



British Baseball Federation Our Future

2023 - 2035

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1. INTRODUCTION

This British Baseball Federation (BBF) document outlines the start of a process of review, engagement and delivery to develop the future of our sport.

It sets out key goals and outlines how the British baseball community can collectively could achieve these goals for the good of the sport.

Starting with BaseballSoftballUK's (BSUK) recent development webinars held at the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, it was clear that a defined plan with clear objectives was needed for the sport in order for us to engage with BSUK in terms of what the community actually wanted for the sport to grow and develop.

This document sets out a proposed vision for the future of British baseball over the next 10 to 15 years. It has been drafted by the BBF Development Committee with specific input from BBF board members, GB Baseball, clubs, players, coaches and officials.

It sets out:

- How British baseball could look by 2035 and beyond
- How this can be delivered
- The key pillars for delivery
- The infrastructure and governance the BBF will put in place to deliver the vision
- Key actions for 2023
- The current state of baseball compared to its potential development over the next 10 to 20 years

This version of the document should be seen as the initial part of a process of review and consultation with BBF clubs, players, coaches, officials GB and independent leagues and BSUK as we move forward over the coming months and years.

To make this plan happen and succeed, the BBF needs the input and support of every baseball club, every league across the country and key stakeholders.

To achieve this, we will be working with the whole British baseball community.

TOM THORNHILL British Baseball Federation President

LEE MANNING British Baseball Federation Development Official

February 2023



2. THE BBF CURRENT MISSION

The British Baseball Federation's current stated mission and the five core principles is set out below. It puts this document into context about the BBF is aiming to achieve and how it will go about it and can be revised to reflect the consultation. It is:

Organise, develop and promote baseball across Britain as a participatory sport and represent the country internationally.

OUR VISION

- is built on five core principles (see below)
- defines where we want to be
- tells us what success looks like, so that when we achieve it, we will be able to recognise it
- allows us to focus on the actions that get us closer to where we want to be
- provides evidence, both within and outside our sport, as to our values and principles.

Baseball is for everyone: We are committed to making baseball an inclusive and welcoming sport for all irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity or ability. We will seek to provide a wide range of opportunities for all individuals to participate, enjoy and succeed in baseball, whether as a recreational pastime or a competitive passion.

Youth is our future: We acknowledge the central importance of engaging, retaining and nurturing youth participation and we are committed to providing a pathway from youth to adult baseball.

Growth drives progress and opportunity: We will grow our community by recruiting new participants throughout the country at every level and in every capacity. We will broaden opportunity by assisting the establishment of new clubs and facilities, and by encouraging the creation of new teams.

Excellence and quality delivers a rewarding experience: We will strive for excellence and quality through education, communication and skills development by investing in our players, coaches, officials, administrators and fans. We will strengthen the national governing body and clubs by adopting best practice and by building productive partnerships with other organisations and sports.

A strong international reputation builds pride and respect: We want to see our national and club teams representing Britain, and competing and succeeding at international level. We will pro-actively seek to host international competitions in the UK and we will seek to obtain leadership positions across baseball's international organisations.



3. OUR VISION FOR 2035

“Our vision for the future is that regardless of age, ability, geography, background or circumstance, positive baseball experiences are accessible to everyone in Great Britain.

It will not matter how people participate in the sport but it is vital they all have fun and easy access as well as an ability to progress as a player, coach, official or administrator to the highest levels.

Our key objectives for 2035:

- A comprehensive national adult league system, for mixed and women only teams, with four levels of play accessible in every area of the country.
- A comprehensive national youth participation programme across the whole country.
- A semi-professional National Baseball League with eight teams with at least one team competing in the top-level European tournaments.
- A National Teams Programme that is perennially in the medal zone in the biggest World and European competitions, showcasing the best British baseball players in the World and maintaining its position in the top 12 International Baseball Programmes



4. BASEBALL IN 2035 - OUR PROPOSED GOALS

The BBF's proposed future for British baseball would change how the sport is organised, played and promoted in 2035.

- A. All baseball clubs and players are affiliated to a single NGB in a regional structure that allows each region to manage and develop the sport on its own doorstep to national standards with central support.
- B. Great Britain Baseball is consistently ranked in the top 12 International Baseball Programmes. We are a regular fixture at the World Baseball Classic, the Premier 12, the U23 World Cup and the Olympic Games (in order of rankings points earned).
- C. The GB Women's Senior National Team regularly wins medals at the European Championships and is challenging for World Championships.
- D. GB Youth Programmes are providing an elite development pathway that contributes to home grown players being capable of playing at the highest level.
- E. A semi-professional National Baseball League (NBL) whose high standard of coaching, competition, and player development produces teams and players that are capable of winning at WBC Europe, CEB and Champions Cups, as well as earning spots on the Great Britain National teams to compete in the WBC, Premier 12, Olympic Games, U23 World Cup and various other world and European competitions.
- F. The NBL and its clubs benefit from sponsorship and online streaming and have a recognised youth programme.
- G. There are regional championships at AAA, AA and A and end of season national playoffs. There will also be a development league set up in each region for new players as appropriate.
- H. Each region includes a strong and sustainable women's league with end of season national playoffs but driven by clubs.
- I. Annual and measurable increases in player, club and team creation, coaches, umpires and scorers participation. Clubs also take responsibility for player development through a measurable system.
- J. More clubs have youth programmes and drive local leagues from Under 6 upwards with regional teams reflecting the international age groupings which move into national championships and a home nations competition.
- K. Coaching will be organised on a regional basis with direction and support from a national coaching team. Formal qualifications (up to level 3) will be put in place to drive up standards and increase paid coaching roles.



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- L. Umpiring will be organised on a regional basis with direction and support from a national umpiring team. Formal qualifications will be put in place to drive up standards.
 - M. Game officials (umpires, scorers and technical commissioners) are among the best in Europe and regularly receive assignments to the highest level of continental tournaments.
 - N. There is a standardised scoring system in place across the country with formal training with assignments and accreditation.
 - O. Each region will have a high quality baseball facility hub with at minimum two diamonds that has the capability to host regional clinics and tournaments which will sit alongside BSUK's national baseball centre at Farnham Park.
 - P. There is a strong and sustainable universities competition with local clubs and regions working to support and promote those student teams.
 - Q. Baseball is played at schools across the country and is an accepted option on the sports curriculum and links to local clubs.



5. DELIVERING OUR FUTURE

This document aims high but we believe it can be delivered if the baseball community works together for the good of the sport.

We believe we need to have the following in place to help delivery:

1. Priority pillars that focuses the work of the BBF in the short to medium term.
2. A series of achievable actions for 2023.
3. Specialist committees that will help deliver the key aims and objectives.
4. A set of measurable targets to ensure we deliver the vision.
5. The input of the whole British baseball community to the final vision.



6. DELIVERY - THE KEY PILLARS OF ACTIVITY

The British Baseball Federation, in the short to medium term, would focus on the following five areas in order to achieve its objectives.

LOCAL MODELS OF PARTICIPATION

- Encouraging clubs to establish their own models of participation and play that are more locally centered. This may encompass spring and fall leagues, midweek leagues, and club-based activities.
- This strategy makes it easier for people to actually play, hence promoting club growth; it eliminates initial barriers for players; and it generates additional revenue for clubs. The removal of obstacles to play and the addition of funds for facility improvement.

COMPETITIONS

- Access to more national and regional tournaments and competition models, such as tournaments, All-Star events, and extended playoffs.

ADULT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Development of elite athletes to fill out the domestic game.

UPSKILLING

- Accessibility, nationally and regionally to coaching, player, officials and volunteering upskilling opportunities across all levels.

RECRUITMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Creating widespread awareness to attract the general public to clubs and aid in their retention. This will include sourcing mass media interest and engagement across the country.
- Engagement of the Federation with the community and stakeholders.

APPOINTMENT OF SKILLED VOLUNTEERS

- Skilled based volunteers appointed based on committee structure.

Details of these key pillars can be found in Appendix Three



7. DELIVERY - KEY ACTIONS FOR 2023

To make Our Future a reality, the baseball community needs to agree a set of priorities for 2023 which will become the bedrock of the future of British baseball.

ADULT AND YOUTH COMPETITIONS

- Creation of nationwide adult competitions: tournament format with more opportunities to participate.
- Creation of youth competitions nationwide: create a youth committee to run these. Mix and match regional games across the UK for Under 23s & Under 18s
- Creation of lower level youth competitions in London: creation of youth competitions for Under 12s and Under 15s in and around London.

MLB RECRUITMENT DAYS

- MLB Recruitment Day marketing with beginner sessions at every club utilising MLB marketing machine across the UK for clubs to receive new participants. This also applies to WBC and London Series

YOUTH COACHING CLINICS

- Host youth coach specific coaching sessions in and around London and at other locations as appropriate specifically to help coaches involved with youth programmes.

COACHING CLINICS

- Foundational coaching clinics across Bristol, Exeter, Cambridge, Farnham, Birmingham, Manchester/Sheffield, Edinburgh, planned, set out and developed in partnership with the national teams coaches
- Different charge rates based on affiliation to be decided.

UMPIRE CLINICS

- Regional Level 1 umpire clinics in Keynsham, Hadlow and Hemel Hempstead delivered by senior umpires
- Advanced umpire training focusing on two-to-three-person umpire systems, open to all
- Different charge rates based on affiliation to be decided.

SCORING CLINICS

- MyBallClub training
- How to score training
- Different charge rates based on affiliation to be decided.



LOCAL MODELS OF PLAY

- Incentivise clubs to run their own spring and fall leagues and drive towards hosting more events and competitions internally.
- Communication drive around local models of play for clubs to run spring and fall leagues locally.

ONLINE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Development of online infrastructure to operate officials and coaching members and the respective qualifications (eg JustGo System).
- Potential player registration system to outline where we are at.

COMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- National teams, youth, coaches, marketing and communications
- Appoint key community members as well as skilled based volunteers
- Committees to work on plans for their own areas



8. DELIVERY - BBF INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to deliver the aims and objectives contained in this document, the BBF has set up a series of committees each with their own responsibilities (see Appendix A) that will work together to deliver Our Future. *(Details of the roles and responsibilities can be found in Appendix Two)*

Development

- Co-ordinating and driving the strategy with the committees.
- Measuring the success of current programmes and the state of play.
- Proposing governance review for skilled appointees to Federation committees to help enact changes.

Senior Leagues

- Creating new competitions and tournaments.
- Incentivising the creation of new forms of participation including local play.

Coaches

- Responsibility for the management and development of coaches working with GB and BSUK to raise the level of coaching across the country.

National Teams

- Coordinating and working with National teams, youth programmes and coaches to enhance the activities of the Youth and Coaches Committees.

Youth

- Creating youth programmes competitions, enact youth development activities and liaising with BSUK

Officials

- Responsibility for the management and development of game officials (umpires, scorers and technical commissioners)

Marketing & Communications

- Supporting the delivery of the BBF Development Plan, create national and local exposure and activities to encourage people to join clubs and aid retention.
- Working with external partners to ensure an increase in the number of players applying to join clubs.



9. DELIVERY - MEASURING PROGRESS

It is imperative that the above aims are able to be measured in order to identify and target effort and resources where needed against agreed objectives.

A key part of the vision will be to create realistic annual targets based on accurate data. These will focus on two main areas.

Quantity and Quality

- Adult teams and players
- Youth teams at U9, U12, U15 and U18
- Coaches
- Umpires and Scorers
- Domestically grown elite players

Quality of Experience

- All participants

The BBF Development Committee will work with its specialist counterparts and BSUK to set measurable targets using accurate data from across the country.



10. DELIVERY - NEXT STEPS

The vision aims high but it can be delivered if the baseball community works together for the good of the sport.

In order to achieve this, the next steps have been identified:

- Agree a timetable to finalise this document
- Carry out a consultation exercise to seek the views of all baseball clubs and leagues in the country
- Share this document for feedback and comments with partners such as BSUK
- Draft and publish final document
- Implement the strategy



11. APPENDIX ONE : STATE OF PLAY

	Where are we now?	Where do we want to be in 13 years?	Where do we want to be in 20 years?
Participation	Around 2,000 adult players with low levels of youth players	3500(250 teams)	7-10,000 (500 teams).
Leagues	London/SE bias; virtually no spectators; no sponsorship; children play; amateur; no/little standards or requirements.	Semiprofessional national baseball league; team and league sponsorships; streamed online; playoffs on TV; 50%+ homegrown; facility/uniform etc standards; standard 2-4 person umpire crews; 250+ attendances.	>> broadcast on TV; 75% homegrown; 500+ attendances.
Competition Structure (Adult)	Fractured; changeable.	All baseball clubs and players are affiliated to a single NGB in a regional structure that allows each region to manage and develop the sport on its own doorstep with central support. The NGB sits alongside BSF on the board of BSUK.	>> more regions e.g. transition to county leagues.
Competition Structure (Youth/Young Adult)	Tiny. Inconsistent.	Club-driven local leagues from U6 . Regional leagues matching international age groupings (U12/15/18/23) and playing national championships. Home nations competition.	>> more regions e.g. transition to county leagues.
Player Development	Lack of clarity on who is responsible for what (club vs. BSUK Academies vs. National Teams).	National Team-driven pathway operating regionally and nationally and aligned with UK Sport/Sport England standards. Clarity on club role in PD. University centres of excellence.	>> Regional academy hubs who's offer includes residency.



Coach Development	BSUK have oversight but delivery is limited	Coaching will be organised on a regional basis with direction and support from a national coaching team. Formal qualifications (up to level 3) will be put in place to drive up standards.	>> L4.
Officials Development	Small group of trained umpires covering NBL games mostly. Low visibility of "team umpires" officiating lower league games. BBF organises sporadic clinics. No development path offered.	NBL games to be umpired by three person crews, all other league games are officiated (umpired and scored) by certified participants. Pool of 10 internationally qualified umpires.	>> all lower league (regional) games umpired by two person crews
Facilities	A few dedicated diamonds	Regional Hubs with multiple diamond facilitates that can host tournaments.	County centric hubs with multiple diamonds that host county youth and adult competitions.
National Teams	Rolling internationally and on the eve (Q4 '23) of a big rankings jump; success built on overseas- based players.	Great Britain Baseball is consistently ranked in the top 12 International Baseball Programmes. We are a regular fixture at the World Baseball Classic, the Premier 12, the U23 World Cup and the Olympic Games (in order of rankings points earned). The GB Women's Senior National Team regularly wins medals at the European Championships and is challenging for World Championships	>> Men's/Women's teams comprised primarily of homegrown players. Winning medals in most European competitions and challenging for medals in World competitions. Major private and public investment.



12. APPENDIX TWO: BBF PROPOSED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



13. APPENDIX THREE: KEY PILLARS OF ACTIVITY



The Pillars Of Activity till 2035

The Federation will be focusing on the following five areas in order to achieve it's objectives.

Local Models of Participation

Encourage clubs to set up their own more local based forms of participation.

Easier for people to actually play in this model helping club growth, removes barriers for participates in the beginning, more money for clubs. Removal of barriers to play and more money for facilities development.

Competitions

Access to more tournaments and models of competitions at the national levels.

Upskilling

Accessibility nationally and regionally to coaching, player, officials and volunteering upskilling opportunities across all levels

Recruitment & Communications

Generating general awareness to get people into clubs in the first place and interested to turn up.

Mass media appeal, engagement with United Kingdom.

Federation engagement with community and stakeholders

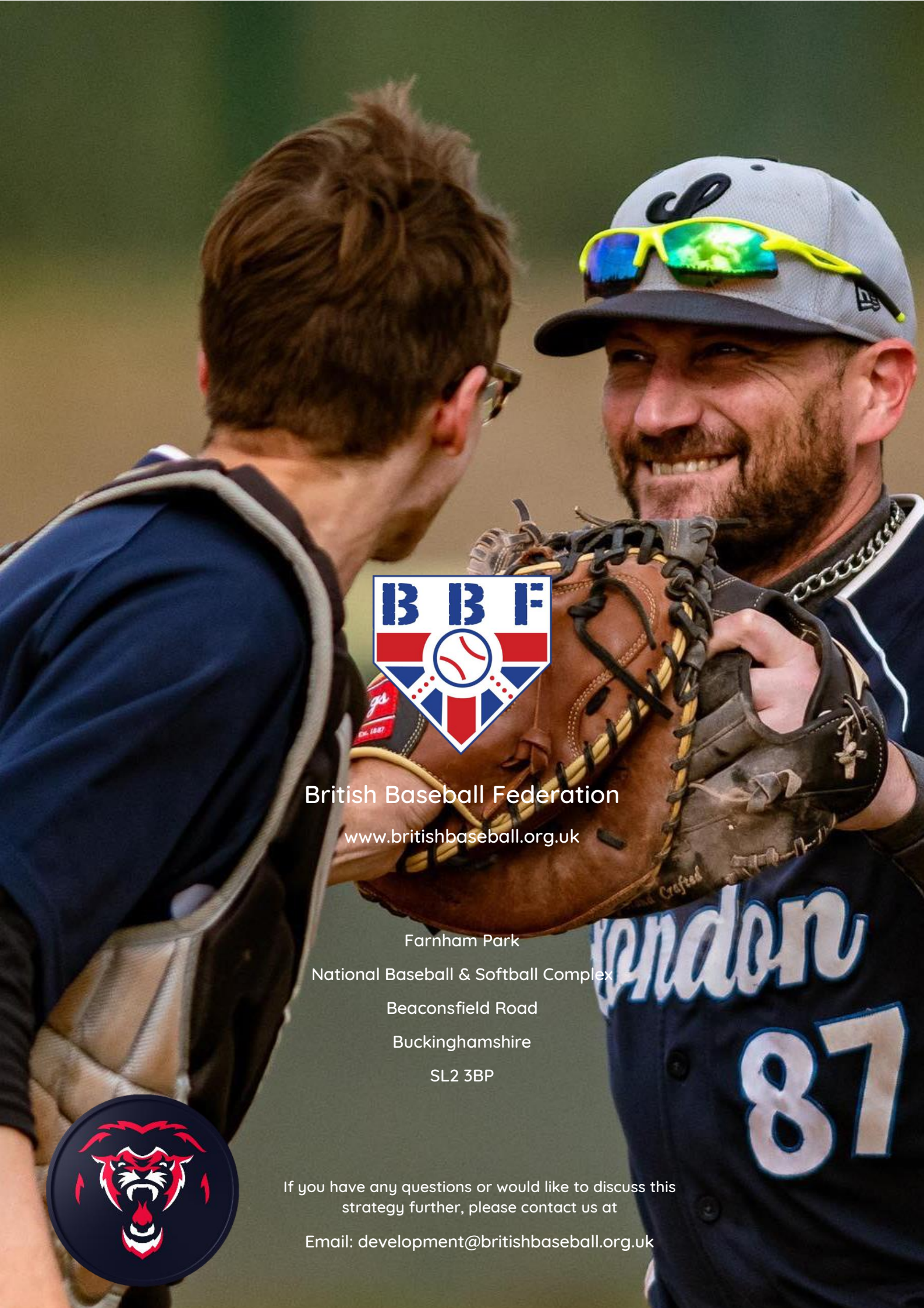
Youth Development

Development of elite athletes to fill out the domestic game.

NGB Skilled Appointed

Skilled based volunteers appointed based on committee structure.





British Baseball Federation

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If you have any questions or would like to discuss this strategy further, please contact us at

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