



**June 2007**

# **SOFTBALL BULLETIN**

This is the sixth in a series of monthly Bulletins that will be produced on behalf of the BSF in 2007 by **BaseballSoftballUK** to keep Softball organisers and members up to date with news and opportunities.

We hope organisers will continue to ensure that information in these Bulletins reaches their teams and players, even during the off-season. We are very grateful to those league officials and team captains who make this happen on a regular basis.

This Bulletin is now only sent out electronically so that recipients can easily send it on to team captains, players and friends. If you know anyone who does not already receive the Bulletin directly and would like to, please send his or her e-mail address to Tim Stride at the BSUK office on: [info@baseballsoftballuk.com](mailto:info@baseballsoftballuk.com). The other way to ensure receipt of the Bulletin each month is to register on the BSUK website and tick the appropriate box.

If you cannot access the Bulletin electronically, please contact Tim Stride on 020-7453-7055, Option 2 or on the e-mail address shown above, give him your postal address and ask him to send you a hard copy.

Anyone who wishes to submit material for inclusion in the Bulletin is welcome to do so. Send copy to Bob Fromer on: [news@baseballsoftballuk.com](mailto:news@baseballsoftballuk.com). The deadline for each month's Bulletin is the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month.

Check out the **BaseballSoftballUK** website on [www.baseballsoftballuk.com](http://www.baseballsoftballuk.com) for a range of information beyond that presented in this Bulletin. The website is now updated daily.

New contact details for the BSF will be published shortly. In the meantime, general Softball queries should be directed to:

**Tel: 020-7453-7055, Option 2**  
**E-Mail: [info@baseballsoftballuk.com](mailto:info@baseballsoftballuk.com)**

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# NEW CONTACTS FOR THE BSF EXECUTIVE

All BSF Executive members shown below can now be contacted by e-mail at: <<firstname.lastname>>@britishsoftball.org. Please note that this is a new dedicated address for the BSF, replacing the previous BSUK addresses.

<b>President</b>	Tony La Fave
<b>Executive Secretary &amp; Acting President</b>	Libby Moss
<b>Administrative Officer</b>	<i>Position Vacant</i>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<i>Position Vacant*</i>
<b>National Teams Officer</b>	Hayley Scott
<b>Tournaments Officers</b>	Liz Graham Lesley Morisetti
<b>Slowpitch Officer</b>	Roger Grooms
<b>Fastpitch Officer</b>	Ross Smith
<b>Youth &amp; Schools Officer</b>	Carmel Keswick
<b>Coaching Officer</b>	<i>Position Vacant</i>
<b>Technical Officer &amp; BASU Rep</b>	Pearl Bramhall (BASU-appointed)
<b>Sponsorship &amp; Marketing Officer</b>	<i>Position Vacant</i>
<b>Press &amp; PR Officer</b>	Nikki Hammon (co-opted)
<b>General Officers</b>	Gary Hoxby & Mike Jennings

\* **Pearl Bramhall is filling this role on a temporary basis.**

In addition, the following BSF e-mail addresses are available:

[info@britishsoftball.org](mailto:info@britishsoftball.org) -- for general information or questions about Softball in the UK.

[feedback@britishsoftball.org](mailto:feedback@britishsoftball.org) -- to make comments or suggestions directly to the BSF Executive.

[support@britishsoftball.org](mailto:support@britishsoftball.org) -- for help with website or other internet problems.

[webmaster@britishsoftball.org](mailto:webmaster@britishsoftball.org) -- for help with carrying out website processes, such as player or team registration or management of team or league pages.

# UPPER HEYFORD TRAINING CENTRE UNDER THREAT

The National Team Training Centre at Upper Heyford, used for the past eight years by Softball, Baseball, Volleyball, Beach Volleyball and Fencing as well as by community groups including Heyford Diamonds Softball Club, has been receiving a lot of local and national media attention over the past few weeks – but for an unfortunate reason.

As a local Oxfordshire paper put it: “While billions are being invested in preparing the country to host the Olympics in 2012, one vital sports centre looks set to close because no money can be found to replace its leaking roof.”

The large gymnasium, Beach Volleyball court and dedicated Baseball and Softball fields at the former US Air Force base at Heyford have been invaluable to the small Olympic sports that have used them for the past eight years as a low-cost training venue their national teams could afford. But as anyone who has been to Upper Heyford will know, the facility has always been run down, and dereliction has only been held at bay by the sterling efforts of Facility Manager Tom Middleton, who has been supported in his part-time post by the British Olympic Association (BOA).

However, an ongoing problem has always been leaks in the flat gymnasium roof, and the excessive rainfall Britain has endured since the beginning of May has brought the situation to crisis point. Recently, the leaks became so extensive that Volleyball had to stop using the gym; and Fencing had already withdrawn from the consortium of sports that runs Upper Heyford earlier in the spring.

The Baseball and Softball diamonds are still useable and are being used, but once the summer is over, Upper Heyford may no longer be able to offer indoor training facilities and a project that was a great example of co-operative effort among sports may come to an end.

BOA support for Upper Heyford will cease in any case in 2008, since Baseball and Softball are no longer Olympic sports and the other Heyford sports will have 2012 Olympic money to pay for more salubrious training venues.

The situation has been especially frustrating for Tom Middleton, a retired fireman and Volleyball Development Officer who has put his heart and soul into the project on behalf of all the user sports. Tom told a local newspaper: “Six years ago we were told it would cost £150,000 to repair the roof and that it would have to come from local councils or the user sports. The sports don’t have the money, but I’m amazed the local authority isn’t interested in investing when you consider all the stuff about making the most of the London Olympics. It’s such a good site for so many activities and the standard of the teams that rely on it will inevitably suffer if it can no longer be used.”

GB Baseball Assistant Coach Adam Roberts, a native Australian, said, “It’s very sad, and there’s no way this would happen in Australia. The difference in approach to sports investment between the two countries is massive.”

Because Upper Heyford, which is leased from the MOD by a consortium of house-building companies, probably always had a limited shelf life as a National Team Training Centre, work has been ongoing for the past three years to move the Heyford project and all the user sports to a new sports centre being developed in Milton Keynes. But this possibility is still uncertain; and with the cessation of BOA support, the project may simply fall apart.

Bob Fromer, who chairs the Board of NTSCH Ltd, the not-for-profit company that runs the project, said, “Upper Heyford has been an inspiring effort in self-help and cooperation among a group of sports that have always struggled for national team funding, and the support of the BOA has been instrumental in keeping it going. All of the sports that have used Heyford have benefited tremendously, and they could never have afforded equivalent training time at a commercial facility. But unless there’s a miracle, the obstacles to Heyford continuing may simply have become too great.”

## **ISF AWARDS COACHING COLLEGE TO ITALY FOR JANUARY 2008**

The International Softball Federation (ISF) and the US National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) are combining to run a major five-day Coaching College in Europe next January, and BSUK and the BSF had lodged a bid to host the course in the UK following the ESF Congress in February.

Negotiations over arrangements for hosting the course in Britain had been ongoing with the ISF, and the general assumption was that only the details remained to be sorted. BSUK had pledged £4000 to support the course, the BSF had pledged £500 and the ISF will pay up to \$10,000 to defray hosting costs.

However, BSUK was suddenly informed last week in a one-sentence e-mail, with no prior warning, that the ISF has decided to award the course to Italy.

The advantage of hosting the Coaching College in Britain would have been that while each country is limited to two places on the course, the host country can have more places, and it would have been a major opportunity to upgrade our coaching base.

Britain will now send two coaches to the course in Italy, supported by BSUK, and a process to choose the most suitable candidates will get underway shortly.

## **BSUK DONATES EQUIPMENT TO CHARITY IN PERU**

BSUK will be donating Softball equipment to a charity called Peru’s Challenge, which works with deprived children in slum areas in the country’s capital, Lima.

A request for equipment was made recently by Irish Softballer Jan Mogerley, who helps organise the Craickers team that plays in the World Series each year, and who recently spent time as a volunteer with Peru’s Challenge. Jan introduced Softball to some of the kids she was

working with in Lima and they loved it – but providing enough equipment to keep things going was the problem.

Because so many of the volunteers who work with the charity are from Softball-playing countries such as the US, Canada and Australia, Jan believes there will be no shortage of people able to sustain a Softball programme once it gets established.

The bats, gloves and balls that BSUK is donating will be taken to Lima later this summer by a UK-based volunteer.

## **WORLD SOFTBALL DAY CELEBRATED IN REGENT'S PARK**

**BaseballSoftballUK** marked World Softball Day on June 13 with a series of exhibition games in Regent's Park in London. Teams from BSUK, the United States Embassy and Sport England played each other that evening, with BSUK emerging unbeaten and Sport England drawing against the Embassy.

The point of the three friendly Slowpitch Softball games was to celebrate World Softball Day, an annual event marked by the International Softball Federation as the date in 1991 when it was announced that Women's Fastpitch Softball would be added to the Olympic programme beginning with the 1996 Games in Atlanta.

World Softball Day is now celebrated around the globe through activities carried out by member countries of the ISF.

At this year's event in Regent's Park, a mixture of experienced Softballers and new players took part, with coaching and equipment provided by BSUK.

Luis Colmenares, BSUK's Regional Development Officer for West London and the Thames Valley said, "This was an excellent opportunity to fortify relations between the sporting agencies and BSUK and it also gave new players the opportunity to enjoy this sport for the first time."

# NATIONAL TEAMS NEWS

## GB CADETTES SELECT FINAL 14 FOR EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP SQUAD

**BSF National Teams Officer Hayley Scott writes:**

The GB Cadettes (Under-16) Girls' Fastpitch Team has been training for well over a month in preparation for the **European Cadette Championships**, to be held in the Czech Republic from July 9-14, and the final squad of 14 players has now been selected.

Thanks go to Aisha Arnold, Jim Nicolson and Joke van der Hulst for their assistance in training the team while Cadette Head Coach Karlene Headley-Cooper was travelling with the GB Women's Team. Assistant Coach Paul Cooper and Team Manager Carmel Keswick have also been working with the group to prepare them for the challenge ahead.

The players selected are:

Jem Bhatt  
Nadine Gardner  
Chloe Hodges  
Alex Keegan  
Victoria Keswick  
Ceanna Madden  
Rebecca Oldham  
Kelly Randall  
Linda Randall  
Jennifer Rushworth  
Hannah Thompson  
Laura Thompson  
Amy Wells  
Charlotte Wells

It gave me great pleasure to call each of the players and congratulate them on their final selection and the players were all very excited to receive their call.

Unfortunately some players who are still very much a part of the GB youth programme were unable to travel with the team on this occasion: Claire Ferris, Stephanie Pearce, Charlotte Morgan and Louisa Scott.

It was also confirmed this week that Joke van der Hulst will join the team as a member of the coaching staff. Joke will work directly with the pitchers and will assist the other coaches in trying to make GB's third appearance at the European Cadette Championships our most successful one to date.

Nine teams – Russia, Poland, Holland, Ukraine, Spain, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Greece and GB – will take part in the competition and GB's first game will be against the host Czech team following the Opening Ceremony in Plzen at 6.30 pm on Monday, July 9.

Games will then come thick and fast as a full round-robin schedule is played. GB will have a tough day on Tuesday, July 10, taking on Russia at 1.30 pm and the Netherlands at 6.30 pm, and Wednesday will bring games against Greece at 11.30 am and the Ukraine at 4.00 pm.

On Thursday, GB will play Spain at 9.30 am and Slovakia at 4.00 pm, and Britain's final pool game will be against Poland at 10.00 am on Friday, July 13.

A Page Playoff involving the top four teams from the round-robin will begin Friday afternoon and conclude with the Championship Game at 3.00 pm on Saturday, July 14.

## **GB MEN'S FASTPITCH TEAM WITHDRAWS FROM EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The Great Britain Men's Team has been forced to withdraw its entry to the European Men's Fastpitch Championships, due to be held in Belgium from July 2-7.

According to Team Manager Steve Fullan, the reason for the withdrawal was a lack of pitching due to injuries; the team did not want to risk the health of pitchers who were not 100% fit.

Although withdrawal at this stage will incur a fine from the European Softball Federation, the ESF has assured BSF Acting President Libby Moss that the team's ability to compete next year, when World Championship places will be at stake, will not be affected.

## **NEW GB WOMEN'S TEAM TO MAKE ITS FIRST TOURNAMENT APPEARANCE**

When the GB Women's Team failed to win the Euro/Africa Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Italy earlier this month and reach the Beijing Olympics, the door effectively closed on a programme made up primarily with overseas-based players. But the door has now opened for a new GB team that will make its first competitive appearance next month in Belgium.

In March of this year, the BSF held tryouts for a "GB Women's Development Team" and a young and largely inexperienced squad has been training since then under the leadership of BSF National Teams Officer and GB Women's Team Assistant Coach Hayley Scott.

Now this squad becomes the new GB Women's Team and will compete in a club tournament hosted by Cardinals Wanze BSC in Belgium on the weekend of July 13-15. Hayley Scott will coach the team at the event, but there are hopes that additional coaches can also attend.

Players who have confirmed their participation (but others may join them, since a pitcher and catcher are still needed) are:

Morgan Parkerson  
Ali Parkerson  
Lyn Kozak  
Larissa Benbow  
Fiona Herdman Smith  
Emma Ley  
Amber Jackson  
Kelly Becraft  
Meaghan Kall  
Colette Gardiner  
Sonya Wilson

Although this team is taking its first competitive steps, it will be travelling under the GB banner and a professional attitude will be expected from both staff and players.

After all, in just two years' time, the team starting out next month at a club tournament in Belgium will be representing Great Britain in the 2009 European A Pool Championships and will hope to fight for a World Championship place.

## GB SLOWPITCH TEAM NEWS

*GB Slowpitch Team Head Coach Mark Saunders has supplied the following updates from the programme:*

### RETIRING PLAYERS

**Andy Larcombe** and **Steph Jardine** have announced their retirement from the GB Slowpitch Squad.

**Andy Larcombe** joined the team in 2005 and showed promise as a power-hitting outfielder. He competed for GB Blues at the 2005 ISF Slowpitch World Cup and the Sports Illustrated Advertising World Series. He always had a great passion and enthusiasm for the game and the way he played through pain at the SI World Series earned him a lot of respect from GB coaches and players. His reasons for retiring are that he is taking time off to travel with his family and eventually hopes to settle in France.

**Steph Jardine** was a member of the original GB Squad that competed in and won the first European Slowpitch Championships in 1998. Due to her Fastpitch commitments she hasn't always been able to play for GB Slowpitch, but whenever she has been available she has competed to the best of her considerable ability. In the 2000 European Slowpitch Championships in Ireland, Steph hit .688, made a diving catch in right field to save the only game that GB team was in danger of losing and won the tournament's female MVP award.

Now Steph says, "After a fair bit of deliberation I've decided to call it a day with GB Softball; it's time to step aside for the young blood. I've had some great times with the squad but I think I need to rein in my commitments and start to develop my post-Softball life".

Steph will be greatly missed, as she was the player that every coach wants to have in their squad. She was unfalteringly positive, had great skills and game awareness and played the game with maximum effort as well as being a great team player.

We wish both Steph and Andy the very best for their future and hope they continue to play Softball with the enthusiasm and dedication they have shown to GB.

### **COMPETITION IN USA**

The GB Slowpitch Squad is currently in the process of putting a team together for the NSA Western World Series, which is again being held in Las Vegas, Nevada at the end of September.

GB entered a team last year and played some of the best Slowpitch any of the players had experienced. The squad is eager to do better than the 14th place achieved last year.

### **CLINIC IN MANCHESTER**

Members of the GB Slowpitch team ran a player clinic in Manchester on Sunday, June 24, with more than 30 people taking part. These player clinics are good fundraisers for the GB squad and are also our way of giving something back to the Softball community.

### **ANALYSIS:**

## **A POST MORTEM ON THE BRITISH ATTEMPT AT OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION**

The GB Women's Fastpitch Team that came together in Holland in mid-May for the European A Pool Championships in Amsterdam (May 28-June 2) and then the Euro/Africa Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Italy (June 9-16) had high hopes of doing well at the Europeans and then mounting a real assault on the Olympic place in Beijing available to the team that won the Qualifier.

The fact that the only a fifth-place finish was achieved in both competitions sounds like the team was far from achieving its goals. But appearances can be deceiving, and this team came closer to the prize than the standings suggest.

However, the cold reality is that failure to achieve Olympic qualification means that the GB Women's Team programme that began to have serious aspirations in 1999, got minimal funding for the first time in 2001 and then decent funding in 2005 and rose as high as fourth place in Europe and 10th at the World Championships last year will now have to begin again with no external funding – that will end because Softball is no longer an Olympic sport – and with entirely or mostly home-based players.

The attempt to build a world-class British National Team in a country with only three Women's Fastpitch club teams was always a quixotic idea. But it was spurred by the huge opportunities that a British Softball Team in the London Olympics could have brought to the sport – and when that dream was dashed, by the benefits that could still have been derived by British Softball as a whole from a British team competing in Beijing.

Building the GB team almost entirely around foreign-based players who have grown up in Softball-playing cultures was inevitable given the goal of Olympic qualification and the realities of British Softball – although this approach was and is controversial in Britain and to some extent in Europe.

But it's worth remembering that Italy has dominated European Softball for most of the past 20 years because of the high-quality Italian-American players that make up about half their starting team – players they import despite having thousands of home-based players and a high-quality network of heavily-sponsored clubs.

## **Two Key Points**

Two points should be made about the British programme that ended with defeat in Italy:

-- The creation of a GB team that became increasingly foreign-based over the past three years was paralleled by the creation of a successful Girls' Fastpitch schools programme in Britain, resourced by BaseballSoftballUK, that has already begun to produce a generation of home-based players taking part in European Championships at Under-13 and Under-16 levels. The GB Women's Team will not lack for home-based players in future.

-- The 17 players who represented Great Britain at the European Championships in Holland and the Olympic Qualifier in Italy may have included only two players who live in the UK. But this team, all of whom are British passport holders by virtue of having one or more British parents and close family connections to Britain, could not have worked harder, fought more fiercely or cared more about getting British Softball to the Olympics. They were a credit to the sport and to the country they represented in these tournaments.

## **Pros and Cons**

The GB Women's Team that competed in Holland and Italy was the strongest group of players Britain has ever had, and in particular, with three current or former NCAA Division 1 pitchers and a good Division III pitcher, the team, at least on paper, had the pitching depth that GB has always lacked.

On the other hand, the team had only a week of practice before the tournaments began, with six completely new players who had to be bedded into the squad. It took the coaching staff a while – including games at the European Championships – to determine the best players for each position. Although the team was trying to win every game, the European Championships were regarded by coaches and players alike as preparation for the Olympic Qualifier rather than an end in itself.

And while the GB team looked to have more pitching depth than ever before, one of those pitchers was only eight weeks into recovery from a separated pitching shoulder and was struggling with control; and another pitcher was lost entirely to an ankle injury sustained in a training session just before the Olympic Qualifier began after pitching promisingly in the European Championships. And the squad's youngest player, an outfielder who was making a

real impact offensively, was effectively lost for the last few days of the Qualifier with a worsening leg injury.

None of this is by way of excuse; all teams have to deal with injuries. But the regret the GB coaching staff and management will have is that this team could not have been together longer and will not be able to mature together – because this set of players could have become a very good team indeed.

If Softball could have stayed in the Olympics, if a GB Softball team could have played in the Olympic Softball Stadium in Regents Park in 2012, that might well have happened, because this GB team was very young, with an average age of just under 21. And they are talented, spirited, smart and coachable players who never played to their full potential during the past four weeks because it was too soon for that to happen.

### **Close Encounters**

Even so, when you look closely at the results in both the European Championships and the Olympic Qualifier, you see that all the games between GB and the top teams in both competitions were close and all of them could have gone either way. But given the injuries to the pitching staff, GB couldn't quite keep those teams off the scoreboard; and on offense, though GB generally had baserunners and scoring chances, the big hit with runners in scoring position just wasn't there enough of the time.

Nor was the luck that any winning team has to have. Too many hard-hit balls by British batters went straight to opposing fielders and too many softly-hit balls by opposing batters turned into cheap hits. That kind of thing evens out over time, but during these two tournaments the balance was definitely not in favour of Britain.

But there is no relationship between “if only” and the real world. All we can do now – all of us in the British Softball community and other Softball people around the world – is work as hard as we can to return Softball to the Olympics when the IOC next makes programme decisions in 2009 for 2016.

In the meantime, while a new GB Women's Team programme will start at a lower level and build up in a different way, a national Women's Fastpitch Team will certainly not be lost. The programme just ending will contribute in many ways to the new programme that the British Softball Federation has already put in place. And thanks to the continued dedication of those involved, Fastpitch Softball in Britain will continue to grow and progress.

## **ONE ROUTE TO GB SUCCESS**

Finally, a special word about the route to success taken by one of the two players on the GB Olympic Qualifier squad who lives in the UK and the only player to come up through the GB youth system.

**Laura Thompson** was born in Zambia, where she began playing Softball, but after her family moved to the UK Laura got involved with the GB Youth programmes directed by Natalie Fox. Laura went to the first ISF Junior World Cup in Plant City Florida as a 15-year-old in 2001 with a very inexperienced GB team playing against some of the top U-16 teams in the world – and even in that environment, Laura was able hold her own. Talent was clearly there.

Laura was selected for the GB Senior Team that competed in European Championships and the Olympic Qualifier in 2003 at the age of 17, and again just about held her own – but it was clear that her abilities needed to be developed in a more intensive Fastpitch environment than the UK could offer.

Along with another young GB-based player, Sophie Froud, Laura went to play for the Dutch club team Tex Town Tigers in the summer of 2005, and her improvement after a season of top Dutch Softball was clear to see. After winning a starting place with the GB team that competed in European Championships in 2005, Laura went to the States to play for a Junior College Softball programme in Texas. She was homesick at first, but soon got past that and continued to learn and improve.

This season, when she joined the GB team after winning the award as MVP in her Junior College Regional Tournament, it was clear to the coaches that Laura had become a real impact player – a quick and aggressive outfielder with great instincts and a dangerous hitter who combined speed with increasing power.

And as a result of the improvements she's made, Laura has now won a scholarship to attend college at Eastern New Mexico, an NCAA Division II school with a good Softball programme. An exciting two years lie ahead of her, and the GB coaching staff is sure she will make her mark at that level. GB Head Coach Craig Montvidas is convinced that Laura would not be out of place in a Division I school and conference.

The moral is that as a Slowpitch-dominated country, Britain offers few opportunities for even talented young players to develop the Fastpitch skills and experience that will make them successful in international Softball. Laura Thompson loves the game, and together with her family, made the decision to go abroad to make herself a better player. The decision has paid off both for Laura and GB Softball.

There is now an emerging group of young players coming into GB Youth Teams from the GrassRoots school and club programmes at U-13 and U-16 level, and some of these players clearly have ability. But if they want to become senior international players, the best of them may need to follow in Laura's footsteps and go abroad to get the skills and experience they need. This is not a path that suits everyone, and families often face hard decisions (getting places at US colleges or junior colleges for promising players is the easy part; GB coaches can do that).

But in a situation where we want to develop and maintain a successful GB Women's Team with home-based players, it's a path that any emerging young players with talent will need to consider.

**Bob Fromer**

*Full reports on GB games in the European Championships and Olympic Qualifying Tournaments, plus the wonderful Final in the Olympic Qualifier where the Dutch upset Italy to book a place in Beijing next year, will be in the National Teams section of the website until June 30.*

# BSUK NEWS

## DEVELOPMENT POSITIONS START TO BE FILLED

**BaseballSoftballUK** is beginning to put additional development staff in place based on the recently-secured three-year Club & Coach Development Grant from Sport England.

### **Callie Batts**

Callie Batts, who was BSUK's Regional Development Officer for the Thames Valley/West London Super Area last year, has returned this year to fill an interim RDO role in the West Midlands, working closely with Baseball National Development Manager John Mills and super-volunteer Peter Tierney to build partnerships and connections in the region.

Callie will also cover school and club coaching sessions until an Interim Coach-in-Residence for the region can be put in post. She will work closely with Paul Wright in Birmingham to try to find ways to improve Softball recruitment in the Second City and will also take an important role in the final stages of preparation and submission of the next Equity Standard that BSUK has to meet.

### **Sam Dempster**

Sam Dempster has been operating as an MLB Envoy coach since March, but has now become the Interim Coach-in-Residence for the North West (specifically Greater Manchester). This will allow him to expand the excellent coaching work he's been doing in the region.

Sam will also continue to work closely with the Baseball Academy at Upper Heyford.

### **Mark Kerr**

Mark Kerr, who has served the community in many guises, including as a Level 3 Coaching Course tutor, a member of BSUK Council and the British Softball Federation Executive, a private coach to teams and players and as the League Secretary of the Greater London Softball Mixed League, has been appointed as an interim Coach-in-Residence for the London Region.

Mark will work closely with a number of organisations, including the Raiders Softball Club, the London Mets Baseball and Softball Club and schools across London (including GrassRoots schools); and he will run a series of corporate Softball coaching sessions, supporting the work of the Regional Development Officer for West London/Thames Valley, Luis Colmenares). Mark will be aided by summer Import Coach Karlene Headley-Cooper.

# DEVELOPMENT NEWS

## GRASSROOTS FASTPITCH NATIONALS CANCELLED FOR 2007

The 2007 GrassRoots Fastpitch Nationals for school teams, scheduled for this past weekend (June 23), has had to be cancelled due to a lack of teams able to attend.

In part this was a result of staff reorganisation at BSUK following the change of remit to a Development Agency, and the GrassRoots programme was not able to be fully staffed this year.

According to National Programmes Manager Donald Morris-Vincent, BSUK's Development Department is looking at prioritising activities for next year to keep the momentum going in GrassRoots schools and hopefully drawing other schools in these areas into the programme. There is every expectation that the GrassRoots Nationals will return in 2008.

## DEVELOPMENT IN A TIME OF CHANGE

By John Boyd  
BSUK Head of Development & Joint CEO

The newly created Development Department at **BaseballSoftballUK** is going through some very interesting times – but recent changes offer promise for the future.

After starting the year with just three staff, new members have been added who are making significant contributions to future plans. But news of our recent Club and Coach Fund grant has brought with it a lot of initial conditions from Sport England that need to be met before funds will be released, including detailed delivery plans for each of the regions in which we'll be working and the submission of Equity and Child Protection Standards, among many others.

The delivery plans have involved meeting with people from the County Sports Partnerships in each of the relevant regions to detail plans that can be rolled out currently and once our Coaches-In-Residence are in place. There have also been a number of meetings with local schools, School Sports Partnerships, local company and corporate sports organisations and local Equity groups.

**John Mills**, newly appointed **National Development Manager (Baseball)**, has been working on a number of projects, including laying groundwork for Baseball and Softball to be

included in Sport England's Club Accreditation Programme and reviewing our Coach Education Programme. He's been on the ground in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, working closely with **Ingo Gottwald** (Regional Development Officer for Greater Manchester) and **Callie Batts** (newly-appointed RDO for the West Midlands), overseeing the creation of delivery plans and ongoing activity and meeting with regional and local partners. John worked closely with key volunteer Peter Tierney in Coventry before Callie took up her post and has been an excellent addition as a senior member of the department.

**Donald Morris-Vincent** has taken on a new role as our **National Programmes Manager**, responsible for the oversight of development programmes as well as key communication and administration tasks for the Development Department. His past three months have been dominated by the completion of the Child Protection Standard on behalf of BSUK and he submitted the our portfolio three weeks ago to the Child Protection in Sport Unit.

He's also been working hard to communicate with the GrassRoots schools, pulling together the schools database, preparing for the Play Ball! World Series and handing over the commissioner role for the Baseball Youth Leagues to the British Baseball Federation.

Donald has also overseen Regents Park Softball pitch bookings this year and has been preparing for the London Corporate Softball League due to take place from mid-July through August.

**Luis Colmenares**, Regional Development Officer for West London/Thames Valley, has taken a lead for BSUK in London, communicating extensively with London-wide schools in particular. He's has been our representative on the London NGB Forum facilitated by Sport England and has developed delivery plans for both London and the Thames Valley. Under his belt already was a low-key but successful World Softball Day celebration on June 13, two well attended Open Days at Northwick Park, a number of (unfortunately unsuccessful) applications to the London Summer of Sport and close work with a number of clubs across the region.

**Callie Batts**, although only in the UK temporarily, has been a huge asset to the West Midlands region. She has moved to Coventry to be able to oversee the extensive programming of coaching set up by Peter Tierney in the area, with the partnership building work across three County Sports Partnerships (Coventry, Birmingham and the Black Country). Additionally, Callie has volunteered to take a lead in preparing the final stages of BSUK's portfolio for our next Equity Standard, due to be submitted to Sporting Equals in the next three weeks.

**Ingo Gottwald** has clearly benefited from a winter of planning and has been prolifically attending school sessions in Greater Manchester and the surrounding area, focusing particularly on building extensive exit-route opportunities for children. With additional hands-on support from MLB and BSUK Import Coach Sam Dempster, Ingo has, been able to deliver development to both new participants and existing members in the region.

Sessions have been run for the Manchester Softball League (specifically the Manchester Lions), Bolton Baseball Club (helping the club establish a youth section), Manchester Baseball Club, etc. Ingo has been instrumental in setting up a local collaboration with Timperley Sports Club. The Second Manchester Baseball and Softball Forum that he organised was a well-attended event and there was a positive and pro-active approach from regional members and engaged parties.

Two additional consultants have been hired during this period. **Tom Gillespie** and **Hayley Scott** have been engaged in building the Baseball and Softball Academy programmes for this year in addition to their day jobs. They have both also been working on the playing infrastructure for Baseball and Softball respectively.

We look forward to **Hayley Scott** taking up the post of **National Development Manager (Softball)** on August 1, 2007.

Finally, my work has been very different this year. My focus has been taken up, first with the negotiation and creation of the Club and Coach Fund application and, since the award was announced, with the fulfilment of Sport England's conditions.

Having staff on the ground doing excellent work has meant that I can take an oversight role, but I've made it a point to meet with each of the Sport England Regions in person and to ensure that we're clear on what needs to be delivered. The Club and Coach Fund grant has been complicated by some intricate negotiations about how quickly we can start with putting personnel in place and I'm very pleased that we've reached the point of being able to appoint interim Coaches-In-Residence in most of the key regions and will soon be advertising for full-time positions to be filled.

In addition to this, I've been involved in setting up the Development Strategy Group, which is the main group of Federation directors who "own" the development strategy of **BaseballSoftballUK**.

All this is just a snapshot of the work that's been going on in the Development Department since the AGMs in February. There's obviously a lot more detail involved and I'll be happy to answer any questions about our current work and our focus. Just let me know.

**John Boyd**

# DOMESTIC FASTPITCH NEWS

## FASTPITCH COMPETITION AND TRAINING SET FOR THIS WEEKEND

This coming weekend, June 30-July 1, will be a busy time for senior and junior Fastpitch Softball players.

On Saturday, June 30, British Women's League fixtures will be played at Upper Heyford, but there will also be a Softball Academy training session from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm with the help of a guest coach, South African National Team pitcher Kirsty Jennings.

In addition, the GB Cadette (Under-16) Team will train in preparation for European Championships in the Czech Republic next month, and a capping ceremony will be held for the players selected.

On Sunday, July 1, the scene will shift to St Mary's College in Twickenham, where another GB Academy session will be held with Kirsty Jennings, the GB Cadette squad will hold a further training session, and the new GB Women's Development Team will prepare for their first competition, a tournament in Belgium on July 13-15.

For more information, contact Hayley Scott ([firstname.lastname@baseballsoftballuk.com](mailto:firstname.lastname@baseballsoftballuk.com)).

# UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

**The outdoor Slowpitch tournament season is now about halfway through. Here's what's coming up over the next month or so:**

### **UK Corporate Games Softball Tournament**

**Saturday-Sunday, June 30-July 1 in Sheffield.**

The tournament will be part of a large multi-sport event (24 sports, thousands of participants), but the entry deadline has passed. On the other hand, corporate teams that fancy this kind of event can sign up for the London Corporate Games to be held on August 18-19 on Hackney Marshes. For info and entry forms contact **Ben Sedgemore** ([ben@corporate-games.com](mailto:ben@corporate-games.com)).

### **Guernsey Slowpitch Open**

**Saturday-Sunday, June 30-July 1 in St Peter Port, Guernsey.**

This is the second Guernsey Tournament of the summer, aimed this time at C-level Rec and Social teams. To see if there are places left, contact **Paul Vaudin** ([vaudgsa@aol.com](mailto:vaudgsa@aol.com)).

### **Bristol Tournament**

**Saturday-Sunday, July 7-8 in Bristol.**

Places for this tournament were gone long ago, but if you want to try for a late vacancy, contact **Neil Butterfield** ([ydm76@dial.pipex.com](mailto:ydm76@dial.pipex.com)).

### **Emerald Single-Sex Slowpitch Tournament**

**Saturday-Sunday, July 14-15 at Farnham Park near Slough.**

It's not clear at this point whether this tournament will be a Single-Sex event as originally planned or become another Diamond Co-ed event. To find out, contact **Dave King** ([diamondsoftball07@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:diamondsoftball07@hotmail.co.uk)).

### **Windsor Tournament**

**Saturday-Sunday, July 21-22 near Maidenhead.**

There may still be places available for what is always one of the top tournaments of the year. To check, contact **Tammy Moran** ([morantammy@hotmail.com](mailto:morantammy@hotmail.com)).

### **Single-Sex B & C Nationals**

**Saturday-Sunday, July 28-29 at the University of Central England, Birmingham.**

The B & C Single-Sex Nationals get bigger every year and 2007 should be no exception. A new venue in the middle of the country should also add interest. Places are still available. Full details are on the BSF Nationals website ([www.bsf-nationals.com](http://www.bsf-nationals.com)) or contact **Liz Graham**.

### **Dave Allen Memorial Tournament**

**Saturday-Sunday, August 4-5 at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk.**

This tournament has been set up in honour of former BASU umpire Dave Allen, who died last year, and will pit US military base teams against British "civilian" teams. For more information or to apply for a place, contact **Cedric "Mac" McLendon** ([mccedric@msn.com](mailto:mccedric@msn.com)).

### **Diamond Co-ed Series II**

**Saturday-Sunday, August 4-5 at Farnham Park near Slough.**

This is the second of the new Diamond Series tournaments. Places are still available in A, B and C grades. Contact **Dave King** ([diamondsoftball07@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:diamondsoftball07@hotmail.co.uk)).

Unless otherwise noted, e-mail address for tournament contacts are:

<<firstname.lastname>>[@baseballsoftballuk.com](mailto:baseballsoftballuk.com).

# TOURNAMENT RESULTS

## LEAGUE ALL-STAR NATIONALS TO BE EVEN BIGGER AND BETTER NEXT YEAR

The inaugural **League All-Star National Championships**, held at the University of Central England Sports Ground in Birmingham on June 9-10, was generally agreed to be a major success.

“From the folk that were there and what they said,” BSF Tournaments Officer Liz Graham remarked afterwards, “we’ll soon be fighting them off for a spot, just like the World Series.”

Among the comments received were:

“What a brilliant idea!”

“Why wasn’t this thought about long ago?”

“Can’t wait for next year!”

“It’s great to play against your team mates and folk you have never met before.”

Liz feels that future All-Star Nationals will probably divide naturally into A and B competitions, but what happens next year will depend on which leagues enter and with what kinds of teams.

*For a full report on the All-Star Nationals, won by Windsor in a thrilling 6-5 final over the Greater London Mixed League, see the BSF website.*

## GLASGOW TARTAN TOURNAMENT

<b>Dates:</b>	May 26-27
<b>Venue:</b>	Cumbernauld Rugby Club
<b>Entries:</b>	15
<b>Weather:</b>	A few showers, but we got off pretty lightly.

**Kelvingrove Cup Winner:** Clan  
**Kelvingrove Cup Runner-up:** Rally Caps  
  
**Hunterian Cup Winner:** Lions  
**Hunterian Cup Runner-up:** Fish  
  
**Burrell Cup Winner:** Fockers  
**Burrell Cup Runner-up:** Didsbury Bats  
  
**MVPs:** Deano (Clan)  
Elaine (Rally Caps)

Once again we braved some rain and chilly winds but still managed to get sunburned over the weekend of the Tartan Tournament. This year saw the return of many Tartan Tournament stalwarts, but we were also pleased to welcome new teams to the tournament, including some who had travelled quite far to join us.

The 15-team tournament was played in seeded groups of five, with a full round-robin for each team. This led to one big table with the top five teams playing for the Kelvingrove Cup on the Sunday, the middle five playing for the Hunterian Cup and the bottom five teams playing for the Burrell Cup. Another round-robin was played on the Sunday with the top two teams from each group going through to the final.

This format saw **Chaos** at the top of the table on the end of Day 1, having gone unbeaten with only 10 runs conceded in their four games. **Souls** had also gone undefeated in their group with 17 runs conceded. **Saltires, Rally Caps, Clan** and **Lions** all won three of their games, but it was Lions who missed out on a place in the top group on the basis of runs conceded.

**Fish, Yorkshire Terriers, Pimpin' Legends** and **DC Legends** made up the middle group with the **Lions** while **Demons, Fockers, Didsbury Bats, AJs** and **D'ohNuts** completed the table.

Sunday saw a change in fortune for some teams. **Didsbury Bats** went on to win all their Burrell group games, ensuring them a place in the final alongside the **Fockers**, who had only lost to the Bats. The AJs unfortunately lost all their games on Sunday as well as on Saturday, earning themselves the Wooden Spoon prize (a lovely tartan mug in this instance).

**Lions** carried on their strong performance and won all of their Hunterian group games, earning them a spot in the final with fellow Manchester team **Fish**, who again had lost only once to the table leaders. And Sunday saw **Clan** and **Rally caps** win three games each, Caps beating Clan for the second time in two days. The final would see them play each other for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time.

In the three finals, Fockers fought a strong fight against Didsbury Bats in the **Burrell Cup** and took the victory 15-8.

Lions continued their winning streak, taking the **Hunterian Cup** with a 21-6 win over Fish.

And the **Kelvingrove Cup** final, featuring Clan and Rally Caps, kept the spectators biting their nails to the very end, with Clan fighting back against the team who had been ahead of them all weekend to take the silverware by a score of 10-9.

A great weekend, not too wet, and lots of great Softball. The organisers and host league CSSL would like to thank everyone for attending and making Tartan Tournament 2007 a great success!

**Laura Cameron**

## **GB SLOWPITCH OPEN TOURNAMENT**

The GB Slowpitch Open was held at Riverside Lands in Chiswick on the weekend of May 19-20 and this year a more ambitious format was planned by expanding the event to a two-day tournament with Co-ed competition on the Saturday and Single-Sex competition on the Sunday.

Twenty Co-ed teams (14 B teams and 6 C teams) entered on the Saturday and 11 Single-Sex (6 men's teams and 5 women's teams) entered on the Sunday.

The original plan was to have a GB Slowpitch Squad player assigned to each team as a "slave", but sadly there weren't enough GB players available on the day to do this plus all the umpiring, so in the end GB players helped out where possible.

All the teams were given plenty of games and a Long Ball Competition (for both men and women) plus a "Throw a Ball at the Beer Crate" competition were held, which all helped to raise over £2000 for the GB Squad. Tournament results were as follows:

### **B Trophy Final**

Thames Valley 10, Avengers 3

### **B Plate Final**

SPAM 13, Coyotes 10

### **C Trophy Final**

Clapham Thunder 20, Raiders Gold 3

### **C Plate Final**

Common People 13, Finsbury Dazzlers 5

### **Men's Final**

Puppies 24, Cockney Rebels 18

### **Women's Final**

Charmed Ones 11, No Balls 10.

### **Long Ball Winners**

Ritchie Browne (Hooligans)

Debbie Spackman (Swingers)

A huge thanks to all the teams who took part and also to Ronnie van Loo and Tina Franchi who so generously helped out with umpiring and Tournament Control.

## TOURNAMENTS NOT REPORTING

No reports have been received from the following recent tournaments, despite requests:

**GrandSlam I**

**Pioneers Tournament**

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## SUCCESS FOR INAUGURAL MEN'S FASTPITCH WORLD CUP

Last week (June 18-24), the Czech Republic was proud to host the first edition of a top world event – the **ISF Men's Fastpitch World Cup**.

The World Cup was an open format tournament featuring the highest level of Men's Fastpitch ever seen in Europe. Five national teams – the USA, Japan, Venezuela, the Czech Republic and Denmark – plus club teams from Holland, Spain and the Czech Republic featuring top players from around the world contributed to a great week.

Czech National Television broadcast five games live, three from the round robin and then the Final and Grand Final.

In addition to the competition on the field at the excellent Krc Altron complex in Prague, a series of seminars for players and coaches, led by trainers and players from the US and Japanese teams, were held throughout the week.

The tournament was won by Japan, who defeated the United States in the Grand Final 2-0.

## **JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS RUNNING IN HOLLAND THIS WEEK**

The ISF's 8th Junior Women's Fastpitch World Championships for Under-19 players began on June 20 in Enschede, Holland and will end June 30.

The 16 teams taking part in the competition, the first World Championship to be held on European soil, are Argentina, Australia, Botswana, Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Russia, South Africa, the USA and Venezuela.

The event website will offer live coverage as well as full results and standings. Go to: [www.wksoftbaljunioren2007.nl/](http://www.wksoftbaljunioren2007.nl/).

## **REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER AGREEMENT SIGNED**

The Dominican Republic has become the official location of an ISF Regional Training Centre for Softball after International Softball Federation President Don Porter attended a signing ceremony in Santo Domingo recently.

The ISF next hopes to formalise the venue from the 2004 Olympic Softball competition in Athens as a Regional Training Centre for Europe. The ISF's world headquarters facility in Plant City, Florida, serves as a North American Training Centre and boasts a 6,700-seat stadium and four adjacent diamonds, along with a 1,500-square foot conference facility.

## **ISF LOOKS TO INCREASE SOFTBALL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS**

"Softball's growth to a large extent is being help by the increased development of the sport in the school systems in many countries", Dale McMann, chair of the ISF Development Commission, said recently.

The ISF has been targeting school systems by providing Starter Kits as well as making coaching instructors available for clinics and seminars. During the past three years, over \$2.1 million worth of Softball equipment has been distributed to 65 countries, many to school systems.

"When young girls and boys play Softball at an early agr, it tends to get their interest up and they are more inclined to continue to play as they grow older," said McMann.

Since the ISF's equipment program began in 2002, shipments have been sent to approximately 70 countries, with the total value of goods shipped estimated at \$2 million. So far, in the first five months of 2007, according to ISF Development Coordinator Lori Nolan, a

total of 14 countries have received Softball equipment valued at over \$150,000, with much of the equipment designated for school systems to help introduce the sport.

## ISF'S "SOFTBALL2016" CAMPAIGN TO START NEXT MONTH

The ISF's Strategic Task Force, put together with the goal of restoring the sport to the Olympic programme, is finalising details to kick off its "Softball2016" campaign next month.

The Task Force has been working through recommendations from two earlier meetings and details of the campaign will be announced on July 5.

## MEETING SET TO BOOST THE NUMBER OF FEMALE UMPIRES

A meeting to discuss the development of female umpires will be held in September at the ISF's world headquarters in Plant City, Florida.

The meeting will explore ways and means of recruiting and training female umpires in different countries around the world. Exact dates will be announced shortly.

## ISF CREATES SOFTBALL COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

A brief guide for communications professionals, journalists, and broadcasters has been developed by the International Softball Federation (ISF), the world governing body for the sport.

***Properly Portraying Softball*** covers do's and don'ts for the written and spoken word as well as images, and will be made available in hard copy and electronic formats.

"Just as with our development efforts, we're always trying to educate people about our sport," said ISF President Don Porter. "There are a lot of common mistakes that we felt we could help prevent – like making sure people say "pitching circle" instead of "pitcher's mound" – so this guide will be one of the steps toward accomplishing that."

The ISF plans to make ***Properly Portraying Softball*** available to its member federations and hopes to make it a regular handout at international Softball tournaments as well.

“This Guide is not the final version,” the ISF President added. “We constantly analyse our sport from a multitude of viewpoints, and as we see other common areas that we need to properly direct people on, the guide will undergo updates.”

## **ISF MEMBERSHIP TO GROW TO 129 COUNTRIES**

International Softball Federation (ISF) President Don Porter has announced that Sierra Leone has been granted provisional membership under the world governing body’s umbrella.

Under the leadership of President Joseph Kaneka Kanu and Secretary General Edward Kai Kelly, the Sierra Leone Softball Association will become the ISF’s 129<sup>th</sup> member on confirmation at the ISF Congress in Manila in October. This will increase the number of African ISF members to 21.

# BRITISH BASEBALL SECTION

*Most Softball Bulletins now include a section with information on British Baseball that may be of interest to people in the Softball community. A parallel exercise is carried out with the inclusion of Softball material in the monthly Baseball Bulletins. The aim is to encourage knowledge and cross-fertilisation between the two sports.*

## GB AND FORMER RICHMOND PLAYER SIGNED BY SAN DIEGO PADRES

On Monday, June 18, just one day after participating in a GB Baseball evaluation event in New York, catcher Aeden McQueary-Ennis signed a free agent contract with MLB's San Diego Padres.

Aeden is a current member of the GB Men's National Team and he led GB in RBIs at the 2005 European Championships in the Czech Republic. In 2004, Aeden also starred for the Richmond Flames of the British National League.

Aeden was signed by the Padres largely on the strength of two strong seasons at Georgia State University (NCAA Division I). In each of his seasons at GSU, Aeden hit over .300 and threw out more than 35% of would-be basestealers. While the Padres have signed Aeden as a catcher, he is also a skilled pitcher with a 90+ mph fastball.

Aeden has been assigned to the Class A Eugene Emeralds of the Northwest League, where he will play for ex-major league manager Greg Riddoch.

## MARGARET BORLEY, TONBRIDGE COACH, RECEIVES MBE IN BIRTHDAY HONOURS

**Margaret Borley, a baseball coach who is still training the players of the future at the age of 77, has been made an MBE.**

A retired language teacher and grandmother-of-three, Margaret Borley has been involved with hockey for 50 years and baseball for 25 years. She has coached up to several hundred children at Tonbridge Bobcats Baseball Club in Kent, occasionally training two generations of the same family.

"I enjoy seeing the development of young people," Mrs Borley said. "I've met some charming young people over the years. It's very pleasing to see. Some had learning difficulties or behavioural difficulties, and it's pleasing to see them go on. What is most

rewarding is the number of children I have coached who have gone on to play for Great Britain.”

Mrs Borley said she was now planning to take a "less prominent role" in the club, but she would miss it if she "dropped out entirely".

Adding that she wants to spend more time with her grandchildren as well as pursuing her hobbies of history, stained glass, church windows and natural history, she said: "I've got so much on my plate at the moment."

Her award in this year's Birthday Honours came about after some adult players who she coached as youngsters teamed up to put her name forward.

The honour came just weeks after Mrs Borley was awarded a lifetime achievement award for coaching by Tonbridge and Malling Council, presented to her last month by former Tottenham Hotspur and England football player Gary Stevens.

Margaret had praise for BSUK's **Play Ball** Programme: "As a tournament it is great fun and shows that one can play at all levels and have fun at whatever level. I hope that the publicity this award has garnered will bring baseball to a wider audience and also show that a woman can contribute in a predominately male sport."

## UK'S BIGGEST ANNUAL BASEBALL TOURNAMENT COMING UP IN JULY

Teams can still sign up to take part in the UK's biggest annual baseball tournament.

On Saturday and Sunday, July 14-15, a quiet park on the outskirts of Croydon will be transformed into baseball's answer to Glastonbury. The event, of course, is the **London Tournament**.

Come and watch as teams from Britain and Europe try to dethrone the hosts and reigning champions Croydon Pirates. There is no admission fee for spectators and good food and drink will be available throughout both days.

Better still, why not take part – it's not too late to enter.

Interested teams should email [piratesclub@hotmail.com](mailto:piratesclub@hotmail.com) with their details. Camping is available at the ground and should be booked in advance.

### **Home-Run Derby**

In case two full days of competitive baseball is not enough, this year the tournament organisers are planning to add a home-run derby to the programme on Saturday evening. So come along and find out if you are a Silver Slugger.

Tournament details and directions to Roundshaw Playing Fields are available from the

Pirates' website on [www.croydonpirates.co.uk](http://www.croydonpirates.co.uk).