



*Two Sports One Ambition*

# Strategic Plan

## 2020-24

Baseball •   
Softball **UK**

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# INTRODUCTION



**Chris Greenhalgh**  
Interim Chair

“Two Sports, One Ambition” builds from the success of our previous strategy “Played in Every Park” and sets a new ambitious mission to get more people playing baseball and softball in more places. The new strategy applies across the whole organisation. Moreover, through sport-specific development plans that will become key pillars of the strategy, it will resonate across British baseball and softball.

Spanning baseball and softball, we will leverage opportunities afforded by presenting our two sports together, as one community, acting as a voice and contact point for partners, government and the sports sector, nationally and internationally.

## ABOUT

BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) is the national development agency for the British Baseball and Softball Federations. BSUK was formed in 2000 to move baseball and softball forward in the UK by achieving operational efficiencies, approaching businesses for investment and maximising investment from government.

Our job – helping to get the nation active through baseball and softball – has been defined by our vision of a future where baseball and softball are ‘Played in Every Park’. To achieve this, we have centred our work programme on increasing regular participation in the sports. We believe that the most important measure of the health of the sports in the UK is the number of people who play them regularly. This key measure determines where we focus resources, time and effort.

This plan sets out our continued commitment to develop both baseball and softball together. By embracing the commonality, inclusivity and range of opportunities within baseball, slowpitch and fastpitch softball, we will appeal to the widest possible playing audience. It is from this approach that our sports can most rapidly grow.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, now is an opportune time to redouble our development efforts. It is a reminder of how important it is to have a professional agency coordinating efforts.

We have consulted widely to create this strategy and reviewed existing insight into the needs and demands of our sports. This has identified opportunities to stretch ourselves in our efforts to grow and development the sports in this country.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and executive team, we are proud to present our Strategic Plan for BaseballSoftballUK.

BaseballSoftballUK provides an interface between our sports and Sport England, UK Sport, Sports Aid, the Youth Sport Trust and the wider sporting ecosystem. We are a member of the British Olympic Committee and sit on the National Olympic Committee.

BSUK employs a staff of thirteen full-time people, who organise, communicate, promote and develop the sports. The organisation provides several development programmes including Hit the Pitch, The Academy (and HPA), Coach Education Programme and Coach Summit. Behind the scenes, our administration continues to offer professional support to the British Baseball and Softball Federations, particularly providing appropriate safeguards for young and vulnerable people.

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# INFORMING THE STRATEGY

This Strategy was substantially informed by an independent Strategic Review commissioned by BaseballSoftballUK in 2019. The review was conducted by Bayridge Sports Consultancy and involved an extensive three-stage process of design, consultation and recommendations. It involved direct input from the leadership of the sports, the sports' partners, stakeholders, staff and participants. Consultation included input from stakeholders, including the British Softball Federation, the British Baseball Federation, Major League Baseball, Sport England, Little League and UK Sport. It stated:

*“The consultation process has highlighted three clear themes, endorsed by the overwhelming majority of stakeholders. These were:*

- 1. The potential growth opportunities for baseball and softball are not currently being maximised.*
- 2. While they are two different sports, baseball and softball are stronger together than they are apart.*
- 3. BSUK has an important and enduring role to play in supporting the growth of both sports.*

*To accelerate growth and contribute positively to the development of the sports, BSUK will need to change, both in terms of its approach and the focus of its operations.*

*An updated approach needs to place more emphasis on effective communication and collaboration. BSUK needs to be much clearer on its priorities and targets and ensure its activities and plans are more deeply integrated into the wider baseball, softball and sport community – stretching from MLB all the way to grassroots.*

*Operationally, more emphasis needs to be placed on youth development, particularly in schools, and marketing and facility development both need clearer, more targeted approaches.*

*These changes are ‘critical’ rather than ‘radical’. They are built on the original spirit of collaboration in which BSUK was founded and can be achieved through sensible evolution and a sharpening of focus.*

*There will need to be increased focus and accountability in the areas of:*

- 1. Youth development – strategy, targets, programme development, stakeholder engagement and programme roll-out.*
- 2. Communication and collaboration – including clear accountability for liaison with the baseball and softball communities, alignment of participation programmes and calendar coordination.*
- 3. Funding and facility development – planning, lobbying, alignment and reporting”.*

Following the Strategic Review, the Board considered known factors, such as the approach and requirements of Sport England, UK Sport and Major League Baseball, as well as the context of the sports nationally and internationally.

The Board recognises the need for baseball and softball to be unified and coordinated, served by a professional and skilled administration. Taking a leading role across baseball and softball together, as one sporting community, and presenting the sports as such to the wider sporting sector, has been a part of BaseballSoftballUK's fabric since it was formed two decades ago.

# TWO SPORTS ONE AMBITION

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# AMBITION

## More people playing baseball and softball in more places

### More Participation

- Young people
- Under-represented groups
- Higher Education
- Workplace

### Grassroots Support

- Safer, stronger, sustainable
- Local profile and connectivity
- Improved facilities

### Talent

- Home-grown
  - From all communities
- Clear pathways
- High-quality experience

### Sustainability

- New revenue streams
- Augmenting Sport England funding with new revenues



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 1

### Targeted Participation Growth

**We will encourage and enable growth, working with a range of partners and organisations to reach new audiences.**

- a) Coordinating a children and young people participation plan that establishes local youth leagues particularly for baseball and girls fastpitch, underpinned by strong school-club links.
- b) Further developing adult baseball and softball in the Higher Education and the workplace.
- c) Facilitating and enhancing playing opportunities for LGBTQ+ people, women and girls, lower socio-economic communities, BAME people and those with a disability.

## 2

### Talent Development

**We will build an effective and efficient talent identification and development pathway.**

- a) Supporting home-grown talent from all communities, reducing financial barriers that prevent talent from blossoming.
- b) Developing and communicating clear performance pathways from grassroots to elite.
- c) Delivering regular high-quality coaching opportunities, in appropriate facilities.

## 3

### Efficient Grassroots Support Services

**Spanning baseball and softball, we will support grassroots organisations to be stronger, safer and sustainable.**

- a) Offering services that add value in safeguarding, integrity, administration, technology and marketing, through collaborative working.
- b) Coordinating UK-wide and home country development plans for baseball, and for slowpitch and fastpitch softball, spanning grassroots, talent and workforce development.
- c) Supporting grassroots organisations to become an important part of their local community.
- d) Taking a leading role in enabling the improvement and creation of appropriate local playing facilities.

## 4

### Organisational Sustainability

**Build the organisation and sports to be more financially sustainable, including:**

- a) Increasing and diversifying our partnerships and funding sources.
- b) Realising the potential of our workforce, assets, services and relationships.
- c) Increasing funding from events, fundraising and sponsorship.





# Our enablers



Effective  
**Communication**

**AMBITION**  
More people  
playing  
baseball and  
softball in  
more places



Strong  
**Collaboration**



Consistent **Delivery**

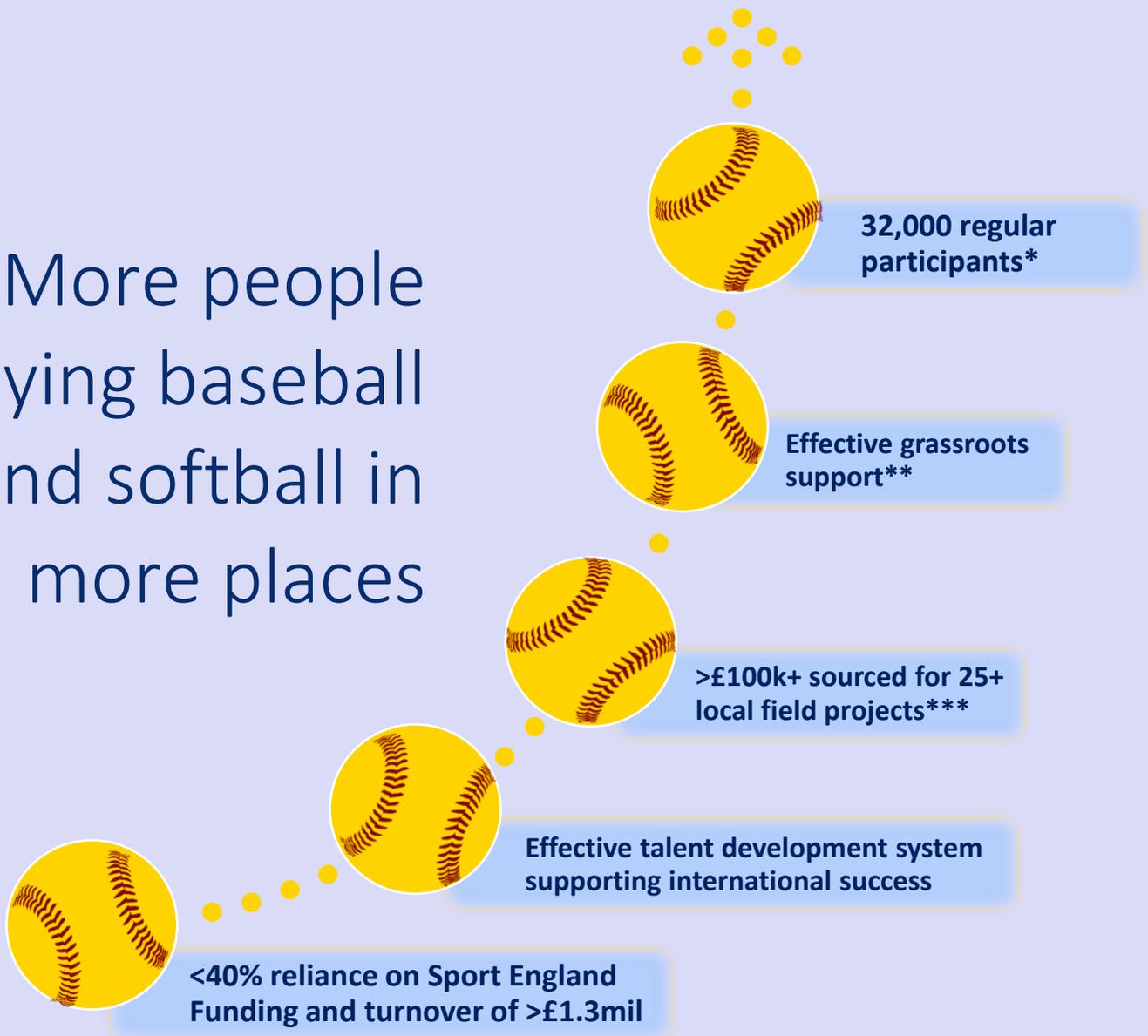


National **Coordination**  
across our sports

Spanning baseball and softball, we will leverage opportunities afforded by presenting our two sports together, as one community, acting as a voice and contact point for partners, government and the sports sector, nationally and internationally.

# SUCCESS MEASURES - 2024

More people  
playing baseball  
and softball in  
more places



\* Stretch target of 35,000 from a baseline of 26,200 in 2019.

\*\* 1. Increased retention of teams within chartered clubs and leagues leading to a 15% increase in membership (2016-19 showed loss of 8%).

2. Retention of 95%+ of chartered clubs and leagues by 2024.

\*\*\*£100k facility investment to include BSUK grants and match funding (usually local).

All above targets will be reviewed at the start of the 2021 season to reflect post Covid-19 participation, turnover and funding levels.

As a rolling strategy, progress and success measures will be annually reviewed and adjusted.





**SPORT  
ENGLAND**



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