



**Board of Directors Meeting
March 10th/26 @ 7:00 PM
Virtual**

MINUTES

Present:

Scott Neiles, President

Directors:

Brooks Penrod

Bob Stanton

Lisa Parkes

Kareena Zanolli

Neil Teague

Vanessa Kosteroski

Larissa Franklin (Athlete Representative)

Staff:

Mike Branchaud, CEO

Brooke Beleza, Coordinator – Events &
Officials

Angela Ballantyne, Mgr. - Sport
Development

Gabrielle Lamadeleine, Coordinator –
Programs

Gilles LeBlanc, Mgr. – Operations

1. Call to order, Land Acknowledgement and President's opening remarks

- President Neiles opened the meeting at 7:03PM (EDT)

2. Acceptance of the November 6th Meeting Minutes

MOTION #1 - Move to accept the minutes of November 6th, 2025 Board Meeting

***Moved by Teague, seconded by
Kosteroski, CARRIED***

3. Approval of the Agenda with power to add

***MOTION #2 – Move that the agenda with the additions be approved, with the
powers to add.***

***Moved by Zanolli, seconded by
Parkes, CARRIED***

4. Canadian Championships

4.1 Supervisor's assignments

Almost all Canadian Championship supervisors have been assigned, with only a few remaining pending confirmations. We will keep everyone updated once the process is finalized.

Additionally, an opportunity has arisen to supervise at the Special Olympics in Alberta on August 10. This event is not included in the current supervisors' assignments. However, it may be a potential opportunity should any supervisor be interested.

4.2 Streaming discussion from AGM

Softball Canada was approached at the AGM following the P/T Presidents' meeting, where increasing fees for Canadian Championships was discussed. The goal of this increase would be to improve streaming and provide coverage on all diamonds. The idea was later shared during the most recent P/T call. While some P/T organizations were very supportive, others noted they had not previously been aware of the proposal.

Proposed Actions:

- There is an opportunity to pilot this initiative during the Men's and U23 Men's Canadian Championships this year, as these categories have generated the most demand for improved streaming. Saskatchewan has also a partnership with Softball Premier TV that aligns with the event timeframe.
- The proposed model would introduce an additional fee of \$220-\$225 per team, on top of the existing \$850 entry fee that goes directly to the host. Estimated expenses for enhanced streaming at the Men's and U23 Men's events include a contract with Luciano totaling \$5,400, in addition to flights, accommodations, and per diems for camera crew/announcers, bringing the total projected cost to approximately \$15K. Based on participation estimates (e.g., 12 Men's teams and 8 U23 teams), the additional team fees would generate approximately \$4500.00, helping to offset a portion of these costs.
- The pilot would apply only to the Men's and U23 Men's Championships for this year.

MOTION #3 – Move forward as using the Men's and U23 Men's as pilot for streaming.

***Moved by Teague, seconded by
Kosteroski, CARRIED***

4.3 Canada Games age process

A workshop was held at the AGM where all P/Ts expressed support for maintaining the current age categories for the Canada Games.

The only proposed change is the addition of two overage athletes for BC on the Men's side. This adjustment is intended to support program development, considering factors such as recent results, population, and registration numbers, and to help strengthen their men's program.

MOTION #4 – Move to approve the addition of two overage player for the U20 Men for BC at Canada Games

***Moved by Stanton, seconded by
Teague, CARRIED***

MOTION #5 – Move to approve the Canadian Championships report

***Moved by Stanton, seconded by
Parkes, CARRIED***

5. Officials

5.1 Approvals

All UIC/DUIC assignments have been finalized, distributed, and previously approved by the Board. International assignments have also been shared with the Board.

Softball Canada umpire is no longer invited to attend the Slo-Pitch Co-Ed European Cup, as it is now a smaller-scale event. However, a new fastpitch opportunity has been offered at the Men's Fastpitch Super Cup in Europe. Further details, including the exact date and location, are pending. The ODC is looking to send Diego Lamana.

MOTION #6 – Move to approve Diego Lamana to go to Men's Fastpitch Super Cup

***Moved by Stanton, seconded by
Teague, CARRIED***

5.2 WBSC Slo-Pitch seminar

The ODC would like to endorse and support the operation of a SP WBSC Seminar in Summer 2026. The event will be run in conjunction with a Super Series weekend (June 13-14) in Dorchester, Ontario. Canada has not hosted a SP WBSC Seminar since 2018. USA Softball has indicated that they will be hosting a FP WBSC Seminar in December 2026 as Canada hosted last.

WBSC seminars are typically only open to those within the region, and they must be the highest level within their program. However, as there are few WBSC Slo-Pitch seminars hosted, this one will be open to all international officials who are at their highest level.

We will provide more information regarding the instructors once they are confirmed.

MOTION #7 – Move to approve the WBSC Slo-Pitch Seminar to be attended by Frankie and an ODC Member

***Moved by Penrod, seconded by
Kosteroski, CARRIED***

5.3 QC ongoing translation challenges

MOTION #8 – To move in camera

***Moved by Penrod, seconded by
Zanolli, CARRIED***

MOTION #9 – To move out of camera

***Moved by Zanolli, seconded by
Teague, CARRIED***

5.4 Rulebook

- The online rulebook has been completed and is available on the website for purchase.
- There has been a price increase, with the online version now set at \$11.
- The cost for P/Ts is \$10 plus tax.
- Printed rulebooks are in the process of being produced and shipped to all P/Ts.
- All French content was reviewed this year by Gilles to ensure accuracy and quality.

MOTION #10 – Move to approve Officials Report

***Moved by Franklin, seconded by
Parkes, CARRIED***

6. 2025 AGM Survey

6.1 UIC meetings @AGM discussion

One survey question asked whether an annual UIC meeting is necessary, a topic also discussed during the February P/T call. Key findings include:

- Based on survey results, there is general support for continuing an annual UIC meeting. However, some respondents suggested:
 - Shorter meetings
 - Alternating in-person and virtual formats
 - Holding in-person meetings during rule-change years only
- Umpires were also able to complete the survey; therefore, responses in favour of continuing the meeting may include feedback from umpires.
- Multiple P/T's indicated agreement with holding the UIC meeting in person during rule-change years, followed by a virtual meeting the following year.
- Softball Canada will reach out individually to all P/Ts to gather additional comments and feedback.

After following up with the P/T's, the following are in favour of having the UIC meeting in person during rule-change years, followed by a virtual meeting the following year:

- Alberta
- Manitoba
- Saskatchewan
- PEI
- BC
- Yukon
- NWT
- NL

The following are in favour of continuing to have yearly in person UIC meetings:

- Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick

The following are neutral in regard to yearly in person UIC meetings:

- Ontario
- Quebec

Considerations

- Changing the format will help reduce costs for P/Ts.
- P/Ts can still bring their PUICs as voting members; however, there would no longer be a dedicated PUIC meeting.

- If PUICs do not attend the AGM:
 - Consider scheduling a separate face-to-face PUIC/ODC meeting during the year.

Decision Timeline

Once a decision is made on whether to proceed with the change, implementation was discussed for either 2026 or 2028. If implemented in 2026, a decision must be made soon, as it will impact Softball New Brunswick's AGM planning.

Next Steps

- Schedule a meeting with the ODC (Mike, Bob, Scott, and Brooke) to further discuss the matter.
- Continue discussions with provinces to finalize direction.

6.2 2026 AGM update

The 2026 AGM will be held in Fredericton from November 12-14, at the Fredericton Inn.

7. Officials/Events Risk Management

- Rising cost of flights/hotels for supervisors and umpire travel.
- Streaming has been a constant issue and we often receive complaints. Hosts are now required to stream all diamonds which could cause challenges for all.
- Continual Challenge: Translation and getting materials out at the same time remains an issue.
- The WBSC Umpire Exam has moved to a new platform this year, resulting in delays in creating user profiles and confusion among umpires regarding when and how to access the exam.

MOTION #11 – Move to approve Officials/Events Risk Management Report

***Moved by Parkes, seconded by
Penrod, CARRIED***

8. Men's National Teams

8.1 MNT Pan Am results

- The team accomplished its goal of qualifying for both the 2028 World Cup and 2027 Pan Am Games (if added to the programme) with a fourth-place finish.

8.2 MNT Coaching call

- A call for head coach applications will be sent this spring, with interviews to be completed by the Men's National Team hiring committee.
- Once the head coach is selected, they will sit on the hiring committee to interview assistant coaches to complete their staff.

8.3 U23 World Cup

- Preparations are well underway for the U23 World Cup in Sincelejo next month.
- The final roster was named January 27th.
- The team will get together to train at the Jackie Robinson Training Complex in Vero Beach, Florida April 19-22 before travelling to Sincelejo.
- The coaching staff has been holding monthly calls, with athletes currently training and giving regular reports to the staff.

8.4 U18 Coaches Approval

- We are seeking approval to bring back the coaching staff from the 2025 Pan American Championship, who did an outstanding job with the team under difficult circumstances.
- Once approved, the coaching staff will work with Softball Canada to establish a plan for the 2027 World Cup cycle, which is expected to include scouting, identification camps and establishing an athlete pool in 2026.

Request for Approval to name Bryan Brooks (Head Coach – ON), Jean-Yves Doucet (Assistant Coach – QC) and Don Scott (Assistant Coach – ON) to the U18 Men's National Team Coaching Staff

Motion #12 – Move to Approve Bryan Brooks, Jean-Yves Doucet, and Don Scott as the coaching staff for the U18 Men's National Team

Moved by Penrod, seconded by

Kosteroski, CARRIED

8.5. Risk Management

- The Men's National Team program is nearing the end of an extremely busy fiscal year with a total of 6 events among the 3 teams (three for MNT, two for U23, one for U18). The financial and time commitment burden on Softball Canada and the athletes/coaches was extremely high but was effectively managed.
- Unexpected health issues and departures among the coaching staff came in to play this past year. It proved to be important that we had a coaches pool and a shortlist of other potential candidates to fall back on as a contingency plan.
- The MNT program is currently going through a rebuilding phase, and other countries continue to improve (especially in pitching). Athlete development will

need to be a big priority for the coaching staff going forward if we want to improve/maintain our World Ranking.

- Rising travel costs and last-minute planning by WBSC Americas (in particular) continue to be the biggest risks associated with the MNT program.

Motion #13 – Move to Approve the Men’s National Team Report

***Moved by Teague, seconded by
Zanolli, CARRIED***

9. Slo-Pitch

9.1 Border Battle – MGR / Coach Approvals

Coaching Staff – seeking Board Approval

Role	Name
Men’s Team Head Coach	Stephane Chapdelaine (QC)
Men’s Team Assistant Coach	Mike Neufeld (BC)
Women’s Team Head Coach	Amanda Howard (AB)
Women’s Team Assistant Coach	Pat Severin (ON)
Team Manager	Tony Carnelos (ON)

Motion #14 – Move to Approve the Border Battle Coaching Staff and Manager

***Moved by Teague, seconded by
Penrod, CARRIED***

9.2 Date and location of the Border Battle

- The 2026 Border Battle is expected to take place in Winesburg, Ohio, from June 18-20. Both the women’s and men’s teams will be participating in the event.

9.3 Working Group

- Following the completion of the inaugural working group, Softball Canada issued a call for applications. There are eight open positions on the committee, including two Co-Chair roles. The application period closed on February 1, and the quality of applicants was of high caliber, with a total of 23 applications received.

Selected Working Group Members:

Co-chairs

- Tony Canelos - ON
- Heather Annear - PEI

Members

- Craig Carter - BC
- Eliza Lewis - AB
- Kearney O'Keefe - NL
- Renn Visser - BC
- Shelby Craig - ON
- Stuart Bowden - ON

Motion #15 – *Move to Approve Slo-Pitch Report*

***Moved by Franklin, seconded by
Stanton, CARRIED***

10. DEI

10.1 Alberta ruling

Concerns were expressed by some PTs regarding how current legislation in Alberta related to transgender athlete participation in sport may impact the upcoming Canadian Championships being hosted in the province.

It was clarified that this legislation applies only to athletes registered within Alberta and does not extend to athletes residing outside the province.

Concerns remain about how the situation may still impact the Canadian Championships. Specifically, there is a risk of potential confrontations or questions regarding an athlete's right to participate.

Recommended Actions

- Ensure that all supervisors at the Canadian Championships are provided with accurate and consistent information regarding Softball Canada's policies and stance on the matter.
- Develop a clear statement for supervisors to use if questions arise. Supervisors should respond to coaches only, not parents, and must keep Softball Canada staff informed of any incidents.
- Share relevant information with coaches in advance, including Softball Canada's position and policy. This information should also be included in the team guide to ensure consistency and transparency.

10.2 Extra Funding Initiatives

- **Softball Québec Cree Nation Coach Development**

Funding will be provided to Softball Québec to organize a coaching clinic in Val-d'Or, QC, specifically designed for Cree Nation coaches.

- **Indigenous Logo Helmet Stickers**

Funding will support the production of Softball Canada Indigenous logo helmet stickers, which will be distributed to all players participating in the Canadian Championships.

- **Softball Canada Indigenous and Pride Pins**

Funding will support the production of Softball Canada Indigenous and Pride logo pins, which will be distributed by National Teams at international events and at multiple Canadian Championships across the country.

- **Indigenous Representation in Umpiring**

Funding will be provided to Softball Canada's Officiating Development Committee (ODC) to support:

- a. Hosting an umpire clinic in conjunction with the Native Nationals

- **Distribution to Provincial/Territorial Associations for DEI Projects**

Provincial and territorial associations will have the opportunity to apply for funding to support ongoing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives or projects that can be implemented quickly.

10.3 Athletes Canada survey results

The AthletesCAN EDI Survey Results have been shared with the Board. Please feel free to review them to gain insight into what is currently happening across the sport sector.

11. Programs Risk Management

- **Compressed Timelines: DEI** - Requirement to allocate funds by March 31 increases the risk of rushed decision-making.
- **Participation Risk:** Limited awareness and a short application window may reduce the number of applicants for the Indigenous Umpire Bursary and P/Ts DEI Project funding.
- **Sport Canada reductions** will continue to affect Programs.

Motion #16 – Move to Approve DEI Report

***Moved by Penrod, seconded by
Franklin, CARRIED***

12. Women's National Team

12.1 U18 WNT and WNT planning

It will be a busy summer for the Women's National Team.

- Stage 1 Qualifier (Prague, Czechia) - June 16-20
- Japan Exhibition Series (Takasaki, Japan): June 23- July 3
- Canada Cup (Surrey, BC): July 6-12
 - Including Elite Team
- USA Invitational (Oklahoma City, OK): July 28- August 3

Regarding the U18 Women's National Team, we were informed that there will be no U18 Pan Am Qualifier in Mexico. However, this does not necessarily mean the event will not take place; the location and timing are currently unknown. This uncertainty has created challenges in planning, particularly with delays in confirming timelines for ID camps, making the overall process more difficult for this group.

12.2 LA 2028 Qualifying Process

Qualification Pathway (6 Teams Total)

Host Nation

- 1 spot automatically allocated to the host country (United States).

WBSC Women's Softball World Cup Finals (2027) Australia

- 1 spot awarded to the highest-placed team not already qualified at the World Cup Finals.

Continental Qualifiers (2027) Locations TBD

Three regional tournaments will each award 1 Olympic berth:

- Asia/Oceania Qualifier – 1 team qualifies
- Europe/Africa Qualifier – 1 team qualifies
- Americas Qualifier – 1 team qualifies

Each of these events typically includes six teams from the respective regions.

Final Qualification Event (Early 2028) Location TBD

- The runner-up and third-place teams from each continental qualifier advance.
- These teams compete in a final tournament, and the winner earns the last Olympic spot.

Motion #17 – Move to Approve Women's National Team Report

Moved by Penrod, seconded by

Teague, CARRIED

13. Coaching

13.1 Recognition awards

It was discussed to refresh the Coach of the Year award by creating three categories: Recreational, Competitive, and Coach Developer of the Year. The intention is to better recognize meaningful, long-term contributions rather than focusing solely on seasonal success.

Motion #18 – Move to Approve Coaching Report

Moved by Penrod, seconded by

Teague, CARRIED

14. Registration / Membership Fees

Softball Canada held a follow-up consultation call with Provincial/Territorial representatives as a continuation of AGM discussions regarding national participant registration and fee modernization. The call focused first on exploring comfort levels with a potential national registration system, with agreement to separate the registration conversation from the discussion of the national fee structure.

Provinces expressed mixed positions. Several indicated openness to exploring a national registration model, while others requested greater clarity regarding system design, data-sharing parameters, privacy protections, implementation timelines, and membership year alignment. No province expressed an outright refusal to continue discussions.

Concern expressed:

- Adult slo-pitch and fast-pitch players may be reluctant to pay a participant fee, as they do not perceive clear benefits from being members of Softball Canada.
- Registration fee's structure is outlined in the Softball Canada SOR and need to be voted on. Unless we change them and vote on the changes, Softball Canada doesn't have the final say.

Proposed Actions / Next Steps:

- Create a small group to contribute ideas and guide how to move forward.
- Examine what other National Sport Organizations have done when moving to a

national database.

- Start by piloting with provinces already on board.
- Separate the concerns (membership/fees vs. registration system) for clearer focus and resolution.

Motion #19 – *Move to Approve the Update on Registration and Membership Fees*

Moved by Parkes, seconded by

Teague, CARRIED

15. Sport Development Risk Management

Coaching

- The reduction in Sport Funding presents a resource risk, potentially limiting the ability to develop new materials, deliver training, or support coach education initiatives at the same level as previous years.
- With multiple initiatives underway (assessment tools, pathway updates, awards restructuring, MED updates), there is a risk of staff and volunteer capacity being stretched, which could delay implementation.

Safe Sport

- Matters managed through the Independent Third Party (ITP) process may require significant financial resources and administrative time.

National Teams

- Increasing travel costs continue to elevate the overall expense of participating in national and international competitions.
- Own the Podium (OTP) funding decisions are influenced by projected medal potential, creating financial uncertainty depending on performance assessments and anticipated funding levels.

16. Marketing Group update

- A list of 30-40 companies has been proposed and will be reviewed with them.
- The marketing group is eager to work with us, positive about the partnership, and have been provided with the necessary information. We are primarily looking for cash contributions and contractual agreements.
- An initial investment of \$40,000 has been made, with expectations to secure additional funding. More information will be available as we begin to see results.

17. Staffing

- The summer intern has been selected. His name is Eric, and he will begin on May 7.
- For the Communications Manager position, 25-30 applications were received and they were narrowed down to 8 candidates. The selected candidates will complete a task and participate in interviews during the week of March 23rd, with the goal of having the position filled by late April or early May on a full-time basis.
- Gabby will be starting full-time as Program Coordinator on May 1.

Motion #20 – Move to Accept Staffing Updates

***Moved by Teague, seconded by
Franklin, CARRIED***

18. Board Update - Andison

An announcement was made at the last Board meeting that Rob Andison is stepping down from his position.

Two options were discussed:

- Appointing a replacement
- Leave the position vacant until the AGM

The Board is in favour of waiting until the AGM to elect a Board Member and leaving the position vacant for now.

Motion #21 – Move to Accept Leaving the Board Position Vacant Until the AGM

***Moved by Zanolli, seconded by
Kosteroski, CARRIED***

19. Budget

Softball Canada is projecting a loss in the range of \$250,000-\$300,000 for the 2025 fiscal year.

Moving forward, there will be a reduction in national team programming in 2026-2027, which represents a significant expense. This is expected to help recoup some costs and move the organization closer to a break-even position.

Motion #22 – Move to Accept the Budget

***Moved by Teague, seconded by
Parkes, CARRIED***

20. Other Business

21. Next meeting – July @ Canada Cup

The next Board meeting is expected to take place in July during the Canada Cup.

22. Adjournment

MOTION #23 – Motion to adjourn

***Moved by Kosteroski, seconded by
Parkes, CARRIED***