Board of Directors Meeting
Surrey, BC July 8, 2026

MINUTES

Present:
Scott Neiles, President

Directors:

Brooks Penrod	Bob Stanton
Kareena Zanolli	Vanessa Kosteroski
Lisa Parkes	

Staff:
Mike Branchaud, CEO
Angela Ballantyne, Mgr. - Sport Development
Gilles LeBlanc, Mgr. – Operations
Brooke Beleza, Coordinator – Events & Officials
Gabrielle Lamadeleine, Coordinator – Programs

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

- President Neiles opened the meeting at 1:00 PM (EDT)

2. Acceptance of the March 10th Meeting Minutes

MOTION #1 - Move to accept the minutes of* March 10th *2026 Board Meeting

Moved by Stanton, seconded by Penrod,
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 Kosteroski, CARRIED

4. Canadian Championships

4.1 Rising Hotel/Flight Costs

The cost of flights and hotel accommodations continues to increase each year. This should be a key consideration when awarding Canadian Championship events to host organizations. Maintaining regular communication with hosts and securing hotel room blocks and rates well in advance will help minimize the risk of last-minute changes and higher travel and accommodation costs.

4.2 Increase in Participation Fee

Softball Canada's current team fees for Canadian Championships are $850.

- This fee is significantly lower than the registration fees charged for comparable softball championships and other major softball events.
- Staff will research and compare team registration fees from similar events and present the findings, along with potential recommendations, at the October Board meeting for further discussion.

4.3 U15 Men's Canadian Championships – No Host Team

BC will not send a team to the U15 Men's Canadian Championship at Softball City

- We gave them until June 26th to confirm but they still could not put it together

- British Columbia was originally sending three teams to the Men's Slo-Pitch Championship but has since withdrawn BC3
  - As a result, they will forfeit their registration fee and incur a $1,000 penalty
  - Ontario will replace the withdrawn team, bringing the total number of Ontario teams participating to six

Softball Canada will explore adding a requirement to the Host Agreement that the host Provincial/Territorial Association will guarantee the participation of at least one host team at the event.

MOTION #3 - Move to approve the Canadian Championships report.

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Stanton, CARRIED

5. Officials

5.1 Approvals

- International umpire assignments are underway
- We currently have 10 umpires assigned to international events for 2026
- All assignments have been previously approved

Audrey Desmarteaux Houle was unable to obtain time off work and was therefore no longer able to attend the European Women's Softball Championship. Michael French was selected as her replacement, and Board approval was received via email in May.

5.2 WBSC Slo-Pitch Certification Clinic

- In conjunction with an Ontario Slo-Pitch Super Series Event, Softball Canada & the WBSC hosted a Slo-Pitch Certification Clinic in Dorchester ON
- The clinic consisted of in classroom exercises and learning as well as an on-field evaluation
- Certification Instructors were Pete Saunders from England and Frankie Billingsley

Congratulations to the following umpires who were successful in achieving their WBSC Slo-Pitch Certification:

Softball Canada

- Carla McKenzie
- Pat Chiquette
- Dave Pritchard
- Jeff McKay
- Don England

This was a very successful event; however, there are two important considerations for the Board to keep in mind as the Officiating Development Committee (ODC) evolves, although the current ODC is already aware of these recommendations:

- Canada should not host another Slo-Pitch Certification Seminar for approximately 10 years. This would allow sufficient time to build participant demand and maximize attendance
- Future Certification Seminars should not be held in conjunction with a Super Series event. The Super Series does not operate under Softball Canada's weather

protocols. Had Softball Canada's weather protocols been followed, the schedule and event management would have been significantly different.

MOTION #4 - Motion to move in camera

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Zanolli, CARRIED

MOTION #5 - Motion to move out of camera

Moved by Stanton, seconded by Zanolli, CARRIED

MOTION #6 - Move to approve the Officials report

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Zanolli, CARRIED

6. 2026 AGM and Hall of Fame Banquet

6.1 2027 AGM

The 2027 AGM will be held in Edmonton, AB at the Wyndham Edmonton from November 11 – 13.

6.2 2026 AGM

The 2026 AGM is being held in Fredericton, NB, at the Fredericton Inn.

- More communication will be sent to all staff, board, and P/Ts over the next few months.

6.3 Hall of Fame candidates

The deadline for Hall of Fame nominations was April 1st 2026. Softball Canada received two nominations:

- Lauren Bay Regula – Athlete, BC
- Helen Doberstein – Athlete, ON

Lauren Bay Regula's nomination will be held until the next time the AGM takes place in the West region (2027). Based on her nomination, Helen should be considered in the Trailblazers category, as most of her listed accomplishments were before Softball Canada

was established in 1965 and the World Championships she competed in were ASA, not ISF/WBSC.

The 2026 AGM was supposed to be held in the Central region (ON, QC, MB & NWT), but since Softball NWT could not host Softball New Brunswick has accepted to hold it. Softball Canada currently does not have a backlog of suitable inductees in the Atlantic region after recently having inductions in Nova Scotia in 2025.

The Board discussed the 2026 Hall of Fame induction process and banquet.

- The Board agreed that the Hall of Fame should maintain its integrity and not induct individuals solely to support an annual ceremony. If there are not enough deserving candidates, there may be no 2026 induction.
- The financial and contractual implications of cancelling the banquet were discussed, including potential hotel costs and reduced revenue. The positive relationship with the host hotel and Softball New Brunswick was acknowledged.

Alternative options discussed included:

- Developing a list of potential candidates for future consideration.
- Replacing the banquet with additional workshops if no induction takes place.
- Revising the fundraising event in partnership with Softball New Brunswick, potentially including a Friday evening social or Saturday fundraising event.
- Exploring alternative ways to recognize significant contributors

Action Item: Staff to confirm whether any contractual penalties would apply if the banquet is cancelled.

Next Step: Further Board discussion is required before a final decision is made.

MOTION #7 - Move to approve the AGM report

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Parkes, CARRIED

7. Men's National Teams

7.1 U18 Men's National Team

- U18 Men's coaching staff Bryan Brooks, Don Scott, and Jean-Yves Doucet have developed a long list of players to monitor during the 2026 season, based on

athletes born 2009–2011 identified at the 2025 ID Camps and Canadian Championships
- Bryan Brooks and Don Scott scouted the OASA U17 Elimination Tournament, while Jean-Yves Doucet attended the Carp Shootout with the Quebec U20 team.
- Bryan Brooks and Jean-Yves Doucet will scout the U17 Men's Canadian Championship in Surrey, August 5–9
- A selection camp is scheduled for August 10–13 in Napanee, immediately following the U17 and U20 Canadian Championships
- Invitations were sent to 23 athletes and all accepted
- The WBSC World Cup is expected to take place in June 2027 in Czechia

7.2 MNT Coaching process

MOTION #8 - Motion to move in camera

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Zanolli, CARRIED

MOTION #9 - Motion to move out of camera

Moved by Stanton, seconded by Penrod, CARRIED

7.3 Bear Creek Hosting

Bear Creek has completed a new facility featuring two state-of-the-art diamonds.

- The facility will host the 2026 and 2028 ISC Championships, as well as the 2027 Men's and Master Men's Canadian Championships.
- There was discussion about the possibility of hosting a WBSC Group Stage event in Canada. SASA explored hosting the event in Saskatoon; however, estimated expenses of approximately $380,000 made the event financially unfeasible, as projected revenues would not cover the costs.
- Two meetings have been held with Bear Creek regarding potential WBSC hosting opportunities. Bear Creek is interested in pursuing both the Men's WBSC Group Stage and Final Stage events, potentially in 2028 and 2029.

Hosting a WBSC event in Canada would provide the Canadian Men's team with an automatic berth and help reduce overall costs.

MOTION #10 - Motion to accept the MNT report

Moved by Parkes, seconded by Penrod,
CARRIED

8. Slo-Pitch

8.1 Border Battle results

The 2026 Border Battle took place in Winesburg, Ohio, from June 18-20. Both the Canadian men's and women's slo-pitch teams competed in five exhibition games leading up to their final matchups against Team USA. The men's team finished with a 1-4 exhibition record, while the women's team had a 3-2 record. Both Canadian teams were defeated in their Border Battle matchups against Team USA.

Men's Border Battle Game Results

Date	Event	Opponent	Score	Result
June 20th 2026	Border Battle	USA	32-12 (4 innings)	Loss

Women's Border Battle Game Results

Date	Event	Opponent	Score	Result
June 20th 2026	Border Battle	USA	27-7 (4 innings)	Loss

The Board discussed the current state of the Slo-Pitch program and the need to explore new opportunities and approaches to better support slo-pitch moving forward.

Border Battle - Hosting in Canada

- Canada had originally been expected to host the Border Battle in 2026; however, those plans were postponed due to the FIFA World Cup taking place in British Columbia during the same period.
- The possibility of hosting the Border Battle in Canada in 2027 was discussed; however, there has been no recent update and there is currently no interest from potential Canadian hosts.

Border Battle - Recruitment

- The possibility of introducing Identification (ID) Camps as part of the selection process for the Border Battle teams was discussed.
- It was noted that while ID Camps could support athlete identification and development, they would likely not, on their own, address the current competitive gap between Canada and the United States.

Border Battle - Financial Considerations

- The cost of participating in Border Battle is approximately $60,000 annually. Discussions took place regarding whether the event is still providing value and supporting the goals of the program.

Future of the Border Battle

- Discussion centered around exploring other opportunities and alternative ways to support the growth and development of Slo-Pitch in Canada, including the possibility of no longer participating in Border Battle.
- There was general agreement that it may be time for a change in direction; however, what that change may look like has yet to be determined.

WBSC Slo-Pitch Opportunities

- There was hope that the WBSC would announce international opportunities or initiatives to support Slo-Pitch globally.
- To date, no updates or announcements have been received regarding potential WBSC involvement or programming in this area.

8.2 SPN Discussion

- The possibility of revisiting previous discussions with SPN, including a potential partnership or merger, was raised.
- Softball Canada was approached by SPN in June to reopen discussions and put potential collaboration opportunities back on the table.
- As part of a potential partnership, SPN indicated they would be willing to provide Softball Canada with approximately $0.30-$0.50 per registered participant.
- A national partnership could create additional opportunities for recreational athletes competing at the B, C, and D levels.
- The focus of a potential partnership would not necessarily be on increasing the number of events, but rather on improving the quality and overall experience of existing events.
- Additional discussions are expected to take place during the Niagara Falls Canadian Slo-Pitch Championships in August, where there will be an opportunity for more in-depth conversations regarding potential collaboration and future opportunities.
- A partnership with SPN could provide Softball Canada participants with increased playing opportunities.

Growing Youth Slo-Pitch Opportunities

- It was identified that youth slo-pitch is an area that should receive greater focus moving forward, with an emphasis on increasing accessibility and creating more participation opportunities.
- The potential introduction of minor championships was highlighted as an opportunity to support the continued growth and development of the sport.

MOTION #11 - Motion to approve the Slo-Pitch report

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Parkes, CARRIED

9. DEI Strategy / Programs

9.1 Committee approval

DEI Committee

Softball Canada issued a call for applications for the DEI Committee following the conclusion of five terms, including one co-chair position and four committee member positions. The application period ran from May 1 to May 18 and was promoted on social media, on the website, and shared with all provinces and territories. The number of applications received was lower than anticipated, with only five applicants. Committee members were selected with the support of the staff liaison and the Board of Directors representative.

DEI Committee - seeking Board Approval

<u>Co-chairs</u>

- Kareena Zanolli (Returning)
- Dakotah Pratt (Current)

<u>Members</u>

- Rhea Jankowski (Current)
- Anastasia Morrison (Current)
- Sheridan Hamilton (Current)
- Brittany Brunn (Current)
- Kim Stemshorn (Returning)

- Lisa Brown (Returning)
- Sahara Tom (New)
- Danielle Pierre (New)

MOTION #12 - Motion to approve the DEI Committee

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Stanton, CARRIED

DEI Strategy Review

DEI Committee members took time to review the committee's progress, including what has been working well, areas for improvement, and potential recommendations moving forward.

DEI Committee - Challenges

- One of the key challenges identified is that the DEI Committee operates as a volunteer-based committee, which impacts the capacity and time available to dedicate toward achieving the objectives outlined in the DEI Action Plan and advancing initiatives.
- Another challenge identified is the reliance on external grant funding to support DEI initiatives. Grants are often received with limited notice, which creates challenges in planning and implementing meaningful projects. For example, $31,000 in funding was received with only a month and a half to allocate and spend the funds, limiting the ability to use the funding strategically and maximize its impact.

DEI Committee - Recommendations

- Proactively budget for funding that is typically received through grants, with Softball Canada providing initial financial support and backfilling the amount once grant funding is confirmed. This would allow for improved planning, timely implementation, and greater impact of DEI initiatives.
- Clarify the role of the DEI Committee as an advisory body that supports Provincial/Territorial Associations (P/Ts) in implementing initiatives at the provincial level, rather than directly delivering programs at the national level.
- Conduct an external DEI and Safe Sport evaluation of Softball Canada's national team programs through an independent third-party organization. This would demonstrate Softball Canada's commitment to these areas and identify potential risks.

The barriers currently being experienced have led to discussions around how the DEI Committee may need to evolve moving forward. This includes shifting the committee's role

toward a stronger advisory function, reviewing the funding model to better support DEI initiatives, and exploring the need for an independent third-party review of Softball Canada's national team programs.

MOTION #13 - Motion to move in camera

Moved by Stanton, seconded by Parkes, CARRIED

MOTION #14 - Motion to move out of camera

Moved by Zanolli, seconded by Stanton, CARRIED

MOTION #15 - Motion to approve the DEI Strategy

Moved by Stanton, seconded by Penrod, CARRIED

10. Women's National Teams

10.1 WNT results and schedule

- Canada qualified for the 2027 WBSC Women's Softball World Cup Finals after posting a 4–1 record and finishing first in the Prague Group Stage.
- Two additional Group Stage events remain in Lima and Oklahoma City, with the remaining finalists to be determined.
- The World Cup Finals in Australia will also serve as the first softball qualification opportunity for LA28.
- CBC Gem provided national coverage of Canada's Group Stage games, increasing visibility for the Women's National Team and the sport. Similar coverage is anticipated for the Canada Cup.

Japan Exhibition Series

- Team Canada will travel to Japan for training and competition, including four games against Japan and additional exhibition games, before returning for the Canada Cup.

Canada Cup

- The 2026 Canada Cup will take place July 6–12 in Surrey, B.C., featuring 15 teams.
- Softball Canada will enter both Team Canada and the Canada Elite Team.
- The Canada Elite Team returns to the tournament for the first time since 2018 and will provide additional high-level competition and support athlete development toward LA28.

10.2 U18 camps

- Regional identification camps are being held in Saskatchewan, Ontario and B.C., with approximately 220 athletes registered.

10.3 U18 Pan Am Championship

- Preparations are underway for the 2026 Pan American U18 Women's Championship in El Salvador, which will serve as a qualifier for the 2028 WBSC U18 Women's World Cup.

MOTION #16 - Motion to approve the Women's National Team Report

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Zanolli,
CARRIED

11. Registration / Membership Fees

11.1 Update and next steps

This remains an ongoing process, with discussions continuing between multiple stakeholders.

Several individual meetings have taken place between Provincial/Territorial Organizations and Softball Canada's President. Softball Canada is continuing to reach out to the remaining provinces and territories; however, responses from some organizations have not yet been received.

Further discussions and follow-ups will continue as we work toward next steps.

12. Marketing Group update

Nothing further was discussed on the marketing group. All information was provided in the original report to the Board.

13. Safe Sport

MOTION #17 - Motion to move in camera

Moved by Stanton, seconded by Parkes, CARRIED

MOTION #18 - Motion to move out of camera

Moved by Zanolli, seconded by Stanton, CARRIED

14. Staffing

MOTION #19 - Motion to move in camera

Moved by Stanton, seconded by Zanolli, CARRIED

MOTION #20 - Motion to move out of camera

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Parkes, CARRIED

15. Budget

Nothing further was discussed on the budget. All information was provided in the original report to the Board.

16. Other Business

No other business.

17. Next meeting

Softball Canada's next Board of directors meeting will take place in person in Ottawa on October 2nd, 2026. The Canadian Championship committee will meet the day prior, October 1st.

18. Adjournment

MOTION #21 - Motion to adjourn

Moved by Penrod, seconded by Stanton, CARRIED