



Softball New Brunswick Board Meeting
Sunday, October 22nd, 2023
9:00-4:00pm @ Sport NB Office

Attendance – Voting Members:

Scott Willis – President (Vote only if tie)
Dan Mersereau -(Vice President
Ron Campbell - Provincial Umpire in Chief
Gracelyn Kaine - Adult Coordinator
Craig Clarkson - Region 3 Director
Paul Bedford - Region 4 Director
Matt Whipple - Minor Male Coordinator
Stacy Blois - Minor Female Coordinator
Darleen Sobey - Region 6 Coordinator

Non-Voting Members (Staff):

Hillary Pineau – Executive Director
Cameron Rogers - Technical Director

Vacant Positions:

Region 1 Director
Region 2 Director
Region 7 Director
Region 8 Director
Slo Pitch Coordinator

Absent Voting Members:

Breanna Saulnier - Region 5 Director

1. President Welcome

- a. Introduction of new board members
 - i. Paul Beford
 - ii. Craig Clarkson
- b. President Scott Willis indicated it is nice to see everyone in person. A lot to go through, so looking forward to maximizing the time together and having a good discussion on various topics.

2. Land Acknowledgement

- a. Gracelyn Kaine acknowledged that Softball New Brunswick's office is located on the traditional unceded territories of the Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq, and Peskotomuhkati Nations. We honour the traditional lands and homelands of all indigenous peoples and communities across Canada, including First Nations, Inuit, Métis living both on and off reserve, in rural and urban communities.

3. Staff Roles

- a. Board reviewed the roles and responsibilities of both the Executive Director and Technical Director, now that there are two full time staff



- b. President Scott Willis requested the Board respect the time of the staff, and respond to them promptly, or communicate with them within business hours, if possible. Urgent issues should still be addressed with staff or the President ASAP.
- c. Hillary Pineau will send out a copy of the staff roles for the Board to have access to.
- d. Staff will be redefining Board member roles and put recommendations forward for the February (Winter) Board meeting.
 - i. There needs to be a clear indication of everyone's roles, so the membership know who to direct questions to, as opposed to going directly to the office
 1. Filter through Regional Director
 - a. First Point of Contact
 2. Particularly Safe Sport questions
- e. Darleen Sobey indicated she looks forward to the development of a “basics of scorekeeping” webinar, as scorekeeping is very inconsistent across the province
 - i. Hillary Pineau referred her to a short powerpoint on the basics of scorekeeping on the Softball NB website.
 1. Hillary also discussed the need for education on the scorebook but also implementing Game Changer for Qualifiers, Provincial Championships, etc.
 - a. Generate statistics, track athletes, etc.
 - ii. Cameron Rogers will take the lead on the development of a scorekeeping educational project

4. Board Recruitment

- a. Welcome to Craig Clarkson (Region 3 Director) and Paul Bedford (Region 4 Director)
- b. Angela Sanford (Former Timbits Coordinator) expressed interest in continuing to assist with different tasks (evaluations, facilitating, etc.)

Board of Directors Entered Closed Session at 9:23am

Board of Directors Exited Closed Session at 9:35am

- Scott Willis showed the map of regions followed by Softball New Brunswick
 - Same as Sport and Recreation branch
- Currently have 16 positions on the board
 - Have previously been down to only 7 of 16 positions filled, leading to a significant number of vacancies
 - Do not want this



- Unanimous agreement that that now with two established full time staff positions, the Board is too big
 - Would like to see number of positions streamlined
 - Ideally 10-12 positions
 - Potentially consider combining some of existing positions (Ex. Slo Pitch Coordinator to fall under Adult Coordinator)
 - Stacy Blois recommended going back to more committee work for specific tasks (i.e. Rules & Regulations, etc)
 - Not everyone wants to be at the Board level; however, they may be more interested in a committee position
 - Scott Willis and staff will undergo a review of the current structure and do a comparison amongst other similar PSO's, and come up with a few recommendations for the Board for February (Winter) board meeting.
 - No rush to implement for 2024 season, will do thorough review and make recommendations for implementation in 2025

5. Membership

- a. Hillary Pineau showed the board a membership comparison from 2022 to 2023, as well as 2023 to a projection for 2024 season
 - i. 2023 saw an increase in our membership in all categories
 - 1. A lot more opportunity to grow
 - ii. 18.5% Minor male increase
 - iii. 13.3% Minor female increase
 - iv. 60.8% Adult increase
 - 1. Return of some Slopitch leagues
 - 2. Increased U23/Women's fastpitch
 - 3. Expansion of Men's fastpitch
 - v. 21.7% coach registration increase
 - vi. 2% Umpire increase
- b. Cameron Rogers presented the membership/team projections for 2024 by each region
 - i. Identified that there is currently no ball in regions 2,7,8
 - 1. Big opportunity currently for region 2 in particular
 - ii. Looking to expand reach in existing regions to other communities outside city centers.
 - 1. Region 1



- a. Currently only in Saint Leonard for minor ball. Need to expand to Grand Falls, etc.
- b. St. Anne de Madawaska Men's Orthodox league
2. Region 2
 - a. A lot of unregistered adult slo pitch leagues
 - b. Potential for minor programming
 - i. Ex. U9 Provincials
3. Region 3
 - a. Biggest and most diverse region
 - b. Only area with minor male membership
4. Region 4
 - a. Second largest region
 - b. Opportunities for Belle-Isle and St Martins
 - i. Potential for minor male programs
5. Region 5
 - a. Only in Moncton and Memramcook currently
 - b. Underperforming in the region currently
 - i. Lack of membership and officials
 - ii. Struggling to get all members and teams actually registered
6. Region 6
 - a. Currently only in Nelson
 - b. Potential to grow into Blackville
7. Region 7
 - a. Significant amount of untouched slo pitch being played
 - b. Need to generate relationships with these leagues and find competition for them, to entice them to join Softball NB
8. Region 8
 - a. Currently not a lot is happening in the region.
 - b. One small program in the Bathurst area, hopes to see this grow next year.
- c. First Nations
 - i. Board revisited the discussion on developing a bigger relationship with the first nations communities
 1. Stacy Blois met with Kylee Francis (Elsipogtog) who has indicated that she wanted to develop a long term relationship and plan



2. Revisit U13 COED Slo Pitch Championship
 - a. Need to be accessible
 - b. Need buy in from community leaders (Chiefs, Recreation Leaders)
 3. Darleen Sobey discussed with Kelvin Simonson from Eel ground, that Eel Ground is looking to build a minor field right next to their current field
 4. Need a champion from each area to lead, need the support of the board
- ii. Darleen Sobey and Matt Whipple willing to take on a bigger role to head this initiative and support this

6. Registration

- a. Hillary Pineau and Cameron Rogers outlined the following to the Board related to registration
 - i. There was a struggle to get select players, coaches, and teams registered
 1. Information appears not to be being pushed beyond some association presidents, etc.
 - a. Overall good compliance from the membership
 - i. Tendency of same clubs year after year. Need to implement consequences to get compliance
 - b. Staff will do more regular follow ups / reminder for the upcoming season
 2. Staff to circulate a list at the beginning of each week over the summer to umpires and associations of registered leagues. Will help other teams and officials know who is and isn't covered
 - ii. Regional Directors need to take a bigger role in the dissemination of registration information
 1. Regional Facebook pages
 - iii. Increase in overall membership may translate to increased organization profile / funding.

7. Boy's Softball

- a. Hillary Pineau indicated that currently our minor boys game is at a critical point. While the membership rose 18% this past season, that growth is not sustainable, and without some action, the male is at risk of disappearing. Currently only in Region 3 in the province. Without expanding outward, there is no opportunity for much competition for these athletes.
 - i. 2029 CSG in NB
 1. Want Men's and Women's Softball to be part of the sport selection



- ii. Action Item - Hillary Pineau is requesting that all Regional Directors to host at least 1 clinic in their region next spring/summer primarily directed at Males
 - 1. Promotion, Recruitment, Development
 - 2. Utilize/Apply for regional funds to offset the cost of this initiative (currently being underutilized by our regions)
 - 3. Minor Boys ball is an issue around the country
- iii. Will be a discussion at the upcoming Softball Canada AGM
 - 1. Staff will update the board with finding from National conversation

8. Financial Update

- a. Hillary Pinau indicated that she is still waiting on 2021-2022 audit from accountant
 - i. Has reached out multiple times, and will continue to follow up
- b. The 2022-2023 year end just passed.
 - i. Treasurer, Ellen Fitzsimmons, is currently preparing the books for an independent review
- c. Scott Willis reviewed the increased core funding received from GNB
 - i. Scott Willis and Hillary Pineau will have the 2023-2024 fiscal year budget prepared to present by December

9. Umpires Program

- a. Umpire program is currently at a point of crisis
 - i. Ron Campbell outlined his registered numbers vs what he actually has available. Will need help and support to fix the program
 - 1. Only a select few are willing to umpire 4 days per week and every weekend. Most want to do no more than 1-2 nights, 1 tournament.
 - 2. JD retention is a struggle
 - a. Need to provide positive opportunities
 - 3. Softball Canada umpire recruitment and retention committee has identified some strategies
 - 4. Ron Campbell with Scott Willis, Dan Mersreau, Matt Whipple, Hillary Pineau, and Cameron Roger to discuss the program and next steps
 - ii. Ron Campbell indicated that he is spending a significant amount on travel (mileage, meals) annually to league games, tournaments, etc. This cannot/will not happen any longer, and that cost needs to be put on hosts (Utilize regional funding)
 - iii. Sending umpires to CC typically costs \$10,000-\$12,000
 - 1. Good for development
 - 2. Performance Pathway



- b. Cameron Rogers will help to support the umpire program as part of her role as Technical Director
- c. There needs to be a focus on mentorship
 - i. Will cost money
- d. Shift focus for recruitment to parents within associations
 - i. Softball NB to put emphasis and pressure on associations to find new officials (provide incentives, etc.)
- e. Umpires program needs to develop a retention plan to increase quality of the umpires
- f. Game fees need to be increased to attract officials
 - i. Will come back with proposal
- g. Gracelyn Kaine indicated she would be also interested in assisting Ron Campbell. Scott has asked Matt Whipple and Dan Mersereau to assist as well.
- h. Staff and Ron Campbell will come back to the Board with an action plan for the umpires program

10. Canpitch

- a. Cameron Rogers reviewed that pitching development needs to be a priority for the organization
 - i. Softball NB held a Pitcher Instructor Beginner clinic in April 2023
 - 1. Well attended (16 participants)
 - 2. Interest from participants for more development and continuing on
 - ii. Cannot be a 1 and done event
- b. Scott Willis spoke with Greg Parker, and he is interested in leading Canpitch within the province
 - i. Finalizing details of what that leadership would look like
 - ii. Peter Mersereau also interested in joining Greg Parker
 - iii. Work with Provincial team athletes
 - 1. Always have a pitching and catching component to work into training
 - iv. Work with (Develop) Pitcher Instructor Beginning participants and other potential instructors to bring them in and work with actual athletes
 - 1. Do a session in the spring and fall
 - a. Run them through what a pitching clinic should look like
 - 2. Have a resource for instructors to go back to if they need help troubleshooting
 - v. Organization need to be introducing pitching earlier
 - 1. 7-8 years old
- c. To develop pitching, it is going to cost money



- i. Canadian Championship technical fund
- d. Regional Directors to include canpitch funding into Regional Profile Applications

11. Timbits Softball

- a. Hillary Pineau recapped the Timbits program for the 2023 season
 - i. Did not operate the Community Caravan
 - 1. Staff struggled to get a plan for the program until July despite efforts
 - 2. Capacity from Summer Student
 - a. Lower number of student grants than previous year
 - b. Already committed hours to Canadian Championship, Eastern Canadians
 - ii. Proposed there need to be a shift on what the scope of the program looks like
 - 1. Recommending shifting the focus to U9-U11/13 instead of U5 and U7.
 - a. Focusing on softball related skills
 - b. Incorporate pitching component
 - iii. Seeking a new Timbits Coordinator
 - 1. Craig Clarkson recommended an individual with a kinesiology, physical education background for coordinator, focus on softball skills and fundamental movement skills
- b. Need to see a return on investment, not glorified babysitting
- c. Once proposal is finalized and approved, Hillary Pineau would reapply for Go NB funding to fund the program
- d. Consider training sessions for new coaches
 - i. How to run a Timbits program
 - ii. Facilitators needed
 - iii. Curriculum generation
- e. Staff will develop a proposal for the Timbits program the upcoming season to present to the board in February
 - i. How to promote and implement the program provincially
- f. Stacy Blois indicated she is willing to help the staff with the Timbits program

12. Annual Awards

- a. Staff recommending a thorough review of the awards we offer
 - i. No real criteria currently, and not getting quality applications
 - 1. Also many awards not filled
 - ii. Need to streamline the approach and to consider framing up proper criteria
 - iii. Board was in agreement that this change is needed. Directed staff to come back with recommended award criteria for consideration



- b. Have been losing money on this event consistently
 - i. Cost of facility, plaques, food etc.
 - ii. Attendance is low

Craig Clarkson left meeting at 12:33pm

- c. Selection committee needs to be unbiased
- d. Dan Mersereau recommended that the staff have the ability to also put in recommended candidates, as they have a strong knowledge of membership around the province, and potential deserving candidates
- e. Upon review of criteria, staff will consider what other provinces/sports do

13. Hall of Fame

- a. Board reviewed the criteria of the Hall of Fame
- b. In 2018, a lot of work into this to develop this criteria. Selection committee needs to follow it
- c. Pool is currently at 18 candidate
 - i. Consider the quality of the candidates. Quantity over quality in the current pool.
- d. Comparing to others sports we are inducting way too many
 - i. 5 per year is not sustainable
 - ii. Not enough quality applications coming in
- e. Losing money at event
 - i. Due to the high price of meals, etc.
 - ii. Need a sponsor to offset costs.
- f. Hillary Pineau presented to the Board that both the Annual Awards and Hall of Fame are consistently losing money. Reviewed the budgets of both events. In an effort to prevent that from happening going forward, she recommended to the board to consider combining the two events into one banquet, held in the fall
 - i. Increase the profile/prestige of the event
 - 1. Bigger crowd
 - ii. Consider lessening the number of individuals inducted annually
 - iii. Way to turn into a money making event

Motion: To combine the Softball New Brunswick Hall of Fame banquet and Annual Awards banquet into one event, to be held in the fall of each year. To begin in fall 2024



First: Dan Mersereau

Second: Ron Campbell

Discussion: Board unanimously in favour of making this shift. Will make more financial sense for the organization.

Carried

14. Coaching Program

a. Coaching Courses

i. Cameron Rogers did significant promotion over National coaches week

1. Circulated a fall coaching survey to gauge interest on coaching courses offered

- a. Currently only offering one comp intro per year
- b. Membership looking for Community Stream as well as Comp-Intro / Comp-Dev courses
- c. Cameron Rogers recommending to hold the Community Stream course in April 2024 to grassroots introductory coaches
- d. Competition Introduction to also be held in the spring
 - i. 20-25 coaches expected
- e. Competition Development
 - i. Softball Canada putting this course on the provinces to host
 - ii. Softball NB planning a course with Mark Quinn for winter 2024 (January)
 - iii. Staff will circulate another survey for interest/commitment

b. Coaching Symposium

i. Staff recommended to the Board that a coaching symposium be held in the spring of 2024.

1. Coaching professional development needed within the province. A priority for the upcoming year
2. Tie event in with AGM weekend in April
3. Event to focus on topics that were not covered in comp-intro
 - a. Ex. Rules 101, Leadership & Team Dynamics, Troubleshooting, Building a Practice Plan, etc.
 - b. Bring in facilitators as well as use the experts within the province to host the sessions
 - c. Will apply for to make it a PD opportunity for coaches



4. Reach out to Coach NB for partnership & resources
5. Opportunity to apply for event specific funding to offset cost
 - a. Want to make it affordable and attractive to membership
 - b. Open it up to as many coaches as possible
- ii. Board strongly on board with the staff moving forward on this event
 1. Will revisit topic in at the winter board meeting when a full proposal and budget is in place

15. Calendar of Events

- a. Cameron Rogers gave the overview of the draft 2024 calendar of events
 - i. Will be finalized by January for circulation
- b. Release process
 - i. Minor
 1. Releases need to be earlier
 - a. Staff recommending to move release deadline to May 15th
 - i. Window of May 1-15th to finalize all releases
 - ii. Need to be a requirement for those athletes released to fulfill (cannot just be released and then only show up to select events. Need to regularly attend practice, games, etc.)
 - ii. Major FP and SP
 1. Fastpitch not an issue
 2. Slopitch
 - a. Players need to play within our province first
 - b. NB had enough players released to NS this year for the Canadian Championship to send an NB team to Canadians

Matt Whipple left 2:10pm

16. Provincial Championships

- a. Hosts
 - i. Staff outlined that previously, finding hosts for provincial championships has been a struggle
 - ii. Look at centralizing some tournaments, if hosts aren't found
 - iii. Will be open to associations to host, if at the end of the application they don't have hosts then we will switch lanes and potentially host the vacant tournaments as the PSO



- iv. Staff will revamp the host responsibilities document
 - 1. Discussed that some associations are intimidated to run a provincials due to not knowing what their role is
- v. Use of GameChanger has to be a priority for 2024 championships
- vi. Provincial Championship host applications will launch mid February. Deadline will be March 31st
 - 1. Hillary Pineau and Cameron Rogers will do some cold calling to associations to promote
- b. Rain Date
 - i. When teams register for Provincials, they are also registering for the rain dates (need to be clearly identified). Board agreed teams should not receive a refund if they cannot commit to a rain date
- c. Deadline
 - i. Moving to 1 firm deadline for Provincial Championship registration
 - 1. Minor - July 15th
 - 2. Adult - 4 weeks prior to the start of the championship
 - 3. Consider a early bird price (\$350) vs late price (\$400)
 - a. Table to next meeting
- d. Female 'A' vs 'AA'
 - i. Cameron Rogers indicated there needs to be a clearly defined deadline for female teams to declared whether they will be 'A' or 'AA' for Provincial Championships
 - 1. Criteria to be built to submit to office for teams to be considered for 'A' (Recreational)
 - 2. July 15th
- e. Player of the Game Responsibility
 - i. Tabled for December
- f. Region 2
 - i. Staff recommended running the U9 provincials in Region 2 to generate interest in a new community
 - 1. Get a new team started and interested in attending
 - ii. Need connect with Towns (Woodstock, Hartland, etc.) for a partnership
 - 1. Field rentals
 - iii. Board in favour of staff exploring this opportunity

17. Middle School Provincials

- i. Hillary Pineau reviewed 2023 championship



1. Lost money on event
2. Discussed high field costs in Sussex
3. Lack of communication with office staff on the status of the event
4. Participation was up from 2022
 - a. 15 teams over 3 division
- ii. A lot of work for organization for not much return on investment
 1. Compare to what other PSO's are doing
 2. Board agreed that the current way the event is being run does not make sense financially. Changes need to be made
- iii. Board indicated that the responsibility (costs) be put back onto the schools or local associations
- iv. General consensus from board would be to consider looking into elementary school options instead
- v. Stacy Blois is going to reach out to Kerry Laviolette-Rowe and Angela Sanford to discuss further
- vi. Will revisit the topic in the December

18. Provincial Teams

NB Selects Provincial Teams are our high performance teams that attend Canadian Championships on an annual basis. Best players from around the province

- a. U15-19 Women's underway and U20 Men's
 - i. Final camps end of November
- b. Need a big focus on the fundamentals
 - i. Softball Skills
 - ii. Mental performance skills
 - iii. Strength and conditioning
 - iv. Improvement needed in these areas to raise the level of the program each year.
- c. East Coast Showdown
 - i. June 7-9th, 2023
 - ii. U17/19 Female categories being offered
 - iii. Need to prioritize tournament by having the top umpires for development opportunities
 - iv. Keep at 1 location (both Prospect Fields)
 - v. First priority is Atlantic province Provincial Teams, followed by Quebec and US Elite level teams
 1. Will use U23 teams if absolutely necessary on numbers
 - vi. Premiere event that must be prioritized



- vii. Teams that volunteer during event will receive proceeds (split)

19. Eastern Canadian Qualifiers

- a. Have hosted in Moncton the past few years
 - i. Fields at no cost and 6 fields at one location
 - ii. Unfortunately very few officials in Moncton
 - iii. Have not seen any growth or return by hosting event it in Moncton
- b. Staff recommending looking at a new location for this year that is realistic for facilities and umpires
 - i. Recommending Fredericton for 2024 as they have several officials as well as low field cost
 - 1. Board in favour of this direction.
- c. Stacy Blois indicated KVGSA would be willing to take a small qualifier if one division needs to be held elsewhere

Gracelyn Kaine Left 3:08

20. Canada Summer Games

- a. Women's Program
 - i. 2023 Fall PT tryouts served as ID camps
 - ii. Official tryouts to begin in the spring (March, May)
 - 1. Players will play on their clubs teams and potentially Provincial teams for the summer
 - iii. 2024 fall, will be final invite only tryout
- b. Men's Program
 - i. 2023 players will play on club teams, men's teams and potentially U20 provincial team.
 - ii. Waiting for tryouts until 2024 fall
 - iii. In better shape for registration than expected
- c. Funding
 - i. Explained previous funding structure
 - 1. \$1,000 per year per team (\$4,000 total per team)
 - ii. Conversation with Christine Powers-Thompson
 - 1. Canada Games program should not be put on a pedestal, so should be treated the same as Provincial Team program
 - iii. Table funding model decision until further research conducted



21. Fundraising Model

- a. Hillary Pineau will be seeking sponsorship for the following events
 - i. Provincial Championships
 1. Title Sponsor
 2. Awards/Plaques
 3. Player of the Game
 - ii. Annual Award / Hall of Fame
 - iii. Go NB program
- b. Cameron Rogers outlined that she has been researching option for a provincial level fundraiser through online platforms
 - i. 50/50 draws has been deemed as preferred option
 - ii. Option to raise funds for different programs (High Performance, Umpires, Timbits, etc.)
 - iii. Board is in favour of her moving forward with exploring options further
 1. Could see significant financial return for various program
 2. Currently not doing anything

22. Mileage & Per Diems

- a. Hillary Pineau and Scott Willis presented the current mileage and per diem rates for Softball NB
 - i. Have not been updated in approximately 5 years
 - ii. Comparison to other PSO's across the country was presented showing increase is needed with rising costs

Motion: To increase mileage to \$0.45/km and per diems to \$55 per day (\$15 breakfast, \$20 lunch, \$20 dinner) for Board of Directors

First: Ron Campbell

Second: Paul Bedford

Carried

23. Action Items

- a. Board Annual Reports due November 15th, 2023
 - i. Send to Hillary Pineau

24. New Business

- a. No new business

25. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

First: Dan Mersereau