



SOFTBALL ASIA

Secretariat: 46, Jalan Cenderai 1, Lucky Garden, Bangsar,
59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Tel: +603-2094 1271 **Fax:** +603-2094 1275

Email: bclow@bclowco.com ; bengclow@gmail.com

MINUTES OF THE 3rd SOFTBALL ASIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCO MEETING (03/2018-2022))

Date: 01 December 2020
Time: 10.00am (Malaysia time)
Venue: **ONLINE** via Zoom

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Dato' LOW Beng Choo | President |
| 2. | Ms. Taeko UTSUGI | 1 st Vice President |
| 3. | Ms. Susan ZHANG Xuan | Vice President |
| 4. | Mr. Kosol YIMPAIBOON | Vice President |
| 5. | Ms. Sally LIM Swee Gaik | Secretary-General |
| 6. | Mr. Hiromi TOKUDA | Advisor |

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Mr. Yutake MIYAKE | SA Coaching Committee Chair |
| 2. | Mr. SEE Kok Wooi | SA Technical Committee Chair |
| 3. | Ms. Heidi IP Ching Kit | SA Technical Committee Co-Chair |
| 4. | Mr. Paulo TABIRARA | SA Umpire Committee Co-Chair |

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Mr. Michael SCHMIDT | WBSC Executive Director |
| 2. | Mr. Tomoaki OKAMOTO | Japan SA Executive Director |
| 3. | Mr. Hiroyuki YOKOTA | Japan SA Secretary-General |
| 4. | Mr. Tomohiro HISAKA | Japan SA Secretariat |
| 5. | Ms. Taeko ONO | Japan SA Secretariat |
| 6. | Mr. WOO Jisuk | Korea BSA Staff/Interpreter |
| 7. | Mr. Tony MARIADASS | SA Media Officer |

ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Mr. PAN Yi Chuan | Chairman |
| 2. | Mr. CHANG Chia Hsing | Secretary-General (Chairman's Office) |
| 3. | Ms. KIM Eun Young | Vice President |
| 4. | Mr. Jimmy FONG Song Kuan | Vice President |
| 5. | Mr. Jean Henri LHUILLIER | Vice President |
| 6. | Ms. TAN Chia Mien | SA Scoring Committee Chair |
| 7. | Mr. CHANG Sy-Chau | SA Scoring Committee Co-Chair |

1. ROLL CALL

- 1.1 Softball Asia (SA) Secretary-General Ms. Sally Lim completed the Roll-call and confirmed that a quorum was present for this SA EXCO Meeting to proceed.

2. SA PRESIDENT’S WELCOME REMARKS

- 2.1 SA President Dato’ (Ms.) Low Beng Choo called the Meeting to order and thank everyone for taking time to attend this online 2nd SA EXCO Meeting, and for their continuous support and commitment.
- 2.2 She extended the apologies of SA Chairman Mr. Pan Yi Chuan and SA Secretary (in Chairman’s office), Mr. Chang Chia Hsing, as well as SA Vice Presidents Mr. Jean Henri Lhuillier, Ms. Kim Eun Young and Mr. Jimmy Fong Song Kuan, who could not join the Meeting.
- 2.3 She also welcomed the WBSC Executive Director Mr. Michael Schmidt who had to get up very early in the morning (about 03.00 am) to attend this Meeting due to the time difference in Lausanne, Switzerland. She also thanked the WBSC Executive Ms. Aki Huang (who also had to get up very early) for agreeing to assist with the technical set-up and for attending this online Meeting.
- 2.4 She said that this SA EXCO meeting was in follow-up to the online SA EXCO Meeting held on 14 October 2020, and in preparation for the SA Congress scheduled to be held online on 15 December 2020.
- 2.5 She informed that the SA Advisor, Mr. Hiromi Tokuda, had suggested that each of the EXCO Members to give an update of the situation in his/her country. Mr. Tokuda stated that it would be good for each to give the main challenges each of his/her National Federation faced and proposed steps to move forward with Softball activities during the current global Covid-19 pandemic and movement restriction/lockdown.

2.5.1 Japan – Japan Softball Association (JSA) President Mr. Yutake Miyake

- JSA’s biggest challenge was that since the dates of the international competitions (such as the WBSC World Cups and the Asia Cups) have yet to be fixed with certainty, JSA has yet to hold the selection/screening of the players for the national teams, such as the Men, U23 Men and U18 Women teams.
- The uncertainties have also resulted in the national teams not being able to proceed with proper preparations for competitions.
- Although JSA managed to complete the league for the top Men and Women softball competitions in 2020, the other 2020 national competitions have been postponed to 2021.
- There were concerns as the number of Covid-19 cases have been increasing recently in Japan.

2.5.2 China - Chinese Softball Association (CSA) Secretary General – Ms. Susan Zhang Xuan

- Just like others, CSA was facing tough times in the current pandemic. However, CSA was fortunate to be able to complete all national level competitions except the junior-level.

- Sports organisations in China, including the CSA, were undergoing structural/entity reform as part of the Government of China's new policy, to give the national sports associations more autonomy and authority in decision-making, such as holding competitions and activities.
- CSA representatives have been in close communication with the Hangzhou Asian Games 2022 Organising Committee (HAGOC). The construction of the new baseball competition venue had started and that for the softball venue would start later. Her colleague, representing CSA, had just completed a successful meeting with HAGOC on sports presentation and ceremonies.
- The Chinese national U18 women softball team (which is to participate in the WBSC World Cup U18 Women Softball 2021 in Lima, Peru) has been selected and started physical training in Jiangsu, although not all selected players were attending.
- CSA hopes that more countries would ease their regulation to enable physical national and international competitions to be held, and would be able to share their experience and operating procedures so that everyone could help each other to organise more physical events and activities.

(SA President Low informed the EXCO that the WBSC had just sent out a notice of the further postponement of the WBSC U18 Women Softball competition from March 2021 to the new dates of 28 August to 05 September 2021).

2.5.3 **Korea – Korea Baseball Softball Association (KBSA) staff Mr. Woo Jisuk on behalf of Ms. Kim Eun Young**

- KBSA completed an umpires' seminar and Korea Softball league in November 2020.
- KBSA plans to select the coach for the Korea women softball national team for the Hangzhou Asian Games 2022 and start the team's physical training soon.
- KBSA plans to start their domestic softball competitions (which usually start in March) later in 2021, perhaps May-June 2021.

2.5.4 **Philippines – Mr. Paulo Tabirara**

- The Philippines was still under lockdown and strict quarantine regulations so physical activities had not as yet resumed. The national teams were still undergoing training online.
- ASA-Phil was doing a lot of online activities, such as webinars and distributing materials online, to strengthen itself.
- He hoped to plan for webinars for umpires for Asia and would discuss further with the SA as well as the WBSC Director of Softball Umpires, Mr. Bob Stanton.

2.5.5 Hong Kong – Ms. Heidi Ip Ching Kit

- HKSA was still having small group physical training sessions at the Tin Kwong softball field. Their women's team have also played friendly games with the local Japanese team. The U12 and U15 players had stopped their physical training sessions due to Covid-19 concerns, but others, such as the U18 and women players, were still training.
- However, the number of Covid-19 cases has been increasing recently, especially in social community settings, such as fitness clubs, dance classes, etc. As such, the Government may soon issue lockdown restrictions for safety reasons, and that would mean that all physical activities, including training sessions, would have to stop.

2.5.6 Thailand – Softball Association of Thailand (SBAT) – Mr. Kosol Yimpaiboon

- SBAT completed the national competitions for the senior and U18 youth categories in November 2020. It was preparing the national U15, U18 and Women's teams.
- SBAT was also discussing the budget to host the Asia Cup Asian Universities Women Softball in July 2021 with the Sport Authority of Thailand.
- He stated that SBAT's first choice of competition venue was the Thammasat University; and the second choice was Kasetsart University. He informed he would discuss the matter further with the SBAT President-elect Mr. Yotsakrai Phainpanitporn.

(SA President Low reminded SBAT to submit to SA, as soon as possible, its proposal to host that event SA's consideration and approval.)

2.5.7 Malaysia – Softball Association of Malaysia (SAM) President – Mr. See Kok Wooi

- Malaysia was still under strict movement control regulations, with some areas under total lockdown. As such, outdoor sports activities were very restricted. He added that the schools were not open as the school holidays period had started.
- He said he hoped that physical activities would be allowed early next year (2021).

3. **MINUTES OF 2nd EXCO Meeting (1/2018- 2022) held on 14 October 2020**

- 3.1 SA President Low informed that the Minutes of the 2nd SA Exco Meeting held online on 14 October 2020 was sent out earlier to the EXCO Members. There were no requests for amendment to the Minutes.

Proposal:



To consider and approve the Minutes of the 2nd EXCO Meeting held online on 14 October 2020 as proposed by Mr. See Kok Wooi and seconded by Ms. Taeko Utsugi.

DECISION

The SA EXCO unanimously approved the Minutes of the 2nd EXCO Meeting held online on 14 October 2020.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MEETING

The following matters arising from the Minutes were discussed and updated.

4.1 SA-JSA (Japan Softball Association) Joint Project: Coaching Webinar

4.1.1 Upon the SA President Low's request, the WBSC Executive Director, Mr. Michael Schmidt, confirmed that the WBSC Academy has uploaded videos for webinars on "Coaching at Grassroot-level", which was open to all who register. The SA Coaching Committee could view that content.

4.1.2 Mr. Miyake (SA Coaching Chair and JSA President) gave the following update on the SA-JSA Joint Coaching Webinar Project. He invited JSA staff, Mr. Tomohiro Hisaka, to make the PowerPoint presentation on the matter:

- The tentative schedule for the Webinar was presented, with the videos of the Webinar to be available from early December, and to be completed by end March 2021. The first video (Pitching Level 1) had been completed and had been uploaded onto to special website created for the Coaching Webinar Project, and was available on the online platform.
- The role of the 3 stakeholders of the Coaching Webinar project would be as follows:
 - **National Federation-Members (NFs) of SA**
 - Interested coaches-participants to register through his/her National Federation. NFs to contact SA, not JSA, to register.
 - NFs to register and send a list of participants' information and e-mail addresses to SA.
 - Participants to connect to SA website (<http://www.asiasoftball.com>) to find link to the webinar platform (<http://www.softball.or.jp/acw/>)
 - Participants who register with SA would be given a password/passcode by SA to get access to the videos in the link to the special website.
 - NFs/participants to send "feedback" to SA, not JSA.
 - **Softball Asia**
 - To display the webinar special website link on SA

website.

- To collate the list of participants who register.
 - To provide the “password/passcode” to registered participants.
 - To receive “feedback” from NFs/participants, including questions for interactive sessions.
 - To share the list of participants and feedback with SA Coaching Committee Chair and JSA.
- **Japan Softball Association**
 - To provide the webinar platform and deliver instructional videos.
 - To upload footage on a weekly basis.
 - To provide the access link to SA.
 - To provide to SA, the “password/passcode” to enable the participants to view video footage.
 - To receive participants’ “feedback” from SA.
 - To plan and implement live webinars.
 - Live webinar proposed on 30 January and 27 March 2021.

4.1.3 In response to Mr. Miyake’s query as to whether his team could proceed further with the videos for the Webinar, SA President confirmed that since the SA EXCO had already approved the Project at the previous online EXCO Meeting on 14 October 2020, his team could proceed and continue with the Project.

4.1.4 The EXCO noted that the JSA’s annual allocation/contribution to SA for 2020 would be reduced from ¥2,000,000.00 to ¥1,000,000.00 as the sum of ¥1,000,000.00 from the original sum would be retained by JSA and be allocated for the Webinar Project. SA President Low informed that SA would send to JSA, the invoice for the ¥1,000,000.00 annual contribution by JSA to SA for 2020, and request that JSA deduct the WBS Development Grant of USD5,000.00 approved for the Webinar Project.

4.1.5 To Ms. Zhang’s query on the language used for the videos, SA President Low informed that the videos would be in Japanese with English subtitles, and that NFs would need to do their own local translation from the English subtitles to their local language, if necessary.

4.1.6 Ms. Zhang and the other EXCO Members expressed their appreciation to Mr. Miyake and his team for their dedication, commitment and efforts in producing the videos for the Webinar Project.

4.1.7 Mr. Miyake informed that the preliminary budgeted amount for the Webinar Project was ¥3,400,000.00.

4.2 Allocation & Distribution of Used Softball Equipment

On the 5 sets each of used softball equipment (received from the old ISF Plant City office) which the EXCO approved for allocation to the following at the

previous EXCO Meeting held on 14 October 2020, Mr. See Kok Wooi, who was assisting the SA on the shipping and delivery, gave the following update:

4.2.1 Shipment/delivery to National Softball Federations of:

- India
- Malaysia
- Pakistan
- Thailand

4.2.2 He had obtained the addresses from India and Pakistan for the delivery.

4.2.3 There is a delay in the shipment delivery due to travel restriction regulations - there are very few shippers operating routes, and he would keep SA posted when there were shipping schedules available.

5. UPDATE ON WBSC SOFTBALL REVIEW WORKING GROUP

5.1 SA President Low requested Mr. Schmidt to give an update to the EXCO of the progress and recommendations of the WBSC Softball Review Working Group (WG).

5.2 Mr. Schmidt informed the EXCO that the WG had several meetings and have agreed on some recommendations to be tabled to the WBSC Executive Board (EB) at its meeting to be held on 09 December 2020 for approval:

5.2.1 The WBSC World Cups for Softball – Men, Women, U23 Men, U18 Me, U18 Women and U12 Mixed Gender – would be moved from a 2-year cycle to a 4-year cycle.

5.2.2 The World Cups for Men, Women and U18 Women Softball would be changed to a 2-tier/stage system. The qualified teams would be divided into 3 – 4 pools/groups for a preliminary round robin competition within each pool/group; the top teams (number from each pool/group to be determined) of each group would then qualify to play in a final round/super round World Cup competition to determine the World Cup champion for each category.

5.2.3 The other World Cups, namely, for U23 Men, U18 Men and U12 Mixed Gender Softball would continue to be played using the current 1-tier/stage (all teams in 1 stage) World Cup competition.

5.2.4 There would be a revised overall calendar for all WBSC World Cups for Baseball and Softball, which is to be tabled to the WBSC EB for approval.

5.3 The EXCO fully supports the above recommendations of the WG.

5.4 The EXCO noted the possibility that the U23 Men Softball World Cup may be postponed further from 2021 to 2022 and the WBSC was still in discussion with the host in Argentina.

5.5 In response to Mr. Okamoto's query as to whether JSA should select their players for the national U23 Men Softball in January 2021, SA President Low informed that JSA could hold the selection later, perhaps February or later, as SA was still waiting for the WBSC to confirm the dates for the U23 Men Softball World Cup.

5.6 Mr. Schmidt requested the SA to wait for the WBSC EB to approve the revised overall calendar for Baseball and Softball World Cups, as there would be a shift in the years each would be held, particularly with the change to a 4-year cycle for softball. He and SA President Low informed the EXCO that the WG took into consideration many factors before finalising the WG recommendations, such as:

- 5.6.1 Reduce risks and costs for teams during the current global Covid-19 pandemic with less international travel by moving to a 4-year cycle for the World Cups.
- Consider Athletes' welfare and wellbeing (with less intensity as less days of competition and less games over 1 stretch of time) under a 2-tier/stage World Cup.
 - More teams may participate at different levels in the 2-tier/stage World Cups as more teams would be eligible to participate due to increase in number of participating teams at the first stage of the World Cup.
 - Cost cutting was important as allocations for sports were being cut by many governments and sponsors.
 - An assumption that Baseball-Softball would be back on the Olympics programme for Los Angeles 2028, be included in future World Games and other Regional Games, such as the Asian Games and Pan American Games.

6. TO DISCUSS SOFTBALL ASIA CONGRESS 2020

6.1 SA President Low pointed out the draft Agenda for the SA Congress to be held online on 15 December 2020 had been sent to all EXCO Members. She requested the EXCO Members to forward, within this week, any requests for additional items to be on the Agenda for the Congress.

6.2 The EXCO noted the main items to be discussed at the coming online SA Congress as follows:

6.2.1 Report on the WBSC Softball Review WG.

6.2.2 Report on the SA-JSA Joint Coaching Webinar Project.

6.2.3 To consider and approve the SA President and Secretary General Report for period 01 December 2018 to 30 November 2020.

6.2.4 To consider and approve the SA Accounts of Receipts and Expenditure for the period 01 December 2018 to 30 November 2020.

6.2.5 To discuss and decide on the SA Calendar for 2021 with the following events/activities scheduled:

- **Asia Cup Men Softball** (host and dates to be determined) – qualifier for 2 Asia teams for WBSC World Cup Men Softball (19 – 27 February 2022 – Auckland, New Zealand).
- **Asia Cup U23 Men Softball** (host and dates to be determined) – qualifier for 2 Asia teams for WBSC World Cup U23 Men Softball (October 2021 – Santiago de Estero, Argentina).

- **Asia Cup U12 Mixed Gender Softball** (host and dates to be determined – qualifier for 1 Asia team for WBSC World Cup U12 Mixed Gender (August 2021).

(SA President informed the EXCO that it may not be necessary to host Asia Cup as only 2 teams, namely, Hong Kong China and Chinese Taipei, had indicated interest in response to the SA Survey sent to SA NF-Members in mid-2020. She said that Chinese Taipei was eligible to participate as host of the WBSC World Cup U12 Mixed Gender Softball (24 – 29 August 2021 – Taichung, Taiwan and Hong Kong China would qualify as the 1 Asia team eligible.)

- **Asia Cup Asian Universities (U23) Women Softball** (host and dates to be determined).
- **Asia Cup Baseball5** (host – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and dates to be determined) – qualifier for 2 Asia teams for WBSC World Cup Baseball5 (2022 – Open category; 2023 – U18 category – hosts to be determined).
- **WBSC-Softball Asia Seminars for Technical Officials, Scorers, Umpires** to be held in conjunction with any of the above Asia Cup competitions.
- **WBSC-Asia Baseball5 Technical Seminar** to be held in conjunction with any of the above Asia Cup competitions.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 **Qualifier for Asian Games Hangzhou 2022**

7.1.1 Ms. Taeko Utsugi asked whether there would be a qualifier to qualify the teams eligible to participate in the Women Softball in the Asian Games Hangzhou 2022. The EXCO noted that participation in the Asian Games was under the authority of the NOCs, and not the NFs.

7.1.2 SA President Low informed that there may not be a need for a qualifier for the Asian Games Hangzhou as SA had always, in the past, had problems convincing the minimum of 6 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to allow their national Women Softball teams to participate in the Asian Games.

7.1.3 She informed that she would survey the NFs and NOCs to ascertain the number of teams interested and allowed by their NOCs to participate in the Asian Games Hangzhou 2022. She stated that under the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Constitution, participation in the team sports in the Asian Games was open to all teams in Asia.

7.2 **Webinar for Umpires**

Mr. Tabirara (SA Umpires' Committee Co-Chair) informed that he would discuss his plans for umpires' webinars for Asia with the WBSC Director of Umpires. Mr. Bob Stanton, and submit a proposal to SA for consideration.

7.3 **Media Reports by NFs**



- 7.3.1 SA Media Officer Mr. Tony Mariadass thanked all those who submitted periodic reports to update SA of their events and activities. He informed that he has been uploading the reports on events and activities of the NFs, onto the SA website.
- 7.3.2 He reminded all Members to submit the report in “Word” format and ensure that all photographs were captioned. SA President Low also requested the Members to submit a copy of their update report to the WBSC Media team for the news to be included in the WBSC website and newsletter.

7.4 WBSC Academy

- 7.4.1 WBSC Executive Ms. Aki Huang requested Members who have queries on the registration process and procedures for the WBSC Academy to contact her. She said that for the first session of the Baseball5 Webinar, there were about 20 participants from Asia registered and the second session was open for registration.
- 7.4.2 She clarified that registration for the courses available under the WBSC Academy was open to athletes, umpires, coaches, etc., and not just the staff of the NFs.
- 7.4.3 SA President Low requested for the list of the participants from Asia in the webinars under the WBSC Academy so that SA could follow-up with NFs for more participants to register.

7.5 Update on the WBSC

- 7.5.1 Mr. Schmidt updated the EXCO on the work done at the WBSC level. He stated that despite the many challenges caused by the global pandemic, it had been a very busy year for the WBSC.
- 7.5.2 He stated that one of the important steps taken by the WBSC was the setting up of the Integrity Unit chaired by the WBSC Secretary General-SA President Low. He said that this was an important step forward for a more organised and better governed WBSC as an established and recognised International Federation, to serve the WBSC Members more effectively.
- 7.5.3 He noted the request for the sharing of good practices, experience and operating procedures on how to organise national and international physical events and activities in the current pandemic situation. He stated that after the WBSC EB Meeting in December 2020, the WBSC would have better documentation put together to share with the Members and the Continental Associations on how events and activities may be organised under a “bubble system”.
- 7.5.4 He added that despite the many challenges, the WBSC hoped to implement the “bubble system” for the Baseball World Cups for U18 Men and Women to be held in March 2021 in Mexico. He said the WBSC was aware of the importance of staying optimistic to send the strong message that the WBSC was able to adapt to overcome challenges by still being able to organise physical events

and competitions during the current pandemic situation by finding solutions and implementing sufficient health and safety processes and protocols well.

- 7.5.5 He updated the EXCO that the WBSC Academy has already available webinars for Baseball5 and Coaching – Grassroot level; and soon for Umpires, Scorers, Baseball for the Blind and Wheelchair Softball; and next year, there would be added webinars and tools for Administration to help NFs to strengthen their administration and management.
- 7.5.6 He said that the WBSC was looking at a re-structure and strategic plan to strengthen itself to enable the WBSC to serve better and lend more support to its Members. He added that Asia Members could also contact Ms. Aki Huang who is in charge of the WBSC Academy and also the WBSC Members in Asia.
- 7.5.7 He informed that the WBSC had sent a Survey and Questionnaire to all WBSC Member-NFs to obtain status and information as an important step to plan how to better serve its Member-NFs. He hoped that all the Asia NFs would respond as the data collection was very important.

8. ADJOURNMENT

- 8.1 SA President Low thanked Mr. Schmidt for attending the Meeting and Ms. Huang for attending as well as helping with the technical set-up for the Meeting. She also thanked all attendees of the Meeting. She wished everyone and their families would continue to stay well, healthy and safe, and stated she looked forward to meeting again online for the SA Congress on 15 December 2020 at 14:00 (02.00 pm) Malaysia time.
- 8.2 There being no other matters arising, the meeting was adjourned at 11.30 am with a vote of thanks to the Chair of the meeting.

Minutes confirmed by:



BENG CHOO LOW
President, Softball Asia

01 December 2020