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WBSC

WORLD
BASEBALL SOFTBALL
CONFEDERATION

Game Time!

Softball Division Board Meeting

By videoconference
5th October 2022

Minutes

WBSC Softball Division Board Meeting

By videoconference

5th October 2022

AGENDA

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Roll call
- 3) Open discussion on the U-23 Men's Softball World Cup 2022
- 4) Any other business
- 5) Adjournment

ATTENDANCE

From the WBSC Executive Board:

Member At-Large: Mr. Gabriel Waage

From the WBSC Softball Division Board:

Chair:	Mr. Craig Cress
Vice Chair:	Dato' (Ms.) Beng Choo Low
Vice Chair:	Ms. María Soto
Continental VP– Asia:	Mr. Xu Yang
Continental VP– Europe:	Mr. Krunoslav Karin
Continental VP– Oceania:	Mr. Rex Capil
Member At-Large:	Ms. Taeko Utsugi
Member At-Large:	Ms. Mette Nissen Jakobsen
Athletes' Rep. – Men's Softball:	Mr. Bruno Motroni

Excused:

Continental VP– Africa:	Mr. Felix Okuye
Continental VP– Americas:	Mr. Tommy Velázquez
Member At-Large:	Mr. Chong Hoon Lee
Athletes' Rep. – Women's Softball:	Ms. Erika Polidori

In attendance, also:

Mr. Michael Schmidt, Executive Director
 Ms. Akiko Ito, Japanese interpreter
 Ms. Vanessa Endo, Secretary General of WBSC Americas Softball
 Staff of the Continental VP– Asia, Mr. Xu Yang
 Staff of the Member At-Large, Mr. Chong Hoon Lee
 Mr. Tirelo Mukokomani, Member of the Men's Fast Pitch Commission
 Mr. Jacinto Cipriota, Member of the Men's Fast Pitch Commission
 Mr. Tony Giles, Member of the Men's Fast Pitch Commission

WBSC Staff Members:

Mr. Richard Baker (Media & Communication)
 Mr. Joan García (Event Department)
 Mr. Victor Isola (Executive Assistant to the President)

1. WELCOME

- 1.1 Chair Cress called to order this 5th October 2022, WBSC Softball Division Board Meeting at 13:00 (Lausanne time). He welcomed all the attendees and outlined the matters as listed on the Agenda for discussion in this Meeting.

2. ROLL CALL

- 2.1 WBSC Executive Director Schmidt completed the Roll Call as per the attendance list above and confirmed that there was a quorum for this Meeting to proceed.

3. OPEN DISCUSSION ON THE U-23 MEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP 2022

- 3.1 Chair Cress opened by informing that unfortunately the LOC of the U-23 Men's Softball World Cup 2022 have decided to withdraw from the organisation of the event for economic reasons. In the meantime, attempts have been made by WBSC for another host for the tournament and one of the most concrete was the Dominican Republic which however was recently hit by a hurricane and therefore the government had to review priorities. Chair Cress highlighted that the WBSC Office also tried to find possibilities in other countries in the Americas, such as Colombia, but for the short time unfortunately they could not confirm. For all these reasons, Chair Cress raised the issue among all present and the members of the WBSC Men's Fast Pitch Commission to make recommendations to the WBSC Executive Board.
- 3.2 Mr. Schmidt explained that therefore the proposals was either to cancel the tournament or postpone it to 2023 and then also to decide on the age category in case the event was to be postponed to 2023; furthermore, he underlined that in 2023, the U-18 Softball World Cup has not yet any host and therefore suggested that all softball tournaments be reviewed a bit.
- 3.3 Ms. Low added that it would not be good to tell all qualified athletes that the U-23 tournament had to be cancelled, as well as it would not give a positive message for the WBSC.
- 3.4 Mr. Cipriota recalled that the tournament was supposed to take place in 2021, but then the WBSC asked for a move to 2022 due to the overlapping of events and the pandemic consequences. Meanwhile the country Argentina had an economic collapse with the change of three ministers in the space of fifteen days, just when the LOC payments had to be made; and for these reasons it could not go ahead. He stated that the LOC made every attempt but then, given the situation, he asked for the event to be moved to the first half of 2023. However, Argentina received the WBSC's response that an attempt would be made to hold the event elsewhere in 2022 to avoid further postponement. Mr. Cipriota agreed with the attempt in the

interest of the athletes. At this time, having no organisers for 2022, Mr. Cipriota ratified the LOC's commitment to do the event during the first half of 2023 (ideally March-April 2023) with the full backing of authorities at all levels, city, regional and national. Mr. Cipriota was also keen to specify that Argentina organised in 2022 a Pan-American tournament in July and its teams would participate in the Pan-American tournament in Guatemala and in the WBSC Men's Softball World Cup in New Zealand, which showed that funding was present.

- 3.5 Ms. Low thanked Mr. Cipriota and Argentina for their efforts and that the meeting was no to put blame on anyone, but to find a solution for the situation for the U-23 tournament in the interest of the qualified athletes and teams.
- 3.6 Mr. Capil replied that credibility was not only whether an event was cancelled or not, but also the fact that it was difficult for WBSC to find a replacement host-organiser within weeks of the event itself. Furthermore, he reminded that the age of the athletes was another factor to be considered since if the event is moved to 2023, we could have a U-23 World Cup where the athletes were already 25 years of age if we want to keep the same qualified athletes.
- 3.7 Mr. Giles indicated that New Zealand would not participate in the World Cup in 2023 with changed age category but would prefer to analyse opportunities for the U-18 Softball World Cup.
- 3.8 Mr. Waage expressed the difficulty of the athletes participating due to short-time frame to plan and stated that participation in the World Cups was a motivational engine for the athletes.
- 3.9 Mr. Cipriota added that the most important thing was to maintain credibility and ensure that the athletes who have prepared, trained, and qualified for a World Cup get to play. He also pointed out that men's softball was very important because it would also be ready to replace men's baseball in the Olympic Games should it be necessary to stand alongside women's softball. Finally, he added that from a marketing point of view, he did not see any problem in moving an event by year while keeping the same name, as was done with the 2020 Olympic Games played in 2021. Finally, he added the important thing was that there is a rule that when moving an event by year, the age of the qualified athletes would change but not the name of the event, so that athletes were guaranteed to be eligible participate.
- 3.10 Mr. Motroni pointed out that it was not good to cancel a World Cup as it would send a negative message, particularly to the athletes.
- 3.11 Ms. Low asked if there was a possibility to hold the event in 2022 at WBSC expenses, to which Mr. Schmidt said that it was not possible to organise the event in 2022 due to time and there was not host-venue to do it.
- 3.12 Chair Cress clarified that it is impossible to do the event in 2022 because there

was no host-venue, even if the WBSC covered part of the expenses.

- 3.13 Mr. Capil asked when the next U-23 Men's Softball World Cup would be, and Chair Cress replied that it was scheduled for 2026.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the postponement of the U-23 Men's Softball World Cup 2022 to 2023.

DECISION

The WBSC Softball Division Board approved (by majority) the postponement of the U-23 Men's Softball World Cup 2022 to 2023.

- 3.14 Mr. Cipriota replied that Argentina would look at the possibility of organising the U-18 Men's Softball World Cup in Argentina saying that all categories were important, and WBSC should not give up any one category in favour of another category. Furthermore, he specified that Argentina authorities supports the senior category and U-23 category Men Softball.
- 3.15 Mr. Waage suggested those who would be in Auckland for the coming Men Softball World Cup could have an informal open meeting-discussion there to review the softball tournaments and calendar.
- 3.16 Mr. Schmidt clarified that it was important to decide on the age category issue for the postponed tournament in 2023 and that WBSC would reopen the bid for that U-23 tournament.
- 3.17 Ms. Low proposed keeping the tournament name and the same group of athletes in 2023 for that U-23 tournament.
- 3.18 Mr. Waage proposed keeping the U-23 category.
- 3.19 Upon request, Chair Cress clarified that if WBSC did not maintain that group of athletes, many athletes who had qualified and trained for that tournament would not be able to participate in that World Cup and the teams would have to re-selected, but on the other hand, those participating would be 25 years of age.
- 3.20 Mr. Capil queried on the integrity aspect if WBSC organised an event which was one age category but the athletes who participated were another age category.
- 3.21 Ms. Nissen Jakobsen asked if it was possible to change the name of the event.
- 3.22 Ms. Low stated that she would prefer to support the qualified athletes to participate in the postponed tournament rather than for the national federations involved to

have to select a new team to participate, to be fairer to those athletes who have been training in anticipation of the tournament.

- 3.23 Mr. Schmidt stated that the postponement of the event was due to the global pandemic and therefore it was not so much a question of integrity but rather unforeseen circumstances. On the other hand, he underlined the fact that Asia played the qualifier recently and for this reason were also in favour of using the same athletes, although it was noted that the other continents played their respective qualifier more than a year ago.
- 3.24 Mr. Karin said that listening to all the recommendations, he would like to say that it was not the same for all continents and for this, he endorsed Mr. Waage's proposal.
- 3.25 Ms. Utsugi added that it is important that the qualified teams go to the World Cup even if it takes place in 2023.

PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve the change of eligibility allowing U-25 athletes to participate in the U-23 Men's Softball World Cup to be played in 2023.

DECISION

The WBSC Softball Division Board approved (by majority) the change of eligibility allowing U-25 athletes to participate in the U-23 Men's Softball World Cup to be played in 2023.

- 3.26 Ms. Low requested that Argentina put in a bid for the U-23 tournament in 2023.
- 3.27 Mr. Cipriota replied that it would not be a problem for him to have other bids on, but that for a Men's Softball tournament, the requirements should be reviewed.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 There was no other matter brought up.

5. ADJOURNMENT

- 5.1 Chair Cress thanked all who attended the Meeting. He also thanked the WBSC staff and the interpreter for their efforts in ensuring the success of the meeting.
- 5.2 There being no other matters, the Meeting adjourned at 14:10 with a vote of thanks to the Chair. [End]

These Minutes, originating from the WBSC Softball Division Board Meeting held by videoconference on 5th October 2022, are formally confirmed as correct by:

Day _____ Month _____ Year _____

City _____

Signed by _____
Craig Cress
Chair

Signed by _____
Beng Choo Low
Vice Chair