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**WBSC**

WORLD  
**BASEBALL SOFTBALL**  
CONFEDERATION

*Game Time!*

# **Executive Board 34th Meeting**

By videoconference  
5th March 2026

# Minutes

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## WBSC Executive Board 34th Meeting

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By videoconference

5<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## AGENDA

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Roll call
- 3) President's Address
- 4) WADA Code and its application to the professional organisations
- 5) National management of Baseball5 – Lithuania case
- 6) Any other business

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## ATTENDANCE

### Present (20/28):

|                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| President:                 | Mr. Riccardo Fraccari     |
| Secretary General:         | Dato' (Ms.) Beng Choo Low |
| Treasurer:                 | Mr. Angelo Vicini         |
| Vice President:            | Mr. Luís Mejía            |
| Vice President:            | Mr. Willi Kaltschmitt     |
| Vice President:            | Ms. Beatrice Allen        |
| Vice President:            | Mr. Francesco Ricci Bitti |
| Executive VP – Softball:   | Mr. Craig Cress           |
| Member At-Large Baseball:  | Mr. Xu Chen               |
| Member At-Large Baseball:  | Ms. Lucie Zawada          |
| Member At-Large Softball:  | Ms. Taeko Utsugi          |
| Member At-Large Softball:  | Mr. Garibaldy Bautista    |
| Athletes' Rep. – Baseball: | Ms. Ayako Rokkaku         |
| Continental Rep – Africa   | Mr. Saber Jlaïla          |
| Continental Rep – Africa   | Mr. Tirelo Mukokomani     |
| Continental Rep – Americas | Mr. Paul Seiler           |
| Continental Rep – Asia     | Mr. Masatake Yamanaka     |
| Continental Rep – Asia     | Mr. Art Phainpanitporn    |
| Continental Rep – Europe   | Mr. Gabriel Waage         |
| Continental Rep – Oceania  | Mr. Rex Capil             |

### Excused:

|                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Executive VP – Baseball:   | Mr. Jeffrey Koo Jr.     |
| Member At-Large Baseball:  | Ms. Aracelis León       |
| Member At-Large Softball:  | Mr. Juan Reinaldo Perez |
| Athletes' Rep. – Baseball: | Mr. Randolph Oduber     |
| Athletes' Rep. – Softball: | Ms. Stacey Porter       |
| Athletes' Rep. – Softball: | Mr. Joshua McGovern     |
| Continental Rep – Americas | Vacant                  |
| Continental Rep – Europe   | Mr. Krunoslav Karin     |
| Continental Rep – Oceania  | Mr. David Hynes         |

**Also In attendance:**

|                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mr. Michael Schmidt       | Executive Director                    |
| Ms. Akiko Ito             | Japanese interpreter                  |
| Mr. Chris (Chien Fan) Day | CTBA International Relations Director |
| Mr. Ron Finlay            | Chair of the WBSC Legal Commission    |
| Ms. Karen Gaunt           | Member of the WBSC Legal Commission   |
| Mr. Vincenzo La Rocca     | Member of the WBSC Legal Commission   |
| Ms. Vivien Campos         | WBSC Interpreter                      |

**WBSC Staff Members:**

|                        |                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mr. Marco Ienna        | COO                                  |
| Mr. Richard Baker      | Media & Communications Department    |
| Mr. Victor Isola       | Executive Assistant to the President |
| Ms. Yoori Jung         | Presidential Cabinet                 |
| Ms. Imani Moore        | Presidential Cabinet                 |
| Ms. Carine Esoua       | Legal Officer                        |
| Ms. Francesca Fabretto | Member Relations Department          |

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## 1. WELCOME

- 1.1 President Fraccari called to order this 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026 WBSC Executive Board (EB) Meeting at 13:00 (Central European Time) by videoconference. He welcomed all the attendees and expressed appreciation for their support.

## 2. ROLL CALL

- 2.1 Secretary General Low completed the Roll Call as per the attendance list above and confirmed that there was a quorum for this Meeting to proceed.

## 3. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

- 3.1 President Fraccari opened his address by welcoming the Executive Board (EB) members, and invitees, present (online), and thanked them for attending at short notice. He noted that the Meeting was convened to address important matters, and to provide an important update on key developments since the last EB Meeting on 24 November 2025 (online).
- 3.2 He first paid tribute to Melitón Sanchez, a long-standing colleague who had recently passed, noting that over more than five decades, he left a profound mark on Softball, the Olympic movement, and sport governance across the Americas. Within the WBSC, he had served as an EB Member, and Vice President, playing a central role in strengthening the global governance of Softball and supporting the WBSC mission, and objectives.
- 3.3 He reported on the meeting held on 13 January 2026 with IOC President Ms. Kirsty Coventry, which was also attended by WBSC Executive Director (ED) Mr. Schmidt and WBSC Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mr. Ienna. He described it as a constructive and forward-looking meeting, in which a wide range of strategic topics were addressed, including:
- The history of WBSC;
  - The globalisation of our sport
  - The unification of the IBAF and ISF in 2014;
  - Our current membership figures;
  - The growth of our athlete base and tournaments across all discipline categories; and

- Our work on innovative products such as eSports and the Baseball Champions League.

- 3.4 He also reported that in mid-February 2026, the WBSC European Congress took place in Malta, during which the Mediterranean Baseball Softball Union was officially established with the participation of numerous “Mediterranean” countries in Europe. The first EB of the new Union was elected, and the statutes were approved, formally establishing its governance framework. Baseball5 is already set to feature as demonstration sport at the Mediterranean Games in Taranto, Italy in the summer of 2026.
- 3.5 He informed the EB that the previous week, he, accompanied by Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Ienna, met with the leadership of FISU (Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire), the International University Sports Federation, in Lausanne. He was pleased to confirm that Baseball and Softball have been included in the sport programme of the 2029 World University Games in North Carolina, USA – a major milestone for the continued integration of WBSC within the global multi-sport movement. The potential future inclusion of Baseball5 in the university sport ecosystem was also explored during those discussions.
- 3.6 The President concluded his address by noting two important governance matters to be addressed under the subsequent agenda items.

#### **4. WADA CODE AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 4.1 President Fraccari informed that for some weeks, WBSC was engaged in discussions with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) regarding some doping cases involving MLB (Major League Baseball) athletes who had competed in the 2023 World Baseball Classic (WBC). He requested Mr. Ienna to brief the EB on the matter.
- 4.2 Mr. Ienna presented the background to the matter as follows:
- 4.2.1 During the 2023 WBC, two (2) athletes tested positive for cannabinoids (marijuana), and were sanctioned with two-(2)-year bans each at the international level as the athletes did not respond to the charges, and the two-(2)-year suspension sanction was applied as the prescribed measure under the WADA Code.
- 4.2.2 WADA raised concerns that the athletes competed in professional leagues during

their two-(2)-year ineligibility period, which is prohibited under Article 10.14.1 of the WADA Code, and requested WBSC impose further sanctions of up to another two (2) years (corresponding to an increase in the sanction, equivalent to the original one).

- 4.3 President Fraccari explained that for several years, the WBSC has actively worked to strengthen relationships with professional leagues worldwide, including MLB, the MLB Players Association (MLBPA), NPB (Nippon Professional Baseball) in Japan, KBO (Korean Baseball Organization) in Korea, CPBL (Chinese Professional Baseball League) in Chinese Taipei, as well as the professional leagues in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and others.
- 4.3.1 He stated that a significant milestone in this cooperation has been the establishment and development of the WBC, jointly organised with MLB. Within that framework, an anti-doping programme aligned with the WADA Code — including adherence to the Prohibited List and results management principles — has been implemented.
- 4.3.2 He informed that this has allowed top professional athletes-players to compete under a Code-compliant structure, and has provided an important opportunity to educate them on the WADA framework and International Standards.
- 4.3.3 While substantial progress has been made, structural differences remain between the WADA Code system, and certain professional league anti-doping programmes. These differences arise from distinct legal frameworks, including domestic law, and collectively bargained agreements, rather than from any lack of commitment to clean sport. The present cases illustrate the complexity of operating across these parallel systems.
- 4.3.4 The underlying Anti-Doping Rule Violations in the two (2) cases concerned cannabinoids (marijuana), a substance that is not prohibited under the MLB Joint Drug Prevention and Treatment Program. Under the WADA Code, cannabinoids are categorised as “Substances of Abuse”, and generally lead to relatively limited periods of ineligibility.
- 4.3.5 The athletes in question have already served two-(2)-year periods of ineligibility from international competition for what is widely regarded as a minor category of violation under the Code, within a framework that, particularly in relation to the substance in question, is not intended to operate as an instrument of punitive

justice. The nature of the substance and its regulatory treatment across systems is therefore a relevant contextual factor when assessing proportionality.

- 4.3.6 The alleged participation during the period of ineligibility occurred exclusively within a professional league operating under United States law, and governed by a collective bargaining agreement between MLB and the MLBPA. The WBSC does not have sporting disciplinary jurisdiction over MLB competitions, nor does it possess regulatory authority over the league's operations. The athletes were contractually bound to their clubs, and subject to their employment obligations under the collectively bargained framework.
- 4.3.7 It is also relevant that at the time of the registration to the events which triggered the concerned Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs), the MLB formally communicated to the athletes-players that substances not prohibited under its program (like cannabis) would not result in sanctions within that jurisdiction. In this context, the WBSC's ability to regulate or sanction conduct occurring exclusively within such a domestic professional framework remains inherently limited.
- 4.3.8 The WBSC is also mindful that the interaction between international sporting disciplinary frameworks, and professional leagues, operating under domestic law, and collective bargaining agreements, requires careful consideration of the legal environments in which those leagues operate.
- 4.3.9 In considering the matter, the WBSC has assessed the case in light of the totality of the circumstances and all relevant mitigating factors.
- 4.3.10 In particular, the WBSC has taken into account the historically limited exposure of MLB athletes to the WADA Code framework outside the context of international competitions. Unlike athletes competing regularly within the Olympic movement, or under International Federation anti-doping systems, MLB athletes-players are primarily subject to their own professional league anti-doping programme, and are therefore not routinely operating within the WADA Code structure. As a consequence, the level of education and practical familiarity of such athletes with the specific requirements and consequences of the WADA Code framework is factually limited, particularly with respect to obligations that arise outside international competition contexts. The WBSC has also considered the nature and scope of the communications and information that were provided to the athletes within their professional league structure.

4.3.11 There is no indication that the athletes sought to deliberately undermine the objectives of the Code. In addition, the WBSC has carefully considered the broader procedural implications of pursuing additional proceedings in circumstances where the conduct in question occurred entirely outside the Federation's sporting disciplinary jurisdiction and where the players concerned have already served lengthy periods of ineligibility under WBSC's anti-doping jurisdiction, and they are now in the process of concluding their career and retiring from the sport (Mr. Ryan Pressly already retired, while Mr. Adam Ottavino is the process of doing so over the coming months).

4.3.12 These cases have served as an important catalyst for strengthening communication and education. With the constructive support of MLB and the MLBPA, we are enhancing efforts to ensure that professional athletes clearly understand the WADA Code, the Prohibited List, and the consequences that may arise when competing in international events governed by International Federations

4.4 The WBSC Executive Board engaged in extensive discussion, and each of them underscored the importance of jurisdiction, and the need for WBSC to make every effort to strengthen anti-doping initiatives within its jurisdiction.

#### PROPOSAL:

To consider and approve for WBSC to inform WADA to not assert a violation of Article 10.14.1 of the Code against the players concerned.

#### **DECISION**

*The WBSC Executive Board unanimously approved to inform WADA to not assert a violation of Article 10.14.1 of the Code against the players concerned.*

## 5. NATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF BASEBALL5 - LITHUANIA CASE

5.1 President Fraccari requested the EB Members to recall this matter, in relation to the EB's decision as regards the management and authority for Baseball5 in each country, that:

- 5.1.1 where a country has two separate national federations, each may operate independently at the national level.
- 5.1.2 However, when international representation must be determined, WBSC urges the federations to reach a mutual written agreement. In the absence of such agreement, the decision taken at the previous Executive Board meeting was to hold a playoff between the two respective federations, with the result determining which federation would represent the country internationally.
- 5.2 Following that decision, President Fraccari met with the Lithuanian Baseball Federation (LBF) at the WBSC European Congress in Malta and explained the Board's position. Subsequent correspondence was received from the LBF. The President noted that he did not consider this correspondence to raise any new fundamental position, and requested Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Ienna to brief the EB Members:
- 5.2.1 Mr. Schmidt confirmed that the EB's previous decision was clear, and that a response letter was sent by the WBSC Secretariat to all National Federations (NFs) that appropriately addressed the points raised. He recommended informing Lithuania that the EB's position stands, and that the matters raised by LBF did not raise any new - valid legal basis / grounds for the any change in the EB's previous stand and decision..
- 5.3 Secretary General Low proposed reaffirming the decision taken at the previous EB Meeting and proceeding to send the prepared response letter. This was supported by Mr. Cress, Mr. Waage, and other Board members, who noted that the matter had been debated at great length at the previous meeting and that no new grounds had been advanced.
- 5.4 Mr. Vicini requested confirmation that the Legal Commission had reviewed the letter. Mr. Finlay confirmed that while the Legal Commission did not draft the previous WBSC letter, its content was legally appropriate from the perspective of the EB's mandate. He proposed that the closing tone could be softened slightly, while confirming the substantive position was entirely correct.
- 5.5 Ms. Allen noted that it would be useful to ascertain which of the two federations has the support of the Lithuanian government, as government positioning may be relevant in cases of internal disputes of this nature.
- 5.6 President Fraccari noted that the underlying reason for the dispute was financial: both

federations had received government funding allocated to Baseball5, and both wished to retain access to those funds.

## PROPOSAL:

To reaffirm the decision of the previous Executive Board meeting regarding the national management of Baseball5 in Lithuania and to authorise the WBSC Office to send the prepared response letter.

### *DECISION*

*The WBSC Executive Board approved to reaffirm the decision of the previous Executive Board meeting regarding the national management of Baseball5 in Lithuania and to authorise the WBSC Office to send the prepared response letter to the Lithuanian Baseball Federation.*

## 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 No other business was raised.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

7.1 President Fraccari thanked all who attended the Meeting and extended his appreciation to the WBSC staff and interpreters for their efforts in ensuring its success. He apologised again for the short notice in convening the meeting, and emphasised the importance of the matters discussed.

7.2 The Meeting ended at 15:50 with a vote of thanks to the Chair. [End]

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*These Minutes, originating from the WBSC Executive Board Meeting held by videoconference on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026, are formally confirmed as correct by:*

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_  
Riccardo Fraccari  
President

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_  
Beng Choo Low  
Secretary General