Softball Division
Board Meeting
By videoconference
25th April 2024
Minutes

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WBSC Softball Division Board Meeting
By videoconference
25th April 2024
AGENDA

1) Welcome
2) Roll call
3) Tie-Breaking Rules Recommendations
4) Any other business
5) Adjournment

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ATTENDANCE

From the WBSC Softball Division Board:
Chair: Mr. Craig Cress
1st Vice Chair: Dato’ (Ms.) Beng Choo Low
Continental VP– Africa: Vacant
Continental VP– Americas: Mr. Tommy Velázquez
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

Excused:
2nd Vice Chair: Ms. María Soto
Member At-Large: Mr. Chong Hoon Lee
Athletes’ Rep. – Softball: Ms. María Soto

In attendance, also:
Mr. Michael Schmidt, Executive Director
Mr. Chet Gray, Chair of the Softball Technical Commission
Ms. Akiko Ito, Japanese interpreter
Staff of the Continental VP– Asia, Mr. Xu Yang
Staff of the Member At–Large, Mr. Chong Hoon Lee

WBSC Staff Members:
Mr. Joan García (Events Department)
Ms. Laurie Gouthro (Events Department)
Mr. Victor Isola (Executive Assistant to the President)
Ms. Yoori Jung (Protocol Department)
1. **WELCOME**

1.1 Chair Cress called to order this 25th April 2024, 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 Mr. Schmidt completed the Roll Call as per the attendance list above and confirmed that there was a quorum for this Meeting to proceed.

3) **TIE-BREAKING RULES RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 Chair Cress introduced the topic to be discussed during the meeting which is the tie-breaking rules. The rules have been reviewed by the WBSC Softball Technical Commission and the commission suggested three different options to improve the rules. Chair Cress said that the WBSC Softball Division Board needed to reach a consensus on this topic among three options.

3.1.1 Mr. Schmidt further explained the background of the discussion mentioning that there were three teams tied for the first time in the U-15 Women’s Softball World Cup 2023. Then the comprehensiveness of the current rules has come to the fore.

3.2 Mr. Gray briefed the Commission’s review on the tie-breaker scenarios. The Team Quality Balance (TQB) system was reviewed in a very early stage of the process, however, the Commission wanted to maintain the current rule with clearer language. After what happened during the U-15 Women’s Softball World Cup 2023, the Commission was asked to review the tie-breaking rules again. There were questions regarding the TQB system, which has been adopted in baseball for a long time, but it is new to softball.

3.3 Mr. Gray continued stating the viewpoint of the WBSC Softball Technical Commission, that the Commission believes the TQB system is the only item outstanding right now for the 2024 season.

3.4 Mr. Schmidt talked about experiences with the TQB system in baseball which has been applied for more than 11 years, even changed and then reinstated again. Just as an example, when there were five out of six teams tied during the U-23 Baseball World Cup 2022 group stage, the TQB system was convincing enough to everybody.

3.5 Mr. Schmidt explained the TQB is more complex than just counting the runs against but on the other side, too simple calculations might lead to match-fixing which we
take seriously, and we cannot allow to happen. He continued saying he believes the TQB system is the fairest way of breaking ties because it includes the runs made, runs received, and the innings and outs played which the current softball regulation does not consider.

3.6 Chair Cress thanked Mr. Gray and the WBSC Softball Technical Commission for their hard work. Then he opened the floor for comments and questions.

3.6.1 Ms. Low spoke in favour of the TQB system saying the current run difference tie-breaker rule is easier for teams to manipulate the games. She agreed with the opinion of Mr. Schmidt pointing out that the complexity of the TQB system will make it difficult for the teams to manipulate the rule. Ms. Low mentioned she thinks it is fairer to have a TQB system because it considers all the games played overall – the number of runs for, runs against and innings played – and we would want to have better teams in quality moving forward to the next round, rather than a simple rule affecting it.

3.6.2 Mr. Capil supported the TQB system saying it seems obvious that the system fulfills what we need to be seen to be operating under and this is what is right for our tournaments and participants going forward.

3.6.3 Mr. Karin stated he believes the TQB system is the fairest system we can have as it takes both parts of the game – offense and defense – and it is difficult to manipulate it. It is almost impossible to have the same TQB in the end.

3.6.4 Ms. Utsugi backed the TQB system up explaining that she has been trying to sort it out and compared all systems. She stated that it is the fairest one for all of us, clear and equal to everyone.

3.6.5 Ms. Jakobsen supported the TQB system based on the discussion, as it seems it is well-tested fairly.

3.7 Chair Cress expressed his opinion of supporting the TQB system as we move forward. He emphasised that we must make sure that the staff and softball community understand the system and the change if the TQB system is adopted.

PROPOSAL:
To consider and recommend the TQB (Team Quality Balance) tie-breaker system for the WBSC Executive Board Meeting which will be held on 11th May 2024 in Pully, Switzerland, as proposed by Ms. Low, and seconded by Mr. Karin.
DECISION
The WBSC Softball Division Board unanimously approved to propose the TQB (Team Quality Balance) tie-breaker system for the WBSC Executive Board Meeting which will be held on 11th May 2024 in Pully, Switzerland.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Ms. Low mentioned we may have an explanation of the TQB system with more details so that the softball community can understand the system and the way we are moving forward.

4.2 Ms. Utsugi added that it is also important to explain the system during the team manager meetings previous to the tournaments.

4.3 Mr. García answered that he will make sure to include the topic in the pre-tournament technical and organisational meeting and support the technical directors of the tournament.

5. ADJOURNMENT

5.1 Chair Cress thanked all who attended the Meeting. He also thanked the WBSC staff for their efforts in ensuring the success of the meeting.

5.2 There being no other matters, the Meeting adjourned at 13:45 with a vote of thanks to the Chair. [End]
These Minutes, originating from the WBSC Softball Division Board Meeting held by videoconference on 25th April 2024, are formally confirmed as correct by:

Day _______ Month _______ Year _______

City ________________________________

Signed by ___________________________  Signed by ___________________________
Craig Cress                                Beng Choo Low
Chair                                       1st Vice Chair