



# 2024 SEASON REPORTS

## Director's Report- Lorraine Phee

Work for the 2024 season began in late December 2024, and our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Tuesday, January 30th. Registration for the 2024 season opened in early February and closed on March 10th. We were pleased to see 49 teams register, matching the total from the previous season in 2023. Among the new additions, we welcomed the development squad *Bangers and Smash* to Division 6. Unfortunately, we also saw the long-standing team *Knight Sliders* fold prior to the season and they did not register.

For the 2024 season, Divisions 1 through 5 each fielded 8 teams, while Division 6 had 9 teams. While the larger 9-team division provided some excitement, it also led to a longer season. This size proved challenging, as seen in previous years, and resulted in complications with scheduling. In response, teams in Division 6 agreed to avoid bye weeks by scheduling two weeks with double fixtures. While this allowed most teams to play their games without major issues, rainouts late in the season, particularly in August, presented challenges for rescheduling.

Looking ahead to the 2025 season, the committee has agreed to welcome a new team, *London Asteroids*, into Division 3. This will bring the possibility of a 9-team division, depending on the registration numbers.

In March, we hosted the return of New Player's Day, which, for the first time, was held indoors at the 108. Daniel's report goes into more detail, but it was an overall success. The event saw an influx of 12" ball players, while 11" ball players continued to be in high demand.

The season officially kicked off at the end of April and ran over 14 weeks. Overall, the season progressed smoothly with minimal disruption. However, we did face challenges due to transportation strikes, weather issues, and even the scheduling conflicts with Glastonbury. Despite the new division structure, some teams struggled to complete all of their games before the regulated end of the season. Tiernan's field report will provide further insight into this.

As the season drew to a close, we witnessed some incredibly tight finishes across the divisions. Below is the list of winners and runners-up for each division:

- **Division 1**  
*Winners:* Secret Agents MI6  
*Runners-Up:* Mescalitos and The Mob
- **Division 2**  
*Winners:* Fuzzy Ducks  
*Runners-Up:* Odd Sox
- **Division 3**  
*Winners:* Raiders Gold  
*Runners-Up:* Secret Agents Private I's

- **Division 4**  
*Winners:* Base Jumpers  
*Runners-Up:* Pimlico Buccaneers
- **Division 5**  
*Winners:* Battitude  
*Runners-Up:* Flyballers
- **Division 6**  
*Winners:* Raiders Red  
*Runners-Up:* Bonk Squad

The *Majors* and *Minors* reports will provide more details on the season's highlights, but the competitive nature and sportsmanship across all divisions made for an exciting conclusion to the 2024 season.

### **Outgoing roles:**

**Lukas Kelly:** League Secretary. Lukas joined the committee in 2019, and over the past five years, he has made an invaluable contribution to the league. His commitment to the role has been clear in everything he's done, from meticulously keeping the minutes and notes at all AGMs and committee meetings to offering his insight and resourcefulness whenever needed.

In addition to his administrative contributions, Lukas once contributed to development squads. He devoted time to coaching during the 101 sessions and stepped up to help mentor new players, always giving his time to support the growth of the league. He's also been a reliable presence on the field, stepping into full-time umpiring roles during tournaments and when teams needed help with league games.

On behalf of the entire committee, thank you, Lukas, for all your hard work and dedication. We're confident that we'll continue to see you behind the plate this season, and we look forward to your continued involvement in the league in one way or another.

**Chioma Nwaorgu-Okere:** Minors Officer. Chioma joined the committee last year after a relatively short time in the league, but it didn't take long for her to become a valuable member of our team. I first met Chioma during a pickup game at Clapham South as part of the BASU umpire training, and since then, she's quickly immersed herself in many aspects of the league.

From the very start, Chioma has been eager to help and always reliable. She never needed to be chased for reports and was incredibly proactive in updating the standings for the minors on the website every Friday. Her willingness to jump in and assist, whether it was on the field or helping with awards presentations, made her a true asset to the committee.

Although her time with us was brief, Chioma's hard work and dedication have not gone unnoticed. On behalf of the entire committee, thank you for everything you've done this season. Your contribution, even in the short time you were with us, has made a meaningful impact.

**Daniel Brightman: New Players Officer.** Daniel has served on the LSL committee for four years as our New Players Officer. When he first joined, his interest was in the Minors Officer role, but he quickly embraced the New Players role and made it his own. Over the years, Daniel has played an essential part in organising numerous New Players Days and in communicating with new members before, during, and after the season.

His commitment has been key in providing new players guidance find the right team for their abilities and social preferences. Daniel has always been there to make sure that newcomers feel welcomed and integrated into the league. His organisational skills and efficiency made him a reliable member of the team.

You could always count on Daniel to show up prepared—whether it was with the registration lists, clipboards and name tags, or simply being the friendly face new players needed when they arrived. His efforts have made a lasting impact on the league, and we're incredibly grateful for everything he's done. Thank you, Daniel, for all your hard work and dedication over the years

**Lorraine Phee: League Director.** It feels a little strange to be writing about myself, but as I step down from my role as League Director, I want to take a moment to reflect on my time with the committee. Serving this league for the past three years has truly been an honour, and it's hard to put into words just how much it's meant to me.

I originally joined the committee as Events Officer for the 2022 season, and then, when the Director role became vacant, I stepped into that position in 2023. Over the course of the 2023 season, I found myself stepping up in multiple areas as vacancies arose, which led me to take on not just the Director role, but also both the Events and Communications Officer roles. It was a lot, and at times unbelievably stressful but I was glad to help wherever I could. Thankfully, for the 2024 season, we had some new additions to the committee, which allowed me to focus on what I knew would be my last year as Director.

During these three years, I've learned so much about how this league operates—how much work goes on behind the scenes, and how dedicated everyone is to making it the community we all love. When I first took on this role, my main goal was to keep the league inclusive and accessible to all. I wanted to be approachable, visible, and to emphasise the social side of softball, because in all honesty if it wasn't for softball I wouldn't have any friends! I was also excited to reintroduce the LSL umpiring courses and to help bring more people into the league. And, of course, I used my new found status to find few chances to yell into a microphone or two along the way!

But, as all good things must, it's time for me to step away. The time constraints, combined with other personal commitments, mean I need to hang up my hat. As much as I've loved being part of this committee, I know it's the right time to pass the torch.

I am so grateful for everything I've experienced during my time on the committee. I've met so many incredible people, and had the chance to get to know some familiar faces even better. It's been a true privilege to give back to a community that welcomed me with open arms when I moved to the UK 10 years ago. This experience has taught me so much, and I'll carry those lessons with me.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your support, for the laughs, and for the opportunity to grow as both a person and a leader. I've loved every (or most) moment(s), and while I may be stepping down from the committee, I'm sure I'll see you all around the diamond in the near future!

## **Majors Report-Dana Granville and Dan Ferguson**

### **Majors 3**

At the top of the table, Raiders Gold were almost unstoppable with a 13-1 record and 332 runs scored (an average of nearly 24 runs per game) while conceding just 142 runs. The Private I's secured second place and were right behind the Raiders Gold in runs-for, with 320 runs scored. They will be joining Raiders Gold in Majors 2 in 2025.

The middle of the table featured stiff competition, with the Base Invaders, Cheetahs, Oblivion, and Raiders Blue all finishing 6-8. In the end, the Base Invaders clinched third place thanks to their steady offense, which scored 241 runs. The Cheetahs finished fourth with one of the stingiest defences among the mid-table teams. Oblivion secured 5th place, and Raiders Blue hung on in 6th place, and all will remain in Majors 3 in 2025.

Bat Intentions finished the season with a 4-8 record, and will be joining The Mafia, who finished with a 3-10-1 record, in Minors 1 in 2025.

### **Majors 2**

As always, Majors 2 was highly competitive, with only a three-win difference separating promotion from relegation. The Fuzzy Ducks bounced back from their 2023 relegation with an impressive 12-2 record and a +92 run differential, which secured their immediate promotion back to Majors 1. Majors 2 mainstays the Odd Sox will finally be trying their luck in Majors 1 in 2025 - their defence was the second-best in the division, allowing just 152 runs across 14 games.

Majors 2 mainstays SPAM finished third with a 7-6-1 record. Their run differential of -4 highlighted their knack for grinding out victories in close contests. Just behind them in 4th place were another longstanding Majors 2 team - The Pirates with a 7-7 record, finishing with a +14 run differential. Despite finishing in fifth place, Soft Boiled scored 248 runs (the second-highest total in the division) and made a late-season relegation push. BBG Muppets finished with a 5-8-1 record, good enough for 6th place and to avoid relegation.

Just below them were The Dazzlers, who finished with a 5-9-0 record. In spite of their +7 run differential, the Dazzlers, who were in Majors 1 in 2023, will be relegated to Majors 3 for 2025. Recently promoted Game of Throws finished with a 4-10-0 record, and will be joining Dazzlers in Majors 3.

### **Majors 1**

MI6 have continued their stronghold on Majors 1, claiming the title with an 11-3 record and a +130 run differential. Right behind them in joint second place were perennial Majors 1 contenders the Mescalitos and Majors 1 newcomers The Mob. The Mesokies had a notably fantastic defence that allowed just 164 runs— the second-best in the league. Meanwhile, The Mob had the best-ever year for a newly-promoted team, and defeated MI6 in an all-LSL Platinum Club Nationals final.

Meteors Black started the season 6-0 and were in the title race all season, eventually finishing fourth with an 8-6 record. The ever-consistent Mouse Rat finished fifth with a very solid 7-6-1 record.

The division featured an epic relegation battle with Coyotes winning their last 3 games to stay up. LNZ, who finished 4-9-1 and the newly promoted Niño's who finished 2-11-0 will be playing in Majors 2 in 2025.

## **Minors Report- Chioma Nwaorgu-Okere**

As the Minors Officer representing the Minors teams in the London Softball League, it is my pleasure to provide a summary of yet another engaging and invigorating season within the softball community:

### **Minors 3:**

Division 6 were surprised by the vigour of the 2023 dev squad Bangers and Smash, as they debuted into the league, dominating within the first few games, before settling into their groove. Those weekly Sunday afternoon practice sessions are exactly what the coach called for and resulted in them coming in ahead of all the development teams in the division. Recent relegates Raiders Red also had a slow start to the season, kicking things up a notch and proving that division 6 isn't their forever home. Just as they came in, they're off again and we wish them the best of luck in division 5. As a fellow division 6 player who experienced one of their thrashings – best of luck, you won't be missed.

Coming in second are Bonk Squad – the most confusing team to play. Half of them don't know the rules yet and the other half manage to always hit it out of the park. But hey, something is working since they managed to score promotion into division 5. Maybe this is the year they pull it all together (or fold because their captain has moved back to America).

It was a Raiders heavy season this time around, which ended in the most intriguing sandwich but it's truly anyone's game this year and our spirits will continue to remain high. As new teams join us and others leave to greener pastures, all you really need to know is that the Beavers are your friends, and we have ducks.

### Minors 2:

The season began with the addition of Flyballers and Battitude from division 6, who had emerged victorious from the previous season and were riding their winning streak straight off the bat. Competition between the two teams was stark, with Battitude coming out on top overall, with 13 wins vs Flyballers 12. For the rest of the teams in the division, the battle was still on, to see who can secure the middle spots within the division to avoid relegation. Things heated up towards the end of the season with weather and the diminishing daylight hours wreaking havoc on our emotions but in the end, someone must go and it's with open arms that we welcome Banditos and Tecumsehs to division 6 for the upcoming season. Please be gentle.

### Minors 1:

In Minors 1, Base Jumpers celebrated their victory, securing the top position in the division followed closely by Buccaneers. Say goodbye to the Minors, you're on your way up. Diamond Dogs and Golden Sombreros remained neck in neck with their competition with one another once again and came in ahead of the rest of the teams. Maybe this season will see one or even both graduating up. It was a tough season for this division, with the lack of small ball hitters taking its toll. Meteors Purple took the brunt of this and even though the baked treats were always a welcome reward, it wasn't enough to maintain their position so they – alongside their Meteors Red brethren will be debuting in division 5 this year.

Overall: Fortunately, the season concluded without any major incidents, proving how strong our sportsmanship is within the league. Despite the random heat wave and bout of rain that just wouldn't quit, it has been fun. We all came together hyped up as ever, utilising the supportive nature of each player to ensure that every team has had access to ringers who can step in at a moment's notice and I'm sure the captains appreciated it the most. As we reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of the season, we look forward to building on this foundation for an even more exciting and inclusive experience in the upcoming seasons.

## Development Report- Marty Terzic and Dani Yoshimi

Softball 101 continued to attract new players into the LSL community in 2024. At the beginning of the summer (in May and early June), our sessions were often attended by 45-50 players, and with interest surpassing those numbers at times, we had to cap the number at 50 in order to run informative, safe and fun sessions. As expected the numbers lowered slightly over the course of the season, but we regularly had 30+ players attend sessions. The split between SBH and BBH was approximately 1:3.5, but we believe this can be further improved and look forward to working with the league, committee and the inclusion officer to find ways to recruit and retain more SBHs at 101.

### 101 Teams & players

At the end of the 101 programme, a team called Base Bandits was created and they will be joining LSL for the 2025 season in Division 6. The team is very enthusiastic, and seem to be focused on improving as quickly as possible, so they can be prepared for Div 6 when the season starts. They are a very big team at the moment, and there were conversations during the 101 sessions on potentially splitting into 2 teams, but eventually a decision was made by the players to remain as one big team. That of course may come with some challenges, but we hope they will navigate these, and we have offered our support in case they need any advice as the season approaches.

The players that are included in the Base Bandits have had a chance to experience some tournaments during the 2024 season, including Raiders, Lastball and Publishers, and some even decided to ring at the August Cup. The tournaments definitely had some highs and lows, and we will need to think carefully how to manage this next season, but the team has a lot of potential and we hope to see them successful in Div 6 and at future tournaments.

### What comes next?

- Programme Development

I (Marty) am currently in the process of developing a comprehensive 14-week programme that we will be able to use for 101, not just for the upcoming season, but also in the future. The programme is being developed with the help of some coaching contacts I have in the US, as well as with the coaches that will be a part of the 101 sessions in 2025.

- Core Coaching Staff

In 2024, we were very lucky to have many qualified coaches and volunteers offer their time to the 101 programme. In fact, at one of the sessions, we had 10 coaches/volunteers present. That said, going forward we will be creating a core coaching staff to increase consistency across the sessions and to improve how we coach and communicate with the new players. We also plan on creating a pool of volunteers (please get in touch if interested), who we can ask for help in the odd session or two if/when the members of the core coaching staff aren't available.

- SBH-only Sessions

Last season, we were hoping to run a couple of SBH-only sessions for 101 attendees, but couldn't work out the logistics. We look forward to working with the new inclusion officer, to understand how best to approach these sessions. If interested in helping with these sessions, please do get in touch.

- Financing 101

We will continue using Spond for the 2025 season, and will look to finalize the per-session cost within the next few weeks. There has already been interest by new players to join 101 groups on the platform for the following season. A new 2025 group will be created soon, to make sure any other interested players can be added immediately after requesting access.

- Equipment

During the 2024 season, we have kept our equipment at the storage facilities in The Hub. The location is very close to the 101 pitch, so continuing this agreement with Regent's Park would be very useful. Some equipment, primarily gloves, are getting quite old and we'd love to get some newer options for players attending 101. If any teams and/or players have any spare gloves that they don't use anymore, we would hope you will consider donating them to the programme. Thank You!

- 101/102 Split

I would like to take this opportunity to say a BIG THANK YOU to Dani for helping out with 101 last year, as I was finishing my Master's Degree and couldn't take on the full responsibilities of the role. I am now able to take full ownership of the programme, so, as discussed when we decided to take on the Development Officer roles, from now on we will each focus solely on one of the programmes. Dani will be running 102 (I believe with the help of Timo from Flyballers) and I will be running the 101 programme with the help of the core coaching staff and volunteers. We are still looking at options on where and when 102 will be held, but if it ends up running on Mondays, the programme won't be held in close proximity to 101, both for safety reasons and to avoid any potential poaching of players going through 101.

### Registering Interest

If you have any questions about the 101 programme or would like to register your interest (volunteering, SBH-only sessions, equipment donation, or anything else), please do get in touch. Thank you!

### Umpiring Report-Jon Clanton

Ahead of the 2024 season, LSL worked with BASU to provide two sessions of the BASU umpiring course with a total of 27 participants. In addition to those who were renewing their BASU credentials, 6 people qualified as new BASU umpires, with the rest qualifying as LSL umpires. We also offered a one-day course run by experienced LSL umpires for a further 29 people who were only interested in LSL qualification.

Heading into the 2025 season, we have again partnered with BASU to run one training sessions with a total of 15 participants, and we will run a one-day course for anyone who wants to get LSL qualified (we have 25 sign-ups already).

The end of season survey included some responses requesting an increase in umpire fees, so we have brought forward a vote at the AGM to increase umpiring fees. However, remember that you can also provide incentives within your own team if you are having trouble finding volunteers to umpire.

## **Events Report- Magda Baran**

2024 was my first year as Event Officer, and it was definitely a learning experience! A huge thank you to all the other committee members for their invaluable assistance in organizing and managing the events, and especially to Loraine for sharing her knowledge and providing support throughout the year. It truly takes a village to make these events successful.

### **Firstball 2024**

Our Firstball tournament took place on May 11th, 2024, at Regents Park, with 34 teams participating across four grades, spread over nine fields. Thankfully, the weather was on our side, and as we all know, softball in the sun with a few (non-alcoholic ;) drinks is the perfect combination. There were a few issues on the fields for blue grade at the beginning of the tournament due to regents forgetting to mark one of the pitches. Big thank you to the blue grade teams (particularly Banditos and Battitude) who were very patient and accommodating during the early morning struggle to get this fixed. Also thank you to the gold grade teams who needed to move pitches part-way through the day due to an injury which left a player unable to vacate the field until the ambulance arrived.

Massive thanks to everyone who made this tournament possible: from tournament control, to First Aid, to the umpires (both full-timers and those who volunteered on the day), as well as everyone who helped with the set-up and clean-up of the fields.

The after party was held at Edinboro Castle, where we had the garden area booked just for us. Huge congratulations to all the winners! (Note to self: remember to list the winners next time for the report!)

### **Lastball 2024**

Originally, Lastball was planned for Farnham Park, but due to maintenance work by the council, we had to relocate. Fortunately, Regents Park stepped in to save the day.

The event took place on Saturday, August 17th, 2024, with 36 teams participating, divided into four grades. The Gold grade was the largest, with teams competing for the cup, plate, and spoon trophies, meaning a total of 18 trophies were awarded. Congratulations again to all the winners, and a big thank you to everyone who helped out.

For the afterparty, we tried a new venue: Regents Refinery. Finding a good place to party is honestly one of the most challenging aspects of this role! Based on feedback, the venue was well received, though we acknowledge there are areas for improvement (such as queue times and food ordering difficulties). We'll hopefully work with the venue to address these issues and give it another go next year.

### **All Stars 2024**

The All Stars game was held at Clissold Park on September 21st, 2024. The navy and orange teams, captained by Gemma, Rachel, Lorraine, Claire, Tiernan, and Dana, played what was arguably the most high-stakes ;) game of the season.

After the game, drinks were enjoyed at the Rose and Crown - a great way to celebrate the event and the season.

### **End of Season Party**

The End of Season Party was held on October 11th at The 108. I was on holiday at the time, so Lorraine graciously organized the event. A big thanks to her for stepping up! Unfortunately, due to comp indoor



being scheduled the following day we didn't have as big a turn out as expected but those who did attend enjoyed an evening of batting cages, awards and live music from Conor Clarke. Thank you to Rachel from Beavers for recommending Conor, he had us all up on our feet dancing by the end of the night.

### **Looking Ahead to 2025**

For 2025, Firstball will take place on May 20th, and Lastball will be on August 16th. Both tournaments are likely to be held at Regents Park again, and we'll do our best to match, if not exceed, last year's events. As always, any feedback is greatly appreciated, so please feel free to reach out if you have suggestions or would like to assist in any way.

### **Communications Report- Steve Karmeinsky**

Though taking on the role, initially there was meant to be a Comms Officer and I would act as a secondary resource. Unfortunately the person elected at the 2024 AGM lasted a couple of weeks before resigning and the role fell on to me.

There have been regular communications via social media (Facebook/Instagram) and email. There are currently 456 subscribers to the Mailchimp LSL list, 1,045 followers on Instagram and just under 200 followers on Facebook.

During the season, WhatsApp Communities were used and it is intended to keep using WhatsApp for future messaging, though other platforms are also being investigated.

There will be a technical review of systems that are used prior and during the next season such that messaging and other systems can be used securely and safely.

### **New Players Report-Daniel Brightman**

New players day was held Sunday 24th February at The 108 in Brent Cross. The first time using this venue for this event. Due to limited space the day was split into two sessions. The 13:00 session for Rec level players and the 14:40 session for Comp. We capped numbers for each session at 40, and both were fully attended.

It was also the first time implementing an online booking system, Ticket Source. It was used to track attendance and charge a small fee to recover some of the expense of hiring the venue. We also utilised MailChimp to stay in contact with players, this meant we could send out information in a timelier manner, and not rely on Google, which could be a bottleneck, and it looks more professional.

Utilising The 108 indoor space meant we were guaranteed to go ahead despite any adverse weather. It also has a bar ideally suited for the important task of recruiting players.

The first New Players day 2025 will be held on Saturday 8th March at 16:30, back at The 108 and will follow the same format as last seasons, 16:30 session for Rec level players and the 18:15 session for Comp. We are also planning a second day on 23<sup>rd</sup> March from 12:30-14:30 for all levels of play at Clapham Common. Please note, as usual because this session takes place outside we are at the mercy of the weather, so we are going to encourage as much attendance as possible at the first session.

The New Players sign up form remained the same, with no amendments, as last season's. From the list 23 new players found places amongst 15 teams. Down from last year's numbers.

As of January 2025 the New Players List has 230 names on it. Comments and suggestions to [newplayers@londonsoftball.co.uk](mailto:newplayers@londonsoftball.co.uk)

## **Fixtures and Fields Report- Tiernan Evans**

The league this year consisted of 49 teams, with 9 teams vying for the Division 6 title. The teams elected to fit the extra game in within their schedule, so the season was extended to 15 (rather than 16) weeks and some weeks saw teams with two games scheduled.

Available field space remained tight, though the new ground at Morden Sports Ground proved to be a valuable relief valve, hosting 7 rescheduled games from teams that typically played at other venues due to rainouts and councils double booking. While home to teams in divisions 3-6, the ground eventually hosted action in every division. This was particularly important, as weather and other considerations resulted in nearly 50 rescheduled games across the league.

Regent's Park ran relatively smoothly: through the cooperation of teams to move away from Tuesdays and negotiations with BSUK the league avoided any games on Primrose Hill. This is, as ever, up for change going forward, especially as Leah Holmes who we have productively worked with for the last few years has stepped down from BSUK. Pitch conditions also improved somewhat from the 2023 season, thanks to the park's responsiveness to complaints ahead of time and the option for teams to fill any remaining holes before the games.

We are in the early days of talks regarding a new pitch in West Ham. As always, any leads from teams on new pitches are much appreciated.