



Ulster Baseball and Softball Club
Trustee Annual Report 2024

Charity Registration Number: 107746



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Organisation Overview and Purpose

Ulster Baseball and Softball Club is a charity registered with the Charities Commission in Northern Ireland. The Club is affiliated to the national governing bodies Baseball Ireland and Softball Ulster and is led by a voluntary committee (the trustees).

In setting our objectives and planning our activity for the year the trustees have considered the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit. This is to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to our beneficiaries namely the members of Ulster Baseball and Softball Club who live in Northern Ireland.

Club Objectives:

- to promote and further the interests and practice of baseball and softball in Ulster Province

The trustees are appointed on an annual basis at the Annual General Meeting.

Trustees	
Eadaoin Hamill	David Gray (appointed 03.04.2024)
Diane Mallon	Gordon Cuthbert (appointed 03.04.2024)
Sinead Shackley	



Ulster Baseball and Softball Club Activities 2024

The club consists of:

- ❖ Three adult baseball teams
 - Belfast Northstars,
 - Belfast Bucs, and
 - Belfast Bucs C
- ❖ One softball team
 - Belfast Angels, and
- ❖ An academy, aka Little League, for younger players under 13
 - Belfast Badgers

Adult training commences in late January/ early February indoors and moves outside to the purpose built Hydebank facility once the clocks change. The Academy, (also known as Little League), training is outdoors from April- September. Training is open to anyone and taster day adverts on social media are prompted throughout Jan-Mar. The club provides training and coaching for all who attend and caters for all players, whether they choose to play to be competitive, social, fitness or fun, new or veteran.

The baseball teams and academy team participate in the Baseball Ireland (BI) leagues and the softball team participates in the Ulster Softball League.

The beginning of the 2024 season saw a good return of the existing base of club members and a number of players from before Covid. Adult winter training was held at a local leisure centre on consecutive Saturdays in February and March rather than alternate Saturdays, the cost of which was funded by a grant from LCCC. Recruitment posts were posted on club social media for tryout sessions and several new players attended. April saw training move to Hydebank, and enough interest was shown for sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the season. The Angels Softball Team were registered with Softball Uster for the A League. The decision was made to register 2 baseball teams in the BI Adult B League: Belfast Northstars, a competitive team in the B1 division and Belfast Bucs, a development team in the B2 division. Baseball Ireland also introduced a C league and UBSC decided to enter a team to this league as it was seen as good vehicle for players to develop skills in different positions and a good introduction to the Adult League for rising Little Leaguers. Throughout the reporting year



the Coaching team continued to engage in learning and development opportunities to provide excellence in the coaching of our players.

During the 2024 reporting period the Club was successful in securing a grant from the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Sports Accelerator fund allowing for Winter Training in the New Season 2024 to take place weekly in the hope of retaining interest in new attendees and cages for storage in the current container at Hydebank. This has been a valuable asset for the club, making training and game prep and tidy up much easier. The club would also like to thank Matplas from whom the club received sponsorship for the Badgers and Baseball United from the US, who make grants and at times send coaches over to run workshops with our youth players.



Team Activity

Baseball

Bucs

The Bucs continued in Baseball Ireland's B division. The team consisted of a couple of new rookies that joined the club during winter training, our experienced veterans and some little league players that we hoped would gain experience at the senior level. Training sessions were well attended with a majority of Bucs players training every week.

The team improved from 3 wins the previous season to 5 wins this year. This was great as we started to integrate some players from previous years' little league teams into our roster. These players we hope will be core players for the club for many years to come and seeing them succeed at this level so early on is very encouraging. We hope to match this win total next year as we intend to add more youth players to the team, giving them more experience at various positions around the diamond including pitching towards the end of the season as they become eligible.

Northstars

The Belfast Northstars started the 2024 season with an intention to go one step further than 2023 when they made it all the way to the 2023 playoff finals and narrowly missed out on national success against the Cork Renegades. The Northstars got their season off to the worst possible start suffering defeat to the Dublin Hurricanes. Things improved significantly over the remainder of the season with the Northstars going on to win 14 games with only suffering one more defeat in the regular season. This left the team sitting top of the table winning the League Pendant and top seed going into the playoffs. The playoff semi-final was a repeat of the 2023 final, this time the Northstars were able to get the better of the Cork Renegades sealing their place in the final with a convincing 19-4 victory.

The Northstars for the second year in a row contested a heated final which went to a deciding game against the Dublin Hurricanes, with both teams taking a win each. Despite best efforts, the Northstars narrowly lost out in the decider game with a 23-20 loss. Whilst the Northstars were disappointed not to win the Championship, it was an extremely successful baseball season for the club and we will hope to go one step further in the 2025 season.

Angels

The 2024 season started with high hopes for the Angels. Having won promotion to the A League with an unbeaten 2023 season, the Angels were looking forward to a successful season. Unfortunately, a number of key injuries saw important players either sidelined or playing through the pain. Despite a valiant effort, the Angels were unable to win a game throughout the season, coming close on a number of occasions, but just beaten by the experience of the long-standing A League teams. Finishing bottom saw the Angels relegated back down to B League for the next season. Despite this, there were some positives to the season. A number of players showed great development and progress throughout the season.

At the end of the season, long-standing Angels captain Dave stepped down to make way for a new management team. With the injuries healed and a concerted recruitment effort, the Angels enter the 2025 season with renewed confidence and are hoping for a quick return to A League.

Badgers

The Badgers headed into their last Little League season with a smaller but very experienced team. A smaller squad meant everyone got action on game days. We started off with a home double header resulting in 2 shut outs and our confidence soaring and we never looked back all season. Going undefeated was never the plan but the way we started the season the kids talked about nothing else, their confidence was that high. Pitching (allowed 8 runs all season) was our greatest strength like any championship team. A perfect end for a perfect team.

Terry and Heather Rosbotham decided they could no longer commit the time to run the Badgers and as most of kids were old enough to move to the adult teams, they decided this was the perfect time to bow out. The Club wants to express their gratitude for the huge contribution these two have made over the years.

Financial Commentary

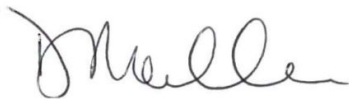
The Club accounts and Independent Examiners Report are submitted alongside this report. Income was £9,223 with Expenditure being £8,650 leaving a surplus for the year of £572 which offsets last year's overspend.

Income for 2024 was generated from membership fees and fundraising with a very successful quiz night and the game day shop. The shop is staffed by our dedicated volunteer and supporter Éadaoin Hamill who also organized the Quiz night. The Club acknowledges and much appreciates the work she does to raise funds every year. Gift aid was claimed again this year and the club intends to continue using this revenue stream.

Declaration

In preparing this report the Trustees of UBSC have had due regard for the guidance on public benefit from the Northern Ireland Charity Commission and other documentation produced by the Commission and are of the view that the Club is operating in full compliance with its duties as a charity.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



Diane Mallon

Ulster Baseball and Softball Club Treasurer