

BASES LOADED



MANCHESTER SOFTBALL LEAGUE

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This week's games

TUESDAY

Division 3

Seagulls 3W @ Screwballs 2L (pitch 7, ump SS)

Thunder III 1W @ Sluggababes 1W (4, FF)

Tiggers 2W @ Bandidos 13L (2, DW)

Interdivisional

Swingers 1W @ Stingers 1W (1, EC/PF)

Division 4

Raiders 1L @ Barflies 1L (6, LA)

Thunder IV 2W @ Enforcers 2L (3, MG)

WEDNESDAY

Division 1

Camels 3L @ Thunder 5W (F, MD)

Mavericks 2W @ Sharks 3W (H, JC)

Meerkats @ Speeders POSTPONED

TravDodgers 2L @ Mayhem 5L (G, PF)

Greensox rest

Division 2

Bats 3W @ Freeze 1L (A, DS)

Camels II 2W @ Thunder II 3W (B, IC)

Tigers 1T @ Mavericks II 1T (D, HS)

Titans 2L @ Dodgers 1L (C, AG)

Hackers rest

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Welcome back

Welcome to another year and another season of softball. In the off season we had 11 weeks of indoor softball at the Dome in Platt Lane, which we will continue with again from October. Manchester Firstball has just happened and was a great success with the weather gods helping us out. We were close to losing one of our longest established teams, but we welcome



back the Greensox to the fold. We are hosting the BSF Single-sex Nationals this year at WSG, so look out for info about this as we will need volunteers for the weekend. We have some newly qualified BASU umpires out on the diamonds so expect some new faces behind the plate. Have a great 2023 season and see you out on the diamond.

Paul Fagan, League head

Tournament dates for your diary

Selected dates from	17-18 Jun NSL II
BSF's softball calendar:	1-2 Jul Bristol Somerball
tournaments in bold are	8-9 Jul Leeds
in Manchester.	29-30 Jul NSL III
13 May BSUK LGBTQ+ tournament	5-6 Aug Manchester Main
20-21 May NSL I	12-13 Aug Co-ed Nationals
27-28 May Liverpool Shield	19-20 Aug Bristol Wreck
3 Jun Alex Hall Memorial Tournament	26-27 Aug Edinburgh Festiball
10-11 Jun Single-sex Nationals	2-3 Sep NSL Nationals
	16 Sep BSUK LGBTQ+ tournament, Liverpool
	16-17 Sep Cotswolds

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Contributions should be sent to review@manchester-softball.co.uk.

Available online at <https://manchester-softball.co.uk/softball-news/the-review/>

Birthdays

Week beginning April 24th

Monday Kirsty Eaton (Thunder II), Mitch Gilbert (Enforcers), Jane Langford (Bandidos)

Tuesday Ben Rocca (Swingers)

Wednesday Jack Scholes (Camels)

Thursday Jonny Creelman (umpire)

Friday Ben Acton (Thunder IV)

Saturday Tom Munro (Mayhem)

On this day ...

Our season did not start this early until the late noughties, so our new series of “On this day” records begins in 2007. Very few of the fixtures on 25th April of that year could occur now, with most of the teams having folded. However CAM-ELS and DODGERS met in a close game, with the bactrians winning 7-6.

On 26th April 2011, EN-FORCERS mercied HURRICANES (present-day Thunder III) 35-9 with respectively 15 and 16 runs in the first and third innings.

The same date five years later saw an 11-11 tie be-

tween DRIZZLE (today's Thunder II) and TIGERS (now Travelling Dodgers) in Division 3. Just to explain, in 2021 on our return to play after COVID, Tigers, having won Division 2, underwent a split of personnel, with those taking the Div 1 place adopting a new team name, and Tiggers, newly promoted to Division 3 rebranding themselves as Tigers. To add to the confusion, a new Tiggers team was formed. Meanwhile on the same day HURRICANES (Thunder III, try to keep up) convincingly beat FREEZE 16-1 in Division 3.

Greensox reinstated—a statement from the Exec

It has been decided by the Exec, after earnest deliberation ending with a vote, that Greensox will be allowed to register with the league and play in Division 1 this season.

The Greensox team's standing captain had previously confirmed to the Exec that they would not enter the league for the 2023 season, as reported at the

Captains' meeting of April 12th. However, Paul Kidley contacted the league shortly afterwards to request that Greensox register with Manchester Softball League for the 2023 season. At the request of the Exec, he provided a team roster and his players will be told to register before they play, as normal. With only eight days before the start of the sea-

son, this was a difficult decision for the Exec, as the team registration deadline had already passed on March 31st and fixtures were released on April 18th. The Exec acknowledges that the Division 1 fixtures will need to be altered. Promotion and relegation throughout the league will be two-up two-down, as is normally the

⇒ *Continued on page 5*

North West Series 1

The pre-season kicked off with the first of the three-date series of one-day tournaments organised by BaseballSoftballUK, the North West series, now in its sixth year, held at a soggy but sunny Parrswood.

Twelve teams walked on to the “slightly damp” grass at Parrswood High School in Didsbury to play for the sought-after North West Series medals. Teams travelled from London, Leeds and Liverpool to play, with more than 150 people turning up!

The teams were split into two divisions and some of the highlights of the day included... Breaking Bats’ dedication to travel roundtrip from London to Manchester to play; the Misfits’ Aaron Peters playing in his first tournament the day after his 14th birthday; and Thunder coming from behind in the Comp final to beat the Camels 14-13 in a stunner! In the Rec final, Bats beat the Tigers.

Linni Mitchell was Tournament Control for the weekend and said, “What a great way to start off the 2023 season! We had per-



Comp winners Thunder (top) and Rec winners Bats (bottom)

fect softball conditions and not a spot of rain all day—rare in Manchester this time of the year! Thank you to all the teams who made the trip, and we’re looking forward to a great season!”

BSUK’s North West Development Manager Luis Arrevillagas commented, “We love organising the first tournament of the year. People are itching to

play, and the first North West Series is surely a sign that spring is here! Thank you to all the umpires and captains for making our event possible. See you all at the next two tournaments!”

Text and photos adapted from BSUK website. Additional reporting Abbie de Zwart

Firstball

Twenty-two teams travelled to Wythenshawe last weekend for Firstball 2023. The usual local representatives were joined by three teams from Leeds, and a school team, Monmouth Rockets, who were unaffected by the long drive from South Wales, topping the Rec B table by the end of the first day and ending runners-up in Rec. Bats held the top spot in Rec A on Saturday evening. Thunder, starting as they meant to go on, dominated the Comp tier.

The weather was mostly clement, with just a brief sharp shower late on Sunday. There was unfortunately one serious injury, to Pippa of Yorkshire Dales, who took a ball to the face and suffered a split lip.

There were a few shock results and “mercy” scores. Stingers battered

a frustrated Mavericks II 17-3. Chloe Patient scored Stingers’ third home run of the game off an easy pitch, reaching home plate despite having taken a line drive to the solar plexus in the previous game against Bats.

Each of the Rec finals were close games. Mavs II and Rockets agreed to take the semifinal they had played against each other as their final result. The junior steers claimed the Rec Cup having defeated Rockets in a close 8-7 game. Stingers narrowly missed out on the Rec Plate, losing to Bobcats 13-15, and Mayhem Freeze beat the Manchester University team Maelstrom 5-4 for the Rec Spoon.

In Comp, another close result saw Meerkats clinch the Comp Plate from Mossley Mayhem by 5-4, a friendly game ending on a controversial call. Thunder were on

A bird’s-eye view of the tournament
Photo still from video by Mike Lott



form for the Comp Cup final, rinsing Traveling Dodgers

Greensox reinstated (Continued from page 3)

case, rather than the scheme agreed at the Captains’ Meeting which was aimed at restoring nine teams to Division 1: this is no longer necessary. The Exec acknowledges that this was an unusual occurrence outside normal rules and process. Ultimately the Exec have decided, and voted, that the continued participation of the Greensox in Manchester Softball League is for the greater benefit of the League, which is our highest priority.

We hope that you will be understanding of this decision and adapt to the fixture and other changes that follow.

MSL Exec

20-3 in the afternoon drizzle. Thanks go to our umpires who were BASU, volunteers and blues in training who were shadowed.

Abbie de Zwart

[The editor adds:] Above all, thanks go to the organizer NJ Dyson, assistant Abbie de Zwart, and crew chief Ian Cairns, who battled under the difficult conditions of a shortage of umpires and a heavy cold.

19th Alex Hall Tournament

THE annual Alex Hall Tournament will take place on Saturday 3rd June 2023 at its usual location at Parrswood.

This year marks 20 years since Alex (pictured) lost her battle with cancer and 19 years since the first Alex Hall tournament took place.

For those unfamiliar with this tournament, it is a fun-filled fund raiser for The Christie Hospital. Participants enter as individuals and are assigned to colour-coded teams of mixed ability. Teams compete not only on the softball diamond but also in the colour-themed fancy dress and picnic competitions.

Those amongst you who have good memories (thank you Harry!) will recall that the first fundraiser in 2004 was made up of “national” teams and

was won by Southern England. The new, fun, format (as we now know it) started in 2005.

A conservative estimate of the funds raised for the Christie to date is somewhere in the region of £40,000 – that’s an incredibly massive amount. Let’s see if we can make this year the most successful one yet!

We are looking for raffle



The red team’s winning picnic in 2021

Photo Arthur Hung

prizes and bottles (booze, tomato sauce, perfume – anything really!). Please let us know if you can help with these – we’d be very grateful.

Please contact Vicky Green, Kate Shearer or Gina Amos for an entry form or join the Alex Hall Facebook group (The Alex Hall Memorial Tournament, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/518681788191346>)

Vicky Green



GB selection for five MSL players

Congratulations are due to three of our youth players, who have been selected for the GB U16 and U18 men's fastpitch squad, and to two adults selected for the full GB squad.

According to the BSF website, the selections were made following trials held on the weekend of 18-19 March for players across all four teams in the GB Men's Fastpitch programme.

The chosen ones are brothers **Rory and Dany Casey-Wright**, who have joined Stingers this season, and **Luis Allan Arrevillagas** of Thunder III. Rory has been selected for the U16s, a new GB team, while Dany and Luis will play at U18 level even though Luis still qualifies for the younger team.

The players will represent GB at the European Championships to be held at the beginning of July in Sezimovo Ústí in the Czech Republic, where GB will face teams from the host nation, plus Denmark, Israel and Croatia. The U18 tournament will serve as a qualifier for the next WBSC



Pictured: Luis Allan (above left), Rory and Dany (above right), Jack (below left) and Tom (below right).

Picture credits: Luis Arrevillagas, Kerril Casey, BSF
Images of minors printed with permission

World Cup.

In a separate announcement some days later, the senior men's fastpitch squad was announced, and includes Thunder's **Tom Russell** and **Jack Scholes** (Camels). The

senior team will be in action towards the end of July in the European Men's Fastpitch Championship to be held in Hørsholm, Denmark.

Well done, lads! We are sure you will do us proud

representing MSL as well as GB. To celebrate and support their achievement, the League will be making a contribution towards the cost of uniforms for all five players.



End-of-Season Ball Quiz answers

The End-of-Season special issue as usual carried a prize quiz, this time echoing the James Bond theme of the Ball. Here are the answers.

Section A—The initial questions

1. An easy starter: which MSL team name is part of the title of a Bond film? **Thunder(-ball)**
2. What links industrialist David Brown with James Bond? **The Aston Martin DB cars which Bond drives**
3. For which agency does Bond work? **MI6**
4. Desmond Llewelyn, Peter Burton and Geoffrey Bayldon, among others, have played which recurring character? **Q**
5. What does the 'R' stand for in the acronym of Bond's opponent SPECTRE? **Revenge**
6. The pistol Bond uses most often in the films is a Walther, but which model? **PPK**

Section B—Title

7. Which three Bond films do not contain the letter 'e' in their title? **Dr No, Octopussy and Skyfall**
8. Ian Fleming's home in Jamaica shares its name with the title of which Bond film? **GoldenEye**
9. Fleming took the name James Bond from that of the author of a book in his study in Jamaica. What was the subject? **Birds (of the**

West Indies)

10. Which are the Bond films with (a) the shortest and (b) longest names? **Dr No, On Her Majesty's Secret Service**
11. Which was the first Bond film whose title was not the title of an Ian Fleming novel? **Never Say Never Again**
12. Which novel by Ian Fleming was made into a film in 1968 starring Dick van Dyke and Sally Anne Howes? **Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang**
13. Bond girls Jill and Tilly Masterson appear in which film? **Goldfinger**

Section C—Name, rank and number

14. To date, how many actors have portrayed 007 on the big screen (excluding the 1967 satirical version of *Casino Royale*)? **7** (One answer pointed out that in the final Bond film, 'No Time To Die', there is a new 007, Nomi, played by Lashana Lynch, so we also accepted 8 as a correct answer).
15. What nominal rank does James Bond hold? **Commander (RNVR)**
16. Bond is entitled to the initials CMG after his name. To which honour do they apply? **Companion of the Order of St Michael & St George**
17. What Bond film character has been played by someone whose real name

is Bond? **Miss Money-penny** (Samantha Bond)

18. Which Bond film ranks as the highest grossing in terms of box office receipts? **Skyfall**

19. In *You Only Live Twice*, Fleming reveals that Bond's mother's name was Monique Delacroix. What nationality was she? **Swiss**

20. And to end with a baseball question: who in 1943 played 13 games as a pitcher for the minor league team Lynchburg Cardinals, with a 6-5 W-L record and an ERA of 2.41? **James Bond** (of course)

The tiebreak question was not needed. It asked: How many players called James played in MSL last year? The answer was **6**.

Thanks to Tim Roberts for the questions.

The quiz was won by the Seagulls, who scored a creditable 18/20, and as a prize got £40 off their MSL registration this year.



New safety rules

New rules introduced for this year by our parent organisation BSF particularly impact youth players (under-18s).

When fielding, the requirement to wear a face-mask has been extended to 1st and 3rd base as well as pitcher and catcher (which was already a local rule). All U-18 infielders must wear a

gumshield, even if they are already wearing a face mask.

BSF also originally mandated that batting/running helmets, which are mandatory for all players, must now be fitted with a faceguard when worn by U-18s.

However, in an announcement just before the start of the season they noted that face-

guards are hard to come by and also very expensive. They have therefore decided to postpone the introduction of this rule for a year.

One other rule change, which locally is effectively just a reminder, is that under-18s must wear a helmet when base-coaching, or acting as bat-boy/-girl.

Last season's awards

Home run trophy

Division 1 SBH Natalie Leyland (TDS) and Linni Mitchell (MHM)

Division 1 LBH Tom Russell (GRX)

Division 2 SBH Nicola Booth (CM2) and Amy Miller (MKT)

Division 2 LBH Adam Faloona (SPE) and Ross Maskell (MV2)

Division 3 SBH Grace Mills (HAC) and Jasper Rushen (SGL)

Division 3 LBH Carl Emsley (SGL)

Division 4 SBH Olivia Westmacott (SCR)

Division 4 LBH Joe Regan (SWI)

MVPs

Division 1 SBH shared between Tanya Burton (GRX), Nic Duerden (LDS), Kim Hannessen (THU), Hayley McTear (CAM) and Linni Mitchell (MHM)

Division 1 LBH Tom Atkinson (CAM)

Division 2 SBH Amy Miller (MKT)

Division 2 LBH shared between Sam Baker (TTN), Andrew Bogie (TH2) and Simon Sharp (TIG)

Division 3 SBH Lisa Williams (ENF)

Division 3 LBH Mark Hayward (FRZ)

Division 4 SBH shared between Mandy Ashton (BFL) and Rachel Wake (SLG)

Division 4 LBH Oli Sharpe (TGG)

Young players of the year Amber Frost (BAT) and Antoon Lemmers (SLG)

Rookie of the year Hollie Glennie (SGL)

An old rivalry resumed: last meeting 1996

There are a number of match-ups this season that renew old rivalries after a short-er or longer hiatus, but the rivalry that has laid dormant for the longest period is revived by next week's game between the **Dodgers** and the **Hackers** ... who have not met for— wait for it—27 years! But apart from the long wait, there is something even more interesting about this match-up.

Not many people will know that this is actually a “derby”, a renewal of a sibling rivalry, because the Dodgers were formed back in 1993 as a break-away from the Hackers. The Hackers team was based in UMIST's Computational Linguistics department: the name does not refer to “hacking” as we now understand that term, but to computer scientist slang for an ad hoc rough and ready bit of program code. The team had been formed by the girlfriend of a guy called Steve Pleydell-Pierce, who was in one of the other founder member teams, but is more notable for the fact that he was a cartoonist at Cosgrove Hall in

Chorlton, and was in fact the lead artist on *Danger Mouse*. You can see Steve's distinctive style in the Hackers' original logo (Steve also drew logos for some of the other teams).

Anyway, the Hackers squad, mostly students and researchers working on a very early version of Machine Translation (years before Google

Translate or even Babelfish for those that remember that) had

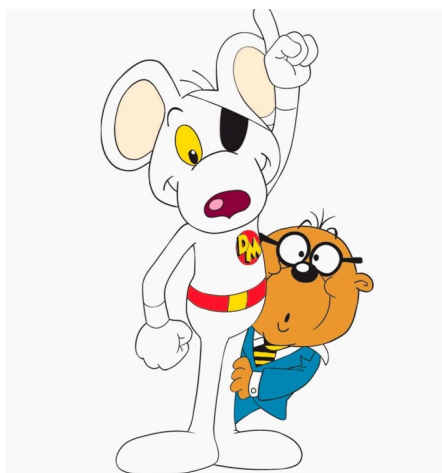
grown to be about 20-strong, and there were

tensions around game time, which was obviously a bit limited, fed by some personality clashes.

So about half the team broke away and formed a new team in 1993, initially called Mostly Harmless (after the joke in the Douglas Adams book, *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*), then renamed Just Lust for one season (1995) before opting to be known as Jammy Dodgers in 1996, which remains (more or less) their name to this day.

Official records only begin in 1994, so their first ever meeting in 1993, which Hackers won 63-19, isn't included; in '94 they met once, Hackers winning 16-15, while Just Lust won their only meeting in 1995. The following year in Division 2 saw the (now named) Jammy Dodgers win twice on their way to promotion to Division 1. And the pair have remained in different divisions ever since... until now, that is.

This is actually a “derby”: the Dodgers were formed as a breakaway from the Hackers



Steve Pleydell-Pierce's original logo for the Hackers, and his most famous creation, *Danger Mouse* together with side-kick Penfold.

Next week's fixtures 2/3 May

Division 1

Camels @ Mayhem

(pitch B, ump Green)

Last meeting 6 July 2022, Mayhem won 19-6, reducing Camels' all-time lead to 7-4 (or 7-5 including unofficial meeting in 2020).

Greensox @ Thunder

(D, Caird) Last meeting 22 June 2022, Thunder won 26-18 but trail 14-17 in all meetings.

Mavericks @ Speeders

(C, Strayer) Last meeting 2 June 2010, Mavericks won 19-12 and lead 15-1 in all meetings.

Meerkats @ Traveling Dodgers (A, Somers) Last meeting 14 July 2021, TDs won 24-9, but trail 4-6 in all meetings, including those under the Tigers banner.

Division 2

Dodgers @ Hackers

(H, Creelman) Last meeting 17 July 1996, Dodgers won 28-27 and lead 3-1 in official meetings. See opposite page.

Freeze @ Mavericks II

(G, Davies) Last meeting 21 July 2015 (Division 4), Mavs won 32-1 (4 inns) (all-time record 2-0): this was the Mavs' maiden season, when they stormed their

way unsurprisingly to the Division 4 title with 17 straight wins.

Thunder II @ Bats

(E, PFagan) Last meeting 18 August 2021 in a game started on 28th July but abandoned after one inning due to a thunderstorm. Thunder won the eventual game 12-11, completing the double.

The pair had first met four years earlier, when TH2 were Drizzle, with two Bats wins. So they are 2-2 in all meetings.

Titans @ Camels II

(F, Wallace) Last meeting 15 June 2022, Titans won 17-14 and lead 3-1 in all meetings.

Tigers rest

Division 3

Sluggababes @ Stingers

(7, Goff) First ever meeting.

Interdivisional

Barflies @ Bandidos

(3, Hung) First ever meeting.

Screwballs @ Enforcers

(2, PFagan) Only previous meeting 20 July 2021, in only the Screwballs' second ever game, Enforcers won 28-16.

Seagulls @ Thunder IV

(4, Arrevillagas) First ever meeting.

Thunder III @ Swingers (6, Sharp) Only pre-

League structure (continued from page 12)

-team half-rotations for the final three weeks. But if there is no new team, Division 4 is set for the excitement of a best-of-three play-off between the top two to decide the title winners (regardless of their head-to-head record) while the remaining three play each other once more for final positions.

vious meeting 8 June 2021, Thunder won 22-10

Tiggers @ Raiders (1, Hugill) Last meeting 14 June 2022, Tiggers won 15-13 to complete the double.

Last week's opening-day fixture was postponed at the request of the Meerkats, who opted not to take the walk-over due to Speeders' shortage of players. The postponement was requested and granted following our now established rules. It will be played on August 30th. Please note that this 'extension' to the season does not change the transfer deadline, which is still Wednesday August 9th.

A full schedule for the season is available at <https://manchester-softball.co.uk/fixtures/>.

Results and Standings

League structure

With the resurrection of the Greensox (see page 3), the league structure as agreed at the Captains' Meeting aimed at restoring Division 1 to nine teams next year is no longer needed. So the Exec has proposed to revert to the usual default of two-up two-down throughout all four divisions. This will leave Divisions 3 and 4 evenly split (6 and 5, or 6 and 6 if a new team is formed mid-season).

Divisions 3 and 4 will start the season with a 12-team rotation including interdivisional games, after which the two divisions will split into the 7- and 5-team groups as determined by last year's promotions and relegations. The seven Division 3 teams will simply play a single further rotation. But the structure for the second half of the season in Division 4 depends on whether a new team is formed from the rookie sessions during the first eleven weeks, as has happened quite often in the past. In either case there will be a full 5- or 6-team rotation, to be followed by 3

⇒ Continued on page 11

Final Standings last year

	P	W	T	L	F	RS	RC	Pts
Division 1								
Trav Dodgers (C)	17	13	0	4	0	267	170	43
Mavericks	17	12	0	5	0	250	207	41
Thunder	16*	12	0	4	0	241	188	40
Mayhem	17	8	0	8	1	242	218	32
Greensox	17	9	0	7	1	208	203	34
Sharks	17	7	0	10	0	173	258	31
Camels	17	4	0	13	0	176	214	25
Lion Dodgers (R)	16*	2	0	14	0	160	259	20
* Thunder @ Lion Dodgers not played								
Division 2								
Meerkats (C)	17	16	0	1	0	293	114	49
Speeders (P)	17	10	0	7	0	276	218	37
Tigers	17	9	1	7	0	238	246	36
Mavericks II	17	7	1	9	0	243	232	32
Thunder II	17	9	0	8	0	239	250	35
Titans	17	8	0	8	1	212	274	32
Camels II	17	6	0	11	0	262	278	29
Bandidos (R)	17	2	0	14	1	178	329	20
Division 3								
Bats (C)	15	12	0	3	0	269	148	39
Hackers (P)	15	10	0	5	0	284	194	35
Freeze (P)	15	9	0	6	0	236	236	33
Stingers	15	7	0	8	0	260	241	29
Seagulls	14	8	0	6	0	246	250	30
Thunder III	14	4	0	10	0	176	274	22
Enforcers (R)	14	1	0	13	0	162	290	16
Division 4								
Sluggababes (C)	15	13	0	2	0	298	187	41
Screwballs (P)	15	9	0	6	0	280	218	33
Tiggers (P)	15	9	0	6	0	231	220	33
Barflies	15	7	0	8	0	253	238	29
Thunder IV	14	6	0	8	0	198	263	26
Swingers +	14	4	0	10	0	223	229	20
Raiders	14	3	0	11	0	157	285	20
+ deducted 2 points for unregistered players								