



GRAND SLAM

and the Pursuit of
Physical Literacy



PREAMBLE

This Manual is divided into two sections as shown in the Table of Contents. We will begin by offering you a short description of each section.

The “Introduction” section will offer information pertaining to the program objectives, the role of Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) in the sport of Baseball. It will also offer implementation options for the program.

Section 2 will present the contents of ten (10) practices to be used by Coaches of Grand Slam teams.

The appendixes will allow you to find complementary tools to this manual.

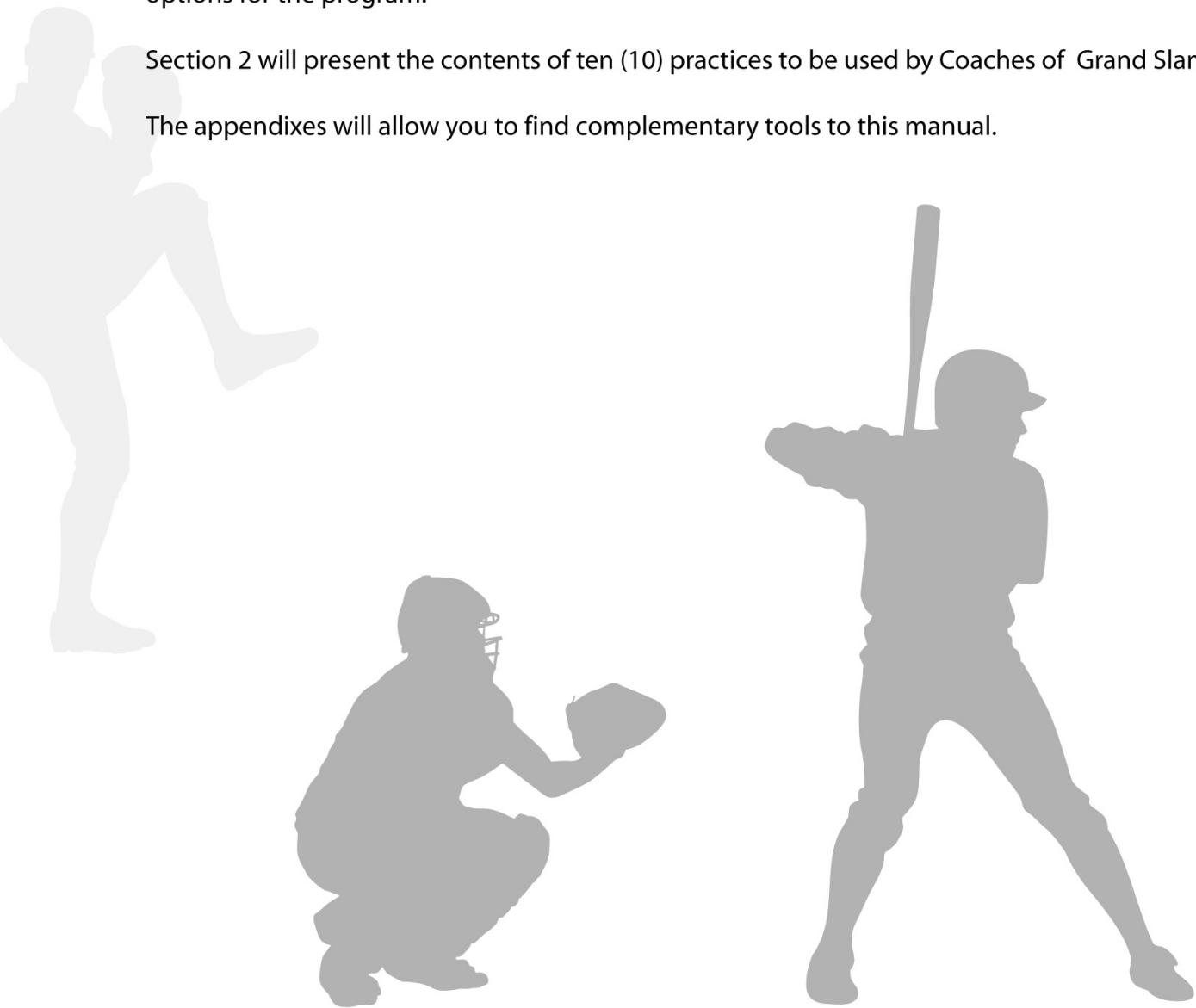




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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Grand Slam Program. This Guide will offer you useful information that will lead to a successful season.

Following the initiative of the Canadian Government aimed at implementing a Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Model, this program was designed with the objective of making Baseball more attractive and facilitating learning with young Canadian athletes. It is intended to be a logical follow-up for young players who have been initiated through the Rally Cap Program.

This Grand Slam Manual intends to be a continuation of the tool that was supplied to activity leaders in the Rally Cap Program. It is based on the LTAD recommendations as previously explained. All the technical and tactical content covered in this program has been judiciously chosen. In fact, Baseball Canada, with the cooperation of high performance coaches at Baseball Canada and volunteers, has conducted an inventory of the techniques and tactics related to Baseball. After this first step, the workgroup divided each of the elements into the various divisions of Baseball. This means that each of the skills or tactics will go through one of the following stages: Introduction, Development, Consolidation and Refinement of the skills. Each of the terms is associated to a number of times the skill is presented in the ten practices. You can consult the set of elements taught in this Manual in Appendix 1.

→ OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The objectives of the Baseball Canada Grand Slam Program are:

- To create a healthy environment in which children of various levels of ability will find pleasure in learning Baseball.
- To initiate or pursue the development of basic Baseball skills and strategies for players in the Grand Slam division.
- To teach and develop sportsmanship in a context of healthy competition.
- To develop and promote self-esteem in the children through the help of Minor Baseball interveners and their associations.



→ THE COACH'S CRUCIAL ROLE

The coach is an important part of the Grand Slam Program. Players trust him and expect to receive from him technical advice and encouragement. Parent and players trust him and our objectives will only be met if coaches commit to reaching them.

→ THE STICKER ALBUM AS PART OF GRAND SLAM PROGRAM

Throughout Season 1 and Season 2 of the Grand Slam program, players will be put in situations where they can acquire experiences in different aspects of the game. Those experiences can sometimes be skills oriented or sometimes be around events and behaviors. The program is built so 6 aspects (innings) are covered in Season 1 and 6 others in Season 2. Once an aspect (inning) is fully experienced by the young athlete, the coach will then be able to give the appropriate sticker. Each inning features current and former Canadians in the Major League or on National Teams. The player will also have the opportunity to receive an email from the featured athlete by asking his coach to go on Baseball Canada website.

→ THE STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL

Under Section 2, you will find ten practices, each using one of the following models:

MODEL 1

Warm-up: activation, warm-up of joints and throws. (15 minutes)

Three workshops - (3x 10 minutes)

Team defense - (15 minutes)

Running - (10 minutes)

Games and challenges - (10 minutes)

Conclusion and reminder of the objectives - (5 minutes)

MODEL 2

Warm-up: activation, warm-up of joints and throws. (15 minutes)

Three workshops - (3x 10 minutes)

Offensive Play - (3x 10 minutes)

Games and challenges - (10 minutes)

Conclusion and reminder of the objectives - (5 minutes)



THE IMPORTANCE OF ADAPTING THE PRACTICE TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR PARTICIPANTS

The coach will have the opportunity to adapt the various drills presented by using the suggested variations. Variations will be presented to adapt the contents for an intermediate clientele (players are quite successful at the technique) or advanced (players need additional challenges).




VARIATIONS:

- | | |
|------|---|
| i) | The coach can set the objective at eight passes. |
| ii) | Passes must be done overhand. |
| iii) | The player cannot return the ball to the player who has just thrown it. |



PICTOGRAMS

Pictograms are used to allow the coach to adapt the drill to the participant's level. When one of the following pictograms appears, the coach must choose between beginner, intermediate or advanced.

Beginner		Do exercise A
Intermediate		Do exercises A & B
Advanced		Do exercises A & C

In certain cases, an activity to which a pictogram is attached will allow the coach to use this activity should he deem it necessary.



SEQUENCES OF PRACTICES

Baseball Canada recommends that coaches use one of the three following methods of operations to implement the program.

First Method: The Association regroups all Grand Slam players on five different days over a two-hour period on a regular-sized field. The players are then divided according to their level of abilities and go through the three workshops. For the offensive and defensive portions, the outfield is used.

Second Method: The coach plans ten (10) practices with his team.

Third Method: During Grand Slam games, the coach who has 12 players on his team can send six of them in the outfield with six players of the opposing team and go through the three planned workshops.



→ LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

The Grand Slam Program is within the realm of Sport Canada and its Long Term Athlete Development Program.

The LTAD is based on a general framework of the athlete's development and pays particular attention to growth, maturity and development, training capacity as well as the reorganisation of programs and their integration in the global sports system. It includes information gathered from numerous sources and profits from the experience acquired through various athlete development projects since the mid '90's.

The Grand Slam Program aims at accompanying Minor Baseball Organisations, coaches and parents in this process of change towards an athlete-centered program or the sport development of youngsters. The Grand Slam Program is included in one of the nine steps of the LTAD. The Grand Slam Program will further the development of motor abilities of the young players as planned by Baseball Canada and Sport Canada.

→ LTAD RECOMMENDATIONS

Here is a resume of the LTAD recommendations as described by Baseball Canada for youngsters aged 8 and 9 years old:

- Length of the season: 8 to 12 weeks.
- Ratio of practices / competition: 80% practices - 20% games.
- 1 to 2 hours a week for a period of 8 to 12 weeks including training camps.
- Parents act as umpires.
- No scorekeepers.
- Use of a pitching machine or a parent acting as a pitcher.
- At this stage, children should participate in a great variety of sports activities each week without going over two sessions a week.
- Game format: 6 on 6.
- All players have equal playing time and experiment by playing all positions.

→ TEN FACTORS OF THE LTAD

The Grand Slam Program is inspired by the Ten Factors of the LTAD.

According to scientific studies, ten key factors play a role in the development of an athlete. Baseball Canada has taken these factors into account when designing this Manual:

1

The Ten-year Rule: Scientific studies have shown that a talented athlete must train some 10 years or 10,000 hours to reach the Elite level. This manual gives the athlete an opportunity to train.

2

Acquisition of basic skills prior to the growth spurt at adolescence heightens the chance of reaching Excellence while augmenting satisfaction in playing baseball.

3

Baseball is a sport in which specialisation comes later; this Manual will invite the players to try all positions on the field.

4

While using this Manual, the Coach must take into account the developmental age of his participants.

5

Each player's physiological system can be trained at any age, but there are critical periods in the players development when the body responds to specific types of movements and skills. This will influence their training capacity.



6

The physical, mental, cognitive and emotional development will influence the young player's progression.

7

Within the context of the LTAD, the step by step approach establishes the link between the current developmental stage and the requirements specific to said stage. It is the reason why Baseball Canada has spread the learning of technical and tactical abilities over a number of division of its program.

8

The various steps of development have specific requirements with regards to the training to competition ratio. This Manual aims at accompanying the coach who wishes to lead practices. The immediate success of short-term competition should not be given priority for children and young players over long term development.

9

It has become evident that the implementation of LTAD principles leads organisations to modify their offer of services. There is a need for mutual support in order to contribute to the player's development and learning.

10

This Manual and those that follow will accompany coaches so that they continue to progress as interveners, to foster accrued participation and the promotion of Baseball in Canada.

