

Lacombe Minor Softball Association

Policies & Procedures



SELECTS
- FASTBALL -

The logo features the word "SELECTS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below it, the words "- FASTBALL -" are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a light blue diamond shape formed by four intersecting lines.

MATRIX
- SOFTBALL -

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Mission Statement

Our mission at Lacombe Minor Softball is to foster the development of softball players at all levels, providing them with the resources and support needed to grow and achieve their full potential.

We believe that softball provides a unique opportunity for personal growth, teamwork, and leadership, and we are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment that allows every player to thrive.

Through our softball programs, we aim to inspire a lifelong love of the game, while also preparing our athletes for success on and off the field.

We are committed to providing high-quality coaching and resources, as well as offering opportunities for players to participate at any level of softball that will help them grow and develop as athletes and individuals.

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1.0 Financial Assistance

Lacombe Minor Softball Association (LMSA) encourages keeping girls active and participating in organized sport. However, it is recognized that the cost of participation can be a potential barrier for some. With that in mind, LMSA is pleased to work together with JumpStart, KidSport Lacombe and Lacombe County to provide all children with the opportunity to play organized sports by removing financial barriers. Please see the following websites for more details:

- <https://kidsportcanada.ca/alberta/lacombe/apply-for-a-grant/>
- [Home | Jumpstart \(canadiantire.ca\)](#)

For more information, reach out to the president at president@lacombegirlssoftball.com. Upon request, payment plans may be set up through our registrar.

2.0 Registration and Cancellation

- 2.01 Registration for C/D level play will occur each year from January to the end of March, while registration for A/B level play will occur in September or after final ID camps when team selections are made.
- 2.02 A waitlist will be started once the optimum number of players has been reached.
- 2.03 All registration fees must be paid by:
- a) April 1st for C/D Levels
 - b) October 1st for A/B Levels
- 2.04 For the athlete to withdraw from the program, the parent/guardian for an athlete MUST submit a letter to the Lacombe Minor Softball Association President outlining the situation and reason for the request. This can be emailed to president@lacombegirlssoftball.com.
- 2.05 The request will be reviewed within 14 days of the submission.
- 2.06 To be granted a refund, the following will apply:
- a) A request for an athlete to withdraw from our Matrix C/D programs received prior to the 2nd Friday of March, or request to withdraw from our Selects A/B programs received prior to the 2nd Friday of January will be subject to a cancellation fee of 25% of the registration fee paid.
 - b) A request for an athlete to withdraw received after the 2nd Friday of March (Matrix program) OR the 2nd Friday of January (Selects program) and before the commencement of the season, will be subject to a cancellation fee of 50% of the registration fee paid.
 - c) A request for an athlete to withdraw received after the last day of March (Matrix program) OR the last day in January (Selects program) will not be eligible for a refund.

- 2.07 Lacombe Minor Softball Association will only consider a withdraw for the following reasons:
- a) A move/job transfer to another town or city. The new residence of the athlete **MUST** be outside of the registration boundaries of the Association.
 - b) Medical reasons. A doctor's note/certificate must be included with the letter submitted to the Association for the request.
 - c) If the extenuating circumstance does not fit the above criteria, the board will review each case individually.

3.0 Player Import and Release

Lacombe Minor Softball Association is committed to developing players in the Lacombe and surrounding community. The goal of LMSA is to provide both recreational and competitive opportunities to accommodate the playing needs of all players. LMSA strives to run competitive teams at the A/B level that can successfully compete provincially and considers athletes who cannot find an A or B competitive program in their community. This policy outlines the way in which LMSA will accept and release players with a goal to find a balance between community player development and opportunities, and team competitiveness.

3.01 Import Players

a) Definition

- i. A Player is considered an Import Player if they meet any of the following conditions:
 - a. They reside outside of the City of Lacombe in a community with an active and equivalent level (e.g., U13A/B) Softball Program.
 - b. They reside outside of Zone 4.
- ii. A player is NOT considered an Import Player with LMSA if they meet any of the following conditions:
 - a. Is a resident of the City of Lacombe?
 - b. They reside in a Zone 4 community without an active and equivalent level (e.g., U13A/B) Softball Program (and regardless of what the closest local association with one is).
- iii. A player who lives equal distance between associations but has previously played for the other association, thus requiring a release from that association will not be considered an import in the application of this policy.

b) Criteria

- i. Every Import player must be in compliance with the Softball Alberta Player Transfer Policy and any other relevant Softball Alberta policy.
- ii. Coaches may select a maximum of 40% of their players as import players except where approval by the board has been granted for exceptional circumstances.
- iii. Import Players are responsible for completing the relevant year's Softball Alberta Player Transfer form (available at [TRANSFERS - Softball Alberta](#)) and obtaining the required signatures from the releasing organization and providing this to the President of LMSA.

c) Application

- i. The LMSA board may consider increasing the number of allowed import players on a team if the team is unable to reach the necessary numbers to make a viable team at a certain age/skill level.
- ii. The LMSA board may upon specific request exempt pitchers and/or catchers from the 40% cap based on need for an appropriate skill level for a team.
- iii. The LMSA Registrar will maintain a list of all import players on each team and ensure compliance with the 40% maximum and any exceptions made.
- iv. The LMSA Registrar will track player transfer forms and ensure the required process with Softball Alberta is followed.
- v. A player waiting on release from their association will be refunded LMSA registration fees (excluding any other training or team fees) should a release not be granted.
- vi. Any player wishing to appeal their designation as an import player may request a meeting with the LMSA board.
- vii. Special requests will be reviewed on an individual basis by the LMSA board.

3.02 Player Release

a) Requests and Application

- i. A release is not required for players in age categories U17 and up.
- ii. The board will not provide pre-approval for transfer requests. Transfer requests will not be considered until the first Sunday of April for the year release is being requested [except in the case of section 3.02 b) v or other exception].
- iii. A player in U15 and under seeking a release from LMSA may submit a Softball Alberta transfer form to the LMSA president once the form is available from Softball Alberta, however requests will not be reviewed or considered by the board until the first Sunday in April of the year in which release is being requested.
- iv. The request should be accompanied by any relevant rationale as to why the request should be granted.
- v. As per Softball Alberta, player transfers are only applicable in the year of issue, so players of LMSA will need to apply on a yearly basis for continued release.

b) Assessment and Approval

- i. The Board will determine on a case-by-case basis if the release will be granted. Decisions will be final, and appeals can be made directly to Softball Alberta. All appeals will follow Softball Alberta guidelines.
- ii. The following are some of the guidelines that will be used in assessing the request and determining whether a release shall be granted:
 - a. Whether the player has received an offer for the same age category but higher-level team with another association. (i.e., Player is offered B with our association but A with another)
 - b. Whether or not there is a viable team for the player to play on

- c. Whether the player's release would have an impact on the viability of a team for remaining LMSA players
 - iii. Any transfer forms received will be responded to within 7 calendar days of receipt with the application review beginning the first Sunday in April of the year in which release is being requested [except where section 3.02 b) v or other exception applies].
 - iv. A player who requests and is granted a transfer for the year but subsequently decides they wish to play with LMSA for that same year may do so only where it is advantageous for LMSA. LMSA will not displace any players after the fact to accommodate the return. The decision will be made by the Board.
 - v. A player who is offered a spot on an LMSA team but chooses to accept a position on a same level team (e.g., 13A, where level is based on the intent for team at time of formation) with another association may request a release from LMSA as soon as the form is available from Softball Alberta by submitting the completed form to president@lacombeginsoftball.ca. This situation will be an exception from LMSA's standard review date and LMSA will review and respond to these requests within 7 days of receipt. Should the release be granted, the player will not be eligible to return to LMSA in that current season. This will also apply to a player who does not request a formal release.
- c) Exceptions
- i. Any exceptions to this policy and the process for releasing players as indicated in this policy must have unanimous board approval from all members. Exception requests can be sent to president@lacombeginsoftball.ca

4.0 Evaluation and Team Selection Process

The Lacombe Minor Softball Association aims to evaluate player softball skills in a consistent and fair manner resulting in teams at various levels who will all focus on development, opportunity, sportsmanship, and love of the game. LMSA will outline the standard way in which players are evaluated, and teams selected, while providing clarity for how some of the more common situations that arise will be navigated. Any situation not specifically outlined in this policy will be reviewed and assessed at the board level with the goal being a fair review and outcome.

4.01 General

Lacombe Minor Softball Association teams will be formed, and the number of teams determined based on the number of eligible registrants, skill and talent level, competitiveness, and parent/player commitment level in the respective groups. This is outlined further in our Team Roster Policy (section 5.0) and applies to all levels. The level at which each team competes will be at the coach's discretion with the final approval coming from the LMSA Executive. The intent is to place the teams in the level of league and provincial play that will offer the players the most positive season experience.

- a) The following is a summary of the tiering classifications:

- i. "A"- This is the highest level of competition available in Softball. These teams require a higher level of commitment from the players, parents and coaches. It is the expectation that all "A" level teams will participate in the Alberta Provincial Championships and may advance to Western or National championships.
- ii. "B"- This is an intermediate level of competition. A high level of commitment is required at this level from players, parents, and coaches. It is encouraged that all "B" level teams will participate in Play Downs (when necessary) and Alberta Provincial Championships. They may then advance to Western or National championships.
- iii. "C/D" - This is a purely recreational level unless otherwise discussed with the LMSA Board and head coach. These teams will participate in the Central Alberta Softball League and are encouraged to attend "C" or "D" Play Downs (when necessary) and Alberta Provincial Championships.

4.02 Eligibility

Players eligible to be selected for LSMA teams must meet the following criteria:

- a) Must follow the current Import Policy [section 3.01 a) i, ii, iii] or must follow Softball Alberta Zone Transfer Policy and any other relevant Softball Alberta policy.
- b) Have paid all applicable fees - past and current.
- c) Have filled out all required forms, including registration and/or waivers.

4.03 Player Evaluation Process - "A" or "B" Competitive Program

Player evaluations for "A" or "B" Competitive Program teams (normally U13/U15/U17/U19) will be held in late summer and/or early fall as these teams are required to practice and participate in the winter player development programs provided by LMSA. Players will be required to immediately register for the spring season and winter player development program(s). Registration fees will include LMSA registration and payment of any additional fees that relate to the Player Development Program(s) if selected for an "A" or "B" level Competitive Program team.

4.04 Player Evaluation Process - "C" or "D" Recreational Program

Player Evaluations will be held at the beginning of each season (normally February) based on the registrations received.

4.05 Talent Identification and Evaluations

- a) Eligible players will be tested using the Selects Evaluation Metrics (see Appendix 3). Metrics are approved by the LMSA Board and will be reviewed yearly to ensure the most up to date metrics are being used.
- b) Players must attend a minimum of one (1) evaluation session for A/B level.
- c) Pitchers and Catchers will be required to attend a metric session specific to that skill in addition to the other session(s).
- d) Evaluation scores will be confidential; however, players and parents may request to see their scores through the Evaluations Director (see 4.07 d)

- e) Players that are interested in competing at the C/D level(s) are required to attend one (1) evaluation in the spring based on Metrics at their age level.
- f) A player may proactively request an excused absence from the Evaluations Director prior to the start of the evaluation. The Evaluations Director, with direct input from the LMSA board, will review the circumstances of the request and may request supporting evidence to approve or deny the request.
- g) Players who attend none of the evaluations for their age level will automatically be placed on a “D” team where the LMSA Board and current years coaching staff see fit, except where an excused absence has been approved as above.

4.06 Evaluations and Scoring

- a) All players will be evaluated by a combination of their overall skills and abilities as softball players, Selects Evaluation Metrics, and in some cases game situation simulations to assess game sense.
- b) Parental and family commitment and support for the sport, league, program, and team may be considered in the overall evaluation score where the score of players is similar.
- c) Players that choose to be evaluated for a Pitcher and/or Catcher position will receive separate scores with respect to these positions.
- d) Evaluation Scores (Player and Pitcher/Catcher) will be compiled by the LMSA Evaluations Director which will also be used by the Director, Player and Coach Development Director and 2 other selected board members who have no directly involved interest to aid in the selection of any parent coaches at specific levels.

4.07 Evaluators

- a) Evaluators must be an individual who has extensive experience as a player and/or as a coach in competitive softball.
- b) Evaluators must be objective and cannot have any familial or personal ties to the level they are evaluating.
- c) Evaluators must provide fair and consistent evaluations of players within the group.
- d) Evaluators recognize the sensitive nature of the player evaluations and will not discuss the player evaluations with any other individuals other than those directly involved in player evaluations. Evaluation scores will be confidential; however, players and parents may request to see their scores through the Evaluations Director upon formal request. Requests will be sent to the President of LMSA via email, president@lacombeginllsoftball.com.
- e) Evaluators will provide their completed scoresheets to the Evaluations Director who will compile the results.

4.08 Evaluation Assistants

- a) Will ensure a proper warm-up is done at the beginning of each evaluation session.
- b) Demonstrate and ensure that players understand each drill.
- c) Be conscious of time management.
- d) Ensure proper equipment is being used.
- e) Encourage the players to perform to the best of their ability.
- f) Will not share any of their personal insight with players, parents, or other observers during the evaluation process.

- g) Must remain objective and cannot have any familial or personal ties to the level they are assisting with.

4.09 Team Selection

- a) A/B Levels will be based on current Selects Evaluation Metrics, prior demonstrated playing skills, game sense, and coach selections. A final selection session will be held. Players chosen to participate will receive an invitation to the final evaluation selection session.
- b) The Evaluations Director will schedule player selection meetings with the Head Coach, Player and Coach Development Director and two (2) other selected board members who have no directly involved interest. This will be known as the Team Selection Committee. Team selections will start with any A team (starting at U11 moving upward), then B team(s). C/D team(s) selections will occur after February metrics evaluations.
- c) During the player selection meetings, the Team Selections Committee will be given the evaluation and scoring information from the Evaluations Director. They will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement from LMSA before receiving this information. For “A” and “B” teams, the top 5 evaluated players are “must picks” and the head coach, with help from the Team Selection Committee, will select the remaining roster from the next 13 top evaluated players. In instances where the coach and/or Team Selection Committee wishes to go outside of these parameters, valid rationale must be provided and accepted by the LMSA Executive.
- d) Where ties exist in player evaluation metric numbers, the discretion of which player(s) to select will be left up to the Head Coach with input from the Team Selection Committee.
- e) In C/D levels, where multiple teams exist, the Evaluations Director and the Team Selection Committee will strive to form the teams based on balancing the skill level amongst the teams.

4.10 Team Placement

- a) All players selected for an A/B level team will receive notification of an offer from the team head coach who will also provide a timeline in which to accept the offer.
- b) All Players selected for a C/D level team will be notified by the team head coach and given a timeline in which to respond (where applicable).
- c) Remaining players will receive notification that they have not been selected for an A/B level team and will participate in the next evaluations which will occur in February. These players are encouraged to register for our winter Player Development Programs.
- d) A player who evaluates as a pitcher or catcher but evaluates higher as a player will be approached by the coach and given the choice to play on the higher-level team as a player with little to no pitching/catching time or to play on a lower-level team to have the opportunity to develop those skills further. If a situation such as this arises, both the player and parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to be involved in the conversation with the coach.
- e) Best efforts will be made to ensure that all registered players will be placed on a team. This may include joining with other communities or programs to ensure a team is viable.

- f) If changes need to be made to teams based on an unwillingness of the player or family to commit to the team, the coach should inform the Evaluation Director and/or the President of LMSA so players can be re-assigned and/or the situation assessed.
- g) Any player requests for team placement on C/D level teams must be made upon registration and prior to evaluations of players. Valid reasoning for this request must be sent via email to president@lacombegirlssoftball.com
- h) When the team formation process is complete, the list of teams along with head coach contact information will be posted on the Lacombe Minor Softball Association web page as well as social media outlets.

4.11 Late Registrations, Excused Absences and Injured Players

- a) If a potential player has missed registration, the following guidelines will be used to determine the appropriate action:
 - i. If evaluations have not yet occurred, the late registrant can proceed with scheduled evaluations and be placed on the appropriate team. The late registrant will also be asked to pay the late registration fee plus all other fees due at that point in time.
 - ii. If evaluations have occurred, it is at the discretion of the LMSA Executive as to whether the late registrant will be allowed to be evaluated and/or placed on a team. The number of registrants at that age level and team size will be the primary consideration in deciding.
- b) For a player wishing to be evaluated for an A/B team that was unable to attend scheduled evaluations (due to injury or received an excused absence approved by the board), the following guideline will be used to determine the appropriate action:
 - i. The head coach of the desired team has the option of evaluating the player that has missed scheduled evaluations but is not required to do so except where the player previously played on an A/B team and/or attended one (1) evaluation where they scored at a level indicating they would have had a strong chance of making an A/B team.
 - ii. Players that have gone through the evaluation process and have been placed on the desired team will not be displaced.
 - iii. If the new player is evaluated by the coach of the desired team, meets the requirements for the team, and has approval of the LMSA Executive, then they will be added to the team and the team roster will be increased by one.
NOTE: Team roster size is limited, and the Import Player Policy still applies.
- c) For players wishing to play on C/D teams who missed scheduled evaluations and teams have been formed, the player may be placed on a team at the discretion of the LMSA Executive subject to the following:
 - i. The player will not be granted an evaluation.
 - ii. The player will be placed on a team that does not have a full roster or on a team at the LMSA Executive's discretion.
 - iii. The player will be asked to pay the late registration fee, plus all other fees due at that time.

4.12 Resolving or Addressing Concerns:

It is important to note that the Lacombe Minor Softball Association, inclusive of its evaluators, coaches and volunteers spend a considerable amount of time and effort into making the evaluation and selection process as professional and unbiased as possible. Often problems are the result of a misunderstanding or failure to identify expectations. We expect that coaches, players and parents can be reasonable and considerate in approaching any potential concern or conflict and work with the understanding that no one intends any ill will.

- a) With respect to the evaluation process the following should be noted:
 - i. Any decision made by or with support from the President of LMSA is final.
 - ii. Individuals should strive to support the evaluation process to allow for balanced and competitive teams that will enjoy a successful ball season.
 - iii. Issues with the evaluation and team selection process should be presented with suggestions for improvement to the Evaluations Director and/or an executive level board member via written email.
 - iv. If further clarification is required, a discussion can be scheduled with the Team Selection Committee.
 - v. As the evaluation and team selection process is a Policy within the Lacombe Minor Softball Association, any changes must be reviewed and approved by the LMSA Executive. The objective of the evaluation process is to ensure that all players are correctly placed on the appropriate team. Special circumstances, which fall outside the normal process, can be brought forward to the LMSA Executive for their review.

5.0 Team Roster Size

LMSA believes that rosters beyond, or below, a certain number are not in the best interest of overall/long term player development. Therefore, the LMSA recommends that team roster sizes be kept to a reasonable size allowing enough flexibility to be able to accommodate occasional missing players and balancing that against having too many players sitting on the bench. The following objectives have been implemented to guide this policy.

5.01 U7 and U9 teams:

- a) Teams will be formed, based on a best effort, with an ideal size of 9 players. The association will not operate a team with less than 7 players on the roster. Team rosters will not have more than 10 players unless approved by the LMSA Executive.

5.02 U11, U13 (C/D), U15 (C/D), U17 (C/D), and U19 (C/D) teams:

- a) Teams will be formed, based on a best effort, with an ideal size of 12 players. The association will not operate a team with less than 10 players on the roster. Team rosters will not have more than 13 players unless approved by the LMSA Executive.

5.03 U13(A/B), U15 (A/B), U17(A/B), U19 (A/B) teams

- a) Teams will be formed based on formal, organized evaluations and scores, with a minimum of 11 players and maximum at the coach's discretion with appropriate

consideration of the players and overall team. The evaluation for these teams will be held in the fall each year to allow fall/winter development. For age groups U13, U15 and U17, it is recommended to have no more than 14 players while U19 is based solely on coaches' discretion with LMSA Executive consultation.

- 5.04 Exceptions: Upon a specific request, the maximum roster size may be increased upon approval from the LMSA Executive. Each request will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

6.0 Play Up Policy

6.01 Lacombe Minor Softball Association believes that most players develop better in their age-appropriate category. We do recognize that highly talented players do exist and may want to provide themselves with an opportunity to play in the next age category within the association.

- a) Any players who are interested in trying out for an older age category are invited to do so.
- b) Athletes can only try out to play up if they are in the second year of their current age category.
- c) For an athlete to play up on a Tier 1 team, they MUST evaluate in the top 5 overall of the age category they wish to play in
- d) To balance teams, any athlete that wants to play out of their age category needs to evaluate in both age categories to ensure they can safely play with older athletes.
- e) There are no guarantees that an athlete will be granted a spot on a team for an age category above where they belong.
- f) All requests need to be submitted to the Evaluations Director.

7.0 Athlete Affiliation

7.01 Non-Provincial Play

- a) At the beginning of each softball season, higher division coaches may approach lower division coaches within the Lacombe Minor Softball Association looking for players to affiliate. Affiliates are restricted to one division below.
- b) Teams whose rosters are small will look for back up players in case of injuries or sickness that could befall some of their players.
- c) The coaches and LMSA board should confer on possible choices and then the parents should be consulted as to their interest in being an affiliate player.
- d) The process and times of possible affiliation should be explained to both parents and players so there is no misunderstanding.
- e) The lower tier or division coach of an affiliated athlete must agree to let the affiliated athlete play in the higher division. Only if and when there is a conflict in a tournament or regular league game play, the lower division coach can decline the request for the athlete to play for the higher division team.

- f) When an affiliated athlete's name is on the official score sheet and lineup card, they are considered to have played in the game. This participation shall be noted on the official score sheet and lineup card with an "AP" beside their name.

7.02 Provincial Play

- a) All Softball Alberta standards and rules must be followed as per [Appendix G, Softball Alberta Handbook \(page 32, 33\)](#).

Category	Level	Categories eligible for pickups	
U19	C	U19 C, D	U17 B & Lower
	D	U19 D	U17 B & Lower
U17	B	U17 B, C, D	U15 A & Lower
	C	U17 C, D	U15 B & Lower
	D	U17 D	U15 AB & Lower
U15	B	U15 B, C, D	U13 A & Lower
	C	U15 C, D	U13 B & Lower
	D	U15 D	U13 B & Lower
U13	A	U13 A, B, C, D	U11
	B	U13 B, C, D	U11
	C	U13 C, D	U11
	D	U13 D	U11
U11	-	U11 & Lower	-

8.0 Coaching Requirements

LMSA strives to provide both recreational and competitive levels of playing opportunities to players. The aim of coach development is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of softball coaches within LMSA. To achieve this goal, we require volunteers to coach these teams and recognize that trained coaches provide a better experience for players. This policy will outline the way in which LMSA will select coaches for teams, the expectations of selected coaches as well as how they will be evaluated.

8.01 Coach Selection

- a) Application Process

- i. An individual interested in coaching an LMSA team must complete and submit the LMSA Coach Application form expressing their interest in coaching. This form can be found on the LMSA website: [Selects 2023/2024 Coach Application \(google.com\)](#).
 - ii. Applications for teams evaluating in the fall will normally be submitted before the September evaluations.
 - iii. LMSA may approach individuals to submit a coaching application where the need exists for coaches or where the individual has a background that would be an asset for our players.
 - iv. LMSA reserves the right to accept coach applications after any deadlines identified to find a suitable coach for a team.
 - v. The LMSA Executive has the discretion to accept or refuse an application to coach.
- b) Selection Process
- i. The Coach and Player Development Director, with LMSA Executive support as required, will review accepted Head Coach applications and consider the following:
 - a. Whether any formal training through the National Coaching Certification Program has been completed and what certifications the volunteer already has.
 - b. Coaching and player experience in the sport of softball.
 - c. Previous coaching history in sport.
 - d. Previous coach evaluation feedback where the individuals have previously coached for LMSA. This would also include any formal complaints received and any grievances that have occurred.
 - e. Where the volunteer is a parent volunteer wishing to coach their player's team, the level at which that player is evaluated.
 - f. The number of applications received and the number of teams needing coaches.
 - ii. The Coach Selection Committee (composed of the Coach and Player Development Director, one executive level board member and in some cases a third board member) may invite the candidates to participate in a formal interview depending on the situation and applications received.
 - iii. Where a formal interview process is taking place, all candidates will be asked a consistent set of standardized questions to gather comparable information.
 - iv. Where only one coach has applied for a team or where there is only one qualified candidate, The Coach and Player Development Director may conduct an informal interview with the candidate to gather any additional information required. If the Director feels the team should be awarded to the candidate, this recommendation will be brought to the Coach Selection Committee for final approval.
 - v. The Coach Selection Committee has the authority to award the Head Coach position for a team. Communication to the successful candidate will occur by the Coach and Player Development Director.

- vi. Care will be taken to avoid an overt conflict of interest in terms of Selection Committee members for any situations as needed.
- vii. Assistant Coaches will be selected and recruited by the head coach, however the LMSA Executive reserves the right to refuse any assistant coach selections.

8.02 Coach Expectations

a) Training and Certification

- i. Coaches must abide by Softball Alberta requirements for training/certification based on the team level being coached and events attending (i.e., provincials, post provincials).
- ii. The following are the minimum certification requirements set out by Softball Alberta and LMSA for Head Coaches and should be achieved prior to the start of the season:

Category	Level	Certification	Requirement
U9		CS, MED	Trained
U11	A	CS, MED	Certified
	B/C/D	CS, MED	Trained
U13	A/B/C/D	CS, MED	Certified
U15	A	CS, CI*, MED	Certified
	B/C/D	CS, MED	Trained
U17	A/AW	CI, MED	Certified
	B	CS, CI*, MED	Trained
	C/D	CS, MED	Trained
U19	A	CI, MED	Certified
	B	CS, CI*, MED	Trained
	C/D	CS, MED	Trained

Legend:

CS - Community Softball (Level 1); CI - Competition Introduction (Level 2 equivalent); MED - Making Ethical Decisions (Online Evaluation)

*If coaching a team in a category that leads to post provincial play, the coach must be 'Competition - Introduction' certified including MED.

- iii. All LMSA Head and Assistant Coaches are encouraged to take NCCP's Community Softball coaching clinic. Upon completion of the clinic LMSA will provide a reimbursement of the registration fees associated with attending this clinic.
- iv. Upon completion of the 'Competition - Introduction' coaching clinic, where that level of certification is required, or where the LMSA board determines that

such certification is of benefit to the Association and on field evaluation, LMSA will reimburse each team's head coach for any applicable fees.

- v. All Head and Assistant coaches will be required to obtain a Criminal Record - Vulnerable Sector check at the start of the season. A letter will be provided to coaches so there will be no cost incurred by the coaches.
- vi. As per Softball Alberta, it is required that all affiliated **MINOR** softball coaches, assistant coaches, and managers (U19 and lower) complete or have completed the online Respect in Sport Certification for "Activity Leaders". This course is to be completed by June 1.

8.03 Team

- a) Coaches will schedule a team meeting at the start of the season and communicate their coaching philosophy and expectations of parents and players for the season during this meeting.
- b) Coaches will discuss roles and expectations of any Assistant Coaches including:
 - i. Expectations of commitment levels.
 - ii. Expectations of tasks.
 - iii. Expectations regarding input into game lineups, player play time etc.
 - iv. Assistant Coaches are to understand that the expectations may vary from one Head Coach to another. These conversations will ensure the Assistant Coach is provided with a clear understanding of what to expect and can choose to step out at the beginning of the season should the expectations not be acceptable to the Assistant Coach. This will proactively mitigate potential conflict that could occur.
- c) Coaches are responsible for making the board aware of any conduct issues that occur (coach or parent or player) during the season. Issues should be brought forward in a timely manner.

8.04 Establishing Coaching Standards and Conduct

- a) Coaches will develop and implement coaching standards that align with LMSA and Softball Alberta's guidelines, and the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model (see Appendix 2)
- b) Coaches must demonstrate patience with players and recognize players have different strengths and will learn at different speeds. Interactions with players will always maintain appropriate boundaries and always be respectful.
- c) Coaches are expected to encourage, promote and demonstrate sportsmanlike conduct. This includes treating all players and coaches of other teams with respect.
- d) Coaches are required to treat all umpires with respect and dignity. Coaches will avoid confrontational behavior and speak respectfully with umpires using appropriate methods of appeal during games.
- e) Coaches will monitor the behavior of their team and fans and take necessary measures to ensure proper conduct.
- f) Coaches must be drug and alcohol-free during team practices and games and will not use tobacco products in the dugout or on the playing field.

- g) All coaches are expected to conduct themselves in line with the LMSA Coach Code of Conduct (see section 16.0) in addition to adhering to all expectations outlined in this policy.
- h) Where the LMSA Executive receives a complaint regarding a head coach or assistant coach's behavior and it is determined by the Board to be in contradiction of LMSA's Code of Conduct for coaches and/or this policy, the coach may face disciplinary action. Discipline may include a verbal warning, suspension for a predetermined amount of time, or complete suspension from coaching for LMSA.
- i) Previous complaints received, and severity of the complaint(s) will be considered when determining disciplinary actions to be taken.

8.05 Coach Evaluation

- a) Collection of Feedback
 - i. LMSA sends out a yearly coach feedback form to collect input from players/parents regarding their players coaching experiences from the year.
 - ii. Feedback is reviewed by the board and will be used in subsequent years in the coach selection process.
 - iii. Coach feedback will be shared with the receiving coach where deemed necessary by the board (e.g. in the case of consistent negative feedback).
 - iv. Feedback will be used as an opportunity for growth and development wherever possible.
 - v. Feedback will be incorporated into the Coach Development plan to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs of softball coaches in the LMSA.

8.06 Collaboration and Networking

- a) The LMSA may facilitate opportunities for coaches to collaborate and network with their peers within Lacombe, Alberta, and nationally. For example, LMSA will host an annual coaching clinic bringing in guest coaches to support our current coaching staff for the season.
- b) LMSA may organize coaching symposiums, roundtable discussions, and coaching forums where coaches can share experiences, exchange ideas, and learn from each other. This fosters an environment of growth and support at all levels.
- c) LMSA aims to develop a Junior Coach/Mentor program to encourage a love of coaching in older players as well as fostering positive mentorships for young athletes within the Lacombe Minor Softball Association.

8.07 Recognition and Incentives

- a) LMSA will recognize and reward coaches who demonstrate exceptional commitment, innovation, and impact in their coaching practices.
- b) LMSA aims to establish awards to honour coaches who have made significant contributions to the development of softball in Lacombe.

By implementing this comprehensive Coach Development Plan, LMSA aims to create a pool of highly skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated coaches who can maximize the potential of players and contribute to the overall growth and success of softball in Lacombe and Zone 4.

9.0 Equipment Policy

9.01 Coaches

- a) Head coaches will receive a package of equipment at the beginning of each season. Responsibility for this equipment remains the Head Coach's for the duration of the season.
- b) If any equipment is damaged or lost, please let the association know as soon as possible, so that it can be replaced in a timely manner.
- c) If there is something required above the initial package of equipment, please submit a formal request to Lacombe Minor Softball Association via email at equipmng@lacombeirlsoftball.com.
- d) If any equipment is purchased with fundraising funds by the association, it becomes the property of Lacombe Minor Softball Association at the conclusion of the season.
- e) Any questions can also be directed to our Equipment Director.

9.02 Matrix Players

- a) All players must be dressed in the following for games:
 - i. Black ball pants and a team designated colored belt.
 - ii. Matrix Jersey(s) will be provided to each player at the beginning of the season.
 - a. A \$50 deposit will be applied to your fees at the beginning of each season. When the jersey is returned, you will receive a refund of the deposit.
 - iii. One (1) pair Knee-high socks in your designated team color will be supplied by Lacombe Minor Softball Association.
 - iv. All players must have their own ball glove and protective support including a Jill (when required as per Softball Alberta), CSA helmet with dual ear flaps, working chin strap, and attached face mask.
 - v. Proper running shoes or softball cleats as per Softball Alberta requirements. Crocs, clogs, boots, sandals, slip on shoes or bare feet are not permitted.
 - vi. All pitchers must wear an approved fielding mask for all levels.
 - vii. All infield players must wear an approved fielding mask at U11 and above.

9.03 Selects Players

- a) All Selects uniform requirements will be issued each season by the Selects Director. The following will be required but not limited to:
 - i. Team designated ball pants and colored belt.
 - ii. Selects Jersey(s) will be provided to each player at the beginning of the season.
 - iii. One (1) pair knee-high socks in your designated team color and will be supplied by the Lacombe Minor Softball Association.
 - iv. All players must have their own ball glove, Jill (protective support), CSA helmet with dual ear flaps, working chin strap, and attached face mask.
 - v. Proper softball cleats as per Softball Alberta requirements.
 - vi. All pitchers must wear an approved fielding mask for all levels.

10.0 Umpire Funding

10.01 The LMSA supports the development of local umpires as umpires are essential to the game of softball. The LMSA believes that there should be no financial barriers for any athlete who is wanting to grow as a player and individual within this aspect of the sport. Upon email request to the President, LMSA will cover the cost of the umpire clinic for any registered athlete within our association. The minimum requirements for this funding to occur are:

- a) Shall work a minimum of 3 games for the LMSA.

11.0 Team Management

11.01 Upon the formation of teams, it is necessary to appoint a team manager. This is a volunteer position. Some responsibilities of the team manager include:

- a) Booking Tournaments.
- b) Scheduling and keeping parents and athletes up to date on game dates/times/locations.
- c) Keeping copies of Medical Forms.
- d) Attend manager meetings.
- e) Consult the Selects Director with any team management questions.
- f) Coordinate and assist with filling parent volunteer positions where applicable.
 - ❖ Examples, but not limited to: Scorekeepers, Game Changer, Parent Liaison, Social Media, Photographer/Team pictures, Sponsorship, Organizing the hotels, Food, Fan Apparel, Fundraising or other team activities.

12.0 Fundraising and Team Finances

12.01 Association fundraising is mandatory for all players U9 and above. This will encompass **ALL** teams under the LMSA.

12.02 When Team Fundraising, you are representing the Lacombe Minor Softball Association within the community. Please remember this and always represent LMSA in a positive and professional manner.

12.03 Maximum fundraising for a season is \$3500 for our C/D Matrix Levels. Maximum fundraising for our A/B Selects Teams will be discretionary based on their season plan and consultation of the LMSA Executive. We strongly encourage that at least one (1) team fundraising initiative is taking place.

- 12.04 Team sponsorship funds are to be used towards tournament entry fees, team events, rental facilities for practicing, apparel, and anything else the team deems necessary.
- 12.05 Any fundraiser that requires an AGLC license (ie 50/50, raffle draw, liquor basket) needs approval from the LMSA Executive. AGLC Licensing funds are limited and regulated therefore a formal request must be submitted via email to fundraising@lacombegirlssoftball.com.
- 12.06 If a team would like to fundraise more than the allotted above-mentioned maximums, a request must be formally submitted to the LMSA for approval via email to fundraising@lacombegirlssoftball.com.
- 12.07 Cash calls should only be requested when necessary. A team may ask for no more than \$500/FAMILY initially for our A/B Selects teams and \$100/FAMILY for our C/D Matrix teams. A/B Selects teams may require a second cash call depending on their season and fundraising/sponsorship for said season. If any changes to the above are necessary, consult the LMSA Executive.
- 12.08 All proceeds from fundraisers must be deposited into a team bank account and recorded as part of the team financials. Each team will appoint a team treasurer, and this will be a volunteer position. Banks will open a team account with some paperwork from Lacombe Minor Softball Association. Contact the Treasurer for support in opening your team account.
- 12.09 At no time should a team's financial balance be in the negative.
- 12.10 The team must supply a draft budget for the upcoming season by the time that they hold their parent meeting. This is to allow the coach and manager and/or treasurer to work through their plans so that the level of the financial commitment can be communicated to the parents early in the season. The LMSA Treasurer can provide a spreadsheet for each team to allow an easy breakdown and management upon request.
- 12.11 Teams must provide a financial statement detailing all income and expenses at the end of season. The final version of the closing financial statements is due to LMSA by Sept 1st. The statements must show that the team account has been brought down to zero. The statements must include a list of all expenses (cheques) and income for the entire year as well as a bank statement(s) showing all activity on the team bank account(s) and a final balance of zero.
- 12.12 Lacombe Minor Softball Association is a non-profit organization and as such will keep fees and fundraising set to rates that allow us to maintain services without incurring financial loss.
- 12.13 All excess Matrix funds at the end of the season must be completed in the following order:

- a) Used to pay for any outstanding bills that are the responsibility of the team.
- b) Divided up evenly and given back to the families to a maximum of what was asked for a cash call.
- c) Presented to the association to be donated back to the association.

12.14 All excess Selects funds at the end of the season must be completed in the following order:

- a) Used to pay for any outstanding bills that are the responsibility of the team.
- b) Divided up evenly and given back to the families to a maximum previously agreed upon amount that is not greater than the total of the cash call from the season.
- c) To be kept in the Selects revolving account up to a maximum of \$2000.

13.0 Play Down, Provincial and Post-Provincial Funding

13.01 The LMSA recognizes that there are teams within the association that have goals of post seasonal play and would like to assist any teams endeavor to do so financially. Upon any Matrix/Selects team's eligibility of play downs, provincials and/or post provincial play, the LMSA will:

- a) Pay all applicable fees to Softball Alberta as required prior to play downs and/or provincials.
- b) Pay all applicable post provincial bond fees.

13.02 In the case that gate fees are required by the hosting association for play downs and provincials, it becomes the responsibility of the attending team to use their own team funds. Any and all requests for LMSA to pay fees for play downs, provincials and post provincial play must be sent via email to treasurer@lacombeginsoftball.com and will be considered on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the President of LMSA.

14.0 Conflict Resolution and Discipline

14.01 The LMSA realizes that conflicts can take place throughout the season. How these conflicts are dealt with is critical for all parties involved. For this reason, LMSA has adopted the following process in hopes of diffusing conflicts as swiftly as possible within the association. Absolutely no phone calls to the board of directors will be accepted.

- a) Incident occurs.
- b) Must wait 24 hours to file a complaint.
- c) Document the incident or issue in writing. Verbal complaints will not be acknowledged.
- d) Be sure to clearly state the situation in as much detail as possible.
- e) Submit a written complaint to your team's parent liaison.
- f) The team's parent liaison will endeavor to resolve conflict at team level. This would include discussion with the parties involved.

- g) If a solution agreeable to both parties is not possible, the incident is then forwarded to the Vice President of LMSA.
- h) The Vice President will review the written submissions of the incident. They may call a meeting of all parties involved and the parent liaison to find a resolution acceptable to both parties at this level.
- i) If a resolution is not possible at this level, they will forward the complaint to the LMSA President for further review.
- j) The LMSA Executive may review and act on the situation as they see best fit for all parties involved.

14.02 EXCEPTIONS: A LMSA board member must recuse themselves if they have any conflict of interest with the parties involved. Every situation and resolution will be decided on a case-by-case basis and will consider the severity and number of offenses previously occurred. The LMSA Executive reserves the right to implement any solutions they see fit and are final with no right to appeal.

15.0 Safety and Injury

- 15.01 LMSA Athlete Medical Forms must be present at all practices, games, tournaments, and other team functions.
- a) LMSA will provide each team with a first aid kit.
 - b) LMSA is committed to preventing injuries due to the game of softball by:
 - i. Adhering to the appropriate safety equipment required for the athletes set out by Softball Alberta.
 - ii. Warming up properly prior to each practice/game.
 - iii. Concentrating on age-appropriate pitching/pitch counts.
 - iv. Developing skills that are age appropriate.
 - v. Returning to play only when a healthcare professional grants clearance.
 - c) Concussion guidelines and protocol can be found at: <https://www.parachutecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Return-to-Sport-Strategy.pdf>

16.0 Code of Conduct

- 16.01 Coaches
- a) You, as a coach, can have a major effect on the development of an athlete of any age. The experiences our athletes have on and off the softball field will last for a lifetime, and we hope it instills the love of the game.
 - b) LMSA works to ensure the coach/athlete relationship and the educational setting is always a positive experience so that each athlete's learning curve can be maximized to its fullest.
 - c) To enjoy the season and to allow others to do the same, LMSA asks that coaches and assistant coaches please follow these guidelines:

- i. I will be a role model for each athlete that I coach by using praise, positive encouragement, displaying control, professionalism, and respect for my team, LMSA, and Zone 4.
- ii. I will be familiar with and coach under Softball Alberta rules.
- iii. I will encourage sportsmanship, and be courteous and respectful to all athletes, parents/guardians, coaches, officials, umpires, and other fans of the game.
- iv. I will be reasonable when scheduling practices and other activities, remembering that the athletes on my team have other interests and obligations.
- v. I will ensure all players on my team receive equal skill development, support, and fair playing time.
- vi. I will teach the athletes on my team to play fairly and to respect the rules, the officials, their opponents, and their teammates.
- vii. I will always show concern towards sick and injured athletes and will request the advice of medical professionals as to whether they are ready to play again.
- viii. I will not ridicule or yell at the players on my team for making mistakes or performing poorly. I will remember that children play to have fun and must be encouraged to have confidence in themselves.
- ix. I will make sure that the equipment and facilities are safe and match the ages and abilities of the players on my team.
- x. I will obtain proper training and continue to upgrade my coaching skills, so I am able to develop the athletes' skills and understanding of the game of softball.
- xi. I will demand a sports environment for my athletes that is free from drugs (including cannabis), tobacco, vaping, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
- xii. I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Verbal warning by official, head coaches, and/or head of league organization.
 - b. Written warning.
 - c. Coaching game suspension with written documentation of the incident kept on file by the organization(s) involved.
 - d. Coaching season suspension.

16.02 Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

- a) Our parents and fans represent the Lacombe Minor Softball Association when our teams play and practice. The actions of one of us can affect the image of all of us. Remember, we are all dealing with amateur athletics that are for enjoyment and fun. This encourages us to promote respect and fair play for all players, parents, fans, volunteers, coaches, officials and umpires.
- b) To enjoy the season and to allow others to do the same, Lacombe Minor Softball Association asks that parents and their guests please follow these guidelines:
 - i. I will remember that children participate to have fun and play by the rules. The game is for youth, not adults. Therefore, I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of any desires I have for my child to win.

- ii. I will treat my team with respect and have my player(s) and all their equipment arrive at games and practices on time.
- iii. I will participate and adhere to the Fundraising policy.
- iv. I will report to the coach of any physical disability/injury that may affect my child or the safety of others.
- v. I will provide my child with positivity and support every chance I get, no matter what the outcome of the game may be and/or their performance. It is ok to make mistakes.
- vi. I will be a positive role model, encourage sportsmanship, and be courteous and respectful to all athletes, coaches, officials, umpires and other spectators.
- vii. I will demand that my child treat other athletes, coaches, officials, umpires and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- viii. I will never ridicule, yell, engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct or use inappropriate language at my child, other athlete, coach, official or umpire.
- ix. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs (including cannabis), tobacco, vaping, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
- x. I will learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
- xi. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players from the sidelines/stands.
- xii. I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Verbal warning by official, head coaches, and/or head of league organization.
 - b. Written warning.
 - c. Parental game suspension with written documentation of the incident kept on file by the organization(s) involved.
 - d. Parental season suspension.

16.03 Athletes

- a) As an athlete, represent the LMSA when your team plays and practices. The actions of one of us can affect the image of all of us. Remember, we are all here for enjoyment and fun.
- b) To enjoy the season and to allow others to do the same, Lacombe Minor Softball Association asks that athletes please follow these guidelines:
 - i. I will give 100 % of my effort, positive attitude, and sportsmanship on and off the field.
 - ii. I will respect, honor and be a positive contributor to the Lacombe Minor Softball Association.
 - iii. I will treat my team with respect and arrive to games and practices on time with all my equipment.
 - iv. I will respect, listen to and follow the direction and rules set out by my manager and coaches.
 - v. I will respect my team members and other athletes.
 - vi. I will never ridicule, yell, engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct or use inappropriate language at other athletes, coaches, officials, or umpires.

- vii. I will maintain an environment that is free from drugs (including cannabis), tobacco, vaping, and alcohol and I will not be under the influence of these substances and will refrain from their use at all sports events.
- viii. Be proud to be an athlete for LMSA and have FUN doing it!
- ix. I also agree that if I fail to abide by these rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Verbal warning by official, head coaches, and/or head of league organization.
 - b. Written warning.
 - c. A game suspension with written documentation of the incident kept on file by the organization(s) involved.
 - d. A season suspension.

Appendix 1: Needs Assessment for Coaches

The Lacombe Minor Softball Association (LMSA) is committed to providing a positive and engaging environment for youth athletes to develop their softball skills. In order to maintain and enhance the quality of coaching within our association, it is important to conduct a needs assessment to identify areas where our coaches may require additional support or resources. The following assessment aims to gather information regarding the needs and preferences of our coaches, with the goal of improving their effectiveness and satisfaction in their coaching roles.

The objective of this needs assessment is to identify the areas in which LMSA coaches require additional support, training, or resources to enhance their coaching abilities. By understanding these needs, the association can develop targeted strategies and initiatives to address them effectively.

Assessment Questions:

1. Current Coaching Experience:
 - a. How many years of coaching experience do you have?
 - b. Have you previously coached softball or other sports? If yes, please specify.
 - c. What age groups have you coached in the past?
2. Areas of Expertise:
 - a. What specific softball skills or techniques do you feel most confident coaching?
 - b. Are there any areas of coaching where you feel you need improvement or additional training?
3. Training and Professional Development:
 - a. Have you participated in any coaching clinics or workshops in the past? If yes, please provide details.
 - b. What types of training or professional development opportunities would you like to see offered by the association?
 - c. How frequently would you prefer training sessions to be conducted?
4. Resources and Support:
 - a. What coaching resources do you currently utilize (e.g., books, online materials, drills)?
 - b. What additional coaching resources or tools would you find helpful?
 - c. How can the association better support coaches in their roles?

5. Communication and Feedback:
 - a. How would you rate the effectiveness of communication between the association and coaches?
 - b. Are there any specific communication channels or methods you prefer for receiving updates, resources, or information?
6. Coach-Player Relationship:
 - a. How do you establish and maintain a positive and supportive relationship with your players?
 - b. Are there any challenges you face in building rapport with your players? If yes, please explain.
7. Coach Evaluation and Feedback:
 - a. How do you currently receive feedback on your coaching performance?
 - b. Would you find it valuable to have regular evaluations or assessments of your coaching effectiveness? If yes, how often?
8. Suggestions and Comments: Is there anything else you would like to share or suggest regarding coaching in the Lacombe Minor Softball Association?

By conducting this needs assessment, the Lacombe Minor Softball Association aims to gather valuable insights from coaches to better understand their needs, strengths, and areas for improvement. The results of this assessment will guide the association in developing tailored training programs, resources, and support systems to enhance coaching effectiveness and satisfaction.

Appendix 2: Long-Term Athlete Development Model

The objective of the Long-Term Athlete Development Model for softball in Lacombe is to provide a comprehensive training plan for players of all ages and skill levels. This program aims to develop fundamental softball skills, improve physical fitness, enhance game strategy and knowledge, and foster a love for the sport.

Program Structure:

1. Skill Development:
 - a. Basic Fundamentals:
 - Throwing: Proper grip, arm motion, accuracy, and velocity.
 - Fielding: Ground balls, fly balls, and infield/outfield positioning.
 - Hitting: Bat grip, stance, swing mechanics, bunting, and situational hitting.
 - Base Running: Techniques for stealing, leading, and sliding.
 - b. Advanced Techniques:
 - Pitching: Mechanics, different pitch grips, speed, accuracy, and strategy.
 - Catching: Stance, receiving, blocking, throwing, and game-calling.
 - Position-Specific Skills: In-depth training for specific positions (e.g., shortstop, outfielder, etc.).
2. Strength and Conditioning:
 - Agility: Footwork drills, ladder drills, and cone drills.
 - Speed: Sprint training, base running techniques, and reaction time exercises.
 - Strength: Age-appropriate strength training exercises, emphasizing core strength and explosive power.
 - Flexibility: Stretching routines to improve range of motion and prevent injuries.
3. Game Strategy and Knowledge:
 - Rules and Regulations: Understanding softball rules and how to apply them.
 - Situational Awareness: Teaching players to analyze game situations and make informed decisions.
 - Offensive Strategies: Hitting approach, base running strategies, and small ball tactics.
 - Defensive Strategies: Positioning, cut-offs, double plays, and defensive communication.
4. Mental Skills Training:

- Concentration and Focus: Techniques to improve mental focus during games and practices.
 - Visualization: Imagining successful performance to build confidence and mental rehearsal.
 - Goal Setting: Setting both short-term and long-term goals to track progress and maintain motivation.
 - Resilience and Sportsmanship: Teaching players to handle failures, adapt to setbacks, and maintain a positive attitude.
5. Game Experience:
- Scrimmages: Organizing intrasquad scrimmages to provide real game-like situations.
 - Tournaments: Encouraging participation in local and regional tournaments to gain exposure to different competition levels.
 - Video Analysis: Reviewing game footage to identify areas of improvement and reinforce learning points.
6. Coaching and Mentorship:
- Qualified Coaches: Ensuring the program is led by experienced and certified softball coaches.
 - Guest Clinicians: Inviting guest coaches, former players, and experts to conduct specialized clinics.
 - Leadership Development: Encouraging older or more experienced players to mentor and guide younger or less-experienced players.
7. Parent Involvement:
- Education: Conducting informational sessions for parents on various aspects of the sport, including rules, equipment, and player safety.
 - Supportive Environment: Encouraging parents to provide positive reinforcement and support their child's participation in the program.
 - Volunteer Opportunities: Offering parents opportunities to assist with program activities or events.

Note: The program can be tailored based on the age group, skill level, and available resources. It is crucial to create a safe and inclusive environment that promotes the enjoyment of the sport while emphasizing personal growth, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Appendix 3: Selects Metric Evaluation

Metric	Details
Home To First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Player begins at home plate ● Timer starts upon player's first move ● Timer stops upon player touching first base
Second to Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Player begins at second base ● Timer starts upon player's first move ● Timer stops upon player touching home plate
Exit Velocity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Velocity of ball batted off of tee ● Recorded with radar gun ● Player hits 4 balls with top velocity recorded
Throwing Velocity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Velocity of ball thrown from stretch (like a baseball pitcher) ● Recorded with radar gun ● Player throws 4 balls with top velocity recorded
Pro Agility (5-10-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three cones/lines marked out in straight line, 5 yards away from each other ● Player straddles the center line. Timer starts upon players first move ● Player runs to first outside line touching on or past the line ● Player runs to opposite line touching on or past the line ● Player sprints back across the center line ● Timer stops at first step on or beyond the center line ● Players can run up to three times with top score recorded
Pitching Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be recorded with radar for appropriate ages (U13 and up) ● Key metrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pitch Accuracy ○ Velocity ○ Pitch Selection
Catching Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home to second 'pop' time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Catcher behind home plate is thrown a pitch ○ Timer starts as ball contacts catchers glove ○ Timer stops as ball contacts receivers glove at second base