



## *My daughter wants to play on an 'A' or travel team, what should I expect?*

These are a few things that need to be expected when playing 'A' or travel ball. It should be considered a privilege to be able to play at this level as it is the highest level of fastpitch there is. With that, there is a certain skill set, dedication and expectations to compete at this level. Please refer to the information to below to help you decide if these expectations will work for your athlete and family prior to committing to a team.

### *1. Commitment to your team*

Players need to be committed and dedicated to the team throughout the full season (winter, spring, summer). It is understandable that girls have other sports to play throughout the winter as well, but there needs to be a balance of commitment between all sports and all teams. It is expected that players work hard on their skills at practices, and at home, throughout the winter season. Success is easier found if all parts of the team are dedicated and committed to the winter practices and training. The goal of winter practices is to hit the ground running come spring, get a strong start on the season, allowing the team to come out ahead early. It is a huge advantage for our teams to be able to practice all winter, developing and growing together as a team. Fastball is a very short season. Players need to make every effort to attend & maximize your development opportunity.

**Commitment & effort in = Skill & development outcome.**

### *2. More competitive environment*

'A' or travel ball is typically more competitive than rec teams (C/D level) with a focus on higher level of player development. Positions are earned, not guaranteed. Equal playing time is not promised, especially at Provincial tiering weekends, Provincials and post Provincial play. Substitution rules are in effect for all Provincial play, meaning that 9 players will be playing (DP/Flex at U15A and above). It is not guaranteed that there will be equal play involved, as these events will be being played to ensure that the team is successful. Commitment to consistent training and development will ensure that your athlete is prepared, as best as possible, for the season.

### *3. Increased time commitment*

'A' level ball requires a significant time commitment from **both players and parents**, with more practices, games and travel to tournaments. You should expect to be involved with fastball 3 times per week when there are no tournaments/games and alternatively you should expect to be involved with fastball 2 times per week and all weekend (Friday-Sunday) when we have games/tournaments. Unfortunately, there is no league to play in around Central Alberta for this level of play however it is possible to schedule exhibition games with neighboring similar level teams ie: Red Deer.

In order to get game play, please expect your athlete to play in tournaments most weekends in May-June until provincials in July (possibly some tournament play in April). Should your team qualify for post provincial play that typically takes place in August.

There is a lot of work to do both on and off the field to make every season a successful one. **It is mandatory for parents to step up in roles to ensure the success of the team.** It should not fall on a few parents to make it a successful season for all.

## 4. Building a community & culture

The A or travel tournament season is a fast but furious season. The girls will spend a lot of time together at the field and away from the field, parents will become friends and the time we spend together bonds us all as a softball family. The girls need to make sure that they attend team bonding events as it helps build the chemistry between the girls on and off the field. Team bonding and chemistry has a huge impact on the successfulness of the team. Within LMSA it is always our goal to foster an environment of support, encouragement, community and ultimately creating family type bonds. It is important for every athlete within to offer support for each other and our sister teams, for parents to support & encourage the athletes (ALL of them) and support your volunteer coaching staff. Softball families create lifelong bonds that are valued long passed our years at the diamond.

## 5. Higher Cost

There is a larger cost involved with playing on an 'A' or travel team. Costs outlined below are a rough estimate based on previous seasons but can and will fluctuate depending on current costs.

***All Selects players are expected to purchase a New Player Apparel Package. This package is mandatory and a cost of approximately \$800 per player and includes the following:***

Purple helmet and white cage, Purple ball bag or Black catcher bag (embroidered with name/number), 2 visors, 3 belts, 6 pr of socks, full Pinstripe uniform Jersey and Pants (custom with last name), Purple jersey (custom with last name), purple pants, a cage jacket, player hoodie, practice shirt.

Once this package is purchased initially, you are only required to purchase items, in future years, that need replacing due to being outgrown or damaged. Historically things like visors, socks and belts get worn out and occasionally pants can get sliding holes and may need replacing.

***Optional items that may be required or encouraged (some are team needs based):***

White ball pants, stadium jacket, additional jersey option, additional practice shirt

***Items you are required to provide for your player:***

Cleats, glove, batting gloves, bat, infielders mask, indoor shoes for winter training

***Registration with LMSA currently is a cost of \$300 per player & includes your \$100 fundraising commitment to LMSA.***

This fee covers a multitude of items including Softball Alberta registration and insurance, diamond rental in Lacombe, umpire fees for in season games, provincial registration fee (NOT gate fees), etc.

The required fundraising for LMSA is an opportunity for you to sell your tickets and get your \$100 back. This fundraising helps to keep costs low for everyone in LMSA and assists the board with running the seasons functions of the association.

In addition to the above, the team will also have a team budget for the season that will cover the costs of winter training, exhibition games, tournament entry fees, provincial tiering entry fees & gate fees, coaching costs etc. An initial team fee (seed money) of \$500 will be required upon accepting a spot on a Selects team. The season budget will depend on many factors and may not be the same year to year, but you can expect the season to cost approximately \$1800-\$2000 per player at a minimum.

Depending on the number of tournaments the team enters this cost can vary significantly. While these costs may seem alarming to some, it's important to remember the team will discuss as a group how they would like to pay for the season. Great options are fundraising, sponsorships and cash calls (if necessary) are all examples of how the team budget can be funded. It should always be a goal to work together to keep the above costs as low as possible for everyone so participation in fundraising, etc. is not necessarily optional.

Each family will also need to budget for travel expenses (hotels, fuel, food), and potentially specialized training (if desired) or equipment for your athlete in addition to the cost explained above.

## ***6. Parent Roles – every parent must have a role, sometimes 2!***

This list below is partly mandatory/partly optional positions – in order to make the season successful for the girls all parents need to help out.

- Manager (Mandatory, will be added to the LMSA Manager team snap for support in the season)
- Treasurer (Mandatory)
- Parent Liaison (Mandatory)
- Hotel/camping/travel coordinator
- Fundraising committee/raffle tickets
- Social (team building, beverages/snacks for tournaments where games are tight for time)
- Walk up music
- Scorekeeper
- Game changer (confidentiality requirements)
- Photographer/picture coordinator
- First aid
- Banner (teams usually have a sponsor banner that is hung up at every game)

## ***7. Commitment & Expectation contracts for all coaches, players and parents are mandatory to be signed and abided by.***

Remember every time you step on the field to coach, play or cheer, you are not only representing yourself but your parents or athletes and LMSA. It's important to always remember to be respectful of other teams, coaches, officials, associations and governing bodies.

