

Player Evaluation, Placement, and Team Designation Policy



NOSE CREEK SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

DEFINITIONS:

NC – Nose Creek Softball Association, A District Program under Calgary Minor Softball Association.

District – a group of communities or small municipality with boundaries designated by Calgary Minor Softball Association.

Calgary Minor – Calgary Minor Softball/Fastpitch Association, is the direct governing body of Nose Creek Softball Association. Calgary Minor was established in 1970 and offers the largest Softball/Fastpitch programming in Calgary and surrounding municipalities. Calgary Minor produces our Season and Playoff Schedule, verifies eligible players, governs Respect in Sport along with adjustments in rules (over and above the Softball Canada Rule Book) to accommodate fun and fair competition at all levels. Each District Board President serves as a member, which allows for continuous feedback from our membership to offer the programming our members would like – www.calgaryminorsoftball.com (Pro Tip: Game schedules for U9-19 are posted here first, generally the last week of April right before season games begin on opening weekend. This is also where we get schedule information to share with you! Calgary Minor has previously revised our schedules often and it is best practice to check here before heading to the diamond, especially at the beginning of the season).

Governing Bodies – Calgary Minor, Softball Alberta, Softball Canada

Softball Alberta – Softball Alberta governs ALL Softball in our province. They act as coach educators, insurers, as well as coordinate our provincial competition. They also facilitate many aspects of our sport on behalf of Softball Canada - www.softballalberta.ca

Softball Canada – Governs our sport nationwide - www.softball.ca

Lead Evaluator – The Lead Evaluator will be assigned by the Board and will be tasked to plan and schedule the Evaluation Process, assign Evaluators and Support Coaches. The Lead Evaluator should be skilled to coach at all levels of play and will generally be a senior member of NC. A lead evaluator may be assigned to each division at the discretion of the board.

Evaluators – Evaluators may be Past/Current Coaches or other knowledgeable individuals chosen by the Lead Evaluator, if required. Evaluators will be chosen and designated to evaluate each age category based on their knowledge, experience, or training. Evaluators must be fair and consistent for each category/group. Parents will not be allowed to evaluate their child's category. However, Parents intending to coach may be requested to evaluate their child's category during the 2nd session at the discretion of the President and/or Lead Evaluator.

Evaluation Coordinator – The Evaluation Coordinator will assist the Lead Evaluator as requested and handle player logistics on evaluation days. They will be provided the list of registrants by the Registrar to create sign-in sheets for attendance, emergency contacts and to assign pinnies. They will coordinate volunteers for the check-in table including set up/take down and transport pinnies. The evaluations coordinator will collect player data from evaluators and will compile for the selection committee

Support Coaches – Past/Current Coaches or other skilled individuals (if required) that will perform and facilitate drills during evaluations.

President & Vice President – Nose Creek Softball Associations currently serving President and Vice President

NC Head Coach – Assigned Head Coach of Nose Creek Softball Association.

Board – When referenced in this document it refers to ONLY the following board members of Nose Creek

Softball Association: President, Vice President, Secretary, Registrar and Directors.

Selection Committee – President, Vice President, and NC Lead Evaluator or age group Lead Evaluator. Previous coaches and identified new coaches may be consulted but will not be present for final decision making.

Remedy – A presentation of conflict, suggested solution(s), deliberation and special vote held by the Board and any NC Head Coach directly impacted by the results. The voted decision is FINAL.

Field IQ – Comprehension of basic and complex game situations, as well as strategy of play.

Roster – A list of players assigned to a team generally required for all levels of competition to verify eligible players. They are also used for insurance purposes.

GENERAL:

NC is a District association governed by Calgary Minor Softball, Softball Alberta and Softball Canada.

Softball Canada has categorized players by Age "Category". Further classification for competition has been set forth by Calgary Minor as "Division" and by Softball Alberta as "Provincial Categories".

Category:

The Category a player is placed will be determined by the age the individual will turn within the current season's calendar year (i.e., a player turns 10 in October after the season is finished, they are considered U11, meaning under 11. They are no longer considered under 9 years old or U9 even though their birthday falls after the season has completed).

Each Age Category: U9, U11, U13, U15, U17, U19 or U17/U19 combined also referred to as HS (High School).

Each player will be designated to their Category upon registration and verifying their birth year. NC will use the evaluation process to determine if a player may be suited for a younger category or older category due to safety concerns or skill level and may request a category change and approval through Calgary Minor for that individual.

Calgary Minor, during the season, may decide a team will be better suited for a different Division and will revise their game schedule accordingly.

Competition Level:

- ***U9 Junior** – Players that are still learning fundamental skill and Field IQ. They will enjoy a fun, relaxed experienced based on learning and laughter.
 - ***U9 Senior** – Players show knowledge of some fundamental skills, basic Field IQ and are responsive and attentive to coaching. They may also show more focus, motivation or strength compared to their peers. Players will be challenged and enjoy an introduction into competitive play.
- *U9 is a modified form of standard rules of play and teams only field 6 defensive players vs. traditional fastpitch which fields 9 defensive players.***
- **Division 3 (U11 to HS)** – players may require less commitment or a shorter season for various reasons. They may have a modest skill level compared to their peers and are just learning to set goals to take them to the next level. They may also prefer a social recreational environment to learn at their own pace. We encourage coaches at this level to enter tournaments to give their players extra game opportunities. We hope that Parents/Guardians will be willing to support and fulfill any additional commitment, volunteer hours or costs at the Coaches discretion.
 - **Division 2 (*U11, U13 to HS)** – players will enjoy an intermediate level of play, with a moderately extended schedule. They may have met some goals to improve their skill set and are eager to acquire more with less pressure. They may be seeking a higher division but require an additional year of growth (physical/mental/skill) to adequately compete. These athletes will be challenged to grow and encouraged to attend more focused training if seeking higher competition. Parents/Guardians should be prepared to undertake additional volunteer hours at the team level, commit to additional tournaments, and navigate additional costs.
 - **Division 1 (*U11, U13 to HS)** – Players are committed to a more robust program with an extended schedule, additional practices, and events. They have good communication and strive to be responsive, self motivated, respectful, disciplined, persistent and resilient. They have acquired skills beyond their peers (or show rapid comprehension). They continue to set goals and plan to train hard to achieve

them. Parents/Guardians are prepared to navigate additional costs for travel/practice facilities/tournaments. They are eager to support the team, and the coach, by fulfilling a large amount of additional volunteer hours while having a can-do attitude.

****The U11 Category for all divisions will NOT have an extended season.***

It is important for individuals to review and understand Category and Division of play prior to the Evaluation process. If you believe that you or your child gave the intention to play in an incorrect Division, please reach out to the NC Registrar immediately (registrar@nosecreeksoftball.ca). Players SHOULD NOT evaluate for a Division they cannot commit to playing. Attending Division 1 evaluations indicates players are aware of their duty and recognize that additional commitment and possibly travel will be required. There will be two evaluation sessions a week apart for 2024. Following the first session, the Selection Committee may determine if there are top ranked players with parents willing to be a head or assistant coach for a team in any division. The Selection Committee may then consult with these coaches for team selection as outlined on page 1. The Lead Evaluator for the age category for the intended team may, at the discretion of the Selection Committee, evaluate the proposed player.

Provincial Categories Guideline:

- U9 Senior/Junior: Provincials are not offered at this level.
- U11 Jamboree (Any team from any Division is allowed to compete)
- Division 3: Provincial Category “D”
- Division 2: Provincial Category “C”
- Division 1: Provincial Category “B”

Across Canada we have many styles of softball programs. In Alberta, we sometimes refer to them as “clubs”, they are not bound by the rules and regulations set forth by a district structured program like Calgary Minor Softball. For instance, they use a “Try-out” to seek skilled players from any district and players not chosen are not placed on a team and eliminated. They generally compete in Provincial Category “A”.

Provincial Categories for individual teams are not set, the above is a guideline only. More information can be found on Softball Alberta’s website and be provided by your NC Head Coach.

Provincial Competition each year is not always available for every Category/Division.

ELIGIBILITY:

All players and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) must meet specific criteria to evaluate and play with NC. Criteria for eligibility has been set forth by Calgary Minor and NC.

Players must:

- Reside in a community within the NC District Boundary; or
- Be a resident of a community not represented directly by any district association AND have not previously played for another district governed by Calgary Minor; or
- Acquire an approved “Player Transfer/Release” by Calgary Minor (this is a challenging process where very limited valid reasons are accepted, and specific criteria must be met)
- Meet age guidelines for their category; or
- Be granted permission by the Board to evaluate in another category.
- Have registered, been accepted, and not *wait-listed.

Parents/Guardians or Players considered a legal adult prior to registration must:

- Review, complete and/or sign all required forms including, but not limited to, policies, registration, and waivers.
- Not have outstanding fees, unless approved by the Board due to their financial situation.

****NC at times will use a wait-list due to the number of registrants and the ability to form teams with an acceptable roster size. These registrants will be notified and are not considered accepted until further confirmation and may unfortunately be denied.***

EVALUATION PROCESS:

General:

General Skill Evaluations will be held for each Category.

Players will be scheduled by their birth year/Category. Any players requesting to play in an older Category must seek approval from The Board. If approved, they will evaluate with the older Category.

Evaluations for Division 1 placement will be held in February annually. Evaluations for all other levels will be held in March annually.

Player Evaluations are MANDATORY.

Players who wish to be evaluated for pitching or catching must indicate this at the time of registration. These players will be scheduled for an additional evaluation for those specific positions if NC chooses to hold one for their Category and/or Division.

Players that would like to be evaluated but have a conflict in scheduling OR Players that have registered past the deadline may request a separate evaluation through the Lead Evaluator or NC Head Coach if already assigned. It is at their discretion if that request will be granted.

Unevaluated eligible players will be placed on a team at the discretion of the Board with input from Past and/or Current NC Head Coaches.

Any player evaluation protest, whether it involves the ability to have a late evaluation, or a team placement decision, must be submitted by email to the President.

The following two examples offer a guideline that will help to provide consistent and appropriate action to respond to situations that may arise:

1. If a potential player has missed the registration deadline:
 - If evaluations have not yet occurred, the player can proceed with scheduled evaluations and be placed on the appropriate team.
 - If evaluations are complete, the player may be granted an evaluation OR be placed on a team that requires a player OR be placed on a team as an additional player at the discretion of the Board and NC Head Coach for the recommended team.
 - The player may be charged a late fee that will be immediately due, along with any outstanding balance.
2. A player requests to be evaluated for Division 1 and was unable to attend the scheduled evaluations:
 - The NC Head Coach for the intended team will be given the option to evaluate the proposed player but is not required to do so.
 - If the new player is evaluated by the coach and meets the requirements for the team, the player will be an addition to the roster and no other players may be displaced.

Procedure for General Skills U9-HS:

A minimum of 3 evaluators will be assigned to each Category, as well as the Lead Evaluator.

Players will be scheduled by Category and may be further divided into groups.

The number of sessions offered is at the discretion of the Board and the Lead Evaluator. Generally, we provide at least two (2) sessions for general skill evaluation.

The Lead Evaluator and Support Coaches will guide the players through a series of drills to challenge their skills of play: Throwing, Catching, Fielding, Hitting, and Batting. Evaluators will also be observing player attributes: demeanor, communication, motivation, focus, persistence, resilience, etc. Evaluators will collect a variety of quantitative (measured) data as well as qualitative (observed based on the experience of evaluators) information. Volunteers without softball coaching/evaluating skill may be used for collecting quantitative data and experienced evaluators with previous coaching and/or evaluating skill will perform qualitative observations.

To provide the best evaluation experience for ALL players and evaluators, the following should be considered:

- Groups should be balanced by ability and motivation.
- Players should be transferred between groups for each session to allow for consistent scoring.
- Players should be transferred urgently and appropriately to another group/category/division if there is a safety risk.
- Players should be transferred urgently and appropriately to another group/category/division if the player is deemed out of their depth compared to peer skill level (i.e., player chooses to evaluate for Division 1 but cannot adequately perform the skills requested and is having a clear impact on other players ability to do so). This is to be handled by the Lead Evaluator, kindly, and at their discretion.
- Evaluators should, at all times, ensure players cannot view their forms.
- Evaluators may request to rewind any drills, should they require a 2nd look to confidently issue their score.
- Evaluators should do their best to observe only. They may at times encourage players that are struggling due to nerves to help put them at ease. They may also make requests to their group with the intention of scoring responsiveness or other player attributes.
- Players should not assume that any verbal communication from an Evaluator such as "Good Work" is an indication of their score.
- The Lead Evaluator at any time may stop and instruct the players further, offer encouragement or discipline as they see fit.
- Parents/Guardians may NOT join evaluation sessions. Evaluations are a fast-paced environment where any additional noise/distraction/obstacles may impact the performance of the session. Players (generally the U9's), that may not have the maturity to handle this situation alone, will be granted permission to leave and provided a partial or no score. The Selection Committee will utilize other tools for placement. At no point should a child exhibiting true fear be forced to continue by evaluators or parents. We ask that parents calming their child's emotions move to a quiet space away from the main group or check-in station to avoid causing additional upset from other players.
- NC values setting up our players for success and will tailor the experience based on level. Lower Divisions and younger ages may have a more relaxed environment with a lot of verbal encouragement from Support Coaches and Evaluators.
- The Lead Evaluator may at anytime ask a player to leave if their behavior is unacceptable.
- Swearing, Bullying, Gloating, Interrupting/Distracting or any unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated and will impact score. Support Coaches and Evaluators MUST tell the Lead Evaluator if they witness this behavior.

Procedure for Pitchers U9-U19:

Pitching Evaluations for each Category are generally scheduled immediately after the General Skills Evaluation.

Pitchers will only be offered one (1) session to be evaluated, unless they evaluated for Division 1 and are not placed after that session.

Each pitcher must provide their own catcher (family member/teammate/friend). It is highly recommended that pitchers choose a catcher that is capable.

Pitchers will be given an opportunity to warm up, and then called to evaluate. Evaluators will consider many factors, here are a few examples:

- Mechanics
- Pitch Placement
- Velocity of Fastball
- Spin Rate
- Other Pitch Competency (Change-up, Drop, Rise, etc.)
- Composure

****Pitch count is at the discretion of the Evaluators to confidently issue a score, each pitcher is unique and their allotted pitch count may differ.***

Procedure for Catchers U13-HS:

Catcher Evaluations for each Category are generally scheduled immediately after the General Skills Evaluation.

Catchers will only be offered one (1) session to be evaluated unless they evaluated for Division 1 and are not placed after that session.

Support Coaches will lead them through a series of drills and Evaluators will consider criteria such as:

- Agility
- Throw Accuracy & Strength
- Blocking Ability
- Motivation
- Determination
- Responsiveness

Observation and Review:

Evaluators will observe players and complete the NC Player Evaluation Form. Evaluation scores are to be kept confidential. No Coach or Evaluator is permitted to share this information outside of the Evaluation Process. This is intended to protect the integrity of the process, reduce gossip, and avoid conflict.

The Lead Evaluator will review the results and have an open discussion with past and/or current coaches to guide their decision process. Member history including Field IQ, consistency, commitment, overall behaviour and other criteria not easily discernible during evaluations will be considered in the Lead Evaluator's recommendation for placement.

PROCESS OF INDIVIDUAL PLAYER PLACEMENT, TEAM SELECTION & DESIGNATION:

The Lead Evaluator will compile the forms from all sessions including General Skills, Pitching and Catching, and review for completeness and accuracy. They will then rank each player based on their best session in each area.

The Lead Evaluator will present their results and recommendations to the President and Vice President. Together, they will use their experience and best judgment to determine final placement. The factors they will consider (not in a specific order):

- Player Evaluation Ranking by Position
- Player Attributes
- *Player History
- Field Placement
- Competition Level
- Team Formation
- Roster Structure & Size
- Team Harmony, Culture & Commitment Level

The Selection committee, at their discretion, may allow the designated NC Head Coach to choose players from a narrowed selection.

**NC would like to convey that we understand each player may have personal or environmental factors that contributed to their player history. We also believe not all mistakes or conflict should follow a player into their next season. However, we must also recognize the negative impact one player (or their parent/guardian) can have on an entire team. It is our duty to review all information available and we are obligated to base our decisions on what will benefit the majority of our members. Decisions impacted directly by player history will be thoughtfully deliberated.*

Considerations:

Friend Request (U9/U11): NC honours the value an existing friendship can bring to players who join a team together. Generally they will show more confidence while having immediate support from a teammate. We do our absolute best to honour friend requests in the U9 & U11 Category (for U11 development division only). However, friend requests are at the discretion of the selection committee and there are some situations where we will not be able to accommodate. The most likely example is a difference in skill level. We evaluate and place our players with similar skill level so that our players have the most rewarding experience. A player placed on a team that exceeds their current skill level or knowledge can be intimidated, lose confidence or pose a safety risk. A player placed too low, can become bored as they will not be able to be challenged fairly. The great news is that softball is a very inclusive sport and players make fast friends on their team that they will form new bonds with. We hope parents can encourage their child to give it some time and not allow a refused friend request become a barrier for their child.

Coach Designation: Those intending to become a Head or Assistant Coach at NC, should indicate so at the time of registration for their daughter. If you are an individual who does not have a daughter currently in our

program, please contact our President to be considered. New coaches must complete the Coach Application available on our website and understand that they will need to pass a Police Information Check/Vulnerable Sector Screening prior to coaching. The President will place coaches according to their daughter's team assignment. The President will also consider other factors such as experience, training, parent feedback, and commitment level. Independent coaches will generally be asked to fill positions where team parents are not comfortable handling the role or where their experience outweighs that of the parent coach(s). Independent Coaches may be designated once it is established there is no conflict - which may be prior/during/after evaluation processes. Parent Coaches may be designated during the evaluation process or after at the discretion of the President.

Level of Play Designation: Once a Team Roster is decided, the newly assigned NC Head Coach with permission of the President will determine level of play. This designation will be based on overall team skill level, potential for growth and/or commitment level of the team.

Calgary Minor along with NC strives to put forth a Division 1 team for each age category of play. It may also be evident that two teams in the same category have a similarly skilled roster and commitment level. If so, they may choose to compete in the same Division.

Team Formation: Teams will be formed based on the number of eligible players, while placing players with teammates that exhibit similar skill, motivation, coachability and commitment level.

Note: Pitchers or Catchers who have not evaluated as strongly compared to their peers in those positions, but have excellent evaluation scores in General Skills, may be given an option for team placement. The selection committee may recommend these players consider playing in a lower division to strengthen that roster. This would allow developing Pitchers/Catchers the opportunity to spend more time playing their key position to improve their skill. Players may also feel content at reduced or refused game opportunities for those positions and choose to play in the higher division. Coaches will be encouraged to set clear expectations and limitations for game play and practice time for these Pitchers/Catchers to allow for an informed decision.

Roster: Once a player is placed on a team, they form part of that team's Roster. When a Roster is considered complete it will be submitted for approval by Calgary Minor. At this point Rosters are set. They can only be revised by a vote from the Board and any NC Head Coach impacted, along with further approval by Calgary Minor.

Roster Size: Each roster size will be determined by level of play, with an emphasis on expected commitment level. This can vary season to season. The guideline for U9 is 8-9 players with a maximum of 10. We try to structure a roster of 12 players from U11-HS and will not form a team with fewer than 10 players. NC Head Coach(s) for teams with a reduced commitment level may prefer a larger roster to ensure adequate attendance for game nights.

The goal is to balance team sizes and optimize playing time, while including as many athletes requesting to play, as possible. NC believes Roster sizes significantly above this guideline (without reason), are not what is best for player development and enjoyment.

Player Notification:

The Placement, Team Selection & Designation Process can be lengthy, however please know the Selection Committee will make this a priority. *We request the utmost patience during this time.* Individuals will receive an email with their team information as soon as possible after their team is formed.

The NC Head Coach will contact each player to confirm their commitment to the team. If a player is unwilling to commit, the coach should inform the President immediately.

Teams will be formed by oldest age category to youngest, and by highest division to lowest. Please expect that our U9 Junior teams will be the last to be notified. Again, we appreciate your patience. If you have not been updated by April 1st, please feel free to check in with our registrar for an update.

***Players who have not been placed after Division 1 Evaluations will be notified and should re-evaluate during the March session.**

RESOLVING OR ADDRESSING CONCERNS:

Nose Creek Softball Association, as well as the Evaluators, Coaches and Volunteers spend considerable time and effort ensuring this policy is implemented with integrity in a professional and unbiased manner. At any time, if you require further clarification of this policy, please contact our President at president@nosecreeksoftball.ca.

Any issue conveyed to Nose Creek Softball Association regarding this policy, should be presented with suggestions for improvement.

POLICY PROCEDURE:

This policy, along with all policies of NC, will require any revisions to be reviewed and approved by the Association.

DISCLAIMER:

This policy has been revised for the 2023 season to incorporate a separate Division 1 evaluation. The purpose is to allow Division 1 teams more time to practice together, prepare, fundraise etc. As this is a new policy, we expect it will not encompass a complete guideline for many situations that could evolve. NC will work diligently to update this policy as situations arise and decisions are made.

FINAL SENTIMENT:

All members should support the evaluation process, this process carefully allows for competition that will challenge each player, allow room for growth, and create a successful season filled with pride, achievement and FUN!

Pro Tip: Join our skills sessions in the winter months to prepare your daughter for the best possible outcome! Players that have a chance to shake the dust off and grow their skill in these sessions generally evaluate stronger and show more confidence, motivation, and determination during their evaluation.

Approved January 16, 2024