



# SOFTBALL CANADA'S ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

[GOLD MEDAL PROFILE  
INTEGRATED]





## Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A tremendous amount of time and energy was invested in creating Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix. We were very fortunate to be able to access some of the most knowledgeable and experienced experts both in the field of softball specifically and in the ancillary areas impacting athlete development. Their input was critical in ensuring the information

contained within the guide was both relevant and leading edge ensuring it would serve as a powerful resource for Softball in Canada.

The successful development of this guide is the result of the many long hours our contributors have given of their time, expertise and knowledge. Without this

valuable collaboration and teamwork, none of this would be possible. Softball Canada would like to thank all those involved for their insights, leadership and generosity in helping us build the very best pathway to develop the very best athletes.

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## Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)

### WHAT IS AN ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MATRIX?

An Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) is an outline of the skills and attributes of athletes progressing through each stage of development to providing the greatest probability of success to the individual as they mature - not just with athletic success but also participation for health and social benefits.

Softball Canada's ADM is a document to help guide coaches and steer the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) content. It lays out in great detail what a player should be able to do at each stage of **their** Long-Term Athlete Development. Softball's ADM tries to ensure that players do not miss critical skills early in learning the game - therefore leading to more successful softball development.

### WHO IS IT FOR?

The Athlete Development Matrix is a document designed to help guide coaches and administrators as they work together to develop athletes and is the foundation in which Softball Canada aligns its various resources including coach certification and athlete program development. For parents the ADM should act as a directory of skills that their child's coaches will be teaching them throughout the season.

The ADM is NOT a "cookbook" for high performance excellence, but rather a guide to developing all players to maximize their enjoyment of the sport - and to ensure that those players who have the talent and drive to become World Class Athletes have the necessary fundamental foundation by learning the correct skills at the appropriate stage of development.

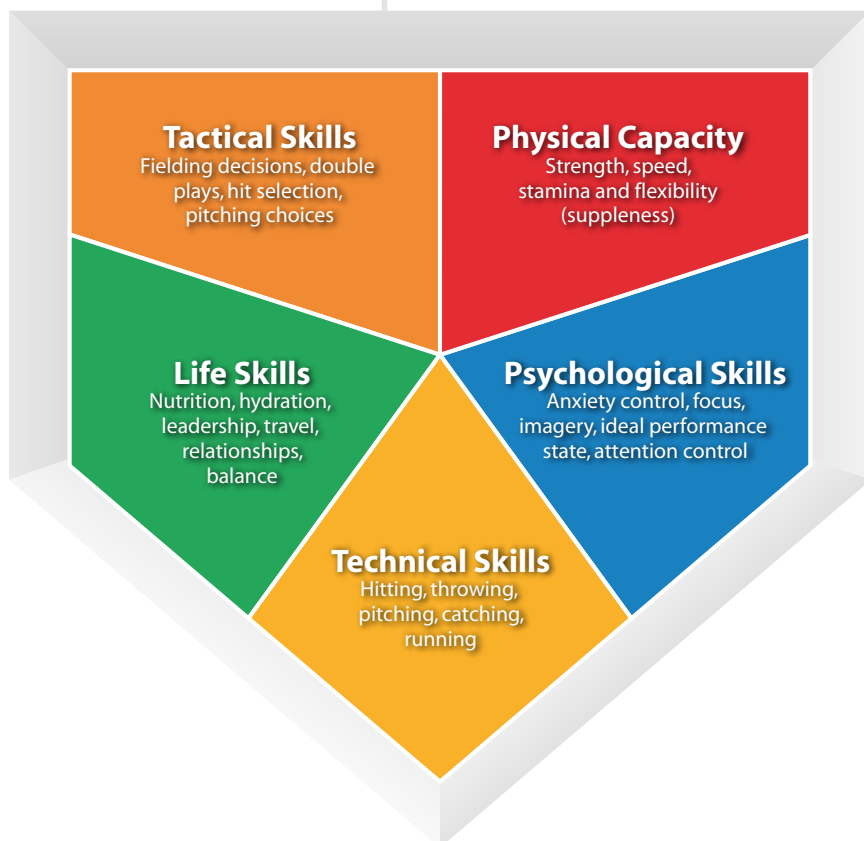
### THE FIVE SEGMENT MODEL

To organize the multiple aspects of development in an easy-to-follow format for coaches, Softball Canada's Long Term Player Development utilizes a Five Segment Model..

- ♦ The **sport specific technical skills** (*hitting, throwing, etc*) required and
- ♦ The **sport specific tactical skills** (*decisions, double plays, pitching choices, etc*) needed to play the sport
- ♦ The **physical capacities** (*speed, strength, endurance and flexibility*) required of the sport
- ♦ The **sport psychology** (*mental, imagery, focus*) skills needed, and
- ♦ The **life skills** (*teamwork, decision making, etc*) that support effective athlete development.



The **Softball** Matrix was developed by Softball experts, in consultation with experts in adolescent growth and development and sport performance, based on the generic **Sport for Life** Athlete Development Matrix.







## Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)

### WHAT'S NEW IN VERSION 2?

As new research and information comes to light, we must continue to update and improve our LTPD framework. Following the lead of Sport for Life and Own the Podium, Softball Canada has incorporated several changes to our model moving forward.

### UPDATED SOFTBALL TECHNICAL/TACTICAL SKILLS TABLES

Some of the most significant changes you will see, will be the technical and tactical skills laid out in the tables of each stage of development. These changes stemmed from updates to the generic LTAD model, feedback from softball experts and the greater softball community but in large part by aligning Softball's Athlete Development Matrix with our Gold Medal Profile. The Gold Medal Profile (GMP) defines the skills and abilities required to achieve podium performances and recognition at the highest level of play (Olympics, Pan American Games & World Championships).

### ADDITION OF THE AWARENESS AND FIRST INVOLVEMENT STAGES

Awareness promotes an understanding of opportunities to get involved in sport and physical activity. It highlights opportunities for persons of all abilities to participate in sport, become an athlete, and go as far as their ability and motivation will take them. In Awareness, prospective participants and leaders are informed of the range of activities available and how they can take part.

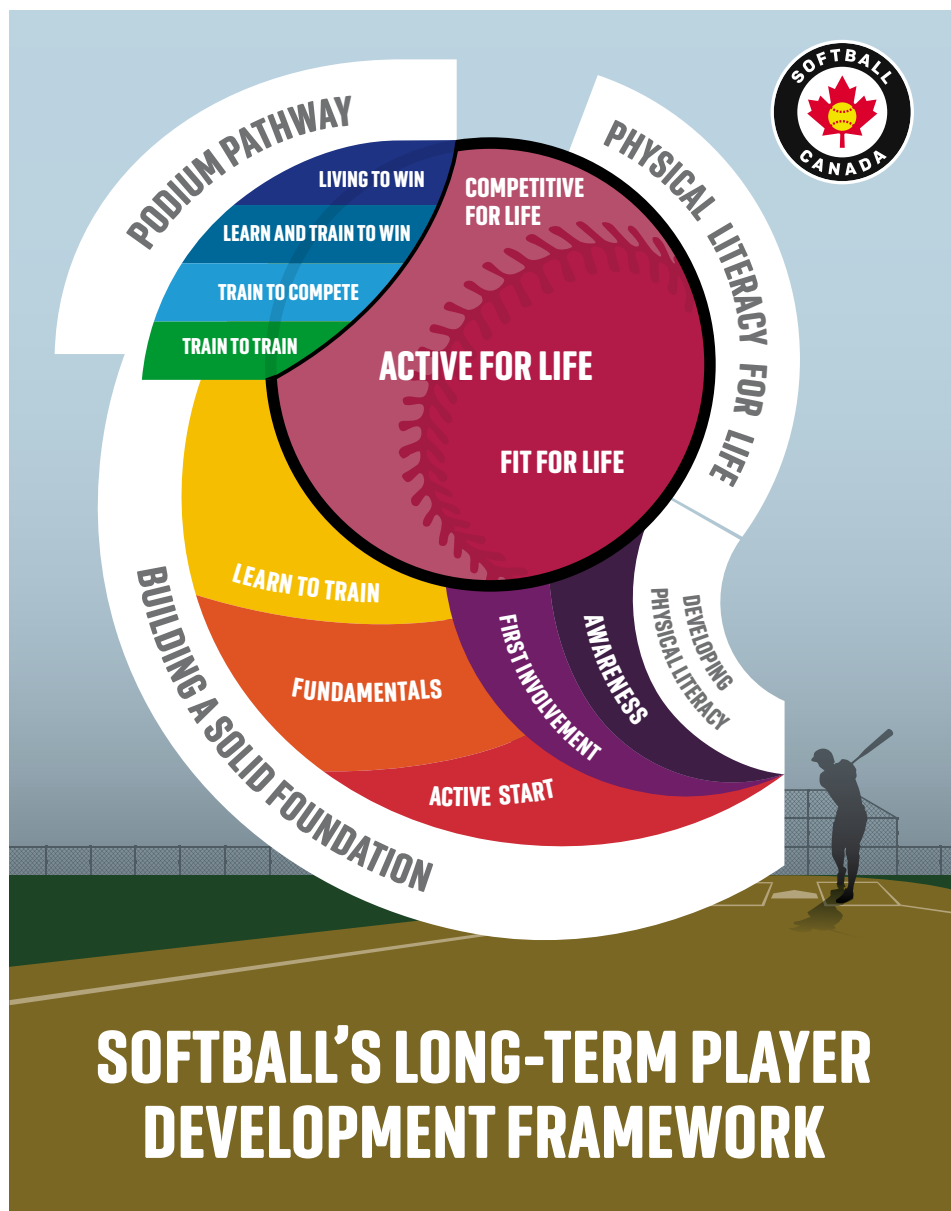
First involvement refers to the first experiences participants have in sport. In this phase it is critical to ensure individuals have a positive first experience in an activity as negative first experiences can lead to non-participation. Organizations and leaders need to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for participants with developmentally appropriate instruction, adapted equipment, and facilities with a program orientation they will nurture the desire and confidence to participate for life. Clear direction should be provided to participants with regarding their second involvement.

### NEW SOFTBALL CANADA LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

As a result of changes being made to the overall Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity framework – Softball's model has also updated some important pieces:

- ♦ First Involvement and Awareness are integral to everyone's initial experiences in sport and physical activity.
- ♦ Physical Literacy is not confined to the early stages of development and can happen throughout a participant's life.
- ♦ The Podium Pathway describes Softball's excellence stages and specifically applies to athletes on a trajectory towards podium results at the highest level of Softball. It encompasses both the Gold Medal Profile and Winning Style of play (WSP). The WSP is derived from competition results and is the progression of performance benchmarks required to move through the Podium Pathway and successfully reach the Olympic podium as it applies to team sports.

Our updated Long Term Player Development Model graphic reflects these changes.





## Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)

### GOLD MEDAL PROFILE STANDARDS (FEMALE)

The Gold Medal Profile (GMP) defines the skills and abilities required to achieve podium performances and recognition at the highest level of play (Olympics, Pan American Games & World Championships). The Winning Style of Play is the progression of performance benchmarks required to move through the pathway and successfully reach the podium as it applies to team sports - like softball. The GMP and WSP skills and attributes for softball have been identified within the Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) with this 🍁. The Gold Medal Profile Standards table outlines the average and exceptional standards as laid out by Softball Canada. The table (available for download at [softball.ca](http://softball.ca)) includes not only technical and tactical skills but also life, mental and physical skills, all of which hold equal importance. They are based on validated metrics and benchmarks collected by experts in softball. These standards are only applicable to competitive, not recreational athletes and can give coaches, parents and athletes the ability to recognize where areas of improvements in their skill development can be made.

These standards can and should act as goals to work towards as an athlete's development progresses, but it is incredibly important to note that an athlete will not get to the highest level of play by only focusing on these skills. Each of these standards are influenced by a number of variables, and that should be kept in mind when interpreting these standards. In softball, it is vital that athletes play multiple positions and realize that the skills needed to achieve a podium performance need be fostered during an athlete's early development.

Coaches should also note that these standards are based on average developing athletes, it is important that late developers not be overlooked especially during sensitive periods of maturation. While the GMP standards begin within the Train to Train stage, it is in the best interest of athletes to apply these standards during the latter part of the stage in order to allow athletes as much time as possible to mature.

Softball Canada is working with our Men's National Team Program to collect and analyze data comparable to the Women's Program in order to make it available to our members in the same manner.

### THINGS TO REMEMBER:

The ADM is a roadmap of what players need to learn, develop and build as they advance and become more skilled in the sport. It provides a guide for individual coaches regardless of the level of player they coach. It will need to be updated regularly to incorporate emerging knowledge, and accommodate any changes in skill, tactics and strategies that are seen in Softball. Information in the ADM will be coordinated with the NCCP coaching program and updated accordingly. The ADM is intended to be an ongoing working document that will evolve with the sport.



### ATHLETES WITH A DISABILITY (AWAD)

Information is available in every stage of development pertaining to Athletes With a Disability. This information includes tips on inclusion, how to minimize barriers, and ways to adapt softball to create more meaningful sport opportunities for all athletes.



**Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) is a part of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) in Softball in Canada.**



## Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)

### HOW SHOULD THE ADM BE USED?

The Athlete Development Matrix recognizes that skills are not taught just once, but rather develop as the child's body grows and strengthens, and the child's brain develops greater capacity for thought and greater control over musculature. Most skills go through a well-recognized sequence:

**LEGEND FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** ■ **I** - Introduce, ■ **D** - Develop, ■ **C** - Consolidate, ■ **R** - Refine, ■ **M** - Maintain  
**Bold text** – skill/tactic is a priority at this stage

#### ■ **INTRODUCE (FIRST EXPOSURE)**

Introduce means that the player is learning an element (skill or tactic) for the first time and is given a global idea of what the skill is and how to perform it (key movements). Players should be introduced to a skill or tactic under controlled, constant, easy and predictable conditions. The pursuit of this objective requires concentration in a rested state. The focus or emphasis is on a global execution of the skill/tactic at much less than game-like speed.

The skill is **introduced** and the player has a basic understanding of why it is performed and how to do it.

#### ■ **DEVELOP (LEARN)**

After players have been introduced to a skill/tactic and have a fairly good understanding of what it should look like, the skill/tactic must now be repeated continuously and correctly in order to make it reliable. This is still an early stage of learning where the athlete is learning to coordinate the key components of the movement and execute them in the correct order to perform a rough form of the skill/tactic. The movements are not well synchronized or under control and lack rhythm and flow. The execution is inconsistent and lacks precision. The athlete must think about what they are doing while performing the skill. Both form and performance tend to deteriorate markedly when the athlete tries to execute movements quickly or is under pressure, as may be the case in a competitive situation. The develop stage is still part of the learning process with the focus on improving the success rate (outcome).

The athlete **develops** the basics of the skill – and can perform it in a way that others would recognize.

#### ■ **CONSOLIDATE (STABILIZE)**

During this skill development stage, the athlete can now execute the movements of the skill/tactic with correct form, good movement control, synchronization, and rhythm when performing the skill under easy and stable conditions. The movements can be repeated consistently and with precision under these conditions. Some elements of the performance can be maintained when the athlete is under pressure, when conditions change, or when demands increase, but performance remains inconsistent.

A **consolidated** skill is one that has been learned well, and can be executed without conscious thought by the player.





## Softball Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)

### REFINE (PERFECT)

This skill development stage is achieved only by the best athletes. The performance of the skill/tactic is highly automated which enables the athlete to focus on the environment to pick up visual cues in order to make rapid adjustments as necessary. The athlete can now execute the skill/tactic or movements in a way that is very close to the ideal in terms of form and speed but may also develop a personal style that is efficient for their physical make-up. For example, two players may possess the same variety of skills, but they will use different skills in a given situation due to differences in stature, speed, stamina, strength, and suppleness. At this stage, the execution of the skill may look different from another player's execution. Personal interpretation of movements or personal movements may also be combined into unique patterns in response to specific competitive situations. The performance is very consistent and precision is high, even under very demanding conditions and in situations that are both complex and varied. Only minor finetuning may be necessary to achieve optimal execution. The athlete can also reflect critically on his or her performance to make in-game corrections. It is expected that players involved in drills/games will read and react appropriately to changing tactical situations.

Once a skill is **refined**, the player can execute the skill at will, in game situations, and with variations that are triggered by "in game" situations that the player recognized and responds to.

### MAINTAIN (PRESERVE)

Once a skill/tactic is refined or a capacity has been achieved, there is a need to ensure it does not deteriorate or is not de-trained during different points within a season. Players in this stage of skill development can preserve consistency in the execution of the skill/tactic or level of conditioning usually with a lower level of training or practice than was necessary to reach the refined stage.

When a skill has been refined, there is a need to **maintain** it at an appropriate level, through specific training, through repeated in-game use, or both.

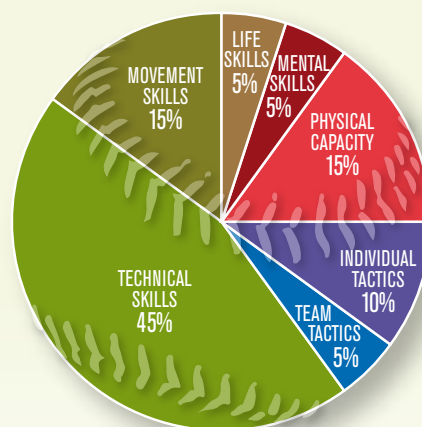
Keep the above definitions in mind as you work your way through the document.



### BEST USE OF SOFTBALL TIME

Once skills have been identified, it is important to decide where to spend valuable and **LIMITED** training time and that this time changes as the athlete develops. The ADM provides some guidance in every stage of development, the overall best use of softball time. Although, the amount of time spent will ultimately depend on the individual athlete and their specific strengths and weaknesses.

### This is an Example







### Long-Term Player Development in Softball

*Softball Canada has a plan to systematically develop players once they enter the sport up until they reach their full potential. We call this process Long-Term Player Development (LTPD). This means:*

- Teaching the right skills at the right time;
- Developing appropriate speed, strength, endurance and flexibility, and;
- Holding competitions suited to the developmental age of the players.

*It's all about doing the right things, at the right time and in the right way.*

**For more information about LTPD and more details about this stage, visit:**

<https://softball.ca>

### Changing the Narrative

*We are only just beginning to learn how important what kids tell themselves can be. If a kid isn't having success with doing a skill - ask them why they think it's not working for them. Listen carefully for "self-blaming" reasons like, "I'm just not good enough", and external reasons, like, "The pitch is too fast". Keep asking questions until you get an "external" reason, and then both reinforce the child's externalization of the problem and ways to modify the task. "Yes, the pitch is too fast, let's see if you can hit when the pitch is slower". If we can change their internal "story" about why they can't do something, we can change their attitude towards doing it, and we won't reinforce their belief that they just can't do the skill because they are not good enough.*

### ABOUT THE FUNDAMENTALS STAGE:

This is a stage of rapid development of a wide range of fundamental movement skills (FMSs) in different environments. A child's participation in many different sports and activities should be encouraged. Unstructured play remains important but there is a shift to more structured play including instruction. Less skillful kids should not be permitted to fall too far behind their peers as could lead them to be left out of informal games with their peers.

#### The Participants

These are elementary school age children taking physical education as part of their school curriculum who also take part in community recreation such as local minor softball programs. Children are often put in "age-group" programs where the oldest children within the age-group have a significant advantage because they have had more time to develop and mature, are generally taller and heavier, and have had more time to develop their skills. All children in this stage should be given equal playing time and quality coaching because it is far too early to know which children will excel in the future.

- Participant characteristics:
  - Are generally involved in activities that parents or guardians sign them up for, and may have little choice in the matter
  - Attendance in programs is often dependent on others so missing activities is often beyond their control
  - Children are starting to compare their abilities to children around them. Children who think they are not "good enough" start to drop out of activities.
  - Female Participants
    - Girls are starting to place more emphasis on relationships with the other girls in the program than boys do at this stage
    - Program leaders need to take this into consideration and provide time for socialization

### SEASON STRUCTURE

- Competition/Training Ratio: 30%/70%
- Pre-Season:
  - Early in Stage: 0 practices
  - Later in Stage: 8-12 practices
- Competitive Season: 8-10 weeks
- Softball-specific activities per week:
  - 1-2 times for 90 minutes each
- Daily participation in unstructured and structured physical activities or sports





## FUNDamentals (FUN)

### FUNDamentals Basics:

- ✓ Keep it **FUN**.
- ✓ Encourage participation in many different sports and activities to create motor patterns that will facilitate sport-specific skill acquisition in later stages of athlete development.
- ✓ Create a variety of safe and stimulating environments in which children can play and develop fundamental movement skills (body control skills, locomotor skills, and object control skills) and motor skills (Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed or ABC's) on different indoor and outdoor playing surfaces, in/on the water, on ice and snow, and in the air.
- ✓ Develop player's confidence in ability to learn new skills.
- ✓ Introduce the basic rules and ethics of sports.
- ✓ Don't be concerned with winning or losing; focus on learning and having fun.
- ✓ Introduce remedial teaching if children do not have the same level of skills as their peers. This will limit kids from being excluded from pick-up games which can cause a significant amount of drop out. If kids enjoy participating, they will develop a love of sport and being active.
- ✓ Don't get caught in the specialization trap— developing all-around athletes at this stage is far better.



### Athletes with Disabilities

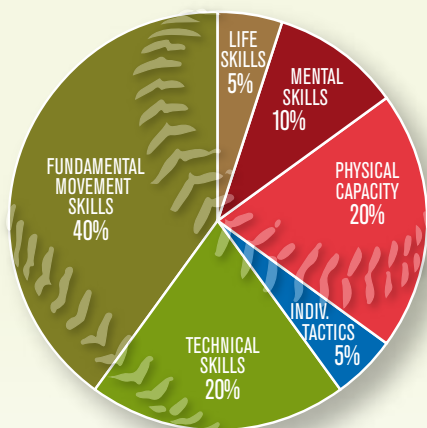
Children with a disability should continue to be encouraged to take part in dynamic physical play with their able-bodied peers.

- Provide opportunities to grow fundamental movement skills like running/wheeling, throwing, catching, and striking.
- Minimize barriers and be cognisant of adaptive devices/equipment and support needs.
- Find out more about the child and their abilities, to create the most positive sport environment for everyone participating.

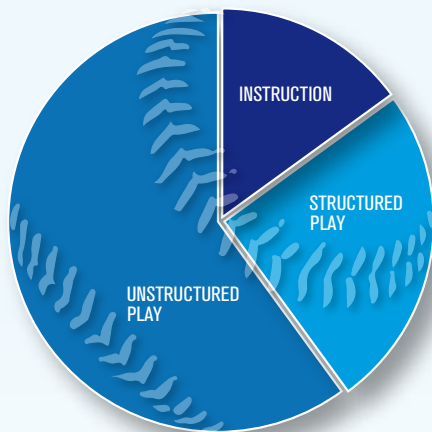
### THE FIVE-SEGMENT MODEL

At every stage of LTPD, players need to develop stage and age appropriate skills and capacities in each of the 5 following areas: technical skills, tactical skills, physical capacities, mental skills and life skills. Each capacity has different levels of importance at different points in a player's development. For the FUNDamentals stage this means:

#### Best Use of Softball Time



#### Best Use of Activity Time



- Types of Activity:
  - Unstructured play
  - Structured play
  - Instruction
- Wide range of activities on land, in/on water, on snow/ice, in the air
- Informal competitions and pick-up games
- Accumulate a minimum of 60 min. of active play every day

### FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS (FMSs)

The objective at this stage is to develop fundamental movement skills that lay the foundation for motor patterns that can then evolve into softball-specific skills in later stages. The focus for this stage is on making activities fun, on learning multiple fundamental movement skills and developing athleticism by improving agility, balance, coordination and movement speed.

Key fundamental movement skills to develop at this stage are:

- **ON LAND:**
  - Running, starting, stopping, changing direction, forward, backward and sideways movements; falling and rolling.
  - Catching, throwing, striking, and kicking to develop hand-eye coordination (using a wide variety of equipment and sizes of equipment with both the left and right hand/foot).
  - Agility, balance and coordination along with speed of movement.
  - Hitting different objects of various sizes (balls, shuttles, etc.) with a bat or racquet.
- **IN WATER:**
  - Floating, swimming and diving to develop body orientation skills and enhance child safety.
- **ON SNOW AND ICE:**
  - Skating, sliding and skiing.
- **IN THE AIR:**
  - Jumping and twisting, learning to control the body when not in contact with ground.

### SLEEP

*Duration: 10-11hours + 30 minute nap between 2-4pm*

- Reinforce 15-30 minute bedtime routine
- Avoid stimulation 1-2 hours before bed, control "screen time"
- Good nutrition and meal routines reinforce sleep routines
- Introduce independent sleep initiating behaviors

**FUNdamentals (FUN)**MALES: 6 – 9 YEARS  
FEMALES: 6 – 8 YEARS**PHYSICAL CAPACITY**

	Development Priority (through play)		
	Low	Med.	High
Endurance		■	
Speed - Hand/Foot			■
Speed - Whole Body	■		
Speed - Endurance	■		
Relative Strength	■		
Strength - Endurance	■		
Explosive Power		■	
Flexibility		■	

**NOTE**

This is a good time to start working on hand and foot speed, and, especially for boys a good time to work on flexibility. Endurance and strength developed through vigorous play and games rather than specific training regimes.

**MENTAL SKILLS**

Ensure positive learning environment, that children understand everyone fails at times, and failing is important to learning as long as you keep trying.

Continue to develop Executive Function through games and activities that require rapid change in the player's focus (cognitive flexibility), holding multiple pieces of information in mind at the same time (working memory) and readiness to move without moving until a signal is given (inhibition control).

Games of imagination at this stage help prepare the child for later visualization and imagery activities.

Help children "listen to their bodies" so that they know how they feel when anxious, and how their body responds to physical activity.

Introduce simple challenges and goal setting, "can you jump over this rope", "can you hit the ball passed that line?"

**LIFE SKILLS**

Understands the relationship between effort and results.

Takes responsibility for being prepared for activity participation.

Is comfortable taking turns during activities, and cooperates with others who are playing.

Can be part of a team, and is sometimes a leader and sometimes a follower.

Helps prepare post-activity snacks and drinks, and understands that food and fluids are necessary for both life and sport participation.

Understands and can follow rules (particularly safety rules) for softball and other activities.

Understands that people come from different countries (cultures) and might do things differently.





# FUNdamentals (FUN)

MALES: 6 – 9 YEARS  
FEMALES: 6 – 8 YEARS

## SOFTBALL TECHNICAL / TACTICAL SKILLS

While many children are introduced to softball during the FUNdamentals stage, it is not the right time to start intense softball-specific training. Activities that develop FMSs can have a softball flavour by using modified playground games. If children have been provided with a good base of FMSs early in this stage they may be ready to start to learn softball-specific skills late in this stage with minimal instruction on correct techniques. Introduce basic rules and the etiquette of the game using fun, modified games. The Timbits Softball Program is a great introduction to the sport of softball at this stage.

### SKILLS

LEGEND FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT: **I** - Introduce, **D** - Develop, **C** - Consolidate, **R** - Refine, **M** - Maintain  
**Bold text** - skill/tactic is a priority at this stage

OFFENSIVE SKILLS		SUB-SKILL				
HITTING		I	D	C	R	M
Hitting Mechanics	Weight Transfer (From Back to Firm Front Side)	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
	Stacked Position at Contact	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Eye/Hand Coordination	Bat Control	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Strike Zone Awareness		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Avoiding Pitch		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
BASERUNNING		I	D	C	R	M
Getting out of Batters Box		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Running to 1st Base		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Rounding Base		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
SLIDING		I	D	C	R	M
Bent Leg Slide		<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>





# FUNdamentals (FUN)

MALES: 6 – 9 YEARS  
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## SKILLS

LEGEND FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT: ■ I - Introduce, ■ D - Develop, ■ C - Consolidate, ■ R - Refine, ■ M - Maintain  
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DEFENSIVE SKILLS		SUB-SKILL	I	D	C	R	M
<b>THROWING</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Overhand Throwing Mechanics	Elbows and Shoulders Level		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	<b>Pull Front Elbow into Body on Shoulder Rotation</b>		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	On Release Throwing Elbow Above Shoulder		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	Transition Footwork (Shuffle or Crossover)		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Flips and Tosses			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Throwing on The Run			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>RECEIVING THROWS</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Soft Hands (Absorbing Ball)			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Transfer			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>FIELDING GROUND BALLS</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Ready Position			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Ground Ball Fielding Mechanics	Glove Foot Ahead of Throwing Foot		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	Glove Fingers Point Down/Out Front and Down		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	<b>Bum Down, Weight on Balls of Feet, Eyes Up, Chin down</b>		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	Throwing Hand Follows Ball into Glove		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Glove Work	Forehand		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>FIELDING FLYBALLS</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Flyball Fielding Mechanics	<b>Wrist Back, Glove Above Forehead and Center of Body</b>		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>MULTIPLE PLAYER DEFENSIVE SKILLS</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Tag Plays			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>PITCHING</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Pitching Mechanics	Leg Drive		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	<b>Stacked or Power Position</b>		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	<b>Arm Action in Joint Sequence</b>		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>CATCHING</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Receiving Position			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Blocking			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Framing			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Throwing	Around Batter		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>MIDDLE INFIELDER</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
Relay Throws			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
<b>CORNER INFIELDER</b>			<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
1st Base Skills	Footwork at Bag		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>
	Stretching		<span style="color: #f8d7da;">■</span>	<span style="color: #fff3cd;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d4edda;">■</span>	<span style="color: #d1ecf1;">■</span>	<span style="color: #c6e8ff;">■</span>



# FUNdamentals (FUN)

MALES: 6 – 9 YEARS  
FEMALES: 6 – 8 YEARS

## TACTICS

**LEGEND FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT:**   **I** - Introduce,   **D** - Develop,   **C** - Consolidate,   **R** - Refine,   **M** - Maintain  
**Bold text** - skill/tactic is a priority at this stage

### OFFENSIVE TACTICS

#### SUB TACTIC

#### **BASERUNNING**

		I	D	C	R	M
Reading and Reacting	<b>Coach Signals</b>	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>				
	<b>Hit Ball</b>	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>				
	Lead Runner	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>				

### DEFENSIVE TACTICS

#### SUB TACTIC

		I	D	C	R	M
Communication With Teammates Pre Pitch	Indicating the Number of Outs	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>				
Communication With Teammates During Plays	<b>Calling for the Ball</b>	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>	<span style="background-color: #d1ecf1; border: 1px solid #bee5eb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>			
	Calling Which Base to Throw to	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>				
Angles to the Ball	<b>Flyballs</b>	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>	<span style="background-color: #d1ecf1; border: 1px solid #bee5eb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>			
	<b>Groundballs</b>	<span style="background-color: #f8d7da; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>	<span style="background-color: #d1ecf1; border: 1px solid #bee5eb; padding: 0 2px;"> </span>			



[illegible]





The current Softball Athlete Development Matrix is and will always be a “work in progress”. As new information emerges, the document will be updated and revised based on the best available information from softball experts, experts in growth and development and sport performance.

The ADM will change as the softball community continues to identify different or new needs. This document will evolve to better serve the softball community in Canada with your feedback so please **visit [softball.ca](http://softball.ca) to tell us your thoughts.**



## OTHER RESOURCES

Softball Canada offers additional resources to aid in the development of the skills listed in this document. To find out more about what is available visit **[www.softball.ca](http://www.softball.ca)**

## REFERENCES

- Canadian Sport for Life. (2015). Long-Term Athlete Development – Athlete Development Matrix. *Canadian Sport for Life*, 1.
- Samuels, C.H. & Alexander, B. (2013) Sleep, Recovery, and Human Performance. *Canadian Sport for Life*. Retrieved from, <http://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-view/sleep-recovery-and-human-performance/>
- Sport for Life. (2019). Long Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity 3.0. *Sport for Life Society*.