



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.

◆	Angela Ballantyne	◆	Terry Baytor	◆	Dave Bourne	◆
Gord Collings	◆	Gary Corbett	◆	Lisa Down	◆	Jackie Dugger
◆	Jeff Ellsworth	◆	Tony Foti	◆	Dr. Colin Higgs	◆
Dr. Kaila Holtz	◆	Guy Jacobson	◆	Lise Jubinville	◆	Andrew Leslie
◆	Mark Loehndorf	◆	Erin Mills	◆	Noreen Murphy	◆
Kristin Noonan	◆	Dave Paetkau	◆	Mark Quinn	◆	Mike Renney
◆	Mark Smith	◆	John Stuart	◆	Dr. Lauren Tashman	◆
Andrea Wolf	◆	Lori Zehr	◆	Sport Canada	◆	Own the Podium
◆	Sport for Life	◆	All Softball Canada Provincial & Territorial Associations			





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.

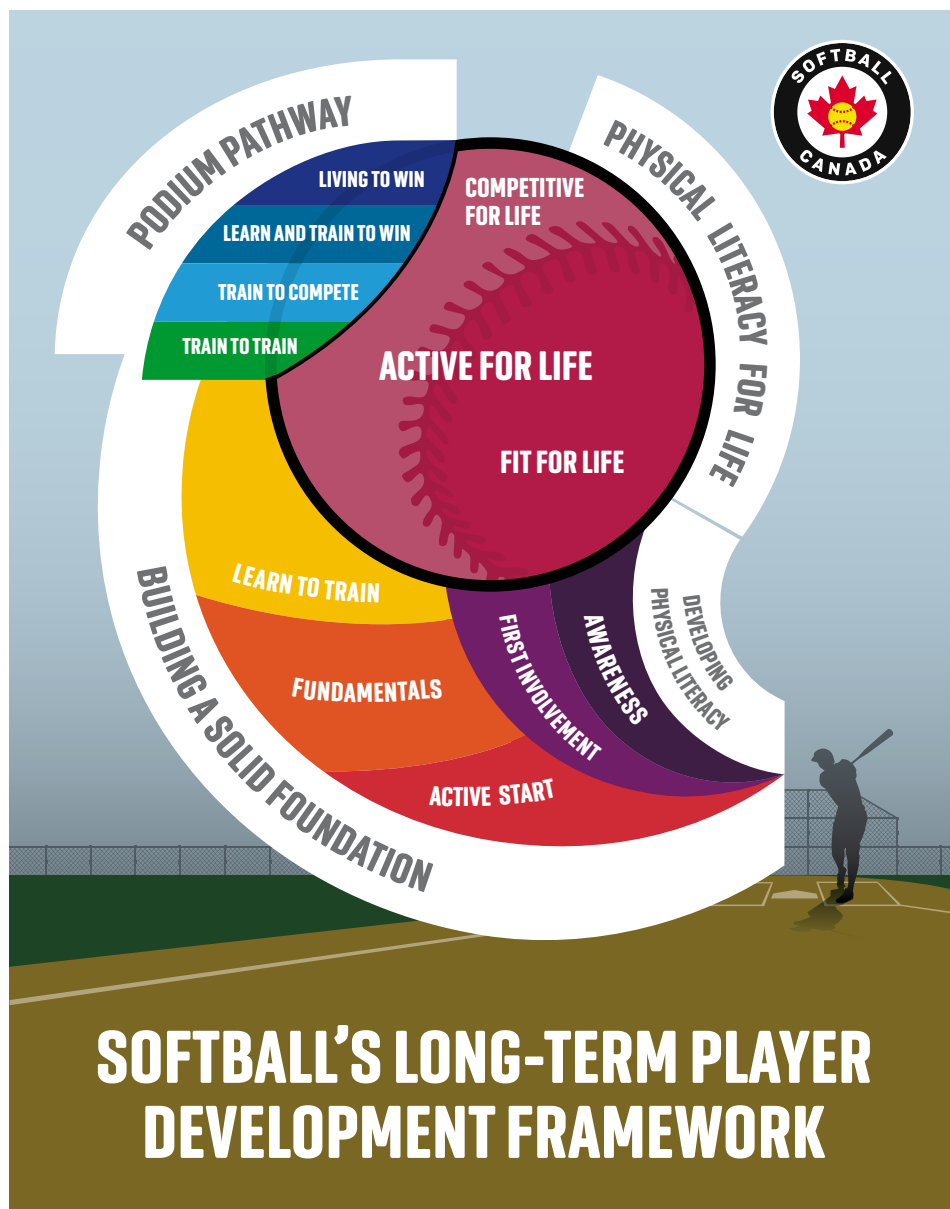
First involvement refers to the first experiences participants have in sport. In this phase it is critical to ensure individuals have a positive first experience in an activity as negative first experiences can lead to non-participation. Organizations and leaders need to create a safe, welcoming, and 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) 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.

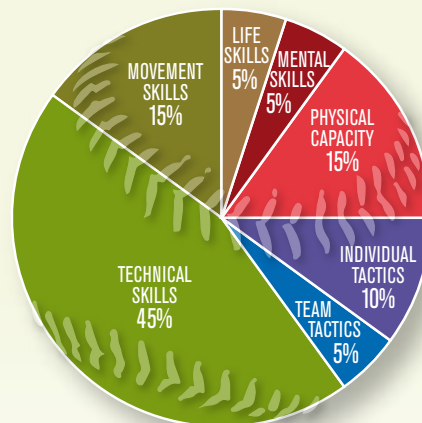
Keep the above definitions in mind as you work your way through the document.



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





Learn to Train (L2T)

MALES: 9 – 12 YEARS
FEMALES: 8 – 11 YEARS

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>

ABOUT THE LEARN TO TRAIN STAGE

This is the stage from late childhood until the onset of the growth spurt at adolescence. With near-adult sized brains, these are often called the "skill-hungry" years. This is one of the most important periods of motor development. Children are developmentally ready to acquire softball-specific skills. Children learning to play softball are NOT miniature adults, and this means taking into account how 10-year olds learn new skills, how 12-year old bodies respond to different types of training, and what strategies and tactics kid's developing brains are capable of understanding. Children at this stage aren't generally capable of dealing with complicated tactics or strategy, but are very concerned with sport being "fair". Some examples for this stage include:

- This is a great time for kids to learn fundamental softball skills like batting, throwing, baserunning, pitching and fielding - and they need lots of reps and time for practice.
- It's a great time to build flexibility (especially for boys), but not a good time to work on strength and power.
- It's a stage of development where it is more important for kids to play than to win, and when everyone needs to be playing not sitting on the bench.
- It is way too early to know who will ultimately be the best softball players, or what positions players will ultimately excel at - so it's a time for everyone to try every position and have equal playing time.
- It's also way too early for children to focus on only one sport. They should be playing 3 or 4 different sports to build all-round athleticism.

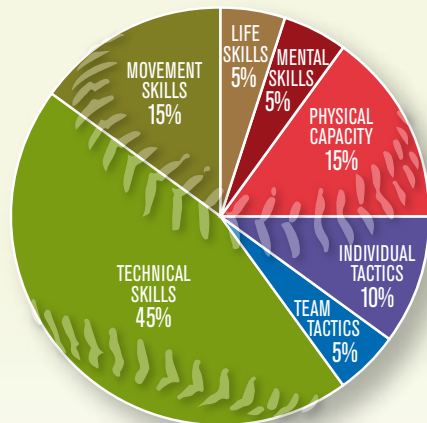
Learn to Train Basics:

- ✓ Focus on keeping softball and physical activity FUN to further develop players' love of the game/physical activity and being part of a team.
- ✓ Further develop fundamental movement skills (FMSs) in a variety of environments (land-based, water-based, and snow/ice-based), including movement-to-music programs.
- ✓ Teach fundamental softball-specific skills (hitting, throwing, pitching, fielding and baserunning) and basic tactics essential to participate in softball.
- ✓ Introduce children to physical conditioning to develop age-appropriate stamina, strength, speed, skill and suppleness.
- ✓ Introduce children to basic mental skills.
- ✓ Develop all-round athleticism including agility, balance and coordination.
- ✓ Ensure children are involved in several sports and have them try different positions or events in each sport.
- ✓ Teach the basic rules and etiquette of softball.
- ✓ Establish appropriate competitive environments where the competition is positioned as a learning experience, designed to encourage and nurture players and where winning and results are not the top priority.
- ✓ Continue to encourage children to engage in unstructured and imaginative play every day.
- ✓ Enroll children in activities that continue to develop stamina, strength, speed, skill and suppleness.

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 Learn to Train stage this means:

Best Use of Softball Time



SEASON STRUCTURE

- Competition/Training Ratio: 30%/70%
- Pre-Season:
 - Early in Stage: 0 practices
 - Later in Stage: 8-12 practices
- Competitive Season:
 - Early in Stage: 8-10 weeks
 - Later in Stage: 12-15 weeks
- Softball-specific activities per week:
 - Early in Stage: 1-2 times for 90 minutes each
 - Later in Stage: 2-3 times for 90 minutes each
- Players take part in 3-4 seasonal sports as part of year round activity



Learn to Train (L2T)

MALES: 9 - 12 YEARS
FEMALES: 8 - 11 YEARS

PHYSICAL CAPACITY

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

NOTE

A key stage for developing hand and foot speed, and for developing flexibility.

Strength training should focus on body-weight exercises, and medicine balls. Introduce hopping and bounding for power development.

MENTAL SKILLS

	Skill Competence					
	I	D	C	R	M	
Confidence and Presence	■					
• Positive attitude						
• Introduction to visualization						
Grit		■				
• Motivation						
• Goal setting						
• Developing passion						
Resilience		■				
• Mental toughness						
• Learning from mistakes						
Focus and Intensity Regulation		■				
• Attention/focus						
• Arousal regulation – breathing						
Team Player		■				
• Developing relationships						
• Communication skills						

NOTE

At this level skills and strategies can be introduced in a group setting to develop a foundation of mental skills.

Kids at this stage are not as self-conscious as during adolescence and this makes it a good time to introduce and practice sport psychology skills in a group setting.

LIFE SKILLS

Player takes responsibility for preparing equipment/clothes for training and competition.

Player takes responsibility for preparing pre-and post training snacks and drinks.

Player is comfortable traveling to and from training and competition as part of team/group.

Understands the rules and ethics of softball and makes conscious decision not to cheat.

Can be a leader and a follower when appropriate.

Appreciates diversity and accepts personal differences.

SLEEP

Sleep- Duration: 9.5-10 hours + 30 minute nap between 2-4pm

- Maintain 15-30 minute bedtime routine
- Monitor caffeine intake



Athletes with Disabilities

Children with a disability should be encouraged to take part in a wide range of sports and activities.

- Provide opportunities to develop sport specific skills like running/ wheeling, throwing and catching a ball (with or without a glove), and hitting with a bat.
- Create a positive learning environment and be aware of different learning styles/needs.
- Adapt equipment, skills, and rules to allow athletes with disabilities to be activity engaged in softball.



Learn to Train (L2T)

MALES: 9 – 12 YEARS
FEMALES: 8 – 11 YEARS

SOFTBALL TECHNICAL / TACTICAL SKILLS

One of the most important periods of sports skills development for children is between the ages of 9 and 12, before the onset of the adolescent growth spurt. This stage is a sensitive period of accelerated adaptation to skill learning. Boys and girls are now developmentally ready to learn fundamental softball-specific skills which will lay the foundation for advanced softball skills in later stages. Instruction from qualified coaches on correct techniques and creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. This is also the time to learn basic rules and the etiquette of the game.

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	Loading (Front Foot to Hand Separation)	■	■			
	Weight Transfer (From Back to Firm Front Side)	■	■	■		
	Palm Up /Palm Down Through Contact	■	■			
	Stacked Position at Contact	■	■	■		
Eye/Hand Coordination	Bat Control	■	■	■		
Strike Zone Awareness		■	■	■		
Avoiding Pitch		■	■	■	■	
Pitch Recognition (After Release)	Spin Recognition and Reaction	■				

BUNTING

		I	D	C	R	M
Sacrifice (Mechanics)	Split Hands With Firm Grip	■	■			
	Barrell Above and in Front of Hands	■	■			
	Head/Eyes at Top of Strike Zone	■	■			
	Absorb the Ball (Contact End of Bat)	■				
Drag Bunt (Mechanics)	Move Through the Box to Pitcher (Back Foot to Pitcher)	■				

SLAP HITTING

		I	D	C	R	M
LH Running Slap	Cross Over Step Towards Shortstop	■	■			
	Hands Above Strike zone	■	■			
	Controlled Bat Path in a Downward Movement	■				
	Barrell Lags Behind Hands to Hit Ball to Left side	■	■			

BASERUNNING

		I	D	C	R	M
Getting Out of Batters Box		■	■	■		
Running to 1st Base			■	■		
Rounding Base	Question Mark Turn	■	■			
	J turn	■	■			
Lead Offs		■	■			
Tagging Up		■	■			
Stealing		■	■	■		

SLIDING

		I	D	C	R	M
Bent Leg Slide		■	■	■		
Dive Back		■	■			
Pop Up Slide		■				



Learn to Train (L2T)

MALES: 9 – 12 YEARS
FEMALES: 8 – 11 YEARS

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

DEFENSIVE SKILLS		SUB-SKILL	I	D	C	R	M
THROWING			I	D	C	R	M
Overhand Throwing Mechanics	Elbows and Shoulders Level		■	■	■		
	Pull Front Elbow into Body on Shoulder Rotation		■	■	■		
	On Release Throwing Elbow Above Shoulder		■	■			
	Ball Release Creates a 12-6 Rotation on Ball		■	■			
	Transition Footwork (Shuffle or Crossover)		■	■	■		
Side Arm Throwing			■				
Flips and Tosses			■	■			
Throwing on the Run			■	■			
RECEIVING THROWS			I	D	C	R	M
Soft hands (absorbing ball)			■	■			
Transfer			■	■			
FIELDING			I	D	C	R	M
GROUND BALLS			I	D	C	R	M
Ready Position			■	■	■		
Ground Ball Fielding Mechanics	Glove Foot Ahead of Throwing Foot		■	■			
	Glove Fingers Point Down/Out Front & Down		■	■	■		
	Bum Down, Weight on Balls of Feet, Eyes Up, Chin Down		■	■			
	Throwing Hand Follows Ball into Glove		■	■	■		
Glove Work	Forehand		■	■			
	Backhand		■	■			
	Shorthops		■				
FLYBALLS			I	D	C	R	M
Flyball Fielding Mechanics	Get Behind the Ball, Glove Foot Ahead of Throwing Foot		■				
	Wrist Back, Glove Above Forehead and Center of Body		■	■	■		
Flyball Footwork	Drop Step		■				
Flyball Catches	Basket Catch		■				
	Over Shoulder Catch		■	■			
Diving Catches	Feet First Sliding		■				
Playing the Sun			■				
Fielding At / Off Fence			■				
MULTIPLE PLAYER DEFENSIVE SKILLS			I	D	C	R	M
Tag Plays			■	■			
Cut Offs			■	■			
Relays			■	■			
Rundowns			■				
PITCHING			I	D	C	R	M
Pitching Mechanics	Leg Drive		■	■	■		
	Stacked or Power Position		■	■	■		
	Arm Action in Joint Sequence		■	■	■		
	Hides Pitches						
Pitches	Fastball		■	■			
	Change		■				
Control (In and Out of Strike Zone)	Throw to Multiple Locations		■	■			
	Throw One Pitch to Multiple Locations		■				
Pitch out			■				



Learn to Train (L2T)

MALES: 9 – 12 YEARS
FEMALES: 8 – 11 YEARS

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

SKILLS						
DEFENSIVE SKILLS	SUB-SKILL					
CATCHING		I	D	C	R	M
Receiving Position		I	D			
Blocking		I	D			
Framing		I				
Throwing	Around Batter	I	D			
	From Knees	I				
Giving Signals		I				
Balls at the Backstop		I	D			
MIDDLE INFIELDER		I	D	C	R	M
Double Play Footwork	Receiving	I	D			
	Throwing					
Relay Throws		I	D	C		
MIDDLE INFIELDER		I	D	C	R	M
Double Play Footwork	Receiving	I	D			
	Throwing					
Relay Throws		I	D	C		
CORNER INFIELDER		I	D	C	R	M
Fielding Bunts		I	D			
1st Base Skills	Footwork at Bag	I	D			
	Stretching	I	D			
	Picks	I				
OUTFIELD		I	D	C	R	M
Long Throw Mechanics	Approach to Ball	I	D			
Safety Catch		I	D			





Learn to Train (L2T)

MALES: 9 – 12 YEARS
FEMALES: 8 – 11 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

HITTING TACTICS

		I	D	C	R	M
Making Adjustments	From at Bat to at Bat or Within at Bat	■	■			
	From Pitcher to Pitcher	■	■			

BASERUNNING TACTICS

		I	D	C	R	M
Reading and Reacting	Coach Signals	■				
	Passed Ball/Wild Pitch	■	■			
	Hit Ball	■	■	■		
	Lead Runner	■	■	■		
1st and 3rd Steals		■				

HITTING/BUNTING TACTICS ON STEAL PLAYS

		I	D	C	R	M
Run and Bunt / Hit / Slap		■				
Fake Bunt		■				

DEFENSIVE TACTICS

SUB TACTIC

		I	D	C	R	M
Communication with Teammates Pre Pitch	Indicating the Number of Outs	■	■	■		
Communication with Teammates during plays	Calling for the Ball	■	■	■		
	Calling Which Base to Throw to	■	■			
	Calling Bunt/Slap/Steal	■	■	■		
Backup Plays	On a Hit Ball	■	■			
	On a Throw to a Base	■	■			
Coverage Plays (Defensive Movement)	Balls Hit to Infield and Outfield	■	■			
	Bunt Plays	■	■	■		
	Slap Plays	■	■			
	Steals	■	■	■		
	Passed Balls/Wild Pitches	■	■	■		
Angles to the Ball	Flyballs	■	■			
	Groundballs	■	■			

TEAM DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

		I	D	C	R	M
Defensive Positioning	Game Situation (# Outs, Score, Inning, Runners on Base)	■				
	Field or Environmental Conditions	■				
Situational Plays	Steal Defense	■	■			
	Bunt Defense	■	■			

[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 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**

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*.