



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.

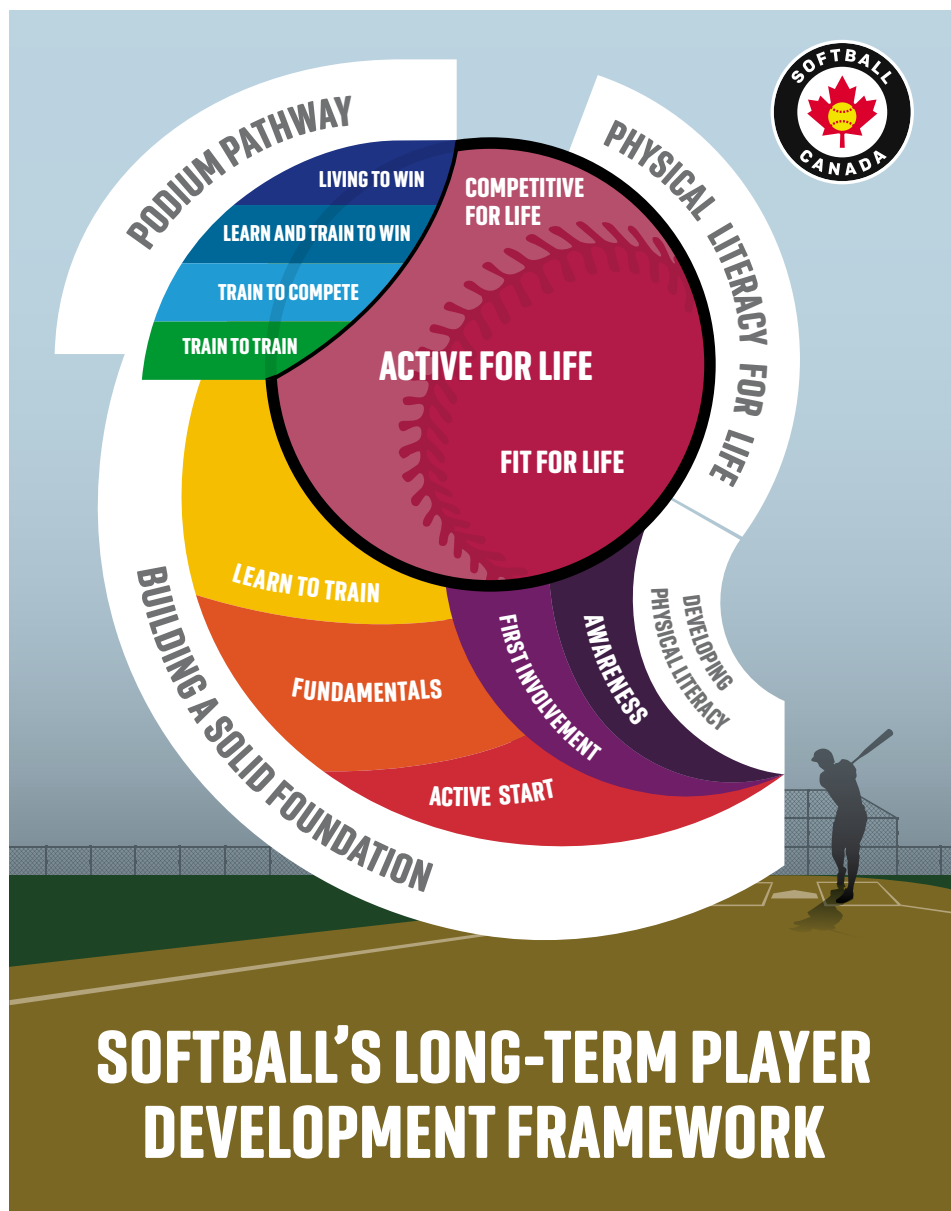
First involvement refers to the first experiences participants have in sport. In this phase it is critical to ensure individuals have a positive first experience in an activity as negative first experiences can lead to non-participation. Organizations and leaders need to create a safe, welcoming, and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

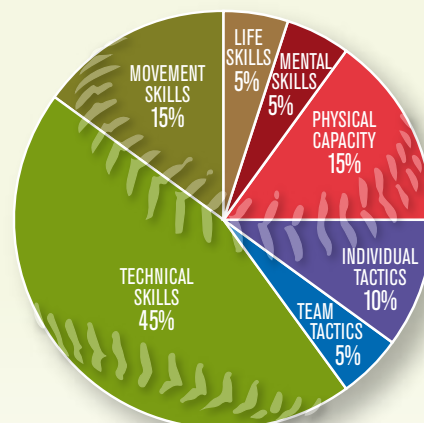
Keep the above definitions in mind as you work your way through the document.



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





ABOUT THE LIVING TO WIN STAGE

There are relatively few athletes who reach this stage of development. The focus of this stage is to maximize performance in order to win medals at the Pan American Games, World Championship or Olympic level. Athletes reach full adult maturity in this stage. They pro-actively take full responsibility for self-assessment of their personal strengths and weaknesses, and work diligently with team coaches and Integrated Support Team experts (sport psychologist, strength and conditioning coaches and sport science specialists) to reduce and eliminate weaknesses. They are full-time athletes committed to the National Team training on a year-round, daily basis. Achieving competitive excellence at the highest level requires the full dedication of the athlete and team towards mastering every skill set in softball. Towards the end of this stage, athletes prepare for retirement and a smooth transition out of high performance softball.

Female Players

- Players should be educated about sound nutrition, the need for energy balance to support training and the risk posed by the female athlete triad including information about resources available to them if there are concerns about disordered eating or potential eating disorders.
- Childrearing assistance available for female players starting a family and wishing to continue to play.

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>

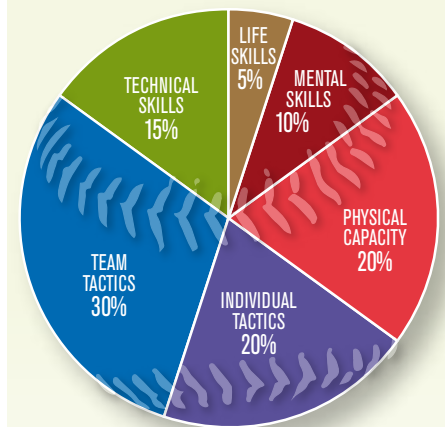
SEASON STRUCTURE

- Competition/Training Ratio: 75%/25% (includes competition-specific training)
- Pre-Season: 18-22 weeks of daily training
- Competitive Season: 14-16 weeks (possibly longer if climate permits or if travelling to warmer climates)
- Softball-specific activities per week: 9-12 times including fitness and mental skills training
- Daily participation in complementary physical activities/sports in the off-season

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 Living to Win stage this means:

Best Use of Softball Time





Living To Win Basics:

- ✓ Provide a year-round, high-intensity training program conducted in a quality, daily training environment.
- ✓ Design and implement training programs to raise the athletes' performance capacity emphasizing the 5 Ss (Stamina, Strength, Speed, Skills and Suppleness) and which is based on the individual needs of each player as well as the team as a whole.
 - Encourage players to make decisions about their training regimen.
 - Individually tailor, to a greater degree, fitness programs, recovery programs, psychological preparation, and technical development to meet the player's individual sport-specific needs, position-specific needs and address each player's strengths and weaknesses.
 - Refine and maintain the world leading technical skills, tactical skills, physical capacities, mental skills and life skills needed to be contributing members of the National Team with the ability to execute them on demand to win medals at international competitions.
 - Teach players, who are now proficient at performing advanced softball and position-specific skills, to perform these skills under a variety of conditions at competition speed and intensity.
 - Refine psychological skills to produce the ideal performance state including setting, monitoring and adjusting outcome and process goals based on performance results.
 - Maximize strength training to bring about overall improvement. Ensure that physical training programs employ the most advanced techniques and sport science information in order to minimize injuries.
- Place special emphasis on optimum preparation by modelling high-level competitions in training in order to perform on a regular and consistent basis to reach the podium at major domestic and international events.
- Ensure optimal nutrition, hydration, and sleep/rest.
- Be aware of and knowledgeable about how to deal with physical and/or mental fatigue.
- Incorporate frequent preventative breaks to ensure physical and mental recovery and regeneration.
- When traveling to different parts of the world:
 - Develop effective plans to minimize the impact of environmental factors such as jet lag, time change, altitude, pollution, and temperature/humidity.
 - Understand different cultural expectations.
 - Prepare for nutritional needs while on the road.
- ✓ Conduct detailed softball skill, physiological and biomechanical testing procedures on athletes at regular intervals to monitor current performance level against desired performance level or benchmarks.
- ✓ Utilize double or multiple periodization strategies to effectively manage the athlete's/team's annual and multi-year schedule, including tapering and peaking for major competitions, to accommodate the large training volumes and intensities in this stage.
- ✓ Change the training-to-competition ratio to 25% training and 75% competition, which includes competition-specific training activities.
- ✓ Arrange or select opportunities to compete against the best athletes/teams from other countries. Use minor competitions to rehearse strategies for major competitions.
- ✓ Work with an IST that is led by the head coach to ensure players and team reach high levels of performance.
- ✓ Work with an Integrated Support Team (IST) consisting of a sport psychologist, nutritionist, exercise physiologist, strength and conditioning coach and a medical team (physician, athletic therapist, physiotherapist, massage therapist, chiropractor) to enhance player and team performances.
- ✓ Debrief and reflect post-training and post-competition to find ways to enhance athlete's future performances by identifying factors that contribute to their Ideal Performance State (IPS) and achieving this state for every competition.
- ✓ Conduct critical evaluation of the program at regular intervals throughout the season and at season's end with coach and player(s) thoroughly examining competition results, achievement of team and individual goals and how the player and team prepared. Together, the coach and player(s) will make modifications for the next competition or cycle.
- ✓ Maintain a sport/life balance and pursue educational, employment, relationship, family and other life opportunities.



PHYSICAL CAPACITY

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

NOTE

Highest training priority is speed and explosive power, particularly explosive leg power for running and explosive arm power for throwing/pitching.

MENTAL SKILLS

	Skill Competence					
	I	D	C	R	M	
Confidence and Presence						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust and resilience confidence driven by clear identity Thrives under pressure Visualizes success and uses for mental preparation 						
Grit						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent passion and perseverance Consistent formal mental practice and preparation Clear goals and competition plans 						
Resilience						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental toughness Adversity as opportunity to improve Emotion regulation and composure 						
Focus and Intensity Regulation						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear understanding of and plan for getting to optimal performance level Attention/focus regulation (present moment, cue recognition, anticipation) Arousal regulation (plan for optimal zone) Well-defined and consistently utilized pre-performance and in-game routines 						
Team Player						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embraces and prepares for role Relationship, communication, and leadership skills Embraces and drives team culture on and off field 						

NOTE

At this level mental skills and preparation are consistently utilized to perform to potential.

Anxiety reduction and emotional control in high pressure situations becomes critical.

Focus on error reduction and good decision making in high pressure situations.

LIFE SKILLS

Athlete committed to high performance and making national team.

Athletes have refined sound nutrition and hydration protocols for daily living, training, competition and recovery.

Player is comfortable traveling independently to and from international training and competition events.

Can maintain fitness and nutrition status when on-the-road for extended periods.

Athlete maintains balance between softball, work and relationships.

Understands and appreciates cultural differences and is comfortable with international travel experiences.

SLEEP

Duration: 8-10 hours +30 minute nap between 2-4pm

- Focus on reducing sleep debt
- Do not train if unrested and sleep deprived
- Avoid technology before bed
- If your sleep is poor seek help



Athletes with Disabilities

Athletes with a disability should maximize performance and compete at their highest athletic potential.

- Provide opportunities for year-round individualized and team training while working with Integrated Support Team experts.
- Ensure coaches/managers possess the knowledge of competition classifications/divisions while adhering to equipment policies for devices/adaptations.
- Be cognisant of international travel/accommodation needs and plan for any possible barriers or interruptions.



SOFTBALL TECHNICAL / TACTICAL SKILLS

At this stage all aspects of training and preparation are geared to winning at the Pan American Games, World Championships and Olympics. Because of this, training plans are multi-year and designed to allow the athlete to peak at critical times. Athletes train with help from an Integrated Support Team which is led by the National Team head coach.

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	I	D	C	R	M
HITTING			I	D	C	R	M
🍁 Hitting Mechanics	Loading (Front Foot to Hand Separation)					R	M
	Weight Transfer (From Back to Firm Front Side)					R	M
	Palm Up /Palm Down Through Contact					R	M
	Stacked Position at Contact					R	M
Eye/Hand Coordination	Bat Control					R	M
Avoiding Pitch						R	M
Pitch Recognition (After Release)	Spin Recognition and Reaction					R	M
BUNTING			I	D	C	R	M
Sacrifice Mechanics	Split Hands With Firm Grip					R	M
	Barrell Above and in Front of Hands					R	M
	Head/Eyes at Top of Strike Zone					R	M
	Absorb the Ball (Contact End of Bat)					R	M
Drag Bunt Mechanics	Move Through the Box to Pitcher (Back Foot to Pitcher)					R	M
	Split Hands With Firm Grip					R	M
	Barrell Above and in Front of Hands					R	M
	Head/Eyes at Top of Strike Zone					R	M
	Absorb the Ball (Contact End of Bat)					R	M
Push Bunt						R	M
SLAP HITTING			I	D	C	R	M
LH Running Slap	Cross Over Step Towards Shortstop					R	M
	Hands Above Strike zone					R	M
	Controlled Bat Path in a Downward Movement					R	M
	Barrell Lags Behind Hands to Hit Ball to Left side					R	M
Stationary Slap						R	M
BASERUNNING			I	D	C	R	M
Getting out of Batters box						R	M
🍁 Running to 1st Base						R	M
🍁 Rounding Base	Question Mark Turn					R	M
	J Turn					R	M
Lead Offs						R	M
Tagging Up						R	M
Stealing						R	M
SLIDING			I	D	C	R	M
Bent Leg Slide						R	M
Dive Back						R	M
Head First Slide						R	M
Back Door Slide						R	M
Pop Up Slide						R	M



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					
🇨🇦 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							
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						
	Short hops						
FLYBALLS							
Flyball Fielding Mechanics	Get Behind the Ball, Glove Foot Ahead of Throwing Foot						
	Wrist Back, Glove Above Forehead & Center of Body						
Flyball Footwork	Drop Step						
Flyball Catches	Basket Catch						
	Over Shoulder Catch						
Diving Catches	Feet First Sliding						
	Head First Dive						
Playing the Sun							
Fielding at / off Fence							
MULTIPLE PLAYER DEFENSIVE SKILLS			I	D	C	R	M
Tag Plays							
Cut Offs							
Relays							
Rundowns							



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
PITCHING							
Pitching Mechanics	Leg Drive						
	Stacked or Power Position						
	Arm Action in Joint Sequence						
	Hides Pitches						
Pitches (Mastering 2 or 3 Pitches)	Fastball						
	Change						
	Drop						
	Rise						
	Curve						
	Screw						
Control (In and Out of Strike Zone)	Throw to Multiple Locations						
	Throw One Pitch to Multiple Locations						
	Throw Multiple Pitches to One Location						
Pitch Out							
CATCHING							
Receiving Position							
Blocking							
Framing							
Throwing to Bases	Around Batter						
	From Knees						
Giving Signals							
Balls at the Backstop							
INFIELD							
MIDDLE INFIELD							
Double Play Footwork	Receiving						
	Throwing						
Relay Throws							
CORNER INFIELD							
Fielding Bunts							
1st Base Skills	Footwork at Bag						
	Stretching						
	Picks						
OUTFIELDERS							
Long Throw Mechanics	Approach to Ball						
	Crow hop						
Safety Catch							



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
🍁 Situational Hitting	Hitting Behind Runner				R	M
	Hitting With Runner on 3rd Less Than 2 Out				R	M
	Hitting Strategy (Bunt, Slap, Hit Based on Defensive Positions)				R	M
🍁 Making Adjustments	From at Bat to at Bat or Within at Bat				R	M
	From Pitcher to Pitcher				R	M
🍁 Pitch Recognition (Pre Release)	Picking Pitchers (Recognizing Pitches Before Release)			C	R	M
	Recognizing Defensive/Catcher Positioning			C	R	M

BASERUNNING TACTICS

		I	D	C	R	M
Delayed Steal					R	M
Reading and Reacting	Coach Signals				R	M
	Passed Ball/Wild Pitch				R	M
	Hit Ball				R	M
	Lead Runner				R	M
Blocking Throws Between Bases					R	M
1st and 3rd Steals					R	M
Rundowns	Escaping				R	M
	Staying in Rundown to Advance Runner				R	M

HITTING/BUNTING TACTICS ON STEAL PLAYS

		I	D	C	R	M
Protecting the Runner					R	M
Run and Bunt / Hit / Slap					R	M
Fake Bunt					R	M
Contact Play (Runner on 3rd)					R	M
Squeeze Play					R	M

COMMUNICATION

		I	D	C	R	M
🍁 Relaying Information About at Bats to Teammates					R	M
🍁 Relaying Information to Hitter About Catcher Positioning (In/Out)					R	M





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

DEFENSIVE TACTICS

SUB TACTIC

		I	D	C	R	M
🇨🇦 Communication With Teammates Pre Pitch	Indicating the Number of Outs					
	Defensive Positioning Communication					
🇨🇦 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					
	Secondary Plays					
	🇨🇦 Passed Balls/Wild Pitches					
Fake Throw						
Angles to the Ball	Flyballs					
	Groundballs					
Pitcher/Catcher	🇨🇦 Pitcher Game Management					
	🇨🇦 Catcher Game Management (Pitcher and Team)					
	Calling Pitches					
TEAM DEFENSIVE STRATEGY		I	D	C	R	M
Defensive Positioning	Game Situation (# Outs, Score, Inning, Runners on Base)					
	Based on Current Hitting Tendencies or Pitches Being Thrown					
	Scouting Reports					
	Field or Environmental Conditions					
Set Plays	Pickoffs					
	1st and 3rd Plays					
Situational Plays	Steal Defense					
	Slap Defense					
	Winning Run and Bottom of Inning Defense					
	Bunt Defense					



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.





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*.