



Sherwood Park Minor Softball Association U11-U19 Coach's Handbook 2024



SPMSA Mission *In Development*

To provide young players the opportunity to learn and enhance their skills in an environment that focuses on fun, fair play and development.

Division Directors (SPMSA)

U7/U9	U11	U13
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2024 IMPORTANT DATES

April 18th SPMSA Coaches meeting - SPMSA Softball Shack

April 21st GEMSA Coaches Meeting @ Foote Field

U11 Coaches - 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Recreational Division (C/D) U13 - U15 - U17 - U19 5:45 PM - 6:45 PM

Competitive Division (A/B) U13 - U15 - U17 - U19 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Equipment/Uniform Pick Up - April 18th - SPMSA Softball Shack

First week of May - GEMSA League Play begins

June 17th, 2024 Raffle Tickets are submitted to SPMSA from Team Managers

July 2nd, 2024 Raffle Draw takes place

GEMSA City Playoffs June 21, 22, 23 in Leduc

TBD Uniform Return (time TBD)

Coaching Expectations

The Head Coach is expected to be responsive, adhere to, and promote the directives of the SPMSA board and administer the team within established policies and guidelines.

The Head Coach, as chief team official, is fully responsible for all activities of his or her team. Delegation of responsibilities to assistant coaches, managers and parents is necessary, desirable and encouraged; however, ultimate responsibility for these activities rests with the Head Coach.

Head Coach Responsibilities:

- Ensure proper supervision of the team before, during and after all games and practices and accept responsibility for the conduct, safety and well-being of players
- Coaches are to make player **enjoyment** and **development** a priority
- All players will be given equitable or fair playing time during games and practices to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to develop and learn skills as well as have fun and enjoy the sport. • Lead by example. Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.
- Develop a set of rules and philosophies for the team, which are clearly communicated and which will be enforced fairly in relation to all players.

SPMSA follows Softball Alberta's Section Four: Operating Policies; Policy 4002 – Code of Conduct. The complete policy is available at

<https://www.softballalberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

COACH'S CODE OF CONDUCT - Softball Alberta

If players are to grow and develop in their sport or physical activity, an environment of positive communication and respect must exist. Coaches should observe the following Code of Conduct.

- I will remember that all the players are playing for their enjoyment, not for mine.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire or external pressure to win.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing environment for all players.
- I will not have unrealistic expectations. I will remember that the amateur athletes are not professionals and cannot be judged by professional standards.
- I will respect the official's decisions and communicate with them in an appropriate manner and I will encourage my players to do the same.
- I will encourage all players to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will teach my players good sportsmanship.
- I will never ridicule or yell at the players, coaches or officials for making a mistake.
- I will applaud good players' performances on both teams.
- I will never question the official's judgement or honesty in public.
- I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.
- I will not consume alcohol or smoke on, or near the vicinity of the players' benches.
- I will not use bad language, nor will I harass athletes, coaches, officials or other spectators.
- I will be knowledgeable of the league rules and regulations and teach these rules to the players on

my team.

- I will encourage my players to respect the rights of other players, coaches, fans & officials.
- I will be responsible for my own behaviour and also the behaviour of my team members, their parents & fans.
- I will have respect for all the facilities and equipment used in the sport.

Certification – COACHING

- 1) Making Ethical Decisions (MED) course is completed online using the following link. There is a fee of \$85. <http://coach.ca/make-ethical-decisions-med--s16834>
- 2) Online course Foundations of Coaching Softball (\$10) this is a great introduction for U11 Coaches and new coaches in the B and C Divisions.
- 3) Respect in Sport - Activity Leader is required for ALL coaches as of 2023. Also can be completed online using the following link.
<https://softballcanada-activityleader.respectgroupinc.com/>

All U11 categories require a registered coach to have Foundations of Coaching Softball Part 1 and the Make Ethical Decisions Online Evaluation complete on their NCCP transcript. (2023 including Respect In Sport)

NOT leading to Post-Provincial play - all Minor & Adult FP categories require a registered coach to be fully Trained in NCCP "**Community Softball**".

Leading to Post-Provincial play - all Minor & Adult FP categories require a registered coach to be fully Certified in NCCP "**Competition Introduction**".

For a listing of Softball Alberta Coaching Clinics, go to the Softball Alberta website. Clinics fill fast so register early!

<https://www.softballalberta.ca/coaches/>

**Coaching Certification fees are reimbursed by SPMSA. Upon completion, submit proof of certification and your receipt to the Division Rep.*

RCMP – Criminal Records Check

Clearance letters are required for all coaches and assistant coaches **EVERY SECOND** year. The Criminal Records Check (CRC) Letter can be found on the SPMSA website, and must be submitted to the Sherwood Park RCMP Detachment (911 Bison Way) at the time of the request. The CRC will be provided **free** of charge. Submit the original copy to your division rep on or before **May 1st, 2024**

Harassment

“Softball Alberta is committed to providing a sport and work environment that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and respectful. Such an environment does not condone discrimination or harassment.” *Softball Alberta Policy 4007 – Harassment.*

SPMSA follows Softball Alberta’s Section Four: Operating Policies; Policy 4007 – Harassment. The complete policy is available at <https://www.softballalberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Harassment.pdf>

SPMSA Raffle Tickets

- Raffle tickets are pre-purchased by parents with online registration (Fundraising Fee) and are the responsibility of each family to sell. **Money collected is kept by the seller.** Some families may have opted out during registration, they do not receive tickets.
- Raffle ticket coordinators are selected and will accept and manage their team’s raffle tickets. •

Raffle ticket process:

- 1) Raffle ticket coordinator (choose a parent volunteer) will pick-up their team’s raffle tickets at uniform pick-up.
- 2) Distribute tickets to parents as soon as possible – give pre-assigned ticket numbers to their assignee only. **DO NOT SWITCH TICKET NUMBERS.**
- 3) Parents must initial the control sheet when they have received the tickets
- 4) Parents must return all ticket stubs to the raffle ticket coordinator by **June 17th, 2024**. Do not remove the ticket covers.
- 5) Parents must date and sign for tickets returned to the raffle ticket coordinator.
- 6) Raffle ticket coordinators will return ALL of their team’s ticket stubs at once to the Raffle Chairperson by **June 17th, 2024**. Drop off at Janice Lee’s home (address below).
- 7) Lost or stolen tickets must be reported immediately to the SPMSA Raffle Chairperson.

Janice Lees
SPMSA Raffle Chairperson
155 Chestermere Cres, Sherwood Park
Email: jlees@ualberta.ca

Incident Reports and Conduct

- Head coaches or the SPMSA Division Representative may provide Incident Reports. The Division Representative will deliver all reports to the President at which time a decision to present to the SPMSA Executive for further action will be made.
- Parents and Coaches are expected to follow the 24-Hour Rule: if a parent has something to say to the coach or manager – or vice versa - that could be contentious, wait 24 hours after the event or the game before discussing it. By this time, both people will likely have a better perspective - arguments are often diffused or eliminated naturally in the process.

Financial

*NOTE: The financial Policy is a DRAFT and has not yet been approved by SPMSA executive. Questions or concerns can be forwarded to the SPMSA president

- Teams will be required to pay for tournament fees and other associated costs, gym rentals, specialised training, apparel and other such expenses.
- Teams can choose to collect funds through sponsorships, bottle drives, fundraising or a parent “cash call”.
- Fundraising activities that include a raffle, 50/50, or squares and such requires an AGLC licence and all rules must be strictly adhered to.
 - AGLC guidelines for use of proceeds in sports can be found at:
[https://aglc.ca/sites/aglc.ca/files/aglc_files/Guidelines%20-%20Sports Use%20of%20Proceeds%20\(5504\).pdf](https://aglc.ca/sites/aglc.ca/files/aglc_files/Guidelines%20-%20Sports%20Use%20of%20Proceeds%20(5504).pdf)
 - Gaming funds **cannot** be used to pay for:
 - personal apparel, gear or equipment
 - social team functions
 - travel to tournaments out of province
- All team funds MUST be accounted for and used in the **current** season.
- SPMSA requires financial transparency within teams and accurate accounting practices to be used. • Teams must use common sense and discretion when soliciting donations. The amount of the donations should be limited to the amount required to cover expenses.
- All funds remaining at the end of the season and after normal operating expenses can be distributed in one of the following ways:
 - 1) Co-mingled funds (donations and/or AGLC proceeds with cash call) - refunded to parents, in the form of a gift card, to a maximum of their fees contributed to the team - not including the cost of SPMSA registration and fundraising fee.
 - 2) Team fees paid by cash call only or non AGLC fundraising— cash can be refunded to parents
 - 3) Donated to SPMSA or a charity of choice

Tournaments / Playoffs / Playdowns / Provincials

- GEMSA Playoffs are typically held throughout the last week and weekend of June
- All “A” teams are required to commit to attending either Western Canadians or Nationals if you qualify.
- Teams designated “A” are expected to play in A Provincials.
- Teams designated “B and C” are all encouraged to attend Provincials.
- More information can be found on the Softball Alberta website.
 - <https://www.softballalberta.ca/championships/provincials/>
 - SOFTBALL ALBERTA - Championships - Provincials
 - A complete list of tournaments can be found on the Softball Alberta website.
<https://www.softballalberta.ca/tournaments/listings/>

First Aid

Each team is supplied with a first aid kit that will be located in the equipment bag. Please inform the SPMSA Equipment Manager at equipment@spmsa.com, if any supplies need to be replaced due to damage or usage.

****All player injuries must be reported to the Division Rep who will then contact the General Manager.**

Apparel

Individual teams may purchase apparel items for their players, parents, and fans. Any teams deciding to purchase team apparel must do so from an approved source. Approved sources for the 2024 season are:

SPMSA logo is on file at:

Tyleen Sportswear

136-134 Pembina Rd

Sherwood Park, AB, T8H 0M2

Phone: 780-464-0628

Umpires

*New! GEMSA Fees include umpire fees and umpire travel fees! When submitting scores, only select umpire if you had an Official Softball Alberta umpire; this will help GEMSA track these costs. If there is no official umpire one volunteer from each team will umpire as per the handbook.

Exhibition games or tournaments will be the team's expense.

If there are **no** official umpires for a game, the **home team supplies a plate ump** and the **visiting team supplies a base ump**. SPMSA members will umpire from behind the pitcher instead of the plate for safety reasons.

Scheduling Games

Refer to the league game schedule. Refer to GEMSA rules for rescheduling of rain out or cancelled games.

Scorekeeping

Scorekeeping is done by both teams during a game. Refer to the league rules for instructions on how to submit the final game score.

Diamonds / Batting Cages - Booking

Diamonds for practice and rescheduled games AND batting cages must be booked (or cancelled) through SPMSA. Diamonds and batting cages can be booked online.

The links will be emailed to coaches by the Division Director.

Any questions or concerns, contact:

General Manager: generalmanager@spmsa.com

BATTING CAGE RULES:

- Code to the lock is 5262, this will give you entrance to the batting cage
- ***The pitching machine MUST be shut off for 15 minutes every 1.5 hours to prevent it from burning out***
- Only **one** person in the cage at a time
- Batting helmets **must** be worn
- Only coaches or a designated adult can run the machine
- Be sure spectators don't put their fingers on the fence when someone is hitting
- Cover up machine when you are done and put balls in plastic container
- Clean up the area after leaving. Example water or Gatorade bottles, disposable coffee cups, bags of spits etc.
- Only use your allotted time as we have 3 different time slots
- Safety is a key when using this machine!! Use a speed that your players can handle
- *U7/U9 division will not be allowed to use the batting cage*
- BE SURE GATE IS LOCKED WHEN LEAVING

Rainout/Storm/Cold Temperatures - Procedures

Fields can be closed due to unsafe playing surfaces and to prevent severe turf damage. When Strathcona County Diamonds are closed, ALL teams must refrain from use until they are declared open again. Teams who do not comply with diamond closures put SPMSA at risk of losing access to all diamonds.

- Strathcona County – field status information will be posted by 3 p.m. (Monday – Friday). Closure/Rainout updates are available at <https://www.strathcona.ca/recreation-events/parks-and-trails/parks-trails-sports-venues/sports-field-status/> through the e-newsletter and on the closure line at 780-467-5800
- City of Edmonton - field status changes will be posted by: 4pm (Monday-Friday) and 10am (weekends and holidays). Closure Line (Rainouts) updates are available at <http://coewebapps.edmonton.ca/facilitynotifications/default.aspx?args=4,14> , by signing up for email notifications, and calling 780-496-4999, dial 1.

SPMSA and GEMSA are required to cancel games when the fields are closed. The sun may be out, but the field conditions could be deemed unplayable earlier in the day.

Diamonds Closed Prior to Game Time

- Please check the county and city websites for up-to-date info on diamond closures/conditions when there is suspect weather. When a diamond is closed prior to game time, a designated person will then call/message the members of the team with the information. If you cancel a game with a team, please follow the league procedures.
- If diamonds are open, but you are concerned about the weather and/or diamond conditions, please go to the diamond at your regular time and make the decision following the protocols below.

Inclement Weather During a Game

- The decision to cancel or suspend a game in progress will be made by the umpire and in the event an umpire is not present, coaches will call the game - please use the following information to make a safe decision in consultation with the other coach. Notify your Division Rep ASAP with your decision.
 - Recruit the cooperation and assistance of your coaches and parents in monitoring conditions. Parents in particular can usually pay closer attention to the weather than coaches. Get them to alert you to changing conditions.
 - ***Do not be persuaded to continue a game.*** The SPMSA will fully support any decision you make that errs on the side of caution.
 - If you have to cancel a game, note the time, inning and score at suspension, and notify your Division Rep within the next 24 hours.
 - When thunder or lightning are present, coaches and parents are asked to adhere to the following policy:

SPMSA Lightning Policy

If you hear it, clear it. If you see it, flee it.

- a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
- b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count reset the clock and another 30 minute count should begin.

Field Playing Conditions

Notify the association ASAP if any repairs need to be done to the field in order for the players to participate safely or if there is lack of upkeep.

Take a photo and forward it to:

General Manager: generalmanager@spmsa.com

Equipment & Uniforms

- **SPMSA ISSUED UNIFORMS ARE FOR GAMES ONLY!** The uniform will consist of a SPMSA jersey, Kelly green socks and belts will be available for purchase at Sin Bin or United Cycle.
- All players must wear sport running shoes or moulded sport cleats (no metal). ***No open-toed shoes allowed on the field by players, coaches, or anyone warming up the pitcher.***
- Pelvic protectors are recommended.
- All players are required to wear a protective batting helmet with chin strap while on deck, batting and running the bases. Refer to Softball Alberta Handbook – Article III, Section J – Equipment, 1.
- Catchers ***or anyone warming up the pitcher*** MUST wear a mask while receiving warm up pitches anywhere on or near the playing field or in the warm-up area prior to the start of the game. Refer to Softball Alberta Handbook – Article III, Section J – Equipment, 1b.
- Catchers must wear all SPMSA supplied equipment or personally owned equipment – catcher's helmet, chest protector, pelvic protector and shin guards. Regular batting helmets cannot be worn in place of the catcher's helmet as they do not provide the required protection.
- Pitchers are required to wear an approved protective face mask or guard when pitching, no pitcher will be allowed to throw a pitch in a game until an approved face mask or guard is worn. Failure to wear an approved face mask or guard will result in the pitcher being unable to continue pitching and they must be replaced and or substituted for. Refer to Softball Alberta Handbook – Article III, Section J – Equipment, 2d. Protective infield masks are highly recommended for all infield players.
- Infielder masks are required when playing in GEMSA league games, this may differ from tournament play or provincials.
- Bats - any bat that appears on the ISF or ASA approved bat list and has an ISF or ASA certification stamp will be accepted for play. Bats with the wording "official softball" are also accepted. The bat must also pass a visual inspection by the umpire prior to the start of the game.
- Distracting Adornments: "no exposed items (including jewellery) judged by the umpire to be distracting to the opposing players may be worn or displayed. The umpire shall require the item to be removed or covered. Medical alert bracelets and/or necklaces, if deemed to be distracting, shall be required to be taped to the body in such a manner that the medical alert information is visible. If a player is requested by the umpire to remove jewellery and they refuse, the player will be removed from the game and ruled ineligible" (2017-2018 Softball Canada Official Rule Book).

Parent Meeting

Teams are required to have a parent meeting as soon as practical after the teams are selected.

The meeting agenda should cover but are not limited to the following:

- The team budget and optional fundraising initiatives
- The time and tournament commitment required by players
- **The coach's philosophy on player enjoyment and development**
- The team's goals – short and long term
- The team's communication protocol and conflict resolution process
- Assign team volunteer positions
 - **Raffle Ticket Coordinator**
 - **Team Manager**
 - **Treasurer**
 - **Scorekeepers**
 - **Equipment and Diamond set-up**

Social Media

SPMSA is working towards increasing our Social Media presence. You can post and tag photos using the hashtag **#shpksoftball**. If you have news or pictures about your team activities to share on our Facebook or Instagram, please send to generalmanager@spmsa.com

Note: no harassment or bullying will be tolerated on Social Media. Players/Parents should be reminded that if they are posting something it should be positive and that they should have permission from anyone that is in the picture to post it.

Player's Code of Conduct

SPMSA follows the Softball Alberta's Player Code of Conduct <https://www.softballalberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Player-Code.pdf>

Please review with your players.

PLAYER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

- I will not have unrealistic expectations. I will remember that we are not professionals and cannot be judged by professional standards.
- I will respect the official's decisions and communicate with them in an appropriate manner and I will encourage my teammates to do the same.
- I will encourage my teammates to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will exhibit good sportsmanship.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my teammates, opponents, coaches or officials for making a mistake.
- I will applaud players' performances on both teams.
- I will never question the official's judgement or honesty in public.
- I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.
- I will not consume alcohol or smoke on, or near the vicinity of the players' benches.
- I will not use bad language, nor will I harass opponents, coaches, officials or spectators.
- I will be knowledgeable of the rules and regulations.
- I will respect the rights of other players, coaches, fans & officials.
- I will be responsible for my own behaviour.
- I will have respect for all the facilities and equipment used in the sport.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Sherwood Park Minor Softball Association strives to provide a safe, welcoming sporting environment for all athletes. SPMSA has a zero-tolerance policy regarding bullying of any form, including:

- physical – pushing, shoving, hitting, damaging or stealing property that belongs to someone else
- social – purposefully excluding others from a group or spreading gossip or rumours about them
- verbal – disrespectful or hurtful name calling, mocking, or inappropriate comments based on gender, race, or other personal beliefs
- electronic - (commonly known as cyber-bullying) - bullying that takes place over digital devices, through SMS, text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content.

An athlete who purposefully engages in bullying, promotes bullying or does not report bullying will be subject to discipline. The first line of report is to the teams coach and or manager, if unresolvable the next reports are in order: division representative, Vice President, President. A discipline committee will be formed as appropriate and will include the SPMSA Executive and other resources as appropriate.

Consequences may include: immediate removal from the field, suspensions, removal from a roster and release from SPMSA.

This policy applies to all members of SPMSA including, but not limited to board members, coaches, athletes, family members and guests of athletes and is applicable as soon as the athlete registers with SPMSA.

SPMSA coaches will:

- strive to create a positive atmosphere of respect and support.
- communicate clearly to players that bullying among the team and/or members of other teams, officials, etc will not be tolerated.

If parents witness or become aware of teasing, exclusion, threats or other forms of bullying, they are encouraged to talk with the coach, manager, or division representative.