



## 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:

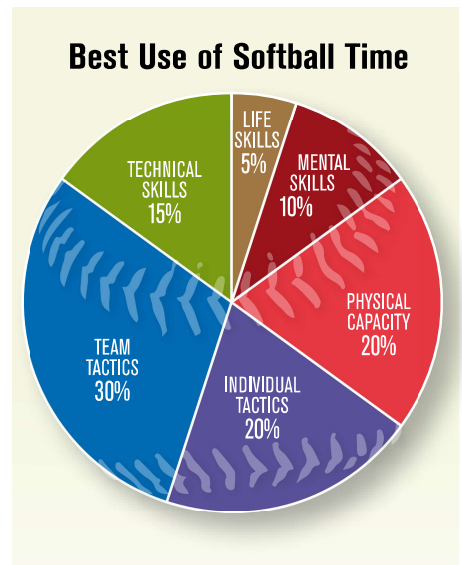
<https://softball.ca>

## 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:





### **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.



# Living to Win (L2W)

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

**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						
<b>HITTING</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
🍁 <b>Hitting Mechanics</b>	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				■	■
Avoiding Pitch					■	■
<b>Pitch Recognition (After Release)</b>	<b>Spin Recognition and Reaction</b>				■	■
<b>BUNTING</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Sacrifice Mechanics</b>	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)				■	■
<b>Drag Bunt Mechanics</b>	Move Through the Box to Pitcher (Back Foot to Pitcher)				■	■
	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)				■	■
<b>Push Bunt</b>				■	■	
<b>SLAP HITTING</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>LH Running Slap</b>	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				■	■
Stationary Slap				■	■	
<b>BASERUNNING</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Getting out of Batters box					■	■
🍁 Running to 1st Base					■	■
🍁 Rounding Base	Question Mark Turn				■	■
	J Turn				■	■
Lead Offs					■	■
Tagging Up					■	■
Stealing					■	■
<b>SLIDING</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Bent Leg Slide					■	■
Dive Back					■	■
<b>Head First Slide</b>					■	■
<b>Back Door Slide</b>					■	■
<b>Pop Up Slide</b>					■	■





**SKILLS**

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DEFENSIVE SKILLS		SUB-SKILL	I	D	C	R	M
<b>THROWING</b>							
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							
<b>Throwing on the Run</b>							
<b>RECEIVING THROWS</b>							
Soft Hands (Absorbing Ball)							
Transfer							
<b>FIELDING</b>							
<b>GROUND BALLS</b>							
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	<b>Forehand</b>						
	<b>Backhand</b>						
	<b>Short hops</b>						
<b>FLYBALLS</b>							
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						
	<b>Over Shoulder Catch</b>						
Diving Catches	<b>Feet First Sliding</b>						
	<b>Head First Dive</b>						
Playing the Sun							
Fielding at / off Fence							
<b>MULTIPLE PLAYER DEFENSIVE SKILLS</b>							
Tag Plays							
Cut Offs							
Relays							
Rundowns							



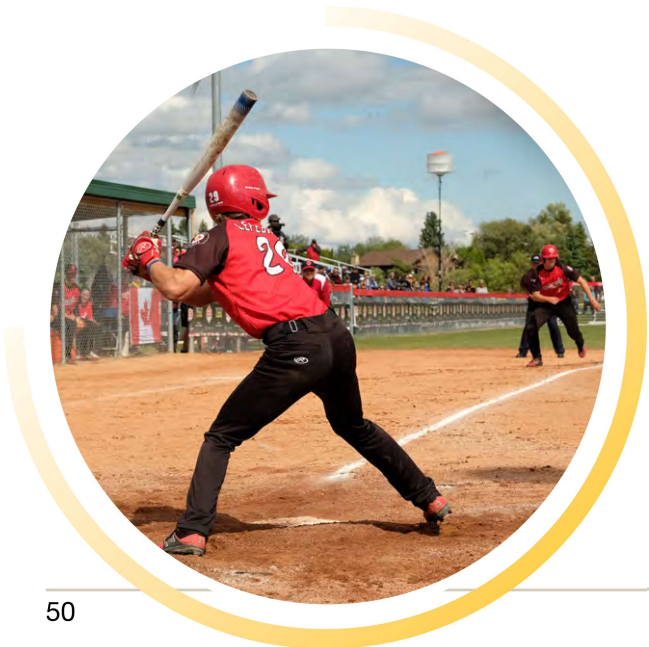
SKILLS		LEGEND FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT: <span style="color: #FFC0CB;">■</span> I - Introduce, <span style="color: #C0C0FF;">■</span> D - Develop, <span style="color: #C0C0FF;">■</span> C - Consolidate, <span style="color: #4169E1;">■</span> R - Refine, <span style="color: #000080;">■</span> M - Maintain				
		<b>Bold text</b> - skill/tactic is a priority at this stage				
DEFENSIVE SKILLS	SUB-SKILL	I	D	C	R	M
<b>PITCHING</b>						
Pitching Mechanics	Leg Drive				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Stacked or Power Position				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Arm Action in Joint Sequence				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Hides Pitches				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Pitches (Mastering 2 or 3 Pitches)	Fastball				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	<b>Change</b>				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	<b>Drop</b>				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	<b>Rise</b>				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	<b>Curve</b>				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	<b>Screw</b>				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Control (In and Out of Strike Zone)	Throw to Multiple Locations				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Throw One Pitch to Multiple Locations				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Throw Multiple Pitches to One Location				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Pitch Out				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	
<b>CATCHING</b>						
Receiving Position					<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Blocking					<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Framing					<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Throwing to Bases	Around Batter				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	<b>From Knees</b>				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Giving Signals					<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Balls at the Backstop					<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>INFIELD</b>						
<b>MIDDLE INFIELD</b>						
Double Play Footwork	Receiving				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Throwing				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Relay Throws					<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>CORNER INFIELD</b>						
<b>Fielding Bunts</b>						
1st Base Skills	Footwork at Bag				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Stretching				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Picks				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>OUTFIELDERS</b>						
Long Throw Mechanics	Approach to Ball				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
	Crow hop				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
Safety Catch				<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	



**TACTICS**

LEGEND FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT: I - Introduce, D - Develop, C - Consolidate, R - Refine, M - Maintain  
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OFFENSIVE TACTICS	SUB TACTIC	I	D	C	R	M
<b>HITTING TACTICS</b>		I	D	C	R	M
🍁 Situational Hitting	Hitting Behind Runner					
	<b>Hitting With Runner on 3rd Less Than 2 Out</b>					
	<b>Hitting Strategy (Bunt, Slap, Hit Based on Defensive Positions)</b>					
🍁 Making Adjustments	From at Bat to at Bat or Within at Bat					
	From Pitcher to Pitcher					
🍁 Pitch Recognition (Pre Release)	<b>Picking Pitchers (Recognizing Pitches Before Release)</b>					
	<b>Recognizing Defensive/Catcher Positioning</b>					
<b>BASERUNNING TACTICS</b>		I	D	C	R	M
Delayed Steal						
Reading and Reacting	Coach Signals					
	Passed Ball/Wild Pitch					
	Hit Ball					
	Lead Runner					
<b>Blocking Throws Between Bases</b>						
<b>1st and 3rd Steals</b>						
Rundowns	Escaping					
	Staying in Rundown to Advance Runner					
<b>HITTING/BUNTING TACTICS ON STEAL PLAYS</b>		I	D	C	R	M
Protecting the Runner						
Run and Bunt / Hit / Slap						
Fake Bunt						
<b>Contact Play (Runner on 3rd)</b>						
Squeeze Play						
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>		I	D	C	R	M
🍁 Relaying Information About at Bats to Teammates						
🍁 Relaying Information to Hitter About Catcher Positioning (In/Out)						





# Living to Win (L2W)

MALES: 23+ YEARS  
FEMALES: 19+ YEARS

## TACTICS

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