



*providing Softball opportunities for all Canadians*

## **THE SPORT OF SOFTBALL**

### **THE SPORT**

Softball is one of the largest participation sports in Canada. Over 300,000 players enjoy the sport in registered Fast-Pitch, Slo-Pitch and Orthodox leagues across the country. Many thousands more learn the game in schools across the country.

The scope of the game ranges from the 5 year old child just taking up the sport to the 65 year old grandparent enjoying a friendly game of Slo-Pitch. In between there are a variety of opportunities that take the sport all the way to the Olympic Games.

### **WHERE DOES SOFTBALL CANADA FIT IN?**

Softball Canada is recognized by the International Softball Federation and the Government of Canada as the exclusive national sport governing body for softball in Canada. An 8 member Board of Directors, elected by the 13 Provincial/Territorial softball associations, governs the work of the association. They are supported by 7 staff members in the national office in Ottawa.

### **OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to provide a range of opportunities for athletes, coaches, officials and Provincial/Territorial associations through the development, delivery and promotion of programs and services at the National and International level.

In support of our mission we adhere to the following principles:

1. Athlete focused – The needs of the athletes we serve are why we operate our programs.
2. Gender Equity – We provide equitable opportunities for females and males at all levels of the game.
3. Accessibility – Our goal is to make the game accessible to all regions and populations.
4. Values and Ethics – We are committed to a “Fair Play” sport environment
5. Official Languages– Services are provided in both official languages.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

To assist in focusing resources and achieving excellence, Softball Canada has identified four major pillars as the foundation for future strategic direction. These pillars represent the core responsibilities of a national sport organization.

#### **1. INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION**

One of the great strengths of softball is that it has become an international game. Currently over 100 countries belong to the International Softball Federation (ISF). Softball Canada supports the international growth of the sport through providing volunteers to sit on key ISF Boards and committees. We provide Canadian know-how and support key initiatives that will assist further growth.

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International activities are important because they:

1. Provide significant opportunities and goals for Canadian athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers
2. Raise the public profile of the sport and increase media and promotional opportunities
3. Provide key hosting opportunities

## **2. NATIONAL TEAMS**

Softball Canada operates 4 National Teams – Senior Men's and Women's and Junior Men's and Women's. Each team competes in a World Championship every 4 years and a myriad of other competitions including the Pan-American Games and the Olympics for Women's softball.

Canadian teams have experienced tremendous success at the international level, bringing home numerous medals.

Our Men's program has consistently generated top 3 results while our Women's program has been a consistent top 8 finisher.

A strong National Team program is essential to the long-term health of the sport by:

1. Providing a high profile top-end goal for athletes and coaches.
2. Developing role models, increasing the profile of the sport and re-informing domestic development
3. Increasing Canadian profile at the international level, thereby enhancing Canada's position in the international softball community

## **3. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Canadian Championships are offered in both Fast Pitch and Slo-Pitch categories in various age and gender categories. The Canadian Championship program involves over 130 teams in 8-10 competition locations across Canada. The Championships, run in cooperation with local host committees, are the highlight of the Canadian softball season.

The Canadian Championship program helps strengthen the game by:

1. providing competitive opportunities for athletes, coaches and officials
2. playing an important role for provinces and territories and the national team program in player development
3. providing local opportunities for the development of volunteers, facilities and promotion of the sport

## **4. DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT**

Domestic Development is crucial to the long-term health of the sport and acts as a feeder system for the other 3 pillars of the strategic plan. Softball Canada's role in this area is to facilitate the sharing of information between Provincial/Territorial members and to create standardized national programming, where requested by our Provincial/Territorial partners. Delivery of programs to the grass roots is a Provincial/Territorial responsibility.

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Key initiatives in the area of Domestic Development include:

1. Creating a standardized National initiation program.
2. Facilitating the work of the Softball Canada Minor committee, which is made up of Provincial/Territorial representatives.
3. Facilitating discussion amongst the membership on Slo-Pitch issues through the Slo-Pitch committee

## **SUPPORTING PROGRAMMING**

In support of Softball Canada's 4 strategic pillars, a number of related programs are operated. These include;

### **1. COACHING**

Over 25,000 coaches have participated in Softball Canada's coaching certification process (Levels 1-5 are offered). Coaches are offered a variety of resource materials and development opportunities in conjunction with the Coaching Association of Canada.

### **2. OFFICIATING**

The Canadian officiating program is recognized as the worldwide leader in training and performance. Over 4,000 umpires are registered with Softball Canada and activities include the certification process (Levels 1-5), specialized learning materials and publications and professional development opportunities at all levels.

### **3. TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

Softball Canada sets national standards for the safe, fun, fair enjoyment of the sport. This includes the setting of rules, bat and ball approval programs and injury research.

### **4. PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

Softball Canada is involved in the promotion of the game through a variety of avenues including - our website [www.softball.ca](http://www.softball.ca), which averages 20,000 hits a month, media liaison, direct electronic messaging (Around the Horn), event promotion and securing television coverage for the sport. Did you know that over 10,000,000 television viewers have watched Canada's national teams since 1999!

On the marketing side Softball Canada has been successful in securing numerous sponsors/suppliers who provide support for key programming areas.

### **5. ADMINISTRATION**

A significant number of administrative activities are undertaken to support the development of the sport. These include the Annal Meeting, committee meetings, related staff support and recognition programs for athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers.

In addition, Softball Canada represents the interest of our sport to the Government of Canada (Sport Canada), Canadian Olympic Committee, Canada Games Council and a variety of other national sport and multi-sport organizations.

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## **6. FINANCE**

Revenue generation is a key challenge facing Softball Canada. The association annually operates a budget of approximately \$1.5 million. Of this, approximately 47% comes from Sport Canada. Much of this is earmarked for High Performance programming. The next 5 largest contributors are Canadian Championships (hosting and team fees), resource sales, Canadian Olympic Committee, Sponsorship and Umpire registrations. Together these total about 40 % of revenues.

Not surprisingly the 2 major program expenditure areas are National Teams and National Championships. Both Sport Canada and Canadian Olympic Committee funding are heavily skewed to National Team results.

## **RESOURCES**

Softball Canada has produced a variety of specially designed publications and resource materials to help players, coaches, officials and administrators. A complete list of these items is available from Softball Canada or your Provincial/Territorial association.

For further information please contact:

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## **SEE FOLLOWING LINKS**

1. It Takes an Extraordinary Person to Become an Official
2. The Benefits of Becoming an Umpire
3. Umpire Certification Program - Lessons in Self Improvement
4. How to Become a Softball Canada Registered Umpire