



2010 - 2014
STRATEGIC PLAN

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2010 - 2014 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Softball Canada's last Strategic Plan took in the period from 2005 to 2009 (the original plan was 2005 to 2008 but was extended by one year so that the result of the vote on sports being included in the 2016 Olympic Games could be taken into account for planning purposes). This new 5 year plan will be in effect from 2010 to 2014, inclusive.

Our previous Planning facilitator – Judy Kent, was retained to assist us in the development of the new plan. The process for developing this plan began with the Board of Directors and Staff of Softball Canada reviewing the previous plan and setting the template for the new plan. The previous plan had provided the association with a clear set of goals for that period and was judged to have been very successfully implemented, with the vast majority of objectives having been achieved. Incorporating a similar framework to the previous plan, while updating it to reflect current circumstances, was the initial objective. The previous plan had been built on 6 pillars/priorities. These were; National – Provincial/Territorial relationships, Canadian Championships, National Teams, International Representation, Domestic Development and Revenue Generation. Since that plan had been developed Sport Canada has increasingly moved to a Strategic Plan that focused on 4 major pillars – Enhanced Participation, Enhanced Excellence, Enhanced Capacity and Enhanced Interaction. In comparing our previous pillars with the Sport Canada pillars it was decided that Softball Canada's key priorities could readily fit within the 4 Sport Canada pillars. This would provide a much simplified reporting procedure with Sport Canada and a useful template for our Provincial/Territorial partners to follow with the subsequent development of their plans and Government reporting procedures.

The process that was followed had the Staff and Board create an initial document based on the previous plan, our current needs and where we wanted to be in the future. At that point we wanted to survey our general membership to get their input. The Board and Staff would then take that input and refine the plan for more discussion at the 2009 Annual Meeting. Following that, the feedback would be incorporated into the final draft for approval at the March, 2010 Board of Directors meeting. The approved plan would then become a living document with operational activities being updated as required and an annual

review taking place. The Plan would be posted on the Softball Canada website and distributed to our Provincial/Territorial associations, who could then use it as a template for the development of their own Strategic Plan.

Over the course of the spring/summer of 2009 the Board and Staff reviewed the previous Vision, Values, Operating Principles and Mission. It was decided that a more descriptive Vision should be developed for this plan. The new Vision incorporates a short Vision statement and a more detailed description of what we want the organization to look like in 2014. The Values, Operating Principles and Mission required only minor initial revisions.



In the process of beginning to generate potential initiatives to include under the 4 main pillars, the Board and Staff completed a SWOT analysis which provided a current and projected future environmental scan. After the first draft was developed, with potential objectives identified, an on-line survey was developed to generate feedback from the greater membership. Over 70 responses were received with representation from Provincial/Territorial/Local association volunteers and staff, Softball Canada volunteers, players, coaches, officials, parents, sponsors and fans representing both the recreational and competitive streams. Both Fast-Pitch and Slo-Pitch backgrounds were represented. This feedback was then incorporated into a Priority setting document that was used in 2 workshops held at the 2010 Annual Meeting. The first of the 2 workshops asked the delegates to work in small groups to prioritize each potential initiative and indicate a timeline for completion. The second workshop provided an opportunity for a more in-depth look at some of the initiatives and guidance for our Provincial/Territorial members on developing their own plan.

Following the Annual Meeting the feedback from the workshops was compiled, reviewed by staff and priorities were identified with timelines and operational activities to accompany them. The document was provided to the Board of Directors for final comments/acceptance at the March, 2010 Board of Directors meeting.

Softball Canada would like to thank all those that played a role in developing this plan.



VISION 2014

What we aspire to:

A unified softball community offering life-time, positive, coordinated opportunities that enhance participation, leadership, respect and personal excellence across all age categories and level of competition.

What will have happened:

Softball Canada and its Provincial/Territorial (P/T) partners have worked collaboratively and successfully to promote and integrate the use of Long Term Player Development (LTPD) principles in softball across the country. This has been communicated to all parties through an effective information technology solution. New programs based on these principles have been accepted in all Provinces and Territories as a result of engagement of local associations in the process and existing programs have been modified to reflect this new direction. This has resulted in an increased interest in including softball in school curricula.

Both competitive and domestic programs actively engage all 13 Provincial/Territorial associations as well as local associations in programming suitable to their level of interest and ability. Canada's national softball teams are recognized as medal contenders in all categories.

Canadian player, coach, official and volunteer development programs are recognized in the top echelon of Canadian sport and are leading edge in international softball, resulting in increased opportunities and interest from potential participants.



VALUES

Fundamental beliefs of Softball Canada and our members include:

- ❑ Softball is athlete/participant centered, coach driven, and supported by officials, volunteers, staff and financial partners
- ❑ That the game should provide a fun experience for all participants
- ❑ The value of sport in developing life skills, healthy active living and achieving excellence
- ❑ Fair and inclusive access
- ❑ Ethical, Respectful and Moral behavior
- ❑ Safe and supportive environments free from harassment and abuse



OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- ❑ LTPD framework guides decision making
- ❑ Competitions and programs are designed to increase the growth and development of the sport and meet the needs of the participants
- ❑ Both recreational and competitive streams support softball's sustainability in communities
- ❑ A willingness for change and a flexibility to achieve results
- ❑ Open, effective communication to encourage collaboration
- ❑ Respect of differences and support of others within the organization
- ❑ Provision of services in both official languages
- ❑ Recognition and respect for the important role of volunteers in softball
- ❑ Effective and efficient organizational and financial management

MISSION

Softball Canada in partnership with Provincial/Territorial and local Associations leads, promotes, invests and builds the sport. Collectively we provide opportunities for athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers by developing, delivering and promoting innovative, quality programs and services at the Community, Provincial/Territorial, National and International levels.

1. ENHANCED PARTICIPATION

Outcome – Increasing the number of Canadians, from all segments of society, involved in quality softball activities that are appropriate to their stage of development and interest.

a) LTPD implementation

- All Provinces and Territories and registered local associations have formally accepted the implementation of the LTPD plan and are offering the full complement of related programming at their level. This has resulted in a clear, athlete supported path from the Learn to Play level to Senior's softball.

Target Completion Date – 2014 season

Operational activities: see 1 a,b,c,d.

- A practical how to implement LTPD in your club resource is distributed.

Target Completion Date – December, 2011

Operational activities: To follow.

- Local, Provincial/Territorial, Regional and Canadian competitions are effectively aligned to provide opportunities at the right level for participants. New Championships are added where demand warrants (i.e. Intermediate, Recreational Slo-Pitch).

Target Completion Date – 2012/13 seasons

Operational activities:

2010 – Completion of Competition review report (April).

– President's Forum to discuss the issue (May).

– Review of report and results of the President's Forum (Summer)

– Final Matrix presented and adopted at 2010 Annual Meeting (November).

- Rules are appropriately modified to meet LTPD and participants needs.

Target Completion Date – 2013 season

Operational activities:

2010 – Full review of all rules currently in effect completed (November).

2011 – Consult with all parties and provide recommendations to Board of Directors (September).

– Presentation of recommendations at the Annual Meeting (November).

2012 – Feedback incorporated into rule change submissions and final draft presented to Board of Directors (March).

– Rule Change submissions distributed to all Provincial/Territorial associations (May).

– Rule changes passed at Annual Meeting and incorporated in 2013-14 rule book (November).



- *Provinces and Territories have a communications strategy to continue to promote LTPD principles and assign personnel to that task.*

Target Completion Date – November, 2010

– Operational activities:

- Develop a shorter (45 minutes) LTPD PowerPoint presentation
- Ensure that all P/T's have received at least 1 master presentation by October, 2010
- Release presentation on website by November, 2010
- Provinces and Territories share activities and strategies at the Annual Meeting Staff Forum on an annual basis (November).

- *Registered local associations adhering to LTPD principles are recognized for their commitment and receive an appropriate designation for their efforts.*

Target Completion Date – Release to local associations (December, 2011), evaluation begins in 2012 season.

Operational activities:

2011 – In conjunction with the development of a how to implement LTPD in your local association manual, an accompanying evaluation tool is distributed.

- *An LTPD school stream is developed that includes softball academies, interscholastic softball, intramural softball and softball in physical education classes.*

Target Completion Date – Spring, 2013

Operational activities: To follow.



b) Domestic Development and New Programming

- A full complement of specific programming/coaching resources is offered and is regularly updated. This begins at the Learn to Play level and continues to Midget. It includes Curriculum Guides for coaches, an After Learn to Play program and a National Pitching initiative. For adult levels, appropriate opportunities are offered, depending on the level of play and type of game that players wish to participate in.

Learn To Play

Target Completion Date – Program continuation in 2010, review completed by February, 2011

Operational activities:

- Continue regular operation of the program in 2010 with a goal of 100,000 people exposed to the program.
- Full review of program objectives and resources by Learn To Play Committee, with recommendations for future direction.

After Learn to Play

Target Completion Date – various

Operational activities:

- Development of Curriculum Guides – Squirt (September, 2010), Pee-Wee (November, 2010), Bantam and Midget (March, 2011)
- Development of associated skills program (November, 2010)
- Finalization of Schools program and game for national roll-out, in conjunction with Softball Ontario, (February, 2011)

CANpitch

Target Completion Date – Ongoing programming

Operational activities:

- Complete Instructor manual (May, 2010).
 - Complete DVD (May, 2010).
 - Coordinate Instructor training and feedback (Ongoing).
 - Track staging and feedback from 6 week programs (July annually).
 - MPI Meeting (November, 2010 Annual Meeting).
- A strong working relationship is established with the aboriginal community.

Target Completion Date – December, 2010

Operational activities:

- Meet with Aboriginal Sport Circle representatives and other parties to develop a strategy for a future partnership.

- A Slo-Pitch strategy is agreed to and followed.

Target Completion Date – May, 2011

Operational activities: To follow



- Program opportunities are available for the disabled, including Special Olympics, Wheelchair and Blind communities.

Target Completion Date – April, 2011

Operational activities: Meet with respective governing bodies to develop strategies for future partnerships.

- New Canadians are engaged in softball, particularly through the school system and with community groups.

Target Completion Date – October, 2013

Operational activities: Develop a strategy to engage this population using national team members where possible.

Other Possible Opportunities:

- Softball is recognized as a transition sport in the Active for Life stream through post-secondary intramural programs and corporate leagues.
- 50 + Canadians are actively involved with softball.
- A survey of why participants continue their involvement in the game or conversely end their involvement in the game is undertaken.

c) Promotion

- Exposure for, and interest in the game, is enhanced through an effective media/communication strategy.

Target Completion Date – April, 2011

Operational activities:

- Develop a plan to follow up on current PSA campaign, associated promotional material and other programming opportunities.



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d) Membership/Club Development

- A proper national membership tracking system (i.e. Database) for players, coaches and officials is operational.

Target Completion Date – February, 2011

Operational activities:

2010 - Investigate current membership systems in place for softball organizations and other national sport organizations.

- Develop a system for local and Provincial/Territorial associations that don't have a system in place that they can use and that can also capture the data of those that are currently using a system.

– Present system at Annual Meeting.

- System in place for 2011 registration season.

- A national insurance program is in place.

In place as of January 1, 2010.

- A Club support package assists existing clubs and helps new clubs start operations.

Target Completion Date – December, 2011

Operational activities:

- Produce in conjunction with the How To Implement LTPD in your association resource.

- Assistance to regions is available to assist them in participating in national programs.

Target completion date – Effective immediately

Operational activities:

- Affected Provincial/Territorial associations to advise CEO of any issues. Board of Directors to monitor developments on an ongoing basis.

Other Possible Opportunities

- There is a well developed membership benefits plan.

2. ENHANCED EXCELLENCE

Outcome – Canadian teams participate and excel in major national and international events because a pool of highly skilled players has been developed through outstanding training and competitive opportunities.

a) Canadian Championships/Canada Games/Universities and Colleges

- Approved recommendations of the LTPD Competition Review committee are implemented. This includes alignment of Westerns/Easterns, Western Canada Games and Canada Summer Games.

Refer to Enhanced Participation section, 1 a.

- Canadian Championships are fully subscribed with solid representation from all regions. Midget, Junior and Senior categories have a minimum of 7 (2010) and 8 (2011 and beyond) Provincial/Territorial entries per category.

Target Completion Date – 2010/11

Operational activities:

- Competition review recommendations and ongoing discussion with Provincial/Territorial partners produces a model that allows for wider P/T representation.

- New Championships are offered in categories where demand and growth exist (Intermediate, Masters, Recreational Slo-Pitch, Corporate, Seniors).

Target Completion Date – Annual review

Operational activities:

- Canadian Championship Committee researches and reviews opportunities on an annual basis.

- A Canada Games, or similar, opportunity is available to both male and female players.

Target Completion Date – 2013, 2017...

Operational activities:

2010 – Determine 2013 Host for Men's event (November).

2011 and 2012 – Work with Provincial/Territorial associations to prepare for 2017 Canada Games evaluation process. Communicate with Sport Canada and Canada Games Council on the development of the process and scoring criteria.

- Support softball opportunities at the University/College Levels.

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Complete annual survey of representative teams at the University/College levels.
- Continue to assist in the staging of an annual University Championship.
- Work with Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), Canadian Colleges Athletic Association (CCAA) to attain full status for softball.

Other Possible Opportunities:

- Mutually beneficial hosting arrangements (for Host, Teams and Softball Canada) are in place and attract on-going interest from potential hosts.



b) National Teams

- The Canadian National Team program is recognized in the top 3 in the World (as measured by their performance in the last World Championship in all 4 Junior and Senior categories, current ranking in 2009 is # 3).

Target Completion Date – Measurements done annually, beginning in 2010.

Operational activities:

– Annual National Team plans.

– Performance Goals (World Championships) – 2010 Women's – medal, 2011 Junior Women's – Top 4, 2012 Women's – medal, 2012 Junior Men's – medal, 2013 Senior Men's – medal.

– 2010 Regional Championships – Senior Men, Pan-American Championships - Medal. Junior Women, Pan-American Championships - Medal

- A program is developed for National Team alumni/supporters recognizing their importance and allowing them to effectively give back to the sport.

Target Completion Date – May, 2011

Operational activities:

- Create Men's and Women's alumni committees.
- Create a database of all former national team players.
- Develop a menu of opportunities for alumni to give back to the sport, volunteering, coaching, booster club...

- A coordinated talent identification program is developed in conjunction with Provincial/Territorial partners.

Target Completion Date – November, 2013

Operational activities:

- Once the revised Competition structure has been developed and implemented, a national player identification program will be created and publicized in conjunction with the Provincial/Territorial associations.



3. ENHANCED CAPACITY

Outcome – The essential components of an ethically based, athlete/participant centered development system are in place, funded, and are continually improved as required.

a) Partnerships (Organizational and Financial)

- *Provincial/Territorial – Special assistance is provided to associations that need extra resources (only as strong as our weakest link).*

See Enhanced Participation, Section 1, d.

- *Ensure that all members have an equitable say/role within Softball Canada.*

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Ongoing dialogue at Annual Meetings, President's meetings and through Softball Canada personnel attending Provincial/Territorial Annual Meetings.

- *Local associations – Are fully engaged in the delivery of the sport in a uniform manner across the country.*

See Enhanced Participation, section 1, a

- *Strong working relationships are established with Sport Canada, COC, related funding bodies and other Government Ministries (i.e. Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs...).*

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Softball Canada staff to be active in related meetings and to investigate possible opportunities for new partnerships.

- *Existing corporate sponsorships are maintained and new ones developed.*

Target Completion Date: Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Softball Canada staff to maximize opportunities.

- *New creative revenue streams such as merchandising, apparel sales, membership rewards, fund raising and group buying opportunities that can share revenues across all levels of the game.*

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Softball Canada staff to maximize opportunities.



b) Support Training Programs for Coaches/Officials and Volunteers

- *Special emphasis on engaging females, where they represent less than 40% of the identified group (i.e. Officials, Coaches).*

Target Completion Dates – see below

Operational activities:

Officials – Strategy developed in Long Term Officials Development Plan (February, 2012)

Coaches – Coaching Committee to develop grass roots program to attract/retain female coaches (November, 2011). National Team Committee to ensure at least 50% of all Women's National Team coaches are female (2011 season and beyond).

- *Annual curriculum with associated practice plans and norms for skill acquisitions for all players from the LTP category through to Midget are in place to assist coaches.*

See Enhanced Participation, Section1, b.



- *Successful completion of the transition to the new NCCP.*

Target Completion Date – April, 2012

Operational activities:

- Work with CAC to complete remaining components.

- *Ongoing professional development activities are offered outside of the NCCP program.*

Target Completion Date – Various

Operational activities:

- Hold a National Coaches symposium at least once every 4 years.
- Coaching and National Teams Committees to identify other opportunities on an annual basis.

- *A mentoring/professional development plan for coaches identified as future potential national team coaches is in place.*

Target Completion Date – January, 2012

Operational activities:

- Coaching and National Teams Committees to identify joint strategy.

c) Prudent Financial management

- A Long Term Officiating Development Plan is established that enhances existing umpire resources and opportunities and ensures that an active, engaged umpiring community can continue to support and grow the game. This includes a grass roots umpire recruitment and training program (with special emphasis on Junior and Female umpires), a new approach to certification and clinics (on-line resources, possibly shorter clinics) and an on-going emphasis for respect in the game.

Target Completion Date – February, 2012

Operational activities:

- ODC to complete with input from Provincial/Territorial members.
- On-line training and e-learning opportunities for coaches, officials and volunteers that minimize the costs and shorten the actual clinic time required.

Target Completion Date – Platform established by April, 2011. Activities commence as available.

Operational activities:

- Coaching and Officiating Committees and staff members work collaboratively together to develop suitable system.
- Respective committees to identify suitable opportunities for on-line learning.

Other Possible Opportunities:

- Development of a volunteer recruitment and training program with emphasis on risk management procedures for local associations.
- Full-time coaching positions are created and increased financial incentives are available to other coaches through collaborative and creative partnerships.

- Sufficient reserves are in place to efficiently operate the association, that annual budgeting continues to fund key programming areas and that new projects that advance the cause of the sport can be funded.

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Board of Directors and Staff to annually monitor. Accumulated reserves to equal at least 25% of annual operating budget.



4. ENHANCED INTERACTION

Outcome – Softball is connected, coordinated and successful as a result of the committed collaboration and communication among all stakeholders.

- Gender and language preference of all registered members (Database) is readily available.

See Enhanced Participation, Section 1, d.

- Softball Canada representatives attend Annual Meetings in each P/T.

Target Completion Date – At least one visit per P/T every 4 years

Operational activities:

- Board to schedule visits during their Spring/Summer meeting.

- A President's Forum is held and provides an opportunity to discuss issues of common interest.

Target Completion Date – At least 1 President's Forum every 4 years

Operational activities:

- Forum scheduled for May, 2010.

- Opportunities are available for P/T and Softball Canada staff to meet.

Target Completion Date – Meeting to be held every year at the time of the Annual Meeting

- Provincial/Territorial Partners, in conjunction with Softball Canada, develop an outreach program with suitable resources to existing local associations and to potential new associations.

See Enhanced Participation, Section 1 a,b,c,d.

- A regular on-going dialogue is established with companies in the softball business.

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational Activities: To follow.

- Investigate the possibility of establishing positive working relationships with non-affiliated softball organizations.

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Board of Directors to review on an annual basis at Winter meeting.



- *Canadians have considerable influence in ISF and CONPASA (Pan-Am region) affairs and Canadians are viewed as leaders in all facets of the game.*

Target Completion Date: Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Attendance at all ISF World Championships and Congresses.
- Promote election of Canadians on ISF Executive Board and appointment to committees.
- Attendance at all CONPASA Championships and Congresses.
- Promote election of Canadians on CONPASA Executive Board and appointment to committees.
- Work to have Canadian Officials and Coaches receive key international appointments.
- Promote Canadian ideas to better the game.

- *Canada is a successful host of international competitions.*

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Identify and promote hosting ISF/CONPASA opportunities, recruit potential hosts and successfully bid on Championships.
- Host 2012 Women's World Championships.
- Work with ISF to lobby 2015 Pan-American Games organizers, COC and PASO to include Women's and Men's softball in the Toronto Games.



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- *Working relationships are established with the Aboriginal Sport Circle, Special Olympics, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Canadian Wheelchair Sport and Canadian Blind Sport.*

See Enhanced Participation Section1, b.

- *Communication and influence with Multi-sport groups such as COC, CAC, Canada Games Council and Athletes Can is enhanced.*

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

- Continue to be an active "A" member of the COC.
- Maintain involvement and membership on CAC working groups.
- Take an active role in all Canada Games Council consultations.

- *Work is ongoing with the school system to integrate softball in their programming – curriculum, intramural and inter-school.*

See Enhanced Participation Section 1, a.

- *Softball Canada is a leader within the Canadian sport system to advance team and summer sport interests.*

Target Completion Date – Ongoing

Operational activities:

- Active member of the Canadian Team Sports Coalition

Other Possible Opportunities:

- *A forum is provided engaging all levels of the game and providing for recommendations on the full integration of the delivery of softball in Canada.*