

Olds Pistols Competitive Program Guidelines

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Policy Name: 1.0 Program Overview

Purpose

The Pistol Competitive program was formed to provide optimal training, competition and recovery programs for athletes at each stage of their development. The operation of the program is carried out by the Olds Minor Softball Executive Board.

Different from recreational “Community League” softball where the focus is fun through playing games in the months of May and June, the Pistol Competitive Program is made available for those players/members that desire:

- A higher level of skill development, competition, and travel;
- A longer season – opportunity for more games, more practices;
- Exhibition/League play in a variety of communities across the province;
- An opportunity to compete at a Provincial Championship;
- A larger commitment to the game – expectations for attendance, costs, time, etc.

Objective

A key Core Value of the Pistol Competitive Program is...

To provide our young ball players with a positive learning environment wherein the players and parents grow their appreciation and admiration for the game of softball.

The Association is also aligned to the objectives of Softball Alberta’s Competitive Program:

‘A’ DIVISION and ‘B’ DIVISION

- The objective of the Provincial 'A' and 'B' Leagues is to provide a competitive yet developmental level of play for players/teams at the U11, U13, U15, U17 and U19 age categories in a province-wide format.
- We may not always offer an ‘A’ division.

Guiding Principles

The Competitive Program’s Guiding Principles will supplement the Association’s Guiding Principles of fun, safety, fair play, friendship, and sportsmanship, and include:

- Represent the Olds Minor Softball Association, and our community proudly.
 - Learn and develop softball skills & knowledge – attend practices, use what you learn.
- To meet these principles, the Board of Directors will hold all members participating in the Competitive Program (i.e. coaches, players & families) accountable to lead by example and represent each Association to the highest standard.

Commitments

Competitive softball levels are a significant commitment for players and families. Through this commitment, players will see a substantial increase in the development of their softball skills and continue to grow their passion for the game. Key commitment factors that all players and families should be aware of include the following:

- Evaluations will be in the fall or will begin in the New Year.
- Indoor practices commence in April (if not before) and move outdoors once the weather permits.
- The season typically runs from May to the mid to end of July.
- Typically 'A' and 'B' teams can be on the field 3 to 5 days a week with practices, league games, exhibition games, and tournaments.
- Practices are at each team's discretion, but 2 or 3 practices a week can be expected.
- Exhibition games commence in May and can include 2 or more games per week primarily on weeknights.
- Tournaments are at each team's discretion.
- 'A' and 'B' teams may be expected to travel across Alberta for games and tournaments.
- Out of province tournaments are also a possibility at each team's discretion.
- Top teams in U13, U15, U17 and U19 that win the Provincial Championships may represent Alberta at the Western Canadian Championships or National Championships in late July or early August.
- Due to the time commitments outlined above, the Pistol Competitive Program strongly encourages players that commit to 'A' or 'B' softball programs should consider what conflicts may arise by participating in other spring/summer activities. Participation in other spring/summer activities and the conflicts that will arise will be considered when creating our teams.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

- An evaluation fee will be asked from those players who wish to attend evaluations for a competitive team.
- Registration fees are determined by the Executive and approved prior to the start of the season and will be posted on each Association's websites once known.
- Individual team "cash calls" and fundraising are the responsibility of each team and done in consultation with the parents.
- **Contact your executive board for fundraising details and requirements.**

Policy Name: 2.0 Player Evaluations

Evaluations are mandatory for consideration to play with a Competitive team.

Competitive Team Evaluations

The evaluation process can be a stressful time for players and parents alike. The executive board strives to keep the process as clear and open as possible while being impartial and minimizing bias. The executive board will conduct evaluation sessions in the fall or in the New Year. Evaluations will be completed in a phased approach. All players wishing to play on a competitive team will attend tryouts. From this pool of players, the “top” team will be selected first. Then the “second” team will be selected. This will continue until the number of teams, as deemed practical by the executive board, are formed.

The following attributes will be assessed and will be evaluated over the course of a number of evaluation sessions:

Measurable Attributes:

- Hitting
- Throwing
- Defense
- Running
- Pitching

Intangibles:

- “Coachability”
- “Softball IQ”

Each “Measurable Attribute” will be evaluated by at least 2 evaluators.

- No coaching is permitted during evaluations
- If known ahead of evaluations, head coaches will be present during evaluations

Missed Evaluations

In the event a player is unable to attend any or all of the Competitive Team Evaluations because of previous commitments or injury, the Board must be notified prior to team formation in order to make alternate arrangements. If proper notice is given, every effort will be made to accommodate a make-up evaluation and previous experience may also be taken into consideration. If proper notice is not provided, the issue of player placement will be discussed and determined by the executive board. Information gathered from previous years may also be used to help in player evaluations.

Policy Name: 3.0 Team Selections

Team Creation Process

It is the goal of the Associations and the executive board to field as many competitive teams at the 11U age level, and at least 1 team at 13U to 17U, each season. However, the final number of competitive teams at each age level will depend on registration numbers each year, as well as the executive board's ability to secure proper facility space and qualified coaches. Team formation will be announced via Olds Minor softball website for parents and players to view.

'A' and 'B' Teams

The total number of player spots on each competitive team will be determined by the head coach. Most competitive teams carry anywhere from 11 to 15 players, with some exceptions being made on a case by case basis.

At each age level,

- Team 1 will be referred to as Pistol BLACK
- Team 2 will be referred to as Pistol RED
- Team 3 will be referred to as Pistol WHITE
- Team 4 will be referred to as Pistol GREY

All competitive teams will be formed based on player evaluations and "Coach Picks", as outlined below.

The top 8 evaluated players will be considered locks and will be named to the team. The head coach is then able to pick from evaluated player #9 to #18.

Coach Picks must be presented and justified by the head coach to the executive board for final approval.

Teams will not be considered finalized until such approval has been given by the executive board. The team is considered final once the executive board has completed its review.

Where a conflict exists when a Head Coach is also a member of the executive board, that executive board members are not permitted to vote on any matters in selecting that team.

U11 Underage Players

There may be instances where a player wishes to play at the next age level up. In such cases, the following rules shall apply:

- The underage player must submit a request in writing to the Board of his/her desire to be evaluated as an underage player at the next age level up.
- The underage player must attend the evaluations at the higher age level to ensure a complete evaluation has been done. If one or more evaluations are missed for any reason, the player will not be eligible to play at the higher age level.

- The executive board will vote on case by case scenario applications and decide on the best interest of the team formation.
- There will be no cap or limit to the number of underage players considered based on the criteria and process outlined above, and registration numbers will be considered when deciding underage player placement.

Import Players

The executive board recognizes that neighbouring Associations may not offer competitive softball or a particular age level/division to their members and welcomes them to attend competitive evaluations for a Pistol Competitive Team.

Based on the competitive outlook of a team the executive board reserves the right to consider additional import players.

Policy Name: 4.0 Coach Selections

Overview

To ensure a safe and positive learning environment for all players, all individuals interested in a head coaching role in the Competitive Program will be approved/selected by the executive board.

The objective of the competitive coach selection process is to select coaches who will provide the greatest benefit to the players in the program, and who will meet the coaching requirements and serve the mandate of the executive board.

To provide a quality competitive softball program, the Association is responsible to select coaches it feels best meet the objectives of the Associations, the governing bodies (ie. Softball Alberta, softball Canada), and the game itself. In the event of a number of candidates, then the following selection process will be used:

Selection Criteria

Coaches will be selected based on a set of transparent qualifications. Some qualification criteria are deemed mandatory and comprise the minimum qualifications for a coach at that level and category. Other criteria contribute to the overall rating of the coach candidate. An application not meeting the minimum qualifications shall not be selected over one who meets or exceeds the stated qualifications, unless their experience and ability vastly exceeds those of the candidate meeting the minimum qualifications. Coach Selection shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Coach Qualifications

- **Must** provide a current Criminal Record Check
- Training qualifications are based on NCCP certification – selected coaches **must** meet minimum requirements as set out by softball Alberta, or **must** commit to obtaining the minimum qualification during the current season as per the mandatory deadlines.
- Preference could be given to coach candidates with higher levels of certification and training.

2. *Coaching Experience* – the experience qualification is based on:

- The number of years as a coach;
- The category and level of the teams coached;
- The association or organization of the teams coached;
- The coach's personal, proactive coaching development plan.

3. *Playing Experience* –The executive board's interest in playing experience will be weighed against the applicants coaching experience & coaching philosophy.

- The number of years playing softball;
- The category and level of the teams played on;
- The association or organization of the teams played on;
- Other sports played and level of competition, etc.

4. *References* - Coach candidates will be asked to provide references that can verify their background and experience. References will provide the opportunity to confirm a candidate's:

- Knowledge of the game;
- Coaching philosophy and style;
- Adherence to fair play;
- Conduct with officials;
- Character;
 - Past history with other clubs.

5. *Interview (if needed)*- The executive board may conduct interviews with coaching candidates in order to establish a better sense of the candidate's qualifications. Attributes of a candidate that will be assessed could include but are not limited to their:

- Knowledge of the game;
- Coaching philosophy and style;
- Character;
- Quality of practice plans;
- Discussion on the use of assistance coaches;
- Personal coaching development plan.

6. *Other Commitments* - The executive board will evaluate the level of other commitments a candidate has and may include that as a factor in the selection process.

- Preference could be given to coach candidates that are relatively free of other commitments.
 - Specifically, coaching another team, extensive job related travel or volunteer time in other organizations.
- Preference will be given to those that show alignment and a commitment to the Association and the Competitive Program.

Selection Process

The executive board will act as the Coach Selection Panel for all Competitive Teams.

The members of the Coach Selection Panel will meet to review all of the coach applicants' materials and to conduct the interviews if required. All coach applicants will be assessed through the criteria listed above, the application they build and submit to the Chair and an interview by the executive board, if

required. The executive board will determine which candidate will be offered the head coach role for each team via a vote with majority being required for a decision to be made. The Chair will only vote in the case of a tie. If a coach applicant sits on the executive board, they will not be allowed to be a part of the coach selection process for the team being considered.

Assistant Coaches

Head coaches are responsible for selecting their assistant coaches. They can select from the pool of applications or recruit other coaches. It must be noted that any assistant coach selection can be overridden by the executive board for reasons such as; no RCMP Criminal Record Check, poor past coaching evaluations, inadequate NCCP certification, etc. As a result, the team staff (including the Off Field Manager) is not considered final until approval is given by the executive board.

Non-Parent Coaches

Compensation for those individuals wishing to be a head coach and who have been selected to coach a Competitive Team will be discussed and determined by the executive board on a case-by-case basis.

Selection Timeline

Deadline for submitting a Head Coach application will be **2 weeks after advertised**.

The goal of the executive board is to have Head Coaches named for the “Black” teams prior to the start of evaluations.

Once the ‘Black’ teams have been selected, the executive board will look to name the Head Coaches of Team ‘Red’, ‘White’, and ‘Grey’ based on the applicants remaining and how their player has evaluated through the first round of evaluations

Application Process

The executive board will inform the coaching applicant of an interview date/time, if required. If the date/time is unacceptable to the prospective coach, the executive board will endeavor to find an alternative date/time that works for all participants.

Successful candidates will be notified by the executive board. Successful head coach candidates that accept the role must agree to sign off on the “**Coach Conduct and Expectations**” document.

Policy Name: **5.0 Affiliate Players**

As noted in the annual softball Alberta Handbook, *the affiliate program is in place to provide coaches with an option to pick-up players from a lower category/division in the event of unforeseen circumstances where their roster would drop below the original size. Coaches have the option to bring their roster size up to its original roster size utilizing affiliates.*

As noted in the handbook, the affiliate program is not in place to permit coaches to add depth to their team's current roster, and is only to be used as an emergency backup plan.

Softball Alberta

Some key points to consider:

- **All affiliate players must be approved by Softball Alberta prior to them being eligible to play.**
- The team must submit the *Affiliate Player Application* (completed and signed by the affiliate's parent unless 18 years of age) along with a \$25 processing fee to Softball Alberta at least 3 working days prior to their first game to be played.
- In order to utilize an affiliate, the coach/team manager must contact the affiliate player's team coach to determine availability and to also discuss how the player will be utilized (coaches should come to agreement of innings/pitch counts to be pitched as those innings may affect the affiliate player's team).
- Affiliate players may only sign with one team and may only play up to 5 games throughout the entire schedule.
- No Affiliate players will be permitted for use at the Provincial Championships.
- Coaches of Competitive Teams are expected to be familiar with the most current softball Alberta rule on affiliates and if they have any questions about the program they are encouraged to contact the Competitive Director for guidance as needed. The executive board's expectations in the utilization of affiliate players are the following:
 - Members first – every effort should be made to utilize OMSA players before seeking an affiliate player from another association.
 - The team will be responsible for the softball Alberta fee.
 - The Head Coach should make every effort possible to ensure the affiliate player has an opportunity to play.

Policy Name: 6.0 Accountability and Disciplinary Process

The executive board understands that an “Accountability and Disciplinary” process is required to be in place should an instance arise that needs to be dealt with. This offers a transparent guideline on how those situations will be handled.

This process is in place for:

1. Coaches
2. Parents
3. Players

Coaches, parents and players will be required to sign off on their respective “Code of Conduct” which will be held by the executive board should it be required if the conduct of an individual is called into question.

The following steps are to be followed should a concern arise that a member feels action needs to be taken to address:

Step 1 – Off-Field Manager:

- After following the “24 Hour” rule, the concern is to be submitted to the teams Off-Field Manager in writing.
- Together, between the concerned individual, Off-Field Manager, Team Parent Liaison, and the Head Coach the concern will be discussed to see if a resolution can be found within the team.
- A summary of the concern and resolution (if found) is to be submitted by the Off-Field Manager to the Division Coordinator
- If resolution is not found in **Step 1**, the concern is to be elevated to **Step 2**.

Step 2 – Division Coordinator:

- The Off-Field Manager is to submit a summary of the concern and attempted resolution.
- Between the concerned individual, Off-Field Manager, Team Parent Liaison, Head Coach and the Division Coordinator, discussion will be had to work towards finding a suitable outcome for all involved.
- The Division Coordinator will submit a summary of “Step 2” to the executive board.
- If resolution is not found in **Step 2**, the concern will be escalated to the executive board for resolution.

Step 3 – Executive board

- The executive board will take all previous information of the incident into account and formulate a resolution.
- All efforts will be made to find a resolution that is satisfactory to everyone involved. The decision made by the executive board will be considered final.

Policy Name: 7.0 Player Development

o Under development

Appendices

Head Coach “Duties & Responsibilities”

- Head coaches will be responsible for making 100% of their team selections based on the evaluation
- Head Coaches, as chief team officials, shall be fully responsible for all activities of their team.
- Delegating responsibilities to assistant coaches, managers and parents is necessary, desirable and encouraged; however, ultimate responsibility for these activities’ rests with the Head Coach.
- Coaches and team management are expected to be responsive to directives of the executive board and operate the team within established policy and guidelines.
- Respond to the needs and skills of individual players, ensuring that each player has the maximum opportunity to develop his/her potential.
- Recognize their responsibilities as leaders, educators and role models for young players. Conduct towards players, parents, officials and other persons should be based on mutual respect and be fair and reasonable. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, or profanity is unacceptable and will be investigated by the executive board.
- Be sensitive to parent concerns, and be prepared to respond cordially when warranted.
- Commit to the continued development of all players for the full season, once players are selected to a team.
- Deal fairly with players at all times. Rewards or considerations to players or parents should be those reasonably available to all members of the team.
- Coaches should not accept gifts, favours or other considerations from players or parents or place themselves in a situation where their actions may be compromised because of such considerations.
- Ensure proper supervision of the team, before, during, and after all games and practices and accept reasonable responsibility for the conduct, safety and wellbeing of their players.
- Ensure proper supervision and take responsibility for the team during all team functions.
- Develop a set of rules for the team, which are clearly communicated and enforced equally on all players.
- Encourage and motivate their players towards enjoyment of the game, team concept, and skill development.
- Pursue objections to directives or policy through appropriate channels and in a manner that is not detrimental to the team, league or Association.
- Comply with normal administrative directives by:
 - Holding a beginning of season parent meeting
 - Submitting a budget to parents and Division Directors as requested
 - Submitting financial statements on schedule
- All coaches shall hold a parent meeting shortly after the team has been made. Items to be covered include:
 - Proposed budget
 - Season plan
 - Coach, Parent, Player conduct expectations
 - Parent Roles required
- All coaches are encouraged to have a practice plan prepared for their practices.
- The coach is also to abide by the team rules that are agreed to with the team, which includes arrival times for games and practices.

- The coach is responsible to ensure that the team managers and treasurer also know their responsibilities!