



# National Player & Coach Development Pathway



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## National Player & Coach Development Model

The revised Player and Coach Development Pathway is aimed at providing coaches with the necessary tools to arm themselves and their players as they evolve through the game of softball.

The new pathway will ensure an improvement in the quality and performance of New Zealand's top players, coaches and teams in the years to come helping us meet two key objectives:

1. Ensure New Zealand is one of the leading softball countries in the world and
2. Provide an excellent product to attract and retain coaches and players to softball.

A key aim of the pathway is to meet the needs of coaches at a particular time in their development. Allowing coaches to develop the necessary skills through a flexible program will help them reach these objectives.

The pathway will allow coaches to 'pick' and 'choose' modules that appeal most to their needs. It will allow coaches to specialise a pathway that suits their direction whether it be a pitching coach, a hitting coach or a trainer. There is also potential for coaches to complete every module within the programme.

SNZ has created a number of modules for the coaching pathway in recent years. It is SNZ's intention to continue building similar modules on a yearly basis until the pathway is complete. Please bear in mind this is a lengthy process and will take some time to develop.

The pathway includes an online coaching program that will complement the accreditation programme providing easy access to coach education and accreditation. The build of the online coaching program will commence prior to the 2013-14 season, however we are unable to provide an indication of when the program will be available for use at this point. Existing coach accreditation modules will be loaded into the website in the first instance followed by new modules as they are developed accordingly.

Please note that the online accreditation programme is not intended to replace group/class sessions but merely a tool to enhance and support coaches through the pathway.

Accreditations completed in the previous coaching pathway will be recognised in the new Player and Coach Development Pathway.

The new National Player & Coach Development Pathway includes the following key concepts:

- A 3 phase accreditation system including existing modules i.e. Fundamentals, Essential Skills and the Competitive Athlete
- 3 stages within each phase linking to the National Player & Coach Development Pathway
- Advanced content for the Performance phase
- Related modules providing a greater understanding of the role as a coach
- Brand alignment and promotion providing a colourful pathway in which to play the game
- Support, educate and improve the quality of softball coaches across all levels of the game
- An online E Learning platform for new and existing coaches with the aim to:
  - Build an improved interactive coach accreditation system engaging coaches across the country
  - Ensure all coaches are provided with the same quality and consistency of information
  - An online management system that SNZ can add additional modules to overtime.





## Grassroots to High Performance

New Zealand softball teams have produced some outstanding results on the world stage over a number of decades which we are proud of as a softball community. In order to consistently continue that momentum on the world stage we as a sport need to continually raise the bar. The National Player and Coach Development Pathway will help us do just that by providing a pathway or a bridge between our grassroots and high performance objectives. The Player and Coach Development Pathway is about developing all coaches and players to their full potential in order to increase their chance of success at whatever level they pursue.

**Mark Sorenson** – In 1984 Mark Sorenson made his international softball debut at the ISF VI Men’s World Championship at the age of just 16 years old. Twenty-one years later he retired from the game with seven world championship tournaments (one junior) to his credit – all of them gold (five times) or silver medal finishes. In four of the seven he finished with a .400 batting average or higher. A catcher, Mark played in over 70 games in world championship play alone. He made more than 125 other international playing appearances on behalf of New Zealand over his three decades in men’s fast pitch softball to cement his legacy in Black Sox history.

**Naomi Shaw** - Naomi was in the New Zealand Women’s Softball Team from 1978 to 1986. She won a bronze medal in 1978 and 1986 and was the captain of the only women’s team to win a world championship gold medal in 1982 in Taiwan.

Naomi came on the international softball coaching scene as an assistant coach for New Zealand’s junior women’s team from 1988-1991 and head coach until 1995. She was also an assistant coach of the women’s national team between 1992-1998. Naomi was appointed as head coach of the NZ White Sox team in 2010. She has attended a total of three ISF World Championships as a player and five ISF World Championships in a coaching capacity. In 1999 she was inducted into the NZ Sport Hall of Fame; 2001 inducted into the NZ Softball Sport Hall of Fame; 2010 inducted into the International Softball Federation Hall of Fame.

Mark and Naomi’s player and coach pathway progress from grass roots to international level epitomises what the SNZ Player and Coach Development Framework is all about.



Mark Sorenson,  
New Zealand Black Sox Coach



Naomi Shaw,  
New Zealand White Sox Coach

## National Player & Coach Development Pathway

The SNZ coaching pathway aligns to the 3 phases of player development; Fundamentals, Essential Skills and Competitive Athlete. These 3 phases encompass the learning and development needs of the player and coach as they progress through the pathway.

To gain a more detailed understanding of how coaching modules and the pathway evolved please refer to the learning curriculums for each phase on the following pages.

Please note that these are guidelines only and that some players may not fit exactly into the stages of development.



## Coach Accreditation Program

Please note the nature of the accreditation modules may vary slightly until the program is complete. The program will be considered a living document until all considerations and refinements are finalised.

### Phase 1 – Fundamentals



<b>Foundation Coach</b>  There are no pre-requisites to any modules in this phase.	<b>Small Sox (stage 1)</b> - Safety Net	<b>Tee Sox (stage 2)</b> - Coach T-Ball	<b>Rookie Sox (stage 3)</b> - Induction - Induction (for Schools) - Pitching & Catching
<b>Athlete Development</b>	Play 0-4 years	Discover 5-8 years	Learn 9-12 years
<b>Competition Structure</b>	<b>Fundamental movement</b> <b>“games”</b>	<b>T-ball</b>	<b>Softball</b>

## Phase 2 – Essential Skills



<b>Development Coach</b>  SNZ strongly recommends the Creating Athletes (How to coach) module as a prerequisite to all modules in this phase.	<b>Emerging Sox (stage 4)</b>  <b>Social</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating Athletes</li> </ul> <b>Technical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Catching</li> <li>- Fielding &amp; Throwing</li> <li>- Hitting &amp; the Short Game</li> <li>- Baserunning &amp; Sliding</li> <li>- Pitching Mechanics &amp; Rules</li> <li>- Pitching Training &amp; Drills</li> </ul> <b>Tactical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positional Play</li> <li>- Game Strategy</li> </ul>	<b>(stage 5)</b>  <b>Technical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Battery</li> <li>- Catching “Calling the Game”</li> <li>- Movement Pitches</li> </ul> <b>Cognitive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mental Skills for Softball</li> <li>- Learning styles</li> </ul> <b>Extra modules</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Running Trials &amp; Selecting Teams</li> <li>- Coach educator</li> </ul>	<b>Major Sox (stage 6)</b>  <b>Social</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul> <b>Physical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On &amp; Off field Strength &amp; Conditioning</li> <li>- Sports Injuries</li> </ul> <b>Extra Modules</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talent Identification (TID)</li> <li>- Role of a Manager</li> <li>- Club Coaching Coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Athlete Development</b>	Participate, Compete & Develop 13 – 18 years		Enhance Adult
<b>Competition Structure</b>	<b>Regional &amp; SNZ National Tournaments, Dev &amp; Junior Black and White Sox Teams</b>		<b>SNZ National Tournaments, NFC</b>



## Phase 3 – Competitive Athlete



Junior Black & White Sox



Performance Coach	Junior Sox (stage 7)	Black & White Sox (stage 8)	Champ Sox (stage 9)
<p>There are no pre-requisites to any modules in this phase.</p>	<p><b>Cognitive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mental Processes</li> </ul> <p><b>Technical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advanced Hitting</li> <li>- Defensive Styles</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Defensive Strategy</li> <li>- Offensive Strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>Extra modules</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individualised Program Planning</li> <li>- Coach educator</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offensive &amp; Defensive roles</li> </ul> <p><b>Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentoring</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On &amp; Off field Strength &amp; Conditioning</li> </ul> <p><b>Cognitive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mental Processes</li> </ul> <p><b>Extra modules</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of National Team Manager</li> <li>- Building a Campaign</li> </ul>	<p><b>Extra modules</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce a document, program or other resource which contributes to NZ softball</li> </ul>
Athlete Development	Optimise	Excel	Mastery
Competition Structure	<b>SNZ National Tournaments, NFC, Black and White Sox teams</b>		

## Targeted Audience, Outline & Learning Curriculum

### Phase 1 - Fundamentals

#### Foundation Coach

Phase 1 is about sharing your knowledge and experience, making softball fun and giving everyone a go.

The foundation coach will play an important role in making sure players learn to enjoy softball and other physical activities.

Phase 1 is designed to help you as the coach get started in coaching. It covers basic yet important information to help the coach understand individuals and the team through the following fundamentals:

- Your role as a coach in meeting the needs of your players
- Being inclusive and fair
- Communication
- Running a coaching session
- Planning
- Basic coaching principles
- Basic rules
- Equipment
- Fundamental softball skills
- Playing positions & batting order
- Basic game strategy
- Softball jargon
- Correcting common errors.

Accreditation		Target Audience	Outline
Stage 1	Safety Net	T-Ball Coaches, Parents or Teachers	1 hour online course on fundamentals of coaching
Stage 2	Coach T-Ball Unit	T-Ball Coaches, Parents or Teachers	1 hour theory & practical on how to teach T-Ball to children
Stage 3	U13 Rookie Sox Pitching & Catching Module	Beginning Coaches, Parents or Teachers	1 hour practical on pitching & catching for coaches who are in transition from T-Ball to Softball
Stage 3	Induction Unit	Beginning Coaches or Parents	2 ½ hour theory & practical of all Softball Fundamentals
Stage 3	Induction Unit for Schools	Primary, Intermediate or Secondary School Teachers	1 ½ hour practical of all Softball Fundamentals

## Learning Curriculum

FOUNDATION PHASE			
STAGE	Play 1-4yrs	Discover 5-8yrs	Learn 9-12yrs
Focus	Fun and active	Fun and participation	Fun and mastery of basic softball skills
Technical skills	Focus on learning fundamental movement skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throwing</li> <li>• Catching</li> <li>• Striking</li> </ul>	Fundamental softball skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base-running</li> <li>• Throwing</li> <li>• Catching with glove</li> <li>• Striking</li> <li>• Ground fielding</li> </ul>	Pitching Batting (including bunting) Fielding fly balls and ground balls Base running (intro sliding) Catching
Tactical	Nil	Simple rules	Simple rules Basic tactics
Physical (fitness)	Nil	ABC's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agility</li> <li>• Balance</li> <li>• Coordination</li> <li>• Speed</li> </ul>	Introduce general physical conditioning Importance of warm-up/cool down
Social	Playing with others Developing confidence and positive self-esteem	Playing with others Introduce fair play concepts Encourage positive attitudes and the importance of making a good effort	Teamwork Fair play Work ethic Respect for others Dealing with winning and losing
Cognitive	Using imagination	Using imagination Simple rules and ethics	Introduce elements of decision-making Rules and ethics
Game modifications	Minor games – softball related that emphasise basic skills	Introduction to T-Ball Rotate positions Equal playing time Use 11inch flexi ball	Teach all players to pitch Rotate positions Equal playing time Use 11/12 inch flexi ball Large home plate and strike zone Limit the number of innings pitched

<b>Session planning</b>	20-30 minutes Well-structured Modified activities Skill progressions High levels of activity Positive environment Learning through play	Up to 45 minutes Modified equipment and activities Appropriate skill progressions High levels of activity Positive environment Emphasis on learning through play	Up to 60 minutes Appropriate modifications to suit level of players Appropriate skill progressions High levels of activity Positive environment Emphasis on learning through play Players learn 2+ positions
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## Phase 2 - Essential Skills

### Development Coach

Phase 2 will help determine your level of interest in the game and your future coaching aspirations. It is an important phase that covers a wide range of tactical, technical and planning skills.

Essential Skills will cover the following information:

- Mental skills for softball
- Fielding mechanics and defensive strategies
- Leadership
- NZ Coach Approach
- Position specific skills and awareness
- Effective communication
- Battery development
- Understanding the athlete
- Understanding pitch counts and hitter tendencies
- Tools and techniques for behaviour management
- Pitching movement
- Giving feedback
- Hitting fundamentals and the short game
- Club coaching coordinator
- Strength and Conditioning
- Evaluating your coaching.

Accreditation		Target Audience	Outline
Stage 4	Pitching Mechanics & Rules	For Developing Coaches	2 hour practical on pitching mechanics and pitching rules
Stage 4	Catching	For Developing Coaches	2 hour practical on all catching skills
Stage 4	Hitting & the Short Game	For Developing Coaches	2 ½ hour practical on all hitting & short game skills
Stage 4	Competitive Pitcher	For Developing Coaches	2 hour practical on all throwing & fielding skills
Stage 4	Fielding & Throwing	For Developing Coaches	2 hour practical on all throwing & fielding skills
Stage 4	Creating Athletes	For Developing Coaches	2 ½ hour theory on the “how to coach”
Stage 4	Game Strategy	For Developing Coaches	2 hour theory on game strategy
Stage 4	Positional Play	For Developing Coaches	To be developed
Stage 4	Baserunning and Sliding	For Developing Coaches	2 hour practical on Baserunning and Sliding
Stage 4	Pitching & Training Drills	For Developing Coaches	To be developed
Stage 5	Pitching Movement	For Developing Coaches	2 hour practical on how to pitch drop, rise & change pitches
Stage 5	Battery	For Developing Coaches	2 hour theory on battery fundamentals & calling the game
Stage 5	Catching “Calling the Game”	For Developing Coaches	2 hour theory & practical on “calling the game” patterns & tendencies
Stage 5	Mental Skills for softball	For Developing Coaches	2 hour theory on the “Mental Skills for softball”



Stage 5	Running Trials & Selecting Teams	For Developing Coaches	To be developed
Stage 5	Coach Educator	For Developing Coaches	To be developed
Stage 6	Coaching Genders	For Developing Coaches	To be developed
Stage 6	On & off field Strength & Conditioning	For Developing Coaches (on line only)	40 minute online module providing an overview of the strength & conditioning required for softball
Stage 6	Sports Injuries	For Developing Coaches	To be developed
Stage 6	Talent Identification (TID)	For Developing Coaches	To be developed
Stage 6	Role of a Manager	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 6	Club Coaching Coordinator	For Performance Coaches	To be developed

## Learning Curriculum

### DEVELOPMENT PHASE

STAGE	Participate, Compete & Develop 13-18yrs	Enhance Adult
Focus	Fun, participation, learning, competing	Fun, learning, competing
Technical skills	Promote more technical types of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting</li> <li>• The short game (bunting)</li> <li>• Sliding</li> <li>• Pitching/catching</li> <li>• Defence/team defence</li> </ul>	Develop all aspects of individual skill sets
Tactical	Emphasis on team work Develop tasks per position	Develop tasks per position Offence and defence Strategy
Physical (fitness)	Develop softball-specific physical conditioning Develop general speed, agility, and quickness and flexibility Introduce injury prevention	Introduce position-specific physical conditioning. Introduce softball-specific speed, agility, and quickness. Maintain speed, agility, quickness and flexibility Practice injury prevention

Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pride in teamwork</li> <li>Humility</li> <li>Expressing gratitude</li> <li>Fulfilling team role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedication and commitment</li> <li>Humility, gratitude</li> <li>Tolerance</li> <li>Inclusiveness</li> <li>Accepting and embracing discipline for the team</li> </ul>
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop goal setting, team cohesion, visualisation skills, emotional control, decision making during skills</li> <li>Introduce game plans, pre-game and game routines, coping strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine goal setting, team cohesion, visualisation skills, emotional control, decision making during skills</li> <li>Develop game plans, pre-game and game routines, coping strategies</li> <li>Introduce the psychology of the inner game of softball</li> <li>Promote self understanding and demonstration of leadership skills</li> <li>Promote innovation and creation</li> <li>Promote decision making, advanced problem solving, social comparison, moral decision making &amp; self evaluation</li> </ul>
Game modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use 12 inch standard softball</li> <li>Standard home plate and strike zone</li> <li>Rotate positions</li> <li>Equal playing time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adhere to the SNZ official rule book</li> </ul>
Session planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 2 hours</li> <li>Appropriate modifications to suit level of players</li> <li>Appropriate skill progressions</li> <li>High levels of activity</li> <li>Positive environment</li> <li>Emphasis on learning through play</li> <li>Players learn 2+ positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 3 hours</li> <li>60 minutes plus of dedicate physical conditioning</li> <li>Appropriate skill progressions</li> <li>High levels of activity</li> <li>Positive environment</li> <li>Emphasis on learning through play</li> <li>Players specialise in one position and learn 1-2 other</li> </ul>

### Phase 3 – Competitive Athlete

Phase 3 is the performance phase where coaches are introduced to the high performance development process. Coaches in this phase will arm themselves with the necessary information required for SNZ elite tournaments and the international arena.

The Mastery stage is unique in that it sets its self apart from the rest, as there is no defined team for those that aspire to this level. This stage represents the morals and ethics of the ultimate Softballer, a person who is an ambassador for the game both on and off the field. The Mastery player has played at the highest level of the game; they are respected and recognised through their commitment to the game and themselves.

Performance will cover the following information:

- Hitting, Pitching & Catching technical & tactical
- Offensive & defensive strategy
- Hitting & defensive styles
- Mental processes
- Mentoring
- Offensive & Defensive Roles
- Develop a project for the benefit of New Zealand softball.

Accreditation		Target Audience	Outline
Stage 7	Advanced Hitting	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 7	Defensive Styles	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 7	Advanced Defensive Strategy	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 7	Advanced Offensive Strategy	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 7	Mental Processes	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 7	Individualised Program Planning	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 7	Coach educator	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 8	Offensive & Defensive Roles	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 8	Mentoring	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 8	On & off field Strength & Conditioning	For Performance Coaches (on line only)	40 minute online module providing an overview of the strength & conditioning required for softball
Stage 8	Role of National Team Manager	For Performance Coaches	To be developed

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Stage 8	Building a Campaign	For Performance Coaches	To be developed
Stage 9	Develop a project for the betterment of the game	For High Performance Coaches	To be developed

## Learning Curriculum

EXCEL PHASE			
Stage	Perform	Excel	Mastery
Focus	Fun, socially motivated, develop player autonomy	Player autonomy is refined	Morals and ethics are of the highest stand
Technical skills	Develop all appropriate team and individual skills sets	Refine appropriate team and individual skills sets	Innovative and development of individual and team skills sets
Tactical	Offence and defence strategy	Advanced offence and defence strategy	Innovative and development of new offence and defence strategy
Physical (fitness)	Develop general physical conditioning, general strength and power Develop position-specific physical conditioning Develop softball-specific speed, agility, and quickness Maintain speed, agility, quickness and flexibility Practice injury prevention	Refine softball and position specific physical conditioning Refine softball and position specific strength and power Refine softball and position specific speed, agility, and quickness Refine speed, agility, quickness and flexibility Practice injury prevention Detailed and biomechanical testing	Detailed and biomechanical testing Optimise physical performance Promote innovative ways to further develop position specific strength and power, softball specific speed, agility, and quickness Practice injury prevention
Social	Moral decision making Healthy living Accountability Mental toughness	Moral decision making in heat of battle Healthy living Committing to continuous improvement Accepting and fulfilling role of team Accountability Mental toughness/determination	Moral decision making in heat of battle Healthy living Exploration of new and innovative ways to grow as a person/player Accepting and fulfilling individual role of team. Supporting the development of individuals within the team Accountability Mental toughness/determination
Cognitive	Psychology of the inner game of softball Refine game plans, pre-game and game routines, coping strategies and visualisation skills Develop self understanding and demonstration of leadership skills Promote innovation and creation Develop decision making, advanced problem solving, complex analysis, social comparison, moral decision making & self evaluation	Develop innovation and creation skills Promote the making of appropriate life decisions Refine decision making, advanced problem solving, complex analysis, social comparison, moral decision making & self evaluation	Refine self understanding and demonstration of leadership skills High moral life decisions Detailed physiological testing
Game Modifications	Adhere to the SNZ official rule book	Adhere to the SNZ official rule book	Adhere to the SNZ official rule book



<b>Session planning</b>	<p>Up to 3 hours specific softball training per week 60 minutes plus of dedicate physical conditioning Include mental conditioning Instruction and preparation are individualised Emphasis on speed of execution of plays Include statistical and video analysis to support individual and team development</p>	<p>Position specific training Players specialise in one position and the ability to play another position well Daily skill development, fitness training and mental training Synchronisation between combinations, and increase speed of execution of play Include statistical and video analysis to support individual and team development Players are trained to peak for key events</p>	<p>Physical training programs employ the most advanced techniques and sport science technology Critical evaluation/consultation between coach and players Players to make decisions about their training regimen Players to lead the direction of the team as a whole</p>
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For further information on the National Player & Coach Development Pathway please contact Glen Roff, Softball Manager, 021537082, <mailto:glen@softball.org.nz>



## National Player & Coach Development Pathway

