

GROWING SOFTBALL

Softball NZs Strategy 2014 - 2018

Softball NZ is the national governing body of softball in New Zealand and is committed to leading the development of our game.

The landscape of sport is continually changing and Softball NZ has built our strategy around **growth**, our **vision** and our **values**.

We are excited about the future and its challenges as we build on the successes of the past while capitalising on today's passions to grow softball into the premier summer sport in NZ

OUR VISION: Softball is a champion sport on and off the diamond

OUR MISSION: To offer leadership, support and deliver an accessible sport that promotes enjoyment, success and lifelong participation

OUR VALUES: Leadership on and off the diamond
Courage to be bold and innovative
Integrity so we build and maintain trust
Passion and a desire to be the best we can
Respect for each other and the game



OUR FOCUS

1. Grow and develop participation

WHY THESE FOCUS AREAS?

The 2013/14 season saw a significantly lower participation numbers (26895) compared to the previous season (32350)., While participation numbers fluctuate annually, it is disappointing to see that last season unfortunately produced the lowest participation numbers for SNZ in 10 years. Over the next 4 years we aim to increase participation opportunities via 2 key strategies which can be found in this document.

2. Growing our business

In 2012 SNZ faced a major funding cut. In order to minimise the financial risk on our organisation we need to become less reliant on charitable funding in the long-term. This will be achieved by focusing on 5 key strategies which utilise expertise and growing our knowledge, partnerships, media presence and revenue in order to have more control over our future financial position, our commercial identity and our brand.

3. Connecting softball nationally

We have the need and opportunity to improve the capability of our volunteers, clubs, associations, delivery structures and the relationship Softball NZ has with our current and potentials affiliates. Through the provision of information platforms, support structures, and national / regional delivery models we aim to link Softball NZ and our affiliates more closely while improving our ability nationwide.

4. Create champion athletes and coaches on the international stage

An absence of a structured HP Plan has meant an inconsistency in the delivery and goals set between our HP teams and to a degree a lack of effective campaigns. While we the Black Sox are 6 x World Champions, we need to continue this level of success in the men's game and build on performance of our women's game dramatically via 3 key strategies outlined in this document.



Focus: GROW AND DEVELOP PARTICIPATION

Our Intention: To offer an accessible and great experience to all our communities

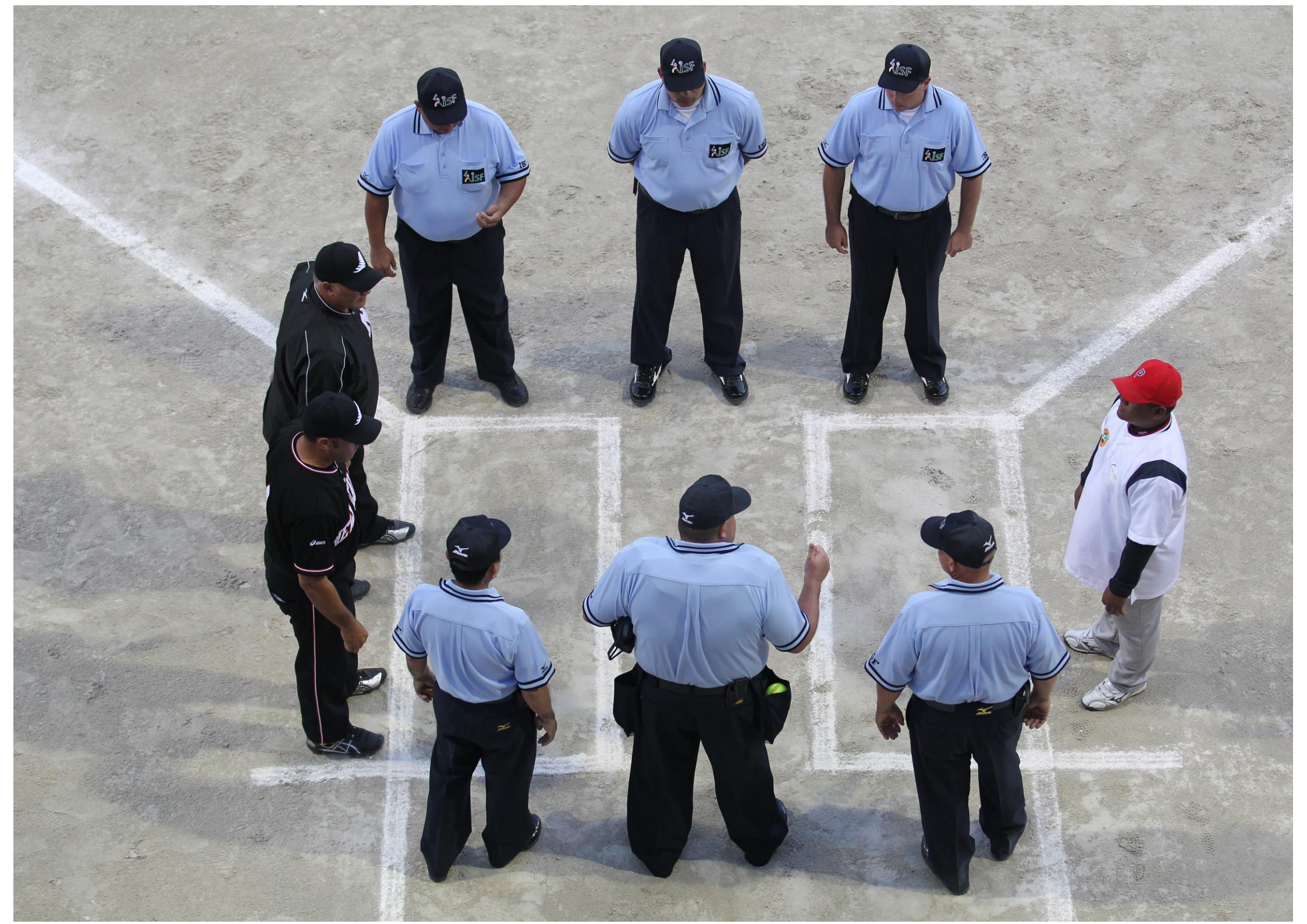
STRATEGIES	GAME PLAN
<p>Develop and package a variety of game and competition formats targeted at different audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow T Ball, slow-pitch, secondary school softball and other social softball opportunities resulting in a 5% increase in overall participation annually • Develop a national primary schools program to be released in mid-2015 with 160 registered deliverers by 2018 • Build and promote the female game resulting in a 5% increase of female participation yearly • Provide regular competitions, events or participation opportunities with one target being a 10% increase in advertised Slowpitch competitions • Review current age-group tournament structures to maximise participation by 10% annually • Undertake research to understand changing consumer needs of softball and adapt products and services to match, resulting in a 5% annual increase in modified leagues/events provided by associations • Provide quality senior national events annually aiming for increased participation • Develop baseline participation information with breakdowns for male, female, junior, competition and social players
<p>Target key sectors within our game and build successful development programs and frameworks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the national player and coach development pathway including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A blueprint for local and national softball modules promoting the Sox themed Brands and - Coaching modules to be developed annually with a 15% yearly increase of accreditations completed • Develop our on-line resources for club and representative coaches / managers annually resulting in a 5% increase in new coaches • Host regional coaching, umpiring and scoring clinics on an annual basis aiming for a 5% increase in both registered umpires and scorers • Build and implement a national umpire and scorer development framework (junior and senior) by mid-2016 • Develop and maintain an effective national coaching database



Focus: GROWING OUR BUSINESS

Our Intention: To promote and strengthen SNZ, our brands, values and partnerships

STRATEGIES	GAME PLAN
Re-package softballs competitions and events program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the current national tournaments program annually• Align and package a circuit of premier club tournaments established by the 2017/18 season• Develop a range of high quality merchandise to support branded competition and events• Develop and implement a social media plan that aims to increase the captive audience by 7.5% annually
Establish regular national forums on developing the business of softball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share expertise via a network of national advisory groups (for targeted areas of softball development) to be utilised as required.• Open communication channels between SNZ and associations by preparing a series of annual regional forums based on the identified regional needs, commencing mid-2015• Develop and implement a commercialisation strategy at national and regional level by 2018
Cultivate strategic and community partnerships with corporations, councils, RSTs and tertiary institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a partner / stakeholder mapping exercise of current and potential partners we can link with at a national and community level by 2018• Facilitate the development of partnership agreements between softball regions and RSTs by 2018
Develop international relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop international relationships through attending the ISF congress (with full voting rights to be utilised) and developing a stronger international softball presence.
Build on our national brands to increase our public profile and financial opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage and increase our current sponsor partnerships by 5% and look to increase our revenue across the sport by a total of 10% through all new partnerships• Negotiate and liaise with media companies for increased coverage of our high profiled events



Focus: CONNECTING SOFTBALL NATIONALLY

Our Intention: To provide leadership and guidance to our membership.
To build excellence through our people, our affiliates, facilities and partners

STRATEGIES	GAME PLAN
<p>Provide resources to build sustainable and successful clubs/associations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and evolve business tools and online resources which can aid and improve our affiliates business operations, such as the SNZ Club Tool Box, SNZ Club Check and Sport NZ ODT • Introduce an annual administrators conference commencing mid-2015 • Softball officers available to assist associations with organisational, people and softball development activities with 100% of affiliated associations engaging in Partnership plans • Work with softball associations to maximise softball's access to community based funding sources by providing ongoing funding guidance
<p>Develop resources and opportunities to enhance and recognise our people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a volunteer management program within community softball by mid-2016 resulting in a 5% increase in volunteers annually • Develop and implement a leadership development program for young softballers and administrators of the game by the 2015/16 season
<p>Review, modernise and align the current delivery structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the softball "hub concept" and have hubs operational by 2018 through; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The review regional models developed by other sports codes and - The review existing collaborative models within softball.
<p>Develop and implement a national facilities strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national facilities strategy by 2014/15 season which takes into consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A stock take of existing facilities used for softball and their potential capacity, - Current supply and demand of current facilities, - Identifying facilities not yet utilised for softball activity • Provide a guidance document for facility upgrades by Oct 2015



Focus: CREATE CHAMPION ATHLETES & COACHES ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Our Intention: To have an effective HP program and improved results

STRATEGIES	GAME PLAN
<p>Create an optimal high performance environment to allow our HP teams to excel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the SNZ High Performance plan that includes our talent identification and development approach • Build solid campaigns linking with our High Performance plan resulting in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Podium finishes for the Black Sox, Junior Black Sox and Junior White Sox by 2015 and - The White Sox to be ranked in the top 5 by 2018 • Create regional high performance programs that contribute to an overarching national softball High Performance plan by 2018 • In 2015 implement nationally developed talent identification plans to support talented young softballers • Establish regionally based talent incubators in 2017 • Establish a High Performance advisory group by to be utilised as required annually
<p>Develop international exchange opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an international softball events timetable which is visible to our community • Create beneficial international relationships allowing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased regular playing or training opportunities and - Resulting in a minimum of one international event to be hosted in NZ every two years
<p>Build the relationship with HPSNZ and other potential partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and further develop the relationships with HPSNZ • Advance the working relationship with Baseball NZ

Growing softball: THE ROLE OF SOFTBALL NZ

Softball New Zealand's role is to lead, promote and support the development of softball in New Zealand. It does this by:

Provide sport leadership and strategic direction

Managing key partner relationships e.g. Sport NZ, High Performance Sport NZ and the media

Manage and resourcing our national teams participation in world championship and other international events

Representing New Zealand's softball interests internationally

Provide a framework and pathways from regional to national and international levels for players, coaches, umpires and administrators

Increase the profile of the sport through marketing and brand strategies

Manage the national tournaments and events programme

Provide a framework for social softball participation and school development

To provide a network of Softball Officers available to associations to assist with organisational and people, and softball development activities

Host national and international events in partnership with associations



Growing softball: THE ROLE OF OUR COMMUNITY



Role of regional hubs

Deliver regional player, coach, and umpire and scorer clinics

Coordinate entry of regional teams into national tournaments

Organise regional quad tournaments

Hubs will form the effective centre of an activity, region, or network. We will create softball 'hubs' throughout the country to form a regional softball delivery network.

The key drivers for creating regional softball hubs are:

- The opportunity to achieve national alignment in the delivery of softball
- To focus the delivery of softball at regional and local level
- Increasing the focus on accessing local and regional resources to support the delivery of softball.

The purpose of these hubs is to deliver the national player development pathway but on a regional basis, using regional skills and expertise while linking with local and regional resources such as funders, businesses and potential delivery partners such as regional sports trusts, schools and councils.

Role of the associations

Provide player, coach, umpire and administrator development opportunities

Provide a link between Softball NZ and clubs

Support delivery of schools competitions

Deliver quality competitions that meet participant needs

Develop strategic plans to support long term sustainability

Host national and international events in partnership with SNZ

Partner with councils and RSTs to promote softball

Source grant funding and sponsorship to support game development and the representative team program

Maintain quality facilities in partnership with councils

Manage the representative teams programme

Role of the clubs

Recruit and develop players, umpires, scorers and administrators

Promote softball as a family sport and grow the game from the grass roots up

Build relationships with local schools to foster position in softball

Provide player pathways for all ages and abilities

Develop strategic plans to support long term sustainability

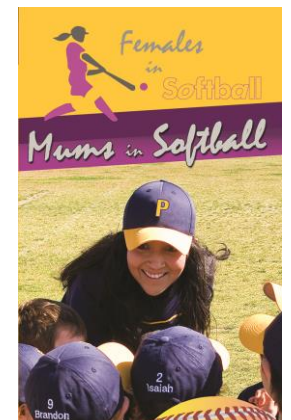
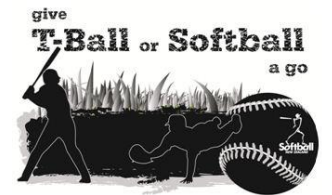
Support teams entering local competitions

Promote healthy social interaction, fun and friendship

Source local grant funding for club development



Game Development Initiatives





National Player & Coach Development Pathway

Performance



Development



Foundation



QUESTIONS

How is the new strategy going to be implemented?

Softball NZ will be responsible for leading this strategy nationally. It is crucial that Softball NZ takes leadership to ensure the success of this strategy. The Softball NZ staff will be responsible for new initiatives, providing resources, supporting and providing guidance to our membership, and communities. We aim to have alignment between Softball NZ and our affiliates so that our clubs and associations will identify priority growth areas within this document and incorporate it into their long term planning and delivery.

What process did Softball NZ follow to reach the focus areas in the new plan?

Softball NZ gained feedback from our softball affiliates and consulted associations with our strategy concepts and aims. This strategy is a combination of feedback from those at Softball NZ, from association forums and best practice concepts from a range of national sporting organisations.

Why base a strategy around growth?

A growth strategy emphasises the importance of knowing and responding to what people want from their softball experiences whether as a player, coach, administrator, umpire, scorer, funder or supporter.

To grow participation we must be able to identify different groups of people and provide them with accessible softball opportunities and experiences they are looking for in a way that suits their needs

- Growth is about bringing extra resources to the game – more players, more supporters, more dollars, more media presence, more funders etc.
- Growth is also about performance – doing things better and to a higher level than we have done previously both on and off the diamond.
- Growth is about having a bigger and better public profile within New Zealand.
- Growth is also about personal development through softball.

With special thanks to our commercial partners



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