

# National Coaching Strategy 2017-2020



**SOFTBALL IS A CHAMPION SPORT ON & OFF THE DIAMOND**

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## FOREWORD

As a sport that does not have a wealth of resources we need to make the most of what is available to us, including our people. Our hopes and dreams of sustained sporting success cannot be realised without the continued investment in our coaches and volunteers. Coaching plays a crucial role from supporting our elite athletes to excel on the world stage to encouraging our local communities to participate, compete and enjoy Softball; coaches provide the inspiration and practical support to enable this.

The National Coaching Strategy seeks to build on existing successes, putting in place systems which will deliver more and better supported coaches. We want to challenge ourselves to engage more people to our great game and retain them. We want Softball to be a sport where everyone who participates should have access to an appropriately skilled coach a sport where all coaches are appropriately recruited, trained, deployed and ultimately retained within Softball.

Over the years we have made significant progress in coach development but there is much more to be done. We need to increase the number of active coaches in Softball and to support them properly if we are to become a healthier and more successful Softball nation. We must ensure that our coaching workforce is properly qualified and that they have the skills and tools to work with children as well as elite athletes. This strategy provides a clear direction and focus for all our efforts to achieve a successful and effective coaching system.

The National Coaching Strategy was developed through a National Coaching Advisory Group. The group consisted of current or former national coaches. Through their valuable insight two key strategies were identified 1) Coach Development and 2) Coach Recruitment. From here enablers were developed to support the direction of coaching in New Zealand Softball over the next four years.

This strategy defines the roles and responsibilities of Softball NZ, Associations and Clubs. The plan will guide us all towards 2020 with definitive timelines and outcomes. There are a number of enablers that are currently in action and some that still need to be developed, piloted and launched.

We know the National Coaching Strategy will only succeed when all organisations involved in the game buy into and collectively work in the same direction.





## PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to state Softball New Zealand's aspirations and set the direction for coaching in Softball for the next four years. The Strategy sits alongside the National Player & Coach Development Framework and will provide a blueprint for developing a system to take Softball coaching in New Zealand towards being a world leader by 2020.

## COACHING IN 2017

Coaching has changed in that the technical and tactical skills of a sport are no longer regarded as the be-all and end-all. The 'softer' skills of coaching such as how to communicate effectively, listen, empathise and provide feedback are assets coaches must possess in order to be effective. In addition, coaches take on a variety of roles that have a significant impact and influence on a child or athlete's involvement or development such as; mentor, role model, technical expert, taxi driver, babysitter, psychologist and the list goes on.

Today through the National Player & Coach Development Pathway, most Associations and Clubs are able to provide coach education specific to the age group skill and ability. Volunteers who wish to learn how to coach are able to receive the necessary information either through a Softball NZ accreditation module.

Good coaching is essential to building participation and growth within our game. Good coaches make learning fun at all levels. Good coaches enhance the Softball experience, provide avenues to develop confidence and character, skill and integrity, independence and maturity and can change the way athletes of all ages see themselves and their place in the world.

The New Zealand Softball community is extremely passionate about maintaining positive traditions as well as ensuring that more New Zealanders have the opportunity to participate and compete in the game of Softball.





## STRATEGY ONE – COACH DEVELOPMENT

Though the National Coach Advisory Group Softball NZ has targeted a number of Coach Development enablers. These will serve as a driver to; initiate a more reaching and robust coach delivery programme, ensure our National Player & Coach Development Pathway continues to serve player and coach development needs and is flexible across multi generations and provide a national coaching conference providing professional learning developments.

### NATIONAL COACHING WORKING GROUP

A National Coaching Working Group will be created to represent the ‘wider’ coaching community including; Foundation, Development and Performance phases. The Working Group will support Softball NZ providing key input into development and areas of best practice. The Working Group will allow for a closer working relationship between Softball NZ and coaches at the coalface of the game.

### NATIONAL PLAYER & COACH DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The National Player & Coach Development Pathway was implemented with the intent of providing coaches with the necessary tools to arm themselves and their players as they evolve through the game of Softball. To ensure the pathway meets its intended purpose new modules will be added to the pathway with existing accreditations reviewed periodically. Furthermore the pathway will be reviewed to ensure it provides clear direction and a strategic framework for both players and coaches across the New Zealand.

### COACH ACCREDITATION DELIVERERS PROGRAMME

To ensure the Softball NZ National Coaching Pathway is delivered to the highest standard it is critical we recruit, develop and support facilitators through quality training. Due to the shortage of coach deliverers across the country we will create regional gap analysis and action plans to ensure delivery of the pathway to all corners of the country.

### BIENNIAL COACHING CONFERENCE

The National Coaching Conference will be a biennial event. The two yearly event will aim to attract coaches from across the regions where they will engage in a wide range of topics from notable speakers. Those attending will gain insight from some of the industries foremost subject experts helping to generate new ideas or polish trusted practices.



## STRATEGY TWO – COACH RECRUITMENT

Coaches are the drivers and backbone of most teams at all levels. Without coaching there is no player development or growth within the game. There is a requirement to recruit new coaches to the game and encourage those players that have finished their careers to take up the rewarding journey of coaching. To ensure the game continues to prosper an array of coach recruitment programmes are required.

### COACH MENTOR PROGRAMME

The Coach Mentor Programme will provide mentoring and support for coaches who are committed to coach development and who engage in the National Player & Coach Development Pathway. The programme will allow more coaches to work collaboratively, in turn accelerate coach education, coach philosophies and support coach development. In addition the programme will enhance coach recruitment and support coaches within the club environment.

### VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Softball NZ will develop a Volunteer Management Programme to be implemented at community level. The programme will not only cover coach recruitment but management and recognition of volunteers with a view to attracting more volunteers/coaches to Softball.

### NATIONAL PLAYER & COACH REGISTRATION DATABASE

The purpose of the National Player & Coach Registration Database is to directly connect with the Softball coaching community. The database will allow Softball NZ to provide information and support specific coaches needs and in doing so encourage coach development. A robust database will manage and store all coach accreditation, profiles and coaching numbers.

### FEMALE COACH RECRUITMENT PROGRAMMES

In an attempt to rebuild and promote the female game it is critical female coaches play a significant role in the development of young girls As they progress through the Softball NZ player pathway. A marketing concept to attract mothers to partake in coaching will be a key initiative in the recruitment of female coaches. Providing the necessary development and support to ensure females continue and prosper in the game will be the second part of the process. Softball NZ will work closely with Sport NZ and other codes to develop and apply best practice methods allowing us to rebuild female coaching stocks.



### COACH DEVELOPMENT

- National Coaching Working Group formed
- International club/coaches operating models researched, common practice templates developed.

### COACH RECRUITMENT

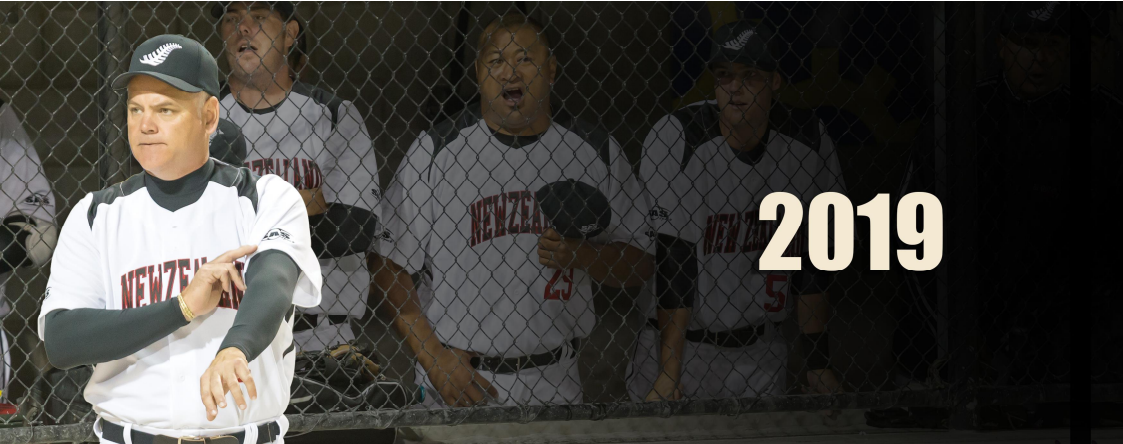
- Coach mentor program developed and piloted.

### COACH DEVELOPMENT

- Recommended club/coach operating models promoted to clubs and coaches
- Biennial Coaching Forum
- Coach Accreditation Deliverer's roles reviewed, applications requested and training provided.

### COACH RECRUITMENT

- Coach recruitment program developed and piloted
- Female coach recruitment programme developed and piloted.



### COACH DEVELOPMENT

- Modules reviewed, updated and added to encourage a culture of learning
- National Player & Development Pathway reviewed and refreshed
- Coach assessment process reviewed.

### COACH RECRUITMENT



### COACH DEVELOPMENT

- Volunteer Workforce Strategy developed and piloted
- National player and coach registration database launched
- Female Coach Programme Initiated.

### COACH RECRUITMENT

- Volunteer Workforce Strategy initiated.





## OUR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The National Coaching Strategy a significant piece of work that requires the support and buy-in from our Associations, Clubs and coaches. Sport New Zealand supports our quest by providing the necessary support and guidance where possible to ensure the strategy is a success.

### Softball New Zealand

Softball New Zealand is committed to providing a framework and pathway catering for players and coaches at all levels of the game.

#### **Softball New Zealand is responsible for:**

- Leading and enabling Associations to ensure they have in place suitable coaching personnel and regional coaching plans that align with the national strategy
- Design and deliver targeted programmes based on the needs of softball
- Research, coordination and provision of sport specific coaching best practice guidelines, templates and coaching knowledge to the wider coaching sector within our sport at all levels.

### Associations

Associations have direct relationships with, and are responsible for providing leadership and provide player and coach development opportunities.

#### **Associations are responsible for:**

- Leading, enabling and investing in their local clubs and schools to ensure they have in place suitable coaching personnel and club coaching plans that align with their Association
- Adapt Softball NZ's generic and softball specific coaching best practice guidelines, templates and coaching knowledge to suit their regions needs.



## Regional Sports Trusts

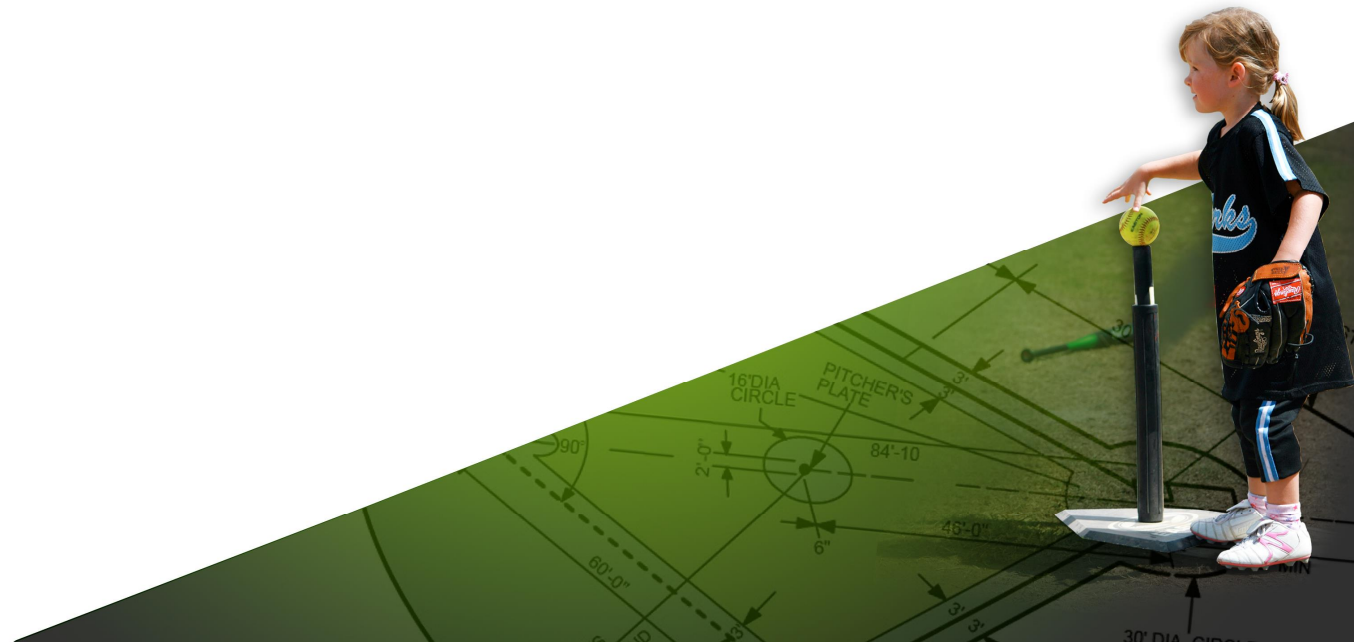
Regional Sports Trusts are centres of influence within their sporting communities and can align and maximise regional resources to support the provision of coaching in clubs, venues, schools and community facilities.

### Regional Sports Trusts are responsible for:

- Supporting Softball Associations in delivering their coaching responsibilities within their area
- Adapting Sport New Zealand's generic coaching best practice guidelines, templates and coaching knowledge to support associations, clubs, venues and schools within their region.

## Clubs & Schools

Softball clubs and schools are the main place for softball participation and coaching.





## OUR COACHING COMMUNITIES

The following information on the three softball coaching communities are derived from the Sport New Zealand Coaching Communities and have been revised to better represent the Softball coaching environment.

### The Foundation Coaching Community

#### The participants they coach:

Foundation Coaches support participants enjoying their first experiences in organised softball. The vast majority of the participants will be primary and intermediate school aged children participating in T-Ball and Softball at either a club or primary school.



#### Who the coaches are:

Foundation coaches can come from anywhere – it's not about 'who' they are but rather whether they understand and care about the development of young people.

#### Typically Foundation Coaches are:

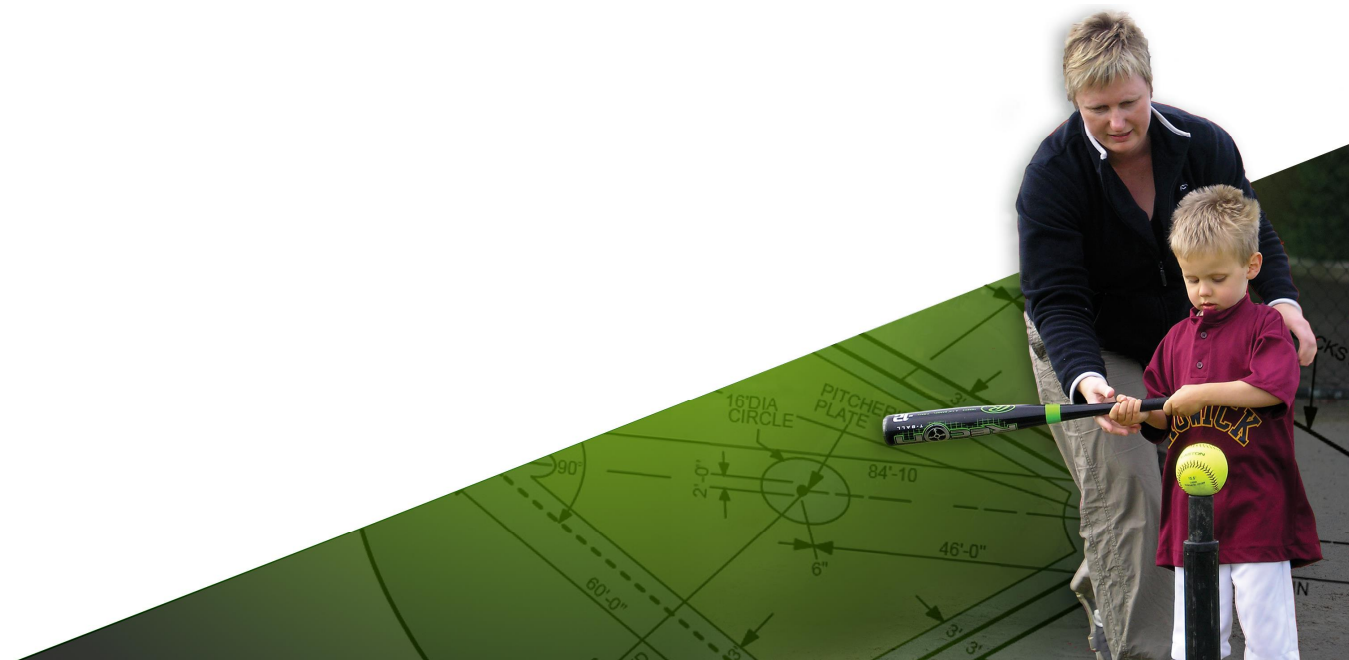
- Small, Tee and Rookie Sox club coaches
- Kiwi Sox coaches
- Parents
- Primary and intermediate school teachers
- Regional Development Officers



- Older secondary school students
- Tertiary students.

**The ideal Foundation Coach will:**

- Nurture a love of sport and active recreation
- Focus primarily on fun, participation and skill development
- Understand the needs of primary school age children
- Encourage multiple sports and skills
- Introduce the concept of fair play
- Understand that they are in the business of creating not only better young athletes, but better young people
- Have a sense of working in a wider coaching community with similar goals.







## The Development Coaching Community

### The participants they coach

Development Coaches support a wider range of participants including the young people who continue in organised sport through secondary school students in both the school and club setting. This might include those juniors developing to play at an Association or national age grade level. Development Coaches also teach adults who play and enjoy organised Softball in a non-elite environment.



### Who the Coaches are:

Development Coaches can come from anywhere – it's not about 'who' they are but rather whether they understand and care about the development of young people and adult non-elite participants in sport.

### Typically Development Coach are:

- Club Coaches
- Regional Development Officers
- Tertiary students

### The ideal Development Coach will:

- Nurture a love of multiple sports
- Focus on skill development and decision making
- Understand the needs of youth and adult non-elite participants



- Reinforce ethical approaches to sport and recreation
- Provide for participant's needs and aspirations
- Understand that they are in the business of creating not only better athletes, but better people
- Have a sense of working in a wider coaching community with similar goals.





## The Performance Coaching Community

### The athletes they coach

Performance coaches support the narrowing range of youth athletes through to those competing on the international stage.



Junior Black & White Sox



### Who the coaches are:

Performance Coaches require considerable coaching experience and a high degree of softball knowledge. They are often in roles where they are involved with National Fastpitch Franchises or a national team.

### Typically Performance Coaches are:

- Former elite softball players who have shown a desire to become involved in coaching
- Former coaches who no longer have the time to be involved at a Highest level
- Dedicated to lifelong learning and coaching innovation
- Coaches who have an absolute understanding of competing and winning at the top level.

### The ideal Performance Coach will:

- Nurture a love of competing and being the best you can be
- Focus on skill development and decision making in a competitive environment
- Understand the needs of performance youth and adult athletes competing at representative level
- Help athletes develop a wider sense of sporting ethics and professional behaviour



- Provide appropriate sequenced development opportunities and guidance (periodisation)
- Understand that they are in the business of creating not only better athletes, but better people and role models for younger participants
- Refine the understanding of what it takes to achieve success at the highest level and strive relentlessly to evolve players into winners
- Understand the needs of top level softball players and their required behaviour
- Create a training and learning environment that enables success at the highest level.





# NATIONAL PLAYER & COACH DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY



The National Player & 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.

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 including the online coaching programme 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.

Available for download at [softball.org.nz](http://softball.org.nz)

