**LMSA Roles of the Travel/Provincial Coaching Staff**

The coaching staff has an important role to play in the development of our athletes. This role goes beyond the teaching of game skills.

The travel rep team leadership is made up of the division representative, the head coach, assistant coaches and if designated the manager and parent rep.

As a coach or leader of a travel/rep. team you are responsible and accountable to the association, the athletes, and their families.

General responsibilities:

* Safety of athletes and coaching team and prevention of injuries
* Communication between: coaching team, parents/guardians, athletes, division rep.
* Teaching methods that are supportive and based on NCCP methods and concepts
* Basic softball rules
* Fair play guidelines
* Understanding of Softball Alberta player development strategies for your age group

LMSA Coaching philosophy (taken from NCCP)

Communication

* Teaching and communication are two functions that raise above all other aspects in supporting LMSA and your role in player development. (NCCP page 13)
* The foundation of effective communication is effective teaching. To become an effective teacher/leader one must develop skills of an effective communicator. This includes: setting a positive foundation for the athletes and the families that support them, problem solving, good listening skills and mentorship.
* Poor communication habits are a common source of difficulty in coaching. Communication involves being a good listener and a good presenter of information. For the coaching team to work effectively together information must be shared between all members. This builds the foundation of trust, and is valuable in keeping the team moving forward in the event that one of the leaders is absent for a day or the season i.e. sickness, injury, personal matters.
* Each leadership group will be required to develop the season’s action plan in written form that can be shared with the division rep, the parents/caregivers and the athletes. This plan will include proposed tournaments/home away games, practices (as we have shared diamonds so this will alleviate double bookings). They will also submit a request for funding assistance which needs to be pre-approved by the LMSA board in order to be reimbursed for expenses. We acknowledge there may be unforeseen expenses but these must be discussed with division rep. who in turn will discuss with LMSA board as needed.

Player development

* The travel/rep team is a development program for those athletes who are interested in more game experience and skill development.
* As such there is an added cost to participate in this program. The fees will be designated each year and guidelines will be provided for what the fees can be used for e.g. will offset the cost of tournament entry, may be used for player meals, will be used for purchase of team t-shirts/hoodies, other acceptable expenditures (will be developed by LMSA board in coordination with the coaches of this current year)
  + An example of some of the Cost breakdown:
  + $500 provincial entry fees + $400 away tourney + $150-$200 for practice shirts or hoodies + $150 for a team meal. Estimated costs associated with playing at rep. team level= $1200 other costs- possibly 2 home/away games with Elkford and medicine Hat, one day mini tourney, extra practices and possible umping expenses. These costs will be covered by the player fee, other fund raising is encouraged and the LMSA board would encourage the majority of these efforts to be a cross division team building opportunity as we want the rep. team players to see themselves as part of a bigger group.
* Player development goes above just the team you are coaching, we wish to develop players readiness skills to move to the next level/grouping of the travel team i.e. U12 will be ready to move up to U14, U14 will be ready for U16 etc. this requires the leadership to communicate and share learnings amongst all leaders of different age groups i.e. if pitching is a weakness the board will look into off season skill development through winter training opportunities and skill clinics. With this feedback and teamwork the association can develop extra programs/trainings to improve current skill levels.
* The rep. team is an opportunity to develop community leaders and a culture of team work across age groups. The coaching team and players will be expected to assist with field and building maintenance/clean up as well as other opportunities to be determined. The coaching team will encourage all players to contribute as equally and fairly as possible.
* We encourage and welcome team spirit, teamwork, and an openness to develop this program that Lethbridge and area can be proud of!
* LMSA welcomes input into the further development of these guiding principles.