

COMPETITIVE FAIR PLAY – LAKEHILL SOFTBALL’S CORE PHILOSOPHY

Fair Play is the foundation of Lakehill Ball

Lakehill Softball works to provide a supportive sport environment where girls can develop their skills and enjoy the fun of playing one of the best games around. We offer opportunities in our community (C) and competitive (B) streams. A core principle is the philosophy of fair play.

The [International Fair Play Committee defines fair play](#) as:

“Fair competition, respect, friendship, team spirit, equality, sport without doping, respect for written and unwritten rules such as integrity, solidarity, tolerance, care, excellence and joy, are the building blocks of fair play that can be experienced and learnt both on and off the field.”

[Softball BC uses this definition](#) of fair play:

“Fair play is an attitude, a way of thinking. It can be taught and it can be learned. Once it’s learned, it can apply to every aspect of a person’s life. That’s why fair play is so important and that’s why all of us are responsible.”

Lakehill endorses the expectations for Fair Play put forward in Softball BC’s “Fair Play Code”.

For the **players** this code says:

“Participate because you want to, not just because your parent or coach wants you to. Co-operate and respect your coach, teammates and opponents, because without them, there would be no game. Always try to control your temper. Competition is stressful and can provoke powerful emotions, but fighting and mouthing off spoil the game for everyone. Remember that winning isn’t everything. While it is great to win, it should always be fun to play.”

For the **coaches** this code says:

“Encourage your team to respect the opposing team and the rules of the game, to accept the judgements of officials and opposing coaches without argument. Teach your players how to manage conflict and stress, and use good judgement in tough situations. Avoid overplaying talented players and allow average players equal playing time. Remember that children need a coach they can respect. Be generous with praise and set a good example.”

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For the **officials** this code says:

“Be consistent and objective in calling infractions, regardless of your personal feelings toward a team, coach or individual. Prevent any players or team staff from intimidating other participants, either by word or action. Similarly do not tolerate unacceptable conduct toward yourself, other officials, players or spectators. Remain open to constructive criticism and try to consider different points of view. Respect the athletes, their coaches, parents and everyone involved in your sport. Remember that you have many shared interests and common sport goals.”

For the **administrators** this code says:

“Make sure that coaches and officials are capable of promoting Fair Play as well as the development of sound judgment and good technical skills. Encourage them to become certified. Do your best to ensure that all children are given the same chance to participate, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic background or race. Distribute Fair Play Codes to spectators, coaches, players, officials, parents and news media.”

Lakehill Softball is not a win at all costs park. While winning is a hopeful outcome, it is never the primary objective of our activities if it comes at the cost of fair play. Fair play has to be considered across the season since when and where players play changes depending upon the situation. Lakehill softball players can always expect fair play opportunities and Lakehill coaches implement procedures to ensure fair play regardless of the stream (Community C or Competitive B) they are playing.

How to Play with Competitive Fair Play

Fair play has with it the concept of where and how much players play. Within the Community C stream, fair play means equitable positional and playing time across the season. So, league play, tournaments, districts and provincials would all be similarly addressed.

Within the Competitive B stream, competitive fair play is modified slightly to reflect the increased competitive focus. So, across league play, tournaments, districts, provincials, and beyond, players will see opportunities for positional play and playing time. Yet in the playoff rounds of tournaments differential play will occur. This means that some players will play more in league and round-robin games and others will play more in the playoff and championship rounds. Over the full season, however, equitable innings will be sought for all.

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Competitive Fair Play with a Focus on Player Development

At Lakehill, the development of players follows Softball BC’s [NCCP “Long-Term Player Development”](#) model. This model advocates multiple positions for players across age divisions and changes the technical focus as players move from U9 all the way to U19. Softball Canada offers a [guide for parents](#) that highlights important ideas found in the full [Long-term Player Development Guide for Softball](#). The LTPD model ensures a progression through the acquisition, consolidation, and refinement of fundamental movement skills, fundamental sport skills, and fundamental softball specific skills, laying the foundation of physical literacy upon which to build athleticism.

The LTPD model uses a holistic approach to player development that recognizes that the physical, mental, cognitive, and emotional traits mature at different rates for different players. Of importance is the recognition that softball is a late specialization sport as players do not reach their peak until well into their 20’s. When specialization is too early, there are many negative consequences including lack of a development of fundamental movement and sport skills, overuse injuries, and early burnout.

The LTPD model also provides a framework to address a number of shortcomings, including: the short term goal of winning now versus long term goal of player development; adult training being imposed on children and youth; training methods for males being superimposed on females; and competitive structures interfering with player development. Key components to overcoming these shortcomings include: good coach education, support for volunteers, an understanding of proper mechanics and technical skills, and being aware of priorities at each stage of development in order to increase player potential and performance.

Lakehill Softball utilizes the LTPD model and framework to provide a supportive and developmental environment. Key developmental milestones that cover the years at Lakehill are Learning to Train (L2T; 8-11y), Training to Train (T2T; 11-15y), and Training to Compete (T2C; 15-21y). Full details are found in the Long-Term Player Development Guides but some key details that shape Lakehill’s player development philosophy are given in the following Table.

TABLE: Softball Technical Development Pathway at Lakehill Ball: inspired by the NCCP “Long-Term Player Development” to give each player the best opportunity to reach their potential (whatever that might be). Below are anticipated developmental milestones.

NOTE:

*Stages overlap as players progress at different rates

**Ratios represent an average throughout the year

***Positional play may vary year to year as team composition changes

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Stage	Division	Guiding Principles	Objectives	Benchmarks	Positional Play
Learning to Train (L2T) Ages 8-11 y	U9/ U11	<p>Focus is on process of individual & team development and not on the outcome of the game</p> <p>Players are divided into teams based on skill level, if possible</p>	<p>Fair and reasonable play time</p> <p>Refine movement skills, develop sport skills, and introduce softball skills as well as simple softball tactics and strategies</p> <p>Modify equipment, distances, and rules to reinforce fundamental skills</p> <p>Focus on fun and participation</p>	<p>Pre-season=8-16 practices</p> <p>Practice to game ratio=70:30 to 60:40</p> <p>Total # games = 18-29 + structured pre-game training</p> <p>Total # practices=42-52</p> <p>1-3 times per week in season (60-90 minutes per session)</p>	<p>Rotate players through all positions</p> <p>Early encouragement of all players to pitch, towards development of at least 5 pitchers per team</p>
Training to Train (T2T) Ages 11-15 y	U13/ U15/ U17	<p>Focus is on process of individual & team development rather than competitive outcome</p> <p>Players are separated into Community or Competitive streams based on skill level</p>	<p>Fair and reasonable play time</p> <p>Develop physical capacities and softball skills</p> <p>Further consolidate fundamental softball skills, tactics and strategies;</p>	<p>Pre-season=8-20 practices</p> <p>Practice to game ratio=60:40 to 50:50</p> <p>Total # games = 24-36 +</p>	<p>Towards play at 3-4 positions (U13) and 2-3 positions (U15)</p> <p>Develop at least 3-4 pitchers per team</p>

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		Community C – Fun (socially motivated); balance between participation and competition	Introduce advanced softball skills, tactics and strategies	structured pre-game training	
		Competitive B – Fun (competitively motivated); balance between participation and competition	Teams play to win but the major focus is on execution of skills and tactics rather than on wins and losses	Total # practices=36-45 2-3 times per week in season (90 minutes per session)	
Training to Compete (T2C) Ages 15-21y	U17/ U19/ U23	Focus is on player development and autonomy.	Fair and reasonable play time	Pre-season=10-20 practices	Community C: Play 2-3 positions;
		Distinct streams	Refine softball skills and further develop advanced softball skills, tactics and strategies	Practice to game ratio =50:50 to 40:60	Competitive B: specialize in 1 position & play 2-3 positions
		Community C – Fun (socially motivated); balance between participation and competition	Softball specialized training	Total # games = 36-52 + structured pre-game training	Develop at least 3 pitchers per team
		Competitive B – Position specific training; importance of modeling high performance players	Individual player instruction/preparation for needs, strengths, weaknesses	Total # practices=44-52	
			Life – play balance Players learn how to self-coach	2-4 times per week in season (90 minutes per session)	