



HIGH PERFORMANCE PLAN

2023 - 2025

Document Control

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Softball WA is an integral component of the national softball landscape. National representation should be viewed in two perspectives, top down and bottom up. From the national level there needs to be a clear, consistent and effective talent pathway. From the local level athletes need to be clear in their understanding of how to reach the pinnacle of the sport.

Softball WA's role is in both perspectives. Softball WA needs to work harmoniously and effectively with Softball Australia to meet their player pathway requirements. It is of benefit to both the athletes and the sport that our organisations are aligned to maximise performance, opportunities and outcomes. Softball WA also needs to work harmoniously and effectively with local players, clubs and associations to provide appropriate support, pathways and systems to collectively support aspirations of players, clubs and associations to reach their peak performance.

The programs vision is outlined below:



VISION
Consistent national representation

MISSION STATEMENT
Performance of Softball WA athletes and coaches to meet the standards for national representation achieved through use of a comprehensive Softball WA High Performance plan

PHILOSOPHY
Athlete focussed, coach directed, performance driven.

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SOFTBALL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FTEM FRAMEWORK

Softball WA supports the Australian Institute of Sport FTEM model. We all participate in sport for many different reasons:

- some are interested in maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle
- others love the thrill of competing with their friends
- a rare few set their sights on winning medals for their country.

Whatever the motivation we are on a pathway, although sometimes the pathway chooses us. The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) has developed the Foundations, Talent, Elite and Mastery framework (FTEM framework) to capture these different pathways.

FTEM provides a practical tool to assist sporting stakeholders (National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and their personnel, coaches, teachers, parents etc.) in reviewing, planning and supporting athlete pathways. The framework consists of four macro phases of athlete development (Foundation, Talent, Elite and Mastery outlined below), which are further differentiated into 10 micro phases.

FOUNDATION

In the FTEM framework, the Foundations phases are associated with the early development, refinement, and expression of the foundations of movement, leading to life-long physical literacy. Physical literacy is deemed to be a critical pre-cursor for the three key outcomes of sport, active lifestyle, recreation, and high performance, and has been recognised as a key strategic pillar and 'platform' for enduring success of sporting systems.

- F1 - Learning and Acquisition of Basic Movement
- F2 - Extension and Refinement of Movement
- F3 - Sport Specific Commitment and/or Competition

TALENT

Talent identification and development (TID) describes the process of an athlete moving into, and/or progressing up, the high performance pathway to an elite or mastery status.

Within the FTEM framework, the T1 and T2 phases expand the concept of talent identification to include consideration of a broad range of holistic athlete attributes and a period of confirmation to improve selection decisions. The T3 and T4 phases advocate a process of deliberate programming to optimise athlete development.

- T1 - Demonstration of potential
- T2 - Talent verification
- T3 - Practising and achieving
- T4 - Breakthrough and reward

ELITE

Achieving and Maintaining Elite Performance

At the pinnacle of the athlete pathway, sporting organisations strive to improve the conversion rates from national representation to podium and onto sustained success. They seek to assist athletes to negotiate the myriad of high performance stressors while maintaining a healthy sport-life balance which supports athletes' wellbeing and their ability to sustain their performance on the world stage.

To distinguish between elite and non-elite athletes in the field of talent development it is essential to fully understand expertise characteristics and their development. Elite performance within the FTEM framework is represented by clear performance benchmarks and achievable planning outcomes.

E1 - Senior Elite Representation

E2 - Senior Elite Success

MASTERY

For Olympic and Paralympic sports, mastery athletes are those that achieve sustained success at an E2 phase over multiple high performance cycles (ie a typical eight year period based on two high performance cycles of four years). Similarly, professional mastery phase athletes are those who achieve repeated and sustained success at E2 over an enduring period or era (ie eight to 10 years).

Mastery as the pinnacle of the high performance pathway represents the highest of sporting achievement. Mastery athletes represent the most advanced and optimised exemplars of the bio-psycho-social components for their respective sport. Their sustained elite success represents the most cost effective and efficient outcomes for the considerable investments made into elite athlete development. Better understanding of what athlete factors, attributes and strategies underpin sustained elite success is paramount to maximising investment in elite talent. It also enhances diagnostics, strategies and provides systems specific to pre-elite identification (T1), confirmation (T2) and development (T3).

Softball WA approaches the high performance area through a number of key factors including:

- Athletes
- Coaches
- Daily Performance Environment
- Competition
- Regional and Rural
- Leadership
- WA Institute of Sport
- Strategy Development
- Resourcing
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Critical High Performance Issues/challenges

- Collaboration with Softball Australia's High Performance program
- Enhance coaching quality
- Provide more quality competition opportunities
- Development of a Daily Performance Environment (DPE)

HP Strategies to address emergent issues and challenges:

COMPONENT	ACTION
Athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Softball WA player pathway • Develop an Individual Performance Plan with athlete agreement
Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a State Coaching Panel • Develop State Team Selection criteria • Enhance coaching education and development with FTEM pathway
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint High Performance Coordinator team in order to coordinate the high performance program
Daily Performance Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a daily performance environment plan that meets the physical, psychological and educational needs of high performing athletes
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the quality and quantity of competition opportunities • Ensure there is a spread of opportunities across associations
Research & Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce more technology and technical expertise for coaches • Educate coaches and players on data analysis and performance analysis
Stakeholder alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a partnership with a performance provider that meets the goals of a Daily Performance Environment.
State representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented selection criteria

MASTERY

M1

Sustained Success at E2

An integral and long standing member of the Aussie Spirit or Aussie Steelers team, winning multiple medals at the ISF Open World Championships.

E2

Podium Success

A member of the Aussie Spirit or Aussie Steelers team who has medaled at the ISF Open World Championships.

E1

Senior National Representation

A squad member of the Aussie Spirit or Aussie Steelers team competing at the ISF Open World Championships.

T4

Breakthrough & Reward

A member of the U18 national teams and/or member of an open age state team competing at National Championships.

T3

Practicing & Achieving

Committed to daily training & competition within state and/or national development program.

T2

Talent Verification

Confirmed as having High Performance Program potential after attending a series of development camps.

T1

Demonstration of Potential

Talent spotted at regional/state/national underage championships or nominated by local club and invited to try out for state-based development squad or program.

F3

Sport Specific Commitment and/or Competition

Playing underage and grade softball for a local club and attending coaching sessions.

F2

Extension & Refinement of Movement Foundations

Participating in organised softball related activities like Home Run Heroes to develop softball skills and/or participating in unorganised softball at home, schools & parks.

F1

Basic Movement Foundations

Learning the fundamentals of object control and interception. eg Hitting a stationary ball with a bat, catching, throwing and running etc.

ELITE

TALENT

FOUNDATION



High Performance Plan 2023-2025









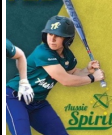


SOFTBALL WA

HIGH PERFORMANCE PLAN

FTEM MODEL

2022-2024



FTEM STAGES	FOUNDATION			TALENT				ELITE		MASTERY
FTEM PHASES	F1	F2	F3	T1	T2	T3	T4	E1	E2	M1
	Basic Movement Foundations	Extension & Refinement of Movement Foundations	Sport specific commitment &/or Competition	Demonstration of Potential	Talent Verification	Practicing & Achieving	Breakthrough & Reward	Senior National Representation	Podium success	Sustained success at E2
FTEM ATHLETES	Fundamentals of Softball.	Training to train.	Training to compete.	Training to win.	Meets relevant benchmarks in TID assessment.	Optimal development performance of all skill components in competition.	Demonstration of elite potential with senior level of competition.	Demonstration of all areas of skill on international stage.	Consistent demonstration of all areas of skill on international stage.	Consistent demonstration of all areas of skill on international stage.
										
	Learning the fundamentals of object control and interception eg hitting a stationary and moving ball with a bat, catching, throwing and running etc.	Participating in organised softball related activities like Home Run Heroes to develop softball skills &/or participating in unorganised softball at home, schools, park.	Playing under-age and grade softball for a local club and attending coaching sessions.	Talent spotted at regional/ state/ national under-age championships or nominated by local club and invited to try out for state-based development squad or program.	Confirmed as having High Performance Program potential after attending a series of development camps.	Committed to daily training & competition within state and/or national development program.	A member of the U18 national teams and/or member of an open age State team competing at National Championships.	A squad member of the Aussie Spirit or Aussie Steelers team competing at the ISF Open World Championships.	A member of the Aussie Spirit or Aussie Steelers team who has medalled at the ISF Open World Championships.	An integral and long standing member of the Aussie Spirit or Aussie Steelers team, winning multiple medals at the ISF Open World Championships.

ATHLETE MANAGEMENT				State based reporting of training and competition workloads. Development assessment of state based programs and athlete plans.		Reporting of training and competition workloads and current physical health status. Quarterly assessment of athletes individual development plan.		Detailed reporting, monitoring and assessment across physical conditioning, sports psychology, nutrition, medical condition and training workload. Game based performance measured and assessed against international standards and benchmarks.		
COACHING	Foundation Coach - evidence based curriculum.	Community Trainer Coach - Foundation Coach - Evidence based curriculum.		Best practice senior club and State age grade coaches.			Best practice by Senior State and U18 National Coaching Staff	Best practice by Open Grade Head and Assistant coaches		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3-4		Level 3-4-5 Accreditation			Level 5-6 accreditation		
COMPETITION	Local club and Association events, Home Run Heroes.	Local club and Association events, juniors.	Local club and Association events.	State events, State Championships U14-Open.	Senior State Squad, Senior Club. Age Grade State representation.	Age Grade national squad. Open Grade State representation.	Open Grade National squads. Age Grade World Championships.	International tournaments and matches.	Open grade World Championships and Olympic competition.	Open grade World Championships and Olympic competition.
DAILY TRAINING ENVIRONMENT	Club/ community player development.	Club/ community/ Association player development.	Club/ community / Association/ regional player development.	Regional / State player development, talent identification U14-Open.	State player development, State talent identification U14-Open.	National squad state based training under satellite coaches. Conditioning and skills programs.	National squad state based training under satellite coaches.	Best practice service support.	Best practice service support.	Best practice service support.
LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	Participation Manager, teachers, parents, coaches.	Participation Manager, Club Development Officer, schools, coaches.	School and club coaches, club, Association and State Development Officers.	State High Performance and Development Officers and State programs.	State High Performance and Development Officers.	High Performance Manager, National Coaches.	High Performance Manager and senior and age grade National Coaches.	High Performance Manager and Senior National Coaches.	High Performance Manager and Senior National Coaches.	High Performance Manager and Senior National Coaches.
NUTRITION				Access to online basic sports nutrition education resources.		Group training in sports nutrition and use of online tools.		Advanced individual nutrition management. Dietary plan monitoring and reporting. Access to service provider and support network.		

PERFORMANCE				Assessed during regional championships and state based competition.	Assessed during National Championships and state league competition.	Assessed during international competition, National team training camps and inter state competition.	Assessed during international competition, National team training camps and inter state competition. Athlete monitoring, testing and reporting.			
				Potential assessment via Natinal Scouting Program						
PERSONAL EXCELLENCE				Introductory leadership development and training. Respect amd rensibility training.	Social media training. Developing life balance and managing responsibilities.	Development in individual athlete personal excellence. Developing life balance and managing responsibilities.	Advanced development and support in individual athlete personal excellence. Understanding and respect for softball team's legacy and traditions.			
				Understanding State and National Pathway.		Understanding and respect for softball history.				
RESEARCH & INNOVATION	Interventions to improve Foundation.	Distributions of educational resources.	Research strategies to examine lack of transition of softballers in the HP Pathway.	Innovative recruitment and talent identification strategies.	Valid test of skills proficiency.	Longitudinal tracking of skills competencies/ performance vs worlds best.	Action research re negotiating junior to senior transition.	Investigating competition strategies and preparation.	Research strategies focussed on E2/M athletes to inform athletic profiling.	Research strategies examining factors underpinning sustained success.
SPORTS MEDICINE				Injury prevention education and management as required. Performance enhancing substance education.		Physiotherapy screening. Fundamental movement screening. Performance enhancing substance education.		Medical screening, physiotherapy screening. Movement screening. Advanced individual injury management. Possible drug screening.		
SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY				Access to online introductory learning modules and resources predominantly areas of goal setting, mental toughness, game preparation and dealing with adversity.		Individual and group development in self determination, concentration and focussing, mental toughness, building confidence, dealing with adversity.		Individual performance psychology development and servicing of self regulation, mental toughness, performance psychology strategies, group dynamics and leadership, access to service provider and suport network.		

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING		General strength and conditioning activities supervised by State, school and club coaches.	Access to general modulsed strength and conditioning programs.	Modulsed training programs and intervention to mitigate deficiencies. Testing and monitoring.	Individualised physical development programs, maximising training time. Targetted intervention to mitigate physical deficiencies. Physiological testing and evaluation. Reporting and monitoring.		
TACTICAL		Basic skills and decisions executed under pressure in game situations. Introduction to individual and team performance analysis.	Junior State level skills and decision making executed in game situations.	National elite decision making and strategy development. Skills and decisions executed under pressure in game situations.	International elite decision making and strategy development. Skills and decisions executed under pressure in elite level game situations.		
			Individual and team performance analysis.				
TECHNICAL					Best practice and consistent demonstration in all areas of skill on international stage.	Best practice and consistent demonstration in all areas of skill on international stage.	Best practice and consistent demonstration in all areas of skill on international stage.
	Umpire Level 1-3 accreditation	Umpire Level 3-6 accreditation		Umpire level 5-8 accreditation			
	Scorer level 1-2 accreditation	Scorer level 2-4 accreditation		Scorer level 4+ accreditation			
TECHNICAL & SKILL		Fundamental and technical skills development occuring in group decision making environment.	State and national skill aquisition and decision making development and application in game situations.	National and international general and specialist skill and decision making skill acquisition. International competition and national training camps.	International elite position and specialist skill acquisition and development. International elite decision making skill acquisition. International events and competition. National training camps.		
		Potential position specific clinics.					

ATHLETES

Athlete Pathway

The current pathway is based on a structured domestic competition program with players identified for Regional, State and National squads. Talented athletes are selected using a “talent selection” process based on performances through to National Championships.

All athletes should be aware of their pathway to the level of performance their individually aspire to.

Softball WA has the following levels of performance and the associated FTEM category

Club	Foundation
Association	Foundation
Regional	Foundation
U14 State team	Talent
U16 State team	Talent
U18 State team	Talent
U23 State team	Talent
Open State team	Talent

Progression through the FTEM model would then lead to national team selection for:

U18 - Junior Diamonds teams	Elite and Mastery
U23 – Aussie Pride (Women) Junior Steelers (Men)	Elite and Mastery
Open – Aussie Spirit (Women) Aussie Steelers (Men)	Elite and Mastery

Softball WA Elite Athlete Pathway

National Teams	Women		U14 Girls National Team	U16 Girls National Team	U18 Girls Diamonds	U23 Aussie Pride	Aussie Spirit
	Men		U14 Boys National Team	U16 Boys National Team	U18 Boys Diamonds	U23 Junior Steelers	Aussie Steelers
	Women & Men		National Training Camps and Squads (<i>Nationally Coordinated</i>)				
National Championships	Women		U14 Boys National Champs	U16 Girls National Champs	U18 Girls National Champs	U23 Women's National Champs	WA Flames
	Men		U14 Girls National Champs	U16 Boys National Champs	U18 Men National Champs	U23 Men's National Champs	WA Blaze
State Teams	Women		U18 Women & Men Nationals				Aussie Pride
	Men		U16 Women & Men Nationals				Aussie Colts
	Women & Men		Open Women & Men Nationals				Aussie Spirit
State Championships	Women		U14 Boys State Champs	U16 Girls State Champs	U18 Girls State Champs	U23 Women's State Champs	WA Open State Champs
	Men		U14 Girls State Champs	U16 Boys State Champs	U18 Men State Champs	U23 Men's State Champs	WA Open State Champs
Regional Teams	Women & Men		Regional Tournaments				
Local Teams	Women & Men		Club/Association Competition				
Other		Club, School Community Programs					
		Tee-ball (TBAWA)					
FTEM		FOUNDATION	TALENT			ELITE	MASTERY

COACHING

Exposure to high quality competition is a significant driver of improved performance in softball players. Softball WA is restructuring its competition offerings to provide:

- A greater range of competitions
- A greater number of competitions
- Competitions that will assist in the high performance pathway (can be used as selection tools for regional/State selection).
- Bidding to host national competitions to reduce costs and retain more athletes in the sport
- Encouraging more touring teams to visit Western Australia so both parties can grow and develop from the relationship.

Currently the National Competition comprises of a one-off National Championships event in January each year. Realistically this does not provide enough intermediate competition to ensure emerging athletes are identified and current national athletes are prepared for international competition. T

Depth and Quality of Coaching

It is acknowledged that we have a number of suitable high performance coaches operating at the elite end of the pathway. The real issue lies within the development pathway (particularly meeting the needs of athletes within the Talent to Elite section of the FTEM model). There is need of a “quality assurance program” based on educational and experiential which is aligned with the athlete FTEM pathway.

Coaching Initiatives

Coaching Panel

Development and coordination of a State Coaching Panel of all State level appointed coaches and assistant coaches to collaborate and coordinate their high performance coaching efforts. Having plans documentation and processes that provide for consistency, transparency, planned tiered approach, documentation that can be provided to coaches, players and stakeholders regarding the players pathway.

Coach Development

Create a Coach Development Program which is aligned with the FTEM pathway and provides opportunities for individuals to enhance their coaching practice leading to better performance outcomes for athletes. This program will include the following strategies:

- Review accreditation and formal education opportunities
- Ensure focus is on how to coach as well as what to coach.
- Provide informal opportunities for coaches to learn from experience and from each other
- Develop ancillary specialist coach programs (e.g. pitching, catching, batting)
- Create an opportunity for “satellite” coaches working with identified athletes in the HP Program
- Ensure coaches maintain defined benchmarks and standards for coaching practice (knowledge, application and behaviour).

By implementing a quality assurance program and coach education initiatives Softball WA can ensure that selected coaches have the right skill sets and competencies to match with the developmental needs of talented and elite athletes.

Coaching Leadership (National Head Coaches)

DAILY PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENT

The philosophy underpinning the HP program is to ensure it is athlete-centred and performance driven. The use of team and individual performance plans with the provision of athlete monitoring and performance evaluation will assist coaches to develop a meaningful coach/athlete relationship focussed on improving performance outcomes.

Overview of the Daily Performance Environment

A critical challenge for the Daily Performance Environment within Softball WA includes

- Number of athletes seeking within each athlete demographic;
- Number of athletes seeking to join a High Performance program;
- Number of athletes currently at an acceptable High Performance program level;
- Lack of accessible affordable high performance facilities, equipment and services;
- Time constraints for both coaches and athletes; and
- Lack of High Performance program funding for softball.

Proposed Daily Performance Environment

Coaches will develop a program and services agreement will be negotiated with each identified athlete and will be based on the level of performance and any other training needs (Individual Performance Plan). For example, strength and conditioning and access to performance psychology may be identified as priorities for athletes. Services and support required include:

- Sports Science/Sports Medicine (Injury management)
- "Personal Excellence"
- Strength and Conditioning
- Access to training facilities including gymnasium
- Other performance services as required including biomechanics, nutrition and performance psychology

Daily Performance Environment

The majority of sport related training will be undertaken at the Mirrabooka International Softball Stadium. It is envisaged that relationships with performance partners will allow High Performance program participants to undertake their daily performance routines within their operational venues.

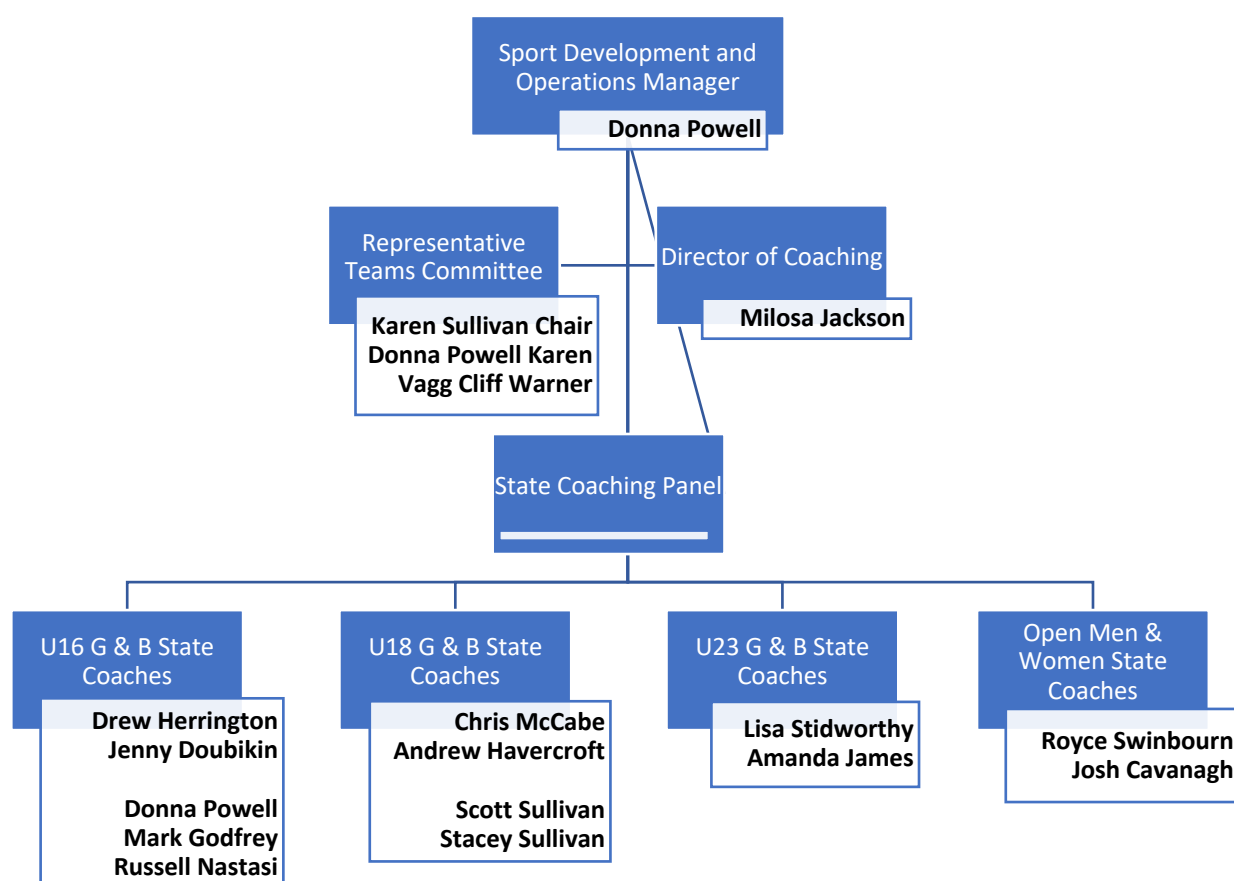
Coordination and WAIS Support

The Sport Development and Operations Manager will be responsible for liaising with the Western Australian Institute of Sport for identified and support softball athletes.

LEADERSHIP

Central to the High Performance program will be a well established team with a clear vision and strategic priorities to lead Softball WA forward. This team will provide advice to the Sports Development and Operations Manager who will ultimately be accountable for the program outcomes. This approach will ensure that the High Performance team and leadership have the necessary degree of empowerment to make conscientious operational and innovative decisions.

High Performance Organisational Structure (High Performance Team)



Rationale

Three tiers of organisation are required to deliver the High Performance Program:

- Strategic leadership is provided by the Sport Development and Operations Manager
- Operational, technical direction and performance service support is provided by the Representative Teams Committee and Director of Coaching. Additional support is available from the Softball Australia National Coaching & Pathways Manager, the HP Administrator and Service Support Coordinator.
- Coaching via appointment of Open and age based State Coaches for girls/boys and women/men's teams to deliver coaching to athletes

HIGH PERFORMANCE ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA	ACTIONS	PRIORITY	WHO	WHEN	STATUS
FOCUS AREA 1: That Softball WA develops a robust High Performance Plan that aligns with the Strategic and Operational Plans of the Association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a detailed High Performance / Talent Development Plan that aligns with National targets and initiatives 	High	CEO, Board & SDOM		
FOCUS AREA 2: That Softball WA develops, implements, and publishes an athlete pathway document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current external pathway documents Seek endorsement by Board with HP Action Plan Develop clear policies and procedures for athlete selection for each level of the talent pathway (or State Team Selection) Develop a statement that outlines the degree of servicing for athletes at each level of the talent pathway. Includes athlete pathway document of school-based and feeder programs and any partnerships with sports such as T-Ball and Baseball. 	High	CEO, Board & SDOM		
FOCUS AREA 3: That Softball WA makes some progress in influencing the Daily Performance Environment by implementing an integrated sport science servicing plan.	Implement partnership agreement with an identified service provider including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of sports science expertise player and coach education regarding Strength & Conditioning principles resources for athletes who participate in HP/TD programs that will accelerate personal development Undertake a review after 12 months with a view to include other services as required 	Low	SDOM & CEO		

<p>FOCUS AREA 4: That Softball WA conducts a full review of the competition structure to ensure that levels of competition are appropriate for the development needs of the athletes at each stage of their career/the athlete pathway.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDOM to complete full review of current competitions with primary objective to review competitions in terms of the alignment to HP pathways • SDOM to make recommendations for retaining, re-vamping and/or establishing new competitions to promote HP strategic objectives • Period of consultation with relevant parties on the SDOM recommendations • Develop a separate action plan and timeline to implement agreed recommendations 	Medium	CEO / SDOM		
<p>FOCUS AREA 5: Softball WA establishes a State Coaching Panel to work collaboratively across representative teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve professional coaching development and skills • Share knowledge and data of players • Plan a High Performance calendar • Coaches be heavily involved in the Sports Science Servicing Plan. • Develop a coach mentoring program 	High	SDOM / Director of Coaching / State Coaches		
<p>FOCUS AREA 6: Softball WA invests into information and communication technology for development of tools for coaches and players to improve skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Softball WA makes progress in influencing the Daily Training Environment by implementing an integrated sport science servicing plan with an appropriate servicing partner • Softball WA purchase video and data analysis technologies to support coaches upskilling players. • Coaches are upskilled in data collection, interpretation, analysis. • Coaches are educated to transfer data to practical skill development techniques with players. 	High	CEO / SDOM / Director of Coaching / State Coaches		
<p>FOCUS AREA 7: That Softball WA includes regional and rural areas in the High Performance Plan, and engages with the Regional Talent Development program, as an opportunity for growth within 2-3 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding to visit Regional Areas to Talent ID regional athletes during other capacity building activities • Seek to develop relationships with suitable coaches to oversee Softball WA programs with Talent ID recognised athletes. • Liaise with relevant Sport Academies (South West/Mid-West) to provide suitable services to Regional ID athletes. 	Low	SDOM, PDO		

HIGH PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction:

Attached here is a high performance review tool which has been developed to help Softball WA work better on the planning, continuous development and on-going review of the program.

This review tool is designed to be used primarily as a guide within a high performance program. In essence, this process is designed to help understand:

- How well have we performed against our plan – KPIs?
- What do we think we are really good at?
- What do we need to improve?
- How can we eliminate or reduce the impact of our performance barriers?
- What do we really need help with?
- What are our competitors doing better than us?
- What could we learn from other sports' HPPs?
- How can we improve our performance drivers?

How does it work?

The review tool is made up of discreet elements which are designed to deconstruct Softball WA's high performance program and examine its constituent parts in a logical and sequenced fashion. The review tool provides a structure within which discussions can take place which might highlight the effectiveness of the program.

The process looks to identify the performance drivers that underpin success in our sport, and how well our processes and systems support those drivers, as well as the performance barriers that currently are a potential threat to the delivery of successful performances.

Preparation – considering the evidence

For the purpose of this review, high performance refers to the point at which Softball WA commences the organised identification of talent and implements systematic programs to develop talent and maximise potential. The term high performance encompasses activities conducted along the talent development pathway to achieve success at the national/international level.

Performance history, athletes and coaches in the system

To do this, please review the following:

- The current Softball WA Strategic Plan
- Current Softball WA High Performance squads, structure and criteria
- Athlete and Coach Development Pathways

Performance History				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4-8th
Results at <u>recent</u> National Championships – Open (2022)				
Results at <u>past</u> 3 National Championships - Open (2021)				
- Open (2020)				
- Open (2019)				
Results at <u>recent</u> National Championships – U23 (2022)				
Results at <u>past</u> 3 National Championships - U23 (2021)				
- U23 (2020)				
- U23 (2019)				
Results at <u>recent</u> National Championships – U18 (2022)				
Results at <u>past</u> 3 National Championships - U18 (2021)				

- U18 (2020)				
- U18 (2019)				
Results at <u>recent</u> National Championships – U16 (2022)				
Results at <u>past</u> 3 National Championships - U16 (2021)				
- U16 (2020)				
- U16 (2019)				

Number of Athletes and Coaches in the System	Now	Likely by 2024
WA athletes selected in Australian Teams – Open (Current)	Women - Men –	Women – Men –
WA athletes selected in Australian Teams – Under Age (Current)	Women – Men –	Women – Men -
WA coaches selected into National Programs	Women – Men -	Women – Men -
WA coaches selected in State Team Programs	Women – Men -	Women – Men -

2. Preparation –

Consider how well our high performance program addresses the following Performance Drivers and Planning Themes:

Performance Drivers

- Athletes
- Coaching
- Daily Performance Environment
- Competition
- Regional and Rural
- Leadership
- WAIS Program Sports (if applicable)

Planning Themes

- Vision and Values
- Strategy Development
- Resourcing
- Monitoring and Review

3. The program review questions and RAGG Ratings

The RAGG ratings or - Red / Amber / Green / Gold - ratings offer a way of determining the relative strength of a particular area of the current high performance program. As you go through each question, you are asked to nominate a RAGG rating to as many questions as possible. The RAGG ratings are defined as follows:

Gold	Outstanding and a match for the national benchmark; potential source of learning and inspiration to others
Green	Working well; fully functional, up to date and fit for purpose; high confidence based on evidence; challenges identified, action taken and solution working
Amber	Solution to challenges identified, action plans under way with signs of progress being made
Red	Not Working; solution to challenge not agreed, planned or activated

Where you are unsure of how to respond – then do not worry. Simply make a note against ‘Unsure’. If from your perspective the element / question is not applicable – then simply note ‘Not Applicable’.

4. The Priority Definitions

Once you have determined a suitable RAGG rating for the element, then consider how much of a priority it is for the sport to address. The priority ratings are as follows:

- **1 - VERY HIGH PRIORITY - Do now**
Important and urgent - must be addressed now
- **2 - HIGH PRIORITY – Plan & Action**
Important and less urgent – plan to address to be determined
- **3 - MEDIUM PRIORITY - Plan & Monitor**
Less important and lower impact on program relative to other matters
- **4 - LOW PRIORITY – Monitor**
Limited impact on program - does not need attention now

5. Program review

Performance Driver	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GO LD	GREEN	AMBER	RED	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Athletes	1	We have identified the number, quality and Daily Performance Environment (DPE) location of current athletes in your pathway.											
	2	We play an active role in educating athletes (and family members) to take responsibility for their actions, including those outside the DPE.											
	3	We detail the requirements of the athletes, including standards of service provision expected to support their DPE at each stage of the pathway.											
	4	We have mapped out in detail, the physical/technical/skills curriculum and activities designed to achieve athlete characteristics and performance standards expected at each level. This is visible to the athletes and coaches to follow.											
	5	We have developed partnerships or leveraged support for athlete development through clubs, universities, schools, private providers or regional academies.											
	6	We clearly identify your expectations of stakeholders supporting athletes in the pathway including: NSOs, WAIS, Regional Academies, Regional Sporting Associations (RSA), clubs, schools, etc.											
	7	Most of our highest performing athletes emerged from your development and talent recruitment programs.											
	8	We have well developed plans and tools for tracking your athletes along a pathway, and have evidence to show where they fit in to an overall program.											
	9	We have clear policies and procedures for athlete selection for each level of the talent pathway, and these are distributed to stakeholders.											

Performance Driver	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	RED	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Coaches	1	We have identified the number, quality and location of current HP and Talent Development (TD) coaches.											
	2	We are committed to attracting and recruiting the best HP coaches available.											
	3	Strategies are in place to bridge the gap between what coaching talent you have, and what you need.											
	4	Our coaches are fully aware of the HP strategic direction, policies and the desired culture/philosophy of your sport.											
	5	Our coaches have the desired impact on athlete progression and performance.											
	6	The leadership team includes a clearly identified role that is responsible and accountable for HP/TD coaching development and support.											
	7	Systems and processes define outcomes and hold HP coaches accountable to them.											
	8	We have individualised professional development plans in place for your key coaches.											
	9	Our coaches understand that you expect them to stay "current" and relevant.											
	10	The coaches understand the need to communicate with family and friends of the athletes.											
	11	Coaches are afforded regular opportunities to meet, share and collaborate with each other.											
	12	Our sport encourages its coaches to experiment and innovate, includes looking to best practice from other States /NSO.											
	13	Recruitment and selection policies and procedures are in place for all HP/TD coaching positions.											

Performance Driver	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	RED	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Daily Performance Environment (DPE)	1	Current support service provision has been mapped against the capability necessary for optimal athlete preparation and performance.											
	2	Strategies have been implemented to address any gap between current capability and required future capability.											
	3	Roles and responsibilities for the provision of athlete services at each level of the pathway are clearly communicated.											
	4	The sport has an effective injury and / or athlete welfare monitoring and management system.											
	5	Athletes have ready access to appropriate facilities as and when required.											
	6	Successful athletes cite membership of your program as a major determinant of their achievements.											
	7	The athletes believe that the program is athlete focussed – they are the priority.											

	8	Athletes are able to shape their programs through formal and informal feedback to coaches.											
	9	The athletes' views are heard and valued.											
	10	The athletes have ready access to support services if they are injured while training.											
	11	There is a strong and effective working relationship and integration of service providers, key coaches and HP leadership.											
	12	Our athletes and coaches are committed to the program and demonstrate behaviours that are appropriate to achieve program targets.											

Performance Driver	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOL D	GR EEN	AM BER	RE D	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Competition	1	There are clear benchmark events for each season.											
	2	Levels of competition are appropriate for the development needs of the athletes at each stage of their career.											
	3	The competition schedule is planned with the engagement of the athletes, coaches and key service providers.											
	4	We use competitions to evaluate and develop on and off-field behaviours and skills,											
	5	Recent competition goals have been met by the majority of your athletes.											
	6	We use the competition outcomes to assess the overall effectiveness of your program.											
	7	We seek competition away from WA if the coaches and athletes require it.											

Performance Driver	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOL D	GR EEN	AM BER	RE D	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Regional and Rural	1	Regional/rural areas in WA feature in our High Performance Plan.											
	2	Our talent pathway includes reference to regional programs/competitions as part of the overall pathway for our sport.											
	3	The DPE in regional/rural WA is appropriate to the level of athletes who reside here.											
	4	The competitive environment for our sport in regional WA is demanding and stretching.											
	5	Our sport has adequate systems for identifying talent within the regional areas of WA.											
	6	Coaches in regional WA have access to the appropriate level of support.											
	7	Coaches based in regional/rural WA are afforded opportunities to work with their metro colleagues.											
	8	There is a robust plan in place for the education and development of regionally-based coaches/officials/administrators.											
	9	Our sport has systems in place which ensure that up-to-date information is readily available to athletes/coaches/officials.											
	10	Our sport works proactively in partnership with Local Government Authorities, regional academies etc.											

Performance Driver	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	RED	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Leadership	1	We understand what HP "leadership" you need and your leaders have roles.											
	2	We have job profiles for all of your leadership team members.											
	3	We leadership team is having the desired impact.											
	4	We identify, promote, train and develop your top talent and plan for leadership progression and succession within your sport.											
	5	The governance structure of your sport facilitates effective leadership and management of the program by the HP staff.											
	6	The Board provides appropriate oversight.											
	7	There is trust and confidence in your leaders – "the coaches have the locker room".											
	8	The hard questions are asked and answered.											
	9	We are able to influence the NSO's decision-making and thinking.											
	10	In the face of crises or challenges, your leadership team can be relied upon to deal with stakeholders including the media.											
	11	Our athletes, coaches and staff are fully aware of current anti-doping requirements and are committed to the culture of drug-free sport.											
	12	Our sport incorporates integrity issues and policy within its yearly plan.											
	13	We have a dispute resolution policy and process in place for athletes wanting to appeal selection outcomes.											

Performance Driver	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	RED	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
WAIS Program Sports (if apply)	1	We have an enduring relationship with WAIS and it is mutually beneficial.											
	2	The WAIS program for your sport adds value to your non-WAIS activities.											
	3	We have multiple contacts within WAIS and these are effective.											
	4	Our athletes make full use of the support services on offer at WAIS.											
	5	We meet regularly with key staff at WAIS.											
	6	Our athletes view a WAIS scholarship as a worthwhile target and it helps to keep them motivated.											
	7	Coaches from our sport benefit from being involved in WAIS.											
	8	Our association with WAIS is critical to our high performance planning.											
	9	We are provided with and have access to high performance resources from WAIS.											

Planning Theme	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOL D	GRE EN	AMB ER	RE D	UNS URE	N/ A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Strategy Development	1	Our Strategic Plan/ HP Plan sets goals with specific, measurable and realistic targets.											
	2	It provides strategic direction for developing key components of our performance program.											
	3	There is alignment/links/engagement between the NSO/SSA/RSA.											
	4	Stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities at each level of the development pathway.											
	5	The Strategic Plan is up-to-date and reflects output from a review of trends in our sport.											
	6	The plan contains sufficient detail to help drive creation of Annual Operational Plans.											
	7	The clarity of our HP objectives generates buy-in from stakeholders.											
	8	A culture of Aim-Plan-Do-Review ensures our program is constantly evolving.											
	9	Plans, and changes to them, are communicated widely and effectively, ensuring a high level of awareness.											
	10	We have used an evidence-based approach (such as a SWOT/GAP analysis) to assess your current position.											
	11	We have analysed the barriers to success, their key causes and identified the key HP areas where change needs to occur.											
	12	The strategy is discussed and developed with many stakeholders to ensure that it is all encompassing.											
	13	We have a planned and structured system for the identification of talented athletes.											
	14	We have clearly defined pathways and opportunities for officials.											

Planning Theme	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOL D	GR EN	AM BER	RE D	UNS URE	N/ A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Resource	1	Resources have been allocated to where they are most needed and where they will have greatest impact on successful outcomes.											
	2	We have an established pattern of meetings covering athlete management and operations											
	3	Structures are regularly reviewed and adapted accordingly.											
	4	Contributions to attainments are freely recognised and rewarded.											
	5	An identified individual has formal responsibility for HP communications.											
	6	Budgeting reflects the goals of your program and the priorities of your annual plan.											
	7	Spend is reviewed regularly to assess the impact of funding decisions upon performance.											
	8	Our sport is capable of attracting funds from a number of non-Governmental sources.											
	9	The leaders and the Board are aware of the financial situation at any given time.											
	10	Our sport has adequate facilities for both the DPE and the competition environment within both Metropolitan and regional areas.											

Planning Theme	S#	STATEMENT	RAGG RATING						PRIORITY				COMMENTS
			GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	RED	UNSURE	N/A	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Monitor & Evaluate	1	Robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes are embedded and well documented.											
	2	We use appropriate KPIs which indicate progress towards long-term goals.											
	3	Views of all stakeholders are sought through a range methods on a regular basis.											
	4	We have a structured approach to reviewing the views gathered, and communicating your responses to the stakeholders.											

RESEARCH

The impact of research and innovation has the potential to significantly improve outcomes in the delivery of Softball WA's High Performance Plan and includes:

- Pitching research and development program
- Cross-fertilisation with Baseball on HP Practice and Coaching
- Data collection from training and match footage
- Coach education to analyse data

Pitching Research Initiatives (Key activities associated with National Battery Performance Centre)

Improving pitching coaching and performance

Pitching performance is one of the key drivers of success in softball. Softball Australia has recognised the importance of pitching by implementing a National Battery Program. There is an opportunity to support the efforts of Softball Australia to gain data from a researcher or sports scientist incorporating biomechanics, skill acquisition and performance outcomes to improve skill acquisition.

Data Collection and Analysis

Purchase video technology

Data collection and analysis is an integral component of high performance. Improved video technology is available to capture game and training footage. Analysis platforms are available to code and quantify areas of performance that players and coaches can assess and develop issue specific programs to address.

Data use in performance management

Underpinning this purchase of technology will be the educational component. Initially there will be training around three areas:

- Camera operation, set up and locations
- Data analysis – understanding specific data sets and they mean for both players and coaches
- Data implementation – educating coaches how best to transfer insights gained from the captured data and data trends into performance and performance management.

Cross Fertilisation of ideas in HP Practice (Baseball and Softball)

Baseball and softball have a number of synergies within the skills and game itself, governance, Olympic aspirations, and the athlete developmental pathway. At the high performance end of the athlete pathway (Elite – Mastery) there is a significant opportunity to share knowledge and resources between the two games. Although some foundational skills diverge at the elite level many high performance elements are similar and services to support such skills could be shared including:

- Strength and Conditioning
- Performance Psychology
- Video analysis
- Scouting and performance profiling
- Coaching and some tactical similarities

Combined high performance programs provide significant interactions and exchange of ideas and methods in coaching, officiating and administration. This collaboration also provides the opportunity to make savings in terms of high performance costs (e.g. coaching – sports science; equipment, software and sport science support).

Linkage with Western Australia Institute of Sport (WAIS)

WAIS has undertaken research to assist in focussing goals and strategies towards high performance. The following condenses their findings and supports the approach undertaken by Softball WA in this High Performance Plant through:

- Clear HP Planning and alignment
- Coach Development and education
- Talent identification and development
- Effective environments and athlete retention
- Athlete development focus areas
- Regional engagement
- Para sport TID and pathway development

SNAPSHOT

Understanding our WA High Performance Pathways

SURVEY

The Survey identified a need for **clear high performance strategies**, structure and consistent understanding of role and requirements for stakeholders (coaches, athletes, SSAs, NSOs, WAIS and regional academies) throughout the HP pathway

43% Addressing barriers in **Coaching**, specifically at Development & Elite levels, will support effective HP pathways



Areas for focus include number of coaches, coach development, and employment / remuneration

Talent Supply + Athlete Retention

- **Club** development programs identified as main source of talent supply
- Athlete retention challenges noted with **Drop Out** occurring at transition from Development to Elite level, and 15-20 years of age
- **Environment**, and **Opportunities** for emerging athletes are vital



Para-sport improvement opportunities exist across the full HP pathway. Talent referral, coaching, para-classification and facilities are key barriers



Regional academies have a role to play, as hubs for coaching, performance support, education and camps

Underpinning is a theme of limited **financial resources** that constrain effectiveness of HP pathways for organisations and individuals. Impacts identified: staffing levels, coaching, facilities, and travel



Profile of Survey Respondents

PATHWAY SUCCESS FACTORS

"The Coach was recognised as pivotal in supporting athlete development and effective environments"

A review of pathway success factors confirmed consistent themes to the Survey and identified key areas for consideration in strengthening high performance pathways:

- Clear HP strategy and alignment
- Coach development and education
- Talent identification and development
- Effective environments and athlete retention
- Athlete development focus areas
- Regional engagement
- Para-sport TID and pathway development

The importance of **context** in the design of pathway initiatives and the alignment of governance, strategy, structure and partners

The alignment of outcomes from the survey and pathway success factors indicates clear opportunities to improve WA's high performance pathways for Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports

SOFTBALL AUSTRALIA

Softball Australia is introducing from 2023 a “Two Squad Concept” for elite team selection.

Squad One

Players who are over 18 will be called the Elite Player Development Squad (EPDS). Teams will be selected from this squad to attend events depending on the specific requirements of each event. For example, the World Cup qualifier will require a different team than a one-off series against New Zealand. It is Softball Australia aspiration that all players selected for an Olympic Team will have at least ten international caps.

The team required at any point in time will change and it is incumbent upon us to ensure our teams are best placed to win pinnacle events such as the Olympics. Teams will be selected depending on opposition and tournament type which will allow younger members to have time to mature in a positive environment surrounded by experienced international players. This approach will also maintain internal competition between squad members to ensure they are in the best mental and physical condition to be selected at any time. Squads will be selected every year and automatic selection, or progression will depend solely on performance. There may be times in the selection cycle where players may not be the right fit for a particular squad, but they will still be considered part of the system.

To maintain a position in the squad, players will be required to attend designated events both face to face and online as well as participating fully in training, monitoring and testing program throughout the year. Within the squad, smaller teams will be developed – _battery, infield, outfield. The battery program will be supported by coaching resources and be driven centrally with specific resources allocated to face to face and online training environments. The program will have specific annual targets and players will be taken in and out of the program based on their engagement in the program and their performance both on and off the field.

Selection for this squad will be carried out in three parts – _domestic selection will occur at the national championships; overseas selection will consider players currently competing internationally and talent transfer will identify athletes from other sports who demonstrate an aptitude to train as softball players.

Squad Two

Players who are under 18 will form the Talent Development Squad (TDS). The focus for this squad will be the identification and development of talented athletes to become international softball players.

Players who are currently playing in Australia as well as athletes from the talent transfer program will be considered for this squad. Players will need to demonstrate both the physical and mental aptitude to develop into international softball players. All players will be required to maintain home based training and learning programs as well as attending events when required.

National Testing Program

To capture a game wide set of physical data we will be asking all female players attending the Softball Australia national events to take part in the National testing program.

The program will be delivered at the events, and we do not believe that the small battery of tests Grip strength, 20 m sprint, long and vertical jump will take anything away from performance.