



SOFTBALL BATTER UP

HOW TO CONDUCT SBU PROGRAMS



SPORTAUS

FUN COMMUNITY DIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE TEAMWORK

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OVERVIEW

Softball Australia has recognised the need for a nationally branded junior participation program to encourage children to be a part of softball from an early age. Softball Batter Up (**SBU**) has been developed, in accordance with the Long-Term Athlete Development Model, to introduce participants to the fundamental skills of softball through a variety of activities and games designed to develop physical fitness, social skills and an understanding of the game.

Softball Batter Up has been designed to be flexible in delivery and to respond to the individual abilities and experience of each participant. A feature of the program is its flexibility in relation to when and how it is delivered.

Sessions can be run prior to junior softball games each week, condensed into pre-season, as a school holiday program, on weekends or any time during the year. Each stage provides an appropriate learning environment for a range of ages and abilities, helping maximise enjoyment and encouraging a lifelong participation in the sport.

The Program combines a variety of mechanical, physical, coordination and mental skills in a team atmosphere and helps participants to develop an understanding of the game

ROLE OF THE SOFTBALL BATTER UP COACH

Coaches have a very important development role to play, a role that extends far beyond teaching the skills of softball. A coach assumes the responsibility of ensuring the participants have an enjoyable and safe sporting experience while learning the fundamental skills of the game. It is important for coaches to recognise their responsibility to contribute in a positive way to growth of the participants as individuals. A coach's leadership philosophy and actions should assist young children to develop a sense of fairness, sportsmanship and respect.

The coach must ensure the program is planned weekly and communicate with the coordinator if there are any issues or problems that may need rectifying.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide a safe environment and quality softball experience
- Adequately plan activities to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to participate
- Develop and maintain a fun atmosphere in all activities at all times
- Provide opportunities to participate in interesting and challenging ways that simulate game situations
- Maximise participation and support players to develop skills during the course of the activity
- Ensure equipment is safe and proper – equipment should be kept in good order and adequately repaired where necessary
- Closely supervise all activities
- Develop clear rules for training and general conduct

SOFTBALL BATTER UP ACTIVITIES

Softball Batter Up activities align with the national health and physical education curriculum and are written with coaches and teachers in mind. Detailed information is provided on each activity's learning intention, band levels, and skill focus, together with questions to encourage participant engagement.

With more than [60 different softball activities](#) and games on offer, you can design your own softball sessions, or even design your entire program allowing for repetition over time to maximise learning and development opportunities. There are three different categories of activities in the card set:

The activities are divided into three different categories:

Starter	5- 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use as a warm up• Pre-activity energisers• Encourages co-operative play
Get into it	10-15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activity based on the Game Sense approach• The focus is on participation, not the skills and drills• The focus is on involvement, not winning or technique
Game application	15-30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modified games of softball• This is the main part of the session• Variations can be applied depending on the age and ability of the group

Each session should contain at least one of each category

The activities are available in hard copy from the [Softball Australia online shop](#) for (\$50.00 including GST) or they can be viewed in the resources section of the [Softball Batter Up website](#).

Learning intention

Band levels

Skill focus

Content description

Equipment

Game application
Beat the base

Learning intention
Beat the base is a modified softball game that builds on fielding, throwing and catching skills and encourages teamwork and thoughtful placement of the ball. It provides a good introduction to softball and baseball.

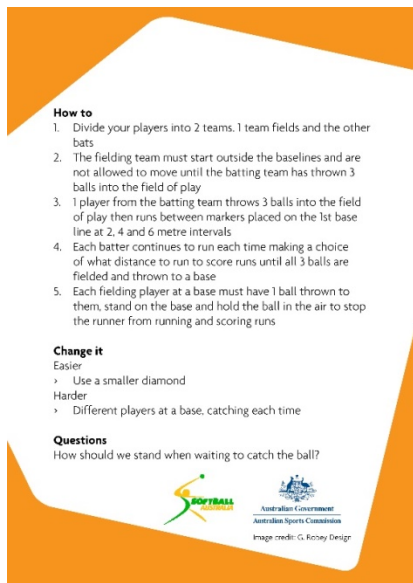
3-4 **5-6** **Skill development**

Skill focus
Fielding, throwing, and teamwork

Content description
ACPMP043, ACPMP045, ACPMP061, ACPMP063

Equipment
3 balls per group
Marker cones
1 glove per player (optional)

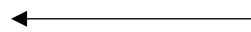
SOFTBALL BATTER UP



How to



Change it



Questions

As well as the activity card, the sets also contain additional information including:

- 🕒 Planning and conducting your sessions
- 🕒 The Game Sense approach
- 🕒 Quickly and easily forming groups
- 🕒 Safety considerations

SOFTBALL BATTER UP WEBSITE

The SBU website makes it easy to deliver a fun, flexible and engaging program for children from kindergarten age to years 6. The focus is on fun activities while learning basic throw, catching, fielding and striking skills. You don't need to be an experienced softball player or coach to deliver a successful program, which can be adapted for all ages and abilities using the Game Sense and CHANGE IT approach. With more than 60 different softball activities and games, you can design your own sessions or even design your entire program allowing for repetition over time to maximize learning and development.

The SBU website contains great resources for the softball coach including:

- 🕒 Video clips of all the activities
- 🕒 A session planner where you can drag and drop the activities you want to run for each session
- 🕒 Pre-planned sessions for four and six weeks in each of the three band levels
- 🕒 How to use the resources
- 🕒 Purchase equipment
- 🕒 Tips on planning and conducting your sessions
- 🕒 How to quickly and easily form groups
- 🕒 And most importantly, safety considerations



COACHING PHILOSOPHY

The Softball Batter Up objectives are to provide opportunities to participate in games and activities in a learning environment that is fun, safe and embodies the principles of fair play. The following key elements are a guide to ensure sessions are conducted in accordance with the Program objectives.

MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION	Children like variety and action. Aim for sessions that keep them moving. Minimise the amount of time participants are waiting for their turn by having smaller teams or more equipment. Provide an enjoyable environment.
LEARNING THROUGH MODIFIED GAMES	Children love learning new skills. When working with entry level participants it is recommended that skill development occurs during games or game-based activities. By involving participants in games, they will not only be active for longer – therefore improving their skills – but will gain more enjoyment from the experience.
MATCH PARTICIPANTS FOR SIZE AND ABILITY	Be aware of the individual skill and experience level of participants. Where possible, match participants accordingly. This will reduce the risk of injury and lead to enhanced skill development and enjoyment for all participants.
FACILITATOR VERSUS INSTRUCTOR	<p>Coaches play more of a facilitator than instructor role. Rather than instructing participants how to perform a particular skill, coaches provide key coaching points then present challenges which participants must attempt.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🏆 How many times can you catch the ball in 30 seconds? 🏆 Where will you stand to field the ball? 🏆 How could this activity work better? <p>This fosters a Game Sense approach and engages players in the activity at a level that suits their own ability, and players learn through self-discovery rather than coach direction.</p>

ASK THE PARTICIPANTS	Asking questions is a valuable strategy to engage participants in changing the activity to increase participation and to make the activity more or less challenging.
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	<p>Providing a safe environment is essential. Prior to each session, check facilities and equipment and remove any potential hazards. If there is a potential risk of injury, the session should be delayed until all risk has been removed or managed and a safe environment restored.</p> <p>Before starting a session, make sure there is adequate distance between activities. Explain any potential dangers and enforce safety rules.</p>
SUPERVISE	<p>Remember it is your responsibility to supervise activities and to make modifications where appropriate to ensure the safety of all involved.</p> <p>Ask yourself the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⓧ Is this game safe? ⓧ Are the players having fun? ⓧ Is participation being maximised? ⓧ Is the game appropriate to the ability level of each player? ⓧ Are all players being challenged? ⓧ Is the objective of the game being achieved? <p>If the answer to any of these questions is 'no', CHANGE IT.</p>

SOFTBALL FOR ALL ABILITIES

Thousands of Australians get involved in sport each year. It's part of our culture and way of life. For people with a disability, the motivation to play sport is the same as for everyone else: fun, fitness, self-esteem, to increase skills and social contact. As individuals, young people with a disability also have a right to participate in sport and physical activity and maximise their potential.

There are many similarities than differences in teaching and coaching athletes with a disability. Athletes are athletes first and foremost.

A fundamental component and attribute of being a good coach is inclusion. Inclusive coaching does not require any special skills or knowledge – just enthusiasm, a flexible attitude and a willingness to try.

As every young player is unique, a good coach should always conduct activities that cater for individual differences and as such, a young athlete with a disability should be seen as just another member of the team.

Coaches should have the ability to assess individual strengths and weaknesses, set challenging and achievable goals, communicate effectively and provide accurate and positive feed-back.

Young people with a disability can be active participants in sport and physical activity. In fact, in many cases, they can be included with little or no adaptations or modifications to the activities already being undertaken within a program. However, if necessary, an activity or game can be adapted or modified using CHANGE IT.

C	COACHING STYLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding when to direct activities and when to ask the players Knowing when to provide discrete instruction and when to 'just let the kids play' The use of player questioning is a valuable strategy to engage the players themselves in changing the activity to increase participation and to make the activity more or less challenging.
H	HOW YOU SCORE TO WIN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce zones for batting or target games.
A	AREA (PLAYING AREA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the playing area smaller or larger; alter distances to targets between players.
N	NUMBER OF PLAYERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider different team sizes to keep all players active. Have several games of 2 v 2 or if focusing on defensive skills, change to 3 v 2 or 2 v 1 etc.
G	GAME RULES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow 2 bounces before catching or stopping the ball or introduce a no-go zone.
E	EQUIPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a larger or softer ball; no bat or foam bat, bins or markers for targets.
I	INCLUSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify the game to maximise the involvement from all players. Ask the players how to change the game.
T	TIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce or extend the time to perform actions; change the number of passes within a time limit, vary the length of time a player can hold the ball.

GUIDELINES FOR DELIVERY

Before the lesson

- 1 This booklet provides an introduction and understanding of the SBU coaching philosophy and the program structure
- 2 Read through the Lesson Plans and activities presented to make sure you understand the objectives and requirements for each lesson
- 3 Organise an appropriate and safe playing area and the necessary equipment (based on the number, ability levels and experience of the players).

During the lesson

Deliver each session using the activities and instructions provided

- 1 Keep group sizes to a minimum to ensure maximum participation for all children. Run the activity with several groups at once, or set up stations with various activities and rotate regularly. Remember to ensure there is adequate supervision at all times. It is recommended that the program is conducted with a ratio of one coach/teacher per 10-12 participants.
- 2 Use the 'easier' and 'harder' variations to modify the games to suit the ability levels of all players. If necessary, use the CHANGE IT principles to modify activities.
- 3 Encourage participants to have a go and be involved. Maximise participation and give players one-on-one coaching support where required.

After the lesson

Review the lesson immediately afterward so you can identify what worked well and what didn't, what level the players are at and what you need to remember for next time. The outcome of this review will influence what you include in the next lesson and the best method of delivery.

SAFETY

Providing a safe environment is essential. Prior to each lesson, check facilities and equipment and remove any potential hazards. If there is a potential risk of injury to anyone, the lesson should be delayed until any risk has been removed and a safe environment is restored. Bats and balls can be dangerous so please keep in mind the following safety considerations:

- ⑩ Always check the playing facility, surface and equipment for hazards. Make sure the playing surface is in reasonable condition without holes, exposed sprinkler heads or hard patches.
- ⑩ Make sure there is enough space between fielders or activities to allow for safety when throws/hits are inaccurate
- ⑩ Use equipment appropriate to age and stage of development of participants
- ⑩ Keep the batting line a safe distance from the batter – at least 5 meters to the right and behind the tee
- ⑩ Fielders should roll the ball back to the person feeding the tee
- ⑩ There are no practice swings, unless otherwise instructed
- ⑩ Bats should be placed (not thrown) on the ground when not in use
- ⑩ Make sure participants wear the right protective equipment such as helmets and chest protection when catching.
- ⑩ Match children according to physical maturity and skill level
- ⑩ Provide adequate water and adopt a SunSmart policy. Encourage players to wear sun protective clothing, sunglasses, SPF 30+ sunscreen and a hat.
- ⑩ Always warm up and cool down to help participants get the most out of the lesson and to prevent the occurrence of injuries.

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

In addition to Softball Australia's values and general Code of Conduct, as a coach appointed by Softball Australia, a Member State or an affiliated association or club you must meet the following requirements in regard to your conduct during any activity held by or under the auspices of Softball Australia, a Member State or an affiliated association or club.

- 1 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of, and refrain from any discriminatory practices against, any person regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- 2 Endeavour to ensure players' time spent with you is a positive experience.
- 3 Respect the talents, developmental stage and goals of each individual player.
- 4 Treat each player as an individual and help them reach their full potential.
 - Provide training programs that are planned and sequential and suitable for the age, experience and ability of the players
 - Be fair, considerate and honest with players
- 5 Be reasonable in your demands on your players' time and ensure there is an appropriate balance between sporting involvement, education and career objectives.
- 6 Implement clear rules for players in training and general conduct.
- 7 Be professional in your appearance and manner and accept responsibility for your actions.
 - Display high standards in language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation
 - Display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved with softball, including opponents, coaches, officials, umpires, scorers, administrators, the media, parents and spectators
 - Encourage your players to demonstrate the same qualities.
- 8 Make a commitment to providing a quality service to your players, your affiliated club, association and state, and to Softball Australia, by continually improving your coaching knowledge and skill.
 - Seek continual self-improvement through performance appraisal and ongoing education
- 9 Operate within the rules and spirit of the sport.
 - Abide by and respect the policies governing softball and sport generally and the organisations and *individuals administering those policies*
 - *Reject the use of performance* enhancing drugs in sport and abide by the anti-drugs policies of the relevant national and international sporting organisations and government regulatory bodies
- 10 Ensure physical contact with players is appropriate to the situation and necessary for the player's skill development. Inappropriate physical contact is a form of sexual harassment.
- 11 Refrain from any form of personal abuse. This includes verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
- 12 Refrain from any form of sexual harassment. This includes explicit, implicit, verbal and non-verbal sexual harassment.
- 13 Refrain from initiating a relationship with a player and also discourage, in a sensitive manner, an attempt by a player to initiate a sexual relationship with you.
- 14 Provide a safe environment for training and competition. Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate for the age and ability of the players.

- 15 Show consideration and caution towards sick and injured players.
 - Provide a modified training program where appropriate
 - Allow further participation in training and competitions only when appropriate
 - When necessary, follow the advice of a reputable doctor or physiotherapist when determining when a sick or injured player is ready to recommence training or competition
- 16 Be a positive role model for softball and your players.
- 17 Do not tolerate acts of aggression.
- 18 Refrain from engaging in any behaviour that is in breach of Softball Australia's Member Protection Policy.