



Softball Canada CANpitch Program!

(Ottawa, ON) Softball Canada's new pitching program, known as the CANpitch Program has been in effect for 1 year now. From numerous discussions, it was determined that pitching was a key area in need of coaching resources. Thus, Softball Canada put together a group of internationally acclaimed pitchers to discuss this area of the game, with the goal of developing a standardized pitching curriculum based on Softball Canada's Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) Model, to be used across the country.

The program was created by Mark Smith (current Senior Women's National Team Head Coach and former National Team pitcher), Deb Sonnenberg (1996 Olympian and former Senior Women's National Team pitcher), Rob Guenter (former Senior Men's National Team pitcher), and Kaila Holtz (2004 Olympian and former Senior Women's National Team pitcher) as well as feedback from Glen Jevne (former Senior Men's National Team pitcher) and Russell Cooper (a New Zealand pitching expert and former pitching coach at St. Louis University currently instructing in the United States). This group identified key drills that teach the fundamental skills of pitching and reinforce the proper mechanics. Using these drills, a set of three 6-week curriculums were created which includes group lessons for the FUNDamentals (ages 8-9), Learning to Train (ages 10-12) and Training to Train (ages 13-16) LTPD stages. The CANpitch Program will be available to all athletes between 8-16 years old who want to learn or improve the fundamental skills of windmill pitching. With this curriculum and the help of the softball community, Softball Canada hopes to expose more young athletes to pitching, develop fundamentally sound pitchers and, over time, improve the level of softball competition across Canada.

To help deliver the program across the country, Softball Canada has put together a revolutionary team of Master and Regional Pitching Instructors, who will cover each region of a province or territory to ensure quality pitching instruction is offered at the local level. Instructors include former National Team pitchers, former and current elite level pitchers, as well as youth softball coaching experts. Once appointed, every instructor will receive ongoing training to become experts in every aspect of working with pitchers. In addition, Softball Canada is finalizing a CANpitch DVD that will assist coaches and pitchers in understanding the key teaching points for the drills in the curriculum. The DVD will be available for sale at the end of February.

The CANpitch Program will be available to all athletes between 8-16 years old who want to learn or improve the fundamental skills of windmill pitching. Contact your Provincial or Territorial office to learn more about the CANpitch Program in your area.

"Pitching is the lifeblood of the sport of softball" said Mark Smith. "The CANpitch Program provides a fun, safe, and developmentally appropriate method to teach the fundamentals skills of pitching. Our CANpitch Committee consulted with pitching experts from throughout Canada and the world and volunteered an incredible amount of time and energy to create this exciting program. Our Provincial/Territorial Associations have been an important partner in providing the financial resources to create the program and in identifying quality instructors to deliver this important new initiative. The CANpitch Program is the first step towards developing quality pitching talent throughout Canada for many years to come."

For more information about the CANpitch program, please visit Softball Canada's website at www.softball.ca, or contact your local provincial or territorial softball office.

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