

OLDS SPITFIRES

Competitive Program Guidelines

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Policy Name: **1.0 Program Overview**

Purpose

The Spitfire Competitive program was formed to provide optimal training, competition and recovery programs for athletes at each stage of their development. The operation of the program is carried out by the Spitfire Executive Board.

Different from recreational “Community League” baseball where the focus is fun through playing games in the months of May and June, the Spitfire Competitive Program is made available for those players/members that desire:

- A higher level of skill development, competition, and travel;
- A longer season – opportunity for more games, more practices;
- League play in a variety of communities across the province;
- An opportunity to compete at a Provincial Championship;
- A larger commitment to the game – expectations for attendance, costs, time, etc.

Objective

A key Core Value of the Spitfire Competitive Program is...

To provide our young ball players with a positive learning environment wherein the players and parents grow their appreciation and admiration for the game of baseball.

The Association is also aligned to the objectives of Baseball Alberta’s Competitive Program:

‘AAA’ DIVISION & ‘AA’ DIVISION

- The objective of the Provincial 'AA' and 'AAA' Leagues is to provide a competitive yet developmental level of play for players/teams at the 11U, 13U, 15U, and 18U age categories in a province-wide format.
- Baseball Alberta’s ‘AA’ and ‘AAA’ Division website can be found at the following link, and includes information on rules and regulations, schedule, coaching, and miscellaneous forms.
<https://www.baseballalberta.com/>

Guiding Principles

The Competitive Program’s Guiding Principles will supplement the Association’s Guiding Principles of fun, safety, fair play, friendship, and sportsmanship, and include:

- Represent the Olds Minor Ball Association, and our community proudly.
 - Learn and develop baseball skills & knowledge – attend practices, use what you learn.
- To meet these principles, the Board of Directors will hold all members participating in the Competitive Program (i.e. coaches, players & families) accountable to lead by example and represent each Association to the highest standard.

Commitments

AA and AAA Baseball at all levels is a significant commitment for players and families. Through this commitment, players will see a substantial increase in the development of their baseball skills and continue to grow their passion for the game. Key commitment factors that all players and families should be aware of include the following:

- Evaluations begin in the New Year.
 - Indoor practices commence in Feb/March/April and move outdoors once the weather permits.
 - The season typically runs from May to the beginning of August.
 - Typically 'AA' and 'AAA' teams can be on the field 4 to 5 days a week with practices, league games, exhibition games, and tournaments.
 - Practices are at each team's discretion, but 2 or 3 practices a week can be expected.
 - League games commence in May (per Baseball Alberta's League Calendar) and can include 2 to 4 games per week primarily played on weekends. The occasional weeknight game can also be expected.
 - Exhibition games and tournaments are at each team's discretion.
 - 'AA' & 'AAA' teams are expected to travel across Alberta for league games and tournaments.
- Out of province tournaments are also a possibility at each team's discretion.
- Tier 1 teams in 13U, 15U, and 18U that win the Provincial Championships represent Alberta at the Western Canadian Championships in mid-August.
 - Due to the time commitments outlined above, the Spitfire Competitive Program strongly encourages players that commit to 'AA' & 'AAA' Baseball programs should consider what conflicts may arise by participating in other spring/summer activities. Participation in other spring/summer activities and the conflicts that will arise will be considered when creating our teams.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT 'AA' and 'AAA'

In order to help offset the costs of additional diamond time, player and team fees, umpire fees, tournaments, development, etc., player costs are higher for teams in the Competitive Program than those in a Community program.

- An evaluation fee will be asked from those players who wish to attend evaluations for a competitive team
- Registration fees are determined by the Executive and approved prior to the start of the season and will be posted on each Association's websites once known.
- Individual team "cash calls" and fundraising are the responsibility of each team and done in consultation with the parents. Contact your executive board for fundraising details and requirements.

Policy Name: **2.0 Player Evaluations**

Evaluations are mandatory for consideration to play with a Competitive team.

Competitive Team Evaluations

The evaluation process can be a stressful time for players and parents alike. The executive board strives to keep the process as clear and open as possible while being impartial and minimizing bias. The executive board will conduct closed evaluation sessions in the New Year. Players will have to be registered with their home Association prior to attending any approved evaluation session. Evaluations will be completed in a phased approach. All players wishing to play on a competitive team will attend tryouts. From this pool of players, the “top” team will be selected first. Then the “second” team will be selected. This will continue until the number of teams, as deemed practical by the executive board, are formed.

The following attributes will be assessed and will be evaluated over the course of a number of evaluation sessions:

Measurable Attributes:

- Hitting
- Throwing
- Defense
- Running
- Pitching

Intangibles:

- “Coachability”
- “Baseball IQ”

Each “Measurable Attribute” will be evaluated by at least 2 evaluators.

- No coaching is permitted during evaluations
- If known ahead of evaluations, head coaches will be present during evaluations
- In the event a coach’s child is needed to be evaluated, the child will only be evaluated by the 3rd party evaluator(s).

Missed Evaluations

In the event a player is unable to attend any or all of the Competitive Team Evaluations because of previous commitments or injury, the Board must be notified prior to team formation in order to make alternate arrangements. If proper notice is given, every effort will be made to accommodate a make-up evaluation and previous experience may also be taken into consideration. If proper notice is not provided, the issue of player placement will be discussed and determined by the executive board. Information gathered from previous years may also be used to help in player evaluations.

Policy Name: **3.0 Team Selections**

Team Creation Process

It is the goal of the Associations and the executive board to field as many competitive teams at the 11U age level, and at least 2 teams at 13U to 18U, each season. However, the final number of competitive teams at each age level will depend on registration numbers each year, as well as the executive board's ability to secure proper facility space and qualified coaches. Team formation will be announced via Olds Minor Baseball website for parents and players to view.

'AA' & 'AAA' Teams

The total number of player spots on each competitive team will be determined by the head coach. Most competitive teams carry anywhere from 11 to 17 players, with some exceptions being made on a case by case basis.

At each age level,

- Team 1 will be referred to as Spitfire BLACK
- Team 2 will be referred to as Spitfire ORANGE
- Team 3 will be referred to as Spitfire WHITE
- Team 4 will be referred to as Spitfire GREY

All competitive teams will be formed based on player evaluations and "Coach Picks", as outlined below.

Coach Picks must be presented and justified by the head coach to the executive board for final approval.

Teams will not be considered finalized until such approval has been given by the executive board. The team is considered final once the executive board has completed its review.

Where a conflict exists when a Head Coach is also a member of the executive board, that executive board members are not permitted to vote on any matters in selecting that team.

U11 Underage Players

There may be instances where a player wishes to play at the next age level up. In such cases, the following rules shall apply:

- The underage player must submit a request in writing to the Board of his/her desire to be evaluated as an underage player at the next age level up.
- The underage player must attend the evaluations at the higher age level to ensure a complete evaluation has been done. If one or more evaluations are missed for any reason, the player will not be eligible to play at the higher age level.
- The executive board will vote on case by case scenario applications and decide on the best interest of the team formation.
- There will be no cap or limit to the number of underage players considered based on the

criteria and process outlined above, and registration numbers will be considered when deciding underage player placement.

Import Players

The executive board recognizes that neighbouring Associations may not offer competitive baseball or a particular age level/division to their members and welcomes them to attend competitive evaluations for a Spitfire Competitive Team.

Based on the competitive outlook of a team the executive board reserves the right to consider additional import players.

Policy Name: ***4.0 Coach Selections***

Overview

To ensure a safe and positive learning environment for all players, all individuals interested in a head coaching role in the Competitive Program will be approved/selected by the executive board.

The objective of the competitive coach selection process is to select coaches who will provide the greatest benefit to the players in the program, and who will meet the coaching requirements and serve the mandate of the executive board.

To provide a quality competitive baseball program, the Association is responsible to select coaches it feels best meet the objectives of the Associations, the governing bodies (ie. Baseball Alberta, Baseball Canada), and the game itself. In the event of a number of candidates, then the following selection process will be used:

Selection Criteria

Coaches will be selected based on a set of transparent qualifications. Some qualification criteria are deemed mandatory and comprise the minimum qualifications for a coach at that level and category. Other criteria contribute to the overall rating of the coach candidate. An application not meeting the minimum qualifications shall not be selected over one who meets or exceeds the stated qualifications, unless their experience and ability vastly exceeds those of the candidate meeting the minimum qualifications. Coach Selection shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Coach Qualifications

- **Must** provide a current Criminal Record Check
- Training qualifications are based on NCCP certification – selected coaches **must** meet minimum requirements as set out by Baseball Alberta, or **must** commit to obtaining the minimum qualification during the current season as per the mandatory deadlines.
- Preference could be given to coach candidates with higher levels of certification and training.

2. Coaching Experience – the experience qualification is based on:

- The number of years as a coach;
- The category and level of the teams coached;
- The association or organization of the teams coached;
- The coach's personal, proactive coaching development plan.

3. *Playing Experience* –The executive board’s interest in playing experience will be weighed against the applicants coaching experience & coaching philosophy.

- The number of years playing baseball;
- The category and level of the teams played on;
- The association or organization of the teams played on;
- Other sports played and level of competition, etc.

4. *References* - Coach candidates will be asked to provide references that can verify their background and experience. References will provide the opportunity to confirm a candidate’s:

- Knowledge of the game;
- Coaching philosophy and style;
- Adherence to fair play;
- Conduct with officials;
- Character;
 - Past history with other clubs.

5. *Interview* - The executive board may conduct interviews with coaching candidates in order to establish a better sense of the candidate’s qualifications. Attributes of a candidate that will be assessed could include but are not limited to their:

- Knowledge of the game;
- Coaching philosophy and style;
- Character;
- Quality of practice plans;
- Discussion on the use of assistance coaches;
- Personal coaching development plan.

6. *Other Commitments* - The executive board will evaluate the level of other commitments a candidate has and may include that as a factor in the selection process.

- Preference could be given to coach candidates that are relatively free of other commitments.
 - Specifically, coaching another team, extensive job related travel or volunteer time in other organizations.
- Preference will be given to those that show alignment and a commitment to the Association and the Competitive Program.

Selection Process

The executive board will act as the Coach Selection Panel for all Competitive Teams.

The members of the Coach Selection Panel will meet to review all of the coach applicants’ materials and to conduct the interviews if required. All coach applicants will be assessed through the criteria listed above, the application they build and submit to the Chair and an interview by the executive board, if required. The executive board will determine which candidate will be offered the head coach role for each team via a vote with majority being required for a decision to be made. The Chair will only vote in the case of a tie. If a coach applicant sits on the executive board, they will not be allowed to be a part of the coach selection process for the team being considered.

Assistant Coaches

Head coaches are responsible for selecting their assistant coaches. They can select from the pool of applications or recruit other coaches. It must be noted that any assistant coach selection can be overridden by the executive board for reasons such as; no RCMP Criminal Record Check, poor past coaching evaluations, inadequate NCCP certification, etc. As a result, the team staff (including the Off Field Manager) is not considered final until approval is given by the executive board.

Non-Parent Coaches

Compensation for those individuals wishing to be a head coach and who have been selected to coach a Competitive Team will be discussed and determined by the executive board on a case-by-case basis.

Selection Timeline

Deadline for submitting a Head Coach application will be **2 weeks after advertised**.

The goal of the executive board is to have Head Coaches named for the “Black” teams prior to the start of evaluations.

Once the ‘Black’ teams have been selected, the executive board will look to name the Head Coaches of Team ‘Orange’, ‘White’, and ‘Grey’ based on the applicants remaining and how their player has evaluated through the first round of evaluations

Application Process

The executive board will inform the coaching applicant of an interview date/time, if required. If the date/time is unacceptable to the prospective coach, the executive board will endeavor to find an alternative date/time that works for all participants.

Successful candidates will be notified by the executive board. Successful head coach candidates that accept the role must agree to sign off on the “**Coach Conduct and Expectations**” document.

Policy Name: *5.0 Affiliate Players*

As noted in the annual Baseball Alberta Handbook, the affiliate program is in place to provide coaches with an option to pick-up players from a lower category/division in the event of unforeseen circumstances where their roster would drop below the original size. Coaches have the option to bring their roster size up to its original roster size utilizing affiliates.

As noted in the handbook, the affiliate program is not in place to permit coaches to add depth to their team’s current roster, and is only to be used as an emergency backup plan.

Baseball Alberta

Some key points to consider:

- **All affiliate players must be approved by Baseball Alberta prior to them being eligible to play.**

- The team must submit the *Affiliate Player Application* (completed and signed by the affiliate's parent unless 18 years of age) along with a \$25 processing fee to Baseball Alberta at least 3 working days prior to their first game to be played.
- In order to utilize an affiliate, the coach/team manager must contact the affiliate player's team coach to determine availability and to also discuss how the player will be utilized (coaches should come to agreement of innings/pitch counts to be pitched as those innings may affect the affiliate player's team).
- Affiliate players may only sign with one team and may only play up to 5 games throughout the entire schedule.
- No Affiliate players will be permitted for use at the Provincial Championships.
- Coaches of Competitive Teams are expected to be familiar with the most current Baseball Alberta rule on affiliates and if they have any questions about the program they are encouraged to contact the Competitive Director for guidance as needed. The executive board's expectations in the utilization of affiliate players are the following:
 - Members first – every effort should be made to utilize OMBA players before seeking an affiliate player from another association.
 - The team will be responsible for the Baseball Alberta fee.
 - The Head Coach should make every effort possible to ensure the affiliate player has an opportunity to play.

Policy Name: **6.0 Coach Development**

○ Under development

Policy Name: **7.0 Accountability and Disciplinary Process**

The executive board understands that an "Accountability and Disciplinary" process is required to be in place should an instance arise that needs to be dealt with. This offers a transparent guideline on how those situations will be handled.

This process is in place for:

1. Coaches
2. Parents
3. Players

Coaches, parents and players will be required to sign off on their respective "Code of Conduct" which will be held by the executive board should it be required if the conduct of an individual is called into question.

The following steps are to be followed should a concern arise that a member feels action needs to be taken to address:

Step 1 – Off-Field Manager:

- After following the "24 Hour" rule, the concern is to be submitted to the teams Off-Field Manager in writing.
- Together, between the concerned individual, Off-Field Manager, Team Parent Liaison, and the Head Coach the concern will be discussed to see if a resolution can be found within the team.

- A summary of the concern and resolution (if found) is to be submitted by the Off-Field Manager to the Division Coordinator
- If resolution is not found in **Step 1**, the concern is to be elevated to **Step 2**.

Step 2 – Division Coordinator:

- The Off-Field Manager is to submit a summary of the concern and attempted resolution.
- Between the concerned individual, Off-Field Manager, Team Parent Liaison, Head Coach and the Division Coordinator, discussion will be had to work towards finding a suitable outcome for all involved.
- The Division Coordinator will submit a summary of “Step 2” to the executive board.
- If resolution is not found in **Step 2**, the concern will be escalated to the executive board for resolution.

Step 3 – Executive board

- The executive board will take all previous information of the incident into account and formulate a resolution.
- All efforts will be made to find a resolution that is satisfactory to everyone involved. The decision made by the executive board will be considered final.

Policy Name: **8.0 Player Development**

o Under development

Appendices

Head Coach “Duties & Responsibilities”

- Head coaches will be responsible for making 100% of their team selections based on the evaluation
- Head Coaches, as chief team officials, shall be fully responsible for all activities of their team.
- Delegating responsibilities to assistant coaches, managers and parents is necessary, desirable and encouraged; however, ultimate responsibility for these activities’ rests with the Head Coach.
- Coaches and team management are expected to be responsive to directives of the executive board and operate the team within established policy and guidelines.
- Respond to the needs and skills of individual players, ensuring that each player has the maximum opportunity to develop his/her potential.
- Recognize their responsibilities as leaders, educators and role models for young players. Conduct towards players, parents, officials and other persons should be based on mutual respect and be fair and reasonable. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, or profanity is unacceptable and will be investigated by the executive board.
- Be sensitive to parent concerns, and be prepared to respond cordially when warranted.
- Commit to the continued development of all players for the full season, once players are selected to a team.
- Deal fairly with players at all times. Rewards or considerations to players or parents should be those reasonably available to all members of the team.
- Coaches should not accept gifts, favours or other considerations from players or parents or place themselves in a situation where their actions may be compromised because of such considerations.
- Ensure proper supervision of the team, before, during, and after all games and practices and accept reasonable responsibility for the conduct, safety and wellbeing of their players.
- Ensure proper supervision and take responsibility for the team during all team functions.
- Develop a set of rules for the team, which are clearly communicated and enforced equally on all players.
- Encourage and motivate their players towards enjoyment of the game, team concept, and skill development.
- Pursue objections to directives or policy through appropriate channels and in a manner that is not detrimental to the team, league or Association.
- Comply with normal administrative directives by:
 - Holding a beginning of season parent meeting
 - Submitting a budget to parents and Division Directors as requested
 - Submitting financial statements on schedule
- All coaches shall hold a parent meeting shortly after the team has been made. Items to be covered include:
 - Proposed budget
 - Season plan
 - Coach, Parent, Player conduct expectations
 - Parent Roles required
- All coaches are encouraged to have a practice plan prepared for their practices.

- The coach is also to abide by the team rules that are agreed to with the team, which includes arrival times for games and practices.
- The coach is responsible to ensure that the team managers and treasurer also know their responsibilities

Coach “Conduct Expectations”

1.) Punctuality

I will lead by example and be punctual to all team practices, games, team events, etc.

2.) Priorities

As a coach my job is to:

- i. Teach
- ii. Mentor
- iii. Motivate
- iv. Be a positive role model
- v. Always preach the importance of positivity, attitude, & effort

3.) Parent Coach

Having a player on this team presents its challenges. As a coach I always have to ask myself if the decisions being made are in the best interest of the team. If I question that this is the case with me or another coach, it is my job to bring this up to the coaching staff for discussion.

4.) Communication

It is my job as a coach on this staff to be a communicator. Whether it surrounds players, coaches, or parents, communication is vital and will ensure there are no misunderstandings.

5.) Respect

a. I will treat all players and opposing coaches with respect, being positive and constructive at all times. I will not use abusive language or actions and will control my anger at all times. I will insist that all parents, coaches, players and fans associated with my team follow my example.

b. I will always treat the parents that are a part of this team with respect and all dealings with parent(s) will be done in a mature and understanding fashion.

c. I will always reinforce the importance of positivity and our “Team First” mentality.

d. I will treat all umpires with respect, recognizing that they are volunteers or young adults, and that baseball rules involve judgment. If I have complaints, I will use the appropriate methods of appeal during the game and avoid confrontational behavior on the field. After the game I may choose to go through the proper channels for resolution.

e. I will promote sportsmanlike conduct, shaking hands with the opposing coach after each game, encouraging my team members to cheer positively, and shaking hands with the other team in a sportsmanlike manner after the game. I will not tolerate negative cheering, trash-talking, or displays of anger or disrespect by my team.

f. I will be drug and alcohol free while at any of my team’s games and/or practices. I will not use any tobacco products in the dugout or on the playing field.

Signed
Parent “Conduct Expectations”

1.) Negativity will not be tolerated.

We will not convey negative words towards my child, his teammates, the coaching staff, team manager, and other parents on this team or towards the Spitfire Baseball Program in general. This also pertains to social media.

2.) Punctuality

a. Practices – We will have our player at the field at a time that allows him to be ready to go on the field for the start of practice. Pulling into the parking lot or walking into the dugout when practice starts will be considered being late.

b. Games – We will have our player at the field 1 hour and 15 minutes before game time

c. Attendance at practices and games is expected. Any instances where my player will not be in attendance will be communicated with the Head Coach along with the reason why.

3.) Grievance Policy

Any grievance that a parent may have is to be communicated as per the “Accountability & Discipline” process outlined in the “Spitfire *Competitive Guidelines*” document. No grievance will be addressed if the “**24 Hour Rule**” is not followed

4.) Parent Roles

Throughout the year the Off-Field Manager will require assistance with duties. As parents on this team we will ensure that when a duty is assigned by the Off-Field Manager or we take on a role, that it is done to completion.

5.) Promote Positivity

The “Power of Positivity” is far reaching. We will do our best to demonstrate positivity towards this team for our players both at home and at the ball field. We also acknowledge our player has been told by the coaching staff that we as parents are expected to demonstrate positivity towards this team, its players, its coaches, and its parent group.

6.) Social Media

We will not post any pictures of players, coaches, the team manager, or other player’s family members to any social media platform without their consent.

7.) Transparency

We understand that our player will be shown this “Parent Letter of Understanding” so that they are aware of what is expected of us as parents on this team. We have also been shown and understand the “Player Letter of Understanding” and the “Coach Letter of Understanding” By signing this document we as parents understand what is presented and will respect and abide by its content.

Player Name

Parent

Parent

Player "Conduct Expectations"

1.) On Field Expectations

- a. Punctual
 - i. On the field ready to go for the start of practice or games
- b. Prepared
 - i. I will be in full uniform for all practices
 - ii. I will be in full uniform for all games
 - iii. I will have the necessary items to ensure I stay hydrated during team activities
- c. Effort
 - i. My best effort is expected at all practices and games
- d. Attitude
 - i. A positive attitude is the only option. Negative attitudes or negative body language can result in playing time consequences.
- e. Team Equipment
 - i. Team equipment will always be packed up and put away first before my own equipment.

2.) Social Media

I will not use social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) to post any pictures of my teammates. I will not use social media in any way that degrades or shines a negative light on any member of this team or this program.

3.) Team First Mentality

I am not above any member of this team. A successful team needs to have players that fill roles that all work towards a common goal. **I will be a good teammate.**

4.) School & Home Responsibilities

I will not allow baseball to become an excuse as to why I have not done my school work or chores that I am expected to do at home. I will ensure that I use my time wisely to get my homework and any responsibilities at home done.

Signed