



# **CAA Softball Travel Team Selection Handbook**

**Last Updated:** May 2024

## 1) Philosophy and Goals

a) The Chanhassen Softball travel philosophy focuses on the goals of player development, team competitiveness, player retention, and fun. The decisions around how many teams and which levels they play, as well as how we select the players and coaches for each team, are fundamental to achieving these goals.

## 2) Teams and Levels by Age

a) Our goal is to field competitive teams while maximizing the number of players on each team who can successfully compete at a given level. Team roster sizes are generally 10-12 players and our our competition levels will be determined by the depth and quality of the age group.

b) Our general approach is to field teams as follows:

i) 8U: Equally skilled teams that play in tournaments and the Big West 8U League.

ii) 10U & 12U: Goal is to field appropriate level teams possibly multiple at level. These teams compete in tournaments as well as Big West league games.

iii) 14U: Goal is to field appropriate level teams and possibly multiple at a level. These teams compete in tournaments as well as Big West league games, generally following the conclusion of the HS season.

## 3) Team Selection Weighting

a) Team selection is based on an equal weighting of an independent tryout evaluation and prior year coach evaluation. An independent tryout provides an objective perspective of the players and provides focused feedback in a controlled environment. Coach evaluations provide feedback on in-game performance and skillsets.

b) Both coach & tryout evaluations are based on the age-specific CAA Softball Player Development skills & proficiency matrix established by the Softball Operating Committee

c) This process applies to all ages with the exception of first-year 10U. Team selection for first-year 10U players is based solely on tryout scores.

## 4) Prior Season Coach Evaluations

a) Coaches evaluate players on the following categories:

i) Hitting

ii) Throwing

iii) Fielding (infield & outfield)

iv) Base running

v) Intangibles (softball IQ/sportsmanship/ coachability)

vi) Pitching & Catching (as applicable)

b) These evaluations are used to generate a player ranking based on the average of the coach input. Coaches do not evaluate their own child.

c) Players that do not have a comparable prior season coach evaluation (e.g., new to the association) will be handled on an exception basis by gathering prior season data when available, otherwise evaluations will be based on tryouts only.

## 5) Tryout Process and Weightings

a) We believe an independent tryout process is an opportunity for our children to demonstrate their abilities, validate their skills, and show progress from the prior season.

b) Independent evaluators assess each player on the following categories as we believe all 4 skill areas are important for our players to develop and to ensure team competitiveness at all levels of play. The skill areas totaling 100% are outlined below:

i) Hitting – 46% Weight

(1) We evaluate live hitting (with a pitching machine) and front toss drills to assess quality of contact and form.

ii) Infield – 28% Weight

(1) Infield – We are looking for the player’s ability to field ground balls using good form, make a clean play, and make a strong and accurate throw across the diamond.

iii) Outfield – 18% Weight

(1) Outfield – We are looking for the player’s ability to catch fly balls using good form, make a clean play, and make a strong and accurate throw to their target.

(4) Catching (optional) – We will assess ability to frame pitches, block balls and throw to 2nd.

iv) Baserunning – 8% Weight

(1) Each player will complete speed tests in the form of home to first, second to home or a shuttle run.

v) Pitching & Catching (optional) – used to create rankings by age level

(1) Players will be given a set number of pitches (10 +) and will be evaluated on mechanics, velocity, and accuracy

(2) Players will be evaluated while catching for pitchers during tryouts as well as in drills to demonstrate stance/positioning, receiving, blocking, transfer and throw-downs.

c) Players may choose to register to ‘play-up’ one level about their current age-level (i.e. 8U to 10U). Players choosing to do so must inform the Player Agent prior to tryouts. To be eligible to play-up, out of all tryout participants, a player must rank in the top 10% of their actual age-level and the top 50% of the higher age-level. In the event that a player attempting to play-up could result in other players to be cut, the SOC reserves the right to keep the player at their current, actual age-level.

## 6) Coach Selection Process (Head & Assistant Coaches)

a) Head coaches are selected by the Softball Operating Committee (SOC) and will be selected from the pool of locked players (defined later) unless SOC deems no coach from the locked pool as qualified, in which case, they reserve the right to expand the pool of prospective coaches.

b) All prospective coaches are required to register and will be asked to conduct a background check (valid for 2 years), concussion training (every 3 years) and adult abuse awareness training (every 2 years).

c) In the event of multiple qualified head coach applicants at an age / skill level, the SOC may perform interviews to aid in selection.

d) The selection of assistant coaches is conducted by the head coach after the teams are selected and posted.

## (7) Team Selection Process

- a) Team selection utilizes a multi-step process outlined as follows if they aren't equally balanced teams:
  - i) Locked Players – Based on the blended ranking of tryout scores and prior season coach evaluations, we 'lock' in the top 8 players for each level.
  - ii) Pool Players – Based on the blended ranking of tryout scores and prior season coach evaluations, we 'pool' in the next appropriate group of players to fill out the remainder of the team.
- b) The player agent & VP softball work with the head coach to ensure the remaining slots are filled most judiciously from the pool players based on tryout scores, prior season coach evaluations and possibly depth at key positions (pitching and catching).
- c) Once the top team is completed, the process outlined above is repeated for all remaining teams at that age level.
- d) If no coach is named for an age / skill level prior to team selection, the roster will be set by the Player Agent and VP Softball.

#### 7) Communication of Team Selection

- a) Before teams are posted, the head coaches shall NOT communicate to any of the players, parents, or other potential assistant coaches to keep our process efficient and in the best interest of our players.
- b) Prior to communicating final teams, the player agent will summarize the team selections and review with the SOC to confirm accuracy.
- c) Once the teams are finalized the player agent will post the rosters on the CAA website. Our goal is to ensure accuracy of our team rosters as well as simultaneous communication of the rosters to all players and parents.
- d) Questions should be directed to the applicable player.