



**Long Term Athlete  
Development Plan**

**Cuyahoga Falls Amateur  
Baseball Association**

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**Education, Health and Safety**  
**Long Term Athlete Development Plan**

Long term player/athlete development is an important aspect of the current changes in USA Baseball. USA Baseball, along with several other national sports governing bodies, have identified the importance of the creation of long-term athlete development plans, and have become dedicated to educating coaches on these plans.

LTAD plans focus on age-appropriate development that assist players at each level to progress and become the best versions of themselves. CFABA realizes that the LTAD plan from USA Baseball is not a one-size-fits-all plan. CFABA has utilized the USA Baseball LTAD and modified it as is appropriate for both the traditional level of play within CFABA as well as future improvements of play.

Coaches at each level should learn to incorporate the LTAD into the design of their practice plans. Coach should remember that you are NOT the owner of your athletes, instead you are part of the CFABA coaching staff, and we are here to develop athletes. Regardless of how long you coach, our collective goal is to produce athletes who have a lifelong relationship with baseball and who develop those skills that youth sports teach that have little to do with success on the field.

The LTAD plan is highlighted on the next page, specifics to pertaining to CFABA and each developmental level should be used in conjunction with the CFABA Coaches Handbook and curriculum to provide the best experience for CFABA participants.

# BASEBALL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY STAGES OF THE LTAD

The LTAD is a multi-stage pathway for training, competition and recovery, that guides an athlete's experience in the sport from infancy to adulthood. The LTAD recognizes the need to involve all amateurs in the developmental pathway, not just the "elite," and is made up of a seven-stage framework that builds upon itself. The stages listed below and their highlighted descriptive terms identify general phases of development within a child's maturation. When appropriate, this framework advises athletes to begin an "Advanced Track" within the Develop Stage for 14 to 16 year-olds. Advanced athletes are those who show a high level of aptitude in the sport at their given age. The "Advanced Track" is a pathway of development that allows for athletes to direct more time and energy to training and competition for their high-level progress in the game.



## ACTIVATE LEVEL – CFABA T-Ball Level

*This level is an introduction to the game of baseball. Coaches should focus on teaching proper skills through fun and repetitive practice. Throwing, running, fielding and proper swing mechanics are introduced. Players must be given time to make mistakes and coaches must encourage self-discovery and the joy of play. Drill lines or putting players into the field and hitting one player a ground ball at a time should NEVER be the practice plan, coaches must design practices that involve small group instruction with players working with qualified CFABA coaches.*

Level	Ages	CFABA Leagues	
Activate	Up to 7	T Ball	
	Component	Definitions	Specific Details
Activities	Physical Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamental skills should be taught and mastered before progressing into more complex skills. These fundamental skills should include overhand throwing, catching, striking the ball, fielding a bouncing ball, running, and dodging. To achieve mastery of these skills, a remedial breakdown of specific skills may be required</li> <li>• A modified form of baseball is recommended to increase mastery of basic skills.</li> <li>• Early-stage athletes should see and feel the correct movement pattern (i.e., throwing, catching, hitting) as early and often as possible.</li> <li>• Demonstrations of appropriate skill performance are encouraged and should be performed by a knowledgeable coach.</li> <li>• Athletes need to receive ample feedback while learning new skills.</li> <li>• Early-stage athletes should be actively involved in playing and developing skills with minimal boredom or “talking time”</li> <li>• Early-stage athletes should be introduced initially to closed skills first (e.g., hit off a batting tee) to control external factors before moving on.</li> <li>• Early-stage athletes’ cognitive stress levels should be highly managed and easy decision-making solutions should be provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaches must be able to break down basic movements into their correct patters.</li> <li>• Coaches should focus on simple tasks that are closed – meaning there is a start to the activity, it is in one direction and there is an end. Example is teaching players to run through first base</li> <li>• Players at this age should ONLY hit off a Tee to master the swing</li> <li>• Coaches should provide positive verbal feedback</li> <li>• Coaches should avoid having “drill lines,” instead CFABA coaches should engage the rest of their staff and create stations where players can engage and master movements.</li> <li>• Coaches must avoid long lectures - any discussions should focus on fun and have 1 teaching point.</li> <li>• Coaches should follow a practice plan that is age and skill appropriate.</li> </ul>
	Physical Development	Children should be introduced to movement and play activities that develop motor skills and muscular strength	<p>All drills should be game-like or play like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award points for each correct throw</li> </ul>

		<p>in an unstructured and exploratory manner. Game-based activities that are fun, engaging and socially stimulating can help young children experience the mere enjoyment of learning new skills and playing with friends.</p> <p>Creative games activities that develop hand-eye coordination and body weight management abilities can serve as the building blocks for more complex activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To build bat speed play “Monster Smash” where players pretend the ball is a monster</li> <li>• Have team relay races to teach base running</li> </ul>
	<b>Injury Prevention</b>	<p>Full body warm up before and full body cool down after practice for children to learn healthy habits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant pitching is discouraged during games.</li> <li>• No year-round participation in a single sport; take at least four months off from throwing sports.</li> </ul>	<p>Coaches MUST include time for warm up, stretching and cool down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This may involve “silly” stretching and trying to have 4–6-year old’s to focus – but setting the foundation of a proper warm up and cool down now will help in upper leagues.</li> </ul>
	<b>Psychosocial</b>	<p>Begin to develop intrinsic motivation for lifelong sport and physical activity participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize enjoyment of physical activity in general and baseball as a great avenue to experience sport enjoyment.</li> <li>• Focus on modeling and rewarding (with praise, encouragement) positive sport behaviors/successes.</li> <li>• Develop positive social interactions and communication among teammates, parents and coaches.</li> <li>• The goal should be to foster a lifetime love of baseball; the emphasis at this age should be on promoting physical activity/baseball enjoyment and intrinsic motivation for movement and skill development.</li> <li>• Psychological skill development should not be a primary focus, but monitoring athlete stress (by coaches and parents) and explaining the basic concepts of psychological skill development, including healthy goal setting, represents a positive and effective means to promote athlete psychosocial health and performance.</li> <li>• Sport should be a venue for athletes to develop friendships and positively interact with peers and adults. This will set the stage for broader social development as well as a lifetime love of baseball.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Scores are kept</li> <li>• No league standings</li> <li>• Teams should congratulate each other</li> <li>• Coaches should help and encourage all players</li> <li>• As a coach – stress improvement and not results</li> </ul>
	<b>Specialization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No single sport specialization.</li> <li>• Sport and activity sampling are highly recommended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA does not condone or encourage year-round play</li> <li>• CFABA encourages children to play multiple sports until an appropriate time</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Competition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents and coaches should encourage sampling of multiple sports that primarily focus on deliberate play (Activities that are intrinsically motivating and are meant to be enjoyed).</li> <li>• Develop athleticism by playing multiple sports.</li> <li>• Focus on high amounts of deliberate play.</li> <li>• Athletes should spend 75 percent of dedicated time to sports training, or participating in deliberate play, and no more than 25 percent of dedicated time to sport should be spent competing.</li> <li>• Athletes can participate in each sport one to two days per week in season, for no more than four months out of the calendar year at a time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice at this level should be the primary focus with a 3 practices to 1 game ratio.</li> <li>• Coaches should monitor players for early signs of overload and should avoid scheduling practices outside of the official season.</li> <li>• Parents are expected to complete the USA Baseball The Play Ball Parent: Maximizing Your Child’s Experience in Baseball</li> <li>• Coaches must earn their USA Baseball A Certification</li> </ul>
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## DISCOVER LEVEL – CFABA Coach Pitch, H League and G League

*During this stage children develop at different rates. Some players will advance quicker as their neurological systems mature. Speed, agility, and balance will continue to advance from Coach Pitch to G League. During this stage players begin to face live pitching and begin to pitch. Coaches should avoid position specialization in coach pitch and H League. Players may begin to hone skills and specialize as they advance into G League. CFABA approved coaches must continue to develop a love for the game and promote character development.*

Level	Ages	CFABA Leagues	
Discover	7 – 12	Coach Pitch, H League and G League	
	Component	Definitions	Specific Details
Activities	Physical Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The discover stage for young athletes is to continue basic development of physical literacy and fundamental movement skills, as well as improve agility, balance, coordination, and speed.</li> <li>• Athletes can move on into beginner open skills (e.g., hit short soft toss from 5-10 feet) to moderate open skills (e.g., hitting controlled front toss or coach pitch) to finally advanced open skills (e.g., hitting live pitching) through a structured approach to skill development based on appropriate progression.</li> <li>• A modified form of baseball is recommended to increase mastery of basic skills. Specific baseball tasks can continue to be modified throughout this stage in terms of the size of the ball, distances of the bases, format of the game, etc.</li> <li>• Cognitive stress levels should continue to be managed and easy decision-making solutions should be provided (e.g., fielding groundballs and coach tells the player where to throw the ball prior to the play) to allow for athletes to maintain minimal cognitive decision load while focusing on physical skills.</li> <li>• Middle stage athletes should continue to see and feel the correct movement pattern for each basic skill (i.e., throwing, catching, hitting), but can also expand their basic skills into more technical skills once basic skill mastery is accomplished.</li> <li>• Advanced skills and activities can be taught through individual practice or integrated into game activities.</li> <li>• The addition of self-observation and review of their technique can begin to be applied (e.g., “how did that feel hitting?” or “why do you think</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As players transition from T Ball to Coach Pitch, coaches should continue to focus on the development of sound fundamental skills. Hitting progressions should include work on the tee, followed by soft toss, followed by overhand coach pitching.</li> <li>• Coach pitch players should have the opportunity to play all positions, including catcher, in order to develop an understanding of the game.</li> <li>• CFABA Certified Coach Pitch Coaches should modify the speed of their pitches to accommodate and encourage development of players.</li> <li>• CFABA Coaches in both Coach Pitch and H League should be vocal and active in coaching players on defense. Coaches should start the season instructing players between pitches on defensive choices (example: runner on 1<sup>st</sup>, play is at...) as the season progresses coaches should allow for more autonomy.</li> <li>• CFABA Certified H League and G League coaches should begin to challenge advanced players with advanced skills. Coaches can begin to work with infielders on</li> </ul>

		<p>that throw went to the right instead of on-target?”).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue providing feedback to help athletes self-identify or identify for themselves when errors are made.</li> <li>• Athletes should start being actively involved in decision making process to decrease the amount of conceptual abstract ideas and be encouraged to make their own playing decisions while making large amounts of safe mistakes (i.e., no physical harm to themselves or others).</li> </ul>	<p>step progressions as well as glove side and back hand plays. Coaches can begin to work with outfielders on setting up their throw and with the whole team on defensive strategy.</p>
	Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health- and skill-related fitness qualities should be trained in an integrative manner with a focus towards enhancing competence and confidence in the ability to perform strength-building and skill-enhancing exercises.</li> <li>• Younger children should be encouraged to engage in less formalized training and unstructured fitness activities, most seven- and eight-year-olds are ready for some type of structured strength and conditioning as part of fitness conditioning.</li> <li>• Early exposure to strength and conditioning programs that are developmentally appropriate, technique-driven and supervised by qualified professionals will set the stage for even greater gains in physical fitness during adolescence and adulthood.</li> <li>• While there is no “minimum age” for participation in strength and conditioning activities, participants must be able to follow coaching instructions and be able to handle the demands of a training session.</li> <li>• Athletes should learn basic movement patterns and progress to more complex exercises over time while gaining confidence and competence in their abilities to move with style and precision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified coaches should encourage active play outside of practices and games.</li> <li>• Players should be encouraged to be physically active, coaches can “assign” homework that may include playing catch at home or playing running bases to encourage activity.</li> <li>• Players in H League can begin additional conditioning but only under the supervision of qualified personnel which may include those certified by either the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) or the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM).</li> <li>• Players in G League should be encouraged to seek out supplemental conditioning that engages the whole body.</li> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches can find information on age appropriate conditioning, including but not limited to, the throwers ten program on the CFABA website.</li> </ul>
	Injury Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on skill acquisition with good mechanics.</li> <li>• Participate in stretching and tubing injury prevention program before practice and stretching after practice to encourage habit formation and development.</li> <li>• Acquire throwing skill with mechanics that decrease the stress on the shoulder and elbow.</li> <li>• Athletes should avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups.</li> <li>• Follow Pitch Smart recommendations for pitching guidelines and required rest.</li> <li>• Once removed from the mound, pitchers should not return later in the game to pitch again.</li> <li>• Pitchers should avoid pitching in multiple games on the same day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches must encourage skill development that is developed upon good mechanics.</li> <li>• H – League pitchers should concentrate on good mechanics and throwing fastballs only.</li> <li>• G-League pitchers may begin to add off speed pitches and those at the upper end of the maturation level can adjust their grip to create movement.</li> <li>• CFABA coaches MUST follow league pitching guidelines and must report all pitches.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitchers should not exceed 60 (seven- to eight-year-olds) or 80 (nine- to 12-year-olds) combined innings pitched in a 12-month period.</li> <li>• On days pitched, athletes should avoid playing catcher while not pitching.</li> <li>• Athletes should avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time.</li> <li>• No year-round participation in a single sport; take at least four months off from throwing every year, with at least two to three of those months being continuous.</li> <li>• Athletes should participate in a full body-strengthening program to promote symmetrical balance.</li> <li>• Focus on nutrition for recovery after participation.</li> <li>• Educate athletes on injuries and how to communicate symptoms to parent/coach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches must not exaggerate their knowledge or qualifications concerning pitching development, when a coaches knowledge is lacking they are encouraged to contact their league president for guidance.</li> </ul>
	<p>Psychosocial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to develop intrinsic motivation for lifelong sport and physical activity participation.</li> <li>• Emphasize enjoyment of physical activity in general and baseball as a great avenue to experience sport enjoyment.</li> <li>• Instill sport competence by providing opportunities for success and highlighting them.</li> <li>• Minimize use of punishment for incorrect behaviors at this stage.</li> <li>• Develop positive social interactions and communication among teammates, parents, and coaches.</li> <li>• Continue to develop intrinsic motivation for physical activity/baseball by emphasizing the satisfaction of effort and mastering skills.</li> <li>• Continue to develop intrinsic motivation for baseball via autonomy supportive coaching methods and emphasizing aspects of baseball individual athletes enjoy.</li> <li>• Create a mastery motivational climate where individual improvement, effort and skill development are modeled/rewarded.</li> <li>• Encourage positive peer interactions and teamwork via modeling, reinforcement, and communication. (i.e., team sports building).</li> <li>• Introduce the concept of goal setting reach to attainable team and individual goals.</li> <li>• Continue to foster positive peer relationships at this critical time when peer acceptance and social comparison are important and prevalent in sport.</li> <li>• Continue to foster a mastery motivational climate where individual improvement and skill development is modeled/rewarded. All athletes should have opportunities to experience success and have input (i.e., autonomy) into their sport experience regardless of skill level.</li> <li>• Carefully monitor athlete stress levels and psychological health markers (e.g., anxiety,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches must instill that ALL players on the team have a role to play and that success is not defined by what happens on the field, but rather how players use the lessons in life.</li> <li>• Coaches can de-emphasize winning by celebrating individual success and improvement.</li> <li>• Coaches are encouraged to celebrate not only after wins, for example, take the team out for ice cream after a loss.</li> <li>• Encourage cheering for your own team.</li> <li>• Coaches must have a zero-tolerance policy for poor sportsmanship, which may include: yelling when the opposing pitcher is in their wind-up, refusing to shake hands after a game, cheering when an opposing player is injured, laughing at opposing players when they are not successful, use of foul language on the field, talking at opposing baserunners in order to distract them, taunting, and all other forms of poor sportsmanship.</li> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches should encourage team building on the individual team basis and league wide basis – remember that while</li> </ul>

		<p>depression); introduce basic psychological skills to manage stress and aid concentration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote enjoyment and intrinsic motivation with an emphasis on skill learning, effort, and improvement. For ages 10-12, promotion of intrinsic motivation, positive social experiences and enjoyment will promote sport adaptive forms of sport commitment and deter dropout at a time where individual skill levels, success and interests will vary.</li> <li>• Psychological skill development should not be a primary focus but monitoring athlete stress (by coaches and parents) and explaining the basic concepts of psychological skill development, including healthy goal setting, represents a positive and effective means to promote athlete psychosocial health and performance.</li> <li>• Closely monitoring and preventing/managing athlete stress and psychological health will further promote athlete well-being and encourage continued baseball participation.</li> <li>• For ages eight to nine, competition need not be emphasized, as team building, and group goal setting should promote positive baseball experiences and set a template for similar experiences in other sports being sampled. Peer comparison and competition will begin to be more common for athletes ages 10-12. This can be problematic when athletes are still learning skills and can deter motivation and enjoyment if they struggle. For this reason, individual skill development and supportive coach and teammate relationships should be promoted.</li> </ul>	<p>you are opposing teams in the current season, we are all on the same CFABA team!</p>
	Specialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to strongly discourage single sport specialization – encourage two other sports to grow and cross train. This will serve to promote identity development, social development (exposure to multiple social groups) and discourage burnout and dropout.</li> <li>• Children should sample a variety of sports and avoid specializing early in a single sport.</li> <li>• Develop athleticism by playing multiple sports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches should educate parents and players on the need for rest throughout the year.</li> <li>• Encourage multi-sport participation, even on an informal level</li> </ul>
	Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents and coaches should encourage sampling of multiple sports that primarily focus on deliberate play. Less emphasis should be placed on deliberate practice compared to deliberate play. Some deliberate practice should be included to aid in skill acquisition.</li> <li>• Athletes should spend 75 percent of dedicated time to sports training, or participating in deliberate play, and no more than 25 percent of dedicated time to sport should be spent competing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-sport participations should still be encouraged by coaches.</li> <li>• Training to game play should be 3:1</li> <li>• Encourage a significant time off from baseball activities each year.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Athletes can participate in each sport one to two days per week in season, for no more than four months out of the calendar year at a time.</li></ul>	
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## PROGRESS LEVEL – F League

*During this stage players should continue specific skill development that has begun at the late stages of the previous level. Coaches should scale back extrinsic motivation while encouraging intrinsic motivation. Coaches should be able to help athletes self-diagnose aspects of their gameplay that is deficient. Proper arm care, including proper conditioning should take place. It is essential that coaches within the program understand that at this stage we must work together to continue to develop the advanced players to prepare them for high school, while at the same time providing a place for recreation level players. Coaches must remember that you are part of the CFABA Coaching Staff and not the coach of team “x”.*

Level	Ages	CFABA Leagues	
Progress	12-14	F League	
	<i>Component</i>	<i>Definitions</i>	<i>Specific Details</i>
Activities	Physical Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes can start to become “their own best coach,” and thus able to self-correct errors. To do this, the use of expert models for skill demonstration and self-observed feedback should be encouraged. Expert models can include coaches and/or skilled athletes, or even a video of a player performing the skill.</li> <li>• Continue to be introduced to new closed skills first (e.g., hit off a batting tee to control external factors while making mechanical adjustments, such as changing hand path position for hitting swing) and then progress into open skill environment with new mechanical adjustment.</li> <li>• Cognitive stress levels should be manipulated in a cautious manner to simulate game experiences during the learning process (e.g., fielding groundballs with game scenarios of a man on second base with one out) to allow for athletes to become comfortable in making cognitive decisions while enacting physical skills.</li> <li>• Athletes should continue to see and feel the correct movement pattern (i.e., throwing, catching, hitting), but the addition of advanced self-observation using video feedback and detailed review of their technique can begin to be applied.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While CFABA coaches are volunteer coaches, in order to provide expert models, they must be students of the game, following an evidence-based approach and not just design activities because that is how they have always done things.</li> <li>• Practices should have more game scenarios and deliberative practice that permits players to make their own decisions. For example – coaches can place a runner on second and tell the team that there is 1 out, put a ball in play and allow players to make decisions.</li> <li>• The use of video to provide feedback can be as simple as recording every player taking batting practice and send them the clip for self-reflection and correction.</li> </ul>
	Physical Development	Early exposure to strength and conditioning programs that are developmentally appropriate, technique-driven and supervised by qualified professionals will set the stage for even greater gains in physical fitness during adolescence and adulthood. While there is no “minimum age” for participation in strength and conditioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaches can begin to suggest off season and in season conditioning programs. Utilizing the programs designed on the USA Baseball Mobile Coach app is highly suggested.</li> </ul>

		<p>activities, participants must be able to follow coaching instructions and be able to handle the demands of a training session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes should learn basic movement patterns and progress to more complex exercises over time while gaining confidence and competence in their abilities to move with style and precision.</li> <li>• Focus on body weight exercises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid utilizing heavy weights or machines, body weight exercises should be emphasized.</li> </ul>
	<b>Injury Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While pitching, focus on mechanics; athletes can add breaking ball pitches when fastball and changeup mechanics are well developed.</li> <li>• Athletes should participate in stretching and injury prevention program before practice and stretching after practice.</li> <li>• Strength and conditioning should emphasize core strength development and body weight exercises.</li> <li>• Athletes should participate in a full body strengthening program to promote symmetrical balance.</li> <li>• Follow Pitch Smart recommendations for pitching guidelines and required rest.</li> <li>• Athletes should avoid pitching in multiple games on the same day.</li> <li>• Pitchers should not exceed 80 (12-year-olds) or 100 (13-14-year-olds) combined innings pitched in a 12-month period.</li> <li>• On days pitched, athletes should avoid playing catcher while not pitching.</li> <li>• Athletes should avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time.</li> <li>• No year-round participation in a single sport; take at least four months off from throwing every year, with at least two to three of those months being continuous.</li> <li>• Refrain from using weighted ball throwing programs.</li> <li>• Focus on nutrition for recovery after participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For those pitchers who have command of their fastball and change-up, coaches can introduce breaking balls if the coach understands the mechanics of the pitch.</li> <li>• Coaches should design a pre and post practice warm up and cool down routine that players complete – to allow autonomy coaches should require that players lead these exercises.</li> <li>• Coaches must track and accurately report all pitches. All pitching rules must be followed.</li> <li>• Begin to emphasize proper rest and nutrition. Instill in players that in order to be successful they must be responsible for what they do both on and off the field and how they take care of their body, a coaches goal should be to develop lifelong healthy habits.</li> </ul>
	<b>Psychosocial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize enjoyment of physical activity in general and baseball as a great avenue to experience sport enjoyment.</li> <li>• Continue to develop intrinsic motivation for baseball via autonomy-supportive coaching methods and emphasizing aspects of baseball that individual athletes enjoy.</li> <li>• Continue to develop intrinsic motivation for baseball and mastery of motivational climates via modeling/reinforcement and promotion of sport competence. When correction is needed, utilize positive approaches to communication.</li> <li>• Enhance sport commitment by making baseball an enjoyable and cost-effective (when possible) physical activity option. Also, provide athletes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA coaches should continue to work on intrinsic motivation of players.</li> <li>• Coaches should emphasize self-growth and getting ready for participation in high school at this point, game results mean little, with individual and team growth the goal.</li> <li>• CFABA coaches should be aware indications or burnout including, lack of motivation, poor sleep habits, poor nutrition, apathy, and disinterest. CFABA Coaches</li> </ul>

		<p>with autonomy (i.e., input) into their sport participation decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop leadership skills for individual athletes and promote relatedness (i.e., connection) between athletes and coaches to promote social involvement.</li> <li>• Continue to monitor athlete stress and markers of psychological health (e.g., anxiety, depression). Promote psychological skills (advanced goal setting, arousal-regulation, concentration drills) to enhance well-being and facilitate performance.</li> <li>• Educate parents and coaches on factors contributing to sport stress, low motivation, and athlete burnout, as well as appropriate ages to consider baseball specialization.</li> <li>• Excellent time to enhance earlier efforts to promote intrinsic baseball motivation, enjoyment, and positive relationships within baseball to promote participation into the high school years. A focus on satisfying athlete needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness in the sport environment will aid this goal.</li> <li>• Proper education on prevention of elevated athlete stress, low motivation and burnout will help to promote psychosocial well-being and deter dropout.</li> <li>• Athletes should be allowed to mentally and physically re-charge as appropriate. Structures for travel/select teams should allow athletes to experience other sport and non-sport opportunities. This should also serve to promote multidimensional athlete identities and deter athlete burnout and sport dropout.</li> </ul>	<p>are responsible for monitoring the playing environment and maintain control over expectations and demands of spectators.</p>
	<p><b>Specialization</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes should sample a variety of sports and avoid specializing early in a single sport.</li> <li>• Do not encourage single sport specialization; participation in one other sport is still highly encouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches must continue to encourage time off from baseball as well as participating in multiple activities throughout the year.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Competition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes of higher talent levels and a desire to become an advanced baseball player can reduce involvement in extra sports (compared to the sampling years – up to 12 years of age) and increase deliberate practice. Athletes are still encouraged to continue some deliberate play in other sports.</li> <li>• Athletes should spend 65 percent of dedicated time to sports training, and no more than 35 percent of dedicated time to sport should be spent competing.</li> <li>• Athletes can participate in each sport two to three days per week in season, for four to eight months out of the calendar year at a time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified coaches should still emphasize practice over games. USA Baseball suggest 65% practice and 35% competition, this is still a 2:1 ration of practice to games.</li> </ul>

## DEVELOP LEVEL – E League

*During this final stage player should be able to self-correct errors. CFABA Coaches should work on refining advanced skills, ideally coaches at this level spend less time coaching technique and more time managing the team. CFABA Coaches should develop practice plans that continue to refine skills and allow for self-reflection, while creating opportunities for players to make their own decisions. It is said, if coaches at lower levels have done their job, then coaches at the higher levels only need to be proficient game managers.*

Level	Ages	CFABA Leagues	
Develop	15+	E League	
	Component	Definitions	Specific Details
Activities	Physical Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes are likely experiencing major changes in growth. It is critical that movement quality during skills is maintained during this period. Coaches may need to revisit technique of basic skills (e.g. throwing, running) to ensure athletes maintain optimal performance without increasing injury risk.</li> <li>• Athletes should continue to see and feel the correct movement pattern (i.e., throwing, catching, hitting), but the addition of advanced self-observation using video feedback and detailed review of their technique can begin to be applied. Video observation and feedback can be readily provided with coach and athlete interaction.</li> <li>• Athletes can continue to become “their own best coach” – continue self-observation along with expert model information.</li> <li>• Athletes should lead in decision making process (e.g., deciding to throw the ball home on a ball hit to the pitcher with a man on third base instead of making the easy out at first base) and continue to be encouraged to make their own playing decisions while making large amounts of safe mistakes.</li> <li>• Athletes should continue refining baseball movement patterns in a closed skills setting first (e.g., new approach or glove positioning when fielding ground balls can be done with the ball stationary) to and then progress into open skill environment.</li> <li>• Athlete’s fatigue and cognitive stress levels should be manipulated to simulate game experiences during the learning process (e.g., bottom of the last inning and 3-2 count during batting practice) to allow for refinement and control of cognitive and physical skill interplay.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches should be aware of the rapid changes that occur in an athlete’s body during this stage. Certain skill sets may need to be re-taught or refined, but they should allow ample time for players to “grow into” their bodies.</li> <li>• Coaches can continue to use video feedback to allow athletes to self-correct</li> <li>• Coaches should allow for autonomy of game decisions, instead of being critical when a mistake is made, coaches can help players self-reflect by asking questions like “Tell me what you saw or were thinking on this play.”</li> <li>• Coaches should be aware of the cognitive, social, and physical challenges that occur during this stage and manage stress on players.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes may benefit from more individualized training.</li> <li>• Training intensity can begin to increase as athletes move through this stage.</li> </ul>	
	Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes should continue to participate in developmentally appropriate strength and conditioning activities that should be consistent with the specific demands of each player's position.</li> <li>• Total body fitness, muscular strength and motor skill competency remain key components of sport training programs for performance enhancement and injury reduction.</li> <li>• Having the ability to express total body power safely within a spectrum of movement competencies that include acceleration and deceleration, pushing and pulling, and jumping and landing will provide the best opportunity for a player to exceed expectations on the field and tolerate the unpredictable impact forces experienced in high action sport activities.</li> <li>• Adolescents who are not exposed to well-designed strength and conditioning program early in life will have more difficulty mastering movement skill and will be ill-prepared for advanced training.</li> <li>• Coaches should have practical experience instructing resistance training exercises and conditioning activities to youth. In addition, coaches should be sensitive to inter-individual differences in physical development and fitness abilities between athletes of the same age.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaches should consult with experts in strength and conditioning when suggesting any type of programs.</li> <li>• At this age players should be able to engage in advanced programs under the supervision of experts.</li> <li>• Exposure to strength and conditioning programs is essential to all players.</li> </ul>
	Injury Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While pitching, continue focusing on mechanics. Athletes can continue to add pitches when consistent mechanics with previously learned pitches are demonstrated.</li> <li>• Stretching and injury prevention program before practice and stretching after practice.</li> <li>• Strength and conditioning should emphasize core control development.</li> <li>• Athletes should partake in full body training programs, not just strengthening programs, to promote symmetrical balance.</li> <li>• Follow Pitch Smart recommendations for pitching guidelines and required rest.</li> <li>• Pitchers should avoid pitching in multiple games on the same day.</li> <li>• Pitchers should not exceed 100 combined innings pitched in a 12-month period.</li> <li>• On days pitched, athletes should avoid playing catcher while not pitching.</li> <li>• Athletes should avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time.</li> <li>• No year-round participation in a single sport; take at least four months off from throwing every year, with at least</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole body and core conditioning programs should be encouraged.</li> <li>• Avoid overuse injuries and pay attention to those who have a high volume of throwing. For those players that come off a high school season of pitching, coaches should inquire about how many innings were pitched and keep players to less than 100 innings total during the year.</li> <li>• Coaches must track and accurately report all pitches. All pitching rules must be followed.</li> <li>• Begin to emphasize proper rest and nutrition. Instill in players that in order to be successful they must be responsible for what they do both on and off the field and how they take care of their</li> </ul>



		<p>two to three of those months being continuous.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use weighted ball throwing programs with caution.</li> <li>• Focus on nutrition for recovery after participation.</li> </ul>	<p>body, a coach's goal should be to develop lifelong healthy habits.</p>
	<p><b>Psychosocial</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite increases in competition level, continue to foster more self-determined forms of motivation by promoting athlete feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their baseball experiences.</li> <li>• Utilize autonomy-supportive coaching methods to develop a mastery oriented motivational climate, which supports effort/persistence.</li> <li>• Encourage development of positive and cooperative relationships among athletes, parents, and coaches via parent and coach training and athlete communication skills development.</li> <li>• Educate parents and coaches on factors contributing to sport stress, low motivation and athlete burnout as well as appropriate ages to consider baseball specialization.</li> <li>• Continue education on psychological skill development. Consult with a certified sport psychology consultant and/or trained mental health professionals for needs beyond education (i.e., clinical mental health issues).</li> <li>• Excellent time to enhance earlier efforts to promote intrinsic baseball motivation, enjoyment and positive relationships within baseball as a means promote participation into the high school years. A focus on satisfying athlete needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness in the sport environment will aid this goal.</li> <li>• Teaching athletes key psychological skills will aid in the management of stress and psychosocial well-being and facilitate concentration and performance.</li> <li>• Athletes should be allowed to mentally and physically re-charge as appropriate. Structures for travel/select teams should allow athletes to experience other sport and non-sport opportunities. This should also serve to promote multidimensional athlete identities and deter athlete burnout and sport dropout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As players begin to specialize in sports, CFABA Coaches need to be able to recognize burnout and teach parents about the warning signs.</li> <li>• Coaches should continue to develop and manage the playing environment that rewards effort and persistence.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Specialization</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While single sport specialization may begin, it should be delayed as late as possible within this stage.</li> <li>• Participation in one other sport is highly encouraged.</li> <li>• Other recreational activities and sports continue to be an important factor in overall health and well-being.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified Coaches must continue to encourage time off from baseball as well as participating in multiple activities throughout the year.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Competition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational and advanced level athletes continue to play multiple sports that include elements of deliberate play and practice, for the promotion of fitness and enjoyment.</li> <li>• Athletes of higher talent and a desire to become an advanced baseball player can invest their time in one sport (i.e., baseball) with other sports supplementing their training for their primary sport.</li> <li>• Baseball can be the primary sport, but athletes should play other sports as well.</li> <li>• Balance deliberate play with deliberate practice.</li> <li>• Ensure game enjoyment.</li> <li>• Athletes should spend 65 percent of dedicated time to sports training, or participating in deliberate play, and no more than 35 percent of dedicated time to sport should be spent competing.</li> <li>• Athletes can participate in each sport three to four days per week in season, for four to eight months out of the calendar year at a time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFABA Certified coaches should still emphasize practice over games. USA Baseball suggest 65% practice and 35% competition, this is still a 2:1 ration of practice to games.</li> </ul>
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## Summary

The LTAD Plan must be discussed and embraced by coaches at all levels. CFABA provides an opportunity for any youth player to be involved in baseball from T Ball to E League. At this time CFABA should embrace and modify the plan as implemented by USA baseball. This plan accounts for all areas of player development, resulting in players that are physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially developed players and people.

Each level of the plan can be adapted but considers the unique changes that occur throughout youth development. Coaches at each level should understand these developmental differences and plan practices that agree with the LTAD Plan and age appropriate.

Above all CFABA Certified Coaches must take the approach that they are part of the CFABA coaching staff, not that they are coaches of a particular team. The league must have a uniform and coherent plan to develop players to permit participants to develop to the best of their individual ability. The aim of every CFABA coach is to have all players have fun, develop physical and emotionally, to return the next season regardless of the coach or team, and to place as many alumni players as possible on area high school teams. While not every player will have the drive or the skill level to play in high school, players that return every year because all the coaches provide consistent coaching, will develop the hidden skills of offered from youth sports.