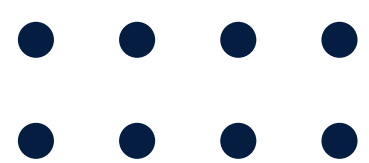




TOP DOG SOFTBALL IN-SEASON

#BeTheTopDog

10u & 12u ACADEMY



IN-SEASON OVERVIEW

KEEPING THE FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT	2
MARCH & APRIL	2
MAY & JUNE	2
JULY	2
LEVEL OF PLAY PROGRESSION	3
EVENT SCHEDULING	4
THROWING PROGRAM	5
PRE-GAME ROUTINE	5



KEEPING THE FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT

Everywhere you look everyone uses the word “development,” but when it comes to getting into the true competitive portion of the year “development” goes out the window and wins and losses become the main focus. The **IN-SEASON** portion of our year (March, April, May, June, and July) is what we identify as the true baseball/softball season. Just because we are **IN-SEASON** does not mean we get away from our core principals and commitment to developing all of our athletes for the individual they are and the overall team growth and success.

It is our goal to maintain a balance between competition and teaching the value in competition, development, and experience that will create memories that will last a lifetime. The bond and friendships built will last far beyond the playing days.

MARCH & APRIL

THE RAMP UP MONTHS

March and April are our months for ramping our athlete’s up into competitive play. The **IN-SEASON** portion of the year is where our athletes are playing games on the most consistent basis and we have ensure we are protecting their overall health by monitoring their workloads and making sure their workloads are progressive.

In today’s society athletes are expected to be at 100% and carry a full workload for 11-12 months out of the year and that is just not realistic for their long term health or athletic success. Top Dog teams bring a heavy amount of focus and intent into monitoring and progressing athlete workloads to help minimize the risk of injury.

MAY & JUNE

THE VALUE IN COMPETITION

By the time we get to the months of May and June Top Dog athletes should be in shape to consistently attack the games and competitive scheduling. This time of year also brings an opportunity to introduce a critical piece in life and development: **COMPETITION!** During the months of May and June Top Dog athletes will gain an understanding for what it means to earn their playing time, the commitment to team success, and the value in winning versus losing.

May and June are months where the depth of the roster will be tested and how well our development plan has worked over the course of our year. The expectation is for Top Dog teams to be in the Semi-Final or Championship game in every event they play in. The only way we can make that happen is by contribution from every member on every roster.

JULY

TURNING HEADS AND HANGING BANNERS

July is the month where the competitiveness of Top Dog teams should be at its highest. Teams should be entering the time of year where they are preparing for their end of the year event, and our goal is to win that event. Every practice and event has built into the end of the year event;

that is **THE EVENT** we are setting out to win. Top Dog teams should be all in on setting out to win their end of the year event.

Top Dog teams shine the brightest on the biggest stage.

LEVEL OF PLAY PROGRESSION

Top Dog is committed to creating environments and setting schedules that are appropriate for the team's level of competition, but also challenging in helping maintain the direction of continuous development. With this Top Dog has a set progression for events Top Dog teams participate in and a path progressing from one level of events to another.

1. NSA

NSA sets the foundation level of play for all 10u and 12u Top Dog teams. NSA provides a local platform that allows for teams to maximize playing time while participating in a level of play that is slightly higher than Rec Ball.

To progress out of NSA teams need to meet **at least 3** of the following criteria:

1. Have a tournament record of .500 or better in 3 consecutive events participated in
2. Mercy Rule an average of 2 teams per event
3. Play in the Semi-Final or Championship game in 3 consecutive events participated in
4. Be a Top 4 Gold Bracket team in 2 consecutive events participated in
5. Have a run scored to runs allowed differential of at least +10 in 3 consecutive events participated in

2. AST

AST has established a competitive platform with a competition level that is slightly higher or more consistent than NSA. AST events help families gain an understanding for what "travel ball" is with events being held from Manteca into Sacramento or East Bay, and as far away as Reno. AST events also help families and teams see a variety of competition in terms of a different set of teams every weekend and varying levels of play, but on a much more consistent basis than what NSA has to offer.

To progress out of AST teams need to meet **at least 3** of the following criteria:

1. Have a tournament record of .700 or better in 3 consecutive events participated in
2. Mercy Rule an average of 2 teams per event
3. Play in the Gold Bracket Semi-Final or Championship game in 3 consecutive events participated in
4. Be the #1 or #2 ranked team from their Pool in 3 consecutive events
5. Have a run scored to runs allowed differential of at least +10 in 3 consecutive events participated in
6. Take **NO MORE THAN 2** losses by 5 runs or more in 3 consecutive events participated in

3A. TRIPLE CROWN

Triple Crown is “travel ball.” Teams are competitive. Schedules become a grind. We will consistently see events that hold higher level teams. This is the stage where traveling becomes a big piece in the schedule as most events are hosted in Stockton or Southern California.

To progress out of Triple Crown teams need to meet **at least 3** of the following criteria:

1. Have a tournament record of .600 or better in 3 consecutive events participated in
2. Take **0 LOSSES** by 5 runs or more in 2 consecutive events
3. Play in the Gold Bracket Semi-Final or Championship game in 2 events participated in
4. Be the #1 or #2 ranked team from their Pool in 2 consecutive events participated in
5. Have a run scored to runs allowed differential of at least +10 in 2 consecutive events

participated in

3B. PGF

PGF has become **THE DESTINATION** for travel softball in the last 10 years. PGF events hold the biggest stage weekend after weekend and hosts the premier Nationals event at the end of Summer, bringing over 100 teams per age group to Irvine, Huntington Beach, and Fountain Valley for a week long event. PGF is the level of play all Top Dog athletes should be striving to play at.

EVENT SCHEDULING

March: 1 to 2 Tournaments

April: 1 to 2 Tournaments

May: 2 Tournaments

June: 2 to 3 Tournaments

July: 1 Tournament & End of the Year Event

TOTAL: 8 - 11 TOURNAMENTS

END OF THE YEAR EVENT

OPTION 1: NSA West Coast World Series | “B”

- This option is for teams that are struggling to compete in NSA events. Teams cannot win on a consistent basis and perform a lot more consistently against lower seeded teams in tournaments.

OPTION 2: NSA West Coast World Series | “A”

- This option is for teams that have not progressed out of NSA yet, but compete consistently with middle of the pack or higher seeded teams in tournaments. This option is also for teams that have progressed into AST but have not yet hit their stride in consistently competing in Gold Brackets during their events.

OPTION 3: Triple Crown World Series

- This option is for teams that have progressed out of NSA and are competing consistently in the Gold Bracket during AST events. This option is also for teams that are consistently competing in Triple Crown events.

OPTION 4: PGF NATIONALS or ALLIANCE NATIONALS

- This option is the best of the best. This is the highest level of competition and is the ultimate goal for all Top Dog teams. These events create the highest amount of exposure for Top Dog teams and participating in these events can pave the way for major opportunities as athletes and teams navigate their journey through the age groups of travel ball.

THROWING PROGRAM

The **OFF-SEASON** throwing program should have established the foundation and cleaned up fundamentals to allow Top Dog athletes to throw and catch consistently. The **IN-SEASON** throwing program is all about consistency and maintaining what was developed in during the **OFF-SEASON** throwing program.

WEEKLY ROUTINE

DRILL	REPS	DISTANCE	EFFORT %	NOTE
THROWING ASSESSMENT				
Staggered Stance	5 - 8	15 FEET	50%	Focus On The Movement
Pivot Throws	5 - 8	20 FEET	50%	Focus On The Movement
Step & Throw	5 - 8	30 FEET	75%	Blend It Together
Shuffle & Throw	5 - 8	45 FEET	80 - 100%	Rhythm
GB Field Position. Shuffle & Throw	5 - 8	60 FEET	80 - 100%	Rhythm
Play Catch Step & Throw	10 - 15	30 FEET	75 - 100%	Blend It Together

LONG TOSS (DO 1-2 TIMES PER WEEK)

DRILL	REPS	DISTANCE	EFFORT %	NOTE
Step & Throw	20 - 25	60 - 75 FEET	100%	Blend It Together
Shuffle & Throw	10 - 15	70 - 85 FEET	100%	Blend It Together
2 Hops & Throw	8 - 12	80 - 95 FEET	100%	Blend It Together

Throw on an arc to a Coach. The distance is far enough for the athlete to make the throw, with a high arc, on **ONE HOP**. Long toss helps the athlete focus on release point, maintaining direction, and increasing arm strength.

PRE-GAME ROUTINE

It is the expectation all Top Dog teams have a structured **Pre-Game Routine** that prepares athletes for competition. All Top Dog team's **Pre-Game Routine** should include the following:

1. DYNAMIC STRETCHING & AGILITIES

2. BASE RUNNING

1. Timing & Lead @ 1B
2. Timing, Lead, Chop Chop, GO @ 1B
3. Steal @ 1B

3. OFFENSIVE STATIONS

1. Bunting
2. PVC Movement Prep
3. Tee Work
4. Front Toss (Whiffle Balls - Throw With Pace **NO LOBS!**)
5. Front Toss (Heavy Balls)
6. Shagging Front Toss

*If space does not allow for whiffle balls to be hit take out Front Toss (whiffle balls)

4. DEFENSIVE STATIONS - PART 1

1. Throwing Fundamentals (Into BowNet)
2. Catching Fundamentals (Coach Throws)
3. Partner Catch
4. Ground Ball EDD Progression Rolls
5. Drop Steps

*This is the time for Pitchers and Catchers to start getting loose

5. DEFENSIVE STATIONS - PART 2

1. Ground Ball Rolls & Throw Into BowNet
2. Ground Balls Off The Bat & Throw To Coach
3. Fly Ball Toss & Catch
4. Fly Ball Drop Step & Catch