PHYSICAL PREPARATION

INTRODUCTION

WHY CONDITION FOR SOFTBALL?

It's true that the physical demands of playing softball are considerably less than some other sports. At the same time it is also true that higher levels of physical conditioning can improve performance in any activity. So why is physical training and fitness so badly neglected at the lower levels of softball training?

Conditioned athletes can; jump higher,
throw farther,
swing harder,
run faster,
have quicker reactions,
are less prone to injury and,
when injured, heal faster.

These are all good reasons to work on your physical conditioning. Softball is a game of inches and mistakes. It challenges players in such domains as reaction, concentration, intensity, commitment and self discipline. All of these qualities are enhanced through increased fitness, so one might argue that this, in itself justifies some type of conditioning program.

CONDITION WHAT?

This material should be read in conjunction with the hand out, "Fitness Model", and, "Periodization", which explain the elements of physical conditioning appropriate for softball. At Squirt level the focus should be on flexibility, agility and quickness.

Flexibility is critical to success in softball, so every player should have a stretch program they use to prepare for practice and games. In fact, stretching is a healthy activity for lifetime fitness. If you don't have a flesibility program for your team, there is a separate hand out on this.

Agility is the ability to change directions quickly and that's a benefit to every player in all positions.

Pee Wee players should continue training those elements but add strength and power training as well. At Bantam level, players need to increase the emphasis on power and add dynamic strength for a complete fitness program.

CONDITIONING VS. SKILL

Conditioning is never a replacement for skill, and both should be enhanced in conjunction with each other.