

BASEBALL PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

1. Barwon Sports Academy Overview

The mission of the Barwon Sports Academy is to identify, support and nurture regional athletes, coaches and families through education, elite training and pathway integration, enabling success in sport and life.

We will achieve this by.

- Delivering leading edge pathway support
- Focus on holistic sport and education growth
- Promotion of behaviours aligned with leadership and success
- Encouraging athlete responsibility and resilience

We are one of six regional academies in Victoria supported by the Victorian Institute of Sport and partner with state sporting associations to provide rich environments for regional athletes to flourish. Each sporting partnership requires a Program Manager and Head Coach who work with the BSA team to develop and deliver our programs.

2. BSA Values

- **Excellence** - We strive for high standards in everything we do — planning, preparation, delivery, and outcomes. We pursue continuous improvement and hold ourselves accountable to deliver quality experiences for athletes, coaches, and partners
- **Integrity** - We act with honesty, fairness, and respect, always prioritising safety and doing what's right. We foster a culture of trust where decisions are made ethically, transparently, and in the best interests of all involved.
- **Inclusion** - We create a welcoming and caring environment where all people feel valued, respected, and safe. We celebrate equality and diversity and work to remove barriers so everyone can thrive in sport, regardless of background and circumstances.

- **Collaboration** - We work together with our community, clubs, coaches, families, and partners to build a stronger sporting community. We believe success is shared and value open, respectful communication and meaningful partnerships.
- **Care** - We are committed, caring, and energised by the positive impact of sport. We nurture enjoyment, friendship, and personal growth.

3. Long term Baseball Athlete Development (LTAD) Framework

Developed by the Australian Institute of Sport, the **FTEM pathway** is a nationally recognized model used across sports, including baseball. It consists of four progressive stages

Phase	Focus
Foundation	Basic movement skills, fun participation, and early sport exposure
Talent	Skill development, competitive play, and identification of potential
Elite	High-performance training, national competition, and international prep
Mastery	Professional-level performance and sustained excellence

Sources: [Australian Institute of Sport FTEM](#)

VRAS is in the Talent (T1-T4): Skill development, competitive play and identification of potential. This ensures;

Progressive skill development across all age groups

Holistic athlete growth including physical, mental and emotional aspects

Late specialization to encourage multi-sport participation before focusing on baseball.

Launched in late 2022, the **Performance Pathway** replaced the former Aces Academy and reflects a renewed focus on optimizing player development and increasing the pool of international-standard athletes. ¹

Three-Tier Structure

Tier	Age Group	Focus
Futures	U12–U14	Skill acquisition, game fundamentals, and early talent identification
Prospects	U16–U18	Advanced training, competitive exposure, and performance tracking
Select	U18+	National squad preparation, college commitments, and elite readiness

4. The role of the Baseball program in our region's pathway

The BSA Baseball program is positioned to support aspiring Junior baseballer's U/18 from the Barwon region. It will suit talented players who are looking to develop their skills and understanding in pursuit of reaching their full potential, progressing along the High-Performance pathway and realizing the career opportunities in the sport. The goal of the program is to bring together a like-minded cohort of athletes, expose them to resources that help them understand what is required to reach the next level.

The BSA provides access to experiences, holistic education and strength and conditioning advice. We expect players to graduate from the program knowing more about their bodies, how to train effectively, the mental approach required the career pathway available.

The BSA recognise both the Baseball Australia and Baseball Victoria pathways and the rich access to opportunities at club level in the Barwon region. Please see the attached document highlighting these.

5. What is the goal of the Baseball program?

The goal of the BSA Baseball program is to provide baseball related skills and understandings that provide the athletes with the best chance to reach their full potential and understand the career opportunities within the sport.

6. Key Baseball component

Technical development

These are the core baseball skills athletes must master through progressive drills and feedback:

- Throwing mechanics: Emphasis on arm path, release point, and follow-through to improve velocity and accuracy.
- Pitching fundamentals: Grip variations, delivery consistency, and command of fastball, changeup, and breaking pitches.
- Hitting technique: Bat path, timing, load and stride mechanics, and pitch recognition.
- Fielding skills: Footwork, glove work, transfer speed, and positional awareness for infielders and outfielders.
- Catching skills: Receiving, blocking, framing, and throwing to bases.
- Base running: Acceleration, turns, sliding techniques, and decision-making on the basepaths.

Tactical Development

This focuses on game strategy, decision-making, and situational awareness:

- Situational play: Understanding cutoffs, relays, bunt defense, and double plays.
- Game IQ: Reading pitchers, anticipating plays, and adjusting to game flow.
- Team strategy: Offensive and defensive systems, signs, and communication protocols.

- Scouting and analytics: Exposure to basic data analysis (e.g., spray charts, pitch tendencies) to inform decisions.
- Mental skills: Visualization, focus routines, and coping strategies for pressure situations.

Physical Conditioning

Athletes need structured programs to build strength, speed, and durability:

- Mobility and flexibility: Dynamic warm-ups, hip and shoulder mobility, and recovery routines.
- Strength training: Age-appropriate resistance work focusing on core, posterior chain, and rotational power.
- Speed and agility: Sprint mechanics, lateral movement, and explosive starts.
- Endurance and conditioning: Interval training, aerobic base building, and recovery protocols.
- Injury prevention: Arm care routines, workload monitoring, and biomechanical assessments.

7. Holistic education (Sport specific)

- Goal setting
- Nutrition for competition
- Injury prevention (Understanding your body, MSK, loads, recovery)
- Mindset (Psychology involved in tennis)
- The pathway to USA College tennis
- Baseball ambassadors sharing insights & Q & A

8. Selection

An information session will be held October/November of each year leading into the application process based on the standard selection criteria.

All information available on www.barwonsportsacademy.org.au

9. Questions please contact

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“Empowering Barwon’s sporting community to shine on the world stage, sustainably, innovatively, and together.”

Baseball Australia's High-Performance Pathway

Stage 4: National & International Representation (18+) Entry Point: Baseball Australia's National Teams Pathways: • Team Australia (Senior Men's/Women's) • U23 National Team • College Baseball (USA) • Australian Baseball League (ABL)
Stage 3: State Pathway Integration (Ages 14–18) Entry Point: Selection into Baseball Victoria's Performance Pathway Tiers: • Futures (U12–U14): Weekly training, tournament exposure • Prospects (U16–U18): Winter academy, advanced skill development • Select (U18+): National squad prep, college readiness
Stage 2: Regional Talent Identification (Ages 12–14) Entry Point: Junior club competition and Little League tournaments
Stage 1: Grassroots Development (Ages 5–12) Entry Point: Local clubs in the Barwon region (e.g., East Belmont Saints, Guild Lions, Newport Rams)

The **Victorian Regional academies of sports program** also sits in this space, with athletes identified, provided access to the high-performance team, strength and conditioning and a holistic education program.