



2026 COACHES MEETING

U13 – U19 RECREATION

CATEGORY



INTRODUCTIONS

President: Julie Robicheau

Vice President: Colleen Allison

Treasurer: Sheila Wilson

Commissioner: David Brewer

Registrar:

Scheduler:

Secretary: Krista Maine

AGENDA



Objectives - Definitions

Coaches Do's & Dont's

Respect in Sport

The Basics

What to Expect on Game Day

Rule Highlights

Score Sheet Cheat Sheet

Umpires & Yellow Card

Weather/Rescheduling/Standings

Finals

Contacts

Other Information

Questions

OBJECTIVES OF GEMSA LEAGUE PLAY

- Creating a fun and safe environment for youth to learn softball
- Developing sportsmanship, teamwork and a sense of fair play
- Increasing skill and understanding of the game of softball
- To Focus on the core skill Development and fundamentals of Softball



COACHES – DO'S

- READ THE HAND BOOK
- ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO READ THE HANDBOOK
- PLAYER ENCOURAGEMENT AND FAIR PLAY
- MAINTAIN CONTROL
 - Emotions
 - Fans/Spectators
 - Parents



COACHES – DON'T

- MISTREAT UMPIRES
- RAISE VOICE IN ANGER
- FORGET THAT
 - **POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND FAIR TEAM PLAY MAKES IT FUN FOR ALL PLAYERS**



RESPECT IN SPORT

PLEASE REMEMBER

THIS IS A **GAME**
COACHES ARE **VOLUNTEERS**
UMPIRES ARE **HUMAN**

EVERYONE DESERVES
RESPECT!



Coaches are required by GEMSA and Softball Alberta to have

- Respect In Sport

AND/OR

- Safe Sport Canada



THE BASICS – PART 1

- GAME NIGHTS
 - Monday – Wednesday – U13 & U17/U19 (combined)
 - Tuesday – Thursday – U15
 - 2 games each week
 - Game Start time 7:00 PM
- TEAM SIZE
 - Minimum of 8 to start
 - All Players are to bat in order
- GAME PLAY
 - Maximum 7 innings
 - 5 Runs per inning



THE BASICS – PART 2

- DIAMOND
 - Bases –
 - U13 – 55'
 - U15 – U19 – 60'
 - Pitching –
 - U13 – 38'
 - U15 – 40'
 - U17 & U19 – 43'



THE BASICS – PART 3

- BALL –
 - U13 - 11”
 - U15 – U19 – 12”
- EQUIPMENT
 - Caged Helmet
 - Infielders Mask
 - NO Metal Cleats U13 – U15
 - Metal Cleats allowed U17 – U19



WHAT TO EXPECT ON GAME DAY

- First Team to arrive has choice of dugout
- Check the field – Safety First
- Home team is responsible for diamond set up
 - Home team will be identified on the schedule.
- Line-up cards must be completed



RULES – HIGHLIGHTS

- RULES IN EFFECT – U15 and Up Only
 - Third Strike Rule
 - Infield Fly Rule
- PITCHERS
 - MAXimum 4 innings per game for U13 – U15
 - U17 – U19 unlimited



Top 20 Misunderstood Rules

1 Left Hand Turn From First Base
A runner forfeits exemption from liability to be put out if, after overrunning first base, makes an attempt to run to second base.
The key to this is the runner continues to second base. There must be at least an attempt towards advancing to second base. It does not matter which direction the batter-runner turns after reaching first base as they are coming back to first base without attempting to advance to second base.

2 Check Swing
It is the plate umpire's judgement that the batter made an attempt to swing at the ball (but not a full swing); the plate umpire shall call the pitched ball a strike. This call CANNOT be appealed to the base umpire - use the guiding principle that the plate umpire does not call it a strike unless he/she saw the attempted swing - therefore no need for an appeal.
However, if the batter attempted to swing at the ball but the plate umpire did not see the attempt (perhaps blocked out by the catcher) then a ball shall be called. With this call, the plate umpire does have the opportunity to check with the base umpire(s) following the request from the defensive team. The base umpire shall only answer a check swing request made by the plate umpire - the base umpire shall only respond to a request made directly to them by a plate umpire. The base umpire does not respond to a request made directly to them by a defensive player.

Should the base umpire see the attempt that the plate umpire did not see, they shall respond to the plate umpire by calling "Yes" and the call shall be changed from ball to strike by the plate umpire.

3 Award of Bases on an Overthrow
When a thrown ball goes out of play (beyond the established boundary lines of the playing field):
✓ all runners, including the batter-runner, shall be awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time that the thrown ball left the fielder's hand
✓ if there are two runners between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner

Keys to remember with this rule:
✓ the award is based on the position of the runner(s) at the time the ball left the fielder's hand, not at the time that the ball went out of play - that is important to remember on a long overthrow from the outfield
✓ the award is two bases from the last base legally touched - if a runner has rounded second base and is returning to first base to tag up on a fly ball, they will be awarded third base as the last base that they had legally touched was first base

4 Batted Ball hitting Home Plate or a Base
Home Run
✓ a batted ball remains alive and in play when it strikes home plate
✓ when a batted ball comes to rest on home plate, it is a fair ball and the plate umpire shall signal accordingly
✓ remember, the ball flies back to the back point of home plate so the plate is completely in fair territory

First or Third Base
✓ When properly located, first and third base are positioned on the diamond completely in fair territory - see #11
✓ Once a batted ball strikes first or third base without having been first touched by a player, the batted ball shall be ruled a fair ball regardless of where the ball ends up
✓ Once the ball touches first or third base does not have to pass the base, touching the base is all that is required to make it a fair ball
✓ The plate umpire should signal fair ball immediately once the batted ball strikes the base

5 Batter Stepping on Home Plate or Directly in Front of Home Plate
Stepping on Home Plate:
✓ the batter is out if any part of their foot is touching home plate when the bat contacts the ball
✓ the ball is dead and runners may advance on the play
Stepping directly in front of Home Plate or Mat:
✓ the batter is out if their foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and touching the ground when the bat contacts the ball
✓ the ball is dead and runners may advance on the play

Points of Emphasis:
✓ there is no penalty unless the batter makes contact with the ball
✓ position of the foot is judged when the bat makes contact with the ball - if the foot is in the air and then comes down on the ground after the ball is hit, there is no penalty
✓ with the exception of the foot touching home plate, the foot must be completely outside the lines of the batter's box - touching any part of the lines is acceptable as the lines are part of the box
✓ the same penalty applies whether the batted ball is fair or foul - "Dead Ball" is called as soon as the batter makes contact with the ball

6 Fair Ball Bouncing out of play or off a defensive player
When a fair ball bounces out of play, including if it deflects off a defensive player, the umpire shall declare "Dead Ball" as soon as the ball goes out of play.
✓ All runners shall be awarded two bases
- the award is based on their position at the time of the pitch - not at the time the ball went out of play
- the award is the same regardless of where the ball actually goes out of play

7 Infield Fly
Requirements for an Infield Fly:
✓ runners on first and second base OR first, second and third base
✓ less than 2 out
✓ not a bunt
✓ not a line drive
✓ can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort - this includes the pitcher, catcher or any outfielder positioned in the infield
Once an Infield Fly is declared:
✓ if the hit becomes a foul ball, no penalty - treat like any other foul ball
✓ if the hit remains a fair ball:
- the batter is out regardless of whether the ball is caught or not
- the ball remains alive
- the runners may advance at their own risk
- if the fly ball is caught, the runners must tag up
- if the fly ball is not caught, the runner can choose to advance but as the batter has already been declared out there is no force play.

8 Lead-off (Pitchers Circle)
The Pitcher's Circle is the area within a 8' radius of the pitcher's plate - the lines are considered within the circle.
Even though the ball may be in the pitcher's possession in the pitcher's circle, the batter-runner:
✓ may continue past first base and is entitled to run towards second base, as long as the batter-runner does not stop at first base
✓ once the batter-runner makes a stop, the batter-runner must immediately proceed to the next base or return to the base legally obtained UNLESS the pitcher makes a play (including a fake throw) on the batter-runner or another runner.
If the runner stops and simply stands there off the base while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle and no play is made - "DEAD BALL - RUNNER IS OUT - LEAD-OFF"
If the runner stops and then makes a move in more than one direction immediately after the stop while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle and no play is made "DEAD BALL - RUNNER IS OUT - LEAD-OFF"
Key to remember with this rule:
✓ the pitcher cannot force the first stop by a runner merely by having possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle. The runner is allowed one stop. As soon as the runner stops, runner must make a decision immediately to either advance or return
✓ A play on the runner (including a fake throw) nullifies any penalty. Every fake throw allows the runner one more stop

9 Difference between Interference and Obstruction
Interference
✓ typically an act by an offensive player
✓ possible to have umpire interference and spectator interference
Results:
• "Dead Ball" being called (exception - umpire interference)
• Always have out if by an offensive player
Obstruction
✓ is an act by a defensive player (typically being in the way of a runner)
Results:
• in a delayed dead ball (play continues)
• determined at the end of the play, in the umpire's judgement as to where the offensive player would have gotten without the obstruction
• if the obstructed player is called out, "Dead Ball", and bases awarded
• if runner advance past the base they would have achieved (in the judgement of the umpire), the runner is in jeopardy of being put out. An obstruction call does not entitle the obstructed runner to keep attempting to advance until played upon

10 Stepping back toward home
After hitting a fair batted ball the batter-runner shall proceed directly to first base. The batter-runner cannot take a step back towards home to avoid being put out.
✓ The batter is out for stepping and taking a step back toward first base. If in the judgement of the umpire this was an act to prevent another out, the runner closest to home is out
✓ When the batter-runner stops between first base and the plate umpire signals and calls "Dead Ball" and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch
✓ When a batter-runner / runner stops after legally obtaining first base, between first & second base, second & third, third and home the runner is in jeopardy of being put out



TOP 20 MISUNDERSTOOD RULES

11 Double Base
The Double Base is used at first base with the orange portion in foul territory and the white portion in fair territory. A batted ball striking the white/fair portion is declared a fair ball.
The defensive player uses the white/fair portion of the base at all times. Exception: If the thrown ball comes from foul territory, on the first base side, then the defensive player can use the orange/foul portion of the double base.
The offensive player uses the orange/foul portion of the base on his/her first attempt at first base when a play is being made on him/her. This includes when the batter-runner runs on a dropped third strike. Exception: If the ball is thrown from foul territory, on the first base side, the offensive player must use the white/fair portion of the double base.
On a hit to the outfield with no play being made at first base, the offensive player may touch either portion of the base on his/her first attempt at first base.
Once an offensive player has touched the orange/foul portion of the base on his/her first attempt at first base, the runner must then use the white/fair portion of the base:
✓ when returning to the base after overrunning first base
✓ when taking his/her position prior to the next pitch
✓ when tagging up on a fly ball

Points of Emphasis:
✓ defensive player - provided any portion of the runner's foot is touching any portion of the white/fair portion of the base, the runner is considered to be in contact with the base
✓ offensive player - when his/she is required to use the orange/foul portion, provided any portion of his/her foot is touching any portion of the orange/foul portion of the base, his/she is considered to be in contact with the base
✓ once the offensive player has made their first attempt at first base, the orange/foul portion of the base no longer exists

12 Runners passing each other
A runner cannot pass another runner on the diamond.
✓ Runner that physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been called dead by the umpire will point at the preceding runner as they "passing" and the ball remains live. No call or signal will be given until the status of the ball is determined. If the status for the ball is determined to be live, then the out call is made and signaled.
Exception:
• When the runner is assisted on a home run or an award of bases, the ball remains dead
• The runner passes a preceding runner during a dead ball play, the ball will remain dead
• A batted ball becomes a dead ball foul ball, the runner is not out for passing a runner prior to the dead ball declaration

13 Coaches Assistance
When a coach is in the way of the runner, as the runner is approaching or rounding the base or touches the runner to hold up or send the runner, the runner is out.
✓ Coaches need to be aware of where they position themselves to ensure they are not preventing the forward progress of the runner
✓ Coaches cannot touch the runner in any way to tell them to go or to stop
✓ Coaches cannot push or catch the runner

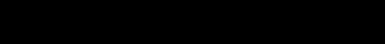
14 Hands - Not part of the bat
When a pitched ball hits any part of the batter's body, the umpire will call "Dead Ball". It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. EXCEPTION: If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the umpire shall call a "ball" if it's a ball, if a batter is hit with a pitch that is "strike" - it's a strike, whether they try and avoid being hit.
✓ If the batter swings at the pitch, it's a dead ball and a strike, the bat continues.
✓ If the batter doesn't swing, it would be a dead ball, batter goes to first base.

15 Leaving the Bat over the Plate
If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, is it an automatic strike? NO. The batter can leave the bat over the plate during the wind-up and through the actual pitch. A strike is an attempt to hit the ball.
✓ In the judgement of the umpire, if it is deemed the batter made good, attempted to hit the ball the umpire will call "SWING" point at the plate with their open hand and then signal the strike call with their right hand.
✓ If the batter does not move the bat in an attempt to hit the ball, in the judgement of the umpire, the umpire will call "BALL" (if not in the strike zone), the bat continues.

16 Batting Out of Order
The PROPER batter is the one called out.
Any hit or advance by the hit or any runners due to the hit, or error or other source is nullified. The next batter is the one who follows the batter who was called out.
✓ This happens: the improper batter hits the ball advances to first - the umpire calls the proper batter out and it just so happens the improper batter removed from first base hits again because they actually follow the proper batter in the line up.
✓ There are other things that can happen, but this is the one most folks get most confused about.

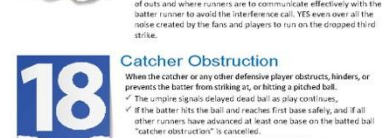
17 Dropped Third Strike - RUN?
The batter runner can only advance if there are less than two out when first is put out.
✓ The batter runner can run if there are two out & first is occupied.
✓ A batter runner who is out and advances toward first base can create a form of interference by drawing the throw to first base resulting in the runner closest to home being called out.
✓ Coaches at first need to be keenly aware of the count, the number of outs and where runners are to communicate effectively with the batter runner to avoid the interference call. YES even over all the noise created by the fans and players to run on the dropped third strike.

18 Catcher Obstruction
When the catcher or any other defensive player obstructs, hinders, or prevents the batter from striking at, or hitting a pitched ball.
✓ The umpire signals delayed dead ball as play continues.
✓ If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball "catcher obstruction" is cancelled.
• All actions as a result of the batted ball stands
• No options if runners do not advance safely the offensive coach has the option:
- Taking the result of the play
- Having the batter advance to first and if a runner is already standing on first the runner is forced to second.
All runners can only advance if forced - by being pushed to the next base by a preceding runner advancing to the base they have legally obtained before the "catcher obstruction".

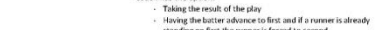


19 Established Base Path
We all know what a base path is - the imaginary line between two bases. The established base path is the imaginary line between the runner and the base they are running toward when a play with the ball is attempting to be made out.
✓ The batter-runner does not have to run within the 3 foot line if they are avoiding a player making a play on the ball they can establish a base path.
✓ The runners do not have to run on the base path they can round the base for example and once the player is in front of them has the ball, the base path is established by their location and a direct line to the base they are attempting to obtain.
✓ The runner can stop and turn, but the batter runner heading from home to first and then run toward the base establishing a new base path and then turn again and establish a new base path.
✓ In the judgement of the umpire the runner / batter runner cannot leave the established base path when a play is being made on them by the defensive player with the ball.
• Rule of thumb is the offensive player cannot take more than one or two steps perpendicular to the established base path (three feet or one meter)
• Deviations in the application / judgement - clearly the level of play, the skill of the players, and the skill of the umpires affect the application of this rule as with many other rules. The key is to understand the base path is created when the defensive player has the ball and is making an attempt to get an out.

20 UMPIRE/ARBITER - JUDGEMENT
Good judgement means being able to weigh your options accurately, under pressure, in a matter of seconds.
✓ The first step of the process is to gather information and learn everything you possibly can about the rules and the game. Figure out all the infinite pros and cons of your choices. Imagine the possible consequences, both good and bad. Be prudent and use your common sense.
✓ And then, when the time comes, you must choose the best option without hesitation.
✓ What is good judgement VS bad judgement - become an umpire this demonstrates a desire to develop "good judgement"



Give Respect to Get Respect



Give Respect to Get Respect

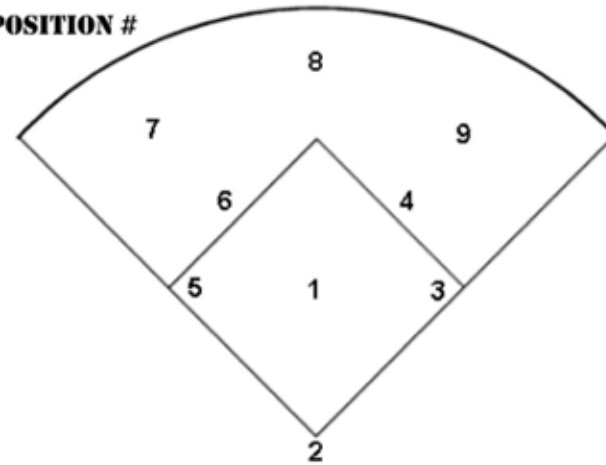
SCORE SHEET CHEAT SHEET



SCOREKEEPING CHEAT SHEET

LIST OF POSITIONS AND POSITION

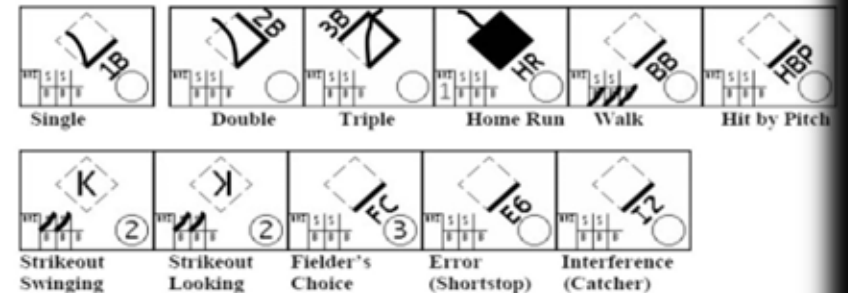
1	Pitcher (P)
2	Catcher (C)
3	First base (1B)
4	Second Base (2B)
5	Third Base (3B)
6	ShortStop (SS)
7	Left Field (LF)
8	Center Field (CF)
9	Right Field (RF)



#	Player	Pos	1
9	Smith, J.	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	Lawson, A.	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Henry, D.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	Jones, T.	9	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1B Single | B Balk |
| 2B Double | PB Passed Ball |
| 3B Triple | WP Wild Pitch |
| HR Home Run | GRD Ground Rule Double |
| K Strikeout Swinging | DP Double Play |
| X Strikeout Looking | FC Fielder's Choice |
| BB Base on Balls | IFR Infield Fly Rule |
| IBB Intentional Walk | I Interference |
| HBP Hit By Pitch | DI Defensive Indifference |
| SB Stolen Base | ! Great Play |
| CS Caught Stealing | E Error |

The Basic plays that occur in Softball are scored as follows;



Often, on a base hit, a scorekeeper will also draw a line to show where the ball was hit

UMPIRES

WILL Be respected at all times

- Umpire present – NO Pay at Plate
- No Umpire present...
 - Expectations are,
 - Teams will provide a parent umpire –
 - Home teams to Provide plate umpire/Away team Base umpire
 - IF Switching each half inning (Home team umpire when their team is in the field/Visiting team while at bat)



YELLOW CARD

- **Yellow Card**

- **Why a yellow card program**

- **As we have an issue with recruiting and retaining officials, it is important to protect, encourage and respect them.**
 - **These officials in most cases are young officials and are still learning the game, no different then your players. We need to be able to give these officials a mechanism that they can use with confidence and be respected.**



What can we use as a "Yellow Card?"

Umpire Communication and Culture Project

PLATE CONFERENCE

1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND/OR YOUR PARTNER(S) AT THE PLATE MEETING
2. PROVIDE THE COACHES WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES
3. GO OVER ANY GAME/PARK SPECIFIC RULES
4. "If you have a question during the game, please ask for time, and when time is granted, respectfully approach me or my partner. We will discuss the play, and we will give you our FINAL decision."
5. "Just like the players, I will try my best, but do not expect perfection. If there are any concerns about the game, don't hesitate to get in touch with the UIC (Umpire in Charge)."
6. "Coach, are you and all your players, coaches, parents, and spectators ready to conduct themselves respectfully, fairly, and within the Softball Alberta Code of Conduct and Safe Sport?"
7. "Is this understood?"



Umpire Communication and Culture Project

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

COACH/PLAYERS

"Coach, you or your team's behavior is unacceptable, and you have not honored our Agreement.

Continued poor behavior will result in you or the player being removed from the game."

PARENTS/SPECTATORS

"Coach, your parent/spectator behavior is unacceptable, and you have not honored our Agreement.

Continued poor behavior will result in you or the parent/spectator being removed from the game."



Examples of Misconduct and Category for possible Sanctioning

Minor Misconduct (Yellow Card)

- Use of audible foul language
- Disputing judgment or decision of an umpire
- Minor equipment abuse
- Frivolous complaints (first incident)
- Talking Back to an Umpire
- Displays of inappropriate aggressive behavior

Major Misconduct (Ejection)

- Receiving a second Yellow Card in a game
- Disparaging or insulting remarks and/or the use of foul language directed toward a player/coach/official/umpire/spectator
- Failing to carry out a lawful direction of an umpire
- Abusing an umpire or official
- Deliberately barging with force
- Displays of excessive aggressive behavior
- Frivolous complaints (second and further incidents)
- Major equipment abuse where there is potential to injure participants and/or spectators
- Fighting after being provoked
- Provoking a fight but no further involvement
- Physically attacking an umpire



What are we asking UIC's to do after an incident?

PLAYER/COACH

Follow up with the individual who was given the yellow card:

Immediate Contact:

Listen Actively:

Identify Issues

Offer Constructive Feedback:

Remember, supporting a youth umpire isn't just about addressing immediate concerns but also about fostering their long-term development and resilience in the role.

AGE

<16 210 43.3%

17 - 21 40 8.2%

22 - 30 26 5.4%

31 - 40 18 3.7%

41 - 50 63 13.0%

51 - 60 55 11.3%

61 - 70 43 8.9%

>70 26 5.4%

Unknown 4 0.8%

485

ARE WE PLAYING?

- Diamonds
 - Games are on, unless diamonds are closed by city/county.
 - Check rainout websites
- Air Quality – Rain outs – too cold – too hot
 - Games are on, unless you have received a notification from GEMSA thru RAMP
- ANY information we have will be sent to coaches thru RAMP



RESCHEDULING

- Diamonds
 - Book your own
- Umpire
 - contact GEMSA (min 48 hr notice)
- Games cancelled due to Weather/Air quality if not made up will be considered a tie
- Games cancelled for any other reason will be considered a forfeit
- GEMSA will have a Game reschedule form online



WHAT ARE OUR STANDINGS?

- Scores are to be entered in RAMP
 - DO NOT Check the Rainout Box
- League Standings will then calculate



2026 FINALS

- Location – Leduc, Alberta
- Diamonds –
 - LEDE 1-7, ELKS 1-2, AILEEN FALHER 1-2, Calmar 1-3, Devon Paragon
 - We are working on additional diamonds
- Playoffs MAY start on Thursday June 18th, 2026.



WHO DO I CONTACT?

- Book Umpires
 - vp@gemsa.ca & treasurer@gemsa.ca
- Umpire Concern
 - commissioner@gemsa.ca & admin@gemsa.ca
- Game Concern
 - commissioner@gemsa.ca & admin@gemsa.ca
- General questions
 - admin@gemsa.ca
- I can't Make the Finals
 - president@gemsa.ca & admin@gemsa.ca



OTHER INFO

- Schedules
 - Will be posted on- line - Coaches will receive an email Notification
 - Ensure you are notified by updating your contact information in RAMP
- RAMP
 - UPDATE Coach/Contact Information



Questions?

