

### **Nature of the Petitioner's Business: Softball Training Facility**

The standards of the industry are ultimately defined by the expectations of the parents and children expecting a certain service. However, as professionals in this business we are legally and ethically responsible for making sure we maintain a level of integrity, professionalism, and safety. We are in the business of coaching children, the nature of the training, the length of time and duration of the training, the age of our clients, the type of softball and conditioning skills we are teaching, all pose risks to our young population. A responsible softball training business must not overlook the social or cultural ingredients within their business model or day-to-day operations. Nor can one in this industry fail to address these components and expect to be profitable. This is why SoftballOne Inc. follows the standards set in place by the National Association for Sports and Physical Education and our hiring practices mirror both the accreditation of physical education and coaching education. Although there are distinct differences from athletic programs with softball coaches in public institutions and in private business that employ softball coaches we carry the same legal and ethical responsibility in the eyes of the law and society.

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Coaches in this industry also carry most of the load when it comes to actually teaching our athletes the game of softball. It is our ability to train athletes year round, our role to link players into their various teams at different times of the year, combined with the expectations of those we service and our reputation as coaching leaders, that makes this business very detailed and the duties we as coaches extremely complex. Not only must we train softball skills, we must be at the forefront of education, and commit ourselves to constant professional development in several sport disciplines. We must initiate and create softball curriculum and learning materials to uphold the value of sport, present healthy training for young children, and have the foresight to balance all of this so our kids can play at the highest level. In this day and age, where the stakes and risks are so high, this isn't accomplished by merely teaching a kid how to catch and throw. It is definitely not done with a coach without the educational training to understand these control these complexities.

### **Differences in the Softball Coaching Field or Industry:**

#### **Where are softball coaches?**

The first question is, "Where do you find softball coaches?" Private softball coaching schools employ coaches and provide monetary compensation. High schools and universities also employ softball coaches and provide monetary compensation to their coaches. You also find softball coaches in the community league but their position is of a volunteer. You also find many volunteer coaches at the amateur level coaching summer teams within a non-profit organization. Given the broad spectrum of the institutions you may find a coach you must examine these closely to understand the unique business operations of SoftballOne.

#### **Universities or Higher Education Institutions**

*Differences:*

- A softball program of a university of another higher education institution is a sub-division of the athletic department, which is one of many departments within the University. SoftballOne is an independent company functioning in the free-market with a specialized focus on the game of softball and the women who play.
- Softball programs in higher education are composed of athletes ranging between the ages of 18-22. SoftballOne trains players between the ages of 8-18.



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- Softball programs of higher education institutions are limited to an academic calendar and the NCAA, NAIA, or NJCAA rules regarding athletic competition and training. These softball programs are also regulated with the type of training and length of time they can provide their student-athletes with coaching within an academic calendar year. This is often done to level the playing field of participating institution within a same sport and protect the student-athlete and defend their academic performance. The coaching services of SoftballOne are in operation year round, including major academic holidays, and are not limited to the type of training we provide.
- Softball programs of higher education institutions consist of 2-3 coaches and 18-22 softball athletes. The program at SoftballOne consists of 100 or more softball players .
- Softball programs of higher education institutions provide scholarships to their player, which is considered financial motivation or incentive to participate. The SoftballOne program is composed of players who pay for our coaching services.
- Softball coaches of higher education programs are provided with a set salary and benefits supplemented with state tax dollars or private donations. They are also given budgets to operate their programs on a year-to-year basis. The revenue of SoftballOne is generated by the quality of its coaching services and dependent on the satisfaction of the customers and its reputation. The coaches of SoftballOne on salary are paid first, along with the additional operational expenses, and the profits of the business and the owners are calculated only after they have deducted their payroll obligations and paid their bills.
- Softball coaches of higher education programs can vary in their undergraduate or graduate disciplines. Softball coaches of SoftballOne and similar private training businesses are more specialized in their sport specific undergraduate degrees.
- SoftballOne coaches and higher education coaches are both full-time positions.

### *Similarities:*

- Both coaches at the higher educational institutions and at SoftballOne incorporate advanced sport science training into their curriculum.
- Both coaches at the higher educational institutions and at SoftballOne specialize in position specific individual training.
- Both coaches at the higher educational institutions and at SoftballOne provide mental training and sports psychology to their athletes.
- Both coaches at the higher educational institutions and at SoftballOne provide nutritional education to their athletes to enhance physical and mental performance.
- Both coaches at the higher educational institutions and at SoftballOne address the issues of obesity and eating disorders in female athletes.
- Both coaches at the higher educational institutions and at SoftballOne are driven by performance results and assessed according to these results.
- Both coaches at the higher educational institutions and at SoftballOne possess college degrees, 4 years of college playing experience, and extraordinary coaching experience.

### *Conclusion:*

To sum it up simply, SoftballOne prepares college players and universities prepare our coaches. The drive for our players to reach their dreams of playing in college increases the demand and opportunity for businesses like this in this industry. The two programs feed off one another and rely more on each other than any other two softball programs where you would find softball teams and players.

## **Public and Private High Schools**

### *Differences:*

- A softball program at the high school level is composed of players ranging in ages between 14-18. High school programs are generally composed of a varsity, junior varsity, and

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freshman program depending on the amount of players available. SoftballOne programs include players between the ages of 8-18.

- High School coaches are part-time, or seasonal, and are paid on top of their teacher's salary. In the state of Indiana head coaches average \$2,900 after taxes are withheld. SoftballOne

conducts training year round and coaches are full-time with coaching as their only source of income.

- High school softball programs, depending on the district, hire three coaches for the entire program. Leaving a 12 to 1 ratio for instruction. SoftballOne programs are classes and the student to teacher ratio is limited to a maximum 4 to 1 student to teacher ratio. Some classes are a 1:1 ratio.
- The duration of the season of a high school season is 3.5 months and can lengthen to 4 months for the varsity team depending on how far the advance in the state tournament sanctioned by the IHSAA. SoftballOne coaches are strictly preparing athletes for competition for their other teams and do so 12 months out of the year.

- The coaches of a high school softball program are limited in the amount of time they can spend preparing and coaching their teams and players by the IHSAA. SoftballOne has no limitations.
- High school programs are community based. The softball players of SoftballOne live within the state of Indiana, but are from different cities or small towns.
- Not all high school programs have the luxury of finding professional coaches. School districts hire teachers or other school employees first. SoftballOne actively recruits and hires professional coaches.
- During the high school season practices and games are conducted Monday –Saturday. SoftballOne conducts training 7 days a week.
- Athletes of high school programs have academic requirements imposed by their school and the IHSAA.
- Players of high school programs have more of a participation mentality. Players of SoftballOne are seeking high-level instruction because they have a serious competitive mentality and seek to play in college.
- High school coaches and programs are not expected to address the strength and conditioning needs of their athletes. It isn't uncommon for high school coaches to have 2-3 weeks of practice before their games start because of the weather and indoor training resources. SoftballOne and its coaches prepare our athletes with these conditioning and injury prevention methods and spend enough time with the athlete to do so effectively.
- High school players do not pay to participate.

### *Similarities:*

- Both high school coaches and SoftballOne coaches are in direct contact with minors and retain the legal and ethical responsibilities to ensure safety and professionalism.
- Both high school coaches and SoftballOne coaches are in direct contact with the parents of the students.
- Both high school coaches and SoftballOne coaches possess a minimum of a college degree.
- Both high school programs and SoftballOne are an integral part of a child's growth and development. Between the ages of 14-18.

### *Conclusion:*

SoftballOne prepares the serious athlete who plays high school softball. High school programs also hire the services of professional coaches in this industry because they are considered the leaders in the field of coaching and they can coach high school athletes when high school coaches are forbidden.

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Because of the nature of the high school season, the type of weather, the condensed training and competition season, and the high student to teacher ratio many athletes experience their overuse injuries in these periods. This makes the duties of the year round training more complex and the injury prevention measures SoftballOne includes in their training all the more important. Unfortunately many softball players are opting out of playing for their high schools because of the increase to injury. This is not something that SoftballOne supports, we understand the value of high school athletics and community participation to the athlete, and this is why our training includes many injury prevention efforts including mandatory periods of rest, performance assessment and measurement, nutritional counseling, and strength and conditioning. Coaches of high school programs understand we are vital in building their best players and keeping them in their programs.

### Summer Teams and Organizations

#### *Differences:*

- Summer Team Organizations have a wide range of coaches. Some programs are lead by volunteer parents while other more serious programs hire professional coaches for their children. SoftballOne has strict hiring requirements for their coaches.
- Summer team organizations can vary in their motivation and competition emphasis. Some teams have the sole intention for their players to be marketed and placed into higher education programs. While others are feeder systems into their high school programs. Elite summer teams often fill their rosters with players from several states and only come together for college exposure tournaments or national competition. Some summer teams are more community based and place a stronger emphasis on participation. This is more common in the young age groups. However you still find young players on these teams with dreams of playing in college. SoftballOne helps to train all these athletes and even provide support to their coaches.
- Summer teams and organizations can apply, accept, and be granted non-profit status. SoftballOne is for profit.

#### *Similarities:*

- Year round training and an emphasis on producing the complete athlete.
- Parents must pay to participate on these teams and partake in SoftballOne training.
- Training of minors and interaction with their parents.
- Closely related to the college recruiting process.
- Not directly affiliated with public education.

#### *Conclusion:*

SoftballOne prepares athletes for teams of summer organizations. It is these athletes and coaches that are our primary source of income. Generally these athletes are more serious and the driving force behind the recent explosion in the industry. However, these programs are also the major culprits when contributing to injuries in our young players. It is our long-term interaction with these programs that will impact our young players and the quality of our game. We provide leadership and education to these programs in addition to training their players for competition. This is another reason why our training includes many injury prevention efforts including mandatory periods of rest, performance assessment and measurement, nutritional counseling, and strength and conditioning.

### Community Leagues and Organizations

#### *Differences:*

- Community leagues are composed of teams coached by volunteers.
- Community leagues participation based.
- Community teams are composed of part-time players looking to have fun.
- Community teams play and practice only in the spring/summer months.

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### *Similarities:*

- Interaction with softball players between the ages of 8-11.
- Legal and ethical responsibility to their children.

### *Conclusion:*

There is very little connection with SoftballOne and these types of programs or their players. In the near future these leagues will be non-existent. However many coaches from the leagues seek our guidance when starting to develop the very young player.

In support of these conclusions SoftballOne has provided the following information for review:

- Packet 1 includes statements from parents of children who hire SoftballOne coaches establishing the expectations of the market and type of training involved.
- Packet 2 includes schedules of university, high school, summer team, and community league schedules.
- Packet 3 includes sections from the Indiana High School Athletic Association By-Laws regarding softball and softball coaches limitations. Also included is a high school softball coaching job announcement.
- Packet 4 includes promotional material of SoftballOne from [www.softballone.com](http://www.softballone.com)
- Packet 5 includes additional training material of SoftballOne.
- Packet 6 includes fastpitch articles published by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association authored by SoftballOne.
- Packet 7 includes patented softball training material owned by SoftballOne.
- Packet 8 includes photos of softball training classes.