



# BASEBALL & SOFTBALL COUNCIL

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Baseball & Softball Industry

**From:** Jess Heald

**Date:** October 3, 2001

**Re:** Softball Participation Programs

The following three softball programs are endorsed and being promoted by the SGMA Baseball & Softball Participation Committee as a practical means for increasing participation. All three programs have proven successful in increasing participation and are focused on recreation level, co-ed play, for all age groups.

SGMA would like to thank the following three managers of these programs who have contributed the following templates to be used in implementing these programs:

1. Softball Free Agent Program: Tim Fishburn, Mid-West Sports Complex, Indianapolis, Indiana
2. Marketing Recreation Co-ed Softball: Gladys Penttila, Mills Pond Park, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
3. Youth to College Recreation Co-ed Softball: Bob Darden, Beaver creek Youth Softball Association, Beaver creek, Ohio

The SGMA Baseball & Softball Participation Committee was formed in 2000 for the express purpose of fostering growth in participation in both baseball and softball. For more information, contact Sebastian DiCasoli at SGMA Headquarters, 561/840-1120, or visit the SGMA website at [www.sgma.com](http://www.sgma.com) and click on "Sports Development-Councils/Committees."

**SGMA BASEBALL/SOFTBALL PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE (BSPC)**  
**FREE AGENT PROGRAM TEMPLATE**

**The Problem:** The time & effort required to organize/manage a softball team has resulted in an untapped network of unaffiliated players with the desire but no team.

**The Solution:** Free Agent Program

**How It Works**

**The Message:** "Whether you have a team or are an individual looking to play, call [complex] and they will hook you up!"

**Actions:**

- A) Meet with Complex manager and determine times and fields available. Calculate number of teams this will support
- B) Identify the person at the Complex who will take the calls, record the information, and make the follow up calls with team and schedule assignments. Schedule time to meet with this person to create teams and place players
- C) Begin process of distributing message and generating calls
- D) Calls will generate leads/database of players who pay sign-up fee of [\$xx] to become a "Free Agent" (*Note: Sign-up fees help make program self-funding*)
  - Name
  - Address
  - Home/Work Telephone
  - E-mail Address
  - Days Available To Play
  - Ability Level & Interests
    - Positions Played
    - B, C, D, E, Rec, etc.
    - Men's, Women's, Co-Ed, etc.
  - Willingness to Captain?
- E) Database will generate teams and fills league nights that need to be filled or fills open slots on existing teams
- F) Word-of-mouth will hopefully generate even larger database

**How To Get Message Out:**

- A) Partner with local media (radio station, TV station, newspaper) to trade public service announcements (PSA's) for ad space and/or "official" designation at complex. (*Note: Contact existing players at complex to see if any work for or have connections with local media*)
- B) Create and direct mail a flyer promoting the program to existing database if available
- C) Distribute flyer door-to-door and/or through local hangouts (restaurants, bars, etc.)
- D) Utilize website messages/advertising
- E) Request listings in Community Event sections in local media
- F) Other?

**The Challenge:** Each BSPC member to establish Free Agent Program at 3 parks in local region by Super Show '02. Desired effect: 30-40 parks in '02; 100-150 parks in '03; etc.

**SGMA BASEBALL/SOFTBALL PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE (BSPC)**  
**CORPORATE CO-ED PROGRAM TEMPLATE**

**The Problems:** Under-utilized complexes  
Declining softball participation in general

**The Solution:** Corporate Co-Ed Program

**How It Works**

**Goal:** Establish league of corporate co-ed teams with the promises of 1) safe & healthy recreation; 2) effective team-building activity; and 3) social outlet. Possible leagues include local Realtors, Banks, Hotels, or Teachers.

**Suggestion:** Co-ed teams should require only three females (one Infielder, one Outfielder, one IF/OF).

**Actions:**

- A) Assess complex schedule and target dates/times most needed to fill
- B) Determine team capacity based on field availability
- C) Create flyer with dates/times/location/cost/contact person/etc. of program
- D) Solicit co-sponsorships and/or prize packages from local restaurants, bars, etc. Trade exclusive and targeted advertising opportunity for donated money or food and beverages
- E) Barnstorm local businesses with presentation of program and request for support

**How To Get Message Out:**

- A) 4-6 weeks prior to the start of the league, begin passing out flyers to all existing teams at Complex. This can be perhaps your greatest resource, as existing players spread the word to their friends and colleagues at other businesses.
- B) Distribute flyers to local hangouts, businesses, churches, etc.
- C) Direct mail flyers to any and all applicable lists obtained
- D) Request PSA's in local media (TV, radio, newspaper)
- E) Utilize local Chamber of Commerce to spread the word
- F) Utilize website messages/advertising
- G) Request listings in Community Event sections in local media
- H) Other?

**The Challenge:** Each BSPC member to establish Corporate Co-Ed Program at 1 complex in local region by Super Show '02. Desired effect: 10-12 leagues in '02; 25-50 leagues in '03; etc.

**SGMA BASEBALL/SOFTBALL PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE (BSPC)**  
**HIGH SCHOOL CO-ED PROGRAM TEMPLATE**

**The Problems:** Under-utilized complexes  
Declining softball participation in general  
Aging softball player base without adequate amounts of younger players to fill the void

**The Solution:** High School Co-Ed Program

**How It Works**

**Goal:** Establish league of high school co-ed teams with the promises of 1) safe & healthy recreation; and 2) social outlet

**Actions:**

- A) Assess Complex schedule and target dates/times most needed to fill.  
Idea: Schedule evening games during summer months, thus making event more social while not interfering with summer jobs.
- B) Create flyer with dates/times/cost/etc. of program
- C) Solicit co-sponsorship from local restaurant and/or beverage company to provide free/discounted food & beverages at complex on league nights
- D) Approach individual schools, school districts, P.E. teachers, and coaches to obtain support for the program even if no direct affiliation
- E) Seek out student leaders who want to play. They can be your best salespersons!

**How To Get Message Out:**

- A) Distribute flyers to schools, local hangouts, churches, etc.
- B) Direct mail flyers to students or parents if possible
- C) Request PSA's in local media (TV, radio, newspaper)
- D) Utilize website messages/advertising
- E) Request listings in Community Event sections in local media
- F) Other?

**The Challenge:** Each BSPC member to establish High School Co-Ed Program at 1 complex in local region by Super Show '02. Desired effect: 10-12 leagues in '02; 25-50 leagues in '03; etc.