

# Recreation Softball Information

Parents, it is very important your daughter plays Softball with Softball-approved equipment. Although similar, baseball and softball are different sports and baseball bats especially are illegal to use in softball. Umpires check our equipment prior to a game and any item deemed unsafe or illegal will not be used.

All you need to play Recreation Softball is a glove and probably a pair of cleats. For safety reasons, a fielder's mask and a chest/heart guard are also highly recommended. Many players prefer to have their own bat and helmet, however, the Program can supply them if needed. The Program handles all other details such as uniforms, catcher's equipment, softballs, schedule, umpires, etc... Your Coach will schedule practice times and distribute a game schedule. We just ask that you be courteous to your teammates and notify your Coach in advance if you cannot attend a game or practice.

In an effort to try and save you some time and money, please consider the following information as it pertains to the most common times the wrong equipment is purchased, usually by mistake.

## **Softball Gloves**

Softballs are much larger than baseballs so you want to make sure you are using a fielder's glove designed for softball. Grades K-4 use a 11 inch softball while Grades 5-8 use a 12 inch softball so it's important you get a glove large enough to catch the ball. It is important you "condition" your new glove by softening it up with conditioning oil. Of course, the best way to break in a glove is to use it! There are all types of different gloves for every position and every price range. Generally, you can find a standard fielder's glove for under \$50 that should work well for every position except for Catcher.

## **Softball Bats**

Although the Program supplies some bats, if you wish to purchase your own bat consider the following:

**Fast Pitch Softball Bats** are primarily used in softball games for girls and women playing fast pitch softball. The best-selling length-to-weight ratio is -10 ounces, ranging from 25 inches in length (for young girls) to 34 inches in length for High School-level and College-level softball bats. For example, a bat that is marked "30-10" means that bat is 30 inches long and weighs 20 ounces. There are several factors to consider when choosing the optimal fast-pitch bat. The most important factors include your budget, type of bat (i.e., what the bat feels like when hitting; how that bat performs/matches your swing style), length and weight of bat, barrel size and the bat's certification/league standards compliance.

- You can find fast-pitch bats from \$20 up to more than \$500, depending on the brand manufacturer and bat composition. It is important that you select a bat that is right for your playing ability, your level of competition, and your budget.
- Determine what type of material you want. Mainly there are two choices: aluminum or composite. You'll find heated debates on which material is better yet, in the end, it comes down to your personal choice and amount of money you are willing to invest. Wood bats with an ASA stamp are fine too, though wood bats are very uncommon in fast-pitch leagues.
- **Bat Diameter and Length:** All fast pitch softball bats must have a 2 1/4 inch barrel diameter and be no more than 34 inches in length or heavier than 31 1/2 oz. regardless of which association you play in.

- Bat certification: Most fast-pitch bats are certified by the ASA or USSSA, two very popular fast-pitch softball-governing bodies. The majority of fast-pitch players play in ASA sanctioned leagues. 2013 ASA certification will continue to use the 2004 or 2000 certification marks. The certification is normally printed on the barrel or head of your bat.
- For softball players, ASA is considered the most highly regulated association in softball, followed by USSSA. If your bat bears either the ASA or USSSA certification mark, it will be legal in our league.

Above all, the best thing you can do is try out a few bats and then narrow down your bat choice options. You have your personal preferences and what seems like a perfect choice on paper might not be the right one when you have a swing at the ball.

### **Batter Helmet/Fielder's Mask/Heart Guard**

All Players regardless of age must wear a batting helmet with a face mask attached, even if hitting off a tee.

Although not required, it is highly recommended all players wear a Fielder's Mask. In addition to the obvious safety benefits, the mask also improves the player's confidence to properly catch the ball. The younger they start wearing the mask, the more likely they won't want to play without it. However, a Fielder's Mask is required for all Pitchers.

For additional safety, many players wear a Heart Guard. You can find this guard attached to a shirt the player can wear underneath the jersey to protect the chest should they get hit by the ball.

### **Tee-Ball Equipment**

For the younger girls who may hit off a tee, generally the term "tee-ball" is associated with baseball and anything marked for tee-ball is probably for baseball. Just because it is pink does not mean it is for Girls Softball.

Should you have any questions regarding your daughter's softball equipment, please contact [saddlebrooksoftball@gmail.com](mailto:saddlebrooksoftball@gmail.com)

