

Ball, Glove & Bat Guidelines

1) We play with an 11" softball through Minors division and a 12" ball Majors and above. The Instructional and Junior leagues use an 11" 'Incrediball' or 'Softie' softball. Minors and above use regulation softballs.

2) When choosing a softball glove, don't get one that is too small or too large. When the glove is on and lowered to the side, it shouldn't slip off the hand. It is easier to learn to catch correctly with a smaller glove than with a larger one. Generally don't go smaller than a 9.5" glove for Junior and Minor Leagues; most girls should play with a 10.5" to 12" glove Minors and up -- no larger. The glove should be leather, not vinyl. We're not recommending any particular manufacturer, however, Mizuno makes a series of gloves with a "V-flex" notch that makes the glove easier to close, which seems to be well suited to a child's grip. Other manufacturers also have this feature. Be sure you are getting a **fastpitch softball glove**, not a baseball or slow pitch softball glove. "Hot Glove" heat treatment can be used to break in the glove. Rub glove with Vaseline or Vaseline Intensive Care lotion to keep glove pliable and extend its life – avoid glove oil which adds weight to the glove. When not in use a ball should ALWAYS be placed in the pocket to maintain its shape and to prevent the glove from flattening out (taco effect).

3) WGSA supplies bats and helmets although some girls like to have their own. If you want to get a bat, we recommend waiting to purchase a bat until we have had a chance to determine the proper size and weight for your daughter. Fastpitch softball bats are found in a variety of lengths and swing speeds. The longer the bat, the better, provided it can be swung properly. Upper body strength is the most important factor in determining the proper bat. To size the bat have the player stand up straight and set the bat upright on the floor with the barrel on the ground and the knob end upward. The knob of the bat should only go to the wrist (maybe an inch past, but no more). Next have her grip the bat with the palm of the hand facing the floor and hold it out horizontally from the body; she should be able to hold it comfortably for about 30 seconds without becoming fatigued (dipping or shaking), if not, she needs a lighter bat. When she swings the bat, if she can't follow through with the bat held high (it dips/drops), then the bat is too heavy. To be used in a game the bat must be an ASA approved (ASA certified/stamped) fastpitch softball bat. If she has a bat, get some wiffle balls to practice at home.

Swing Speed is the weight drop number (oz) found on some bats. The negative number on some bats refers to the weight ratio. The greater the negative number, the faster it will swing. For a bat of the same length, a -12 will swing faster than a -10.

Longer bats with faster swing numbers are typically made from special metal alloys which can substantially increase the price of the bat. We recommend a -10 to -12.

4) Helmets **must** fit snugly – the helmet should not “bobble” when the player runs. Choose a helmet for fit, not style/color. The helmet must have a face-mask/cage. If the player holds the mask to keep the helmet from bobbling when she runs, the helmet is too large. Chin straps should be used.

5) **Shoes:** Many girls in the Minors and above will wear rubber cleat shoes (not metal), soccer shoes. You can get a good used pair at Play it Again Sports.

6) **Sliding Pads:** We recommend that girls wear a sliding pad to protect their leg from abrasions and give the girls more confidence to slide. These are available in a variety of styles. There are also sliding shorts that can be worn under the uniform shorts to pad the thigh (usually worn only by the older girls). Sliding is introduced midway through the Minor's season and is required in the Major, Senior and High School Divisions. In these Divisions any player who does not slide to avoid a collision is automatically "out".

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