



Special Olympics Softball Coaches Quick Start Guide

Softball Attire

For competition uniforms refer to the 'Uniforms' section of the current SONC/SONV Softball Rules & Guidelines.

For training, appropriate softball attire is required for all participants. As the coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted, weather appropriate, clothing along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long pant jeans to blue jean shorts are not proper softball attire for any event. Explain that they cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict movement. Take athletes to high school or collegiate games while training or during competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes that do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Shirts

Shirts should be comfortable and non-confining with short or long sleeves such as (t-shirts, sweatshirts or warm-up jackets etc.).

Pants/Sliding Pants

All player pants shall be either all long or all short in style. Players may wear a uniform solid color pair of sliding pants. It is not mandatory that all players wear sliding pants, but if more than one player wears them, they must be alike in color and style except temporary, snap-on or Velcro sliding pads. No players may wear ragged, frayed or slit legs on exposed sliding pants.

Shorts

Shorts with waistbands that fit snugly around the waist are recommended. Shorts should be long enough to provide protection to the thighs when sliding. Shorts should provide the athlete with comfort and good appearance. An elastic waistband will help keep the shirt in place.

Sliding shorts, though optional, can be worn under the athletes' shorts and may help reduce injuries from sliding.

Socks

Athletic socks are recommended for softball training.

Shoes

Probably the most important piece of clothing a player wears are their shoes. Shoes which are ill-fitting can cause the athlete discomfort that will impede the athlete's play and concentration. Molded rubber softball cleats or sturdy sneaker/ tennis shoes are recommended. Metal cleats are not allowed.

Cap or Visor

Caps, visors and headbands are optional for players, but can be mixed. If more than one type is worn, they must all be of the same color and style. Plastic or hard visors are not allowed.



Softball Equipment

For legal softball equipment refer to the 'Equipment' section of the current SONC/SONV Softball Rules & Guidelines.

The sport of Softball requires the type of sporting equipment below. It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment for the specific events works and impacts their performance. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each. Equipment must be safe for athletic use. Use proper equipment at all times and teach athletes to use equipment and perform all activities the "right" way, first time and every time. For safety's sake, keep playing areas free of clutter, like loose equipment and clothing. Be alert to safety hazards and problem areas and do whatever is necessary to avoid them.

Softballs

See the 'Equipment' section of the current Rules & Guidelines for specifications. Softer balls as well as wiffle balls may be used for training purposes or specific drills.



Bats

Bats included on the USA Softball Bat Lists that continue to meet specific provisions are approved for use. Should a bat no longer meet the provisions, it shall be considered an illegal bat and not approved for use at practice or in competition.



Gloves

Gloves are made for both left-handed and right-handed players. They are also made in junior and standard sizes. Most new gloves require a breaking in period. Catchers and athletes playing First Base may use a special trapping-style glove while playing the designated position.





Special Olympics Softball Coaches Quick Start Guide

Catcher's Equipment

Catcher's masks, protective headgear, chest protector and shin guards are required both for practice and competition.



Helmets

Helmets are mandatory on offense for batters, on-deck batters, batter-runners, runners, players who coach in the first and third base coaches box, and youth age representatives that participate as a bat boy or girl while on the field or in the dugout.



Coaching Aids

Coaching aids are vital to the success of every softball program. Use cones, batting tees, and reversible jerseys during your training sessions. A tethered softball is excellent for developing batting skills. It allows the athlete to practice hitting without the need to chase the ball. The tethered softball is also adaptable to wheelchair activities. Also, there are many videos available that break down each skill into small components, or have someone film a practice session for later review.

