

Preparing for Tryouts

Earning a spot on a High School softball team during tryouts can be a difficult and pressure-packed experience. In a short period, softball players must display their talents and instincts in front of coaches who don't have much time to evaluate the many players who are attempting to make the team. Below are some guidelines to help you know what to expect and what coaches are looking for.

Versatility

We are looking for players with versatility. If you can play more than one position, we will look at you favorably when making final evaluations of who should be on the team. For example, if you can play shortstop, first base and center field, we will feel good about adding you to the roster. A catcher who can catch fly balls and comfortably play the outfield when she is not behind the plate is valuable. And we want pitchers who can start or come in and relieve in tight situations.

Throwing

We can tell a lot about your softball skills and potential just by watching you throw. And often, throwing and catching will be among the first drills you'll do at a tryout. Even if it seems like a warm-up, treat each throw and catch like you're in the middle of the game and not like you're just playing catch with a friend. Make an aggressive catch and give a little hop and step with each throw. This may be the first impression your coaches get of you, so make it a good one.

Fielding Fundamentals

We want players who know how to get directly in front of ground balls and not field them from the side. We want you to throw the ball with a straight overhand motion and not sidearm the ball over to first base. Go back decisively on fly balls to the deep part of the outfield. Charge one-hoppers to the outfield, pick the ball up cleanly, and throw it in quickly. If you make an error, you can still make the team as long as your fundamentals are strong and your approach is consistent.

Pitching and Catching

Pitching and catching is a vital part of putting a team together through tryouts. Pitchers must show the ability to throw a variety of pitches and control those pitches around the strike zone. Catchers must set a consistent target for the pitcher, catch and block balls in the dirt and take charge in the infield when it's necessary to move fielders so they are positioned correctly.

Hitting

You will probably take eight to ten swings, either against live pitching or a pitching machine. Treat each pitch as if it's a game situation. Relax and try to hit line drives by keeping your hands slightly above the ball so your bat strikes the ball at an angle. This will avoid hitting under the ball, resulting in pop flies. You may be asked to run to first after your last swing, so be sure to run hard.

Most Important

As softball tryouts are approaching, remember two things: Have fun and hustle. Softball is a game, and while your potential coaches want to see that you are serious about the sport, you should also keep in mind that this is something you do because you enjoy it. Demonstrating a positive attitude and good energy can help make up for a few miscues at the plate or in the field. Players with a poor attitude are often cut, even if they are athletically gifted.