

Preparing for Tryouts with a Competitive Softball Team

Steps for Trying out for a Competitive Softball Team

Earning a spot on a competitive 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.

Step 1 Coaches want hitters who are smart and talented enough to go with the pitch rather than trying to pull everything. Fast-pitch softball can be a low-scoring game, often decided by one or two late runs. Coaches want players who are effective situational hitters who can hit a variety of pitches and don't just try to overpower every pitch they see.

Step 2 Make all the basic plays in the field. Spectacular plays may be featured on highlight shows, but it's more important to your team that you make all the routine plays with good fundamentals. Get in front of any ball you can during fielding tryouts. Coaches don't want players who stand to the side and reach for the ball. They want consistent and accurate throws across the infield, and outfielders who get rid of the ball quickly and hit the cutoff man consistently.

Step 3 Run the bases with confidence and decisiveness. Baserunning is one of the most overlooked aspects of softball; being good at it doesn't necessarily depend on your speed. You have to know how to take the shortest possible route when running the bases and you also have to judge the positioning and arm strength of the outfielder before you take the extra base. This takes a softball instinct that the best players have and put on display regularly.

Step 4 Compete hard in a scrimmage game. Coaches will put prospective players through hitting, pitching, fielding and baserunning drills during tryouts, but they may also evaluate players by playing a practice game among all candidates. Coaches will see which players are aggressive and which ones are timid. Some players may hit early in the game while others will come through in clutch situations late in the game. The practice game helps coaches evaluate players toughness and overall ability.

Playing Catch

While many play catch as an opportunity to warm up, it is important to note that the moment you walk on the field, you are being evaluated by coaches. So warm up before your tryout. Casually throwing the ball around with other players during a tryout does not accurately showcase your throwing technique and arm speed. As a result, if you are asked to play catch with a partner during a tryout, always use your best form, catching the ball directly in front of you and throwing the ball with your arm coming directly over the top of your head.

Laying Out

During softball tryouts, most coaches like to separate the players who hustle from the players who don't. As a result, during infield drills, if a ground ball is hit far to your left or right side, get dirty by diving for the ball. Even if you do not come up with it, the willingness to dive out to make the play will earn you extra points with the coaches. This strategy also can be applied to outfielders when balls are hit over their heads or far to the left or right. If you dive early enough in the tryout, each time you step up to the plate or go to field a ball, coaches will notice the dirt stain on your jersey. This will separate you from the other players in the tryout.

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What do I need to know for softball tryouts?

Softball tryouts require a player to have confidence and a calm demeanor. When you are trying out for a travel, high school or college team, you will be putting your skills on display, and coaches will be evaluating them. While this can be stressful, it can also be an outstanding opportunity to demonstrate your development and find out where you stand compared to your peers.

Versatility

Coaches are looking for players with versatility. If you can play more than one position, they will look at you favorably when they make final evaluations of who should be on the team. For example, if you can play shortstop, first base and center field, a coach 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 coaches want pitchers who can start or come in and relieve in tight situations.

Hitting to All Fields

When you can show the ability to hit to all fields, you will impress coaches. Demonstrate that you can hit the outside pitch to the opposite field and pull the inside pitch. This shows that you do not have any predetermined ideas of what you are going to do at the plate and that you are comfortable going with the pitch.

Fielding Fundamentals

Coaches want players who know how to get directly in front of ground balls and not field them from the side. They 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

A pitcher who has command of her pitches and poise on the mound has a strong chance of making a team through tryouts. Pitchers need to show they can move the ball in and around the strike zone and throw a variety of pitches. A good fastball is essential. If you also have other pitches too, coaches at tryouts will see your potential to be a dynamic pitcher who takes command when you get in the pitching circle.

What to expect when trying out for a Competitive Softball Team

If your first softball tryout is 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.

Throwing

A coach can tell a lot about a girl's softball skills and potential just by watching her throw. And often, throwing and catching will be among the first drills you'll do at 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.

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Fielding

If you're trying out for second base or shortstop, coaches will want to see that you have a good range, so stay on your toes and be ready to hustle after any ground ball hit anywhere close to your area of the field. Third basemen don't need to show off an amazing range, but they do need to demonstrate an ability to scoop up ground balls and make the long throws to first. First basemen will be evaluated on their ability to handle the varied throws made their way by the other infielders. The other issue, no matter what position you're trying out for, is to stay with any ball hit to you and finish the play. If you're supposed to get 10 ground balls in a row and one of them deflects off your glove, don't just let it go. Instead, chase after it and throw it to first or wherever the coach wants you to throw.

Hitting

You will probably take eight to 10 swings, either against live pitching or a pitching machine. Treat each pitch as if it's a game situation. Your coaches want to see your mechanics as well as bat speed and control. You may be asked to pull the ball or hit to the opposite field. You may also be asked to lay down a bunt. 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.

Conditioning

In addition to evaluating your softball skills, potential coaches want to see what kind of athlete you are - and how fit -- for the upcoming season. If you have time, perform some stretching, running and strength training before your tryout. Do what you can to get in good shape and demonstrate your commitment to the sport. You may be asked to perform agility drills; practicing similar drills before your actual tryout can ensure prowess and inspire confidence in your abilities as an athlete.

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.