

PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

Coaches/Parents can use this list as a guide when helping choose or decide on what equipment to get for their kids. Prices are estimate/guidelines only and are as priced in 2015. There is other equipment out there and this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Helmet: (\$25-\$60)

All girls must wear an ASA Certified batting helmet. Chin straps were a requirement until 2016 season. Helmet needs to have a face guard.



- Ensure helmet is snug
- Inserts can be bought for small heads
- Ensure face guard doesnt block kids vision
- Ensure helmets are in good working order
- Helmet AirBrush Decorations available opening day
- Teams sometimes make custom stickers for helmet
- Do not recommend girls share helmets for health reasons

Gloves: (\$15-\$500)

All girls must use and have a fielding glove. Glove quality and construction varies. There are dedicated catchers gloves, 1st base gloves, infield gloves and outfield gloves as well as all purpose fielding gloves. Selection and types vary widely. To give an idea:

<http://www.justballgloves.com/>



- Price of the glove isnt as important as fit and function
- Stay away from the \$5 vinyl plastic bat/glove combos
- For higher end gloves expect break-in period
- Proper glove maintenance should be taught to girls
- Ball in glove during storage is critical
- Proper oiling and tightening of strings
- For 6U/8U divisions and new players good pre-broken in gloves that are easy to use can be found from \$30-\$50 range. The kids will likely outgrow the glove before it wears out.
- For year round players or older divisions high quality gloves can be found from \$50 to \$100 range (or higher). These gloves will typically require more breakin and more care but will wear better and perform better.
- Specialty gloves are optional and not recommended as most players will not play only one position. Catchers glove are the exception.

Bats: (\$15-\$400)

Bat quality and construction varies even more than gloves. Construction material will range from aluminum to multi-piece composites. There are many opinions on bats and the value of composites vs. individual skill. It will come down to personal budgets. Parents should be made aware that between 6U and 12U they will likely outgrow the bats in one to at most 2 seasons.

Common bat sizing/lingo terms:

Length: Bats range in length from 25 inch to 36 inches.

Weight: Is expressed as a function of the size using a term Drop X where X is a number subtracted from the Length to determine weight. For example a 30 drop 10 bat is 30 inches long and 20 oz in weight.

Multi-Piece vs Single Piece: Describes how the bat is made. It's either one big piece of aluminum or some composite material or is made up of multiple pieces (Handle and Barrel epoxied together) etc.

ASA Certified: Bats must conform to certain performance limits set forth by ASA. The certification is stamped on the bat. Note umpires will and can check equipment to make sure the bats are certified and in general are safe to use.

Bat Sizing:

There are many online resources for bat sizing. Rule of thumb is the length of the bat should equal the length between middle of chest and end of fingers with hand stretched out next to them. Weight should be light enough where they can swing in a level plane and not be manhandled by the bat.

6U and 8U: (\$15-\$80)

Girls are learning fundamental swing mechanics and need a bat they can handle. There is absolutely no need for high end multi piece composite bats in this age group. The balls are softer and the pitching is too slow to take advantage of the performance benefits composites bring. Proper length and weight are the key factors. At this age they will likely outgrow the bat within two seasons.

10U and above: (\$15-\$400)

Balls get harder, girls get bigger, bat speed increases, fundamentals swings are better. It is around this age where the quality and material of a bat may make a difference in hitting performance. Expensive bats are never a requirement. *Composite bats should NOT be used*

with pitching machines and the heavy balls. Some composites are known to get damaged due to heft of pitching machine and heavy balls.

Representative Bats:



\$20 Easton Mako



\$350 Louisville LXT Plus

Batting Gloves: (\$10-\$30)

Probably the most frustrating piece of equipment for parents. They will get lost, torn, misplaced, and take forever to get on and off. Sizes/Colors/Prices will vary. Buy them in bulk and maybe they will have enough to last one season.

Batting gloves prove more useful in helping protect hands during slides than in the grip of the bat. Mainly because bats have very nice grips these days. Gloves usually last at most one season. Less for the kids playing year round.



Slider Shorts: (\$10-\$30)

Padded underwear that provides protection against rashes when sliding on dirt. Not required piece of equipment but extremely helpful in making girls comfortable with sliding. Most commonly used starting at 10U and beyond.



Cleats: (\$20 to \$80)

Below 14U division no metal cleats are allowed. At younger ages cleats will be outgrown and outworn rather quickly. As they get older recommendation is for girls to put on and take off cleats at the field to save the wear and tear on the plastic cleats specially on cement and asphalt.



Facemask: (\$20 to \$40)

There are two basic types of masks. Plastic and Metal. The plastic ones are lighter and more comfortable and are ideal for younger players. Their main drawback is more interference with the field of view. Metal masks provide better field of view but tend to be heavier and bigger and are more suited for older/bigger players.



Author's personal opinion:

While facemasks, unlike helmets, are NOT a required piece of equipment parents are strongly encouraged to invest in one for their player. They are one of the most cost effective teaching aids a parent can buy, specially if done at an early age. It is much easier to teach and coach catching/fielding fundamentals without the kids having to worry about a broken nose. While they dont guarantee injury free play, the extra safety it brings against injury is an added bonus. Wearing one has nothing to do with a kids ability as a player.

Balls (\$2.50 to \$9.00):

Every kid should have a ball in their bag and always put their glove away with a ball inside the glove. There are 3 types of balls the league uses depending on the division.



6U/8U: Worth RIF 1 Sof-Dot **10 inch** ball

10U: Worth RIF 1 Sof-Dot **11 inch** ball

12U: Worth Dream Seam 12 inch ball

The RIF-1 10 inch and 11 inch balls are much harder to find locally than the 12 inch balls.
