

## A GUIDE TO HELP YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT SOFTBALL BAT

The bats on the market today not only enhance performance but are also tailored to an individual's strengths. When selecting a bat, you'll want to find one that fits your body and skill level.

### **Aluminum**

The lighter weight of an aluminum bat increases control and bat speed, and the aluminum itself offers durability and is not prone to crack or break. They come in a variety of alloys of differing weights. Because aluminum is lighter, the bat has a larger sweet spot. Aluminum bats are available in single-layer or double-layer construction (a double-layer bats offers more durability and power).

### **Graphite/Titanium Lined**

Graphite and titanium are just two the lighter and stronger materials used by bat makers. Both graphite and titanium are usually added to thinner-wall aluminum bats, making them lighter and thereby increasing your swing speed and the sweet spot. These materials also help reduce vibration and the sting of ball shock.

Although a baseball bat looks very similar to a softball bat, there are important differences, and it is important to distinguish between them. The diameter of a softball bat usually increases up to a point and then remains constant while the diameter of many aluminum baseball bats may increase for the entire length of the bat. All aluminum bats are marked with something that will tell whether it is for baseball or softball use. All levels of softball, even at the college level, use aluminum bats, so chances are this is what you will want to get.

**Bat Length** – Here are some general rules for selecting the right bat length...

<b>PLAYERS AGE</b>	<b>BAT LENGTH (inches)</b>
5 - 7	24 - 26
8 - 9	26 - 28
10	28 - 29
11 - 12	30 - 31
13 - 14	31 - 32
15 - 16	32 - 33
17 plus	34

### **Determining The Right Bat Weight**

Most bats are weighted in ounces, and sometimes show a weight-to-length ratio, often shown as -4, -6, etc. For example, a 34-inch bat with a -6 ratio weighs 28 ounces. The factors that will determine your bat weight are your strength, your hitting style, and your personal preference in weight and length. Stronger players usually prefer a heavier bat since they get benefits of swing power. Younger players and players with less strength should consider a lighter bat to generate a quicker swing and increase control. The following is a quick way to find out if a bat is too heavy for a player. Have the player hold the bat with one hand, at the end of the handle. Hold the bat straight out to the player's side. If the player can hold the bat level with the ground without shaking, then the bat weight is correct.