



Overview: Softball Throw

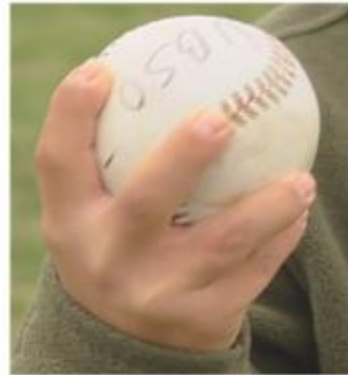
Throwing events in Special Olympics athletics are fun and exciting. Softball throw is a unique event in Special Olympics. It is a development event for athletes with lower ability level. In time, some athletes will progress on to traditional throwing events such as shot put or mini-javelin.

YOUR ATHLETE CAN
Standing Throw
Place thumb under ball. The index, middle and ring finger should be on top. The little finger should be on the side.
Stand 1.5 strides behind foul line. Left shoulder facing throw's direction
Keep feet parallel with toes pointing forward. Legs should be a little wider than shoulder-width apart.
Raise right arm with elbow pointing back. Hold ball behind the head
Bend left arm and hold it in front of chest
Push off right foot. Take one step with left foot toward direction of throw
Transfer body weight from the right leg to the left leg
Bring right arm up and forward, leading with elbow
Extend right arm, snap wrist and release ball off fingertips
Follow with throwing arm, down and across body
Wheelchair Softball Throw
Sit upright in chair with buttocks against chair and feet on foot supports
Place thumb under the ball, with index, middle and ring finger on top, and little finger on side.
Bend and lift right elbow 90 degrees away from body. Bring ball behind head.
Hold left arm above eye level. Lean back slightly in chair with a small arch in back
Push left arm to right, pulling it back down to left.
Raise right shoulder and drop left shoulder. Keep right elbow up and away from body
Bring right arm up and forward, leading with elbow
Extend right arm sharply and high over right leg. Snap wrist and release ball off fingers
Follow through with throwing arm down and across body



Coaching Points - Gripping the Softball & Ready Position

1. Pick up softball with the throwing (dominant) hand.
2. Place the thumb under the ball. Ensure the index, middle and ring finger are on top. The little finger should be on the side. The coach may need to adapt this grip according to the size of the athlete's hand.
3. Apply pressure by squeezing fingers to keep ball in the hand.



Coaching Points - Standing Overhand Softball Throw

1. Stand 1.5 strides behind foul line. The left shoulder faces the direction of the throw. Feet are parallel and a little wider than shoulder width and toes point forward.
2. Raise right arm, with elbow pointing back and holding ball behind head.
3. Bend left arm. Hold it in front of the chest.
4. Push off right foot. Take one step with left foot in direction of throw.
5. Transfer body weight from right leg to left leg.
6. Bring the right arm up and forward, leading with the elbow.
7. Forcefully extend right arm. Snap the wrist and release the ball off fingertips.
8. Follow through, down and across body.
9. Official Special Olympics Athletics rules require an overhand throw, similar to American baseball.





Coaching Points – Wheelchair Softball Throw Ready Position

1. Set front wheels of chair just behind the foul line. Lock back wheels.
2. Sit upright in chair. Ensure buttocks are against back of the chair. Place feet either on the ground or on the foot supports.
3. Properly grip the softball.
4. Bend right elbow to 90 degrees, lift it away from body, and bring ball behind the head. The hand is behind the elbow.
5. Hold left arm above eye level. Lean back slightly in chair with a small arch in back.

Coaching Points – Wheelchair Softball Overhand Throw

1. Take ready position. Throw ball by pushing left arm to the right. Then pull it back down to left.
2. Raise right shoulder as the left shoulder drops. Keep right elbow up and away from the body.
3. Bring right arm up and forward. Lead with elbow.
4. Extend right arm sharply, high over right leg. Snap wrist and release ball off fingers.
5. The right arm follows through, down and across body.

Top Tips for Coaching Softball Throw (Skill Development)

1. Demonstrate how to grip softball.
2. Demonstrate proper throwing position.
3. Manually place athlete's fingers on ball.
4. Athletes with small hands may place all four fingers on top and the thumb to one side, and hold the ball in the palm of the throwing hand.
5. Stand behind athlete and move his/her arm through throwing motion.
6. Practice throwing motion without a ball first, then with ball.
7. Practice throwing over a barrier, like a high jump standard with the crossbar.
8. Emphasize holding up throwing arm and throwing overhand.
9. Make sure left shoulder is lower than right and back is arched when releasing the ball. This allows the athlete to apply maximum force to throw.
10. Practice with athlete taking one step before throwing.
11. Place marks on ground to help the athlete step with correct foot.

TOP TIPS FOR SOFTBALL THROW AT COMPETITION

1. Conduct a practice competition. Teach your athletes about roles at competition. One athlete plays the official and others assist in marking the distance of the throw.
2. Remind your athletes to:
 - a. Listen for the official to call their names.
 - b. Enter and exit throwing area from the back line.
 - c. Stand at the back of the throwing area.