## **HOW to select softball cleats TO SELECT SOFTBALL CLEATS**

The EGMSA highly recommends that you wear softball cleats. Softball cleats help players grip the ground more securely during games and practice. Cleats not only keep players safe by reducing falls and injuries, but also allow for improved performance. When choosing cleats for softball, you should consider such things as fit, cleat design, ankle support and stud length.

**Step 1**

The EGMSA only allows rubber or polyurethane cleats. Metal cleats have been banned in order to prevent injuries. The National Softball Association bans not only metal cleats, but any sports shoes with metal tips.

**Step 2**

Try on cleats before buying them. Cleats may fit differently than your regular shoes, so don't buy based simply on size. Look for a snug fit and a shoe that doesn't pinch your toes. The cleats should feel lightweight enough, so they won't interfere with your game. Get a feel for the level of cushioning in the sole to ensure that it is comfortable. For girls often the cleat selection is limited, so you may have to try boy’s cleats to find a good fit.

**Step 3**

Try different styles of cleats to determine how much ankle support you'll need. High top models offer support for weak ankles but may feel too heavy for younger or smaller players. Mid-height models offer some ankle support but weigh less than high tops. Low-top cleats have the lowest weight but offer no ankle support. They are best for players with strong ankles who want maximum running speed.

**Step 4**

Match the length of the cleat studs to the terrain you'll be playing on. Most children require studs less than 1/2 inch long. Choose short studs or relatively smooth soles for dense, firmly packed play surfaces, or slightly longer studs for soft dirt or mud.

**Tips and Suggestions**

Choose synthetic materials rather than leather. Synthetic cleats are the easiest to clean cost less than leather. For players who are still growing and changing sizes often, leather cleats are likely a waste of money. There's also a risk that leather cleats will shrink slightly as they are exposed to moisture from sweat or mud. Buy cleats with velcro or buckles rather than laces. Younger players will have an easier time keeping these cleats secure by themselves without needing the assistance of parents or coaches each time laces come untied. Older and more aggressive players will experience fewer problems with laces coming untied as they play, allowing them to focus on the game. Molded cleats have built-in soles made of rubber and are the style recommended.