

BECOMING A SOFTBALL UMPIRE IN ILLINOIS

*The **first** step in becoming a softball umpire in Illinois is to register with the **Illinois High School Association (IHSA)**. IHSA provides a rulebook and a casebook, which are valuable tools in learning about and applying softball rules.*

***Second**, contact a local softball officials association, such as the **Athletic Officials Association (AOA)**. Individual AOA softball members can provide new officials with lower level high school games, as well as spring, summer, and fall softball tournament games.*

***Third**, attend the **AOA softball clinics** held each March. These clinics provide instruction in basic and advanced rule and situation knowledge. There is also a “hands-on” session with live pitching and base running.*

***AOA softball also assigns a mentor** to each new official. Mentors can provide support and encouragement for new officials by watching games and giving feedback and constructive comments to help the new officials improve their umpiring skills.*

*New umpires are also encouraged to contact their local park districts to work “in-house” park district games. These games are usually at a much slower pace than high school and tournament games. Park districts will often pay more per game for “patched”, **IHSA registered umpires** than non-registered umpires.*

*Many officials start working varsity games after just a couple of seasons of lower level softball. Umpires are strongly encouraged to go for promotion with IHSA to become “**certified**” umpires. IHSA will use only certified umpires for state contests.*

*In summary, **register with IHSA, join a local officials organization such as AOA softball, and be willing to work hard and know the rules!***