

Johnston Girls Softball Association (JGSA)



Dragon Select Softball

What is Dragon Select Softball?

Dragon Select is a competitive softball program lead by JGSA designed for girls of all skill levels ages 8U through 14U that play in weekend tournaments and/or fall and spring leagues. Competitive softball is **not** an extension of recreational softball.

Why participate in Dragon Select Softball?

JGSA encourages girls who want to continue to learn the game, build skill sets, and have fun to play Select softball. The program is designed to give girls exposure to both league play and tournament play in the fall and spring seasons. Our volunteer coaches are experienced and skilled in the game, focused on teamwork, and sportsmanship. Participating in competitive softball requires commitment, is a great way to make new and lasting memories, friendships, and develop as a person and a player. Through it all and no matter the level of competition, softball is a game and should be kept in that perspective by players and parents alike.

What to expect?

Tryouts – Girls will be expected to attend one or two evenings of tryouts based on her age group at the Jensen Quad Fields. Each age group will have one tryout night. In addition, a separate tryout night is available for all pitchers and catchers. JGSA does everything it can to match up skill levels and place every girl on a team. However, number of team spots available is dependent on the number of girls signed up and the number of coaches available.

The JGSA Dragon Select tryout dates for the 2023-2024 season are as follows:

- 8U – Monday, June 19 at 5:30 p.m. (5:00 p.m. check-in and warmups following ribbon cutting and photo opportunity with Mayor and City Council at new bathroom / storage building)
- 9U & 10U – Tuesday, June 20 at 5:30 p.m. (5:00 p.m. check-in and warmups)
- 11U & 12U – Wednesday, June 21 at 5:30 p.m. (5:00 p.m. check-in and warmups)
- 13U & 14U – Monday, June 19 at 6:30 p.m. (6:10 p.m. check-in and warmups)
- All pitchers 9U and up – Thursday, June 22 at 5:30 p.m. (5:00 p.m. check-in and warmups)
- All catchers 9U and up – Thursday, June 22 at 7:00 p.m. (6:30 p.m. check-in and warmups)

Fall Season – Teams will participate in a fall season which could consist of league play, multiple tournaments, or both. Including practice, fall season typically starts in August and ends in October. The schedule of league play and tournaments is decided by the coaches as the season approaches. Practices will occur one or two times a week at Lew Clarkson Park. Most games and tournaments are on the weekends.

Winter – Throughout the winter, girls will practice one to two times a week indoors at a facility that JGSA rents located at 3217 NW Prairie Lane, Des Moines (across the river from the Johnston Soccer Fields).

Spring Season – Teams will participate in several weekend tournaments between late March and late June. The number of tournaments and which weekends will be decided by the coach as the season approaches. Girls will practice at Lew Clarkson Park one to two times per week and will also be expected to play on a Rec team in the spring (if younger than 8th grade).

Who is eligible to play?

Any girl who plays in the Johnston Girls Softball Association recreation league or Johnston School teams are eligible to play.

What age group would my daughter fit into?

A Dragon Select season includes a fall season and spring season. For the 2023-2024 season:

- 14U – birth years of 2009 & 2010
- 12U – birth years of 2011 & 2012
- 10U – birth years of 2013 & 2014
- 8U – birth years of 2015 & 2016 & more recent

Do pitchers and catchers try out separately?

Pitchers and catchers will go through the same tryout process as other players. In addition, they will have pitching and catching specific tryouts on a separate day. The JGSA Board believes that to have a strong Select program, there is a need to develop many pitchers and catchers at the younger age groups. Thus, the general practice is that trying out as a pitcher or catcher (at any age group) can only help a player during team selection and **cannot** have negative impacts. A couple possible examples of how this might apply include:

Example 1: A player's overall tryout is good enough to place her on the top team at her age group; however, her pitching tryout is scored that she is the third or fourth ranked pitcher. Since the selection committee starts with the top two pitchers on the top team, there may be concerns that this player would be placed on the second team. This is not what the selection committee will decide. In this example, since the player's overall skill level is determined to qualify her for the top team, the selection committee would contact the player's parents to ask whether the player would like to play for the top team (knowing she would be the third or fourth pitcher and therefore may not have as many opportunities to pitch in games), or if the player would prefer to be one of the top pitchers on the second team. (Note: this example also applies for catchers, but the selection committee starts with the top catcher to the top team, the 2nd catcher to the second team, etc.).

Example 2: A player's overall tryout score places her on the second team. However, her pitching tryout ranks her as the top pitcher at her age group. She would be placed on the top team since the general practice has been to put the top pitcher on the top team. (Note: this example also applies for catchers).

Who will select the teams?

A Dragon Select selection committee will be formed by the JGSA Board, prior to tryouts. The selection committee will include JGSA Board members.

How many teams will there be in each age division?

We will field as many teams as there are managers and players interested. Generally, there will be multiple teams in each age division.

Will all competitive team players be guaranteed equal playing time?

Playing on a Dragon Select team is earned and a commitment. It can be a rewarding and challenging experience as players are exposed to a higher level of competitive play. There is **no guarantee** of equal playing time for all girls on a Dragon Select team. All decisions in this regard will be at the sole discretion of the coaches. We ask parents to be supportive of coaches' decisions. If you have questions or concerns, please hold discussions with coaches in private and away from the players and other parents. If needed, parents may contact a member of the JGSA Board.

Will any player who wants to play on a Dragon Select team be cut?

JGSA will make a reasonable effort to form as many teams as it takes to allow everyone to play. One factor that will impact our effort is having enough qualified volunteers to coach. Another factor is the number of girls who sign up to play at each age level.

What does it cost to play on a Dragon Select team?

For the 2023-2024 season, there is a registration cost of \$100, a \$400 facilities fee, as well as the purchase of uniforms (if needed). Some discounts are provided for families that have three or more girls in the program. If teams choose to play away from the Des Moines area, there could be travel, lodging, and meal costs incurred as well. In addition, a family can expect to spend approximately \$200 to \$400 per player to cover tournament registration and gate fees; however, part (or all) of this cost may be offset if the team can obtain a sponsor or perform fundraising. All registration fees must be paid in full before your daughter is allowed to tryout.

How are coaches selected for Dragon Select teams?

Individuals interested in being a coach for a Dragon Select team must complete and submit an application to the JGSA Board and be approved.

How do I get started and what if I have more questions?

Visit the JGSA website to register: <https://www.johnstongirlssoftball.org/>. Most of your registration fees will be forwarded to each approved coach once teams have been formed for use toward tournament entry and gate fees or other team costs. Please contact any member of the [JGSA Board of Directors](#) with additional questions.