

20 & 40 YARD DASH

Average 20-yard dash times for softball players typically range from **3.1 to 3.5 seconds**. This metric is nearly identical to "Home to First" speed (as the distance is 60 feet) and is highly valued by recruiters for assessing baserunning and defensive range.

Average 20-Yard Dash Benchmarks

According to [NFCA standardized testing](#) and recruiting data, average times improve as players advance:

Level of Play	Average Range (sec)	Elite / Goal (sec)
Youth (12u)	3.3 – 3.6	3.0 or lower
High School Average	3.1 – 3.5	2.8 – 2.9
NCAA Division I Average	2.8 – 3.1	2.6 – 2.7
NCAA Division III Average	3.1 – 3.3	2.9 or lower

Sources: NFCA - BATS Metrics, [Dynamite Sports](#)

Key Metrics & Recruitment Insights

- **The "3.0" Barrier:** In the recruiting world, a sub-3.0 second laser-timed 20-yard dash is considered the threshold for "legitimate speed".
- **Recruitment Minimums by Level:**
 - **Division I:** Coaches prioritize times between **2.8 – 2.9 seconds** for position players.
 - **Division II / NAIA:** Target times are usually **2.9 – 3.0 seconds**.
 - **Junior College:** Programs typically look for **3.0 – 3.2 seconds**.
- **Timing Accuracy:** Hand-timed results are often [~0.24 seconds faster](#) than laser times. If you are timing yourself with a stopwatch, aim for a lower number to account for this human error margin.
- **Position Specifics:** Outfielders and middle infielders are generally expected to be the fastest on the team, often averaging **2.7 – 2.9 seconds** at the elite college level.

Standard Testing Protocol

To compare your time accurately, use the following official setup:

1. **Start Position:** Begin in a base-stealing stance (shoulders perpendicular to the line).
2. **Timing:** The clock starts on your **first movement** after being set.
3. **Finish:** Run through the line; the clock stops when your **chest** crosses the 20-yard mark.

While the 20-yard dash is the primary metric for softball (mimicking the distance between bases), the 40-yard dash is used to measure **top-end speed** and closing ability in the outfield. For high school softball

players, an average time is approximately **5.4 to 5.8 seconds**.

Average 40-Yard Dash Benchmarks

These times reflect typical performance ranges for competitive fastpitch athletes:

Level / Age	Average Range (sec)	Elite / Goal (sec)
Youth (12u–14u)	5.9 – 6.5	5.6 or lower
High School Varsity	5.4 – 5.8	5.1 – 5.2
College (D1–D3)	5.1 – 5.4	4.8 – 4.9

Sources: National Scouting Report, BeRecruited Standards

Key Performance Insights

- **The "Elite" Threshold:** For female softball athletes, breaking the **5.0-second** barrier is considered elite speed, typically seen only in top-tier Division I center fielders or middle infielders.
- **Comparison to 20-Yard Dash:** A player's 40-yard time is not simply double their 20-yard time. The second 20 yards measures **maximum velocity (Vmax)**, whereas the first 20 yards measures **acceleration**.
- **Recruiting Importance:** While [NCSA Recruiting Guidelines](#) prioritize "Home-to-First" (20 yards), a strong 40-yard dash demonstrates the "track speed" required to play a high-level outfield.
- **Surface Impact:** Times recorded on **turf or track** are consistently faster (0.1–0.2 seconds) than those recorded on dirt or grass.

How to Improve Your Time

- **Drive Phase:** Focus on staying low for the first 10–15 yards to maximize horizontal force.
- **Arm Action:** Ensure hands move "cheek to cheek" to drive the legs more efficiently.
- **Sprinting Drills:** Incorporate flying 20s—where you have a running start before being timed for 20 yards—to build the top-end speed needed for the back half of a 40-yard dash.