



America's Baseball Camps

COACHES CLINIC INFORMATION PACKET

www.baseballcamps.com 800.222.8152

Introduction

What is your role as a coach?

Answer: You are much more than a coach! You will be a father/mother figure, a teacher, a mediator, a psychologist, a friend and quite possibly one of the most influential people in your player's lives!

Why are you coaching?

Answer: This is specific to you, it must be understood though that as much as we all want to win, it should not be the driving force behind why you are coaching. Baseball is a game of failure, which you and your players need to understand. It is always more fun if you win, it is ok if you lose though, as long as there is something to learn from the failure (which there always is).

What are your goals for yourself and the team?

Answer: This should be clearly defined for you, the parents and the team. I like to say "Lets have fun and maybe learn a little bit along the way!"

10 Winning Concepts

-Build confidence all day long- Most of the time it's a confidence issue when players fail. Every success should be highlighted and failure learned from. "If you think you can, you're right, if you think you can't, you're still right"

-Be specific on what you are asking them to do:

"Jon, wait on the ball!" or "Swing later!" or "Get the ball down!" **These are Incorrect**

"Jon, let ball get to your feet" "Release the ball out in front of your hat" **These are Correct**

-Be aggressive- Put pressure on other team (Hard turns, aggressive at the plate), try not to have hitters always work from behind in the count by taking too many pitches.

-End with a positive- Start with items they need to work on individually or as a team, then end practice with the good stuff. That ending item is what they take home.

-Think whole team, instead of top of line up- Think about the future of these kids, the bottom half of a teams line up wins championships anyway. You shouldn't always bat little Timmy last and big Bobby fourth.

-Parents- Expect that "one" parent each year, it always happens and always will. Just listen and move on, let them know what is important to you and what your expectations are.

-Team Unity- This is where the teams become championship teams. Having pizza parties and doing things together as a team are a must. Hold as many events as possible.

-Be remembered as a coach- Have your players leave each day or each season saying, "that coach was cool," "I learned a bunch and had fun." We all remember our good coaches, not always for instruction, but as people and people that believed in us as players!

-Dads and their sons- Once your child and/or players hit 10 to 12 years old, maybe sooner, they don't think you know anything anymore. This is the way of life and that's the way it's going to be. Get them into camps to get them around other good coaches.

-Have fun! Enjoy the experience!

Your Team

Once you get your team, email or phone them, establish a parent meeting or letter (goals on sheet, be positive). Let them know what is important to you? What you expect? Are you an "on time guy?" Are you a "not having parents around the field guy?" Form a team list with contact information to give out to all players / parents, form a team schedule or practice schedule as soon as possible. The more your team is together the better. Finally, remember...the first impression is everything.

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Team Mom's- Are the best! Use them often!**

Check out our new instructional hitting DVD: The Hitting Zone, Beyond the Bat!

Equipment

1. How to pick a bat? How to pick a glove? How to break in a glove? What equipment do I need for practices?

ABC Recommended Items needed for Team for Year

If possible - 3 Volunteer coaches per practice + yourself (Sometimes might only be you and another?)

3 to 6 Batting Tees

Bucket of Balls

Bucket of Tennis Balls

Bucket of wiffle balls and/or golf ball wiffle balls

Wooden Sticks (broom handles cut in half) – Great to hit small waffles with for hand eye coordination

Hitting Disks- www.hittingdisk.com

Helmets (usually provided by league)

1 or 2 Sets Catchers Gear

Up to date instructional DVDs to pass around to parents or at least coaches to get on same page-

www.baseballcamps.com

*Possible flip up net or nets (Can cost?)

Notepad to take notes on kids or write down thoughts, etc.

HOW TO DEVELOP FUN AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Practice Setup:

The goal for any practice is to make sure that there is never any player on the team with nothing to do. Although it is important to try and stick to the practice plan as close as possible, quick modifications and adjustments are sometimes necessary to keep it fun. When you only have the field for a short period of time, you need to keep all players as active as possible for the entire practice. You may need to get creative depending on the equipment you have and/or the number of kids at practice.

Talking to your players during practice:

When you are lecturing the players, make sure that they are not looking directly into the sun. The instructor should be the one looking in the direction of the sun or simply make sure it is off to the side. The coach needs to keep the attention of the players. It doesn't take long for young kids to lose focus and a lot of times after about 3-5 minutes; you will lose their attention. Signs that you have "lost them" are wandering eyes, talking to their neighbor, and/or playing in the grass or dirt. That is when you can:

- Pull a camper up to be an example
- Start asking questions, but have them raise their hands
- Start your next sentence of with the name of the player you notice is not listening ("So Timmy, when your working on this next drill, I want you to.....")
- Tell a story
- Show an example
- Get them involved, do shadow drills or have them all try together

Practice Components:

Deciding on what to include in your practice plan on a particular day is as simple as selecting items off of a menu at a restaurant. You need to choose an appetizer (What you will do for a warm-up), what type of soup or salad do you want for your first course (what you will do for your position specific or skill specific drills), what do you want for the main course (the "meat & potatoes" of a practice, what you will do for your team drills), and what you want for desert (what you will do for a game and/or competition).

Organization and implementation of a fun and effective practice:

Step #1 – Select a goal or focus for each practice. This should be done before practice begins. You may focus on hitting, meaning have one extra hitting station during a particular practice, you may do mostly team drills one day, or you may play all games and have competitions one day. The key is to have this set

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before you get to the field and determine what will be the most beneficial content for your team at that time.

Step #2 – Select a warm up. Make sure to do something new almost every practice (unless they request a specific one because they have so much fun doing it). *See “menu” items below for examples.

Step #3 – Select a couple position / skill drills. Make sure to vary your practice plan by selecting different skills to work on each practice. Example: One practice work on pitching & catching along with hitting, a team drill and game, another practice work on infield & outfield along with hitting, a team drill and a game.

Step #4 – Select a Team Drill(s). Make sure to vary your practice plan by selecting different team drills to work on each practice. There are a lot of different ways to accomplish the same goal. An example being you don’t have to always do regular infield/outfield to work on fielding and throwing (substitutions being the triangle drill or four corner drill).

Step #5 – Select a Game or Competition. It is a good idea to end with a fun activity or competition so your players leave the field understanding that the game of baseball is just that, a game, and it is fun. It is also a good idea to have a treat at the field (great to delegate to mom’s) or go somewhere as a team to get a treat after all practices and games.

Note: Other than making sure the warm up is done first, there is no specific order you have to conduct your practice. One day do warm up then go into games and competitions then drills and finish with another game or maybe do a warm up, then a scrimmage, then a game. Variation of content and order will keep it fun for the players.

Warm-up options (Appetizers):

Pick from the list below, then do the General Mobility exercises immediately after.

1. Jumping Jack Series (2 sets of 10-15):

Jumping Jacks: Basic Jumping Jack

Front Straddle Hops: Feet move forward and back, arms cross in front

Crossovers: Feet crossover (Right then Left), arms cross in front of hips

Cross Country Skiers: Feet move forward and back, arms move in opposition

2. Follow the Leader:

Pick a leader (new one every practice) and have them lead the team around the field going wherever they want for approximately 2-3 minutes. Make sure they keep the movements at a jogging pace. They can skip, hop, jump, lunge, squat, low walk, turn, etc. (You may want to lead the first couple of times to give the kids ideas). Complete warm up with the General Mobility.

3. The Passing Lane (Indian Run):

Everyone jogs in a single file line following the warning track around the inside of the field. On the coaches call of go the last player in line speeds up his pace and passes everyone and takes over first place in line. Once that player reaches the front of the line, the next “last player in line” passes everyone to take over the lead. Continue process for approximately 2-3 minutes then get in lines or circle up for the General Mobility.

4. Gotta Touch It:

Make sure the kids understand that this is not a race. The coach calls out different movements for the kids to perform while going to touch specific items on the baseball field. Examples would be: jog and touch the right field foul pole or skip to the center field wall or jump to second base.

Continue to vary the movements and locations for approximately 2-3 minutes then get in lines or circle up for the General Mobility.

5. Obstacle Course:

Set up cones, gloves, tennis balls, etc. in different patterns and locations on the field. Have the kids perform different movement over and around the obstacles for approximately 2-3 minutes.

Example: Zig Zag through the cones, jump over the gloves, skip around second base, do five push ups in front of the dugout, hop around the pitchers mound, etc. Complete warm up with the General Mobility.

6. Flamingo Tag:

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Designate an area as the playing field and select a player to be “it.” On your call of go the player designated as “it” attempts to tag all of the other players. The other players must stay within the designated area and when tagged must assume a single leg stance position (flamingo stance). They remain in the single leg stance until a teammate who is free comes by and tags them. The game continues until all team members are standing on one leg or time runs out, which ever comes first. No “hard tags” (to be determined by coach), any player applying a hard tag runs laps around the field for their warm up until the game is over. Play for approximately 2-3 minutes then perform the General Mobility.

7. Exercise Tag:

Designate an area as the playing field and select a player to be “it.” On your call of go the player designated as “it” attempts to tag all of the other players. The other players must stay within the designated area and when tagged must perform what ever exercise the coach calls out. Example: The coach calls out “when you are tagged you must do jumping jacks until freed,” or “when tagged you must perform squats until freed.” They continue to perform each exercise until a teammate who is free comes by and tags them. The game continues until all team members are performing an exercise or time runs out, which ever comes first. No “hard tags” (to be determined by coach), any player applying a hard tag runs laps around the field for their warm up until the game is over. Play for approximately 2-3 minutes then perform the General Mobility.

8. Players Choice:

Select a player (does not always have to be a team captain) to decide which warm up the team will perform for that day.

General Mobility Warm Up Exercises:

- **Neck Clocks** (Roll head 5-7 times in each direction)
- **Shoulder Circles** (Roll shoulders 5-7 times in each direction)
- **Arm Circles** (keep palms up and arms straight, draw circles with arms 7-10 times in each direction, start small and get progressively bigger)
- **Arm Hugs** (keep hands at shoulder height and using full range of motion, swing arms back then immediately forward wrapping arms around torso 7-10 times)
- **Trunk Twists** (keep arms straight, palms down, and rotate upper body side to side turning head w/ shoulders 7-10 times)
- **Trunk Circles** (place hands on hips and bend torso forward, to the side, back, and then the other side 5-7 times in each direction)
- **Squats** (extend arms in front of body and perform a full squat 7-10 times, knees must remain behind toes and heels must remain on ground)
- **Lunges** (take 5-7 large steps forward with each leg, keep front knee behind toes and keep back knee above ground)
- **Heel Toe Raises** (raise up as high as possible on the ball of foot and toes, then immediately drop down to a flat foot position and then lift the toes as high as possible)

Pitching/Throwing

***Remember proper warm-up and attire are very important for taking care of young arms.**

Grips/Pitches – Successful pitchers throw something hard, something soft and something that breaks to 2 locations. Holding a 4 seam, 2 seam, curveball, change up

Steps to Pitching:

Starting position - (Wind up and Stretch)

Rocker Step - (Coming “set” when in “Stretch”)

Pivot - (Foot is square or toe slightly in front of heel)

Balance Point – (Eyes locked on target)

Power Position – Arm, head, chest, lower half positions

Throw – Release out front, proper direction

Ready Position - Become fielder after release

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Pitch Counts and Recovery Times

(These recommendations are from the American Sports Medicine Institute)

Age	Number of Pitches	Types of Pitches	Max. Number of Games a Week
6 to 8	50	FB	2
9	50	FB	2
10	50	FB, CH	2
11	70	FB, CH	2
12	70	FB, CH	2
13	75	FB, CH	2
14	75	FB,CH,CB	2
15	90	FB,CH,CB,KB	2
16	90	FB,CH,CB, KB,SL,FK	2
17	105	FB,CH,CB,KB,SL,FK,S B	2
18	105	FB,CH,CB,KB,SL,FK,S B	2

Pitch Key
FB - Fast Ball
CH - Change Up
CB - Curve Ball
KB - Knuckle Ball
SL - Slider
FK - Fork Ball
SB - Screw Ball

SUGGESTED RECOVERY TIMES				
<i>Once you reach a certain number of pitches, you need that much rest/recovery time.</i>				
Age	1 days rest	2 days rest	3 days rest	4 days rest
8/10	21	34	43	51
11/12	27	35	55	58
13/14	30	36	56	70
15/16	25	38	62	77
17/18	27	45	62	89

Most important Pitch - Next pitch

*Strike one to every hitter, most important, Hitters hit .078 after a 1st pitch strike

* Hitters guess right 4 out of 12 times

During Game

* Should through 60% fast balls in and out during games

* Breaking ball counts 0-0,1-2,0-2 (not until 13-14 years old)

* Tall Hitters- Are low-ball hitters

* Crouch hitters- Are highball hitters

* On plate- likes the balls in

* Off Plate- Does not want balls in

* 1 and 1, throw command pitch (want to get to 1-2)

-**When things are going well?** Video tape the hitters or pitchers doing well. *From the side when possible

-**When things are not going well?** Time for a change, new spark, new routine, new guest coach, new activity, getting mind on something else. Take some tape, put side by side on

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Skill & Position Drill options (First Course):

**PRO TIP- How much time should I dedicate to each component of a practice drill station?*

- 5% - Introduction of station (Goal of station, responsibilities, etc.)
- 15% - Demonstration(s) (use kids as demonstrators whenever possible)
- 45% - Major activity for station (kids are actually performing drill/ skill)
- 8% - Giving feedback (What you are seeing, what you want to see)
- 25% - Games or Contests with players
- 2% - Review, collecting gear/items and prepare group to rotate

Pitching Drills:

Note: Teach pitchers to have confidence in their mechanics prior to game time situations. During the game is not the time that a pitcher should have to think about how their mechanics are. They should be focusing on getting the batter out and hitting their spots. Keep in mind that if your pitcher is missing high or low it is their posture (they are collapsing on their back leg or under or over striding). If they are missing left or right, it is their front side and glove (they must stay closed and control the glove arm).

1. Throwing Up Hill Drill- This drill can be used for all players having a hard time following through out over the front side. Have the player stand on the back of the pitcher's mound and step uphill while throwing down to the target. The player's hand will have to stay on top of the ball and follow through over the front foot. You can have them throw 3 to 5 pitches uphill and then address the rubber and throw 3 to 5 pitches normally. They will develop a new feeling of throwing downhill.

2. Balanced Throw Drill- Have the pitcher lift his leg into the balance point position and hold it as a teammate or coach (the feeder) tosses them a ball. After they catch the ball, the pitcher will then drop their hand, circle it back to the top, and throw with a smooth, loose arm. Younger players have the tendency to rush out front with their bodies instead of getting to a good balance point, staying back before they throw. Rushing out forward destroys balance and the proper throwing motion. This drill will eliminate rushing as well as improve balance and arm swing.

3. Rotation Drill (45 to 30 ft.)- Have the player's pair up and have one be the pitcher and one the catcher. They should throw about 10 pitches and then switch positions. This is all done on flat ground and they are working on hitting their targets. Make sure your players are varying the location of the target they are giving and are avoiding giving a target right down the middle. Have them work on both sides of the plate and give the same target at least 3 times in a row to work on the consistency of their mechanics.

4. Towel Drill- This is probably the best drill there is for pitchers. Have your pitchers pack a towel about 18 inches long in their bags at all times. In order to ensure proper set up for this drill you want to have the pitcher go through a game like wind up and hold their landing foot or stride position at the end. From there, the player needs to step off heel to toe about 4 to 5 steps from the point where their stride foot landed. This is where the coach will kneel down and hold out their hand or a glove (you can also place a chair or bucket here if a partner or coach is not available). The player will then hold the towel around their middle finger and go through their motion trying to slap the coach's hand or glove with the towel. The point of the drill is to simulate releasing the ball out in front as far as possible. Reaching out is a key to pitching, your pitchers throwing hand should be as close to their target as possible when they release the baseball.

5. Hat Drill- Have each player get a partner and have them spread out along the foul line across from their partner with about 90-120 feet of distance between them (depends on age and skill level). The kids will set their hats on the ground approximately 15-20 feet in front of where they will be standing and play "one hop" catch attempting to hit their partners hat. If they miss, they must adjust the arc, velocity and/or release point of their next throw.

6. One Knee Throwing from Power Position- Have each player get a partner and stand across from them with about 20-30 feet of space in between them. Each partner takes a knee (throwing arm side knee down). They will play catch from this one knee position, starting their throwing motion from the arms up or "power position." Throwing on one knee eliminates the footwork so the player can better focus on their

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upper body mechanics. The focus should be on balance and taking their chest to their glove (reach out to target).

7. One Knee Throwing with Full Arm Action- Have each player get a partner and stand across from them with about 20-30 feet of space in between them. Each partner takes a knee (throwing arm side knee down). They will play catch from this one knee position. Throwing on one knee eliminates the footwork so the player can better focus on their upper body mechanics. The focus should be on balance and having their arms be “mirror images” of each other (when one goes down, the other goes down, when one moves up, the other moves up).

Additional Pitching Drills:

- **Balance Drill with Contest**
- **Balance Drill, 5 taps and a go**
- **“21” Game**

Catching Drills:

Note: Teach your catchers to be a wall (block everything), have soft hands (catch everything), and to be the “quarterback” of the team (always reminding other players of their responsibilities). Communication is very important for a catcher with all players, coaches, and the umpire.

1. Throwing Drills for Catchers:

- One Knee Throwing (Power position training)
- One Knee Exchange Drill w/ Paddle Glove (Quick hands training)
- One Knee Quick Catch w/ Mitt (Exchange & throw training)
- T-Drill (Footwork training)
- Fungo Drill (Stay low training)
- Load & Throw Drill (Stay back training)
- Blind Throws (Release point / kinesthetic awareness training)

2. Blocking Drills for Catchers:

- Sit and Get Hit Drill (Comfort w/ getting hit training)
- Dry Run Blocking (Transition training)
- Side to Side Block (Transition training w/ ball and form training)
- Balls in Line Blocking (Quickness and conditioning training)
- Quick Block Drill (Quickness and form training)
- No Hands Blocking (Blocking position training)
- Curve Ball Blocking (Offspeed form training)
- Block, Retrieve and Throw Drill (putting it all together)

3. Receiving Drills for Catchers:

- Barehand Receiving w/ tennis balls (soft hands training)
- Barehand Quick Pitch Receiving w/ tennis balls (soft hands / quick hands training)
- Paddle Glove Blocking Drill (Hand position training)
- Quick Pitch Receiving Drill (Quick hands / reaction drill)
- Reaction Receiving (Reaction training)
- Two ball Receiving Drill (Focus Drill)

Additional Catching Drills:

- **One hop tag plays**
- **Force plays**
- **Retrieve drill**
- **Pop-ups**
- **Bunt plays**

Infield Drills:

Note: Teach your infielders to always come through a ground ball when possible (never sit back and wait for the ball to come to you). You want your infielders to be fluid with one full motion through fielding and throwing across the diamond.

1. No Glove Drill- Have your player's pair up and get about 20 feet apart. You want players to roll the ball softly back and forth with each other while working on using soft hands. They should be field the ball as far out in front of their body as possible. This is a great drill to work on front hand and backhand balls also. You can even have them put their throwing hand behind their backs. There is a fun contest that goes with this drill. When you say, "go" the competition starts and the team that gets to 20 points wins. You receive points every time the ball is rolled back and forth between partners. If they miss then they go back to zero.

2. Corner Drill- This is a quick hand drill. Infielders make hard, quick and accurate throws around a triangle. For safety, make sure the triangle is not too small. Put enough distance between the players, so they have enough time to react and catch each other's throws.

3. Short Hop Drills- Head On, Side to side, backhands, forehands, close distance, away, etc. Line up just like the no gloves drill in lines with partners about 20 feet apart. Have each player toss a ball to their partner as a short hop in front of their glove making each ball have an in between hop.

4. On the Run Drill- Have players stay low and keep the glove down while moving to the ball. As they scoop up the ball and throw, the player needs to continue moving towards the target. There should be no jumping while throwing in this drill. This is a great drill to practice fielding slow rollers with the glove hand and bare hand. In both cases, the player needs to keep the hand under the ball so they scoop it.

Additional Infield Drills:

- **Route Drill**
- **Pair Drills- Glove, No Glove, Throwing arm behind back, etc.**
- **Communication Drills**
- **Do or Die Drills, Slow Rollers**
- **Triangle Drill**
- **Turning 2 Drills**
- **Relay Drills**
- **Softhand Drills- Close range, rapid fire**

Outfield Drills:

Note: Teach your outfielders to be aggressive and to keep the ball in front of them at all costs. It is important that your outfielders come through the ball with good momentum whenever it is possible (this will aid with producing a more powerful throw into the infield).

1. Quarterback Drill - Over the Shoulder- Have players start squared up to you and work on their first step being a good open drop step. As you throw the ball at an angle to one side or the other, the player runs back to make the catch and turns their back to the ball, but doesn't take their eye off of it though. The player then needs to make the catch on the run and with the glove above the shoulder.

2. Reaction / Communication Drill- Have the outfielders get into 2 lines and spread out in front of you and facing away from you. After you launch the ball between the 2 outfielders, give them a verbal cue when to go for the ball. When they turn to face the ball, one of them has to take control and call the other outfielder off by yelling, "I Got It!" and waiving their arms.

3. Cut-Off Relay Drill- The outfielders are set up in a straight line. Spread them out far enough to simulate an outfield to infield throw. See how fast they can send it all the way up and down the line. This will encourage players to make good throws that are easily caught by their teammates in order to keep the ball moving. Time them with a stopwatch and see if they can improve their times each time you have them do it.

4. Playing the Sun – Pair up outfielders about 30 yards apart. Have them looking into the sun. Have each player toss the ball underhand to his partner. Have the player catching the ball use the correct technique. One the catch is made, return a fly ball to the partner.

5. Charge & Scoop – Set players in a straight line about 30 yards away. Have the first player in line run and scoop a ground ball on the ground. Make sure the player is playing the ball on his glove side and fielding the ball with his glove side foot forward.

6. Fly Ball Communication – Set up the drill with two outfielders side-by-side about 20 yards apart. Hit or throw the ball between the players, causing them to communicate as to who will catch the ball. Have them gather their feet, set, and throw to the cut off man. Include infielders to increase importance of communication.

7. Gap Ball & Throw – Start with a single outfielder and eventually progress to two outfielders and work on the communication as well. Initially throw the ball to the left, right, or over the player's head and have him track it down. After the player has run the ball down, have him set his feet and throw to a cut off man. Progress to hitting the ball with a fungo after the player is comfortable with this drill.

Additional Outfield Drills:

- **Drop Step Drill**
- **Drop Step to Sprint and Catch**
- **Barehand Tennis Ball Catch**
- **Crow Hop Flyball/Groundball Drill**
- **Get Behind Drill**

HITTING:

Mechanics of the Swing

Mental Approach (Practices and Games)

- A. Try to hit ball through fence instead of over fence
- B. Hit ball back where it came from
- C. Line drive to down instead of line drive to up.

Plate Coverage and Box Routine

Stance (Feet to Head)

What should hitters look like with pitcher on mound?

What should hitters look like with ball 15 feet out in front?

What should hitters look like at point of contact?

What should hitters look like foot past contact?

What should hitters look like at finish?

Advanced – Off Speed Pitches (Release Point, rotation, point of contact, inside feet)

Top Hitting Faults and Fixes

***Coaches, when working with hitters make sure of the following:**

- Make what you are working on very specific, work focusing on 1 to 2 things tops. Work on and master one thing at a time. Do not view the entire swing; focus on the part that you think is the “root” to most of their problems. End result of what the ball does, does not always tell you what is going on with a hitter. Meaning they may have hit the ball hard but their swing may have been completely incorrect fundamentally.
- Pick the largest area you are working on and get that down as that might fix some other areas. Example: You may notice your hitter is either popping the ball up or missing it all together and is falling backwards after swinging. Keeping the front shoulder closed can remedy both of those faults in the swing. Focus on mastering the lower half, or mastering the swing path, not both in the same practice.
- Usually a lower half issue or a upper half issue. It is usually one or the other and not both (Could be many times as simple as what they are doing with their head)
- Work off a tee or soft toss when working with a hitter. Most of the time you will not throw live to work with a player. Trying to fix a swing fault while hitting live can be a challenge. You add too many other variables for the hitter to worry about such as the speed of the pitch, location and timing. Will not work unless you are working on a point of contact issue.

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- Always try to view from the side when working with hitters. Best spot to get a look at the different faults. *When taping a swing, always view from the side of the hitter.

- **Missing a lot of pitches due to head coming up**- Head down at contact. A lot of times fixing the head will fix a lot of the hitters issues.

- **To many ground balls** – Check point of contact, utilize the double tee drill, the hitter is probably not hitting through ball enough, or not getting inside ball enough

- **To Many Fly Balls** - Hand path is wrong, the way the bat is approaching the ball. High tee or back leg tee.

- **Timing issues** - contact issue (Bat too early/too late) *Point of contact, place ball where they make contact. Perform soft toss to work on rhythm.

- **Afraid of the ball** - Confidence issue, use the getting hit drill with tennis balls or flexi-balls.

-**Missing ball** - Check head; find out if hitter is focusing on top or on bottom of ball

-**Stepping Out** – Take stride away or make stride not leave ground or just go up and down. Use stride stopper.

-**How to hit off speed pitches** - Point of contact, how to have them wait on ball. Off speed soft toss or front toss.

HITTING DRILLS:

Note: Teach hitters to be fluid and in control of their swing, but also to be aggressive as their hands release through the ball. If the hitter is not making a fluid and powerful swing through the ball, their bat may be too heavy. As with all hitting drills, you can use a metal or wooden bat.

1. Hitting Disks- Hitting aid designed to help work on your hand path. This drill is designed to develop palm-up / palm-down through the zone as long as possible. Players should imagine that the disk is a pizza and they are serving the pizza down a table that goes from home plate to the center field wall.

2. Tee Work- This drill is probably the best training tool in hitting. This is the best time to make any adjustments in a player's swing, because the player can focus on certain areas without worrying about the ball. The tee will build strength, consistency, muscle memory, and confidence. If a player can create the muscle memory of a proper swing through repetitions off the tee, then when they step into the batters box, they will only have to worry about seeing and hitting the ball.

The following coach's points apply to all tee drills:

- ◆ The tee should be slightly ahead of the hitter's front foot, not directly in front of the foot or in the middle of the stance. (exception being when working on outside pitches)
- ◆ With each swing, the hitter is trying to hit their target. (Usually the center of the net)
- ◆ The hitter should be making a level swing and hitting all line drives (hit it through the fence not over the fence).
- ◆ All tee drills can be done into a catch net, a cage, or into the open field.

3. Soft Toss- This is a great drill to work on location specific hitting. The player tossing the ball is the most important person in this drill. If the accuracy of the toss is too inconsistent the drill will be useless. Make sure the younger players are not hitting the ball too far out in front. When you want to challenge your players, have them hit golf ball wiffle balls and use a cut-off broom handle to them with.

4. Crossover Drill- Have the player start a couple of feet away from you with their feet together. Have them take a step with their back foot behind the front foot towards the pitcher. Make sure they are focusing on really balancing on their back leg while you toss the ball up. They then can step with their stride foot and hit. This drill gets your players to ride out their backside instead of hitting off of their front foot.

5. Bottom Hand Drill- This will help a player's barrel stay up and keep his hand from rolling over. Have the player hold a bat with just their bottom hand and then do soft toss or use a tee. Make sure they choke up enough to make the bat at least half the weight and length.

Additional Hitting Drills:

- **Double Tee Drill**
- **Head Down Drill**
- **Soft Toss Drill for Off Speed Pitches**
- **Out of 10 Drill off Tee, Softtoss or Live**

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- **Flip from behind Drill**
- **Grips Drill- Crossover, Split Hand, 1 Hand**
- **Hop Drill**
- **Speed hand drill- Side Toss**
- **Stick Drills- Hand Eye Drills- Marshmallows, Seeds, Rice, Beans**
- **Over the line**

Base Running/Sliding Drills:

Note: Teach your players to be aggressive yet smart when running the bases. “If you can’t run fast the next best thing is to run hard.”

1. Tag Up – Set a group of players at each base. Have the coach stand in center field. Have the players take a secondary lead. The coach should throw the ball into the air. The players will return to the base and advance to the next base after the ball is caught.

2. First Base Turn Drill – Extra Base or Stay – Place the runners at home plate. Have them one at a time run to first base veering out of the baseline to get a good angle to the inside corner of first base. Have the coach at second base roll a ball to a player in center field. If the player fields the ball cleanly, hold up and return to first base. If the player misses the ball, advance to second base.

3. Circuit Running – have the players perform the following running format. Make sure the lead runner is half way between the bases before you start the next runner. Make sure each runner is performing the correct base running fundamentals. This is great for team conditioning.

- Run home to first (Jog to the back of the line)
- Run home to second base (Stay at second base)
- Run second base to home (Stay at home)
- Run home to first (Stay at first)
- Run First to third (Stay at first)
- Tag up at third and run home

Additional base running / speed drills:

- **Primary & secondary leads**
- **Crossover step Drill**
- **Get up starts (linear & lateral)**
- **Wall/fence drill**
- **Partner resisted runs**
- **Circle Drill**
- **Pick up your base coach drill**

Team & Large Group Drill options (Main Course):

Note: A team drill doesn’t necessarily mean the entire team has to be part of the drill. Incorporating drills that involve a large number of your players at the same time can be very beneficial. These large group drills can improve teamwork, communication, and cooperation and are often more “game like” than other drills.

1. Situational Infield / Outfield. Have a player at each position and the extras are base runners. Explain each player’s responsibilities and then hit a ball to see how everyone reacts. Give feedback on the outcome and complete the process again.

2. Cutoffs and Relays. Same set up as the situational infield / outfield only focusing on balls hit to the outfield. Explain responsibilities of each player then hit a ball to the outfield (flyball or groundball) and see how they react.

3. Pop fly Communication: Place all of your players at either a position in the outfield or infield. Explain who has priority between the infielders and outfielders, then hit or throw pop ups between each position so the players can work on their communication. (Center fielder has priority over other outfielders, Shortstop

has priority over left side of infield, Second Base has priority over right side of infield, and Outfield has priority over Infield)

4. Situational Hitting. Have one group of players hitting and base running while the other group is shagging. Explain the purpose of each situation and have each player attempt to perform each situation correctly. Situations include: Sacrifice Bunting, Hit and Run, Move the runner over from second base, and score the runner with a fly ball or groundball. Have the base runners and fielders play the balls live off of the bat.

5. Circuit Running. (See Base-running drills)

6. Four Corner Throwing. Split the team into four even groups and have one get in a line behind each base. The first player in each line steps forward to begin the drill. On the coaches call of go the players begin to throw the ball in a clockwise (home – third – second – first – home) direction. If the coach yells switch they immediately start throwing around the horn in a counter clockwise direction. If the coach yells across the player that catches the ball next throws the ball to the player across from them (home – second or first – third, etc.). After a player throws the ball they immediately move to the end of the line and the next player in line steps up to receive the next throw. See how many times your team can go around the horn without missing a throw.

7. 18 outs. Put one player at each position on the field, the extras will be base runners. Randomly hit ground balls and fly balls simulating different situations during a game and see if the team can get the runner out before they reach home plate. The runner keeps going until they are tagged out. The goal is for the defense to get 18 outs before a run scores. Switch the runners with a fielder after 2-3 turns running. This can be included in the game and competition section as well.

8. Scrimmage or modified scrimmage. Most teams don't have enough players to field two full teams for a scrimmage so a modified option would be splitting the team into three teams (4 hitters, 4 infielders and 4 outfielders). After the hitting team gets out, they rotate to the infield, infield goes to outfield and the outfield comes in to hit. Play as many innings as you can in the time allotted.

Games and Competitions:

Note: As hard as it may be not to, resist the urge to teach during these games and just allow the kids to have fun, compete and not worry about form or mechanics. The more they practice the correct form the more it will just start to happen in games and competitions.

1. Triangle Drill. Have a group of kids in a line next to the mound, a group of players in a line next to 1st base and a group of players in a line behind home plate. The first player in each line steps forward to perform first play. The coach hits a ground ball to the player at the mound, that player fields the ball and throws it to the 1st baseman and follows their throw by getting in the back of the line at 1st base. The player that caught the ball at 1st throws the ball to home plate and follows their throw by getting in the back of the line behind home plate. The player at home plate catches the throw, flips the ball to the coach, then runs out to get in the back of the line at the mound. Each time a player fields the ball cleanly and makes a good throw to first base they get a point. Keep track of points and whoever has the most at the end wins.

2. Relay Race. Have players with their gloves on get in two or three lines with about 20-30 feet of space in between them. The player at the beginning of the line has a ball in their glove and on the coaches call of go he throws the ball to the next guy in line. The ball is to be thrown all the way down and back through the line of players and the team that gets it done the quickest wins. You can go numerous rounds by doing the best out of 5-10 games.

Hitting Disk Games: (Hitting disks can be purchased at www.hittingdisk.com)

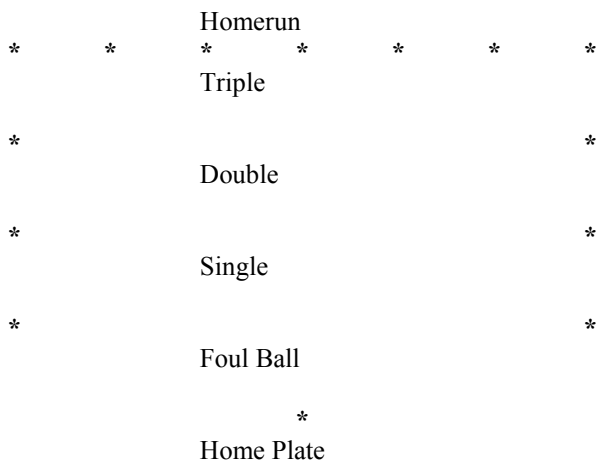
3. Distance Contest. Line all players up on the foul line (or make two lines, group #1 & group #2) and call out the steps to the swing, “stance, load, stride, swing!” On the call of swing the entire group throws their disk into the outfield using correct form. After they throw each player runs out and stands next to their disk so the coach can judge who went the farthest. Do as many rounds as you would like. We recommend that you do not eliminate anyone, simply give points to first, second and third place and who ever has the most points at the end of the rounds is the winner. Everyone gets to throw, every round.

4. Over-the-Line. Set up cones, tennis balls or gloves as the boundaries. The playing field should be approximately 20-30 feet wide and 60-70 feet long. Place one marker on the dirt behind second base or on the foul line and designate as home plate. Then place two markers about 12 feet

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in front of the home plate marker with about 20-30 feet in between, two more about 12 feet farther out from the first two, two more 12 feet out from there, two more 12 feet out from there and then a line of markers completing the playing area. See diagram below.

HITTING DISK OVER-THE-LINE SET-UP



Description: Separate the team into two groups (make as even as possible), one is on defense and one is hitting. Give the hitting team a batting order and get each player a hitting disk. They stand in a line behind home plate and step up to the plate when it is their turn. The defense is spread out in the playing field wherever they want to stand. Recommend at least one in the “single” area, one in the “double” area, one in the “triple” area and the others spread out. No one can stand in the Homerun area as that is over the fence. The hitting team gets as many outs as there are players on their team. They throw the disk on their turn and in order to get a hit must have it land in the playing area or go past the homerun line. If the disk is caught in the air or lands outside of the playing area it is an out. Any disk that lands in the area between home plate and the first to markers is considered a foul ball and each player is only allowed two foul balls. A third foul ball in a row is an out. The coach keeps track of the runners on base and the score. Runners must be forced in, meaning a runner does not score from second or third on a single, they must be forced in by a double or triple. To speed up the game you can have the hitting team get to start once they are ready, they don’t have to wait for the defense to be ready. This will encourage hustling on and off of the playing field. Play as many innings as you can in the time allotted.

5. Wiffle Ball Game. Recommend setting up in the outfield with drop down bases. Set up the field so home plate is close enough to the fence that most of the kids can hit a homerun. Make up your own modified rules to make the game as exciting and fun for the kids. Examples: pegs are OK if below the waist (if above waist that runner automatically scores), no gloves, only get two outs, etc.

6. Backward Baseball. Using a wiffle ball or Atec foam ball (or another type of safety ball), have second base be home plate and hit toward the backstop. Modify the rules in any way you like to make the game fun and exciting. You can encourage line drives by making a rule of anything over the fence is an out.

7. Hit it Where They Ain’t. Set up like a modified scrimmage game (three teams) with all of the fielders standing from second base over (recommend setting up defense to the opposite field side of most of the hitters to encourage waiting on the ball and hitting it the other way). There will be two infielders, two “rovers” and four outfielders. The hitter must attempt to have the ball drop in the middle of the entire defense. Anything hit to the field where no one is standing is an automatic out. If they hit a ground ball it must make it to the fence or not be fielded cleanly to be a hit. Each player on the hitting team is allowed 5 swings to get as many hits (points) as possible. Coach keeps track of points while playing as many rounds as possible in the time allotted.

Additional Group Drills / Games:

8. Relay Running Races

9. Race the bases

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10. “500” or “Three fly’s up”

11. Flip

Sample Practice Schedules (based on 90 minute practice):

Note: With the following practice plans, you can use any drills from the list above that pertain to the area of focus

Sample One (Need at least Two Total Parents or Helpers)

Practice Objective- Normal All-around practice

0-5 Minutes – Preview practice, kids coming late, see how many helpers you have, explain goals and focus for practice.

6-16Min Warm up including throwing warm up- You can make the warm up throwing fun by using the Hat Drill or 21 Point Game. Incorporate Long Toss every other practice to develop arm strength. (2-3 minutes of warm up game, 2-3 minutes for General Mobility, and 4-6 minutes of throwing) **If throwing is the focus for practice that day extend the time allotted for this portion.

16-20Min Water break and explanation of stations to entire team (Examples: Hitting, Pitching, Team Defense, Infield, Outfield, Base running, What you liked in the game and what they need to work on, Guest Instructor, Competition or Game)

20-56 Min (3) 10 minute Stations with 2 Min Rotations:

Break your team up into 3 groups- Group #1 – Hitting Drill, Group #2 Infield Drill, Group #3 Outfield Drill

Sample Stations: Tee work in cage or into backstop w/ waffles, No hands Drill in infield, Quarterback Drill in outfield

56-60 Min. Water break and explanation of Team Drill

60-80 Min. Team Drill (Triangle Drill or Situational Infield/Outfield)

80-88 Min. Group Game (Hitting Disk Over-the-Line, etc.)

88-End Pick up stations / gear and head to the bleachers so next team can start their practice. Review, announcements of next practice times, snacks, games, etc. Make sure to do all-important items at end of practice as kids come in late, etc.

Sample Two (Need at least Two Total Parents or Helpers)

Practice Objective – Hitting Focus

0-5 Minutes – Preview practice, kids coming late, see how many helpers you have, explain goals and focus for practice.

6-16Min Warm up including throwing warm up- You can make the warm up throwing fun by using the Hat Drill or 21 Point Game. Incorporate Long Toss every other practice to develop arm strength. (2-3 minutes of warm up game, 2-3 minutes for General Mobility, and 4-6 minutes of throwing) **If throwing is the focus for practice that day extend the time allotted for this portion.

16-20Min Water break and explanation of stations to entire team (Examples: Hitting, Pitching, Team Defense, Infield, Outfield, Base running, What you liked in the game and what they need to work on, Guest Instructor, Competition or Game)

20-56 Min (3) 10 minute Stations with 2 Min Rotations:

Break your team up into 3 groups- Group #1 – Live in Cage, Group #2 Tee work left field line, Group #3 Hitting Disk right field line

56-60 Min. Water break and explanation of Team Drill

60-80 Min. Team Drill (Situational Hitting or just extra live hitting on field)

80-88 Min. Group Game (Backward Baseball)

88-End Pick up stations / gear and head to the bleachers so next team can start their practice. Review, announcements of next practice times, snacks, games, etc. Make sure to do all-important items at end of practice as kids come in late, etc.

Sample Three (Need at least Two Total Parents or Helpers)

Practice Objective – Throwing and fielding focus

0-5 Minutes – Preview practice, kids coming late, see how many helpers you have, explain goals and focus for practice.

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6-16Min Warm up including throwing warm up- You can make the warm up throwing fun by using the Hat Drill or 21 Point Game. Incorporate Long Toss every other practice to develop arm strength. (2-3 minutes of warm up game, 2-3 minutes for General Mobility, and 4-6 minutes of throwing) **If throwing is the focus for practice that day extend the time allotted for this portion.

16-20Min Water break and explanation of stations to entire team (Examples: Hitting, Pitching, Team Defense, Infield, Outfield, Base running, What you liked in the game and what they need to work on, Guest Instructor, Competition or Game)

20-56 Min (3) 10 minute Stations with 2 Min Rotations:

Break your team up into 3 groups- Group #1 – Form throwing left field line, Group #2 Four Corner drill infield, Group #3 Ground balls in right field

56-60 Min. Water break and explanation of Team Drill

60-80 Min. Team Drill (Cutoffs and Relays)

80-88 Min. Group Game (Relay contest)

88-End Pick up stations / gear and head to the bleachers so next team can start their practice. Review, announcements of next practice times, snacks, games, etc. Make sure to do all-important items at end of practice as kids come in late, etc.

Sample Four (Need at least Two Total Parents or Helpers)

Practice Objective – Pitching / Catching Focus

0-5 Minutes – Preview practice, kids coming late, see how many helpers you have, explain goals and focus for practice.

6-16Min Warm up including throwing warm up- You can make the warm up throwing fun by using the Hat Drill or 21 Point Game. Incorporate Long Toss every other practice to develop arm strength. (2-3 minutes of warm up game, 2-3 minutes for General Mobility, and 4-6 minutes of throwing) **If throwing is the focus for practice that day extend the time allotted for this portion.

16-20Min Water break and explanation of stations to entire team (Examples: Hitting, Pitching, Team Defense, Infield, Outfield, Base running, What you liked in the game and what they need to work on, Guest Instructor, Competition or Game)

20-56 Min (3) 10 minute Stations with 2 Min Rotations:

Break your team up into 3 groups- Group #1 – One knee drills left field line, Group #2 Standing Drills (Balance Point, Towel Drill), Group #3 Catching Drills (Barehand Receiving, Form Blocking)

56-60 Min. Water break and explanation of Team Drill

60-80 Min. Team Drill (18 outs)

80-88 Min. Group Game (21 game, hat game)

88-End Pick up stations / gear and head to the bleachers so next team can start their practice. Review, announcements of next practice times, snacks, games, etc. Make sure to do all-important items at end of practice as kids come in late, etc