

**BASEBALL PRACTICE, PLANS AND DRILLS:
THE "FUNDAMENTALS"
RIDGE MEADOWS FEVER "CATCH IT"**

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**RIDGE MEADOWS MINOR BASEBALL
www.RMBaseball.bc.ca**

Practice Plans:
First Week of Practice

Practice Plans: Day #1
Season: Spring
Precompetition

Age Group: Under 12 years; League play
Location: Outdoors

Component	Time (min)	Objectives, Drills and <i>Key Points</i> <i>Key Point:</i> Coach always demonstrates each drill before having players do it.
Introduction	10	Objective: To introduce players and coaches. Team meeting to cover expectations and learn names.
Warm up	10	Objective: To teach warm-up. Jog and stretch arms, legs and torso.
Throwing	30	Objective: To teach and drill throwing. 1. Grip Drill. One ball per player. Players toss ball up to themselves, catch the ball and practice getting the grip as quickly as possible. 2. Two line partner Drill - no ball. Demonstrate throwing motion, calling out basic progression: catch, grip, starter step, down, back, through. Players then actively follow the called out progression. 3. Two line partner Drill - with ball. Begin throwing at a short distance stressing accuracy and control. Correct and reinforce mechanics. Gradually move lines further apart stressing control and technique. <i>Key Points:</i> Throwing: get the grip - four seams; eyes on target; take the starter step; bring down hand; take arm back; bring arm through; snap the wrist; arm follows through.
Baserunning	10	Objective: To teach and drill baserunning, home to first. Home to first Drill. From batting stance, swing, drop bat, run to 1st. <i>Key Points:</i> Run straight down the line. Touch front of base, either foot. Run hard past the bag, continue down the line.
Scrub Game	20	Objective: To practice throwing and running skills and to have fun. Three batters. Coach pitches and umpires. Players rotate positions on outs. Batter who hits into a force play is out, not the runner.
Review	10	Objective: To review key points of the practice. Reinforce how the drills and mechanics were used in the scrub game and that by practicing these they will get better.

Practice Plans:
First Week of Practice

Practice Plans: Day #2
Season: Spring
Precompetition

Age Group: Under 12 years; League play
Location: Outdoors

Component	Time (min)	Objectives, Drills and <i>Key Points</i> <i>Key Point:</i> Coach always demonstrates each drill before having players do it.
Introduction	5	Objectives: To cover expectations and explain what will be covered in practice.
Warm up	10	Objective: To get body core and limbs ready. Jog and stretch arms, legs and torso.
Throwing	10	Objective: To review grip and throwing. 1. Grip Drill. 2. Two line partner Drills.
Baserunning	10	Objective: To review baserunning, home to first. .Home to first Drill.
Catching	20	Objectives: To teach and drill catching. 1. Simulate catch Drill. Position of hands, catching a ball above the waist and below the waist. 2. Barehand catching with a partner Drill. Reinforce cushioning ball and catching with two hands. 3. Two line partner Drill - with ball and glove. <i>Key Points:</i> Eyes on ball, extend both arms, check had position, cushion the ball, catch in the pocket, grip for throw.
Baserunning	10	Objective: To teach and drill baserunning, home to second. Home to second Drill. From batting stance, swing, run to 1st then 2nd. <i>Key Points:</i> Run 2/3 of way down line, swing out. Round and touch the base and go to second.
Game	20	Objectives: To practice skills and to have fun Base Hit Competition. Divide team into three groups; one team bats, the other two in the infield and outfield. Coach pitches and scores. Team at bat gets 4 swings each. When all players have hit, base hits are totaled and teams rotate.
Review	5	Objective: To review key points of the practice.

Practice Plans:
First Week of Practice

Practice Plans: Day #3
Season: Spring
Precompetition

Age Group: Under 12 years; League play
Location: Outdoors

Component	Time (min)	Objectives, Drills and <i>Key Points</i> <i>Key Point:</i> Coach always demonstrates each drill before having players do it.
Introduction	5	Objectives: To cover expectations and explain what will be covered in practice.
Warm up	10	Objective: To get body core and limbs ready. Jog and stretch arms, legs and torso.
Catching	5	Objective: To review catching mechanics. Simulate catching Drill.
Throwing	10	Objective: To review throwing mechanics. Two line partner Drill.
Baserunning	5	Objective: To review baserunning, home to second. Home to second Drill.
Pitching	20	Objective: To teach and drill pitching. 1. Pitching simulation Drill. Go through pitching progression without a ball. 2. Pitching target Drill. Set up 4 targets on a fence or screen. Divide players into four groups and throw at the targets, stressing proper mechanics and follow through. <i>Key Points:</i> Stance, eyes on target, shift of weight, pivot, 'thumb to thigh, ball to sky', arm down, back, step to target, arm through, wrist snap, follow through.
Sliding	10	Objective: To teach and drill base sliding. Sliding Drill. Teach why and when to slide and have players practice one or two in a grassy area. <i>Key Points:</i> Run aggressively, throw front leg up, tuck second leg under, throw hands high, stay low, slide on bent leg, seat and back.
Game	20	Objectives: To practice skills and to have fun Inter Squad Game. Divide team into two groups. Coach pitches and umpires. All players hit and have five pitches each. Complete two innings .
Review	5	Objective: To review the key points of the practice.

Practice Plans:
First Week of Practice

Practice Plans: Day #4
Season: Spring
Precompetition

Age Group: Under 12 years; League play
Location: Outdoors

Component	Time (min)	Objectives, Drills and <i>Key Points</i> <i>Key Point:</i> Coach always demonstrates each drill before having players do it.
Introduction	5	Objectives: To cover expectations and explain what will be covered in practice.
Warm up	10	Objectives: To get body core and limbs ready. Jog and stretch arms, legs and torso.
Sliding	10	Objective: To review base sliding. Sliding Drill.
Pitching	10	Objectives: To review and drill pitching. Pitching Target Drill.
Ground Balls	15	Objectives: To teach and drill fielding ground balls. 1. Simulate ground ball progression Drill. Players follow coach through progression: relaxed - ready positions, glove leg forward, cushion ball - suck it up, starter step, grip, break hands, down, back, step and throw. 2. Controlled ground balls with a partner Drill. Divide team into partners in two lines. One partner line rolls ball to other, five times then switch, repeat. 3. Ground ball shuttle Drill. Divide team into two lines, facing coach. Coach throws ball to first player in line, then alternates to each line. <i>Key Points:</i> Relaxed and ready positions, move to ball, arms extended, seat down, glove leg forward, take starter step, grip and break hands in front of body, follow through in direction of throw.
Fly Balls	15	Objective: To teach and drill catching fly balls. 1. Fly ball simulation Drill. Players follow coach through catching positions . 2. Fly ball Drill. Coach throws ball to two, alternating lines of players <i>Key Points:</i> Ready position, eyes on thrower, use cross over step, run on balls of feet, glove by side, catch at shoulder height, grip, separate hands, throw.
Game	20	Objectives: To practice mechanics and to have fun. Inter Squad game
Review	5	Objectives: To review key points of practice.

Practice Plans:
First Week of Practice

Practice Plans: Day #5
Season: Spring
Precompetition

Age Group: Under 12 years; League play
Location: Outdoors

Component	Time (min)	Objectives, Drills and <i>Key Points</i> <i>Key Point:</i> Coach always demonstrates each drill before having players do it.
Introduction	5	Objectives: To cover expectations and explain what will be covered in practice.
Warm up	10	Objectives: To get body core and limbs ready. Jog and stretch arms, legs and torso.
Ground balls	5	Objectives: To review and drill fielding ground balls. Ground ball shuttle Drill.
Fly Balls	5	Objectives: To review catching fly balls. Fly ball Drill.
Catchers	20	Objectives: To teach and drill back catching. Divide team into pitchers and catchers in one group and 'batters' in another. Pitchers and catchers work on mechanics, batters on swing mechanics. 1. Simulation Drill. Pitchers and catchers follow progressions for each. 2. Live throw - catch Drill. Pitchers throw working on location; Catchers work on receiving and framing pitches. Batters track pitch and do not swing. <i>Key points, Catchers:</i> Relaxed and ready position to receive ball, distance from plate and batter, Target and hand positions, cushion ball, catch in palm, separate hands in front of body, throwing points.
Hitting	20	Objectives: To teach and drill hitting. 1. Simulate swing Drill. Players follow progression of grip, stance, swing, follow through. Divide group into three groups: Three swings each, rotate and repeat. 2. Tee Drill. 3. Soft toss Drill - side. 4. Soft toss Drill - front. <i>Key Points:</i> Bat selection, grip, stance, power position, stride, hands follow path to ball, balance, barrel above hands, front side closed, follow through.
Game	20	Objectives: To practice skills and to have fun. Base hit competition.
Review	5	Review key points of practice.

Practice Plans:
First Week of Practice

Practice Plans: Day #6
Season: Spring
Precompetition

Age Group: Under 12 years; League play
Location: Outdoors

Component	Time (min)	Objectives, Drills and <i>Key Points</i> <i>Key Point:</i> Coach always demonstrates each drill before having players do it.
Introduction	5	Objectives: To cover expectations and explain what will be covered in practice.
Warm up	10	Objectives: To get body core and limbs ready. Jog and stretch arms, legs and torso.
Ground Balls	5	Objectives: To review ground ball skills Ground ball shuttle Drill.
Catchers	10	Objectives: To review catching and pitching. Live throw - catch Drill.
Hitting	20	Objectives: To review and drill hitting. Four station Drill. Divide team into four groups for: tee work, soft toss - side, soft toss - front, swing-fence.
Bunting	15	Objectives: To teach and drill bunting skills. 1. Simulation. Players follow progression for bunting: stance, positions of hands and arms, contact. 2. Four player bunting Drill. Divide team into groups of four, set up in a mini diamond of pitcher, 1st, batter, 3rd. Pitcher lobs ball to batter to bunt, others field. After 5 attempts, rotate positions. <i>Key Points:</i> Pivot, hand position on bat, extend arms at shoulder level, eyes on ball, angle bat with barrel above hands, 'catch' the ball on the bat, bunt strikes.
Game	20	Objectives: To practice skills and have fun. Inter squad game - revised. Coach pitches and scores. All players bat in an inning. Each group must have two players bunt in their inning (players decide whom). These players change from inning to inning. <i>Key Points:</i> Hitting, bunting, fielding and throwing key points. Introduces the idea of 'strategy' into the game.
Review	5	Objectives: To review key points of the practice.

Practice Plans:
First Week of Practice

Practice Plans: Day #7
Season: Spring
Precompetition

Age Group: Under 12 years; League play
Location: Outdoors

Component	Time (min)	Objectives, Drills and <i>Key Points</i> <i>Key Point:</i> Coach always demonstrates each drill before having players do it.
Introduction	5	Objectives: To cover expectations and explain what will be covered in practice.
Warm up	10	Objectives: To get body core and limbs ready. Jog and stretch arms, legs and torso.
Bunting	10	Objectives: To review bunting skills Four player Drill
Throwing	10	Objectives: To review throwing skills. Two line partner Drill.
Ground Balls	10	Objectives: To review fielding skills. Ground ball shuttle Drill.
Infield - Outfield	20	Objectives: To teach infield and outfield location, coverage and cut-offs. 1. Simulation: Ball 'shadow' hit to infield and outfield locations. Coach calls out and moves players into position and coverage. Players 'shadow' catch and throw. Players rotate positions. Option: Coach leads team in playing a two inning shadow game. 2. Live. Coach throws ball to infield and outfield locations. Players field and throw to appropriate base or cut-off. <i>Key points:</i> Accurate throws, outfielders throw to cut-off player, outfield, infield and pitcher coverages, all players move on a hit ball.
Scrub Game	20	Objectives: To practice skills and have fun. Three batters. Coach pitches and umpires. Players rotate positions on outs. Batter who hits into a force play is out, not the runner.
Review	5	Objectives: To review key points.

PRACTICE DRILLS

Keys:

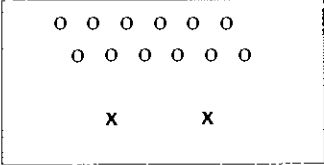
o = players x = coaches

path of runner path of ball

THROWING DRILLS

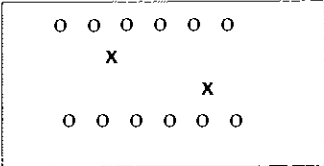
1. Simulate Throwing (without a ball)

Coach calls out the basic throwing progression: Catch, Grip, Starter Step, Down, Back. Through. The players actively follow the progression called out. Coaches circulate, correct or reinforce mechanics.



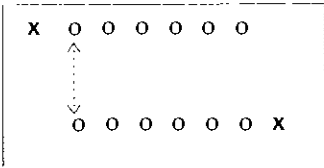
2. Gripping the Ball

One player per ball. Players toss the ball up to themselves, catch the ball and practice getting the grip as quickly as possible by adjusting the ball in their throwing hand. Coaches circulate to check proper grip (across four seams).



3. Throwing with a Partner/Two line Partner

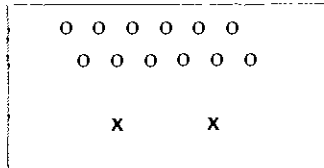
Divide team into two groups. Players should face each other at a short distance. Concentrate on control and practice the correct throwing motion. Have the receiving players give a glove target and have the thrower concentrate on throwing to the target.



CATCHING DRILLS

1. Simulate Catching

Coach demonstrates and leads players in correct catching mechanics. Check to see if players know how to position their hands for: two-handed catch, catching a ball above the waist (thumbs together, palms down), catching a ball below the waist (little fingers together, palms up).

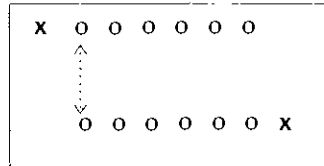


2. Catching with a Partner - Barehand

Divide team into two groups. Players face each other at a short distance with no gloves. Players toss ball to each other catching with two hands.

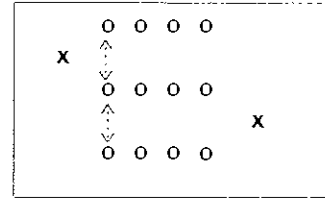
Catching with a Partner - Gloves

Have the two lines move further apart and put on gloves, stressing catching with two hands. Instruct players to throw to their partners above and below the waist.



3. Three Player Relay

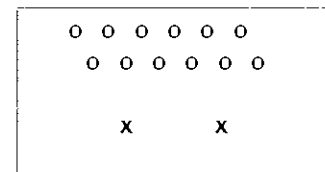
Divide team into three lines about 45 feet between each. Three players in line with each other, one in each line, form a team. Each player in line 1 has a ball to start the relay throws. Each team of three completes throws from line 1 to line 2, line 2 to line 3, line 3 to line 2, and line 2 to 1. Team that completes the sequence fastest wins race. Option: Team that completes as many sequences in a time period (eg 30 sec.) wins .



FIELDING GROUND BALLS DRILLS

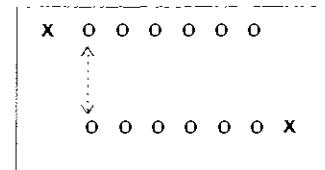
1. Simulate Ground Ball Progression

Organize players so they can see the coach and have room to move. Coach takes players through progression: Relaxed position, Ready position, Glove leg forward, Suck it up, Starter step, Grip, Break hands in front of body, Down, Back, Step and Throw .



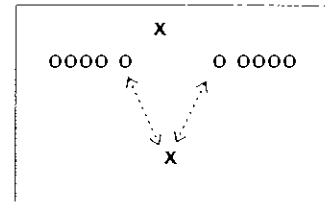
2. Controlled Ground Balls with a Partner

Divide team into two lines. Before ball is rolled to partner, player must be in ready position. Ball is rolled underhand. Partner moves to the ball, fields it and throws it back. Repeat several times then switch roles.



3. Ground Ball Shuttle

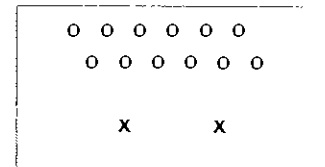
Divide the team into two lines, facing coach and lined up one behind the other. First player in each line gets into the ready position. Coach alternates throwing ground balls to each line. Player fields ball and throws it back to the coach. Options: This drill has many options to challenge players (eg. speed, difficulty of fielding, backhand, forehand, short and long hops).



FLY BALL DRILLS

1. Simulate Basic Catching Positions

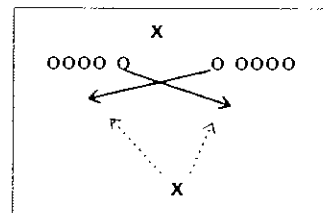
Organize players so they can see coach and have room to move. Coach leads and has players demonstrate/follow forehand and backhand catching positions as well as the cross over steps to the left and to the right.



2. Fly Ball Drill

Divide team into two lines, facing coach, one behind the other, each player has a ball. Player at the front throws ball to the coach, takes the cross over step and moves to receive fly ball thrown by coach. Catch made and player starts a new line. Continue until all players completed. Complete drill going the other direction.

Options: Throw ball to alternating lines. Coach can vary difficulty of throw (distance, throw in front, behind player).

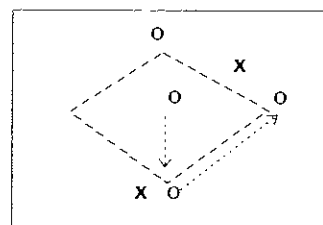


BACK CATCHING DRILLS

1. Throwing to a Base

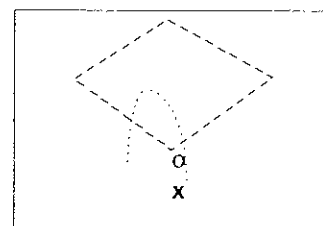
Three players: catcher, pitcher, fielder. Catcher receives the pitch in a ready position and practices the step and release of the ball to each infield base. The player acting as the infielder will catch several throws at each base.

Option: This drill can be done anywhere, not necessarily in the infield.



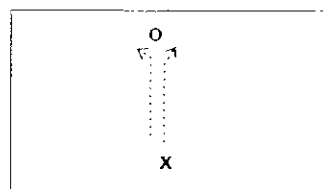
2. Catching a Pop-Up

Coach takes position behind catcher who is facing forward in a ready position. Coach tells catcher if batter is right or left handed, says 'ball' as he throws the ball up and back like a pop foul. Catcher clears mask, locates ball, moves to the ball, releases mask to an open area and makes the catch with his back to the infield. Coach can vary height and direction of the pop-up.



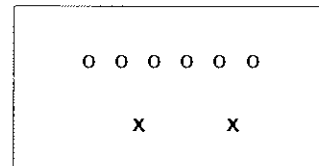
3. Blocking Pitches in the Dirt

Using a softer, cloth type ball (eg. tennis ball) and with catcher in full gear, Coach stands about 10 feet in front of catcher and throws short hops in the dirt to simulate pitches. Catcher blocks ball with body instead of blocking it rigidly. Catcher's body is in a cupped or rounded position.

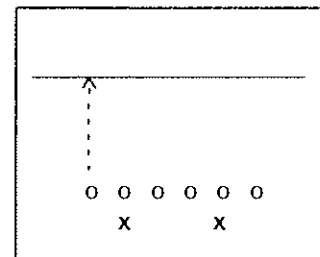


PITCHING DRILLS
1. Simulate Pitching Motion

Organize players so they can see coach and have room to move. Using pitching rubbers or marker (line in the dirt), coach leads all players through stance, shift of weight, pivot, post, thumb to thigh, ball to sky, stride, throw, snap wrist, follow through. Coach calls out each step as players go through motions. Options: Coach can isolate and work with a specific segment of the progression (eg. post, trailing leg)

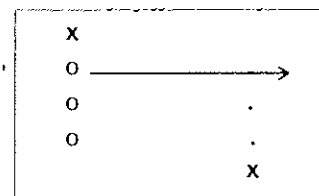

2. Pitch to a Target

Setup targets on a fence or screen, low in the strike zone. Divide the team into several groups/lines. Pace out correct pitching distance from targets. Each player has a ball. Players at front of line go through pitching motion and throw at the target. Options: Players can throw several pitches at a time. Difficulty can vary (eg. hit specific parts of the target, throw different types of pitches at the target).

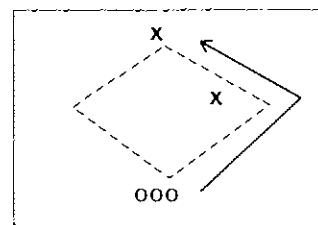


BASERUNNING DRILLS
1. Home Through First Base

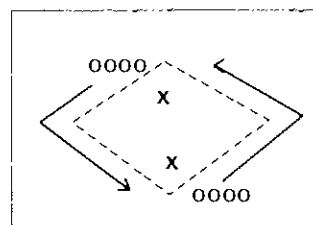
Divide team into four lines. Using bases or markers for bases, pace off appropriate distance. Four players at front of lines assume a batting stance. On coach's call, players shadow swing, run down baseline, stepping on front of base with either foot, running through base down the line several steps.


2. Home to Second Base

Players line up at home plate and practice running down the line 2/3 of the way, swing out to round base, hitting the inside of the base with either foot, continuing on to 2nd base. Options: Combine with home to first drill by having coach in infield signal a single hit (1st base) or double (round first, go to second), base hit, outfield (round first, stop after 4 - 5 steps). Can also use drill for running 2nd base to home.

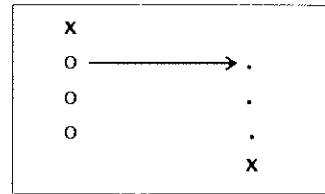

3. Baserunning Relay

Divide team into two groups, one at home plate, who try to advance all players from home to second before the others at 2nd base advance all runners to home. Players cannot leave until their teammate touches home or 2nd respectively. Option: Runners advance three or four bases at a time.



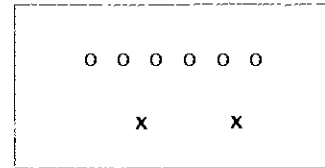
SLIDING DRILL
1. Sliding (This is a good drill for rainy days.)

Have players place gloves down on a grassy area, about 3 steps apart in a long line. Players line up with their glove about a baseline length away. On coach's call, players sprint to glove and slide and stay down in position so coaches can check position, form and distance from bag. Notes: Wet grass is great for sliding practice. Parents like knowing before a practice when sliding is being done so players can wear old pants.

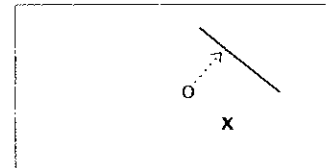


HITTING DRILLS
1. Simulate the Swing

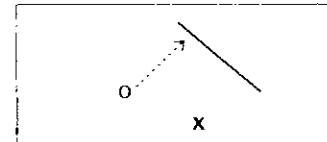
Organize players so they can see coach and are a safe distance apart. Each has a bat. Coach takes players through progression: grip, stance, power position, stride, hands follow path of ball, barrel of bat above hands, throw barrel at ball, follow through, balance. Options: Coach can highlight a specific segment of the swing (eg. power position, balance).


2. Tee Work into a Screen

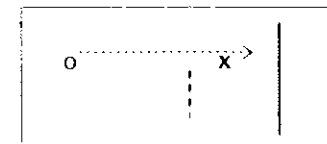
Players line up tee with middle of the strike zone. The contact area should be right off stride foot. Player practices swing, hitting hard ground balls and line drives up the middle. Options: Set tee for inside pitch and outside pitch. Use for lead hand and top hand drills. Use for big ball drills (to develop strength in hands and arms and helps to get the feet of driving through the ball)


3. Soft Toss - Side

Coach tosses ball into contact area from the side of batter. Players practicing swing and hitting skills, hit balls into a screen. Can also be used for lead hand and top hand drills.


Soft Toss - Front

Coach (behind a screen) tosses ball into contact area from in front of batter. Players practicing swing, hit line drives up the middle. Options: Coach can vary speed of toss; can be used for bunting practice .



COACHES CHECKLIST OF KEY POINTS

THROWING

- get grip
- eyes on target
- take starter step
- bring hand down
- take arm back
- bring arm through
- snap the wrist
- arm follows through

CATCHING

- eyes on ball
 - extend both arms
 - check hand position
 - cushion ball
 - catch in pocket
 - grip for throw
-

FIELDING GROUND BALLS

- relaxed position
- ready position
- move to ball on the swing
- arms extended
- seat down
- glove leg forward
- suck ball into waist
- take starter step
- grip and break hands in front of body
- follow throwing progression

FIELDING FLY BALLS

- ready position
 - eyes on batter, strike zone
 - use correct cross over step
 - run on balls of feet
 - run with glove by side
 - 'thumbs together' - forehand catch
 - 'thumbs together' - backhand catch
 - catch at shoulder level
 - grip, break hands in front of body
 - follow throwing progression
-

HITTING

- bat selection
- grip and stance
- power position and stride
- hands follow path to ball
- head down on contact
- closed front side
- barrel of bat above hands
- follow through, arms extend towards pitcher.
- balance

BUNTING

- pivot stance, feet position
 - position of hands on bat
 - extend arms shoulder level
 - eyes on ball
 - angle bat toward baseline desired
 - barrel of bat above hands
 - 'catch' the ball on the bat
 - bunt strikes only
 - balance
-

PITCHING

- position on mound
- eyes on target
- shift of weight
- pivot, post
- arm down, back: 'thumb to thigh, ball to sky'
- stride to target
- arm through
- wrist snap
- follow through to fielding position

CATCHING

- relaxed and ready positions
- distance from batter
- target and hand position
- cushion the ball
- catch in palm
- follow throwing progression
- catching pop-ups
- blocking the ball
- throwing to a base

BASERUNNING

Infield Hit

- run straight down the line
- touch front of base, either foot
- continue down line, past base

Base Hit

- run 2/3 of way down line, swing out
- round base toward 2nd with 4 - 5 steps
- face fielder, return to 1st if not safe to advance

SLIDING

- run aggressively
- throw front leg up
- tuck second leg under
- throw hands high
- stay low
- slide on bent leg, seat and back

PRACTICE SESSIONS

- start on time
- be organized, plan every practice
- review skills from last practice
- teach a new skill
- keep all players active
- be patient, be positive
- use competitive, fun drills
- finish on time

PRACTICE DRILLS

- understand and try every drill before using in practice
 - organize drills efficiently
 - vary the drills
 - modify drills for players' age, ability
 - drills should reinforce skills taught
 - each drill should be short
 - invent 'game situation' drills
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