



# Coaching Guide

**The Purpose of this guide:**

**The very first words of this coaching guide must be **THANK YOU!!****

**Thank you for deciding to be part of your child's baseball experience. Your son or daughter will NEVER forget that you coached their team. Thank you for volunteering to coach and for dedicating your time and energy to help us make this the best baseball league in the area.**

**It seems as if less and less people are volunteering to coach. There are many reasons why this is occurring and many of them are legitimate, understandable and unavoidable. However, there is one reason that we as a baseball organization can address. That reason is the uncertainty of coaching and teaching baseball.**

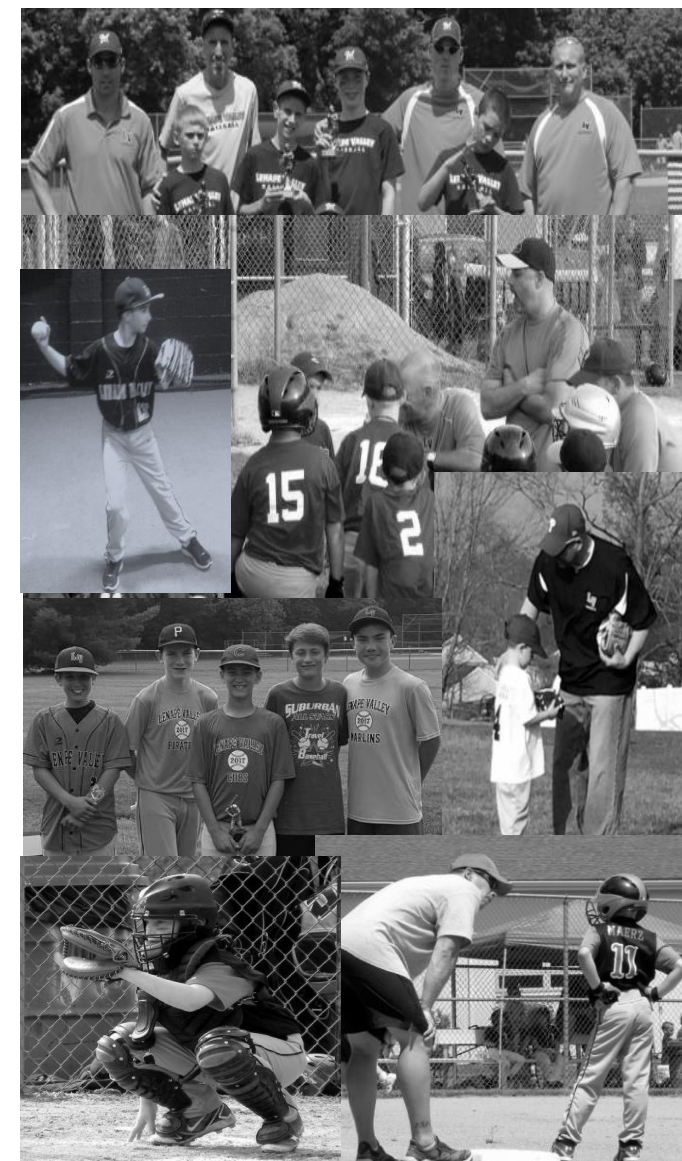
**Addressing this concern is the purpose of this coaching guide. It is our hope that after you read and use this guide your comfort level will increase and that your instructional techniques, coaching points, and practice organization will improve and become consistent throughout the league.**

**This guide is not an attempt to micro-manage you and your team. The sole intention is to assist you. Hopefully this guide will answer some of the more common questions such as; "What should the kids know and be able to do at this age?" "How do I write a practice schedule?" "Is there a drill for that?"**

**The first part of this guide can be viewed like a school curriculum guide. There are expectations for each level. Each coach should be making their best attempt to get their kids to meet the standards outlined. Do your best and ask me questions.**

**With regards to the skills and drills section. Become acquainted to what LV expects in terms of the teaching of baseball mechanics. In terms of the drills, including variations there are over 100 drills in this guide. Nobody will have the time to incorporate all of these drills. Treat this section like a cookbook. Pick and choose what you feel comfortable teaching and what you feel your team would most benefit from.**

**If you have any questions or concerns about any coaching topic. Please contact me. This includes practices, drills and skills, and parental concerns.**



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## Key coaching principles

1. **Safety first:** Make sure your drills are age appropriate and that the player has the necessary skills to play the specific position. Make sure playing surfaces are safe to play on and free of obstacles.
2. **Develop relationships: Kids will remember how you made them feel more so than what they were taught on the baseball diamond. This is how great attitudes start.** Learn their names as quickly as possible. Develop trust and remember what it was like when you were young.
3. **Make it fun and purposeful:** Baseball is fun that's why kids want to play it. Emphasizing fundamentals while keeping it fun must be the foundation to our approach. This applies to **ALL** levels of this league. People naturally seek pleasure and when they experience it they come back for more, make it fun. The same exact chemical responses occur in the brain when people see meaning and purpose in what they are doing. Make your drills and practices are meaningful to the player.
4. **Be positive:** It is scientifically proven that positive reinforcement is the most effective method to promote gains in an athlete. Focus more on what kids are doing correctly. This will help you develop stronger relationships and trust. This in turn will make kids more receptive to the corrections that you provide to them.
5. **Be a great communicator:** Work to make your instruction as **clear and as concise** as possible. The clearer and more concise the instruction the more memorable. Repeat the same coaching points all the time. Example: When a batter approaches the plate, a coach might say, "feet, knees, hands, eyes." These four words cue the batter to have a balanced stance, keep their hands back, and have a level head with their eyes on the ball. At lower levels, you might want to reference how Superman can burn a hole in objects with lasers coming from his eyes. We want kids to burn holes in the ball with their eyes.

The use of the word "freeze" is an excellent teaching tool. Train the players to stop immediately at the word freeze. This helps them understand their positioning and exactly what it is you are trying to teach. This is a much more effective method than trying to explain something that happens after 3 or 4 other things have occurred.

6. **Demonstrate, Demonstrate, Demonstrate-** Demonstrate all new skills. A picture is worth a thousand words. When a player pays close attention and observes the coach or other players they are getting "mental reps." After their mental rep. they should be provided an opportunity to imitate what they observed. This is how connections are built in the mind.
7. What is true for demonstrating skills and drills is also true for **attitude and sportsmanship**. Please keep this in mind when dealing with the other team and umpires.
8. **Be organized and efficient with your time:** Have practice plans, batting lineups, positioning all established before you arrive to the field. Whenever possible get to the field early to set up drills. When drills are set up and plans are written, it sends a powerful message to players at all levels. Organized practices are faster practices because there is less down time. Whenever possible you want to break up the team into small groups and practice specific skills in stations. Everybody should be moving- avoid lines. **I'll put it this way, the local lacrosse coaches want you to have 10 kids are standing around watching one kid field a ground ball.**
9. **Be adaptable and creative: Your best resource will always be your own creativity.** Don't be afraid to experiment and make up your own drills and try new things in practice. This is how you and the league will make progress. Remember something that is creative is new and has value.

# Player Development Pacing Guide

Practices are intended to provide players an opportunity to improve their skills and to meet the standard skill level for each division.

Practices also provide a low risk opportunity to introduce and develop the basics of approaching skills that are expected to be met at higher divisions. This is dependent upon both the player's and coach's comfort level. Additionally, higher levels skills should not be introduced until the current division standards have been met.

Game rules have been developed to accommodate the appropriate skill level of the typical player at that age group. This is to better ensure safety, developmental needs, and a smoothly run game experience. Modifications of the rules have been voted on by the LV board and come from suggestions/mandates of little league baseball and suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatrics. The game play rules per level may not be changed.

# Single A Tee Ball (4 to 6 years old)

## Quick view

<p><b>Learning the basic rules:</b> The right direction to run when the ball is hit Where the bases are and runners must touch the bases How to record outs (catch the ball in the air, throw to first, or tag the runners) Running past first base Concepts of TEAM Three outs constitute a half an inning Good Sportsmanship</p>	<p><b>Hitting:</b> Choosing the right bat size How to hold and swing a bat Batting stance Proper body mechanics in swing Batting safety! When not to swing bats and wearing batting helmets Hitting off a tee Hitting soft toss</p>
<p><b>Throwing Mechanics:</b> Turn the body so the front shoulder points toward the target Keep the throwing elbow above the shoulder Step toward the target with the non-throwing foot and release the ball</p>	<p><b>Learning Position Play:</b> If the ball is hit to a teammate let him or her field it Proper fielding position (down and ready)</p>
<p><b>Tracking:</b> Follow the ball with the eyes into the glove Whether on the ground or in the air use softer balls Use two hands to catch and field Try to catch the ball out in front of the body</p>	

**The is a developmental level therefore games are considered key times for coaching and teaching. There should be multiple coaches on the field.**



**Level:**

**Single A**

**Skill:**

**General Knowledge**

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

Upon leaving single A

Players have developed an understanding of . . .

Safety – not to throw a ball if intended receiver isn't looking and bat safety measures

The positions and their associated areas of responsibility

The concept of an out

The meaning of a run

The direction to run on the bases

The concept of being safe or out

Begin communication

Know the right direction to run when the ball is hit

Know where the bases are and that runners must touch the bases

Know how to record outs (catch the ball in the air, throw to first, or tag the runners)

Understand running past first base

Understand Concepts of TEAM

Know that Three outs constitute a half an inning

Demonstrate Good Sportsmanship

Developmental drills such as

Simon says positions

The gate keeper

Run the bases and freeze tag

Modeling of good sportsmanship and being a great teammate

The expectation is that if a runner is out then the base runner returns to their bench

Players know their positions and stay within their area.

The use of cones is recommended at the single A level early in the season and whenever necessary

Multiple coaches on the field providing meaningful and immediate coaching points.

If not hitting players are on the bench, supervised by the team mom or a designated bench coach.

0-10 scale for overall goals

0

Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

1-2-3

Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

4-6 (approaching)

There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept

7-10 (meeting)

The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept



**Level:**

**Single A**

**Skill:**

**Hitting**

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

Upon leaving single A  
Players have . . .  
Developed and executed  
proper batting technique  
Demonstrated proper  
Grip  
Demonstrated proper  
Stance  
Demonstrated a proper  
swing  
Successfully hit off a tee

Use a proper grip  
Properly swing a bat  
Get into a good Batting stance  
Execute Proper body  
mechanics in swing  
Know Batting safety  
Hit a ball off a Tee

Skills expected to be met  
  
Practice Drills  
  
Basic Tee Drills  
Stance-load-swing  
Griffey's  
  
Approaching skills  
  
As the season Progressions  
Coaches may include basic soft toss  
and front toss drills.

Please do not pitch to the players.

Players will be hitting off of  
the tee.  
  
A coach will be near the  
player providing necessary  
and immediate coaching  
points.  
  
Whenever possible the  
hitting team should have a  
first and third base coach.  
  
Coaches of the fielding team  
are expected to assist with  
baserunners at 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

0-10 scale for overall goals  
  
0  
  
Player has never  
demonstrated the skill or  
understanding of the concept  
  
1-2-3  
  
Player has rarely  
demonstrated the skill or  
understanding of the concept  
  
4-6 (approaching)  
  
There is evidence that the  
player is acquiring the skill or  
understanding of the concept  
  
7-10 (meeting)  
  
The player consistently  
demonstrates the skill or  
understanding of the concept

**Approaching Skills:**

Players can hit soft and  
front toss balls





Level:

Single A

Skill:

Fielding and Tracking the Ball

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Player Development Pacing Guide

Overall Goal:

Skills: Player will be able to:

Developmental methods and drills:

Game play expectations

Player Evaluation

Upon leaving single A

Throwing Mechanics:

Practice:

Players are expected to know the positions.

0-10 scale for overall goals

Players have ...

Introduce Power T

Catch the ball to the glove side and in front of the body

0

developed athletic stances

Turn the body so the front shoulder points toward the target

Use single A throwing and fielding drills

Each player is expected to play all positions during the season (the exception being pitcher and first base)

Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

developed attention span

Keep the throwing elbow above the shoulder

At times it may be appropriate to only use parts of single A drills

To play first base players are expected to be able to track the ball and use their glove to protect themselves

1-2-3

Learned to keep eye on the ball

Step toward the target with the non-throwing foot and release the ball

Additionally for more advanced players begin incorporating AA drills or parts of Double A drills.

Pitcher – players who are engaged

Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

Demonstrated proper throwing, fielding techniques

Pay attention to the game

Proper throwing technique is the top priority.

The use of cones on the field is acceptable and advisable early in season

4-6 (approaching)

demonstrated knowledge of positions

Get into an athletic position with glove out in front and palm showing

Multiple coaches are expected to be on the field giving quick and immediate coaching points

There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept

7-10 (meeting)

**Approaching skills:**  
Catching fly balls

Use Alligator fielding technique

Catch the ball to the glove side and in front of the body

**Table of Contents**

## Double A: Machine Pitch (7 to 8 years old)

### Quick view

<b>Learning the basic rules:</b> Concept of TEAM Force outs Tagging up What is a double play Balls and Strikes Good Sportsmanship 3 outs per inning and run scores	<b>Catching and Fielding:</b> Thrown and hit balls Fingers up versus fingers down See the glove and the ball Use two hands Forehands and backhands Introduce the underhand flip First-base fundamentals Cross over and drop steps
<b>Base running:</b> When you don't have to run Not running into or past teammates on the base paths Always keep running after ball is hit with two outs	<b>Hitting:</b> Choosing the right bat Proper grip and hitting mechanics Hitting machine pitched balls Introduce drill work (tee, soft toss, short toss)
<b>Throwing Mechanics:</b> Introduce the four-seam grip Point the front shoulder, step and throw Introduce the concept of generating momentum to the target and following the throw.	<b>Learning Position Play:</b> Learn the positions and the areas each player should cover Cover the nearest base when the ball is not hit to you. Basics of cut-offs and relays Outfielders backing up infielders

**The is a developmental level therefore games are considered key times for coaching and teaching. There should be multiple coaches on the field.**



Level:

Double A

Skill:

General Knowledge

Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide

Overall Goal:	Skills: Player will be able to:	Developmental methods and drills:	Game play expectations	Player Evaluation
<p>Upon leaving Double A Players have ...</p> <p>Developed an understanding about</p> <p>Scoring runs Advancing bases Force outs and tag outs 3 outs per inning Winning and losing</p> <p><b>Approaching:</b></p> <p>Developed great communication skills</p> <p>Developed a constant inner voice – telling themselves what to do before every pitch</p>	<p>Demonstrate the concept of TEAM Good Sportsmanship</p> <p>Demonstrate their understanding of a force out at the proper base.</p> <p>Properly tag up on a fly ball</p> <p>Know what a double play is</p> <p>Know the Strike zone</p> <p>Understand that there is 3 outs per inning</p> <p>Understand that the winner of the game is the team that scores the most runs</p> <p>Grasp the concept of an extra base hit</p> <p>Backing up and relays</p>	<p>Of all of the steps a player is going to take from single A to double A, general knowledge of the game is the biggest step.</p> <p>A portion of every Practice should be designated for game situations.</p> <p>When doing station work have one station be game situations</p> <p>Play a lot (3-2 count games)</p>	<p>Although this is a level up from single A</p> <p>It is a developmental league in the strictest sense of the term.</p> <p>Therefore once again there should be multiple coaches on the field providing <u>immediate</u> feedback</p> <p>Coach points however should be limited to pre-pitch and post pitch and never during the play.</p> <p>There is nothing wrong with a coach reminding the players where the play is (pre-pitch) As the season progresses the players must begin communicating</p> <p><b>Table of Contents</b></p>	<p>0-10 scale for overall goals</p> <p>0</p> <p>Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept</p> <p>1-2-3</p> <p>Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept</p> <p>4-6 (approaching)</p> <p>There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept</p> <p>7-10 (meeting)</p> <p>The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept</p>



Level:

Double A

Skill:

Hitting

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

Upon leaving Double A

Players have . . .

Continued to make progress in terms of grip, stance, and swing mechanics

Hit a moving ball that varies slightly in level and location

**Approaching:**

**Bunting skills**

Demonstrate proper batting mechanics

Hit a moving ball that does not vary significantly in level and location

Develop timing in stance-load-swing

The use of the many drills in this guide

Tee work  
Soft toss work  
Front toss work  
Pitching machine work

Every practice should include hitting in some fashion

**In terms of bunting:**

**This skill can be introduced and practiced in a station**

The AA level is using pitching machines and Tees

Each game will use the pitching machine in accordance with suggestions provided by JUGGS inc.

The player will have 5 swings unless the 5<sup>th</sup> swing is a foul ball. If the ball has still not been hit into play the player will use the batting tee.

**Notice: In the rare event that the machines are not operating the following protocol is expected to be put in place:**

1. Coach pitch – only coaches who can consistently throw pitches that have little arc will pitch. If there is not a coach on the field that can do so then . . .

2. Front toss

**Under no circumstances will kids pitch**

0-10 scale for overall goals

0

Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

1-2-3

Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

4-6 (approaching)

There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept

7-10 (meeting)

The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept



Level:

Double A

Skill:

Fielding and Catching

Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide

Overall Goal:

Skills: Player will be able to:

Developmental methods and drills:

Game play expectations

Player Evaluation

Upon leaving Double A

Catch Thrown and hit balls

Utilize all AA fielding drills

There will only be nine fielders on the field.

0-10 scale for overall goals

Players have . . .

Catch the ball using a backhand catch

With an emphasis on infield drills.

0

Learned how to properly throw, catch, and field

Know when to put glove fingers up versus fingers down

Begin incorporating some AAA drills or parts of AAA drills as the season progresses.

**For safety purposes, it is strongly advised that only players who are meeting the catching goal are eligible to play first base.**

Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

Learned how to move fluidly in all directions

See the ball into glove

Players cannot be asked to catch the ball enough at this level.

The expectation is that players will learn to proper base to throw to and the understand the difference between force outs vs tag outs.

1-2-3

Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

**Approaching skills:**

Use Forehands

Catching is a top priority at this level.

Outfielders must back up

4-6 (approaching)

There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept

Use their backhand

Move into position to field the ball

Relays are expected

7-10 (meeting)

The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept

Use a drop step at a 45 degree angle

Perform an underhand flip

Demonstrate First-base fundamentals

Use a Cross over step



Level:

Double A

Skill:

Throwing and Pitching

Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide

Overall Goal:

Skills: Player will be able to:

Developmental methods and drills:

Game play expectations

Player Evaluation

Upon leaving Double A

Players have . . .

Built off the power T.

Continued to improve both upper body and lower body throwing mechanics

**Approaching:**  
Step through to target

**Approaching in terms of pitching:**

Stretch  
Balance  
Power T

Use a four-seam grip (depending on hand size)

Point the front shoulder, step and throw

generating momentum to the target and following the throw.

Every practice should incorporate stand alone throwing drills and throwing sessions.

Players will be throwing more this year and it is imperative that they learn the proper mechanics

Equally important is that when not doing a stand-alone throwing drill proper throwing technique is stress- it is never something to ignore.

In terms of pitching:

Pitching development at the double A level should be limited to perfecting throwing techniques and introducing balance drills from the stretch.

**No player is to pitch to another player at this level**

Continue to coach throwing throughout the game.

**Under absolutely zero circumstances will a player be allowed to pitch at this level during the game.**

Coaches must begin to consider throwing ability when positioning their players. Players with weaker arms should play 2<sup>nd</sup> base, centerfield, left field, or first base.

0-10 scale for overall goals

0

Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

1-2-3

Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

4-6 (approaching)

There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept

7-10 (meeting)

The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept



**Level:**

**Double A**

**Skill:**

**Baserunning**

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

**Upon leaving Double A**

**Players know . . .**

**When they do and don't need to run**

**Baserunning rules**

**Proper place to step on base**

**To watch their coaches**

**How to slide properly**

**Approach Skills:**

**Leads**

**Stealing**

**Pop up slide**

**Determine when they need to and when they don't need to run**

**Demonstrate that they know the rules of baserunning i.e. base path, not passing lead runner**

**Demonstrate that they always run on contact with two outs.**

**Properly know how to touch the bases**

**Properly execute a bent leg slide**

**Utilize base running drills as a method of warming up and conditioning**

**Or as a fun ending activity**

**Make coaching points during scrimmages**

**And feel free to have stand alone station activities**

**The expectation is that coaches on first and third base and the coach operating the pitching machine will provide reminders and coaching points throughout the game.**

**0-10 scale for overall goals**

**0**

**Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept**

**1-2-3**

**Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept**

**4-6 (approaching)**

**There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept**

**7-10 (meeting)**

**The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept**

## Triple A: Player Pitch (9-10 years old)

## Majors: Player Pitch (11-12 years old)

### Quick view

<b>Learning the basic rules:</b> Infield fly (majors only) Balks (majors only)	<b>Hitting:</b> Bunting Drill Work: Tee, Soft toss variations Batting Practice vs. live pitching Bunting
<b>Base Running:</b> Leads (majors only) Stealing Extra-base hits Tagging up and going half way Proper Sliding techniques	<b>Learning Team Fundamentals:</b> Cut-offs and relays Basic bunt defenses Basic first and third situations Double plays Defending the steal Infield and outfield communication and priorities Backing up bases
<b>Pitching &amp; Throwing Mechanics:</b> Pitching mechanics Wind-up versus pitching from the stretch Four seam grip Shuffle, throw, follow Pitcher covering first	
<b>Fielding:</b> Backhands and when to use them Pitcher covering first Infield communication	





**Level:**

**Triple A and Majors**

**Skill:**

**General Knowledge**

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

Upon leaving Triple A  
Players know . .  
  
Almost all of the rules of  
baseball  
  
Upon leaving majors  
Players know . .  
  
Infield fly (majors only)  
Balks (majors only)

Demonstrate excellent  
sportsmanship  
  
Demonstrate great team play  
  
Build off their knowledge of  
previous levels  
  
Majors only:  
  
Understand the infield fly rule  
Understand what is or isn't a  
balk

Rules and general knowledge of the  
game should be stressed during  
sessions and particularly during game  
simulated drills.  
  
Coach team communication  
Coach player self talk must

Coaches will not be on the  
field at the AAA and Majors  
levels  
  
Continuing to stress team  
communication is one of the  
most important aspects of  
this level.

0-10 scale for overall goals  
  
0  
  
Player has never  
demonstrated the skill or  
understanding of the concept  
  
1-2-3  
  
Player has rarely  
demonstrated the skill or  
understanding of the concept  
  
4-6 (approaching)  
  
There is evidence that the  
player is acquiring the skill or  
understanding of the concept  
  
7-10 (meeting)  
  
The player consistently  
demonstrates the skill or  
understanding of the concept



**Level:**

**Triple A and Majors**

**Skill:**

**Hitting**

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

**Hit off of live pitching  
Properly bunt**

**Hit off of live player pitching**  
**Understand the strike zone**  
**Take a mental approach to batting**  
**Adjust swing to varying pitch speeds and pitch location**  
**Properly bunt the baseball**

**Continue with work on the Tee, soft toss, front toss.**  
**Use more live pitching drills**  
**Bunting is addressed in practice**

**Full player pitch**  
**Strike outs**  
**Bunting**

**0-10 scale for overall goals**  
**0**  
**Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept**  
**1-2-3**  
**Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept**  
**4-6 (approaching)**  
**There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept**  
**7-10 (meeting)**  
**The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept**



Level:  
Skill:

Triple A and Majors

Fielding and catching

Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide

Overall Goal:	Skills: Player will be able to:	Developmental methods and drills:	Game play expectations	Player Evaluation
<p>Upon leaving Triple A and the majors</p> <p>Players know . . .</p> <p>Their responsibilities on every play regardless of whether the ball is hit to them or not.</p> <p>This includes, the proper base to throw to, backing up responsibilities and correctly aligning relays</p>	<p>Use a backhand</p> <p>Track a baseball in the outfield including dropping on 45 degrees and adjusting on the run</p> <p>Understand pitcher’s fielding assignments including when the pitcher covers first</p> <p>Infield communication</p> <p>Understand and execute Backing up responsibilities</p> <p>Understand their role on every play even if the ball isn’t hit to them</p> <p>Understand bunt defense</p> <p>Understand defense against the steal and lead</p>	<p>AAA and up fielding drills</p> <p>Players should begin working in groups to understand their responsibilities in different types of scenarios</p> <p>Game situation with coach hit fielding practice</p> <p>Play (3-2) game</p> <p>Coaches should always be teaching the mental game.</p> <p>Continue to have players communicate with their teammates and themselves.</p> <p><b>Develop “If-then” talk</b></p> <p>“If the ball is hit to me in the air, then I am catching it and throwing to second, if the ball is hit to me on the ground, then I am throwing to third”</p>	<p>With the exception of some base stealing restrictions at the triple A level- the game of baseball is being played</p> <p>No restrictions at the major level.</p> <p>Like yards in football, there is a correlation between teams that win and total bases.</p> <p>Defenses should strive to limit the amount of total bases the opponent accumulates.</p>	<p>0-10 scale for overall goals</p> <p>0</p> <p>Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept</p> <p>1-2-3</p> <p>Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept</p> <p>4-6 (approaching)</p> <p>There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept</p> <p>7-10 (meeting)</p> <p>The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept</p>



**Level:**

**Triple A and Majors**

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Skill:**

**Pitching and throwing**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

**Upon leaving Triple A and the majors**

**Players know . . .**

**Proper throwing mechanics**

**Proper pitching mechanics**

Continue to develop excellent throwing mechanics

Naturally find and use a 4 seam grip

Use a crow hop in the outfield

Demonstrate proper Pitching mechanics

Both AAA and majors

Know when to use the Wind-up versus pitching from the stretch

Throw strikes

Majors

Understand the balk rule and how to not commit a balk

Properly hold a runner on base

Pick off moves

Understand how to make a batter off-balance using change of speeds and change of location

**All throwing drills**

Long toss

Crow hop drills

**Pitching Drills**

Separate pitchers out when you work throwing

Or put all pitchers in a group and have a pitching station in station work

Don't over work your pitchers- there are plenty of things they can work on without overusing their arms.

Work on pick off moves and holding runners

**Pitching**

**By rule we must be monitoring and reporting pitch counts**

**0-10 scale for overall goals**

**0**

Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

**1-2-3**

Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

**4-6 (approaching)**

There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept

**7-10 (meeting)**

The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept

**Approaching**

**Majors:  
Getting batters off balance**

**Fastball and changing speeds and location**

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**Level:**

**Triple A and Majors**

**Skill:**

**Base running**

**Lenape Valley Baseball  
Player Development Pacing Guide**

**Overall Goal:**

**Skills: Player will be able to:**

**Developmental methods and drills:**

**Game play expectations**

**Player Evaluation**

Upon leaving Triple A and the majors

Read and understand base coach jesters

Drills such as the 5 in 1 base running drill are a great way to warm up the team and teach at the same time

Continue to coach the mental game

0-10 scale for overall goals

Players know . . .

Properly steal on a catcher (AAA)

Base running drills a effective methods to teach techniques

We expect a lot of help from the third and first base coaches

0  
Player has never demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

Proper baserunning skills and the proper mental approach to the game

Properly touch the bases on Extra-base hits

Game situation from an offensive perspective should be used

Aggressive base running

1-2-3  
Player has rarely demonstrated the skill or understanding of the concept

Know when to Tag up and when to go half way

If you are running a (3-2) game or game situation drill it is important that the runners are being coached as well.

4-6 (approaching)

Execute Proper Sliding techniques

Develop the inner voice within the baserunner

There is evidence that the player is acquiring the skill or understanding of the concept

Properly execute a Lead, secondary lead and how to get back to the base (majors only)

**“If – then”**

7-10 (meeting)

Properly Steal on the pitcher (majors only)

“if the ball is hit in front of me, then I won’t advance to third” “if the ball is hit behind me, then I advance to third”

The player consistently demonstrates the skill or understanding of the concept

# Juniors (13-15) Field 60/90

## Quick view

### **Throwing Mechanics and Pitching:**

Emphasis on generating momentum toward the target and following the throw.  
Curveballs/breaking balls  
Change-ups  
Pitching Mechanics and using the body effectively  
Pick-off mechanics  
Drill Work  
-Chair drills  
-Towel drills  
Introduction to long toss

### **Base Running:**

First and third situations  
Steal Breaks  
Delayed Steals  
Reading situations and reacting to them

### **Fielding:**

Generating Momentum back toward the target on throws when necessary  
Crow hop, Cross over and drop steps  
Backhands and when to use them  
Double play depth  
Pitcher covering first  
Infield communication

### **Hitting:**

Introduce situational hitting  
-Inside-out swing  
-hitting behind runners  
-hit and run  
-productive outs  
  
Sacrifice bunting versus bunting for a hit  
Understanding the count

### **Learning Team Fundamentals:**

Pick-off plays  
Full bunt defenses  
Full first and third defenses  
Pop-up and fly ball priorities  
Double plays and underhand flips

# Seniors (16-18) Field 60/90

## Quick view

### **Throwing Mechanics and Pitching:**

Long toss  
Balance drills  
Continue mastering breaking and off speed pitches  
Throwing for accuracy  
Generating momentum toward the target and following the throw  
Pickoff mechanics

### **Base Running:**

One-way leads  
Going on the first move  
Reacting to batted balls  
Tag-up situations  
Third-base rules  
No out, one out and two out rules

### **Fielding:**

Understanding and adapting to playing conditions  
Fence drill (outfield)  
Crow hops Crossover and drop steps  
Do or die plays at the plate  
Preventing runners from taking extra bases  
Communicating between pitches

### **Hitting:**

Mental aspects  
-Hitter's count versus pitcher's count  
Two strike hitting  
Aggressive versus defensive swings  
Situational hitting  
Productive outs  
Advanced game situations and defenses

### **Learning Team Fundamentals:**

Cut-offs and relays  
Advanced pickoff plays and when to use them  
Double plays  
Advanced game situations and defense

# Practice Plans



# Practice Plans

1. Have your plans written up prior to practice. Feel free to use one of the plans provided.
2. Have your drills set up prior to practice.
3. Get into a routine throughout the season.
4. Make your practices purposeful and fun
5. Keep kids moving and engaged (avoid lines!!!)
6. Whenever possible have multiple stations
7. Recruit as parents to coach.
8. Get a feel for your kids – be prepared to adapt your instruction on the fly
9. Give specific coaching points but avoid long winded explanation. **Demonstrate, Demonstrate, Demonstrate**
10. Have fun!!!!!!

# Practice Plan

## Ages 4- 6 (single A)

Practices should not run more than 1 hour for this age group

Time	Activity
5 mins	Warm up  dynamic flex base running- running through first base team game or competition
30 mins.	Station activity (number of groups depends on number of coaches) coaches can travel with groups or just man the station ideally you would have 3 groups (7-10 minutes) per station minutes per station  Throwing – T position throw, standing T, T then Load (you can make this into game using targets) Hitting- Tee work and soft toss drills other group members can field Fielding- Funnel, Shuffle, gate keeper drill
20 minutes	Scrimmage (with significant coaching) or new stations
5 minutes	Run the bases- race , 4 base chase, or dizzy bat race

This is a basic format to follow- Games, station/drill work can be replaced with age appropriate drills. Your station work can emphasis a skill or an aspect of the game

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding. [Table of Contents](#)**

# Practice Plan

## Ages 7-8 (Double A) practice 1

Practice time: 1 hour- 1 hour and 20 minutes

Time:	Activity:
5 min.	Dynamic Flex
5 min.	base running (through first), home to first, first to second
10 min.	Throwing (with teammates) - one knee drill (5 minutes) - Power T position (5minutes)  as season progresses add in new drills
30 min	Stations (3 groups, 10 minutes each, or 4 groups 7 min. each)  - hitting (tee work, soft toss, ½ ball work, pitching machine work) - infield and throwing (ground ball work, rolled ground balls, throwing after catch) - Outfield work (thrown fly balls) as season progresses add in new outfield drills
10 minutes	fielding situation work- force outs, force at 2 <sup>nd</sup> base coverage (if possible set up 2 infields. 1 in outfield using cones or other bases) backing up the play drill
20 min.	scrimmage (either with machine or soft toss game) or front toss with L screen
5 min.	Base path race (home to second vs second to home)

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.**

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# Practice Plan

## Ages 7-8 (Double A) practice 2

Practice time: 1 hour- 1 hour and 20 minutes

Time:	Activity:
5 min.	Dynamic Flex
5 min.	base running (through first), home to first, first to second
15 min.	Throwing (with teammates) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- one knee drill (5 minutes)</li><li>- Power T position (5minutes)</li><li>- Catching coach's throws with 2 hands</li></ul>
30 min	Stations (3 groups, 10 minutes each, or 4 groups 7 min. each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- hitting (tee work, soft toss, ½ ball work, pitching machine work)</li><li>- infield and throwing (ground ball work, rolled ground balls, throwing after catch)</li><li>- Outfield work (thrown fall balls) as season progresses add in new outfield drills</li></ul>
25 min.	Scrimmage with machine or front/soft toss game To speed game up you can play (3-2 game) all batters start with a 3-2 count
	-

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.**

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# Practice Plan

## Ages 7-8 (Double A) practice 3

Practice time: 1 hour- 1 hour and 20 minutes

Time:	Activity:
5 min.	Dynamic Flex
5 min.	base running (through first), home to first, first to second
10 min.	Throwing (with teammates) - one knee drill (5 minutes) - Power T position (5minutes) - other throwing drills
27 min	Hitting Stations (3 groups 10 min. each)  Tee work (tennis balls against fence) Soft toss (with either ½ tennis balls or mini golf wiffle balls) Either machine work, coaching pitch BP, or L screen front toss
27 min.	Fielding drills (3 groups, 10 min. each) <b>Game situation</b> ½ field work (1 <sup>st</sup> base, 2 <sup>nd</sup> base, SS) force at first, force at 2 <sup>nd</sup> hop variations (3 <sup>rd</sup> base area) Outfield – playing fly balls and ground balls
5 min.	Base path race

You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.

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**Practice Plan**  
**Ages 9-10 (Triple A) practice 1**

**Practice time: 90 minutes**

<b>Time:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>
<b>5 min.</b>	<b>Dynamic Flex</b>
<b>5 min.</b>	<b>base running (through first), home to first, first to second or 5 in 1 drill</b>
<b>10 min.</b>	<b>Throwing and Catching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- one knee</li><li>- Power T position with a load position</li><li>- Field- step through- to power T</li></ul>
<b>15 min.</b>	<b>Team fundamentals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cutoff drills and relays, first and third offense and defense</li><li>- game situations, infield outfield communication</li></ul> <p><b>If you have enough players – set up two infields</b></p> <p><b>or have a coach work with one side of the field and the other coach the other side of the field</b></p>
<b>30 min.</b>	<b>Stations (3 groups – 10 minutes or 4 groups 7 minutes)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- hitting- tee, soft, front (any hitting drill)</li><li>- infield and throwing – ground balls</li><li>- outfield ( fly balls and throwing)</li></ul>
<b>25 min.</b>	<b>2 stations - hitting and baserunning work                      and pitching work with catchers</b>

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.      [Table of Contents](#)**

Practice time: 90 minutes

## Practice Plan Ages 9-10 (Triple A) practice 2

Time:	Activity:
5 min.	Dynamic Flex
5 min.	base running (through first), home to first, first to second
10 min.	<b>Throwing and Catching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- review one knee drill and power T position</li><li>- emphasis proper mechanics and accuracy</li><li>- focus on catching ball out in front of the body with two hands</li><li>- any throwing drill can be substituted</li><li>- pitchers can work on throwing and pitching drills</li></ul>
15 min.	<b>Team fundamentals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cutoff drills and relays, first and third offense and defense</li><li>- game situations, infield outfield communication</li><li>- four corners and variations</li><li>- If you have enough players – set up two infields or have a coach work with one side of the field and the other coach the other side of the field</li></ul>
30 min.	<b>Stations</b> Hitting drills infield throwing drills Outfield drills
25 min	3-2 game (play a game where the batters always start with a 3-2 count) this can be front toss or BP pitching situations

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.**

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# Practice Plan

## Ages 9-10 (Triple A) practice 3

Practice time: 90 minutes

Time:	Activity:
5 min.	Dynamic Flex
5 min.	base running (through first), home to first, first to second
10 min.	Throwing and catching Knee, power T, step behind field and throw any throwing drill or partner ground ball work  Pitchers can use this time to work on drills
25 min.	Team drills- cutoffs/relays, mini diamond/ four corners  or specific skills stations (choose one aspect to emphasis) (7 minutes per drill) hitting- tee work, front toss work, BP infield- ground balls and throwing – to first, 2 <sup>nd</sup> /SS coverage, other infield drills outfield- pattern reading- cutoff relays, backing up drills
25 min.	other stations of skills not emphasized in previous session
20 min.	Controlled game – or game situations

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.**

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# Practice Plan

## Majors practice 1

Practice time: 2 hours

Time:	Activity:
10 min.	Dynamic Flex and stretch
10 min	Throwing - one knee drill - power position (early in season) - any throwing or pitching drills - emphasis long toss throughout season
20 min.	Infield and outfield work - rolled ground balls, throwing after catch, hitting ground balls - thrown fly balls, fungo to outfield - for outfield always have a cutoff gut
20 min.	Team fundamentals choose from cutoffs and relays, pickoff plays, first and third offense and defense, bunting and bunt defense, defending steals, proper fielding rotation and backing up responsibilities
40 minutes	Hitting stations (10 minutes per station) Soft toss drills, tee work drills , front toss drills , BP drills  Infielders can get more work and pitchers and catcher can work together
20 min.	Situational baseball (emphasis on pitcher's covering first base.)

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.**

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# Practice Plan

## Majors practice 2

Practice time: 2 hours

Time:	Activity:
5 min.	Dynamic Flex
5 min.	base running (through first), home to first, first to second
10 min.	Throwing and catching Knee, power T, step through field and throw any throwing drill or partner ground ball work  Pitchers can use this time to work on drills
40 minutes	Hitting stations (10 minutes per station) Soft toss drills, tee work drills , front toss drills , BP drills
15 min.	Infield and outfield work - rolled ground balls, throwing after catch, hitting ground balls - thrown fly balls, fungo to outfield - for outfield always have a cutoff gut
15 min.	Team fundamentals choose from cutoffs and relays, pickoff plays, first and third offense and defense, bunting and bunt defense, defending steals, proper fielding rotation and backing up responsibilities
30 min.	Controlled game – or game situations or 3-2 game

**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.**

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# Practice Plan

## Majors practice 3

Practice time: 2 hours

Time:	Activity:
5 min.	Dynamic Flex
5 min.	base running (through first), home to first, first to second
10 min.	Throwing and Catching Pitchers can work on pitching drills
20 min.	Infield and Outfield work - 4 corners backhand drills, fielding ground balls- fungo pass patterns, fence drill, crow hops
20 min	Team fundamentals Choose from cutoffs and relays, pickoff plays, first and third offense and defense bunting work, base stealing and defending the steal (pick-off plays)
60 minutes	Game situation, controlled scrimmage, soft toss game, 3-2 game front toss
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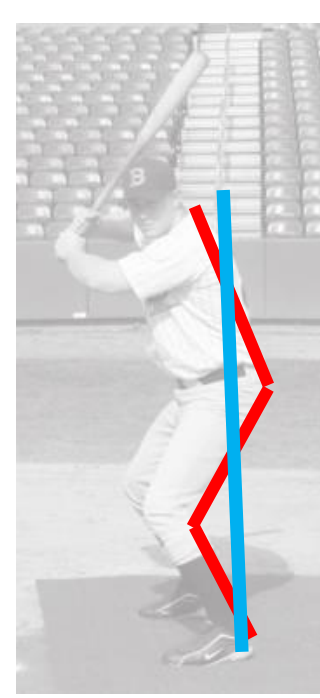
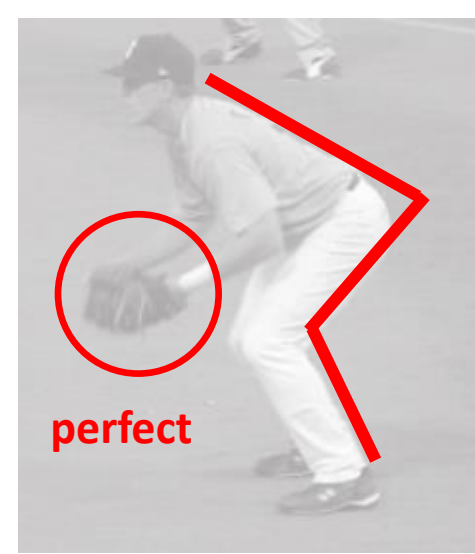
**You can also utilize pre and post practice time to work on extra hitting or fielding.**

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# Skills and Drills

# Power Athletic position:

- Feet slightly wider than shoulders
- Weight on the balls of the feet
- Toes pointed straight ahead
- Knees bent and over inside of foot

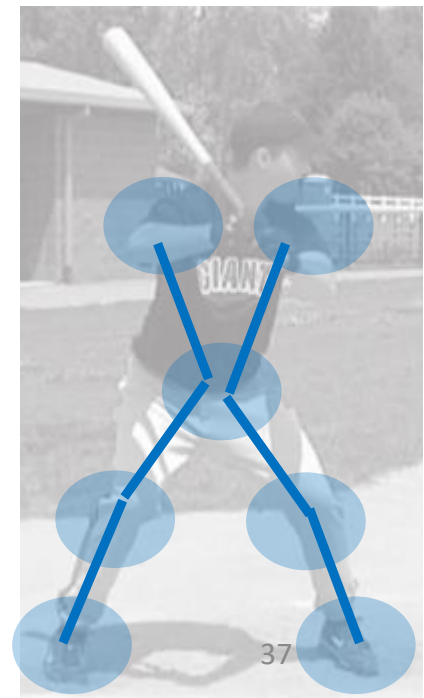
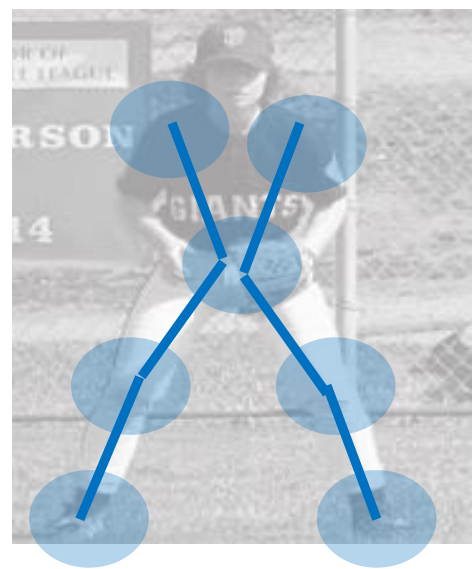


**In batting**  
Shoulder, base of back, and heel should be aligned- strong power base

Chest over thighs with shoulders back (from a front view we want to see the name of the sponsor on the players chest but not the player's belly button)

**Infielders should have glove down and ready with palm showing**

Outfielders should be a little more upright for vision.



Notice the similarities between all of the stances, regardless of what the player is doing.

<b>Dynamic Flex (active stretch)</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>AAA</b>	<b>Majors (+)</b>
Run the bases	yes	yes	no	no
Walking with arm circles 2x	yes	yes	yes	yes
Shuffle with 2 hand touch (palms up) 2x	yes	yes	yes	yes
3 step pick up. Alternate glove and hand 2x	yes	yes	yes	yes
Side take-off sprint 1x	no	yes	yes	yes
45 degree 1x	no	yes	yes	yes
45 degree backward zig zag	no	no	yes	yes
<b>Static stretch</b>				
Shoulder	no	no	yes	yes
Wrist and forearms	no	no	yes	yes



# Hitting

## Hitting main points:

1. When selecting a bat, pick a bat that feels right and that is light enough to generate good bat speed.
2. A player's stance should be considered their comfortable starting point. But there are some fundamentals that should be stressed to young hitters.

Stance-starting point; need vision, balance, and plate coverage.

Feet- slightly wider than shoulders and toes pointed toward the plate

Knees- bent and inside the feet

Torso- slight inward lean- no round backs!!!!

Hands- hands even with back armpit

Head- level head and in a position where the batter's back eye can see the pitcher.

### 3. Proper bat grip.

- a. Most importantly, the bat should be gripped with the fingers and pads at the base of the fingers. Not deep in the palm. (consistent amongst all hitting coaches) **(fig. A)**
- b. Next, Adopt a comfortable grip. Treat the bat like a you are holding a bird- if you grip it too tight you will crush it If you grip it too loosely you won't have any control.
- c. The back of the bottom hand should point toward the pitchers, and the back of the top hand behind.
- d. Knuckles- line up the **door knockers (fig. b)**  
The door knockers are lined up if a player extends their pointers fingers and they point in same direction **(fig. c)** This grip forces the elbows down and allows the player better use their forearms and wrist and a quicker swing.



fig. A



fig. b



fig. c



## Hitting main points:

### 4. Load

- a. Shift weight slightly back (to back foot/hip)
- b. Bring both hands slightly back (about a ball or two balls behind back shoulder).
- c. Keep hands in front of the vertical toe line. Do not rotate shoulders!!!

### 5. Stride- short and soft toward the pitcher or pick up and place foot back down

6. Swing-short and quick, using hands, wrists and forearms. Head down, rotating at the hips as back foot “crushes the bug.” The swing should have a slight upward path.

7. Follow-through-one or two hands; takes care of itself if all elements of swing are in place.

## Note:

**It is important at all levels to have a batter’s box**

**For single A it is an absolute must. This will save the coach a considerable amount of time. Kids process what they can see faster than what they hear.**

**If there is no way to have a batter box, make marks in the dirt, use field paint to establish their proper footing, or sprinkle flour on the ground.**

# Fundamentals of the Batting Stance

**Front Shoulder Closed**

**Relaxed front elbow**

**Knees slightly bent**

**Front foot closed**



**Feet parallel and slightly wider than shoulders**

**Head and eyes pointed toward pitcher**

**Hands back and even with armpit  
Relaxed back elbow**

**60% of weight on back foot  
(after load)**

# The Load

**The load** provides the coiled tension that is essential to an explosive, powerful baseball swing.

The load is the energy behind an explosive and powerful swing. What is the “load” of a baseball swing?” In baseball batting, the load is where we gather our momentum to our backside to prepare for an explosive swing. Sink your weight into your back hip.

It’s like a snake coiling to strike, or pulling back the string of a bow and arrow.

Why is the load important? Use it as a timing device and a continuation of your rhythm. Getting your weight back helps you wait to explode on the ball.

**Timing.** As the pitcher starts his load (leg lift) you want to start your weight shift by moving a portion of your weight on your back foot.

## Pre Load



**Weight 50-50 front foot/back foot**

## Load



**Hands come back (slightly)  
Hands same level  
Front shoulder to chin  
Weight 60% on back foot  
Back knee stays inside back foot**

# The Stride and Swing



**Load**



**Stride/Swing**



**Swing**



**Swing**



**Follow through**

Chin	front shoulder	down	down	down to back shoulder	"
Shoulders	level	level	level	level	level
Back hip	back hip to ump (no strip)	coming through	comes with swing	back hip to the plate (see the pant stripe)	
Feet	toes to the plate	slight front foot stride	back foot turns (squashes bug) this allows for back hip rotation		
Feet width	slightly wider than shoulders (power position) notice this doesn't change during the entire swing – don't over-stride				
Knees	inside feet				

In practice you do not need to have kids take 50 swings. Focus on quality and swing with a purpose. Over swinging tires out players and breaks down proper technique. For this reason, batting practice in any form should never be used as a conditioning drill.

We will use:

**Tees-** stationary ball to work on mechanics (absolutely all levels should be working with Tees)

**Soft toss-** working on mechanics and training eyes (these drills can be introduced at single A and performed at all levels)

**Front toss (underhand toss from front with an L screen)** these will end up being some of your most meaningful drills

**Machine pitch** (all levels but AA gets priority if a schedule conflict arises)

**Live pitching (either player or coach)** Coaches and players may begin pitching to team at triple A level.

**All drills must replicate some aspect of the game.**

**Additionally all drills must emphasize the entire body and not just the hands.**

**Each Swing must be done with a purpose.**

**Please avoid drills that incorporate rapid fire pitches and swings.**

**Drill: Tee Work**

**Level: All**

### **Objective**

A great tool to work on all aspects of the swing. For younger levels, work on stance, load, stride, swing

### **Setup**

Batting tee, bucket of balls, net, screen or fence to hit into

### **Execution**

Set up tee in front of the middle of the plate. Players adjust the batting tee to a height that makes them swing level to get the barrel of the bat to the ball. Players hit into the screen or a net with a target. If you don't have a net, plastic balls, tennis balls, or soft rubber balls can be hit into a fence. Never hit baseballs into a fence.

### **Coaching Keys**

See hitting main points

Players should work to hit the inside and top half of the baseball.

**Drill: Sniper**

**Level: All**

**Note: Avoid any hitting drill that forces players to swing down at the pitch. For example avoid two tee drills that place the back tee higher front tee. The emphasis should be getting the batter to swing on the same plane as the ball.**

### Stance-Load-swing

**Purpose:** To breakdown each component of the swing

Start players in proper stance

Instruct player to load (weight shift back, bat back) chin should be on front shoulder

Short step while keeping hands back

Swing- short stride with head- eyes on the ball. Chin should finish on back shoulder

**Teaching Proper load on a Tee** Note: In addition to the two drills listed below you can also use Rocker and Boxer movements (see throwing)

**Drill:** Knee Tuck

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** to teach player how properly load

**Execution:** Get player in proper hitting position with hands back  
The first movement of this drill is to have player bring front knee up and in. This will shift weight back. Finish Swing

**Coaching Point:**

Just tuck knee up and back  
Don't raise head and shoulders



**Drill:** Hop forward- hop back

**Level:** AAA and up

**Purpose:** to teach a player how to properly load

**Execution:** 1. Player starts in a good hitting position  
2. set weight forward with a small hop  
3. Bring weight back with a hop back  
4. Swing



**Drill: High/Low Tee Work**

**Level: AA and up**

**Note: Both of these drills can be soft toss drills or front toss**

### High Tee

**Purpose:** Proper technique to hit a high pitch

#### **Execution**

Adjust Tee so that the ball would be at the top of the strike zone (about even with the armpits). Often used for high and tight pitches.

#### **Coaching Keys**

Stay on top of the ball. Don't drop elbow and don't drop back shoulder. The goal should be a line drive right up the middle.

### Low Tee

**Purpose:** Proper technique to hit the low pitch. Low and away

#### **Execution**

Adjust Tee as low as it will go.

You can also exaggerate this drill by using a small cone instead of the Tee.

#### **Coaching points**

Players shouldn't just reach out for the ball. They should drive their back knee to their front calf while keeping their chin down

**Drill: Two tee Drill**

**Level: AA and up**

**Purpose:** to teach proper bat path for the fastest swing possible

**Execution:** Set up two tees

Player is hitting off the 2<sup>nd</sup> tee

The back tee should be set up about 2 feet behind with a ball at the same level or slightly lower

Batter wants to hit the ball on the 2<sup>nd</sup> tee without hitting the first ball.

**Coaching point:** flatten out top hand on contact



Back knee drives down towards the height of the front calf.





## St. Louis Drill

**Purpose:** To teach players proper hip rotation

### Execution:

Set up tee in front of the middle of the plate

Have player get proper hitting distance from plate (bat can reach all parts of the plate)

### Drill Stance:

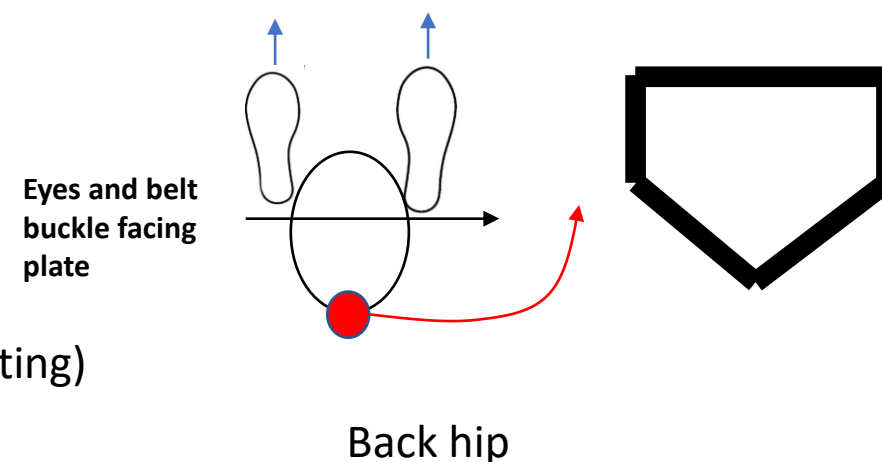
Upper body should be in a natural hitting position with the belt buckle facing the plate.

Feet and toes of both feet are pointed toward the pitcher.

### Coaching Points:

There is no stride in this drill

This drill forces batters to lead with their back hip thus executing proper hip rotation (probably the most under coached aspect of hitting)



## **Drill: Griffey's**

## **Tee Work**

## **Level: AA and up**

A common issue in hitting is a poor follow through. Poor follow through is often a sign that the hitter has stopped his swing prematurely. We want to increase bat speed as we swing the bat and as we contact the ball we want to drive through it. If we do that then we need a complete follow through to let our arms stop the bat naturally. A good follow through is a result of a good hard swing, if you don't have a good follow through then your cheating yourself out of a good swing.

**Very few baseball players had a better follow through than Ken Griffey Junior.**

## **Griffey Drill**

**Purpose: To teach players proper follow through on Swing**

## **Execution:**

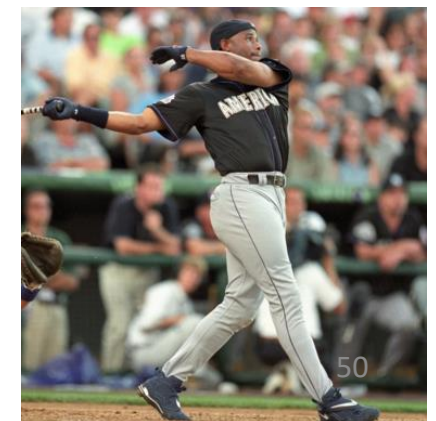
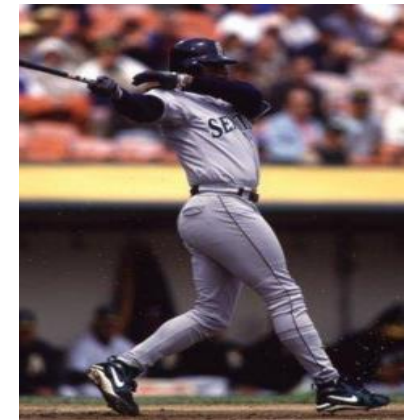
Set up tee in front of the middle of the plate

Have player get proper hitting distance from plate (bat can reach all parts of the plate)

Have players swing hard and exaggerate the Griffey follow through.

## **Coaching Points:**

End with a wide chest



## Drill: Soft Toss

Level: All

### Objective

To use a proper grip and understand how proper grip improves bat speed, verbal cue: "Loose hands, quick bat"

### Setup

Bucket of balls, coach, player or toss machine to toss; net screen, or fence to hit into

### Execution

This is a standard hitting drill that can be done virtually anywhere. Teammates can toss to one another, or a coach can toss to a player. The batter takes his or her stance; the tosser kneels across from the hitter, slightly in front of home plate in foul ground, not in the direction that the ball will be hit. The ball is tossed underhand so the batter can hit it out in front of the plate. The hitter wants to concentrate on having a loose grip in the fingers with the "door knocking" knuckles lined up. This will allow the wrists to unlock, promoting a quicker swing using the hands, wrists, and forearms. Batters should think loose hands, quick bat. This drill works best if done into a screen with a target, but it can also be done into a fence if plastic balls, tennis balls, or rubber balls are used. Never hit baseballs into a fence.

### Coaching Keys

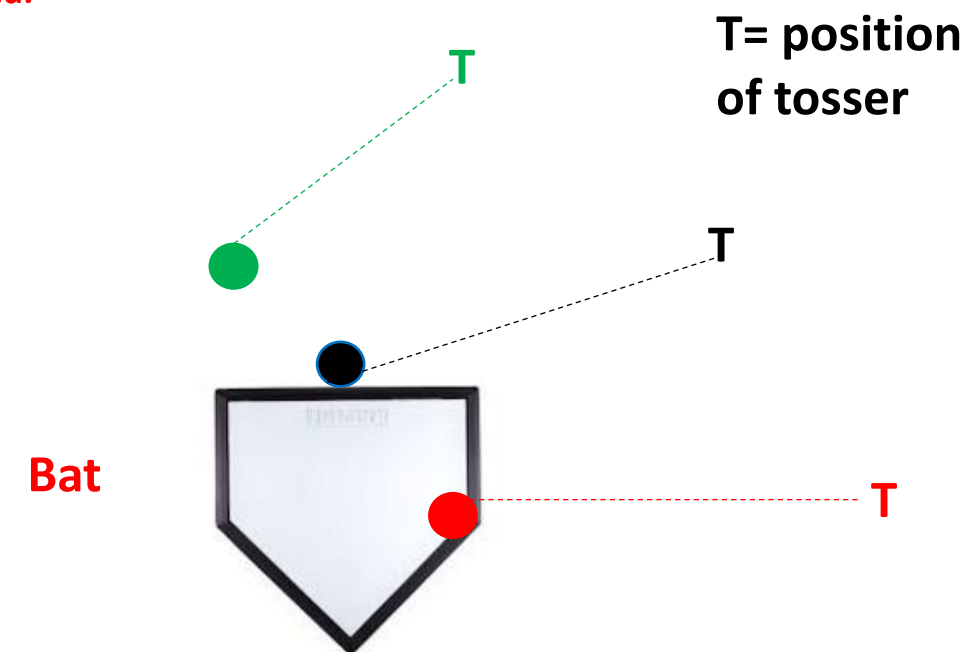
If players seem to be getting jammed quite a bit, take a look at where the tosses are coming from and are being hit. A lot of coaches try to soft toss from a position directly across from the batter. When the ball is coming directly at the batter, he or she actually has to drag the bat to the ball, hitting it at a location that's not in front of home plate. The toss should come from an angle slightly in front of home plate and be struck slightly in front of the plate. This allows the wrists to unlock and the barrel of the bat to get to the ball.

Tosser starts with ball up – "ready"  
Tosser's hand comes down- "load"  
Hitter starts load when tosser drops the ball

Tosser tosses at player belt level.  
It is absolutely key to allow batter time to reset.

This one of the best drills but if executed improperly it can develop terrible habits.

**Avoid hitting drills that emphasis rapid pace in between swings such as rapid toss drills. Each swing has a purpose and should not be rushed.**



**Note: Avoid soft toss from behind the batter. It is unrealistic**

**Soft/Front Toss Variations:****Level: AA and up****High ball toss** (see coaching points for High tee)**Low ball toss** (see coaching points for low tee)**Griffey Toss** (see coaching points for Griffey tee)**Drop Toss****Level: AAA and up**

Similar to soft toss but you will be dropping at the height of the player's head.

This drill is intended to work on bat speed.

**Two ball toss: soft toss or front toss** **Level: AA and up****Purpose:** To teach hand eye coordination, bat control, keeping hands back**Execution:** Toss two balls instead on one. The balls will naturally separate on the toss.

One high and one low. On toss say "high" or say "low" to instruct player on which ball to hit. Coach can wait decide when to call high or low

You can use two different color baseballs, two different colored golf wiffle balls- call out color.

**Spin or No spin (soft toss)****Level: (AAA and up)****Purpose:** To train players to pick up ball rotation**Execution:** soft toss but regularly spin the baseball, instruct players to say "no" or "spin" when the swing**What's that Color? (front toss)****Level AA and up**

Color in portions of old baseballs/tee balls/or tennis balls. Cover up cover with hand. Player calls out color after swing.

**Drill: Front Toss**

**Level: AA and up**

*Make it into a game! Set up cones with point values*

**Objective:**

To use the big part of the field by keeping the front shoulder in long enough to hit balls tossed to the outside part of the plate up the middle or the opposite way

**Setup:**

L-screen, stool or bucket for coach to sit on, coach to toss, bucket of balls

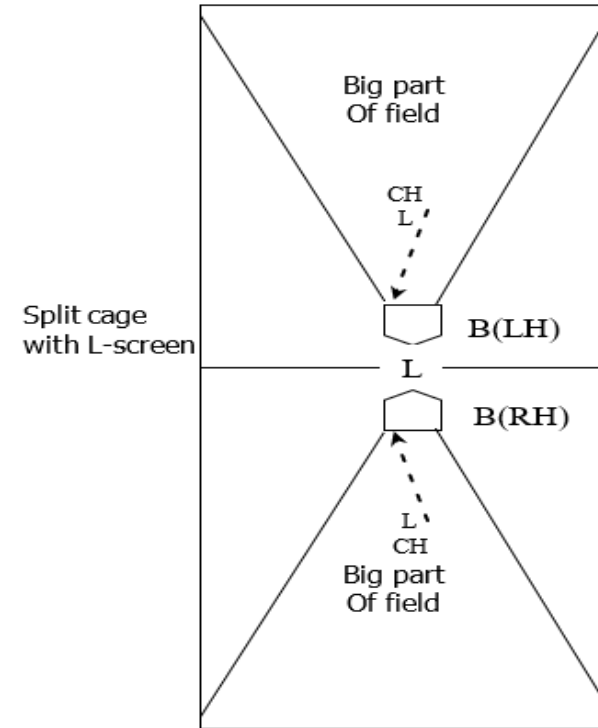
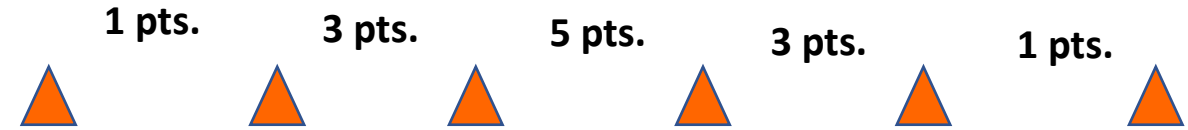
**Execution:**

This drill stresses using the big part of the field. Coach sits on a bucket or chair behind a screen about 10 to 12 feet out in front of home plate. Coach tosses pitches underhand, but firmly, to outside part of plate. Batter tries to keep the front shoulder in and drive the ball up the middle or the other way. Some batters naturally will pull the pitches, which is okay if that's their natural swing and they hit line drives. Weakly pulled ground balls are what we're trying to avoid.

**Note:** This is also a variation of soft toss from the front. The toss should be belt high and with little more velocity.

**May be done with mini wiffle balls- great pre game hitting drill.**

Many hitting drills (tee or soft toss) can be executed with a front toss



**Drill: Front Toss up the middle Level: AA and up**

**Objective:**

To use the big part of the field by keeping the front shoulder in long enough to hit balls tossed to the outside part of the plate up the middle or the opposite way

**Setup:**

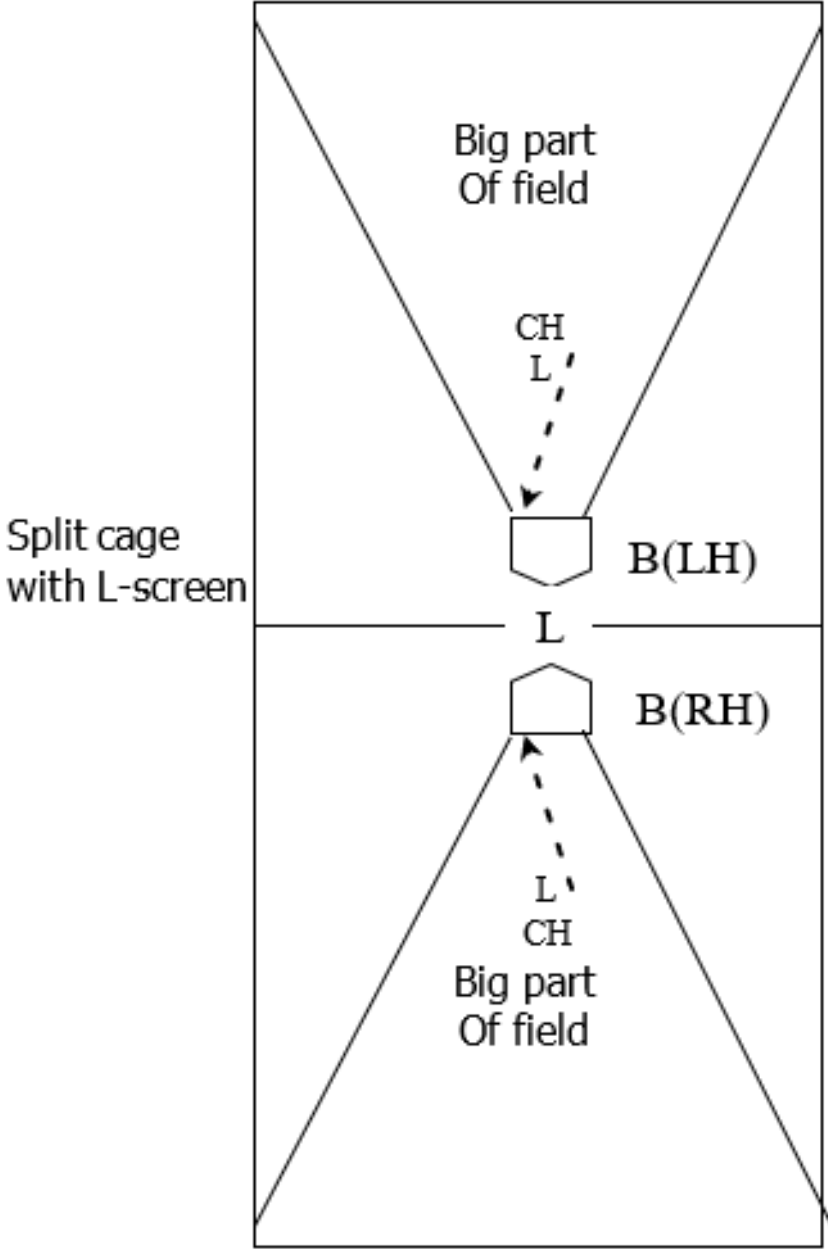
Mini wiffle balls, or with an L screen baseballs or hard balls

**Execution:**

This drill stresses using the big part of the field. Coach sits on a bucket or chair behind a screen about 10 to 12 feet out in front of home plate. Coach tosses pitches underhand, but firmly, to outside part of plate. Batter tries to keep the front shoulder in and drive the ball up the middle or the other way. Some batters naturally will pull the pitches, which is okay if that's their natural swing and they hit line drives. Weakly pulled ground balls are what we're trying to avoid.

**Note:** This is also a variation of soft toss from the front. The toss should be belt high and with little more velocity.

Many hitting drills (tee or soft toss) can be executed with a front toss



**Drill: Ty Cobb front toss**

**Level: AA and up**

**Purpose:** To teach bringing top hand to the ball.

**Execution:** Front toss

Coach says inside or outside

Player on swing will bring top hand to the ball (while dropping it to the low hand)



**Pre swing- hands separated**



**Swing- top hand to the ball**

## **Other soft and front toss equipment variations:**

Instead of bat and hardball

Try these other variations

**PVC pipe (cut to bat length)** - this is a little sturdier and heavier than a wiffle bat

**PVC pipe and golf wiffle balls** (great for hand eye coordination) and ball doesn't travel far – set this drill up in outfield with portable plate

**PVC pipe with ½ tennis balls** (great for hand eye coordination) this is old school stick ball.

If you want to use a baseball bat

Use ½ tennis balls, small squishy balls, or mini wiffle balls



## 1 arm drills

Level: AAA and up

**Equipment:** One arm bat, tee ball bat, or regular bat with a choked up grip

Can be done with a Tee, using soft toss, or front toss

1. Start with 4 or 5 swings with two hands with the goal of hitting line drives up the middle

2. Front arm

Tee or front toss

emphasis – short, quick, powerful stroke to the baseball  
you can tuck front against side. Arms/hands close to the body.

Purpose: to develop quickness, power, and direction of the bat

3. Back to two hands on the bat with the goal to hit line drives back up the middle

Back arm

Tee or front toss

Emphasis – power- Don't create too much separation between hand  
and body. Palm should be up on contact but not prior. Elbow to belly  
button

## Bunting

Level: AAA and up

### Objective

To work on keeping sacrifice bunts away from the pitcher

### Setup

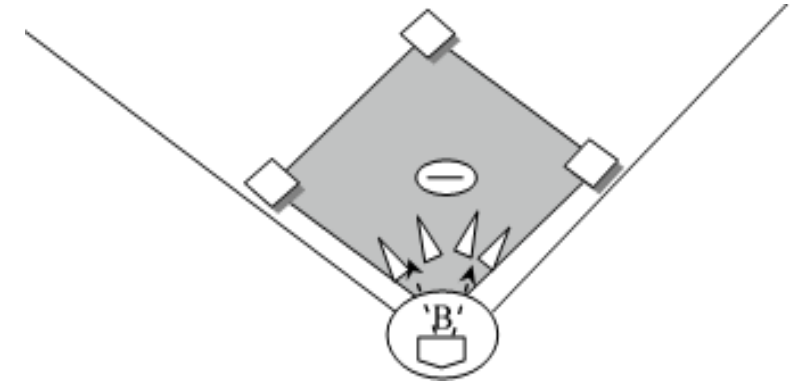
Four cones, bucket of balls, coach or player to pitch

### Execution

Set up two cones down the first base line about halfway between home plate and the mound. One should be about 3 feet inside the baseline, the other about 8 to 10 feet inside the line toward the mound. The same thing should be done on the third baseline. A coach can throw from a shortened distance with players taking turns bunting. The idea is to stop or push the ball between the cones. Try not to make the bunts too perfect. Make the pitcher come off the mound to field the ball. Stress that players pivot both feet instead of squaring to bunt. Have them start with the bat at the top of the strike zone and the barrel of the bat above the hands at an angle, bending their knees for lower pitches and leaving pitches above the hands alone. Players should give with the pitch to deaden the ball and use the bottom hand to guide the bat and push the ball in the desired direction. Give the players five tries each; see how many each one can get between the cones.

### Coaching Keys

If the ball is being popped up quite a bit, the barrel of the bat probably is below the hands at the moment of contact. The player may be either bunting a pitch that's too high, starting the bat too low and then bringing it up to meet the ball, or not bending his or her knees to get to lower pitches. If the ball is being bunted consistently back to the pitcher, the batter is not using the lower hand to angle the bat correctly. If the batter is bunting a lot of foul balls, he or she is most likely not placing the bat in front of home plate.



## Teaching the Mental Approach to the plate:

Level:

AAA and up

Introduce concept to AAA level

Simple but effective approach to the plate.

1. Know where the pitch is coming from, what is the pitcher's release point?
2. Swing at your pitch or the umpire's pitch – not the pitcher's pitch

### The first two strikes are the batter's strikes.

Explain to the players that that they have 3 strikes for a reason. Hitting is tough!!!

Meaning the batter should pick an area of the plate that they want to see the pitch. At higher levels the player should be thinking area and pitch type. If they get their pitch – swing away!!!!

Use location areas that are easy to understand

- Down the middle                      inside, away, low, high, inside and low, high and inside, low and inside, high and away, low and away

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is the umpire's strike

When the batter has 0 strikes or 1 strike - only swing at a pitch that is in your zone

When you have 2 strikes – you must swing a pitch that you think the umpire will want to call a strike. Or in other words protect the plate/strike zone.

**Note:** If a pitcher is extremely wild then it may be advisable to instruct the batter to wait until the pitcher throws strikes. But as a general approach this advice is flawed. When a coach instructs his hitters to wait until the pitcher throws a strike he is cutting the “batter's strikes” down to one and as opposed to two.

## Mental Approach Drills

Incorporate pitch counts when doing any form of batting practice such as front toss and pitching.

1. Pre pitch                                      Tell kids count                                      Ask kids approach
2. Pitch to either have kids swing or to have them be discipline with their approach.

# Throwing

All throwing drills involve 4 seam grip by fielders

Pitchers can do these drills with a 4 seam grip, 2 seam grip, and change up

## Throwing Main Points

1. A ball should be thrown with a *four seam fastball grip (if hand size allows)*. Basically this means that your fingers and hand should go across the seams of a baseball. This allows for a straighter backspin motion of the ball. (fig. A and fig. B) **Regardless of grip, the thumb must always be under the ball.**
2. When getting into the throwing position, the ball should face away from the head and body Your index and middle finger should be closer to your head than the ball , “thumb to thigh, show the ball to the sky.” (fig. C) The player’s front shoulder, front hip, outside of front knee, and outside of front heel should be pointing to their target (fig. D)
3. Get into a power T throwing position- throwing hand/arm back with ball facing away. Point the glove at the target and keep your feet in a parallel position towards your target. Keep your elbow high while you throw. (fig. E)
4. Load- Rock you weight back, lift front foot (non-throwing hand foot)
5. Take a small step forward with glove hand. Release ball in front. Keep a loose grip on the ball the entire time. (fig. F) and fig. G).
6. **Finish your throw each time.** Follow through – Follow through – Follow through. Glove out in front and bring chest to glove. This will look like the front elbow goes to front pocket (fig. H) Chin to target.



Fig. A



Fig. B

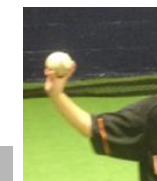


Fig. C



Fig. D



Fig. E



Fig. F



Fig. G



Fig. H

**Drill: One Knee**

**Levels:** All

**Purpose:**

Develops players upper body throwing mechanics.

**Equipment:**

Baseballs

**Setup:**

Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball.

**Execution:**

Players get on one knee(throwing arm side) about 15 feet from their partner. The player with the ball will rotate his shoulder toward the target, bring his arm back with his hand on top, use a good circular motion and throw the ball. Build on the wrist and elbow drill, making sure the player bends his elbow and uses his wrist.



**Drill: Power T****Levels:** All**Purpose:**

To develop the player's upper body throwing mechanics.

**Equipment:**

Baseballs

**Setup:**

Players pair up with gloves and 1 baseball.

**Execution:**

Players get in Power T position about 15 feet from their partner.

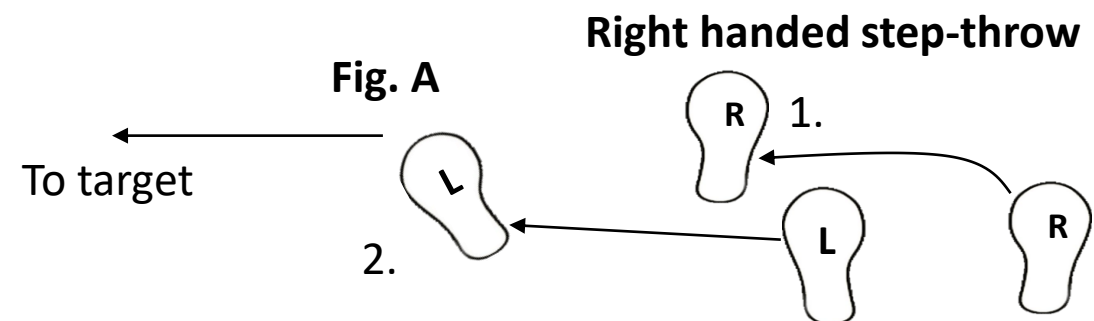
Feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart

**Slightly open foot to target** (this will allow for hip rotation)

The player with the ball will rotate his shoulder toward the target, bring his arm back with his hand on top, use a good circular motion and throw the ball.

Build on the wrist and elbow drill, making sure the player bends his elbow and uses his wrist.

1. No step throw
2. Small step throw (non-throwing foot)
3. Step through step then throw (fig A.)



**Drill:** Twenty-One

**Level:** All

**Purpose:**

To improve throwing accuracy

**Execution:**

This is a game played by baseball players at all levels.

As players play catch, 1 point is awarded to the thrower for each ball caught at chest level.

Two points are awarded for a ball caught at head level.

Points can be deducted for uncatchable throws.

If a throw is accurate but the receiver misses it, points are still awarded to the thrower. The first player to 21 wins. Stress proper mechanics.

Set up a team competition in which winners move on and losers are eliminated. To speed things up, play to 15 instead of 21.

**Note: For single A coach can stack cones on bucket and have players try to knock them down (carnival style)  
Or place a bucket on a Tee and have players work to hit the target.**



**Drill:** Wrist snaps

**Level:** AAA and up

**Purpose:** To reinforce the ball rotation needed for accuracy and carry.

**Execution:**

1. Partners get on one knee or stand straight on 10 to 15 feet apart
2. Thrower uses a 4 seam grip with his forearm perpendicular to the ground. With his throwing elbow about shoulder height. With his opposite hand, he holds his throwing elbow.
3. Make sure player is throwing behind the ball meaning at the release point the player's hand is behind the ball and not to the side.
4. As he moves his throwing forearm forward, he tries to accentuate the back-spin and four seam rotation.



**Drill:** Ten Toes

**Level:** AAA and up

**Purpose:** To work on upper body mechanics and energy transfer through body

**Execution:**

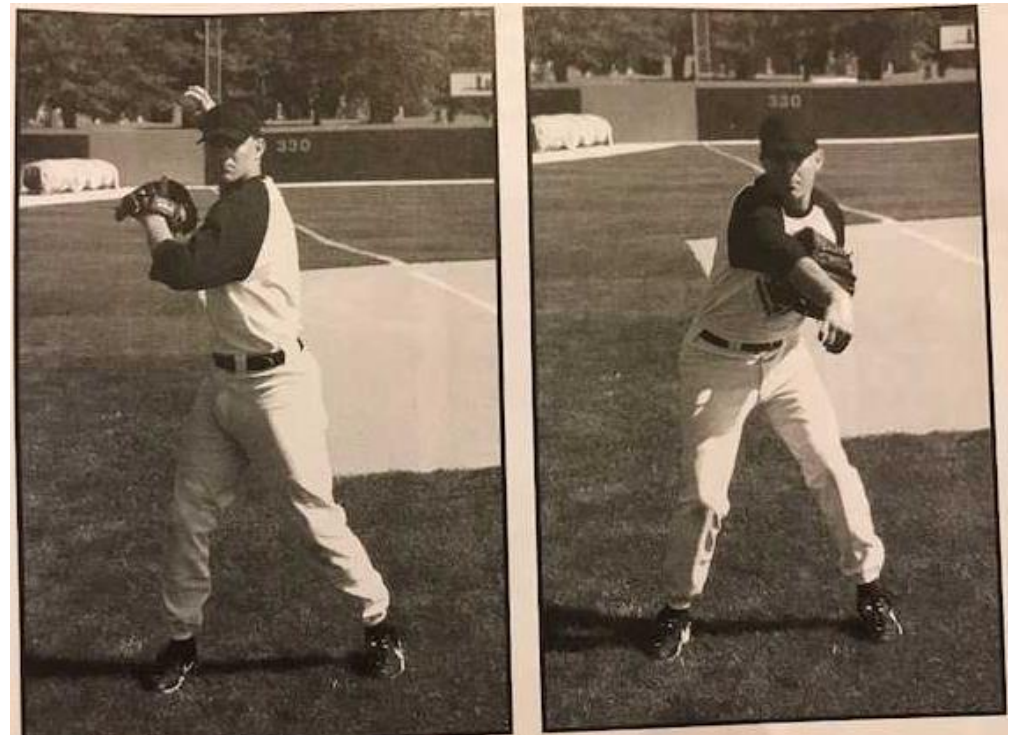
1. Partners stand and face each other. Their knees are slightly bent to help with balance and transfer of energy from the ground up. The feet are shoulder width apart. All ten toes are pointing straight.
2. Proper upper body mechanics

Hold hands together to the midline of chest as he rotates to point his front shoulder at his partner

Keep Elbows at chest level

Hold chest up right keeping eyes on target.

3. The thrower aims at partner's chest, rotating hips through on throw. The throwing side heel should rotate over



**Drill:** Tempo arm swings

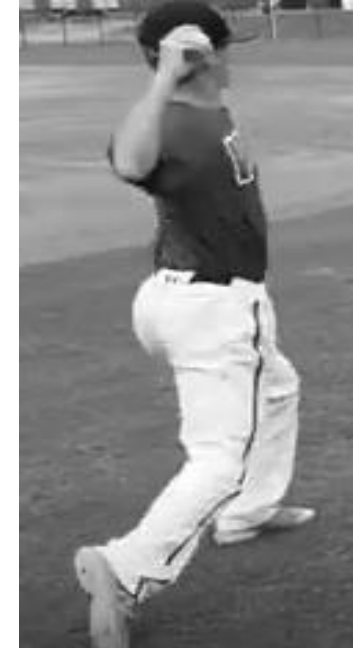
**Level:** AAA and up

**Purpose:** To work on upper body mechanics and energy transfer through body (loading). Learn to transfer energy from back to front

**Execution:**

1. Standing Power T
2. Swing arms in front (when back hip should come with throwing hand) when hand swings back hip comes back (load)
3. End with Throw

**Coaching Point:** Good rhythm and balance. Tempo- free and easy movement don't be a robot



## Drill: Boxer throws

Level: AAA and up

**Purpose:** To work on upper body mechanics and energy transfer through body (loading). Learn to transfer energy from back to front

### Execution:

1. Hands together at chest height
2. Tiny hops front to back like a boxer. Hips come back
3. After about three hops, plant back foot and load. Execute throw.

**Coaching Point:** Good rhythm and balance. Tempo- free and easy movement don't be a robot



## Drill: Jump Backs

Level: AAA and up

**Purpose:** To learn to transfer energy through body (loading). Transfer energy from back to front

### Execution:

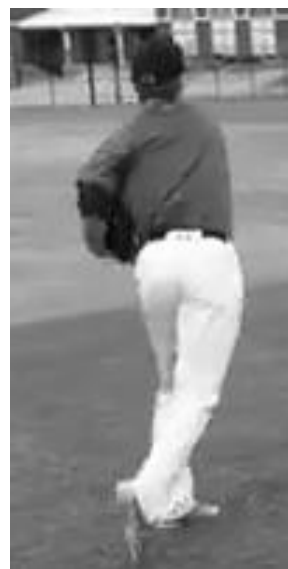
1. This is an exaggerated load.
2. Transfer energy from backside – out over front side
3. Follow through on your throw

### Coaching Point:

### Other variations to help teach loading

Hop forward 3 hops  
On third hop throw

3 step QB drop  
Throw on third step



**Drill: 180's**

**Level: majors up**

**Purpose:** Body control on throw

**Execution:**

1. Exactly like a spin move to second
2. Throwing to a blind target

**Coaching Point:**

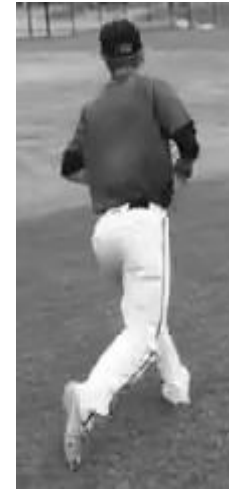
**Follow your throw!!!**



**Drill: 360's**

**Juniors and Seniors**

**Purpose:** To learn to control body and throw from uncomfortable positions.



**Drill:** Down the line

**Level:** majors and up

**Purpose:** learn to throw on the run

**Execution:**

Throw takes a few steps down a line and throws to a target.



## **Throw by Position (ball always starts in glove so players learn to make the transition)**

### **Infield**

Field (assume a grounder)

Power throw

receiver is a relay man and catches and spins

2 variations

Quick release

Field-shuffle-shuffle

### **Outfield**

Field (pop)

crow hop

receiver acts as a relay man

### **Catcher**

Block pitch in dirt runner goes

Throw to second

### **Pitcher**

Throws from wind up and stretch



**Drill: Long Toss with a crow hop**

**Level: juniors and seniors**

**Emphasis proper mechanics**

**Begin 40 feet apart**

**Play catch and execute 5 to 10 throws before stepping back.**

**Move back in 15 to 20 feet increments until they are a maximum distance for them (depends on strength and conditioning)**

**After about 10 throws at maximum distance**

**Start closing the distance – this is to work on flattening out the arc.**

---

**Drill: Quick Release Drill**

**Level: AAA and up**

**Purpose work on quick release**

**Execution:**

**Partners align about 45 feet away. They play catch with a coach timing and counting how many accurate throws and catches are made within a 20 second period.**

---

**Drill Quick Release underhand toss (shaking hands)**

**Purpose:** to teach quick underhand toss to a bag holder at close range.

**Execution:** when a player executes short toss they should act as if they are shaking hands at a farther distance

Players set up 5 feet apart – and execute underhand toss. Receiver should catch with glove (to practice transferring ball to hand).

Players should see how many accurate underhand tosses can be executed in 20 seconds.

**Drill:** Throwing routine 15- 20 minutes

**Level:** AA and up

The entire workout or only portions of workout can be utilized

#### **4 seam grip every time**

**Lower levels:** work on each drill separately

**Upper levels:** 1 minute to 2 minutes per drill

**Drill 1:** Wrist snaps (AAA and up)

**Drill 2:** knee drill (A and up)

**Drill 3:** Ten toes drill no step (hip rotation) AAA and up

**Drill 4:** Standing Power T position spread arms- (no step)

**Drill 5 :** Standing Power T position- small stride (AAA and up)

**Drill 6:** boxer: power position- small stride (AAA and up)

**Drill 7:** jump backs- stride forward (majors)

**Drill 8:** 180's and throw (majors)

**Drill 9:** throwing down the line (majors)

**Drill 10:** Position Quick release drill

**Drill:** Long Line Toss

**Level:** AAA and up

**Contributed by:** Chris Antonello

Age Group: 8 – 10+ year old

Time: 5-10 minutes

**Purpose:** This drill helps players use cutoff man and work on good throw/receive mechanics.

Equipment: big field

Setup: Two or Three long parallel lines of players, space players out 30-40ft apart

Execution: The ball will start at the end of the line. The players will toss/throw the ball to the next player in the line. The object is to get the ball to the other end of the line before the other line does.

Note – Proper form in receiving the cut-off throw is what the coach should be looking for; body turned, receive the ball glove side to be in a good position to deliver the relay to the next player



# Fielding and Catching the Baseball

## **Main Points for fielding ground balls**

- 1. Create a wide base with the feet.**
- 2. Butt stays down; bend at the waist, hips and knees.**
- 3. Hands are out in front; see the ball into the glove.**
- 4. Relax wrists; fingers point down and barely touch the ground.**
- 5. Bring ball and glove to belly and transition into a power throwing position**

**Note: the following drills can be completed separately, as part of station work, or during a 15 minute fielding period.**

**Additionally these drills can be completed with the coach as a partner or two players as partners (recommended at higher levels)**

# Catching the baseball

## Proper Technique:

1. The eyes are just as important as the hands. Train your players to keep their eyes on the ball.
2. Whenever possible we want the players to catch the ball within their frame (i.e. moving to catch the ball out of front of their body, but centered as much as possible). Train your players to move their feet. This will also put the players in a better position to throw.
3. Whenever possible we want the players catching with two hands. This mean the throwing hand is near by and ready to come on top. The main reason for using two hands to catch the baseball is for a quick transfer to make a throw.
4. Instruct your players not to let the ball dominate them. We want them to dominate the baseball. The should have flexibility in their wrist but be firm in their arms but don't lock out the arm. **Don't have your players stab at the ball.**
5. The goal should be to catch the ball in the pocket of the glove.



## Tips to teaching how to catch

1. More often than not young players will more comfortable catching on their glove side. Start on this side before you move on to other sides. The coach should try to throw to that side even if its an underhand toss.
2. When the ball is at or above the belly button we want the player's glove fingers to the sky. When the ball is below the belly button our finger tips are to the ground.
3. Once the player feels comfortable with catching the ball to his glove side and in front of him, the coach can begin implementing slight movement. Have the player run a couple of steps to the side and you can toss the ball leading him by a couple of steps.

## Tee ball

**Drill: Catching to side of the body**      **Level:** Single A

### Execution:

Coach tosses the ball to the player's glove side  
Gradually progress to the middle to the player's body

**Drill: Catching on the move**      **Level:** Single A

**Execution:** Have the player run a couple of steps to his glove side. Lead the player a little with the toss.



**Drill: Stationary Backhand catch**

**Level: AA**

**Execution:** Have the player position himself to use his backhand. Give the player tosses.



**Drill: Movement to backhand catch**

**Level: AA**

**Execution:** Have the player run a couple of steps to his backhand side. Lead the player a little with the toss.



**Drill: Backward Movement to glove side**

**Level: AA and up**

**Execution:** Have players drop a couple of steps to his gloves side and on an angle. Lead the player with a toss.





**Drill:** Simon says positioning

**Level:** Single A and AA

**Purpose:** This is a fun and productive way to engage young players while teaching or reviewing positions.

**Execution:**

Have team set up at pitchers mound

As an alternative you could split them up between coaches at different locations

1. Coach says “Simon says run to centerfield” – kids run to center field
2. If coach says run to a position but doesn’t say Simon says, that group does 3 jumping jacks

**Drill:** Team glove hand relay

**Level:** all

**Purpose:** to teach players to use their glove

**Execution:** divide team into two lines that face each other

Have the first player who has ball in glove start drill by jogging forward

On movement of first player first player in other line proceeds.

At intersecting point flip ball out of glove and other player catches with glove

The next person in line proceeds when the person in front executes the flip.

**Purpose:** fun way to teach a young player to field ground balls.

**Execution:** Place cones 20 feet apart and have the player set up in the middle and a couple of feet in front.

A coach then either rolls/bounces grounders by hand or hits ground balls of the bat.

The player must cleanly field and throw the ball back to the coach.

Players score 1 point for a cleanly fielded and thrown ball.

The Coach scores one point for getting the ball past the gate keeper.

As the players improves the drill can quickly become more advanced by spreading the cones out further.



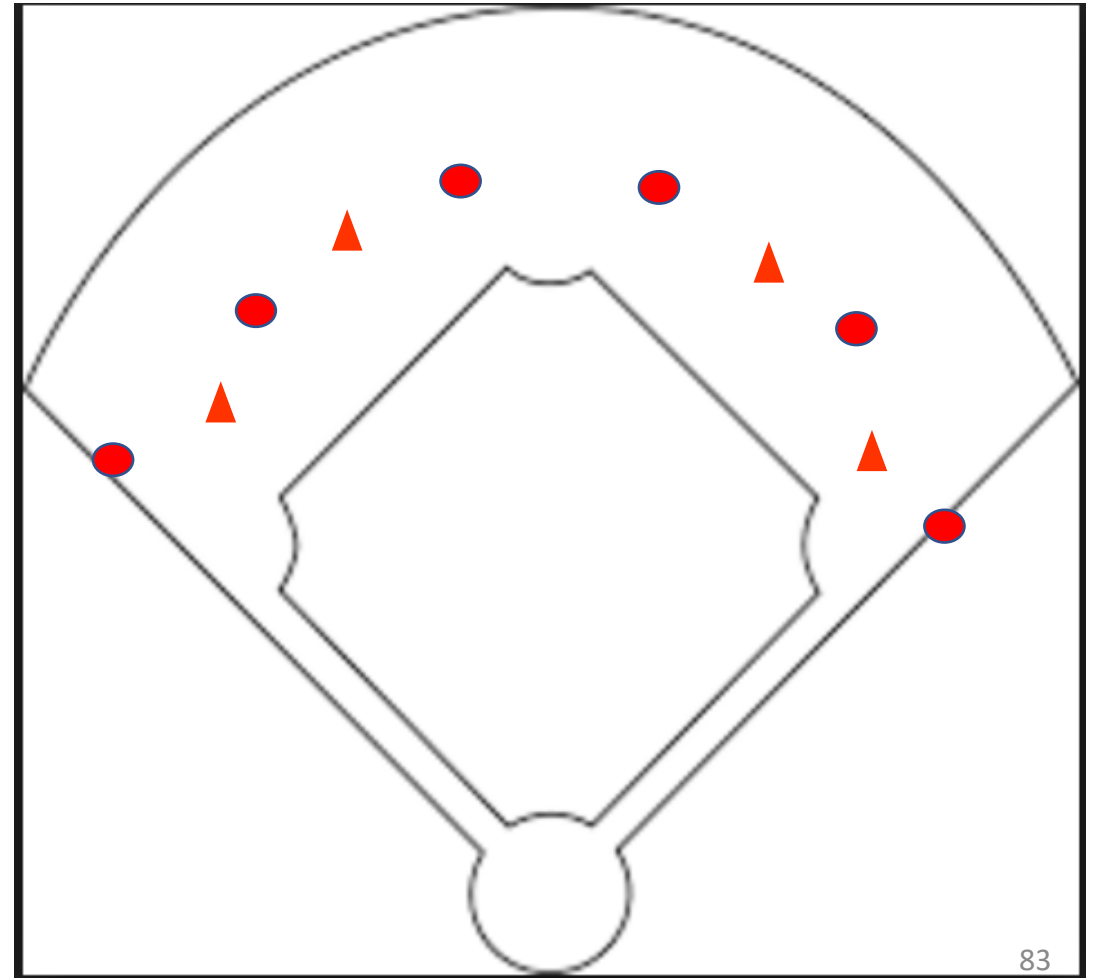
**Drill:** Infield cone work

**Level:** single A

**Purpose:** Various purposes including teaching a player their area of responsibility and teaching proper foot work

**Note:** At the single A level placing cones on the field to show the players their proper positioning and areas of responsibility is advisable even during game play.

Setting up the field with cones is a natural next step after playing the gate-keeper game. The gate keeper game established in their mind that it is their job to field the ball hit to their area. The cones on the field now give the players a visual to where they start and their fielding areas.



# Drill: Hungry Hippos (or whatever your team name is)

Level: single A

**Purpose:** To teach proper fielding position and getting the glove down, throwing hand on top, and bring ball to belly

## Execution:

Create 3 to 4 lines of players. 1 line per coach

4 player up at once

4 players behind serve as back up

1 coach per line

Players set up 10 feet from coach

Coach say go

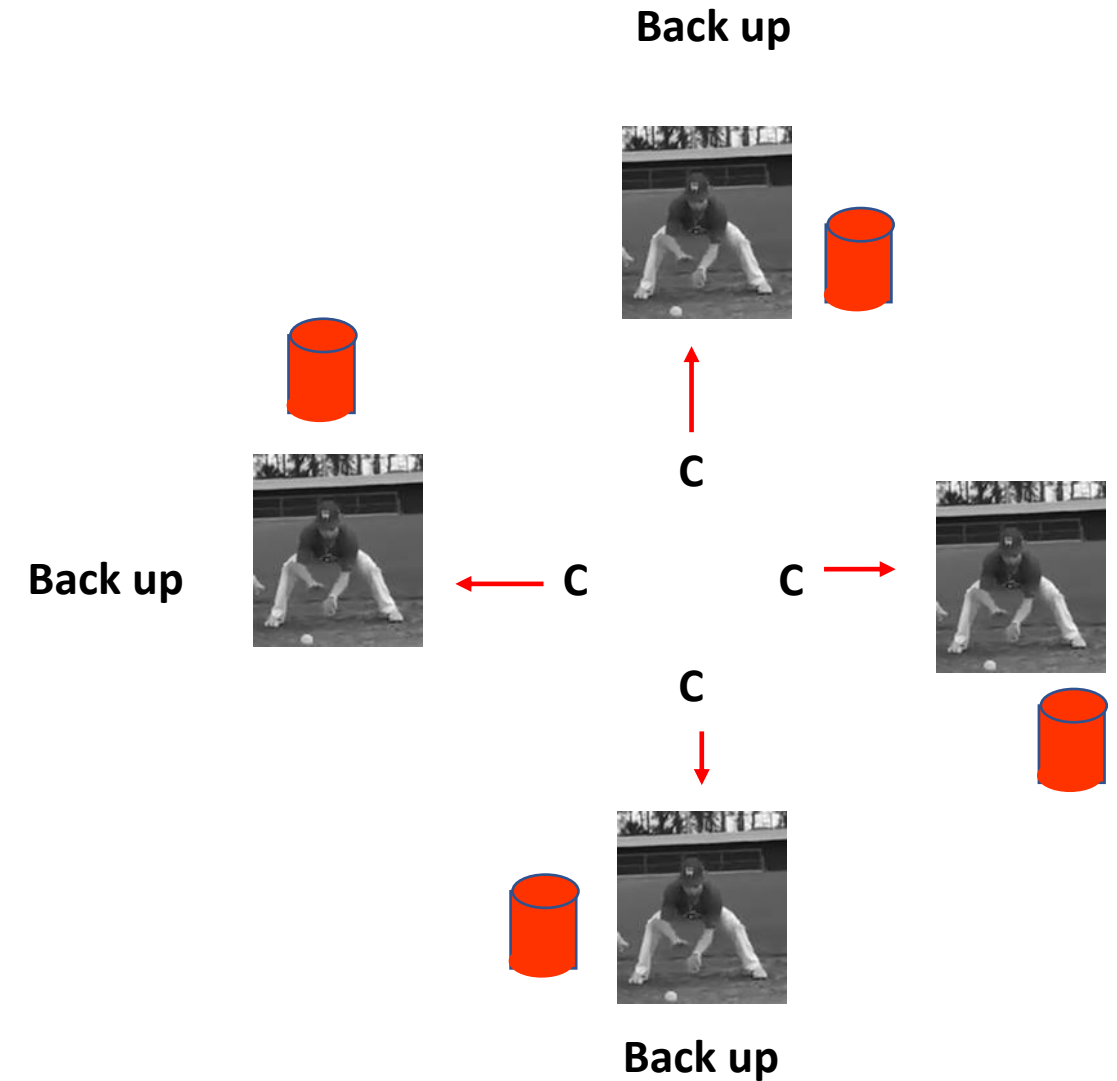
Coaches roll balls to players who field and put balls in bucket only after the ball goes to belly.

If player mishandles ball they let it go

If player doesn't bring ball to belly coach deduct points

The is a continuous drill for 30 seconds.

After drill the player count how many balls are in bucket.



**Drill:** partner-roll-shuffle

**Level:** AA or up (and higher level A players)

**Purpose:** to work on short side to side infield movements

**Execution:**

- Players partner up 10 feet apart
- Both players are in a baseball ready position
- First player rolls the ball slightly to the side of his partner
- The partner shuffles to field the ball and then rolls the ball to the side of his partner
- Both partners are shuffle throughout the drill

**Coaching points:**

- Shuffles are not hops. We don't want to see head bobs
- It is not a race.

You can have multiple groups going at once

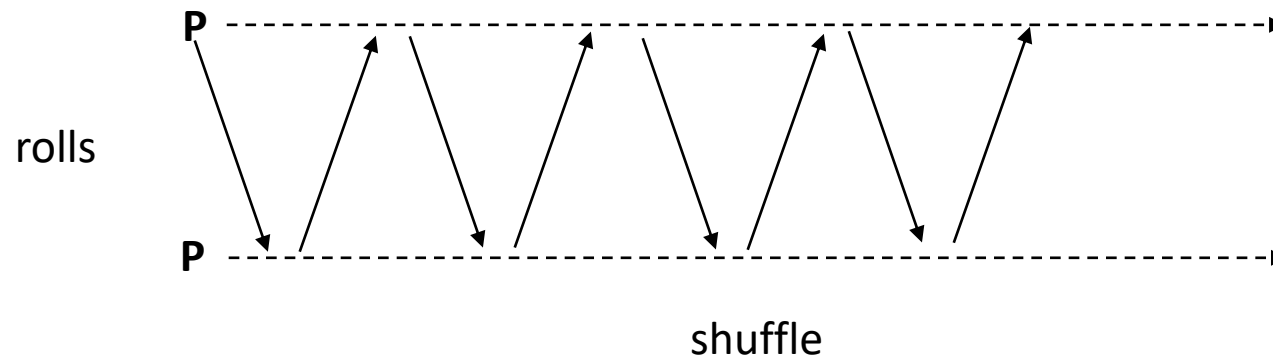
**Variation:**

SS/2B

Roll and cover

SS roll to 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman then cover 2<sup>nd</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> baseman roll to SS and cover 2<sup>nd</sup> base



**Drill:** Infield Star Drill

**Level:** AA up

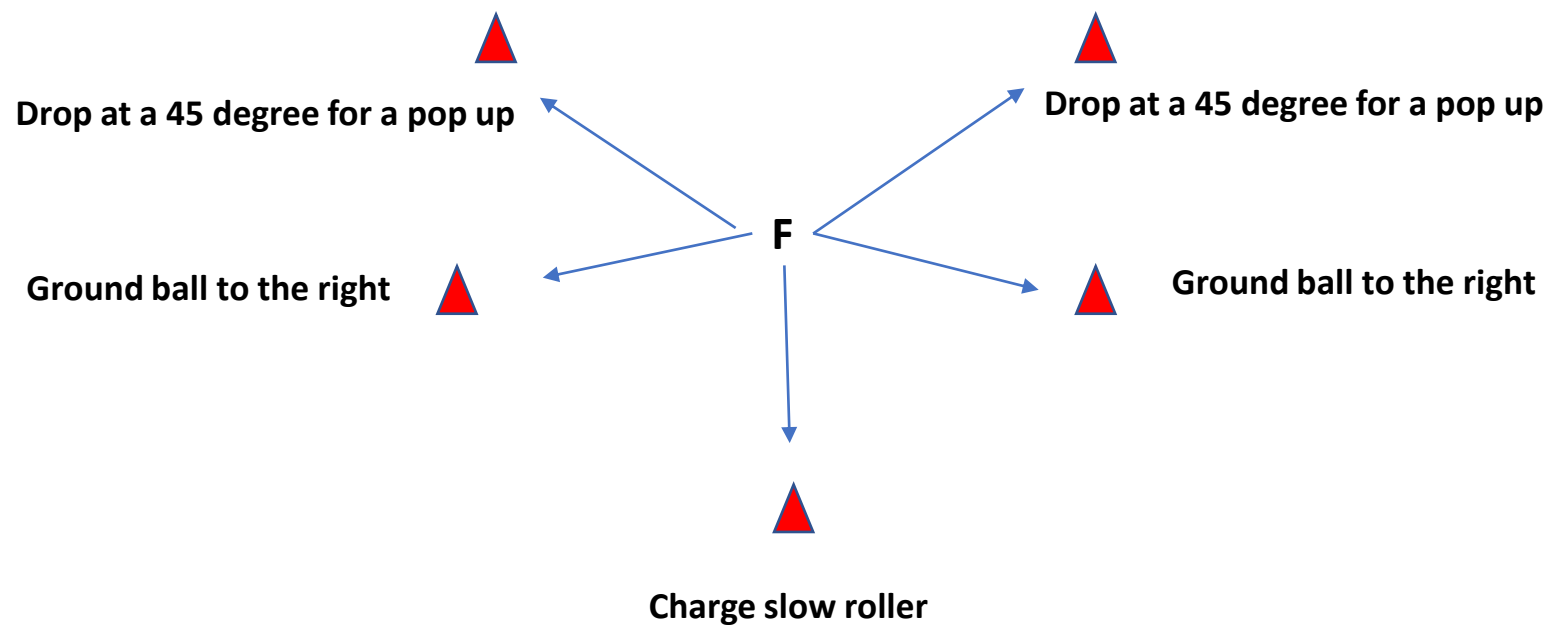
**Purpose:** To incorporate multiple infield movements

**Execution:**

Place cones in designated areas

Coach places player in middle cones and has players execute specific movements

This should be rapid fire meaning player executes play and then immediately returns to the middle of the star to execute the next play



**Drill:** 4 square

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** to execute multiple movements

**Execution:**

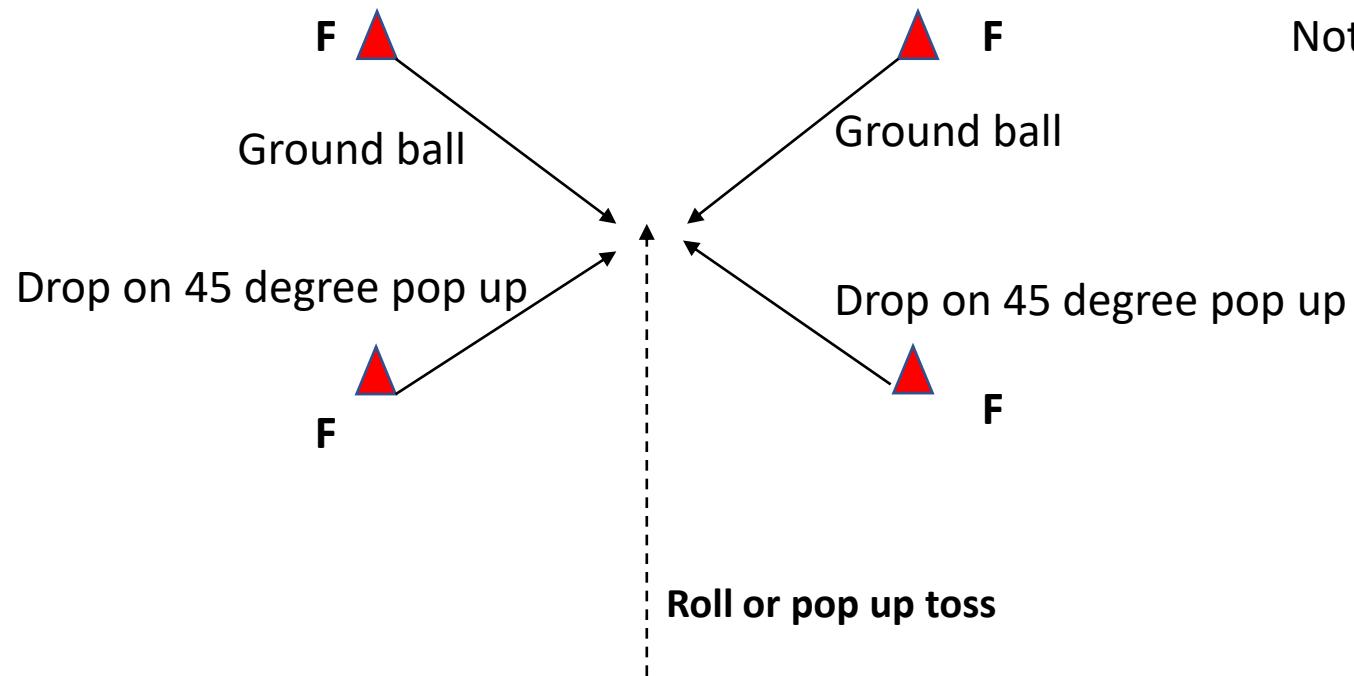
Set up 4 cones and 15 feet apart

Have a player on each cone

Coach calls out name of player and either rolls or tosses ball to the middle of the square

Players rotate cones after each player has a turn from their cone.

This can be competitive elimination drill



Note: Only 1 player at a time

## Infield Drill: Fly ball drill

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** to work on fly balls hit to an infielder. Also to work on applying tag and relay

### Execution:

Partners align 20 feet apart

Thrower tosses

- over the glove side 2x
- throw side 2x
- straight over the head 2x of the fielder.

After catch is made- field executes a quick transition and throw

Upon catching the throw the receiver then executes a second base tag or a relay turn.





**Purpose:** To teach proper field position. Getting low, eyes to the ball. Great for hand eye coordination

- 1. No glove
- 2. With glove
- 3. With glove power throw position
- 4. With glove – power throw – **speed transitions**

**A. Funneling – roll**



**B. Short hop at fielder**



**C. Short hop backhand (AAA and up)**



**D. Short hop – glove side**



**E. Short-hops complex**

Mix it up  
 Combo of funnel,  
 short hop at, short  
 hop backhand,  
 short hop glove



**Note:** drill can be complete on two knee (short hop) and one knee glove side roll or back hand roll.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9tIZIzJHtc>

## Infield Drills: 3 step and 5 step infield drills

**Levels:** All

**Purpose:** To train the fielder to move from side to side. Work to get in front of ball. Avoid back hand if possible.

### Execution:

Align the fielder about 10 feet away from roller. Roll the ball to the sides of the fielder. So that the fielder is either taking 3 or 5 steps to get in front of the ball. Once fielded the fielder is make a quick transition to the power throw position and will toss the ball back to the roller (who is wearing a glove).

At least 3 to 4 each way- this is a quick drill and ball proper footwork and fast ball transition must be stressed.

### 3 step/5 step (all levels)

Work to get in front of ball, avoid backhand if possible.

**Note: This drill can be modified into a shuffle drill but only if the shuffle is within an area of 5 feet. Otherwise the player should utilize a cross-over sprint.**



**Infield Drills: Ozzie**

**Level:** AAA and up

**Purpose:** Hand-eye coordination. Fielding in between - short hops (with some velocity) straight on, back hand, glove side.

Once again quick transition and quick strong throw must be stressed.

**Execution:**

Fielder is on knees

Thrower is about 15 feet from fielder.

Throw toss balls with velocity that will result in short hop (straight on, back hand, or glove side) about 5 tosses for each

This is executed with one hand

This is a rapid fire (little pause in between throws)

Quick transition and powerful throw back (all from knees)



## Infield Drills: High Toss hop

**Level:** AAA and up

**Purpose:** To work in in between hops

### Execution:

Align fielder and thrower 15 to 20 feet apart

Thrower will throw a toss with a high arc (think slow pitch soft ball) at various heights and distances

Fielder catches and fields the ball on the first hop.

Quick transition and power throw

#### 1<sup>st</sup> at fielder – fielder 2 hands



#### 2<sup>nd</sup> - back hand



#### 3<sup>rd</sup> glove side hand



**Drill:** 3 cone charge drill

**Level:** AAA and up (some AA players)

**Purpose:** To teach charging the ball- step through and throw- and following your throw

**Set up:**

Coach sets up three cones

Cone A is where the player initially sets up and is about 15 feet from cone B

Cone B- this is the area where we want to have the players field the ball after they have charged

Cone C- This cone is set up about 7 feet from cone B and at an angle toward the person who will receive the players throw (coach or player)

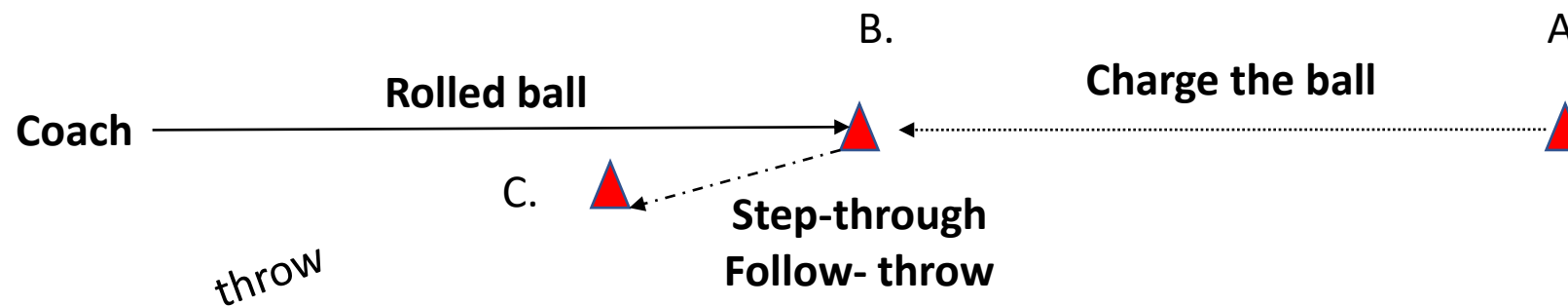
**Execution:**

Coach rolls a ball that must be charged

Player charges the ball, fields it cleanly (top priority) and executes a quick transfer to throw (around cone B)

The player executes a step through (multiple times) which may end up looking more like quick – small shuffle steps

The player throws ball and follows ending around cone C



# Outfield

**Drill:** Stance and 1 step drill and progression

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** To teach proper stance and proper first step without false stepping.

**Execution:**

Place players in proper stance.

Feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart  
Weight on balls of feet  
Knees slight in (over big toe)

**Teaching first step:**

**First step is always back**

45 degree drop step:

Opening up at a 45 degree angle.

No false step!!!

Pick your foot up and gain ground first step but don't over-extend

Elbow to dropping side must aggressive come to hip.

Don't pop up!!! Pretend you are sitting in a chair.



**Progression on teaching footwork:**

1. 1 step drill (step and hold)
2. Sprint 45 degrees
3. Sprint 45 degree with baseball thrown
4. React to throw
5. 45 degree drop- break forward



**Drill:** Open hip Zig zag

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** To develop great hip mobility. To teach re-direction while still facing forward and never taking eyes off the ball.

**Execution:**

This can be done with multiple players at one time.

First begin with the 45 degree steps.

Players should be keying coach for this drill, they will react to the coach's pointing

Coach send the players in a specific direction, the players are to sprint (on balls of the feet) at 45 degree angle (not shuffle).

The coach will then point to the opposite direction. Players are to redirect using an open hip step and not a baseball turn.

**Note:** A variation of this drill uses cones a landmarks. Instead of coach point players change direction as the reach the cones.

**Open hip turn coaching points:**

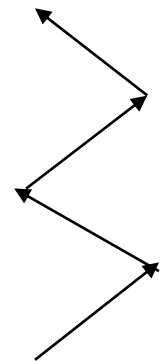
Plant the foot using "an 8 cleat plant" or breaking glass (use cleat to break pretend glass floor.

Steps at a 45 degree step with the other foot point toe in new direction and whip the elbow to the hip.

Stay low (sitting in the chair)

Work to keep shoulders forward.

End with a catch





**Drill:** Baseball turn

**Level:** majors and up

**Purpose:** To teach re-direction and head snap

**Execution:**

This can be done with multiple players at one time.

First begin with the 45 degree steps.

Players should be keying coach for this drill, they will react to the coach's pointing

Coach send the players in a specific direction, the players are to sprint (on balls of the feet) at 45 degree angle (not shuffle).

The coach will then point to the opposite direction. Players are to redirect using a baseball turn.

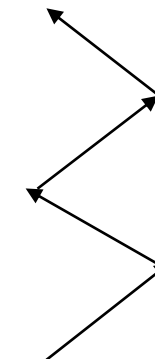
**Note:** A variation of this drill uses cones a landmarks. Instead of coach point players change direction as the reach the cones.

**Baseball turn coaching points:**

Plant foot opposite of turn- using "an 8 cleat plant"

Snap head to find ball

Don't slow down



**Drill:** Star Drill

**Level :** AA and up

**Purpose:** To work on outfield movement

**Execution:**

Player aligns in the outfield about 15 feet from coach

Coach gives player command and tosses ball

Drop Right- work on a 45 degree drop- coaches throws a pop up

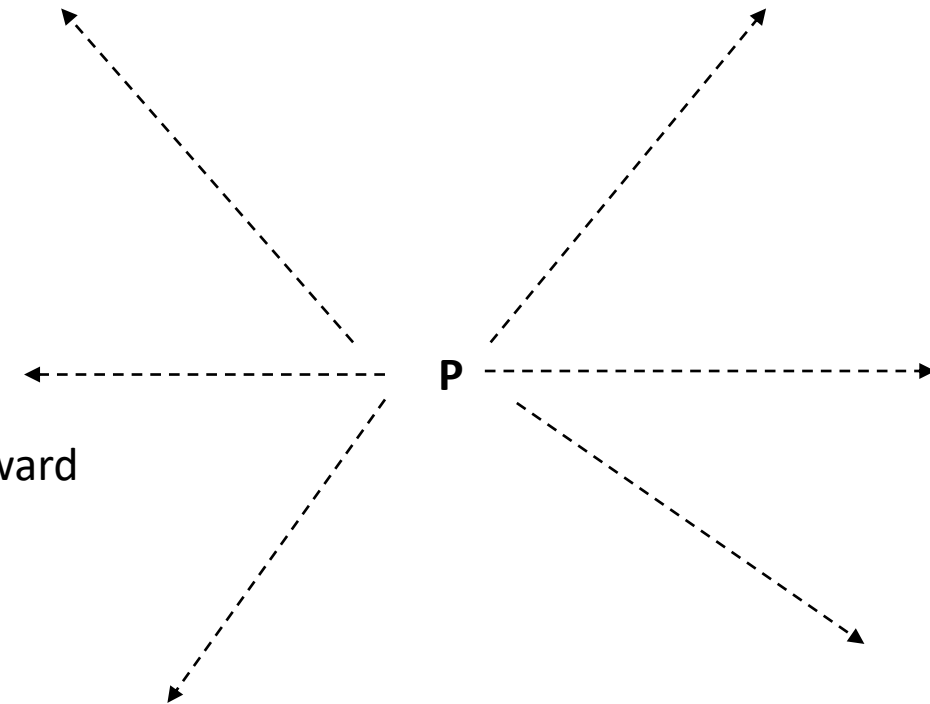
Drop left- work on 45 degree drop – coach throws a pop up

Forward right- forward at a 45 degree- coach throws under toss- player comes forward to make play

Forward left- forward at a 45 degree- coach throws under toss- player comes forward to make play

Side Right

Side Left



**Coach**

**Drill:** Double ball drill or multiple fly ball

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** Reaction to fly ball

**Execution:**

**Have player field a thrown pop up and then throw him another**

Age Group: 8+ year old

Time: 5-10 minutes

Purpose: This drill makes players think ahead

Equipment: Baseball, Glove, Base Runners

Setup: Have defensive players in position in left field, right field, third base, and first base

Execution: The ball is hit to either first or third base. The outfielders are to run in and backup the primary fielder.

Additional complexity can be added by hitting ball to short or second base and having the fielder make the play to first or third while the out fielders backup the primary play.

# Base- running

## **Baserunning Main Points:**

- 1. Know how many outs there are.**
- 2. Don't assume the fielder is going to make the play. Play the game to the fullest. Running full speed puts pressure on the fielders**
- 3. The runner should run *through* first, not to first. Run full speed past the bag.**
- 4. The runner should step on the front part of the bag.**
- 5. Don't leap to the bag.**
- 6. Sliding should only be used to avoid the tag. A feetfirst slide takes extra time, and a headfirst slide can cause injury and is illegal at the Little League level.**
- 7. Assume that balls hit to the outfield will be extra bases until the defense proves otherwise. Run full speed to first and take an aggressive turn. Take advantage of being a baserunner.**

## Rounding the bases

### 1. Home to first.

- a. Start out fast and in a straight line for about  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of the way to the bag.
- b. Begin to veer out at a 30 degree angle, and take a tight "question mark path." Make sure to touch the inside corner of the bag. Use the inside corner as a springboard. It does not matter if it is the player's left foot or right foot. Don't spend valuable time over-coaching this concept, instead spend your time coaching the proper path and maintaining high speed.

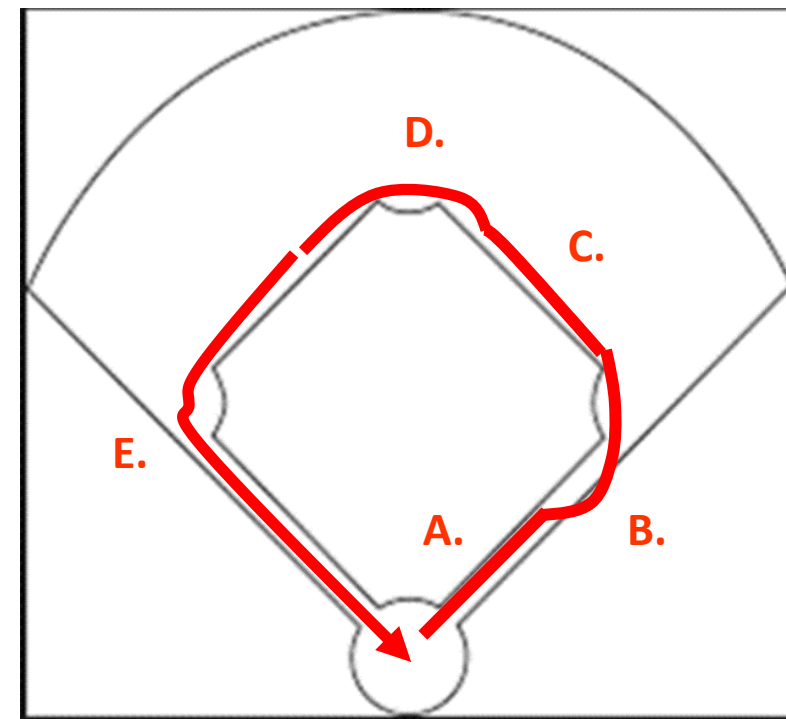


### C. After you have rounded first- hug the inside lip of the infield.

As the runner approaches second base he should be should find the baseball (if it is hit from right-center to left field. If the ball was hit to right field he should look at his 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach.

### D. Once again the player should touch the inside corner of the base. The player should immediately look for guidance from the 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach.

### E. Once the player gets the sign to go home from third base he should once again touch the inside corner of the base.



**Purpose:** To teach the players the basic concepts of running the bases, the concept that a player is safe on a base, and the direction that the players run on the bases.

**Execution:**

1. Players are dispersed in the infield grass. Coaches spread out and tag players who must freeze until they are tagged by a follow player in which case the player can resume running.
2. Next, if a player is tug they must sprint off to the side (teaching concept of what it means to be out). Instruct the players that if they are on a base (other than home plate) that they are safe and cannot tug out by a coach.
3. For the next round, divide players into groups and have them stand on designated bases. On go they must run to the next appropriate base. Coaches are in bath path trying to tag players. Players can avoid tags but must stay in base path.
4. Finally divided the players into two teams. Runners and taggers. Roll the ball to each player fielder. The players may progress to the next base on the roll. If a player executes a proper tag the runner must sit out.



## **Drill: Dizzy Bat Drill**

**Level: Single and AA (any level for a fun way to end practice)**

**Purpose:** To teach dropping the bat and not throwing it.

### **Execution:**

1. Divide players into equal teams and place them in lines.
2. Players start the drill on coach's command. Each player must place forehead on knob of bat and barrel on the grass.
3. Players must complete 10 turns and then sprint through the coach.
4. Players must drop bat and not throw bat.
5. Once player crosses coach- next player starts his turn.
6. Drill concludes when last player from team crosses finish line.

**Drill:** 4 base Chase

**Level:** Single A and up

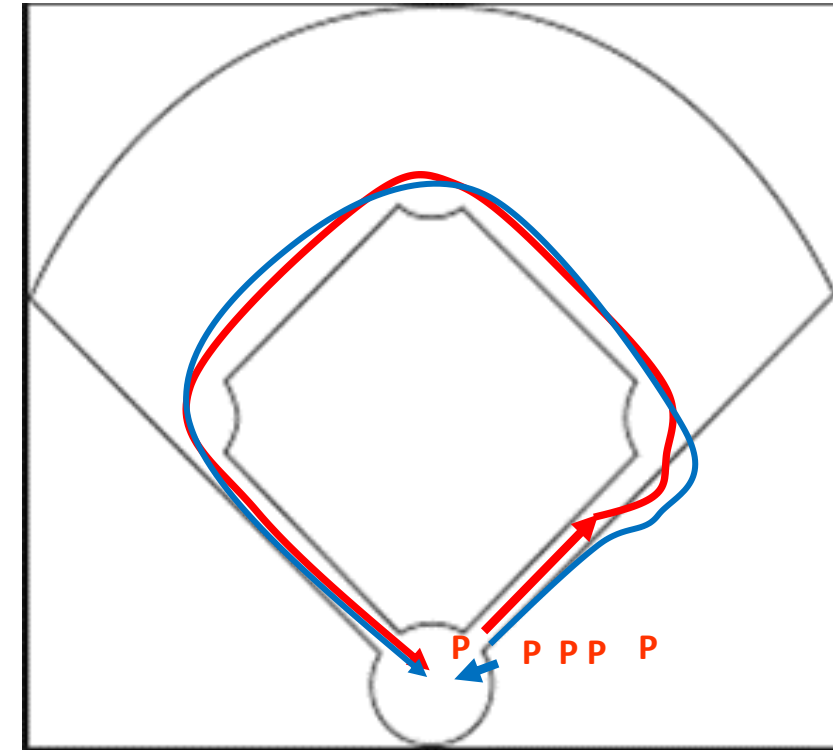
**Purpose:** To teach the baserunner proper sprinting out of the box and proper turns. This drill can also be used as a warmup, end of practice game, or mid practice

**Execution:**

1. Team starts in a line in foul territory away from potential baserunners coming home.
2. On coach's command first player sprints down the first baseline. The next player in line immediately gets into position to chase (and to be chased)
3. Coach send the next player when the previous player is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  way down the base line (this can be altered due to speed).
4. Drill concludes when all players cross home plate.

**Coaching Point:**

If players are having trouble making correct turns and taking a proper route to the next base, set up cones to mark the proper path. Players will take a path to the outside of the cones.



**Objective**

To demonstrate that the fastest player isn't always the best base runner; to understand how to make a proper turn when going from home to second and second to home

**Setup**

Field with bases (preferably pegged bases)

**Execution**

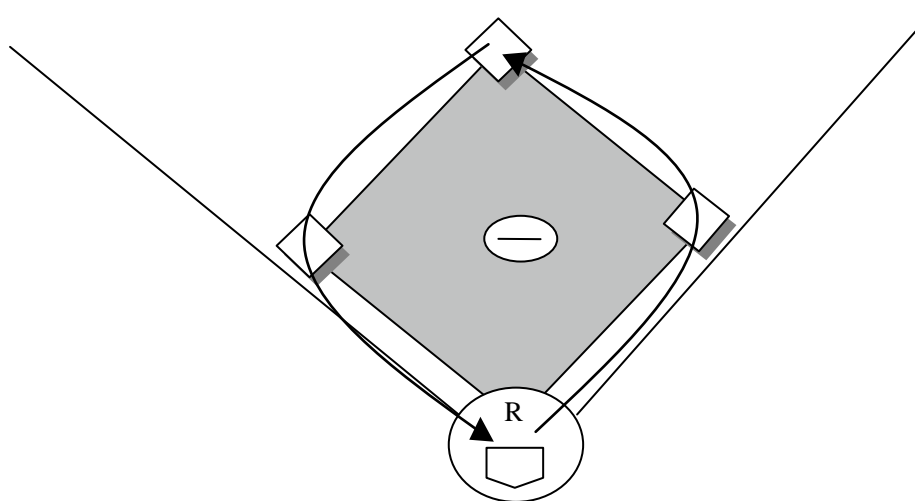
One player starts at second and the other starts at home. The coach stands on pitcher's mound and yells, "Go!" Player from second is simulating scoring on a hit. Player at home simulates running out a double. Whoever gets to his or her destination first wins. Point out players who adhere to proper fundamentals when running the bases well.

**Variations:**

2 base race

4 base race

4 players (one on each base)



**Drill:** 5 in 1 base running drill

**Level:** Majors

**Purpose:** To work on numerous base running techniques

**Execution and set up:**

- 1. Have players in 5 stations: 2 at home, 1 at first, 1 at second, 1 at third
- 2. To start drill have to players simulate batting

Drill starts on “on”

**Players at home** 1 batter runs through first base then stays at first.  
 1 batter goes from home to second practicing rounding 1<sup>st</sup>

**Runner at second** he will take a lead and round third base and score

**Runner on third** when he hears go he will go back to third base and tag up and score.

**Runner on first** he will take a lead and round second base and stop at first.

## Sliding techniques

First learn with a glove or a cone instead of a pegged base.

You can use cardboard

Slip and slides

In the grass

Experiment with different distances (generally start you slide about 5 to 7 feet prior to base)

### Bent-Leg Slide



Slide on butt (not side of leg)  
Make a figure 4 with legs  
Keep front foot up  
Keep arms and hands up

### Pop up Slide



Similar to pop up slide  
Contact front of bag with heel  
Allow momentum to carry you up



# Pitching

## **Developing pitching at the AA level**

Developing pitchers at the AA level starts with developing great throwing technique.

Practices at the beginning of the season should stress throwing and not address pitching at all.

As the season progresses and the players become stronger and better at throwing the coach may want to begin to include some basic pitching concepts.

1<sup>st</sup> start from the stretch.

2<sup>nd</sup> teach balance

3<sup>rd</sup> stress power T and follow through

## **AAA expectations**

As players progress into AAA they will be pitching full time.

Young players should be introduced to the wind-up and allowed plenty of time to practice during the season.

The more advanced pitchers should be the players selected to pitch in the games.

Locating pitches and control

## **Majors**

The additional emphasis at this level is mastering pitching from the stretch. This includes holding a runner on base and understanding what is and what isn't a balk.

Learning to change speeds should be introduced.

## Main Points

1. Feet-take a **small** step back with non-throwing side foot (rocker step), keeping the weight over the stationary foot, which is turned parallel and touching the rubber
2. Balance Position-non-throwing side leg comes up, is at waist level, torso is slightly forward so that the weight is centered over the pivot foot.
3. Power Position (Power T Position)-hand above the ball, take the ball down out of the glove and up (circular motion) as the front foot strides toward home plate.
4. Rotation-hand goes from above the ball to behind it as the release point is approached; elbow is above the shoulder.
5. Follow-through-end up in a good fielding position; the follow-through takes care of itself if mechanics are correct; don't be too picky about a perfect follow-through if the results are consistent.



## Grip:

1. Start young pitchers with a 4 seam fast ball (discussed in throwing section). The four seam grip will result in an accurate and faster pitch.
2. Player can progress to a 2 seam fast ball, which will result in a pitch with some movement.



## Balance and Load:

### From the wind-up

1. Feet should be shoulder width apart with the heels on the rubber (not the entire foot). Hands out in front and comfortable
2. Rocker- step: slight backward movement of non pitching hand foot. This should not be a big step.
3. Pivot and step down with throwing hand foot, foot should not be next to rubber

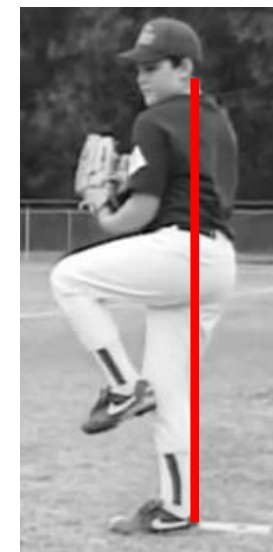


## Balance and Load (cont.)

4. Lift non-throwing hand leg. **(fig. a) Lift the leg- Don't swing the leg.**
  - a. back leg should have a slight bend
  - b. Front leg up but no tension- toes can be pointed down but not up
  - c. Knee pointed toward 3<sup>rd</sup> base (right hand pitcher) or first base (left handed pitcher)
  - d. Hands still together
  - e. The player should be balanced

## Power:

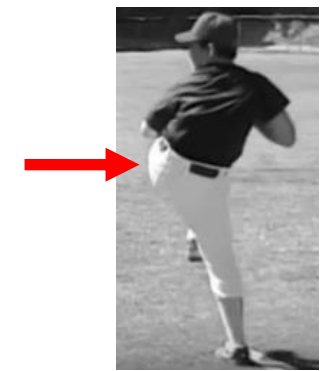
1. When striding toward the plate- lead with your front hip **(fig. b)**
2. Hands separate on stride. Thumbs down **(fig. c) feet stay in a straight line.**
3. Power Position (Power T Position)-hand above the ball, take the ball down out of the glove and up (circular motion) as the front foot strides toward home plate. In Power T (equal and opposite), front elbow, shoulders and back elbow are level. Spread your wings. Front toe has opened up to point at target. Ball is pointed toward center field. **(fig. d)**



**(fig. a)**



**(fig. c)**



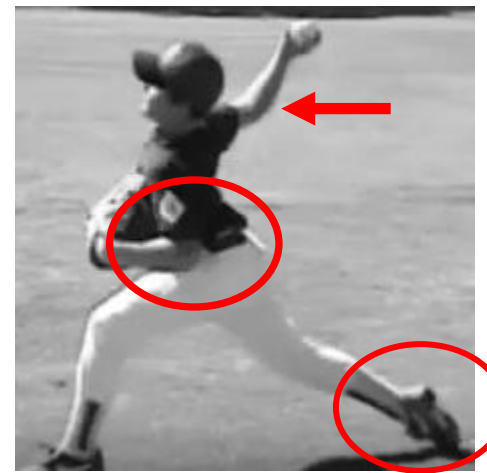
**(fig. b)**



**(fig. d)**

## Release and Finish:

1. Rotation-hand goes from above the ball to behind it as the release point is approached; elbow is above the shoulder. **(fig. e)**
2. **Back foot rotates** while eyes stay level and glove stays out in front. **(fig. e)**
3. Release point out in front, finish with flat back, and chest over thigh. **(fig. f) You are not getting to the release point- you want to get through the release point.**
4. Everything must be aligned- head, chest, toes
5. Follow-through-end up in a good fielding position; the follow-through takes care of itself if mechanics are correct; don't be too picky about a perfect follow-through if the results are consistent.



**(fig. e)**



**(fig. f)**

## Pitching from the stretch:

It is advisable to first teach pitching from the stretch and then move on to the wind- up.

2 reasons:

1. Natural progression from throwing motion
2. Almost 70% of pitches will start from the stretch.

## Balance

1. Start in the middle of the rubber.
2. Starting position – ball behind back to find seams.
3. Set position- hands together – eyes on target Back leg firm in ground, slight bent
4. Leg lift – up but not as high as wind up (runners on base) and slightly back to develop hip rotation and to help you lead with the hip.
5. **Get Equal and opposite on the throw (power T)**  
**Power/Stride/Release/Finish are the same a the wind up**



**Drill:** One Knee Drill

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** To isolate upper body mechanics to develop correct follow through and improved accuracy

**Execution:**

1. Players get set up on 1 knee in ready position
2. On coach's command players will get in to power T throwing position
3. When says release – the player will throw or simulate a throw.

Ready



Ready



Release



**Drill:** Balance Drill

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** To teach proper balance during the pitching motion.

**Execution:**

1. Line up pitchers and have them start from wind-up or stretch (early ages).
2. As they execute their leg lift instruct them to hold the position for 5 to 10 seconds.



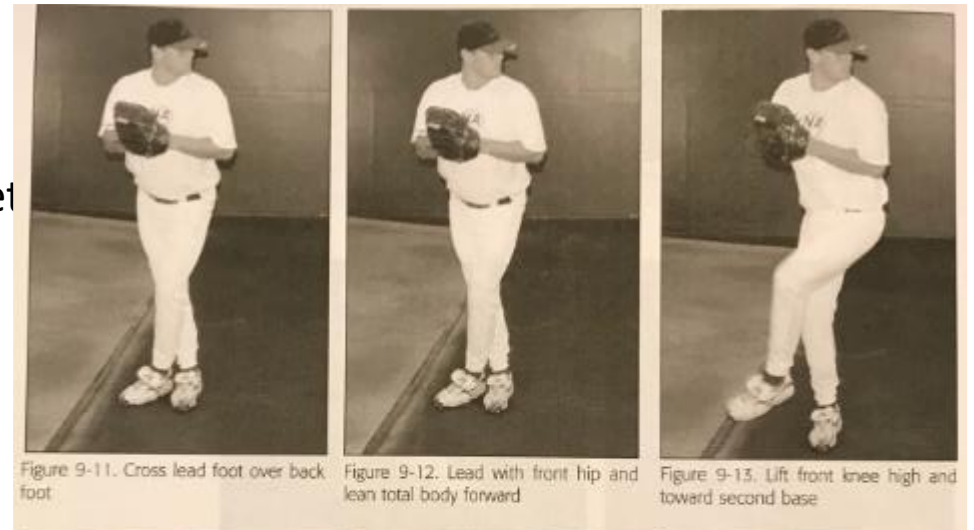
**Drill:** Cross over Drill

**Level:** AA and up

**Purpose:** To teach player to lead with front hip

**Execution:** This can be completed on the mound or on flat ground

1. Cross the lead foot over back foot. Show the batter your back pocket
2. lead with front hip and lean total body forward
3. Lift front knee high and toward second base
4. Land with opposite and equal
5. Eyes and glove to target
6. Throw to target



**Drill:** Narrowed Stance Drill

**Execution:** Just like cross over drill but instead of crossing over bring both feet and knees together and stagger your feet so that the ball of the back foot is even with the arch of the front.



## Drill: Wall/Fence Drill

Level: AAA and up

**Purpose:** To teach pitchers to lead with their front hip

### Execution:

1. Set up nice and close to a wall or the fence (about 1 ½ away) as if you are pitching from the stretch.
2. Pre-set your hip
3. Leg lift- eye on target
4. Start your delivering while looking at your target (wall)
5. Lead with hip into wall and hold for 5 seconds. The only part of the body touching the wall is the front hip.

### Coaching points:

Lead with hip

Keep head level throughout

Leg lift and thrust



## Drill: The Rocker Drill

**Level:** AAA and up

**Purpose:** To develop hip/shoulder mechanics

### Execution:

1. Player gets in a wide stance that simulates his stride
2. Front foot is at 45 degrees
3. Arms opposite and equal (power T)
4. Rock back and forth
5. Separate and throw – follow through
6. Throwing foot ends with shoe lace down or follow through





## Drill: Sit Drives

**Level:** majors and up

**Purpose:** To develop leg drive.

### Execution:

Set up bucket on pitcher's mound

Player sits on bucket making sure his knees are inside his ankle

Rock back

Drive forward



**Drill:** Towel Drill

**Level:** AAA up

**Purpose:** To work on pitching mechanics without stressing arm. Getting to stride length and arm action

**Execution:**

Perform from wind-up and/stretch

Have a partner align out in front and try to hit his glove with the towel out in front and up (not down).





# Playing Catcher

**Information Contributed: by Brian Flynn**

## Primary Stance Level: (AA and up)

The Primary stance is used when there are no runners on base, and a past ball or steal is not a concern.

The catchers feet are shoulder width apart, and pointed out slightly. The catcher can be relaxed with their butt down.

The catchers elbow on their glove hand should be out so that the wrist and elbow are at the same height. This will allow the catcher to receive the ball and cushion (and frame as they age) the pitch as it is received.

The catchers throwing hand should be protected (behind back, leg or foot). The throwing hand should not rest on the catchers knee.

**Drill:** For young catchers, they can enter the primary stance easily by standing with feet shoulder width apart (like a fielder), and then squatting. As catchers age, they should work on moving from a Signal stance to the Primary stance by either hopping, or "walking" into it by taking a small step with each foot.



## Secondary Stance

**Level:** AAA and up

The Secondary stance is used when there are runners on base and a past ball or steal is a concern. The secondary stance is similar to the Primary stance, however the catcher is in a more athletic position to stop a ball in the dirt or throw a runner out.

The catchers feet are shoulder width apart, and pointed out slightly.

The catchers butt is raised off their legs (butt up) so their thighs are parallel to the ground.

The catchers elbow on their glove hand should be out so that the wrist and elbow are at the same height. This will allow the catcher to receive the ball and cushion (and frame as they age) the pitch as it is received.

The catchers throwing hand should be in a fist and situated behind the catchers mitt, but not resting on the mitt or catchers chest. The throwing hand is protected but is ready to transfer the ball quickly to throw.



### **Conditioning - Square Hoping/Walking**

The catcher in full gear (without helmet and glove) gets into a secondary stance. Using an imaginary square, with each side being about 10 feet in length, walks and hops around the square. The catcher should maintain a secondary position throughout the entire exercise. The catcher will walk forward approximately 10 feet, then turn to their right and hop forward 10 feet, then without turning, walk sideways to the right 10 feet, then turn right and hop sideways another 10 feet. The catcher should end at the same point they began. Depending on the age, the square should be repeated a number of times. Once that has been complete, the square should be repeated moving to the left instead of the right.

### **Conditioning - Ready-Block-Throw**

The catcher in full gear should run in place using quick feet, then the coach will yell ready, and the catcher should immediately breakdown into a secondary ready position, the coach can then yell block, and the catcher immediately drops to block a ball, the coach will then yell Throw, and the catcher should spring to their feet in a throwing position (power tee for catchers). When the coach yells go, the catcher runs in place using quick feet again. The exercise can be repeated as long as necessary.

### **Soft Hands**

The catcher in full gear (without helmet and glove) gets into a primary stance. A coach will underhand toss a ball to the catcher from about 10 feet away. The catcher should practice receiving the ball bare handed. That is, the catcher should catch the ball without stabbing, reaching out, or grabbing the ball. The catcher should concentrate on framing the ball towards their belly button by an inch or two. The catcher will also concentrate on catching the ball first with the index finger and thumb (how their hand should catch in the mitt).

## Signal Stance

**Level:** Majors and up

This is the stance many young players use to receive the pitcher, however it should only be used between pitches (when giving signs). The player is not in an athletic position but in a relaxed and sometimes unbalanced position.

The Catcher is relaxed, feet are close together, their glove hangs past the left knee.

Having their feet together allows the knees to angle towards first and third bases providing room to give signs to the pitcher without the base coaches being able to see them.

The glove hand should hang over the (left) knee so the glove blocks the view of the base coach.

Signs should be given to the pitcher using the throwing hand (typically right) deep in the groin to prevent anyone but the pitcher from seeing the sign.

It is important to ensure the catchers knees angle out so the pitcher can see the signs.



## Signs

**Level:** Majors and up

- 1 Index finger straight down. Typically 4 seam Fastball
- 2 Index finger and middle fingers straight down (As catcher ages should use Index and Pinky). Typically a 2 seam Fastball
- 3 Middle, Ring, and Pinky (OK sign) pointing down. Typically off-speed pitch (Curve or Change-Up)
- 4 Index, Middle, Ring, and Pinky pointing down. Typically off-speed pitch (Curve or Change-Up)
- 5 Make a fist. Typically a pitch out

Thumb - Thumb pointing to the side. Typically a throw over to a base.



## Skill: Throwing

Level: Majors and up

**Note: Catcher specific throwing should not be taught to young players.**

When throwing, a catcher's elbow should remain above their shoulder like any other fielder, however the throw is shortened, by keeping the hand and ball around the ear.

A catcher's throwing motion is like drawing a bow and arrow, the hand circles the ear, and is not brought all the way back into a power tee position.



## Skill: Blocking

Level: AAA

When a catcher blocks a ball, the catcher drops or scoots to their knees. The catcher should attempt to get directly behind the ball, and angle themselves towards home plate.

Their elbows are tucked in at their waist / hips tightly, they position both hands between their legs, with the throwing hand behind the glove (to block the 5 hole).

The catcher's chest should not be stiff, but soft and angled slightly, so the shoulders are above the knees. When / if the ball bounces off their chest protector, the ball is deadened, and it will allow for space to form between the catcher's body and chest protector to soften the impact of the ball.

One of the hardest things for players to do is watch the ball the entire time, as it hits the ground and then themselves. The natural reaction is to turn their head, however this increases the chance for injury. Turning their head exposes their neck to potential impact.

Watching the ball ensures their neck is protected by the throat protector. It also ensures the catcher is able to recover the ball quickly to keep runners on base.



### **Blocking**

The catcher in full gear, can be in a blocking positing, already down on their knees. The coach, standing about 10-15 feet away, throws balls into the ground at the catcher to block. The catcher should work on blocking without sticking out their chest, and control the block of the ball back towards the center of the plate.

### **Stick Blocks**

The catcher is in a secondary position behind the plate, and using a hitting stick (or bat), the coach points to a location on the ground to simulate where a pitch lands. The coach should rotate where the simulated ball lands around the plate. The catcher reacts and mimics blocking the ball back towards the center of the plate. The catcher should concentrate on getting out around the ball (angling back towards the plate), and springing up quickly to field the blocked ball.

### **Thrown Blocks**

The catcher is in a secondary position behind the plate, the coach throws balls into the dirt for the catcher to block. The coach should rotate where the simulated ball lands around the plate. The catcher reacts and blocks the ball back towards the center of the plate. The catcher should concentrate on getting out around the ball (angling back towards the plate), and springing up quickly to field the blocked ball. Ideally a blocked ball will stay in the area of the plate or batters box.

### **Shadowing (2 Catchers)**

Two catchers in secondary positions face each other. Taking turns, one catcher drops to block an imaginary ball. The other catcher mimics the block of the first catcher. The catcher should concentrate on good form, and shortening the reaction time between when the first catcher blocks until they react. This drill enhances reaction times while practicing blocking form.

## Scooping

**Level:** AA and up

When fielding a bunt, catchers should field the ball with their back to the mound, even if they have to step over the ball to field it. When scooping a bunt, both the glove and throwing hand should be used in a sweeping motion towards each other.



## Bunting Drill

The catcher in full gear, squats behind the plate as normal. A coach stands behind the catcher & rolls out balls to field bunts. The catcher should field the bunts using a scooping motion with their back to the mound. If available, the catcher can complete the throw to first, or feint the throw.

**Skill:** Pop-Ups

**Level:** AA and up

Pop-ups in foul territory round home plate will have enough back spin so that the ball will end up coming back towards the field of play.

As such, the catcher's back should be towards the mound.

For a pop-up a catcher should remove their mask immediately, but only throw it away once they have found the ball.

Once the catcher is under the ball, the mask should be thrown away from the direction of the ball towards the fence in foul territory. This ensures it will not be in the catcher or other fielder's way.

Coach and toss the ball

Use machine

Or hit fungo



A faded, circular background image showing a group of people, possibly a team, standing in a circle. The image is light gray and serves as a backdrop for the main text.

# Team Drills

**Drill name:** Pickle

**Level:** A and AA

A.K.A. Hot Box

A.K.A. Run Down

A.K.A. Running the Bases

The rules of the game are pretty simple.

You'll need two bases (we used Mom's rugs), a softball and two softball gloves (if you don't have the gloves just use a ball that's not "hard.")

Set up the two bases about 20 feet apart.

Two kids would be selected to be "it", one at each base.

The other kids would divide and go to the bases.

The game started by the two kids who were "it" tossing the ball to each other.

The object of the game was to time running from one base to the other without being tagged by the ball.

If you were tagged then you were "it" and the game continued, usually until all the kids were too tired to run anymore.

The fun of the game was getting the person who was "it" to throw a wide pitch or "steal" the base.

## Soft Toss Game

Play a full field game with constantly rotating players and hitters where pitches come in as soft toss....this is essentially a never ending situations game. Keep track of situations (“man on first, two outs”) and make the defense say it out loud before every batter. Discuss what the general plan is...getting the lead runner, keeping the ball in the infield, cutting off a late inning run...) Let the normal play dictate the situations and then discuss options as they arise. This gets a lot of people at bats in a very short period of time, and the situations change constantly.



**Drill:** 4 corners

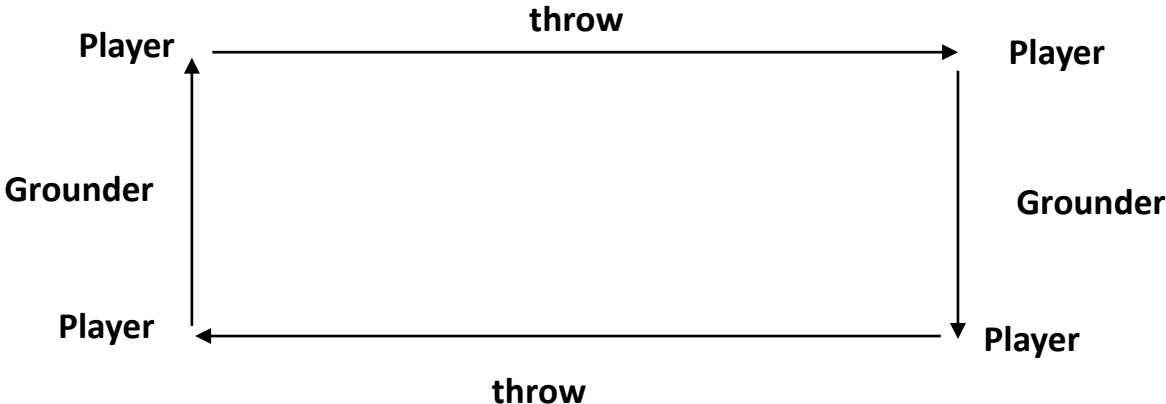
**Level:** All (with variations) including distance

**Purpose:** To develop specific fielding skills and conditioning

**Execution:**

Divide team in four corners  
Corners range from 30 feet to 60 feet  
Players chase after their throw/roll

**Basic Format:**



**Variations:**

- Grounders- throw- grounder-throw**
- Pop-ups- throw-pop ups- throw**
- Pick-off move- throw- pick-off move- throw**
- Catcher- snap throw-catcher- snap- throw**

**This drill only limited by your creativity**

**Coaching Points:**

Good drill to do inside  
Always make sure player is paying attention before ball is thrown  
Hustle must be stress

## Drill: Mini-Diamond Drill

**Level:** All (with variations) but especially AA and up

**Purpose:** To develop the mental knowledge of base coverage, backing up, knowing where to throw. The reason to use a mini-diamond is to develop the mental game while increasing number of reps. and reducing the amount of time wasted due to errors and errant throws.

### Execution:

Set up bases (rubber mats, bases, or anything that can serve as a landmark for bases) about 15 to 20 feet apart.

Coach can work small groups such as middle infielders, infield only, outfield and infield.

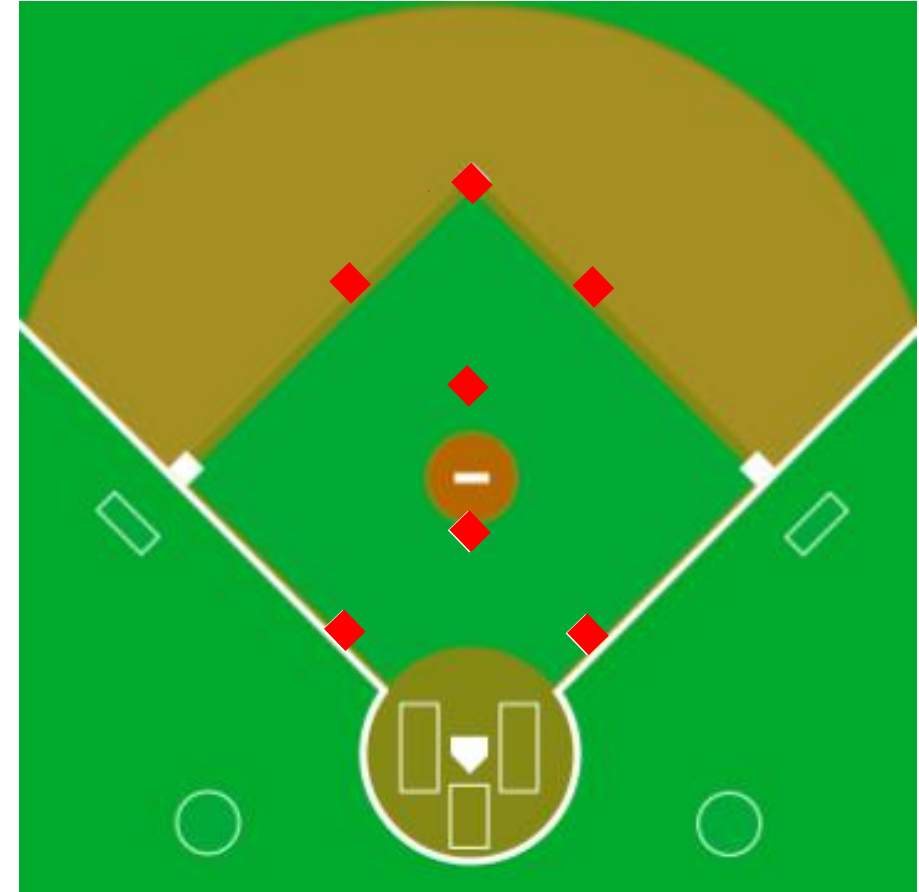
Coach provides situation (you can use or not use baserunners) and simulates a batted ball by rolling or tossing a ball. The players will execute the proper movement with or without the ball. Where are you going with the ball? Who is covering what base? Who is backing up?

### Coaching Points:

Good drill to do inside or in limited space such as a parking lot, or in a station

Coach needs to emphasize that it is more of a drill for players who did **not have the ball hit to them.**

Easy to reset the situation and walk through proper movements.



# Miscellaneous items

**Drill Creation tips**

**A and AA position and batting order matrix**

**Scorecard**

**Advice for batting order (9 player lineup) (10+ player lineup)**

**Bat length and Bat Size**

**Working with Parents**

**Parental Expectations**

The purpose of this document to help coaches, parents, and players to understand what skills are expected per position as you reach higher levels of little league.

The “must-be able to do” list of skills primary addresses safety concerns. It is the number one responsibility of the coach to do their best to limit the dangers on the baseball field. It is important that a player demonstrates these skills.

The “Should-be-able to do” list primary deals with skills that players should be working to accomplish. Not meeting these skills doesn’t prevent a player from playing a position because of safety reasons.

The list of drills is to provide coaches with a plan for player improvement.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Must be able to do</b>	<b>Should be able to do</b>	<b>Drills</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> base</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Track a thrown ball and protect themselves with a glove.</li><li>Catch the ball that is thrown at them</li><li>Pay attention during the game</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Catch a ball thrown on different planes</li><li>Field grounders</li></ul>	Pages 78-80
<b>Pitcher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Protect themselves with a glove.</li><li>Real home plate on a pitch</li><li>Pay attention during the game</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consistently throw strikes</li><li>Understand base coverage responsibilities</li></ul>	Pages 110-122 Pages 60-75
<b>Catcher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Track a thrown ball and protect themselves with a glove.</li><li>Catch the ball that is thrown at them</li><li>Pay attention during the game</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Catch a pitch thrown on different planes</li><li>Reach second base on a throw</li></ul>	Pages 123-133
<b>Infield</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pay attention during the game</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Track a thrown ball and protect themselves with a glove.</li><li>Catch the ball that is thrown at them</li><li>Understand base coverage responsibility</li><li>Reach 1<sup>st</sup> base on a throw</li></ul>	Pages 81-93
<b>Outfield</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pay attention during the game</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Field a batted ball</li><li>Understand the concept of backing up and hitting the cutoff man</li></ul>	Pages 94-100

For lower levels such as A and AA consider making a matrix to organize your line ups and monitor positions played and batting order throughout the year.

**Note: The safety of the player always comes first. Players who are inattentive should not be playing first base or pitcher.**

		<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>Batting Order</b>	<b>Inning</b>	<b>Inning</b>	<b>Inning</b>
<b>1</b>		<b>3B</b>	<b>LC</b>	<b>2B</b>
<b>2</b>		<b>LC</b>	<b>2B</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>3</b>		<b>2B</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>LF</b>
<b>4</b>		<b>P</b>	<b>LF</b>	<b>1B</b>
<b>5</b>		<b>LF</b>	<b>1B</b>	<b>RC</b>
<b>6</b>		<b>1B</b>	<b>RC</b>	<b>SS</b>
<b>7</b>		<b>RC</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>CF</b>
<b>8</b>		<b>SS</b>	<b>3B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>9</b>		<b>RF</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>LC</b>
<b>10</b>		<b>C</b>	<b>RF</b>	<b>3B</b>
<b>11</b>		<b>RF</b>	<b>3B</b>	<b>LC</b>

Team:



home  
away

Opponent:

Field:

Umpire:

Date:

Start Time:

End Time:

#	Player	Pos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	AB	R	H	RBI	
			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
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			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
			◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇					
<b>Totals</b>		Runs															
		Hits															
		Errors															
		Left On															
#	Pitcher	IP	Win/Loss	Save	Hits	Runs	ER	Walks	K	HB	BK	WP					

**BATTING ORDER  
NINE-MAN BALL**

Batting order	Player Characteristics
1. Leadoff Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good speed</li> <li>• Good eye</li> <li>• Good base runner</li> </ul>
2. Second Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unselfish</li> <li>• Good contact hitter</li> <li>• Good bunter</li> <li>• Good eye</li> </ul>
3. Best Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Left-handed (if possible)</li> <li>• High average</li> <li>• Good speed</li> <li>• Makes good contact</li> <li>• Power is a plus</li> </ul>
4. Power Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good power</li> <li>• Good pitch selection</li> <li>• Extra base hits</li> </ul>
5. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much like attributes for Power Hitter</li> <li>• Drive in Runs</li> </ul>
6. Contact Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the ball in play</li> <li>• Doesn't strike out much</li> <li>• Good speed</li> <li>• Base stealer</li> </ul>
7. Contact Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much like attributes for Second Hitter</li> <li>• Not as good a hitter</li> </ul>
8. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor contact</li> <li>• Some power</li> <li>• Not a high average hitter</li> </ul>
9. Leadoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second lead off man</li> <li>• Good eye</li> <li>• Base stealer</li> </ul>

- Try to mix-up right and left-handed hitters. This keeps the pitcher from getting into a rhythm – throwing to the same side of the plate to several hitters in a row.
- Mix your speed players in between your slow players. This will keep you from ending up with all slow runners on the bases at one time. (Just don't stick your slowest player in the 8 slot before your two fastest "lead-off" hitters. In fact, try to follow your slowest base runner with a good contact hitter to give him a better chance of advancing).
- Place a left-handed hitter behind a base stealer. This blocks the catcher's vision of the runner and creates a hole when the first baseman holds the runners on.

## BATTING ORDER EVERYBODY BATS

Batting order	Player Characteristics
1. Leadoff Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good speed</li> <li>• Good eye</li> <li>• Good base runner</li> </ul>
2. Second Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unselfish</li> <li>• Good contact hitter</li> <li>• Good bunter</li> <li>• Good eye</li> </ul>
3. Best Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Left-handed (if possible)</li> <li>• High average</li> <li>• Good speed</li> <li>• Makes good contact</li> <li>• Power is a plus</li> </ul>
4. Power Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good power</li> <li>• Good pitch selection</li> <li>• Extra base hits</li> </ul>
5. Second Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much like attributes for Power Hitter</li> <li>• Drive in runs</li> </ul>
6. Contact Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the ball in play</li> <li>• Doesn't strike out much</li> <li>• Good speed</li> <li>• Base stealer</li> </ul>

7. Weak base runner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If he puts the ball in play can contribute</li> <li>• If he gets on, needs help to advance bases</li> </ul>
8. Contact Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much like Second Hitter attributes</li> <li>• Not a great hitter but could help advance 6, 7 hitters</li> </ul>
9. Third Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Okay contact</li> <li>• Enough power</li> <li>• Can help plate previous runners</li> </ul>
10. Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determined hitter to keep inning alive</li> </ul>
11. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent hitter</li> <li>• Power when he connects</li> </ul>
12. Weak Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to swing</li> <li>• Determined to improve</li> </ul>
13. Leadoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second lead off man</li> <li>• Good eye</li> <li>• Base stealer</li> </ul>

- Main objective is to eliminate weak innings by spreading power, sprinkling in contact hitters. Always make sure speed leads slower runners (don't tie up the speedsters). Work on making weaker hitters better
- Try to mix-up right and left-handed hitters. This keeps the pitcher from getting into a rhythm-throwing to the same side of the plate to several hitters in a row.
- Mix your speed players in between your slow players. This will keep you from ending up with all slow runners on the bases at one time. (Just don't stick your slowest player in the 8 slot before your two fastest "lead-off" hitters. In fact, try to follow your slowest base runner with a good contact hitter to give him a better chance of advancing).
- Place a left-handed hitter behind a base stealer. This blocks the catcher's vision of the runner and creates a hole when the first baseman holds the runners on.



## BAT LENGTH

To determine the correct length, consider the players height and weight. The chart below offers some guidelines and a general idea of the length of bat that fits your body.

Height Weight	36" to 41"	41" to 44"	45" to 49"	50" to 52"	53" to 56"	57" to 60"	61" to 64"	65" to 69"	69" to 72"	73" & up
60 lbs & under	26"	27"	28"	29"	29"					
61-70 lbs	27"	27"	28"	29"	30"	30"				
71-80 lbs		28"	28"	29"	30"	30"	31"			
81-90 lbs		28"	29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	32"		
91-100 lbs		28"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	32"	
101-110 lbs		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	32"	
111-120 lbs		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	32"	
121-130 lbs		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
131-140 lbs		29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
141-150 lbs			30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
151-160 lbs			30"	31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	33"
161-170 lbs				31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	33"
171-180 lbs						32"	33"	33"	33"	33"
180 lbs & up							33"	33"	33"	33"

## BAT SIZING

The right bat for you is one that lets you generate maximum bat speed. You accomplish this with a bat that's not too long or too heavy. The best way to find the "right" bat is to start with the sizing chart. Then try different size bats in that general length range. The bat that feels "comfortable" and "easy to swing" should be selected.

Height Weight	3'-3'4"	3'5"- 3'8"	3'9"-4'	4'1"- 4'4"	4'5"- 4'8"	4'9"-5'	5'1"- 5'4"	5'5"- 5'8"	5'9"-6'	6'1"- over
Under 60 lbs	26"	26"	28"	29"	29"					
61-70 lbs	27"	27"	28"	29"	30"	30"				
71-80 lbs		28"	28"	29"	30"	30"	31"			
81-90 lbs		28"	29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	32"		
91-100 lbs		28"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
101-110 lbs		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
111-120 lbs		29"	29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"		
121-130 lbs		29"	30"	30"	30"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
131-140 lbs		29"	30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
141-150 lbs			30"	30"	31"	31"	32"	33"	33"	
151-160 lbs			30"	31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	33"
161-170 lbs				31"	31"	32"	32"	33"	33"	34"
171-180 lbs						32"	33"	33"	34"	34"
180 lbs & up							33"	33"	34"	34"

## MOST POPULAR LENGTH BY AGE

AGE	5-7	8-9	10	11-12	13-14	15-16
LENGTH	24"-26"	26"-28"	28"-29"	30"-31"	31"-32"	32"-33"

## **Working with Parents:**

The parents meeting is the single best means of setting the tone for the season. If a meeting isn't possible to set up, send an introductory email that covers the items listed on the meeting agenda.

Try to run it in an informal manner where parents feel free to talk freely about their questions or concerns.

***Try to make it so parents feel welcome to contribute. You may want to do everything yourself but you'll find if you get some parents that are willing to help, good things can really happen.***

Remember a practice with no parents helping is a disaster and one with 5-6 parents helping is usually a big success.

## **PARENTS MEETING AGENDA**

### **Coaches Background**

Talk about your background and why you're coaching.

### **Coaches Goal for the Season**

I want your kid to play again next year.

### **Coaching Philosophy**

Help kids learn the game

Teach kids how to listen to the coach

Teach kids how to deal with mistakes

Honor the Game

### **What you can expect out of the coach:**

Do all I can to make things fun for players so their skills improve and they truly want to play again next year.

Practice will start on time and end on time.

I will plan every minute of every practice to maximize player improvement and fun.

I will do my best to play kids where they have the best chance to succeed and I will give them opportunities to play where they want to play (once they have shown me they can succeed in practice).

### **What we would like from the parents:**

Cheer for all teams

Work with your player or players at home

Help me out at practice, there is no such thing as too many assistants and in T-ball, more coaches than players is definitely preferred.

Let me know immediately if you are unhappy with anything

Be on time for practices and games

RSVP for games and practices

### **Top tips to for coaches to avoid parental problems**

- 1. Smile and have fun with the kids**
- 2. Be organized**
- 3. Keep practices meaningful, organized, safe, and fun**
- 4. Keep a matrix for games (single A and double A) this has been provided to you**
- 5. Communicate with parents on a timely fashion**
- 6. Ask them to assist with the team. Its tough to complain if you are an assistant. It is also tough to complain if you were asked to be an assistant and declined.**

## **Parental Expectations**

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Players must be receptive to coaching. A parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. How and when a parent expresses their feelings can have a decided effect upon the player.

**Lenape Valley Baseball encourages the following approach from parents:**

***Be a part of your player's experience:*** Please volunteer to coach or be a team mom, more hands make a lighter load.

***Encourage your player to be a self-advocate.*** Remind them that they can always discuss concerns with their coach.

***Be positive with your player.*** Let them know you are proud that they are part of the team. Focus on the benefits of teamwork the value of the player's individual role, and the importance of giving a great effort.

***Allow your athlete to perform and progress at a level consistent with his ability.*** Athletes mature at different ages; some are more gifted than others.

***Cheer for our team and players. Opponents and umpires deserve respect.*** Realize that little league players will make mistakes. Your support is needed during tough times.

***Winning is fun, but building stronger individuals and promoting positive team values is most important.*** The concept of working together to perform a task will have lasting benefits. Winning is more likely to occur when all the little things are done correctly.

## Voicing concerns

It is **NEVER** acceptable for a parent to attempt to discuss playing time with a coach during a game or practice. It is also **NEVER** acceptable for a parent to attempt to discuss the performance or playing time of another participant.

The Head Coach, athlete, and/or parent meetings may help to resolve issues (including playing time) creating concern or dissatisfaction. Such meetings **MUST** be scheduled beforehand and will be on campus. Any meeting with a parent must include the player and may also include an assistant coach, or trainer.