**Coaches Guide**

*(If printed we recommend 2 pages per sheet double sided landscape orientation and in color)*

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**INTRODUCTION**

**Purpose.** The purpose of the document was to record a coaching approach that is straightforward to implement, practical in its intent, and results in a team of competitive and fundamentally sound players.

The authors evolved the approach over a number of years coaching at levels from just above coach-pitch through high school (and some summer league teams with a mix of high school and college level players). Tactics from formal college baseball programs are also incorporated into this manual.

Even for much younger teams we found almost all concepts and drills presented (such as those typically learned at college or high school level) were easily understood and successfully implemented.

The structure of this document assumes a worst-case scenario regarding preparation time ahead of Game 1 as follows:

**Assumptions.**

1. Four weeks or less between a draft or “cut” day and Game 1
2. Only one to two practice days available per week before Game 1
3. Practices limited to 1-2 hours per session due to coach and/or player schedules
4. Some players not able to attend every practice
5. Limited outdoor practice opportunities (mainly due to weather)
6. Wide spectrum of talent on the team (some players poor, some excellent)

Therefore, given these assumptions, a very austere approach for preparation leading up to Game 1 is presented. This can easily be augmented according to your actual available practice time and field access. This approach, especially the drills, should be augmented to be a bit more lenient for very young (but above coach-pitch level) teams.

Regardless, even the austere approach will result in a fundamentally sound team able to meaningfully compete during the season with individual players by season’s end prepared to play at higher levels.

This document also covers the administrative component of coaching such as evaluations, drafting, communication, practice scheduling, etc.

It is understood by the authors the level of perfection attainable by a player is typically much less at younger ages than older, especially with aspects relying on strength. However, the authors unexpectedly found the younger ages easily able to absorb the concepts in this document and therefore were able implement almost every aspect presented. *It was the mistake of opposing coaches to think otherwise.*

Conditioning and many additional baseball drills are not covered in this document due to the assumptions listed above. It is understood by the authors that an appropriate level of conditioning is required for different positions at higher levels of play. And it is understood that many advanced baseball drills can be supplemented to this approach. However, both will remain outside of the scope of this document.

Finally, it is also understood by the authors the discipline and oversight required will be much less for older vs younger players – sometimes! Regardless, no matter the age level it was found better to always state the expectation of their behavior and consequences to the contrary.

We hope this approach serves as a solid starting point by sparing you the trial and error we encountered during our early years of coaching. We hope you enjoy the same levels of success we experienced using this approach.

We thank God for allowing us to coach together and assemble this document.

Sincerely,

Pete, Sean, Pops, and Chris

**GUIDE FORMAT AND CAUTION**

**Guide Format.** Sections are organized in order typically encountered during the season:

* Pre-Draft (or “Cut”)
* Draft Day (or “Cut Day”)
* Post-Draft (or “Cut Day”)
* Game 1 Preparation
* Regular Season Game 1
* Remaining Regular Season Games and Adjustments
* Post Season Preparation and Play
* Season Wrap Up

Each section is then comprised of trackable steps.

Drills are organized into “Set Up”, “Overview”, “Execution”, and “What to Look For and Immediately Correct” sections so you are not just merely conducting a drill, but also using the drill to identify necessary improvements.

Reminder - the assumption with this approach is you have only one practice a week over the next 4 weeks to prepare a team of players with a wide spectrum of talent for Game 1.

Modify this approach depending on your team, schedule, coaching experience, and preference.

**Caution!**  This is a no-nonsense approach requiring your focus and both your best communication and organization skills. It requires **you** to **not** take any shortcuts with league rules! And although it does not guarantee a winning record for the season, it will result in a team where each player becomes better by season’s end than when they started.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Positions**

* 1b or “one”: First base or first baseman
* 2b or “two”: Second base or second baseman
* 3b or “three”: Third base or third baseman
* 4 or “four” or “the plate”: Home base
* P: Pitcher
* CF: Center Field (or center fielder)
* LF: Left Field (or left fielder)
* RF: Right Field (or right fielder)
* Left Center: Halfway between center field and left field
* Right Center: Halfway between center field and right field

**Terms**

* Backstop: The fence or wall behind the umpire.
* Bag: A base
* Baseline or Line: Out of bounds line
* Box: The batter’s box
* Continuous Walk or Continuous Steal: When a batter is walked to 1st and instead of stopping at 1st continues to run to an unoccupied second base to intentionally draw a throw from the catcher
* Dirt Ball: Ball that is pitched or thrown in the dirt (almost always by accident)
* Dropped Third: A strike thrown by the pitcher that the catcher drops accidently (batter can try to steal 1st when this occurs)
* In the hole: The batter after the next batter
* On deck: The next batter
* Shallow: The portion of the outfield very close to the infield
* Straight Away: No shifting (example player plays exactly in the center field spot vs shifting a few steps to the right or left of dead-center field)
* Suit Up: Catcher put on his equipment
* Ump: Umpire

**PRE-DRAFT**

1. **Review the sections of this guide.** If you’ve not read this guide before, do so at a high level before continuing any further so you are familiar with the order of what to execute during the season.
2. **Determine your goal as a coach.** Even if you were “involuntarily volunteered” to be a coach or are a coach of last resort, you need a goal that is not just “make it through the season” or “win games”. A simple achievable goal such as “develop the players and have a successful season” is your best bet. And a successful season does not mean “winning” (although it sure helps), but instead is measured by the improvement of the players and the team by season’s end. You will not go wrong with this as your goal. The wins will come as the team gets better.
3. **Being wrong.** Accept that as a head coach you will be wrong and make mistakes (about strategies, play calls, etc.). This approach requires you to be humble. Be ready to apologize to fellow coaches, players, and umpires when you are wrong.
4. **Communication.** Make up your mind **now** that you will communicate frequently with your team (usually via texting or similar) regarding practices, games, and cancellations.
5. **Abide by the rules.** Get the rule book from the league commissioner and be familiar with the pitcher’s rules, the bat size rules, the innings-played rules – all of it. No matter what level you coach, do not shortcut or violate the rules. An ill-gained victory is no victory at all. You will forever have to look back on a win that required deceit as its foundation and realize you are \*that\* kind of coach. This is not good for the kids, the parents, the community, or you.
6. **View the “Draft Day” section of this document.** If applicable, be familiar with the drafting rules and how automatic drafting of players might occur.
7. **Find Assistant Coaches.** Be sure assistant coaches are on the same page with you regarding the goals for the team.
   1. Do NOT coach with anyone you are not on the same page with because when things are not going well during the season (especially a game) you will likely argue vs working through the issue together. Discuss the potential for attending together the open sessions and evaluations/tryouts.
   2. After finding your primary assistant coach, find a few more! Shoot to have at least a handful of assistants because multiple assistant coaches make for a much better team. Multiple coaches mean more efficient and effective practices, more sets of eyes to pick up on items in practices or games that are otherwise missed. Ultimately a player relates better to one coach vs another. If you are all on the same page, no matter who the player relates to best, they are still getting the same message and the players will more effectively congeal into a unified team.
   3. Have an open mind when your assistant coaches offer ideas! Dig further into their observations or recommendations, they may have the answer to a problem, even if it is counter to your original idea, and it may be the best one for the team!
8. **Complete required certifications and medical training.** Check with your league commissioner or similar on what these requirements may be. And be sure to complete all required certifications and training in a timely manner.
9. **Attend Open Sessions.** Attend at least two open sessions to both see and get to know the players. Your goal is to get a sense of their “coachability”. A second goal is to identify players who can legitimately be pitchers, catchers, and those who are defensively fundamentally sound (can catch a fly ball, field a ground ball smoothly, and can make an accurate throw with some speed).
   1. **How to spot coachability.** Raw talent will be obvious to spot by grace, speed, power, and how few errors are made. However, what makes for a truly great team is if it is comprised of *coachable players* WITH talent. Introduce yourself to a given player and ask about themselves (“how is school going?”, “you hoping for a snow day next week?”, “what other activities are you involved with at school?”). Notice if they look you in the eye, are polite, or if they shook your hand when you offered it to them. If a player needs an obvious and immediate correction in their baseball mechanic, introduce yourself as a coach and offer them your coaching tip and see how they respond. Notice if they attempted to implement your suggestion or ignored you. These are good indicators of how a player responds to being coached.
   2. **A note about parents.**  In this process you might have parents approach you. Parents who lead a conversation with negativity (such as about how bad their coach was last year, travel ball is too political, etc.) are likely going to feel more at ease to be even MORE negative with you the more they get to know you. Caution is warranted. Generally speaking you are looking for a player who is coachable, has talent, and has reasonable parents.
   3. **Player talent.**
      1. Defensively look for the players who can catch a fly ball, field a ground ball smoothly, and can make an accurate throw with some speed.
      2. Offensively look for players who hit the ball solidly and consistently. WARNING! Hitting hard off a tee doesn’t always mean they hit live pitching well.
      3. Speedy runners are helpful to have on the team
      4. Just because a player says they are a pitcher or likes to pitch doesn’t mean they can actually pitch! Ask the coach leading the open sessions to set up a simple pitcher/catcher demo.
         1. The same holds true for any position the player states they have played or like to play
10. **Attend Evaluation Day/Tryouts.** If held, attend these because you will see new players in addition to those who attended the Open Sessions. Use the same approach as you did in the open sessions (seek coachable players with good parents and decent talent).
    1. A basic set of attributes to rank are the following from 1 to 5 (where 5 is best)
       1. Attitude
          1. Coachability
          2. Paying attention
          3. Talking to peers when coach talking
       2. Hustle
          1. Trying vs being lazy
       3. General Catching
          1. Secures ball solidly in glove
          2. Doesn’t stab at the ball as it arrives (lets ball come into the glove)
       4. Throwing
          1. Strength
          2. Accuracy
          3. Form
       5. Fielding Ground Balls
          1. Ability to field a direct ground ball cleanly
          2. Ability to field indirect ground balls cleanly
          3. Ability to field hopping ground balls cleanly
          4. Ability to charge a slow ground ball and field it cleanly
       6. Fly balls
          1. Ability to catch a direct fly ball
          2. Ability to catch an indirect fly ball
          3. Ability to track a fly ball (does not lose sight of the ball)
          4. Form (back peddling = bad, football receiver form = good)
       7. Catchers
          1. Ability to receive the ball without dropping it
          2. Ability to scoop dirt ball
          3. Ability to block dirt ball
          4. Range left-right
          5. Accuracy and speed on throw-back to pitcher
          6. Accuracy and speed on throw-down to a base (is the throw on the proper side of the bag where the runner would be)?
       8. Defensive Baseman
          1. Ability to receive the ball without dropping it
          2. Ability to scoop dirt ball
          3. Good range left to right
          4. Instinct to come off the bag to field a bad throw (this is good)
       9. Pitchers
          1. Control (very few wild pitches).
          2. Speed
          3. See the Pitching Reference in the Appendix for additional information
       10. Hitting
           1. Ability to hit squarely off a tee (good hip rotation, back foot rotated toward pitcher after swing, head down where contact was made, swing follows through ear to ear)
           2. Ability to hit pitched balls squarely
           3. Ability to instinctively run through 1st base or home full speed
           4. Ability to instinctively round a base properly (vs running at right angles)
           5. See the Batting Reference in the Appendix for additional information
       11. Running speed (fast, moderate, slow)
11. **Prioritize Players.** Create a prioritized list of all the players in the draft (a list of players is provided by the league ahead of the draft, ask for it if not provided).This is critical because it makes draft-day smooth (on draft day you will cross players off the prioritized list as they are taken and simply take the next best available player).
    1. **First Priority.** Coachable players with at least moderate talent and good parents.
    2. **Second Priority.** Identify at least three pitchers and then at least two catchers. Take a pitcher with control and moderate speed vs a fast pitcher with no control. Catchers should be able to receive the ball without it dropping out of the glove.
    3. **Third Priority.** Players who are fundamentally sound defensively and speedy.
    4. **Fourth Priority.** Players that can hit. It is unusual to put this attribute almost last, but most players who can pitch, catch, or play sound defense can also hit decently.
    5. **Last Priority.** Unknowns. Put names of unknown players last. Call friends, other coaches, even your kids and ask about the unknown’s attitude and athletic ability.
12. **Review your prioritized list with your coaches.** Be sure to be on the same page with who you want on the team with your coaches. There may be good reason to shuffle priorities around based on player attitude or even a negative parent.

**DRAFT DAY**

*At higher levels this is also known as “cut day” and much of below does not apply – except the Guiding Principle below will still hold true.*

1. **Guiding principle.**  It is better to draft a player of moderate talent who is coachable vs a star player with either a bad attitude or who comes with difficult parents.
2. **Automatic-drafting Rules**. Be aware!
   1. **Head Coach.** The child(ren) of the head coach are usually automatically on the team
   2. **Assistant Coach**. The child(ren) of the assistant coach is usually automatically on the team
   3. **Sponsor.** The child of the sponsor is usually automatically on the team.
   4. **Siblings.** In some leagues, rules require keeping siblings on the same team. This means if there is a very good player with good parents you wish to draft that has a sibling who is un-coachable, you get both.
3. **During the Draft**
   1. **Use your list.** Circle players you draft, cross out other players taken, take the next available player.
   2. **Unknown Players.** If you reach the end of your list and are left with choosing unknown players (players you have not seen, met, or know anything about), ask the commissioner and other coaches in the draft what they know about their attitude, athletic ability, and parents.
   3. **Team color.** It was found that a light color is better for your team as the weather gets warmer because the light color reflects vs absorbs heat of the sun. A black or dark color jersey does look great, but serves a personal cook-oven during warmer weather. If you go with dark jerseys your team will pay for it in fatigue.
   4. **Team name.** If names are not already pre-chosen, keep it clean, nothing with innuendo. Remember the team name represents your community, your players, their parents, your assistant coaches, and you.

**POST DRAFT**

*At higher levels a few of the items below will not apply. But communication and setting expectations remains a critical step*

1. **Inform your team.** Send an introductory but concise email to the parents of the players
   1. Introduce yourself as the head coach
   2. Congratulate the player for being drafted due to their coachability and talent.
   3. Identify the assistant coaches and sponsor
   4. Provide contact info of all the coaches
   5. Include a team player roster
   6. Request the best cell numbers of the parents for texting practice announcements and schedule changes
   7. Include a word about your goal for the season
   8. Include a word about expectations to attend all games and practices and to inform coaches the week prior if attendance not possible
   9. Include mandatory equipment to possess and any associated rules
   10. Conclude with “the practice and game schedule will be provided when it becomes available“
2. **Create and test group lists on your phone for texting or create a social media access point.** You can’t communicate effectively until this completed. And it is best to make separate groups as you will want at times to only text the coaches and not the players. It is critical to verify these work well before the first practice.
   1. Coaches
   2. Players (if available and appropriate)
   3. Player’s parents (if players are young)
3. **Query parents or the league for any medical issues of your players**
   1. You must get this information and be clear on how to address, prevent, and potentially immediately react for any medical issues of players in their absence.
   2. This might include asthma inhalers, Epi-pens, etc.
4. **Obtain Other Critical Contacts.** Collect and provide all the following to your assistant coaches. Do not share with the parents or players.
   1. The League Commissioner’s contact info
   2. The opposing teams coaches contact info (obtain from the league commissioner)
   3. The umpire coordinators contact info (obtain from the league commissioner)
   4. Links to the field conditions home and away if available
5. **Set a Practice Schedule**
   1. You will need no fewer than 3 practices before game 1 assuming full team attends each practice.
   2. Therefore plan for 5 two-hour practices to barely cover the needed information in the Game 1 Preparation section. Identify dates/times for these practices on a calendar and share those with the team. This may have to include practices in local batting cages or indoor sports facilities.
   3. Do not conduct
      1. Sunday practices (don’t cut into worship and family time)
      2. Saturday practices before 9am (let the kids sleep and give the parents driving their kids to practice a break)
      3. Start time of practices after 6pm any day of the week – even Saturday
      4. Start time of practices before 430pm school days
      5. Practices longer than 2 hours for non-high school level leagues (even travel level) during the school year
   4. Tip: Although not preferred, many 1 hour practices are better than having only one 3 hour practice before game 1
6. **Regular Season Game and Playoff Schedule.**
   1. When it comes available, share the schedule with the whole team and include verified addresses of all fields you will be playing (home and away)
   2. At this time poll coaches and players of unavailability during the regular AND post season. Reschedule regular season games if possible with the opponent now.
      1. Request dates of unavailability for each player. This includes conflicts with school activities such as field trips, theatre, bands, other sports, and family events or vacations.
      2. For coaches this includes work-related conflicts, family events or vacations.
   3. Especially request dates of unavailability for the post season. This is critical for the playoff rotation. Knowing now you may be short staffed might help you identify other players in the league or lower league that could “play up” for you during the post season (and that you can develop during the regular season)
7. **Obtain a medical kit**
   1. League will provide you this
   2. Obtain locations of any AED units at fields at home and away fields (request League Commissioner to obtain this information)
8. **Obtain your practice equipment**
   1. League will get you an equipment bag
   2. Get flexible base markers for indoor practices to mark base lines or in-bounds areas 
   3. Get small whiffle golf balls with holes (for pre-game batting practice)
   4. Be sure you have a bucket of baseballs – although your league may supply you with some baseballs, its best to have more because you can lose them in the adjacent woods of a field during batting practice. BE SURE THEY ARE NOT SOFT OR VINYL (which tend to curve when thrown and is unwanted when ironing out mechanics)

**GAME 1 PREPARATION**

*Reminder!!! The assumption in this document is you have 4 weeks to prepare a team of players with a wide spectrum of talent for Game 1.*

**Note sections 1-7 below provide an overview, sections 8-11 provide drills with details**

1. **Philosophy of Practices**
   1. You will play like you practice. If you don’t practice well, you won’t play well. If you are sloppy in practice you will play a sloppy game. This is guaranteed.
   2. Focusing on execution of fundamentals and the details of the game will maximize your chance of winning, especially in close games (like those in the post season).
   3. It is not a good approach to use games alone as live practice. Scheduled deliberate preparation is critical to developing the players.
   4. Set a “game-ready foundation” before game 1!
   5. Your goal is to by the first game put the players in a position to properly handle at least 95% of the situations that will occur in a game
      1. This allows you as a coach to be able to remind them “got to do it just like we did in practice” if they execute poorly during a game.
      2. We encountered too many teams that were unprepared to handle many common situations during Game 1.
   6. Until proven, do not assume experienced players are knowledgeable and can execute fundamentals consistently well (it is a critical incorrect assumption to assume players with travel or club ball and in some cases high school and college level experience had been ingrained with fundamentals to the point of habit)
   7. Without sacrificing offense, focus on ironing out defensive tactics because it is attainable and limits the opponent’s ability to score
   8. Use “small-ball” to manufacture runs on offense and limit runs on defense
   9. Always include bunting practice with hitting practice
   10. Use any practices after Game 1 to perfect existing skills and introduce additional techniques
   11. By at least 1/3 of the way into the season (sooner for teams with older players and vice versa), strive to have the team be able to coach themselves on the field (recognizing situations offensively and defensively and then communicating and adjusting appropriately). Yes – this works also for younger teams (we found since they can learn multiple foreign languages, master complex video game controllers, they certainly could know how many outs there were and where to throw the ball)
   12. Use the last ¼ of the season to get post-season ready
2. **Format of Practices**
   1. **Duration of Two Hours**
      1. First 15 minutes allow for arrivals of players and warmups then do a quick huddle with team about what needs to be focused on in practice today
      2. Follow with 10 to 30 min chunks of what will be accomplished (examples - cutoffs, base running, defensive drills, etc.)
      3. Except for the very first practice, end practices with a contest of some kind (friendly competition between the players centered on hitting, bunting, or defense). For younger players it can be a lot of fun if they can “beat the coaches”.
   2. **Efficiency and Organization are key**
      1. The day prior to practice map out what you will accomplish in 10-20 minute chunks (put it on your phone, paper, etc.). Strictly stick to the schedule and do not go overtime in the practice
      2. No matter what, start the practice on time to send the message “don’t be late”.
      3. Note – the first practice you will take a few more minutes after the players arrive to set the tone about hustle, listening, being on time, sportsmanship, etc. AND you may have to repeat this over the next few practices if you’ve not been able to communicate this to the whole team in person.
      4. It is critical to do this so the whole team knows your expectations and how they will roll forward together. It is ok if some players hear the same speech multiple times.
3. **Number of practices**
   1. Plan for 5 two-hour practices for Rec League programs. For higher level squads, 4 practices per week for four weeks is optimal (especially high-school level as this allows time to focus on academics and let bodies get rest).
   2. If all players attended each practice, you would need no fewer than 3 practices to be prepared for Game 1. However, this does not usually happen.
   3. Identify dates/times for these practices on a calendar and share that with the team.
4. **Where to practice**
   1. **Outdoor Practices**. There are numerous baseball fields to practice on in your area or open fields (non-baseball) at community parks (the latter of which can be used for free by permission).
      1. These do NOT have to be baseball fields – a community park, a field complex with unused soccer fields, even a smaller baseball field will work. Sometimes even the high school football fields are available for use.
   2. **Indoor practices**. During the pre-season the weather may prohibit ANY outdoor practices. However, there are many indoor facilities you can complete parts of practices. These include batting cages. You can rent two side by side. One can be used to hit, the other can be used for simple fielding drills including drills for cutoffs and grounders. It can also be used to test pitchers and catchers and can be used to teach stealing and leading techniques.
      1. Tip – check with the local school system of what gyms might be available to use (contact the Athletic Director for assistance)
   3. **You do NOT need a full field to practice**. There are also indoor sports facilities that will allow you to rent out part of their facility vs the whole practice area. The square footage is wider than a batting cage and allows you to conduct basic infielding, base running, cutoffs, and hitting drills. Whiffle balls can be used in locations where hard balls are not allowed. Soft toss hitting of whiffle balls (with real bats) can serve as a good proxy to hitting. Basketball courts that are part of the school system’s and hence baseball league’s program may be available cost-free for indoor practices.
      1. A word about money. It was found that most of these venues are fairly cheap to rent (on the order of $25 - $50). If you ASK the parents to bring only $1 - $2 to help defray costs, sometimes they bring a bit more. Asking assistant coaches to help usually makes the rental on the order of $5-$10 out of your own pocket. People are usually more generous than you expect. If you end up with more money than needed, return it or with permission save it for the next rental.
5. **Required Equipment**
   1. Players - must bring their helmet, glove, bat, wear a cup, **and wear athletic pants so they can slide** (you can relax this last requirement as temperatures get hotter).
   2. Players must bring their own water! Not soda, energy drinks, or sports drinks – just water (with containers labeled with their last name).
   3. Coaches bring an equipment bag supplied by the league, a sufficient number of baseballs for hitting practice (20 or so), plate markers, and if needed whiffle balls for batting practice inside or soft toss.
   4. It is also helpful to have markers for locations that are NOT baseball fields (inside venues such as basketball courts, outdoor soccer fields, parking lots, etc.).
6. **Scrimmages**
   1. We do not recommend scrimmaging against teams in your division or local league as it will give away your style and remove the element of surprise.
   2. If possible it is better to scrimmage against teams that you will not face in the regular or even post season.
7. **Team Bonding**
   1. At times it is helpful to before a practice or a big game to tell the kids go into shallow outfield and decide what kind of team they want to be today and let them come back fired up
   2. On rare occasion we let a practice go in favor of the kids playing 2 hand touch football.
   3. On one occasion we saw a few players (teenage) had arrived 15 min before practice and were in the middle of the field passing a ball to each other in a circle. Turns out the one who had the ball told a small story. We let it continue. As others arrived they joined the circle with the coaches far away. That team bonded and won the first community playoff game for their division in a decade.
   4. We opted not to have captains. There was no need to name them as the players seemed to know who the leaders were and it avoided the situation of back-biting and sniping.
8. **Practice 1**

*The following will need to be abbreviated (except the introduction) if you have less than 2 hours to practice.*

* 1. **Arrival - 10 minutes.** Players should players play catch (or short warm-up routine like running a few laps and stretching if needed)
  2. **First Practice Introduction - 10 minutes.** Details found in like-named section of the Appendix
  3. **Initial Defense - 45 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix
  4. **Break - 5 minutes.** Players get water then come back to home with helmets.*While they are getting water – remind them how critical it to executing the details of defense. Execution of details WILL decide the outcome of close games – and are usually the deciding factor between the champion and the loser. There will be many situations you will win a game simply because you held the runner (who crushed a ball deep in the outfield) to just a double and he ended up not scoring at all that inning – all because you executed your cutoff properly.*
  5. **Initial Base Running – 10 minutes.** Details found in like-named section of the Appendix
  6. **Break - 5 minutes.** Players come back with gloves only and catchers suit up.*While they are getting water – remind them they should be so enthusiastic to get to the next base that it will take the base coach shouting at you to make you op. make the coach stop you. Run like you have a triple. Make the coach stop you. Your ability to get to the next base WILL determine if we win or lose a game – don’t lose an opportunity to advance to the next base. Yours might be the only opportunity we get as a team. So make it count.*
  7. **Simultaneous Separate Drills: Pitching and Fielding Pitching – 25 minutes.** Details found in like-named section of the Appendix
  8. **Initial Hitting – 10 minutes.** Details found in like-named section of the Appendix

1. **Practice 2**

*The following will need to be abbreviated (except the introduction) if you have less than 2 hours to practice.*

* 1. **Arrival - 10 minutes.** Players should players play catch (or short warm-up routine like running a few laps and stretching if needed)
  2. **Repeat the First Practice Introduction - 5 minutes.** This is done only if all players were not at the first practice. Details found in like-named section of the Appendix
  3. **Stealing - 15 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix
  4. **Base Running II - 10 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix
  5. **Break - 5 minutes.** Players come back with helmets only again. *While they are getting water – warn them that while stealing to listen (but NOT LOOK) to see if the ball is hit but after the steal to immediately locate the ball.*
  6. **Pitcher Pickoffs and Stealing - 25 minutes.** Details found in like-named section of the Appendix.
  7. **Break - 5 minutes.** Players stay near the dugout with helmets on and bats ready.
  8. **Hitting II with Bunting And Simultaneous Pitcher/Catcher practice – 30 minutes**
  9. **Bunting and Hitting Game - 15 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix.

1. **Practice 3**

*The following will need to be abbreviated (except the introduction) if you have less than 2 hours to practice.*

* 1. **Arrival - 10 minutes.** Players should players play catch (or short warm-up routine like running a few laps and stretching if needed)
  2. **Bare Hand Drill – 5 minutes.**  *Make sure each player has a ball and have them line up along the third base line. Have them drop it on the ground in front of them. You get a ball and drop it in front of you. Tell them for any ball that is not moving or just about dead to NOT pick it up with their glove, but instead to push the ball into the ground with their bare hand and then pick it up. Have them do it once and warn a lap comes with anyone who tries to pick it up with their glove in practice.*
  3. **Defensive Drill – 15 minutes** (same set up and execution as was done in Practice 1)
  4. **Break/Defensive Tips – 5 minutes.** Read these while players facing you in dugout. Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix.
  5. **Stealing Home - 15 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix
  6. **Break/Batting Tips – 5 minutes.** Read these while players facing you in dugout. Details in like-named section of the Appendix.
  7. **Catcher Drills with Runners - 10 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix.
  8. **Run Downs – 10 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix
  9. **Break –** **5 minutes.**
  10. **Fly ball game – 10 minutes.** Details found in the like-named section of the Appendix
  11. **Bunting and Hitting Game with Simultaneous Pitcher/Catcher - 25 minutes** (See practice 2, while this game is going on have the pitchers and catchers out in the deep outfield)

1. **Additional Practices**
   1. At this point you have covered or at least introduced the vast majority of items and scenarios the team will implement and encounter during Game 1
   2. The remaining practices should always cover the following
      1. Arrival/warmup
      2. Defensive Drill
      3. Hitting Game with Bunting
      4. Pitching Practice
      5. Catcher Throwdowns
   3. Cover specific topics or mechanics that the team needs to execute more crisply
   4. Additional possible skills to practice
      1. **Catcher blocking ball – 10 Minutes**
         1. Have the catcher line in equipment behind the plate
         2. Take 10 tennis balls and one hop them at the front of the plate
         3. Be sure the catchers blocks the ball by putting his glove touching the ground between his legs WHILE his knees come down to the ground.

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* + 1. **Team Defense Bonding Game – 30 Minutes**
       1. Split the players into 4 squads. Put one squad at each literal base. One player per squad steps in front of the base.
       2. Announce there are 7 (or 9) innings in a game
       3. Complete 7 (or 9) rounds without error in a row for the drill to end
          1. Hit a grounder to the player at the 3rd base location
          2. He fields the ball and throws it to 1st base
          3. The player at 1st base catches the ball and throws it to 2nd base
          4. The player at 2nd base catches the ball and throws it to home
          5. If they do it cleanly without error that is “1 inning”
          6. If they make an error they restart
          7. Repeat until 7 (or 9) “innings” are completed without error
    2. **Bunting Defense**
       1. When a batter squares around to bunt the infielders should be yelling “bunt bunt bunt!” and those infielders involved in the play must be running in motion before the ball is bunted
       2. For no runners or runners anywhere with two outs
          1. Pitcher/catcher with 1bt and 3b charge in to get ball (catcher too)
          2. 2b covers first base, SS covers second base
          3. Throw to 1b
       3. Runner on 1st (or 1st and 3rd) less than 2 outs
          1. 3rd baseman and pitcher crash (pitcher covers area left side of a line from mound to plate, 3rd base covers the right side of that line)
          2. 1st base covers 1st, 2b covers 2b, SS covers 3rd base
          3. Look at lead runners, make play in priority at 2nd or 1st base
       4. Runner on 2b (or 2b and 1b) less than 2 outs
          1. 1st baseman and pitcher crash (pitcher covers area right side of a line from mound to plate, 1st base covers left side of that line)
          2. 3rd base covers 3rd, SS covers 2nd
          3. Look at lead runners, play for an out with lead runner
    3. **Tee Drill (Hitting)** 
       1. Bat should not hit the tee during the swing
       2. Tee waist high centered on the edge of plate pitcher’s side
          1. 10 cuts – ball should travel dead center line drive or slightly on the batters opposite side (image shows location of tee for right or lefty batter)

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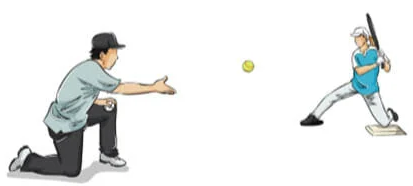
* + - 1. Tee waist high inside front corner but about 1 foot away from the front edge of the plate toward the pitcher. This teaches the player to hit inside pitchers before it gets to the front of the plate to maximize the chance they get the meat of the bat on the ball.
         1. 10 cuts – ball should travel in a line drive left side of field for righty batters and vice versa for a lefty hitter (image shows set up for a righty batter, for a lefty it would go other side).

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* + - 1. Tee waist high outside edge of the plate half way between the front edge and the point.
         1. 10 cuts – ball should travel in a line drive opposite field (image shows set up for a righty batter, for a lefty it would be opposite)

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* + 1. **One Knee Tee Drill of Soft Toss (also known as the “hands through drill”)**
       1. See image – same as soft toss but the batter is one knee (you are still at an angle up the line off to the side. The purpose of this drill is to get muscle-memory and habit with getting the hands through the ball after the swing.

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* + 1. **Sliding Practice – 10 minutes**
       1. Teach the players to slide by you standing about 2 feet off the second base bag toward first base and out of the base line with a bat like a limbo pole 4 feet off the ground. Have them run (taking a proper lead looking at the mound) from 1st to 2b and slide under the bat.
       2. This is why the players need to wear athletic or baseball pants to practice!

**REGULAR SEASON GAME 1**

*Note – a spread sheet is available to help you assemble both a batting line up and a defensive rotation (it will alert you if you accidently entered a player twice in defensive line up for a given inning and it will inform not only the total innings a player will be on the field, but also if they are not playing consecutive innings). Reference the Innings Played Planner Excel Sheet.*

1. **Strategy for Defensive Lineups**
   1. Ensure players get the playing time as dictated by the league rules! Do not take short cuts. If you are short of players and are borrowing from another team, even if the borrowed player is better than your players, give more playing time to your own team members, not the borrowed player.
   2. Starting lineup.
      1. Pitcher/Catcher combination. You need a strong or solid pitcher/catcher combination the whole game. Example – you don’t want a pitcher who is constantly wild or a catcher who has a weak arm or drops a lot of pitches.
      2. First Base. Because most plays in the infield go to first base be sure your first base man has the ability to catch a ball very well and especially has the instinct to come off the bag to get a bad throw. It is very helpful for this person to be able to scoop a bad throw out of the dirt.
      3. Short Stop. Your short stop is also a key position in the infield. They must be able to easily catch fly balls and field ground balls at and nearby their position. They must also possess a good throwing arm where they can deliver the ball quickly to first base without any high arcs or dirt balls. This person must have good range to cover ground not only at his position but also behind third and second base for fly balls or bad throws.
      4. Second Base. This player’s ability to catch a fly ball and field a ground ball is critical
      5. Third Base. A strong arm and good glove are important at this position because it is a long throw to first base.
      6. Outfield. You need a solid centerfielder to act as the captain of the outfield. Place your next best fielder in left or right depending on your pitcher. If your pitcher is slow, most right hand batters will hit on the short stop and left field side of the field but if they are fast they will hit to the opposite side. For a lefty batter a slow pitcher usually finds the ball hit to the second base/right field side of the field and vice versa for fast hitters.
   3. For the remainder of the game work in the remaining players as dictated by league rules.
      1. Generally speaking you try to keep your best players on the field most often.
      2. It is helpful in those leagues that require a minimum number of innings played to have your best players sit for just one inning (try not to have all your best players sit during the same inning).
         1. If you do this cleverly during the game (like 2nd or 3rd inning when most opposing teams worst hitters are at bat) you will minimize the risk of it hurting the team and at the same time make it easier for you to rotate all players in as needed.
   4. Pitching rotation.
      1. Be sure to follow league rules for pitching. Do not over pitch a player ever.
      2. Have two to three pitchers lined up for a game. The strategy is to bring in the better pitcher to end the game assuming the first pitcher can last through their max innings allowed to start the game.
      3. Be careful not to exhaust all of a pitchers allotted innings in a just one or two games if you are short on pitchers and have 3-4 games during the week.
2. **Batting line up**
   1. Follow the league rules to ensure players are meeting minimum number of at bats per game (some rules dictate all players bat throughout the game)
   2. Ideally, your leadoff batter is someone who can get on base “anyway anyhow” - hit walk or error. Their job is to get on base. They should be speedy so they can potentially steal. The strategy is to get your leadoff batter in scoring position (not just on base) with an out or less to maximize the chance of scoring at least one run in the first inning.
   3. Your second hitter should be a good contact hitter (but not a fly ball type hitter). Ground outs are acceptable because theoretically your lead off will be in scoring position by the time this happens. His job is to advance the lead runner, or get on base if the lead runner could not.
   4. Your third hitter should be a strong hitter who can drive runners home, or at least drive the lead or second batter home should they be on base with less than 2 outs.
   5. Your fourth hitter should also be a strong power hitter who has a high hitting average. Assuming there are multiple runners on the base, he will drive at least one of them in to score.
   6. We found it helpful to repeat this pattern with the remaining players (speed followed by contact followed by strong followed by power)
      1. We found that overall it seemed to work out better if you spread the hitting “wealth” around vs “top loading” the lineup. That is, we ironically found it better to have a few decent hitters in the middle and the bottom of the line-up to avoid long lulls in offensive production during a game.
   7. It was VERY helpful to use a spreadsheet to set up the batting order, share with the coaches, and make adjustments on the fly during a game while still keeping track of innings-played rules.
   8. We did not announce the line up until the players arrived to the game. The exception being that some pitchers were informed a day prior. But sometimes if players unexpectedly did not show up, it changed who or when we pitched a pitcher or where we played a player. So it was best just to not announce the line up until just before the game started or before infield practice.
3. **Pre-Game Routine**
   1. Format
      1. Arrival/warm ups. As players arrive have them play catch (or stretch first if needed before catch). As soon as the starting catcher arrives have him take a few swings then have him suit up. As soon as the starting pitcher arrives have him take batting practice (have him cut in line if needed). Then have him warm up with the catcher.
      2. Batting practice
         1. Pitchers/catchers first or as soon as they arrive!
         2. Do soft toss directly in front of the batters with whiffle golf balls, have next guy on deck retrieve (shag) the balls. As soon as a batter is done have them get their glove and go with another coach into either left or right field for fielding drills
      3. Fielding drills
         1. Players at least 25 yards away from the coach
         2. Coach throws or hits the ball
         3. Players call all fly balls, then always hit the cutoff man
         4. Round 1 – fly balls directly to the player
         5. Round 2 - fly balls to a player’s right
         6. Round 3 - fly balls to player’ left
         7. Round 4 - one hop line drive directly to the player
         8. Round 5 – hard grounder then the player goes to the dugout
      4. Taking infield (only if time, actually not needed if fielding drills above completed)
         1. Infield practice never seems to be a good litmus test of how the team will play in the game (we are not sure why). How your team practices is the best litmus test.
         2. Grounder to first each baseman (except first baseman throws to 3rd)
         3. Outfielders to cutoff at 2nd base then come in to dug out
         4. Infield Turn two
         5. In field Home and follow
         6. Catchers dropped third
4. **During the game**
   1. On defense ensure…
      1. Players are communicating number of outs and where the next play is
      2. Players are communicating steal coverages
      3. Pickoffs are being conducted
      4. Outfield is shifting based on the batter
      5. Outfield is backing up the infielder’s ground ball and throw downs on steals
      6. Catcher is adjusting pitcher
      7. Pitcher is on track
      8. 2b or SS is backing up the catcher’s throwback to the pitcher if a runner on 2b or 3b – every pitch
   2. On offense ensure…
      1. Runners are stealing on pass balls and other pitches appropriately
      2. Batters AND BASE COACHES are
         1. Watching for signals
         2. Aware of 3-0 rules and
         3. Aware of continuous walk situations
      3. Next man up is timing pitcher
      4. Man in the hole is doing the same
      5. Guys in the dugout are helping runner with pickoffs
   3. Coaches are noting what players are doing well and what needs practice
5. **Post-game routine**
   1. Ask the coaches quickly what they want covered
      1. Make it relevant to getting ready for post season play or playing up a division
   2. Talk about the things that went well
   3. Talk about things that need improvement
   4. Progress meter - tell them as a team (where 100% is “play-off ready”) where they are at today. Ideally that % you provide should increase over the season despite intermittent peaks and valleys
   5. You can have all the coaches say something, but it must be short
   6. Take any questions from players
   7. Have the players do a round of kudos
      1. Sometimes a game rock, belt, or goofy hat can be handed out (but have them return it for next game to be handed to the next nominee)
   8. Reminder of next practice or game time and location
   9. Coaches – have a possible coaches meeting at a location of choice to discuss game strategies, potential practices, and lineup changes.

**REMAINING REGULAR SEASON GAMES AND ADJUSTMENTS**

1. The pregame routine should be similar for each game.
2. About ¼ through the season give certain players a green light to steal whenever they can so long as they are not hampering an offensive strategy. This is only “awarded” to those who have developed a “base running” mentality, IQ, acumen, and athletic ability of better runners.
3. As a coach be sure that by 1/3 through the season you should have the kids coaching themselves during a game (vs coaches telling them where the play is, how many outs, shifting outfielders, etc.)
4. Each game will reveal what needs to be practiced. If needed have a practice but only on weeks with 2 games or less unless you are very close to the end of the season and need to fit something in before the post season
5. By mid-season you should have a good idea as coaches if your players need to be realigned in position. It is ok to wipe the slate clean and reboot the line up if it is not working.
6. You can use a “pick your own position day” as an incentive. Tell the team if they continue to execute the fundamentals well they can earn a game where they pick where they want to play for an inning or two. Yes this means you may lose this game, but it can be very helpful for team building and also for kids who think they can pitch to understand they really can’t, or for you as a coach to see someone excel in a position you hadn’t considered.
7. During the last 1/3 of the season start getting the team “post season” ready. That means ironing out any kinks. It can also mean getting pitchers who will be pitching more in the playoffs more frequent pitching time (even if it’s just 2 innings a game almost every game for the rest of the season).
8. Coaches meetings are extremely helpful for this purpose and also helps with coaches bonding.
9. Practices during the regular season should still cover basic defense (infielding, outfielding hitting cutoffs, using runners for situations) and hitting/bunting. However, time should always be reserved for covering items that the team especially needs improvement. Format should always be arrival/warm ups, standard defense drills, and end with some kind of competition like a hitting, bunting, or fielding game.

**POST SEASON**

1. The practices during post season should focus on aspects the team is weakest but, should not omit aspects team is strong (the latter can be covered over a short drill to keep the team sharp).
2. You should also be simulating as best you can the talent they will be facing. Examples:
   1. If opposing team has fast pitching, coach throws pitches standing closer to home than usual (simulates the need for a faster reaction time of a hitter)
   2. If opposing team has fast pitching that is difficult to hit, practice bunting.
   3. If the opposing team steals a lot, practice throw downs and steal coverages.
   4. If the opposing team bunts a lot, practice bunting coverages (see “additional practices” in this document.

**SEASON WRAP UP**

1. Be sure to congratulate the team on their progress (and if relevant, their winning season and any post season wins). Emphasize the progress made. Thank the parents and coaches.
2. Note any changes to the approach that are appropriate to implement the following year. Your personal approach will deviate from this document and eventually this document may become irrelevant as you evolve your style.
3. Post season coaches meetings are helpful if you plan to coach with the same staff again. Frank discussion on what worked and vice versa will make the post season coaches meetings worthwhile and a success.
4. If appropriate throw a post-season party for the team (can be pizza at a park pavilion, pool party perhaps a player’s parent might offer to use, etc.).
5. If your team wins an interleague championship and the league does not supply a trophy, consider getting trophies online with their nick-names. The coaches might pitch in to cover the costs and typically you can get these for a fairly cheap price. Another option is for them to sign baseballs at the party for each other.
6. If you are up for it, offer to any players who may need help next year, even if they are not on your team that “once your coach, always your coach” (you’d be available to help them if needed).

**APPENDIX**

**Contents** *(in order of appearance)*

* First Practice Introduction – 10 Minutes
* Initial Defense – 50 Minutes
* Defense Drill – 40 Minutes
* Initial Base Running – 10 Minutes
* Simultaneous Separate Drills: Pitching and Fielding – 25 Minutes
* Initial Hitting – 10 Minutes
* Stealing – 15 Minutes
* Base Running II – 10 Minutes
* Pitcher Pickoffs And Steal Coverages – 20 minutes
* Hitting II with Bunting And Simultaneous Pitcher/Catcher Practice – 30 Minutes
* Bunting and Hitting with Bunting Game – 25 Minutes
* Defensive Tips – 10 Minutes
* Stealing Home – 25 Minutes
* Batting Tips – 10 Minutes
* Catchers Drill – 10 Minutes
* Run Downs – 10 Minutes
* Fly Ball Game – 10 Minutes
* Pitchers Reference
* Hitting Reference
* Bunting Reference
* Acknowledgements and Who To Blame

**FIRST PRACTICE INRODUCTION – 10 Minutes**

*This is a recommended introduction to set the tone and expectations for the season. It is typically provided at the first practice but, should be repeated at subsequent practices for players who were not present at the first practice. It is best to repeat this in front of all players. Your goal is to ensure every player hears this message and in the presence of the whole team.*

1. **Welcome and congratulate the players for being on the team**
   1. You were picked because of attitude and coachability, not just because of talent
2. **Introduce the coaches by name**
3. **Have the players introduce themselves**
4. **Set the tone and expectations** 
   1. Only “x” practices (or weeks) until Game 1
   2. Even if you are good already, you are all going to be better players by season’s end
   3. But you need to be on time, eyes on coaches when they are talking, not just to you, but to anyone. And no talking when coaches or talking (you may end up doing laps)
   4. Good sportsmanship – you represent your community and your family
      1. Tell fellow players good job if they make a good play
      2. This goes for your opponents – tell them great play
      3. If teammate makes a mistake, “we’ll get it next time” – do not talk negative
      4. If you see an opponent on the ground during a time out, pick him up.
      5. Bad calls – do NOT give the umpire any lip, wave arms, etc.
      6. Sometimes the umpire will talk to you or coach you, you call him Sir
      7. Ignore parents or other team players yelling at you – keep playing
      8. No swearing
      9. No leaving field between innings or during game (team needs you on the field and mentally in the game)
      10. No family members, pets, etc. in the dugout
      11. Made a great play??? Act like you’ve done it before - no chest thumping.
   5. Hustle. We won’t get too upset if you drop a ball or strike out, but if you are being lazy, not paying attention or just making bad decisions – we will be on you quickly
   6. “May I have another?” Errors during practice, ask for another ball, get it right
   7. On field – practice or game - need to do what coaches have coached you to do. Even if it seems strange or out of place, there is a reason, it will help the team. If you get out because of something we told you to do, that’s our fault not yours.
   8. Details Details Details – execute the details, there are no shortcuts to excellence.
   9. Questions are welcome – but not argumentatively and not during the game
5. **Coaches:** We are going to get into all the details later, right now at a high level to do you have anything to add?

**INITIAL DEFENSE – 50 Minutes**

**Pre-drill Instruction Points - Must be shared to the WHOLE Team**

1. Know what to do with the ball before each pitch (changes can occur pitch to pitch – example - when a runner steals a base, where you will throw to get an out has changed).
2. Have the mindset of making two outs on one play – get the first out then immediately look to make a second. “Where is the NEXT out?? Where is the (new) lead runner??”
3. Grounders – belly button in front of the ball, knees bent when getting a grounder and getting the back of your glove dirty
4. Charge slower ground balls – do not wait for it to get to you!!!
5. Fly balls - chase down everything fair or foul. If it’s yours call out loudly “mine mine mine!” - BEFORE the ball starts coming down! And then catch the ball! And at a minimum get your glove on the ball for hard to get fly balls
   1. Once you call for it you better get it
   2. If two guys are going after the fly ball, after hearing “mine mine mine” the other player will say “take it take it take it” (vs yours yours yours)
6. If you make an error - no problem – hustle and pick up the ball with your bare hand not your glove! And throw it to where it should be thrown

**Pre-drill instructions for the Outfielders, but be sure whole team hears this**

1. Where to throw the ball
   1. Pop Up – throw is one base ahead of the lead runner
   2. Grounders – throw is two bases ahead of lead runner. Examples…
      1. Lead runner on 1st? Your throw is to 3rd
      2. Lead on 2nd? Your throw is to home
      3. Lead on 3rd? By the time you get the ball, that runner on third is already at home, so your lead runner is your batter – 2 bases ahead of home plate is 2b.
2. Get the ball in to your cutoff man as soon as you field it – whether you catch it, get a grounder, or boot it!
   1. Do NOT throw wild! Many runs will be saved by you getting it to the cutoff man.
   2. EXCEPTION, if you are close to the base you are throw to and have a strong arm, just throw it to that base.
3. Hit your cutoff man in the chest when you throw it – no over throws or grounders because that will lead to extra bases for the opponent.
   1. The farther away you are from your target, aim higher on his body like his head when you throw it and gravity will do the rest.
4. Back up your infielders. Do not assume they will stop the ball, even if hit right to them because a runner will get extra bases if you are not there when it goes through their legs
   1. RF backs up 2b and 1b, CF backs up 2b and SS, LF backs up SS and 3B.
5. Catch all balls – fair or FOUL and then throw it right away into the cutoff man
6. NEVER HOLD THE BALL – throw the ball in – or run it in to the cutoff or base if you fielded it in shallow territory.

**Pre-drill instructions for the Infielders, but be sure whole team hears this**

1. **Infield hits**
   1. Where is the lead runner (runner closest to scoring)??
   2. When less than 2 outs, quickly check the lead runner to see if you can get that runner out, if you can’t get the nearest out.
      1. After the out – get the next lead runner out on the same play!
   3. When there are 2 outs just get the easiest out
   4. Get off the bag to get the ball if there is a bad throw – and hustle after the ball – where is the lead runner?
   5. Force out and a Tag Out
      1. Force out – after a hit, if a runner HAS to advance a base because all bases behind him were occupied, just step on or tag the base he is running to. Examples…
         1. Runner on 1st and a ground ball, step on 2nd for the out.
         2. Runners on 1st and 2nd, ground ball, step on 3rd.
         3. Bases loaded – any base, put preferably home if the out is certain
      2. Tag out – runner with at least one base behind him unoccupied - TAG THEM LOW (otherwise they may slide under your tag safely into the base).
2. **Hits into the outfield (fly or grounder)**
   1. When a ball is hit beyond the shallow part of the outfield, infielders need to be halfway between the outfielder and the base they are throwing it to – this is the CUTOFF MAN. Examples
      1. Ball hit in left field – Cutoff man = SS.
      2. Ball hit in right or centerfield field – Cutoff man = 2B
   2. The Cutoff man must be in a direct line between the base and the outfielder
   3. The Cutoff man must be about half way between the base and the outfielder
      1. Exception – a very deep ball may require the cutoff man to be out farther toward the outfielder
   4. The Cutoff man must be waving their hands and shouting CUT CUT CUT
   5. The Infielder covering the bag the ball is being thrown MUST verbally direct the cutoff man to slide right or left to be in a perfect line between the outfielder and the bag
      1. Examples – yell “left left left stop” or “right right right stop” until the cutoff man is in that perfect line. This is critical because if there is an over throw at least the ball is still coming in line to the base vs off to the side.
   6. The same infielder will yell “in in in” or “out out out” if needed to get the cutoff man in the best range to receive the ball.
   7. STOP is used to indicate to the cutoff man to stop adjusting their location
   8. Just before the ball arrives to the cutoff man from the outfielder, the infielder covering the base will yell CUT (followed by a base number 1 2 3 4 for first second third or home) or “LET IT GO” (or silence also means let it go).
      1. LET IT GO (or silence) means get out of the way and let the ball arrive to the bag by itself.
      2. CUT <base number> (like CUT 3 or Cut 4) will tell the Cutoff man what bag to throw it to as that might change while the runner is rounding the bases.
   9. The cutoff man should be receiving the ball with his throwing shoulder pointing toward the ball so they can receive the ball and quickly make the turn toward his glove side to throw to the base.

**DEFENSE DRILL – 40 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. Put the players in defensive positions you think that they will play best
      1. The drill will reveal if positions need to change, but you can also test players at different positions.
      2. If you are practicing inside in a confined space, you can still practice the cutoff portion of the drill by splitting the players at the base.
      3. If you are short of players you can practice one side of the field at a time (all players on the right side of the infield and outfield and vice versa). In this case do not use players as a catcher or a pitcher (use a coach instead)
   2. Remind the players during practice if you hit a ball to the wrong place for them to still play it as if it is live. Anything you hit is live – even to the wrong location.
   3. Remind players – always strive for belly button in front of ball, glove on ground on ground, Yell “mine mine mine” for popups
   4. You or an assistant coach hit the ball, the remaining coaches should roam the infield and outfield ensuring the players are properly fielding and throwing the ball, lining up the cutoff man, and especially throwing it to the right location. You can have a coach on the pitcher’s mound with a glove to receive the ball.
2. **Execution**
   1. Typical initial round is to hit the ball to each infielder to throw it to first base. (Exception is the 1st baseman traditionally throws it to 3b.)
   2. After going around once in the infield, hit the ball to the outfield and whether it is a fly ball or grounder get it to second base using a cutoff
   3. At the end of a given play have the players throw it to whoever is on the pitcher’s mound. If not enough players for a pitcher, just have them throw it home.
   4. If you have enough players for a pitcher and a catcher, hit a ball to the pitcher too, and drop the ball out in front of the plate for the catcher to throw it to 1st base.
   5. Repeat but with infielders turning a double play and outfielders throwing to third base
      1. Make sure the throws to 2nd base are at the 2nd baseman’s ear so he can quickly get it out of his glove for the throw to first
      2. Emphasize the quick release
   6. Repeat again but with infielders throwing to third base and outfielders throwing home (your catcher is now the person directing a cutoff man)
      1. Your pitcher serves as a double cutoff for super deep hits when throwing home
   7. Round 2 – use runners (coaches) and use real outs. Ask “where is the play for the first few outs”, then make sure they are calling out the play.
3. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. All players should be moving
      1. Outfielders should be backing up the infielders
      2. Be sure the right fielder is backing up the 1st baseman as best they can during throws to first base, the exception is the left fielder backs up the 3rd baseman when the throw goes from 1st to 3rd.
      3. Outfielders not directly part of a play should be collapsing partially to the infield in case of an errant throw
   2. The first or third baseman should be coming off the bag if the throw is significantly off target – there should be no ball getting past these bases.
   3. For hits to the outfield
      1. Be sure the person covering second base is directing the cutoff man loudly and in a direct line.
      2. Be sure the CUTOFF MAN is getting half way between the ball and the base AND shouting CUT CUT CUT while waving their hands
      3. Be sure the outfielder is throwing at the cutoff man
      4. Be sure the person covering the base yells CUT (base number) like “CUT 2” or “CUT 3” to inform the cutoff man where to throw it.
   4. Throws should be on target – not in the dirt or too high. If they are too low, tell the player to use the head for a target. If they are too high, tell the player to use the chest as a target.
   5. Fly balls – all of them – even if clearly only one player has a shot at it should be yelled at as “mine mine mine”
   6. During round two the players should know where to throw the ball given how many outs there are and where the lead runner is – they should be calling out the play before you hit it (give them that chance to call it out before you hit the ball, if they don’t yell out “how many outs and where is the play – loud so your team mates can hear it!”)

**INITIAL BASE RUNNING - 10 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. You are between the mound and the plate, but close to the plate
   2. Tell the players to get in a line up the third base line starting from the righty batter’s box plate facing you
   3. You need an assistant coach coaching first base and one coaching third base and another in shallow center field near 2b.
2. **Overview**
   1. Once you hit it – run on foul side of line toward first and immediately start listening to first base coach – do not look at the ball!
   2. We run in foul territory because the umpire can call you out if you do not (this actually happened to us!)
   3. Keep running until ump calls foul or coach tells you either one of the following
      1. **Stop** (because ball landed foul or you are out)
      2. **Run through** - run straight through first FULL SPEED and not until two steps after stepping on first should they peel off to the right into foul territory
      3. **Round it** – run a few steps past first base toward second – just a few and locate the ball and be ready for the coach to say “go” or “come back”
      4. **Go** – keep running to second and on your way look at the third base coach who can tell you to keep going to third or slide into second.
   4. REMINDER- if you are told to “run through”, run full speed through the base – do not hop or stride into the base as that will just slow you down reducing the chance you will be safe.
   5. For this drill if you are told to “round it”, pretend the ball was hit to left-center field – locate the ball and be ready to immediately be told to come back or to go.
3. **Execution**
   1. Each player will get into the batter’s box take a swing and then run
   2. The coach at first base will tell them “Run Through”, “Round it” or “Go”
   3. Repeat 2-3 rounds
   4. Make them immediately stop and come back and do it again if…
      1. they are running in fair territory up the first base line
      2. they do not run through 1st base full speed if told to “run through”
      3. they do not stop right on the bag if they are told to hold or stop at 2b or 3b

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1. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. As a coach take note of who is fast and who can round the bases smoothly
   2. Be sure runners are staying on the foul side of the line running toward first base
   3. Be sure if they are running through, they run through the base full speed
   4. Be sure if they round it they are looking for the ball in center field AND that your first base coach is telling them to go or come back if they
   5. The coach in shallow center should be sure the runners are looking at the third base coach if they are near 2b sent to third

**SIMULTANEOUS SEPARATE DRILLS: PITCHING AND FIELDING – 25 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. Split into two groups
      1. Group 1 - Pitchers and catchers
      2. Group 2 - Everyone else
   2. Any coach knowledgeable in pitching should stay with you
   3. All other coaches will go (not yet) with the other group to the outfield
      1. 3 balls are needed for the outfield group
      2. The coaches should bring baseball gloves
2. **Drill that will occur in the outfield - Overview and Execution**
   1. Players going to the outfield
      1. Players will get in a line about 20 yards away from the one coach
      2. Each player takes a turn with the coach throwing the ball to the players and the players throw it back – one turn a player until all players had a turn (one full round)
         1. If another coach is available have that coach act as a cutoff man.
         2. If no coach is available have the players throw it back to the one coach
      3. Each round the coach will throw it (not hit it, unless they are super accurate) as follows:
         1. Round 1 – fly at the player
         2. Round 2 – fly to the player’s left
         3. Round 3 – fly to the player’s right
         4. Round 4 – line drive one or two hop at the player
         5. Round 5 – line drive right at the player
      4. During fly balls the fielder should call “mine” no later than after the ball starts to descend – any later is too late!
      5. Players waiting in line should help the fielder judge the depth of a fly ball by shouting “in” or “back”. This will get them in that habit and also minimize talking that occurs when players are in line.
      6. Players need to hit the cutoff man with a good throw
         1. If the coach can, have him raise his hands to get the kids used to identifying the cutoff as the person with their hands up.
3. **Drill that will occur in the outfield - What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. As a coach take note of who is an agile fielder, who has a solid glove, who can handle a one hop grounder, who can make a good throw
   2. Be sure the players are calling out “mine” no later than when the ball descends
   3. Be sure the players in line are helping with depth yelling “in” or “back”
   4. Be sure players say great catch or nice try to each other
   5. Be sure players are getting their body in front of the ball and their glove on the ball
   6. Be sure the throws are good

1. **Drill that will occur with the Pitchers and Catchers**
   1. Goal
      1. Assess a pitcher’s control – not necessarily speed (although you will note that as well)
      2. You will also be able to tell which “catchers” can really catch
   2. Set up and Execution
      1. Get all the pitchers at the mound and all the catchers at home plate
      2. Each pitcher will have 5 warm up pitches and then 10 real pitches
      3. Catchers alternate with each pitcher
      4. If a coach happens to be a good pitching coach let him run this drill
   3. Execution (see Pitchers Reference in the Appendix)
      1. Warm up normally (10 pitches) – when warmed up, see how you are throwing – THEN make adjustment
         1. If you keep throwing too low (2 or more pitches in a row) aim at the catchers head
         2. If you keep throwing too high aim in between the catchers knees
         3. If you keep throwing too much to one side of the catcher aim at the catchers opposite shoulder
      2. If there are a lot of pitchers you may have one of them stand in the batter’s box with a helmet and a bat but don’t not swinging
      3. For your catchers you want them to adjust their pitcher
         1. Pitcher throwing consistently too high, lower the target
         2. Pitcher throwing consistently to one side of the plate, adjust the target in the opposite direction
   4. What to look for and correct (refer to Pitchers Reference in the Appendix)

*Warning - do not correct more than 2 items per practice that are body-mechanics, it will be too much for the player to simultaneously iron out hard to implement)*

* + 1. Are they coming set properly
    2. Are they getting sufficient extension
    3. Is the pitcher stepping toward the plate or off to a side
    4. Are they following through
    5. Do the pitchers have control
    6. Is the pitcher waiting 2-3 pitches before making self-adjustments
    7. Are the catchers dropping the balls
    8. Is the catcher waiting 2-3 pitches before adjusting their target

**INITIAL HITTING – 10 Minutes**

1. **Set up and Execution.** Each batter (with helmet and a game-bat) stands at the plate and you feed them each 5-10 soft toss pitches. Note the angle you are offset from the batter in the picture. For a righty batter you should be up the first base line and vice versa. You may be safer if you are more in foul territory like the picture. Toss the ball underhand so it can be hit right at the front edge of the plate about waist high relative to the batter. Do not throw an upward line drive nor throw a super-rainbow-arc. Ideally the ball should just about be starting to come down when it lands at front center of the plate



1. **Goal.** Identify mechanical issues need to be worked on in future practices for each batter.

1. **WARNING.** Although you may offer multiple easy stance related corrections simultaneously (stand closer/further away from your body, bend your knees, etc.)
   1. Limit mechanical corrections to a maximum of 2 (start with your bat higher/lower, turn your hips more, etc.).
   2. In this first practice be sure obvious stance items are corrected and maybe 1 additional “mechanics” item. The rest can be corrected in subsequent practices.
2. **What to look for and immediately correct (See Batting Reference in the Appendix)**
   1. Is there stance proper– make those corrections now!
   2. Are they watching the ball?
   3. Are they still while they are swinging (happy feet not allowed)?
   4. Are they holding the bat all the way through?
   5. Are their eyes and head looking down where contact should have been made?
   6. Are they swinging ear to ear?
   7. Are they rotating their hips?
   8. Are they over rotating their body and not keeping their front shoulder pointed at the ball until contact is made (“flying open”)?
   9. Are they extending sufficiently after contact?
   10. Are they lunging?

**STEALING – 15 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. Need a coach as a pitcher on the mound, coach as a catcher (standing up) and a first base coach
   2. Remainder of the players line up along the first base line with the first player on first base and the second player a good 5 yards away from first base toward home plate, rest of guys in line behind 2nd player.
   3. The “pitcher” will line up from the stretch and either act out a pick off 1b or will toss it home
   4. Get a ball and put it in your pocket or hold it behind your back
2. **Overview**
   1. Your mentality is that in two pitches I will be at 3rd base (when no runners on base)
   2. Signals are: *(and give your signals for a steal, for younger players typically a simple signal that has “s” for steal – like touching your skin or shoulder and a “b” for bunt like your belt or belly. But because this is in print, others may use these too).*
   3. Taking a lead – primary lead
      1. Do not take lead until pitcher is on the rubber of the mound
      2. Question? What gets you out in a game?
         1. Answer (show them the ball, pause, and say “the only thing is THIS – the “rock”!)
      3. So eyes always on the ball (“the rock”) even if coach is talking to you
      4. Shuffle sideways – without crossing feet – to your lead (the traditional way of taking a step off first with your left foot leaves you prone to a quick pick off and NO leverage)
         1. 1b AT LEAST one body length and ½ away (~ 3.5 steps), do not lean
         2. 2b – five, yes five steps – but at an angle about two steps behind (toward the outfield) the baseline so you can see the short stop and second baseman.
            1. Peripheral vision is achieved in this positon of both the pitcher and second baseman which prevents constant head-turning by the runner (constantly shifting views between the pitcher and the second baseman) – and eliminates the potential to make the worst mistake by the runner… losing sight of the rock.
            2. As the pitch is being delivered you want to creep back up to the baseline at an angle while taking your secondary lead
         3. 3b – 2 steps (we will go over more about leading from 3rd later)
   4. Secondary Lead. If you are not able to steal, while the ball is traveling toward the plate take a large secondary lead (as soon as the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand)
      1. 1b: 1/3 way to 2nd
      2. 2b: ½ way to 3rd
      3. 3b: 1/3 way to home
   5. When coach tells you to steal, **do it** only then after the pitcher’s motion heads to the plate (but before the ball leaves pitchers hand).
      1. Exception! For sloppy teams - leave as soon as pitcher lifts his foot – but be careful!
      2. Be careful with a lefty pitcher – his head can be facing the plate and he may still pick you off – you have to wait longer – until ball leaves his hands.
   6. If you are on 1st or 2nd on a pass ball you must steal!!!
   7. Sliding or diving back to the base
      1. Diving back to a base on a pick off is done head first, but always done looking away from home plate
         1. This allows you to locate the ball to see if it got overthrown and allows you to immediately determine to advance to the next base
         2. This also prevents the ball, the opponent’s glove, or event dirt getting in your face.
         3. If you come back to the base standing up you are not far enough off the base!
         4. The traditional “extra step off the bag” only when stealing is not advised for two reasons
            1. It is a hint to the other team you will steal
            2. Always being at the max distance in a lead (that a runner can handle without getting picked off) means the runner has maximized the chance of getting to the next base by shortening the distance to the next base.
      2. Sliding into a stolen base is ALWAYS done unless coach yells stay up or the ball is in plain sight far away
         1. In younger leagues there may be NO head-first slides allowed
         2. And in younger leagues you might HAVE to slide at home no matter what (we have been called “out” when you do not slide at home)
      3. LOCATE THE BALL!!! Do not call time out immediately after diving back or sliding – look to see if the ball has been overthrown first because you may be able to move to the next base
      4. If you can’t locate the ball, unless the coach says otherwise, assume the defender has it! Get up while keeping contact with the base at all times until pitcher with the ball goes back to mound (this is called “walking up the base”
         1. Exception - if you are not able to “Walk up the base” call time verbally
   8. The Continuous Walk (younger leagues always, sometimes in high school)
      1. Less than 2 outs, runner on 3rd, no other runners
      2. Batter walks, he does not stop at 1st he runs right to second to draw a throw and allow the runner at third the opportunity to score
      3. Many younger opposing teams will let the runner just go to second (a free base for you) but teams with better arms will likely throw out the runner
3. **Execution**
   1. One at a time have kids practice with two pitches: one pitch to practice getting back to the base and one pitch to steal
   2. As you progress through the players, reduce it to one pitch where the pitcher choses to throw a pick off or pitch the ball
   3. After the runners arrive at 2b, have them remain there for the next drill
      1. Move the 1b coach to third base and then repeat the drill with the kids at second base with a bigger lead listening to their third base coach
   4. Once they get to 3rd they are done with the drill (you will cover how to steal home in a separate session in a different practice).
4. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. Are they waiting to take a lead until pitcher on the rubber of the mound?
   2. Are they shuffling off without crossing their feet to the proper distance?
   3. At second base are they taking the lead behind the base line – and then creeping back into the base line at an angle toward 3rd base with a secondary lead?
   4. Are they taking secondary leads properly?
   5. When they slide or dive, are they locating the ball to see if they can advance?
   6. Are they walking up the bag after they slide or dive?
   7. When you are talking to them while they are on base, are they looking at the pitcher instead of you?

**BASE RUNNING II – 10 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. Line up at first base, first runner on first base, rest out of bounds, coach at 3b
2. **Overview**
   1. When there are two outs – run as soon as the ball is hit - air or the ground – and look for your coach at third base
   2. Less than 2 outs
      1. Grounder
         1. If you all bases behind you are occupied, just run!
         2. If base behind you is not occupied
            1. Grounder to first base half of infield - run fast to 3rd and expect coach to send you home
            2. Grounder on 2nd base side - facing the ball take a step back toward 2nd and get ready to run to 3rd if a throw is made to first.
         3. If you are on 3rd with nobody on 2nd
            1. Run immediately home except if ball is hit to pitcher or catcher
            2. If the ball is a grounder (or a bunt) to the pitcher or catcher, be off 3rd enough to draw their attention, but not enough to get thrown out. And this will allow the coach and you to determine once it IS thrown if you should explode to home.
      2. Ball hit In the air
         1. While ball travelling drift two steps back toward the bag while watching the ball.
         2. If you think ball has no chance of being caught, get halfway to the next base until you are sure it won’t be caught (or take off a little early)
         3. If you think a catch will be attempted – get ALL the way back to the bag but in a sprinters position (and look at your coach or the attempted catch).
            1. If it is caught only leave when your coach says GO or if the ball is touched (even if he bobbles it, once he touches you GO!).
            2. If the ball is caught and your coach says HOLD - stay ON the bag until the ball gets back to the pitcher.
3. **Execution**
   1. Coach will tell how many outs then hit the ball either in the air or on ground
   2. Runner determines how to advance based on outs and how ball is hit
4. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. Are runners reacting properly to a ground ball
   2. Are runners reacting properly to a fly ball (tagging up especially for high arc fly balls)?

**PITCHER PICKOFFS AND STEAL COVERAGES - 25 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. 1 pitcher on the mound (they will take a turn per runner)
   2. Catchers at home
   3. Coaches at 1b and 2b
   4. Infielders playing normal positions
   5. Outfielders playing normal positions
   6. Remaining players as runners or extra coaches serve as runners
2. **Overview - Pitchers**
   1. When a runner is on 1b and is the only lead runner – you **must** give him the “stink eye” (got to look over at him)
   2. And you must throw it over at least once and no later than 2nd pitch.
   3. Throwing it to first prevents too big a lead OR can get you an out
   4. Mechanics – Lead runner on 1st base
      1. From the stretch you come set
      2. After being set a righty pitcher’s body will be facing third base. Rotate your head to look at runner, you cannot turn your shoulders or it’s a baulk.
      3. From this position you can only pitch the ball or throw it over to first
         1. Any movement toward home plate or little flinch after you are in the set position without pitching the ball is considered a baulk and the runner gets the next base
      4. To pick off the runner, while your body is facing third base, take a short quick sidestep toward 2b, then turn toward counterclockwise (toward home) round to first, get your feet set, and throw the ball hard up at the first baseman’s chest. This all should take less than a second.
      5. You can fool a runner too - if you lift your leg straight up without any other part of your body starting toward home plate – the runner might go and at that point you can immediately rotate on your right foot to second base and throw the runner out.
      6. If you are still in the set position and runner goes – step BACK off the mound turn and throw the ball to second
      7. If you are a lefty you can come to your set position and you will be facing first. While looking at the plate you can lift your leg straight up to pretend you are going to pitch and then rotate your body on your plant foot toward first base and throw the runner out
   5. Mechanics – lead runner on 2nd base
      1. Same idea – easier to see the runner once you come in the set position.
      2. Still have to step back off the mound toward 2b, turn and make the throw.
      3. An easier way is to just pivot on your right foot (right pitcher, but vice versa for a lefty pitcher).
   6. Mechanics – 3rd Base
      1. Unless there are less than 2 outs do not throw over unless coach gives you permission
      2. Same process as first but reversed. You are already facing the third baseman so you can lift your leg, pivot and then throw to 3B
      3. IT IS CRITICAL THIS THROW IS A GOOD THROW – A BAD THROW MEANS A RUN WILL SCORE
3. **Overview – Basemen**
   1. A pass ball is a free base for the other team or run
      1. CATCH THE BALL FIRST – DO NOT ALLOW THE BALL BY YOU
      2. IF THE BALL IS IN THE DIRT GET DOWN AND BLOCK IT WITH YOUR BODY
      3. Come off the bag if you need to catch or block the ball
   2. Once you catch the ball tag the runner quickly and low
   3. Once the pitcher starts his delivery – hustle back to your position ready to play defense
   4. Corner basemen (1st and third) when you cover a runner - straddle over the bag along the baseline between home and the outfield.
   5. Middle infield (SS and 2b) –
      1. For a righty batter the 2b covers the runner, for a lefty the SS covers the runner
      2. This is reversed if the pitcher is superfast because the hits will likely go to the opposite field
      3. Whoever is covering the runner can do signals with the pitcher on when to throw it. A simple system is glove taps (but key words or phrases are better)
         1. 1 loud glove tap = no pickoff
         2. 2 loud glove taps = throw to 2b just to keep the runner close
         3. 3 loud glove taps = pick the runner off
         4. Code words could be used instead of glove taps, like the pitchers first vs last name, or some positive phrase like “here we go” vs “let’s go”
         5. But the codes have to be subtle
4. **Overview - Outfielders**
   1. Pay attention to the pickoff moves and back them up 5 yards behind the play
   2. RF back up throw from catcher to 1b or a pickoff move to 1st base
   3. CF back up the throw to second on a pickoff move or steal to 2nd base
   4. LF back up throw from home to 3rd or pickoff move to 3rd
5. **Overview – Catchers**
   1. At times a lead runner is walking back to their base head down slowly (happens at 2b occasionally). If you throw the ball to the pitcher really fast and hard that will be his signal to catch it and throw immediately to that base. You may want to call time out and alert the pitcher just before this happens if you think they have forgotten (and shout to the CF “heads up out there”).
   2. PITCHER IF NOBODY IS THERE TO RECEIVE THE THROW CALL TIME OUT AND ALERT YOUR INFIELDERS
      1. INFIELDERS BE AWARE OF THIS BANG-BANG PLAY
      2. OUTFIELDERS – BE PREPARED TO BACK UP A THROW
   3. On a steal throw to the proper side of the bag not the side the runner won’t be sliding into
6. **Execution**
   1. Let the fielders have a quick huddle and decide on their codes they will use
   2. Turn one
      1. Runner will wait until pitcher is on the rubber and then take a lead
      2. Pitcher will come set and either pick him off or pitch
      3. Runner will react or steal
      4. Players will react
   3. Each turn use a pitcher and catcher
   4. A coach who is running should also choose a few times to walk back slowly to see if the players remember what to do
7. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. Are outfielders backing up the infielders?
   2. Are the basemen coming off the bag for bad throws and doing everything they can to stop the ball?
   3. Are they tagging the runner low?
   4. Is the pitcher throwing at the baseman’s chest on a pick off?
   5. Did the pitcher come set?
   6. Did they baulk?
   7. Did they step off the bag properly?
   8. Did they rotate the right way?

**HITTING II WITH BUNTING AND SIMULTANEOUS PITCHER/CATCHER PRACTICE – 30 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. Pitcher/Catcher drill
      1. Have a coach who is most knowledgeable on pitching and catching count off the number of steps from the middle of the plate to the mound
      2. That coach will take (after the Bunting Overview) to a level part of the outfield near the fence (out of the way of hitters) the following:
         1. A pitcher
         2. A catcher fully dressed
         3. A fake plate or marker
   2. Hitting Drill
      1. A batter ready to hit in the box, a batter on deck and one in the hole (who can retrieve a foul ball over the backstop).
      2. Need another coach to pitch
         1. This coach should put a pitching fence if available between him and the batters and pitch from a closer distance than the typical distance
         2. If this is not available then the coach will have to do soft toss (see Initial Hitting drill in the Appendix).
      3. Rest of players in positions they will be playing in a real game. No catcher is needed,
2. **Overview**
   1. Bunting Overview
      1. There is one purpose to bunt – put the ball in fair territory (in play)
      2. From that at least two things we want can happen
         1. We can advance a runner to the next base
         2. You as a bunter can sneak a base hit (defense not paying attention)
      3. Bunting is reserved usually for those two purposes and because you mostly end up out when you bunt we reserve it for when it is critical to advance a runner (like end of a game when we need a run either by getting a runner around the base or a runner on the base)
      4. True stories
         1. There was a semi-final game where the home team was down by 1 run in the bottom of the last inning in a regional playoff. The opposing pitcher was too fast to hit, but the home team (starting with no outs) bunted 5 batters in a row, the last to win the game on a 2-out bunt.
         2. There was a game where a particular all-star team was losing by one run with 2 innings left in the game to a superior all-star team from another part of the local area. The home-team finally got a runner on base and then used bunts to move the runner around and score. The run started a rally and the home team ended up winning the game by 2 runs.
3. **Execution**
   1. Pitcher/Catchers – same as in Simultaneous Pitcher drill in Appendix.
      1. Give the pitcher 10-15 pitches
         1. If a pitcher seem skilled enough ask if they can throw a changeup. If not teach them and especially when it is to be used (usually when a batter is expecting and timed up to hit a fast ball -- see Pitching Reference in Appendix).
      2. After a pitcher is done send them in queue to bat
      3. Change catchers according to how many pitchers are at practice that day (example for 4 pitchers and 2 catchers – change catchers after 2 pitchers)
   2. Bunting and Hitting – same as in Initial Hitting with the following exceptions
      1. Give the batter 5 good pitches to attempt a bunt
      2. Then give the batter 10 good pitches to hit
      3. Make the last hit (only) “live” – that means only on the last hit will the batter run and the players play live defense. The rest of the hits the players should at least be fielding the ball correctly but don’t have to hit their cutoffs.
      4. Have the on deck batter “time you up as a pitcher” – simulate hitting by being sure he’s swinging as the ball gets to the front of the plate.
      5. Be sure they are using the same approach in the batter’s box as taught in the Initial Hitting drill (see Appendix)
      6. Exception – be sure the batters are implementing corrections from the last hitting practice
4. **What to Look For and immediately correct**
   1. Pitchers/Catchers – use the “what to look for” in the Simultaneous Drill (see Appendix)
   2. Hitters – use the “what to look for” in the INITIAL HITTING section of the Appendix and use the Batting and Bunting References in the Appendix
      1. But also be sure the bunters are getting bunts in play without popups
      2. Be sure they are NOT stabbing at the ball but instead are letting ball hit bat
      3. Be sure they are not attempting to Bunt pitches above their arm-pits or below their knees
      4. Be sure they ARE using their knees to bunt pitches that are near or above the knees and below the waist
   3. Defense – use “what to look for” in the Initial Defense section of the Appendix

**BUNTING AND HITTING with BUNTING GAME – 25 Minutes**

1. **Set up and Execution**
   1. Split the players into two teams. Have two assistant coaches either team.
   2. They each go into separate dugouts
   3. There are no fielders (except the coaches)
   4. First Coach on the mound with a hitting fence if necessary and at 2/3rds distance from home to the mound
2. **Bunting Game**
   1. Each batter gets one pitch
   2. There are no innings nor outs per inning
   3. Each team goes through each batter twice (2 rounds)
   4. Team with most points wins after two rounds
   5. Alternate batters from each team
   6. Batter is “out” (turn is done) if they…
      1. Look at a strike (any ball chin to shin or within a ball diameter of the edge of the either side of the plate is close enough to hit)
      2. Attempt to bunt and miss
      3. Bunt a pitch that was a ball
      4. Bunt a second foul ball
      5. Bunt a pop up in fair territory
      6. Extra points if a player can announce where they will bunt it (and it actually gets bunted in that location like “up the first base line”, “between third baseman and pitcher”, etc.
   7. Team gets one point (notice the TEAM gets the point not the batter) when
      1. Batter bunts it in fair territory and the ball rolls to at least half way between the catcher and the pitcher
   8. Team gets two points if the bunt rolls slowly in between where the pitcher and third or first baseman would normally be
   9. Do this so that each batter on each team gets two full rounds – highest score wins
   10. At younger ages, if the leagues allow bunting, it may be sufficient to award points just for getting the bat on the ball or getting it anywhere in fair territory
3. **Hitting Game**
   1. This is a 6 inning game. 3 outs per inning. NO walks and no batters run to a base after they hit the ball. NO bunting
   2. First coach pitches for 3 innings
   3. Next coach pitches for 3 innings
   4. Each batter gets one pitch
      1. Batter is out if they
         1. Look at a strike (any ball chin to shin or within a ball diameter of the edge of the either side of the plate is close enough to hit)
         2. Swing and miss
         3. Hit a second foul ball (first one is ok)
         4. Hit an infield pop-up, regular fly ball to the outfield, or a soft grounder in fair territory
         5. Try to bunt
      2. Team gets one point (notice the TEAM gets a point not the batter) when
         1. Batter hits a very hard grounder
         2. Batter hits a line drive that lands in the infield
      3. Team gets two points when
         1. Batter hits a hard line drive to the outfield
      4. Team gets three points if it makes it to the fence even on a roll or a few bounces
      5. Team gets four points if they hit it out of the park
   5. Team with most points wins. Extra innings allowed
      1. Note – at younger levels it may be sufficient to just award points for getting the bat on the ball (and remove the penalty for hitting foul balls only); and also increasing points for getting the ball anywhere in fair territory.
4. **Overview**
   1. It is ok to throw fast as it will get the players used to hitting faster pitchers. The first time you play this game you may want to just throw medium speed.
   2. Both games are fun for the players and bond the players
   3. Purpose for bunting game
      1. Get batters used to “one-chance” “do or die” bunting situations
      2. Develop a feel to put the ball in play vs pop up
   4. Purpose for hitting game
      1. Get batters used to hitting the first non-perfect strike on a line drive
      2. Reinforce putting the ball in play is important
      3. Award for hard hits
   5. Purpose for switching pitchers – get the batters used to seeing different pitchers
5. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. The usual with bunting and hitting (form and mechanics – see Appendix Hitting Reference)

**DEFENSIVE TIPS - 10 Minutes**

1. **Infielders**
   1. 2b or SS back up every catcher’s throw to pitcher when runners are on 2b or 3b
   2. 1b expect a throw from RF on a hard hit to shallow RF and no runner on 1st or 2nd
   3. 1st and 3rd basemen with nobody on – get 2 steps over from the bag toward 2nd base and 4 steps back from the imaginary baseline connecting your bag and 2B
   4. All - if there is a weak batter do not play to deep infield (protect a weak grounder being too slow to get to you in tome to make an out)
2. **Outfielders**
   1. Start “straight away “
   2. Cheat 3 steps right if there is a righty, and 3 steps left if there is a lefty
   3. This will be opposite if your pitcher is very fast and the batters are late (evident by foul balls opposite field)
   4. Unless you have seen a particular batter hit deep, for batters #5 through the end of the lineup cheat in 4 steps until they prove they can hit it over your head. This will allow you to catch many hits that would otherwise be base-hits.
   5. But for good hitters cheat 3 steps back
   6. For high arc fly balls that will drop in front of you dive after them without fear of them going by you because they will not roll far – but if you miss it – **immediately** get up and throw it to your cutoff man.
   7. RF on a sharp hit and no runner on 1st or 2nd make a throw to 1B if you are shallow
3. **Pitchers and Catchers**
   1. Throw low if you want a grounder to the infield
   2. Throw high if you want a pop fly
   3. For good hitters - throw low/outside
   4. For poor hitters - throw strikes down the middle (don’t get cute with pitches)
   5. If you sense a continuous walk/steal is going to occur you can call for time out before you get the ball
   6. Pitchers
      1. Back up throws coming from outfield to any infield base
      2. Run and cover the plate if you throw a pass ball whenever a runner is on 3rd
      3. When you hit a batter it’s a dead ball, walk over with your hat off & apologize
4. **All**
   1. Shout out where play is based on lead runner
   2. The ball is live, don’t mope if you make an error, get the ball to the right bag
   3. Don’t hold ball - get it to the cutoff man
   4. For fly balls, get “behind the ball” so it will come down in front of you.
   5. Don’t wait for few first batters to start making plays – make good plays right away
   6. No “5 out” innings (errors on easy outs led to a longer inning than neccessary)

**STEALING HOME - 25 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. Coach as a catcher at home
   2. Coach as a pitcher on the mound
   3. Players in helmets with one runner on third base rest facing the third base coach
   4. Third base coach (a coach knowledgeable about stealing home the following way speaks):
2. **Overview**
   1. **Leading off of third – critical to success!**
      1. How you lead off of third will dictate if or not you will be able to steal home
      2. You do NOT want to be noticed by the pitcher
      3. Your leadoff of third is always as far off as the third baseman is away from the base
      4. And as you see the pitcher deliver the ball you want “to roll down the line” IN FOUL TERRITORY to about 1/3 of the way home
      5. But you DO NOT get in the habit of sprinting out of that lead and skidding to a stop 1/3 of the way home for two reasons
         1. You want your forward motion to be seamless if you do end up stealing or being hit home
         2. You do NOT want to be in the habit of stopping
      6. If there is no opportunity to steal and you were not hit home you shuffle back up the line facing the pitcher with leverage on both legs in case you need to dash to home or back to the bag. BUT you do NOT return to the bag unless you are being picked off
         1. DO not turn your back to the catcher and run back up the line because you will miss a possible opportunity to steal if there is a catcher overthrow of the pitcher or a slow throwback to the pitcher
         2. In younger leagues a catcher may “run you back” to the base but you do NOT come back to the base (quickly or at all) if the pitcher is still on the mound (more on this in a minute)
   2. **Two obvious times to steal home**
      1. The ball gets a good distance past or to the side from the catcher
         1. Warning - slower pitchers are less likely to have a pass ball that go far enough away from the catcher to steal and vice versa.
         2. Beware - if the backstop is close to the umpire, the ball has to have ricocheted well off to the side to steal home. A deeper backstop gives you a better chance of stealing.
      2. When you are running to third and there is an overthrow
   3. **Additional opportunities not exploited by most opposing teams**
      1. When the catcher throws it over the pitchers head to second base
         1. *Warning* 
            1. *Sometimes the pitcher or second baseman will intercept the throw and try to throw you out at home*
            2. *Sometimes the catcher zips it right back to the pitcher despite looking like he is going to throw it to second.*
         2. *The only way you know the throw will get to second base is if it’s going well over the pitchers head – steal home!*
      2. Accidental bad throw back to the pitcher from the catcher
      3. Slow throw back from the catcher to the pitcher when the pitchers back is toward you on third base
         1. *When you creep down the line and the catcher runs up the line toward you – but the pitcher doesn’t cover home plate -- and the catcher throws the ball to third - steal home!*
      4. In these last three situations you DON’T want the pitcher to have noticed you much when you are on third. You DON’T want to take big initial leads. You want to take a good secondary lead only. Being invisible is key.
   4. **Coach has you steal**
      1. Steal home with a slow pitcher who doesn’t throw pick offs
      2. Suicide squeeze (batter is supposed to bunt the ball in play away from the catcher and pitcher as you are stealing home)
   5. **Caution**
      1. In younger age leagues there may be a mandatory rule that the runner MUST SLIDE AT HOME (even if it is not a close play they have to slide or they are called out)
3. **Execution**
   1. Runner takes lead according to how far third base man is off the bag
   2. As the pitcher delivers the pitch, the runner will you will “roll forward” toward home (in foul territory) so by the time it gets to the plate you are ready to decide to steal based on what you see.
      1. STEAL if there is a pass ball
   3. If there is no pass ball start to shuffle back to the base still facing the pitcher watching the ball
      1. STEAL if there is a bad throw back
      2. STEAL if the throwback is really slow
   4. If the catcher starts walking you back up the line you do not have to RUN back, shuffle back and see if the pitcher covers the plate
      1. If pitcher covers the plate, get back to the bag
      2. If no pitcher you may want to stop going back to the back and bait him into throwing it so you can steal home
   5. If you are caught in no-man’s land (catcher throws back to third – just sprint for home and slide)
   6. Coaches will mix up pass balls, bad throw backs, and walking runner back up the line ending with a throw to the bag *with and without* a pitcher covering the plate
4. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. Are the runners taking inconspicuous initial leads in foul territory that barely (if at all) draws the pitcher’s attention?
   2. After pitch delivered is the runner is 1/3 way down the line – by rolling vs a full speed sprint?
   3. Is the runner ready to steal once pitch arrives at plate?
   4. Did the runner STEAL on a pass ball?
   5. Is the runner continuously watching the ball while they shuffled back during the throwback to the pitcher?
   6. Do you feel they would be ready to immediately steal if there was a bad or slow throwback to the pitcher?

**BATTING TIPS – 10 Minutes**

1. **On deck** 
   1. Time up on the pitcher while on deck – this means get used to speed of the pitcher by practice swinging when the ball gets to the front of the plate
   2. For younger ages practice when to swing by getting used to how fast the pitcher is throwing (when he starts moving see how many seconds it takes for ball it to reach the plate – notice when r it reaches the plate). Use that for a guide when up at bat.
2. **For real slow pitchers**
   1. Move up in the box
   2. Wait until the ball has left the pitchers hand AND you can “see” its seams clearly
3. **For faster pitchers**. Move back in the box, Begin load-stride before he lets go of the ball
4. **Stay in the box**. Do NOT back out unless the pitch will actually hit you.
5. **EVERY pitch** ball or strike. Step into every pitch as if you are going to swing
6. **Gauge the ump**
   1. If the first strike called on you seemed too high/low, in/outside, realize the ump will likely call all similar pitches the same way
   2. Don’t chase those until you have two strikes called on you. If you wait you may get a better pitch to hit prior to your getting two strikes
7. **TAKE A PITCH (DON’T SWING) IF YOU KNOW THE RUNNER IS GOING TO STEAL**
8. **With 2 Strikes**
   1. No looking at a 3rd strike – do not let a close pitch go by without swinging.
      1. The exception is if the pitch is over your eyes, at your feet, way way way outside or is going to hit you. Otherwise – swing at that ball.
   2. Strike 3– it’s not over!! Run immediately to 1b until you hear the coach say stop
9. **3-0 count.** No swinging even if it’s a perfect pitch!!! EXCEPT if the coach tells you its ok.
10. **On Ball 4** 
    1. EXPECT the ball to get past the catcher and start to hurry down to first – don’t jog (you might be able to steal as you get to 1st base)
    2. Expect to do a continuous steal to second when there is less than 2 outs and we have a runner on 3rd base already -- especially if the catcher has a poor arm
11. **Recognize the pitch.**  Inside pitch swing early. Outside wait for ball to “get deeper” (closer to you) before swinging.

**CATCHERS DRILL – 10 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. Catchers behind the plate
   2. Everyone else near the plate
2. **Overview**
   1. **Every new batter.** Call out the number of outs and where the play is so the infielder/outfielder can hear it.
   2. **Adjust your target based on tendency of 2 pitches. Examples:**
      1. 2 pitches in a row too low? Move your target up
      2. 2 pitches in a row too inside? Move your target outside
   3. **Throws**
      1. Strong throwback to pitcher
      2. No rainbow throws to second aim at or about 2 feet over the pitchers head
      3. Throws to third are to be on the fair side of the foul line
   4. **Dropped third strike.**
      1. Throw to first EXCEPT (maybe) when a runner is on third with less than 2 outs
      2. Alert the 1st baseman when to expect this
      3. Call out to the 1st baseman inside or outside so you don’t hit the runner
         1. “Inside” means you will throw it on the inside (fair) side of the line
         2. “Outside” means you will throw it on the foul side of the line
   5. **Slow rolling foul ball up the line.** Touch it as soon as it’s foul!
   6. **Pass ball runner stealing home.** Pitcher must cover the plate make a good underhand throw to the pitcher no more than chest high so he can catch and tag immediately
   7. **Infielders** 
      1. Stealing - usually for a lefty batter SS covers bag and 2B for a righty – unless coach says otherwise
      2. Covering a runner or fielding a steal - straddle bag when receiving a throw then tag runner low!
   8. **Outfielders** - run to back up the throw if it gets past the baseman
3. **Execution**
   1. Send players to their normal defensive positions
   2. Coach will call out # outs, lefty or righty batter, where lead runner is and where will be the steal. Then test the defense with these specific situations:
      1. No outs, runner at first, steal at 2b
      2. 1 out, runner at 2b, steal at 3b
      3. 2 outs, runner at 2b, dropped third strike
      4. 1 out, runner at 3b, tie game, dropped third strike (coach decides)
      5. Pass ball, runner at 3b, no outs
   3. Pitcher pitches the ball to the catcher and play is made according to the situation
   4. Swap catcher every play
4. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. Is catcher calling out the play?
   2. Are outfielders adjusting to batter?
   3. Is catcher throwing on the proper side of the bag?
   4. For dropped third strike is the catcher yelling inside or outside?
   5. For a pass ball
      1. Did the catcher give a good underhand throw to the pitcher?
      2. Did the pitcher cover the plate and make a tag?

**RUN DOWNS – 10 Minutes**

1. **Set up.** While the players are still in their positions use coaches as runners with only one coach to start on first base.
2. **Overview**
   1. The “run down” is also known as “a pickle”
   2. The play is over in two throws maximum!
   3. When a player is caught in between two bases the first throw is to the base the runner is heading toward (not where the runner came from!)
   4. The baseman receiving the throw runs back at the runner … and about 10 feet before the runner is back at the bag, throws the ball and the tag is made low on the runner to make the out.
   5. Meanwhile
      1. The pitcher covers the bag where the 1st throw went
      2. If there is another lead runner, the baseman running the runner back to the base they come from must look at the lead runner to make sure he doesn’t go – even if it means the original runner gets back safely.
      3. The person who makes the second throw out gets of the way and runs back to the base he started from
   6. The worst that will happen is the runner gets back safe at the same base he started
   7. The best that will happen is you get the runner out
3. **Execution**
   1. Round 1. With coach leading off 1b, pitcher does a pickoff, coach gets caught in a rundown
   2. Round 2. With coach leading off 2b, pitcher does a pickoff, coach gets caught in a rundown
4. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. Is the first throw to the base the runner is heading?
   2. Is the pitcher covering the base where the first throw is made?
   3. Did the whole event end after two throws (whether or not the runner was out or safe?)
   4. Was a tag made on the lower half of the body?

**FLY BALL GAME – 10 Minutes**

1. **Set up**
   1. In shallow outfield split the team in half with their gloves
   2. First player from Team A lines up in front of you back about 10 yards
   3. First player from Team B is your cutoff man
2. **Overview**
   1. This is a game to get you to keep your eyes and head on a fly ball that is over your head without turning your back fully to the ball
   2. Catch the ball like a football wide receiver



* 1. You never back peddle
  2. You get points as follows
     1. 1 point for not turning your back to the ball (spinning all the way around 360 degrees to change directions)
     2. 1 point for a catch (or for real young players getting their glove on the ball while running)
     3. 1 point for a good throw to the cutoff man (not over his head or off to the side)
     4. 1 “style point” if you happen to have to dive for the ball and catch it
  3. Team with most point wins

1. **Execution**
   1. Coach will hold the ball out in front of him on his right side or left and yell go
   2. The player heads away like a football receiver going out for a pass to that side of the ball (not back peddling)
   3. The coach will change directions 1 or 2x by moving the ball to the other side
   4. The player will have to change directions by rotating his body using his hips but not turning his back to the ball and keeping his eyes on the ball
   5. Coach throws a fly ball to either side of the player and the player will make the play
2. **What to look for and immediately correct**
   1. Is the player running backwards not sideways?
   2. Are they using their hips to change sides without turning their back to the ball?
   3. Was it a good catch?
   4. Was it a good solid throw to the cutoff man?
   5. Is the cutoff man yelling cut with his hands up

**PITCHERS REFERENCE**

1. **Holding the ball**
   1. This depends on the type of pitch to be thrown. For illustrative purposes the figure shows the differences. Be sure the player knows
      1. 4 seam fastball
      2. 2 seam fastball
      3. Change
   2. Players of all ages can work on the aforementioned 3 pitches because they require the same exact arm motion (makes the change up hard to detect in the wind up).
   3. Older players (high school age) can attempt the others pitches

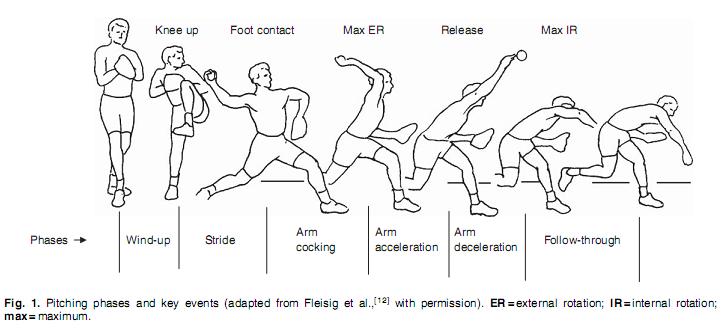


1. **Two ways to pitch**
   1. From the windup (nobody on base) vs the stretch (somebody on base)



* 1. The stretch can also be used when there is no one on base and some pitchers pitch more accurately and faster from the stretch

1. **Basic Mechanics** 
   1. Getting set
   2. Winding up
   3. Simultaneous stride-foot plant-back arm extension
   4. The delivery
   5. Follow through





1. **Tips** 
   1. Once a pitcher receives a ball he cannot quick pitch (he has to come set for 1 second)
   2. Once a pitcher is set, they cannot stop once they begin any motion toward home plate (balk is called and any base runners automatically advance). Nor can they flinch. At this point the pitch is delivered or a pick off move is initiated.
   3. The wind up should result in a near vertical position on the mound with the lead

knee at least high enough so the thigh is parallel to the ground. A good drill is to have the pitchers hold that position (first frame of the pro ball player) for 30 seconds

* 1. During the stride the pitcher should be pushing off the rubber
  2. At this same time while the front foot is striding in a direct line toward home plate, there should be good extension during the stride of brining the ball back behind the pitcher.
  3. The front foot becomes the balance point by which the whole body will pivot over during the delivery.
  4. The back is bent so it is almost parallel to the ground (called “throwing downhill”)
  5. The back foot should not drag along the ground during that delivery and in fact should come up off the ground due to the moment of the body’s throwing motion.

**BATTING REFERENCE**

1. **Mindset**
   1. “I’m gonna crush this ball on a hard line drive”
   2. Eyes on the ball and HIT THE FIRST GOOD PITCH HARD – do not let strikes go by
   3. During practices swinging at pitches from chest to knees – not at anything else!
   4. Don’t swing at junk, no matter how excited. Don’t GIVE strikes by swinging at pitches over neck/under knees.
   5. SWING HARD AT (AND HIT) THE FIRST STRIKE unless told otherwise
2. **Holding a bat**
   1. Generally the batters hands should be stacked (no space between them) and the bottom hand’s row of knuckles closest to the wrist should be just about lined up with the set of middle knuckles in the top hand.
   2. When properly aligned the top of the fingers between the middle row of knuckles and the knuckles closest to your wrist should be parallel to the front of your body.
   3. If your hands are rotated too far clockwise or counter clockwise from this position it may lead to loss of power or pop ups
   4. It is not something to overthink about, but it is something to make sure the batter is doing properly



1. **Your Approach - Entering the Batter’s Box**
   1. Generally the front foot should be no closer to the pitcher than the front of the plate
   2. To maximize the chance the meat of the bat covers the strike zone during the swing (vs the skinny part hitting the ball) adjust your distance closer/away from the plate by letting tip of bat hit ground at a 45 degree angle while in your stance (when your knees are slightly bent). As a starting point the tip of the bat should land in the middle of the plate.
      1. If the tip lands on the other side of the plate you are probably a bit too close to the plate and vice versa
   3. This approach will allow you to adjust on the fly
      1. Pitchers speed - up in the box toward the pitcher if slow, farther back if fast
      2. Umpire bias - closer to plate if the umpire likes to call outside strikes and vice versa
2. **Hitting Mechanics** - Your goal is to hit the ball just in front of the plate with the bat parallel to the front of the plate during contact. The ball must be watched through contact.



* 1. The Stance
     1. Get set in the box using your approach
     2. Feet
        1. Typically shoulder width apart
        2. Parallel to a line extending along the batter’s box
     3. Knees slightly bent
     4. Hands
        1. Height – anywhere from arm pits to ears
        2. No closer to pitcher than back shoulder
        3. No closer to body than where your helmet begins
     5. Feel a hint of weight on your back foot but do not lean backward
     6. Do not lean forward toward pitcher
     7. Do not over lean toward away from plate

*The remaining points below should be used as litmus tests to tell if the swing is occurring properly. Strive for these to occur, but do not try to correct more than 2 of these at a time. A lot of these occur automatically, but if you do not see these happening they are tip-offs that something is fundamentally wrong with the swing.*

* 1. Load-Stride (Timing Transition)
     1. While keeping back foot planted, step forward along that the line parallel to the batter’s box – and simultaneously bring your hands BACK a little
        1. Tip. The knob of the bat should be facing the catcher at this point.
     2. Important! This action is loading you for the swing. The timing of this load-stride will occur differently for different speeds of pitches. You must load-stride early on faster pitches or wait until the ball is actually out of the pitchers hands for slower pitchers (and even longer for real slow pitchers – like until you can see the seams on the ball)
  2. The swing (rotation)
     1. If possible begin rotating your hips a fraction of a second before your arms start swinging – this is a subtly and the fraction of the second this occurs before the arms start swinging is not something to get lost in. What is important is that the hips are rotating AFTER the arms get going.
     2. While your hips are rotating, the knob of the bat will actually lead the swing to the point where it will be facing the pitcher and parallel to the ground just as you are entering mid swing (at this point being parallel is important – a major tilt downward or upward is not good)
     3. The meat of the bat will come through the strike zone automatically – now with a slight downward tilt
  3. Contact
     1. At the point of contact the hips will end up facing the pitcher and the bat will be parallel relative to the front of the plate
     2. And at this point the outer (upper) hand’s palm will be facing up (still holding the bat of course) while the lower (inner) hand’s palm will be facing down
     3. A vertical line can be drawn from the batters face down to the knee of his back leg.
     4. At this point the batters arms shouldn’t be hugging his body nor should they be super extended away from the body. Some space between the back arm’s elbow and body is permissible – but not “a lot” (6” is “a lot”, “2” is not)
  4. Extension
     1. With your hips now rotated toward the pitcher, the bat comes through for a full swing (on its way to the opposite ear, but not there yet) and the tip of the bat will be pointing to the pitcher as you extend through the swing.
        1. If done properly there will be a slight “V” shape with a vertex at the wrists between the end of the bat and the batter’s shoulders
     2. The swing continues to the outside ear.
  5. Note – due to the hip rotation be sure to let the back foot rotate and the back leg will automatically bend. If you do not let the back foot rotate, you are taking power away from your swing.

**BUNTING REFERENCE**

**How to bunt**

1. You receive the signal from your coach while in the batter’s box. If you do not receive the signal you should not bunt unless your defense is asleep and you can control your bunts to obtain a base hit.
2. You do not give away any hint that you might be bunting. This means you get ready and stand in the batter’s box just the same way you would if you are about to hit the ball.
3. Typically just before the pitcher releases the ball (later for slower pitchers) you “square around” for a bunt by doing the following SIMULTANEOUSLY



1. Keep your foot closest to the pitcher planted and at the same time slide your back leg back to the outside part of the batter’s box. This will automatically cause your front knee to bend.
2. Twist your upper body toward the ball so you can see it better.
3. Slide your top hand up the bat almost to the thickest part – almost
   1. Be sure your top hand is on the opposite side of where the ball will hit the bat – otherwise it will get smashed!
4. At the same your bottom hand should be a little but up the handle away from the bottom of the bat
   1. Be sure the top of your hand is on the top side of the bat
   2. This hand can serve to steer the bunt
5. The bat should be out in front of you, not next to your body, so you can see where the ball will hit the bat.
6. Let the ball hit the bat! Do NOT TRY TO stab or jab at the ball.
7. Do not bunt a pitch that will be called a ball. Only bunt strikes! However a ball at your knees is a strike and you should bend your knees to get low enough to bunt the ball



1. If the pitch is too high, low, or outside – it is a ball! DON’T BUNT IT. Pull back.
   1. Exception is for a play where a runner at third base is stealing home – your job is to knock that ball into the ground in fair territory so the runner can score (suicide squeeze).
2. We try not to bunt on 2 strikes – because if it’s foul you are automatically out
3. Sometimes you can fake a bunt on 3-0 just to rattle the pitcher. Be sure to pull your bat back right after the pitcher lets go of the ball to ensure you do not accidentally get called for a strike.

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**Who To Blame**

That’d be us four below. Contact us at 330 396 0059 (including text) or email [hpccak1@roadrunner.com](mailto:hpccak1@roadrunner.com) with any questions or corrections. Pete Manousos, Chris Herchek, Pops (Steve Cline), Sean Murphy.



*July 2019 Richfield Town Hall, Richfield OH. RBSA E & F League Champion Coaches. L to R Chris, Pete, Pops, Sean*

*“Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed” (Proverbs 15:22)*

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