
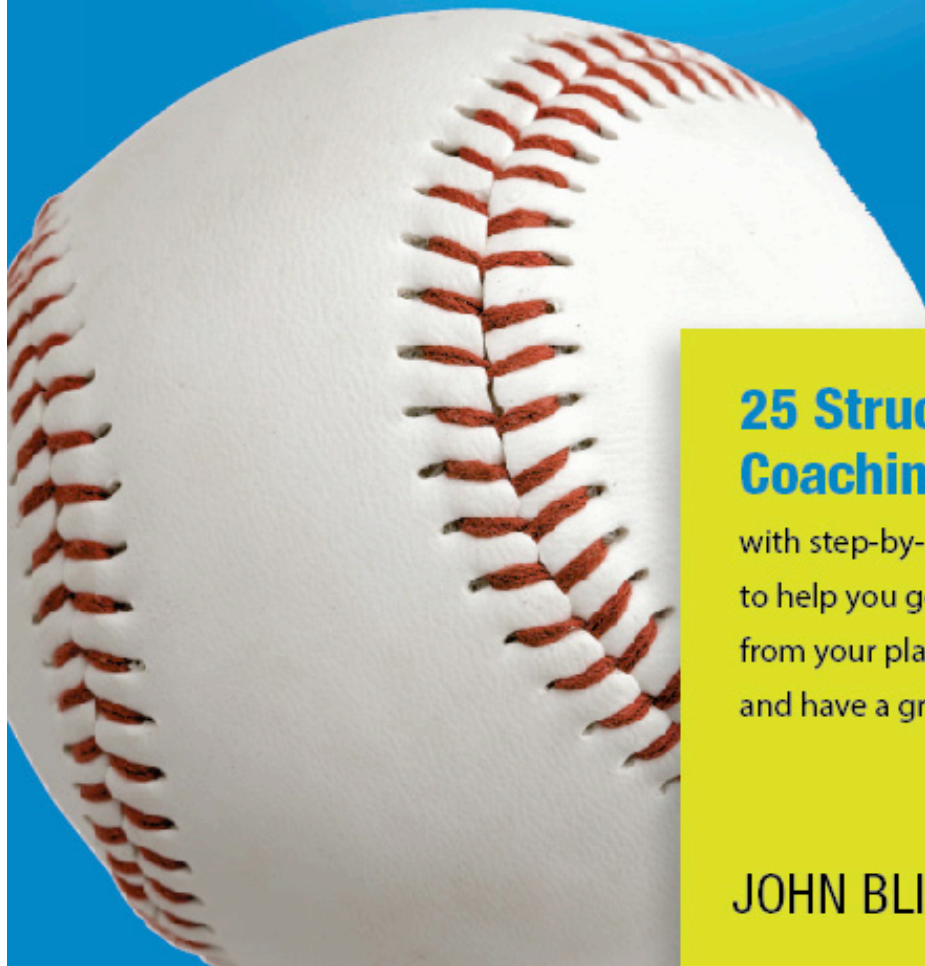


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TEAMS

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**COACH**<sup>TM</sup>

# Youth Baseball

## PRACTICE PLANS



### 25 Structured Coaching Plans

with step-by-step activities  
to help you get the most  
from your players, save time  
and have a great season

JOHN BLISSENBACH



# 25 YOUTH BASEBALL PRACTICE PLANS

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# INTRODUCTION

In my youth, many baseball practices consisted of batting practice followed by a round of infield. Players spent a lot of time standing around watching other players hit and would occasionally field a ball hit to them. Most coaches were Dads that had little time to think about or prepare a plan for each practice.

If, as a youth baseball coach, you would rather have fun, structured, fast-moving practices loaded with fundamentals, then this book is for you. As you enter a new baseball season, three things are certain; your players will be diverse in their skills and understanding of the game, there is great deal your players will need to learn, and finally, you will have a limited amount of time to prepare for each practice, as well as a limited amount of time during practice.

How your players spend their time during practice will determine the success of your team's season. What your players do during practice and when they do it is entirely up to you. Your players are counting on you to be prepared so they can be prepared.

This guide is intended to make your coaching job a lot easier. If you're new to coaching, you can use this guide as your roadmap. If you've coached before, this guide will remove a lot of the work associated with mapping out each practice. You can supplement the practice plans with your own concepts that have worked for you in the past.

With your use of this guide, your players will be learning, having fun and picking up on the key baseball concepts at the right time. As a coach, you'll look experienced, knowledgeable and well prepared. Plus, with some of the heavy lifting removed from your schedule, you'll have more time to appreciate the season. Enjoy!

--John Blissenbach

P.S. Please send comments and suggestions about this guide to [jtblissenbach@yahoo.com](mailto:jtblissenbach@yahoo.com). Thanks.

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- For each practice, review the PRACTICE AGENDA at least a day before the practice. If you're not as familiar with baseball concepts or drills, do some research on the Internet. Want to see how to teach bunting? Google it or do a search on YouTube. For most baseball skills, you can find high quality instructors demonstrating proper form in video format or in a detailed written explanation.
- Print out the pre-practice notes on one side of an 8 ½" by 11" sheet of paper and the Practice plan on the flip side. Some coaches prefer to fold the paper and keep it in the pocket of their sweat pants while others attach it to a clipboard. Refer to the sheet for your pre-practice comments and during practice to stay on pace with the practice plan agenda.
- Feel free to adapt the practice agendas to your own liking. Some drills might become player favorites and they'll want to do them again. Repeat them by eliminating one of the other agenda items for the practice. Based on your team's play in games, you might need to revisit certain exercises. Use the agendas only as guidelines — you'll know best what your team needs.
- Review the 25 **Practices Overview**. Note how teaching pitcher & catcher fundamentals make up the "Meat" of the first 2 practices. Why? "Good pitching beats good hitting" is an accepted baseball absolute. Some experts have estimated that pitching is 80% of the game. Regardless of the percentage, it is very important to develop pitching & catching skills early in the season. It's the reason major league pitchers & catchers report to spring training before all other players. By teaching these concepts first, and reviewing them throughout the year, players will know that you consider the skills of pitchers & catchers important to your team.
- In the 25 Practice Overview section, note how practices #10 and #22 call for a scrimmage with another team. Start networking now and figure out possible scrimmage opponents. You may find it more effective to scrimmage teams of similar age from neighboring communities vs. a team older or younger from the same community.
- Review a couple practice plans. Note how all of the practices plans begin with the same warm-up routine. Getting arms & legs properly stretched & warmed up will help prevent injuries during your season.

# PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

- Plan your practices. What does your team need right now to move forward and improve? Customize these practice plans to your own unique situation. Practices early in the season will require more explanation — plan fewer exercises so that more time can be devoted to explanation and demonstration.
- Committing to meeting at least 10 minutes prior to each practice can make a big difference for your team. In addition to ensuring players are ready to go when the field is theirs, it's your time to teach additional concepts, bond with your team and for players to talk and ask questions. Ten extra minutes at each practice can make a big difference.
- Get in the habit from the first practice of starting on time and ending on time.
- Once you have the field, coaches shouldn't do a lot of talking until the kids have had a chance to burn off some excess energy during their warm up routine.
- Kids can tire of the same drill if it's done for too long of a time. Look for ways to keep drills exciting.
  - Have mini-competitions, e.g. which group of players can do the relay drill the fastest or which player can make the most accurate throws to home from second base.
  - Have entire team competitions, e.g. how many consecutive ground balls can the team field without error? Pick a number to beat. If the team beats the number, players get to choose the next activity.
  - Identify players who are doing the drills with correct form and have them demonstrate to other players. It's a great ego boost for the player who is asked to demonstrate.
- Always remember, "Shout praise, whisper criticism."
- End practice on a high note: an exercise players like and words of praise. You want your players anxious to come back for more.
- Bring a dry-erase board and marker to practices and games.
- Make it fun. Smile more and yell less. Never forget they're kids.

# 25 PRACTICES OVERVIEW

**MEAT** = The primary focus of the practice, usually 20 – 35 minutes is devoted to this core concept.

**POTATOES** = The next biggest focus for the day’s practice, usually 15 - 20 minutes is devoted to this topic.

PRACTICE	MEAT	POTATOES
1	Pitcher/Catcher basics	Pitcher/Catcher fielding drills
2	Pitcher/Catcher basics	Pitcher/Catcher fielding drills
3	Throwing & fielding	Hitting fundamentals
4	Hitting & bunting	Infield fundamentals
5	Team defense	Hitting & bunting stations
6	Base-running situations	Hitting & bunting stations
7	Intrasquad scrimmage	Bunting competition
8	Fundamental review day	Fundamental review day
9	Pitcher/catcher review	Pitcher/catcher fielding review
10	SCRIMMAGE 1	SCRIMMAGE 1 (Cont.)



<b>PRACTICE</b>	<b>MEAT</b>	<b>POTATOES</b>
11	More defensive situations	More defensive situations
12	Hitting, hitting	& More hitting
13	Team Defense	Base-running review
14	Parent vs. Child Game	Award ceremony
15	Hot Box	Hitting & bunting stations
16	Intrasquad scrimmage	Throwing accuracy competition
17	Defensive Situations	Hitting & bunting stations
18	Back to fundamentals	Hitting & bunting stations
19	More defensive situations	Hitting & bunting stations
20	THE PRACTICE LIKE NO OTHER	THE PRACTICE LIKE NO OTHER

PRACTICE	MEAT	POTATOES
21	Hitting & bunting stations	Defensive situations
22	SCRIMMAGE 2	SCRIMMAGE 2 (Cont.)
23	Pitcher/catcher review	Pitcher/catcher fielding review
24	Hitting, hitting	& More hitting
25	Team competitions	Team competitions

# PRACTICE ONE & TWO — PITCHER/CATCHER BASICS

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 15 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- Let's introduce ourselves. Please introduce yourself by giving your name, school, and favorite thing about baseball and favorite thing outside of baseball.

### Coach's Comments

- Practice guidelines:
  - Bring glove, spikes and water bottle to every practice.
  - If you're thirsty, need a break, or not feeling well, let me know.
  - We'll be meeting 10 minutes prior to our actual practice time, to go over some points that don't require the field. I start on time, so please be prompt.
  - When I call the group together during practice, please come immediately. Be an active listener: Eyes should focus on whoever is talking so that they know you're paying attention, mouths should be closed and ears should be wide open so you can understand everything being discussed.
  - Our first two practices of the season are focused on pitching & catching. Both of these positions are very important to the success of our team. Players at these positions touch the ball more than any other players on the field. The first half of practice we will divide pitchers & catchers into two groups. Each group will work on drills that are unique to each position. The second half of practice we will bring the group together to work on a set of fielding drills.
  - We will be covering a lot of things that may be new to you. If there is anything you do not understand please stop us and ask us to review it again.
  - We want each practice to be fun, fast-moving & loaded with baseball fundamentals. Let's play hard, work hard & be ready to learn.

**Conclusion:** Many other teams will be practicing the same types of things that we'll be practicing. The difference will be how we do it. Doing little things correctly can make a big difference. Let's do the little things right.

## PRACTICE #1 and #2— PITCHER & CATCHER BASICS

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<p><b>10</b> minutes</p>	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul> <p>**For the next set of drills break pitchers &amp; catchers into 2 groups and complete drills at same time. Pitcher’s drills are listed first followed by catcher’s drills</p>	<p>The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique &amp; fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy &amp; throwing distance</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)</p>	<p><b>One-knee drill:</b> Two pitchers on one knee (left knee for left-handers and right knee for right-handers) facing each other, 40 feet apart. Player with ball will turn shoulder with glove toward target, bring arm back with hand on top of baseball. Begin throw with arm held high, release ball &amp; end with throwing elbow past front knee.</p> <p><b>Cock &amp; throw drill:</b> Pitcher spreads feet shoulder-width apart with glove-side foot pointing toward target. Both feet remain on ground during drill. Bring elbow of throwing arm and elbow of glove arm to shoulder height. Point elbow of glove arm at target. Rotate hips and pivot on back foot and throw the ball. Pitcher follows through by bending back and bringing throwing arm elbow to glove-side knee.</p>	<p>Purpose is to isolate lower body while focusing on development of proper throwing motion.</p> <p>Purpose is to teach players how to “stay on top” of baseball by keeping throwing-elbow high. As the pitchers are pulling their throwing elbow back ask them to imagine that they are reaching back in order to pull baseball off of a high shelf. As they follow through they should imagine pulling a shade down quickly.</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)</p>	<p><b>Quick-throw drill:</b> Begin with hands together and ball in glove. Pitcher spreads feet shoulder-width apart with glove-side foot pointing toward target. Both feet remain on ground during drill. As fast as possible (with control) pitchers break hands, turn hips, throw and follow through. Pitchers complete throw without stepping towards the target.</p> <p><b>Pause drill:</b> Pitcher will start wind up without a baseball. The pitcher lifts the glove-side knee to the same height as their hip. The pitcher will then stop, turn towards coach and wait (3 to 5 seconds) to be handed the baseball. After receiving the ball, the pitcher will step &amp; throw to the target.</p> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>Purpose is to slowly build pitching speed by training the pitcher’s body to release the ball quickly.</p> <p>Purpose is to teach pitcher how to stand upright, balanced and under control before they release the ball. This drill will help prevent pitchers from rushing their pitches.</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)</p>	<p><b>Wind-up &amp; balance drill:</b> Right-handed pitchers stand on right side of rubber (lefties on left side) First take a small step back and then turn hips toward the target and lift glove-side leg to hip level; and stay in balance position for 5 seconds or more. Repeat this drill about 20 times.</p> <p><b>Stride drill:</b> A pitcher’s stride should equal 80% of their height. This means a pitcher five feet tall should have a 4 foot stride. To help a pitcher stride the proper distance in the proper direction, draw a straight 8 foot line in the dirt from the middle of the rubber towards the middle of the plate. Then mark out a distance across the line that equals 80% of the pitcher’s height. The pitcher then goes through their entire delivery and checks to see where their foot lands in relation to the two lines in the dirt. The drill can be completed with a full wind-up or in a stretch position. It can also be done with or without a ball thrown.</p>	<p>Purpose is to slowly build muscle memory in the first stages of the pitching motion – going from stance to the balance position in a controlled fashion.</p> <p>Purpose is to teach pitchers how to increase the accuracy of pitches by striding the proper distance and in the proper direction.</p>
		<p>Purpose is to increase the comfort level</p>

<p>15 minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Blocking Drill I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchers should wear all gear</li> <li>• Coach stands about 10 feet away with a bucket of balls.</li> <li>• Coach will throw balls in the dirt immediately in front of catcher.</li> <li>• Catcher should drop directly to knees with knees past shoulder width. Drop glove between the legs with arms close to the body</li> </ul> <p><b>Blocking Drill II – No Hands</b></p> <p>Two catchers in full equipment stand about 20 to 30 feet apart. Catcher 1 throws balls in the dirt to the left, right and in front of "home." Catcher 2 practices blocking the wild pitches with shin guards and chest protector using proper technique and footwork only.</p>	<p>of blocking a ball using body/catcher's gear.</p>
<p>15 minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Quick Drills</b></p> <p><b>Quick Feet Drill:</b> Catcher 1 throws the ball hard from 20 - 30 feet away to catcher 2. Catcher 2 takes a jab step to the left or right attempting to get the middle of the body in front of the ball.</p> <p><b>Quick Hands Drill:</b> Catcher 1 throws the ball hard from 20 - 30 feet away to catcher to catcher 2. The balls are thrown high, low, inside, and outside of home plate.</p> <p><b>Quick Release Drill:</b> The catchers, who are 60 - 70 feet apart, throw to each other playing "hard catch". They work on taking the ball out of the glove quickly and on utilizing proper footwork while emphasizing quick releases on the throws.</p> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>Purpose is increase the quickness of movement to the ball with hands &amp; feet.</p>
<p>15 minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Throwing Drills</b></p> <p><b>One Knee Throwing:</b> Two catchers kneel 30 feet apart on their left knees. After throwing the ball back and forth for a few minutes, they move apart 10 more feet. Continue throwing and moving back until the throws equal the distance from home to second base. Emphasize proper shoulder and hip turn to gain strength. Drill can be done with catchers kneeling on both knees as well.</p> <p><b>Catcher Scoop &amp; Locate:</b> Three catchers group for this drill. One catcher sets in a crouched catching position, one player stands behind him with a baseball, and the third player stands downfield about 50 feet. The player standing behind the crouched catcher rolls the ball out in front of the catcher at different angles, making the catcher explode from his stance, circle the ball using proper techniques, scoop the ball, and make the throw to the other player downfield. Players also rotate in this drill.</p>	<p>Improve fielding and throwing skills.</p>
<p>30</p>	<p><b>Pitcher &amp; Catcher Fielding Drills</b> (Note for these drills, rotate extra pitchers as infielders &amp; base-</p>	<p>These drills replicate fielding situations that will likely occur multiple times during a game. By mastering each of</p>

<p>minutes (pitchers and catchers)</p>	<p>runners as needed)</p> <p><b>Catcher backing up first base</b> In situations with no one on base, it is the catcher's responsibility to back up first base on infield grounders. Coach should hit ground balls to infield. On contact, catcher sprints along foul line, about 12 ft to the right of the line, and gets in position to back up a wild throw.</p> <p><b>Pitcher covering first base</b> When a ground ball is hit to the right side of the infield, the pitcher may need to cover first base. Hit grounders between first &amp; second. Pitcher runs toward a spot on the first base line a few feet short of base and then runs along inside of line to the base. Ball should then be tossed to the pitcher one step before reaching the base, under hand if within a few feet or overhand for longer distances. Pitcher then tags infield side of bag &amp; then runs to the left to avoid contact with runner.</p> <p><b>Pitchers &amp; Catchers fielding bunts</b> Have both pitchers &amp; catchers practice fielding bunts immediately in front of plate and along both foul lines. Players should pivot while fielding the ball so that shoulder of glove hand is pointed toward the base.</p> <p><b>Catcher fielding pop-ups</b> Have catchers practice catching pop-ups in front of and behind plate. As soon as ball is popped up catcher should remove mask and hold it until ball is located. Have pitchers instruct catchers on location of ball. Once ball is located and catcher is in position, the mask should be tossed to the side.</p> <p><b>Pitcher pick-off attempts</b> From a stretch position, have pitchers practice pick offs to all three bases.</p> <p><b>Catcher pick-off/steal attempts</b> Have catchers practice pick offs at all three bases and throws to second and third on steal attempts.</p> <p><b>Catcher tag play/blocking plate</b> Have catchers practice tag plays at the plate. Have a runner slide into the plate while a fielder throws the ball to the catcher. Catcher should straddle base line in front of plate and then drop to knees after catching the ball while using shin guards to block the plate from runner.</p> <p><b>Pitcher &amp; Catcher wild pitch/passed balls</b> Have catchers chase pitch to back stop and have pitchers cover home plate with a runner approaching from third base. Catchers should slide on shin guards to pick up ball. Shoulder of glove hand should be pointing towards plate. Pitchers and runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> should sprint home with pitcher tagging runner sliding home.</p>	<p>these skills, pitchers and catchers will help their team reduce the number of base runners and runs scored against them.</p>
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# PRACTICE THREE — THROWING & FIELDING

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 15 Minutes

This will be the first full-squad practice so you will need to repeat some things from the pitcher/catcher pre-practice meeting.

### Get your players talking

- Let's introduce ourselves. Please introduce yourself by giving your name, school, and favorite thing about baseball and favorite thing outside of baseball.

### Coach's Comments

- Practice guidelines:
  - Bring glove, spikes and water bottle to every practice.
  - If you're thirsty, need a break, or not feeling well, let me know.
  - We'll be meeting 10 minutes prior to our actual practice time, to go over some points that don't require the field. I start on time, so please be prompt.
  - When I call the group together during practice, please come immediately. Be an active listener: Eyes should focus on whoever is talking so that they know you're paying attention, mouths should be closed and ears should be wide open so you can understand everything being discussed.
  - Most of today's practice will be devoted to the fundamentals of fielding ground balls & fly balls. We will focus on using the right technique each time you field a ball. All of the drills today will be fast-moving so that each of you will get lots of practice. We will also introduce you to the fundamentals of hitting and then have you rotate through three batting stations. Each of you should get many chances to work on your swing.
  - All of the things you do today you will also be able to work on at home with a parent, a friend or a sibling. The more you practice these fundamentals, the better fielder & hitter you will become.
  - We will be covering a lot of things that may be new to you. If there is anything you do not understand please stop us and ask us to review it again.
  - We want each practice to be fun, fast-moving & loaded with baseball fundamentals. Let's play hard, work hard & be ready to learn.

**Conclusion:** Many other teams will be practicing the same types of things that we'll be practicing. The difference will be how we do it. Doing little things correctly can make a big difference. Let's do the little things right.

## PRACTICE PLAN #3 — THROWING & FIELDING

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique & fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy & throwing distance
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Ground Ball Fundamentals:</b> Have players pick a partner and create two lines with players facing each other. Lines should be about six feet apart with six feet between players in each line. Each set of players will have a ball. Players should put gloves behind them. Player without ball should be in a fielding position; head up, butt low, arms in front of body & extended, hands out front with palms pointed out. Player with ball rolls it on the ground to teammate. Player fielding ball drops hands to ground. Hands should be extended in front of the body forming the mouth of an alligator. Bottom hand is glove hand and should touch the ground. Top hand should touch bottom hand at the wrist. Fingers should form an open mouth to receive ball. Players should alternate rolling the ball to each other, directly between players legs and then to each side. Players should shuffle feet side to side for balls thrown to their left & right. Objective is to field ball between legs. Drill should now be repeated with players using their gloves. Players should be reminded to keep fingers of glove touching the ground with throwing hand on top forming the mouth of all alligator.	Teaching point: It is important for players to learn proper positioning of legs, feet, arms & hands for fielding grounders. Repetition of drills with & without the use of gloves will improve skill level.
<b>15</b> minutes	<b>Fielding Ground Balls:</b> <b>Part 1:</b> Players should form two lines, one along the first base line & the other along the third base line. An empty bucket should be placed on third base & on first base. Coach will be at home with a bucket of balls. Coach will hit balls to players in each line in rapid fashion. Players will field the ball and drop it in a bucket. Focus should be on a proper ready position & proper positioning of hands & head while fielding the ball. Players should also “round to the ball” so that feet and body are in position to make a throw. <b>Part 2:</b> Players should form a single line along third base. Two players should alternate playing first base. An empty bucket should be placed near first base. In rapid fashion hit grounders to players in line. Players will catch the ball & throw to players at first base. First baseman should drop ball in bucket after catching it. Have players focus on rounding to the ball and getting feet set before making throw. Make sure each player gets multiple fielding chances & then rotate two players to play first base. <b>*****WATER BREAK*****</b>	This is a rapid fire drill. Every player should get multiple chances to field grounders during drill, Focus more on proper technique than whether the ball is caught. When players are in the ready position, pocket of glove should be pointed at hitter. Palm of throwing hand should also point at hitter....hands should not be on knees.



<p>15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Fielding Fly Balls (Thrown by Coach):</b>  <b>Part 1 - Fly Ball in Front or Directly At Player:</b> Players should divide into two groups, one in right field &amp; the other in left field with an empty bucket. One coach with a bucket of balls should be with each group. Demonstrate how to catch fly ball hit directly at player, with glove slightly higher than eyes and fingers pointed up. Thumbs on glove hand and throwing hand should touch. When catching the ball, the foot on the glove side of body should be closer to home plate than other foot. This places feet in the right position for the throw. Coach should stand about 25 feet away from players and throw each a fly ball directly in front of them. After catching the ball, player should place ball in bucket. Repeat with throws to the right &amp; left sides of each player. Each players should field multiple throws  <b>Part 2 - Fly Ball Over Players Head:</b> Ball should now be thrown over each players head. In order to catch the ball, player will quickly need to judge flight of ball and run to the spot the ball will land. For balls thrown to player's right side, player will need to turn body to the right while taking first step back with right foot. For balls thrown to the left side, player will need to turn body to the left while taking first step back with left foot. For balls thrown directly over head, players may step back with either foot and slightly "circle" to the ball rather than running straight back. While running, glove should be at side rather than held above head. Each player should field multiple throws.</p>	<p>Teaching Points:  Players should not back pedal to catch balls thrown over head. A step back followed by a sprint to the ball is the proper technique.  No throws are needed in this drill, Throwing will be part of practice devoted to defensive situations.</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Fielding Fly Balls (Hit by Coach):</b>  <b>Part 1 - Fly Ball in Front or Directly At Player:</b> Players should divide into three groups, one in right, center &amp; left field, each with an empty bucket. One coach with a bucket of balls should hit from a spot on the infield. Coach should hit balls in front or directly at players. Each player should field multiple hits and place ball in empty bucket.  <b>Part 2 - Fly Ball Over Players Head:</b> Ball should now be hit over each players head. In order to catch the ball, player will quickly need to judge flight of ball and run to the spot the ball will land. Each player should field multiple hits.  *****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>The goal with both of these drills in to provide each player with multiple chances to field the ball. Both should be done in rapid fashion to increase the number of chances per player.</p>
<p>5 minutes</p>	<p><b>Hitting Fundamentals:</b> Before dividing players into multiple hitting stations, conduct a brief demonstration of the fundamentals of hitting. Demonstration should focus on gripping the bat, stance, stride, turning hips and back foot, moving chin from front to back shoulder while swinging, and the importance of a short, compact swing. Hour and hours could be spent on discussing the finer points of hitting. Cover the key points in your demonstration and then provide more instruction to each hitter as you watch them at multiple hitting stations.</p>	
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Hitting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following three stations and equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after a few minutes at each:  1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.  2. Soft toss - Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.  3. Live hitting - Have coach pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have</p>	<p>The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>

# PRACTICE FOUR — HITTING & BUNTING

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- What questions do you have about baseball or the season ahead?

### Coach's Comments

- The first half of practice today we will focus on hitting & bunting. Last practice we demonstrated & discussed the fundamentals of hitting. Today we will review the fundamentals of bunting. You will then divide into groups & spend time at each of 4 stations. We have 4 stations because we want as many of you swinging the bat as possible at the same time. While our time at practice is limited, you can also practice hitting on your own time as well. The more time you spend swinging a bat, the better hitter you will become.
- The second half of practice will focus on helping you develop the skills that are unique to each of the infield positions. We will have stations set up at each base. SS & 2B will work together at the 2B station. 1B & 3B will have stations at their bases. We will work 10 minutes at each station and then rotate to the next station.
- We will conclude practice with a fun throwing accuracy contest. The player with the most accurate throws will win a prize.

**Conclusion:** Our team will not be able to win games unless we are able to score runs. And we will not score runs if we are not able to hit the ball. Our goal is for each of you to become a better hitter. Let's have a great practice.

## PRACTICE PLAN #4 — HITTING & BUNTING

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique & fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy & throwing distance
5 minutes	<b>Bunting Fundamentals:</b> Before dividing players up at hitting stations demonstrate the basics of bunting. Key points to cover are moving slightly up (closer to pitcher) in batters box, pivoting feet to face the pitch, squaring shoulders, sliding hand down the barrel of bat, keeping fingers away from front of bat to prevent injury, keeping knees flexed to move up or down with pitch, holding bat out in front of body and keeping eyes slightly above bat level in order to see the ball approach & hit the bat.	Bunting is a key component in a team's offense. Many players never learn the finer points of bunting. Learning this skill at an early age will be of great benefit to all of your players.
30 minutes	<b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station & rotate after a few minutes at each: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss – Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting – Have coach pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting – Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.
30 minutes	<b>Infield Fundamentals:</b> Divide players into three groups and rotate them through the following stations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. First Base</b> – At this station work on the following:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Movement of feet around the bag with throws directly at and to left and right of player.</li> <li>B. Fielding bad throws – Practice catching balls thrown in dirt &amp; over head.</li> <li>C. Positioning in the field when holding a runner on base &amp; when no runners are on base.</li> <li>D. Fielding bunts and throwing to first base.</li> <li>E. Positioning for cut-off throws.</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>2. Second Base/Shortstop</b> – At this station work on:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Charging ground balls</li> <li>B. Flipping ball to second base for front end of double play</li> <li>C. Covering second base to catch the ball and making relay throw to first base.</li> <li>D. Covering base and tagging sliding base runners on pick-off &amp; steal attempts.</li> <li>E. Positioning for cut-off throws.</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>3. Third Base</b> – At this station work on:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Charging ground balls</li> <li>2. Fielding bunts</li> <li>3. Covering base and tagging sliding runners on pick-off &amp; steal attempts.</li> <li>4. Positioning for cut-off throws</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	
15 minutes	<b>Throwing Accuracy Contest:</b> Place a bucket or some other target on home plate. Have players line up behind second base. One at a time, each player will throw the ball & attempt to hit bucket. Each player that hits the bucket scores a point. Give each player 5-10 chances to hit the bucket. The player that scores the most points wins the prize.	

# PRACTICE FIVE — TEAM DEFENSE

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- What aspect of baseball do you think you do really well? And, what one area do you need the most improvement on?

### Coach's Comments

- Baseball is a unique game because the team on defense has the ball. In most sports the team on offense has the ball. Once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, a long list of things can happen. So each player on the field needs to be prepared to react to all the things that could happen.
- Today we will focus on several defensive situations. What a player does in each situation will depend on the number of outs, the location of any base-runners, and where the ball is hit. Therefore, before the ball is hit, it is very important that every player knows the number of outs and location of base-runners. We will then discuss & practice what you will do with the ball if it is hit to your position.
- In all situations, players without the ball are either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base. No one should be standing in one spot watching the play.
- We will conclude practice with our hitting stations. Starting today we will have pitchers throwing batting practice. Catchers will also put on the gear to catch during batting practice. We want to give all pitchers extra time to face hitters before pitching in a scrimmage or a game. We will limit pitches to 25 for each pitcher.

**Conclusion:** Reacting to all of the different situations in baseball can be one of the most difficult parts of the game for a player to learn. Our goal will be to review & practice each situation multiple times. The coaches promise to be patient with you as you learn what to do with the ball after it is hit to you. I guarantee, as you gain experience & develop your skills, you will make better & faster defensive decisions.

## PRACTICE PLAN #5 — TEAM DEFENSE

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	<p>The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique &amp; fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy &amp; throwing distance</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Relay Drill:</b> Divide team into groups of four. First player should stand on foul line and other players should be about 75 feet apart. Each line of four should be 30 feet apart. The two players in the middle will work on relay throws. Ball should be caught with shoulder of glove hand pointed towards the next player in line. Immediately after catching the ball, players should throw to next player in line. Have each line complete a few practice throws. In order to increase speed of relays have lines compete. Ball should start and end with player on foul line. The team that relays the ball fastest from one end of the line to the other is the winner. Rotate players at ends of line into the middle relay positions.</p>	<p>This drill teaches players proper positioning of body for quickly relaying ball to a teammate.</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Outfield Cut-Off Practice:</b> Put players at every position except pitcher. Begin with hitting fly balls &amp; ground balls to outfielders. First round of throws should go to second base, second round to third base and final round to home. On throws to second &amp; third, shortstop is the cut-off for balls hit to LF &amp; CF, second baseman is cut-off for balls hit to RF. On throws home, third baseman is cut-off for balls hit to LF, first baseman is cut-off for balls hit to CF &amp; RF. Every outfielder should attempt 2-3 throws to every base.</p>	<p>During this drill make sure all players making the relay throw have their bodies positioned correctly.</p>
15 minutes	<p><b>Infield Practice:</b> (During infield practice, outfielders should practice catching fly balls). Warm up by throwing ball around the horn 2-3 times(C to 3B to 2B to SS to 1B to C). Start with throws to first base. Hit ground balls to players at every position. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the second round, all throws go to second for double play. Second baseman covers 2B for throws from 3B and SS. Shortstop covers 2B for throws from 1B &amp; 2B. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the third round, all throws go to home plate. In the final round, all players throw home and then charge towards plate, catcher rolls ball on ground and player throws to first. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>During this part of the season, stress technique in fielding &amp; throwing correctly &amp; accurately. While quickness in fielding is very important, it will develop over time.</p>

<p><b>30</b> minutes</p>	<p><b>Defensive Situations:</b> Place players at every position. Use remaining players as base runners. The objective of this drill is to make sure that every defensive player is in the proper defensive position after ball is hit and every player throws to the proper base. Before ball is hit, the coach tells players the number of outs and either leaves the bases empty or places a base runner on one or more bases. Following are the possible situations &amp; <b>most common</b> defensive plays. (Note: There may be multiple choices for a defensive player, the common rule is to attempt to force out the lead runner. If this is not possible, defense should throw or run to get the “easiest out”.</p> <p><b>1. Bases empty, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. OF throws to 2B.  <b>2. Runner on 1B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B, OF throws to 3B.  <b>3. Runners on 1B &amp; 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B or 3B. OF throws to cut-off for home plate.  <b>4. Bases loaded, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws home. If a base hit, OF throws to either 2B or 3B. If runner on 3B tags up on fly ball to OF, throw should go to cut-off for home plate.  <b>5. Runner on 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 2B “look” runner back to 2B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to cut-off for either 3B or home plate.  <b>6. Runner on 3B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to 2B on base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.  <b>7. Runner on 2B &amp; 3B 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws cut-off for 3B or home on a base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.</p>	<p>This can be one of the most complicated parts of the game for a player. Be patient with young players as they learn what to do with the ball after it is hit to them. Remind players of the importance of reviewing in their mind the numbers of outs and location of base-runners before ball is hit. As players gain experience &amp; develop skills, they will make better &amp; faster defensive decisions.</p> <p>In all situations, players without the ball are either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base. No one should be standing in one spot watching the play.</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes</p>	<p><b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after a few minutes at each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss – Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting – Start using your team’s pitchers &amp; catchers when pitching to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting – Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol>	<p>The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>

# PRACTICE SIX — BASE-RUNNING SITUATIONS

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Coach's Comments

- Last practice we spent a lot of time working on defensive situations. What questions do you have about any of the situations? Is there anything that you find especially difficult to do or is there anything you do not understand?
- Today we are going to shift most of our focus to offense. As you know there are many ways to get on base; a hit, a walk, an error, or getting hit by the pitch. Once you are on base, it's important that you learn basic base-running skills so that you can achieve the team goal of scoring a run. We will work on four aspects of base-running; running to first base, sliding, stealing & tagging up.
- We will also spend some time working on both the offensive & defensive aspects of "hot box" situations. This is a situation where a player gets caught in a run-down between bases.
- We will conclude practice with our hitting stations. Again we will use our pitchers and catchers during live hitting instead of coaches.

**Conclusion:** Not everyone has the same speed or quickness for running bases. However, everyone has the ability to be a "smart" base-runner. Our goal today is to help all of you become "smart" base-runners.

## PRACTICE PLAN #6 — BASERUNNING SITUATIONS

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	<p>The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique &amp; fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy &amp; throwing distance</p>
<b>40</b> minutes	<b>Base-running Basics:</b> <p><b>1. Running to First Base:</b> Demonstrate “running through” first base on infield grounders and “rounding” first on based hits. When “rounding” players run straight at bag until they get within 10 ft of base. Then they veer a few steps to the right side of foul line so that they can quickly make their turn to 2B. Players should tag infield side/left corner of base with right foot. Have players line-up at home and place a coach at 1B. Players will run, one at a time to 1B. If 1B coach says nothing, player will run through bag. If coach says “round-it” players will round bag, stop a few feet from first and then go back to first. If coach says “two” the player will round base and continue to 2B. Players should jog back to home after completing their turn. Repeat drill 3-4 times.</p> <p><b>2. Sliding:</b> Demonstrate the various methods for sliding. The most common is the “pop-up” slide. Player slides directly into front of bag with left foot tucked under right knee, right foot slides into bag and both hands are behind the head and in the air. Player “pops-up” to standing position after foot touches bag. Another slide is the “hook” slide. Player slides to either right side of base &amp; hooks the bag with left foot or left side &amp; hooks the bag with right foot. Both slides are used to evade the tag with throws approaching from opposite side of base. Another is the back door slide in which player slides on right or left side of base and grabs it with hand. Have all players line up at first, run to second one at a time, &amp; practice sliding into the base.</p> <p><b>3. Base-stealing:</b> Put players at the following positions: P, C, 1B, 2B, SS. Remaining players are base-runners at 1B. During these drills, pitcher works on pitching from a stretch and making pick-off throws to first base. Catcher works on making throws to 2B. 1B works on holding runner at 1B. 2B &amp; SS work on catching throws from catcher &amp; tagging base-stealers. Base-runners work on getting a secondary lead if they are not stealing and on getting a good “jump” (beginning sprint towards second at the same time as pitcher begins stride towards home) and then sliding into second. Give every runner multiple chances to steal and rotate fielders &amp; runners after multiple attempts.</p> <p><b>4. Tagging Up:</b> Put players in the following positions: LF, 3B &amp; C. Remaining players are base-runners at 3B. Place a coach at 3B. Another coach will hit fly balls. When ball is hit, 3B coach will say “tag-up”. Base-runner will return to third base, face home plate and get in sprinting position with one foot touching base. Player will not watch ball being caught but will listen for coach to say “Go”. Player will then sprint &amp; slide into home. LF works on positioning for catch, making throw at a level above head of 3B, C will work on lining 3B up for cut-off, letting 3b know whether to cut the ball by yelling “Cut”, catching the throw from LF or 3B, blocking plate &amp; making tag. 3B will work on lining up for cut and making accurate relay throw if ball is cut. Give every player multiple chances to tap up &amp; then rotate fielders &amp; runners.</p> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	



<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Hot Box:</b> When base-runners are caught between bases, defensive players form a hot box. A hot box can be formed with one or more runners on base. When the hot box is formed on the lead runner, defensive players should not be mindful of other runners. However, when the hot box does not involve the lead runner, the defense must attempt to keep that runner from advancing while attempting to tag the runner caught off base. For simplicity, start with only a runner at first base. Put players at each of the infield positions. The runner should try to get in a hot box by taking a big lead. The pitcher will then make a pick-off throw to first and then run to a point in foul ground to back up 1B. When the pitcher throws the runner breaks for 2B. Immediately after receiving the pick-off throw, 1B throws to the SS covering 2B &amp; remains at 1B. 2B moves to back up the throw from 1B. The runner should stop short of the bag. The SS will approach, forcing the runner back to 1B while decreasing the size of the box. The 2B will fill in behind the SS and cover the base. 3B backs up 2B. Ultimately an out will be made by the SS tagging the runner or by throwing to 1B for the out. If a throw to 1B is needed, the SS should then veer to right &amp; back up both the pitcher and first base. The primary goal is to tag the runner out with the fewest number of throws. If an out is not made, the secondary goal is to force the runner back to the base from which they started. Give every player a chance to be a runner in a hot box. Rotate fielders &amp; runners.</p>	
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after a few minutes at each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss – Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting – Have pitchers pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting – Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol>	<p>The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>

# PRACTICE SEVEN — INTRASQUAD SCRIMMAGE

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- Last practice we focused on base-running including running to first base, sliding, stealing & tagging-up. We also worked on the offensive & defensive aspects of a “hot-box”. What are the three things that could happen when running to first base? What are the three ways to slide into a base? At what times would you use each slide? Are there any questions you have regarding base-running?

### Coach’s Comments

- Today is the first time that you will get a chance to do all the things you have practiced in a game situation. We will have an umpire that will call balls & strikes & base coaches to assist you on the base path.
- The third base coach will provide signs for bunting, stealing & taking a pitch. (Come prepared with signs for each. Depending on the age group you are coaching you may want to add the following plays to your practice schedule and have signs for each; delayed steal, suicide bunt, & run & hit.) Remember to step out of the box like this (demonstrate) before every pitch so that you can look at the coach in order to see if a sign is being given. If you are not certain that you have been given a sign, call time out and go talk to the coach.
- All of our pitchers will get a chance to pitch & everyone should be able to bat more than once. We will keep track of the number of pitches thrown. No pitcher will throw more than 40 pitches.
- At this time go through the line-up of players that will start the game in the field & those that will bat first.
- Before we start the game we will go through our normal pre-game routine including warm-ups, outfield cut-off practice, & infield practice.
- After the scrimmage we will have a bunting contest.

**Conclusion:** Let’s focus on doing the little things right. Little things lead to big things.

## PRACTICE PLAN #7 — INTRASQUAD SCRIMMAGE 1

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique & fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy & throwing distance
7 minutes	<p><b>Outfield Cut-Off Practice:</b> Put players at every position except pitcher. Begin with hitting fly balls &amp; ground balls to outfielders. First round of throws should go to second base, second round to third base and final round to home. On throws to second &amp; third, shortstop is the cut-off for balls hit to LF &amp; CF, second baseman is cut-off for balls hit to RF. On throws home, third baseman is cut-off for balls hit to LF, first baseman is cut-off for balls hit to CF &amp; RF. Every outfielder should attempt 2-3 throws to every base.</p>	During this drill make sure all players making the relay throw have their bodies positioned correctly.
8 minutes	<p><b>Infield Practice:</b> (During infield practice, outfielders should practice catching fly balls). Warm up by throwing ball around the horn 2-3 times(C to 3B to 2B to SS to 1B to C). Start with throws to first base. Hit ground balls to players at every position. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the second round, all throws go to second for double play. Second baseman covers 2B for throws from 3B and SS. Shortstop covers 2B for throws from 1B &amp; 2B. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the third round, all throws go to home plate. In the final round, all players throw home and then charge towards plate, catcher rolls ball on ground and player throws to first. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B.</p>	During this part of the season, stress technique in fielding & throwing correctly & accurately. While quickness in fielding is very important, it will develop over time.
55 minutes	<p><b>Scrimmage:</b> If your roster has 18 or more players, split it into 2 teams. Play the game under normal rules. If less than 18, place nine players in the field and keep the remainder in to bat. When the team batting makes 3 outs, switch players that have had an at bat with players in the field. If all players hit before 3 outs, switch all players with players in the field. Keep track of each pitcher's pitch count. Early in the season, they should keep the count under 40.</p>	Assess what your team's biggest needs are from watching the scrimmage. Is it swinging at bad pitches? Looking at good pitches? Is it poor fielding technique? Is it throwing to the wrong base or not throwing to the cut-off man?
10 minutes	<p><b>Bunting Competition:</b> Have all players take a turn bunting. Define an area that the bunt should land. All players that place the bunt into the area continue in the competition. Have as many rounds as needed to determine a winner.</p>	It is important for players to understand the benefits of bunting & develop the skills to execute it properly.

# PRACTICE EIGHT — REVIEW DAY

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- We had a good scrimmage during last practice. What things do you think went well? What things do we need to practice more?

### Coach's Comments

- Praise the things the players did well during the scrimmage & highlight the things that need more work.
- Today we have scheduled a review day to go over some of the basics and work on some things we spotted during the scrimmage.
- After we warm-up, we will divide the entire team into four stations. The four stations are hitting, fielding fly-balls, fielding ground balls, & base-running. You will spend 20 minutes at each station. (Prior to practice contact parents and ask their help in working each station).

**Conclusion:** With anything you do in life, whether it is school work, playing a musical instrument, doing a job, the more you do it the better you become. Today we are going to review some of the things you learned at an earlier practice & give you time to get better at each of them.

## PRACTICE PLAN #8 — REVIEW DAY

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique & fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy & throwing distance
-	Divide the team into 4 groups. Set up the stations listed below. Rotate entire team after 20 minutes at each station.	
20 minutes	<b>Hitting Station:</b> Set up net for soft toss and hitting off of a tee. Have a bucket of balls. After 10 swings rotate to next player.	Provide individual instruction to each player. Watch stance, stride, follow-through, keeping head in, turning hips, pivoting back foot.
20 minutes	<b>Fly Ball Station:</b> Start by throwing fly balls to the left, right, & overhead of each player. Watch so that they drop back, run & get in position properly to make each catch. After about 10 minutes, begin hitting fly balls. Have each player rotate at the cut-off position.	As you watch, begin to assess each player's skills as an outfielder.
20 minutes	<b>Ground Ball Station:</b> Have players pair off and roll balls to each other with & without gloves. Watch so that they stay low, keep hands in front of them & use "alligator" hands to catch ball. After about 5 minutes, have players form a line to field grounders. Place a bucket next to line. After players field ball, they should drop it in bucket. After 7 minutes, players should come up throwing.	As you watch, begin to assess each player's skills as an infielder.
20 minutes	<b>Base-Running Station:</b> Players should practice the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Running to first base: run through bag, round first and stop, round and go to second.</li> <li>2. Leading off: sliding/diving back to first base, getting secondary lead, stealing.</li> <li>3. Sliding into second base: pop up slide, hook slide &amp; back door slide.</li> <li>4. Tagging up at third base.</li> </ol>	

# PRACTICE NINE — PITCHER/CATCHER REVIEW

## Get your players talking

- All of you have had a chance to pitch or catch during practice & during our scrimmage. How's it going so far? What's working well? What's not? What should we be doing more of? Less of?

## Coach's Comments

- Today we going to do all of the things that we did during our first two practices of the season. We will try to spend some extra time with things that are either causing some confusion or that we simply are not executing well because we have not spent enough time on it.

**Conclusion:** I recognize that our pitchers & catchers have two of the most difficult jobs on the team. There is a lot to learn & a lot depends on you. Both positions handle the ball more than any other positions on the field. That's why we have scheduled special practices for your positions. Let's have fun & have a great practice.

## PRACTICE PLAN #9 — PITCHER/CATCHER REVIEW

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul> **For the next set of drills break pitchers & catchers into 2 groups and complete drills at same time. Pitcher’s drills are listed first followed by catcher’s drills	
<b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)	<b>One-knee drill:</b> Two pitchers on one knee (left knee for left-handers and right knee for right-handers) facing each other, 40 feet apart. Player with ball will turn shoulder with glove toward target, bring arm back with hand on top of baseball. Begin throw with arm held high, release ball & end with throwing elbow past front knee.  <b>Cock &amp; throw drill:</b> Pitcher spreads feet shoulder-width apart with glove-side foot pointing toward target. Both feet remain on ground during drill. Bring elbow of throwing arm and elbow of glove arm to shoulder height. Point elbow of glove arm at target. Rotate hips and pivot on back foot and throw the ball. Pitcher follows through by bending back and bringing throwing arm elbow to glove-side knee.	Purpose is to isolate lower body while focusing on development of proper throwing motion.  Purpose is to teach players how to “stay on top” of baseball by keeping throwing-elbow high. As the pitchers are pulling their throwing elbow back ask them to imagine that they are reaching back in order to pull baseball off of a high shelf. As they follow through they should imagine pulling a shade down quickly.
<b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)	<b>Quick-throw drill:</b> Begin with hands together and ball in glove. Pitcher spreads feet shoulder-width apart with glove-side foot pointing toward target. Both feet remain on ground during drill. As fast as possible (with control) pitchers break hands, turn hips, throw and follow through. Pitchers complete throw without stepping towards the target.  <b>Pause drill:</b> Pitcher will start wind up without a baseball. The pitcher lifts the glove-side knee to the same height as their hip. The pitcher will then stop, turn towards coach and wait (3 to 5 seconds) to be handed the baseball. After receiving the ball, the pitcher will step & throw to the target.  *****WATER BREAK*****	Purpose is to slowly build pitching speed by training the pitcher’s body to release the ball quickly.  Purpose is teach pitcher how to stand upright, balanced and under control before they release the ball. This drill will help prevent pitchers from rushing their pitches.
<b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)	<b>Wind-up &amp; balance drill:</b> Right-handed pitchers stand on right side of rubber (lefties on left side) First take a small step back and then turn hips toward the target and lift glove-side leg to hip level; and stay in balance position for 5 seconds or more. Repeat this drill about 20 times.  <b>Stride drill:</b> A pitcher’s stride should equal 80% of their height. This means a pitcher five feet tall should have a 4 foot stride. To help a pitcher stride the proper distance in the proper direction, draw a straight 8 foot line in the dirt from the middle of the rubber towards the middle of the plate. Then mark out a distance across the line that equals 80% of the pitcher’s height. The pitcher then goes through their entire delivery and checks to see where their foot lands in relation to the two lines in the dirt. The drill can be completed with a full wind-up or in a stretch position. It can also be done with or without a ball thrown.	Purpose is to slowly build muscle memory in the first stages of the pitching motion – going from stance to the balance position in a controlled fashion.  Purpose is to teach pitchers how to increase the accuracy of pitches by striding the proper distance and in the proper direction.

<p><b>15</b> minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Blocking Drill I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchers should wear all gear</li> <li>• Coach stands about 10 feet away with a bucket of balls.</li> <li>• Coach will throw balls in the dirt immediately in front of catcher.</li> <li>• Catcher should drop directly to knees with knees past shoulder width. Drop glove between the legs with arms close to the body</li> </ul> <p><b>Blocking Drill II – No Hands</b></p> <p>Two catchers in full equipment stand about 20 to 30 feet apart. Catcher 1 throws balls in the dirt to the left, right and in front of "home." Catcher 2 practices blocking the wild pitches with shin guards and chest protector using proper technique and footwork only.</p>	<p>Purpose is to increase the comfort level of blocking a ball using body/catcher's gear.</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Quick Drills</b></p> <p><b>Quick Feet Drill:</b> Catcher 1 throws the ball hard from 20 - 30 feet away to catcher 2. Catcher 2 takes a jab step to the left or right attempting to get the middle of the body in front of the ball.</p> <p><b>Quick Hands Drill:</b> Catcher 1 throws the ball hard from 20 - 30 feet away to catcher to catcher 2. The balls are thrown high, low, inside, and outside of home plate.</p> <p><b>Quick Release Drill:</b> The catchers, who are 60 - 70 feet apart, throw to each other playing "hard catch". They work on taking the ball out of the glove quickly and on utilizing proper footwork while emphasizing quick releases on the throws.</p> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>Purpose is increase the quickness of movement to the ball with hands &amp; feet.</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Throwing Drills</b></p> <p><b>One Knee Throwing:</b> Two catchers kneel 30 feet apart on their left knees. After throwing the ball back and forth for a few minutes, they move apart 10 more feet. Continue throwing and moving back until the throws equal the distance from home to second base. Emphasize proper shoulder and hip turn to gain strength. Drill can be done with catchers kneeling on both knees as well.</p> <p><b>Catcher Scoop &amp; Locate:</b> Three catchers group for this drill. One catcher sets in a crouched catching position, one player stands behind him with a baseball, and the third player stands downfield about 50 feet. The player standing behind the crouched catcher rolls the ball out in front of the catcher at different angles, making the catcher explode from his stance, circle the ball using proper techniques, scoop the ball, and make the throw to the other player downfield. Players also rotate in this drill.</p>	<p>Improve fielding and throwing skills.</p>
<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>Pitcher &amp; Catcher Fielding Drills</b> (Note for these drills, rotate extra pitchers as infielders &amp; base-</p>	<p>These drills replicate fielding situations that will likely occur multiple times during a game. By mastering each of</p>



<p>minutes (pitchers and catchers)</p>	<p>runners as needed)</p> <p><b>Catcher backing up first base</b> In situations with no one on base, it is the catcher's responsibility to back up first base on infield grounders. Coach should hit ground balls to infield. On contact, catcher sprints along foul line, about 12 ft to the right of the line, and gets in position to back up a wild throw.</p> <p><b>Pitcher covering first base</b> When a ground ball is hit to the right side of the infield, the pitcher may need to cover first base. Hit grounders between first &amp; second. Pitcher runs toward a spot on the first base line a few feet short of base and then runs along inside of line to the base. Ball should then be tossed to the pitcher one step before reaching the base, under hand if within a few feet or overhand for longer distances. Pitcher then tags infield side of bag &amp; then runs to the left to avoid contact with runner.</p> <p><b>Pitchers &amp; Catchers fielding bunts</b> Have both pitchers &amp; catchers practice fielding bunts immediately in front of plate and along both foul lines. Players should pivot while fielding the ball so that shoulder of glove hand is pointed toward the base.</p> <p><b>Catcher fielding pop-ups</b> Have catchers practice catching pop-ups in front of and behind plate. As soon as ball is popped up catcher should remove mask and hold it until ball is located. Have pitchers instruct catchers on location of ball. Once ball is located and catcher is in position, the mask should be tossed to the side.</p> <p><b>Pitcher pick-off attempts</b> From a stretch position, have pitchers practice pick offs to all three bases.</p> <p><b>Catcher pick-off/steal attempts</b> Have catchers practice pick offs at all three bases and throws to second and third on steal attempts.</p> <p><b>Catcher tag play/blocking plate</b> Have catchers practice tag plays at the plate. Have a runner slide into the plate while a fielder throws the ball to the catcher. Catcher should straddle base line in front of plate and then drop to knees after catching the ball while using shin guards to block the plate from runner.</p> <p><b>Pitcher &amp; Catcher wild pitch/passed balls</b> Have catchers chase pitch to back stop and have pitchers cover home plate with a runner approaching from third base. Catchers should slide on shin guards to pick up ball. Shoulder of glove hand should be pointing towards plate. Pitchers and runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> should sprint home with pitcher tagging runner sliding home.</p>	<p>these skills, pitchers and catchers will help their team reduce the number of base runners and runs scored against them.</p>
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# PRACTICE TEN — SCRIMMAGE 1

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Coach's Comments

- We're going to be scrimmaging (fill in team name) today and it should be a lot of fun.
- Everything we have done in practice so far has prepared you for today's scrimmage. You have worked hard and smart in practices & today's scrimmage gives you an opportunity to show what you have learned. It's also OK to make mistakes. That's one of the reasons we scheduled a scrimmage. It gives the coaches feedback on things we need to work on in practice.
- Scrimmages also give coaches an opportunity to provide instruction during the game. So, we may call time out and come out to the field to discuss a play that has been completed or discuss the current defensive situation.
- Here is the starting line-up and the positions you'll be playing. All players will play at least half the game and we may rotate many of you to different positions during the game.
- Defensively, let's make sure we focus on getting the lead runner out and outfielders focus on hitting the cutoff. Pitchers remember to pitch from the stretch when runners are on base.
- On offense, let's make sure we are stepping out to look for signs (review the signs with everyone). Let's swing at good pitches & protect the plate with two strikes on you. Let's be aggressive on the bases and pay attention to the base coaches.

### Players:

- What questions do you have?

**Conclusion:** Let's try our best and have some fun.

## PRACTICE PLAN # 10 — SCRIMMAGE 1

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
5 minutes	<p><b>Outfield Cut-Off Practice:</b> Put players at every position except pitcher. Begin with hitting fly balls &amp; ground balls to outfielders. First round of throws should go to second base, second round to third base and final round to home. On throws to second &amp; third, shortstop is the cut-off for balls hit to LF &amp; CF, second baseman is cut-off for balls hit to RF. On throws home, third baseman is cut-off for balls hit to LF, first baseman is cut-off for balls hit to CF &amp; RF. Every outfielder should attempt 2-3 throws to every base.</p>	During this drill make sure all players making the relay throw have their bodies positioned correctly.
5 minutes	<p><b>Infield Practice:</b> (During infield practice, outfielders should practice catching fly balls). Warm up by throwing ball around the horn 2-3 times(C to 3B to 2B to SS to 1B to C). Start with throws to first base. Hit ground balls to players at every position. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the second round, all throws go to second for double play. Second baseman covers 2B for throws from 3B and SS. Shortstop covers 2B for throws from 1B &amp; 2B. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the third round, all throws go to home plate. In the final round, all players throw home and then charge towards plate, catcher rolls ball on ground and player throws to first. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B.</p>	During this part of the season, stress technique in fielding & throwing correctly & accurately. While quickness in fielding is very important, it will develop over time.
60 minutes	<p><b>SCRIMMAGE</b></p> <p>Make a point to remind your team the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the plate with 2 strikes</li> <li>• Hit the cut-off man</li> <li>• Always keep in mind number of outs &amp; location of base-runners prior to pitch</li> <li>• Pitchers pitch from stretch with runners on base.</li> </ul> <p>Spend a little time watching each individual player</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are their strengths and weaknesses?</li> <li>• Where do they need work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With coaches umpiring, it's a great time to get out on the field and make suggestions at the appropriate time.</li> <li>• Mix things up. Try people at different positions</li> <li>• Focus on player development.</li> </ul>
10 minutes	<p><b>Post-scrimmage wrap-up</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliment your players on their efforts and play.</li> <li>• Review what was working and what wasn't. Ask your players for their input. What do we need to work on more at practice?</li> </ul>

# PRACTICE ELEVEN — MORE DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- What did we think of the scrimmage? How was our fielding? How well did we run the bases? How was our pitching? How did we do swinging the bat?

### Coach's Comments

- Go over the scrimmage. Congratulate them on the things they did well and on their effort. Remind them that the scrimmage was a good test so that we can work on some things prior to our first game.
- Our focus today is on three defensive situations. The first is when there are runners at first & third. The second is how we will field bunts. The third is determining which position calls off other positions when a fly ball is hit in the gap between two players.
- The second half of practice we will continue working on developing your hitting skills.

### **Conclusion:**

Each of the situations we will work on today provides us an opportunity to get an out. It also presents an opportunity for our opponent to advance base-runners and score runs. By working on these in practice, it is our goal to increase our chance of getting an out & reduce the chance of our opponent scoring runs. Let's have a great practice.

## PRACTICE PLAN #11 — MORE DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
15 minutes	<p><b>First &amp; Third Situation:</b> Place players at all infield positions and runners at first &amp; third. Discuss the following options for the catcher when runner at first attempts to steal second:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Throw out runner stealing second base. 2B covers bag when there is a RH hitter. SS covers when there is LH hitter.</li> <li>2. Fake throw to 2B, attempt pick-off of runner at 3B.</li> <li>3. Quick throw back to pitcher, attempt pick-off of runner at 3B.</li> <li>4. Throw to second base cut-off by SS (if LH hitter) or 2B (if RH hitter). SS or 2B runs to a point about 15 feet in front of 2B in order to throw out runner at 3B.</li> </ol> <p>Have team practice each option. Provide signs for each option that catcher can signal to fielders prior to pitch. Practice each option using signs, Rotate runners and fielders &amp; go through options again</p>	Normally the defense wants to select the option that prevents a run from scoring. The best option depends on the score, number of outs, speed of runners, strength and accuracy of catcher & fielders throws. Because of all these factors the coach should decide and signal the option to the catcher.
15 minutes	<p><b>Bunt Defense:</b> Place players at all infield positions. Have a batter that will attempt a bunt. Run through the following two bunting situations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Runner on first base. When the batter squares to bunt, the P, 1B &amp; 3B charge the plate, 2b covers 1B, SS covers 2B. Players should attempt to throw out the runner at 1B unless there is a clear opportunity to throw out the runner going to 2B,</li> <li>2. Runners on 1B &amp; 2B. When the batter squares to bunt, the P covers the right side of the infield, 3B covers the left side, 1B covers 1B, 2B covers 2B and SS covers 3B. Players should attempt to throw out the runner at 1B unless there is a clear opportunity to throw out the runner going to 3B. See Appendix B for diagrams.</li> </ol> <p>Rotate batters, runners &amp; fielders.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	This drill provides bunting, base-running & fielding practice for the entire team
15 minutes	<p><b>Fly Balls Between Fielders:</b> Talk to players about which player should call off other players when a pop-up or fly ball is hit in the gap between fielders &amp; both have a chance to catch the ball. Following are the general rules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CF calls off other OF, 2B and SS</li> <li>2. LF calls off 3B &amp; SS</li> <li>3. RF calls off 1B &amp; 2B</li> <li>4. SS calls off P, 2B &amp; 3B</li> <li>5. 2B calls off P &amp; 1B</li> <li>6. 3B calls off P &amp; C</li> <li>7. 1B calls off P &amp; C</li> <li>8. C calls off P</li> </ol> <p>Place players at all positions and either throw or hit pop-ups/flyballs in gaps between players. Players with catching priority should yell, "mine, mine, mine". See Appendix C for diagram,</p>	It is important that players learn the call off rules as it will help avoid injury from players colliding while attempting to make a catch..
35 minutes	<p><b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and</p>	The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts

	<p>equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after a few minutes at each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss - Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting - Have pitchers pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting - Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol>	<p>each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>
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# PRACTICE TWELVE — HITTING, HITTING & MORE HITTING

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- Who is your favorite baseball player? Why do you like this player?

### Coach's Comments

- Today we will be having a hitting scrimmage. Our goal is to give each of you as many “game situation” at bats as possible.
- We will have players at each position and the rest of the team will stay in to bat. (Provide names of players for each position and batting order for remaining players).
- If you make an out (while at bat or on the bases) or score a run you will replace a player in the field. That player will come in to bat. After three outs the bases will be cleared. Runners on base after three outs will replace players in the field.
- We will conclude practice with a throwing accuracy contest.

### **Conclusion:**

Many people know that Babe Ruth hit 714 home runs in his career. What most people do not know is that he also struck out 1,330 times; nearly twice as often. The point is, even the best baseball players strike out often. If you do, learn from it, forget about it & then get out there & try again.

## PRACTICE PLAN #12 — HITTING, HITTING, & MORE HITTING

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
70 minutes	<p><b>Hitting Scrimmage:</b> Place players at every position. Remaining players are batters. Coaches or parents are umpires. If player makes an out (either at bat or while on base) or scores a run they replace a player in the field. After 3 outs the bases are cleared. Runners on base after 3 outs replace players in the field. Pitchers should throw no more than 40 pitches. Rotate with another player after 40 pitches.</p>	Keep things moving during the hitting scrimmage. The goal is to provide all players with as many at bats as possible.
10 minutes	<p><b>Throwing Accuracy Contest:</b></p> <p>Have this fun competition to conclude practice with winner getting a small prize. Place a bucket or some other target on home plate. Have players line up behind second base. One at a time, each player will throw the ball &amp; attempt to hit bucket. Each player that hits the bucket scores a point. Give each player 5-10 chances to hit the bucket. The player that scores the most points wins the prize.</p>	



# PRACTICE THIRTEEN — TEAM DEFENSE

## REVIEW

### Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

#### Get your players talking

- How many of you watch baseball on TV? Have you ever seen a player make a great catch or a great throw? What play do you remember most?

#### Coach's Comments

- Earlier this season we had a practice that focused on defensive situations. Today we will again review each of those situations. Is there a situation that has happened during any of our games that you were not sure what to do? We will cover these situations during practice also.
- Remember, what you do in each situation will depend on the number of outs, the location of any base-runners, and where the ball is hit. Therefore, before the ball is hit, you should know the number of outs and location of base-runners.
- Also remember, players without the ball are either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base. No one should be standing in one spot watching the play.
- We will also review running to first base, stealing, sliding & tagging up.
- We will conclude practice with a relay competition.

#### **Conclusion:**

*“If you think small things don’t matter, think of the last game you lost by one run.” -- Unknown*

Let’s focus on doing the small things right in practice today.

## PRACTICE PLAN #13 — TEAM DEFENSE REVIEW

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 - 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
<b>30</b> minutes	<p><b>Defensive Situations:</b> Place players at every position. Use remaining players as base runners. The objective of this drill is to make sure that every defensive player is in the proper defensive position after ball is hit and every player throws to the proper base. Before ball is hit, the coach tells players the number of outs and either leaves the bases empty or places a base runner on one or more bases. Following are the possible situations &amp; <b>most common</b> defensive plays. (Note: There may be multiple choices for a defensive player, the common rule is to attempt to force out the lead runner. If this is not possible, defense should throw or run to get the “easiest out”.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Bases empty, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. OF throws to 2B.</li> <li><b>2. Runner on 1B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B, OF throws to 3B.</li> <li><b>3. Runners on 1B &amp; 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B or 3B. OF throws to cut-off for home plate.</li> <li><b>4. Bases loaded, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws home. If a base hit, OF throws to either 2B or 3B. If runner on 3B tags up on fly ball to OF, throw should go to cut-off for home plate.</li> <li><b>5. Runner on 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 2B “look” runner back to 2B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to cut-off for either 3B or home plate.</li> <li><b>6. Runner on 3B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to 2B on base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.</li> <li><b>7. Runner on 2B &amp; 3B 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws cut-off for 3B or home on a base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.</li> </ol> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>This can be one of the most complicated parts of the game for a player. Be patient with young players as they learn what to do with the ball after it is hit to them. Remind players of the importance of reviewing in their mind the numbers of outs and location of base-runners before ball is hit. As players gain experience &amp; develop skills, they will make better &amp; faster defensive decisions.</p> <p>In all situations, players without the ball are either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base. No one should be standing in one spot watching the play.</p>

<p>40 minutes</p>	<p><b>Base-running Review:</b></p> <p><b>1. Running to First Base:</b> Demonstrate “running through” first base on infield grounders and “rounding” first on based hits. When “rounding” players run straight at bag until they get within 10 ft of base. Then they veer a few steps to the right side of foul line so that they can quickly make their turn to 2B. Players should tag infield side/left corner of base with right foot. Have players line-up at home and place a coach at 1B. Players will run, one at a time to 1B. If 1B coach says nothing, player will run through bag. If coach says “round-it” players will round bag, stop a few feet from first and then go back to first. If coach says “two” the player will round base and continue to 2B. Players should jog back to home after completing their turn. Repeat drill 3-4 times.</p> <p><b>2. Sliding:</b> Demonstrate the various methods for sliding. The most common is the “pop-up” slide. Player slides directly into front of bag with left foot tucked under right knee, right foot slides into bag and both hands are behind the head and in the air. Player “pops-up” to standing position after foot touches bag. Another slide is the “hook” slide. Player slides to either right side of base &amp; hooks the bag with left foot or left side &amp; hooks the bag with right foot. Both slides are used to evade the tag with throws approaching from opposite side of base. Another is the back door slide in which player slides on right or left side of base and grabs it with hand. Have all players line up at first, run to second one at a time, &amp; practice sliding into the base.</p> <p><b>3. Base-stealing:</b> Put players at the following positions: P, C, 1B, 2B, SS. Remaining players are base-runners at 1B. During these drills, pitcher works on pitching from a stretch and making pick-off throws to first base. Catcher works on making throws to 2B. 1B works on holding runner at 1B. 2B &amp; SS work on catching throws from catcher &amp; tagging base-stealers. Base-runners work on getting a secondary lead if they are not stealing and on getting a good “jump” (beginning sprint towards second at the same time as pitcher begins stride towards home) and then sliding into second. Give every runner multiple chances to steal and rotate fielders &amp; runners after multiple attempts.</p> <p><b>4. Tagging Up:</b> Put players in the following positions: LF, 3B &amp; C. Remaining players are base-runners at 3B. Place a coach at 3B. Another coach will hit fly balls. When ball is hit, 3B coach will say “tag-up”. Base-runner will return to third base, face home plate and get in sprinting position with one foot touching base. Player will not watch ball being caught but will listen for coach to say “Go”. Player will then sprint &amp; slide into home. LF works on positioning for catch, making throw at a level above head of 3B, C will work on lining 3B up for cut-off, letting 3b know whether to cut the ball by yelling “Cut”, catching the throw from LF or 3B, blocking plate &amp; making tag. 3B will work on lining up for cut and making accurate relay throw if ball is cut. Give every player multiple chances to tap up &amp; then rotate fielders &amp; runners.</p>	
<p>10 minutes</p>	<p><b>Relay Competition:</b> Divide team into groups of four. First player should stand on foul line and other players should be about 75 feet apart. Each line of four should be 30 feet apart. The two players in the middle will work on relay throws. Ball should be caught with shoulder of glove hand pointed towards the next player in line. Immediately after catching the ball, players should throw to next player in line. Have each line complete a few practice throws. In order to increase speed of relays have lines compete. Ball should start and end with player on foul line. The team that relays the ball fastest from one end of the line to the other is the winner. Rotate players at ends of line into the middle relay positions.</p>	<p>This drill teaches players proper positioning of body for quickly relaying ball to a teammate</p>

# PRACTICE FOURTEEN — PARENT VS. CHILD GAME

**Pre-planning:** To make things go smooth on Parent vs. Child game night, it helps to line up the following beforehand:

Volunteers:

- Home plate & base umpire
- Gain commitment of participation from parents
- Coach for parent team (to prepare line-up and coach during game)
- Someone to bring drinks/treats (optional)

Stuff to bring:

- Wiffle balls & plastic bat or tennis balls & wood bat
- Dry erase board to keep track of runs scored each inning.

## **Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes**

### Coach's Comments

NOTE: For younger grades, it sometimes help to alter the rules a bit to ensure a player victory. For example, below are some rules that can be sent out by email prior to the game and reviewed just before game time as well.

## **OFFICIAL RULES**

To partially offset potential parents' team advantages and avoid injury; consider the following modifications.

- Play the game with waffle balls & plastic bats or tennis balls & wood bats.
- Have parents bat on their opposite side of the plate (If normally a RH hitter switch to the left side of the plate.)
- Switch to 3 balls for a walk & 2 strikes for a strike-out to keep things moving.
- Have game end in 65 minutes. If parent team (visitors) is at bat after 65 minutes, make sure child team get's last at-bat if they are behind.

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Review starting line-up. Ask players to go thru pre-game warm-up and treat like a game.

**Conclusion:** Let's have fun!

## PRACTICE PLAN #14 — PARENT VS. CHILD GAME

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
5 minutes	<b>Warm-ups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure all of the parents know each other. Have them introduce themselves and identify their child.</li> <li>• While players are doing their regular stretching, jogging &amp; short toss/long toss routine, make sure the parents also warm-up a bit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a plate and base umpire if you haven't already done so.</li> <li>• Outline the rules for both teams.</li> <li>• Ask parents to be particularly safe in order to avoid injury to either team.</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<b>Parent Outfield/Infield Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have parent team take the field to practice outfield cut-offs &amp; infield drills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's fun if the parents come up with their own team name and cheer.</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<b>Child Outfield/Infield Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have child team take the field to practice outfield cut-offs &amp; infield drills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure playing time is evenly distributed for team members.</li> </ul>
65 minutes	<b>Play Ball!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have parent team bat first.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure everyone has fun</li> </ul>
10 minutes	<b>Award ceremony &amp; post game celebration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider inviting someone to bring drinks and/or treats for the post-game celebration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create your own trophy for the game by pulling the rectangular plate off an old baseball trophy and changing it to something appropriate, e.g. "Parent Game Champion." Players can share the trophy by passing it on at subsequent practices and games.</li> </ul>

# PRACTICE FIFTEEN — HOT BOX

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- What did you think of the parent/child game? Did everyone have fun? Is there anything we should have done differently?

### Coach's Comments

- Earlier this season we had a practice that focused on the “hot box”. What are some of the things you remember from that practice?
- Today we will spend more time working on our “hot box” defense. All of you will get a chance to either be a runner or a fielder in these drills. Remember, our goal is to work the runner back to the base they started from and tag them out as we are forcing them back. What we do not want is to force the runner in the direction of the next base.
- The hot box is one of the little things that may happen only a few times during a season. But if executed correctly it can be the difference between winning & losing a game.
- We will also have a bunting competition today. We will ask all of you to place your bunts in a defined area. Players that are able to do it will continue in the competition. We will have a prize for the winner. Bunting is also one of those little things that can make a big difference in a game.

### **Conclusion:**

Let's try to do the little things correctly. The little things always add up to big things. Let's have a great practice.

## PRACTICE #15 — HOT BOX

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 - 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
20 minutes	<p><b>Hot Box:</b> When base-runners are caught between bases, defensive players form a hot box. A hot box can be formed with one or more runners on base. When the hot box is formed on the lead runner, defensive players should not be mindful of other runners. However, when the hot box does not involve the lead runner, the defense must attempt to keep that runner from advancing while attempting to tag the runner caught off base. For simplicity, start with only a runner at first base. Put players at each of the infield positions. The runner should try to get in a hot box by taking a big lead. The pitcher will then make a pick-off throw to first and then run to a point in foul ground to back up 1B. When the pitcher throws the runner breaks for 2B. Immediately after receiving the pick-off throw, 1B throws to the SS covering 2B &amp; remains at 1B. 2B moves to back up the throw from 1B. The runner should stop short of the bag. The SS will approach, forcing the runner back to 1B while decreasing the size of the box. The 2B will fill in behind the SS and cover the base. 3B backs up 2B. Ultimately an out will be made by the SS tagging the runner or by throwing to 1B for the out. If a throw to 1B is needed, the SS should then veer to right &amp; back up both the pitcher and first base. The primary goal is to tag the runner out with the fewest number of throws. If an out is not made, the secondary goal is to force the runner back to the base from which they started. Give every player a chance to be a runner in a hot box. Rotate fielders &amp; runners. Next, place runners at first &amp; third &amp; pick-off runner at first. Have players attempt to tag runner going back to first. Runner on third should look for an opportunity to run home while the runner on first is in the hot box.</p>	
20 minutes	<p><b>Bunting Competition:</b> Have all players take a turn bunting. Define an area that the bunt should land. All players that place the bunt into the area continue in the competition. Have as many rounds as needed to determine a winner.  <b>*****WATER BREAK*****</b></p>	It is important for players to understand the benefits of bunting & develop the skills to execute it properly.
40 minutes	<p><b>Hitting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after a few minutes at each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss - Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting - Have pitchers pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, if using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> </ol>	The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.

# **PRACTICE SIXTEEN — INTRASQUAD SCRIMMAGE 2**

## **Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes**

### Get your players talking

- What makes a good teammate? (Let everyone contribute an answer)

### Coach's Comments

- Today we will have another intra-squad scrimmage. Again we will have an umpire that will call balls & strikes & base coaches to assist you on the base path.
- All of our pitchers will get a chance to pitch & everyone should be able to bat more than once. We will keep track of the number of pitches thrown. No pitcher will throw more than 40 pitches.
- At this time go through the line-up of players that will start the game in the field & those that will bat first.
- Before we start the game we will go through our normal pre-game routine including warm-ups, outfield cut-off practice, & infield practice. We will end practice today with a throwing accuracy competition.

### **Conclusion:**

*“Individually we are one drop, together we are an ocean.”*

**-- Ryunosuke Satoro**

The ocean is due on the field now. Let's go!



## PRACTICE PLAN #16 — INTRASQUAD SCRIMMAGE 2

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
7 minutes	<p><b>Outfield Cut-Off Practice:</b> Put players at every position except pitcher. Begin with hitting fly balls &amp; ground balls to outfielders. First round of throws should go to second base, second round to third base and final round to home. On throws to second &amp; third, shortstop is the cut-off for balls hit to LF &amp; CF, second baseman is cut-off for balls hit to RF. On throws home, third baseman is cut-off for balls hit to LF, first baseman is cut-off for balls hit to CF &amp; RF. Every outfielder should attempt 2-3 throws to every base.</p>	During this drill make sure all players making the relay throw have their bodies positioned correctly.
8 minutes	<p><b>Infield Practice:</b> (During infield practice, outfielders should practice catching fly balls). Warm up by throwing ball around the horn 2-3 times(C to 3B to 2B to SS to 1B to C). Start with throws to first base. Hit ground balls to players at every position. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the second round, all throws go to second for double play. Second baseman covers 2B for throws from 3B and SS. Shortstop covers 2B for throws from 1B &amp; 2B. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the third round, all throws go to home plate. In the final round, all players throw home and then charge towards plate, catcher rolls ball on ground and player throws to first. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B.</p>	During this part of the season, stress technique in fielding & throwing correctly & accurately. While quickness in fielding is very important, it will develop over time.
55 minutes	<p><b>Scrimmage:</b> If your roster has 18 or more players, split it into 2 teams. Play the game under normal rules. If less than 18, place nine players in the field and keep the remainder in to bat. When the team batting makes 3 outs, switch players that have had an at bat with players in the field. If all players hit before 3 outs, switch all players with players in the field. Keep track of each pitcher's pitch count. Early in the season, they should keep the count under 50.</p>	Assess what your team's biggest needs are from watching the scrimmage. Is it swinging at bad pitches? Looking at good pitches? Is it poor fielding technique? Is it throwing to the wrong base or not throwing to the cut-off man?
10 minutes	<p><b>Throwing Accuracy Contest:</b> Have this fun competition to conclude practice with winner getting a small prize. Place a bucket or some other target on home plate. Have players line up behind second base. One at a time, each player will throw the ball &amp; attempt to hit bucket. Each player that hits the bucket scores a point. Give each player 5-10 chances to hit the bucket. The player that scores the most points wins the prize.</p>	

# PRACTICE SEVENTEEN — DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Coach's Comments

- Today we will review defensive situations. The reason we are reviewing these situations several times during the season is because these situations can be the most complicated part of the game and they require all players to be in the right place at the right time in order to be executed correctly. We have made a lot of progress on these since the start of the season & today's practice provides an opportunity to get even better.
- Remember, in every situation, players without the ball are either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base. No one should be standing in one spot watching the play.

**Conclusion:** Let's play smart & let's have fun!

## PRACTICE PLAN #17 — DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
<b>40</b> minutes	<b>Defensive Situations:</b> Place players at every position. Use remaining players as base runners. The objective of this drill is to make sure that every defensive player is in the proper defensive position after ball is hit and every player throws to the proper base. Before ball is hit, the coach tells players the number of outs and either leaves the bases empty or places a base runner on one or more bases. Following are the possible situations & <b>most common</b> defensive plays. (Note: There may be multiple choices for a defensive player, the common rule is to attempt to force out the lead runner. If this is not possible, defense should throw or run to get the “easiest out”. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Bases empty, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. OF throws to 2B.</li> <li>2. <b>Runner on 1B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B, OF throws to 3B.</li> <li>3. <b>Runners on 1B &amp; 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B or 3B. OF throws to cut-off for home plate.</li> <li>4. <b>Bases loaded, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws home. If a base hit, OF throws to either 2B or 3B. If runner on 3B tags up on fly ball to OF, throw should go to cut-off for home plate.</li> <li>5. <b>Runner on 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 2B “look” runner back to 2B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to cut-off for either 3B or home plate.</li> <li>6. <b>Runner on 3B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to 2B on base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.</li> <li>7. <b>Runner on 2B &amp; 3B 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws cut-off for 3B or home on a base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.</li> </ol> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>This can be one of the most complicated parts of the game for a player. Be patient with young players as they learn what to do with the ball after it is hit to them. Remind players of the importance of reviewing in their mind the numbers of outs and location of base-runners before ball is hit. As players gain experience &amp; develop skills, they will make better &amp; faster defensive decisions.</p> <p>In all situations, players without the ball are either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base. No one should be standing in one spot watching the play.</p>
<b>40</b> minutes	<b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station & rotate after a few minutes at each: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss - Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting – Have coach pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting – Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol>	<p>The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>

# PRACTICE EIGHTEEN — BACK TO FUNDAMENTALS

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Coach's Comments

- Every position on a baseball field has a unique set of responsibilities & requires an ability to do different types of things. These things are the fundamental skills for each position.
- Today we will review the fundamentals for each of the infield positions and outfield positions. We ran through these fundamentals at an earlier practice & today our goal is to reinforce what you learned & give you some extra practice time.
- Most of the things you do here today you can also practice with one other person when you are at home. The more time you spend practicing these things, the better player you will become.

**Conclusion:** When you practice something over & over & over again, not only do you get better at it, but you also start to do things automatically. When you get to this point, you are well on your way to mastering the skill.

## PRACTICE PLAN #18 — BACK TO FUNDAMENTALS

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 - 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
<b>35</b> minutes	<p><b>Infield Fundamentals:</b> Divide players into three groups and rotate them through the following stations:</p> <p><b>1. First Base</b> – At this station work on the following:</p> <p>A. Movement of feet around the bag with throws directly at and to left and right of player.</p> <p>B. Fielding bad throws – Practice catching balls thrown in dirt &amp; over head.</p> <p>C. Positioning in the field when holding a runner on base &amp; when no runners are on base.</p> <p>D. Fielding bunts and throwing to first base.</p> <p>E. Positioning for cut-off throws.</p> <p><b>2. Second Base/Shortstop</b> – At this station work on:</p> <p>A. Charging ground balls</p> <p>B. Flipping ball to second base for front end of double play</p> <p>C. Covering second base to catch the ball and making relay throw to first base.</p> <p>D. Covering base and tagging sliding base runners on pick-off &amp; steal attempts.</p> <p>E. Positioning for cut-off throws.</p> <p><b>3. Third Base</b> – At this station work on:</p> <p>1. Charging ground balls</p> <p>2. Fielding bunts</p> <p>3. Covering base and tagging sliding runners on pick-off &amp; steal attempts.</p> <p>4. Positioning for cut-off throws</p> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	
<b>10</b> minutes	<p><b>Fielding Fly Balls (Thrown by Coach):</b></p> <p><b>Part 1 - Fly Ball in Front or Directly At Player:</b> Players should divide into two groups, one in right field &amp; the other in left field with an empty bucket. One coach with a bucket of balls should be with each group. Demonstrate how to catch fly ball hit directly at player, with glove slightly higher than eyes and fingers pointed up. Thumbs on glove hand and throwing hand should touch. When catching the ball, the foot on the glove side of body should be closer to home plate than other foot. This places feet in the right position for the throw. Coach should stand about 25 feet away from players and throw each a fly ball directly in front of them. After catching the ball, player should place ball in bucket. Repeat with throws to the right &amp; left sides of each player. Each players should field multiple throws</p> <p><b>Part 2 - Fly Ball Over Players Head:</b> Ball should now be thrown over each players head. In order to catch the ball, player will quickly need to judge flight of ball and run to the spot the ball will land. For balls thrown to player's right side, player will need to turn body to the right while taking first step back with right foot. For balls thrown to the left side, player will need to turn body to the left while taking first step back with left foot. For balls thrown directly over head, players may step back with either foot and slightly "circle" to the ball rather than running straight back. While running, glove should be at side rather than held above head. Each player should field multiple throws.</p>	<p>Teaching Points:</p> <p>Players should not back pedal to catch balls thrown over head. A step back followed by a sprint to the ball is the proper technique.</p> <p>No throws are needed in this drill, Throwing will be part of practice devoted to defensive situations.</p>

<p><b>10</b> minutes</p>	<p><b>Fielding Fly Balls (Hit by Coach):</b>  <b>Part 1 - Fly Ball in Front or Directly At Player:</b> Players should divide into three groups, one in right, center &amp; left field, each with an empty bucket. One coach with a bucket of balls should hit from a spot on the infield. Coach should hit balls in front or directly at players. Each player should field multiple hits and place ball in empty bucket.  <b>Part 2 - Fly Ball Over Players Head:</b> Ball should now be hit over each players head. In order to catch the ball, player will quickly need to judge flight of ball and run to the spot the ball will land. Each player should field multiple hits.  *****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>The goal with both of these drills in to provide each player with multiple chances to field the ball, Both should be done in rapid fashion to increase the number of chances per player.</p>
<p><b>25</b> minutes</p>	<p><b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after a few minutes at each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss - Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting - Have coach pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting - Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol>	<p>The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>

# PRACTICE NINETEEN — MORE DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

Have your players take the Baseball quiz. (Have players raise hands to answer after you read the questions to the group)

1. In what city is the Baseball Hall of Fame located? Cooperstown, New York
2. On a Major League Baseball diamond, what is the distance between bases? 90 feet
3. What Major League slugger was nicknamed Mr. October? Reggie Jackson
4. What does it mean when a Major League player wins the Triple Crown? The player that hits the most home runs, has the highest batting average & drives in the most runs wins the Triple Crown.
5. How many games does each team play in a regular Major League season? 162
6. What do the initials R.B.I. stand for? Runs Batted In
7. How many stitches does a regulation baseball have? 108
8. What Major League ballpark has a wall nicknamed “The Green Monster”? Fenway Park
9. What do the initials H.B.P. stand for? Hit By Pitch
10. Who was the first Major League player to hit 60 or more home runs in a single season? Babe Ruth

### Coach’s Comments

- Today we will review first & third situations, bunt defense & fly balls between fielders.

## PRACTICE PLAN #19 — MORE DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
15 minutes	<p><b>First &amp; Third Situation:</b> Place players at all infield positions and runners at first &amp; third. Discuss the following options for the catcher when runner at first attempts to steal second:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Throw out runner stealing second base. 2B covers bag when there is a RH hitter. SS covers when there is LH hitter.</li> <li>2. Fake throw to 2B, attempt pick-off of runner at 3B.</li> <li>3. Quick throw back to pitcher, attempt pick-off of runner at 3B.</li> <li>4. Throw to second base cut-off by SS (if LH hitter) or 2B (if RH hitter). SS or 2B runs to a point about 15 feet in front of 2B in order to throw out runner at 3B.</li> </ol> <p>Have team practice each option. Provide signs for each option that catcher can signal to fielders prior to pitch. Practice each option using signs, Rotate runners and fielders &amp; go through options again</p>	Normally the defense wants to select the option that prevents a run from scoring. The best option depends on the score, number of outs, speed of runners, strength and accuracy of catcher & fielders throws. Because of all these factors the coach should decide and signal the option to the catcher.
15 minutes	<p><b>Bunt Defense:</b> Place players at all infield positions. Have a batter that will attempt a bunt. Run through the following two bunting situations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Runner on first base. When the batter squares to bunt, the P, 1B &amp; 3B charge the plate, 2b covers 1B, SS covers 2B. Players should attempt to throw out the runner at 1B unless there is a clear opportunity to throw out the runner going to 2B,</li> <li>2. Runners on 1B &amp; 2B. When the batter squares to bunt, the P covers the right side of the infield, 3B covers the left side, 1B covers 1B, 2B covers 2B and SS covers 3B. Players should attempt to throw out the runner at 1B unless there is a clear opportunity to throw out the runner going to 3B.</li> </ol> <p>Rotate batters, runners &amp; fielders.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	This drill provides bunting, base-running & fielding practice for the entire team
15 minutes	<p><b>Fly Balls Between Fielders:</b> Talk to players about which player should call off other players when a pop-up or fly ball is hit in the gap between fielders &amp; both have a chance to catch the ball. Following are the general rules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CF calls off other OF, 2B and SS</li> <li>2. LF calls off 3B &amp; SS</li> <li>3. RF calls off 1B &amp; 2B</li> <li>4. SS calls off P, 2B &amp; 3B</li> <li>5. 2B calls off P &amp; 1B</li> <li>6. 3B calls off P &amp; C</li> <li>7. 1B calls off P &amp; C</li> <li>8. C calls off P</li> </ol> <p>Place players at all positions and either throw or hit pop-ups/flyballs in gaps between players. Players with catching priority should yell, "mine, mine, mine".</p>	It is important that players learn the call off rules as it will help avoid injury from players colliding while attempting to make a catch..
35	<p><b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your</p>	The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the



minutes	<p>team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after 8 minutes at each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss - Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting - Have pitchers pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting - Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol>	<p>same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>
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# PRACTICE TWENTY — “THE PRACTICE LIKE NO OTHER”

**Explanation:** As a way to break up a busy stretch of practices, games & tournaments, schedule a practice labeled, “The Practice like No Other.” At earlier practices and via email, build up the practice as being a “can’t miss event,” but give no details as to what will happen. There will be a lot of curiosity from both players and parents, but hold firm and reveal little.

When the big night arrives, fib a little and tell the players that tonight’s practice is going to focus entirely on base-running. After waiting for the expected groans, give them the real agenda: we’re not playing any baseball — we’re playing kickball!

To make it more exciting, we’re going to have some fun contests between innings including a bubble gum bubble blowing contest (biggest wins), a throw a miniature football thru the hoop (closest or most in wins), and a “home run kicking contest” (move home plate closer to the fence so that a well-kicked ball will go over the fence). Throughout the night, pull players aside and take photos of them in a silly baseball pose. Send the photos to players via email or post them on your team website.

A local minor league baseball team, the St. Paul Saints, is noted as much for their festivities off the field at their games as for the action on the field. The approach to this practice is to take a St. Paul Saints approach to a kickball game.

## **Stuff to bring**

- Prizes for contests: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place prizes for Football throwing contest, bubble gum bubble blowing contest and homerun contest.
- Bubble gum for all players
- Kickball
- Mini football
- Old (or spare) tire and bucket
- Camera for “silly baseball photos.”

Make sure the gym has wrestling mats that you have access to for the slam-dunk photos.

## **Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes**

### **Coach’s Comments**

- Review the agenda: explain what’s going on tonight.
- Divide into two equal kickball teams.

**Conclusion:** No popping bubbles during bubblegum contest. Have fun!

## PRACTICE PLAN #20 — “THE PRACTICE LIKE NO OTHER”

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
20 minutes	<b>Kickball</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute gum for bubble blowing contest to players now. Limit number of pieces in mouth to a reasonable number, e.g. 4 or 5.</li> <li>• Explain kickball rules, e.g., like baseball but you can throw ball at runner to get an out. For an out, the ball must be below shoulder level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this kickball session and every other, pull offensive players over for their photos. Take several shots from several angles. Encourage the players to be as silly as possible with their pose.</li> </ul>
10 minutes	<b>Football throwing contest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place the tire on a bucket behind the team bench &amp; mark off 60 feet. With a mini football, players are given 3 tosses to throw the football through a tire from the 60 ft. mark. The player that throws the most through the tire wins.</li> </ul>	
20 minutes	<b>Kickball</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the players keep a running track of the score.</li> </ul>	
10 minutes	<b>Bubble gum bubble blowing contest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 pieces in mouth limit</li> <li>• Biggest bubble wins!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great photo opportunities. Get a team photo with everyone blowing a bubble.</li> </ul>
20 minutes	<b>Kickball</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have your Assistant Coach umpire the kickball game if you're taking the silly photos.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you get photos of everyone.</li> <li>• By the way, if you don't think your players would warm up to kickball, consider dodgeball (be careful) or ultimate Frisbee.</li> </ul>
10 minutes	<b>Home run kicking contest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move home plate closer to the fence so that a well-kicked ball will go over the fence. Give each player 5 attempts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just play on creativity and likelihood of working in a game situation.</li> </ul>

# PRACTICE TWENTY-ONE — HITTING & DEFENSE

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- Review the “silly” baseball poses with your players from “The Practice Like No Other.” (show on digital camera or laptop, or print out one photo for each player)
- Vote on the three best photos.

### Coach’s Comments

I had a great time playing kickball at The Practice Like No Other, but now it’s time to turn our attention back to baseball.

Let’s review what makes up a good defensive player (explain and demonstrate as needed)

- Know the number of outs & ball/strike count on hitter
- Know where base-runners are located
- Know what to do if ball is hit directly at you, to your right or to your left
- Good stance
- Balanced
- Eyes on hitter
- Palms of both hands facing hitter
- Good communicator (Calls for fly-ball, calls off teammate, let’s teammates know when opponent is stealing)
- Use both hands to catch ball
- Soft hands
- Quick feet
- Never standing in one place watching play; either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base.

Focus tonight is defense: Defense and pitching win championships.

**Conclusion:** My goal is for our team is to consistently play better defense than the teams we face. We’ll be working on that tonight.

## PRACTICE PLAN #21 — HITTING & DEFENSE

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
<b>40</b> minutes	<b>Hitting &amp; Bunting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following four stations and equally divide your team across each station & rotate after 10 minutes at each: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>2. Soft toss – Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.</li> <li>3. Live hitting – Have pitchers pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, if using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</li> <li>4. Bunting – Have coach pitch to players with either a net, screen or backstop behind hitters.</li> </ol> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.
<b>40</b> minutes	<b>Defensive Situations:</b> Place players at every position. Use remaining players as base runners. The objective of this drill is to make sure that every defensive player is in the proper defensive position after ball is hit and every player throws to the proper base. Before ball is hit, the coach tells players the number of outs and either leaves the bases empty or places a base runner on one or more bases. Following are the possible situations & <b>most common</b> defensive plays. (Note: There may be multiple choices for a defensive player, the common rule is to attempt to force out the lead runner. If this is not possible, defense should throw or run to get the “easiest out”). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Bases empty, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. OF throws to 2B.</li> <li><b>2. Runner on 1B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B, OF throws to 3B.</li> <li><b>3. Runners on 1B &amp; 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 2B or 3B. OF throws to cut-off for home plate.</li> <li><b>4. Bases loaded, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws home. If a base hit, OF throws to either 2B or 3B. If runner on 3B tags up on fly ball to OF, throw should go to cut-off for home plate.</li> <li><b>5. Runner on 2B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 2B “look” runner back to 2B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to cut-off for either 3B or home plate.</li> <li><b>6. Runner on 3B, 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws to 2B on base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.</li> <li><b>7. Runner on 2B &amp; 3B 0-2 outs.</b> IF throws to 1B. SS &amp; 3B “look” runner back to 3B before throwing if less than 2 outs. OF throws cut-off for 3B or home on a base hit or home on a fly ball and less than 2 outs.</li> </ol>	This can be one of the most complicated parts of the game for a player. Be patient with young players as they learn what to do with the ball after it is hit to them. Remind players of the importance of reviewing in their mind the numbers of outs and location of base-runners before ball is hit. As players gain experience & develop skills, they will make better & faster defensive decisions. <p>In all situations, players without the ball are either covering a base, setting up for a cut-off, or backing up a base. No one should be standing in one spot watching the play.</p>

# PRACTICE TWENTY-TWO — SCRIMMAGE 2

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Coach's Comments

- We're going to be scrimmaging \_\_\_\_\_ today and it should be very competitive.
- Scrimmages are big opportunities for you. I'd like each of you to take a moment and think to yourself — don't say anything out loud. What I'd like you to think about is this question: what's one area of my game where I need to improve? Do I always put my body in position to properly catch a ball? Do I watch good pitches instead of swinging the bat? Do I stay alert during the game & know what I need to do if the ball is hit to me? Do I offer encouragement & support my teammates? Do I show respect to teammates, opponents, umpires, coaches & fans? Whatever, the case, I want you to think about it and then I want you to work on it in the scrimmage today. After the scrimmage, we'll discuss what each of you worked on.
- Here is the starting line-up and the batting order. Everyone will play at least half of the game.
- On offense, we will be aggressive at the plate and on the bases. We will look for opportunities to bunt, steal & take an extra base. So let's stay alert & let's have some fun.

### Players:

- What questions do you have?

**Conclusion:** Let's challenge ourselves today by each of us working on improving one area of your game. Let's have a great scrimmage.

## PRACTICE PLAN #22 — SCRIMMAGE 2

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
5 minutes	<p><b>Outfield Cut-Off Practice:</b> Put players at every position except pitcher. Begin with hitting fly balls &amp; ground balls to outfielders. First round of throws should go to second base, second round to third base and final round to home. On throws to second &amp; third, shortstop is the cut-off for balls hit to LF &amp; CF, second baseman is cut-off for balls hit to RF. On throws home, third baseman is cut-off for balls hit to LF, first baseman is cut-off for balls hit to CF &amp; RF. Every outfielder should attempt 2-3 throws to every base.</p>	During this drill make sure all players making the relay throw have their bodies positioned correctly.
5 minutes	<p><b>Infield Practice:</b> (During infield practice, outfielders should practice catching fly balls). Warm up by throwing ball around the horn 2-3 times(C to 3B to 2B to SS to 1B to C). Start with throws to first base. Hit ground balls to players at every position. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the second round, all throws go to second for double play. Second baseman covers 2B for throws from 3B and SS. Shortstop covers 2B for throws from 1B &amp; 2B. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B. Have catcher field bunt. In the third round, all throws go to home plate. In the final round, all players throw home and then charge towards plate, catcher rolls ball on ground and player throws to first. For ground balls to first baseman, second baseman should cover 1B.</p>	
60 minutes	<p><b>SCRIMMAGE</b></p> <p>Make a point to remind your team the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the plate with 2 strikes</li> <li>• Hit the cut-off man</li> <li>• Always keep in mind number of outs &amp; location of base-runners prior to pitch</li> <li>• Pitchers pitch from stretch with runners on base.</li> </ul> <p>Spend a little time watching each individual player”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are their strengths and weaknesses?</li> <li>• Where do they need work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With coaches umpiring, it’s a great time to get out on the field and make suggestions at the appropriate time.</li> <li>• Mix things up. Try people at different positions</li> <li>• Focus on player development.</li> </ul>
10 minutes	<p><b>Post-scrimmage wrap-up</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliment your players on their efforts and play.</li> <li>• Review what was working and what wasn’t. Ask your players for their input. What do we need to work on more at practice?</li> </ul>

# PRACTICE TWENTY-THREE — PITCHER/CATCHER REVIEW

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- This is the last of our four practices devoted exclusively to pitchers & catchers. I hope you enjoyed these special practices and found them helpful. What did you enjoy most about pitching & catching? What things were the most difficult? What drills in practice were the most helpful? What was the least helpful?

**Conclusion:** Thank you to each of for playing these two positions this season. They are the most challenging positions on the field and you worked hard all season. We've got a great group of pitchers & catchers on our team. I'm proud of each and every one of you!



## PRACTICE PLAN #23 — PITCHER/CATCHER REVIEW

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul> **For the next set of drills break pitchers & catchers into 2 groups and complete drills at same time. Pitcher’s drills are listed first followed by catcher’s drills	
<b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)	<b>One-knee drill:</b> Two pitchers on one knee (left knee for left-handers and right knee for right-handers) facing each other, 40 feet apart. Player with ball will turn shoulder with glove toward target, bring arm back with hand on top of baseball. Begin throw with arm held high, release ball & end with throwing elbow past front knee.  <b>Cock &amp; throw drill:</b> Pitcher spreads feet shoulder-width apart with glove-side foot pointing toward target. Both feet remain on ground during drill. Bring elbow of throwing arm and elbow of glove arm to shoulder height. Point elbow of glove arm at target. Rotate hips and pivot on back foot and throw the ball. Pitcher follows through by bending back and bringing throwing arm elbow to glove-side knee.	Purpose is to isolate lower body while focusing on development of proper throwing motion.  Purpose is to teach players how to “stay on top” of baseball by keeping throwing-elbow high. As the pitchers are pulling their throwing elbow back ask them to imagine that they are reaching back in order to pull baseball off of a high shelf. As they follow through they should imagine pulling a shade down quickly.
<b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)	<b>Quick-throw drill:</b> Begin with hands together and ball in glove. Pitcher spreads feet shoulder-width apart with glove-side foot pointing toward target. Both feet remain on ground during drill. As fast as possible (with control) pitchers break hands, turn hips, throw and follow through. Pitchers complete throw without stepping towards the target.  <b>Pause drill:</b> Pitcher will start wind up without a baseball. The pitcher lifts the glove-side knee to the same height as their hip. The pitcher will then stop, turn towards coach and wait (3 to 5 seconds) to be handed the baseball. After receiving the ball, the pitcher will step & throw to the target. *****WATER BREAK*****	Purpose is to slowly build pitching speed by training the pitcher’s body to release the ball quickly.  Purpose is teach pitcher how to stand upright, balanced and under control before they release the ball. This drill will help prevent pitchers from rushing their pitches.
<b>15</b> minutes (pitchers only)	<b>Wind-up &amp; balance drill:</b> Right-handed pitchers stand on right side of rubber (lefties on left side) First take a small step back and then turn hips toward the target and lift glove-side leg to hip level; and stay in balance position for 5 seconds or more. Repeat this drill about 20 times.  <b>Stride drill:</b> A pitcher’s stride should equal 80% of their height. This means a pitcher five feet tall should have a 4 foot stride. To help a pitcher stride the proper distance in the proper direction, draw a straight 8 foot line in the dirt from the middle of the rubber towards the middle of the plate. Then mark out a distance across the line that equals 80% of the pitcher’s height. The pitcher then goes through their entire delivery and checks to see where their foot lands in relation to the two lines in the dirt. The drill can be completed with a full wind-up or in a stretch position. It can also be done with or without a ball thrown.	Purpose is to slowly build muscle memory in the first stages of the pitching motion – going from stance to the balance position in a controlled fashion.  Purpose is to teach pitchers how to increase the accuracy of pitches by striding the proper distance and in the proper direction.

<p><b>15</b> minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Blocking Drill I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchers should wear all gear</li> <li>• Coach stands about 10 feet away with a bucket of balls.</li> <li>• Coach will throw balls in the dirt immediately in front of catcher.</li> <li>• Catcher should drop directly to knees with knees past shoulder width. Drop glove between the legs with arms close to the body</li> </ul> <p><b>Blocking Drill II – No Hands</b></p> <p>Two catchers in full equipment stand about 20 to 30 feet apart. Catcher 1 throws balls in the dirt to the left, right and in front of "home." Catcher 2 practices blocking the wild pitches with shin guards and chest protector using proper technique and footwork only.</p>	<p>Purpose is to increase the comfort level of blocking a ball using body/catcher's gear.</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Quick Drills</b></p> <p><b>Quick Feet Drill:</b> Catcher 1 throws the ball hard from 20 - 30 feet away to catcher 2. Catcher 2 takes a jab step to the left or right attempting to get the middle of the body in front of the ball.</p> <p><b>Quick Hands Drill:</b> Catcher 1 throws the ball hard from 20 - 30 feet away to catcher to catcher 2. The balls are thrown high, low, inside, and outside of home plate.</p> <p><b>Quick Release Drill:</b> The catchers, who are 60 - 70 feet apart, throw to each other playing "hard catch". They work on taking the ball out of the glove quickly and on utilizing proper footwork while emphasizing quick releases on the throws.</p> <p>*****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>Purpose is increase the quickness of movement to the ball with hands &amp; feet.</p>
<p><b>15</b> minutes (catchers only)</p>	<p><b>Throwing Drills</b></p> <p><b>One Knee Throwing:</b> Two catchers kneel 30 feet apart on their left knees. After throwing the ball back and forth for a few minutes, they move apart 10 more feet. Continue throwing and moving back until the throws equal the distance from home to second base. Emphasize proper shoulder and hip turn to gain strength. Drill can be done with catchers kneeling on both knees as well.</p> <p><b>Catcher Scoop &amp; Locate:</b> Three catchers group for this drill. One catcher sets in a crouched catching position, one player stands behind him with a baseball, and the third player stands downfield about 50 feet. The player standing behind the crouched catcher rolls the ball out in front of the catcher at different angles, making the catcher explode from his stance, circle the ball using proper techniques, scoop the ball, and make the throw to the other player downfield. Players also rotate in this drill.</p>	<p>Improve fielding and throwing skills.</p>
	<p><b>Pitcher &amp; Catcher Fielding Drills</b> (Note for these drills, rotate extra pitchers as infielders &amp; base-</p>	<p>These drills replicate fielding situations that will likely occur multiple times</p>

<p><b>30</b> minutes (pitchers and catchers)</p>	<p>runners as needed)  <b>Catcher backing up first base</b>  In situations with no one on base, it is the catcher's responsibility to back up first base on infield grounders. Coach should hit ground balls to infield. On contact, catcher sprints along foul line, about 12 ft to the right of the line, and gets in position to back up a wild throw.  <b>Pitcher covering first base</b>  When a ground ball is hit to the right side of the infield, the pitcher may need to cover first base. Hit grounders between first &amp; second. Pitcher runs toward a spot on the first base line a few feet short of base and then runs along inside of line to the base. Ball should then be tossed to the pitcher one step before reaching the base, under hand if within a few feet or overhand for longer distances. Pitcher then tags infield side of bag &amp; then runs to the left to avoid contact with runner.  <b>Pitchers &amp; Catchers fielding bunts</b>  Have both pitchers &amp; catchers practice fielding bunts immediately in front of plate and along both foul lines. Players should pivot while fielding the ball so that shoulder of glove hand is pointed toward the base.  <b>Catcher fielding pop-ups</b>  Have catchers practice catching pop-ups in front of and behind plate. As soon as ball is popped up catcher should remove mask and hold it until ball is located. Have pitchers instruct catchers on location of ball. Once ball is located and catcher is in position, the mask should be tossed to the side.  <b>Pitcher pick-off attempts</b>  From a stretch position, have pitchers practice pick offs to all three bases.  <b>Catcher pick-off/steal attempts</b>  Have catchers practice pick offs at all three bases and throws to second and third on steal attempts.  <b>Catcher tag play/blocking plate</b>  Have catchers practice tag plays at the plate. Have a runner slide into the plate while a fielder throws the ball to the catcher. Catcher should straddle base line in front of plate and then drop to knees after catching the ball while using shin guards to block the plate from runner.  <b>Pitcher &amp; Catcher wild pitch/passed balls</b>  Have catchers chase pitch to back stop and have pitchers cover home plate with a runner approaching from third base. Catchers should slide on shin guards to pick up ball. Shoulder of glove hand should be pointing towards plate. Pitchers and runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> should sprint home with pitcher tagging runner sliding home.</p>	<p>during a game. By mastering each of these skills, pitchers and catchers will help their team reduce the number of base runners and runs scored against them.</p>
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# PRACTICE TWENTY-FOUR — HITTING, HITTING & MORE HITTING

## **Prior to Practice:**

- Let players know about the agenda for this pre-practice meeting so that players can begin preparing their own comments for each player.
- Begin thinking of comments that you can make for each player.

## **Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes**

### Get your players talking

- Teammate recognition night: I'm going to identify one player and then go around the circle and you'll each have the opportunity to recognize this player by saying something that player does exceptionally well either on the field or in support of the team. (Call out each player by name and ask each player to say something positive about the selected teammate. Be ready with some comments of your own for each player. Try to spend the same amount of time on each player.) Ten players at about one minute each will take up your pre-practice meeting time.

**Conclusion:** We've got a great group of players on our team. I'm proud of each and every one of you!

## PRACTICE PLAN #24 — HITTING, HITTING & MORE HITTING

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
70 minutes	<p><b>Hitting Scrimmage:</b> Place players at every position. Remaining players are batters. Coaches or parents are umpires. If player makes an out (either at bat or while on base) or scores a run they replace a player in the field. After 3 outs the bases are cleared. Runners on base after 3 outs replace players in the field. Pitchers should throw no more than 40 pitches. Rotate with another player after 40 pitches.</p>	Keep things moving during the hitting scrimmage. The goal is to provide all players with as many at bats as possible.
10 minutes	<p><b>Throwing Accuracy Contest:</b></p> <p>Have this fun competition to conclude practice with winner getting a small prize. Place a bucket or some other target on home plate. Have players line up behind second base. One at a time, each player will throw the ball &amp; attempt to hit bucket. Each player that hits the bucket scores a point. Give each player 5-10 chances to hit the bucket. The player that scores the most points wins the prize.</p>	

# PRACTICE TWENTY-FIVE — TEAM COMPETITIONS

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 10 Minutes

### Get your players talking

- What have been your favorite things about this baseball season?

### Coach's Comments

- I hope you've come to recognize some important lessons that baseball can teach including:
  1. Hard work and purpose lead to success.
  2. Winning and losing with grace is the mark of a true champion.
  3. Never, ever, give up.
  4. The power and magic of teamwork – everyone makes a difference.
- Today we will have five fun competitions.
  1. Fastest time to first base.
  2. Fastest time to second base.
  3. Longest throw.
  4. Most accurate throw.
  5. Longest hit.
- I want to thank you all for a great season. I've really enjoyed all of our practices and games. If you like baseball, I hope you all choose to continue playing the sport.

**Conclusion:** This is our last practice as a team together. Let's make it our best.

*"If it is to be, it begins with me."* -- **Unknown**

*"Whether you think you can or think you can't - you are right".*  
-- **Henry Ford**

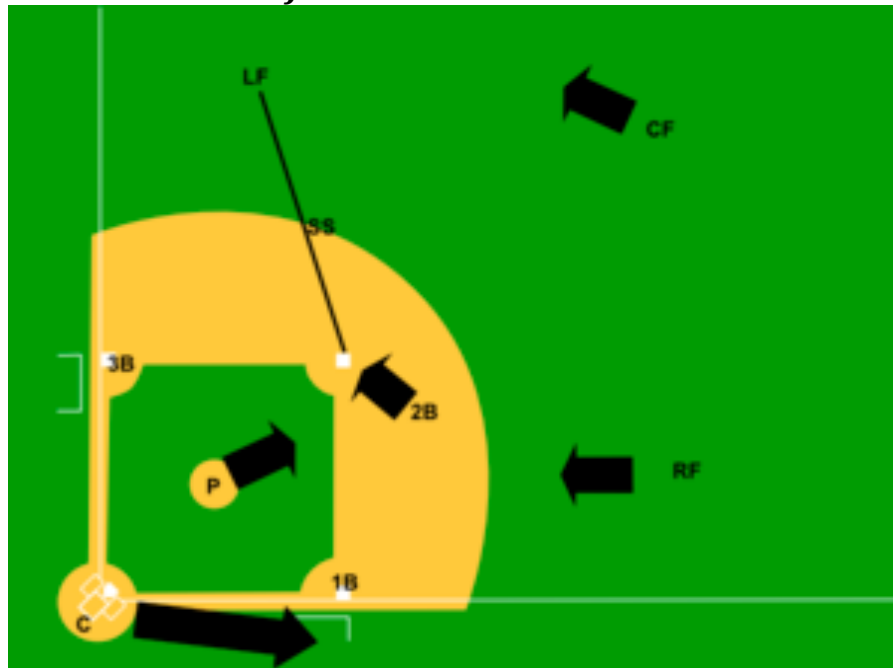
## PRACTICE PLAN #25 — TEAM COMPETITIONS

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
10 minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Start with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	
5 minutes	<b>Fastest time to first base:</b> Line up players at home plate. Each should take a swing and run to first. Start stop watch when players drop their bat. Give each player 2 attempts.	
10 minutes	<b>Fastest time to second base:</b> Line up players at home plate. Each should take a swing and run to first. Start stop watch when players drop their bat. Give each player 2 attempts.	
10 minutes	<b>Longest throw:</b> Line up players along foul line. Each should take a turn throwing ball. Measure throws, Give each player 2 throws.	
10 minutes	<b>Most accurate throw:</b> Line up players at second base and place a bucket on home plate. Player that hits the bucket the most or is closest wins. Give each player 3 throws.	
45 minutes	<b>Longest hit:</b> Have each player take batting practice at home plate. Place a marker for each player's longest hit. Player with longest hit wins.	

# APPENDIX A: SETTING UP FOR CUT-OFF THROWS

## THROWS FROM LEFT FIELD

### *Left Field to Second Base*



Situation: No Runners on Base, Single to LF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to 2B

C: Back up potential throw to 1B

1B: Cover 1B

2B: Cover 2B, line-up SS for cut-off, yell cut if needed.

SS: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed.

3B: Cover 3B

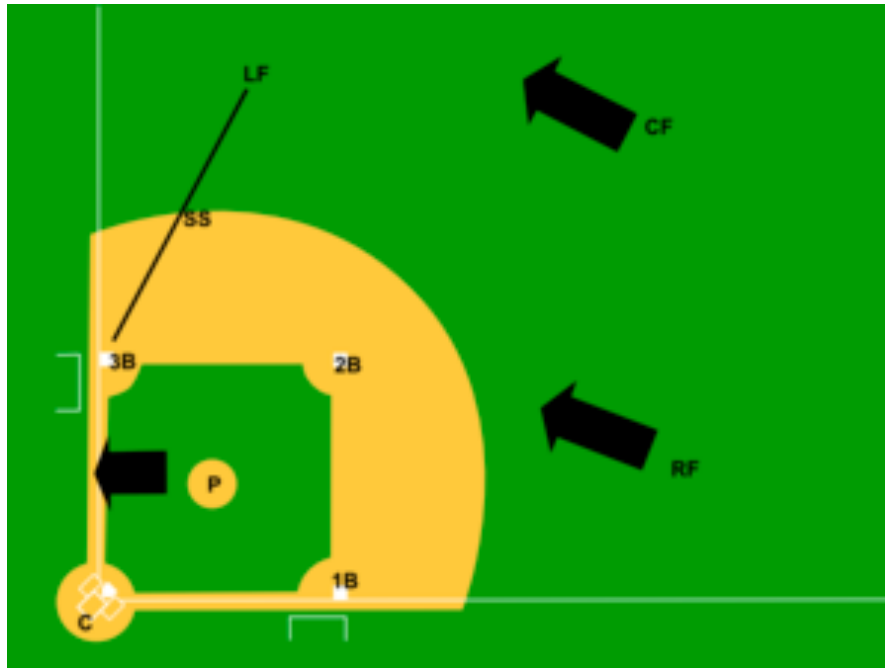
LF: Field ball & throw head high to SS (Cut-off)

CF: Back up ball hit to LF

RF: Back up throw to 2B

### *Left Field to Third Base*





Situation: Runner on First Base, Single to LF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to 3B

C: Cover Home

1B: Cover 1B

2B: Cover 2B

SS: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed

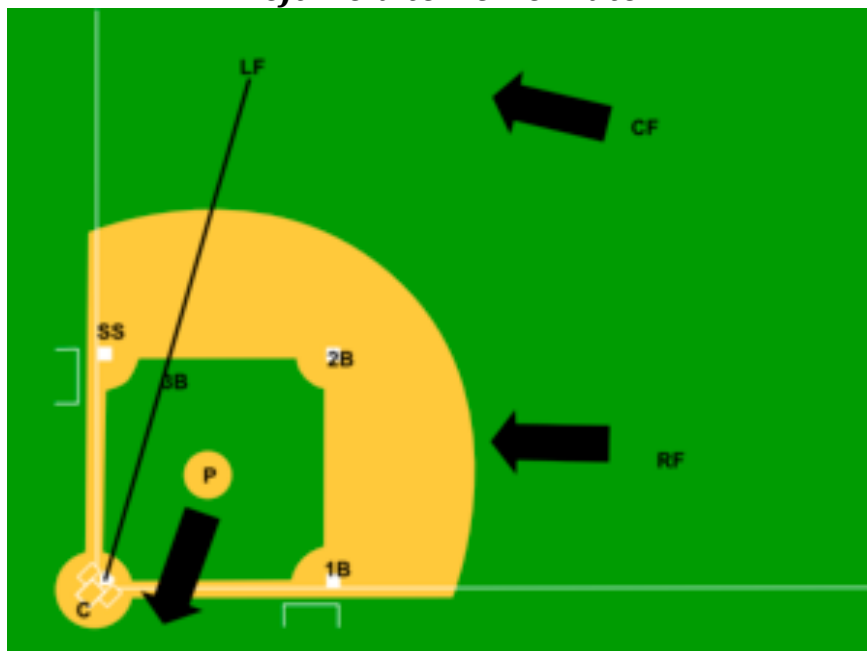
3B: Cover 3B, line-up SS for cut-off, yell cut if needed

LF: Field ball & throw head high to SS (Cut-off)

CF: Back up ball hit to LF

RF: Back up potential throw to 2B

### *Left Field to Home Plate*



Situation: Runner on Second Base, Single to LF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to Home

C: Cover Home, line-up 3B for cut-off, yell cut if needed

1B: Cover 1B

2B: Cover 2B

SS: Cover 3B

3B: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed.

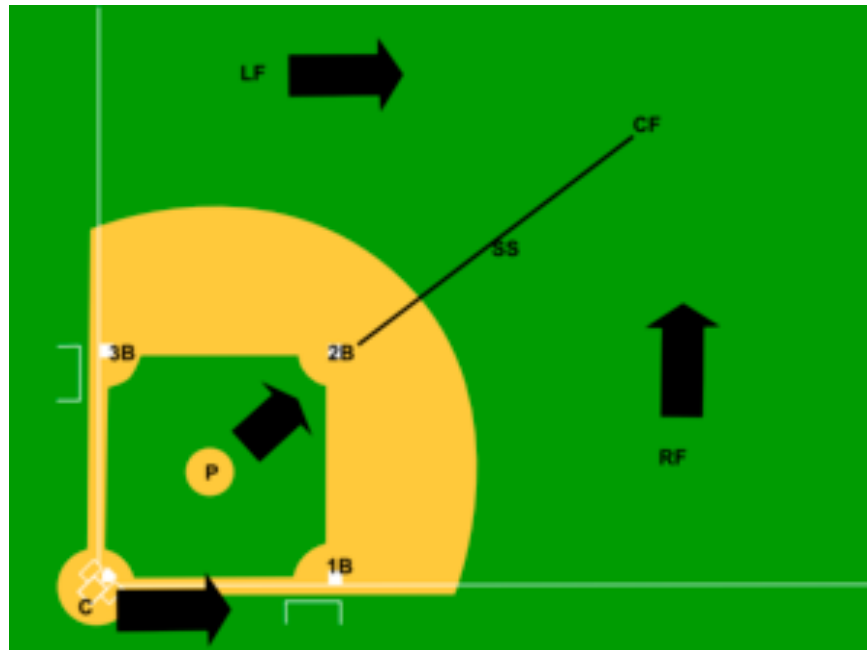
LF: Field ball & throw head high to 3B (Cut-off)

CF: Back up ball hit to LF

RF: Back up potential throw to 2B

## THROWS FROM CENTER FIELD

### *Center Field to Second Base*



Situation: No Runners on Base, Single to CF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to 2B

C: Back up potential throw to 1B

1B: Cover 1B

2B: Cover 2B, line-up SS for cut-off, yell cut if needed.

SS: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed.

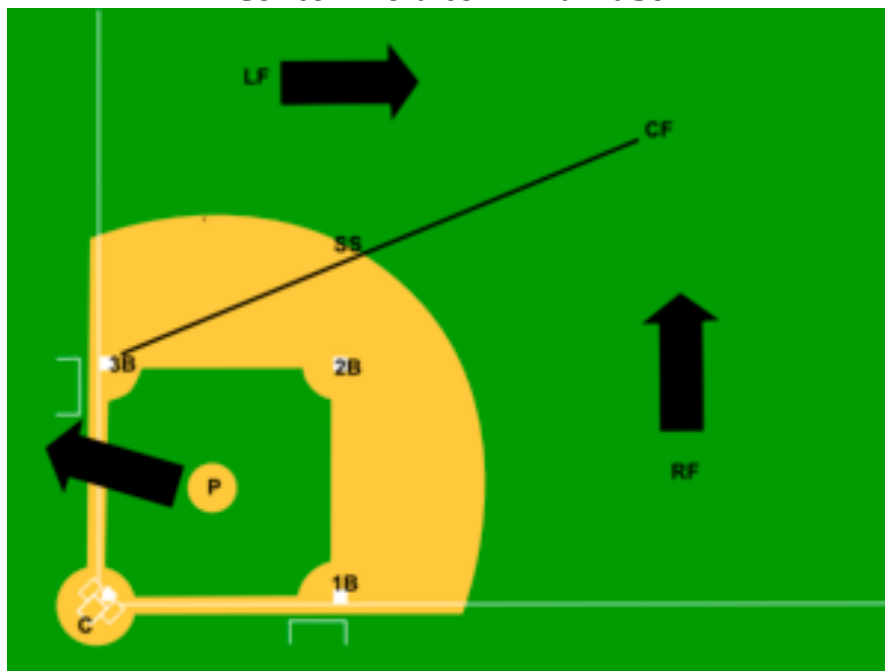
3B: Cover 3B

LF: Back up ball hit to CF

CF: Field ball & throw head high to SS (Cut-off)

RF: Back up ball hit to CF

### *Center Field to Third Base*



Situation: Runner on First Base, Single to CF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to 3B

C: Cover Home

1B: Cover 1B

2B: Cover 2B

SS: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed

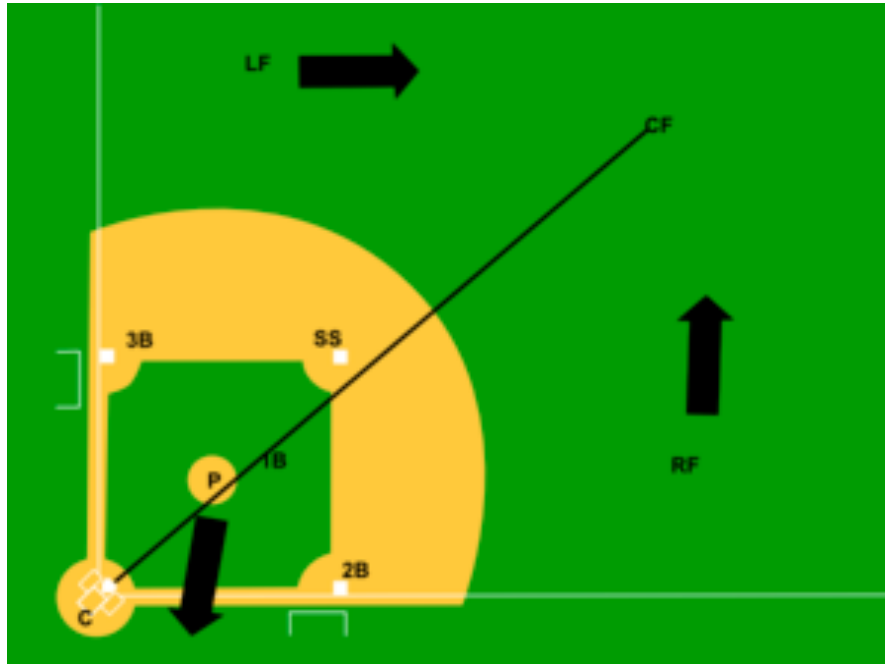
3B: Cover 3B, line-up SS for cut-off, yell cut if needed

LF: Back up ball hit to CF

CF: Field ball & throw head high to SS (Cut-off)

RF: Back up ball hit to CF

### *Center Field to Home Plate*



Situation: Runner on Second Base, Single to CF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to Home

C: Cover Home, line-up 1B for cut-off, yell cut if needed

1B: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed

2B: Cover 1B

SS: Cover 2B

3B: Cover 3B

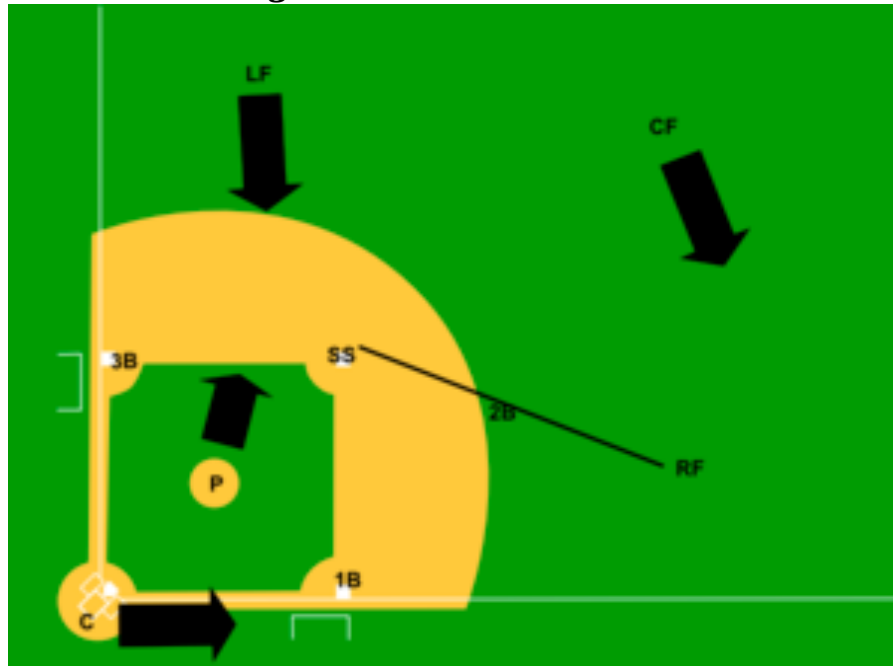
LF: Back up ball hit to CF

CF: Field ball & throw head high to 1B (Cut-off)

RF: Back up ball hit to CF

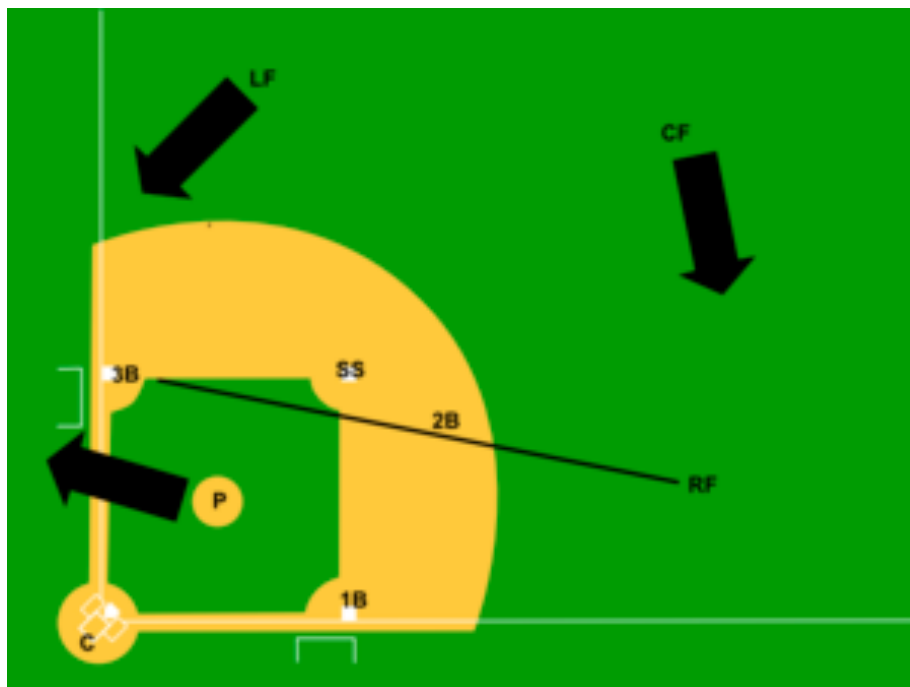
## THROWS FROM RIGHT FIELD

### *Right Field to Second Base*



- Situation: No Runners on Base, Single to RF
- Player Responsibilities:
- P: Back up throw to 2B
  - C: Back up potential throw to 1B
  - 1B: Cover 1B
  - 2B: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed
  - SS: Cover 2B, line-up SS for cut-off, yell cut if needed
  - 3B: Cover 3B
  - LF: Back up throw to 2B
  - CF: Back up ball hit to RF
  - RF: Field ball & throw head high to 2B (Cut-off)

### *Right Field to Third Base*



Situation: Runner on First Base, Single to RF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to 3B

C: Cover Home

1B: Cover 1B

2B: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed

SS: Cover 2B

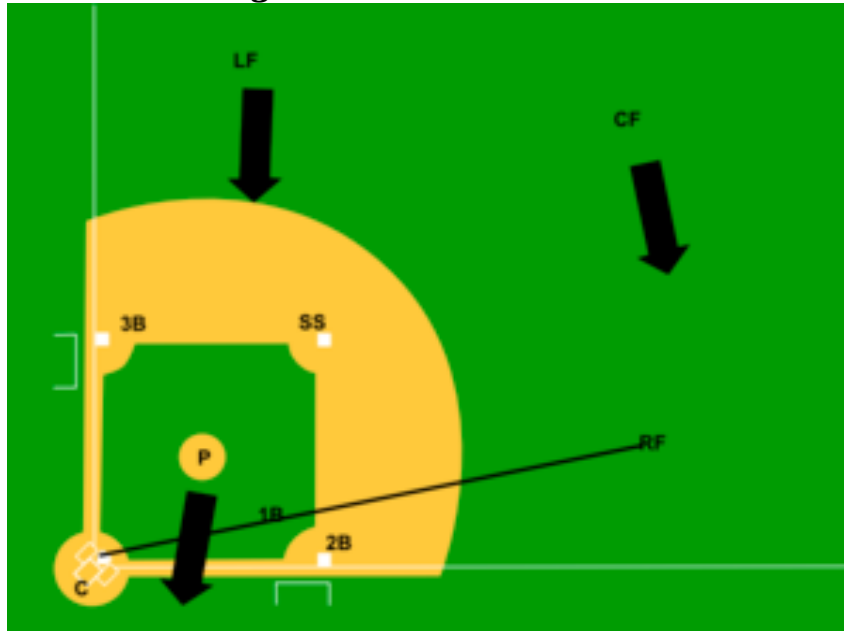
3B: Cover 3B, line-up 2B for cut-off, yell cut if needed

LF: Back up throw to 3B

CF: Back up ball hit to CF

RF: Field ball & throw head high to 2B (Cut-off)

## *Right Field to Home Plate*



Situation: Runner on Second Base, Single to RF

Player Responsibilities:

P: Back up throw to Home

C: Cover Home, line-up 1B for cut-off, yell cut if needed

1B: Set up for cut-off, cut if needed

2B: Cover 1B

SS: Cover 2B

3B: Cover 3B

LF: Back up potential throws to 2B or 3B

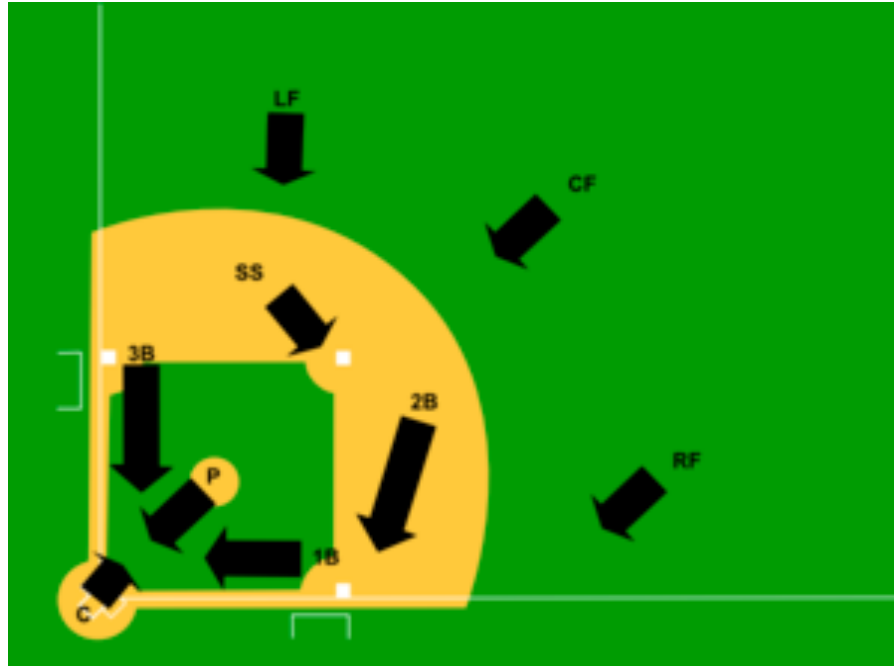
CF: Back up ball hit to RF

RF: Field ball & throw head high to 1B (Cut-off)



# APPENDIX B: Bunt Defense

## *No Runners on Base*



Situation: No runners on base, bunt attempt

Player Responsibilities:

P: Charge home plate

C: Chase ball

1B: Charge home plate

2B: Cover 1B

SS: Cover 2B

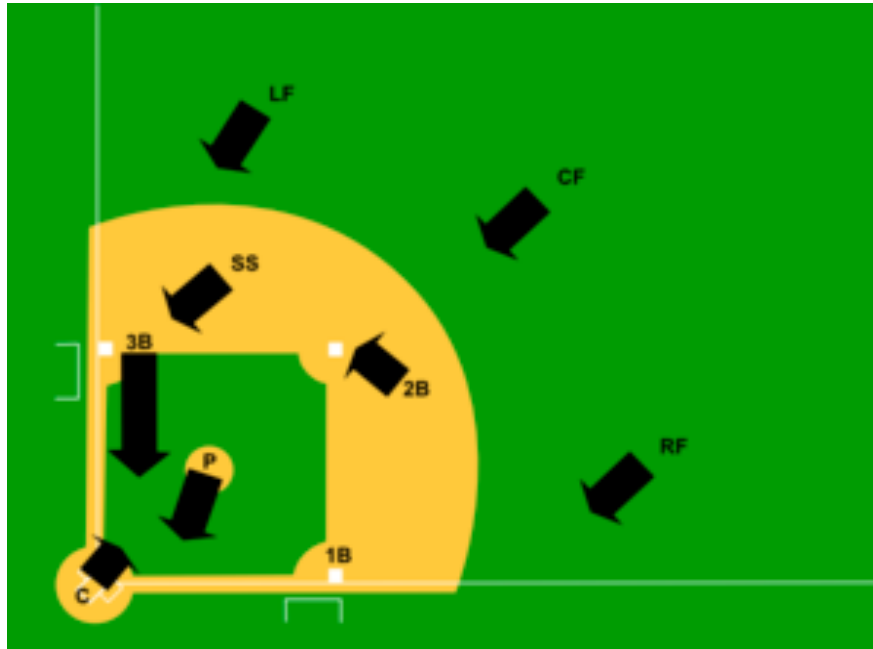
3B: Charge home plate

LF: Back up potential throw to 2B

CF: Back up potential throw to 2B

RF: Back up throw to 1B

## *Runner on First Base*



Situation: Runner on first base, bunt attempt

Player Responsibilities:

P: Charge home plate, cover right side of field

C: Chase ball

1B: Cover 1B

2B: Cover 2B

SS: Cover 3B

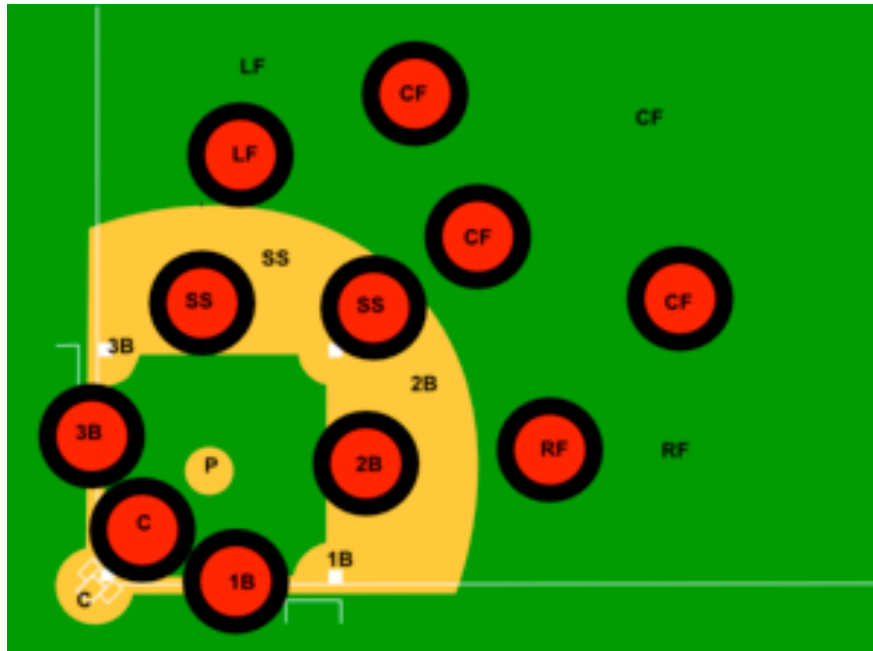
3B: Charge home plate, cover left side of field

LF: Back up potential throw to 3B

CF: Back up potential throw to 2B

RF: Back up throw to 1B

## APPENDIX C: Fly Balls Hit Between Fielders



**Fly Balls Hit Between Fielders:** The diagram above identifies the player that has first priority to call off other players when a pop up or fly ball is hit in the circled areas. The player identified in the circle should call off other players when a ball is hit in the gap & players have an equal chance to catch the ball.

Following are the general rules:

1. CF calls off other OF, 2B and SS
2. LF calls off 3B & SS
3. RF calls off 1B & 2B
4. SS calls off P, 2B & 3B
5. 2B calls off P & 1B
6. 3B calls off P & C
7. 1B calls off P & C
8. C calls off P

## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE IDEAS

In no particular order, here are some websites to examine when you're looking for some baseball coaching ideas and insights:

<http://www.pitchingtips.com/>

<http://www.beabetterhitter.com/>

<http://www.guidetocoachingsports.com/baseball.htm>

<http://thebaseballmechanic.com/index.html>

<http://www.weplay.com/youth-baseball/drills>

<http://www.theoleballgame.com/index.html>

<http://coachbaseball.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.youthbaseballinfo.com/index.php>

<http://coaching-youth-baseball.com/>

## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE IDEAS (CONT)

<http://theyouthbaseballcoach.com/>

<http://www.qcbaseball.com/>

<http://www.mycoachonline.com/Baseball/>

<http://www.youthbaseballbasics.com/index.shtml>

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

John Blissenbach has coached all levels of youth baseball from kindergarten through high school. He has coached and managed championship youth & American Legion baseball teams.

He began coaching baseball in 1979 at the age of 20. He started as a high school assistant varsity/JV head coach working with varsity head coach Hank Mauer (Great uncle of Minnesota Twins All-Star Catcher, Joe Mauer ).

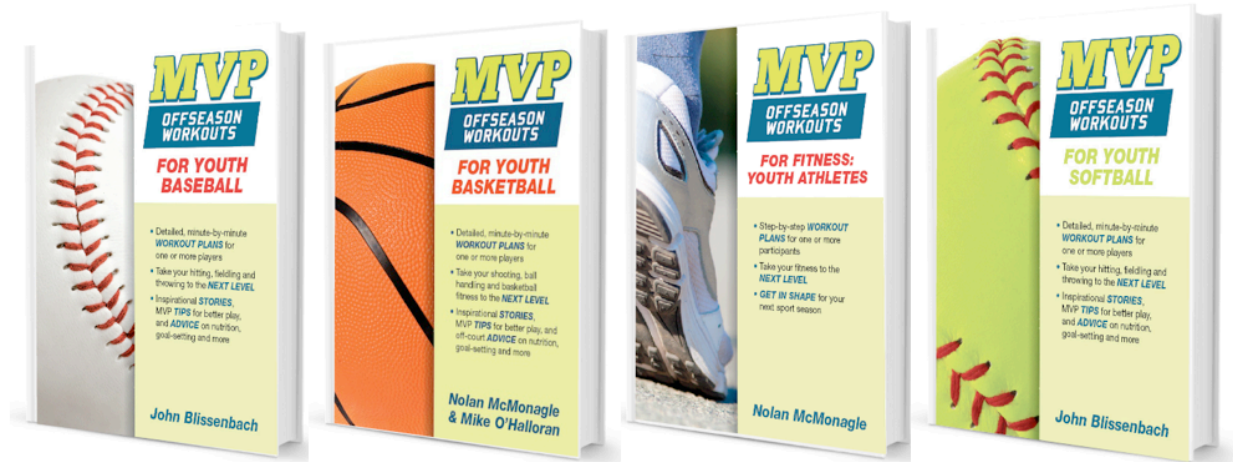
In addition to coaching baseball, John has also been a coach for his 4 children's softball, football, basketball, track & soccer teams. During the past 20 years he has had the great pleasure of coaching more than 50 youth (boys & girls) teams.

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## Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank all of the players I've coached, past and present, for their contributions to this book. Coaching youth baseball can be such a great experience. I've been blessed by having great players — and their families — as part of our teams and supporters. They've always kept the fun meter on high and made any of the work associated with coaching worthwhile.

It has been my fortune to work with and learn from many coaches over the years. They have greatly influenced my knowledge and passion for the game of baseball. Special thanks go to Hank Mauer, Jim Hessler, Jim Page, John Lamprecht, John Boyle, Ron Grothe, Todd Kelsey, Dave Draves, Dave Jaede, Jeff Budin, Greg Margarit & Jim Lawton.

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