



PRACTICE DRILLS

DYNAMIC WARM UP: (most effective way to prep body for action and minimize injury risk)

1. Sequence I recommend but can be varied:
 - a. Jumping Jacks
 - b. Squats (teaches proper fielding position)
 - c. High knee skips forward, backward, and lateral (30-60' each)
 - d. Lateral shuffles maintaining ready position, alternate directions
 - e. Carioca: concentrate on quickness in changing feet position
 - f. Jump-Sprint-Jump: vertical jump, followed by sprint, sudden stop, vertical jump, repeat
 - g. Knee to chest with toe raise alternating legs for 30'
 - h. Open the Gate: raise knee toward chest, rotate hip outward, bring foot to ground, alternate legs for 30' (Close the Gate: rotate hip from outward to inward)
 - i. Monster Walks: with a straight leg try to kick hand same side for 30' then attempt to kick opposite hand for 30'
 - j. Butt Kickers: jogging forward bringing heel to butt with every stride for 60'
 - k. Lunge walks adding arms stretches with each lunge cues are Field Goal (raise arms over head), Airplane (raise arms out to side and stretch back), Scarecrow (raise arms up from side with elbows bent to 90* and Twist over front knee).
 - l. Small and Large arm circles
2. Static Stretch:
 - a. Hug: pull arm across chest hold 10 count
 - b. Scratch back: hold 10 count
 - c. Plank Holds both high and low plank

THROWING: ("C" Grip/4 seam grip, 12-6 rotation use taped balls)

1. Every-days: Probably the most important skill you can teach them is to throw with good form!
 - a. Catching Drill: Bare hand with sock/tennis balls then glove and ball (fingertips up!) Be athletic, balls of feet, catch ball in center of body, use legs to move up and down.
 - b. Kneeling: glove side knee up
 - i. Wrist flicks bridge elbow at 90* ("L" shape) fingertips to ground (5-7' apart)
 - ii. Wrist flick follow thru ("L" to "I") finger tips to ground (7-10' apart)
 - iii. Full Throws: rotate, "break" (see below), pinch-point, sweep ground on follow thru (10-12' apart)
 - c. Standing: (The Break): ball in glove, separate, **arms parallel** to ground, hand on top of ball in "C" grip, **pinch** throwing shoulder blade to spine and **point** front elbow or glove to target. **aka Scare Crow Position.**
 - i. Static Stance Throws: Stand 20' apart from partner/coach, Stagger stance placing feet 10"-12" apart throwing foot 2' behind glove foot, Ball in Glove centered, Break, Pinch/Point, Throw with glove tuck and follow through
 - ii. Dynamic Stance Throws: Stand 40' apart from partner/coach, Feet 10"-12" apart, Ball in Glove centered, Turn throwing side foot to 3 o'clock position, Break, Pinch and Point, take a stride with glove side foot to 1 o'clock position, throw with glove tuck and follow through.

- iii. Crow Hop Throws: Stand 60+ feet from partner/coach, same as dynamic stance throw adding the crow hop into 3/1 position. Initiate crow hop with a forward step of the glove side foot, drive throwing side knee up and hop forward, land with throwing side foot in 3 o'clock, Break, Pinch/Point, landing glove side foot in 1 o'clock position, throw with glove tuck and follow through.

2. Drills:

- a. Four Corners: Full distance 60' (CW, CCW, Follow The Throw, add Tags)
- b. 3 Box Pride Drill: (CW, CCW, can do individual or all 3 boxes simultaneously)
 - i. 10' square: Specialty tosses; step into the tosses
 1. Forehand toss
 2. Backhand shuttle ("C" to Heart)
 3. Underhand shuttle to throwing side (timing toss)
 - ii. 30' square:
 1. Jump turns quick release throws
 2. Pivot turns (duplicates middle infield turning double play)
 - iii. 60' square: Full throws can add tags as a variable
- c. Zig Zag: Full team, 2 lines facing each other both lines staggered, spread out. Throw ball in zig zag pattern, reverse direction (works glove side turns and jump turns)
- d. Relay: Minimum 3 players no maximum. 1st player faces away from other players, tosses self a pop up, turns GLOVE SIDE, throws to next person who catches and turns GLOVE SIDE continue same to end of line, ball comes back through line until it reaches 1st player, all players move up a spot and repeat drill. (Emphasize GLOVE SIDE turns, communication as player receiving calls "Ball"). Can be a competition too.
- e. Coach Call It: Hit or throw grounders, call out destination of throw randomly (foot work)
- f. Run Downs (Pickle Drill): 3-5 fielders, 1 runner, throwing lane, dart throws, follow throw.

INFIELD:

1. Mechanics:

- a. Ready Position: feet shoulder width apart, weight on balls of feet, squat position with slight arch in lower back, eyes to hitter
- b. Tip of Triangle Position: draw triangle: base connects toes, tip out in front
- c. Eyes track ball to glove, pull glove to center of body
- d. Forehand: field inside glove side foot, move through the ball
- e. Backhand: field outside throwing side foot, pick and lift or rake technique; smiley face

2. Every-days:

- a. Ready Pos. to Fielding Pos. (tip of triangle), POP to "Break" Pos. (race coach)
- b. Kneeling (8' apart from partner) no glove or use paddle, roll grounder, pull ball to center
- c. Kneeling short hops: kneel in grass edge of infield, coach sit on bucket and bounce short hops from 10-15' away, focus on tracking ball into glove, "triangle" and soft hands

3. Drills:

- a. 2 Line Criss-Cross: 2 coaches, one on 1st base and 3rd base lines, players form single line at 2B and SS, coaches alternate grounders to each line, players rotate lines
- b. Slow Rollers: attack, bare hand pick, attempt to throw off throwing side leg to coach
- c. 90* Degree: Coach at 1st and 3rd base, player at 2nd base, coach at 1st hit ball to player throw back to hitting coach, player quickly turns to coach at 3rd base fields grounder returns throw to hitting coach, repeat sequence, gradually increase pace of grounders.
- d. Triangle Drop Step: 3 cones in triangle shape, player stands inside triangle, coach rolls grounder outside of triangle, player must drop step behind cone to field ball. (works to improve line of attack on balls hit out of reach to either side)
- e. Zig Zag Cone: Set up 10 flat cones in zig zag pattern, place a ball in each of 5 front cones, player serpentine thru cones, fields ball with specific sequence of (squat, gather, break, throw) until all balls fielded and thrown.

- f. "I" Drill: Draw an upper case I in the dirt with stem 8-9' long, players stand in a lunge stance perpendicular to the stem of the "I", tips of glove in dirt, partner rolls ball, work both forehand and back hand. (Great lower body conditioning and teaches low position)
- g. Multi-Station: 4 lines of players (3B, SS, 2B, 1B) and 3 coaches 1 at home, and 1 coach 15' up each base line. 1st base side coach throws grounders players work on back hand technique, 3rd base coach throw grounders players work on fore hand technique, Home plate coach throw grounders to SS and 2B who work on fore/back hand tosses to 2B.
- h. 5-3-2 Drill: Players at 3rd, 1st and home. Coach stands in front of home plate hits ball to 3rd, player throws to 1st, 1st throws to home with a tag. Follow throw players moving clockwise. Can repeat with slow rollers to simulate a bunt.
- i. Combo Field/Throw: Players on each base and home plate, coach hits grounder to each position throw to 1B to C: then vary destination of throws, work on SS toss to 2B throw to 1B, multiple varieties of throwing combos.

OUTFIELD:

1. Mechanics:

- a. Field ball above forehead with finger tips up
- b. Never back pedal, use the drop step
- c. 1st step always back unless ball below eye level

2. Every-days:

- a. Happy Feet Drop Step: static quick stepping, coach uses hand or ball signals direction, player executes drop step to that direction then returns to static quick stepping, repeat.
- b. Drop Step, Tuck Glove, Sprint to cone without fly ball then add fly ball.

3. Drills:

- a. Head Toppers: Foam balls only, no gloves, coach throws pop up, player positions so ball bounces off head just above forehead (teaches positioning under fly ball)
- b. Zig Zag Patterns: Drop, Tuck, Sprint; coach signals direction change, player changes direction with a drop step to that side, repeat and add fly ball after last zig/zag.
- c. Pass Patterns: Player about 90' from coach, coach throws pop up and player calls for the ball, fields and throws to coach, player charges toward coach and tries to make a shoestring grab before ball hits the ground, hands ball to coach, circles around coach and goes out for a pass trying to catch up to ball before it hits the ground.
- d. 4 Cone Diamond Drill: 4 cones in a diamond pattern, player starts at front cone, drop step to right side cone, catch fly, throw to coach return to front cone. Player drop steps to same cone then changes direction to back cone never turning back to coach keeping eyes on ball, catch fly, throw to coach, return to front cone, and repeat to opposite side.
- e. 6 Cone Drill: 3 cones straight line left to right 30' from coach, 3 cones 30' back from front row of cones. Players starts at center cone front row with a ball, throws ball to coach sprints to cone to players right coach throws line drive player catches throws back to coach returns to center cone, coach throws to next cone in back row player drop steps sprint catches throws and returns to starting cone repeat for remaining cones end with player charging toward coach for a shoestring grab.
- f. Do or Die: Player charges shallow fly ball or grounder without worry of missing trying to make play cleanly. Field outside of glove side leg make a crow hop throw.
- g. My Ball: 2 players in outfield (i.e. LF and LC) throw pop up between them, both converge on ball, player must take charge, call the ball while other player backs her up.
- h. Go For It: works on ball attack, fly balls, line drives and shallow hit pop ups
 - i. Step 1: all players with a ball start to right of coach, player tosses ball to coach and run for a pop fly then form a line to left of the coach
 - ii. Step 2: all players to left of coach about 10-15 feet away, throw ball to coach, sprint diagonally to catch a line drive then form a line 30-40 feet from coach
 - iii. Step 3: all players 30-40 feet from coach, throw ball to coach, then sprint toward coach, coach lob a ball, make attempt at a shoestring or sliding catch.

HITTING:

1. Mechanics:

- a. Grip: Handle along base of fingers, wrap fingers for firm grip, knocking knuckles in line
- b. Stance: Balanced weight, knob over big toe of back foot, knees flexed like sitting on a bar stool, shoulders square and relaxed, “4” eyes to pitcher
- c. Swing:
 - i. Initiation:
 1. Forward move (walk don't jump into stride), Tall Posture, Early and Slow
 2. Shoulders stay over line connecting feet, athletic legs, no forward lean
 3. Back elbow and knee stay connected to body and move together
 - ii. Contact:
 1. Top arm tight to body, palm up/palm down, punch pitcher
 2. Accelerate to contact, Commit to forward move
 - iii. Extension:
 1. Stay tall through swing, head and chest up, stay into the body
 2. Stay inside the ball, Top hand under Bottom hand, Accelerate thru contact
 3. Finish with top hand palm up (Spiderman), as if handing bat to pitcher

2. Drills:

- i. Wall Drill: stand back foot against wall, Load, Drive to Front Foot, Do Not rock back into wall on the load
- ii. Frisbee or Ball toss: kneeling or standing, hold ball so palms face up and down, execute swing throwing ball into net (2 o'clock area for right hand hitters, 10 o'clock area for left hand hitters), hold finish in Extension as described above
- iii. Fence Swing: (cure for casters) stand parallel to fence so bat does not hit fence when in Contact position, then progress to full swings without hitting fence
- iv. Tee Work: (small seams vertical) (whiffles only into fence, balls into nets or field)
 1. Single Hand Swings (Top Hand), hold Extension as described above
 2. Split Grip Swing hold Extension (kneeling or standing in narrow stance)
 3. Flamingo Drill – Narrow stance to Extension
 4. No Wrist Rollover Drill – Full Stance to Extension
 5. Check Swings: Reinforces Contact Position, accelerate, hold contact
 6. Full Swings still emphasizing Extension
 7. Gilmore – 1 step back toward catcher, slow step forward back foot crosses behind front foot, quick hands (explode) thru ball to Extension
- v. Soft Toss: stand to side of player, toss ball to front edge of plate, hit into fence with whiffles or regular balls into net/field
- vi. Mini-whiffle dart throw by coach (bat speed, tracking)
- vii. Heavy Ball: Half deflated soccer balls, generates power, proper mechanics
- viii. Double Tee: Tee #1 mid-thigh height, Tee #2 mid-chest height, tees 9' apart, drive back ball into front ball. (Reinforces Extension and Swing Path)
- ix. Coach Front Toss: Stand about 20' from batter, allow batter to set, pitch line drives, vary speed and location, add Recognition Drill (players call out “now” when she sees ball leave coaches hand), swing only at strikes and take balls

BASE RUNNING: (run thru safety bag balls in infield, circular pattern ball hit out of infield)

1. Run Thru first and low 5 the coach before slowing down
2. Rounding: set up cone about 20' from 1B toward home player runs straight at cone then on cue from coach to make turn players veers to right continues to run in a circular pattern touching inside corner of bag. Use cones to keep runners close to base path.
3. Stance:
 - a. Sprinter position when pitcher takes the mound
 - b. Rocker position (good for timing 12U and up)

4. Sliding: Figure 4, use slip and slide, sliding pad or in socks on the grass
5. Mindset: always looking to take the next base, find the ball, be athletic

COMBINATION DRILL: Encapsulates stealing, base coverage and catcher throw downs.

1. Steal-Tag Out Drill: 1 player at SS, 1 player at 2B, Catcher at home plate, base runner on 1st and/or 2nd, coach or pitcher throws ball to catcher, player leaves bag (based on division rules) to steal next bag. Cue for fielder to leave position is when ball reaches catcher's glove, catcher makes throw to appropriate base, fielder attempts tag out runner, runner executes a slide into base. Repeat for throws to 2nd and 3rd bases.

COMPETITION DRILLS: Build fun games into your practices, tons of resources on the web

1. Throwing/Catching:
 - a. Accuracy: Hit helmet off bucket, ball off tee or center square of net, increase distances
 - b. Target Practice (8U): teaches player to scoop ball from ground, quickly get into throwing stance and accuracy.
 1. Set Up: 2 Bow nets side by side a few yards apart, 2 cones about 5 yards from each net, place ball between cones.
 2. Action: Player attack ball, scoop ball with proper glove hand technique, pop to throwing position, transfer ball from glove and must make accurate throw into net or player is out. Increase distance to 10 yards from net and repeat continuing to increase distance until only 1 player is standing for the win.
 - c. 1st to 15:
 1. Set Up: Players face each other in teams of 2 about 15-20' apart
 2. Action: On Coaches "Go" players execute throw to each other, 1st team to 15 consecutive throws without ball hitting the ground wins or can play last team to finish is eliminated then increase distance and repeat until 1 team is standing. If ball hits the ground count resets and that team continues.
 - d. Knockout:
 1. Set Up: Players form a circle around the coach without a glove.
 2. Action: Coach tosses a ball underhand to each player, player must catch with barehand using glove hand, if ball dropped player is out, last one standing wins. Can increase pace to increase challenge
2. Baserunning:
 - a. Relay: (reinforces aggressive base running)
 1. Set Up: Split into 2 teams, 1 team at home plate other at 2nd base
 2. Action: Players determine the order of runners, 1st player for each team starts on the base with a ball, Coach signals "Go", players make good turns around bases until they return to start point, they hand ball to next player in line and repeat above. 1st team to get last runner back to starting base wins.
3. Fielding:
 - a. Gold Glove:
 1. Set Up: Split into 2 teams, one teams positions where 2nd baseman would stand and the other team where SS would stand. One coach on 1st and 3rd baselines.
 2. Action: Coach hits balls to players each coach alternating, each team gets 1 team error then all misses after that remove that player from the game. Removed players go 2nd base, last team with a player standing wins. Can also do with 1 line of players based on number of participants
 - b. Pepper:
 1. Set Up: 3 to 4 players stand 10-20' from coach
 2. Action: Player will underhand toss ball to coach, coach will execute a check swing or push bunt on the ball hitting it back toward players in random order, players must cleanly field ball and toss underhand pitch back to coach. Game can be done as a drill or competition, last player to miss the ball wins.

4. Hitting:
 - a. Double Tee: Can use the double tee drill above as a competition. Most successful attempts win.
 - b. Opposite Field Game: (works on letting ball travel especially when pitching is slow)
 1. Set Up: Coach will front toss from about 20' away, players stand at plate in normal hitting stance
 2. Action: Coach will pitch line drive to player, object is for player to hit ball to opposite field.
 3. Scoring: Ground balls, fly balls and pulled balls are outs. Line drives infield = 1 point, line drives to outfield = 2 points (all must be opposite field) Player attempts to get as many points as possible before the 3rd out and most points wins.
5. Combination Games:
 - a. Beat the Ball: works baserunning, clean fielding, accurate throwing and "endurance"
 1. Set Up: Split team in equal groups
 1. Defensive Team: place a player at each infield position including pitcher and catcher, if more that 6 per team double up a position.
 2. Offensive Team: congregate at cone up 1st baseline.
 3. Coach: stands at home with a bat
 2. Action: Coach initiates game by hitting ball to fielders in order of (3rd, SS, 2nd, 1st, P, C) Each fielded ball is thrown to 1st then relayed to C then handed to coach who repeats the action. Once the ball has been hit to all fielders the defensive team will rotate to the next position in same order shown above. Coach then restarts the process, and this continues until all players have fielded in all positions and have returned to their starting place. While this is occurring, the Offensive Team is running the bases (use a cone about 1/3 up each base path as start and finish markers to avoid home plate area). Object is for the Offensive Team to score as many runs as possible before the defensive team makes all the fielding plays. Switch positions when Defensive Team has completed its action. Team with most runs scored wins.
 - b. Beat the Runner: works on aggressive baserunning, tags, quick transfers and sliding
 1. Set Up: Split team in 3 equal groups at home, 2nd and 3rd base. Place 3 balls about 4' feet apart on home plate side of 3rd base with one group. Players at home are runners with helmets on. Players at 2nd are receivers and taggers.
 2. Action: Player at 3rd base will stand behind 3rd in a ready position, runners at home in a run ready position as if stealing, on first movement of the fielder at 3rd the runner will break attempting to get to 2nd base. Fielder will move to 1st ball, gather, set feet, and throw to 2nd base, object is to get the 3rd ball to 2nd with a successful tagout before the runner reaches the base safely. Can increase difficulty by increasing spacing of the balls or adding a 4th ball.

TIPS:

1. Do your every-days and mix in other drills varying the drills each practice
2. Enlist your parents to help run stations. Keep players busy, nothing worse than 12 players at SS and hitting ground balls for 20 minutes with 11 players spectating at any given time.
3. Have multiple stations going at one time, 2 kids per station is ideal. Stations can all be the similar skill or a completely different skill building drill just limit the down time.
4. End practices with a fun game or activity, sometimes a 1 inning intersquad scrimmage is fun
5. Setting up and breaking down the fields is a TEAM responsibility not just a COACH'S task.
6. Meet with your families and the team to discuss your plan for the season, your expectations of them and to elicit their help and support to make the season a success!!
7. Above all else we do this for the kids to foster a love for the sport, make it fun!