

Baseball Manitoba

ROOKIE BALL

- Preparing for the Season
- Ways to make practices and games more fun
- Baseball Skills Progression Chart
- Practice Plans



Here are some tips and ideas to help make a successful and enjoyable season for your Rookie Baseball Team. This material should give you some direction in planning practices, ensuring the safety of your players and creating a fun environment for all participants. Use the "Getting Started in Baseball" book to provide practical information, guidelines and checklists to help you and your athletes develop their baseball skills.

First Time Coaching Tips

If you're coaching a team this spring, be prepared for some challenges. Here are some ideas that may help:

Build relationships. Game scores and win-loss records will fade away, but friendships and fun will be remembered long after the last out. Teaching your players to care about one another promotes camaraderie.

Earn their respect. Kids appreciate knowledgeable coaches who admit mistakes and don't act like they know it all. Before each season study videos and books to learn age-appropriate drills and coaching tips. Attend clinics and recruit other coaches to lend a hand. Follow a plan for practice, which will keep you on track.

Set rules and standards of behavior. Rules need to be spelled out from the start, then reinforced consistently. Good sportsmanship and appropriate behavior have to be expected from players, parents and coaches.

Motivate, encourage and have fun! Enthusiasm is contagious. Kids like coming to practice and playing games when the coaches are fun to be around. Laugh with them. Surprise them. Sometimes coaches hand out bubble gum during practice or organize a parent/player pizza night after a game. Look for something to praise about each child.

Set an example. It's difficult keeping spirits up when a team loses game after game. But this is a good chance to build character, develop proper attitudes, and teach lessons about life.





Baseball Manitoba

Preparing for the Season

ROOKIE BALL



1. GETTING STARTED

- a) **MAKE A TEAM ROSTER** (player's names, address, phone numbers, parent's first names, coach's names and phone numbers).
- b) **MAKE INNINGS PLAYED TRACKING SHEET** (for your own benefit).
- c) **PLAYER'S MEETING** (welcome and introductions, goals and roles, your coaching philosophy, players' expectations, schedule for league and tournaments, schedule for practices, social activities, fundraising, questions and answers, hand out team roster and schedule).
- d) **PARENT'S MEETING** (welcome and introductions, team objectives, your coaching philosophy, parent's expectations, ways parents can assist and be involved, schedule for practices, games, and tournaments, arrange phone pooling and car pooling, expenses and fundraising, questions and answers).
- e) **RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS** (assistant coaches, manager, medical expert, fundraising, field raking, telephone caller, bring drinks, score keeper, wind-up coordinator).

2. SAFETY

- a) **KNOW YOUR ATHLETES** (make a list of medical numbers and emergency phone numbers, know fitness level, understand special conditions, watch after they have been sick or injured).
- b) **CHECK EQUIPMENT REGULARLY** (check for proper fit, cracked helmets and missing parts e.g. chin straps, throat guards).
- c) **WALK THE DIAMOND** (before game or practice do a safety check, survey the diamond for hazards e.g. holes in backstop, wet areas, holes, broken glass).
- d) **FIRST AID KIT** - for minor injuries common to baseball such as the following listed below (remember to always have another person with you when administering first aid).
 - i. **BLISTERS** (keep clean and cover).
 - ii. **NOSEBLEED** (sit with head slightly forward, pinch nose just below the hard part, breath through mouth).
 - iii. **SLIDING BURNS** (wash with mild cleansing solution, dry, and cover).
 - iv. **SPRAINS** (ice should be applied to reduce swelling. If injury is severe an x-ray should be taken).
 - v. **NECK AND BACK INJURIES** (if injury is severe, do not attempt to move the player, call for an ambulance).
- e) **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN** (remain calm, know if any of your parents have medical training e.g. CPR or doctor or nurse, know where the nearest phone is and emergency numbers, tend to the injured player until medical personnel arrive).

3. EQUIPMENT

- **GLOVE** (properly sized, good quality leather, not plastic, or mom or dad's old softball glove).
- **SHOES** (properly fitted, running shoes or rubber cleats).
- **UNIFORMS** (long sleeve undershirts same color, hats).
- **BALLS** (minimum 1 ball per two players [not a lot more], nice to have whiffle balls and soft baseballs).
- **HELMETS** (check for cracks and if any, replace; minimum 4 double ear flaps with chin straps. Helmets should be worn when on deck, at bat, on base).
- **BATS** (proper length and weight, check for cracks, dents, worn grips, [not for hitting stones, posts, pegs, or people]).
- **CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT** (properly sized and adjusted, catcher's helmet and mask with throat protector, belly protector, shin guards, catchers mitt, athletic supporter and cup).
- **PROTECTIVE CUP** (strongly recommended for all players, mandatory for catchers).
- **HOMEPLATE, 3 BASES WITH PEGS, MEASURING TAPE, AND HAMMER.**

4. ROOKIE BALL RULES (note: rules may vary by league - these are traditional)

- a) **MACHINE OPERATOR IS UMPIRE** (no protests).
- b) **PITCHING MACHINE IS MANDATORY** (speed is agreed to by both coaches & set with no changes).
- c) **LENGTH OF GAME IS 6 INNINGS OR 90 MINUTES** (complete inning in progress).
- d) **ALL PLAYERS IN BATTING LINEUP.**
- e) **10 DEFENSIVE PLAYERS** (4OF, 3B, SS, 2B, 1B, C, P [beside machine], unlimited substitutions).
- f) **NO BASE ON BALLS** (batter gets 5 hittable balls, if hitter doesn't hit, he or she returns to the bench but is not counted as an out).
- g) **NO INFIELD FLY RULE, BUNTING, OR STEALING.**
- h) **BATTER/RUNNER ALLOWED ONE BASE ON AN OVERTHROW, RUNNERS CAN NOT ADVANCE ON A PASSED BALL BY THE CATCHER.**
- i) **BALL IS DECLARED DEAD IF IT HITS PITCHING MACHINE AND HITTER GETS A SINGLE.**
- j) **INNING IS COMPLETE WHEN 3 DEFENSIVE OUTS, OR 6 RUNS HAVE SCORED, OR MAXIMUM OF 12 BATTERS.**
- k) **NO PLAYER SITS OUT MORE THAN ONE DEFENSIVE INNING IN A ROW.**

5. SETTING UP THE DIAMOND

- **SURVEY FIELD FOR OBSTRUCTIONS.**
- **DIMENSIONS - BASEPATHS 60 FEET.**
 - HOME TO SECOND 84 FOOT 9 INCHES. (Same distance between 1st & 3rd)
 - PITCHING MACHINE 42 FEET.

6. WARM UP

- **WARM UP TO THROW; NOT THROW TO WARM UP.**
- **START WITH EASY RUN.**
- **STRETCHING AND EXERCISES** (mix in different stretches, and running/coordination drills - skipping, running through cones, shuffles, quick feet, etc.).
- **RUN** (one lap slow, next one medium, last lap fast).

7. THROWING

- a) FIND THE GRIP (pads across seams, finger width apart, thumb under ball, gap at base of thumb).
- b) STARTER STEP (small forward step with power foot (throwing side foot), 30 to 45 degree angle, look at target).
- c) ARM DOWN POSITION (throwing hand straight down by the hip).
- d) ARM BACK POSITION (throwing hand straight back, hand on top of ball, glove shoulder and hip point at target, weight on power foot, sight with lead shoulder).
- e) STEP AND THROW (step forward with glove foot, plant foot pointed at target, arm continues forward with elbow pointed out and ball close to head, rear hip and shoulder turn forward toward target, pull lead shoulder down).
- f) FOLLOW THROUGH (extend arm forward, snap wrist, throwing hand in opposite pocket and shoulder pointed towards target, swing power leg (throwing side leg) forward).

8. CATCHING

- a) READY TO CATCH (body in front of the ball, legs shoulder length apart knees bent, both arms forward with elbows slightly bent, eyes focused on the ball, throwing hand next to the glove).
- b) CATCH MADE ABOVE THE WAIST (thumbs up).
- c) CATCH MADE BELOW THE WAIST (pinky fingers together).
- d) CUSHION THE BALL (catch with two hands, in palm of glove, bend your elbows and bring hands in towards body).
- e) PREPARE TO THROW (watch the ball into palm of glove, throwing hand immediately covers the ball and finds the grip).

9. FIELDING GROUND BALLS

- a) RELAXED POSITION (position before the pitch, face the batter with glove leg slightly forward, feet shoulder length apart, weight on balls of the feet, knees bent with hands resting on the knees).
- b) READY POSITION (position as the pitch is thrown, feet slightly wider, hands extended out and down with elbows between the knees, seat down and head up).
- c) RECEIVING THE GROUND BALL (move quickly behind the ball, extend both hands out front with glove web on ground, extend glove leg forward, head and seat down).
- d) SUCK IT UP (show the button of your cap - "head down", watch the ball into the palm of glove, suck the ball up into the stomach with both hands, elbows past the waist, grip the ball).
- e) STARTER STEP, ARM DOWN POSITION, ARM BACK POSITION, FOLLOW THROUGH.

10. FIELDING FLY BALLS

- a) READY POSITION (eyes fixed on the ball, feet shoulder width apart, weight on the balls of the feet, balanced stance allows quick movement in all directions).
- b) FIELDING A FLY BALL - FOREHAND (use cross over step, run quickly to the ball with hands down, keep eyes on the ball).
- c) FOREHAND CATCH (when you get to the ball, reach up with both hands, keep thumbs together and catch the ball in the palm of the glove).
- d) FIELDING A FLY BALL - BACKHAND (use cross over step, run quickly to the ball with hands down, keep eyes on the ball).
- e) BACKHAND CATCH (when you get to the ball, reach up with both hands, keep thumbs together and catch the ball in the palm of the glove).

11. BASERUNNING

- a) HOME TO FIRST (immediately after contact the bat is dropped, not thrown, eyes focus on first base, all out sprint from batter's box directly to first base).
- b) GROUND BALL TO THE INFIELD (1/3 way down the baseline a quick look to see where the ball is, run through first base, keep eyes on the base, touch the front of the base with either foot, after crossing first slow down while looking over right shoulder for possible missed ball).
- c) BASE HIT THROUGH THE INFIELD (1/3 way down the baseline a quick look to see where the ball is, 2/3 way down the baseline begin to curve out [BANANA] allowing good turn to second, keep eyes on the base, contact the base on the inside with either foot, head straight for second base, keep your eyes on the ball).

12. SLIDING (feet first only)

- a) SLIDE ON ALL CLOSE PLAYS (approach base with body erect, eyes on the base, slide without hesitation). Do not slide into first base.
- b) TUCKED or BENT LEG SLIDE (begin slide early, take off on whichever foot is natural, kick one leg up and tuck other leg under the knee of the extended leg, throw both hands up in the air, slide on the seat and back).
- c) PRACTICE IS FUN (tell players in advance to wear old clothes, start in soft grassy area, wear only running shoes or socks, throw base down loose don't spike down).

13. HITTING

- a) BAT SELECTION (assist player choosing a bat suited to physical size and ability, most tend to choose a bat that is too big, stress bat speed).
- b) GRIP (held loose with the fingers not the palms of the hands, align second set of knuckles on both hands, choke up for better bat control).
- c) DISTANCE FROM THE PLATE (feet are parallel to the plate, position so bat covers hitting zone when bat and arms are extended away from the body while taking a forward stride).
- d) THE STANCE (relaxed grip, hands are back at shoulder level, arms away from body with rear elbow slightly up, shoulders and hips level, head steady with chin over front shoulder, eyes level and fixed on the ball, body is balanced with knees slightly bent and feet shoulder width apart with front foot slightly turned).
- e) STEP AND COCK (as pitch is delivered, shift weight to the rear foot and take a short gliding step towards the pitcher, hands pulled back slightly, head steady, eyes on the ball, chin on front shoulder).
- f) SWING (pivot back foot - pretend they are squishing a bug under the ball of their back foot), and brace front foot, toe pointed between first and second for right handed batter, hips open quickly, throw hands and bat towards the ball to get level swing, (action more like a pushing of the back arm). Arms do not extend until after contact, the bat is over the hitting zone of the plate, weight shifts to front foot, head and eyes down on the ball.
- g) FOLLOW THROUGH (hips and upper body face pitcher, arms take a natural full follow through, both hands stay on the bat, eyes stay focused on ball, chin ends on back shoulder, body balanced at finish).

14. PRACTICE PLANS

- a) EVERY PRACTICE IS PLANNED AND HAS A PURPOSE.
- b) 90 MINUTES MAXIMUM.
- c) BEGIN WITH WARM-UP AND EXERCISE.
- d) PROCEED TO THROWING AND CATCHING DRILLS.
- e) REVIEW SKILLS TAUGHT LAST PRACTICE AND TEACH A NEW SKILL.
- f) USE SMALL GROUPS WHEN DOING DRILLS, SO PLAYERS ARE NOT WAITING.
- g) INCLUDE A GAME TYPE COMPONENT, RELAYS, COMPETITIONS HAVE SOME FUN.
- h) EVERY PRACTICE IS DIFFERENT AND HAS 7 OR 8 COMPONENTS.
- i) END WITH A TEST, EITHER VERBAL OR BY DEMONSTRATION TO SEE IF THE SKILL TAUGHT IS UNDERSTOOD.

15. GAME DAY

BEFORE THE GAME

- ARRIVE AT THE FIELD IN LOTS OF TIME.
- MAKE SURE YOU HAVE FIRST AID KIT.
- CHECK THE FIELD FOR HAZARDS.
- PREPARE THE FIELD SET UP THE BASES.
- MAKE SURE VOLUNTEERS ARE READY AND KNOW THEIR DUTIES.
- ENSURE ALL PLAYERS WARM UP PROPERLY.
- SET UP YOUR BATTING ORDER AND STARTING LINEUP.
- PLAN YOUR SUBSTITUTIONS.
- EXCHANGE LINE UP WITH OTHER COACH.
- HAVE A SHORT MEETING WITH YOUR PLAYERS.

DURING THE GAME

- BE ENTHUSIASTIC, CREATE A HAPPY POSITIVE MOOD.
- MAKE SUBSTITUTIONS SO EVERYONE HAS EQUAL CHANCE TO PLAY.
- SET A GOOD EXAMPLE IN DEALING WITH UMPIRES AND THE OTHER TEAM.
- HAVE FUN.

AFTER THE GAME

- MAKE SURE PLAYERS SHAKE HANDS WITH THE OTHER TEAM.
- PROVIDE PLAYERS WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND POSITIVE FEEDBACK.
- SAY SOMETHING POSITIVE TO EACH PLAYER INDIVIDUALLY.
- MAKE ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT UPCOMING PRACTICES OR GAMES.
- ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:
 1. Did my players have fun?
 2. Was there an equal opportunity for everyone to play?
 3. Was it a good experience for everyone?

Ways to Make Rookie Practices and Games More Fun

Tips for coaches as they work with young ballplayers to help them develop their game.

A POPULAR REFRAIN AMONG PARENTS and youth baseball coaches these days laments the loss of fun in the game of baseball in general and in youth baseball in particular. Too many coaches, many of us worry, think only about winning. They exert too much pressure on players to perform beyond unreasonable standards.

But what can be done? Well, for one thing, how about putting the experiences of players before the desires of adults?

Perhaps you've heard of a few ways to spice up the game: play more pickup games, have a home run derby, hit opposite-handed, organize a throwing competition, use water balloons occasionally in batting practice, conduct sliding practice on a slip-and-slide with water from a hose running on it, bunt into specified areas away from home plate that have treats placed there for players who hit the mark, eat watermelon after practice, have players pull their baseball pant legs up to their knees for that old-timey look, or have them roll up their sleeves.

Not all such ideas involve antics. Some involve thoughtfully organizing and conducting practices. Others are about working hard and working on correct mechanics. But all of them can help enrich a player's experience in the sport. Here's a list of ideas you may want to consider.

BE POSITIVE AND LET EVERY PLAYER PLAY

1. Have many short practices as opposed to a few long ones.
2. Organize practice so there's no downtime. Don't let kids stand around watching for long periods of time.
3. Break into small groups of four or five when teaching new skills. This allows the players more "hands-on" time, which is what makes baseball fun.
4. Make "games" out of practice. When practicing bunting, place various targets near home plate that are worth different amounts of points. When a player bunts a ball that hits the target, he gets points. Keep track of each player's points and declare the bunting champion of the day. This type of activity can be incorporated into the practice of almost any skill.
5. Bring drinks for after practice as a surprise.
6. In games, give each player that is not in the field a certain responsibility, such as keeping track of helmets, bats and balls or where each of his teammates (or the opposing team) hits the ball. This will allow players to feel like part of the team even when not playing.
7. Stay positive during games. Practice is the place to work out problems.
8. Let every kid play in each game and let them try several positions.
9. Sit on the bench during the game and talk baseball with the players. They'll love it!

Techniques for Coaching Younger Children

By: Terry Churchfield - has been a youth league coach for 14 years on and off since coaching with American Legion in the early 1960's. He is a Pony League head coach and manager of the "Plum Stripes" 14-year old traveling baseball team. From www.baseballtips.com.

One of the greatest rewards in life may very well be that of parenthood. Having the chance to watch your children grow from "demanding" infants to "demanding" teenagers may be life's greatest compensation. Perhaps second to that honor may be the distinction of being athletic coach to your son or daughter. The problem comes when it is not just your child, but 10-or-12 other children as well. Suddenly, there is a responsibility to many while you were struggling with parenting only one or two. Once you make the decision to coach, there is no other choice in the matter than to become something that you might not know how to be.



Take it from one who has been there that this is not as tough as it may seem. First thing to remember is always be yourself. You probably already know the best lesson to learn. The problem is that most of us do not remember being seven-year old and being taken from the safety of the backyard and placed with strangers on a field bigger than the imagination. Try to see yourself through those innocent eyes, so eagerly watching the coach's every move, and try to become his or her favorite coach. The idea of being a "good person with the kids" is what youth ball is really all about. There are indeed rules to follow. Spend a few nights reading a book or two about basic ball playing; however, when putting it altogether in your mind, do so as a seven, ten, or twelve year old.

A good rule of thumb is never attend practice in a shirt and tie. Young children take notice and place themselves at a disadvantage to the authority it implies. My dad went to work wearing a shirt and tie, but when he came home to play with me, he removed them. Wear blue jeans or shorts, but be prepared to get down on your knees and talk straight into their faces one-to-one. Get down to their level. Your best player might just take on the "Giant Killer" attitude. While a six-foot coach stands high above the child's three-foot frame, he or she may feel they will be swallowed up at the first mistake. They tend to turn their backs on the coach and hide any talent they may have. A good idea is to pick out two-or-three of the second-year players and befriend them. The fact that the younger player realizes the coach's interest in the older players without fear of retaliation will make him or her more acceptable to you and your "different from my dad" personality.

Above all, make coaching challenging for you and fun for the kids. Always remind them that this is a game and that it must be fun to play. When it is not fun anymore, even you should get out and do something else.

Do not get too technical. Yeah, you must teach basics, but do it the way they would understand. Teach the "alligator." Never teach the technical way to field a ground ball. The "alligator" will accomplish the same thing. The alligator has a big mouth, and we use our hands like the alligator. The glove hand is the bottom of the alligator's mouth; the throwing hand is the top. Now get down low just like the alligator and keep your back flat. Here comes the ball, let it roll to you. Put your glove on the ground like the alligator's mouth and with the top (throwing) hand, close those jaws

down and lock that ball in your glove. Even teach them to growl while they close down the jaws. That will allow them to expend air and make the play much easier. It will also keep them from getting hurt. Follow the "alligator" with the "bird." Bring the hands to the middle of the chest and spread the wings (arms), with thumbs always downward. Flap the wings, crow hop and throw! This is not only fun, it is natural. It is basic and after a few short practice sessions, the players will be sort of fielding grounders, throwing close to first base and making many strange noises. They will be back next practice, next game, next year and who knows what could be next. ""Squash the bug, ring the bell, hit the ball and run like the wind!"

Never scold or criticize in front of the entire team. Take the child aside and show them what they did wrong. Start out by praising the player about something they do correctly and then emphasizing what to do next time. Wipe their tears when they cry and laugh with them (they will be amusing) as often as you laugh at them.

Always emphasize the need for parent-to-child relationships. Allow parents to watch your coaching techniques and ask them to drill 15 minutes each day on the things taught. As the coach, you are a leader, a dad, a nurse and a best friend to the players. To the parents, you are the boss. You must know when the child comes to practice or the game and when he or she is being taken home. Discuss parents' differences face-to-face only after practice, never over the telephone. Be the coach. Reward them with high five's, handshakes, words of encouragement and above all, smiles. When a child gets a bump or bruise, be the first to his or her side. Make sure they know you care. Be sure to make practice fun and games competitive only to the point of competition itself-never for the sake of winning at all costs. Leave that must-win thing for elite leagues and colleges.

Good luck as head coach. Remember, this is their game not yours. Make sure you play everybody at least 70% of the time. I hope you enjoy coaching baseball as much as me. I have countless memories to be thankful for and would never give up the chance to do it for all the money in the world.

THROWING DRILLS

Throwing drills (remember the correct grip – with four seams across the “horseshoe”, thumb underneath)

1. Wrist Snap

On knees, facing partner, throwing arm held in front, bent at 45 degree angle so that the elbow is as high as the shoulder and the finger point to the sky, ball facing partner, elbow in glove, supporting the arm. With proper grip, **snap** the wrist and forearm to propel ball to partner. Working on the last part of the throw, the wrist snap imparts velocity, aids in accuracy and distance.



2. Back knee: goal-post

Kneel on throwing side knee, glove side hip and shoulder pointing to partner, lead leg extended at slight angle to right of partner to allow hip/shoulder turn. Ball is held in proper grip, arm facing out to second base, elbow bent at 45 degree angle and at shoulder height, ball pointing to second base (wave "good-bye"). Glove side elbow is up at shoulder height, arm bent at 45 degrees, glove at comfortable position. Rotate forward, pulling down with front elbow and throwing ball with correct arm action, reaching out to target. **Emphasize follow through.** (knee to chest).



3. Back knee: full arm

Same position as above, this time with ball in glove at waist (belly button). Break hands thumbs down, elbows up. Throwing arm goes down, out, and back. Continue up through goal-post position and throw ball. Do not stop at goal-post position, but make it one continuous smooth motion. Again emphasize the follow through.

4. Rock and fire: goal-post

Stand up, feet almost twice shoulder width apart (simulating the stride when throwing), glove side hip and shoulder facing partner. Arms should be in the previously described goal-post position. Transfer the weight to the back leg by slightly bending the back knee. Do not lean back, but keep trunk upright. Shift weight forward and rotate trunk to throw ball. Follow through is key. Back foot should roll over so that the heel points upward.



5. Rock and fire: full arm

Stand as above, and use the full arm action described in step number 3.

6. Step and throw

Regular catch and throw, receiving ball with two hands, stepping with the glove side foot to the ball, then making step with back foot by turning pivot foot (photo right) and rotating trunk before throwing.



Starter step

SKILL LEARNING

Here is a good teaching sequence to follow:

1. Explain the skill
 - name the skill and describe it
 - tell why it is important and when it is used. Highlight the key teaching points (key words or phrases used in instructing and giving feedback to your players)
2. Show how it is done
 - demonstrate
 - state key points again
3. Give time to practice
 - get players to practice the skill right away
 - get everyone involved
4. Tell them how they are doing
 - move around each player
 - give individual feedback
 - get assistants to help

PREPARING FOR PRACTICE

Practice time is precious, so you'll want to make the most of it. Here are some tips for planning and running your practices:

- Plan to keep everyone active. Use small groups when doing drills so players don't have to wait long for their turn
- To save time, consider introducing your drills on a chalk board or white board before going on the field
- Treat all players equally and emphasize positive feedback. Try to talk to every player individually at every practice.
- Ensure at least one coach is supervising each station, and that the coaching staff control all activities
- Ensure that all drills are appropriate for the age and skill level of the players and utilize proper teaching progressions
- Ensure players play within team rules and that team rules are developed and consistently applied
- Ensure that all drills are organized with safety of the players of prime concern

TEACHING TIPS

Here are a few tips to help you communicate effectively with your players during practices and games:

- Arrange players in semi-circle in front of you
- Position them so there are no distractions, or the sun, behind you
- Scan your group as you talk. Make eye contact with all players
- Ask questions to make sure players have understood you and know what is expected of them
- Give your players an opportunity to speak
- Listen to what they say and how they say it
- Speak to them using words they can understand (keep it simple)
- Bend down, kneel or crouch so you can talk to them at their level
- Speak to every player at every session



80 Ways to say "Very Good!"

1. Good for you!
2. Superb
3. You did that very well
4. You've got it made
5. Terrific
6. That's not bad!
7. Couldn't have done it better myself.
8. Marvelous!
9. You're doing fine.
10. You're really improving.
11. You're on the right track now!
12. Now you've got it figured out.
13. Outstanding!
14. That's coming along nicely.
15. I know you can do it.
16. Good work.
17. You figured that out fast.
18. I think you've got it now.
19. I'm proud of the way you worked today.
20. Tremendous!
21. You certainly did well today
22. Perfect!
23. Nice going
24. You've got your brain in gear today
25. Now you've got the hang of it
26. WOW!
27. Wonderful!
28. You're getting better every day
29. You're learning fast
30. You make it look easy
31. That's much better
32. Nice try
33. Super!
34. You did a lot of work today
35. Keep it up!
36. Congratulations
37. Exactly right!
38. Nice going
39. Excellent!
40. Sensational!
41. You're doing beautifully
42. You've just mastered that!
43. That's the best ever
44. That's great!
45. Way to go!
46. That's the way to do it!
47. That's quite an improvement
48. Good thinking
49. Keep up the good work
50. That's it!
51. That's better
52. You haven't missed a thing
53. Fantastic!
54. You outdid yourself today
55. You're doing a good job
56. That's the right way to do it
57. That's better
58. Right on!
59. That's the best you've ever done!
60. That's RIGHT!
61. You must have been practicing!
62. Great!
63. Keep working on it... you're getting better
64. You remembered!
65. That kind of work makes me very happy
66. You're really working hard today
67. I knew you could do it!
68. I'm very proud of you
69. One more time and you'll have it
70. Fine!
71. That's good
72. Good job
73. You really make this fun
74. Good remembering
75. You are doing much better today
76. Keep on trying
77. You are really learning a lot
78. You've just about got it
79. I've never seen anyone do it better!
80. You are very good at that.

Manitoba Baseball Association

BASEBALL SKILL PROGRESSION CHART

This skills chart should serve as reference for coaches as they determine what skills to teach their players. Teaching skills beyond the capabilities of the player can often cause problems.

Scale: I = Introduce; M = Maintain

SKILLS	AGE					
		9 & under	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Throwing						
Grip		I	I/M	M	M	
Arm action	I	I	I/M	M	M	M
Body action	I	I	I/M	M	M	M
Crow hop			I/M	M	M	M
Starter Step		I	I/M	M	M	
Follow through		I	I/M	M	M	
Arm back	I	I	I/M	M	M	
Warm up		I	I/M	M	M	M
Receiving						
Two hands	I	I	M	M	M	M
Position of body	I	I	M	M	M	M
Position of glove		I	M			
Quickness of feet			I	M	M	M
Cushion ball	I	I	M			
Prepare to throw		I	M	M	M	
Hitting	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Bat selection	I	M	M			
Grip	I	M	M	M		
Stance	I	M	M			
Swing and stride	I	M	M			
Ready position	I	M	M	M		
Strike zone		I	M	M		
Sacrifice bunt				I	M	M
Push bunt					I	M
Drag bunt					I	M
Squeeze bunt					I	M
Free swinging	I	M				
Follow through	I	M	M	M		
Faults and corrections				I	M	M
Base running	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Speed and agility	I	M	M	M	M	
General body movements	I	M	M			
Running form			I	M	M	M
Running the right direction	I	I/M				
Home to first	I	M	M	M		
Turn at first	I	M	M	M		

Base running – (continued)	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Bent leg slide	I	M	M	M		
Hook slide			I	M	M	M
Pop up slide				I	M	M
Head first slide				I	M	M
Base stealing				I	M	M
Lead off				I	M	M
Picking up signals				I	M	M
Rounding bases	I	I/M	M			
Returning to first	I	I/M	M	M		
Leading off second				I	M	M
Leading off third				I	M	M
Pitching	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Fastball			I	M	M	M
Curveball					I	M
Change up				I	M	M
Set position			I	M	M	
Wind up				I	M	
Pivot				I	M	
Balance			I	M	M	M
Stride			I	M	M	M
Delivery			I	M	M	M
Follow through			I	M	M	M
Arm action			I	M	M	M
Grips			I	M	M	M
Warm up			I	M	M	M
Fielding position			I	M	M	M
Covering first base			I	M	M	M
Fielding the ball			I	M	M	M
Balks & Pick-off moves				I	M	M
Catching	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Receiving		I	M	M	M	
Squat and Crouch		I	M	M		
Catching Position		I	M	M	M	
Blocking low pitches				I	M	M
Throwing		I	M	M	M	M
Fielding pop ups			I	M	M	
Fielding bunts				I	M	M
Tagging runners			I	M	M	M
Calling pitches				I	M	M
Framing				I	M	M
Infielding	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Fielding stances	I	I/M	M	M	M	M
Fielding ground balls directly at	I	I/M	M	M	M	M
Fielding groundballs to left			I	M	M	M
Fielding ground balls to right			I	M	M	M
Fielding ground balls on backhand				I	M	M

Infielding (continued)	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Basic fielding positions (depths)				I	M	M
Cross over step			I	M	M	M
First base position & footwork		I	M	M	M	
Holding runners on				I	M	M
Receiving throws	I	M	M	M		
Double Play - Second base				I	M	M
Double Play - Shortstop				I	M	M
Feeding shortstop - second base				I	M	M
Feeding second base - shortstop				I	M	M
Third base - Slow roller				I	M	M
Fielding pop ups	I	M	M			
Fielding and throwing	I	M	M	M		
Tagging the runner		I	M	M	M	M
Outfielding	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Stance	I	M	M	M	M	
Line drives			I	M	M	M
Fly balls	I	M	M	M	M	
Fielding ground balls directly at	I	M	M	M	M	M
Fielding ground balls to left			I	M	M	M
Fielding ground balls to right			I	M	M	M
Playing balls in the sun					I	M
Going back for fly balls			I	M	M	M
Crow hop			I	M	M	M
Throwing	I	M	M	M	M	M
Playing the fence					I	M
Communication	I	M	M	M	M	M
Catching with two hands	I	M	M	M	M	
Cross-over step			I	M	M	M
Physical Preparation	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Aerobic				I	M	M
Anaerobic				I	M	M
Speed			I	M	M	M
Strength				I	M	M
Power				I	M	M
Flexibility		I/M	I/M	M	M	M
Nutrition			I	M	M	M
Team Skills	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Throwing ahead of runner	I	I/M	M			
Looking where to make the out		I	I/M			
Communicating ahead of play			I	I/M		
Communicating during play			I	I/M		
Double Plays			I	I/M	M	M
Decoys					I	M
Relays			I	I/M	M	M
Double Cuts				I	M	M

Team Skills (continued)	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 - 18
Fake bunt double steal					I	M
Hit and run				I	M	M
Double steal			I	I/M	M	M
Squeeze play				I	M	M
Sacrifice bunts			I	M	M	M
Run and hit				I	M	M
Mental Skills	7 & Under	8 & 9	10 & 11	12 & 13	14 & 15	16 & 18
Positive self talk			I	I/M	M	M
Visualization				I	M	M
Concentration				I	M	M
Energization				I	M	M
Relaxation				I	M	M
Knowing situation				I	M	M
What to do next		I	I/M	I/M	M	M

PRACTICE PLAN #1

Date: _____

TEAM: _____

Location: _____

Time (min)	Drill	Emphasis
10	<p>Warm-up Tour of the Bases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Walk</i> - high knee lift & arm swing bringing hands to shoulders. Land on the ball of foot. (from home plate to 1st base) • <i>Skip</i> - skip jumping - jumping as high as possible (from 1st base to 2nd) • <i>Quick feet</i> - feet going as fast as possible, knees lifted to waist with hands moving as quickly, short steps. (from 2nd base to 3rd base) • <i>Run backwards</i> - heels almost touching their bums (from 3rd base to home plate) • <i>Run to 1st base</i> - run from home plate to 1st base running through the base touching the outside front of bag, and break down to stop. • <i>Shuffle</i> – facing the pitching area, shuffle feet (click heels) (1st base to 2nd) • <i>Shuffle</i> – facing left field, shuffle feet (click heels) (2nd base to 3rd base) • <i>Light jog</i> – jog to home plate • <i>Trip around the bases</i> – players run the bases calling each base by name as they step on it (e.g. “Second base”, “Third base”, etc.) <p>Team Cheer</p>	Get loose and ready to go
5	<p>Discussion - What’s an out? Show how an out is made at first base (force out - tagging the bag). Also explain a caught fly ball for an out.</p>	Lecture and demonstration
<p>40</p> <p>4 stations</p> <p>10 minutes per station</p> <p>4-5 parents</p> <p>One per station except for 2 at hitting</p>	<p>Station 1 - Learn to catch a ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ coach tosses the ball under hand – players without gloves ◆ palms up little fingers together for throws below the waist ◆ palms down, thumbs together for throws above the waist ◆ arms give with the ball ◆ toss ball from side to side, make them move for the ball <p>Station 2 - Teach throwing (players throw to coach 1 at a time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ spread their feet (throwing foot to glove foot lined up with their target) ◆ goal post position (elbows as high as the shoulders, palm of the ball facing away) ◆ turn trunk and throw to the coach ◆ then move to spread feet with hands together rock back to goal post position, turn and throw the ball <p>Station 3 - Hitting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use Tees or soft toss to hit the balls against the screen ◆ hands together with the proper hand on top (right hand if right handed batter) ◆ hands at shoulder height ◆ Feet about shoulder width apart ◆ swing slightly down to hit the ball ◆ Finish the swing after hitting the ball <p>Station 4- Fielding ground balls and fly balls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls ◆ get behind the ball ◆ field the ball with feet apart and hands out front (make a triangle with glove at top point) ◆ keep the bum down (low) on ground balls ◆ use two hands to catch fly balls, watching ball into glove ◆ show how to make an out at 1st base 	<p>Move to the ball and stay in front</p> <hr/> <p>Glove side shoulder and hip point to target, feed shoulder width apart, on throw, should bend back (follow through) and roll back foot onto toe</p> <hr/> <p>a. Use foam, plastic or rag balls on backstop so you don’t damage fence b. Batter should make complete swing and not stop at contact</p> <hr/> <p>Keep ball in front, and move toward ball (don’t wait for it)</p>

10	<p>Scrimmage Game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches to help players learn where to make a play to make an out with base runners • Use a Tee at the start, progress to coach toss, and machine in subsequent practices when the players can handle it. • Everybody bats in every half inning • Do not record outs • Players run to the furthest base they can get to with out being put out • Players on base must be in contact with the base until the ball is hit. (Left foot on base) • Switch teams after the last batter has stopped at a base. 	<p>Safety first Everybody bats Emphasis on FUN</p>
5	<p>Wrap-up - Have players help pick up equipment and put it away.</p>	<p>Review the day's activities & date of next practice.</p>

PRACTICE PLAN #2

Date: _____

TEAM: _____

Location: _____

Time (min)	Drill	Emphasis
10	<p>Warm-up Tour of the Bases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Walk</i> - high knee lift & arm swing bringing hands to shoulders. Land on the ball of foot. (from home plate to 1st base) • <i>Skip</i> - skip jumping - jumping as high as possible (from 1st base to 2nd) • <i>Quick feet</i> - feet going as fast as possible, knees lifted to waist with hands moving as quickly, short steps. (from 2nd base to 3rd base) • <i>Run backwards</i> - heels almost touching their bums (from 3rd base to home plate) • <i>Run to 1st base</i> - run from home plate to 1st base running through the base touching the outside front of bag, and break down to stop. • <i>Shuffle</i> – facing the pitching area, shuffle feet (click heels) (1st base to 2nd) • <i>Shuffle</i> – facing left field, shuffle feet (click heels) (2nd base to 3rd base) • <i>Light jog</i> – jog to home plate • <i>Trip around the bases</i> – players run the bases calling each base by name as they step on it (e.g. “Second base”, “Third base”, etc.) <p>Team Cheer</p>	Get loose and ready to go
5	<p>Discussion - What’s an out? Show how an out is made on a tag play, and also how they occur. Review force out at first base and caught fly ball.</p>	Lecture and demonstration
<p>40</p> <p>4 stations</p> <p>10 minutes per station</p> <p>4-5 parents</p> <p>One per station except for 2 at hitting</p>	<p>Station 1- Learn to catch a ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ coach tosses the ball under hand – players with gloves ◆ finger in every finger hole of the glove ◆ palms up little fingers together for throws below the waist, palms down, thumbs together for throws above the waist ◆ catch the ball with glove foot forward in the pocket of the glove with 2 hands ◆ give with the hands towards the throwing side of the body, apply the grip ◆ toss ball from side to side , make them move for the ball <p>Station 2 - Teach throwing (players throw to coach 1 at a time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ spread their feet (throwing foot to glove foot lined up with their target) ◆ goal post position (elbows as high as the shoulders, palm of the ball facing away) ◆ turn and throw to the coach ◆ then move to spread feet with hands together rock back to goal post position, turn and throw the ball ◆ progress to step with throwing foot to target (turn inside of foot so it is facing target), stride to the target with glove foot, turn body and throw <p>Station 3 - Hitting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use Tees or soft toss to hit the balls against the screen ◆ hands together with the proper hand on top (right hand if right handed batter) ◆ hands at shoulder height and feet about shoulder width apart ◆ Line up so front foot even with front line of plate, back about 1½ steps from plate ◆ turn back foot (squash bug) to bring bat in front of the body ◆ swing slightly down to hit the ball ◆ Finish the swing after hitting the ball 	<p>Move to the ball and stay in front</p> <hr/> <p>Glove side shoulder and hip point to target, feed shoulder width apart, on throw, should bend back (follow through) and roll back foot onto toe</p> <hr/> <p>a. Use foam, plastic or rag balls on backstop so you don’t damage fence b. Batter should make complete swing and not stop at contact</p>

	<p>Station 4- Fielding ground balls and fly balls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls ◆ get behind the ball ◆ field the ball with feet apart and hands out front ◆ keep the bum down (low) on ground balls ◆ use two hands to catch fly balls, watching ball into glove 	<p>Keep ball in front, and move toward ball (don't wait for it)</p>
10	<p>SCRIMMAGE GAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches to help players learn where to make a play to make an out with base runners • Use a Tee at the start, progress to coach toss, and machine in subsequent practices when the players can handle it. • Everybody bats in every half inning • Do not record outs • Players run to the furthest base they can get to with out being put out • Players on base must be in contact with the base until the ball is hit. (Left foot on base) • Switch teams after the last batter has stopped at a base. 	<p>Safety first Everybody bats Emphasis on FUN</p>
5	<p>WRAP-UP - Have players help pick up equipment and put it away.</p>	<p>Review the day's activities & date of next practice.</p>

	<p>Station 3 - Hitting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use Tees or soft toss to hit the balls against the screen ◆ hands together with the proper grip middle knuckles lined up ◆ hands together with the proper hand on top (right hand if right handed batter), hands at shoulder height ◆ Feet about shoulder width apart ◆ Line up so front foot even with front line of plate, back about 1½ steps from plate ◆ turn back foot (squash bug) to bring bat in front of the body ◆ swing slightly down to hit the ball, finish the swing after hitting the ball <p>Station 4- Fielding ground balls and fly balls (roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls ◆ get behind the ball (have players charge ball) ◆ field the ball with feet apart and hands out front (ball should enter glove as glove side foot contacts ground) ◆ keep the bum down (low) on ground balls ◆ use two hands to catch fly balls, watching ball into glove ◆ fly balls - get behind the ball, catch the ball with glove foot forward 	<p>a. Use foam, plastic or rag balls on backstop so you don't damage fence</p> <p>b. Batter should make complete swing and not stop at contact</p> <hr/> <p>Keep ball in front, and move toward ball (don't wait for it)</p> <p>"Alligator" the ball (pretend their hands are an alligator's mouth)</p>
10	<p>Catch Game (all players):</p> <p>Relay throw across field for time (players in a line the length of the field, about 15-20 feet apart in 2-3 equal lines). Ball starts at one end and is thrown player by player to the other end and back again. Go 2 or 3 repetitions, timing them to see how long it takes.</p>	<p>Make sure of catch before throwing ball and look before they throw</p>
10	<p>SCRIMMAGE GAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches to help players learn where to make a play to make an out with base runners • Have a designated person tossing the ball to the batters • Everybody bats in every half inning • Do not record outs • Players run to the furthest base they can get to with out being put out • Players on base must be in contact with the base until the ball is hit. (Left foot on base) • Switch teams after the last batter has stopped at a base. 	<p>Safety first Everybody bats Emphasis on FUN Continue to teach where to play the ball</p>
5	<p>WRAP-UP - Have players help pick up equipment and put it away.</p>	<p>Review the day's activities & date of next practice.</p>

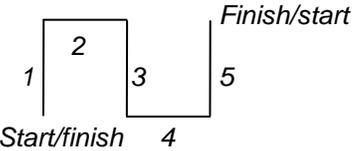
	<p>stride to the target with glove foot, turn body and throw</p> <p>Station 3 - Hitting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use Tees or soft toss to hit the balls against the screen ◆ hands together with the proper grip middle knuckles lined up ◆ hands together with the proper hand on top (right hand if right handed batter), hands at shoulder height ◆ Feet about shoulder width apart ◆ Line up so front foot even with front line of plate, back about 1½ steps from plate ◆ turn back foot (squash bug) to bring bat in front of the body ◆ swing slightly down to hit the ball, finish the swing after hitting the ball <p>Skill Drill: "Run to first" - have them run to where a base would be after they hit the ball. Make sure they just drop the bat on the follow through, and not throw it or bring it back to the plate</p> <p>Station 4- Fielding ground balls and fly balls (roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls ◆ get behind the ball (have players charge ball) ◆ field the ball with feet apart and hands out front (ball should enter glove as glove side foot contacts ground) ◆ keep the bum down (low) on ground balls ◆ use two hands to catch fly balls, watching ball into glove ◆ fly balls - get behind the ball, catch the ball with glove foot forward 	<p>them</p> <p>a. Use foam, plastic or rag balls on backstop so you don't damage fence b. Batter should make complete swing and not stop at contact</p> <hr/> <p>Keep ball in front, and move toward ball (don't wait for it)</p> <p>"Alligator" the ball (pretend their hands are an alligators mouth)</p>
10	<p>Four corner throws</p> <p>Divide the players into groups of 4 (use coaches or parents if more needed). The players get into a square about 15-20 feet apart. The ball starts with one player who throws to his left. That person catches and throws to his left, and so on until all have caught and thrown the ball left. Continue without stopping for several repetitions, they have the players change by throwing to the right.</p>	<p>Make sure of catch before throwing ball and look before they throw. Two handed catches, getting the grip on the ball</p>
10	<p>SCRIMMAGE GAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches to help players learn where to make a play to make an out with base runners • Have a designated person tossing the ball to the batters • Everybody bats in every half inning • Do not record outs • Players run to the furthest base they can get to with out being put out • Players on base must be in contact with the base until the ball is hit. (Left foot on base) • Switch teams after the last batter has stopped at a base. 	<p>Safety first Everybody bats Emphasis on FUN Continue to teach where to play the ball</p>
5	<p>WRAP-UP - Have players help pick up equipment and put it away.</p>	<p>Review the day's activities & date of next practice.</p>

PRACTICE PLAN #5

Date: _____

TEAM: _____

Location: _____

Time (min)	Drill	Emphasis
5-10	<p>Agility Run Using six cones or batting helmets, set up a square “S” pattern. Start at one end, and when players get to the other end, that becomes the new starting point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st path: Lines 1, 3 & 5 sprint, and lines 2 & 4 shuffle • 2nd path: Line 1, 2 & 5 backwards, lines 2 & 4 shuffle • 3rd path: Lines 1& 3 shuffle; lines 2 & 4 sprint, line 5 karaoke • 4th path: Line 5 karaoke, lines 2 & 4 sprint, lines 1 & 3 shuffle  <p>Team Cheer</p>	Get loose and ready to go
5	<p>Discussion – On and Off the Field Start players on bench, with their gloves ready. Each player should already be assigned what position they are playing. On “GO”, the players should run out to their positions and call out where they are. Time them to see how long it takes. Have them come in like the last out of an inning was made (getting ready to bat). Time them again. Send them out, to different positions</p>	Lecture, demonstration & participation
<p>40 4 stations 10 minutes per station 4-5 parents One per station except for 2 at hitting</p>	<p>Station 1- Learn to catch a ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ players in pairs toss the ball <u>over</u> hand to each other ◆ palms up little fingers together for throws below the waist; palms down, thumbs together for throws above the waist ◆ balls between the chest and waist lower the chest by bending the knees ◆ catch the ball with glove foot forward in the pocket of the glove with 2 hands ◆ give with the hands towards the throwing side of the body, apply the grip ◆ toss ball from side to side , make them move for the ball ◆ toss the ball at different heights so the player as learn to read the flight of the ball <p>Skill Drill: “High/Low”: coach tosses 6 balls in a row to player, throwing them high or low so player has to use correct technique. Switch players after each turn.</p> <p>Station 2 - Teach throwing (players throw to each other)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ spread their feet (throwing foot to glove foot lined up with their target) ◆ start in goal post position (elbows as high as the shoulders, palm of the ball facing away), turn and throw to the coach ◆ spread feet with hands together rock back to goal post position, turn and throw the ball ◆ step with throwing foot to target (turn inside of foot so it is facing target), stride to the target with glove foot, turn body and throw <p>Skill Drill: “Target throws” - Use a parent as a target. Players stand single file 45 ft away and see how many throws they can make in a row to their “target”. Target parent will roll or throw back balls to coach near line</p>	<p>Move to the ball and stay in front. Watch the ball all the way into the glove</p> <hr/> <p>Look before they throw</p>

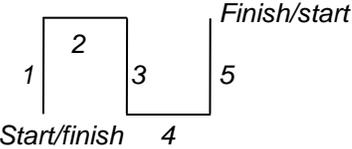
	<p>Station 3 – “Live” Hitting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use whiffle balls or rag balls ◆ Coach will be down on 1 knee about 15-20 feet away. One batter at plate, other players in the field. Players return batted balls to the coach ◆ hands together with the proper grip middle knuckles lined up ◆ hands together with the proper hand on top (right hand if right handed batter), hands at shoulder height ◆ Feet about shoulder width apart ◆ Line up so front foot even with front line of plate, back about 1½ steps from plate ◆ turn back foot (squash bug) to bring bat in front of the body ◆ swing slightly down to hit the ball, finish the swing after hitting the ball ◆ switch batters every 5-7 swings (not hits) <p>Station 4- Fielding ground balls and fly balls (roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ get behind the ball (have players charge ball) ◆ field the ball with feet apart and hands out front (ball should enter glove as glove side foot contacts ground) ◆ keep the bum down (low) on ground balls ◆ use two hands to catch fly balls, watching ball into glove ◆ fly balls - get behind the ball, catch the ball with glove foot forward <p>Skill Drill: “Goaltender” – use cones or helmets to set up a “goal”. Player stands between cones and coach rolls balls, trying to ‘score” Player tries to stop as many balls as possible (just stop them and knock them away – don’t worry about throwing them)</p>	<p>a. Batter must have helmet on.</p> <p>b. No other players near batter when swinging.</p> <p>c. Players should not go too close to batter or near batter when batter swinging, to get balls. Wait until batter is finished.</p> <hr/> <p>Keep ball in front, and move toward ball (don’t wait for it) Keep glove open.</p>
10	<p>Throwing Contest (all players): Throwing contest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two parents will be targets at either side of home plate • Players should form two single file lines 45 ft from parent. • Players throw ball to parent for accuracy (in air) • First team to 10 good throws wins; count out loud • Parent will roll/throw ball back to coach between lines (players do not catch thrown ball, may miss and hit person behind them. • Players hustle to back of line after throw. • Can move back to 60 ft as players progress. 	<p>Players should use correct technique, and use their legs to get ball to parent.</p> <p>Make sure they look before they throw, and put enough arc on the ball to reach their target.</p>
10	<p>SCRIMMAGE GAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches to help players learn where to make a play to make an out with base runners • Have a designated person tossing the ball to the batters • Everybody bats in every half inning • Do not record outs • Players run to the furthest base they can get to with out being put out • Players on base must be in contact with the base until the ball is hit. (Left foot on base) • Switch teams after the last batter has stopped at a base. 	<p>Safety first Everybody bats Emphasis on FUN Continue to teach where to play the ball</p>
5	<p>WRAP-UP - Have players help pick up equipment and put it away.</p>	<p>Review the day’s activities & date of next practice.</p>

PRACTICE PLAN #6

Date: _____

TEAM: _____

Location: _____

Time (min)	Drill	Emphasis
5-10	<p>Agility Run Using six cones or batting helmets, set up a square “S” pattern. Start at one end, and when players get to the other end, that becomes the new starting point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st path: Lines 1, 3 & 5 sprint, and lines 2 & 4 shuffle • 2nd path: Line 1, 2 & 5 backwards, lines 2 & 4 shuffle • 3rd path: Lines 1& 3 shuffle; lines 2 & 4 sprint, line 5 karaoke • 4th path: Line 5 karaoke, lines 2 & 4 sprint, lines 1 & 3 shuffle  <p>Team Cheer</p>	Get loose and ready to go
5	<p>Discussion – Fielding Responsibilities Put players in the field, and discuss with them their area of defensive coverage. Players should cover their area and respect their teammates area by backing it up, and not taking the ball from their teammates.</p>	Lecture, demonstration & participation
<p>40 4 stations 10 minutes per station 4-5 parents One per station except for 2 at hitting</p>	<p>Station 1- Learn to catch a ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ players in pairs toss the ball <u>over</u> hand to each other ◆ palms up little fingers together for throws below the waist; palms down, thumbs together for throws above the waist ◆ balls between the chest and waist lower the chest by bending the knees ◆ catch the ball with glove foot forward in the pocket of the glove with 2 hands ◆ give with the hands towards the throwing side of the body, apply the grip ◆ toss ball from side to side , make them move for the ball ◆ toss the ball at different heights so the player as learn to read the flight of the ball <p>Skill Drill: “Call for it”: Players paired up. Coach tosses ball up in air between a pair of players. Both players go for ball, closest one calls “I got it” and makes catch. Other player backs up the first player. Players should take turns and not encroach into the other players area.</p> <p>Station 2 - Teach throwing (players throw to each other)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ spread their feet (throwing foot to glove foot lined up with their target) ◆ start in goal post position (elbows as high as the shoulders, palm of the ball facing away), turn and throw to the coach ◆ spread feet with hands together rock back to goal post position, turn and throw the ball ◆ step with throwing foot to target (turn inside of foot so it is facing target), stride to the target with glove foot, turn body and throw <p>Skill Drill: "Shuffle throws" - Players line up single file to throw to parent (target). With their body turned so the glove side is facing target, hands together at the chest, ball in glove, throwing hand holding ball; shuffle the back foot up to the front foot, then step with the front (glove foot) toward target and throw the ball.</p>	Move to the ball and stay in front

	<p>Station 3 – “Live” Hitting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use whiffle balls or rag balls ◆ Coach will be down on 1 knee about 15-20 feet away. One batter at plate, other players in the field. Players return batted balls to the coach ◆ proper grip, proper hand on top, hands at shoulder height ◆ Feet about shoulder width apart, with front foot even with front line of plate, back about 1½ steps from plate ◆ turn back foot (squash bug) to bring bat in front of the body ◆ swing slightly down to hit the ball, finish the swing after hitting the ball <p>Skill Drill: “Run to first” - have them run to where a base would be after they hit the ball. Make sure they just drop the bat on the follow through, and not throw it or bring it back to the plate</p> <p>Station 4- Fielding ground balls and fly balls (roll ground balls and toss fly balls to each player – may also use tennis balls for fly balls)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ get behind the ball (have players charge ball) ◆ field the ball with feet apart and hands out front (ball should enter glove as glove side foot contacts ground) ◆ keep the bum down (low) on ground balls ◆ use two hands to catch fly balls, watching ball into glove ◆ fly balls - get behind the ball, catch the ball with glove foot forward <p>Skill Drill: “Underhand flip” - The flip is used when fielder is close to the person they want to throw to (i.e. shortstop to 2nd base, or pitcher to 1st base). Have players spaced out in a square about 10 feet apart. One player rolls ball to player to their left. Fielder fields the ball, and flips to the next player to their left. That player catches the ball and rolls to the next player. Switch rollers and fielders so that all players get to do flips</p>	<p>a. Batter must have helmet on. b. No other players near batter when swinging. c. Players should not go too close to batter or near batter when batter swinging, to get balls. Wait until batter is finished.</p> <p>Keep ball in front, and move toward ball (don't wait for it) <u>Underhand flips</u> Keep throwing arm stiff, and take step forward with back leg on release of ball. Ball should travel straight path, and not go up in air. Flip should be made from the ground where ball is fielded. Fielder should not stand up to flip.</p>
10	<p>Taking an Infield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put 6 players into the infield (1st, 2nd, shortstop, 3rd, Pitcher & Catcher) • Other players put on helmets and act as baserunners • Players should take turns being fielders and runners, and player different positions • One coach at home plate will act as batter and can roll balls out to the fielders who will make the play. As the year progresses, the coach may bat balls to the players • Coaches in the field will assist players with where to stand and where to throw the ball • Coach calls out situations (i.e. “First batter of the game”) and then rolls the ball as if it were a batted ball. Runner with helmet on starts just behind the plate, and runs to first as ball rolled out. Infield makes the play based on where runners are and number of outs. • Mix up the runners on the bases and the situations. 	<p>Players should use correct technique, and use their legs to get ball to parent.</p> <p>Make sure they look before they throw, and put enough arc on the ball to reach their target.</p>
10	<p>SCRIMMAGE GAME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches to help players learn where to make a play to make an out with base runners • Have a designated person tossing the ball to the batters • Everybody bats in every half inning • Do not record outs • Players run to the furthest base they can get to with out being put out • Players on base must be in contact with the base until the ball is hit. (Left foot on base) • Switch teams after the last batter has stopped at a base. 	<p>Safety first Everybody bats Emphasis on FUN Continue to teach where to play the ball</p>
5	<p>WRAP-UP -_Have players help pick up equipment and put it away.</p>	<p>Review the day's activities & date of next practice.</p>