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# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT



# Ardsley Little League Player Development

A commitment to the progressive development of the baseball and softball skills of all Ardsley Little League players

Welcome to the 2025 Ardsley Little League season! As a Little League Coach, you have the opportunity to shape young lives and inspire a love for the game of baseball and softball. Your role extends beyond simply teaching the fundamentals; it's about nurturing well-rounded athletes and developing their potential.

For the 2025 season, we are going to have a strong focus on player development. Player development is a holistic approach that focuses on improving a player's physical, mental, and technical skills. It encompasses everything from developing the fundamentals of hitting, pitching, and fielding to building the confidence needed to perform under pressure. It's also about more than just winning games; it's about creating a positive and supportive environment where players can learn, grow, and have fun.

In this manual, we'll address the key aspects of player development, including:

- **Physical Preparation:** The general and specific movements and physical capabilities required to play the game.
- **Skill Development:** The building blocks of baseball, such as hitting, pitching, and fielding.
- **Creating a Positive Learning Environment:** Fostering a culture of fun, learning, and improvement.

By understanding and implementing these principles, you can help our players develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed both on and off the field.

# 2025 Ardsley Little League Coaches Guide

This season, Ardsley Little League Coaches will be setting the foundation for the long-term success of the players and the league. As coaches, you will also be shaping and defining the player experience. Please use the guidelines below as a framework for your coaching this season.

## **Key Coaching Principles**

- Safety First: Prioritize player safety in all drills and activities.
- Focus on Development: Emphasize player development over winning.
- Lead by Example: Demonstrate good sportsmanship and a positive attitude.
- Continuous Learning: Continuously learn and improve your coaching skills.

## **Create a Positive Learning Environment**

- Positive Reinforcement: Focus on positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- Individualized Instruction: Provide individualized instruction and feedback to each player to meet their specific needs..
- Make it Fun: Create a fun and engaging learning environment where players enjoy the game.
- Teamwork: Emphasize teamwork and cooperation among players.

## **Communication and Feedback**

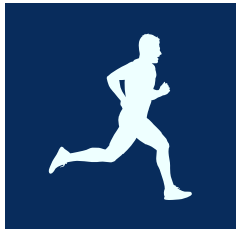
- Effective Communication: Communicate clearly and concisely with players, parents, and other coaches.
- Constructive Feedback: Provide constructive feedback that is specific, positive, and focuses on improvement.
- Listen to Players: Listen to player concerns and address them appropriately.

## **Remember:**

- Keep it Simple: Focus on one or two key fundamentals at a time.
- Be Patient: Skill development takes time and consistent effort from coaches and players.
- Most Importantly - Have Fun! Make sure the players are enjoying the game and learning to love baseball and softball.

# Player Development

Maximizing player development requires a comprehensive approach that focuses on both physical preparation and systematic skill enhancement.



## PHYSICAL PREPARATION

The components of physical preparation, both general and specific, prepare athletes for the physical demands of their sport in the short and long term.

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## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing specific techniques and movements required for a sport, while improving physical and mental skills that contribute to athletic performance.

# Player Development Calendar

A player development calendar provides a structured and intentional framework for enhancing player development throughout the year. This approach focuses on consistent improvement of physical attributes and skills, which ultimately leads to a higher level of performance in the game.

## Baseball/Softball Annual Development Calendar

### Winter

**Focus:**  
**Rest, Physical Development, and Skill**

- Rest/recovery early in Winter
- Build the physical capabilities needed to express skill and stay healthy throughout the season
- Skill development and preparation for competition

### Spring

**Focus:**  
**Competition**

- Application of the skills developed during the Fall and Winter
- Develop competitiveness and being a great teammate

### Summer

**Focus:**  
**Competition**

- Continue to develop technical and tactical skills
- Continue to develop competitiveness and being a great teammate

### Fall

**Focus:**  
**Skill and Physical Development**

- Enhancing the developmental areas identified during Spring and Summer competition
- Address specific skill needs
- Address physical development needs



# Physical Preparation

Physical preparation is a crucial aspect of youth baseball and softball development, contributing significantly to a player's performance, injury prevention, and overall enjoyment of the game.

## **Key benefits of enhancing the physical preparation of our players:**

- Enhanced power and speed
- Improved agility and quickness
- Better coordination and balance
- Reduced injury risk
- Improved flexibility
- Enhanced body awareness
- Increased confidence
- Improved focus and concentration



# Physical Preparation

The general and specific warm-ups below provide a structured and systematic approach to physically preparing Ardsley Little League baseball and softball players for practice and games. The warm-ups are designed to address the following areas:

- Progressively prepare the player's bodies for the physical demands of baseball and softball.
- The movements within the general warm-up will challenge the player's coordination and mobility, enhancing both through focused practice and repetition.
- The general warm-up finishes with three lower body strength and power drills, which will help increase our players' explosiveness.
- The throwing warm-up progressively prepares the soft-tissue structures of the arm and shoulder for the stress of throwing before the players pick up a baseball or softball.

## **How to Use the Warm-Up Progressions**

The warm-up progressions should be conducted before your players perform any baseball activity. Throwing, hitting, fielding, etc., are all high-velocity movements that place significant stress on a player's muscles, ligaments, tendons, and bones. Performing a proper warm-up before baseball activity will significantly reduce the risk of injury while enhancing a player's ability to express speed, strength, and mobility while playing baseball or softball.

## **Sequencing the Warm-Ups**

1. General Warm-Up
2. Throwing Warm-Up
3. Baseball Activity

- *We will explain in greater detail how to optimally structure an entire practice in the Skill Development section.*

# General Player Warm Up






The general warm-up serves to increase blood flow, flexibility, and mobility prior to beginning baseball-specific activities. It should take ~3-5 minutes to complete.

Movement	Cues	Purpose	Reps
<b>Short Jog</b>	Easy jog, stay loose	Warm up the body Increase blood flow	x1 Distance of ~50yds
<b>Lateral Shuffle</b>	Stay tall Arms and legs long Reach arms overhead	Warm up and activate the muscles that control lateral motion	1x each way Distance of ~10yds
<b>Walking Knee Hug</b>	Stay tall Bottom leg straight Pull opposite knee up to chest	Warm up, lengthen, and activate the lower body	x3 each leg
<b>Walking Quad Stretch</b>	Stay tall Bottom leg straight Pull opposite heel to butt Feel stretch in quad	Warm up, lengthen, and activate the lower body	x3 each leg
<b>Walking Lunges</b>	Big step out Drop back knee Chest up	Warm up, lengthen, and activate the lower body	x3 each leg
<b>Jump Squats</b>	Quick dip and drive Be explosive! Land in half squat	Prepare the lower body for explosive movement	x5
<b>Sprint Series</b>	Lean forward knee up, toe up Drive down and back	Prepare the lower body for high-velocity running	3 sprints x 10yds 30sec between sprints



# Throwing Warm Up

Performing a throwing warm-up progressively prepares the body, specifically the arm and shoulder, for the stress of high-velocity throwing. This warm-up should be used prior to throwing, starting at the AA level.

Movement	Example	Cues	Purpose	Reps
<b>Arm Circles - Fwd, Bwd</b>		Big circles, loose arms	Warm up the shoulder	x8 each way
<b>Chest Hugs</b>		Open arms wide, close and hug your back	Warm up chest and upper back	x8 each way
<b>T's</b>		Arms long, shoulder height, thumbs up, open and squeeze shoulder blades	Activate posterior shoulder muscles	x5
<b>No Money's</b>		Arms at side, elbows 90 degrees, palms up, bring hands out wide and squeeze shoulder blades	Activate posterior shoulder muscles	x5
<b>Scarecrow Wave</b>		Arms out from shoulder, elbows 90 degrees, hands facing forward, rotate hands down then back up	Activate posterior shoulder muscles	x5
<b>Throwing</b>				x5 Throws @ 20 feet x5 Throws @ 30 feet x5 Throws @ 40 feet x3 Throws @ 50 feet x3 Throws @ 60 feet x3 Throws @ 60+ feet

# Throwing Load Management

Managing a young pitcher's throwing workload is crucial for their long-term health and development. Overuse injuries, such as elbow and shoulder injuries, can have serious consequences if not addressed properly.

Managing throwing workload is essential to:

## Preventing Overuse Injuries

- **Stress on the Arm:** Repeated throwing without sufficient rest can put significant stress on the young pitcher's developing arm and shoulder.
- **Risk of Injury:** Overuse can lead to inflammation, tendinitis, tendon and ligament damage, and even stress fractures.

## Optimizing Performance

- **Peak Performance:** A well-managed workload can help pitchers reach optimized performance by preventing burnout and fatigue.
- **Skill Development:** Proper rest and recovery allow for better focus and skill development during practice sessions.

# Throwing Load Management

## Considerations for managing throwing workloads in youth baseball and softball players

When determining appropriate pitch counts for youth pitchers, you must account for the **TOTAL VOLUME** of throws by the player, not just pitches. This includes:

- High-intensity throws in the field during the game
  - These throws should be included in the player's pitch count for that day.
- Stressful innings for pitchers
  - High-stress innings - long innings with many runners on base increases fatigue and can lead to mechanical breakdown.
- Long warm-ups for pitchers or while playing in the field
  - Excessive warm-up throws in between innings can increase fatigue and lower pitch effectiveness.
- Pitch counts from playing with other teams
  - Pitch counts and playing time with other teams (ex., travel teams) should be considered when determining appropriate pitch counts.

*Example:*

*A 9-year-old 3B has played three innings in the field. He has fielded 5 ground balls with throws to first base during the game. Before each inning, he made 3 hard throws from 3B during warm-ups. According to the Pitch Smart daily pitch limit for a player of this age, his pitch count should be 75. When factoring in his plays in the field and hard warm-up throws, his effective pitch count should be reduced to 61 pitches.*

# Throwing Load Management

## Baseball Pitch Count Guidelines

AGE	DAILY MAX PITCHES	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)				
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
15-16	95	1-20	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+

## Softball Pitch Count Guidelines

AGE	DAILY MAX PITCHES	REQUIRED REST
7-8	3 Inning Max	1 Day Rest for 1 Inning Pitched
9-10	3 Inning Max	1 Day Rest for 1 Inning Pitched
11-12	12 Inning Max	1 Day Rest for 6 Innings Pitched

\*Please refer to Little League pitching guidelines at:  
<https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/pitch-count/>

### Note:

*Players should never pitch when pain is present or when they are experiencing arm or shoulder fatigue as the risk of injury is significantly increased.*

# Pre-Season Throwing Programs

Pre-season throwing programs are designed to prepare baseball and softball players for the upcoming season by progressively building throwing tolerance and minimizing the risk of injury. The gradual progression of volume and intensity reduces the risk of overload/overuse while building arm strength, endurance, and velocity.

In the following pages, you will find pre-season throwing programs for players starting at the AA level and continuing through the Majors. T-Ball and A levels players do not yet need a throwing programs and should instead have fun playing catch in preparation for their seasons.

## **How to use the programs:**

Depending on their playing level, players should count backward from the start of their practices to align their throwing program with that date. For instance, the AA throwing program lasts 3 weeks. AA players should identify the date of their first practice and start their throwing program no later than 3 weeks before that date.

Players will throw three times a week, ensuring at least one day of rest between throwing days. It's important to rest briefly (30-60 seconds) between moving to throws at different distances (ex., moving from 30 feet to 45 feet) to minimize fatigue.

Not all players have the same throwing strength and endurance. Therefore, some players may need to make slight adjustments to their programs to suit their current level of preparedness. For example, a AAA player who finds throwing at 75 feet challenging should remain at that distance for their last two throwing sessions in week three. Thus, adjust the distance upward or downward as necessary based on throwing ability.

# Pre-Season Throwing Program

## AA Level

### Warm Up :

Players should perform the general warm-up and pre-throwing warm-up before each throwing session.

Week	Day	30 feet	45 feet	60 feet	75 feet	90 feet
1	1	1x10	1x10			
1	2	1x10	1x10			
1	3	1x10	1x10			
2	1	1x10	1x10	1x5		
2	2	1x10	1x10	1x10		
2	3	1x10	1x10	1x10		
3	1	1x10	1x10	1x10		
3	2	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	
3	3	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	



# Pre-Season Throwing Program

## AAA Level

### Warm Up :

Players should perform the general warm-up and pre-throwing warm-up before each throwing session.

Week	Day	30 feet	45 feet	60 feet	75 feet	90 feet
1	1	1x10	1x10			
1	2	1x10	1x10			
1	3	1x10	1x10			
2	1	1x10	1x10	1x5		
2	2	1x10	1x10	1x10		
2	3	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	
3	1	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	
3	2	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	1x5
3	3	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	1x5

# Pre-Season Throwing Program

## Majors+ Levels

### Warm Up :

Players should perform the general warm-up and pre-throwing warm-up before each throwing session.

Week	Day	30 feet	45 feet	60 feet	75 feet	90 feet	105+ feet
1	1	1x10	1x10				
1	2	1x10	1x10				
1	3	1x10	1x10				
2	1	1x10	1x10	1x5			
2	2	1x10	1x10	1x10			
2	3	1x10	1x10	1x10			
3	1	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5		
3	2	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5		
3	3	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	1x5	
4	1	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	1x5	
4	2	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	1x5	1x5
4	3	1x10	1x10	1x10	1x5	1x5	1x5

# Skill Development

Ardsley Little League prioritizes developing fundamental baseball and softball skills - throwing, catching, hitting, fielding - in all players. Our goal is to build a solid skill base over focusing on winning games in the short term. This approach will benefit players and the league for years to come as a strong skill foundation is essential for future success as players transition to higher levels.

As a coach, you play a vital role in the development of the players in our league. It is important to understand and embrace your role in player skill development for the long-term success of both the players and the league.

The following pages will outline the skill development progression for players within the Ardsley Little League system, as well as the core competencies we aim to coach and develop at each level. This information will assist you in planning to ensure the proper development of the players on your team.



# Skill Development Progression

The skill development progression below provides a structured and systematic approach to enhancing the playing abilities of the Ardsley Little League baseball and softball players. The progressions start with basic fundamentals and increase in complexity as players advance playing levels. This allows players to master the fundamentals before moving on to more challenging skills, ensuring we are coaching age-appropriate skills at each level. With this approach, as players advance through the Ardsley Little League, our coaching system will support the continuous development of their playing skills, resulting in enhanced team play at the competitive age levels.

## **How to Use the Progression**

To use the progression for your team, first, find the playing level in the grid for the team that you will be coaching. Next, scan across the grid, moving to the right, to view the key developmental skills for each ability - hitting, pitching, infield, outfield, catching - that you will be coaching this season. As coaches, you will use the key developmental skills to assess your player's abilities, create your practice plans, and identify effective coaching cues for your players.

Your responsibility as a coach is to do some homework on the skills/competencies you will be developing. You should understand how these skills fit into the greater skill sequence of the competency you are coaching (e.g., the importance of loading the back hip when hitting). Then, identify some drills that you think will translate well to your players, determine how you plan to teach the drills, and what language or coaching cues will resonate best.

You may have to progress, or regress, your coaching of some skills for players on your team.

*Example:*

*As a Majors coach, you have a few players who are advanced with their hitting, but their fielding skills are at a AAA level. Here, you would focus on developing their fielding skills at the AAA level until they show that they can progress to the skills at the Majors level while continuing to develop and progress their hitting skills.*

# Skill Development Progression

Level	Hitting	BB Pitching	SB Pitching	Infield	Outfield	Catching
<b>T-Ball</b>	Set up at plate - Grip, Stance, Aggressive Swing	Throwing basics - Step to Throw, Proper Throwing Motion	Throwing basics - Step to Throw, Proper Throwing Motion	Stance, Learning the Positions	Stance, Learning the Positions	Stance, Catching
<b>A</b>	Hand Position, Loading, Strike Zone	Throwing basics - Step to Throw, Proper Throwing Motion	Throwing basics - Step to Throw, Proper Throwing Motion	Stance/Ready Position, Glove Position	Stance/Ready Position, Glove Position, Catching	Stance, Catching
<b>AA</b>	Stride to Swing (Launch), Staying Connected	Starting Stance, Grip, Load (lift knee), Balance, Lower Leg and Hands	Starting Stance, Grip, Drive	Prep Step, Get in Front of Ball, Use Two Hands, Tagging Runners	Prep Step, Foot Position On Catch, Get Ball In Quick	Catching Stance, Receiving Glove Position, Blocking Intro
<b>AAA</b>	Balanced swing, Bat Path	Front Leg Stride to Home, Arm Separation, Square Hips to Home, Follow Through	Landing Position, Drag, Snap/Release	Attack the Ball, Move Toward Base, Intro Backhands and Double Plays	Drop Step (left and right), Hard Liners, Catching On the Run	Blocking, Pop Up Technique, Throwing Footwork
<b>Majors</b>	Timing, Approach at the Plate	Continued Skill Refinement	Continued Skill Refinement	Short Hops, Slow Rollers, Covering Steals and Picks	Throwing to Bases (long hop), Playing the Fence	Blocking, Fielding Bunts, Plays at the Plate
<b>Juniors</b>	Continued Skill Refinement	Continued Skill Refinement	Continued Skill Refinement	Double Play Feeds and Flips, Holding Runners	Continued Skill Refinement	Giving Signs, Back Pick Throws to 1st.

# Skill Development Coaching Resources

The links below contain drills and techniques for coaching the skills outlined in our skill development progression. Additional research by your coaching staff can help you build an inventory of drills that resonate best with your players.

## Pitching - Baseball

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Pitching Sequence	<a href="https://youtu.be/4NOo7JSK6eA?si=pkflPL21Gly8GV2z">https://youtu.be/4NOo7JSK6eA?si=pkflPL21Gly8GV2z</a>
Throwing Basics	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXuXBJ-xbB8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXuXBJ-xbB8</a>
Stance, Load, Balance	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHid0hnc4_M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHid0hnc4_M</a>
Stride, Separation, Finish	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McHb2hXrTrE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McHb2hXrTrE</a>

## Pitching - Softball

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Pitching Sequence	<a href="https://youtu.be/m4CV9vAs4xg?si=l8tQZXK4Z1nQdYMU">https://youtu.be/m4CV9vAs4xg?si=l8tQZXK4Z1nQdYMU</a>
Stance, Drive	<a href="https://youtu.be/o2UiYWqnSFk?si=KnV_STxi2EaRGylK">https://youtu.be/o2UiYWqnSFk?si=KnV_STxi2EaRGylK</a>
Landing Position	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3W8prAjmzqU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3W8prAjmzqU</a>
Drag, Snap/Release	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UH_2_LEGIM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UH_2_LEGIM</a>

## Hitting

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Set up, Stance	<a href="https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-drills-tee-hitting/">https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-drills-tee-hitting/</a>
Loading, Launch	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBBjgzEGfRw&amp;t=516s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBBjgzEGfRw&amp;t=516s</a>
Staying Connected	<a href="https://youtu.be/01VWfZ09Vh4?si=GJnITFLV7jvEZE0v">https://youtu.be/01VWfZ09Vh4?si=GJnITFLV7jvEZE0v</a>
Bat Path	<a href="https://youtu.be/MRnbvsD4tSs?si=pfq0xkx37S1DVnOD">https://youtu.be/MRnbvsD4tSs?si=pfq0xkx37S1DVnOD</a>
Timing	<a href="https://youtu.be/bot4OoQMue8?si=CKn5q8Sh9pY-zw8o">https://youtu.be/bot4OoQMue8?si=CKn5q8Sh9pY-zw8o</a>



# Coaching Resources

## Infield

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Stance, Learning Positions	<a href="https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-drills-fielding/">https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-drills-fielding/</a>
Prep Step	<a href="https://youtu.be/93vYbUqdlEM?si=7k1jAu-Bxg6ZZQ0q">https://youtu.be/93vYbUqdlEM?si=7k1jAu-Bxg6ZZQ0q</a>
Glove Position	<a href="https://youtu.be/vDlnZs4DUU?si=bpbUEh7vNMYyPvk1">https://youtu.be/vDlnZs4DUU?si=bpbUEh7vNMYyPvk1</a>
Footwork	<a href="https://youtu.be/0_Z3vLKtVI4?si=Rd8IG7qHKf2yMgkC">https://youtu.be/0_Z3vLKtVI4?si=Rd8IG7qHKf2yMgkC</a>
Backhands	<a href="https://youtu.be/vXBrifPqBE8?si=jVPpwVeAGs4YHWbZ">https://youtu.be/vXBrifPqBE8?si=jVPpwVeAGs4YHWbZ</a>
Short Hops/Rollers	<a href="https://youtu.be/MvA2UllgzjU?si=dwTfXDIuoLLgr_xH">https://youtu.be/MvA2UllgzjU?si=dwTfXDIuoLLgr_xH</a>

## Outfield

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Stance, Learning Positions	<a href="https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-drills-left-field-center-field-right-field/">https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-drills-left-field-center-field-right-field/</a>
Catching	<a href="https://youtu.be/AeJ3RvgTgvM?si=dp0iM3sW3TUyMAt5">https://youtu.be/AeJ3RvgTgvM?si=dp0iM3sW3TUyMAt5</a>
Prep Step	<a href="https://youtu.be/93vYbUqdlEM?si=7k1jAu-Bxg6ZZQ0q">https://youtu.be/93vYbUqdlEM?si=7k1jAu-Bxg6ZZQ0q</a>
Get the Ball in Quick	<a href="https://youtu.be/UYltjZ8hPg0?si=MLzvyHSzAkRrQTiD">https://youtu.be/UYltjZ8hPg0?si=MLzvyHSzAkRrQTiD</a>
Drop Step	<a href="https://youtu.be/qwwkdxepqTk?si=Dckz4erxuGHBxBQb">https://youtu.be/qwwkdxepqTk?si=Dckz4erxuGHBxBQb</a>
Catching on the Run	<a href="https://youtu.be/49bYBKbdyz4?si=fPNjGN4CrEDHyTPH">https://youtu.be/49bYBKbdyz4?si=fPNjGN4CrEDHyTPH</a>

## Catching

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Stance, Catching	<a href="https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-catching-ball/">https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tee-ball-catching-ball/</a>
Receiving	<a href="https://youtu.be/3QfepqKCWFo?si=CeImIHQBpXYUicHA">https://youtu.be/3QfepqKCWFo?si=CeImIHQBpXYUicHA</a>
Blocking	<a href="https://youtu.be/Tjzv5anKEe0?si=FEEBx5p0ZhKjboQ3">https://youtu.be/Tjzv5anKEe0?si=FEEBx5p0ZhKjboQ3</a>
Pop Up/Throwing	<a href="https://youtu.be/wd8eYHPhAJA?si=6KTqhvxk-0f2N5m">https://youtu.be/wd8eYHPhAJA?si=6KTqhvxk-0f2N5m</a>
Fielding Bunts	<a href="https://youtu.be/cuGEomBjNjg?si=y3zeo9XZPwo45MjO">https://youtu.be/cuGEomBjNjg?si=y3zeo9XZPwo45MjO</a>
Back Picks	<a href="https://youtu.be/UsUbs7dcSQ?si=8ufykp3QX18nrKq0">https://youtu.be/UsUbs7dcSQ?si=8ufykp3QX18nrKq0</a>

# Practice Planning

Developing an efficient and effective practice plan helps to create a fun and challenging practice environment that progressively builds players skills, confidence, and enjoyment of the game.

## **Developing Your Practice Plan**

1. Determine your goals for the practice. Identify, specifically, what you would like to accomplish.
2. Select the drills you would like to use to help achieve your goals.
3. Review the logistics required to accomplish your goals. (Equipment needs, field constraints, coach responsibilities for each drill, time spent on each drill, etc.)
4. Utilize stations to maximize efficiency and get the kids more repetitions. High-quality reps = faster development!
5. Make sure the practice will be fun and safe!

## **Sequencing Your Practice**

1. General warm-up
2. Throwing warm-up
3. Technical/challenging drills
  - a. New drills and/or the most technical and physically demanding drills should occur early in the practice when players are fresh and have 100% focus.
4. Reinforcement drills
  - a. These are drills that the players have familiarity with and are used to maintain skills.
5. Teambuilding activities/challenges/conditioning

*Remember that developing players can be challenging and takes time. It will not be accomplished in one practice, but significant progress can occur over a season with consistent coaching and developmentally oriented practices.*

# Introducing a New Skill

## Skill Introduction

1. Provide players with the name of the skill/drill and explain why it is important (How will it help their playing ability?)
2. Demonstrate the skill using slow, deliberate movements. (If necessary, use video to provide a clear example of the skill)
3. Provide verbal cues focusing on the most important aspects of the movement.
4. Explain the drill and/or practice plan for how the team will learn and develop the skill.
5. Answer any questions the players may have.

## Teaching the Skill

1. Use simplified drills or versions of the skill to build confidence.
2. Provide individualized feedback, offering specific guidance to each player.
3. Provide “catchy” verbal cues and reminders to help the players understand and perform the skills correctly.
4. If necessary, break the skill down into smaller, more manageable steps. (e.g., Remove the specific skill you are coaching from the greater sequence. For example, when teaching the Prep Step in fielding, have the players repeat just the prep step without taking ground balls. This will allow the players to focus on just the specific skill without the added challenge of having to perform it in a live drill)

## Refining the Skill

1. Have players practice the skill repeatedly, in isolation, before integrating it into the greater movement sequence.
2. Incorporate challenges or variations of the drill to keep the practices engaging.
3. Once players show the ability to perform the skill you have been teaching consistently, integrate the skill into more challenging, game-like situations.
4. Have patience - Skill development takes time, but the benefits are worth it! Providing continuous feedback, making adjustments when needed, and staying positive will keep your players on the right path!

**We thank you for your continued support as coaches and look forward to a great 2025 season!**



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