

Dear Coaches and Assistant Coaches;

First off, on behalf of the Association we would like to thank you for volunteering your time to help coach or assistant coach for the upcoming baseball season. It is because of people like you that this sport will continue to thrive in the Wood Buffalo Region. You are a very important factor as to how much a child is going to enjoy his/her baseball experience. My name is Justin Blackburn and I am the House League Director. I am going to help provide you with a guideline to teaching basic fundamentals for T-Ball age ballplayers.

The goal is to provide every participant with a positive baseball experience with the hope that they will want to continue to play on a yearly basis. How do we achieve that goal? By making the experience a fun, positive one and teaching basic proper fundamentals so the players can see improvement. Anyone who is in this type of atmosphere usually enjoys themselves. If you have never coached before we have practice plans in place and will do everything we can to help make your own experience a positive one.

Have a great season!

Justin Blackburn
House League Coordinator
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FMMBA - T -Ball Rules

1. Start time for T-Ball will be **6:15pm** and will finish at **7:30pm**. Coaches will be responsible to run a 30-minute practice **BEFORE** starting a game. Each team will get 15 minutes on the diamond to practice (**starting with the home team**) and then will practice the remaining 15 minutes off the diamond. Practice should include basic techniques with throwing; fielding, running, catching, hitting and can involve fun games for the kids to help keep them engaged. The equipment bins will have extra Tee's, bases, balls and bats so both teams will have what they need to run practice. **RUNNING PRACTICES ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY AND WILL HELP DEVELOP THE CHILDREN'S SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAME.**
 2. Bases are to be 45 feet apart. Teams can assist each other to help put out bases to help start the games on time
 3. Score will not be kept during games.
 4. Outs at first base will not count and the runner will continue to run the bases.
 5. Every player will play on the field when their team is on defense. **THE COACHES SHOULD ENCOURAGE AS MANY PARENTS TO COME ONTO THE FIELD WHEN PLAYING DEFENSE TO HELP THE KIDS WITH POSITIONING AND TO KEEP THEM FOCUS ON THE BATTER.**
 6. Each inning only four players on the offensive team will take a turn at bat.
 7. The last three batters on the batting order will occupy 1st, 2nd, 3rd base respectively in the first inning. Each following inning, players that will not bat in the inning will occupy the bases. This will continue through the rest of the innings according to the batting order.
 8. When hit in fair territory, the ball must go 15 feet to be considered a "fair" ball.
 9. The last batter in the line-up will run around the bases until she/he touches home plate. The defense will get the ball to the catcher who takes it and touches home plate to end the inning for the defense.
 10. If the temperature is not +5 or above according to the weather channel the game will be postponed. The league uses THE WEATHER NETWORK for weather information.
1. If any coach would like to hold an additional practice on the weekends please contact Leland at
 2. houseleague@fmmmba.ca to arrange a field.

#1 Rule: Play safe and have FUN!



T-Ball Coaches Initiatives

Basic Fundamentals

Throwing:

It is very important to try and teach proper throwing fundamentals at a young age so that the players develop the right habits. Some players will be able to play together but for the most part you will probably have to work with small groups 1 adult for 3 to 4 players as most will have trouble catching each other.

1. Get the players to start off on 1 knee the same knee as the hand they throw with. All they are going to do is simply flip the ball to their partner who will only be 3 to 4 feet away. The focus is to create good backspin on the ball and keep their throwing elbow even or above their shoulder. Try to throw the ball to their partners' chest. This will be done without gloves. (2-3 minutes)
2. Staying on the same knee get them to put their gloves on. Now have them start with the hands together, take the ball out of the glove pushing the ball away from the body, point the glove towards the target and throw the ball to their partners' chest. Try and make sure that the hand and ball are making somewhat of a circular motion from original start point to release point. Once again make sure they are keeping the throwing elbow even or above the shoulder and not pushing the ball or working underneath it. (2-3 minutes)
3. Stand the players up and back up to where they can still play controlled catch. The one throwing the ball will start off sideways with his/her feet wide enough so that he/she can deliberately transfer his/her body weight from leg to leg. Start with the hand and ball in the glove, rock the weight back while taking the hand and ball out away from the body and pointing the glove to the target, shift weight as you come around and throw. Same fundamentals as on the one knee with the arm action only now we have our hips and lower half involved. (3-4 minutes)
4. Back the up a little, start off with feet shoulder width apart facing partner sideways. Lift the front leg, separate the hands and step towards the target and throw. Emphasis on the same fundamentals as the previous 3 steps but now we are putting the entire package together. (3-4 minutes)

Catching:

As well as throwing we want to teach the proper fundamentals in the catching department to create good habits that will stick with the players. The best way to enforce these habits is to have small groups giving the players a lot of repetitions and attention. Make sure the players always start with the knees slightly bent and hands are thumb to thumb. The general rule is that when the ball is above the waist we want to catch it with the fingers up and below the waist fingers down.

- 1.** Using the soft stitch ball or even tennis balls begin with using bare hands. Try to teach the players to catch the baseball with their fingers up and having the glove hand as the backstop and the throwing hand as the trapper. A lot of young players want to try and catch everything with the palm up instead of palm towards their partner. Start off nice and close and throw simple underhand tosses towards their chest. Make sure they keep their eyes on the ball and use the hand to stop the ball. If the throw is around waist high get them to bend their knees and catch with fingers up, if it is lower then we catch with fingers down. Once they have done a good job with their bare hands then we can move on to using gloves.
- 2.** We will now use the gloves and do the exact same thing making sure they focus on keeping the palm out and fingers up, remembering that the glove is the backstop and the hand is the trapper.

Groundballs:

Fielding groundballs at this age group is a lot easier than catching fly balls but also needs to be taught correctly instilling proper fundamentals. This can be done with partners as the coach walks around or in small groups. Strong emphasis on triangle position between feet and point of contact, bending the knees, using 2 hands (alligator) and being aggressive towards the target once the ball is fielded.

- 1.** No gloves, have them roll the ball back and forth using 2 hands and focusing on the alligator position with the hands eating the ball. The hand that the glove usually goes on will be the hand closest to the body with palm facing out (bottom of alligator mouth). The other hand will be the top of the alligator mouth. If the ball is a little to the side, have them shuffle and field the ball in the middle of their body with their chins down.
(3-4 minutes)
- 2.** Gloves on the same hand as without gloves except now they are a little farther apart and will focus on having an eye in their glove from the start point and not taking the eye off the ball. Have them imagine that the eye is in the middle of their palm and that they can't take the eye off the ball. This will eliminate flipping the glove down which is a bad habit for a lot of players. (2-3 minutes)
- 3.** Have them in small groups and roll each one a ball, they will field the ball down out in front and come up making a throw back to you. Give them each a lot of reps stressing the importance of doing it with the proper technique. (4-5 minutes)

Flyballs:

This is probably the biggest challenge for young players as the fear of getting hit in the face is in their minds. Most young players want to catch the ball away from their heads with their palm facing up. Just as we talked about at the beginning, the important thing to stress here is palm out and fingers up. Back stop (glove) and trapper (hand).

- 1.** Form small groups and start them off with their gloves on nice and close. Underhand flip balls to them emphasizing the fundamentals that we have talked about. As they get better and more confident you can start throwing the balls higher up. Make sure they use 2 hands and get their body underneath the ball. (5-10 minutes)

Hitting:

Hitting for the majority of new baseball players is their favourite part of the game. Instilling proper fundamentals at a young age usually leads to success which keeps the player interested in the game. This is T-ball but I want to provide you with some insight on the proper swing:

Every hitter's swing must have a coil (gather and load), a stride (ready to transfer weight), hip rotation while pulling the hands through, and finish all while trying to maintain balance and being efficient and in control. This obviously takes a lot of practice and some good guidance which is where we come in to play as coaches. Not only do we have to try and provide knowledge of proper hitting mechanics but we also need to help each individual develop a mindset that works for them. Some hitters are at their best when there is absolutely no pressure and some thrive off of it. We need to make the hitter understand that the only pressure that exists is the one that he/she puts on him/herself. He/she needs to find which state he/she is most successful in and create that every time he/she is at the plate. Hitting like every other part of this game is about confidence and that is something as coaches that we can all play a big role in developing into our players.

- 1.** Spread your players out each with a bat and helmet. Show them how to properly grip the bat by lining up their knocking knuckles. Grip the bat loose and be relaxed, face the "T" with feet shoulder width apart and bat head facing up. In order to hit the ball hard they will need to get extension with the arms, bat and transfer their weight. Get them to take swings and take them through the correct path to the ball. We want them to lead with the knob of the bat keeping the hands close to the body and taking the shortest path to the ball. Have them swing down towards the ball and not upwards. They should focus on hitting the ball as hard as possible on a line and not upwards. Once they have worked on this we can lead them to the T's. (3-4 minutes)
- 2.** Have 2 to 3 players per T and work on swinging down to the ball trying to make contact with the arms extended and keeping their eyes on the ball at point of contact. Make sure they are getting their entire body involved in the process, rotating their hips as they transfer weight to hit the ball. Work on everything that we have

discussed and stay positive with the players. (Have the players hit 3 to 4 balls in a row and rotate within their group for up to 8 minutes.)

Baserunning:

Teaching baserunning is probably the easiest out of the fundamentals that we have gone over but equally important. We need to make sure that the players understand the rules and what it takes to properly run the bases.

- 1.** Take the players through the proper route to every base. Once they have hit the ball they need to run as fast as they can to 1st base and touch the middle front part of the bag. Show them that they are allowed to run through the bag and break it down after. Explain to them why this is allowed and that if there is an overthrow they can proceed to the next base at their or the coaches discretion.
- 2.** Running the bases at the beginning of practice and going over the importance of this is a good way to get your team warmed up and is also fun for the players. Make sure you teach the importance of this every time you take them through it.

Conclusion

By following these basic fundamentals you will be providing your players with the proper techniques to becoming a better ball player. However the most important part of this experience is for the players to have fun and enjoy a positive experience. If at any time you have questions please feel free to contact me at inquiries@fmmba.ca . Thanks for taking the time. Good luck and PLAY BALL!



Practice Plan # 1

Before Games or Practice

8-10 mins Stretch and active warm up

Start them off by having a light jog. Once they have warmed up take them through the stretch routine. Finish by having 5 or 6 lines of 2 and work on their form running. The form running is very important to their development as an athlete.

Required Equipment: 6 Softstitch balls, 2 T's, 2 bases, 30 wiffle balls

Station #1 (10 mins) Hitting and Baserunning

Show your team how to properly grip and swing the bat. Have them hit 3 wiffle balls off the T and after hitting the 3rd run to first base break it down and look over their right shoulder. Set up a couple of T's and break your team into 2 groups.

Station #2 (10 mins) Throwing

Take your team through the 4 different components of throwing in the T-ball coaches initiatives.

Station #3 (10 mins) Groundballs

Take them through steps 1-3 of groundballs in the T-ball coaches initiatives.

Clean up balls and equipment in the area. Discuss and go over fundamentals learned and end with positive comments.



Practice Plan # 2

Before Games or Practice

8-10 mins Stretch and active warm up

Start them off by having a light jog. Once they have warmed up take them through the stretch routine. Finish by having 5 or 6 lines of 2 and work on their form running. The form running is very important to their development as an athlete.

Required Equipment: 10 Softstitch balls, 4 Bases

Station #1 (10 mins) Baserunning

Teach your team the rules about baserunning. Show them the proper routes to take and encourage them to be aggressive running as hard as they can to the respective bases. It is a good idea to have them yell each base as they run across them to make sure they know the different bases (just for the practice).

Station #2 (10 mins) Throwing

Take your team through the 4 different components of throwing in the T-ball coaches initiatives.

Station #3 (10 mins) Catching/Flyballs

Take them through the fundamentals of catching and flyballs in the T-ball coaches initiatives.

Clean up balls and equipment in the area. Discuss and go over fundamentals learned and end with positive comments.



Practice Plan # 3

Before Games or Practice

8-10 mins Stretch and active warm up

Start them off by having a light jog. Once they have warmed up take them through the stretch routine. Finish by having 5 or 6 lines of 2 and work on their form running. The form running is very important to their development as an athlete.

Required Equipment: 6 Softstitch balls, 2 T's, 30 wiffle

balls Station #1 (10 mins) Throwing

Take your team through the 4 different components of throwing in the T-ball coaches initiatives.

Station #2 (10 mins) Groundballs/Flyballs

Divide your team into 2. Have a competition with 1 coach per team. Each team receives a point for executing a play. Proper execution is properly fielding a groundball/flyball and making an accurate throw.

Station #3 (10 mins) Hitting

Go over proper fundamentals of hitting. Divide your team into 4 groups. 2 groups per T, 1 group hitting and 1 group fielding. Hit 4 wiffle balls and rotate within the group until 5 mins is up then switch with the group who is fielding.

Clean up balls and equipment in the area. Discuss and go over fundamentals learned and end with positive comments.



Practice Plan # 4

Before Games or Practice

8-10 mins Stretch and active warm up

Start them off by having a light jog. Once they have warmed up take them through the stretch routine. Finish by having 5 or 6 lines of 2 and work on their form running. The form running is very important to their development as an athlete.

Required Equipment: 6 Softstitch balls, 1 T, 4 bases, 4 pylons

Station #1 (7 mins) Throwing

Take your team through the 4 different components of throwing in the T-ball coaches initiatives.

Station #2 (7 mins) Fielding

Divide the team into 2. Set up 1 team in between 2 pylons and the other in between the other 2 pylons. 1 coach rolls ground balls to one side and the other coach does the same. Coaches will count how many times the ball gets past the pylons which are the goal line. Players will do whatever they can to keep the ball from getting past their respective nets.

Station #3 (15 mins) Simulated Game of outs

Keep the same two teams together and play a simulated game with outs counting as points. Go through the order once and then switch to keep track of the score.

Clean up balls and equipment in the area. Discuss and go over fundamentals learned and end with positive comments.



T-Ball Practice Plan # 1

0:00-0:10 Stretch and active warm up

Starting down the right or left field line have the kids run to the centerfield fence and back as a group. Take them through the stretch and active warm up routine.

0:10-0:23 Throwing

Go through the 4 different components of throwing in the coaches initiatives handout.

0:23-0:25 Water break

0:25-0:35 Infielding/Outfielding

If possible, separate your team into 2-4 small groups and rotate them through these two stations.

Take your team through steps 1-3 of fielding groundballs. (5 mins)

Work on the basic fundamentals of catching flyballs. (5 mins)

0:35-0:50 Hitting

Divide the team into 3 groups; group # 1 fielding the batted balls, group # 2 hitting off the T towards the field, group # 3 hitting off T's against the fence. (5 mins per group and working on proper hitting fundamentals).

0:50-1:00 Simulated game of outs

Divide your team into two teams and play a game. Everyone on the hitting team hits once and then switches with the defensive team. The team which makes the most amount of outs is the winner. Keep rotating until time is up.

1:00-1:05 Practice wrap up

Clean up balls, jog around bases twice making sure to touch every base. Discuss and go over fundamentals learned and end with positive comments.



T Ball Practice Plan # 2

0:00-0:10 Stretch and active warm up

Have the kids meet at home plate and jog around the bases twice. Take them through the stretch and active warm up routine.

0:10-0:20 Swing and run through 1B

One player at a time will simulate a swing, drop the bat and run through 1B. Make sure they touch the base and break it down afterwards. If you have a stopwatch and time them from home to first they will really like it. Emphasis on dropping and not throwing the bat and making sure they keep their eyes on the base.

0:20-0:32 Throwing

Go through the 4 different components of throwing in the coaches initiatives handout.

0:32-0:35 Water break

0:35-0:45 Groundballs

Have your players partner up and with no gloves roll the ball back and forth working on fielding the ball down and out front with two hands making sure they use the alligator mouth technique. (5 mins)

Divide the group into 2 teams; half will be between 1st and 2nd and the other half between 2nd and 3rd. The players will have their gloves on and will all get in the ready position. 1 coach per side will roll the ball to their respective team. The players will get a point for fielding the ball properly and making a good throw to their coach. The team with the most points after 5 mins is the winner.

0:45-0:55 Hitting

Divide your team into 4 groups; 2 groups will be hitting off 2 different T's and the other 2 will be fielding the balls hit and throwing it into the coach. Each hitter will hit 3 balls and rotate within their group until 5 mins is up. They will then switch with the defensive players.

0:55-1:00 Practice wrap up

Clean up balls, jog around the entire diamond once as a group. Discuss and go over fundamentals learned and end with positive comments.

Active Warm UP Example

Dynamic Warm up and stretches

- Skips with arm circles
- High Knees
- Butt Kicks
- Carioca w/high knee crossover
- Side shuffle w/ arm crossover
- Forward Lunge w/alternating arm reach
- Frankenstein
- Build up sprints 3X20 yards (50%, 75%, 100%)

Static stretches

- Sitting Hurdler hamstring stretch (20 seconds each leg)
- Butterfly stretch (20 seconds)
- Lying on side quad stretch (2 X 20s each leg)
- Scorpions (lay on stomach, bring foot up to opposite hand) (2 X 8 reps)
- Sitting back twist stretch (sitting up, bend one leg and cross over other, use leg for leverage and twist back in the other direction to stretch side and back)
- Walk the dog circuit (Forward, Back, Pee, Kickback)
- Standing hamstring

Throwing Activation

- Wrist Snaps – 5 each – 10ft apart
- Squared up – 5 each 25ft apart
- Pivot picks - 5 each 40 ft apart
- Step backs – 5 each 40 ft apart
- Foot Behind lift – 5 each 40 ft apart
- Drop and spin throw – 5 each 60 ft apart

Player Rotation Chart

13 Player Chart								12 Player Chart							
Inning Number								Inning Number							
Name	1	2	3	4	5	6		Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Kid 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 - Pitcher	Kid 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 - Pitcher
Kid 2	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 - Left Field	Kid 2	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 - Left Field
Kid 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	3 - Sit	Kid 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	3 - Catcher
Kid 4	4	5	6	7	8	9	4 - Catcher	Kid 4	4	5	6	7	8	9	4 - Sit
Kid 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	5 - Center Field	Kid 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	5 - Center Field
Kid 6	6	7	8	9	10	11	6 - Sit	Kid 6	6	7	8	9	10	11	6 - 1st Base
Kid 7	7	8	9	10	11	12	7 - 1st Base	Kid 7	7	8	9	10	11	12	7 - 2nd Base
Kid 8	8	9	10	11	12	13	8 - 2nd Base	Kid 8	8	9	10	11	12	1	8 - Sit
Kid 9	9	10	11	12	13	1	9 - 3rd Base	Kid 9	9	10	11	12	1	2	9 - 3rd Base
Kid 10	10	11	12	13	1	2	10 - Sit	Kid 10	10	11	12	1	2	3	10 - Right Field
Kid 11	11	12	13	1	2	3	11 - Right Field	Kid 11	11	12	1	2	3	4	11 - Shortstop
Kid 12	12	13	1	2	3	4	12 - Shortstop	Kid 12	12	1	2	3	4	5	12 - Sit
Kid 13	13	1	2	3	4	5	13 - Sit								
11 Player Chart								10 Player Chart							
Inning Number								Inning Number							
Name	1	2	3	4	5	6		Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Kid 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 - Pitcher	Kid 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 - Pitcher
Kid 2	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 - Left Field	Kid 2	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 - Left Field
Kid 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	3 - Catcher	Kid 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	3 - Catcher
Kid 4	4	5	6	7	8	9	4 - Sit	Kid 4	4	5	6	7	8	9	4 - Sit
Kid 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	5 - Center Field	Kid 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	5 - Center Field
Kid 6	6	7	8	9	10	11	6 - 1st Base	Kid 6	6	7	8	9	10	1	6 - 1st Base
Kid 7	7	8	9	10	11	1	7 - 2nd Base	Kid 7	7	8	9	10	1	2	7 - 2nd Base
Kid 8	8	9	10	11	1	2	8 - Sit	Kid 8	8	9	10	1	2	3	8 - 3rd Base
Kid 9	9	10	11	1	2	3	9 - 3rd Base	Kid 9	9	10	1	2	3	4	9 - Right Field
Kid 10	10	11	1	2	3	4	10 - Right Field	Kid 10	10	1	2	3	4	5	10 - Shortstop
Kid 11	11	1	2	3	4	5	11 - Shortstop								
9 Player Chart								8 Player Chart							
Inning Number								Inning Number							
Name	1	2	3	4	5	6		Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Kid 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 - Pitcher	Kid 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 - Pitcher
Kid 2	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 - Left Field	Kid 2	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 - Left Field
Kid 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	3 - Catcher	Kid 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	3 - Catcher
Kid 4	4	5	6	7	8	9	4 - Center Field	Kid 4	4	5	6	7	8	1	4 - 1st Base
Kid 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	5 - 1st Base	Kid 5	5	6	7	8	1	2	5 - 2nd Base
Kid 6	6	7	8	9	10	1	6 - 2nd Base	Kid 6	6	7	8	1	2	3	6 - 3rd Base
Kid 7	7	8	9	10	1	2	7 - 3rd Base	Kid 7	7	8	1	2	3	4	7 - Right Field
Kid 8	8	9	10	1	2	3	8 - Right Field	Kid 8	8	1	2	3	4	5	8 - Shortstop
Kid 9	9	10	1	2	3	4	9 - Shortstop								

BATTING ORDER EVERYBODY BATS

Batting order	Player Characteristics
1. Leadoff Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good speed ● Good eye ● Good base runner
2. Second Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unselfish ● Good contact hitter ● Good bunter ● Good eye
3. Best Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Left-handed (if possible) ● High average ● Good speed ● Makes good contact ● Power is a plus
4. Power Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good power ● Good pitch selection ● Extra base hits
5. Second Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Much like attributes for Power Hitter ● Drive in runs
6. Contact Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put the ball in play ● Doesn't strike out much ● Good speed ● Base stealer
7. Weak base runner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If he puts the ball in play can contribute ● If he gets on, needs help to advance bases
8. Contact Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Much like Second Hitter attributes ● Not a great hitter but could help advance 6, 7 hitters

9. Third Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Okay contact ● Enough power ● Can help plate previous runners
10. Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determined hitter to keep inning alive
11. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inconsistent hitter ● Power when he connects
12. Weak Hitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Willing to swing ● Determined to improve
13. Leadoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Second lead off man ● Good eye ● Base stealer

Main objective is to eliminate weak innings by spreading power, sprinkling in contact hitters. Always make sure speed leads slower runners (don't tie up the speedsters). Work on making weaker hitters better

Try to mix-up right and left-handed hitters. This keeps the pitcher from getting into a rhythm-throwing to the same side of the plate to several hitters in a row.

Mix your speed players in between your slow players. This will keep you from ending up with all slow runners on the bases at one time. (Just don't stick your slowest player in the 8 slot before your two fastest "lead-off" hitters. In fact, try to follow your slowest base runner with a good contact hitter to give him a better chance of advancing).

Place a left-handed hitter behind a base stealer. This blocks the catcher's vision of the runner and creates a hole when the first baseman holds the runners on.

