

ABSOLUTES CLINIC



CONTEXTS:

➤ REGIONAL/PROVINCIAL COACH, NCCP COMPETITION INTRODUCTION



Coach:

Concussions in Sport



A concussion is an injury to the head or brain that causes brain function changes. These brain function changes can lead to symptoms that can be physical, cognitive or emotional/behavioural.

A direct or indirect blow to the head or body that will cause the brain to move back and forth within the skull can produce a concussion.

Identification and proper management are key components in preventing a concussion to go unnoticed. An unidentified concussion has the potential to cause permanent or severe brain damage.

Concussion Safety Legislation

The Province of Ontario has recently passed Rowan's Law meant to ensure concussion protection for youth athletes across our province. Baseball Ontario is committed to ensuring that our athletes are safe. Under Rowan's Law and its regulations, all coaches are required to review and confirm having reviewed concussion education resources prior to their first game.

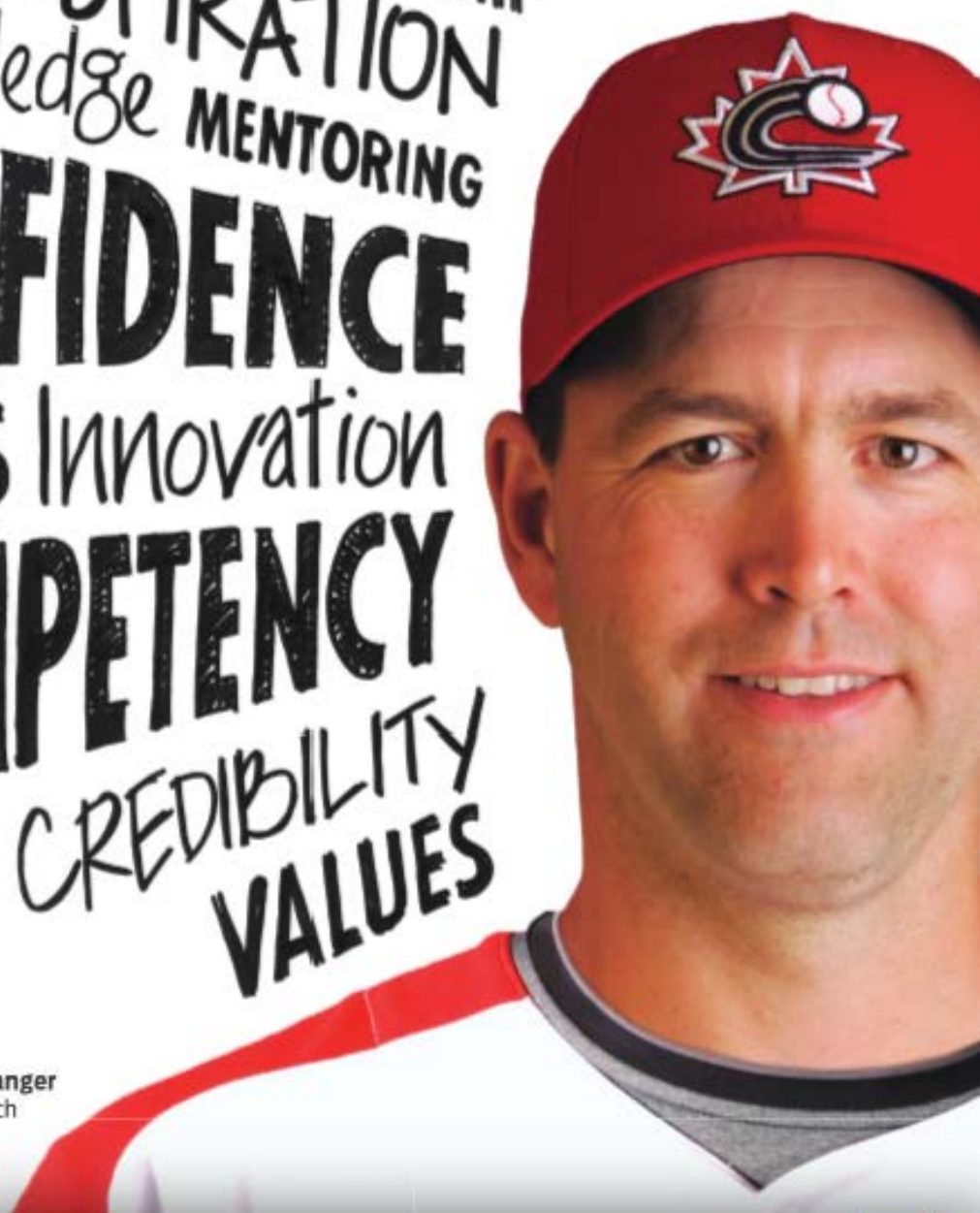
As such, all coaches participating with Baseball Ontario are required to review and/or acknowledge the following steps prior to leading any activities for your team:

1. Annual review of the Concussion Education Resources to help prevent, identify and manage concussions.
2. Annual review of the applicable OBA Code of Conduct.
3. Indicate that you have completed steps 1 and 2 by completing the acknowledgement form.

Visit the Safe Sport section of the Baseball Ontario website (www.baseballontario.com) for resources and acknowledgement.



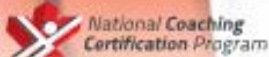
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The programs of this organization are funded in part by Sport Canada.



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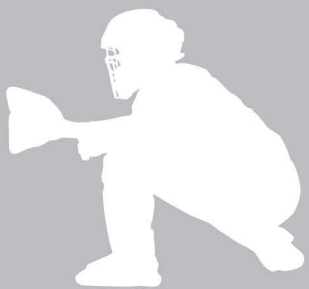
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Absolutes clinic!

The Absolutes represents the minimum standards for the skills that coaches must teach players at the age group in which they are playing. And, the Absolutes goes beyond the physical skills that need to be taught; there is also a focus on mental and life skills within the game of baseball. We anticipate 99% of our players end up doing a regular work in life after baseball and there are valuable life lessons to be learned through baseball!



In this clinic, the following components of baseball will be covered:

- Warm up, throwing and receiving and cool down;
- Pitching;
- Catching;
- Fielding;
- Offensive/Defensive tactics;
- Mental skills, and communication;
- Hitting and base running.

Coaches participating in this clinic will be placed in workgroups according to the age category in which they are coaching. It is important that participants use this workbook to record as much information as possible during the clinic, so you have a comprehensive resource when you leave.

At the beginning of each section of this workbook there is a cross-reference chart that identifies which Absolutes relate to the current section.

We hope you enjoy this clinic and the resources it provides in your future coaching endeavours!

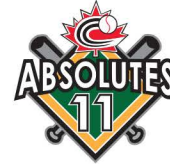
Yours in baseball,





2

THE ABSOLUTES

List of elements - Absolutes 11

- 1 Teach dynamic throwing using proper footwork and arm action.
- 2 Teach the basic stance at the plate and proper hitting bat path.
- 3 Teach receiving a ball thrown to them, in front of their body.
- 4 Teach pitching, focusing on the set position only.
- 5 Teach fielding ground balls and fly balls, from multiple directions.
- 6 Teach getting out of the box effectively, how to run through and how to round first base.
- 7 Teach how to safely slide at a base using the figure-4 technique.
- 8 Teach how to communicate properly on defense by calling the ball using a simple fly ball priority system.
- 9 Integrate warm-ups in practice and games that allow players to work on agility, balance and coordination.
- 10 Teach how to focus on the next task without being distracted by the previous pitch, play or at bat.
- 11 Develop a system that keeps all players involved and active, using a multi-positions approach, while placing a high emphasis on all players trying the position of pitcher.



List of elements - Absolutes 13



- 1 Teach dynamic throwing by position using a situational focus.
- 2 Consolidate basic hitting mechanics by placing emphasis on hitting stance, swing path and pitch location.
- 3 Teach cut offs and relays in multiple situations involving runners moving one or two bases only.
- 4 Teach pitchers to consolidate basic pitching mechanics, experiment with the change up in game situations, include pitching from the wind up, and teach them how to pitch with runners on base.
- 5 Teach fielding ground balls and fly balls, by specific position, including defensive pitching plays (PFP).
- 6 Teach appropriate lead offs at all bases, stealing second base and returning to each base.
- 7 Introduce situational offensive tactics.
- 8 Introduce situational defensive adjustments.
- 9 Introduce more complex agility, balance and coordination drills in warm up.
- 10 Teach how to develop strength through body weight exercises while integrating flexibility in all warm-ups and cool downs.
- 11 Teach confidence building through experiential game situations.
- 12 Develop a mental offensive and defensive plan.
- 13 Create a positive environment based on open communication.



List of elements - Absolutes 15

- 1 Teach how to develop and maintain arm strength using a position-specific approach.
- 2 Teach how to make appropriate adjustments to hitting based on different counts and types of pitches.
- 3 Teach pitchers to refine pitching mechanics while integrating a third pitch.
- 4 Teach adaptive defensive plays at various positions.
- 5 Teach safe sliding techniques in different game situations.
- 6 Implement situational hitting to your batting practice and games.
- 7 Implement situational running to your practices and games.
- 8 Create and communicate a defensive system (bunt, first and third and defense against sure doubles).
- 9 Create a defensive system for pitchers.
- 10 Integrate speed and stamina development in your practices.
- 11 Teach mental techniques so players can develop a "mental tool box" to be used in multiple situations and against different opponents.
- 12 Refine pitching and hitting plans using different tools such as chartings.
- 13 Teach how to persevere from making mistakes.
- 14 Be a role model by influencing players to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- 15 Develop strategies to help players identify and understand roles.



3 WARM-UP

Absolutes
Cross-Reference
Chart

WARM UP

Consider:

- Age-appropriate exercises;
- Length of activities in relation to overall practice/game;
- Physical, mental and emotional components;
- Baseball and non-baseball exercises;
- Coaching leadership – who will lead this component of the practice or game.

List of elements:

- A11-1
- A11-3
- A11-9
- A13-9
- A13-10
- A13-13
- A15-10
- A15-14
- A15-15

Baseball Canada has created a series of videos depicting drills that will help players prepare their bodies for practices and games. These videos are available to coaches at: lab.baseball.ca

Task - Warm up

You will be grouped according to the Learning Facilitator’s (LF) instructions. The LF will assign to your group one or more warm-up drills from **Baseball Canada Lab**. Your group will lead the assigned drill(s) using the other coaches in the clinic as athletes. The following descriptions will assist you in preparing your warm-up activity(ies).

4 Corner Direction Drill - Warm up

- Set up a square grid with disc cones.
- The square can be 3-4 metres, or paces, between the cones.
- The athletes will start at a designated cone and begin on the coach’s command.
- Sprint to the outside of cone 2.
- Lateral shuffle across the top to cone 3.
- Backpedal to cone 4.
- Shuffle across and around the cone 1.
- Then sprint up to the inside of cone 2, go around the cone in a tight circle and sprint back towards the inside of cone 1.
- On each change of direction make sure the players maintain good body position, staying forward and keeping their feet under their core.
- You can increase the speed of the drill as the players master their footwork.



Warm-up (continued)

30 Yard Backpedal – Warm-up

- Set up a row of cones along the fair/foul line to assist the players in lining up. Add a second row of cones approximately 30 yards away, in line with the start-line cones.
- Have the players line up on the same side of each cone.
- Remind them to start slow and gradually accelerate down to the far cone.
- Use a verbal command to start each row of players, providing plenty of space between athletes so they can go at their own speed and won't step on each other.
- They should be leaning forward as they move backward, reaching back with long strides to prevent loss of balance and falling.
- Have them create movement by pushing through their toes while maintaining a good balance position.
- When the athlete has a good feel and is comfortable moving backwards, remind them to not peek over their shoulder to see where they are going. They can use landmarks to stay on course.
- Gradually have them increase their speed as they become accustomed to backwards running.

30 Yard High Knee Bounds – Warm-up

- Set up a row of cones along the fair/foul line to assist the players in lining up. Add a second row of cones approximately 30 yards away, in line with the start-line cones.
- Have the athletes do high knee bounds, getting as high as they can down to the far cone.
- Their arms and legs should work in opposite coordination. For example, left knee up, right elbow forward; right knee up, left elbow forward.
- They should stay in the air as long as possible, driving aggressively with their knees and arms.

30 Yard Shuffle – Warm-up

- Set up a row of cones along the fair/foul line to assist the players in lining up. Add a second row of cones approximately 30 yards away, in line with the start-line cones.
- Have the players line up on the same side of each cone and start them with a verbal command providing plenty of space so they don't collide during the drill.
- Have the athletes at the front of each line face in the same direction.
- Athletes will get into the athletic position, and will shuffle to the far cone, changing the direction in which they are facing at the half-way point. They will line up at the far cone to return.
- Focus on keeping the eyes level, driving with the back leg.
- Gradually have them increase their speed as they become more comfortable with lateral movement.



Warm-up (continued)

»» 30 Yard Sprint – Warm-up

- Set up a row of cones along the fair/foul line to assist the players in lining up. Add a second row of cones approximately 30 yards away, in line with the start-line cones.
 - If your athletes are just starting the warm up have them start slow off the line and gradually pick up speed down the grid.
 - Instruct the athletes to use their arms, and to maintain quiet feet when running.
-

»» Shuffle Shuffle – Warm-up

- Set up a row of cones along the fair/foul line to assist the players in lining up. Add a second row of cones approximately 10 yards away, in line with the start-line cones.
 - Staying in a low athletic ready position, move down to the far cone with a shuffle step.
 - Drive off the back foot to create movement.
 - Go around the far cone and continue to face in the same direction while coming back to the start cone.
 - Keep your hands out front; keep the upper body as quiet as possible.
 - Concentrate on keeping the head from moving back and forth, or up and down.
 - Speed up as you move down to the far cone.
-

»» Sprint to Backpedal – Warm-up

- Set up a row of cones along the fair/foul line to assist the players in lining up. Add a second row of cones approximately 10 yards away, in line with the start-line cones.
- Sprint up to the far cone accelerating to 60-70% of the athlete's top speed.
- Decelerating properly is important as you approach the far cone.
- When decelerating, your feet should not be slapping against the ground.
- Stay forward as you decelerate into the cone.
- To round the cone we use a three-step transition pattern:
 - Decelerate into a plant step with the outside foot; make sure you are forward over the plant foot.
 - Transfer with a lateral step.
 - And then accelerate backward pushing through the toes of the lateral step plant foot.
- The entire three-step transition is done with a forward athletic body position.
- Then backpedal aggressively down to the start cone.



Warm-up (continued)

»» Straight leg clap – Warm-up

- Set up a row of cones along the fair/foul line to assist the players in lining up. Add a second row of cones approximately 10 yards away, in line with the start-line cones.
 - Start by standing with your feet together leaning forward so most of the pressure is on the fore foot.
 - On the coach's start command, have the athletes keep their forward lean, kick one leg up as high as possible.
 - The kick leg should cross toward the midline of your body.
 - As the kick leg reaches its top height clap your hands under the leg keeping your back and support leg as straight as possible.
 - As you move forward make sure the lead foot is not reaching out in front but rather touching down right underneath the centre of mass.
 - We want to avoid having the lead foot touch down out in front of the body; it is very important to maintain a forward lean through the entire drill.
 - Remember to keep your back the support leg as straight as possible.
 - Encourage athletes should be able to kick their leg up to shoulder height.
-

See APPENDIXES for Warm-up worksheet.



Technical skills

4 TECHNICAL SKILLS

>> Throwing / Pitching, Catching, Fielding

Technical drills are done by one player to practice the basic technical skills used in baseball. For example, hitting a baseball, pitching or throwing a baseball, fielding a ground ball or fly ball, receiving a pitched or thrown baseball, are all technical skills that are practiced in technical drills.

The objectives for this section are to understand some of the technical skills that are required for baseball, and how these skills will fit into efficient drills that can be used in a practice plan.

NOTE: All drills should include Key Teaching Points / Key Execution Points (KTP / KEP), as well as Coach Assignments, to ensure that all support staff know what to teach and how players should execute the drills in your plan. You can also identify what drills coaches will lead, and who will support the coaching of the drills.

Absolutes Cross-Reference Chart	>> TECHNICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	<i>List of elements:</i>
	Your LF will identify a drill from the drills illustrated on the subsequent pages for the following technical skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A11-3 ■ A11-4 ■ A11-5 ■ A11-11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Throwing/Pitching; ■ Receiving; ■ Fielding (infield and outfield). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A13-1 ■ A13-4 ■ A13-5
Use the worksheet provided in this Coach Workbook to alter the provided drill in the following ways:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Create a simplified version of the drill. 2 Create a more complex version of the drill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A15-1 ■ A15-9 ■ A15-12

See APPENDIXES for Skill / Drill worksheet.

Technical skills (continued)

Throwing / Pitching

THROW - CATCH

OBJECTIVE: Show the player how to grip the ball.

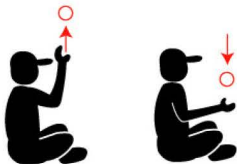
SKILLS: Warm-up the upper body, throwing technique, grip the ball.

EQUIPMENT: One ball for each player (12)

ORGANIZATION: Players are paired. At the signal, players use the proper grip on the ball.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

B Players are seated; they flip the ball in the air with the arm at 90 degrees.



THE SMALL HAND

VARIATIONS:

- i) Use eight-inch balls for the smallest players.
- ii) Use foam balls or Incrediballs.



Make sure the grip is appropriate



Wrong grip

KEY POINTS:

- 1) Place two or three fingers on the ball.
- 2) Hold the ball with the fingers, not in the palm of the hand.
- 3) Place the fingers on the 'C'.
- 4) The fingertips cover the seams.

THROW - CATCH

OBJECTIVE: Foster proper arm action with the players.

SKILL: Throwing technique.

ORGANIZATION: In pairs, players throw the ball to each other using the proper arm action.

VARIATIONS:

- i) The type of ball.
- ii) Have a player throw with a parent.

Beginner	●	Do exercises A-B-D-E
Intermediate	■	Do (in order) exercises A-B-H-D-E
Advanced	◆	Do (in order) exercises A-B-H-D-E

KEY POINTS:

For the first command:

- 1) Hands together in front of the chest.

For the second command:

- 1) Thumbs rotate pointing downward (bicycle wheel).
- 2) Shoulders are in a straight line with their partner.
- 3) Prior to the throw, arms are at shoulder height.
- 4) The thumb on the ball is pointing to the back.
- 5) The glove or the forearm points to the partner.



For the third command:

- 1) The foot of the glove hand moves towards the partner.
- 2) The head moves towards the partner and the throwing hand follows through to end behind the thigh on the opposite side.
- 3) The back leg advances to join or go ahead in front of the foot on the side of the glove.

THE CATAPULT

EQUIPMENT: One ball for each participant (12)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

A Players are on their knees and follow the coach's commands without throwing the ball.

- First command: Hands together.
- Second command: Hands separate.
- Third command: Throw.

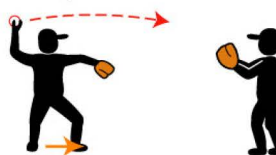
B Players are on their knees and on the coach's command, throw the ball to their partner.



H Standing up, foot of the glove side forward, the players transfer their weight from the front foot to the back foot then from the back foot to the front foot. On the third time the weight is shifted to the back foot, hands separate. When the weight is again shifted to the front foot, the players throw the ball.

D Standing up, foot of the glove side forward, they throw the ball to their partner.

E Standing up, foot of the glove side forward, shuffle step then they throw the ball to their partner.





Technical skills (continued)

Throwing / Pitching (continued)

PITCHER

THE ACE

OBJECTIVE: The young player will be able to recognize the different phases of a pitch.

SKILL: Pitch to a batter.

ORGANIZATION: With the coach or in pairs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

B Players are in a single line in front of the coach and execute his commands. (No ball is used.)

- 1) Taking signals (waiting position on the plate).
2) Regrouped position (or pause).
3) The balance (the tightrope walker).
4) The position to better use the muscles.
5) The pitch (throwing a dart).
6) The follow through (saluting the crowd).



C In pairs, players follow the coach's commands.



D In pairs and alternating with his partner, the players completes five pitches.



E In pairs, one player simulates facing a batter; the coach or the catcher calls balls and strikes.



EQUIPMENT: One ball, one pitcher's plate.

VARIATIONS:

- i) During a practice, face one or two batters for real.
ii) Ask a parent to act as the catcher.

KEY POINTS:

- Phase 1: 1) Foot on the side of the pitching arm is in contact with the plate. 2) The rest of the body is relaxed. 3) Look at the catcher.
Phase 2: 1) The glove is chest high and aimed at the catcher. 2) The foot on the glove side is slightly ahead of the back foot. 3) Feet are spread at shoulder width. 4) Shoulders are in line with the plate. 5) Knees are slightly bent.



- Phase 3: 1) lift the knee belt high. 2) The pitcher must keep his head above his bellybutton. 3) The knee on the glove side aims at 3rd base for right-handers and at 1st base for left-handers.



- Phase 4: 1) the heel of the front foot (closer to home plate) is moved forward while remaining in the centre of the back foot. 2) When both heels are on the ground, they are in a straight line with home plate. 3) Elbows are in line with the body and in line with home plate. 4) The glove or the forearm points to home plate. 5) The head is above the bellybutton and in a straight line with home plate.



- Phase 5: 1) The bill of the cap aims at home plate.



- Phase 6: 1) The hand of the pitching arm is in the direction of the back of the opposite thigh. 2) The head is in a straight line with home plate.





Technical skills (continued)

Receiving

THE CATCHER

◆ This exercise is done by "Beginner" groups.

OBJECTIVES: Players become familiar with the equipment required to act as a catcher and teach the basic positions of a catcher.

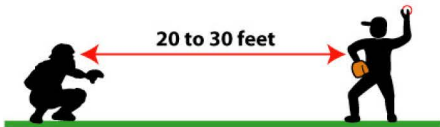
SKILLS: Catch the ball and position oneself as a catcher.

EQUIPMENT: A mask, shin guards, a chest protector, a catcher's mitt (if required) and a plate.

ORGANIZATION: For the first progression, players are positioned in a half moon in front of the coach. Afterwards, they will be in teams of two or three according to the progression.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

B In pairs, the young players position themselves 30 feet apart, one of them being the catcher. The second player will pitch five balls to the catcher before exchanging position. (Minimally, the player acting as a catcher must wear a catcher's mask and helmet.) Once the players are paired, the coach asks them to imitate his gestures (the coach mentions the key points).



THE SHIELD

C In teams of three, one player moves 30 feet away to act as a pitcher, one of the other two acts as a batter and the third player is the catcher. (Players must wear the catcher's equipment. The coach explains the positioning of the catcher in relation to the batter in the box. Afterwards, he asks the players to change position.

* player acting as a batter can take simulated swings when the ball arrives. (He has no bat in his hands.)



KEY POINTS:

- 1) Take a position such that the feet are wider than the shoulders.
- 2) The player's buttocks are close to the ground.
- 3) The upper body is straight.
- 4) The arm with the glove is bent.
- 5) The glove is at the same height as the thighs.
- 6) The hand of the throwing hand is behind the catcher's back.

VARIATIONS:

- i) Use the pitching machine.

CATCHING

OBJECTIVE: The player will be able to direct the foot on the glove side toward him.

SKILLS: Play and catch the ball at first base.

EQUIPMENT: Balls (1 per two players), bases (1 per two players) and cones (2 for each group of two players).

ORGANIZATION: To begin, players are in a half-moon. Then, players are paired and distanced by 10 to 40 feet.

VARIATIONS:

- i) The distance between bases.
- ii) The type of ball used.

Beginner	●	Do exercises A - B - C
Intermediate	■	Do exercises A - B - C
Advanced	◆	Do exercises A - B - C - D

KEY POINTS:

- 1) **Find where the ball has been hit:** If the ball is hit to him, he catches it. If the ball is batted to another player, he goes to his base while looking where the ball has been hit.
- 2) **Go to first base:** The player places both heels on the base and faces the player who will throw him the balls.
- 3) **Catch the ball:** The player moves the foot on the side of the glove towards the ball as the latter moves towards him.

PLAYING FIRST BASE

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

A Players are kneeling in a half-moon in front of the coach. The latter explains the three steps required when playing first base:

- 1) Find where the ball has been hit;
- 2) Run to the base;
- 3) Catch the throw.

B One of the two players acts as first baseman, the other throws him balls chest-high.



C One player throws balls at another player acting as the first baseman. Two cones are placed three feet on each side of the player playing at first base. The other player throws ten balls that do not touch the ground between the base and the cone on each side. Then, players exchange positions.

D One player throws balls at another player acting as the first baseman. Two cones are placed one foot on each side of the player playing at first base. The other player throws ten balls that bounce on the ground between the base and the cone on each side. Then, players exchange positions.





Technical skills (continued)

Fielding

CATCH

OBJECTIVE: The player will be able to catch a grounder.

SKILLS: Proper use and positioning of the glove to catch a grounder.

EQUIPMENT: Different types of balls and cone (5).

ORGANIZATION: One adult for each two to four players.

VARIATIONS:

Beginner	●	Rouler des ballons ou des balles de tennis.
Intermediate	■	Varié la hauteur des bonds faits par la balle.
Advanced	◆	Frapper la balle.

KEY POINTS:

- 1 First phase:**
 - 1) Body weight is on the ball of the foot.
 - 2) Knees are slightly bent.
 - 3) Both hands are held belt high.
- 2 Second phase:**
 - 1) Feet are wider than the shoulders.
 - 2) Knees are deeply bent.
 - 3) The glove is on the ground.
 - 4) The position of the glove and that of the feet form a triangle.
- 3 Third phase:**
 - 1) The eyes are close to the glove.
 - 2) As much as possible, the eyes are at the same level as the bounces of the ball.



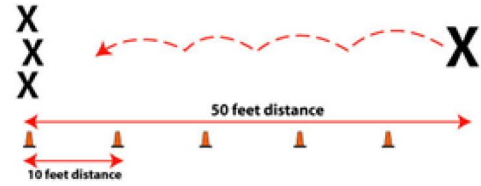
CATCH IN THE INFIELD

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

B Players are standing up in a half-moon in front of the coach. The players react to the coach's commands: First, second and third phase.



C Players are in teams of two to four with a coach. Players are 50 feet away from the coach and pylons are placed ten feet apart between the players and the coach. The coach will roll balls to players located 50 feet away. The player completing a catch may advance ten feet.





Technical skills (continued)

Fielding (continued)

CATCH FLY BALLS

OBJECTIVES: The player will be able to position himself under the ball and catch it.

SKILLS: Proper use and positioning of the glove for the catch.

ORGANIZATION: Players are divided in teams of two to four with a coach.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

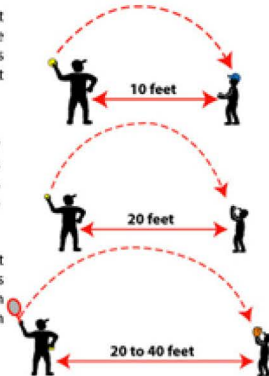
A Players are kneeling in a half-moon in front of the coach. The latter explains the following three steps:

- First step: Waiting position.
- Second step: The position of the body and the glove at the moment of the catch.
- Third step: The importance of keeping the ball in one's field of vision.

D The players are wearing a helmet and stand ten feet away from the coach; the latter throws tennis balls in the air and players must let them bounce on their head.

E Players are standing 20 feet away from the coach; the latter throws tennis balls in the air and players must catch them with both hands.

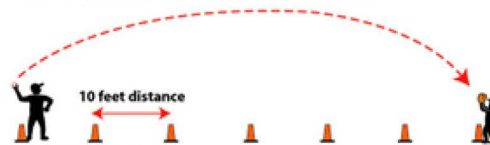
F Players are standing 20 to 40 feet away from the coach; with a tennis racket, the latter hits tennis balls in the air and players must catch them with both hands.



THE BALL IN THE CLOUDS

EQUIPMENT: Various balls, tennis racket (1), protective helmets (4) and cones

G Players are standing 40 feet away from the coach, cones are placed on the ground every ten feet from the coach. The coach throws balls to players 60 feet away. The player who catches a ball may advance ten feet.



VARIATIONS:

Beginner	●	Do exercises A - D - E - F - G
Intermediate	■	Do exercises A - D - F - G
Advanced	◆	Do exercises A - F - G

KEY POINTS:

First step:

- 1) The weight is on the ball of the foot.
- 2) Knees are slightly bent.
- 3) Both hands are waist high.

Second step:

- 1) The foot on the side of the glove is in front.
- 2) Do not bring the glove in the air too fast.
- 3) The glove will be on top of the forehead.
- 4) The other hand is close to the glove.

Third step:

- 1) The player does not turn his back to the ball.
- 2) Follow the ball right into the glove.





Technical skills (continued)

Technical skills

Recommended practice conditions	Stage of Skill Development			
	Initiation First contact	Acquisition Movement patterning	Consolidation Contact execution in variable conditions	Refinement Minor improvements
Surrounding environment	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Stable and predictable, free of distractions	Increased variability and distractions in the environment, but not to the point where movement pattern deteriorate	Competition conditions
Decision-making	No decision-making or options to choose from	Simple decision-making, maximum of 2 options	More complex decisions to make, increased frequency of decision-making, and more options (3-4)	Complex decisions, as many options and at the same frequency as in a competition
Speed and execution	Slow and controlled	At athlete's own pace	Increased, variable, and close to competitive demands	Similar to conditions in competition
Number of repetitions	As needed depending on athlete's general motor development	High	High	As many as possible
Risk factor	Completely safe conditions, errors of no consequence	Low-risk conditions	Less than or similar to what is encountered in regular competitions	Similar to a high level of competition
During training, the emphasis should be on...	Basic stances and positions; getting the idea of what the movements are about, look like	Global execution and general form of the movement	Maintaining the form of movements and some performance consistency under a variety of conditions and under stress	Creating conditions that stress the specific elements that need adjustments



Technical skills (continued)

» Hitting

Hitting is often viewed as the most enjoyable aspect of baseball by young players. Hitting depends on timing, eye-hand coordination and confidence. When you are planning the hitting components of your practice plans, you should always consider the following when designing your drills:

- Use of equipment (tees, whiffle balls, L-screen, other);
- Use of available space;
- Coaching responsibilities;
- Safety considerations;
- Base running considerations at each base (sliding, lead offs, other).

Absolutes Cross-Reference Chart

» SCENARIOS

U11 You have a player that holds the bat with a cross-hand grip, and steps behind their body with their front foot, also referred to as “stepping in the bucket”, when swinging. The Absolutes 11 indicates that **proper hitting stance** and **bat path** are key focuses for coaches teaching players to hit at this level.

Using this information, how would you correct the problems identified above?

U13 The Absolutes focus for 13U coaches is to **consolidate basic hitting mechanics by placing emphasis on hitting stance, swing path and pitch location**. You have a player that struggles hitting pitches on the outside of the plate and often strikes out looking because they feel they cannot hit that pitch as hard as they would like.

How would correct this hitter’s approach at the plate, considering stance, swing path and pitch location?

List of elements:

- A11-6
- A11-7



- A13-2
- A13-6
- A13-7



To be continued on next page



Technical skills (continued)

Absolutes Cross-Reference Chart

SCENARIOS

U15 Your players are seeing curve balls more frequently. The Absolutes 15U asks the coach to focus on teaching how to make appropriate adjustments to hitting, based on different counts, and type of pitches.

How will you build confidence in your hitter's ability to hit different pitches in different counts at various times of the game?

- A15-2
- A15-5
- A15-6
- A15-7
- A15-12
- A15-13
- A15-14
- A15-15



See APPENDIXES for Hitting / Notes worksheet.



Technical skills (continued)



Base running

Base running is one of the most natural skills of the young player. The coach’s role is to correct errors, teach appropriate base running skills, and develop positive attitudes about hustle and aggressiveness. This section will help coaches develop stage-appropriate skills to improve athlete’s effectiveness when running the bases.

Absolutes Cross-Reference Chart

GROUP TASKS

U11

Consider:

- 1 Getting out of the batter’s box, and
- 2 Sliding (figure 4 slide only).

Explain the key teaching and execution points, for these two base running skills. Develop one drill for each of the skills noted above.

U13

Consider:

- 1 Primary lead offs at each base, and
- 2 Returning to first base on a pick off attempt.

Explain the key teaching and execution points, for these two base running skills. Develop one drill for each of the skills noted above.

U15

Consider: your team has 12 players

- ➔ Divide the team in 4 groups of 3.
 - Group 1: Hitting
 - Group 2: Base running
 - Group 3: Fielding balls on the infield
 - Group 4: Fielding balls in the outfield.

How would you integrate various base running situations into the functional batting practice model noted above?

List of elements:

- A11-6
- A11-7



- A13-6



- A15-7





5

TACTICS

Including mental skills and communication



Defensive (infield), defensive (outfield), defensive (infield and outfield, situational), offensive (situational)

To be successful in game performance, your players need to do more than simply execute their fundamental sport skills well. They must also be able to read and react to what is happening around them. Coaching your players to recognize specific situations and teaching them appropriate tactics to use in response, helps to develop their understanding of the game and how it is played and contributes to their overall athletic development.

Which tactics you introduce to your players will vary according to their age, ability and comprehension of team play. Tactics should be introduced in practice with explanation, demonstration and reinforcement allowing for repetitions that increase speed and complexity gradually, thereby increasing their chance of performing them successfully in game situations.

The amount of time devoted to coaching tactics increases over time and in direct relation to the athlete's skill development. It is important to remember that a player must first acquire the fundamental skills before they can begin to learn how to apply them tactically.

Most athletes you are coaching fall within the Learn to Train stage of development, which as you will recall, is considered the golden age for skill development. Which means that while you will be spending some time introducing basic tactics, the greater emphasis will continue to be placed on developing your players' fundamental technical skills.

You will find more information on this topic in your Absolutes coaching materials.





Tactics (continued)

Absolutes Cross-Reference Chart

▶▶ OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE TACTICS, INCLUDING MENTAL SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION

You are coaching in your defensive half of an inning early in the game. Your team is playing the offensive team “straight away” and at normal depth. The lead off batter gets on base with a single to the outfield.

➔ **Q1:** What defensive adjustments would you make, considering the next batter is right-handed, the runner on first is quick?

The batter hits a fly ball into shallow left-centre field where the short stop, left fielder and centre fielder can converge to catch the ball.

➔ **Q2:** How will you teach your players to react to this situation, using communication skills?

With one out, you anticipate the next batter will bunt.

➔ **Q3:** How do you adjust your defense to manage the bunt situation, using signs from the bench, and on-field communication?

With two out with a runner at second base, there is a base hit to right field.



➔ **Q4:** How will your defense align to complete this play?

List of elements:

- A11-8 
- A11-10
- A11-11
- A13-3 
- A13-5
- A13-7
- A13-8
- A13-11
- A13-12
- A13-13
- A15-4 
- A15-8
- A15-9
- A15-11
- A15-12
- A15-13
- A15-14
- A15-15



APPENDIX 1: Chart for warm-up drill

 Assigned warm-up drill:
 Key teaching points and key execution points:



APPENDIX 2: Skill / drill worksheet

▶ Skill:	
▶ Drill:	
▶ Simplified drill:	
▶ More complex drill:	

▶ Skill:	
▶ Drill:	
▶ Simplified drill:	
▶ More complex drill:	



APPENDIX 3: Hitting / worksheet

Hitting



Notes:



APPENDIX 5: Practice Plan

▶ Practice Plan:
Date:
Location:
▶ Objectives:
▶ Coach Assignments:



Notes:



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Canada 

Coach Certification Requirements for 2022

Division:	Requirements (Head Coach)	Requirements (Assistant Coaches)
Select Division, all series	1. Initiation Online Module 2. Initiation Clinic 3. Teaching & Learning Clinic 4. Infielding Clinic 5. Hitting Clinic (Total: 5 Components)	1. Initiation Online Module (Total: 1 Component)
Rep 8U and 9U	1. Initiation Online Module 2. Initiation Clinic 3. Teaching & Learning Clinic 4. Infielding Clinic 5. Hitting Clinic (Total: 5 Components)	1. Initiation Online Module 2. Initiation Clinic 3. Teaching & Learning Clinic 4. Infielding Clinic 5. Hitting Clinic (Total: 5 Components)
Rep 10U and 11U	1. Initiation Online Module 2. Initiation Clinic 3. Teaching & Learning Clinic 4. Infielding Clinic 5. Hitting Clinic 6. Pitching and Catching Clinic 7. Absolutes Clinic (Total: 7 Components)	1. Initiation Online Module 2. Initiation Clinic 3. Teaching & Learning Clinic 4. Infielding Clinic 5. Hitting Clinic (Total: 5 Components)
Rep 12U and 13U	11U Head Coach Requirements plus : 8. Base running Clinic 9. Planning Clinic 10. Regional and Provincial Coach Online Portfolio***See note for changes (Total: 10 Components)	11U Assistant Coach Requirements plus : 6. Pitching and Catching Clinic 7. Absolutes Clinic (Total: 7 Components)
Rep 14U and 15U (including 16U Girls):	13U Head Coach Requirements plus : 11. Outfielding Clinic 12. Strategies Clinic 13. Practice Evaluation (Total: 13 Components)	13U Assistant Coach Requirements plus : 8. Base running Clinic 9. Planning Clinic 10. Regional and Provincial Coach Online Portfolio***See note for changes (Total: 10 Components)
Rep 16U-18U (including Women):	15U Head Coach Requirements plus : 14. Game Evaluation (Total: 14 Components)	15U Assistant Coach Requirements plus : 11. Outfielding Clinic 12. Strategies Clinic (Total: 12 Components)
Rep 22U	1. Initiation Online Module 2. Infielding Clinic 3. Hitting Clinic 4. Pitching & Catching Clinic 5. Baserunning Clinic 6. Outfielding Clinic (Total: 6 Components)	1. Initiation Online Module 2. Infielding Clinic 3. Hitting Clinic 4. Pitching & Catching Clinic 5. Baserunning Clinic 6. Outfielding Clinic (Total: 6 Components)
Senior:	No Formal Training Required	No Formal Training Required

Notes:

* For teams entering the Elimination Tournaments, coaches must meet national standards for eliminations in the year they are competing. Details available at www.baseballontario.com.

** All coaches and field managers at Peewee and up, and in their very first year of coaching, will be granted an extension of one (1) calendar year to complete the required modules for their specific division, provided they complete at a minimum the following 5 courses prior to June 15th of their first year coaching: Initiation Online Module, Initiation Clinic, Teaching & Learning Clinic, Infielding Clinic, Hitting Clinic.” For the purposes of this exception, “very first year of coaching” shall mean has no previous NCCP baseball-specific training.

*** The Regional and Provincial Coach Portfolio has been sectioned off and now consists of:

1. Core Portfolio Evaluation
2. 13U Video Package - Pre-requisite to Core Portfolio Evaluation
3. 13U Portfolio Tasks