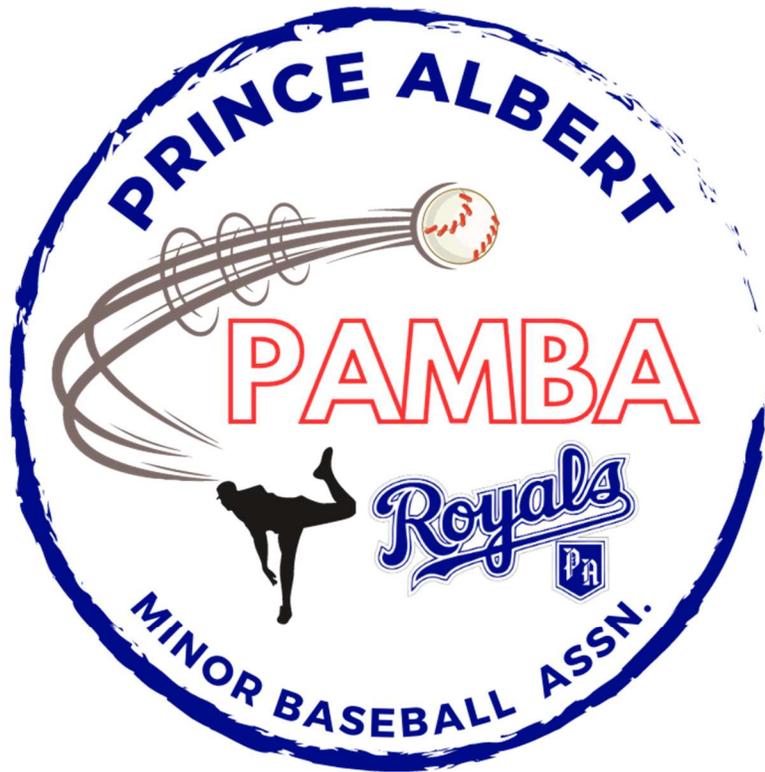


# PAMBA



## *Practice Plan Guidelines & Drills*

Updated March 2024

Introduction.....	4	Blind .....	24
Perfect Practice Makes Perfect.....	4	Double Blind .....	24
Preparation.....	4	Turbo Pepper .....	25
Coaching Tips.....	5	High Rep Glove Work .....	25
Junior & Senior Rally Practice Stations.....	6	Rebounder .....	25
Sample Season Plan Junior Rally.....	9	Transfer drill .....	25
Sample Practice Plans.....	10	Ball in Glove .....	25
Practice Drills Summary.....	21	Knockdown .....	25
Playing Catch .....	21	Roll back and forth .....	25
Hand Eye Drill .....	21	Rapid fire.....	25
Flick drill .....	21	Short Hops .....	25
One-knee drill .....	21	Triangles .....	25
Two-knee drill .....	22	Figure 8 .....	26
Head or Chest drill .....	22	Partner Ground Balls .....	26
Back 'em up three .....	22	Shadow Baseball .....	26
Long toss .....	22	Four Corners.....	26
Throwing relay drill .....	22	Diamond Throw .....	26
Star Drill .....	22	Diamond Throw #2 .....	26
Cut Offs .....	22	Competitions .....	27
Infield Throws .....	22	Middle infield / Double play drills .....	27
Infield drills .....	23	Hot corner situations.....	28
Four Seam Grip .....	23	Outfield /Pop Fly Drills .....	28
Prep Step drill .....	23	Outfield Footwork .....	28
Alligator arms .....	23	Pop Flies .....	28
Charge the Ball drill .....	23	Y-Drill .....	28
Shuffle .....	23	M-Drill .....	28
Open Pocket drill .....	24	Lead drill .....	28
Breakdown .....	24	Turn to the Ball drill .....	29
Ready, set, go .....	24	Left and right fly balls .....	29
Pick Off Play .....	24	Bent leg Sliding drill .....	29
IB Fungos .....	24	Football drill .....	29
IB Toss or Dart .....	24	Ground balls .....	29
IB Angles .....	24	Do or die .....	29
IB Footwork .....	24	One-hop Throwing drill .....	29
Fungo Drills .....	24	Fly/Pop fly ball priorities .....	29

Catcher Drills.....	30	Whiffle circle .....	34
Stance .....	30	Four, four and four.....	34
Ramp Drill .....	31	Batting Cage .....	34
Drop Zone .....	31	2 Plate Drill .....	34
Six Shooter .....	31	Tee Drills.....	34
Bounce & Follow .....	31	Pitching Drills .....	34
Sweeper .....	31	Turn & Separate .....	34
90's Receiving .....	31	Head Tilt Drill .....	34
180 Receiving .....	31	Towel.....	35
Pop Ups .....	31	One-hop Throwing drill .....	35
Blocking .....	31	Heel Over drill .....	35
Rice Crispies .....	31	Step offs .....	35
Pop Up Block .....	31	Scarecrow .....	35
Verbal.....	31	Targets .....	35
Base Running Drills .....	31	Competitive Drills .....	35
Lead Offs .....	32	Obstacle Course .....	35
Straight through first .....	32	Pass the Bat .....	36
The question mark .....	32	Basic Mechanics.....	37
The banana .....	32	Hitting .....	37
First to third .....	32	Pitching .....	38
Second to home .....	33	Throwing .....	39
Diamond relay .....	33	Catching .....	39
Hitting and Situations .....	33	First Base .....	39
Dry Run Hitting drill .....	33	Player Evaluation .....	40
Target drill .....	33	Bat Length & Weight Rules .....	41
Soft toss .....	33	Pitching Distance and Basepaths .....	41
Load and Stride.....	34	Pitch Limits .....	42

## Introduction

The Prince Albert Minor Baseball youth coaching manual has been developed with two main objectives in mind. One, to assist managers and coaches to prepare for, and run, effective practices. And two, to promote and instill a more consistent coaching methodology throughout all levels, one that we're confident will keep the players engaged and interested in the game of baseball, and one that is designed to develop and enhance the players' skills as they progress through the Prince Albert Minor Baseball program.

Included in this manual are a series of practice plans organized by skill level (ex. Rally Cap and 11U – 18U). The practice plans included are intended to be used as is, especially for those instructing youth baseball for the first time, but we encourage managers and coaches to utilize the drills and practice formats that they have found to be effective or may be better suited depending on the skill level of their team's players. A brief description of each of the drills may be found in the "Practice Drills Summary" section.

At the end of the manual, you also find a player evaluation form. We feel it is important and necessary for each coach to assess each player's end of season skills and attributes. This information and feedback will be shared with the age group coordinators and used to help balance teams the following year. Instructions for using the players evaluation are included on the form.

## Perfect Practice Makes Perfect

Baseball players are indeed creatures of habit. These habits and routines are shaped at an early age and reinforced by repetition. Through repetition and practice, players are better positioned to execute in game situations. Repetition alone, however, does not ensure success. The players must be taught the proper way to execute a drill, skill, or play. This is vitally important, especially for younger players or those playing the game for the first time. Recognize too that not all players develop their skills or understanding of the game at the same pace. If you see that a player is not fully grasping the concept of a drill or play, take the time to work with the player individually.

## Preparation

Take the time to prepare and review your practice plan in advance of your practice. If possible, bring copies of and review your practice plan with coaches and volunteers. When you have a plan, the players will remain engaged, the parents will appreciate that you are prepared, and you will find that your coaching experience will be more rewarding.

## Coaching Tips

- Prepare for your practice in advance, start on time, and stick to your timeline (refer to sample practice plans).
- Set expectations for the practice and the season – we encourage coaches at all levels to conduct a “parent meeting” at the beginning of the season and to set ground rules for the players.
- Ask for help (the more volunteers the better), but don’t be afraid to tell volunteers how you want drills organized and executed – this is still your practice.
- Keep the kids moving, for example, run stations and limit the amount of time at each. If necessary, break the kids up into smaller groups to maintain their attention and increase their repetitions.
- Reinforce routines, for example, start each practice the same way (running and stretching, throwing mechanics, etc.), and have a designated place to play catch (ex. right or left field foul lines).
- Don’t sweat the small stuff. Kids will be kids. There’s not a great deal you can do about that but set guidelines for conduct.
- Keep it fun by incorporating contests, games, or competitions. (Refer to sample practice plans).
- Focus on the basics and skills development. Baseball is about muscle memory caused by repetition of good mechanics.
- Try to incorporate “situations” at each practice to teach the kids the game.

If you have any questions regarding the practice plans or drills, please contact the division coordinator.

Good luck!

## Junior & Senior Rally Practice Stations & Instructions

### Hitting

- Knuckles are lined up or close to it, loose grip, hands maintained at the top of strike zone, knob of bat pointing to opposite batter's box (bat at 45-degree angle), elbows are down, hands are lined up at the back shoulder.
- Feet are shoulders-width apart, in a straight line with toes pointing forward and slightly in, knees slightly bent, and weight of body is balanced on a flat foot.
- Weight is back (65% back foot, 35% front foot), stride is soft, slow, straight, short, and shallow – the “5 S's” – and the stride is always towards the pitcher.
- Hands stay inside the ball through the swing, knob of the bat leads the way, eyes stay out front, head has very little movement, pivot on the back foot (“push the ground”)

#### Station 1: Hitting – Tee work (whiffle balls, bats, and tees)

- Each player has a tee; separate left and righthanded hitters. Use whiffle balls to hit off the tee to an open area. Have parents shagging the balls and repeat

#### Station 2: Hitting – Hitting Sticks (hitting sticks, bats)

- In this station review the hitting stance and grip. Have the players take 10 swings each with the stick held at about their waste. Rotate players through, the second time adjust the height or depth of the stick to force them to make some adjustment. If you can, use a home plate to have them know where to stand.

#### Station 3: Hitting – Hitting and Fielding (helmets, gloves, whiffles or soft balls, bats, and tees)

- Let the kids enjoy themselves at this station
- Split kids up into two groups; one group hits balls off the tee while the other fields and tosses back to hitting area to a parent or net.

#### Station 4: Hitting – Soft Toss (helmet, bats, soft balls or whiffles, gloves)

- A coach will toss “soft toss” to the players. There will be fielders to receive the hits and throw them back to a target. With soft toss, the coach kneels about 5 feet beside the hitter. The hitter holds their stance as the coach tosses the ball from the side so the player can work on hitting the ball in front of their body. Toss the ball towards their front hip.

### Pitching

- Balance, balance, balance
- A pitcher should have their foot parallel with the rubber, not heel on or toe on the rubber.
- Hands in the glove with a four-seam grip and held between your belly button and your chin.
- Lift front leg until your thigh is at least parallel with the ground. As leg lifts, so do your hands.
- As the stride starts, your hands separate with the ball moving down, around, and up.

#### Station 5: Pitching – Basics (gloves, soft balls, pitching rubber, home plate)

- Players line up with a partner or a coach to be a catcher. Go through a few of the important steps to pitching/throwing. Have them start facing their arm side and go through the lift, separate, load, and throw sequence. Have them pitch 10 and switch with their catcher.

#### Station 6: Pitching – Targets (gloves, soft balls, pitching rubber, home plate)

- Give the players targets such as left knee, right knee, left shoulder, right shoulder. Have them pitch 10 trying to hit a specific target on their catcher. They can move to the next target once they hit their intended target.

#### Station 7: Pitching – Head Tilt (gloves, soft balls, pitching rubber, home plate)

- To keep pitchers from having too much head movement, have them play catch or pitch with a glove on their head. This should help keep their head stable and eyes on target as they develop their accuracy.

#### Station 8: Pitching – Flick, one knee, and two knee drill (soft balls)

- Flick drill – Have players start on one knee. Their throwing side knee should be down. Start the drill by having the player hold their throwing arm elbow in their glove resting on the glove side knee. They use a flicking motion (wrist only) to throw the ball to their partner. Repeat and give feedback.
- One-knee drill – As players get better at the Flick Drill, have them stay in the kneeling position, with shoulders and hips facing their target and front toe turned in slightly. They should have the ball in their throwing hand inside their glove just below chest height. They want to start the “break” by bringing the ball down out of the glove in a circular pattern until it rotates down, back, and up to where the elbow is at shoulder height and at a 90-degree angle. Their chest and shoulder should have rotated back 90-degrees, so their glove arm is pointing at the target. The ball should be facing away from the player, the wrist should be flexed, and the glove hand pointed at the target. Once here, players should look back at their arm to correct any errors and then throw the ball to their partner by leading with their elbow, snapping their wrist, and tucking the glove. After release the throwing arm crosses the front side of the body by the opposite leg.
- Two-knee drill – Same drill as above, but both knees are on the ground and player is facing partner. Start with ball in glove, then break, and bring the ball down, back, and up. The glove arm is now up and pointing at target with a slight bend in the elbow. Throwing arm is in ready position with elbow equal to shoulder, at 90-degree angle and ball pointed away. As player throws, glove is tucked into chest/armpit, and after ball is released, throwing hand/arm crosses front side leg.

#### Outfield

- Start in an athletic stance. Try to catch the ball above your head or glove side shoulder. Fingers should be pointed up at the catch with the free hand securing the ball in the glove. Get the players used to calling the ball as they approach for the catch.
- When moving to catch the ball make sure they are running without their glove in the air. They put their glove up when they get to the spot to catch it.
- Emphasize the triangle shape both hands make (hands should be close to one another)

#### Station 9: Pop-ups (tennis balls, gloves)

- Form a couple of lines and start without gloves, then progress to using a glove.
- Throw the ball in the air towards the player and progress to balls a little further away from them

#### Station 10: Fly balls (glove, soft balls)

- Set up two cones where the player starts between facing the coach. The coach will point to the left or right. The player will drop step with the same foot as the direction they are turning to run. Throw the ball slightly over their shoulder and make them catch on the run.

#### Station 11: Football drill (gloves, soft balls)

- Have the player start at a pylon. They turn and start to run straight behind them. Emphasize the drop step. Throw the ball beyond them so they need to run it down like a football pass. Catch with two hands if possible.

#### Infield

- Players start in an athletic position with their glove out front and open.
- When fielding the ball, get your butt down, back flat, head up, and glove out front. Get low to the ground and try and field the ball off your glove side foot.
- Have players take two shuffles before throwing to a target. This will allow them to get a good grip, set themselves, and make an accurate throw.

#### Station 12: Alligator arms (soft baseballs)

- Start with ground balls without gloves at relatively close distance; introduce gloves and lengthen distance as the kids have success.
- Have players partner up. They will alternate rolling the ball to their partner and receiving it using extended arms. Have them “swallow” the ball into their belly before the stand up and roll the ball back to their partner. You can advance to one player rolling and one player fielding and throwing it back.

#### Station 13: Hoola hoop drill (soft baseballs, hoola hoops or pylons)

- Have the players start in a line on the left side of the hoola hoop/pylon. Coach will be about 15 feet away rolling balls towards the hoola hoop. Players are to shuffle around the hoop on the right side and field the ball and throw it to a target/net.
- You can advance to hitting the ball at them.

#### Station 14: Fungos (glove, pylon/bases, target)

- Line the players up with a target for them to throw the ball to. Coach will hot soft ground balls and they use proper fielding mechanics to charge, field, and throw to a target.

#### Station 15: Base running (bases, balls)

- Infield hit - players first find ball then keep head down and run through first base (i.e., no sliding or lunging)
- Ground ball through infield: players find ball then begin turn (the “question mark”) once they see it go through the infield; teach players to step on inside corner of bag then make short choppy steps as the ball is fielded cleanly
- Clean base hit: players begin turn (the “banana”) out of the batter’s box
- First to third and second to home: teach players to find coach and look for signal to advance or stay; waive some players, hold others

## Sample Season Plan for Junior Rally Cap

Start each practice with a 5-10 minute warm up. This should include some kind of running and some dynamic stretching, specifically the arms and shoulders. You could set out some bases and have them run the bases as a warmup.

After a group warm up, you will split the kids into 3-4 groups and run 3-4 stations. Have the kids run through each drill station for approximately 8-12 minutes. This will include water breaks and transition time between stations.

To finish the practice, gather the kids into one or two groups depending on numbers and play a game like situation with coach pitch/soft toss and parents helping monitor the players. Be sure to use soft balls and have players wear a helmet when in a batting line.

Below is a sample season using the stations from above.

Practice 1: Station 1, Station 5, Station 9, Station 12, game

Practice 2: Station 2, Station 6, Station 10, Station 13, game

Practice 3: Station 3, Station 7, Station 11, Station 14, game

Practice 4: Station 4, Station 8, Station 9, Station 15, game

Practice 5: Station 1, Station 6, Station 10, Station 12, game

Practice 6: Station 2, Station 7, Station 11, Station 13, game

Practice 7: Station 3, Station 5, Station 9, Station 14, game

Practice 8: Station 4, Station 8, Station 10, Station 15, game

Practice 9: Station 1, Station 7, Station 11, Station 12, game

Practice 10: Station 2, Station 6, Station 9, Station 13, game

Practice 11: Station 3, Station 5, Station 10, Station 14, game

Practice 12: Station 4, Station 8, Station 11, Station 15, game

Practice 13: Station 1, Station 5 extended game

Practice 14: Station 9, Station 12, extended game

Practice 15: Station 2, Station 13, extended game

Practice 16: Station 6, Station 10, extended game

Be sure to return all equipment to the storage shed at the end of the day.

## Warm Up for IU-18U

- Players will make sure they have their shoes tied tight and are dressed to stay warm. Players will begin with a 2-lap jog of the baseball field. The key is to increase their heart rate, warm up their bodies, and start to sweat. They should wear their gloves during the warmup to get used to running with a glove on.
- Next, get into some dynamic stretching. Keep those big muscles in mind like upper legs and shoulders. A good mix would be knee lifts, squats, lunges, arm circles, karaoke, core twists. A good stretch will always include the shoulders, elbows, and wrists in preparation of throwing.
- After a good warm up and dynamic stretch, each player should do 4 sprints or accelerations. Try and make them at least as far as the distance between two bases.
- Daily's – grab a partner and work through your infield daily's
- Finally, play catch with meaning. Do not let players build bad habits with poor throwing mechanics. (See – “Playing Catch” in the drills section)
- Playing Catch –Before a practice, be sure players are playing catch with a purpose. It is important that you as the coach are out there watching and giving feedback during this time. Players are learning habits; you need to control those habits.
  - Start about 30 feet apart and work on catch, turn, load, and fire. Start with lower intensity and slowly increase velocity. Low intensity does not mean bad mechanics or poor accuracy.
  - During this 30-foot warm up players can also do the circle drill. This means that the player catches the ball, make a quick circle from glove to throw. The drill works on quick transfer and proper mechanics of the throw.
  - Widen the gap until you are about 70 feet apart using the same good mechanics.
  - Add in ground balls to glove side or arm side as well as fly balls to their left and right, but only about 5-10 feet max.
  - Move your distance to long toss, around 120 feet. Work on one bounce to partner.

### Daily's

- Infield
  - Ping Pong
  - Secure
  - Forehand
  - Backhand
- Outfield
  - Spoke Drill
    - Side Sprint – left, right
    - Drop Backs – left, right, back
    - Front Sprint – left, right, forward
  - Short Hops

Set of 10 Practice Plans – can be used for 11U – 18U teams

Practice I – 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Hand Eye Drill
- One hand catch, no glove
- Flick Drill

Fielding Station work (30 minutes)

Infield (15 minutes)

- Four seam grip – eyes open, eyes closed
- Stationary field and throw
- Alligator arms

Outfield (15 minutes)

- Glove and hand position
- Daily's
- Pop flies – Footwork Drill

Hitting and Pitching Station Work (40 minutes)

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Grips
- Fastball or change up only – no curve balls allowed
- Dry Run Pitching Drill – Stance, Pivot & Balance, Separate & Stride, Release & Follow through
- Live pitching – Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

Hitting (20 minutes)

- Introduce the swing keys – balance and timing
- Batting practice off machine with fielders
- Soft Toss into net

Base running (5 minutes)

- Run through first – no sliding!

Competition (10 minutes)

- Running the bases race

## Practice II - 120 minutes

### Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Flyball one hand, no glove
- Flick Drill
- One Knee Drill

### Fielding Station work (30 minutes)

#### Infield (15 minutes)

- 4 seam grip – eyes open, eyes closed
- Stationary field and throw
- Approach – Hoola hoops/cones, off a roll
- Approach – Hoola hoops/cones, off a hit

#### Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- Pop Flies with Footwork Drill
- Drop step - left and right fly balls, no false step

### Hitting and Pitching Station work (40 minutes)

#### Hitting (20 minutes)

- Hit the ball in front of the plate
- Batting practice off machine with fielders
- Soft Toss into net

#### Pitching (20 minutes)

- Scarecrow
- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

### Base running (10 minutes)

- First to third

### Competition (15 minutes)

- Whiffle ball game

Practice III - 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Flick Drill
- One Knee Drill
- Two Knee Drill

Station work (60 minutes)

Infield (20 minutes)

- Prep step – pitcher with wind up
- Approach – Hoola Hoop off a hit with prep step
- Approach without hoola hoop with prep step

Hitting (20 minutes)

- Hit the ball in front of the plate
- Batting practice off machine with fielders
- Soft Toss into net

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Towel Drill
- Target Drill – Ghost hitter working on load and stride

Base running (10 minutes)

- Diamond relay Game

Competition (15 minutes)

- Four, four and four (or three, three and three)

## Practice IV - 120 minutes

### Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- One Knee Drill
- Two Knee Drill
- Head or Chest

### Fielding Station Work (30 minutes)

#### Infield (15 minutes)

- Charge the Ball Drill – throw to first/net
- Short Hop Drill – with a partner, switch every 10

#### Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- One Hop Throwing Drill
- Football Drill

### Pitching and Hitting Station Work (40 minutes)

#### Pitching (20 minutes)

- Turn and Separate Drill
- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

#### Hitting Stations (20 minutes)

- Soft, slow, straight, short, shallow
- Batting practice off machine with fielders
- Soft Toss into net

### Baserunning (5 minutes)

- Sliding into a base – do on the grass

### Competition (15 minutes)

- Obstacle Course

Practice V – 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Two Knee Drill
- Head or Chest
- Back 'em Up Three

Fielding Station work (30 minutes)

Infield (15 minutes)

- Short Hops Drill with a partner x 10
- Fungo Blind Drill

Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- Pop Flies with Footwork Drill
- Lead Drill

Hitting and Pitching Station Work (40 minutes)

Hitting (20 minutes)

- Both eyes on the pitcher
- Batting practice off machine with fielders
- Soft Toss into net

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Head Tilt Drill
- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

Baserunning (5 minutes)

- Second to Home

Competition (20 minutes)

- Run Downs

Practice VI – 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Head or Chest
- Back 'em Up Three

Fielding Station Work (30 minutes)

Infield (15 minutes)

- Fungo Blind Drill
- Fungo Double Blind Drill

Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- Pop Flies
- Turn to the Ball Drill

Hitting and Pitching Station Work (40 minutes)

Hitting (20 minutes)

- Batting practice off machine with fielders – try to hit the target
- Soft Toss into net

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Target Drill
- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

Baserunning (5 minutes)

- Question Mark Drill

Competition (20 minutes)

- Pass the Bat

Practice VII – 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Head or Chest
- Back 'em Up Three

Fielding Station work (30 minutes)

Infield (15 minutes)

- Ball in Glove Drill
- Knockdown Drill

Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- Cut off Drill

Hitting and Pitching Station Work (40 minutes)

Hitting (20 minutes)

- Batting practice off machine with fielders – look to pull the ball
- Soft Toss into net

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Work on Heel Over Drill
- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

Baserunning (5 minutes)

- Banana Drill

Competition (20 minutes)

- Line Ball

Practice VIII – 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Back 'em Up Three
- Long Toss

Fielding Station work (30 minutes)

Infield (15 minutes)

- Rapid Fire Drill
- Figure 8 Drill

Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- Ground Ball Fielding Drill – Semi knee or pro method

Hitting and Pitching Station Work (40 minutes)

Hitting (20 minutes)

- Batting practice off machine with fielders – look to hit the ball off field
- Soft Toss into net

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Start with One Hop Drill
- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

Baserunning (5 minutes)

- Diamond Relay

Competition (20 minutes)

- Whiffle ball game

Practice IX – 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Long Toss
- Star Drill

Infield (20 minutes)

- Four Corners
- Pitcher fielding practice – cover 1<sup>st</sup> base

Stations work (30 minutes)

Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- Y-Drill

Hitting (15 minutes)

- Batting practice off machine with fielders – look to pull the ball
- Soft Toss into net

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

Baserunning (5 minutes)

- Sliding

Competition (20 minutes)

- Race around the bases
- Relay throw

Practice X – 120 minutes

Warm Up and Daily's (25 minutes) Together

- Long Toss
- Throwing Relay
- Star Drill

Fielding Station work (30 minutes)

Infield (15 minutes)

- Four Corners Pylon Drill – toss back to coach each rep
- 

Outfield (15 minutes)

- Daily's
- Lead Drill
- Cut Off Drill

Hitting and Pitching Station Work (40 minutes)

Hitting (20 minutes)

- Batting practice off pitcher with fielders
- Soft Toss into net

Pitching (20 minutes)

- Live pitching –Typically, just use the group to rotate through as a catcher and then a ghost hitter.

Baserunning (5 minutes)

- 2<sup>nd</sup> to home drill

Competition (20 minutes)

- Four-four-four

## Practice Drills Summary

### Throwing & Catching Drills

The first thing that needs to be taught about throwing and catching is how to hold a ball and how to hold the glove as a target. Be sure to teach players to hold the ball with a 4-seam grip. That means their fingers will cross the 4 seams of the horseshoe, with the tips of their fingers on the seams for better grip upon release. Their index and middle fingers should be on top of the ball with their thumb on the bottom. The ball should not be set back in the palm, rather the fingers should just wrap around the ball. The glove should be held at shoulder height on the glove side with a small amount of flex in the glove hand elbow. The glove hand fingers should be pointing up.

1. Playing Catch –Before a practice, be sure players are playing catch with a purpose. It is important that you as the coach are out there watching and giving feedback during this time. Players are learning habits; you need to control those habits.
  - a. Start about 30 feet apart and work on catch, turn, load, and fire. Start with lower intensity and slowly increase velocity. Low intensity does not mean bad mechanics or poor accuracy.
  - b. During this 30-foot warm up players can work on quick transfers and proper footwork mechanics at higher speeds.
  - c. Widen the gap until you are about 70 feet apart using the same good mechanics.
  - d. Add in ground balls to glove side or arm side as well as fly balls to their left and right, but only about 5-10 feet max.
  - e. Move your distance to long toss, around 120 feet. Work on one bounce to partner.
2. Hand Eye Drill – Toss the ball in the air with your bare hand. Try and catch it with the other. Switch hands, toss it higher, catch it behind your back, etc. Add a glove.
3. Flick drill –Players are kneeling with their throwing side knee on the ground and their glove side knee up. They should be about 5’ – 10 feet apart depending on age and size. The player will have their throwing arm elbow in their glove and use only their wrist to throw ball to partner. Elbow height should be equal to shoulder. Emphasize wrist snap at release to improve velocity, carry and accuracy.
4. One-knee drill - As players get better at the Flick Drill, have them stay in the kneeling position, with shoulders and hips facing their target and front toe turned in slightly. They should have the ball in their throwing hand inside their glove just below chest height. They want to start the “break” by bringing the ball down out of the glove in a circular pattern until it rotates down, back, and up to where the elbow is at shoulder height and at a 90-degree angle. Their chest and shoulder should have rotated back 90-degrees, so their glove arm is pointing at the target. The ball should be facing away from the player, the wrist should be flexed, and the glove hand pointed at the target. Once here, players should look back at their arm to correct any errors and then throw the ball to their partner by leading with their elbow, snapping their wrist, and tucking the glove. After release the throwing arm crosses the front side of the body by the opposite leg.

5. Two-knee drill – Same drill as above, but both knees are on the ground and player is facing partner. Start with ball in glove, then break, and bring the ball down, back, and up. The glove arm is now up and pointing at target with a slight bend in the elbow. Throwing arm is in ready position with elbow equal to shoulder, at 90-degree angle and ball pointed away. As player throws, glove is tucked into chest/armpit, and after ball is released, throwing hand/arm crosses front side leg.
6. Head or Chest – This drill will work on throwing accuracy. The object of the drill is to gain points by throwing the ball directly at a player's head or chest. If player hits partner in face/head area, they get 2 points. If player hits partner above belt in the upper torso area, they get one point. First person to ten wins. Switch partners and play again. Distance apart will depend on age and size of athletes.
7. Back 'em up three - Form two lines with players facing one another in pairs. Players play catch. If the ball is caught, one partner backs up three steps. Continue with one partner backing up three steps each time ball is caught. If the ball is not caught, that player must take two steps towards their partner. Play for a given amount of time (3 minutes) and see what group can get the furthest apart.
8. Long Toss – This drill is meant to build arm strength in a safe manner will also teaching the importance of release point. Players start by facing a partner about 15 – 20 feet apart. Again, this distance is dependant on the size and age of the players. Players will begin to play catch, but every two throws, one of the partners should take two steps back. Continue this pattern until the players are up to 150 feet apart, again, age dependant. Teach the players it is okay to bounce a ball to their partner, but the object is to throw the ball in the air the whole way. Once players have reached their maximum distance, they should stay there for the remainder of the drill.
9. Throwing relay drill - Line players up in groups of three or four players, approximately 20-30 yards apart. Player “A” throws to player “B”, who in turn throws to player “C” (the “relay”), and so on. If ball is dropped, it must be returned to the thrower before it can be advanced to the next player. First team to return the ball to Player A wins. Emphasize throwing to a target and giving the “cutoff man” a throw they can handle. Receiving player should provide a target and position themselves (moving forward or backwards, if necessary, i.e., to avoid short hops) to receive the ball and make the proper turn and throw to the next player. Glove hand foot should be forward, after catching the player will turn to the glove side and take a step towards their target and throw.
10. Star Drill - Get players into a group of 5 and form a star. As the ball travels around, it will trace the shape of a star. This will change angles and can also be done by throwing in an arm side or glove side direction.
11. Cut offs - Get into groups of 3 or 4 and work on cut offs. Simulate OF to MI to 1B. The receiver has arm side to the ball, catch across your body, step, and throw to next target. These should not bounce. You can also turn this one into a relay drill. The outside

players should be your IF and the inside players should be your OF. First a tag then throw, then a relay throw, another relay throw, and finish with a catch/tag.

12. Infield Throws - Get players in groups of 4 and create a square that is about 70-80 feet in length. Players can work on 4 shuffles, 2 shuffles, no shuffle. You can also change direction to say they need to throw to glove side or arm side, this will force them to get feet turned around and to work on pivots.

## Infield Drills

1. Four Seam Grip – Have players practice holding the ball with a four-seam grip. That means the index and middle finger will lay across the horseshoe of the baseball, with the thumb directly under the baseball. The grip should be soft and in the fingertips, not back in the palm of your hand. Have players practice pulling the ball out of their glove with the four-seam grip. They can try this with their eyes closed. Be sure to stress they get the grip before pulling the ball out of their glove. This will avoid bobbles.
2. Prep Step – Have players lined up in the 4 infield spots or anywhere on the infield. Have a coach standing on the mound simulating a pitchers delivery. The infielders will be in their ready position with gloves out. As the pitcher lifts their leg to deliver the ball, the infielders start to take two steps towards the plate. When the ball is thrown to the plate the infielders should be on their second and final step, getting low to the ground with their glove out.
3. Alligator arms - Break the team up into groups of three or four. Before starting the drill, explain to the players how an alligator jaw works – the ball is its food. Make sure player is in the proper fielding position (knees bent, butt down, hands out front). Roll the ball to the player. When the ball enters the glove, the bare hand covers the ball to secure it. The player's head should remain down and emphasize bringing the ball into his belly. You can perform this drill with or without gloves.
4. Charge the Ball – Have players in an infield position. Place a ball on the ground about 5-10 feet in front of them. On coaches signal, the player will execute a prep step and then attack the ball by circling around it so they can see the side of the ball as they approach, field, and throw the ball to a target or 1B.
5. Shuffle - Break the team up into groups of three or four. Player assumes proper fielding position. Roll balls to the left or right of the player. Player shuffles once or twice to get to the right-hand side of the ball, field the ball, and tosses back to coach while maintaining the proper fielding position. Coach receives the ball and rolls again forcing the player to shuffle in the opposite direction. Repeat 4-6 times for each player. Emphasize moving feet quickly so player can field the ball in front of him, but also see the short hop from the side. Introduce rolls at greater distance from the player so he is required to pivot, cross over and run a few steps to ensure ball is fielded in front of him.
6. Open Pocket Drill – Line the players up in pairs about 5-10 feet apart. Have one player start with the ball in their glove. They are to toss the ball using the glove to the other

player. Do not grab the ball with the throwing hand, just push it towards the partner with the glove hand. Tell the players not to close their glove around the ball each time.

7. Breakdown - Line players up along the foul line and request they assume the fielding position. Say "go". Players run until you say "field", at which point players break down into fielding position. Repeat.
8. Ready, set, go - Line players up so they are facing each other, approximately 10-15 yards apart. Players in one line have the ball. When you say "ready", players breakdown into fielding position, holding the ball in their gloves with their hands out front. At "set", players bring ball into their belly then pop up into throwing position, with front foot and glove hand pointing at their partner. At "go", players throw ball to their partner. Emphasize follow through and glove tuck.
9. Pick Off Play - This can be a drill for a pitcher and IB or just the IB. Coach or pitcher can toss different kinds of throws as a pick off, forcing the IB to adjust to bad throws.
10. IB Fungos - Coach will hit fungo ball from SS or 2B simulating throws to IB. Some will be good, some not so good. This will allow the IB to judge when they stride, if they stride, or if they leave their base to stop the ball.
11. IB Toss or Dart - Have the IB stand in a good starting position. Coach will toss a ball at the first basemen or closer to the base. The player will field the ball and underhand toss to a target. The coach will then toss away from the base so the IB needs to throw an overhand dart to the target.
12. IB Angles - have the first basemen surrounded by about 5 players. One player at a time they will toss a ball to the IB. Some good, some in the dirt. IB picks and drops to the side. This is a rapid-fire drill.
13. IB Footwork - IB will stand on base like they are ready to receive a throw. Coach will give hand signals of left (IB steps to his left), right (IB steps to his right), at (steps towards coach), or up (IB jumps and comes down on base)
14. Fungo Drills - A fungo ball is simply one that is hit by the coach by tossing it up from their glove or free hand.
  - a. Blind - Have players in a line at any position on the infield. The player that is up is facing to the outfield and listening for the crack of the bat. When they hear it they spin, field, and throw to IB (or a net)
  - b. Double blind - You need a line on the left side of the infield and a line on the right. Two coaches will hit balls at the same time. Player will spin, field and hold or throw to a net.
15. Turbo Pepper - Have players on the grass for this drill. Have a batter about 40 feet away from a line of fielders. The coach will be kneeling beside the player tossing to the hitter

with only a few seconds between each toss. The same fielder will field about 10 hits in a row. No throw is needed, just field and toss to the side.

16. High Rep Glove Work – Have a line of players with a coach about 10-15 feet in front. Work on receiving the ball at them, back hand, arm side. Have no throw, toss to MI or throw across diamond to player or net.
17. Rebounder – Have the player stand in front of a coach facing the rebounder. The coach will toss a variety of angles from behind the player so they have little time to react. Add in a toss or throw to a base or net. Try and have the rebounder set up such that the ball comes off in the same direction it would from home plate. This can be set up at any base on the infield.
18. Transfer – Have each player with a ball then they transfer it from glove to hand as fast as they can. Sometimes they go through the legs or behind the back.
19. Ball in Glove – These are good MI drills to work on diving and footwork. The player will start with the ball in their glove and then work on diving to their left or right, getting up, and throwing to 1B or a net at 1B. They can also work on two-step, four-step, or no-step, or negative step throws.
20. Knockdown – Here a coach can hit or throw a ground ball at a MI. They are supposed to let it hit their glove, drop to the ground, grab it, and throw it to a target or base.
21. Roll back and forth - Line players up so they are facing each, approximately 2-3 yards apart. Players proceed to roll ball to another. Players should remain in fielding position throughout the drill and employ proper fielding mechanics (hands out front, head down, bring ball into belly). Perform drill for 20-30 seconds, give players a brief break, then start drill again.
22. Rapid fire - Empty a bucket of balls. Line up players in single file or separate into small groups. Put empty bucket next to the players. Coach rolls balls to the players rapidly. As the player is catching the ball, the next ball is rolled so the players are forced to move quickly. Fielded balls are placed in the bucket. You can use this format for the shuffle drill as well.
23. Short Hops – Coach will have a bucket of balls about 20 feet away from a line of players. Have them line up behind a hoola hoop or set of pylons. The player starts on the left-hand side of the hoola hoop, then coach rolls a ball straight at the hoola hoop, and the player must shuffle around the right side of the hoop and field the ball off their glove hand foot and throw to a target. Turn this into a fungo drill as a progression.
24. Triangles – Have players team up in groups of 3. Rather than playing catch or doing grounders with 2 people, use 3. One person is a feeder, one is on one knee catching short hops and tossing to a player and then that player pivots and throws it back to the feeder. After 10 cycles switch your role. You can add many different variations to what each

player must do. More game like to not be throwing in the direction the ball just came from.

25. Figure 8 – Have two lines of players behind 2B and SS. Coach is around the pitcher's mound giving short hops at, to backhand, and to arm side. Start at SS, they field, toss to second and go to 2B line. 2B times up approach to the bag, catches, puts in a bucket, and goes to SS line. This is a rapid-fire drill with lots of motion.
26. Partner GB's – In this drill, you will face your partner and work on a quick transfer. Start by getting in a good fielding position, throw the ball to your partner, field it, and give a grounder back. Feet and hips need to pivot but try not to gain too much airtime. Progress to a grounder, field, throw, tag, then move to a grounder, field, throw, throw, tag. Keep adding variations.
27. Shadow Baseball – Just as a boxer can shadow box, we can train our IF to shadow field. They need to be able to be in a ready position, get down, field, and up. Coach will say different commands and the IF will shadow the sequence.
28. Four Corners – Players create a square with anywhere from 4 – 8 players standing about 20 feet apart. You will work on underhand tosses and side tosses to both glove side and arm side. If more than 4 players, the tosser rotates with the player behind them each time. This drill will work on the double play toss for a MI.
29. Diamond Throw - Divide your team into 4 even groups. Assign a starting spot for each group, home, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>. The players will need their gloves. Helmets might be suggested for younger groups.
  - Start the ball at home. Have the first player in line throw the ball to second base.
  - Once they throw the ball, they need to run to first base.
  - The player at second base receives the ball and attempts to throw the runner at first out.
  - After they throw the ball they run to the next base, in this case that would be third base.
  - The player at first base then catches the ball and throws it to third base followed by running to second base.
  - The player at third catches the ball and tries to throw them out at second.
  - After their throw from third they run home and the player at second tries to throw home to get them out.
  - That is one cycle of the drill. The drill is continuous until the coach calls for a stop. The players will need to back up the throws like they would in a game. I would also suggest the coaches have a few extra baseballs ready to toss into the drill in case of an errant throw going to the outfield fence.
30. Diamond Drill #2 – Have an infielder at each of the 5 spots. Ball starts with the catcher. They throw to the SS covering second base, then to the 1B, the 1B throws home. Now the catcher starts it again by throwing to 3B, the 3B throws to the 2B covering second and they pivot and throw to 1B, and back to the catcher.

31. Competitions – Competition at the end of practice is always a good thing.
  - a. Use coaches to be quick feeders in a variety of drills. Use knockout style, so if a player bobbles, double clutches, can't make accurate throw, etc. they are out. You can use short hops, back handers, glove side, slow rollers, etc.
  - b. Have players field a ball from a coach hit and throw to a certain bag, however, the other players are allowed to run in front while the ball is coming or scream and yell at the fielding player to try and distract them. They are not allowed to touch the ball or touch the player, only distract. Have the fielder work on slow rollers, back hands, short hops, etc. Again, play elimination style.

### Middle infield / Double play drills

Break players up into two groups, one at the shortstop position and one at the second base position. A player, coach, or net can play first.

1. 4-6-3 double play:
  - Hit or roll balls directly at the second baseman, emphasizing a pivot move and making accurate throw to the shortstop covering second base.
  - Hit or roll balls to left of the second baseman so he is required to run or shuffle a few steps to field the ball. Instruct player to make a spin move (turning body so back is facing home plate) and accurate throw to second base (shortstop covering).
  - Hit or roll balls to right of the second baseman so he is required to shuffle feet to field the ball. This play should result in a flip throw or toss to the shortstop covering the bag. Instruct players to say "flip" so the shortstop knows it will be an underhand throw or soft toss. Second baseman should "follow the toss" to ensure an accurate delivery.
2. 6-4-3 double play:
  - Hit or roll balls directly at the shortstop, emphasizing pivot move or drop step, and making an accurate throw to the second baseman covering the bag.
  - Hit or roll balls to right of the shortstop so he is required to run a few steps to field ball. Instruct player to make drop step and an accurate throw to second baseman.
  - Hit or roll balls to the left of the shortstop so he is required to shuffle feet to field the ball. This play should result in a flip throw or toss to the second baseman covering the bag. Instruct players to say "flip" so the second baseman knows it will be an underhand throw or soft toss.

Stress the importance of first making an out ("make sure of one") – the double play is the bonus. If fielded ball is bobbled or dropped, play is to first. Tell players covering second base to always give a target (hold hands up together in upper torso area) and to expect a bad throw (players should take short choppy steps as the approach second base so they can react to off target throws). Demonstrate pivot moves at the second base bag (e.g., the straddle, cross over, step-back). For balls hit far to the left of second baseman/right of shortstop, the player covering second becomes a first baseman (i.e., stretches when receiving the ball). Tell players covering

second base to hold ball if there is no reasonable chance of turning the double play (avoid errant throws).

### Hot corner situations

Break players up into three groups - third basemen, first basemen, runners.

1. Man on first, less than two outs:

Hit or roll baseballs to third baseman. Hard hit balls at or to the left or right of third baseman, play is to second base. If ball is hit softly to the third baseman (i.e., a slow roller), play is to first base.

2. Man on first and second, less than two outs:

Hit or roll baseballs to third baseman. Hard hit balls to the left of third baseman, play is to second base. Hard hit balls at or to the right of the third baseman, player steps on third and throws to second or first base, assuming there is a play to be made. If ball is hit softly to the third baseman (i.e., a slow roller), play is to first base.

Again, stress the importance of making an out. If ball is bobbled or dropped, play is to first base. If no play can be made, hold the ball.

### Outfield /Pop Fly Drills

1. Outfield Footwork – Have a line of outfielders that you will toss hit soft fly balls to. The fielder is to catch the ball with their glove foot forward. While they gather the ball, they get the four-seam grip in the glove and take a second step with the throwing side foot. As they make the throw, the glove side foot takes the final step, and the fielder releases the ball with momentum towards their target.
2. Pop flies - Break players up into two or three groups. Throw or hit fly balls to players (a tennis racquet works nicely too). Demonstrate the proper technique, for example, run to the spot where the player thinks the ball will land and get both hands held out high with palms facing up. Head and shoulders should be directly under the ball when catch is being made. Throwing hand covers the ball as it enters the glove.
3. Y-drill or M-drill – Here you will have pylons set out in the shape of a Y or M and they are about 15-20 feet apart. Create a movement pattern around the Y or M and have a coach deliver 2 or 3 different style balls at different parts of the letter. Change the starting position of the players and it will work on different backhand or arm side movements. For example, you might have a coach toss a flyball at the first change of direction, then a liner at the second, and a ground ball at the third. Many variations can be used as well as spacing of the pylons depending on age and ability of your player.
4. Lead Drill – Fielders line up in CF facing home. Have the player start to sprint towards a foul line while the coach hits or throws a ball in front of the fielder. When fielding towards glove side, the player will want to spin and throw to a target. When fielding on arm side, the player will plant and hop to throw toward a target.

5. Turn to the Ball Drill – This is a similar drill to the Lead Drill, but instead the coach hits/throws a ball behind the fielder. They must adjust to the ball and make a decision to either turn away from the ball (it has beat them) or turn into the ball (they can still field it in front).
6. Left and right fly balls - Break players up into two or three groups. Player stands facing coach. Throw the ball over the left or right shoulder of the player. Stress the importance of the drop step with the foot closest to the ball (i.e., if ball is hit over left shoulder, the player should drop step with left foot). Teach the players to run to the spot where they think the catch will be made, turning their back, if necessary. Discourage back-pedaling.
7. Bent Leg Sliding Drill – Outfielders will start in a line. Coach will toss/fungo short fly balls forcing the player to run in and slide to make the catch. As the player approached the ball, they start to lower themselves to the ground butt first playing the ball on their glove side.
8. Football drill - Break players up into two groups. Player stands facing coach. Explain to players that you will either raise your right or left arm. If right arm is raised, player drop steps with his left foot and sprints to his left at a 45-degree angle from starting point. If left arm is raised, player drop steps with his right foot and sprints to his right at a 45-degree angle from starting point. Lead the player with a throw as you would a football to a receiver. This drill teaches players how to maintain focus on the ball and catch while in a full sprint. Have some fun with this drill and break out the football!
9. Ground balls - Break players up into two or three groups in the outfield. Throw or bat ground balls. For slower hit balls, instruct players to charge ball then break down as they would when fielding a ground ball in the infield. For harder hit balls, show players how to drop to one knee to ensure ball does not get past them. After fielding the ball, players should pop up and throw ball to coach or cut off man.
10. Do or die - This drill is designed to teach players how to charge and field balls hit into the outfield and throw players out (“do or die”) or prevent them from advancing a base. Break players up into two groups. Throw or bat ground balls to the players. Instruct players to charge the ball and field it while maintaining a stride. Players should position themselves such that they field the ball on their glove hand side. After fielding the ball, the player takes crow hop and throws to coach or cut off man.
11. One Hop Throwing Drill – Outfielders are grouped into pairs and facing each other about 60 feet apart or an appropriate distance for their age. Players should be facing each other with their feet pointing at the other outfielder. Players are to throw the ball without moving their feet and try and have it bounce about 2/3 of the way to their partner. This will work on their ability to field the hop and work on throwing mechanics and getting on top of the throw.
12. Fly/Pop fly ball priorities

Play the outfield as if there are no infielders. You want your outfielders to track down every ball they possibly can and not rely on an infielder to make a catch that they should be making moving forward. It's important that players understand who has priority when there is a pop or fly ball. A key to determine where to throw the ball is to throw at the lead runner when the ball is hit right at you and to the trail runner when the ball is hit to your side. When practicing infield/outfield drills, spend 10-15 minutes simulating various situations, for example, fly balls to right-center or left-center, pop flies in shallow center, pop flies in the infield, etc. Also, explain the hierarchy, as follows:

- Not only is your center fielder the “captain” of the outfield, but he also has priority over all positions in the field. Teach your center fielder to take control, and if he can catch a fly ball or pop fly in right, left or shallow center, he should call all other players off.
- Outfielders have priority over infielders. On balls hit to the shallow outfield, instruct your outfielders to call off infielders (it's easier to make a catch running as opposed to running back), but only if they think they can make the catch.
- Your shortstop is the captain of the infield and should call off all other fielders, provided of course he can make the catch.

Coach's note: As soon as one infielder calls for a catch, all other infielders should be taught to run to cover their respective bases.

- The shortstop and second baseman have priority on pop flies behind third and first base, respectively. It is much easier for a shortstop or second baseman to catch a ball running to his left (e.g., into shallow right field) or his right (e.g., into shallow left field) than it is for a third or first baseman trying to catch a ball over their shoulder. Also, remind the shortstop or second baseman that outfielders have priority.
- The third or first baseman have priority on short pop flies between them and the catcher in fair or foul territory. Again, it's much easier to make a catch running in than it is running back.
- For pop flies around home plate (fair or foul territory), teach your catchers to turn with their backs facing the infield and to take a couple of steps back. This type of pop fly will naturally drift towards fair territory, so using this technique will increase the likelihood that the ball will be caught.

Coach's note: On pop fly foul balls by left-handed batters, teach catchers to look over their left shoulder first. Left-handed batters will rarely hit a pop fly ball to the first base side in foul territory. If a right-handed batter hits a pop foul ball, catchers should look over their right shoulder first.

When practicing these drills, get the players to form a habit of either calling for the ball (“I got it, I got it!”) or “acknowledging” that a teammate is clear to catch the ball that they have called for (“you, you, you!”). Player's fielding fly balls should also wave off their teammates.

### Catcher Drills

1. Stance – Line the catchers up so you can see them. Have them get in an athletic stance; feet slightly wider than shoulders. Drop elbows to knees with a flat back, point toes slightly out, and keep knees slightly inside feet. Have them shift their weight back and

forth side to side, slowly getting lower and lower each time until they are in a comfortable position.

2. Ramp Drill – Since we want our catcher to have their glove rise as it catches a pitch, we want the catcher to get a feel for the motion. If you have access to a small ramp that is about 2 feet wide and 8 inches tall, set it in front of the catcher. They start with their glove at the bottom and push it up the ramp as they go to catch the ball. If you do not have access to a ramp, have a ball between their feet and in front of their glove. The catcher pushes the ball away from them as the pitch comes toward them. This allows the glove to move forward and rise toward the ball.
3. Drop Zone – A coach stands behind the catcher and drops a ball. The catcher should have their glove down, let the ball bounce, and then catch it on the way up.
4. Six Shooter – Have a coach stand about 10 feet in front of the catcher. They will have 3 balls in each hand. This is a rapid-fire drill where the catcher will scoop catch the ball and then drop it instantly and get ready for the next one.
5. Bounce and Follow – Here a coach will be about 10 feet in front of the catcher. They will toss a ball in the dirt that the catcher has to block, then the catcher will pop back up into stance and the coach will toss a good one. Add variation by tossing good then back or add a third pitch, etc.
6. Sweeper – While the catcher is in a good crouch, they will sweep their glove back and forth in front of them as they wait for the pitch. They will also have a glove on their head, to keep their head balanced. This can be done off a machine, with a coach, or live pitchers.
7. 90's Receiving – The catcher will start facing 90° to the left or right and then pop to square with their glove low and scoop to catch the ball.
8. 180 Receiving – Have the catcher face backward and flip their feet to square up and scoop catch a pitch.
9. Pop Ups – Have the catcher start lying on their belly. They need to pop up to their catching position and then receive a pitch.
10. Blocking – Have the catcher start on their knees with their glove up. The coach will be about 10 feet away and throw a pitch in the dirt for them to block. Be sure the catcher flips their glove upside down and does not try to catch it. They are trying to block it with their body.
11. Rice Crispies – Coach stands in front of catcher and throws a ball hard in the dirt. Catcher drops down, blocks it, then pops up, grabs it, and gets into a throwing position.
12. Pop up Block – The catcher starts on his belly, pops up, coach tosses a ball in the dirt, he blocks it, pops up, grabs ball and get into throwing position.
13. Verbal – Many of the same drills above can be done by making the catcher throw to a base by verbalizing 1, 2, or 3 as they block the ball. You can have nets set up for them to toss into if you do not have enough players to use as infielders.

### Base Running Drills

1. Lead Offs – This needs to be a team identity where everyone on the team does the same things when they get on. You want the opposition to fear every runner and not know when they are going to steal or not. Never take lead until the pitcher is on the rubber and be capable of taking the lead while looking at the pitcher. All runners should be hunting the balls in the dirt and look to advance when ever they can. The key thing is

to be landing on your last shuffle as the ball enters the hitting zone. Be sure to deepen your lead with two outs.

- a. Practice the primary lead. This is a left, right, shuffle, shuffle. Player should be around 8-10 feet off the bag and in an athletic position.
  - b. Secondary leads are an additional couple shuffles after the pitcher lifts and goes home with the ball.
  - c. Have a coach stand in front of the runner and point left (secondary lead and run), both hands up (line drive – shuffle, plant, and get back or right (dive to back half of base))
2. Straight through first - The objective is to teach players the proper way to run to first base on a groundball to the infield. Line the players up a home base. Simulate a ground ball hit in the infield. Instruct players to find the ball within the first few strides towards first base then keep head down as they run through the base (looking for the ball slows them down). Discourage sliding into or lunging towards first base bag. Players should practice stepping on the home-plate side of first base (i.e., not the middle or back portion of the bag) to improve speed to bag and reduce injury.
  3. The question mark - The objective is to teach players to identify when a batted ground ball makes it through the infield and to make the proper turn towards and through first base. Line the players up a home base. Simulate a ground ball hit in the infield. Instruct players to find the ball within the first few strides towards first base (they are still on the first base line at this point). When they see the ball has made it through the infield, they initiate a turn and proceed to and through first base. The resulting running path should resemble a question mark. Emphasize stepping on the corner of the bag facing the inner-diamond and taking short choppy steps after they pass the bag. Players should keep their feet moving so if the outfielder bobbles the ball, they are prepared to take the extra base. If ball is fielded cleanly, instruct players to quickly return to first base.
  4. The banana - The objective is to teach players how to exit the batter's box properly on a clean base hit (or fly ball to the outfield), and to make the proper turn towards and through first base. Line the players up a home base. Simulate a base hit to the outfield. Instruct players to exit the batter's box at a 45-degree angle in foul territory then begin making turn towards inner part of the first base bag. The resulting running path should resemble the shape of a banana. Emphasize stepping on the corner of the bag facing the inner-diamond and taking short choppy steps after they pass the bag. Players should keep their feet moving so if the outfielder bobbles the ball, they are prepared to take the extra base. If ball is fielded cleanly, instruct players to quickly return to first base.
  5. First to third - This drill teaches players running from first base how to "pick up" the third base coach on a base hit to the outfield, and to make the proper turn around second base. Line the players up at first base and place a coach in the third base coach's box. Simulate a base hit. Instruct players to run hard and pick up the third base coach approximately half to two-thirds of the way to second base. The third base coach either waves (windmill motion) the player to third or holds (both arms up, palms facing out) the player at second. If the player sees that he is being waved to third, he should begin making a slight turn and step on the corner of the bag facing the inner diamond.

6. Second to home - This drill teaches players running from second to home how to pick up the third base coach on a base hit to the outfield, and to make the proper turn around third base. Line the players up at second base and place a coach in the third base coach's box. Simulate a base hit. Instruct players to run hard and pick up the third base immediately. The third base coach either waves (windmill motion) the player home or holds (both arms up, palms facing out, player makes the turn around third; or pointing to the bag, indicating player should stop on the bag) the player at third. Again, player should make the proper turn and step on the corner of the bag facing the inner diamond.

Note to third base coaches: If you want the player to advance home or at least make the turn, leave the coach's box, and position yourself one-third or halfway to home (in foul territory). If you want the player to stop on third base, remain in coach's box and point to the bag with one hand and with the other, hold up indicating player should stop. Also, never touch the player as he is rounding the bag.

7. Diamond relay - This is a fun drill, but it also teaches players how to make the proper turns around the bases, including stepping on the right part of the bag (see drills above). Split the players up into teams of two. Half of the players go to second base, and the other half remains at home plate. At "go" players begin to sprint around the bases. After they've completed their tour around the bases, they tag the next player in line, relay style. First team to complete the relay wins.

### Hitting and Situations

1. Dry Run Hitting – Spread hitters out so they have at least 5 meters between them in all directions. Lead the players through the phases of the swing – relax, ready, stride, and swing – calling out each phase before they do. Move to a coach simulating a pitcher. The hitters will try and time up their swing with the pitcher's release.
2. Target Drill – Set up two pylons on the field where you want the hitter to try and hit the ball. Start with pull side and work around to off field hitting. You can narrow or widen the gap depending on the players ability and age.
3. Soft toss - Position player perpendicular to and approximately 2-3 yards away from fence or batting cage screen. If possible, use a portable home plate so the player knows where to stand in relation to the plate. The coach takes a knee and positions himself approximately 2-3 yards from the player and at a 45-degree angle from the player's mid-section. The coach proceeds to underhand ("soft toss") tennis or whiffle balls towards the player's mid-section. The player hits the ball into the fence or screen. Reinforce all the basic hitting fundamentals during this drill, for example, proper stance, hand positioning, weight shift, stride, swing plane, and hitting the top half of ball. Teach the players how to time the toss. For example, lowering your hand before the toss is like a pitcher breaking his hands before a pitch, in which case the player should begin his weight shift and stride. For older or more advanced players, toss the ball higher (player must still wait for ball to drop down to mid-section) so the player learns to keep hands and weight back, or with more velocity towards his mid-section so he is forced to make a quicker swing ("throw your hands").

4. Load and Stride – Use bullpen session to help get hitters their timing for the load and stride. They should be able to stand in the batter’s box with a helmet and bat. They will NOT swing, rather just get their back leg loaded and then stride so they are loaded as the ball is getting to the front of the plate.
5. Whiffles - Arrange players in a few lines and pitch whiffle balls from one knee. Continue to focus on mechanics (proper stance, hand positioning, weight shift, stride, swing plane, and hitting the top half of ball) and introduce concepts of timing and tempo for more advanced players (e.g., they begin stride as you bring arm back in throwing motion). Players should be in “ready” position while waiting (no swinging!).
6. Four, four and four - This drill is a combination of batting practice and situations. Break teams up into three teams of four, or three, if necessary. Also, attempt to evenly distribute your skilled players amongst the teams. One team takes batting practice while the other two teams take positions in the field. Throw five to six pitches to each player and on the last one, have the player “run it out” and the fielders make the play. Proceed until the batting team has made three outs. Rotate teams, and the team with the most runs (or hits) wins.
7. Batting Cage – Here are some drills that can be used in the batting cage or during BP
  - a. Two Plate Drill – have two plates set out. Batter takes one swing from first plate then needs to adjust his timing with two swings from the back plate. You can change the pattern of this to back, front, back and any other combination. Be sure the batter is set and in their ready position before the ball comes each time but do encourage them to do it in a timely fashion. This will replicate off-speed pitches being thrown during an at bat. Really looking to avoid grounds to the middle of the diamond. Line drives over the middle infielders are optimal.
  - b. Tee Drills – First, be sure you start with the tee in front of the plate. We want to train our hitters to hit the ball out front. Start with some well-balanced swings. This means a slight movement back, small stride, contact, and finish. Add in these pre-swing movements to force the player to get back into load position. Two-foot bounce, one knee up, Flamingo, step back, and Happy Gilmore. You can also do all of these with soft toss, front toss, or BP

### Pitching Drills

1. Turn and Separate – If your pitchers are having trouble with their arm motion, try this one. Have them hold the ball in the fingertips pointed up, toss it up, catch it with their fingertips pointed down, and immediately go through the throwing motion. It should force them to make a more efficient motion.
2. Head Tilt Drill – In order to keep pitchers from having too much head movement, have them play catch or pitch with a glove on their head. This should help keep their head stable and eyes on target as they develop their accuracy.

3. Towel Drill – have players partner up. One player is the pitcher with a towel in their hand and the other player is a target. The target starts close and slowly moves back as the drill goes on. The player with the towel will go through the throwing motion with a snap to finish. They are snapping the towel at your partners extended glove. Slowly start to extend yourself to your maximum extension while keeping solid mechanics.
4. One Hop Throwing Drill – Have two players stand about the pitching distance apart plus 20 feet. Younger players will be closer together than older players. Have a cone about 1/3 and 2/3 of the way between the players. Have the pitcher start in the stride position with their hands at chest level and stride foot forward. When ready, the pitcher will separate hands, bring arm up, and throw the ball towards the second pylon focusing on getting on top of the ball. Repeat about 10 times before beginning a throwing session.
5. Heel Over Drill – have players start in the “T” position with their stride leg already forward and their throwing arm loaded. In slow motion, deliberately bring the arm forward with the chest and head and finish with the arm fully extended across the stride leg. The pivot foot toe should stay planted while the heel lifts and rotates to the outside.
6. Step offs –In this drill you will need a catcher, a first basemen and a runner. The catcher will give a sign to the pitcher of either throw over or fastball. If it is a throw over, the pitcher will step off and attempt a pick off play at first. Runner can work on their lead off skills and how to get back into the bag. Always slide to the back corner of the bag. The first basemen can work on their footwork and positioning. They should be in a straddle position of the bag where they can catch and tag in one motion or step off and defend. The catcher can work on their throw down to first base if the pitch comes home.
7. Scarecrow – Here pitchers will work on their form by raising their lead leg, separating their throwing arm from the glove, and holding the position like a scarecrow with one leg in the air and both arms elevated at shoulder height. They will then deliver the pitch, emphasizing the lead hip driving toward the target.
8. Targets – In this drill you will need a catcher. The pitcher will work on throwing each of their pitches to the 4 quadrants of the plate. They emphasis is keeping it out of the middle of the strike zone. Have a competition of how many pitches it takes to hit all 4 corners of the zone. Having an umpire is also a good idea. It gives players an idea of what a strike looks like and what is out of the zone. It also allows them to understand how difficult it is to umpire.

### Competitive Drill Situations

1. The Obstacle Course - This drill is a great way to incorporate some fun and [competition into your baseball practice](#). In this drill, players work on their speed and agility by completing an obstacle course that requires baserunning, throwing and hitting skills. This drill is a great way for coaches to finish practice, as it incorporates some conditioning and builds team energy by getting all your players involved.

## How to Set Up the Drill:

- Place a tee on home plate with a ball loaded on it.
- Place one bucket of baseballs in foul territory by first base.
- Place one bucket of baseball behind second base.
- Place one bucket of baseballs in foul territory by third base.
- Place two nets behind and in front of the pitcher's mound.
  - One net facing directly toward first base.
  - One net facing directly toward second base.
- Place a bucket (or throwing target) near the on-deck circle in the third base dugout.

The purpose of this drill is to introduce competition into your practice, while also practicing several simple offensive and defensive skills in a high-pressure environment. This drill incorporates many of the skills often overlooked in winning baseball games: focusing on baserunning, sliding, and making accurate throws.

## How the Drill Works:

- Coaches should have a stopwatch to time the players for completing the obstacle course, starting as soon as the player makes contact off the tee and stopping once the player touches home.
  - The hitter starts out by driving the baseball off the tee. To beef up the competition here, set a goal for acceptable contact. With my teams, we're always looking to hit line drives over the shortstop's head.
  - After driving the ball into the outfield, the player sprints to first base, making a hard turn and diving back to the bag to simulate a game-like scenario.
  - After diving back to first, the player then bounces up quickly to make an accurate throw into the net facing first base.
  - The player then sprints to second base, sliding hard into the bag and popping up quickly.
  - Next, the player grabs a ball out of the bucket behind second base and makes another accurate throw into the net that's facing second.
  - After the successful throw from second, the player sprints to third, making a hard turn around the bag and getting back to the base.
  - The player then grabs a ball out of the bucket located behind third base and fires it to a designated target located near the on-deck circle by the third base dugout. You can be creative with this target but make it challenging. I like to put a helmet on top of a bucket, challenging players to make an accurate throw and knock the helmet off.
  - After the successful throw from third base, the player sprints home. This ends the drill.
2. Pass the Bat Drill - In this drill, we're focusing on offense and putting a small twist on standard batting practice. After going through a few rounds of BP, this drill is a great change of pace to incorporate competition while stressing the importance of quality at bats with your hitters. For this game, hitters are given one swing to put their best contact on the baseball and are evaluated using the scoresheet below.

## How to Set Up the Drill:

- Divide your team into two even groups. One group will be hitting while the other group is on defense.
- The defense can play anywhere in the field. If you're short on players, spread them out evenly since this is an offensive drill. If you have enough players, then go ahead and place them in their normal positions so they can get game-like reads at their positions.
- The offensive group is given a specific amount of time to hit. I generally do five minutes.
- This drill can work with a coach pitching, front toss or off of a pitching machine. I generally like to use a machine for this drill, so my hitters are getting consistent, game-like pitches.
- When the clock starts, the offensive team gets in line and takes one swing. After that, the next player jumps in and we rotate through as many times as we can in the specified time period.
- Have a scorekeeper track each plate appearance and document the score using the scoresheet below:
  1. 1pt Ground ball to grass
  2. 2pts for hit in air to outfield
  3. 3pts for ball that rolls to fence
  4. 4pts for ball off the fence
  5. 5pts for ball over the fence
  6. -1pt for swing and miss or foul ball

## What to Watch For:

This is a great drill for breaking up the repetitiveness of standard team batting practice. It also emphasizes the importance of every swing and at bat. When your hitters are taking multiple hacks in a round of BP, it can be easy to not take their best swing on every pitch — swinging at balls outside of the zone, getting tired and developing bad habits, or swinging without intentional purpose to do damage. By only allowing one swing, this drill emphasizes the need to put their best swing on every pitch.

## Basic Mechanics

### Hitting

- Balance, balance, balance and timing, timing, timing
- Hit the ball before it gets to the plate (catch it in front)
- Feet a little more than shoulder width
- Knees slightly bent with 65% of weight on back leg and heels slightly wider than toes
- Bat held with the knob pointing at the opposite batter's box
- Hands at shoulder height
- You should see a triangle created by the back hand, back shoulder, and back elbow
- Both eyes on the pitcher/ball
- Stride towards the pitcher with a soft, slow, straight, short, and shallow step

- Have the hand come through the inside of the baseball before the barrel of the bat
- Hitter is trying to hit the inside of the baseball
- Hands stay tight to the body with initial movement because you can twist faster with hands in.
- Less leg kick is always better. Power comes with size and bat speed, but accuracy is a result of calm and easy swings. It is hard to do this with a big leg kick.

## Pitching

- Balance, balance, balance
- A pitcher should have their foot parallel with the rubber, not heel on or toe on. It is more deceiving if your pivot foot is more on the arm side of the rubber.
- Hands in the glove with a four-seam grip and held between your belly button and your chin.
- Lift front leg until your thigh is at least parallel with the ground. As leg lifts, so does your hands.
- As the stride starts, your hands separate with the ball moving down, around, and up.
- Once in a loaded position, your trigger is when the stride leg hits the ground. At this point the ball starts to move forward toward the catcher.
- Your glove hand will move through a motion toward the catcher first and follow through into your side.
- Your throwing hand will make the same motion and finish on the opposite thigh.
- You want your back side leading the way as you stride towards the plate.
- Your weight should be more on your heel than your toe when you are on the rubber and loaded up. To help keep your weight over your heel, you can get your pitchers to have a SLIGHT head tilt away from the plate. Do not let them exaggerate this as it will get them off balance.
- You want to avoid drifting towards the plate before your arm has had a chance to get through its motion. You want to look for the throwing hand to be high as the front foot contacts the ground.
- Stride foot should land pointed slightly in, not directly at the plate.
- You knee should lift to at least belly button. Higher is only better if the pitcher can stay on balance.
- The hip motion towards the plate should begin with the lead hip driving towards the plate.
- Your pitcher can use either the drop or the pump. With younger pitchers, less movement is better, so the drop is probably better. The drop has the glove start at the abdomen and rise to the chin before the hand separates and drops while the pump has the glove rise above the head before it comes back down to the separation phase.
- Location – Your pitch location is determined by both your front shoulder and your back shoulder. You want to stand behind your pitchers to be able to see what direction their front shoulder (glove side) points when the pitchers body starts toward the plate and then what direction their back shoulder (arm side) is pointing when they are finished their delivery. Both should be aimed at the plate. Get players to hold their finish and then see how their back shoulder will always line up with where their pitch ends up.

## Throwing

- Once the ball is in your glove, get it to chest height and get the ball in hand, preferably with a 4 seam-grip
- Bring the throwing hand out of the glove with a slight downward motion, pulling the ball back behind the head with the arm bent at 90° and the ball facing away from the target
- Be sure to step toward the target with a stride or crow hop to gain momentum and accuracy
- The glove hand will lead the way towards the target with the throwing hand following after

## Catching

- Catcher needs to be in a balanced squatted position
- Glove hand is held out as a target at the bottom of the zone or below the zone
- Throwing hand is held behind the catcher to protect it from foul balls
- Wrist is loose, and as the ball is coming in, the glove drops and motions in an upward path to catch the ball
- When giving signs to the pitcher, be sure to have your hands close to your body

## First Base

- Need to defend the triangle. Your key area is the triangle between the pitcher, the catcher, and first base.
- Your basic starting position is 12 feet behind the base and 8 feet towards the infield. This will allow time to get to the base before the runner so you can receive the ball.
- If you have a green runner, you should reduce to 8 and 8. Red runner can extend to 14 and 8.
- When a runner is on first, your right foot should be placed just on the home plate side of first base. Your left foot is in fair territory with your glove pointed out to the pitcher.
- Always communicate with pitcher when runners are on base, or you are changing your starting position.
- After a hit, find the base first, step on it with your arm side foot, and pivot to find the ball
- Do not start your stretch until the ball has been thrown towards you



## Bat Rules

### 8U (Rally Cap)

32" Long, 2-3/4" diam, Taped 16"

For minus 5 and above, all bats can be used.

### 11U (Mosquito – All Categories)

32" Long, 2-3/4" diam, Taped 16" No maximum length-weight differential

### 13U (Pee Wee – All Categories)

Only bats with a maximum diameter barrel of 2-3/4 inches with (i) a 1.15 BPF (Bat Performance Factor) or (ii) USA Baseball Model is permitted. For this division using up to a maximum length-weight differential of minus 10.

### 15U (Bantam AAA, AA Tier 1) Boys

Only wood bats, bamboo bats and wood composite bats will be allowed. Wood composite bats include wood bats with fiberglass sheathing and wood barreled bats with composite handles. Wood composite bats do not include any bat that has any metallic component.

### 15U (Bantam AA Tier 2, AA Tier 3, AA Tier 4, AA Tier 5) Boys

Bats constructed of aluminum, fiberglass, or magnesium with a maximum diameter barrel of 2-3/4 inches will be allowed and have a maximum length-weight differential of minus 5. (New for 2024)

### 16U (Bantam) Girls Baseball Canada Championship

Only bats with a maximum diameter barrel of 2-3/4 inches with (i) a 1.15 BPF (Bat Performance Factor) or (ii) USA Baseball Model is permitted. For this division using up to a maximum length-weight differential of minus 5.

### 18U (Midget AAA, AA Tier 1, AA Tier 2, AA Tier 3)

Only wood bats, bamboo bats and wood composite bats will be allowed. Wood composite bats include wood bats with fiberglass sheathing and wood barreled bats with composite handles. Wood composite bats do not include any bat that has any metallic component.

## Pitching Distance and Basepaths

	Rally Cap	11U	13U	15U	18U
Basepath	60'	60'	70'	80'	90'
Pitching Rubber	40'-42'	44'	48'	54'	60' 6"

## Pitch Count Limits

11U DIVISION										
ALL SEASON	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)
	<b>1 -25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26 - 40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41 - 55</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>56 - 65</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>66 -75</b>	<b>4</b>

- No curveballs allowed

13U DIVISION										
ALL SEASON	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)
	<b>1 -30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31 - 45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>46 - 60</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>61 - 75</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>76 -85</b>	<b>4</b>

- No curveballs before June 1st

15U DIVISION										
ALL SEASON	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)
	<b>1 -35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36 - 50</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>51 - 65</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>66 - 80</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>80 -95</b>	<b>4</b>

18U DIVISION										
ALL SEASON	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)	# of pitches	REST (Days)
	<b>1 -40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41 - 55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>56 - 70</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>71 - 85</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>86 -105</b>	<b>4</b>

1. Once a player assumes the position of pitcher, they cannot catch for the remainder of the day.
2. Pitchers shall be permitted to have 2 appearances in the same calendar day. If a pitcher requires a rest following 1<sup>st</sup> appearance, they cannot return in the same calendar day.
3. Pitchers cannot pitch in 3 games during a day.
4. Pitchers are allowed to pitch up to 3 consecutive days provided their pitch count total over the first two days does not exceed the minimum threshold for their age.
5. When the pitcher reaches the maximum number of pitches allowed (75, 85, 95, 105 and 115 pitches) during a day during a batters at-bat, they are allowed to complete the at-bat and must be replaced following that batter. The coach or manager needs to acknowledge this to the umpire at this moment prior to the next pitch.
6. Intentional Walks are allowed in 13U, 15U, 18U and 21U and will be included in Pitch Count totals. 11U does not allow intentional walks.
7. Required Rest shall be defined in “Days” starting at 12:01am and ending at 11:59 pm of the next calendar day.