



U7 Program Guide

St. Paul Minor Ball

April 26, 2026

1.0 Introduction

The primary goal of the U7 program is to introduce players to the fundamentals of the game in a fun environment while keeping the players engaged in a high amount of physical activity.

Parents are encouraged to stay and help their child participate. Coaches need as much help as possible at these ages!

Drills provided in this guide are merely suggested drills. Coaches can develop their own drills for practice as they like.

2.0 Equipment

Players in U7 will require a baseball glove and batting helmet and will use aluminium bats (provided by St. Paul Minor Ball). The game will be played with a soft core baseball with players hitting the ball off a tee.

3.0 Game Setup

The goal of St. Paul Minor Ball is to keep teams to 9 players or less.

Bases will be setup at a distance of approx 40 feet.

Score is not kept.

All players on the team will bat in each inning. Players will hit the ball off of the tee and run one base at a time. All players on the offensive team must be wearing batting helmets. While the defense can attempt to get runners out, there are no outs. Players will stay on base even if they are out.

Coaches can work together to plan practices and games as several teams will be using the fields together. It is recommended to focus on practice for at least the first week before starting to play games.

It is recommended to practice by splitting team into stations (depending on number of coaches) so players can get more reps to work on skills.

4.0 Learning Objectives

Fielding Technique

- Proper Stance
 - Feet shoulder width apart
 - Knees bent - weight should be forward on balls of feet
 - Head is up facing the ball
 - Keep your eyes on the ball until the ball is in the glove
- Proper Glove/Hand Position
 - Glove hand should be touching the dirt at an angle

- Throwing hand should be above the glove with the palm facing the ball
- Once the ball reaches the glove the top hand should cover the ball inside the glove (Alligator Hands)

Throwing Technique

- Proper Throwing Motion
 - Players start by facing the target
 - The foot of the glove hand should be closer to the target with the foot of the throwing hand back in the stance
 - Reach back with the throwing hand with elbow bent with hand up and wrist straight (make a muscle)
 - Ball is pointing away from player
 - Glove hand should be in front of the body
 - The glove hand foot should take a step toward the target and the back foot should pivot
 - Release the ball when throwing hand passes player's head

Batting Technique

- Proper Stance
 - Feet shoulder width apart
 - Square the feet to home plate - you can draw a line in the dirt to show the players where to stand
 - Bend the knees slightly
 - Grip the bat with the fingers, not tightly with the palm of the hand. A relaxed grip is preferred
 - Square the shoulders to the feet
 - Elbows should be slightly bent and relaxed near body
- Proper Swing Motion
 - Load and transfer - begin the swing with a small step toward the pitcher. Foot flighting moves forward while they move hands back with the bat.
 - Can tell the kids to imagine they have a rubber band tied from their front foot to the bottom of the bat and they want to stretch this out.
 - Stance should remain closed - do not step out towards third base
 - Eyes should remain on the ball through impact
 - Proper stance and swing should be balanced
- Hitting from the Tee
 - Tee should be belt high
 - Kids should not hit up on the ball
 - Hit through the ball
 - Drop bat, do not throw bat

Catching Technique

- Proper Catching Position
 - Players start by facing the target
 - The foot of the glove hand should be closer to the target
 - Glove hand should be eye level and out in front of the body
 - Fingers up and palm facing the target
 - Elbow should be bent slightly and arm should be in position to make a full circle in front of the body
 - Other hand should also be up and close to the glove once caught

- Players with less experience may want to catch the ball with the palm up and fingers down. This is okay as they develop
- The goal is to practice with the palm facing the target
- Balls thrown to players above the belly should be caught with fingers up. Balls thrown to players below the belly should be caught with fingers down.

Base Running Technique

- Teach players to stand with left leg on base
- Start with relaxed stance with hands on knees
- Ready stance - knees bent and arms up
- Players should start running by crossing over their left foot over their right foot
- Teach starting low and then getting tall after first couple strides
- Arm motion - thumb to nose, thumb to hip, repeat
- Home to First
 - Runners should learn to run as fast as they can when running from home to first
 - They can run over the base after touching it and should turn toward the fence when returning to first
 - Avoid sliding
 - Players should be taught to touch the bag every time

Learn the Positions

- Walk each player through the positions
- Start with 1st Base, 2nd Base, Shortstop, 3rd Base, Pitcher, Catcher, Outfield
- Communicate name of each base and position
- Where player stands in relation to base while player is batting
- Hula Hoops or cones can be used to help identify where to stand
- Area to cover when the ball is hit
- Emphasis to only cover their area
- Important factors to teach as the year progresses
 - What to do if ball is hit to their position (assuming the play is throw to first base)
 - Importance of always paying attention
 - Return back to position after each play
 - Where to go when runners are running
 - When to hold the ball

Discuss Basic Concept of Baseball/Softball

- Team on Defense - team in the field
 - Objective is to stop the batting team from scoring runs
 - Various ways to get outs
- Team on Offense - team batting
- Objective is to hit the ball so the defense can't get it
- Get to the bases before the defense gets you out
- Importance to running fast to the bases and staying on the base
- Review basic rules

5.0 Practice Drills

Infield Ground Ball Drills

- Basic Ground Ball Drill
 - One line behind SS position
 - Have one player at a time step up to the SS position
 - Roll ground balls to the player and have them field the ball and throw back to you
- Side to Side Ground Ball Drill
 - Same as basic but roll the balls left and right of the player to make them move to get in front of the ball
 - Want to get player to move in front of the ball instead of reaching out with the glove
- Plays at First - Ground Ball Drill
 - Form one line behind 2B
 - Have one player at a time move in the 2B position and have a coach/parent stand on 1B
 - Roll ground ball to 2B. Player should field the ball and make a throw to 1B
- Plays at First - Side to Side Ground Ball Drill
 - Form one line behind 2B
 - Have one player at a time move in the 2B position and have a coach/parent stand on 1B
 - Roll ground ball to the left and right of player to make them move in front of the ball. Player should field the ball and make a throw to 1B
- Plays at Second - Ground Ball Drill
 - Form one line behind SS
 - Have one player at a time step up into SS position
 - Have another player in 2B position
 - Roll ground ball to player at SS and have them field the ball and make throw to 2B
 - Make sure player at 2B moves to the base to make the catch
- Hands Drill
 - Put the glove down and have the kids field the ball with their bare hands
 - Roll the ball to them and have them focus on using their hands to get the ball
 - Can use tennis ball
- Alligator Drill
 - Roll ground ball to player and have them make an alligator out of their arms
 - Bottom arm with the glove is the jaw and top arm without glove is the head
 - When balls rolls in have them act like the alligator is biting or eating the ball. Both arms come together.
- Triangle Drill
 - Have 2-4 pliers form a quarter circle around coach
 - Each player should stand with their feet just outside shoulder width
 - In the dirt draw a triangle using their feet as the base
 - Have them put their hands together and extend out in front of them touching the dirt. This will create the triangle.
 - Roll a ball to each player and have them field the ball and toss back to you, while keeping the triangle intact (feet in place with hands in front)
 - Continue around the group for several minutes
 - Speed the drill up as the players advance

Throwing Drills

- Proper Form Drill
 - Without a ball, have the players get into throwing position and talk them through each step
 - Repeat with the ball. Do not be too concerned about where the ball goes. During this drill the form is most important
- Helmet Drill
 - Use a basic ground ball drill but set up a tee with a helmet on it. After the player fields the ball, have them make a throw to hit the helmet
 - Helmet is used because it gives the player a target at their level to help with accuracy
 - Can also stack two empty buckets on top of each other or place a different object on the tee (ie. soccer ball)
- Kids Throwing to Coaches
 - Get a bucket of balls and have the player stand with the bucket
 - Start at 10 feet away and have the player throw all ten balls to the coach. Coach should reinforce proper technique during the drill. Goal is to get the player to throw a straight ball toward the coach.
 - Extend the distance based on skill level
- Kids Throwing to Kids
 - This is a drill that can be used as the players improve. This provides them with experience both catching and throwing the ball.
 - Start at distances which can be successful. 10 feet away is good starting point
 - Tennis balls work well when starting
- Kids Throw at Coach
 - Have kids in line along foul line with several balls each. Can also mix in different types of balls (tennis balls, wiffle balls, foam balls)
 - Coach stands at a distance in the field with his back to players
 - Coach yells "Go!" and players all throw at the coach attempting to hit him in the back. Kids seems to get excited to throw balls at a coach!
- Fielding Ground Balls and Throwing
 - Line up a group of players facing the coach
 - Have players receive a ground ball, stand up and make throw back to coach.
 - Roll three balls to the player before rotating
 - Extend the distance as the players improve
 - Increase the pace of the drill as the players improve

Batting Drills

- Fence Drill
 - Place tee 4' from the back stop
 - Line up players so that they hit the ball into the back stop
 - Place ball on the tee
 - Have the batter drive the ball straight into the fence
 - Focus on fundamentals of the swing
 - Good stance, proper hand position, good swing through contact and correct finish
 - Can use wiffle balls or tennis balls
 - Set up 2-3 stations to allow multiple batters at once
- Dot on the Ball
 - Draw a dot on the ball about the size of a quarter

- Place the ball on the tee so that the dot is pointing straight back and is visible to player
- When batting have the player focus on hitting the dot while driving the ball forward
- Can be done into the fence or into the field
- Directional Hitting
 - Drill can be done in the field once players have progressed and are making good swings
 - Place tee at home plate and have player line up to the plate with the proper stance
 - Provide the batter with a direction to hit the ball (3B, 1B, etc)
 - Make sure they rotate their body and square their hips to the direction they are hitting
 - Have the player hit to each position once before rotating
- Cone Contest
 - Game to help improve batting while having fun!
 - Place 4 cones at 4 different positions in the field
 - First Cone - just in front of pitcher's mound (1 point)
 - Second Cone - between pitcher's mound and 2B (2 points)
 - Third Cone - at back of infield dirt (3 points)
 - Fourth Cone - 20 feet past the third cone (4 points)
 - Each player gets four hits and records their score based on the points
 - Player with highest total wins
 - Can also be played in a team format
- Batting/Infield Practice
 - Each player takes a position on the field with remaining players going to bat (need four batters)
 - One batter makes four hits with fielders making a play to first on each hit - on the fourth hit the batter will run to first
 - Next batter comes up and completes their bat and runs to first (player at first runs to second)
 - Continue with batters until the first batter comes home
 - The batter that just came home will rotate into the infield at pitcher. Pitcher will move to first base, first to second, second to SS, SS to third, third to OF (depending on number of players)
 - Drill gives all players the chance to bat and play a different position

Catching Drills

- Proper Form Drill
 - Without a ball - have the players get into catching position and talk them through each step
 - Show the players by making a full circle in front of your body with your catching hand. Have the players copy you
- Coach to Player Catch
 - With young players it is important to start slowly with catching. Confidence is the key to the kids developing their catching skills
 - Have player stand about 10 feet from coach
 - Line up 3-4 players per coach
 - Coach throws ball at the glove and player is asked to watch the ball into the glove
 - Encourage players

- Important for coaches to throw accurately
- Tennis balls can also be used
- Soft Toss Catch
 - Players start by facing the target without a glove
 - Coach softly tosses a ball to the player who attempts to catch with bare hands
 - Player should attempt to catch with two hands away from the body
 - Fingers up and palm facing the target
 - Drill is done at close distances
 - After a few successful tosses and catches, have players put on glove
 - Drill can be done with a tennis ball

Base Running Drills

- Runner to First Base for a Single
 - Line up players at home plate
 - With a bat (no ball), have the players take a swing and run to first
 - Make sure they do not throw the bat
 - Should place the bat down and run as fast as they can to first base
 - Make sure they run through the base and return to first properly

6.0 Progression Options

As player skills develop, coaches can choose to increase the difficulty of the drills for players that are showing significant development. For example, coaches may choose to start introducing coach pitch to players towards the end of the season if they show that they are ready for it.