Parents and Coaches,

The purpose of this manual is to help all coaches plan and provide baseball practices that will be fun for the kids, keep interest and develop them as players. We stress the word “help” because we do not intend for you to follow this page by page, rather hope you can extract some good ideas to enhance your own practice sessions. Over the years, we have tried many styles and approaches, for all age levels. This manual brings to you, the benefit of that experience; avoiding what has failed and using what works. What we hope to accomplish is to establish a fun and competitive league, help our Fox Point kids develop into baseball players ready for the next level, and to assure Fox Point is as competitive as it can be in tournament play.

Parents, we appreciate your interest in Fox Point Baseball, and your children surely appreciate the opportunity you are giving them to play. As coaches, we will do our best to make this a fun and rewarding experience for your child. However, we cannot stress how beneficial parental involvement can be, whether helping with the team or league, having a catch in the back yard, or just being there at the practices and games to provide support for them. Our experience is, the more support you can provide, the better experience for your young player.

Coaches, we appreciate your voluntary time and effort. This booklet is intended to help you be the best coach possible. Whether you use the actual drills and practice plans or not, is your choice. Regardless, the important thing is to apply these concepts and always remember your mission as a coach; is to develop the younger player so that they will have the confidence and desire to keep playing, and the ability to advance to higher levels. The contents of this manual are designed to help make that happen.

Contrary to belief, the practice part of baseball can actually be more fun than games, and practice is certainly more valuable in the development of a young player. There are three primary but simple objectives of practice:

1. Make it fun for all of the kids (not just the stars).
2. Keep it moving at all times with many opportunities to touch the ball.
3. Have a lesson plan and a plan for drills.

This booklet provides specific drills for teaching hitting, fielding, pitching, catching, and base running. The overall lesson plans are targeted for the Rookie League level players and Minors. However, the concepts can be applied to T-Ball and Majors. In addition, we are providing a Coaches Field Manuals as a companion to this manual which are division specific and include the drills described in Chapter 4 and practice session in Chapter 5.

Good luck, thank you, and let’s play ball.
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Chapter One

League Organization and Division Objectives

Season Objectives
Babe Ruth Baseball, and almost any other formal league for youth begins at age 5 and continues until age 12. Within these age brackets, there are four divisions of competition. First is T-Ball (tee-ball), then Rookie League, next minors, and finally the majors. After that point, and from ages 13 to 15, many other versions of league play are available, including at Fox Point.

T-Ball is for ages 5 & 6; where kids are introduced to the game, learn very basic fundamentals such as how to hold and swing a bat, field positions, how to field a ball, and how to throw. At this point, there is very little game concept, batting is from a tee, and the ability to catch a thrown ball is very limited. The next level is Rookie League, where kids begin to learn important fundamentals and how the game is played. Before entering Rookie League, it is best if the kids know the basics; where bases and positions are, how to wear a glove, how to step and throw, and how to hit a ball off a tee consistently.

Rookie League, primarily for ages 7 & 8, is our first target for real instruction and the level that our drills and practices are best suited for. Rookie League is considered an instructional league, with the objectives of having fun and getting ready for the minors. After completing Rookie League, every player should know the basics of baseball, be able to catch, throw, and hit a pitch from a coach. The following drills are designed to help make this happen. One suggestion for instructional ball, make the player complete the play in the field. For example, if a grounder goes to short, even if the runner is already safe, make the throw. This give the shortstop practice as well as the first basemen.

Minor level baseball is a much more complicated game and for the first time, the players will play with rules similar to professional baseball. The age group is 9 and 10. There are real umpires, the kids pitch, and there is base stealing. To enter this level, each player must understand the basics of baseball, be able to hit a coach pitched ball, and be able to field, catch, and throw. Players must go through tryouts and are drafted by coaches on to teams. There are some league specific rules to assure development and monitor game enrichment.

The majors, is for players who are ages 11 and 12, and some exceptional 10 year olds. This is the real deal and follows Babe Ruth Baseball rules.

Overall, no matter what division we are in, the objective for each level is for the kids to have fun, but as important is for the kids to build confidence. To build confidence, it is our job as a coach to teach them and make them work at developing and improving skills. At times we will have to push them beyond what they think they can do. If we can do this, they will gain confidence. That confidence will erase stress and result in fun.
Chapter Two
Practice Basics & Coaching Tips

Practice Preparation
First rule of thumb; you should never “go it alone”. Before the season begins, a team Manager should assemble a dedicated team of coaches, at least two. Before each practice, the coaching staff should have a preplanned practice session with all available coaches having defined assignments. This will assure a good practice that will keep the kids interested. This booklet will provide many drill options and preplanned practice sessions.

Parent Preparation and Conduct
Before the first practice, review team objectives with all parents and players so that they know what you are doing and why. Many parents may think they know more than the coach, or may not understand what you are doing. Talk to them often and invite them to help. Finally, encourage parent to stay with their child during practice. This is required for T-Ball and Rookie League, and encouraged for older divisions. This is important for two reasons. First is safety. Parents must understand, this is not a baby-sitting or childcare service. If a player gets injured, the parents need to be there to assist. Second, it is very encouraging and rewarding to the player to know the parent is there “with them”. Finally, the parents should be informed, you are the Manager, not them. You make the decisions, and most important, you handle any disputes with umpires. Good conduct is expected. Bad conduct is a bad example for the kids, and will not be tolerated by the league.

Practice Safety
Baseball can be a dangerous sport with many potential hazards. However, these hazards can be prevented if the coach defines clear safety rules and maintains a “zero tolerance” if these rules are not followed. Suggested rules:

1. **Never throw a ball if the receiver is not looking** – Many times, especially at the T-Ball and Rookie League levels, kids with “pick up and throw” with no regard for what or who is on the other end. The rule here is whenever you throw a ball, make sure the person catching is looking and ready for a throw.
2. **Never throw a ball toward a group** – Another hazard is when one player throws a ball to another who is in front of a group. If he/she misses, someone gets hit. Especially in drills, the waiting line should be off to the side of a throw, and all waiting players should be instructed to keep their eye on the play.
3. **Warm ups should be organized** – When kids arrive, they will find another player and start throwing. This is good, however must be organized. The kids should be in pairs of two (no triangles) and set up with one on the foul line and the other in the outfield, all in a row. This avoids other players getting hit by bad throws.
4. **Never throw a bat** – When batting, never throw the bat. There are drills you can use (make them carry it to the coach ½ way down the line) until they learn.
5. **No roughhousing in dugouts** – Players should remain on the bench and watching the game. There should be not bats in the dugout and no playing catch. As a suggestion, it is recommended there is not gum or food as this leads to distraction. In addition, we suggest for T-Ball and Rookie League, a parent or coach be in the dugout at all times.

6. **On deck batters swing out of dugout or in separate batting box** – The on deck batter is the only player who should have a bat, and should be in a separate batting box. No other player is permitted in that box for any reason.

7. **Getting hit with the pitch** – In baseball players get hit. Teach the kids to plan to swing at every pitch (yes, yes, maybe concept). This will help them get out of the way or turn into the pitch.

8. **Pay Attention at all times** – Try to teach kids to pay attention at all times. They learn more and they are more ready when wild throws occur. Establish a basic rule: When the coach talks, all eyes are on the coach. During drills, there should be no “side activities or conversation among players.

9. **Organization** - When the player arrive at practice, it is best if the coach is already there, the equipment is in place, and warm-ups are conducted in an orderly manor.

10. **The players must drink plenty of fluids** - For each practice; make sure the players have plenty of hydration breaks and plenty of water or sports drinks available. Water breaks should be often, especially in hot weather. Sodas, fruit juices, gum, and any food should be discouraged.

**Behavior Discipline**

Discipline and how you apply it are critical to a fun and successful season. This sounds serious or mean but its not. This is important because you can easily loose control of a team or practice” or more serious, someone can get hurt. On the first day of practice, each coach will be “sizing up his players”. Guess what, each player is sizing up the coach as well. Day one is when you will either gain control or loose control of your team for the season.

1. Establish rules and review them with all players. Some coaches actually have players sign a “code of conduct”. That way they know the expectations.
2. Be consistent. Do not make up rules as you go along or change them. The players will get confused, and loose respect for you and the “important rules”.
3. Remember you are a coach first, not a friend. Treat all kids (skilled / challenged) and (obedient / problem) the same. It is ok to be a friend to the kids, but that should not replace your primary role.
4. Try to avoid embarrassing or disciplining a player in public, never touch a player or use force, and never yell at a player. (It is humiliating for the player and may cause a confrontation you do not want.) If a problem arises, the Manager should remove himself and the player from the team, and deal with the issue as needed. It is preferred the coach deals with the issue and parents do not get involved unless asked. (This is another reason why other coaches and parents are needed.)
5. Discipline for bad or disruptive behavior should not be confused with “baseball mistakes.” Discipline is needed to reinforce behavior, not develop ability. If applied for behavior it should be minor such as “no batting practice”, “one or two laps around the field”, or “sitting out a drill or two”. Never make a player do anything that is degrading or potentially harmful (such as “drop and give me 100” or “no water break”). If there are more severe events to deal with, the player should be removed from the team and the situation handled by the league and parents.

Practice and Game Corrective Action – “Mistakes”
Mistakes on the field or lack of ability should never, never, never be disciplined. Remember, the league is for the kids, about the kids, and should be fun for the kids. When mistakes are made, there are two ways to make it a positive and even fun experience. There are many schools of thought on this. Some support only pulling the player aside and discussing what they could do better. Others like to use mistakes as learning tools for the team. We suggest both.

1. Games – After the play, and in the dugout, pull the player aside and discuss what was done right and what could have been done better. After that, inform the player you want to share the learning opportunity with the team if appropriate. Never embarrass a kid in the field, never pull a kid during an inning, never change a position because of a mistake, and unless a pitching change, try to avoid position switches. This can destroy developing self-confidence.

2. Practice – Inform the players in the first practice, as mistakes are made, they will be used as learning experiences for everyone. If they know you will be doing that, they will not be embarrasses when it happens to them. (However try not to correct one individual more than others and share the “intervention”.) When a mistake is made, stop action immediately. If you wait, they will not remember what they did wrong. Try to make it fun (or funny) as you can when you make it a team issue. Let the player be part of the discussion. Let them tell you what was done right and what needs improvement.

3. Mistakes – There are physical mistakes and mental mistakes. Physical mistakes should never be addressed, especially if the fundamentals were there. In fact, this is a good time for a “pat on the back” and encouragement. If the fundamental were not there, apply the private, then team discussion. However, mental errors are a coaches “night mare”. This is a time for the “10-count” self restraint. Once a player makes the mistake, usually they know. Back in the dugout is where to deal with it.

4. Placing Blame – Never place blame for a game or big inning on anyone. In fact, if it happens, make sure you point out the positives and make it a team loss, with team blame. Encourage parents to do the same. Remember, winning or loosing a game is not important, a developing player’s confidence and self esteem is all that matters. We should teach them to learn from mistakes, not dwell on them.
Drill Suggestions

In drills, it is recommended the players be split up in smaller groups or stations. This will reduce “waiting” time for turns and assure more touches of the ball during practice.

Touch time (the numbers of times a player touches the ball, or is involved in a play) is most critical to practice success and building individual fundamentals. If drills are conducted as a team, realistically players may only get 10-15 touches per practice and this is not enough. Further, the waiting time leads to boredom and reduced focus. When players are split up in groups, they can get more one-on-one instruction and up to 50 touches per practice.

Another suggestion is when running fielding drills, it is suggested bats are not used, rather the coach throws the ball to assure you control where the ball goes. However, this is up to the coach.

Fundamentals

Nothing is more important in baseball that fundamentals. When kids are young, they develop “comfort habits” based on what is comfortable, what works, or may have worked once. It is our job as a coach to “erase these bad habits” and teach fundamentals.

While it is important to encourage and celebrate a player’s success, it is more damaging in the long run to reward the outcome, rather than the correct behavior. Especially in Rookie League, which is an instructional level. At this level, even if they make the play but do it wrong, you should take the opportunity to instruct the player on how it should have been done. (Note – there are correct ways and wrong ways to do this and we discuss this later, just remember, never yell at or embarrass a young player) If not, as the player advances, he/she will be more challenged as the competition and expectations increase. It is better to “nip it in the bud” at the youngest age possible. As stated in Chapter 2, for the kids to have fun, they need confidence. To feel confidence, they need repetitive success. To achieve this success, they need fundamentals.

The three basic fundamentals include throwing, catching, and fielding a ground ball. In addition, we will spend time on batting. These must be reinforced at all levels and this booklet provides technical instruction and drills to help you do this. Please note, there are volumes of books on each of these areas, and this booklet is not intended to “tell all”. Rather, it will give you some basics in key areas and fundamentals to work on.

Practice Drills

Practice drills are designed to reinforce fundamentals and practice components of plays. Kids love batting practice and scrimmages. However, as practice time is limited, you and the kids will be better served if you focus on drills, rather than scrimmages. Chapter 4 provides many drill options. Following are basic techniques and baseball fundamentals. You will note, our discussion on pitching catching is very limited. The reason, these two positions are very complex and can not be covered at this level of detail. Further,
coaching these positions should be done with guidance from experienced coaches to avoid developing “wrong habits” and to avoid damage to a young pitcher’s arm.

**Batting Technique**

Batting is difficult, even if done right, but more difficult if done wrong. One key to hitting, always think “yes” on every pitch, and even if you are “signaled to take a pitch” be ready and prepared just the same. Here are some batting tips.

**Grip:**
- Grip bat with fingers, not the palms of the hands. Middle knuckles should be lined up. (You can use rotated box grip if uncomfortable.) The bat should be held loosely, as if holding a bird you don’t want to get away, but you don’t want to hurt either. Then tightened up as the ball is pitched.

**Stance:**
There are three stances and three versions of each; neutral, slightly closed, slightly open. Within each, the player can be crouched down, slight crouch, or almost straight up. Fundamentally, we suggest neutral with a slight crouch. However, each batter is different and slight alterations for comfort are should be expected and “allowed”.
- The stance begins with the feet square, slightly wider than shoulders. If open or closed, no more than ½ foot length.
- For the right crouch, have the player jump up as high as they can with a bat in their hands. How they land is an indication of a good balanced stance for them.
- The feet are parallel to the front and back lines of the box.
- The feet should be far enough back so the bat passes slightly across the outer edge of the plate when the arms are extended.
- Knees should be bent slightly, weight on the balls of the foot, with weight shifted to the back foot.
- Upper body is slightly bent forward.
- Eyes should be focused on the pitcher, head down with chin on front shoulder.
- The bat grip should be held between shoulders. 45-degree angle preferred. Elbows should be out from the body with the forearms in an upside down “V”. Many suggest the back elbow up and horizontal to ground - this is wrong because it hinders the proper swing.
- Suggest a small rocking of the bat or body groove rather than standing still. This relaxes the batter and improves reaction time.

**Stride and Swing:**
The stride and swing are most important to becoming a good hitter and where a player can gain power and bat speed. It is complicated and there are many additional tips that can be added to these basic concepts.
- As the pitcher begins his forward motion (not backward rock) and his front foot moves forward, “be ready”. If they tend to bail out, place a bat behind them in practice. This forces them to move forward.
- At this time, hands move up 3 or 4 inches, as the ball is released. (part of the swing)
- It is not necessary to stride, but if a player does, it should be small and before the swing. The step initiates the swing and should be no more than 6” to 12” and very soft.
The legs and hips initiate the swing. This is important for power.
As the hitter shifts weight from back to front, the back foot pivots and knee rotates.
The front foot remains straight and firm, the shoulders open and the hands come down and through the swing. Swing down and through, not uppercut.
The head should remain still. As the shoulders rotate, the chin begins on the front shoulder and finishes on the back shoulder.
Arms should be extended and contact should be made in front of home plate.
The eyes should follow the ball to contact or the catcher's glove.
Complete the swing, drop the bat and run without looking at the ball.

**Fielding Ready Position**
The first and most important rule is a player must pay attention at all times, on every pitch. This is most important for infielders.
On each play, the infielder should start in the ready position. (During games the coach can remind them “ready position”.) The feet should be about shoulder width or wider, on the ball of the foot, knees bent, shoulders square leaning slightly forward, butt low, and head up looking at strike zone. The arms should be out in front, with the hands above and in front of the knees.
Between pitches, the fielders should relax and not “stand still”. Keep loose but be “in the ready position” as soon as the pitcher is set. If the pitcher works fast, teach them to rest hands on the knees, then get in “ready” when the pitcher is set.
Outfielders should be square to the infield, however, left and right fielders may tend to angle their position. That should be discouraged. It is ok for outfielders to keep their hands on their knees, during the pitch.
Infield Fielding Technique
Before attempting that double play, fielding technique must be learned. No matter what age group, fundamentals and repetition are a must. Every practice should include many repetitive drills on fielding. Infield technique is different for each position, but the basics are all the same.

- Start in “Ready Position”, feet wider than shoulders, balanced on balls of feet, legs bent and butt low. You can have hands on knees to start.
- As the pitcher begins to release the ball, hands should be out, knee high. Eyes on the strike zone.
- When the ball is hit the fielder must move to the ball. This is important to reinforce. Move to the ball, charge if slow in front, sideways to spot of intercept.
- Keep body low to keep glove low, most errors go under the glove.
- Glove should be down and open, touching the ground (exaggerate this), and the throwing hand on top looking like an alligator.
- Keep eyes on the ball, look it into the glove.
- Control the ball, pick out of the glove and sight the target.
- Arm back, then step to target as you throw. Eyes stay on the target.
- Note, discourage and “fancy moves”. Reinforce fundamentals. Remember, the play must be consistent and the receiver must catch the ball. The receiver needs consistent motion from the thrower.
- Keep the ball in front of you at all times. Do not wait and extend for a play.

Throwing
The best fundamental is “turn, step, and throw”. Teach the kids to throw over the top.

- First, get control of the ball, glove up to back shoulder, then out of the glove.
- Eyes must be on the target.
- Bring throwing arm back, glove arm extends in front toward target.
- Step with glove side foot to the target, then throw.
- Follow through on your throw, arm extended, and keep the eyes on the target.
- Stay ready for any continued play.
- Note, the crow hop can be applied by kicking the lead foot with the back foot, and the front foot leads in a hopping motion. This is a fundamental needed for outfield play, and can help very young infielders get more energy in the throw.
- Teach older players (8 and older) to pick up ball with two fingers and a thumb and place fingers over seams to gain a more accurate throw.
Outfield Basics

- Start in “Ready Position”, feet wider than shoulder, balanced on balls of feet, legs bent.
- As the pitcher begins to release the ball, hands should be out, knee high. Eyes on the strike zone, same as an infielder. (You can keep hands on knees longer if tired).
- When the ball is hit the outfielder must move to the ball. This is important to reinforce. The first step should be back, to gage the ball. The next should be a cross over step in the direction of the ball.
- Eyes remain on the ball. (Promise the fielder the “ground” will always be there, they don’t need to look at it.)
- Most important, get under the ball, do not wait and extend for the catch. (Many young outfielders will try this.) The glove should be down until you get to the spot of the catch.
- Keep eyes on the ball, look it into the glove. Glove should be up and between the elbow and side of the face. (No basket catches.)
- Control the ball, pick out of the glove and sight the target.
- Arm back, then step to target as you throw. Eyes stay on the target.
- Outfield throw is slightly different. Take a “hop off the back foot”. This is called the crow hop. On the hop, the back foot kicks the right (the hop) and on the stride, transfer weight from back to front and accelerate the throw over the top of the shoulder. The back leg should “whip around”. This gives the throw momentum and accuracy. Note, discourage and “fancy moves”. Reinforce fundamentals. Remember, the play must be consistent and the receiver must catch the ball. The receiver needs consistent motion from the thrower.
- For ground balls, the important concept is “stay in front of the ball”. When ball is hit, charge the ball, then get on glove side knee, glove down and field with two hands, pick up ball, then crow hop the throw.

Catching (Not Catcher)

Learning to catch is as difficult as batting. This takes time, and patience for the fielder and well as the coach.

- The fielder should have shoulders square to the throw, eyes on the ball, and in a ready, but relaxed position. The glove should be up about chest high, arm bent, and away from body.
- As the ball approaches, step toward the approaching ball with the “glove foot”.
- The glove should “move to the ball” not wait for it.
- As the ball hits the glove, squeeze and pull the ball and glove toward you.
- Note, different positions and plays require different approaches. These techniques are basic fundamentals.
- The rainbow drill is designed to teach proper glove location and very basic fundamental catching skills.
**Pitching Basics**

Pitching is very complex. Because a young pitcher's arm is still growing, there is great risk in hurting a young player's arm if technique is not properly applied or if the pitcher is overworked. Following are very basic fundamentals, however we stress, only those with pitching knowledge should attempt to teach pitching. There are many good pitching books available, and many other coaches can assist you if needed.

- At a young age, accuracy is very important and many young pitchers will throw side arm and out of the stretch. This is ok, in games, however, as they develop, emphasize proper technique to assure a quality pitcher reaches his/her potential.
- Suggest the pitcher limit his/her selection to a changeup or fastball. This is better for a growing arm and much easier to control.
- Using the rubber is needed to gain power for your legs and transfer that energy to the pitch. Many young kids resist using the rubber, make them use it.
- Place back foot in comfortable position, ball of foot inside the rubber.
- Stance should be open, not too wide. Gather arms, pitching hand on ball in glove.
- Eyes should be on target.
- Get set and catch a breath. The pitcher should try to be relaxed but ready.
- Start wind-up, rock back, rubber foot pivots as pitcher starts windup. The “glove knee” comes up waist high (does not have to be a high wind up) and back knee bends.
- The front foot strides with toes pointing toward the plate. The rear foot pushes off rubber. As the arms separate, pitching arm is back “reach towards center field”, and the glove arm moves down and away.
- As weight is transferred from the back to the front, the pitcher should lean forward to help gain a low strike.
- Throw through the ball, with complete follow-through with back foot coming forward to assume fielding position as the weight is transferred from back to front.
- After follow-through, the glove should be back, the pitching arm down, and the knees bent.
- After the pitch, bring the glove forward fast and up, and move glove side leg up to get in ready fielding position.

**Catching (Catcher) Basics**

The catcher position is very complex, but you can begin teaching fundamentals as soon as Rookie League. Make sure and child catching is in full gear at any level. The following tips are very basic.

- Position catcher behind plate, far enough behind to avoid contact with the batter in a full swing. (Catch must be aware of batters location if back in the box.)
- Position should be a full squat, with the glove out in front, chest high, making a good target for the pitcher.
- The throwing hand should be behind the back (to protect from foul balls).
• Older catchers should learn to move with desired pitch location. (Wait till pitcher is in windup so batter does not see location.)
• The catch must provide a good a still target for the pitcher.

Catcher (Continued)
• The catcher waits for the ball, not move toward it or reach out in front.
• For inside and outside pitches, teach catchers to “frame” the pitch by moving the glove back in strike zone after the catch.
• After catch, stand up, and make accurate throw to pitcher (the pitcher should not have to chase balls).
• For base stealing, catcher does not remove mask. Stand up, glove put in front, arm cocked with ball at “ear level”, step and throw.
• For pop-ups and ground balls, throw off mask and make the play.
• Practice in blocking wild pitches is needed. Catcher should move to block a low through, right or left with glove down if possible. It may help many young catchers to “fall to their knees” like a hockey goalie to help with blocking the ball. The goal is to keep the ball in front of the catcher.
Chapter Four
Drills

Before starting any drills, the basic fundamentals must be learned, and then applied in the drills. Chapter Three, provides the fundamentals that should be reinforced by these drills. Most of practice is drills. Most drills should be in small manageable groups as often as possible to keep the kids in action.

Catching and Throwing Drills
This drill is designed for T-Ball and Rookie League age players who are learning to catch and throw. For safety reasons, at this age, playing catch should be with a coach, not another player. Limit to 4 to 6 players per 2 coaches.

CT-1. Form Throwing - 20 minutes
- Line up all players. Together follow coach step by step direction. Repeat each step 10 times.
- Next, each player throws to the coach, one at a time. One coach is behind players to correct motions, the other about 15 feet away to catch the throw. Back coach places ball in fielders glove. Fielder “secures” ball, moves glove over throwing shoulder and turns body sideways. Then kicks front foot with back foot, separates hands (glove forward, ball back) take step forward with front foot toward target and throw. Teach older players to throw with two fingers across seams. Repeat 10 –20 throws each.
CT-2. Form Catching, Rainbow – 20 minutes
Catching is the hardest skill to learn, especially for young players. For those afraid of the ball, use a tennis ball until confidence is achieved.

- Line up all players. Together follow coach step-by-step direction placing glove in front facing up at chest level. Then move the glove like a rainbow from left, to center, to right. Repeat each step 10 times.
- Next, each player will catch 3 throws from the coach (left, center, and right), one player at a time. One coach is behind players to correct motions (and get missed balls), the other about 10 to 15 feet away to make the throws. Fielder makes catch and throws back to the coach. Repeat 5 to 10 rounds each.

CT-3. Throwing and Catching – 15 minutes
- Line up all players in groups of 3 all facing same direction, one coach for each 3 players. The players should be apart as far as their extended arms.
- One coach stands about 15 feet away from players, and plays catch with 3 players. Coach corrects motions. Repeat 20 throws each.

CT-4. Base to Base Throwing – 20 minutes
- Split squad drill, player on each bag, tries to throw around the horn to next bag. The goal is to throw straight; younger players can bounce it there if needed.
Outfield Drills

As the players advance, outfield play becomes more critical to game success than infield play. Many players will resist outfield as a demotion. Assure that they know this is not true.

**OF-1. Learn to Catch Drill**

Outfielder – 10 minutes per drill, 4 or 5 players, 1 or 2 coaches

Set-up: one fielder in ready position. All others are behind the coach in line. Coach will throw fly ball to one spot. Fielder will run to the spot and catch the ball. Coach will repeat drill to fielders right, left, in front, and overhead. The drill can be done with a tennis ball for younger players.

**OF-2. Catch and Relay Drill**

Outfielders and 2B – 15 minutes drill, full team or split squad

Set-up: One line of outfielders, one line of 2B, about 25 yards apart.

2B starts with back to the play. Coach throws fly ball to the outfielder, 2B turns and gets to relay position with hand out. Outfielder catches and throws relay to 2B. Outfielder goes to 2B line, 2B tosses ball to coach and goes to outfield line.

**OF-3. I got it Drill**

Outfielders – 15 minutes per drill, full team or split squad.

Set-up: Two lines of fielders about 10 yards apart, near outfield fence. First two players step up in ready position.

Coach hits ball, one player calls the ball, one player backs up (you want them to learn to make a decision). Make catch and throw back to coach immediately. As players get better, speed up drill with quick throw back. For younger players, use a tennis ball and tennis racket to hit high fly balls until confidence develops.

**OF-4. Cut Off Drills**

Outfielders, 2B, and Catcher – 20 minutes, full team.

Rotate 4 infielders (2 @ SS, 2 @ 2B), 2 catchers, all others outfield. Each option is a series of plays with fielders in position. Options are separate drills. Objective is to teach outfielder to throw to cutoff man or the right base and to have cut off and base lined up.

Have player covering second base direct the cutoff player “right/left/stop” to line up throw.

Option 1 - Coach hits (or throws) fly or ground ball in the hole to outfielder, on right side. Field the ball, step and throw to cut off 2B. SS covers 2B and yells “cut 4” (home). 2B throws home to catcher. Switch, hitting ball to left side, SS and 2B switch roles.

Option 2 – Coach hits ball directly to fielder. Fielder throws to SS covering 2B. (This is a priority in game situations.) The catchers play pitcher. The SS gets the ball to the pitcher.

Option 3 – Coach hits ball directly to fielder. Fielder does crow hop and throws home.

Option 4 – Coach hits ball directly to fielder. Fielder throws to 3B.
**OF-5. Crow Hop Drill**

Full team using entire field or split squad. Half players in outfield, half at home. (If split squad, outfielders in LF and catchers in RF).
Coach hits grounder or fly ball to fielder.
Fielders get ball, crow hops, then throws ball to catcher.
Fielder “secures” ball, moves glove over throwing shoulder and turns body sideways.
Back foot kicks front foot (this is the hop), front foot steps forward toward target.
Separate hands (glove forward, ball back) take step forward with front foot toward target.
Release the ball with arm extended. Repeat 10 –20 throws each. Rotate players.

**OF-6. Relay Drill**

This is a coach’s favorite, and hard work for the kids.
Full squad, all coaches.
Line up players in lines of 3, 15 yards apart (outfield fence to outfield/infield edge)
Player in the middle takes relay over right shoulder, turns, steps, and throws. He turns his/her body to receive the next throw back.
Note, the relay catch is “opposite” from a routine catch, to place the middle-man in a better position to make a fast and hard throw.
The drill must be very fast pace.

**OF-7. Pop Ups**

Full squad, two lines, 2 coaches. One in right field, one left field.
Hit or throw pop ups near foul line. Teach fielders to keep after balls, even if foul.
Fielder catches ball, throws back to coach. (If coach is batting, use one catch to take throws.)
Infield Drills

IF-1. **SS and 2B Grounder Drill**
20 minutes full squad or split squad with ½ infield and ½ outfield.
Two lines, one at 2B, one at SS. Two 1B.
Coach hits or throws grounders to SS, then 2B. They throw to 1B.
SS rotates to 2B. 2B rotates to SS. 1B switch after 2 plays each. Note, back up 1B must pay attention to avoid bad throws.
Option, 1B can join rotation.

IF-2. **Backhand Drill**
Split squad, 3 groups, 3 coaches. One group at SS with coach, one at 2B with coach, one at 3B with coach. Coach throws to back hand. Fielder does cross step, (for right hander) left foot over right, down on right knee, and backhand ball. Stand up, set feet, and throw back to coach.

IF-3. **Soft Toss Drill**
Full squad, 15-20 minutes. Two lines of players, facing each other, about 20 feet apart.
First player takes ball from glove, holds up at shoulder height to “show the ball.
Takes two or three steps to receiving player, then makes underhand soft toss. The receiving player waits for the ball.
First player goes to end of other line. Receiving player makes the toss to the next player, then, goes to the back of the other line. Keep rotating, going faster as skills improve.

IF-4. **Run Down Drill**
Four fielders, 1 base runner, one coach. 20 minutes.
Pitcher starts with ball, runner (suggest a coach first try) on 1B with lead.
Pitcher throws to 1B, runner goes toward 2B. First baseman throws to SS at 2B. SS catches ball, holds ball at shoulder height, and chases runner back to first. Second baseman covers 1B, First baseman goes to 2B after throw. Second baseman, catches throw at 1B and chases runner to 2B, and throws the ball to First baseman on 2B. SS I snow on 1B. First baseman chases runner back to first. Keep the rotation going.
Note, teach players to chase runners back, not forward. When throwing to advance base, make throw 1/3 way to base. When chasing back, hold ball to 1/2 way to base.

IF-5. **Double Play Drill**
20 minutes full squad or split squad with ½ infield and ½ outfield.
- Two lines, one at 2B, one at SS. Two 1B.
  Coach hits or throws grounders to SS, who fields ball, then throws to 2B who covers the bag. Second Baseman catches ball, steps to first and makes the throw. Players stay in same lines.
  After 2 rotations, hit ball to second baseman, who throws to SS who throws to 1B. After 2 rotations, switch positions.
- Option, same drill, but 3B and 2B.
- Option, same drill but first baseman to SS to second baseman covering 1B.
- Option, same drill, P to SS to 1B.
IF-6. **Freeze Drill**  
Infielders only. All positions filled. Coach hits ground ball to fielder. When he/she gets the ball, coach yells “freeze”. Coach checks positions and how other fielders cover positions. *This is best done during situation drills.*

IF-7. **Full Infield Drill**  
Infielders only, all positions filled including catcher. Coach hits grounders to fielders who complete plays at “command of coach” for location. Include catcher with mask and slow rollers in front of catcher. Catcher must pull off mask before play. Make sure infielders move to the ball and charge slow rollers.
**Base Running Drills**

**BR-1. Run to First**
Full squad, all players in line at home plate.
- **Run through drill** - First player swings bat, drops bat and runs to first base. Runner runs “through” the base. Four turns each.
  - Coach stands 7-10 feet past first base, and has runner give high five.
- **Take turn drill** – First player swings bat, drops bat and runs to first base. Runner takes turn toward second, stops and goes back to first. Four turns each.

**BR-2. Run to First, Second, and Sliding**
Full squad, all players in line at home plate.
- First player swings bat, drops bat and runs to first base.
  - Coach stands in coach’s box and gives run through or turn sign.
- First player swings bat, drops bat and runs to first base.
  - Coach stands in coach’s box and gives double sign.
  - Runner turns and runs to second base. Runner slides into base.
  - When next batter runs to first, runner on second slides to third base to side 3B coach points to. On next batter, runner slides home.

**BR-3. Infield Pop up Drill**
Half squad, all players at first base, two coaches.
- One coach on pitchers mound, throws pop up. Other coach either catches or drops the ball. Base runner must lead 1/3 way, watching the ball, then run to second on drop or back to first on catch. Four turns each.

**BR-4. End of Practice “Laps”**
For T-Ball and Rookie League, end each practice with laps around the bases. No more than 4, be sensitive to age, stamina, and ability to complete drill.

**BR-5. Base Stealing Drill**
This is a base running as well as infield drill.
- One second baseman, one SS, one pitcher, one catcher.
Team Fielding Situation Drills

F-1. **Game Situation Drill**
Full squad, 30 minutes.
All fielding positions filled, the remainder of the team will back up positions. Catchers are in full gear. Coach hits or throws ball for plays and calls situations such as “runners on first and second, one out”. Fielders make every play and others move to back-up positions. Freeze plays to show correct positions. Extra players can be used as base runners. This is a good time to reinforce when and how to tag a runner (non force play, ball in glove with two hands).

F-2. **Split Squad Team Fielding**
This is a fielding drill that requires 4 coaches and coordination. There will be 3 groups each using the same field. Rotate positions often. This should only be done in the minor and major divisions.

- **Group 1** includes a 3B, SS, LF and CF (in LCF) in position. The coach is between Home and 1B with a player to catch throws back to the coach. The coach hits or throws ground balls and fly balls to the players.
- **Group 2** includes a 1B, 2B, RF and CF (in RCF) in position. The coach is between Home and 3B with a player to catch throws back to the coach. The coach hits or throws ground balls and fly balls to the players.
- **Group 3** is optional and includes a pitcher and a catcher. The coach behind the catcher.
Batting Drills
Batting is very important but batting drills are difficult to achieve in practice. We strongly discourage more than 25% of practice on batting with full squad because it is boring and offers very little “touch time” for the fielders. Batting is best done in small groups and/or a separate area such as a batting cage with one-on-one guidance.

B-1. Tee Drill
One batter, one coach. This can be done with a whiffle ball behind the cage, or with no ball at all. Before batting, each player should take 10 to 20 swings off a tee. The coach should look for form and technique improvements. Concentrate on grip, hands, swing, and stepping into the ball. Move the tee for inside, middle, or outside locations.

B-2. Toss Drill
After tee drill, one player, one coach. Player faces backstop fence in batting stance. Coach is off to the side, about 5 feet away. Coach tosses ball in high, middle, low, inside, and outside zones, batter hits ball.

B-3. Traditional Batting Practice
Full squad, 45 minutes. Suggest coach pitch for consistency and better pitching selection. All fielding positions filled, the remainder of the team in dugout for batting. Catchers do not rotate. First catcher stays in position for ½ the batters, while the back up bats. Catchers switch. Each batter gets 15-20 pitches and runs out the last. Fielders make every play. After each batter, players rotate. Suggest start rotation after second batter, to give last batter time to go back to dugout and get glove. Otherwise, there is a delay between each rotation. Batter goes to last fielding position, fielders rotate, and the first position goes to back of line in dugout for batting. Batters in dugout should go through tee, and toss drill stages before coming to bat. This will require 2 additional coaches to supervise these stations. As the pitchers develop, consider using them for practice.

B-4. Combination Drills
During a batting practice session, for t-Ball and Rookie League, one field can be used for multiple stations. For example, 6 players and 2 coaches can be in the infield batting, 3 players and 1 coach doing the toss drill, and another coach throwing pop ups to outfielders. For older players, this is not recommended as the player can hit the ball farther.

B-5. Pepper
Involves full squad, 3 coaches, 20 minutes. Pepper is a great drill but should only be done with minor or major division players. A coach should be with each group.

• Place three groups of 5 players around the infield. The 5 players include 3 fielders, 1 batter, and 1 catcher. One group near home plate, one near 1B, the other near 2B or 3B. Fielders are on the outside of the field with the batter and catcher closer to the pitchers mound. Batter and fielders about 25 to 30 feet apart.
The fielder throws an overhand slow toss to the batter who taps the ball back to the fielder, trying to keep them in order. Each batter should get about 15 to 20 swings. Rotate positions. The catcher is not behind the batter, unless in full gear.

**Game Day Preparation**

Before the game, each coach has 10 or 15 minutes to warm up the team on the field. It is important to “look your best” because this sets the tone for the game and is the first look at your team for your opponents and the fans. Between inning warm-ups should be done correctly as well. Do not wait until the first game to do this, practice at least once.

**G-1. Game Day Warm-ups**

- Infielders should be in position, and the coach hits a bucket of ground balls to them from between home and 3B (closer to home). A catcher takes return infield throws from the 1B.
- An outfield coach hits fly balls to outfielders who relay throws back to the coach.
- Batters can be in the batting cage if desired.
- The pitcher should be warming up with the team if you are the second team on the field. Otherwise, he/she may choose to wait until before the game and warm up in the bull pen before the start of the game.

**G-2. Between Inning Warm-ups**

Surprising enough, most Rookie League and Minors get this wrong. Practice at least one time before the first game.

- The first baseman takes a ball out to the field and throws good accurate throws to the infielders, 2B, SS, then 3B. The infielders should not attempt to get a throw aimed at another player. The pitcher should be warming up and not part of this activity. There are no outfielders in this warm-up.
- The CF takes a ball and warms up with the LF. The RF warms up with a coach or another play on the sidelines.

When the umpire yells “Com’n Down”, proceed with the “Com’n Down” play (next).

**G-3. Com’n Down, Around the Horn**

All players in position, one coach. This is not a drill or play but should be practiced before the games. Com’n down and around the horn is what you do after the last warm up pitch. It is important because from the start, it shows the other team “what you are made of”.

- After the last warm up pitch, the catcher throws to 2B bag.
- The SS takes the throw and the second baseman backs it up.
- SS throws to 2B (standing in the outfield).
- 2B throws to 3B.
- 3B throws to 1B, 1B throws to pitcher. Note, in professional baseball, 3B throws to the pitcher, 1B is not involved.
Chapter Five
Practice Sessions

As suggested in chapter two, before each practice, the coaching staff should have a preplanned practice, allotting defined durations for each drill, and with all available coaches having defined assignments. Select a practice session objective such as double plays and sliding technique, and develop you lesson plan around those objects, selecting and grouping drills from Chapter 4. It is important to stick with preplanned timelines in order to accomplish each practice session objective.

This preparation will assure a good practice that will optimize time and most important, keep the kids interested. T-Ball practice sessions should be no more than 1 hour, Rookie League 1 ½ hours, and minors/majors about 2 to 2/1/2 hours. In addition to attention spans, field resources, and available time, you will be challenged with weather conditions as well. Because your practice time is limited by schedule and field availability, we suggest alternate “black top” practices for when field conditions are not playable. Typically batting is not an option in this case, however infield and outfield drills can be achieved. A final planning tip, is to try and have stations where groups can rotate. This is especially important for T-Ball and Rookie League. This gives them a variety and the experience all planned drills. Batting should be one of the stations, rather than pulling kids off the field to another location. This avoids them missing other “one-time” instruction while batting.

Before the regular season games begin, we suggest at least 6 to 8 practices, as time permits. During the season, there will be 2 games a week and we suggest only one team practice over the weekend. Pitchers and catchers are an exception, and one additional practice is suggested. Finally, coaches should try to understand that players and families have other commitments and “full time baseball” may not be possible for some. Do not punish a player for these reasons. Try to keep a balance between practice becoming a family chore vs. having fun.

General Practice Suggestions – All Divisions
The manager and coaches should get to practice 15 minute early if possible, and have the field set up when the players get there. Early players should be encouraged to help set up and no one should be throwing during this time. After practice, the players should be the ones who pack the gear and put the bases in the shed or supply box. After clean up; time permitting, it may or may not be a good time to quickly review what we learned that session. Usually most young players are too tired or mentally exhausted right after practice or the parents are eager to get home. Therefore, this can be done during warm-ups at the next practice.
Preplanned Practices
This handbook provides some preplanned practice sessions, for the first four practice sessions focusing on fundamental drills. After that point, the coaching staff should develop practice sessions based on “where the team is”, ability, and the assessment of individual players and their needs. Drills should be designed to extract the potential of all players and get them to excel beyond their expectations. After the first four practices, older teams should be starting simulation drills, more complex drills, and practicing actual plays. Following are some general practice tips, followed by preplanned practice sessions for each division level.

1. **Throwing Warm Ups – 10 minutes**
As the players arrive, they should pair up and begin warming up to loosen up their throwing arms (after the field is set up). All players should be positioned in two rows, in the outfield, with the ball only going between two players. NO TRINGLE CATCHES. The first 5 throws each should be about 10 feet apart, then move to 15 feet then to 25-35 feet based on ability and age. This activity should be supervised and not “long throws” permitted to avoid injury to others.

2. **Exercise Warm Ups – 5 to 10 minutes**
When all the players have arrived, pull them in for full body warm-ups. This is a good time to review a previous practice or game, and to review today's practice plan. At a young age warm-up is not as critical however if they start young, they will learn to put it in there pregame ritual. For the first practice, the coach should lead the exercise routine. After that, let the players do it. Suggest four or five exercises (each with 10 to 20 repetitions) such as jumping jacks, sit-ups, push-ups, hamstring stretches, and touching toes. After these are done, a good lap around the outfield is suggested. Note, the coach should be aware of each player’s ability and condition and should not over stress any player. For example, 20 sit ups are a good number, 100 are extreme and could be harmful. Further, a coach must be aware of weather conditions and refrain from excessive activity in very hot humid weather. In addition, we discourage the use of sit-ups or push-ups as a disciplinary measure, and players who can not complete the warm up drills, should not be forced to do so, or do them over. Remember, this is not military camp, its baseball.

3. **Pitchers and Catchers**
Pitchers and catchers should participate in all team practices, however we suggest additional and separate practice time. If a batting cage or bull pen are available, they are good locations for a separate practice location. Pitchers should work on fundamentals and there should always be a coach watching every pitch. Catchers should be in full gear and practice blocking and retrieving a ball as if it were a game situation. A coach may be used as a stand in batter.
The Batting Practice
While we stress fielding should be a priority, batting should be included with each practice, and allow ample time so that all batters get the same amount of practice. Here are 3 options for fitting in batting practice, and tips for different age groups. The drills are detailed in Chapter 4, Batting Drills.

BP-1. *End of Practice Session* – 30 to 45 minutes
Plan on 30 to 45 minutes at a minimum for minors and majors. 30 minutes for T-Ball and Rookie League. The coach should pitch. Similar to traditional batting practice B-3.
- Align players in position in all fielding location
- All additional players should be in the dugout
- Rotate players in every position until all batters get at least 15 swings.
- Each batter should run out the last hit.

BP-2. *Small group sessions* – 20 minutes
If your complex has batting cages, or a second practice field, it is suggested small groups of players bat as one of your stations for practice. The group of 4 to 6 can go through a series of batting stations such as hitting whiffle balls off the tee, the coach side toss, and then the batting cage for one-on-one coaching.

BP-3. *Team Scrimmage* – 45 to 60 minutes
Split the team up in 3 groups, to form 3 teams. For example, if you have 12 players, make 3 teams of 4 each. Group 1 fills P, 1B, 2B, SS. Group 2 fills RF, CF, LF, 3B. Group 3 bats. After 3 outs, rotate. Each team keeps score to see who wins.

This can be done as 6 against 6 as well with coaches fill in outfield positions as needed.

BP-4. *Full Practice Batting*
After proper warm-ups, an entire practice can be devoted to batting. This is a good reward after a series of good practices or a very well played game. The key is to set up stages of batting practice which include hitting off a tee, coach soft pitch from side location, batting cage, and finally the field batting.
- Players 1-7 field all fielding positions except pitcher and catcher. Three catchers should rotate, each catching 1/3 of practice. The remaining players are all batters.
- Suggest coaches pitch to keep the practice moving or a batting machine could be used if available.
- Refer to batting drill (B-3). Pitchers can pitch if ready.
T-Ball Practices

**Practice 1 – 45 Minutes**
- Team – 10 Minutes: Introductions, Parent / Player expectations. (Coaches should call parents to review expectations before the first practice.)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises jumping jacks and stretching, warm up lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there).
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running (BR-1), teach to run through first base, and the right direction around all bases (call out the base).
- 2 Groups Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  - Group 1: Fielding - set up in two lines for ground balls, teach how to hold a glove. Teach alligator position (glove down – hand up like an alligator) for grounders.
  - Group 2: Batting (B-1)- Instruction on how to hold a bat, batting off a tee or hitting whiffle balls. One batter, others field the balls.

**Practice 2 – 60 Minutes**
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there).
- Team – 10 minutes: Place players in positions to learn what the positions are. Have them run back to dugout, then back to positions.
- 3 Groups Split Squad – 30 Minutes: Form Throwing, Form Catching, and Batting baseballs to a fence off a tee (or to fielders. This can be done in the outfield.
  - Group 1: Throwing (CT-1) - teach “turn /step/throw basics”
  - Group 2: Catching (CT-2) - teach “rainbow”/get the glove up and move side to side. Review alligator positioning. Coach toss ball.
  - Group 3: Batting (B-1) – hit baseballs off tee into a fence or to players.
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running, through first and around the bases.

**Practice 3 – 65 Minutes**
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there).
- Team – 5 minutes: Place players in positions, Have them run to various positions and call them out one player at a time.
- 3 Groups Split Squad – 30 Minutes: Form Throwing, Form Catching, Batting baseballs to a fence off a tee.
  - Group 1: Throwing (CT-1) - teach “turn /step/throw basics”
  - Group 2: Catching (CT-2) - teach “rainbow”/get the glove up and move side to side. Review alligator positioning.
  - Group 3: Batting (B-1) – hit baseballs off tee into a fence or to players.
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running (BR-1)
- Team – 15 Minutes: Scrimmage each player gets 3 swings, and runs on third hit. Fielders rotate position.


**Practice 4 – 75 Minutes**

- **Team – 15 Minutes:** Exercises, warm ups, lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there)
- **2 Groups Split Squad – 20 Minutes:**
  - **Group 1:** Form Throwing (CT-1)
  - **Group 2:** Form Catching & Alligator (CT-2)
- **2 Groups Split Squad – 20 Minutes:**
  - **Group 1:** Infield throw base to base (throw straight and bounce if needed) around the horn (CT-4)
  - **Group 2:** Batting off a tee.
- **Team – 5 Minutes:** Base Running (BR-1)
- **Team – 15 Minutes:** Scrimmage each player gets 3 swings, and runs on third hit. Fielders rotate positions. (B-3)
**Rookie League Practices**

**Practice 1 – 70 Minutes**
- Team – 10 Minutes: Introductions, Parent / Player expectations. (Suggest coach calls parents before first practice for expectations.)
- Team – 5 Minutes: Exercises, warm up lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there.)
- 3 Groups Split Squad – 45 Minutes: (15 minutes per station)
  Group 1: Catching (CT-2): Rainbow Drill (rotate glove up @ left/center/right positions). Coach tosses ball to player (left side, center, then right).
  Group 2: Throwing (CT-1): Back coach places ball in fielders glove.
  Fielder “secures” ball, moves glove over throwing shoulder and turns body sideways. Then kicks front foot with back foot, separates hands (glove forward, ball back) take step.
  forward with front foot toward target. Repeat 10 –20 throws each.
  Group 3: Infield (IF-7): Align infield, coach hit/throw ground balls to fielder, throw (or bounce) to first. Rotate positions.
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-1).
  (If cold or windy use base running as a between station warm-up).

**Practice 2 – 105 Minutes**
- Team – 5 Minutes: Exercises, warm up lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there)
- 3 Groups Split Squad – 30 Minutes: (same as practice 1) Form Throwing, Form Catching, Infield Drills
  Group 1: Throwing (CT-1)
  Group 2: Catching (CT-2)
  Group 3: Infield (IF-7)
- 2 Groups Split Squad Batting (B-3/B-4) - 70 minutes: (35 minutes per group)
  Group 1 (6 players)– Coaches pitch & catch. (Suggest overhand as soon as possible.) Teach players infield positions.
  Fielders at 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, one on deck, and one batting
  Coach pitches 15 balls, fielders throw to first, then to pitcher.
  Players rotate, try to complete 2 full rotations.

  Group 2 (6 players @ 2 stations) Station A in RF, Station B in LF.
  *(After 17 minutes, switch kids from Stations A to B, and B to A.)*
  Station A (3 players /1 coach @ 17 minutes) – Pop up drill (short toss start with tennis ball, then baseball), rainbow catch, and throwing.
  Station B (3 players/1 coach @ 17 minutes) – Coach toss whiffle balls to one batter, two players field balls.
**Practice 3 – 100 Minutes**

- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm ups, lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there)
- Team – 15 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-2 and BR-3). Teach extra bases and sliding.
- Team – 75 Minutes: Batting (B-3) and Scrimmage (2 options)
  Option 1 - each player gets 10 swings, and runs on last hit. Fielders rotate positions.
  Option 2 – six on six, coaches pitch, catch and play outfield. (Kids prefer this option.)

**Practice 4 – 100 Minutes**

- Team – 15 Minutes: Exercises, warm ups, lap around the bases (call out each base as you get there)
- 2 Groups Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  - Group: Form Throwing (Same as practice 1)
  - Group: Form Catching (Same as practice 1)
- 2 Groups Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  - Group 1: Infield Drills (Same as practice)
  - Group 2: Batting Drills – Hit coach pitch whiffle balls, kids field balls.
    This station is in the outfield.
- Team – Situation Drills - 45 Minutes: Fielders in position, use base runners.
  Coaches hit/throw ball and direct situations. Stop and freeze, check positions, talk as a team.

**Blacktop Practice – Combination of practice ideas suggest 60 to 90 minutes**

- Team – 5 Minutes: Exercises, throwing warm up and lap around the bases.
- 3 Groups Split Squad – 45 Minutes: (15 minutes per station)
  - Group 1 – Catching: Rainbow Drill (rotate glove up @ left/center/right positions).
    Coach toss ball to player (left side, then center, then right).
  - Group 2 – Throwing: Back coach places ball in fielders glove. Fielder “secures” ball, moves glove over throwing shoulder and turns body sideways.
    Then kicks front foot with back foot, separates hands (glove forward, ball back) take step forward with front foot toward target. Repeat 10 –20 throws each.
  - Group 3 – Infield: Align infield, coach hit/throw ground balls to fielder, throw (or bounce) to first. Rotate positions.
- Team Situation Drills - 40 Minutes: Fielders in position, use base runners.
  Coaches hit/throw ball and direct situations. Stop and freeze, check positions, talk as a team.
Minor Division Practices

**Practice 1 – 90 Minutes**

- Team – 10 Minutes: Introductions, Parent / Player expectations. (After practice if possible)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm ups, lap around the outfield (Suggest warm up throws are done before practice when possible. Suggest 3 person relay format.)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-1 / BR-2) Run through first, Extra base, and sliding.
- Split Squad – 30 Minutes
  - Group 1: Infield (IF-1) Two lines for ground balls and two alternating 1B (or field all infield positions), teach how to hold a glove, ready position, and alligator.
  - Group 2: Outfield Drill, learn to catch (OF-1) Coach throws fly balls, player throws to cutoff.
- Batting Technique – Coach pitch, all players in field, rotate positions, one batter, one on deck with batting coach soft toss while ball or tee. (If most players struggle with contact, suggest additional batting stations.)

Schedule separate practice for anyone interested in pitching and catching. Suggest looking at pitchers (7-10 pitches after practice.)

**Practice 2 – 125 Minutes**

- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up throwing and lap around the bases.
- 2 Groups Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  - Group 1: Form Throwing (CT-1)
  - Group 2: Form Catching (CT-2)
- Team – 20 Minutes: Two lines for ground balls, focus on alligator and throwing.
- Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  - Group 1: Outfield Drill, catch and relay (OF-2)
  - Group 2: Infield Soft Toss Drill (IF-3)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-2 or BR-5). Extra bases or stealing.
- Team – 30 Minutes: Team Batting (B-3)

Catchers - If possible, work with catchers separately blocking the ball during infield drills.
Pitchers - Allow 20 to 30 pitched after practice if time permits.
**Practice 3 – 125 Minutes**
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up.
- Team – 25 Minutes: Relay Drill (OF-6) Line three players up, quick relay throws.
- Team – 20 Minutes: Infield (IF-1) Two lines for ground balls, focus on alligator and throwing. Alternate drill, add 3B line.
- Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  - Group 1: Outfield Drills
  - Group 2: Infield Drills (IF-7)(option to work with Pitchers/Catchers separate)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-2, BR-3) Extra bases, sliding
- Team – 40 Minutes: Team Batting (B-3) or scrimmage
  Suggest kids pitch.

**Practice 4 – 125 Minutes**
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up.
- Team – 15 Minutes: Relay Drill (OF-6) or Cut-Off Drill (OF-4)
- Team – 15 Minutes: Infield (IF-1) Two lines for ground balls, focus on alligator and throwing.
- Split Squad – 20 Minutes: Three Groups
  - Group 1: Outfield Drill, catch and relay (OF-2) or “I got it (OF-3)
  - Group 2: Infield Drill with full infield (IF-7) or double plays (IF-5)
  - Group 3: Pitching and Catching (Non pitchers/catchers return to OF Group)
- Team – 15 Minutes: Base Running and Base Stealing Drills (BR2 and BR-3). For pop ups, runners go 1/3 and advance or go back to base.
- Team – 40 Minutes: Team Batting (B-3). Suggest situation drills. Fielders in position, use base runners. Coaches hit/throw ball and direct situations. Stop and freeze, check positions, talk as a team.

**Blacktop Practice – Combination of practice ideas suggest 60 to 90 minutes**
- Team – 5 Minutes: Exercises, throwing warm up and lap around the bases.
- 3 Groups Split Squad – 45 Minutes: (15 minutes per station)
  - Group 1 – Catching: Rainbow Drill (rotate glove up @ left/center/right positions).
    Coach toss ball to player (left side, then center, then right).
  - Group 2 – Throwing: Back coach places ball in fielders glove. Fielder “secures” ball, moves glove over throwing shoulder and turns body sideways. Separate hands (glove forward, ball back) take step forward with front foot toward target. Repeat 10 –20 throws each.
  - Group 3 – Infield: Align infield, coach hit/throw ground balls to fielder, throw to first. Rotate positions.
- Team Situation Drills - 40 Minutes: Fielders in position, use base runners. Coaches hit/throw ball and direct situations. Stop and freeze, check positions, talk as a team.
Major Division Practices

Practice 1 – 90 Minutes
- Team – 10 Minutes: Introductions, Parent / Player expectations. (After practice if possible)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm ups, lap around the outfield (Suggest warm up throws are done before practice when possible. Suggest 3 person relay format.)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-1 / BR-2) Run through first, Extra base, and sliding.
- Split Squad – 30 Minutes
  Group 1: Infield (IF-1) Two lines for ground balls and two alternating 1B (or field all infield positions), teach how to hold a glove, ready position, and alligator.
  Group 2: Outfield Drill, learn to catch (OF-1) Coach throws fly balls, player throws to cutoff.
- Batting Technique – Coach pitch, all players in field, rotate positions, one batter, one on deck with batting coach soft toss while ball or tee. (If most players struggle with contact, suggest additional batting stations.)

Schedule separate practice for anyone interested in pitching and catching. Suggest looking at pitchers (7-10 pitches after practice.)

Practice 2 – 125 Minutes
- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up throwing and lap around the bases.
- 2 Groups Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  Group 1: Form Throwing (CT-1)
  Group 2: Form Catching (CT-2)
- Team – 20 Minutes: Two lines for ground balls, focus on alligator and throwing.
- Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  Group 1: Outfield Drill, catch and relay (OF-2)
  Group 2: Infield Soft Toss Drill (IF-3)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-2 or BR-5). Extra bases or stealing.
- Team – 30 Minutes: Team Batting (B-3)

Catchers - If possible, work with catchers separately blocking the ball during infield drills.
Pitchers - Allow 20 to 30 pitched after practice if time permits.
**Practice 3 – 125 Minutes**

- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up.
- Team – 25 Minutes: Relay Drill (OF-6) Line three players up, quick relay throws.
- Team – 20 Minutes: Infield (IF-1) Two lines for ground balls, focus on alligator and throwing. Alternate drill, add 3B line.
- Split Squad – 20 Minutes:
  - Group 1: Outfield Drills
  - Group 2: Infield Drills (IF-7) (option to work with Pitchers/Catchers separate)
- Team – 10 Minutes: Base Running Drill (BR-2, BR-3) Extra bases, sliding
- Team – 40 Minutes: Team Batting (B-3) or scrimmage
  Suggest kids pitch.

**Practice 4 – 125 Minutes**

- Team – 10 Minutes: Exercises, warm up.
- Team – 15 Minutes: Relay Drill (OF-6) or Cut-Off Drill (OF-4)
- Team – 15 Minutes: Infield (IF-1) Two lines for ground balls, focus on alligator and throwing.
- Split Squad – 20 Minutes: Three Groups
  - Group 1: Outfield Drill, catch and relay (OF-2) or “I got it” (OF-3)
  - Group 2: Infield Drill with full infield (IF-7) or double plays (IF-5)
  - Group 3: Pitching and Catching (Non pitchers/catchers return to OF Group)
- Team – 15 Minutes: Base Running and Base Stealing Drills (BR2 and BR-3). For pop ups, runners go 1/3 and advance or go back to base.
- Team – 40 Minutes: Team Batting (B-3). Suggest situation drills. Fielders in position, use base runners. Coaches hit/throw ball and direct situations. Stop and freeze, check positions, talk as a team.

**Blacktop Practice – Combination of practice ideas suggest 60 to 90 minutes**

- Team – 5 Minutes: Exercises, throwing warm up and lap around the bases.
- 3 Groups Split Squad – 45 Minutes: (15 minutes per station)
  - Group 1 – Catching: Rainbow Drill (rotate glove up @ left/center/right positions).
    Coach toss ball to player (left side, then center, then right).
  - Group 2 – Throwing: Back coach places ball in fielder’s glove. Fielder “secures” ball, moves glove over throwing shoulder and turns body sideways.
    Separate hands (glove forward, ball back) take step forward with front foot toward target. Repeat 10 –20 throws each.
  - Group 3 – Infield: Align infield, coach hit/throw ground balls to fielder, throw to first. Rotate positions.
- Team Situation Drills - 40 Minutes: Fielders in position, use base runners.
  Coaches hit/throw ball and direct situations. Stop and freeze, check positions, talk as a team.