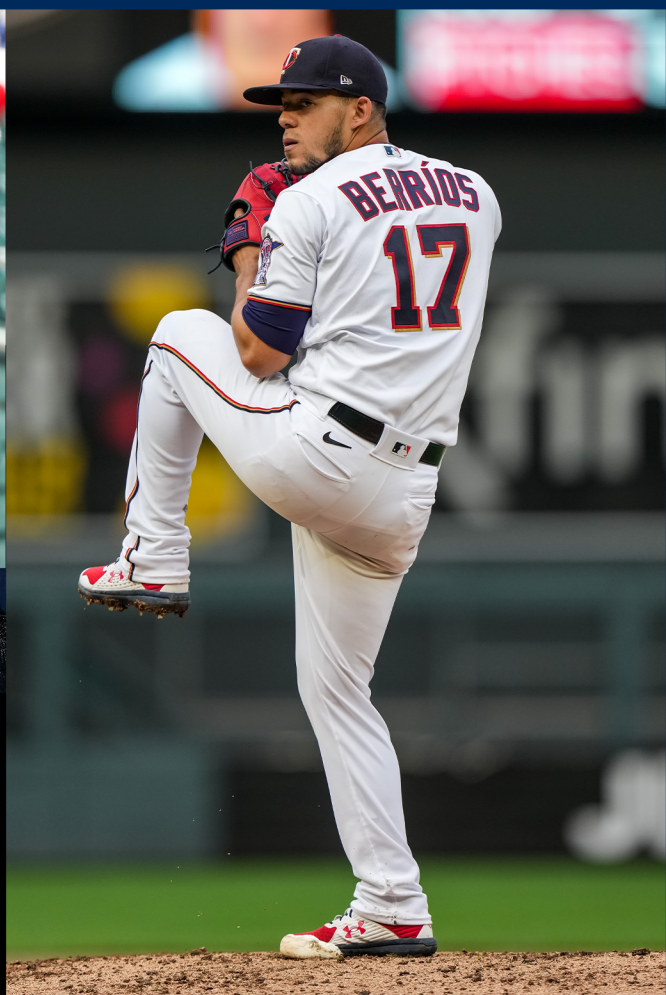
MINNESOTA TWINS
COACHING MANUAL – 18U



Introduction
Thank you for volunteering to coach in the Minnesota Twins' RBI program! Your drive to have a positive impact on the lives of these ball players is commendable and greatly appreciated!

This manual is meant to serve as a resource for you in regards to skill development, practice planning, and game management. It is designed to help you develop age-appropriate skills using drills and games to keep practices fun, engaging, and competitive. The manual is not meant to, nor can it, replace the years of coaching experience you have, our hope is that it will supplement that experience.

Each section in this manual is broken down into four categories:

Goals: This section highlights those things we believe to be the most important priorities for this stage of development. Try to keep the goals in mind whenever you are working on a particular skill.

Coaching Notes: Here we outline tips and strategies for teaching each specific skill, as well as common challenges you may encounter and how to work through them.

Drills: For each skill we have compiled a number of drills that can be done with common baseball equipment. Many of these drills include options for you to increase or decrease the level of difficulty based on the needs of the athlete.

Games: Lastly, we provide games to incorporate into practice to help create a fun and competitive environment. While 18U teams will likely play fewer games in practice, it is important to incorporate competition whenever possible. These games can be used in addition to, or in place of, drills and many of them can be played individually or with groups split into teams.

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Our priorities with these athletes are to foster and develop a love for the game while helping them develop high-level skills. These are the guiding principles for everything within this manual. By further developing their love for the game, we gain the opportunity to develop the skills needed for them to be successful as they advance. The best way to develop a love for the game is by creating positive and memorable experiences, leaving them looking forward to the next practice, game, or season.

Through baseball we can also teach life lessons and develop skills that will set them up for success off the field. Our athletes are unlikely to remember wins, losses, or drills, but the lessons, principles, and memories will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

In addition to providing positive and memorable experiences, our aim is to develop these athletes into high-level players. To do this, we must address a number of areas including strength and conditioning, sport-specific skill, and situational knowledge.

With regard to skill development, it is important to be mindful of what we ask our athletes to do. Providing too many internal cues—instruction about what to do with a specific body part—can reduce output, slowing down movements that should be explosive. To prevent this, most of our drill recommendations use environmental or physical constraints rather than internal cues. In these drills all of the coaching goes into the setup and athletes are given a task to complete. This allows them to move freely and explosively while trying to accomplish the specific goal.

STRENGTH & MOVEMENT

Goals

1) Build athleticism with a variety of different movements.
2) Prepare them physically for baseball specific activities.
3) Teach foundational movements for strength development.

Coaching Notes

- The best way to include a wide variety of movements in practice is through a properly designed warm-up.
- The goal during the movement portion of practice is to allow exploration, not necessarily to develop specific movement patterns.
- Coaches should demonstrate each movement, then allow athletes to mirror them as best as possible.
- Encourage players to experiment and move fast, while allowing them space to struggle.
- Coaches should include movements requiring players to move forward, backward, side-to-side, and to jump.
- Strength work should be included as a block or station in the practice plan two to three times per week.
- During the strength station it is appropriate to give internal and external cues with regard to starting positions and movements.
- Foundational movements that should be included in the strength routine are squatting, hinging, pushing, and stabilizing.
    - Squatting
        - The players' weight should be in the middle of their foot.
        - Their hips shift back as their knees bend.
        - Their chest remains vertical
        - Their knees should not move forward past their toes.
        - Examples: Air squats, goblet squats, front squat, and back squat
    - Hinging
        - The players' weight should be in the middle of their feet.
        - Their hips shift back as they bend at the waist.
        - They should maintain a small and consistent amount of knee-bend.
        - Their neck and back should remain straight and neutral.
        - Examples: Good mornings, deadlifts, and Romanian deadlifts
    - Pushing
        - The players' core should stay tight throughout the movement.
        - Their neck and back should remain in a straight line to their heels.
        - Their shoulder blades should move forward and backward at the end range of motion.
        - Examples: Elevated-hands push-ups, eccentric push-ups, and traditional push-ups.
    - Stabilizing
        - The player's core should stay tight throughout the exercise.
        - Their neck and back should remain straight and neutral.
        - Examples: High-planks, low-planks, and bird-dogs.

Drills

- **Dynamic Warm-Up**
  - Utilize a variety of movements each day.
  - Examples: skipping, hopping, jumping, high-knees, shuffling, crawling, back-pedaling, and sprinting, among others.
  - Be creative and allow players to provide ideas as well.

- **5x5**
  - Choose three of the foundational movements to perform.
  - Players perform five repetitions for each exercise.
  - Repeat the rotation five times.
  - Example: Air Squats x5, Push-ups x5, Planks x :60 seconds. Repeat five times.

- **Isometric Holds**
  - Choose three of the foundational movements to perform.
  - Demonstrate the proper position for each movement.
  - Players hold each position for 20 seconds, then rest for 30 seconds.
  - Repeat the rotation three times.
  - Example: Squat :30, Split stance :30, Plank :60. Repeat three times.

- **Medicine Ball Throws and Slams**
  - These drills require a larger ball, but not necessarily a medicine ball.
  - Basketballs, soccer balls, volleyballs, or kickballs all work well.
  - **Overhead Slams**
    - Players begin in an athletic stance holding the ball with two hands.
    - They raise the ball overhead and slam it to the ground, slightly in front of them, as hard as possible.
    - Players should pass the ball towards a partner to avoid bouncing at themselves.
  - **Palm-Up Palm-Down**
    - Players begin in their batting stance, holding the ball with two hands.
    - They simulate a swing, throwing the ball as far as possible.
    - The players' non-dominant palm should face down at release.
    - The player's dominant palm should face up at release.
    - Use a ball that weighs two pounds or less for this throw.
  - **Over the Shoulder**
    - Players begin in their pitching stance, holding the ball with two hands over their throwing shoulder.
    - They lift their lead leg and stride towards their target, as if pitching from the stretch.
    - Players throw the ball as hard as possible with two hands.
    - Use a ball that weighs two pounds or less for this throw.

Games

- **Races**
  - Use a variety of the movements from the dynamic warm-up.
  - Choose movements that can be done at a high speed without sacrificing quality
    - Examples: sprinting, back-pedaling, skipping, and jumping.
  - Races can be done individually or as relay races.
  - This game encourages players to move fast and introduces competition into practice.

- **Long Jump**
  - Players begin on the foul line in the infield.
  - Players complete a jump variation, trying to jump as far as they can.
    - Examples: Two-foot single jump, two-foot double jump, or jumping with a running start.

- **Last Player Standing**
  - Players perform isometric holds of a plank, squat, or split stance.
  - Use a stopwatch to track personal best scores.
  - Compare scores over time to show growth.

- **Longest Toss**
  - Choose a medicine ball throw variation to use.
  - Players perform three repetitions of the chosen throw.
  - The player who throws the ball the farthest in the air wins.

- **Air Force Football**
  - Create a miniature football field using cones or markers.
  - Can be played with a football or tennis ball.
  - Divide into two even teams.
  - The offense begins with the ball at the opposite end of the field.
  - The ball can only be advanced by throwing and catching it.
  - Once a pass is caught, the receiver cannot run any further and immediately becomes the quarterback.
  - Play does not stop until there is a touchdown or turnover.
  - An incomplete pass or interception is a turnover and the defense immediately becomes the offense in the other direction.
  - Each touchdown is worth seven points.
  - Play for a predetermined number of minutes.

HITTING

Goals

1) Establish the load and stride phases of the swing.
2) Develop bat speed and exit velocity.
3) Improve timing and pitch recognition.
4) Teach a mental approach to hitting.

Coaching Notes

- Emphasize an athletic batting stance that encourages movement.
    - This allows players to properly execute the load and stride phases of the swing.
- Encourage players to stride aggressively to a balanced position.
- Bat speed is increased by training to swing fast and hit the ball hard, but the swing must also be balanced to be effective.
    - The goal is to move as explosively as possible while squaring up the ball consistenly.
- Use external cues with the hitters rather than internal cues.
    - External cues help the athlete focus on what they are trying to accomplish, rather than what their body is doing.
    - Examples:
        - "Hit it as far as you can."
        - "Hit it over the shortstop."
        - "Move the bat fast."
- Hitters must hit various speeds and pitches in practice to improve their timing and pitch recognition.
    - Vary the speed of batting practice and include as much game-like practice as possible, including scrimmaging.
- Introduce the idea of an approach to hitting and count-based hitting, which means hitters should have a plan before every pitch.
- Approaches vary from team-to-team and player-to-player, but count based hitting stays consistent.
    - Plus-counts include: 0-0, 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 0-1, 1-1, 2-1, 3-1.
        - Hitters should be selective about what pitches they swing at, but swing aggressively at good pitches to hit.
    - Minus-counts include: 0-2, 1-2, 2-2, 3-2.
        - Hitters should defend the strike zone with the goal of putting the bat on the ball. Shorten the swing if necessary to handle all of the pitcher's pitches.
- Hitters should fail in practice. Hitting in a game is difficult and practice should reflect that.

Drills

- **Dry Swings**
  - Best utilized when making a change to a movement within the swing.
  - Removes the consequence of missing a ball while feeling certain changes.
  - Internal cues are appropriate when focusing on how the body should move and feel.
- **Tee Work**
  - Best utilized when making a change to a movement within the swing, working to ingrain a specific pattern, or warming up.
  - Provides the opportunity to pattern the swing and receive immediate feedback on new movements.
  - Hitters should be focused on an external goal.
    - Hitting the ball over the second baseman.
    - Hitting the ball up the middle.
    - Hitting the ball as far as they can.
- **Front Toss**
  - The coach stands behind a screen or net and tosses the ball underhand to the batter.
  - The player should be focused on an external goal.
    - Hitting the ball over the second baseman.
    - Hitting the ball up the middle.
    - Hitting the ball as far as they can.
  - Provide positive feedback for fast, athletic, and balanced swings regardless of outcome.
- **Hook 'Em.**
  - The constraint drill can be used during tee work or front toss.
  - The batter should set up:
    - Balancing on their rear leg.
    - Hooking the heel of their front foot on the pinky toe of their rear foot.
    - With their legs crossed and their hips and shoulders turned slightly away from the pitcher.
  - The batter strides and swings from this position.
  - The player's goal should be to hit the ball as far as they can in the air.
  - Provide positive feedback for fast, athletic swings regardless of outcome.
  - This constraint encourages players to stride aggressively, using their hips to power the swing.
- **Pre-set Open**
  - This constraint drill can be done as tee work or during front toss.
  - The batter should set up:
    - In their batting stance.
    - Turned with their chest and toes pointed at the pitcher.
  - The batter loads and strides towards the pitcher to swing.
  - The player's goal is to hit the ball as far as they can in the air.
  - This constraint encourages players to load and stride while counter-rotating their hips
    - A proper load with counter-rotation increases power from the lower-half.
- **Flamingo**
  - This constraint drill can be done as tee work or during front toss
  - Players should set up in their batting stance.
  - The batter lifts their knee to their waist and balances for two seconds before swinging.

- The player's goal is to hit the ball as far as they can in the air.
- This constraint promotes body control and encourages an aggressive stride.

- **The Happy Gilmore**
  - Perform this constraint drill using a tee.
  - Players should set up:
    - In their batting stance.
    - Two to three steps behind the batter's box.
  - Batters shuffle into their normal spot to gain momentum into the swing.
  - The player's goal is to hit the ball as far as they can in the air.
  - Players should move fast and aggressively.
  - This constraint challenges their body control while encouraging them to swing hard.
- **Plus Velocity**
  - Intermediate and advanced hitters must have their timing challenged.
  - This means exposing them to high velocity pitching.
  - Coaches should throw batting practice from a shortened distance, simulating the reaction times experienced with high-velocity pitchers.
- **Live At-Bats**
  - Pitchers throw to hitters, using all of their pitches.
  - Hitters are challenged to adjust to various pitches and velocities.
  - Use the **Quality At-Bat** and **Pitch Tracking** chart to gather data.

Games

- **Long Drive**
  - Place markers in the field progressively farther away from home plate.
  - Award points for each marker a batted ball passes.
  - The game can be played from a tee, front toss, or normal batting practice using any of the above constraint drills or their normal swing.
  - The score can be kept on a team or individual basis.
  - Compare progress over time to show growth.
- **Last Batter Standing**
  - Place a target marker in the outfield within striking distance for all hitters.
  - Allow hitters one swing to hit a ball past the marker.
  - Players who fail to hit the ball past the marker are eliminated.
  - Each round, move the marker further away.
  - The game can be played from a tee, front toss, or normal batting practice using any of the above constraint drills or their normal swing.
  - The game can be played individually or with two teams alternating at-bats.
  - If the game is played individually, provide an activity for players who have been eliminated.
- **Hot Bat**
  - Allow batters a certain number of practice swings before beginning the game.
  - Players attempt to hit the ball to the outfield in the air as many times as they can, in a row.
  - When a batted ball does not reach the marker the round is over.
  - The batter with the most balls hit past the marker in a row is the winner.
  - The game can be played from a tee, front toss, or normal batting practice using any of the above constraint drills or their normal swing.

- **Home Run Derby**
    - If necessary, provide a temporary home plate to make it easier to hit home runs.
        - Choose a distance that is achievable, but challenging.
    - Players take a predetermined number of swings, counting the homeruns in their round.
    - The game can be played from a tee, front toss, or normal batting practice using any of the above constraint drills or their normal swing.
    - The score can be kept individually, in small teams, or as one team trying to beat a previous score.
    - Compare progress over time to show growth.
- **The Infield is Lava**
    - Every player takes a place in the outfield except for one batter and one on-deck batter.
    - Each player takes a predetermined number of swings.
    - Award three points for any ball that reaches the outfield in the air and five points for any ball that reaches the fence.
    - No points are awarded for a ball that touches the infield.
    - The game can be played from a tee, front toss, or normal batting practice using any of the above constraint drills or their normal swing.
    - Score can be kept individually, in small teams, or as one team trying to beat a previous score.
- **Situational Hitting**
    - Divide into two teams.
    - One team plays defense.
    - Write various situations on notecards.
    - Examples include:
        - 2-0 count, runner on 3rd, 1 out.
        - 0-2 count, runner on 1st, 1 out.
        - 0-0 count, runner on 2nd, 2 outs.
        - 0-2 count, runner on 3rd, 0 outs.
        - 3-2 count, runner on 3rd, 2 outs.
        - 1-0 count, bases loaded, 1 out.
    - The hitter draws a situation at random.
    - The coach throws batting practice.
    - Award points to the offense if the batter:
    - Swings appropriately for the count.
    - Advances the runners.
    - Scores the runner batters.
    - Award points to the defense if they:
    - Record an out.
    - Prevent runners from advancing.
    - Prevent a run from scoring.
    - Switch sides after a predetermined number of at-bats.

THROWING

Goals

1) Sustain healthy habits for arm care by warming up to throw.
2) Develop strong, accurate, and versatile throwers.

Coaching Notes

- It is important to develop the habit of warming up to throw rather than throwing to warm-up.
- Throwing should always follow the strength and movement portion of practice, as well as a shoulder strengthening routine.
- Throwing into a fence or open field allows players to throw the ball hard without the consequence of hurting a teammate.
    - This will not always be appropriate, but is important to provide the opportunity for athletes to throw the ball as hard as they can.
- Throwing motions should be fast and explosive, but under control.
    - The player's momentum should move towards the target.
- Coaches should introduce or review position specific footwork.
    - Infielders - Two Step and Four Step:
        - The infielder is moving towards their throwing target while fielding.
        - Movement is right to left for infielders.
        - The player fields the ball while their weight is shifting from their right foot to their left foot.
        - The two-step footwork pattern is: R - L - Field - R - L - Throw
        - The four-step footwork pattern is: R - L - Field - R - L - R - L - Throw
        - The four-step pattern is used when the infielder has more time to make the play.
    - Outfielders - Pro-Step:
        - The outfielder is moving towards their target while fielding.
        - Movement is forward for outfielders.
        - The player fields the ball while their weight is shifting from their right foot to their left foot.
        - The player turns their hips and shoulders perpendicular to their target after fielding the ball to prepare to throw.
        - To do this, players step behind their front foot with their back foot.
        - The pro-step footwork pattern is: R - L - Field - R (Behind L) - L - Throw
- After teaching footwork, coaches should try to provide external cues to the players rather than internal cues.
    - External cues help the athlete focus on what they are trying to accomplish, rather than what their body is doing.
    - Examples:
        - "Throw it as far as you can."
        - "Throw it through their glove."
        - "Move fast towards your target."
- Fielding drills and position-specific throwing overlap significantly.
    - Coaches should cover both topics within the same block of practice.

Drills

- **Shoulder Strength**
  - This exercise should be used as a shoulder warm-up prior to throwing.
  - Use a variety of these movements for 30-60 seconds each for a total of 3-5 minutes.
    - Small to large arm circles forward and backward with straight arms and palms up
    - Small to large arm circles forward and backward with straight arms and palms down
    - Small to large arm circles forward and backward with straight arms and thumbs down
    - Press hands together in front of the chest as hard as possible for five seconds
    - Lock hands together in front of the chest and pull apart as hard as possible for five seconds. Repeat with the opposite hand position.
- **Ten Toes**
  - Athletes should stand with their chest and all ten toes pointed at their target.
  - Without moving their feet, the players turn their upper body and throw the ball.
  - This constraint drill is designed to help them dissociate their upper and lower body.
- **Clockwork**
  - Players stand 60-90 feet from their partner
  - Coaches or players call out times from a clock and players match their arm angle with the time.
    - 12:00 - Directly overhead
    - 3:00 - Sidearm
    - 5:00 - Submarine
  - This exercise builds adjustability and encourages players to use different arm slots.
  - To increase the difficulty of the drill, challenge players to balance on one foot while throwing.
- **Quarterback Scramble**
  - This exercise requires partners or a target to throw towards.
  - Pairs of throwing partners must be spread out more than normal.
  - Throwers act as a quarterback scrambling away from a pass rush, before throwing the ball to their target.
  - Players should scramble to their throwing side and non-throwing side.
  - This exercise is meant to build adjustability and develop versatile throwers.
- **Long Toss**
  - Coaches should use this drill most often.
  - The player should set up in an athletic stance with their shoulders perpendicular to their target.
  - The players' goal should be to throw the ball as far as they can towards a target or partner.
  - Provide positive feedback for long, fast, explosive throws regardless of outcome.
  - Encourage players to move their feet in a variety of ways.
  - Challenge players by altering their starting position.
    - Players begin with their backs to the target before turning to throw.
    - Players run towards their target before throwing.
    - Players shuffle towards their target before throwing.
    - Players hop on their rear leg before throwing the ball.

Games

- **Sharp Shooter**
  - Hang a target from a fence.
  - Players throw at the target a predetermined number of times.
  - Award points for each time they hit the target.
  - Progressively increase the distance and points awarded.
    - 1 point at 60 feet
    - 3 points at 75 feet
    - 5 points at 90 feet
  - Adjust the difficulty of the game by altering target size and throwing distance.
- **Baseball Bocce**
  - A player or coach throws or hits a target ball into the outfield.
  - All players throw their ball towards the target.
  - Award points to the players whose throws land closest to the target ball.
    - 5 points for the closest throw
    - 3 points for the second closest throw
    - 1 point for the third closest throw
  - The player who landed closest to the target throws or hits the target ball to begin the next round.
  - Play a predetermined number of rounds.
- **Longest Toss**
  - Place markers in the field progressively farther away from the throwing line.
  - Players throw 3-5 times, attempting to throw as far as they can.
  - Award points for each marker a thrown ball passes.
  - The score can be kept on a team or individual basis.
  - Compare progress over time to show growth.
- **Relay Race**
  - This game should be played with the whole team split into groups of 4-5.
  - members of each team spread out evenly in a straight line across the outfield.
  - The ball begins on one end of the line and players throw the ball from oneteammate to the next, down and back.
  - It is a race to see which team can throw the ball down the line and back the fastest. Bad throws must return to the thrower and be thrown again before the ball can advance.
  - Everyone must catch and throw the ball.
  - Increase the difficulty by increasing the length of each throw or the number of times the ball must travel down and back.
- **Around the Horn**
  - This game should be played with the whole team.
  - Divide the team evenly around the bases.
  - The ball starts at home plate.
  - The players throw the ball around the bases—home to first, first to second, second to third, and third to home—a predetermined number of times as fast as they can.
  - Bad throws must return to the thrower and be thrown again before the ball can advance.
  - Use a stopwatch to time the game.
  - Compare progress over time to show growth.

PITCHING

Goals

1) Develop athletic and efficient pitching motions.
2) Improve velocity and command.
3) Establish consistent command of offspeed pitches.
4) Teach strategies for managing the running game.

Coaching Notes

- It is important that every player interested in pitching is given the opportunity to develop as a pitcher.
- Coaches should resist the urge to decrease output in an attempt to increase accuracy.
    - Players must learn to move explosively while throwing to their target.
- Coaches should teach each player how to pitch from the stretch position and progress players to the wind-up when they have shown the ability to control their body from the stretch.
    - Stretch Position
        - The pitcher begins in an athletic stance with their back foot parallel to the pitching rubber.
            - The stance should be similar to their batting stance.
        - The pitcher:
            - Lifts their front leg towards their throwing shoulder.
            - Strides towards the plate.
            - Throws.
    - Wind-up
        - The pitcher begins with both feet on the pitching rubber pointed towards the catcher.
        - The pitcher:
            - Steps back or to the side with their glove-side foot.
            - Places their throwing side foot in front of the pitching rubber.
            - Lifts their front leg towards their throwing shoulder.
            - Strides towards the plate.
            - Throws.
- Coaches should provide external cues after the stretch and wind-up have been taught.
    - External cues help the athlete focus on what they are trying to accomplish, rather than what their body is doing.
- Common issues for this age group include momentum, balance, and over-throwing.
    - Helpful external cues for these issues include:
        - Momentum: “Drift forward as the leg lifts.”
        - Balance: “Post-up on the front leg.” “Do not let your back-foot land.”
        - Overthrowing: “Let your arm float.” “Relax, then crack the whip.”.
- Prioritize throwing hard in the strike zone rather than aiming at the edges of the plate.

- Offspeed pitches should be thrown with the same arm speed as the fastball.
    - Curveballs and change-ups can be thrown a variety of ways. Common tips include:
        - Curveball
            - The middle finger rests along the horseshoe seam.
            - Apply pressure with the middle finger and thumb.
            - Pre-set the wrist in a “karate-chop” position.
            - The goal is to impart front-spin on the ball.
        - Change-up
            - Hold the ball using all four fingers and the thumb.
            - Experiment with different finger pressure and grip strength.
            - The ring finger or pinky finger touches the ball last.
- Manage the running game by varying timing from pitch-to-pitch and attempting pickoff moves.
- Follow Pitch-Smart pitch count guidelines.

Drills

- **Wall Drill**
    - Pitchers begin in the stretch position perpendicular to a wall or fence post.
    - Pitchers should be less than one foot away from the wall.
    - Pitchers lift their lead leg towards their back shoulder and drift into the wall with the back pocket of the lead leg.
    - This drill encourages players to move towards their target during their leg lift.
- **Hook ‘Em**
    - The pitcher should set up:
        - Balancing on their rear leg.
        - Hooking the heel of their front foot on the pinky toe of their rear foot.
        - With their legs crossed and their hips and shoulders turned slightly away from the target.
    - The pitcher:
        - Lifts their lead leg knee towards their throwing arm shoulder.
        - Strides towards the target.
        - Throws.
    - This constraint encourages pitchers to stride aggressively, using their hips to power the throw.
- **Walking Wind-Ups**
    - Pitchers begin 3-5 steps behind and to the glove side of the pitching rubber.
    - The pitcher:
        - Walks towards the pitching rubber to gain momentum.
        - Places their throwing-side foot on the pitching rubber.
        - Lifts their lead leg knee towards their throwing arm shoulder.
        - Strides towards the target.
        - Throws.
    - Pitchers should maintain momentum through the throw.
    - This constraint drill is designed to help them increase and control momentum towards their target.

- **Back-Ins**
    - Pitchers begin with their back to their target and the ball in their glove.
    - Pitchers take one step backwards, towards their target with their throwing-side foot.
    - When the foot is planted the pitcher:
        - Lifts their lead leg.
        - Strides towards their target.
        - Throws.
    - This drill helps pitchers feel counter-rotation as they stride towards their target and increases rotational speed into front-foot strike.
- **Step Backs**
    - Pitchers begin in the stretch position, about one foot in front of the pitching rubber.
    - Pitchers step back with their throwing-side foot, placing it on the pitching rubber.
    - When the foot is planted the pitcher:
        - Lifts their lead leg.
        - Strides towards their target.
        - Throws.
    - Pitchers should begin to move forward as soon as their lead-leg lifts.
    - This drill helps pitchers feel weight in their back leg as they move down the mound.

Games

- **Pitch for Pitch**
    - Divide pitchers into two even teams on either side of the pitching mound.
    - Pitchers from each team alternate pitching to a target or catcher.
    - Award points for each strike thrown.
    - The team with the most strikes wins.
- **Knockout**
    - Play this game in small groups to limit wait times.
    - Pitchers stand in a single file line and take turns delivering one pitch at a time.
    - If Player 1 throws a strike, Player 2 must also throw a strike or they will be given a point.
    - If Player 2 also throws a strike, there are two points on the line for Player 3.
    - Once a player has three points they are eliminated from the game.
    - To increase difficulty, allow pitchers to include offspeed pitches.
- **P-I-G**
    - Play this game in small groups or pairs to limit wait times.
    - Pitchers throw from the mound to a catcher or target.
    - Pitcher 1 chooses a constraint drill to use—Hook ‘Em, Walking Wind-Up, Back-Ins, Step Backs—and delivers a pitch to the target.
    - If Pitcher 1 throws a strike, the next pitcher must throw a strike repeating the constraint otherwise they earn a letter.
    - Add more variability by allowing pitchers to throw offspeed pitches as well.
        - “Walking wind-up, change-up.”
        - “Hook ‘Em, fastball.”
        - “Step-back, curveball.”

- **21**
  - Play this game in small groups to limit wait times.
  - Pitchers stand in a single file line and take turns delivering one pitch at a time. Points are awarded based on accuracy:
    - 3 points for strikes
    - 2 points for near misses
    - 1 point for all other throws
  - The first player to reach 21 points wins.
  - To increase difficulty, require pitchers to include offspeed pitches during certain rounds.

FIELDING

Goals

1) Establish proper glove positioning and footwork.
2) Teach position-specific skills.
3) Develop pre-pitch routines.

Coaching Notes

- Provide opportunities for infielders to practice fielding in three different lanes with three different techniques.
    - Directly at them, fielded with two hands.
    - To their glove side, fielded with a forehand.
    - To their arm side, fielded with a backhand.
- Defensive footwork is position specific, but most commonly infielders will use either a two-step or four-step pattern to throw. Those patterns are outlined in more detail in the throwing section, along with the pro-step pattern from the outfield.
- Utilize a daily drill series that is low-rigor, but highly transferable. This will help to develop key skills in short amounts of time.
- Focus practice time on the plays that happen the most.
    - Reserve small portions of practice to experiment with more challenging plays.
- Challenge movements and skills by increasing the speed and variability within a drill.
- Develop pre-pitch routines by having players ask themselves:
    - “What will I do if a ball is hit to me?”
    - “What will I do if it is hit somewhere else?”
- Teach options for pre-pitch movement. Option include:
    - Prep-step or creep step
        - Small steps forward in an athletic position as the pitcher begins their movment.
    - Hop
        - A small hop, landing in an athletic position as the ball enters the hitting zone.
- Prioritize the following skills with each position:
    - First Base
        - Fielding balls to their right.
        - Foot placement while waiting for the throw.
        - Stretching towards the throw.
        - Forehand and backhand short-hops.
        - Flips to pitchers covering first.
        - Fielding bunts.
        - Double play feeds.
        - Foot placement while holding a runner.
    - Middle Infield
        - Fielding balls to their right and left.
        - Fielding slow-rollers.
        - Double play feeds and turns.
        - Relay throws from the outfield.
        - Catch and tag from the outfield and catcher.

- Third Base
  - Fielding balls to their left and right.
  - Fielding bunts and slow-rollers.
  - Double play feeds.
  - Relay throws from the outfield.
  - Catch and tag from the outfield and catcher.

- Outfield
  - Catching fly balls in every direction.
  - Fielding ground balls to protect second base.
  - Fielding ground balls to throw out the lead runner.
  - Throwing after catching a fly out.
  - Hitting the cutoff.

Drills

- **Knees Down Fundamentals**
  - This drill can be done with or without a glove.
  - Players kneel 20-25 feet apart from a partner, rolling the ball back and forth.
  - Kneeling simplifies the movement by removing the footwork.
  - Encourage players to point the fingers of their glove at the ground when fielding and use their other hand to secure the ball when appropriate.
  - Players should roll the ball to their partner in all three fielding lanes.
    - Directly at them, fielded with two hands.
    - To their glove side, fielded with a forehand.
    - To their arm side, fielded with a backhand.
    - Players should transfer the ball and get to their throwing slot on each repetition.
- **Rapid Fire**
  - Players stand 25-30 feet apart from a partner in a good fielding stance.
  - One player plays defense at a time.
  - The throwing partner delivers 3-5 ground balls to a single lane in quick succession.
  - The fielder fields each ball and tosses it aside before fielding the next ball.
- **Switches**
  - Players stand 25-30 feet apart from a partner in a good fielding stance.
  - One player plays defense at a time.
  - The throwing partner will deliver ground balls to various lanes.
  - The fielding partner switches their feet quickly to get into the correct position each time.
- **Toe Down**
  - Players stand 15-20 feet apart from a partner in their fielding stance.
  - Players shift their weight to their throwing-side foot and lift the toe of their glove-side foot.
  - The partner rolls a ground ball to the two-handed or forehand lane.
  - The fielder puts their toe down as they field the ball and move towards their target.
  - This drill can be done with or without a throw.
  - This drill encourages the proper footwork pattern while fielding and throwing.

- **Flamingo**
    - Players stand 15-20 feet apart from a partner in their fielding stance.
    - Players shift their weight to their throwing-side foot and lift their glove-side leg to their waist, balancing until they field the ball.
    - The partner rolls a ground ball to the two-handed or forehand lane.
    - The fielder lowers the glove-side leg as they field the ball and move towards their target.
    - This drill can be done with or without a throw.
    - This drill encourages the proper footwork pattern while fielding and throwing.
- **Ground Balls**
    - Players line up at each position.
    - Coaches hit ground balls from home plate to all three fielding lanes.
        - Directly at them, fielded with two hands.
        - To their glove side, fielded with a forehand.
        - To their arm side, fielded with a backhand.
    - Fielders approach the ball in an athletic position and execute the proper glove position and footwork.
    - This drill can be done with or without a throw.
    - Increase or decrease difficulty by increasing or decreasing the speed of the groundball and the distance players must travel to field it.
- **Cross the Line**
    - Players line up at one position in the infield.
    - Mark a straight line from the fielders to home plate using cones or markers.
    - Players stand with the line to their right facing the coach.
    - The coach hits ground balls directly at the players.
    - Players must cross the line with both feet before fielding the ball.
    - This drill encourages fielders to get around the ball and field it with their momentum moving towards first base.
- **Route Running**
    - Place a marker in the outfield for players to run towards.
    - Players line up on the side of a coach, similar to a wide receiver with a quarterback.
    - Players run towards the target as fast as they can.
    - The coach throws a ball for them to catch on the run.

Games

- **Hot Hands**
  - Players line up in the infield behind a marker.
  - The coach hits or rolls ground balls to the players one at a time.
  - The score is kept by counting how many ground balls the team fields in a row.
  - The game can be played in teams or as individuals.
  - Compare progress over time to show growth.
- **Knockout**
  - Players line up at one position in the infield.
  - Players get one chance to field a ground ball cleanly and make a good throw to first base.
  - If the ball is dropped, or a bad throw is made, the player is eliminated.
  - Increase the difficulty each round by increasing the speed of the ground ball or the distance the fielder must cover.
- **Flip**
  - Players stand in a circle facing each other with their gloves.
  - The player who begins with the ball tosses it to someone in the circle.
  - That player must redirect the ball to another teammate using only their glove.
  - This continues until the ball is dropped or a bad flip is made.
  - The player who dropped the ball or made an uncatchable flip is given a strike.
  - Players are eliminated after three strikes.
- **Two Ball**
  - Players stand in a circle facing each other without their gloves.
  - Each player has a baseball, but one player has a second baseball.
  - The player with two baseballs begins by tossing a ball to another player.
  - That player must catch the ball with one hand while tossing the other to another player.
  - This continues until the ball is dropped or a bad toss is made.
  - The player who dropped the ball or made an uncatchable toss is given a strike.
  - Players are eliminated after three strikes.
- **Beat the Clock**
  - One coach hits ground balls while another uses the stopwatch.
  - Players line up at one position in the infield.
  - Players must field the ground ball and throw to first base in under 4.5 seconds..
  - If the throw does not arrive on time, the coaches are given a point.
  - If the player beats the clock the players are given a point.
  - Adjust the time limit as needed.

CATCHING

Goals

1) Teach primary and secondary stances.
2) Improve their ability to catch pitches consistently and cleanly.
3) Develop their ability to block pitches in the dirt.
4) Improve footwork and release times to each base.

Coaching Notes

- Develop as many catchers as possible.
    - Provide encouragement and positive feedback to increase participation.
- Provide low-risk opportunities for players who are new to the position.
    - Use a tennis ball or soft alternative to start.
    - Practice receiving from the catching stance without a batter to build confidence.
- Catchers should wear proper protective equipment whenever there is a batter or a pitcher is throwing.
    - Equipment includes: helmet, mask, chest protector, cup, and shin-guards.
- Develop both primary and secondary stances.
    - Primary Stance: Used when no runners are on base and there is no need to block a pitch in the dirt.
        - Priorities are to:
            - Provide a low target.
            - Catch the ball consistently.
            - Present the ball to the umpire.
                - Working from low to high.
                - Moving pitches towards the strike zone.
    - Secondary stance: Used when there are runners on base or two strikes.
        - Priorities are to:
            - Provide a low target
            - Catch the ball consistently.
            - Present the ball to the umpire.
                - Working from low to high.
                - Moving pitches towards the strike zone.
            - Block pitches in the dirt.
            - Throw out baserunners.
        - The catcher must be more mobile.
            - Wider stance.
            - Hips at knee height.
            - Weight towards the toes.
- Consistently catching the ball is the most important skill for catchers.
    - The priorities, in order, are:
        - Receiving
        - Blocking
        - Throwing
- The receiving arm should remain slightly bent when catching the baseball.
- The hand should make a “C” shape with the thumb underneath and four fingers on the top of the ball.

- Proper blocking technique requires the catcher to:
    - Drop to their knees quickly in front of the ball.
    - Place their hands in the space between their legs.
        - With their palms towards the ball.
            - Hide their throwing hand behind their glove hand.
        - Pointing their fingers to the ground.
    - Pull their elbows to their sides
    - Tuck their chin to their chest
- When blocking, there should be no room for a ball to get through.
- Provide opportunities to judge whether a pitch should be caught or blocked.
- Catchers throwing to second base should:
    - Get their throwing-side foot under them as quickly as possible
    - Transfer the ball as quickly as possible.
    - Stride towards the base.
    - Deliver the throw to the base or on the right side of the base.
- Catchers throwing to third base should:
    - Get their throwing-side foot under them as quickly as possible
    - Transfer the ball as quickly as possible.
    - Stride towards the base.
    - Deliver the throw to the base or on the right side of the base.
    - If there is a right-handed batter, the catcher must step behind the batter, clearing space to throw.
- Catchers make the same number of throws as pitchers.
    - Be aware of how often they are catching.
    - Do not ask players to pitch and catch on the same day.

Drills

- **Partner Receiving**
    - Can be done without catching gear or a glove if equipment is limited.
    - Players line up 15-20 feet away from their partner.
    - One partner is in a catching stance with their glove or fingertips resting on the ground.
    - The other partner underhand tosses a baseball, tennis ball, or other soft alternative to the catcher.
    - The catcher receives the ball and holds it in place for one second.
    - This drill encourages catchers to work low-to-high when catching the ball.
- **Dry Blocking**
    - This is a good drill for a large group of catchers.
    - If not all players have shin-guards, complete the drill in the grass or somewhere soft.
    - Catchers begin in a proper catching stance.
    - The coach points straight down, to the left, or to the right.
    - Catchers move to block an imaginary pitch in that location.
    - Coaches should evaluate the catching stance and the blocking position.
- **Live Blocking**
    - Catchers must be in full catching gear.
    - Coaches stand 45-60 feet away from the catcher.
    - The coach delivers pitches in the dirt to the catcher.
    - Catchers block each pitch.
    - Coaches evaluate the catcher's blocking positions.
    - This drill should feel very low-risk and approachable..

- To increase difficulty coaches can increase the speed of the throws and incorporate throws to either side of the cather.
- Help players build confidence before challenging them.
- To progress the drill, catchers will block and recover, which involves:
  - Getting up.
  - Hustling to the ball.
  - Picking it up ready to throw out a runner.

- **Wild Card**
  - Catchers must be in full catching gear.
  - Coaches stand 45-60 feet away from the catcher.
  - The coach alternates randomly between pitches that can be caught and pitches that need to be blocked.
  - Catchers receive pitches in the air and block pitches in the dirt.
- **Bullpens**
  - Catchers must be in full catching gear.
  - Pitchers practice their delivery and various pitches.
  - Catchers take game-like repetitions, varying between primary and secondary stances.
  - Catchers block pitches in the dirt and recover as if to throw out a runner.

Games

- **Rapid Receiving**
  - Can be played barehanded and without any catching gear, or in full gear.
  - The catcher begins in a proper catching stance.
  - The coach stands 20 feet away with a bucket of baseballs.
  - The coach underhand tosses balls to the catcher for 30 seconds.
  - Catchers receive each ball and toss it aside.
  - Points are awarded for tosses that are caught cleanly.
  - The catcher with the most points is the winner.
  - To increase the difficulty, vary the location of the tosses.
- **Protect the Net**
  - Must be played in full catching gear.
  - The catcher begins in a proper stance in front of a “goal” that has been created using markers.
  - The coach, or opposing player, stands 50-60 feet away.
  - The coach, or opposing player, makes five throws, attempting to get the ball by the catcher to score a goal.
  - The catcher with the fewest goals allowed is the winner.
- **Sharp Shooter**
  - Place a five gallon bucket at either second base or third base.
  - Catchers throw to the base as if a runner is attempting to steal.
  - Award points based on the quality of the throw.
    - Three points for hitting the bucket
    - One point for near misses.
  - To increase the difficulty, use a stopwatch to determine the time between the catch and the ball reaching the base.
    - Only award points if the throw is made below a certain time threshold.

BASE RUNNING

Goals

1) Teach primary and secondary leads at each base.
2) Master intermediate baserunning concepts, including sliding, reading fly balls, and advancing in non-force situations.
3) Improve situational baserunning instincts.
4) Introduce basic strategies for stealing second and third base.
5) Develop speed.

Coaching Notes

- Coaches should begin by revisiting intermediate baseball rules and concepts.
  - When to slide and how to do it correctly
  - When to advance or tag up on fly balls in the outfield
  - When to advance or retreat in non-force situations
- If any of the above topics need to be addressed, spend time mastering those concepts before moving on.
- Practice sliding in the grass or on a large piece of cardboard to make it easier and less intimidating.
  - Do not practice sliding in the grass or on the infield if players are wearing shorts.
- A proper feet-first slide involves:
  - Maintaining momentum.
  - Tucking the right leg under the left leg in a figure-four pattern.
  - Sliding straight into the base.
- Baserunners can advance “half-way” on fly balls.
  - To do this, players:
    - Move towards the next base while the ball is in the air.
    - Stay close enough to the original base to return safely if the ball is caught.
- Baserunners without a runner behind them may advance at their own risk
  - Players should:
    - Advance on a ground ball to their left.
    - Hold their ground or retreat on a ball to their left.
    - Retreat on a line-drive.
- Running the bases with two outs means baserunners no longer have to tag up.
- Teach the difference between primary and secondary leads.
  - Primary leads:
    - Taken while the pitcher has the ball on the mound.
    - 6-12 feet at first base
    - 9-15 feet at second base.
  - Secondary leads
    - Occur after the pitcher has committed to the plate.
    - Allows runners gain additional distance towards the next base.
    - Vary widely in length situationally.
- When taking a primary lead at first base, players should:
  - Begin with their feet together on the base.
  - Maintain an athletic position.
  - Take deliberate shuffle-steps until they have reached their desired distance.
  - Never take their eyes off the pitcher or cross their feet.

- When taking a primary lead at second base, players should:
    - Maintain an athletic position.
    - Walk or shuffle away from the base until they've reached their desired distance.
    - Never take their eyes off the pitcher or cross their feet.
    - Listen to the coaches communicate what the middle infielders are doing.
- When taking a secondary lead, players should:
    - Be sure the pitcher is delivering the pitch home.
    - Take two shuffles towards the next base.
    - Build momentum to advance on a ball in the dirt or ball in play.
    - Retreat to the original base when the ball is secured by the catcher.
- Players to be aggressive when a pitch bounces in the dirt.
    - Determining whether or not to advance on a ball in the dirt is an important part of baserunning that must be practiced.
- Stealing bases is a complex skill. Generally, players should: .
    - Not increase their primary lead
        - Doing so draws attention and increases the likelihood of a pickoff attempt.
    - Look for tendencies in timing
        - Many pitchers fall into patterns that can be exploited.
- Coaches should use a stopwatch as often as possible to time the players as they run.
    - Using a stopwatch will lead to higher effort levels and develop speed.

Drills

- **Home-to-First**
    - Players hit a ball from a tee or front toss and run as fast as they can through first base.
    - Coaches use a stopwatch to time players from contact to first base.
    - Without a stopwatch, two players can race to first base after taking dry swings.
- **Station-to-Station**
    - Set up with one batter and a baserunner on each base.
    - The batter hits the ball from a tee or front toss and runs fast through first base.
    - The other baserunners advance one base.
        - If the ball is hit in the air, runners should advance "half way" until the ball is caught or lands on the ground.
    - Incorporate this drill into batting practice by only advancing runners on the last hit of the round.
    - If possible, use a stopwatch to time the batter running to first base.
- **On and Island**
    - Set up with one batter and a baserunner on each base.
    - The batter hits the ball from a tee or front toss and runs fast through first base.
    - The other baserunners act as if they are the only one on base.
        - Force situation at first base.
        - Non-force situation at second and third base.
        - If the ball is hit in the air, runners should advance "half way" until the ball is caught or lands on the ground.
    - Coaches watch each baserunner and provide guidance when necessary.
    - Incorporate this drill into batting practice by only advancing runners on the last hit of the round.

- **Ball-In-Dirt**
    - Two or three players take their primary lead at first base.
    - The coach or pitcher delivers a pitch to a catcher.
    - Baserunners take their secondary lead and read the pitch.
        - If the ball is caught, they return to the base.
        - If the ball is dropped or bounces in the dirt, they continue to second base.
- **Cardboard Slide**
    - Place a large piece of cardboard in the outfield grass or in front of a base on the infield.
    - Players get a running start and slide into the base at the end of the cardboard.
    - This drill allows players to practice sliding in a low-risk environment.

Games

- **Race to Home**
    - Two players line up at third base.
    - The coach throws a ball to simulate a fly ball.
    - When the ball hits the ground—or is caught by another coach—the players race to home plate.
    - This game reinforces tagging up and develops speed simultaneously.
- **Modified Baseball**
    - This game provides an opportunity to learn in game-like situations.
    - Modifying the game increases the amount of repetitions each inning.
    - Divide into two teams, one on defense and one on offense.
    - The offensive team runs the bases after hitting the ball from a tee, front toss, or normal batting practice..
    - The defense attempts to make a play on the ball.
    - To increase the number of players in action, start each inning with the bases loaded.
    - Switch sides after three outs, or a predetermined number of at-bats..
- **Pickle**
    - Use two bases with a defender on each base and a baserunner in the middle.
    - The two defenders attempt to tag the baserunner out.
    - The baserunner attempts to steal as many bases as possible before being tagged.
    - There are no force outs.
    - The player who tags the baserunner out becomes the next base runner.
    - Set up multiple games so each player can participate.
    - The player with the most stolen bases is the winner.
    - This game develops speed and agility while providing opportunities to throw and catch the ball.

MENTAL GAME

Goals

1) Build routines for players to use between pitches.
2) Teach strategies to regain focus on the present moment.
3) Develop the tools to navigate nervousness, frustration, and adversity.

Coaching Notes

- Players should be taught strategies to manage their emotions and regain their focus throughout a practice or game.
- Using basic breathing patterns and rhythms can help slow players down and bring their focus to the present moment.
- Breathing exercises are a great way to start practice, prior to the warm-up.
    - The exercise can bring their focus to practice, rather than other things going on in their lives.
    - Once coaches introduce a strategy they can remind players throughout practice.
- Provide players the opportunity to slow down when necessary during practice.
    - Coaches often recognize signs of frustration before players are aware of it.
    - Intervene and remind players to reset with their breath.
- Discussions regarding anxiety, frustration, and nerves can help players become more aware of their mental state.
    - Awareness is the first step before players can take charge of their mental process.
- During competition, or high stress situations, remind players to slow down by taking a breath.

Drills

- **Nasal Breathing**
    - Players close their eyes to limit stimulus.
    - Players should:
        - Breath in deeply through their nose until their lungs are full.
        - Pause for a moment at the top of the breath.
        - Exhale slowly through their nose until their lungs are empty.
    - Repeat 3-5 times.
- **Belly Breathing**
    - Players close their eyes to limit stimulus.
    - Players should:
        - Breath in deeply through their nose feeling the breath in their belly more than their chest.
        - Pause for a moment at the top of the breath.
        - Exhale slowly through their nose until their belly is empty.
    - Repeat 3-5 times.

- **Box Breathing**
    - Players close their eyes to limit stimulus.
    - Players should:
        - Breathe in through their nose as they count to three.
        - Hold their breath at the top of the inhale as they count to three.
        - Exhale slowly through their nose as they count to three.
        - Hold their breath at the bottom of the exhale as they count to three.
    - Repeat 3-5 times.
    - To progress this exercise, players can move to a 4-4-4-4 or 5-5-5-5- breath.
        - The goal is simply to slow down and focus on their breath.
- **Street Lights**
    - This exercise is best done as a small group or team discussion.
    - Use a street light as an analogy for specific mental states.
        - Green Light
            - Everything is going well
            - Little or no thought
        - Yellow Light
            - Things are starting to go wrong
            - Thinking about situation, score, and stakes
        - Red Light
            - Lost focus totally
            - Mind is on all the wrong things
            - Performance is suffering
    - Discussing what each state feels like for players increases their awareness.
    - Increased awareness increases their chance to intervene.
- **Routine Building**
    - Players write down their specific routines for in between pitches.
        - Hitting
        - Pitching
        - Fielding
    - Provide the Routine Building worksheet to guide players through the process.
    - Establishing a consistent routine leads to consistent performance.

Sample Routine Building

Situation	Mental Routine	Physical Routine
Hitting - Green Light	Tell myself, “Be aggressive.”	Adjust my helmet and take a deep breath.
Pitching - Green Light	Visualize the next pitch as a strike.	Take a deep breath as I step on the rubber.
Fielding - Green Light	Ask myself, “What will I do if the ball is hit to me?”	Adjust my hat and take a deep breath.
Hitting - Yellow Light	Tell myself, “It only takes one.” Visualize a line drive on the next pitch.	Re-tighten my batting gloves. Close my eyes and take a deep breath.
Pitching - Yellow Light	Tell myself, “Clean slate. Reset.”	Wipe the pitching rubber clean. Take a deep breath
Fielding - Yellow Light	Repeat to myself, “Give me the next one.”	Take a deep breath. Draw an ‘X’ in the dirt and wipe it away.
Hitting - Red Light	Tell myself, “Calm down, you got this.”	Step out of the box. Find a focal point on the bat. Take two deep breaths.
Pitching - Red Light	Remind myself “nothing matters except the next pitch.”	Take off my heat for two deep breaths. Put it back on when I’m refocused.
Fielding - Red Light	Visualize myself making a web-gem the next play. Tell myself, “There’s no one better!	Take off my glove and shake it out. Put it back on after two deep breaths.

Sample Routine Building

Situation	Mental Routine	Physical Routine
Hitting - Green Light		
Pitching - Green Light		
Fielding - Green Light		
Hitting - Yellow Light		
Pitching - Yellow Light		
Fielding - Yellow Light		
Hitting - Red Light		
Pitching - Red Light		
Fielding - Red Light		

PRACTICE PLANNING

Goals

1) Provide opportunities for the players to compete every day.
2) Keep players active and engaged throughout practice.
3) Develop athleticism and baseball skills that will help players long term.

Coaching Notes

- Keep the players engaged by limiting individual portions of practice to 15-20 minutes.
- Design practices with multiple stations for the players to rotate through.
- Use small groups with many active participants to limit periods of inactivity.
- Practice plans should always include hitting, throwing, and fielding.
    - Inclusion of other skills can rotate from day-to-day.
- Maintain a list of skills and concepts to cover over the course of the season. Cross items off when they have been incorporated into practice an appropriate amount.
- When creating groups for practice consider which positions each player plays.
    - This makes defensive stations more productive.

Sample Practice Plan **120 minutes** **Date:** **4 - 1 - 2021**

Strength and Movement Exercises: 15 minutes

Teams compete in **Relay Races** in the outfield using a variety of different movements that include moving forward, backward, side-to-side, and jumping. Finish with a game of **Air Force Football.**

Team	Players	1st Station
Twins		1
Saints		2
Wind Surge		3

Station Length: 20 minutes	Drills	Game
Station 1: Hitting	Tee - The Happy Gilmore Front Toss - Hook 'Em	
Station 2: Fielding	Knees Down, Switches, Position Specific	Knockout
Station 3: Arm Care	Shoulder Work, Dry Reps	
Station 4: Throwing	Hook 'Em, Walking Wind-ups, Back-ins	Long Toss

Team Activity: 25 minutes

Modified game with the bases loaded. The Twins bat first, then the Saints, then the Wind Surge. The two teams not batting play defense. After three outs are made, the teams switch.

Notes:

Practice Planning Template **Date:**

Strength and Movement Exercises:

Team	Players	1st Station
Twins		
Saints		
Wind Surge		

Station Length:	Drills	Game
Station 1:		
Station 2:		
Station 3:		
Station 4:		

Team Activity:

Notes:

GAME MANAGEMENT

Goals

1) Maintain a positive and encouraging environment throughout the game.
2) Provide opportunities for players to learn and participate while not playing.
3) Teach rules and strategies of baseball using in-game examples and situations.

Coaching Notes

- Provide opportunities for all players to develop and participate in games.
- Use players who are not in the game to complete charts.
    - Charts keep them engaged, teach them about the game, and provide useful data.
- Praise outputs as much as outcomes. Hard-hit balls are not always hits, but should always be praised. Encouraging effort and output can help make the game more enjoyable for struggling players.
- Keep notes of basic rules or ideas that need to be revisited and reinforced in practice.
    - Resist the urge to address the topics immediately after the game.
    - Use that time to provide positive feedback and encouragement.
        - Even after bad games there are positives to discuss and praise.

Pitch Tracking Chart

Pitcher	Strikes	Balls	Total	Strike %

Quality At-Bat Chart

Hitters are awarded one point for each item in an at-bat.

Quality At-Bat Traits:
1. Hard Hit Ball
2. Hard Hit ball in the Air
3. Walk
4. 4+ Pitch AB without a K
5. 5+ Pitch AB
6. Base Hit
7. Hit by Pitch
8. Move Runner With 0 Outs
9. Score a Runner

Hitter	At-Bats	QAB Points

Pitch Smart Guidelines for Youth and Adolescent Pitchers

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	REST DAYS PER PITCHES THROWN IN A DAY					
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	81+	N/A
19-22	120	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	81-105	106+