

Hello Coach!

Welcome to PSA Baseball and thank you for volunteering to coach your child and their teammates through our baseball program. Below you will find some coaching pointers and strategy suggestions to help you in your endeavors on the field of play. Thank you again for your service to the youth!

Cheers!

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Practice Schedule

1:30min

0-:10 Dynamic Warmup Movements--Pick Six-Carioca, Shuffle Scoops, High Knee, Backpedal, Jumping Jacks, Lunge with Twist, Tin Man to Toe Touch, Lunge/Lunge Shuffle

Carioca-With the body moving laterally alternate feet in front of then behind one another

Shuffle Scoops-With the body shuffling laterally have the players scoop their arms down lightly grazing the grass then back up to 180 degrees

High Knee-With arms pumping have the players get their knees to belly button height while slowly advancing forward. The faster the arms the faster the legs.

Backpedal-With arms pumping and eyes facing away from the direction they're going have the players kick the heels to the butt then kick them backward extending the heel towards the opposite direction of their eyes. The chest should be at a 45-degree angle to allow the legs the needed angle to reach backward.

Jumping Jacks-Hands to side and feet together at start. Full range of motion with arms is fully extended at top and bottom of movement for the added stretch to the lats and shoulders.

Lunge with Twist-At bottom of the lunge the player should twist away from the front leg then towards the front leg. Before standing return to center then stand to balance. Avoid hands on knees as much as possible.

Tin Man to Toe Touch-Swing leg forward where leg is straight and elevates ideally to the shoulder height and touches the opposite hand that is extended out. As the leg comes down the chest comes forward and leg continues backward to hip height as the other hand extends to opposing toe.

Lunge/Lunge Shuffle-Moving laterally the player will lunge with hips back toward the direction they're headed, reaching across the body and touching the fingers to the opposite foot, then from that down position lean back to the opposite foot and touching it with the other hand, finishing with a shuffle towards the direction of the coach on the other end of the field.

## Arm Warmups—Trunk Rotation with Reach, Arm Flaps, Propellers, Swimmers

Trunk Rotation with Reach—Standing with feet hip width apart twist one direction extending the arm completely at shoulder height when fully rotated then twist the other direction doing the same.

Arm Flaps—With feet just outside hip width and standing have players give themselves a big hug then swing arms back as far as possible. Stretch should be in chest when arms are extended away from one another and arms should be as close to shoulder height at the back of the movement as possible.

Propellers. With feet about twice the distance of hip width, have players bend to ground with arms straight and back straight where they're barely touching the grass, back should be perpendicular to the ground. Slowly begin to swing the arms and torso in a twisting motion where arms are at 180 degrees from one another and the twisting makes the player look like a plane propeller.

Swimmers— One arm moves vertically while the other moves down to side getting as much extension away from another as possible. Both arms should be working in opposite directions during the entire movement.

:10-:20—Catch—Goal is to start at 30-45ft depending on age/experience and stretch it out to a comfortable long distance where players can still catch and throw efficiently. Novice players should start with wrist flips where they can see the backspin on the ball and learn how to create proper wrist action that gets the fingers behind the ball at release. More advanced players should work other movements such as rock-n-go or staggered stance follow throughs to advance their balance and core stability. As players increase distance from one another they should move their feet during all throws and keep their shoulders lined up with their target until the front foot lands. A consistent alignment of the body before each throw does wonders for consistency. All throws should be at the chest or the face and all catches should be out front of the body. Once players are at a distance farther than the base, they should practice glove side turns or snap tags when catching the ball. Glove side turns are accomplished when players set up as if they were the cutoff man for an outfield throw with their body setup where their glove is on the opposite side of their catch partner. Receiving player should catch the ball on their glove side with body lined up to make a throw in the same direction as the one they caught. They will then fake a throw in that direction, turn 180 degrees, then return the ball to their partner shuffling through their throw as well. Snap tags are done by the receiving player imagining they're making a tag on a runner coming into a base. Primary objective is to catch the ball, secondary goal is to return the glove to the front of the imaginary base as quickly as possible.

:20-1:20 Pick 3-4 of the following stations with groups of 3-4 per station-- Hitting, Infield, Outfield, Pitching—If 3 stations split in 20 min rotations if 4 stations split into 15 min rotations.

Hitting—Pick 2--Tee work, Live BP, Soft Toss or Front Toss

Tee Work—Primary objective is to hit line drives into the net or field of play. Consistent stance, setup, load, and follow through with balance is key. For a bonus have tee hits go to players in infield group or outfield group. As players advance in skill move location of contact point and encourage bat control hitting different pitches to different parts of the field.

Soft Toss-From slightly in front of the hitter and to their side, have toss aimed at front hip of batter with and batter hit the ball at the top of the arc out in front of their body where the barrel connects.

Front toss-Only to be done with fencing to protect pitcher, toss ball from the front of the hitter same as side soft toss. Goal should be line drives

Live BP-Coach throws BP or simulate a scrimmage with pitchers starting at a 1-1 count. Use machine for added consistency. Infield and outfield stations should incorporate positions and fielding drills into retrieval of balls during this station of hitting.

Infield—Pick 2--3-Cone Rounding Drill, Ladder Forehand/Backhand Drill, Middle Infield Flip/Toss/Throw Drill, Grounders with throws to 1<sup>st</sup> and Double plays, One hop drill

3-Cone Round Drill-Using cones or baseballs setup an equilateral triangle with one flat side perpendicular to home plate. Have Players start at front of triangle rotating first base side around triangle doing a backpedal then as they come back around to the front of the triangle roll a ball to them so they can learn how to field the ball off their front foot and shuffle through their throw towards first, or second base

Ladder Forehand/Backhand Drill-With a speed ladder have feet go into ladder front foot first, then back foot, then as front foot comes up to exit ladder roll a ball on the exit side. Fielder fields the ball off of front foot glove side for forehand then continues forward to next ladder position stepping up with foot that's still in the ladder box. Continue movement to backhand with player fielding the rolled ball to backhand on the other side of the ladder.

Flip/Toss/Throw Drill-For all middle infielders the goal is to know the difference between needing to throw or flip or toss the baseball to second for a force play at second. All deliveries should be made a shoulder height on the glove side of the receiver. When a ball is hit to a middle infielder a flip is a backhand toss where the player steps and extends the flip to the receiver when the ball is hit directly at them or they move closer to second base to retrieve it. Second basemen will use this movement more than SS. A toss is underhand and performed the same way and for the same reason by the SS when they move towards the back to retrieve the ground ball. These two moves are typically performed when players are closer than 15ft to the bag or their momentum is bringing them toward the base. Throws should be made to second on all balls outside this range or when the ground ball takes them away from the bag. In most cases SS should field the ball, funnel to belly button, then throw all in one motion without standing completely to do so. Body should follow the throw. For second base the player should learn the drop step movement where they field the ball off their glove side then step back with their right foot so they can clear their hips and throw the ball to second with their chest squared. In some cases where the ball is fielded in their forehand behind the body it makes more sense to turn glove side and throw to second after the have turned.

Outfield—Pick 2--Football Post/Flag Routes, Grounders to crow hop drill, Cutoff Man Drill, Hip Turn Fly Ball Drill

Football Post/Flag Routes-Have players set up like a wide receiver and run Post and Flag routes, throwing the ball to them once they make their cut. Work both sides of their body and remind them to run with the glove down until they're about to catch the ball, which is when they should extend to catch it.

Grounders to crow hop drill-Hit/roll ground balls to the outfielders and have them practice fielding the ball off their glove side foot while running then transferring the ball from their glove to their hand while squaring their shoulders with a crow hop to throw to the respective base/cutoff man.

Cutoff Man Drill- Spread out players to the distance that they'd need to make a long throw to the cutoff man and have them compete with one another for time on accurate throw and catch series. Ball should be caught on a line and to the glove side. Players at ends of line should practice snap tags or glove side turn to return ball back to starting position.

Hip Turn Fly Ball Drill-With players at a reasonable distance in front of coach and facing the coach based on age, have them practice turning at a 45-degree angle opening the hips to the side the ball is throw. Once they leave the starting position they should turn and run towards a second cone and run to where they think the ball will land, turning back to find the ball as they approach the projected landing target. For novice players incorporate a tennis ball or even a whiffle ball to prevent the possibility of them catching it with their face.

Pitching--Pick 2--Flat Ground, Mound Work, Pickoffs, PFPs, Backup Drills, Rock n Go Drill, Knee to Stand Drill, Triple Balance Drill, Up and Over Up and Go Drill, Wrist Flip Drill, 4 step drill

Rock N Go Drill-With legs spread out to almost full stride length, feet parallel, glove and hands at the midline between the belly button and sternum, and shoulders perpendicular to the catcher, have pitcher rock forward toward catcher. As they begin to rock back to their power position the ball should drop out of the glove and arc down back and then up to shoulder/ear height by the time their hips have reached the back of the movement. The glove should be shoulder height with thumb facing down and covering up the catcher. At this point the glove side leg opens to where the ankle, knee and hip are stacked one on top of the other with a slight bend to the knee and the player completes his throw with a fully extended arm and flat back at completion. The goal is to have a front leg that is vertical and not angled and a follow through that shows balance at the finish with the throwing hand extending down past the front side knee.

Kneel to Stand Drill-Similar to Rock N Go with the upper body, but from the kneeling position with the hips already square to the catcher and frontside leg out front already bent and stacked vertically. The goal is to get to the power position then make a throw and stand into it with a fully extended follow through to a balance finish. This drill creates strength in the lower half and balance on the front side when incorporated.

Triple Balance Drill. From the set position in the stretch, have player slowly and with balance lift and drop the leg twice to and from the set position to the balance position where the knee lifts to belly button height or higher and slightly back towards the throwing shoulder. The goal is no leaning back as the leg lifts the head should stay with nose over the toes and hips behind the back-leg heel. After the two leg lifts, the pitcher will lift the leg a third time and then deliver a throw to their target.

Much like the Triple Balance, but the pitcher will lift the knee then bring the foot down behind the back foot then lift the leg back to balance position again before delivering the throw. The goal is to create more dynamic balance, leg power, and positive movement patterns. If the knee is not getting to hip/bellybutton height on each lift, they aren't doing it right.

Wrist Flip Drill-For newer pitcher or players that still get to the side of the ball and twist their hand at finish. Have player put elbow on glove at shoulder height then with only their forearm and wrist follow through and throw the ball with wrist pulling down through the ball and producing backspin with a four-seam grip. Hand should finish directly out front at shoulder height.

4 Step Drill-With coach calling out cadence have players produce proper positions for 1. Setup 2. Balance Position 3. Power Position and 4. Follow Through to finish. At each position coach should have player hold the pose, then adjust their body positioning as needed. Keys at setup are hands between sternum and belly button in midline of body, grip is four-seam, glove is hiding the ball, feet, hips and shoulders are all perpendicular to catcher, and feet are just outside hip width and parallel with one another. At balance position knee is hip height or higher with knee at the midline of the body, hands are still between the sternum and chin now down the midline of the body and hips and shoulders are either perpendicular or slightly closed off toward home. Power position is feet lined up directly towards home plate with front shoulder still closed off, front foot slightly closed, glove at shoulder height or slightly above and covering up the catcher. Throwing arm is shoulder/ear height directly behind the head as to hide the ball from the hitter and the thumb and fingers should be facing away from the target with the wrist slightly at an obtuse angle. At the follow through the chest should open and arm should extend out toward the catcher, finishing down past the front knee with balance on the front side leg where the ankle, knee and hip are stacked vertically. Player should be able to hold this follow through position with the back flat over their front side.

PFPs-Pitchers Fielding Practice is done where players work on bunts, ground balls and covering first base on balls hit to the right side of the field. There are two primary ways to cover first, the direct route and the banana route. The direct route to first should only be done against fast runners. Pitcher should always run full speed to the bag and attempt to set up like a first baseman before the ball is throw. If they get there late, they should think ball first then find the bag with their foot. The banana route has them coming up the fair side of the baseline and helps prevent them from crossing over the bag and colliding with the runner. At all times the pitcher should find the front left side of the bag and make sure they don't step on top or to the foul side of the bag. Once catch is completed and base is tagged, they should turn inside toward the field of play and look for other runners that may still be in transition or moving to a new base. Never cross over the foul line in these drills. For bunts and ground balls players should field the ball and try to set their feet towards a throw to the targeted base as they do so, making sure to funnel the ball to their belly button and stay low during the throw. Standing up completely to throw wastes time and usually results in a safe runner or errand throw.

Pickoffs-Pickoffs are meant to be accurate and quick footed, not necessarily hard thrown. The ball should end up between the ground and up to 2 feet off the ground directly over the base. This way their teammate can easily tag the runner sliding back in. In the event of a pickle the pitcher will follow their throw to first, go to third on a throw to second or third, and go home on a play at the plate. The pitcher never goes to second base on a pickoff to second. On picks to second, there are two moves to utilize, the inside move and the spin move. Spin move is 180-degree spin glove side while gaining ground to second and completing an accurate throw. Inside move is where the pitcher lifts his leg to the balance position then turns toward their arm side as the leg comes down. Once the foot hits the dirt behind the rubber, the player should hop and turn to square their shoulders then make an accurate throw to first base.

Flat Ground and Mound Work-These are regular bullpen sessions with a catcher, one on flat ground and the other from the mound. The goal should always be throwing strikes and working on developing command with all their pitches. This can be incorporated into live BP as a means of competition, and no player should throw a pen over the max pitches recommended for a player by the Pitch Smart Guidelines from the MLB.

1:20-1:30 Baserunning—Pick 2—Rounding the Bag, Running through First Base, Picking up Coach, Sliding, Leading Off

Rounding the Bag-Player should bubble out of the baseline roughly 5-8 feet and step on the front left corner of the base with either foot. Goal is to hit the front left corner of the bag and push off towards the next base in a straight line.

Running through First Base-Player should hit front right part of first base and run all the way through the bag. As they pass the bag they should look down and towards foul territory to see if there was a bad throw. If they see the ball on the ground and the coach tells them to run to second base, they should turn field side to the left and continue to the next bag. If the ball is not visible and they are safe they should turn towards foul territory to the right and walk back to the bag in foul territory.

Picking up Coach-Player should start at 1B or 2B and begin to run to the next base as if the ball were hit in the outfield. Player needs to look to 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Coach and pick up his sign to keep running or to hold at the base they're at. Heads up needs to happen when they're 2/3 of the way to the upcoming base.

Leading Off-Backstep, three lengths of shuffle, eyes always on the ball. This should only be done when the pitcher has the ball and is on the rubber. Players should know their own speed and make sure the lead is big enough for the pitcher to worry about you but not so far that you get picked off. Always keep your eyes on the ball and who has it!

Sliding-Practice sliding feet first and front foot down and hands off the ground. The kids usually love this one. For added skill have coach point to what side of the bag they should slide on. Try popup slides where back leg and that same hand push off the ground and stand player up as they hit the bag with their front foot for an added boost. Have players figure out which leg they slide best with, but still have them use both for versatility.

Coaches,

This outline is an efficient way for you and your team to run a smooth and active practice but is by no means the only way to run a practice, but they are a great starting point. As your team progresses and develops you will want to add different and more challenging components of the game. If you only have an hour, pick two skills from two groupings and focus on those. In all cases the focus should be on development of skills and FUN!

Most of these drills are available to view through youtube and if you have any questions feel free to email or call me for further explanation.

Cheers!

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