

Coach Pitch Coaching Notes

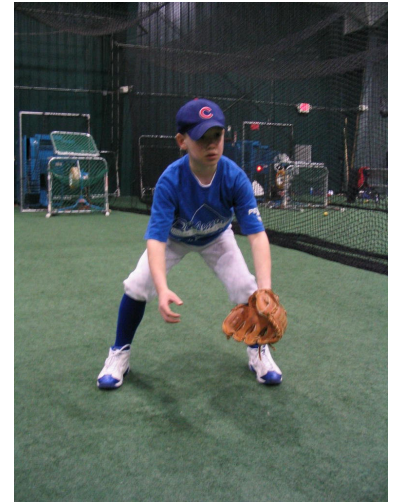
Warm-up Drills

- Base Running: Line-up players at home plate. Say “go” and have the player run to first and stop. As you start the next player from home the first player runs from first to second. Continue for all the players as they go from home and return home. A variation is to have the players run around the bases continuously.
- Arm Warm-up: As they walk from home to first the player rotates the arms in a swimming motion.
- Player positions: Teach the kids the bases and infield positions, then play a game to emphasize them. One suggestion is to assign each player a position. On the count of three have them all run to their assigned position. It might be helpful to position them such that they don’t intentionally run over each other. This is a good way of teaching outfield positions too.

Fielding

Fundamentals

- Put the glove on the correct hand!
- PFP (Perfect Fielding Position):
 - Face batter
 - Knees bent
 - Glove in front with pocket facing up
 - Ground balls use the alligator analogy with the glove the lower jaw and hand is the upper jaw.
 - Watch ball into glove and catch at the player’s finger tips of the glove (not the end of glove). For more advanced players working on quick transition, catch ball in pocket and “deflect” to throwing hand.
 - Use buzz word like “Ready Position” or “Be-Set” to remind players to get into PFP.
- Ball transfer: Catch ball in glove and shift to throwing position pointing at target (see throwing).
- Fly balls: Move under ball and catch high.



Drills

- Grounders: Coaches form several lines (the more one-on-one the better) and practice rolling the balls to the player. When one player fields a ball and throws it to the coach the next player moves into position. This can be done with or without gloves teaching transfer from fielding to throwing position.
- Glove positioning: Teach the player the position of the glove by holding a ball. As you raise the ball yell pop-up and have them move the glove up. Or grounder and have them move into the alligator position. This is more for first year or less experienced players.
- Fly balls: Start with player close to you and have them back pedal then throw a fly ball. The coach can have the player run backwards with the ball placed on alternate sides or angle to the ball. (i.e. shift from left to right as running backwards.)

Throwing

Fundamentals

- Body pointing to the target like riding a surfboard.
- Throwing arm back in an “L” position. The hand should be pointed backward like they are waving to mom in the stands.
- Glove arm elbow pointed to the target. The elbow should be bent slightly
- Throw straight at target with hand pointing to target when the ball leaves the hand.

Drills

- Body Shift: Line-up the players side-by-side with space between them. Practice shifting from facing the batter when fielding to the riding the surfboard when throwing.



- Wall drill: Put back against a wall of fence and get into throwing stance. The back, entire throwing arm, and glove arm from shoulder to elbow should be touching the wall.

Batting

Fundamentals

- Bat should be on the lighter side. A common size is a length of 28-29" and weight of 18-19 oz. The Bat Ratio is determined by subtracting the length in inches from the weight in ounces. A common size is 28"/ 18 oz, which is referred to a minus 10. The player should try a bat to what feels best when swinging. Smaller players may want a shorter bat.
- Balance should be on the balls of feet, not toes or heels.
- Loose grip on bat
- Grip: Fingers straight out when open. At front position one palm up, one palm down.
- Bat Position: Don't wrap bat around head. Position behind head, back a little. Front elbow even with front part of body. Back elbow should be lower but not against body.
- Move knob of bat to the ball. Rotate hips toward the ball. Like squashing a bug with the rear foot in a turning motion.
- Small step forward. Step should be straight at the pitcher and not sideways.
- Drop the bat and run to first. Special care must be taken to teach kids not to throw the bat even if the coach needs to over emphasize setting the bat down before running.
- Coach Pitching:
 - Pitch to the player's level. One idea is to sit on a five gallon bucket or kneel and throw straight at the strike zone.
 - Do not lob or arc the ball too much or throw at the kid's bat.
 - **Limit the pitch count to 10 pitches.** Excessive pitches create a safety problem in the field because players lose concentration and can get clobbered by a surprise hit.



Drills

- T work is important at all levels so do not be afraid to start players on the tee hitting into the backstop.
- Side toss: Kneel to the side and in front of batter and lightly lob the ball toward the front hip. This works eye-hand coordination. Hit into backstop or net.

Catching

Fundamentals

- Position feet behind the plate just behind the batter's swing zone.
- Crouch on the balls of the feet with the knees bent.
- Glove should be in the middle to lower part of the strike zone framing the pitch. Provide a good target for the pitcher.
- Place throwing arm behind the back.
- Block the balls that are thrown in the dirt, always keeping the ball in front of you.
- Always face the pitcher. Turning the body exposes unprotected areas of the body.
- Always keep the helmet and face mask on the head, even when retrieving the ball.

Drills

- Practice throwing the ball to the catcher as well as in the dirt.
- Practice pitches to the side, teaching them to block the ball.

Coaching Tips

- Safety Issues:
 - Drop the bat and do not throw it. See the batting fundamentals.
 - Batters and runners always wear a helmet.
 - No on-deck swinging. Practice swings can be taken in the batter's box prior to batting.
 - One coach/parent should keep kids on the bench and have them ready and sitting in batting order.
 - Run through first base on the outside bag.
 - Limit Pitches to 10!
- Keep the kids busy and moving. Recruit parents standing around as needed. Usually they are bored standing there and don't mind doing small tasks like throwing balls in fielding drills.
- Divide the players into smaller groups. If two or more players are especially mischievous together put them in separate groups or different places in line.
- All involved all the time!