



District 54 Coaches Clinic

Warm-Up Routine

Dynamic Warm-Up – Begin Each Practice/Game with this routine. Players begin by lining up down first base or third base line.

Blood Flow – Used to get blood flowing to the muscles before stretches are performed.

- 50% Jog to 2nd - Down & Back
- 50% Jog 20 feet past 2nd Down – Backpedal Back
- Shuffle Facing Home – Down & Back
- Carioca Facing Home – Down & Back
- Power Skips for Height – Down & Back
- High Knee's Down – Butt Kickers Back

Stretch Series – Meant to be a dynamic stretch to allow fibers to stretch and blood to access the muscles

- Walking Quad Pull
- Reverse Lunge w/ Bend
- Knee Pulls w/ Calf Lift
- 2 Step Gate Squats
- Side Stretch w/ Shuffle
- Side Stretch w/ Shuffle

Arm Series – Meant to warm the arm up BEFORE throwing rather than throwing to warm up. (For added resistance, players can hold their mitts in their throwing hands)

- **Circles Forward** – Small, Medium, Large
- **Circles Backward** – Small, Medium, Large
- **Front Raises** – Thumbs up, Palms up, Thumbs Down
- **Diagonal Raises** – Thumbs up, Palms up, Thumbs Down
- **Lateral Raises** – Thumbs up, Palms up, Thumbs Down

Throwing Progression – Starting each practice with organized catch play (5 Steps Back After Each)

- **Chest Facing** - Feet in Cement (working on 4-seam grip and backspin) Nice and Light
- **Sideways Rock Through** – Shoulders pointed to target, feet wide, transfer weight forward, backward, and throw. Making sure to clear the back leg.
- **Step & Throw** – Making sure to step directly at your target. Making sure to clear the back leg. – Partner should be moving to the ball, trying to center the ball in the middle of their body.
- **Giddy Up & Tags** – Shuffle feet to generate momentum and throw. Making sure to clear the back leg – Partner should be opening up and placing a tag.
- **Cross Over Step Behind & Tags** – Generate momentum and make sure to clear the back leg – Partner should be opening up and placing a tag.
- **Long Toss (Optional)** – Make sure players are throwing the ball as hard and far as they can on a LINE. Try to avoid “Lollipop” throws. Keep throws low while trying to get distance.

- **Quick Catch** – Feet constantly moving, stepping into the ball w/ glove side foot, staying “Thumb to Thumb” when receiving.

Hitting

Stance - Checklist

- Feet – Straight or Pigeon (NO DUCK FEET) (should they be shoulder width or hip width apart?)
- Knees – Bent and Inside of feet
 - Tell kids to act like they are holding a beach ball between their knees to get them to keep their knees flexed in.
- Hips Back – Chest Should be over knees (Counter Balance)
- Hands Comfortable – Hands should not be tense, should not be too elevated or too relaxed. Somewhere right in between.
- Head – Both eyes should be pointed towards the pitcher. Make sure there is no head tilt to the side.

Stride

- Pyramid – Feet Athletic, Knees Between Feet, Head Between Knees.
- Stride should be used to get them to a balanced and athletic position.
- Always making sure the player lands on the balls of their front feet (Never heel first)
- Once the front toe hits the ground, the swing is initiated.
- Hands should be separating back as the front foot comes forward.

Hand Path

- Never should a player be taught to swing DOWN at the ball.
- In order to flatten a swing out, tell them to take their hands towards pitcher as first move. This will allow the barrel to drop into the plane of the ball.
 - Keep your hands above the table
 - Stretched out “U” path
 - Airplane landing and then taking off again

Finish

- Balance
- Low “L” with the back leg
- Firm front side (Not locked, but not bent)
- Head should be near the center line of the body

Tee Placement

Inside – Tee should be placed on the inner half, slightly in front of the front foot after stride.

Middle – Tee should be placed middle of the plate, even with the front foot after stride.

Away – Tee should be placed on the outer half, slightly behind the front foot after stride.

Pitching

Wind-Up Sequence - Feet facing Home – Left of rubber for Lefty – Right of rubber for Righty

- Rock-it (Rocker Step)
- Pivot
- Knee Lift (With Balance)
- Separation timing w/ Knee coming Down
- Stride Straight
- Finish Down

Stretch Sequence - Outside of foot against rubber

- Athletic Stance – Glove & Hands Separated
- Set – Feet Together, Hands Together
- Knee Lift (With Balance)
- Separation timing w/ Knee coming Down
- Stride Straight
- Finish Down

Hitting/Pitching Drills

****It is a difficult thing to run hitters and pitchers through drills, especially if you are not as familiar with hitting and pitching as you could be. You could end up harming the swing or throwing motion by trying to add in fancy drills without truly understanding what you are trying to accomplish with the drills. For this very reason, the only suggestion I have for you coaches as far as hitting and pitching drills are concerned is to get them in the correct starting positions and give them basic tips to help get them in the right direction.**

Hitting

- Tee Work, Front toss, & Live Repetitions are the best methods for hitting improvement.
- Get players to understand the correct stance, stride, and finish. And have them repeat those 3 main points in order to build consistency.

Pitching

- Really good catch play and flat ground bullpens are the best methods for pitching improvement.
- Teach players the correct methods for both the wind-up and stretch.
- Coach them up on keeping their heads still, separation, stride direction, & finish. Repeat those main points to create consistent pitchers.

Infield Drills

****Split team in half. Have half of them working with one coach on one drill. Have the other half working with the other coach on a different drill. After 15 Minutes switch groups and continue. Remember, you can never take too many groundballs and keep the tempo UP!**

****One drill from Infield can be paired with one drill for Outfield.**

Ground Ball Technique - Always reinforce these key points

- **Glove position** – Glove should be out in front of the body, keeping an even line with the forearm and the wrist. Broken Wrist Down will cause the fielder to allow room for the ball to squeak under their body. Broken Wrist Up will allow the edge of the glove to be raised, creating a lip that can deflect the ball.
- **Setup** – Short Choppy Feet, Small right step, wide left step as they are fielding. Left foot should always be slightly in front of the right to allow our hips to clear and allow us to generate momentum necessary to make a good strong throw. (FLIP FOR LEFTY)
- **Field & Transfer** – Field the ball out in front and absorb back into our throwing position. Soft hands are REQUIRED. Field and transfer should be as smooth as possible.
- **Throwing Footwork** – We are teaching a small shuffle after fielding a ground ball. This is known as the “Replace Method”. This allows for players to quickly reach their throwing position as well as allow them to use their momentum to throw the ball.

EDD's - Knee Series – These can be done with the entire team all at once – 2 knees, Chest facing partner.

- **Bare Hand** – Partners roll balls to center of the body. Fielders should field with their glove hand and transfer to their throwing position. Making sure to keep soft hands.
- **Glove On** – Perform the same drill with gloves on.
- **Glove On Backhand** – Partners roll soft groundballs to backhand side. Players should work on staying soft and absorbing rather than stabbing.
- **Glove on Forehand** – Partners roll soft groundballs to glove

side, players should focus on keeping the glove out in front, remaining soft and transferring ball to throwing position.

EDD's - Standing Series – These can be done with the entire team all at once – Light footwork, slow and controlled tempo.

- **Bare Hand** – Partners roll balls to center of the body, players should take small right left and field with soft hands. Transfer the ball to the throwing position. Footwork is important.
- **Glove On** – Perform the same drill with gloves on. Footwork is important
- **Glove On - Backhand** – Partners should roll balls to backhand. Players should get into proper backhand position when fielding. Transfer ball to throwing position. Footwork is important.
- **Glove On - Forehand** – Partners should roll balls to forehand. Players should move to the ball and get into the correct fielding position. Work on transferring to throwing position. Footwork is important.
- **Glove On – Short Hops** – Partners should try to feed each other a short hop. Receiving partner should try to receive the ball as close to the hop as possible. Working through the ball.

GB Muscle Memory - Wide Base, Butt Down, Glove Out, Throwing Hand to the Side

Roll 3 balls consecutively – Players should field, absorb and overhand flip back to coach staying smooth.

Beginner – Soft Groundball – **Intermediate** - Firm Groundball – **Advanced** – Firm w/Bounces

GB Backhand Muscle Memory – Wide Base, Butt Down, Glove out, Inside Knee DOWN

Roll 3 balls consecutively – Player should field, absorb up to the chest and flip back to coach staying smooth

Beginner – Soft Groundball – **Intermediate** – Firm Groundball – **Advanced** – Firm w/Bounces

Shuffle, Throw, Follow – **Beginner** – Set up 3 cones in a straight line – Have one player at a time get into the fielding

position to the far left cone (Wide Base, Butt Down, Glove out)
– Each player should start with a ball in their glove - Have the player act like they are fielding, shuffle (Replace) their feet towards the second cone, and FOLLOW their throw to the third cone.

- This will allow players to use body momentum to throw the ball instead of just using their arms.

Shuffle, Throw, Follow – Advanced – Set up cones in a straight line – have one player at a time get into fielding position - Have a coach roll them a ball, player must field, shuffle, throw, & FOLLOW their throw to the third cone, trying to hit their coach in the chest.

- Players can also be the ones to receive the ball, have one guy start at the cone and another on stand-by. Once the player fields, shuffles, throws, and follows they should run to where their teammate is receiving the ball and get ready to receive a throw from the next player in line.

3 Ball Shuffle – Have players start at short stop – Players should not be backhanding balls, they should be working around every ball in order to keep the ball in front.

- Ball Left – Player should shuffle his feet, field and flip back to coach.
- Ball Right – Player should shuffle his feet, field and flip back to coach.
- Ball Left – Player should shuffle his feet, field and flip back to coach.

***Rapid Fire Ground Balls* Best Drill for Repetitions** – Players should be grouped at shortstop. Coach should be set up near the pitcher's mound. Coach will roll ground balls to the players at short, working on footwork and glove out/butt down. Can work on both forehand & backhands.

- Have players focus on keeping their momentum moving.
- Make sure the next player in line is focused on the ball that is about to be rolled, rather than the player fielding the ball. This will keep tempo up.

Outfield

****Split team in half, have half of them working with one coach on one drill. Have the other half working with the other coach on a different drill. After 15 Minutes switch groups and continue.**

****One drill from Outfield can be paired with one drill for Infield.**

Drop Steps – (Small Group Training) – Each player should start with a ball of their own and pass it to the coach when it is their turn.

- Open Left and run diagonally back. Fire ball over the outfielders shoulder. Have player hang on to the ball and get to the back of the line. When each player reaches the front of the line they will pass their ball to the coach and repeat.
- Open Right & execute the same drill.
- Open Directly Back and execute the same drill

3 Cone Drill – (Small Group Training) – Pop Up Priority with half the team.

- 3 cones should be placed in a spaced out triangle with one player at each cone. Coach should throw a fly ball to the triangle and players should work on calling the ball. Players should call the ball by saying “BALL BALL BALL” – other players should acknowledge by saying “take it, take it”

2 Cone Drill (Small Group Training)

- 2 Cones should be placed spaced out with one player at each cone. Coach should hit a ball in between the cones. Players should practice getting around the ball in an effort to send their momentum towards home plate. Each player should fight to get AROUND the ball. This will work on correct angles as well as setting players up to take momentum through the ball.

Work Through - (Small Group Training)

- Have players grouped in an open area. Throw a fly ball in front of the player, have them set their feet and work through the fly ball forward. This will work on generating momentum THROUGH a fly ball, rather than catching it moving back.

Catching

Bare Hand Receiving – Have catchers softly flip balls to each other. Catchers should work on maintaining the “C” throughout the zone. Catching with SOFT hands.

Bare Hand Transfers – Have catchers softly flip balls to each other. Catchers should work on maintain the “C” throughout the zone. Catching with SOFT hands and transferring to their throwing hand as quick and smooth as possible.

Glove On Receiving – Have catchers throw pitches to each other. Catchers should work on maintaining the “C” Throughout the zone. Catching with SOFT hands.

Glove On Receiving w/ Transfers – Have catchers throw pitches to each other. Catchers should work on maintaining the “C” throughout the zone. Catching with SOFT hands and transferring to their throwing hand as quick and smooth as possible.

Receiving & Footwork – Have catchers throw pitches to each other. Catchers should work on maintaining the “C” Position throughout the zone. Catching with SOFT hands and transferring to their throwing hand as quick and smooth as possible. “Shift” Feet into throwing position and stay athletic.

Block Position Tracking – Place catchers in the correct “Block” position. Lightly bounce balls into their chest having them track the balls in with their eyes and head. As they track the ball in with their head, they will naturally bring their chin down, protecting their throat from being hit.

Drop & Block – Place catchers in their athletic position. Lightly bounce balls towards them, having them drop to their “Block” position. Tracking the ball in and being soft with their chest.

Footwork

- **To First** – “Shift” method
 - In one full motion, shift feet all the way around so that the shoulders line up with first base. Catcher should split his weight, 70% on the backside & 30% on the front side.
- **To Second** – “Replace” Method
 - Catcher should receive the ball and replace the left foot with the right foot while taking the left foot towards second base. Should almost make a skewed “L” pattern.
- **To Third** – Step Behind Method
 - Catcher should receive the ball and immediately take their right leg back behind their left while sending their left foot towards third base. This will allow the catcher to “Create a Lane” in which he can throw down to third base unobstructed by the batter.

Base Running

Progression

****Whole team should line up and run through the drill one by one. This should be done towards the end of practice and will act as conditioning.**

- Run Through First – Hit the bag and look right to find the ball.
- Rounding First – Have players round first base but stop after reading the outfielder has successfully stopped the ball.
- Taking Second –
- First to Third
- Second to Home

Tagging Up

****Half the team base running, half the team in the outfield catching fly balls. This will work outfield as well as base running.**

- Ball goes up, player goes back. Player should keep his chest to the baseball at all times.
- Players should start at third, coach should hit a fly ball to outfield group and runner should leave when ball is caught sprinting home.

Live Application

Pop Up Priorities – Have your team take the field, filling every position.

- Hit fly balls anywhere in the field and have your players work on positioning to make the catch as well as communication.
- Players should call the ball when it is at its highest point, avoiding calling it too early or too late.
- Player running in on the ball always has priority over the player running back.
- Player who calls the ball should signal by saying “Ball Ball Ball”
- Player who acknowledges it should signal by saying “Take It”

Infield Situations – Have your team take the infield, filling every position – some positions will have more than 1 player. Have them rotate each play in order to ensure even reps.

- Start by giving a situation such as: “Runner on 1st, no outs”
- Give your team a second to think about where the play is.
- Hit the ball anywhere in the infield and have them execute the play.
- If they are not able to correctly execute, STOP and coach them as to how they should have executed. Always reset the table with the same situation and hit the ball in the same place to see if they can execute the play correctly.
- Avoid moving to the next situation if they are unable to execute the current play correctly.
- Switch situations constantly such as: “Runner on 2nd, 1 out” and so on.

Full Field Situations – Have your team take the field, filling every position. – Some positions will have more than 1 player. Have them rotate each play in order to ensure even reps.

- Start by giving a situation such as: “Runner on 1st, no outs”
- Hit the ball anywhere in the field and have them execute the play.

- Follow the same guidelines as INFIELD SITUATIONS – Do not allow the team to move on until they correctly execute the current play.
- Switch situations constantly such as: “Runner on 2nd, 1 out” and so on.

Live Situations – Split your team into groups of 3 players. Label them Group 1, 2, 3, 4

- Have group 1 go to the outfield, Group 2 and 3 should be in the infield, Group 4 should put their helmets on and act as runners.
- Start a runner at home, facing their back to the field (To prevent leaving early) Have the runner go once they hear the CRACK of the bat.
- Have the coach hit the ball anywhere in the field and the runner run. The players should try to complete the play. If the base runner reaches first safely, leave him there and have them play the situation with a runner on first.
- Repeat as many times as possible, rotating each group between outfield, infield, and base running. Rotate groups every 6 outs. Clear the bases of runners every 3 outs.

6 on 6 – This is essentially 6 on 6 live play! Great way to get game like reps with limited players.

- Split your team in half. Make sure there are an even number of PITCHERS and Catchers on each team.
- First group will be in the field, and the second group will be hitting.
- Have them just stay in the infield. Pitchers will face live hitters and hitters will face live pitchers. As the players hit, play the situation live as they would in a real game!
- If the ball goes into the outfield, kill the play and award bases accordingly. Continue from there.
- Each pitcher should get the opportunity to record 6 outs before changing pitchers and switching between offense and defense. If a pitcher is struggling to get outs, make sure you switch as you see fit. You do not want a pitcher out there having to face 12 batters and risk wearing out their arm.
- Clear the bases once 3 outs have been reached and then start again!

6 on 6 Coaches Pitch – This is the same as 6 on 6 with live hitters and pitchers except the coaches will be pitching. This is a way to get live reps in before an upcoming game. It will allow you to save your pitchers arms but still a great way to get live reps and at bats.

- Make sure to switch teams every 6 outs that are recorded.
- Clear the bases once 3 outs have been reached and then start again!

Games

Triples Alley – Object is to reinforce RELAYS and BASE RUNNING. Hitter must hit the ball and run around the bases trying to reach third base before all players on defense touch the ball. The ball from defense must end up at third base for a “Force Out” before the runner reaches in order to record an out.

- Split players into 2 teams.
- Coaches will be pitchers
- Players on defense should spread out all over the field
- All players on defense must touch the baseball.
- Baseball must end up at third base for a “Force Out” to record an out.
- If the base runner reaches third base before the ball, offense records a run.
- 3 outs and switch!

Relay Race

- This is your standard relay race. Separate the team into 2 or 3 even groups. Start the ball at the same point and determine how many times each team must go down and back. First team to complete the set number of down and backs, wins!
- Example: Coach will say “3” – The players must throw the ball through their relays, down and back 3 times as fast as they can.
- Make sure the ball touches each players hands, no skipping over players.

Groundball Elimination Game – Players will be taking ground balls from shortstop hit by the coach.

- If the player successfully fields the groundball, they will remain IN.
- If the player does not field the groundball clean, they will be called OUT.
- Last man standing is the winner!

Fly Ball Game – Players will be taking Fly Balls from Center Field hit by the coach.

- If the player successfully catches the fly ball, they will remain IN.
- If the player drops the fly ball, they will be called OUT.
- Last man standing is the winner!

Quick Catch Contest – Players should play quick catch, trying to be the first team to reach the number selected by the coach. First team to reach the designated number, wins!

- Example: Coach will say “18” followed by saying “GO” – Each team will play quick catch trying to be the first team to throw the ball back and forth 18 times. First team finished, wins!

How to Structure a Practice

Dynamic Warm-Up – 15 Minutes

Throwing Progression – 15 Minutes

Fundamentals Builder – Four Corners – 10 Minutes

Segment 1 – Fundamentals – Select two of the drills from the above lists. Either 1 infield, 1

outfield, 2 infield, or 2 outfield. These can be mixed and matched to get a little bit of everything or place emphasis completely on one aspect. If your team struggles with groundballs, work predominantly on groundballs during practice. If they are struggling with fly balls, work mainly on fly balls during practice. If you would like them to get a variety, select one of each. Split your team in half to maximize the amount of reps they receive.

Groundballs/Fly Balls – 20 Minutes & Switch Groups

- Split your team in half.
- Send half your team to work on one of the outfield drills selected from above.
- Send the other half of your team to work on one of the infield drills from above.

Segment 2 – You have 3 options here – 40 Minutes

- Bullpens/Hitting
- Live Applications
- Games

**Select one (or even 2) of these to reinforce what you went over in practice. I think that every practice should contain fundamental repetitions, as well as Situational/Application repetitions.

**Best thing for these boys to do is to play as much as possible. To get as many live repetitions as possible. Drills are great, but playing the game is not only fun but where a majority of their development will come from!

Valuable Coaching Tips

- 1) What you see from the games will determine what you work on at your practices. If your team struggles with situations, work situations. If your team struggles on fundamentals, work fundamentals. And so on..... Always look for what their immediate weakness is and attack it in practice.
- 2) Light Bullpens/Hitting should be done at least once per week during practice. Always good to separate the team in half, send half to hit and the other half to work on fundamentals.
- 3) Make sure to correct players when they are making mistakes. It is great to be positive, but it is also okay to let them know when they are doing things the wrong way. Show them how to correct it and when they do correct it, PRAISE THEM!
- 4) The more live repetitions your boys get, the better they will become. The more live pitching and live at bats they receive, the more progress they will make. Definitely conduct practices where your focus is on fundamentals, but these players will get the most out of playing the game. Live 6 on 6 is a once per week practice for me.

- 5) Stay positive. Young kids respond best when you just talk to them rather than screaming at them.
- 6) Always develop a plan for practice before arriving at the baseball field. There is nothing worse than showing up to the field with nothing prepared for the day, the kids will not benefit.