

HS Varsity Practice Notes 3/26/17

Practice Activities

1. Stretching
 - a. Arm swings
 - b. Toe pulls
 - c. Two arms straight, bend and touch the ground, alternate legs straight back
 - d. Lunge step with twist
 - e. 4-6 other stretches
 - f. Dynamic plyometrics
2. Sprints
 - a. 2 x 15 feet
 - b. 2 x 30 feet
3. Throwing Progression (in pairs)
 - a. 4 feet apart, wrist flips
 - b. 6 feet apart, stationary feet
 - c. 8 feet apart, stationary feet
 - d. 10 feet apart, move feet

Notes: Stationary feet staggered with the dominant foot forward force the player to open up their body (rotating waist and torso backwards) and follow through on the throw. Catching partner should move feet to catch the ball without reaching out. This is practice for catching a cut-off throw from the infield.

4. Throwing Drills (in pairs)
 - a. 10 quick throws per player, see which pair finishes first (count to "10" then sit, making quick transitions, start over again if ball is dropped)
 - b. 5 outfield throws per player, loop down and back and then up for long throws. Catching player moves to the ball.
5. Everyday/9 Points (in pairs; 5 reps)
 - a. Players pass a ball back and forth to practice fielding barehanded, with a paddle, and then with a glove (make sure player assumes proper defensive stance: feet a bit wider than shoulders, knees bent, body arched facing forward)
 - i. Roll on (straight across)
 - ii. One hopper (roll to the side)
 - iii. Forehand (roll farther to the sides)
 - iv. Backhand (same as above)
 - v. Drop right
 - vi. Straight back
 - vii. Drop left
 - viii. Charge ball

Notes: These drills build muscle memory, and confidence. For younger players they can be an opportunity to build skills and hand-eye coordination. Throwers can use this drill to practice a flip toss, with elbow pointed to the catching player.

6. Four Corners

- a. Position the players at the bases. They will throw a ball around the bases (counterclockwise). As the player catches the ball, they set and quickly throw to the next base and then run to that base and line up. The players in line back up the throws. Stop when all players return to their original position.
- b. Repeat as above but players lay down a tag at their feet before throwing the ball (runner is imaginary). Switch direction (clockwise)
- c. Add a second ball for additional challenge. (probably not safe for our league)

Notes: Throwers should move their feet to the ball. Catch and jump, not taking many steps.

7. Base Running Drills

- a. For conditioning: 4 singles, 3 doubles, 2 triples, one home run
- b. For technical skill work
 - i. Full speed single. Run full speed hitting 1st base at the front inside corner. Look over right shoulder at 1st base coach as you cross the base.
 - ii. Turn base. Run full speed to first turn with right foot hitting at the front inside corner. Take the corner and then turn body into diamond and run to second.
 - iii. Steal second and slide. Slide outside 2nd base and reach and tag base with base-side hand. Practice sliding on both sides of 2nd base (depends which side throw is coming from).
 - iv. Score from second. Step off base and stop (around shortstop position). Turn and watch the hit over left shoulder then running full speed to home, sliding in.

Notes: When standing on base prepared to run, stand with left foot in front and on the edge of the base so you can push off on the base when you start running. Practice sliding in wet grass to get the girls used to the motion. No headfirst sliding into home. On a play at the plate, the on deck batter should be base coaching for the runner (for young players it's always important to remind the batter to step off home plate to avoid interference with runner, which can cause serious accident).

8. Fielding Drills (catching player shouts "I got it" every time)

- a. Half moon. Player stands to the left of the coach (players in line). The coach (with bucket to her/his right, may kneel down) rolls the ball out ahead of the player and the player runs to the ball, fields it, and throws it to player in 1st base (positioned to right side of the coach) (back to the coach). The player should get their body in front of the ball and then keep moving as they throw the ball. Run this drill in both directions.
- b. Drop steps. Player stands next to the coach and runs away, looking back. Coach throws the ball for the player to field. Different kinds of throws of different lengths. Players field the ball and carry it back in. Variation: coach shouts "turn" and player turns body to look over other shoulder before catching (note: after fielding, each player keeps their ball to move drill quickly).
- c. Circle drill. About 5 players stand in a small circle and take turns tossing a ball into the middle and calling out the name of another player who fields the throw. Different types of throws, including bounces and pop ups. Players stay low and dive, make each other work. After a few throws, spread circle wider.
- d. The charge. Players line up facing coach about 10 feet away. Coach rolls ball toward the players and they field it and throw it back. Coach may alternate grounders and short fly

balls (after catching ball, rather than throwing players may drop ball in the bucket to move drill quicker)

9. Batting Practice

- a. Live hitting
- b. Bunting
- c. Hitting from the tee

10. Scrimmage play

Players assume regular positions with live pitching, and rotate player positions (except pitcher and catcher, who stay longer; with younger players should have coach pitching until pitchers attain stable control; also, keep back-up player behind 1st base to avoid delays from overthrows)

Other Notes

Players are taught to make eye contact with their partner before throwing.

Fielding Stance - feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, staggered or not. Bend at the knees and at the hip. All parts of the body should face the ball.

Tennis balls are useful for developing fundamentals and confidence.

When teaching players how to catch a ball, tell them to have their glove open up for low ball and down for high balls. "If high fingers to the sky, if low fingers below."

Suggested Resources

Kent State for drill ideas <https://www.youtube.com/user/KentStSoftball>

Mike Candrea: <http://www.candrea.com/>