



SIMSBURY LITTLE LEAGUE
SOFTBALL COACH MANUAL
FARM A



Farm A Skills

Please remember that although many Farm A plays have played Tball, softball is still very new them. Practice and games must be fast moving and fun. SLL Softball will use the Little League 10 week Tball practice plans as a guideline. It is always a good idea to over plan for Farm A practices.

1. Basic softball rules
 - how many outs per inning
 - how many balls and strikes / what is a ball and a strike
 - How many outs to end an inning
2. Batting
 - Properly Grip the Bat / Batting Stance / Swing Level / Follow through
 - Basically first set of knuckles are lined up with finger joints of other hand
 - Hands together with dominant hand closer to bat barrel
3. Running
 - Successfully run to 1st base after ball is hit
 - Run through 1st Base / Don't slow down until after 1st base
 - Watch the runner on the next base
4. Catching & Fielding
 - Be able to name all the positions on the field
 - Introduce base fundamentals
 - Understand positions so they stay in their position to field and throw the ball to the correct player to make an out
 - Ready position (feet apart, throwing side foot slightly back, knees bent, butt down, glove on the ground)
 - Learn to Call for the Ball
 - Fly Balls
 - Get to the Ball first
 - Eye on the Ball, Glove fingers up
 - Catch ball with 2 hands
 - Grounders
 - Get behind the ball
 - Fingers down, pocket facing ball
 - Hands in front of body
 - Sweeping the glove, two hands close together

Throwing

- Properly Grip the Ball
- Throw the ball overhand – mechanics
- Teach two hand grounding with "Alligator hands"
- Teach throwing with three steps - point to target, step toward target, throw overhand
- Introduce concept of generating momentum toward the target
- Introduce underhand flip

5. Practice/Game Skills

- Dynamic Warm Up Stretches
- Sportsmanship, encouraging team mates
- Be able to Throw and Catch with a partner

6. Pitching

- Introduce basics of softball pitch. Practice with no windmill.

GENERAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

1. Warm-ups

- Start with throwing on one knee to warm up
- Full Throw
- Jog (bases / outfield etc)
- Circle up to do dynamic stretches such as
 - Jumping jacks
 - Donkey kicks
 - High Knees
 - Walking Lunges
 - Arm circles (forward and backwards)
 - Grapvines

2. Batting Practice

- Batting cage (AAA, Majors and Juniors Only)
- T-work all levels
- Softball Toss all levels
- Bunting (AAA, Majors & Juniors, possibly AA)

3. Drills / Stations

- Examples
 - Fielding
 - Cross Fire
 - Situations
 - UConn Drill
 - FlyBalls / Cut-offs etc

4. End with Something Fun

- Examples
 - Scrimmage
 - Hit the Bat Game
 - Pickle
 - Relay Race

Practice & Game Warm-Ups/Cool Downs

Warm-Ups

For younger players, 10 minutes total of blood-pumping, body-moving activity can help raise the body's core temperature and loosen up muscles for the practice or game. These are not static stretching exercises, but active dynamic warm-ups.

- Start by having players run from foul pole to foul pole, then do some agility exercises:
 - High knees
 - Butt kicks
 - Karaoke run<
 - Jumping jacks
 - Arm windmills
 - Neck circles

- Throwing
 - All players begin on one knee (throwing hand side), facing their partner, about 10 feet apart. Throwing elbow is extended in the direction of the partner, ball in hand, glove hand under, and supporting throwing elbow at a 90 degree angle. With a flick of the wrist, player throws ball to the partner, focusing on correct 12 to 6 o'clock ball rotation. This is a wrist throw only, no arm. 15-20 reps.
 - Still Kneeling, players move 10 yards apart and begin a full-motion throw. Fingers on the throwing hand begin at the hip (fingers by the thigh). Arm rotates back, bringing ball over the head (elbow up high). Player brings the arm straight over the top of the shoulder (fingers to the sky). Finally, player pulls down through the ball, focusing on 12 to 6 o'clock rotation (wave bye-bye). Wrist is straight and follow through continues down through the body. 20-30 reps.
 - Players should make all catches with 2 hands, concentrating on the exchange between glove hand and throwing hand.
 - Players should now stand up and begin throwing from a standing position. Key to the continued development of players is encouraging them to focus on every throw.

Cool Down

After a practice or game, don't just send your kids home. Muscles need to be worked to get new oxygen in and remove the waste by-products of exercising.

- Have players run a lap around the field, then sit in a circle and stretch muscles
 - arm windmills
 - neck circles
 - hurdler's stretches for the quads and glutes
 - Twisting exercises that stretch the side muscles and back also are good. As an example, sit on the ground, placing the foot of a bent leg on the opposite side of an outstretched leg's knee, and twist your torso across the upright knee. Then switch legs and twist the other way.