

BYBA Coaches Clinic

Sunday, May 31, 2015

6:00-7:30 PM

Grades 4-6

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I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Practice Organization

III. Throwing & Catching Drills

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*"Baseball for young kids needs to be taught in a way that is fundamental and easy to understand but more importantly it needs to be fun so that the kids keep coming back each year, if it isn't fun they will play something else and our game will die out, make it **FUNDamental!**"*

Tommy Lasorda, Former Los Angeles Dodger Manager

Practice Organization

Need to be organized and prepared to keep the kids busy.

Here is a sample of a practice for a time slot of 1 hr. There are many different ways to run a practice. Be organized and stick to it.

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|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:00-10:10 | Have the kids run out and touch the outfield fence and back 2 times. Stretch: Arms, back and legs. |
| 10:10-10:20 | Play catch to warm-up arms
One knee wrist flips & one knee extensions - 8 feet apart
Hip Drill - On feet in power position - 15 feet
Step and throw - 25 feet
Step, hop and throw - 40 feet
Regular throw using body - 60-90 feet. |
| 10:20-10:30 | Have kids line-up in lines and hit them ground balls and fly balls 5 minutes each. Have parents help you out while you coach footwork and glove position. (May roll groundballs & throw pop-ups) |
| 10:30-10:45 | Hitting on the field
Put in groups of 4 or 5
Last hitter runs bases on the hits - works on moving to the next base on the good hit and then scoring. Give each hitter 6 cuts and they run out to 1st base the last hit. Tell them to beat it out or round the base. Continue same with next hitter.
Put another group in IF and other in OF working on playing the ball on hits. |
| 10:45-11:00 | Take some infield and outfield fielding
Have another coach or parent hit ground balls to 1B while you hit to outfield and then have them hit to outfield while you hit to IF. |

With Pitchers- bring them over 1 or 2 at a time to work on their pitching and use them in situational stuff as well as scrimmages

Practice ideas:

- Play Tee Ball – lots of repetition on fielding, saves arms(time), and works on hitting mechanics
- Soft/Front toss Scrimmage
- Situations w/runners – Coach hitting balls
- Fielding, hitting, running, pitching and catching competitions makes practice fun

The main thing with practice is that you do not want kids standing around and not keeping active. During the games, coach situations with the players. If no balls are being hit to the outfield, in between hitters throw them some fly balls and groundballs.

HAVE FUN WITH THEM!!!! BE A KID & REMEMBER WHY YOU PLAYED!!!!

Throwing & Catching

The most important part of being able to play baseball is the ability to throw and catch effectively. These two areas usually are the skills that are taken for granted. It is your responsibility to teach proper throwing mechanics so that the players can throw the ball to each other. Then being able to catch the ball makes the game more fun. 5 minutes a day will do wonders!

Throwing

- **Grip:** have them grip the ball across the wide seams so the ball will travel straight
- Have them start with hands together and front shoulder pointing to partner
- On your command have them step out and separate hands, with glove to partner and ball behind head. Stress that hands needs to be behind the ball & elbow above the shoulder. Call this the "**Spread Eagle Position**" this gives them a cue.
- Have them go back to the start position then go the Spread Eagle position so that they have it mastered before they throw. The start again and throw to partner with proper follow through. You will need to show them.
- Have partner give them a target with glove and hands at chest high.
- After they have mastered that, have them square shoulders to partner and step with throwing side foot, take a short hop, get to spread eagle and throw to partner. May take a while for this to be mastered.

Catching the ball

- Have the players pair their hands together always when catching a groundball, thrown ball or fly ball. This will help them understand the importance.
- Always have them square up their shoulders to catch the ball in front of their body. Use soft balls that won't hurt to help them get away from the fear of the ball.
- A key to catching the ball is always having your feet in place first in order to concentrate on the ball.
- Have them watch the ball all the way to their glove. Have them tuck their chins to their chest to help watch ball in.
- Teach them not to reach but to move their feet to center the ball (Tough to do)
- Have them play games that stress the mechanics. Throw to your partners target and keep track how many time you hit it without the glove moving out of 10 throws, etc.

Fielding Groundballs and Fly balls

Players need to be taught how to properly approach a ball to be able to catch it. This is sometimes taken for granted but you as a coach needs to be ready to teach them how to properly field a groundball or a fly ball.

Groundball Fielding

Ready Position

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Knees bent
- Bent forward at waist
- Head up
- Glove out in front of body
- Throwing hand relaxed at side
- Good balance

Moving to ball

- From Ready position the players should cross over and shuffle to balls to right or left of them
- Balls in front of them they should step with glove side foot
- While moving to ball keep glove out in front of body
- Point glove at ball to keep glove between eyes and ball
- Get body in position to center the ball between the feet
- Get there as quickly as you can

Fielding Position

- Feet need to be stopped and square to the ball
- The body will follow and square itself to the ball as the feet do
- Bend your knees to get glove on ground out in front of body
- Do not sink butt any lower then knees (catchers squat)
- Put throwing above glove to form "Baby Alligators Jaws" and to protect face.
- Eyes should be on ball all times
- Head down, need to show the coach the beanie of the cap
- Close jaws after ball contacts glove and bring elbows to belly
- Pick head up and get into throwing position for throw

Drills

- Stops
- Pick-ups
- 1, 2 Field
- Step 1,2 Field

Fly ball & pop-ups

Kids love to catch fly balls, just watch them in the back yards throwing the ball up to themselves. What happens is that people do not spend enough time teaching how to catch the fly ball properly.

Ready position

- Similar to groundball ready position
- Feet shoulder width
- Knees bent
- Head up
- Shoulders square
- Glove out in front of body
- Throwing hand relaxed at side

Footwork

- First 1-2 steps should always be back to determine distance of ball
- Teach them to drop step to ball side (tough to do)
- Have them call for the ball when heading to them
- Get glove and hands up in front and above the face (nose)
- Get back on the fly ball (play 2 steps behind where ball will land)
- As ball comes down step in and catch the ball above head
- Have throwing side foot back and glove side foot out in front of body
- See the ball in and use 2 hands to catch the ball

Drills:

- Starts
- Gloves up
- Throw fly balls - 10 feet distance
- Fly balls at 20 feet
- Throw very high balls to catch
- Hit fly balls from home plate to each position in outfield

It is important that you work all players together in infield and outfield drills so that they learn the different positions. Whenever doing drills make it a game. Do not make it sound like work. Defensive work can become boring to kids because there is some standing around. There will more than likely be parents sitting around watching practice they can always throw groundballs and fly balls to help you out.

In developing defensive skills it is important to spend time on these everyday especially early in the season to get them ready for games. You can do these while the players are hitting off the tees or from the coach pitching. Have the kids play 500 or something like that to make them concentrate on all balls hit.

Hitting

First of all this is what everyone wants to do. In the eyes of young kids they all want to be Joe Mauer, etc. What you have to do is point out that in order to hit you have to get the other team out first so that you get a chance to hit. What happens is coaches tend to spend so much time on hitting in practice that the players never learn how to play the game. Hitting in practice gives the coach opportunity to teach the game to his/her team.

Selection of bat

- Very important
- Must be able to hold bat out in front of them with strong hand for 20 seconds without the barrel of bat tipping down
- Use common sense - bat shouldn't be bigger than the player
- Some stores have the bats labeled for particular age groups

Grip on bat

- Grip the bat with the fingers (knocking knuckles)
- Line up the knuckles
- Do not grip too tight, need loose wrists

Five Step Hitting Process

Square

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Body square to home plate
- Head level and eyes on pitcher or tee
- Knees bent, waist slightly bent
- Elbows in 45 degree position (form a triangle with hands)
- Hands up by back shoulder, behind ear

Load

- On Pitcher hand separation
- Move hands back and up slightly to back shoulder and up to ear height
- Front knee should move toward back knee
- Front heel will lift off ground slightly
- Head and eyes stay on pitcher

Stride

- Front foot strike must hit ground same time as pitchers front foot
- Hips start to rotate
- Hands still stay back ready to attack
- Back to balance
- Back knee starts to rotate

Swing

- Should be quick and short with short step
- Rotate hip and squash the bug with back foot
- Stress hands inside the ball

- Eyes on ball
- Keep head level
- Keep elbows at 45 degree
- Palm up and palm down at swing
- Stress making contact, keeping eyes on ball

Finish

- Swing should go through the ball to back of front shoulder
- Should keep both hands on bat (may release top hand after contact)
- Finish a little higher to get maximum lift and drive on ball
- Should be balanced and remain balanced
- Head stays level

Drills

- Dry Swing Mechanics
- 1, 2, 3 Tee Work
- Load, Stride, Swing flip
- Soft or front toss
- Quick hands / Drop

Base running

The thing to remember about base running is that the more you spend on it the more games you will win. Being able to run the bases aggressively and smartly you will cause a lot of stress on your opponents.

Home to First

- Swing
- Right handed hitter: right, left, right out of the box then check ball
- Left handed hitter: left, right, left check ball
- Run as fast as you can to 1B
- Keep a forward lean and hit base with chest over top of front knee
- Then check over right shoulder and break down to see if you can go to 2B
- Turn toward foul line to go back to base
- Do not focus on ball let coach help you

Home to first on base hit

- Force the OF to play the game
- By rounding the base hard you force the OF to get the ball in quickly
- Make sure turn is at least 1/2 way between Home and 1B
- Try to hit the inside corner of the base to get into straight line to 2B
- Throw inside shoulder (left) toward the inside of the field to get hips moving toward 2b
- Go as far as the OF will allow you to go
- Break down and keep weight on front foot (right) and keep eye on ball
- If OF jogs or bobbles the ball take the extra base
- Be aggressive

Sure Double

- Same running to first as base hit
- Find ball (coach should tell you where it is)
- Pick up 3B coach about 1/2 to see if you can continue
- Make the OF get ball in

Pitching

Mechanics-Playing Catch with catcher

- Wind-up
- Stretch
- Grip
- Step and Throw

Drills

- Throwing to target with partner
- Pitching to catcher with batter standing in batters box
- Pitching in scrimmages
- “Strike Out Game” – 3 people

The more you make the game fun the more likely the players will play their hearts for you and for the team. Make practice fun and teach them how to play the game. Be aggressive in offense and defense which will make them enjoy the game.

Some equipment that I feel will help you make their baseball experience a fun one are as follows:

- Whiffle balls or Softee Balls - Can never use them enough
- Tennis balls to help catchers get better at blocking and framing the ball
- Rag balls help take fear of ball out of game
- Tees - allows for more guys to get swings

If the kids see you having fun and know that you are organized. You will be able to accomplish more and be able to focus on teaching the game. Just make sure that if you yell at a player you have good reason and explain to them why. The more they understand what went wrong the better they will perform. Do not yell at the team for making a mistake that you did not prepare them for.

Many of these can be incorporated into combined stations. While working on fielding and hitting, play controlled scrimmages so that you can also teach situations and baserunning. You can also work on different situations within these scrimmage formats by putting a runner on one of the bases and have the team work on that particular situation.

What usually happens is that coaches will hit some groundballs, flyballs and then have them hit, then practice is over and then nothing really got accomplished. It is okay to make practice competitive as that is what your are trying to get across to the kids when its time to play the game. Teach them how to play the game within the game and you will

have one of the most enjoyable summers of coaching baseball. The funny thing is that it doesn't take a lot of time, just patience and organization.