

# CLAYBA Coach's Manual



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of coaching standards to guide CLAYBA's coaches and assistant coaches to achieve CLAYBA's goals.

## 1.2 CLAYBA Goals

CLAYBA's goals are to:

- Provide a safe environment for kids to enjoy and learn the game of baseball
- Allow our players to learn skills that will allow them to reach their baseball goals
- Represent the communities of Clear Lake and Clearwater in a manner we all can be proud of
- Contribute to building a sense of community in Clear Lake and Clearwater

## 1.3 Coach's Expectations

We expect all of our Assistant and Head Coaches to:

- Review and adhere to the coaching standards in this document
- Align their coaching methods to the goals of the club
- Attend coaching clinics provided by the club
- Continuously improve their coaching skills
- Always place safety, player development and sportsmanship ahead of winning

We expect all of our Head Coaches to:

- Hold an introductory meeting or write an introductory letter to the parents of their team at the start of each season
- Prepare practice plans that are consistent with the guidelines in this document
- Offer a minimum of one practice per week
- Keep practices at a high tempo
- Help each player improve their skills further each season
- Appoint an Assistant Coach to run practices and games in the Head Coach's absence
- Complete concussion awareness training

## 2. Coaching Baseball Practices

### 2.1 Practice Tempo

CLAYBA practices are to be at a high tempo. Practices should start and end on time and keep the players moving from start to finish. This will require the Head Coach to be prepared for each practice so she/he can quickly move the players between stations and activities.

### 2.2 Practice Frequency

Each player from the BBall level up should have the opportunity to practice with a CLAYBA coach at least once per week during the registered season. Therefore, each coach should ensure they arrange a weekly practice. Combining practices with another CLAYBA team is acceptable.

### 2.3 Practice Duration

Recommended practice durations vary by the age of the player. The following are recommended practice durations per division:

- TBall – 45-60 mins
- BBall – 60 mins
- Willie Mays – 60-120 mins
- 11U/12U – 60-120 mins
- 13U & up – 90–150 mins

Shorten practice durations in hot or cold weather.

### 2.4 Master Practice Plan

At the start of each season each Head Coach is to develop a master Practice Plan that lists the skills they will teach during the season and create a list age-appropriate drills and games to develop those skills. Develop the plan considering the age of the team. For BBall and above the critical practices are those that occur prior to the first games so consider the number of practices that will occur prior to the first game and plan those practices to work on the key aspects of the game you want to develop prior to playing those games.

See Appendix A for an example Master Practice Plan.

### 2.5 Practice Plans

Each practice should be pre-planned by the Head Coach. Experienced coaches might be able to use a simple bullet point list to run a practice or work effectively without a written plan at all. Less experienced coaches should have a written plan to guide them through practice. The plans should consider who will lead each drill, the number of players per drill, any equipment needed for the drill,

and the total duration of the drill. This preparation will ensure practices run smoothly. When the Coach is prepared and organized the players and parents will soon follow that example.

See Appendix B for example Practice Plans, Drills and Activities.

## 2.6 Typical Practice

We want to have consistency in our practice routine from TBall up to our oldest players. By reinforcing a consistent routine we will build a comfort level with player and parents and make practices more effective as routines become deeply established. Specific skills and game scenarios will be built upon as the player advances through the older divisions. However, the typical practice structure should be basically the same at all ages. Each practice should include, in order:

Team Meeting

Warm-Up

Throwing

Fielding, Pitching and/or Hitting Drills

Game Scenarios\*

Group Game/Fun Activity\*

Conditioning\*

Team Meeting

\*some fielding drills may include sufficient aspects of game scenarios, fun and conditioning that a separate dedicated time may not to be allotted for these activities

Water breaks should be provided between drills or about every 15-20 mins. Encourage the players to always take a drink to keep hydrated. Increase the number of water breaks in hot conditions to every 10-15 mins. Keep an eye out for players who don't appear to be drinking and talk to parents about ensuring the player arrives with a water bottle. Keep the water breaks short in duration (1-2 mins) to keep the practice tempo up.

See Appendix B for example Drills and Activities that meet the criteria above.

## 2.7 Team Meetings

Hold team meetings on the infield and close to the fence where parents can hear what you are saying. Have the players take a knee and ensure all players are present. With younger players review the safety rules, housekeeping rules and sportsmanship expectations regularly.

For meetings at the beginning of practice review what will happen for that practice and give any instructions that are needed.

For meetings at the end of practice review the top 2-3 skills that were worked on. Compliment any accomplishments or hard work you observed. Remind player and parents about the next game or practice. Close with a team cheer.

## 2.8 Utilizing Stations

To keep a high tempo we want to maximize the amount of time each player is fielding, hitting, pitching, or running bases. As a coach your practice plan should utilize stations which will be operating simultaneously. Use your assistant coaches and parents to set up 3-4 stations each focusing on developing a different skill. Each station should have 2-4 players and can have 1-2 coaches/parents. For example, on a 12 player team you can have 4 players working on ground balls in the infield, 4 players working on fly balls in the outfield, 2 pitching in the bullpen, and 2 hitting soft toss or off a tee - all at the same time. This will require at least 4 coaches/parents but go ahead and pull a couple parents out on the field with you and get it done. Rotate the players every 5-7 minutes so each player works on each skill. Ideally the Head Coach will not run any of the stations but rather can rotate between the stations to guide the coaches and parents and assist the players.

## 2.9 Games/Group Activities

Concluding each practice with a fun game or activity that involves the entire team is a great way to end a practice. However, splitting the players into two teams and playing “real baseball” can really slow down the tempo. Instead, there are alternate games and activities that can be fun and keep the tempo up.

See Appendix C for example games and activities for the entire team.

## 2.10 Customizing the Practice Plan

Each practice should follow the “typical practice” structure described above. It is important to customize practices to the needs of the players and to add some variety in the drills and activities. Many different drills and activities exist and have proven successful. Each Coach should feel empowered to adjust any drill or game to make it suitable for their specific Team. Inventing new drills and games or tweaking well established ones is encouraged as long as they are achieving the intent of developing the player’s skills and keeping the practice tempo at a high level.

### 3. Communicating with Parents

At the start of each season the Head Coach should communicate with the parents of the team. This can be verbally at the first practice or written prior to the season. The Coach should communicate the following items as a minimum:

- Your goals
- How you will keep the players safe
- What you expect from the players (equipment, uniform, behavior, attitude, arrival time, etc)
- What you expect from the parents (behavior, arrival time, communication, participation, etc)
- Playing time per player
- Best way for parents/players to reach you (phone, text, email)

Continue communication with the parents throughout the season. Talk to them when walking to and from the parking lot to get their take on how things are going. It is always best to know how they are feeling early so you can do something about it or to get encouragement from them.

## 4. Coaching Games

### 4.1 Arrival Time

At the TBall level arrive 10 to 15 minutes prior to practice time. This will allow you to set up the field for the first activities. Parents appreciate a Coach who starts consistently on-time. It will also encourage discipline as the players develop a routine.

At the BBall level the Coaches should arrive to the games 20-30 minutes prior to game time. Ask players to arrive 15-20 minutes prior to game time. Establish a warm-up routine of throwing and stretching that the players and parents are familiar with so that if you arrive late the players know what they need to be doing. You should use the same routine in practice.

At the Willie Mays and older levels the Coaches should arrive to the games 35-45 minutes prior to game time. Ask players to arrive 30 minutes prior to game time or earlier. Establish a warm-up routine of throwing and stretching that the players and parents are familiar with so that if you arrive late the players know what they need to be doing. You should use the same routine in practice.

### 4.2 Equipment

At the BBall level and up the Head Coach should take practice balls, game ball, score books (or mobile app if going paperless), batting helmets, bats, catching gear, first aid kit, lineup card, pen, cash for the umpire fees (for home games) and their mobile phone (if applicable). Bug spray and sunscreen are good to have on hand but confirm with parents prior to applying to any players.

Players should be in full uniform including their hat, jersey, grey baseball pants, cleats and glove. Shirts should be tucked. Jewelry such as watches, bracelets and necklaces should be removed.

### 4.3 Playing Time

All players should get equal playing time. A player should never sit off for two consecutive innings. Players should all get equivalent time in the infield and outfield as compared to their teammates. Achieving equivalent time in the infield and outfield amongst the team could be difficult for each individual game but over the course of the season all players should have played equal time in the infield and outfield when compared to their teammates.

Exceptions to the above guidelines can exist but be sure that the parent of the player who is an exception is fully aware of any exceptions and the reason. One reason to make an exception is for safety. If a player is not capable of safely playing a position like catcher or first base then the player's parents should be notified. In case of a disagreement between the player and coach the CLAYBA Board can intercede and review the player's skills and help make a final decision. Ultimately player safety is the first priority so as the Coach you need to stand firm in protecting the player even if there is a disagreement with a parent.

## 4.4 Lineup Card

An example lineup card is attached in Appendix D.

## 4.5 Player and Parent Conduct

As the Coach you will need to set some expectations of your players and parents to ensure a safe and fun game for all players. Those expectations should include:

- Only speak encouragingly to teammates, opponents and umpires
- Be in full and proper uniform when arriving at the ballpark
- Remain in the dugout or bullpen when not on the field
- Ask a Coach before leaving the dugout to use the restroom, Coach to ensure player is escorted by the player's guardian or has a buddy according to the Zero Tolerance Against Abuse Policy
- Keep the dugout area clean and tidy with bats, helmets, gloves, and water in designated areas
- Only drinks allowed in the dugout and bullpen (eat meals and snacks before or after the game)
- Only players and coaches allowed in the dugout and bullpen
- Inform the Head Coach as early as possible about any upcoming absences



## 5. Safety Rules

Common safety rules across all CLAYBA teams include:

- Always have a helmet on while swinging a bat
- Always be at least 20 feet from any other person while swinging a bat (unless doing a hitting drill with Coach or at bat in a game)
- Only throw a ball to someone who is looking at you and expecting you to throw to them
- Never climb or hang on fences

## 6. Concussion Awareness

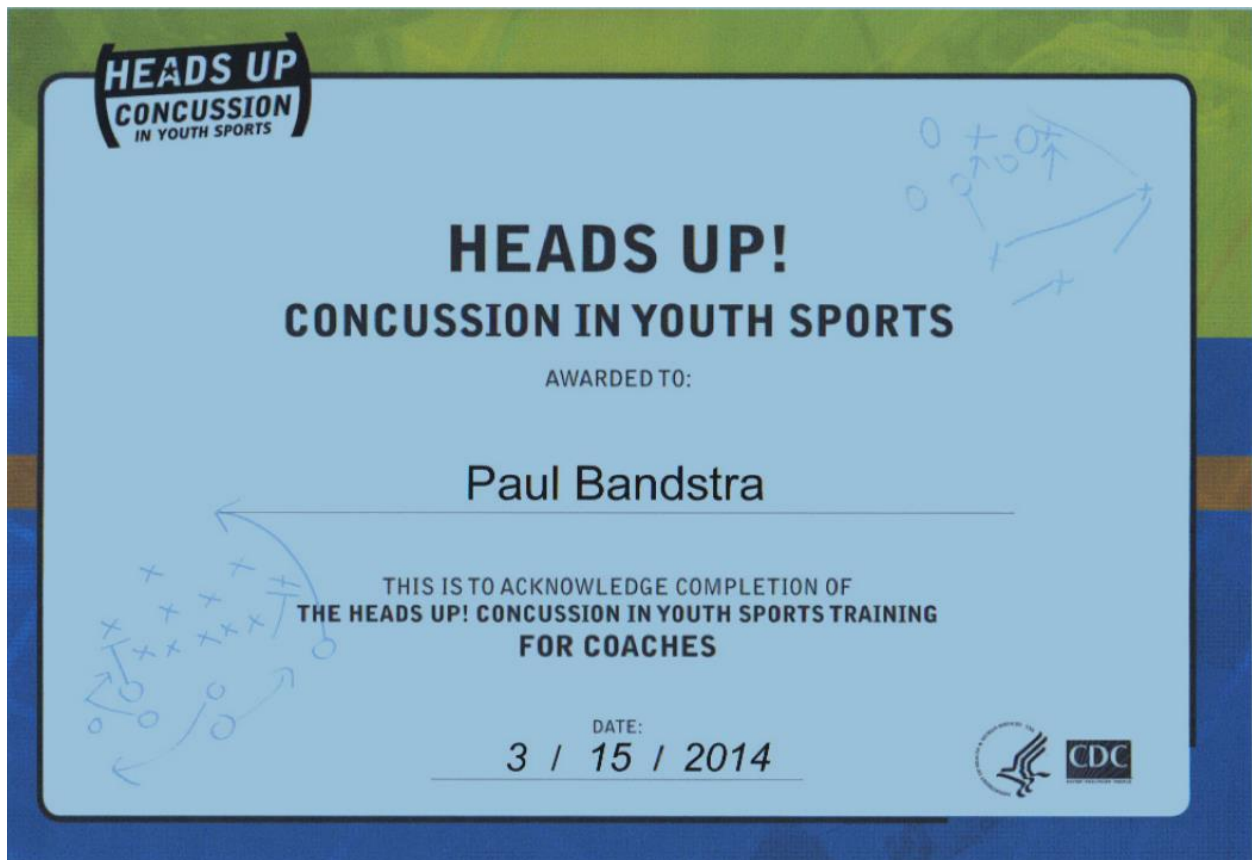
<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/Training/index.html>

Each coach must complete the concussion awareness training provided at the above link. This training takes about 30 mins and is free of charge. This training is mandatory for all coaches and is required as part of CLAYBA's insurance coverage.

Upon completion a certificate can be printed and should be provided by to the CLAYBA Secretary (see the CLAYBA website for the current secretary and their contact information) to keep on file.

CLAYBA considers the certificate valid for 3 years after the date on the certificate.

Below is an example of the certificate:



## 7. Abuse Awareness and Prevention

CLAYBA has a Zero Tolerance Policy Against Abuse which is applicable to all volunteers, including coaches. The Policy is attached in Appendix E.

# Appendix A - Example Master Practice Plan (Used for Willie Mays 2013)

## Skills to Develop

- 1) Infield
  - a. Receiving ground ball
    - i. Ready position
    - ii. Glove tip down forming triangle with feet, low position, reach
  - b. Throwing ball to base
    - i. Ball high, follow through by stepping (full steps) toward target, throw to chest of baseman
  - c. First Base
    - i. Right foot on edge of bag, wait to stretch to ball
    - ii. Pitcher covering – lead the pitcher, underhand toss
    - iii. Unassisted – stay in fair territory, use inner 1/3 of bag
- 2) Outfield
  - a. Catching Fly Ball
    - i. Ready position, move feet
    - ii. Both hands above shoulders and between shoulders & absorb
  - b. Catching Fly Ball Hit Over Head
    - i. Drop Step – One step back, turn and run
  - c. Keeping the Ball in Front
  - d. Throws to Infield
    - i. Simple cutoffs
- 3) Pitching
  - a. Grip
    - i. 4 seam
    - ii. 2 seam
  - b. Stretch
    - i. Grip hidden in glove, hands off chest, elbows down
    - ii. Lead leg to 90 degrees, push off back leg
  - c. Delivery
    - i. Glove hand toward plate & throwing back & high (pitcher's T)
    - ii. Fingers up (“fangs away from body”) & elbow high
    - iii. Stretch to 2/3 height, toes to plate
  - d. Follow Through
    - i. Glove hand to chest under armpit
    - ii. Step over with push leg
    - iii. Be in fielding position
  - e. Covering First Base

- i. Glove up
    - ii. Stay in fair territory
  - f. Backing up bases
    - i. Backing up 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - ii. Backing up Home
- 4) Catching
  - a. Crouch
    - i. Feet outside knees, slight forward lean, glove above knees, throwing hand behind back
    - ii. Framing
  - b. Blocking Pitches
    - i. Staying behind ball
  - c. Backing up First
- 5) Hitting
  - a. Grip
    - i. Hold bat in fingers not palms
    - ii. Align door knocking knuckles, finger point test
  - b. Stance
    - i. Athletic position, square to pitcher, parallel to plate
    - ii. Hands at top of strike zone, deep breath
  - c. Swing
    - i. Load up on back foot, get on toe on front, small step with front foot
    - ii. Open hips
    - iii. Knob to ball with bat drag through hitting zone, contact with elbows bent (inverted V)
    - iv. Extend after contact & follow through over shoulder
  - d. Bunting
    - i. Sac Bunt - Adjust stance when pitcher starts wind up, “pinch” bat with top hand and below barrel, turn to face pitcher (hips & toes to pitcher), bat parallel to ground, move bat up and/or down using knees not arms as much as possible
- 6) Base Running
  - a. Running Through First
    - i. Watch bag, stay on outer half of bag
  - b. Rounding First
    - i. Start turn early (“question mark” path), use inner corner of bag, be ready to decelerate
  - c. Stay on base until ball crosses plate or is hit
  - d. Sliding Feet First

## Six Practice Schedule

- 1) Practice 1
  - a. Introductions
  - b. Ground Rules
  - c. Today's Plan
  - d. Warm Up
  - e. Throwing
  - f. Infield Basics Drills
  - g. Hitting Basics Drills
  - h. Pitching Basics Drills
  - i. Arizona Hitting Game
  - j. Recap
- 2) Practice 2
  - a. Review Practice 1
  - b. Today's Plan
  - c. Warm Up
  - d. Throwing
  - e. Outfield Basics Drills
  - f. Pitching Advanced Drills
  - g. Hitting Advanced Drills
  - h. Infielders Drill Game
  - i. Recap
- 3) Practice 3
  - a. Review Practice 1&2
  - b. Today's Plan
  - c. Warm Up
  - d. Throwing
  - e. Infield Advanced Drills
  - f. First Base Drills
  - g. Pitching Review and PFP Drills
  - h. Hitting Drills
  - i. Beat the Runner Game
  - j. Recap
- 4) Practice 4
  - a. Review Infield Advanced, First Base Defense & PFP
  - b. Today's Plan
  - c. Pictures
  - d. Warm Up
  - e. Throwing
  - f. Outfield Advanced Drills
  - g. Catching Drills

- h. Pitching to Hitters
  - i. Recap
- 5) Practice 5
  - a. Review Outfield Advanced & Catching
  - b. Today's Plan
  - c. Simulate Pre-game Warm Up
  - d. Intersquad game
  - e. Recap
- 6) Practice 6
  - a. Review Pre-game Warm Up
  - b. Preview Line-up Card (How to Read)
  - c. Exhibition Game
  - d. Recap

## Appendix B - Example Practice Plans, Drills & Games/Activities

### Warm Up Activities

Start slow and work the intensity level up as you go. Some examples:

Run laps	Lunges	Jumping Jacks	Shuffles	Crossovers
High Knees	Pickoff Sprints	Butt Kicks	Stretches	Toe & Heel Walk

### Throwing Activities

*Do drills in pairs when possible (3 max) and always start with partners close together and work back to greater distances.*

#### **Flick drill**

Elbow in glove, use wrist only to throw ball to partner. Elbow height equal to shoulder. Emphasize wrist snap at release to improve velocity, carry and accuracy. Can do from one knee or standing.

#### **One-knee drill**

Throwing side knee is on ground. Glove side leg is out front at 45 degree angle and in line with throwing side knee, pointed at partner. Foot is closed to 45 degree angle. Glove arm is up and pointing at target with a slight bend in the elbow. Throwing arm is in ready position with elbow equal to shoulder, at 90 degree angle and ball pointed away. As player throws, glove is tucked into chest/armpit, and after ball is released, throwing hand/arm crosses front side leg. Can do this synchronized where all players on one side tossing at once with coach shouting "Set...Break...Throw" (where "set" is twisting torso to have lead shoulder pointing to partner, "break" is moving arms to "pitcher's tee" position, "throw" is the toss with proper follow through).

Can do this drill standing too.

#### **Back It Up (Game)**

Start partners standing and close together, partners play catch but take a step back each time they make a catch, if ball touches ground the partners sit down, last pair standing wins. For older players can back up 2-3 steps per catch.

#### **Hit the Target (Game)**

Partners stand medium distance apart for age, partners play catch and thrower gets 2 points if their throw would have hit their partners chest or head, 1 point if within partners reach but would not have hit head or chest, first to 10 or 20 wins (depends on age). For older players can award 2 points for head, one for belt to chest, minus for uncatchable.

### Fielding Drills

#### **INFIELD**

##### **Four square**

You will need at least four coaches/volunteers to perform this drill. Place players at infield positions (2-3 players at each position). Two coaches stand on third base line and hit balls to first and second baseman.



Two coaches stand on first base line and hit balls to shortstop and third baseman. Hit ground balls and instruct players to make good throws back to the coach.

Rotate players amongst positions every 3-4 minutes. Make a game of it. Player must field the ball cleanly and make good throw back to the coach, otherwise, they are eliminated. Last player standing wins.

### **Middle infield / Double play drills**

Break players up into two groups, one at the shortstop position and one at the second base position. A player or coach can play first.

#### *4-6-3 double play:*

- Hit or roll balls directly at the second baseman, emphasizing a pivot move and making an accurate throw to the shortstop covering second base.
- Hit or roll balls to the left of the second baseman so he is required to run or shuffle a few steps to field the ball. Instruct player to make a spin move (turning body so back is facing home plate) and accurate throw to second base (shortstop covering).
- Hit or roll balls to right of the second baseman so he is required to shuffle feet to field the ball. This play should result in a flip throw or toss to the shortstop covering the bag. Instruct players to say "flip" so the shortstop knows it will be an underhand throw or soft toss.

Second baseman should "follow the toss" to ensure an accurate delivery.

#### *6-4-3 double play:*

- Hit or roll balls directly at the shortstop, emphasizing pivot move or drop step, and making an accurate throw to the second baseman covering the bag.
- Hit or roll balls to right of the shortstop so he is required to run a few steps to field ball. Instruct player to make drop step and an accurate throw to second baseman.
- Hit or roll balls to the left of the shortstop so he is required to shuffle feet to field the ball. This play should result in a flip throw or toss to the second baseman covering the bag. Instruct players to say "flip" so the second baseman knows it will be an underhand throw or soft toss.

Stress the importance of first making an out ("make sure of one") – the double play is the bonus. If fielded ball is bobbled or dropped, play is to first. Tell players covering second base to always give a target (hold hands up together in upper torso area) and to expect a bad throw (players should take short choppy steps as the approach second base so they can react to offtarget throws). Demonstrate pivot moves at the second base bag (e.g., the straddle, cross over, step-back). For balls hit far to the left of second baseman/right of shortstop, the player covering second becomes a first baseman (i.e., stretches when receiving the ball). Tell players covering second base to hold ball if there is no reasonable chance of turning the double play (avoid errant throws).

### **Hot corner situations**

Break players up into three groups - third basemen, first basemen, runners.

#### *Man on first, less than two outs:*

- Hit or roll baseballs to third baseman. Hard hit balls at or to the left or right of third baseman, play is to second base. If ball is hit softly to the third baseman (i.e., a slow roller), play is to first base.

*Man on first and second, less than two outs:*

- Hit or roll baseballs to third baseman. Hard hit balls to the left of third baseman, play is to second base. Hard hit balls at or to the right of the third baseman, player steps on third and throws to second or first base, assuming there is a play to be made. If ball is hit softly to the third baseman (i.e., a slow roller), play is to first base.

Stress the importance of making an out. If ball is bobbled or dropped, play is to first base. If no play can be made, hold the ball.

## **OUTFIELD**

### **Pop flies**

Throw or hit fly balls to players (for younger players can use a tennis racquet and tennis balls if they show fear of the ball). Demonstrate the proper technique, for example, both hands should be held out high with palms facing up. Head and shoulders should be directly under the ball when catch is being made. Catch above shoulder and between shoulders as often as possible. Throwing hand covers the ball as it enters the glove.

### **Left and right fly balls (Drop Step Drill)**

Player stands facing coach. Throw the ball over the left or right shoulder of the player. Stress the importance of the drop step with the foot closest to the ball (i.e., if ball is hit over left shoulder, the player should drop step with left foot). Teach the players to run to the spot where they think the catch will be made, turning their back, if necessary. Discourage back-pedaling.

### **Football drill (Another Drop Step Drill)**

Player stands facing coach. Explain to players that you will either raise your right or left arm. If right arm is raised, player drop steps with his left foot and sprints to his left at a 45 degree angle from starting point. If left arm is raised, player drop steps with his right foot and sprints to his right at a 45 degree angle from starting point. Lead the player with a throw as you would a football to a receiver. This drill teaches players how to maintain focus on the ball and catch while in a full sprint. Have some fun with this drill and break out the football!

### **Ground balls**

Break players up into two or three groups in the outfield. Throw or bat ground balls. For slower hit balls, instruct players to charge ball then break down as they would when fielding a ground ball in the infield. For harder hit balls, show players how to drop to one knee to ensure ball does not get past them. After fielding the ball, players should pop up and throw ball to coach or cut off man.

### **Do or die**

This drill is designed to teach players how to charge and field balls hit into the outfield and throw players out ("do or die") or prevent them from advancing a base. Break players up into two groups. Throw or bat ground balls to the players. Instruct players to charge the ball and field it while maintaining a stride. Players should position themselves such that they field the ball on their glove hand side. After fielding the ball the player takes crow hop and throws to coach or cut off man.

### **Fly/Pop fly ball priorities**

It's important that players understand who has priority when there is a pop or fly ball. When practicing infield/outfield drills, spend 10-15 minutes simulating various situations, for example, fly balls to right-center or left-center, pop flies in shallow center, pop flies in the infield, etc.

Also, explain the hierarchy, as follows:

- Not only is your center fielder is the "captain" of the outfield, but he also has priority over all other positions in the field. Teach your center fielder to take control, and if he can catch a fly ball or pop fly in right, left or shallow center, he should call all other players off.
- Outfielders have priority over infielders. On balls hit to the shallow outfield, instruct your outfielders to call off infielders (it's easier to make a catch running as opposed to running back), but only if they think they can make the catch.
- Your shortstop is the captain of the infield and should call off all other fielders, provided of course he has the ability to make the catch.  
Coach's note: As soon as one infielder calls for a catch, all other infielders should be taught to run to cover their respective bases.
- The shortstop and second baseman have priority on pop flies behind third and first base, respectively. It is much easier for a shortstop or second baseman to catch a ball running to his left (e.g., into shallow right field) or his right (e.g., into shallow left field) than it is for a third or first baseman trying to catch a ball over their shoulder. Also, remind the shortstop or second baseman that outfielders have priority.
- The third or first baseman have priority on short pop flies between them and the catch in fair or foul territory. Again, it's much easier to make a catch running in than it is running back.
- For pop flies around home plate (fair or foul territory), teach your catchers to turn with their backs facing the infield and to take a couple of steps back. This type of pop fly will naturally drift towards fair territory, so using this technique will increase the likelihood that the ball will be caught.  
Coach's note: On pop fly foul balls by left-handed batters, teach catchers to look over their left shoulder first. Left handed-batters will rarely hit a pop fly ball to the first base side in foul territory. If a right-handed batter hits a pop foul ball, catchers should look over their right shoulder first.

When practicing these drills, get the players to form a habit of either calling for the ball ("I got it, I got it!") or "acknowledging" that a teammate is clear to catch the ball that they have called for ("you, you, you!"). Players fielding fly balls should also "waive off" their teammates.

## Base Running Drills

Several of the drill below can be further enhanced by utilizing first and third base coaches. Use your assistant coaches as if there is real game occurring. This will get the players used to looking to their base coaches and also get the coaches used to the signals they will be using (holding the runner, waving runner up to next base, etc). For older players (Willie Mays and up) you can *occasionally* use the players to coach bases during practice. Seeing the game from the perspective of a coach can be very valuable to players.

### Straight through first

The objective is to teach players the proper way to run to first base on a groundball to the infield. Line the players up a home base. Simulate a ground ball hit in the infield. Instruct players to find the ball within the first few strides towards first base then keep head down as they run through the base (looking for the ball slows them down). Discourage sliding into or lunging towards first base bag. Players should practice stepping on the home-plate side of first base (i.e., not the middle or back portion of the bag) to improve speed to bag and reduce injury.

### **The question mark**

The objective is to teach players to identify when a batted ground ball makes it through the infield and to make the proper turn towards and through first base. Line the players up a home base. Simulate a ground ball hit in the infield. Instruct players to find the ball within the first few strides towards first base (they are still on the first base line at this point). When they see the ball has made it through the infield, they initiate a turn and proceed to and through first base. The resulting running path should resemble a question mark. Emphasize stepping on the corner of the bag facing the inner-diamond and taking short choppy steps after they pass the bag. Players should keep their feet moving so if the outfielder bobbles the ball, they are prepared to take the extra base. If ball is fielded cleanly, instruct players to quickly return to first base.

### **The banana**

The objective is to teach players how to exit the batter's box properly on a clean base hit (or fly ball to the outfield), and to make the proper turn towards and through first base. Line the players up a home base. Simulate a base hit to the outfield. Instruct players to exit the batter's box at a 45 degree angle in foul territory then begin making turn towards inner part of the first base bag. The resulting running path should resemble the shape of a banana. Emphasize stepping on the corner of the bag facing the inner-diamond and taking short choppy steps after they pass the bag. Players should keep their feet moving so if the outfielder bobbles the ball, they are prepared to take the extra base. If ball is fielded cleanly, instruct players to quickly return to first base.

### **First to third**

This drill teaches players running from first base how to "pick up" the third base coach on a base hit to the outfield, and to make the proper turn around second base. Line the players up at first base and place a coach in the third base coach's box. Simulate a base hit. Instruct players to run hard and pick up the third base coach approximately half to two-thirds of the way to second base. The third base coach either waves (windmill motion) the player to third or holds (both arms up, palms facing out) the player at second. If the player sees that he is being waved to third, he should begin making a slight turn and step on the corner of the bag facing the inner-diamond.

### **Second to home**

This drill teaches players running from second to home how to pick up the third base coach on a base hit to the outfield, and to make the proper turn around third base. Line the players up at second base and place a coach in the third base coach's box. Simulate a base hit. Instruct players to run hard and pick up the third base immediately. The third base coach either waves (windmill motion) the player home or holds (both arms up, palms facing out, player makes the turn around third; or pointing to the bag, indicating player should stop on the bag) the player at third. Again, player should make the proper turn and step on the corner of the bag facing the inner-diamond.

Note to third base coaches: If you want the player to advance home or at least make the turn, leave the coach's box and position yourself a one-third or halfway to home (in foul territory). If you want the

player to stop on third base, remain in coach's box and point to the bag with one hand and with the other, hold up indicating player should stop. Also, never touch the player as he is rounding the bag.

### **Diamond relay**

This is a fun drill but it also teaches players how to make the proper turns around the bases, including stepping on the right part of the bag (see drills above). Split the players up into teams of two. Half of the players go to second base, and the other half remains at home plate. At "go" players begin to sprint around the bases. After they've completed their tour around the bases, they tag the next player in line, relay style. First team to complete the relay wins.

## **Pitching Drills**

### **Beginner's Pitching Mechanics Instruction**

It is typically easier to teach young players to pitch from the set position (as if runners on base). There are fewer moving parts in the set position than the windup and it is easier to critique as a coach. However, there is no absolute right and wrong about which method is taught. But eventually every pitcher will need to know the set position so it is recommended to teach the set position first.

Set Position (For right-handed pitcher...Lefties need to reverse) – Right foot in front of but touching pitcher's rubber and parallel to rubber. Feet about shoulder width apart with slight knee bend. Pitcher's chest should be facing third base and left shoulder should be "pointed" towards home plate. Pitcher used 4 seam grip and has right hand in glove hiding the ball from opponents. Right hand with ball in glove should be in front of chest but not pressed against chest and not far from chest – comfortable position with glove 4-6 inches off chest is best. Pitcher lifts left leg so knee is at 90 degree angle. Point left toes down. Avoid "wrapping" leg around body. (Have players balance on right leg with left at 90 degree angle to emphasize this motion.) Arms should now swing out into "pitcher's tee" (left hand pointing to home plate with thumb down, right hand straight back with little to no bend in elbow and fingers pointed towards second base and thumb down). Deliver pitch while pushing off pitcher's rubber with right leg. Stride should be about 2/3 the height of the pitcher. Left foot should land with toes pointed to home plate. Right arm should come across body and finish with right hand on left side of left leg. Left hand (glove) should come to left armpit/chest area. Follow through to good fielding position with head, glove, chest towards home plate.

**ADD MORE PITCHING DRILLS HERE**

## **Hitting Drills**

### **Soft Toss (Side and Front)**

See the attached video for a tutorial. In the example the coach is tossing from an angle which is the preferred method. However, especially when pitching to younger hitters, this can be very unsafe for the coach. Pitching from a position where you are directly facing the batter and the batted ball is hit 90 degrees from the coach is a safer option and acceptable. As a coach you know that when you make a pitch that it missed or not swung at but hits the batter's front toe that you have made a proper soft toss pitch.

### **[Soft Toss Drill](#)**

**ADD MORE HITTING DRILLS HERE**

## Appendix C - High Tempo Group Games and Activities

### Coach-pitch tempo game

Split the group into two teams and play regular baseball rules with exceptions to keep players active. First exception is to have a coach pitch. Coach can pitch overhand, underhand or soft toss depending on player age and skill level. Can use tee for younger players. Second exception is that all players run the bases regardless of the outcome of the hit. If the hitter is thrown out at first or the ball is caught have the hitter stay at the base and all other runners move up a base. If a runner is forced out or tagged out have the player remain at the base. Run through the batting order 2-3 times and then reverse the hitting and fielding teams. Have the fielding team switch the infielders and outfielders each time the hitting team has gone through the batting order once.

This type of game allows the coach to focus on any skill or game situation they want. Use it to reinforce base running, sliding, cutoffs, ready position, backing up bases, encouraging teammates, congratulating runs scored, etc.

Ensure pitcher has a bucket of balls on hand to keep the tempo up. Only give the teams 7-10 seconds (depending on age) to get on and off the field when changing from the hitting team to fielding team (have players sprint on and off field). Focus on getting them to leave their glove, bat, helmets in the same place each time where they can access it quickly.

### Throwing relay drill

Line players up in straight line in groups of three or four players, approximately 20-30 yards apart (depending on age). Player "A" throws to player "B", who in turn throws to player "C" (the "relay"), and so on. When ball reaches the end of the line throw in reverse order. If ball is dropped, it must be returned to the thrower before it can be advanced to the next player. First team to return the ball to Player A wins. Extend game to 2-3 times through the line for older players. Can add "punishment" for dropped balls like push-ups or jumping jacks that have to be done before ball can advance to next person in the relay.

Emphasize throwing to a target and giving the "cutoff man" a throw he can handle. Receiving player should provide a target and position himself to make a quick relay (show glove, athletic position) to receive the ball and make the proper turn and throw to the next player.

### Arizona Hitting Game

Split the group into three teams. Place Team A at first base and Team B at third base (no gloves). Team C bats. Have hitters hit off tee or use soft toss. One player from Team A stands on first base and the rest of the team waits. One player from Team B stands on third base and the rest of the team waits. One player from Team C hits and the rest of the team waits. After the player on Team C hits the ball the hitter runs the bases as fast as possible. The player from Team A and Team B run after the ball on contact. The goal of the player from Team A and Team B is to touch the ball as soon as possible and when each have touched the ball the play is over. The player from Team A and B can stop the ball but cannot kick or throw it to each other. The hitter gets one point for each base reached prior to both players from Team A and B touching the ball. Coaches can decide if they want to give a point if a player has reached the halfway point or if they need to make it all the way to the base. Focus on aiming the hit and rounding bases properly.

**Water balloon game (fun for the younger players)**

On a hot day bring 50-60 filled small water balloons. Split the group up into two teams and play Coach-pitch Tempo Game rules. Have a coach underhand toss the balloon and the players hit the balloon. It will explode on contact and spray them. After they hit the balloon have them run to first. As the player runs to first a second coach can roll or toss a ball into play from the third base side of home to simulate an actual hit. Save a few balloons for the kids to get the coaches too!

## Appendix D – Example Lineup Card

	Batting	Jersey #	Name	1st Inning	2nd Inning	3rd Inning	4th Inning	5th Inning	6th Inning
20-Jul	1	6	Cody	2B	Left Center	Left	SS	Right Center	Bench
	2	14	Cam	Bench	1B	SS	3B	Left Center	SS
	3	3	Liam	Catch	SS	Left Center	1B	SS	Bench
	4	12	Max	SS	Bench	1B	Left Center	Pitch	Pitch
	5	9	Connor	Right	Catch	Right Center	Bench	Catch	Right Center
	6	15	Josh	1B	Left	Pitch	Pitch	Bench	1B
	7	1	Lukas	Pitch	Pitch	Bench	Right	1B	Left Center
	8	11	Tyren	3B	Right	3B	Catch	Bench	Left
	9	4	Reid	Left Center	2B	Right	Bench	2B	3B
	10	8	Jay	Left	3B	Bench	Right	3B	Right
	11	7	Colton	Right Center	Bench	2B	Right Center	Right	2B
	12	10	Austin	Bench	Right Center	Catch	2B	Left	Catch



## Appendix E – Zero Tolerance Policy Against Abuse

Abuse of any kind is not permitted within our organization. CLAYBA does not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or misconduct from our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents or spectators.

Physical or sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, indecent or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within our organization.

Emotional or verbal abuse is also prohibited. These include, but not limited to use of foul language or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age.

All coaches, officials, and volunteers are appointed through the registration process as protection advocates of this policy. Every member is responsible for reporting any cases of questionable conduct or alleged mistreatment toward participants by any coach, official, volunteer, player, parent, sibling or spectator.

CLAYBA requires that every activity (game, practice, tournament, fund-raiser) sponsored by the organization put a BUDDY SYSTEM in place. No child should go anywhere - to the bathroom, locker rooms, or other location, without his or her buddy.

To further protect youth participants, as well as the coaches, volunteers, and officials, we require that no adult person allow himself/herself to be alone with a child during sponsored activities.

Do not drive alone with a child participant (other than your own children) in the car.

Do not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms or any other private room.

If you must have a private conversation with a youth participant, do it within view of others, in the gym or on the field, instead of in a private setting.

When traveling overnight with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of same gender and similar age group, with chaperones in separate but nearby rooms.

Children should be empowered to trust their feelings and let them know that their concerns and fears are important by listening to them. Open communication between children and parents, or between children and other adults in the organization may help early warning signs of abuse to surface.

The CLAYBA board of directors will respond quickly to any and all allegations of abuse within this organization. This information will be communicated to the authorities for investigation and will be reviewed by the organization's directors. The alleged offender will be notified of such allegations promptly and may be subject to a disciplinary hearing.

Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended by the board until the matter is resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of charges, may apply to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his/her former position.

Our mission is to promote good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourage qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all participants, coaches, officials and volunteers, and spectators. Children with a strong self-image may be less likely targets for abuse; and they may be less likely to abuse or bully others around them.