

## **Practice Drills – Examples**

### ***Outfield Drills***

When you practice it is important to keep the team actively engaged. Standing around should be kept to a minimum. We recommend the use of “stations” or the team divided into small groups that rotate through various practice drills. This will allow for each player to practice key baseball fundamentals throughout each scheduled practice time. Additionally, coaches may try group competitions to facilitate a drill in a fun, yet competitive way. Coaches should use the Practice Template to design specific drills needed prior to a scheduled practice.

#### **1. Pop Flies**

Have players form a line in the outfield 40 feet away straight in front of the coach. Use a tennis racket and tennis balls (or a bat and ball – or a coach can throw pop flies) to hit pop flies to the fielders. Stress to the players proper technique and positioning. As they get better, begin to hit the ball to their left, right, and behind them, teaching them to react properly (take step back), cross-over step and proper tracking.

#### **2. Sinking Line Drives**

To practice one of the more difficult catches in the game. Have players form a line in the outfield 40 feet away straight in front of the coach. The coach should be on one knee. One at a time a player will sprint towards the coach. The coach will throw a sinking line drive right at the player. To make this throw the coach should throw the ball side-armed. Throw the ball at the player’s knees or lower. Make sure the kids are sprinting in; otherwise the drill will not be “game-like”. Also, make sure the throw has a sinking action like in a game. Variations: Have the players line up at an angle from the coach. The players then sprint in front of the coach with the coach throwing the same type of throw. Make sure that the players are running at an angle in front of the coach. This is a good drill also to practice diving catches. Emphasize watching the ball into the glove, balance, and securing the catch.

#### **3. Cut-off Relays**

To build skills, speed, accuracy and confidence. Create two teams or “lines” of at least five players each competing against each other. They line up about 30 feet apart and stretch about 120 feet across the field. Make sure to have catcher, first baseman, and third baseman on one end. Have an outfielder the opposite end. Your middle infielder should be in the middle. The drill starts for both lines at the same time. The first team to take the ball to the end and get it back is the winner. The ball must be caught and thrown by player in the line. Teams may not skip a man. The catchers should practice catching and tagging a runner. The middle infielders should be taught to keep hands chest high to speed releases, and catch the throws in the glove side of the body. Emphasize accuracy on all throws.

Catcher-----x-----x-----x-----Outfielder

The distances should be matched to the age. You may also want to make this a “total team” drill with the team having to catch and throw the ball to cover a long distance. If you have the room to do this, it is great to have the team work together to beat the clock. They must beat a set time or they “pay”. You may also want to have the line” make more than one trip down and back.

#### **4. Relays**

To develop mechanics of the relay throw and tags. Line up three infielders 90 feet apart, depending on age and arm strength. End fielder throws to middle man, who uses proper technique to relay to other end fielder. Upon receiving the ball the end fielder drops a tag on an imaginary runner, spins, and throws back to the middle infielder, and so on. Emphasize proper technique and accuracy.