

2013 WBSL Softball Coaching Reference

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

7:00 PM



WBSL Softball 2013 Coaching Instruction and Practice Drills

2013 WBSL Board of Directors (Softball)

Barry Moeckel, Girls 6U (T-Ball) Director

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Skills Matrix

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2013

WBSL Softball Coaching Progression Recommendations

	Age	Hitting	Base running	Throwing	Fielding	Defensive Play	Pitching	Work Ethic	Attitude
T E E B A L L	5	Feet Position/Aligned Balanced Stance Grip/Knocking Knuckles Nose on Ball	Basic Rules Run through First	Grip - 4 Seam Wrist Snap Glove Points to Target	Ready Position Fingers up above knees Fingers down below knees	Get ball to 1B or P	N/A	Have Fun!	Fun. Anything goes Making Friends Snack Is Key!
	6	All above Contact in front of front foot	All above Explode from base Read Position	All above Step to target	All above	Get ball to 1B or P	N/A	Have Fun!	Fun to learn!
I N S T R U C T I O N A L	7	All above Trunk Rotation - Power L Direct Hand Path to Ball Finish/Follow Through	All above Listen to Base Coaches Explode from base Rounding bases	All Above Step, Point, Throw "Ball to the Wall" Throwing elbow up Shoulder to Shoulder	All above Ready + Creep Step Charge all Grounders Soft Hands Field ball out in Front Lateral movement	All above Concept of Force Out Easiest Base Get Ball to P Tag technique	Position on Rubber Wrist flicks Release Point Sling (no windmill) Focus on Target Basic drills only	Have Fun! Intro to learning	All above Desire to Learn Positive expectation
	8	All above Front Heel Lift/Toe Tap Timing	When to run/stay Circle Rule (P w/Ball)	All above Trunk Rotation	All above Drop Step Short Pop Fly's	All above Lead Runner Cutoff Technique	All above Push off rubber Stride and Step to Target	Have Fun! Continue Learning	All above Positive/Fun Team Cheers
M I N O R S / M A J O R S	9	All above Timing - on Release Bunting	All above Explode on Release Sliding	All above Accuracy/Repetition Longer Throws	All above Learn grounder rhythm Learn backhand	All above Situational Defense Communication	All above Develop Control Begin Windmill	Have Fun! Really learning Start bearing down	All above Desire to Improve Team Cheers
	10	All above Hit ball where it is pitched Hands Inside Ball Count Awareness Bat on plane of pitch Tuning Reps	All above Tagging up Stealing Freeze on Line Drive Proper Leads Aggressiveness	All above Perfect Technique Crow Hop (outfield throws)	All above Fly Balls Fielding footwork Transfer footwork Repetition and tuning	All above Cutoffs/Relays Double Play Rundowns	All above Stay Tall Intro to work ethic Advanced Drills Good Mechanics Tuning	Have Fun! Working hard	All above Desire to Improve and Compete
	11	All above Hit ball where it is pitched Tuning Reps	All above More Aggressive	All above Accuracy/Strength Perfect Technique	All above Mental toughness Repetition and tuning	All above Steal defenses Bunt defenses Communication	All above Leg Drive/Stride Perfect Technique Confidence	Have Fun! Working hard on weaknesses	Goal Setting Mental toughness
	12	All above Tuning Reps	All above Advanced Leads	All above Arm Strength Perfect Technique	All above Aggressiveness	All above	Concentration Control/Command	Have Fun! Working hard on weaknesses	Compete to win Team Cheers
Goals		Hitters that hit in front of the plate, generate power from the trunk, take their hands directly to the ball, have muscle memory in the strike zone, and load up and release power efficiently.	Aggressive, knowledgeable base runners	Kids that use their trunk for power, have good footwork, throw with their elbows up. Accurate and strong throwers	Confident, fundamentally sound fielders. Aggressive fielders not afraid to fail.	Confident, solid defense. Strong sense of communication and positional responsibilities.	Command and Technique are Key Foundational Elements. Once these are established new pitches can be taught/learned.	Kids who love the game and want to work hard to improve.	Confident, hungry, and positive can-do attitude

Catching/Throwing

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Coaching Instruction Reference

Catching the Ball

- **Gloves Fingers up (both hands - thumbs up)**
 - Chest level or above
 - If ball below chest, bend knees
 - If ball at waist, feet wide, bend knees
 - Only ball at knee level and below should glove fingers be flipped down
- Catching Details
 - Always catch the ball out in front of the body so that the eyes can follow it all the way into the glove.
 - Give a target with two hands at chest level in front of the body.
 - Start with the fingers of the glove pointing up and the wrist relaxed.
 - Follow the ball all the way into the glove with your eyes, squeeze the glove, and use the bare hand to hold the ball in the glove so that a quick throw can be made. Don't squeeze the outside of the glove with the second hand.
 - Turn the glove as necessary to catch throws that are not right at you. These balls still should be caught in front of the body.

Throwing

- **Grip - hold ball across 4 seams** (threads in shape of horseshoe or 'U')
- T position - point glove, pick apple (hand position with ball facing behind, wrist cocked)
- Front shoulder to target
- Throw - overhand - elbow stays above shoulder, arm comes forward, **wrist snaps** forward (ball rotation 12 to 6)
- Glove tucks to chest (advanced) - helps rotation
- Follow through - back shoulder pointing to target, throwing elbow to opposite knee

Practice Drills

- **Catching:**
 - 2 Hands, No Gloves - with Tennis Balls, Wiffle Balls or Softies
 - Teaches proper technique, using 2 hands - thumbs up, elbows under
 - With Glove
 - 2 hands - regular
 - Advanced (2 hands - glove closed, hand traps ball against back side of glove)
- **Play catch with kids kneeling**
 - Down on one knee - throwing side knee down (R knee for R hand throw)
 - Catch with glove fingers up
 - Throw (close) have throwing elbow in glove, focusing only on wrist snap
 - Same drill, regular throw
 - start throw with arms in T
 - Glove points to target, arm comes forward/down to up knee (opposite knee)
- **Throwing/Catching**
 - One knee
 - throwing side knee on ground
 - opposite (glove side) knee up and at 45 degree angle (i.e. not straight on)
 - Straight on T Drill (standing)
 - Feet wide, pointed straight ahead at target, point glove
 - 1) Throw
 - 2) Rotate torso
 - 3) Follow through
 - 90 degree (sideway) T Drill
 - Start with torso at 90 degrees to target
 - T- Pick apple, point glove
 - 1) Point
 - 2) Step w/front foot (optional for instructional)
 - 3) Throw
 - 4) Rotate torso
 - 5) Follow through
 - Catch - always Glove fingers up
 - 3 Step (advanced)
 - 1st step with Power foot at 45 degree angle (throwing side - Right for RH throw)
 - Point to target with glove (T position)
 - Arm comes forward as opposite foot comes down
 - 3rd step helps complete follow through
 - R-L-R (for right hand throw, start with power foot)
 - Line Drill/Cut-off drill
 - 3 or 4 players in a line
 - Each player throws to next in line
 - Goal - down and back twice without dropping

Ground Balls

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Coaching Instruction Reference

Ground Balls

Ready Position

1. Feet Wide
 - a. Shoulders square to home plate
 - b. Ready to move in 4 different ways
 2. Knees Bent - Fanny Down, Lean forward keeping Back Straight
 - a. As low as possible without bending your back
 - b. Head up - need to see ball
 - c. Incorrect - Bending down at the waist brings fanny up and head down
 3. Glove
 - a. Down with Palm up
 - b. Low - Below knee (give up range to keep glove down)
 - c. Out in front
 4. Field Ball out in Front of body
 - a. glove extends out in front
 - b. Field the ball out in front of your nose (apex of triangle with your feet)
 5. Charge Ball (never back up)
 - a. Surround ball to get in front of the ball
 - b. Field on glove side
 - c. Use momentum into throw
 6. Soft Hands
 - a. Bring it in, suck it up - 2 hands coming in same direction as ball (soft hands)
 - b. Keep eyes on the ball until it is in the glove
 - c. No stabbing at the ball
 - d. No scooping dirt - glove going in wrong direction if you do
- Ready Position
 - Anticipate every ball is going to be hit to you
 - Need to be prepared to charge the ball
 - (creep step - moving forward every pitch)

Practice Drills

Ground Ball Drills

- Alligator Drill
 - Kids in semi-circle, coach rolls ball to kids
 - Ground ball fielding position
 - Hands together
 - Top (throwing) hand above glove, with wrist and fingers up
 - Palm facing palm (forms alligator jaws)
 - Field ball, and roll back without coming out of position
 - This drill also works well with tennis ball
 - good drill for kids to practice at home (tennis ball off garage door)
- Short Hop Drill
 - Extending glove forward to go get the ball
- Double barrel
 - Split into 2 groups
 - 1 group at 2nd base
 - 1 group at shortstop
 - 1. Regular (roll)
 - Coach rolls directly to fielder
 - Charge all balls
 - Glove down, field out in front
 - Throw ball back to coach
 - Variation - can use cones
 - start fielder at back cone
 - field at or in front of front cone
 - Throw ball back to coach
 - 2. Range Drill (roll)
 - Coach rolls ball to one side of fielder or the other
 - focus on angle to get in front of ball to field
 - Variation - incorporate back-hand
 - 3. Regular (hit)
 - Coach hits ground balls to each group
 - Charge all balls (use cones)
 - Glove down, field out in front
 - Throw to
 - 1) Coach
 - 2) First base

Fly Balls

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Coaching Instruction Reference

Fly Balls

1. Basic Stance - Ready position
 - a. Balanced, athletic position
 - i. Balls of feet (not flat footed)
 - ii. Feet slightly staggered (glove foot in front)
 - b. Ready to move - **drop step** (first step)
 - i. Gets hips and shoulders turned
 - ii. Run (with both arms pumping)
 - c. Positioning (Advanced - different for LF, RF, CF)
2. Call it up ("Ball, Ball, Ball")
 - a. If someone else calls it first, then it is their ball
 - b. Communication is critical
3. Track it, and get underneath the ball (run to point where it is going to come down)
 - a. Advanced - have players 3 steps behind the ball than need to so weight can be moving forward on catch into the throw
 - b. Advanced - using glove to block sun
4. Positioning for Catch - above your head, with both hands, over either shoulder
 - a. Glove fingers up, palm facing forward
 - b. Up with both hands
 - c. over throwing shoulder - best (advanced)
5. Catch the Ball with 2 hands (always)
 - a. Cover up with throwing hand
 - b. Grip, transfer to throw
6. Glove does not come up until it is time to catch the ball (i.e. don't run with your glove above your head)
 - a. Teach kids how to run with their gloves

Practice Drills

Fly Ball Drills

- Individual - players toss ball up in the air and catches themselves
 - with tennis ball or softie
 - Can do with or without glove
 - Can do at home
- Go-drill
 - Players start at line
 - Run away from coach
 - Coach tosses ball
- **Go-back drill (L or R)**
 - Fielding position
 - Throw pop up to either side
 - Forces player decision as to which way to turn with drop step
 - Variation - making adjustment to go other way
 - Rotating hips without spinning around backwards
- Coach tosses short fly balls
 - Have them throw to player acting as cut-off (arms up)
 - **Don't recommend hitting fly balls to Instructional Division**
- **Minors division**
 - Can start having coach throw long fly balls
 - Once comfortable with that, coach can start hitting
- Call it up Drill (Majors and above)
 - Have 2 or more players spread out
 - Coach hits fly ball
 - Players have to communicate to call-up ball
 - Other player(s) position for backup
- Crow-Hop Drill (Advanced)
 - Use bucket as target
 - Coach tosses short fly ball to player
 - Player catches using proper technique and form
 - Player uses crow hop technique and makes throw to bucket
 - Lead with heel on throwing side
 - Hop into throwing motion to create momentum and using legs for stronger throw
 - Make it a game!

Hitting

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Coaching Instruction Reference

Hitting Instruction

1. Relax
2. Have Confidence
 - "I'm hitting this pitch", "I'm hitting this pitch", "I'm hitting this pitch"
3. Focus on 1 thing - the ball (vision important - head completely turned)
 - **Encourage kids to swing**
 - **Stride (front foot heel lift - up/down) every pitch**
 - Swing hard, consistent follow through/finish
 - Don't discourage them from going after bad pitches
 - **Grip**
 - Hold bat in pads (base) of fingers
 - not in Palm of the hand - shake hands with the bat
 - Middle knuckles of hands lined up
 - Door knocking knuckles in-line or split the difference

Stance

- Wide (better balance)
 - Straight Line down from front shoulder to behind front foot (shoulder width apart or slightly wider)
 - Helps prevent lunging (keep weight back)
- Open Stance (option)
 - Helps to see the ball better
 - Helps with bailing out (stepping into the bucket)
- Bend at waist (slightly)
 - helps balance
 - Helps to keep head on the ball
 - To fix falling off on swing, bend more at waist
- Pigeon toed (toes pointing in slightly) - Advanced
 - Front Foot - still want to land slightly closed
 - Loosing power if front foot lands open
 - Back Foot - helps with **Power-L** (pivot - hip rotation and firing belly button and back knee at pitcher)
- Launch position
 - Relax - Can start with bat on shoulder
 - Cock Bat - Lift bat up off shoulder - hands at the top of the strike zone

Practice Drills

Hitting stations (Drills)

1. Hitting Stick
 - Keep out in front
 - Watch for kids creeping
 - Can use sharpie to make different shapes on stick
 - ask which shape they just hit (keeps them focused on the stick)
2. Soft toss (into Net, or outfield)
 - Hitter 5 feet or so away from net/fence (if using net/fence)
 - Coach at 45 degree
 - Coach tosses ball out in front
 - Player hits ball
 - Focus on keep head down on ball throughout swing
 - Focus on all good swing mechanics
 - Helps build confidence
3. Fence/Wall drill
 - Can place tennis ball in fence
 - Line up with bat knob on belly, and barrel end extend to fence
 - Swing
 - If hitting fence, hand path needs to be shortened
 - "Short To, Long Through"
4. Wiffle balls
 - Coach on knee, pitches wiffle balls
 - Use small balls, mixed with some larger (golf ball size, regular, softball)
 - Make it a game
5. Tee drill
 - Regular - hit off tee (from home plate)
 - Important: place tee in front of home plate
 - 1) Hit ball out in front of front foot
 - 2) Watch for stepping straight
6. Coach pitch (Live)
 - Stride (front foot heel lift - up/down) on every pitch
 - Make sure stride is straight back to pitcher
 - Keeping head on ball throughout entire swing is key
 - Can use sharpie to write numbers on 5 or 6 balls
 - Ask hitter the number of the ball they just hit

Base Running

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Coaching Instruction Reference

Base Running

1. Run through first base
 - a. Good running form
 - b. Accelerate through the bag
 - c. Focus on touching front part of the bag
2. Ready position when on base (i.e. not standing straight up)
 - a. Athletic stance
 - b. Grab dirt, rocking - to time release
 - c. Explode off base with 3 or 4 quick steps
 - i. On pitcher release (Minors and above)
 - ii. When reaches batter (Instructional, Tball)
3. Base Coaches
 - a. Teach kids to pay attention to base coaches
 - i. Stop sign
 - ii. Wave on
 - iii. "Take your turn" (and look for ball)
 - iv. Slide (older divisions)
 - b. Teach kids to look for ball off bat
4. Sliding (Minors and above)
 - a. All Kids need to learn proper sliding technique
 - b. Sliding is necessary on close plays to avoid collisions
 - c. Aggressive with lower body, passive with upper body
 - d. Legs in form of a "4" figure
 - e. Throw arms up and back above head
 - f. Weight shift back to help avoid catching cleats
 - g. Proper slide on back side of hip/fanny
 - h. Stress acceleration into slide (watch for slowing down)

Practice Drills

Base Running Drills

Make sure all players wear helmets when doing base running drills

- Start at home plate and run through first
 - Sprint and accelerate through the first base bag
 - 1B Coach **behind** base to hold out hand for player to slap
 - glance off into foul territory, watching for overthrows (advanced)
 - Watch for:
 - stopping at base
 - Slowing down at or before base
 - Jumping the bag
 - To reinforce (if incorrect): have them keep running down to RF foul pole and run back to end of the line
- From home plate
 - Player Rolls Ball towards coach in fair territory and tries to run safely through first
 - Coach tries to throw them out (try to make plays close)
 - Variation (Minors and above) - have players field
- Release Drill
 - Split players up to groups at 1B, 2B, and 3B
 - Have Coach (or pitcher in older division) take position on rubber and throw pitch)
 - Coaches watch for kids exploding off base each pitch
- Multi-base (Minors and above)
 - Practice running for doubles
 - Proper line towards first base coach
 - Inside corner of the bag
 - Same for triples
- Sliding (Minors and above)
 - Easier to teach on grass when grass is wet
 - Use outfield grass or hill if possible (e.g. GBS)
 - Have older girls come down to help teach if available
- Relay Race (good drill to close practice)
 - Split team into 2 groups (1 at 2B, 1 at Home Plate)
 - First player in each group starts on coaches signal to run all 4 bases
 - Focus touching on inside corner of bag
 - Once a player goes through the last base, next player goes

Softball Pitching

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Softball Pitching - Basics (reference)

1. Grip - Cross-Seam - holding the "C"
 - a. Top knuckles on top seam
 - b. Fingertips (not the palm - palm restricts wrist flick)
2. Stance
 - a. Both feet in contact with pitcher's plate, straight at target (plate/catcher)
 - i. Front foot middle (middle of foot on middle of rubber plate)
 - ii. Back (glove) foot Toe on back part of mound, in contact with rubber
 - b. Shoulder width apart
 - c. Balanced/Relaxed/Breathe
3. Motion Preliminary
 - a. Ball in 1 hand or another - hands apart
 - b. Weight forward
 - c. Make sure of proper grip (every pitch)
 - d. Deep Breath
4. Motion Start
 - a. Presentation - Bring hands together (for at least 1 second)
 - b. Weight back
5. Pitch
 - a. Start Wind-up
 - b. Drive into stride - push off with power foot (throwing side)
 - c. Step forward (glove foot) to target
 - d. **Keep weight back, staying tall**
 - e. **Release ball at hip**
 - f. Wrist snap - straight to catcher's glove
 - g. Keep upper body straight/upright on release
 - h. Drag back foot (toe/lower inside of foot)
 - i. Must push off and drag away from pitcher's plate (rubber)

Softball Pitching Drills

Basic

- Use Taped/Striped Ball
- Use Power Phase - (Stance when releasing)

1. Wrist flicks

- a. Wrist only, lower arm glued to side. variation - glove across arm
- b. Wrist w/Lower arm coming up

2. T's - extend glove hand in front and pitching arm back forming a T. Bring both down and snap ball to catcher.

3. L's or K's - Glove hand and pitching arm straight in the air forming an L or a K (more advanced). Bring both down and snap ball to catcher.

4. Knee Drills - pitching arm leg down and glove hand leg stretched out in front. Isolates arm motion.

5. Glove Snaps - Glove out in front of front leg, and snap ball into glove. Helps with release point.

Advanced (Windmill Clinic or Pitching Coach)

6. Bucket Drill - Lightly place glove hand toe on bucket and complete windmill arm motion keeping weight back.

7. Slide Glides - practice a smooth leap and drag; put both feet together, lift glove hand leg up and jump out to catcher while dragging drive foot

8. Flamingo - Balance on pitching arm leg with glove leg in the arm. Weight entirely on pitching arm leg. Drive off toes into windmill keeping shoulders back.

9. Walk on's (3 step - R-L-R {right handed throw}, Pitch, keep walking)

10. Eyes Closed - any drill with eyes closed. Want to feel motion and make adjustments. Puts focus on mechanics (not target).

Coaching Resources

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Coaching Resources:

www.windhambaseball.org

[Hey Softball Coaches - WBSLWeb Site](#)

[WBSL website – Hey Coach – Coach’s Corner](#)

Babe Ruth League Coaching Education Center
(www.baberuthcoaching.org)

- [Online Courses](#) (Coaches Certifications)
- [Books](#)
- [DVDs](#)
- [E-Books](#)

ASA/USA Softball Training DVDs are available for checkout at the Nesmith Library

Windham Baseball Softball League has donated an ASA/USA Softball DVD instructional series to Nesmith Library. The USA Softball DVD instructional series features instruction and demonstrations from members of the USA Softball Women’s National team program. The titles include Fundamentals of Pitching, Fundamentals of Catching, Fundamentals of Hitting, Slapping and the Short Game, Hitting Drills, and Defensive Drills.

Fundamentals of Pitching

Olympic gold medalist Cat Osterman covers in detail the grip, motion and overall technique of her four pitches including the drop, curve, change up and rise ball.

Fundamentals of Catching

USA Softball Olympic Team assistant coach Ken covers all of the key fundamentals-from the squat position, targeting and receiving, to pickoffs and pop ups.

Fundamentals of Hitting

Follow tips from legendary head coach Mike Candrea and third baseman Andrea Duran as they guide you through the keys to becoming a better hitter.

Slapping and the Short Game

This session will teach you importance of the short game and that putting the ball in play is critical to your team’s success. Features Caitlin Lowe and Andrea Duran....

Hitting Drills

Coach Candrea demonstrates his hitting drills program, helping you and your team ready your skills and instincts for any situation in the batter’s box. Features Andrea Duran....

Defensive Drills

See how the team prepares to defend against the best players in the world. With their gloves, arms and voices, you’ll see how each player is in tune with their teammates, and learn the proper techniques to make the tough plays and execute an error-free defense.

Practice Planner Template

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Practice Planner					
Date:					
Time:	Mins	Players	Drill	Goals	Notes

Notes/To-Do:

