

Orleans Little League Baseball

Minor Program

9-10 years old players

Practice Guide & Plans



SECOND EDITION

2013

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This guide has been prepared by Eric Louis-Seize, baseball coach within Orleans Little League Baseball (OLLB), to help any Minor baseball coach plan and run efficient practices. You'll find useful coaching tips, important information for players and most importantly, a number of drills organized according to different aspects of the game and also according to the different field positions.

Some practice drills and coaching tips in this guide were found on baseball related websites. You'll find links to these different websites at the end of the guide.

Special thanks to Frank St-Denis and Bernie Hughes for their contributions and precious advices.

Introduction

Baseball games are fun. No matter our age, we enjoy testing our skills against others. Even the youngest baseball players want to see how they compare to other players or teams their age. Learning to compete to the best of our ability at whatever we pursue and how to win and lose with grace and dignity are important life lessons that should be introduced at a young age. But to maximize a young player's enjoyment of the game and to provide players with the best opportunity to improve, organized and enjoyable practices are a must. So practices are definitely more important to player development than games. In a perfect world, having a minimum of 2 practices per week during spring baseball and a minimum of 3 practices per week during summer baseball would be the way to go. Kids want to have fun and play, and coaches want the kids to have fun and play the game properly. When kids play the game properly they have fun. The greatest source of pleasure for an athlete is to progress, being able to do something he was not able to do before.

If we can agree that practice is important, then the next question is how can we practice properly? The best practices are nothing but small bits of the game broken down and rehearsed over and over again. The coach that can put his players in a position to do the things that need to be done in the game will find more success than the coach who has catch, followed by batting practice and then a round of infield. The good coach knows exactly how to break the game up and teach the game thru the proper drills.

Kids need to experience any situation that the coach wants them to learn. For example, when a pitcher fails to cover first base on a ball hit to his left, the coach will tell the player what he should have done. But that is not enough. To hold the player accountable in a game situation, the player should be put in positions in practice where he needs to react properly. This is what good coaching is all about. Breaking the game down into small pieces and allowing the players to experience what is expected. Rundowns, cuts and relays, bunt defenses, base running, are just simple examples of situations where some coaches want proper execution by simply talking about them in practice. Good coaches figure out ways to practice game situations.

The importance of practicing and planning

➤ Make it fun

One of the basic philosophies of teaching baseball is to make it fun. On the surface that means that we should let the kids play games, which is important from both an enjoyment and a developmental standpoint. Still, when it comes to developing young baseball players, the importance of practice cannot be underestimated. Games give the kids something to look forward to each week, which helps maintain their interest. However, even though baseball games lend themselves to a certain amount of standing around and downtime (between pitches, between innings, when your team is hitting and so on), games do not usually offer an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching. A lot of excitement, energy, tension, interference, and distractions surround baseball games, making it extremely difficult to communicate any type of lessons to a player.

➤ The right time to correct mistakes

During games, a coach will not stop the play and make a point to bring attention to a mistake or situation that could have been handled differently. We do not want to single out a kid to tell him that something could have been done differently or better. Doing so can lead to embarrassment, which could turn a young player off from the sport. We

should do our teaching between innings in a more appropriate setting like the dugout or behind the bench area. Still, at that moment, the player most likely is focusing on something else instead of giving you his full attention. The player might be looking at his parents, thinking about the next at-bat, or looking for a friend in the crowd.

Although it's good to go over the mistakes after they happen in games, remember that the best time to teach is during practice. Kids seem to have the ability to let go of the moment and not dwell on what has just taken place. Maintain a journal or notebook with a detailed list of situations and mistakes. Those issues will then be addressed at the next practice in special instructional sessions for all players or through individual instructional sessions.

➤ **Practices are for coaches to teach and for kids to learn**

As mentioned previously, practice clearly is the best time to address situations that occur in games and to perfect areas of play that need work. Leagues that only play games can really hurt the development of their young players. Time must be dedicated to address skill development and team fundamentals in a practice setting. Big league players go through six weeks of spring training for good reasons. For kids, however, six weeks of practice without playing would not be practical. During practices, you cannot simulate everything that potentially can happen in a game. Baseball is a crazy game. Every year during the Major League season we see plays that we never have seen before. At the lower levels of baseball, we have the luxury of re-creating any new or unusual situations that arise in a practice setting to make sure that all of the tangible lessons can be absorbed. For kids, having the opportunity to break the situation down into understandable parts and to explain why each player involved in the play should react in a certain way is an invaluable learning opportunity. If the coach has his team do nothing but play games, it becomes very difficult for him to do any teaching, because he always reacts to events that occur in the heat of battle.

Practice gets a bad reputation, especially in baseball, for being boring and tedious. So many fine motor skills must be mastered to play the sport—throwing, catching, hitting, running and so on—that fundamental skill development is a must. Remember, baseball is a very simple game. Whether you are a budding youth player or a Major League player, you have to be able to throw the ball, catch the ball, and hit the ball to be successful. And, whether you are a novice or a pro, to be successful you should follow the exact same fundamental approaches. When a ground ball is hit to a young player, if the player has been schooled correctly, he fields it with the feet spread apart to create a wide base, the butt down, and the hands out in front. The same goes for the pro. When we instruct young players, we have them work on these simple fundamentals over and over. You know why? Because those are the same fundamentals that Major League players have worked on from the time they were playing recreational ball right up to this very day.

“Baseball is the only thing beside the paper clip that hasn't changed” -- Bill Veeck

Baseball's fundamental skills are very simple; the complexities of the game come with the various strategies and team fundamentals that are incorporated as we get older and the game becomes more serious. However, players cannot incorporate those complexities until they have mastered the basics. As guideline, young player should perform in each practice, a minimum of 100 throws (short, medium and long distance) and 150 swings (ex: dry swing, wiffle balls, soft toss and live pitches).

“Fundamentals are the most valuable tools a baseball player can possess. Bunt the ball into the ground. Hit the cut-off man. Take the extra base. Learn the fundamentals.” -- Dick Williams

Games provide kids with a fun, competitive atmosphere that is necessary to maintain their interest and attention. However, kids just don't get enough repetitions in games to develop the fundamental skills necessary to improve. You can introduce and practice the basic fundamentals during practice in a lot of fun ways. There is no

question that fundamental drills can become tedious. Kids are not wired to be able to perform the same simple tasks over and over again without shifting their focus. By breaking the kids into small groups and rotating them to different stations every 15 or 20 minutes, you can break up the monotony of practice. You can hold their attention in other ways as well. Later on in this practice guide, you'll see different ways in turning the same simple drills into games or contests to help maintain a high level of interest and concentration. The same drills that seemed boring before suddenly become a lot more exciting when the element of competition is introduced.

➤ **Remain goal oriented**

Coach should always design practices while keeping in mind the age-specific goals set at the beginning of the season. When developing a series of practice plans, it is important to understand the philosophy about skill development, which includes introducing and demonstrating a skill, using buzzwords and catch phrases to help kids remember, explaining why the skill or drill is important, letting the kids attempt the skill, correcting mistakes through conversation and demonstration, and reviewing and refining until the skill is mastered. Be careful not to incorporate more advanced skills, drills, or concepts into your practice until you have achieved the age-specific goal in a particular category. If you move too quickly for the players in the age group, you are setting both your players and yourself for a great deal of frustration. In planning, we often refer to the phases of introduction, consolidation, refinement and maintenance. Always go through these four phases, no matter the level of the athlete.

Pre-practice meeting

A coach should always spend the first 5 minutes of the practice to discuss with players. It's a good opportunity to talk about the previous game or practice. In fact, the way the team has performed in the last game should directly influence the practice plan. Players should be conscious that the reason why the practice will focus on the defence is because as a team, we've made 15 defensive errors in the last game. Baseball teams rarely win games when they commit that many defensive errors. Be careful to not just change elements of a practice based uniquely on performance and not have a real sustainable progress plan. Perhaps the first half of any practices should be devoted to the development of the basic skills or priorities and the second half should be devoted to improving the elements related to the game. The coach should share with players the practice plan and the different drills they're going to do. It's a matter of preparing the players for the practice.

If necessary, the coach can also use the pre-practice meeting to reiterate the importance of respecting the team rules. It is also important to periodically review the team objectives and player's personal goals that were set at the beginning of the season. Players should always practice in order to meet their personal goals and also work with teammates to meet the team objectives. If a goal is achieved, a new one should be set. If a goal is unrealistic, it can be adjusted. Finally, if the action plan needs to be modified (i.e. add tasks), it can be discussed.

Calendar of practices

Here is the calendar of practices followed by the practice plans for the whole spring season. These practice plans will ensure all players work through the same curriculum of baseball fundamentals related to both defensive (throwing, catching, fielding) and offensive (hitting, base running) aspects of the game. Practices are scheduled to last 2 hours.

Week	Practice Plan	Practice Date	Practice Focus	Comments
1	Practice Plan 1		Assessment 1 – Throwing and catching Assessment 2 – Hitting Throwing and catching Ground balls	
2	Practice Plan 2		Throwing and catching Hitting Running the bases	
3	Practice Plan 3		Throwing and catching Position: Pitcher Ground balls Running the bases	
4	Practice Plan 4		Throwing and catching Hitting Fly balls Cardio-vascular training	
5	Practice Plan 5		Throwing and catching Quick hands, feet and release Position: Infielder Game situation	
6	Practice Plan 6		Throwing and catching Games	

Practice Plan 1

0:00 – 0:10 (10 minutes)

- Welcome players and parents in a quick team meeting
- Introduce everyone and outline expectations from the coaches, parents and players
- Communicate the importance of players being at the park for 5:30 on game day
- Equipment: Each player should wear an athletic cup, running shoes or cleats, baseball glove and hard helmet
- Communicate to players the team rules (when coach talks, players listen, respect coaches and teammates, etc.)
- Communicate the practice plan to the players

0:10 – 0:20 (10 minutes)

▪ Warm-up

Cardio-vascular warm-up (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Forward jogging (2-3 minutes)
- Backward jogging (50 – 60 feet)
- Skip running high knees (50 – 60 feet)
- Side running with leg twist – Carioca (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Running with butt kicks (50 – 60 feet)
- Side shuffling (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Stationary jumping with both knees up (20 seconds)
- Jumping jack (20 reps)
- Sprint (50 – 60 feet)

Stretching (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Shoulder rotation, progress from small to larger circles, reverse direction
- Torso rotation with hands on hips
- Left-centre-right standing crunch
- Steam engine (15 reps) ** Standing, both hands on side of the head, bring elbow to opposite knee up.
- Touch sky and toe
- Standing, 3-points floor touching

0:20 – 1:10 (50 minutes)

Coaches will assess the players in order to better organize the practices for the rest of the spring season. It is important to have observers with a simple check-list of the player's name and the two activities that will be assessed. Using a simple scale, rate each player as either A (top players) or B (bottom players). Keep in mind that players can move from group B to group A as their skills change.

▪ Assessment 1 – Throwing and catching (25 minutes)

Have all players form one line. One by one, players will throw the ball to a coach (to assess his throwing ability) and the coach will throw him back the ball (to assess his catching ability). Do it 2-3 times per player. Player returns at the end of the line.

▪ Assessment 2 – Hitting (25 minutes)

Install a T on the third base line or first base line in the outfield. One-by-one, players will hit the ball on the T. Look at how they hold their bat, how they stance and finally their ability to make a swing. Have players make 2-3 hits. While one player is hitting, one should be waiting and everybody else in the outfield to catch balls.

1:10 – 1:30 (20 minutes)

▪ **Short distance throwing / catching – Station location: outfield**

- Focus on the proper throwing techniques (5 steps)
 - 1- Sideways
Feet, hips and shoulders perpendicular to target
 - 2- Shift
Transfer weight to back leg (throwing arm side)
 - 3- Swing
As shifting back, break hands and swing arms in a pendulum down and out to ready position (back arm stretched out with ball facing the ground with knuckles to the sky, front arm pointing at target)
 - 4- Step
As the weight is transfer from back leg to front leg, step directly towards the target pointing with your front toe and your glove
 - 5- Throw
From ready position throw ball to target, do not drop elbow, and follow through, throwing arm should hit your front quad muscle
- When throwing make sure the elbow is above the shoulder (to avoid future injuries)
- Player receiving presents a target (chest) every time to the player throwing
- Player receiving puts himself in front of the ball (centreline of body)

1:30 – 1:55 (25 minutes)

▪ **Fielding ground balls – Station location: infield**

- Group 3-4 players per coach
- 10 feet between the coach and the players (in line)
- Players start without their gloves
- Teach the “ready/base position” – feet apart, knees flexed, seat out and hands out front
- Teach the players to move toward the rolling ball and not just wait for it
- Focus on staying low and work on improving lateral quickness
- Coach throws soft grounder to each players who catch it using both hands
- Grounders should be thrown each side of the players to practice the side-to-side shuffling
- After about 5 minutes, have players grab their gloves
- Keep throwing grounders to players but this time using the glove and the other hand
- Make sure players always use two hands when fielding the ball

1:55 – 2:00 (5 minutes)

▪ **Wrap-up the practice**

- Summarize the drills done in the practice
- If necessary, remind players about team rules or any items you would like rectified

Practice Plan 2

0:00 – 0:05 (5 minutes)

- Welcome players
- Communicate the practice plan to the players

0:05 – 0:15 (10 minutes)

▪ Warm-up

Cardio-vascular warm-up (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Forward jogging (2-3 minutes)
- Backward jogging (50 – 60 feet)
- Skip running high knees (50 – 60 feet)
- Side running with leg twist – Carioca (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Running with butt kicks (50 – 60 feet)
- Side shuffling (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Stationary jumping with both knees up (20 seconds)
- Jumping jack (20 reps)
- Sprint (50 – 60 feet)

Stretching (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Shoulder rotation, progress from small to larger circles, reverse direction
- Torso rotation with hands on hips
- Left-centre-right standing crunch
- Steam engine (15 reps) ** Standing, both hands on side of the head, bring elbow to opposite knee up.
- Touch sky and toe
- Standing, 3-points floor touching

0:15 – 0:35 (20 minutes)

▪ Short distance throwing / catching – Station location: outfield

- Focus on the proper throwing techniques (5 steps)
 - 1- Sideways
Feet, hips and shoulders perpendicular to target
 - 2- Shift
Transfer weight to back leg (throwing arm side)
 - 3- Swing
As shifting back, break hands and swing arms in a pendulum down and out to ready position (back arm stretched out with ball facing the ground with knuckles to the sky, front arm pointing at target)
 - 4- Step
As the weight is transfer from back leg to front leg, step directly towards the target pointing with your front toe and your glove

→ 5- Throw

From ready position throw ball to target, do not drop elbow, and follow through, throwing arm should hit your front quad muscle

→ When throwing make sure the elbow is above the shoulder (to avoid future injuries)

→ Player receiving presents a target (chest) every time to the player throwing

→ Player receiving puts himself in front of the ball (centreline of body)

0:35 – 0:45 (10 minutes)

Basic swinging techniques with soft toss – Station location: infield

Here are the key elements when swinging the baseball bat

→ Basic stance...

- Feet positioning – both feet pointing the base of the Tee
- Feet shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent
- Both hands together with knocking knuckles lined up
- Both elbows down
- Hands back over back foot at player's ear level
- Slight bend at waist, shoulders and feet in straight line at pitching mound

→ The swing...

- Quick step (6-8 inches) toward the pitching mound
- Do not point foot, hands stay over back foot at ear level
- Head down as you swing, throw hands forward toward the front toe, not looping or out
- Swing through / full swing

→ Have players practice their stance and swing while they get soft toss

- Coach facing the hitter
- Player hit balls in the fence, or in the field to other players
- Can vary the height of the toss to force the batter to adapt
- Can also throw two balls and ask the player to hit either the top ball or the bottom ball

Must follow the basic swinging techniques

Separate the team into the 2 groups defined during the assessment sessions (groups A and B)

Each group will spend 20 minutes per station

0:45 – 1:25 (40 minutes)

Station 1: Soft toss and live toss – Station location: outfield

→ Have players practice their stance and swing while they get soft toss

- Coach facing the hitter
- Player hit balls in the fence, or in the field to other players
- Can vary the height of the toss to force the batter to adapt
- Can also throw two balls and ask the player to hit either the top ball or the bottom ball

Must follow the basic swinging techniques

After one round of soft toss, if time permit, have players hit some live ball (coach as the pitcher)

▪ **Station 2: Hitting off the tee – Station location: outfield**

- While one player hit off the Tee, the other players field the ball
Focus on the basic swinging techniques

1:25 – 1:55 (30 minutes)

▪ **Running from home to 1st base – Station location: infield (15 minutes)**

Regardless from which side of the plate the player hit, the first step out of the box should be a crossover step. The runner should drive out of the box as if he were stealing a base. Get in the habit of getting out of the box quickly, this helps on a close play at first and may just turn that long single into a double. Runners should assume there will be a play at first base on any ball hit on the ground or on a line drive.

Here are the key elements when running from home to 1st base:

- Staying low initially
- First step is always left foot crossover (for left side hitter) or right foot crossover (for right side hitter)
- For left side hitter, left arm drives upward to give the runner momentum. Right arm for right side hitter
- Run every ball out and run it out hard, never slow down
- Run hard even on slow roller to the pitcher or a pop fly to the infield / outfield
- Listen to 1st base coach:
 - Run through (on close play – ball hit in the infield)
Focus on the front outside part of the base
 - Take two (when the runner can reach 2nd base)
Move off from the first base line and start the turn at 1st and then run hard to 2nd base
- Have each player run from home to 1st base
 - Practice the two different scenarios (run through and take two)

▪ **Running when on 1st, 2nd or 3rd base – Station location: infield (5 minutes)**

Here are the key elements when running from one bag to the other:

- Foot should remain on the bag until the ball is hit (no lead-off)
- Run hard on any ground balls or on fly balls with 2 outs
- If 0 or 1 out, wait when the ball is hit in the air (fly ball)
 - If the fly ball is dropped, run hard to the next bag
 - If the fly ball is caught, come back or stay on the bag

▪ **How to act on bases after every pitches – Station location: infield (10 minutes)**

- Explain to players the importance of being aggressive on base
- Look at 3rd base coach for stealing sign
- When the pitcher is ready, bend your knees and be prepared to shuffle
- As soon as the ball cross the home plate, shuffle on the side off the bag one to two steps
- Be ready to go on every pitch
- Have each player step on 1st base and perform what the coach just explained

1:55 – 2:00 (5 minutes)

▪ **Wrap-up the practice**

- Summarize the drills done in the practice
- If necessary, remind players about team rules or any items you would like rectified

Practice Plan 3

0:00 – 0:05 (5 minutes)

- Welcome players
- Communicate the practice plan to the players

0:05 – 0:15 (10 minutes)

▪ Warm-up

Cardio-vascular warm-up (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Forward jogging (2-3 minutes)
- Backward jogging (50 – 60 feet)
- Skip running high knees (50 – 60 feet)
- Side running with leg twist – Carioca (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Running with butt kicks (50 – 60 feet)
- Side shuffling (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Stationary jumping with both knees up (20 seconds)
- Jumping jack (20 reps)
- Sprint (50 – 60 feet)

Stretching (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Shoulder rotation, progress from small to larger circles, reverse direction
- Torso rotation with hands on hips
- Left-centre-right standing crunch
- Steam engine (15 reps) ** Standing, both hands on side of the head, bring elbow to opposite knee up.
- Touch sky and toe
- Standing, 3-points floor touching

0:15 – 0:35 (20 minutes)

▪ Intermediate / advance throwing techniques – Station location: outfield

- Focus on the proper throwing techniques (6 steps)
 - 1- Wrist
10 feet between players
Go on one knee (same knee as throwing arm), with throwing arm placed upwards at a 90 degrees angle (shoulder joint and elbow joint). While holding glove below elbow, throw ball to partner using just a wrist snap.
 - 2- Wrist / Elbow – Front
With the body and arm in same position as exercise above but this time, use the forearm and wrist (elbow extension and wrist snap) to throw ball to partner.
 - 3- Torso Rotation (Sitting)
Sit with legs spread and throw ball by rotating upper torso. Use the glove arm to direct the throw by pointing at target before throw.
 - 4- Torso Rotation (on one knee)
Go back to one knee (same knee as throwing arm). Throw ball by rotating upper torso, as in above exercise. This time emphasize follow-through across the raised knee.

→ 5- Scarecrow

10-15 feet between players

Stand with glove arm closest to partner (glove arm pointing to partner, throwing arm pointing away), and feet shoulder-width apart (perpendicular to target). Ball should be facing the ground with knuckles to the sky. Throw to partner with a normal step (non-throwing foot, toes should point to target) and follow-through.

→ 6- Normal Throw / Step

First few throws without moving their feet and then add a normal step.

Things to watch: Ball is spinning (wrist effect), the elbow is higher than the shoulder (before and during first phase of throwing motion), follow-through.

→ When throwing make sure the elbow is above the shoulder (to avoid future injuries)

→ Player receiving presents a target (chest) every time to the player throwing

→ Player receiving puts himself in front of the ball (centreline of body)

→ Option: Put targets on the fence and have players throw the ball on the target with the focus on the proper throwing techniques.

Separate the team into the 3 groups. Each group will spend 20 minutes per station

0:35 – 1:35 (60 minutes)

▪ **Station 1: Position: Pitcher – Station location: on the pitching mound**

→ General information for pitchers

- Eyes are constantly on the target (catcher's glove)
- Pitcher's job is to induce the batter to hit
- Always try to be ahead in the count
- Pitcher covering home
 - When runner on 3rd base
 - To be done on every pitch (running to plate)

→ Step-by-step pitching motion

- Reset / Setup
 - Both feet on the rubber, pointing at the target (catcher's glove) with two hands in front and close to the chest
- Small step back
 - Take a small step back (left foot for right handed pitcher). As the weight is transferred to the back leg, the front foot will be turned and placed parallel to, in contact with, and in front of the rubber. The feet are now in position to begin the kick.
- Windup / Kick
 - Once the front foot has pivoted, the pitcher will shift his weight onto the pivoted foot and pull the back leg forward and up, swiveling as he does this until his thigh is parallel to the ground or a little higher. His body should be sideways to the plate. Make sure the planted leg is not locked at the knee, it should be slightly flexed.

The critical element is balance. That doesn't mean that the pitcher should be able to hold this position. In fact, the pitcher should be moving forward as he reaches the top of the kick and should have some forward lean to his body (towards home plate) to help get moving in that direction.

Many young pitchers are taught to get to the balance point where you can hold that position. While this is supposed to show good balance it really only helps if the goal is to stop there. Since our goal is to pitch the ball, a slight forward lean will actually help the young pitcher keep their entire motion in balance. The pitching motion is a combination of many movements that need to be executed exactly the same way with every pitch. Without balance at this point, consistency in

▪ **Station 2: Fielding ground balls – Station location: between 2nd and 3rd base**

- 10 feet between the coach and the players (in line)
- Players start without their gloves
- Teach the “ready/base position” – feet apart, knees flexed, seat out and hands out front
- Teach the players to move toward the rolling ball and not just wait for it
- Focus on staying low and work on improving lateral quickness
- Coach throws soft grounder to each players who catch it using both hands
- Grounders should be thrown each side of the players to practice the side-to-side shuffling
- After about 5 minutes, have players grab their gloves
- Keep throwing grounders to players but this time using the glove and the other hand
- Make sure players always use two hands when fielding the ball

▪ **Station 3: Shuffle and throw – Station location: between 1st and 2nd base**

- Players learn how to shuffle in order to get their body in position to throw and to gain momentum toward the target
- Have the player with the ball place on the ground in front of him
- He will then simulate fielding a ground ball
- Once he has fielded the ball he will take a couple shuffle steps toward the target getting his body in good throwing position as he does so
- After a couple of shuffle steps he will step and throw
- Make sure the player is getting his body lined up as he performs the shuffle steps
- His lead shoulder and hip should be pointing towards the target
- After few rounds, have players perform the same drill with live grounders

1:25 – 1:55 (20 minutes)

▪ **Running from home to 1st base – Station location: infield (10 minutes)**

Repeat the drill performed in the last practice

- Have each player run from home to 1st base
 - Practice the two different scenarios (run through and take two)

▪ **How to act on bases after every pitches – Station location: infield (10 minutes)**

- Explain to players the importance of being aggressive on base
 - Look at 3rd base coach for stealing sign
 - When the pitcher is ready, bend your knees and be prepared to shuffle
 - As soon as the ball cross the home plate, shuffle on the side off the bag one to two steps
 - Be ready to go on every pitch
- Have each player step on 1st base and perform what the coach just explained

1:55 – 2:00 (5 minutes)

▪ **Wrap-up the practice**

- Summarize the drills done in the practice
- If necessary, remind players about team rules or any items you would like rectified

Practice Plan 4

0:00 – 0:05 (5 minutes)

- Welcome players
- Communicate the practice plan to the players

0:05 – 0:15 (10 minutes)

▪ Warm-up

Cardio-vascular warm-up (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Forward jogging (2-3 minutes)
- Backward jogging (50 – 60 feet)
- Skip running high knees (50 – 60 feet)
- Side running with leg twist – Carioca (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Running with butt kicks (50 – 60 feet)
- Side shuffling (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Stationary jumping with both knees up (20 seconds)
- Jumping jack (20 reps)
- Sprint (50 – 60 feet)

Stretching (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Shoulder rotation, progress from small to larger circles, reverse direction
- Torso rotation with hands on hips
- Left-centre-right standing crunch
- Steam engine (15 reps) ** Standing, both hands on side of the head, bring elbow to opposite knee up.
- Touch sky and toe
- Standing, 3-points floor touching

0:15 – 0:35 (20 minutes)

▪ Intermediate / advance throwing techniques – Station location: outfield

- Focus on the proper throwing techniques (6 steps)
 - 1- Wrist
10 feet between players
Go on one knee (same knee as throwing arm), with throwing arm placed upwards at a 90 degrees angle (shoulder joint and elbow joint). While holding glove below elbow, throw ball to partner using just a wrist snap.
 - 2- Wrist / Elbow – Front
With the body and arm in same position as exercise above but this time, use the forearm and wrist (elbow extension and wrist snap) to throw ball to partner.
 - 3- Torso Rotation (Sitting)
Sit with legs spread and throw ball by rotating upper torso. Use the glove arm to direct the throw by pointing at target before throw.
 - 4- Torso Rotation (on one knee)
Go back to one knee (same knee as throwing arm). Throw ball by rotating upper torso, as in above exercise. This time emphasize follow-through across the raised knee.

→ 5- Scarecrow

10-15 feet between players

Stand with glove arm closest to partner (glove arm pointing to partner, throwing arm pointing away), and feet shoulder-width apart (perpendicular to target). Ball should be facing the ground with knuckles to the sky. Throw to partner with a normal step (non-throwing foot, toes should point to target) and follow-through.

→ 6- Normal Throw / Step

First few throws without moving their feet and then add a normal step.

Things to watch: Ball is spinning (wrist effect), the elbow is higher than the shoulder (before and during first phase of throwing motion), follow-through.

→ When throwing make sure the elbow is above the shoulder (to avoid future injuries)

→ Player receiving presents a target (chest) every time to the player throwing

→ Player receiving puts himself in front of the ball (centreline of body)

→ Option: Put targets on the fence and have players throw the ball on the target with the focus on the proper throwing techniques.

0:35 – 0:45 (10 minutes)

Basic swinging techniques with soft toss – Station location: infield

Here are the key elements when swinging the baseball bat

→ Basic stance...

- Feet positioning – both feet pointing the base of the Tee
- Feet shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent
- Both hands together with knocking knuckles lined up
- Both elbows down
- Hands back over back foot at player's ear level
- Slight bend at waist, shoulders and feet in straight line at pitching mound

→ The swing...

- Quick step (6-8 inches) toward the pitching mound
- Do not point foot, hands stay over back foot at ear level
- Head down as you swing, throw hands forward toward the front toe, not looping or out
- Swing through / full swing

→ Have players practice their stance and swing while they get soft toss

- Coach facing the hitter
- Player hit balls in the fence, or in the field to other players
- Can vary the height of the toss to force the batter to adapt
- Can also throw two balls and ask the player to hit either the top ball or the bottom ball

Must follow the basic swinging techniques

Separate the team into the 2 groups defined during the assessment sessions (groups A and B)

Each group will spend 20 minutes per station

0:45 – 1:25 (40 minutes)

▪ **Station 1: Soft toss and live toss – Station location: outfield**

- Have players practice their stance and swing while they get soft toss
 - Coach facing the hitter
 - Player hit balls in the fence, or in the field to other players
 - Can vary the height of the toss to force the batter to adapt
 - Can also throw two balls and ask the player to hit either the top ball or the bottom ball
- Must follow the basic swinging techniques
After one round of soft toss, if time permit, have players hit some live ball (coach as the pitcher)

▪ **Station 2: Hitting off the tee – Station location: outfield**

- While one player hit off the Tee, the other players field the ball
Focus on the basic swinging techniques

1:25 – 1:45 (20 minutes)

▪ **Catching fly balls – Station location: infield and outfield**

- Group 3-4 players per coach / parent
- 10 feet between the coach and the players
- Teach keeping your eye on the ball
- Teach feet apart and knees flexed
- Teach elbows out front slightly bent
- Coach throws a fly ball, about 6-10 feet high, to each players
- Players must call the ball, be under it if possible and catch it with two hands if possible

1:45 – 1:55 (10 minutes)

▪ **Cardio-vascular training**

- Circuit of different exercises
- To do 2-3 times
 - By groups of 3 players, start at home plate, jogging to right field corner, jumping jacks (15 reps.)
 - Jogging to left field corner, squats (10 reps.)
 - Sprint to home plate
 - 30 seconds rest

1:55 – 2:00 (5 minutes)

▪ **Wrap-up the practice**

- Summarize the drills done in the practice
- If necessary, remind players about team rules or any items you would like rectified

Practice Plan 5

0:00 – 0:05 (5 minutes)

- Welcome players
- Communicate the practice plan to the players

0:05 – 0:15 (10 minutes)

▪ Warm-up

Cardio-vascular warm-up (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Forward jogging (2-3 minutes)
- Backward jogging (50 – 60 feet)
- Skip running high knees (50 – 60 feet)
- Side running with leg twist – Carioca (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Running with butt kicks (50 – 60 feet)
- Side shuffling (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Jumping jack (20 reps)
- Sprint (50 – 60 feet)

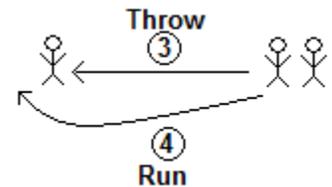
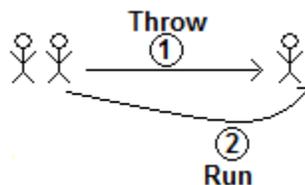
Stretching (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Shoulder rotation, progress from small to larger circles, reverse direction
- Torso rotation with hands on hips
- Left-centre-right standing crunch
- Steam engine (15 reps) ** Standing, both hands on side of the head, bring elbow to opposite knee up.
- Touch sky and toe
- Standing, 3-points floor touching

0:15 – 0:20 (5 minutes)

▪ 3-Players relay – thrown and run – Station location: outfield

- Groups of 3 players
- After throwing the ball to his facing partner, player runs behind the player who just caught the ball



0:20 – 0:35 (15 minutes)

▪ Cut-off man relay – Station location: outfield

- Relay race drill
- Minimum 3 players, maximum 4
- Players in line with 20-25 feet between each other
- Players should have their throwing arm closest to partner that will throw the ball at them
- Player receiving should present his glove as a target for the player throwing
- Player throwing should aim for the glove of the player receiving
- At the count of three, each team must throw the ball to his closest partner



Separate the team into the 2 groups defined during the assessment sessions (groups A and B)

Each group will spend 20 minutes per station

0:35 – 1:05 (40 minutes)

▪ **Station 1: Quick hands, feet and release – Station location: outfield**

→ Quick hands (5 minutes)

- To be done in solo, with glove and a ball
- Start in sitting position with legs spread and ball in hand (not in glove)
- Player brings the ball to his glove to simulate a catch
- Get to throwing position (scarecrow) as quickly as possible
- Ball should be facing the ground and the knuckles the sky
- Return to starting position
- Note: The sitting position forces the player to use correct upper body movements

→ Quick hands and feet (5 minutes)

- To be done in solo, with glove and a ball
- Works on quick “glove to hand” ball transfer and a quick turn with the feet
- Start in catching position with ball in hand (not in glove)
- Player brings the ball to his glove to simulate a catch
- Quickly turn and hop to simulate a throw (do not throw the ball)
- Return to catching position before starting the next repetition
- Once comfortable with the technique, have player throw the ball to himself in the air and then catch, turn and simulate a throw

→ Quick hands, feet and release (10 minutes)

- 10-15 feet between the coach and the players (in line)
- Coach toss the ball to players
- Players must follow the quick hands, feet and release techniques.
- Emphasize a quick release and concentrate on the ball entering and leaving the glove
- Have players performed this drill for normal throws, pop-fly and grounders

▪ **Station 2: Follow the throw – Station location: infield**

→ 5 players, all infielders except the pitcher

→ All extra players are in a line at SS ready to receive a ground ball

- Coach hits a ground ball to the SS
- SS throws to 1st
- 1st baseman throws to 2nd
- 2nd baseman throws to 3rd
- 3rd baseman throws to home
- After each throw the player goes to the base they just threw to for the next round, and the catcher goes to the back of the line at SS

→ Focus is on good throws, proper catching technique and tagging

→ You can make this drill into a team competition by keeping track of errors and who made them. Players try to finish drill with no errors.

1:05 – 1:55 (50 minutes)

▪ **Game simulation**

- Expose players to game situations
- Have players in a defensive position (3 outfielders, 4 infielders, 1 pitcher and 1 catcher)
- Other players will be base runners
- Start with a runner at home and hit fly balls and line drives into the outfield
- Players (fielders and runners) should act like it's a game situation
- After each ball is thrown in back to the pitcher, have the defence hustle back into their initial position
- Swap base runners with position players after 10-15 plays
 - Between plays, give players explanations if necessary

1:55 – 2:00 (5 minutes)

▪ **Wrap-up the practice**

- Summarize the drills done in the practice
- If necessary, remind players about team rules or any items you would like rectified

Practice Plan 6

0:00 – 0:05 (5 minutes)

- Welcome players
- Communicate the practice plan to the players

0:05 – 0:15 (10 minutes)

▪ Warm-up

Cardio-vascular warm-up (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Forward jogging (2-3 minutes)
- Backward jogging (50 – 60 feet)
- Skip running high knees (50 – 60 feet)
- Side running with leg twist – Carioca (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Running with butt kicks (50 – 60 feet)
- Side shuffling (50 – 60 feet each side)
- Jumping jack (20 reps)
- Sprint (50 – 60 feet)

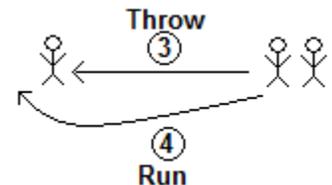
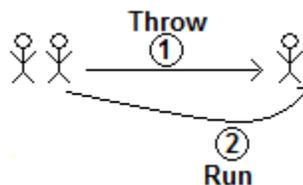
Stretching (pick 3-4 of the following)

- Shoulder rotation, progress from small to larger circles, reverse direction
- Torso rotation with hands on hips
- Left-centre-right standing crunch
- Steam engine (15 reps) ** Standing, both hands on side of the head, bring elbow to opposite knee up.
- Touch sky and toe
- Standing, 3-points floor touching

0:15 – 0:20 (5 minutes)

▪ 3-Players relay – thrown and run – Station location: outfield

- Groups of 3 players
- After throwing the ball to his facing partner, player runs behind the player who just caught the ball

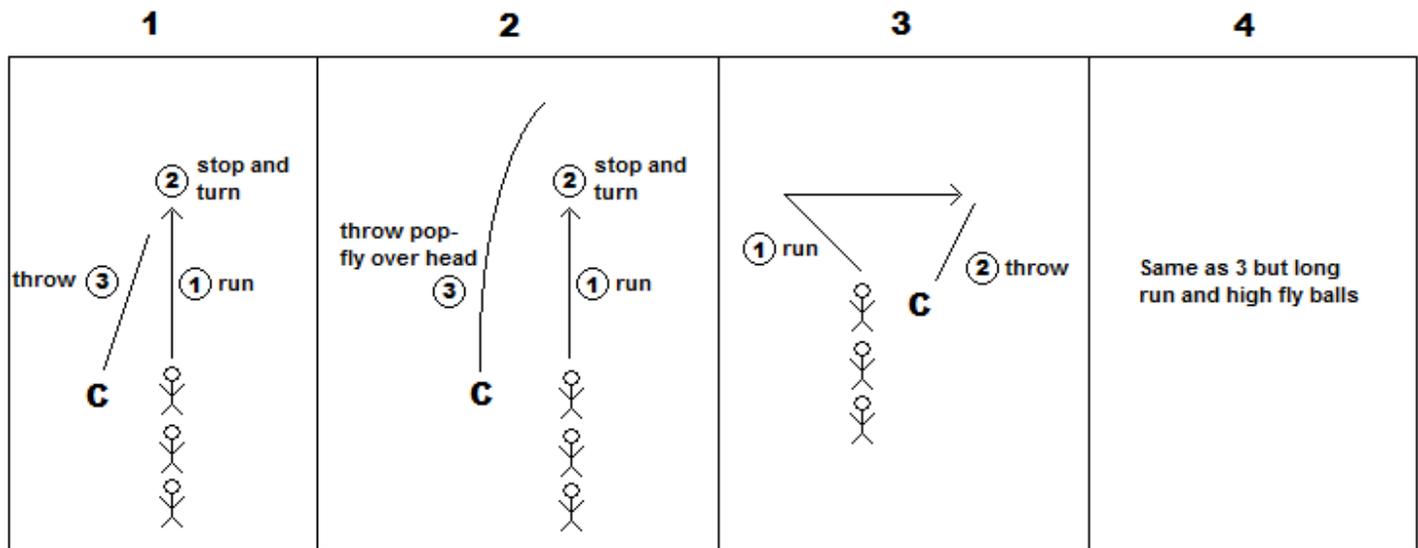


Separate the team into the 2 groups defined during the assessment sessions (groups A and B). Both groups will do the same drill. One group in the left field and one in the right field.

0:20 – 0:40 (20 minutes)

▪ QB game – Station location: outfield

- Players in line, one at a time performs the following drills:
 - 1) Player runs 15 feet; stop, turn and coach will throw the ball at him (or grounder).
 - 2) Player runs 15 feet; stop, turn and coach will throw a fly ball over his head.
 - 3) Player runs 15 feet on one side, change direction, run another 15 feet and coach will throw the ball.
 - 4) Player runs 15 feet on one side, change direction, run hard for 10 seconds and coach will throw a high fly ball.



Create two balanced teams (mix of A and B players).

0:40 – 1:55 (75 minutes)

- **Inter-squad game**

1:55 – 2:00 (5 minutes)

- **Wrap-up the practice**
 - Summarize the drills done in the practice
 - If necessary, remind players about team rules or any items you would like rectified