

Girls Softball Coaches Manual

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Running an effective practice

1. Facilities and resources and number of coaches-take these into account.

Start with first game of the year and work backwards to be sure you have everything in.

Everything they do they try to pick the pace up.

Foundations of practice

1. Practice makes permanent.
2. Spend quality time organizing practice.
3. Set standard every day in practice. Pay attention to the details.
4. Know the game. Take the time to understand the game.
5. Be able to demonstrate well, kids are visual learners.
6. practice is the base for team building
7. Develop a variety of drills but they must stay in the context of the game. (quality repetitions doing things the right way)
8. Pregame should be worked on daily in practice.
9. Make practice fun and productive.

Practice rules

1. If you are not early you are late. If you are late you are going to pay. (he punishes the rest of the team. And then it doesn't happen again).
2. Run between the lines. Hustle. Sprint to your positions. (A good lesson is have everyone run to home and back to dugout, to pitcher and back to dug out, etc.
3. Encourage enthusiasm. One or two vocal people will change the whole complexion of practice. Enthusiasm is catching
4. Look like a team. You play and act the way you feel.
5. Proper Planning prevents piss poor performance (The 6 P's)
6. Go hard or go home
7. Control your attitude and your effort. 2 things you can control.
8. Be a great listener. (don't take off equipment , etc. make eye contact). Ask them to repeat it to make sure they got it.
9. Good feeling will help morale. End practice on a positive note. Kids need to walk away from that practice and that experience in a good way. End drills on a successful note.
10. Your kids need to have confidence and believe in the system.

Practice planning-Develop a checklist of what you want to cover.

Foundations of practice plans:

1. Active warm up and stretch (run a couple of laps, do dynamic movements to get self loose, and then stretch, (hip flexors are important) He likes to do routines.

2. Throwing drills-have specific drills for players. Coach the mechanics.

A. One knee drill

B. Feet together

C. Side Straddle

D. Long Toss-to increase arm strength

E. Footwork

3. Individual defensive drills.

Infield

Daily short hops, getting rid of the ball quickly, ground ball footwork (rolling first, use small balls, bare hand drills, small gloves, webless gloves, hitting ground balls, get mechanics down and give them confidence. Then challenge them. Double play feeds, making sure you get the first out; fielding bunts and slow rollers, receiving throws in a good athletic position and using your feet to get to the ball and not just reaching, back hands. Relay footwork.

Outfield: every day they do dropsteps, footwork adjustments (they do it every day), ground ball footwork-3 ways: 1like infielder, 2- no one on base and I want to keep the ball in front of me and taking a one knee if big hops, and 3: do or die. Fly ball footwork-work on going to glove side and learn to drop step and get body turned to redirect for a throw. Fungos, throwing to bases a little bit daily,

Catchers: throwing footwork, framing, receiving throws, 9adjust from the ground up)

Pitchers: ground ball footwork throwing to bases, fielding bunts, squeeze play.

4. Team defense

Bunt defense cut offs and relays, 1 and 3 defense, pickoffs and rundowns, pop up communication, play situations.

5. Team offense

Baserunning leads at 1 base, sac bunt, slap hitting, fly ball situations, steal leads, balls in the dirt, anticipate every ball is in the dirt, eas at 2, ground ball reaction, fly ball reaction, ball in dirt, leads at 3, ball angle off the bat,

6. Batting practice. (they never have a practice they don't hit).

3 different formations: Groups , stations, or combinations.

One group hits live and runs bases, one group on D, and one group in cages or hitting stations.

Quality vs. quantity., no more than 5 cuts at one time. (i.e. 10 rounds of 5 instead of 50 cuts). Stay inside the ball in the first round (don't pull everything). pupose for the on deck batter is practice in practice too.... (not just games)

7. Conditioning and weights.

If you are going to get picked off, get in a run down to allow your trail runner to advance

Scrimmage games

1. Point Game
 - a. 4 batters vs. team (or team vs. team).
 - b. For every base that a team member touches safely, her team receives a point (i.e. to first is 1; to second is 2 plus the original 1, to third is 3 plus the 2 plus the 1, etc.)
2. Short Game
 - a. Hitter in batter's box and baserunner at base in the situation you choose. Hitter gets one pitch.
 1. Sacrifice bunt w/ runner at 1B
 2. Bunt and run: runner steals 2B; hitter must get pitch down and stealer goes all the way to 3B.
 3. Sac bunt w/ runner on 2B and aggressive 5 step lead
 4. Safety squeeze with runner on 3B
 5. Squeeze with runner at 3B.
- 3.. Runners begin in the choice situation with hitter in batter's box.
 - a. Hitters get one pitch. Runners are stealing on the pitch and must know where ball is at all times. Choose from:
 1. Hit and run: Hitter peaks on third step
 2. Run and hit: hitter peaks on 3rd step; hitter only swings at strikes (hittable).
 3. Fake hit and run: runner steals the base; hitter swings and intentionally misses the next pitch (must sell as real attempt to hit)
 4. Fake bunt and steal; runner tries to steal; hitter shows bunt and squares late to protect the runner and freeze the defense.
 5. Contact play: runner on 3B; hitter tries to put ball in play on the ground. Runner is breaking for home on contact regardless of where the ball is hit.
 6. Angle down: runner on 3B; hitter tries to put ball on ground toward 2B or SS; runner breaks for home if ball is hit through first line of defense (past pitcher, 1B/ 3B).
4. 21
 - A. Place a team of offense in dugout and they organize their own batting order.
 - B. Defense takes field.(may have more than 9)
 - C. Defense can play any position (not normal alignment). Can use a pitching machine.
 - D. Cannot walk or strike out. Hitter may bunt/slap/it to get on base.
 - E. Defense scores a point for each out.
 - F. Offense scores a point only when a runner crosses the plate.
 - G. Object: offense to score 21 points/runs before defense gets 21 outs.
 - H. Runners-decide if they can or cannot steal
5. Softball Yahtzee
 - A. Divide team into groups of 4. 2 groups in field; 1 group hitting
 - B. Use screen and pitching machine
 - C. Each team gets 21 attempts to execute (as in 21 outs in 7 inning game).
 - D. For every failure to execute on an attempt, the offense must cross off or eliminate one of the 21 attempts on their scorecard.
 - E. Use this score card (or change to any categories desired)

	First Attempt	2 nd Attempt	3 rd Attempt	Bonus For 3 Executions
Home Run	5 pts	5 pts	5 pts	50 pts
RBI single	3 pts	3 pts	3 pts	25 pts
Sac Bunt	3 pts	3 pts	3 pts	20 pts
Slap bunt	2 pts	2 pts	2 pts	15 pts
Squeeze	5 pts	5 pts	5 pts	50 pts
Hit and run	3 pts	3 pts	3 pts	25 pts
Sacrifice Fly	2 pts	2 pts	2 pts	15 pts
Bonus points for execution of each of the above	50 pts	50 pts	50 pts	
Sub totals				
Total				

6. Hit and Run, Run, Run

- A. Pitching machine in front of mound; split team into 3 groups; one on defense, one hitting, one on bases.
- B. Start w/ runners at 1B; one player runs at a time.
- C. Give a batter one attempt to execute a ht and run with the runner at 1B. Runners will advance to 2B and wait for all players at 1B to complete their turn at 1B/
- D. Once all hitters have been given their rep with runners on 1B, they Hit and run w/ runner at 2B advancing to 3B.
- E. Once all runners are at 3B, batters get a rep at attempting to score the runner on 3B with a hit and run play.

7. Ducks on the Pond

- A. Divide into groups of 4-5 players.
- B. All offensive players wear helmets.
- C. Put a runner on each base.
- D. Batter comes to plate and another is on deck.
- E. Batter will take 3 consecutive attempts to execute 3 different strategies.
 - i. First: runner on 3B; runner will advance home on the play and prepare to be next on deck.
 - ii. 2nd will be a runner on 2B; this runner advances on the attempt and stays on 3B for the next batter.
 - iii. The third attempt is with a runner at 1B only. This runner will also advance on the play and be in place for the next batter. On this 3rd and final attempt, the batter will run through 1B and become the 1b runner for the next batter.
- b. The new batter steps to the plate and executes the same 3 offensive strategies.
- c. Everyone gets 3 attempts at the plate.
- d. Can use different strategies decided by coach.

8. Hits, runs, and errors:
1 player batting off a T, one player feeding the T, and 2 players on defense. You have 4 cones set up in a 25 X 25 foot square. One defender is even with the front cones, and one is even with the back cones.
First defender fields it it is an out.
A single: past first Defender on ground
A double: line drive
A triple: grounder past second defender
A Home run: fly ball past 2nd defender.
9. Triple Challenge:
One bunter, one runner vs. pitcher, catcher and infielders.(or no infielders).
Batter bunts the runner from first to second, slaps the runner from 2nd to 3rd, and squeezes the runner home. Runner slides at each base.
10. Three Second drill:
Infield in place and pitcher pitches. Bunter bunts. Timer times from when the pitch hits the bat until the throw hits the glove. Try to make all plays within 3 seconds. Can also try to make double plays within 4 seconds.
11. Work up (all play all positions and aggressiveness to defense and hitting).
8 defenders in field. The rest of the team is hitters. Batter continues hitting until she makes an out. If she flies out she replaces that fielder who goes in to hit. If she grounds out, she goes to right, right goes to center, center to left, left to 3, 3 to SS, SS to 2, 2 to 1, 1 to Catch, Catcher in to hit. (machine feeder)

Date _____

Announcements:

Segment one was individual fundamentals

Segment two was position specific fundamentals

Segment three is Game situation drills.

Drill #	Category	Drill	Layout/instructions
	Warm up/Flexibility		
	Throwing		
	Individual Defense		
	Positional Defense		
	Team/Situational Defense		
	Individual/Partner Hitting		
	Live/Machine Hitting		
	Bunting		
	Team/Situational Offense		
	Pitchers		
	Scrimmage		
	Baserunning		
	Conditioning		

Infield Defensive Drills

11. Throw, run catch

1. 2-6 players have a ball. Coach is 30-90 feet away with a ball.
2. player throws her ball to coach, waits for coach to catch ball, sprints across at the angle designated, coach throws ball toward player so she is reaching to catch ball on the run. Can throw a sprint over head, sprint in for short fly, spring across for line drive.
3. Variation: Player throws ball at coach, sprints toward her, coach throws own ball back at player, player receives ball and continues sprinting, throws ball back until player is in front of coach, (attempt to achieve at least 3 exchanges; then run around coach and sprint back to where started for pop up.

12. Triangle

1. 2 cones with coach at the third point of the triangle
2. Player starts out in the middle of the triangle, with coach at bottom tip of triangle.
3. Fielder sprints toward coach, coach tosses ball for diving/shoestring catch. Fielder makes catch, tosses ball back to the coach. Fielder sprints toward left cone and coach throws a fly ball over the player's left shoulder to force an over the shoulder catch. Fielder makes catch, runs around cone, makes good throw back to coach, Coach rolls grounder toward player, player sprints toward ball, fields it, makes good throw back, sprints toward coach for another shoestring/diving catch. Then sprints to right triangle, catches over shoulder, sprints around cone throws ball, sprints in for another diving/shoestring catch.

13. Relay Throws

1. A group of 4 players stand in a line 15-20 (or more) feet apart. A player on one end starts with the ball.
2. Player 1 throws to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4. Work on communicating with teammates, catching, receiving.
3. After X # of reps, switch interior with exterior players.
4. Can add: only a line of 3 with the 4th player at the start, and do as shuttle.

14. Basic fielding drills

1. Side to side: partner drill with teammate rolling ball back and forth, shuffling feet to keep ball in front of body when taking ball in.
2. Short hops: 10-20 feet apart, throw one hop balls to each other to work on soft hands and collecting ball in front of center of body.
3. Sun balls: hit or throw ball at player into sun; practice shielding sun with glove
4. Diving head-first catch
5. Double-play simulation: catch, transfer, and move toward throwing location
6. Catch and tag simulation on pick off or steal attempt: catch a thrown ball and quickly move glove to a cone.
7. Running with glove (sprint without extending glove hand until ball arrives).

15. Receiving a force throw

1. 1B is in position to receive force throw. Coach is at SS.
2. Coach hits line drives at 1B and she must read the "throw" (hit) and stretch to the ball.
3. 1B must catch each ball; if she must leave the bag, fake tag.

Infield Drills

1. Action Infield Drill
 - 3B to 1b, SS to 2B
 - 1B to 3B, 2b to SS
 - 3B to 2B, SS to 1B
 - 1B to SS, 2B to 3B
 - 3B to SS covering 3rd, 1B to 2b covering one
 - SS to 3, 2B to 1
 - All home, Catcher to 1, 2, or 3 (Coach call)
2. Charge and sprint drill
 - a. Infielder draws a line 10 feet in front of her.. She starts in ready position and must charge to field a ground ball in front of her line, and then throw to 1B.
 - b. Next Coach hits a Texas Leaguer , for infielder to sprint to catch the ball.
 - c. Do 4 reps (one grounder and one fly = 1 rep). Then new fielder.
4. Infield Hot Box
 1. Place 2 hitters (each with a catcher) 70 feet apart.
 2. Put a fielder in between the two hitters.
 3. Hitter 1 hits a ground ball to the fielder, she fields, throws back to catcher 1; then she quickly turns around and fields another ball hit by hitter 2 and throws to catcher 2.
 4. The hitter should begin to hit her ground ball as soon as the fielder has released the ball to the opposite side.
 5. As you tire you have to concentrate. Have others encourage from sidelines.
 6. Field 20-30 ground balls. See how many they field/throw cleanly.
5. Five Ball Fungo
 1. All infielders are in position.
 2. One player receives 5 consecutive balls which she throws to 1, 2, 3, 2, 1.
 3. Can add doing from a side toss fungo.
6. 6. 2-man infield fungo
 - a. 6-5/4-3 Switch
 - b. 4-6/5-3 Switch
 - c. 6-3/4-5 Switch
 - d. Turn two/ 2 to 5; Turn two/2 to 3.
7. Back hand drill: groups of 3 (need 2 buckets and 30 balls)
 - A. One player rolls balls from 20 feet
 - B. Player two is already done cross over step (stationary)and stays in that low position
 1. Bend knees
 2. Hip area bent-Back end should not be up in the air
 3. Head over glove
 4. Soft glove when you receive it
 5. Absorb the ball when you field it
 6. Toss the ball to player 3

C. Player three puts ball in bucket.

After 10 reps, rotate

At the same time the other infielders do a second station:

8. Using paddles, fielding drill. (can use tennis ball)

A. Player A rolls the ball from 20 feet

B Player B fields th ball

1. Ready position with knees and hips flexed, hands open, facing player A.

2. Using the paddles, concentrate on using two hands and have soft hands (give with the ball as it comes into the paddle)

3. After fielding, set up your footwork with feet in line with the target and ball into throwing position, being sure to finger the ball on your grip

C. Player C puts the ball in the bucket

After 10 reps, rotate

At the same time other infielders do a third station:

9. Charging a slow roller drill

A. two players alternate turns charging the ball while third player rolls balls to them.

1. Stay low as you charge the ball

2. pick up the ball with the bare hand (or pro-style)

3. Release the throw with a stiff wrist, not allowing hand to come higher than your shoulder as you stay low. Toss should be in a good position to tag a sliding runner

10. A. One player rolls grounders from 25 feet

B. Player two uses proper technique to field the grounder, feet in position, and throw the ball back

1. Glove foot is slightly forward

2. Head is down

3. receiving the ball hands are out in front of the body

4. turning and setting the feet up in line with the target in ready to throw position.

11. Load and Go Drill

A. Player A underhand tosss the ball to player B.

B. Player B catches the ball with weight on back foot

1. Balanced when transfer weight

2. Catch the ball with two hands, put the weight on back foot (throwing side foot) and set up to throw

3. Throw the ball to player C

C. Player C catches the ball and puts it in the bucket

12. Set up at their position and work on proper fielding mechanics and throw for all types of play that could come to them.

fungo hitter on first base side hits to the 3B who throws to 1b.

Fungo hitter on 3b side hits to 2b who works on the short throw to the SS.

Fungo on 3b is hitting to SS who throws to 2b.

Fungo hitter on 1B is hitting to 3B who again throws to 1B.

Fungo hitter on 3B hits to short stop who throws to 1B.
Fungo hitter on 1B hits to 3B and she throws to 2B.

Fungo hitter on 1B hits to Short stop who throws to 1B
Fungo hitter on 3B hits to 2B who throws to 3B.

Fungo hitter on 3B hits to 2B who throws to 1B.
Fungo hitter on 1B hits to SS who throws to 3B.

Fungo hitter on 1B hits to SS who throws to 2B.
Fungo hitter on 3B hits to 1B who throws to 3B

Fungo hitter on 1B hits to 3B who throws to First base with the 2B covering 1.
Fungo hitter on the 3B hits to 1B who throws to SS covering 2B.

Fungo hitter on 1B hits to 3B who throws to SS covering 3B.
Fungo hitter on 3B hits to the 1B who throws to the 2B covering 1B.

Fungo hitter on 1B hits to short stop with a runner at 2 running to 3. SS does not throw the ball. She must focus on fielding and line up to throw. The runner does not have to go all the way to 3.
Fungo hitter on 3B hits to the 2B with a runner on 1 running to 2. 2B does not throw the ball. She must focus on fielding and then line up to throw. The runner does not have to go all the way to 2.

13. Repeat the previous drill and try to have the runner run right in front of the fielder.
4 fungo hitters: One (A) is between home and 3B, one (B) is on the 3B side of home, one (C) is on the 1B side of home, and one (D) is half way between Home and 1B.

- A. Hits it to the 1B who fields and puts it in bucket
- B. Hits it to the 2B who fields and puts it in bucket
- C. Hits to the 3B who fields and puts it in bucket
- D. Hits to the SS who fields and puts it in the bucket

Individual Defensive Drills-All Positions

1. Chicken Drill:
 1. Partners-no gloves and one ball.
One person stands in defensive stance with feet apart. Partner stands, with ball, 7 feet away. The thrower tries to bounce the ball between the feet of the defender. The defender is working on looking the ball in, quick reactions, and defeating fear of ball. Key is good defensive position with hands out in front; and soft hands.. Cleanly field as many balls in a row as possible.
2. EJ's Drill: "Purdue"...
You set up 2 cones on each side (like your making a soccer goal). Then you have 2 players on each team and they have to bounce the ball off the floor and try to make it between the 2 cones. If a team scores then the losing team is out and the winning team stays in until they lose. If you catch a line drive then that team is out and the next 2 players go in against the winning team. Use squishy softballs.
3. Blind Drill: to work on reaction and judgment
Defender stands with back to coach. At the sound of the ball hitting the bat, she turns around, finds the ball, and makes the catch.
4. Coach vs. two works on reactions and defensive skills
Partners
6-10 feet wide and 25 feet deep.
Coach gets 5 tries to hit the ball past the 2 fielders (use a flexiball indoors.
5. Falcon- good agility and conditioning and eye hand coordination.
Player with partner. Partner has 2 balls and is 5 feet apart. Partner tosser tosses balls one after another. Defender must stay in defensive stance and slide back and forth catching each ball and tossing it back.
6. Quick reaction drill
One defender in infield stance vs. one thrower. The thrower tries to throw to back hand, fore hand, and between the feet. All throws are one hoppers.
7. Rapid Fire:
Coach hits to fungo player, fungo player flips it to someone with a bucket, feeder feeds coach. Take 10 consecutive hot shots and try to field them all cleanly.
8. Lay Down
Player lays on belly 70 feet from the fungo hitter. Fungo hitter hits, player jumps up and fields the ball. Good for agility and quick reactions.
9. Slap Drill (to work on slap placement).
Slap as many balls behind pitcher and 3B as possible in 10 pitches. Repeat between pitcher and 1B.