

Practice Drills – Examples

Base Running 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.

Running Bases – Great for the end of practice

1. The Race

Divide your team equally, where possible (someone may have to run twice – be cognizant of placing equal speed on both teams), placing half the team at second base, the other team at home plate. The goal is for each player to run the bases, using proper running skills, rounding each base in the proper manner. Demonstrate before the race how players should round and touch each base as they run. Each team races each other, touching all four bases, beginning when the coach yells “go” – The winning team will be the first to finish with all players.

2. The Rundown Drill

Put a fielder at both first and second base. Put helmets on your runners. Let the kids just run wild between first and second base. Tell your fielders to get as many outs as they can in a 1-minute period. This is a fun game for both runners and fielders alike, as the fielders must learn to both throw and catch “under pressure” at a fast pace. They really need to be able to catch and throw the ball very quickly. They will also have to throw accurately. They will be forced to learn how to apply fast tags. They will start to understand the dos and don'ts of rundowns. This is a great learning game that happens to be a lot of fun.

3. Running Through First Base

Line the team up at home plate. Place a Parent or Coach 6 -8 feet PAST first base. Have players lineup in a line behind a lead player. Have the player pretend to hit a pitched ball (no bat is needed), and then run – full speed, THROUGH first base, past where the coach or parent is. Remind players to turn inside – to foul territory.

4. Outfield Hit

To teach at full speed proper turning technique at first base. Place a glove or cone on the back edge of first base, and another about 10 feet from the base on the way to second base. This second marker should be about 10 feet to the right field side of the base path. Using an imaginary swing, have the players run and round first base at full speed. If they are making the turn properly, they will be able to stay inside the second marker. The coach calls out which field the ball is hit to, and watches to see if runners take a larger turn on balls to left than center (moderate) or right (short). Emphasize hustle, a strong push off the bag, and a quick return to the base.

5. Turn at Second

To teach at full speed proper turning technique at second base. Younger players start at first base; older players start from a lead, then move into a secondary lead at first base. The coach uses an imaginary swing, and calls out where the ball is going. Runners aggressively round second base; if the ball is to right, they practice picking up the third base coach for instructions before they get to second. Emphasize hustle, a strong push off the bag, and growing an awareness of when and when it is not a good time to go for third. For a variation use outfielders to make the throws to third base to grow runner awareness of their own speed and outfielder awareness of when it is and when it is not a good time to try and throw out a runner at third base.

6. Infield Advance

To practice moving to third or home ground balls. Using full infield defense (including pitcher), position baserunner on second or third base. Younger players start on the base; older players start from a lead, then move into a secondary lead. Coach hits ground balls to infielders, and the runner decides whether to advance or not. Emphasize proper time to advance, growing runners' awareness of their own speed, and growing defender awareness of the best options to get an out.

7. Tag Ups

To teach proper tag technique and situational base running from all bases. Place player on base; younger players start on the base; older players start from a lead, then move into a secondary lead. Position a Third Base Coach in the Third Base Coaches Box and a Coach in the First Base Coaches Box. Use these coaches to help guide runners. Another Coach/Parent calls out how many outs and hit balls to the outfield; runners decide what the proper option is (no outs – tag; one out – tag on deep fly, come off the base on routine flies). Emphasize proper tag technique (tag with foot closest to the ball, not leaving the base early) and decision-making. Once complete, teach runners to watch and listen to coaches, do drill again, using coaches as a guide... For a variation use outfielders to make the throws to the base to grow runner awareness of their own speed and of when it is and when it is not a good time to try and advance.

8. Slide Circle

To teach proper slide body position. Coach has players form a circle around him. Players assume their slide positions, and coach quickly checks each for proper positioning.

9. Box Top Slide

To teach proper sliding technique. Coach acquires a cardboard mattress or refrigerator box. He places it flat on the ground and anchors one end by kneeling on it. Two other players stand on the sides to firmly anchor the entire piece. The remaining players line up 15 yards off the other end, and run to the box and then drop into a slide on it. Initially these runs are only a little faster than a walk through to encourage focus on technique. As skills increase, the drill can be run at faster speeds.