



Major Practice Plan

Practice #1 (90-120 mins)

Parent Meeting [5 mins]

- Cover schedule, parent participation, objectives of year, and key dates. Cover that gear bags and snacks are to be kept on the bench, not in the stands with parents. Recruit scorekeeper, pitch counter, team manager, etc.
- To save time, can do parent meeting while assistants run warmups.

Player Meeting [5 mins]

- Fun introduction to learn names.
- Set expectations.

Warm up [10 mins]

- Active warm up – starting on foul line and jog out 30', stop and return; forwards, backwards, shuffle, crossovers.
- Progressions: High knees, butt kickers, trunk twists, sprint. Add dynamic stretches such as arm swings, leg stretches, arm circles.

Warm up to Throw (10 mins)

- review how to grip ball. Players this age will use 4-seam grip with minimum of two fingers across seams.
- Work on progressions to isolate mechanics
- Step and aim at target. Progressions: 1 knee, square and throw (chest to partner), isolate wrist, isolate elbow, isolate hips, stand and throw, step and throw. Focus on alignment, balance, and proper arm circles.

Water Break (2 mins)

National: Review/Introduction to Skills (10 minutes)

- Throwing
 - o Grip, body position, throw, follow through
- Fielding
 - o Ready position, fielding position, 'alligator', bring hand up to belly button, step and throw
- Catching
 - o Without ball - Catching ball above waist (hands high, thumbs together)

- Without ball - Catching ball below waist (hands low, pinkies together)
- With ball - Squeeze ball in glove with both hands
- With ball - On bounce, cradle ball; 'Soft Hands'
- Baserunning
 - Running through first base on ground ball
 - Rounding other bases by touching the inside corner
- Batting
 - Feet, hands, bat position
 - Dry swings with no bat

Canadian – Review positions and defensive responsibilities(10 mins)

- First base – 5 steps to side and 5 steps behind bag
- Second base – 6 steps beside and 6 steps behind base for lefties, 4x4 with righties
- Shortstop – 6 steps beside and 6 steps behind for righties, 4x4 with lefties
- Third base – 4 steps beside and 4 steps behind
- Ball hit to RF, second base is cutoff, SS covers second.
- Ball hit to CF, SS is cutoff, 2B covers second
- Ball hit to LF, SS is cutoff, 2B covers second
- Catcher relays what base to throw to.
- Outfielders need to talk to each other. CF can call off other OFs
- On shallow fly ball, OF coming in can call off infielder going back

Skill Stations (24 mins)

1. Partner drill

- Players work in teams of 2. Each stand by pylons about 80 feet apart
- Coach hits ball between them. They must communicate who fields the ball and who backs up.
- Player fielding ball throws to cutoff.
- Coach mixes up fly balls, grounders, pop flies.

2. Sliding

- Suggest using large unfolded cardboard box
- Teach Figure 4 slide with hands up
- Start with each player sitting on grass
- Move to run and slide onto cardboard box, head up while grabbing bat (like a limbo stick)

3. Goaltender drill

- Players line up beside pylon. Two pylons are placed 15-20 feet apart.
- Player must keep thrown or batted ball from 'scoring' between the pylons
- Player must block or field ball in front of them, then throw to cutoff.
- For fun, keep 'score'

Water Break (2 mins)

Skills Stations (24 mins)

1. Pitching Motion in bullpen

- Break down pitching motion into steps
 - i. Throw the ball
 - ii. Elbow up, arm straight up, look down the elbow
 - iii. Make the 'W'
 - iv. Rock back and forth
 - v. Lift up knee

2. Catching

- Proper position. National allows for one knee down. Canadian both feet on the ground and squat.
- Throwing arm either behind the back, or behind leg with no runners on base. Throwing hand behind glove with runners on base.
- Receiving the ball and throwing through the plate.
- Move to blocking pitches; chin down, glove open and between legs. Move from side to side by always face the plate. Can use tennis balls or practice balls.

3. Pitching and Catching

- Pitchers throw from mound to catchers.
- Pitchers throw to backstop and catchers retrieve and throw to pitchers covering plate.
- Pitchers throw to plate, catchers retrieve and throw to players or coaches at second and third base. Can use live runners and/or batters in the box to simulate game situations.

Water Break (2 mins)

Batting (20 mins)

- Review Etiquette. Set aside extra time for National as there may be players new to baseball.
 - Players must ALWAYS wear helmets when on the bench
 - Bats are kept by the on-deck position, not on the bench.
 - How to carry the bat on the field (one hand on the barrel)
 - Only one on-deck batter in on-deck area
- Introduce how to set feet, proper hand position on bat, keep eye on the ball.
- Introduce/review how to bunt properly.
- Players hit off tees (8 swings each). Depending on number of players, use multiple stations with remainder of players in the field, cycling in and out of stations.
- Suggested stations:
 1. Behind backstop, player with front knee up, coach/parent soft tosses wiffle balls (isolate hands)
 2. Behind backstop, player stands and hits wiffle off tee
 3. Behind backstop, player stands and takes soft toss and bunts
 4. On field, player hits tee balls off coach throwing from knees, players field the ball

If time remains, play quick game, i.e. Jackpot.

Team Defence (15 mins)

- Work on relays and base coverage
- Work on bunt defence

Practice Ends (2 mins)

- Thank everyone for coming.
- Reminder of next session, picture day, administrative tasks, etc.
- Can ask to come up with team cheer.

Practice #2 (90-120 mins)

Player Meeting [5 mins]

- Review what everyone learned last practice
- Expectations for the day

Warm up [10 mins]

- Active warm up – starting on foul line and jog out 30', stop and return; forwards, backwards, shuffle, crossovers.
- Progressions: High knees, butt kickers, trunk twists, sprint. Add dynamic stretches such as arm swings, leg stretches, arm circles.
- Can finish with running pole to pole to home plate.

Warm up to Throw (10 mins)

- Work on progressions to isolate mechanics
- Step and aim at target. Progressions: 1 knee, square and throw (chest to partner), isolate wrist, isolate elbow, isolate hips, stand and throw, step and throw. Focus on alignment, balance, and proper arm circles.

Water Break (2 mins)

Fielding and Catching the ball (15 mins)

- o Review fielding mechanics
 - 2 stations
 - o Ground balls in infield [7 minutes]
 - Players line up and ground balls are hit/rolled to them.
 - Progress into moving them left and right
 - Show how to catch a ball at 1B
 - o Fly balls in outfield [7 minutes]
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Infield/outfield stations [15 minutes]

Focus on how to make outs (force play, tags, catch etc) and teach them the ways to get players out

Tag up from third drill – have 1 outfielder, 1 SS, 1 3B and one catcher and one pitcher, and 2 runners.

- Coach hit ball in the air, runner starts on third. Outfielder relays the ball to SS, who relays it home for a play. Runner decides whether to run straight home or go back to third. Pitcher backs up home plate. Rotate players.
- Relay ball to second drill – CF, RF, 2B and SS w/2 runners.
- Coach hits ball in air, runner starts from home plate. Outfield relays ball to second base. Runner decides whether or not to advance to second. Rotate.

Water Break (2 mins)

Pitching and catching (20 mins)

- 1 pitching station in the bullpen. Go through motion and set up target on tee.
- 1 catching station on the field. Go through receiving, blocking, framing.
- Combine with passed ball drill with live runner coming home from third

Hitting (15 mins)

- Review set feet, set hands, bat position and follow through
- Teach how to load to swing hard

4 hitting stations . 8 swings each (20 mins each)

1. Behind backstop, player with front knee up, coach/parent soft tosses wiffle balls (isolate hands)
2. Behind backstop, player stands and hits wiffle off tee
3. Behind backstop, player stands and takes soft toss and bunts
4. On field, player hits tee balls off coach throwing from knees, players field the ball

Remaining time can be used to finish practice off with a game, i.e, race around the bases or run the gauntlet with wiffle balls.

Practice Ends (2 mins)

- Thank everyone for coming.
- Reminder of next session, picture day, administrative tasks, etc.

Fielding Drills

Ground Balls on Knees: Roll ball back and forth to control with two hands with glove.

Ground Balls Standing: Standing with partner close together roll ball back and forth for control.

Forehand Play: We must get the front shoulder on the target on this play to keep the ball from sailing away from the target.

Backhand Play: You must make sure that you are bending at the knees, instead of straight down at the waist. You want to keep your eyes as close to the glove as you can.

Angle Drill: Players start in single file line, each with a ball. The first player in line will give their ball to the coach. Coach then points in a direction. Player uses proper footwork (drop step, crossover) to initiate pursuit. The player should not look for the ball until coach yells "ball". The player locates the ball and continues to sprint to the spot of landing for the catch. This drill can be used for practicing ground balls, line drives and fly balls.

Outfield Weave Start the drill w/ three groups, one in left field, one in center field, and one group in right. Have the coach near 2nd base w/ fungo. First player in each line prepares to receive fly ball. Coach hits fly ball between left and center field. Left fielder moves to catch ball and center fielder backs up play. Left fielder catches ball and throws ball into 2nd base. Left fielder and center fielder switch groups. Then coach will hit it to Right and do the same thing.

Relay Drill: Line-up a minimum of three players about 5-10 feet apart. Ball is thrown down the line to each player.

Hitting Drills

Set-Up: Stance: Feet parallel, toes pointed straight, weight on inner balls of feet, knees inside feet, grip: knocking knuckles lined up, back elbow half way up, front shoulder on pitcher, head upright eyes level, hands held on top of strike zone.

Stride Position: Stride: Step to pitcher, front toe still pointing to home plate, weight is at a 50/50.

Slow Motion Swings: Any new mechanical idea or adjustment should be executed correctly in a slow motion dry swing so that the hitter can feel the proper movement.

Standard Tee Work: Emphasis on stride alignment and not over stepping the ball and tee.

Early Stride-Separation: Front or side flips, short pitch or batting practice where the hitter goes through their weight transfer back and stride separation then pauses in a strong launch position before the ball is flipped. The purpose of this drill is to show the hitter this is their strongest hitting position and this is where they should be when they take a pitch.

Whiffle Ball Front Toss: Multiple lines at one time for more repetitions. Coaches toss the balls so players can practice consistent swing.

Step In Drill: The hitter will be in their normal set-up but just with an open stance. They will have the bat on the shoulder and when the stride foot advances forward the hands take the bat to the proper launch position.

Forced Hand Movement: Hitter begins from their normal stance except the hands are placed in front of the face with the bat vertical. The idea is to show the hitter the back movement as the stride foot advances forward. The hand set up position makes the hitter have to move their hands to get to the proper position. The desired bat angle when the foot hits will be approximately 45-degree angle with the end of the bat over the head. This drill can be done using the tee, soft toss, short pitch and regular distance.

Walk Thru Drill: This drill will allow the hitter to work on all the absolute from the start of the swing until the finish. Hitter gets in their set-up with feet approximately 6" to 8" apart, bat on the shoulder and the arms relaxed with the knob of the bat pointed at the instructor. The 1st step is a small crossover with the back foot across parallel to the front foot. As crossover occurs with slight shoulder turn, the knob of the bat is pointed at the instructor. As the foot comes forward with the stride, the hands take the bat off the shoulder to get the bat to the launch position as the hitter rides the back leg before they swing. The hitter must focus on riding his back leg properly to get pitch recognition and control the weight instead of rushing to the front side.

Team Drills

CHAOS Drill: Full field. Players are at all positions. Pylons between 1st&2nd, 2nd&3rd, and 3rd&home. Runners set up at home plate. Coach hits ball to infield, infielders must throw the ball to each base as the runner runs around and attempt to tag the base before the runner gets there (4 outs). Coach hits ball to outfield, outfielder must relay the ball to second base before the runner gets there and then the infielders throw the ball to third and home before the runner gets there. Once the runner gets past each base, the fielders cannot throw the ball until the runner passes the midway cone. FOR SAFETY, the runners must run AROUND each base and home plate. There are no tag outs!

Double Play Drill: Second baseman and shortstop. Balls may be rolled or hit. Fielders work half of the time on fielding and feeding, while the other half of the time working on pivots.

Partner Drill: Two players line up at least 40 feet apart. A ball is hit or thrown in between the players forcing them to communicate and call the ball on its downward flight. A player should call the ball until it is in their glove.

Game Play Situations: Simulate situations with coach hitting fungoes and players running bases and playing defense. Other coaches should roam field-giving instruction from play to play. With advanced players, they may hit with coaches pitching.

Arena Baseball Game: This offensive game is played with two teams. An offensive team and defensive team. It is pitchers hands out. You only use home plate and second base. Use a coach as a pitcher and catcher. Offensive team sets batting order, defensive team sets themselves on defense exactly like Sox Derby (anywhere). Player comes to the plate and hits the ball. The object is to score as many runs as possible by running straight across the diamond to second base and then home again. The hitter may stop at second base if he/she feels they cannot advance home. However, if you are not touching second base as the pitcher receives the ball you are out. Runners cannot over run second base. When defensive team attempts putout at home it is a force out. Each hitter from the offensive team hits once and then switch.

2 pitch Game: Coach pitches and gives 2 pitches to each batter. If he doesn't swing at first, he must swing at second. A full defense is on the field. Many offensive and defensive reps

Quad Game: 3 or more groups of 4 players. 2 groups on defense, 1 group hitting, and an additional group (if you have one). Can work hitting drills in cage or off of a screen

Baserunning

Home To First:

1. Drop Bat, step w/back foot out of box.
2. Three step peek.
3. Hit Front part of bag.
4. Forward lean
5. Breakdown/ look to right for overthrow.

DRILL #1: Coach acts as 1st baseman w/ball in hand. As runner crosses base and looks to right coach either holds onto ball and runner returns to base, or coach tosses ball behind him and runner sees overthrow and breaks for second base.

Rounding First:

1. Drop bat, back foot out of box.
2. Three step peek, read play.
3. Banana route, (3 steps out -3 steps in).
4. Inside corner, read play, chest to infield, back to bag

DRILL #2: Coach sets up as shortstop. As runner sneaks peek coach simulates fielding a ground ball, runner runs through bag. Coach can also simulate going out for cut-off by turning around with his back to infield. Runner takes banana route and rounds bag.

First to Third:

1. Check outfielders
2. Pick up coach twice
3. Inside corner
4. Slide, stop on bag, round 3rd base pick up ball.

DRILL#3: Position a coach in 3rd base coaching box. Runner runs, picks up coach half way to second. Coach signals player to hold up at second or continue to third. As player reaches second, pick up coach again. After reading play coach may signal player to advance or hold up. Runner picks up coach into third.

Second Base to Home:

1. Check outfielders.
2. Primary & Secondary leads.
3. Read infield grounders off bat (left or right of body).
4. Pick up coach, round bag, inside corner.

DRILL#4: Position a coach shortstop side of pitching mound. Runner begins secondary lead. Coach rolls ball. If rolled left side of runner, runner advances toward third, pick up coach at third base. If ball rolled to right of runner, runner stays at second.

Position a coach in third base coaching box. Runner advances towards third and coach signals to hold up on bag, round bag and pick up ball, or round bag and advance to home.

3rd Base to Home:

1. Lead in foul territory, return in fair.
2. Walking lead (read play).
3. Tag

DRILL #5: Position a coach in 3rd base box. Work with players on walking leads. Also, position coach in outfield with ball, (or another coach can throw him a fly ball). Players take walking lead, when ball is in air player returns to base and tags up. Coach makes throw into home.