



T-BALL SEASON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION AND GOAL OF T-BALL

The South Ottawa Little League (SOLL) has put this program together to guide coaches and parents in making T-Ball a very productive and engaging activity for our aspiring baseball players. T-Ball is a critical division for children as this is the first time many are introduced to the game of baseball. If we can make the first baseball experience enjoyable, fun, and educational for players, they will return and continue playing the game.

The goal of the SOLL T-Ball program is purely about skills development. The curriculum in this guide is designed to focus on introducing players to drills they will use for the remainder of their baseball careers. Many of the drills in this guide are drills used by advanced players of all skill levels.

T-BALL SEASON

The SOLL T-Ball season runs for 7 weeks in May and June. We offer weekday and weekend options. Players can choose one session per week, or more. We encourage two sessions where possible especially for players moving ahead into rookie the following season. Players are divided into small groups that rotate through skills stations and a short game on the diamond. The key is to move the players quickly enough through the stations so that they stay active, engaged, and moving.

IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN BASEBALL

As a chartered member of Little League International it is important that all participants be familiar with the following pledges. The Little League Parent/Volunteer Pledge is as follows:

- I will teach all children to play fair and do their best.
- I will positively support all managers, coaches and players.
- I will respect the decisions of the umpires.
- I will praise a good effort despite the outcome of the game.*

Covid Protocols

For the 2022 season, there are no covid protocols prescribed by the City of Ottawa, Public Health or Little League. Players, coaches or parents may wear protective masks if they wish but they are not required. Everyone's choice will be respected.

Parent Volunteer Roles Required

Each program requires:

- 1 or 2 Head Coaches** who oversee and direct the overall program on the field
- 8-12 assistant coaches** (2-3 per station) to help players with skill development
- 1 convenor** who handles "off field" details such as communicating rain outs, photo day, liaising with league reps if for example more equipment/hats/support are needed.

League organizers will divide players into little "teams" of 3-4 players. This builds friendships, comfort levels and reinforces the concept of being part of a team. Small groups = more reps for players / less standing around getting bored. Each team receives team jerseys and a hat. Coaches are assigned to stations, not to teams. Coach shirts are all one colour. Wherever possible, a league organizer will be present at the first session and will provide additional support as required to convenors and coaches aimed at making everyone's experience a positive one.

This guide is written with programs of 20 player in mind. Some programs will have fewer and some may have more players. Reduce or increase the number of stations and volunteers as required. Notice the "homework" suggested each week for parents and players to work on at home.

What does success look like?

At the conclusion of the program, players should have progressed their individual ability in the basic t-ball skills of throwing, catching, hitting off the tee and have been introduced to basics of the game such as running bases, safe/outs.

Progression

The stations in the program are intended to create progression week to week. Head coaches can tweak stations to meet the needs of the group and reinforce learning. An example is in Week 2 Station 1 when the main part of the infield starts to be used for a little game each week. This starts out pretty simple with the batter being shown how to hold the bat, where to stand and many players being shown where first base is and when they should run to it. Each week more can be integrated. In the last couple of weeks a progression could be to put two teams at this station (8 players total) and play a 15-20 minute mini game.

Remember – PESOS

PREPARE -- get set up / welcome players / tell them your name

EXPLAIN --- what will be happening

SHOW --- demonstrate the skill

OBSERVE --- they do the skill, assist as needed but don't overdo corrections

SUPPORT -- encourage and support development

WEEK 1 – FOUR STATIONS --- BLITZ – 10 MINUTES EACH

Purpose

The purpose of week 1 is for the convenor and coaches to make players feel welcome, comfortable and for them to have FUN so that they want to come back next week. The league will provide name tags, stickers and other miscellaneous items to further this purpose. You'll need time to hand out t-shirts and hats to players and coaches.

The Practice

Divide the players into 4 groups of roughly equal size and have them move as a group from station to station.

STATION 1 – Hitting whiffle balls off tee

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 whiffle balls, 5 cones, 3 tees, 3 bats, 6 small buckets

Key words: GRIP, BAT BACK, BEND KNEES, BALL, SWING

Instructions:

- NO PLAYER PICKS UP A BAT UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY THE COACH
- All batters must have a helmet on
- Tees are 5m apart
- One batter at each Tee, one or more fielders with buckets 15m away
- Fielders must not retrieve balls in front of cones
- Coach sets balls on tees, steps back and gives direction
- Give minimal correction, positive feedback
- After 5 hits, batter grabs empty bucket & goes to field, fielder becomes batter

STATION 2 – Target Throw

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 20 baseballs, 6 washcloths, 12 clothespins, 6 small buckets

Key words to use with players: BALL IN GLOVE, EYE ON TARGET, STEP & THROW

Instructions:

- Use clothes pins to secure wash cloths on fence
- Place small buckets with 5 balls each approximately 10m away from fence
- One coach gives commands for all players, non-throwers sitting & cheering
- Thrower retrieves 5 balls and switches

STATION 3 – Catching

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 10 bean bags, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: READY, EYE ON BEAN BAG, CATCH & PROTECT, RUN IT BACK

Instructions:

- Players line up approximately 6m away from coach behind cones
- Coach says "READY" player moves in front of cone in a fielding position

- Coach tosses bean bag to waist-shoulder target area
- Player catches and runs bean bag into bucket beside coach

STATION 4 – Catching Ground Balls to Throw

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 20 baseballs, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: READY, BEND KNEES, READY, SQUEEZE, STEP, THROW

Instructions:

- Players line up approximately 8m away from coach behind cones
- Coach says “READY” player takes a step forward in a fielding position
- Coach rolls ball, player moves towards the ball, catches it and throws back to coach

WEEK 2 – THREE STATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

All players will participate together in a 5-minute warm up game (see Appendix for ideas).

The Practice

Divide the players into 4 groups of roughly equal size and have them move as a group from station to station.

STATION 1 -- MAIN FIELD

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 5 baseballs, 1 tee, 1 bat, 3 bases

Instructions:

- One player bats, other players on bases and rotate

STATION 2 – Hitting whiffle balls off tee

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 whiffle balls, 5 cones, 3 tees, 3 bats, 6 small buckets

Key words: GRIP, BAT BACK, BEND KNEES, BALL, SWING

Instructions:

- NO PLAYER PICKS UP A BAT UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY THE COACH
- All batters must have a helmet on
- Tees are 5m apart
- One batter at each Tee, one or more fielders with buckets 15m away
- Fielders must not retrieve balls in front of cones line
- Coach sets balls on tees, steps back and gives commands
- Give minimal correction, positive feedback
- After 5 hits, batter grabs empty bucket & goes to field, fielder becomes batter

STATION 3 – Sit Up & Throw Drill

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 35 baseballs, 5 cones, 6 small buckets

Key words to use with players: STRETCH, SIT-UP, BALL BACK, ELBOW HIGH, THROW

Instructions:

- Players lie on back with throwing arm stretch out above head
- Coach says “READY” player sits up
- Coach says “THROW” player throws towards bucket
- Players throw 10 balls
- Players run to field to retrieve balls

STATION 4 – Bean Bag Self Toss & Catch

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 10 bean bags, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: TOSS, TRACK, CATCH

Instructions:

- spread players out approximately 5m apart
- players toss bean bag 1m in the air and catch:
 - with 2 hands at waist (pinkies touching)
 - with left hand at waist
 - with right hand at waist
 - with 2 hands above shoulders (thumbs touching)
 - with baseball glove on, using two hands
- players may toss higher than 1m

BASEBALL HOMEWORK

- ❖ Toss a tennis ball off a wall and catch it 20 times.

Week 3 – Three Station Skills Development

All players will participate together in a 5 minute warm up game (see Appendix for ideas).

The Practice

Divide the players into 4 groups of roughly equal size and have them move as a group from station to station.

STATION 1 - MAIN FIELD

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 5 baseballs, 1 tee, 1 bat, 3 bases

Instructions:

- One player bats, other players on bases and rotate. By now the players should be starting to understand where the bases are

STATION 2 – Hitting whiffle balls off tee

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 whiffle balls, 5 cones, 3 tees, 3 bats, 6 small buckets

Key words: GRIP, BAT BACK, BEND KNEES, BALL, SWING

Instructions:

- NO PLAYER PICKS UP A BAT UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY THE COACH
- All batters must have a helmet on
- Tees are 5m apart
- One batter at each Tee, one or more fielders with buckets 15m away
- Fielders must not retrieve balls in front of cones line
- Coach sets balls on tees, steps back and gives commands
- Give minimal correction, positive feedback
- After 5 hits, batter grabs empty bucket & goes to field, fielder becomes batter

STATION 3 – Knee-Down Target Throw

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 baseballs, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: READY, POINT & BALL BACK, THROW, GLOVE TO HIP, HIGH ELBOW, FOLLOW-THROUGH

Instructions:

- Target is bucket 10m away, cones 10m past bucket for retrievers
- Player has throwing arm knee on ground, hand on ball inside glove
- Coach gives commands, “READY, POINT & BALL BACK, THROW”
- Coach gives focus instruction one at a time (Pull glove to glove side hip as you throw, keep elbow high, etc.)
- Fielder retrieves ball and places in bucket
- Player throws 5, then switches positions

STATION 4 – Star Drop & Catch

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 20 bean bags, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: READY, PINKIES (or THUMBS), TRACK, CATCH

Instructions:

- Players lie on back in 5-point star shape with head towards centre
- Coach stands in middle with bean bags
- Coach gives two commands (i.e. READY, TRACK) and drops bean bag so:
 - player catches at waist area with pinkies together
 - player catches at shoulder/chin area with thumbs together
 - Player holds caught bean bag up until coach rotates back to player

BASEBALL HOMEWORK

- ❖ Toss a tennis ball off a wall, let it bounce once and catch it 20 times.

WEEK 4 – THREE STATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

All players will participate together in a 5 minute warm up game (see Appendix for ideas).

The Practice

Divide the players into 4 groups of roughly equal size and have them move as a group from station to station.

STATION 1 - MAIN FIELD

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 5 baseballs, 1 tee, 1 bat, 3 bases

Instructions:

- One player bats, other players on bases and rotate.

STATION 2 – Ball Pick Up, Step, Throw to Target

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 baseballs, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: READY, MOVE TO BALL, PRESS, POINT & THROW, GLOVE TO HIP, FOLLOW-THROUGH

Instructions:

- Target bucket 10m away, cones 10m past bucket for retrievers
- Coach toss a ball to the ground just in front of player
- Coach gives commands, “READY, MOVE TO BALL, SQUISH & PICK TO HIP”
- Player bends down, squishes the ball into the ground as his or she picks it up, brings ball to waist with glove
- Coach gives commands, “T, POINT & BALL BACK, THROW”
- Coach gives focus instruction one at a time (Pull glove to glove side hip as you throw, keep elbow high, etc.)
- Fielder retrieves ball and places in bucket

STATION 3– Beanbag Catch from Coach

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 20 bean bags, 5 cones, 1 bucket

Key words to use with players: READY, PINKIES (or THUMBS), TRACK, CATCH & COVER

Instructions:

- 2 players line up behind each cone
- coach stands 5m away (able to toss to 2 cones) with bean bags
- coach gives commands (i.e. READY, TRACK...COVER) and tosses
 - player catches at waist area with pinkies together
 - player catches at shoulder/chin area with thumbs together
- player runs caught beanbag back to coach and returns

STATION 4– Whiffle Ball Batting with Hit & Run Every 5th Hit

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 whiffle balls, 4 Tees, 3 bats, 4 bases

Key words to use with players: GRIP, BAT BACK, BEND KNEES, BALL, SMALL STEP & SWING

Instructions:

- NO PLAYER PICKS UP A BAT UNTIL A COACH TELLS THEM TO.
- All batters must have a helmet on.
- Batting tees are **10m** apart.
- One batter at each Tee, one or more fielders at bucket 15m away
- Batter has front foot at tee.
- Coach “control” batters and watches fielders
- On 5th hit, player runs to 1st base, then returns to waiting area
- fielders put “recoverable hit balls” in buckets

BASEBALL HOMEWORK

- ❖ Play catch with mom or dad or a friend for 10 minutes.

WEEK 5 – THREE STATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

All players will participate together in a 5-minute warm up game (see Appendix for ideas).

The Practice

Divide the players into 4 groups of roughly equal size and have them move as a group from station to station.

STATION 1 – MAIN FIELD

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 5 baseballs, 1 tee, 1 bat, 3 bases

Instructions:

One player bats, other players on bases and rotate

STATION 2– Moving Ball Pick Up, Step, Throw to Catch

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 baseballs, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: MOVE TO BALL, POINT & THROW, GLOVE TO HIP, THROW TO ME, FOLLOW-THROUGH

Instructions:

- Coach is 10m away from 2 player lines behind cones
- Coach will ground a ball to the player and give commands as necessary
- If ball goes astray, player runs, picks it up and places in bucket behind coach
- Players rotate through the line

STATION 3 – High & Low Glove Catches from Coach

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 10 bean bags, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: READY, PINKIES (or THUMBS), TRACK, CATCH & COVER

Instructions:

- 2 players line up behind each cone
- Identify “glove hand” and “cover hand”
- Coach stands 5m away (able to toss to 2 cones) with bean bags
- coach gives commands (i.e. READY, TRACK...COVER) and tosses o player catches at waist area with pinkies together
 - player catches at shoulder/chin area with thumbs together
- player runs caught bean bag back to coach’s bucket and returns

STATION 4 – Whiffle Ball Batting with Hit & Run Every 5th Hit

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 whiffle balls, 5 cones, 3 bats

Key words to use with players: GRIP, BAT BACK, BEND KNEES, BALL, SMALL STEP & SWING

Instructions:

- NO PLAYER PICKS UP A BAT UNTIL A COACH TELLS THEM TO.
- All batters must have a helmet on.
- Batting tees are **10m** apart.
- One batter at each Tee, one or more fielders at bucket 15m away
- Batter has front foot at tee.
- Coach “control” batters and watches fielders
- On 5th hit, player runs to 1st base, then returns to waiting area
- fielders put “recoverable hit balls” in buckets

BASEBALL HOMEWORK

- ❖ Field 15 rolling ground balls from a parent or a friend

WEEK 6 – THREE STATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

All players will participate together in a 5-minute warm up game (see Appendix for ideas).

The Practice

Divide the players into 4 groups of roughly equal size and have them move as a group from station to station.

STATION 1 – MAIN FIELD

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 5 baseballs, 1 tee, 1 bat, 3 bases

Instructions:

One player bats, other players on bases and rotate

STATION 2– Throwing for distance to a target

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 20 baseballs, 5 cones, 6 small buckets

Key words to use with players: READY, BALL TO WAIST, “T”, STEP BEHIND, TOE TO TARGET, THROW, FOLLOW-THROUGH

Instructions:

- Small buckets set 10m, 12m, 14m & 16m from cones.
- 2 players behind each cone, each will throw 5 balls at each target
- Players recover 5 balls, then switch with partner, then switch to new target

STATION 3 – Ground ball glove catches from coach

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 20 baseballs, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: MILK CRATE, ALLIGATOR, TRACK, CATCH & COVER, HIP

Instructions:

- 2 players line up behind each cone
- Players identify “glove hand” and “cover hand”
- Coach stands 5m away (able to toss to 2 cones) with balls
- Coach gives commands (i.e. READY, TRACK...COVER) and tosses ○ - glove foot should be beside glove when picking up ball

- Player runs caught ball back to coach's bucket and returns

STATION 4 – Whiffle Ball Batting with Hit & Run Every 5th Hit

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 30 whiffle balls, 5 cones, 3 bats

Key words to use with players: GRIP, BAT BACK, BEND KNEES, BALL, SMALL STEP & SWING

Instructions:

- NO PLAYER PICKS UP A BAT UNTIL A COACH TELLS THEM TO.
- All batters must have a helmet on.
- Batting tees are **10m** apart.
- One batter at each Tee, one or more fielders at bucket 15m away
- Batter has front foot at tee.
- Coach “control” batters and watches fielders
- On 5th hit, player runs to 1st base, then returns to waiting area
- fielders put “recoverable hit balls” in buckets

BASEBALL HOMEWORK

- ❖ 20 self-toss balls in the air and catch

WEEK 7 – THREE STATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

All players will participate together in a 5-minute warm up game (see Appendix for ideas).

The Practice

Divide the players into 4 groups of roughly equal size and have them move as a group from station to station.

STATION 1 – MAIN FIELD

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 5 baseballs, 1 tee, 1 bat, 3 bases

Instructions:

One player bats, other players on bases and rotate

STATION 2 – Target Throw

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 10 baseballs, 6 washcloths, 12 clothespins, 6 small buckets

Key words to use with players: BALL IN GLOVE, EYE ON TARGET, STEP & THROW

Instructions:

- Use clothes pins to secure wash cloths on fence
- Place small buckets with 5 balls each approximately 10m away from fence
- One coach gives commands for all players, non-throwers sitting & cheering
- Thrower retrieves 5 balls and switches

STATION 3 – Ground ball glove catches from batted ball

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 15 baseballs, 5 cones

Key words to use with players: MILK CRATE, ALLIGATOR, TRACK, CATCH & COVER, HIP

Instructions:

- 2 players line up behind each cone
- Identify “glove hand” and “cover hand”
- Coach stands 8m away (able to hit to 2 cones) with balls
- Coach gives commands (i.e. READY, TRACK...COVER, HIP) and hits an easy ground ball to player o Glove foot should be beside glove when ball is picked up

- Player can throw ball back to coach and return to end of line

STATION 4– Hitting baseballs off a tee

Equipment: 1 big bucket, 10 baseballs, 3 bats, 3 tees , 5 cones

Key words to use with players: GRIP, BAT BACK, BEND KNEES, BALL, STEP & SWING

Instructions:

- NO PLAYER PICKS UP A BAT UNTIL A COACH TELLS THEM TO.
- All batters must have a helmet on.
- Batting tees are **5m** apart.
- One batter at each plate, others seated behind cones
- Batter has front foot at front edge of plate.
- After 5 hits, batter collects balls and sits behind cones

BASEBALL HOMEWORK

- ❖ 10 self-toss balls in the air & catch -- (10 off wall & catch, 10 off wall, 1 bounce & catch)

APPENDIX -- Ideas for games

Each activity is to be quick starting with minimal instruction and last 5 minutes max. Covid safety protocols preclude choosing games where there is a need for distancing, such as freeze tag where players touch each other. Choose other games or modify a tag game to eliminate touching.

BEAN BAG THROW

- Provide each player with 2 bean bags
- Line them up in a long row
- Players throw each bean bag as far as they can and then go pick them up
- Make it interesting by having the coach run through the throwing field and players try to hit the coach!

CONES HOP

- Place cones throughout the marked play area
- On "GO" players run to a cone and wait
- On "CHANGE" players find a new cone
- Encourage the players to run fast and keep their heads up

WHIFFLE BALL TAG

- Use 1, 2 or 3 whiffle balls and have a marked play area
- "IT" player(s) try to tag other players with the ball, who then become it; players try to avoid being hit

ACTION FREEZE TAG

- Player(s) with hat on is it, other hats help mark boundaries, decide on area and mark with cones
- Decide on "action" required to get back in the game if tagged
 - 2 log rolls
 - 1 push up
 - forward roll
- Change "it" quickly (every minute)
- no one is ever eliminated, players are always moving

GAME OF YOUR CHOICE

- use a game of your choice that keeps all players moving in all sorts of directions
- ensure all players will be safe