

TPMSL

LTP Coaches Guide

Topham Park Minor Softball League

Welcome to Topham Park Learn to Play (LTP) Program

This guide provides information to help you throughout the season.

THE GOAL FOR THE SEASON IS TO TEACH EACH PLAYER THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SOFTBALL, BEING PART OF A TEAM, WHILE HAVING FUN!

1. Things will look disorganized during the first couple of weeks. Once you arrive, you will be bombarded with players, parents, other coaches.

2. Be clear of the goals and expectations of the day and season. Coaches quite often will assume that every player understands what they are supposed to do, and how they're supposed to act.

3. Ask for help. Be sure to ask the Convenor or one of the Junior Coaches for clarification and or demonstration if unclear.

4. Keep the practice moving. The kids typically have a short attention span and will lose interest. The more the kids are moving, the less likely you'll have to deal with other issues.

5. Focus on the fundamentals. Always keep player development at the top of the priority list. There are 12 kids on the team. If each player leaves the season better than when they arrived, you have succeeded.

6. Encourage effort. The players are going to make many mistakes, some more than others. Players will be trying new things and advancing in their development differently. The one thing they can all be good at is EFFORT. Encouragement will instill confidence in the players and provide them with a base for getting better.

7. Don't worry about the small things. Kids will be kids. There is nothing you or I will do to ever change that. Set basic guidelines, and reinforce.

8. Coaches are role models. Remember to always talk positively about players, parents, other teams, and coaches. Kids look up to the coach, so it's important to provide them with a positive image. What we say, how we say it, and how we act can leave a lasting impression on a young player. Always be positive, even on those days that seem most challenging.

10. Have Fun! Coaching kids should be enjoyable. Try to have fun, and keep the season in perspective. **THIS IS NOT MLB.**

FIRST YEAR FORMAT

WEEKS 1-4: DRILLS DEMONSTRATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR TEAMS.

- Base recognition will be taught. This may only be required the first week
- Players will be taught the basics of batting, throwing, fielding through practice drills.

WEEKS 5-6: MODIFIED GAME (2 innings or time) INSTRUCTION WILL OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE GAME

- **All players on team will bat, no outs will be called. Players will be warned about bat throwing**
- **Each batter advances one base at a time.**
- Fielders will be instructed to call the ball "MINE" to try and avoid multiple fielders jumping on a ball
- **Fielders will be instructed to throw the ball to first. When fielder on first base has control of the ball. He/she will touch the base (white bag) and throw to home plate.**
- Infield and outfield players MUST be rotated during the innings.

WEEKS 7 AND 8: GAME

- All players on team will bat
- **Outs will be called. Bat throwing will be a first warning, any subsequent will be an out**
- **Each batter advances one base at a time. Based on team's progression, Convenor may allow more than one base per hit. Play will stop once fielder touches a base with ball in hand.**
- Fielders will be instructed to call the ball "MINE" to try and avoid multiple fielders jumping on a ball
- Fielders will be instructed to throw the ball to first. When fielder on first base has control of the ball. He/she will touch the base (white bag) and throw to home plate.
- Infield and outfield player MUST be rotated.

Second Year Format

WEEK 1: Review: DEMONSTRATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR TEAMS.

- Teams will review base recognition and the basics of batting, throwing, fielding
- Based on team's progression and time, **a game MAY be played**

WEEK 2 : Modified game (2 innings or time) INSTRUCTION WILL OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE GAME

- **All players on team will bat, no outs will be called. Players will be warned about bat throwing**
- **Each batter advances one base at a time**
- Fielders will be instructed to call the ball "MINE" to try and avoid multiple fielders jumping on a ball
- **Fielders will be instructed to throw the ball to first. When fielder on first base has control of the ball, He/she will touch the base (white bag) and throw to home plate.**
- Infield and outfield player **MUST** be rotated.

WEEKS 3 -8 Modified game (2 innings or time) INSTRUCTION WILL OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE GAME

- All players on team will bat.
- **Outs will be called. Bat throwing will be a first warning, any subsequent will be an out**
- **Each batter advances bases based on distance of hit and timely fielding. Play will stop once in-fielder touches ANY base with ball in hand.**
- Fielders will be instructed to call the ball "MINE" to try and avoid multiple fielders jumping on a ball
- Infield and outfield player **MUST** be rotated.

BASIC SKILL INSTRUCTIONS

BATTING BASICS

Proper Stance

- Dominant hand on top
- Hands together, above the knob of the bat, or higher based on player
- Feet - shoulder width apart,
- Square the feet to home plate –draw a line in the dirt to show the players where to stand
- Bend the knees slightly
- Grip the bat with the fingers, not tightly with the palm of hand. A relaxed grip is preferred
- Square the shoulders to the feet, chin should be closer to the front shoulder.
- Elbows should be slightly bent up

Proper Swing Motion

- Load and transfer - Begin the swing with a little to no step toward the pitcher. The foot should not be high up.
- The stance should remain closed – player should not step towards third base
- Move hands toward the ball, bringing bat through the hitting zone to hit the ball.

Squash the bug

- As the hands come through, turn hips at the same time.
- The player should turn on the ball of back foot. Squashing the bug
- Eyes should remain on the ball through impact.
- Proper stance and swing should be balanced.

Hitting From the “T”

- Tee should be belt high
- Players should not hit up on the ball
- Hit through the ball – driving the ball toward the pitchers feet

FIELDING BASICS

Proper stance: (READY POSITION)

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Knees bent - weight should be forward on the balls of feet
- Players move from side to side
- Their head is up facing the ball.
- Keep eyes on the ball until ball is in the glove.

Proper glove/hand position:

- Glove hand should just be touching the dirt at a 45 degree angle.
- Throwing hand should be above the glove with the palm facing the ball. Once the ball reaches the glove the top hand should cover the ball inside the glove.
 (ALLIGATOR)

CATCHING BASICS

Proper Catching Position

- Players in ready position start by facing the person throwing the ball
- The glove hand should be eye level and out in front of the body.
- Fingers up and palm facing the target
- Elbow should be bent slightly and arm should be in position to make a full circle in front of the body
- Other hand should also be up and close the glove to close the glove once caught
- **Player will want to catch the ball with the palm up and fingers down. This is ok as they develop. The goal is the palm facing the target**
- Balls thrown to players above the belly should be caught with fingers up, below the belly fingers down.

THROWING BASICS

Proper Throwing Motion

- Players start by facing the target.
- The foot of the glove hand should be closer to the target with the foot of the throwing hand back in the stance.
- Throwing arm should be in the 90 degree angle with elbow as high as shoulder with glove pointed toward target.
- Glove hand should be in front of the body (and move forward around the body as the ball is thrown).
- Once in position to throw the ball the glove hand foot should take a step toward the target and the back foot should pivot.
- **Release the ball at the point the arm reaches extended point, makes the throw toward the target while still keeping eyes on target, then continues with follow through. Arm should extend over to throw, not to the side**