

## ***T-Ball & Instructional Key Coaching Elements Summary:***

### 1) **Key Instructional/Coaching Objectives:**

- ❑ Main responsibility is provide a safe, fun, organized season.
- ❑ Teach FUNdamentals.
- ❑ Have a plan for every practice.
- ❑ Ability to throw & catch are the 2 most important aspects at this level.
- ❑ Get adequate support from parents and recruit 3 assistant coaches.

### 2) **Throwing:**

- ❑ Proper crow position, hand on top of ball.
- ❑ Proper grip of ball 3 fingers.
- ❑ Proper execution of drills -Indian style, One knee, Directional step throw.

### 3) **Hitting:**

Proper fundamentals:

- ❑ Grip - knocking knuckles lined up
- ❑ Stance - feet slightly wider than shoulder width.
- ❑ Stride - NO STEP
- ❑ Posture - knees slightly bent, hands at back shoulder
- ❑ Swing - short downward blow (top of ball), see it hit the bat.
- ❑ Tee position - in front on home plate & no higher than belt high.

Proper execution of drills:

- ❑ Proper hitting position (PHP) - Relax, Ready, 80/20, Contact, Finish
- ❑ Pivot drill - bat behind the back and squish the bug.

### 4) **Defense/fielding:**

- ❑ Grounders - Teach the Proper fielding position (PFP), start with slow easy rollers, and use drills to gain confidence, Wall drill with Tennis balls, Pick-up's and rapid fire.
- ❑ Catching - emphasize two hands always, move your feet to catch.
- ❑ Pop-up's - start with low easy throws, Teach proper ready position, Drills to use Self-toss, Coach underhand & Turn and Go.

### 5) **Base Running:**

- ❑ Base running is fun - work on this every practice.
- ❑ Teach them to run through 1st and look to base coaches for instructions.
- ❑ Teach players when to run and when not to run.

## *A-Level Key Coaching Elements Summary:*

- 1) **Key Instructional/Coaching Objective:**
  - Hitting a moving ball will be your biggest challenge.
  - Proper throwing and catching mechanics should be your #2 priority.
  - Catchers must be taught to be comfortable behind the plate.
  
- 2) **Throwing:**
  - Utilize the same drill series as tee-ball.
  
- 3) **Hitting:**
  - Getting out of the way of errant pitches. At time the machine will throw wild. Players must be taught the proper way to avoid being hit.
  - Introduce soft toss and one knee hitting drills to improve hand eye coordination.
  - Utilize the hitting tee to work on lower body mechanics and good balance in the swing.
  
- 4) **Defense/fielding:**
  - See attached drill series. Emphasize (PFP) Proper Fielding Position.
  
- 5) **Base Running:**
  - Proper sliding techniques
  - Rounding the bases.
  
- 6) **Catchers:**
  - Proper stance and protecting the throwing hand.
  - Teach players to block the ball with the chest protector when thrown directly at them in the dirt. Do not teach blocking of errant pitches from side to side this will be taught a next level.

## ***AA-Level Key Coaching Elements Summary:***

- 1) **Key Instructional/ Coaching Objectives:**
  - ❑ Hitting a thrown ball for the first time. Players must be taught to not be afraid of the ball and how to get out of the way of an errant pitch.
  - ❑ Emphasize safety in throwing and use of bats.
  - ❑ Pitching will be your top priority at lower minor level.
  - ❑ Hitter must be encouraged to swing the bat and the strike zone should be taught armpits to knees, one ball outside/inside.
  
- 2) **Throwing:**
  - ❑ See attached drill series. Stay with the basics.
  - ❑ Left, right, left throwing drill should be introduced on long toss
  
- 3) **Pitching:**
  - ❑ Proper balance point and directional step. Restricted wind-up (stretch)
  - ❑ See attached drill series.
  
- 4) **Hitting:**
  - ❑ See attached drill series
  - ❑ Hitting fundamentals is your #2 priority. Focus on drills and reps.
  
- 5) **Defense/fielding:**
  - ❑ Catchers should be taught proper stance and to protect throwing hand.
  - ❑ Catching fly balls
  - ❑ Infield & Outfield pop fly communication
  
- 6) **Base Running:**
  - ❑ Sliding - players should slide using backside not hip. Front leg elevated.

## ***AAA-Level Key Coaching Elements Summary:***

- 1) **Key Instructional/Coaching Objectives:**
  - ❑ Pitching instruction is the most important objective at this level.
  - ❑ Emphasize fundamentals as opposed to game situations and strategy.
  - ❑ Hitting instruction should be elevated to stress positive rep's 100 swings per player per practice should be the coach's goal.
- 2) **Throwing:**
  - ❑ Use more advanced drills such as solid lower half
- 3) **Pitching:**
  - ❑ See attached Drill Series. Each coach should work to develop 5 to 6 pitchers.
- 4) **Hitting:**
  - ❑ See attached practice program
- 5) **Defense/fielding:**
  - ❑ Rundowns
  - ❑ Know what to do when the ball is hit to me.
  - ❑ Infielders learn to play the ball not the bounce.
  - ❑ Relay throws from outfield - proper cut-off and communication.
  - ❑ Force & Tag plays at home plate
  - ❑ 1st & 3rd situations. Keep it simple
  - ❑ Outfield cut-off plays from the outfield, Proper body position to catch & throw
- 6) **Catchers:**
  - ❑ Should be taught the basic fundamentals of blocking, framing, fly ball and fielding a bunt.
- 7) **Base Running:**
  - ❑ Rundowns
  - ❑ Tagging up on fly balls
  - ❑ Running through the bag at 1st base. And proper rounding of the bases.
- 8) **Other:**
  - ❑ Signs and signals offensive & defensive.

## ***Majors Key Coaching Elements Summary:***

- 1) **Key Instructional/Coaching Objectives:**
  - ❑ Character - Develop it, Demonstrate it, Make it a part of every practice
  - ❑ Every player on the team must have a positive experience.
  
- 2) **Throwing:**
  - ❑ Crow-hop (left-right-left foot work) on long toss
  
- 3) **Pitchers:**
  - ❑ Proper fielding position after release.
  - ❑ Fielding bunts
  - ❑ Plays to 2nd base.
  - ❑ Covering 1st base on balls to right side.
  
- 4) **Hitting:**
  - ❑ Understanding the strike zone - Be patient at the plate. Look for a good pitch to hit. Teach a wide strike zone.
  - ❑ Tracking the ball from the pitchers release (see the spin)
  - ❑ Bunting for a hit & Situational bunting.
  
- 5) **Defense/fielding:**
  - ❑ Backhanders for infielders.
  - ❑ Getting the lead runner.
  - ❑ Rundowns - coverage, ball position, toss, alignment, movement after toss.
  - ❑ Tagging a base runner properly
  - ❑ Various defensive alignments - In-tight, corners in, regular, dbl. Play depth.
  - ❑ Turning the double play.
  - ❑ Bunt defense
  - ❑ Ground ball to right side coverage & communication.
  - ❑ Looking for secondary plays.
  - ❑ Proper back-up's - know where to be on every play (30 ft behind)
  - ❑ Fly-ball communication.

6) **Catchers:**

- ❑ Framing the pitch
- ❑ Proper stance - no runners on & runners on
- ❑ Past ball recovery at back stop - sliding on knees
- ❑ Blocking the ball
- ❑ Fielding a bunt
- ❑ Fielding a pop fly/foul ball
- ❑ Tag plays at home. Blocking the plate.
- ❑ Signs and signals to the pitchers.
- ❑ Setting up for various pitch locations
- ❑ Pick-off plays at 1st, 2nd, 3rd

7) **Base Running:**

- ❑ Delayed stealing
- ❑ Break down after crossing 1 st base - look for the over throw.
- ❑ Diving back to the base - protect your face, back of helmet to ball.
- ❑ Pop-up slide.
- ❑ Proper rounding of bases - always hit the inside corner.
- ❑ Aggressive running force the other team to make a throw.

8) **Mental Aspects of the Game:**

**Players:**

- ❑ Players are constantly focusing on the past and the future, not the here and now. They let mistakes stay with them.
- ❑ Lack of confidence - In order to feel confident you need to experience success.
- ❑ Player often look outside themselves for the culprit - No excuses.

**Coaches:**

- ❑ Don't coach mechanics in game situations.
- ❑ Don't tell a player what they are doing wrong unless you have time to work with them.
- ❑ Set up a training environment that builds self-confidence. Positive reps.

## ***Key Coaching Elements Practice Organization:***

- ❑ **Get help nobody does it alone.** Smith had Guthridge, Johnson had Turner, you need someone.
- ❑ **Accomplish 4 Objectives** - realistic objectives help you focus so your team can focus.
- ❑ **Write it Down** - basic fundamentals of success and teaching and coaching is teaching.
- ❑ **Make them move** - soccer, lacrosse are fun because they are moving more than standing.
- ❑ **Make it competitive** - healthy and fair competition breed's competitors and kids love it.
- ❑ **Make throwing a priority** - No longer, just warm-up, create games and teach throwing, we win more games because we don't throw the ball away rather than we do hit the ball well.
- ❑ **Change every 15-20 minutes** - Attention spans small, variety is the spice of life.
- ❑ **Hit in the context of controlled game situations** - take batting practice before games not during practice. Use T and slow toss, wiffle ball drills for repetition.
- ❑ **Divide players and do 2 or 3 things and switch or one thing in smaller groups** - Remember suggestion #1, give each layer more rep's and keep them moving (#4)
- ❑ **Use 15 minutes before a game to Drill** - Skip infield if need be and do a drill series
- ❑ **Encourage kids to watch other games** - Listen to the announcers during games on TV, the game it self is a great teacher.
- ❑ **Play wiffle ball** - It is great for base running instincts and hand eye coordination.
- ❑ **Talk with each player individually each day** - It doesn't have to be about baseball related, it doesn't have to be warm and fuzzy, but great leaders are personable and they know their people.
- ❑ **Have a rule of the game or a philosophy point to discuss throughout every practice** - Sesame Street has a word of hey day and it works for big bird why not for you.
- ❑ **Have high expectations during practice and a true sense of reality during games** - talent level is not an issue during practice.
- ❑ **Keep a copy of your practice plan** - It helps evaluate and plan for the next practice.

### **Typical Practice Outline: (2:15)**

0 - 15	Review expectations, stretching and calisthenics
15 - 30	Throwing - teaching and drills.
30 - 75	Hitting Stations: (Pick 3 depends on # of coaches available) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Swing weighted bat (25) individual/team</li> <li>- Wiffle ball on Tee (25) individual/players</li> <li>- Batting T (25) coach</li> <li>- Pivot Drill (25) individual/team</li> <li>- Soft Toss (25) coach</li> <li>- Font toss (25) coach</li> </ul>
75 - 120	Fielding Stations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ground ball's infielders</li> <li>- Pop fly's Outfielders</li> </ul>
120 - 130	Competitive games/drills involving conditioning & throwing
130 - 135	Announcements and reminders.

*Note: Pitchers and Catchers will need a separate practice unless you have enough coaching support.*

## ***Hitting:***

### ⇒ **Purpose for Drills:**

- to groove a fundamentally sound swing through repetition and focus.
- to work on a specific part of the swing to change (repair) or condition the player.
- to work on the team's offense with limited space and facilities.
- to reinforce the positives in a mostly negative activity.
- **Important Notes:**
  - Discuss with your players what the key components to a proper stance and swing.

### ⇒ **Stance:**

- Head Position - eyes level, head shouldn't be tilted, quiet head in stride.
- Grip - relaxed, middle knuckles should be in line, get bat out of the palms.
- Elbows & Arms - should be in, up or out you lose power and quickness.
- Feet - shoulder width apart, toes straight and even, weight inside toes and knees (balance), wider stance usually allows for better balance.

### ⇒ **Equipment:**

- Start collecting the following items if possible:
- Tennis balls, wiffle balls, golf wiffle, incredi balls, buckets (drywall), broom sticks or hit sticks, wiffle ball bats, Tee's

### ⇒ **Hitting Drills to Isolate the Upper Half:**

- One Knee Drill - Hitter gets on back knee with front foot in a balance position; this will force the hitter to isolate the upper half; can be done with soft toss or tee.
- Double Tee Drill - Place two tees back-to-back, place ball on the front tee, hitter hits the ball, and this will help to stop the looping or upper cut swing.
- Tennis Ball Throw - Hold the ball in your stance and throw the ball like you're swinging, the hand action is much like the swing.

### ⇒ **Hitting Drills to Isolate the Lower Half:**

- Hands on Hips - This will isolate the lower half with the stride, hip and back foot rotation; helps the player to understand the proper lower half. You can use a bat with this.

- Squash the Bug Drill - Pre-set the back foot where it should be at the finish so the hitter can feel what its like to have it turned. Can be done in soft toss or tee.
- No Stride Drill - Takes swings without striding to get balance, to correct over striding or stepping in the bucket. Can be used in soft toss or tee.
- Flamingo Drill - Exaggerates lifting front foot like a flamingo to gain balance or to work on getting backside through the ball (a back foot hitter).
- High Toss Drill - Toss ball over the head and have the hitter stride when you toss then wait for ball to come down to hit. This is good for the over strider.

⇒ **Additional Drills**

- A key to any drill situation is to be flexible and to re-adjust according to the level of play and surroundings.
  - Knob Drill - This can be used to get loose using visualization (great for pre-game).
  - Clap Drill - Two claps, first clap hitter strides, second clap they swing. Good for controlling and analyzing the swing. Great with groups. Can be done off a tee.
  - Rapid Fire Drill - Feed the hitter 10 balls quickly trying to get a rhythm.
  - Short Toss Drill - If you don't have a screen use tennis balls, wiffle balls or golf wiffle balls. Great for not having a field to hit on.
  - Second Drill - See how many good swings they can do in 10 seconds. Good for competitions and conditioning.
  - Long Tee Drill - Try to hit a ball off a tee at a target (this can be a ball on a tee or a circle or anything you want). Reinforce the idea of hitting line drives with a good swing. Good for a team competition.

## *Pitching:*

- ❑ **Balance Position** - The player should stand perpendicular to a fence/wall with the left arm extended to the wall/fence. The player should put himself in the balance position while using the wall to assist him with his balance. The player should count to 5 slowly then put his leg down and relax. **The focus on this drill should be on assuring the left knee, while in the balance position, is pointing to the right shoulder and the player's eyes are looking down his left arm simulating looking at the catcher.**
- ❑ **Variation** - Do this drill in front of a mirror so the player can see himself. The focus here should be to assure the player's back is straight and he is not leaning forward or backwards to maintain his balance.
- ❑ **Sitting** - 2 players sit facing one another 10 feet apart. Place their glove under their throwing elbow, while assuring the **elbow is above the shoulder**. The player should grip the ball across the **4 seams**. **The player should feel the ball be released from his fingertips**. He should concentrate on his wrist throwing the ball and **watching the rotation of the ball after he releases it**.
- ❑ **Kneeling** - 2 players kneel on their right knee facing one another 15 feet apart. The player should turn his shoulders so they are perpendicular to his partner and assume the crow position. **Assure that the throwing hand is on top of the ball**.
- ❑ **Two Feet Together** - 2 players stand with both feet together facing one another 15 feet apart. The player turns his shoulders so they are perpendicular to his partner and assume the crow position. Assure that the throwing hand is on top of the ball. From this position, the ball is thrown to his partner and the player is to **focus on pulling down on the ball as it is thrown**. **Assure the player finishes with his right arm touching the ground near his left foot**.

### **Chest to Chest:**

Shoulder to target.  
Arm, down back, up and over.  
Feet shoulder width.

- ❑ **Balance - Step - Throw - Finish** - 2 players stand facing one another 15 feet apart. The player turns his feet and shoulders so they are perpendicular to his partner. The player then goes into balance position and steps and throws. The player should **focus on his finish position** after the throw has been completed. **The player's right leg should be in front of the left leg a full 90 degrees**.

- **Variation** - The player should stand perpendicular to a wall or fence with his right shoulder 12” to 18” from the wall/fence. While in the balance position and crow position, the player should place the ball against the wall/fence so his hand is firmly on top of the ball. The right elbow should be slightly above the shoulder. From this position, the player should focus on pulling down hard while still remembering to finish in the proper position.

- **Stride Position:**

  - Arm, down back, up and over.

  - Pivot back foot.

  - No follow through.

  - Pause at extension.

  - Stride Position with Follow Through:**

    - Pause at extension.

- **Balance Point With Pause:**

  - Hand the pitcher the ball at balance point.

  - Player grabs ball from Coach who stands behind him.

- **Live Pitching** - 2 players set up with one pitching and one catching 50 feet apart. The pitcher goes through his normal (full) wind up. The player should be focused on rhythm, timing, and balance. **Assure the player is finishing in the proper position (i.e.: right leg in front of left)**. Also assure when the player rocks back on his left leg that his step is towards the second baseman. The rocker step should be a small step. If the player is having trouble turning his right ankle to get it parallel to the rubber, his rocker step is not being done properly.

  - Game** - Use this drill as a game where you keep track of balls and strikes. The catcher calls the balls and strikes and simulates a batting count. Keep track of how many batters the pitcher strikes out in 30 pitches.

- **Long Throwing** - 2 players should stand 120 feet apart. The player should take 1 or 2 crow hops and throw the ball to his partner. The player should focus on throwing the ball on a line as opposed to a fly ball. This drill is the best thing players can do to build arm strength.

- **Change Up:**

  - % less

  - Circle

  - Modified Circle - 4 fingers

- **General** - You will notice that these drills are designed to be done in sequence. I strongly suggest that each pitcher do a complete set of drills on every off day. That would mean 3 to 4 times per week on the days which we are not practicing or have a game. I also firmly suggest the drills be done in sequence as listed above. If a player does not have a partner to practice with, the drills should be simulated without throwing the balls. Doing the drills without actually throwing, will still produce results.

**Suggested Workout Routine:**

	<u>Repetitions</u>
Balance Position	10
Sitting	20
Kneeling	20
Feet Together	20
BTSE	20
BTSE - Variation	20
Live Pitching	30
Long Throwing	20
Total	160

## ***Catching - Key FUNDamentals:***

**Catchers** - The following list has only brief checkpoints for the fundamentals of catching. There will be variations to all of these. Adapt them to fit the need of the individual catcher.

⇒ **Equipment**

- Shin guards should buckle on the outside / chest protector, mask and helmet should all fit snug.

⇒ **Stance**

- (No one on) Stay on balls of feet / keep knees pointed forward / bend at waist for low target / bare hand on heel of shoe.

⇒ **Stance**

- (Man on) Cheat right foot back / lift rear end up / keep back parallel to the ground

⇒ **Signs**

- Keep knees pointed forward / put entire glove below left knee / heel of right hand shoulder rest on cup.

⇒ **Blocking**

- Kick feet out, don't move forward on the ball (it's quicker) / keep face and chest over the ball / watch the ball hit the ground / keep both knees facing forward, **BLOCK DON'T CATCH** / keep bare hand fingers together.

⇒ **Throwing**

- (Upper Body) - Pick ball out of glove, don't carry the ball / rotate glove back / point from shoulder in direction of throw / keep elbow above shoulder / stay low early, don't stand up.

⇒ **Throwing**

- (Lower Body) - Move forward not up / step with right foot / right foot should be parallel to front of plate, this will swing hips around and point the shoulder to second / left foot will take care of it's self when stepping forward.

⇒ **Framing**

- Move wrist not elbow / force web of glove to middle of plate / low balls should be caught with web down.

⇒ **Pop Flies**

- Turn in correct direction / take off mask and hold it / find ball / turn back to the rest of the field / once into position throw mask / stay back and move in as catching the ball / use two hands.

⇒ **Bunts**

- Take off mask / circle the ball so the from shoulder is pointing to first base / on balls down first base line, clear a throwing lane / use two hands to pick the ball.

⇒ **Backing up at First Base**

- Take the deepest path possible / beat the base runner / find the correct throwing angle.

⇒ **Tag Plays at the Plate**

- Use two hands / stay low like fielding a ground ball / go directly to the plate with the ball, don't look for the runner.

⇒ **More to Consider**

- Double plays / swaying / sliding into the backstop.

## *Catcher - Drills*

⇒ **Blocking**

- Have the catcher or catchers get in a receiving position with shin guards and mask on. Coach should be about 30 feet away. Using tennis balls, work the middle and outside, occasionally throwing a good pitch to keep them honest.
- *Coaching Keys: Kick out feet, block don't catch, recover quickly.*

⇒ **Throwing**

- Catcher should be in stance. Coach will be about 30 feet away throwing pitches. Catcher will receive the ball starting hands prior to receiving the ball. The drill is to work on upper and lower body not throwing.
- *Coaching Keys: Start hands early, point front shoulder, elbow above shoulder, quick feet, back foot first.*

⇒ **Bunts**

- Catcher should get in stance with the coach standing behind the catcher. Coach will roll a ball representing a bunt and catcher will take the correct path to the ball, picking the ball up with two hands, pointing the front shoulder to first base. Roll balls in all directions.
- *Coaching Keys: Round off the bunts so catchers front shoulder is pointing to first base before pick up the ball, clear a throwing lane on ball down first base line.*

⇒ **Fly Balls**

- Catcher will get in stance, coach will be behind the catcher with tennis balls and tennis racquet. When coach hits the fly ball, catcher will break on sound of contact.
- *Coaching Keys: Turn back to rest of the field, catch the ball moving in, two hands, keep mask until ball peaks.*

⇒ **Tag Plays**

- Catcher will straddle the plate preparing for a tag play. Coach will rotate around the infield with balls and fungo. Hit the catcher fungos, simulating bad throws from the cut off man.
- *Coaching Keys: Stay low and work up when receiving the ball like an infielder, get glove to the plate for the tag.*

⇒ **Framing**

- Catcher will be in stance with glove. Coach will be directly in front of the catcher on a knee. Hold the ball and move it around representing different pitches in the zone.

- *Coaching Keys: Move only the wrist and not the elbow. Can also work on swaying during this drill, trying to keep as much of the chest behind the ball when receiving it.*

## **Situations - Practice Areas:**

### ⇒ **Rundowns:**

- One throw
- Force the runner by running him hard
- Cut the distance
- Know the situation give up a run and get an out or stop the run?

### ⇒ **1st & 3rd Defensive Plays:**

- Play #1 - Throw to 3rd Base
- Play #2 - Throw to Short Stop
- Play #3 - Throw to 2nd Base
- Play #4 - Throw to Pitcher
- Know the situation
  - Are we giving up a run for an out or giving up the base to stop the run?
  - Don't end up any worse than you started on the play i.e., if they end up back at first and third - OK!

### ⇒ **Base Running:**

- Sliding
- Rounding the Base
- Watching the Coach at 1st & 3rd
- Stealing: (2nd & 3rd, Home, Delayed)

### ⇒ **Signs: (5)**

- Offense:
  - Bunting
  - Stealing
  - Take a Pitch
- Defense:
  - 1st & 3rd

### ⇒ **Force Out at Home Plate**

### ⇒ **Tagging the Base Runner**

### ⇒ **Turning the Double Plays**

### ⇒ **Relay Throws to Bases:**

- Stay basic and consistent
  - Use what works for you
  - Make sure all players know your system
- Practice alignment and techniques before doing situations
  - Depth with outfielders

- 2 hands with outfielders
- 2 hands with body turn for infielders
- Tags
- Team walk through
- Situations
  - Fly balls with runners in all positions
  - Base hit with runners in all positions
  - Sure doubles with runners in all positions
  - Pass balls and over throws
- Be accurate with throws
- Must practice quick hands and turning body on relays
- Must know the difference between Cuts and Relays
- The cut-off man is  $\frac{2}{3}$  distance from thrower and  $\frac{1}{3}$  from base i.e., cut-off man must be in position so that ball goes through his head and one hop to base otherwise it is a relay.

⇒ **Pick-off Plays for the Catcher:**

- 1st Base
- 2nd Base
- 3rd Base

⇒ **Bunt Defense:**

- No Runners on Base
- Runners on Base:
  - 1st
  - 2nd
  - 3rd
  - 1st & 3rd

⇒ **Offensive Situations:**

- 1st & 3rd
- Bunting
- (2) Strike Swing

⇒ **Pop Fly and Fly Ball Coverage:**

- Importance
  - Communication is crucial
  - No fear of going for ball
- Outfield
  - Center fielder has priority over everyone else
  - Back up depth and angles
  - Outfielders over infielders
- Infield
  - Shortstop on left side - 2B on right

- 1st base and 3rd base over pitchers and catchers
- Pitchers over catchers
- Exception
  - Pitcher best athlete
- Acknowledge call with “Take it”
  - Call ball at peak
- Communication
  - Center Fielder over all
  - Right Fielder over In Fielder
  - Left Fielder over In Fielder
  - 3rd Base over Pitcher, Catcher
  - Shortstop over all In Fielder, Out Fielder
  - 2nd Base over 1st Base, Pitcher
  - 1st Base over Pitcher, Catcher
  - Pitcher over Catcher

⇒ **Cutting off the Run:**

⇒ **Ground Ball to Right Side:**

⇒ **Bunt:**

- Have first baseman cover first whenever possible
- Pitcher “replaces” the player that fields the ball
- GET AN OUT!

⇒ **Team Defense:**

- *Defensive Philosophy:*
  - GET AN OUT!
  - Keep it simple and do it well
  - Stay out of big innings
  - Make the plays that you can make
  - Proper throwing mechanics
    - if you’re not ready to make a throw, DON’T
  - Look for “secondary plays”
  - Take throws on “ball-side” of the base
  - Come off the base and block the ball when you feel it is necessary
  - Know where you need to be
    - “back-ups” at 30 to 45 feet
  - COMMUNICATE!
    - who is covering second, # of outs, type of pitch, etc.
- *Defensive Alignment:*
  - Regular depth
    - determined by each players ability
  - Double play depth

- middle slightly up and towards the middle
- corners at bag level
- Corners back and middle at double play depth
- 1 corner up and others back
- Corners tight and middle at double play
- One side up and the other back - “stagger”
- Everyone tight

## *Infield Practice Program (60 min)*

- ⇒ Ground balls Crossfire:
  - Round 1:
    - 3rd & SS throw to coach at 2nd base.
    - 1st & 2nd throw to coach at 1st base.
  - Round 2:
    - 3rd & SS throw to coach at 1st base.
    - 1st & 2nd throw to coach at 3rd base.
  
- ⇒ Double plays at 2nd:
  - Coaches back-up 2nd and 1st
  - 3 Times around the in field
  
- ⇒ Pop-up to infielders:
  - Round 1:
    - SS & 2B - Coach throws pop-up's between players.
    - 1st & 3rd - Coach throws pop-up's over players heads.
  - Round 2:
    - SS & 3rd - coach throws pop-up's between players.
    - 1st & 2nd - coach throws pop-up's between players.
  
- ⇒ Infield in on grass plays at Home:
  - 3 Times around the infield.
  
- ⇒ Pitchers to pitchers mound:
  - Come-backers to mound throws to 1st, 2nd & 3rd.
  - Bunt coverage 3rd & 1st base sides.
  - Grounders to right side pitcher covering 1st base.
  
- ⇒ Catchers:
  - 3 - Bunts
  - 3 - Throws to 2nd
  - 3 - Pick off Throws to 3rd & 1st

- 3 - Pop-up
- 3 - Passed balls

## *Outfield Skills Developmental Program*

- ❑ Cross Over Step Drill (10 ea) - Player faces coach in proper ready position. Coach points to the left or right and the player using the proper cross over step runs a 10 yard sprint.
- ❑ Pairs Cross Over Step Drill (10 ea) - 2 players face each other in the proper ready position. One player sprints in either direction using the cross over step and the other player attempts to out run him in a 10 yard sprint.
- ❑ Football Receiving Drill (10 ea) - Coach uses mini football players run in a certain direction and catch the ball on the run. After catching the ball players jog to a spot and upon the coaches command they long toss the football back to the coach.
- ❑ Crow Hop Drill Using Proper Catching Position: (10 min)
- ❑ Cone Drill (5-10 ea) - Coach makes the players circle around a cone in order to field a outfield grounder such that the players field the ball straight on while charging the ball.
- ❑ Soft-hands using Wooden Glove (10 ea)
- ❑ Live Pop-ups With Throws to Cut-off Man (10 ea)

## *Practice - Throwing & Catching Program Sheet*

### **FUNDamentals:**

- ❑ Proper upper and lower body positioning.
- ❑ Proper crow position.
- ❑ Proper finish position.

### **Key Coaching Elements:**

- ❑ Do not minimize the importance of the basics throwing and catching.
- ❑ Foot work during catching is vital.
- ❑ Two hands during catching is vital.
- ❑ Utilize the front elbow to create proper arm slot during throwing
- ❑ Watch the ball into the glove.
- ❑ Use drill series to create/promote proper throwing mechanics.
- ❑ Don't over coach/talk the fewer words the better. Use drills listed below to instill the proper mechanics into the player.

### **Drills:**

- ❑ Sitting - promotes proper release of ball and wrist action.
- ❑ Feet Together - Isolates lower body & promotes proper arm slot and trunk rotation.
- ❑ Kneeling on One knee - isolates lower body, proper arm slot, teaches good follow through, promotes proper crow position.
- ❑ Solid Lower body - Same as above
- ❑ Regular Step throw
- ❑ Left - Right - Left Foot Work - promotes proper foot work for long toss
- ❑ Rapid fire - promotes quick hands and release and proper foot work.

## ***Practice - Fielding Program Sheet***

### **FUNDamentals:**

- ❑ Emphasize ready position for middle infielders vs. first & third baseman
- ❑ Teach proper *fielding* position (PFP). Flat back hands out front, chin up.
- ❑ Promote soft hands through proper receiving of the ball. “Suck it in”
- ❑ Emphasize proper foot work in positioning to receive ball and throw.

### **Key Coaching Elements:**

- ❑ Feet should be twice as wide as shoulders.
- ❑ Don't allow players to stand up after fielding the ball.
- ❑ Never throw off-balance.
- ❑ Step and throw. Make sure back foot steps (instep) to the target.
- ❑ Target should always be the players face.
- ❑ Don't over coach/talk the fewer words the better. Use drills listed below to instill the proper mechanics into the player.

### **Drills:**

#### **Proper Fielding Position Drill:**

- ❑ Ready position glass of milk
- ❑ 2 Steps into (PFP) hands out front, flat back
- ❑ Coach rolls ball to player
- ❑ Field, Suck ball into chest, step with right foot, crow & throw
- ❑ Alternate using a glove, bear hands or wooden glove.

#### **Proper Fielding Position Drill Backhanders:**

- ❑ Same as above only player must execute the proper crossover step.

#### **Live ground balls - with glove or wooden glove**

- ❑ Slow Roller's -
- ❑ One Arm Behind the back -
- ❑ Hard grounders with tennis or incredi-ball
- ❑ One hop line drives

#### **Tag Plays at bases.**

## *Practice - Hitting Program Sheet*

### **FUNdamentals:**

- ❑ Stance - Feet slightly wider than shoulder with, toes turned inward.
- ❑ Grip - Knocking knuckles in-line, index fingers to the sky, loose grip.
- ❑ Hands, Elbows, Ready Position - Top of the strike zone to top of the shoulder, away from body, elbows pointing down.
- ❑ Load your right side before the pitch so weight is 80% on back leg.
- ❑ Stride/Soft Step - No stride or short soft-step to trigger swing (not during swing)
- ❑ Contact Point - Head down, see the ball hit the bat. Squash the bug. Good balance.
- ❑ Finish Point - Head down in contact zone. Good balance position. Stiff front leg, bent back leg. Belly button to the pitcher.

### **Key Coaching Elements:**

- ❑ Knocking knuckles in line to allow proper release of hands.
- ❑ Butt of bat pointing to home plate to create short quick swing.
- ❑ Squash the bug with back foot creates proper hip rotation and generates power & quickness.
- ❑ Head Down at contact point forces hitters to see the ball hit the bat.
- ❑ Finish point in balance is an indication all things went right in the swing.
- ❑ Don't over coach/talk the fewer words the better. Use drills listed below to instill the proper mechanics into the hitter/student.

### **Drills:**

- ❑ Soft-toss top hand - promotes short swing and squash the bug.
- ❑ Soft-toss bottom hand - promotes short swing and squash the bug.
- ❑ Front-toss of inside hip - promotes better/proper release of hands.
- ❑ Quick bat wall drill - shortens swing
- ❑ Large wiffle ball's hit from the hitting tee - promotes level swing.
- ❑ Batting tee drills - groves proper swing and improves hand eye.
- ❑ Stride Drill ( step, pause, swing)
- ❑ Pivot/Squash the bug drill - promotes proper hip rotation and balance.
- ❑ Contact Point - promotes head down position.

- ❑ Finish point - Checks for good balance in swing.
- ❑ Proper stance - creates good foundation.
- ❑ Quick toss - same as soft-toss except rapid fire to promote quick hands.
- ❑ Hit drill - batter says hit at contact with ball during tee and soft-toss stations to improve hitters timing at contact point.

## *Practice - Agility Program Sheet*

- ❑ Shadow Drill
- ❑ Side to Side Toss
- ❑ Pick-up's
- ❑ Crazy legs cross over side steps
- ❑ Knee High's
- ❑ Skip, kick, step
- ❑ Overhead catch
- ❑ Cross-over step's
- ❑ Batters box step's
- ❑ Shuffle, Shuffle, Shuffle
- ❑ Run Down Toss
- ❑ Quick Hands - In a group of 4, catch and throw the ball as quickly as possible in an X pattern. Keep the feet moving at all times. Possibly use 2 balls.
- ❑ Relay - Hold arms up high above head , simulate catching the relay, turn glove side, small crow-hop and throw.

## ***Practice - Position Drills - Catcher***

- ❑ Proper Stance (10)
- ❑ Receiving/framing (20)
- ❑ Blocking (20)
- ❑ Passed Balls (6)
- ❑ Bunts (6)
- ❑ Pop-up's (6)
- ❑ Tag plays at home (6)
- ❑ Throwing to 1st, 2nd & 3rd

## ***Practice - Position Drills - 1 st Baseman***

- ❑ Proper Footwork Drill (10)
- ❑ Throws to the right with swipe tag on runner going to 1 st. (10)
- ❑ Throws to the left (10)
- ❑ Picks/Short Hops to Left (10)
- ❑ Picks/Short Hops Straight On (10)
- ❑ Picks/Short Hops to Right (10)
- ❑ Cross Over Base Path Throws to Left of 1st Base Path.

## ***Practice - Other Skills/Developmental Drills***

- ❑ Bunting
- ❑ Rundowns
- ❑ Sliding
- ❑ Wiffle ball games.
- ❑ Rapid Relay throwing drill
- ❑ Carry the team hitting drill.
- ❑ Fly ball coverage and communication.