

## **Additional Drills & Activities to Add or Mix Things Up**

### **Infield Drills**

#### **Rope-a-Dope (from Tom Dedin Clinic) 10 Minutes**

Place a rope at shortstop, doubled back to form two lines, 12 inches apart. Have the kids receive the ball with their feet behind the rope, but reach over the rope with their fingers all the way to the ground to receive the ball. Step over the rope with their power leg to throw.

#### **King of the Diamond - (10 Minutes)**

One coach at Home throwing the grounders, one coach at First Base with an empty bucket to put the balls in.

All players get in line at Second base. If they make a good play and good throw, they move on to Shortstop. If they make a good play and throw at Short Stop they move to Third Base. If they make a good play at third, they get a point. If they make a bad play, they go back to Shortstop. Every time you make a bad play, you go back one position. Play 10 rounds. Whoever has the most points after 10 rounds wins, and is "King of the Diamond."

#### **Rapid Fire (from Field of Champions Clinic) 10 Minutes**

Line up Players – One player jumps out at a time between cones/markers  
Coach throws to player who throws back to coach (next player jumps out.)  
Coach can also make poor throws to force adjustments from players.

Focus on ready position, quick feet, receiving ball in front of body (not to side), staying relaxed and with body control.

#### **Left/Right Drill (From Field of Champions Clinic) 10 Minutes**

Focus on pre-pitch routine, little motor or creep, alligator hop, whatever you use.

Kids in a line

From ready position player creeps or motors toward coach prior to pitch

Coach rolls a ball to a side form 10-15 feet away.

Focus on player staying low and opening up on first step ("half-moon")

Set up cones so players have visual aid as to the correct path to the ball

Gradually work farther back and roll ball at a greater speed.

\*This drill can also be used for outfield flies, focusing on initial drop step back.

#### **Cross-Fire - 10 Minutes**

Line players up in two lines, one at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, the other at Shortstop

One coach hits/throws to one line, the other coach hits/throws to the other. Coaches should switch lines.

Use this set-up for other drills (pop-ups, fly balls, etc.)

#### **Throwing Three Directions (5 – Minutes) -**

Have them practice throwing in three directions, straight ahead, left at a 45 degree angle, and right at a 45 degree angle. Have them point the instep of their power leg toward their target on forward step.

**Oven Mitt Catch (5 – Minutes) -**

Have players play catch with a safety ball or pickle ball while wearing oven mitts.

**Pickle Ball Bare-hand Catch (5 – Minutes) -**

Have your kids play catch with pickle balls or tennis balls, focusing on cushioning the ball as they catch it, with their hands out front. They have to give them self room for the cushioning.

**Two Step Throwing March (5 Minutes)**

Without a ball, the kids catch an imaginary ball, make a two step throw, and set up again for you to call the next catch. They continue to march this way until you tell them to turn around and come back.

**Outfield/Fly Ball Drills**

**Relay Race – 10 Minutes**

3 or 4 kids per team, spaced 10-30 steps apart (dependent on age)

Ball starts at foul line.

Have a race to see which team can get the ball down the line and back first.

Emphasize catching the ball with two hands, in a position ready to throw to the next player down the line.

Use a ball appropriate for the age group (hard ball, Rif-5, Safe\_T or tennis ball)

**High Ball Toss (5 Minutes)**

Kids play catch throwing the ball high to each other. Each kids sets up underneath the ball as if it were a fly ball and catch in a position ready to throw the ball with their glove leg ahead.

**Fly Ball Shuttle Drill with target 23 steps away. (10 Minutes)**

Run the fly ball shuttle drill, but have the kids finish with a throw at a bucket or target 23 steps away. This is the average distance most fielders need to throw to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

**Throwing Contest (10 Minutes)**

Have the kids line up at any distance, but 26 steps is best. Have them compete at hitting a target, whether it is a bucket, inflatable toy, water balloon on the fence, etc.

**3 Player Relay (10 Minutes)**

Three players line up 60 feet apart (Base distance). One on first base line (with a base [glove or marker]between his legs), one between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base, and one in left field.

The ball starts at the person on the first base line. When coach says start, the ball goes to the cutoff man, to the person in the outfield, back to the cutoff man, and ends at the person who started. The

first team to tag the base wins. Do a couple practice races, then rotate so that everyone gets a chance to play in each of the three positions. Emphasize the proper cutoff form and preparation for receiving a cutoff throw. Also, emphasize that the player at the base needs to be ready to put the tag down to end the contest.

After everyone has had a chance at each position, let each team pick which person they want in each of the three positions for the real contest. Let them compete about five times and give a point to each winner. After five rounds, declare a Champion.

### **Pitching Drills**

#### **Pitching Drills 10 Minutes**

Station 1 - Towel Drill – Slap coaches glove – 5 times each, rotate. 3 lines

Make sure hand action is straight, not rotated. Make sure slap is delayed, not early.

“Scrape & Step (at same time) Spin & Throw” Reach for glove and then slap it.

Station 2 From power position with wide feet “Reach, Spin & Throw” tennis ball at targets.

Station 3 Pitch from mound to coach or parent with real ball.

#### **Basic Pitching Mechanics (This is from the Tom Dedin Clinic) (10 Minutes) -**

**Introduce only the first or second stage of this during your first practice. Then add a step each practice.**

- 1. Up/Down** – Like an Elevator (Have the kids lift their front leg along with their glove, and then lower their front leg until it hovers just above the ground. Repeat over and over.
- 2. Up/Hold it/Down** Then have them do the same drill, but pause at the top.
- 3. Up/Down/Out** (Body Weight slightly back or centered) – During this step they raise their glove and leg, lower their leg above ground height, then slide their front leg straight toward the plate keeping their weight centered or slightly back. Stop when their foot lands. Front shoulder still pointing at plate.
- 4. Up/Scrape Down/Out** (Land on Flat Foot) Same as above, but the kids separate their hands down as they lower their leg, and as they stride they continue with their arms to the high power throwing position.
  - Throwing elbow above shoulder
  - Ball facing toward second base in a reverse “C” position
  - Front elbow or glove pointing at target.
- 5. Up/Scrape Down/Out/Throw with Hip Twist** (Have them freeze as their foot lands, then twist their hips while lowering their back knee slightly)
- 6. Up/Scrape Down/Out/Slide/Throw with Hip Twist and Towel Snap** – Same as 5, but they slide toward their target before twisting hip and snapping towel or throwing ball.

### **Proper Ball Rotation Drill**

With normal baseball, or baseball with electrical tape around it, have kids practice getting a perfect backspin on the ball when it is released.

Kids partner 10 feet away from each other. They hold the baseball almost like shooting a basketball free throw, with glove under throwing arm elbow. Focus on snapping the wrist with straight backspin, not wobbly electrical tape line. Focus on releasing with middle finger.

### **Group Activities**

#### **Bubba Baseball (from Big Al clinic and dvd) 10 – 20 Minutes**

Divide your team into two teams.

Bubba baseball is played with a big plastic bat or "Bubba bat" and a wiffle or Pickle Ball.

Play in the infield with shorter bases, or move to the outfield. One coach pitches and another coach plays Catcher. The kids do not wear their gloves.

Bat the entire roster and then switch. Kids like this game because it is fast paced and fun. Coaches can stop play at any time to explain a rule, situation, mistake, or correct play. This is a great teaching tool for situational play. Play as many innings as time allows, or use innings as a reward for working hard during practice.