

AYRA National League Minimum Skills

The National League should continue to work on all previous teachings and build upon these skills. This is the age to stress the teaching of "why" a player should do certain things for specific situations. Understanding the game should be stressed with everything that is shown to the players.

Hitting

The Swing

Stress weight transition, hip rotation, arms extension, and follow through. Stress the concept of "loading up the swing." Stress "short to it and long through it." Teach the "how and why" of the hit and run. Teach the "how and why" of hitting behind a runner.

Show players how to go with the pitch. Teach players how to keep one foot in the box and one foot out while looking for signs from the third base coach.

Bunting

Master the art of bunting. Introduce the "suicide squeeze" play.

Fielding

The Mental Game

Teach the player to be situationally aware. Teach the player that the proper play may vary for different counts on the batter.

Advanced Skills

Teach the concept of when to play the infield in and the outfield in. Teach the concept of double play depth. Teach individual base play to include glove position, footwork, and playing depth.

Base Running

Teach players when attempting to take an extra base to push off the edge of the bag facing the next base. They should not be landing on top of the bag.

Teach players to lead 3 1/2 steps off of first base and 5 1/2 steps off of second base. When leading off third base the initial lead should be short and should grow as the pitcher delivers to home so the runner's momentum is going toward home plate. Runners on third base should always take their lead in foul territory. When on second

base with two outs, the base runner should take three steps behind the base line to create a better angle to hit third base and continue home.

Catcher

Teach catchers how to circle a bunt to properly field it for throwing the runner out going to first. Show catchers how to locate a popup before throwing the mask away. Reinforce proper techniques on blocking pitches in the dirt. Catchers should have the "Nothing gets past me!" attitude. Catcher should start becoming the vocal leader on the field shouting out how many outs, calling for cutoffs, etc.

Pitching

Continue to reinforce balance and mechanics. Introduce the windup if the pitcher does not already know it. Continue to change speeds and work both sides of the plate. Introduce the pickoff move to each base. Teach the pitch out. Teach throwing over to first to keep the runner close. Lastly, teach the pitcher how to cover first when a ball is hit to the first baseman.