

# Coaches Corner #4

## Quote/Thought of the week

Last week I mentioned letting kids learn and figure things out on their own. A great way to do that is ask questions. Some good ones are:

1. What did you feel there?
2. What did you see on that play?
3. What were your thoughts?
4. Why did you throw to \_\_\_\_\_ instead of \_\_\_\_\_?

Ask even when they did it correct and then you can compliment them on a good decision and reinforce why they made the decision with the team.

## Drill of the Week

### Ladder Drills

Ladder drills are a way of teaching a progression of a skill. In the following example uses multiple drills to quickly teach many of the skills required of a relay from the OF to a base. The following example can be used at one practice or broken up into multiple, back to back practices to best keep players attention. It can also be used as a ground ball progression or even hitting progression beginning with items such as grip, stance, load, swing.

The ladder drills may seem very basic in the beginning but setting a good foundation is key. If your team seems to have the beginning nailed, move through the ladders quickly and focus on the later rungs of the ladder, then focus on the more advanced parts such as where backups need to go.

Many of the players may not have been told why you do it this way. Explain the "WHY". Why we turn glove side, why we direct the relay person, and why we back up where we back up.

#### Example - relay or cutoff

1. Players play catch with arms up, drop stepping to glove side
2. 3 player relay - middleman is relay man. Make sure end player tags pretend runner. Rotate every 2 throws. (have multiple lines going at one time so players are not standing still)

3. Move relay to a fence and work on a mini relay. Coach throws ball off fence player retrieves ball, turns to glove side and throws to coach who makes sure to move a bit right or left while player has back turned so the player has to quickly locate where they are going to throw. Throws can be very compact, 30-45 feet at most. The goal is to get the player used to retrieving the ball, turning glove side and quickly finding a target.
4. Extend the mini relay drill and switch in a player for the coach. The coach can now go play the base. Have a player retrieve the ball, throw to the cutoff (now a player) and then to the coach. If things go well try to direct the relay man left or right so a high throw or missed throw will still come your way
5. Substitute a player for the coach. Now we have a player at all three positions.
6. Teach how to run cut offs at multiple bases with a full infield and outfield. No one should be standing around. Everyone has somewhere to be.

#### AA + Practice Plan

Time	Station	Notes
0-15	Dynamic Warm Up & Baserunning	Let players begin to lead DW Time runners home - 1st and home to 2nd, get an average time
15-25	Catch Progression	End with 15 pitches flat ground work @ 40 feet
30-55	Ladder Drill OF Cuts	Drill of the week
60-90	Stations	
Infield Station #1	PFP's	Using P & 1B have players call ball ball ball and bag bag bag to communicate on ball hit to right side. If all goes well add a 2nd man
Infield Station #2	Flips @ SS/2B	Using 3rd base as 2nd base practice rolled ground balls to SS (who is actually down the 3b line if foul territory) and 2B (who is standing near where a 3B would stand in game). Have the player cover bag and get force out. Or throw into a net

Hitting Station	Hit it in the air wiffle ball BP	Using circle BP have players see how many total balls they can hit in the air (line drive or up).
95-115	Fun Game/Competition	Optional

#### Tball/ A Practice Plan

Time	Station	Notes
0-5	Baserunning	Home through first First to 2nd
5-15	Catch With Coach	Break into small groups and have players play catch with a coach working on fundamentals
20-30	Ground balls with Coach	In small groups, to get more reps work on groundball fundamentals. Add right to left movement if possible
30-60	Learning scrimmage teaching the fundamentals of force outs, tag plays, etc	Teeball will move quickly up to bat. For Single A try to stick to 3 pitches then add use the tee to keep things moving. For fun you can also play with an old mini basketball or soccer ball off the tee (no gloves required)

Feel free to contact me with any questions.

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