

OPYBS Coaches' Manual Addendum

9U Practice Plans

The following practice plans have been designed and utilized to teach players at the 9U level. Additional detail for each of the drills outlined in these practice plans is included in the appropriate section of the OPYB/S Coaches' Manual.

Please keep in mind that these practice plans are meant to be a guide. Each team is different, and coaches will have to adjust these plans to address the specific areas where additional skill-development is necessary. In addition, it can be very effective to utilize core drills as part of a pre-game warm-up routine.

It is important to remember that 9U players are seven to nine years old. 9U is an instructional league that is designed to prepare young players to the various aspects of competitive softball. Given that most players have participated in our t-ball league, it is safe to assume that they all have a general knowledge of the game. However, there is still a tremendous amount of training that must take place at the 9U level. Not only must players continue to develop and refine their defensive skills, but they also are being introduced to several additional facets of the game, specifically pitching, playing catcher, hitting a pitched ball, and sliding.

Much like t-ball, it is advisable not only to break skills and drills down into simpler, smaller components, but also to utilize a variety of different methods to teach them. There are, of course, core drills (such as flips, ball everydays, and the star drill) that should be repeated as often as possible. However, fundamentals can also be emphasized while practicing other, game-like situations, and this will help the players to understand why fundamentals are important.

Repetition is key, though it is equally important to maintain the interest of the players. With this in mind, get as much help you can, don't linger too long on one particular drill, and whenever possible, divide the team into smaller groups to keep everyone busy. Encourage players to practice core drills at home. Most of all, make practices fun.

PRACTICE 1 (90 minutes)

I. Warm Up / Introduction (15 min):

- A. Everyone introduces self
- B. Structure of practice: warm-up, team drills, hitting/fielding stations, team practice/game simulations
- C. Talk about and practice a lot of skills for offense and defense, introduce pitching, catcher position
Repeat at future practices. Please work at home.
- D. Questions, please ask. Problems, please talk to me. Unless you get hurt, no crying!
- E. Warm-Up and Stretching Drills [PAGES _____]

II. Intro to Pitching (30 minutes)

- A. Explain Motion
- B. Flips [PAGES _____]
 - C. 9'O Clock Drill [PAGES _____]
 - D. 12 O'Clock Drill [PAGES _____]
 - E. K Drill [PAGES _____]
 - F. Future Pitching Practices Will Be Held Separately. It Does Require an Additional Commitment But Anyone Interested Should Attend.

Note: Explain How Each Drill Fits into the Overall Pitching Motion.

III. Stations (40 minutes)

A. Intro to Hitting

- 1. Explanation of Stance and Swing [PAGES _____]
- 2. Dry Swings - Step-by-Step Walk Through, Then Full, Fast Swings
- 3. Top Hand / Bottom Hand Tee Drill [PAGES _____]
- 4. Full Swings on Tee

B. Fielding Review

- 1. Review of Throwing and Catching [PAGES _____]
- 2. Flips [PAGES _____]
- 3. Ready Break Throw Drill [PAGES _____]
- 4. Figure 8 / Swims [PAGES _____]
- 5. Review of Fielding [PAGES _____]
- 6. Coach Rolls Grounders / Throw Back

Players Should Switch Stations after 20 minutes.

IV: Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

PRACTICE 2 (90 minutes)

I. Warm Up Stretches / Introduction (5 min)

II. Stations (60 minutes)

A. Hitting

1. Tee Practice

- a. Top Hand / Bottom Hand Tee Drills [PAGES _____]
- b. Back Knee Hitting Drill (Tee) [PAGES _____]
- c. Full Swing Tee Drill [PAGES _____]

2. Toss Practice

- a. Side Toss Drills [PAGES _____]
- b. Machine or Coach Front Toss Drills [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A1 & A2 should switch after 15 minutes.

B. Fielding

1. Throwing

- a. Flips [PAGES _____]
- b. Ready Break Throw Drill [PAGES _____]
- c. Figure 8 / Swims [PAGES _____]

2. Catching Thrown Balls / Fly Balls / Line Drives

- a. Soft Hands Drill [PAGES _____]
- b. Coach Throw / Player Catch [PAGES _____]

3. Ground Balls

- a. Ball Everyday - Up the Middle & Glove Side [PAGES _____]
- b. Coach Roll / Player Field & Throw Back [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A & B Should switch after 30 minutes.

III. Base-Running (20 minutes)

1. Review of Base-Running [PAGES _____]
2. Incremental Base-Running Drill, All Variations

IV. Wrap-Up

PRACTICE 3 (75 Minutes)

I. Warm Ups & Stretching / Introduction (5 min) [PAGES _____]

II. Everyday Balls (10 min) [PAGES _____]

- A. Straight
- B. Glove Side
- C. Backhand

III. Stations (60 minutes)

A. Hitting

1. Tee Practice

- a. Top Hand / Bottom Hand Tee Drills [PAGES _____]
- b. Hip Drill / Lower Body [PAGES _____]
- c. Full Swing Tee Drill [PAGES _____]

2. Toss Practice

- a. Back Knee Hitting Drill (Variation / Toss) [PAGES _____]
- b. Side Toss (Emphasize Driving the Ball) [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A1 & A2 should switch after 15 minutes.

B. Fielding

1. Throwing

- a. Flips [PAGES _____]
- b. One-Knee Throws [PAGES _____]
- c. Ready/Break/Throw [PAGES _____]
- c. Figure 8 / Swims [PAGES _____]

2. Catching Thrown Balls / Fly Balls / Line Drives

- a. Soft Hands Drill [PAGES _____]
- b. Coach Throw / Player Catch [PAGES _____]
 - Increase Distance and Strength of Throw from Previous Session
 - Fly Balls Should Be Right Above Her Head So She Does Not Have to Move

3. Ground Balls / Coach Roll or Hit - Up the Middle & Glove Side [PAGES _____]

- Use this to Evaluate Potential 1B players by alternating Who Will Receive the Throw from the Fielders

Players at Stations A & B Should switch after 30 minutes.

III. Base-Running (10 minutes)

Incremental Base-Running Drill, All Variations

IV. Wrap-Up(5 minutes)

PRACTICE 4 (90 Minutes)

I. Warm Ups & Stretching / Introduction (5 min) [PAGES _____]

II. Everyday Balls (10 min) [PAGES _____]

- A. Straight
- B. Glove Side
- C. Backhand

III. Stations (60 minutes)

A. Hitting

1. Tee Practice

- a. Top Hand / Bottom Hand Tee Drills [PAGES _____]
- b. Back Knee Tee Drill [PAGES _____]
- c. Full Swing / Stop on Contact Tee Drill [PAGES _____]

2. Toss Practice

- a. Introduction to Bunting / Bunting Practice [PAGES _____]
- b. Machine Pitch or Coach Pitch / Front Toss [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A1 & A2 should switch after 15 minutes.

B. Fielding

1. Throwing

- a. Flips [PAGES _____]
- b. One-Knee Throws [PAGES _____]
- c. Figure 8 / Swims [PAGES _____]

2. Star Drill [PAGES _____]

3. Bucket Game [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A & B Should switch after 30 minutes.

IV. Intro to Sliding (10 minutes)

Discussion / Demonstration / Step Through / Jog-Through Only

V. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

PRACTICE 5 (90 minutes)

I. Warm Up / Stretching / Introduction (5 min):

II. Stations (60 minutes)

A. Hitting

1. Tee Practice

- a. Top Hand / Bottom Hand Tee Drills [PAGES _____]
- b. Full Swing / Stop at Contact Tee Drill [PAGES _____]
- c. Full Swing Tee Drill [PAGES _____]

2. Toss Practice

- a. Bunting w/ Wiffles [PAGES _____]
- b. Machine Pitch or Coach Pitch / Front Toss [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A1 & A2 should switch after 15 minutes.

B. Fielding

1. Intro to Catcher Position

- a. Explanation / Squat [PAGES _____]
- b. Practice Catching w/ Foam Balls [PAGES _____]
- c. Catching Foul Balls

2. Ground Balls

- a. Sit on Bucket Drill [PAGES _____]
- b. Coach Roll Grounder [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A & B Should switch after 30 minutes.

IV. Sliding (20 minutes)

A. Review

- B. Two-Man Helping Slide Drill [PAGES _____]
- C. Limbo Slide Drill [PAGES _____]

V. Wrap-Up (5 min)

PRACTICE 6 (90 minutes)

I. Warm Up / Stretching / Introduction (5 min):

II. Fielding (20 minutes)

- A. Flips
- B. One-Knee Throws
- C. Figure 8s/Swims
- D. Roll Grounders / Throw Back
- E. Fly Balls

III. Scrimmage Game (60 minutes)

IV. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

PRACTICE 7 (90 minutes)

I. Warm Up / Stretching / Introduction (5 min)

II. Stations (60 minutes)

A. Hitting

1. Tee Practice

- a. Top Hand / Bottom Hand Tee Drills [PAGES _____]
- b. Full Swing / Stop at Contact Tee Drill [PAGES _____]
- c. Full Swing Tee Drill [PAGES _____]

2. Toss Practice

- a. Bunting w/ Wiffles [PAGES _____]
- b. Machine Pitch or Coach Pitch / Front Toss [PAGES _____]

Players at Stations A1 & A2 should switch after 15 minutes.

B. Fielding

1. Throwing / Flips [PAGES _____]
2. Throwing / Figure 8s [PAGES _____]
3. Star Drill [PAGES _____]
4. Around the Horn Drill [PAGES _____]

III. Relay Drill (10 minutes) [PAGES _____]

IV. Sliding (10 minutes)

- A. Two-Man Helping Slide Drill [PAGES _____]
- B. Full Slides [PAGES _____]

V. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Sample Pre-Game Workout (45 min)

I. Warm Up / Introduction (5 min)

II. Stations (40 minutes)

A. Hitting

- Front Toss / Wiffle Balls [PAGES _____]
- Pitchers Should Go First [PAGES _____]

B. Pitchers

- Flips, 9 O'Clock, K Drills, Full Pitches [PAGES _____]

C. Fielding

- Flips [PAGES _____]
- One Knee Throwing Drill [PAGES _____]
- Figure 8s [PAGES _____]
- Relay Drill [PAGES _____]

Sample Pitcher/Parent Practice (60 minutes)

- A. Flips [PAGES _____]
- B. 9 O'Clock Drill [PAGES _____]
- C. 12 O'Clock Drill [PAGES _____]
- D. K Drill [PAGES _____]
- E. Rock Backs [PAGES _____]
- F. Balance Points [PAGES _____]
- G. Walk-Throughs [PAGES _____]
- H. Full Motion Pitches [PAGES _____]

New Drills:

Back Knee Hitting Drill

Level: 9U, 10U

This drill is designed to focus on upper body mechanics. The player should kneel on her back knee. Her front leg should be bent at the knee at a 90 degree angle. Her feet should be pointing across the base, in the same manner in which they would be if she were standing at the plate. The tee should be adjusted to a lower level, so the ball sits as high as the middle of her torso. She should swing normally, using her upper body, and coaches should pay particular attention to make sure extend her arms too soon and to make sure that she does not drop the barrel of the bat below her hands.

Variation: The player should assume the same position, and the coach should watch for the same behaviors. However, instead of using a tee, turn this drill into a side-toss drill.

Hip Drill / Hitting

Level: T-Ball, 9U

The player should stand at a Tee. She should hold her bat behind her back with one hand on the barrel and one hand on the handle. The bat should be parallel to the ground. She should step close to the tee, so that when she rotates her lower body, the knob of the bat will knock a ball off the tee. The player should assume a good lower body stance, and on the coach's signal, she should rotate her hips/pivot her back foot to knock the ball off the tee. She should freeze after completing the rotation of her lower body.