

# **OPYBS Coaches' Manual Addendum**

## **Sample Practice Plans**

The following are just a few sample practice plans to give an idea of how a practice might run. There are many other ways to run a practice, and we strongly encourage OPYBS coaches to send us your plans for inclusion here. The more ideas we can give to others, the better. Plans or other ideas or questions can be sent to: Brian Endless, OPYBS Softball Director of Instruction, at [bendles@luc.edu](mailto:bendles@luc.edu)

## **Practice Plan 1 (a sample first practice for 9U, adaptable to other levels)**

1. Name game -- stand in circle, throw the ball to someone across the circle, calling out that person's first name as you throw it, etc. [5-10 mins]

2. Warm ups -- stretching, jumping jacks and jogging game (pass the ball back down the line while jogging the bases) [10-15 mins]

3. Throwing drills: [20-25 mins]

- Flip drill with glove on (facing, don't move body, flip arm/wrist)
- Flip drill with glove off (softer balls)
- Back up a little, do "Ready / break / throw" (stand sideways, start in ready position, get grip / go to break position -- glove pointed, throwing arm back and cocked / throw ball)
- Back up more, regular throwing -- add in the concept that the person catching should take a step or two before making the catch -- move toward the ball!

REINFORCE: proper grip when throwing / glove facing out, not basket catching

4. Fielding drills: [20-25 mins]

- "Ball everyday" (bare hand), beginner (on knees, roll ball to partner, catch properly between knees)
- Ball everyday, side (same drill, catch ball on glove hand side)
- Ball everyday (with glove, standing) -- repeat a
- Ditto, repeat b
- Break into groups, coaches throw grounders, practice ready position, practice catch, position and quick release back to coach
- Girls form two lines, throw grounders to each other

REINFORCE: glove moves to the ball, not ball to the glove

5. Running drills -- practice running from home to first [10 mins]

- reinforce running through base (versus turning)
- reinforce taking off fast, don't look at ball, run hard all the way
- coaches demonstrate, then line girls up to run through it several times
- Timing drill -- time each girl from Home to 1B -- be competitive! Run through 2-3 times to see improvement

REINFORCE: running fast and always moving is the best thing YOU can personally do to be better

6. Hitting drills -- display the basics [10 mins]

- no real hitting, just proper form (stance, hands, nose on ball), how to swing, what to practice between now and next practice

REINFORCE: nose on ball

7. Closing game -- throwing at the buckets -- 2 teams [5-10 mins]

- 1 point if bottom bucket is hit
- 3 points if top bucket is knocked off
- team with most points gets to pick - run the bases or pack the gear bag and ball buckets!

At end:

- Things to do between now and next practice:
  - Ball everyday -- roll ball back and forth, catch properly
  - Proper glove storage
  - Play catch (remember your grip and form!)
  - Swing the bat! (go to a batting cage, practice with bat, without bat -- 10 mins a day!)

## **Practice Plan 2 (after basics have been taught):**

### **1. Warm ups [10 mins]**

- girls lead stretching, jumping jacks and jogging game (pass the ball back down the line while jogging the bases)
- 1 coach stays w/girls, others set up pitching machine and bases
- start on-time or even a little early if most girls are around

### **2. Throwing warm-up/drills: [10 mins]** – should be quicker now that they have the basics

- Flip drill with glove on (facing, don't move body, flip arm/wrist)
- Back, do "Ready / break / throw"
- Add in the concept that the person catching should take a step or two before making the catch -- move toward the ball!

**REINFORCE:** proper grip when throwing / glove facing out, not basket catching

### **3. Set up three stations and rotate through them [50 mins]**

#### **Station 1: Soft toss (or side toss)**

- 3-4 girls at this station
- Coach pitches 8-10 soft balls from a short distance (about 5 feet)
- Work on picking up the ball, watching ball in, hand/eye coordination
- Order: Player 1 (P1), P2, P3, P4
  - NOTE: when setting up multiple stations, it is good to pre-plan who will start at each location
- Any girls not hitting shag balls when hit
- After hitting, move to batting station

#### **Station 2: Batting (no fielders, just shag balls)**

- 3-4 girls at this station
- Coach uses machine to pitch 6-8 balls, use wall or fence/backstop behind batter
- Start with strongest batters/best at making contact (less strong hitters will need other stations first)
- Order: P5, P6, P7
- Any girls not hitting have gloves on at 2nd/SS equivalents and shag balls
- After hitting, move to fielding station

#### **Station 3: Fielding drills**

- Coach hits/throws to fielders – combo of grounders and a few fly balls if time permits
- Have one fielder stand next to coach (4-5 feet out) and act as First Base –when ball is caught, throw hard to first as if in game situation
- When someone comes over from batting station, move another girl to soft toss (have an order pre-set, including who is playing “first base”)
- Order: P8, P9, P10, P11, P12 (P8 moves to soft toss as soon as the first person comes over from batting)

#### **4. Fly ball game [5 minutes]**

- How did you do at home? (encourage playing this game at home, hopefully at least a few played!)
- Play one round, compare scores

#### **5. Closing game -- throwing at the buckets -- 2 teams [5-10 mins]**

- 1 point if bottom bucket is hit
- 3 points if top bucket is knocked off
- team with most points gets to pick - run the bases or pack the gear bag and ball buckets!

#### **Team Meeting / Reminders:**

- Saturday game at 11am at Maple North – arrive NO LATER THAN 10:15 (do this one with parents around)
- Wear full uniform – hair pulled back

Focus on doing your personal best, hustling all the time, helping your teammates and following what we’ve been doing at practice -- NOT on winning. We’ll win some and lose some, but if we do the basic things well, winning will happen.

## Practice Plan 3

*[NOTE: this is an early practice plan at the 9U level, including a section to work on early pitching drills. At 9U, each coach will need to identify pitchers. While volunteering is important, because pitching does take a lot of extra work in addition to having the potential skills, many girls will not think they can pitch until they try. When shown the breakdown of pitching, some players with very good potential may choose to practice more and stick with it. The exercise included here is to help with this identification process, both so the girls can determine interest, and so the coaches can see which girls it may make sense to encourage more.]*

### 1. Warm ups [10 mins]

- girls lead stretching, jumping jacks and jogging game (pass the ball back down the line while jogging the bases)
- 1 coach stays w/girls, others set up pitching machine and bases
- start on-time or even a little early if most girls are around

### 2. Throwing warm-up/drills: [10 mins] – these drills take longer if early in the practice season and players do not yet know the basics

- Flip drill with glove on (facing, don't move body, flip arm/wrist)
- Back, do "Ready / break / throw"
- Add in the concept that the person catching should take a step or two before making the catch -- move toward the ball!

**REINFORCE:** proper grip when throwing / glove facing out, not basket catching

### 3. Set up three stations and rotate through them [50 mins]

#### Station 1: Soft toss (or side toss)

- 3-4 girls at this station
- Coach pitches 8-10 soft balls from a short distance (about 5 feet)
- Work on picking up the ball, watching ball in, hand/eye coordination
- Order: P1, P2, P3 (P1 is the first person to move to batting)
- Any girls not hitting shag balls when hit
- Focus on picking up the ball and moving hands to it!
- After hitting, move to batting station

#### Station 2: Batting (no fielders)

- 3-4 girls at this station

- Coach uses machine to pitch 6-8 balls, use wall or fence/backstop behind batter
- Start with strongest batters/best contact: some combination of
- Order: P4, P5, P6 (P4 moves to fielding after she is done)
- Any girls not hitting have gloves on at 2nd/SS equivalents and shag balls
- Focus on picking up the ball and moving hands to it!
- After hitting, move to fielding station

### **Station 3: Fielding drills – with runners**

- Coach hits/throws to fielders – combo of grounders and a few fly balls if time permits
- When ball is caught, throw hard to first as if in game situation
- Use “stop” drills as needed to reinforce positioning and where to throw
- When someone comes over from batting station, move another girl to soft toss
- Call directions to runners to hold or go – work on thinking two bases ahead
- Order: P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12 (P7 moves to soft toss as soon as first person comes over from batting)

### **4. Pitching practice [20-25 mins]**

- All girls back together – talk about pitching in games/volunteers after this practice
- Talk about extra practice time needed
- Coach demonstration – pitching position/arm movement – practice with no ball
- Coach demonstration – Wrist flip, 9:00 drill, 12:00 drill
- Reinforce: ball is thrown at the hip/belly button, face sideways when thrown, straight line, flip wrist up to touch shoulder after release
- 2 drills:
  - wrist flips, pair up, about 4 feet apart, don’t throw fast, try to throw straight – 10 each
  - 9:00 drill – backup to 15-20 feet, a little faster speed – 10 each
  - IF TIME – 12:00 drill – same distance, fuller motion – 5 each

### **5. Closing game -- throwing at the buckets -- 2 teams [5-10 mins]**

- 1 point if bottom bucket is hit
- 3 points if top bucket is knocked off
- team with most points gets to pick - run the bases or pack the gear bag and ball buckets!

### **Wrap-up / Reminders:**

- Wednesday game at 6:00 pm at Maple North – arrive NO LATER THAN 5:15 (do this one with parents around)
- Practice at home between now and then as much as you can!
- **Psych up** (*this was used after a bad loss in which several game rules were broken*)
  - talk about how to focus even more on the rules after Wednesday’s game

don't let it get to you, focus on how to personally do better next time!



## Practice Plan 4

[This can be done after 3-4 practices once players have been practicing basic throwing and hitting skills. It is important to scrimmage at least a few times to give girls game-like situations in practice]

### 1. Warm ups [10 mins]

- girls lead stretching, jumping jacks and jogging game (pass the ball back down the line while jogging the bases)
- 1 coach stays w/girls, others set up pitching machine and bases
- start on-time or even a little early if most girls are around

### 2. Throwing warm-up/drills: [10 mins] – should be quicker now that they have the basics

- Flip drill with glove on (facing, don't move body, flip arm/wrist)
- Back, do "Ready / break / throw"
- Add in the concept that the person catching should take a step or two before making the catch -- move toward the ball!

**REINFORCE:** proper grip when throwing / glove facing out, not basket catching

### 3. Scrimmage [50 minutes] – try to get in 2 innings

- split group into two teams in advance
- scrimmage with infielders only – unless we have 7 on a team
- some position rotation between innings, but pre-plan if possible
- debrief at end for things to remember

### 4. Fly ball game [5 minutes]

- proper catching form – avoid the basket catch!!!
  - only basket catch if you are moving forward to catch a ball
- self catching game
  - 1 point for basket catch, 3 points for overhand catch
  - best points for 10 throws
- practice this at home!!!

### 5. Closing game -- throwing at the buckets -- 2 teams [5-10 mins]

- 1 point if bottom bucket is hit
- 3 points if top bucket is knocked off
- team with most points gets to pick - run the bases or pack the gear bag and ball buckets!

### Scrimmage Teams:

[Note: assumes 14 players -- decrease appropriately, starting with the Catcher at 9U and below. Players should not be randomly distributed the P1, P2, etc. distinctions are just encouraging that players be switched to secondary positions for subsequent innings. Using names like "Team Red" and "Team Blue" avoids distinctions that may suggest a level of players, like A team and B team -- while the coaches may not *intend* these to set up multiple classes of players, the players may take it that way.)

<b>Team Red</b>	<b>Inning 1</b>	<b>Inning 2</b>	
1st	P1	P2	
2nd	P2	P3	
SC	P3	P4	(SC position only if at TBall or 9U)
SS	P4	P5	
3rd	P5	P6	
P	P6	P7	
C	P7	P1	

<b>Team Blue</b>	<b>Inning 1</b>	<b>Inning 2</b>	
1st	P8	P9	
2nd	P9	P10	
SC	P10	P11	(SC position only if at TBall or 9U)
SS	P11	P12	
3rd	P12	P13	
P	P13	P14	
C	P14	P8	