



JUNIORS DIVISION GOALS AND PRACTICES

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At the beginning of the season, prepare a list of equipment and items to bring to each practice and game. Make sure parents receive this list and put the players name on everything.

- Water bottle
- Baseball shoes
- Baseball hat
- Glove (yes, it must be on the list, you'd be shocked at the players who forget)
- Cup (athletic supporter)

PRACTICES

- Have a well-defined plan of your goals and objectives to accomplish during practice.
- Keep all participants involved. Drills and contests should be short, fun and easy to follow.
- ALWAYS BE ON TIME
- BE ENTHUSIASTIC!! Make at least one personal positive statement to every player during practice.
- Be alert and watch out for potential accidents.
- Stick to the fundamentals.
- Give individual attention
- Change practices around building on skills already taught.

- **LEARN EVERY PLAYER'S NAME**
 - Make a game of learning every player's name
 - Work on this the first few practices until it feels like a team

TEACH THE POSITIONS

- If you tell a player at this age to "go play second base" chances are they will go literally stand on the base.
- By the end of the second practice all players should know where each position is located.
- **DRILL:** Have them race to the spot when you call the position.
- **DRILL:** Yell, "Shortstop" and see where they run.
- Encourage hustle and understanding of where they should be and where they should throw.
- Do not let your players think baseball is a game of standing around.
- Help the player to understand all aspects of the game.
- Make sure they understand whenever a ball is in play they need to be involved-backing up, covering a base,
- Fielding the ball –anticipate the bad throw

TEACH SKILLS

- Explain
- Demonstrate
- Have players perform the skill
- Correct the faults
- Repeat correct form

TEACH SPORTSMANSHIP AND RESPECT FOR THE GAME

- 1) To fellow teammates. Never blame a teammate for a bad play. Encourage them to “get it” next time.
- 2) To opponents
- 3) Encourage players to practice at home

BASIC SKILLS

THROWING: A good throw is one in which the entire body is used. It starts from the feet. The hand should be the last part of the body involved.

- 1) Point toe and foot in the direction you are throwing.
- 2) Front foot should point at the target.
- 3) When arm moves forward make sure shoulder is high.
- 4) Transfer weight forward as ball is thrown.
- 5) Complete motion by extending the elbow and following through in the direction of the target.
- 6) Proper grip of the ball: Two fingers across the seams

DRILL: Practice throwing to bases and have a contest for accuracy and distance throwing.

DRILL: Throw from knees to get good arm and wrist action

CATCHING

- 1) Use both hands and catch the ball with body directly in front of the ball.
- 2) Demonstrate different glove positions to catch a baseball: high, low, glove-side and back-hand.
- 3) When catching a ball above the waist fingers of the glove are pointed upward at a slight angle
- 4) When catching a ball below the waist the fingers of the glove are pointed downward.

DRILL: Place a player near a fence. From 15 feet away throw the ball to different glove positions

DRILL: Divide the team into squads and have them throw to each other down the line.

FIELDING GROUND BALLS

- 1) Make sure fielder is facing the batter in the ready position (never flat footed)
- 2) Fielders should be ready to move quickly in any direction and stay relaxed (this is different than being asleep)
- 3) **Position is crucial.** Knees slightly bent, upper body bend slightly forward, hands out front, good balance, feet parallel.

- 4) Position glove like a ramp, body and glove low to the ground, left foot slightly ahead of right (reverse for left handed players), look ball into glove, secure ball with bare hand.

DRILL: Have players roll balls to a partner with bare hands to make sure palms are up and they cover ball with other hand.

FIELDING FLY BALLS

- 1) Outfielders should be in the ready position. The younger the player, the harder it is to keep them ready.
- 2) Run to ball and then catch. Do not run with glove extended.
- 3) Raise glove to eye level and cover ball with bare hand after catch is made.
- 4) Glove is tilted at an angle just slightly closer to throwing arm to catch ball.
- 5) Always get ball quickly into the infield.
- 6) Teach running a 45 degree angle to cut off balls hit deep.
- 7) It is always easier to run IN on a ball than run OUT to catch it.

DRILL: Toss soft fly balls and build confidence and skill.

BASERUNNING

- 1) Always keep eyes up to see where you are running.
- 2) Run in a straight line.
- 3) Don't watch the ball when you hit it.
- 4) Run through first base (unless coach is waiving you to second).
- 5) Extra bases: Strike the inside corner of the base, as you approach first base move slightly out of baseline to loop-this allows a straight line to second.

DRILL: Race around the bases for time. Have players be a base.

DRILL: Coach and either waive them to second or push them to overrun first.

HITTING

- 1) Proper bat weight and size are essential (don't let the kids swing with a bat that is too big)
- 2) Grip the bat with hands together
- 3) Stand close enough to the plate you can touch the far corner with the bat.
- 4) Feet parallel to the plate, knees slightly flexed
- 5) Shift weight to back foot prior to pitch
- 6) Stride forward with front foot toward the pitch (watch for stepping out)
- 7) Project weight forward.
- 8) Pivot at hips as hands lead the swing in front of body.
- 9) Keep your eye on the ball. Don't just say it—TEACH IT
- 10) Teach a downward swing.
- 11) Snap wrists to stroke ball.