

## 2018 T-Ball Pre-Game Drills

Justin Smith - HFLM Youth Baseball  
[justinnaa@gmail.com](mailto:justinnaa@gmail.com) / 585-472-1715

Scheduled T-Ball "Games" are actually skill development plus a 3 inning game  
 Please allow 30 minutes for drills and 30-45 minutes for the 3 inning game  
 Below are recommended skill areas and drills for each week...feel free to adjust to your team's needs.  
 See HFLM Youth Baseball Coaches Clinic document for more drill ideas

Remember that young kids do not throw properly if playing catch with a friend (they are too nice). Have them play catch with an ADULT so they throw HARD and can be more athletic throwers.

### 2018 - T-Ball Pre-Game...Week by Week

Week	Dates	Themes of the Week	Notes	Warm-up (6 minutes)	Drills #1 (12 minutes)	Drills #2 (12 minutes)
1 & 2	4/28 - 5/5	Throwing & Baserunning	For throwing...focus on form and distance. Accuracy will come later...fluid mechanics better than "pushing" ball toward a close target.	Run, jumping jacks, arm circles, stretch, roll-and-go behind drill, etc.	THROWING A) Throw 10 to coach B) 3 Players & Coach...focus on throwing	BASERUNNING A) Teach names of bases & Run bases B) Home-Second Relay
3 & 4	5/6- 5/19	Throwing & Hitting	For throwing...focus on form and distance. Accuracy will come later...fluid mechanics better than "pushing" ball toward a close target.	Run, jumping jacks, arm circles, stretch, roll-and-go behind drill, etc.	THROWING A) Space Invaders (tennis balls) B) 3 Players & Coach...focus on throwing	HITTING A) Air Swings B) Hit 3 and run
5 & 6	5/20 - 6/2	Catching & Hitting	For catching..."knock it down" drill (below) is a good way to get players to catch with fingers up instead of always "basket-catching"	Run, jumping jacks, arm circles, stretch, roll-and-go behind drill, etc.	CATCHING A) Knock-it-Down B) 3 Players & Coach...focus on catching fingers up (like knock-it-down drill teaches)	HITTING A) Hit 3 and run B) Hit it up the middle
7	6/3 - 6/9	Combination Drill and Hitting	For throwing...focus on form and distance. Accuracy will come later...fluid mechanics better than "pushing" ball toward a close target.	Run, jumping jacks, arm circles, stretch, roll-and-go behind drill, etc.	Field grounder and throw to first base (adult as first baseman)	HITTING A) Hit 3 and run (tee or underhand pitched)

Drills: See coaches clinic document on the website for more detail

#### WARM-UP

##### Roll-and-go-behind (can do this with or without gloves)

- 2 lines, one ball
- Roll ball to other line
- Follow ball and go to end of other line
- Roll ball back to line 1 and go to end of line 1
- Repeat

#### BASERUNNING

##### Home-Second Relay

- Half of the team at home, other half at second...coaches can participate
- Ball is the baton
- First team to complete everyone rounding the bases wins

#### THROWING

##### Throw 10 to coach

- 1 coach, 1 player, 10 balls (tennis balls or baseballs)
- 10-15 yards separation
- Player throws 10 in a row to coach
- If simultaneous players...can establish a line to throw across
- Make it a race...first one to throw 10 across the line wins

##### 3 Players & Coach

- Players fan out
- Coach throws grounders and line drives and flies to each kid
- With focus on throwing...have several balls ready so if there is a missed catch or overthrow you can keep it moving.
- To teach "fingers up" catching...play "knock-it-down." Players knock the ball out of the air with the back of their glove...keep fingers up.
- (This teaches them to not be afraid of a ball coming right at them...and to use proper "fingers-up" technique)
- Keep it moving...more than one ball?
- Make it random
- Award points? (2 points for catch, 1 point for good throw, earn fly balls?)

##### Space invaders

- Use tennis balls...need a bunch
- Line up the players with balls in front of them
- Coach with barrel or garage can lid 10-15 yards away
- Coach moves back and forth...players try to hit barrel or lid with thrown balls. (They love hitting you)

##### Clean out the garage

- Use squishy balls or tennis balls (safety)
- Half the group on one side of a line, half on the other
- 10-15 balls on one side of the line (spread out) and 10-15 balls on the other
- On "GO" both teams pick up balls and throw them to other side...winner if one team can get all balls to other side
- Police the middle...don't let kids get too close...maybe enforce a "no-man's-land" area
- Kids figure out they should be quick and throw it long

#### HITTING

##### Hit 3 and Run

- Hit 3 balls off the tee
- Run to first base after the third hit
- Have a couple batters ready to make it go quicker

##### Hit it up the middle

- Set up batting tee and markers to define an "up the middle" hit

Player takes 10 swings...tries to hit the balls between the markers  
Define a minimum distance to hit it so players don't tap at the ball  
Most up the middle hits wins

### **CATCHING**

#### **Ball Handling**

No Glove, all players with a ball  
Like basketball drills  
Toss to self...two hands, one hand, alternate hand, catch after one bounce on ground, catch after bounce off knee, ball around waist, ball around knees, etc.  
Kids copy coach and then let kids come up with ideas  
Ball on ground behind player, pick up ball quickly when coach says go. Instruct kids to pick ball up w/ two hands quickly & bring to stomach (like picking up a grounder)  
Coaching Tips: Catch with two hands, fingers out, soft hands, watch ball all the way into hands

#### **3 Players & Coach**

Players fan out  
Coach throws grounders and line drives and flies to each kid  
With focus on throwing...have several balls ready so if there is a missed catch or overthrow you can keep it moving.  
To teach "fingers up" catching...play "**knock-it-down**." Players knock the ball out of the air with the back of their glove...keep fingers up.  
(This teaches them to not be afraid of a ball coming right at them...and to use proper "fingers-up" technique)  
Keep it moving...more than one ball?  
Make it random  
Award points? (2 points for catch, 1 point for good throw, earn fly balls?)

#### **Knock-it-Down**

Great for Kids who are afraid of the ball or who cannot catch very well  
Teaches fingers-up technique  
Use tennis balls or wiffle balls (grab a bunch...rapid fire more fun and more reps)  
Coach tosses balls at player's chest (dart throw...not underhand toss)  
Player uses back of glove (with fingers up) to knock balls away  
Great confidence builder and breaks the "always-catching-with-palm-up" bad habit  
Nice drill for girls - gives them confidence