



Coachs's Guidelines

2021



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General Information for Coaching (Continued)

Creating a Positive and Fun Environment

Athletes can achieve more when they are having fun. Here are some ways you can create a positive and fun environment to make sure your team is enjoying the game.

- Praising your players when they do skills well.
- Allowing your players to be loose and enjoy themselves, as long as they are still on task.
- Never asking your players to do something you would not do, such as excessive punishment runs.
- Encouraging your players to discuss the game with you.
- Mixing in fun competition-driven games and drills within a practice.

Teaching and Modeling Behavior

One of the greatest character traits baseball can teach all athletes is sportsmanship.

Start teaching your athletes about sportsmanship by explaining what it is and what it includes:

- Playing fair.
- Being honest.
- Following the rules of the game.
- Respecting officials, coaches, teammates, and opponents at all times.
- Remembering the golden rule to treat others as you wish to be treated.

Recognizing Good Sportsmanship

- **As a coach, it is important to know what behaviors are acceptable and show sportsmanship, and which behaviors are unsportsmanlike and unacceptable.**

Failure in Baseball

- Try to stay as upbeat and positive as possible
- Avoid removing players from the game for small physical mistakes
- Avoid the urge to publicly critique your players' play
- Capitalize on positive teaching moments
- Reinforce your players' strengths and their past successes

Keeping Perspective

Warning signs you've lost your perspective in youth sports:

- Conversations are dominated by baseball in all aspects of your life.
- Winning is more important than anything else.
- Your relationship with your players as their coach is based on their performance on the field.
- Your players' physical health is less important than competition.
- Your team is overly nervous about practicing or playing for fear of making mistakes.

General Information for Coaching (Continued)

Coaching Key Points

- Creating a Fun and Positive Environment will enhance your players' overall experience with the game
- You can be a role model for sportsmanship through your actions on the field and your interactions with your opponents, umpires, and other coaches
- Failure is unavoidable. Help your players learn from, and build upon, each mistake they make
- Maintain the perspective that baseball is just a game, and games are meant to be fun for all parties involved

Tips for Coach-Parent Communication

The relationship between the coach and the parents is a key factor in the team's success. If the coach and parents are all on the same page, it makes the message the players are receiving on and off the field more alike.

The goal should be to maintain open lines of communication with all parents throughout the entire season. In order to do this, consider some of the following tips:

- Provide parents with contact information for the entire coaching staff and other parents at the beginning of the season.
- Set clear rules and guidelines for how to address concerns with the coaching staff.
- Provide parents with a detailed schedule and communicate any schedule changes as soon as possible. Additionally, include any duties that parents may have throughout the year.
- Ask that parents give you as much notice as possible if their child is going to miss a game or practice.
- Establish an email group to be able to send out messages to all of the parents.

Coaching your own Child

- Have your child refer to you as "coach" in team settings
- Refrain from spotlighting your own kid in a single priority position
- Provide equitable character development opportunities
- Prioritize your off-field relationship over your on-field relationship

Creating a Successful Team Climate

Autonomy

Players need to have the power to make decisions on their own, and not rely on the coach to make every in-game decision. When players are empowered to make decisions, they often take more ownership of the game and become more confident of their skills.

Support

Support is needed throughout games and practices, but it becomes crucial when a player begins to struggle. Each player needs to feel supported so that when he or she does make a mistake or start to struggle, the player knows that the coach and team believe in him or her.

Pressure

Be careful putting too much pressure on your players. While you may think you are pumping them up for the game, you could be adding pressure that may make them play more timidly, afraid to make mistakes.

Recognition

Players need to be periodically recognized for the good things they do by the coaching staff. This promotes a positive environment that increases confidence.

Trust

Coaches must trust the players to make decisions on the field, and the players must trust the coach to teach them the game and guide them. It is important to convey through actions and words that you trust your players to do the right thing.

Fairness

All players are not created equally, but they must be treated equally. If the players think that another player is receiving more favoritism, they will start to resent that player and the coach. It is important to treat everyone as fairly and as equally as possible.

Innovation

The team should be able show their overall personalities, as long as they do not interfere with performance. By letting your players' personalities come together and shine, a team personality is created that can stimulate even higher performance.

Cohesion

Possibly the most crucial factor to a successful team climate is the cohesion of the team. Cohesion is a measure of a player's attraction to, sense of belonging to, and desire to remain a part of the team. The team should operate as one unit, not several small units.

Pride

Players and coaches should feel proud to be a part of the team. By playing for a team and coaching staff that they believe in, players are more likely to give their best effort and take accountability in the team's overall success.

Managing Team Players

- Create expectation for the players and team.
- Help them play better.
- Don't forget how hard the game can be.
- Take an interest in them personally.
- Win the heads and the hearts of your players.
- Communicate their role to them.
- Put them in position to succeed.
- Coach adversity. Teach players how to overcome adversity.
- Walk the walk.

Coaching Philosophy and Approach

- Teach one thing at a time.
 - Don't overload your players.
 - Work from the ground up.
- Stay positive.
 - Encourage process driven action over end results.
 - Criticize effort and approach.
 - Encourage players to become students of the game

Exercise: What do you value?

1. What do you value as a coach?
2. What do you hope baseball provides and teaches your athletes?
3. Complete the Coaching Philosophy Worksheet
4. Choose 5

Coaching Philosophy Worksheet

<input type="radio"/> Work Ethic	<input type="radio"/> Mental Strength
<input type="radio"/> Respect	<input type="radio"/> Dedication
<input type="radio"/> Confidence	<input type="radio"/> Character
<input type="radio"/> Responsibility	<input type="radio"/> Integrity
<input type="radio"/> Excellence	<input type="radio"/> Sportsmanship
<input type="radio"/> Education	<input type="radio"/> Personal Growth
<input type="radio"/> Focus/Concentration	<input type="radio"/> Selflessness
<input type="radio"/> Interaction with Others	<input type="radio"/> Teamwork
<input type="radio"/> Self-Discipline	<input type="radio"/> Independence
<input type="radio"/> Self-Discovery	<input type="radio"/> Interdependence
<input type="radio"/> Health Fitness/Wellness	<input type="radio"/> Desire to Improve
<input type="radio"/> Leadership	<input type="radio"/> Ethics
<input type="radio"/> Competition	<input type="radio"/> Commitment (even when its hard)
<input type="radio"/> Perseverance	<input type="radio"/> Determination
<input type="radio"/> Optimism	<input type="radio"/> Have Fun! Meet New Friends

Leadership Styles

Task-Oriented Leaders

- Autocratic: One-way communication, “my way or the highway” coaching approach.
- Dictatorial: Two-way communication, coach has the final say.

People-Oriented (Social Leaders)

- Democratic: Coach and athlete have say in team matters, decisions made by consensus.
- Laissez-Faire: Little or no direction, individuality is the norm, communication is two-way.

One thing to keep in mind is that these four styles are all useful, given the situation. Being adaptive in your leadership style is highly effective, and your personal leadership style might be a combination of some or all of the above. Which style do you identify most with?



Planning your next Practice

- USA Baseball Mobile Coach App (usabmobilecoach.com)

Download the App on your phone for quick reference to:

- Course Quick Reference Information
 - Practice Plans
 - Library of Drills
- Youtube
 - Talk to other Coaches

Coaching Guidelines Purpose and Mission:

This is a Coaching reference guide to go over the basic fundamental and developmental principles in teaching youth baseball ages 5-12. Coaching someone who is 5 or 13 can be extremely different in teaching the mechanics of playing baseball in the areas of hitting, fielding, throwing, pitching, catching, and base running. Coaching methods and terminology in these baseball areas change through the development of teaching 5 to 12 year olds. Teaching the fundamentals remains consistent. Coach's responsibility is to step in and provide constructive and positive correction to improve mechanics. Ultimately coaches are there to give the tools to help youth baseball players succeed. BJLBA coaches who speak the same baseball language will increase BJLBA youth players understanding of the game of baseball and ultimately increase their baseball knowledge from 5 to 13 in the areas of hitting, fielding, throwing, pitching, catching, and base running. These areas have been examined and discussed with BJLBA board members, experienced players, coaches, and professional players and coaches outside of BJLBA.

Batting

Every coach has a unique style when it comes to coaching hitters, and while each hitter's swing will be slightly different and individualized, there are a number of fundamentals that are the building blocks for every hitter's swing.

Stages of the swing:

The Grip (Novices-Majors)

- For a right-handed batter, the left hand should be above the knob of the bat and the right hand should be above the left hand.
- For a left-handed batter, the right hand should be above the knob of the bat and the left hand should be above the right hand.
- There should be no space between the hands on the grip of the bat.
- To grip the bat in the proper position in the hands, have hitters lay the bat handle at top of the palm where the fingers and palm meet, rather than deep in the palm.
- The middle knuckles should be aligned for both hands.
- The hitter's back elbow, grip, hands, and upper body should remain relaxed and not tense.



Stance and Balance (Novices-Majors)

The fundamental basis of hitting mechanics is balance. Without balance, a productive swing is not achievable.

- The hitter's base should be athletic and comfortable, and will vary from hitter to hitter.
- An athletic base is generally defined by having flexion in the knees and waist and the weight on the balls of the feet.
- Before starting the swing, the hitter's weight should be evenly distributed on both feet, and shoulders should be level.
- In the batter's box, hitters should stand close enough to home plate to be able to cover the outside corner of the plate while swinging.



Batting (Continued)

The Load (Novices-Majors)

Every hitter will have a different load.

- To load in anticipation for a pitch, the hitter should shift some of their weight onto their back side.
- The hitter's hands should also shift slightly back away from the ear, but should remain near the same level—not drastically dropping or raising.
- This shift in weight may cause the hitter's shoulders to rotate. This movement is acceptable as long as it is a very slight rotation.
- Make sure the hitter's head and eyes stay focused on the pitcher.



Stride and Separation (Novices-Majors)

Simultaneous to the load occurring, the hitter will stride, which creates separation.

- The stride should be a small step forward with the hitter's front foot.
- When striding, the hitter's knees should stay slightly bent so that they are in an athletic position, and their weight should remain on the balls of their feet.
- The hands should remain in the load position during the stride, and there should be minimal movement of the head, shoulders, and arms.
- The hitter should remain balanced throughout the stride.



Batting (Continued)

Contact Point (Novices-Majors)

Once the front foot has completed the stride, the swing can begin.

- The swing begins as the back hip rotates to drive the hands through the zone.
- As the back hip is rotating toward the ball, the back foot will pivot.
- The front foot should remain stationary as a brace for the swing, but allows the hips to rotate.
- The hands are pulled through the zone to hit the ball on a level plane.
- The hands and bat should go straight to the ball, creating a short swing. A short swing allows for quicker bat speed and better control of the bat.
- The hitter's weight should transfer from back foot to middle of the body.



Contact Point (Continued)

The contact point is the location in the swing in which the ball is hit.

- The hitter's head should remain fixed with eyes on the ball at all times.
- In general, the contact point is in front of the plate for maximum impact on the ball.
- There are three main contact points:
 1. **Inside:** In general, a pitch in this location should be hit to the pull-side of the field for the hitter or back up the middle of the field.
 2. **Middle:** In general, a pitch in this location should be hit back up the middle of the field.
 3. **Outside:** In general, a pitch in this location should be hit to the opposite field for the hitter.

Batting (Continued)

The Finish (Novices-Majors)

The finish of the swing allows for all of the force generated to be used.

- Once the hitter has made contact with the ball, they should finish their swing.
- The hands should continue around the front side of the body with arms extended.
 - This can be achieved with both hands remaining on the bat or the top hand coming off of the bat after contact has been made.
- The hips and torso should continue to rotate to allow the hands to follow through.
- The head and eyes should still be focused on the point of contact.
 - If the hitter is looking at where they hit the ball, have them refocus on the point of contact for their next swing.
- The hitter should be balanced throughout the entire finish.
 - If they are unbalanced, check their stride direction.



Coach Terminology Word Bank

Hitting Stance	Hitting Motion
Feet and Toes Pointing Forward	Load
Feet Shoulder Width Apart	Plant Back Foot
Bend Your Knees	Stride; Step or Step to Pitcher
Bat Up	Pivot Back Foot ("Squish the bug" for Novices-Juniors)
Hands Touching	Knob through the ball
Right foot lined up with Left foot	Rubber Band Analogy for Twisting Torso
Chest over knees	

Drills to Use

Batting Tee Drills

- Shoulder swings
- Bryce Harper drill-show pitcher bottom of foot
- Stride pause to stride swing drill

Fielding (Outfield)

Before each pitch, outfielders should get into a ready position.

- Outfielders should be on the balls of the feet.
- The feet can be kept even or the player can use a staggered stance as their ready position.
- Being in a good ready position allows your outfielders to get better jumps off of the bat.

Anticipating a Hit (Juniors-Majors)

It is important that your outfielders know where the play may be before the ball is hit. Teach your outfielders to work through possible situations in their head if the ball is hit to them. Some situations your outfielders should know and think about are:

1. The number of outs.
2. Where the baserunners are and the speed of the runners.
3. The score.
4. Where the play will be if the ball is hit to them as a ground ball, fly ball, or if it is hit in the gap. (**Situational Baseball**)

Outfield Positioning (Minors-Majors)

Depending on the batter, you may position your outfield to help them get to the ball quicker.

- For left-handed hitters who pull the ball, or right-handed hitters who often hit to the opposite field, you can shift your outfielders toward the right field foul line.
- For right-handed hitters that pull the ball, or left-handed hitters who often hit to the opposite field, you can shift your outfielders toward the left field line.
- For hitters who often hit shallow fly balls, you can move your outfielders in toward the infield.
- For hitters who have more power and often hit the ball to the fence, you can move your outfielders back toward the fence.

Backing up Infielders (Juniors-Majors)

- Whether the ball is hit directly to the infielder or to either side, your outfielders should always break to back up the infielder. If an infielder makes an error on a ball hit directly at them and the outfielder has not moved to back him up, the runner could easily take an extra base.
- Your outfielders should also back up throws from infielders to the bases, including pickoffs.

Backing up Outfielders (Minors-Majors)

- As a general rule, the outfielder closest to the player fielding the ball should be backing up the play.
 - Your outfielders should understand that the sharper the angle of a fly ball, the farther it will roll if missed.
 - This means a high fly ball will be less likely to bounce far away, while a line drive will roll a long way.
- Ground balls follow the same rule. Sometimes, a ball will take a bad hop, skip over the outfielder's glove, and roll a long way.
 - If a fellow outfielder does not back them up, then the runner will likely be able to take extra bases.

Fielding (Outfield Continued)



Ground Ball Fundamentals (Minors-Majors)

Teach your outfielders to always break hard for a ball, even if it is hit directly at an infielder. They should get in the habit of backing up your infielders.

- When charging and approaching the ball, have your players break down using choppy steps.
- Outfielders should field the ball off of the glove-side leg and come through the ball when fielding.
- Make sure your outfielders are always fielding the ball out in front of the body.
- Your outfielder is the last line of defense for your team, so they cannot let the ball bounce over or under their gloves.
- With no runners on base at the younger levels, your outfielders can go to their throwing-side knee to field a ground ball. If going to one knee, they should not be lazy and take too much time because the runner could advance to the next base.
- Outfielders should come up to throw with a long arm and keep their fingers on top of the ball to avoid throwing side-armed.
- Make sure they field the ball, crow hop, and throw the ball through the cut-off man.

Fly Ball Fundamentals (Juniors-Majors)

Teach your outfielders to run full-speed to a fly ball. Unless they have to make a running catch, the outfielder should have enough time to get to the spot and wait to catch the ball.

- An outfielder should never be directly under the ball, but keep it at a slight angle. This allows the outfielder to move toward the target before they actually catch the ball.
- Make sure your outfielders are looking the ball into the glove when catching a fly ball.
- Outfielders should catch the ball with two hands on the throwing side of the body.
- When your outfielders catch the ball, they should have momentum into the throwing motion.
- On a sliding catch, have your outfielders use the pop-up slide technique with the glove out to the side.
- As a general note, a fly ball will always curve toward the foul lines.

Outfield Communication (Juniors-Majors)

- Ball, Ball, Ball or Mine, Mine, Mine (Said 3 times when taking the ball themselves)
- Take it, Take it, Take it (Said 3 times when communicating to other outfielders or infielders to catch it)
- Back, Back, Back or In, In, In (Said when communicating to other outfielders)
- Track, Track, Track (Said when communicating to another outfielder when they get close to the outfield fence or wall)

Fielding (Outfield Continued)

Coach Terminology Word Bank

Outfield Fielding Stance	Outfield Fielding Motion
Feet Forward	For Balls Hit to Left and Right: Angle to Catch
Bent Knee	For Balls Hit Shallow: Run in
Staggered Stance	For Balls Hit Deep/Over players head: Drop Step and Over Shoulder Run
	For Balls Hard to Judge: Drop Step and Adjust (Drop Step First and Run Forward or Over Shoulder as needed)
	Crow Hops
	Extended Arm/Over the top

Drills to Use

Retrieve over left/right shoulder

Fielding (Infield)

Anticipating the Play (Minors-Majors)

One of the keys to playing good defense is anticipating plays before they happen. Infielders should think about the situation before the ball arrives to them. Some things to consider are:

- The inning and the score.
- The baserunners, where they are, and understanding their speed.
- The number of outs.
- Where the play will be if the ball is hit to them.

Pre-Pitch Movement (Juniors-Majors)

Infielders should use a pre-pitch movement to get into an athletic stance. There is no one way for pre-pitch movement. Some examples are:

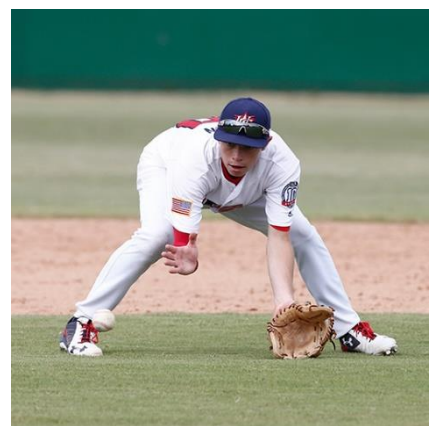
- Walking into a split step.
- Walking into having one foot forward.
- Standing into a split step.

This movement makes for quicker reactions to a batted ball, and the pitch-by-pitch attention maximizes your infielder's focus during the game.

Barry Larkin: "There is not one way to do anything in baseball but you have to be prepared"

Ready Stance (Novices-Majors)

- Infielders should be in an athletic stance and should not be flat-footed.
- Your infielder's glove should be out as if about to field a ground ball.
 - Third and first basemen may want to be lower, with their glove on the ground, as their reaction time needs to be quicker.
- The key is to make the transition from waiting for the ball to fielding the ball as smooth as possible.



Fielding (Infield Continued)

General Fielding Fundamentals (Novices-Majors)

Consistency is very important to being a great infielder. Getting to a proper fielding stance on each and every ground ball allows for greater consistency. A few key points are:

- Your infielders should be in a good, athletic ready stance.
- When fielding a ground ball, your infielders' eyes should be tracking the ball into the glove.
- The glove should be out in front of the body with the fingertips pointed toward the ground.

Ground Ball Footwork (Minors-Majors)

When a ball is hit directly to your infielder, their first move should be a shuffle or jab step to the right. This is called getting "outside the ball." With this tactic, the infielder can read the ground ball correctly and then field the ball on a long hop or a short hop. In addition, your infielder will maintain their flow to and through the ball, allowing for a smooth throw to first base.

- After the initial jab step, your infielder should move into the proper fielding position.
- Using short, quick, choppy steps, the fielder should move forward to the ball.
 - The final steps will bring them to an athletic fielding position with the glove down and eyes on the ball.
- Make sure your infielder is always trying to keep their feet moving and catch the ball on the gloveside of their body to maintain rhythm through the ball.
 - Barry Larkin: Draw an imaginary line in the center of your body. Receive the ball on the gloveside of that line. *(exception to novices)*

Reading the Hop (Minors-Majors)

Proper footwork assures that your infielders will rarely get a bad hop. Even on a field in poor condition, your infielders can limit the number of bad hops they receive.

- Infielders should field every ground ball on either a long hop or a short hop.
- To do this, the approach to the ball is very important. Avoiding the in-between hop will limit the number of errors an infielder makes.
- Your infielders must read the trajectory of the ball off of the bat, and either charge or wait on the ball to catch the short or long hop.
 - Be aggressive in reacting to the ball
 - Getting the right hop is based on deciding when to attack the ball
 - Don't sit back and let the ball play you



Fielding (Infield Continued)

Forehand Fundamentals (Minors-Majors)

Forehanded fielding is fielding the ball off of the glove side of the body. For right-handed players, this means the ball is hit to their left. For left-handed players, this means the ball is hit to their right.

- On a ball that is hit to the forehand side and short, infielders can get in front of the ball and catch with two hands.
- On a ball hit to the forehand side that is deep, infielders should try to catch the ball with one hand.
- Infielders should field the ball out away from the body to create a good rhythm going into the throw.
- Once fielded, infielders should move their feet and take their body to the throw



Backhand Fundamentals (Minors-Majors)

Backhanded fielding occurs when the ball is hit to your player's throwing side, and they are unable to move and get in front of/around the ball.

There are two ways to field a ground ball backhanded.

1. **Field off of the back foot:** Your infielder should plant their throwing side leg and shift their weight from back to front, bringing the glove through on the ground.
 - Once they field the ball, they should shuffle toward first base and throw.
2. **Crossover step:** Cross-over with the glove side foot, fielding the ball in front of that leg.
 - Once your infielder fields the ball, they should plant the back leg and throw.

Note: Third and first basemen may not have a choice of which method to use if the ball is hit hard enough. Middle infielders may have more of a choice between the two methods based on the speed of the ball. The objective is to get rid of the ball as quickly as possible with an accurate throw to the base.



Fielding (Infield Continued)

Coach Terminology Word Bank

Infield Fielding Stance	Infield Fielding Motion
Infield Ready	Wide Stance; legs more than shoulder width apart
Creep (First Step, Tennis Step/Split Step)	Bent Knees (Butt down)
Bent Knee	Chest Over Knees
Glove Forward, Pocket Out, Slightly Below Waist	Flat Back
On Balls of Feet	Receive Ball at Highest Point or Lowest Point
Read Left to Right	Glove in the Dirt
Wide Stance (Wider for 1st and 3rd base)	Fingers Pointing Down
Body in Rhythm	Arms Extended
	Non Glove Hand Ready (Alligator or Trap)
	Quick Transfer from Glove to Hand
	Shuffle

Tips

Balls grounded slower:

- Player receives ball in middle of body whenever possible until advanced
- Charge
- Charge and receive gloveside (More Advanced for Minors or Majors)

Balls grounded faster:

Forehand/Gloveside

- Backstep/Side step/Both
- Extended Stance

Backhand

- Backstep/Side step/Both
- Extended Stance
- Top of Glove pointing down (no pancake hand)

Drills to Use

- On Knee Drills (Forehand, Middle, Backhand)
- Stationary Foot Drills (Forehand, Middle, Backhand)
- Cone Drills: Forehand, Middle, Backhand
- Cone Drills: Charge Ball

Throwing (In General)

Athletic Throwing Stance and Motion (Novices-Majors)

- **Stay Low:** Slightly Bent Knee
- Foot and shoulder pointed at target
- Point Elbow or Glove
- Extended Throwing Arm
- Ball down
- L in Throwing Arm
- Open Chest to target
- Snap Wrist
- Follow Through

Pitching

Windup Stance (Minors-Majors)

With no runners on base, for example, the windup can be used.

- For this stance, teach your pitcher to begin on the rubber facing home plate, in an athletic position with their glove and throwing hand together in front of their chest.
- The pitcher should be upright and relaxed.
- From this position, the pitcher should take a rocker step with their glove-side foot. Make sure your pitcher maintains balance during this step.
- The pitcher will then pivot their throwing-side foot so that it is flush against the front side of the rubber.
- Once in this position, the pitcher can then pull their glove-side knee up to get to the leg lift or balance position.

Stretch Stance (Minors-Majors)

The stretch stance is used more commonly today than ever before when there are no runners on base. It is also used as the primary stance with runners on base. Because it's simple, this stance is frequently used to introduce pitching to younger players.

- For this stance, the pitcher will start with their glove-side shoulder pointed toward home plate, and the outside of their throwing-side foot flush with the front side of the rubber.
- Their glove and throwing hand should be in a relaxed position in front of their chest, and their feet should be shoulder-width apart.
- From this position, the pitcher can shift their weight back onto their throwing-side foot to get to the leg lift or balance position.



Pitching (Continued)

Leg Lift (Minors-Majors)

No matter which stance is used to start the delivery, the pitcher will always gain their balance and collect their power using a leg lift.

- The pitcher should bring their glove-side knee up so that their thigh is at least parallel to the ground and slightly towards their back shoulder.
- While maintaining balance and body control, their lower body should be loaded and ready to move forward to deliver the pitch.
- Lift the leg so the knee points slightly toward the back shoulder



Break of the Hands (Minors-Majors)

The pitcher begins their movement toward the plate with the break phase. In the break phase, the pitcher should be focused on the catcher's mitt. This is when the ball and glove separate, and the throwing motion begins.

- There are all different types of athletes, and every pitcher will be different.
- As the leg starts coming down, the pitcher can start breaking their hands. Mickey Galloway: Don't follow your hands with your legs, break around chest.
- Ultimately, the main goal is to get the arm up in a good position when the stride foot hits the ground.



Pitching (Continued)

Power Position (Minors-Majors)

The glove-side foot has now hit the ground, leaving the pitcher in the power position. Here, the legs are in a wide base, both arms are raised and prepared to begin the transition forward. This transition should begin as soon as the glove-side foot hits the ground.

- The pitcher should have a shoulder tilt with the glove arm shoulder slightly higher than the throwing arm shoulder.
- The arm and ball should be up in a position to begin transitioning.
- The front side should remain strong.
- The stride should have direction and alignment toward the plate.
- The stride foot should be on the ground and the back foot should still be engaged on the rubber.



Release Point (Minors-Majors)

The release point is where the pitcher's entire delivery comes together.

- Now, your pitcher's upper body and momentum should have shifted out over their glove-side leg.
- The throwing-side arm should now accelerate toward the catcher, and the pitcher should feel as though they are staying behind the ball as long as possible.
- The ball should be released out front with as much extension as possible on a downward trajectory toward the target.
- After the release point, a natural pronation should occur.



Follow Through (Minors-Majors)

Now that the pitch has been thrown, the proper execution of the follow through is a critical last step to the delivery. There are two primary tenets to a proper follow through.

- The follow through should enable the pitcher to have a natural deceleration of his throwing arm.
 - An abrupt stoppage of the arm or an off-balance finish is a recipe for an injury.
 - Make sure your pitcher finishes his motion with a flat back and allows his throwing arm to finish past his glove-side knee.
 - Pitchers should stay as strong as they can on that plant leg.
- A good follow through will land the pitcher in a good position to become an active fielder.
 - Fielding his position is one of the best ways a pitcher can help his own cause, and the proper follow through is the first step to achieving that success.



Base-Running Fundamentals

Running from Home to 1st Base (Novices-Majors)

- Runners should focus on the front of the bag
- Make sure runners stay in stride when running through the bag
- Players should run full speed through first base, striking the front of the bag with their foot without chopping their strides or lunging at the bag.
- After crossing the bag by a couple of steps, the player can then start to break down by keeping their feet slightly wider than their shoulders and using short choppy steps.
- As the player is slowing down, they should be looking towards the first base side fence to see if the ball was over-thrown.

Running from Home to First: Rounding First (Juniors-Majors)

- When your player hits a clean single, they should round first base to see if there is a chance to advance to second base.
- Your player should run full speed as they drift slightly away from the first base line to make an arc toward the inside corner of first base.
- Make sure your player hits the inside part of the bag to set their angle toward second base while staying in stride and not slowing down.
- Your player should locate the ball and be in a position to advance to second base if they see an opportunity.
- Once the player knows they cannot advance to second base, they should break down and shuffle back to first base.

Leads at First Base (Majors)

When your baserunners are on first base, teach them to do the following:

- While on first base, baserunners should be alert, look for signs from the third base coach, and keep track of other baserunners and the number of outs.
- The primary lead is based on comfort and skill level of the baserunner, but is generally a step and a dive away from the bag.
- Make sure players are not crossing over their feet while taking their lead.
- As the pitch is delivered, baserunners should take a secondary lead of three to four lateral shuffles.
- The secondary lead should be aggressive, but on a no action pitch your baserunner should be ready to get back to first base quickly or the catcher can pick them off.
- If the pitcher turns to pick off the baserunner, the runner should dive or run back to the back corner of the base.

Stealing Second Base (Minors-Majors)

Stealing second base is one way you can get your players into scoring position. When teaching your players how to steal second base, remember the following:

- Your baserunner should get a primary lead off of first base while the pitcher is setting up and be in a good athletic position.
- When the pitcher begins his delivery to home plate, your baserunner's left foot should cross over their right foot and they should stay low while moving toward second base.

Base-Running Fundamentals (Continued)

Running Around the Bases (Juniors-Majors)

When running around the bases, or running around multiple bases at a time, there are some fundamentals your baserunners should know.

- Make sure your baserunners hit the inside part of each bag to create better angles and shorten the distance from base to base.
- Baserunners should not be running in a straight line from base to base, as that will slow them down and make it hard to turn and run to the next base.



Line Drives (Juniors-Majors)

- When a line drive is hit with less than two outs, your baserunner's first reaction should be to get back to the bag.
- If your players freeze in the base path before getting back to the bag they could get thrown out.

Single to Right Field (Juniors-Majors)

- When a runner is on first and there is a single hit to right field, the runner should pick up the third base coach when approaching second base to see if they should continue to third or stop at second base.
- In this case, the third base coach is important because the ball is behind the runner and they cannot make that decision on their own.

Single to Left Field (Juniors-Majors)

- When there are less than two outs with a runner on first base and a fly ball is hit to left field, the runner should run halfway to second base.
- If the ball is caught, the runner should get back to first.
- If the ball is not caught, the runner should advance.
- More advanced players can retreat back to first early to try to tag up and take second base.

Base running Developmental

Creating the Right Mindset (Juniors-Majors)

As with many aspects of the game, being a great base runner is often not about pure speed, but rather about taking pride in the game awareness and hustle it requires. Baserunning is one of the critical aspects of the game, and it is the coach's responsibility to treat it as such. Emphasize the importance of base running with your players by including it in every practice and showing your team that good base running can help them win games.

Practice Baserunning (Juniors-Majors)

It is the coach's responsibility to establish the base running mindset early on. Coaches have to get players excited to run the bases and work on base stealing in practice. By highlighting the smallest details of picking up advantages on the base paths, coaches can get their players excited about base running and eager to learn more. This enthusiasm can help improve players' comfort and instincts, and it can lead to quick improvement on the base paths.

Athletic Stance (Majors)

When running the bases, an athletic stance is important when leading off the base, preparing to run. An athletic stance for a baserunner is similar to that of an infielder, with the feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart. The knees should be bent with the weight on the balls of the feet. There should be a very slight bend at the waist, but the key is to remain upright to allow for a quicker transition into running form.



Base running Developmental (Advanced, Continued)

Become a Sprinter (Juniors-Majors)

When the hitter makes contact with the ball, they should always hustle and run hard out of the batter's box. Though often overlooked, it is important to recognize the power of the arms when running the bases. When the arms are engaged, the body not only moves faster, but also reduces the necessary work and energy of the legs during the running process, which means the body can maintain the running motion longer. With the arms in motion, the chest opens up, the body relaxes, breathing comes more naturally, and forward momentum becomes easier to sustain.



Rhythm (Minors-Majors)

Baserunning not only requires proper form and technique, but it also requires rhythm. A good baserunner is light on their feet and has rhythm going in both directions, whether they are breaking right to advance to the next base or diving left to get back to the bag and avoid being picked off. Coaches can help their players develop rhythm by running drills during practices and pregame warm-ups.

Leads at First Base (Majors)

While looking for signs from the third base coach, a runner on first should keep track of other base runners and the number of outs. The runner should take a primary lead of about 9-12 feet off of first base, depending on the game situation. Above all, the lead at first base should feel as natural as possible for the baserunner; the more natural it feels, the more comfortable it will be and the easier it will be to repeat.

Taking a Lead:

Left Right Left,
half step to add

Measured from Left foot

9ft- Easiest to Repeat
10ft- Safe
11ft-Average
12ft-Aggressive

Leads at Second Base (Majors)

While on second, the runner should focus solely on the pitcher without looking at the middle infielders. The third base coach should watch the middle infielders and warn the runner if they are in danger of being picked off.

The runner should be more aggressive with their lead at second base, but still be cautious. The lead can be taken back from the baseline for a better angle on rounding third if the runner is not stealing third base. As the pitch is delivered, the runner should take a secondary lead of two or three lateral steps; however, if the pitcher turns to pick off the base runner, the runner should dive or run back to the base.

Leads at Third Base (Majors)

On third base, the runner should take a walking lead of about six feet down the line in foul territory as the ball crosses the plate. The runner's right foot should strike the ground as the ball enters the hitting zone, and they should always be in a position to tag up on fly balls in the outfield. Any line drive or fly ball should mean a quick tag back to third. The runner should stay in foul territory when taking a lead but head back to third in fair territory to disrupt the catcher's attempt to throw a pickoff. As always, the runner should run hard to home plate, sliding when necessary.

Secondaries (Majors)

At any base the runner should take a secondary lead. As the pitch is delivered, baserunners should take a secondary lead of two to four lateral shuffles. The secondary should be aggressive, but as soon as the ball is cleanly caught by the catcher and there is no read off the bat, the runner should be ready to turn and sprint back to the base in order to avoid being picked off.

Reads vs. RHPs and LHPs (Majors)

Baserunners should take distinct approaches to reading the pitcher based on the pitcher's handedness.

- When reading a right-handed pitcher, the focus should be on the pitcher's front (left) shoulder, looking for either a slight turn inward or a slight shift backward.
- When reading a left-handed pitcher, the focus should be on the pitcher's leg lift at either .1, .2 or .3, as demonstrated in the following video.

Reads Off the Bat (Juniors-Majors)

Baserunning is not only about stealing bases, but also about getting good reads off the bat when the ball is put in play. Getting a good read off the bat is not about being aggressive, but rather about being strategic; one strategy should include each individual baserunner checking outfield positioning prior to every pitch. A good base running team will take advantage of every opportunity to advance while limiting unnecessary risks.

On first base:

- On a fly ball with less than two outs, the runner should move halfway towards second and hustle back to first if it is caught.
- On a hit to right field, the runner should glance at the third base coach when going from first to third. On a hit to left field, the runner should take a look and make a decision on their own.
- On double plays, it is important to force a throw to second in order to allow the hitter more time to reach first and slide into second base regardless of the situation.

On second base:

- A ball hit to the runner's left should allow them to advance to third.
- A ball hit to the runner's right requires them to wait until it goes through the infield to advance.
- A ball hit right at the runner requires them to make their own decision while avoiding getting hit by the ball at all costs.

Catching

Blocking (Juniors-Majors)

- Anticipation
- 3 Distinct Parts
 - 1st: Glove goes toward ground
 - 2nd: Body goes to the ground; outside pitches: 45 degree angle to home plate
 - 3rd: Recovery- back on the feet

Receiving Stance (Juniors-Majors)

- Primary Stance: No runners on base
- Secondary Stance: Runners on base, more athletic stance to block the ball
- Knees pointed to second base and shortstop
- Give a good target
- Catch out in front
- Beat the ball to the spot

Pop-Ups (Juniors-Majors)

- On pop ups in the general vicinity, the catcher should turn their back to the field and leave enough room for the ball to come back towards the field.
- On plays away from home plate, the catcher should take off their mask.
- On balls close to the plate, the mask should be thrown when the ball gets to its max height. The catcher should always try to catch the ball with two hands approximately head-high.

Wild Pitches (Juniors-Majors)

- Approach ball from right side
- Drop to knees and scoot to ball to attack more aggressively
- Pop up to make throw at plate or to base

Plays at the Plate (Juniors-Majors)

- Good stable athletic stance protecting the plate
- Catch ball with 2 hands, tag with 2 hands
- Allow the runner a part of the plate to slide to

Pitching (Pitch Smart)

Intro to Pitch Smart: Understanding Arm Care (Minors-Majors)

- What is Tommy John's Surgery:
 - Tommy's John's Surgery is the reconstruction of the UCL using another tendon from somewhere else on the body
- There are several risk factors associated with arm injuries and Tommy John surgeries for pitchers. These risk factors include:
 - Pitching while fatigued.
 - Not taking enough time off from baseball every year.
 - Throwing too many pitches and not getting enough rest during the season.
 - Pitching on consecutive days.
 - Pitching for multiple teams at the same time.
 - Throwing breaking pitches at too young of an age.
- Signs of Problems
 - Tingling sensations of pinky or ring finger
 - Pitchers who throw more than a 100 innings in a calendar year increase the risk for arm injury
 - If you notice a pitcher grabbing his or her elbow or shoulder, or favoring his or her arm in any way while on the mound, call timeout to check on the pitcher and take him or her out of the game to rest.
- Pitch Counts
 - Monitoring and keeping track of pitches has been found to be the best tool in managing and measuring fatigue
 - Pitch counts are kept through the app GameChanger

Tips for Safe Pitching Practices (Minors-Majors)

Pitch Smart provides a valuable resource for ways in which you can work to prevent arm injuries. To further aim to prevent arm injuries, remember these key tips for safe pitching practices:

- Ask your pitchers when was the last time they threw, and how much they threw in that outing.
- Pay close attention to pitchers as they are warming up. If a pitcher looks as if his or her arm is sore, be sure to talk to the pitcher and decide if he or she is unable to compete that day.
- If a pitcher verbalizes that his or her arm is hurting, take him or her out of the game to rest.
- Minimize the amount of time pitchers spend playing catcher immediately before and after pitching appearances.
- You'll find Pitch Smart's general guidelines and age specific recommendations for safe pitching practices in the Related Resources tray below.

Pitching (Pitch Smart Continued)

Intro to Pitch Smart: 8 and under (Minors-Majors)

Typically 46' Pitching Distance

- Focus on athleticism, physical fitness, and fun.
- Focus on learning baseball rules, general techniques, and teamwork.
- Do not exceed 60 combined innings pitched in any 12 month period.
- Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2–3 of those months being continuous.
- Make sure to properly warm up before pitching.
- Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods.
- Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups.
- Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time.
- Avoid playing catcher while not pitching.
- Avoid pitching in multiple games on the same day.
- Play other sports during the course of the year.
- Monitor for other signs of fatigue.
- Pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers.
- No pitcher should appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch counts

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	Required Rest (Pitches)					
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
7–8	50	1–20	21–35	36–50	N/A	N/A	N/A

Intro to Pitch Smart: 9-12 years old (Minors-Majors)

Typically 46–50' Pitching Distance

- Focus on athleticism, physical fitness, and fun.
- Focus on learning baseball rules, general techniques, and teamwork.
- Do not exceed 80 combined innings pitched in any 12 month period.
- Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2-3 of those months being continuous.
- Make sure to properly warm up before pitching.
- Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods.
- Avoid throwing pitches other than fastballs and change-ups.
- Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time.

- Avoid playing catcher while not pitching.
- Avoid pitching in multiple games on the same day.
- Play other sports during the course of the year.
- Monitor for other signs of fatigue.
- Pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers.
- No pitcher should appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch counts

Pitching (Pitch Smart Continued)

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	Required Rest (Pitches)					
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
9–10	75	1–20	21–35	36–50	51–65	66+	N/A
11–12	85	1–20	21–35	36–50	51–65	66+	N/A

Intro to Pitch Smart: 13-14 years old (Minors-Majors)

Typically 60' Pitching Distance

- Players can begin using breaking pitches after developing consistent fastball and changeup.
- Do not exceed 100 combined innings pitched in any 12 month period.
- Take at least 4 months off from throwing every year, with at least 2–3 of those months being continuous.
- Make sure to properly warm up before pitching.
- Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods.
- Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time.
- Avoid playing catcher while not pitching.
- Avoid pitching in multiple games on the same day.
- Play other sports during the course of the year.
- Monitor for other signs of fatigue.
- A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once per game.
- No pitcher should appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch counts

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	Required Rest (Pitches)					
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
13–14	95	1–20	21–35	36–50	51–65	66+	N/A

Coach Certification

Instructions for Certification (Free Certification)

- 1) Go to usabdevelops.com
- 2) Sign up and create account
- 3) Go to My Profile
- 4) Select a Course (each course takes about 10 minutes)
- 5) Complete the Courses Below (**Novices-Majors**)
 - Building a Baseball Experience
 - Coaching Philosophy and Approach
 - Managing Players
 - Confident Baseball Coach
 - Coaching the Fundamentals of Infield
 - Coaching the Fundamentals of Outfield
 - Coaching the Basics of Hitting
 - Base running Fundamentals
 - Catching StancesAdditional Courses (**Minors and Majors**)
 - Catching Development
 - Baserunning Development
 - Infield Development
 - Outfield Development
 - Offensive Development
 - Coaching the Pitching Delivery
 - Managing a Pitching Staff
 - Intro to Pitchsmart
- 6) Download the Certificate for each course
- 7) Create a Folder on your Desktop, Documents, or Downloads
- 8) Send Folder to jcgoode@iu.edu



