

Coaching Essentials

Make Practice Fun

- Fast Paced / High Energy
- Always **end with a Game/Scrimmage**
- Use props...hit a teddy bear as a target, use oversized plastic bat+tennis ball
- Tons of REPS

Dynamic Warmup

- No static stretching / no long runs...be creative
- 8-10 Mins MAX
- **Create ATHLETES**...backwards running / sliding / diving / change direction

REPS are CRITICAL

- Short lines (4 Max)...involve parents/assistant coaches to help
- Break down a complex skill (grounders) focus on specifics (footwork)...tons of reps for specifics
- **Skills are taught as a PROGRESSION**. Grounders = Footwork+Glove Skills+Transition+Throw
- **ERROR CORRECTION is essential**...don't let kids turn bad habits into muscle memory

Station Based Practices

- 2 or 3 stations teaching different skills will keep players engaged, shorten lines and increase reps
- Use entire field or multiple diamonds if available...grounders infield / fly balls LF / batting RF
- **Parent involvement is MANDATORY**. They can be targets, shag balls, soft toss, roll grounders
- Ensure all coaches/helpers can identify major errors and correct them (elbow above shoulder when throwing/ glove foot forward on grounder)

Teach Proper Development...not success

- Don't reward making contact with a poor swing. Emphasize fundamentals, success follows
- **Make coaching decisions based on development, not winning**. NEVER say "only swing if its perfect"... challenge players and encourage them to be aggressive
- Look for individual successes. If a player fields a clean ground ball but makes a bad throw, emphasize the successful grounder...he knows he made a bad throw
- Set individual, **ATTAINABLE GOALS that focus on proper development**. Taylor them so players can be successful no matter the skill level (every swing without lifting back foot / field every grounder with glove foot forward)

Miscellaneous

- Buy a whistle and a stop watch. Kids love hearing the whistle instead of "Go". And they love being timed and measured...even if you are not really keeping track
- Introduce Competition. Not only against each other, but against themselves (try to throw further than you did last month)
- Be OVER-PREPARED. Don't show up and think on your feet. 90min plan for 60min practice
- **Assign duties**. Coaches shouldn't rake fields, work concession, plan team lunch. **Coaches COACH**