



Machine Pitch Goals and Objectives

Baseball Skills to Learn

1. Play catch
2. Hitting off a pitch
3. Field ground balls and fly balls
4. Base-running techniques
5. Catching position introduction
6. Sportsmanship

Social Skills

1. Have Fun!
2. Follow Directions
3. Social Interaction

Practice Time

1. 1.5 hours maximum
2. Divide into several blocks of time, keep things moving at a good pace
3. Demonstrate the drills

Coaching Tips

1. All the players and coaches should have FUN!
2. Be organized
3. Have a plan but be flexible to adjust the plan if it's not working
4. Ask for help from all the parents – Get them involved
5. Praise first, correct second
6. Keep the players and practices/games moving
7. Break down the concepts/drills into small, manageable portions
8. Variety in the drills is important – switch things up at practices
9. Allow each player to play all positions during the year
10. Remember it is only a game

Other Helpful Tips

1. During games, players should sit on the bench in the order they will bat
2. Align batter's feet with plate to be ready for pitch
3. When in field, coaches stay in the field to help remind players what to do
 - a. Hitter's Coach/Parent should run the machine
4. Remind players to be in ready position and focused on the ball
5. Completion of game, line up and shake hands – players should tell other team "Good Game"
6. Bring team together after game into huddle and provide positive feedback to the players



Coaching Notes

Play Catch – Throwing Progression

1. **TURN** – turn to square shoulders to target
2. **BREAK** – break hands from glove, lead with pinky out first
3. **POWER L** – elbow around 90 degrees and arm forms “L”. Check before throwing
4. **FINISH** – throw the ball released out in front and finish with chest over knee

Fielding Ground Balls

1. Legs shoulder width apart
2. Butt down, glove out in front
3. Head down, eyes down, glove down to field ball
4. Backing up teammates

Partner drill – right at them, forehand, backhand, short hops (bare hand and glove work)

Outfield

1. Stance, ready position – focus on first step backwards
2. Running backwards – not back peddling, turn $\frac{1}{4}$ turn and run
3. Ground ball, head down, eyes down glove down – suggest to put leg down as blocker
4. Backing up teammates

Be an Athlete – catch everything, take pride into not letting the ball touch the ground!

Hitting

1. Teach proper grip on bat – hand position
2. Load, Stride, Swing
3. “Squish the bug”
 - a. Pivot the back toe
4. Bat path – first thing to move should be hands
 - a. Bottom hand to ball
 - b. Short to ball, long through it, hands finish high

Running the Bases

1. Teach the players to run through 1st base each time on infield ground balls
2. Eyes and ears on base coaches for instructions while running
3. Touch inside corner of bases
4. Teach them running the bases based on situations
 - a. 1st to 2nd
 - b. 1st to 3rd
 - c. 2nd to home
 - d. Fly ball hesitation (1/3 way between bases)
 - e. Line drive hesitation



Machine Pitch Practice Plan #1

Drill/Practice Topic	Time	Skill
Introductions	5 min	Social Interaction
Dynamic warm-up	7 min	Running/Stretching
Throwing progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One knee – snap wrist • One knee – throw • Standing – feet together • Sideways • Quick toss – keep feet moving • Long toss - move back every 5 throws • 60 ft throws – no talking 	10 min	Throwing, Following Directions
Running the bases	5 min	Baserunning
Infield - Ground Balls	10 min	Fielding
Outfield – Fly balls, Ground balls	10 min	Fielding
Hitting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft toss – gain consistency in swings 	15 min	Hitting
Four Corners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even number of kids at each base • Ball starts at home • Throw from Home to 3rd to 2nd to 1st • Catch the ball and ready to throw to next base 	5 min	Catching and throwing quickly
Review with players	5 min	Have Fun!



Machine Pitch Practice Plan #2

Drill/Practice Topic	Time	Skill
Introductions – discuss practice plan	5 min	Social Interaction
Dynamic Warm-up	7 min	Running
Throwing progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One knee – snap wrist • One knee – throw • Standing – feet together • Sideways • Quick toss – keep feet moving • Long toss - move back every 5 throws • 60 ft throws – no talking 	10 min	Throwing, Following Directions
Hitting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft toss (on deck batter) – gain consistency in swings • Hitting live from machine 7-10 pitches per player 	20-30 min	Hitting
Catching Position Drills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxed stance – toes angled out, wide stance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thumb up when receiving pitch ○ Move hand out to the ball, don't let ball get into body ○ Soft hands ○ Keep ball to center of body – use the equipment to block 	10 min	Catching position intro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have each player try this position during a practice to get comfortable for games
Infield/Outfield Relays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball hit to the gap, identify location on where to throw ball based on situation • Add runners to this drill once understanding is build 	15 min	Fielding and throwing
Baserunning	7 min	Situations



Machine Pitch Practice Plan #3

Drill/Practice Topic	Time	Skill
Introductions – discuss practice plan	5 min	Social Interaction
Dynamic Warm-up	5 min	Running
Throwing progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One knee – snap wrist • One knee – throw • Standing – feet together • Sideways • Quick toss – keep feet moving • Long toss - move back every 5 throws • 60 ft throws – no talking 	10 min	Throwing, Following Directions
Infield - Ground Balls	10 min	Fielding
Outfield – Fly balls, Ground balls	10 min	Fielding
Intersquad Scrimmage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign players to each position, have remaining players be up to bat – groups of 3 batting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Goal is for the fielders to get them out and then rotate players so each sub-group has the opportunity to bat ○ Keep track of number of runs scored for each round ○ Opportunity to practice fielding, throwing, hitting and running the bases 	30 min	Hitting, Fielding, Throwing, Situations
Position Sprints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign players from bench to run to position on field • Repeat 	7 min	Know the Field
Review with players	7 min	Social Interaction



Others Drills

Throwing and Catching

1. **Wrist elbow** – players kneel 10 feet apart and reach back with their wrist and snap the ball to the partner (gloves on)
2. **One knee** – players kneel 15 feet apart and throw from one knee (opposite knee in air from throwing hand – left knee up if player throws right handed)
 - a. Emphasize reaching hand back, rotating hips and following through
3. **Step and Throw** – players stand 20 feet apart and throw to partner by stepping at and throwing to target.
4. **Ground and Throw** – players place the ball on the ground and then pick it up bare hand and step and throw to partner.
 - a. Have players say “Left, right field, Left, right throw”
5. **Long Toss** – players back up and throw as far as they can to the target.
 - a. Emphasize controlling the throw to the target
6. **Relay** – 3-4 players stand in a line and throw and catch down the line

Fielding

1. **Bare hand** – player stand 10 feet apart and roll the ball to each other
 - a. Emphasize eyes down, butt down, hands out, soft hands
2. **Right/Left** – same drill as above but players roll the ball to the side
 - a. Emphasize keeping the ball in the middle of the body, shuffle feet to get to the ball position
3. **Glove on** – same techniques as above but have the glove on
4. **Throwing to the base** – coach rolls ball to the player who throw it to 1st, 2nd or 3rd base
 - a. Emphasize fielding the ball first, throwing second – player should say where they are throwing it
 - b. Add on – use some basic situations on when to throw to a base other than 1st

Scrimmage (within team)

1. Assign players to each position, have remaining players be up to bat – groups of 3 batting
 - a. Goal is for the fielders to get them out and then rotate players so each sub-group has the opportunity to bat
 - b. Keep track of number of runs scored for each round
 - c. Opportunity to practice fielding, throwing, hitting and running the bases