



**GMBA**

***Georgina Minor Baseball Association***

***Coaching 9U House League***

## **Georgina Minor Baseball Association – 9U Program**

### **Objectives:**

- FUN is the emphasis
  
- High number of repetitions of the skills
  
- Progressions to suit the skill level of the player
  
- Drills that offer a high success rate
  
- Volunteers are required. Please make sure you have lots of parent helpers (Start from the first practice).

## **Getting Started**

1. Who is the League Contact?
2. When are Practice Days / Game Nights?
3. Equipment – What is required?
4. What are the League rules?
5. Who are the Contacts – Team members and parents?
6. Who will assist? You need a lot of volunteers and parent helpers

### **Note:**

- Form circles with you in the Center down at the player's level. Kids are focused on you when explaining drill.
- Encourage them often
- SMILE a lot
- Ask parents to help
- Break players into smaller groups, easier to teach drills, individual attention
- End of game drinks

## How to Play

### **Practices**

- Emphasize skills and drills in small groups of 3 – 4 players

### **Games:**

- Games will run about 1.5 hours in length,
- Score is to be kept
- Outs recorded

### **Offence:**

- Everyone in line up hits
- Have a number of volunteers – helmets, order kids on bench
- Batting order – By player number, # 1 through 12 / 13, rotate every game # 1 moves to bottom, # 2 becomes lead off
- Bungee cord and close pins with players names
- Parents / helpers required at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

### **Defence**

- Positions players in the 4 infield positions 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, SS, 3<sup>rd</sup> 1 Pitcher, Catcher, 4 Outfielders
- Organize fielding line up prior to game. Clip board to fence, have many volunteers to assist – Catcher gear
- Rotate all players through infield / outfield and by position
- Encourage all balls fielded to be thrown to 1<sup>st</sup> base, when none on base, tag runners
- Work on force out and double play.

### Using the Pitching Machine

- Pitching machine provides relative consistency with baseball.
- Recognize the machine will need adjustment during game as height of ball may change due to machine vibration.
- Set up machine so ball crosses plate mid thigh to waist high.
- When pitching to batter. Ensure batter focused and looking at Pitching Machine Coach. Coach shows ball to player holding arm above machine. Pitching Machine coach slowly lowers ball into machine.

## **Effective Practices**

1. Keep players active and moving
2. Design your practice
3. Ensure you have lots of helpers
4. Use Orange pylons to mark out areas / distances for drills
5. Communicate to players on their level
6. Break team into smaller groups of 3 – 4 players doing different drills
7. Drills should be no more than 10 – 15 minutes in length
8. Ensure you have a post practice talk to go over accomplishments and remind of next game / practice

## **Establish Practice Goals**

### **Practice goals to include the following:**

- Fielding and proper throwing mechanics
- Proper Hitting Techniques, bat grip, swinging the bat
- Catching with two hands
- Run through first base
- Base Running – know where to run
- Know the positions on the field

## **9U Ball:**

Every practice should place emphasis on the following:

- Throwing Mechanics
- Hitting Fundamentals
- Fielding & Catching

Starting the practice

1. Warm up and stretch (5 minutes)
  - Light jog
  - Stretches

## **Goals: Learning the Game**

### **1. Learning the Basic Rules**

- The right direction to run on the bases
- Touching the bases
- How to record outs
- Running through first base, Scoring a run
- Last Batter Rule (Everyone hits)

### **2. Throwing Mechanics**

- Turn the body, front shoulder points at target
- Keep elbow above the shoulder – L shaped arm
- Step toward target with non-throwing side foot
- Release Ball

### **3. Tracking the Ball**

- Follow the ball with the eyes into the glove
- Nose on the ball
- Use two hands to catch – no glove
- Catch the ball out in front of body

### **4. Hitting**

- How to hold and grip the bat
- How to swing the bat, Tee Hitting, Soft toss
- Knees, belt buckle face plate
- Pitching Machine, what to look for

### **5. Learning the Positions**

- Let the players field the ball
- Where's the play
- Full fielding positions (1 pitcher)
- 10 Defensive players

## Basic Skills Checklist

Catching The Ball	
1	Above the Waist – thumbs together
2	Below the waist – thumbs apart
3	Watch ball into glove
4	Reach to ball
Throwing the Ball	
1	Elbow up to shoulder or higher
2	“L” shape
3	Stride to target with glove side foot
4	Point glove to target
Base Running	
1	Drive Arms
2	Knees High, slight lean forward
3	Run through 1 <sup>st</sup> base
4	Know where to go
Hitting	
1	Grip – Bat in base of fingers
2	Stance – face plate, feet shoulder width apart, hands by back shoulder, elbows bent and relaxed
3	Hip rotation – Belly Button faces pitcher, back foot turn
4	Follow Through – Arms extended
Fielding	
1	Ready Position – like a monkey
2	Move to get body in front of ball
3	Get butt low
4	Field in front of body, nose on ball, alligator mouth (Top / bottom hand action)

## Hitting

Young players may never have held a baseball bat. Have each player attempt swinging the bat both left-handed and right-handed – you should see a difference in the swing.

- Right-handed: The left hand is at the bottom of the bat and is facing the pitcher on the left side of home plate (the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of home plate). Left-handed hitter, the right hand is on the bottom of the bat, and the opposite holds true (on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side of home plate).
- The proper grip - The handle of the bat is in the crease of the hand between the palm and the base of the fingers, (the bat is not squeezed hard, but held lightly, but firm enough to swing).
- The stance: The stance should be shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, feet point forward.
- The bat is lifted and held about 6 inches from the back shoulder, at shoulder height. The top hand is in a position as if talking on a telephone by the ear.
- The hands should start to the ball on a downward plane, bottom hand pulls the bat down, the top hand swings the bat. Barrel stays above the hands. Arms should extend through the ball. Follow the ball with the nose.

### Hitting Drills:

1. Stance Drill: Practice proper stance with no bat. Players get into proper stance with hands up as if holding a bat. Check stance. Most players do not form a wide enough base, and knees should be flexed.
2. Rotation Drill: Have players get into proper stance. They then place hands on hips. Have players turn hips so belly button or waist “eye” faces coach. Watch that back foot does not step out, but rotation occurs with hips.
3. Swing bat while coach tosses soft toss into back stop – 2 players.

## 6 Steps to a Perfect Swing



### Step 1

#### Using a "Good Grip"

Using the proper grip allows the batter to achieve as much hand quickness and bat speed as possible. The key to a good grip is positioning the bat in the fingers and not the palms. The bat should be held firmly but not tight that the batter's hand speed is slowed. The batter can assure a great grip every time by lining up the "door knocking knuckles" as shown.

### Step 2

#### Have a Super Stance

The batter should always be taught to use a balanced parallel stance with both feet about shoulder width apart with his toes even and slightly facing inward. He should assume his stance about 8-10 inches from the plate. The batter should slightly bend his knees with his weight on the balls of his feet. The batter's front shoulder, hip and knee should be slightly turned forward. A proper stance will allow the batter to react to the pitch with speed, quickness and power.



### Step 3

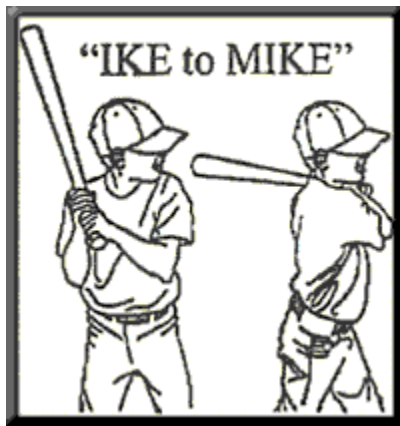
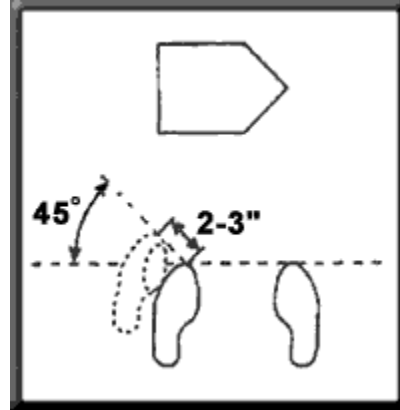
#### Correct Hand, Arms and Bat Angle

The bat is correctly held at a 45-degree angle. The hands should not be held too high or too low. A medium location is desired with the back elbow down and the hands located 3-6 inches from the body. The bottom of both elbows should be parallel. To assume the most comfortable stance the batter should position his arms and hands so that the upper edge of the top of the hands on the bat is even with the shoulder.

## Step 4

### Four Keys to a Correct Stride

1. The batter's stride should be short, no more than two or three inches.
2. The stride should be at a 45-degree angle towards home plate.
3. The batter should land softly on his front foot as if he were stepping on an egg.
4. The batter should stride and land on the big toe or inside of his front foot.



## Step 5

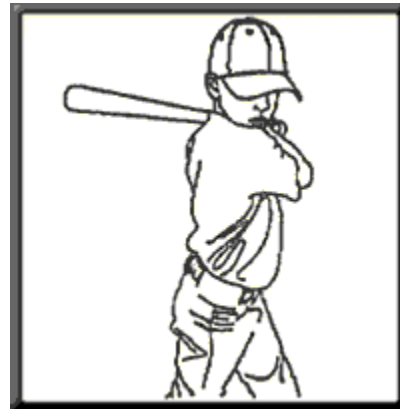
### Head Action and Ball Tracking

The batter should turn his head enough that he can see the ball with both eyes. The "IKE to MIKE" method should be taught. The batter's front shoulder, toward the pitcher, is "IKE", and his back shoulder is "MIKE". The batter should start with his chin on "IKE". During the swing the head does not move. The body rotates and the shoulders switch places with the head finishing on "MIKE". The batter should keep his eyes on the ball and should be taught to "track" the ball from the pitcher's hand to the bat.

## Step 6

### Swing and Finish

The batter should take a good level swing or slightly downward. He should strive to keep his back foot in position while lifting his heel slightly and then turning his foot towards the pitcher as he starts his swing. He should concentrate on hitting the "top-half" of the baseball. When his front foot lands, he should thrust or turn his hips.



## **Base Running Drills**

Goal to ensure the base runner knows where to run.

### Base running Warm Up

1. Run with knees high
2. Call the Base: Have your team run around the bases and call out each base as they hit the bag. This can be done at the start of each practice and as they become more comfortable have them speed up and only hit the corner of the bag.
3. Relay Races: Players with ball in glove, ensure they are holding tightly race around the bases and hand ball off to next player who runs around the bases. Split the team into 2 groups one at home the other at 2<sup>nd</sup>, and start the relay with 2 groups.
4. Through 1<sup>st</sup> base: The only base you can run through. Set up a coach 3 – 4 feet behind 1<sup>st</sup> base and have the players run through the base, touching the orange part of the base and give the coach a High 5. Make sure they turn into foul territory.
5. Home to 2<sup>nd</sup>: Run from Home to 2<sup>nd</sup>, watch the wide turn at 1<sup>st</sup>, and make sure they stop on the bag.
6. Watch the Coach Drill: At 9U players should watch the coach at 3<sup>rd</sup> as they approach 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Players start at 1st base, ball is hit, players run toward 2<sup>nd</sup> and look at coach, who holds up hands to stop at 2<sup>nd</sup>, or waves hand to run to third. (Remember this is for FUN, while learning how to run bases is important, aggressive base running is discouraged and not the goal).

## **Catching**

Catching a baseball is difficult for the young player. Fear of the ball is a concern and the use of the soft orange ATEC balls will help with this problem.

Make sure the glove is open, and the easiest way is to press down on the top of the glove at the webbing. This will help open the glove and make it easier to catch.

The most important element in catching is keeping the eye on the ball.

For the young player focus on the following:

- Palm down for balls below the waist, or fingers down or thumbs apart
- Palm up for balls above the waist, or fingers up, or thumbs together
- The palm always faces the thrower and moves the glove around. Think of a Clock Face and the glove moves around the face to catch the ball.
- Throwing hand stays beside the glove ready to trap and grab the ball.

Drills:

1. No Glove: Start with no glove and practice moving the hands around the clock face. Follow the fingers up, thumbs together, fingers down thumbs apart.
2. Catch the ball with no glove
3. Glove around the Clock: Have players put on a glove and begin the movement again.
4. Individual Soft Toss: Start the players with their own ball and do a soft toss in the air to get use to the glove and ball as well as hand-eye coordination.
5. Coach Toss: Coach and parents toss to players, allowing player only to move their glove to catch the ball
6. Coach Toss – Left / Right: Toss the ball left or right of the player forcing them to move
7. Partner Throwing:
8. Triangle Throwing

## **Fielding:**

Always focus on the “Ready Position.”

- Feet more than shoulder width apart
- Knees Bent
- Butt down, (sit on the chair)
- Glove and hand low, pinkies down, glove on ground, palms up

### Alligator Catch

- Field as if glove is the bottom of the alligator’s mouth and the throwing hand is the top. Field ground ball like an alligator closing its mouth, top hand closes on glove with ball.

### Drills:

1. No Glove: Field rollers – Coach and helpers 10 feet away slow roller
2. Glove field rollers
3. Field bouncing balls
4. Roll balls left / right
5. Batted balls

### Fielding Fly Balls

- Run to the spot where the ball will be caught, keep glove down use both arms to run
- Watch the ball into the glove, catching slightly above the head
- Keep your nose on the ball

### Drills:

1. Coach soft toss from close distance
2. Player self-toss
3. Move for ball

## **Throwing**

Break down throwing into the following small steps:

1. Face Target (Where you want to throw the ball)
2. Grip ball with 3 fingers, thumb underneath ball, lined up directly opposite fingers
3. Bring arm back in L – Shape, point ball away from target, fingers should stay on top of the ball
4. Step forward with opposite foot, shoulders in line with target
5. Move arm forward in throwing motion, (make sure elbow is above or even with the shoulder) as front foot lands, let go of the ball
6. Point hand to target

Drills:

1. Sitting Position Throw
2. On two knees throw
3. On one knee throw, make sure butt is up
4. Throw at a target, (pylon, pail) make a game of hitting the target

## **Drills:**

### 1. Show Me Drill:

Have the players show they are holding the ball with thumb under the ball and three fingers on top of the ball. Each player quickly takes the throwing position with legs apart, throwing arm back and up, and the front shoulder turned toward the target. Player throws to a volunteer parent.

### 2. One Knee Throwing

Emphasize upper body, through grip, raised arm and elbow, L shape, turn body and throw

### 3. Use the L Drill:

Remind players to have throwing arm bent into L shape. Separate the team into groups of 2 and throw to volunteers. Loudly call out “L” just before they throw the ball.

### 5. Base Running Drill

Have players line up at Home Plate. Coach says start players run to first base. Repeat the drill to second, third and home.

### 6. High Five Drill

Players line up at home, and on the word “GO” one at a time run through first base and give the coach a “High Five”. Repeat drill to second base, coach stands at second base so players do not over run the base.

### 7. Invisible Bat Drill

Space the players widely in a row pretending to hold an imaginary bat and facing an imaginary Tee. All players get into their batting stance and the coach yells “Swing” and all players simulate their batting sequence, follow through, and drop the bat. Make sure they don’t swing too hard watching for proper swing, and instructing. Repeat 10 times.

### 8. Tee Drill

The coach works with each batter hitting into the screen (Groups of 3 players with volunteers). Comment after each swing, but only make very minor adjustments and focus on one thing. Repeat the drill 8 – 10 times per player.

## 9. Soft Toss Drill

Group of 2 or 3 players, 2 to 3 volunteers. Players hit into the backstop. Coach tosses waffle or game ball at a 45 degree angle to player. Toss should be in front of home plate waist high. Player loads bat, strides as coaches hand goes down. Player swings through the ball into screen.

## 10. Machine Hitting

Bring machine to Batting Cage. Players work in groups of 3. (10 - 15 Minutes). Have coach pitching and volunteers to work on soft toss with 1 player into screen, 3rd player practices swings waiting turn to hit.

## 11. Champ

Catching, throwing drill for two players who have the skill to catch and throw. With a volunteer have the players throw and catch back and forth with the volunteer. For every catch and good throw, they receive a letter. Let the players choose the word.

## 12. Sky Ball

Have a volunteer throw balls to 2 players. Each ball caught; another is thrown a little higher. See how high the ball can get, and who can catch the highest ball.

## 13. Block the Ball

Group the players (2 – 3 per group). Start the first player in each group in the ready position, knees bent, head up, with an area marked out about 10' wide. Have volunteers ready to roll the ball to the players, right at them at first, then side to side. Have another set of volunteers award points for knocking down the ball.

## 14. Call the Ball

Have the players grouped into two lines. Roll a ball and have the players call Mine, Mine, Mine. Work with fly balls as well

## 15. Know where to go

Start a player on first base, have the other players line up to bat. Hit the ball, and have the batter run through first base (high five drill), and teach the first base runner to run to second, and so on...

## 16. Alligator Catch

Form 2 groups of 3 players. Have players in ready position. Two volunteers roll the ball to the players who catch like an alligator and throw the ball back. Players can roll the ball between each other and work on drill.

Coach and other volunteer can work with another group on hitting.

## 17. Home Run Target

Set up a target, 2 buckets stacked on top of each other. Have players try to hit target from 4 distances. Award points for each target hit. Lines could represent single (1 point), double (2 points), triple (3 points), home run, farthest distance (4 points).

## 18. Hot Potato

Have 4 players line up in a row, side by side. Player 1 has the ball and runs to player 2, drops ball in glove. Player 2 uses alligator to capture ball, pulls out of glove with one hand, and runs to player 3. and so on up and down the line.

## 19. Goal Ball (in pairs)

Mark off goal with Pylons for each pair, players take turns trying to throw ball on ground to score a goal.

## **More Advanced Drills**

### 1. Around the Bases

Players at each base, with catcher and pitcher. Pitcher throws to C, throws too 3<sup>rd</sup>, who throws to 2<sup>nd</sup>, who throws to 1<sup>st</sup>, throw to C, and back to P.

### 2. Desperation Drill

3 players in LF / 3 players in CF – Pitcher and Catcher. Coach rolls ball to LF. CF runs behind LF to cover in case LF misses ball. LGF retrieves ball and throws towards Catcher. The Pitcher faces the LF and follows the ball in case of bad throw. The Catcher stays behind home plate and blocks ball with body, retrieves and prepares to tag runner.

### 3. Tag the runner

Runners start at 1<sup>st</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> with normal infield. Coach hits ball to 3<sup>rd</sup> base who fields and steps on bag. (Force Out). Coach hits ball to P or SS who tries to tag the runner before they reach home.

### 4. Circle Drill

Players form a circle. One player has ball calls out name of player throws ball to the player. 2<sup>nd</sup> player continues drill. Excellent way for all players to learn players names. Make sure player is looking and throw the ball.

### 5. Line Drill

Form 2 lines of players space about 15 – 20 feet apart. Player 1 starts with the ball, throws to next player in line, who turns glove side, and throws to 3<sup>rd</sup> player in line. Go up and down the line.

## Practice Plan # 1

Time	Drill	Coaching Points
5 Min.	Team Jog, Arm and leg stretch	Coach leads, team building
10 Min.	Introductions / Baseball Talk	Player introductions, learn the players' names, every opportunity use their name
15 Min	Players pair Up	Short Distance throwing warm up in grass – (20 feet move to 40 feet apart) 1. One Knee 2. Standing no stride 3. Stride
18 Min.	1. Group 1 – Ready Position 2. Group 2 – Throwing Mechanics 3. Group 3 – Hitting Mechanics	Rotate Every 6 minutes – keep them moving
7 Min	Water Break	
20 Min (rotate 7 Min)	Group 1: Hitting Mechanics Group 2: BP Group 3: Soft Toss into Screen	10 Balls maximum – Volunteer throws Coach corrects on the side, not during BP – observe and assist after turn.
10 Min.	Base Running Drills	Run through first, Home to Second
5 Min	End of Practice Talk	

## Practice Plan # 2

Time	Drill	Coaching Points
5 Min.	Team Jog, Arm and leg stretch	Coach leads, team building
5 Min.	Review Throwing Mechanics	Focus on correct fundamentals
15 Min.	Warm up Throwing	Pair up always start at short distance, watch and correct mechanics
5 Min	Review Ready Position	
15 Min	Infield Drills – 3 groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alligator Drill – 3 player Rotate</li> <li>2. SS / 2<sup>nd</sup> – Field Rotate, Coach near pitching rubber, throw to coach</li> <li>3. 3 players 1<sup>st</sup> base – softly hit balls</li> </ol>
5 Min	Water Break	
20 Min.	Group 1 – Infield Plays to 1st Group 2 – Outfield Fly balls	Rotate at 10 minutes
20 Min	Batting Practice (10 Balls)	Group 1 – 3 players BP Group 2 – Hitting Mechanics (Soft Toss – 3 Players) Group 3 - Shaggers
5 Min	End of Practice Talk	

### Practice Plan # 3

Time	Drill	Coaching Points
5 Min.	Team Jog, Arm and leg stretch	Coach leads, team building
5 Min.	Review Throwing Mechanics	Focus on correct fundamentals
15 Min.	Warm up Throwing	Pair up always start at short distance, watch and correct mechanics
5 Min	Review Ready Position	
15 Min	Infield Drills – 3 groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alligator Drill – 3 players Rotate</li> <li>2. SS / 2<sup>nd</sup> – Field Rotate, Coach near pitching rubber, throw to coach</li> <li>3. 3 players 1<sup>st</sup> base – softly hit balls</li> </ol>
5 Min	Water Break	
20 Min.	Group 1 – Infield Plays to 1st Group 2 – Outfield Fly balls	Rotate at 10 minutes
20 Min	Batting Practice (10 Balls)	<p>Group 1 – 3 players BP</p> <p>Group 2 – Hitting Mechanics (Soft Toss – 3 Players)</p> <p>Group 3 - Shaggers</p>
5 Min	End of Practice Talk	

## Practice Plan # 4

Time	Drill	Coaching Points
5 Min.	Team Jog, Arm and leg stretch	Coach leads, team building
5 Min	Review Throwing Mechanics	Players work on mechanics
15 Min.	Throwing warm Up	Stretch out throws, throws on a line, not rainbows
5 Min	Review Ready Position	Work on Ready Position – All players in ready position
20 Min.	Infield Drills – 4 groups	3 batters – 4 groups at each infield position – 3 <sup>rd</sup> , SS, 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1 <sup>st</sup> – Balls hit to 3 <sup>rd</sup> , throw to 1 <sup>st</sup> , Balls hit to SS and 2 <sup>nd</sup> , drop in bucket, Players rotate to left.
5 Min	Water Break	
40 Min	Batting Cage – Rotate players	3 players at cage, remaining team works on fly balls
5 Min	End of practice talk	

**Practice Plan #**

Time	Drill	Coaching Points
5 Min.	Team Jog, Arm and leg stretch	Coach leads, team building

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Time	Drill	Coaching Points
5 Min.	Team Jog, Arm and leg stretch	Coach leads, team building