



**PWYSA Skill
Development &
Coaching Guide**

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PRACTICE PLANNING:

Philosophy

What you do in practice must mimic the game exactly for it to transfer (many repetitions are key)

Establish Goals based on your age group

- Strength/Conditioning
- Team Procedures
- Fundamental Skills Checklist
 - Infield, Outfield, Pitchers, Catchers
- Team Strategies checklist
 - Rundowns, 1st & 3rd, Relays/Cutoffs, Positioning, Inf/Out communication, Pre-Game Format, Signals
- Determine what kind of team are you?
 - Run, Slow, Pitching, Defense, hitting?
- Determine Offensive and Defensive strategy

Types of Practice

- Hitting only
- Defense Only
- Individual vs. Team sets
- Competitions
- Strength & conditioning

Recommendations for Practice Planning

- Pitchers/Catchers Individual Work (10-14U): 30-45 Minutes before scheduled time
 - Pitchers – bring their own catcher
 - Work on pitching progressions
 - Catchers – work on individual drills with coach
 - Footwork, receiving skills, blocking positioning throwing mechanics
- Dynamic Warm Up – 5-10 minutes
- Throwing progressions – 15 minutes
- Individual Station Work – 30-45 minutes
 - Break into groups of 2-3 players per station
 - Keep stations short and focused
 - Examples:
 - Hitting – tee station
 - Hitting – soft toss

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- Fielding – slow rollers
- Fielding – ground ball to SS, throw to 2nd (flip)
- Game situations – 15-30 minutes
 - Examples:
 - Fielding and back up positioning, base running, runner on third, etc
 - Run downs/pickle situation
 - Bunt coverage
 - Outfield cut offs
- Something fun– 5 minutes
 - HR contest, relay race, throwing contest (hit the bucket, around the horn)

Team Warm Ups:

- Dynamic Warm Up with Gloves ([video](#)) – 10 minutes
 - High knees
 - Butt kicks
 - Side shuffle
 - 50% jog
 - Sprint back
 - Drop step over right shoulder, drop step over left shoulder
 - Quarterback drills using softballs
 - Ground ball finishers

OFFENSE:

Philosophy

Be aggressive until other team makes you pull back

- Emphasize batters being ready to swing and hit the ball (we are not there to walk)
- Be ready to run on a dropped 3rd strike
- Smart, aggressive base running

Hitting

<<Add Angie's 5 step progression>>

- [Tutorial Video- MegRem](#)
- Stance:
 - Location in batter's box
 - Hands location (high and tight to body)
- Load as pitcher is winding up
- Contact, Extension, Follow Through

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- Swing (keep hands in, belly button should move with bat)

Bunting

- [Tutorial Video- MegRem](#)
- Square to pitcher
- “Balance” bat with finger pads of back hand
- Eyes above the bat
- Bend legs to “catch” ball with the bat

Base Running

- [Tutorial Video](#)
- Batted Ball
 - Running to first base
 - Run through the base
 - Run to the right (red) base
 - Rounding bases
- Getting leads/ Base stealing
 - Players should get an aggressive lead (~5 steps) on every pitch
 - Player can leave after ball has left pitchers hand
 - Hold your lead until the pitcher has the ball back in the circle
 - Stealing:
 - 1st - get a 5 step lead; should steal second on every pitch
 - 2nd - should be able to get to shortstop on every lead; should steal 3rd on most teams
 - 3rd – Get a 5 step lead, anticipate passed ball and time your lead with the ball arriving at home plate to get good jump on going home
- Sliding
 - Practice sliding early and often
 - Inforce “if it’s close, slide”, especially for plays at home

Hitting Drills:

***See Grit Sports Hitting Manual for Beginner - Advanced Hitting progressions and training plan**

Additional drill ideas

- Flamingo ([video](#))

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- Tee drill. Player starts on back hitting leg with front leg up like a Flamingo. Objective is to get them to use their legs and feel how they start back and move forward with their swing.
- Skater ([video](#))
 - Tee drill, getting players to feel the weight shifting back to forward during their swing.
- Happy Gilmore ([video](#))
 - Player should start about three steps behind the ball, cross over to come to athletic hitting stance and hit, this drill helps to get their lower body moving with the correct weight transfer
- High tee drill ([video](#))
 - Pull the tee as high as it can go and have the player keep their hands high and hit the ball on a line drive
- Top hand and bottom hand ([video](#))
 - Use either mini bat or choke up on players bat, drive through the ball and get to extension, these should not be very hard swings and limit to 10-15 per hand
- Step-in Hit (8/10U starter version of the Happy Gilmore)
 - Using a ball on a tee, with the player standing outside the batter's box, have them step into the box with their back/load foot first, as they bring their front foot into the box, have them stride into their swing and hit the ball
- 90 degree load ([video](#))
 - Player stands with feet facing towards the pitcher. Rotate back at the waist, keeping their hands up by ear, rotate hips and hit from here
- Hip Movement Drill ([video](#))
 - Objective is getting kids to feel their hips turn in alignment with swing. Get PVC pipe or bat, hold across
- One Knee Down Drill ([video](#))
- Bunting Drills ([video](#))
 - Work on stance, hand position, how to adjust to pitch height

Sliding Drills

- How to slide ([video](#))
 - Leg tucked under, be more on the left side of bottom, lean back slightly, hands should be up in the air
- Arms Up Figure 4 Form Drill
 - Have 2 coaches hold a pipe or bar slightly above their waist approximately 6 feet in front of 2nd base on the 1st base side
 - Instruct the player to run to 2nd base from first base and as they approach the bar, use it to swing into position as they slide into 2nd base
 - When they slide, their hand should be up on the bar and their legs should fall into a '4' position where their non-dominant leg is loosely straight in front of them and their dominant leg is bent at the knee with their inner ankle face up under the knee of their non-dominant leg
 - Getting low as they go
 - As players gain comfort in the mechanics, encourage them to increase speed

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- Hook slide- to get around the tag
- Dive Back- to the base from lead off
- Knowing when to slide
 - Explain close play rules, especially plays at home plate, coaching signs/hand signals

Base Running Drills

- Running to First Base
 - Run hard through the base
- Turns
- Lead offs
- Always looking for opportunity to get an extra base...watch your coaches before you get to the base & be aware of fielders – seize the opportunity
- Coach Says
 - Full speed base running drill in which the player must look for and follow base coach's instructions (1st and 3rd). Same concept as the children's game Simon Says.
 - Review when to look for instruction relative to base position
- 1st to 3rd (double steal)- watching the fielders (what does 3rd do?, how strong is catchers arms, is center field backing up 2 on the throw down, does the baserunner have wheels?)
- Stealing from 3rd/Scoring from 2nd
- Pickle in the Middle (Stealing Home)

DEFENSE:

Philosophy: Try to make all the plays when they occur (even if there's no chance of getting player out).
Going through the motions will help us improve.

- Purpose of positions and skills needed: [The 9 Softball Positions & The Skills Required For Each One \(snapsoftball.com\)](#)
- Throwing/Catching Progressions (videos)
 - [How to throw a Softball Video](#)- MegRem
 - [How to Catch a Softball Video](#)- MegRem
 - Teaching the proper throwing motion at a young age is vital to player development
 - Work on mechanics early and often
 - Focus on arm slot and follow through to the ground
- Fielding tips:
 - [Ground Ball Tutorial Video](#)
 - [Ground Ball Video](#)- MegRem
 - Players bodies should be squared up towards home plate (many tend to square up towards pitcher);
 - Infielders feet should always be moving towards the ball (right handed players – right, left, field; right, left, throw)

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- As the pitcher is delivering the ball, players should take 2-3 steps or “creep” towards home plate. This gets them ready to move.
- Infield Positioning
 - 8U & 10U Infield should be positioned inside the base paths to allow for shorter throws
 - 12U – 2B & SS should be behind the baseline, but 1B & 3B need to be shallow and prepared for bunt situations
 - Covering the Bases
 - Covering 2nd on the steal- [How to Cover 2nd Base on a Steal | Softball Infield Drills - Bing video](#)
 - Covering 3rd based on throws- [How To Set Up At 3rd With Throws From The Outfield - YouTube](#)
- Outfield Positioning
 - 8U & 10U – play shallow (on the outfield grass line) and teach players to keep ball in front of them
 - 12U – need to play slightly deeper as players are better
 - Hit fly balls off the bat whenever possible- getting a read on the ball off the bat is a tough skill to develop and takes many reps... they may not see it much in 10U; but when they do- being able to catch or at least get behind the ball and stop it will prevent extra runs.
- Things go know:
 - Fielding masks
 - 8U-10U: All positions **must** wear masks
 - 12U-14U: Infield **must** wear masks
 - **Situations:**
 - 10U – attempt to make the plays (throw to bases when stealing)
 - Runner on 2nd &/or 3rd –check runner back to base before throwing to pitcher
- Between Inning Warm ups for Games
 - 1st Baseman should bring ball and roll ground balls to infields
 - Center fielder should bring a ball to play catch
 - If there is 1 or more players on the bench during the inning, a bench player should bring a ball out to the near side outfielder and warm them up while the Centerfielder warms up the far side outfielder

Drills:

- Throwing Progressions ([video](#))
 - Work on motion of proper fielding position, pull apart, set, point with elbow, pull in front arm, and throw.
- Infield drills
 - [Ground Ball Tutorial Video](#)
 - Proper Fielding Positioning (PFPs) (video)
 - How to proper field a ground ball ([video](#))
 - Positioning (glove under your eyes, chest down, flat back), approach footwork (right, left, field; right, left, throw), throwing hand over glove
 - Shuffle Side to Side & Throw ([video](#))
 - Focus on agility & quick throwing motion
 - Footwork & Direction ([video](#))
 - Glove out, quick feet cross overs, field, throw
 - Quick feet footwork ([video](#))
 - Range Drills ([video](#))
 - Practice taking good angle going side to side (front and back hand)
 - Rolling ball drill (fundamentals of catching, throwing) – video link
 - Cone Drill – video link
 - Hop drill (video)
 - Figure 8 quick throws/warm ups (2 opposing lines- catch/throw- focus on quick transition from glove to throw- throwing on the move- then run to back of other line)- this is also the same routine for hotbox progression
 - Belly Up- fielder lay on belly- pop up off the hit, field the ball and throw to 1st
 - Zig-zag- set up at 2nd, ss, and/or 3rd... 4-5 cones, zig zag touch each cone, field ball on last cone and throw to 1st follow your throw and take 1st base for next fielder
- Outfield
 - Cone Drills ([video](#))
 - Drop steps, ground balls, fly balls
 - 4 Cone Drill ([video](#))
 - Charge grounders, field with throwing hand foot in front
 - Crow hop drills into net
 - Fly Balls with bare hands and whiffle balls
 - Throw High Fly Ball (video)
 - Throw into bucket (video)
 - Circle up Fly Balls- great for game warm ups and between games at tournaments- girls form 2 circles- hits fly ball to 1 circle - players catch and throw in- need to call it and back each other up. Coach hits fly ball to 2nd circle, repeating many times. Coach calls rotate every so often- girls rotate like a clock to get different positioning.

Gym Drill Ideas

Tennis balls!!!

Offense

- Pepper- Video: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=xN1wrcX2laA>
- Bow net & tee drills
- Rope bat
- Side toss; side toss 2 balls call high/low or based on color
- Bunting and slapping- tennis ball catch back hand, single hand bund,
- Weighted ball front toss- power through the ball
- Get out of the box- swing off the tee, coach bounces a tennis ball half way up 1st baseline- player needs to get out of the box, catch the ball as they run through 1st.
- Tennis ball bounce hitting- bounce tennis ball- players need to hit the ball off the 1st or 2nd bounce- keep good form; teaches timing of the swing

Defense

- Bucket zig-zag
- Front hand/back hand/center on knees
- Frond hand/back hand/center in fielding position
- Ladder front/back hand
- Wall drill- with and without glove
- Diamond drills- front hand, back hand, center- lunges, side lunges, jump squats to get back in line

Catch

- Catcher ladder drills
- Catcher framing drills
- Catcher separation drills

Baserunning

- Run through first, round and look
- Player hits off tee- has to run the bases outside of the fielders before fielders complete around the horn
- Sliding
- Dive backs

DEFENSIVE SKILL PROGRESSIONS BY POSITION

	6U/8U	10U	12U
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Envision the field is set up in 4 zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right side infield Middle infield Left side infield Outfield Ball hit into the outfield = hit; get the ball in quickly Ball hit to left side infield = hit. It is likely only 20% of those fielded and thrown to 1B will be an out Middle and Right infield is where majority of the action will be Introduce situational awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Envision the field is set up in 4 zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right side infield Middle infield Left side infield Outfield Ball hit into CF, LF = likely a hit. Teach getting ball in quickly Introduce cutoff and relay throws Ball hit to left side infield = hard throws may get the out. Practice and educate on quick out of glove and quick throw Middle and Right infield is where you need to expect guaranteed outs – routine plays Learn to manager 3rd base to prevent runs Utilize some signs for base running and pitching Reinforce situational awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outfield performance becomes a critical part of the defensive game Player’s skills will further define the 1-2 key positions they excel in. Bunting becomes a big part of the short game Being able to get the ball out of the glove and thrown to first FAST is critical. Many easy outs are not gotten simply because the throw to 1B was not in time Manage 2nd base to prevent runs Use signs for running, pitches, catcher glove location, etc. Expect and reinforce situational awareness
P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machine Pitch at 35' This position is part of the 1B, 2B, P triangle where approximately 70% of balls are hit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35'distance to plate You want a pitcher who can throw strikes. Learn to throw hard and incorporate lower body while players mechanics are still pliable Some may have a change up Encourage your pitchers to work on non-practice days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40' distance to plate Ball size increases to 12" Pitcher should be able to throw a minimum of 2 pitches (FB/Drop and change up). Many will have additional pitches Calling pitch type and location from dugout is a big part of the strategic portion of the game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenario – runner on 1B, likely will attempt to steal 2B. Ask your P to throw her first pitch high and inside so the catcher can pop and throw to 2B quicker

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<p>C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stealing is not allowed so there will be no opportunities to execute throw-downs Have all your players try this position This is a great position for the player that needs additional work on catching and throwing outside or practice times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocking is key at this age Work into framing if pitchers can hit spots. Quick pop ups and a key leader on the field- have this position call outs and where the play is; Advanced: begin to call pitches if pitcher hits spots and throws a change up. Pick offs from 3rd with strong LF back up and good 3b glove will get extra outs and prevent runs. Continue to do throw downs to 2B even though you may not get the out. Catchers need to practice for 12U and beyond. Fielders need to know how to cover thrown down. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice quick release/step and throw without taking multiple steps Many outs will happen with quick throw to 3B on attempted steal Consider working on the one-hop throw to 2B glove on steal from 1B Runners will not steal on catchers with strong arms
<p>1B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position is part of the 1B, 2B, P triangle where data indicates approximately 70% of balls are hit The most critical position in terms of action. Most outs will occur with 1B receiving the throw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is one of the most important positions Will have the best opportunities for outs when you have your best catcher playing this position This position should play in front of the bag and 2-3' off of foul line Work on the relationship between 2nd and 1st. Ideally you want 1B to only field balls hit 2-3 steps to her right. All others should be fielded by 2B, 1B has the bag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 12U, you do not necessarily have to have your top athlete play this position. This position is good for players who can catch the ball, has some height advantage and good stretch. Goal is that any ball thrown to 1B will be an out No longer is/has to be the best player. Quickness is important as 1B will likely be going for the bunt and dribblers past the pitcher. 2B will cover the bag
<p>2B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position is part of the 1B, 2B, P triangle where data indicates approximately 70% of balls are hit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position is responsible for covering all of the right side of the infield. Most success with player who is quick, aggressive fielder and can cover a lot of ground Eventually you can work on 2nd covering 1st but not a priority at this age Need to understand and use sweep tag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2B learns to cover 1B when 1B is covering the bunt or a dribbler past Key role for your 1st and 3rd plays- teach them to read the field and know when to cut and throw home, let it go to 2, fake, etc. Awareness of the field on steals, bunts, slaps, pitcher back up, etc. Good speed, quick throws, and smart field awareness needed at 2B. Will play behind baseline, typically
<p>3B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a good arm and quick fielding execution Even if this position fields effectively, only 20% are likely to be converted to outs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position is ideal for the player with a strong arm, is quick and can cover ground. Ideally you want this position to cover as many ground balls on the left side of the field as possible. Success is equal parts mental engagement and physical skill set. Needs to be quick and cover bunts. Will cover throws to 3rd by catcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position is critical and the player will be most successful if they can handle or "read" any play. Quick to cover the bunt, high chopper or dribbler. Good communication with catcher for pick offs Quick reaction time – strong arm This player is a vacuum and fearless. This position will typically play 2-3' off of foul line and in front of the bag

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to understand and use sweep tag 	
SS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even if this position fields effectively, only 20% are likely to be converted to outs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You do not necessarily need your strongest player in this position This position will have to field throws to 2B from catcher and back up any grounders 3B doesn't cover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletic and quick is key for this position. Must cover a lot of ground – shallow fly balls and shallow outfield fly balls can be fielded by SS Must have quick throws to 1B Good situational awareness for coverage bunts, slaps, steals, cut off from OF, back up pitcher, etc. Typically plays 3-5' behind baseline
RF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the most important outfield position. The player should play shallow and try to make the shallow throw to 1B for an out Introduce concept of backing up throws to 1B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the most important outfield position. Player should play as a deep infielder to facilitate getting the 9-3 out on a grounder that gets by 2B. Players who HUSTLE and are focused will be a great asset in this position. This position should play more shallow than CF or LF Reinforce need to backup throws to 1B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often the best arm on the outfield will be in RF Position often plays deep infield to get the 9-3 out. Want a player with head in the game, hustles, and is constantly moving to back up throws to 1B Expect they are backing up throws to 1B
CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach this position to field the ball and throw it into the 2B quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position is responsible for keeping the ball in front of them and getting the ball into 2B quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed matters in CF You want this position to be able to cover a lot of ground, quickly Goal: keep balls in front of them and throw the ball in front of the runner May see this position placed 15' deeper than RF
LF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach this position to back up throws to 3B Balls hit to LF should be fielded quickly and thrown in to 3B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position is responsible for backing up throws from catcher to 3B, and throw back quickly Very important position for throwdowns and picks offs from 3rd. Needs ability to back up the play and an arm to be able to throw home on an overthrow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You want this position to be able to back up throws to 3B Strong arm and great throws home-inside the baseline. Goal: keep balls in front of them and throw the ball in front of the runner

8U to 10U Progression

Ensure players moving up to the 10U level work on the following:

- Basic softball IQ - offense
 - Getting batters exposed to live pitching
 - Getting batters exposed to umpire behind the plate

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- Know and understand your pitch count – what to do when ball 4, what to do when strike 3
- Dropped 3rd strike ○ Stealing – when to leave, how to position feet on base, leading off and getting back
- Running the bases
 - Sliding
 - Work on their swing fundamentals
- Basic softball IQ – defense
 - Proper throwing skills – work on eliminating the rainbow arc
 - Know the number of outs and where the play is
 - Talking in the field
 - Receiving the ground ball and transitioning from glove to throw
 - Proper throwing
 - 2-hand catching

10U to 12U Progression

Ensure players moving up to the 12U level work on the following

- Basic softball IQ - offense
 - Getting batters exposed to different pitches (spots and change ups)
 - Understanding and executing on signs
 - Double steal opportunities
 - Stealing – timing and importance of sliding
 - Diving back to the base
 - Running the bases
 - Sliding – hook slide, sliding to back of plate, etc.
 - Work on their swing fundamentals
 - Timing from pitches at 40' More in-depth strategies – bunting to move runners, slap, drag, sacrifice flies, hitting to a location, drawing the throw down, tagging up, etc.
- Basic softball IQ – defense
 - Getting ball out of glove FAST. Quick hard throw to 1B
 - 1B to home quick plays
 - Pick offs at 3rd/1st
 - Introduce simple 1st and 3rd plays
 - Know the number of outs and where the play is
 - Knowing how to set up a cut-off and execute on the cut off from OF
 - Playing with a bigger ball
 - Pace of play must be faster to succeed

- More in-depth strategies – fielding position shifts to where a batter is hitting, going home for the force out, Catcher to SS play to draw the runner off of 3B,

PITCHING

- Philosophy: try to get as many kids pitching as possible, but know this is a total family experience. Pitchers need to work extra to develop a consistent pitching motion. This will require a partner to play catcher
 - 10U Pitchers – should be pitching 2-3 times per week
 - 12U Pitchers – should be pitching 3-4 times per week
- Pitching Drills:
 - Wrist Flicks
 - Check for proper 4 seam grip
 - Back leg stacked, heel up, front foot at 1 o'clock
 - Pinky at pocket, long arm
 - "W"s Whips
 - Connect arms to ribs
 - Back leg stacked and keeping weight back
 - Resist with the front side (Squeezing knees together)
 - Keep hand under the ball
 - Whips with a drag
 - Shoe laces towards the ground
 - Knee driving to catcher
 - Standing Arm Circles
 - Back up a few feet, same stance
 - Glove at their heart, throwing hand out to catcher
 - Focusing on balance/weight distribution and staying back and stacked
 - Not using legs yet
 - Arm Circles with a step
 - Same idea as Standing arm circles
 - Stepping with left foot (for RHP)
 - Show bottom of shoe to catcher
 - Drag shoe laces towards ground, knee drive to catcher
 - Tap Drill- at full distance
 - Start in regular pitching stance, step forward knee over toe and bring both arms to catcher trying to stay stacked
 - Tap back to regular stance and then full pitch
 - Full Pitch
 - Inside and Outside pitches
 - Mechanics stay the same
 - Minor change is where you are driving your hips/ stepping towards

the designated corner of the plate

- o Mechanics ([Video](#))
- o Foundation First ([Video](#))
- o Footwork on the Mound ([video](#))

CATCHING

- o Philosophy:
 - Catchers role: do the best job they can to get strikes for their pitcher

Preparation:

- Dynamic Movements
- Stretching
 - Back & forth hamstrings
 - Glutes
 - Ankle Rotation
 - Duck Walk –
 - o Forward & backward
 - o Side to side (both directions)
 - o On knees, slide both ways, forward
 - Modified bear crawl
- o **Receiving the ball:**
 - Goal: Create & keep strikes

Technique:

- When catching, thumb should be "under" the ball, with a wide pocket. Think of catching the the "L" shape of your thumb and finger.
- Athletes should have a slight bend in their elbow and it should be in line/slightly below their wrist
 - o If their elbow is down then their glove is also not in the right position to frame the ball
- Athletes should go to the ball with their heel of their hand rather than top of the fingers --> if their fingers lead, they will most likely drag the ball down/out of the zone
- Try to receive the ball within your shoulders. This means athletes might need to shift their chest slightly depending on the location of the pitch (this is a slightly more advanced skill)
- Quiet receiving – very little movement of body or glove

Drills:

- Tennis ball catch (my favorite) --> how athletes set up in stance and catch a tennis ball in bare hand making sure technique is solid (L shape, elbow up, heel of hand leading)

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- Two ball tennis ball catch (slightly advanced) --> put a tennis ball in last two fingers of your catching hand (pinky/ring finger) and try to catch the ball tossed to you in thumb and forefinger. If athlete leading with their fingers, most likely they won't catch the ball
- Tennis ball bounce - have athlete start with their bare hand low or on the ground and bounce the tennis ball. This allows them to work underneath the ball with their thumb

BLOCKING

Technique

- Glove first!
- Knees replace feet (or close too). I had the girls work on a line so they could visualize it. Biggest thing here is to raise the hips and lower the chest to kick back the legs vs. jumping up then jumping down
- Chest down at 45, hips off heels, chin tucked, throwing hand OUT OF THE WAY (behind back or glove)

Drills:

- 3 Part: 1) start on knees and just have the girls practice glove down w/ head 2) on knees w/ glove off. put 2 hands down directly in front of you and practice kicking legs back in good positioning 3) full block w/ glove first
- Tennis ball blocking
 - 3 ball block - put a ball on the inside, middle, outside of plate and work on reactions to each location

THROWING

Technique:

- Make sure athlete gets in the right slot MEANING getting into to that position is not down and around (like an outfielder) but more like straight back
- We want wrist in line with the elbow and not below or behind head
- Ball should NEVER be facing away from them if you can help it
- The SEQUENCING OF THE THROW should happen like this: Catch/transfer, load step (right foot either directly beneath them or slightly in front), step & separate (as they make the step forward, the arm should be coming back into their slot), then hips lead elbow and hand forward to their target
- Shoulders must be turned prior to throwing (meaning front shoulder points to target)
- Activate glove hand and bring it down to ribs to help momentum of the chest forward

*** Make sure the chest does not lead the throw. If you have a player whose chest is parallel to the ground when they're done, they will injure themselves (I was that player!). Instead tell them to activate their core, stay tall, and keep their nose over their belly button or front toe. They need to rotate from center and their legs rather than chest

Drills (This is hard to break down because I do a LOT of breakdown drills with my younger players for sequencing):

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- Feet together/hands together. They will start with feet together and the ball in glove and hands together. I will say separate and they have to get in a good throwing position. Then I'll say throw
- Load step. I'll have them stand facing their target with the ball in their glove. I typically put a cone right between their feet. I will say load and they have to bring the ball to their chest to transfer to throwing hand while loading into their load step (right foot). When the "hop" to load, they must either step on the other side of the cone where their left foot was or directly in front of the cone (this helps with momentum). Once they are loaded, I'll say separate and they again get in a good throwing position. Then I'll say throw.
- (more advanced you can always take out the middle step of saying separate)
- From their stance, I'll do the above drill broken down
 - ^^ once they become strong throwers, you can add more advanced drills but I urge them to get their technique down first.

Other Drills:

- Mini Mit (web gloves)
- Double tennis balls
 - Hold one in hand, catch a second ball in same hand
- Donut Mitt
 - Stiff, doesn't close, can only catch in the pocket
- Baby Glove (27")
- Knee down receiving (up to catcher if they like knee down or not)
- Frisbee Drill
 - Focus on thumb under
- Tennis ball roll
 - Lay on stomach
 - Hand resting on ground
- Tennis Ball Drop
 - Good for hand eye coordination
 - Drop by from straight up, catcher should come up to catch
- Cone Drill
 - Work on thumb under
 - Come from below
 - Outside and inside
- Exchanges or Figure 8's
 - Practice getting ball out of glove
- Flat glove
 - Trying to receive quickly
 - Catch and throw work
- QB Drill
 - Face plate like you are a hitter
 - Receive deep (middle of body) and make quick exchange

- Receiving throws at home plate
 - Tag – make sure it’s going to the plate (not the runner)
 - Drills
 - Throw tennis balls so catcher can practice short hops
 - Fungos to your catcher (practice bad bounces)

Catcher/Umpire Relationship

- Introduce yourself
- Talk to the umpire
- Gain feedback
- Understand “unwritten rules”
 - Ie. Foul tips, give them time
- Mutual respect
- This takes practice]

Strength and Agility

<<Pending Formal Program>>

- **Focus here is on injury prevention; consistency is key. Doing strength and agility at least 3 days per week is imperative to reducing the risk of repetitive use injuries in addition to developing better all around athletic abilities. Incorporate some of this into your practices and encourage your athletes to make this part of their weekly routines.**
 - Jog/warm up 5 mins
 - Stretch 5 mins
 - 20 mins
 - **Choose 2-3 exercises from each section below; complete 3 sets of 10-15 reps; with approx. 30 seconds rest between.**
- **1. Shoulder**
 - **Front raises, side raises, angled turn the bottle over, bands- pulls into body, pulls away from body, shoulder pull downs**
- **2. Core- back and stomach**
 - **Russian twists, heel touch crunches, super man, reach and pull exercises (lateral pull downs, bands pulls across body), push ups**
- **3. Legs**
 - **Jump squats, frog jumps, lunges, side lunges, hip adduction, hip abduction, hip swings, jump lung switches, Calf raisers**
- **4. Agility**
 - **Ladder- fast feet, karaoke, touch and go on bases (killers base to base), side to side, burpees**
- **Pitcher-specific**
 - **Shoulder bands**

Wayzata Skill Development Coaching Guide

- **Leg adduction (squeeze in)**
- **1 leg squats, lunges, explosive**
- **Core- Russian twists**
- **Catcher-specific**
 - **Ladder drill**
 - **Block 3 sides**

Knee injury prevention with strength training for legs (above)