



PRACTICE PLANS

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INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to **Version #1** of our EyeBlackAcademy.com Little League Practice Plan. This plan is intended for ages 6-12 and can be used for a variety of skill levels. We have outlined a number of drills and made suggestions for how to structure practices based on 10+ years of experience running highly efficient, productive, and fun workouts for exactly this age group. As the season progresses, you should start tailoring each practice to the specific needs of your team, but we have supplied all of the drills you could possibly need. For example, if our Week 7 practice features a “Cut-Off” station but your team is looking extremely solid in that area, absolutely replace it with an area that needs more work. That said, the initial practice plans should be followed very closely as those workouts are proven to get your players heading in the direction across all skills.

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION:

Inside you will find a series of practice outlines. It is recommended that you follow the progression as closely as possible as we designed each practice taking into consideration that your players will be improving over the course of the season and will be ready for increasingly challenging drills as time goes by. We have addressed a variety of skills and introduced drills in sequence that will help you build on previous workouts on a week to week basis.

At the top of each of each practice plan we have provided spaces for you to fill out your roster of who is present at practice. Make the groups during warm-ups to ensure you have even numbers and have accounted for anyone who is not attending practice (there are always no-shows). Organize the groups however you would like but it may be helpful to divide the groups in order to keep “goofballs” apart from each other, or divide by talent levels in order to make practices more efficient. Do not worry about organizing by what position you believe each player will play at this age, it is extremely important that every player rotates and gets a repetition at each position/station regardless of where they will play in games. Rotating positions allows your players to gain a greater understanding of the game as a whole, and will give you more options as a coach by having players who are competent and comfortable at multiple positions.

BASEBALL IS A GAME OF REPETITION!

If your players struggle with a concept or drill at practice, we highly recommend repeating it at future practices so they become increasingly more comfortable with the concepts and skills we want to develop. Early in the season, many drills will be an absolute mess as players grow accustomed not only to the fundamentals of the skill work, but also the functionality of the drills. Stick with it through these rough patches because with focus and repetition, they will get it!

DIAGRAMS

At the bottom of each practice we have provided diagrams for the more complicated drills or movements. They are static as we have tried to make the presentation as simple as possible, and have provided a key to help explain the drill. If you are still unclear on the functionality of a drill, search our forum for similar questions or post your own and we will do our best to clear up any confusion. We are currently developing video content that will support this guide and your feedback on this document will greatly help us create videos that are of maximum utility to you as a coach.

PLAYER SAFETY:

In many drills there are multiple coaches and multiple baseballs being hit or thrown at the same time. Remember to always keep the safety of your players as a priority. Base runners and hitters should always be wearing helmets. Balls should be hit or thrown to players in a sequence that makes sure players are not in the way of throws or batted balls.¹

DIFFICULTY:

These drills can be performed by groups of all skill levels. The major difference may be in the length of time you choose to focus on a skill set. Some groups will pick up on a skill or concept quickly, and you can move on. Others will struggle, so take your time teaching each station/drill until you are making progress with the group. Don't feel like you have to get everything into one practice. If you find that a given drill has been quickly mastered by your team, we have provided additional advanced drills to use at your discretion.

NOTES:

We have provided a note section on each page of the practice plan. Use this section as a way to jot down quick reminders to yourself of any issues (positive or negative) that come up during practice. Take note of your "MVP of the Day" - this award should ALWAYS be "effort-based" for post-practice recognition and reward, for example. Keep track of what drills went well and which will require more work. Jot down any issues that arose during practice (botched cut-offs, passive at-bats, not backing up bases, etc. etc.) that you would like to address in future workouts and then reference this coach's guide on how to fix them. One of the keys to becoming a great Little League coach is to be totally objective and honest about your team's strengths and weaknesses (as well as your own) and tailoring future practices accordingly. If your team is extremely proficient in one area but needs work in others, focus future workouts on the areas that need the most improvement.

¹ As such our practices are a guide only, and only you can determine if the situation is unsafe for your players. By using this practice plan, you agree that we cannot be held responsible for any injuries that occur during one of these practices.

BLANK PRACTICE:

In the back of the manual we have provided a blank practice plan. If you have captured the essence of our practices and want more freedom, feel free to use this to insert your own practice items. This will keep you organized and efficient with your time.

HERDING CATS: HOW TO KEEP PLAYERS FOCUSED

After more than a decade coaching the 6-12 age groups, we understand better than anyone the challenge of keeping young ballplayers engaged and focused for the full duration of a practice. Recognizing and reminding yourself that these are kids and that they are supposed to goof off and get distracted every once in a while, will help you as a coach connect with the team as a whole. There is not *one* magic potion you can use to keep *every* player focused, but we've outlined some extremely effective methods that have worked well for us over the years.

- **Competition** – Kids love competing and keeping score! In order to challenge players of all skill types, we suggest providing opportunities to compete with their own personal record, or a team record, to avoid direct competition between the best and weakest players. This way everyone can find ways to improve.
 - Example – On throwing drills, have players count how many balls they can catch in a row – and then have them try to beat their record. Or have them count how many times in a row they can throw the ball to their partner in the vicinity of their chest. Have them keep count and repeat it again next practice. Write it down, and save the numbers in your notes.
- **Baseball Cards** – For the youngest players, 4-8, using baseball cards as a reward system is an extremely effective way to keep the group engaged and focused. Buy a few packets of cards and constantly reward players throughout practice not only for good plays, but for eye contact and listening during team meetings, being a good teammate, hustling, etc. Results-based recognition (i.e. giving away cards for a great hit or great play) will usually mean celebrating the same few more talented players over and over again. Be sure to find ways to pump up every player as your practices will run smoother, your players will work harder, and your team will be more successful if ALL players feel valued.
- **Stay organized and efficient** – When players are at a station too long, their minds wander, they lose focus, and the drill suffers. Make sure to keep the practice upbeat and focused. Keep them moving from one station to another so that they don't have time to stare off into space. Limit each drill or station to 10-20 minutes (depending on age group).
- **Water breaks** – Schedule water breaks so your players don't get thirsty in the middle of a drill and disrupt the flow of practice. It sounds simple, but hydrated players have better practices.

- **Organize gloves** – Make a “Glove Pile” in or near the dugout before and after every drill – you won’t believe how much time you’ll save at practices if your team always knows where their equipment is – seamless transitions keep control of your players’ attention spans! No more: “I can’t find my glove.”!!!!
- **Energy and focus** - Simply stated, you must coach with more energy than your players and have an organized practice plan that you stick to. If you lethargic at practice, they will be too. If you come to practice without a practice outline and there is unfocused downtime between drills, they won’t be focused when the drills start back up. Players respond to their coaches energy and focus, and if you can keep your pace quick and your energy high, your practices will benefit immensely.

IN CONCLUSION:

At Eye Black Academy we are committed to producing the absolute best online youth sports instruction content and work tirelessly on a daily basis to continually improve our product. Our mission is to make Little League more enjoyable for players and parents alike, and we encourage you to take advantage of everything our site has to offer.

Good luck!



PRACTICE PLAN



For more coaching tools visit www.EyeBlackAcademy.com

Coaching Tip!

Arrange groups before practice to save time and confusion

Coaching Tip!

Focusing on uniform and attitude helps players concentrate and realize that practice means focus

Practice Plan # 1

Team:

Group 1: _____

Group 2: _____

Group 3: _____

Group 4: _____

Start of Practice

(Minute 1)

Uniform Check – Make sure shirts are tucked in, hats on forward, and cleats are tied, attitude

Goal: - Begin to focus on baseball exclusively

Warm-up

(5 Minutes)

Loosen Legs: Run from first base to the right field foul pole, and run to a meeting spot in center field

Stretch: Touch the toes, butterfly, lunges, arm circles

Goal: - Focus Focus Focus, as a Coach, make sure everyone is thinking baseball and hustling

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Improve concentration by competition.

1.) Quick toss – how many throws can you and your partner make in a minute (concentrate on footwork)

2.) Accuracy – how many times can you throw with your partner without dropping the ball

Keep track each practice and follow improvement. Note: Competing only with personal scores, not against teammates.

Coaching Tip!

A throw that is on a line and bounces gets to a target faster than a high arcing throw.

Do not rush through throwing; this is probably the most important part of practice, emphasizing focus and accuracy (this will pay off in the long run!)

Throwing Drills

(15-20 Minutes)

Wrist flippers:

Description: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, both toes facing forward, and chest facing the target. Your throwing arm is out in front of you, throwing elbow at shoulder height, and your glove under the elbow, providing support. Without using your arm, chest, legs, or hips, flip ball to the partner using only the wrist.

Goals: - Focus on 1) four seam grip, 2) creating backspin, and 3) having loose, quick wrist

One knee down:

Description: Throwing arm knee on the ground, sitting up tall, with glove-side leg out front for stabilization. Start with chest square towards target, rotate shoulders away from target while keeping your lower half still. Shoulders should rotate all the way to perpendicular to the target while separating ball and glove in a downward motion towards ground with the palms moving in opposite directions. Then throw the ball going forward with chin finishing over front knee, chest above the left thigh, and hand finishing by the left shoe.

Goals: - Accurate throws, creating torque in the core. Finish chin towards target.

Step, Stop, and Check:

Description: Start standing on both feet with the shoulders and hips perpendicular to the target. Take a step and separate the hands down towards the ground with the palms going away from each other and stop in the "power position" aka "Egyptian Dude or L7" position. Throwing elbow should be shoulder height, fingers pointed away from target, glove under left elbow, hips, shoulders, knees, and toes all perpendicular to target, (L7, power position/ "Egyptian Dude"), and follow through to the target.

Goals: - Improve accuracy with chest chin and glove moving towards the target during the throw. Throwing hand finishing by the opposite knee, (not rib cage, hip or shoulder)

Johnny Rockers:

Description: Shoulders perpendicular to your target, with feet very wide. Rock back and forth and finish throw to the target. Use your momentum to make you follow through running towards the target.

Goals: - Creating power from your lower half, and practice finishing towards the target

Long Toss:

Description: Increase throwing distance to increase arm strength over the season. Make sure the throws are on a line (roughly head-high or below). It is fine to one hop or to bounce it to your target, as long as the throw does not have an arc.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Keep the lines moving quickly to increase activity and focus.

Coaching Tip!

Focus on active footwork. Ground balls are about your feet, not your hands.

Goals:

- One and two hops are encouraged to guarantee that the throw stays low. Develop step behind/crow hop/shuffle throws - throwing side leg moves behind your lead leg to create a crow hop.

OVERALL GOALS:

- Get arm loose, but focus on having fun and paying attention to detail and performance

Throwing around the bases

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Evenly divide the players between 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and home plate.

Description: The ball starts at home plate with a throw to 3rd. 3rd then throws to 2nd, 2nd to 1st, and finally 1st to home. Once a player has caught the ball and thrown it to the next base, he hustles to the end of the line of that base to act as a backup. Keep throwing around the bases until the team can complete 8-25 throws in row depending on age and skill level.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Backing up bases
 - Moving feet to off-line throws
 - Quick footwork and release (advanced)
 - Inside and reverse pivot footwork (advanced)
 - High intensity matching game speed

Rolling Groundballs

(5 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Two coaches needed. Evenly divide groups at 3rd, SS, 2nd, and 1st. One coach rolls alternating ground balls to 3rd and SS, and the other coach alternates rolls to 2nd and 1st. The players RUN the ball back to the coach (**See Diagram 1 below**)

- Goals:**
- Down and ready position
 - Move feet
 - Bend at knees
 - Glove dirty
 - Fielding triangle
 - Fast pace to simulate game speed and make practice active and fun!

Optional: Move on to hitting fungos (balls hit by a coach): Two coaches, one coach hits to the left side of the infield, the other to the right. The players throw the ball back to the coach.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Rotate the positions every five minutes.

Always have a player or coach catching for you. It keeps the drill moving more efficiently.

Make players chase balls they miss! This helps them focus more on every ball hit to them in practice and gets them in the habit of going after the ball after an error.

Coaching Tip!

Use whiffle balls. It's safer and you spend less time chasing.

Hitting Groundballs

(5 Minutes per Position- 15-20 Minutes Total)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing near the right hander's batter box of home plate and Coach 2 near the left hander's batter's box of home plate.

Description: Coach 1 hits a groundball to the 3rd base line - the player fields the ball and throws a 1 hop back to the coach (or in the air if there's an additional coach available to catch.). That player goes to the end of his line while another ground ball is hit to the SS. Coach 2 is doing the same with the 2nd and 1st lines.

- Goals:**
- Ground balls should be hit crisply and often to simulate fast-paced game situations.
 - Ground balls should be hit directly at the players at first to build comfort, confidence and focus on fundamentals
 - Players should focus on being "Down and Ready" - this means hands off their knees, on the balls of their feet and ready to react and move.
 - Players should focus on moving their feet to attack the ball while also centering the ball in the middle of their body
 - Players should focus on bending down at their knees (butt down) and not at their waist.
 - Players should focus on getting their gloves dirty (literally on the ground) with their hands out in front of their feet.

Advanced: Players can start to use their footwork to "find the good hop"
Players can start to set their footwork preparing for the throw before receiving the ball.

Tee Stations

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place a tee on Home Plate with a bucket of balls nearby.

Description: Batters hit off the tee into a net, fence, or side of a cage.

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Hitting the "middle of the ball" - no hitting the tee, and no chopping
 - Bat Speed
 - Head Discipline
 - Quality of swing over quantity of swings (most players will just swing and swing and swing without really thinking about what they're doing)

Advanced: Move the tee to different locations in the hitting zone.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Side toss, while popular is, in general, a bad idea since no batter will ever face a pitch coming from the side in a real game.

Front Toss

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front on the batter approximately 10-15 feet away.

Description: The coach makes firm underhand tosses to the batter down the middle of the plate (do NOT lob the ball).

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Advanced: Bat speed
Different pitch locations

Cool Down:

(5 Minutes)

A.) Sprints along OF line. Must run full speed through 60 feet. If they don't repeat and make everyone do it again.

B.) Running the bases. Practice sprinting through first. Then first to second, second to third, third to home. And an imaginary inside the park HR!

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



Supportive Practice Diagrams

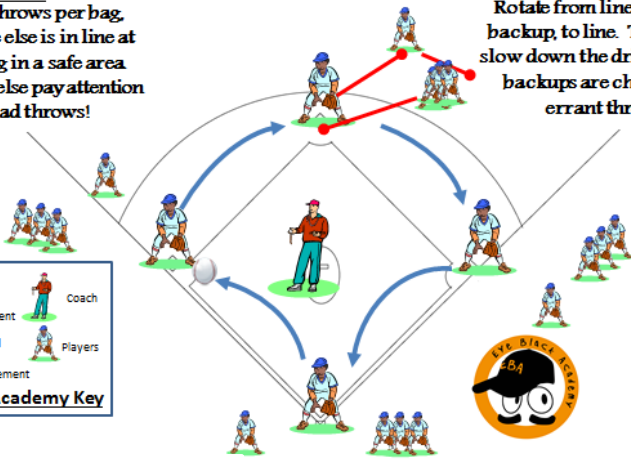
Throwing Around the Bases

Only one player backing up errant throws per bag, everyone else is in line at each bag in a safe area. Everyone else pay attention to bad throws!

Rotate from line to bag, to backup, to line. That won't slow down the drill when the backups are chasing an errant throw.

Eye Black Academy Key

- Throw (curved arrow)
- Movement (solid arrow)
- Hit/Roll (dashed arrow)
- Alt. movement (dotted arrow)

 Coach
 Players


Ground Balls: Rolled Balls from Coaches

Eye Black Academy Key

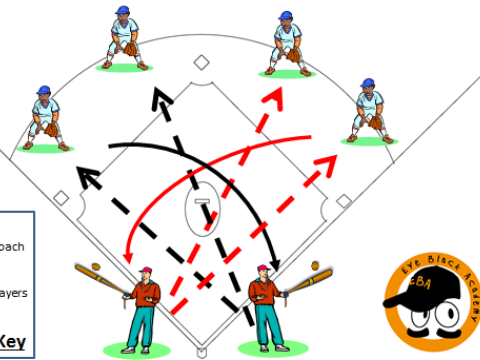
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 Coach
 Players


Hitting Ground balls

Eye Black Academy Key

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- Movement (solid arrow)
- Hit/Roll (dashed arrow)
- Alt. movement (dotted arrow)

 Coach
 Players


Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



For more details for drills visit www.EyeBlackAcademy.com

Coaching Tip!

Arrange groups before practice to save time and confusion

Coaching Tip!

Focusing on uniform and attitude helps players concentrate and realize that practice means focus

Practice Plan #2

Team:

Group 1: _____

Group 2: _____

Group 3: _____

Group 4: _____

Start of Practice

(Minute 1)

Uniform Check – Make sure shirts are tucked in, hats on forward, and cleats are tied, attitude

Goal: - Begin to focus on baseball exclusively

Warm-up

(5 Minutes)

Loosen Legs: Run from first base to the right field foul pole, and run to a meeting spot in center field

Stretch: Touch the toes, butterfly, lunges, arm circles

Goal: - Focus Focus Focus. As a Coach, make sure everyone is thinking baseball and hustling

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Improve concentration by competition.

1.) Quick toss – how many throws can you and your partner make in a minute (concentrate on footwork)

2.) Accuracy – how many times can you throw with your partner without dropping the ball

Keep track each practice and follow improvement. Note: Competing only with personal scores, not against teammates.

Coaching Tip!

A throw that is on a line and bounces gets to a target faster than a high arcing throw.

Do not rush through throwing; this is probably the most important part of practice, emphasizing focus and accuracy (this will pay off in the long run!)

Throwing Drills

(15-20 Minutes)

Wrist flippers:

Description: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, both toes facing forward, and chest facing the target. Your throwing arm is out in front of you, throwing elbow at shoulder height, and your glove under the elbow, providing support. Without using your arm, chest, legs, or hips, flip ball to the partner using only the wrist.

Goals: - Focus on 1) four seam grip, 2) creating backspin, and 3) having loose, quick wrist

One knee down:

Description: Throwing arm knee on the ground, sitting up tall, with glove-side leg out front for stabilization. Start with chest square towards target, rotate shoulders away from target while keeping your lower half still. Shoulders should rotate all the way to perpendicular to the target while separating ball and glove in a downward motion towards ground with the palms moving in opposite directions. Then throw the ball going forward with chin finishing over front knee, chest above the left thigh, and hand finishing by the left shoe.

Goals: - Accurate throws, creating torque in the core. Finish chin towards target.

Step, Stop, and Check:

Description: Start standing on both feet with the shoulders and hips perpendicular to the target. Take a step and separate the hands down towards the ground with the palms going away from each other and stop in the "power position" aka "Egyptian Dude or L7" position. Throwing elbow should be shoulder height, fingers pointed away from target, glove under left elbow, hips, shoulders, knees, and toes all perpendicular to target, (L7, power position/ "Egyptian Dude"), and follow through to the target.

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Johnny Rockers:

Description: Shoulders perpendicular to your target, with feet very wide. Rock back and forth and finish throw to the target. Use your momentum to make you follow through running towards the target.

Goals: - Creating power from your lower half, and practice finishing towards the target

Long Toss:

Description: Increase throwing distance to increase arm strength over the season. Make sure the throws are on a line (roughly head-high or below). It is fine to one hop or to bounce it to your target, as long as the throw does not have an arc.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Emphasize pitch location vs. velocity.

Coaching Tip!

Rotate the positions every five minutes.

Always have a player or coach catching for you. It keeps the drill moving more efficiently.

Make players chase balls they miss! This will increase focus and get them in the habit of running after an error immediately.

Goals:

- One and two hops are encouraged to guarantee that the throw stays low. Develop step behind/crow hop/shuffle throws - throwing side leg moves behind your lead leg to create a crow hop.

OVERALL GOALS:

- Get arm loose, but focus on having fun and paying attention to detail and performance

Pitching

(5-7Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place Player 1 on the foul line and Player 2 roughly 40-45 feet away.

Description: Have Player 1 be the "pitcher" and Player 2 be the "catcher" where Player 2 gets in a little half crouch giving a chest-high target. After Player 1 pitches to Player 2, Player 2 now becomes the "pitcher" while Player 1 is the "catcher," reversing roles. All pitches should be thrown at 60-70% intensity.

- Goals:**
- Focus on correct balance points of the pitching mechanics
 - Without a batter, the only goal is throwing strikes
 - Learn to focus on the target (the glove) and nothing else
 - At reduced intensity and velocity, players are now able to concentrate on mechanics and location exclusively

Hitting Groundballs

(5 Minutes per Position- 15-20 Minutes Total)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing near the right hander's batter box of home plate and Coach 2 near the left hander's batter's box of home plate.

Description: Coach 1 hits a groundball to the 3rd base line - the player fields the ball and throws a 1 hop back to the coach (or in the air if there's an additional coach available to catch.). That player goes to the end of his line while another ground ball is hit to the SS. Coach 2 is doing the same with the 2nd and 1st lines.

- Goals:**
- Ground balls should be hit crisply and often to simulate fast-paced game situations.
 - Ground balls should be hit directly at the players at first to build comfort, confidence and focus on fundamentals
 - Players should focus on being "Down and Ready" - this means hands off their knees, on the balls of their feet and ready to react and move.
 - Players should focus on moving their feet to attack the ball while also centering the ball in the middle of their body
 - Players should focus on bending down at their knees (butt down) and not at their waist.
 - Players should focus on getting their gloves dirty (literally on the ground) with their hands out in front of their feet.

Advanced: Players can start to use their footwork to "find the good hop"
Players can start to set their footwork preparing for the throw before receiving the ball

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Don't think about the double play. Have players focus on getting the out.

Coaching Tip!

Use whiffle balls. It's safer and you spend less time chasing.

Groundballs w/ Dart Throws and/or Flips

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill:

SS and 2nd Baseman Instruction (Underhand Flips):

Use an underhand flip when the ball is hit at the player or between the player and the bag. After fielding the ball with correct technique, square hips to the bag, show the ball (get it out of the glove), and run a few steps towards the bag, using the velocity created by your momentum to generate the speed on the flip. No big swinging arms, no bowling ball throws!

SS and 2nd Baseman Instruction (Dart Throw):

A Dart Toss is used when 2nd or SS is moving away from the bag to field the groundball. In these instances they will almost always field the ball too far from the bag for an underhand flip, but too close to the bag for a full throw. After fielding the ball, square (turn) the hips towards the bag, throw using only your wrist and elbow like a dart. This is should create a quick release and solid throw without the ball lobbing (underhand flip) or being a missile (full throw).

Drill Description: Roll the ball to SS while 2nd moves to cover the bag. Initially, several rounds should be rolled at or to the bag side of the each player resulting in an Underhand Flip. The next several rounds should be rolled away from the bag resulting in a Dart Throw.

- Goals:**
- Footwork
 - Correct fielding position
 - Correct delivery to 2nd (Underhand Flip vs. Dart Throw)
 - Communication
 - Player receiving the ball focusing on getting the "lead runner" (no double plays)

Tee Stations

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place a tee on Home Plate with a bucket of balls nearby.

Description: Batters hit off the tee into a net, fence, or side of a cage.

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Hitting the "middle of the ball" - no hitting the tee, and no chopping
 - Bat Speed
 - Head Discipline
 - Quality of swing over quantity of swings (most players will just swing and swing and swing without really thinking about what they're doing)

Advanced: Move the tee to different locations in the hitting zone.

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PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Side toss, while popular is, in general, a bad idea since no batter will ever face a pitch coming from the side in a real game.

Front Toss

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front on the batter approximately 10-15 feet away (Side toss is a bad idea since no batter will ever face a pitch coming from the side in a real game).

Description: The coach makes firm underhand tosses to the batter down the middle of the plate (do NOT lob the ball).

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Advanced: Bat speed
Different pitch locations

Cool Down:

(5 Minutes)

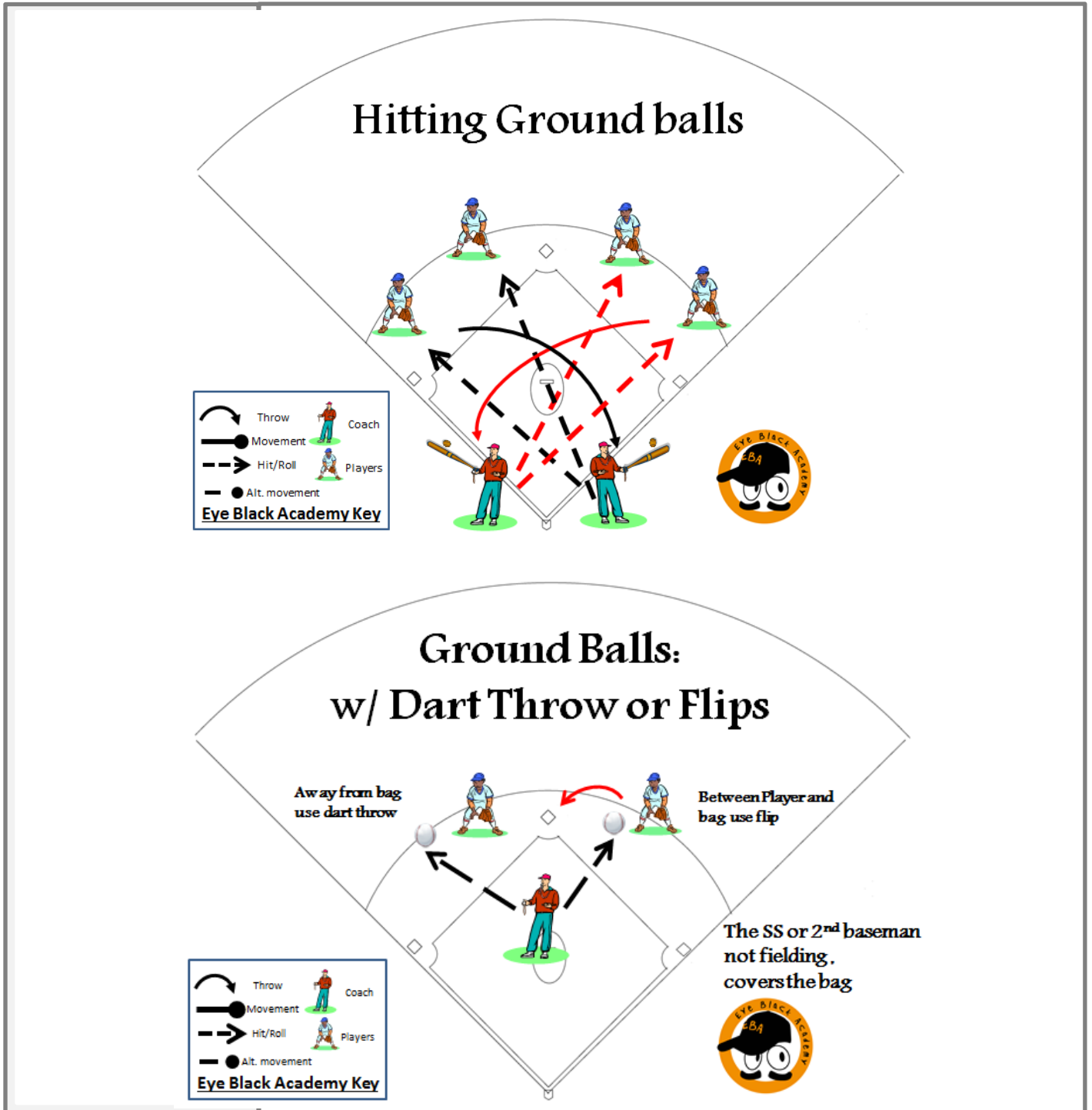
A.) Sprints along OF line. Must run full speed through 60 feet. If they don't repeat and make everyone do it again.

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Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



Supportive Practice Diagrams



Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



For more details for drills visit www.EyeBlackAcademy.com

Coaching Tip!

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Coaching Tip!

Focusing on uniform and attitude helps players concentrate and realize that practice means focus

Practice Plan #3

Team:

Group 1: _____

Group 2: _____

Group 3: _____

Group 4: _____

Start of Practice

(Minute 1)

Uniform Check – Make sure shirts are tucked in, hats on forward, and cleats are tied, attitude

Goal: - Begin to focus on baseball exclusively

Warm-up

(5 Minutes)

Loosen Legs: Run from first base to the right field foul pole, and run to a meeting spot in center field

Stretch: Touch the toes, butterfly, lunges, arm circles

Goal: - Focus Focus Focus. As a Coach, make sure everyone is thinking baseball and hustling

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Improve concentration by competition.

- 1.) Quick toss – how many throws can you and your partner make in a minute (concentrate on footwork)**
- 2.) Accuracy – how many times can you throw with your partner without dropping the ball**

Keep track each practice and follow improvement. Note: Competing only with personal scores, not against teammates.

Coaching Tip!

A throw that is on a line and bounces gets to a target faster than a high arcing throw.

Do not rush through throwing; this is probably the most important part of practice, emphasizing focus and accuracy (this will pay off in the long run!)

Throwing Drills

(15-20 Minutes)

Wrist flippers:

Description: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, both toes facing forward, and chest facing the target. Your throwing arm is out in front of you, throwing elbow at shoulder height, and your glove under the elbow, providing support. Without using your arm, chest, legs, or hips, flip ball to the partner using only the wrist.

Goals: - Focus on 1) four seam grip, 2) creating backspin, and 3) having loose, quick wrist

One knee down:

Description: Throwing arm knee on the ground, sitting up tall, with glove-side leg out front for stabilization. Start with chest square towards target, rotate shoulders away from target while keeping your lower half still. Shoulders should rotate all the way to perpendicular to the target while separating ball and glove in a downward motion towards ground with the palms moving in opposite directions. Then throw the ball going forward with chin finishing over front knee, chest above the left thigh, and hand finishing by the left shoe.

Goals: - Accurate throws, creating torque in the core. Finish chin towards target.

Step, Stop, and Check:

Description: Start standing on both feet with the shoulders and hips perpendicular to the target. Take a step and separate the hands down towards the ground with the palms going away from each other and stop in the "power position" aka "Egyptian Dude or L7" position. Throwing elbow should be shoulder height, fingers pointed away from target, glove under left elbow, hips, shoulders, knees, and toes all perpendicular to target, (L7, power position/ "Egyptian Dude"), and follow through to the target.

Goals: - Improve accuracy with chest chin and glove moving towards the target during the throw. Throwing hand finishing by the opposite knee, (not rib cage, hip or shoulder)

Johnny Rockers:

Description: Shoulders perpendicular to your target, with feet very wide. Rock back and forth and finish throw to the target. Use your momentum to make you follow through running towards the target.

Goals: - Creating power from your lower half, and practice finishing towards the target

Long Toss:

Description: Increase throwing distance to increase arm strength over the season. Make sure the throws are on a line (roughly head-high or below). It is fine to one hop or to bounce it to your target, as long as the throw does not have an arc.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Emphasize pitch location vs. velocity.

Coaching Tip!

Encourage quick feet and quick glove to hand transfer for older kids.

Goals:

- One and two hops are encouraged to guarantee that the throw stays low. Develop step behind/crow hop/shuffle throws - throwing side leg moves behind your lead leg to create a crow hop.

OVERALL GOALS:

- Get arm loose, but focus on having fun and paying attention to detail and performance

Flat Ground / Dry Work

(5-7Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place players approximately 40-46 feet from each other in a normal warm-up position down one of the foul lines (1 player on the line, the other in the OF grass.)

Description: At 50% intensity, have Player 1 pitch to Player 2 who is in a half-crouch giving a good target with the glove. After receiving the pitch, Player 2 now becomes the "Pitcher" while Player 1 becomes the "Catcher"

- Goals:**
- Without a batter and at 50% intensity, players can focus 100% attention on correct mechanics and pitch location.
 - Catchers can work on giving a good target and being aware of the pitcher's mechanics for when it's their turn to pitch.

Throwing competitions: 60 Seconds!

(1 Minute)

Setting up the drill: Have the throwing partners spaced approximately 40-50 feet apart with one player on the foul line and the other in the outfield grass.

Description: On the count of "GO!" players will see how many total catches they can complete in 60 seconds.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Quick feet to the ball, shuffle step back to the original distance
 - Simulate game speed and intensity
 - Encourage hustle on missed balls
 - Every throw counts
 - Quick glove/hand transfer (advanced)

Throwing competitions:

Most Catches in a Row!

(1 Minute)

Setting up the drill: Have the throwing partners spaced approximately 40-50 feet apart with one player on the foul line and the other in the outfield grass.

Description: On the count of "GO!" players will see how many total catches they can complete in a row in 60 seconds. If the ball is dropped the count starts over at zero.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

As they get further away, allow players to stay in the game using a 1 hopper to account for arm strength. No rainbow throws!

Coaching Tip!

Emphasize pitch location vs. velocity.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Quick feet to the ball, shuffle step back to the original distance
 - Simulate game speed and intensity
 - Encourage hustle on missed balls
 - Every throw counts
 - Quick glove/hand transfer (advanced)

Throwing competitions: "Egg Toss"

(5 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: 1 player starts on the foul line and his partner starts approximately 25 feet away in the outfield. Line up the whole team the same way.

Description: On the count of "GO," all players on the foul line will throw the ball to their partner. If the partner catches it, they take 2 steps back. If they drop it, the team sits down and is "out" until the next game." All the teams still "In" then throw the ball back to the player on the foul line. If caught, the outfield player backs up another 2 steps and so on and so forth. Once the throws get longer, 1 hop is ok and the receiving player may only take 1 step in any direction to catch the ball (like a first baseman would). Make sure all the groups are throwing at the same time to ensure the competition is fair.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Concentration
 - Longer throws
 - "Pressure" throws
 - Every throw counts

Pitching

(5-7Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place Player 1 on the foul line and Player 2 roughly 40-45 feet away.

Description: Have Player 1 be the "pitcher" and Player 2 be the "catcher" where Player 2 gets in a little half crouch giving a chest-high target. After Player 1 pitches to Player 2, Player 2 now becomes the "pitcher" while Player 1 is the "catcher," reversing roles. All pitches should be thrown at 60-70% intensity.

- Goals:**
- Focus on correct balance points of the pitching mechanics
 - Without a batter, the only goal is throwing strikes
 - Learn to focus on the target (the glove) and nothing else
 - At reduced intensity and velocity, players are now able to concentrate on mechanics and location exclusively

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Start with ghost base runners, and add runners to simulate game situations for both fielders and runners.

Make sure the runners don't cheat!

Coaching Tip!

Make sure cutoff men are turning to their glove side and are lined up correctly with the bases.

Ground Balls w/ Throws

(10-15 Minutes, w/ rotations)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing near the right hander's batter box of home plate and Coach 2 near the left hander's batter's box of home plate. Coach 1 will hit the ground ball to the SS. Coach 2 will hit the ground ball to 3rd base.

Description: SS will field the ball and throw to 1st. 3rd base will field the ball and throw to 2nd. **BE CAREFUL** with the timing of hitting the balls - make sure the SS has completed his throw and is out of the way before hitting the ball to 3rd.

- Goals:**
- Same focus on correct groundball technique but now adding a throw
 - Focus of the throws should be accuracy
 - Players receiving the ball at 2nd and 1st can begin to focus on footwork around the bag and reacting to throws that may be off target
 - Concentration and communication starts to become important as there will be lots of action in this drill.

Infield Situations

(15-20 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing at home plate.

Description: With each player in the front of each line being "live," the coach will call out a situation like "nobody on, nobody out." The players will then call out where the play is and get in their down and ready positions. Coach 1 then hits a groundball somewhere in the infield and the players react accordingly. Other situation examples would be, "Runner on 1st, 1 out," or "Runners on 2nd and 3rd, 2 outs."

- Goals:**
- Emphasis on communication before and during the play
 - Emphasis on players finding a way to be involved in the play even if it's not hit to them (communicating, backing up, etc.)
 - All players must now react to the each batted ball and continue until the play is complete.

Cutoffs Drill

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: 4 groups: LF, RF, SS, 2B with coach standing on pitcher's mound.

Description: Coach throws ball to LF and SS runs out to be the cut-off. 2nd base should help line up SS so he is in a straight line between where the LF fielded the ball and the 2nd base bag using commands, "left, left, left or right, right, right. You're good, good, good". Also make sure that the SS is approximately half-way between the LF and the bag so that neither throw from the LF to the SS or SS to the 2nd is too long.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Use whiffle balls. It's safer and you spend less time chasing.

Coaching Tip!

Side toss, while popular is, in general, a bad idea since no batter will ever face a pitch coming from the side in a real game.

After the repetition is completed, the next person at SS and 2nd get ready and the ball is thrown to RF (groundball at first, then fly balls) and the drill is repeated on that side of the field. Give all players roughly 5-7 reps before rotating positions. Make sure every player gets to play each position.

- Goals:**
- Introduction to team defense concepts
 - Communication
 - Always run TOWARDS the ball
 - Cut off turning glove side after the catch (advanced)
 - Applying a tag at the bag (advanced)

Tee Stations

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place a tee on Home Plate with a bucket of balls nearby.

Description: Batters hit off the tee into a net, fence, or side of a cage.

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Hitting the "middle of the ball" - no hitting the tee, and no chopping
 - Bat Speed
 - Head Discipline
 - Quality of swing over quantity of swings (most players will just swing and swing and swing without really thinking about what they're doing)

Advanced: Move the tee to different locations in the hitting zone.

Front Toss

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front on the batter approximately 10-15 feet away.

Description: The coach makes firm underhand tosses to the batter down the middle of the plate (do NOT lob the ball).

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Advanced: Bat speed
Different pitch locations

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

It is important the players get reps that are strikes, even if that means you have to throw underhanded to achieve that goal.

Batting Practice in Cage

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place one batter at Home Plate and a coach behind a protective "L" screen.

Description: Coach throws strikes to the batter (try not to lob it, but having a little arc on it is OK as pitches thrown by Little Leaguers will almost always have an arc on them)

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Cool Down:

(5 Minutes)

A.) Sprints along OF line. Must run full speed through 60 feet. If they don't repeat and make everyone do it again.

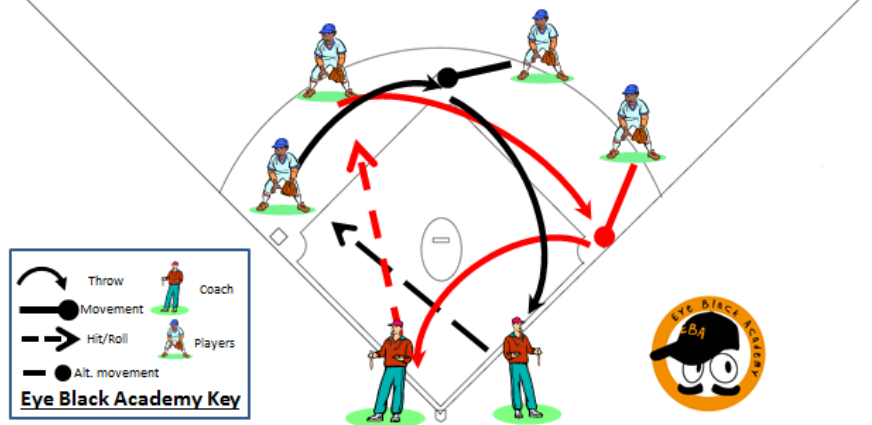
B.) Running the bases. Practice sprinting through first. Then first to second, second to third. Third to home. And an imaginary inside the park HR!

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)

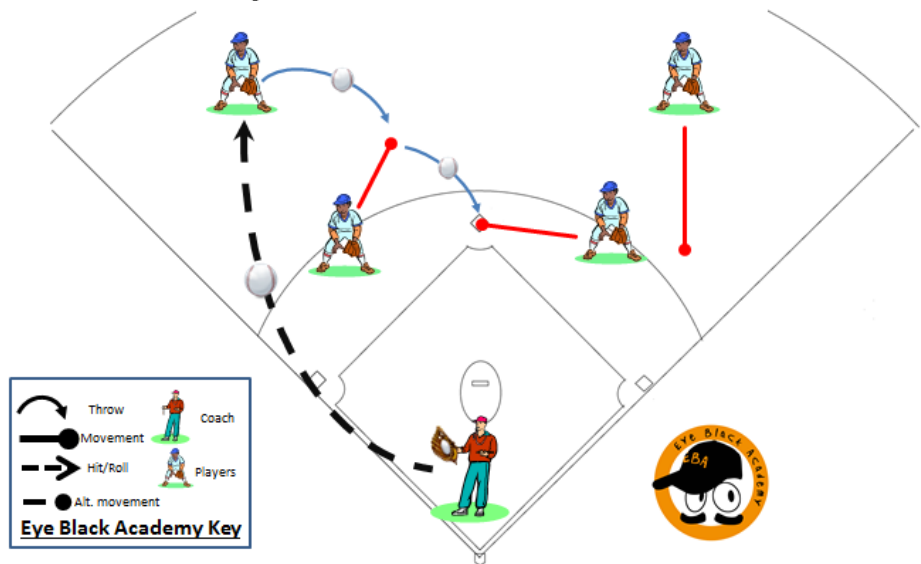


Supportive Practice Diagrams

Ground Balls w/ Throws



Fly Balls: Cut Off Drills



Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



For more details for drills visit www.EyeBlackAcademy.com

Coaching Tip!

Arrange groups before practice to save time and confusion

Coaching Tip!

Focusing on uniform and attitude helps players concentrate and realize that practice means focus

Practice Plan #4

Team:

Group 1: _____

Group 2: _____

Start of Practice

(Minute 1)

Uniform Check – Make sure shirts are tucked in, hats on forward, and cleats are tied, attitude

Goal: - Begin to focus on baseball exclusively

Warm-up

(5 Minutes)

Loosen Legs: Run from first base to the right field foul pole, and run to a meeting spot in center field

Stretch: Touch the toes, butterfly, lunges, arm circles

Goal: - Focus Focus Focus. As a Coach, make sure everyone is thinking baseball and hustling

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Improve concentration by competition.

- 1.) Quick toss – how many throws can you and your partner make in a minute (concentrate on footwork)**
- 2.) Accuracy – how many times can you throw with your partner without dropping the ball**

Keep track each practice and follow improvement. Note: Competing only with personal scores, not against teammates.

Coaching Tip!

A throw that is on a line and bounces gets to a target faster than a high arcing throw.

Do not rush through throwing; this is probably the most important part of practice, emphasizing focus and accuracy (this will pay off in the long run!)

Throwing Drills

(15-20 Minutes)

Wrist flippers:

Description: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, both toes facing forward, and chest facing the target. Your throwing arm is out in front of you, throwing elbow at shoulder height, and your glove under the elbow, providing support. Without using your arm, chest, legs, or hips, flip ball to the partner using only the wrist.

Goals: - Focus on 1) four seam grip, 2) creating backspin, and 3) having loose, quick wrist

One knee down:

Description: Throwing arm knee on the ground, sitting up tall, with glove-side leg out front for stabilization. Start with chest square towards target, rotate shoulders away from target while keeping your lower half still. Shoulders should rotate all the way to perpendicular to the target while separating ball and glove in a downward motion towards ground with the palms moving in opposite directions. Then throw the ball going forward with chin finishing over front knee, chest above the left thigh, and hand finishing by the left shoe.

Goals: - Accurate throws, creating torque in the core. Finish chin towards target.

Step, Stop, and Check:

Description: Start standing on both feet with the shoulders and hips perpendicular to the target. Take a step and separate the hands down towards the ground with the palms going away from each other and stop in the "power position" aka "Egyptian Dude or L7" position. Throwing elbow should be shoulder height, fingers pointed away from target, glove under left elbow, hips, shoulders, knees, and toes all perpendicular to target, (L7, power position/ "Egyptian Dude"), and follow through to the target.

Goals: - Improve accuracy with chest chin and glove moving towards the target during the throw. Throwing hand finishing by the opposite knee, (not rib cage, hip or shoulder)

Johnny Rockers:

Description: Shoulders perpendicular to your target, with feet very wide. Rock back and forth and finish throw to the target. Use your momentum to make you follow through running towards the target.

Goals: - Creating power from your lower half, and practice finishing towards the target

Long Toss:

Description: Increase throwing distance to increase arm strength over the season. Make sure the throws are on a line (roughly head-high or below). It is fine to one hop or to bounce it to your target, as long as the throw does not have an arc.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Emphasize pitch location vs. velocity.

Goals:

- One and two hops are encouraged to guarantee that the throw stays low. Develop step behind/crow hop/shuffle throws - throwing side leg moves behind your lead leg to create a crow hop.

OVERALL GOALS:

- Get arm loose, but focus on having fun and paying attention to detail and performance

Flat Ground / Dry Work

(5-7Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place players approximately 40-46 feet from each other in a normal warm-up position down one of the foul lines (1 player on the line, the other in the OF grass.)

Description: At 50% intensity, have Player 1 pitch to Player 2 who is in a half-crouch giving a good target with the glove. After receiving the pitch, Player 2 now becomes the "Pitcher" while Player 1 becomes the "Catcher"

- Goals:**
- Without a batter and at 50% intensity, players can focus 100% attention on correct mechanics and pitch location.
 - Catchers can work on giving a good target and being aware of the pitcher's mechanics for when it's their turn to pitch.

Throwing around the bases

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Evenly divide the players between 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and home plate.

Description: The ball starts at home plate with a throw to 3rd. 3rd then throws to 2nd, 2nd to 1st, and finally 1st to home. Once a player has caught the ball and thrown it to the next base, he hustles to the end of the line of that base to act as a backup. Keep throwing around the bases until the team can complete 8-25 throws in row depending on age and skill level.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Backing up bases
 - Moving feet to off-line throws
 - Quick footwork and release (advanced)
 - Inside and reverse pivot footwork (advanced)
 - High intensity matching game speed

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Concentrate on turning glove side and using footwork to get rid of the ball quickly.

Coaching Tip!

Rotate the positions every five minutes.

Always have a player or coach catching for you. It keeps the drill moving more efficiently

Make players chase balls they miss! This helps them commit to every ball hit to them in practice.

Cutoff Lines

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Put 4-6 players in a straight line from foul pole to foul pole in the outfield, spread out roughly 25-30 feet from each other. Another line can be set up parallel to the first line.

Description: Start the drill with a player on the foul line holding the ball and have him throw it to the next guy in line. The ball should make its way to the other foul line 1 player at a time.

- Goals:**
- Work on accurate throws
 - Move your feet towards the ball
 - Turn "glove side" after catching the ball
 - Quick footwork and release (advanced)

Hitting Ground Balls

(5 Minutes per Position- 15-20 Minutes Total)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing near the right hander's batter box of home plate and Coach 2 near the left hander's batter's box of home plate.

Description: Coach 1 hits a groundball to the 3rd base line - the player fields the ball and throws a 1 hop back to the coach (or in the air if there's an additional coach available to catch.). That player goes to the end of his line while another ground ball is hit to the SS. Coach 2 is doing the same with the 2nd and 1st lines.

- Goals:**
- Ground balls should be hit crisply and often to simulate fast-paced game situations.
 - Ground balls should be hit directly at the players at first to build comfort, confidence and focus on fundamentals
 - Players should focus on being "Down and Ready" - this means hands off their knees, on the balls of their feet and ready to react and move.
 - Players should focus on moving their feet to attack the ball while also centering the ball in the middle of their body
 - Players should focus on bending down at their knees (butt down) and not at their waist.
 - Players should focus on getting their gloves dirty (literally on the ground) with their hands out in front of their feet.

Advanced: Players can start to use their footwork to "find the good hop"
Players can start to set their footwork preparing for the throw before receiving the ball.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Make sure the runners leave when the ball is hit. If they cheat, it will make real life simulation more difficult.

Coaching Tip!

Make sure cutoff men are turning glove side and are lined up correctly.

Infield Situations w/ Runners

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing at home plate.

Description: With each player in the front of the line being "live," the coach will call out a situation like "Nobody on, nobody out." The players will then call out where the play is and get in their down and ready positions. Coach 1 then hits a groundball somewhere in the infield and the players react accordingly. Other situation examples would be, "Runner on 1st, 1 out," or "Runners on 2nd and 3rd, 2 outs." This time, use players with helmets on as base runners in each situation.

- Goals:**
- Emphasis on communication before and during the play
 - Emphasis on players finding a way to be involved in the play even if it's not hit to them (communicating, backing up, etc.)
 - All players must now react to the each batted ball and make decisions based on what the base runner(s) do
 - Increased "pressure" from game situations will improve defenses ability to execute plays in games without panicking
 - Base runners can work on their reaction to the batted ball, slides, turns, etc.

Cutoffs Drill

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: 4 groups: LF, RF, SS, 2B with coach standing on pitcher's mound.

Description: Coach throws ball to LF and SS runs out to be the cut-off. 2nd base should help line up SS so he is in a straight line between where the LF fielded the ball and the 2nd base bag using commands, "left, left, left or right, right, right. You're good, good, good". Also make sure that the SS is approximately half-way between the LF and the bag so that neither throw from the LF to the SS or SS to the 2nd is too long.

After the repetition is completed, the next person at SS and 2nd get ready and the ball is thrown to RF (groundball at first, then fly balls) and the drill is repeated on that side of the field. Give all players roughly 5-7 reps before rotating positions. Make sure every player gets to play each position.

- Goals:**
- Introduction to team defense concepts
 - Communication
 - Always run TOWARDS the ball
 - Cut off turning glove side after the catch (advanced)
 - Applying a tag at the bag (advanced)

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Use whiffle balls. It's safer and you spend less time chasing.

Coaching Tip!

Side toss, while popular is, in general, a bad idea since no batter will ever face a pitch coming from the side in a real game.

Coaching Tip!

It is important the players get reps that are strikes, even if that means you have to throw underhanded to achieve that goal.

Tee Stations

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place a tee on Home Plate with a bucket of balls nearby.

Description: Batters hit off the tee into a net, fence, or side of a cage.

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Hitting the "middle of the ball" - no hitting the tee, and no chopping
 - Bat Speed
 - Head Discipline
 - Quality of swing over quantity of swings (most players will just swing and swing and swing without really thinking about what they're doing)

Advanced: Move the tee to different locations in the hitting zone.

Front Toss

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front on the batter approximately 10-15 feet away.

Description: The coach makes firm underhand tosses to the batter down the middle of the plate (do NOT lob the ball).

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Advanced: Bat speed
Different pitch locations

Batting Practice in Cage

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place one batter at Home Plate and a coach behind a protective "L" screen.

Description: Coach throws strikes to the batter (try not to lob it, but having a little arc on it is OK as pitches thrown by Little Leaguers will almost always have an arc on them)

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Cool Down:

(5 Minutes)

- A.) Sprints along OF line. Must run full speed through 60 feet. If they don't repeat and make everyone do it again.
- B.) Running the bases. Practice sprinting through first. Then first to second, second to third, Third to home. And an imaginary inside the park HR!

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



Supportive Practice Diagrams

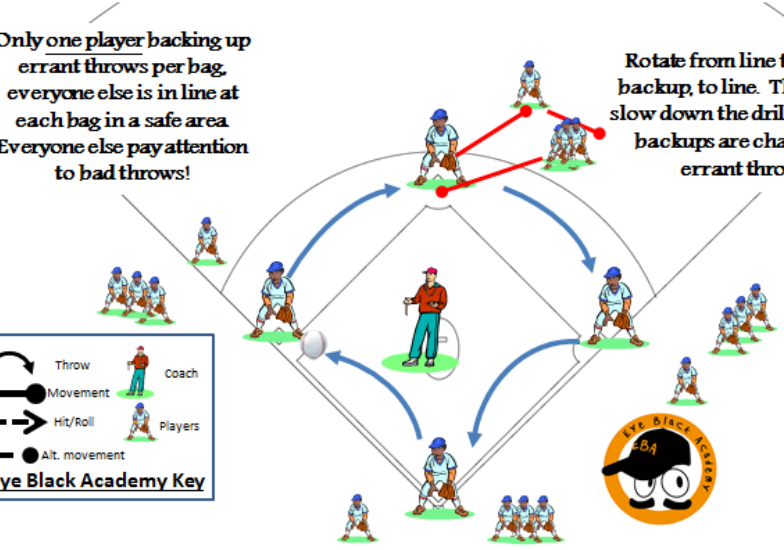
Throwing Around the Bases

Only one player backing up errant throws per bag, everyone else is in line at each bag in a safe area. Everyone else pay attention to bad throws!

Rotate from line to bag, to backup, to line. That won't slow down the drill when the backups are chasing an errant throw.

	Throw		Coach
	Movement		Players
	Hit/Roll		
	Alt. movement		

Eye Black Academy Key

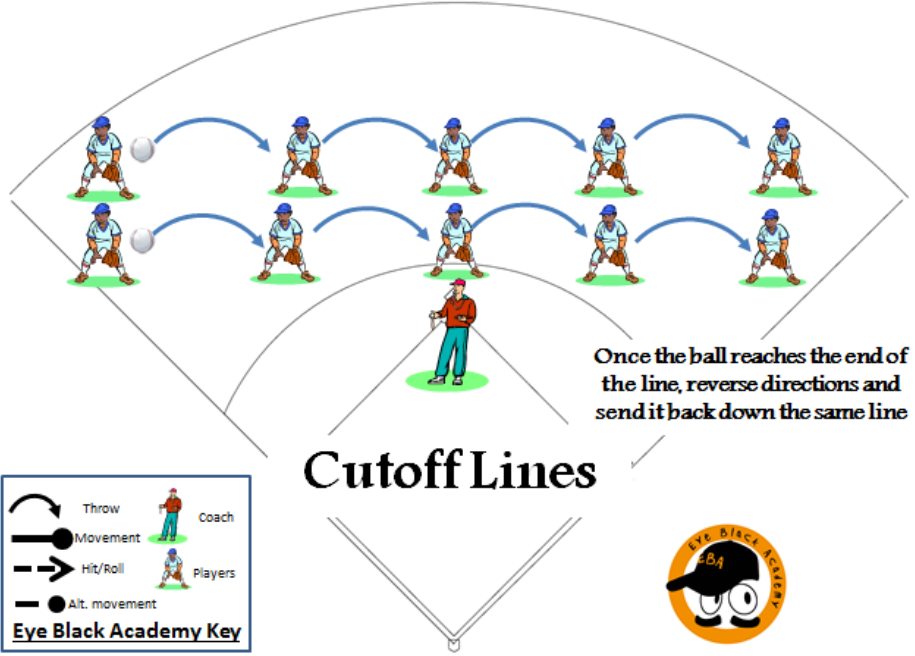


Once the ball reaches the end of the line, reverse directions and send it back down the same line

Cutoff Lines

	Throw		Coach
	Movement		Players
	Hit/Roll		
	Alt. movement		

Eye Black Academy Key

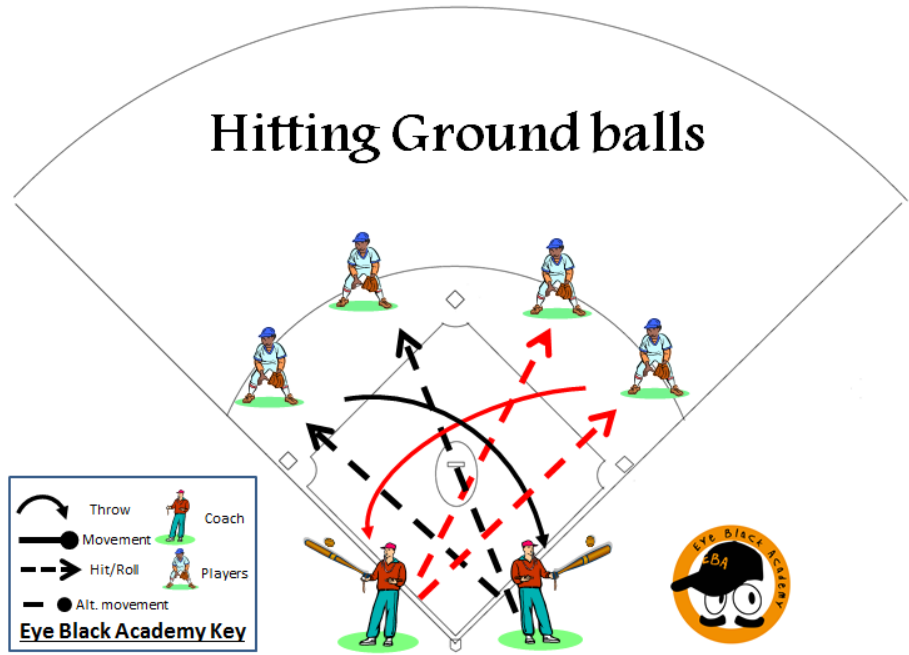


Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)

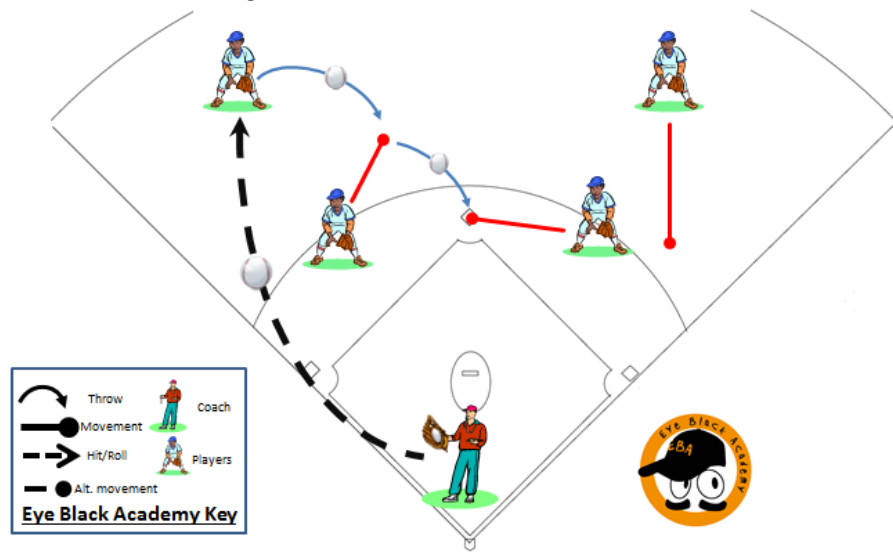


Supportive Practice Diagrams

Hitting Ground balls



Fly Balls: Cut Off Drills



Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



For more details for drills visit www.EyeBlackAcademy.com

Coaching Tip!

Arrange groups before practice to save time and confusion

Coaching Tip!

Focusing on uniform and attitude helps players concentrate and realize that practice means focus

Practice Plan #5

Team:

Group 1: _____

Group 2: _____

Group 3: _____

Group 4: _____

Start of Practice

(Minute 1)

Uniform Check – Make sure shirts are tucked in, hats on forward, and cleats are tied, attitude

Goal: - Begin to focus on baseball exclusively

Warm-up

(5 Minutes)

Loosen Legs: Run from first base to the right field foul pole, and run to a meeting spot in center field

Stretch: Touch the toes, butterfly, lunges, arm circles

Goal: - Focus Focus Focus. As a Coach, make sure everyone is thinking baseball and hustling

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Improve concentration by competition.

- 1.) Quick toss – how many throws can you and your partner make in a minute (concentrate on footwork)**
- 2.) Accuracy – how many times can you throw with your partner without dropping the ball**

Keep track each practice and follow improvement. Note: Competing only with personal scores, not against teammates.

Coaching Tip!

A throw that is on a line and bounces gets to a target faster than a high arcing throw.

Do not rush through throwing; this is probably the most important part of practice, emphasizing focus and accuracy (this will pay off in the long run!)

Throwing Drills

(15-20 Minutes)

Wrist flippers:

Description: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, both toes facing forward, and chest facing the target. Your throwing arm is out in front of you, throwing elbow at shoulder height, and your glove under the elbow, providing support. Without using your arm, chest, legs, or hips, flip ball to the partner using only the wrist.

Goals: - Focus on 1) four seam grip, 2) creating backspin, and 3) having loose, quick wrist

One knee down:

Description: Throwing arm knee on the ground, sitting up tall, with glove-side leg out front for stabilization. Start with chest square towards target, rotate shoulders away from target while keeping your lower half still. Shoulders should rotate all the way to perpendicular to the target while separating ball and glove in a downward motion towards ground with the palms moving in opposite directions. Then throw the ball going forward with chin finishing over front knee, chest above the left thigh, and hand finishing by the left shoe.

Goals: - Accurate throws, creating torque in the core. Finish chin towards target.

Step, Stop, and Check:

Description: Start standing on both feet with the shoulders and hips perpendicular to the target. Take a step and separate the hands down towards the ground with the palms going away from each other and stop in the "power position" aka "Egyptian Dude or L7" position. Throwing elbow should be shoulder height, fingers pointed away from target, glove under left elbow, hips, shoulders, knees, and toes all perpendicular to target, (L7, power position/ "Egyptian Dude"), and follow through to the target.

Goals: - Improve accuracy with chest chin and glove moving towards the target during the throw. Throwing hand finishing by the opposite knee, (not rib cage, hip or shoulder)

Johnny Rockers:

Description: Shoulders perpendicular to your target, with feet very wide. Rock back and forth and finish throw to the target. Use your momentum to make you follow through running towards the target.

Goals: - Creating power from your lower half, and practice finishing towards the target

Long Toss:

Description: Increase throwing distance to increase arm strength over the season. Make sure the throws are on a line (roughly head-high or below). It is fine to one hop or to bounce it to your target, as long as the throw does not have an arc.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Emphasize pitch location vs. velocity.

Coaching Tip!

Make sure cutoff men are turning to their glove side and are lined up correctly.

Goals:

- One and two hops are encouraged to guarantee that the throw stays low. Develop step behind/crow hop/shuffle throws - throwing side leg moves behind your lead leg to create a crow hop.

OVERALL GOALS:

- Get arm loose, but focus on having fun and paying attention to detail and performance

Flat Ground / Dry Work

(5-7Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place players approximately 40-46 feet from each other in a normal warm-up position down one of the foul lines (1 player on the line, the other in the OF grass.)

Description: At 50% intensity, have Player 1 pitch to Player 2 who is in a half-crouch giving a good target with the glove. After receiving the pitch, Player 2 now becomes the "Pitcher" while Player 1 becomes the "Catcher"

- Goals:**
- Without a batter and at 50% intensity, players can focus 100% attention on correct mechanics and pitch location.
 - Catchers can work on giving a good target and being aware of the pitcher's mechanics for when it's their turn to pitch.

Cutoff Lines

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Put 4-6 players in a straight line from foul pole to foul pole in the outfield, spread out roughly 25-30 feet from each other. Another line can be set up parallel to the first line.

Description: Start the drill with a player on the foul line holding the ball and have him throw it to the next guy in line. The ball should make its way to the other foul line 1 player at a time.

- Goals:**
- Work on accurate throws
 - Move your feet towards the ball
 - Turn "glove side" after catching the ball
 - Quick footwork and release (advanced)

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Encourage movement from every player. It helps keep players active and everyone focused.

Coaching Tip!

Practice both routine and broken plays, i.e. don't just stop if there is an error!

Cutoffs - Full Field

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place a player at every position except Pitcher. Coach stands at home plate with a bat and ball.

Description: After calling out a situation (can also be done with base runners), the coach hits a ball into the outfield. This can either be a groundball or fly ball right at a player, in the gaps, down the lines, etc. Coaches are essentially trying to simulate every outcome of a ball hit into the outfield.

- Goals:**
- Players communicate before the ball is put in play
 - Cardinal Rule of Defense: every defensive player is doing 1 of 3 things:
 - 1) Making a play on the ball
 - 2) Covering a base
 - 3) Backing up a base
 - Coaches should encourage movement from all players on every play.
 - At first, all cutoffs should go through the 2nd or SS on the way to the 2nd base bag.
 - Advanced teams can start to make cut-offs to 3rd and Home, but the majority of LL cutoffs should go through 2nd base

Full Field Situations

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Put a player at every position in the field except Pitcher.

Description: Call out a situation (ex. "Runners on 1st and 2nd, nobody out!") and hit the ball all over the field making players react, communicate, and execute.

- Goals:**
- Cardinal Rule of Defense: every defensive player is doing 1 of 3 things:
 - 1) Making a play on the ball
 - 2) Covering a base
 - 3) Backing up a base
 - Communication - it's OK to make mistakes (calling out the wrong base, setting up the wrong cutoff). We learn by making mistakes. A talkative defense doing nothing right at first will turn into a better defense than one that is totally silent.
 - Adjusting when plays break down
 - Infield: making routine plays and getting outs
 - Outfield: keeping the ball in front and not allowing extra bases, hitting cutoffs, getting the ball back into the infield as quickly as possible
 - Catchers: being a vocal leader

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Ask the kids to hit a hard ground ball or line drive. Lazy pop ups will slow down the drill.

Full Field Live w/ Hitters on Tee

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Same as above except now have a batter put the ball in play off a tee or soft toss and then run it out like a live situation.

Description: Call out a situation and prepare the defense. All the players to hit the ball all over the field making players react, communicate, and execute.

- Goals:**
- Cardinal Rule of Defense: every defensive player is doing 1 of 3 things:
 - 1) Making a play on the ball
 - 2) Covering a base
 - 3) Backing up a base
 - Communication - it's OK to make mistakes (calling out the wrong base, setting up the wrong cutoff). We learn by making mistakes a talkative defense doing nothing right at first will turn into a better defense than one that is totally silent.
 - Adjusting when plays break down
 - Infield: making routine plays and getting outs
 - Outfield: keeping the ball in front and not allowing extra bases, hitting cutoffs, getting the ball back into the infield as quickly as possible
 - Catchers: being a vocal leader
 - Batters get to work on base running
 - Fielders must play under more real "game situations"

Cool Down:

(5 Minutes)

A.) Sprints along OF line. Must run full speed through 60 feet. If they don't repeat and make everyone do it again.

B.) Running the bases. Practice sprinting through first. Then first to second, second to third. Third to home. And an imaginary inside the park HR!

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



Supportive Practice Diagrams

Once the ball reaches the end of the line, reverse directions and send it back down the same line

Cutoff Lines

Example of Cutoff-Full Field Rotations

Example of Cutoff-Full Field Rotation: To the Fence

To the fence, play will be at 3rd!

2nd baseman backs up the cutoff to SS in LF (SS backs 2nd in RF)
1st baseman tails runner to 2nd.

Eye Black Academy Key

- Throw (curved arrow)
- Movement (solid arrow)
- Hit/Roll (dashed arrow)
- Alt. movement (dotted arrow)
- Coach (orange figure)
- Players (blue figures)



Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



For more details for drills visit www.EyeBlackAcademy.com

Coaching Tip!

Arrange groups before practice to save time and confusion

Coaching Tip!

Focusing on uniform and attitude helps players concentrate and realize that practice means focus

Practice Plan #6

Team:

Group 1: _____

Group 2: _____

Start of Practice

(Minute 1)

Uniform Check – Make sure shirts are tucked in, hats on forward, and cleats are tied, attitude

Goal: - Begin to focus on baseball exclusively

Warm-up

(5 Minutes)

Loosen Legs: Run from first base to the right field foul pole, and run to a meeting spot in center field

Stretch: Touch the toes, butterfly, lunges, arm circles

Goal: - Focus Focus Focus. As a Coach, make sure everyone is thinking baseball and hustling

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Improve concentration by competition.

1.) Quick toss – how many throws can you and your partner make in a minute (concentrate on footwork)

2.) Accuracy – how many times can you throw with your partner without dropping the ball

Keep track each practice and follow improvement. Note: Competing only with personal scores, not against teammates.

Coaching Tip!

A throw that is on a line and bounces gets to a target faster than a high arcing throw.

Do not rush through throwing; this is probably the most important part of practice, emphasizing focus and accuracy (this will pay off in the long run!)

Throwing Drills

(15-20 Minutes)

Wrist flippers:

Description: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, both toes facing forward, and chest facing the target. Your throwing arm is out in front of you, throwing elbow at shoulder height, and your glove under the elbow, providing support. Without using your arm, chest, legs, or hips, flip ball to the partner using only the wrist.

Goals: - Focus on 1) four seam grip, 2) creating backspin, and 3) having loose, quick wrist

One knee down:

Description: Throwing arm knee on the ground, sitting up tall, with glove-side leg out front for stabilization. Start with chest square towards target, rotate shoulders away from target while keeping your lower half still. Shoulders should rotate all the way to perpendicular to the target while separating ball and glove in a downward motion towards ground with the palms moving in opposite directions. Then throw the ball going forward with chin finishing over front knee, chest above the left thigh, and hand finishing by the left shoe.

Goals: - Accurate throws, creating torque in the core. Finish chin towards target.

Step, Stop, and Check:

Description: Start standing on both feet with the shoulders and hips perpendicular to the target. Take a step and separate the hands down towards the ground with the palms going away from each other and stop in the "power position" aka "Egyptian Dude or L7" position. Throwing elbow should be shoulder height, fingers pointed away from target, glove under left elbow, hips, shoulders, knees, and toes all perpendicular to target, (L7, power position/ "Egyptian Dude"), and follow through to the target.

Goals: - Improve accuracy with chest chin and glove moving towards the target during the throw. Throwing hand finishing by the opposite knee, (not rib cage, hip or shoulder)

Johnny Rockers:

Description: Shoulders perpendicular to your target, with feet very wide. Rock back and forth and finish throw to the target. Use your momentum to make you follow through running towards the target.

Goals: - Creating power from your lower half, and practice finishing towards the target

Long Toss:

Description: Increase throwing distance to increase arm strength over the season. Make sure the throws are on a line (roughly head-high or below). It is fine to one hop or to bounce it to your target, as long as the throw does not have an arc.

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

The hitter is in there to track pitch speed and location. He is in there to practice as well, not to be a practice aid.

Coaching Tip!

Recognize player's abilities and make the fly balls more or less difficult accordingly.

Goals:

- One and two hops are encouraged to guarantee that the throw stays low. Develop step behind/crow hop/shuffle throws - throwing side leg moves behind your lead leg to create a crow hop.

OVERALL GOALS:

- Get arm loose, but focus on having fun and paying attention to detail and performance

Bullpen W Catcher and Player (No Bat)

(5 Minutes per Pitcher)

Setting up the drill: 1 player is pitching, 1 player is catching in full gear, and a batter is standing in the box with a helmet on, no bat in hand, but wearing a fielding glove to protect them.

Description: Pitcher pitches, catcher catches, and batter tracks the pitches.

- Goals:**
- Pitcher now gets comfortable pitching with a batter standing in the box
 - Catcher now gets comfortable receiving the ball with a batter in the box
 - Batter gets to track pitches while gaining confidence in the box facing a live pitcher
 - Batter uses the glove only for protection on a ball thrown directly at him – all other balls pitched should be caught or blocked by the catcher

Fly Balls (Short) / (Full Distance)

(10 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at each outfield position. The coach will stand about 20 to 25 feet in front of the line (roughly on the cut of the infield dirt and the outfield grass).

Description: Coaches lob easy fly balls (not too high) directly at the player at the front of each line. No need to be too challenging at first as building confidence is incredibly important. Once players start catching more balls thrown right at them, then you can start forcing them to run to their right and left to catch balls. This may take several practices, but as they progress, slowly move back so the fly ball is traveling a greater distance and going higher in the air. Repeat until eventually you are hitting full field fly balls from home plate

- Goals:**
- Build confidence
 - Emphasize footwork and proper catching technique
 - First Step Back
 - Keep the ball in front
 - Prepare throwing footwork before the catch (advanced)

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



Coaching Tip!

Use whiffle balls. It's safer and you spend less time chasing.

Coaching Tip!

Side toss, while popular is, in general, a bad idea since no batter will ever face a pitch coming from the side in a real game.

Coaching Tip!

It is important the players get reps that are strikes, even if that means you have to throw underhanded to achieve that goal.

Tee Stations

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place a tee on Home Plate with a bucket of balls nearby.

Description: Batters hit off the tee into a net, fence, or side of a cage.

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Hitting the "middle of the ball" - no hitting the tee, and no chopping
 - Bat Speed
 - Head Discipline
 - Quality of swing over quantity of swings (most players will just swing and swing and swing without really thinking about what they're doing)

Advanced: Move the tee to different locations in the hitting zone.

Front Toss

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front on the batter approximately 10-15 feet away.

Description: The coach makes firm underhand tosses to the batter down the middle of the plate (do NOT lob the ball).

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Advanced: Bat speed
Different pitch locations

Batting Practice in Cage

(10 Minutes per Station)

Setting up the drill: Place one batter at Home Plate and a coach behind a protective "L" screen.

Description: Coach throws strikes to the batter (try not to lob it, but having a little arc on it is OK as pitches thrown by Little Leaguers will almost always have an arc on them)

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



Cool Down:

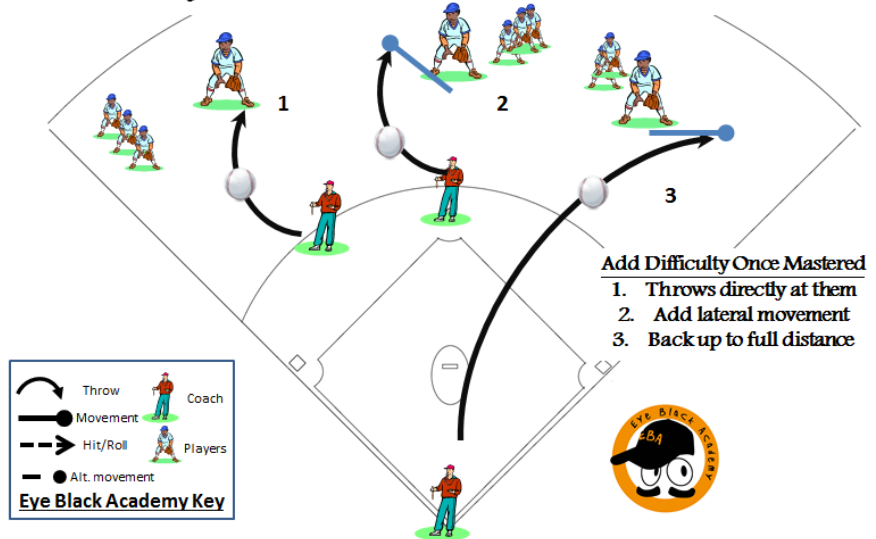
(5 Minutes)

A.) Sprints along OF line. Must run full speed through 60 feet. If they don't repeat and make everyone do it again.

B.) Running the bases. Practice sprinting through first. Then first to second, second to third, third to home. And an imaginary inside the park HR!

Supportive Practice Diagrams

Fly Balls: Short/Full Distance



Coaching Notes: (Use this space to take notes on behavior and success)



PRACTICE PLAN



www.EyeBlackAcademy.com

Build Your Own Practice

Team:

Group 1: _____

Group 2: _____

Group 3: _____

Group 4: _____

Warm-up / Throwing Drills

(5 Minutes)

Station #1

(15-20 Minutes)

Station #2

(15-20 Minutes)

Station #3

(15-20 Minutes)

Station #4

(15-20 Minutes)

Station #5

(15-20 Minutes)

Cool Down

(5 Minutes)

Coaching Notes:

EyeBlackAcademy.com

Additional Practice Drills and Details

Throwing Drills

Pages 2-4

- Basic Throwing Drills
- Throwing Around the Bases
- Throwing Competitions: 60 Seconds
- Throwing Competitions: Most Catches in a Row!
- Throwing Competitions: "Egg Toss"

Ground Balls / Infield Defense

Pages 4-10

- Rolling Ground Balls
- Hitting Ground Balls
- Ground Balls w/ Throws
- Ground Balls w/ Dart Throws and/ or Flips
- Infield Situations
- Infield Situations w/ Runners
- 1st Base Play / Drills
- Bermuda Triangle (Advanced)
- Wild Pitch at Home (Advanced)

Cutoffs / Outfield Work

Pages 10-13

- Cutoff Lines
- Cutoffs Drill
- Cutoffs-Full Field
- Fly Balls (Short) / (Full Distance)

Team Defense

Pages 13-14

- Gappers
- Full Field Situations
- Full Field Live w/ Hitters on Tee
- Full Defense: Player Hitting Soft Toss/Off Tee and Play it Live

Hitting Drills

Pages 15-16

- Tee Stations
- Front Toss
- Batting Practice in Cage
- Inside / Outside Pitches (Advanced)
- Off-Speed Adjustments (Advanced)

Pitching Drills

Pages 16-17

- Pitching - Basic
- Flat Ground /Dry Work
- Bullpen W/ Coach
- Bullpen W/ Catcher
- Bullpen W/ Catcher and Player (No Bat)
- Pitching: Live on the Field

Throwing and Catching Drills

Throwing Drills

(15-20 Minutes)

Wrist flippers:

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OVERALL GOALS:

- Get arm loose, but focus on having fun and paying attention to detail and performance

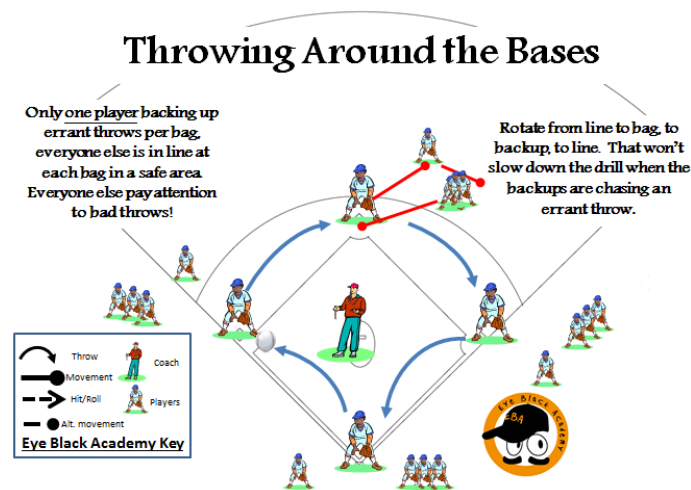
Throwing Around the Bases

(10-15 Minutes)

Setting up the drill: Evenly divide the players between 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and home plate.

Description: The ball starts at home plate with a throw to 3rd. 3rd then throws to 2nd, 2nd to 1st, and finally 1st to home. Once a player has caught the ball and thrown it to the next base, he hustles to the end of the line of that base to act as a backup. Keep throwing around the bases until the team can complete 8-25 throws in row depending on age and skill level.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Backing up bases
 - Moving feet to off-line throws
 - Quick footwork and release (advanced)
 - Inside and reverse pivot footwork (advanced)
 - High intensity matching game speed



Throwing Competitions: 60 Seconds!

Setting up the drill: Have the throwing partners spaced approximately 40-50 feet apart with one player on the foul line and the other in the outfield grass.

Description: On the count of "GO!" players will see how many total catches they can complete in 60 seconds.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Quick feet to the ball, shuffle step back to the original distance
 - Simulate game speed and intensity
 - Encourage hustle on missed balls
 - Every throw counts
 - Quick glove/hand transfer (advanced)

Throwing Competitions: Most Catches in a Row!

Setting up the drill: Have the throwing partners spaced approximately 40-50 feet apart with one player on the foul line and the other in the outfield grass.

Description: On the count of "GO!" players will see how many total catches they can complete in a row in 60 seconds. If the ball is dropped the count starts over at zero.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Quick feet to the ball, shuffle step back to the original distance
 - Simulate game speed and intensity
 - Encourage hustle on missed balls
 - Every throw counts
 - Quick glove/hand transfer (advanced)

Throwing Competitions: "Egg Toss"

Setting up the drill: 1 player starts on the foul line and his partner starts approximately 25 feet away in the outfield. Line up the whole team the same way.

Description: On the count of "GO," all players on the foul line will throw the ball to their partner. If the partner catches it, they take 2 steps back. If they drop it, the team sits down and is "out" until the next game." All the teams still "In" then throw the ball back to the player on the foul line. If caught, the outfield player backs up another 2 steps and so on and so forth. Once the throws get longer, 1 hop is ok and the receiving player may only take 1 step in any direction to catch the ball (like a first baseman would). Make sure all the groups are throwing at the same time to ensure the competition is fair.

- Goals:**
- Accurate throws
 - Concentration
 - Longer throws
 - "Pressure" throws
 - Every throw counts

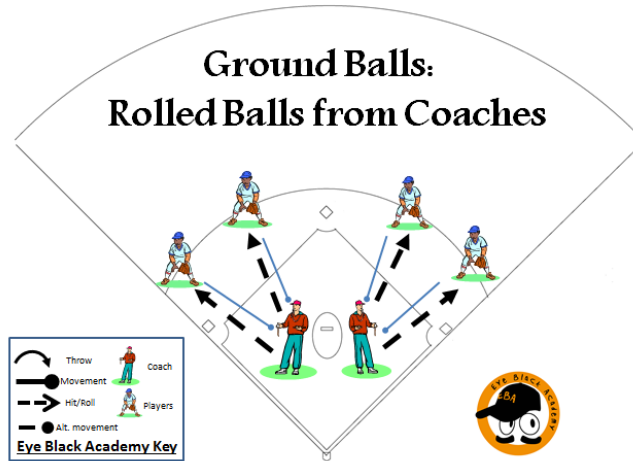
Ground Balls / Infield Defense

Rolling Ground Balls

Setting up the drill: Two coaches needed. Evenly divide groups at 3rd, SS, 2nd, and 1st. One coach rolls alternating ground balls to 3rd and SS, and the other coach alternates rolls to 2nd and 1st. The players RUN the ball back to the coach (**See Diagram 1 below**)

- Goals:**
- Down and ready position
 - Move feet
 - Bend at knees
 - Glove dirty
 - Fielding triangle
 - Fast pace to simulate game speed and make practice active and fun!

Optional: Move on to hitting fungos (balls hit by a coach): Two coaches, one coach hits to the left side of the infield, the other to the right. The players throw the ball back to the coach.



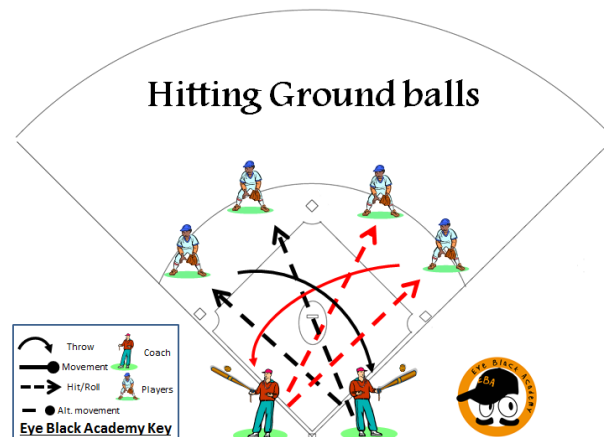
Hitting Ground Balls

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing near the right hander's batter box of home plate and Coach 2 near the left hander's batter's box of home plate.

Description: Coach 1 hits a groundball to the 3rd base line - the player fields the ball and throws a 1 hop back to the coach (or in the air if there's an additional coach available to catch.). That player goes to the end of his line while another ground ball is hit to the SS. Coach 2 is doing the same with the 2nd and 1st lines.

- Goals:**
- Ground balls should be hit crisply and often to simulate fast-paced game situations.
 - Ground balls should be hit directly at the players at first to build comfort, confidence and focus on fundamentals
 - Players should focus on being "Down and Ready" - this means hands off their knees, on the balls of their feet and ready to react and move.
 - Players should focus on moving their feet to attack the ball while also centering the ball in the middle of their body
 - Players should focus on bending down at their knees (butt down) and not at their waist.
 - Players should focus on getting their gloves dirty (literally on the ground) with their hands out in front of their feet.

Advanced: Players can start to use their footwork to "find the good hop"
Players can start to set their footwork preparing for the throw before receiving the ball.

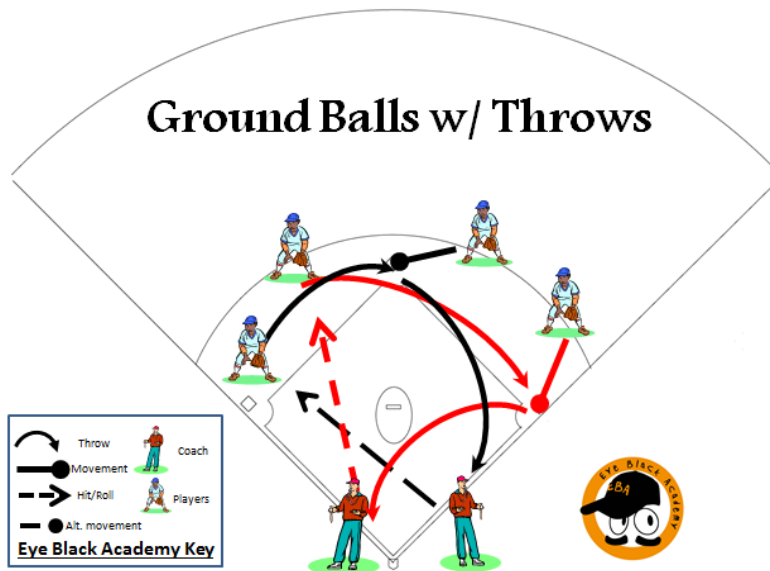


Ground Balls w/ Throws

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing near the right hander's batter box of home plate and Coach 2 near the left hander's batter's box of home plate. Coach 1 will hit the ground ball to the SS. Coach 2 will hit the ground ball to 3rd base.

Description: SS will field the ball and throw to 1st. 3rd base will field the ball and throw to 2nd. **BE CAREFUL** with the timing of hitting the balls - make sure the SS has completed his throw and is out of the way before hitting the ball to 3rd.

- Goals:**
- Same focus on correct groundball technique but now adding a throw
 - Focus of the throws should be accuracy
 - Players receiving the ball at 2nd and 1st can begin to focus on footwork around the bag and reacting to throws that may be off target
 - Concentration and communication starts to become important as there will be lots of action in this drill.



Ground Balls w/ Dart Throws and/or Flips

Setting up the drill:

SS and 2nd Baseman Instruction (Underhand Flips):

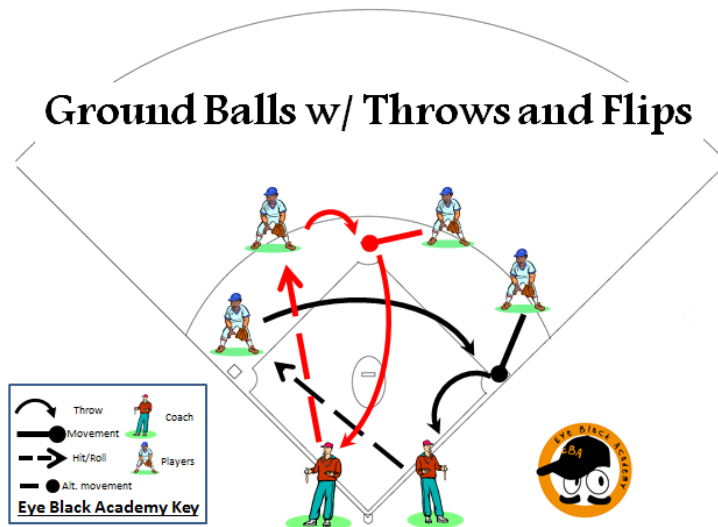
Use an underhand flip when the ball is hit at the player or between the player and the bag. After fielding the ball with correct technique, square hips to the bag, show the ball (get it out of the glove), and run a few steps towards the bag, using the velocity created by your momentum to generate the speed on the flip. No big swinging arms, no bowling ball throws!

SS and 2nd Baseman Instruction (Dart Throw):

A Dart Toss is used when 2nd or SS is moving away from the bag to field the groundball. In these instances they will almost always field the ball too far from the bag for an underhand flip, but too close to the bag for a full throw. After fielding the ball, square (turn) the hips towards the bag, throw using only your wrist and elbow like a dart. This is should create a quick release and solid throw without the ball lobbing (underhand flip) or being a missile (full throw).

Drill Description: Roll the ball to SS while 2nd moves to cover the bag. Initially, several rounds should be rolled at or to the bag side of the each player resulting in an Underhand Flip. The next several rounds should be rolled away from the bag resulting in a Dart Throw.

- Goals:**
- Footwork
 - Correct fielding position
 - Correct delivery to 2nd (Underhand Flip vs. Dart Throw)
 - Communication
 - Player receiving the ball focusing on getting the "lead runner" (no double plays)



Infield Situations

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing at home plate.

Description: With each player in the front of each line being "live," the coach will call out a situation like "nobody on, nobody out." The players will then call out where the play is and get in their down and ready positions. Coach 1 then hits a groundball somewhere in the infield and the players react accordingly. Other situation examples would be, "Runner on 1st, 1 out," or "Runners on 2nd and 3rd, 2 outs."

- Goals:**
- Emphasis on communication before and during the play
 - Emphasis on players finding a way to be involved in the play even if it's not hit to them (communicating, backing up, etc.)
 - All players must now react to the each batted ball and continue until the play is complete.

Infield Situations w/ Runners

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and SS with Coach 1 standing at home plate.

Description: With each player in the front of the line being "live," the coach will call out a situation like "Nobody on, nobody out." The players will then call out where the play is and get in their down and ready positions. Coach 1 then hits a groundball somewhere in the infield and the players react accordingly. Other situation examples would be, "Runner on 1st, 1 out," or "Runners on 2nd and 3rd, 2 outs." This time, use players with helmets on as base runners in each situation.

- Goals:**
- Emphasis on communication before and during the play
 - Emphasis on players finding a way to be involved in the play even if it's not hit to them (communicating, backing up, etc.)
 - All players must now react to the each batted ball and make decisions based on what the base runner(s) do
 - Increased "pressure" from game situations will improve defenses ability to execute plays in games without panicking
 - Base runners can work on their reaction to the batted ball, slides, turns, etc.

1st Base Play / Drills

Setting up the drill: Teach players not to stretch too early on balls thrown to them at first and to use their footwork around the bag to react to where the ball is actually thrown.

Description: Players at 1st base position themselves preparing for a throw coming from SS. The ball is then thrown to them in the air (no picks) forcing them to move (stretch) up and down the foul line, with some balls thrown right at them as well.

- Goals:**
- Develop correct footwork around the bag
 - Learn to react to the throw rather than guessing (assuming) it will be a perfect throw
 - Communicate by yelling, "1, 1, 1 !!!!"
 - Learn to completely vacate the bag if the throw is so off-line that catching it while keeping a foot on the bag is impossible.
 - Catching an errant throw is more important than holding the bag.

Bermuda Triangle (Advanced)

Setting up the drill: Position players in lines at Pitcher, 2nd, and 1st

Description: This is one of the most difficult plays in baseball to execute correctly and professional teams spend hours and hours at Spring Training getting it right.

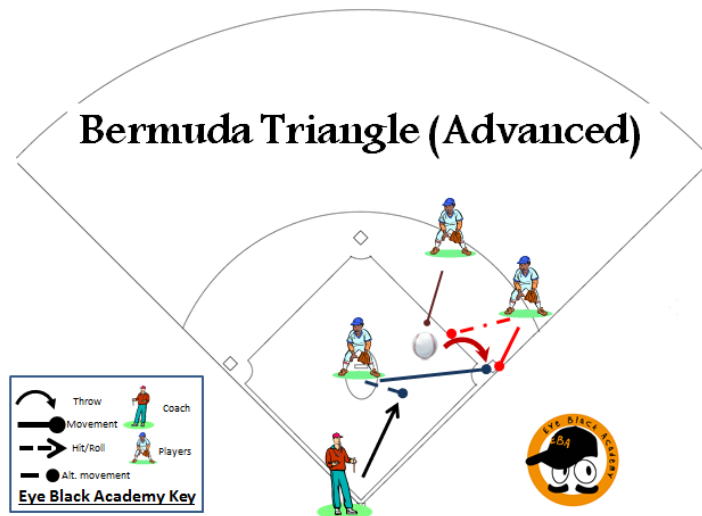
The coach will roll (hit) a ball softly somewhere on the right side of the infield. The Pitcher, 2nd Baseman, and 1st Baseman must react and communicate so that the ball is fielded and the bag is covered every time.

Pitchers: Your job is to run on a straight line from the pitcher's mound to 1st base. If, on the way to the bag, you can field the ball, do so and continue running to 1st to make the play unassisted. (Assume that the 1st basemen won't be covering because he also will be moving to field the groundball). If you don't field the ball, continue sprinting to the bag as you will now cover when 1st or 2nd fields the ball.

1st Base: Go after every ball that you think you can get. If the pitcher does his job and continues to 1st to cover the bag, when you field the ball, someone will be at 1st to receive your throw.

2nd Base: Like the 1st baseman, you go for every ground ball as well. If the ball gets past the Pitcher and 1st baseman, then you have to field the ball. Very rarely will you end up covering 1st, but be prepared in case there is a breakdown and neither 1st nor pitcher is covering the bag.

- Goals:**
- Communication!!!!
 - Make sure ball is fielded and the bag covered (you won't believe how often Little -Leaguers will run away from the ball to cover the bag).
 - Shorter flips and throws require practice.
 - Find the bag with your feet while also watching the play to see the ball thrown.

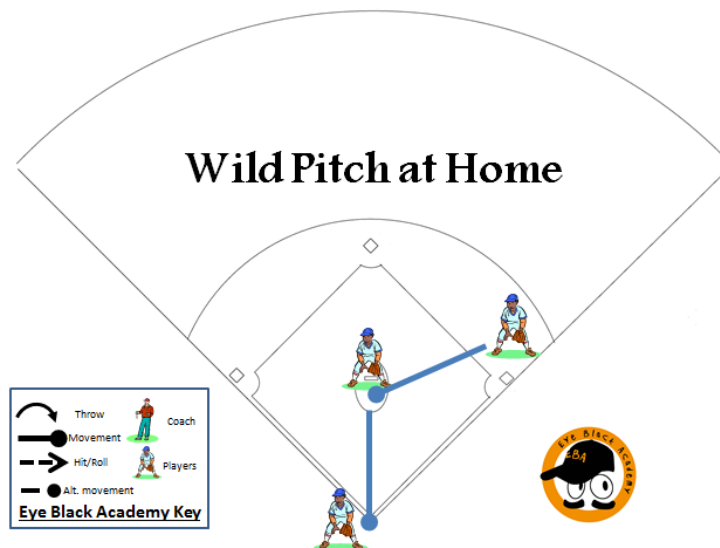


Wild Pitch at Home (Advanced)

Setting up the drill: Put a line of players on the Pitcher's mound, a line at 1st, and catchers at home plate.

Description: The Pitcher intentionally throws a Wild Pitch. The catcher turns to chase it as the Pitcher sprints home to cover the plate. The 1st baseman sprints towards the Pitcher's mound in order to back up throw from the catcher to the pitcher covering home plate.

- Goals:**
- Reaction and hustle after a Wild Pitch rather than standing and watching
 - Communication
 - Backing up
 - Not allowing 1 mistake to turn into 2 or 3 mistakes.



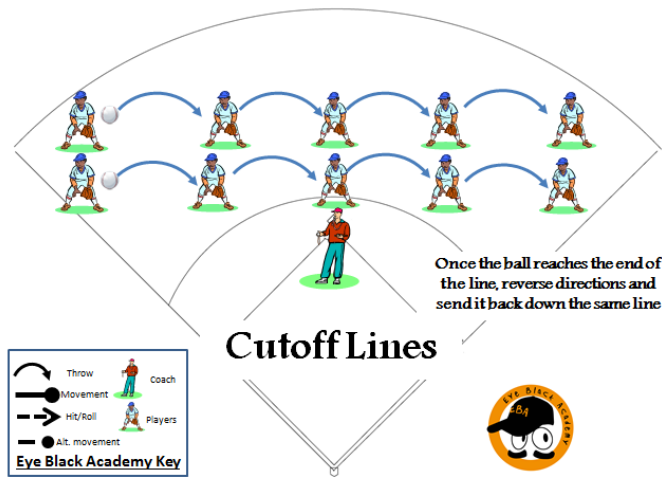
Cutoffs / Outfield Work

Cutoff Lines

Setting up the drill: Put 4-6 players in a straight line from foul pole to foul pole in the outfield, spread out roughly 25-30 feet from each other. Another line can be set up parallel to the first line.

Description: Start the drill with a player on the foul line holding the ball and have him throw it to the next guy in line. The ball should make its way to the other foul line 1 player at a time.

- Goals:**
- Work on accurate throws
 - Move your feet towards the ball
 - Turn "glove side" after catching the ball
 - Quick footwork and release (advanced)



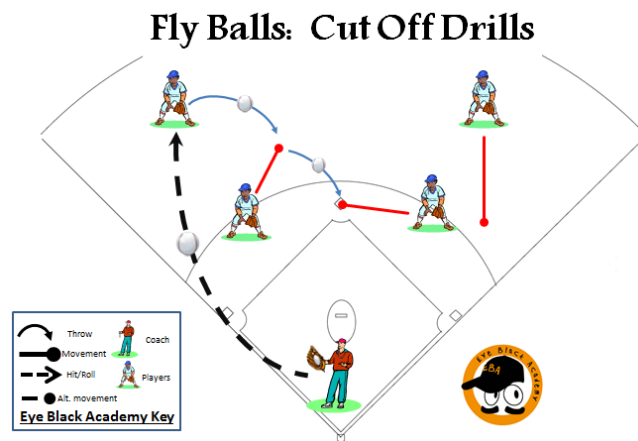
Cutoffs Drill

Setting up the drill: 4 groups: LF, RF, SS, 2B with coach standing on pitcher's mound.

Description: Coach throws ball to LF and SS runs out to be the cut-off. 2nd base should help line up SS so he is in a straight line between where the LF fielded the ball and the 2nd base bag using commands, "left, left, left or right, right, right. You're good, good, good". Also make sure that the SS is approximately half-way between the LF and the bag so that neither throw from the LF to the SS or SS to the 2nd is too long.

After the repetition is completed, the next person at SS and 2nd get ready and the ball is thrown to RF (groundball at first, then fly balls) and the drill is repeated on that side of the field. Give all players roughly 5-7 reps before rotating positions. Make sure every player gets to play each position.

- Goals:**
- Introduction to team defense concepts
 - Communication
 - Always run TOWARDS the ball
 - Cut off turning glove side after the catch (advanced)
 - Applying a tag at the bag (advanced)



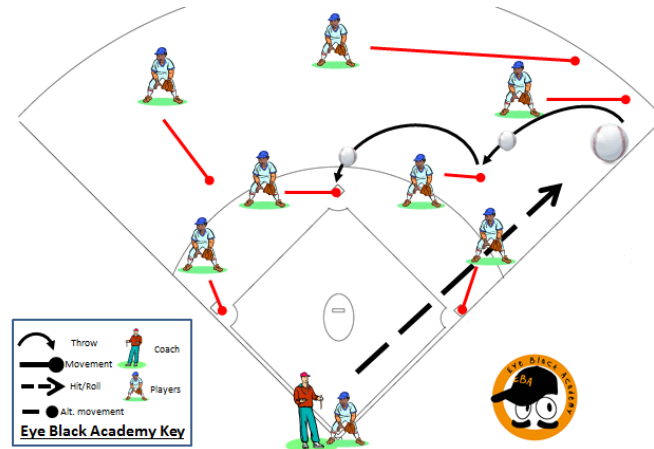
Cutoffs - Full Field

Setting up the drill: Place a player at every position except Pitcher. Coach stands at home plate with a bat and ball.

Description: After calling out a situation (can also be done with base runners), the coach hits a ball into the outfield. This can either be a groundball or fly ball right at a player, in the gaps, down the lines, etc. Coaches are essentially trying to simulate every outcome of a ball hit into the outfield.

- Goals:**
- Players communicate before the ball is put in play
 - Cardinal Rule of Defense: every defensive player is doing 1 of 3 things:
 - 1) Making a play on the ball
 - 2) Covering a base
 - 3) Backing up a base
 - Coaches should encourage movement from all players on every play.
 - At first, all cutoffs should go through the 2nd or SS on the way to the 2nd base bag.
 - Advanced teams can start to make cut-offs to 3rd and Home, but the majority of LL cutoffs should go through 2nd base

Example of Cutoff-Full Field Rotations



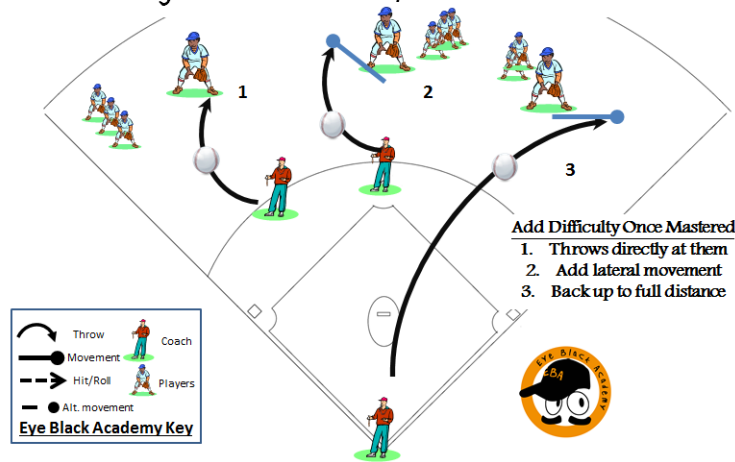
Fly Balls (Short) / (Full Distance)

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at each outfield position. The coach will stand about 20 to 25 feet in front of the line (roughly on the cut of the infield dirt and the outfield grass).

Description: Coaches lob easy fly balls (not too high) directly at the player at the front of each line. No need to be too challenging at first as building confidence is incredibly important. Once players start catching more balls thrown right at them, then you can start forcing them to run to their right and left to catch balls. This may take several practices, but as they progress, slowly move back so the fly ball is traveling a greater distance and going higher in the air. Repeat until eventually you are hitting full field fly balls from home plate

- Goals:**
- Build confidence
 - Emphasize footwork and proper catching technique
 - First Step Back
 - Keep the ball in front
 - Prepare throwing footwork before the catch (advanced)

Fly Balls: Short/Full Distance



Team Defense

Gappers

Setting up the drill: Place a line of players at each outfield position. The coach will stand about 20 to 25 feet in front of the line (roughly on the cut of the infield dirt and the outfield grass).

Description: Throw (then hit) balls in the gaps forcing outfielders to think about their routes to the ball.

- Goals:**
- Keeping the ball in front!
 - On a Little League size field, the goal of the outfielders is to never let the ball hit the fence.
 - Get to the ball as quickly as possible with the correct angle.
 - Setting feet after fielding the ball and making an accurate throw to the cut-off
 - Get the ball to the cutoff as quickly as possible.

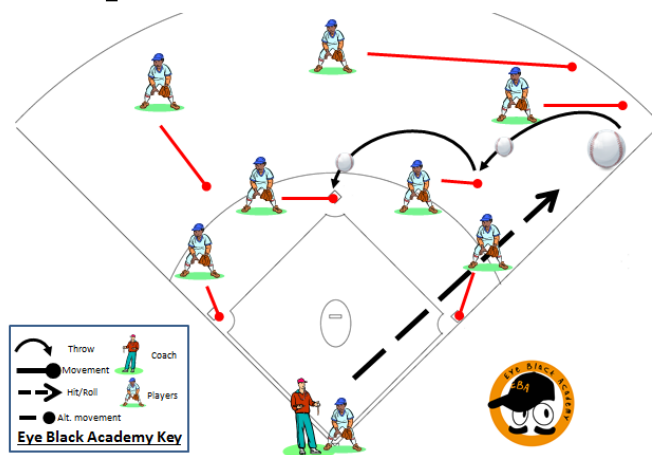
Full Field Situations

Setting up the drill: Put a player at every position in the field except Pitcher.

Description: Call out a situation (ex. "Runners on 1st and 2nd, nobody out!") and hit the ball all over the field making players react, communicate, and execute.

- Goals:**
- Cardinal Rule of Defense: every defensive player is doing 1 of 3 things:
 - 1) Making a play on the ball
 - 2) Covering a base
 - 3) Backing up a base
 - Communication - it's OK to make mistakes (calling out the wrong base, setting up the wrong cutoff). We learn by making mistakes. A talkative defense doing nothing right at first will turn into a better defense than one that is totally silent.
 - Adjusting when plays break down
 - Infield: making routine plays and getting outs
 - Outfield: keeping the ball in front and not allowing extra bases, hitting cutoffs, getting the ball back into the infield as quickly as possible
 - Catchers: being a vocal leader

Example of Cutoff-Full Field Rotations



Full Field Live w/ Hitters on Tee

Setting up the drill: Same as above except now have a batter put the ball in play off a tee or soft toss and then run it out like a live situation.

Description: Call out a situation and prepare the defense. All the players to hit the ball all over the field making players react, communicate, and execute.

- Goals:**
- Cardinal Rule of Defense: every defensive player is doing 1 of 3 things:
 - 1) Making a play on the ball
 - 2) Covering a base
 - 3) Backing up a base
 - Communication - it's OK to make mistakes (calling out the wrong base, setting up the wrong cutoff). We learn by making mistakes a talkative defense doing nothing right at first will turn into a better defense than one that is totally silent.
 - Adjusting when plays break down
 - Infield: making routine plays and getting outs
 - Outfield: keeping the ball in front and not allowing extra bases, hitting cutoffs, getting the ball back into the infield as quickly as possible
 - Catchers: being a vocal leader
 - Batters get to work on base running
 - Fielders must play under more real "game situations"

Full Defense: Player Hitting Soft Toss/Off Tee and Play it Live

Setting up the drill: Position players at every defensive position (excluding Pitcher and Catcher) and have 2-3 players ready to hit.

Description: From the foul line about 5-7 feet away from home plate, underhand toss (soft toss) the ball to the batter. He will then swing and run the bases at game speed while the defense reacts at game speed.

- Goals:**
- Live game simulation
 - Defensive communication
 - Cardinal Rule of Defense
 - Batters: hit hard ground balls and line drives
 - Batters: Aggressive and smart base running

Hitting Drills

Tee Stations

Setting up the drill: Place a tee on Home Plate with a bucket of balls nearby.

Description: Batters hit off the tee into a net, fence, or side of a cage.

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Hitting the "middle of the ball" - no hitting the tee, and no chopping
 - Bat Speed
 - Head Discipline
 - Quality of swing over quantity of swings (most players will just swing and swing and swing without really thinking about what they're doing)

Advanced: Move the tee to different locations in the hitting zone.

Front Toss

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front on the batter approximately 10-15 feet away (Side toss is a bad idea since no batter will ever face a pitch coming from the side in a real game).

Description: The coach makes firm underhand tosses to the batter down the middle of the plate (do NOT lob the ball).

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Advanced: Bat speed
Different pitch locations

Batting Practice in Cage

Setting up the drill: Place one batter at Home Plate and a coach behind a protective "L" screen.

Description: Coach throws strikes to the batter (try not to lob it, but having a little arc on it is OK as pitches thrown by Little Leaguers will almost always have an arc on them)

- Goals:**
- Set up and stance
 - Balance
 - Timing
 - Head discipline / eye contact with the ball at impact
 - Hitting the ball with the barrel

Inside / Outside Pitches (Advanced)

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front of the batter approximately 10-15 feet away.

Description: Toss balls to the inside third, outside third, and middle third of the plate to simulate different pitch locations (underhand or overhand, whichever is easiest for you). Pick a "third" to work on and only throw pitches to that location until the batter gets comfortable and starts having some success. Only then should you start to focus on a different "third" of the plate. Repeat until batters have complete plate coverage.

- Goals:**
- For right handed hitters: swing later on outside pitches (let the ball get deeper in the zone) and hit them to the right side of the cage (do not "reach" or "lunge" for the ball). Apply the opposite instructions for left handed hitters.
 - Swing earlier on inside pitches (do not lean back, lunge, or pull your hands inside in order to hit this pitch).
 - Focus on adjusting the "timing" of the swing rather than changing the swing to hit different locations.

Off-speed Adjustments (Advanced)

Setting up the drill: In a cage or on the field, set the player up at home plate with a coach behind a screen directly in front on the batter approximately 10-15 feet away

Description: Toss a few balls at normal speed. Then start tossing balls slower (it's OK if these have a little arc on them as this is a drill and not meant to exactly mimic a true off-speed pitch). The batter needs to wait until the ball gets into the zone, and then take his normal swing - the adjustment to hit off-speed pitches is with the TIMING of the swing, not the MECHANICS of the swing.

- Goals:**
- TIMING, TIMING, TIMING
 - No Lunging
 - No Reaching
 - Maintain bat speed
 - Maintain quality of swing

Pitching Drills

Pitching

Setting up the drill: Place Player 1 on the foul line and Player 2 roughly 40-45 feet away.

Description: Have Player 1 be the "pitcher" and Player 2 be the "catcher" where Player 2 gets in a little half crouch giving a chest-high target. After Player 1 pitches to Player 2, Player 2 now becomes the "pitcher" while Player 1 is the "catcher," reversing roles. All pitches should be thrown at 60-70% intensity.

- Goals:**
- Focus on correct balance points of the pitching mechanics
 - Without a batter, the only goal is throwing strikes
 - Learn to focus on the target (the glove) and nothing else
 - At reduced intensity and velocity, players are now able to concentrate on mechanics and location exclusively

Flat Ground / Dry Work

Setting up the drill: Place players approximately 40-46 feet from each other in a normal warm-up position down one of the foul lines (1 player on the line, the other in the OF grass.)

Description: At 50% intensity, have Player 1 pitch to Player 2 who is in a half-crouch giving a good target with the glove. After receiving the pitch, Player 2 now becomes the "Pitcher" while Player 1 becomes the "Catcher"

- Goals:**
- Without a batter and at 50% intensity, players can focus 100% attention on correct mechanics and pitch location.
 - Catchers can work on giving a good target and being aware of the pitcher's mechanics for when it's their turn to pitch.

Bullpen W/ Coach

Setting up the drill: Take 1 pitcher to the bullpen with 1 coach who will act as the catcher.

Description: Have your pitcher working on pitching in the general strike zone with no batter.

- Goals:**
- Pitching in a game or live setting can be intimidating for young pitchers: by only having a coach as the catcher, we are eliminating distractions or causes of nerves and giving our players a chance to focus on mechanics and pitch quality.

Bullpen W/ Catcher

Setting up the drill: Take 1 pitcher to the bullpen with 1 player who will act as the catcher (Wearing Gear!).

Description: Pitcher now begins to get comfortable pitching to a teammate while the catcher starts gaining confidence catching in a semi-live setting

- Goals:**
- Pitcher works on throwing pitches in the general strike zone.
 - Catcher works on receiving, framing, and blocking

Bullpen W/ Catcher and Player (No Bat)

Setting up the drill: 1 player is pitching, 1 player is catching in full gear, and a batter is standing in the box with a helmet on, no bat in hand, but wearing a fielding glove to protect them.

Description: Pitcher pitches, catcher catches, and batter tracks the pitches.

- Goals:**
- Pitcher now gets comfortable pitching with a batter standing in the box
 - Catcher now gets comfortable receiving the ball with a batter in the box
 - Batter gets to track pitches while gaining confidence in the box facing a live pitcher
 - Batter uses the glove only for protection on a ball thrown directly at him – all other balls pitched should be caught or blocked by the catcher

Pitching: Live on the Field

Setting up the drill: Place players at the infield positions with the rest of the team waiting their turn to bat

Description: Live simulated game with the entire infield and batter playing every pitch at game speed

- Goals:**
- Simulating as close to game situation as possible