

# ***BYS BASEBALL***



## ***Coaches Handbook***

*BYS Baseball*  
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## Coach

Thanks for volunteering your time and talents to coach our youth. Coaching is a rewarding, tiring, exciting, at times gray hair producing and hopefully fun experience.

For those experienced as well as those new to coaching, we have tried to put some tips and references in this handbook that will bring out the best in your players and yourself.

As with any volunteer organization we wouldn't exist without you. We, the Board, are here to support you and the players as they learn and excel in "America's past time". If you have questions or need any assistance do not hesitate to contact any Board member or division commissioner.

Thanks again and Let's Play Ball!!!!

Kurt Freer

President, BYS Baseball

## **I. Practice**

Practice is as, if not more important than playing games. Practice is where you teach the skills needed to succeed in the game. Practice is also where you find out your players strengths and identify areas that need reinforcement. Depending on which level you are coaching it may also be where you identify your position players or pitchers. It's where you get to know your players and they get to know you. Take time during practice to talk with each player one on one, give positive feedback and suggestions to make them better.

Overall, practice is where your success will come from. Run good practices and it will carry over to the field during games. Below are some general guidelines applicable to all ages. We will break down division specific suggestions later.

Practice requires preparation by you and your assistant coaches. You should have an outline of several areas that you want to cover during your practice. A goal of practice is to keep it flowing and to keep the players busy. Idle players will lead to horseplay, inattention and disruptions.

### **Preparation**

- Keep practice time from 60-120 minutes depending on age and level.
- Have a plan before you arrive.
- Keep a first aid kit and ice packs nearby.
- Work on skills that were identified during the last practice or game.
- Start out by telling your players what is going to be covered in practice.
- Reward players that show up on time. For example first player to arrive gets to bat first. Soon players will show up early to be first in line.

### **Running practice**

- Start practice by warming up. Stretches, running laps and soft toss are all great ways to start out. On cold days early in the season warm up a little longer.
- Observe your players throwing during warm ups. Make sure they are using proper technique. Correct them if you see them using poor technique.
- Games are won at 1B and 3B spend time throwing to these bases.
- Have a lot of help. Have assistant coaches to break up the team into smaller groups to work on skills.
- Consider closing practice with a scrimmage rather than 1 on 1 drill with players standing in line waiting.
- If you are not a hitter for infield practice, throw the ball. Better to get it where you want it.

## **Run, run, run**

- Have your team run on and off the field. Baseball is sacred. No one walks.
- Baseball is not a spectator sports. Players should be moving on every play. Players should run to the ball on every play.

## **Finishing up.**

- Try to end the practice at the same spot on the field and on a positive note. Consistency is good. **Finish up with something fun.**
- Consider spending 5-10 minutes after practice on a player you noticed needs a little extra reinforcement or pep talk. You want your players to feel confident when they finish up.
- Homework is good!!! Give players drills to work on between practices. Involve parents to continue what was done that day.
- Assign players to gather the equipment. Rotate so that every player takes a turn.
- Make sure players clean up after themselves. Water bottles, wrappers, equipment should all be cleaned up before players leave.
- Drag and rake the field after practice. Be considerate to the team that will use it next. Put bases and field equipment away.
- Don't underestimate the effect you have on your players. Demonstrate behaviors you want your team to possess.

## II. Expectations

### Level specific coaching.

A frequent mistake is trying to teach a skill or concept that is above the level of your team. Tee Ballers won't turn a double play or execute a suicide squeeze so trying to teach this will be an exercise in futility. Below are the key elements in baseball and at what level they should be taught. While each coach teaches a little different, if players at each level learn these skills it will allow for easier progression from level to level.

These are the minimum lessons for each level. Players who master these skills can progress as coaches see fit. But these skills should be a priority.

Some division titles have changed from our past names to their new ones

Tee Ball → Tee Ball (unchanged)

Rookie → Farm League

Minors → B Ball

Majors → A Ball

Juniors → Juniors (unchanged)

### Tee Ball

- Know what foul and fair lines are and what they mean.
- Know where bases are and what direction to run. (home→first→second etc)
- Know basics on how to throw the ball properly
- Know basics of swinging the bat and making contact
- Where each position is, and the range of that position
  - Left fielder should NOT be fielding balls at shortstop in any league
- Understand how to hold the glove to catch balls
  - Difference between catching a fly ball, line drive, grounder.
- What is means to be “safe” and “out”? Out is out, no exceptions.
- Explain what a “base path” is, and what “out of the base path” means
  - Base path – 3’ on each side of a direct line from base to base.
- Understand that every action on the field should be done with hustle.
- Players should have and demonstrate respect for umpires, coaches, and other players at all times.
- Players and parents should understand the importance of being on time and prepared to play.

## **Farm league (Formerly Rookie)**

- **All aspects of Tee Ball, plus:**
- Throwing and catching
  - Proper throwing grip (4-seams)
  - Using back foot to generate power
  - Catching with two hands
- Defense
  - Proper ground ball fielding technique
  - Proper fly ball fielding technique
  - Force out/ Lead runner
  - Applying a tag
  - Run downs (playing 'pickle')
- Hitting
  - Relaxed hand grip
  - Aligned knuckles
  - Back elbow relaxed and angled towards the catcher, not UP
  - Balance with weight focused on back foot
  - Back foot pivot
  - Opening up hips during the swing
  - Basic understanding of strike zone.
- Base Running (1B and 3B coaches directions)
  - Proper way to run through 1st base into foul territory ('breaking down')
  - Proper way to round 1st base
  - Hitting the inside corners when heading to the next base
  - Picking up 3rd base coach – a little more than half way to 2nd
  - Hands up, feet first slide

## **B Ball (formerly Minors)**

- Throwing and catching
  - Proper throwing grip
  - Using back foot to generate power
  - Catching with two hands
  - Catchers quick release
  - Infielders quick release
  - Outfielders crow hop
- Defense
  - Proper ground ball fielding technique
  - Proper fly ball fielding technique
  - Force out/ Lead runner
  - Applying a tag
  - Bunt rotations
  - Double play techniques
  - Catcher blocking techniques
  - Outfield relays
  - Run downs (playing 'pickle')
- Pitching
  - Balanced delivery
  - Power generating leg kick
  - Using the rubber
  - Follow through
- Hitting
  - Relaxed hand grip
  - Aligned knuckles, hand position on swing
  - Balance
  - Back foot pivot
  - Opening up hips during the swing
  - Understanding 'your' strike zone.
  - Understand the count.
  - 0-0 look for your pitch, nothing else
  - 3-0 likely not swinging
  - 0-2 shorten up, protect
  - Bunting techniques
- Base Running
  - Proper way to run through 1st base into foul territory ('breaking down')
  - Proper way to round 1st base
  - Hitting the inside corners when heading to the next base
  - Picking up 3rd base coach – a little more than half way to 2nd
  - Hands up, feet first slide
  - Anticipation – balls in dirt, overthrows
  - "Down" 3rd base line in foul, "Back" 3rd baseline in fair.

## **A Ball (formerly Majors) and Juniors**

- Throwing and catching
  - Proper throwing grip
  - Using back foot to generate power
  - Catching with two hands
  - Catchers quick release
  - Infielders quick release
  - Outfielders crow hop
- Defense
  - Proper ground ball fielding technique
  - Proper fly ball fielding technique
  - Force out/ Lead runner
  - Applying a tag
  - Bunt rotations
  - Double play techniques
  - Catcher blocking techniques
  - Outfield relays
  - Run downs (playing 'pickle')
  - First and Third situations
  - Slow roller/ "on-the-run" technique
- Pitching
  - Balanced delivery
  - Power generating leg kick, using the rubber
  - Follow through
  - Wind-up vs. Stretch
  - Pitch selection (Senior Boy's)
- Hitting
  - Relaxed hand grip
  - Aligned knuckles, position of hands on swing
  - Balance
  - Back foot pivot
  - Opening up hips during the swing
  - Understanding 'your' strike zone.
  - Understand the count.
  - 0-0 Look for your pitch, nothing else
  - 3-0 Likely not swinging
  - 0-2 Shorten up, protect
  - Bunting techniques
- Base Running
  - Proper way to run through 1st base into foul territory ('breaking down')
  - Proper way to round 1st base
  - Hitting the inside corners when heading into the next base
  - Picking up 3rd base coach – a little more than half way to 2nd
  - Hands up, feet first slide, pop-up slide, hook slide
  - Anticipation – balls in dirt, overthrows

- “Down” 3rd base line in foul, “Back” 3rd baseline in fair.
- Leading, Stealing
- Keeping yourself in a rundown

### III. Hitting

#### *The Basics of Hitting*

#### Choosing the Proper Bat Size & Weight

Use the chart below as a guideline when selecting a bat.

##### Bat Length Guidelines:

Age	Bat Length	or	Player Height	Bat Length
5-7	24" - 26"		5' - 5' 6"	32"
8-9	26"-28"		5'6" - 6'	33"
10-11	28"-30"		6' +	34"
11-12	30"-32"			
13-14	31"-32"			
15-16	32"-33"			
17+	34"			

Worth Sports conducted a study with the University of Arizona, in which they determined the best bat weights for hitters, based on their height. The table below summarizes their findings.

##### Bat Weight Guidelines:

A. High School & College Baseball		B. Youth League Baseball (11-12 yrs)		C. Youth League Baseball (8-10 yr. olds)	
Player Height (in.)	Best Bat Wt (oz.)	Player Weight (lbs.)	Best Bat Wt (oz.)	Player Height (in.)	Best Bat Wt (oz.)
>66	>27	>70	>18	>48	>16
>68	>27.5	>80	>19	>50	>16.5
>70	>28	>90	>19.5	>52	>17
>72	>29	>100	>20	>54	>17.5
>74	>30	>110	>20.5	>56	>18
>76	>30.5	>120	>21	>58	>18.5
>Formula: $\text{Height}/3 + 5$		>130	>21.5	>60	>19
		>140	>22	>Formula: $\text{Height}/4 + 4$	
		>150	>23		
		Formula: $\text{Weight}/18 + 14$			

## The Proper Grip

- Grip the bat very loosely. The bat should rest across the middle of the fingers, (not in the palm of the hand), with your “door knocking” knuckles lined up.
- DO NOT: grip the bat too tight, over-wrap your knuckles or hold the bat with the palms of your hands. All these things will slow down the swing.

## The Proper Stance

- The player should be close enough to home so they can bend 45-degrees at the waist and touch the outside corner of the plate with their bat.
- The feet are a little more than shoulder width apart, with the toes in a straight line pointed towards home plate (No closed or open stances).
- The head starts completely turned toward pitcher, square to the ground with both eyes level and focused on the release point of the pitcher (Just outside and above the throwing shoulder).
- The knees are flexed with the weight centered on the insides of the feet. Balance is the primary objective.
- The Hands should be aligned so that the top hand on the bat sits at the same height as the rear shoulder, approximately 3-6 inches from same rear shoulder.
- The Rear elbow should be down at a natural 45-degree angle and the front elbow should also be down, pretty much even with the back elbow. Creating a “V”. NOTE: ELBOWS SHOULD NOT BE UP!!! When the rear elbow starts up, it must come down in order to hit the ball, creating an uppercut.
- The bat should sit at a 45-degree angle also, with the knob of the bat pointing at the opposite batter's box.
- This is where all proper swings originate from (**launch position**) regardless of their starting position. Starting here eliminates unnecessary movement needed to get here during the swing.

## The Swing

- When pitcher shows you his hip, begin the swing by actually moving back. Front knee, front shoulder and back hip turn back 2-3 inches.
- Don't over stride. The stride should be no more than 3 inches and weight remains back. After completion of stride, the heel of the front foot touches the ground, officially starting the swing.
- The swing begins from the waist down. The power in the swing comes from the HIPS. Hit with your HIPS. HIPS before HANDS. The back hip rotates toward the ball so that eventually the rear knee, the waist and the belly button are ALL facing the pitcher and the back foot is pointing straight at the pitcher.
- You are now ready to swing. The swing is in the shape of the letter U. The hands come straight down towards the ball, leading with the knob of the bat. “Pull the chain”. Don't extend early; keep hands close to body and inside the ball. As the bat enters hitting zone it should level off until impact. The swing then finishes with a slightly upward angle as

the arms extend completely. “Throw the Frisbee”. Don’t stop your swing, let it finish and follow through.

- Keep the head DOWN. The hitter's chin rests on front shoulder “Mike”, while looking at pitcher, prior to initiating swing. The head stays there during the swing, down on the ball, with shoulders rotating around head, until chin ultimately ends up on rear shoulder at completion of swing “Ike”. *Mike to Ike*

## ***Diagnosing and Fixing Common Problems with the Swing***

### **Where’s the Problem?**

If you have a hitter that is having problems (doesn’t make contact, has a slow swing, doesn’t hit with power, just looks wrong) try this technique for diagnosing the problem. First make sure they are starting in the proper position. Check their grip and stance. Once you are sure the grip and stance are fine, watch their feet when they swing. Make sure they are staying balanced, not over-striding and that their back foot is turning when they swing. If the back foot is not turning on every swing then they are not rotating their hips. If the feet are fine then check the hands. The hands should stay close to the body and come straight at the ball as they start to swing. Many hitters will extend their hands away from their body as they start the swing (looping or big swing) or they will drop their hands just before they start the swing (hitch). If their hands are fine, then move on to the head. Is it facing the pitcher when they start, does it stay on a level plane or is it bouncing up and down? Are they watching the ball all the way until it hits their bat? Below is a list of the most common problem that kids have when they are hitting and some suggestions for correcting them.

### **The Grip**

Most kids will over wrap their knuckles, hold the bat in their palms and/or grip the bat too tight. If their elbows are not pointing down when they are in their stance then they are probably gripping the bat wrong. This slows down the swing and makes it harder to bring it through the hitting zone. Fix the grip before you let them swing. Have them take some practice swings after you fix their grip. They will probably notice how it makes it easier to swing the bat. You will probably need to correct each player's grip a number of times before they do it naturally. Don’t let them swing with a bad grip. It will just cause bad habits.

### **Hit With Your Hips**

Many kids do not rotate their hips when they swing and end up swinging completely with their arms. If the ball does not jump off their bat then they are probably not using their hips. Watch their feet when they swing. If the back foot is not turning when they swing, they are not rotating their hips. Explain that all the power comes from the hips. Usually if you correct this in soft toss they will immediately see how much harder they can hit the ball. If they still don’t understand how to use their hips try this Hip Twist drill. Have the player place a bat (stick, broom handle, etc.) behind their back on their waistline. With hands gripping the bat from behind, they should get into their stance. Have them try and hit a few soft toss pitches from this position. The only way they can get the bat head to cross the plate is to rotate their hips. Repeat this a few times until they get a feel for the movement. Go back to the normal stance and repeat. Doing this 10 to

20 times a day programs young hitters to get that lower body working correctly without conscious thought (Muscle Memory).

### **Over Striding and Reaching**

Some hitters will stride too far and end up shifting their weight forward before they swing. They end up reaching at the ball instead of swinging. This action makes it difficult to hit change-ups and off speed pitches. Have them shorten their stride and focus on keeping their weight back. Put an object, like a batting helmet, in front of their front foot so they can't over stride.

### **Keep Your Eye on the Ball**

Many kids will turn their head just prior to impact. They don't keep their head down and "watch the ball hit the bat". If you have a player that consistently swings and misses at soft toss, they are probably doing this. There are a couple of ways to correct it. Have a baseball in your bag that you have colored with two different bright colors. When you soft toss to the player, have them yell out the color that they hit. This forces them to watch the ball all the way to the bat. You can also put a batting helmet on the first base line when they are swinging. Tell the player that when they finish the swing they should be looking at the batting helmet.

### **Hitch**

This happens when the player starts the swing by dropping his hands instead of coming straight at the ball from the launch position. This action slows down the swing making it difficult to hit fastballs. To break this habit have the player get in the launch position and then let the bat rest ON their shoulder. As you soft toss to them the bat must come straight from the shoulder to the ball. You can also try rapid-fire soft toss. Get five soft toss balls ready to pitch. In rapid succession soft toss the balls to the player giving them very little time between pitches. This forces the player to shorten their swing and come straight at the ball. You can also try the FENCE DRILL (see below) to try and stop the hitch.

### **Looping or Big Swings**

This happens when the player extend his arms too early, usually when the bat is still behind home plate. This slows down the swing and reduces power at impact. Use the fence drill to correct this problem. Have the player take a batting stance with the outside of the rear end against a fence or wall. The object is to have the player take a normal swing without making contact with the fence or wall. Start in slow motion, for obvious reasons. Improper swing and bat angle will provide immediate negative feedback. The key here is to keep the barrel above the rear shoulder at the proper bat angle (good launch position) and swing through the ball. If a player does this with hands in close to the body (inside the ball), allowing back foot to begin first, they will complete the drill properly. If the player takes a stride, rotates back foot and hips, keeping the bat head above the hands, hands inside the ball, and opens up away from the fence, they can swing down and through the ball without hitting the fence. Full arm extension should not take place until immediately after contact.

## ***Hitting Drills***

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Don't run your practice with one player hitting while you pitch and everyone else is just standing around. If you are pitching to one player, have another player hit off a tee and another player (or two) hitting soft toss. Break your team into a couple of groups and have an assistant coach work on throwing or fielding while you are live pitching. Use Soft Toss and a Tee to fix hitters problems. Don't try and fix their swings when they are up at bat in a live game.

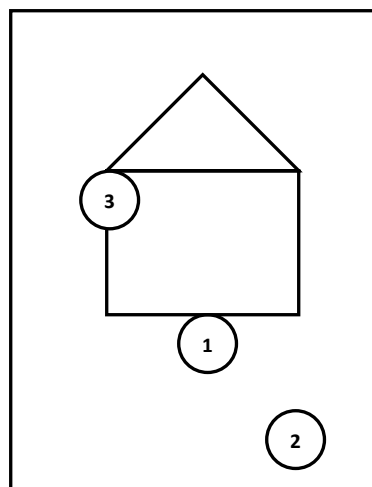
### **Soft Toss**

This is the best way to fix hitting problems. Have the player stand approx. 6-10 feet from a backstop. Have the pitcher kneel at the fence at a 45-degree angle from the batter. The batter should start with their head facing the normal pitchers throwing zone. As they see the soft toss starting (from the corner of their eye) they can bring their head to the hitting zone and begin their swing. Don't let them continue bad habits during Soft Toss. Make sure the grip, stance, and swing, are correct. When one batter is facing live pitching, you should have the on deck hitter at a soft toss station. Use soft toss in every hitting practice and before games. If a player is having trouble making contact have them take extra soft toss. Players should have their own tape balls (scrunch one full sheet of newspaper into a ball and then wrap it with duct tape) so they can practice at home.

### **Hitting Off a Tee**

This is another good way to work on the swing. Don't put the Tee in the middle of home plate. Practice with the Tee in three different places. Start with the Tee in the middle of the front edge of the plate (Position 1). This is where a pitch straight down the middle should be hit. Next move the tee approx. 6 inches in front of the inside corner of the plate (Position 2) where an inside pitch should be hit. Then move the tee on the back edge of the outside corner of the plate (Position 3) where an outside pitch should be hit. Have the player begin every swing by first looking out where the pitcher would normally be standing. Then they can bring their head down to the ball in the hitting zone.

#### **Tee Positions:**



## **Scrimmage**

Kids love to scrimmage during practice. Combine your live pitching with a scrimmage. If you have 12 players, divide them into three teams of four. One team is up and the other two are in the field. Have one coach pitch and another coach player catcher (by the backstop). You don't need to use a real catcher; it will just slow down the game. The team that is up gets to hit until they make three outs. Have the kids keep score (they will anyway). The coach that is pitching should talk to the players about situations in between batters. (How many outs are there? What are you going to do with the ball if it's hit to you?) The coach that is catching can work with the hitters. This is a good way to end each practice.

## **Using your hips when you swing**

Have each player get a partner and face each other approx. 3 feet apart. Player One puts his hands behind his lower back palms facing out, elbows pointed out. Player Two extends one hand out in front of his body at waist level into the other players "strike zone". Player One must hit Player Two's hand with his strong elbow (for a right-handed batter that is his right elbow). To do this Player One is forced to rotate their hips, as they should when they swing. Have the player repeat this ten times so they get a feel for the swing. Now have Player One hold his two hands as if he is holding his bat in a cocked position. Have him swing his hands to hit Player Two's hand using the same hip motion. Repeat this ten times. As Player One swings the coach should watch their back right foot. If it does not turn forward ("squish the bug") then they are not using their hips. Have them go back to swinging with their hands behind their back until they get the feel for the swing, then have them return to swinging with their hands in the cocked position. Now have Player One and Player Two switch positions and have Player Two perform the two exercises. Repeat this drill so each player practices the drills twice.

Now move to the batting tees and give each player hit 10 balls off the tees. Place the tee in the front center position of home plate. Again watch their back foot to make sure it turns forward. If it does not, have the player put down the bat and practice the exercise with their hands behind their back. Have the player retrieve the 10 balls and then move to the end of the line.

## **The Trigger**

The swing actually begins with the hitter rotating their back hip, front shoulder and hands, about 2-3 inches back in a clockwise motion. This move, called the trigger, gets the swing started and gives it some momentum to move into the ball. When the pitcher winds up and shows the hitter their hip the batter starts the triggers. Once the player has rotated 2-3 inches they should reverse direction now rotating their hips counter clockwise into the ball. The player should **not** freeze before reversing direction; instead it should all be one fluid motion.

Have the players form three rows in front of the coach. Each player should be at arm's length from the next player and should be in a batting stance facing the coach as if he was the pitcher. The coach yells **trigger** and **swing**. On **trigger** the batter begins the trigger by rotating back. They should freeze at this point and the coach should check the position. On **swing** the player rotates forward and freezes. The coach should now check that the hips rotated properly. Repeat this a few times until they are performing the skill properly. Now the coach should repeat the drill a few times, without freezing, so the player gets a feel for the fluid motion. Now the coach should repeat the drill using a pitcher's windup. When he shows them his hip (when the glove side knee reaches the peak of the kick) he yells **trigger**. As he finishes his throwing motion he yells **swing**. The coach should be watching the player's hips and back foot to make sure the hips are rotating properly.

Now the coach should soft toss each player five balls. On each toss the coach should start with the ball pointed directly at the batter. As the coach brings the ball down to start the underhand toss they yell **trigger**. Then they should toss the ball and yell **swing**. The coach should check the trigger and swing to make sure the hips rotate properly.

### **Watching the ball – Multi-Colored Soft Toss**

In this drill the coach will be soft tossing multi-colored baseballs to a batter. The batter is instructed to call out which color he hits as he makes contact with the ball. The coach should try and toss the ball with very little spin so the player can see the different colors. The coach and players waiting in line should also call out the color as the ball is hit. Each player takes five swings, retrieves the balls for the coach, and moves to the end of the line.

### **Watching the ball – “Ball” and “Hit”**

"Ball" and "ball-hit" are two easy drills to help a coach and hitter determine when the hitter first sees the ball and how long he sees it. In the "ball" drill the coach throws batting practice to the hitter. The hitter says the word "ball" when he first sees the ball, which should be when the ball is about to leave the coach's hand. At first the ball will be well on its way before the coach hears the word "ball." As more repetitions take place, the ball moves back toward the release point. In the "ball-hit" drill, the hitter says the word "ball" when he first sees the ball and the word "hit" as he makes contact with the ball.

### **Rhythm-Balance and Over Striding**

With the feet spread and the knees squeezed, place volleyball or a junior basketball between the knees. Hit balls off a tee or straight-on underhand toss. If rhythm and balance are consistent, the volleyball or basketball will remain between the knees until just before contact. A key point is that the front knee stays behind the front ankle at all times. The back knee moves down and in as the back hip rotates.

2. Weight-shift hitting. Most young hitters shift their weight too soon, either in the stride or as they start the bat. To have significant power, the weight must shift as the barrel is traveling through the hitting zone (just before contact and through contact). Hit balls off a tee. Using ankle flexion, the inside ball of the back foot is pushed down into the ground and the back foot "squashes the bug," then the back foot comes off the ground slightly as the barrel of the bat moves through the hitting zone. The important point here is to feel the weight shift against the front leg just before contact.

### **Hitting Drills – Long Slow Bat**

1. Standing one-hand drills.

a. Use a short bat in the bottom hand. Hit balls from straight-on underhand toss. Top hand on the chest. Keep the front elbow down and the barrel of the bat as close to the body as possible until right before contact. Hit the inside of the ball and try to hit the ball to the opposite field.

b. Use a short bat in the top hand. Hit balls from straight-on underhand toss. Bottom hand on the chest. Keep the back elbow close to the body, striving to get it even with the belly-button at contact. The barrel stays close to the body until right before contact. Hit the inside of the ball and try to hit the ball to the opposite field. Stop the barrel as soon after contact as possible without slowing the bat through contact, being careful not to roll the hand over.

2. Backside soft toss.

a. The feeder in backside soft toss is on the same side as the hitter, rather than the opposite side as in traditional soft toss, but at about the same 45-degree angle as traditional soft toss. The ball is tossed across the plate, and the hitter keeps his head still, stays inside the ball and hits it to the opposite field. This is a difficult drill, especially if the hitter turns away from the ball. The feeder may want to use a screen!

b. The feeder is in back about where the umpire stands behind the catcher. The hitter's head should be angled slightly toward the back shoulder to pick up the ball as it comes through the hitting zone. The ball is tossed slowly through the zone and the hitter stays inside the ball, keeping the barrel "on" the ball out front as long as possible. This is a very difficult drill and can be extremely frustrating. It takes the hitter's maximum concentration to do it right.

### **Hitting Drill: Driving through the Ball (Basketball Drill)**

Purpose: To make the batter forcefully hit through the ball.

Set a basketball on a batting tee set about knee height. The batter takes a regular swing at the ball and hits it into a net. Coaches: The drill makes the batter incorporate the lower body to generate power and a strong wrist snap through contact. For younger hitters, use a water polo ball or volleyball to lessen the effort necessary to hit through the ball correctly.

### **Hitting Drill: Avoid Being Hit**

Most kids that are afraid of being hit tend to step out with their left foot exposing the front of their body to the baseball. Teach the kids to turn their front shoulder in and down on an inside pitch. This exposes their back end to the baseball, reducing the risk of serious injury. To

reinforce this behavior practice having the player get up in their normal stance and soft toss tennis balls right at the player.

## IV. Throwing

### *The Basics of Throwing*

#### **Stretch Before Throwing**

Have all the players stretch their arms before they begin throwing. The following routine is a good start:

- Three sets of front arm circles for 15 seconds.
- Three sets of back arm circles for 15 seconds.
- Stretch the throwing arm by holding it across your chest and then use the opposite hand to pull the throwing arm bicep towards your chin. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat three times.
- Raise the throwing arm straight up with the palm faces backwards, bend the throwing elbow so the throwing hand is now touching the back of the throwing shoulder. In this position use your non-throwing hand to push your throwing elbow back causing your throwing hand to reach down your back. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat three times.
- IF THE WEATHER IS COLD, AVOID EXCESSIVE THROWING DRILLS

#### **The Grip**

Four-seam grip – Grip the ball so the index and middle fingers are on top and cross two seams each, and the thumb is on the bottom of the ball under the index and middle fingers. The ball is gripped loosely and there should be a space between the ball and the V formed by the thumb and index finger. The pads of the fingers should come to rest on top of a seam so that a reverse spin can be put on the ball as it is released.



#### **Proper Throwing Motion**

**Starting Position:** The players should position themselves so their shoulders form a straight line to the target with their throwing shoulder in back and their feet facing forward (perpendicular to the target). The hands should start together at the belly button.

**Starting the Throw:** Using “**Right to Left, Left to Throw**” is a good way to help players remember proper throwing footwork. For right handed thrower, right foot meets left foot, then left foot lifts and slides toward target. The throwing motion begins when the front foot is lifted and begins to slide toward the target. At the same time the hands separate. The glove hand is thrown forward towards the target with the thumb pointing down (this forces the front shoulder to turn in). The throwing hand goes down below the waist, and then reaches back in a circular motion, with index and middle fingers on top and pointing away from the target. “Bow and Arrow position” All weight is on the inside of the ‘pivot foot’ with a flexed knee to begin ‘pushing’ with your pivot leg towards the intended target.

**Hip Rotation and Weight Shift:** As the front foot lands (on the toe and ball of foot), the back hip and shoulder rotate forward towards the target bring the weight up and over the front foot. This rotation and weight shift is the key to using your body to throw. The throwing arm comes up (so the throwing elbow is at least shoulder height) and then forward with the elbow in front of the ball. As the back shoulder comes forward it should be aimed at the target. The glove arm is bent and pulled back into the body so that it tucks right under the shoulder. This movement with the glove arm is important because it helps the hips to rotate and improves throwing accuracy.

**Release:** The ball is released slightly in front of the body with a downward motion. There should be a snap of the wrists as the ball is released to add velocity to the throw. The ball should just spin off the top pads of the index and middle fingers. After release should give a “High Five”

**Follow Through:** The motion should be completed naturally. The player should let his throwing arm complete its motion and not force it to stop. The back leg will come forward with the weight shift and the back knee should come towards the front knee. If the player ‘points’ to their target with their shoulders (in-line) when starting their throw, eyes looking at the target, front foot landing in line with their target, releasing the ball in front of their eyes toward the target, the more likely they will reach their target. When any one of these factors is not practiced....the success rate of reaching their intended target reduces dramatically.

### ***Diagnosing Problems***

**Check the starting Position:** As with hitting, make sure the player is starting in the proper place. Check the ball grip and starting position.

**Watch the feet and legs:** If they are starting properly, watch their feet and legs when they throw. Watch the front foot to see if they are over striding, landing on their heel, or not stepping directly towards the target. If they stride too far, they end up shifting their weight forward before the hips have started to turn and they don’t get their body into the throw. If they land on their heel, it can force there weight back and make it difficult to rotate their hips. If they don’t step directly at the target it will throw off their aim and hip rotation.

**Check the body rotation and weight shift:** As the front foot lands, the back knee, hip, and shoulder should rotate and bring the weight forward. If the player's belly button/sternum has not turned to face the target at the time of release, then the player is not rotating their hips properly. If the back knee does not come towards the front knee, then the player is not shifting their weight forward over the front foot.

**Arm Position:** If the body rotation and weight shift is correct, watch the arm motions. The arms should separate as the player's strides. Make sure the glove arm is thrown out towards the target and then pulled back under the glove side shoulder. Check the throwing arm to make sure it goes down, back, and up (forming a circle). When the throwing arm is back the index and middle fingers should be on top. If they are on the bottom the player will end up pushing the ball instead of throwing it. When the throwing arm is up, the elbow must be at least shoulder height. If it is below shoulder height the player ends up short arming the throw and can injure their arm.

### **Throwing Drills**

#### **Tee Ball Throw and Go**

This drill teaches young players to follow their throws in the right direction. Have two single file lines of players (one behind the other) facing at a comfortable throwing distance.

A5 A4 A3 A2 A1 >> << B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

The player at the head of line one throws (A1) to the player at the head of line two (B1). After the throw, player continues a forward motion (as one should) in the direction of the throw by running to the back of the opposite line (B1 goes behind A5, A1 goes behind B5, etc.). The drill is especially effective for Tee Ball players as it encourages players to follow their throws instead of allowing them to 'cheat backward' as they tend to do when going to the back of the same line.

#### **Wrist Snap**

Wrist Drill - Players are on both knees facing each other about 8-10 feet apart. Player 1 will place his throwing elbow in his glove. Raise the throwing elbow so it is even with his throwing shoulder. Concentrate on loading and popping the ball with the wrist to Player 2. There should be very little body movement other than the wrist propelling the ball. Player 2 should give a target and catch the ball with two hands. PURPOSE - focus on the last 10% of the throw/**wrist** action

#### **Throwing Drill – Motion: Upper Body Movement**

Two Knee Throwing - Players are on both knees facing each other at 15 feet. Player 1 will throw to Player 2. The emphasis should be on the hand break out of the glove, arm circle (loose and controlled), turning of the shoulders, release, and follow through. It is important to preach proper arm action - ball comes out of glove and proceeds down, back, and up. The fingers should remain on top of the ball. The throwing elbow needs to get even or above the throwing shoulder. PURPOSE - To isolate the upper body during

the throwing process.

### **Throwing Arm Down and Back, Fingers on Top**

Player 1 is in a throwing position with shoulders lined up facing a target and hands together at chest. Player 2 is on one knee about 8-10 feet directly behind Player 1. Player 1 starts the throwing motion by separating the hands, the glove hand goes forward and the throwing hand goes down and then back in an arc. The fingers are on top of the ball at all times. Player 1 releases the ball as it reaches shoulder level behind their body resulting in a toss to Player 2. Coaches: watch for proper arm separation, throwing arm going down and then back, and that the fingers remain on top of the ball. If the toss does not go directly to Player 2 then make sure the arm is coming straight back.

\* As the player gets older, gradual long throwing is the best way to condition a throwing arm once pre-throwing stretching is completed \*

## **V. Fielding**

### *The Basics of Fielding*

#### **Choosing the Proper Glove Size**

The glove should be small enough so the player can move their arm and wrist easily when the glove is on. The player should not bury their entire hand in the glove. When worn properly the bottom of the palm, near the wrist, is exposed. Smaller gloves force the player to use two hands when catching. Use the chart below as a guideline when selecting a glove size:

Use the chart below as a general guideline for determining glove size.

Age	Position	Glove Size
5-6	General	10 to 10 1/2 (youth model)
7-8	General	10 1/2 to 11 (youth model)
9-12	General	11 to 11 1/2 (youth model)
High School/Adult	Infield	11 to 11 1/2
High School/Adult	Outfield	12 to 12 1/2

#### **Preparation**

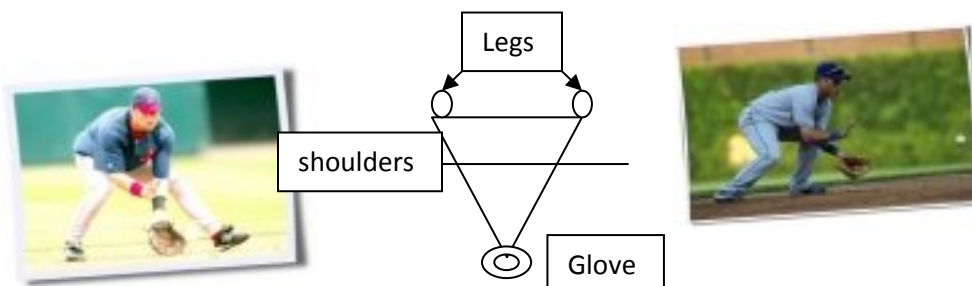
The first step in fielding is to be prepared mentally and physically. Before the pitcher starts to throw, the fielder has to know what they are going to do with the ball if it is hit to them. As the pitch is delivered, an infielder takes a step or two forward with their knees slightly bent, their feet a little more than shoulder width apart and both hands in front of their body ('infield creeping'). They time the end of their 'creeping' so they land as the

ball crosses the plate. If the ball is hit, they are already moving and will be able to react quickly. An outfielder takes the same slow moving approach (away from the batter) but their hands do not need to be in front of their body. Their first reaction will be step back so the arms should be prepared to run.

### **Fielding a Ground Ball – Infielders**

**Approaching the ball:** If the ball is hit directly at an infielder, they should charge the ball. If the ball is hit to either side they should first move laterally, starting with a crossover step until they are in front of the ball and then they should charge the ball if possible. They should NOT take a direct line to the ball that is hit to their side.

**Catching the ball:** As a ground ball approaches, the fielder's feet should be slightly more than shoulder width apart, with the foot on their glove side slightly in front of their other foot. They should position themselves so the line of the ball is inside the foot on their glove side. Their knees and waist are bent so the back is parallel to the ground. The ball is caught out in front of the body. Their glove hand should be touching the ground in front of their body with the palm facing up forming a triangle. In order to get the glove in this position they will be forced to bend their knees and waist. Their throwing hand should be on top of their glove hand so they form the shape of an open Alligator's mouth. Their head is square to the ground and watching the ball. This is 'getting in front of the ball' or 'squaring to the ground ball'.



**Positioning to throw:** After catching the ball, they can make one of three moves to get their bodies in a throwing position that is lined up to the target. If they are making a short throw they can just POP: take a quick hop (staying in a crouched position) with a slight twist so their throwing arm foot lands behind them and is perpendicular to their target. If they are making a medium length throw they can PIVOT: take a short step forward with their throwing foot so it lands perpendicular to their target so that the next step with their opposite throwing foot will cause them to pivot into a position that lines them up with their target. If they are making a long throw they can shuffle their feet towards the target (replacing the front foot with their pivot foot) making sure that their throwing foot is perpendicular to the target when they finish the shuffle. Regardless of the move they choose they should end up with their shoulders lined in a direct line to the target with the throwing shoulder in the back.

**First Base:** When playing first base, fielder should have throwing hand foot standing on the base. As the ball is approaching first base, the fielder should step with the glove hand to decrease the distance the ball needs to cover to the glove. First baseman should extend to right or left and cross over to field throw as necessary and come off base to stop errant throws from getting behind him. Importance should be placed on first catching the ball and if unable, to keep ball in front of first baseman to prevent runner taking additional bases.

### **Fielding a Fly Ball – Outfielders**

***Approaching the ball:*** An outfielder's first step should almost always be back. They should not move forwards until they are SURE the ball is hit in front of them. Tell your outfielders that if they are going to make a mistake, it should always be in front of them. A mistake in front of them is a single. A mistake behind them could be a HOME RUN! If the ball is hit to their side their first step should be to move their glove side foot back and towards the ball. This pivot will cause a right-handed player to close (angle their back on) a ball hit to their right, and open up on a ball hit their left or directly at them. Their first step should not be lateral Outfielders should run under control (the head should not bounce up and down) and their glove should NOT be extended until the ball is about to arrive (run with the glove 'tucked' and palm facing skyward). If they have time, they should always put themselves in a position so they can face the ball and catch it with their arms extended in front of the body and above their head.

***Catching the ball:*** Just before the ball arrives, they should extend their arms so they catch the ball with thumbs together, two hands away from their body, and above their head. They should try and position themselves so the glove never blocks their line of sight to the ball.

***Positioning to Throw:*** Most outfield throws will be long, so an outfielder should take a shuffle step or a crow hop. They should shuffle their feet towards the target making sure that their throwing foot is perpendicular to the target when they finish the shuffle.

***Balls hit down the Line:*** Tell your left and right fielders that any ball hit between them and the foul line will tail towards the foul line. It doesn't matter if a lefty or righty is up, it will still tail towards the line.

### **After the Ball is hit**

Teach the players that everyone moves after the ball is hit. Outfielders charge every ground ball and assume that it will get through the infield. They also back up overthrows to the bases. Catchers and second basemen can back up throws to first; the pitcher should be backing up third and home. Players should learn to anticipate throws. If there is a wild throw to first then the left and centerfielders should move to back up the first baseman's throw to second.

## **Backing Up**

### **Left Fielder**

- If there is a runner on 3B, backup the 3B line after every pitch.
- Ball hit to center, backup the center fielder.
- On a ball hit to right side, with play at 2B, backup the throw to 2B
- On a ball hit to right side, play at 3B, backup throw to 3B.
- On a groundball to 3B or shortstop, back up all ground balls.
- On a bunted ball, always charge to back up 3B
- Rundown going home or 3B – backup 3B.
- Rundown going to 2B – backup 2B.

### **Right Fielder**

- If there is a runner on 1B, backup 1B line after every pitch.
- Ball hit to center, backup the center fielder.
- On a ball hit to left, with a play at 2B, backup the throw to 2B.
- On a ball hit to left, with a play at 1B, backup 1B in foul territory.
- On a groundball to 1B or 2B, back up all ground balls.
- On a bunted ball, always charge to back up 1B
- Rundown going to 3B – backup 2B.
- Rundown going to 2B – backup 1B.

### **Center Fielder**

- If there is a runner on 2B, backup 2B after every pitch.
- Ball hit to left, backup the left fielder.
- Ball hit to right, backup the right fielder.
- On a groundball to 2B or shortstop, back up all ground balls.
- On a bunted ball, always charge to back up 2B
- Rundown going to 2B or 3B – backup 2B.

### **Catcher**

- Bases empty, on a groundball rundown 1B base line to backup throw to 1B.
- Runner of 1B, move up the 3B base line to provide backup at 3B.
- Runners on 2B or 3B, cover home.

### **Pitcher**

- Runner on 1B, ball hit to right, backup 3B.
- Runner on 2B, ball hit to any field, backup home.
- Cover 1B on anything hit in infield to your left.

### **2B Baseman**

- Runners on 3B, backup every throw to pitcher.
- Bases empty, backup throw to 1B on groundball.
- Cover 1B on groundball to 1B.

## ***Calling for the Ball***

### **Calling for the ball**

Wait for the ball to reach the top of its trajectory. Once you know you can catch the ball call for it. To call for the ball YELL MINE! MINE! The louder you yell, the more likely

another player will not collide into you. Don't yell, "I got it", and don't call the ball for someone else (Yours). If you are not sure if you can get to it and, the ball is about to hit and no one has called for it, then call for the ball and try to get it. Call EVERYTHING even if it is hit right at you. This lets the other players know you see the ball (you haven't lost it in the sun) and they don't need to call for it.

### **Order of Precedence**

There is an order of precedence among the fielders with the center fielder being the highest.

Center Fielder, Left and Right Fielder, Shortstop, Second Baseman, First Baseman, Third Baseman, Pitcher, Catcher

Whenever possible the player highest in precedence should call for the ball and catch it.

Examples:

- Outfielder should try to catch all shallow fly balls.
- Shortstop should try to catch a popup behind third.
- Second baseman should try to catch a popup behind first.
- First and third baseman should try to catch foul pops between their base and home.
- The Center Fielder wins all ties with other outfielders.
- The Shortstop wins all ties with infielders.

If two players call for the ball the player highest in precedence should catch the ball and the other player should back off. Don't dive for a ball if you have not called for it.

### ***Fielding Drills***

#### **Getting Started**

***Use Tennis Balls and Tee Balls*** - Kids have a natural fear of being hit with a baseball. A coach can reduce this fear from interfering with the learning process by using a softer ball (Tennis balls, Tee balls) when you start teaching them to field.

***Catch with Two Hands*** - Tennis balls are great because it will force them to use two hands when catching.

#### **Count the Bounces**

Kids tend to watch the ball until it is just about to arrive, then they turn their face away so it won't get hit. Even if they are not afraid of the ball, experienced players can develop a bad habit of taking their eye off a ground ball, just before it arrives, so they can sneak a look where they should be throwing it. Both infielders and outfielders will do this especially if runners are on base. This move causes most errors (and injuries). When you throw them ground balls, tell them to count the bounces out loud. This forces them to keep their eyes on the ball and to watch the last bounce. This bounce is the most important because they need to react to it in order to field. Watching the ball is actually their best defense mechanism against getting hit by it.

### **Machine Gun Throwing**

Put 7 players in a straight line approximately 3 to 4 feet apart with the player at the far right (P2) holding a baseball. Put 1 player (P1) facing the line of 7 approximately 15 feet away from the center player in the line of 7. P1 also has a baseball.

P8 P7 P6 P5 P4 P3 P2

P1

Coach will say, "Go." P1 throws his ball to player 3 (P3). At the same time P2 throws his ball to P1. As soon as P3 catches the ball he throws it back to P1. As soon as P1 catches the ball from P2 he throws it to P4, and so on down the line. P1 works his way down the line to P8 and then back up the line to P2. At this point P1 flips his ball to P3, P2 replaces P1 (P1 then goes to the end of the line) and everyone rotates up one spot and the drill starts over again.

P1 P8 P7 P6 P5 P4 P3

P2

We believe this is an excellent drill for developing quick hands and quick feet. It forces the players to catch the ball with two hands. If he catches it with one hand he can't get rid of it in time before the next ball is coming at him. It also teaches our players the importance of stepping at your target because you have to shift your feet in a different direction before throwing to the next person in line. A player who needs some work with his glove or feet is easily spotted in this drill.

### **Relays and Relay Race**

This drill is a great skill builder. There will be at least 5 players on a team. They line up about 30 feet apart and stretch about 120 feet across the field. You will have two teams or "lines" competing against each other. Make sure to have you catcher, first baseman, and third baseman on one end. Have an outfielder on the opposite end. Your middle infielder should be in the middle. The drill will start for both lines at the same time. The first team to take the ball to the other end and get it back is the winner. The ball must be caught and thrown by each player in the line. Teams may not skip a man. The catchers should practice catching and tagging a runner. The middle infielders should be taught to properly "round" the ball, make a proper relay catch and quick throw (glove side to the infield on relay throws form the outfield).

Catcher-----1B/3B-----2B/SS-----3B/1B-----Outfielder

The distances should be matched to the age. You may also have the outfielder let the ball go and hit the fence, before he goes retrieves it and makes his throw to the cutoff man. You may also want to have the "line" make more than one trip down and back. It is great to make each "line" take the ball to the other end three times.

### **Fielding Drills: Groundball Drill**

**Instructions:** Place two batting helmets (H) approximately 10 feet apart on a line.

Player 1 (P1) stands in ready position 10 feet behind the line without a glove. The coach says ready and the player 'infield creeps' forward as if the pitch is being thrown. The coach then throws a ground ball to the left, middle or right of the batting helmets. Player 1 moves to position them self in front of the ground ball, picks it up and throws in to the coach (bare handed). Player 1 then goes to the end of the line and Player 2 (P2) steps in. Continue through the line until each player has had a chance to field the balls in all three

positions. The coach should have an ample supply of balls so they don't have to stop the drill if a throw is wild.

**Things to check:**

***Infielders need to be ready to move when the ball is hit:*** Make sure the player completes the 'infield creep' after you say ready.

**P1**

**H H**

**C**

**P2**

**P3**

**P4**

***Taking the right line to a ground ball:*** The player should not take a straight line to the ground ball. They should move slightly lateral and then come straight to the ground ball so they are facing their target when they field the ball. The helmets force them to do this.

***Charging ground balls:*** Make sure the ground ball is fielded in front of the line.

***Proper position for fielding ground balls:*** The player should be facing target (coach) with foot opposite throwing hand slightly ahead of other foot. Knees bent, back parallel to ground.

***Field Ground Balls out in front of your body:*** The players' glove should be extended with palms facing up.

***Step and throw:*** After fielding a ground ball the player should stay low and their first step should be to move their throwing foot forward and plant it perpendicular to the target so they are ready to stride and throw.

**Follow Your Throws**

Start with five infielders, one at each base, and two at home. The first catcher rolls a ground ball to the third baseman and then follows his throw to third base. The third baseman throws to second base, starting the double play and then follows his throw to second base. The second baseman turns the double play and then follows his throw to first base. The first baseman receives the throw, turns and fires home to the second catcher and then follows their throw home. The second catcher now rolls a groundball to third base and starts the drill again. Have a contest by keeping track of how many times each group of five can get the ball around the infield in two minutes.

## **Fielding Drills: Fielding On the Run**

**P1 H H**

**C**

**P4, P3, P2**

**T1**

**T2**

**T3**

**Instructions:** Place two batting helmets (H) approximately 6 feet apart and 10 feet behind a line on the field. Player 1 (P1) stands in ready position between the two helmets. The Coach (C) says ready and the Player 1 ‘creeps’ forward as if the pitch is being thrown. The coach throws a line drive (T1) at the Player 1. Player 1 charges the line drive and catches it near the line. Player 1 throws the ball back to the coach (T2) and then the coach throws a fly ball (T3) behind one of the helmets. Player 1 runs back and catches the fly ball, throws the ball back to the coach and goes to the end of the line. Player 2 (P2) now takes a turn in the drill. The coach should have an ample supply of balls so they don’t have to stop the drill if a throw is wild. Continue the drill until each player has had a few turns fielding the throws.

### **Things to check:**

***Infielders need to be ready to move when the ball is hit:*** Make sure the player completes the infield creep after you say ready.

***Catching the ball on the run:*** The player should catch Throw 1 near the line. The player needs to run under control, the head should stay on the same plane and not bounce up and down.

***Catch the ball out in front of the body:*** The player should extend the glove in front of their body to catch the line drive. The throwing hand should be near the glove (catching with two hands).

***Pivot and throw:*** The player’s first step after the catch should be a short step forward with the throwing foot placing it perpendicular to the throwing target. This will force the next step to be a pivot that properly lines up their body with the target. They are now ready to stride and throw.

***Proper line on a fly ball:*** The player’s first step should be to pivot and run back. The first step should not be lateral move. The helmets will force the player to start straight back and then move laterally.

***Players should run to the ball:*** Once the player has pivoted they should RUN to the ball. Make sure the player does not shuffle back or run backwards. The glove should also be tucked down while running. The player should not raise their glove until they are ready to catch the ball.

***Catch the ball away from the body:*** The player should extend their arm and catch the ball (with two hands if possible) away from the body and above their head.

***Crow hop and throw:*** The throw from the outfield requires a crow hop that lands with the throwing foot behind the body and perpendicular to the target.

### **Tennis Ball Pop-Ups for Tee Ball Players**

Utilize a tennis racquet and tennis balls to hit players pop-ups. Kids are about 30 feet away from you. Make a line off to the side - one player sprints out and gets ready. Catch popup, place in bucket at the end of the line. You can hit these really high and it is much safer. Kids love it. Coach checks to see if players are moving their feet to get under the pop-ups, keeping their gloves out in front of their body with two hands above their head.

### **Preparing for the Ball**

Put players at each outfield position and each infield position. Have the outfielders play fairly deep. The coach stands at pitcher's mound with a Tennis Ball and racquet and hits high fly balls to various places. The players need to go after the fly balls and make the proper calls.

### **Fielding – Infield: Proper hand and feet position when fielding the ball**

The coach should demonstrate the proper foot and hand position to field a ground ball. When possible, an infielder should field a ground ball with the glove out in front of their body (so their eyes can watch the catch) inside their glove hand foot. The glove hand foot should be slightly in front of the other foot so the player can quickly pivot into a throwing position. The glove should be on the ground and open with the palm facing the sky. The throwing hand should open just above the glove with the palm facing down. Break the players into circles of about 5-6 players. Give each group a ball and have them start rolling groundballs to each other with their bare hands. The players should focus on getting their feet and hands into the proper position to field the groundball. The coach should watch the circles and make sure the drill is performed properly. If a player is not in the proper position then stop the drill and correct them.

Now have the players get into lines and have a coach roll ground balls to the first player in each line. When you first introduce this drill use T-Balls so the player is not worried about getting hit with the ball and can focus on their hands and feet (regular baseball at older ages). The coach should roll the balls slow enough so the player has time to get into the proper position. The player is instructed to freeze when they field the ball. Check the players hand and foot position when they freeze. If the ball is not being caught inside the glove hand foot or the glove hand foot is not slightly ahead of the other foot then correct the player. Have the players complete this a few times until their hands and feet are in the proper position. Now repeat the drill, but instead of having the players freeze, they should come up throwing. The coach should continue to check the hand and feet positions.

### **Infield: Watching the last bounce**

This drill focuses on making sure that infielders keep their eye on the ball and see the last bounce. Tell the players that MOST infield errors are made because the infielder does not watch the ball take its last bounce. Also tell them that the best way to avoid being hit with a ground ball is to make sure that you watch it. You can't duck out of the way of a

bad hop if you are not watching the ball take a bad hop. You will need a bouncy lopsided ball that does not bounce true. To make one you need a tennis ball and a roll of masking tape, or a 'reaction ball' from a sporting goods store. Tear off about eight five inch strips of masking tape and scrunch them into small balls with the sticky side out. Stick the scrunched balls onto the tennis ball in various places. Now take some strips of masking tape and tape the tennis ball completely so that the scrunched balls will stay in place. Have the players get into lines and have a coach roll the ball at a brisk pace to the first player in each line. The player is instructed to focus on the last bounce so they know where the ball is heading. You can do this drill with or without gloves. Repeat the drill often so the players get into the habit of watching the ball.

### **Infield: Footwork for a Medium length throw**

When an infielder fields a ground ball their feet should be a little more than shoulder width apart with the glove side foot slightly ahead of the throwing side foot. If they are making a medium range throw their first step after catching the ball is to bring their back foot (throwing foot) one step forward towards the target so that it lands perpendicular to the target. Now when they bring their glove foot forward their body will automatically turn so their shoulders line up and point to the target and they can go right into their throw. Their knees should remain bent at all times so they stay low to the ground.

Have the players form three rows, an arm's length apart, in front of the coach. The coach yells three commands, **catch**, **step**, and **pivot**. On **catch** the player should get their feet and hands into the proper position to field a ground ball. On **step** the player should bring their back foot (throwing foot) one step forward towards the target so that it lands perpendicular to the target. On **pivot** the player should bring their glove foot forward and their body should turn so their shoulders line up and point to the target. Have the players freeze after the pivot and make sure they are all lined up to the target and their knees are still bent. Repeat this drill about 10 times until they are all comfortable with the footwork.

Now have each player get a partner and form two lines with the partners facing each other about 15-20 feet apart. Give every other player on each side a ball so that each pair has a ball. The coach now yells **catch**, **step**, **pivot**, and **throw**. On **catch** the player with the ball gets into the proper groundball fielding position as if they have just caught a ground ball. On **step** and **pivot** they move their feet as described above and on **throw** they throw the ball to their partner. Repeat this drill so each side performs the drill a few times.

Now the coach will yell ready, throw. On throw the player rolls a soft groundball directly to their partner. The partner should catch, step, pivot and throw in one fluid motion.

Continue this drill with the players only throwing on the coach's command. The coach should watch all kids making sure they are moving properly and correcting them if they are not.

### **Outfield: Proper hand and feet position to catch a fly ball or pop fly**

The coach should demonstrate the proper hand and feet position for catching a fly ball or a pop fly. When possible, fly balls and pop flies should be caught with the glove out in front of the body and above the head. The glove should be positioned in front of the throwing hand shoulder with the glove open and up. To get the glove in this position the

player should move the glove **across the body first** and then up, so that the glove never blocks the eye's view of the ball. The throwing hand should be under the glove with the palm open and facing up. The feet should be a little more than shoulders width apart with the glove hand foot should be slightly in front of the throwing hand foot so that the player can quickly pivot into a throwing position after catching the ball.

Have the players spread out with gloves but no baseballs. Have the coach call ready, catch, and freeze. On catch the players should move their feet and hands to the proper position and then freeze. The coach should check the hand and feet positions to make sure they are correct. Watch how the player moves the glove into position to make sure it does not cross their line of sight. Repeat this drill until the players are doing it correctly. Now have the players get into lines and have a coach toss a pop up to the first player in each line. The player should freeze when they catch it. Check the feet and hands. Repeat this drill a few times then have the players catch the ball and throw without freezing. To start throw the pop fly to the throwing hand side of the player so they don't have to move their feet too much in order to get in the correct position. After they are more comfortable, alternate throwing the ball to either side of the player so they have to move their feet in order to get in the correct position. Don't throw the ball over the players head during this drill. Correct any player that does not do the drill properly.

### **Outfield: Moving for balls hit over your head**

To move for a ball hit over their head the first step an outfielder should make is to move the 'ball side foot' (the foot on the side where the ball has been hit) one step back so that the foot comes down with the toes pointing away from the body. The player should then move the other foot across the front of the body so that it lands in a line pointed to where they think the ball is going to land. This will cause the players body to close on the ball (their back will be facing the path of the ball). They should proceed to run towards the landing point while keeping their eye on the ball at all times.

If a ball is hit directly over their heads then they should try to drop and pivot on their glove hand side. It will be easier to extend their gloves to make a catch if they pivot on this side.

Have the players spread out in front of the coach. Start with a ball hit to their right. Have them drop their right foot and then cross over the left foot. Change to a ball hit to the left. Have them drop their left foot and then cross over their right foot. Repeat each side a few times, doing each step slowly until they are comfortable with the drill. Now have the coach hold up either their left or right hand to indicate which side the ball has been hit. The player should drop, crossover, and freeze. Check to make sure each player has done it correct. Repeat this drill a few times until everyone is doing it right. The coach should hold their hand directly over their heads to indicate fly balls hit directly over the players head. Check to see if they are pivoting to their glove side on this type of fly ball.

Now the coach should throw each player a pop fly just slightly over their heads to either side of their body. The coach should observe the player to make sure they drop and cross over. If they do it wrong, have them repeat the drill. Keep doing the drill until each player has had a chance to practice catching the ball a few times for each side.

## **Outfield: Footwork for throwing**

When an outfielder catches a fly ball in the proper position their throwing side foot will be slightly behind their glove side foot. To make throws from the outfield the player will have to make a **crow hop** in order to gain momentum to make the long throw. The crow hop is actually made up of a few quick steps.

1. The glove side foot steps toward the target landing perpendicular to the target (body is automatically turned with the shoulders on a straight line to the target)
2. During the action in 1, the throwing hand and glove hand begin to separate, throwing hands starts to drop below the waist while the glove hand starts to rise above the waist
3. The throwing foot crosses over the glove side foot (with a 'hop') and lands firmly perpendicular to the target while shoulders are on a straight line to the target, the player has reached the top of the 'circular throwing motion'
4. The glove side foot lands, as the players chest and sternum are 'squared' to the target as the player has released the ball in front of their body towards their intended target

Have the players form three rows, an arm's length apart, in front of the coach. The coach yells **catch, one, two, three** and **throw**. On **catch** the player gets in the proper position to catch a fly ball. When the coach yells **one** the players take step one above and should freeze. The coach check to make sure everyone is in position. Now do steps **two, three** and four (**throw**), freezing after every step. Repeat this a few times until they are comfortable.

Now have each player get a partner and form two lines with the partners facing each other about 30 feet apart. Give every other player on each side a ball so that each pair has a ball. The coach now yells **catch, one, two, three**, and **throw**. On **catch** the player with the ball gets into the proper fly ball fielding position as if they have just caught a fly ball. On **one** they perform step one above and freeze. The coach checks to make sure everyone is in position. Now do step **two** and **three** freezing after every step. On **throw** they should take the final step and throw the ball to their partner. Repeat this a few times freezing between the steps. Once everyone is doing it properly repeat the drill without freezing.

## **VI. Base Running**

### ***The Basics of Base Running***

#### **Home to First**

***Always run hard*** - your goal is to advance for extra bases on balls hit into the outfield. On balls hit in the infield, we hope to beat the throw to 1st base, but we will at least apply a little pressure on the defense. You are expected to run out all pop ups and fly balls. If there is any doubt as to whether a batted ball is fair, run hard and let the umpires decide. ***Rely on your 1B coach*** – once you have made contact with the ball, drop the bat, and sprint to 1B only watching your 1B coach. He will tell you whether to run through 1B, round 1B, or head to 2B. Do not watch the batted ball while running to 1B....it

drastically slows you down.

***Balls in the infield*** - On balls hit in the infield you should hit first base with your left foot. Never lunge at the bag - just run through 1st base, this is why the rules allow you to overrun that base. Do not slide into 1B, it slows you down.

***Balls in the outfield*** - On balls hit in the outfield always make an aggressive turn at 1st Base. Make wide banana turn starting halfway down first base line - If you can make the outfielders believe you are going to second base when you turn at 1st base, you have done your job. If the outfielders aren't even aware that there is a runner, you have given up a chance to put pressure on the defense. To avoid turning wide, learn to swing out into foul ground and dip your inside shoulder as you turn for 2<sup>nd</sup> base, touching the inside corner of 1B.

***Never become a spectator*** - If you single in a runner from second base, chances are there will be a throw to the plate. If the ball clears the cutoff man, you should be on second base. You must anticipate this throw, find the cutoff man, determine the height of the ball, and aggressively take second base when it is available. Lots of things happen in games when a ball is batted. We must always be ready to take the extra base if the situation allows for it. There is a difference between aggressive and foolish. It is up to the coaches to manage the base running

***Don't step on Home*** - Never step on home plate when bunting or swinging the bat. If you make contact with the ball at all....the batter is out. It doesn't matter if the ball is fair or foul.

**When you are on base:**

***Know the situation*** - Get your signs from the coach (league appropriate), know how many outs there are and if you are forced on a groundball. Check where the outfielders and infielders are playing and make a mental note. That information will help you on batted balls into the outfield.

***Don't Interfere*** - The rules require that you avoid all batted balls and fielders in the act of fielding the ball. If you run into a batted ball or a fielder trying to field, you will be called out.

**First base:**

***Get a good secondary lead on every pitch (league appropriate)*** - If the ball is in the dirt and by the catcher then go. If the ball is caught, GET BACK! You are responsible for getting back if the catcher throws to first. Do not **solely** rely on your First base coach. If you are getting a good lead, many catchers will throw over.

***When to Run*** - If there are two outs then run on contact. If there are less than two outs then the rule is: Groundball - GO, Line drive -Freeze, Fly ball - Halfway and get back (coach assisted). Tag up only on deep fly balls. "Halfway" means as far as you can get toward 2nd base and still get back safely if the ball is caught. That could be 2 feet on a pop up to the first baseman or 59 feet on a fly ball to deep center field. With less than 2 outs, always freeze on a line drive. The reason we need to freeze (or not run) is to make sure the line drive goes through the infield. If it is caught in the infield and we have already started our move toward the next base, the fielder throws to our base and the fielder only has to step on the base before the player returns for record the out.

***Be Aggressive*** - You should want to run to third base. If the ball is hit in front of you (to Left or Center), your coach will decide if you can make it or not and carry out the appropriate actions. If the ball is hit into right field, pick up the third base coach before

you get to 2nd base (about 20 feet before) and he will tell you to stay or GO.

**Bunts** - If we are bunting, be sure the ball will hit the ground before you run!

### **Second base**

**Get a good secondary lead on every pitch (league appropriate)** - Get off the base on every pitch and watch for the ball in the dirt. Runners on second need to react to the ball in the dirt. If the ball kicks away from the catcher they should go. If the catcher blocks the ball in front of him the base runners should stay.

**When to Run** - Groundballs: If you are forced the GO! If there is no runner at 1st base forcing you to advance on ground balls with less than 2 outs, you should GO on ground balls hit at you or behind you. Do not hesitate. On balls hit in front of you (to your right), you should wait and read the infielders throw. Fly balls: Tag at 2nd base on all fly balls at the coach's discretion. If you are not sure if the ball is foul, rely on your base coach on the side of the field where the ball has been hit. Otherwise, only tag on fly balls that appear to be sure outs but are deep enough that you can beat the outfielder's throw to third base. Most of these 'tag-able' fly balls are hit to center and right. It is very rare to tag up to 3B on a ball hit to left field. Line drives: FREEZE!

**Be Aggressive** - When running from 2nd base, advance to 3rd as though you will keep going toward home. The 3rd base coach can only stop you. Avoid station-to-station running. In other words, do not go to third and wait for the coach to send you home. You are going home unless the coach stops you. You must advance toward 3rd full speed with the intention of scoring. Important: with two outs running on second are concentrating on scoring on a single.

### **Third base**

**Get a good secondary lead on every pitch (league appropriate)** - Always take your leads in foul ground and return back to the bag in fair ground. This is because a batted ball that hits you over fair territory puts you out, but a thrown ball that hits you could result in a run. In addition, returning in fair territory limits the catcher's throwing lane to 3B. If you have the green light on a passed ball then be aggressive! If the ball kicks away from the catcher they should go. If the catcher blocks the ball in front of him the base runners should stay. If you are not sure the STAY!

**When to run** - Groundballs: with less than two outs you need to know if you should advance on a groundball. Listen to your base coach for special instructions. Coaches may want to see the ball go through the infield before we try to advance or go on anything hit to the right side. You must be ready to react when running at third base. Fly balls: with less than 2 outs, tag on all balls hit in the air to the outfield and listen to your third base coach for instructions. On all balls hit to the outfield go back to the bag to tag and spring home as soon as the ball touches the outfielder's glove

### **Base Running Drills**

#### **Sliding for Tee Ball Players – must slide or avoid contact on all close tags**

When practicing sliding, try using a large piece of cardboard placed on grass. Have the kids start their slide hitting the piece of cardboard. This causes the cardboard to slide on the grass instead of the kid so there is less chance for injury due to abrasion or maybe

snagging a cleat or shoe in the grass. Use a stick of some kind as sort of limbo bar and have them slide under it to make sure they stay as low as possible. Make sure they practice good form (slide more on your hip than side and keep the hands up and back). The lead leg should be bent at the knee so it can bend as it hits the base.

### **Running the Bases Relay Races**

This is a good base running drill to use with young kids at the end of every practice. Split the team in half, with one group of kids behind home plate and other half behind second base. Give the first kid of each group a ball (this will be the "baton" for the relay race). At "GO!" the first kid from each team begins running the bases, ball in hand. After making a complete lap around the bases (back to each kid's starting point) that kid hands the ball off to the next kid in line, who continues the relay race. First group of kids to finish the race wins.

### **Running to First**

Players line up at home plate. Place another base about 10 feet past First base down the right field line about three feet in foul territory. One at a time, swing a bat and drop it safely as if a hit. They then become a runner and run to first base watching the 1B coach. If signaled to second they round the base and go to second. The coach may send them to slide into 2B, or have them run through first base and into foul territory. The coach should alternate his calls to keep the players guessing and watching.

Coaches Focus on:

- 1) running through the base into foul territory
- 2) rounding a base properly
- 3) watching and listening to the base coach.

### **Running to First X 2**

Line up half the team behind home plate and half behind second base. Have a coach at first base and a coach at third base. Players run for first or third on a start signal from the coach and must either stop or go on based on coach's signal.

Variation 1: Treat third base the same as first base in this drill. This allows the home to first drill to go twice as fast. If done in reps with players jogging to back of line after run can be used as a type of wind sprint.

Variation 2: Use bases as actual bases so runner at second will either slide into third, go in standing up, or make turn for home, while runner going to first either runs through or makes turn to second.

### **Aggressive Base Running and taking the Extra Base**

Divide the players equally among the four bases. One at a time from each base player will be running, with the others waiting their turn. At 'go' from the coach, the four base runners begin running to the next base. Proper technique is a must and the goal would be to do a certain amount right in a row before going on to something else.

Player at the plate: Simulates a swing and begins running as if hitting an extra base hit. Batter runner makes a good turn at 1B, heads toward 2B and looks to the 3B coach a little more than half way to 2nd. Batter runner rounds 2B hard, 'picks up the ball' (based on the information told to them from the 1B coach, and returns to 2nd quickly.

Player at first: From a lead (league appropriate), runs from 1B to 3B (looking at 3B a little more than half way to 2B), rounds 2B and runs to 3B (looking at 3B coach for instructions), runner rounds 3B as if heading towards home then returns quickly.

Player at 2nd: From a lead (league appropriate), runs from 2B to home, a little more than half way to 3B, looks at the 3B coach for direction, rounds 3B and sprints for home...sprinting through the plate (or sliding to practice this as well)

Player at 3rd: From a lead (league appropriate), goes back to 3B to tag up. Sprints towards home on 'tag-up command by 3B coach. Runner either sprints through home plate or slides as instructed.

### **Getting the Jump**

One problem we have in youth baseball is getting the base runner to come off of the base aggressively for a secondary lead as soon as permitted by league rules.

To improve this, run an exercise requiring a pitcher, a catcher and a first baseman and one base runner with batting helmet (at first base). The remaining players line up in foul territory to take their turn running. The pitcher pitches to the catcher. At league appropriate timing, the base runner takes an aggressive lead off of 1B. Where appropriate, have the catcher throw to the existing first baseman and have the base runner promptly return to 1B...attempting to have the base runner as far off from 1B without getting put out by the catcher

The object is for the base runner to get as far as possible toward second base (but not to go to second) and then try to get safely back to first before the throw. Mark a line in the dirt at the farthest distance that each player gets to - only if they get back to first safely. That tells the player how far they can get off the bag and still get back during a regular game. Have a competition to see who can get the farthest. Never skip a chance to make any drill into a game or competition. In order to get any distance at all they have to dive headfirst back to first base (which is considered both safe and legal in all of our leagues). Our aim is to get the players to come off the bags far enough to take advantage of any dropped balls by the catcher or to get the catcher to make an attempt at a put-out. It is also a good workout for the pitcher, catcher and first baseman.

Final coaching consideration

It is important that when you finish the competition to go back over each player's mark with that player and have them stride off the distance. This will let them have an idea how far to come off the bag in game situation

### **Balls in the Dirt (league appropriate)**

This drill helps the players learn how to read the trajectory of a pitched ball that will bounce in the dirt. Players are set up at all three bases. They are independent of each other because different bases have different rules for a ball in the dirt. A coach pitches from the rubber and mixes in strikes and balls in the dirt to the catcher. Any time the ball is about to bounce the whole team must yell "DIRT." This helps you make sure everyone is paying attention. Base runners on first should automatically go when they know the ball is going to bounce and get by the catcher. If they leave after the ball has bounced, they left too late. A runner on second will have to react to the ball in the dirt and then decide if they could be safe. Teach them to read and decide. It is up to the base runner to advance on instinct and up to the coach to correct them when necessary. If the ball kicks

away from the catcher they should've gone. If the catcher blocks the ball in front of him the base runners should stay. The runner on third base is similar to the one on second. The runner takes a lead, gets a substantial lead as the ball nears the plate and reacts to the ball in the dirt. Again, he reads and decides.

Coaches should emphasize that each base is independent of each other. Just because cause the runner from first goes to second doesn't mean the runner on second has to go. This is drill specific instruction. Coaches should also emphasize good secondary lead technique. It also helps if you have at least 2 catchers.

## **VII. Teamwork and Attitude**

### **Hustle**

Excel in effort. Give your best, 100% effort--always!

On a baseball field, walking is prohibited (exceptions: pitcher and catcher). We hustle and run at all times! A team that hustles is a team that plays with discipline and enthusiasm. Hustle does not require awesome talent, it requires simple commitment and desire. We will out hustle every team we play!

### **Teamwork**

Each team has 9 defensive players on the field. It takes all players on the field and all players offensively to work together towards one common goal. Teach the players to play for the name on the front of their uniform....not the name on the back.

There is no 'I' in Teamwork

Andrew Carnegie

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the ability to direct individual

accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

### **Support your Teammates**

Develop loyalty. Put the team first. Be a team player. Help your team members achieve team goals.

Baseball is a team game. We succeed and fail on the field as a team. Be supportive of your teammates at all times. Encourage and cheer for one another. Mistreating or criticizing another player is a team offense.

### **Stay Alert**

Whether in a game or at practice, keep your mind focused on the team's baseball objectives.

Master the fundamentals. Learn the basic skills. To become a skilled player on game day, start by being a good practice player. Players will only perform as good as their worst practice.

Anticipate each pitch and fielding situation. Players are never spectators--when you are on the field, be prepared to be involved in every play. Know your assignments. With every pitch anticipate the action and get in position to make the play. Without focus,

injury is possible as well.

### **Everyone is going to Make Mistakes**

Make every mistake a part of your development. Learn from adversity. Mistakes are common in baseball. Errors are part of the game. Every player, regardless of skill, will make errors that are both physical and mental. What sets winning teams apart from others is attitude. When a mistake is made, forgive yourself, and make a commitment to learn from the experience. You will learn more from a mistake or failure than you will from a success.

Baseball is a game of failure....a hitter going 1 for 3 for their career will end up in the Hall of Fame.

### **Be a Good Sport**

Value sportsmanship. Be a good sport. Show respect for opponents, officials, and fans. Most of all, demonstrate your respect for our team and the great sport of baseball by conducting yourself with honor on and off the field.

### ***Teamwork Drills***

#### **Hit & Fetch**

**Purpose:** To accomplish conditioning in a fun and competitive way.

**Set-Up:** Divide your team into two groups. Group One is at the plate hitting off a tee or off coach pitch. Group Two is divided, with half fielding at third base and half fielding at first base.

**The Drill:** The batter hits the ball and runs the bases. Every base the runner touches scores a point for their team. The play is stopped as soon as both players who began at first and third touch the ball. Example: The ball is hit to deep center field. The runner is between second and third when both fielders get to the ball and touch it in center field. That round is over, with the runner's team getting two points. Go to the next batter and two new players at the bases. After everyone has gone through one time, the teams switch.

#### **Hollywood Runs**

**Purpose:** To accomplish conditioning in a fun and competitive way and promote teamwork.

**Set-Up:** All team members lineup single file behind home plate. As a team they begin to jog the base path. They will need to maintain a consistent distance between each other for the drill to work well.

**The Drill:** Once the last person in the line (as the team is jogging towards 1B) crosses home plate, the player sprints to the front of the line. Once that player reaches the front, they yell 'GO', thus telling the next player (who is now last in the line) to sprint towards the front of the line. During all of this, the entire team is jogging the base paths. The drill is completed when the first person in line has sprinted to the front of the line

**Coaches:** Keep the team drills fun and competitive, before you know it, everyone is huffing and puffing without complaint.

## **VIII. HOUSE RULES**

Apply to ALL leagues, regardless of individual league outside rules, or location of play.

### **1. General**

- a.** BYS On-line Registration opens in December for the following year's season (i.e. Dec. 2012 registration for 2013 season).
- i.** Head coaches and assistant coaches are solicited and selected by the Board from the registration process.
- ii.** In-person registration is held on two separate occasions. One at the Union Township Building and the other at the Boone Area Library in January.
- iii.** Advertisement of registration date and time is a result of direct emails, website posting, fliers in school folders, etc.
- iv.** Early registration closes on February 15th. Late registration continues until Board determines date based on league deadlines.
- v.** Registering with false information may result in withdrawal of playing opportunity.
- vi.** All registrants will play in age assigned level. Those wishing to "play up" may try out at a date associated with spring clinics.
- b.** These rules supersede any previous rules and regulations.
- c.** The head coach is responsible for the behavior of all of their players, assistant coaches, and team parents.
- d.** All rules put forth in the Official Baseball Rules are in force except for the changes outlined herein. All managers and coaches shall familiarize themselves with all rules for their league.
- e.** All Managers and Coaches shall learn and follow the BYS Code of Conduct and enforce with their team parents and all of their players.
- f.** There shall be no smoking, tobacco, alcohol, or drug usage at any BYS fields
- g.** Field usage other than scheduled practices/games shall only be approved by the President/Vice President or League Commissioner as appropriate. Field time shall be prioritized as follows:
  - i.** Scheduled Game
  - ii.** Rescheduled game
  - iii.** Tournament team practices
  - iv.** In-House practices.
- h.** No game shall be played during a lightning storm. All games shall stop and players put into dugouts or preferably placed in the care of their parents if lightning or thunder is present. 20 minutes of no lightning or thunder must pass before continuing play.
- i.** During a game, only the coaches, scorekeeper, and players are allowed in the dugout. Any players not required to be outside the dugout must remain in the dugout. Any batboys or base coaches under the age of 18 must wear a helmet.
- j.** General rules will consist of those of the Twin Valley Youth Baseball League and will be updated annually and reviewed by the BYS Board.
- k.** BYS Board meetings are the 4th Sunday of each month at the Birdsboro Community Memorial Center at 7pm. All are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

## **2. Equipment**

- a.** All male players must wear protective cup. Tee Ball may wear a soft cup; all other leagues must wear a hard cup.
- b.** While batting and running bases, helmets with dual earflaps must be worn. All helmets must be NOCSAE approved.
- c.** No jewelry may be worn during practice or games. Medical IDs are not considered jewelry.
- d.** Catchers must wear protective equipment (face mask minimum) when warming up pitchers. This is during games and practices.
- e.** No metal spikes unless noted within league specific rules.
- f.** Head coaches will pick up team equipment in March (as determined by BYS Field Coordinator) and be responsible for its care and return at seasons' end. Dates will be different for Spring, Summer Tournament Teams, Juniors Summer Teams, and for Fall Ball teams.
- i.** At equipment pickup, all equipment will be inventoried and signed for by the responsible party.
- ii.** All equipment will be returned, inventoried, and signed for by the responsible party.
- iii.** Equipment in need of repair or replacement will be noted and returned to BYS Board members for determination of its disposal.
- iv.** Appropriate keys to equipment sheds will be given to each head coach, which provides access to equipment at their league respective fields. These will need to be returned when equipment is returned.
- g.** Head coaches are responsible for the return of all equipment. If the head coach fails to return the BYS owned equipment, BYS will invoice the head coach for the replacement value of the equipment.

## **3. Important Forms – listed on the BYS website at [www.bysbaseball.org](http://www.bysbaseball.org)**

- a. Background check – MANDATORY** for all new coaches and assistant coaches. Application is to be completed and returned to President of BYS board for processing. We reserve the right to disallow volunteer participation based on results of the insurance mandated background checks.
- b. Code of Conduct – MANDATORY** for all coaches, and assistant coaches to read and sign. We have a zero tolerance policy on behavior, which will be enforced swiftly and regardless of document handed in to head coach.
- c. Medical Release Form - MANDATORY** for all players, coaches, and assistant coaches to complete and give to the head coach. No player may practice or evaluate at a tryout without the form handed in to the head coach or administrator of the evaluation / tryout. Head coach should maintain possession of the forms at all practices and games.

## **4. League Rules**

- a.** Are determined annually by the Board of TVYBL, of which the President of BYS is a member. Each set of league rules are board approved and not subject to change without majority approval of the TVYBL Board of Directors.

- b.** The respective League Commissioner is responsible for the explanation, the interpretation, and intent of each rule within each league.
- c.** If a situation does arise, requiring further explanation, it will be at the discretion and interpretation by the BYS Vice President
- d.** Each coach and assistant coach should be thoroughly familiar with the rules within each league coaching.
- i.** League rules are in place for a reason and not subject to open interpretation by coaches.
- ii.** League rules have playing time and batting requirements that must be adhered to.
- iii.** Violations of league rules are a violation of the BYS Code of Conduct, which will not be tolerated and may lead to suspension.
- e.** All League rules will be posted on the [www.bysbaseball.org](http://www.bysbaseball.org) website. Click on coaches section and the click TVYBL rules.

### **5. League Draft / Organizational Meetings**

- a.** League meetings will be held and run by the BYS President/Vice President beginning in late February / early March.
- b. Contact information** - All coaches need to provide all contact information to their league commissioner, to include accessible email addresses, cell phone number and work phone numbers.

**6. Field Preparation** – It is incumbent upon each coach and volunteer to groom each field prior to and after each practice and game. BYS does its very best to provide grooming to all fields within our organization.

### **7. Umpires (league appropriate)**

- i.** BYS utilizes uniformed umpires in the Juniors, A and B Leagues.
- ii.** These umpires are paid by the head coach of the home team.
- iii.** The umpire fees are provided to the head coaches by the BYS Treasurer
- iv.** One plate umpire is responsible for enforcing the playing rules for the entire game.
- v.** Umpire judgment calls are final and considered correct.
- vi.** Umpire rule interpretation decisions may be appropriately questioned. However, the umpire's resultant decision is final.
- vii.** Umpires are to be treated with respect by players, coaches, and parents.
- viii.** Anyone arguing with, yelling at, or otherwise disrespecting an umpire may be subject to sanctions by our Code of Conduct.

**1. BYS Summer Tournament Team selection.** When available BYS will form tournament teams in the Junior, A, B and Farm leagues

- i.** Players eligible for these teams will play on the age appropriate team based on age as of May 1.
- ii.** These teams play in 2-4 locally run competitive weekend tournaments between May and July.
- iii.** These teams will practice weekly in addition to their respective regular league team schedules.
- iv.** Every effort is made to limit the impact tournament teams have on our regular programs. This requires on-going communication

between the coaches of all teams impacted.

**v.** Tournament teams are self-funded through BYB assisted efforts to offset the cost for participating. There may be additional costs associated with Tournament Team participation for uniforms or other expenses as determined by the BYB Board.

**vi.** Player and family commitment is vital. BYB will identify the dates of the tournaments as soon as possible. The expectation is that a player selected for one of these teams has minimum attendance requirements for practices and tournaments.

**vii.** All Players will be invited to tournament tryouts.

**viii.** Coaching nominees will be solicited. The coaches will be approved and voted on by the BYB Board.

**ix.** Team selection will be based on overall skill and ability as well as roster size. The approved head coach will select their assistant coaches with the approval of the BYB Board.

### **7. Uniform process**

**a.** All equipment and uniform issues from players should be directed to the head coaches. The head coaches will communicate with the respective League Commissioner. The League Commissioner will then communicate with the Uniform Coordinator.

**b.** Uniforms will be distributed by the Head Coach prior to the first league game.

### **8. Field Preparation and Maintenance**

**a.** *Field preparation and maintenance is the responsibility of everyone!*

**b.** BYB is solely responsible for the care of Texas Field.

**c.** Other fields utilized by BYB Baseball are shared with other organizations. However proper care before and after utilization of these fields is expected by all coaches and players. Equipment is available at all fields to provide for proper field preparation and maintenance. If needed supplies are missing, the coach should contact the Field Coordinator, League Commissioner or any Board Member to ensure this is resolved.

**d.** Any field grooming questions or concerns should be directed in the following order; 1) Head Coach, 2) League Commissioner 3) Field Coordinator 4) BYB Board.

### **e. Pre-season preparation**

**i.** BYB coordinates a 'Field Day' prior to the start of the season requiring the attendance and participation of all coaches (date TBD each year by Equipment Coordinator);

**1.** To ensure all gang boxes/sheds at each field contain necessary equipment for the season (as determined by Field Coordinator and respective League Commissioner).

**2.** To ensure all fields have field grooming equipment.

**3.** To ensure each field has a functional and safely installed pitching mound and home plate.

**4.** To ensure all fields using drop-in bases have 'pegs' for the drop-in bases at distances dictated by TVYBL League Rules.

**5.** All volunteers (Commissioners and coaches) will take time during this day to rake all dirt areas on the baseball fields assigned to their respective leagues..

## **f. In Season Maintenance**

**i.** Head coaches, assistant coaches, and any available volunteers should use the field grooming rake(s) at each field and rake around all bases, home plate, and the pitching mound. **This should occur before and after EVERY practice and game.**

**1.** Equipment to line the fields will be in the appropriate storage area.

**2.** When lime or dirt needs to be replaced or added at a field, coaches should contact their League Commissioner or Field Coordinator

**3.** An inventory of lime and field dirt will be used and distributed at the discretion of the Field Coordinator.

## **g. End of Season Closing**

**i.** BYS President and Field Coordinator will coordinate with League Commissioners to ‘close’ all BYS fields at the end of the season (date and time TBD each season, usually late Oct/early Nov).

**ii.** Any durable equipment that could be stored at a field location in its shed until the following season without damage, may be kept in the shed at that field.

**iii.** Any equipment (such as field rakes) that could be damaged should be brought back to the Field Coordinator (date, time, and location TBD each season)

## **9. Snack Bar**

**a.** The snack bar is a source of income which allows BYS to maintain low registration fees and offer tournaments and other programs throughout the year

**b.** The Snack Bar is organized by the snack bar coordinator

**c.** Parents are expected to provide at least one shift during the season. Head coaches may be asked to obtain volunteers from their parents to help work the snackbar.

**d. No one under 13 years old is permitted to work or be inside the snack bar**