



RALLY CAP PROGRAM

"Rally Cap" Program
Baseball Canada's Official Initiation Program

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Rally Cap program. This booklet will give you all of the necessary information you need in order to deal with the 2005 pilots Baseball Canada is conducting across the country.

In order for this program to be successful in 2006, the pilot phase is very important to Baseball Canada. Therefore, each pilot organizer will be required to fill out and return the feedback form to our offices with comments on their experience dealing with the Rally Cap program.

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Goals

The goals of the Baseball Canada Rally Cap program are:

1. Create an environment in which children and adults can have fun with baseball
2. Teach baseball skills, rules and strategy to our players
3. Model and teach competitiveness with an emphasis on good sportsmanship
4. Promote increased self-esteem among Rally Cap children and adults

The Crucial Role of Coaches

The most important person in the Rally Cap program is the coach. The players look at him/her for instruction, encouragement and inspiration. Assistant coaches and parents take their cues from him/her. Our goals can only be met if coaches embrace them and work to achieve them.

How Coaches Can Help Achieve Rally Cap Goals

The following are some of the ways coaches can help achieve the Rally Cap goals:

1. Create an environment in which children and adults have fun with baseball
 - a. Encourage players often. Show by behavior and words that each child is an important member of the team regardless of whether they perform well. Recognize and encourage effort as well as results.
 - b. Give every player equal playing time.
 - c. Show your own enjoyment of the game to your players.

2. Teach baseball skills, rules and strategy to our players
 - a. Rely on positive reinforcement for things done correctly. Minimize negative emphasis on mistakes, which are required in order for learning to take place. Players can handle only so much negative feedback without becoming discouraged. Players will learn more, try harder and be more open to accepting criticism if they are praised often. Praise players in public and correct them in private.
 - b. Provide adequate repetition of teaching. Baseball is complicated. Lessons often need repeating before they are understood. Once players understand, they often need repeated practice before they can perform the expected behavior well.
 - c. Encourage players to set individual and team goals corresponding to their ability levels and then work to master the skills needed to achieve them.
 - d. Organize practices to maximize learning and minimize inactivity.

3. Model and teach competitiveness with an emphasis on good sportsmanship
 - a. Teach players aggressiveness and good sportsmanship at the same time.
 - b. Obey the rules and show respect for the umpire even when you disagree.
 - c. Acknowledge good plays by the opposing team in front of your players.
 - d. Always treat players on other teams as members of the community first and as opponents second.
Refrain from actions or words that undercut the self-esteem of players on other teams.

4. Promote increased self-esteem among Rally Cap children and adults
 - a. Encourage players whenever possible. Show by words and actions that you like and accept them regardless of how they perform. Adults often assume children can read their minds but children determine whether they are liked and accepted by adults by what the adults say and do.
 - b. Spend comparable instructional time with all players regardless of ability.
 - c. Encourage parents to become involved with the team.

STRUCTURE

The Rally Cap program was developed using existing initiation baseball programs as well as adding other ideas to create some new interest for kids.

In the Rally Cap baseball program, each team will consist of 6 players only, meaning more teams could be formed while more repetitions will allow players to improve their different skills.

In Rally Cap baseball, 3 teams will meet at the park at the same time. Two (2) teams will be playing a game while 1 team will be practicing in the outfield.

THE GAME

Each session will last 60 minutes. Two (2) teams will play an actual game while 1 team will be practicing drills in the outfield area. After each inning played (both teams bat), teams will rotate. The rotation will go as follows: Team on 1st base dugout moves to 3rd base dugout, Team on 3rd base dugout moves to the outfield, the outfield group moves to the 1st base dugout.

At each turn batting, all players will come to bat. The ½ inning will end when all six players have completed their turn.

Teams will score runs the same way they score runs during a regular game (i.e. touching home plate). Teams will also have the opportunity to earn points or runs on defense (you can therefore earn 6 points on defense every inning). You can earn a point every time you catch a fly ball and every time you throw a runner out at a base. To throw a runner out, you can throw to any base before the runner reaches 1st base. You can only run to 1st base to make an out.

VARIATIONS: You can develop a different point system to reward different defensive plays. (i.e. You can allow more points for fielding a ball followed by an accurate throw.)

There are no walks, no strikeouts, no base stealing and runners can advance only on batted balls.

With hitting being the most fun part of the game, the program has the purpose of helping the players hit the ball no matter what the skill level. This means all 3 formats can be used:

- Tee-ball
- Parent-pitcher
- Pitching machine

Each player can use the format they wish to use depending on their development stage. All 3 formats can then be used during a game.

Each hitter gets a maximum of 5 baseballs. If the 5th ball is not hit, a coach will roll the ball to allow the hitter to run the base paths and to allow the defense to field the ball and make plays.

When the last hitter (#6) hits the ball, the ball has to be thrown to home plate to get him out.

The batting order will change the next time a team comes to bat (first hitter becomes last, etc.)
Defensive positioning will also change the next time a team comes to bat.

VARIATIONS: You can actually use the volleyball rotation style and proceed with defensive rotation at each opposite batter.

THE PRACTICE

While in the outfield area, each team will practice different drills with respect to the following FUNdamentals:

Throwing
Receiving
Hitting
Base running
General knowledge

A coach's guide with drills is included to help coaches prepare the sessions. Three (3) stations with 2 players at each station will be developed. Players will rotate stations next time they come back to the outfield.

We highly recommend that you set up your equipment before the start of the session. We also want to avoid players bringing bats and balls. They only have to think about bringing their own glove.

THE RALLY CAP SYSTEM

During the season, the teams will be working on the 5 FUNdamentals of baseball. We recommend that twice during the summer, players have the opportunity to perform different tasks in order to earn a colored Baseball Canada Rally Cap. **You can also have less or more Rally Cap Days but we think that having official Rally Cap Day will create some interest. Please avoid awarding caps on a daily basis as we want to prepare the kids to perform on a special day.**

All players will go through stations where they will perform the different tasks. When a player succeeds at each task at a particular level, he/she gets the appropriate colored hat.

Rally Cap Program

Level Ability	White Cap	Grey Cap	Black Cap	Green Cap	Blue Cap	Red Cap
Throwing	1. Able to throw a ball at 5 feet	2. Able to throw 7 of 10 balls to partner at 10 feet	3. Able to throw the ball at 25 feet	4. Able to throw 9 of 15 in the strike zone from 20 feet	5. Able to throw the ball at a distance of 50 feet	6. From a fielding position, I can throw 10 of 15 balls to 1 st base from SS
Receiving	7. Able to catch a ball thrown at 5 feet	8. Able to field 10 of 15 ground balls from 15 feet	9. Able to catch 10 of 20 fly balls from a height of 15 feet	10. Able to catch 5/5 ground balls, 5/5 fly balls, 5/5 balls thrown by a partner from 15 feet	11. Able to catch 12/15 fly balls not directly hit to me (20 feet in front and 5-10 feet left and right)	12. Able to field 5/5 grounders to the left and 5/5 grounders to the right (regular distance)
Hitting	13. Able to hit a ball off a tee	14. Able to hit 10 of 15 balls off a tee	15. I can hit 7 of 15 balls thrown underhand	16. Able to hit 7/15 balls past the base paths, rolling or in the air	17. Able to hit 12/15 balls on the outfield grass	18. Able to hit 10/15 between cones.
Base running	19. Able to run to 1 st base in 12 seconds or less	20. Able to run to 1 st base in 8 seconds or less (60 feet)	21. Able to run home to 2 nd base in 14 seconds	22. Able to run around the bases in 27 seconds	23. Able to run to 1 st base in 5 seconds or less	24. I can run from 1 st to 3 rd in 11 seconds with a correct slide at 3 rd base.
General	25. I know my team's name, coach's name and names of 3 teammates	26. Able to name all of the position numbers	27. I know 3 different ways to get a player out	28. I know where to throw the ball when I field it	29. I know the difference between a hit and an error; a strike and a ball; safe and out; a single, double, triple and HR; fair and foul	30. I know where to position myself depending on the hitter

Rally Cap Program

1. **White Cap – Throwing**

With a partner or a coach standing in front of the player at a distance of 5 feet, ask the player to throw the ball. Accuracy is not important at this stage. We just want the player to be able to reach the distance. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

“HANDCUFFS”

Goal:

- Teach players the proper way to throw a ball

Description:

- Players throw a ball over their heads, catch it and apply the proper grip

Variation & Progression:

- Make them show the proper way one by one

Key Points:

- Always put two or three fingers on the ball
- Hold the ball in their fingers and not in the palm of the hand

2. **Grey Cap – Throwing**

With a partner or a coach standing in front of the kid at 10 feet, ask the player to throw the ball. The accuracy is not important at this stage. We just want the player to be able to reach the distance. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

“THE WHEEL”

Goal:

- Teach the proper mechanics when throwing a ball.

Description:

- In pairs, the players play catch using the proper mechanics

Variations & Progression:

- Players simulate the mechanics without a ball.
- Players use the three steps: 1) throwing arm goes down; 2) reach back; 3) lift arm to shoulder height
* Make sure they warm up

Key Points:

- Explain that the longer the arm circle, the faster the arm speed (small wheel vs. big wheel)
- Make sure they hold the ball right, facing away.

3. **Black Cap – Throwing**

With a partner or a coach standing in front of the kid at 25 feet, ask the player to throw the ball. The accuracy is not important at this stage. We just want the player to be able to reach the distance.

Here is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

CHAMP

Skills: catching, throwing

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Organization: 1 adult for every 2 players or players in partners if they are capable of throwing and catching the ball back and forth

Activity:

- every time a ball is caught by one of the two players, they get a letter of "CHAMP"
- partners can compete against other partners to see which pair can spell "CHAMP" first. Letters can be awarded for good throws back to the adult as well
- for variation, select other words players have selected (e.g. Barney, elephant, etc.)

4. **Green Cap – Throwing**

With a partner or a coach standing behind home plate, have the player position himself at 20 feet. In 15 attempts, the pitcher will have to throw 9 balls in the strike zone. Remember the strike zone is an imaginary area that is as wide as home plate and extends from the batter's chest to his knees.

Here is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

HOME RUN

Skills: throwing accuracy

Equipment: 2 targets, 4 balls

Organization: 4 groups of 3, with 2 groups of 3 at each target, which is hung on backstop. Mark out 4 lines at various distances from the target. Distances can be according to ability of the group. A high success rate is wanted.

Activity:

- players choose which distance they throw from in order to hit the target
- points are awarded as follows: single - 1 pt.; double - 2 pts.; triple - 3 pts.; HR - 4 pts.
- objective can be to see if each player can get more points on each consecutive throw or it can be made competitive with other groups, by totaling each group's points

5. Blue Cap – Throwing

With a partner or a coach standing in front of the kid at 50 feet, ask the player to throw the ball. The accuracy is not important at this stage. We just want the player to be able to reach the distance.

Here is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

SPACE SHUTTLE

Skills: throwing for distance, low level competition against each other

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Organization: 1 adult and 1 ball (space shuttle) for every 2 players; 1 marker for each player; Try to assign partners as close in ability as possible.

Activity:

- partners stand behind a line and see how far they can throw (send the ball into space)
- their adult leader can be in the area of the throw to mark the spot
- competition can be introduced by seeing if they can throw farther each time and by competing against each other

6. Red Cap – Throwing

With the player standing at the shortstop position, roll 15 balls to the player and have the player throw the ball to first base. At this stage you are looking at players who are able to throw the ball to 1st base without the ball bouncing and you are also looking at accuracy, as you want the player at 1st base to be able to keep 1 foot on the base to catch the ball. Fielding techniques are not important here. Also, if the player at 1st base drops the ball, you can then judge if this was a catchable ball.

Here is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

BIG FOOT

Skills: throwing, catching

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Organization: Partners start on lines, facing each other, approximately 10 feet apart.
One adult per pair.

Activity:

- players throw to each other (or adult throws if skill level is too low for accurate throws)
- every time they make a catch they move back one giant step
- the pair that gets the farthest apart while still able to catch the ball gets the BIG FOOT award

7. White Cap – Receiving

With a partner or a coach standing in front of the kid at five (5) feet, throw the ball underhand to the player. We are only looking at players who can receive the ball using both hands.

Here is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

“CATCH THE BALL LIKE AN EGG”

Goal:

- Help players absorb the ball when catching it

Description:

- Players in pairs, 6 feet apart
- Both knees on the ground
- No glove
- Toss the ball underhand

Variations & Progression:

- Use foam balls
- Use a bigger ball (soccer or volleyball)
- Use tennis balls
- After a while, continue the exercise standing up

Key Points:

- Reach out for the ball
- Bring hands towards the body when catching the ball

8. Grey Cap – Receiving

With the coach located at 15 feet in front of the player, roll 15 balls to the player. In order for the player to succeed, he will need to field 10 of the 15 balls. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

“THE CROCODILE”

Goal:

- Teach and reinforce the proper way to receive a ground ball

Description:

- Coach asks the players to simulate the proper way; The coach inspects each player

Variations & Progression:

- Simulate receiving the ball
- Coach rolls a ground ball
- In pairs, one player rolls the ball and the other receives it

- With and without their gloves

Key Points:

- Always put hands out like a crocodile's mouth
- "Pet" the ball when receiving it
- Feet and hands form a triangle

9. **Black Cap – Receiving**

With a partner or coach standing in front of the player at 10 feet, throw the ball in the air at approximately 15 feet. We only want players to catch the ball using both hands. To succeed, the player must catch 10 fly balls out of the 15 balls thrown. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

SKY BALL

Skills: proper use of glove and positioning when catching fly balls

Equipment: 1 ball and glove for each player

Organization: 1 adult for every 2 players

Activity: - coach will demonstrate progressions as in skills section
 - players will then practice from high tosses from an adult
 Self-competition can be included by:
 1) Seeing if they can catch a higher one each time
 2) How many consecutive catches can they make?

10. **Green Cap – Receiving**

With a partner or a coach standing in front of the player at 15 feet, the player will receive 5 ground balls, 5 fly balls and 5 direct balls. In all cases, the player will have to catch all of them. Same procedures as previous drills. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

"ALL MESSED-UP"

Goal:

- Help players catch the ball from every direction

Description:

- In pairs with no gloves, face each other about 6 feet apart
- Stationary; players throw the ball up in the air, left, right and below the waist; the receiving player must catch it without moving their feet

Variations & Progression:

- Use gloves

- Use tennis balls
- Use foam balls

Key Points:

- Put thumbs together when catching balls chest high or higher to the left and right
- Put pinkies together when catching balls below the waist
- Catch the ball using both hands

11. Blue Cap – Receiving

With a partner or a coach standing in front of the player at 20 feet, throw the ball in the air at approximately 5-10 feet to the player's left and to the player's right. The objective is for the player to catch 12 fly balls out of the 15 balls thrown. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

FIELD 3

Skills: hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

Equipment: 2 bats, 2 balls, 2 sets of catcher's equipment, 2 helmets, 2 sets of bases

Organization: 2 teams of 6 - 1 batter, 1 catcher, the rest are fielders; 2 separate activity areas set up a safe distance apart; 1 adult pitcher in each area for each group of 6; Set up bases on diamond.

Activity:

- one batter at a time bats off an adult pitcher, with one player in catching equipment
- when a fielder has successfully fielded 3 groundballs or has caught 1 fly ball, he/she becomes the batter
- players rotate positions
- make sure all players get an opportunity to bat and catch

12. Red Cap – Receiving

With a partner or a coach standing at home plate, roll or hit the ball on the ground at approximately 5-10 feet to the player's left and to the player's right. The objective is for the player to catch 5 out of 5 grounders to the left and 5 out of 5 grounders to the right. If the coach is not good using the bat, simply roll the ball. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

“THE GUARDIAN”

Goal:

- Teach players a safe way to field a ground ball

Description:

- At coaches signal, the players simulate the action without a ball

Variations & Progression:

- Make them move in on a stationary ball
- The coach rolls a ball and the players field the ball
- The coach rolls the ball, the players field and throw the ball

Key Points:

- Put one knee on the ground
- Upper body must be behind the ball
- Always face the ball

13. White Cap – Hitting

With a partner or a coach standing beside the player, simply ask the player to hit the ball off the tee. The distance is not important here as we are only looking for contact. Make sure you place the tee in the front of home plate and NOT directly on home plate. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

“BETWEEN THE TWO”

Goal:

- Introduce them to the perfect batting stance

Description:

- Each player has a bat in his/her hands
- Copy every different position the coach takes
- Every time the coach asks the players how to position themselves, they answer: “Between the two”

Variations & Progression:

- Close feet vs. wide feet (wide vs. compact stance)
- Straight legs vs. bent legs
- High hands vs. low hands
- Bat pointing straight up vs. laying on shoulder

Key Points:

- Feet must be wider than shoulders

14. Grey Cap – Hitting

With a partner or a coach standing beside the player, simply ask the player to hit the ball off the tee. The distance is not important here as we are only looking for contact in 10 of 15 attempts. Make sure you place the tee in front of home plate and NOT directly on home plate. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

500

Skills: hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

Equipment: 2 bats, 4 balls

Organization: 2 groups of 6 each with their own activity area. 1 batter, while the other 5 players field. The other group does the same.

Activity:

- batter will bat off a T or via adult-pitch
- each batter gets 10 swings or hits
- fielder can get points by fielding the ball
 - * 100 for caught fly
 - * 50 for one bouncer
 - * 25 for a grounder

15. Black Cap – Hitting

With a partner or a coach standing in at 45 degrees from the player, simply ask the player to hit the ball thrown underhand. The distance is not important here as we are looking for contact in 7 out of 15 attempts. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

Soft toss

Objective:

- Gives players an opportunity to work on specific areas of their swing

Description:

- Players can do this in pairs or in groups of three (each group needs 6-10 baseballs)
- Have players find an area next to a screened fence or the side of a batting cage
- Get one player to kneel in front and to the side of the hitter and toss a ball with little or no arc in front of them
- After the hitter has had 10-15 quality swings, get the players to switch

Teaching Tips / Progressions:

- The pitcher should keep the delivery consistent so the hitter can find his/her timing
- Make sure the hitter is striding and pivoting correctly, rotating hips, and throwing his/her hands straight to the ball

16. Green Cap – Hitting

With a coach standing in front of the player at 20 feet and throwing overhand from his knees, simply ask the player to hit the ball. The ball has to reach the outfield portion, rolling or in the air. This has to be done 7 times out of 15 attempts. Here is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

Drill: Wiffle BP**Objective:**

- This is a fun drill that allows players to get a lot of swings in a very short period of time

Description:

- This drill can include up to 15 players
- Players are usually set up as follows; 2 players hitting, 2 players catching behind the hitters, 1 player feeding tennis balls to the coach, and the rest in the field gathering balls
- Players rotate (in pairs) from the field, to catching behind the hitters, to hitting, and finally back to the field
- After coach has thrown a ball to one hitter, he/she immediately throws the next pitch to the other hitter
- Players rotate after each group has had 10-15 quality swings

Teaching Tips / Progressions:

- The coach or pitcher should concentrate on giving the batters good pitches to hit
- Even though an "L-Screen" is not mandatory, it is important for the coach to try and turn away from the pitch after he/she has delivered it
- It is sometimes a good idea to have a pre-set hitting order to avoid confusion between players over who will be the next group to hit

17. Blue Cap – Hitting

With a coach standing in front of the player at 30 feet and throwing overhand, simply ask the player to hit the ball. The ball has to reach the outfield portion, rolling or in the air. This has to be done 12 times out of 15 attempts. Below is a drill you can use to prepare your players for this task:

Raquet BP**Objective:**

- This is a fun drill that gets young players used to hitting / striking a moving object
- It is a simple drill that is designed to develop hand-eye coordination and increase confidence

Description:

- This drill is very similar to wiffle batting practice and can include up to 15 players
- Players are usually set up as follows; 2 players hitting, 2 players catching behind the hitters, 1 player feeding tennis balls to the coach and the rest in the field gathering balls
- Note: video shows example of 1-man hitting rotation only (see diagram for full illustration)
- Players rotate (in pairs) from the field, to catching behind the hitters, to hitting, and finally back to the field
- After coach has thrown a ball to one hitter, he/she immediately throws the next pitch to the other hitter
- Players rotate after each group has had 10-15 quality swings

Teaching Tips / Progressions:

- The coach or pitcher should concentrate on giving the batters good pitches to hit
- Have the player who is feeding the coach stand directly behind the coach to avoid getting hit by a line drive
- Even though an "L-Screen" is not mandatory, it is important for the coach to try and turn away from the pitch after he/she has delivered it
- If one game has both left- and right-handed hitters, make sure they are positioned as far apart as possible to avoid injury (see picture above)
- It is sometimes a good idea to have a pre-set hitting order to avoid confusion over which batters will be the next group to hit

18. Red Cap – Hitting

You will need 4 cones for this drill. Cones #1 and #2 will be placed at shortstop at 15 feet apart while cones #3 and #4 will be placed between 1st and 2nd base at 15 feet apart. With a coach standing in front of the player at 30 feet and throwing overhand, simply ask the player to hit the ball. On the first 5 balls thrown, 3 have to be hit between cones at shortstop. On the next 5 balls, 3 have to be hit between cones in the middle and on last 5 balls, 3 have to be hit between cones between the 1st and 2nd base area. The ball has to reach the outfield portion, rolling or in the air.

White Cap – Base running

With a stopwatch, coach is standing down the 1st base line. Player takes a position in the batter's box. With a ball standing on a tee, the player takes a full swing and start running towards first base. The coach starts timing on contact and stops timing when the player touches 1st base. To be successful, the player has to run the distance in 12 seconds or less. (distance of 60 feet)

"THE GAZELLE"

Goal:

- Teach and help players to use the right technique to get out of the batter's box

Description:

- Player takes a swing with a bat

Variations & Progression:

- Stimulate a swing with a foam or aluminum bat
- Hit a badminton birdie
- Hit a practice ball (foam or wiffle ball)
- Hit object and run to first base

Key Points:

- Players use their batting stance and take a swing
- Don't look at the ball after it is hit
- Never throw the bat
- Right-handed batters' first step is with the right foot and left-handed batters' first step is with the left foot

19. Grey Cap – Base running

With a stopwatch, the coach is standing down the 1st base line. The player takes a position in the batter's box. With a ball standing on a tee, the player takes a full swing and starts running towards first base. The coach starts timing on contact and stops timing when the player touches 1st base. To be successful, the player has to run the distance in 8 seconds or less. (distance of 60 feet)

GIMME 5

Skills: running through 1B, speed development

Equipment: 4 bases

Organization: Put bases down 30'-40' from players; 4 groups of 3

Give "high 5," return to touch bag, say "green light" for the next player to leave

Activity: - players, in turn, take a swing at an imaginary ball, drop bat, run as fast as possible past their base, give coach "high 5," return to base as if running to 2B
- make sure players are running full speed across the bag, slowing down only after touching it

20. Black Cap – Base running

With a stopwatch, coach is standing at 2nd base. The player takes a position in the batter's box. With a ball standing on a tee, the player takes a full swing and starts running towards first base. He then rounds 1st base and goes to 2nd base. The coach starts timing on contact and stops timing when the player touches 2nd base. To be successful, player has to run the distance in 14 seconds or less.

- 10 min. **KILL THE MOSQUITO**
Skills: Rounding 1B
Equipment: 4 bases
Organization: Put bases down in proper locations on diamond, with 3 players at each one. Pretend there is a mosquito on the INSIDE corner of each base.
Activity: - players, in turn, take a swing at an imaginary ball, drop the bat, run as fast as possible to the next base, stepping on the "mosquito" as they round the base
 - Players then wait their turn at the base they just rounded
 - remind players it will be easier to step on the "mosquito" if they run a little to the outside of the base line as they approach the base
 - It would be helpful to put some markers down for them to go around as shown in the diagram

21. **Green Cap – Base running**

With a stopwatch, the coach is standing at home plate. The player takes a position in the batter's box. With a ball standing on a tee, the player takes a full swing and starts running towards first base. He then rounds 1st base, 2nd base and 3rd base before returning home. The coach starts time on contact and stops time when the player touches home plate. To be successful, the player has to run the distance in 27 seconds or less.

GOTCHA

- Skills: base running, determination
Equipment: 4 bases
Organization: 4 groups of 3 with 3 players at each base. Set up bases in diamond formation 20–30 feet apart.
Activity: - on "Go," one player from each group starts running around the bases
 - objective is to run past the person ahead of you
 - score 1 point for your team for every player passed
 - run for a set period of time (15-30 seconds)

22. **Blue Cap – Base running**

With a stopwatch, the coach is standing down the 1st base line. The player takes a position in the batter's box. With a ball standing on a tee, the player takes a full swing and start running towards 1st base. The coach starts timing on contact and stops timing when the player touches 1st base. To be successful, the player has to run the distance in 5 seconds or less. (distance of 60 feet)

- 10 min. **SMASH**
Skills: getting out of the box
Equipment: ball gloves, 6 carpet home plates
Organization: Ball gloves are placed on the ground across from where players are standing along the 3rd base line, to simulate where 1B would be for each batter. Draw a home plate (or use carpet plates) on the ground along the 3B line for each pair of players.
Activity: - on verbal signal "Hit," all players swing at an imaginary ball, then pivots on lead foot and runs toward their glove (1B). Coaches should emphasize getting out of box quickly, with power, driving the arms rather than the correct pivot
 - they then return to behind their plate while their partner takes his/her turn

23. Red Cap – Base running

With a stopwatch, the coach is standing down the 3rd base line. The player takes a position at 1st base keeping only one foot on the base. When the player is ready, the coach starts timing on the first move and stops timing when the player reaches 3rd base. To be successful, the player has to run the distance in 11 seconds or less with a correct slide at 3rd base using the proper criteria: bend leg to height of calf, leg extended in the air, hands in the air, weight on the butt, upper body raised. Below is a drill to prepare players:

Sliding Mat

Objective:

- Improve the technique of sliding into bases

Description:

- Place the mat into an open field and have the players slide into the mat
- Have players line up in single file approximately 10 to 15 feet away
- Have players run and complete the slide, one player at a time

Teaching Tips / Progressions:

For all sliding techniques, the coach can shorten the "run up" distance to slow the players down and focus on technique of the slide, then slowly increase the speed of the players after they feel more comfortable.

- Bent Leg Slide:
 - Make sure the players have their hands in the air to avoid injury.
 - Stay low throughout the approach of the slide in order to decrease the amount of impact with the ground.

24. White Cap – General

By using the report card attached with this document, ask the player to fill out the portion in relation to his team. Below is a drill to prepare your players:

Around the horn

Have the players standing in a circle. Use an odd number of players if necessary. The coach gives a ball to one player. At the start signal, the player throws the ball underhand to the second player to his right. While throwing the ball, he must say the name of the player catching the ball. Once the players become comfortable with 1 ball, the coach will add a second, third and fourth ball. See how many balls they can handle at the same time.

25. Grey Cap – General

By using the report card attached with this document, ask the player to fill out the portion in relation to this item. Here is a drill to prepare your players:

"NAMES & NUMBERS"

Goal:

- Teach the players the name and number of the positions

Description:

- Name each position and their number
- Give each player a name and ask them to go to the corresponding position

Variations & Progression:

- Start them off the pitching mound
- Write position numbers on balls, put the balls in a bag, make them draw a ball and take it to the corresponding position

Key Points:

- 1 = pitcher
- 2 = catcher
- 3 = first base
- 4 = second base
- 5 = third base
- 6 = shortstop
- 7 = left-field
- 8 = center-field
- 9 = right-field

26. Black Cap – General

By using the report card attached with this document, ask the player to fill out the portion in relation to this item. Below is a drill to prepare your players:

“OUT!!”

Goal:

- Teach and explain to the players how to make an out

Description:

- Play a game and ask players to touch the runners to make an out

Variations & Progression:

- Make a couple of teams and play mini-games using only one base
- Rotate the teams to change match-ups

Key Point:

Touch the runner with the ball before he/she touches the base

27. Green Cap – General

By using the report card attached with this document, ask the player to fill out the portion in relation to this item. Below is a drill to prepare your players:

BUCKET BALL

Skills: throwing, fielding, base running, cooperation, and teamwork

Equipment: 2 balls, 4 bases, helmet, pail or bag

Organization: 2 teams of 6 - one on offence - one on defense. The defensive team has a catcher at home plate and the others at appropriate locations. The offensive team has 1 player to THROW from home plate and others waiting their turn from a safe distance.

- Activity:
- offensive "batter" throws out 2 balls, at one time in quick succession and runs around the bases trying to make it home before the fielding team gets both balls in a pail
 - if the ball is caught, the "batter" is out
 - fielders may NOT run with the ball; It must be thrown Home; Relay the ball if necessary
 - remind players to make sure the catcher is looking; An adult may have to help at home

28. Blue Cap – General

BALL/STRIKE

A strike is when a batter swings and misses at a pitch or doesn't swing at a pitch that goes through the strike zone. It also counts as a strike if a batter hits a pitched ball into foul territory (see 'The Field'). This is called a foul ball.

A ball, the opposite of a strike, is a pitch that does not go through the strike zone, and that the batter chooses not to swing at.

The strike zone is an imaginary area that is as wide as home plate and extends from the batter's chest to his knees. To get a strikeout, the pitcher must throw 3 strikes to the batter before he throws 4 balls. However, a batter can never strike out (be given a 3rd strike) on a foul ball. If a batter gets 4 balls before he gets 3 strikes that is called a "walk" and the batter automatically goes to 1st base.

SINGLE/DOUBLE/TRIPLE/HOME RUN

A hit that gets a batter to 1st base is called a "single." If the batter makes it to 2nd base safely on a hit it is called a "double." And, if he makes it to 3rd base safely it is called a "triple." Doubles and triples usually make it past the outfielders, allowing the batter to advance around the bases more easily. Sometimes, a batter makes it around all 3 bases and back to home plate in one attempt. Getting around all the bases with one hit is called a "home run."

FAIR/FOUL BALL

Together the infield and outfield make up what is known as "fair" territory. Batters want to hit the ball into this area as it allows them to start running the bases (and hopefully end up scoring a run for their team). Straight lines drawn on the field from home plate to the outfield fence are known as foul lines and they separate fair territory from foul territory. If a batter hits a ball behind or outside of fair territory it is called a "foul" ball. A batter cannot start running the bases on a foul ball.

HIT/ERROR

A hit is a special term in baseball and does not refer to just any batted ball. For a batter to get a hit he must bat the ball into fair territory and get on base safely.

When a batter reaches base when a defensive player cannot field the ball to have him/her out at 1st base, it is called an "error."

29. Red Cap – General

The defensive positioning will vary depending on who comes up to the plate. For example, a weak left-handed will allow the players on the left side of the field to play in. The opposite is true when a weak right-handed batter comes up. The players will have to cover more ground when a power hitter comes up to the plate. The defense will also have to shift to the right or left depending of the hitters' tendencies.

"Rally Cap" Program
Baseball Canada's Official Initiation Program

Feedback Form

Province: _____ Association: _____

Name of contact person: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail: _____

Number of players involved in the pilot: _____

"Rally Cap" Program

Baseball Canada's Official Initiation Program

Do you believe the program answers the players' needs at the initiation level?

Yes ___ No ___

Comments: _____

Do you believe the different levels of caps include appropriate tasks? Were they attainable?

Yes ___ No ___

Comments: _____

Were the drills provided helpful?

Yes ___ No ___

Comments: _____

Did you receive any comments from the parents and players who have participated in the program?

Yes ___ No ___

Comments: _____

Do you have suggestions that would make this program better in 2006?

Yes ___ No ___

Comments: _____

Please return to Baseball Canada by fax at 613-748-5767 once you have completed the program.