



WESTGATE-WESTSIDE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
2007
SHETLAND COACHES CLINIC

Overview

- Watch other teams practice, go to clinics, check out information on the web, ask questions!! There are always things to learn and ways to do things better. Share ideas. Help each other out at these early ages to develop the players.
- Keep it fun!!
- Don't yell if a player commits an error. Everyone does, particularly at this age. Use positive reinforcement. However, don't accept lack of hustle!!!
- Teach sportsmanship.
- Use positive comment, where to improve, positive comment
- Repetition is the key. You need to constantly reinforce the fundamentals at an early age so that it becomes habit, whether that is proper form for throwing, ready position, dugout conduct. This is the age where the foundation is laid for future success and enjoyment of the game.
- 3 Keys to Baseball
 - Listen with your eyes
 - Be quiet, when coach is talking everyone is listening
 - Hustle
- Coaches, be visual, demonstrate, use descriptive terms (e.g., alligator jaws, elephant trunk, eagle position, etc.)
- Attention Getters (Coach says "Ballgame" players respond with "Focus")
- Discipline – Taking away a time at bat is one method to refocus the team/players. Need to inform them of the policy and then follow through!

Basic Terminology to Teach

- Bases (Home, 1st, 2nd, 3rd)
- Positions (Catcher; Pitcher; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd basemen; shortstop; left-, right, and center-fielders)
- What is an "out" and what is "safe"
- Outs in an inning
- Balls in a walk
- Strikes in an out
- Grounder, pop fly, line drive
- Tag out and force out
- Foul ball
- Dugout
- Baseline

Dugout Decorum

- It is essential that the team parent (and helper or helpers) organize the dugout and maintain order. At this age, several parent helpers in the dugout are beneficial.
- Players should not be allowed to leave the dugout except to go to the bathroom. You don't want players to get into the habit of leaving the dugout to talk to parents, fool around, etc.
- Team parent should have the players sit in the proper batting order and have helmets on and be ready for the bat. This helps speed play, which is essential to keep player interest.
- After a player has batted, he/she should put their baseball cap back on and have their glove in their hand and be ready to take the field. This also helps to speed play.

Warm-Ups

- Warm Up Run
 - Jog around the bases (start practice with), call the name of the base as they touch it.
- Stretching (get in a good habit early)
 - Head to feet
 - Neck Rolls
 - Arm Circles (Big, little, forward, back)
 - Shoulder pulls
 - Wrist stretch
 - Trunk rotations
 - One leg lat stretches
 - Toe touches
 - Sitting, pull in legs
 - Jumping jacks
- Throwing
 - Wrist flicks
 - Form Throwing (Ball-Down-Back-Up-Throw)
(at this age, have players throw to coaches. Depending on the number of assistants, can break into lines and have one line do grounders, "easy pop" flies, etc. I don't have them throw to each other because of control problems both throwing and receiving)
- Other Running
 - Run through 1st (to coach and/or grass)
 - Run to 1st races
 - Run to 1st relay races
 - Ball in glove races
 - Agility drill (four corner – spring forward, shuffle, back pedal, shuffle) Variations include karaoke, run diagonally

Proper Fielding Positions

- Thinking position (form glove, know situation)
 - How Many Outs?
 - What is the Pitch Count (balls and strikes)?
 - Where is the Lead Runner, Other Runners?
 - Where are the Force Outs and Tag outs?
 - What do I do if I get a
 - Grounder, Line Drive, Pop Fly
 - What do I do if **Someone Else** gets a
 - Grounder, Line Drive, Pop Fly
- **Step-Step to Baseball Ready Position when pitcher starts motion**
 - Athletic stance, knees bent, glove about waist high with thumbs up
- Fielding Position
- Throwing Power Position

Proper Fielding Technique

- Two hands
- Catch with chest (move your feet, don't reach)
 - Demonstrate range of motion
 - Above waist (thumb to thumb)
 - Below waist (pinky to pinky)
- Fly-balls, call the ball
- Grounders, get the butt down and reach out



Throwing

Grip:

- First and foremost thing to address w/ young kids. All kids should hold the ball using a 4-seam grip. This will lead to a straighter, more accurate throw. Good cues to use are to tell them to hold the ball “across the ‘C’”. If hands are too little, it’s OK let them use more than 2 fingers.
- The ball should be held loosely in the fingers, not in the palm (again, with small hands this may be difficult)

Wrist Flicks:

- One knee position
- Knee out in front, straight back
- Throwing elbow above shoulder
Supported by glove
- Flick the ball using wrist and forearm



Power Position and Motion:

- Power Position (ball, down, back, up, throw)
- Throw to the target, what makes a good target?
- Throw “through” the target, not to it.
- Follow the ball to the target
- Don’t push the ball

Power Position and Motion



Ball



Down



Back



Up

Base Running

All coaches (both teams) should emphasize proper base running. (Defensive team coaches should instruct base runners when hitting team coaches are not available)

- Emphasize running through first (run to a coach and/or the grass)
- Proper stance on the base (do not let them stand on the base with both feet)
- Grounder-run (in most cases, get them in the habit)
- Flyball, wait to see if it is caught before running (won't have too many flyballs at this age)

Batting

- General
 - No player holds a bat in the dugout
 - Bats are not picked up until a coach tells the player to pick it up
 - Bats are carried at the side, no swinging.
 - Proper bat size – lighter and shorter is better at this age
 - Some rules of thumb for proper bat weight/size
 - See attached chart
 - Weight, hold bat out at side and does not waiver after 10 seconds
 - Length, from center of chest to palm of hand. Longer-too long, Shorter-too short
- Batting ready stance (develop a routine that they follow each time)
 - Check feet, slightly wider than shoulder width apart, no “chicken feet”
 - Raise bat, put on shoulder and lift to proper position (hands should be near shoulder level and close to the shoulder-not extended too far out in front of their body. Arms at 90 degrees and down with the back elbow away from body slightly)
 - Barrel pointed up, knob at the plate
 - Knees slightly bent
 - Players needs to be loose, not stiff, have them move/sway a little
- Bat grip
 - Bat in the fingers not in the palm
 - Point guns to check grip
 - Loose grip
- Batting Motion
 - Batting ready position (proper stance as above)
 - Batting power position (small stride, bat back, head stays the same)
 - Swing with hands first, palm up, palm down at point of contact
 - Chin over belt buckle
 - “Squish the bug” with the back foot (rotate the hips).

The batting team is responsible for monitoring the home plate area to ensure kids are swinging the bat safely. The home plate monitor should be an adult. Teach the kids not to throw the bats: correcting this tendency early makes a world of difference when the kids are older. (If player throws the bat, put a hat on the ground down the first base line and have them drop the bat on the hat after they have hit the ball.

Tee Position (place the tee on home plate and put ball so that it is no higher than belt level of the player. Players front foot should be even with the tee)

Catching (Pinto Level, No Catchers at Shetland)

- Alternate players
- Proper distance behind the plate (tendency to sit too far back)
- Emphasis proper squat position
- Big target for the pitcher
- Protect throwing hand by placing behind knee
- Don't reach out to catch the ball
- Use a protective cup

Pitching (Pinto Level)

- Alternate players
- Use the stretch position to limit movements
- Emphasize power position
- Don't stand on the rubber, stand next to it-touching it
- Don't stand in a hole, fill it in

Practice and Drills

Practice Stations Use multiple stations during a practice to keep as many players engaged as possible. For example, you can have batting station, an infield/grounder station, and an outfield/fly ball station going at once. Recruit parents to help at the stations! Do not utilize drills where only 1 player is engaged and the rest are standing around. A typical example of this is a batting practice where one player is hitting and the rest are in the field. A better approach is using several batting stations at once such as a tee station, soft toss station, and live pitch station. This way many players are involved at the same time.

Fielding Positions:

- Thinking (have them form glove while in thinking position)
- Step Step to Baseball Ready
 - toss a grounder, fly ball, etc.
- Throwing Power Position
 - throw
 - follow ball to the target

One Knee Throwing-Wrist Flicks

- Step them through this for five or six tosses

One Knee Power Position Throwing-Sequence Throws

- Ball
- Down
- Back
- Up
- Follow Through (Chicken wing, extend)

Standing Power Position Sequence Throws (with and without back leg follow through)

- Ball
- Down
- Back
- Up
- Follow Through (Chicken wing, extend)

Grounder Knock-out Drill

- Kids in a circle without gloves
- roll balls to each other and field grounders
- if balls get though, that player is out
- continue until a winner or there are 3 or 4 players left

Grounders – Alligator jaws

- player at short stop
- player at 1st base
- Coach about ten feet from SS, rolls soft grounders to player (straight, left, right)
- Player fields ball properly
- Goes to power position
- Coach tells to throw after player gets to proper power position.
- Throws to first and follows ball several steps (can have a player at 1st base to get used to having the ball thrown that way, also have a coach at 1st to field pass balls to keep the drill moving at a fast pace. Don't let the kids run after them. Use a bunch of balls and place them in a bucket 1st.)

Batting Drills

- tee
- soft toss
- short toss
- colored/numbered balls (call the color and/or number)