

# timbits<sup>®</sup>

## SOFTBALL



### U7 LESSON PLANS

#### Session #1 ► Focus: Teamwork

— Warm Up —

#### BLOB TAG

**Learning Objective:** Spatial awareness, cooperation, teamwork, running (forward, backwards, starting/stopping), agility, multidirectional movement, endurance.

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** N/A

#### How to:

- Mark out boundaries of the playing area. One player is chosen to be “it” (beginning Blob) and the rest scatter
- On “GO” the Blob chases, trying to tag others
- Tagged players link arms by hooking together at elbows with the Blob
- When Blob becomes 3, only outside players can tag
- When Blob becomes 4, split to make 2 Mini-Blobs

#### Tips/Modifications:

If you have a larger group of children, start with more than one Blob.

#### Questions:

When was it easier to tag another player? With a bigger or smaller Blob?



**GETTING TO KNOW YOU**

**Learning Objective:** Catching, throwing, getting to know teammates

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 4 players

**How to:**

- 3 groups of 4, with each group positioned in a square formation
- Distance apart will be according to ability
- As players throw the ball to a teammate in their square, they call out their own name
- On second or third round, they call their own name and the name of the player who is to receive the ball
- Change 2 people in groups at a time, so they get to know players in other groups as well

**Questions:**

Ask for a volunteer to see if they remembered everyone's name.

~ *Main Activities* ~

**DIAMOND ORIENTATION**

**Learning Objective:** Diamond layout, softball terms

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Equipment:** Bases in proper field set up

**How to:**

- Put 1 adult in charge of 2 players. Make sure players know the name of their partner and the adult in charge, as well as the coach's name
- Familiarize players with diamond layout by walking them around and showing them where Pitcher, Catcher, 1<sup>st</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base, Short Stop, Left Field, Right Field and Center Field are located. Include talking about home plate
- Have adult helpers on the field to assist in all the activities
- Start players at home plate showing where the batter stands to hit

- Start players in a group at home plate, yell out a position and players have run to that area on the field
- Demonstrate as you speak
- Let players pretend to hit and run to 1st base, run to 2nd base, run to 3rd base and run back to home plate

**Tips/Modifications:**

- Have shapes or different markers to signify each position – this will help children remember more easily.
- Have children run to each position to keep them active and moving.

**Questions:**

What was the easiest position to get to? Which was the hardest?  
Which is your favourite position so far?

**CHAMP**

**Learning Objective:** Catching, throwing

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** Parent Volunteers, 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- 1 adult for every 2 players or players in partners if they can throw and catching the ball back and forth
- Every time the ball is caught by one of the pair, they get a letter of “CHAMP” (or any word you choose – could be shorter for younger kids (BALL) or more difficult if needed).
- 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

**Tips/Modifications:**

- For variation have players select their own words (i.e. superstar, elephant, etc.)
- Coaches demonstrate proper receiving position and good throwing mechanics before starting.

**OVER THE RAINBOW**

**Learning Objective:** Balls, helmets

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** Grip and wrist/finger coordination

**How to:**

- Line players up in lines with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves
- Once the player is able to catch their own ball – proceed to full “Over the Rainbow” and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

**Tips/Modifications:**

Coaches should make sure the players are spinning the ball, working on wrist snaps.

**Questions:**

Were you able to spin the ball? How fast was it spinning?

**IN-COMING**

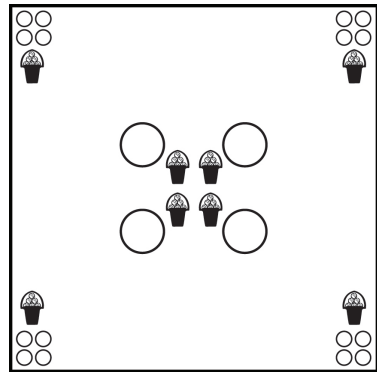
**Learning Objective:** Throwing, fielding, running

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 Hula hoops, 8 buckets, balls

**How to:**

- Split into groups of four
- Have one group of four in each corner of a large square
- In the center of the square have four hula hoops and four buckets of balls, and place a bucket in each corner of the large square
- One player from each corner runs to the center grabs a ball from their bucket and steps in the hula hoop
- Once in the hula hoop, they throw the ball to their team members, one player fields the ball and then passes it to the two other players
- The last person with the ball drops the ball in the corner bucket, when they drop the ball in the bucket the player in the center runs back to their corner and another teammate runs to the center until all team members have ran from the center



**Questions:** Did this activity require teamwork?

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~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.

## Session #2 **Focus: Quickness and Agility**

~ Warm Up ~

### PARTNER TAG

**Learning Objective:** Running, chasing

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** Pylons/markers for designating playing area

#### How to:

- Partners face each other from opposite ends of designated playing area
- On “GO”, one partner tries to tag the other
- When the partner is tagged, the roles are reversed
- After being tagged, the player performs a task (i.e. 3 jumping jacks) to give the other player time to get away

#### Tips/Modifications:

Have the players perform various fundamental movement skills to give the other time to move away (jumping jacks, hopping on one foot, etc).

### BUNNIES & BULLFROGS

**Learning Objective:** Hopping, body awareness

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** N/A

#### How to:

- Make a center line between 2 end lines.
- 2 teams of 6: 1 team of bunnies and 1 team of bullfrogs. Teams lie down head to head, opposite each other on center line.
- If the coach calls “bullfrogs”, frogs get up and hop back to their swamp (end line) while bunnies get up and bunny hop after them



- If a bunny tags a bullfrog before the frog reaches the swamp, the bullfrog becomes a bunny
- If coach calls “bunnies” they turn and hop to their end line while the bullfrogs hop after them
- Coach could surprise by calling “bears” or “birds”. If they rise on a false name they change sides

~ *Main Activities* ~

**GIMME 5**

**Learning Objective:** Running through 1<sup>st</sup> base and speed development

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 bases, bat, hula hoop, tee/ball (optional)

**How to:**

- Put bases down 30' – 40' from players.
- Form 4 groups of 3
- 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 2nd base, touch base and shout “GREEN LIGHT” to signal next player to leave
- Make sure players are running full speed across the bag, slowing down only after touching it

**Tips/Modifications:**

- This activity can be set up in the outfield
- An easy way to teach kids where to drop the bat is to use a hula hoop as a visual reminder.
- To make this more game like, dependent on the development of the children you can have them hit off a tee.



## PIP SQUEAK & WILBUR

**Learning Objective:** Base running, running, multi-directional speed

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 balls, 4 bases

**How to:**

- 4 groups of 3, one group at each base
- Bases are set up in diamond formation
- Players in each group are named PIP, SQUEAK or WILBUR
- 4 balls placed at pitcher plate
- When the coach calls out a name (PIP, SQUEAK, or WILBUR), the player with that name runs around the bases
- When (s)he touches the base they started at, (s)he runs to the center to pick up a ball and brings it back to the group
- Balls are returned to the center for the next person
- Score a point for the 1st person back to their starting base

## PARTNER THROWS

**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- Partners stand opposite each other at a distance commensurate with ability
- Partners throw ball back and forth
- Various goals can be set (i.e. how many consecutive throws and catches without a miss; how many throws in specified time (30 sec.); throw high balls; grounders; side to side; etc.)

**Tips/Modifications:**

Coaches should demonstrate good throwing and receiving mechanics before starting.

**Questions:** What do you aim at when throwing to your partner? Are you making sure your partner is watching and ready for the ball?

**SMASH**

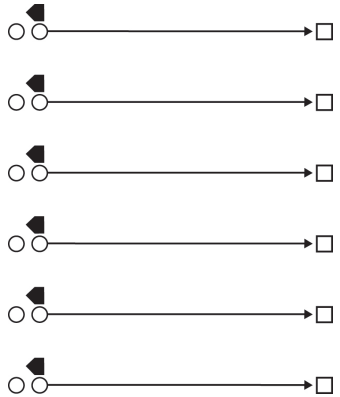
**Learning Objective:** Getting out of the batter's box

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball gloves, 6 carpet home plates

**How to:**

- Players should be divided into partners
- Ball gloves are placed on the ground across from where players are standing along the 3rd base line, this simulates where 1st base would be for each batter.
- Draw a home plate (or use carpet plates) on the ground along the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line for each pair of players
- On the verbal signal "HIT", all players swing at an imaginary ball, then pivots on lead foot and runs toward their glove (1st base).
- Coaches should emphasize getting out of box quickly, with power and driving the arms rather than the correct pivot
- They then return to behind their plate while their partner takes their turn



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~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.

**Session #3** Focus: Baserunning

~ Warm Up ~

**UP AND AT 'EM**

**Learning Objective:** Quickness, running, power/endurance, multi-directional speed

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** N/A

**How to:**

- Split into partners
- One partner (chaser) stands on the end line with hand out
- The other partner (runner) slaps (softly) the outreached hand and runs in the opposite direction to get safely across the other line without being tagged
- The partner, whose hand was slapped, tries to catch the runner before (s)he gets to the safe line



~ Main Activities ~

**REACH THE COACH**

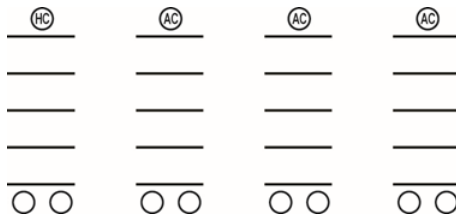
**Learning Objective:** Proper use of glove and positioning for fielding grounders

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- 1 adult for every 2 players.
- Each group draws a series of parallel lines 5' - 10' apart
- Coach will demonstrate the Receiving Ground Balls Progressions as shown in the Softball Skills section



- Each pair will start at the line farthest from the coach
- Objective is to get to the coach in the least number of throws
- A grounder is thrown to each player in turn
- If caught, the player advances to the next line

### **Tips/Modifications:**

As a variation the coach can throw fly balls. Coach can also increase speed of roll for more skilled players and roll side to side.

## **PARALLEL**

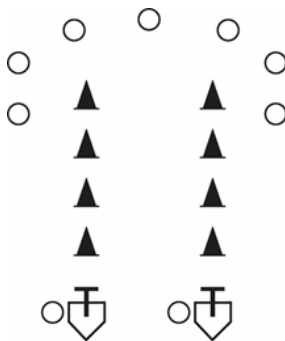
**Learning Objective:** Hitting, fielding

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 batting tees, 8 pylons, 2 balls, 2 bats

### **How to:**

- 2 batters each have a tee in the center of the playing area
- Each batter has a line of four pylons in front of their batting tee
- Batter hits the ball and then runs and touches all the pylons in the line as many times as possible before the fielding team returns the ball to the tee
- Fielders retrieve the ball and return it to the batting tee



### **Tips/Modifications:**

If game is too easy; increase distance between pylons.

**Questions:** Did fielders have to talk to each other? Team work?

**SKY BALL**

**Learning Objective:** Proper use of glove and positioning when catching fly balls

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball and glove for each player

**How to:**

- 1 adult for every 2 players
- Coach will demonstrate fly ball progressions as in skill section
- Players will then practice catching high tosses from an adult
- Seeing if they can catch a higher one each time
- How many consecutive catches can they make?
- Throw somewhat away from the player so that they must move to get underneath

**Tips/Modifications:**

You can start this drill with water balloons and no gloves; stressing 2 hands! Then move to ball and glove, still using 2 hands. Also, if you are throwing the ball away from the player, stress they should run to the ball and then glove up rather than running with glove and arm up.

~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.

## Session #4 ► Focus: Fielding

~ Warm Up ~

### SHARK IN THE TANK

**Learning Objective:** Running, dodging, body awareness, co-operation, agility, power/endurance, multi-directional speed

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** N/A

**How to:**

- 2 or 3 players are the “sharks”, the rest are the “fish”. Mark off an infield area to be used as the “tank”, so that young children can easily visualize
- “Fish” must stay in the tank
- “Sharks” are timed to see how long it takes them to catch all the “fish”. When they do, choose new “sharks”



~ Main Activities ~

### BIG FOOT

**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- Partners start on lines, facing each other, approximately 10' apart. One adult per pair
- 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
- See which team can get the farthest apart and still catch the ball

**Tips/Modifications:**

Can start this drill using softer items, like nerf toys, sponge balls, bean bags and progress to balls.

**FIELD 3**

**Learning Objective:** Hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 bats, 2 balls, 2 helmets, 2 sets of bases

**How to:**

- 2 teams of 6: 1 batter, the rest 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 in diamond formation for each group
- One batter at a time bats off an adult pitch as many as needed, with an adult in the catcher's position
- When a fielder has successfully fielded 3 grounders or caught 1 fly ball, they become the batter
- Players rotate positions
- Make sure all players get an opportunity to bat

**SPELL YOUR NAME**

**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- Partners should be selected by ability and spaced accordingly
- Line the players up, facing their partner or coach
- Remind everyone of the proper way to throw and to catch a ball
- Tell them that the name of the partnership is a combination of both players' names. Coach designates which line of partners gets to be the first name (i.e. players on the north side or south side)
- Have the players call out the name of their team (i.e. Jane Bobby)
- Partners throw the ball back and forth overhand



- They get a letter in their team name every time they make a catch
- When they complete their name, they move back 2 giant steps
- Continue the process to time limit

***Tips/Modifications:***

Adult may have to be the thrower if skill level is not advanced enough

**CIRCLE TOSS**

**Learning Objective:** Catching, eye/hand coordination

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball per group/team

***How to:***

- Form groups of 5 and give each group a ball
- One player in the group is the leader and stands in the middle while the rest of their team forms a circle around them, facing the leader
- The leader throws the ball to the first person, who catches it and throws it back to the leader
- The leader throws it to the next person and continues until all players have caught and thrown the ball
- When the last person catches the ball, they become the new leader

***Tips/Modifications:***

This can be played with a whole team if it is a smaller group. If players still don't know each other, you can make the leader say the name of the player they are throwing to.

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~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.

## Session #5 ■ Focus: Hitting

~ Warm Up ~

### GRAB THE BACON

**Learning Objective:** Running, body awareness, quickness, agility

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

#### How to:

- Partners each start on their own baseline. A ball is placed at the mid-point between the partners
- On “GO” from the coach each partner runs out, tries to grab the ball (bacon) and get back to their baseline before their partner who didn’t get the ball (bacon)
- If the partner without the ball gets to the baseline first the partner with the ball must hand it over
- If the partner with the ball gets back first, they get to keep the ball
- Change partners frequently

#### Tips/Modifications:

The coach can assign points and challenge the kids to be the first to 5 points



## ~ Main Activities ~

**MONSTER BASH**

**Learning Objective:** Emphasis on stride and hip rotation

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 6 “shoelace sticks”, 6 bases, 1 bat for every player (minimum 2 bats for every 2 players)

**How to:**

- 1 adult for every 2 players. Each group will find a safe area to place their base and swing
- The adult will hold the end of the shoelace (pretend it is a monster or something else appropriate) IN FRONT of the base at various heights
- Alternate players for every 5-10 swings. Other players can be taking practice swings

**SMOKE 'EM**

**Learning Objective:** Hitting, fielding

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 bats, 2-3 balls per group, 4 tee's if hitting off a tee

**How to:**

- 4 groups of 3 with at least one adult per group
- In each group an adult will pitch to one batter while the other 2 players field
- Fielding players get 2 points for catching a fly and 1 for a ground ball
- Offensive players get 3 points for a line drive, 2 points for a long fly ball or hard grounder, 1 point for pop fly or easy grounder
- See who can get 10 points first
- Rotate batters every 2 min., so that they all get a turn to bat

## SUPER SHOES

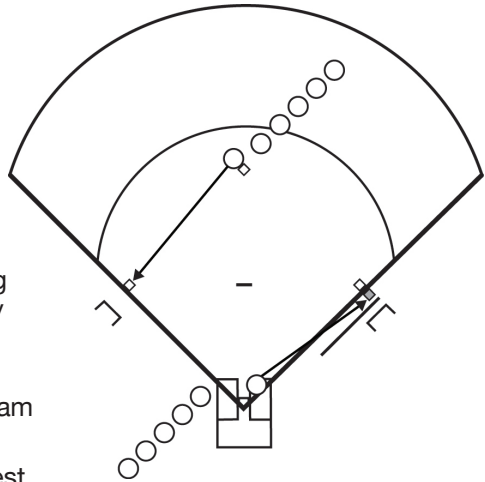
**Learning Objective:** Base running, speed development

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** Bases set up on diamond, 2 stopwatches

**How to:**

- 2 groups of 6, 1 group between home and 1st base and the other between 2nd base and 3rd base
- Each of the groups is broken into 2 groups of 3
- Each player takes a swing with a bat at an imaginary ball and runs to the next base as fast as possible
- Total the times of each team of 3
- Keep a record of the lowest scores for future trials



## KILL THE MOSQUITO

**Learning Objective:** Rounding 1<sup>st</sup> base

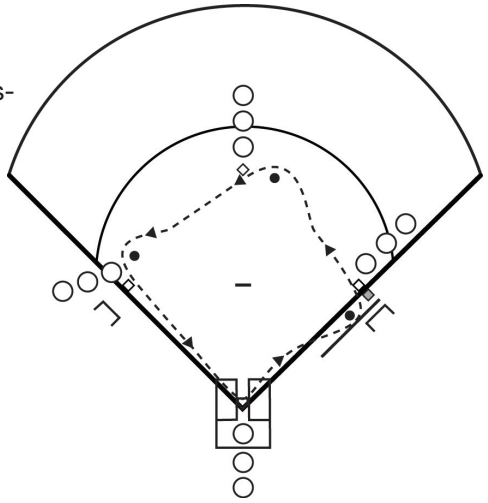
**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 bases, 4 markers, 4 bats

**How to:**

- 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
- One player at each base concurrently takes a swing at an imaginary ball, drops the bat, runs as fast as possible to the next base, stepping on the “Mosquito” as they round it (4 players will be running at the same time)
- They 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 marks down for them to go around as shown in the diagram



**Tips/Modifications:**

Important to have to coach demonstrate this activity.

~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.

## Session #6 ► Focus: Throwing

~ Warm Up ~

### MONSTERS KEEP AWAY

**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching, co-operation, space awareness, running, agility, balance, co-ordination

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 whiffle balls

**How to:**

- 2 teams of 6 with a coach or adult for each team
- Objective is for players to keep the ball away from the monster (coach) as long as possible
- Play stops and starts over when a player is touched by the monster while in possession of the ball OR when the monster gets possession of the ball

**Tips/Modifications:**

To make the game more challenging break into smaller groups



~ Main Activities ~

### HOME RUN

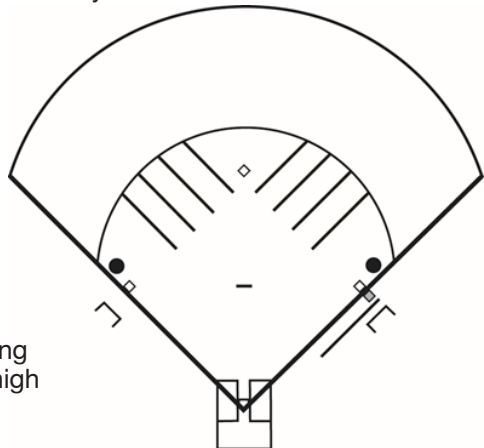
**Learning Objective:** Throwing accuracy

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 targets, 4 balls

**How to:**

- 2 groups of 6, with 1 coach at each target, which is hung on the backstop.
- Mark out lines at various distances from the target. Distances can be according to ability of the group. A high success rate is wanted.



- Each team is lined up in front of a target.
- Remind everyone of the proper way to throw the ball. Tell the players that they will throw at the target, trying to get closest to the center.
- Players choose which distance they throw from in order to hit the target, with the coach's encouragement and advice to help them choose the greatest distance at which they can be successful.
- Adjustments may be made to move the player forward or back during the activity in case the line they chose was too difficult or too easy.
- When players realize that they get points for being closest to the center, some may wish to stand as close as possible to better their chances. Enthusiastic praise for challenging themselves to greater distances may overcome this tendency.
- Each player gets 2 throws and the points are recorded for the best throw.
- After each player on the team has thrown once, go through the order again as many times as time allows.
- Points are awarded as follows: single – 1 pt; double – 2 pts; triple – 3 pts; homerun – 4 pts.
- Hitting the center of the target is considered a homerun. Each subsequent concentric area away from the center is termed a triple, double and single.
- 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

***Tips/Modifications:***

Having more targets is advisable as you may then have smaller teams and each player would spend less time standing around.



**PARTNER THROWS**

**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- Partners stand opposite each other at a distance commensurate with ability
- Partners throw ball back and forth
- Various goals can be set (i.e. how many consecutive throws and catches without a miss; how many throws in specified time (30 sec.); throw high balls; grounders; side to side; etc.)

**OVER THE RAINBOW**

**Learning Objective:** Balls, helmets

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** Grip and wrist/finger coordination

**How to:**

- Line players up in lines with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves
- Once the player can catch their own ball – proceed to full “Over the Rainbow” and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

**FREEZE THE RUNNER (Throwing)**

**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching, base running, co-operation, teamwork

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 ball, 4 bases, 4 helmets

**How to:**

- 2 teams of 6: 1 team on offence and 1 team on defense
- Offensive “batter” THROWS the ball into the playing area and runs around the bases until “FREEZE” is shouted (see next point)
- Ball is fielded, then thrown so EVERY fielder catches the ball – the last fielder to catch the ball shouts “FREEZE”. “FREEZE” may have to be shouted more than once at this age
- You score points by counting the number of bases touched – if caught between bases, the last base touched counts
- After everyone has had a turn, switch defense and offence
- Keep total bases touched for each team
- Emphasize proper rounding of bases by using markers

**Tips/Modifications:**

Players on defense will likely need help from adults to keep them from all running after the ball at once and in knowing where to throw it next. Lack of catching ability will likely mean there is little actual catching going on but at least each player will get to touch and throw the ball

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~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.

## Session #7 Focus: Hitting

~ Warm Up ~

### TAKE IT BACK

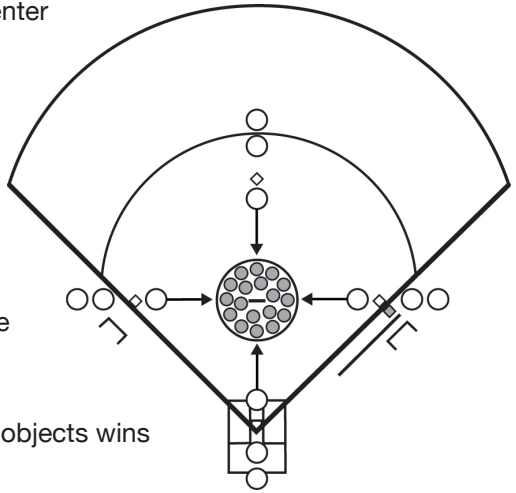
**Learning Objective:** Agility, quickness, teamwork, running, multi-directional speed

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 20 – 25 balls, bean bags or other small objects, 4 markers/pylons

### How to:

- 4 teams of 3.
- One team at each of the 4 markers, which are placed in a diamond formation (bases could be used instead of markers).
- Objects are placed in center where pitcher's location would be
- On "GO", one player at a time from each team runs out and picks up 1 of the objects and returns
- After tagging the returning player's hand, the next player can leave
- Play continues until all objects are gone
- The team with the most objects wins



### Tips/Modifications:

To keep all players actively engaged allow players to take balls from other groups as well as the center, so that players must guard their base. If a player takes a ball and is tagged before they get back to their group, they must return the ball and return to their base before grabbing another ball.

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~ Main Activities ~

**HITTING STATIONS**

**Learning Objective:** Proper hitting form

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 bat per player, 3 tee's, 3 whiffle balls on a rope, 6 carpet home plates

**How to:**

- 1 adult in charge of every 2 players
- 3 tee stations and 3 whiffle ball stations, with 2 players at each station
- Set T's up in front of carpet home plates
- 6 players will practice hitting off a tee
- 6 players practice hitting a hanging whiffle ball which an adult can hold in front of a carpet home plate
- The partner awaiting their turn can be taking practice swings
- Groups can switch stations after 5 min. That will give each player approximately 2 min. of hitting at each activity

**Tips/Modifications:**

- Refer to Session #3 (U5) for proper Hitting Progressions
- Make sure that all know the safety of swinging a bat and the "safety areas" when another is swinging
- Have the children move to each station by the movements out-lined above
- Not all children hit from the same side

**Questions:** Were their hands properly aligned? Were the hips rotating?

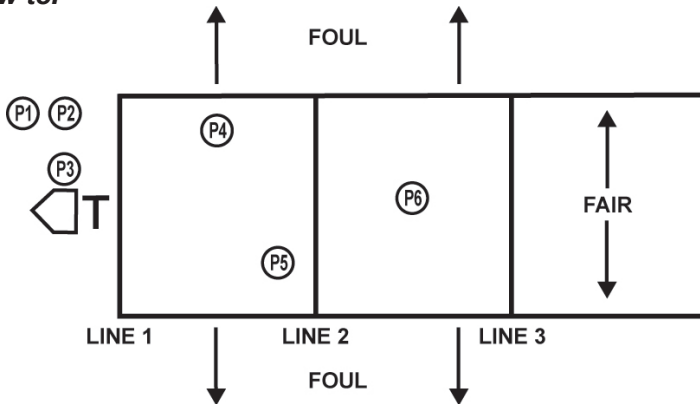
**OVER THE LINE**

**Learning Objective:** Hitting, fielding

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 balls, 2 bats, helmets, 2 home plates, 2 marked off playing areas, batting tee

**How to:**



- 4 teams of 3. Set up separate playing areas.
- 2 teams of 3 play in one playing area. One team on defense and one team on offence
- Batters hit off tee (or adult pitch), trying to get it in the air over line 1.
- If hit between line 1 and 2, it is worth 1 point; between lines 2 and 3 – 2 points; over line 3 – 3 points
- Fielders set up in fair territory. No point is awarded if a fielder catches it before it hits the ground

**Tips/Modifications:**

Review/ demonstrate proper swing mechanics before starting this drill. A variation could be to count 1 point if ball is grounder past line 2 and 2 points if a grounder past line 3. If keeping score is too complicated, simply set up the lines with markers and challenge the players to hit the ball past them

**Questions:** Are players swings level? Are bats the appropriate weight for age level?

**GRAND SLAM**

**Learning Objective:** Hitting, fielding

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 3 tee's, 3 balls, ball gloves, 3 bats

**How to:**

- Groups of 4 – each group has a batting tee and 1 whiffle ball or another type of ball depending on ability
- One batter hits to 3 fielders
- When a fielder catches 2 fly balls OR 4 grounders, they become the new batter
- Players can't bat a second time until everybody has had a chance to bat

**SPELL YOUR NAME**

**Learning Objective:** Throwing, catching

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players

**How to:**

- Partners should be selected by ability and spaced accordingly
- Line the players up, facing their partner
- Remind everyone of the proper way to throw and to catch a ball
- Tell them that the name of the partnership is a combination of both players' names. Coach designates which line of partners gets to be the first name (i.e. players on the north side or south side)
- Have the players call out the name of their team (i.e. Jane, Bobby)
- Partners throw the ball back and forth overhand
- They get a letter in their team name every time they make a catch
- When they complete their name, they move back 2 giant steps
- Continue the process to time limit

## U7

### **Tips/Modifications:**

Adult may have to be the thrower if skill level is not advanced enough

### **Questions:**

Was it easier to spell your name when you were closer or further apart?

## — Modified Game —

### **MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

### **How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

### **Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.



## Session #8 ■ Focus: Throwing

— Warm Up —

### GARBAGE COLLECTORS

**Learning Objective:** Fundamental movement skills

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** A variety of equipment needed (small objects) and hula hoops



**How to:**

- Scatter equipment throughout the playing space
- Have the small objects (gloves, balls, bases, etc) as the garbage
- Set up hula hoops as the “garbage cans”
- Players move throughout the space to collect one piece of “garbage” at a time and throw it into a “garbage can”
- Once all the “garbage” is collected repeat the activity using a different form of movement (jog, skip, hop, side shuffle, leap, gallop, etc).

— Main Activities —

### BOOM A RANG

**Learning Objective:** Throwing from positions in the infield

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 ball, 8 bases

**How to:**

- 2 groups of 6
- Set up bases to make 2 diamonds with 6 players at each
- 5 players in infield position including pitching and catching position
- Catcher throws a grounder to each player in succession
- They field it and throw it to 1st base, who throws it back to the catcher

- Rotate positions after each sequence so all players get a chance to throw from each position
- Score 1 point for each successful throw and catch
- See how many points can be scored per sequence

**Tips/Modifications:**

A variation could be to throw flies instead of grounders

**BULLS EYE**

**Learning Objective:** Throwing accuracy, fielding

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 2 targets, 12 balls

**How to:**

- 2 groups of 6, each group in a file in front of their target, which is placed on the backstop
- An adult will throw either a fly or a grounder to the 1st person in line, who fields it and throws it at the target
- After the throw, the player moves to the back of the line and the next player takes a turn
- Score 1 point for fielding cleanly and 1 point for hitting the target

**Tips/Modifications:**

Competition can be to see which team reaches 10-15 first OR which team scores the most points in a given time limit

**BALL OF FIRE**

**Learning Objective:** Catching, touching base, throwing

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 bases, 2 balls

**How to:**

- 2 groups of 6
- Place bases a distance apart according to ability (30' – 60')
- Players line up in columns behind a base – 3 behind each base
- Player receiving the ball steps in front of the base to receive the ball, catches it, tags the base with one foot, then throws the ball to the opposite base, and then goes to end of line
- Process is repeated until each player has desired repetitions

**Tips/Modifications:**

- Have adult helpers with each base to retrieve the errant balls
- When less players – only use 2 bases

**Questions:** Where children turning the right way to tag and throw?

**SKY BALL**

**Learning Objective:** Proper use of glove and positioning when catching fly balls

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball and glove for each player

**How to:**

- 1 adult for every 2 players
- Coach will demonstrate fly ball progressions as in skills section
- Players will then practice catching high tosses from an adult
- Seeing if they can catch a higher one each time
- How many consecutive catches can they make?
- Throw somewhat away from the player so that they must move to get underneath

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~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.

## Session #9 ► Focus: Base Running/ Sliding

~ Warm Up ~

### FOLLOW THE LEADER

**Learning Objective:** Fundamental movement skills

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** n/a

#### How to:

Choose 1 player to be the Leader. The leader performs different actions such as clapping, crawling, dancing, jumping jacks or skipping. The other players follow the actions and path of the Leader. If a player doesn't follow the exact actions of the Leader, he is out. The last player in the game becomes the new Leader.

- Clap
- Crawl
- Walk
- Run
- Climb a hill
- Blow in the breeze like a tree
- Flap your arms like a chicken
- Hop
- Skip
- Jump
- Gallop
- March
- Spin
- Twist
- Walk on tiptoe
- Stomp
- Roll
- Fall like a leaf
- Wiggle
- Fly like an airplane
- Twirl like a helicopter blade
- Shake your hips from side-to-side
- Crawl sideways like a crab
- Kick
- Step-kick like a chorus line dancer
- Swim like a fish
- Swim like a person

#### Tips/Modifications:

Can use balls/gloves and examples of simple softball movements if desired.



## PARTNER SHUTTLE

**Learning Objective:** Agility, quickness, teamwork, running, jumping, twisting, flexibility, power/endurance, balance, coordination, appropriate equipment, strength training, body weight

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** N/A

**How to:**

- Players form partners and make 2 end lines with partners starting at the same end
- Partners, joined, move back and forth to end line using various combinations of body parts touching the ground (i.e. 3 legs; 2 legs; 4 legs + 2 hands; 2 hands + 2 legs; 1 hand + 3 feet, etc.)
- Can also be done as singles, using various movements (i.e. skip; shuffle step; grape vine; frog hop; duck walk)

## ~ Main Activities ~

### JAM

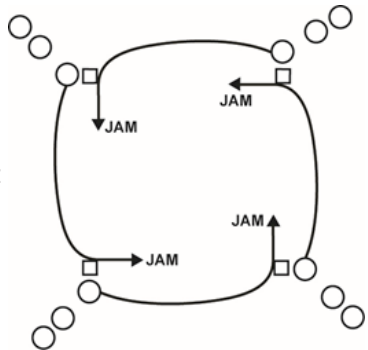
**Learning Objective:** Rounding base and jamming to stop

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 bases, 4 bats

**How to:**

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base
- Bases are set up in diamond formation
- Each player takes a full swing at an imaginary ball, runs to the next base
- Use proper rounding technique taught earlier in this lesson
- After rounding the base, player “jams” to a stop



**Tips/Modifications:**

Coach will have to demonstrate proper ‘jam’ technique (on the balls of their feet and low). Ready to blast forward or back!

**HOT POTATO**

**Learning Objective:** Quick turn when relaying ball from one player to another, catching, throwing

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 3 players

**How to:**

- 4 teams of 3 lined up
- In groups of 3, the ball is relayed from 1 to 2 to 3 and back
- Go slowly at first to concentrate on proper turn in center
- Rotate players in all 3 positions, so each gets experience as a relay player in the center
- It can be made into a relay competition if skill level is high enough

**Tips/Modifications:**

Real softballs do not have to be used – nerf balls, squishy balls, lite flights

**BEEP BEEP**

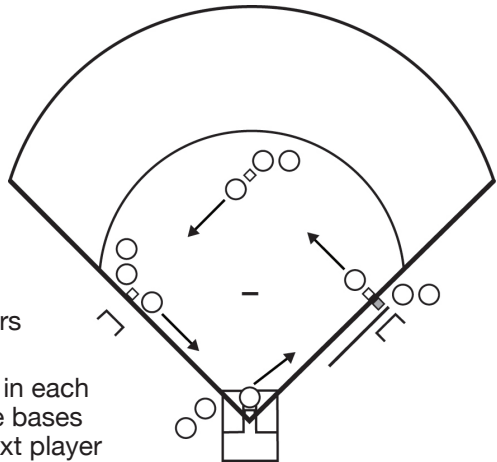
**Learning Objective:** Rounding the bases, speed development, conditioning

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** 4 bases

**How to:**

- Put bases down in proper diamond location, with 3 players at each. One player starts in front of the base and extra players stand behind
- On “GO”, the first player in each group runs around all the bases and returns to tag the next player in line and then they run the bases
- Emphasize proper rounding techniques including stepping on the inside corner



**SLIP N SLIDE** (*Sliding Mechanics*)

**Learning Objective:** Bent leg slide

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** helmets, players must be wearing pants, bases, sock or no shoes

**How to:**

- Players line up on a base line to start
- Then break into 3 groups of 4 with 2 adults per group
- **Determining the Sliding Leg**
  - Have players sit down cross-legged
  - Leg tucked under is usually sliding leg
- **Finish Position**
  - Sliding leg bent 90 degrees, tucked under other leg
  - Other leg extended, slightly bent
  - Extended leg foot is 4-6 inches off ground
  - Base is contacted with extended leg
  - Weight of slider is back
  - Chin is tucked into to the chest
  - Arms thrown above head
- **Distance**
  - Start slide about one and a half body lengths from base
- **General Tips**
  - Ensure players are wearing a helmet even in practice.
  - Build confidence by starting easy and progressing gradually
  - Use support people until slider is confident
  - Practice sliding on wet grass, in a sand pit or in a gymnasium
  - Use unfastened bases to start with
  - Teach sliding to players in socks or bare feet
  - To determine where a player should start their slide, have player put feet on the edge of the base and lay on their bellies stretched out as far from the base as possible. Using a marked cone have player place the cone on the ground where their fingers are stretched to. The cone will be a visual aid to help them understand the distance from the base where they should start the slide.



- **Sliding Teaching Progressions**

- Teach sliding progression in outfield with no shoes on
- Determine the bent or tucked leg
  - Have players form a circle around the Coach.
  - Have the players sit down cross legged
  - They will naturally tuck one leg underneath their body which will be the natural slide leg.
- Demonstrate the finish position
  - Slide leg straight but not locked
  - Bent leg tucked
  - Arms thrown above head
  - Chin tucked into chest.
- Finish position with movement
  - Have players move around in the crab walk position. Coaches use cue words “Hit It” and players get into finish position
  - Using a volunteer player who is lying in the finish position, the Coach will grasp their foot and pull them to simulate the movement of the slide.
- Standing in Finish position
  - While standing, get the players to get into the Finish Position.
  - Be sure they throw their hands back over their head and tuck their chin on their chest.
- Sliding with Support
  - With the aid of two strong coaches, have them hold the slider’s arms and gently lower them into the Finish Position
- Sliding with Support while Jogging
  - Same as above but do a slow jog first from about 10 meters.
  - Instead of two adults supporting slider, you can use two adults holding a broom stick or bat that the slider grabs to lower them to the ground.
- Sliding with Support while Sprinting
  - Same as above but from a sprint
- Bent Leg Slide while Jogging without aid
- Bent Leg Slide while Sprinting without aid

### Coaching Tip

- Have players slide without shoes
- Teach sliding on wet grass or a slippery surface (soapy tarp or a slip and slide)

### Relays

- The relay starts with a strong accurate throw from the outfielder
- The outfielder should try to throw the ball to the relay person's glove at about head height.
- The relay person:
  - Gives a big target with both arms in the air and calls for the ball.
  - Stands at a 45-degree angle to the glove side.
  - Pivots towards glove and throws quickly relaying the ball to the next target.
- **Teaching Progression**
  - Demonstrate proper throwing and receiving technique.
  - Practice movement with NO BALL, with players in a line pretending to receive a ball thrown by the Coach then turning to make throw behind them.

	x
	x
Coach	x
	x
	x

- Make groups of 3 positioned as shown. A pretends to throw to B, who mimics a catch and makes a proper relay turn, then pretends to throw to C.

A	B	C
A	B	C
A	B	C

- Rotate all 3 players through center position.
- Use a ball in the drill. Start slowly at first, making sure center player is turning in correct direction for a quick throw.
- If time permits and players are able, this can progress into a relay competition between teams of 3.

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~ Modified Game ~

**MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME**

**Learning Objective:** All softball skills

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Equipment:** Ball, bat, bases

**How to:**

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

**Tips/Modifications:**

See U7 Introduction for more information.