

Session #10 ▶ Focus: Pitching

— Warm Up —

DEFEND

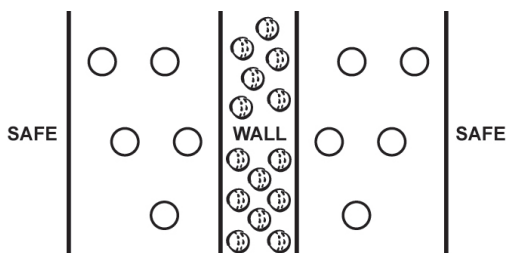
Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, running, teamwork

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Balls, pylons or markers

How to:

- Mark out a “safe” area at both ends of the playing area and an area to be defended in between them



- Place balls in the area to be defended (wall). Select 3-4 players to defend the “wall”. Rest of the players are scattered in the playing area.
- “Defenders” try to keep the others from grabbing a ball and getting it back to a “safe” area without being tagged
- If caught, they become a defender
- Game ends when all balls are in safe area OR all players are caught and are defenders



— Main Activities —

GOTCHA

Learning Objective: Base running, determination

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases

How to:

- Form groups of 3 with 3 players at each base.
- Set up bases in diamond formation 20' – 30' apart
- 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 (15-30 seconds)

KNEE CLAPS

Learning Objective: Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

WHIP IT

Learning Objective: Whipping the ball from the top of the arm circle to the bottom to release it

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Softballs in tube socks (6 for each player), hula hoop targets hung at strike zone height

How to:

- Start by showing players where to grip their “whip-it”. Hands should be placed 6-8 inches from the ball up the sock so the pitcher feels there is some control over the ball but can still appreciate a whipping motion with the sock
- Start the players facing sideways to their hula hoop target grasping the sock in their pitching hand and their glove on the other
- Instruct the player to step to the target while making an arm circle with their “whip-it”
- Use the key words of whipping the ball from the top of their arm circle to the bottom, letting it go at the bottom to go straight for the hula hoop
- Have them repeat these 6 times before all players collect their “whip-its” at the same time
- CAUTION: most inexperienced kids will throw the first couple behind them because they hang on to the sock too long. Encourage them to let go sooner and avoid standing directly behind them during the drill

LEAD ME

Learning Objective: Catching and throwing while moving

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Partners stand, parallel, facing same direction approximately 20ft apart.
- Next set of partners is ready to go as soon as 1st set is out of the way. 2 lines can be going at once
- Partners lead each other with a throw so they both must be moving while throwing and catching

~ 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 #11 ► Focus: Baserunning/ Fielding

— Warm Up —

REACTION SPRINT

Learning Objective: Running, changing direction

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Mark out a starting line
- Have the players spread out along the line
- On your signal have them jog slowly away from the line
- On the next signal they need to turn around quickly and sprint back to the start

Tips/Modifications:

Have the children do different movements when moving away from the starting line (jog, skip, hop, etc).

— Main Activities —

GROUNDBALL

Learning Objective: Grounders, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Adult helper for every 2 players, standing an appropriate distance from players
- Coach throws grounders to each player (one at a time)
- Every time a ball is picked up cleanly and thrown back accurately the pair gets a letter in “GROUNDBALL”
- Partners can compete against each other OR other teams



Tips/Modifications:

The name of this activity can change – based on the ability of your players to spell. Try shorter words or silly words to make it more fun.

Questions: Are players staying low in stance and receiving the ball out in front of their bodies?

SUPER SHOES TO 2nd BASE

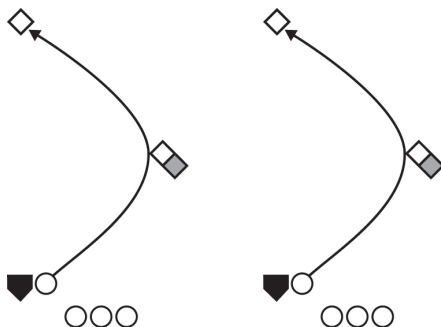
Learning Objective: Rounding 1st base, speed development

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 or 3 stop watches, 6 bases

How to:

- 3 groups of 4. Set up 1st base and 2nd base for each group
- Time each player as they run from home to 2nd base
- Encourage proper rounding of 1st base
- Keep track of times so players can try to beat their own time

**JAM & DIVE**

Learning Objective: Rounding base and jamming to stop, diving back to base

Time: 10 minutes

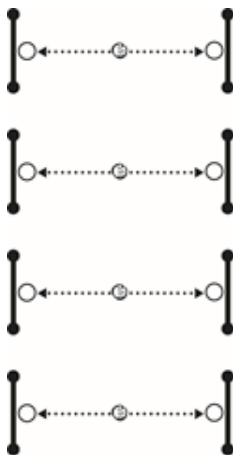
Equipment: 4 bases, 4 bats

How to:

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base
- Bases 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
- After rounding the base, player “jams and dives” back to their base using correct technique as in Base Running Progressions in the Softball Skills section

GOAL BALL**Learning Objective:** Fielding grounders**Time:** 10 minutes**Equipment:** 1 ball for every 2 players**How to:**

- Mark off a “goal” area for each player opposite a partner. The distance depends on skill level (up to 10’ wide)
- Each player tries to score a goal by throwing a grounder by their partner through the marked goal posts
- Score a point for each goal
- Switch partners occasionally



— 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 #12 ► Focus: Throwing

— Warm Up —

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, running, co-operation

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: All available balls and other appropriate objects

How to:

- Mark out 2 lines 50 to 60ft apart
- 2 teams of 6 line up behind opposite lines and spread out
- Place balls and other objects in “No Man’s Land” in center area
- On “Go” objective is to place as many objects as possible over the OTHER TEAM’S line
- Only one object at a time can be taken
- Objects must be placed, not thrown, across the line
- If all the objects are gone from “No Man’s Land” they may be taken from own end and placed in opposite end
- When time is called the team with the LOWEST NUMBER of objects in their end wins

Tips/Modifications:

Have the players use different types of movement (hopping, skipping, walking, etc.) You can also create targets behind the lines to be worth more points.



~ Main Activities ~

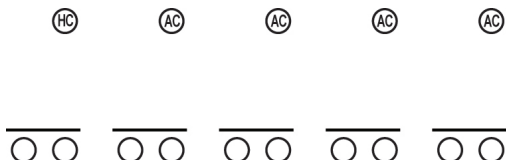
SPACE SHUTTLE

Learning Objective: Throwing for distance

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:



- 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
- 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

Tips/Modifications:

Place hula hoops out on the field at different distances and give points for getting the ball into the hula hoops.

Questions: Are players using good arm mechanics? Check skill section to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top.

GOAL BALL

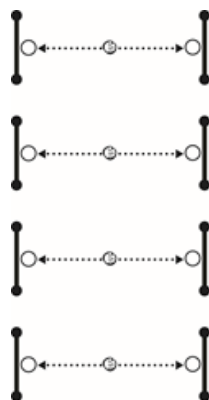
Learning Objective: Fielding grounders

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

How to:

- Mark off a “goal” area for each player opposite a partner. The distance depends on skill level (up to 10’ wide)
- Each player tries to score a goal by throwing a grounder past their partner through the marked goal posts
- The other player is trying to catch the ball or stop it from crossing the goal line
- Score a point for each goal
- Switch partners occasionally



Tips/Modifications:

Use softie balls or whiffle balls for this activity.

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
- Defensive players set up in the infield
- 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

HOME RUN

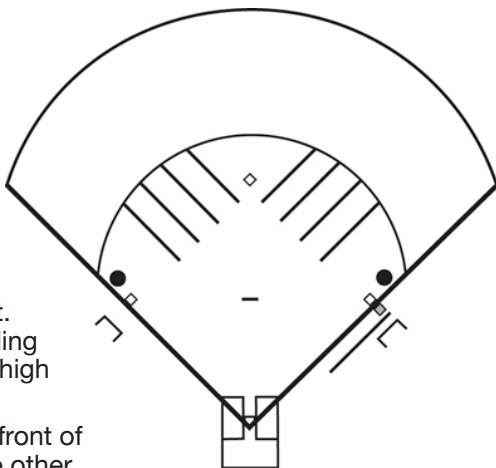
Learning Objective: Throwing accuracy

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 targets, 4 balls

How to:

- 2 groups of 6, with 1 group 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 – one behind the other
- 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.

Remember to have players pick up balls only when it is safe to do so. You can also have adult helpers retrieve the balls.

~ 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.

Questions: Did players know where to throw the ball? What did you see that you can work on next session?

Session #13 Focus: Hitting

— Warm Up —

CRAB TAG

Learning Objective: Fundamental movement skills

Time: 5 minutes

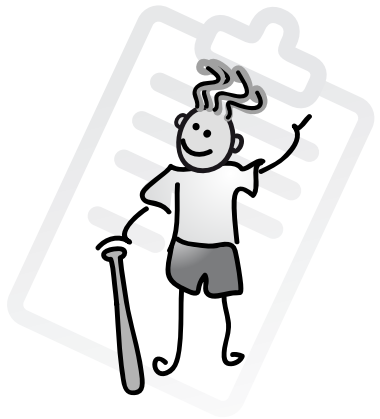
Equipment: Pylons or cones to mark playing area

How to:

- Mark off a designated area with cones. Marking a square with cones and you can adjust it as needed
- Select 3-4 players to be taggers and they will start as the crabs and must crab walk
- All the other players will be on their feet and will try to stay away from the crabs as long as they can
- If a player gets tagged by a crab, they become a crab as well and will get down on the ground and can now tag players as well. Crabs/taggers will grow in numbers as the game goes on
- Play unit there are only a handful of players left in the game
- Crabs can use both hands and feet to tag others

Tips/Modifications:

If players can't decide if they were tagged or not, just have them play rock, paper, scissors off to the side so gameplay doesn't have to stop



~ Main Activities ~

SLUGGER

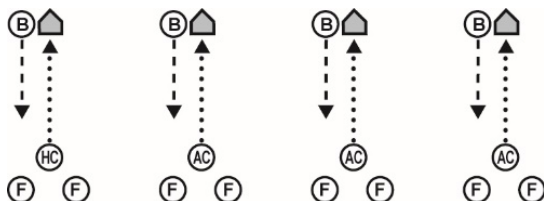
Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 bats, 4 balls, 4 carpet home plates

How to:

- 4 groups of 3, with an adult with each group



- Adult pitches to the 3 players in their group – one at a time
- Batters hit the ball out to 2 fielders
- Fielders get 2 points for a fly ball and 1 point for a grounder
- Emphasize stride and hip action in batter's swing

Tips/Modifications:

Make sure areas are designated for each team – which are far enough away from each other that teams do not interfere with each other.

Questions: Were all tasks executed with proper technique?

CRAZY SOFTBALL

Learning Objective: Batting, throwing, fielding, teamwork

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Balls, 2 pylons, 1 hoop, sponges/bean bags, etc.

How to:

- Game is played between two teams of three
- One person on the batting team receives three objects (sponges, bean bags, balls etc.) and throws or hits them anywhere in the playing area

- After all three objects have been thrown/hit into the playing area the batting team runs back and forth from home to a pylon as many times as they can
- The fielding team collects all the objects and places them inside the hoop, which is set up 5 m from home plate
- The fielding team cannot move with the objects. They must throw them to each other to get them into the hoop
- Once all the objects are inside the hoop the batting team stops running, they receive one run for each time they ran to the base and back home
- Switch batting and fielding teams once each player has had a chance to be the batter/thrower

Tips/Modifications:

Have a foul line marked out – if object goes outside area it is a foul ball

Questions: Were proper techniques used in all skills?

BALL RED ROVER

Learning Objective: Fielding grounders

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, ball gloves

How to:

- 2 groups of 6, each playing a separate Red Rover game
- 3 players on each team, line up facing the other 3 – side by side
- 10 – 20 feet apart. Place markers or draw lines to show goal area
- A player on one line throws the ball along the ground to try to get it past the players on the other line
- Opposite players can try and stop the ball using proper fielding techniques
- If successful, a player from the side who let the ball get by is picked to join the other line
- Adjust the width of the goal line based on the number of players on the line



~ 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 #14 Focus: Pitching

— Warm Up —

DRAGON RACE

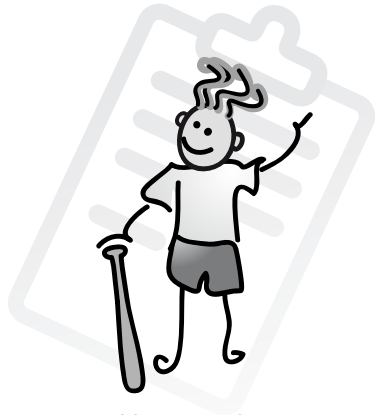
Learning Objective: Running technique and rounding the bases correctly

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, bases

How to:

- Players form 2 single file lines, one team at 2nd base and one team at home. First player in each line has a ball. Players behind the first player move back a bit to give the runners room as they will be crossing the bases.
- Player at 2nd will be running from 2nd -3rd-home-1st-2nd and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- Player at home will running from H-1st-2nd-3rd-H and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- The object is for the person at 2nd to try and catch up or pass the person at home and vice versa.



— Main Activities —

KILL THE MOSQUITO

Learning Objective: Rounding 1st base

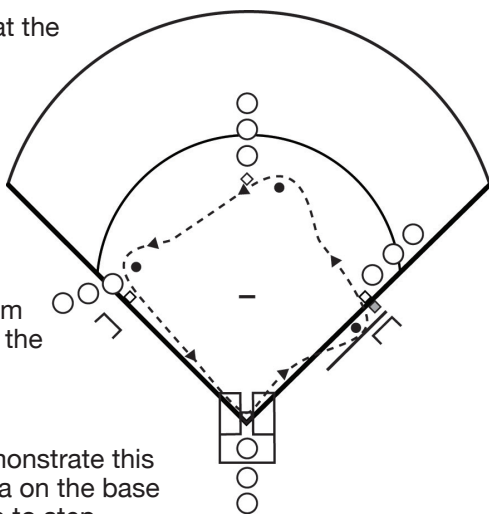
Time: 10 minutes

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. Stickers, or marked area on the base is helpful to show players where to step.

WHIP IT

Learning Objective: Whipping the ball from the top of the arm circle to the bottom to release it

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Softballs in tube socks (6 for each player), hula hoop targets hung at strike zone height

How to:

- Start by showing players where to grip their “whip-it”. Hands should be placed 6-8 inches from the ball up the sock so the pitcher feels there is some control over the ball but can still appreciate a whipping motion with the sock
- Start the players facing sideways to their hula hoop target grasping the sock in their pitching hand and their glove on the other
- Instruct the player to step to the target while making an arm circle with their “whip-it”
- Use the key words of whipping the ball from the top of their arm circle to the bottom, letting it go at the bottom to go straight for the hula hoop
- Have them repeat these 6 times before all players collect their “whip-its” at the same time

- CAUTION: most inexperienced kids will throw the first couple behind them because they hang on to the sock too long. Encourage them to let go sooner and avoid standing directly behind them during the drill

Tips/Modifications:

Refer to pitching section for more information.

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.

~ 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 #15 Focus: Throwing/Catching

— Warm Up —

DEFEND

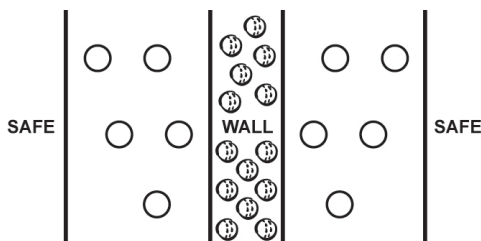
Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, running, teamwork

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Ball

How to:

- Mark out a “safe” area at both ends of the playing area and an area to be defended in between them



- Place balls in the area to be defended (wall). Select 3-4 players to defend the “wall”. Rest of the players are scattered in the playing area
- “Defenders” try to keep the others from grabbing a ball and getting it back to a “safe” area without being tagged
- If caught, they become a defender
- Game ends when all balls are in safe area OR all players are caught and are defenders

TAKE IT BACK

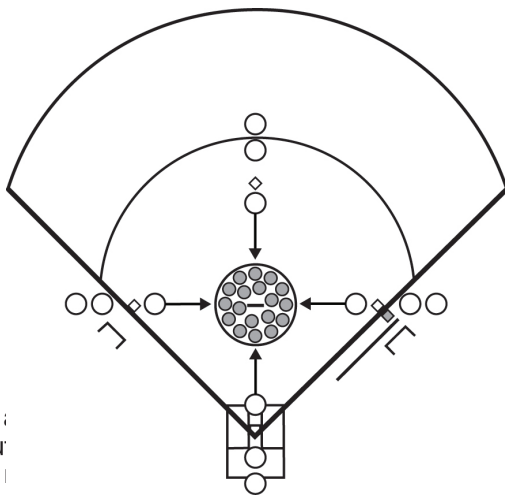
Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, teamwork, running, multi-directional speed

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 each of the 4 markers runs out to grab up 1 of the objects and return to their base.
- 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.

~ Main Activities ~

ADD 'EM UP

Learning Objective: Throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 pylons, 1 ball, 1 bat

How to:

- Divide the group into 2 teams.
- One batter hits off a tee and then the batting team moves as a group between the base and home. One point is scored for each time the batting team touches the base.
- A fielder fields the ball and then the ball must be passed to each member of the team before it can be thrown home. Once the ball reaches home the batting team must stop running.
- Batting team and fielding team switch once all the batters have had a chance to hit.

Tips/Modifications:

Depending on skill level you may want to have the batting team hit off a coach tossed or front toss pitch, or have them throw the ball out to the fielders

Questions: Are players using good throwing mechanics? Check skill section to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top.

FIELD 3

Learning Objective: Fielding

Time: 10 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

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 (rolls) 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 pop flyballs instead of grounders

Questions: Are players in proper defensive positions and are they using proper throwing mechanics? Check skill section for diamond knowledge and to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top.

SUPER SCOOPER

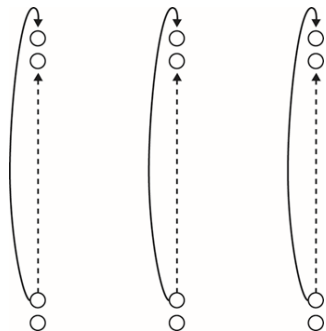
Learning Objective: Fielding ground balls, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 balls

How to:

- 3 teams of 4 in shuttle relay formation
- 1st player in each line throws a grounder to teammate on other side then goes to the end of the opposite line
- Player receiving it throws a grounder to the next player and follows throw to end of that line and so on until they get back to their original positions



Tips/Modifications:

A variation could be to throw pop flies flyballs instead of grounders or throw a slow roller close to tosser and player receiving does a fore-hand underhand toss

Questions: Are players using proper fielding mechanics? Are they using two hands to field the ball? Check skill section to be they are in a proper ready position and move to the ball

~ 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.

Questions: Do players understand the what a strike and ball is? Do they understand what a fair and foul ball is? Do they understand where the defensive positions are? Check skill section for definitions of the rules and diamond knowledge

Session #16 ► Focus: Hitting

— Warm Up —

CATCH THIS

Learning Objective: Throwing

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Balls, or other items you can throw

How to:

- Split into partners
- The player with the ball tosses to her partner
- Partner takes a step back and passes ball back
- This player passes the ball back and if caught, the partner who caught the ball takes a step back.
- Process continues until someone drops the ball
- When the ball is dropped, the two players return to the starting position and see if they can improve on their previous best

Tips/Modifications:

Use fun equipment like water balloons, sponges, beanbags, stuffed animals or add a player in the middle who relays the ball to the partners on the ends. Progression would be to start with no gloves and fun items to throw to gloves and a softball.

Questions: Are the players using 2 hands to catch? Using soft fun items? Using softballs and gloves?



~ Main Activities ~

BATTERS BONANZA

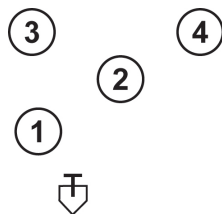
Learning Objective: Hitting, aiming for a target

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: hula hoops, batting tee, ball, bat

How to:

- Have player's split into partners
- Teams will spread hula hoops out in front of the batting tee and assign a point value to each hula hoop
- Partners will play rock, paper, scissors for first bat
- Batter's aim to hit the ball off the tee and into a hula hoop-if they get the ball in the hoop, they earn the points assigned to that hoop
- Each batter gets three turns and then switch
- The non- batting partner retrieves the ball after each hit



Tips/Modifications:

Use a basketball or soccer ball on a tee and reposition it around the field for hitters to aim at. If coach has access to a net, then reposition the net around the infield.

Questions: Are hitters standing correctly in the batter's box? Are players using the proper batting stance and correct batting mechanics? Refer to skills check list for proper batting mechanics

500

Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 bats, 4 balls, batting tee

How to:

- 2 groups of 6 each with their own activity area.
- 1 bat, while the other 5 field. The other group does the same.
- Batter will bat off a tee or adult pitch

- Each batter gets 5-10 swings or hits (dependent on the number of players or time)
- Fielder can get points by fielding the ball
- 100 for caught fly, 50 for one bouncer, 25 for a grounder
- Objective is to reach 500 then that player gets to bat. At this level the batter will likely have to be changed prior to anyone getting 500, so that they all get to bat.

Tips/Modifications:

Instead of points the players could pick a softball related word to spell. First person to spell the word gets to bat

Questions: Are the players communicating and calling the ball? Are they performing all the correct mechanical skills?

GRAND SLAM

Learning Objective: Hitting, fielding

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 tee's, 3 balls (whiffle or other), 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

Tips/Modifications:

Players don't use gloves and the batter hits a nerf ball or slightly deflated volleyball or soccer ball off the tee

Questions: Are players getting into proper ready position every time the batter makes is about to contact the ball? Are hitters holding the bat correctly? Are players in a proper hitting stance? Are players watching the ball contact? Refer to Fielding and Hitting Skills section.

KNEE CLAPS

Learning Objective: Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: N/A

How to:

- Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

Tips/Modifications:

Players should follow the coach step by step through the progression.

- 1) Coach says “lift” and players lift front leg and balance
- 2) Coach says “pivot” and players pivot on back leg so they are sideways to the coach
- 3) Coach says “stride” and players take a large step sideways (towards the coach) with front foot and plant
- 4) Coach says “toe to heel” and players bring back toe of back foot to heel of front foot

Questions: Are players keeping body aligned? (not leaning backwards or too far forwards) Are players landing front foot at a 45-degree angle? Are players strong on the front leg with a little bend in the knee when planting? Are players slamming the back leg into the front leg with heel to toe touch? Refer to the Pitching Skills section.

~ 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 #17

~ 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. Coach could use softball terms to start the game. Instead of “GO” they could say 1st base, Right Field etc.

Questions: Are players using proper running technique?



~ Main Activities ~

DRAGON RACE

Learning Objective: Running technique and rounding the bases correctly

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, bases

How to:

- Players form 2 single file lines, one at 2nd base and one at home. First player in each line has a ball. Players behind the first player move back a bit to give the runners room as they will be crossing the bases.
- Player at 2nd will be running from 2nd -3rd-home-1st-2nd and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- Player at home will running from H-1st-2nd-3rd-H and handing the ball off to the next person in line.
- The object is for the person at 2nd to try and catch up or pass the person at home and vice versa.

Tips/Modifications:

Have coaches jump in and participate or have players compete against the parents

BEANBAG TO BALL ARM CIRCLES

Learning Objective: Releasing the beanbag inside the hip to get it to hit the target

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Beanbags, softballs, hula-hoops hung on the fence at a low height, mat to kneel on (if available)

How to:

- Start with beanbags instead of balls. Have players kneel on the mat facing sideways to their target wearing a glove on one hand and grasping a beanbag in the other
- Instruct the player to “step” toward the target remaining on their knees making an arm circle at the same time “pitching” the beanbag into the hula-hoop

- Focus on the importance of releasing the beanbag inside the back hip and staying sideways to the target
- Once pitchers are comfortable with their release point, give them a ball to experiment with (be aware of park rules regarding throwing balls into fences)

Tips/Modifications:

Have players kneel beside the fence so that their pitching arm is against it. When they do arm circles this will keep their arm in straight circle

Questions: Are the players arm circles big? Are they brushing their pinky along their back-leg thigh?

PLAYERS CHOICE

Time: 10 minutes

How to:

- Allow the players to choose their favourite game!

ADD 'EM UP

Learning Objective: Throwing

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 pylons, 1 ball, 1 bat

How to:

- Divide the group into 2 teams.
- One batter hits off a tee and then the batting team moves as a group between the base and home. One point is scored for each time the batting team touches the base.
- A fielder fields the ball and then the ball must be passed to each member of the team before it can be thrown home. Once the ball reaches home the batting team must stop running.
- Batting team and fielding team switch once all the batters have had a chance to hit.

Tips/Modifications:

Depending on skill level you may want to have the batting team hit off a coach tossed or front toss pitch, or have them throw the ball out to the fielders

Questions: Are players using good throwing mechanics? Check skill section to be sure throwing elbow is back and shoulder level before coming over the top

— *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 #18

~ Warm Up ~

BEAT THE BALL

Learning Objective: Running & catching

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Playground ball or whiffle ball

How to:

- Have children stand in a circle – close enough that they can easily pass a ball to one another
- One of the children is “it”
- When the coach yells “GO” that child must run around the outside of the circle and get back into their spot before the ball gets back to the start

Tips/Modifications:

- Make this activity harder or easier by making the players stand closer or further apart
- Have the children run, jump, skip, etc. around the outside of the circle



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 a 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 ~

GAME PITCHING

Learning Objective: Review the game pitching sequence and rules

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: softballs, pitching plates and a hula-hoop hung in a pop-up net or on a fence. Parents may volunteer as catchers if present.

How to:

- Tell pitchers they are to imagine they are pitching in a game.
- Ask them to receive the ball in front of the pitcher's plate, then walk behind the pitcher's plate stopping to take a deep breath before stepping onto it with both feet. If a pitcher is right-handed the right foot is forward and left foot slightly behind and vice versa for the left-handed pitcher.
- Instruct the pitchers to step onto the mound with their hands apart (ball should be in the glove and not in the pitcher's hand) and once on the mound they may bring their hands together and pause.
- There are several starting styles and it is recommended pitchers either keep the hands together or swing the pitching arm backward in a rhythmic motion (see online drill description) to begin the pitching motion.
- Once starting the pitching motion, the pitcher's step toward the catcher and arm circle are coordinated. The pitcher turns sideways to the target mid-motion. Instruct them to imagine stepping along an imaginary line straight to the target.
- After landing, the ball is released inside the back hip at the bottom of the arm circle with the intent to throw on a straight line to the target.
- Follow-through includes staying sideways to the target and bringing the pitching arm to the middle of the chest. See online descriptions for further details.

HITTING STATIONS

Learning Objective: Learning to hit off self-toss (fungo hit), hitting technique, hand-eye coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 tee's, 12 balls, 12 bats, carpet home plates or bases

How to:

- There will be 3 different stations set up for 4 players to perform the same drill at the same time
 - Station 1 – 4 fungo stations
 - Station 2 – 4 batting tee stations
 - Station 3 – 4 soft toss stations
- 1 adult at each of the soft toss stations (4), 1 adult at the tee stations, and 1 adult at the fungo stations.
- Divide time you have left after setting up into three so that players get an equal time at all 3 activities
- All four players rotate to a different station, when the time is up
- Emphasize stride and hip action
- Make sure the ball is placed IN FRONT of plate. Home plates or bases should be used for each player, so they get the proper feeling of a standing at a plate to hit

Tips/Modifications:

Coaches could have players simulate dropping the bat and running to first after the ball is hit at certain stations

Questions: Are hitters in a proper hitting stance? Are they gripping the bat properly? Are the hands palm up and palm down on contact? Are they dropping the bat properly and not letting go? Are all players in a safe area prior to the hitter swinging?

PLAYERS CHOICE

Time: 10 minutes

How to:

- Allow the players to choose their favourite game!

— *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.

Questions: Are players practicing proper positioning, technical skills, rule knowledge, team play and good sportsmanship?