



COACHES PRACTICE PLAN

Challenging Superior Players in Minnesota since 1988

Introduction:

During this meeting we hope to accomplish the following:

1. Make it a little easier for coaches by offering practice and game tips from experienced coaches and former players.
2. Create more consistency in what we're teaching at each level.
3. Supplement the "Instruction Manual for Parents & Coaches" and "Getting Started" that the league hands out to all coaches.

Practice - All

- **Stress the importance of practice** to the kids and parents. Remind parents that the best way for the kids to achieve is by practicing and being prepared. We learn and prepare for the game by practicing.
- One of the most important things to remember when running practice is to **keep the kids busy or moving**. Make the most of your time by breaking up into two or three groups, depending on the number of coaches, space, and equipment you have available.
- **Coaches must be prepared**. Have your practice planned before arriving at the field. Jot some things on a piece of paper to help get your thoughts together.
- **Practice the way you play** in a real game with proper techniques. During batting practice have fielders field the ball as they would in a game situation. Runners run hard and hitters take good cuts. Practice is the time to work out the mistakes and build confidence resulting in better play during games.
- **Start a routine**. Get the kids to arrive at least 15 minutes before the game or practice to warm up by throwing, catching, and stretching together as a team. Practice scheduled at 6pm means that the kids are warmed up and ready to go at 6pm. Start by throwing. Pair the kids up with half lined up just outside the first (or third) base line and the other half just inside the pitchers mound and facing each other. Always throw in the same direction and with equal spacing. When playing catch you should always give your partner a target (at glove shoulder).
- After playing catch, **take a team jog** and stop to do some stretching. This is a great time to talk to the players – maybe give a little pep talk before a game. This is how we **create a team concept**.
- **Explain why, as well of how**, when teaching. Base runners are much more likely to make the little turn before each base if they're aware that if they don't their momentum will carry them to the outfield grass and they'll not stay tightly in the base paths.
- **Stress fundamentals!**

Instructional Division

Base running:

- Review running through 1st base and running your hardest without slowing down
- Review base runner's ready position, first step, and cross-over
- Teach correct turns when rounding all the bases
- Runners must understand force plays and when it is safe to run when a force is removed (i.e. not running into outs)
- Stealing
- Sliding

Fielding & Positions:

- Review all fielding positions
- Fielding ground balls using alligator method
- Remember to charge the ball whenever possible
- Throwing to bases
- Foul lines
- Force plays
- Backing up
- Cutoffs
- Tagging runners
- Fielding a bunt
- Infield fly rule

Infield:

- Creeping
- Covering the bag
- Calling the ball (Shortstop is the boss)

Outfield:

- Backing up bases and throws
- Shielding the sun
- Throwing using four seam grip (preferable)
- Calling the ball (Center fielder is the boss)

Pitching:

- Grip
- Pitching from the wind up and the stretch
- Use of the pitching rubber
- Pitching motion
- Balance and arm position
- Backing up 3rd and home
- Covering 1st base

Catcher:

- Go over the equipment
- Blocking balls (preventing pass balls)
- Base stealing
- Framing the pitch
- Foul popup

Hitting:

- Review bat grip and hand positions
- Review swing mechanics and batting stance
- Strike zone
- Bunting (sacrifice and for a hit)
- Keep the bat still and concentration on hitting ground balls and line drives
- Use the batting tee and soft toss drills during practice for extra swings
- On-deck routine
- Quick hands and shortening swing

Throwing & Catching:

- Review throwing grip (two seam & four seam)
- Crow hop
- Enforce two handed catching

Safety:

- Warm-up
- When playing catch always throw in the same direction with plenty of separation
- One player holding a bat at a time
- Calling (loudly) for the ball
- No climbing the fences

Equipment and Uniforms:

- Cleats (metal cleats only for Sandy Koufax and Mickey Mantle), Bat (optional), Official uniform, and water bottle
- Shirts tucked in and official hat on forward

Sportsmanship & Team Concept:

- Shake hands with opponents after each game. Tell each player “good game”
- Run on and off the field
- Encourage teammates
- Help pick up the equipment after practices and games
- Enforce league rules as described in the Bolton Little League Program
- Absolutely no arguing with the coaches and/or umpires

Games:

- Arrive 20–30 minutes before all games and 10-15 minutes before practices to warm up.
- Always have the kids place their hats inside their gloves at the same end of the bench. Have outfielder keep their gloves together and infielders their gloves together. When a fellow infielder ends up on second on the third out you can bring his glove out to him. This speeds up the game and promotes a good team concept.

Team Parents:

- The team parent is there to help in any way needed. Coordinate rides, call players for game and/or practice cancellations, coordinate pictures, help with bench duties, ...

Observations:

- Batting gloves should not be worn on the throwing hand while in the field
- Base runners should be in a ready positions and not talking to fielders

General:

- Explain some of the rules as outlined in the Minnesota Baseball Alliance Program
 - Coaches explain to new players or players moving up some of the differences between the leagues
 - Talk to the parents about sideline coaching. Players often get conflicting instructions while they're on the field or at bat. There can be hundreds of people in the stands and the coaches shouting, but the one voice a player hears is his own mother's. Cheering is encouraged, but please limits the sideline and bleacher coaching and instructions for the coaches.
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Drills – Base running:

Running through the 1st base bag:

- Place a second bag or glove about 5–10 feet beyond the 1st base bag. From home plate, have the kids simulate a swing, drop the bat, and run through first base and don't slow down until they get to the second base.

Ready position:

- Position the player on first base with their left foot on the edge of the bag and right foot toward the next base (feet the opposite way will result in their back being toward the field). Feet should be shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. When you say, "GO", have them run to 2nd base. Next, set-up from 1st and 2nd base (do not over-run 2nd and/or 3rd base) and so on. If you like, use this drill with the "running through the 1st base bag" drill.

Fun throwing and running drill:

- Place the player at home plate and have them throw the ball as far as they can onto the field with only the coach to shag it. After they throw it they must run to first base. Start with running through the bag at first, then go onto rounding first and hold, and finally round first and go on to second for a double.

The last hitter homerun:

- Starting from home plate, have the kids run around the bases making sure every base is touched. If a base is missed the whole team must do it again. It's always helpful to have the players first simulate a good swing from home plate and then run.

Drills – Fielding:

Alligator hands:

- Practice the alligator hand position fielding first without glove.
- Set the kids up in pairs about 8 to 10 feet apart and take turns rolling the ball to each other. Teach them to get their seat down and feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart with glove down and open (web touching the ground) to field the ball. Have them position the throwing hand a few inches above the glove giving the appearance of the
- Place the kids into two to three lines (3rd, SS, & 2nd) and roll a ball to each player having them practice this fielding method.

Covering 2nd base (Shortstop & 2nd baseman):

-

Crow hop from third base:

-

Grounder to Pitcher & 2nd base (throw to first):

-

Covering 1st base:

-

Drills - Hitting

Hitting off the tee:

- Use the tee against a backstop

Individual hitting:

- Toss the ball into the air and hit the ball into the screen. This helps hand/eye coordination.

Soft toss hitting:

- Have a partner toss the ball softly toward the front knee and hit the ball into the screen.

Overcoming the fear of being hit (bailing out):

- Quite often we see young players bailing out of the batters box in fear of being hit by the pitch. A drill that you may find useful for these players is to have them concentrate on bunting the ball. With the feet in a bunting position it's very difficult for the player to pull out of the box. This also promotes concentration to follow the pitched ball as well as building confidence and, with any luck, it may eliminate his fear.

Drills – Catching:

Pop fly drill:

- Have the kids put their gloves on the bench and make two lines in the outfield. Have the coach toss a tennis ball into the air 10-15 feet high and have the kids catch the ball with two hands. This promotes two handed catching and soft hands. Teach them first to run to the spot where the ball is and then get set and make the catch. Do not jog or coast to the ball. Next, toss the ball over their right shoulder and practice the drop step. Remember to have the feet parallel to the shoulders and hands off your knees. For a ball over the right shoulder the first step is dropping the right foot back toward the ball and then crossing over with the left foot. Do not back pedal and always run to the ball. Repeat this tossing the ball over the left shoulder. At first the kids will have very little range, but after a few tosses and getting their footwork down the range will probably double. Once they get the hang of this try tossing the ball in front, to the sides, and directly behind them.

Sample Batting Order & Positions

Player	Game 1			
	Inning			
	1	2	3	4
#1	SS	P	LF	2B
#2	P	LF	2B	C
#3	LF	2B	C	3B
#4	2B	C	3B	CF
#5	C	3B	CF	1B
#6	3B	CF	1B	RF
#7	CF	1B	RF	SS
#8	1B	RF	SS	P
#9	RF	SS	P	LF

Batting order	1	2	3	4
1	#1	#2	#3	#4
2	#2	#3	#4	#5
3	#3	#4	#5	#6
4	#4	#5	#6	#7
5	#5	#6	#7	#8
6	#6	#7	#8	#9
7	#7	#8	#9	#1
8	#8	#9	#1	#2
9	#9	#1	#2	#3

Player	Game 2			
	Inning			
	1	2	3	4
#1	C	3B	CF	1B
#2	3B	CF	1B	RF
#3	CF	1B	RF	SS
#4	1B	RF	SS	P
#5	RF	SS	P	LF
#6	SS	P	LF	2B
#7	P	LF	2B	C
#8	LF	2B	C	3B
#9	2B	C	3B	CF

Batting order	1	2	3	4
1	#5	#6	#7	#8
2	#6	#7	#8	#9
3	#7	#8	#9	#1
4	#8	#9	#1	#2
5	#9	#1	#2	#3
6	#1	#2	#3	#4
7	#2	#3	#4	#5
8	#3	#4	#5	#6
9	#4	#5	#6	#7

Minor League Division

Base running:

- Review running through 1st base and running your hardest without slowing down
- Review base runner's ready position, first step, and cross-over
- Teach correct turns when rounding all the bases
- Runners must understand force plays and when it is safe to run when a force is removed (i.e. not running into outs)
- Stealing
- Sliding

Fielding & Positions:

- Review all fielding positions
- Fielding ground balls using alligator method
- Remember to charge the ball whenever possible
- Throwing to bases
- Foul lines
- Force plays
- Backing up
- Cutoffs
- Tagging runners
- Fielding a bunt
- Infield fly rule

Infield:

- Creeping
- Covering the bag
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Outfield:

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- Grip
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- Use of the pitching rubber
- Pitching motion
- Balance and arm position
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Catcher:

- Go over the equipment
- Blocking balls (preventing pass balls)
- Base stealing
- Framing the pitch
- Foul popup

Hitting:

- Review bat grip and hand positions
- Review swing mechanics and batting stance
- Strike zone
- Bunting (sacrifice and for a hit)
- Keep the bat still and concentration on hitting ground balls and line drives
- Use the batting tee and soft toss drills during practice for extra swings
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Throwing & Catching:

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Safety:

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Equipment and Uniforms:

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Crow hop from third base:

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Grounder to Pitcher & 2nd base (throw to first):

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Covering 1st base:

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Drills - Hitting

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Major League Division

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- Teach correct turns when rounding all the bases
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- Stealing
- Sliding (including pop-up slide)

Fielding & Positions:

- Review all fielding positions
- Fielding ground balls using alligator method
- Remember to charge the ball whenever possible
- Throw to bases
- Force plays
- Backing up
- Cutoffs

Pitching:

- Pitching from the wind up and the stretch
- Use of the pitching rubber
- Pitching motion

Catching:

- Go over the equipment
- Blocking balls (preventing pass balls)
- Base stealing

Hitting:

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- Review the strike zone
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- Review swing mechanics and batting stance
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- Use the batting tee and soft toss drills during practice for extra swings
- On-deck routine
- Quick hands and shortening your swing

Throwing & Catching:

- Review throwing grip
- Crow hop
- Enforce two handed catching
- Around-the-horn
- Outfield throws

Safety:

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- Player achievement metals are given out at the end of the year

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MBA Practice Plan

Date:

Time:

OBJECTIVES:

Warm Up (5 minutes) Make the body ready for practice

Activity	Equipment

Team Talk OVERALL PRACTICE OBJECTIVES:

Goals	
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Skill Development Games and Exercises

Activity	Equipment

Break

Reinforce Skill from Today:	
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Scrimmage (20 minutes) Emphasize last weeks skill and new skill

Previous Skill	
New Skill	

Team Talk (5 minutes) Emphasize new skill and techniques from scrimmage

Scrimmage Lesson 1	
Announcements	
Review	