

Running An Effective Youth Practice



Practice Length

- Don't confuse a long practice with a good practice
- You should be able to get all of your on field work done in 1 ½ hours.

Get the parents to help

- You need bodies for practices to be efficient
- If you have 2-3 good assistant coaches, your in heaven
- However, be greedy. Parents that don't know baseball can still roll baseballs, load a ball on a tee, etc.
- This frees you up to coach and be more effective with your practice time

Work on the Basics

- The most important time of your practice is the first 15 minutes -
- Work hard on “Active Catch” – not just getting the arm loose but improving the skill set of catching and throwing. That work will pay off over and over during your season
- Use drills that build fundamental skills – do infield and outfield basics at every practice.

Keep the drills short

- A ballplayers attention span is short
- Keep the drills moving and their focus will impress you

Add competition to your drills

- **At every level, kids love to compete - they focus and work that much harder when they are working to beat their best friend on a drill**

Combinations

- Can rotate 3 practice groups of 4
- When someone is missing, end the practice with 15 minutes of “3 on 3. Coach pitches on the field behind a L screen. Play 6 outs, using ghost runners. Keep it high tempo, allow only 15 seconds for rotating when a side is out
- Don’t forget to get the catchers their blocking work – everyone hates passed balls but very few practice blocking every week

Make it fun

- Create an environment that is fun and positive
- You can have fun and play high level baseball
- Give them nicknames
- Never penalize a player for a parents decision
- End every practice with something that brings them back wanting to do it all over again