

## **SAMPLE PRACTICE PLAN #1**

6:00 - 6:10

Warm-up – Two laps around the field (they should break a sweat) followed by stretching.

6:10 - 6:15

Throwing

- Always catch with two hands.
- Receive the ball over the throwing shoulder.
- Move feet to receive the ball correctly (do not allow the girls to be lazy)
- Start throwing at a close distance, then gradually move further apart.

6:15 - 6:30

Defensive Position Practice

Separate players into groups - infield, and outfield. Both groups can working with a coach at the same time on their drills.

**Infielders** start with ground balls drill:

Partner ground ball

- Pair the girls up
- Stand about 20 feet apart
- One partner rolls the ball to the other partner
- The ball is fielded with proper mechanics

Important tips for fielding ground balls:

- Feet a little more than shoulder width apart.
- Weight on balls of feet. (Softball is not played on your heels.)
- Field balls as far out in front of you as possible.
- Always field ball in front of you - not off to either side.
- Look the ball into the glove. (Each partner should see the other partner's ponytail or top of head, when fielding a ball.)
- Don't just bend at waist when fielding, bend at waist and knees. (Thighs parallel to the ground)
- Cover up the ball with throwing hand when ball goes into glove.

Glove positioning - the back of glove should be on the ground when fielding - not the tips of the fingers of the glove. Give each partner at least 10 ground balls. The key is to field properly. This drill is not a race and doing it 10 times the right way is better than 100 times the wrong way.

Hit Ground Balls - Goal here is to get lots of grounders while fielding properly.

#### Lots o' balls

- Put half of the players at SS and the other half at 3B.
- Hit a ball to SS.
- Hit a ball to 3B.
- After player fields the ball she should throw ball back to hitter (not a hard throw) and rotate to end of line.
- Continue this cycle until each player receives at least 7 ground balls.

This provides players with lots of grounders quickly without taxing their throwing arm. Here's another drill:

#### Live fielding with throws to all bases

- Position players in the infield.
- Hit grounders to each position-throw to 1B.
- Hit grounders to each position-throw to 2B.
- Keep going with throws to 3B and Home.
- Repeat cycle.
- Most throws in a game go to 1B, so make sure lots of throws go to 1B.

## Outfielders

#### Fly balls

- Put outfielders in the outfield.
- Hit fly balls to the 1st player in line.
- She should rotate to the end of the line.
- Repeat the cycle.

Tips for catching fly balls:

- Always call for the ball at least 3 times "ball, ball, ball"
- Always catch with two hands.
- Catch the ball over throwing shoulder.
- Catch ball at or just above forehead level.
- Catch ball on left foot (if player is right handed or vice versa) with weight coming forward - this will help when teaching the crow-hop later.

## Ground balls

There are three ways to field ground balls in the outfield: safety, triangle, or do or die. The player should use the safety method when there is a base hit, but there will be no play made at a base. The purpose is to make sure the ball is fielded in front of the outfielder without bobbling the ball.

Mechanics of the Safety:

- Charge the ball under control.
- Stay as big as possible, just in case the ball takes a bad hop, only bending at the knees until ball reaches you.
- The ball should be fielded in front of body - not to the side.
- WATCH THE BALL ALL THE WAY INTO THE GLOVE!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Use two hands

Techniques of fielding a groundball:

- Feet a little more than shoulder width apart.
- Weight on balls of feet not on your heels.
- Field balls as far out in front of you as possible.
- Always field ball in front of you - not off to either side.
- Look the ball into the glove. you should see the players ponytail or top of head, when fielding a ball.)
- Don't just bend at waist when fielding, bend at waist and knees. (Thighs parallel to the ground)
- Cover up the ball with throwing hand when ball goes into glove.

Glove positioning - the back of glove should be on the ground when fielding - not the tips of the fingers of the glove. Give each partner at least 10 ground balls. The key is to field properly. This drill is not a race and doing it 10 times the right way is better than 100 times the wrong way.

## Communication

Communication is very important in the outfield. Someone needs to call for the ball and someone has to back up the play.

- Put players into 2 groups. Centerfield needs to be one of the groups.
- Each catch needs a back up, they should be at least 15 - 20 behind fielder
- The fielder should call for the ball 3 times ie "mine, mine, mine"
- Encourage your outfielders to call for the ball right away.
- On a fly ball do not call the ball on its upward track because the wind may take it somewhere the player does not expect. Call the ball as it is coming down.

6:30 Water  
break

6:35 – 7:00

### Hitting and Bunting

Hitting takes some major organization. You have 12 players with 25 minutes left. Pair up your players. You need 6 stations to keep them all busy. With ½ hour you have 5 minutes per station. Here are some stations know a head of time which stations you will use and set them up during the water brake:

- T Station (batting T)
  - a. Outside
  - b. Inside
  - c. Down the middle
- Soft Toss - one person hitting into net or fence and partner tossing balls from the side.
- Soft Toss on one knee (concentrate on upper body.)
- T on one knee (concentrate on upper body.)
- Shadow Drill - Player stands so her shadow is somewhere in her sight. Place a ball on the head of her shadow. Get into stance (make sure ball is on head of shadow), swing, look at your shadow. Is the ball still on the head of your shadow? It should be!!
- Ball Bouncing Drill - Player gets a ball. Using a bat, see how many times the player can bounce the ball into the air. Eye-hand coordination (this is a fun drill).
- Belly Button Drill - Player faces the fence. Place bat against belly button and fence (bat will be parallel to the ground). At that distance player should be able to swing without hitting the fence. This drill is good to make sure the swing is short and compact.
- Dry Cuts Drill - Player has a bat and the Coach talks them through a swing by saying "Trigger, Stride, Swing." Repeat.
- Coach Pitch Drill - Behind a screen, the Coach pitches to player about 20 feet away. Sling slot is fine. Get closer if needed.
- Shag Drill - Sometimes this is needed to keep things going (shag the hit balls).
- Hip Twist Drill - Place the bat behind your back, parallel to the ground. Hold it there with your arms. Put a T at the height of the bat head, swing, and concentrate on turning your hips - hit the bat off of the T.
- Blind Drill - Use whiffle balls. One partner hits, the other partner pitches. Batter closes eyes - partner is 15 - 20 feet away. At pitch release or right after (depending on the skill), the pitcher yells "open". The batter then finds the ball and hits it.

6:30

Cool down summarize and clean up

