

## **EP Fastpitch softball practice drills and tips**

### **Warm ups, Throwing, Fielding**

#### **Warm ups & Stretching**

- Static (in a circle)- Arms, shoulders and legs
- Dynamic (lines)- Most important. 40-50 feet out and back. Knee hugs, Heel grabs, Butt kicks, High knees, Power skips, Power scissors, Toy soldiers (toe touch), Forward lunges, Lateral Shuffle, Skip with rotation and Side step lunges.
- Running (lines)- 50% out and back peddle back, 75% out and back peddle back. Dive back drill- Line up on foul line facing infield and on the signal have the players take a lead off, dive back, pop up (as if there was a wild throw) and steal second. Note: On dive back, instruct players to reach for back corner of base farthest from tag and turn head towards outfield to avoid being hit in face by the throw.

#### **Throwing Drills (ALWAYS CATCH WITH TWO HANDS)**

- One knee-Wrist flick drill- Have two players take a knee and face each other 8-10 feet apart. Support throwing elbow at shoulder level with glove hand. Flick ball to partner to practice wrist action and ball release. Arm should not move, only wrist. Look for backwards rotation.
- Swim drill- Have two players face each other 15-20 feet apart. Legs should be shoulder width with knees slightly bent, Make figure "8" motion to glove side and then end at throwing side with arm up, thumb/ball facing back (towards second base), torso turned and front elbow pointed at target. Pause, check form and then throw to partner. Make sure thrower bends at the waist on follow through and finishes with "hand in the pocket."
- Step to ball and shoulder turn- Have two players face each other 25-35 feet apart. Legs should be shoulder width with knees slightly bent. When the ball is thrown, the player receiving should step towards the ball with their glove leg, bring their back leg forward with foot turned out 90 degrees so shoulders turn and line up properly, bring arm to throwing position (pause to check) and throw with proper form.
- Regular throws- Step to the ball with no pause and use crow hop for more distance/ power. Gradually extend distance between players.
- Relay drills- Line up 4 to 5 players in a line with cones about 40 feet apart. Have the player at one end start by throwing the ball to the next player's glove side. The receiving player should call for the ball, turn and throw to the next person in the line. When the ball reaches the end of the line, the player should tag the cone (base), turn and throw the ball back starting a relay the other direction. Have several lines race each other. Rotate players to different positions.
- Star Drill- Break up players into five positions (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, SS, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Catcher) Start by having the catcher throw to SS, SS throws to 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> to catcher. Make sure players step into their catch, use two hands and use good form to throw. Rotate players at each position after each rotation. After a few rotations, switch directions. Go catcher to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> to SS, SS to catcher.
- 4 Base Drill- Start by having the catcher throw to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> back to

catcher and continue around the bases while rotating players into positions. After a few rotations, switch directions. Focus on foot work, accurate throws and calling for the ball. As an alternative, have each player practice tags before she turns to throw to the next base.

## **Fielding**

- “Ball Every Days”- rolling ball to a partner on dirt- about 10-15 feet apart. Good form- knees bent, chest out, glove on ground, throwing hand ready. Focus on form and glove scoop
  - Middle (front facing), scoop out
  - Front Hand (to glove side), scoop out
  - Back Hand, glove starts on ground and is brought up to ear as ball is fielded
  - Middle, take 2 steps, scoop on throwing leg, pop up and turn into throwing positions and roll back to partner.
- Infield Ground balls - (This can be done in 2 lines, one at SS, one at 2<sup>nd</sup>, OR if you have a lot of girls, use all the positions) Roll balls to girls in each line, have them use good fielding form, scoop the ball, pretend to throw home and run the ball to a bucket behind 2<sup>nd</sup> base. They should drop the ball in the bucket and get in the opposite line.
  - Rolling balls to players with No gloves
  - Rolling balls to players with gloves
  - Hitting to players with gloves
- Follow the ball- Start with player at catcher, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. The rest should line up at 3<sup>rd</sup>. Hit the ball to the player at 3<sup>rd</sup>. She fields and throws to 2<sup>nd</sup>. She then follows her throw by running to 2<sup>nd</sup> for the next play. The player that receives the ball at 2<sup>nd</sup> throws to 1<sup>st</sup> and follows her throw. The player at 1<sup>st</sup> throws to the catcher and follows her throw. The catcher receives the ball, hands it to the coach and runs to the back of the line near 3<sup>rd</sup> base. The next player in line steps up to start the process again by fielding a ball at 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **Outfield** - (Calling the ball in the air at the top of the arc)

- Football drills- Players line up on the foul line with a ball of their own. The first player will hand it to the coach. She then sprints toward the outfield. When the coach yells “ball”, she will keep running but look back for the ball, track it, call for it and move to it for the catch.
- Drop step drill- The player faces the coach. The coach will hold a ball up either on his right or left. The player should then drop step to that side and run while keeping an eye on the ball. When the coach switches the ball to the other side, the player should plant her outside foot, turn her hips, rotate the other direction, drop step and start running until the coach changes direction again. The coach will then throw a ball for the player to track and catch.
- Safety Stops- Fielding a ground ball in the outfield with knee on the ground to keep the ball in front. It is used when the batter got a for sure base hit and the outfield wants to make sure the ball doesn’t get by them and roll to the fence or if backing up a base from the outfield on an overthrow.