



COACHING 10U PLAYERS

FEATURES OF THIS AGE GROUP

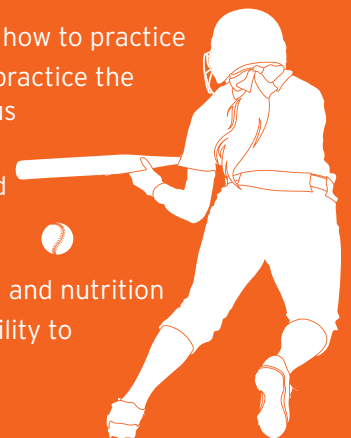
- Developing self-concept
- Learning social skills and how to interact with peers
- Starting to understand the rules of a game or sport
- Fine-muscle motor skills NOT developed
- Limited ability to react quickly to stimulus
- The primary method of learning physical skill is an repetition

PRINCIPLES

- Focus on large muscle and simple motor skills
- Emphasize the development of confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, and cooperation
- Emphasize having fun and making 100% effort
- Focus on primary, fundamental skills
- Simplify the rules
- Focus on developing good practice/learning habits

MENTAL PREPARATION

- Expand on the basic rules of the game
- Introduce the role and positioning of different positions (e.g., 3b plays up to cover bunt)
- Focus on the importance of teamwork (usually takes two players to get an out)
- Focus on sportsmanship
 - Appreciation of opponents and officials (cheers and analogies opponents and umpires)
 - Support of teammates (no put-downs)
- Teach why and how to practice
- Introduce and practice the concept of focus
- Introduce the importance and techniques of warming up, general fitness, and nutrition
- Develop the ability to give 100%



SOFTBALL SKILLS – PHYSICAL

Focus on the most fundamental skills in softball: throwing and catching the ball and running. Hitting should deal with the basic technique, focusing on the development of hand-eye coordination and ensuring bad hitting habits are not developed (e.g., swinging up.) Try to teach the whole motion of a skill. Break down the components only to correct a specific problem.

THROWING

- Focus on “full motion” (body rotation, big “C” or “pet the dog” with the arm)
- Give players homework to watch college softball players on video and imitate their motions
- ✓ Check the following:
 - Pivot step with the correct foot
 - The lead shoulder at the target
 - Stride foot pointing to the target
 - Elbow higher than shoulder
- Show glove to target and pull glove side elbow to the body as throwing arm moves forward towards the target
- Eyes on target - Throw at a specific target, not just towards it (e.g., at the receiver’s glove or chest)



CATCHING A THROWN BALL

- Focus on safety and confidence (they go hand in hand)
- Work without gloves frequently (tennis ball a good options also)
- ✓ Check the following:
 - Facing the thrower (square)
 - Using both hands
 - Never point fingers at the ball (glove should always be perpendicular to the path of the ball)
 - Move to the ball, trying to catch it in the vertical centerline in front of the body

FIELDING

- Demonstrate and practice the basic fielding “ready” position. Glove down and knees bent
- Walk into the pitch; i.e., a pitcher is about to release the ball, start walking forward. Take a few steps to get ready
- Emphasize moving to the ball, and cradling the ball up toward the belly. (practice without gloves as much as possible)
- Move quickly into throwing position
- ✓ Check the following:
 - Good throwing mechanics
 - Eye following the ball into the glove (or hands)
 - Ready to field on every pitch



SOFTBALL SKILLS - PHYSICAL

RUNNING AND BASE RUNNING

- Introduce "running start" from a base
- Practice running for speed over short distances (e.g., home to first)
- Emphasize "fast feet"(feet touching the ground for the least amount of time)
- Work on proper way to round the bases
- ✔ Check the following:
 - Running in a straight line to the target
 - Arms moving back and forth
 - Arms in sync with legs
 - Push with toes



HITTING

- Focus on developing hand-eye coordination (contact rather than power) and emphasize watching the ball all the way
- Develop a desire to hit
- ✔ Check the following:
 - Proper loading on the back leg and weight transfer on the swing
 - Smooth swing directly to the ball (no hitches or dropping of hands)
 - "Level" swing to produce line drives (avoid swinging up)
 - "Dead down," "shoulder to shoulder" (follow the ball all the way to the bat)

BUNTING

- Introduce the basic sacrifice bunt

FITNESS

- Develop flexibility skills (how to stretch)

PITCHING

Learning to pitch is a journey. Pitching is as much a mental game as a physical one. At this level pitchers will not likely throw many strikes. Focus on absorbing the necessary skills to eventually pitch strikes.

- Emphasize the long term nature of learning to pitch, the necessity of constant practice. Encourage/require a parental commitment to daily practice. Teach parents the fundamentals.
- Coaches may recommend players start going to a pitching coach
- Focus on teaching the full motion, breakdown components only to fix problems
- ✔ Check the following:
 - Body rotation (open > close)
 - Pitching arm in the correct plane (straight up and down - ear and hip)
 - Release point at the hip: do not allow for leaning forward on release (to aim the ball into the strike zone)
 - Stride foot is landing on the power line (line leading straight to plate)
- Advanced pitchers should begin developing a change-up



SOFTBALL WORKOUT

WORKOUT	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

