



Berlin Youth Baseball – Baseball Lingo for Youth

Goal of this document: It's important to realize that most youth don't understand or know the fundamentals of baseball. A lot of youth today do not watch baseball on TV and nobody has truly ever explained the rules to them. As the coach, for youth at this young age, you should not assume that they know even basic terms like "choke up" or "tag up". There is nothing worse than in a crucial point near the end of a close game, you're yelling to a player to "tag up" and they have no clue what that even means. You should make sure to take time during practice to introduce these words and phrases, because even if 1 or 2 of your star players understand it, that does not mean that your whole team understands it. By being able to speak in "baseball lingo" during a game and having your players actually understand you, you'll have a leg up over a lot of teams you're facing.

Repetition is key: Just because you taught your youth team a phrase or word once during a practice, doesn't mean they'll remember. You have to repeatedly re-teach and re-say during practice the key words and phrases in order to ensure they remember it.

Watch your youth's faces: If you tell a player to correct something, and the very next time it happens again, it may not be because they weren't listening, it could actually be because they heard you but had no clue what you meant. Pay close attention, there may be a teaching moment happening where you have to explain a word or phrase.

Sample of Important phrases to teach young youth at practice:

Some Batting terms

Strike Zone: The strike zone differs by league and umpire, but in general you can explain it to the youth as an imaginary box that is the width of the plate, is higher than the batter's knees, and is lower than the words on the batter's shirt.

Choke up: Commonly used when the pitcher is really fast and your batter cannot swing fast enough, then they should move their hands up the bat to shorten the bat

Batters Box: One on each side of home plate, the rectangle in white chalk where the batter must stand in when it's their turn to swing.

Move up: When a pitcher is slow or the batter is swinging way too early, a coach may tell their batter to move up, which means move closer to the pitcher while staying inside the batter's box.

Move back: When a pitcher is fast or the batter is swinging way too late, a coach may tell their batter to move back, which means to move closer to the catcher while staying inside the batter's box.

On-Deck/In-the-Hole: Next batter is "on-deck" and the one after is "in-the-hole".

Some Defensive terms

Force out: If there is a runner on all the smaller numbered bases before them, then the runner can be forced out by the defense simply picking up the ball and touching that next base.

No Force: If there is a runner but one of the smaller numbered bases before them has no runner on it, then the runner is not forced out, thus your defensive player will have to apply a tag on that runner to get them out.

Any base: If all bases are occupied, (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) then yelling "any base" means that the defensive can pick up the ball and touch whatever base is closest to them to get at least one out.

Lead Runner: If there is a runner, and there is nobody on a larger numbered base in front of them, then that runner is the lead runner.

Double play: A double play is an attempt by the defense to get 2 runners out on the same play. The most common scenario, is a runner on 1st base, and the batter hits a groundball. The defensive should try to get the lead runner out by throwing to 2nd base, then throwing immediately to first base to get the batter out as well.

Play in/Move in: If the other team's batter is a weak hitter or the winning run is on base, coach may tell the players to move in, which means take a few steps towards home plate.

Pop up: A ball hit into the air in the infield, if somebody catches it, it's an out.

Flyball: A ball hit into the air in the outfield, if somebody catches it, it's an out.

Call it: Anytime a ball is hit into the air, it is expected that the defensive player who is nearest will yell "I got it", and this is referred to as calling it to ensure no other players tries to get it or crashes into them.

Line Drive: A ball hit in the air, but low and fast usually at a direct line towards a defender is called a line drive and can be caught for an out.

Shift: Some good hitters have a tendency to pull the ball in a certain direction instead of hitting it up the middle. Coaches may ask fielders, before a batter swings, to shift left or shift right in order to be in a better position to potentially field a ball.

Cutoff: When the shortstop goes ½ way out into left field to make the outfielders throw easier, or when the 2nd baseman goes out into right field to do the same.

Some Pitching terms

Windup: A pitcher stands with both feet's toes pointing towards home plate, both sets of toes touching the pitcher's mound. Their glove hand foot moves behind the mound, they pivots their throwing hand foot, as the glove hand foot swings around landing towards home plate. This technique gives a pitcher more power, but is not recommended for young players as it has a higher likelihood of poor mechanics.

Stretch: A pitcher stands sideways, with their belly button facing either 1st or 3rd base, their back foot on the pitcher's mound, and the front foot towards home plate. This pitching motion is shorter and more succinct than the "windup" and is more commonly used for youth to eliminate mechanical issues.

Fastball/Change Up: At younger ages you just want youth to throw 1 pitch and throw strikes, but as they get older you can introduce a change-up which just means that the ball being thrown is at a slower speed than their normal fastball.