



Coaching Drills and Skills

Welcome to Carine Cats Ball Club. This is an introduction to some coaching techniques and various drills that you can use when training your team. This is not a comprehensive coaching and training manual, just some examples that have worked with my teams as I have tried to teach our kids to play the great game of Tee-Ball.

The purpose of this is to give you a range of drills to use at training throughout the season, and to assist you in developing the skills of your players. We want the player's skills to develop each year so they can enjoy more challenges in the game, and provide a platform for them to be able to move on to play Baseball or Softball if they choose.

I hope you enjoy coaching as much as I have and see your children develop in to not just great players, but great sports, great people and great team mates. Thanks for taking your time and effort to coach your teams, and develop your players. Our club is built on your efforts!

Brian White
Coaching Coordinator (teeballcoaching@carinecats.com.au)

THE START OF TRAINING

Throw and Catch – One of the most important skills in Tee-Ball is to be able to throw accurately to your team mate, and to receive those throws. At the start of training get the kids to pair up, not too far apart, and throw to each other. As they get warmed up they can gradually increase the distance between them. For younger players they can line up in front of the coach instead, but try to get them throwing with their team mates as soon as they can.



Ensure that the players are throwing accurately, aiming for the center chest of their team mate, and the throws are arriving on target. Also ensure that the catcher is well balanced and has their glove in the correct position to catch the ball, ie "hands up". See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hu-qaaVLmNo> (*Coaching Youth Baseball Catching Drills & Skills Pt 1*).

This is a great way to start training, and to warm up, given not everyone will arrive at exactly the same time to training.

Once a good block of throwing and catching has been done, the players can start to incorporate other skills such as fielding ground balls directly at them, on their glove side & non-glove side, and catching fly balls. Refer to the links page at the end of the document for examples of these options.

Pepper / "Stinky Cheese" – Pepper is another great way to start training and can be played with a few players, or your whole team, so it is a fun way to start as your players are still arriving.



Arrange the players a couple of meters in front of the coach, and so that they are at least arm's length apart. If you are good enough you can use a baseball / tee-ball bat, but I always used a cricket bat as it is easier to direct the ball.

Hit a small hit to the first player on the right hand side of the line, on the full, and have them catch it. Then get the player to lob the ball back to the coach, under armed, and hit it to the next player to the left. Continue down the line from right to left, hitting catches to each player in turn.

In our version we made the catches easier to take at the right side of the line, and harder to catch as we moved to the left. The most difficult catch would be to the player at the far left hand side, and I would try to make them dive.

If a player can not take the catch, they are to proceed to the far right at the end of the line, and become the "stinky cheese". All players that were behind them move up one place with the aim of getting to the far left hand side, to become the "King" or "Queen" (depending on boys or girls) - Coach to try and ensure all players cycle through the line.

Our players took ownership of Pepper and came up with the term "stinky cheese". It was a bit of fun and added to the good natured competition and banter within our team. Give your team the opportunity to personalize this to something for them if they want.



Coaching Drills and Skills

WARM UP

Stretching / Light Jog – Run the kids through a light jog and stretching regime. At the age of most Tee-Ballers, stretching is not critical, but it is a good opportunity to talk to your players about it and demonstrate from time to time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPBx7IkLK4A> (Dragon Youth Baseball Pre Practice Warmup)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Isvs0t9ctkM> (baseball stretches/ Legit Baseball)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GY4nLlLbi4> (Baseball Arm Stretches and Throwing Warm Up)

Base Running – Base running is a skill that should be practiced and is a great way to get your players moving and warmed up. It is also a great chance to have a competition between the kids and let them race.

Encourage the kids to run as hard and efficiently as possible. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0hQU51ms58> (Base Running Tips - The 3 Ways to Become a THREAT on the Base Paths) for tips on how to run through and around a base. I suggest that the players look at their base coach in the game instead of the ball as stated in the video.

- **Chasey** - Line the kids up near Home and, using your arm as a boom gate, tells the kids when to start running around the bases. Tell them to run as fast as they can, and for the kid behind to try and catch the kid in front. Try to start them so that they get close to catching the kids in front, or even to catch them, near Home Plate. Shuffle the order and run it again with a different kid at the front so they all get to chase.
- **Run through First** – Pair up kids of similar speed at Home Plate and get them to run as fast as they can to First Base in a race. Setup a base next to First Base (a meter or so away) so that each kid can run to their own base and there are no collisions. Have a parent or coach at the finish line to call the winner of each. Make sure the bases are touched and the runners turn to their RIGHT when slowing down after hitting the base. Repeat with different pairs of racers.
- **Relay Race** – Split the team into two groups of similar running ability. Have one group start at Home Plate and the other at Second Base. On “Start” get the first runner from each group to run around the bases and tag their team mate when they get back to the starting point, before the next runner heads off. Remove the Home Plate for this drill as it is not pegged down and we don’t want the kids to slip on it.
- **Relay Race with Sliding** – Same as above, but get the runner to slide into each base, then hop back up and continue to the next base. Do this for all bases except when returning to their starting point. Make sure the kids are wearing their Tee-Ball pants when doing this drill and encourage them to try Pop-up slides when ready. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRqqQGQt9FU> (How To: POP UP SLIDE TUTORIAL!)

Hot Potato – Split the players up into groups of 3 or 4 and give each group one ball (no gloves). Each group will race around the diamond while throwing the ball between them. No player is allowed to hold the ball for longer than 1 or 2 seconds, and they are not allowed to throw it back to the same player that threw it to them. All players in the group must get to throw and catch, and they should stay within a few meters of each other. One player, while holding the ball, must touch each base as they go past it. Coach to time each run to create a competition and race between the groups of players.

Talk to the kids about having quick hands and lots of talk and cooperation between their team mates.

2 Ball Catch – Split the group into pairs and have them line up opposite each other, a few meters apart. One line to start with each player holding 2 balls. Those players are to under arm throw both balls to their partner at the same time, who will try to catch both balls. Then that player can throw them both back to their team mate so they have a chance to catch as well. Give the kids some time to practice and then make a competition of it. If the balls are dropped, that team is out, and last one to keep catching wins. Adjust the pairs of players as required to even it out.



Coaching Drills and Skills

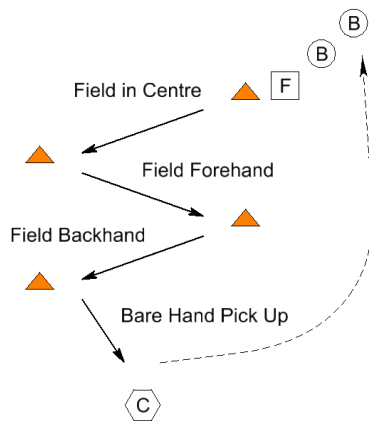
FIELDING DRILLS

The following are a series of drills that can be used to practice fielding technique before moving on to drills around the diamond. Refer to the links page at the end of the document for examples of good fielding technique.

Ground Balls – Split the kids into a couple of groups (depending on how many adults or coaches you have) – 3 groups work well. Get these groups to line up in single file in front of each adult. Have the adult / coach roll the ball to the first kid in line so they can field the ball and throw it back to the coach, then go to the end of the line. As the player's skill develops, have them run in to attack the ball, and give them different bounces to practice with. Also give them the opportunity to pick up a stationary ball, close to the coach, so they can practice their bare handed pickups.

Fly Balls – As above but have the coach / parents lob a high ball to the players in line. Encourage the kids to catch with correct "hands up" technique, taking the ball above their eyes.

Combo – Using the same groups combine the two techniques above. Lob a high ball to the first player for a catch, and then as soon as they throw it back to the coach, roll them a ground ball for the same player to field. The player will take the catch, throw back, field a ground ball, throw back and then return to the end of the line. This is also a great warm up to do before a game with your players.



Ground Ball Cone Drill – With the players split into groups, have the coach / parents roll balls out through the middle of the cones set up like the diagram to the left. Each player to move between the cones to field the balls that are rolled out, before returning to the end of the line.

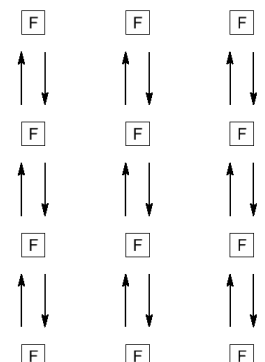
The first ball will be fielded in the middle of the player's feet, directly under their eyes, and thrown back to the coach. The next ball will be fielded on the forehand (glove) side and thrown back, followed by their backhand (non-glove) side and thrown back. Finally the player will pick up the ball rolled closest to the coach with their non-glove (ie bare) hand and underarm it back to the coach before returning to the end of the line.

Move to Fielding Position – Use groups of players again lined up in front of a coach / parent. Coach to roll a ball to the left of the first player who will move across to field it (without their glove) and return to the coach under arm. Then roll a ball to the player's right and have them move across and field and return it. Do this five or six times for each player, having them move side to side to field a number of balls in succession. See about 30 seconds in to this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duJysUUo5zs> (*Extreme Baseball Infield Drills-Major League Fundamentals*). Encourage good foot movement to get in position to field the ball.

Move to Fielding Position and Throw – Have the players line up behind Third Base with the coach positioned in the diamond. The coach to roll a ball out, a meter or so to the left of each player who will crab hop across to field the ball in the middle of their feet, directly under their eyes. The player to then continue moving and make a throw to a coach / parent on First Base. For younger players have them make the throw to pitcher instead.

Relay Throws – Split the group into 2 or 3 groups and line them up, spaced according to the skill and throwing strength of the players. Players to throw the ball down their line, in a relay, and back, racing the other teams. Encourage the players to throw to, and receive on the glove side for faster transition. Increase the distance as arm strength develops.

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgmEKDjFA8Q> (*How to Relay the Baseball*) for tips on how the position to receive and throw the ball.



INFIELD DRILLS

Note – We try to keep the players moving and involved as much as possible in these drills, however there will be some time that they will be waiting for their turn. It is important to make sure when the players are waiting that they are still looking at the ball, for their own safety and to support their team mates.

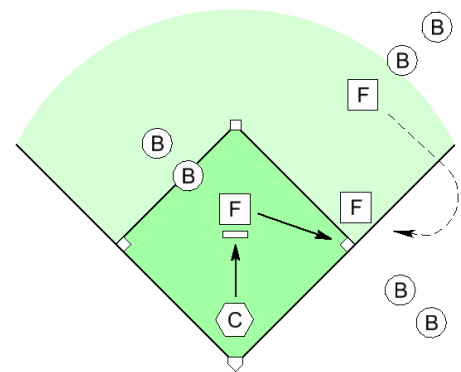
Our team had a rule that if a player missed a ball (hit or thrown to them) then that was ok, but if the ball gets passed the Backup, the entire team had to do 5 push-ups (coaches included). The reason was that even if the kids weren't in the play we expected them to backup their team mates and be aware of the situation. The danger is that if those waiting are not looking at the ball, they could easily be hit by a wild throw and get hurt.

By the entire team (coaches included) sharing the consequences, it reinforces that everything we do affects our whole team, and creates a culture where the players are self-policing. They can still have a laugh and chat with their mates while they are waiting, but in this environment they will do so while still watching the ball and play.

Out at First – Many outs in the game of Tee-Ball will be made at First Base. For younger players a great way to start is to practice the throw from Pitcher to First Base.

LEGEND [F] Fielder → Throw
 [C] Coach [B] Backup - - - - - Run to

Have the coach to roll out a ball to Pitcher who will field and throw to First Base to make the out. For younger players we can use a coach / parent at First Base, but try to get the kids throwing to each other as soon as they can – it will happen in the game! Try to pair your players up at Pitcher and First Base that have similar abilities in throwing and catching, i.e. don't have your strongest throw going to your weakest catcher.

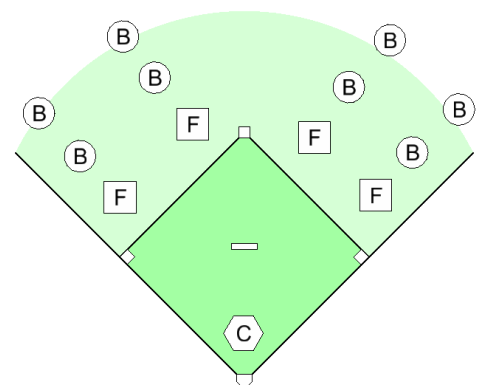


Have the player at Right Field come in behind First Base, near the Dead Ball Line, to back up the throw.

Rotate the groups so that all players get a chance to play each position.

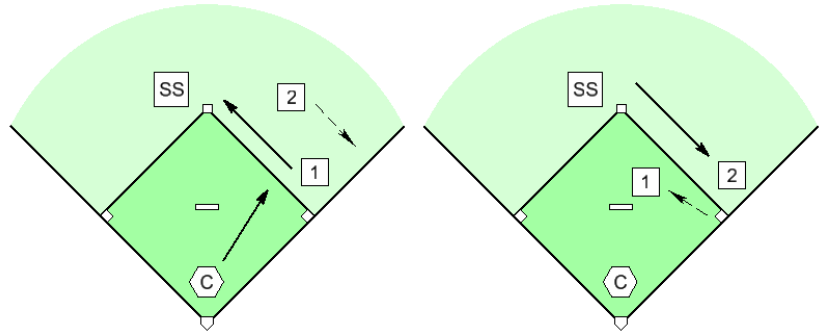
Infield plays – Play through a number of scenarios to practice getting outs at each base. Rotate your players through each position so they can learn them all. Have the coach hit or roll the balls out to:

- Third Base who fields and throws to First Base
- Short Stop who fields and throws to First Base
- Second Base who fields and throws to First Base
- First Base who fields and throws to Third Base
- Third Base who fields and throws to Second Base who rolls a double play by tagging the base and throwing to First Base.
- Short Stop who fields and throws to Second Base who rolls a double play by tagging the base and throwing to First Base.
- Second Base fielder who fields and throws to Second Base (covered by Short Stop) who rolls a double play by tagging the base and throwing to First Base.
- First Base who fields and throws to Second Base (covered by Short Stop) who rolls a double play by tagging the base and throwing back to First Base.
- At the end of the drill hit to each position and have the player field the ball and throw to a catcher at Home Plate, and then run in to clear the diamond.

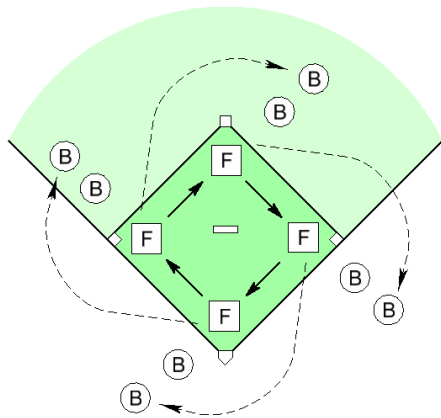


See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fl_vcqwkpmpo (*The Basics of the Double Play*)

Double Play from First – A version of a double play where the ball is hit to the right hand side of the First Base fielder. In this case the First Base fielder moves to their right to field the ball and throw to Second Base (that is covered by Short Stop). During this time the Second Base fielder moves to their left to backup First Base when fielding the ball, and then continues on to the First Base to receive the throw from Short Stop.



Many Second Base fielders and Short Stops are reluctant to get too far away from Second Base in the game. This is an opportunity to remind the players that if the ball is played between First and Second, the Second Base fielder should be fielding the ball or backing up, and Short Stop is responsible for the Second Base. The roles are reversed when the hit goes between Second Base and Third Base.



Around the Diamond – Set up players at each base, inside the diamond, with others behind as backups. Throw the ball around the diamond in a clockwise direction. Once the player makes the throw, they are to follow their throw and join that group at the end of the line.

When the fielder catches the ball have them touch their base before making the throw. Prior to receiving the ball the player should only be a step off the base so it is a small step to make the out.

Make sure the players don't start on the base, this could be "obstruction" for the runner in the game. Practice receiving the ball, touching the base, moving off the base and making the throw.

Chase the Runner – Split the team into 2 groups - one group to be the fielders and one group to be the runners. This drill is a race between a base runner and the fielders.

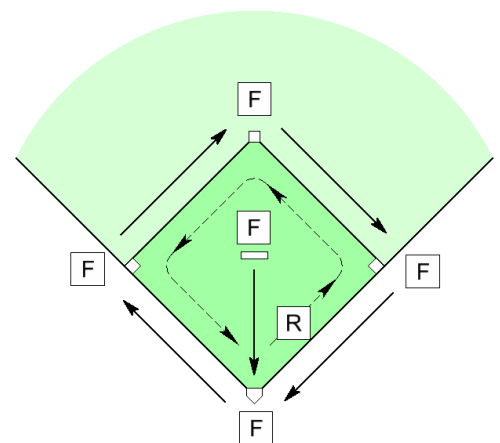
Pitcher to start with the ball and the Runner to start next to Home Plate (not on the plate as it is not pegged down and may cause the runner to slip).

On "Go" the Runner is to run around the bases as fast as possible, while the fielders throw the ball from Pitcher to Catcher and then clockwise around the bases and back to Home Plate.

If the Runner beats the ball their team gets the win, but if the ball beats the Runner Home, the fielding team will win.

Call the next Runner up and rotate all of the fielders around one base position, so they get a chance to play in each spot. If you have 6 on each team, one fielder will rest for each Runner.

Ensure that the base Runners wear helmets when running. When all Runners have had their turn, swap the groups so that the Runners become the Fielders and the Fielders become the Runners.



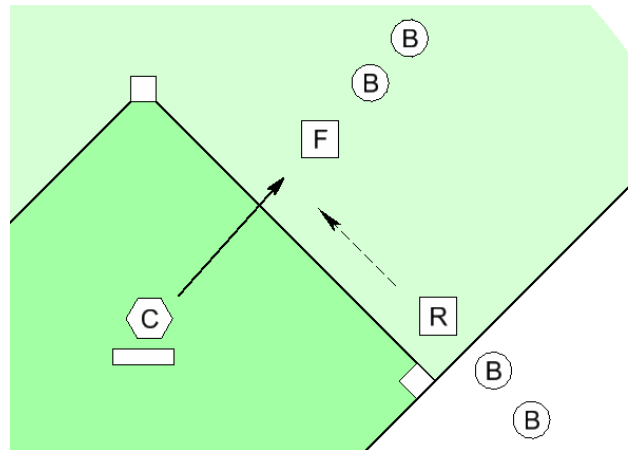


Coaching Drills and Skills

Tag Drill – Have two groups of players, one at First Base (as a runner) and one at Second Base in fielding position. Coach at Pitcher rolls the ball to the fielder at Second Base. A parent or the coach will send the runner from First Base to Second Base. The fielder should field the ground ball and tag the player running towards them.

Make sure that the tag is made with **TWO** hands so the ball does not come out. Get the runner from First Base to run with his glove and join the other group when tagged. After the tag, the fielder will swap groups to become a runner.

Time the runner so the fielder doesn't have too much time to take the ball and make the tag. This makes great competition between the kids and teaches them to field under pressure in a game type situation.



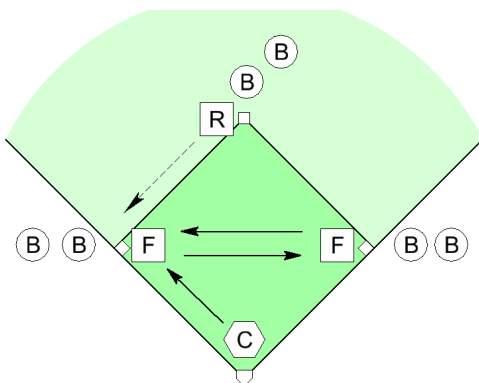
Tag Drill + Double Play – The above drill can be modified so that following the tag being made, the fielder then throws to First Base to make the double play. Add a fielder to First Base to be ready for the throw, who will become the next runner.

Base Running Note: Use the above drill as an opportunity to talk about base running with your players. Make sure they always run hard to the base to beat the ball. But if the ball is fielded early, and there is no chance in the runner not being tagged, have the runner stop and make the fielder come to them. This will take the fielder longer to make the tag and can allow the hitter to make it First Base and avoid the double play.

Run Down Plays – Demonstrate to your players how to execute a Run Down Play, and have them practice it. See the following videos for a great explanation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6Fy98S0WR8> (Ripken Baseball – Rundown)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEam_R1HXF8 (Fundamental Rules of a Baseball Rundown - By Winning Baseball)



Runner Going to Third – As the players develop and get more strength in their arms, we can expose them to more advanced plays.

This drill has a runner on Second Base and no one on First Base. Typically here the Batter would direct their hit to Third Base, or between Second and Third. Until the players have sufficient strength in their arm, we would direct the fielder to hold the ball once fielded to stop the lead runner advancing, thereby giving the hitter an easy run to First Base.

When the players have the arm strength try the following drill.

Coach to roll or hit a ball out the Third Base who will field it and make the throw to First Base. As soon as the throw is made, send the Runner on Second Base to Third Base. First Base must take the ball, touch their base to get the batter out, and then throw back to Third Base. The Third Base fielder should move back to near the base, following their throw, receive the throw from First Base, and tag the runner.

Runners should wear helmets and slide in to Third Base to avoid the tag. Swap the players through each position.

Pitcher Covering First Base – In this drill the ball will be hit to the right hand side of the fielder at First Base. The fielder will move to field the ball, drawing them away from the base. Pitcher will then run to cover the base and receive the throw from the fielder to get the hitter out.

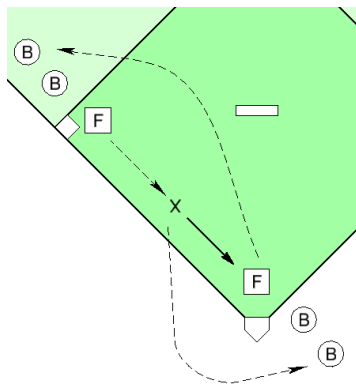
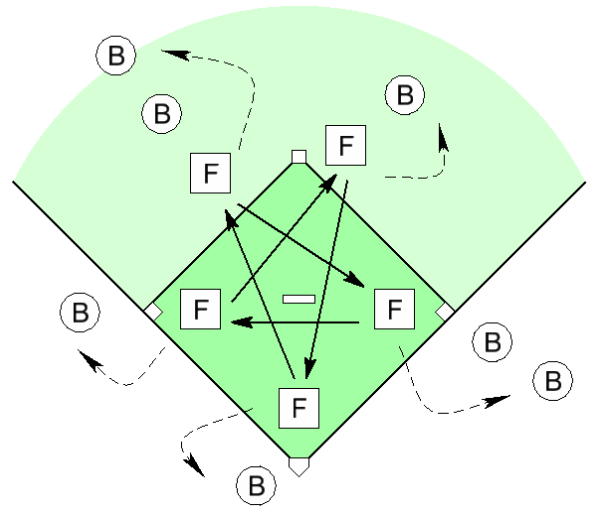
See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZjihadKZLO> (Ripken Baseball - Pitcher Covers First Base)

Diamond Star Drill – Set the fielders at Third Base, Short Stop, Second Base, First Base and Home. Remaining players to backup these positions.

- Catcher will start by throwing to Short Stop.
- Short Stop throws to First Base.
- First Base throws to Third Base.
- Third Base throws to Second Base.
- Second Base throws to Catcher
- Drill Repeats.

Once the player has thrown have them roll behind to back up that position.

Rotate players through the positions and introduce a second ball when ready.



Third to Home – Setup the players in two groups - one at Home plate and the other at Third Base. The player at Home to roll the ball a small distance down the line (no more than a 1/3 of the way to Third Base) and then run to the back of the line at Third Base.

The player at Third Base to run in and field the ball with their bare hand and under arm throw it to the next player at Home, then continue to run through and join the end of that line.

Important to concentrate on a good flick of the ball on the throw, so it hits the target correctly. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfTfwxWZhlM> (Ripken Baseball Fielding Tip - The High Five Drill) to explain a good technique for the under arm flick throw.

King of the Diamond – Have the players line up at Third Base and be ready to receive a ball hit to them. Player to field the ball and throw to a coach or parent on First Base. If they successfully field the ball and make a throw, on the full, so that the coach / parent can catch the ball without coming off the base, they go to the end of the line at Third Base.

If there is a misfield, or the throw is not good enough to First Base, the player will head to Short Stop and line up there. Go through the rest of the line for all players.

Repeat and if the fielder is successful they stay where they are, and if not they slide to the next base (ie Third to Short Stop, to Second Base to First Base)

If the error is made at First Base, that player is out. Last fielder remaining is the “King of the Diamond”.

This is a good test for the players so challenge them with the hits. Incorporate different bounces and spin on the ball.

OUTFIELD DRILLS

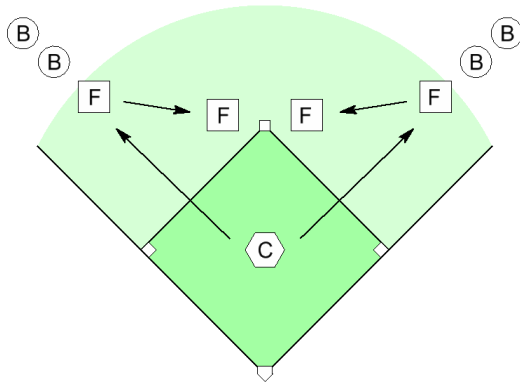
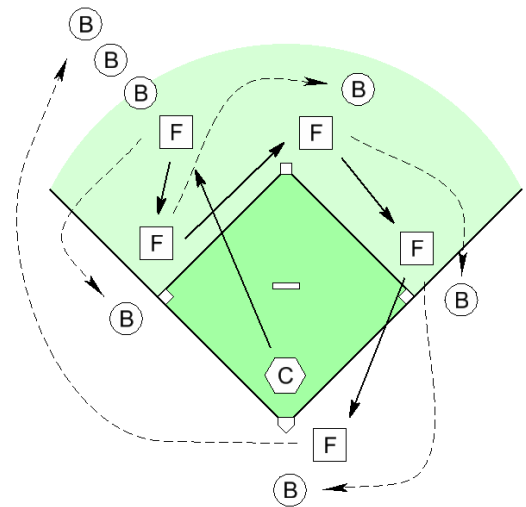
Outfield, then In – Coach hits or throws the ball at Left Field. The first player in line at Left Field fields the ball and throws to Third Base.

Third Base receives the ball, touches their base, moves off the base and throws to Second Base.

Second Base receives the ball, touches their base, moves off the base and throws to First Base.

First Base receives the ball, touches their base, moves off the base and throws to the Catcher at Home Plate.

Players run to the group that they throw to and join at the end of the line.



In to 2 – Split the team into two groups – one in Left Field and one in Right Field.

Coach to hit balls out to each group who will field and return to Second Base. Hit both fly balls and ground balls, both at the players and slightly away from them so they practice fielding in different scenarios.

Have a coach / parent at Second Base to receive the throws in, or have players at both Short Stop and Second Base taking it in turns to receive the ball from the opposite field.

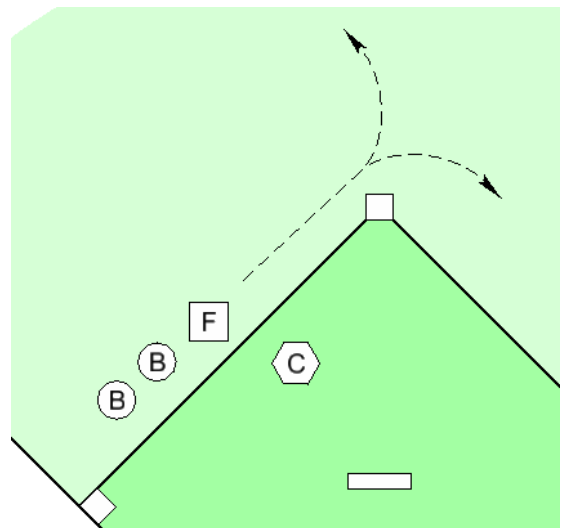
Drop Step – Talk with your players about the most efficient way to move to field an outfield fly ball by using a Drop Step. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvwkdxepgTk> (Ripken Baseball Fielding Tip - Outfield Drop Step). Do this drill and practice on both sides of the player's body.

Fly Balls with Blind Turn – Have the players line up half way between Third and Second (or First and Second depending on the sun angle).

Have them run head down to Second Base, and then turn to the left and look up for a high fly ball that the coach will throw, and move to catch it. Then join the back of the line.

Repeat but this time have the players turn to their right.

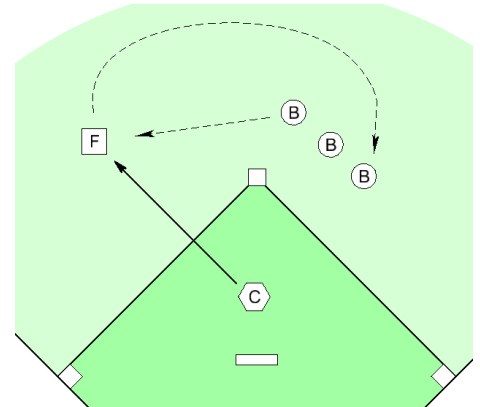
Let the players practice on both sides and then have a competition between the players. If they make the catch then they stay in line. If the catch is dropped then that player is out. Last player remaining wins.



Fly Balls and Communication – Set a fielder up in Left Field (or Right Field depending on the sun angle), with the others in the opposite field (not too far away).

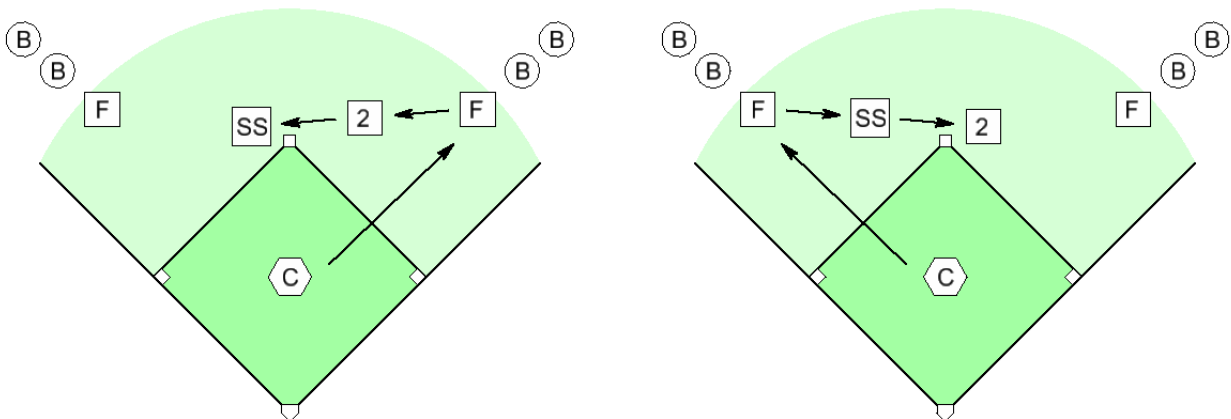
Coach to hit / throw a fly ball to the fielder. The fielder to move to catch the ball while the next player to be catching calls to their mate whether to move “In” or “Out” depending on the depth of the fly ball.

The players on the angle have a different perspective of the flight path of the ball and should help their team mate move to the correct position to take the catch. This encourages our players, who are not in the direct play, to stay involved and do their job for the team.



Ensure the players have to move both in and out in the drill. If moving out, practice their Drop Step as per the other drill

Outfield Relay and Cut Off – Coach to hit the ball to Right Field. The Right Fielder fields the ball deep in the outfield and will need help to get the ball in to the infield. Second Base fielder goes out to a relay (cut off) position and Short Stop covers Second Base. The cut off position should be in a direct line between Second Base and the Right Fielder so the throws will be direct and the return will be as efficient as possible. Right Field will throw to the Second Base fielder who will turn and throw to Short Stop at the Second Base. The Right Fielder will then go to the back of the line in Right Field.

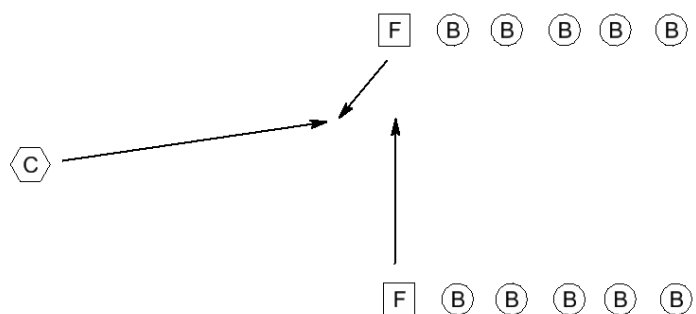


Repeat to the group in Left Field, but this time Short Stop will go out to the a relay (cut off) position and Second Base fielder will cover Second Base. Ensure the cut off position is in line and the correct spacing between the fielders.

Encourage the cut off / relay fielders to catch and turn “glove side” as we did in the relay races drill. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgmEKDjFA8Q> (How to Relay the Baseball) for tips on how the position to receive and throw the ball.

Backing Up – Split the team in to two groups and line them up in front of the coach, about 20m or so apart.

Coach to hit or throw the ball between the two groups but slightly towards one of them. The closest player to call “Mine” and attack the ball to field it. The other player to move behind the fielder to back up. Players to the end of the line following their turns.





Coaching Drills and Skills

BATTING

Where to Hit – It is advisable for the Batter to direct their hits based on the location of any runners on base, to advance the lead runners and try to score runs for their teams. Those scenarios are as follows:

- No Runners on Base -> Hit to Left Field
- Runner on First Base -> Hit to Right Field (Aim to the right hand side of the First Base fielder)
- Runners on First & Second -> Hit to Right Field (as above)
- Bases loaded (all occupied) -> Hit to Right Field (as above)
- Runners on Second and Third -> Hit to Left Field

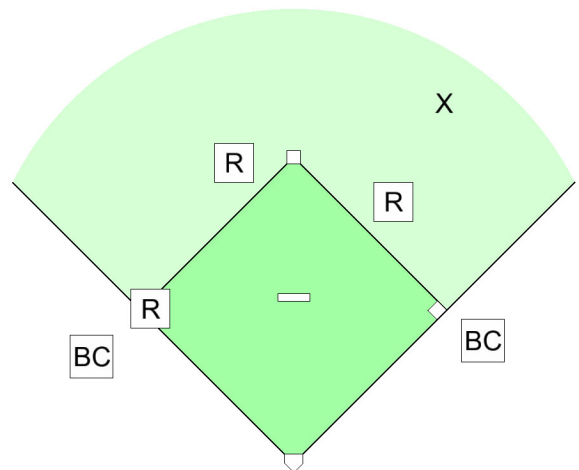
Note: In U7s we instructed our players to hit towards Left Field (either towards Third Base, or between the Third Base and Short Stop fielders) so that the Batter would at least get to First Base safely. There is no scoring in U7s and our main priority is to get the Batter safely to First Base so they have a chance to run the bases, rather than scoring runs. If they get out at Second or Third bases, they will still be happy they had a successful at bat.

Batters should be confident to hit ground balls and also to hit over the infielders. We can work on this with the following drills.

Base Coaches – Encourage your runners to look to their Base Coaches when running. They should be looking at the First Base Coach when running to First to determine if they will be staying at First, or proceeding on to Second Base. After rounding First Base, before getting half way to Second Base, the runner should be looking to the Third Base Coach to determine if they will be staying at Second, or continuing on to Third.

The Base Coaches should also be talking to the runners on base when the Batter hits in the air. When a fly ball is caught a base runner must touch their base, after the catch, before heading on to the next base. Given the distance to the next base there may be a need for a runner to get part of the way towards the next base, while the ball is in the air, so they have a chance to be safe, whether or not the catch is made.

In the case of a ball hit in the air to the outfield, and there are runners on each base, the runners on First and Second should start to move down the line (runner on First could get as far as half way to Second, the Second base runner should only get a couple of meters off Second Base) but the runner on Third should not leave the base. Once the catch is made, or the ball lands safely the Base Coaches can instruct whether the runner should advance or return to their base.



The exception to this is when there are 2 out. In this case everyone should run regardless – if the catch is made the innings is over and there is no opportunity to return to the original base.



Coaching Drills and Skills

Batting Technique – The following are a series of videos that go through the technique of batting. All of your batters will have different swings due to their individual physiology, coordination and development, so these may give you some ideas of how to develop your player's swings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO3PKSAdUSw> (*Beginners Guide to Hitting*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsZGog9xn5Y> (*How to Improve your Hitting with Baseball Pro Tony Gwynn*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keVyBnlHgCo> (*Baseball Hitting Mechanics (Simplified)*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Akyk8BEZ8OI> (*The 7 Steps to the Perfect Baseball Swing*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRBkIwBrENM> (*Load and Separation*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouMN8MvlgIc> (*Drills you can do yourself*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AULUYL79maM> (*Yankees Hitting Coach Gives 3 Tips to Perfect Your Swing*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mn58aE-421M> (*3 Drills To Help You Hit A Baseball With More Power*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HA5Tbmtpv0> (*Load and Body Movement*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC-Obo5miD8> (*Robinson Cano Drill*)

Batting Practice – The most important hitting drill we found was just to let the kids hit. We would set a number up as Batters, depending on the number of Tees that you have (4 worked well), and let them hit out.

A line of Fielders would be placed in front of the Batters at a distance of about where a deep In Fielder would be.

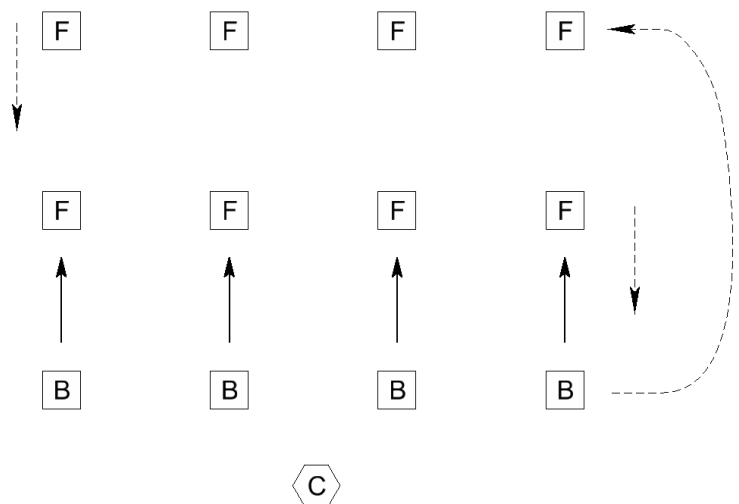
A line of Fielders would then be placed further back, at the depth of where the Out Fielders would be, to back up the In Fielders and to get the bigger hits.

This gives the coach an opportunity to watch each Batter and talk to them about technique and things to work on.

If you have only 3 Tees you can have the same lines but add in the Catchers next to the Batters to receive the ball in from the Fielders.

Once the Batters have hit, they proceed to be the furthest Fielder and each line of Fielders move in so that the In Fielders become the Batters.

This drill should be done at most, if not all training sessions, and before each game. If you don't have enough Fielders, use your parents and helpers as the Out Fielders.





Coaching Drills and Skills

The following drills can be done in the format of our Batting Practice (see diagram above) or using a sub group of players while the rest do other drills and having parent / helpers field and return the hit balls.

We used these drills at the end of training as a competition between the kids (with some sort of prize / award for the winner) or with a consequence for the coach. An example of this would be pushups for the coach if the target was hit or the goal achieved – which the kids loved!

Go for Distance – Set up cones going away from the tee and encourage the kids to see how many they can hit past. Give them more points for the further cones than the closer cones. Encourage them to hit it HARD!

Go for Direction – Set up cones / markers etc at different locations and get the players to try and hit them. Give them points if they can hit them or points if they get close. This can be done as a standard hitting drill or as a fun game using the diamond and the players split into a couple of teams. If using the diamond, set up the markers (tees work well) between First Base and Second Base, and Second Base and Third Base, to encourage the kids to hit through gaps in the game.

For the older players we set up targets next to Third Base to encourage the kids to hit “Down the Line”, and targets in the Out Field to encourage them hitting over the In Field.

Ground Balls – Encourage the kids to hit it hard along the ground. Many players will struggle or not want to do this at first, so you can use push-ups, burpees etc if they hit it in the air. Remember we are not punishing the kids for hitting in the air, just having a fun consequence of going against the drill, so just make it one or two push-ups as a maximum.

Fly Balls – Set up some cones a reasonable (for your level of players) distance away from the tee. Instruct the batters to hit over these markers so that the ball is travelling in the air. For some players you may need to move the cones in, and others move them out. Give them a challenge but we want the kids to be all hitting over the cones. Encourage “flat” hitting so the ball doesn’t loop up too much offering a catch to the fielders.

Batting Box - Talk to your players about how to stand in the batting box. Show them on the diamond how to position their feet if they want to hit to Left Field or Right Field. The coach can help the players in the game, but try to get the players doing it themselves as quickly as possible.

Drop the Bat – Have a short exercise when the kids come up to Home Plate and have a swing off the tee. Get them to swing through, drop the bat – NOT THROW, and run hard to First Base. Make sure they run through First Base before slowing down and then turning to their RIGHT, away from Second Base. We never used a ball for this drill, as we wanted the kids to concentrate on the action of swinging and dropping the bat and running hard to First, instead of the actual hit. Many players will get so excited about the hit they will unintentionally throw the bat at the completion of the swing. We want to make sure this doesn’t happen so no one is hurt.

Competition – Have a competition with the players for the longest hit before bouncing, the straightest hit (to a target), the shortest hit (with a full swing)

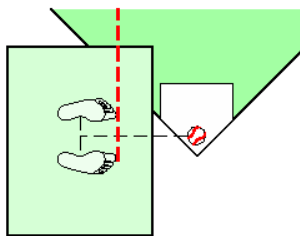
Swing Development – As the players develop we can start to coach them into a swing that is transferrable to Baseball / Softball and does not as clearly telegraph where the ball will be hit.

When children are very young, and new to Tee-Ball, we tend to teach them to line up their feet to where they want to hit. It is an effective technique and easy for the kids to comprehend.

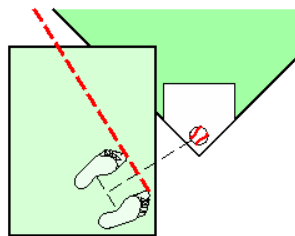
However this is not how we hit in Baseball or Softball. Against a moving ball the process of directing the hit is determined by whether the ball is hit early (towards the front of the Home Plate) or late (towards the back of the Home Plate). Given the ball is stationary in Tee-Ball the way to simulate this is to adjust the position of the Batter's feet relative to the ball.

In doing so we maintain the Batter's alignment to Centre Field / Second Base regardless of where the ball is intended to be hit.

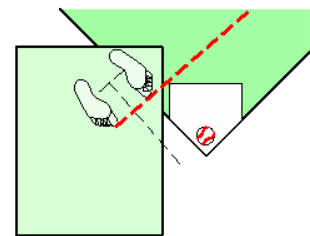
Initially we teach the kids to line their feet up to where they want to hit the ball to



Feet pointing to Centre Field
Hitting to **Centre Field**

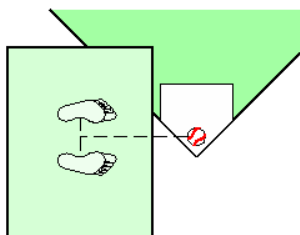


Feet pointing to Left Field
Hitting to **Left Field**

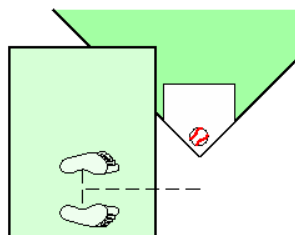


Feet pointing to Right Field
Hitting to **Right Field**

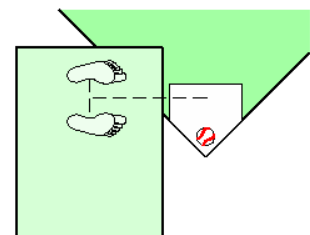
In this case the feet are all lined up to Centre Field / Second Base, but the position to the tee is forward or back in the batting box



Centre of feet aligned with ball
Hitting to **Centre Field**



Centre of feet behind the ball
Hitting to **Left Field**



Centre of feet in front of the ball
Hitting to **Right Field**

Have your players experiment with this technique as their swing develops. Some will pick it up quicker than others but it is worth persisting with. Get them to try and hit to Left Field, Centre Field and Right Field while their feet point to CF.

The other advantage to this technique is that the Batter is able to make slight adjustments with their hands in the swing to refine the location of where the hit is intended to go.

Additionally players can experiment with this setup towards the back of the box (i.e. hitting to Left Field) but incorporating a longer front foot stride to change the contact point so the hit is directed more towards the opposite field.



Coaching Drills and Skills

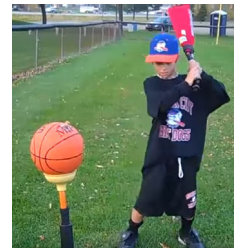
FUN GAMES AND TRAINING EXERCISES

Always try to incorporate a game, competition or fun game in your training. It would be boring to run the same drills over and over, so mix up and get the kids to have some fun and compete.

Sliding – On a hot day set up some black plastic and use some soapy water to make it slippery. Then talk to the players about how to slide into a base and have them practice on the plastic. Get the players to wear their Tee-Ball pants and have towels ready for after. If you are up to it, demonstrate for the kids – they will think it is hilarious! Ensure the kids slide hands up and use cardboard if you can't get plastic and water - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kiiOXW41kl> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BlbkFkhAMA>

Chase down game – Have two teams – one hitting and one fielding. Split the fielding team into 2 groups, one half on First Base and one half on Third Base. Get the hitter to hit the ball as far as they can and start running around the bases. Once the ball has been hit, the fielder on First and Third (one only for each) can leave the base and chase the ball. When they get to the ball and pick it up, the runner is called to stop and the hitting team receives one point for every base that has been reached. Repeat for the other batters and then swap.

Jumbo ball – Take the top of the tee out and put a funnel or plunger in instead. Use this to hold a deflated netball / basketball / soccer ball etc. Split the teams into two groups and have one hitting and one fielding. The fielders should occupy the infield positions. If you don't have enough for all positions the Pitcher can also play Catcher.



Have the batter hit off the modified tee and hit the deflated ball as hard as they can. Then the batter should drop the bat and run around the bases as fast as possible.

The fielders (no gloves required) will field the ball and get it to any two bases (a fielder must be holding the ball and touch the base, before passing it on to the next base). Once the ball has been through two bases, it must come to Home Plate. As soon as the ball is held and Home Plate is touched, the runner is called to stop.

The runner gets one point for their team for every base that has been touched. If the runner gets Home before the play is completed, they should turn and run for First Base again. Try to get Home twice if you can! A good side challenge between the kids is to see what is the record number of bases that can be reached in the play.

The fielders are able to pass the ball in any way they want including by throw or kick. Encourage them to work together as they would in a normal Tee-Ball game and to back each other up. No outs are made in Jumbo Ball so if the ball is caught off the bat, it is play on. The game stops once the ball has been through two bases and then back to Home.

Rotate the fielders through different positions in the game. Each batter will hit, and once all have, that will be the end of the innings and the two teams will swap. Play a couple of innings if you have time.

Another challenge that can be added is to remove the tee for the second innings and have the coach soft toss the ball to the hitters.

Parents vs Kids game – We use this as our pre-Christmas wind up and last training before the end of the season. The kids love it, and so do the parents. Make it harder for the parents by having them bat left handed with the bat upside down. Ensure the safety of the kids at all times when the adults are playing.

We do not normally allow older siblings to play these games as they find it harder to control the pace of the ball and are a bit more competitive which can lead to injuries for the younger players (who are our responsibility).

If you have older kids that are keen to join in, use them as umpires and base coaches, which they often enjoy.



Coaching Drills and Skills

Target Practice – Set up a tee with a ball on it and have the kids try to throw and hit the ball. You can start with a larger ball (such as a flat netball / soccer ball – use a funnel in the top of the tee to hold the ball on if needed) and work down to a smaller ball as the skills develop.

Some teams use a mascot, such as a teddy for target practice. The winner of the drill gets to take the teddy home for the week before bringing it back to their next training.

Play Tee-Ball – A favorite of the kids is just to play the Tee-Ball game. For 12 in a team, have 3 hitters, and the rest in infield positions, with a pitcher and catcher, and the outfield. Use parents and siblings as your outfielders if you are short of players.

Have the hitters bat through two or three times, depending on how much time you have. If all are on base and you run out of hitters bring the closest player home to hit again.

Have base coaches at First and Third to get the players used to listening for instruction. The coach should be at Home instructing the players and umpiring the game. Use this as a learning opportunity to explain things that happen in the game situation as they arise, and how the players could improve the play next time.

Once those players have hit, put them in the field and bring Catcher, Pitcher and First Base in to be the next hitters. Third Base, Short Stop and Second Base move into the First Base, Pitcher and Catcher positions respectfully, and the outfielders move to Third Base, Short Stop and Second Base. The hitters will take up the outfield positions.

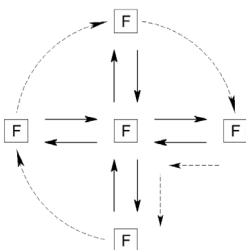
This will cycle the players through each position to give them opportunities at each. It will also stop the kids asking to always be at their favorite position (such as Pitcher). Ensure the Pitcher has the correct protective gear on at all times and no practice swings from the players waiting to bat.

Other Tee-Ball Game Variations – Other variations include (these can be not scored or scored games for a winner):

- **Short Sided Game** – Split the group in to two smaller teams (e.g. 5 vs 5 or 6 vs 6) and have them play against each other. The coach or the players can determine which positions they will field i.e. only having two Out Fielders, Pitcher also plays Catcher, one fielder for both Second Base / Short Stop positions.

With the reduced number of fielders there are many gaps so the kids will enjoy Batting, and the Fielders must work together to cover the entire Diamond.

- **3 Teams** – Setup 3 rosters so there are 4 Batters and 8 Fielders (you can use parents / helpers to fill Center Field, or leave a gap for the team to defend). Put the kids in fielding positions that you want them to practice and let the Batters hit a few times (3 works well). Then swap the teams out so that the Batters become fielders and 4 of the Fielders become the new batting team and repeat. Swap the Fielders so they can practice a couple of different positions.



Quick Hands Game – Set up the cones in a cross shape with a Base pegged in the center. The distance of the cones can be determined by the skill of your players.

Have 4 players position themselves at each cone and one in the middle on the base. The player in the middle starts with a ball, and with their foot on the base at all time, throws it to the first player at a cone and then receives it back, and passes to the next player in a clockwise direction. Once all players have caught and returned the ball, the player in the center puts the ball down and everyone moves around one position.

Once the player who originally started in the center returns there, the group is to sit down and signal they are done. Use this as a race between groups at the same time. First team to complete it and sit down wins.

Work on fast hands and lots of talk. You can add variation by only using over arm or under arm throws. The Coach can swap players and even the teams as required to get results as close as possible.



Coaching Drills and Skills

GAME DAY

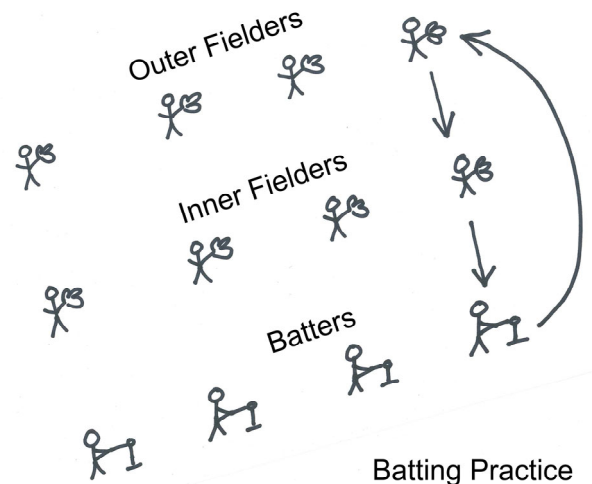
We have always used the same procedure on game day so the kids get into a routine, are organized and know what is required of them. In this way if the kids are organized and the coach / manager / scorers etc are organized, the game will move quickly and we will get in as many innings as possible in the hour allocated. The more innings played, the more at bats the kids will get, and the more positions they will get to play in.

Warm Up

We start our warm up with 4 tees setup and 4 batters. 4 kids will then be fielders in front of the batters, at a safe distance (like an infielder on the diamond), and the final 4 kids will be backing up those fielders (as say outfielders). Let the batters hit for a few minutes and then send them to be the furthest fielders (outfielders). Bring the (in)fielders in to be batters and the previous (out)fielders in to be the (in)fielders. Cycle them through so everyone gets a hit.

This is a good opportunity for the coach to watch the players swing and help with technique.

If you have only three tees, have three "Catchers" next to the hitters that the fielders can return the balls to.



Once everyone has had a hit, bring the kids in and split them into a couple of groups (depending on how many adults or coaches you have) – 3 groups work well. Get these groups to line up in single file in front of each adult. Have the adult / coach roll the ball to the first kid in line so they can field the ball and throw it back to the coach, then go to the end of the line. Repeat this through the line and incorporate fly balls as the players skill improve.

Finish your warm up so the kids are on the bench 5 minutes before the start of play so you can ensure everyone is organized and ready to go.

Start of Game

Talk to the kids on the bench prior to the game and make sure they know if they are batting or fielding first. Then make sure they know which order they are batting in or which position they are fielding in first. We use a magnet board to help the kids know what is required. The kids not fielding can help you change the magnets for the next innings.

Make sure the kids have their mouth guards in, shirts tucked in and shoe laces tied. Then get them to line up behind First Base or Third Base ready for the umpire.

Game Play

Try to keep the game moving as quickly as possible so you get as many innings in as you can. Have the players run in between innings and be ready to bat / field as required. Save breaks till after the game so you don't waste time.

In U7 and U9 the coach is able to be in the field (out of the way, usually behind Second Base or Short Stop) to help guide the players. Encourage the players to try and get outs, and make the throws to do so. Encourage trying to get 3 outs and back into batting.

Encourage the players to field in their position and do their job for the team, not run to other position and take over. Encourage the players not directly involved in the play to back up their team mates.

Encourage fair play and fun. Respect the umpire's decisions (it is a hard job and nobody is perfect) and be ready for your turn. Enjoy the contest and the challenge rather than the win. There are no finals at the lower levels.



Coaching Drills and Skills

After the Game

Give three cheers to the other team and the umpires.

Talk to your team about good team plays in the game and acknowledge good individual efforts and improvements in skill. Share the awards between the players through the season – it is not hard to find great plays or improvements in each player of your team.

Make a note about things you need to work on / teach that you can use at your next training session. Also make a note of who your last batter was, so you know where to start for the next game.

OTHER NOTES

TBWA offer coaching accreditation. It is a half day course and is really informative. If you would like to attend this please let me know and I will arrange it through the club.

Please read and get to know the rules of Tee-Ball to help you understand the game. Refer also to the Carine Cats Ball Club Tee-Ball Division Umpires Booklet for great tips and any local rules.

From the start of the 2018/19 season the following new rules have been introduced:

U7 CLUB RULE CHANGES

- NO scoring
- Do NOT take a base on a pass ball. You can still call a pass ball and then play stops. This is to try and encourage kids to make the out at first on the throw.
- No strikes

U9 CLUB RULE CHANGES

- Removed the batting arc
- Strike rule will remain in place, no strikes until after Christmas

Refer to <https://www.tbawa.com.au/about/for-umpires/training-and-accreditation/> for the official rule book (that you can download) and the Level 1 Umpire Video that will give you an understanding of the rules in play.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Coaching is a continual learning endeavor so I would encourage you to talk to other coaches, watch how other coaches train and drill their teams (take the good, leave the bad), look at the many resources on the web (some links will follow to get you started) and talk to your kids and older players. They are a great resource!

Please remember that coaches are teachers and role models - we want to develop not just good players, but good people. Sport gives us the opportunity to accept a lot of challenges and to overcome them, or to learn from them. Think about what you say to the kids because they will remember what you say, and how you say it, and they want to make sure you have their best interests at heart. Be yourself, develop your own style and have fun! The more fun you have, the more fun the kids will have.

Please try to keep your sense of humour, and your patience. You will find many trying times as a coach, but remember that we are there to help the kids, and that we are the adults. We want our sport to be a positive experience for both the kids, and their families, and also the coaches, and want the kids to look forward to playing or training with their mates at any chance they get.

Thank you for your efforts and your time. I hope you have a great experience coaching and enjoy the opportunity to spend this time with your children and getting to know their friends.



Coaching Drills and Skills

LINKS

Please find below a series of links to get you started. I do not recommend everything in these videos, but I think they all offer some really good examples of technique. You will find that in a team you will have many variations of techniques that are unique to the individual. The following links will give you a starting point to a wide range of resources that you may be able to use in different scenarios with your players.

TBAWA:

<http://www.tbawa.com.au/> - Tee-Ball Association of Western Australia

Fielding Drills:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_Krz-SjRzo - Warriors Infield Drills - Youth Baseball Instruction
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfgSNwFVv1s> - Ripken Baseball Fielding Tip - Fielding a Ground Ball
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oG6gQe2gXUk> - How to: Field a Ground Ball | Baseball Fielding Tips
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7_mciKbLRo - Simple & Easy Baseball Fielding Drills for Kids
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Jgo7ngPmw> - 3 Simple Tips To Become A Dominant Infielder
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9tIZjZHtc> - The "Big 5" Must Know Infield Drills - By Coach Mongero
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=mP8V17j-yH4> - Infielders - How To Improve Your Hands (Simple & Effective Ways)
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=duJysUUo5zs#> - Extreme Baseball Infield Drills-Major League Fundamentals
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xO6tTxEADLw> - Fielding Drills, Everyday Drills (Short Hop / Long Hop)

Throwing Technique:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PbsQ3g33YQ> - Learning How to Throw the Baseball Correctly (7 & 8 year olds)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHRU973uu2c> - How to Throw a Baseball - Baseball Throwing Mechanics
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmFSIUWnAEI> - Baseball Throwing Progression Drills
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-IS351mEkQ> - Youth Baseball Throwing Drills
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_zWCRbrV1Y - Throwing Instruction and Drills

Catching Technique:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hu-qaaVLmNo> - Coaching Youth Baseball Catching Drills & Skills

Hitting Drills:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO3PKSAdUSw> - Beginners Guide to Hitting
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsZGog9xn5Y> - How to Improve your Hitting with Baseball Pro Tony Gwynn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keVyBnlHqCo> - Baseball Hitting Mechanics (Simplified)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Akyk8BEZ8OI> - The 7 Steps to the Perfect Baseball Swing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRBkJwBrENM> - Load and Separation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouMN8MvgIgc> - Drills you can do yourself
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AULUYL79maM> - Yankees Hitting Coach Gives 3 Tips to Perfect Your Swing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mn58aE-421M> - 3 Drills To Help You Hit A Baseball With More Power
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HA5Tbmtpv0> - Load and Body Movement
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC-Obo5miD8> - Robinson Cano Drill

Coaching Resources:

<http://changingthegameproject.com/category/podcast/> - Interviews with leading coaches and athletes about youth coaching, player development and making sure kids have fun, no matter the level of their play.

Motivation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7QL6hjeNDA> - Motivational Speech By Navy Seal Admiral William H. McRaven