

Baseball Coaching Clinic

Summary: This clinic will be broken into sections, we will cover the following items:

Preseason- The importance of a team meeting and what to review during that meeting.

Fundamentals of the Game-First time here? Don't worry, we will cover the essentials.

Warm-ups and drills- Something for everyone here, Get them focused and ready to play the game.

Hitting Basics- Brief review of hitting, and what you should know.

Games- Last but not least, don't forget to have some fun.

Preseason team meeting-

Otherwise known as a Whiteboard session, A great way to start off the season and review the basics. Primarily geared towards less seasoned players that may need a recap.

Lets review,

The team rules

1. No Talking when the coach is talking
2. No horseplay
3. Respect your equipment
4. Have Fun!

The positions on the field

1. Pitcher
2. Catcher
3. 1Base
4. 2Base
5. 3Base
6. SS-Shortstop
7. LF-Left Field
8. CF-Center Field
9. RF-Right Field

The rules of the game

1. Innings, outs, balls/strikes, base running, etc.
2. As players mature, the rules will shift slightly. Review scenarios, signs and hitting changes. As well as more advanced elements of the game.

The general involvement, from both coaches and players

1. Coaches- Your goal is to teach and provide tools.
2. Players- Your goal is to take the tools provided and grow with the game.

Fundamentals-

After an informative preseason meeting, let's get our hands dirty with some fundamentals. Lets work on grip, stance and follow through.

1. Four seam grip- Allows the player to throw faster and with more accuracy.
2. Two hands-Use both hands, allowing you to keep the ball in your glove and line up a quicker throw.
3. Throwing mechanics- Review the basics.
 - a. Elbow above shoulder
 - b. Toes pointing towards target
 - c. Follow through below the waist

Warm-ups and drills to review fundamentals-

Let's warm up-

This is centered on throwing progression (all include the four seam grip). Do this progression before every practice and game. These warm ups are designed to work on individual parts of a throwing motion and finish with good throwing mechanics.

- a. Wrist Throw, Work on rotation of ball, not distance of throw.
- b. Stationary throw, Focus on balance and throwing with good over-the-top mechanics.
- c. Stationary throw, turned throwing side. Works to enforce follow through.
- d. Stationary throw, rocking glove side. Helps transfer weight to both sides
- e. Exaggerated motion. Practices repetition.

The below drills will take what we just reviewed and put them into action.

1. Drills centered on catching.

- f. Partner up and face partner. Practice underhand tosses with and without glove. Focus on two hands and soft hands
 - g. Ground balls with and without glove. Again focus on two hands, Shuffle to ball (keep feet uncrossed and posture crouched). Get ball between legs.
 - h. Ground balls and throwing, Field the ball and get to a good throwing position which includes the four seam grip. **Note: this is a drill for the fielder. Remind your players that tosses should be centered around helping the fielder advance his or her skills and are not for showing off that arm.
2. Drills centered on fielding. These are the basic concepts and can be built upon and alternated as the season progresses and players mature.
 - a. Pop ups. Work on two hands and catching the ball in front of the body. Thumb to the ground and no basket catches. *More advanced, move players and begin to have them catch balls over shoulder and while turning around.
 - b. Ground balls. Focus on good mechanics and work on shuffling to get the ball between legs. Use two hands. *More advanced, begin to work on backhand and forehand.
 - c. Stationary body. requires moving glove to both sides
 - d. Balls hit over head. Don't back peddle, Turn shoulders and run to ball. Rotate glove sideways when throwing. Keep throw low and accurate, no higher than 8 feet.
 - e. Slow rollers/choppers. Reading the bounce and charging in on the ball. Staying on two feet to avoid falling.
 - f. Shortstop and Second base exchange (*Advanced). Flip when going to the bag. Toss when going away from bag. Don't bend elbow when flipping ball. Shortstop crow hops across bag. Second baseman plants and throws.
 - g. Situational baseball. Best way to learn the game, Knowing what to do before the ball comes to you. Quick exchange and accurate throws.
 - h. Deep fly balls. Fly balls in the outfield hit off the bat. Game realistic, provides for a more challenging ball to catch.
3. Drills centered on throwing. Similar to fielding, these throwing drills can be adapted and alternated as player mature. In general, throwing drills are usually more advanced and involve more game style scenarios.

- a. Two base exchange. Two lines facing each other about the distance between bases. Player in line 1 throws to other base where player in line 2 meets the ball at the base and throws the ball back to the base at line 1, where the next player meets the ball. Throwing to a location and not a player. Two hands and quick release.
- b. Relay drill. Three lines stretched out about 2X the distance of the bases. Middle line works on turning on glove side while catching ball. End lines work on quick exchanges. Middle line gets two throws, while end lines get one before rotating to the next player.
- c. 3 man rundown. Pickle! Staying on the right side with ball out of the glove. Run the runner 3/4th of the way and throw. Two lines about base distance apart. Player in one line has ball and runs toward other line with ball out of glove. After getting over the 3/4 mark, toss ball to next line.
- d. Around the horn. How the fielders and the ball moves around the diamond. Specifically how shortstop and second base both cover second base. Throws from catcher and first are taken by the shortstop and throws from third are received by second baseman. Coach calls out different bases and the players have to throw to the corresponding base.

Hitting Basics-

1. Three components of hitting.
 - a. Motion
 - b. Consistency
 - c. Balance
2. Four steps of hitting.
 - a. Batting stance.
 - b. Comfort.
 - c. Going through your checklist.
 - d. Hands, feet, bat, location in the batters box, etc.
3. Load.
 - a. Weight transfers back to back leg.

- b. Hands get to a position where they are locked and loaded.
4. Swing
- a. Starts with the hips and hands follow through.
 - b. Back leg turns to allow hips to drive through the zone.
 - c. Hands extend after the body.
 - d. Back leg is bent and front leg is straight.
 - e. Head on ball
5. Follow through.
- a. Balance is key.
 - b. Should be able to hold a good follow through
6. Tee work.
- a. Never too old for tee work.
 - b. Work on individual parts of the swing.
 - c. Top/bottom hand.
 - d. Lower half.
 - e. Upper half.
 - f. Inside and outside pitches.
7. Soft toss.
- a. Coach tosses ball from side (little in front of plate).
 - b. Works on hand eye coordination.
 - c. Add variations with second ball or rapid fire.
8. Front toss.
- a. Coach is 10-15 feet in front of batter tossing ball underhand.
 - b. Works on timing and seeing a moving target.
 - c. Work inside and outside pitches accurately.
9. Overhand toss.
- a. Coach is 20 feet away and throwing overhand.
 - b. More realistic arm angle.
10. Pitching.
- a. Game speed and most realistic.
 - b. Advanced levels can have players pitch to players.

11. Bunting.

- a. Sacrifice and bunting for a base hit.
- b. Work on bunting down the lines and angling where the ball goes.
- c. Good bunting form is similar to a follow through of a swing, hips through the zone.
- d. Bunt from chest to the knees, never bunting up.
- e. Bat is out in front of the plate

Games-

Wrap up the practice with some fun, while simultaneously applying all the techniques we just reviewed.

1. Cucumber.

- a. Everyone throws to coach standing on a base. If you make the throw and the coach holds the bag, player goes to end of the line. If the throw does not make the coach or pulls coach off base, player is out. After everyone has gone, move distance further back. Continue until one is left.

2. Pitching drill.

- a. Throwing strikes is the key to pitching. Set up a target, empty bucket on top of another bucket for example (or to a coach) and multiple teams. Race to a set amount of strikes.

3. Goalie drill.

- a. Set up a "goal" (could be section of fence or between two cones). Coach throws one hoppers to player standing in front of goal. Player job to stop ball. If successful, they get back in line, if goal is scored, player is knocked out.

4. Hot Seat (ground ball knockout).

- a. Coach hits balls to players (A). If player (A) fields ball cleanly, then they are safe. If error occurs, they are on the hot seat. If following player (B) makes a clean play, player (A) on the hot seat is out. If said player (B) makes an error, they replace the player (A) in the hot seat and player (A) goes back in line. Continue until only one player is left.

5. Home Run derby.
 - a. Two teams. Hitting team needs to hit ball into outfield in the air for a home run. Non hitting team is in the field allowed to make plays. If the catch a fly ball, it's an out. If they field a ground ball cleanly and make the throw back into the pitcher it's an out. An error allows the batter to be safe and continue hitting. Once the hitter is out, the next member on that team is up until each player on the team has made an out. After that, rotate hitting and fielding teams.

6. Pickle.
 - a. Coaches stand at the bases and players run between bases. If a coach tags player, they are out. Last player untagged wins.

7. Scrimmage.
 - a. Difficult to accomplish without the right numbers. Best works with coach pitching and a team of fielders and hitters