

## 8U to 10U Progression

Ensure players moving up to the 10U level work on the following

- Basic softball IQ - offense
  - Getting batters exposed to live pitching
  - Getting batters exposed to umpire behind the plate
  - Know and understand your pitch count – what to do when ball 4, what to do when strike 3
  - Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike
  - Stealing – when to leave, how to position feet on base, leading off and getting back
  - Running the bases
  - Sliding
  - **Work on their swing fundamentals**
- Basic softball IQ – defense
  - Proper throwing skills – work on eliminating the rainbow arc
  - Know the number of outs and where the play is
  - Talking in the field
  - Receiving the ground ball and transitioning from glove to throw
  - **Proper throwing**
  - 2-hand catching

## 10U to 12U Progression

Ensure players moving up to the 12U level work on the following

- Basic softball IQ - offense
  - Getting batters exposed to different pitches
  - Understanding and executing on signs
  - Stealing – timing and importance of sliding
  - Running the bases
  - Sliding – hook slide, sliding to back of plate, etc.
  - Work on their swing fundamentals
  - Timing from pitches at 40'
  - More in-depth strategies – bunting to move runners, sacrifice flies, hitting to a location, drawing the throw down, tagging up, etc.
- Basic softball IQ – defense
  - Getting ball out of glove FAST. Quick hard throw to 1B
  - Know the number of outs and where the play is
  - Knowing how to set up a cut-off and execute on the cut off from OF
  - Playing with a bigger ball
  - Pace of play must be faster to succeed
  - More in-depth strategies – fielding position shifts to where a batter is hitting, going home for the force out, Catcher to SS play to draw the runner off of 3B,

## One Viewpoint on Defensive Strategy

	<b>8u</b>	<b>10U</b>	<b>12U</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Envision the field is set up in 4 zones:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right side infield</li> <li>Middle infield</li> <li>Left side infield</li> <li>Outfield</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ball hit into the outfield = hit</li> <li>Ball hit to left side infield = hit. It is likely only 20% of those fielded and thrown to 1B will be an out</li> <li>Middle and Right infield is where majority of the action will be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Envision the field is set up in 4 zones:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right side infield</li> <li>Middle infield</li> <li>Left side infield</li> <li>Outfield</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ball hit into CF, LF = likely a hit. Teach getting ball in quickly</li> <li>Ball hit to left side infield = hard throws may get the out. Practice and educate on quick out of glove and quick throw</li> <li>Middle and Right infield is where you need to expect guaranteed outs – routine plays</li> <li>Utilize some signs for base running and pitching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outfield performance becomes a critical part of the defensive game</li> <li>Player's skills will further define the 1-2 key positions they excel in.</li> <li>Bunting becomes a big part of the short game</li> <li>Being able to get the ball out of the glove and thrown to first FAST is critical. Many easy outs are not gotten simply because the throw to 1B was not in time</li> <li>Use signs for running, pitches, catcher glove location, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>P</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Machine Pitch</li> <li>This position is part of the 1B, 2B, P triangle where data indicates approximately 70% of balls are hit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35' distance to plate</li> <li>You want a pitcher who can throw strikes.</li> <li>Some may have a change up</li> <li>Encourage your pitchers to work on non-practice days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40' distance to plate</li> <li>Ball size increases</li> <li>Pitcher should be able to throw minimum of 2 pitches ( FB/Drop and change up). Many will have additional pitches</li> <li>Calling pitch type and location from dugout is a big part of the strategic portion of the game.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenario – runner on 1B, likely will attempt to steal 2B. Ask your P to throw her first pitch high and inside so the catcher can pop and throw to 2B quicker</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stealing is not allowed so there will be no opportunities to execute throw-downs</li> <li>This is a great position for the player that needs additional work on catching and throwing outside or practice times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blocking is key at this age</li> <li>Continue to do throw downs to 2B even though you may not get the out. Catchers need to practice for 12U and beyond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice quick release/step and throw without taking multiple steps</li> <li>Many outs will happen with quick throw to 3B on attempted steal</li> <li>Consider working on the one-hop throw to 2B glove on steal from 1B</li> <li>Runners will not steal on catchers with strong arms</li> </ul>
<b>1B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position is part of the 1B, 2B, P triangle where data indicates approximately 70% of balls are hit</li> <li>The most critical position in terms of action.</li> <li>Most outs will occur with 1B receiving the throw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is one of the most important positions</li> <li>Will have the best opportunities for outs when you have your best catcher playing this position</li> <li>This position should play in front of the bag and 2-3' off of foul line</li> <li>Work on the relationship between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>. Ideally you want 1B to only field balls hit 2-3 steps to her right. All others should be fielded by 2B, 1B has the bag</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At 12U, you do not necessarily have to have your top athlete play this position.</li> <li>This position is good for players who can catch the ball, has some height advantage and good stretch.</li> <li>Goal is that any ball thrown to 1B will be an out</li> <li>No longer is/has to be best player</li> <li>Quickness is important as 1B will likely be going for the bunt and dribblers past pitcher. 2B will cover the bag</li> </ul>

<b>2B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position is part of the 1B, 2B, P triangle where data indicates approximately 70% of balls are hit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position is responsible for covering all of right side of infield. Most success with player who is quick, aggressive fielder and can cover a lot of ground</li> <li>Eventually you can work on 2<sup>nd</sup> covering 1<sup>st</sup> but not a priority at this age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2B learns to cover 1B when 1B is covering the bunt or a dribbler past P</li> <li>Will play behind baseline, typically</li> </ul>
<b>3B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires a good arm and quick fielding execution</li> <li>Even if this position fields effectively, only 20% are likely to be converted to outs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position is ideal for the player with a strong arm, is quick and can cover ground.</li> <li>Ideally you want this position to cover as many ground balls on the left side of the field as possible.</li> <li>Needs to be quick and cover bunts.</li> <li>Will cover throws to 3<sup>rd</sup> by catcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position is critical and the player will be most successful if they can handle or “read” any play.</li> <li>Quick to cover the bunt, high chopper or dribbler.</li> <li>Quick reaction time</li> <li>This position will typically play 2-3’ off of foul line and in front of the bag</li> </ul>
<b>SS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even if this position fields effectively, only 20% are likely to be converted to outs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You do not necessarily need your strongest player in this position</li> <li>This position will have to field throws to 2B from catcher and back up any grounders 3B doesn’t cover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Athletic and quick is key for this position.</li> <li>Must cover a lot of ground – shallow fly balls and shallow outfield fly balls can be fielded by SS</li> <li>Must have quick throws to 1B</li> <li>Typically plays 3-5’ behind baseline</li> </ul>
<b>RF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is the most important outfield position.</li> <li>The player should play shallow and try to make the shallow throw to 1B for an out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is the most important outfield position.</li> <li>Player should play as a deep infielder to facilitate getting the 9-3 out on a grounder that gets by 2B.</li> <li>Players who HUSTLE and are focused will be a great asset in this position.</li> <li>This position should play more shallow than CF or LF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often the best arm on the outfield will be in RF</li> <li>Position often plays deep infield to get the 9-3 out.</li> <li>Want a player with head in the game, hustles, and is constantly moving to back up throws to 1B</li> </ul>
<b>CF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach this position to field the ball and throw it into the 2B quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position is responsible for keeping the ball in front of them and getting the ball into 2B quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speed matters in CF</li> <li>You want this position to be able to cover a lot of ground, quickly</li> <li>Goal: keep balls in front of them and throw the ball in front of the runner</li> <li>May see this position placed 15’ deeper than RF</li> </ul>
<b>LF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach this position to back up throws to 3B</li> <li>Balls hit to LF should be fielded quickly and thrown in to 3B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position is responsible for backing up throws from catcher to 3B, and throw back quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You want this position to be able to back up throws to 3B</li> <li>Goal: keep balls in front of them and throw the ball in front of the runner</li> </ul>