

**St. John's Minor Baseball Association
Coaching Basics**



**ST. JOHN'S MINOR 'A'
BASEBALL ASSOCIATION**

Catching and Throwing

Teaching Points: Throwing

- grip - across wide seam if possible with thumb underneath
 - Loose
 - do not “choke” the ball
- drop throwing arm down and fully extend back
- Form a letter L above shoulder as arm comes forward
- point glove hand shoulder at target
- Step and throw (back leg leads)
- follow thru; extend arm out in front forming a full circle
- Chest high throw
- keep head steady for balance

Teaching Points: Catching

- catch ball with 2 hands (cushion throw)
- watch the ball into the glove try to catch the ball on your throwing side as this develops quick hands and quick feet

Drills

- Knee drill. Forces player to throw properly by forming a circle with their throwing arm.
- Create 2 equal rows of players. Players catch and throw with a partner while instructors evaluate their performance.

Infielding

Teaching Points

- **legs spread about 2x shoulder width**
- **knees bent and butt down**
- **hands down, extended out in front with glove open wide**
- **eye always on the ball; watch the ball enter the glove;**
- **cushion ball into glove using 2 hands (vacuum)**
- **pivot/crossover and throw**

Drills

- **Quick Hands Drill**
 - **No glove and work with a partner about 10-12 feet away**
 - **assume fielding position (legs wide, stay low)**
 - **Partners roll ball back and forth eventually moving right and left**
 - **stay low fielding and tossing ball**
 - **teaches kids to use 2 hands when fielding ball**
- **Wall Drill (use tennis balls)**
 - **each kid has a tennis ball and glove**
 - **stand about 15 ft. from wall**
 - **throw ball against wall, field it and throw again**
 - **instructors evaluate technique**
- **Practice Drill**
 - **form 2 lines ; instructor throws ground balls to players**
 - **player fields and throws ball back to instructor**
 - **instructor evaluates each performance**

Hitting

Teaching Points

- **bat selection (use a bat you are comfortable with)**
- **plate coverage**
- **grip (align knuckles then ¼ turn)**
- **stance – even with feet about shoulder width apart**
 - **ensure you can reach outside corner of the plate**
- **hands up, above shoulder**
- **swing – slightly lift front foot for weight transfer**
 - **Level with slight lift on follow thru**
 - **keep head down on the ball, stay down**
 - **rotate hips on follow thru**
 - **Back shoulder should be pointed towards pitcher when swing is completed.**

Drills

- **Instructors demonstrate 2-3 times**
- **Allow players to hit off tee and evaluate (5 swings each)**
- **Rotate thru 2-3 times**

Pitching

Teaching Points

- **stretch position only, using 2 portable mounds**
- **ball on hip; come to set position**
- **hands together in front of chest with glove pointed upward**
- **lift front leg, count 2 seconds (reinforce balance)**
- **release hands with throwing hand falling down and extending back to full extension**
- **elbow above shoulder forming a letter L**
- **emphasize balance (with head, shoulders) while pushing off back leg**
- **head does not move but remains focused on target**
- **follow thru – finish in a fielding position**
- **grip – use across the wide seam for best control**

- emphasis is on throwing strikes and not velocity
- arm strength comes from throwing regularly and long tossing

Drills

- instructor demonstrates
- place players on a line and have them go thru set position on your command ; evaluate
- move to the mounds with 2 groups

**** Will need to identify 2 kids to catch or may have additional instructors catch if possible.**

Outfielding

Teaching Points

- Fly Balls - teach ready position
 - keep the ball underneath you always (in front)
 - watch the ball into your glove
 - catch ball above your head, preferably over your throwing shoulder, with 2 hands (quicker release)
 - footwork to throw – right foot over left foot (RHer)
 - left foot over right foot (LHer)
 - throw on a line thru the cutoff man (elbow up – L)
- Ground Balls – with runners on base
 - Charge ball
 - Glove hand leg leading when fielding the ball
 - Head down, watch ball into the glove
 - cross over step (crow hop) and throw ball (elbow Up – L)

Drills

- Fly Balls – 2 groups (assume ready position)

- toss ball into the air to each player
- catch and throw to instructor (evaluate)

- **Ground Balls - 2 groups (assume ready position)**
 - toss ground ball to player
 - field and throw to instructor using proper technique
 - evaluate

Baserunning

Teaching Points - Home to First

- **technique – arms/legs go north/south ; on balls of feet; upper body slightly forward**
- **ground ball – watch ball to infielder ; if fielded cleanly, look to 1st base and run thru the bag thus looking in foul territory as you pass 1st base (overthrow)**
- **if ground ball goes thru, banana out and round 1st base aggressively (head up and locate the ball) thus tagging the base with your left foot preferably**
- **Leaving the batter's box: always think 1 base ahead meaning if you hit a single think double, hit a double think triple, etc.**

Leadoff - Pee wee Division and up

- **always keep your head on the pitcher**
- **never cross over when getting lead (exchange position with feet)**
- **secondary lead – 3 shuffle steps once pitcher begins delivery**
- **getting back to 1st base – 1 step and a dive to back of base**
- **looking in foul territory (overthrow)**

Sliding

- **Start slide about 6 feet from base (depends on age, size, speed, etc.)**

- **tuck leg under lead leg at 90 degrees**
- **Slide on back of thigh**
- **Hands in air (safety)**

Drills

- **instructor demonstrate each skill**
- **divide into 2 groups; have players practice; evaluate**