

Grand Forks Youth Baseball Association Practice Routine:

It is important to plan your practice and have an itinerary available so that the kids know what to expect. Go over the practice itinerary with your team before practice begins.

All Practices should consist of the following components:

- 1) Stretching
- 2) Throwing Drills
- 3) Fielding Fundamentals
- 4) Specialty Drills

Steps 1-3 should be done at the beginning of each practice and should take about 20-30 minutes. After steps 1-3 are completed, gather the team together and talk about the specialty drills and team drill that you will be doing for the day. Specialty drills include hitting drills, infield drills, outfield drills, baserunning, pitching drills, and situational drills.

Stretching Suggestions:

1. Good mornings – lunge forward while raising both arms up and back – down and back
2. Sideways lunges – up one way and back the other
3. Karioka – be sure to rotate hip over properly – face the same way down and back
4. Butt kickers – jog while trying to bring heel to rear end – down and back
5. Crossover sprint – like stealing a base – down and back
6. Frankensteinds – walk forward with arms out front and try to kick your hands
7. Skip – get as high in the air as possible down and back
8. Daisukes – do a jumping jack sideways while moving – face same way down and back
9. Crossover sprint – like stealing a base (same as above)
10. Sit-ups and Push-ups – two sets of 25 of each – count as a team

Arms –

1. Legs spread – hang throwing arm down while bent over and make large circles slowly
2. Stand straight up – arm is above head and making large circles slowly
3. Stand and bring arm from side to shoulder height straight out to the side
4. Stand and bring arm straight forward to shoulder height with thumb up
5. Stand and bring arm straight up at a 45 degree angle between side and front while keeping thumb pointed to the ground.
6. Hold arm out to the side bent at a 90 degree angle with weight up and bring weight down and up in front keeping upper arm straight out.

Throwing Drills: **The most important part of your practice!**

1. Start out on one knee at close distance and cup elbow of throwing arm in glove. Use only upper arm and wrist to throw ball to partner – 30 feet apart or so.
2. One knee toss – to isolate upper body and check throwing mechanics of arm. Bring arm back and up – stop to check that ball is back, fingers on top, and elbow above shoulder then throw and follow through.
3. Stand with feet spread facing partner and use same mechanics and follow through – feet shouldn't move (to isolate upper body).

4. Begin throwing – we make sure that everyone does a right-left-throw (L-R-T for lefties) when they play catch. This forces them to work on their footwork and it makes the transition into fielding a lot easier and more natural.
5. Be sure that they are practicing taking the ball out of their glove and finding the cross-seam grip. Again, makes the transition easier later.
6. Be sure both partners are catching the ball with two hands and moving to the ball rather than reaching for it.
7. Be sure that they are aiming for a small target (chest or head). It's a good idea to have the partners hold up their glove and try to hit it – keeps them focused.
8. We throw to long-toss – as they get spread out, have them use a throw-hop to get some momentum behind the throw. That is, instead of just a R-L-throw, they hop off their left foot into the right-left-throw. This is the best time to practice it and it makes a world of difference if it comes naturally to them later.

Fielding Fundamentals (choose 1-2 drills and rotate each practice):

- 1.. Short-hops
 - a. Bare hand behind back
 - b. Backhand
 - c. Forehand
 - d. Two-hands – bare hand covers ball

*Emphasize starting with glove on ground out in front of body and on balls of feet. Have them put the left foot slightly forward – keeps them off their heels.
2. Relay drill – groups of 4 or 5 spread across a large area. Start the ball at one end and relay it to the other end. Be sure relay man is facing the ball to start with, then shifts his body sideways as he moves to the ball to make the next relay (step in front to get some momentum on the throw). Men on the end fake the relay to the next base (switch after awhile so everyone gets to actually relay the ball)
3. Run-down drill – two lines facing each other about 100 feet apart with one man at the front of one line with the ball. Man with the ball runs full speed while holding the ball up and tosses it to the man in the next line who is approaching under control. Man catching the ball will call “ball” and then be sure to catch it moving toward the other man. After they make a throw, be sure they get used to peeling off and getting out of the way before they proceed to the end of the other line. Purpose of this drill is to give the players the feel for how they need to attack a rundown situation. Don't use runners in this drill because the emphasis is on learning to throw and catch the ball on the run.
4. Run down drill with a throw. Put a player about 100 feet off to the side and when I yell “going!” the player with the ball must gather himself and make an accurate throw to the player on the side. The point is that usually when there's a rundown, there is another runner on base and we need to listen and react without panicking.