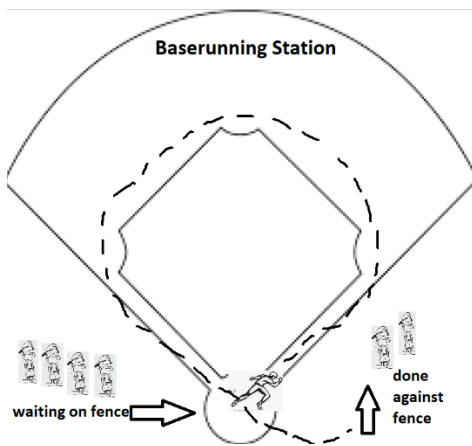




## **Berlin Youth Baseball - Initial Team Assessment**

**Goal of this document:** Provide coaches with ideas for their first practice. You may be looking to determine what your players are capable of, what talent you may have, and what skills your team may need to work on.

**Explanation:** A simple way to do a team assessment on the first practice is have a plan that gives each player a brief opportunity (1 quick turn) to showcase themselves at each of the key skill areas. The goal is not to do any in-depth teaching at this point in the season, but just to assess each player and the entire team's overall strengths & weaknesses. Therefore, each of the drills suggested below should fast-paced and take only a minute or two per player. You'll want to take notes, either mental notes or on a clipboard, of both positive things (talented players, things the team did well at) and areas for improvement (drills the whole team needs work on, players who need work on specific areas). Below is a sample practice plan you could try for your first practice (or spread across 2 practices) to assess your team's talents.

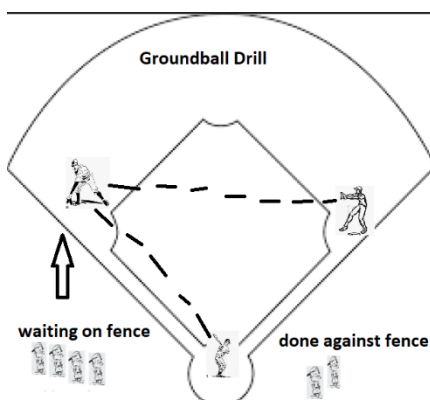


### **1.) Drill: Baserunning**

**Goal:** Assess speed and stamina.

**Overview:** Players lineup against the 3B fence, 1 at a time a player is called over to home. That player starts with their foot on home, coach says go observes the player run around all the bases (optionally you can have a stop watch and time them as they cross home). Each player gets 1 chance to run. After their run they lineup on 1B fence and wait until all players are done.

**What to look for and encourage:** Touching the inside corners, running the whole time, running all the way past home to the fence, positive attitude never giving up.

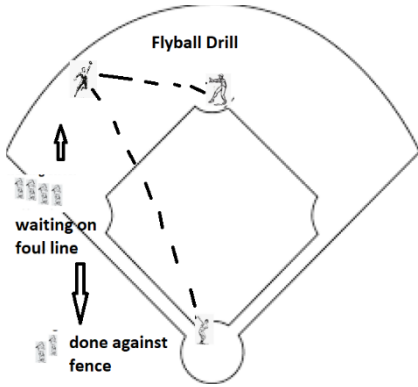


### **2.) Drill: Groundballs**

**Goal:** Assess ability to block ball, arm strength & accuracy.

**Overview:** Players lineup against the 3B fence, 1 at a time player is called to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Coach hits 3 groundballs to each player and throws to another coach at first base. After the 3 groundballs, the player goes to the 1B side fence and waits.

**What to look for and encourage:** Glove down, can stop the ball, step & throw, strength and accuracy, and effort given (especially if they miss, do they hustle to get it or just walk).

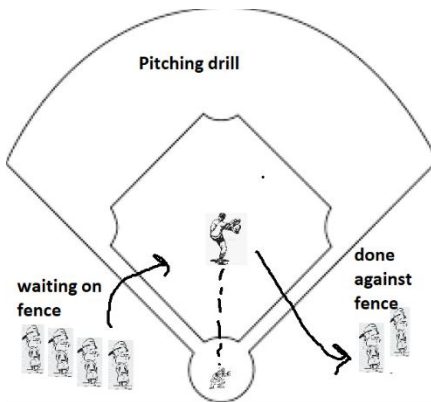


### 3.) Drill: Flyballs

**Goal:** Assess ability to judge a ball in the air, arm strength & accuracy.

**Overview:** Players lineup on 3B foul line in short left field, 1 at a time player is called to Left Field. Coach throws 3 soft flyballs to each player who catches the ball and throws to another coach at second base. After the 3 flyballs, the player goes to the 3B side fence and waits.

**What to look for and encourage:** Glove and second hand raised about the head, step & throw, strength and accuracy, and effort given (especially if they miss, do they hustle to get it or just walk).

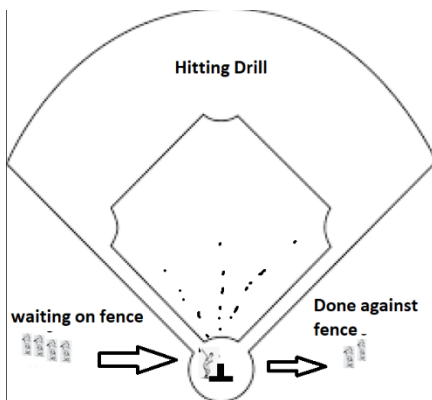


### 4.) Drill: Pitching

**Goal:** Assess arm strength and accuracy.

**Overview:** Players lineup on the 3B fence, 1 at a time player is called to pitcher's mound. Player pitches 5 pitches to a coach as catcher. The catcher throws the ball back to the player at the pitcher's mound each time. After 5 pitches, the player goes to the 1B side fence and waits.

**What to look for and encourage:** At most younger age levels, the most immediate need is to not walk batters, so generally you're not looking for the hardest thrower, you are more likely to succeed by finding an accurate pitcher that can hit the catcher's mitt consistently and has very few wild pitches.



### 5.) Drill: Hitting off Tee

**Goal:** Assess technique, power, and consistency.

**Overview:** Players lineup on the 3B fence, 1 at a time player is called to home plate to hit off the tee. Nobody except extra coaches are in the field. The player hits 5 balls off the tee. After the 5 hits (fair or foul), the player goes to the 1B side fence and waits.

**What to look for and encourage:** At all ages, hitting off a tee is still a core fundamental that should be practiced and each player should be able to succeed at. Watch for bat up, back elbow up, head down, eyes staying on the ball, a compact swing, and a complete follow-through where the bat goes all the way around to their back.

**What to do afterwards:** Immediately after practice, before you forget, dump all those mental notes onto paper so you can use it for future practices. Next practice, you'll want to work on drills that fix the gaps you found (e.g. if everybody is afraid of flyballs, plan drills around flyballs). You'll also want to take advantage of the strengths you discovered to make both practices and games go better (e.g. if you found somebody particular good and catching the ball, having them play first base during infield drills so you have less time wasted chasing after balls).