



Danbury Youth Baseball Cal Ripken League

Fundamentals for All Levels

There are fundamental aspects to the game of baseball from the T-Ball level all the way through the Major Leagues. No player should ever be considered too young to practice these skills or to exhibit these actions.

Sportsmanship

- HAVE FUN
- Learn from mistakes – don't dwell on them
- Respect your coaches and teammates
- Always give your best effort
- Cheer on and encourage the other players
- Shake hands with the opponents –AND- umpire(s) after every game

Safety

- Helmets are to be worn whenever in the field of play as the offensive team including:
- At bat
- In the on-deck circle
- As a base runner
- Bats are only to be swung within the field of play in the batter's box or on deck circle
- Be prepared for the ball to come your way at all times of the game

Preservation of youth arms

- Report all soreness to the coach immediately. Do not continue to pitch through arm soreness.
- Arm care before and after a game pitchers and catchers and other players if available
- Always ice arm after pitching in a game
- Be aware of pitch count and frequency of pitching
- Pitch count limits and required rest recommendations (Cal Ripken Pitch counts)

Age	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	0 Days Rest	1 Days Rest	2 Days Rest	3 Days Rest	4 Days Rest
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+

Visit <https://www.mlb.com/pitch-smart/pitching-guidelines> for more information.

Warming Up

- Warm up to throw, Don't throw to warm up.
- Jogging, Arm preparation movement and Dynamic stretching

Know the Position Names

- Pitcher
- Catcher
- First Base
- Second Base
- Third Base
- Shortstop
- Left Field
- Center Field
- Right Field

Playing the Game

- Always warm up before playing
- Hustle on and off the field
- Pay attention to the game – even while sitting on the bench
- Run hard all the way through first base every time
- No swinging the bat outside of the fence – be aware of surroundings before swinging
- Offensive players must always wear a helmet when on the field. No exceptions.

Ready Position

- Balanced, athletic stance on the balls of the feet
- Glove out – palm up
- Understand the situation – KNOW WHERE THE THROW IS SUPPOSED TO GO

Fielding Position

- Feet wide
- Glove foot forward – toes of the opposite foot even with the heel of the glove foot
- Rear end down
- Glove thumb out – elbow in – flat on the ground
- Ball hand on top
- Flat back
- Eyes down watching the ball all of the way to the glove – should be able to see the button on top of the player's hat
- Ball hand immediately covers the ball inside the glove

Throwing

- Proper ball holding technique – two fingers on top and thumb on the bottom
- Stepping with foot opposite throwing arm with a motion over the shoulder
- Arm extended behind the body and ball thrown over shoulder with arm follow through to opposite leg (prevent "short arm" and side arm throwing)
- Aiming for the catching player's chest

Catching Techniques

- Watch the ball all the way to the glove

Proper catching techniques for catches at:

The chest

- Glove held at the chest
- Glove facing outward
- Fingers up
- Arm partially extended with a “soft” elbow

Groundballs

- Tip of glove touching ground
- Palm of glove facing up to receive ball
- Non-glove hand about 9 inches above ready to cover the caught ball
- Placing the 2nd hand over the ball once inside the glove

Fly Balls

- Run to the location of the ball
- Square up under the ball
- Both hands over head with glove facing upwards to receive the ball
- Non-glove hand should help to squeeze the glove to help prevent the ball from popping out

Batting Techniques

Bat sizing

- Use the proper bat weight – player should be able to hold the bat steady parallel to the ground with an outstretched arm for at least 10-15 seconds – if they can’t, then the bat is too heavy
- Use the proper bat length – bat should reach approximately waist height when stood next to player
- Relaxed grip – knuckles aligned – bat should be in the “middle knuckle” area or the hand grip – not deep in the palm of the hands

Batter’s Stance

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Knees bent
- Balanced and relaxed
- Front foot at approximate middle of plate (slightly back in the batter’s box)
- Should be able to reach outer edge of home plate with bat

Top to Bottom

- Head facing the pitcher so the batter can see the pitcher with BOTH eyes
- Keep head still – track the ball with the eyes only
- Hands together on grip
- Load weight to back foot prior to swing
- Stride (short or no stride)
- Front foot has to be planted before swinging
- Hip rotation as bat comes through
- Back foot pivots with the hip rotation – back heel should be off the ground
- Head should go from the front shoulder to the back shoulder

Swing

- Short, compact swing
- Level swing path
- Follow through

Before leaving the field

- Throw away your own garbage
- Throw away any other garbage laying around
- Be sure you have all your own gear:
 - Glove
 - Hat
 - Cleats/shoes
 - Water bottle
- Help coaches carry equipment

T-Ball Division (not offered at DYB)

Ages

4– 6 year olds

Coach pitches / Hitting off Tee

Purpose

A FUN introduction to the very basics of baseball in a POSITIVE environment.

General Baseball Concepts

All players should have an understanding of the following:

Warm ups

- Warm up to throw, Don't throw to warm up.
- Jogging, Arm preparation movement, dynamic stretching, static stretching

Positions

Players should know where each position is on the field.

- Pitcher
- Catcher
- 1st Baseman
- 2nd Baseman
- 3rd Baseman
- Short Stop
- Outfield

Bases

Players should know what order and sequence to run the bases in

- 1st Base
- 2nd Base
- 3rd Base
- Home plate

Foul Balls

- 1st and 3rd base lines

Players should know what a foul ball is and what it means for ground balls as well as fly balls. Fly balls caught in foul territory is an out as opposed to ground ball.

Outs

- Ways to record an out
 - Force out
 - Tag out (tag must be made with ball in hand or ball in glove)
 - Catching fly ball
 - Strike out
- If batter/base runner is out, they are to return to bench

Scoring Runs

- Run scored once base runner safely reaches home plate

Performance Goals

Throwing

- Proper ball holding technique – two fingers on top and thumb on the bottom
- Stepping with foot opposite throwing arm with a motion over the shoulder
- Arm extended behind the body and ball thrown over shoulder with arm follow through to opposite leg (prevent “short arm” and side arm throwing)
- Aiming for the catching player’s chest

Fielding

- Ready position when batter is in the batter’s box
- Proper throwing technique – throwing over the shoulder
- Proper ground ball fielding – palm up, glove tip on ground
- Proper catching technique – palm out, fingers facing up
- Focus on throwing to 1st base once ball fielded
- Position boundaries (1st baseman not running in front of 2nd baseman to field ball) . Field your position and don’t let every player on the field run after the same ball.

1st baseman responsibilities

- Cover the bag on every ground ball hit to receive the throw from infielders to record the force out.
- On ground balls hit directly to you, field the ground ball and then run to touch 1st base.
- Come off the bag to catch the ball if it is a bad throw, then touch bag.

Hitting

Batting Techniques

Bat sizing

- Use the proper bat weight – player should be able to hold the bat steady parallel to the ground with an outstretched arm for at least 10-15 seconds – if they can’t, then the bat is too heavy
- Use the proper bat length – bat should reach approximately waist height when stood next to player
- Relaxed grip – knuckles aligned – bat should be in the “middle knuckle” area or the hand grip – not deep in the palm of the hands

Batter's Stance

- Feet shoulder width apart
- Knees bent
- Balanced and relaxed
- Front foot at approximate middle of plate (slightly back in the batter's box)
- Should be able to reach outer edge of home plate with bat

Top to Bottom

- Head facing the pitcher so the batter can see the pitcher with BOTH eyes
- Keep head still – track the ball with the eyes only
- Hands together on grip
- Load weight to back foot prior to swing
- Stride (short or no stride)
- Front foot has to be planted before swinging
- Hip rotation as bat comes through
- Back foot pivots with the hip rotation – back heel should be off the ground
- Head should go from the front shoulder to the back shoulder

Swing

- Short, compact swing
- Level swing path
- Follow through

Base Running

- Proper order for running bases
- Foot needs to touch each base
- Always run bases as fast as possible
- Don't watch ball once hit, focus on running to base
- Run through first base, turn head toward foul line or away from the infield
- You can run past 1st base and home plate but not 2nd and 3rd on force play

Rookie Division

Coach and Kids Pitch

Ages

7-8 year olds

Purpose

Build upon the basics learned in T-Ball as players learn to hit a moving ball (review T-Ball Concepts and Goals).

General Baseball Concepts

All players should have an understanding of the following:

Warm ups

- Warm up to throw, Don't throw to warm up.
- Jogging, Arm preparation movement and Dynamic stretching

Home Team vs Visiting Team

- Visiting team begins the game batting

Performance Goals

Throwing

- Proper ball holding technique – two fingers on top and thumb on the bottom
- Stepping with foot opposite throwing arm with a motion over the shoulder
- Arm extended behind the body and ball thrown over shoulder with arm follow through to opposite leg (prevent “short arm” and side arm throwing)
- Aiming for the catching player’s chest

Fielding

- Understanding what bases are force outs throughout the game and when to cover these bases
- Understanding tag plays versus force plays
- Fly ball fielding techniques
- Caught fly ball can be thrown to base with runner in attempt to record a double play
- Concept of backing teammates up

Hitting

- Proper position within the batter’s box to be able to reach far side of plate
- Watch the ball all the way to the bat
- Understanding of the strike zone
- Understanding the count and difference between walks and strikeouts

Base Running

- Eyes on 1st and 3rd base coaches for instructions when running bases
- Touching inside corners of bases while running
- Fly balls require hesitation of running to next base to confirm whether ball is caught
- If fly ball caught, runner needs to return to base they came from
- Understanding secondary leads and why they are important and getting back to base if ball is secured by the catcher
- You can steal after the ball crosses home plate

Sliding

- Feet first slide into the bag

Pitching

- Work from the stretch
- Drive off the back leg
- Follow thru
- Be ready to field your position

Catching

- Have knowledge of the strike zone
- Knowing where to set up...not too close or too far from hitter
- Keep bare hand behind your back so you don’t hurt fingers
- Throwing ball back to pitcher after each pitch
- Receiving with thumb down
- Blocking balls in dirt
- Knowledge of runners stealing base
- Footwork and throwing form is more important than arm strength

Minors Division

Ages

9-10 year olds

Purpose

Build upon the basics learned in T-Ball and Rookie ball as players learn to hit a ball thrown from a pitcher (review T-Ball and Rookie ball goals and expectations).

General Baseball Concepts

All players should have an understanding of the following:

Warm ups

- Warm up to throw, Don't throw to warm up.
- Jogging, Arm preparation movement and Dynamic stretching

Pitching

- Begin to learn about pitching from the windup
- Continue to pitch from the stretch
- Proper lower and upper body form
- Proper arm and leg follow through
- Proper fielding position following the pitch...backing up bases
- Cover home on a passed ball with runner on 3rd
- Covering 1st base

Catcher

- Importance of keeping ball in front of catcher
- Throwing ball back to pitcher following each pitch
- Throwing to base when base runner is stealing (3rd base)

Pitch Count

- Balls and Strikes
- Know the count

Performance Goals

Throwing

- Proper ball holding technique – two fingers on top and thumb on the bottom
- Stepping with foot opposite throwing arm with a motion over the shoulder
- Arm extended behind the body and ball thrown over shoulder with arm follow through to opposite leg (prevent "short arm" and side arm throwing)
- Aiming for the catching player's chest

Fielding

- Execution and knowledge of a cutoff for balls hit to outfield. Every player on the field has a place to be and a job to do.

Defensive Shift

- Right handed vs. left handed batter
- Making adjustments if batter is late or early on pitches

- Bunt defense...everyone is moving and communicating on the field

Infield Defensive Base Focus – 2nd/3rd Bases

- 2nd base responsibilities (2nd baseman vs. Shortstop)
- Begin the concept of backing up the throw from the catcher back to the pitcher
- 3rd base responsibilities
- Covering base when base runner is attempting to steal

Positional Backup Focus – Pitchers

- Plays at any base when ball hit to outfield

Introduction of Positional Backup – Outfielders

- Errant throws/passed balls in infield

Hitting

- Understanding the difference between balls and strikes
- More advanced approach to hitting
- Understanding bunts and how to properly bunt the baseball

Base Running

- Leading off once pitch crosses home plate
- Stealing once pitch crosses home plate
- Proper feet first sliding technique
- Ability to advance to next base on overthrown ball
- Understanding how to advance on balls hit to the outfield
- Getting signs from the 3rd base coach

Majors Division

Ages

11-12 year olds

Purpose

Build upon the basics learned in T-Ball, Rookie ball and Minors as players learn more in-depth baseball knowledge (review T-ball, Rookie ball and Minors Concepts and Goals).

General Baseball Concepts

All players should have an understanding of the following:

Warm ups

- Warm up to throw, Don't throw to warm up.
- Jogging, Arm preparation movement and Dynamic stretching

Pitching

- Pitching from the windup and the stretch
- Pitch from the stretch with runners on base
- Holding runners on base
- Pick off moves
- Continued refinement of pitching mechanics

- Arm care before and after game
- Location, Location, Location...work on changing locations and commanding the strike zone

Catcher

- Throwing to base when base runner is stealing (2nd or 3rd base)
- Blocking pitches in the dirt
- Footwork when throwing out baserunners
- Moving locations of where you set up before the pitch. Give your pitcher a target to throw to
- Communicating to the outfielders and infielders on cut offs and relays
- Communicating to the infielders on bunt plays

Performance Goals

Throwing

- Proper ball holding technique – two fingers on top and thumb on the bottom
- Stepping with foot opposite throwing arm with a motion over the shoulder
- Arm extended behind the body and ball thrown over shoulder with arm follow through to opposite leg (prevent “short arm” and side arm throwing)
- Aiming for the catching player’s chest

Fielding

- Proper way to cover bases when base runner is attempting to steal (2nd and 3rd base) and home for the pitcher
- Run down execution
- Fielding a bunt

Defensive Shift

- Infield in for plays at the plate if coach dictates that

Infield Defensive Base Focus – Home Plate

- Catchers responsibility to cover
- Positioned in front of plate (approximately one foot)
- Catcher as the field “director”
- On in progress plays
- Prior to play beginning (calling outs and shifts)
- Throws to plate from outfield should be backed up by pitcher

Positional Backup Focus – Outfielders

- Any ball hit being an infielders responsibility

Right Field

- Throws to first base
- All fielded balls
- All pickoff attempts
- Throws to second base from left side of field

Center Field

- Throws to second base
- From middle of field
- From the pitcher on a pickoff attempt
- From the catcher on an attempted steal

Left Field

- Throws to third base
- All fielded balls
- From the pitcher on a pickoff attempt
- From the catcher on an attempted steal of 3rd base
- Throws to second base from right side of field

Hitting

- Proper bunting technique
- Picking up hitting signs from 3rd base coach

Base Running

- Primary leads from each base
- The difference between regular lead and 2 out lead at second base
- Proper lead at 3rd base = in foul territory and aware of batted ball at all times
- Stealing 2nd and 3rd base
- proper stealing technique: read pitcher, cross over move, stay low in beginning, run straight to bag, slide into base
- Tagging up on fly balls and looking to advance a base
- Freezing on line drives