

NESCONSET ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

TEEBALL DIVISION GUIDE

Mission:

To grow tee ball by creating an exciting, positive and supportive learning environment where players can have fun while developing their baseball skills, building strong bonds with their teammates, and learning the values of good sportsmanship and fair play.

Values:

1. Make it Fun
2. Make it safe
3. Make it memorable
4. Teach good sportsmanship

During Game Time:

How we make it fun:

1. Since the last batter of the inning hits the homerun, make sure to rotate all kids to bat last and hype them up to "hit the homerun"
2. Rotate all kids around the field. Typically, they all want to play pitches mound or first base. Try to get each kid at 1st or pitcher's mound each game

How we make it safe

1. One kid on deck, one kid at bat, everyone else in the dugout, bats outside the dugout
2. Teach kids in the field to pay attention because the ball could come to them
 - a. Coaches in the field are constantly reminding the kids to look at the ball
3. When the ball is hit, most kids will go for it. Teach them to stay in their area. Coaches need to constantly communicate who's ball it is.
4. Get out of the way when a base runner is running and you have no play

How we make it memorable: *Kids want praise, recognition and to be seen as important*

1. Pick one kid at the end of every game that gets the game ball for showing heart, hustle and to acknowledge they played a great game. Coaches keep a register of who has received the game ball and recognize every kid over the course of the season. This was a big hit with the tee-ballers
2. Have the parent liaison coordinate snacks at the end of every game (juice box and snack) rotate to every parent
 - a. At daycare, the kids talk about being the lunch helper (and their excited about it). They like it because it makes them feel important. Have a kid be the snack helper and pass out snacks to their team mates. (Possibly) We can coordinate this with the parent that brings in the snacks. That kid can pass out their snacks with their parent.
3. Stretching: Pick one kid to lead stretches at each game.
 - a. Typically, limit to 3-4 stretches. Examples: Jumping jacks, arm circles, quad stretch hamstring stretch

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- b. At the end of stretching, have kids run a lap and “race” coach, coach goes 0 for the season
4. Coaches attitude is always positive and reinforces a players ability, skill and makes them feel good
5. See if you can get 1 parent to take pictures of the game. Send the best 2-4 pictures to the league so they can be posted on social media
6. At the end of the season when we hand out trophies, have graduation stickers for the tee ball kids to put on their helmet for “graduating” tee ball” this is only for kids going the next level up. The kids that are still in tee ball will get their sticker when they graduate tee ball.

How we teach good sportsmanship: Empathy, fair play & positive reinforcement

1. Congratulate your team members or opposing team when something good happens
2. When the coach gives the game ball to a player at the end of the game, prioritize good sportsmanship and recognize this
3. Focus on having fun, it’s not about the score
 - a. If a player asks the score, tell them there is no score, we’re here to have fun.
4. Get into a “Winners’ Circle” after each game and give your athletes the chance to tell their teammates the good things they did during the game.
5. Coaches lead by example
6. Prioritize having fun
7. Emphasize it’s not about the score
8. Respect the game

During Practice

How we make it fun

Make it interactive

- Incorporate ways to have the kids show what they know. For example, when we teach how to hold the baseball, the next week when we review it, pick a kid and ask them to demonstrate to the team. This can be done for most skills (running bases, ready position, moving to the ball, 2 hands to catch, etc)

Keep them moving

- Have as little idle time as possible
 - With hitting, it’s 1 kid that playing and the others that are waiting for the ball to be hit. To keep the other kids moving, have hitting be a 1:1 coach instruction and the other players are with the other coach learning / practicing a skill, such as fielding or throwing

How we make it memorable

1. During practice, all teams start with 2-3 minutes of calisthenics. Choose 1 kid each week to lead the team.

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2. Coaches need to connect with players and get to know them (old adage, nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care is true of kindergarteners as it is adults)
 - a. Since there are 2 coaches and the hitting drills are 1:1. The coach needs to use this time to make the player feel valued. Similar if you have more than 1 kid and need to give each some time so they are not always competing for yours
3. Celebrate their achievements. For example, if a kid is struggling hitting, when they connect in practice, high five them, recognize what they did was awesome, or if a kid is having trouble throwing, when they make a good throw, hype it up

How we teach good sportsmanship

1. Coaches lead by example
2. Prioritize having fun
3. Teaching to cheer on congratulate team mates when they do something good
4. Emphasize it's not about the score
5. Respect the game

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Practice Schedule

Each team has 1 practice before opening day (week 0). This is to meet the kids / parents and have the first practice. This practice is a little longer (about 1 hour) and starts laying the groundwork for teaching the fundamentals.

For the first 6 games, the objective is to build up the fundamentals of the game, running bases, getting into ready position, knowing their position in the field, throwing, fielding and catching. Since there are 2 games a week, the practice agenda repeats weekly, games 1, 3 and 5 run the same drills, games 2, 4 and 6 run the same drills, then the second half of the season, we start putting the pieces together.

Week 0: Prior to Opening day (45 – 60 minutes)

- Meet kids and parents, kid and coach introduction
- Establish parent liaison and social media parent
- Explain the game of baseball, put it into 5 year old language (realize that kids attention spans are limited. Needs to be kept short).
 - How to run bases
 - What to do when ball is hit (introduce the concept of field division and only the player the ball is hit to gets it)
- Calisthenics
 - Coaches do 2-3 minutes of warm up: Jumping jacks, arm circles, hamstring and quad stretch
- Teach throwing (All kids)
 - How to grip ball
 - Have kids sit in a line in front of coaches.
 - Coaches have equal number of balls for each coach and kid. Coaches hold the balls
 - Ask each kid which hand they draw with, this is their throwing hand
 - Coach shows how to hold the ball, three fingers on top, thumb on the bottom
 - Coach hands out balls to each kid. Coaches take time with each kid to show how they hold the ball.
 - Have kids practice taking the ball out of their glove with proper throwing grip
 - How to throw ball
 - Line the kids up at the backstop and then take 5 steps back.
 - Coach demonstrates throwing
 - First grip the ball as we practiced
 - Stand with glove (non-throwing hand) facing the fence
 - Point front toe to target
 - Look at target
 - Make a T with their arms, point your glove at the target and look at the target. Then throw the ball to the target
 - If they're getting the concept, teach follow through with back foot

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- Teach base running by playing running bases
 - Explain the concept of running to first, second, third, then home. Then follow it up with a game of running bases, slightly modified
 - Coaches use tennis ball. And setup bases as in a game. All kids start at home and run to first when coach says go. Coach tries to tag players or throw to the other coach. No kid is out, we want them all to run the bases, trying to tag them is what makes it fun. Coach at home moves to second. Coach on first says go, kids run to second. Coach on first goes to third, coach on second throws. Repeat a few rounds around the bases to instill the kids run first, second, third, home.
- Hitting practice (What they all want to do)
 - First bring all kids in and teach bat safety, they are only allowed to swing in the on deck circle or at home plate
 - Have 1 coach in the field, 1 coach at home
 - The coach in the field is teaching ready position and to move to the ball like a frog
 - Have the kids take a position in the field and introduce the concept of their zone. Draw this out on the field (Make pizza slices). Have each kid rotate around the field. When batter is done, kid at third comes into hit, all players rotate around the field, kid hitting goes to first
 - Have each kid take ~ 10 swings and on the 10th swing, run to first like we practiced
 - When teaching hitting, utilize the 7 points of hitting
 - Foot placement (draw a line in the dirt and have kids stand behind it, no plate crowding)
 - Hands are back
 - Position of front foot (between 2nd & 3rd for righty, between 1st and 2nd for lefty)
 - Belly button is facing the pitcher
 - Squish the bug with your rear foot, heel points to the sky
 - Eyes on the point of contact
 - At the end of the swing, the bat points to the catcher
- End first practice
 - Coaches discuss opening day and our first game

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Game 1 / Game 3 / Game 5 (25 - 30 minutes):

- (2 minutes) Go around and do names again (This will be more for the coaches than the kids)
- (2 minutes) Review what we did at the previous practice
- (2-3 min) Calisthenics
 - Pick 1 kid to do the warm ups that we did in practice 1. This kid will lead the team. Then, the last is to run the bases with the kids to instill the way we run the bases. One coach lead, one coach at the end. The coach at the end provides instruction to those kids that still need it when running bases
- (3 – 5 min) Have kids line up 4-5 steps from the backstop and have them practice throwing to the fence. Same method as practice 0
- (12 – 15 minutes) Fielding / throwing & Hitting, Exercises: With 2 coaches, have 1 coach teach fielding ground balls and base running while the 2nd coach takes the tee and teaches hitting. I believe hitting is best when it is a 1:1 (coach to kid). Also, we want all kids doing something.
 - (2-3 minutes per kid) 1:1 (coach to kid) hitting instruction
 - Hit balls into the fence so we don't lose time chasing the ball
 - Follow same hitting instructions from week 0
 - (8 minutes) fielding. 2nd coach teaches ready position
 - Line up the kids in front of the fence and teach the kids to get into ready position because they don't know when the ball will be hit to them
 - Teach to hop like a frog to the left and to the right
 - Teach them when they catch the ball the clam shell technique to use 2 hands
 - Then spread the kids out and randomly throw groundballs to the kids (look for the one not paying attention and throw that kid the ground ball to reinforce, the ball can come to you at any time
 - Have the kid practice their grip and throwing when they throw the ball back to you
 - (5 minutes): Teach positions in the field
 - Have all the kids take a position in the field and divide the field into 6 slices. Each kid goes into their slice. Coach will roll ground balls to each kid and emphasize to the others to stay in their slice
- Juice break
- Game time
 - Before the game starts, draw 5 or 6 distinct lines on the field and let the kids know that is their zone (or pizza slice)

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Game 2 / Game 4 / Game 6 (25 – 30 minutes):

- (2 minutes) Review how to get into ready position and hope like a frog to the ball and use the clam shell technique. If you noticed the kids were struggling with gripping, throwing or running to first review that too
- (2-3 min) Calisthenics
 - Pick 1 kid to do the warm ups that we did in practice 1. This kid will lead the team. Last, run the bases. One coach lead, one coach at the end. The coach at the end provides instruction
- (3 – 5 min) kids line up 4-5 steps from backstop and have them practice throwing to the fence
- (10 – 12 minutes) Catching / throwing & Hitting, Exercises: With 2 coaches, have 1 coach teach catching and throwing while the 2nd coach takes the tee and teaches hitting.
 - (2 minutes per kid) 1:1 (coach to kid) hitting instruction
 - Hit balls into the fence so we don't lose time chasing the ball. Follow guidelines from practice 0
 - (8 minutes) catching & throwing.
 - Catching: Each kid has a softie ball
 - Have each kid throw the ball up a little bit and try to catch in their glove.
 - Teach use two hands, finger pointing upwards (2 minutes)
 - Line up the kids in front of the fence and teach the kids to get into ready position because they don't know when the ball will be hit to them
 - Teach them when the ball is coming their way, thumbs down (or fingers down) if the ball is low (i.e. at their knees) and thumbs up (finger up) if the ball is high (i.e. at their stomach or higher)
 - Spread the kids out and randomly underhand throw low and high balls to the kids (look for the one not paying attention and throw that kid the ground ball to reinforce, the ball can come to you at any time
 - Have the kid practice their grip and throwing when they throw the ball back to you
 - (5 minutes) running bases.
 - Since there is only 1 coach, since the other is teaching hitting, move where there is enough room (possibly the outfield.
 - Have a kid give their glove to use as a base and setup 4 bases
 - Kids and coaches start at home. Coach has a ball. Kids need to run to first and not get tagged by coach. If a kid runs the wrong way, you prioritize tagging them because they are not running the right way. Then go 1st to 2nd, etc
- Juice break
- Game time
 - Before the game starts, draw 5 or 6 distinct lines on the field and let the kids know that is their zone (or pizza slice)
 - During game time, coaches remind the kids to stay in their zone. They will run after the ball when it is hit near them

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Game 7 / Game 9 / Game 11 (25 – 30 minutes):

- (2 minutes) Review what we're taught so far
- (2-3 min) Calisthenics
 - Pick 1 kid to do the warm ups that we did in practice 1. This kid will lead the team. Then, the last is to run the bases with the kids to instill the way we run the bases. One coach lead, one coach at the end. The coach at the end provides instruction to those kids that still need it when running bases
- (3 – 5 min) Have the kids pair up in twos. Try to pair like ability players with each other
 - Have ½ of the kids line up on the foul line and have the other half line up ` 15' away
 - Spread the kids out about 5 to 7' between them
 - Have the kids throw to each other following the guidelines for throwing
 - Have the kids try to catch the ball
 - Coaches watch and teach throwing and catching
 - It might be helpful to get another parent to be on ball patrol as the kids opposite the fence will be doing a lot of chasing
- (10 – 12 minutes) Fielding / throwing & Hitting, Exercises: With 2 coaches, have 1 coach teach fielding ground balls and base running while the 2nd coach takes the tee and teaches hitting. I believe hitting is best when it is a 1:1 (coach to kid). Also, we want all kids doing something. (i.e. the rest are fielding).
 - (2 minutes per kid) 1:1 (coach to kid) hitting instruction
 - Hit balls into the fence so we don't lose time chasing the ball
 - (10 minutes) fielding. 2nd coach teaches ready position
 - Line up half the kids at second base and half the kids at first base.
 - Have them get in ready position
 - Roll a groundball and have the kid at first stand near the bag waiting for the ball
 - Kid at second fields stops and makes a throw to the kid at first.
 - Re-inforce hopping like a frog to the left and to the right
 - Re-inforce the clam shell technique for fielding
 - Have the kids go to the end of the other line. If they just fielded the ball, go to first, if they just got the ball thrown at them, go to second
- Juice break
- Game time
 - Before the game starts, draw 5 or 6 distinct lines on the field and let the kids know that is their zone (or pizza slice)

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Game 8 / Game 10 / Game 12

- (2 minutes) Review how to get into ready position, getting to the ball using the clam shell technique. If you noticed the kids were struggling with gripping, throwing or running to first review that too
- (3 min) Calisthenics
 - Pick 1 kid to do the warm ups that we did in practice 1. This kid will lead the team. Then, the last is to run the bases with the kids to instill the way we run the bases. One coach lead, one coach at the end. The coach at the end provides instruction to those kids that still need it when running bases
- (5 min) Have kids line up 4-5 steps from the backstop and have them practice throwing to the fence
- (10 – 12 minutes) Catching pop-ups/ throwing & Hitting, Exercises: With 2 coaches, have 1 coach teach catching and throwing while the 2nd coach takes the tee and teaches hitting.
 - (2-3 minutes per kid) 1:1 (coach to kid) hitting instruction
 - Hit balls into the fence so we don't lose time chasing the ball
 - (5 minutes) catching pop ups & throwing. 2nd coach reinforces the ready position
 - Catching: Each kid has a softie ball
 - Have each kid throw the ball up a little bit and try to catch in their glove.
 - Teach use two hands, finger pointing upwards (2 minutes)
 - Line up the kids in front of the fence and teach the kids to get into ready position because they don't know when the ball will be thrown to them
 - The coach will call a name and that is who is going to catch the ball.
 - When the ball is thrown the kids yell ball and tried to catch it and then throws to coach
 - (5 minutes) running bases.
 - Since there is only 1 coach, since the other is teaching hitting, move where there is enough room (possibly the outfield.
 - Have a kid give their glove to use as a base and setup 4 bases
 - Kids and coaches start at home. Coach has a ball. Kids need to run to first and not get tagged by coach. If a kid runs the wrong way, that's the one you prioritize tagging because they are not running the right way. Then go 1st to 2nd, etc
- Juice break
- Game time
 - Before the game starts, draw 5 or 6 distinct lines on the field and let the kids know that is their zone (or pizza slice)
 - During game time, coaches remind the kids to stay in their zone. They will run after the ball when it is hit near the