



Berlin Youth Baseball – First Practice Introductions

Goal of this document: Provide coaches with ideas on how to introduce yourself to the players as well as have the players introduce themselves to you and each-other.

Explanation: It'll improve team comrade and bonding by taking a little time during the first practice to do some ice breakers and getting to know each-other prior to jumping right into a baseball practice. Remember the players are here for their first practice, and they are excited to get to playing baseball, so this huddle should only last perhaps the first 5 minutes of practice.

Opening Team Huddle

Goal: Let them get to know you. Let everyone learn a bit about each-other too. Then establish your ground rules and goals for the team.

The Location: Get them into a huddle, it works best if this is out on the field. Remember the bench is not necessarily a “fun place” for players so a good spot for this huddle is right out on the pitcher’s mound. Coach places themself in the middle and players surround in a circle. Players can go to a knee, and the coach should also get down to a knee or low to the ground to make the players feel on the same level.

Start with Ice Breakers: The Coach should go first and introduce themselves (include something fun the kids can relate to, such as your favorite video game, your favorite restaurant, your favorite MLB team). Then go around the huddle, 1 at a time, including the coach, and have everybody say their name, their favorite baseball position, and one thing they like to do for fun besides baseball (e.g. some kids may say another sport like basketball, some may say video games, some may say go to Wisconsin Dells, etc.).

Then Let them know your Goals for them: Give them goals to shoot for, a reason for being at practice. (e.g. Tell them while we’re here to have fun, we’re also here to see that each of you become a better baseball player, a better hitter, a stronger thrower. We’re here to improve every practice and constantly get better as the season progresses). If they put effort in, they will see rewards in the form of hitting the ball farther, throwing the ball farther, and scoring more runs.

Then Establish Ground Rules: Before that first practice starts, make sure to have at least one serious moment, to establish the ground rules. You need to make sure when you cover these ground rules you keep the tone positive and fun, but remind them why they’re here and how they should behave. Give specific examples of things you do want to see, such as always hustling to first base. Give specific examples of things you don’t want to see, such as throwing their helmet or bat after a strike out. Also explain to them what could happen if they break the ground rules, including losing playing time or getting removed from the team.

End it with a team cheer! Every time you get into a huddle, regardless if it’s in a practice or a game, it boosts team morale and bonding by ending that huddle with positive energy! So even if the “establish ground rules” quieted everyone down, you now want to boost that energy level up. Ask the players to put their hands in the middle of the huddle, then do a count-down and a chant such as “1-2-3 Berlin”! Be creative. Be loud. If they’re too quiet, do it again. Louder! Louder! Then start practice.