



Georgina Minor Baseball Association

Coaching 13U House League

Georgina Minor Baseball Association – 13U House League Program

Objectives:

- FUN is the emphasis

- High number of repetitions of the skills

- Progressions to suit the skill level of the player

- Drills that offer a high success rate

- Volunteers are required. Please make sure you have lots of parent helpers (Start from the first practice).

Getting Started

1. Who is the League Contact?
2. When are Practice Days / Game Nights?
3. Equipment – What is required?
4. What are the League rules?
5. Who are the Contacts – Team members and parents?
6. Who will assist? You need a lot of volunteers and parent helpers

Note:

- Encourage them often
- SMILE a lot
- Ask parents to help
- Break players into smaller groups, easier to teach drills, individual attention

How to Play

Practices

- Emphasize skills and drills in small groups of 3 – 4 players

Offence:

- Everyone in line up hits
- Have a number of volunteers
- Bungee cord and close pins with players names
- Parents / helpers required at 1st and 3rd

Defence

- Positions players in the 4 infield positions 1st, 2nd, SS, 3rd 1 Pitcher, Catcher, 3 Outfielders
- Organize fielding line up prior to game. (Sample Attached). Clip board to fence, have many volunteers to assist – Catcher gear
- Rotate all players through infield / outfield and by position

Effective Practices

1. Keep players active and moving
2. Design your practice
3. Ensure you have lots of helpers
4. Use Orange pylons to mark out areas / distances for drills
5. Communicate to players on their level
6. Break team into smaller groups of 3 – 4 players doing different drills
7. Drills should be no more than 10 – 20 minutes in length
8. Ensure you have a post practice talk to go over accomplishments and remind of next game / practice

Establish Practice Goals

Practice goals to include the following:

- Fielding and proper throwing mechanics
- Proper Hitting Techniques, bat grip, swinging the bat
- Pitching
- Catching with two hands
- Base Running – know where to run

Peewee

Every practice should place emphasis on the following:

- Pitching Mechanics
- Hitting Fundamentals
- Fielding & Catching

Keep the game moving, large strike zone, encourage and cheer players to swing the bat.

Starting the practice

1. Warm up and stretch (5 minutes)
 - Light jog
 - Stretches

Goals: Learning the Game

2. Throwing Mechanics

- Turn the body, front shoulder points at target
- Keep elbow above the shoulder – L shaped arm
- Step toward target with non-throwing side foot
- Release Ball

3. Fielding the Ball

- Ready Position
- Follow the ball with the eyes into the glove, Nose on the ball
- Throwing hand should be close to glove
- Catch the ball out in front of body

4. Hitting

- How to hold and grip the bat, Load & Stride
- How to swing the bat, Tee Hitting, Soft toss
- Learning the Strike Zone
- Stride toward the Pitcher
- Fear of being Hit (Stepping out)

5. Learning the Positions

- Where's the play
- Full fielding positions, Live Pitching

6. Pitching Mechanics

- Wind up versus Set position
- Balance is critical
- Stride toward home plate
- Glove, Shoulders, Arm, Feet are in line to home plate

7. Catcher

- Role of the Catcher
- Provide a target
- Block the Ball

Hitting

See Hitting Tutorial

- The proper grip - The handle of the bat is in the crease of the hand between the palm and the base of the fingers, (the bat is not squeezed hard, but held lightly, but firm enough to swing).
- The stance: The stance should be shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, feet point forward.
- The bat is lifted and held about 6 inches from the back shoulder, at shoulder height. The top hand is in a position as if talking on a telephone by the ear.
- The hands should start to the ball on a downward plane, bottom hand pulls the bat down, the top hand swings the bat. Barrel stays above the hands. Arms should extend through the ball. Follow the ball with the nose.

Hitting Drills:

1. Stance Drill: Practice proper stance with no bat. Players get into proper stance with hands up as if holding a bat. Check stance. Most players do not form a wide enough base, and knees should be flexed.
2. Rotation Drill: Have players get into proper stance. They then place hands on hips. Have players turn hips so belly button or waist “eye” faces coach. Watch that back foot does not step out, but rotation occurs with hips.
3. Swing bat while coach tosses soft toss into back stop – 2 players.

6 Steps to a Perfect Swing



Step 1

Using a "Good Grip"

Using the proper grip allows the batter to achieve as much hand quickness and bat speed as possible. The key to a good grip is positioning the bat in the fingers and not the palms. The bat should be held firmly but not tight that the batter's hand speed is slowed. The batter can assure a great grip every time by lining up the "door knocking knuckles" as shown.

Step 2

Have a Super Stance

The batter should always be taught to use a balanced parallel stance with both feet about shoulder width apart with his toes even and slightly facing inward. He should assume his stance about 8-10 inches from the plate. The batter should slightly bend his knees with his weight on the balls of his feet. The batter's front shoulder, hip and knee should be slightly turned forward. A proper stance will allow the batter to react to the pitch with speed, quickness and power.



Step 3

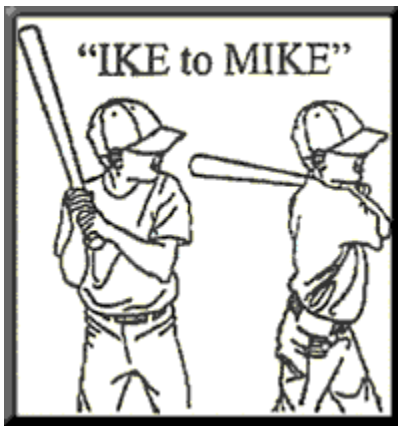
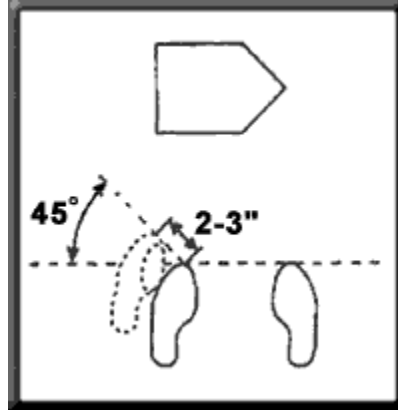
Correct Hand, Arms and Bat Angle

The bat is correctly held at a 45-degree angle. The hands should not be held too high or too low. A medium location is desired with the back elbow down and the hands located 3-6 inches from the body. The bottom of both elbows should be parallel. To assume the most comfortable stance the batter should position his arms and hands so that the upper edge of the top of the hands on the bat is even with the shoulder.

Step 4

Four Keys to a Correct Stride

1. The batter's stride should be short, no more than two or three inches.
2. The stride should be at a 45-degree angle towards home plate.
3. The batter should land softly on his front foot as if he were stepping on an egg.
4. The batter should stride and land on the big toe or inside of his front foot.



Step 5

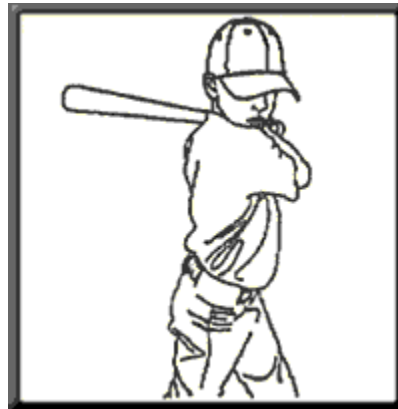
Head Action and Ball Tracking

The batter should turn his head enough that he can see the ball with both eyes. The "IKE to MIKE" method should be taught. The batter's front shoulder, toward the pitcher, is "IKE", and his back shoulder is "MIKE". The batter should start with his chin on "IKE". During the swing the head does not move. The body rotates and the shoulders switch places with the head finishing on "MIKE". The batter should keep his eyes on the ball and should be taught to "track" the ball from the pitcher's hand to the bat.

Step 6

Swing and Finish

The batter should take a good level swing or slightly downward. He should strive to keep his back foot in position while lifting his heel slightly and then turning his foot towards the pitcher as he starts his swing. He should concentrate on hitting the "top-half" of the baseball. When his front foot lands, he should thrust or turn his hips.



PERSONAL SWING ANALYSIS

EVALUATION KEY: E=Excellent G=Good S=Satisfactory NI=Needs Improvement

Positioning the Feet	E	G	S	NI	COMMENTS
Feet shoulder width apart					
Foot closest pitcher lined up near front of home plate					
Should be able to tap outside of plate with end of bat					
Feet parallel					
Feet pointing toward home plate					
Positioning the Body					
Knees slightly bent					
Waist slightly bent					
Positioning the Bat					
Handle of bat near back shoulder					
Barrel of bat above and behind head					
Gripping the Bat					
Middle knuckles lined up					
Bat held comfortably in hands / Not squeezed					
Striding	E	G	S	NI	COMMENTS
Front knee up / back around the time pitcher lifts knee					
Shifting weight forward when pitcher releases ball					
Stride / movement of front foot no more than 6 inches					
Front foot down before ball gets to home plate					
Positioning the Bat					
Handle of bat near back shoulder when front foot lands					
Barrel above and behind head when front foot lands					
Getting the Barrel to the Ball	E	G	S	NI	COMMENTS
Barrel of bat swung directly at ball					
Ball hit within "sweet spot" on the bat (2-6" from top)					
Arms extended right before contact with ball					
Bat on the same plane as baseball when contact made (No chopping up or down / swinging directly at ball)					
Turning the Hips					
Turning hips by pivoting on ball of back foot					
Keeping the Eyes on the Ball					
Eyes are on baseball until contact with ball is made					
Head is NOT following the body when it turns					
Following Through					
Bat has a smooth, slightly upward path					
Hands roll over at completion of swing					
Right-handed: Bat handle stops around left shoulder					
Left-handed: Bat handle stops around right shoulder					
Barrel wraps around upper back					
Chin over shoulder area at swing completion					

Pitching

Keys to effective pitching:

1. Fingers stay on top of ball throughout wind up.
2. Pitchers must be in a good balanced position
3. Movements are controlled and in rhythm
4. Elbow needs to stay at least even and or above shoulder
5. Stride foot lands on line towards home base with glove, throwing arm and shoulders in line toward target.

Drills:

One Knee Drill: (Pairs)

- Throwing knee on ground, other knee up. Use a four-seam grip to throw
- Take ball down, out and up. As hand breaks down, thumb should brush thigh, then take the ball to the sky, ball faces away from target at top point, just before arm comes forward.
- Player then points shoulder to target, rotate hips and throws. Elbow stays above shoulder. Players do not throw hard, work on mechanics.

Coach Behind Drill

- Coach stands behind player completing one knee drill with 5 balls
- At hand gets to top, player opens hand coach feeds ball into hand, throws ball

Power Position Drill

- Players create wide base with feet
- Elbow above shoulder in top of delivery, ball/fingers pointed away from target, weight stays back, front shoulder pointed toward target. (Check elbow, shoulders, feet)
- Player strides toward partner or home plate, stride foot lands on ball of foot at 45-degree angle, and throws ball and follows through

Long Toss

- Critical to develop arm strength, but caution needs to occur to ensure proper throwing fundamentals are being executed.
- Continually move players farther distances until they can no longer throw the ball on a line (Rainbow or looping throws are not the objective)

The Pitching Motion

The pitching motion, divides into 5 phases:

1. The wind-up,
2. Arm-cocking,
3. Arm acceleration,
4. Arm deceleration
5. Follow-through.

As a coach and teacher of pitching, it is necessary to teach and be specific within each sequence of the total throwing mechanism.

Use the following breakdown as a guide and check-list.

A. Preliminary Stance.

- Pitcher should have good balance, be relaxed and squared off to the plate.
- The pivot foot spikes should be in front of the rubber and slightly open.
- The free foot should be slightly behind the pivot foot, about shoulder width apart.
- The pitching hand and wrist should be held within the glove, hiding the grip from others.

B. The Pump.

- The pitcher may use an overhead motion or compact chest-high pump.
- If a pitcher has balance or coordination problems, use a chest- high pump. There is less movement and fewer things to go wrong.

C. The Rocker Step.

- Take a soft, short step back with the free foot at about a 45 degree angle.
- For best balance, the head should stay over the pivot foot and the center of the body.

D. The Pivot Foot.

- The pivot foot should be pivoted to a parallel position off the front edge of the rubber.
- A RHP usually pitches from the right half of the rubber, a LHP from the left. This helps the pitcher stride in a straight line to home plate and also improves the angle of a breaking pitch from a RHP to a RHH and LHP to LHH in the future.

E. Leg Lift.

- The lead leg knee should be lifted up, not kicked or swung which puts many pitchers out of balance.
- Let the free foot hang straight down from the knee.
- Rotate the front hip closed. A RHP's knee should point to 3rd base, a LHP's to 1st.
- Keep the weight back over a straight, firm posting leg to maintain balance.
- Do not allow the body to drift forward until the lead leg reaches its maximum height and rotation (towards 1st or 3rd).
- A pitcher may lift his lead knee to his chest if he can maintain good balance.

F. Hand Break.

- The hands should break between the letters and belt, directly in the center of the chest, close to the body.
- The hands should break when the lead leg starts downward.
- The throwing hand should go down, back, then up in towards the cocked position in a continuous motion, keeping the fingers on top of the ball.
- The wrist is either in a neutral position (straight, with forearm), or extended back slightly.
- The glove hand moves forward and upward toward the hitter.

G. The Stride.

- As the stride leg lowers, the lead foot should move downward (not swung out!) and slide just above the mound surface.
- The body should just glide forward.
- The pitcher should not push off until the stride foot has landed, stabilizing the body.
- Technically, it is a pulling action of the hip flexors and a pull of the back knee forward and inward rather than a push-off from the rubber.

1. Stride Direction.

- Measure from the ball of the pivot foot directly to home plate.
- The ball of the stride foot should land within 1 or 2 inches across the midline. This position helps keep the front side closed, yet does not prevent good hip and trunk rotation.

2. Stride Length.

- Measuring from the front edge of the rubber to the toe of the stride foot, the length of the stride should be the pitcher's height.
- A longer stride is not a problem if the pitcher can get his head and shoulders over the lead leg at the time of ball release.

3. Landing Foot Position.

- The pitcher should land on the ball of the stride foot, or flat footed.

- The toes should point slightly in a closed position (for a RHP, 10 degrees towards the 3rd base foul line, or 1st base foul line for a LHP).
- If the pitcher lands hard on the heel, the foot will usually fly open which causes the hips and trunk to rotate too soon. It will also cause the pitcher to get onto a stiff front leg too early which results in a recoil action that puts him out of proper balance during the acceleration phase. This negatively impacts control and velocity.

H. Transfer of Weight.

- The weight is held back over the posting leg until the lead leg starts downward (almost like "falling" forward).
- The lead foot comes downward a little more than shoulder width apart and slides along the ground to the contact area.
- The upper body and head stays at the top center of the widening triangle of the body.
- The body has only drifted, or "fallen" forward. There is no major push or drive forward until the front foot has landed and stabilized the body.
- Upon firm stride foot placement, the lead leg is flexed at the knee at about a 135 degree angle.
- As the trunk is rotated to a squared off throwing position, the lead leg starts to brace-up so there is a firm base, a firm front side to rotate up against.

I. Rotational Forces of the Hips, Trunk and Shoulders.

- The bracing action of the lead leg stops the body from continuing to move forward, allowing the hips, trunk and shoulders to generate tremendous horizontal rotation and centrifugal forces which produce great arm and hand speed, resulting in greater velocity.
- Many young pitchers, after foot contact, allow their lead knee to stay flexed and actually continue to drift forward. This prevents good rotational forces and causes a loss of power and velocity.

J. Trunk Extension to Flexion.

- As the high velocity pitcher moves to his maximum cocked position, there is an arching of the spine. This becomes much more pronounced as the trunk rotates, squaring off to the plate.
- The chest is thrust out and the spine arched back.
- Upon acceleration and release. the trunk springs from extension to flexion and the head and shoulders come over a braced lead leg. This action generates additional force, power and proper alignment.

K. Arm Action.

- At this point in analyzing the pitching motion, let's focus only on the throwing arm action. I sincerely believe this is one of the least studied and discussed phases

of pitching; yet is one of the most important aspects of throwing a baseball. It is also a phase in which many improper techniques such as wrist hooking, arm hooking, flailing behind the back, stiff arming, etc. can occur and severely limit a pitcher's potential and performance. Again, through the study of high-speed video of professional, college and high school pitchers, I have discovered common traits of high velocity successful pitchers, and have seen common faults with pitchers who either cannot throw hard, have control problems, or have experienced arm injuries.

Base Running Drills

Base running Warm Up

1. Run with knees high
2. Through 1st base: The only base you can run through. Set up a coach 3 – 4 feet behind 1st base and have the players run through the base to the Coach making sure they turn into foul territory.
3. From Drill # 2, have player breakdown with feet staying on line, and listen to coach either say 2, (go to second) or back to bag.
4. Lead offs: (3 lines up line from first base): Player's take 3 sideways strides from bag, always keeping an eye on the Pitcher. Have Coach act as a pitcher, coach as first base defensive player. Coach either goes to home with throw, or attempts pick off. Players should watch Coaches heel on the rubber (good indicator of pick off).
5. Watch the Coach Drill: At 13U players should watch the coach at 3rd as they approach 2nd base. Players start at 1st base, ball is hit, players run toward 2nd and look at coach, who holds up hands to stop at 2nd, or waves hand to run to third. (Remember this is for FUN, while learning how to run the base path is important, aggressive base running to demoralize a team is not the objective).

Catching

The most important element in catching is keeping the eye on the ball. Some say follow the ball with the nose.

Focus on the following:

- Palm down for balls below the waist, or fingers down
- Palm up for balls above the waist, or fingers up, or thumbs together
- Throwing hand stays beside the glove ready to trap and grab the ball.

Drills:

1. Catch the ball with no glove
2. Partner Throwing:
3. Triangle Throwing

Fielding:

Always focus on the “Ready Position.”

- Feet more than shoulder width apart
- Knees Bent
- Butt down, (sit on the chair)
- Glove and hand low, pinkies down, glove on ground, palms up

Alligator Catch

- Field as if glove is the bottom of the alligator’s mouth and the throwing hand is the top. Field ground ball like an alligator closing its mouth, top hand closes on glove with ball.

Drills:

1. No Glove: Field rollers – Coach and helpers 10 feet away slow roller
2. Glove field rollers
3. Field bouncing balls
4. Roll balls left / right
5. Batted balls

Fielding Fly Balls

- Run to the spot where the ball will be caught, keep glove down use both arms to run
- Watch the ball into the glove, catching slightly above the head
- Keep your nose on the ball

Drills:

1. Coach soft toss from close distance
2. Player self-toss
3. Move for ball

Throwing

Break down throwing into the following small steps:

1. Face Target (Where you want to throw the ball)
2. Grip ball with 3 fingers, thumb underneath ball, lined up directly opposite fingers
3. Bring arm back in L – Shape, point ball away from target, fingers should stay on top of the ball
4. Step forward with opposite foot, shoulders in line with target
5. Move arm forward in throwing motion, (make sure elbow is above or even with the shoulder) as front foot lands, let go of the ball
6. Point hand to target

Drills:

1. Sitting Position Throw
2. On two knees throw
3. On one knee throw, make sure butt is up
4. Throw at a target, (pylon, pail) make a game of hitting the target

Catcher Skills – Stance

No runners on base and less than two strikes.

- The catcher will have his weight resting on his instep.
- The feet should be toes out and ninety degrees to each other
- For a right-handed catcher, the left foot should be slightly ahead of the right foot. Balance should be evenly distributed over both feet.
- The glove arm should assume a relaxed position. The fingers should be pointed up and be tension free.
- The elbow should rest under, or slightly angled away, of the hand so that the fingers are horizontal.
- The catcher's elbow should also rest slightly outside the knee.
- The throwing arm can either rest behind the back or the leg.



Runner on base or no runners on and two strikes

- There is no change in weight, feet placement or glove arm positioning.
- There are changes with the throwing arm position and mental preparations.
- The throwing arm should move to behind the glove. Place a closed fist behind the glove.
- Keep the target low and be prepared to block all balls in the dirt, retrieve all balls in the dirt, and throw all retrieved balls.



Drills:

1. Show Me Drill:

Have the players show they are holding the ball with thumb under the ball and three fingers on top of the ball. Each player quickly takes the throwing position with legs apart, throwing arm back and up, and the front shoulder turned toward the target. Player throws to a volunteer parent.

2. One Knee Throwing

Emphasize upper body, through grip, raised arm and elbow, L shape, turn body and throw

3. Use the L Drill:

Remind players to have throwing arm bent into L shape. Separate the team into groups of 2 and throw to volunteers. Loudly call out “L” just before they throw the ball.

4. Base Running Drill

Have players line up at Home Plate. Coach says start players run to first base. Repeat the drill to second, third and home.

5. Through the Bag Drill, Stretch the Double

Players line up at home, and on the word “GO” one at a time run through first base. Repeat the drill, having them run through first and quickly break down with feet listen to coach, who will yell two, two. Player crosses over and runs to second.

6. Dry Swing Drill

Space the players widely in a row with no bat and facing the pitcher. All players get into their batting stance and the coach yells “Stride, Load, Swing” and all players simulate their batting sequence, follow through, and drop the bat. Make sure they don’t swing too hard watching for proper swing, and instructing. Repeat 10 times.

7. Tee Drill

The coach works with each batter hitting into the screen (Groups of 3 players with volunteers). Comment after each swing, but only make very minor adjustments and focus on one thing. Repeat the drill 8 – 10 times per player. Ensure proper Load, Stride, & Swing.

8. Soft Toss Drill

Group of 2 or 3 players, 2 to 3 volunteers. Players hit into the backstop. Coach tosses waffle or game ball at a 45-degree angle to player. Toss should be in front of home plate waist high. Player loads bat, strides as coaches hand goes down. Player swings through the ball into screen.

9. Machine Hitting

Bring machine to Batting Cage. Players work in groups of 3. (10 - 15 Minutes). Have coach pitching and volunteers to work on soft toss with 1 player into screen, 3rd player practices swings waiting turn to hit.

10. Racquet Fly Balls

Bring a tennis racquet and tennis balls to a practice. Have a volunteer hit tennis balls to the players in the Outfield. Start at each player, and move around. Work with small group of 3 – 4 players at a time. Vary the drill to include other fielders, and infield for communication fly ball drills.

11. Block the Ball

Group the players (2 – 3 per group). Start the first player in each group in the ready position, knees bent, head up, with an area marked out about 10' wide. Have volunteers ready to roll the ball to the players, right at them at first, then side to side. Have another set of volunteer's award points for knocking down the ball.

12. Throwing at the Bucket – Target Drill

Set up a target, 2 buckets stacked on top of each other. Have players try to hit target from 4 distances. Award points for each target hit. Lines could represent single (1 point), double (2 points), triple (3 points), home run, farthest distance (4 points).

13. Goal Ball (in pairs)

Mark off goal with Pylons for each pair, players take turns trying to throw ball on ground to score a goal.

More Advanced Drills

1. Around the Bases

Players at each base, with catcher and pitcher. Pitcher throws to C, throws to 3rd, who throws to 2nd, who throws to 1st, throw to C, and back to P.

2. Desperation Drill

3 players in LF / 3 players in CF – Pitcher and Catcher. Coach rolls ball to LF. CF runs behind LF to cover in case LF misses ball. LGF retrieves ball and throws towards Catcher. The Pitcher faces the LF and follows the ball in case of bad throw. The Catcher stays behind home plate and blocks ball with body, retrieves and prepares to tag runner.

3. Tag the runner

Runners start at 1st or 1st and 2nd with normal infield. Coach hits ball to 3rd base who fields and steps on bag. (Force Out). Coach hits ball to P or SS who tries to tag the runner before they reach home.

4. Circle Drill

Players form a circle. One player has ball calls out name of player throws ball to the player. 2nd player continues drill. Excellent way for all players to learn players names. Make sure player is looking and throw the ball.

5. Line Drill

Form 2 lines of players space about 15 – 20 feet apart. Player 1 starts with the ball, throws to next player in line, who turns glove side, and throws to 3rd player in line. Go up and down the line.