

# **LADYSMITH BASEBALL ASSOCIATION**



## **RALLY CAP AND TADPOLE COACHES GUIDE**

## **Rally Cap Goals:**

Encourage players often: Praise on effort and not results.  
Be enthusiastic and positive when things are done correctly  
Encourage players/parents to set goals  
Be organized to maximize learning and minimize inactivity  
Be a role model – praise opposing teams in front of your players  
Encourage parents to participate, you're teaching them too.

### GOALS:

#### April – Start of Season to mid of the season

- Able to throw 5 ft to a partner
- Able to catch 3 ft from a partner (both fingers down and up w/glove)
- Able to hit off a tee
- Know where to run to after hitting off the tee. (right side of the base line)
- Know Team name / Coaches name / 3 teammates

#### June – End of season

- Able to throw 5 of 8 balls to a partner from 10 ft
- Able to catch 5ft from a partner
- Able to field 5 of 10 ground balls from 10 ft
- Able to hit 5 of 10 ball off a tee
- Know where first base is and what side to run on

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#### June – End of season

- Able to throw 8 of 10 balls to a partner from 10 ft
- Able to catch 10ft from a partner
- Able to field 10 of 15 ground balls from 15 ft
- Able to hit 10 of 15 ball off a tee
- Know what the bases are called (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and home)
- Able to name all the infield positions ( 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, ss, Pitcher, and Catcher)

**Being Taught the Correct Way = Fun and Success**

Thank you for volunteering your time and taking an interest in helping, guiding and being a role model for Rally Cap/Tadpole players in Ladysmith. This book is intended to help you be successful at developing good mechanics; ones that are fun and will help each child be successful and develop a love for baseball. Ladysmith Baseball Association emphasizes fun, sportsmanship, teamwork and character development as we want to help our young players learn to play the game of baseball with skill; striving for excellence on and off the field. The drills provided are very important and LBA knows this is the way to start a strong program, one that will be very successful. These drills are intended to be made as fun as possible, if you feel like you are losing players attention, break into a fast game of freeze tag or crab walking contests. It is very important to make Rally Cap and tadpole as fun as you can. LBA wants to thank you for being a coach, and leader. (Food for thought) It takes between 2500 and 3000 repetition to retain the body's muscle memory, and we know incorrect movement's sets the number back by increments of 25. Here is what science tells us about the human body. A person retains 7.9% of what they are being told. They retain 72% if they can see and hear the same message. If you are unsure how to run a drill or instruct a player, please ask for help instead of trying to teach what you think may be right. It is more damaging to teach improper technique, and very hard to reverse bad habits. LBA goal for you is to develop and create good habits for our little ball players.

**Equipment**

As a coach, make sure you players have the correct equipment. This is very important to creating success. First off make sure each player has a jock or jill. Players should have an 8" to 10" glove that is worn in. Players that have a new glove won't be able to close their glove and won't be as successful. Look into second hand gloves or show parents how to work in a glove (oil glove and wrapped a ball in the glove). Make sure each child has a proper fitting batting helmet. Baseball/soccer cleats are not mandatory but are recommended in performing at a better level. Ladysmith weather is very unpredictable, tell parents to dress their children in layers.

Choosing a proper bat is very important. We want players to have the correct size and weight, so they don't create bad habits. Have the player stand with his/her feet shoulder length apart. Spread arm straight out so your player looks like a "T". Palms down and hold a bat straight out for 10-15 seconds if it's a struggle a lighter bat in needed. Children are not required to purchase their own bats; a variety will be provided.

**Drills**

Make these drills as fun as you can. Be goofy and silly, most of all be positive. If at any time your performing drills and you feel you're losing the interest of the players, drop what you're doing and get into a quick game of freeze tag. When the players get tagged make players unfreeze them by running under the outstretched arms of other players. This will burn some of their energy and bring them back to focus. Add your own ideas to the drills, make them fun.

**\*Special Thanks to Mission Minor Baseball and Dan Williams, for sharing their best practices and vision for fun in Baseball. \***

## **Make a plan**

LBA has provided 5 practice plans. These are approx 30 min. It is important to have a plan, try to keep to it. After each game, write down the struggles your team had. This will be your start to make your next practice plan. The drills provided below are big on KEY WORDS, use them. Get your parents involved – provide drills for homework.

## **THROWING and FIELDING**

The throwing habits/skills you teach a 5 - 7-year-old will stay with him/her, and affect their lifelong play, more than anything else you teach them. Here are the essentials of good throwing:

### **The grip:**

Teach kids to grip the ball with fingers, instead of grabbing the ball in the palm. Tee-Ball age: three fingers on top spread out, pinky tucked on side. Thumb on bottom. Bigger handed kids use first two fingers on top, thumb on bottom.

### **Proper mechanics of the throw:**

Body starts sideways to target. (Power “T”) Throwing arm extended out, with bend (almost 90 degree angle) at elbow: front elbow points at target. The players head is in line with elbow looking at target. The Players shoulders and elbow should be a straight line. Ball hand back, **thumb pointing down** (making a backwards “C”). Make sure the player have a circular motion above shoulder when throwing. Throwing elbow should just above shoulder, arm in L - shape at apex of throw. Follow through with whole body; arm comes across as body turns and pointing elbow comes back towards their ribs. Back leg comes across front as weight shifts during release. Tell players to keep their eyes on target entire time. This will take time for players to get.

### **Watch for:**

Players that are side - arm throwers, you need to intervene and correct this right away. Rotator cuff injuries are ahead for a kid who releases to side of body (as he/she gets older). ‘Low elbow’ throwers (Don’t want players leading with their throwing elbow). Produces elbow injuries over time if not corrected. Elbow goes just above shoulder when throwing.

### **Show me**

At this young age, learning the proper grip is the best way to help them build a successful foundation for throwing. When the coach says **“show me”** each player gets into the proper throwing stance with the correct grip.

### **Result**

Coaches will be able to watch how their players are gripping the ball as they show them the grip and the throwing stance. Problems can be corrected at this point.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

## **One knee throwing**

This teaches the players how to throw the ball starting from the wrist, elbow down to finger and upper body without using their legs.

### **How you run this drill?**

Start with players with their throwing hand knee on the ground and their glove hand foot on the ground. Make sure the knee is on a **90 degree angle**. The players throwing arm needs to be in front on a 90 degree angle or “L” shape between the forearm and bicep. Tell the players to put their glove under the throwing elbow. With the ball in their hand, ask them to **show me** the proper grip, they will flip their wrist and release the ball so it has a backwards spin. Second part is to extend the elbow and flipping the wrist. This covers how to release the ball proper. Third part is putting it all together: right from the grip, to the raised arm and elbow, the L-shape between the forearm and bicep, and then turning the body and following through towards the intended target. A good follow through to a target, coach, or teammate is important.

### **Result**

This drill is very important to keep an eye on and to adjust if incorrect. The player will learn the proper upper body mechanics and follow through when throwing to his/her target.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

## **Bonk the Bucket**

This is a very fun game that teaches throwing to a target. Start the players about 10 feet away.

### **How you run this drill?**

Put an empty bucket upright on a tee (take out neck insert first). Line up players approx 10 feet from the bucket (in a position). Have them find grip (**show me**), and on the coaches word players TURN, POINT, STEP, and THROW at the bucket. Give a big cheer if any player hits the bucket. You can increase the difficulty of the drill by increasing the distance that the players have to throw. But, don't sacrifice the distance for the accuracy. Once the players gain the accuracy, then in time they will build the strength to throw the ball a greater distance.

### **Result**

The players will begin to develop throwing accuracy (essential to baseball at any level)  
This creates good throwing mechanics & ‘muscle memory’ of correct throws and the players listen to coaches instructions. This creates success.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

## **Catch and Throw to the Coach**

This is a very fun Team drill. To start use a tennis ball or wiffle ball and when confident enough use a regular ball.

### **How you run this drill?**

Line the players up on a first or third base line facing a coach. Throw to the first player underhand, which catches the ball and throws back. Continue down the line, throwing to each player. After a few practice rounds, have the kids count the number of successful catches. Start simple and as players progress start throwing balls in areas where they have to move their gloves. Keep track of this and show the players their progress. When players see how they progress, confidence will flourish.

### **Result**

Players will try so hard to break records they will concentrate on catching the ball.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

## **Rainbow-Rapid Style**

This drill will help players learn to catch a ball around their head area and learn how to position their glove above their waist. This should be done with tennis balls or wiffle balls. You want the players to re-act on reflexes and not have to think about it. The object of this drill is not to catch the ball but to use their glove and block it.

### **How you run this drill?**

Have the player in front of you. The players use the arch of the rainbow starting from shoulder, over their head and face area, and finish at their other shoulder. You will toss gentle towards the face area and have their glove finger pointing up trying to knock the ball down. Use wiffle balls or tennis balls, so if they miss it will not hurt.

### **Result**

This is a great drill to teach players how to have their glove, when a ball is above their waist. Players will gain confidence on catching balls around their chest and face.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

## **Around the Horn**

Teaching the players to field the ball in a round the horn game. This drill will teach the players to react when the ball is hit. Players will learn to cover their base on hits and be aware of the play.

### **How you run this drill?**

You can run this drill anywhere. Put out bases or cones (shorter than normal if you like, to start), and then put a player at each base. Start players on the base, as player's progress, move them into proper positions in the infield. You can start the drill by hitting a soft grounder, or rolling the ball to one of the players. First they must throw the ball to third base, to second base, then to first base – and finally back to the coach. The players need to use all of the skills they have learned in order to make this drill work. They should work on throwing the ball properly and accurately and then make sure they stop the ball when it is thrown to them. Reward the players that are able to get the ball around the bases without many problems (High Fives, Being super loud and positive as can be). Make this a game; see how many times they can go around the horn without dropping or making a throwing error. Keep track of this; show the kids how much they have improved.

### **Result**

This game teaches players that when the ball is hit they need to cover their base. This helps with throwing accuracy and arm strength.

**Coaches Notes:**

## **Fly Balls**

The purpose of this drill is to teach the players how to catch a fly ball above their heads using a wiffle ball or tennis ball. This drill will install confidence, players will not be hurt in this drill.

### **How you run this drill?**

Have the player's line up and start about 4ft away from them. Have the players put their gloves out in front and above their head. Toss the wiffle ball softly about a foot above their glove and get the players to **catch and hold** for 1 second using glove and hand behind the glove helping to squeeze the glove. As the players get more confident start with more difficulty and make the players run and dive. When they catch the ball, celebrate like crazy and make it a game like football – catch = touchdown.

### **Result**

The players will gain confidence and lose their fear of being hit. Players will start to trust themselves and when ready you can graduate from wiffle to tennis and finally to a tee ball.

**Coaches Notes:**

## **Catching contest**

This is a game that puts the throwing and catching skills of the players against one another. It should be a fun game for all of the kids to participate in. Incorporate other aspects of the throwing motion and grip of the ball. **Show Me – Turn, Point, Step, and Throw**

### **How you run this drill?**

Once you have the players paired up, start them off a short distance apart from one another – probably between 8 and 10 feet. The players should throw the ball back and forth executing overhand throws and catches. The players need to make good throws and good catches, as each time they miss or drop the ball; the pair has to stop in the game. The game ends when the last pair to keep throwing and catching the ball without dropping it is still in the game. If the game lasts longer (with improved play), you can move the pairs back a step or two.

### **Result**

The players will gradually build their throwing and catching skills and learn to work with the other players on their team in this manner.

**Coaches Notes:**

## **Triangle Drill to Block the ball**

This is the first step to getting kids to learn the prospect of fielding the ball. Have the player's place their feet just wider than shoulders, knees slight bend and players on the ball of their feet (not flat footed). Call this the "**Ready Position**". Players should be leaning slightly forward and have their gloves in front and fingers pointing to the ground. With glove out front, it should make a triangle with their glove and feet. Throwing hand should be out to the side of glove and when ball goes in glove the throwing hand should cover the ball. **(Crocodile Hands)**

### **How you run this drill?**

With this drill coaches need to first instruct their players on how to move to get in front of the ball. Start the players off in the ready position (elbows on the knees, slightly bent, glove fingers pointing down and with their head up watching the play). The coaches or volunteers should roll the ball directly at the players at first, but then to either side. The player needs to shuffle to get their body in front of the ball to knock it down. For each ball that the player knocks down they get three points. If the player scoops the ball with their glove, they get five points. The players will get excited about getting points for knocking the ball down. Teach players how to use their gloves properly and to use **Crocodile Hands**. This will help them learn to use their gloves and free hand to scoop up the ball, rather than trap it.

### **Result**

The players will learn proper techniques (Triangle) keeping body in front over top of the ball. Using Crocodile hands will keep the players from trying to trap the ball and show them to make their love a big scoop.

**Coaches Notes:**

## **Learning Field Position**

This is a very fun drill that teaches the players positions of the ball field. You can run this drill in about 5 min in time, teaching the players to hustle in and out. When players are in position, this is a good time for them to show you the “**Ready Position**”.

### **How you run this drill?**

Place a cone in every position, infield and outfield. This is where you want the players to stand. Take a walk through with the team and tell them the position, ask the players to repeat the positions back to you. Assemble the players around the coach at the pitchers mound. Tell the players to close their eyes and remember what your about to say. Tap a child’s head and say a position, tell them to repeat it back to you (e.g., left field, 3<sup>rd</sup> base, ss, catcher, and so on). Continue through the team quickly. When every player has a position, tell them to “**break**”. Players will hustle to their position in the **ready position**. See if everyone gets it right. Correct any players that are not in the right position (e.g., teach that 2<sup>nd</sup> doesn’t play on the bag, but halfway between 1st and 2nd). Call them in, and repeat with new position assignments. Run this game fast, it takes only 5 min to do it 5 times.

### **Helpful Hints**

Players will have a difficult time determining left field from right field. Teach right field is behind first and left field is behind third. Another way is to have the players stand on the plate facing the pitchers mound. Ask the players to hold up their right hand and point to first base. This is the right side of the field, the same for the left hand points to third base means left field. As players get better, (after 3-4 practices) take the cones away.

### **Result**

This is a very fun way to teach players positions that is quick and efficient.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

## **Pizza Slice Defence**

This helps the players learn to stay in their own area based on the position they are playing. Separate the field into ‘slices’ like pizza using cones, and have it correspond with one of the positions on the field.

### **How you run this drill?**

This drill is intended to teach younger players the importance of playing their position on the field – to prevent kids from fighting over the ball when it is hit. Show the players that they each have a ‘slice’ of the pizza, but they can’t have a slice of any one else’s pizza. When the ball is hit, or rolled to the players, they must stay on their own slice of pizza when the ball comes out. They cannot go to another player’s slice to steal the ball.

Players who go into the other players slice will have someone else come in and take their piece of pizza from them.

### **Result**

Gradually, when players lose their slice of pizza, they will understand that they cannot go into other players’ areas to get the ball. This prevents five infielders from going after the same ball.

#### **Coaches Notes:**



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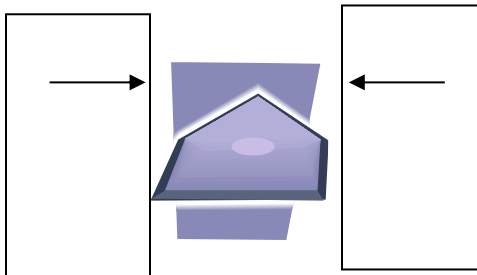


## **HITTING DRILLS**

## **Hitting Drills**

### **Belly Button Batting** (teaching how to stand proper in the box)

Line up the belly button with the back point of the plate



You will need to set up a tee in front of the plate with a ball on it. Batter must have a bat and helmet on.

#### **How you run this Drill?**

Have the player line up their belly button with the back of the plate and put the end of the bat handle to their belly button, move so the bat crosses the whole plate. Have them spread their feet so they are just wider than the distance of their shoulders (parallel to each other) and to bend their knees. Shoulder's slightly forward. Hands need to be back near their ear (holding a phone to ear) and the bat straight up, not behind their back. Both elbow down and in relaxed position. **(WE DO NOT WANT BACK ELBOW UP)**. (Note: when holding the bat, hands together and have the player extend their index finger out; they should be pointing in the same direction). Have the player tuck their chin into his/her shoulder that faces the pitching mound. Head should be looking at impact of ball and after hitting should not have moved.

#### **Result**

This is the correct **Batting Stance** we want you instill. This is new to the players and we want to create muscle memory to ensure the highest success when swinging the bat and making contact. When making contact we want to be in front of the plate.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

### **Invisible Hitting Drill**

Teaching the kids the proper swing is important in creating muscle memory in building a foundation for hitting the ball. No bat is used for this drill.

#### **How you run this Drill?**

Have the player's straddle the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline. You will stand by the pitching mound, so you can observe. You tell the players to get into their proper **Batting Stance**. Take this time to view and adjust their posture. They should have their hands by their ear, back elbow relaxed against body, front arm relaxed by chest muscle.

When you yell **"Swing"**, have all the players swing an imaginary bat, this will allow you to break the swing in slow motion and adjust. When the players have done their swing yell **"Freeze"**, make sure they have their belly button facing you. Back foot heel should be off the ground and knee bent to look like an "L". Make it a game of Freeze so you can adjust their swing.

#### **Result**

You will be able to watch over the players swing, making any adjustments and notes that will create proper muscle memory.

#### **Coaches Notes:**

## **Swat the Fly and Swing**

This is a fun drill for the players as they try to make the bat “swat the fly” on the ball. You will need to draw a fly on the ball and put it on the tee facing the backstop.

### **How you run this Drill?**

Have the player in their proper **Batting Stance**. Tell the batter to swing in slow motion and make the bat swat the fly on the ball without it falling off. The player resumes normal stance and swings in full motion focusing on making the bat swat the fly on the ball. This is a fun way for kids to learn what motion they need to hit the ball.

### **Result**

The players develop muscle memory and hand-eye coordination to make contact with the ball.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Spot on the Ball**

Draw a circle the size of a nickel and fill with a black felt marker. This will help players understand where they need to make contact with the ball.

### **How you run this drill?**

Set up a tee and place the spot facing the backstop so players can see. Ask the player to get into their **Batting Stance** (correct if needed). The player will focus on the spot, not just the ball making it easier for contact. As the player get more confident start incorporating **Swat the Fly**, and **Freeze**. Take the time to fix the players mechanics and create good muscle memory techniques.

Over time change the size of the spot to a penny or dime and eventually nothing at all.

### **Results**

Consistent hitting by focusing on the ball creates success.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **One knee Batting**

This drill teaches upper body movement and allows coaches to correct the upper body. Use a very light bat or use a broom handle cut to proper bat size. Use wiffle balls if you have them.

### **How you run this Drill?**

Have the player kneel down, back knee down and front knee up 90 degree angle. In order for the player to hit the ball – make sure hands are up near the ear, back elbow relaxed. The player needs to hit the top of the ball, enforce teaching getting on top of the ball

Pay attention to the lower body. Make sure the player has little or no movement with the back knee. You want the player to end with their bellybutton overtop of the front leg. All you want the batter to do is make contact with the ball and move through the swing with their upper body.

### **Results**

This drill is excellent in creating strong mechanics and good fundamentals.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Batting Tee Counting- Money Ball**

This is a contact drill and makes the players in the field pay attention.

Set up a tee and have a player in the **Batting Stance** (make sure it's correct). Make sure the tee is waist high or just under. Have the players set up in the infield. Place cones in the field that set up zones (**call the zone their piece of pizza**) that your infield has to stay in. This makes the players stay in position and not chase the ball or (eat another player's pizza).

### **How you run this Drill?**

The coach says, “**Hit**”, the player swings. If the ball is hit the players in the field yell, “One” and make a play to stop the ball and get it back to the coach. The fielders say the corresponding number for each hit. The batter gets three swings and on the final hit drops the bat and runs to first, players in the field try to get him/her out.

### **Result**

Helps player gain confidence in hitting the ball and creates encouragement from a team perspective. Also, give the fielders practice staying in position.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Drop the Bat!!!**

Rally Cap players are being introduced to baseball and some players may have a tendency to throw the bat after they swing. This drill is a fast and fun paced drill to teach the kids to drop the bat correctly after they swing. Have the player's line up behind the fence and call them out one by one

### **How you run this Drill?**

Get some rope or draw a circle in the dirt behind the batter. Have the player in the correct **Batting Stance** (make sure it's correct). The player swings using the correct mechanics, hitting the ball, the player will place the bat in the circle and run to first (**Shoulder Check**) this is the time to have a parent at first teaching the kids to turn to the right after they touch first and looking over their shoulder at the first base coach. Have the player do this in slow motion so they understand to drop the bat and not throw the bat.

**Keywords:** Batting Stance, Place in circle, Shoulder Check

### **Result**

This is an important drill to emphasize to ensure safety for all players

**Coaches notes:**

## **Teaching 3 strikes**

This game is to teach the players about three strikes. You can install this game half way through the season, or when you feel the players are ready and capable to understand what three strike means.

### **How this drill works?**

Have the batter at the plate with the correct **Batting Stance** and fielders in their positions. Set up cones that create proper zones (**Pizza**). The batter attempts to put the ball in play by hitting it. If the player misses or hits the tee, it is considered a strike. This drill teaches the players what three strikes mean.

This will be the first time you introduce players to strike outs. Explain how important it is to make contact with the ball in order to get to first and advance the runners.

Key Words: **Batting Stance, Swat the Fly, Drop the Bat, Shoulder check**

### **Result**

This drill adds the next step to the process we want taught. Making contact within three strikes helps develop the players towards Tadpole.

**Coaches notes:**

## **Game Drills**

### **Running to First**

This is a fun drill that teaches the players to run through 1st base. This teaches players how to listen to coach. Make this a 2 part drill. Part 1 – is to run through first with a shoulder check. Part 2 – is to teach player how to turn towards 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **How this drill works?**

Part 1 - Players are lined up at the plate. Take an imaginary swing and hustle to first. Have the players look at the coach. If the coach makes no gesture towards 2<sup>nd</sup>, the player needs to run through the base turning to the right, looking over their right shoulder. Set up cones behind the base for the players to follow.

Part 2 – Incorporate  $\frac{3}{4}$  into your season. Players are lined up at the plate. Take an imaginary swing and hustle to first. Have the players look at the coach. If the coach points towards 2<sup>nd</sup> have the players round 1<sup>st</sup> touching the inside of the base with foot. Set up cones for players to follow. Have them stop on 2<sup>nd</sup> and explain they can't run through 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **Result**

This drill is fun and the players are learning the keys to being successful base runners.

#### **Coaches notes:**

### **Next Base (Station to Station)**

When players reach first, they may not know where to go next. Make sure you have coaches or Parents at each base. They can talk to the players as where to go next.

#### **How this drill works?**

Start with a player on first. Have all the remaining players at the plate in a line. Have a tee set up and the player will show you their batting stance. Fix their stance if you need to. Have them take an imaginary swing and run to first – through the base with a right shoulder check. The player on first will run to 2<sup>nd</sup> and stop on the base, with the help of parent and so on. Have them go through this drill a few times so they get it without any parent or coach instructions.

#### **Result**

This base running drill will help players learn where to go during the game

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Catch Me if You Can**

This drill will be the player's favorite. Set up cones so the players run along the base line and about 4-5 ft from the base have the players turn out and cut back in stepping on the inside of the base heading in a straight line to the next base.

### **How this drill works?**

Have players lined up at the plate. Give each runner a 5 sec head start and then send the next runner. After all runners have gone, then the coach runs around the bases trying to catch them. The players are trying to pass the runner in front of them and not get caught by the coach.

### **Result**

This teaches the players to run around the bases as fast as they can, or they will be passed and caught by the coach. Simulates a game situation where the players need to run fast.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Touch Down Dance**

This is a drill made to be fun, silly and loud.

You will start with wiffle balls or tennis balls. This is a great drill to start with when teaching how to catch fly balls. Have them call for the ball as they get more confident.

### **How this drill works?**

Have the player's line-up single file behind each other. Set up a cone off to the side and the first player in line stands beside it. Have the players put their glove in front and above their head. You will toss the ball underhand to the player and he/she will try to catch it. Go through this a few times and then start to make them move. When they catch it yell Touchdown and make it very dramatic. Once they realize they won't get hurt they will be more confident to be diving and sliding.

### **Result**

This drill will teach players to catch fly balls and call for the ball

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Charge It**

This drill teaches players to charge the ball, set their feet, and throw to their target. You can divide the players into teams so they can all have several reps. Have a line set up at 2<sup>nd</sup> throwing to first and have a line at ss throwing to 3<sup>rd</sup>. You can start players without gloves to start.

### **How this drill works?**

Set out a cone where you want the players to start, have coaches on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Have the players in the **ready position**. The coach will roll a slow grounder. The player needs to run and pick up the ball using the **Triangle**. Make sure the players use **crocodile hands** and have the players **Turn, Point, Step** and **Throw**. After players put the steps together have them try it with their gloves. Once you feel the players have gained confidence with all the steps, make it a game of speed, count how long it takes to charge and get the ball back to the coach.

### **Result**

Players learn to put all the steps together.

1-Charge it

2-Triangle

3-Crocodile Hands

4-Turn, point, step and throw to target.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Frozen Tag**

This drill teaches players the importance of tagging with the ball. Mark off an area 40ft by 40ft or use the infield. Have two players with a ball inside their glove.

### **How this drill works?**

Frozen Tag is a game that requires the taggers to tag the other players with the ball inside the glove. The two players that are "it" will chase the other player and they have to tag those players with their gloves. If the ball comes out, the player they tagged is NOT frozen. The only way for a player to be tagged is with a glove that has a ball in it. Players that are tagged become frozen and can only be unfrozen by a player going underneath their outstretched arms.

### **Result**

Players will learn to tag players with the ball in their glove, making sure they always have two hands on the glove.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Infield Practice**

Place players in positions, hit or roll balls to players and have them throw to the base you call. **Incorporate key words** – Ready Position, Crocodile Hands, Triangle, Turn, Point, Step, and throw.

### **How this drill works?**

Place players in the infield positions and instruct them to make plays at different bases. Rotate players into new position. Explain to players that on each hit every player has to go to a base. Set up cones for Pizza Slice Defense.

### **Result**

Players learn positions and coverage.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Game Simulation**

This drill simulates real game situations. Have players or parents for runners

### **How this drill works?**

Place defensive players in various positions in the infield and keep 2-3 players in as the batters. Have the batter step up to the tee, adjust batting stance if need be and have them hit the ball and run to first as in a real game. The fielding players need to try to get the batter out. Rotate batters and defense so everyone gets a chance. Coach the players on making the correct decisions, where they need to throw the ball to get the out if it's hit to them. Ask the players where the next play is?

### **Result**

Helps the players think one step ahead

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **First Base – Third Base**

This drill teaches players to field the ball and run to step on the base. This drill can be set up on both 1<sup>st</sup> base and 3<sup>rd</sup> base.

### **How this drill works?**

Set up a cone for players to stand at so they will not interfere with the play. Have a player stand in the 1<sup>st</sup> base and 3<sup>rd</sup> base positions. Have a coach for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> throw or hit a ball towards the fielder. The player fields the ball and then runs to step on the base, trying to simulate beating the runner to the base. The player throws the ball back to the coach and prepares for the second part of the drill. Throw the ball to the fielder in the air who should have one foot on the base.

### **Result**

This drill teaches players to stay in front of the ball to field it and to run to step on the base to get the runner out. The second part teaches players how to get hitters out after they have hit the ball.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Cover 2<sup>nd</sup> Base**

This drill teaches both the 2<sup>nd</sup> base and ss position to cover 2<sup>nd</sup> base when the ball is hit and runners on base.

### **How this drill works?**

Have one group of players lined up between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base and another group of players lined up between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Base. Throw the ball on the ground towards the player at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. That player fields the ball while the player at ss runs to cover 2<sup>nd</sup> base to receive the ball. As the players start to understand start mixing up where you roll the ball, make sure the player without the ball covers 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

### **Result**

Players will learn that if the ball is hit on the right side of the field that ss covers 2<sup>nd</sup> and if the ball is hit on the left side of the field that 2<sup>nd</sup> is covering their base.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Hula Hoop Target throwing**

This drill teaches players to throw the ball to a target. You will need three hula hoops and 3 cones.

### **How this drill works?**

Set up a cone for players to stand on. Set up a hula hoop 10-15 feet in front of cone. Set up two more hula hoops 10 and 15ft in front of the first hula hoop and place a cone in the middle. Put 2 balls in the first hula hoop. Have the player run to the first hula hoop and pick up a ball. Have them show you the proper throwing technique and throw to the first cone in the hula hoop, and then to the second hula hoop. If they hit the cone 10 points, if they hit inside the hula hoop its 5points.

### **Result**

This drill teaches players to throw the ball to a target in a fun manner. Having fun and learning at the same time.

#### **Coaches notes:**

## **Running the base obstacle course**

Set up cones on zig zag direction between first and second. Between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> set up big ones with a broom handle on it and small cones with broom sticks on them

### **How this drill works?**

Have the players lined up at home and second. Yell “go” and the players run through the obstacle course. Have them yell out each base name when they step on it (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, home)

### **Result**

This is a different option than the traditional racing around the bases.

#### **Coaches notes:**

**Practice Plan #1** - This Practice is 35 min long -Keep it Fun!

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :04 min	Intro Talk Stretch arms Go over rules, show players diamond and positions	-	Show players how to stretch proper add some fun into this. Run around the bases – play follow the leader
:5 to :7 min	The Grip Show me	2	Teach the fundamentals step by step. (show, turn, point, step and throw)
:8 to :12 min	One Knee Throwing Have them stand up	3	Watch for correct upper body mechanics. Correct posture create good habits
:13 to :20 min	Catching Contest	6	Use tennis ball or wiffle ball. Make it a game. Say “show me” once in awhile
:21 to :25 min	Triangle Drill to Block the Ball	6	Use key words Ready Position and Croc Hands on balls of feet and not flat footed-look for triangle
:26 to :35 min	Belly Button Batting Stance & Invisible Hitting Drill	9	Create good stance in invisible hitting drill. Have players run to first no bats needed. Use key words – Batting Stance
	End of Practice talk Give homework to parents to work with children at home (grip, show me, ready position, croc hands)	-	Quick recap of key words. Get team name and have a cheer using team name. Tell them to be so loud they want to break the house and car windows (always fun)

First practice is a lot of info for 5-6 year olds. This is the start to creating simple one or two key words that will teach players to focus on what you’re teaching. Make it as fun as possible. Most drills are around 3-5 minutes, if you start losing interest before you time slot, jump into a game of follow the coach around the bases. Every time the players touch the base have the players yell out the base they stepped on. After you have done this get back into your drill.

**Coaches notes:**

**Practice Plan #2** – Keep drills 10 min – keep it moving fast and make them fun.

This practice is 40 min

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :05 min	Stretch arms Run around bases Throw w/parent Re cap of key words	-	Grip, show me, ready position, and croc hands Run around the bases – play follow the leader
:06 to :11 min	Bonk the Bucket	3	Turn, point, step, throw Triangle drill to receive ball. 3 coaches needed 1-players, 1-bucket, and 1 to roll out ball.
:12 to :17 min	Catch and Throw to Coach	4	Start 3-5 ft apart. Use wiffle or tennis ball. After catch hold for 2 sec and throw back to coach
:18 to :23 min	Learning Field Position	7	Players need to hustle and show you ready position.
:24 to :27 min	Running to First Part 1 Next Base –station to station	13	Look at coach Right Shoulder check Hustle Have them go to second, stop and go to third, stop And than onto home
:27 to 30 min	Drop the Bat	12	Players need to know how to drop the bat after swinging.
:31 to 40 min	Swat the fly on the Ball and Swing	10	Work on good <b>Batting Stance</b> . Give player 5 swings and run on last hit.
	End of Practice talk Give homework to parents to work with children at home		Quick recap of key words. Have a cheer using team name. Try even harder to break the house and car windows (always fun)

**Coaches notes:**

**Practice Plan #3** – Keep drills moving - make it fun

This practice is **35 min long**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Drill</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Coaching Points</b>
0 to :05 min	Stretch arms Run around bases Throw w/parent Re cap of key words	-	Grip, <b>show me</b> , ready position, and croc hands, Batting stance Turn , point , step, throw
:05 to :10 min	Rainbow – Rapid Style	4	Have assistants help and use wiffle balls. Start slow and as player’s progress increase the speed.
:10 to :15 min	Field and Bonk the Bucket	8	Ready pos – with croc hands. Triangle drill to stop ball. Show, point, step, throw to bonk the bucket
:15 to :20 min	Spot the Ball Water break	10	Proper batting stance. Belly button facing pitching mound and make sure no front step
:20 to :25 min	Around the Horn	5	Start the players at shorter distance.
:25 to 35min	Fly Balls	5	Two hands - catch and hold for 1 sec
	End of Practice talk Give homework to parents to work with children at home		Quick recap of key words. Have a cheer using team name. Try even harder to break the house and car windows (always fun)

**Coaches notes:**

**Practice Plan #4** – Keep drills moving - make it fun

This practice is 30 min long

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points
0 to :05 min	Stretch arms Run around bases Throw w/parent Re cap of key words	-	Grip, show me, ready position, and croc hands, Batting stance Turn, point, step, throw
:05 to :10 min	Catch and Throw to Coach	4	Use wiffle or tennis ball. After catch hold for 2 sec and throw back to coach
:10 to :15 min	Pizza Slice Defense Water break	7	Teach players to play the position they're in, and not take the ball from another player
:15 to :20 min	Batting Tee Counting – Money Ball	11	Simulate game situation and rotate players
:20 to :25 min	Charge It	15	Put all steps together Charge it, triangle, croc hands, turn, point, step, throw
:25 to 30min	Frozen Tag	15	Tag players with hand over ball in the glove.
	End of Practice talk Give homework to parents to work with children at home		Quick recap of key words. Have a cheer using team name. Try even harder to break the house and car windows (always fun)

**Coaches notes:**

**Practice Plan #5** – Keep drills moving - make it fun

This practice is **30 min long**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Drill</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Coaching Points</b>
0 to :05 min	Stretch arms Run around bases Throw w/parent Re cap of key words	-	Grip, <b>show me</b> , ready position, and croc hands, Batting stance Turn, point, step, throw
:05 to :10 min	Catch and Throw to Coach	4	Use wiffle or tennis ball. After catch hold for 2 sec and throw back to coach
:10 to :15 min	Charge It	15	Put all steps together Charge it, triangle, croc hands, turn, point, step, throw
:15 to :20 min	First base – Third Base	17	Have the players use the triangle to receive the ball and run to step on first. Throw to you and you back to them in the air
:20 to :25 min	Swat the fly on the ball and swing	10	Refer to pg 9 for the <b>Batting Stance Posture</b>
:25 to 30min	Game Situation	16	Get parents involved to be runners. Players hit and infield tries to get out the runners
	End of Practice talk Give homework to parents to work with children at home		Quick recap of key words. Have a cheer using team name. Try even harder to break the house and car windows (always fun)

**Coaches notes:**

**Practice Plan # 6**– Keep drills moving - make it fun

This practice is **\_\_ min long**

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points

**Coaches notes:**

**Practice Plan # 7**– Keep drills moving - make it fun

This practice is      min long

Time	Drill	Page	Coaching Points

**Coaches notes:**