

PLYMOUTH YOUTH BASEBALL  
HORIZON LEAGUE

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Improve a players knowledge of the basic fundamentals and techniques of baseball [catching, throwing, hitting, and base running] using organized methods that are both fun and exciting for the players and coaches while emphasizing sportsmanship, hustle and being the best you can be. Putting a high priority on teaching baseball lingo, field positions and rules within the game of baseball and introducing the finer details of baseball.

**GOALS:**

1. Further a players understanding of baseball and rules
  - what's foul ball
  - what's a single, double, triple, homerun, grand slam
  - what's a strike, what's a ball [ strike zone]
  - what's a strike out – 3 strikes
  - what's a walk – 4 balls
  - what's a double/triple play
  - how many outs in an inning
  - who's the home team, visitor, who bats first/last
  - look at Junior league rules
  - pitching: what's a windup versus the stretch
  - Bunting
  - Sacrifice fly and bunt
  - Run on 3<sup>rd</sup> strike dropped by catcher
  - Foul ball with 2 strikes is not a strike out, does count for strike 1&2
  - Overthrown ball out of bounds – how many extra bases do you get?
  - Throwing to Cutoff man and player positioning in line with 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base
2. Let players play all positions to further develop skills at each position emphasizing responsibilities of that position.
3. refine throwing fundamentals [teach proper foot work when throwing [crow hop/balance]
4. teach base running fundamentals including sliding techniques
5. Introduce pitching fundamentals
6. Refine hitting fundamentals teach proper foot work, bat positioning, swing, hand/eye coordination, feet position when in the batters box
7. Introduce what a strikezone is

8. Introduce terms like choke up, cutoff throws/positioning, backing up on a play
9. introduce situational defense, "What do I do if the ball is hit to me" get the players to know before the ball is hit what they should do.
10. teach/introduce catching fundamentals
  - instruct player on proper equipment to wear and how to wear it.
  - Catcher must wear an athletic supporter and a cup
  - Catcher will squat down behind home base and should position himself a comfortable distance behind the batter.
  - If the batter's bat makes contact with the catchers glove when swinging this results in a catcher interference penalty of a free pass to first base.
  - Catcher should hold the catchers glove out in front of chest in the middle of the strike zone. Give your pitcher a good target somewhere within the strike zone. Place the throwing hand somewhere near his back pocket. This is the only position where two hands is not recommended when catching a baseball. Once the ball makes contact with the catchers glove, the catcher can then get the throwing hand in position to grab the ball from the catchers glove to make a throw.
  - Try to give the umpire a good look at the pitch, stay low until the umpire calls a strike or ball on the pitch.
  - If the ball is hit on the ground in the infield, depending on base runner positions, he can backup the play at first base by running down the line towards first base. This is a situational thing. Ex. If there is a base runner at 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> base the catcher should never leave home base empty so therefore would not back up first base.
  - When catching a popup behind first base catcher should turn his back to home plate as ball will tend to float back toward the infield after tossing his protective mask to the side out of the way. Catchers glove should be above the shoulders and to the side of the head so he can maintain a clear view of the ball when in flight.
11. double play between shortstop and 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman techniques
  - player fielding the hit ball should lead their teammate toward second base, once ball is caught receiving player should tag the base off to the side to avoid an oncoming offensive player sliding into second base depending on how close the force play at second is.
  - if player fielding the ball is within 2 or 3 steps from second base fielding player should tag the base and then throw the ball to first again avoiding oncoming base runner.
  - If player fielding the ball is between 10 and 5 feet from second base an underhand flip(glove side of receiver) to second should be used. Any ball fielded further than approx. 10 feet from 2<sup>nd</sup> base should be thrown overhand to the glove side of the person receiving the ball.
  - Ball should be received at second base on the glove side waist to eye level high, chest to eye level is ideal to turn a double play.
  - Avoid throwing the ball to the back hand side of the player receiving the ball.

- Always make sure you get one out, the second out is a bonus, person receiving the ball must catch it as if he were the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman.

#### 12. fundamentals of a run down

- hold ball in throwing hand not in glove
- run with ball held high (above shoulder) so your teammate you are running at can clearly see the ball
- when the runner is being chased toward a teammate give the person running with the ball a target to throw to.
- A proper run down should be 3 throws or less. Chase the runner all the way back, once the runner gets close to a base throw the ball to your teammate waiting to tag runner out.
- Once player throws ball get out of baseline
- Keep an eye on other base runners not in the rundown trying to advance ahead of the runner in the rundown.

#### 13. 1<sup>st</sup> basemans footwork

- positioning around the base
- straddle bag
- stopping the ball is first priority
- if throw is offline, disengage from the base to get ball, swipe tag if necessary, else touch bag after catch

#### 14. pitching fundamentals

- I. Balance position
- II. Power position
- III. Follow thru position

##### I. Balance position:

- FOCUS EYES ON TARGET [CATCHERS GLOVE] AT ALL TIMES
- Step1. place two feet on the pitching rubber in a comfortable position with hips square facing home plate
- Step2. place ball in glove and grip the baseball with the throwing hand; A three finger cross seem grip[4 seem fastball] or a two finger with the seem grip [2 seem fastball] should be used for beginners
- Step3; Slowly take a half step straight back with the foot opposite the throwing arm. Keep hips square facing toward home plate.
- Step 4. Glide forward to Balance position by placing the stride leg parallel to the rubber with knee bent at a comfortable height. [do not allow knee to slide past the vertical plane of the rubber]. The plant foot should slide in front of the rubber turning the foot with the toes pointing toward the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side if right handed or 1<sup>st</sup> base side if left. Once into the balance position player should be able to stand in this position for a period of time without losing balance.

- Step 5. Throwing hand should remain in the glove with the glove positioned against the rib area wherever is most comfortable.

## II. Power position:

- Step 6. Glove hand/arm should extend forward as ball hand extends back behind the shoulder and arm is lifted to 45 degree angle. Ball should face opposite player shoulder extended away from body with elbow bent at 45 degrees.
- Step 7. Pull glove hand /arm back toward body to tuck position somewhere under the armpit as ball/throwing arm explode toward the target[catcher glove].
- Step 8. Glide step forward to a comfortable landing position [heel to ball of foot] as throwing arm is exploding forward.

## III. Follow Thru position

- Step 9. Throw back leg around to land into a ready fielding position. The ball should be released shortly after lead foot lands.
- Throwing arm/hand should follow comfortably thru down across the chest towards the stride leg.
- Players head needs to finish towards the catchers glove[target] with eyes still on the target.

AGAIN: FOCUS EYES ON TARGET [CATCHERS GLOVE] AT ALL TIMES