

PLYMOUTH YOUTH BASEBALL DEVELOPMENTAL LEAGUE

MISSION STATEMENT: Introduce the basic fundamentals 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.

GOALS:

DEV. SKILL LEVEL 1 & 2: (ages 4 thru 6)

Throwing a baseball:

- grip baseball with 3 fingers
- reach arm back behind body , ball should be held high up behind ear and it should be facing away from the shoulder and above the bent elbow
- Step 1:
throwing drills should begin by kneeling on one knee with your partner 8 to 10 feet apart. If the player throws right handed he should be kneeling on his right knee and opposite if left handed.
- Step 2 : face target,
- Step 3: turn at the hips and reach back placing the ball in proper position as described above. Opposite arm should be pointing at the target.
- Step4: turn head back to see target and explode arm and waist towards the target releasing the ball on the downward motion to the targets glove. Tuck the non-throwing shoulder/arm while throwing arm is coming thru to release the ball.

When standing:

- stride toward the throwing target with opposite foot and with eyes on the target
- ball should be released by a flip of the wrist when the arm is coming thru [in an almost vertical position over the head] towards the target.
- Players arm should follow through towards the front leg position in a downward motion.
- Throwing drills should begin 8 to 10 feet apart gradually increasing the distance as the warm up continues
- To increase a persons arm strength throwing long distance toss can be affective.

Catching a baseball:

- how to hold a glove: Ball above the waste glove should be vertical, below the waste thumbs should be up and open glove should be facing up.
- position the glove out in front of you with open side facing where the ball is hit or thrown from.

- The non glove hand should be next to the glove to hold the ball in the glove once the ball hits the glove and the glove is squeezed shut.

Fielding a ground ball:

- feet should be spread apart outside the shoulders. Knees should be bent so fielder has solid balanced base minimizing the need to bend at the waste.
- Glove should be placed on the ground like a scoop shovel out in front of the feet [not between feet] so fielder can see the glove and ball as it rolls towards them.
- As ball rolls toward fielder, ball should be centered between fielder's legs to the throwing hand side.
- Fielder should be on the balls of their feet not flat footed
- Fielder should cover the ball with the feeder hand which allows a quick transfer to throwing hand and should simultaneously get the feet in throwing position towards the intended target (crow hop motion).
- When fielding from side to side use a shuffle-shuffle to maintain a balanced frame. Do not cross feet. If charging a slow hit ball or bunt the last step should be a jump step which will get fielder into position to throw as quickly as possible. This again depends on the ball position.
- If a ball is dropped and is not fielded cleanly, always pick ball up with the bare throwing hand while transferring to a throwing position, do not pick up with the glove.

Batting off a tee

- move tee between strike-zone [knee's to above waist]. Let the player decide what height works best for them.
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- feet should be beyond shoulder width apart
- knees slightly bent, back straight as possible, very balanced
- batting right handed = left hand on bottom of bat / batting left handed = right hand should be on the bottom of the bat.
- hands together with loose upper hand grip, knobby knuckles[line them up]
- hands back even with the back shoulder, bat angled to behind the ear
- batter should be concentrating a couple inches behind the ball sitting on the tee
- batter should pick up front foot about an inch and slide it forward while the batter's hands begin to move toward the baseball.
- Once the batter's hands reach even with the ball the batter's wrists should explode the bat thru the ball on the tee. Barrel of the bat should be above the hands
- Upon contact with the ball player should keep eyes on the tee instead of where the ball is traveling
- Watch out for looping swings[where the bat starts to go horizontal before the batter's front arm moves toward the baseball], a good swing is one that is quick to the target in a downward motion
- Batter should follow thru with both hands on the bat as long as possible before releasing and dropping the hands from the bat after hitting the ball. [teach good follow thru without throwing the bat].

- Show how to run to first base after dropping bat [stress running thru the base not stopping at the base]
- Explain the difference between a force out and a tag out, when a player can just tag the base and when they must tag the base runner. [level 2]
- Stress throwing to first base or second base only in level 1 and 2.
- Introduce all defensive positions on a baseball field so players get used to hearing all the terms

LEVEL 2:

- Level 2, start introducing underhand/overhand pitching instead of hitting off the tee.
- Make sure the hitter is watching the ball at all times [batters at this age tend to watch your eyes not the ball] move the ball from side to side, the batters eyes should be following the ball.
- If batter experiences trouble making contact with the ball the pitcher should move closer and make sure he/she is concentrating on the ball only.

DEV. SKILL LEVEL 3:(ages 5,6,7 & 8)

- coach pitch overhand from 30 feet or so
- same hitting principals as above but get hitter to watch the ball from the pitchers hand all the way to the bat.
- Stress timing and waiting for the ball while keeping their weight back on the back foot prior to lifting and sliding the front foot towards the pitcher.
- Start stressing defensive positioning, ex. Where does the shortstop stand, 3rd base, all positions.
- Work on using a “crow hop” towards the target when initiating a long throw. This will help with accuracy and velocity of the throw. Stress Under throws are better than overthrows, 1st baseman can stop an under throw but not an over throw.
- Stress accuracy on throws, relaxing, taking the time to make a good throw aiming at the targets chest area.
- Meet the requirements laid out below to graduate to Horizon baseball
- Base running to all four bases
Rounding 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base
Concentrate on inside of the base stepping just inside of the base while rounding . do not step on the top of the base. The outside edge of the right foot should make contact with the inside of the base.

**REQUIRED SKILL LEVEL TESTS
RECOMMENDED TO PASS BEFORE
DEVELOPMENTAL LEAGUE
PLAYER MOVES UP TO THE
HORIZON LEAGUE:**

1. player can throw a hardball from 3rd to 1st somewhat accurately (Horizon league base lengths)
2. player can catch a hardball thrown from 3rd to 1st 4 out of 5 times without showing signs of being afraid of the ball.
3. player can catch a fly ball or pop up.
4. player knows where the bases are and what they are and how to run around the baseball diamond.
5. player knows what a force out is and when the need to tag the runner is required
6. player can hit a hardball pitched by the coach overhand from 45 feet without showing signs of being afraid of the ball
7. player can field a ground ball from the infield and/or outfield.
8. player should be able to identify and locate all defensive positions on a baseball diamond.