

8U Practice Plan

Summary of 90 Minute Field Practice Plan

- 1- Dynamic stretching (5 min)
- 2- Base running (15 min)
- 3- Play catch (15 min)
- 4- Infield/outfield (20 min)
- 5- Pitching/catching (Last 30-60 min of practice for pitches/catchers during practice)
- 6- Drills (15 min)
- 7- Hitting (20 min)
- 8- Field clean-up (5 min after practice has ended)

1- Drill (5 min): Stretching (8U Rec)

- a. Coach to lead stretching
 - i. Dynamic stretching and jogging/running

2- Drill (15 min): Base Running

- a. Players put on helmets and run the bases
 - i. Home to first, running to the orange bag and running through
 1. 1st base coach points towards outfield and yells “run through”
 - ii. Home to second, “banana” around first
 1. 1st base coach points towards second and yells, “go two”
 2. 2nd coach forces players to run inside of them and reminds them to pick up 3rd base coach
 3. 3rd base coach advises stop at 2 or run to 3
 - a. Hand motions
 - iii. Home to first or second
 1. 1st base coach mixes it up to force players to pay attention and simulate live game
 - iv. Home to third
 1. Same as ii above with direction to third
 - v. Home to Home (Home run)
 1. At first practice, time players

2. At mid-season, time the players
3. At last practice, time the players
 - a. This helps to reinforce improvement and friendly competition

3- Drill (15 min): Play catch (8U Rec)

- a. Coaches play catch with as many players as possible
 - i. Coaches are able to instruct while playing catch
 - ii. Coaches are able to provide more reps than new players playing with other new players

4- Drill (20 min): Infield/outfield

- a. Start season practices with coach throwing the ball (Helps with accuracy)
 - i. If outfield fields clean, they run to second to stop the play or tag runner
 - ii. If it goes past outfielder, they throw it to pitcher
 1. Pitcher stays near circle, unless it is way past, then go out further
 - a. Outfielders come to infield
- iii. Grounders to first for all positions
- iv. Have players run the bases to get familiar with base running after all players have had first round of reps

5- Drill (15 min): Misc drills for defense and offense

- a. When you have enough players and coaches, it is best to break up into two to three groups to maximize reps and increase focus.
 - i. **Drill:** Outfield and baserunning drill

Purpose: Teach outfielders what to do when they get the ball. Teach base runners to be aggressive, stay within the base patch, listen to base coaches and not get tagged.

Equipment: Runners wear helmets

Setup: Coach at pitching circle throwing or hitting the ball to outfielders. Base runners line up halfway between home and first. Outfielders in all four outfield positions

Coach throws/hits the ball to outfield, runners run and try to make it to second. If they can't, they retreat. Outfielders are taught to tag with hand and ball in the glove.

ii. **Drill:** Grounder drill

Purpose: Coach proper technique for fielding ground balls and proper throw to first.

Equipment: Gloves and fielding masks

Setup: Position players at their infield positions and hit grounders. Balls thrown to first. First base puts balls into bucket. When balls are missed, they let them go.

iii. **Drill:** Fly ball drill

Purpose: Coach proper technique for catching fly balls

Equipment: Gloves and fielding masks

Setup: Position players in group in outfield. Have one player separate from group and throw them the ball to catch.

6- Drill (30 – 60 min during practice): Pitching/catching at Field Practices

- a. Identify 2-3 pitchers for the season
- b. Pitchers will pitch every field practice
- c. Provide learning pitchers equal innings throughout regular season to help with development
- d. Provide advanced pitchers with more live pitching at practice to help players learn to hit off of players since they should throw more strikes
 - i. 8u coach catches one pitcher at a time

7- Drill (20 min): Hitting

-Rotation is usually Basic Tee (with different variations), to Short Toss to Live Pitching (Batting Practice)

a. **Drill:** Basic Tee

Purpose: Helps a player effectively work on hitting pitches in all locations.

Equipment: Bat and helmet; Batting Tee

Setup: Net and tee at outfield

Execution: Start by placing the ball in the middle of the plate thigh high. Take a few swings. Move the tee in and forward to simulate an inside pitch. Take a few swings. Move the ball outside and back to simulate an outside pitch. Take a few swings.

Use the three placements above and this time vary the height of the tee to simulate high and low pitches. Note: Move the tee to simulate different locations, not the hitter's position in the box. Visualization is important in this drill. Have the hitter look out to where the pitcher would be. Have them imagine a windup and pitch and tracking the ball into the actual location on the tee where they will hit it.

b. Drill: One Handed Tee

Purpose: Helps a player effectively work on hitting with bottom hand vs. casting or rotating early with top hand.

Equipment: Bat and helmet; Batting Tee

Execution: Start by placing the ball in the middle of the plate thigh high.

Make it a One Handed Drill (bottom hand).

- **Have the players choke up and use their bottom hand only to initiate the swing.**
- **This helps train the bottom hand to pull inside and through the ball.**

c. Drill: Soft Toss (as season progresses or for advanced 8U players)

Purpose: Helps a player focus on swing fundamentals, great warm up before a game.

Equipment: Bat and helmet, softballs, heavy balls or Wiffle Balls, Hitting Net

Setup: This drill can be used as a batting practice station or a pre-game warm up. Good idea to also set up some warning cones around this drill so people do not walk too close behind the batter. Always assume that batters will hit the ball over your screen - it should not happen, but it always does.

Execution:

-Set 12 - 15 balls on the ground for this drill and sit on a bucket about 5 feet away and to the side of the batter.

- Position yourself slightly ahead of the batter, about equal to the plate if one is being used.

-Turn slightly sideways so the batter can see the ball better. Show the batter the ball out in front, then slowly rock my arm back and through for an underhand toss toward the front of the plate.

-The underhand tossing motion is important to help the batter develop the timing of their "Load and explode".

-Try to throw most of the balls toward the front of the plate for "ideal impact" up the middle.

Do not toss a big softball lob to the batter, the ball should be coming at an upward angle with no lob

d. Drill: Short Toss

Purpose: Helps develop fundamental swing, controlled environment, no fear.

Equipment: Bat and helmet; wiffle balls, softballs or heavy balls

Setup: This drill can be used as a batting practice station or pre-game warm up.

Execution: Set up at 10 - 20 feet (depending on level of hitters and balls used)

-Firmly toss balls into the strike zone and let the batter hit the pitch. NEVER LOB THE BALL.

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(This drill is also for wiffle circles if there are enough players)

e. Drill: Batting Practice

Purpose: As many good swings as possible with the least amount of standing around time.

Equipment: Bat and helmet, softballs,

Setup: This can be on the field or with a net in outfield

8- Drill (5 min after practice): Field clean-up

a. Players help coaches to put away bases, rake field and groom field