

Youth Baseball/Softball Coaching Notes/Pointers

- **Dugout safety:** no holding/swinging bats in dugout, no surprise sprints behind the batter, no horse play
- **Bat safety:** carry with the barrel down, swing only in the on-deck area, and keep a “bubble” around anyone holding a bat.
- Warm-up every time (practice and games): stretch, run, and get the body ready before the brain tries heroics.
 - Rest arms when sore. “Playing through it” is for movie montages, not youth sports.
 - Optional long-toss/throwing-distance competition (keep it fun and controlled).
- Corner infield (1st/3rd): ‘hot corners’ Be strategic on player utilization

Team Culture & Attitude: Set expectations early (and repeat them often):

- **Positivity:** be a good teammate, even after strike three or fielding error.
- **Body language:** hustle looks like effort, and effort is contagious. No pouting/head hanging/eye rolls
- **Coach vibe:** fun and energetic, but clear and consistent. Also: keep learning—coaching is a skill, not a birthright.
- **No whining:** we can be tired, we can be frustrated, but we can’t be dramatic about it. Set an early understanding that whining will not be rewarded.
- **Kid/parent ‘homework’ communication:** encourage at-home reps. In a 90-minute practice, coaches can’t spend 45 minutes rebuilding one swing. Be honest about what to work on and how.
- **Sprint in/out of the dugout** and keep transitions snappy. Games are timed
- **Pitchers earn innings** by putting in work outside practice and showing it during practice. Suggestion: Coaches attend and encourage- arrive ~20 minutes early for pitching reps (with a parent/sibling to catch).
 - Jason Leach working on weekly times out by the upper softball field in the summer
- **Recommended Lineup option:** continuous batting order from game to game
- **Rotate positions** after a couple of innings to build skills (and reduce boredom). (10s and 12s start playing to strengths)
- Balance with player commitment. If kids aren’t showing up to practices and just games, they haven’t earned more at bats/premium positions.
- Attendance/**RSVPs** (Crossbar): remind parents it’s not just “nice to know”—it’s how practices and games are planned.
- U10/U12: stay with the **team in the dugout** between innings—save visiting with family/friends for after the game.
- **Extra learning:** use clinics/lessons when available (example: Wednesday morning sessions with Dennis Peterson for free). The best players aren’t “lucky”—they’re practiced.
- **Coach homework:** after each game, write (1) three things to improve and (2) three things done well. Keep the focus on learning and encouragement.