



# **GAME-BASED SOFTBALL DRILLS**

**23 Kid-Tested Practice Games to  
Develop Fundamental Skills**



**6 Pre-Designed Practice Plans**



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# INTRODUCTION

There is nothing more valuable than practice time to a player, and as a coach, it is your responsibility to make practice as challenging and engaging as possible for your players so as to maximize their development.

But let's face it - practice can get repetitive, predictable, long, even boring at times. Sitting at the back of a line waiting for your turn to run through a drill for an hour and half is not only not engaging, but it is a waste of the players time.

That's why coaches developed the games approach to practice.

What is the games approach? It is a philosophy of practice where instead of 'drills', we have players work through fun, challenging games to simulate real competitive situations. For example - a relay race performed by throwing the ball to their teammates, or a fielding game where players are eliminated from the game if they make an error.

By limiting the players options and forcing them into a game-like structure, we force them out of their comfort zone. Players must learn to adapt and develop skills that they might of ignored otherwise - whether that's fielding under pressure or making pinpoint accurate throws.

This is key, as we are teaching players how the game works while also focusing on skills that will pay real dividends in game situations.

In the following guide you will find 23 game based drills, ranging from beginner to advanced levels, as well as 6 print and go practice plans that can be used as a strict plan or even as inspiration for a practice plan of your own.

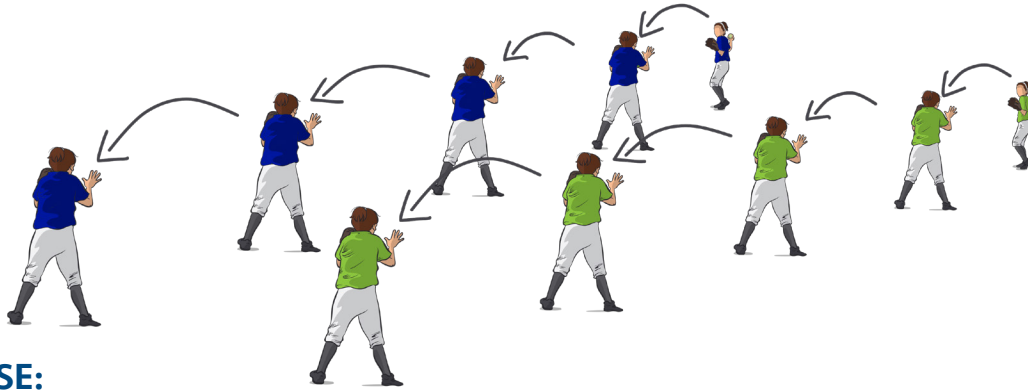
Now let's get to practice!





## **BEGINNER GAME-BASED SOFTBALL DRILLS**

# RELAY RACE



## PURPOSE:

To improve teamwork and communication as well as footwork and throwing accuracy in a competitive environment.

## SETUP:

Split the team into two groups and have them form two lines with their gloves on, each player about 10 yards behind the player in front of them. The first player in each line will start with a ball

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the players at the front of the line with the ball will pivot and turn to throw the ball to the next player in line.
2. After catching the ball, that player will repeat the action, turning and throwing to the player behind them
3. The first team to get the ball to the end of the line wins the race!

## COACHING TIPS:

- For younger players, you may want to use soft balls just to avoid any potential injuries on an errant throw or catch.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- Increasing the distance between players is a great way to up the challenge of this drill. You can also add a penalty - any dropped throws mean that line needs to start over at the beginning of the line again.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- Bringing the players closer together or dividing the team into 3 or 4 groups will make this drill more accessible to younger players.



# PINBALL

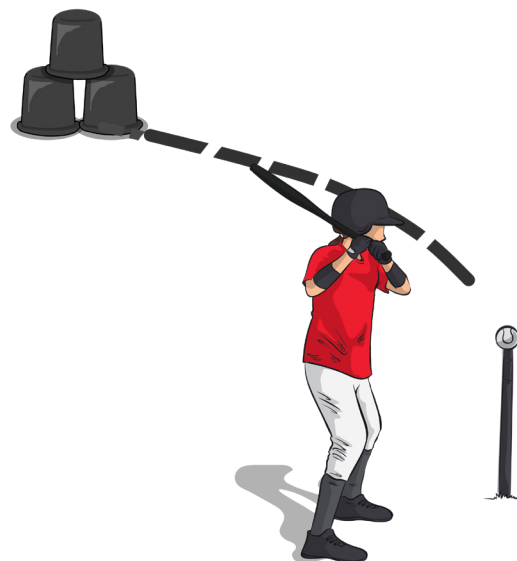


## PURPOSE:

To reinforce to players to stay on top of the ball through their swing, as well as improving their ability to hit under pressure.

## SETUP:

Setup 3 buckets upside down on top of each other, with a tee about 20 feet away. Split the team into two groups and have them form two lines behind the tee.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line will step up and attempt to hit the buckets.
2. The first player in the next line will then take a swing.
3. The drill will continue like this until one team has hit the target 5 times.
4. The losing team has to do push-ups.

## COACHING TIPS:

- It doesn't have to be buckets - you can make a target out of anything you have lying around.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- Make the target smaller - instead of 3 buckets stacked on top of each other, have the players attempt to hit a single bucket.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- You can also go the other way and make the stack bigger - make a pyramid of 5 buckets for example. That, or you can reduce the target number down to 3 hits of the target, or even just 1.

# WIDE RECEIVER

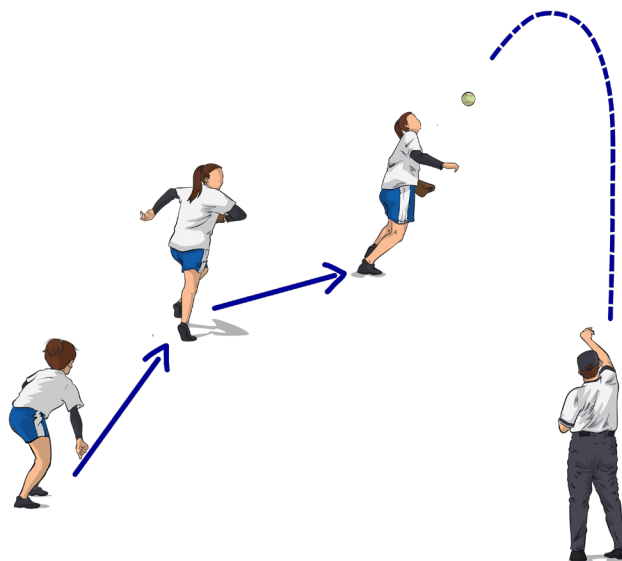


## PURPOSE:

A simple, fun drill that is great for building hand-eye coordination and ball tracking skills.

## SETUP:

The coach is lined up as the quarterback with a bucket of balls at their feet and a line of players 20 feet to the left.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the players will sprint downfield at full speed.
2. About 25 feet downfield, the player will break in towards the coach at a 45 degree angle - this is called a post pattern in football.
3. The coach will throw the ball up after the break, leading the player out in front.
4. The player will catch the ball and bring it back to the coach and get in line on the opposite side of the coach.
5. The drill continues until all players have had an attempt on the left, at which point the drill switches over to the right side.

## COACHING TIPS:

- Feel free to let a player sub in to the quarterback role - you can even make it a reward for best performance in the drill. It can also be a good idea to switch the route from a post to a corner route - it's the same route, just breaking out away from the quarterback instead of in towards them.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- For a real challenge, have the players try and pull this catch off barehanded!

### MAKE IT EASIER

- Bring the players in closer and have them make their break earlier - around 10 feet instead of 20-25.



# INFIELD KNOCKOUT

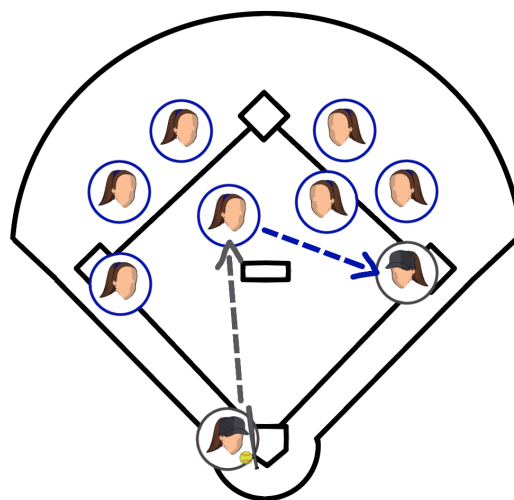


## PURPOSE:

To work on infield defense in a high leverage situation.

## SETUP:

Players spread out in the infield, ideally in their natural positions, but it isn't necessary. A coach will stand at home plate with a bat and a bucket of balls, and either a coach or a player will also line up at first base.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will begin by hitting a groundball towards one of the players in the infield.
2. That player must then field the ball cleanly and make a good throw to first.
3. If the player makes a mistake either fielding or throwing the ball, that player is 'out', and leaves the field.
4. The coach continues to hit groundballs until all but one player has been eliminated - that player is the Survivor!

## COACHING TIPS:

- If they're available, it's great practice for your 1st baseman to get on base and make all the catches. They can play the game as well - if they make an error on any of the catches, they're out as well!
- Eliminated players should move to an area off the field and continue to work on ground balls with an assistant coach or parent

## MAKE IT HARDER

- To up the difficulty, you can add a second target at home plate. After the ball is batted, the coach will call out 'First!' or 'Home!' and the player must react and throw the ball to the correct location on time and on target.

## MAKE IT EASIER

- For players at a lower skill level, the game can move a bit too quickly. To slow it down, give each player 3 lives - this way they get a couple chances to make plays without getting instantly eliminated.

# 5 BALL SCRAMBLE

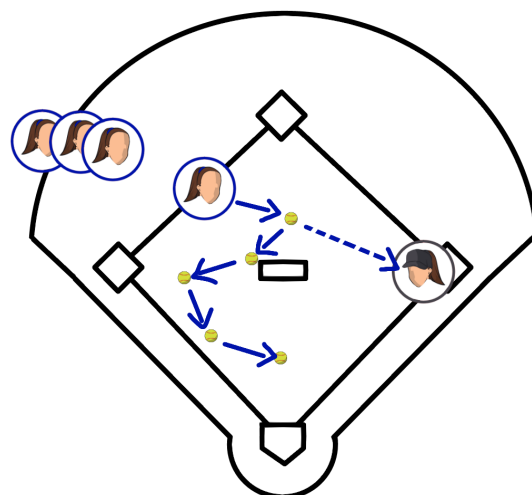


## PURPOSE:

A fast paced drill that gives players the opportunity to practice making quick, accurate throws in a game-like situation.

## SETUP:

Have a coach or player at 1st base, and a line of players at shortstop. Spread 5 balls throughout the infield. An assistant coach or parent stands by with a stopwatch.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the first player in line will run to a ball, field it, set their feet and make the throw to 1st.
2. They will then immediately move to the next ball, and again make the throw to 1st.
3. The player will repeat this until they have worked their way through all 5 balls.
4. The assistant coach times how long it takes to field and throw all 5 balls. The player with fastest time wins the drill.

## COACHING TIPS:

- You can run this drill from anyone one of the infield positions. Or from the outfield, throwing to a cutoff man instead of to first base. Try to place the balls in positions that mimic the places they would have to field and make throws from in game situations.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- 5 is the starting number, but if players are showing they can handle that, feel free to add 2-3 more balls to the infield. You can also change

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players, you might want to reduce the number to 3 balls to start, allowing them to focus on getting the footwork down without getting overwhelmed by the sheer number of throws they need to make.



# BUNT-OFF



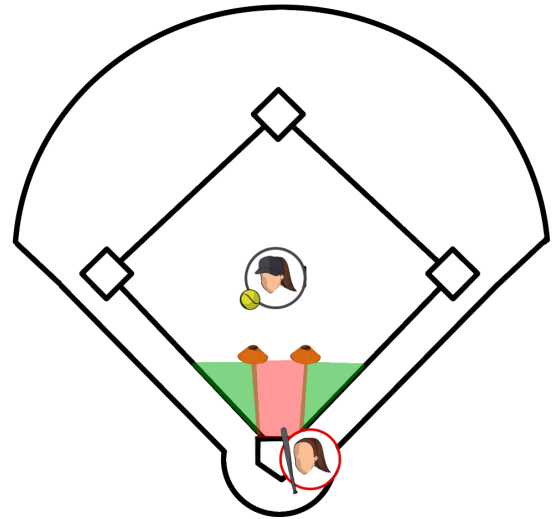
## PURPOSE:

To work on putting down quality bunts while under pressure.

## SETUP:

Place 2 cones on the field - the idea is to create 3 separate lanes - one along the 3rd base foul line, one along the 1st base foul line, and a 3rd in between the two.

Split the team into two groups, and have a coach start on the pitching mound with a bucket of balls.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line will step up with a bat, ready to bunt.
2. The coach will pitch to the player, and the player will attempt to play a good bunt down the foul line.
3. Any bunts in the green areas are worth 1 point for their team, but any bunts that go down the middle in the red area are -2 points.
4. Have each player on the team take a turn - whoever has the most points at the end wins, with losers running sprints.

## COACHING TIPS:

- Instead of picking teams for the players, sometimes just pick two captains and let the players pick their own teams. You can also use more cones and create more lanes for more experienced players.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- As a greater challenge, you can simply place 2 cones on the ground in places where you would consider the ideal bunt, and award the winner based on whichever player can get their ball closest to the cone.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players, focus more on proper bunt technique, and mark wider zones so that they have a higher chance of success.

# LAST MAN STANDING

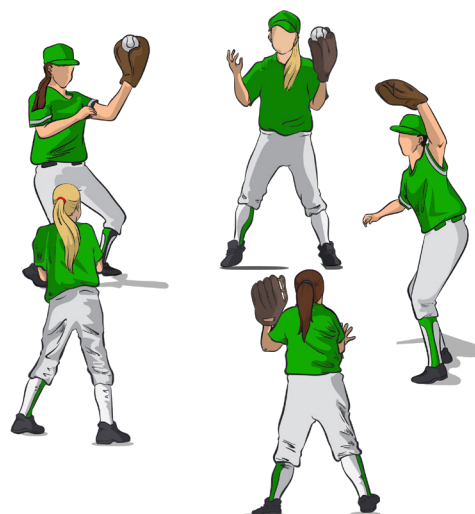


## PURPOSE:

A fun, team-building exercise that will get players loose and ready to get into the more strenuous drills.

## SETUP:

Have 5-6 players set up in a circle, all with a glove. 2 of the players will start with a ball in their glove.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The players that started with the ball will flip the ball across the circle to another player.
2. Those players will then catch the ball in their glove and flip it to a teammate in one motion..
3. If a player makes an error on their flip, they are eliminated, last player standing wins!

## COACHING TIPS:

- Players should not be actually catching the ball - it's almost like a volleyball technique. They should be catching and flipping the ball in one motion, more like redirecting the ball then really catching it.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- Add another ball to the rotation to up the challenge for the players!

### MAKE IT EASIER

- If players are having a hard time, give them 3 lives before they're eliminated. It can also help to reduce the number of balls in play to one for younger players.



# SOFT TOSS SCRIMMAGE

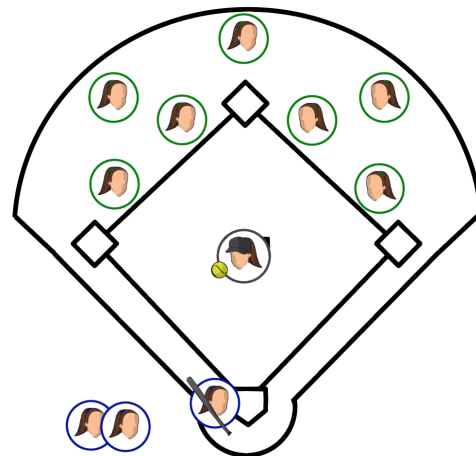


## PURPOSE:

To work on batting and fielding in a game-like situation.

## SETUP:

Split the team into two even groups - one group will take the field to play defense, while the other is batting. A coach will start on the pitcher's mound with a ball.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This will play out like a standard game - with the exception that the coach is pitching, there is no bunting, and there is no stealing since we don't have a catcher.
2. The coach will soft toss a pitch to the batter who will drive it and attempt to get on-base. The batter must attempt to hit every pitch.
3. After each hitter, the defense must rotate over one position.
4. 1st -> 2nd -> 3rd -> LF -> CF -> RF -> 1st
5. The game will continue for 6 outs each half-inning.

## COACHING TIPS:

- This is a great drill early on in the season when you aren't necessarily sure which players are best suited for which positions - you will get a good look at how everyone fares in each of the different spots - and you'll also get to see who can hit for contact/power.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- You can also run this drill with regular batting practice pitching, while still keeping all of the same rules intact - this is a great challenge for more experienced players.

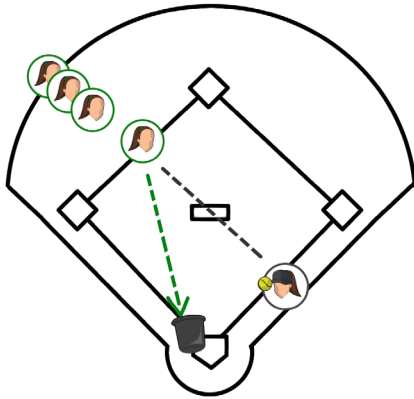
### MAKE IT EASIER

- For less experienced players, simply set up a tee and let the batters drive the ball from home plate!



## INTERMEDIATE GAME-BASED SOFTBALL DRILLS

# HOLE IN ONE



## PURPOSE:

To work on fielding and making accurate throws to home plate.

## SETUP:

Have the players form a line behind shortstop, with the first player in line in position. You will also need a bucket - place it on its side at home plate, roughly where the catcher's mitt would be on a throw to home. Lastly, have a coach line up between 1st base and the pitcher's mound with a bucket of balls.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will roll a grounder to shortstop.
2. The shortstop will field the ball, set their feet, and attempt to throw the ball into the bucket at home plate.
3. A ball thrown into the bucket is worth two points. A glancing hit of the bucket is worth one point.
4. After every player has gone through the drill a few times, award the winner based on most points scored.

## COACHING TIPS:

- This drill combines very well with the Elmo drill - you can have half your team working on throws to home from shortstop, while the rest of the team is working on throws to 1st from 2nd base.

### MAKE IT HARDER

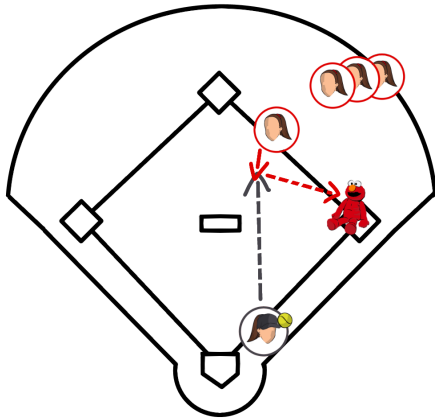
- While the bucket is a good starting point, feel free to substitute a smaller target if you are coaching a more experienced team to up the challenge.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players, it may prove too difficult to reliably get the ball in the bucket - swapping to a garbage can or some other larger target will keep players from getting discouraged and allow them to still improve their skills.



# ELMO DRILL



## PURPOSE:

To work on accurate throws to 1st base under pressure.

## SETUP:

Place a large stuffed animal on a stool or garbage can by 1st base. The players will get in line at 2nd base, and the coach will be at home with a bucket of balls.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will roll a ball over towards the player at 2nd base.
2. The player must step up, field the ball, and attempt to hit the stuffed animal at 1st base.
3. Players receive 2 points if they score a direct hit on the stuffed animal and knock it over.
4. If they hit the stool and it causes the stuffed animal to fall, they get 1 point.
5. After their throw, they head to back of the line and the next player steps up.

## COACHING TIPS:

- Have a parent or assistant coach at first base to track down balls and re-set the stuffed animal after a successful hit.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- Instead of rolling the ball, you can hit grounders into the infield to up the challenge for the fielders. You can also make the scoring more strict - you only receive points for a direct hit on the stuffed animal.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- If the players are having a hard time fielding and throwing, you can eliminate the fielding portion of the drill, and have players focus on just making accurate throws at the target.

# KING OF THE HILL

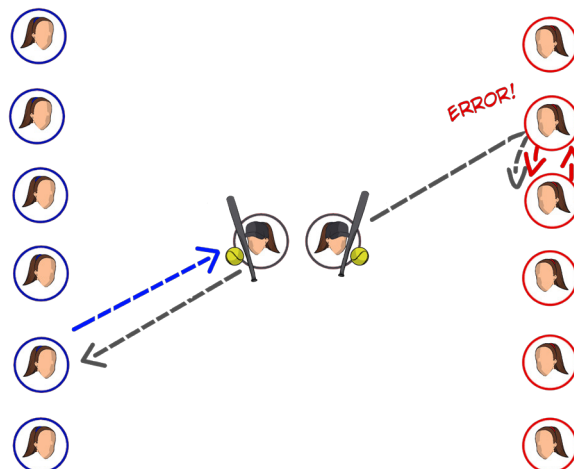


## PURPOSE:

To work on fielding, concentration, and quick reflexes in a competitive environment.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into 2 groups, and have them form 2 lines - they don't need their gloves. A coach will stand about 20 yards away in front of each line, with a bat and a bucket of balls.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will begin by hitting a ball to one of the players.
2. The player must stop and field the ball cleanly.
3. If the player is successful, they keep their spot in the line.
4. If they make an error, they will swap with the player to their left.
5. The goal of the game is to make it all the way to the right most spot - this is the king!

## COACHING TIPS:

- You don't need to hit grounders to the players - the drill will work just as well if you simply roll the ball out to the players.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- One of the ways to make this drill more difficult is to keep the pace high - players must immediately swap and be ready for the next ball coming in.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players, let them use their gloves, and move closer to the players so that you can roll the ball to them with a little bit less pace, making it easier for them to field the ball.

# GOALIE

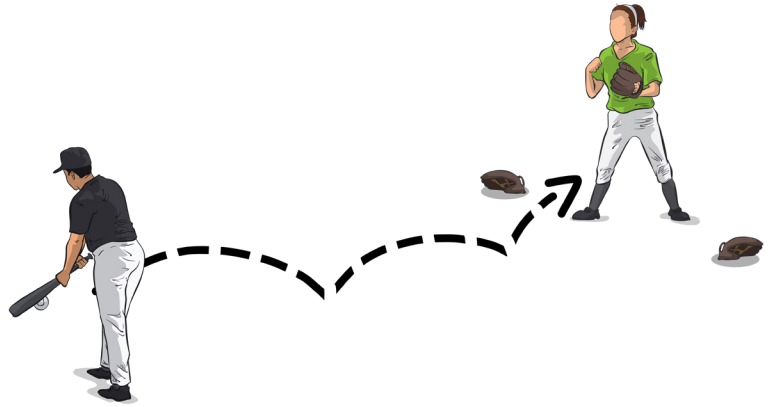


## PURPOSE:

To work on fielding grounders in a high-leverage situation.

## SETUP:

Place 2 gloves or tees down about 6 feet apart and have a coach stand about 15 yards away with a bat and a bucket of balls. The players will form a line, with the first player in line in between the 'goal posts'



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will hit a grounder to the first player in goalie.
2. That player must stop and field the ball cleanly.
3. If they're successful, they stay in the game. If the ball gets past them, they are eliminated from the game.

## COACHING TIPS:

- You may want to use soft practice balls to start - this will eliminate the fear of a ball kicking up unpredictably and allow them to focus on stopping and fielding it.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- For older players, you can move closer - 10 yards away for a real challenge. You can also extend the size of the goal posts if players are fielding the ball too easily. If your field already has a soccer goal set up - use that instead?

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger inexperienced players, start off by just rolling the ball nice and slowly to them - that, or you can move the goalposts in tight and give them a smaller area to cover.



# DOUBLES

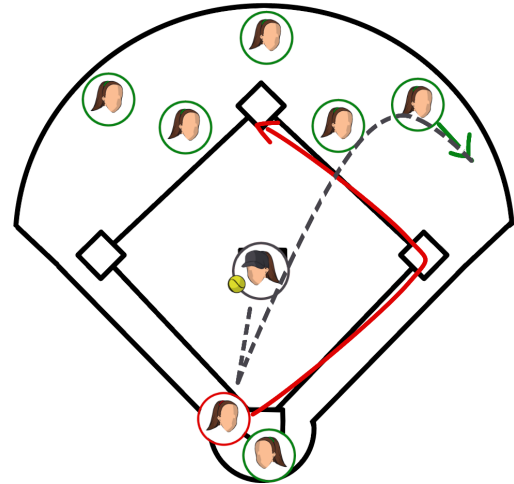


## PURPOSE:

To reinforce the importance of giving 100% effort on every play, both on offense and defense.

## SETUP:

Have 3 outfielders, a 2nd baseman and a shortstop line up on defense. You will also need a coach to pitch, and a batter.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will pitch to the batter who will hit the pitch and takeoff down the base path.
2. The batter has to push for a double, no matter how well or poorly they hit the ball.
3. The outfielders must chase the ball and try to get the out at 2nd base.

## COACHING TIPS:

- No bunting! Batters should be focused on hitting the ball deep and with power, as they must hit the ball out of the infield for this drill.
- The defense will need to communicate - shortstop or 2nd will cover base, and the outfielders may need to relay the throw to get it to 2nd in time.

## MAKE IT HARDER

- With more experienced players, we can make this a competition - split the team into two groups. Every batter that makes it to 2nd is a scored run. Once every player on each time has had an at-bat, tally up the score - losers do push-ups!

## MAKE IT EASIER

- If players have a hard time hitting with power, start them off on the tee - the focus of this drill is hitting with power, baserunning, and hustle!

# TWO BALL TOSS



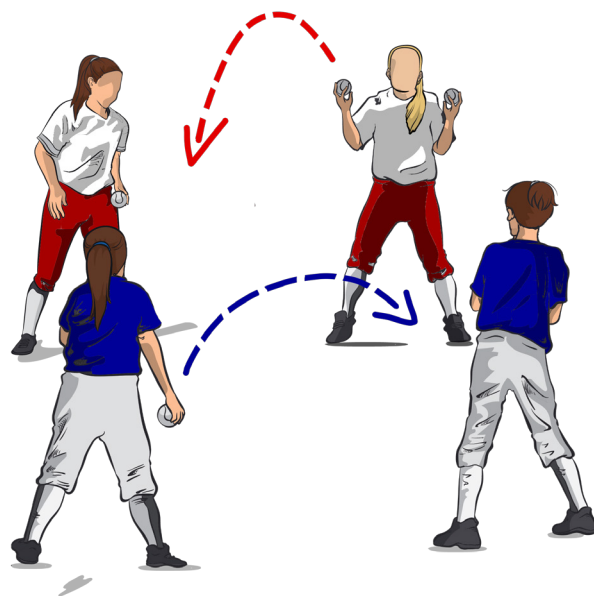
## PURPOSE:

A fun warm-up drill that will help players with concentration and hand-eye coordination.

## SETUP:

Have 4-6 players split off into groups and get in a circle.

Every player in the circle will have one softball and no glove - except the starter, who will have two softballs.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The starter will begin the game by tossing one of their balls to a player in the circle.
2. Before the ball gets to them, that player must toss their ball to another teammate and then catch the ball that was thrown to them - with the same hand.
3. If a player is unable to catch the ball, makes a bad toss to their teammate, or move their feet, they are disqualified.
4. Last player standing wins!

## COACHING TIPS:

- Players are not allowed to switch the hand they are holding the ball in after the catch - they must throw and catch the ball with the same hand. It's also important to remind them that they must keep their feet planted - if a player has to move their feet to make the catch, that was a bad toss anyways.

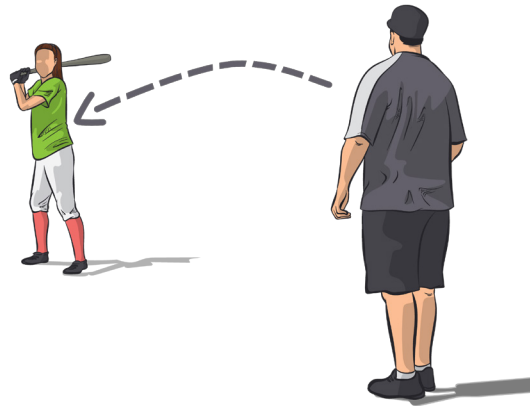
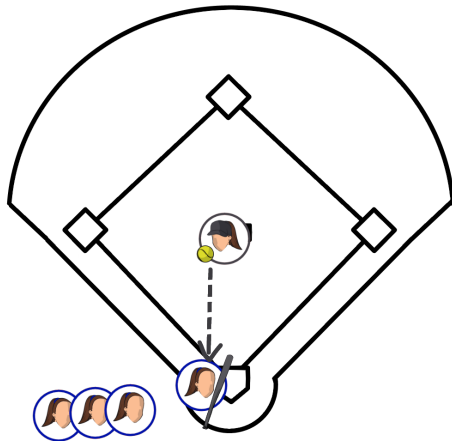
### MAKE IT HARDER

- For a real challenge, get 9 players into the drill - and remember to keep them in tight - the drill will actually become easier the farther the players are away from each other.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players, let them play for 5 minutes or so before they are at risk of elimination. This way they will get a chance to practice and get used to the drill before the stakes go up and the pressure is rising.

# PRESSURE HITTING



## PURPOSE:

A great drill for working on making contact and driving the ball under pressure.

## SETUP:

Have the coach line up at the pitcher's mound with a bucket of balls, one player in the batter's box, and the rest of team lined up ready to run sprints.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will pitch to the batter.
2. The batter must swing, no matter where the pitch is placed, and do their best to drive the ball into play.
3. If the batter is able to make contact, the next batter steps up and they head to the sprinters line.
4. If the batter is unable to make contact with the ball, the rest of the team must sprint. The batter can not move on until they have made contact.
5. If the batter hits a foul ball, they get another chance.

## COACHING TIPS:

- Instead of sprints, you can choose whatever punishment you like – 5 pushups, 5 sit-ups, 5 jumping jacks etc.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- To up the difficulty of the drill, you can challenge players not only to make contact, but to get the ball out of the infield, otherwise its considered a foul ball.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger and more inexperienced players you can give them 3 strikes before the team has to run.

# 3 TEAM SCRIMMAGE

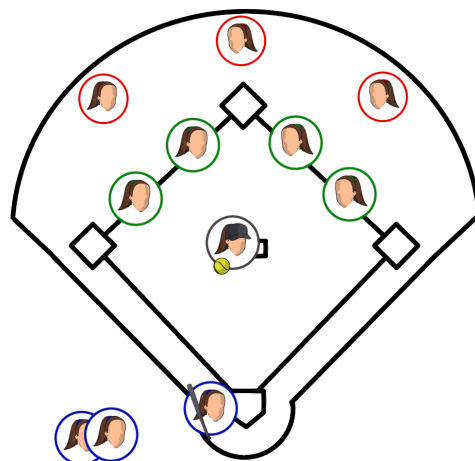


## PURPOSE:

To reinforce the skills that have been worked in practice in a fun game-like situation.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into three groups - it's okay if some groups are of 4, as long as every group has at least 3 players. Each group will take a part of the field - one in the outfield, one in the infield, and one at-bat. The coach's will play as the pitcher and catcher.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will pitch to the first team at-bat, who will attempt to get on base.
2. The infield and outfield will work together to get the batting team out.
3. After 3 outs, the batting team moves to the outfield, outfield moves to infield, and infield takes their turn batting.
4. The game continues until time runs out or one team scores 5 runs.

## COACHING TIPS:

- No bunting! We aren't trying to test the coaches reaction speed, we want to get our players as many reps as possible hitting and fielding.
- Also it's important to remember as a coach to feel free and step in if you see a chance for a teaching moment during the game - this is the beauty of a scrimmage - you can

### MAKE IT HARDER

- To up the challenge, raise the stakes - the losing teams must do push-ups!

### MAKE IT EASIER

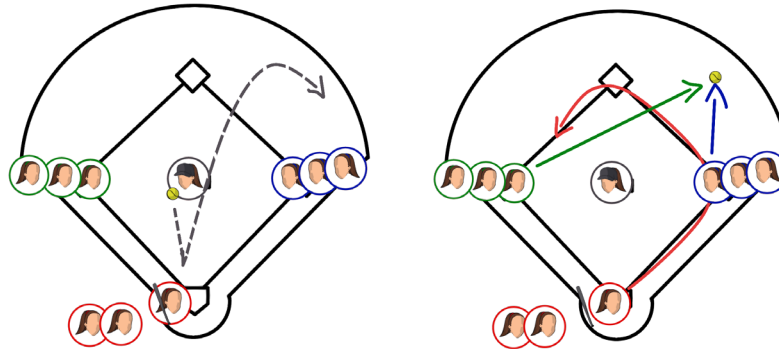
- If players are having a hard time getting on base, switch to a soft-toss pitch - this will get the game moving both for the offense and the defense.





## **ADVANCED GAME-BASED SOFTBALL DRILLS**

# ARIZONA



## PURPOSE:

A drill that focuses on improving batting, baserunning, and effort chasing down balls.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into 3 groups, have them form 3 lines - one at 3rd base, one at 1st base, and a group of batters at home plate. The coach will be at the pitcher's mound with a bucket of balls.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will pitch to the batter at home plate, who will hit the ball as deep as they can.
2. As soon as they hit the ball, the batter will take off around the base path, trying to get to as many bases as they can.
3. Once the ball is hit, the first player in each line at 1st and 3rd base will take off and chase down the ball.
4. The baserunner will keep running until both the 1st baseman and 3rd baseman have run to and touched the ball.
5. Once each batter on that team has at an at-bat, rotate the 3 groups, with 3rd base moving to home, 1st base moving to 3rd, and home moving to 1st base.
6. Continue like this until all groups have had a chance to bat - whichever teams has racked up the most bases during their at-bats wins.

## COACHING TIPS:

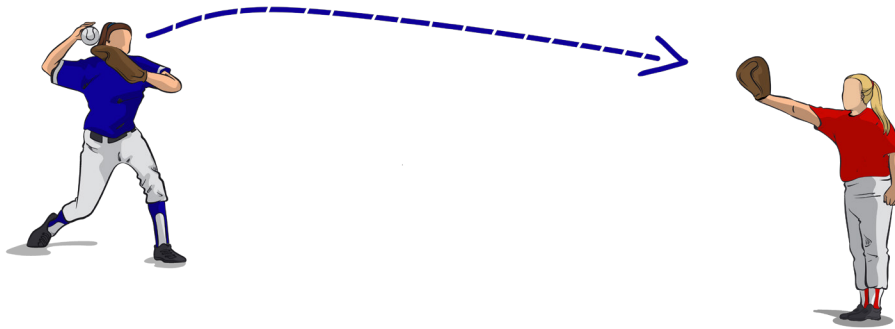
- While it can be a benefit to the batters to throw pitches as if they're in batting practice, it can slow the drill down some, especially with less experienced players. Feel free to switch to a soft-toss style and let players hammer away on the ball and keep the drill moving at a high tempo.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- To challenge more skilled players to hit the ball with some power, any ball that doesn't clear the infield is an instant out.

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players it can be helpful to switch out the pitcher and just use a tee - this will allow batters to focus on the most important parts of this drill - hitting the ball with power and getting down the basepath.



## PURPOSE:

A competitive game that will force players to improve their throwing accuracy under pressure.

## SETUP:

Have the players pair off, each with their gloves and one ball per pair, and stand within a comfortable throw's distance of each other.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The player without the ball will extend their glove towards their teammate, palm out, making a big target.
2. The thrower must attempt to throw the ball so accurately that their teammate doesn't need to move their glove.
3. If the receiver is able to catch the ball without moving her glove more than a foot – the thrower gets 2 points. If the throw can be caught above the waist and inside the width of the receiver's body – the thrower gets 1 point.
4. Players alternate, throwing back and forth to each other.
5. First player to 21 wins.

## COACHING TIPS:

- If the player moves their gloves only slightly - say less than an inch - that will count as a good throw and there is no penalty for the thrower.

### MAKE IT HARDER

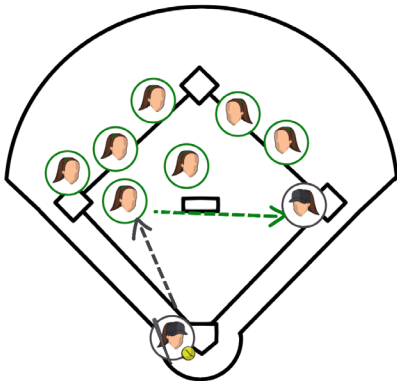
- The easiest way to make this drill more difficult is to move the players another 10-20 yards back. You can also drop the point total for a loss from 21 to 11, and have a tournament in practice to see who is the most accurate thrower!

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For younger players, you may want to change the scoring system:
- 3 points for a good throw, 1 point if their teammate is still able to catch the ball, and 0 points if they aren't. This is a more forgiving scoring system that will help inexperienced or less skilled players stay motivated and engaged.



# BELLY UPS



## PURPOSE:

To work on reaction time, fielding, and throwing accuracy in a high pressure situation.

## SETUP:

Have your infield line up with their gloves and get in their normal positions - except laying down on their bellies. The coach will be at home with a bucket of balls and a bat.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will let the player know the ball is coming to them, and hit a grounder.
2. As soon as the ball is hit, that player must get off their belly, field the ball, and make a throw to 1st base.
3. Repeat.

## COACHING TIPS:

- Have your actual 1st baseman on base rather than a coach or parent - you don't want to waste those reps! Also, if you have extra players, have them line up behind the players participating in the drill and sub in after they have had an opportunity to field the ball.

## MAKE IT HARDER

- Instead of warning the players where the ball is going, you can simply warn them all to be ready on every grounder that the ball might be coming their way. And if you want to add an extra challenge for the 1st basemen, have them start down on their bellies as well!

## MAKE IT EASIER

- This can be a tough drill for inexperienced players, but one way you can make it more accessible is by simply rolling the ball to the players instead of hitting ground balls.

# 3, 2, 1 RUN!



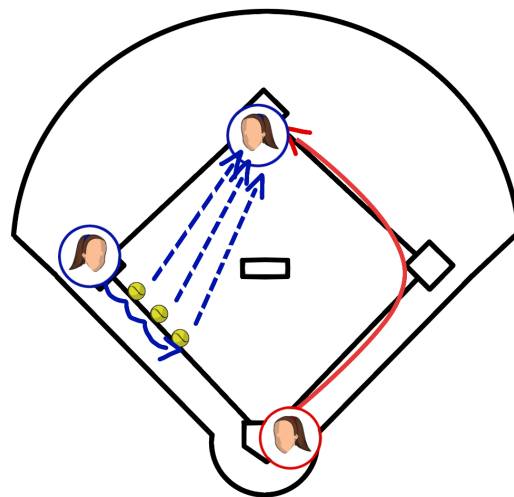
## PURPOSE:

A drill that has the benefit of working on making quick throws under pressure for the defense and baserunning with speed for the offense.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into 2 groups; have one form a line at 3rd base while the others line up at home plate. The first player in line at 3rd base will move over to 2nd.

You will also need to set up 3 softballs, spread evenly apart along the base path from 3rd to home. The 3rd and final ball should be about halfway between 3rd and home.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the drill will start, with the 3rd baseman sprint to the closest ball and the baserunner taking off.
2. The goal for 3rd baseman is to make 3 accurate throws to 2nd base before the runner can get there.
3. If any of the throws are off target or if she can get to 2nd before the 3rd throw, that's a point for the baserunner.
4. If the 3rd baseman can get all 3 throws in on time and on target, that's a point for the infielders.
5. After throwing from 3rd, that player rotates to 2nd base, and the 2nd baseman heads to the back of the line.
6. Once all players have gone, switch offense to defense.

## COACHING TIPS:

- You want the softballs about 5-7 feet apart - don't place them so far that players are practicing a throw they wouldn't make in a game.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- If your players are having an easy time making the 3 throws in time, add a 4th ball!

### MAKE IT EASIER

- For players at a younger level, you can reduce the number of balls down to 2, or even 1 - simply have the baserunner start at 1st base instead of home plate!

# ULTIMATE SOFTBALL

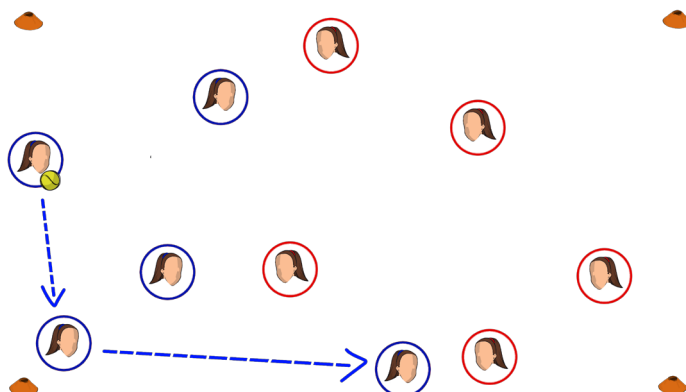


## PURPOSE:

To work on throwing, catching, communication and teamwork in a competitive environment.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into two equal groups, both in size and skill. Find a large grassy area and use 4 cones to create a field about 60-80 yards long 30-50 yards wide. One team will start with the ball (use a soft practice ball for this drill).



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Much like ultimate frisbee, players can only move without the ball, and must try to move downfield to their opponents endzone by making passes through the air to their teammates.
2. If a ball is dropped or deflected, that is a turnover, and the other team will take the ball and start from there.
3. Every time a team gets into the endzone, they get a point.
4. First team to 7 points wins.

## COACHING TIPS:

- We don't want this to just become hailmary after hailmary - players should be encouraged to make short accurate passes. Sometimes adding the prerequisite that every player on the team must touch the ball before they can score can help to reinforce this with the players.

### MAKE IT HARDER

- For a real challenge, have players run this game with no gloves!

### MAKE IT EASIER

- If players are having hard time making accurate throws or catches, you can give them a little lee way on the movement - say every player can take 3 steps after a catch for example.

# SLAPBALL

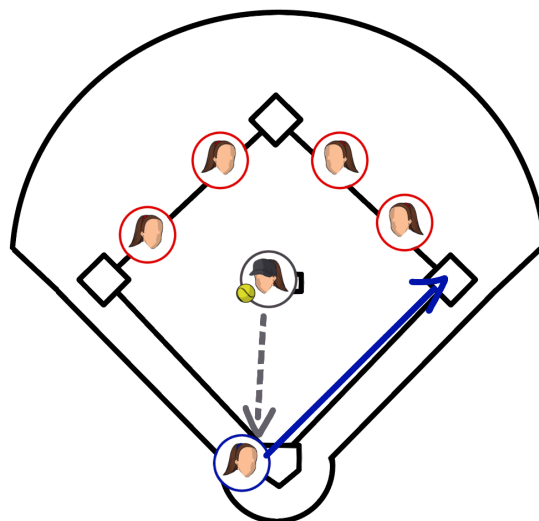


## PURPOSE:

A fun team-based drill that allows players to practice both the hard slap and the soft slap in a game-like situation.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into 2 equal groups. One team will be playing infield defense - the first 4 players will step on the field into position to start. On offense, the other team will send their first batter into the box. You will also need a coach on the mound with a bucket of balls to pitch.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The coach will deliver a pitch to the batter.
2. The batter must then perform a hard or soft slap and take off for 1st base.
3. The infield must corral the ball and get the batter out before they reach 1st.
4. If the batter is able to reach the base in time, their team receives one point.
5. After each at-bat, a new batter steps in, and the defense rotates - 1st base steps off a new player comes in at 3rd, and everyone else rotates over.
6. Once all batter's have had an at-bat, switch sides.
7. Whichever team has the highest point total wins, and the losing team must run sprints.

## COACHING TIPS:

- The key to a good slap is in the footwork. Once the pitch is released, the player should immediately pick their foot up and drop it down, point their toes at short stop. The next step is the crossover step, bringing that back foot forward and creating forward momentum as they drive through the ball.
- For a hard slap, the player is driving through the ball, trying to create a low line drive. For the soft slap, the player is chopping down on the ball, creating a short ground ball.

## MAKE IT HARDER

- To up the challenge, have every batter walk into a 2-1 count, and as a coach, mix in some balls and strikes and make sure your players are batting with good plate discipline.

## MAKE IT EASIER

- This can be a complicated technique, and for younger players it is a good idea to start them working off the long tee, as they will be able to focus on getting the technique right and building from there.



# CRUNCH TIME SCRIMMAGE

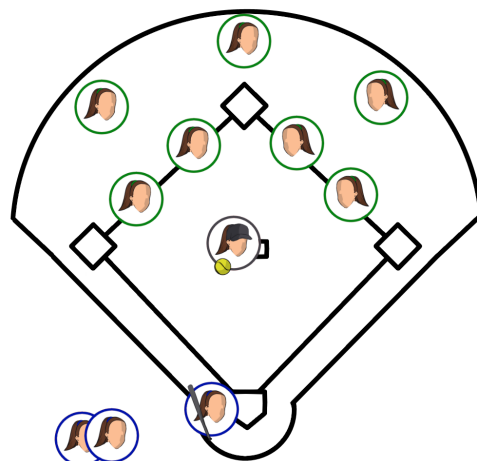


## PURPOSE:

To give players reps in high leverage game situations and allow them to put the skills they've been working on in practice to use.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into two groups, both roughly equal in skill. One team will be on defense in their standard positions, and the other will be batting.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The catch on this scrimmage is that every at-bat is starting at a 2-0 count.
2. Play 3 out innings, and have the teams rotate offense to defense.
3. Keep score and play as if it were a regular game.

## COACHING TIPS:

- While the initial example is to work on a pitcher's composure by placing them in a 2-0 count, you can work on all sorts of different situations - have batters start 0-1 in the count, have a runner on 2nd to start the inning - feel free to get creative!

### MAKE IT HARDER

- The higher the count, the more pressure there will be on the player - you can even have every at-bat start at a full count for the ultimate challenge!

### MAKE IT EASIER

- Just as there are myriad ways you can make this scrimmage more difficult, it is the same on the opposite side of the coin. Any change you make will favor either the offense or the defense, so have a look at your team's weaknesses and tailor the scrimmage around that - you could give the batters 4 outs for example, or not count foul balls as strikes.

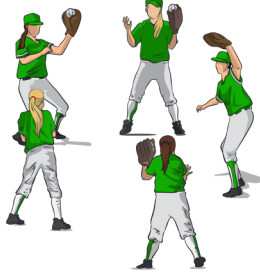


## PRACTICE PLANS

## BEGINNER PRACTICE PLAN (60 MINS)

**Dynamic Warmup:** (5 Minutes): High Knees, Side Shuffle, Carioca, Backpedal

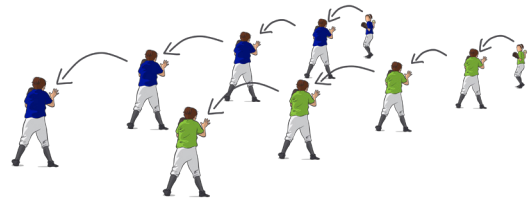
### FLIP



**6 MINUTES**

Players stand in circle and quickly flip balls back and forth using only their glove

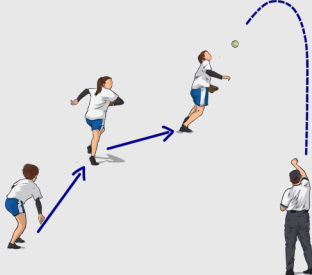
### RELAY RACE THROW



**8 MINUTES**

A race between two teams to see who can relay the ball from one end of their line to the other the fastest

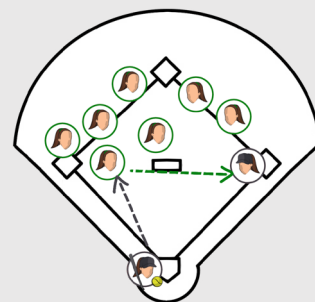
### WIDE RECEIVER



**8 MINUTES**

Players mimic wide receivers and run downfield routes, track the ball, and make the catch

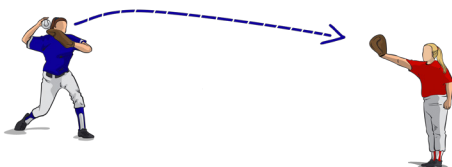
### KNOCKOUT



**8 MINUTES**

An elimination game where players must field the ball and make the throw to first or be knocked out of the game

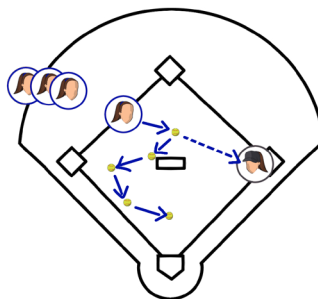
**21**



**6 MINUTES**

Players pair off and one at a time throw to each other, getting points for perfect throws on target - first player to 21 wins

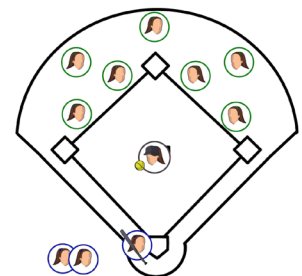
### SCRAMBLE



**6 MINUTES**

Infielder must field and throw 5 consecutive balls as quickly and as accurately as possible

### SOFT TOSS SCRIMMAGE



**12 MINUTES**

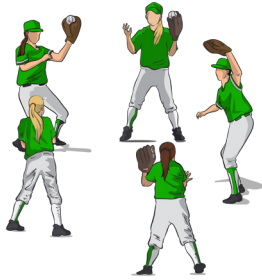
A team scrimmage where the defense must rotate after each at-bat and the coach is soft-tossing to the hitters



# BEGINNER PRACTICE PLAN (60 MINS)

**Dynamic Warmup:** (5 Minutes): High Knees, Side Shuffle, Carioca, Backpedal

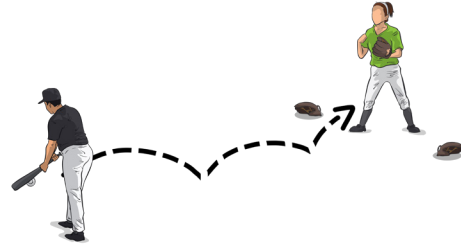
## FLIP



**6 MINUTES**

Players stand in circle and quickly flip balls back and forth using only their glove

## GOALIE DRILL



**8 MINUTES**

Players must defend between 2 goal posts and stop any grounders batted at them or be eliminated

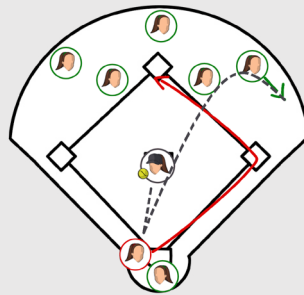
## PINBALL



**6 MINUTES**

2 teams compete to see who can hit the stack of buckets 5 times first

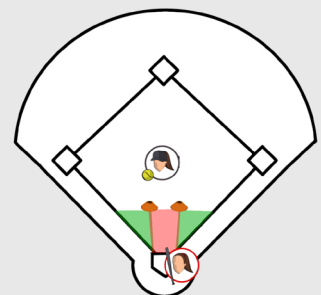
## DOUBLES



**8 MINUTES**

Players attempt to leg out a double on every at-bat while the outfield tries to get the out at 2nd

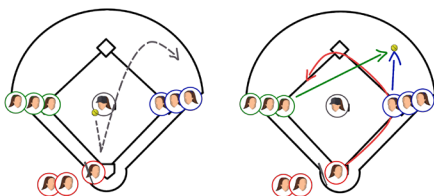
## BUNT-OFF!



**6 MINUTES**

A competition to see which team can reliably put down good bunts in the right areas

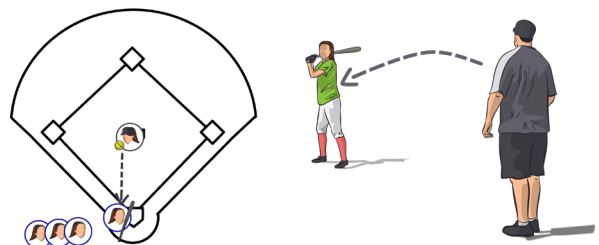
## ARIZONA



**8 MINUTES**

3 teams compete, 2 on defense attempting to run down the batters ball, while the batter tries to rack up as many total bases as possible

## PRESSURE HITTING



**8 MINUTES**

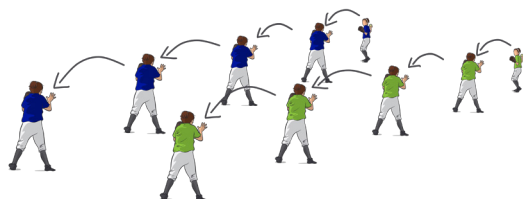
A high stakes series of at-bats where players must make contact or their teammates run sprints



## INTERMEDIATE PRACTICE PLAN (90 MINS)

**Dynamic Warmup:** (5-10 Minutes): High Knees, Side Shuffle, Carioca, Backpedal

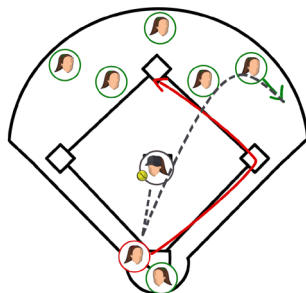
### RELAY RACE THROW



**6 MINUTES**

A race between two teams to see who can relay the ball from one end of their line to the other the fastest

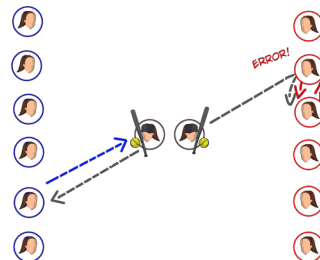
### DOUBLES



**6 MINUTES**

Players attempt to leg out a double on every at-bat while the outfield tries to get the out at 2nd

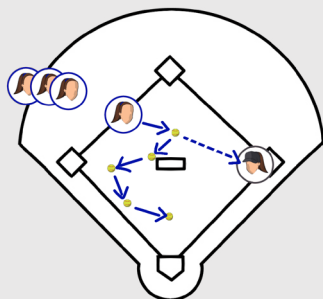
### KING OF THE HILL



**6 MINUTES**

Coaches hit grounders to fielders - on errors they move down the hill - players compete to see who can become and stay King

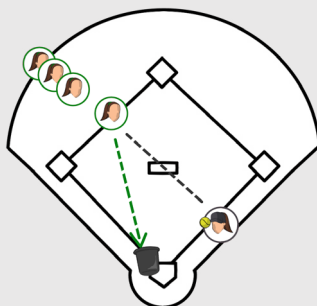
### SCRAMBLE



**6 MINUTES**

Infielder must field and throw 5 consecutive balls as quickly and as accurately as possible

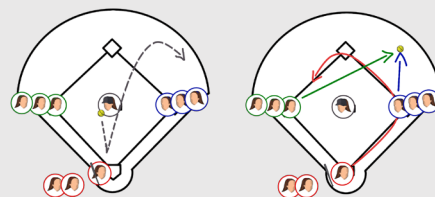
### HOLE IN ONE



**6 MINUTES**

Fielding drill where 3rd baseman must step up, field the ball, and make a throw into a small target at home plate

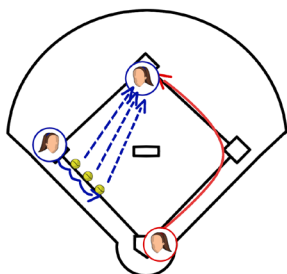
### ARIZONA



**8 MINUTES**

3 teams compete, 2 on defense attempting to run down the batter's ball, while the batter tries to rack up as many total bases as possible

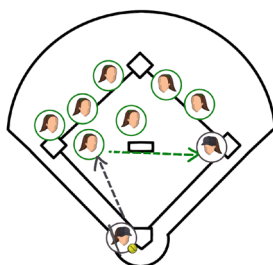
### 3, 2, 1, RUN!



**6 MINUTES**

Baserunner attempts to get from home to 2nd before 3rd base can deliver 3 throws to 2nd base

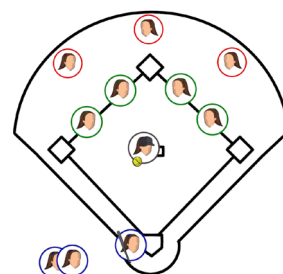
### BELLY UPS



**6 MINUTES**

Players spread out in the infield on their bellies - they must then get to their feet and make a throw to 1st when the ball is hit to them

### 3 TEAM SCRIMMAGE



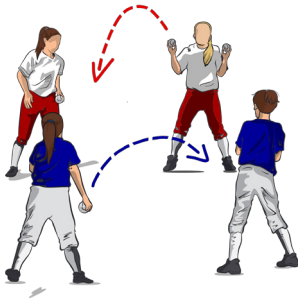
**10 MINUTES**

A scrimmage game where the team is divided into 3 groups - 1 in outfield, 1 infield, 1 batting

## INTERMEDIATE PRACTICE PLAN (90 MINS)

**Dynamic Warmup:** (5-10 Minutes): High Knees, Side Shuffle, Carioca, Backpedal

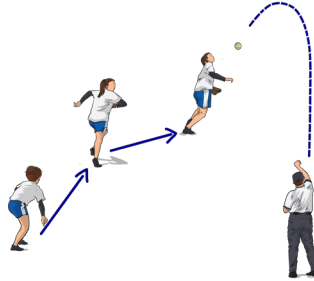
### 2 BALL TOSS



**6 MINUTES**

A warm-up game where players must pass their own ball to a teammate before receiving a pass and are eliminated on errors

### WIDE RECEIVER



**6 MINUTES**

Players mimic wide receivers and run downfield routes, track the ball, and make the catch

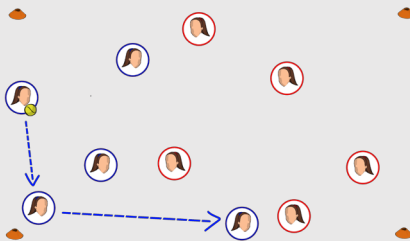
### PINBALL



**6 MINUTES**

Coaches hit grounders to fielders - on errors they move down the hill - players compete to see who can become and stay King

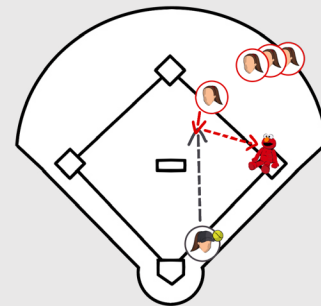
### ULTIMATE SOFTBALL



**10 MINUTES**

Team is split into two groups who compete to advance the ball into their opponents endzone - but they can only move forward by throwing and catching passes to their teammates.

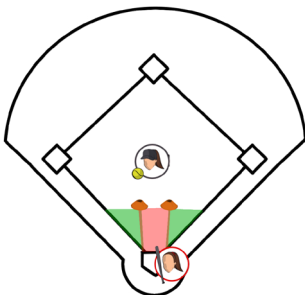
### ELMO



**8 MINUTES**

2nd baseman must field the ball and hit the teddy bear target at first base - points are awarded for accuracy

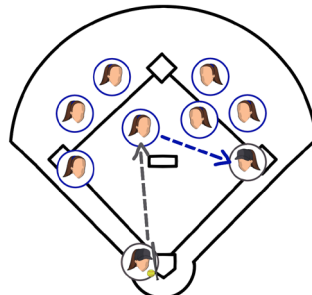
### BUNT-OFF!



**8 MINUTES**

A competition to see which team can reliably put down good bunts in the right areas

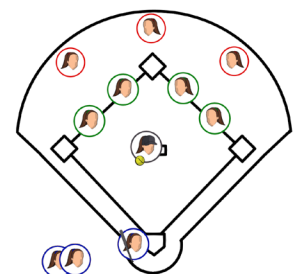
### KNOCKOUT



**8 MINUTES**

An elimination game where players must field the ball and make the throw to first or be knocked out of the game

### 3 TEAM SCRIMMAGE



**10 MINUTES**

A scrimmage game where the team is divided into 3 groups - 1 in outfield, 1 infield, 1 batting

# ADVANCED PRACTICE PLAN (120 MINS)

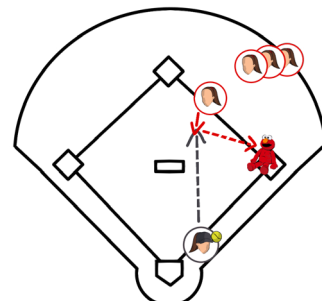
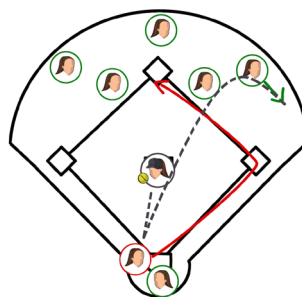
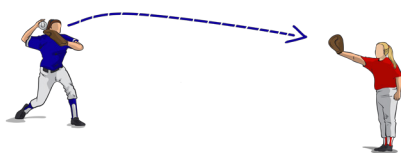
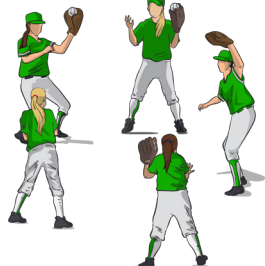
**Dynamic Warmup:** (5-10 Minutes): High Knees, Side Shuffle, Carioca, Backpedal

## FLIP

21

## DOUBLES

## ELMO



### 6 MINUTES

Players stand in circle and quickly flip balls back and forth using only their glove

### 8 MINUTES

Players pair off and one at a time throw to each other, getting points for perfect throws on target - first player to 21 wins

### 6 MINUTES

Players attempt to leg out a double on every at-bat while the outfield tries to get the out at 2nd

### 8 MINUTES

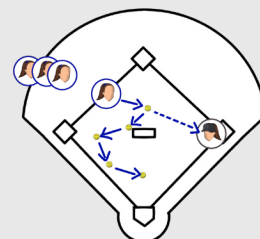
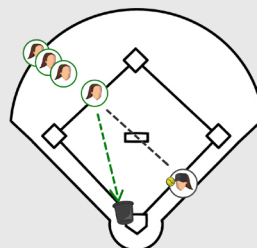
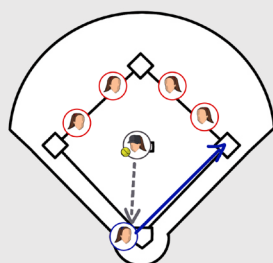
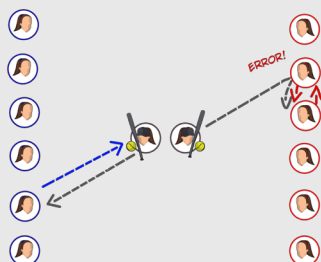
2nd baseman must field the ball and hit the teddy bear target at first base - points are awarded for accuracy

## KING OF THE HILL

## SLAPBALL

## HOLE IN ONE

## SCRAMBLE



### 10 MINUTES

Coaches hit grounders to fielders - on errors they move down the hill - players compete to see who can become and stay King

### 8 MINUTES

Player tries to lay a slap down and get to 1st base while the infielders try to get the out

### 6 MINUTES

Fielding drill where 3rd baseman must step up, field the ball, and make a throw into a small target at home plate

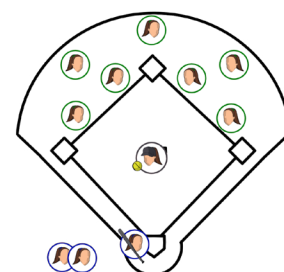
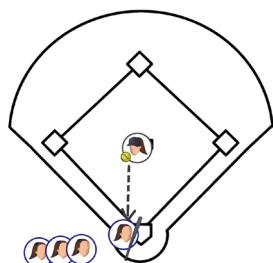
### 8 MINUTES

Infielder must field and throw 5 consecutive balls as quickly and as accurately as possible

## PRESSURE HITTING

## BELLY UPS

## 3 TEAM SCRIMMAGE



### 8 MINUTES

A high stakes series of at-bats where players must make contact or their teammates run sprints

### 10 MINUTES

Players spread out in the infield on their bellies - they must then get to their feet and make a throw to 1st when the ball is hit to them

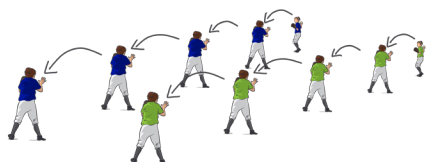
### 10 MINUTES

A scrimmage game where the team is divided into 3 groups - 1 in outfield, 1 infield, 1 batting

# ADVANCED PRACTICE PLAN (120 MINS)

**Dynamic Warmup:** (5-10 Minutes): High Knees, Side Shuffle, Carioca, Backpedal

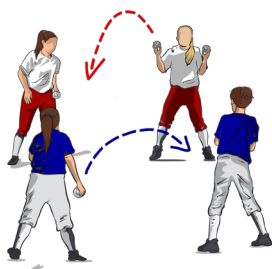
## RELAY RACE THROW



**6 MINUTES**

A race between two teams to see who can relay the ball from one end of their line to the other the fastest

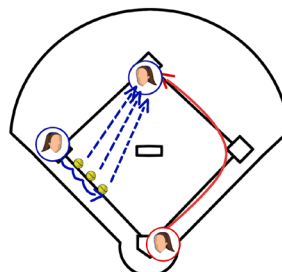
## 2 BALL TOSS



**8 MINUTES**

A warm-up game where players must pass their own ball to a teammate before receiving a pass and are eliminated on errors

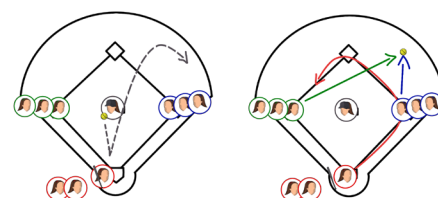
## 3, 2, 1, RUN!



**6 MINUTES**

Baserunner attempts to get from home to 2nd before 3rd base can deliver 3 throws to 2nd base

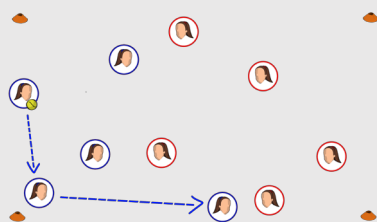
## ARIZONA



**8 MINUTES**

3 teams compete, 2 on defense attempting to run down the batter's ball, while the batter tries to rack up as many total bases as possible

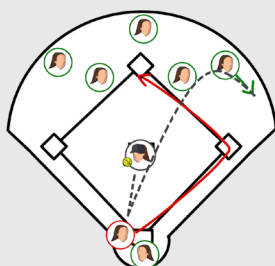
## ULTIMATE SOFTBALL



**10 MINUTES**

Team is split into two groups who compete to advance the ball into their opponent's endzone - but they can only move forward by throwing and catching passes to their teammates.

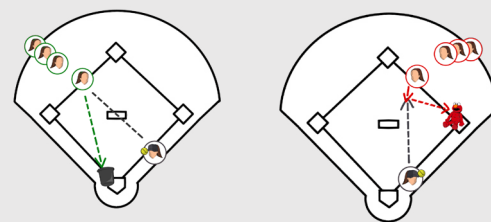
## DOUBLES



**8 MINUTES**

Players attempt to leg out a double on every at-bat while the outfield tries to get the out at 2nd

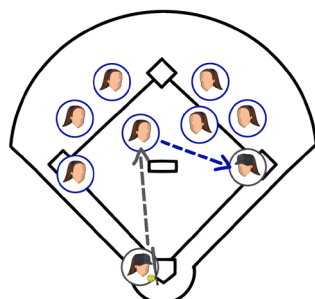
## HOLE IN ONE/ELMO



**10 MINUTES**

Fielding drill where 3rd baseman must step up, field the ball, and make a throw into a small target at home plate / 2nd baseman must field the ball and hit the teddy bear target at first base - points are awarded for accuracy

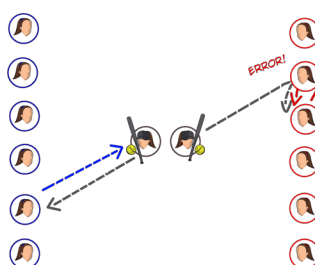
## KNOCKOUT



**8 MINUTES**

An elimination game where players must field the ball and make the throw to first or be knocked out of the game

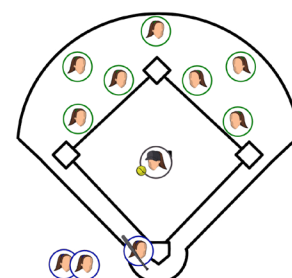
## KING OF THE HILL



**8 MINUTES**

Coaches hit grounders to fielders - on errors they move down the hill - players compete to see who can become and stay King

## CRUNCH TIME SCRIMMAGE



**12 MINUTES**

A scrimmage game where either the pitcher or the batter is put at disadvantage in the count