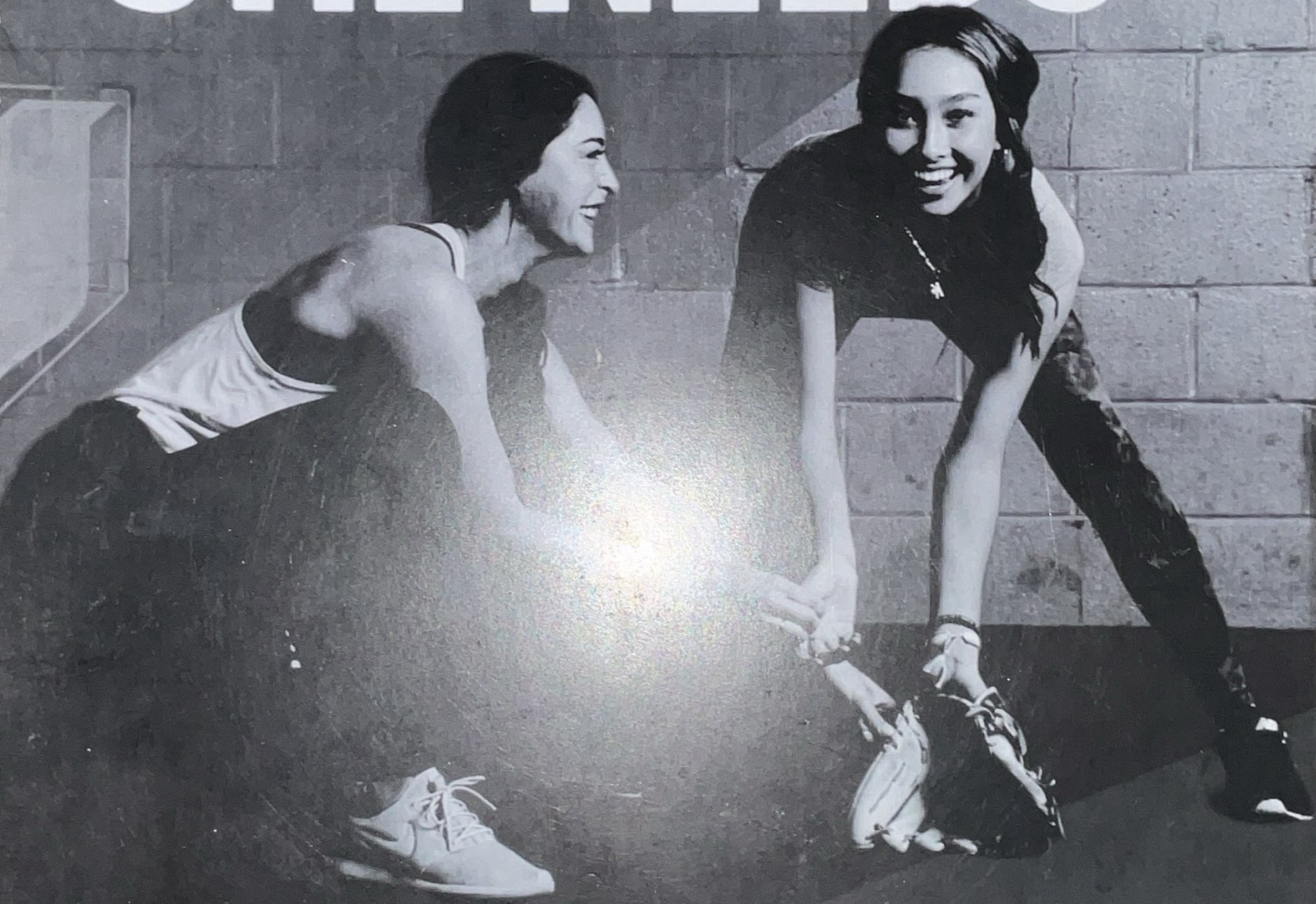


The Manual for Softball Coaches Looking to Impact & Develop Elite Defenders

# THE COACH SHE NEEDS



**GROUNDWORK**  
MORGAN *Stuart* STUART

# THE COACH SHE NEEDS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE COACH SHE NEEDS.....	3
MENTALITY.....	4
WHAT KIND OF TEAM ARE YOU RUNNING?.....	6
CULTURE NON-NEGOTIABLES.....	7
COACHING GIRLS... IT'S NOT THAT DIFFERENT!.....	10
MECHANICS FOR EACH AGE GROUP.....	11
<b>8-10U</b>	
Coaching The Littles.....	13
8-10U Defense Fundamentals.....	16
Defense Coaching Cues.....	18
8-10U Hitting Fundamentals.....	20
Plays To Know By 10U.....	21
8-10U FAQ's.....	23
<b>12+</b>	
12+ Defense Fundamentals.....	25
12U+ Hitting Fundamentals.....	28
12+ FAQs.....	29
Practice Planning.....	31
Make It Routine.....	34
Planning A Practice With Flow.....	35
Fundamental Defensive Rotation.....	36
Building Confidence Workout.....	37
Practice Flow Template.....	38
Workout List.....	40



# THE COACH SHE NEEDS

Coaches are the connection between what a sport might provide to a girl growing up and what that player actually experiences. A coach that falls short can hinder how girls see sports and themselves while a competent and excited coach can be the positive difference a player needs to gain confidence in herself as a player and as a person.

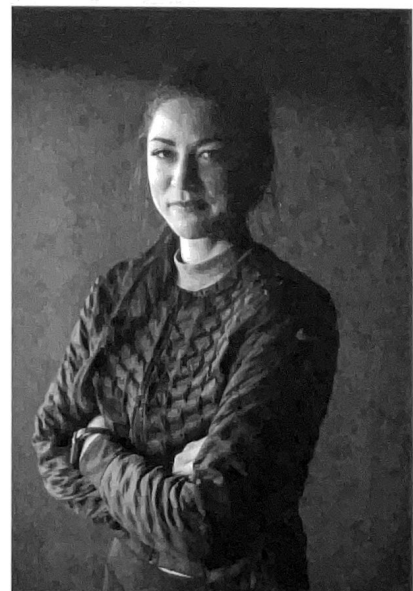
You are such an important piece in her development and self-image. Let's do this the right way.

Whether you're a first-time coach or someone who wants a refresher on some concepts, this manual includes the intangible aspects of coaching as well as concrete plans laid out so you can spend less time planning and more time experiencing the good times of coaching with your team. Can't wait to see all the kids you can impact. Let's go.

## WHO'S MORGAN?

A full-time coach specializing in defense, Morgan has listened to her students and their parents about the pains of home training. This book was created to give softball families the confidence they need to take their development into their own hands.

- 2009 National Champion (Washington)
- 2009 All-World Series Team
- 2010 Pac-10 Champion
- 2011 Academic All-American
- 2012 Riverside Sports Hall of Fame Inductee
- 2013 Professional Player (Switzerland)
- 2013-2014 College Coach (UCR, LMU)
- 2014 Established Lessons at The Workshop
- 2014 UW Hall of Fame Inductee
- 2015 & 2019 Filipino National Softball Team
- Co-Founder of The Packaged Deal
- Team Easton Ambassador



# MENTALITY

## At first practices you might notice some of this:

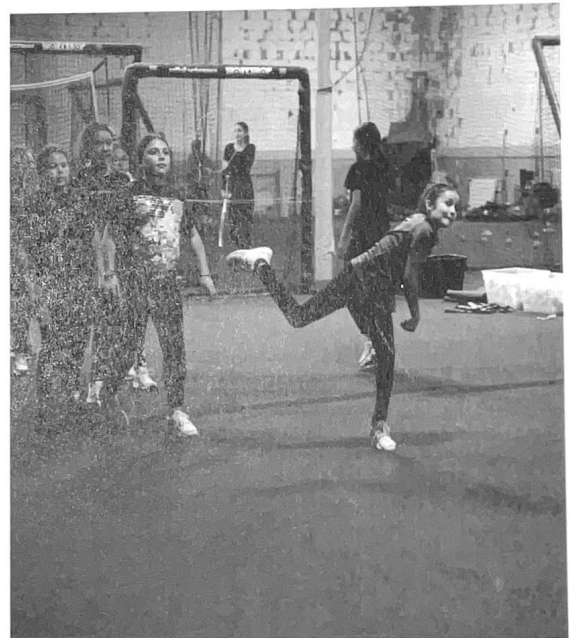
- Everything is unknown... body language reads scared, unsure.
- Week-by-week: Confidence builds with more reps, knowing what to expect & preparation.
- They see immediately they can do harder things - fast.
- They move from Unsure to Player to Leaders - helping the other kids and taking control of their experience if they are comfortable enough to do so.

Our goal as coaches is to create a safe place where girls can learn to compete, learn how to be good teammates, learn themselves, and learn how to be their best selves. This involves PRACTICING CONFIDENCE and our mentality.

Some ways you can implement "confidence practice" immediately into your team practices:

### Choose your expectations...

- What body language do you allow when taking the field?
- Practice Failure Recovery with every play:
  - Finish the play! If they don't finish, there's a consequence
  - Give eye contact after errors to create connection with team and bring energy to the field
- Updates once a month
- Competition in practice



So... How do you keep that up long term? Develop a plan so this doesn't just get talked about once and never again.

### How to develop a plan for maintaining expectations and developing mentality:

Build "mentality" into your practices. It's not just something that is brought up once or twice during the season or before postseason. Take a look at your practice plan: add a MENTAL ASPECT to 2 of the drills each practice or plan in 15 minutes pre or post-practice where there's a check-in about body language, attitude, intensity, work ethic, confidence, etc.

If you make mentality a priority, so will they. It can't be an afterthought. Include it in everything you say and do.

# **YOU'RE BUILDING PEOPLE, NOT JUST PLAYERS...**

Team discussion ideas that will help build their mindset and awareness as they are growing up through sport:

## **1. Rate your presence (1-10).**

Presence is how you show up; what energy you bring to your team.

Rate this on a 1-10 scale.

- 1 = You're unapproachable, unstable mood, people don't know what to expect when they talk to you.
- 10 = You're coachable, a leader, upbeat attitude, and ready to compete.

## **2. Rate your communication (1-10).**

- 1 = You're silent on the field and won't make eye contact.
- 10 = You're aware of your surroundings, communicate with eyes, voice, and body language.

## **3. What is your greatest fear while playing?**

## **4. What are you working towards right now?**

*Other ideas:*

- What role do you play on the field? Are you a leader or a follower?
- What do you do if your team is making errors?
- What is your "release" after you make an error?

# WHAT KIND OF TEAM ARE YOU RUNNING?

You don't have to be the one to decide the goals and dreams of this team, but you will be one that helps to enforce rules. Before your season starts, consider the items below so you can all start on level footing:

1. What are your team goals? Winning or having fun? Both?

---

---

2. What are your team rules?

---

---

3. What will you expect of girls and families when they are on the team?

---

---

4. Will you decide these as a team or will you present expectations to the team and move forward from there?

---

---

**Download the below worksheet for more help:**



**Click Or Scan QR Code!**

Ensure you are logged in beforehand.

# CULTURE NON-NEGOTIABLES

1. SET EXPECTATIONS
2. BUY IN
3. RESPECTING TEAMMATES
4. HARD WORK IS COOL

## What will YOUR culture be?

Sometimes culture is thought of as an "elite" concept but it will drastically impact the girls' experience THIS season.

Make some notes on what you want your girls to experience in the next 3 months:

---

---

---

In the next season?

---

---

---

How will you make this happen?

What can you do differently in the next game/practice that will make this a reality?

---

---

---

## **MY COACHING PHILOSOPHY**

I don't run a team, but I have a lot of girls that come see me every week. If you are having trouble coming up with your philosophy, here are some things I focus on. These might be too intense for a first-year team, but if they are going to move on in sports, these are good to keep in mind!

### **EXPECT GREATNESS.**

This is the short version, but expecting greatness from athletes is where all of my strategies stem from. Below are specific tactics I use in lessons and clinics:

#### **1. I CAN'T WANT IT MORE THAN YOU**

This is a standard that I function by with my girls. My lessons (or anything you learn) can be very boring and disengaging if you're not bought in to how it's going to help you achieve your goals.

I will tell you the why's and how's of defense, but if you'd rather be watching Netflix, this isn't going to work out.

#### **2. 10,000 HOURS**

There is no replacement for hard work. There is no magic drill that will take the place of the hours you put in on your own, with teammates, and over the years that will get you where you need to be skillswise.

#### **3. SKILLS IN PROGRESSION**

I start slow and teach to understand- not just mirroring movements. Once a simple concept is mastered, we build on those skills to either a more advanced concept

or I include that single simple concept in multiple drills so girls can see it used in different ways.

#### 4. TRAIN FAST & COMPETE

There's no point in knowing how or why things work if they can't be used at game-speed. A huge component of learning with me is knowing you might feel uncomfortable with how quickly I push you to move, but this is also part of training to perform in the game. If we can feel that pressure to perform in practice, we will be better prepared to harness those feelings and to think and move quickly when it counts.

#### 5. STAY CONSISTENT IN NON-NEGOTIABLE MECHANICS

The athlete that makes the adjustment the fastest will win. In each movement and practice, girls should be constantly trying to improve in order to grow each and every day.

Your coaching philosophy is different from a team culture, although they can be related.

**Philosophy:** What you bring and how you can be CONSISTENT with your players

**Culture:** What the team brings and how they show up each day to practice or games

Make some notes for your team and how you see them:

---

---

---

#### \*\*\* TEAM EXERCISE IDEA\*\*\*

- Give everyone a notecard and have them define team culture.
- Then have them write down what kind of culture they want that season.
- Write down concrete things someone would physically see as an outsider watching your team if this culture was there every day.
- Make a commitment to hold each other accountable for this!

# **COACHING GIRLS...**

## **IT'S NOT THAT DIFFERENT**

1. Just because they are girls doesn't mean they aren't tough. Challenge them. Demand excellence and they will respond.
2. Let them know you care about them. You can be tough, but at the end of the day an athlete that understands you have their best interest at heart will work harder for you because she trusts you.
3. You are not at a disadvantage if you are a male coach. Majority of the women on our staff grew up being coached by men.
4. More than boys, girls want to get the drill "right" before competing and doing it in front of teammates or friends. Understand that many will have a wall up when competing because they are afraid to look silly in front of others.
5. Girls have to feel good to play good- guys, in contrast, have to play good to feel good. Figure out how to make your girls FEEL unstoppable and they will run through walls.
6. Clear and CONSISTENT team expectations will keep emotions or "drama" from being part of your team culture.
7. Encourage communication and give your girls space to voice their opinions. Many girls mistake being a good player for one that is quiet and doesn't cause problems instead of one who is strong and believes in a system. If there is a misunderstanding, face it with them.
8. Be organized and have an intention with each practice.
9. Instead of just telling your girls what to do, explain why you're doing something and maintain that ADJUSTMENTS are more important than outcome. Having this mindset frees your players from perfection.
10. Don't just tell your girls to be louder on the field. They need practice because sometimes this is the most scary thing for girls to be. Plan a communication station into practices or include talking as a goal of specific parts of practice.

# MECHANICS FOR EACH AGE GROUP

## MECHANICS WITH AN END GOAL

The goal is to EQUIP players with the tools they need to discover their best selves as fielders and competitors.

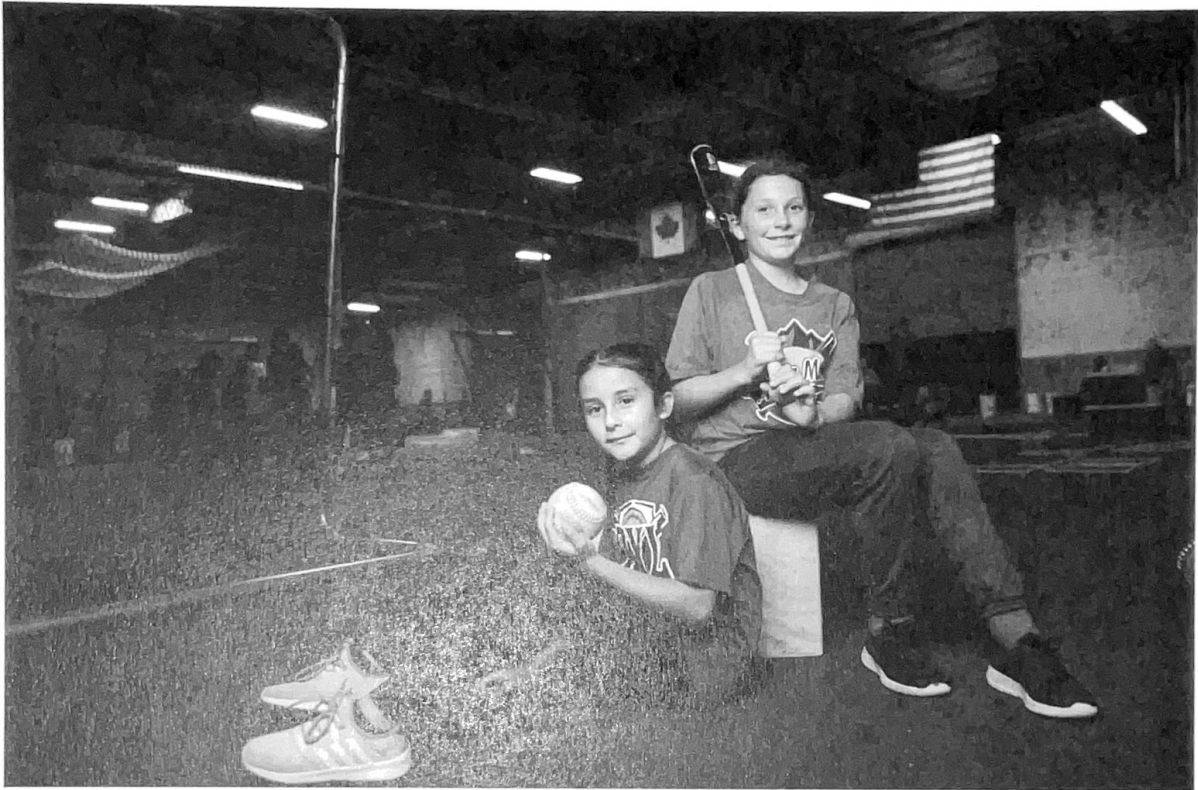


### **ELITE DEFENDERS HAVE THESE THINGS. (DON'T SKIP THEM.)**

- Balance. Posture. Bend behind the ball. Poor setup will make fielding & getting rid of the ball harder than it needs to be and will put you in position for injury. Arms and legs stay bent throughout athletic movements: the throw, absorbing bad hops, raking through a backhanded ball all while keeping the eyes behind the glove to ensure you can see every ball in.
- Break from the center. After receiving the ball, transfer occurs where the ball was caught OR in front of the chest/belly button (center of the body) - as opposed to taking the ball and glove to the ear before throwing. Their transfer is quiet. The ball never stops moving.
- Great first steps. If an infielder has good feet, she can work easier for the rest of the play. Elite players get the inside part of their back feet already aimed at their target.



## 8-10U COACHING THE LITTLES



This is such a fun age to coach because it marks the beginning of their experience with the game. Maybe it's your daughter's team and you want to make sure she's getting the right information and having the best time possible. Here are some notes that could help:

What's developmentally appropriate: Biggest thing they should be able to do by the end of 10U is play catch. Lots of repetition is needed.

In 8U, the girls are learning how to play catch. They should be learning how to turn their fingers in the correct direction while catching. They should understand the grip when throwing and their fielding positions.

Expectations for beginners: At practice, girls should be hustling and ready to learn. ADJUSTMENTS are the key. Missing balls is normal, but make sure they know how to correct their mistakes.

How often to practice: Keep softball fun. One day for games per week and one day for practice with the team. Other days should be practicing hand-eye coordination at home. This might include ground balls at home, tennis balls against the wall.

What to do for fun: Games and competitions are a MUST in practice. Girls will remember how they feel at practice more than what they learn that day.

Playing time: If you're coaching your daughter, she's going to be looked at the most if she's getting the most playing time out of everyone. Have the same standards for all players, no matter what.

You, as her coach, have a huge ability to positively impact the patterns she creates physically and mentally this season.

Be POSITIVE. Always encourage. Use language explaining a positive change they can make instead of telling them "NOT" to do something.

### **Developing Athletes:**

Aside from the softball mechanics, here are some movements that will build agility, balance, coordination, flexibility, power, and speed. The girls will have fun doing them and they will keep them moving!

- Planks
- Squats
- Lunges
- Broad Jumps
- Burpees

### **Have competitions that include these movements:**

- Plank Competition (who can stay up the longest)
- Circuits, Relays, Races

## Keep It Fun, Show Them How to Compete

Play games with your team that incorporate softball skills. Put them in positions to be challenged and compete with each other.

- Target Practice
- Baserunning Relays
- Throwing Relays

### 6-8U

- Keep the kids moving (station work, games).
- Change up practice.
- Games are a great way to learn.

Focus on FUN and fundamentals!

### 10U

- Encourage hard work that leads to success.
- Quality REPS!
- Explain WHY you're teaching a specific skill.

Hitters will struggle with timing and understanding the strike zone. Incorporate games that help with these.

### 12U

- Set short and long term goals for the season.
- Compete constantly.
- Don't let small mistakes continue.

Hitters will struggle with inside versus outside pitch contact points and with staying positive.

No matter what, sports is about progress over results. As long as they are making adjustments, growing, and keeping a positive mindset, you're winning.

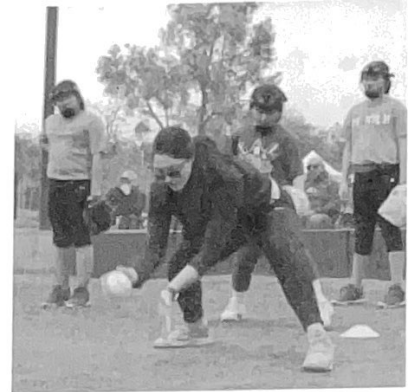
# 8-10U DEFENSE FUNDAMENTALS

## POSTURE

### Basic Setup | Fielding Positions

All limbs are bent. Fielder is bent at the knees & at the waist- this ensures that the butt is BACK and hands are able to be in front of the body.

**KEYS: BUTT BACK, CHEST DOWN, HANDS OUT, ALWAYS ON THE BALLS OF THE FEET.**



Fielder is hinged forward to have upper body over the ground. Back is flat. Fielder is on balls of her feet, palms facing up or in the direction of the hitter.

## THROWING

### 1. Fundamentals

- Grip ("W" across the "C")
- Equal and opposite
- Elbow above shoulder
- Glove arm at target
- Release point
- Glove arm after throw (tuck)
- 12-6 Rotation

### 2. Warm Up Progression

- Feet still, rotating upper body
- Standing, hips turned
- Step and throw
- Shuffle and throw
- Long toss

### 3. Drills

- Around the horn
- Pickle Drill
- Cross-Fire



## **GLOVEWORK**

- Glove in front of eyes
- Create a ramp; not a bridge or a wall with their gloves

## **FILM THE BALL**

Pretend like you have a camera in the palm of your glove and you have to film the ball at all times. One of the major reasons why girls are late to get to the ball is because they are “flipping” or “rolling” their wrists when presenting their glove. Keep your fingers facing down when fielding ground balls.

## **DRILLS TO PRACTICE THIS:**

- Tennis Ball Tap in Ladder

## **FOOTWORK:**

- Drop steps
- Balls of the feet

## **SPECIFIC TO INFIELD:**

- Communicating the play: before, during the play
- Base coverage in different situations

## **SPECIFIC TO OUTFIELD:**

- Fingers up on a fly ball
- Running with glove

# DEFENSE COACHING CUES

## FOR COMMON BAD HABITS/ PATTERNS

Glove timing & patterning: Glove not being open behind the ball and on time is one of the most common mistakes of fielders. You will see players field the ball like a helicopter landing instead of like a plane landing. In other words, they are squatting right on top of the ball instead of stepping through the ball and getting gradually lower to the ball.

Fielders will also roll or flip their gloves instead of approaching the ball with the glove open. This will also make them late to the ball.

**COACHING CUE:** "Fingers down"

Glove arm when throwing: Many young players will open up their front shoulder early and lose control of their glove arm when throwing. Glove should stay in front or on the glove side of the body, but should not flail out or drop down below the waist.

**COACHING CUE:** "Puke in your glove"

Head & eye movement: Players will move up and down too quickly as they are fielding balls and can lose sight of the ball or have trouble tracking hops.

**COACHING CUE:** "Get lower sooner"

Posture: Super common problem is having a bent upper back to get the glove to the ground before a ground ball. These players often don't have the core strength or body awareness to get to a proper fielding position repetitively but slowing it down and training them HOW to get to the right spot can be helpful.

**COACHING CUE:** "Butt back, chest down"

Backpedaling on a fly ball: Instead of turning and running, girls will put glove up

and backpedal. This puts them off balance and doesn't let them move very efficiently.

**COACHING CUE:** "Toes pointed in direction the ball"

How players transfer: Common for players to bring the ball to their ear or to grab the ball out of their gloves with the ball facing up (like they are holding a pizza). Transfer should happen from the middle of the body.

**COACHING CUE:** "Elbows up or ball faces down" & "The ball never stops"

# 8-10U HITTING FUNDAMENTALS

## STANCE

- Balanced, feet wider than the hips
- Door knocking knuckles together

## THE STEP

- Keep the hands back

## CONTACT POINT

- Lead hand facing down, back hand facing up
- Bend = Power: Keep knees bend with high pivot
- Eyes at the contact point

## Above all:

Focus on contact point and bat speed!



[Click Or Scan QR Code To Watch 6-10U Hitting Fundamentals!](#)

[Ensure you are logged in beforehand.](#)

# **PLAYS TO KNOW BY 10U**

## **WHERE DOES EACH POSITION PLAY?**

Show each girl where to stand with no outs and two outs.

## **6-4-3 DOUBLE PLAY**

Should be standard for your girls to know that with a runner at 1st, they are looking to get the lead runner and try to get two outs.

## **BUNT DEFENSE**

With runners on and no outs or one out, third and first base play up before the pitch and crash to field the bunt. Second base covers first and shortstop covers second base.

## **1ST & 3RD**

Have some sort of plan for this situation- whether that's fake a throw and have third baseman covering third or second baseman coming across for a short throw down to second to cut off the runner going home. It's good to have some plan that your team can execute.

## **STEAL COVERAGE**

When does shortstop cover second and when does second cover? When does short cover third and when does third cover?

## **TAGS**

First and third base pick offs (or steals where third base covers): Use the same "drop step" method for footwork to get back to the bag. Turn toes and hips to the base to avoid backpedaling. Protect yourself by positioning feet on the backside of the base (away from the runner).

**SS & 2B:** Covering steals at second base, you can either straddle the base or set up with the back foot at the base. I prefer letting the ball travel further as the ball is always faster than you. What you choose should depend on your catcher's arm strength & throwing tendency.

# 8-10U FAQ's

## **What age should she start lessons?**

- I start lessons at 8 years old, but some kids aren't ready at this age. A good way to know if they will benefit from lessons is 1. If they are able to mirror movements, they should have the body awareness necessary to make adjustments 2. If they are able to react to a ball thrown and protect their face, they will be able to handle lessons without fear of being hurt. Up until this point, playing catch at home is great!

## **What can I do to help her with her confidence on the field?**

- Make softball an environment where she can count up her little "wins" instead of all the things she needs to do to get better. Her having fun is the most important part of her early years. When she's having fun, she's feeling less doubt or fear and isn't paying attention to the ways she's uncomfortable. As much as she might think the point of softball isn't "fun," the mindset we need to be in to learn and be our best, very much is helped by having FUN.

## **Should she wear a mask?**

- If she cannot keep eyes and head down without fear of being hurt, yes, a mask is best.

## **She's afraid of the ball. What should I do?**

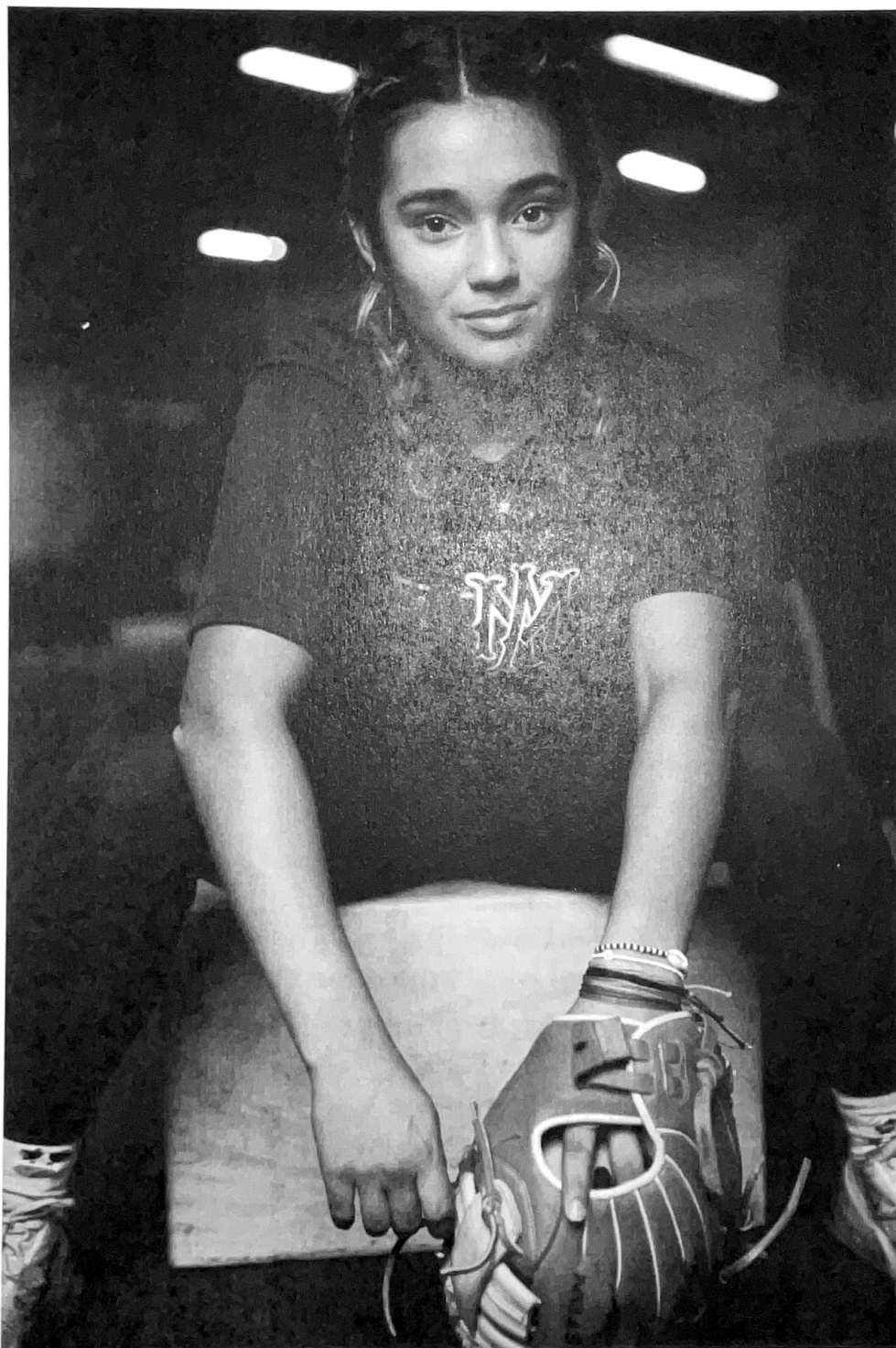
- Do a lot of reps with tennis and softie balls to get her used to the mechanics before moving to hard balls or faster reps.

## **Should she play other sports?**

- 100% yes. It will help with overall coordination, keep her from overuse of the muscles used for softball (biggest cause of injury), and will give her brain a much-needed break from softball-only focuses.



# 12+ DEFENSE FUNDAMENTALS



## **THROWING**

- Staying low when transitioning to throw
- Creating direction with the body
- "Touch:" Use eyes to judge how hard to throw the ball

## **GLOVEWORK | DEFLECT & TRANSFER**

- Secure the ball with your wrist
- With backhands especially (but also with all positions) keep the lead elbow bent. In order to keep this bent, the butt has to be low/ back knee bent.

## **FOOTWORK: FIRST STEPS & ANGLES**

### **Reading bat angle:**

When the ball enters the hitting zone (total area where ball is able to be hit), infielders should have JUST arrived at their "Ready Position."

Their gloves may not be touching the ground, but they are able to move in any direction based on how the hitter makes contact with the ball. HARD FOCUS is critical on the bat angle. Great infielders are able to get their first steps based on the bat angle before the ball is even hit.

### **Direction of toes and hips:**

Turn the lower half to set up the rest of the body. Turning feet & hips quickly in the direction is the most efficient way to meet the ball.

- Drop steps
- 1st steps
- Balls of the feet

### **Specific to Infield:**

- Communicating the play: before, during the play
- Base coverage in different situations

### **Specific to Outfield:**

- Fingers up on a fly ball
- Running with glove

## **MENTALITY**

### **Separation of defense from offense**

It's possible to have the worst offensive game and the best defensive game. Work to contribute to one side of the game even if things aren't going your way on the other. Be a force on defense. Your effort there is completely in your control.

### **Pride in your area**

Before each pitch, prepare the dirt for the next ball.

### **Be a good teammate**

Give good eye contact with the fielders around you and your pitcher and catcher. A good teammate is a present and confident teammate.

### **Being aggressive and assertive**

Don't be afraid to make a mistake. After training and putting in the hard work, trust your body and knowledge to just play.

# 12+ HITTING FUNDAMENTALS

## *What are you saying to yourself in the box?*

Start prompting girls about their self-talk to help confidence.

### 1. The Stance

- Feet shoulder width apart, knees bent
- Weight on the inside part of the legs
- Hands held above the shoulders and away from the ear

### 2. The Load and Step

- Weight shifts from the middle of the body to the inside part of the back foot, Front knee triggers back, hands move back to over the back foot
- LOAD: Important in timing the pitcher, happens before the step
- As the front foot steps forward to time the pitcher, hands stay back

### 3. Get to Contact + WEIGHT TRANSFER

- The swing starts from the ground up
- Weight shifts from back leg to inside of front leg

- First motion: barrel angle stays up
- At contact: Palm up, palm down
- Back leg bent, back heel up driving towards contact

### 4. Extension

- Hands extend towards the pitcher (or where the ball was hit)
- Still palm up, palm, down
- After contact, barrel should stay on same path for as long as possible
- Bat should be pointing where the ball is hit

### 5. Finish

- Balanced over the center of the body
- Back knee bent

**Drills:** Slow motions swings, Bottom hand. Draw your line, Swinging to extension

# 12+ FAQs

**She's great in practice, but when she gets to the games, it's a different story. What can I do to help her?**

- Practice makes progress and this applies to self-talk. In every situation, she can be practicing what she's saying to herself. She can also be aware of the intensity she is practicing at in lessons and her team practices: Is she putting herself in game-mode or is she relaxed in practice and the pressure of games completely throws her off? If so, create more game situations in practice. Apply the pressure so she can get more comfortable with those thoughts and feelings.

**How much time should she be practicing on her own?**

- Every player's needs are different in terms of what they need and the time it will take them to achieve that. In general, every player needs to practice on their own on their offense and defense. Hitting will take priority in the time it will take to master those skills. Weekly, players 8-12 should be putting about 1-2 hours of work in on their own. Depending on goals, players ages 13+ should be working out about 2-3 hours on their own at home, weekly.

**Final note:** My favorite practices are ones with a theme. This can either be a goal that you will attain during that practice or a team core covenant like "Be a Good Teammate." Giving a practice something bigger to work towards will keep focus on each task & will make each rep matter that much more.



# PRACTICE PLANNING



**Watch This First!**

Click Or Scan QR Code!

Ensure you are logged in beforehand.

In this section, I will give you my thoughts on planning a practice, give you examples of practices, and finally give you a template you can print out, make copies and use long-term.

My biggest piece of advice for coaching a team: Decide on a routine for practice so girls can start taking ownership of their time.

In each of my lessons, girls know what to expect when they come to a lesson. We have a routine, but maybe unknown to them, that routine is meant to provide different phases of learning and interacting with skills, their team, and the coaches:

## **PHASE LEARNING:**

### **1. Welcome:**

Girls start to “funnel down” and get focused and present. They get comfortable in their space and connect with teammates. In lessons this is our “wall ball” time.

*In your practice: Warm ups where the girls know what's expected of them. If you have team captains, they can lead this.*

## **2. Goals & Updates:**

Connect with the girls. Softball isn't the only thing coaches should care about. Ball is NOT life.

*In your practice: Team comes together to check-in, maybe you make a point to go around and do "updates" but you can also talk about goals of practice.*

## **3. Stations:**

Teach skills, break mechanics down. Here, we go slower and make adjustments each rep.

*In your practice: This is where you can insert a drill progression or a rotation of drills from my Black Book. Maybe infield and infield are split for their own position-specific drills.*

## **4. Ball off bat:**

Less interference from coaches as girls try to work on their rhythm and timing. Now they are working on reading the ball and reaction.

*In your practice: Situations, infield and outfield working together*

## **Competition:**

Practicing mindset & GAME MODE

*In your practice: Live pitching, any games. Softball is a team sport with shared goals. We should always be implementing skills to be able to PLAY and COMPETE.*

**Welcome & Goals 0:00-0:10**

Focus of the Day:

**Skill Building: 0:10-1:10**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Situations: 1:10-1:40**

**Compete: 1:40-2:00**

# MAKE IT ROUTINE

Create your own routine for practice with some of the same elements that I have used:

1. Welcome / Connect
2. Goals / Get Focused
3. Stations/ Skill Building
4. Live / Implement Training
5. Competition / Remember to PLAY

## **SOME OPTIONS TO START PRACTICE:**

- Dynamic Warmup
- Partner Drills
- Journal
- Infield and Outfield Specific Drills

## **COACHING MECHANICS TO FOCUS ON DURING PRACTICE:**

1. What's this drill work on? What's our goal?
2. Say one thing for each rep or every other rep.
3. Move them, have them do it on their own dry.
4. Speak with volume.
5. Check for understanding.

## **USE THESE COACHING TOOLS THROUGHOUT PRACTICE:**

- Tennis balls, softies, baseballs
- Isolating upper/lower body
- Drill progressions
- Exaggerating movements for feel
- Positive language only
- Progress/adjustments > Results

# PLANNING A PRACTICE WITH FLOW

Depending on the time you're at in your year or your season, the concepts or time allotted for learning will vary. Off-Season and preseason present the MOST time to present new ideas & to test out ways your team prepares best.

## Above All Else:

- Keep your energy up. Players will always get more practice if they are tuned in- it doesn't have to always include fun drills, but the pace should stay constant.
- Have someone run a clock. Knowing how much you want to invest in each part of your practice ensures you'll get to everything you want & helps you plan for more in the future when it didn't feel like it was enough in a certain spot.
- Spread out your numbers. Having too many girls at one station slows the speed of practice & decreases focus. Create movement with multiple things to do for the resting players.

# FUNDAMENTAL DEFENSIVE ROTATION

2 coaches required, 3 recommended to keep smooth flow of practice. You will need 3 buckets of balls, 1 speed ladder, & tennis balls.

## **0:00-0:10: Dynamic Warmup**

Throw (focus on 1. getting body in front of the ball 2. 2-hand catch 3. Finish with glove in front of chest)

## **0:10-0:28: Pick Series (6 minutes @ each station)**

**1. Knee Picks:** Set players up in a semicircle, tossing them underhand short hops or rolls, in order, at a quick pace. Players deflect the ball into their throwing hands- going from pinky fingers together to thumbs together (hands end with palms facing the ground).

**2. Backhand Picks:** Players start open (not crossed over). Good posture: bend knees to sink the butt first then turn the glove over with a bent elbow. Elbow stays bent the entire time! Players field the ball from ground up- last move is UP with the elbow.

**3. Dynamic Picks:** Players start in fielding position. This can be done in partners or in the semi-circle style like the first Pick drills. Players move feet before and after they field the ball. Right, left, field. Right, left, throwing position. To advance this drill, players can move their feet in the direction of the different bases after fielding the ball.

## **0:28-0:40: Agility + Hand-eye ( 5 minutes @ each station)**

**1. Ladder + Catch:** Players go through ladder (2 feet in each hole); running with proper form with gloves on. Once outside the ladder, the coach tosses a ball to lead the player out of ladder to catch. Players must keep their feet moving in order to catch the ball.

# **BUILDING CONFIDENCE WORKOUT**

## **WARM UP**

Bare hand catch with tennis balls: Either lines with multiple coaches - coach throws OR partner tosses

**Wall Ball:** 5 minute game OR elimination game

**Tennis Ball Toss:** glove hand ONLY catch. 5 balls at a time, with speed. Other fielders waiting for their turn are planking or doing sit-ups, squats, or wall-sits

**Regular Catch:** If there are multiple coaches, it can be very beneficial for younger girls to get a good toss from the coach instead of a teammate when just working on catching and transferring the ball.

Just like tennis ball tosses, set up a few lines (depending on how many coaches you have) and have the girls rotate to the back of their lines where they catch and get to a throwing position before throwing the ball back to the coach.

Jog to baseline and back (x4) with gloves: Practice running with gloves on will be very helpful when transitioning to fielding and playing

## **Fielding Position Circuit**

For young players, getting into and staying in a good fielding position are difficult.

After knowing basic key commands- butt down, knees bent, glove out in front- POINT to signal if the ball is to the forehand or backhand side and have the fielder react to that signal by getting in the proper position. In between signals, a fielder can be in "hot feet" (feet moving quickly up and down).

*Reps of 3 at a time before resting feet.*

# PRACTICE FLOW TEMPLATE

## Warm up [0:00- 0:25]

- *Dynamic Warm Up 10 min.*

Have team captains run a warm up that gets the girls moving and ready for any movement. No circle stretching!

- *Throw for 10 min.*

Infielders play with infielders.

Outfielders with outfielders.

Pitchers with catchers- if possible.

Start to create trust with players who will be on the field together.

- *Daily Drills 5 min.*

Routine is a softball player's best friend. These drills done with a partner get the body ready to perform & also relax the mind if kept in place before all practices & games.

## DEFENSE: SPLIT YOUR POSITIONS [0:25-0:50]

1. Infielders on field

2. Outfielders in cages OR defenders all work together on the field and do one big circuit... [0:55-1:20] would be the hitting time

**\*\*SPLIT OPTION:** Depending on your practice space, when you split, all positions can either work defense at the same time or IF can work defense & OF can hit & vice versa after 25 minutes \*\*

**Infielders' Circuit:** 3 minutes each station (Depending on how many coaches you have to work with, players can run drills themselves & one coach can oversee each station)

- Partner knee picks
- Roll to Throw
- Good hop/ Bad Hop

Practice Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Practice Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Practice Focus: \_\_\_\_\_

**Welcome & Goals (Duration: 0:00-0:10)**

Gather the team and set the tone for the practice.  
Discuss the goals for the session and the specific skills to focus on.  
Warm-up dynamically to get players engaged and ready.

**Skill Building (Duration: 0:10-1:10)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

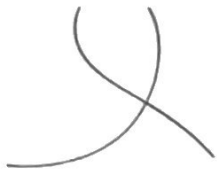
**Situations (Duration: 1:10-1:40)**

Work on game-like situations and scenarios.  
Implement the skills learned in the skill-building phase into realistic situations.

**Compete (Duration: 1:40-2:00)**

**Focus:**

Encourage a competitive mindset among players.  
Incorporate live pitching and various games to simulate game situations.



# WORKOUT LIST

## FRIDAY WORKOUT 600-730

Wallball x2 (10)	
Dynamic x Throw (10)	
1. Drop Step	
2. Jump Rope	
3. GH/BH	1 min.
4. Pole Drill	x2
5. Tennis Ball Tap	
6. 10s / Swivel bh	
7. Partner Dynamic / Static / Picks	

Wallball x2 (10)	
Dynamic x Throw (10)	
1. Drop Step	
2. Jump Rope	
3. GH/BH	1 min.
4. Pole Drill	x1
5. Tennis Ball Tap	
6. 10s / Swivel bh	
7. Partner Dynamic / Static / Picks	

1. Warm Up

2. Adjust

3. Reps

4. Compete

## BACK STOP WORKOUT / 700-815 / 30 GIRLS

1. Ava's Dry + Tennis Ball Tap  
3 in each ladder

2. 10 / 10 / 10 Barehand + w/ Gloves

3. Hand Hit Ball Rolls (3) Forehand (2)  
Hand Hit Ball Rolls (3) BACKhand (2)

4. GH/BH (2x3)  
FH + BH

5. Circle Forward Dry - 3  
Pole Drill Forward - 3

6. RDL DRILL + throw

1. Partner Circle Forward  
(P2 Switch Tosser)

2. Pole Drill with Throw

3. Figure 8 with Throw  
(3 Plank / P2 Switch)

4. BH Knee Picks + Swivel BH

5. Write Your Routine On Defense



Doorstep Obstacle

---

Partner Circle FW

---

10 / 10 / 10

---

Plank Hold

---

Partner GH/BH

---

Pole Drill FW

---

10 Minute 21 Outs

---

Pole Drill --> Feed

---

2B Receive

---

2B Bunt

---

1B Receive

---

Ava's Drill Fry

---

Or

Live SS --> 1B 2

---

1B --> 3B Tag 3

---

LF --> 2B Tag 3

---

Backstop Wall Sit

---