

Rookie

1) Base Running

- a) Knowing what base to run to when the ball is hit
- b) Run through 1st base when the ball is hit
- c) Know how to run from 1st to 2nd to 3rd and then home
- d) Advancing on hits or going back to the base if fly ball is caught
- e) Players should start to learn where the force outs are as to not run into a tag

2) Fielding

- a) Explain the positions on the field show where each position plays (print out position sheet and put it up in the dugout for each game)
- b) Infield positioning (Approx.: 1st base - 5 steps off base, 2nd base - 7 steps off base, SS - 8 to 10 steps off 2nd base, 3rd base - 5 steps off base)
- c) Ready position stance (glove down/butt down with feet wide apart, knees bent & palms up)
- d) Field ball in the infield with two hands (i.e. Alligator)
- e) Know where the force outs are before each batter and if a tag is necessary in lieu of force out
- f) Catching pop flies with two hands (i.e. Butterfly)

3) Batting

- a) Batting stance (where to stand in the box)
- b) feet on railroad tracks (i.e. feet even with each other)
- c) Knuckles lined up when holding the bat (a.k.a. knocking knuckles)
- d) "Squish the Bug" meaning to have the player turn their hips and their back foot towards the pitcher when swinging

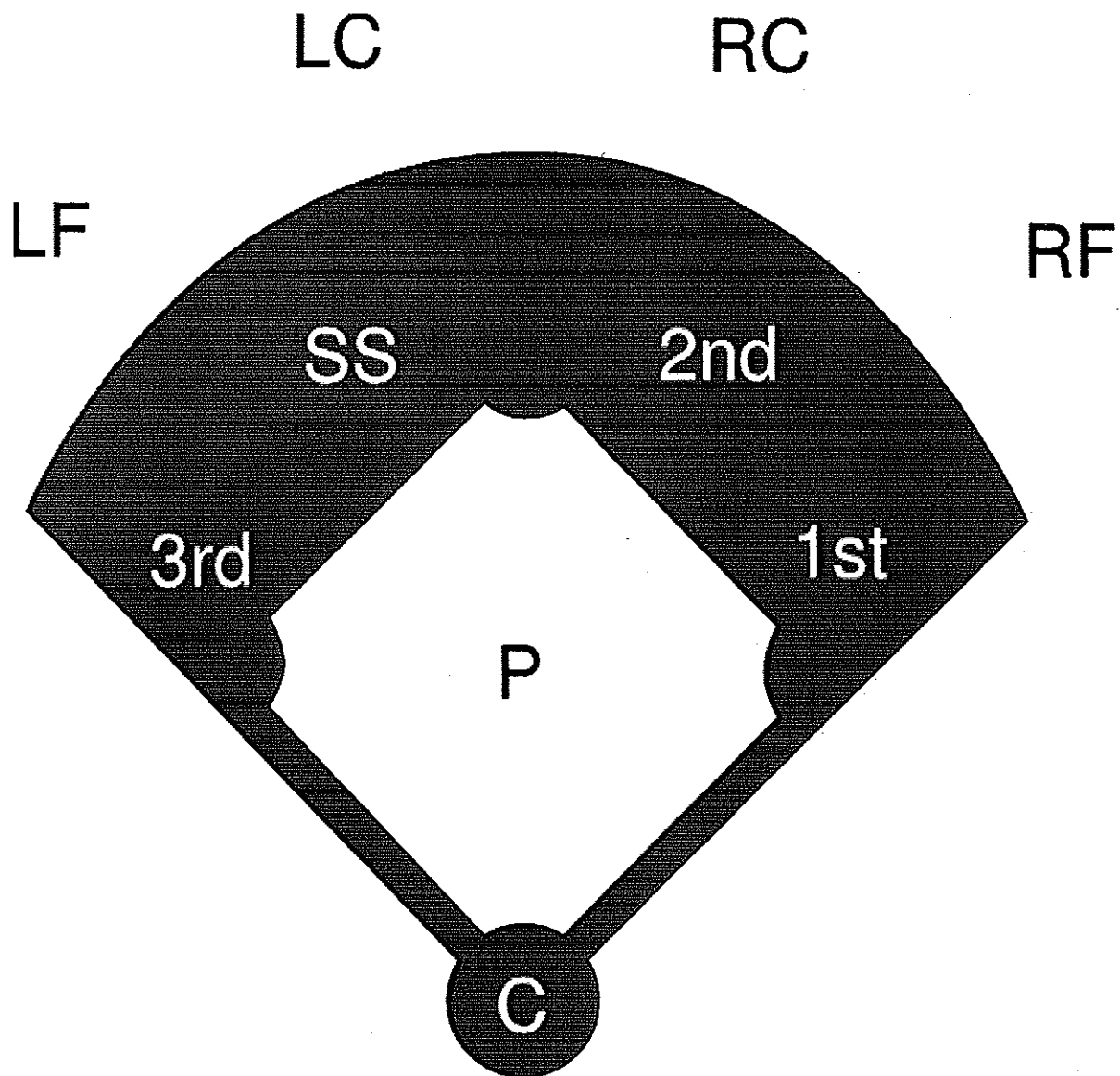
4) Throwing

- a) Throw the baseball using a Four Seam grip
- b) Front shoulder should be pointing at target
- c) Point with the glove, step towards target and then throw (should never see the front of throwers shirt)
- d) Receiver should be in an athletic position (i.e. feet apart, knees bent & glove up for target) to catch the ball

5) Dugout and Team Etiquette

- a) Look at the position schedule and batting order prior to the inning you go out into the field
- b) Baseball bag placement away from area where helmets, bats and gloves are kept
- c) Create an area for equipment (should be a helmet bag to put helmets in when not in use and it should also be used to put gloves and bat in that space when helmets are on)
- d) Bats should not be held on the bench and only picked up when the player is on-deck
- e) A Bench Coach will be necessary to keep kids in the batting order on the bench and kept seated until their at-bat

****It would be expected that each coach would dedicate 10 to 15 min (a.k.a. Association Time) to the throwing program prior to each practice or game**





BETTER ATHLETES
BETTER PEOPLE

Tips for the First-Time Coach

First-time coaches often are parent volunteers. A typical scenario has mom or dad registering a young child in a youth sports organization, which then asks parents to volunteer. The parent might consider him or herself capable of being an assistant coach, and then all of a sudden is named a head coach!

Many first-time coaches find this role harder than they expected, so here are concrete tips to ease matters and help your youth athletes.

- 1) **Let your child know you're considering coaching.** Explain that you're really looking forward to this, and ask for feedback about it. Your child's opinion may or may not change your decision about coaching, but it's good to have your child in on this new role you'll be playing from the beginning.
- 2) **Be clear on your own goals for coaching.** Coaches of kids just starting to play a sport may have the simple goal of a season enjoyable enough that everyone returns for next season.
- 3) **Share your goals with your players and their parents from the start.** Having a pre-season parent meeting is ideal. If it's too late for that, just get the parents together at the end of a practice and let them know why you're out there. It might sound like this: "My number one goal this season is to give your kids such an enjoyable experience that they all can't wait for next season. And, yes, I hope to teach them some skills, too!" Of course, if you have more ambitious goals in terms of skill development or imparting life lessons, share those, too.
- 4) **Invite the parents to help.** It often helps to have some parents pitch in at practices and games. If you invite them directly, they will likely support you with a few extra hands. Getting them involved at your practices also makes it more likely they'll be comfortable practicing the sport with their child outside of official practice time.
- 5) **Welcome each player by name at every practice and game.** When kids arrive to coaches who are smiling and greeting them by name, they feel welcome and positive from the start.
- 6) **Plan practices that keep kids active.** When kids are moving and active, they are more likely to stay focused. At the younger ages, avoid lines. Bring plenty of equipment, so kids are not standing around waiting for their turn. Find games/drills that give kids a lot of repeated practice of the skills.
- 7) **Face the sun, take a knee and be brief.** When you're talking to your athletes, get onto their level (at least physically!) by taking a knee, so you can (literally and figuratively) see eye-to-eye. Find the sun, and make sure you're facing into it. Then make the most of the 30-60 seconds you've got their attention! Six 60-second conversations with your players at a practice are much better than two 5-minute conversations!

continues

Tips for the First-Time Coach, continued

- 8) **Pick 1-2 areas of focus per practice/game.** You likely only have one hour for your practice. Pick one topic (two at the most!) to introduce and repeat over and over again. At the start of practice you might say, "Today is going to be all about passing." Then each time you bring the players in, ask them, "What is our focus today?" Then have this same focus for your competition that week. Whenever you see it being executed well, let your players know it, "Milo, awesome pass to Nathan!"
- 9) **Create a team cheer and do it often.** Young kids love having adults who are willing to be silly with them. Bring them in multiple times during practice to do their cheer, and make sure they see and hear you as an active participant.
- 10) **End practice/competition on a positive note.** At the end of practice or a competition call in all of the athletes and the parents. Ask the kids: "Who saw one of your teammates do something well?" The kids are actually good at answering this question. Then ask the parents, "Parents, what did you see that you liked?" This gives the parents a nice chance to recognize specific, positive things they saw, and it ends the practice/competition on a high note.
- 11) **Don't forget, this can be hard!** Most parents are surprised by how hard it is to feel successful coaching. We go in with very high expectations, and we don't have control over the outcome! You are not alone. Find other coaches who have been doing this for a while, and share your challenges. They can serve as a wonderful resource.

PCA thanks you for being a coach! Without you, kids would not have the opportunity to play. When you're in the thick of it, it's hard to remember just how quickly this time passes, so we want to take this chance to remind you to make the most of it, as it's a time you and your child will always remember.

Rookie & C-League Practice Plan

Time

Baserunning

5 min

1) Understanding bases and where to run

*1st to 2nd to 3rd to home

2) Knowing where outs are and baserunning

*Advancing on hits and going back if fly ball is caught

*Force outs versus tag plays

3) Race around bases one at a time (mostly Rookie but can be used for C-League if needed)

Play Catch

15 min

1) Proper grip (fingers across seam/4 Seam grip)

2) Point - Step - Throw (have hand back by your ear...i.e. reach into the cookie jar)

3) Create bullseye with glove - butterfly - use two hands (alligator)

Ground Balls

15 min

1) Glove Down - Butt Down

2) Feet wide apart

3) Use two hands (alligator)

4) Bucket game - throw to first base

*Set up a bucket pyramid on 1st base and have kids take ground balls to throw to 1st base to knock them down

*Prevents fear of catching ball until kids get comfortable and creates a fun game

Fly Balls

5 min

1) Two hands

2) Tennis balls versus baseballs to develop comfort

Positioning

5 min

1) Where to play in field (positioning)

2) Get everyone lined up outside dugout and have them run to their positions at the same time

3) Get in "ready" position

Hitting

15 min

1) Lay bat down with barrel on corner of plate to find feet position

2) Spread feet (railroad tracks)

3) Hands positioning (elbow up - see your hands out corner of eye)

4) Majority of weight on back foot 60% (squish bug)

*Squish bug is getting them to turn their back foot on its ball when swinging forcing them to turn their hips thru the swing

5) Bucket game (points based on buckets hit)

*Set up buckets in the infield and if they hit buckets they get a point

*If infielders get to ball before the bucket is hit, no points awarded

***Above times can change based on your kids ability to understand each of the above drills