

2023

**Forest Lake Baseball
Association**

Coach Resource Manual



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Welcome Letter

On behalf of the Forest Lake Baseball Association Board, thank you for your willingness to coach for the 2023 baseball season. We recognize volunteer coaching is an enormous commitment that requires countless hours of practice and player development.

Coaches are critical to the success of the team; your leadership, sportsmanship and passion will positively impact the players for years to come. Our hope is that this is also a fun and rewarding experience for you.

We are fortunate to have volunteers step up to develop our young players on and off the field. Thank you for your support and participation in the positive development of our youth. We couldn't do it without coaches like you!

Best of luck this season!

Here is a link to the 2023 FLBA manual for details about the program.

https://crossbar.s3.amazonaws.com/organizations/327/uploads/a359176e-1a7c-4a36-a3d7-79386f4438d0.pdf?versionId=0ucZL913H.f99Gl1Xy6LldcdcKZHpZq_

The Forest Lake Baseball Association Board of Directors



Important Dates

March 25th – FLBA Coaches Meeting/Clinic -- Tal's training facility-- 9:00 AM

April 3rd - 7th -- **14U Scheduling Session Online 10:00 AM**

April 3rd - 7th -- **13U Scheduling Session Online 2:00 PM**

April 4th - 8th -- **12U Scheduling Session Online 10:00 AM**

April 4th - 8th -- **11U Scheduling Session Online 2:00 PM**

April 5th - 9th -- **10U Scheduling Session Online 10:00 AM**

April 5th - 9th -- **9U Scheduling Session Online 2:00 PM**

April 11, 2023 -- **9-12U Coaches Presentation Online 6:00 PM**

April 12, 2023 -- **GSBL 9u-12u League Start Date**

April 18, 2023 - **GSBL 13u-14u Coaches Presentation Online 6:00 PM**

April 19, 2023 - **GSBL 13u-14u League Start Date**

May 15, 2023 - **Gopher State Rec. League Play Begins**

May 18th – 22nd - **15U Scheduling Session**

May 25, 2023 - **GSBL 15u Coaches Presentation Online 6:30 PM**

May 26, 2023 - **GSBL 15u League Start Date**

June 17, 2023 - **FLBA Baseball Day in Forest Lake**

August 4, 2023 - Player evaluation forms due

Coaches Appreciation Dinner -- **TBD**



FLBA Coaches Corner

Communication is Key

To ensure coaches, players and parents are all on the same page as the season begins, it is highly recommended that the head coach outline his/her expectations to both players and parents at the start of the season. This can be accomplished at the parent meeting or at the start of your first team practice. Examples of items to include are your background, coaching philosophy on playing time, team rules, communication style and preferences etc.

USA Bats

As many have seen at stores there is a new bat standard, the USA Standard, that is out on the market and some leagues are switching to use this new standard.

On October 10th, 2018, the Gopher State Baseball League Advisory meeting was held and a vote was taken to maintain the current bat standards that have been in place the last several seasons.

What does this mean for our players? This means that the current bat you are using is still legal for use this season in Gopher State League play. If you wish to use the new USA Standard, this bat is allowed as well.

Will Gopher State be switching in the future? The vote was to maintain the standard going forward with no plans to switch. This could change but the current plan is to make no changes to the bat rules.

What is the difference between the bat standards? The new USA Standard is designed to be more like a wood bat, with less 'pop' and exit velocity of the baseball off the bat.

What bats will be allowed in tournaments? This will be up to the individual tournament hosts to decide on what bat they will allow. The majority of the tournaments will allow USSSA and USA bats.

If you have any questions or comments, please reach out to our Travel Director Brad Tobritzhofer at btobritzhofer@yahoo.com, 651-485-0259.



Coach Director

Tal Gravelle is our Coach Director. He is there to assist you with any player/coach development questions. Reach out to him if you also have any questions about practices or practice plans or would like him to stop by and assist with practice. talgravelle63@gmail.com

FLBA guidance on continuous batting at 14u and 15u

MYAS elected to amend their rule on continuous batting and free substitution at their advisory meeting in October 2018. The decision allowed an option for 14AAA and 14AA to use continuous batting and free substitution. All 15u teams will still operate under the high school rules.

FLBA has decided NOT to follow the guidance from MYAS and will use the high school rules for all groups at 14u and 15u. We encourage coaches to continue to use the DH and EH but focus on playing under the high school rules for batting and substitution.

Here is a link to MYAS advisory meeting minutes:

<http://www.myas.org/media/3765/2018-advisory-committee-minutes.pdf>



FLBA Principles

Fundamentals ○ Core fundamentals must be emphasized at all practices and games.

To include hitting, bunting, fielding, pitching, base running, team concepts, mental toughness and general baseball knowledge.

- Understand it takes quality/innovative practice time to master fundamentals.
- Quality of reps not quantity. Practicing/playing with incorrect fundamentals does more damage than not practicing at all. ○ Learn from mistakes in practice and games. It is OK to fail. ○ Prepare players and put them in positions to succeed. **"Luck is when preparation meets opportunity."**

Teamwork

- The players will understand that every decision made will be with the team in mind. **We** will strive to develop a culture where everyone supports and believes in each other. This will assist us in reaching the goals **we** set as a team. **We** will appreciate the honor and privilege it is to be a part of Forest Lake Baseball. **"Together Everyone Achieves More"**
- Players need to understand that one play does not decide a game. Make plays to help your team – the little things matter!

Commitment

- To be a successful coach you need to be 100% committed to all aspects of the position. This includes organizing practices – preparation for games – team events – communication to players/parents – consistent attendance and a behavioral role model.
- FL baseball should be **committed** to honesty, humility, and discipline from all its players and coaches. ○ You need quality assistant coaches who are committed as well. ○ **"Unless commitment is made – there are only promises and hopes...but no plans."**

Accountability ○ Provide discipline and structure to insure a safe but competitive environment.

- Coaches/players need to take responsibility for their actions. ○ Players/coaches should not blame others or make excuses. ○ **To whom much is given – much is required"**

Competition ○ Learn what it takes to be winners, while respectful in defeat. Success of your team should not be defined by wins and losses. ○ Players need to learn to compete every time they step on the field. ○ Respect the fact it takes great effort, attitude, and concentration to come out on top. ○ **"Competitive toughness is an acquired skill, not an inherited gift."**

Strive for Excellence ○ Motivate players to believe they can be great.

- **"Some people dream of worthy accomplishments while others stay awake and do them."**



Forest Lake Baseball – 4 C's of Coaching

COMPETENCE: Sport Specific Skills, competition, and performance

- "The ability to do something well and be efficient."
- Consistent focus on the core fundamentals of baseball in practice and games.

CONFIDENCE: internal sense of overall positive self-worth

- "A feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's own abilities or qualities." - Building confidence is a process and should be done with every player.

CONNECTION: Positive bonds with players, parents, and institution

- "A relationship/link between two or more people."
- Make a personal connection with all involved with your team...especially players.

CHARACTER: respect, integrity, moral courage

- "The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual."
- Teach Lessons that will take them beyond the baseball field.





2023 Areas of Emphasis

Code of Conduct Updates

The player, parent and coach Codes of Conduct were updated to incorporate the expanding use of social media. FLBA is committed to providing a safe environment for all of those that participate in our activities. A sample social media policy can be found below. Please review the Codes of Conduct with players and parents to ensure all are aware of the changes to the FLBA travelling baseball manual.

Social Media Policy

I will not post on any social media site with the intent to initiate, hurt, intimidate, or humiliate any player, coach, official, spectator or the FLBA program. The posting of negative, demeaning, or derogatory comments will not be tolerated. These acts shall be considered harassment and may result in the immediate removal from the club. Furthermore, if I see anything of concern from or about an official, another FLBA coach, player or FLBA member on a social media site, I will immediately contact an FLBA board member.

Cooling Off Period

The FLBA Board highly encourages all participants to follow the prescribed "cooling off period" referenced in the travelling manual as it relates to parent/player/coach disagreements and grievances. The policy recommends waiting a prescribed period of time prior to having challenging conversations where disagreements may be occurring.

This policy is intended to allow parties to step away from the conversation/circumstance and encourages those individuals to reconnect after a 48-hour waiting period.

Please review this policy prior to the start of your season and ahead of your parent meeting.

Safe Sport Act

In 2017, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 was created in reaction to the abuse found in various youth sports organizations, including USA Gymnastics. This act created a new standard of care that will affect youth-serving organizations across the country. The purpose of the law is to expand existing mandated reporting laws to all youth sport organizations that participate in international or interstate sporting events. This has the potential to affect not only national governing bodies like USA Gymnastics, USA Swimming, and other Olympic sports, but the law will also impact



camps, public and private schools, collegiate sports, country clubs, community organizations, and sport facilities.

While the law is broadly written, the Forest Lake Baseball Association has provided the following guidance on the Safe Sport Act:

- A coach should never be alone with an athlete.
- Two coaches are required to stay until all kids are picked up from practice.
- If you text with your athletes, a parent MUST be included.
- Report any suspected abuse of children to law enforcement within 24 hours - under the law, any individuals interacting with youth are considered mandatory reporters.

Here a link to summary of the Safe Sport Act:

https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/ZeXEaZoEt-k/fact-sheet-protecting-young-victims?utm_content=d609fea965452a7724008c5ff0d35c53&utm_campaign=Trusted%20Coaches%20Child%20Safety%20Training%20Now%20Live&utm_source=Robly.com&utm_medium=email

All Stars for 13/14u

In late June, Coaches for 13 and 14 (AAA and AA) will identify up to 3 players to participate in the All-Star game. The coach is responsible for the nominations and parents will cover the expense for all-star weekend. Please reach out to the coach liaison if you have questions.



Fenway Athletic Park Rules and Guidelines



Fenway Athletic Park

"Little Things List"

- Remove all bases as well as pitching rubber and insert plugs after games and practices.
- Rake and fill holes around pitching rubber and home plate.
- Throw away all trash in the proper receptacles.
- Always rake out chalk lines after games and always rake along (never across) baseball baselines.
- When dispersing puddles of water on Ag-Lime always disperse the water back into the Ag-Lime of the field. DO NOT push water into dugouts or outfield grass. This creates lips and low spots in the infield.
- When using chalk, use 2" lines and never chalk into the grass. Also, when transporting chalk, always push on rear wheels. When front wheels rotate it engages chalking spindle and will dispense chalk.
- Only use Turface MVP when the Ag-Lime is mucky and wet, don't dump into standing water. Distribute water and sparingly use MVP and rake into saturated Ag-Lime. (NEVER USE ON CLAY PITCHING MOUND)
- Never drive into the 4-plex unless allowed to do so, if you are allowed, STAY ON SIDEWALK and unload from there.
- Put rakes, brooms, plugs and anything else used, back where it came from.
- Last coach off of any field needs to lock the gates. (4-plex main gate, baseball cages and dugout locks)

*Doing all these things will make this facility a better and safer place for kids to come and play and make games more enjoyable for all.

5530 206TH STREET N FOREST LAKE, MINNESOTA 55025

651-962-2857



Fenway Fields Use Guidelines

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may lead to termination of a coach or sports right to use the fields.

Baseball and Softball Fields

- FLAAA will prep the fields including grooming and chalking for all games with at least 24-hour prior notice. With less than 24-hour notice, all efforts will be made to have the field prepped but cannot be guaranteed.
- Teams are responsible for placing bases and pitching rubber prior to the game and returning them to the equipment box after the game. All plugs should be returned to the open sleeves after bases are removed. If plugs are missing or damaged, please notify FLAAA as soon as possible so they can be replaced.
 - *Note: the sleeves for the pitching rubber are by design 2-3" below the surface so the plugs for locations not in use do not interfere with the pitcher. Please make sure the plugs are placed on top of the sleeve and buried below the surface. Over time, the sleeves may raise up and get too close to the surface where plugs cannot be buried. If you see this, notify FLAAA as soon as possible so they can be lowered.*
- After each game and practice, it is the team's responsibility to rake the infield in particular around each base, the pitching area and batter's boxes. Pitching areas and the batters boxes must be filled in, leveled and if possible packed. A rake should be available near the backstop fence of each field or by the concession building. If the rake(s) are missing, please notify FLAAA as soon as possible.
- If dispersing puddles of water on the Ag-Lime, always move the water back into the Ag-Lime of the field. DO NOT push water into the dugouts or outfield grass. This creates lips and low spots in the infield.
- When chalking lines use 2" lines and do not chalk in the grass.
- Field 5 specific – after raking and smoothing the field, the batters boxes and pitching mound need to be covered with the provided tarps and weights.
- 200' portable fences are available for use on the quad fields. It is the sports/teams responsibility to put them up and return them to storage if you want to use them. If you want to use them, please notify FLAAA 24 hours in advance to make sure you have access.
- The scoreboards on fields 1 - 4 are available for use when the concession stand is open. Remote controllers can be picked up at the concession stand and must be returned following the last game.
- In case of inclement weather where the fields are too wet to play, FLAAA will notify the appropriate sports field representative as soon as possible during the day.
- FLAAA will attempt to have the concession stand open for all games. If a game is being cancelled, please notify FLAAA as soon as possible so it can be determined if the concession stand should be open.
- Last person leaving the complex should make sure the fences are closed and locked.
- Please leave the area better than you found it. Before leaving make sure dugouts, visitor areas and the fields are free of trash and abandoned equipment, especially after games.

Multi-Purpose Fields

- FLAAA will assist sports with prepping the fields including laying out lines and painting. It is the sports responsibility to maintain the painted lines. FLAAA will assist as much as possible. Contact FLAAA at least 48 hours in advance if work needs to be done.
- Please leave the area better than you found it. Before leaving make sure bench areas, visitor areas and the fields are free of trash and abandoned equipment.

FLAAA Contact

Al Hauge

651-270-1229



Diamond Doctor, Inc.
Athletic Field Restoration



Mound and plate repair steps:

Equipment needed:

- 1.) Broom
- 2.) 1-2 gallon Garden Water sprayer
- 3.) Mar Mound Clay in 5 gallon pail (sealed)
- 4.) Mound Tamper
- 5.) Tarp and stakes

Mound and Plate Post Game Repair Steps:

- 1.) Sweep top dressing off one to side of mound to bare clay
- 2.) Spray a little water into wear areas on mound (bonding agent)
- 3.) Add a couple handfuls of new clay to the wear areas and smooth out with hand
- 4.) Use mound tamper to pack clay tight/add additional clay to create a smooth surface.
- 5.) Water the entire mound area (especially wear areas)
- 6.) Push topdressing back over the entire mound and broom in a circle pattern
- 7.) Make sure to re-tarp the mound and stake it down before you leave



Date: 3/31		
Practice Plan (sample)		
# 1	(# each practice and save to refer back)	
Time	Activity	Objectives - Notes
6:00-6:10	Body warm-up	10 minutes of entire body warm - up
		minimal static stretching -can be done after body
		is warm, baserunning can be part of warm up
6:10 - 6:20	Throwing program	coaches should lead - make sure it is done
	(one of the most important parts of practice)	properly. Keep structured. Focus on accuracy.
6:20 - 6:40	Individual Time (defense)	break into IF, OF, P,C stations. Work on core
		fundamentals specific to each position.
6:40 - 7:10	Batting practice	<u>Stations</u> : live hitting group - T work group -
		fielding group - bunting group. Groups can be 2-3
		players. Multiple groups will be fielding. Don't
		have 10 players sitting in OF doing nothing.
		provide instruction at stations
		include base running as part of live BP
7:10 - 7:30	Team time (multiple options)	Situations - T scrimmage - bunt defense (older)
		team baserunning - 1st and 3rds (older) - type of
		Competition.
	<u>Notes</u>	wrap practice up in 1.5 hours
		keep them engaged and moving
		teach and provide encouragement
		keep things simple
		come with a plan (organized)



		make practice fun
		Get quality help from assistants and parents
		practice base running
		fundamentals should be core of every practice
	written by Tal Gravelle	



Hitting specific practice plan

Keys things to address during this practice:

- HAVE A PLAN AT THE PLATE
- Approach will change as the at bat goes on
- The importance of doing the small things correctly
- DO YOUR JOB

Warm-up: (Do not allow kids to skip part of the warmup)

- Jog to center field fence and back (or around the gym 1-2 times depending on the size of the gym)
- High Knees, Butt Kicks, Karaoke, Pick ups, Turn and sprint
- Band work if pitching will be done that day (depending on the age)
- Start catch at 15 feet with short toss and move back at a **REASONABLE** pace

Conversation about hitting: **Importance of Having a plan**

- Where is everyone's perfect pitch to hit?
- The importance of how the strike zone will change throughout the at bat as the count changes.
- DO YOUR JOB (can be as simple as laying down a bunt)

Perfect Bunt Drill:

- Keeping it random, someone closes their eyes and separates the players into two teams based off of their gloves.
- Place two bats 6 feet outside of each foul line, the goal is to have every bunt in between the foul line and the bat.
- Each team will go through 3 times with each player laying down 1 bunt to each side of the field.
- The winning team picks a small punishment for the losing team.
- Bunting too many kids will become boring so keep this upbeat and fun!!!!

Hitting:

- Divide into 2 groups (Can make more groups if there are more coaches o 1st group: Cage (or on field if outside) o 2nd group: fielding (outfield and infield drills) **End the day with a game of elimination followed by 21 outs!**

Elimination:

- Everyone lines up at SS and the last one to make an error wins!

21 Outs:

- 21 outs are made consecutively before practice is complete



Infield Focused Lesson Plan

Warm-up: (Do not allow kids to skip part of the warmup)

- Jog to center field fence and back
- High Knees, Butt Kicks, Karaoke, Pick ups, Turn and sprint
- Band work if pitching will be done that day (depending on the age)
- Start catch at 15 feet with short toss and move back at a **REASONABLE** pace.

Key Things to address during this phase of practice:

- *GOOD CATCH WILL IMPROVE EVERYONE'S GAME*
- Keep track of how many bad throws were made during the whole period of catch.

How many balls did they miss during the catch?

Everyone will line up at SS and however many bad throws were made during catch that is how many plays will be made before moving on to I/O.

Infield/Outfield: Always start in LF and move over to RF (Outfield will be separate when we are inside)

Outfield

- Two throws to 2nd, 3rd, and Home
- 2nd coach will be hitting pop fly's after outfield has been completed
- Starting at 3B everyone will throw one ball to Homeplate.

Infield

- Starting the process over everyone will make 2 throws to 1st and 1st will make 2 throws to 3rd.
- 2 times through running double plays
- Home and 1st. (Catcher is rolling the ball out for a bunt)
- Pop Fly to the catcher

Everyone will line up at the line as they come off giving each other high fives.

(Repeat this process again, every other practice the second round has kids go to a position they normally do not play).

Double Fungo Drill:

- Each coach will be responsible for hitting ground balls from a different position.
- 1st coach will be hitting ground balls to 3rd and the other will be hitting to SS. After 3 minutes flip and a coach will be hitting to 1st and the other hitting to 2nd.

The ground balls that are being hit to 1st and 3rd are being thrown across the other base while the 2nd baseman and SS are working on turning double plays without a throw.

Coaching Tips for this practice plan:

1% improvement is all that needs to be done. Do not try to fix everything within 1 practice or you may leave with nothing accomplished.



Pitching and Throwing

Throwing Program (8-10 reps of each)

BB Flips: middle of baseball – rotation – (6 steps)

ISO: feet stay on ground – square shoulders – upper body rotation – long arm – (12 steps)

Short arm: short transfer – ball behind ear – relaxed arm – athletic position (12 steps)

Balance: feet shoulder width apart – hands at chest – leg lift for 3 counts – (14 steps)

Catch and Load: short arm – footwork – quick hands – (14 steps)

Regular Throws: (18 steps)

Crow hops: Long arm – footwork - (22 steps)

Long toss: Throw on a line – stall tall – gain momentum – increase arm speed (28+ steps)

- Improving accuracy is #1 priority
- Practice different grips
- Throw at target

Pitching Mechanics

Motion: leg lift – power angle – drive – balance – stride foot (long) - delay hand separation

Delivery: hand on top of ball – arm angle – stay tall - follow through - finish

Wind up/Stretch – young pitchers should master stretch

Grips: middle of baseball (control) – edges of baseball (movement)

SIMPLE MOVEMENTS that are repeatable

Pitching Practice

Wall drill: helps power angle and drive towards home

Wall Drill with throwing motion (towel): power angle – drive – follow through

Stride drill (Towel): stride foot stays planted – work on follow through – 30/40 feet

Toe tap (towel): smooth delivery – quiet head – stay tall – 40/50 feet - TEMPO

Live bullpen: start at 70%, build to 90% - accuracy – mechanics – repetition of pitches

Band drills: strengthen shoulder and elbow – improves recovery and velocity

Sprints/air squats: explosive movements – improve endurance and strength.

Notes:

- #1 priority for successful pitchers is accuracy.
- Practice the mental approach. Positive thoughts – next pitch – no emotion. Create an environment in practice that simulates games (contests, competition, charting).
- Experiment with grips
- Use hitters in bullpens. Helps hitters to track the ball.
- Always throw at a target.
- Focus on what they can control.
- Quality reps over quantity.



PFP's (Pitchers Fielding Practice)

Field bunts/ground balls: simulate throwing motion and field ball – throws to 1B - 2B – 3B **Covering 1B:** simulate throw, hit grounder to 1B **Picks to 1B:** Hold move and pick move – short arm. **Picks to 2B:** Leg lift and reverse pivot.

Charting

of pitches: keep track of every pitch thrown

Strikes/Balls: Keep track of % of strikes thrown (60% and up is good)

K's to walks: come up with strikeout to walk ratio (3 to 1 + is very good)

First Pitch strikes: # of 1st pitch strikes divided by batters faced. (60% + is good)

Quality Inning (QI): 1,2,3 inning or 13 pitches or less. (50% + is good)

Basics of Pitching for Youth

Grip: The grip for most youth players becomes difficult at the younger ages as their hand size and grip strength is not yet fully developed. Most players will tend to grip the ball with all four fingers and or three fingers. We as coaches should use this to our advantage, because they are throwing a natural change up at this point. What we need to work on is throwing a basic four-seam fastball. This grip will give them the most velocity along with accuracy. Accuracy will outweigh velocity and the younger age levels more than anything. Further, a "circle change" is also a small variation to their natural grip at this age that will allow them to change speeds without altering their arm speed. Below are the grips discussed above:



4 Seam



Circle Change

Arm Angle: The age-old question is arm angle and proper mechanics when it comes to this. The biggest thing to remember is that every player's body is made up differently and arm angles in throwing will depend on each individual's body. What we want to make sure of is:



- 1.) Getting on top/behind of the baseball- this is making sure that the fingers are behind and on top of the baseball as the throwing motion is completed. This will increase velocity and accuracy. An easy way to see if this is being accomplished is to watch the rotation of the baseball as the youth throws. The rotation should be end over end and not a rotation that has an angle on it (or looks like a curve ball).
- 2.) The arm angle itself will vary with every player depending on their body structure. The biggest thing is that we do not want them throwing side arm or so far over the top that they damage their rotator cuff. You also want to see their elbow level or slightly above their shoulder as the throwing.

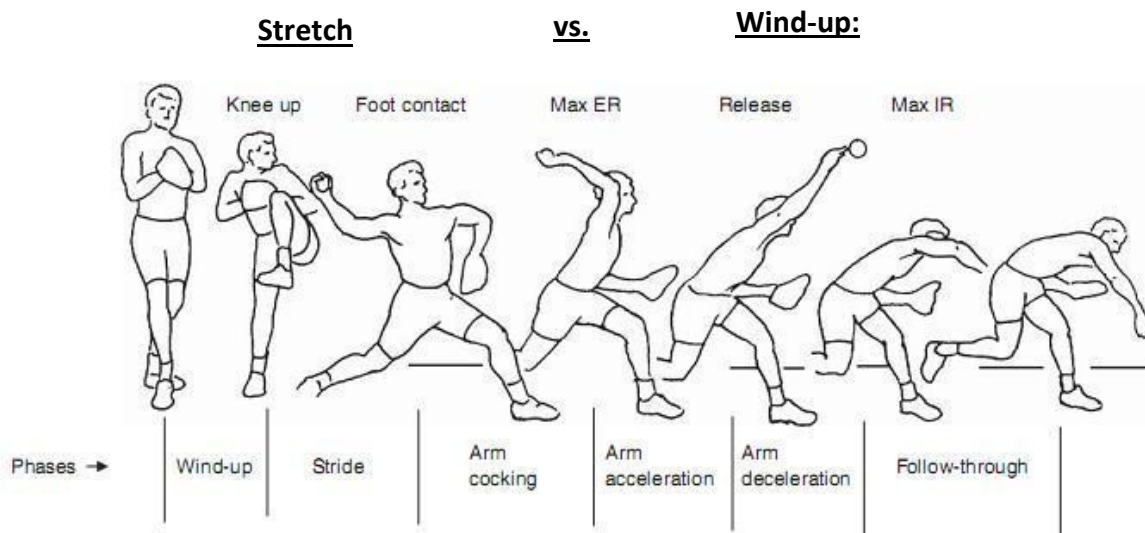


Fig. 1. Pitching phases and key events (adapted from Fleisig et al.,^[12] with permission). ER=external rotation; IR=internal rotation; max=maximum.



Unless a youth has mastered pitching from the stretch, I do not allow them to pitch from the wind-up. The above depictions show the pitching motion in process. The biggest thing with youth is to make sure that they obtain a good leg kick. I personally like to see the elbow tucked behind the leg because it is easier to get a higher leg kick to generate more power. This should be noted is not a must as every player's body is different. If they have a hard time getting their leg high, try this, if not, follow the diagram depicted above. The goal after pitching is that the only part of your body that is tired or possibly sore should be your lower body. The more power youth generate from their lower body, causes less stress on their arms and makes a change-up that much more effective. In terms of lining up with the target, you can see the above photo in which the pitcher's shoulders are lined up with the plate. This is also crucial with the planting foot or lead foot. Most youth will both throw outside or inside and have difficulties being consistent. If this is the case, watch their planting foot, it will show you why. Draw a line on the mound with your foot that lines directly with the plate and tell your pitcher to make sure their planting foot lands on that line. You will notice accuracy improves greatly. As a mental and physical note, get your player to come in their set position, stop and take a deep breath. This will ensure they avoid rushing and come to the same set position each time. Lastly, the follow-through is very important to ensure that all the power generated by the lower body is able to be transferred through the pitching motion. The "push off" foot should end up landing just in front of the planting foot. This also puts the pitcher in a good fielding position as well.

Arm care: Let's talk about arm care since these kids play so much baseball in a short period of time and deal with the colder environment they play in, especially early in the season. First and foremost, make sure their body is warmed up before they throw and or stretch. These youngsters do not need as much time to warm up their arms as adults, so we need to make sure we spend the time to warm-up the bodies and then stretch before throwing. Begin with Arm circles forward and back to begin to get the blood circulating in the



shoulders. Then we stretch the elbow and shoulder together. CAUTION: We ask that you supervise this until the kids get used to it and do not overstretch their partner. Below is an example of the elbow/shoulder stretch with the hand facing upwards; after this is completed, complete the same stretch with the hand facing downwards. While supporting the elbow and shoulder, pull the player's arm back while supporting elbow and shoulder. When the player indicates that "they feel it", stop let the arm back slowly and repeat.

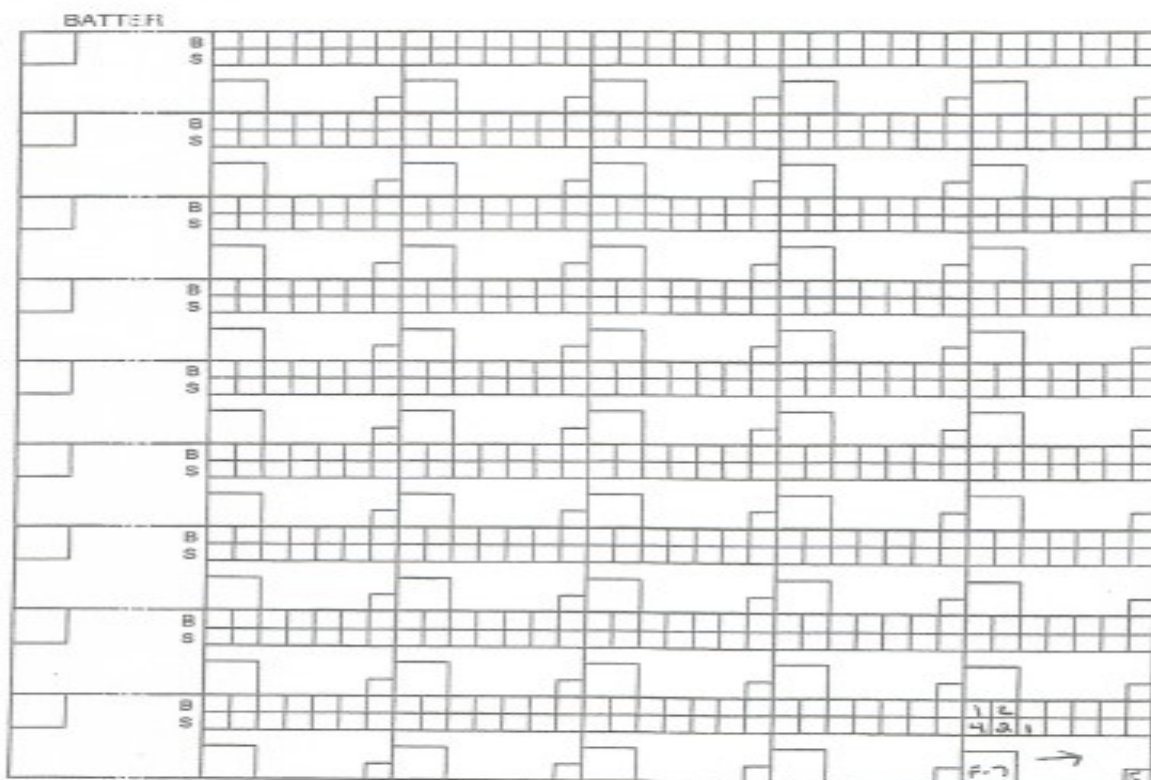


Finally, a player's arm needs rest. If possible, on a day off, do not let them throw. The muscles in the arm break down each time they throw. The body needs to recover so if you have a day off in your schedule, and you need to practice, place buckets in the infield and outfield and have the players put the balls in the bucket instead of throwing. Sprints, and running during these times will help the body recover as a whole and not as just the arm in itself.



Pitching Chart

PITCHING CHART



F - FOUL BALL

S - SWING

1 - FAST BALL

* Circle 1st Pitch Strikes

2 - CURVE

4 - CHANGE

3 - SLIDER

5 - SCREW BALL

6 - KNUCKLE BALL

7 - FORK BALL

* Keep running Pitch Count total

----- GROUND BALL

~ FLY BALL

→ LINE DRIVE

Sample



Offensive Strategy

Approach

Positive mental approach. Think positive mental thoughts "I am going to hit this pitch if it's in there".

Negative thinking creates fear and failure.

Create a routine – you are what you repeatedly do.

- Look to hit Fastball adjust to off speed. Do not guess.
- Think about driving the ball up the middle. Hit off speed to opposite field.
- Make sure you have plate coverage. You should be able to easily tap the outside corner of the plate.

Situational hitting

No one on Base

- Primary focus is to get on base. Walk, hit or HBP
- Can be more selective – work the count. Take a pitch if the count is 2-0 or 3-1.

Runner on 1B

0 outs – Be prepared to Sac bunt or hit and run. Look for a pitch to drive to right side (through hole) early in the count. 1 out – possible hit and run. Look for pitch to hit to right side. Somewhat selective – walk or HBP moves runner into scoring position.

2 Out – look for a pitch you can drive for extra base hit. Be prepared to take pitch if a runner is stealing.

Runner on 2B or 1B and 2B

0 outs – Be prepared to sac bunt or hit and run. Try to hit the ball to right side with less than 2 strikes.

1 out – look for a good pitch early to drive in run. Possible hit and run (1st & 2nd base) to avoid double play.

2 out – look for good pitcher early to drive in run (aggressive) Put in play with 2 strikes.

Runner on 3B

0 out – Be prepared for suicide. IF back – look to hit ball on ground up middle. IF in – look to get a pitch you can hit in air.

1 out – same as above

2 out – look for a good pitch early to drive in run (aggressive). Put in play with 2 strikes.

Count Hitting

0-0: Look for fastball – let curve go by. Swing if it's in your favorite spot.

0-1: still look fastball but adjust to off speed – swing at either if it's in the middle parts of the plate.



0-2: move an inch or two closer to plate. Swing at anything close and try and put in play. Choke up slightly if needed. 1-0: look fastball – swing at your favorite pitch/spot. If 1st pitch was off speed – 95% chance of him throwing a FB on 2nd pitch.

1-1: same as 0-1

1-2: same as 0-2

2-0: Take a strike when no one is on or we are behind late in game and need base runners. Swing if it is your favorite pitch/spot. Look fastball – let off speed go by.

2-1: Look fastball – let off speed go by. Swing if FB is in middle of plate. 2-2: 2 strike hitting – anything close 3-0: auto take unless told otherwise.

3-1: same as 2-0

3-2: Swing at pitch if you think it's a strike – let go if you think it's a ball.



Forest Lake Base Running

Mission

- Create anxiety on the bases. Momentum can be gained for our team through base running. It takes knowledge and effort.
- We can let our opponent be offensive or we can make them defensive through base running. 3 or 4 base running plays can be the difference between a win and loss.

Rules

- Always know where the ball is.
- Always know the # of outs.
- Know what runner matters the most.
- Only tag up on balls you can advance on – otherwise hang out.

Home to 1B

- Straight to bag on ground balls hitting front of bag. Look to right after crossing bag looking for overthrow.
- Round immediately on anything to OF. Hit inside of bag when rounding. Follow baseball, looking for opportunities to advance.

1B

- Take primary lead: (0 – right/left then set. 1 - Right/left then one shuffle 2 – right left the two shuffles. 3 – right/left then three shuffles.
- When leading – 60% weight on right foot...always looking like you are going to steal.
- Secondary lead: take when pitchers front foot lands. Length is based on catcher's arm. Weight on right leg when ball hits catcher's glove. Follow ball flight anticipating ball in dirt. Always watch the catcher when returning to base. 2B
- Length of primary lead should be based on situation. Straight line lead with 0 outs. Deep lead with 2 outs.
- Take secondary lead when pitcher comes set. Be disruptive and create the illusion you are running.
- Advance on ground balls at you or to your left.
- Only tag up on balls you know you can advance and are sure will be caught. Otherwise "hang out. A line drive is the only ball you need to hustle back on.
- Two outs two strikes: start running on hitter's swing.

3B

- Stay barely in foul territory to keep straight line to home. Come back in fair territory.
- Follow ball out of hand to anticipate ball in dirt. Take secondary when front foot lands.
- Always keep an eye on the catcher.
- With less than two outs – anticipate ground ball and react to fly ball.



Forest Lake Baseball Infield Fundamentals and Drills

Core Fundamentals:

- Pre-pitch:
- Feet: Creep and hop. Two small steps and a quick hop as the pitch approaches the plate. Weight on balls of feet, ready to move in any direction.
- Hands: "Thumbs up", glove out front
- Body: Middle infielders can be more upright; corners are lower to the ground.
- Infielders must always know situations before the ball is hit to them: number of outs, hitter's tendencies, positioning (in/back), cut off responsibilities, bunt defense, first and third defense. Process this before every pitch.
Awareness leads to opportunity for success.

Footwork:

- Wide base: This will force hands to be out front and push your backside down when fielding a ball. It will also allow for better movement on a bad hop.
- Left foot should be slightly ahead of your right foot (righthanded fielder) when fielding the ball.
- On the throw, "Right foot to left foot, left foot to target" Always gaining momentum and ground towards our throw. Limit steps to get rid of the ball quickly. DO NOT CROSS YOUR FEET!

After the throw, we follow two steps in the direction of our throw whenever possible.

Hands:

- Hands must be in front of your body. Allows you to see the ball into the glove, react to a bad hop, and keeps you in an athletic position to field. Keep your chest over the baseball.
- As you field the ball, funnel your hands into your midsection.
- Breaking Hands should occur in the middle of your body and in a relatively straight line. Short arm, elbow up, and hand on top of the ball.
- Whenever possible, field the ball with two hands. Throwing hand over the top of the glove and "close down" on the baseball as you field the ball.

Head:

- Eyes out front. Left side dominant (will happen naturally if you have proper footwork i.e., left foot slightly ahead of the right).
- Keep it still when moving to avoid the ball appearing to bounce.
- Head down and chin tucked to chest as you watch the ball into your glove.



- Eyes to target on breaking of hands.

DRILLS/Skills to practice:

****Rolling groundballs is a great way to ensure proper fundamentals. Training your muscles to things correctly will allow for transfer of skills to fielding balls off the bat****

1. Dailies: No glove, glove, knees, standing (done in partners; coaches watch, and correct technique as needed) We do about 10 reps per set every day. Typically, we don't stand until the last drill.
 - a. Groundball at you no glove
 - b. Groundball at you with glove
 - c. Backhand (open)
 - d. Backhand (crossover)
 - e. Shorthops (come through)
 - f. Shorthops (funnel hands)
 - g. Standing grounders (skill of your choice from above)
2. Kansas City Drill-- Coach rolled (or fungoes)
 - a. Groundballs at you
 - b. Groundballs to your left
 - c. Groundballs to your right (practice both backhand plays)
 - d. Set up: Players at positions. One coach near third baseline working with 1b and 2b, one coach near the first baseline working with 3rd and SS.
3. Wrong Foot Plays: Proper footwork for slow rollers
4. First Basemen picks: Forehand and Backhand
5. DP feeds and pivots
 - Flips (Forehands first. Backhands at advanced age) Can be done in a "Four corners" situation or as positional work)
 - Drop Steps/Jump Switch (at younger age, kneel and throw is ok)
 - In the hole
 - Footwork around the bag
6. Pop Up priorities
7. Run Downs
8. Tags: Receive the ball at the base and drop the glove down or sweep tag on a bang-bang play.



9. Always work on situations
10. Use a stopwatch, create competition.
11. 21 outs (or modify for your level) Must record 21 outs in a row without an error.
12. Fielding bunts
13. Work on sell out/unorthodox plays: SS to 3B on ball in hole, 3-2-3 DP's, 1-6-3 DP's, behind the bag DP's with glove flips, etc. If you practice these, you will react better if you have to make these plays (and kids like practicing them) I call this "SportsCenter" practice, and we do this maybe once a week.
14. Three Cone drill: Field, footwork, throw, and follow



Forest Lake Baseball Outfield Fundamentals

I. Pre-Pitch

- A. Stance: Athletic position. Creep in to get moving on the pitch.
- B. Hands in front
- C. Know the situation on every pitch. Understand hitter and pitcher tendencies (i.e., pull hitter, power hitter, slap hitter, off speed, fastball, etc). Be aware of balls hit that will tail toward the foul lines. Anticipate action ahead of time so you can react at contact without hesitation.

II. Fielding

A. Ground Balls:

- 1. Attack ball under control.
- 2. Use short choppy steps as you approach the ball.
- 3. No throw required: Field like an infielder OR drop to knee to make sure ball doesn't get by you.
- 4. Throw required: Field ball with glove foot forward and glove outside and in front of foot.
- 5. Crow hop and throw through the cutoff man

B. Fly Balls

- 1. Read the Ball off the bat.
- 2. Drop Step to the ball if you have to retreat. Open your hips and sprint to the ball. Beat the ball to the spot!
- 3. Catch the ball out front with two hands high and above your eye level.
- 4. Glove foot should be in front whenever possible.
- 5. Get behind the ball and move forward through the ball toward your target.

C. Line Drives

- 1. Freeze for a count and read the ball: in, back, right at me.
- 2. Field the ball at eye level and in front if possible.

D. Throwing mechanics

- 1. Square your body up to the target.
- 2. Eyes up, head still, and lock onto your target
- 3. Crow hop to gather your momentum and gain ground to the target



4. Hand stays on top of the ball with a four-seam grip.
5. Glove reaches out to the target.
6. Throw downhill; elbow up and over the top. Long arm action.

E. Positioning and Communication

1. Develop a communication system with your outfielders. Use visual signals to change depth and positioning.
2. Understand no doubles defense and position OF depth accordingly.
3. OF should call "Ball, Ball, Ball"
4. OF have priority over all infielders

If you want more specific information regarding drills/skills or would like me to visit a practice (time permitting), please contact me at khenry@flaschools.org. Thanks



Hitting

Hitting Fundamentals

Grip: Lose in fingers - like golf stance and bring up. Create "whip"

Stance: feet shoulder width apart – weight balanced on inner halves of feet – stay tall

Load: small – against back leg – start as pitcher comes forward. Stride foot moves at same time. Load with hands not shoulders. No pause at back of load

Stride: inner half of foot – plant heel – 45% angle. 50/50 balance after stride.

Swing: Start moving forward when the ball comes out of the pitcher's hand. Barrel in tunnel (hands inside of ball), get on plane with ball (deliver barrel) – rear elbow stays tight to body – strongest position of contact when rear elbow reaches body line. Backside at contact is non-weight bearing (drive forward). Stay tall.

Contact Points: understand it is different for all pitches (middle, inside, outside). The head stays centered over the body and down through contact. Target is inside of baseball.

Keys to being successful: TIMING – TRACKING – BALANCE – SIMPLE MOVEMENTS. All of these need to be practiced.

"T" Drills

Plate: Have player set feet and put T at appropriate contact point

Middle: All reps up the middle **Outside:** All reps the opposite field

Inside: All reps pull

Iso/high tee: feet stay on ground (upper body). Keeps hitter tall

Balance: swing then lift back leg

Separation: Lift front leg – load as leg moves forward

Heavy ball: soccer balls or other large ball

Load: 2 loads then swing

Cone drill: keeps head down through contact

Hands drill: throw hands to ball...feet stay planted. Can do with chair.

- 5-6 reps of a drill then rest
- Hit to middle as much as possible

Pole Drills

- Use PVC pipe.
- Load drill, one hand drills
- Practice 3 strikes zone (waist – thigh – knee)
- Can do with air swings – off of the Tee – front toss (smush balls)



Batting Practice

Tracking: let hitters track a few balls without swinging. React to moving object.

Front toss: close and accurate – can work on fundamentals and commanding strike zone. Move plate to change timing. Direction

Machine: If available. A lot of quality reps. You can vary speeds/pitches and move the plate to change timing

Live: Command of strike zone, situations, timing, direction

Bunting: Should always be incorporated in batting practice.

Bunting Fundamentals: Pivot – square shoulders – proper grip – bat at top of strike zone – catch ball – steering.



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Forest Lake Hitting - QAB Summary

Forest Lake Hitting - QAB Summary									
Name	Hits	Walk - HBP	Move runner - no outs	hard hit ball	8+ pitch AB	Score runner from 3rd LT 2-outs	Total At Bats	Total QAB's	QAB %
Player A	4			2		2	15	8	53%
Player B	26	6	2	10		2	86	46	53%
Player C	21	3	2	2		1	56	29	52%
Player D	18	11	2	11		1	84	43	51%
Player A	14	4		3		1	44	22	50%
Player B	9	15	1	4		2	62	31	50%
Player C	10	7	2	3			46	22	48%
Player D	6	3	1	5		1	36	16	44%
Player A	25	6		4			79	35	44%
Player B	7	11					41	18	44%
Player C	7	6		5		1	44	19	43%
Player D		1		1			5	2	40%
Player A	11	5			1		43	17	40%
Player B	6	1	2	1			26	10	38%
Player C	3	2		1			16	6	38%
Player D	5	5	1	2			37	13	35%
Total	172	86	13	54	1	11	721	337	47%

