



INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

THE BASICS OF FIELDING, CATCHING AND THROWING

PART I

The following are the notes distributed at our annual coaches' clinic held by former Board member, John Ottavino. It is a summary of what he instructs on a DVD we make available to all coaches and parents. We strongly recommend coaches, assistant coaches and parents to review these notes and the DVD. It is in two parts: Part I is about the basics; Part II is about more advanced skills, including pitching, advanced hitting, base running (and stealing strategies), and managing.

Peewee & Lion Divisions

The Drills Games and Skills Handouts are located on the Pee Wee or Lions' home pages.

You are not coaching baseball. You are coaching a game that is like baseball and is designed to teach the fundamentals of baseball to very young players.

Every player wants to do well. Most players want to please their coach, their parents and to think well of themselves. Sometimes these three parties have different ideas about what is pleasing. In order to please, they must know clearly what is expected of them and have a clear idea about how to go about giving it. They must understand what your team's priorities are.

Therefore you must know what your priorities are as a person who is coaching very young ball players. The clearer you are in your own head about what you want and how a player can give it to you, the more likely it is that your players will give it to you.

Baseball is a game that is won by consistency. While the spectacular play is cheered the loudest, the most consistent ball player is the one that helps the team the most. Consistency is the product of sound fundamentals, practiced repeatedly.

To get consistency you must be consistent, set goals, develop interesting ways to make those goals into habits and KISS (KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID).

I believe my job is to make ballplayers, to get the most out of any player I coach & to give him or her the skills needed so that they can play for as long as they choose. Anyone can play until they reach the 90' field.

Baseball is a game of odds. I therefore coach them to take intelligent risks – that is, risks that tilt the odds of success in their favor. Finally, because mistakes are going to be made, I beg them to make the mistakes that come of doing too much rather than the mistakes that come from doing too little.

Rules of the game: Read the rules. Think about the rules, know the rules - & bring them with you. No one gets cheated. If you learned the rules by watching and playing, you don't know them.

How to Teach Fielding: Step One - Tour the Field - "Run To" Drill (Warm-up)

Fly balls:

Catch with your chest - Tennis ball drill

Run to the ball with your glove down - Get to the spot

Never (almost) break in

Pass patterns.

It's Up

Ground balls:

Catch with your belly button.

Beat it with your knee - Get to the spot - then charge. Fast feet, slow hands. Fast fast fast slow.

Jaws of death (alligator's mouth) - pop & pull drill

Field near your throwing foot & move throwing foot first

Pick up stopped ball with two hands - no bare hand plays

Line drives or thrown balls:

Catch with your chest

Welcome the ball - (don't back off the ball) - Receive with two hands out front

Alligator's mouth - Not as fast as you can, but as soon as you can.

Expect a bad throw. Move your feet to the ball. Make the thrower look good.

Fingers up above the belly button, fingers down below the belly button - Elbows always close to the body

Turn to your glove side

Tagging

Tag low (with back of glove and two hands)

Touch and turn

Throwing:

What is the target? Throw to the chest.

Point to the target & Horsy Horsy Throw will make the thrower stay closed to the target - elbow up?

No rainbows. Two hops is faster than a lollipop

Throw two bases ahead of the lead runner

TEACH MOM HOW TO THROW - beanbags and rolled up socks

Hitting:

Bat weight - Light is good. Lighter is better - Choke up to keep barrel tracking, - How to test for weight

Grip: Hold bat in fingers

Hold bat loosely

The hips lead the arms, the arms lead the bat - Elephant's head - a loose relaxed effortless thing.

Stance

Climb on the bike - balance

Hands in the box - close to the back ribs or farther back. Swing from the ear.

Bat up or flat, but not around the head. WHY? Because of the leveraged weigh of bats.

See the ball

Which way are the red strings spinning?

Chin goes from shoulder to shoulder - keep the head still and straight

Marionette

Rock the Pocket, Squish the bug

Front knee in

Step not necessary, but if there is one, keep it small. Step on ice (eggs)?

Step toward second baseman (righties) - Crushing Down to keep lead shoulder in.

Throw the knob of the bat at the ball

Finish the swing high. Dirty uniform shoulder

Strike one does not mean you stink (that's why they give you three).

Look for one you like (that's why they give you ten).

Are you a righty or a lefty or both?

GET YOUR EYES CHECKED

No one bats a thousand - hey, its eight against one. A game of statistics, (consistency). There is no such thing as extra effort when batting. There are only sound fundamentals.

Don't over manage tight situations. Only coach the fundamentals.

Base Running Run on the blink

First and home are different than second and third

Slide but only safely - never head first. Hands up, feet like the number 4. Move the base, avoid the knee and the spine, face away from the throw

Watch the cleats on the grass - do you need cleats?

Fungo ball

Managing Players

I) Envision Utopia - the create it

II) The offensive line-up

a) Who's up first

b) The mercy rule - using your outs wisely

III) The defensive line-up

Infield and Outfield - everyone everywhere - Positioning your players

IV) Know what you are going to do at practice- Kiss principle

Teach your players the priorities- Stop the bleeding

Fantasy day

Managing Parents

Put 'em to work.

Encourage them - force them - to play with their children during the week

Encourage them to make friends, play nice, leave their children alone, and keep their mouths closed

Root for both teams - celebrate excellence, effort or just plain luck

Give the rules to your parents

Running a practice:

Warm up - leave the day behind - but kids are flexible so don't over do this part.

Many hands make light work. - multiple stations - change often

Managing a team is creating and managing your resources.

RESOURCES:

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