



## T-Ball & Coach Pitch Coaching Tips & Drills

1. Coaching Tips
  - a. T-Ball and Coach Pitch should be a fun experience!
    - i. Use of games really helps kids stay focused and retain information.
  - b. Keep expectations realistic and have patience.
  - c. Come to each practice/scrimmage with a plan. Having a plan should make things smoother.
    - i. Do your best to minimize standing around time. Keep the kids busy and engaged.
  - d. Demonstrate each drill. Show the participants what you mean. Over explain.
  - e. Ask for help when you need it. Parents are normally willing to get involved with practices when asked.
  - f. Promote good sportsmanship. Encourage each other as teammates and do not keep score of games. The kids are here to learn the basics of the game rather than winning or losing.
2. Learning the Positions
  - a. Walk each player to their position
    - i. One practice covers all infield positions, one practice covers outfield positions
  - b. Discuss important points of each position
    - i. Communicate the name of each base and position
    - ii. Draw in the infield where the position stands in relation to the base and what area the position covers when ball is in play.
  - c. Factors to teach as the season progresses:
    - i. How to react when ball is hit to their position (start with first base)
    - ii. What to do if ball is not hit to them
    - iii. Importance of paying attention to batters & runners
    - iv. Returning to position after each play
    - v. Discuss backing up positions when ball is in play
    - vi. Where to go when runners are running and when to hold the ball
3. Basic Concept of baseball
  - a. Team on Defense – Team in the field
    - i. Objective is to stop the batting team from scoring runs.
    - ii. Various ways to get outs
  - b. Team on Offense – Team batting
    - i. Objective is to hit the ball so the defense can't get it
    - ii. Get to the bases before the defense gets you out
    - iii. Importance to running fast to the bases, and staying on the base
4. Fielding Technique
  - a. Proper stance:
    - i. Feet shoulder width apart knees bent - weight should be forward on the balls of feet
    - ii. Their head is up facing the ball. Keep eyes on the ball until ball is in the glove.
  - b. Proper glove/hand position:
    - i. Glove hand should just be touching the dirt at a 45-degree angle.
    - ii. Throwing hand should be above the glove with the palm facing the ball.
    - iii. Once the ball reaches the glove the top hand should cover the ball inside the glove.

## 5. Catching Technique

### a. Proper Catching Position

- i. Players start by facing the target.
- ii. The foot of the glove hand should be closer to the target with the foot of the throwing hand back in the stance.
- iii. The glove hand should be eye level and out in front of the body.
- iv. Fingers up and palm facing the target
- v. Elbow should be bent slightly & arm should be in position to make a full circle in front of the body
- vi. Other hand should also be up and cover the glove to close the glove once caught
  1. Earlier stages of Tee Ball the player will want to catch the ball with the palm up and fingers down. This is okay to allow, but encourage the proper form as they develop.
  2. The goal is to practice with the palm facing the target
- vii. Balls thrown above the belly should be caught with fingers up, below the belly fingers down.

## 6. Throwing Technique

### a. Proper Throwing Motion

- i. Players start by facing the target.
- ii. The foot of the glove hand should be closer to the target with the foot of the throwing hand back in the stance.
- iii. Reach back with the throwing hand with elbow bent hand up and wrist straight.
- iv. Glove hand should be in front of the body & move forward around the body as ball is thrown.
- v. Once in position to throw, the glove hand foot should take a step toward the target and the back foot should pivot.
- vi. Release the ball at the point the arm reaches extended point.
- vii. After release the body should bend forward, with the throwing arm following through to the outside of the glove hand knee. The back foot should step forward as the throw is complete leaving players square to the target.
- viii. It is important that the player sees the target, gets into proper throwing position, makes the throw toward the target while keeping eyes on target, then continues with follow through.

## 7. Batting Technique

### a. Basics Proper Stance

- i. Feet - shoulder width apart
- ii. Square the feet to home plate – you can draw a line in the dirt to show the players where to stand
- iii. Bend the knees slightly
- iv. Grip the bat with the fingers, not tightly with the palm of hand. A relaxed grip is preferred
- v. Square the shoulders to the feet, chin should be closer to the front shoulder.
- vi. Elbows should be slightly bent with the hands just outside the back armpit.

### b. Proper Swing Motion

- i. Load and transfer - Begin the swing with a little to no step toward the pitcher.
  1. Do not pick the foot up high. It's a very subtle lift and move forward.
- ii. The stance should remain closed – do not step out towards third.
- iii. Throw hands toward the ball, bringing bat through the hitting zone to hit the ball.
- iv. Squash the bug. As the hands come through, turn hips at the same time. The player should turn on the ball of back foot. Squashing the bug
- v. Eyes should remain on the ball through impact.
- vi. Proper stance and swing should be balanced.

### c. Hitting From the “T”

- i. Tee should be belt high
- ii. Kids should not hit up on the ball, rather aim for the middle.
- iii. Hit through the ball – driving the ball toward the pitcher's feet

## 8. Infield Drills

### a. Drills Basic Grounder Drills:

- i. Form one line just behind shortstop position
- ii. Have one player at a time step up into the SS position.
- iii. Roll grounders to the player and have them field ball and throw back to you.
- iv. Emphasize the importance of proper stance, keeping glove on the ground, and making a quick but accurate throw back.

### b. Side to Side Grounder Drills

- i. Same as Basic but roll balls left and right of the player to make them move to get in front of ball.
- ii. Emphasize the importance of moving to get in front of the ball instead of reaching with the glove.
- iii. For T-Ball, keep movement minimal to provide time to get body in front of ball.
- iv. Coach pitch, ball should be thrown and/or hit at a faster pace like a game speed.

### c. Grounder Drills/Plays at First

- i. Form one line just behind 2nd base
- ii. Have one player at a time move into 2nd base position and have a coach/parent stand on 1st base.
- iii. Roll the grounder to 2nd base.
- iv. The player should field the ball and make throw toward 1st base.

### d. Plays at Second - Grounder Drills

- i. Form one line just behind shortstop position
- ii. Have one player at a time step up into the SS position.
- iii. Have another player in the 2nd base position.
- iv. Roll grounder to the player at SS and have them field ball and make throw to 2nd base.
- v. Make sure the player at 2nd base moves to the base to make catch.

### e. Hands Drills

- i. Put the glove down and have the kids field the ball with their bare hands
- ii. Roll the ball then have them focus on using their hands to get the ball
- iii. Using a softer ball or tennis ball usually works great
- iv. To engage more kids, have the team form up in two small circles and see who can keep the ball in the circle the longest.

### f. Alligator Drill

- i. Roll grounders to the kids and have them make an alligator out of the arms.
- ii. Bottom arm with glove is the jaw and the top arm without glove is the head.
- iii. When the ball rolls in have them act like the alligator is biting or eating the ball.
- iv. Both arms come together.

### g. Triangle Drill

- i. 2-4 players form a quarter circle with each player standing with feet just outside shoulder width.
- ii. In the dirt draw a triangle using their feet as the base.
- iii. Have them put their hands together and extend out in front of them touching the dirt. This will create the triangle.
- iv. You roll a ball to each player and have them field the ball & toss back to you. Keeping the triangle intact (feet in place w/hands in front)
- v. Attempt to roll the ball quickly and request a quick return.
- vi. Continue around the group for 5 minutes. Finish with everybody fielding and throwing correctly.
- vii. Speed this drill up as the players advance.
  1. Note: You can play a game to see which players fields the most correctly.

### h. Pepper

- i. Have the players line up across an imaginary line between two points. They cannot let the ball get past that imaginary line.
- ii. Coaches will then roll, throw, or hit the ball at the players attempting to get the ball past them from about 15 feet away.
  1. Can vary distance and speed based upon player skill.
- iii. The players need to focus on shuffling back and forth to stop the ball from getting past them.

- iv. To make a competition, split into two teams and players are eliminated as ball gets past them. Team with last person standing wins.
- i. Fear of the Ball
  - i. Split the team into groups. Have a group stand in a row facing the coach about 15-20 feet away with a glove full of balls.
  - ii. Have players spread their arms & add a few feet between themselves & the next player in the row.
  - iii. One assistant coach (or good catcher) play as the first base or cut-off (target) at one central location so all players can reach the target.
  - iv. The coach will have 5 balls in the glove and side step quickly down the row throwing the following balls at the fielder: overhead (1 foot above the head line drive), pop-up, grounder and dribbler that stops before them making the player charge and field the ball with their throwing hand and make the play.
  - v. It gets crazy when they all miss and all start throwing the balls at the coach. But that's kind of fun too if everyone is paying attention
  - vi. Then they get into the groove and the coach can repeat throwing types at random: throwing grounders to the left and right, higher pop-flies, etc.

## 9. Throwing Drills

- a. Kneeling Drill
  - i. THROWING – Grip the ball with 2 or 3 fingers on top for bigger kids; thumb on the bottom; otherwise use 4 fingers or all 5 if small hands
  - ii. Kneeling Throw – have all players on 1 or 2 knees and have kids throw back and forth from knees
  - iii. CATCHING – Thumb to thumb; Pinky to Pinky; move left; move right;
    - 1. COVER UP the Ball or Squeeze it (\* use 2nd hand to secure AFTER ball hits glove)
- b. Helmet Drill
  - i. Use a basic grounder drill but set up a t-ball T with a helmet on it.
  - ii. Once the player fields the ball have them make a solid throw to hit the helmet.
  - iii. The helmet gives the player a small target at their level which helps with their accuracy.
- c. Kids Throwing to Coaches
  - i. Get a bucket of ten balls and have the player stand with the bucket
  - ii. Start at 10 feet away and have the players throw all tens balls to the coach. The coach should reinforce the proper technique during this drill.
    - 1. The goal is to get the player to throw a straight ball toward the coach.
  - iii. In order of importance. Technique, on target versus left or right, straight versus lobbed. Eyes on target is very important
    - 1. Extend the distance based on skill level
- d. Kids Throwing To Kids
  - i. Have the players start at distances which they can be successful. 10 feet is a good starting point
  - ii. Tennis balls work well when starting
  - iii. This is a great drill to do as the players improve.
- e. Unzip and Release Drill
  - i. The kids should be tossing a ball back and forth with a partner until a coach tells them to freeze.
  - ii. The kids mimic zipping a jacket upward to wind the throw. Then they release the ball to their partner when their hand is overhead.
  - iii. Each time they freeze, the coach walks the kids through where they are in the throw.
- f. Fielding Grounders and Throwing
  - i. Line up a small group of players facing the coach – pick a distance that is suitable for the group
  - ii. One at a time have the players receive a grounder and stand up and make a proper throw.
  - iii. Roll 3 balls to the player before rotating
  - iv. The player should work on the proper technique while throwing.
  - v. Extend the distance as the players improve
  - vi. Increase the pace of the drill as players improve

- g. Relays
  - i. Divide your team into two teams (by speed) as equally as possible.
  - ii. Have one group start at second and the other at home.
  - iii. Have one coach with each group to set up a running strategy.
  - iv. Work together to develop a strategy you think will get the very best speed out of each player.
  - v. For outfield relays, set up with the ball at a cone about 10-15 feet from the farthest out player. They will then have to practice hitting the cut-off man and make it a relay to home plate or a specific base.
- h. Crop Hop Drill (Coach Pitch)
  - i. Have coach toss low fly ball to player
  - ii. Player should keep glove foot in front of body (this is the lead foot) to align body towards target.
  - iii. As player catches ball, they should move the back foot forward while taking the ball out of glove.
  - iv. Come through the ball and point glove to target/cut-off man. The entire body should be facing sideways with the front hip, foot, shoulder and glove pointing at target for an accurate throw.
    - 1. Eagle position—arms spread wide, body sideways, knuckles to the sky, & back foot sideways
  - v. Push off back foot and start throwing as glove tucks into chest.
  - vi. Ball is released in front of player's eye with back leg coming forward in the direction of the throw.

## 10. Hitting/Batting Drills

- a. Dot on the Ball
  - i. Draw a DOT on the ball about the size of a quarter
  - ii. Place the ball on the T so that the DOT is pointing straight back but visible by player
  - iii. The player should be able to see the DOT on the ball
  - iv. When batting have the player focus on hitting the DOT while driving the ball forward
  - v. This drill can be done either facing a face or in the standard baseball field
- b. The Cone Contest - Game/Contest to help improve batting while having FUN!
  - i. Place 4 cones at 4 different positions in the field
    - 1. First Cone – At just in front of the pitcher's mound – 1 Point
    - 2. Second Cone – At the front grass just before the dirt in the infield – 2 Points
    - 3. Third Cone – At the back of the infield dirt – 3 Points
    - 4. Fourth Cone - Ten yards past the Third Cone. - 4 Points
  - ii. Each player gets 4 hits and records their score based on the point system.
  - iii. The player with the highest total wins (can also be played in a team format).
- c. Batting / Infield Practice
  - i. Each player takes a position on the field – with remaining players going to bat – need 4 batters
  - ii. One batter makes 4 hits – on the fourth hit the batter will run to first.
  - iii. Next batter comes up and completes his/her at bats and runs to first (player at first runs to second)
  - iv. Continue with the batters until the first batter comes in to home
  - v. Once complete the batter which just came home will rotate into the infield at pitcher.
  - vi. The pitcher will move to first base, first to second, second to short, short to third, third to LF, LF to C, C to RF & RF into the batting lineup.

## 11. Catching Drills

- a. Proper Form Drill
  - i. Have player lay down with their back on the ground with their glove on.
  - ii. Extend glove hand straight up in the air, wrist tilted back so their palm is facing the sky with a slight bend in the elbow.
    - 1. Glove should not be directly in front of their face, but slightly to the glove side of their face.
    - 2. Fingers should be pointing towards the player's face.
  - iii. Have a coach or parent stand beside the player laying down and drop a ball directly into the glove
  - iv. The player should catch the ball using proper form when the ball hit glove.
    - 1. Using two hands to secure the catch. The glove hand squeezes the glove while the other hand closes the glove to secure the ball.

- v. Repeat as many times as needed. This is a great drill to have parents do at home with players.
- vi. Without a ball – have the players get into catching position and talk them through each step.
- vii. Show the players by making a full circle in front of your body with your catching hand
- b. Coach to Player Catch
  - i. With younger players it is important to start slowly with catching. Confidence is key to the kids developing into good catching players
  - ii. Have player stand in the proper stance about 10 feet from the coach
  - iii. Line up 2 or 3 players per coach.
  - iv. Coach throws ball at the glove and the player is asked to watch the ball into the glove
    - v. With a successful throw and catch – plenty of congratulations is needed. Encourage the players.
    - vi. Important for coach to throw accurately. Tennis ball can also be used.
- c. Soft Toss Catch
  - i. Players start by facing the target without a glove.
  - ii. Coach softly tosses a ball to player which attempts to catch with bare hands
  - iii. The player should attempt to catch with two hands away from the body
  - iv. Fingers up and palm facing the target
    - 1. This drill is done at close distances
  - v. After a few successful tosses and catches, conclude this drill with a glove on.
  - vi. Encourage player to catch as they did without the glove
  - vii. Drill can also be done with a tennis ball
- d. Pop Fly Drill
  - i. Start with softer balls (tennis balls hit with a racket) and lob them high in the air.
  - ii. Once they get used to the concept slowly introduce baseballs and batted balls.
- e. Outfield Drill
  - i. While preparing to catch the ball, the outfielder should say "mine" or "I got it" to alert everyone.
    - 1. Key to this drill is for the outfielder to gain confidence.
  - ii. Allow younger outfielders to kneel and have a coach toss a ball directly to them.
  - iii. After that step, the outfielder learns how to stand and catch the ball over his glove shoulder, to ensure that he sees the ball all the way into his glove.
  - iv. When that task is conquered, he learns to catch the ball over his throwing shoulder to allow for a quicker catch-to-release time when a runner is tagging up and trying to advance.

## 12. Base Running

- a. Base Running – Home to First
  - i. Runners should learn to run as fast as they can when running from home to first.
  - ii. They can over run the base and should turn toward the fence when returning to first
  - iii. Players should learn to run through the base
  - iv. They should not slide – no matter what the circumstances are.
  - v. Players should be taught to touch the bag every time.
- b. Runner to First Base for a Single
  - i. Line up the players at home plate
  - ii. With a bat (no ball) have the players take a swing and run to first
  - iii. Make sure they do not throw the bat
    - 1. They should place the bat down and run as fast as they can to first base
    - 2. Make sure they run through the base and return to first properly.
- c. Runner to Second for a Double
  - i. Line up the players at home plate
  - ii. With a bat (no ball) have the players take a swing and run to first
  - iii. Coach at first base will instruct player to turn and run to second
  - iv. Player should start to angle outside the runner lane so they can properly turn to second without slowing
  - v. Make sure to step on base at first

- vi. Player may slide or stop on second base.
- vii. Make sure they do not run through base.
- d. First to Third Base
  - i. Runners leaving first base should start to look at the third base coach at 2/3's the way to second.
  - ii. The coach will indicate to stop (hands up) or continue to third (large circles with arm).
  - iii. Players will need to learn to look for coach and react accordingly
- e. First to Third Base Drill
  - i. Line up the players at first base
  - ii. Coach at home plate will hit ball into field
  - iii. Runner should start toward second and begin to look at third base coach
  - iv. Coach will use either command and runner will react accordingly
  - v. Continue to run players around to home using same concept.
  - vi. Player will return to first base and get back in line to run again.
  - vii. Coaches will work to ensure players understand the signals and are executing accordingly
- f. Relays
  - i. Have the first player in line start with the ball in his hand
  - ii. On your signal each team will start running around the bases.
  - iii. After each player runs around the bases, he will hand the ball to the next player. First team to get all players completely around wins.
    - 1. To add a level of difficulty and decision making, use tennis balls and let the players throw the ball to the next player any time after he has rounded the last base.