



BASE Play RBI Practice Organization

Coaches have the ability to have a profound impact on young athletes. The role of a coach includes: instructor, mentor, motivator, counselor, and organizer, just to name a few. There are different needs for different levels of players and certain competencies a coach should strive to achieve among his/her athletes. Athletics can serve as an avenue for engaging youth in healthy activity and teaching skills that are transferable to everyday life. You, as a coach, may be the only consistent adult in a young player's life, make the experience positively unforgettable.

As a coach you will serve as a model for appropriate behavior in all your interactions, whether they are with your players, parents, other coaches, umpires, or fans. The practice of sportsmanship and professionalism is imperative. The Josephson Institute of Ethics expresses a great approach to ethics known as **The Six Pillars of Character**. **The pillars include: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. As a coach you will be modeling and reinforcing these ethics amongst your team.**

The following are basics to consider if you are a first-time coach or the players on your team will be experiencing their first organized sport.

- Character – respect, awareness, discipline
- Catching – proper form, 2 hands!
- Throwing – grip, body position/ movement, target
- Hitting – stance, hand position, swing, bat placement
- Fielding – ready stance, field positions, concepts, how to tag runners.
- Base-running – sequence, when to run, sliding
- Coaching – attendance, practice stations, equipment/field care, sportsmanship

As players become more settled into techniques and the game you will continue to build on these basics. This should be a fun, learning experience for all. Knowing your team is better than another can build self-confidence (which is part of the goal) but the real purpose is designed to engage students in an active, educational environment so they will recognize the interconnectedness of school, a healthy extra-curricular activity, and community for future success.

BASE Play RBI Practice Organization Suggestions

Keep every player occupied at all times to increase focus and productivity of practices. Break down skills into stations with as few players per group as allowed.

Incorporate base running skills into your warm-up. Divide your players among the bases and home plate. Each runner will react to a different situation.

For example: At home plate, the player will take a swing off an imaginary pitch from the coach and sprint through first base. The runner on first base will leave the base at the release of the pitch (softball) to steal second and slide into second base. The runner on second base will leave the base at the release of the pitch (softball), freeze on an imagined line-drive hit, see it through the defense, and sprint to third base. The runner on third base will leave the base on the release of the pitch (softball), tag up on an imagined fly ball to the outfield, listen to the coach's "go" command once caught, and sprint through home plate. All players will go through each situation described by the coach.



Break down skills into steps.

For example: When throwing overhand, have partners begin from halfway position to focus on keeping throwing elbow high through release. Have receiving partner work on catching with two hands. Add step and begin to increase distance between partners. Then, add crow hop footwork to throw. Have receiving partner work on quick transfer of ball out of glove into throw. You can have your players roll 25 grounders to each other. Then, they can practice drop stepping for 15 short fly balls over each shoulder.

Divide offense practice into partner stations that focus on different skills.

For example: 14 players = 7 stations. 3:00 per station and rotate clockwise. Partners keep switching at current station every 10 attempts if both not practicing at the same time. Anytime real balls are being used, hitters should be wearing helmets. Wiffle balls or lite flite balls are perfect for these sample drills because they do not hurt as much as hard balls if a player gets hit and also do not travel as far making shagging take less time. 1-Bunting station where players easy front toss to each other. 2-Front arm swings off tee to catch net. Partner places ball on tee. 3-Back arm swings with back elbow touching fence/wall/net. The bat should not touch barrier when extending knob of bat forward to imaginary pitcher. 4-Bat behind back focusing on lower half of body driving into swing. 5-Front toss off coach pitch. Partner shags pitches missed. 6-Partners shag balls hit and return to coach front tossing. 7-Dry swings. Both partners do full swings, practice dropping bats, and run a few steps out of imaginary batter boxes.

Divide defense practice into small group stations.

For example: Divide middle infielders, corner infielders, outfielders, and pitchers/catchers into four groups. A coach can hit a ball to SS or 2B and have the opposite position practice covering 2B and receiving the ball. The corners can practice covering the base and scooping bad throws with each other. Outfielders can practice calling for balls hit or thrown between each other and backing each other up. Pitchers and catchers can work on pass ball situations with each other.