

Week 3

Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Jog twice around the bases. Play catch with a partner.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness

Gather team into a group. "If you participate in practice every week, do you think that's enough to keep your body's fitness to play? Do you think you'll improve your body's fitness in the different areas?" Listen to their responses. "You need to be active outside practice to keep your overall fitness at a level that helps you play ball.

What are some activities you could do outside of practice?" Listen to their responses. Discuss activities such as jogging, bicycling, and playing catch.

Game 1 (10 minutes)

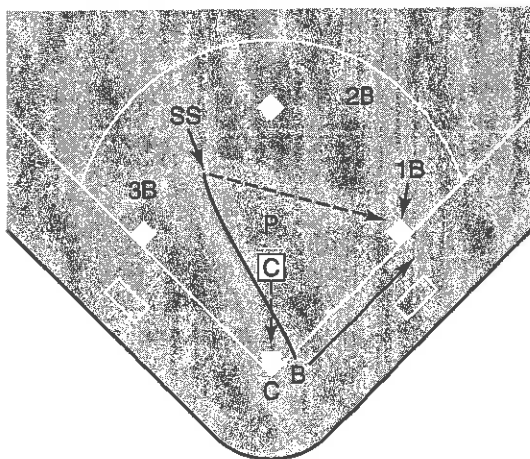
"Zero-Zero"
(zero outs and
zero runners on base)

Goals

Infielders will field grounders and throw the runner out at first base. The runner tries to make it safely to first.

Description

Set up an infield (or two). Play a 6 v 6 game (you can use fewer players per team). The batting team hits off a tee or coach, always beginning with the bases empty. Batters must hit grounders to the infield. Players score a point by reaching first base safely. If possible, they continue to advance. The side is retired after three points or three outs, whichever comes first. Each team should keep track of the points scored and compare the score to the score of Game 2.




PURPOSE

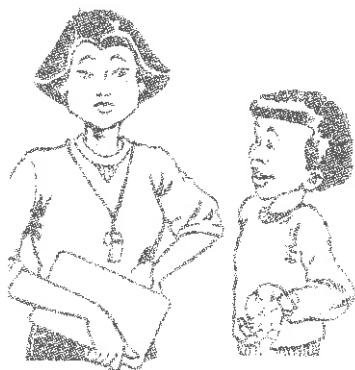
To defend third base in tag situations. The focus is on covering third base on tag plays and on proper baserunning techniques in advancing from second base to third base.

Equipment

- ☒ Six bases, two home plates (set up two fields, minimum)
- ☒ Four batting tees
- ☒ Five balls per tee
- ☒ One glove per player
- ☒ One ball per player (minimum)

**COACH'S
point**

 Encourage players to communicate on every play in the Game and Skill Practice parts of practice.



Coach: What's the difference between a force play and a tag play?

Players: Force play is when the runner must run to the next base, and a tag play is when the runner can choose to advance or stay on their current base. In a force play, the fielder tags the base; in a tag play, the fielder tags the runner.

Coach: How effectively did your team keep runners off base or keep them from advancing?

Players: Sometimes, but not always.

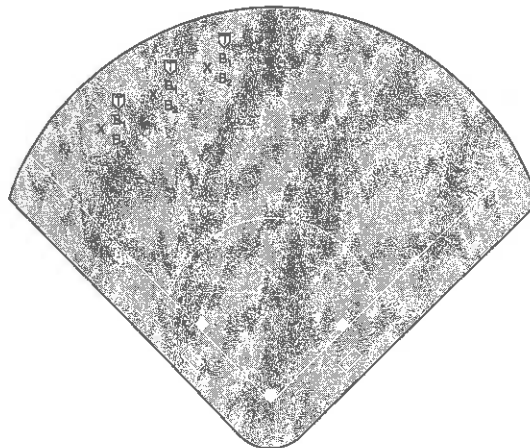
Coach: Let's determine who is responsible for covering first and second base in certain situations and how the base should be covered on force and tag play situations.

Skill Practice (40 minutes)

Skill Practice 1

Description

Players practice hitting. Set up batting tees within 5 feet of a fence. Batters hit into the fence. Each player takes 10 hits in a row and then rotates. One player gives feedback and instruction. The next hitter retrieves balls and places them on the tee for the batter. Remind players about safety: Players not batting should stand 10 to 15 feet away from the batter. Review rules related to batters, including *strike zone* (see page 299), and number of balls and strikes (see page 305).

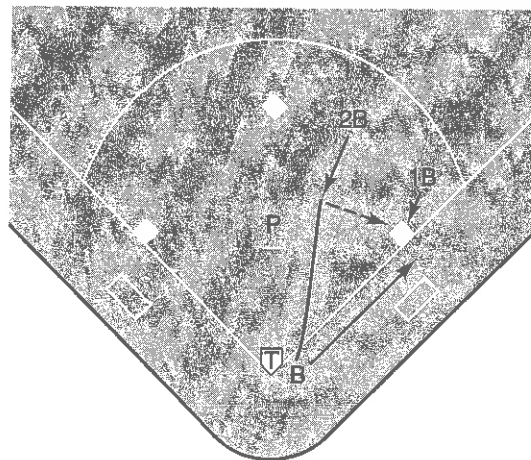


Skill Practice 2

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to cover first base on a force play (see "Force Plays" on page 256).
2. Practice covering first base.

Description

Play a 3 v 3 game with a pitcher, second and first base players, and three batters. Batters take turns hitting from a tee. They must hit grounders to the right side of the infield. Each batter gets three at-bats and scores



Coach's point
Review who covers first and how to cover first. Review *offensive interference* and *defensive interference* rules (see pages 297 and 296, respectively).

Some situations will call for a player to flip the ball to the player covering the base. Some players may need to practice this skill for control and accuracy.

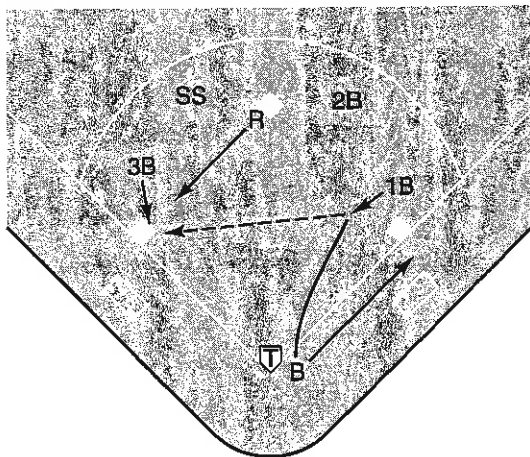
Week 3

a point every time he or she reaches first safely. Players rotate positions each inning. The game is completed after three innings or 15 minutes, whichever comes first.

Skill Practice 3

Description

Practice tag plays at third base. Play a game with players at third, second, and first base and short-stop, and three batters. Batters hit from a tee. They must hit a grounder into the infield and run to first. The runner on second should advance to third and must be tagged out.



For hitting and running to first

- "Ready position!"
- "Watch the ball on the batting tee!"
- "Step and swing fast!"
- "Contact in the power zone!"
- "Step and drive to first base!"
- "Run hard outside the line!"
- "Watch the coach!"
- "Run all the way through the base!"
- "Round first on the signal!" (Or, "Advance to second on the signal!")

For rounding first

- "Start your turn on the approach to the base."
- "Push off on the inside corner of the base."
- "Listen for the coach's signal to 'go' or make the 'turn.'"


For tagging

- "Select your position!" (depending on angle of incoming ball)
- "Ready position!"
- "Straddle the base!"
- "Watch the ball into the glove!"
- "Catch firmly!"
- "Sweep low!"



☞ Encourage players to not watch the ball after they have hit. This delays their initial step to first base.



 Pitchers and catchers can participate in one or two other Skill Practices, then complete Skill Practice 4.

Skill Practice 4 (pitchers and catchers; 15 minutes)

Description

Pitchers practice pitching. They should throw at *slow to moderate* speed, focusing on form. Catchers should also work on technique. Review rules related to *pitching* (see page 298).

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Repeat Game 1. Compare the score with the score of the first game.

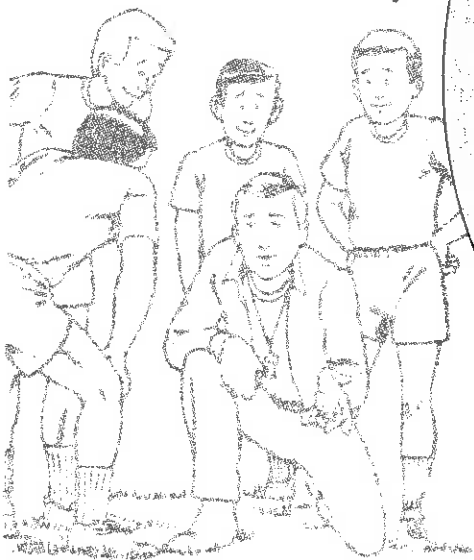
Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather team into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. "What are some of the umpire's duties during a game?" Listen to and discuss responses. "Who makes the calls during the game? Can you disagree if you think an umpire's call is not right, or do you accept the call even if you think it's wrong? If you think you can discuss the call with the umpire, stand at this cone. If you think the umpire makes the call and you accept it, stand at this cone." All players should vote. "You need to have respect for the umpires at all times. They are in charge on the field during a game. Don't argue with them; accept their calls and decisions. But, if you have a question, ask the umpire or me during a break."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the first game.



Variations

You can break each situation down further; for example, use only a pitcher and first base player, along with a couple of runners. You can hit a ball to the first base player and have the pitcher cover first on the play.