

Week 4

Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Run twice around the bases. Play catch with a partner. After 2 or 3 minutes, partners should throw some line drives, fly balls, and grounders back and forth to each other.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Muscular strength and endurance

Gather players into a group in a small area. "I want everyone to find a partner and balance back to back while sitting like a chair. I'll time you for one minute." Model the action for the group. "What muscles did you use to hold yourselves up?" Touch the different areas with your hand to show players the muscle groups of their legs, front and back. "You use different muscles to perform different activities. Practicing using specific muscles improves your muscular strength and endurance—that is, how hard you can throw and how long you can run the bases before your muscles get tired."

Game 1 (10 minutes)

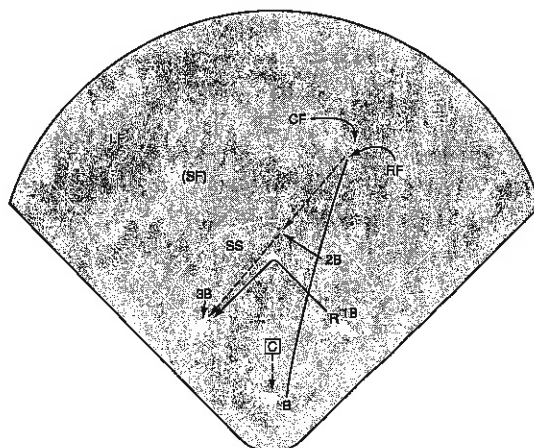
"Movin' on Up"

Goals

The offense tries to advance the runner to third base. The defense tries to keep the runner from advancing to third base.

Description

Set up an outfield, a third base player, a shortstop, and a second base player. The batting team always begins with a runner on first base. Play 5 v 5 or 6 v 6, depending on the number of outfielders used. Batters hit off a tee or coach and attempt to hit the ball to the outfield. Infielders should let balls go through to the outfield. If the runner gets to second



PURPOSE

To defend on balls hit to the outfield with a runner on first base. The focus is on outfielders demonstrating proper techniques in fielding fly balls, line drives, and ground balls and on demonstrating proper positioning in backing up teammates. In the infield the focus is on covering second base on throws from the outfield.

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)



- base safely, the offensive team scores a point and does not continue running. The defense also scores a point if the runner advances only to second base (for holding the runner to one base on a single). If the runner makes it to third base, the offense scores two points. If the runner is thrown out at third base, the defense scores two points. The side is retired after six points for either side.

Coach: What was the goal of the game if you were an outfielder?

Players: Hold the runner at second base or get the runner out at third base.

Coach: Who covered second base if the ball was hit to the right side? To the left side?

Players: Shortstop (right side); second base player (left side).

Coach: If the runner attempted to go to third, who was the cutoff for the throw?

Players: Shortstop (for left fielder and center fielder); second base player (for right fielder).

Coach: If you want to hit a long ball, should you swing the bat hard or fast? What's the difference?

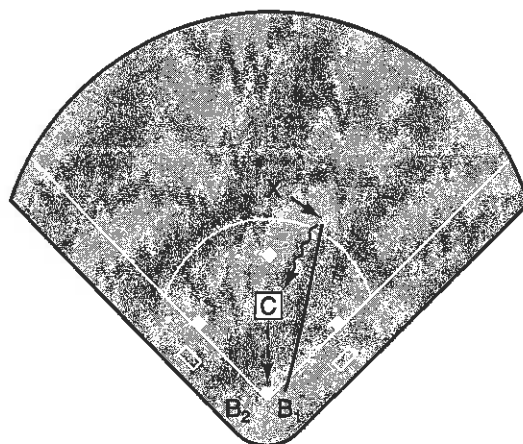
Players: Fast. To swing fast you need to keep your arms loose, instead of tensing them up.

Skill Practice (40 minutes)

Skill Practice 1

Description

Players practice hitting. Each player attempts to hit 10 balls as far as possible into the outfield. One player gives feedback and instruction. Another player retrieves balls and rolls them back to the coach. Players not batting should stand 10 to 15 feet away from the batter. Players on deck should take 10 to 20 practice swings, working on bat speed. Review rules related to the *sacrifice fly* (see page 250).



Devices used to increase bat speed, such as a Wiffle bat that "pops" when you swing hard, might be useful. The harder you swing, the louder it pops.

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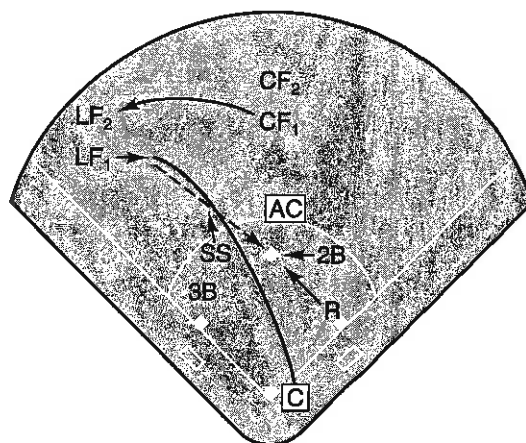
COACH's cues



"Ready position!"
 "Watch the ball out of the pitcher's hand!"
 "Step and swing fast!"
 "Contact in the power zone!"

Skill Practice 2

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *catch fly balls* (see page 293).
2. Practice catching fly balls in the context of Skill Practice 2.



Description

Outfielders practice catching fly balls and getting the ball in quickly to the infield. Place two players in left, two players in center or left center, and players at second, shortstop, and third (the outfielders alternate on every new play). Extra players serve as baserunners, taking off from first base on your signal. Throw or hit balls between the outfield positions, alternating among fly balls, line drives, and grounders. One player calls and catches the ball and the other player backs him or her up and says where to throw the ball. After 10 throws or hits, players rotate.

COACH's cues



For fielding in the outfield

"Feet to the ball!"
 "Watch it in!"
 "Smooth transition from catch to throw."
 "Keep the feet moving through ball and toward target."
 "Throw the ball quickly into the base or cutoff."

For backing up the play

"Move quickly into position!"
 "Adjust with the play!"
 "Assume that the fielder will miss the ball!"

COACH's point



☞ Review the fly ball *tag up* rule (see page 275).

☞ Put an additional coach or parent in the outfield and another at second base.

☞ Remember to rotate players to all positions during practices and games.



☞ Pitchers and catchers can participate in one of the other Skill Practices, then complete Skill Practice 3.

Skill Practice 3 (pitchers and catchers; 15 minutes)

Pitchers should throw *moderate* to *moderately fast*. Focus on form and accuracy. Catchers should continue working on technique and also give the pitcher feedback on control, telling him or her, for example, exactly what part of the plate the ball crossed or if the ball missed a corner.

Game 2 (10 minutes)

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

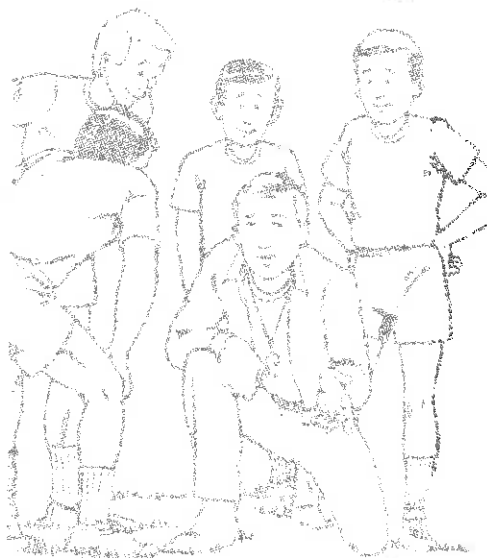
Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Honesty

Gather team into a group. "Give me some examples of being dishonest in practices and games." Listen to their responses. After each response, have players change the examples into acts of honesty. Take three examples. "Honesty is an important value that all players should be practicing every practice and game, especially if a coach isn't there to help you make the right decision, or if an umpire doesn't see the play."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about the practice and give reminders for the next game.



Variations

- Repeat Skill Practice 2 on the right side of the field and have the shortstop cover second base.
- Repeat Skill Practice 2 and have fielders intentionally miss the ball so that players performing backup can practice positioning and fielding a missed ball.