

Week 5

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: Flexibility

Gather team into a circle. "Is there such a thing as stretching your muscles too far, or should you stretch as far as you can to improve your flexibility?" Listen to their responses. "Muscles should stretch only until you feel a slight pulling. You should never feel pain stretching. If you do, you're stretching too far." Choose a stretch for the team to try. "I want you to stretch until you feel the slight pulling. Everyone will have different levels of flexibility, but all of you need to stretch properly to stay flexible and prevent injuries."

Game 1

(10 minutes)

"3 for 3"

Goals

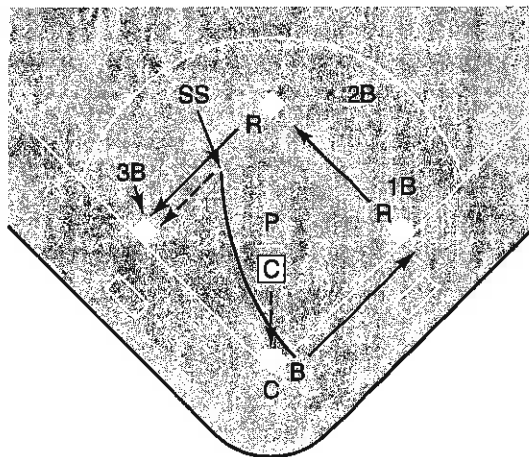
The offense tries to advance the runner to third base.
The defense tries to get the runner out at third base.

Description

Set up an infield (or two).

Play a 6 v 6 game. The

batting team has runners at first and second. If a runner gets to third base safely, the offense scores three points, and that runner does not continue running. The fielding team attempts to get the runner out at third base. The side is retired after nine points or three outs, whichever comes first.

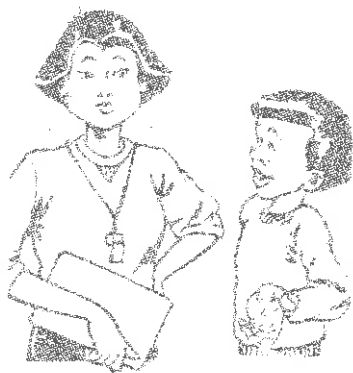


PURPOSE

To defend on ground balls in the infield and the outfield when runners are on first and second base. The focus is on covering third base and proper base-running.

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

Players: Get the runner out at third base.

Coach: Who covers third base? How?

Players: The third base player, by standing just off the base between the ball and base, placing the foot opposite the glove hand on the outside edge of the base.

Coach: How is running from second to third different from running from first to second?

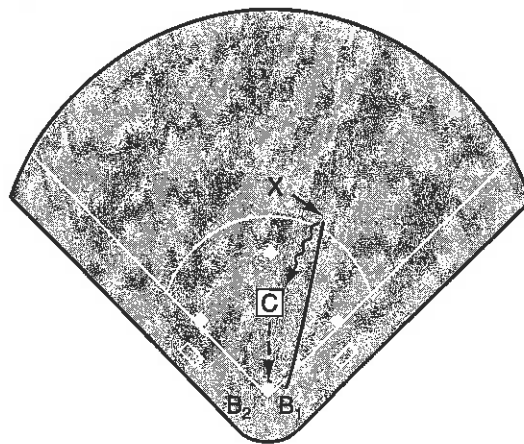
Players: It's not unless you have to round the base to run home, then it's just like rounding first to run to second.

Skill Practice (40 minutes)

Skill Practice 1

Description

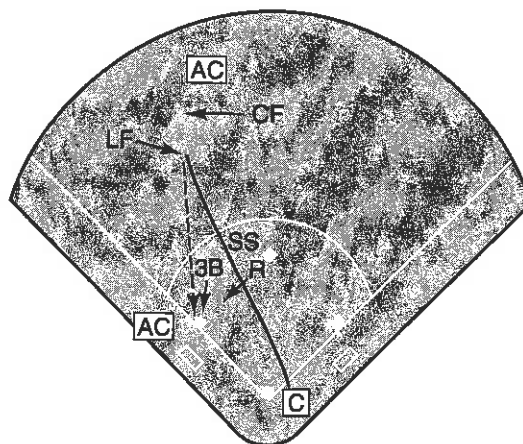
Players practice hitting. Each player attempts to hit 10 balls as far as possible into the outfield. One player gives feedback and instruction. Another player retrieves balls and rolls them back to the coach. Players not batting should stand 10 to 15 feet away from the batter. Players on deck should take 10 to 20 practice swings, working on bat speed. They can also take some turns hitting off the tee into a fence.



Skill Practice 2

Description

Outfielders practice getting the ball in quickly to third base. Place a player in left, a player in center or left center, and a player at third base. Extra players serve as baserunners, taking off from second base on your signal. Throw or hit balls between these outfield positions, alternating among fly balls, line drives, and grounders. One player calls and catches the ball and the other player moves into position for the backup and tells the fielder where to throw the ball. After 10 throws or hits, players rotate.



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

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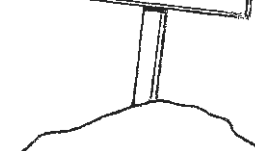
COACH's cues



For taking throw from the outfield
 "Position between the ball and base!"
 "Foot opposite glove hand on outside edge of base!"
 "Watch the ball into the glove."

For baserunning
 "Take off on contact!"
 "Run hard!"
 "Lean back, weight on heels!" (to stop)

COACH's point

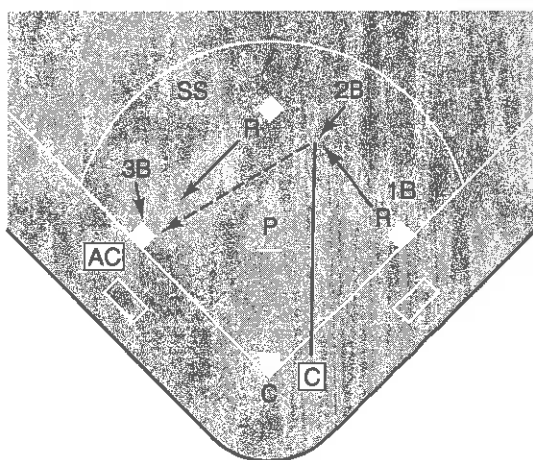


Put an additional coach or parent in the outfield and another at third base.

Skill Practice 3

Description

Infielders practice the force play at third base. Place players at all infield positions. Extra players serve as baserunners, taking off from first and second base on your signal. Hit grounders to each infield position. Infielders field the ball and make the play at third base. Players rotate after three trials at each position. Position a coach at third base to give cues on the proper technique required to cover third on a force-out situation.



Skill Practice 4

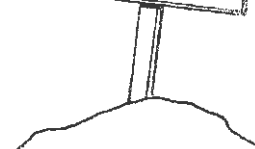
(pitchers and catchers; 15 minutes)

Pitchers should throw *moderate* to *moderately fast*. Focus on form and accuracy. Catchers should continue working on technique and should 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 the outside corner.

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Repeat Game 1 to apply what has just been learned. Compare the score with the score of the first game.

COACH's point



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



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather team into a group. Choose two players to demonstrate with you. Have one player run from home to first as fast as he or she can. Have the second player run from home to first lazily, without trying hard. "What was I working on during this drill?" Listen to responses; lead discussion to hustling to beat a throw to first. "It is your responsibility to work hard to get on base. When you do that, you're being responsible to your team."

Wrap-Up

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

Variations

- You can run Skill Practices 1 and 2 concurrently with players switching tasks after 15 to 20 minutes.
- Have the outfielders on one field and infielders on another field, both working on the same situation.
- Repeat Skill Practice 2 on the right side of the field.
- Allow the runner to continue running to home if the situation arises. This will create a tag play at home or, if the runner is coming back to the base, a tag play at third.