

Practice 5


PURPOSE

To "cut" (cut off) the lead runner and to get from first to second base, focusing on the situation in which there are no outs, a runner is on first base, and a grounder is in the infield. The objective is for players to be able to throw to second base to cut the lead runner and to start and stop properly when advancing from first to second base.

Equipment

- ☒ Six bases and two home plates (set up two fields, minimum)
- ☒ One glove per player
- ☒ One ball per player (minimum)
- ☒ Three or four batting tees
- ☒ Five balls at each tee



 Set up some batting stations early so players can begin batting practice as soon as they arrive.

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

1. Players play catch with a partner.
2. Players jog around the bases once.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather children in a circle. "Do you know that when your body doesn't eat healthy foods and get enough sleep it moves slowly. Let's pretend we have no energy to move because we didn't eat enough healthy foods or get enough sleep." Begin to move slowly, encouraging the children to follow. Move extremely slowly. "Everyone stop. Now I am going to fill your bodies up with healthy foods." Act out giving them foods. "Pretend we are sleeping. When I say 'Wake up!' you can move faster because you have enough energy and enough rest. Wake up and move faster. Stop! What are some other healthy habits you have learned?" Examples: daily exercise, brushing teeth, saying no to drugs, no smoking. "It's important for everyone to practice healthy habits."

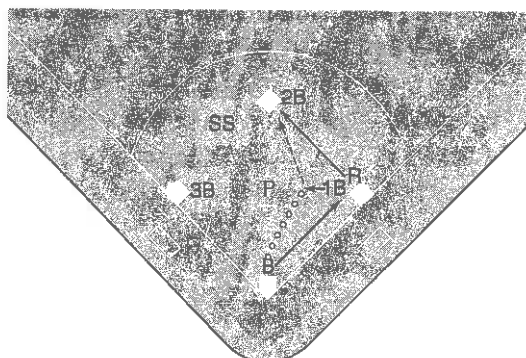
Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

Players will run from first to second before the throw gets to second base. Players will field and throw the ball to second base before the runner gets there.

Description

5 v 5 (can add more players, if needed, up to 6 v 6)—the batting team starts with a runner on first base. The batter hits and runs to first base; if the first-base runner is safe at second, the batting team scores a point. Both



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runners can continue running bases and can score a run if they cross home plate. The fielders attempt to field and throw the ball to second base before the runner gets there. The side is retired after three points or three outs, whichever comes first. Keep score and compare it to the score of Game 2.

Coach: "What was the goal of that game if you were playing the infield?"

Players: "The goal was to catch the ball and throw to second base, ahead of the runner."

Coach: "Who should cover second base if the ball is hit to the left side of the infield?"

Players: "The second-base player should cover it."

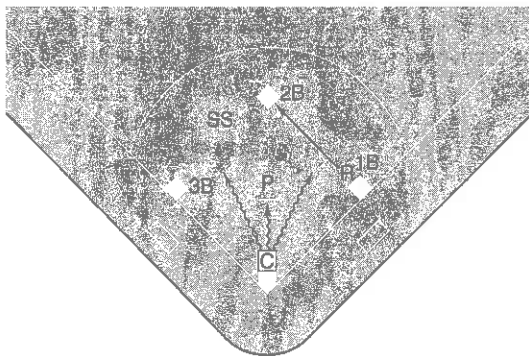
Coach: "Who should cover second base if the ball is hit to the right side of the infield?"

Players: "The shortstop should cover it."



Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to cover second base on a force play and how to start and stop properly when advancing from first to second base (see pages 130-131). Tell players that, to cover a base on a force play, they should keep the foot opposite their glove hand on the edge of the base that is closest to the play (closest to where the ball is coming from).
2. Practice covering second base on a force play and starting and stopping properly when advancing from first to second base.



Description

5 v 5—have the batting team run from first to second base. Cover the rules related to when the runner can leave first base and advance to second (see page 138). The fielding team should have players at first, second, third, shortstop, and pitcher. Roll or throw (or hit off a tee) four balls to the left side, then four balls to the right side, then two to the pitcher. Signal the runners to run each time. After you have thrown 10 balls, the teams should switch. Continue through three rotations so that all players get to play shortstop or second base (rotate in this order: first, second, pitcher, shortstop, third). Discuss the difference between force plays and tag plays (see force-out and tag-out, pages 116 and 117). Also discuss rule(s) related to overrunning first base, but not overrunning second base (see page 138).

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(cont'd)

COACH'S cues



For Advancing to Next Base

- "Take off when the bat hits the ball."
- "Run hard."
- "Lean back with your weight on your heels."
- "Gather." (Bend at the hips, knees, and ankles.)

For Stopping on a Base

- "Lean back."
- "Keep your weight on your heels."
- "Bend your legs and ankles to absorb the force."
- "Hold the base." (Keep your foot on the base at all times.)
- For Covering a Base on a Force Play
 - "Get yourself between the ball and the base."
 - "Put your foot opposite your glove hand on the outside edge of the base."
 - "Make a good target." (The player places his or her glove at about shoulder-level, with the glove open and facing the player throwing the ball.)
 - "Watch it come into the glove."

Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

Description

Set up three or four batting stations. With your or an assistant coach's help, players work on striking the ball off a tee, hitting it against a fence.

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Same as Game 1. Compare the score of the second game with the score of the first game.

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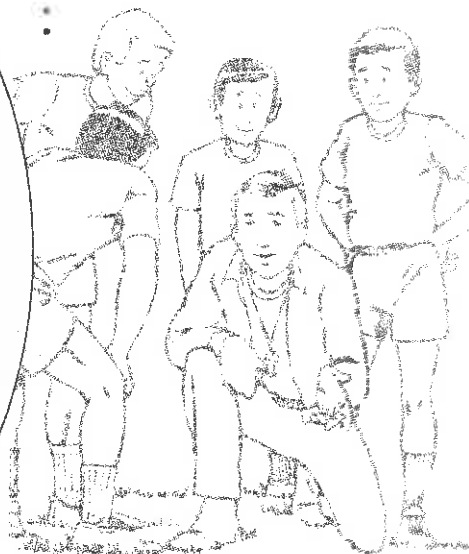
Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather children into a group. "Let's pretend we're playing a baseball [softball] game. Watch what I do with the ball." Tell a child in the group you're throwing the ball to him. Make a bad throw. "That throw wasn't very good, was it? What would you say to me so that I don't feel bad about the throw?" As children respond, toss a ball to each player who makes a supportive comment. If players make unsupportive comments, encourage them to change their words to become more supportive; after they have changed the words, toss them a ball, too. "It's very important to support your teammates, especially when they make mistakes. Saying something that makes someone feel good shows you care."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind the children of the next practice's day and time and give them a sneak preview of that practice—throwing to second base to cut the lead runner and running from first to second base.



Variations

Work on having the runner listen to the base coaches when running from first to second base.



☞ Be sure that all players are moving on every play. If they are not fielding the ball, they should be covering a base or backing up another player.

☞ Remind players to talk to each other during play; for example, they can call the ball ("Mine!") or remind each other where the next play is ("Play's at first").