

Practice 7

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

1. Players throw grounders, line drives, and fly balls back and forth with a partner.
2. Players run around the bases once.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Muscular strength and endurance

Gather children in a group. "Watch how far the ball goes when I throw two different times." Throw the ball to show children the difference between a throw with minimal effort and a throw with close to maximum effort. "Let's line up, and you show me how you would throw the ball. Show me an easy throw. . . . Now show me a hard throw." Highlight the ball going farther in the second throw. "You can throw the ball farther when the muscles in your arms are strong. The muscles in your arms get stronger by practicing throwing."

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

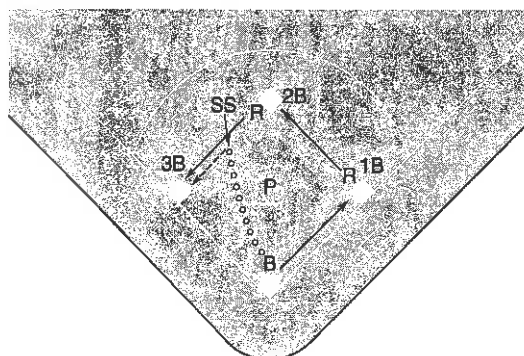
Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

Players will run from second to third before the throw gets to third base. Players will field and throw the ball to third 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 runners on first and second base. The batter hits and runs to first base; if the second-base runner is safe at third, the batting team scores a point. The runners can continue running bases and can score a run if



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they cross home plate. The fielders attempt to field and throw the ball to third 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. Review the rules related to running bases and to not overrunning second or third base (see page 138).

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 third base ahead of the runner."

Coach: "Who should cover third base in this situation?"

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

Coach: "What if a ball gets hit to the third-base player? Should you field the ball or cover third base?"

Players: "You should field the ball."

Coach: "Then who should cover third when the third-base player is fielding the ball?"

Players: "The shortstop should cover it."

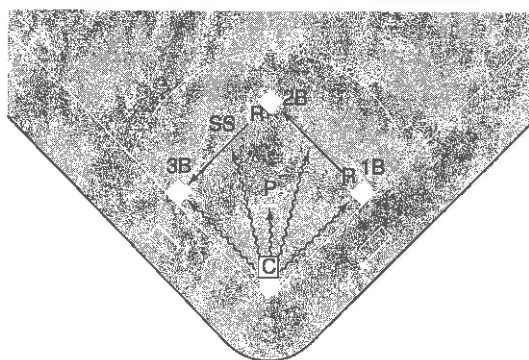
Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to cover third base on a force play and how to start and stop properly when advancing from second to third base. Show how the shortstop should cover third base when the third-base player fields the ball. As the third-base player is fielding the ball, the shortstop runs to third and covers the base for a force play.
2. Practice covering third base on a force play and starting and stopping properly when advancing from second to third base.

Description

5 v 5—have the batting team provide runners at first and second base. The fielding team should have players at first, second, third, shortstop, and pitcher. Roll or throw two balls to each of the five infielders, signaling 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 third base or shortstop (rotate in this order: first, second, third, pitcher, shortstop). Review the rules related to when the player can leave second base and advance to third (see page 138), and teach the kids how to stop at third base. Review what a force play is (see *force-out*, page 116), and differentiate between a force play and a tag play.



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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."
- "Provide 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. Continue for 3 to 5 minutes, then repeat one or two more times.
- Discuss staying in the batter's box when hitting. Also talk about not throwing the bat when they hit and run to first base.

COACH's cues



- "Get in the ready position."
- "Watch the ball on the batting tee."
- "Step and swing fast."

Game 2 (10 minutes)

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

COACH's point

- Be sure all players get to play third base and shortstop so they come to understand how to cover a base on a force play, as well as who should cover third base in each situation.

Practice 1

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather children into a group. "I'm going to ask you some questions about things I notice on this team. Tell me if you agree. Do you try to learn new skills at practice? Do you work hard to improve your skills? Do you help your teammates? Do you follow directions? Do you feel good about yourselves when you play a good game?" Listen to responses following each question. "Think about players who will be your opponents. What qualities or things do they have or do? Are they the same as you?" Listen for yes or no. "It's important to think of our opponents in the same way we think of ourselves. You respect yourself, and you should respect your opponents. They are a lot like you and are learning the same things."

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 home plate to cut the lead runner and running from third to home.



Variations

- For the final game, play a 6 v 6 game.
- During the practice task, mix in some line drives or fly balls. Then review information from Practice 4.



Remember to teach off-the-ball skills, such as base coverage and backing up the player fielding the ball.

Teach runners to look at and listen to the third-base coach as they are running to second base.