

Week 8

Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Run three times 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 and choose a stretch for them to try. "When we're stretching, should we feel anything?" Listen to their responses. "When I feel the slight pulling, what should I do? Bounce or hold the stretch? Raise your hand if you think bounce.

Now raise your hand if you think hold. To get a good stretch, you should hold the stretch for 10 counts, then relax. If you feel the slight pulling go away, you can stretch a bit further.

That tells you your muscles are getting more flexible. Be sure to practice proper stretching to improve your flexibility."

PURPOSE

To defend at third base on balls hit to the infield or outfield. The focus is on covering third base on force plays, covering home plate on tag plays, and demonstrating proper baserunning.

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)

Game 1 (10 minutes)

"3 for 3"

Goals

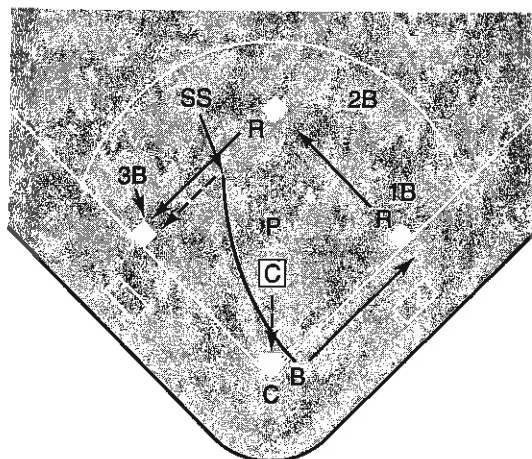
The offense tries to advance the runner to third base. The defense tries to get the runner out at third base.

Description

Set up an infield (or two).

Play a 6 v 6 game. The

battling team has runners at first and second. If a runner gets to third base safely, the offense scores 1 point, and if that runner crosses home plate safely, the offense scores 3 more points. Batters must hit ground balls. The fielding team attempts to get the runner out at third base. The side is retired after 12 points or three outs, whichever comes first.





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.

Coach: What kind of adjustments did the defensive team have to make if the runner went home?

Players: Ball had to be thrown to home, which set up a tag play; sometimes had to use a cutoff or relay; had to pay attention to other runners so they would not advance.

Skill Practice (40 minutes)

Skill Practice 1

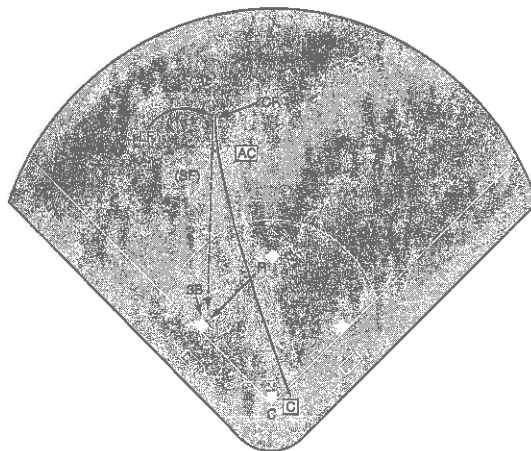
Description

Players practice hitting. One of your pitchers throws for five batters, 10 pitches each. Players on deck should take practice swings, pretending they are the hitter. The batter third in line should work on a batting tee. One player or coach gives feedback. The other players retrieve balls and roll them back to the pitcher. Remind players about safety: Players not batting should stand 10 to 15 feet away from the batter. After the pitcher has thrown to five batters, she or he rotates with another pitcher (see page 166 for a diagram).

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 and home. Extra players serve as base-runners, taking off from second base on your signal. Throw or hit balls between



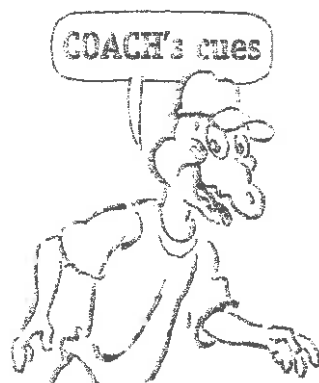
these outfield positions, alternating among fly balls, line drives, and grounders. One player calls and catches the ball and the other player moves into position for the backup and tells the fielder where to throw



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

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the ball. After 10 throws or hits, players rotate. Repeat with a runner advancing to home plate.



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 making sweep tag

"Select your position!" (depending on angle of incoming ball)

"Ready position!"

"Straddle the base!"

"Watch the ball into the glove!"

"Catch firmly!"

"Sweep low!"

For baserunning

"Take off on contact!"

"Run hard!"

"Lean back, weight on heels!" (to stop)

Skill Practice 3

Description

Infielders practice the force play at third base. Place players at all infield positions (see page 159 for a diagram). 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. Runners should advance to home whenever possible, setting up a tag situation at home plate.

Skill Practice 4

(pitchers and catchers; 15 minutes)

Pitchers should throw *moderate* to *full* speed. 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 a corner.



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

Game 2 (10 minutes)

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

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather team into a group. "What are some examples of showing you care about your teammates?" Listen to their responses. After each response, ask for an example of the same sign of caring that players could do outside of practice. Discuss the on-field and off-field examples at the same time, then ask for another response. "Those were all great ideas to show caring to your teammates. Have you seen someone else show an 'act of kindness' toward another teammate?" Discuss their responses. "It's important to show caring both on and off the field."

Wrap-Up

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



Variations

- Skill Practices 1 and 2 can be run concurrently with players switching tasks after 15 to 20 minutes.
- Repeat Skill Practice 2 on the right side of the field.