

Practice 8

PURPOSE

To cut the lead runner and to get from third base to home plate, focusing on the situation in which there are no outs; runners are on first, second, and third; and a grounder is in the infield. The objective is for players to be able to throw to home plate to cut the lead runner and to use the proper start position to run from third to home.

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

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

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

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Training and conditioning

Gather children into a circle. "What will you do tonight after you eat dinner?" Wait for their responses. "At the end of the day, what do you do?" Encourage children to discuss sleep. "Let's pretend you're at home, and you climb into bed to go to sleep. Everyone lie down. Now let's pretend it's morning and a new day. You don't have practice today. What should we do to move our bodies? Your body needs to move every day to stay in good physical condition for baseball [softball]." Wait for their responses. If a child suggests an activity such as biking, walking, or swimming, have everyone pretend to do that activity. Then have them "sleep" again, wake up, and choose another physical activity.

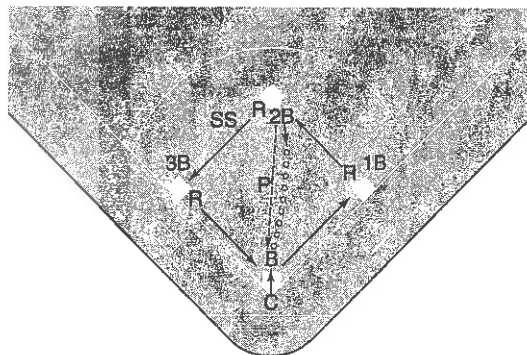
Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

Players will run from third to home before the throw.
Players will field and throw the ball to home before the runner gets there.

Description

6 v 6 — the batting team starts with runners on the bases. The batter hits and runs to first base; if the third-base runner is safe at home plate, the batting team scores a point. The fielders attempt to field and throw the ball to home plate before the runner gets there. The side is retired after three points or three outs, whichever comes first. Keep score and compare it with the score of



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Game 2. Review the umpire signals for safe and out (see page 139). Also review when to run in an arc outside of the base path (see page 131).

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

Players: "To catch the ball and throw to home plate ahead of the runner."

Coach: "Who should cover home plate in this situation?"

Players: "The catcher should cover it."

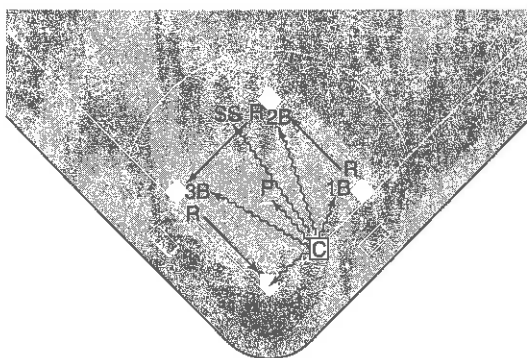
Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to cover home plate on a force play and how to start and stop properly when advancing from third base to home plate. Show how the pitcher should cover home when the catcher fields or chases an overthrown ball.
2. Practice covering home plate on a force play and starting and stopping properly when advancing from third base to home plate.



Description

6 v 6—the batting team provides runners on the bases. The fielding team has players at first, second, third, shortstop, pitcher, and catcher. Roll or throw two balls to each of the fielders, signaling the runners to run each time. After you have thrown 12 balls, the teams should switch. Continue through three rotations so that all players get to play catcher or pitcher (rotate in this order: first, second, pitcher, shortstop, third, catcher). Review the rules related to when a player can leave the base (see page 138) and how to make a force play. Remind runners that they can overrun home plate and they will score a point if they cross home.



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.)

COACH's point

- Be sure all players get to play catcher and pitcher so they understand how to cover a base on a force play, as well as who should cover home plate in each situation.

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(cont'd)

- 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."
- "Watch it come into the glove."

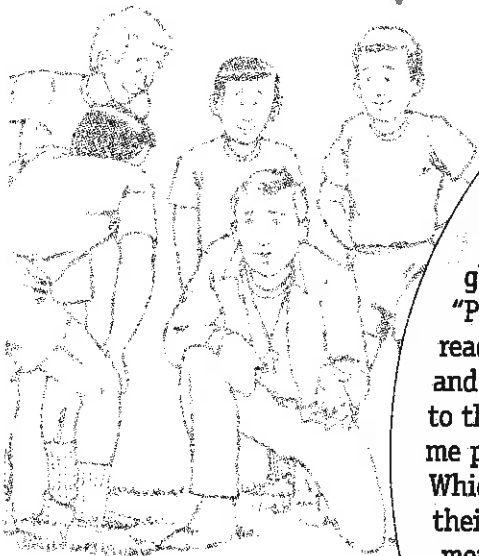
Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

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 Game 2 score with the score of the first game. If you want to try playing with nine players in the field, discuss where the outfielders should throw the ball when they get it (see page 120).



☞ Continue to review and reinforce off-the-ball skills and communication skills.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather children into a group. Dump five to six balls, bats, and gloves out of a mesh ball bag, leaving them where they stop.

"Pretend we just finished one activity in practice and we're getting ready to do something else. Everyone walk away from the equipment and make a group circle." Pick up the balls, bats, and gloves, then go to the group. Dump equipment out again. "Now come back and help me pick up the balls, bats, and gloves, and then go make a circle. . . . Which way makes it faster for me to get to your circle?" Listen to their responses. "What do you think we should do with the equipment?" Listen to their responses. Discuss picking up equipment before doing another activity. "We can have more fun and learn more when we work together and share the responsibility."

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—playing well in a game.