

# HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL MANUAL



Best practices for running a successful  
high school baseball program, and more

PROVIDED BY:



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## **Introduction**

This high school baseball program manual has been developed to support the thousands of dedicated high school coaches around the country, in their quest to provide a positive, development based experience to their student-athletes. From high school programs with long-standing traditions of on-field excellence, to start up schools looking to get a foot hold in their states, this manual provides the framework for success that at all times puts the interests of the players at the forefront. While some sections of this manual may be more relevant to some coaches than other, taken as a whole, the information herein should serve as a blueprint for building a productive environment for the student-athlete, and a call to action for coaches everywhere to work towards the optimization of the high school baseball experience. Some key concepts that this manual covers include:

- The importance of underscoring the academic goals of the school
- How to develop practice plans that enable maximum engagement, movement and physical activity
- The benefits of supporting your players' participation in multiple sports
- Managing relationships within your program, including conflict resolution techniques
- Developing a positive culture that transcends the student-athlete experience through baseball
- Your program's role as a positive contributor within the local community
- Best practices concerning health and safety, and
- Keeping it fun!

## **Importance of a Program Manual**

A program manual is a high school coach's blueprint and the basic foundation for the layout of an ideal baseball program. It provides a year-round plan and intent for players, coaches, and the parent/guardian(s). The manual should give the program an organized picture of the direction for players both on and off the field. By establishing the principals called out through this manual, everyone involved with the program will know the expectations well before the season begins.

## **School Mission Statement & Philosophy**

The baseball program at \_\_\_\_\_ High School is designed to provide a positive and challenging experience both on and off the field for each individual involved. The following components make up what the \_\_\_\_\_ baseball program attempts to provide and teach every student-athlete:

1. A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE
2. THE ABILITY TO HANDLE ADVERSITY
3. BASEBALL SKILLS ON THE FIELD
4. THE ABILITY TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATE
5. BEING A POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE TEAMMATE
6. STAYING IN THE MOMENT AND ENJOY THE CHALLENGES
7. THE INDIVIDUAL PLAYER HAS CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN ATTITUDE & EFFORT
8. DEVELOPING THE ATTRIBUTES OF CLASS, CHARACTER, AND COMMITMENT
9. EMBRACE THE OPPORTUNITY TO AND THE PROCESS THAT SUPPORTS COACHING AND PLAYING SUCCESSFUL BASEBALL
10. DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE LONG FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

## **The Coach**

The coach is the one who is in charge of the entirety of the program. Coaches have a great amount of responsibility as they are the ones who guide and teach the players all year long. A coach's mental game can often be the difference between failure and success for a team. At all times the coach must put the best interests of their student-athletes and the team ahead of other result-based outcomes.

### ***Concepts and Thoughts***

The coaching staff should answer the following questions for self-evaluation:

1. How important is it to win games and championships?
2. How much time should each member of the coaching staff commit to the program?
3. How should the coaching staff help the present players focus on the details of the game?
4. After every practice, coaches need to evaluate how the practice met its objectives. After this, it is a good idea to update the next practice according to what the coaching staff as a whole believes is needed on the field.
5. What are the coaching staff's roles in game day management?
6. Has any member of the coaching staff ever done something to create a negative atmosphere?



### ***Words Worth Understanding***

The following are sayings that apply both in the sport of baseball and in life that may be beneficial to remember throughout the season.

1. Leadership and direction start with the coach
2. The success is in the struggle
3. Caring is the ultimate competitive advantage
4. People become who they hang around
5. All should be held accountable
6. A coach should be the best that they can be
7. Ego is the most damaging trait in the sport
8. How can integrity be implied in action?
9. Who are truly the opponents?

### ***Description of a Positive High School Baseball Coach***

The following are characteristics that describe a positive High School baseball coach:

1. Has a love for the players
2. Loves the game of baseball
3. Communicates well to the age group
4. Communicates well with parent/guardian(s)
5. Sets goals and has intent for practice and games
6. Sets behavior and sportsmanship goals
7. Establishes and is a role model for lifestyle habits and holistic athlete development
8. Stays positive, but firm in handling players
9. Makes the game fun (have a rewards system)

A coach should NEVER underestimate the influence that they have on their players. Players want structure and guidance. Every player has to believe in themselves and the system that the coach has developed to teach baseball, play as a team, and foster sportsmanship. Coaches need to create and develop character, not characters; there is an important difference.

## ***Duties of Athletic Personnel***

1. Duty to Plan
  - a. Have a yearly plan, keep it, and follow it
  - b. Prevent or reduce injury and loss by developing responsive strategies in:
    - i. Coaching competence
    - ii. Appropriate activities that consider age, maturity, and environmental conditions
    - iii. Injury response
    - iv. Child advocacy in cases of alcohol and other drug abuse or family neglect or abuse
2. Duty to Supervise
  - a. A coach must be:
    - i. Physically present
    - ii. Provide competent instruction
    - iii. Structure practices that are appropriate for the age and maturity of players, and keep the athletes active
    - iv. Prevent foreseeable injuries and respond to injury or trauma in an approved manner
  - b. This duty requires supervisors to ensure that facilities are locked and that students are denied access when a competent staff member cannot be physically present to supervise
  - c. A coach must also supervise the condition, safe usage, maintenance and upkeep of equipment and facilities
3. Duty to Assess an Athlete's Readiness for Practice and Competition
  - a. Coaches are required to assess the health and physical or maturational readiness skills and physical condition of athletes
  - b. Athletes must be medically screened in accordance with state association or other administrative bodies regulations before participating in tryouts, practice, or competition
  - c. Injured athletes who require the services of a physician may not return to practice or competition without written permission of the physician
4. Duty to Maintain Safe Playing Conditions
  - a. Coaches are considered trained professionals who possess a higher level of knowledge and skill that permits them to identify foreseeable causes of injury inherent in defective equipment or hazardous environments
  - b. Weather conditions must be considered and athletes should not be subjected to intense or prolonged conditioning during periods of extreme heat and humidity
  - c. A plan for monitoring and responding to dangerous weather conditions is necessary
5. Duty to Provide Proper Equipment
  - a. Coaches must ensure that athletes are properly equipped with clean, durable and safe equipment
  - b. Protective equipment must carry a NOCSAE (National Operating Commission on Safety in Athletic Equipment) certification and must be checked for proper fit and wearing
  - c. Athletes must wear protective equipment any time they are exposed to the full rigors of practice or competition



6. Duty to Instruct Properly
  - a. Athletic practices must be characterized by instruction that accounts for a logical sequence of fundamentals that lead to an enhanced progression of player knowledge, skill and capability
  - b. Instruction must demonstrate appropriate and safe technique and must include warning about unsafe technique and prohibited practices
  
7. Duty to Match Athletes During Practice
  - a. Athletes in practices should be matched with consideration for:
    - i. Maturity
    - ii. Skill
    - iii. Age
    - iv. Size
    - v. Speed
  
8. Duty to Condition Properly
  - a. Practices must account for a progression of cardiovascular and musculoskeletal conditioning regimens that prepare athletes sequentially for more challenging practices and competitive activities
  - b. Consideration must be given to weather, maturational and readiness factors
  
9. Duty to Ensure Athletes are Covered by Injury Insurance
  - a. Athletes must be cleared through the athletic office prior to participation and should not be allowed to participate without this clearance
  
10. Duty to Develop/Follow an Emergency Response Plan
  - a. Plans must be in place to:
    - i. Manage uninjured team members while emergency care is being administered to an injured athlete
    - ii. Ensure access to a stocked first aid kit, spine board and other emergency response equipment
    - iii. Access to a telephone and ensure a timely call to EMS
    - iv. Expedite rapid access by EMS to the injured athlete by stationing coaches or team members at driveways, parking lots, entry doors and remote hallways
  
11. Duty to Provide Proper Transportation
  - a. Ensure that all athletes are on the bus before it departs from an away contest
  - b. Coaches and/or parent drivers must have administrative volunteer driver forms to drive athletes
  
12. Duty to Select, Train, and Supervise Coaches
  - a. Athletic administrators will be expected to ensure all coaches are capable of providing safe conditions and activities as outlined in herein

## Coach's Declaration

The following are questions for coaches to consider in preparing for the upcoming season. The way a coach answers these questions will help to shape the core fundamentals of the program and the coach's personal coaching philosophy.

1. What is the general philosophy on directing a baseball program?
2. How can the player be helped in order to successfully balance school and baseball?  
*Remember, the players are in fact students first; therefore, academics should come before baseball. Having a program with academic-based policies will help to ensure that each player is working to prepare themselves for life after baseball.*
3. What are the objectives and visions for the program, and how will they be communicated to the players?
4. What type of relationship should the coaching staff have with the following people?
  - a. School Administration
  - b. Coaches
  - c. Players
  - d. Parent/Guardian(s)
  - e. Community  
*All parties mentioned above play a part in a school's baseball program. There needs to be an established line of communication with all that will allow for them to be a part of the program in a positive way.*
5. What is the coaching staff's philosophy on multi-sport athletes?  
*Keep in mind that there are many benefits to athletes participating in multiple sports throughout the year.*
6. What will the year-long program look like?  
*Remember, there are many benefits to playing multiple sports and athletes should take at least 3 months off from baseball competition each year.*
7. Will camps and clinics be run for youth players and coaches in the surrounding area?
8. What type of community service projects will the team be involved in?
9. How much involvement will the coaches have in different coaches' associations in the state and across the country?
10. How will the media be involved to help promote the program?

## Establishing a Team Culture

The simple definition of culture is a way of life. Team culture is the most important ingredient in establishing on and off the field excellence. There are many components that make up all cultures. The following is a list of these components related to a positive sports or team culture.

### *Off-Field*

1. Academics philosophy and approach
2. What are the player's priorities aside from baseball?
3. Relationships with teachers and administration
4. Relationships with fellow students
5. Communication and relationships with parents and family members
6. Support for other school athletic teams and extracurricular activities
7. Expectation of behavior socially, parties, and attending outside and school events
8. Respect for the program in all off-field situations including social media
9. Respect and relationships with fellow teammates off the field
10. Providing community service in which the coach and players determine the type

### *On-Field*

1. Approach to practice. The areas we can control by choice include: attitudes, effort, having no excuses, the willingness to improve a skill set, the importance of mental focus and paying attention, owning one's actions, holding oneself accountable, and the approach to helping teammates get better.
2. Embrace adversity and failure. Allow failure to become the best teacher. Mental intent to not make the same mistakes repeatedly.
3. The communication and relationships with captains and assistant coaches to help facilitate the team's identity and culture are critical.
4. It is important that the team and coaches communicate and make a list of components they choose to be identified with. When both coaches and players establish these, it provides ownership of their own team culture.
5. Head coaches need to model all behaviors they are asking their players to do. Respect is earned on both sides with coaches and players.
6. Body language communicates a clear picture of the team culture; this starts with the coach.
7. Roles for players and coaches need to be established and praised for maintaining a positive culture to survive a season.
8. It is productive if the head coach meets with the captains every Monday or in the beginning of the week. The purpose is to discuss team chemistry, practice format and preparation moving forward with the purpose and intent for the week. Seek their advice. Players mental being is important because they need to feel comfortable disagreeing with the coach. Remember whatever the process to make a team better in every aspect is the ultimate end goal. Stuff our egos and do not care who gets the credit for moving forward. It is amazing how much can be accomplished when everyone involved in the program is on the same page.
9. Create an open-door policy with players. Let them know the parameters and what this really looks like. Accountability and honesty are at the fore front of these meetings. The more detailed, the better. A suggestion to the player is to write down any questions and concerns they might have prior to meeting with the coach.
10. Learn to understand and trust the whole development process.

NOTE: Be ready as a coach to site examples of all of the above behaviors on and off the field.

## **Team and Program Management**

The baseball program cannot exist without the team and coach that hold it together. The following are areas that make up the team and program management at the high school.

### ***Player Responsibilities***

The team should take care of the field after every practice and home game. For players, this means cleaning up the dugouts, raking the field, and more. Below are rules and tasks for players to complete each day that they take the field:

#### *Rules:*

1. Take pride in what one does as a player
2. When finished with one job, help with another job
3. The individual player is done when the team is done

#### *Tasks:*

1. Sweep Home Dugout
2. Sweep Visitor Dugout
3. Rake, Groom, & Tarp Plates
4. Rake, Tamp, & Tarp Pitcher's Mound
5. Pick up Clay on Field
6. Broom Edges of Grass
7. Get out/Set up Hose
8. Clean up Trash (stands, dugouts, etc.)
9. Clean Bullpens (Home and Visitor)

### ***Staff Responsibilities***

Coaches at the high school level are some of the most influential people in the athlete's life. This is quite a responsibility and should be kept in proper perspective.

The best characteristic coaches can give athletes is by demonstrating every day how much they care for them and for the game of baseball. Leadership, passion, guidance, and direction are traits that are contagious to players when displayed by their coaches. Coaches have to be able to model what their intent is for players on and off the field. The intent should be to care enough to discipline and praise players when the opportunities present themselves. The will and effort to win is important, but one of the most important jobs of a coach is to keep the team in the moment and create the most positive team and selfless environment. Each player being the best that they can be in every moment is all coaches can ask of them. Doing this together as a team is the best gift as coaches and a team can give to one another.

## ***Philosophy of Coaching for the Staff***

1. Love Players — Players play harder for a coach when they know they are trusted and cared for.
2. Game — Coaches should be enthusiastic and expect a lot from the players.
3. Coaching — Remember, coaches coach for the player, not for themselves.
4. Ego — Ego is the most damaging trait in sports, so one should be cautioned on theirs.
5. Accountability & Responsibility – Hold each other accountable and responsible for actions.
6. Teach the Game – Coaches need to take the players through the basics —yelling at players for something a coach has not taught is the coach's fault. Coaches are completely responsible for the player's preparation.
7. Be on time, organized, and positive.
8. Tonality and non-verbal behavior (body language) can be a damaging trait, therefore be aware of oneself.
9. Assume Nothing — make the player demonstrate and repeat what the coaches are teaching them.
10. Teach the Ability to Practice — competition and measurement are extremely motivating for players— the coaches need to set the attitude and intent.
11. Team first in everything that is done, no exceptions, no excuses.
12. Remember, baseball is a game.

The head coach sets the direction and vision for the program and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program on and off the field. Every assistant coach is different, but the philosophy, discipline, and treatment of players by coaches needs to be consistent throughout each team.

1. The communication and terminology of how coaches teach the game should be simple and consistent for every team. When players move from Freshman team to Jr. Varsity to Varsity, the terminology should remain consistent to allow a player to have a comfortable routine in trying to improve to get to the next level.
2. The head coach needs to make sure that the assistant coaches are being used where their strengths are in teaching the game.
3. Staff meetings are great times for the head coach to get input from the other coaching staff on preparation and practice organization.
4. If there is a disagreement, coaches should handle it away from the players. All individuals on the coaching staff should be respectful of each other when working through disagreements.

5. Players need to see their coaches having fun together and handling adversity in a positive manner, especially in games.

The head coach's responsibility is to communicate the roles and responsibilities expected of the entire coaching staff:

1. Tryouts

Does the head coach want the lower level coaches doing the final releases? Does the head coach want to do all the releases with input from their coaches?

Always have face-to-face meetings, with another coach present, for each player released so they can know exactly how to improve themselves in the future. Do not email or post lists as this is asking for trouble. Players deserve a coach's time. Remember, most players have put in a lot to try to make the team, therefore respect and honor that effort.

2. Fundraising

How does the head coach want the assistants involved?

3. Field Work

Besides the players helping out, in what aspects does the head coach want the assistants to help in maintaining the fields?

4. Parent/Guardian Issues

Always have another coach with the head coach in the meeting. The head coach should be involved in all of these for many reasons. Depending on the nature of the meeting, it can be parent/guardian(s) and player or just parent/guardian(s).

5. Playing Time

Playing time at all levels needs to be documented. A record of innings played should be kept for each player. Pitch counts and using the Pitch Smart regulations provided by USA Baseball should be a staple in the program to protect players now and in the future. Medical research backs this program up with strong data on arm care issues. Some coaches plan the pitching out for the week. Things change but planning this is a good idea if a coach can do it. Be careful what a coach says to players about playing time. If a coach makes a promise, back it up, otherwise a coach should refrain from saying anything. Playing time is always the biggest issue to players and families, so be careful how these issues are handled. Make it clear to the assistant coaches to not say anything about playing time to the players. All of this comes through the head coach. Players are observant and listen to coaches talk about other players. If they hear negative things, there is a chance that it will be shared with a lot of people. It is best to keep any negative comments behind closed doors. It is also advisable to not take any gifts from parent/guardian(s) whose children are still playing under a coach's lead. There is always something that is expected back whether or not it is stated in the exchange.

In conclusion, if players see coaches leading and working together, the players typically will follow that direction and have effective communication.



## ***Strength and Conditioning***

The off-season is an opportunity to train the body to become more functional and balanced. The ability to play the sport of baseball improves immensely when a player trains properly. A well informed program can leverage the importance of nutrition, sleep, and mental and physical training for their collective benefit. If players can develop healthy habits, then there is a great chance at having a successful season on the field.

It is important for strength and conditioning plans to be individually tailored to the player, and should include both physical and cognitive components. What are the player's needs, where do they need to improve strength, what type of player or position does the athlete play? Any program should touch on strength, speed, power, explosiveness, mobility, stability, flexibility, and brain speed while layering in variability and adaptability.

Designing the right program.

- Step 1- Decide on a realistic schedule (off-season/in season/pre-season), how many weeks of training, days per week of training.
- Step 2- Have a goal for each phase (break up into 3 or 4 week phases), while working on traits to maximize the individual's athletic ability.
- Step 3- Have a purpose for each exercise.

Upperclassmen should help the underclassmen during training to provide a positive and meaningful experience for both parties. This type of team atmosphere develops tremendous chemistry between the players all year long.

Before each training session, there should always be a dynamic stretching period to efficiently and effectively warm up the muscles. Stretching properly in each phase is extremely important to the player's health. Post-session stretching can be a combination of core development and static stretching with yoga.

Again, the more individualized each player's strength and conditioning program is, the more productive the results will be.

## **The Off-Season**

Every coach can have a different definition of the off-season, and this can vary in different parts of the country. The off-season is also a good time for the team to outreach by serving in their communities. Coaches who don't encourage players to do so are doing the players a disservice by not getting them involved. Community service is a great way to support other sports and athletes in the school all while forming connections to the community. The following are topics that need to be addressed for the time during the off-season.

### ***Active Rest***

Research has shown that there should be a certain amount of time for active rest for players. This can mean playing another sport, which should be encouraged, or taking time off completely from baseball. Fun sports for baseball players to play in the off-season that can benefit their baseball game include badminton, racquet ball, tennis, basketball, flag football, soccer, track and field, and lacrosse. Pitchers should take 4 months off from overhead throwing. The off-months are beneficial mentally, emotionally, and physically. High school baseball players' bodies and minds are changing at a rapid rate; therefore, active rest is a key to their development.

### ***The Benefits of Playing Multiple Sports***

The end of baseball season can be a gloomy time for everyone. The transition into cooler weather and the changing of the seasons into fall can be tough for anyone who enjoys spending their spring and summer days on the baseball field. While these changes signify the end of the baseball season, they don't have to signify the end of sports participation for the year.

There are many benefits to playing multiple sports. The athletes in the program are in high school and their interests, health, and safety, should be kept as the top priority. The players need to be provided opportunities that will help them grow as individuals on and off the field. All coaches want successful programs, but the core of the program needs to be the student-athlete.

The following are positive benefits of playing multiple sports:

1. Physical injury rates from overuse decrease,
2. Emotional and mental burn out decreases,
3. The player improves at learning to compete,
4. The player learns how to be a positive teammate,
5. The player learns how to better handle adversity and failure,
6. Playing for a school team is a once in a life time experience, so players should take full advantage of the opportunity,
7. The player is able to experience different coaching styles which can prepare them for different leadership styles that they will face in life,

8. The player learns to manage their time more efficiently due to their busy schedule,
9. Learning different sport skills helps one become a better person and all-around athlete, and
10. Ability to further build confidence.

NOTE: No student-athlete should ever be pressured by any coach to choose between sports. Coaches in all sports need to communicate with each other and learn to share athletes because that is the win-win situation for all. Players observing coaches from different sports cooperating together for the benefit of the athlete is a great life lesson to be learned about teamwork. Ego can be the most damaging trait in sports; therefore, coaches should always remember to keep theirs in check. Coaches need to always let the athlete choose what they want to participate in.

## **Pre-Season**

There should be a defined timeline for what is perceived as the pre-season. Generally, it is 4 to 5 weeks prior to the season starting. The pre-season comes after an off-season of possible training or playing another sport. The following should be addressed in regard to the pre-season:

### ***Planning for the Season***

Each State Association has rules and policies about this timeline, so the coaching staff should educate themselves on the specific policies for the district. These rules and policies include the type of contact, instruction, and use of the school facility that the program is legally allowed to have during the pre-season. Based on these variables, some coaches may be more limited on preparing their teams during the pre-season.

Questions and situations to be considered are as follows.

1. Pre-season is a time when players need to start throwing, fielding, hitting, pitching, and conditioning. The arm needs close to 4 weeks of preparation to be in shape for tryouts and the season. Players should gradually strengthen the arm through long toss and throw more volume for at least 3 weeks, not necessarily throwing long distance until the player's arm is ready. A coach should have light bullpen sessions for pitchers because they will not be ready for at least 3 weeks. If a player is a multi-sport athlete whose season runs into the baseball season, it will take some time for them to be baseball ready. Baseball preparation activity for a multisport athlete should be approved with the coach they are currently playing for in-season. Ex. Players who play basketball in the off-season will be ready with their legs and conditioning, but their arm will not be ready.
2. Conditioning during the pre-season can be a combination of strength, power, and explosion on off-days from baseball. This can potentially be conducted twice a week. Yoga is another great activity to keep the mind and the body in a relaxed and balanced state. A coach should try to get gym, or any indoor facility, time if available. If the school is fortunate to be in warm weather, all training can be outside if the facilities for it are available.
3. It is common for players in warm weather climates to play club baseball prior to the school season. A player should be aware of how much they are pitching. Pitchers, as well as coaches, should be tracking how many innings they have thrown. No pitcher should be throwing over 100 innings in a calendar year. More information on pitching can be found via PitchSmart, a joint arm-care initiative between MLB and USA Baseball.
4. Coach pitch games are a great way to lead up to a season. Advantages of coach pitch are that more action can happen offensively, players are able to get more repetitions defensively, and there are plenty of baserunning repetitions.
5. If there are certain restrictions on workouts by the school association, see if open field workouts are acceptable. Ex. This would be like an open gym for basketball. It can be structured so that there is organization and intent. This provides an opportunity for the coaching staff to see which players lead the team and exhibit initiative.

6. In any off-season or pre-season activity, coaches need to have a permission slip and/or liability form for the parent/guardian(s) to fill out and turn in. Players should have their physical completed before the season starts. The procedures and policies for these activities should be checked with the school and the school district.
7. Another consideration is the balance of the student athlete's life. Coaches need to make sure academically, socially, mentally, and emotionally, the players have the time to develop life skills and relationships. Remember, a lot of kids have to work a job to help support their families. Coaches should be considerate and respectful of those situations. The coach has to make the decision whether these workouts in the off-season and pre-season are mandatory or optional.

Get educated. The greatest teachers are those that never stop learning. A bevy of information is available through the USA Baseball Develops Website at [www.USABDevelops.org](http://www.USABDevelops.org). Similarly, coaching clinics are available around the country in the form of the USA Baseball Coaches Clinics. Visit [www.USABDevelops.org](http://www.USABDevelops.org) to learn more.

8. The coaching staff needs to balance their own lives on and off the field. Coaches do what they can. A coach needs to ensure that they have enough time for coaching without causing stress to themselves and to those in their lives.

## In-Season

The in-season is a time when tryouts, games, and practices are the biggest tasks on the coaches' and players' hands. The areas that need to be addressed are as follows.

### ***Tryouts***

Tryouts are a stressful time for players, parent/guardian(s), and coaches. The best way to handle this stress for all parties is through communication and organization throughout the process. It is beneficial for coaches to hold a meeting with parent/guardian(s) of prospective players a week prior to tryouts. There should also be a meeting for all players who will be trying out.

Below is a list of skills and characteristics a coach can use when evaluating players in tryouts:

1. Talent - this includes both physical and mental talent, as well as baseball instincts and baseball IQ.
2. Academic Progress and Work Ethic - this relates to how the player is managing their time and effort with school work when they are not at the field.
3. Effort and Attitude - the player has control over how much effort they give in tryouts and they have control over maintaining a positive attitude.
4. Good Teammate - a player should always be positive and supportive of their teammates.
5. Being Coachable - does the player listen, respect coaches and teammates, and take constructive criticism well?
6. Physical and Mental Skills - the following should be evaluated:
  - a. Arm Strength and Accuracy
  - b. Soft and Quick Hands
  - c. Quick and Functional Footwork
  - d. Playing and Practicing at Game Speed
  - e. Handling Adversity in a Positive Way and Staying Confident
  - f. Staying in the Moment
  - g. Have a Sense of Humor
  - h. Hitting with Consistency and Power
  - i. The Intangibles (Depending on the coach's style, this may vary. "Is the player a good teammate? Do they hustle?" are examples some coaches use)
  - j. Baserunning Instincts
  - k. Communication on the Field
  - l. Decision Making Qualities

The time limit on how many days tryouts last depend on a school's decision and policy. All coaches on staff should evaluate every player, from freshmen to seniors. The final decision on every player should be made by the head coach. The decisions that are made vary between baseball programs. For example, some programs want the head coach to make decisions at each level of the process



instead of just the final decision. This is entirely up to the school district's philosophy and the coaching staff of the program.

### ***Tryout Format***

There are many ways of evaluating players in tryouts. In planning the tryout sessions, there are preliminary questions that should be answered and reminders to note:

1. Are the tryouts going to be indoors or outdoors?  
If there will be both, coaches need to prepare for both.
2. How many coaches will be a part of the evaluation? Should every coach be involved with each player's evaluation, or should it be by levels?  
Ex. Freshman, JV, Varsity
3. What type of session gives the coach the chance to evaluate a player's skills and talent?
4. How can the coaching staff quickly learn the names of the students in the tryout?  
Suggestion: Put the athlete's name across their hat with tape.
5. The more game-like situations the players are put in, the better the evaluation will be.
6. Ensure all coaches are organized for the session.  
Ex. During a defensive specialty drill, have a coach that has expertise in the specific area run and evaluate the drill.
7. Coaches need to meet after every day of tryouts to establish lists of players to watch closer. There are some players the coaches know will have a strong chance to make the team prior to tryouts, unless they eliminate themselves with poor work ethic and character issues. Coaches want kids who are both playmakers and a leader on the field that can guide their team to victory. The evaluation of each player should be recorded so when a one-on-one is held with them, it is a complete and thorough evaluation. Parent/guardian(s) and players want to know this information and how to possibly improve for a later tryout or for a tryout the following year.

### ***Pre-Tryout Player One-on-One Form***

The pre-tryout player one-on-one form is beneficial to both the coach and the athlete. This form will help the coach to know who the player is in regard to their desires for the team and their interests in life. Coaches should always meet with their players and allow the players to communicate their wants and desires to the coach. An example of this form can be found at the end of this manual in the "templates" section. All "one-on-one" meetings must be done with another staff member present.

## ***Planning a Practice Schedule for Tryouts***

Planning a practice schedule for tryouts is an essential part of the tryout process as a whole. Having an efficiently run practice is the way to have accurate and game-like situations for the players, allowing them to show their skills to the coaching staff.

### *First Day Tryout Example:*

1. 5 Minute Meeting:
  - a. The coach should talk about the specific tryout objective and walk the players through it.
  - b. Let the players know that making mistakes is a part of the tryout.
  - c. How the players move on in the session and handle their mistakes is a big part of the evaluation. Baseball is a game of failure, so they need to embrace adversity and move on.
2. Dynamic Stretching:
  - a. Get the players moving and ready. Static and still stretching are not productive ways to prepare athletes for a practice. See template in the back of this document.
3. Throwing and Warming Up:
  - a. This is a time to evaluate a player. If a player cannot play catch, they probably cannot play. The coaches should watch closely for the players that throw with intent and purpose, as they will probably make the team. If a structured warmup is desired, it should be taught to the potential players prior to the session.
4. Pre-Game:
  - a. This is a good time to evaluate players because the coaches have a chance to watch players with the combination of throwing and fielding. The coaching staff should let the players go to the positions that they want to try out for, so the players know they have the opportunity to win the position. The coaches can later change these positions using their best judgment to help the player make the team.
5. Coach Pitch Game Situations:
  - a. Coach pitch game situations are a great evaluator because they allow the coaches to see how the players react and communicate in games, which is an essential part of being a part of a team. Sometimes players look great in drills defensively and offensively, but it does not translate into a game and some players in tryouts might have a hard time catching a good varsity throw or reacting to the ball off the bat. Runners should be on base during these situations as it creates more action. Baserunning, hitting, communication, defense, and a player's instincts are all examples of what can be evaluated during these coach pitch games.
6. Specific Position Drills:
  - a. Players should be allowed to work in isolated situations where coaches can evaluate footwork, angles, arm strength, arm accuracy, functional game speed and quickness. The coaches will notice that the better players will start to stand out in these drills.

## 7. Live On-Field Batting Practice:

- a. This is a good time for coaches to watch swing path, exit speed, contact, and offensive power. On the defensive side, it is a great way to watch infielders and outfielders take jumps and angles to the baseball. Coaches should make sure there is an environment and purpose for the defensive part of this. The coaching staff needs to let the players know this is a big part of the evaluation.

### *Time Organization*

1. On the days that there is a live scrimmage, make sure that the pitcher, catcher and the hitters are listed for that specific segment. If there are tunnels, coaches can throw live and evaluate hitters at the same time. If there are 2 fields, tryouts can be run even more efficiently. **Ex.** If there are two fields, one field could be for defensive evaluation and the other for live hitting practice or scrimmage. The names of the players should be listed, as well as how they rotate through the practice, or it will not be an efficient use of time.
2. It is important to plan the first 3 or 4 days of tryouts with the entire coaching staff so that the whole staff is on the same page for evaluating the players. It is well worth the coaches' time to have a comprehensive tryout, so the players have an opportunity to display all of their abilities.
3. Changing a player's position needs to be done if the coaches think it will give the player a better chance to make and help the team. Make sure the reasoning behind the position change is explained to the player and that it is a positive change to themselves and the team.

### **Evaluations**

Evaluations during a tryout should be kept organized and specific. At the end of the day, these evaluations inform the player of how they can better build themselves as a player, and the evaluations allow for coaches to make the best decisions when putting the team together.

#### *Evaluation of Speed and Quickness*

There are a variety of drills capable of measuring speed and quickness. Some examples are as follows:

1. Measure the time it takes for the player to get to the 10-yard line, the 30-yard line, this gives quickness and speed as a measurement. Distances that are more appropriate to actual game play in baseball should take precedent over a test like running the 60-yard dash, which athletes will never do in a linear path during a game.
2. Lateral quickness. This test should be done in both directions to bring insight into an athlete potentially moving better in one direction and not the other. Ex. 5-10-5 Shuttle Drill. Set 3 cones 5 feet apart. Have the players begin at the middle cone and move 5 feet laterally to the outside cone. Immediately move 10 feet to the other outside cone, and then back to the middle cone. This should be timed for accurate lateral quickness.

3. Record the amount of time that it takes a player to run from home, around the bases and back to home. Be sure to take the time at each base, first, second, and third, as they run to home.
4. Time players during scrimmages as this will allow for the most accurate measurement. Ex. Time the baserunners to any of the bases. Time pitchers take to deliver the pitch. Time the catcher takes to throw to 2nd. Time for the infield to make the play.
5. Working angles by fielding fly balls thrown by a coach is much like a receiver's running routes. This gives the coach a good read on the player's hand eye coordination and the ability to run with a glove. Under these circumstances, a coach can determine if the player has the ability to make the play.
6. Coaches should test a pitcher's ability to field bunts and cover first base. Finding out who the athletes are can be seen in a simple drill like this. It's a good idea to time the players with a stop watch. Anytime a measurement can be taken, it provides great feedback to the player. This also goes for catchers fielding bunts and throwing to the bases.

#### *Testing Infielders for Quickness and Soft Hands*

1. 4 Square Throwing
  - a. Have the coach time the players as they throw around the bases for an evaluation of footwork, hand quickness, accuracy and arm strength.
2. 4.3 Drill
  - a. Coaches can hit ground balls to the infielders and see if the players have the ability to throw out a runner that would take 4.3 seconds to run to first base. This forces the players to go at game speed which coaches need to see. (This drill can be done the same with additional time for double plays.)
3. Fungos
  - a. Coaches can hit fungos and shout out the situation each time with or without baserunners.
4. 3 Man Relay
  - a. Coaches should have the players stand 80 to 90 feet apart and have them relay the ball back and forth as fast as they can with the middle player doing the relay footwork. Allowing 20 to 30 seconds is plenty of time for this.

#### *Catchers*

1. Coaches should evaluate catchers during bullpen sessions, as well as on the field.
2. Taking pop times with a batter swinging at the pitch allows for a more accurate game-like time.
3. There should be a variety of blocking and receiving drills.
4. Evaluate pitch calling and handling of pitchers during the catcher's tryout scrimmages and bullpen sessions.

5. Does the catcher lead and communicate on situations where they have to make the call on where the pitch goes?

### *Outfielders*

1. Use drills that evaluate communication, angles to balls, and the ability to close on ground balls.
2. It is important to have players throw to bases, with and without relays, during the evaluation. The players can throw to whatever base is desired by the coach when evaluating.
3. The best time for coaches to evaluate outfielders is during scrimmages and batting practice. How hard do the players work on making the correct outfield play? What type of jumps and reactions do they get off the bat in BP or the game? What type of route runner are they? Are they able and agile in all directions?

### *Pitchers*

1. Let the pitchers call their own pitches at first, that way, the player owns the pitch and has no excuses if they do not execute it. If coaches call the pitches in the tryout, the player can blame the coach and make excuses about getting hit or walking hitters. Coaches need to measure and chart the pitchers' pitches in scrimmages. Let the pitchers hold runners on their own to see how well they do it.
2. If a team cannot get outside during the tryout, simulate a game with a hitter standing in, but not swinging, unless there is a set up to do it.
3. It takes a lot of time to simulate a game in a tryout. The coach needs to be sure to have it organized so there is no lag time between pitchers on the field. Depending on how many pitchers there might be, dictate the count that is started with. Ex. Start the count 0-0 or 1-1. Putting runners on is a good way to see how the pitchers react during the situation.
4. Have pitchers throw to the appropriate talent for their level. Ex. If a pitcher is trying out for varsity, it is a good idea to have them throw to veteran varsity hitters. This can also work the other way for hitters. If one wants to know if a player can hit varsity pitching, have the player face veteran varsity pitchers.

NOTE: More drills can be found on the USA Baseball Develops website at [www.USABDevelops.org](http://www.USABDevelops.org), or via the USA Baseball Mobile Coach App, downloadable from the App Store on iPhone or Android.

### ***Process of Releasing Players***

For coaches, it can be difficult to release players from the team, but it is often necessary. The coaching staff should establish rules before the season starts to eliminate any confusion about the process.

Releasing of players needs to be done in the presence of another staff member. In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, the coaching staff should identify if there is another role on the team that this

athlete could fill? Thus, removing the need to cut players, could they fill a student manager role? Help with practice or game operations and set-up? Keep stats...etc.

When releasing players from the team, a coach should take the following steps:

1. Bring the player in and talk to them about their evaluation.
2. Players need to know how to improve their skills if they plan on trying out again.
3. Encourage the player to try other sports in the off-season to better their skills as a baseball player. Coaches should always encourage multi-sport athletes.

A school district may already have a policy on the process of releasing players. Other times, the individual schools within the district have the latitude to release players their own way. A coach should always ensure that the athletic director and principal approve the policy. Lists and email lists are not advisable ways of releasing kids, as these methods are impersonal. The best way to release a player is to meet with each player individually and let them know the honest evaluation of their tryout and their possible future in the program. The head coach should always have another coach in the meeting and allow the player to ask questions. Aside from one-on-ones with those who are being released, there should also be one-on-ones with the players that make the team. With the players that have earned a spot on the team, coaches need to be honest with the player's contributing role that they have earned at this time. The player needs to know that roles change all the time. It is possible that a player will quit at this time if they do not like the evaluation given by the coaching staff, and this is completely the player's choice. When coaches talk with each player, it shows the player that the coaches care enough to sit down with them and give them the attention they deserve. Remember: most of these players have put in significant time in preparation for the tryout.



## **Practices**

Practices are ultimately the key to winning games. Everything a player knows about the game should come from practices. The better a practice is, the more players learn and use that knowledge in coming games.

### ***Goals of Practices***

The major goal is to provide an efficient, productive, and purposeful training session that gives every player the opportunity to improve daily mentally, emotionally, and physically.

The following is a list of components that make a training session flow with intent and purpose:

1. Always set the mental approach and passion for each session. Players feed off of the coaches with positive energy and accountability.
2. Teach the players how to practice so they are in charge of their own efforts and performance. At times, players need to evaluate the practice along with the coaches. A great question to be asked on a regular basis is: do the players feel prepared when game time comes?
3. Players need to pay attention and be efficient with time constraints in drills and situations that they practice on.
4. Keep it simple and practice the areas that happen most often in the games.
5. A goal for every practice needs to include working on the fundamentals of fielding, throwing, situational hitting and pitching. Players should know their job pre-pitch so when that situation happens in a game, they are so confident that they execute it without thinking. Players must practice at game speed or beyond game speed.
6. Allow players to figure themselves out on their own. They need time to feel it. This means a pitcher that is commanding a lot of pitches needs to understand the feeling of why it is happening. The bottom line is to make the practice fun, competitive, and challenging every day or else everyone's time is being wasted.
7. Failure will occur in every practice. Coaches need to teach players how to embrace this failure, learn from it, and move on. Make those moments fun challenges instead of stressful experiences that produce fear and doubt in players' minds. There are a lot of professional athletes that have overcome major obstacles because they chose to make adjustments. It is a choice.

### ***Planning the Practice Schedule***

The following are major considerations when planning the practice schedule for the season:

1. Delegate responsibilities amongst the coaching staff.
2. Use indoor and outdoor facilities to maximum efficiency

3. Coaches should plan practices with pace and intent to improve every day by being detailed and having sessions planned down to the minute. This pace and intent starts with the coaches and is hopefully followed by the players. Players have control over their personal approach to practice, so a coach should demand and command their attention. The best practice plans include all players and coaches at all times and enable maximum engagement, movement and physical activity.
4. Players prefer a competitive and organized practice
5. Always start practice with a quote or statement that can relate to life and choose a different player each day to explain what they think it means. Follow up with how the specific quote applies to the team and the sport they are playing. Doing this sets a tone and focus for that day's practice. This material can be a quote from an athlete or from historical events that have affected our lives.
6. The coach should identify a few things that the team should be striving for but ensure that these are process driven. Ex. Embrace the challenge of a 2-strike count or be a fighter and win every pitch mentally.
7. It is a motivator for players to have goals established for defensive positions. Ex. Have an outfield emphasis on great footwork and strong accurate throws when throwing into the infield and to the bases. Ex. Have a catcher blocking a ball with a runner on third base; this can be called a run saver. It is just as valuable as a run batted in.
8. Establish a goal when conducting drills or situational baseball. This way, players are being taught purpose and intent in a practice. Always relate the fundamentals the players are working on to the goal. Praise or give constructive criticism on the goal when it is performed correctly or incorrectly.
9. Practice the situations that happen most often in games. Perfecting fundamentals by quality focused repetitions in practice becomes an automatic response for players in a game. In this, players learn to not over-think the situation, which is what previously led to poor results.
10. Evaluate each practice and be flexible enough to change something for the next day. Include the coaching staff in these evaluations and ask the team what they feel they need to work on to better prepare themselves to execute in games. Players can provide great information. Sometimes coaches think they know the situation, but they often are not fully aware and do not want to ask for input. There are certain things that should be reviewed every day, such as signs offensively and defensively. Players might be afraid to ask certain questions fearing they will get in trouble, so the coaching staff should ensure that all questions are welcome.

### ***Planning the In-Season Practices as a Coaching Staff***

Practices can be called practices or training sessions. Training sessions tend to have a more focused approach. There are many areas to be included and a large amount of planning to do prior to the season with the staff.

Areas that need to be addressed include:

1. Staffing responsibilities and roles
2. Using the staff and their strengths are important. Determining their strengths are and how to use them needs to be discussed in detail.
3. Head coaches and the assistants need to be on the same page in the following areas:
  - a. Players need to see how the staff works as a team, the staff serving as a model for positive teamwork. This is referred to as team chemistry. Remember: coaches are a vital component of the chemistry of a team. Players take on the approach and the personality of the coaching staff, so the coaching staff should always be a good influence.

Ex. If the coach brings positive energy every day, then the players will reciprocate that positive energy.
  - b. The players need to understand that the coach responsible for a certain position is truly the head coach of that position.

Ex. The catching coach is the head coach for the catchers. The players need to understand that the head coach of a certain position will have input on their playing time based on that coach's evaluation of the player.
  - c. Organization and an efficient use of time in each training session are critical to produce the best team possible for game situations. The coach leads by example in this area.
  - d. Terminology on what is taught to the players needs to be consistent. It is confusing to a player if they receive 3 different evaluations in a practice on their mechanics. This is a way to mentally destroy a player.

NOTE: Do not take the athlete out of the athlete. Sometimes the best coaching is to leave the player alone, especially when things are going well, and the player is in a good mental state. Words can destroy a player's mindset, so the coaching staff needs to be aware of this. Coaches should suggest a drill to improve the athlete's skill. After this is a time period where the player needs to use what is taught to figure out how to continue to improve themselves in the game.
  - e. Coaches need to be good listeners. All players are different. Knowing this and managing it produces a great atmosphere to achieve excellence.
  - f. Practice or training sessions need to be detailed and posted each day for the team to use.
  - g. The coaching staff should assume that the players do not understand everything that is taught at first. Coaches should keep practices and/or training sessions simple. Make the player demonstrate physically a drill that was just taught to them. The players should always be able to understand the purpose and intent of what the coaches are teaching them. Understanding the whys of doing something are important for the player to trust and buy into whichever skills they are being taught.
  - h. The most critical component to running good sessions or practices is to take the time to teach players how to practice. Giving them ownership in their improvement as a player is essential in their personal progress in the game of baseball.

## **Practice Planning: Example**

To help coaches plan for practices, an example of a full practice is included in the back of this manual. Additional practice plans are available and may be customized by coaches within the USA Baseball Mobile Coach app.

## **Practice Planning: Mix it up, things to consider**

Practice plan vs. Schedule

1. Schedule – what we're doing when
2. Practice plan – how we're doing what with who (grill design + individual focus)

Principles

1. Best way to learn is to play
2. Keys to championship practice include ...
  - a. Game-like reps (want as many as possible)
  - b. Feedback (so ideally the task gives feedback)
3. Motivation is key (ideally include a sense of autonomy, mastery, purpose ... and fun!)

Variables

1. Speed/stress (added based on what a kid can handle and continue to stretch them some)
2. Decision points (separator in ability to play the game)
3. Mental toughness (confidence, concentration, composure)

Challenges (things that limit reps)

1. Field size
2. Number of players
3. Impact the pitcher has on the game

Creative Free Play Options

1. Pepper
2. Competitions (groundballs, line drives, etc.)
3. Pickle (rundowns)
4. Burn (catch play continuing to get closer and faster) or 4-corner
5. 27 outs (coach controlled, each BIP is a different situation, can do w/ or w/o baserunners, must get 27 outs in a row, back to 0 if a mistake)
6. Field/Defense variables (limited space or numbers)
  - a. Only cover one side of the field (ball hit to the other side is an out)
  - b. Only cover the middle of the field (2 infielders + 2 outfielders)
  - c. Infield only (bunts only or GBs only)
  - d. Pitcher's hand/mound (no 1Bman)
  - e. No catcher (forces pitchers to pitch to contact)
  - f. Ghost defense (imaginary defenders at typical positions)
7. Pitcher variable (trying to increase reps by decreasing the significance of the pitcher)
  - a. 3-2 count
  - b. Short toss (tee or soft toss other alternatives but strongly prefer overhand short toss as it is most game-like)

- c. Hitter throws up the ball and hits it
- 8. Situational games (vary the situation as often as players want)
  - a. Count (1-1 for more action, 3-2 for lots of action, 2-0 for hitter advantage, 0-2 for pitcher advantage)
  - b. Baserunners (runner at 1B to emphasize action (SB, bunts), runner at 2B (or 1B/2B), runner at 3B to stress that situation, etc.)
  - c. Outs (0, 1, or 2)
  - d. Inning (every inning is the 9th inning, tie game so you either win the game or not each inning)
- 9. Scoring variables (get runs or points (or extra points beyond the runs that are scored) for specific tasks other than runs ... can be included with any of the variables above as well)
  - a. Line drives (can work well if you're limited on numbers of players as well)
  - b. Situational hitting
  - c. 1st to 3rd, dirt balls, etc.
  - d. CRG game (SB is +1 and CS is -1)
  - e. Double plays (start w/ runner at 1B and every BIP is an opportunity for a DP)
  - f. Bunts (sac or base hit)
  - g. 1PK, FB down and away, executed CH, FB in, etc.
  - h. Each BIP is a point (offense or defense)
  - i. Double or triple the points for heightened events
  - j. Can award points for something specific or everything in the game
- 10. Player-owned/controlled (players get to pick what they're doing – either each inning or overall for the game so they've got autonomy)

### ***Specific Practice Objectives***

For each position, there are different aspects that need to be addressed in practices. The following sections include specifics for certain situations:

#### *Pitching Routines That Maximize Game Performance*

The following are pitching routines that will maximize game performance:

1. Main Concept: Always practice with a purpose.
2. Main Goal: Give your team an opportunity to get outs.
3. The Main 20:
  - I. Have year-round plan for physical conditioning and throwing that includes dedicated rest and recovery periods.
  - II. Have mental conditioning. Commit and trust the development process. The present moment is the only one that should exist in the pitcher's mind.
  - III. A pitcher should always have control over their emotions and body language. This also applies to the coach.

- IV. Pitchers need to work fast. Coaches should allow 12 seconds or less between pitches. Having this short of time span eliminates the pitcher from having too many thoughts.
- V. Pitchers need to control the running game. In holding the runner, the pitcher needs to mix up looks to bases and the timing of them, so the looks do not become predictable. Holding the runner must be practiced in bull pen sessions.
- VI. Execute and practice pickoffs daily.
- VII. Pitchers are middle infielders. They need to embrace the fact and practice it.
- VIII. Every bullpen has a purpose. During bullpens, pitchers need to be creative and have a competitive mentality. Pitchers need to be aware of the large difference of accuracy and precision of their pitches.
- IX. Be resilient.
- X. After a big offensive inning, the pitcher should attempt to shut the other team out.
- XI. Pitchers should communicate with the coach about game day preparation and routines because every pitcher is different.
- XII. Pitchers should work their mechanics so that they have a feel for when they are in the zone.
- XIII. Pitchers should be able to command their fast ball and changeup first. After accomplishing these, they should then work on a third pitch.
- XIV. As with all players, pitchers need to develop the ability to handle failure and get past it. Pitchers need to find their way and take the game one pitch at a time.
- XV. Remember the game of baseball is 9 defenders against the 1 hitter.
- XVI. Pitchers should have tunnel vision and focus on a tiny target in the catcher's mitt or else where.
- XVII. Pitchers should have backup plans to execute on hitters.
- XVIII. Pitchers need to challenge, attack, and challenge some more.
- XIX. Pitchers and catchers need to develop a positive relationship with one another and learn to trust each other.
- XX. Excellence comes from preparation for performance; therefore, in order to excel, pitchers need to give their best when preparing for a game whether in practice or in the bullpen before a game.



## *Practicing to Win the One Run Game*

A one run game can be a stressful time for players, coaches, and parents alike. If the players practice to win the one run game, they will be more prone to execute correctly in the games. The following are ways to practice to win the one run game:

### 1. Setting the Foundation

- a. The coach should have knowledge of each player's specific abilities.
- b. The players should be used where the team and the individual player has a greater chance for success.
- c. The intensity, intent, and efficiency should be set for practice.
- d. The players should be taught to embrace adversity.
- e. Each player should have confidence in the moment.

### 2. Execution of the Situation

#### **Pitching:**

1. Have a late inning situation. Have runners in scoring position with 1 out. Make a quality pitch and win the 0-0, 1-1, 2-2, 3-2, counts.
2. Pitchers need to change the momentum back to the pitcher's advantage by minimizing the big inning.
3. Have pitchers practice pitching from the stretch to be prepared for the one-run-games. When doing a bull pen workout, the pitcher should pitch 70% from the stretch and 30% from the windup. This is what usually happens in a game. If the pitcher only throws from the stretch, this concept does not apply.
4. Competitive bullpen sessions establish situations pitch by pitch.
5. Be careful with pickoffs. Timing is important and needs to be worked on.

#### **Hitting:**

1. Safety squeeze
2. Fake bunt slash
3. Fake bunt slash & hit and run
4. Hit and run

**Defending:**

1. Outfield positioning to make the right play
2. Do or die when appropriate
3. Factors leading to play infield back or in. Know the pitch and the hitter and the situation that is present.
4. Bunt defenses: keep simple, execute, and get an out
5. First and third from catcher/pick your spots to execute, have a plan

**Baserunning:**

1. Straight steal
2. Early or delay
3. Ball in dirt. Work on it mentally every pitch including during team BP.
4. Fake steal especially with 2 strikes on the board
5. Steal home
6. Fake bunt steal
7. Know where the ball is, signals, outs, defensive positioning and game situation. The coach is a stop sign.
8. Teach players to run independently

**Summary:**

1. Track the statistics in practice. Taking these provides motivation and an evaluation for the players. Ex. Score an entire hitting practice and record all the hard hits. At the end, tell the team the top 9 hitters for the day.
2. Note which players thrive in the moment
3. Keep it simple. Praise the mental effort to perform in the moment.
4. Establish confidence by preparing well. Having a process for preparing well will be proven in results.

### *Key Components of the Throwing Program*

1. Allow proper time to prepare the body and mind to throw. This is accomplished by an efficient dynamic stretch and arm care program.
2. There should be a type of band program to warmup and strengthen the stabilizer muscles that are critical to maintaining a healthy arm. These exercises and movements are designed to isolate those muscles and the connective tissue that help accelerate and decelerate the arm in the throwing motion.
3. Throwing: Minimum of 15 minutes. Long toss is heavily encouraged. The simplest way of completing this consists of two major phases. The “stretch out” and “pull down” phases. The stretch out phase is defined as throwing the ball with an arc on the way out to open the shoulder up. The throwing distances vary on the shape of the arm and more importantly, the player listening to their arm and how it feels on that day. The pull-down phase starts when the player has reached their maximum distance for that day. If the player feels that their arm is in shape, then they should now throw the ball on the line. Players can pull down with the intensity of their last throw at maximum distance and move in at 10-foot intervals until they reach 70 feet away from their partner. The number of pull-down throws thrown depends on the shape and feeling of the player’s arm that day. When pulling down, the player’s arm needs to be in ideal shape. If the player is starting to throw after weeks of not throwing, they should be stretching their arm out for close to 3 weeks to give the arm an opportunity to get in throwing shape.
4. Coaches need to be educated on the intent and purpose of the throwing program. It is important to educate each player on listening to how their arm feels on a daily basis. Ex: If a pitcher threw on a Tuesday, they should come out on Wednesday and just stretch their arm out at a short distance for a few minutes.
5. The most important component of the throwing program is long toss. In the role of throwing, there is nothing that can replace long toss. Players must throw regularly to train their arm to extend out to its furthest possible distance, and then learn to pull down to translate the extension into their throw. When players throw the ball with an arc, they are causing their arm to stretch out. This stretching out can be maximized as players get a further distance from each other. By stretching the arm out, players have allowed the arm to open up, which has now prepared the arm for a more aggressive throw. Pulling down comes after this stretching out phase and involves using the same amount of effort in throwing the ball as in the stretching out phase, but in smaller distances as players begin to move closer together again. All players need to invest time in developing their arm, as this will bring them great success on the field.

### *Throwing Program On-Field*

NOTE: Before any ball is thrown, players need to complete a dynamic stretch and band program to get their body ready to throw in a loose and relaxed state.

A throwing program involves a stretch out and pulls down phase. The following is the progression of such, with players increasing the distance between them and their throwing partner between each step.

1. 10 throws with an emphasis on the upper body working the directional side.
2. Step square turn throw. A foot plant is crucial to incorporate the core and hip movement. This practice helps establish power, balance, and direction.
3. Shuffle for infielders and crow hop for outfielders when the distances are longer. One partner needs to move back a step at a time when needed.
4. Players need to listen to their arms, as every player is different. Joint pain is a common problem, but with proper mechanics and warmup, many arm issues are taken care of.
5. Concepts to understand:
  - a. Volume vs Distance
  - b. There is no set distance unless a player is on a rehab program.
  - c. Players should feel for their core and hips as these areas are essential in developing a safe and healthy throwing program.
  - d. ALWAYS throw to a target

### ***Getting the Maximum Effort from Players***

Coaches must develop a mindset about the importance of practice and how it relates to excellence on the field during games. Each practice or training session needs to have intent and purpose. The content of the sessions varies depending on the direction and performance of the team at the present time. The most important part of having a successful session is teaching the player how to practice. A coach has to be willing to follow through with their own objectives on a daily basis. Players need to understand that having less than their best effort can lead to decreased playing time.

The following is a list of things a player has control over:

1. Work Ethic
2. Punctuality
3. Energy
4. Attitude
5. Hustle
6. Coachability
7. Body Language
8. Preparedness
9. Selflessness
10. Passion and Respect for the Game

Practicing organization and efficiency is a key to maximizing effort and process. When coaches run a great practice, with pace and intent, the players buy into its importance. Every minute is valuable so do not waste it. Players respect a coach that is prepared and values their time.

The following are examples of specific ways to get the maximum effort levels from players during practices:

- **Team Defensive Drill-** The object of this is to get 21 straight outs. Coaches hit fungos and the situation players have to execute.
- **3 Man Quick Toss Competition-** This should be conducted by position. Time this and determine which player has the most throws and catches in 20 seconds.
- **Hitting Practice-** 3 rounds of 5. Only give points for hard hits and negative one point for a pop up or a weak ground ball.

Coaches can get creative with competition and make it fun, but at the same time, the team is preparing to go at game speed.

The more ownership a team is given in establishing the approach to practice, the better effort that they will give. A coach should ask the players if they feel practice prepares them for the game. Allow them to have input into what helps them prepare better for the adversity and challenges the game has for them. When a coach allows the team to have input, the players become more focused in their approach to practice.

If a normal starter gives a lack of effort in practice and still starts every game, it sends a poor message about the importance of practice. If this situation happens, the coach needs to follow through and bench the player. Now the effort and focus in practice will take on a different meaning. This is one of the best ways to maximize the effort in practice. A coach should maximize their effort in every practice if the same is expected as a team.

## Games

A game is the time when every effort given in the off-season, tryouts, and practices, shows. Games are what the players have worked hard for and the games should be treated with an utmost importance. The following are areas addressed for a game day:

### ***Planning for Games***

Planning for games is an important part of a game day. The following is a list of things to have organized that involves the events of a game day:

1. Practice standing at attention for the national anthem. Suggestion: The coach should stand at the same place on the field and all players should stand alongside while the anthem is being sung.
2. The proper way to ride the bus and how the players should behave in the bus heading to the field must be established by the coaching staff. All buses need to be cleaned before the team gets off. There should be rules in place about cell phone usage and music.
3. Home games and away games vary from each other, so the coaching staff should have a plan and routine for both. There should be a plan for the time of the arrival at the field, stretching, practicing hitting, pre-game, and a bullpen plan for the starting pitcher. When the coach has a plan and a routine, it carries with it a positive mental approach to the game.
4. The coach should post the home game plan with times so the flow before the game is comfortable and stress free. The staff should be sure to post the lineup with game duties for the non-starters. Duties of the non-starters include all of the following: who is in charge of getting foul balls, being the bullpen catcher, warming up the outfielder; Who is the designated runner for the pitcher and catcher, the score keeper, pitching/hitting charts, pitch counts; Potential relief pitchers, pinch runners, pinch hitters, and defensive replacements. Postings these lists will cause players to stay more focused during the game and give them a duty throughout.
5. Responsibilities of the coaching staff during the game include: Calling pitches, first and third base coaching, defensive play calling, positioning of players, and ensuring that the bench players are focused and into the game.
6. When a coach takes a pitcher out of the game, ensure that the coach understands the procedure and the behavior desired from the players. Stress to the team how they should hustle on and off the field, how they should celebrate home runs and how they should behave in the dugout. It is important for players to encourage their own teammates in a way that isn't showing up the other team.
7. Remember that the players react to the coach's game management and behavior. If the coach reacts negatively to a play or player, it reflects in their reaction. Teams take on a coach's personality and approach to the game, therefore the coach needs to keep theirs positive and process driven. Keeping a sense of humor in managing the game keeps a team loose and confident.

8. A coach needs to address how the players should address umpires, especially to the catcher and pitcher, as they have the most contact.
9. How the players should interact with the opposing team post-game needs to be addressed and taught to players. This interaction needs to remain respectful and positive. The game of baseball will always be bigger than the players who play it, so the players need to maintain the game and its integrity by being classy at the end of the contest.

### ***Planning the Pitching Rotations***

The following list is designed for all the decisions that might be involved in using pitchers in games.

1. Communication is the most important part of working with pitching rotations. Every pitcher is different, so the coach must get to know the pitchers as well as possible. It is critical for the coach to ask questions about the state of their arm daily. Every pitcher needs to journal how their arm feels and be personally accountable themselves for their own arm care. A coach should also seek advice and evaluations from the catcher on the pitcher. Sometimes the catcher's instinct about a pitcher's toughness, focus, and mind is extremely valuable in making pitching changes.
2. Position players, pitchers in particular, provide another set of challenges. Ex. Will the player have time to warm up prior to going in a game as a reliever?
3. Which players are in long and short relief the particular games? A coach should let players know as soon as they can if they have a relief role that day.
4. If possible, a coach should pitch players that can provide hitters with a different look back to back. Facing pitchers in consecutive at-bats that are opposite handed or that have different pitch selections or release points makes it more difficult for hitters to get comfortable within an individual game.
5. When inter-squad scrimmaging, use rotations and relief roles as close to game-like as possible. When this is done, the coach is able to find out who embraces those roles the best.
6. Scouting reports help a coach find out which players match up better with each team that is faced.
7. When pitching shortstops and catchers, be careful of their work load. Shortstops and catchers require more throws in a game, so their arms have a higher demand than other positions. If they are going to pitch, the coaching staff and the players need to be smart about how many pitches they throw, especially if they will be starting in a game the next day as a shortstop or catcher. They will need more recovery time if the number of pitches is high. Both of these are demanding positions and involve more wear and tear on the arm. It is easier for a pitcher to go to catcher than a catcher to go to pitcher in a game. Hopefully, this situation will not occur often.
8. Due to game schedules varying and games being played on consecutive days, these weekly game schedules determine bull pens and make the need for detailed preparation for the games, tournaments, playoffs, etc.

9. Early season weather conditions can dictate length of outings.
10. Following the Pitch Smart rules are essential for the health and safety of the entire team. As previously stated, these can be found here.
11. Using bands and doing dynamic stretching prior to throwing is paramount for properly preparing pitchers to throw safely.

### ***Relief Pitching Routines and Throwing Programs***

NOTE: It is critical that coaches strive to know as much as possible on arm care so that they are able to teach their players to listen to their arm on a daily basis. Players need to have explained to them the importance of warming up their entire body and arm prior to any practice or game. The health of a player should be a coach's number one priority.

Relief pitcher's throwing program has a different regimen during the season. Pitching changes in games are unpredictable sometimes. In a 7-inning game, the hope is that a starter can go most of the way. The following are plans that should cover most scenarios.

For a game day, plan on the following roles for pitching:

- Starter
- Long Relief
- Short Relief or Closer
- Emergency player in the end if needed

Coaches should communicate to the team who the guys are for the day, so the players can prepare mentally for their roles. Some of these pitchers will possibly be position players that are in the game.

### WEEKLY PITCHING SCHEDULE SETS UP THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THROWING PROGRAM.

Communication to all pitchers is essential. Communication is best done with a weekly plan letting each pitcher know their possibilities of pitching. Coaches will know the starter for the first game that week. Players need to understand that weekly schedules will change depending on the number of pitchers used early in the week. Coaches should know each pitcher's routine and that they feel confident and prepared for, so their mindset is a positive one.

Questions coaches need to answer about each pitcher:

1. How quick can a player get ready?
2. Who embraces relief pitching or starting a game?
3. Does a certain pitcher love to close games? Coaches should want the mentally tough player here.

NOTE: Once a weekly plan has been established, the coaches can adjust the daily routines, conditioning, and throwing programs, including bull pens.



### *Keeping the Arm Open and Healthy*

1. Throwing routines will vary during the season. It will be an individual decision in determining how much the long toss program and bull pen routine will be. It is important for pitchers to get a consistent feel for throwing off the mound. The number of pitches thrown varies but it does not have to be many or thrown at max velocity
2. One factor is how many times a player threw a bull pen that week in practice or preparing to get ready to pitch in a game. Sometimes in games, the team is up and down a lot. Coaches need to be careful and mindful of those decisions. If you are not, the best effort of your pitcher was thrown in the bull pen because you got him up and down too many times during the game. You risk your pitcher entering the game leaving his best stuff in the bullpen because he was up and down too many times during the game.
3. The relief pitcher for the day should be mindful of doing long toss and opening up their arm. If the player is a position player, they should have already completed this process during pre-game warmup. Limit the number of pull downs conducted if the player is a position player who might relieve in the game.
4. Opening the arm up completely has to be done because the arm is going to be throwing very aggressively in the game. After opening the arm up, players have now prepared the arm to feel loose, free, and ready to throw a baseball with an explosive arm action. Recovery time is decreased because of the preparation of a safe and healthy throwing routine.

### *Relief Pitcher Not a Playing Position*

Note: Ways to keep the arm warm and open so the relief pitcher is ready to pitch that day:

1. Warm up an outfielder between innings.
2. Do light band work every 20 to 30 minutes.
3. Run to outfield fence and back between innings.

Note: Playing catch and warming up before the game is necessary. Keep the arm warm and heated by doing steps 1-3 above. It is poor preparation to let the arm completely get cold during the game especially if the coach has communicated to the player the role as a relief pitcher that day. A coach can find the right amount of time to warm this player up since they are not in the game.

If a player is designated that day for a long relief role, they need to keep their arm warm. In warmup that day, do long toss to open up, but limit the pull downs as the player will probably be required to go over 50 pitches that day.

### *Position Players or 2-Way Guys*

1. If a player is a position player, they should get a certain amount of throws in between innings to help keep their arm loose and warm. A good time to warmup for pitching is if the player is not going to hit in that inning, so when they come in from defense, they can go right to the bull pen

to get loose to pitch possibly in the next inning.

2. If a player is a position player and has not pitched or thrown a bull pen for 2 or 3 days, the arm may feel like letting it loose in warmup. If the arm feels good, let it go.

### *2-Way Guys Pitching in Games and Recovery Time*

Note: Use Pitch Smart rules as a basis for decisions

1. If a position player throws 50 or more pitches in a game, their throwing needs to be restricted the next day. If they are practicing, limit any linear throws. They can play catch and stretch out their arm out, but that should be it. If they are playing in a game the next day, the player should be the DH. Remember when the arm is fatigued, the player is more prone to injury. Listen to the arm the next day and take notice how the arm opens up. Obviously warmer weather helps the arm get loose.
2. Positive ways of loosening the arm up the day after pitching.
  - Band Routine
  - Foam Roller
  - Self-Massage
  - Static Stretching

Note: If the team is fortunate to have an athletic trainer, use them. Communicate with them all your throwing programs and routines so they can maximize their time with your players and meet their needs.

### **Game Management**

Game management is how the team treats a game before, during, and after. The following are considerations for game management:

Game management starts in practice. If the coach has the team prepare at game speed, the atmosphere is already set for game conditions. Through this, the players will be prepared mentally, emotionally, and physically for handling adversity that every contest presents to a player. How to handle failure and redirecting it into a positive thing needs to be taught on a daily basis. If coaches can create a mindset of embracing failure as an exciting challenge to overcome, then a path has been created for the players to succeed and perform at the highest level. Every player is different, so coaches must be aware of what process works for each individual. It is the daily process that keeps the player focused on the next pitch or play. This attitude takes time, but if it is emphasized and enforced in practice, the game results will show improvement. Remember: the practices belong to the coaches and the games belong to the players.

If the coaches prepare the team correctly with the process, the players need to be given the freedom to figure the game out on their own. The coaching staff's ability to let a player clear their head of the school day and parental pressure, which is often result-oriented, will have a profound positive impact on the player. A player's mindset should always be a want to, get to, and not a have to. Practices need variety; therefore, coaches should surprise the players with the practice plan some days.

## **Field Maintenance**

Providing adequate field maintenance is key to a safe baseball playing surface and facility. Field maintenance should be addressed in the following ways:

1. The coach should have a plan and a vision each year for facility improvement.
2. The plan should be discussed with school administration for input and approval.
3. How much the district and school are able to help financially should be clearly communicated.
4. The staff should have a multi-year plan. Ex. In 5 years, what should the facility have and look like?
5. When possible, there should be a supportive booster club and officers who have a goal of raising money each year for the projects the team and coaching staff wish to accomplish.
6. The playing surface needs to be the top priority in maintaining the field.
7. The staff should get the community involved in the projects the team undertakes, especially if the community will be able to use it for youth events. It is the coach's and the school's decision as to how much public use there will be at the facility.
8. What organization will be responsible for maintaining the field?
9. What experience, expertise and equipment are available?
10. What is the annual field maintenance budget?
11. What are the funding sources to sustain the annual budget?
12. Will the field be used for other sports or events?
13. How many games will be played per day, week, month and year?
14. Will the field be a site for tournaments?
15. Should the field have synthetic or natural turf?

### ***Daily Field Maintenance***

Not only should there be a year-round list of needs and wants for field maintenance, but there are also tasks that need to be completed for proper upkeep of the playing area.

1. Communication is essential between the coach and the groundskeeper and/or the players that assist in taking care of the field.
2. There should be a plan of the wants for the field and how much help the baseball program can provide.

3. Players need to have specific assignments when working on the field. This will allow them to establish a greater pride and sense of ownership for their home field. Creating a list with names and detailed duties for each player to do is a great way to implement this. It is better to keep players with the same jobs and responsibilities and be willing to help others out to finish their jobs.
4. There should be a detailed action plan for the daily care of the facility and for the management of the playing surface as listed below.
  - How should the field be mowed? This includes the grass height and frequency.
  - What should the fertilization schedule be?
  - How should the field be edged?
  - Mounds and home plate areas need specific attention daily.
5. If the field has an underground sprinkler system, ensure there is someone who knows how to maintain it.

Taking care of a baseball field has its challenges. If the school has a groundskeeper, be sure that they are educated on all areas that need attention and make sure that they feel appreciated by the team. When the players see them working on campus, a personal thank you can go a long way. Reaching out to the community is a great resource for facility projects and use of equipment. Many people are willing to donate labor and sometimes even materials for the program.

The following are tools and materials necessary to maintain the baseball field and facility:

#### *Tools*

- Batter's box, baseline chalker
- Base hole covers
- Batter's box and catcher's box outline frames
- Push broom
- Drags (assorted)
- Edge cutter
- Line marker
- Mound and hitting mats
- Rakes (assorted)
- Shovels
- Small backpack-style sprayer
- String line
- Tamp
- Tarpaulins
- Watering equipment- hoses, spray nozzles, sprinkling (watering) can
- Wheelbarrow

#### *Materials*

- Calcined or vitrified clay- granulated
- Diamond dust- ground calcined clay- for drying wet balls
- Fertilizers
- Herbicides and pesticides
- Line marking material
- Stockpile of mound clay
- Stockpile of soils for fill and topdressing

## Academics

Academics should be of high importance to the player, and the player should show this by their grades and effort put into their school work. The only way for academics to come first is if the player, coach, and family make it a priority.

Every school district has certain eligibility policies and procedures that are required to be followed by the player and the coach. Each individual school and athletic department might have the flexibility to change its requirements, and coaches may also have the flexibility to set their own standards, if approved by the school administration. These academic standards need to be communicated on the school's athletic website, as well as the sports website if there is one present. In a coach's initial meeting with parent/guardian(s), academics need to be a priority in the baseball program. School is a major part of the athlete, so the coaches need to ensure the importance of it to the parents and the players.

Coaches have a responsibility to work with the teachers of their players in a positive and professional manner. Teachers need a list of the active players, which will also be helpful for the coach in following their progress. Teachers are generally helpful towards students who show that they care and have put effort in the classroom. Teachers are also a good resource for tutors if a player needs one.

Grade checks today can often be done online. Coaches usually have access to see the attendance, tardiness, detentions, homework, and test grades of their players. There should be no surprises as parent/guardian(s) have the access to see the student's progress if they like. Coaches should be aware that there can be a teacher grading issue when students do not seem to know what their current grade is. Grade checks should be done in the off-season because it is a common time that students falter with their effort. Freshmen, in particular, need to be monitored closely due to the fact that high school is a huge change for players academically and socially.

NOTE: The grades of individuals can vary depending on the coursework. Some players take all accelerated classes, which require more time spent on homework and outside of class studying. Coaches can help players balance their high school career by being efficient with practice time. Establishing routines on the field is helpful for the player to understand successful time management. Routines help with the efficiency of performing tasks with the least amount of stress, should be taught and carried both on and off the field.

## Parent/Guardian(s)

Parent/Guardian(s) are those that are in complete charge of the athlete. Developing a positive relationship with them is important for the coach. The following areas in which coaches should be involved with the parents:

### **Meetings**

Before the season begins, it is a good idea for the coaching staff to have a meeting with the parents and guardians of players. When parents and guardians are involved from the beginning, channels of communication and expectations are established before any issues have the chance to arise. This way, parents and guardians know what the expectations are of their child as a player, and what kinds of policies will be in place during the season. When people are informed of what the expectations are, they are more likely to reach them.

The following serves as a guideline for parent and guardian meetings:

1. Introductions
  - a. Have parents/guardians tell about themselves as an athlete, coach, or parent
  - b. Have parents/guardians introduce themselves to the group
  - c. Have the parents/guardians share who their player is
  - d. Once everyone is introduced, explain what type of coaching style the coaching staff has. What is the coaching staffs' coaching philosophy?
2. Rules and Expectations
  - a. Team values
    - i. Explain the core values for the team
  - b. Expectations of athletes.
    - i. Explain the expectations that are held as a coach and for the players
    - ii. Provide parents/guardians with a handout of the athlete expectations
  - c. Expectations of coaches
    - i. Explain the expectations and standards that will be held for the head coach and coaching staff by the players and parents/guardians
  - d. Policies
    - i. Explain the policies for the team. Examples of policies include late policies, unsportsmanlike conduct policies, and practice/game policies.
3. Goals for the Season
  - a. The goals as a coach for the team and for the individual players
  - b. Address parent/guardian goals for the players
4. Logistics
  - a. Schedules
    - i. Hand out schedule documents to each parent/guardian if the schedule is already determined at this point.

## b. Contact List

- i. Hand out a contact information document to each parent/guardian if the contact document has been completed by this meeting.
- ii. If the contact information document has not been finalized before the meeting, pass around a blank copy of the contact information template for parent/guardian(s) to fill out.
- iii. After the meeting, coaches should update the digital form of the contact information template and distribute the document to parent/guardian(s) via email or in person.

## 5. Equipment

- a. Provide parent/guardian(s) with a list of the equipment a player will need on the team.
  - i. For example: Cleats, glove, baseball pants, socks, helmet, bat, mouth piece, batting gloves, and catcher's gear.

## 6. Volunteers

- a. Ask the parent/guardian(s) if anyone would like to volunteer to:
  - i. Provide snacks after games.
  - ii. Be the scorekeeper for games.
  - iii. Be the "Team Mom/Dad" to promote open communication between the coach, parents/guardians, and players.
  - iv. Be the "Team Pitch Counter" and track each pitcher's pitch count to stay within the Pitch Smart guidelines provided on [pitchsmart.org](http://pitchsmart.org).
  - v. Be a part of the Booster Club. The Booster Club can contribute to the following and more:
    - Support or help improve the physical facility. Sometimes the team is able to have the labor donated and the costs of materials at a discount.
    - Fund-raising.
    - Ensure that by being a booster club member or officer, it will not have any influence on their player's playing time or what their player's position is on the team.
    - Choosing booster club officers can be difficult if there is a yearlong program. Parents should be selected whose kids will be in the program for at least a year.

## 7. End of Meeting

- a. Ask parent/guardian(s) if they have any questions.
- b. Thank them for their time.
- c. Let them know of the excitement that the coaching staff has for the upcoming season.

When coaches meet during the season with a parent/guardian about their child, it is necessary to have two coaches present. Coaches can meet with only the parent/guardian or with both the parent/guardian and the player. However, it is ideal to meet with both at the same time if possible. Sometimes what a player tells their parent/guardian at home differs from what is happening at practice or games. In this case, there may be a time when a parent/guardian meeting without the player is necessary. In general, sometimes a positive and honest evaluation of a player's performance is taken as negative in the player's eyes, which can be the cause for some parent/guardian meetings. It is always a good thing for the coach to let the player know their role and the way that they individually positively contribute to the program.

## *Mechanics of the Meeting*

1. Let the parent/guardian(s) say what they want to without interruption.
2. Sometimes this confrontation can get volatile. Coaches need only to stay calm and listen.
3. When it is the coaches' turn to talk, they need to stay calm and honest. Both the parent/guardian(s) and the coach are authority figures to the player, so it is important that both are trying to do what is best for the player. The meeting might end up agreeing to disagree, but that is okay.
4. Playing time issues are not to be discussed.

## **Managing Conflicts**

It is inevitable that conflicts will arise with parents throughout the season. Whether it is over a topic that is small or large, the following are ways of how to work through the conflicts that arise.

1. Establish the parent-coach relationship at the coach-parent meeting prior to the season. Using a Player, Parent, Coach, Contract, like the one in the back of this manual, is advised, but it is ultimately the coach's choice.
2. It is important that the coaching staff communicates that both the parent/guardian(s) and the coaches want a positive experience for their kids.
3. Coaches need to be very clear in stating the acceptable issues and situations that are appropriate for coach-parent meetings. These can be stated also in the player-parent-coach contracts. Playing time, what positions they are playing, and where they are placed in the lineup will not be discussed with parents at any time during the season.
4. State the proper times to set up a meeting with the coach. Typically, after games would not be the best time. The coach needs to choose when and where this meeting will take place.
5. A lot of information can be miscommunicated between the player and parent/guardian(s) on what the issues are that the player is experiencing, therefore, the player should be present in coach-parent meetings. Sometimes a player does not give the parent the total picture. This allows for a solution to happen without a meeting because the player does not want the parent to talk to the coach. It is best that all issues first try to be handled between player and coach. If the coach really emphasizes the importance of this then there will be less parent conflict because the coach and the player handle it in a positive and productive environment.
6. Parent-coach meetings ultimately need to be productive. Coaches need to let the parent/guardian(s) voice their concerns as the coaches remain good listeners. It is helpful for the coach when this is done because a better solution can be attained. Keep calm and most times a solution will be the result. Sometimes it is agreeing to disagree. The player is the major focus in this process. Avoid any comparisons to other players evaluating another player. Comparisons are not productive and can add to a possible negative confrontation.
7. It is advisable to have another coach in this meeting to verify everything that was discussed.
8. It is very important that all decisions run through the head coach. The assistants need to un-



derstand this rule and follow it. Sometimes an assistant can say things to parents that do not represent the head coach's philosophy and how they run the program. This can lead to some unfortunate confrontations for the head coach and the program.

9. A parent might need advice on the player/son relationship for a variety of situations including, but not limited to: depression, drug abuse, poor self-esteem, anti-authority issues, anger management, academic and social problems, bullying, hazing, anxiety, etc. The coach can voice these situations at the parent meeting, so they know they are appropriate concerns to discuss if they choose to. Kids today live in an entirely different environment with social media. Every player is different. The goal of the parent and coach is to be helpful to them in a very challenging world at times. There are great life-lessons to learn from playing sports.
10. When a player sees this modeling by parent and coaches working together, they will pass it on and be grateful that both cared enough to help them work through their problems.

### ***Involvement***

There is a variation in the types of parents there are when it comes to their child's sports. The following are ways the parent should be encouraged to be involved with the baseball program:

All parent/guardian(s) have a substantial emotional investment in their own kids. All relationships with parents need to be kept professional and classy. Remember, coaches should be cautious in getting personally involved with any parent/guardian(s). Relationships should be kept as neutral and respectful as possible. Everything a coach does needs to be in the best interest of the team and individual players.

Parent/guardian(s) should be discouraged from attending practice sessions and workouts as student-athletes may not perform as well when parent/guardian(s) are present at workouts.

Parents are encouraged to serve on the team's booster club which is a great benefit for the team.

Community service projects can involve both parents and kids or just kids only. This depends on the service project and the help it might need to complete it.

Suggestion: Do not have a parent help coach a team when their son is playing on it. This can be tough on the parent and the player. If a parent is a very qualified coach whose son has finished playing and wants to coach, it could be different. This is primarily the coach's decision.

In the coach player parent contract, behavior at games should be addressed. Every coach wants a class program, and it is safe to assume some parents do not understand this. The coach controls this on the field with the players, but the coach also needs to educate the parents on the example they are setting for their kids and the school. Emotions always run high with parents and how well their kids are doing in regard to how much playing time they are receiving, and in which positions their child has. Remember: parents and coaches are authority figures to these kids. When a parent negatively criticizes the coach all the time, it becomes confusing to the player and breaks down the respect and authority both the parent and coach want from the kid. Parent/guardian(s) will have a tougher time being an authority figure with their son when they are constantly criticizing the authority of the coach.

## Players

Players are at the building blocks of a baseball program, and as part of a team, they should always be positive and show resilience to each other.

### ***Player Competencies***

Players should:

1. Establish specific and measurable performance goals that are written, shared with coaches, and revised on a regular basis to promote development and accountability.
2. Be able to engage in evaluation of play after a game and readjust daily tasks and short-term goals based on that evaluation.
3. Set goals that encompass all of the various areas of their development including technique, strategy and tactics, fitness and mental toughness.
4. Demonstrate intrinsic motivation.
5. Develop one or two specific cues that help concentration and the ability to stay focused on the task at hand during each practice.
6. Be able to set specific performance goals for each practice. Ex. During batting practice, "I will hit 10 hard balls or line-drives rather than "I will work on my hitting."
7. Have media skills.
  - Be able to successfully give a post-game speech to a crowd after winning or losing a game. Thank the sponsors, staff, umpires, and fans.
  - Speak positively about opponents being respectful of their playing ability and personal attributes.
  - Make the effort to reveal a good personality during an interview.

### ***Meetings***

The key for team meetings is for the coaches to make them purposeful, timely, and to the point.

**Pre-Practice Meeting:** This meeting needs to set the approach and intent of the day. Start with a quote or motivational saying and ask a player what it means to them. Go through the objective of the session or practice and its importance to the team's preparation for games. Post the practice each day and instill in the players the importance of reading it.

**Pre-Game Meetings:** Sometimes players need a good amount of motivation before games, and other times they do not need it. It is critical that coaches know their team well and have instincts on when the team needs motivation and when they do not. Coaches always want players to feel positive and confident about the process of playing a game. Keep it loose with a relaxed, but focused intensity. Each team has different motivating factor, so the coach should spend time to find out what a team needs.

**Post-Game Meetings:** These meetings need to be kept short and to the point. It is better to cover most of everything from the game the next day at practice. No matter how a team plays, a coach should end on a positive and move forward. Coaches and players can get emotional after a tough defeat, therefore meetings after a game should be carefully thought out. Teams are aware of when they do not play well. If it is evident the players are not taking care of the preparation for games in practice, then coaches can call them out to perform at a higher level. Coaches should get other

coaches' advice on the next day's practice and focus on preparing the team for the next game.

In general, coaches should make communication clear to the players. It is often helpful to have players repeat the message back to the coach more than once to ensure they retain it. At all meetings, eyes should be up on the coach who is speaking. Coaches should demand this attention and call individuals out during the meeting if they are not paying attention.

### ***Managing Conflicts***

Players can find themselves in difficult situations sometimes. Knowing how to manage conflicts with players and other staff members is important to retaining the player and showing respect to them. Note: Players come from all different backgrounds and family dynamics. A coach needs to take this into consideration for how they treat and develop the individual player.

The following are recommendations on managing conflicts between the player and coach:

1. Guide and direct the player. Be careful not to be a dictator. Coaches need to find out what makes the player tick, how they feel about making adjustments, and how they handle adversity. "What are they going to do personally about their situation?" and "what is their action plan?" are important questions to be addressed with the player.
2. Coaches should establish a positive and trusting one-on-one relationship with each player, and always be a great listener.
3. Coaches should be open to their players about how important it is to communicate about issues on and off the field.
4. When coaches establish a caring and trusting relationship, they minimize a lot of conflicts. This takes time but ensure the team knows it is a **PRIORITY** with the baseball program.
5. Agreeing to disagree on issues is acceptable in coach/player and player/player relationships. A coach modeling this behavior is vital to the process.
6. Coaches following through with their philosophy and discipline in a consistent and fair manner cuts down on team chemistry issues. When a player knows the coach is consistent in handling team and player issues, they respect the process.
7. Coaches should get feedback from players on establishing rules and policies, this way the players feel a part of the process which helps with accountability and ownership of their behavior and approach to the identity of the team.

### ***The Player, Coach, and Parent Contract***

This is a document that contains the policies, rules, expectations, and the accountability that coaches want to establish in their program. It gives the parent/guardian(s) and players a clear picture of what the program's identity will be. The coaches should give this to the players once the teams have been chosen and go over it carefully with them. Players should sign it and give it to their parent/guardian(s) to also read and sign. Coaches should get this document back from the parent/guardian at the parent/guardian meeting, that way the coaching staff can discuss the contract with the parent/guardian(s) in detail knowing they have read it previously. Communication with administration on the contract is vital. The coach needs to ensure that the policies in the contract are approved by the administration and athletic director.

An example Player, Coach, and Parent Contract is located in the back of this handbook.

## ***Community Involvement***

A high school is a central focus in many communities, no matter how big the city or school district. It is important for the team, both coaches and players, to have a positive relationship with the people whose children go to the school. There are several ways to interact with the general public. The baseball coach has an opportunity to play an influential role in developing the youth baseball programs within the district and community. The following are ways to implement the coach relationship with the many groups that make up most communities:

1. Be willing to speak to groups about the vision and direction of the high school program. Listen and include their ideas so that it is a team effort. The coach is the final decision maker and designer of the program, but community input allows the chance to bring the community together and promote the program at the same time.
2. A team can do community projects during the season and the off-season. Two projects a year would be advisable. Player input can be sought out for suggestions.
3. Promote high school baseball games in the community. One way to promote the high school program is through a website or dedicated social media page. Teams can also put posters up in stores and restaurants to promote the home schedule.
4. Coaches should be available to the media and local newspapers to inform them about the program.
5. Get involved with the community youth programs by hosting camps and clinics for players and coaches. Clinics for coaches are usually well received because the majority of youth coaches are volunteers and would like to know how to teach the game better. When hosting youth camps, have players help instruct the campers, as this is beneficial to both parties by bringing the community closer together. Doing on-field clinics for coaches is the best way to get the community involved because the coaches get to see a hands on look at teaching the game. It is ideal to have current players there to demonstrate, as most people are visual learners. Coaches can conduct Community Clinics as part of the USA Baseball Coaches Certification program.
6. If the program has sponsors, include them with the team by letting them possibly throw out the first pitch at home games. Another example is having a senior player choose a person in their life that had a great influence on them growing up, they could throw the first pitch and be honored also.
7. When building and improving facilities, the community can be a great resource. Many times, people in the community donate time and materials to high school sports. It is important to seek these people out. Many people love to contribute to high school programs.
8. Keep the team alumni informed and involved. Many times, they are the best resource, and they usually make great coaches because they understand the process. Ask them to speak to the team about how important the relationships made through high school baseball can be. They also can talk about how they handled the adversity of playing high school baseball.

## A Message to the Coach, the Player, and Parent/Guardian

It is safe to assume that every kid has a dream to make it to the big leagues of baseball since they put on their first uniform. As a young athlete, it's easy to have a dream of what you want to grow up to be but for the majority, these dreams are unobtainable. For some, this dream can and does become a reality, but it cannot be reached unless there is support from parents, coaches, and friends. There will always be those who criticize a player and tell them that they won't make it, but those words can be used as motivators. It is of extreme importance that those close to a player truly believe in them when they set their sights on something. The player needs to be aware that they have to work harder than everyone else and figure out exactly how the player needs to get there. Words such as "you're the best and it's just going to happen for you," is not a way to encourage a player because they will be unaware and blinded of the challenges they are going to face on their journey to becoming great. Those supporting them need to ensure that the player is going about their goal the right way, they need to be supportive the whole time, and remind themselves that this is the player's dream, not their own. Again, the Big Leagues is the player's dream. Not the coaches. Not the parents.

Here is the reality of baseball players:

***.03% of youth leaguers will play in the Major Leagues.***

***.2% of high schoolers will play in the Major Leagues.***

***10.5% of all high schoolers will play in college.***

***That includes Division I, II, and III, all junior colleges, and NAIA schools.***

***1.2% of high school players earn a Division I baseball scholarship.***

For the ones who will move on, those numbers will serve as motivation to work harder, and for the ones who get unmotivated after seeing them, it was never meant to be.

There is a fine line behind blind optimism, cautious support, and downright naysaying that will kill any and all hopes, but there are a few things that can be done to create reasonable expectations and attainable goals for the kid's future in the game.

*Create a Blueprint for Success*

The player knowing what they want is great but knowing how to get there is better by focusing on short-term goals to get to the ultimate finishing point.

*Keep the Game Fun*

If the player doesn't enjoy it, then why play at all?

*Buyer Beware*

The only people who have the power of scholarships and drafting are members of a college coaching staff, or professional scouts.

*Go To a Game. Go To a Few.*

As a player gets older, and college and professional baseball are legitimate goals, it is vital to get a feel for what collegiate level is best for the player, and how talented those in the pro game truly are.

*Honest is the Best Policy.*

Reach out to a 3rd party such as an opposing high school coach, a professional scout or player, than can watch the player play and note where the player needs improvements on to reach whichever level is their goal.

*Get Away From the Game.*

There is now a culture of specialization and sport-specific training year-round. The three-sport athlete is all but extinct, while the kid who plays two is an endangered species. Major League Baseball players who play from the start of spring training in mid-February well into October if they are lucky enough- DON'T play 12 months of the year. If a kid picks one sport too soon, there is a risk that they will play none before all is said and done. It's amazing how much more players will appreciate the game when they don't have to play it every single day.

First and foremost, it all starts with having a love for the game and a passion to play it. Beyond the player's athletic ability, there are three things that stand out with those who do move up and eventually make it: they absolutely love to play the game, they want to work at getting better each and every day and they will compete at all things, at all times. The simplicity of those three things is really amazing. If you don't love the game, you aren't going to make it. If you don't work hard, you aren't going to make it. If you don't compete, you aren't going to make it.

A reminder to ask: are the Big Leagues the player's goal or the coaches and parents?

## **Coach's Code of Ethics**

The Ethics Code is intended to provide standards of ethical conduct that can be applied to any baseball team and organization. Whether or not a coach has violated the Ethics Code does not by itself determine whether a contract or agreement is enforceable or whether other legal consequences occur.

Baseball is a game played at numerous levels including professional, collegiate, interscholastic, community, and recreational from the local to international levels of competition. The function of all players, coaches, umpires, officials and workers is to abide by only the highest level of sportsmanship and conduct.

The coach must be aware that they have tremendous influence, either good or bad, in the development of the baseball player, and thus, shall never place the value of winning above instilling the highest desirable ideals of character.

The coach must constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with the athletes, umpires, officials, administrators, state and national organizations, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

"Bench jockeying" will not be allowed. Coaches are to prohibit bench jockeying, which would include personal and malicious remarks, cursing and obscene language towards opponents, umpires or spectators.

The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse and under no circumstances should authorize their use.

The coach shall not use alcohol or tobacco products when in contact with players.

Coaches do not make statements that are false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent concerning work activities, personal and organization affiliations.

The coach shall be thoroughly acquainted with baseball rules and is responsible for their interpretation to team members. The spirit and letter of rules should be regarded as mutual agreements. The coach shall not try to seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules. Players should be taught to respect the dignity of the game, umpires and opponents.

Coaches should confine their discussion to the rules and not challenge umpire decisions involving judgment.

Coaches shall actively use their influence to enhance sportsmanship by their athletes and spectators. Before and after contests, rival coaches should meet and exchange friendly greetings in order to set the correct tone for the game.

Contest umpires will be treated with respect and support by the coach. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which will incite players or spectators against the umpires. Public criticism of umpires or players is unethical.

Coaches should expect from the umpires a courteous and dignified attitude towards themselves and the players. Coaches do not engage in sexual harassment, abuse, or any other harassment.

Coaches should develop and promote a spirit of cooperation among the baseball family, including sponsors, the community, and any person connected with the program.

Baseball is a game of fun, designed for enjoyment of youngsters, not to be a hobby for adults coaching them.

I recognize the responsibility encumbered upon me to model ethical behavior. I pledge myself to observe, practice and maintain this code of ethics.

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## **SafeSport and Pure Baseball**

SafeSport is an initiative created by the United States Olympic Committee and governed by the US Center for SafeSport to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport. It includes six categories: bullying, harassment, hazing, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct and sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse. As a high school baseball program, your program is subject to the law (Senate Bill 534 Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017). The law mandates a number of measures be put into place protect minor athletes, inclusive of reporting, background checks, education and training and minor athlete safety policies. USA Baseball is a resource for all baseball organizations in fulfilling all the requirements of this law through our Pure Baseball initiative. To read more about compliance with SB534, SafeSport, Pure Baseball and how USA Baseball can service your organization in this area, please visit [www.purebaseball.org](http://www.purebaseball.org).

## **Financial Management**

Financial management is an important part of the baseball program because money dictates the uniforms, the maintenance, and facility upgrades. In all instances the school administration and athletics department must be consulted. The following are areas to be considered for financial management:

### ***Fundraising***

Fundraising is increasingly common with sports teams at high schools. Many times, there is a certain amount allocated to each sports team from the school's annual budget, but often teams have different wants and different needs that have to be funded elsewhere. With the school's budgets, needs should always take priority over wants. There is a time and a place for fundraising. Coaches need to know where they want the team and facility to be at in a year and in 5 years to successfully create a list of these wants and needs and prioritize them.

Advice for fundraising:

Fundraising should not be done in the off-season as the team has not been selected yet. Coaches want to avoid situations where the individual is fundraising as there is a potential for the player to not make the team when tryouts come around. The community is more than welcome to fundraise themselves in the off-season. Popular ways of fundraising include golf tournaments because it is a choice by individuals to participate rather than a requirement. Booster clubs should be used to aid in fundraising efforts. Once a team is selected is when individual players can fundraise with items such as coupon books. Hit-a-thons are also a way to earn money. Email blasts are immediate donations where there is an ability to explain what the team is wanting to accomplish. Targeting alumni is a smart way to raise money so they are able to give back to the program that they were a part of.

There are rules by athletic associations, districts, and schools on fundraising, ensure coaching staff is aware of the specific rules.

### ***Budgeting***

Budgeting is an important part of the baseball program. Budgeting accounts for everything from updating the field, the resources used to maintain the field, team travel, etc. Coaches should prioritize what's best for the program and differentiate between wants and needs.

### ***Booster Club***

It is important for coaches to set guidelines on the purpose of parents involved with the booster club. Many parents think that if they get heavily involved, then they help their kid earn playing time. This thought process can be a serious problem. The main role of any booster club is to support and help raise funds necessary to maintain and build a positive program. All booster clubs have officers and have to be held financially accountable according to the school districts policies on how money is raised, spent and accounted for.

In choosing officers for the booster club, ensure that the adult's child is on the team. Coaches

can ask for volunteers, but in doing so, it can get complicated. The best way to build the booster club is for the head coach to recommend the officers and the executive board that represents the entire baseball booster club. Those on the club will be responsible for decisions on fundraising projects as well as how the money is allocated. The coaches must always get permission from the booster club before spending money. The coach should never have anything to do with physically collecting the money; instead, there should be a treasurer of the booster club. Again, there should be an annual budget and a multi-year plan developed by the coaching staff for how to build the program and the facility. Allow the players to also have input into the program's projects and fundraisers.

## Health and Safety

The health and safety of a player should be of the utmost importance to the coaching staff and the school. As with every sport, injuries are a part of baseball so every precaution that can be taken should be. The following are areas of health and safety to focus on for the baseball program.

### ***Basic First Aid***

The basic First Aid Course provided by USA Baseball can be found on the USA Baseball Sport Development website, at [www.USABDevelops.org](http://www.USABDevelops.org).

The following are areas to be considered for basic first aid for the baseball program:

#### *Preparation*

The coaching staff needs to ensure that there is a printed and well-rehearsed Emergency Action Plan and a basic first aid kit on hand.

#### *Emergency Action Plan*

Emergencies, injuries and natural disasters are rarely predictable; however, having a controlled plan in place can help eliminate any confusion and increase response time to get aid to those who need it.

Every facility should have an Emergency Action Plan that is reviewed and rehearsed annually by all coaches and facility staff to ensure that should an emergency occur, everything runs smoothly. An Emergency Action Plan should be a written document that is posted in a public location and distributed to certified athletic trainers, teams, staff, administrators, coaches and parents. It should include step-by-step directions such as, but not limited to:

- Contact information for local emergency medical service providers (EMS, Police, Fire) and other pertinent emergency numbers.
- Facility address, locations or maps, specific directions and global positioning coordinates.
- Personnel names, contact information and responsibilities.
- Detailed plans for the event of natural disasters/emergencies, such as severe storms, lightning, flooding, earthquakes, tornadoes and fires.
- The Emergency Action Plan should be implemented in concert with local emergency medical service providers. It is also beneficial for a league or facility to plan an in-person training session to educate coaches and parents on how to recognize emergency situations.

Coaches should receive formal training on First Aid, CPR and AED prior to stepping on the field.

#### *First Aid Kit*

Each team and facility should have a basic first aid kit for injuries.

### ***General Health***

As mentioned earlier, the general health of the baseball players should be of top concern for the program. The following are sections regarding health for athletes:

## *Injuries and Emergencies*

Below are topics that every coach and parent should be informed of before taking the field:

- Skeletal Injuries
- Muscular Injuries
- Wounds such as Abrasions and Lacerations
- Head, Neck, and Brain Injuries
- Concussion Signs and Management Illnesses & Infections
- General Emergencies
- Heat and Hydration Related Emergencies
- Heat Illnesses
  - Muscle Cramps
  - Heat Exhaustion
  - Exertional Heat Stroke (EHS)
  - Heat Illness Prevention
- Commotio Cordis
- Lightning

All coaching staff and others associated with the program are encouraged to take the free online Basic First Aid course offered by USA Baseball on the USA Baseball Develops website. The Basic First Aid course addresses in detail information on all injuries listed above, as well as how to treat and manage each one.

## *Hydration*

As the temperature rises, it is important for the coaching staff to have a plan for hydration. Athletes who exercise in the heat should get into a habit of weighing themselves before training or competition, as well as immediately after, to monitor hydration levels. Use of a hydration schedule before, during, and after practice or competition to help replenish lost weight due to extreme fluid loss is strongly recommended. Hydrating should start even a few days prior to heat exposure and players should be hydrating well the day/evening before.

### *Before Exercise:*

- 2–3 hours before exercise drink 17–20 oz. of water
- 10–20 minutes before exercise drink another 7–10 oz

### *During Exercise:*

In general, every 10–20 minutes drink at least 7–10 oz. of water or diluted 6 percent carbohydrate sports drink (14 grams per 8 oz.). To maintain hydration, players need to remember to stay ahead of thirst. Thirst is a poor indicator of hydration status. In fact, individuals can be dehydrated or on their way to dehydration prior to becoming thirsty. Optimally, drink fluids based on amount of sweat and urine loss.

### *After Exercise:*

Within two hours, drink enough to replace any fluid weight lost due to exercise. Drink approximately 20–24 oz. of water or a sports drink per pound of weight loss. As the temperature rises, it is important for the coaching staff to have a plan for hydration. Athletes who exercise in the heat should get into a habit of weighing themselves before training.

### *Prohibited Substances*

Taking prohibited substances is never safe for a person of any age, particularly children and adolescents. The prohibited substances listed below can cause serious health issues and even death. Major League Baseball's Drug Prevention and Treatment Programs include helpful information to learn more about the dangers of taking prohibited substances. A copy of the current program can be downloaded [here](#).

### DRUGS OF ABUSE

According to the National Institute on drug abuse, drugs are chemicals that affect brain function by interfering with the way the brain normally sends, receives and processes information. Drugs of abuse are illegal substances that have a high potential for abuse, physical addiction and/or psychological dependence. It is important that young athletes are aware of what drugs of abuse are and how use of these substances can negatively affect their social relations (family, friends), their legal status (fines, jail), and their physical and mental health (addiction, side effects, death).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the drugs of abuse covered by MLB's drug programs:

- Marijuana
- Synthetic THC
- Cocaine
- Opiates (e.g., Oxycodone, Heroin, Codeine and Morphine)
- Bath Salts (e.g., Mephedrone and MDPV)
- MDMA ("Ecstasy")
- GHB
- LSD
- Phencyclidine ("PCP")

\*Consult MLB's drug programs for a complete list of drugs of abuse.

### PERFORMANCE ENHANCING SUBSTANCES

Performance enhancing substances ("PEDs") are substances used to gain an unfair competitive advantage in sports by increasing muscle mass, improving strength and decreasing recovery time. Many PEDs are illegal in the United States and all PEDs are banned in sports. Substances that are considered PEDs include anabolic steroids and agents, peptide hormones, growth factors, hormone and metabolic modulators, and diuretics and masking agents. The following PEDs and other substances with a similar structure or effect are prohibited under MLB's drug programs:

- Testosterone
- Human Growth Hormone (hGH)
- Androstenedione
- Anti-Estrogens including Clomiphene
- Boldenone
- Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)
- Nandrolone
- Stanozolol
- Erythropoietin (EPO)
- Growth Hormone Releasing Peptides (GHRP)
- Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (hCG)
- Insulin-like Growth Factor (IGF-1)

\*Consult MLB's drug programs for a complete list of performance enhancing substances.

For more information and resources, please visit [Partnership for Drug Free Kids](#).

PEDs can be taken orally, by injection or applied to the skin in a cream or gel. Regardless of the type, PEDs have the ability to drastically alter the human body and biological function. These drugs can be extremely dangerous, and in some cases, deadly. The negative health effects PEDs can have on one's body include, but are not limited to:

- Cardiovascular problems (hypertension and increased risk of heart attack or stroke)
- Liver and kidney damage
- Increased risk of musculoskeletal injuries
- Stunted growth in adolescents
- Shrinking of the testicles and infertility
- Breast development (gynecomastia)
- Increased risk of certain cancers (prostate and leukemia)
- Acne and male pattern baldness
- Increased aggressiveness
- Withdrawal symptoms including depression, and in some cases, suicide

For more information and resources, please visit [The Taylor Hooton Foundation](#).

## STIMULANTS

Stimulants are substances that increase alertness, focus and energy. These substances are also used to improve performance and their use can result in a player having an unfair competitive advantage. Some stimulants like caffeine are not banned under MLB's drug programs but many others are, including the following:

- Amphetamine (Adderall)
- Ephedrine
- Methamphetamine
- Methylhexanamine (DMAA)
- Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
- Modafinil
- Phentermine

The use of stimulants also has its risks, and can cause serious physiological and psychological problems including:

- Similar to drugs of abuse, addiction and dependence
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Increased risk of stroke, heart attack and cardiac arrhythmia
- Dehydration
- Insomnia
- Paranoia
- Tremors
- Withdrawal symptoms including fatigue and depression

For more information and resources, please visit [The Taylor Hooton Foundation](#).

## **General Nutrition**

Athletes can prepare their bodies for competition through proper nutrition. A proper eating program is just as important to an athlete's success as is a training program. Making healthy choices is a key to long-term health and optimal athletic performance. Resources on information regarding the importance of breakfast, pregame meals, sports nutritional products, nutritional guidelines and more can be found on USA Baseball's Blog by visiting [www.USABDevelops.org](http://www.USABDevelops.org).

### *Athlete Eating Guidelines*

#### **INFORMATION**

A proper eating program is just as important to an elite athlete's success as is a training program. Think of your body as a car, and food and drink as the fuel. Elite athletes are like finely tuned cars that require high-quality fuel to achieve optimal performance. Putting low-quality fuel into your body can lead to compromised health and decreased performance.

#### **APPLICATION**

Encourage your athletes to focus on the following nutrition principles year-round:

- Stay hydrated. Your body is more than 50-percent water, and your muscles depend on water to function properly. A dehydrated body cannot train or compete at its peak. Drink enough so that your urine color is pale lemonade to clear and so that you are urinating frequently throughout the day.
- Fuel up before training. Focus on eating lean proteins, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains to ensure that your body is prepared for training. Try not to go into a training session with an empty fuel tank. Eat a meal 3-4 hours or a snack 1-2 hours before exercise.
- Boost your immune system. Choose foods that are high in antioxidants such as fruits and vegetables to help keep your immune system healthy and reduce the amount of free radicals that your body builds up during high-intensity training. Choose more colorful fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, strawberries, oranges, broccoli, asparagus and sweet potatoes.
- Limit fats. Saturated and trans fats can cause inflammation, which is the exact opposite of what elite athletes need. Stay away from foods that are processed or fried or higher fat meats and choose non-inflammatory unsaturated fats such as olives, avocados, nuts, seeds and salmon.
- Eat to recover. Choose carbohydrate-rich foods with some protein within 30-60 minutes of finishing a training session to help your body recover faster. Whole grains including bread, pasta, rice and potatoes, fruits and low-fat milk and yogurt are good choices after workouts.
- Energy products. Energy bars, gels and drinks do have their place in an elite athlete's eating program; however, be sure not to abuse these types of products as they can deter body weight goals and can replace more beneficial calories from whole foods. Limit these to before, during or immediately after practice depending on your sport needs.

## **General Safety**

Players and coaches can achieve more when they are in settings in which they feel safe. General Safety includes resources on risk management, lightning safety, insurance, hazing, bullying and more.



All volunteer staff should be notified prior to acceptance of their duties that they will be subject to a favorable background check and must provide their consent via a volunteer application.

### *Hazing*

Being a team member shouldn't come with additional requirements that get in the way of enjoying sports. Hazing often begins as seemingly benign behavior but can become an issue if allowed to continue. Since hazing often occurs among peers, coaches and staff can send a strong anti-hazing message by creating an environment that encourages individuals to raise concerns or share information. In addition, most states have enacted legislation to discourage hazing and hold those who participate accountable; and these laws can provide additional support for anti-hazing efforts.

### DEFINITION

Hazing involves coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members. It includes any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law. Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

### EXCEPTIONS

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behavior or promote team cohesion. Examples include:

- Allowing junior athletes to carry senior athletes' equipment into the locker room after practice.
- Encouraging junior athletes to arrive early and set up training equipment.
- Giving senior athletes first preference in team assignments, responsibilities, accommodations, facilities or equipment.

### EXAMPLES OF HAZING

- Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete.
- Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature.
- Sleep deprivation, unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food.
- Social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule.
- Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault.
- Excessive training requirements that single out individuals on a team.

### ***Pitch Smart***

USA Baseball and Major League Baseball (MLB) teamed up to help young players reduce arm injuries by providing a comprehensive resource for safe pitching practices. Baseball is a safe game to play at all ages, but research has shown that pitching too much — particularly at a young age — can increase a pitcher's risk of injury. For ages 15-18, players can begin using breaking pitches after developing consistent fastball and changeup.

Policies to follow regarding youth aged 15-18 include:

- Do not exceed 100 combined innings pitched in any 12-month period

- Take at least 4 months off from competitive pitching every year, including at least 2-3 continuous months off from all overhead throwing
- Make sure to properly warm up before pitching
- Set and follow pitch-count limits and required rest periods
- Avoid playing for multiple teams at the same time
- Avoid playing catcher while not pitching
- Players should not pitch in multiple games on the same day
- Make sure to follow guidelines across leagues, tournaments and showcases
- Monitor for other signs of fatigue
- A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once per game
- No pitcher shall appear in a game as a pitcher for three consecutive days, regardless of pitch counts

AGE	DAILY MAX (PITCHES IN GAME)	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)				
		0 Days	1 Days	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
15-16	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
17-18	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-80	81+

More information regarding Pitching Guidelines can be found by visiting [www.pitchsmart.org](http://www.pitchsmart.org).

### ***Skin Care***

Baseball players, coaches, and umpires spend hours in the sun. Working together, all can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer, the number one diagnosed cancer in the United States. Increased sun exposure and lack of safe sun practices are the two leading factors of skin cancer.

It is important to use preventive measures when going outside. To limit exposure to the sun while in games or at practice, remember these key tips:

- Apply sunscreen that is broad spectrum, SPF 30 or higher, and water resistant at least 15 minutes before going outside.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours. Reapply more frequently if sweating.
- Seek shade as much as possible in the dugout or under a tent.
- Wear baseball hats, sunglasses, long sleeves, and pants to limit sun exposure.

For additional information on understanding and detecting skin cancer, and skin care prevention, coaches, players, and parents should take the free Play Sun Smart online course offered at [www.USABDevelops.org](http://www.USABDevelops.org).

### ***Recognizing When Players are Injured***

Recognizing when players are injured is an extremely important ability in keeping the athlete safe and healthy. All coaches, volunteers, and players should be well informed on all common injuries and illnesses, their signs and symptoms, and the process to go about treating them. If a player continues to play when injured, there is risk of a more serious injury.

## Templates

The following templates are provided by USA Baseball and are displayed on the next pages:

### Field Whiteboard

- Sometimes plays and defensive coverages are best explained through diagrams. Use this field whiteboard to draw out plays, coverages, positions, and more.

### Lineup Card

- Prepare for games by printing this template and creating the lineup. Don't forget to post a copy in the dugout so your players know the batting order.

### Player, Parent, and Coach Contract

- This document contains the policies, rules, expectations, and the accountability that coaches want to establish in their program. This should be signed by both parents and the player.

### Pre-Tryout One-on-One Form

- This form should be filled out before tryouts to give the coach insight about a player.

### Team Contact Information

- It is important to have contact information on every player. This includes the parent/guardian(s) and emergency contacts including phone numbers and emails.

### Team Facility Responsibilities

- The facility and field are a reflection of your team. Teach your players to take care of the facility and field by assigning specific post-practice or game tasks.

### Team Roster

- It is important to know your players' names, their jersey numbers, the positions they play, who their parents are, and even their birthdays. Organize all of this information and more on one sheet using the team roster template.

### Sample In-Season Practice Plan

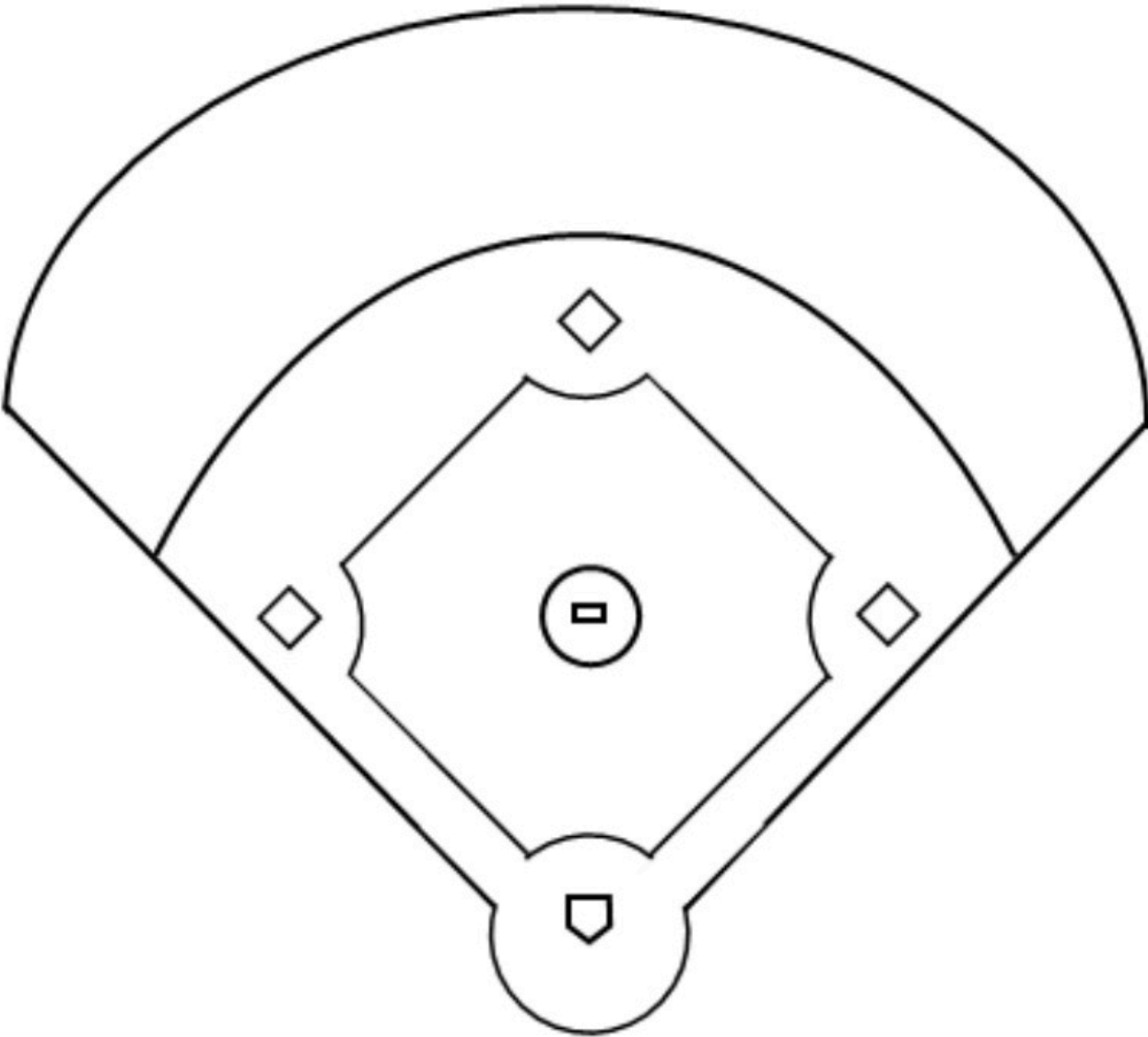
- This is an example of an in-season practice plan.

### Dynamic Stretching and Movement

- This is a guide for executing an age-appropriate dynamic stretching and movement session.

The templates can be printed out from this handbook, or they can be located on USA Baseball Develops' website at [www.USABDevelops.org](http://www.USABDevelops.org).

**Field Whiteboard**



# Lineup Card

TEAM: \_\_\_\_\_

Order	#	Player	Position	Substitutes	Position
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

### SUBSTITUTES

#	Player	#	Player

VS. \_\_\_\_\_ AT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

COACH(ES) \_\_\_\_\_

## Player, Parent, Coach Contract

It is a high priority to Coach \_\_\_\_\_ and the coaching staff of \_\_\_\_\_ High School to communicate clearly and effectively to student athletes and their parents, the purposes, goals, expectations, and philosophies of the \_\_\_\_\_ baseball program.

We believe that this communication and contract will enable the “student-athlete, parent, coach, and team to function in a way that can only produce success and pursue excellence. It is our strong hope that these dynamics will give each player a positive and successful baseball experience.

### PURPOSE

The purpose and intent of the baseball program is to provide the student-athlete with an instructional baseball experience consistent with the standards set by \_\_\_\_\_ High School and the \_\_\_\_\_ school district. Our program exists to add to the educational experience. All goals, expectations, and philosophies will be derived from our purpose.

### EXPECTATIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES

Consistent with school and district policy, any use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs will result in immediate dismissal from the baseball program.

1. There is to be no jewelry worn at practice because players cannot wear it in a game.
2. At no time is profanity an acceptable form of language on the baseball field. If a student athlete cannot control their tongue, their ability to control the rest of their emotions is questioned.
3. Punctuality to practices and games is an absolute. If a student-athlete is not on time, it is believed that they are not ready to perform. If there is an appropriate reason such as an exam, doctor visit, etc. the coaches must be notified prior and arrangements made.
4. Student-athletes are expected to dress in a neat, clean and professional manner at all time when representing the baseball program. This includes practice attire game uniform, dressing for road trips and possibly dressing for school on specific game days.
5. All players in the baseball program are expected to take care of their field. This will include assigned duties, field maintenance, trash detail, equipment responsibilities and other assignments deemed necessary by the coaches.
6. Parents are not required to attend practice sessions and workouts, as it has been observed that on many occasions, student-athletes do not perform as well when the parents are present at workouts.
7. Consistent with state athletic associations policy abusive language toward opponents and or umpires such as “trash talk” is not consistent with a class program.

8. The coaches reserve the right to impose a curfew on evenings before ball games. This discipline is believed to be very compatible with a program pursuing excellence.
9. Playing time, positions, pitching schedules, etc. are not negotiable issues. No one wants to put the best nine players on the field more than the coaches do. Playing time roles will be discussed with the players only.
10. A coaches, player, and parent conference can occur if a situation or circumstance concerning a player arise.
11. Discipline may be administered within the baseball program for behavior that occurs during the school day. To do otherwise would not be consistent with our purpose. What happens at school does matter.
12. Student-athletes are expected to remain eligible throughout the baseball season and school year. The coaches reserve the right to suspend or dismiss a player depending on the situation. Possible playing time can be taken away as a disciplinary measure.
13. A student-athlete is issued a uniform only after their role on the team has been communicated by the coaches. If the student-athlete does not accept the role after receiving the uniform, the coaches reserve the right to dismiss the player.
14. Attitude is everything! Players are expected to maintain and demonstrate a positive team-oriented, teachable and coachable attitude throughout the season. Any behavior less than this may result in discipline, lack of playing time, suspension or dismissal from the program.
15. A player must be cleared by a physician before returning to workouts after being injured or possibly an illness.
16. When the coaches are asked to evaluate a player's baseball future by college or professional scouts a no less than objective and honest evaluation will be given.

NOTE: Any violation of these purposes, goals, expectations, and philosophies, could result in discipline, lack of playing time, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

Again, the purpose and motive of this contract is to communicate clearly and effectively the purposes, goals, expectations, perspectives, and philosophies of the \_\_\_\_\_ baseball program. This is intended to be positive and to facilitate the dynamics between players, parents, and coaches in an effort to make this year a success for all involved, especially the players. Head Coach and the coaching staff of \_\_\_\_\_ High School ask each player and parent to join us in making this commitment to pursue excellence and have culture for a positive year. We ask each player and parent to read and sign below if you are willing to make this commitment with us.

I have read and understand the player, parent, and coaches contract for the baseball season. I agree to commit to its intended purpose and to support, follow and encourage the goals, expectations, perspective and philosophies contained in the contract. I realize my important role on for the team and will work diligently to perform it.

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Parent's Signature

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Player's Signature

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Print Parent Name

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Print Player Name



## Pre-Tryout One-on-One Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR IN SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA TO DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. List 3 reasons why you play baseball.
2. What motivates and inspires you to be a better player?
3. List your strengths as a player.
4. List things you want to improve on.
5. List positive ways of handling failure and adversity in your life.
6. If I were to ask your teammates about what type of teammate you are, what would they say?

7. List the things you like about playing on your school's baseball team. If you play on a club team, who coaches it and what is the name of it.
  
8. Do you plan on playing college baseball?
  
9. What position or positions will you be trying out for this year?
  
10. List the most negative or damaging actions a player can do to destroy a team's chemistry.
  
11. What are your interests outside of baseball?
  
12. List two people you respect and admire and explain why
  
13. List any questions you want to ask me. Write these down prior to our one on one meeting.



## **Team Facility Responsibilities**

Players need to do the following after every practice and game as mentioned previously:

Tasks:

1. Sweep Home Dugout
2. Sweep Visitor Dugout
3. Rake, Groom, & Tarp Plates
4. Rake, Tamp, & Tarp Pitcher's Mound
5. Pick up Clay on Field
6. Broom Edges of Grass
7. Get out/Set up Hose
8. Clean up Trash (stands, dugouts, etc.)
9. Clean Bullpens (Home and Visitor)

The facility upkeep should be a high priority of the team as the facility will only be as great as they make it. Respecting the facility and contributing to its upkeep is a responsibility by all coaches and players



## Sample In-Season Practice Plan

### **2:00-2:03 pm: Quote-**

"Caring is the Ultimate Competitive Advantage". Pick a player to define the meaning of the quote and how it pertains to life and baseball.

### **2:03-2:06 pm: Set the tone for the intent and purpose of the practice-**

All players need to read the board with the practice schedule for the day.

### **2:06-2:12 pm: Dynamic Stretch-**

Players need to be kept moving in preparation for activity. This is not the time to sit around and static stretch.

### **2:12-2:18 pm: Base-running-**

Take a specific situation and work on it that day. For practicing leads at first base off of a left-handed pitcher, coaches can use 5 throw down bases to be more efficient, instead of having all players rotate through on just the first base one at a time. This drill can be completed in the outfield or at first base in the infield. Use lefty pitchers to allow baserunners to get reads off of them during the drill. At this time, coaches can also go over steals, hit and runs, and delays.

### **2:18-2:25 pm: Band work/Upper body and shoulder stretches-**

The benefit of doing all of this activity prior to throwing is that the arm will be ready and warmed up to have a good throwing program.

### **2:25-2:42 pm: Throwing Warm-Up-**

Have the players start short and easy, then gradually get further apart. It will be better to throw with same position players at this time. Ex. Catchers with catchers. The way the player's arm feels each day dictates the volume and length of their throwing. Some days they can long toss at a further distance and pull down coming back in. Obviously, pitchers' workouts are dictated on when they are throwing in that week. Be detailed on the focus of throwing, preferably no talking so the players can focus on targets and techniques. When finished, the player can do one or more fundamentals such as partner short hops, back hands, and quick toss with proper footwork. Pitchers should work on pickoffs to first. Catchers should work on footwork to the bases. Coaches need to be right there with the players to make sure there is focus throughout.

### **2:42-2:52 pm: Defensive specialties: Catchers, Pitchers, Infielders, and Outfielders-**

Depending on how many coaches there are will dictate the efficiency of this exercise. Coaches should post on the schedule where on the field the players should be and what the intent of the day is so that the mindset is established before the players do it.

### **2:52-3:15 pm: Situational baseball using coach pitch-**

This is a chance to go game speed and get the team ready both offensively and defensively. The coach can post situations or just call them out during this. It is more efficient to have at least one runner on the bases. Reiterate to the players that this is a great evaluator for playing time. Ex. Play a situation where players are on first and third base with one out. Put in all the ways that one can score and have the defense try to stop it. There are lots of situations that can be used throughout

the week. The situations chosen to depend on what a coach thinks needs more work.

### **3:15-4:15 pm: Offensive, Defensive, and Base-running-**

When these groups are divided up, there are some considerations on how to do it for defensive reasons. Have a catcher in each group if possible so that bull pen sessions can be thrown while their group is on defense. Keep the starting infield and outfield together if possible.

#### **5 Groups of 4 Players**

1. Group 1: Live hit
2. Group 2: Baserunning situations
3. Group 3: Defense
4. Group 4: Defense
5. Group 5: Hitting tunnels with drill work  
Rotations: 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-1

#### *Hitting Responsibilities for Each Round:*

1. Round 1: Execution of 2 sacrifice bunts, 2 hit and runs, and 1 drag bunt
2. Round 2: 5 cuts, fastball counts stay up the middle
3. Round 3: 5 or 6 hits with change of speed
4. Round 4: 2 game winning situations with a runner on 3rd and the infield in (hitters choice on scoring run)

#### *Infield Responsibilities for Each Round*

1. Round 1: Field and footwork to first (No throw)
2. Round 2: Throws to first
3. Round 3: Double plays
4. Round 4: Infield in

#### *Outfield Responsibilities for Each Round:*

1. Round 1 and 2: Play straight and work on angles
2. Round 3: Play in the gaps and work on communication
3. Round 4: Play straight and in and work on do or die footwork

#### *Baserunning Responsibilities for Each Round:*

1. Round 1: Work from 1st base advancing on sac bunts and hit and runs
2. Round 2 and 3: Work from 2nd base reads on ground balls and balls to outfield with 1 out
3. Round 4: Work from 3rd base on reads and tags with infield in

At the end of each round, signal the end of the round by yelling or blowing a whistle.

\*When planning for this practice plan, be sure to factor in 3 minutes for change and water breaks between each session.

Practice can be finished after the above session or some sort of competition can be added as the final drill of the practice.

Bullpens and pitcher conditioning can be done when they are in the two defensive groups together.

This is an example of a practice without live pitching on the field which changes the time in practice. Usually, live game scrimmage takes longer depending on pitchers throwing strikes. If there are tunnels, hitting off field can be done on these days. When live pitching, always post the pitchers and who is catching them along with the hitters that the coach wants to have them face. Make sure the next pitcher and catcher is ready so there is not time lost during the change of pitchers. The hitters who are going to hit live next should come in from the tunnels.

***For more sample practice plans visit [www.usabmobilecoach.com](http://www.usabmobilecoach.com) or download the USA Baseball Mobile Coach App in the Apple or Android Store . The USA Baseball Mobile Coach App is free to all users and includes over 150 drills detailing difficulty level and average time to complete. A coach is able to plan practices through the practice planning feature. View practice plans from the experts, or personal plans can be created to fit one's custom needs.***



## Dynamic Stretching and Movement

Movement Preparation: 13+ Year Old

The following is a movement progression designed to optimize the physical preparedness of all players while promoting movement competency. Movement is the foundation and is your ability to move through a particular pattern with stability. Performance, the second tier, is how efficiently and quickly you perform this movement pattern. Skill, the final tier, is your ability to transfer sound movement into an efficient pattern thus development of a specific skill can now begin. Inefficient or dysfunctional movement does not allow you to perform at your peak and also opens you up to injury. This program aims to provide opportunities for all children to reach their highest level of movement resiliency and efficiency in physical fitness, athletics, and recreation while gaining confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity.

### Section 1: Locomotion

Category	Posture	Fundamental Motor Skills	Distance/Reps
Coordination		Shuffle Slides + Back Taps	20 yds + Back
Coordination		Slide and Glide + Arm Swing	20 yds + Back
Coordination		Skip + Arm Rolls, Forward out/Backward in	20 yds + Back

### Section 2: Postures + Patterns

Category	Posture	Fundamental Motor Skills	Distance/Reps
Primitive	Supine	Bridge + Scap Slides	5 each
Primitive	Supine	Cross Crawls	5 each way
Primitive	Prone	Push-up/Cobra's	3
Transitional	Quadruped	Rocking	3
Transitional	Quadruped	Bird Dog	10 Alternate
Transitional	Half-Keeling	Half-Kneeling Hip Flexor	10 seconds each
		(Arm Closed Stance & Open Stance)	4 Stances
Transitional	Quadruped	Bear Crawl	5 forward, 5 backward
Fundamental	Double Leg	Deep Catcher Squat	After each Bear Crawl
Fundamental	Double Leg	Squat/Arm Reach/Toe Raise	1

Fundamental	Split Stance	Lunge Back to Front + Side (Same leg/alt)	5 each way
Fundamental	Single Leg	Single Leg Balance	15 seconds each leg
Fundamental	Single Leg	Keep Up to Single Leg Reach (Stationary)	2 each leg
Fundamental	Split Stance	Ankle Mobility – Toe in Ground, Heel Circle	10 seconds each
Arm		Letters: T's, U's, W's, X's, Y's	5 each way
Arm		Wrist Rolls: O's	5 each way

### Section 3: REV UP- Dynamic Locomotion

Coordination		March in Place-Run in Place-Run	20 yards
Coordination		Easy Skips-Fast Skips out, High Skip back	20 yards
Coordination		Backward Skip to Run Straight	20 yards
Coordination		Learning Start	20 yards
Coordination		Push Up Start (on front)	20 yards
Coordination		Roll Start (on back)	20 yards
Coordination		Hi-Step Carioca	20 yards
Coordination		Shuffle + Crossover + Sprint	20 yards

## Additional Support

The USA Baseball Develops Blog contains valuable information for coaches, parents, players, and umpires alike.



The Long Term Athlete Development Plan: This development model contains age specific development and different stages through the athlete's progression.



Pitch Smart can includes suggestions for pitchers on how to maintain the health of the player's arm.



USA Baseball's Mobile Coach App is available for download via Apple or Android. The app contains practice plans, drill sets, and courses, as well as access to Pitch Smart to keep track of player's pitches.



## Resources

The USA Baseball High School Baseball Program Manual would not have been possible without the following contributors and organizations:

- Eric Kibler, USA Baseball Develops Contributor
- USA Baseball Coaches Education Manual- January 2000
- USA Baseball
- Major League Baseball
- US Center for SafeSport
- United States Olympic Committee
- Alan Jaeger
- Darren Fenster, USA Baseball Develops Contributor
- Dave Turgeon, USA Baseball Develops Contributor



