



RIPKEN BASEBALL

COACHING CLINIC

888.RIPKEN.1 • RIPKENBASEBALL.COM

873 LONG DRIVE • ABERDEEN, MD 21001

RIPKEN BASEBALL



Mission Statement:

**Inspire athletes through
remarkable experiences
The Ripken Way.**

Vision:

**Elevate every player's potential
on the field—and in life.**



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RIPKEN BASEBALL

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CORE PILLARS

Keep It Simple Simplicity empowers the message

Explain the Why Purpose drives the human spirit (us)

Celebrate the Individual Fuel their willpower to succeed

Have Fun Joy shatters the limits of what we can achieve - the game is supposed to be fun



"THE RIPKEN WAY"



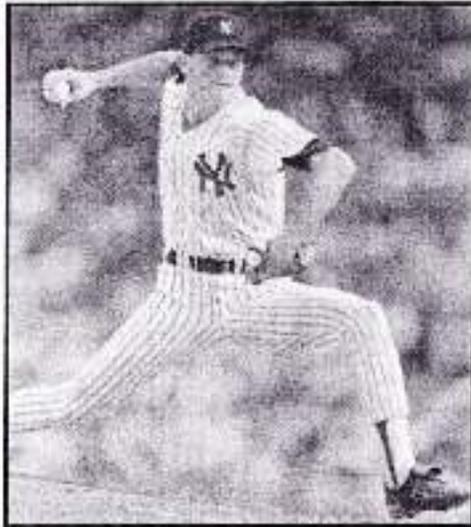
RIPKEN BASEBALL

- **Keep It Simple**
 - Reduce technical aspects to teaching the game to its most simple parts
 - A 6-4-3 double play is 5 simple parts (catch, throw, catch, throw, and a catch).
- **Explain the Why**
 - Not really teaching if we don't know (or teach) why
 - Gives you credibility as a coach
 - Kids ask why to understand
 - Allows kids to become their own coach over time
- **Celebrate the Individual**
 - Observe first, instruct later
 - We do it in society, why not on the baseball field
 - Each player has their own style and the goal is to work within that style to allow each player to develop their skill level.
- **Make It Fun**
 - Kids are more apt to learn in a fun environment
 - The game needs to be fun for kids to want to continue to play. Incorporate fun into drills and practice to keep kids interested in developing their skills.

PITCHING THE RIPKEN WAY



RIPKEN BASEBALL



John Habyan

John Habyan

- 11 Major League Seasons
- In 1985 threw a no-hitter while playing in the Southern League
- 3.85 career ERA
- Ripken Baseball lead pitching instructor since 1999
- Head Coach, St. John the Baptist H.S. (NY) 2008 NSCHSAA Champions

PITCHING THE RIPKEN WAY



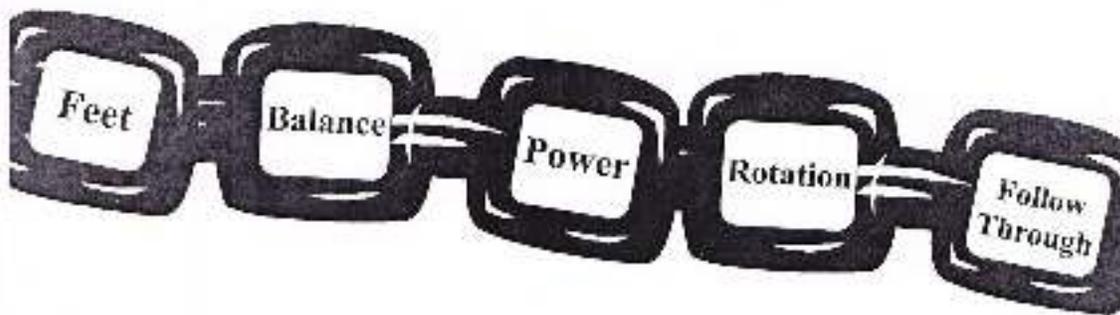
RIPKEN BASEBALL

- **Observe before teaching:** watch pitchers throw & look for:
 - **Strikes**
 - Most important
 - If they throw strikes, resist the urge to tinker
 - **Velocity**
 - **Ball Movement**
 - More advanced
 - Happens as players get older
- **Celebrate individual talents**
 - Each pitcher has different mechanics
 - Many MLB pitchers have unconventional mechanics
- **Break Down Mechanics (5 links of the chain)**

FIVE LINKS OF THE CHAIN



RIPKEN BASEBALL



If one link is weak, it will cause the chain (mechanics) to break down. All 5 need to work together to be consistent.

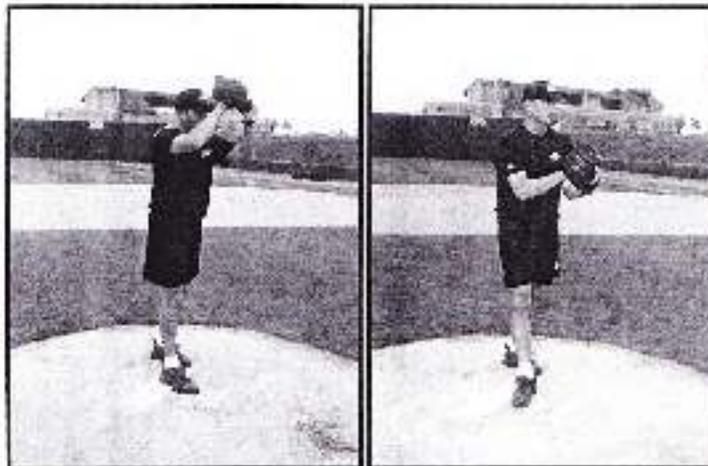
FIVE LINKS OF THE CHAIN



RIPKEN BASEBALL

1. Feet

- Start with heels in middle of rubber
- Smooth tempo
- Keep head above pivot foot
- Short step back at 45 degree angle
- Pivot all the way so the back foot becomes parallel to the rubber



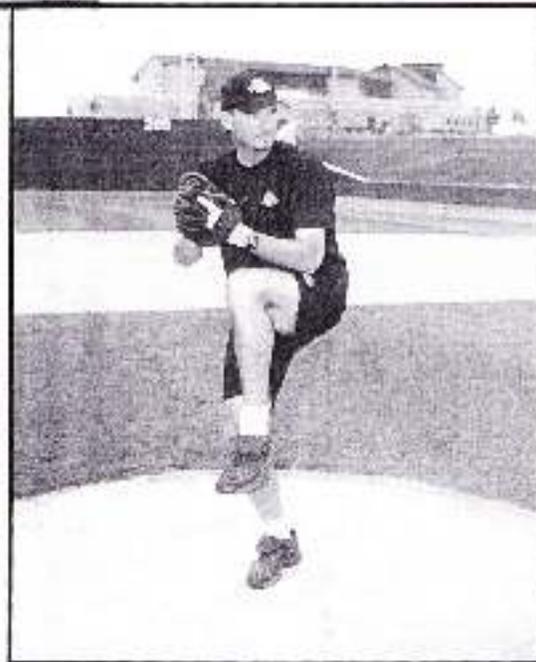
FIVE LINKS OF THE CHAIN



RIPKEN BASEBALL

2. Balance Position

- Controlled leg lift
- Slight bend in back leg
- Leg a little closed, butt pointing a bit toward the catcher
- Hands together and pause with glove slightly above the belt



FIVE LINKS OF THE CHAIN



RIPKEN BASEBALL

3. Power Position

- Get the ball out and up
- Hand above the ball (fingers on top)
- Ball pointing back toward 2nd base
- Strong front side (not limp or lazy with glove-side arm)
- Weight stays back – allows generation of torque for rotation



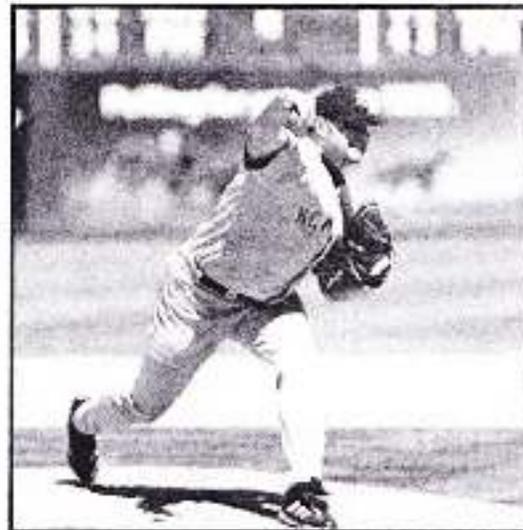
FIVE LINKS OF THE CHAIN



RIPKEN BASEBALL

4. Rotation

- Hand stays behind the ball as arm comes forward
- Elbow forms an "L" and stays slightly above shoulder level – even for a $\frac{3}{4}$ delivery
- Both feet on ground with lead foot pointed toward home
- Front side must be used correctly
- Generate torque



FIVE LINKS OF THE CHAIN



RIPKEN BASEBALL

5. Follow Through

- Back foot on ground when ball is released, then follow through
- Follow through is a result of momentum (happens naturally)
- Not all pitchers will follow through the same – some will be in fielding position, others won't



KNEE DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Throwing-side knee on the ground
- Maintain good posture
- Glove-side knee is up
- Keep hand above ball until rotation, then keep hand behind ball
- Four-seam grip
- Throw from shortened distance
- Do every day to correct problems

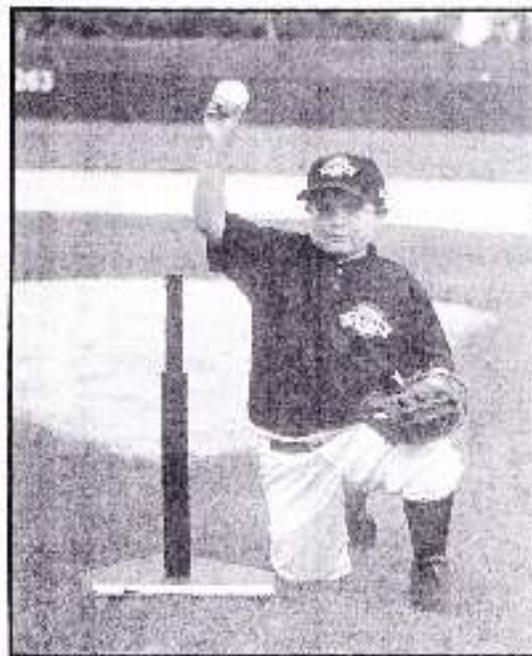


TEE DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- For players who let elbow drop below shoulder
- Knee drill position
- Tee on throwing side, close enough so that elbow hits tee if it drops
- Elbow should stay above shoulder through rotation
- Create muscle memory if done daily



POWER POSITION DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- On or off mound
- Wide base with feet
- Start from power position
- Break hands
- Ball out and up
- Front shoulder at target
- Rotate on back side, create hip turn
- Release
- Follow through
- Both feet stay on the ground at all times – no stride
- Not a velocity drill

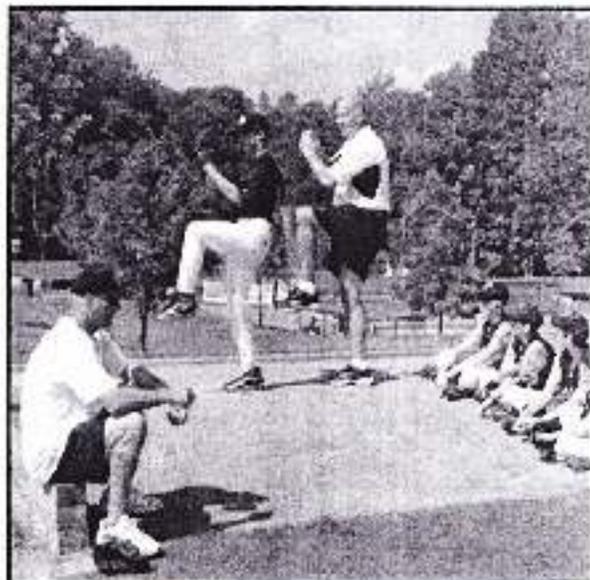


BALANCE DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- For pitchers who don't pause, or gather at balance position
- Start windup and pause at balance position
- Pause for 3 sec before delivery
- Should be able to pause comfortably
- Throw from shortened distance



TOE-TAP (1-2-3) DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- For pitchers who walk through the balance position into their deliveries
- From stretch, raise knee to balance position, lower leg and tap toe then return to balance position
- Repeat twice and deliver pitch after toe touches the ground the third time
- Count "1...2...3" and then throw the pitch



COVERING FIRST BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

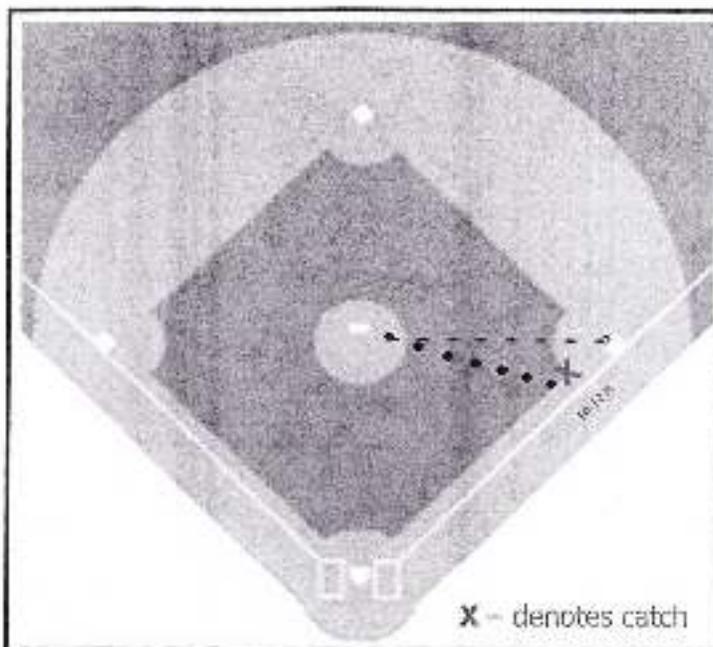
- Once a pitcher releases the ball they are now a fielder
- For every ball hit to the right side, a pitcher's first instinct should be to get over to first base
- The path a pitcher takes is a diagonal path straight to a spot 10-12 ft. in front of first base
- Stay in fair territory and turn toward first base about a foot or two inside the base line
- Catch the ball prior to reaching the base, then touch the base
- Turn towards the infield - avoid interfering with the runner

COVERING FIRST BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- For runner of average speed, take diagonal path to the base (dotted line)
- With a faster runner the pitcher may choose to run directly to the base (dashed line)

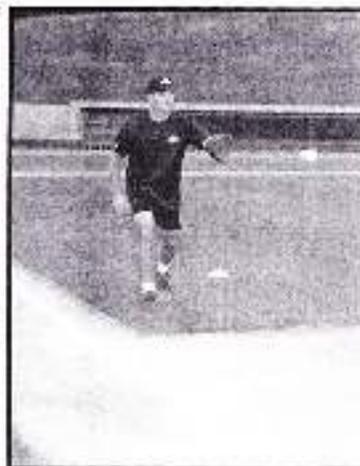


COVERING FIRST BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Place a cone about 10-12 feet up the 1st base line toward home plate and about 5 feet inside the line
- Roll a groundball to the 1st basemen
- Pitcher sprints to the cone, then runs parallel to the baseline
- 1st basemen tosses ball to pitcher as soon as possible before reaching base



HOLDING THE RUNNER



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Responsibility is primarily on the pitcher
- Stretch Position
- Vary Your Set Times
 - Change the rhythm
 - Slide Step
 - Hold the ball
- Vary Your Looks
 - # of times you look over
 - Alternate moves

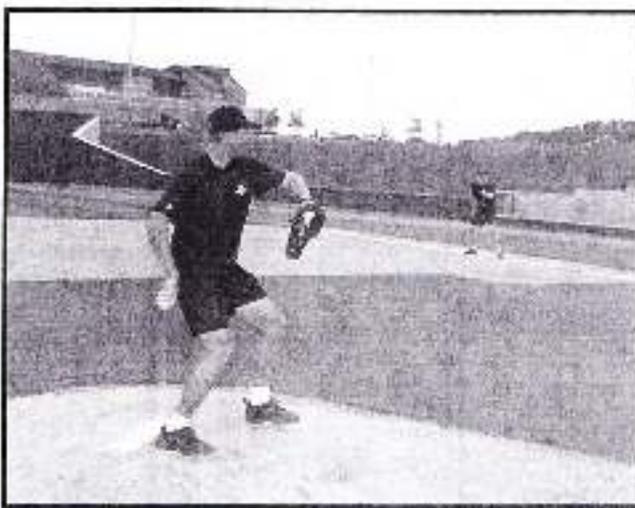


PICKOFFS – 1st BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Disengage the back foot from the rubber first
- Rotate front foot all the way towards target
- Aim for the knees or waist of the first basemen



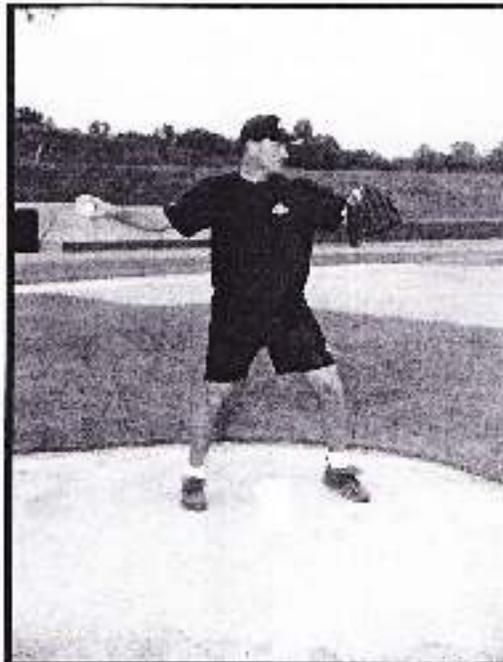
“Quick feet followed by a quick, accurate throw”

PICKOFFS – 2nd BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- When picking off a runner at second base disengage the back foot from rubber
- Spin to your glove side so that your front foot ends up on the other side of the rubber
- You should be straddling the rubber



PICKOFFS: INSIDE MOVE to 2nd BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

1. Get to balance point



2. Turn toward inside (throwing side)



3. Step toward 2nd base



INFIELD DEFENSE THE RIPKEN WAY



RIPKEN BASEBALL



Calvin J.

- 2 Time Gold Glove Winner
- Most Double Plays turned by a Shortstop

B. Ripken

- Ranks among the all-time fielding leaders at 2nd base
- .987 Career Fielding %



INFIELD DEFENSE THE RIPKEN WAY



RIPKEN BASEBALL

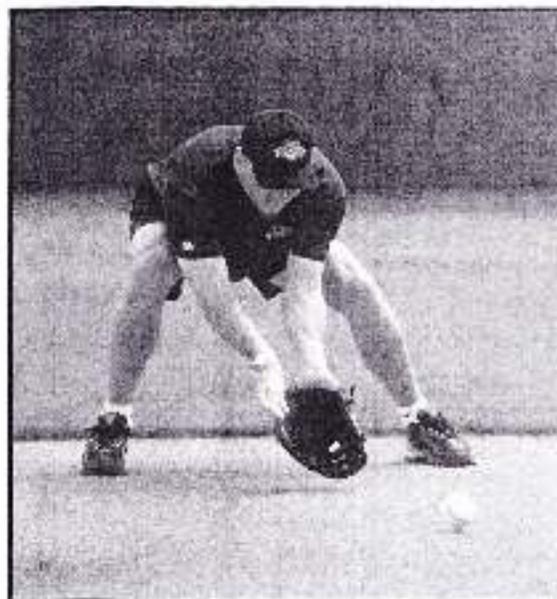
- **Infield defense broken down into two parts:**
 - Catching
 - Throwing
 - "Can't throw if it isn't caught"
 - A 6-4-3 double play simply = a catch, a throw, a catch, a throw, and a catch
- **Ready Position**
 - Athletic position used in almost every sport
 - Feet and shoulders square to home
 - Knees slightly bent
 - Balance – weight distributed evenly on balls of feet
 - Can creep or move side to side, but must be in ready position as ball enters hitting zone

BASIC GROUNDBALL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Wide base
- Butt down
- Hands out in front
- **DRILL:**
 - Player starts in proper position (listed above)
 - Roll them a ground ball and they throw it back to you



BACKHANDS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Used when fielder can't get in front of ball or doesn't have time
- Same principles apply – wide base, butt down, hands out front
- The backhand is a one-handed play
- Two kinds of backhands – throwing side foot & glove side foot



Throwing-side foot



Glove-side foot

BACKHAND TROUBLESHOOTING



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- **Problem** = taking glove away from ball too early (toward the outfield) / pulling glove back too soon
- **Correction** = watch the ball into the glove and then bring the glove to center of body



- ❖ **Problem** = balls bouncing off wrists and forearms (glove is too far back)
- ❖ **Correction** = catch ball out in front

- **Problem** = inside of glove facing sky
- **Correction** = fingertips of glove on the ground instead of back of glove

THROWING AFTER THE CATCH



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Catch the ball properly first
- Bring hands to center of body
- Four-seam grip
- Shuffle feet toward target
- Shoulders parallel to ground
- Point front shoulder toward the target
- Throw (power position)
- Follow the throw toward the target (keep moving toward the target after the throw)

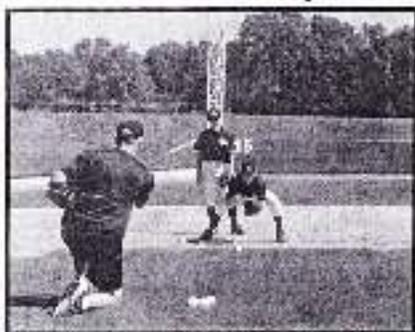


THROWING DRILL

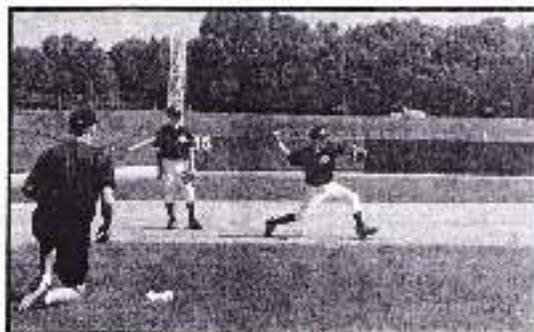
"shuffle, throw, follow"



RIPKEN BASEBALL

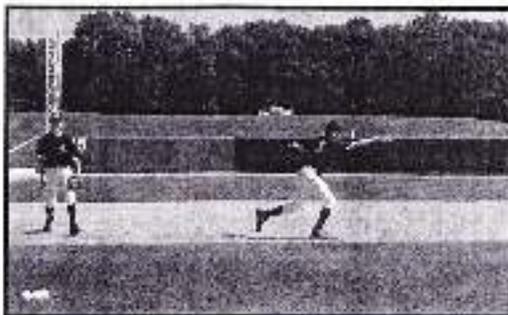


1. Field ball at the 1st cone



2. Release ball at the 2nd cone

3. Follow your throw by going past the 3rd cone (towards the target)



THROWING OFF THE BACKHAND



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Stop momentum by planting throwing side foot
- Point front shoulder toward target
- Push off back foot to create momentum toward target
- Throw
- Follow the throw toward the target



UNDERHAND FLIP



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Valuable skill often taken for granted
- Used by almost every infielder at some point
- Can be used to start 2/3 of all double plays at highest levels
- Can eliminate errors at younger levels

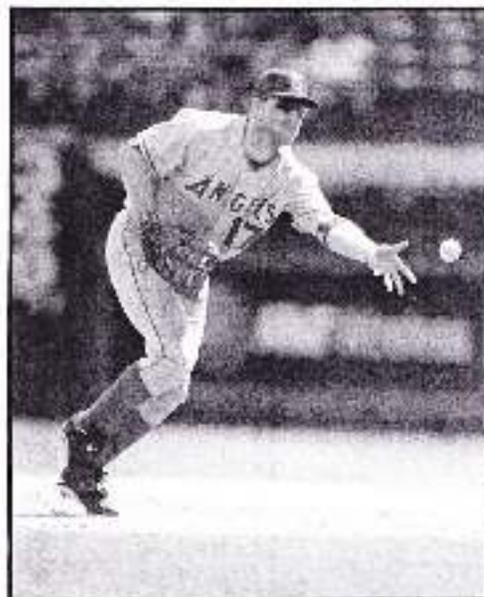


UNDERHAND FLIP



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Generate momentum toward target by moving feet first before the flip
- Separate hands
- Stay low (crouched)
- Don't swing arm behind leg (no bowling)
- Firm wrist
- Leave hand at target's face to ensure an accurate toss



UNDERHAND FLIP



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- More natural for shortstop – already open to 2nd base
- 2nd baseman has to keep hand in front where ball is caught – don't turn shoulders and bring ball behind body (SS loses sight of the ball when it is behind the body)
- Drills for underhand flip:
 - Underhand flip shuttle
 - High 5 Drill
 - Box Drill
 - 6-4 / 4-6 Drill

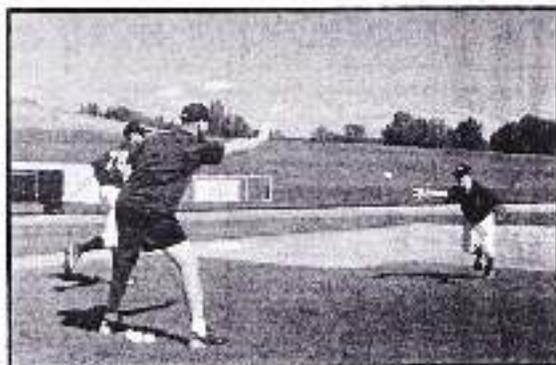


HIGH 5 DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Underhand flip drill
- Player starts in proper groundball fielding position
- Coach rolls a ball & player catches it before moving feet toward the coach
- Player underhand flips the ball to the coach
- Player leaves their hand up and gives the coach a high 5 and then goes back to the end of the line

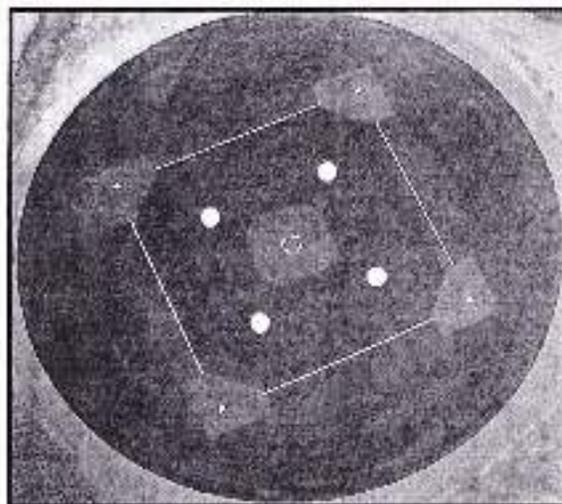


BOX DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Create a box using cones/dots
- Each cone/dot should be placed apart approx. 1/3 of the base distance
 - 90' bases = cones 30' apart
 - 70' bases = cones 25' apart
 - 60' bases = cones 20' apart
- At least 1 person at each spot (need 2 at one dot to start so the min. is 5 people per box)
- SS – 2nd baseman = underhand flip to the left
- 2nd baseman – SS = underhand flip (or counter) to the right

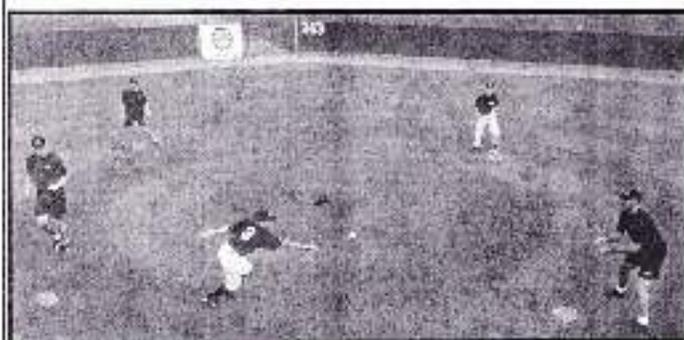
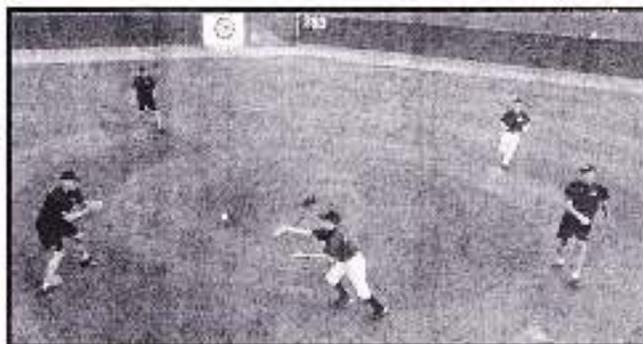


BOX DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

**Shortstop to
2nd Baseman**



**2nd Baseman
to Shortstop**

DOUBLE PLAY SHORTSTOP



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- SS needs to get to 2nd base quickly
- Must be able to get to 2nd base and be a stationary target if ball is hit hard at another fielder
- Right foot on 2nd base
- Shoulders square to feeder
- Take left foot to the ball
- Point shoulder to 1st base
- Make throw



SS COVERING 2nd BASE

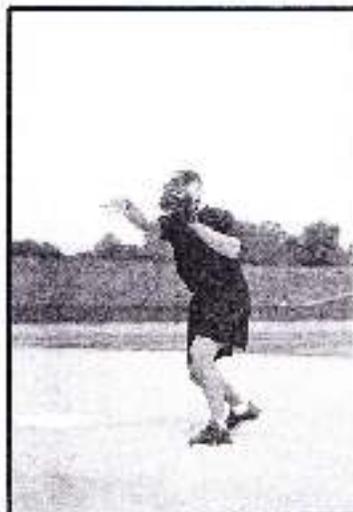
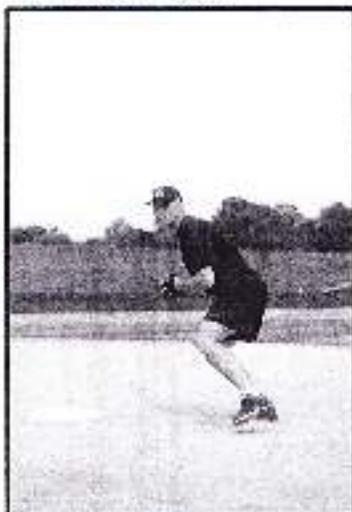
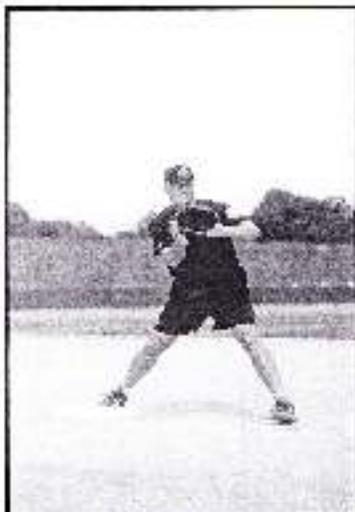


RIPKEN BASEBALL

Right foot on 2nd base
/ Left foot to ball

Tight turn / Point front
shoulder and hips
toward 1st base

Quick release / Make
accurate throw



DOUBLE PLAY **2ND BASEMAN**



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Get to 2nd base quickly
- Must be able to get to 2nd base and be a stationary target if ball is hit hard at another fielder
- Left foot on 2nd base
- Shoulders square to feeder
- Take right foot to the ball
- Point shoulder to 1st base
- Make throw
- Can go across, step back or use bag as protection

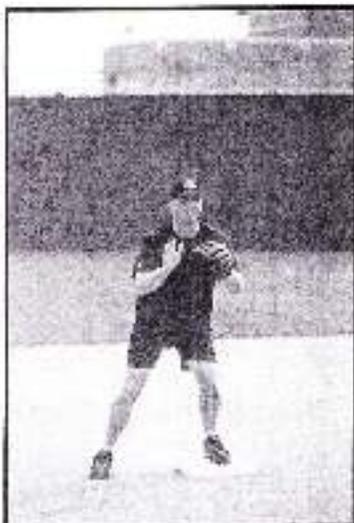


2B COVERING 2ND BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

Left foot on 2nd base /
Right foot to ball



Point front shoulder
and hips toward 1st as
you catch the ball



Push off back foot /
quick release / make
accurate throw

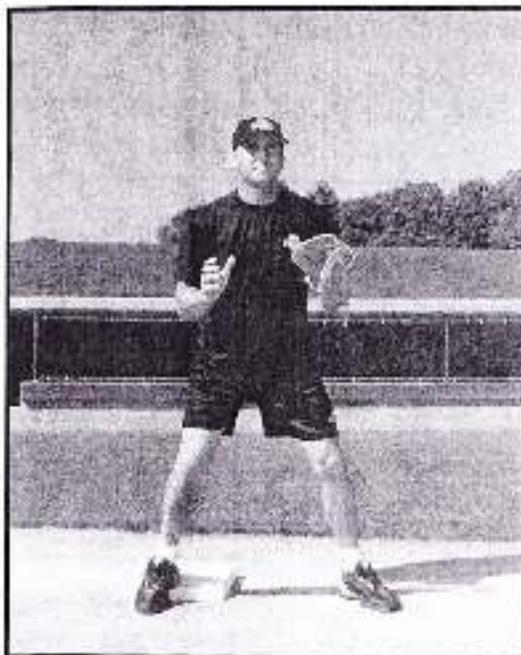


FIRST BASE PLAY



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Field ground balls the same as other infielders
- Most important job is fielding throws
- Get to bag early
- Stationary target
- Be tall and in athletic position
- Square shoulders to fielder
- Heel of throwing-side foot on center of inside part of base
- See the ball cross the diamond and then take glove hand and glove-hand side foot to ball together
- Don't stretch too soon!



FIRST BASE PLAY

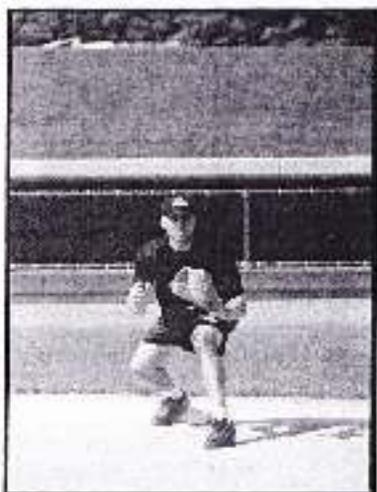


RIPKEN BASEBALL

Don't...

crouch

(be a big target)



Don't...

stretch too soon



Do...

Let the ball travel
before stretching



HITTING THE RIPKEN WAY



RIPKEN BASEBALL



B-Rit

- Led the Orioles in hitting in 1990 with a .291 average, 28 doubles, and 17 sac hits



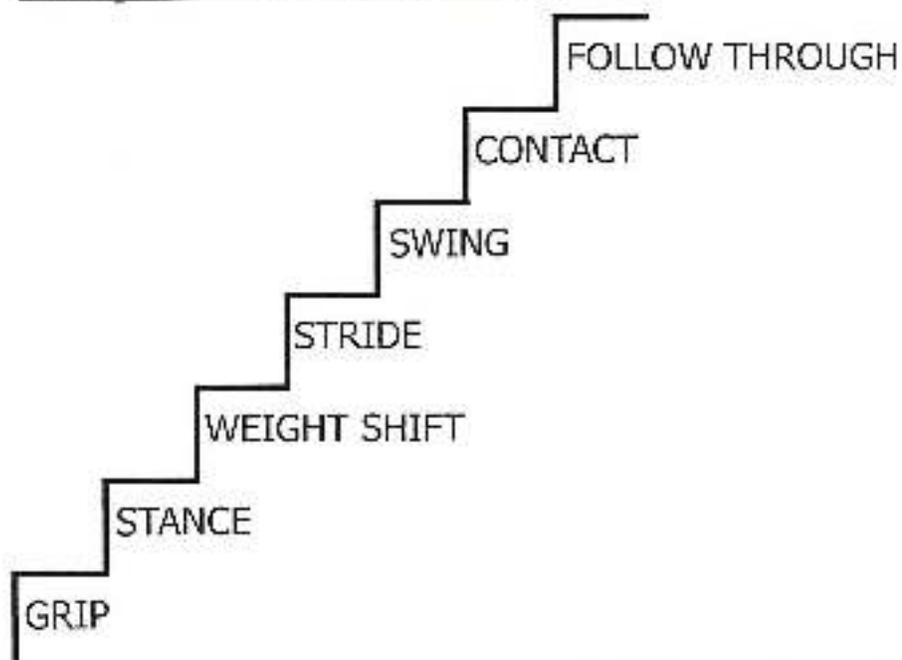
Carly J.

- 3,184 Career Hits
- 431 Career Home Runs

7 STEPS TO A QUALITY SWING



RIPKEN BASEBALL



GRIP



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Placed in fingers
- Line up the "door-knocking" knuckles
- "Loose hands, quick bat"
- Allows you to throw the bat head and create bat speed

CORRECT



INCORRECT

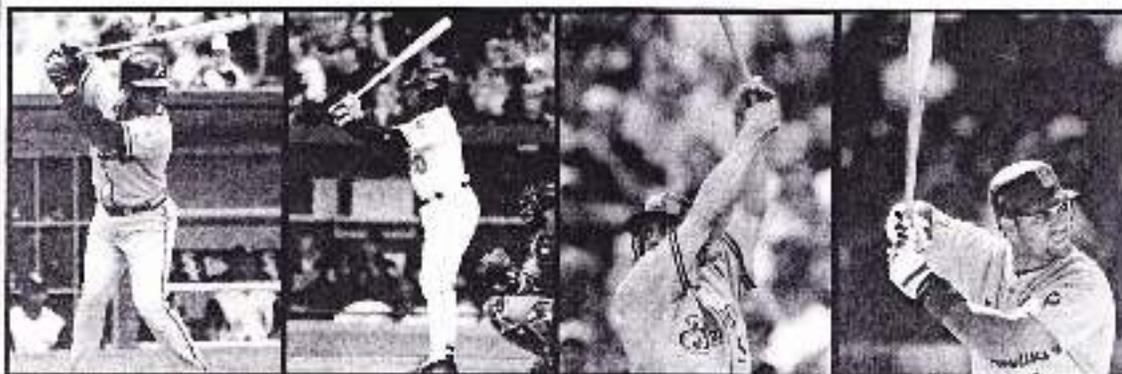


STANCE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Just a starting position
- Choose one that is comfortable
- Good balance is key
- Vision
- Plate Coverage



STANCE

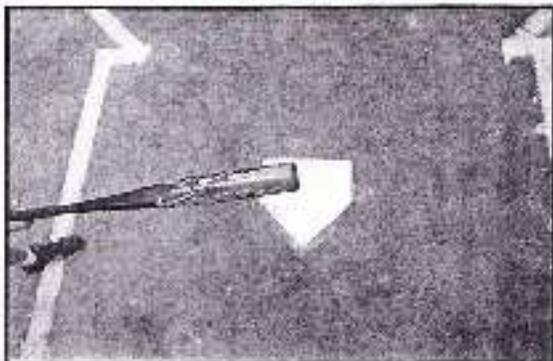


RIPKEN BASEBALL

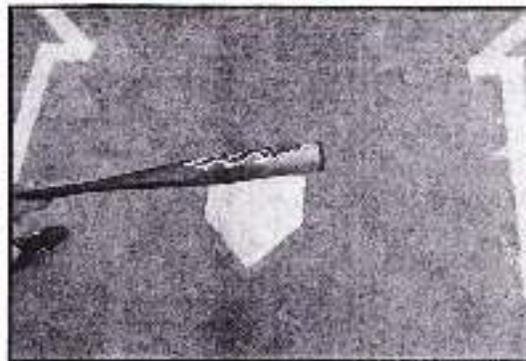
• **PLATE COVERAGE**

- Make sure barrel of bat covers whole plate without reaching

POOR Plate Coverage



GOOD Plate Coverage



WEIGHT SHIFT



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Gathering of energy
- Body and swing must work together
- Go from a cocked, loaded position to a swing position
- "Go back to go forward"
- Transfer weight to back side and then forward to front side as you stride into the swing



STRIDE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Varies for each individual
- No right or wrong, but two things are important:
 - **Stride should be toward the pitcher**
 - Puts batter in position to strike the ball
 - Body position is good for inside or outside pitches
 - **Short, soft stride is preferable**
 - Short stride keeps head on same plane for tracking ball
 - Allows batter to wait longer – less likely to get fooled



SWING



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Hands in ready position, near top of back shoulder
- Ideal swing is level
 - Stay on the same plane as long as possible – “Stay on top of the ball” or “Swing down on the ball” really means to swing level
- Short, quick swing using hands, wrists, forearms
- Don’t get too technical or analytical about the swing
- Let natural swing take over



CONTACT



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Generally made in front of home plate
 - Allows for good extension & bat speed
 - Hitting too far back cuts swing in half, allowing less time and space to generate full bat speed
 - Too far in front means swing is in slowing down phase when contact is made
- General guidelines on contact:
 - Inside pitch hit a little more out in front than a pitch down the middle
 - Outside pitch hit a little farther back than a pitch down the middle
 - Let the natural swing dictate how a hitter hits certain pitches as long as the proper approach is followed (shoulder stays in, stride toward the pitcher, etc.)

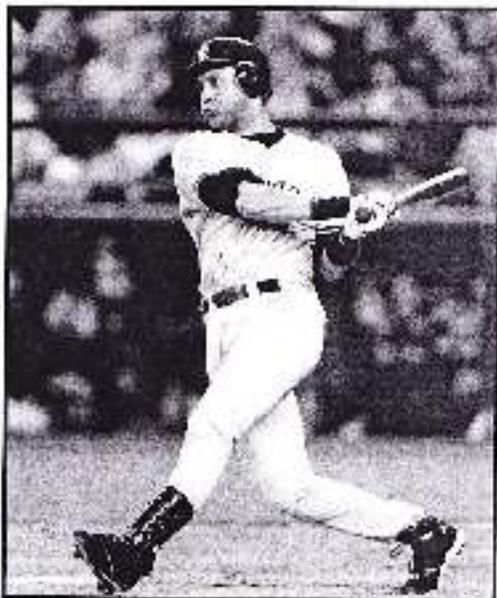


FOLLOW THROUGH



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Swing through ball after contact
- Takes care of itself if everything is done correctly
- Bat is slowing down at contact if there is no follow through
- One hand or two hand – doesn't matter as long as batter swings hard through the ball



TEE DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- “Go back to go forward”
- Develop rhythm in swing
- Don’t rush
- Comfortable stance
- Gather energy – ok to wind up
- Can incorporate balance by having player hold front leg up and count to 3 before swinging
- Swing hard through the ball

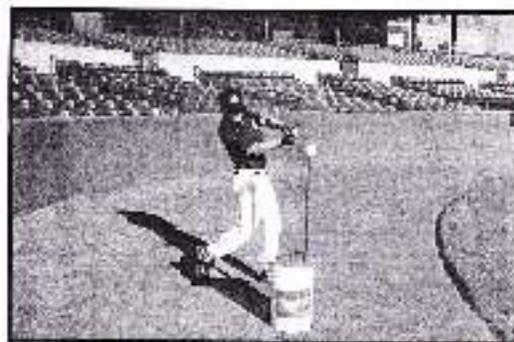
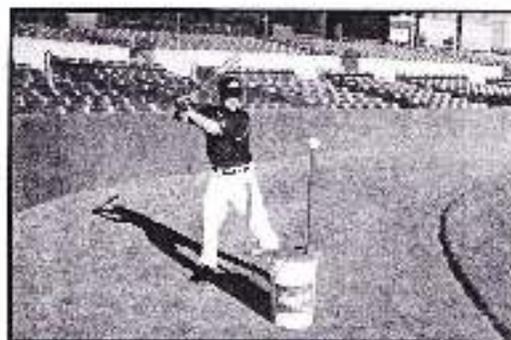


HIGH TEE DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Tee set at top of strike zone
- Older players may have to place tee on a bucket
- Same principles as regular tee drill - Try to hit a line drive
- Must take a direct path to the ball to hit a line drive (can’t drop hands and hit a line drive)
- Helps eliminate upper-cut



BIG BALL TEE DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Large rubber ball (soccer ball) on a tee with plunger to help keep ball in place
- Same principles as regular tee drill
- Promotes a hard swing "through the ball" (their bat will 'bounce' off the ball if they are not strong at contact)
- "Swing to it and through it"

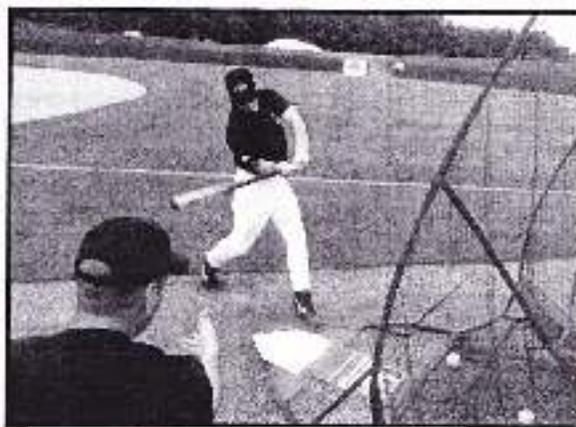


SOFT TOSS DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Focus on proper grip
 - "Loose hands, quick bat"
 - Grip loosely in fingers
- Concentrate on using wrists to swing
- Don't worry about body position
- Tossers is vital
- Not a race (take time and concentrate on each swing)

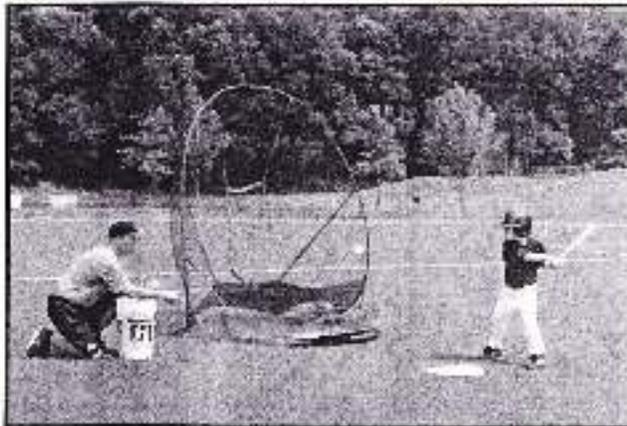


STICKBALL DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Promote balance throughout swing
- Small balls, thin bat
- Set up like soft toss
- Take stride and hold it
- Take five swings quickly
- Batter sets the pace
- Swing hard and reload

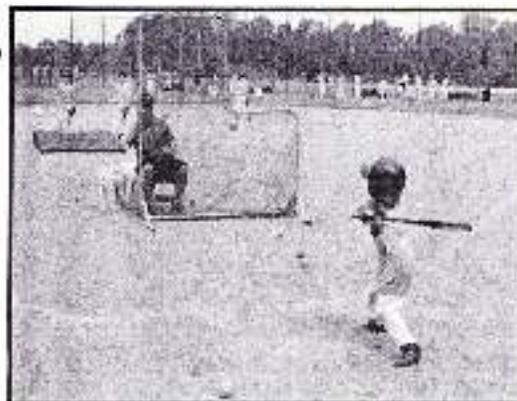


FRONT TOSS DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Focus on proper mental approach (“hit to the big part of the field”) – drive the ball up the middle
- Firm toss to outside half of plate
- Let natural swing take over
- Keep the shoulder in and hit a line drive
- HAVE FUN!! – create fun targets for kids to hit on L-screen (bottle of Gatorade).

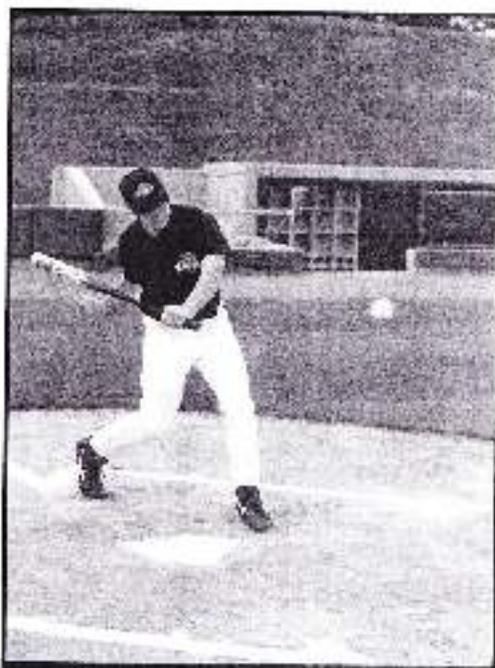


ONE-ARM DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- More advanced, but can be used with younger players
- Promotes direct path to ball
- Use normal game bat
- Toss from out in front
- Five swings with two hands
- Remove top hand for five swings
- Five more swings with two hands
- Tuck lead arm into side for stability if necessary

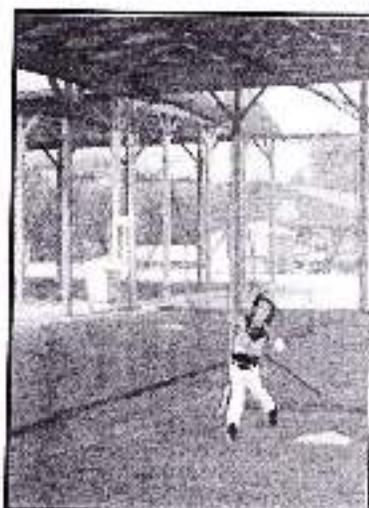
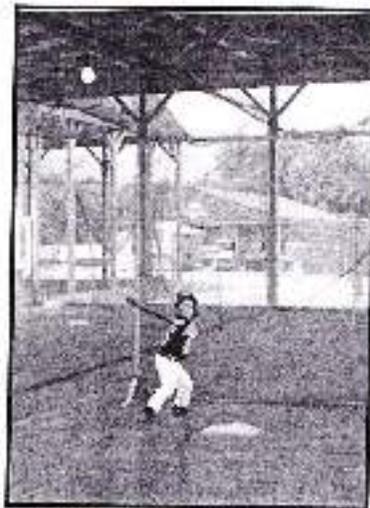


LOB TOSS DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Set up like front toss
- Tosses lobbed with high arc
- Let the ball get deep
- Promotes patience by following the ball all the way to home plate



SITUATIONAL HITTING



RIPKEN BASEBALL

Situational Hitting:

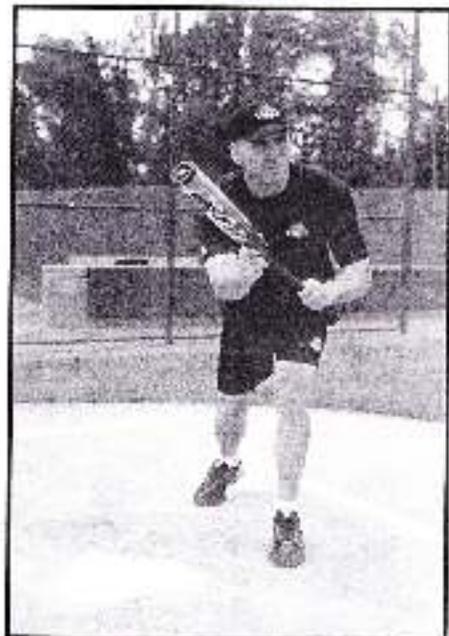
- When a batter changes his strategy depending on the game situation
 - Inning
 - Score
 - Number of outs
 - Men on base
 - Skill / speed of batter / runner
- Examples of Situational Hitting:
 - Bunting (sac, hit, push, & squeeze)
 - Hit & run
 - Runner on 3rd

SACRIFICE BUNT



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- **FEET**
 - Pivot both feet and bend knees
 - One foot in front of the other and pointing toward fair territory
- **HANDS**
 - Top hand slides up
 - Bat held between thumb and forefinger
- Start bat at the top of strike zone

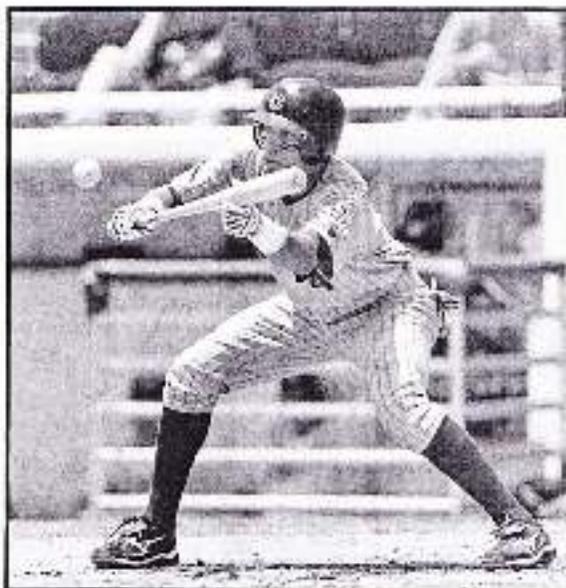


SACRIFICE BUNT



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- As the pitcher lifts their leg, pivot and put yourself in a bunting position
- **Goals for a Sac Bunt:**
 - "Give yourself up" not bunt for a base hit
 - Deaden the ball and keep it away from the pitcher
 - Make sure the ball is bunted in fair territory and on the ground

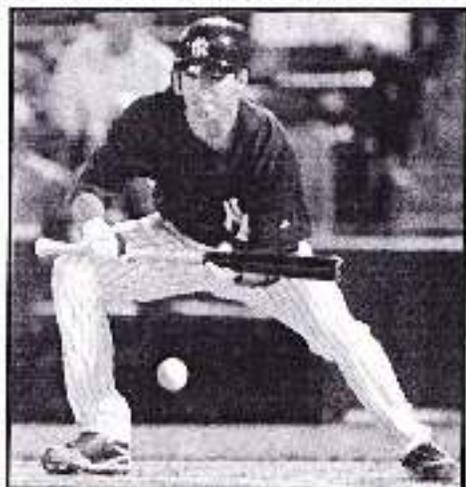


BUNTING FOR A HIT & PUSH BUNT



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Wait to pivot until the ball has left the pitcher's hand
- The goal is to place the bunt so that the pitcher has to go a long way to field it, or so that the 1B or 3B has to field it
- It is ok for a failed bunt for hit to go foul



SQUEEZE BUNT



RIPKEN BASEBALL

• **Safety Squeeze**

- Hitter waits to show bunt until the ball is released from pitcher's hand
- Runner waits until ball is definitely on ground



• **Suicide Squeeze**

- The runner takes off when the pitcher begins to deliver home
- The batter must make contact no matter where the pitch is
- Do not try to make a perfect bunt; simply get the ball on the ground in fair territory

HIT & RUN



RIPKEN BASEBALL

• **The Runner's Responsibility**

- Do not get picked off
- Steal the base

• **The Batter's Responsibility**

- Swing at the pitch
- Hit the ball where it is pitched
 - On the ground is preferred
 - To the right side is preferred

RUNNER ON 3rd BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

• **The Runner's Responsibility**

- 3rd = "The Walking Base"
 - Right foot lands as ball crosses hitting zone
 - Lead should be in foul territory
 - Return to the base in fair territory
- Read the ball off the bat



RUNNER ON 3rd BASE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

• **The Batter's Responsibility**

- With less than 2 outs – score the runner
 - Basic approach doesn't change
 - Get a good pitch to hit
 - Have a plan
 - Main goal is to have a good at-bat and hit the ball hard to the big part of the field

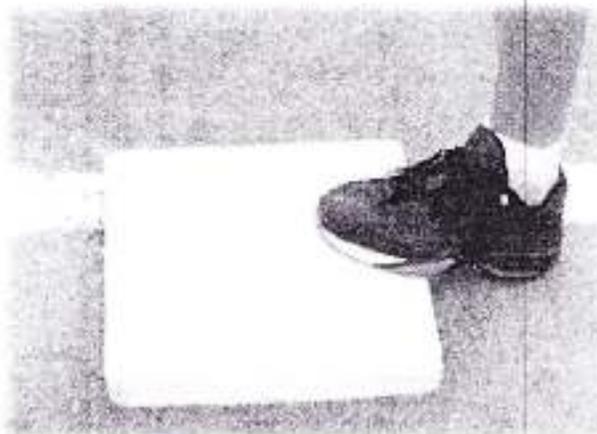
BASERUNNING



RIPKEN BASEBALL

1st Base

- After contact, focus on the front part of the base (the edge closest to home plate)
- Always run through the base
- Once you pass the base, find the ball and listen to the coach



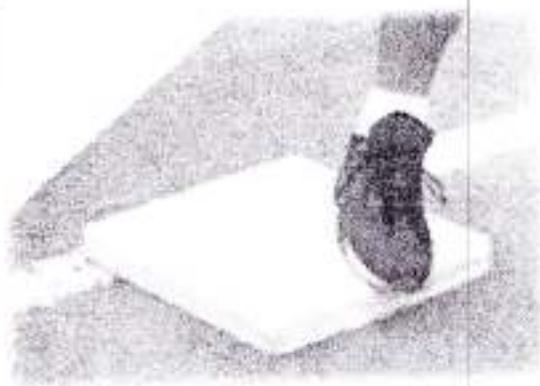
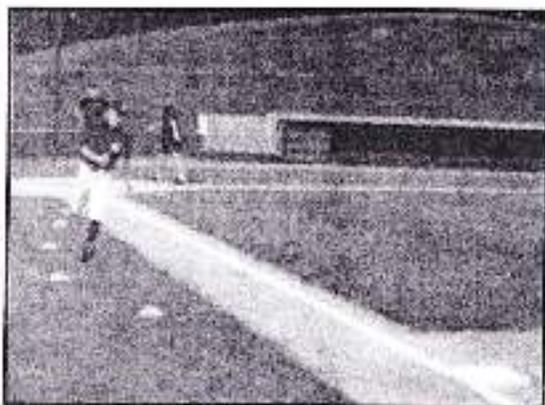
BASERUNNING



RIPKEN BASEBALL

Rounding 1st base, running to 2nd

- Take gradual line toward the 1st base coaching box, so that you can make a turn at full speed and run in a straight line to 2nd
- Step on the inside of 1st base (closest to 2nd) and use the base like a starting block to push off toward 2nd base



LEADS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

Primary Lead

- Basic 2 – 2 ½ step lead
- Keep eye on pitcher
- Lead from the back edge of the base
- Come back to the same back edge

Secondary Lead

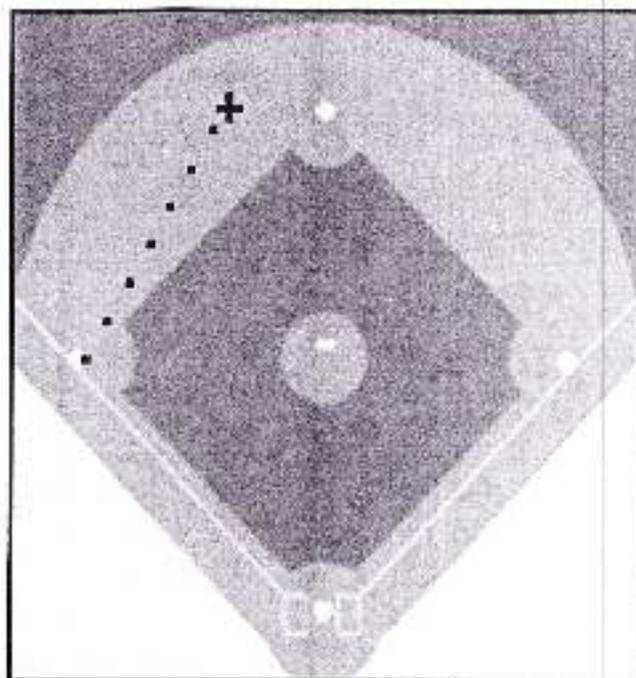
- Create momentum towards next base when pitch is thrown (shuffle step)
- Three shuffles as pitch is thrown
- Right foot should land as the ball enters the hitting zone

LEADS – 2nd Base



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- 2 ½ - 3 step lead off the bag
- Keep eye on the pitcher at all times
- Take a couple of small steps back toward the OF (allows for a better angle to round 3rd base)



OUTFIELD DEFENSE



RIPKEN BASEBALL

OUTFIELDER'S JOB DESCRIPTION

- INF & OF need to learn proper fundamentals & footwork for flyballs
- Catch the routine ball / Last line of defense
- Keep runners from taking an extra base
- Communicate with other fielders

READY POSITION

- Athletic position used in most sports
 - Playing defense in Basketball
 - Goalie in Soccer
 - Linebacker in Football
- Feet shoulder width apart
- Knees slightly bent
- Weight distributed evenly
- Square shoulders to home plate
- Look at hitting zone or follow ball – individual preference



OUTFIELD - GROUNDBALL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Wide base, butt down hands in front
- Keep the ball in front
- Rolled groundball drill (similar to infield defense groundball drill)
- Do-or-die groundball (example shown in picture to the right)
 - Catch ball on glove side
 - Glove side foot is lead foot
 - Glove is on the ground
 - Eyes watch ball go in glove (catch it before you throw it)



BASIC FLYBALL DRILL



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Catch with one or two hands above head
- Don't block vision
- "Ball, glove, eyes"
- Moving forward as ball is caught when possible
- Get to the spot quickly; don't drift
- Thrown flyball drill (w/gloves)
- Lite Flite flyball drill (with or without gloves)

CORRECT



INCORRECT



CROSSOVER STEP



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Most efficient way to move laterally (side to side) on a baseball field
- Used by IF, OF, base runners
- No wasted movements allows for a better jump
- Pivot and crossover in direction of ball
- Crossover step drill
 - Crossover & run to catch flyball over the head

Crossover Step



Catch ball over head



DROP STEP

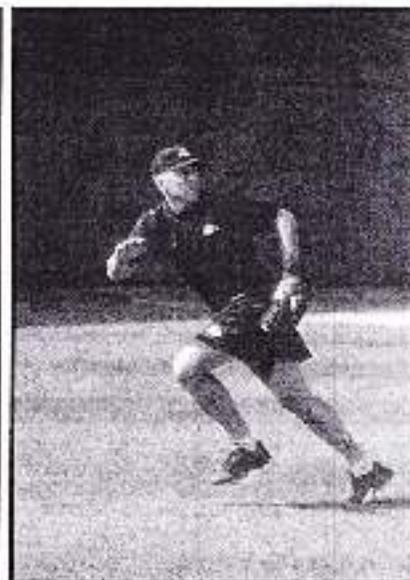


RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Balls hit over the fielder's head
- Combination step – Drop step first to move back and then crossover
- Drop a foot back and open up then cross over in the direction of the ball
- Drop step drill
- Pass patterns drill (use footballs)



Drop Step



Crossover Step

OF COMMUNICATION



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Center fielder has priority over RF and LF
- Outfielders in general have priority over infielders on a flyball
- When calling the ball be loud and clear
- "I got it! I got it! I got it!"
- Off-outfielder backs up
- Communication drill



CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

GIVING SIGNS

- Not doing it right can cause problems for the entire team
- Position your glove to shield the signs from the 1st and 3rd base coaches

- Spread your legs apart – but not too far
- Grab your cup – get deep to give the signs

WRONG



CORRECT



CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

PRIMARY POSITION (Receiving Position)

- No one on base/less than 2 outs
- Need to be relaxed & balanced
- Soft Hands
- Low target
- Allow umpire to see strike zone
- Protect throwing hand
 - Behind ankle
 - Soft hands



CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

SECONDARY POSITION (Throwing Position)

- Runner on base or 2 strikes
- More Advanced- Must be able to receive, block, and throw
- Rear end even with knees
- Right toes even with left foot arch
- Balanced- weight on balls of feet



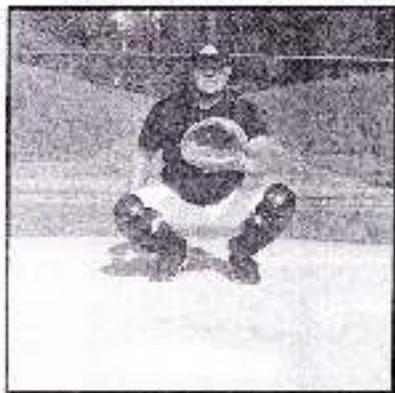
CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

RECEIVING THE PITCH:

- Visualize catching an egg – soft hands
- Keep glove hand relaxed
- Funnel to the center of you body
- Let the ball close the glove (not your hand)
- Simulate catching a pitch when you play catch



CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

CATCHING POP UPS

- Keep eyes open when batter swings
- Take the mask off as soon as possible (keep in your hand until you find the ball)
- Find the ball
- Throw your mask in the opposite direction away from the path of the ball
- Don't cross your feet
- Ball will have backspin & drift toward mound
- Catch the ball out in front of your body and above your eyes
- Bottom line – catch the ball any way you can
- Be aggressive until called off



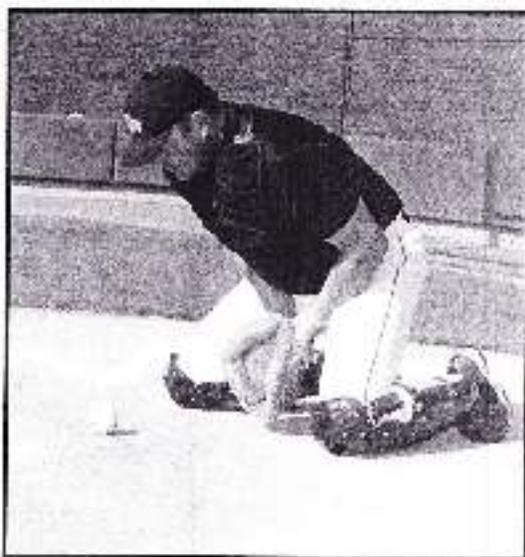
CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

BLOCKING A PITCH

- Practice the correct way over and over
- Anticipate the ball in the dirt – beat the pitch to the spot
- Place throwing hand behind glove
- Weight automatically comes forward
 - Enables us to go through the ball
 - Quicker transfer
 - Gain ground on wild pitches
- Do not try to catch the ball
- Mask goes to spot where pitch bounces
- Glove covers hole between your legs
- Getting to balls to either side:
 - Slide over at 45° angle
 - Ball ends up near the plate



CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

FIELDING BUNTS

- Pick the ball up the first time
 - If it is moving scoop it with glove and throwing hand
 - If it is not moving pick it up with throwing hand
- Stay over the ball and stay balanced
- Front shoulder should point toward target
- For bunts down the 1st base line, clear the runner before throwing to 1st.
- Throw through the target



CATCHING FUNDAMENTALS



RIPKEN BASEBALL

THROWING AS A CATCHER

- Both hands out front when receiving the ball
- Catch ball, then bring ball out and back with hand on top of the ball
- Front side points toward the target
- Push off with right foot to generate some power
- Left foot steps toward the target
- Throw through the target (not to it)



BASEBALL AGILITY **BOX DRILL**



RIPKEN BASEBALL

- Teach each step (crossover, shuffle, drop) before each round
 - Crossover – used in baserunning, moving side-to-side on defense
 - Shuffle step – used in baserunning (secondary lead)
 - Drop step – used w/ crossover by fielders to go back efficiently

• **Round 1 = Crossover Step**

- Start straddling Dot #1 facing Dot #4
- Crossover step and run to Dot #2
- Jog to Dot #3
- Crossover step and through Dot #4

• **Round 2 = Shuffle Step**

- Start straddling Dot #1 facing Dot #4
- Shuffle to the right to Dot #2
- Jog to Dot #3
- Shuffle to the left through Dot #4

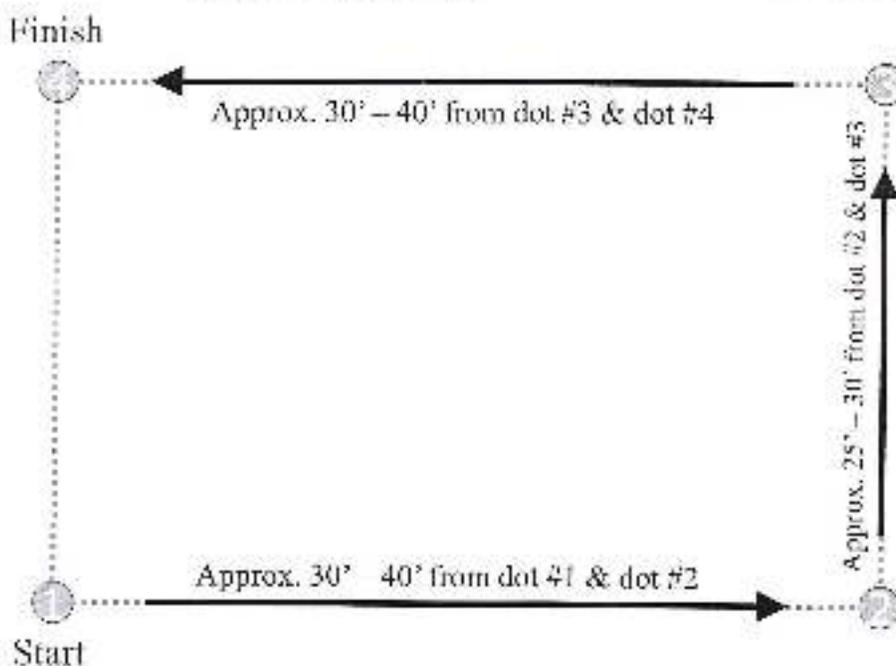
• **Round 3 – Drop Step**

- Start at Dot #1 with back to Dot #2
- Drop step (left)/crossover and run to Dot #2
- Shuffle to Dot #3 (facing away from the box)
- Drop step (right)/crossover and jog through Dot #4

BASEBALL AGILITY **BOX DRILL**



RIPKEN BASEBALL



Tips for Planning and Running a Practice

- Interactive, small groups
 - Station work instead of whole team together whenever possible (better focus)
 - If no assistants, get parents to help (ask for assistance at a preseason meeting)
 - Keep the kids moving around – eliminate standing around time
- Running/jogging
 - Older kids can go for a short jog first (or “Big League” baserunning)
 - Younger kids do baserunning first and last
 - “Big League” baserunning – teaching component and a way to get rid extra energy
 - Home to first (through the bag)
 - First to third – get up with pitch and go (work on good turn at 2nd)
 - Run out a double (work on good turn at 1st)
 - Score on a hit – get up with pitch and go
 - Run out a triple / score from 3rd
 - Run out a home run
- Stretching
 - Serves physiological purpose for older kids / for younger kids – habit forming
 - Allows coach to go over practice plan for the day
- Bating practice – eliminate standing around
 - If hitting on the field – small groups – 1 hitting, 1 in OF, 1 in INF, and 1 doing a drill on the side
 - 15 minute stations / more efficient use of time, space = more swings
 - Acquire as many baseballs as possible – maximizes swings / can do multiple drills at the same time
- Dealing with limited field space
 - Fielding/throwing station = incorporate fungos during BP on the field
 - T-work/soft-toss = use 3 set-ups in a batting cage (coach or parent tosses if possible)
- Planning important – give this some thought ahead of time
 - Stick to the plan – don’t dwell on a drill/skill if they don’t get it right away. Move on and come back to it another day.
 - Keeps kids under control
- One man coaching staff
 - Preseason meeting just with parents – ask for assistance (not full-time, just occasionally) from all
 - Discuss philosophies of playing time
 - Goals / What you are trying to accomplish
 - Emphasis on positive experience
 - Supervision/safety
- Perfect practice makes perfect
 - Practicing the wrong way doesn’t help
 - You practice the way you play
 - Be armed with a plan and fundamentals
 - Stations = more reps, efficiency
 - Don’t compromise quality / Do it the right way every time
 - Develop good habits so game reaction is natural
 - Be disciplined, but still have fun (integrate fun = drills, games, contests)
 - Maintain the player’ interest / Keep it interactive / Be creative
- How much is too much?
 - Common sense is always key
 - Younger players (4-6)
 - Small attention window
 - Accentuate fun in short periods of time
 - 1-hour at most (baserunning is fun)
 - If THEY want to stay, it’s on THEIR terms
 - Shorter stations for younger kids
 - Build a love of the game

- 7-9 age group
 - Same basic concepts as 4-6 year olds
 - Let their attention dictate the time (1-1/2 hours at most)
 - Have Fun - continue to build a love of the game
- 10-12 age group
 - More traditional practice
 - Longer attention, more serious
 - Team skills – time consuming
 - Still teach in smaller groups
 - Don't try to accomplish everything at once
 - Build each time out
 - Have Fun - continue to build a love of the game

Sample Practice Plan – Ages 12 and under

<i>10 minutes</i>	Baserunning ("Big League" baserunning)
<i>20 minutes</i>	Stretch and throw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Warm-up throw with a purpose (good technique and throw to a target every time) ○ Go over practice plan/goals in detail
<i>45-60 min</i>	Stations – small groups, 15 minutes per station and rotate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Batting practice – drills (tee work, soft toss, front toss on field) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could be just one station or two depending upon # of kids and what you have available for BP (cages, on field, extra adult helpers, # of baseballs) ○ Fielding/throwing station (pick a skill or two to work on at each practice – don't overload) ○ Flyballs/throwing station (pick a skill or two to work on at each practice – don't overload)
<i>10 minutes</i>	Baserunning

As always, common sense must prevail. For ages 5-8, a practice should only last an hour. Times should be shortened accordingly. Players should only stay longer if they ask to, and you should let them do what they want. Players ages 8-10 may be able to stay the full time and 11- and 12-year olds might be able to last for even longer. Use this framework as a guideline and customize practices to fit your needs.

Sample Practice Plan – Ages 13 and up

<i>20 minutes</i>	Stretch, run, throw (warm-up throw with a purpose – proper technique)
<i>20 minutes</i>	Groundballs and flyballs – use buckets and systems to minimize throws and maximize reps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not taking infield ○ Two infield fungo stations ○ One outfield fungo station
<i>20 minutes</i>	Team fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bunt defenses ○ First and third defenses ○ Cutoffs and relays ○ Pickoffs and rundowns
<i>20 minutes</i>	Baserunning or another team fundamental
<i>60 minutes</i>	Team batting practice – four stations, 15 minutes each (or four stations, 10 minutes each if you want to do another team fundamental) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stations can be rotated daily – always include free hitting ○ Pitchers can throw on the side ○ On third day of three-day series of practices this can be an intra-squad game

Once in season, coaches should prioritize which issues need to be addressed during team fundamental sessions. Please note that the infield fungo station does not mean taking a full infield. Batting practice provides opportunities for pitchers to throw on the side and do their running.