

BASEBALL

**“ICP”
INSTRUCTIONAL
COACHES PITCH**



TRAINING TOOL

PHILOSOPHY

The MBB philosophy is to teach the same basic fundamentals to every boy and girl in the Midway program.

On our MBB website you can find several training resources to help you in coaching. Go to midwaybaseball.org. Click on the link “Billy P. Coach and Umpire in Residence”, and the link will give you several resources for teaching fundamentals and drills, including this ICP resource. There is also a link which gives our 2012 Midway Modified Rules and sections specific for each league. It is good to be familiar with and to use the website several times a week or even daily for training updates, schedules, weather cancellations, coaches' information, etc.



The ICP age (7-8) is, for most of our kids, their first introduction and experience playing organized baseball. For many of our ICP coaches it is also their (your) first experience in coaching. Recognizing the inexperience of most players and coaches and the physical skills of 7 and 8 year olds, this ICP training tool has been designed specifically for this age group.

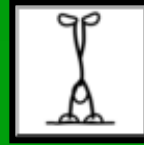
For many/most ICP players this will be their first time to:

- 1. Catch a ball from another little person**
- 2. Throw a ball to another little person**
- 3. Field a batted ground ball**
- 4. Catch a batted fly ball**
- 5. Swing at a ball.....correctly**
- 6. Hit a ball off a tee**
- 7. Hit a ball that is moving**
- 8. Hit a ball then drop the bat and run to first**
- 9. Play in an organized game**
- 10. Take orders (directions) from someone else's dad or mom!**



FUNDAMENTALS TO STRESS AT THE ICP LEVEL

- 1. WARM-UP**
- 2. THROWING**
- 3. CATCHING
FIELDING**
- 4. BATTING
BUNTING**
- 5. BASE STANCE**
- 6. DEFENSIVE
PLACEMENT**



1. WARM-UP

WHY? Stretching is an important tool in managing the muscle imbalances that occur as a result of the young athlete's growing body. Stretching plays an important part of injury prevention by maintaining this muscle balance. Although warming up before activities for the ICP age group might not seem to be crucial, it becomes extremely important the older athletes get. Developing a good foundation at this age is important and can (and will) be beneficial for them for the rest of their lives.

More information on warming up can be found in both the "Midway Drills" and the "Midway Fundamentals" found on the MBB website. midwaybaseball.org

Static & Dynamic stretching

Static: Stationary stretching, holding each stretch for at least 10-15 seconds



Dynamic: Actively stretching movements that move arms and legs through a full range of motion.



A good balance between Static and Dynamic stretching will gain maximum benefits.

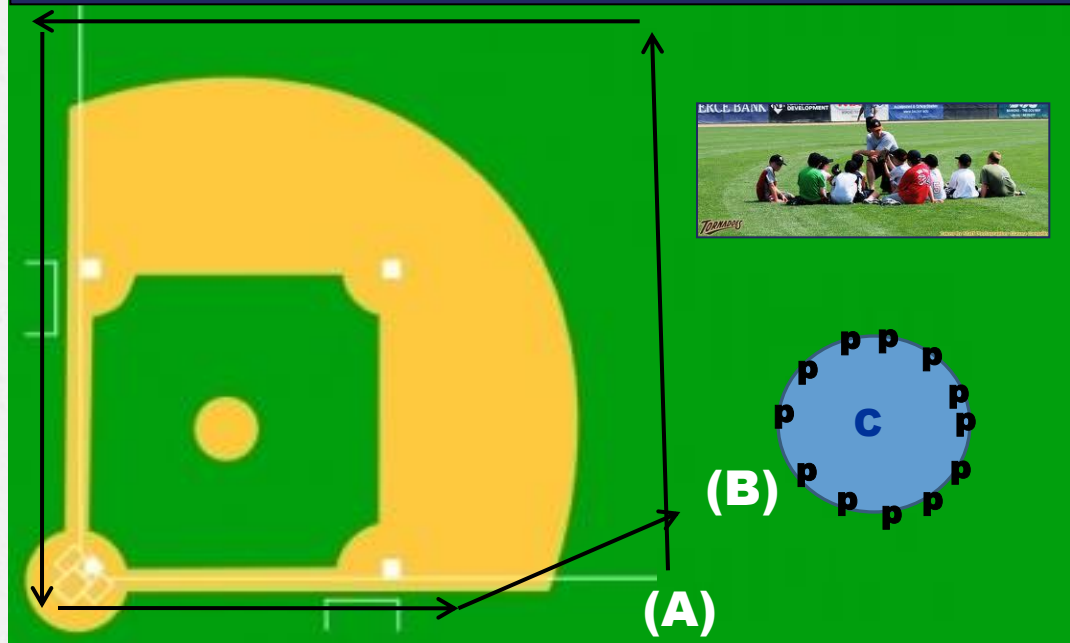
Principles:

- always warm up before stretching (jogging) never stretch cold/cool muscles
- stretch to the point of resistance but not pain
- keep breathing during stretch
- during the warm up a balance between static and dynamic stretching is best
- target the main muscle groups that will be used during practice/game



1a WARM-UP JOG - STRETCHING DRILL

1. Starting at (A) (as a group) warm-up jog around the field to (B)
2. Set up in a circle for stretching. Coach/Leader (C) in the center
3. **Static** (Stationary) followed by **Dynamic** (Movement) Stretching
4. Recommend to use good running techniques during warm-up jog
5. See MBB Fundamentals for stretch suggestions and running fundamentals



The next 2 slides will show some additional **ACTIVE** warm-up drills; **Diving** to catch the ball and running to catch the fly ball over the shoulder. Your players probably will not be ready for these until they have mastered (well sort of mastered) just catching the ball. Excellent drills because they not only help warm up the players, but they are fun drills.

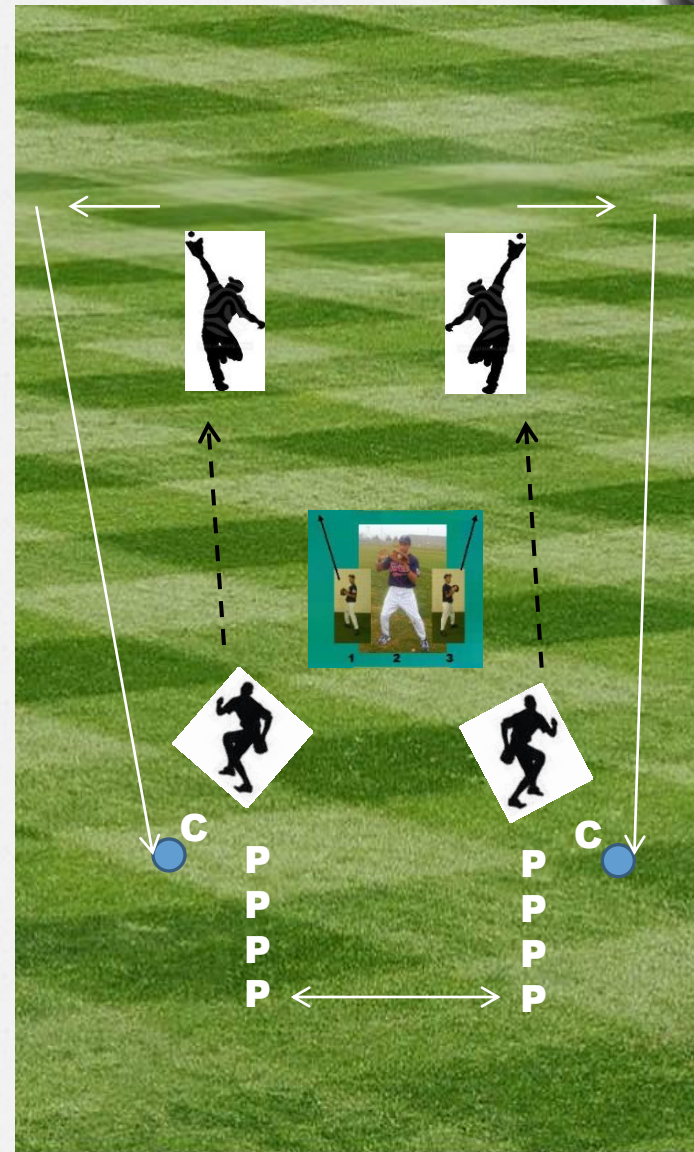
Catching over the shoulder is a good pre-game drill for warm up and loosening up for all age groups.

1b WARM-UP ADDITIONAL/ADVANCED DRILLS

This drill requires the players to have the ability to catch the ball on the run. Seven or less, keep in one line. Eight or more divide into two lines.

First player in line is 10-15' in front of and facing the coach. On the command "GO" the player turns with a drop step (outside foot) and runs looking back over their shoulder at the coach. After a few steps the coach tosses the ball over the shoulder. The player catches (or chases the ball if missed or a bad throw) and runs (on the outside) the ball back to the bucket, drops it in the bucket and switches lines.

On the first "GO" the second player in line moves up to the 10-15' spot and faces the coach. When the first player clears the field the coach repeats the process to the next player and the routine continues. When the players become SOMEWHAT proficient with the drill, keep the lines intact and have a contest/competition between lines.



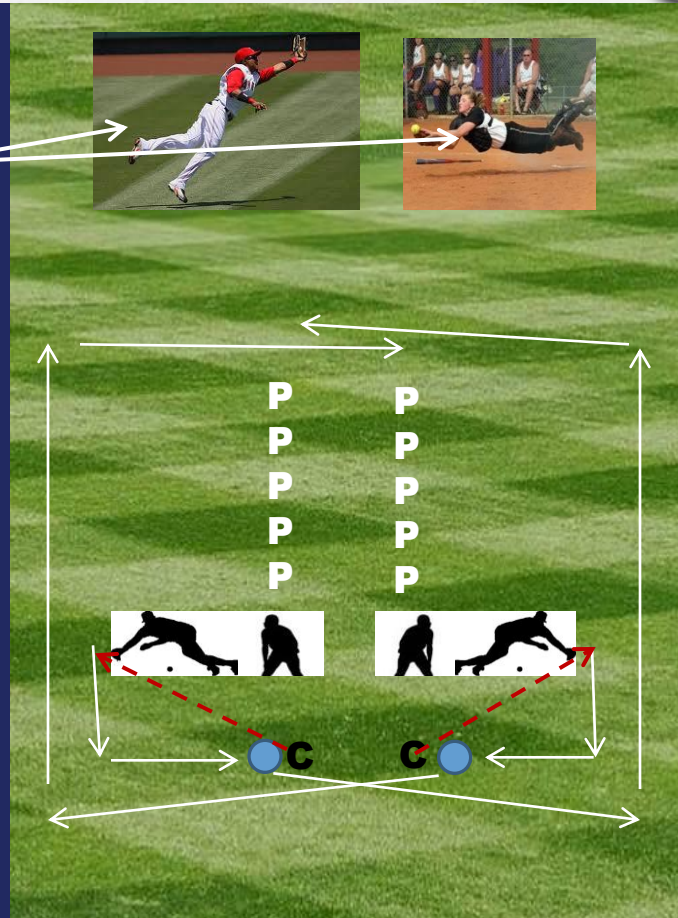
1c WARM-UP ADDITIONAL/ADVANCED DRILLS

This drill helps warm up players and also helps to get rid of some of the inhibitions of diving and hitting the ground to catch the ball. The drill requires the players to have some ability to catch the ball.

Seven or less, one line. Eight or more, two lines. First player (P) in line is on their knees 15-20' in front of and facing the coach. Coach throws (more accurate underhand) a lead pass near the ground and the player (without getting up) dives to catch the ball.

Player catches (or chases if missed) and runs the ball back to the bucket then switches lines. The second player moves up and gets on their knees. When the first player is clear the coach tosses to the next player and the routine continues until everyone has had the opportunity for several tosses/catches on both sides.

Then keep the lines intact and have competition between lines.



With only one line, after each one gets a few throws/catches vary the direction/side the throw goes to so the players cannot anticipate which way to dive.

2. THROWING

6 STEPS WHEN THROWING THE BALL

1. READY
2. STEP
3. SEPARATE
4. STEP & THROW
5. FOLLOW THRU
6. FOLLOW THE THROW

(See MBB Fundamentals for full explanation)

RECOMMENDED FOR ICP

Initially (until players are ready) do not have
players throw to each other (throw & chase)
WHY?

Throws will not be accurate

Throws will not be caught

Players will get hit with the ball

Wide range of abilities and skills

Most of the time will be spent chasing the ball

Chaos

Totally counter productive



READY



STEP



SEPARATE



STEP-THROW



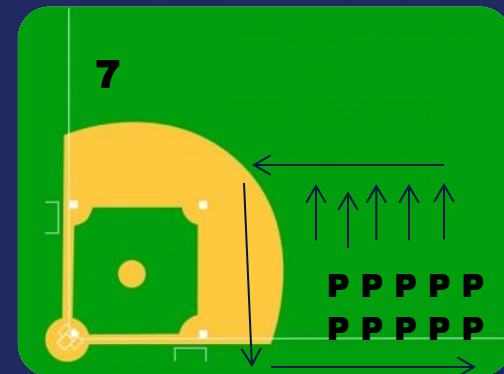
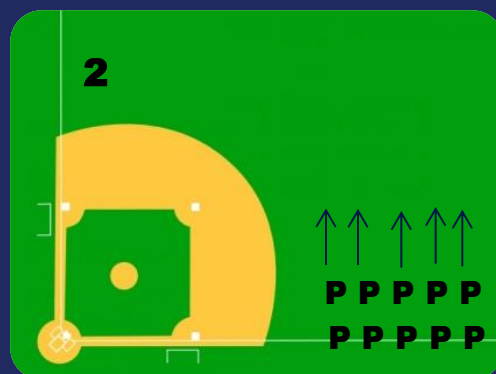
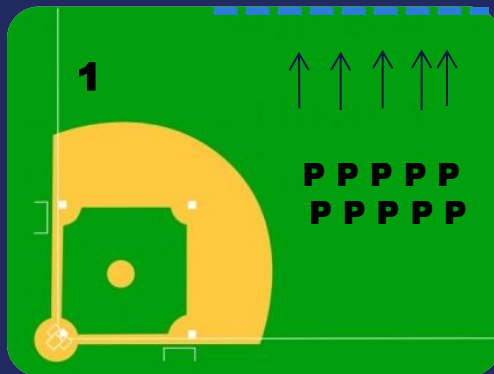
FOLLOW THRU



FOLLOW THE THROW

2a THROWING DRILL

1. In the outfield, facing the **fence**, place players in two lines, far enough away from the fence so throws won't go over. One line behind the other. Space each player about 8' apart.
2. If no fence is available place players in two lines, one behind the other, parallel to the base line but off the line 10 feet (respect the field).
3. Each player will have a ball.
4. In this position, drill the players by the throwing commands (WITHOUT THROWING) "ready", "step", "separate", "step and throw", and "follow thru" several times until they have the basic foot work and the throwing arm and glove movements.
5. When it is actually time to throw, start the front row in the "separate" position.
6. On the command "step and throw" the first line throws the ball toward the fence and follow the ball and go get it (this will develop the habit of following the throw)
7. After they follow and get their ball they should run to their left and get back in line. When all players have cleared on the way back, have the next line do the drill.



3. CATCHING/FIELDING

CATCHING: All balls in the air.
FIELDING: Ground balls.

During games, just prior to the ball being pitched, all players on defense should be in the **READY** position (athletic stance), feet spread about shoulder width apart (comfortable), glove and bare hand on their knees.

When the ball is pitched the stance for infielders and outfielders are slightly different. In the learning process it might be easier (less confusing) to have all ICP players in the infield stance.

Infielders drop their hands slightly lower than the knees, glove open to the sky and eyes on the batter.

Outfielders raise hands chest high, glove open to the batter.



3a. CATCHING/FIELDING BALLS IN THE AIR

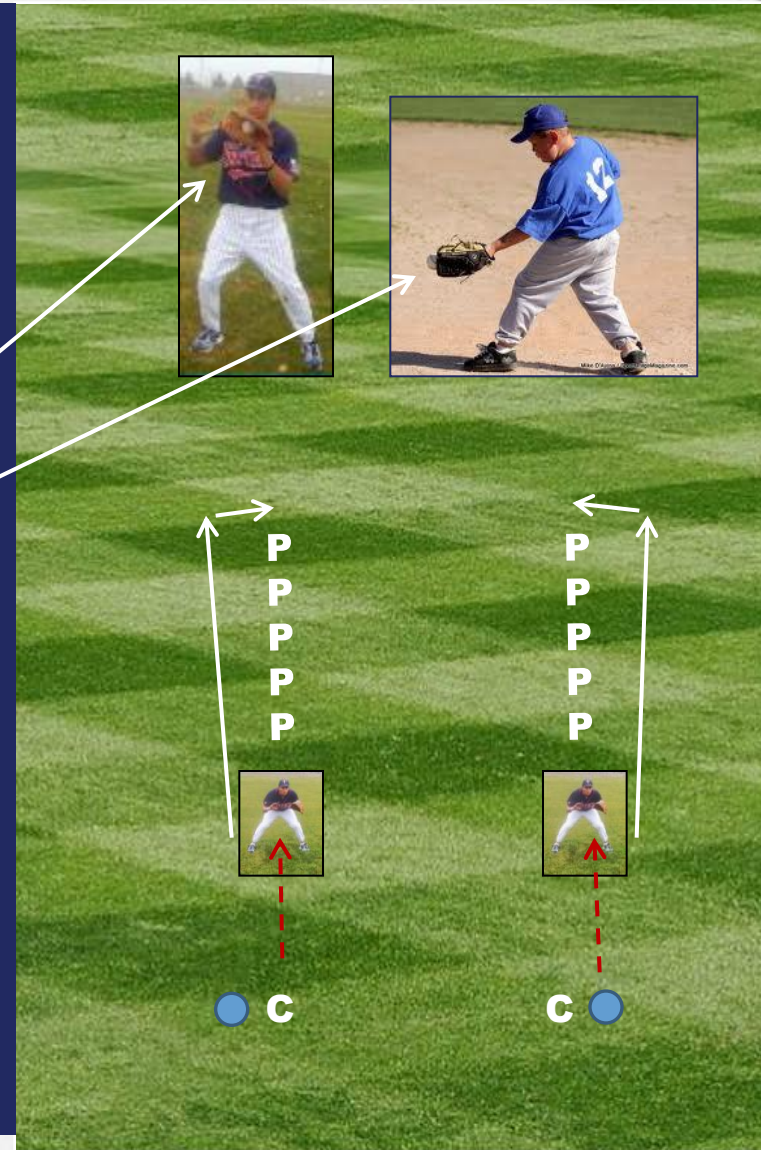
CATCHING: Thrown balls, line drives and fly balls.

Until players have developed some basic skills, coaches should throw balls to players versus batting them. Start 15-20' away. Throwing is more accurate and players will succeed more when coaches throw.

Balls above the waist, catch with the glove facing forward. Balls below the waist catch with the glove facing the sky.

First player in front of the coach 15-20'. Coach (with a glove) throws a (looping not straight) ball directly to the player. Player catches and throws back (using proper throwing fundamentals) to the coach then goes to the end of the line. You can vary the throw depending on the skill of the player.

If you have several coaches (with gloves) have several lines. The more opportunities to catch the better.



3b. CATCHING/FIELDING GROUND BALLS



FIELDING: Ground balls.

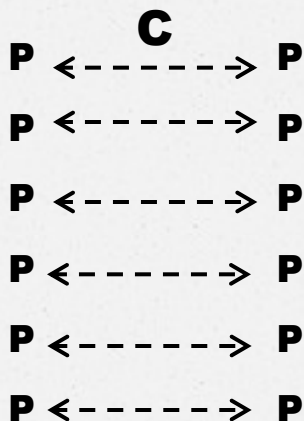
Players can (roll) the ball to each other when learning to field ground balls. Move onto the infield (smoother surface) and place players in two equal lines across from each other approximately 30' apart. Make sure each player has a partner across from him/her. If an odd number, have a coach or parent with a glove, fill in and do the drill.

Without rolling balls, run the players through the fundamentals (see Midway website midwaybaseball.org for fundamentals) by each command.

On the command "LOOK" have the players repeat "LOOK" so they understand to look the ball into the glove. Absolutely the most important part of fielding the ball is **LOOKING** the ball from the bat all the way into the glove. If you cannot see the button on their cap then they are not looking down at the ball into their glove.

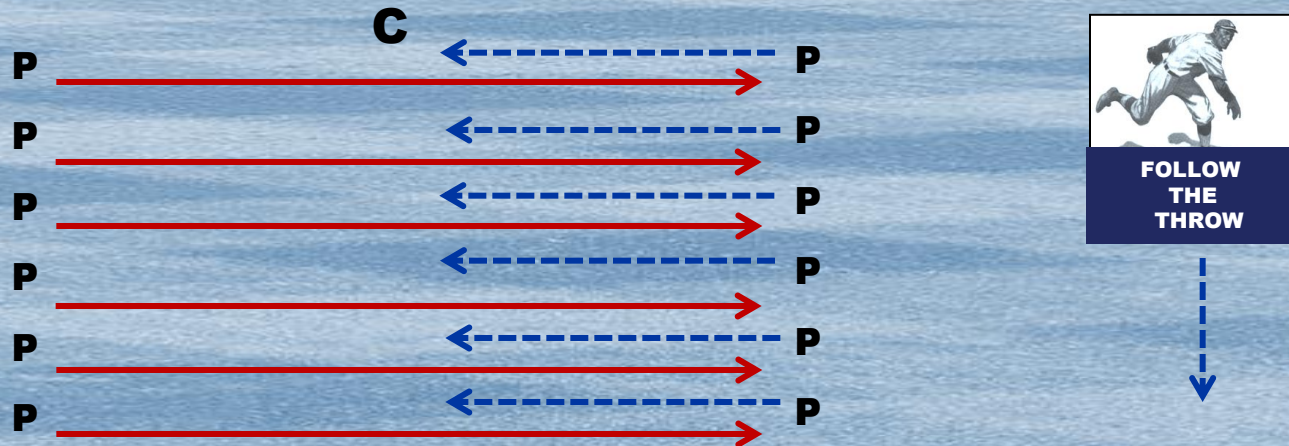
During drills in practice every time they catch a ball have them verbally say "LOOK" .

DRILL: One side have a ball. By the commands **READY, SET, ROLL**. On **ROLL** the side with the ball rolls to their partner. Players receiving the ball say "LOOK" when fielding the ball. Have them stay in this **LOOK** position and check the buttons on their caps. Then bring them to **WAIST** (keep them looking at the ball to the waist). Then repeat the drill going the other way. Repeat many, many times. Repetition, repetition, repetition.



3c. CATCHING/FIELDING/THROWING

Once your players are somewhat skilled at **CATCHING, FIELDING AND THROWING**, it is time to put it all together.



Continue to drill on "Commands" so everyone is doing things together.

One side rolls  the other side fields

Commands are Ready, Set, Roll. On roll the side with the ball rolls to their partner. Partner fields and throw back and follows the throw at least 3 steps. Then goes back to their spot. Have them do the drill several times then reverse it and the roller now fields.

4. BATTING 4 MAIN ELEMENTS



READY

LOAD

SQUISH/SWING

FOLLOW THRU



On the midwaybaseball.org website you can open the link on fundamentals to review all the information on hitting. Here we want to stress the key things that we want to accomplish for ICP players.

READY: Prior to the pitch, relax, bat on the shoulder, weight on both feet.

LOAD: Weight on the back foot, raise heel on front foot which will help keep the weight back. Bat off the shoulder, move hands and arms out away from the body and slightly up even with arm pits.

SQUISH: Keeping weight back, pivot SQUISH the back foot, that opens up the hips.

SWING: Bat level/parallel to the ground when crossing the plate.

FOLLOW THRU: Eyes remain at point of contact until follow thru is completed. Hold follow thru for a count or two. Helps develop the follow thru and maintaining balance.

EMPHASIS: Weight back, eyes follow the ball, good follow thru, maintain balance on the follow thru.

4a. BATTING RUNNING FROM UNDER THE BAT

THROWING THE BAT: A

A bad habit of most players, including MLB players is throwing the bat. After the follow thru they bring the bat back in front and throw/drop the bat on the first base side of the plate. In doing so the player loses at least a step to first base.

THROWING THE BAT: B

At the ICP level kids often times just let go of the bat when they swing and it goes flying...and no one knows where it might go!

The proper mechanics is what we call “Run from under the bat”. After the follow thru, the batter releases the grip on the bat (opens the hands) and takes off running toward first. The bat will drop straight down to the ground.

The way to teach this fundamental at the ICP level:

1. Add “RELEASE” and practice it during batting drills (see slide 4b batting drill and set up) after FOLLOW THRU.
2. Any time in batting practice when the batter completes the last swing, have them hold the follow thru until you say “RELEASE”.

This teaches the proper way to “run from under the bat” and nobody gets hit with a flying bat. We hope!



4b. BATTING THE RIGHT BAT

HINTS WHEN CHOOSING BATS FOR PLAYERS

Youth 8-10 Yrs Old

Player Height	Best Bat Weight
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48 in.	16 oz.
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50 in.	16.5 oz.
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52 in.	17 oz.
--------	--------

54 in.	17.5 oz.
--------	----------

56 in.	18 oz.
--------	--------

58 in.	18.5 oz.
--------	----------

60 in.	19 oz.
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FORMULA (HT DIV BY 4 +4)

Most players want and parents choose, bats that are too big for them! the bat. Bats should be the double edge is that kids grow so today will be the Don't spend a lot of



Players should swing not swing the player. sword for the parent fast that the right bat wrong bat tomorrow. money at this age!

The size and weight of the bat, not the expense, is what is important. The most important thing is to develop a good swing which cannot be achieved if what they are swinging is too long and/or too heavy.



When shopping for a bat, have the player hold the bat straight out to player's side with the top hand.

(right for right hander)

(left for left hander).



If they cannot hold the bat straight for twenty seconds without the arm starting to shake and the bat dropping, the bat is too heavy.

1. BUNTING

Even though we do not allow bunting in league play, bunting improves hitting and should be taught at this level! Learning to bunt develops timing and helps the player see the ball better. It also develops discipline to actually keep your eyes on the ball as it comes in contact with the bat. The fundamentals of bunting should be taught before the fundamentals of hitting. Do babies walk before they crawl?

Only simple basics for the ICP league will be covered here.

(To see all the fundamentals for bunting go to our website: midwaybaseball.org).



Square around

Pivot

Bat angle

On the Plate

Bend at the knees

Placing the bunt

Pinch the bat

Square around: Learning to bunt, start the batter in this position, bat held at the top of the strike zone (never bunt a ball above the top of the strike zone) and level to the ground, hold firm at the knob end & pinch the bat midway up the handle.

Pivot: Pivot on toe of back foot and heel of front foot. (next level).

Bat Angle: Harder to learn and should be taught at the next level.

On the Plate: Step on the plate, make contact (foul or fair) batter is out, main reason to start squared around in the teaching/learning process.

Bend at the knees: Low pitch, bend, don't reach down for the ball.

Placing the bunt : Move the bat at the knob end not at the head .

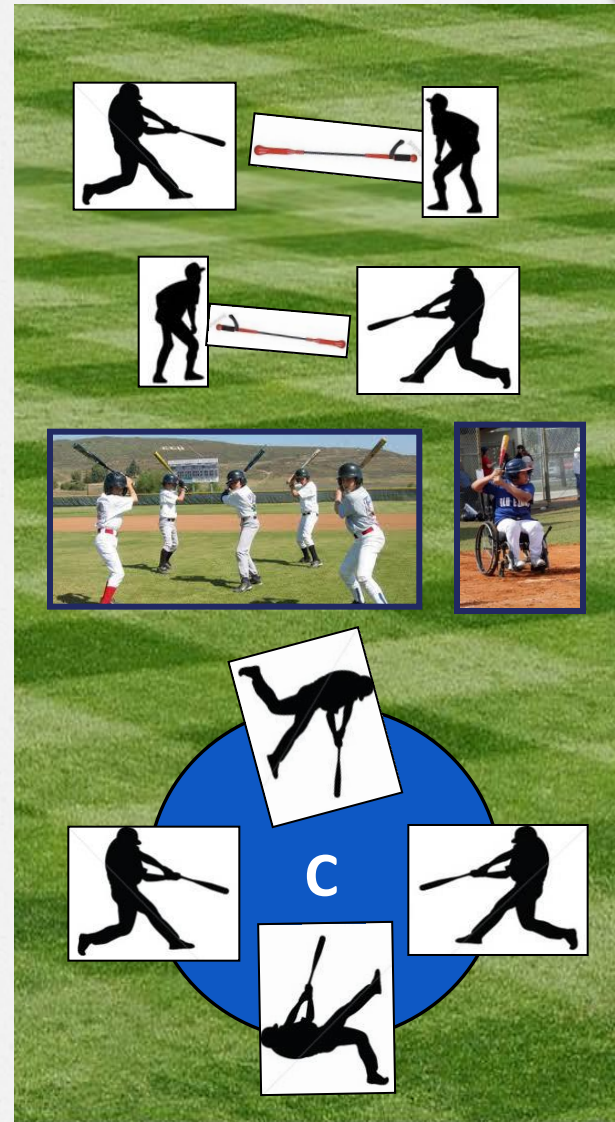
4c. BATTING DRILL & SET-UP

Place players (all players with a bat) in a circle with the Coach in the center. Make sure players have plenty of room between them. Players line feet up with the Coach (similar to facing a pitcher). If all players do not have bats make 2 groups and have one group bat and one group do another drill and then rotate the groups. Do the batting drill step by step on the commands of: **READY-LOAD-SQWISH-SWING-FOLLOWTHRU**

After several swings step by step on command finish the drill by having all players take 10-20 swings together (**READY/LOAD/SWING**). If you have a hit-n-stix, have a coach (parents work good too) go around the (inside) circle with a hit-n-stix. Give each player 1 swing and then rotate to the next player around the circle. More than one stick (if available) may be used. Stix holders (on the Commands **READY** (stick head on the ground), **LOAD** (raise head waist height), **SWING** (batter swings). After each swing stix holder(s) rotate clock wise.

Point to emphasize (over and over) Players should swing (away from practice) at least 20-30 times a day to help develop their "PERFECT" swing. Swinging is not enough. Swings must be fundamentally correct or swinging becomes counter productive.

PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT



4d. BATTING BATTING PRACTICE

Typical batting practice in baseball is: One player at bat taking 20+ hits or swings (way too many) and everyone else in the field standing around.

Here are some hints on how to have better and more productive batting practices that keep everyone involved especially for ICP.

This is designed for 12-15 players. Divide into 3 Groups (keep all left handed batters in the same group). Group1 batting. Group2 on the right side of the infield, Group3 on the left. Coach **C** sitting on a bucket 15-20' down the line) throws soft toss underhand from the 1st baseline for right handers and 3rd baseline for lefties approximately 15' from the batter.

Later in the team's "skill" development you can throw over-hand (more like a flip) from 20' in front of home plate behind a screen

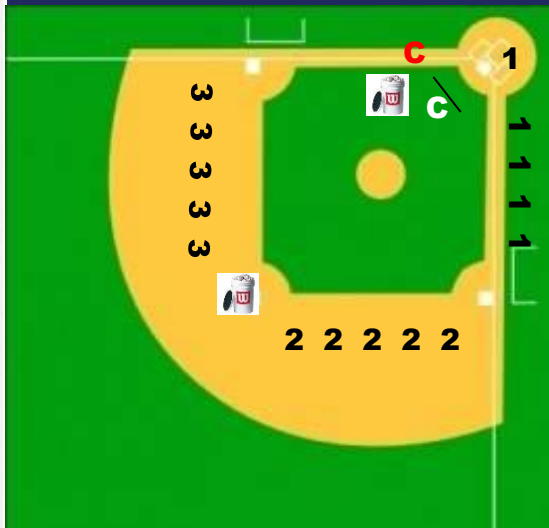


DRILL: (1) first batter at the plate, helmet on. The rest of 1s are in a row with plenty of room between them, helmets on ready to hit next. Do not

have them swing bats **UNLESS** you have some one hovering over them like a helicopter parent. This can be extremely dangerous at this age so stress the importance of **NOT** swinging unless you have plenty of supervision. Give the batter 1 bunt and 3 swings. On the last swing hold the follow thru. Do not let the player run to first until you say "RELEASE".

Next batter moves up. Last batter goes and sits on the bench. When each batter completes their turn at bat then rotate groups.

See next slide



4e. BATTING BATTING PRACTICE cont.

When you rotate groups go counter clockwise. 1s go to the right side, 3s shift over to the left side and 2s go in to bat.

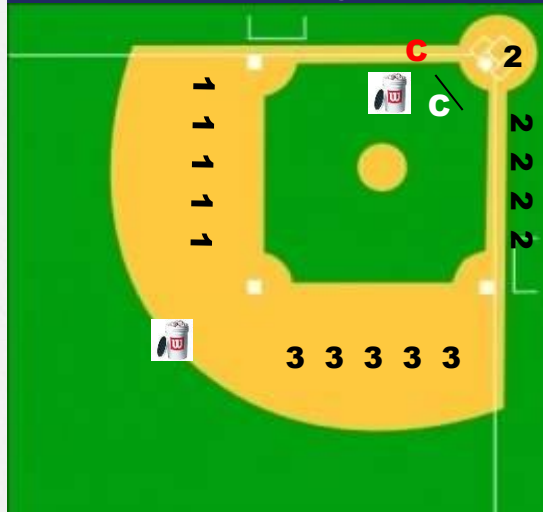
To start the drill: The pitching coach starts with a full bucket of balls. Place an empty bucket at least 10' behind 2nd base. When a ball is hit, give the player a chance to field it or chase it if it is over his head, before throwing the next pitch. All balls that are fielded or missed/chased are dropped in the bucket behind 2nd and then they return to their position.

Don't have players field the ball and throw it to 1st or 2nd. It takes too much time and balls end up flying all over the place. Running the ball back to and placing it in the bucket is consistent with most drills.

After the pitching coach runs out of balls he calls "bucket" and the closest player to the bucket near 2nd runs the bucket into the PC and takes the empty bucket out to 2nd. 5 pitches to each batter should not

take more than one minute. First couple of times when the players are learning the routine it might take a little longer, but you should be able to complete a round with 15 players in 15-20 minutes. BB can be slow moving and boring. Keep moving and keep the players running. When it is time to rotate PC should call Switch and have players run to their next position.

Important to have help! The younger the age the more help you need to keep things in control and organized.



5. BASE STANCE

Players at this level cannot lead off or steal, but it is the right time to have them develop good base running habits.

Have them start on the base in:

- (1) a lead off stance (athletic stance)
- (2) with their left foot on the side of the base and their right foot in line with the next base or home plate if on third.

When the ball is hit, teach them to start by turning their right foot and the first step with their left foot is a (3) cross over step.

Don't have them on the base in a (4) Softball base running stance.



It might seem easier for this level, but it will not prepare them for future baseball base running skills.



SPECIAL THANKS TO:



**BEN
NELSON**



**JOSEPH
BETTS-FLOYD**



**DREW
GUNDERSON**

Coaches:

**Congratulations and Thanks
for accepting this very
prestigious position.**

**It may be one of the most
important things you ever do
for your son(s) or daughter(s)
and some of their friends.**



Billy P