



CLARINGTON BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

COACHING GUIDELINES FOR JUNIOR
HOUSE LEAGUE

2019

KEYS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

1. **Prepare ahead of time.**

As a coach, you need to have a plan in your head or on paper. This will help you to be successful and identify things to carry forward to the next time you meet.

2. **Be prepared to change your plan.**

Players will be sick or on vacation, or the field conditions may be unsuitable. Don't fear improvisation.

3. **Communicate simple goals and expectations.**

Focus on the fundamentals of throwing, hitting and fielding. Keep your rules clear and repeat yourself to be consistent. (e.g. establish a phrase to regain attention)

4. **Move the players around.**

An important recommendation is to set up stations on the field.

Divide the players into smaller, more manageable groups. Attention spans are minimal. Small numbers ensure maximum repetition of skills at stations.

5. **Encourage maximum effort.**

Effort is the one thing everyone can control; skill levels will vary; development will occur at individual paces.

6. **Involve helpers.**

You need three coaches on the field to make this all work. Do you know a teenager looking for volunteer hours? Is there a parent with a lot to say on the sideline? Encourage involvement. Remember that you are the coach and you are in charge.

7. **Remember why you're here**

Coaching is not about winning. You'll be a success if the players have fun and build friendships.

PRACTICE GUIDELINE for Junior HOUSE LEAGUE

1. Warm up (10 minutes)

- a. Always begin with some sort of general cardiovascular activity. Ideas include: chase the coach around the field or dance party circle. Anything that gets the blood flowing to the muscles is good.
- b. Dynamic warm up moving through a progression of stretches. Consider head/neck rotations; shoulder shrugs; arm circles – hands up, hands down; waist rotations; jogging with high knees; ‘butt kicks’; lunging; calf stretch – toes pointed up, reach down with a scooping motion; bear walk.
- c. Sprint – set up a starting point and one base. Have players run THROUGH the base, jog back. Then have players run as though they are headed to second base. Take a water break.

1. Stations (30 minutes) – Consider fundamentals closely

- a. Throwing – balanced, “T” form with arms, leading with front hip, striding in proper direction, follow through. Accuracy is not as important as effort.
- b. Fielding – athletic position, feet apart, bum low, knees bent, hands extended forward, transition into throwing position, use of glove, use of bare hand (alligator method)
You focus will/should be primarily on picking up groundballs
- c. Hitting – hands together, distance from tee/plate, eyes on ball with still head, knees slightly bent, “squash the bug” with back foot and front leg straight at contact, finish high, staying ‘on plane’ through the swing

1. Wrap up and communication to parents (5 minutes)

What did we do well today? Whose effort stood out? Spread praise around and do not make negative comments. Encourage continued practice at home. Repetition is key to improvement. Consider a weekly prize or award for effort.

THROWING DRILLS

1. Basic throw

From a stationary position and at a reasonable distance, have the players throw into the fence. Players begin with a ball in their hand.

- Variation – increased distance
- Variation – target on the fence (hula hoop with shower curtain ring, or a helmet perched atop either a tee or bat leaning against fence)

1. Run-up and throw

Begin in a fielding position with ball in hand. Include short run up/crow-hop/side step before making throw.

- a. Variation – increased distance
- b. Variation – target on the fence (hula hoop with shower curtain ring, or a helmet perched atop either a tee or bat leaning against fence)

2. Hit the coach

Coach/volunteer stands against the fence (or wall). Taking turns, players get three to five attempts to hit the coach

- a. Variation – use tennis balls against a brick wall
- b. Variation – allow the coach to move

3. Clear the zone!

Divide available players into two even teams. Scatter tennis balls on either side of a border line between the players. In a timed session, players must attempt to empty their area of all balls by throwing them across the border.

- a. Variation – if a ball is caught in the air, the player that threw it changes sides

4. Ten at a time

Players line up facing the coach. A bucket with ten balls is placed next to the player who empties the bucket by throwing them to the coach.

Rest of the team keeps track of accuracy by counting out loud.

- a. Variation – increased distance
- b. Variation – timed (1 minute)

5. Underhand tossing

Toss the ball underhand into a target from a reasonable distance

- a. Variation – pivot to underhand toss to either side
- b. Variation – underhand toss around a small circle (think hot potato)
- c. Variation – hit a moving target (coach), or into a bucket over a base

FIELDING DRILLS

1. Basic fielding – coach to player

With NO GLOVES on, line players up and ROLL the ball DIRECTLY to each in turn. Fielded balls can be deposited into a bucket. If possible, use a paved surface at first (school yards typically will work very well).

Consider spreading the players out in a semi-circle to improve pace of drill

- a. Variation – roll the balls to GLOVE side
- b. Variation – roll the balls to the THROWING HAND side
- c. Variation – increase the pace of the rolled ball (direct at player)
- d. Variation – increase the pace of the rolled ball (to either side)
- e. Variation – ball is rolled between two players
- f. Variation – rather than a roll, increase to a bounced ball (coach needs to be low and hand delivering to ensure pace and reasonable accuracy)
- g. Variation – bounced balls to GLOVE SIDE
- h. Variation – bounced balls to THROWING HAND side
- i. Variation – increase the pace of the bounced ball (direct at player)
- j. Variation – increase the pace of the bounced ball (to either side)
- k. Variation – ball is bounced between two players
- l. Variation – TENNIS BALLS ONLY
 - throw a mini pop-up directly in front of the player. Players are to try to get behind the ball and catch it on the first bounce. Balls caught in the air are unlikely

2. Beach ball drill

Lob a beach ball into the air (preferably on a non-windy day). Player will attempt to get under the ball and allow it to hit them on the head.

- a. Variation – players “volley” the ball rather than letting it hit their heads
- b. Variation – increase the height of the ball in the air

3. Hot potato

Form partners. Using a tennis ball or bean bag and then eventually graduating to a baseball, have the players softly toss the object back and forth trying simply not to let it fall to the ground. No gloves required.

- a. Variation – whole group in a circle (small)
- b. Variation – gloves on

4. Wall Ball (if a wall is available – most likely in a schoolyard)

Coach throws ball from behind the player against the wall, player must keep the ball from getting past them. Coach throws can be consistent or variable

HITTING DRILLS

1. Dot on the ball

Use a marker or stickers to place a very small focal point on the ball. Tell the hitter to focus on hitting that spot. Technical advice here – the dot or sticker should be south of the equator of the ball. Hitter should face in towards a fence!

2. Targets on fence

Attach hula hoops to the fence with a shower curtain rings. Player hits balls off the tee attempting to hit the ball into the targets. Align targets to correspond to line drives over infield into left-centre gap or right-centre gap.

3. Hitting for points

Players partner up (or form two even groups). Each takes 10 swings. For every ball hit above a mark on the fence, award two points. For every ball hit under the mark on the fence, award one point. Swings and misses get no points. Team with the highest point total wins!

4. Power test

Player hits balls off the tee into an open field. Cones are placed at 10 metre intervals. Award one point for hitting past first cone, two points for

hitting past second cone, five points for hitting past third cone and ten points for hitting past fourth cone

5. Oversized ball drill

Use a softball or utility ball on the tee and swing away (aimed toward a fence)

6. Soft-toss (advanced hitters only)

Coach kneels approximately 20-25 feet away from the player hitting. Using tennis balls or wiffle balls, gently underhand toss the ball to the hitter who attempts to make contact.

“Perfect practice makes perfect” – Vince Lombardi