

6.1 PROGRAM DESIGN – LEVEL 2 (7-8) YEAR OLDS

Introduction

This section contains lesson plans that are designed to make it easy for coaches who have little or no experience coaching children to run an exciting and effective softball program for young children. Even experienced coaches will appreciate these well thought out lesson plans and incorporate many of the drills into their practice plans.

A set of 18 lesson plans has been designed to assist you in running a bi-weekly 9 week program. The plans have been designed as a resource. You can use the plans verbatim or as a rough guide. They are adaptable to your skills as a coach and the abilities of your athletes. The extent to which you choose to use the plans will depend on your softball coaching experience and your level of comfort in teaching children.

You have been given 18 lesson plans, but you will realize that some activities may work better than others. We encourage you to be creative – combine some of the plans, create your own name for activities or create your own plan based on the activities that you feel are most effective. Even have the players choose the activities as it's all about their enjoyment.

Some coaches prefer to run the program in stations as opposed to one drill after another. If you have enough volunteers this may work well for your groups. For more information on a station based program please refer to Appendix A, at the back of the manual.

All lesson plans do require some advance preparation. The following check list will prepare you to run a successful session:

- ✓ Review the upcoming Lesson Plan prior to the session.
- ✓ Become comfortable with how to set up and run each activity (visualize).
- ✓ Review the skills of the session.
- ✓ Consult the Softball Skills section to review how to teach the skill.
- ✓ Review the Notes to Coaches section of the manual.
- ✓ Practice the skill at home (in front of a mirror) to be sure you are comfortable teaching it.
- ✓ Check to ensure that you have all the necessary equipment for the activities in the upcoming lesson plan.

- ✓ Arrive at the diamond 15 minutes early to ensure the field is safe and discuss the role each coach or adult helper will play during the session. You may also want to use this time to orientate adult helpers (parents/older siblings).

Note: The following points are guidelines only. Please feel free to modify these guidelines or to develop your own as dictated by the needs of your Association.

Length of Season

- Typically the softball season for 7-8 year olds is 8-10 weeks with 2 sessions a week.

Length of Session

- 1 and ½ hour (maximum) per session (45 minutes using the lesson plan and 45 minutes of a scrimmage)

Number of Players

- No more than 12 players on each team. It is recommended to have 10 players or less.

Number of Adult Helpers

- 6 adult helpers (parents or family members) are required for each session.
- Should have one adult for every two players.

Facilities

- While the use of a softball diamond is suggested, an open field can also be used.
- The number of diamonds used will depend on the resources of the Association and the number of participants registered.

Lesson Plans

- The coach is provided with 18 lesson plans to take them through a typical softball season (i.e. a nine week season with 2 sessions per week).
- Each lesson plan involves activities that will teach the players the basic skills of Softball.

- ☐ Coaches are offered suggestions on how to modify an activity to suit the player's ability level.
- ☐ The coach has great flexibility in following or changing the lesson plans to ensure the most **FUN** and **ACTIVITY** for their players.
- ☐ The Lesson Plans are designed so that both teams do the Warm Up at the same time (one group in the infield and one group in the outfield).
- ☐ The next portion of the session has 20 minutes of activities, which is performed in the outfield and the infield.
- ☐ The groups then switch places after 20 minutes so that each has had a chance to practice in the outfield and infield. The session is designed this way because some of the activities require either the backstop or grounders in the infield to be done effectively.
- ☐ The total time (including Warm Up is 45 minutes) for this portion of the session.
- ☐ The team would then scrimmage against each other for the next 45 minutes.

Softballs

- ☐ Softball Canada strongly recommends the use of the Worth Reduced Injury Factor (RIF) softballs for the LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM.
- ☐ Fear of being hit by a hard ball is a deterrent for children learning softball skills so a softer ball will increase the child's confidence when engaging in the activities of the program. The Worth RIF softballs come in a variety of hardness as well as sizes to meet the needs of your association.
- ☐ As the child's skills improve, a harder softball can be introduced.

Scrimmage Modifications

- ☐ An adult will pitch to their own team.
- ☐ 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches.
- ☐ All players will play defense but there will be a maximum of 7 players in the infield.
- ☐ All players will bat each inning.
- ☐ There will be no advances on overthrows.

End of Season

It is strongly recommended that the Association organize a "FUN DAY" at the end of the season for the participants of the **LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM**. (Note: some Associations will also start the season off with a "FUN DAY").

6.2 LEVEL 2 PRACTICE PLANS

Note: Please refer to the section *Softball Skills*, starting on page 219, for teaching progressions for specific skills. Please refer to Appendix C and Appendix D for additional pitching information.

PRACTICE PLAN #1

DATE:

WARM-UP

BLOB TAG

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Mark out boundaries of playing area desired
- One player is chosen to be the chaser (beginning Blob) and the rest scatter
- On "GO" the Blob chases, trying to tag others
- Tagged players link arms with the Blob
- When Blob becomes 3, only outside players can tag
- When Blob becomes 4, split to make 2 Mini-Blobs

Key Teaching Points: Running, dodging, agility, co-operation

MAIN ACTIVITIES

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 4 players

Activity Description:

- 3 groups of 4, with each group positioned in a square formation
- Distance apart will be according to ability
- As players throw the ball to a teammate in their square, they call out their own name
- On second or third round, they call their own name and the name of the player who is to receive the ball
- Change 2 people in groups at a time, so they get to know players in other groups as well

Key Teaching Points: Catching, throwing, getting to know teammates

IN-COMING

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 Hula hoops, 8 buckets, balls

Activity Description:

- Split into groups of four
- Have one group of four in each corner of a large square
- In the centre of the square have four hula hoops and four buckets of balls, and place a bucket in each corner of the large square
- One player from each corner runs to the centre grabs a ball from their bucket and steps in the hula hoop

- Once in the hula hoop they throw the ball to their team members, one player fields the ball and then passes it to the two other players
- The last person with the ball drops the ball in the corner bucket, when they drop the ball in the bucket the player in the centre runs back to their corner and another teammate runs to the centre until all team members have run from the centre

Key Teaching Points: Throwing, fielding, running

GIMME 5

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases

Activity Description:

- Put bases down 30' - 40' from players. Form 4 groups of 3
- Players, in turn, take a swing at an imaginary ball, drop bat, run as fast as possible past their base, give coach "high 5", return to base as if running to 2nd base, touch base and shout "GREEN LIGHT" to next player to leave
- Make sure players are running full speed across the bag, slowing down only after touching it

Key Teaching Points: Running through 1st base, speed development

CHAMP

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- ☐ 1 adult for every 2 players or players in partners if they are capable of throwing; and catching the ball back and forth
- ☐ Every time the ball is caught by one of the pair they get a letter of "CHAMP"
- ☐ Partners can compete against other partners to see which pair can spell CHAMP first. Letters can be awarded for good throws back to the adult as well
- ☐ For variation have players select other words (i.e. Dora, elephant, etc.)

Key Teaching Points: Catching, throwing

OVER THE RAINBOW

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Balls, helmets

Activity Description:

- ☐ Line players up in with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- ☐ Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- ☐ Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- ☐ Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves
- ☐ Once the player is able to catch their own ball – proceed to full "Over the Rainbow" and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

Key Teaching Points: Grip and wrist/finger coordination

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- ☐ Coach will pitch to their team
- ☐ 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- ☐ All players will play defense
- ☐ All players will bat each inning
- ☐ There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #2

DATE:

WARM-UP

PARTNER TAG

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- ☐ Partners face each other from opposite ends of designated playing area
- ☐ On "GO", one partner tries to tag the other. When the partner is tagged, the roles are reversed
- ☐ After being tagged, the player performs a task (i.e. 3 jumping jacks) to give the other player time to get away

Key Teaching Points: Running, chasing

MAIN ACTIVITIES

REACH THE COACH

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- ☐ 1 adult for every 2 players.
- Each group draws a series of parallel lines 5' - 10' apart

- ☐ Coach will demonstrate ground ball progressions as in skills section
- ☐ Each pair will start at the line farthest from the coach
- ☐ Objective is to get to the coach in the least number of throws
- ☐ A grounder is thrown to each player in turn
- ☐ If caught, the player advances to the next line.

Key Teaching Points: Proper use of glove and positioning for fielding grounders

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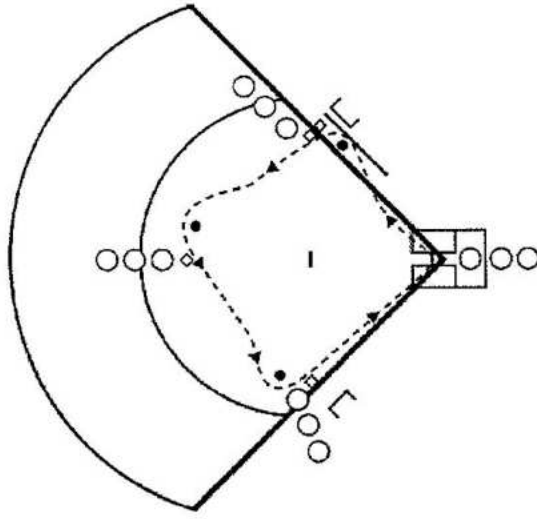
KILL THE MOSQUITO

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 4 markers, 4 bats

Activity Description:

- Put bases down in proper locations on the diamond, with 3 players at each one. Pretend there is a mosquito on the INSIDE corner of each base
- One player at each base concurrently takes a swing at an imaginary ball, drops the bat, runs as fast as possible to the next base, stepping on the "Mosquito" as they round it (4 players will be running at the same time)
- They then wait their turn at the base they just rounded
- Remind players it will be easier to step on the "Mosquito" if they run a little to the outside of the base line as they approach the base. It would be helpful to put some marks down for them to go around as shown in the diagram



Key Teaching Points: Rounding 1st base

PARALLEL

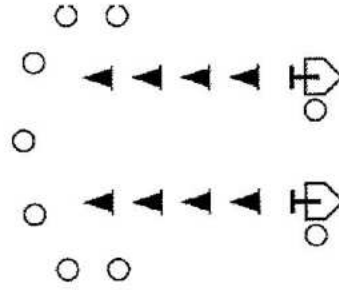
Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 batting tees, 8 pylons, 2 balls, 2 bats

Activity Description:

- 2 batters each have a tee in the centre of the playing area
- Each batter has a line of four pylons in front of their batting tee
- Batter hits the ball and then runs and touches all the pylons in the line as many times as possible before the fielding team returns the ball to the tee
- Fielders retrieve the ball and return it to the batting tee

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding



MONSTER BASH - HITTING

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 6 "shoelace sticks", 6 bases, 1 bat for every player (minimum 2 bats for every 2 players)

Activity Description:

- 1 adult for every 2 players. Each group will find a safe area to place their base and swing
- The adult will hold the end of the shoelace (pretend it is a monster or something else appropriate) IN FRONT of the base at various heights
- Alternate players for every 5-10 swings. Other players can be taking practice swings

Key Teaching Points: Emphasis on stride and hip rotation

OVER THE RAINBOW

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Balls, helmets

Activity Description:

- Line players up in with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves
- Once the player is able to catch their own ball – proceed to full "Over the Rainbow" and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

Key Teaching Points: Grip and wrist/finger coordination

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #3

DATE: _____

WARM-UP

BUNNIES AND BULLFROGS

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- ☐ Make a center line between 2 end lines.
- ☐ 2 teams of 6: 1 team of bunnies and 1 team of bullfrogs. Teams lie down head to head, opposite each other on center line.
- ☐ If the coach calls "bullfrogs", frogs get up and hop back to their swamp (and line) while bunnies get up and bunny hop after them
- ☐ If a bunny tags a bullfrog before the frog reaches the swamp, the bullfrog becomes a bunny
- ☐ If coach calls "bunnies" they turn and hop to their end line while the bullfrogs hop after them
- ☐ Coach could surprise by calling "bears" or "birds". If they rise on a false name they change sides

Key Teaching Points: Hopping, body awareness

MAIN ACTIVITIES

BIG FOOT

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- ☐ Partners start on lines, facing each other, approximately 10' apart. One adult per pair
- ☐ Players throw to each other (or adult throws if skill level is too low for accurate throws)
- ☐ Every time they make a catch they move back one giant step
- ☐ The pair that gets the farthest apart and is still able to catch the ball, gets the BIG FOOT award

Key Teaching Points: Throwing, catching

REACH THE COACH

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- ☐ 1 adult for every 2 players. Each group draws a series of parallel lines 5' - 10' apart
- ☐ Coach will demonstrate ground ball progressions as in skills section
- ☐ Each pair will start at the line farthest from the coach
- ☐ The objective is to get to the coach in the least number of throws
- ☐ A grounder is thrown to each player in turn
- ☐ If caught, the player advances to the next line.

Key Teaching Points: Proper use of glove and positioning for fielding grounders

SKY BALL

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball and glove for each player

Activity Description:

- ☐ 1 adult for every 2 players
- ☐ Coach will demonstrate fly ball progressions as in skill section
- ☐ Players will then practice catching high tosses from an adult
- ☐ Seeing if they can catch a higher one each time
- ☐ How many consecutive catches can they make?
- ☐ Throw somewhat away from the player so that they have to move to get underneath

Key Teaching Points: Proper use of glove and positioning when catching fly balls

OVER THE RAINBOW

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Balls, helmets

Activity Description:

- ☐ Line players up in with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- ☐ Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- ☐ Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- ☐ Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves
- ☐ Once the player is able to catch their own ball – proceed to full "Over the Rainbow" and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

Key Teaching Points: Grip and wrist/finger coordination

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- ☐ Coach will pitch to their team
- ☐ 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- ☐ All players will play defense
- ☐ All players will bat each inning
- ☐ There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #4

WARM-UP

DATE:

PIP, SQUEAK, AND WILBUR

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 balls, 4 bases

Activity Description:

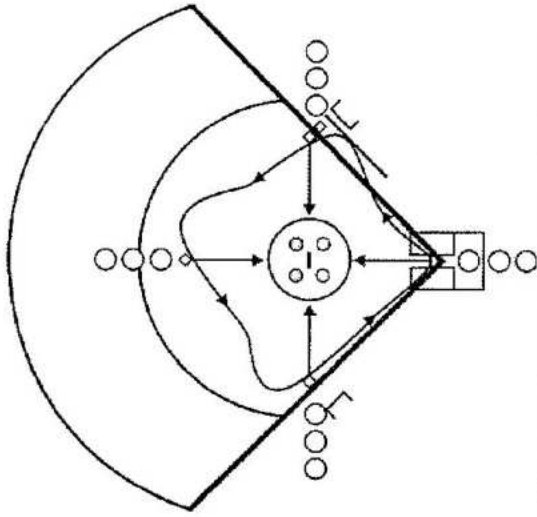
- 4 groups of 3, one group at each base. Bases are set up in diamond formation. Players in each group are named PIP, SQUEAK or WILBUR. 4 balls are placed at pitchers plate.

- When the coach calls out name (PIP, SQUEAK, or WILBUR), the player with that name runs around the bases.

When (s)he touches the base they started at, (s)he runs to the center to pick up a ball and brings it back to the group

- Balls are returned to the center for the next person
- Score a point for the 1st person back to their starting base

Key Teaching Points: Base running



MAIN ACTIVITIES

HOME RUN

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 2 targets, 4 balls

Activity Description:

- 4 groups of 3, with 2 groups of 3 at each target, which is hung on the backstop.

- Mark out 4 lines at various distances from the target. Distances can be according to ability of the group. A high success rate is wanted.

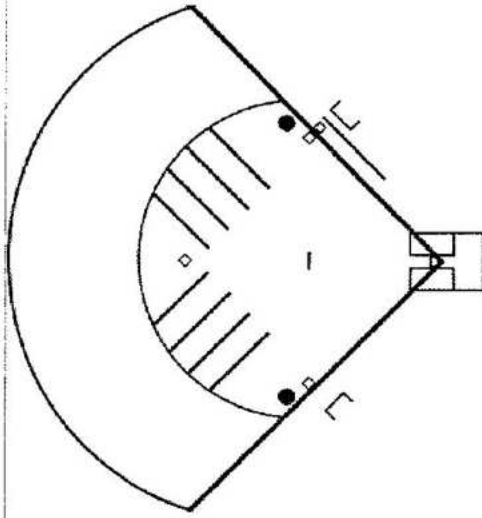
- Players choose

which distance they throw from in order to hit the target

- Points are awarded as follows: single- 1 pt.; double- 2 pts.; triple- 3 pts.; homerun-4 pts.

- Objective can be to see if each player can get more points on each consecutive throw or it can be made competitive with other groups, by totaling each group's points

Key Teaching Points: Throwing accuracy



KILL THE MOSQUITO

Time: 15 minutes

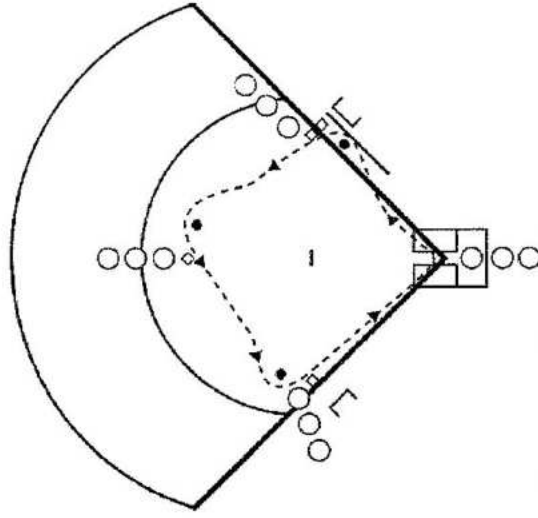
Equipment: 4 bases, 4 markers, 4 bats

Activity Description:

- Put bases down in proper locations on the diamond, with 3 players at each one. Pretend there is a mosquito on the INSIDE corner of each base

- One player at each base concurrently takes a swing at an imaginary ball, drops the bat, and runs as fast as possible to the next base, stepping on the "Mosquito" as they round it (4 players will be running at the same time)

- They then wait their turn at the base they just rounded
- Remind players it will be easier to step on the "Mosquito" if they run a little to the outside of the base line as they approach the base. It would be helpful to put some marks down for them to go around as shown in the diagram



Key Teaching Points: Rounding 1st base

OVER THE RAINBOW

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Balls, helmets

Activity Description:

- Line players up in with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the coach
- Have the players start facing the instructor with the ball in hand and their arm stretched out in front of them parallel to the ground
- Have them spin the ball to themselves out in front of them, trying to get it at least three feet high
- Beginners can have a parent catch the ball for them or they may let it drop to the ground. A more advanced variation is to have players catch the ball themselves.
- Once the player is able to catch their own ball – proceed to full "Over the Rainbow" and have the player start with their arms outstretched to the side (ball and glove in hand). Have them toss the ball over their head and catch it with their other outstretched hand. Consider helmets for inexperienced players.

Key Teaching Points: Grip and wrist/finger coordination

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches

- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #5

DATE:

WARM-UP

GRAB THE BACON

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- ☐ Partners each start on their own baseline. A ball is placed at the mid-point between the partners
- ☐ On "GO" from the coach each partner runs out, tries to grab the ball (bacon) and get back to their baseline before their partner who didn't get the ball (bacon)
- ☐ If the partner without the ball gets to the baseline first the partner with the ball must hand it over
- ☐ If the partner with the ball gets back first they get to keep the ball
- ☐ Change partners frequently

Key Teaching Points: Running, body awareness, quickness, agility

Note: The coach can assign points and challenge the girls to be the first to 5 points

MAIN ACTIVITIES

PARTNER THROWS

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- ☐ Partners stand opposite each other at a distance commensurate with ability
- ☐ Partners throw ball back and forth
- ☐ Various goals can be set (i.e. how many consecutive throws and catches without a miss; how many throws in specified time (30 sec.); throw high balls; grounders; side to side; etc.)

Key Teaching Points: Throwing, catching

FREEZE THE RUNNER - THROWING

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball, 4 bases, 4 markers, 2 bats

Activity Description:

- ☐ 2 teams of 6: 1 on offence and 1 team on defense
- ☐ Offensive "batter" THROWS the ball into the playing area and runs around the bases until "FREEZE" is shouted. "FREEZE" may have to be shouted more than once at this age
- ☐ Ball is fielded, and then thrown so EVERY fielder catches the ball. The last fielder to catch it shouts "FREEZE"
- ☐ Score points by counting the number of bases touched. If caught between bases, the last base touched counts
- ☐ After everyone has had a turn, switch defense and offence
- ☐ Keep total bases touched for each team
- ☐ Emphasize proper rounding of bases by using markers as in "Kill the Mosquito" drill (Lesson 2 Main activities)

Key Teaching Points: Throwing, catching, base running, co-operation, teamwork

Note: Players on defense will likely need help from adults to keep them from all running after the ball at once and in knowing where to throw it next. Lack of catching ability will likely mean there is little actual catching going on but at least each player will get to touch and throw the ball.

SMOKE 'EM

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bats, 2-3 balls per group, 4 T's if hitting off a T

Activity Description:

- ☐ 4 groups of 3 with at least one adult per group
- ☐ In each group an adult will pitch to one batter while the other 2 players field
- ☐ Fielding players get 2 points for catching a fly and 1 for a ground ball
- ☐ Offensive players get 3 points for a line drive, 2 points for a long fly ball or hard grounder, 1 point for pop fly or easy grounder
- ☐ See who can get 10 points first
- ☐ Rotate batters every 2 min., so that they all get a turn to bat

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding

KNEE CLAPS

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- ☐ Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- ☐ Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- ☐ Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- ☐ Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

Key Teaching Points: Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- ☐ Coach will pitch to their team
- ☐ 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- ☐ All players will play defense
- ☐ All players will bat each inning
- ☐ There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #6

WARM-UP

DATE:

SHARK IN THE TANK

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- ☐ 2 or 3 players are the "Sharks", the rest are the "Fish". Mark off a playing area to be the "tank".
- ☐ Fish must stay in the tank
- ☐ "Sharks" are timed to see how long it takes them to catch all the fish. When they do, choose 3 new "Sharks"

Key Teaching Points: Running, dodging, body awareness, co-operation, agility

MAIN ACTIVITIES

HITTING STATIONS

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 1 bat per player, 3 T's, 3 whiffle balls on a rope, 6 carpet home plates

Activity Description:

- ☐ 1 adult in charge of every 2 players
- ☐ 3 T stations and 3 whiffle ball stations, with 2 players at each station.
- ☐ Set T's up IN FRONT of home plates
- ☐ 6 players will practice hitting off a T
- ☐ 6 players practice off a hanging whiffle ball which an adult can hold in FRONT of a home plate
- ☐ The partner awaiting their turn can be taking practice swings
- ☐ Groups switch stations after 5 min. That will give each player approximately 2 min. of hitting at each activity.

Key Teaching Points: Proper grip on bat, stride and hip rotation

Note: Make sure players are shown proper bat grip, and that stride and hip rotation is emphasized. Watch for heel to sky on swing. Make sure batters swing right through and finish with the bat in the middle of their back. Make sure ball is placed IN FRONT of plate.

SUPER SHOES

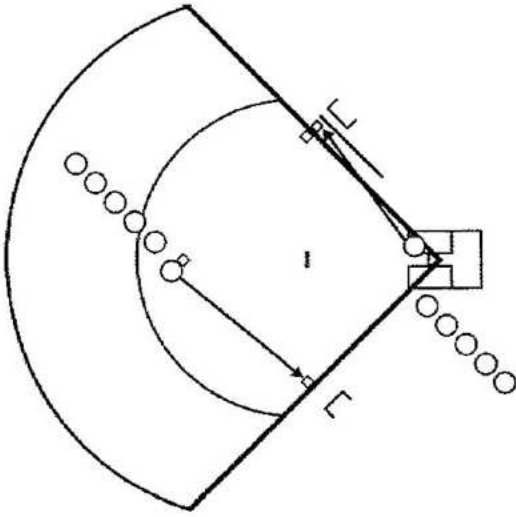
Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: Bases set up on diamond, 2 stopwatches

Activity Description:

- ☐ 2 groups of 6, 1 group between home and 1st base and the other between 2nd base and 3rd base
- ☐ Each of the groups is broken into 2 groups of 3.
- ☐ Each player takes a swing with a bat at an imaginary ball and runs to the next base as fast as possible
- ☐ Total the times of each team of 3
- ☐ Keep a record of the lowest scores for future trials

Key Teaching Points: Base running, speed development



SPELL YOUR NAME

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- ☐ Partners should be selected by ability and spaced accordingly
- ☐ Partners throw the ball back and forth overhand
- ☐ They get a letter in their name every time they make a catch
- ☐ When they complete their name they move back 2 giant steps
- ☐ Continue the process to time limit or success rate gets low

Key Teaching Points: Throwing, catching

Note: Adult may have to be the thrower if skill level is not advanced enough. This drill can be modified to give the points to the thrower for throwing accuracy. It can be made increasingly more challenging by making the target more difficult (i.e. only get a letter if the partner can catch it only moving 1 foot or not moving at all).

KNEE CLAPS

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- ☐ Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- ☐ Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- ☐ Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- ☐ Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

Key Teaching Points: Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- ☐ Coach will pitch to their team
- ☐ 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- ☐ All players will play defense
- ☐ All players will bat each inning
- ☐ There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #7

DATE:

WARM-UP

CATCH THIS

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Balls

Activity Description:

- Split into partners
- The player with the ball tosses to her partner
- Partner takes a step back and passes ball back
- This player passes the ball back and if caught, the partner who caught the ball takes a step back.
- Process continues until someone drops the ball
- When the ball is dropped, the two players return to the starting position and start if they can improve on their previous best

Key Teaching Points: Throwing, catching

Note: Use fun equipment like water balloons or sponges, or add a player in the middle who relays the ball to the partners on the ends.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

BULL'S EYE

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 targets, 12 balls

Activity Description:

- 2 groups of 6, each group in a file in front of their target, which is placed on the backstop
- An adult will throw either a fly or a grounder to the 1st person in line, who fields it and throws to the target
- After the throw, the player moves to the back of the line and the next player takes a turn
- Score 1 point for fielding cleanly and 1 point for hitting the target
- Competition can be to see which team reaches 10 to 15 first OR which team scores the most points in a given time limit

Key Teaching Points: Throwing accuracy, fielding

JAM

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 4 bats

Activity Description:

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base
- Bases set up in diamond formation
- Each player takes a full swing at an imaginary ball and runs to the next base. Use proper rounding technique taught earlier.
- After rounding the base, player "jams" see Base Running progressions in the Softball Skills Section

Key Teaching Points: Rounding base and jamming to stop

SLUGGER

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 bats, 4 balls, 4 carpet home plates

Activity Description:

- 4 groups of 3, with an adult with each group
- Adult pitches to the 3 players in their group
- Batters hit the ball out to 2 fielders
- Fielders get 2 points for a caught ball and 1 point for a grounder
- Emphasize stride and hip action in the batter's swing

Key Teaching Points: Hitting fielding

KNEE CLAPS

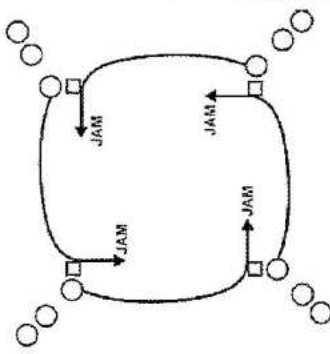
Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Line players up in a line with at least two BIG steps distance in between them facing the instructor
- Have players start facing the instructor with their hands clasped behind their backs standing on one foot on the line
- Taking a big step sideways, have players step and slide their knees together finishing standing on their other leg
- Once players have mastered the lower body step-slide motion, add the upper body by having the pitcher clap as their legs come together. Say step-clap, step-clap as they go through the movement 10 times

Key Teaching Points: Bringing the knees together at the end of a pitch



SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #8

DATE:

WARM-UP

PARTNER SHUTTLE

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Players form partners and make 2 end lines with partners starting at one end
- Partners, joined, move back and forth to end line using various combinations of body parts touching the ground (i.e. 3 legs; 4 legs; 2 legs + 2 hands + 2 legs; 1 hand + 3 feet, etc.)
- Can also be done as singles, using various movements (i.e. skip; shuffle step; carioca (grape vine); frog hop; duck walk)

Key Teaching Points: Agility, quickness, teamwork

MAIN ACTIVITIES

HITTING STATIONS

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 12 bats, 5 whiffle balls on a rope, 4 T's, 3 carpet home plates

Activity Description:

- There will be 3 different stations set up with 4 players to perform the same drill at the same time:

1. Station 1 – 4 Soft Toss

2. Station 2 – 4 Batting T's

3. Station 3 – 4 Whiffle Balls on a Rope

- 1 adult at each of the soft toss stations and 1 supervising all 4 T stations; and 1 at each of the whiffle ball on a rope stations.

- Players will hit at one station approximately for 4 min. then all 4 players will rotate to the next station. (Time will depend on how much time you have left after set up. Just divide the time you have into 3.)

- Players will do all three hitting stations in the allotted time

- Emphasize stride and hip action

- Make sure ball is placed IN FRONT of plate. Carpet home plates should be used to indicate where players should stand and where ball should be placed to hit

Key Teaching Points: Hitting off T, hitting off of a soft toss, emphasis on stride and hip rotation

BEEP BEEP

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases

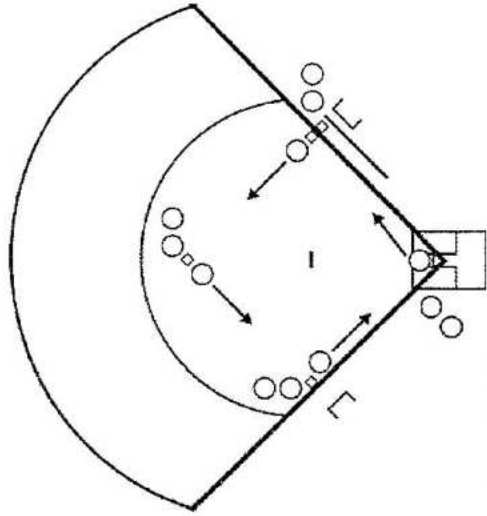
Activity Description:

- Put bases down in proper diamond location, with 3 players at each.
- One player starts in front of base and extra players stand behind

- On "GO", the first player in each group runs around all the bases and returns to tag the next player in line
- Emphasize proper rounding

techniques including stepping on the inside corner

Key Teaching Points: Rounding the bases, speed development, conditioning



LEONARDO

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- Adult helper for every 2 players, standing an appropriate distance from players
- Coach throws grounders to each player (one at a time)
- Every time a ball is picked up cleanly and thrown back accurately the pair gets a letter in "LEONARDO" (or any word they wish to spell)
- Partners can compete against each other OR other teams

Key Teaching Points: Grounders, throwing

BEANBAG TO BALL ARM CIRCLES

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Beanbags, softballs, hula-hoops hung on the fence at a low height, mat to kneel on (if available)

Activity Description:

- Start with beanbags instead of balls. Have players kneel on the mat facing sideways to their target wearing a glove on one hand and grasping a beanbag in the other
- Instruct the player to "step" toward the target remaining on their knees making an arm circle at the same time "pitching" the beanbag into the hula-hoop
- Focus on the importance of releasing the beanbag inside the back hip and staying sideways to the target
- Once pitchers are comfortable with their release point, give them a ball to experiment with (be aware of park rules regarding throwing balls into fences)

Key Teaching Points: Releasing the beanbag inside the hip to get it to hit the target

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #9

DATE: _____

WARM-UP

SHADOWS

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- ☐ 2 players designated as chasers, others scatter
- ☐ On "GO" players scatter, while chasers try to step on their shadows
- ☐ Count how many shadows are stepped on
- ☐ Change chasers often

Key Teaching Points: Chasing, dodging, co-operation

Note: A sunny day is necessary for this activity

MAIN ACTIVITIES

BALL OF FIRE

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 2 balls

Activity Description:

- ☐ 2 groups of 6
- ☐ Place bases a distance apart according to ability (30 to 60ft)
- ☐ Players line up in columns behind a base – 3 behind each base
- ☐ Player receiving the ball steps in front of the base to receive the ball, catches it, tags the base with one foot, then throws the ball to the opposite base, then goes to end of line
- ☐ Process is repeated until each player has desired repetitions

Key Teaching Points: Catching, touching base, throwing

SLIP 'N' SLIDE

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- ☐ Players line up on a base line to start
- ☐ Then break into 3 groups of 4 with 2 adults per group
- ☐ Teach progressions for sliding see Sliding Progressions in the Softball Skills section

Key Teaching Points: Bent leg slide

GRAND SLAM

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 3 T's, 3 balls, ball gloves, 3 bats

Activity Description:

- ☐ Groups of 4 - each group has a batting T and 1 whiffle ball or another type of ball depending on ability.
- ☐ One batter hits to 3 fielders
- ☐ When a fielder catches 2 fly balls OR 4 grounders, they become the new batter
- ☐ Players can't bat a 2nd time until everybody has had a chance to bat

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding

BEANBAG TO BALL ARM CIRCLES

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Beanbags, softballs, hula-hoops hung on the fence at a low height, mat to kneel on (if available)

Activity Description:

- ☐ Start with beanbags instead of balls. Have players kneel on the mat facing sideways to their target wearing a glove on one hand and grasping a beanbag in the other
- ☐ Instruct the player to "step" toward the target remaining on their knees making an arm circle at the same time "pitching" the beanbag into the hula-hoop
- ☐ Focus on the importance of releasing the beanbag inside the back hip and staying sideways to the target
- ☐ Once pitchers are comfortable with their release point, give them a ball to experiment with (be aware of park rules regarding throwing balls into fences)

Key Teaching Points: Releasing the beanbag inside the hip to get it to hit the target

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- ☐ Coach will pitch to their team
- ☐ 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- ☐ All players will play defense
- ☐ All players will bat each inning
- ☐ There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #10

DATE:

WARMUP

LEAP FROG TAG

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Designate 2 or 3 "Frog Catchers". The rest are frogs who try to avoid being caught
- When tagged, the frog is frozen into a frog position
- Frozen frogs can be released by another frog leap-frogging over top of them
- Change the Frog Catchers often

Key Teaching Points: Running, dodging, body awareness

MAIN ACTIVITIES

HITTING STATIONS

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 T's, 12 balls, 12 bats, carpet home plates or bases

Activity Description:

- There will be 3 different stations set up for 4 players to perform the same drill at the same time
 - Station 1 — 4 fungo stations
 - Station 2 — 4 batting T stations
 - Station 3 — 4 Soft Toss stations
- 1 adult at each of the soft toss stations (4), 1 adult at the T stations, and 1 adult at the fungo stations.
- Divide time you have left after set up into three so that players get an equal time at all 3 activities
- All four players rotate to a different station, when the time is up
- Emphasize stride and hip action
- Make sure the ball is placed IN FRONT of plate. Home plates or bases should be used for each player so they get the proper feeling of a standing at a plate to hit

Key Teaching Points: Learning to hit off self toss (fungo hit), hitting technique, hand-eye coordination

BEEP BEEP

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases

Activity Description:

- Put bases down in proper diamond location, with 3 players at each.
- One player starts in front of base and extra players stand behind
- On "GO", the first player in each group runs around all the bases and returns to tag the next player in line
- Emphasize proper rounding techniques including stepping on the inside corner

Key Teaching Points: Rounding the bases, speed development, conditioning

LEAD ME

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- Partners stand, parallel, facing same direction approximately 20ft apart.
- Next set of partners is ready to go as soon as 1st set is out of the way. 2 lines can be going at once
- Partners lead each other with a throw so they both have to be moving while throwing and catching

Key Teaching Points: Catching and throwing while moving

HOT POTATO

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 3 players

Activity Description:

- 4 teams of 3 line up as shown
- In groups of 3, the ball is relayed from 1 to 2 to 3 and back
- Go slowly at first to concentrate on proper turn in center
- Rotate players in all 3 positions, so each gets experience as a relay player in the center
- In relay position, emphasize making a quick turn as in the Relay Progressions in Softball Skills section
- It can be made into a relay competition if skill level is high enough

Key Teaching Points: Relaying ball from one player to another, catching, throwing

BEANBAG TO BALL ARM CIRCLES

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Beanbags, softballs, hula-hoops hung on the fence at a low height, mat to kneel on (if available)

Activity Description:

- Start with beanbags instead of balls. Have players kneel on the mat facing sideways to their target wearing a glove on one hand and grasping a beanbag in the other
- Instruct the player to "step" toward the target remaining on their knees making an arm circle at the same time "pitching" the beanbag into the hula-hoop
- Focus on the importance of releasing the beanbag inside the back hip and staying sideways to the target
- Once pitchers are comfortable with their release point, give them a ball to experiment with (be aware of park rules regarding throwing balls into fences)

Key Teaching Points: Releasing the beanbag inside the hip to get it to hit the target

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #11

DATE:

WARM-UP

BLOB TAG

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Mark out boundaries of playing area desired
- One player is chosen to be the chaser (Beginning Blob) and the rest scatter
- On "GO" the Blob chases, trying to tag others
- Tagged players link arms with the Blob
- When Blob becomes 3, only outside players can tag
- When Blob becomes 4, split to make 2 Mini-Blobs

Key Teaching Points: Running, dodging, agility, co-operation

MAIN ACTIVITIES

BOOM-A-RANG

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 ball, 8 bases

Activity Description:

- 2 groups of 6
- Set up bases to make 2 diamonds with 6 players at each
- 5 players in infield position including pitching and catching position
- Catcher throws a grounder to each player in succession
- They field it and throw it to 1st base, who throws it back to the catcher
- Rotate positions after each sequence so all players get a chance to throw from each position
- Score 1 point for each successful throw and catch
- See how many points can be scored per sequence

Key Teaching Points: Throwing from positions in the infield

Note: A variation could be to throw flies instead of grounders

JAM AND DIVE

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 4 bats

Activity Description:

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base.
- Bases set up in diamond formation
- Each player takes a full swing at an imaginary ball, runs to the next base. Use proper rounding technique taught earlier.
- After rounding the base, player "jams and dives" back to their base using correct technique as in Base Running Progressions in the Softball Skills section

Key Teaching Points: Rounding base and jamming to stop, diving back to base

GRAND SLAM

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 3 T's, 3 balls, ball gloves, 3 bats

Activity Description:

- Groups of 4 - each group has a batting T and 1 whiffle ball or another type of ball depending on ability.
- One batter hits to 3 fielders
- When a fielder catches 2 fly balls OR 4 grounders, they become the new batter
- Players can't bat a 2nd time until everybody has had a chance to bat

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding

BEANBAG TO BALL ARM CIRCLES

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Beanbags, softballs, hula-hoops hung on the fence at a low height, mat to kneel on (if available)

Activity Description:

- Start with beanbags instead of balls. Have players kneel on the mat facing sideways to their target wearing a glove on one hand and grasping a beanbag in the other
- Instruct the player to "stop" toward the target remaining on their knees making an arm circle at the same time "pitching" the beanbag into the hula-hoop
- Focus on the importance of releasing the beanbag inside the back hip and staying sideways to the target
- Once pitchers are comfortable with their release point, give them a ball to experiment with (be aware of park rules regarding throwing balls into fences)

Key Teaching Points: Releasing the beanbag inside the hip to get it to hit the target

SOFTBALL GAME

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #12

DATE:

WARMUP

KERMIT AND MISS PIGGY

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Ball

Activity Description:

- 2 teams of 6: a throwing team (Kermits) and a fielding team (Miss Piggies)
- Kermits stand along 1 end line, while Miss Piggies scatter about the playing area.
- One of the Kermits throws the ball high into the air
- As soon as it leaves the thrower's hand, all the Kermits HOP quickly to the opposite side of the playing area
- Once the Miss Piggies have caught the ball, the leader Miss Piggy yells "Catch Kermit" and they all try to tag the Kermits before they reach safety
- Tagged Kermits must sit down immediately to avoid confusion
- Switch Kermits and Miss Piggies so each get a chance to hop

Key Teaching Points: Hopping, body awareness, co-operation, catching, throwing

MANUACTIVITIES

BULL'S EYE

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 targets, 12 balls

Activity Description:

- 2 groups of 6, each group in a file in front of their target, which is placed on the backstop
- An adult will throw either a fly or a grounder to the 1st person in line, who fields it and throws to the target
- After the throw, the player moves to the back of the line and the next player takes a turn
- Score 1 point for fielding cleanly and 1 point for hitting the target
- Competition can be to see which team reaches 10 to 15 first OR which team scores the most points in a given time limit

Key Teaching Points: Throwing accuracy, fielding

GOTCHA

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases

Activity Description:

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base
- Set up bases in diamond formation 20 to 30ft apart
- On "GO", one player from each group starts running around the bases
- Objective is to run past the person ahead of you
- Score 1 point for your team for every player passed
- Run for a set period of time (15 to 30 seconds)

Key Teaching Points: Base running, determination, conditioning

PRACTICE PLAN #13

DATE:

WARM-UP

UP N' AT 'EM

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Pair off into partners
- One partner (chaser) stands on the end line with hand out
- The other partner (runner) slaps (softly) the outreached hand and runs in the opposite direction to get safely across the other end line without being tagged
- The partner, whose hand was slapped, tries to catch the runner before (s)he gets to safe line

Key Teaching Points: Quickness, running

MAIN ACTIVITIES

GOAL BALL

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Activity Description:

- Mark off a "goal" area for each player opposite a partner.
- The distance depends on skill level (up to 10' wide).
- Each player tries to score a goal by throwing a grounder by their partner through the marked goal posts
- Score a point for each goal
- Switch partners occasionally

Key Teaching Points: Fielding grounders



SUPER SHOES

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Bases set up on diamond, 2 stopwatches

Activity Description:

- 2 groups of 6, 1 group between home and 1st base and the other between 2nd base and 3rd base
- Each of the groups is broken into 2 groups of 3.
- Each player takes a swing with a bat at an imaginary ball and runs to the next base as fast as possible

- Total the times of each team of 3
- Keep a record of the lowest scores for future trials

Key Teaching Points: Base running, speed development

SLUGGER

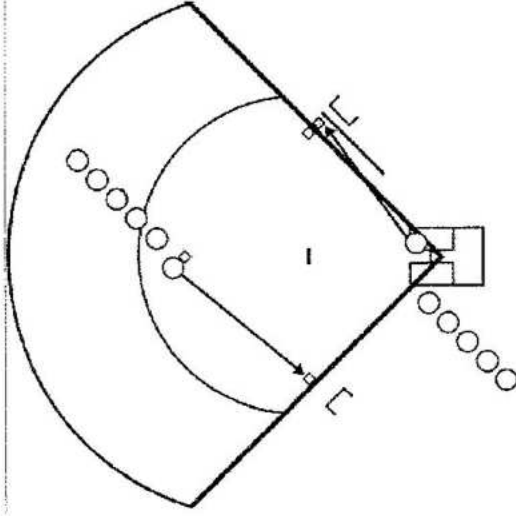
Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bats, 4 balls, 4 carpet home plates

Activity Description:

- 4 groups of 3, with an adult with each group
- Adult pitches to the 3 players in their group
- Batters hit the ball out to 2 fielders
- Fielders get 2 points for a caught ball and 1 point for a grounder
- Emphasize stride and hip action in the batter's swing

Key Teaching Points: Hitting fielding



WHIP-IT

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Softballs in tube socks (6 for each player), hula hoop targets hung at strike zone height

Activity Description:

- Start by showing players where to grip their "whip-it". Hands should be placed 6-8 inches from the ball up the sock so the pitcher feels there is some control over the ball but can still appreciate a whipping motion with the sock
- Start the players facing sideways to their hula hoop target grasping the sock in their pitching hand and their glove on the other
- Instruct the player to step to the target while making an arm circle with their "whip-it"
- Use the key words of whipping the ball from the top of their arm circle to the bottom, letting it go at the bottom to go straight for the hula hoop
- Have them repeat this 6 times before all players collect their "whip-its" at the same time
- **CAUTION:** most inexperienced kids will throw the first couple behind them because they hang on to the sock too long. Encourage them to let go sooner and avoid standing directly behind them during the drill

Key Teaching Points: Whipping the ball from the top of the arm circle to the bottom to release it

Note: LTP instructor required at this station

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #14

DATE:

WARM-UP

HOOK ON TAG

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Mark out a playing area.
- 1 player selected to be the runner.
- 1 player selected to be the chaser.
- All others find a partner, link elbows and find a space.
- On "GO" everyone runs
- The chaser tries to tag the runner
- If the runner links elbows with a pair, then the outside member of that pair becomes the runner
- If the chaser tags the runner they exchange roles

Key Teaching Points: Quickness, running, dodging, fair play

MAIN ACTIVITIES

HITTING STATIONS

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 T's, 12 balls, 12 bats, carpet home plates or bases

Activity Description:

- There will be 3 different stations set up for 4 players to perform the same drill at the same time
 - Station 1 – 4 fungo stations
 - Station 2 – 4 batting T stations
 - Station 3 – 4 Soft Toss stations
 - 1 adult at each of the soft toss stations (4), 1 adult at the T stations, and 1 adult at the fungo stations.
 - Divide time you have left after set up into three so that players get an equal time at all 3 activities
 - All four players rotate to a different station, when the time is up
 - Emphasize stride and hip action
 - Make sure the ball is placed IN FRONT of plate. Home plates or bases should be used for each player so they get the proper feeling of a standing at a plate to hit
- Key Teaching Points:** Learning to hit off self toss (fungo hit), hitting technique, hand-eye coordination

SUPER SHOES – 2ND BASE

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 2 or 3 stop watches, 6 bases

Activity Description:

- 3 groups of 4. Set up 1st base and 2nd base for each group
- Time each player as they run from home to 2nd base
- Encourage proper rounding of 1st base
- Keep track of times so players can try to beat their own time

Key Teaching Points: Rounding 1st base, speed development

FREEZE THE RUNNER

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball, 4 bases, 4 markers, 2 bats

Activity Description:

- 2 teams of 6: 1 on offense and 1 team on defense
- Offensive “batter” THROWS the ball into the playing area and runs around the bases until “FREEZE” is shouted. “FREEZE” may have to be shouted more than once at this age
- Ball is fielded, and then thrown so EVERY fielder catches the ball. The last fielder to catch it shouts “FREEZE”
- Score points by counting the number of bases touched. If caught between bases, the last base touched counts
- After everyone has had a turn, switch defense and offense
- Keep total bases touched for each team
- Emphasize proper rounding of bases by using markers as in “Kill the Mosquito” drill (Lesson 2 Main activities)

Key Teaching Points: Throwing, catching, base running, co-operation, teamwork

Note: As a variation instead of throwing the ball, have the batter either hit off a batting T, off a soft toss, or off an adult pitcher.

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #15

DATE:

WARM-UP

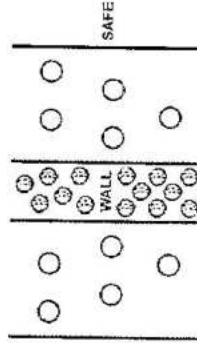
DEFEND

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Ball

Activity Description:

- Mark out a "safe" area at both ends of the playing area and an area to be defended in between them.
- Place balls in the area to be defended (wall). Select 3-4 players to defend the "wall". Rest of the players are scattered in the playing area.
- "Defenders" try to keep the others from grabbing a ball and getting it back to a "safe" area without being tagged
- If caught, they become a defender
- Game ends when all balls are in safe area OR all players are caught and are defenders



Key Teaching Points: Agility, quickness, running, teamwork

MAIN ACTIVITIES

OVER THE LINE

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, 2 bats, helmets, 2 home plates, 2 marked off playing areas

Activity Description:

- 4 teams of 3. Set up 2 separate playing areas.
- 2 teams of 3 play in one playing area.
- One team on defense and one team on offense.
- Batters hit off T, fungo (self-toss) hit, soft toss, or adult pitcher (depending on what the coach wants to practice) trying to get it in the air over line 1.
- If hit between line 1 and 2, it is worth 1 pt; between 2 and 3 - 2 pts, over line 3 - 3 pts.
- Fielders locate in fair territory. No point is awarded if a fielder catches it before it hits the ground

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding

Note: As a variation count 1 pt. if ball is a grounder past line 2 and 2 pts. if a grounder past line 3. If keeping score is too complicated, simply set up the lines with markers and challenge the players to hit the ball past them.

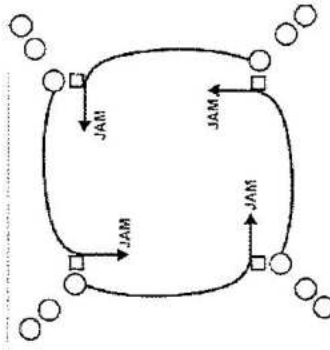
JAM

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 4 bats

Activity Description:

- 4 groups of 3 with 3 at each base
- Bases set up in diamond formation
- Each player takes a full swing at an imaginary ball and runs to the next base. Use proper rounding technique taught earlier.
- After rounding the base, player "jams" see Base Running Progressions in the Softball Skills section



Key Teaching Points: Rounding base and jamming to stop

FIELD 3

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 bats, 2 balls, 2 sets of catcher's equipment, 2 helmets, 2 sets of bases

Activity Description:

- 2 teams of 6: 1 batter, 1 catcher, and the rest are fielders.
- 2 separate activity areas set up a safe distance apart.
- 1 adult pitcher in each area for each group of 6.
- Set up bases on diamond.
- One batter at a time bats off an adult pitcher, with a catcher in catching equipment
- When a fielder has successfully fielded 3 grounders or caught 1 fly ball, they become the batter
- Players rotate positions
- Make sure all players get an opportunity to bat and catch

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

TARGET PITCHING

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Softballs, pylons, playground balls (i.e. dodge ball, volleyball, soccer ball, beach ball)

Activity Description:

- Divide players into partners
- Start by reminding players of the proper grip and have them sideways to the target (pylon with a light playground ball on it) placed 20 ft away with partner ready to retrieve the "big ball"
- At < 8 years old remaining sideways remaining sideways through the entire pitch progression is preferred.

- Have players step to the target while performing an arm circle and throwing the ball with the intent to knock the bigger ball off of the pylon. Have all players do this at the same time and tell them to freeze while their partner retrieves both: balls and sets them up for the next pitch. Repeat 5 times, and then switch pitchers. Partner's core one point for each time a ball is knocked off the pylon.

Key Teaching Points: Pitch the ball through the target rather than to it

Note: LTP instructor required at this station



SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #16

DATE:

WARMUP

FROZEN TAG

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Select 1 or 2 chasers, while the others scatter
- When players are tagged they have to stand with their legs spread apart until a teammate crawls or slides underneath to free them
- Change chasers often

Key Teaching Points: Chasing, running, co-operation

MAIN ACTIVITIES

BALL RED ROVER

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 balls, ball gloves

Activity Description:

- 2 groups of 6, each playing a separate Red Rover game.
- 3 players on each team line up facing the other 3 10 to 20ft apart.
- Place markers or draw lines to show goal area.
- A player on one line throws the ball along the ground, to try to get it past the players on the other line
- If successful, a player from the line who let the ball get by is picked to join the other line
- Adjust the width of the goal line for the number of players on the line

Key Teaching Points: Fielding grounders

CRAZY SOFTBALL

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Balls, 2 pylons, 1 hoop

Activity Description:

- Game is played between two teams of three
- One person on the batting team receives three objects (sponges, bean bags, balls etc.) and throws or hits them anywhere in the playing area
- After all three objects have been thrown/hit into the playing area the batting team runs back and forth from home to a pylon as many times as they can
- The fielding team collects all the objects and places them inside the hoop, which is set up 5 m from home plate
- The fielding team cannot move with the objects and must throw them to each other to get them into the hoop
- Once all the objects are inside the hoop the batting team stops running, they receive one run for each time they ran to the base and back home
- Switch batting and fielding teams once each player has had a chance to be the batter/thrower

Key Teaching Points: Batting, throwing, fielding, teamwork

BATTER'S BONANZA

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: hula hoops, batting tee, ball, bat

Activity Description:

- Have player's split into partners
- Teams will spread hula hoops out in front of the batting tee and assign a point value to each hula hoop
- Partners will play rock, paper, scissors for first bat
- Batter's aim to hit the ball off the tee and into a hula hoop-if they get the ball in the hoop they earn the points assigned to that hoop
- Each batter gets three turns and then switch
- The non-batting partner retrieves the ball after each hit

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, aiming for a target

TARGET PITCHING

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Softballs, pylons, playground balls (i.e. dodge ball, volleyball, soccer ball, beach ball)

Activity Description:

- Divide players into partners
- Start by reminding players of the proper grip and have them sideways to the target (pylon with a light playground ball on it) placed 20 ft away with partner ready to retrieve the "big ball"
- At < 8 years old remaining sideways remaining sideways through the entire pitch progression is preferred.
- Have players step to the target while performing an arm circle and throwing the ball with the intent to knock the bigger ball off of the pylon. Have all players do this at the same time and tell them to freeze while their partner retrieves both balls and sets them up for the next pitch. Repeat 5 times, and then switch pitchers. Partner's core one point for each time a ball is knocked off the pylon.

Key Teaching Points: Pitch the ball through the target rather than to it

Note: LTP instructor required at this station

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #17

DATE: _____

WARM-UP

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: All available balls and other appropriate objects

Activity Description:

- Mark out 2 lines 50 to 60ft apart.
- 2 teams of 6 line up behind their own line.
- Place balls and other objects in "No Man's Land" in center area.
- On "Go" objective is to place as many objects as possible over the OTHER TEAM'S line
- Only one object at a time can be taken
- Objects must be placed, not thrown, across the line
- If all the objects are gone from "No Man's Land" they may be taken from own end and placed in opposite end
- When time is called the team with the LOWEST NUMBER of objects in their end wins

Key Teaching Points: Agility, quickness, running, co-operation

MAIN ACTIVITIES

SUPER SCOOPER

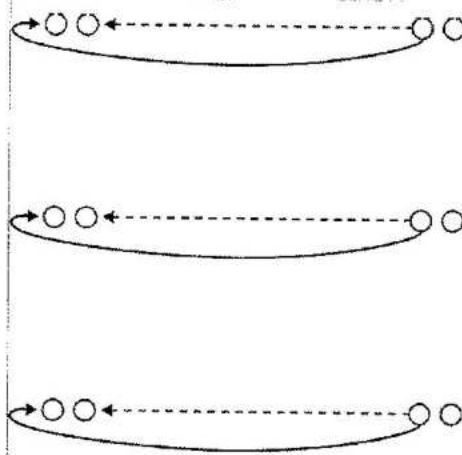
Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 balls

Activity Description:

- 3 teams of 4 in shuttle relay formation
- 1st player in each line throws a grounder to teammate on other side then goes to the end of the opposite line
- Player receiving it throws a grounder to the next player and follows throw to end of that line and so on until they get back to their original positions

Key Teaching Points: Fielding ground balls, throwing



ADD 'EM UP

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 pylons, 1 ball, 1 bat

Activity Description:

- Divide the group into 2 teams
- One batter hits off of a tee and then the batting team moves as a group between the base and home. One point is scored for each time the batting team touches the base.
- A fielder fields the ball and then the ball must be passed to each member of the team before it can be thrown home. Once the ball reaches home the batting team must stop running.
- Batting team and fielding team switch once all the batters have had a chance to hit.

Key Teaching Points: Throwing

Note: Depending on skill level you may want to have the batting team hit off of a pitch, or have them throw the ball out to the fielders

GRAND SLAM

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 3 T's, 3 balls, ball gloves, 3 bats

Activity Description:

- Groups of 4 - each group has a batting T and 1 whiffle ball or another type of ball depending on ability.
- One batter hits to 3 fielders
- When a fielder catches 2 fly balls OR 4 grounders, they become the new batter
- Players can't bat a 2nd time until everybody has had a chance to bat

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding

GAME PITCHING

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: softballs, pitching plates and a hula-hoop hung in a pop-up net or on a fence. Parents may volunteer as catchers if present.

Activity Description:

- Tell pitchers they are to imagine they are pitching in a game.
- Ask them to receive the ball in front of the pitcher's plate, then walk behind the pitcher's plate stopping to take a deep breath before stepping onto it with both feet. If a pitcher is right-handed the right foot is forward and left foot slightly behind and vice versa for the left-handed pitcher.
- Instruct the pitchers to step onto the mound with their hands apart (ball should be in the glove and not in the pitcher's hand) and once on the mound they may bring their hands together and pause.
- There are several starting styles and it is recommended pitchers either keep the hands together or swing the pitching arm backward in a rhythmic motion (see online drill description) to begin the pitching motion.
- Once starting the pitching motion, the pitcher's step toward the catcher and arm circle are coordinated. The pitcher turns sideways to the target mid-motion. Instruct them to imagine stepping along an imaginary line straight to the target.
- After landing, the ball is released inside the back hip at the bottom of the arm circle with the intent to throw on a straight line to the target.
- Follow-through includes staying sideways to the target and bringing the pitching arm to the middle of the chest. See online descriptions for further details.

Key Teaching Points: review the game pitching sequence and rules
Note: LTP instructor required at this station

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

PRACTICE PLAN #18

DATE:

WARM-UP

PLAYER'S CHOICE

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: n/a

Activity Description:

- Allow the players to choose their favourite warm-up game

Key Teaching Points: n/a

MAIN ACTIVITIES

HITTING STATIONS

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: 4 T's, 12 balls, 12 bats, carpet home plates or bases

Activity Description:

- There will be 3 different stations set up for 4 players to perform the same drill at the same time
 - Station 1 – 4 fungo stations
 - Station 2 – 4 batting T stations
 - Station 3 – 4 Soft Toss stations
- 1 adult at each of the soft toss stations (4), 1 adult at the T stations, and 1 adult at the fungo stations.
- Divide time you have left after set up into three so that players get an equal time at all 3 activities
- All four players rotate to a different station, when the time is up
- Emphasize stride and hip action
- Make sure the ball is placed IN FRONT of plate. Home plates or bases should be used for each player so they get the proper feeling of a standing at a plate to hit

Key Teaching Points: Learning to hit off self toss (fungo hit), hitting technique, hand-eye coordination

500

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 2 bats, 4 balls

Activity Description:

- 2 groups of 6 each with their own activity area.
- 1 bat, while the other 5 field. The other group does the same.
- Batter will bat off of a T or adult pitch
- Each batter gets 10 swings or hits
- Fielder can get points by fielding the ball
- 100 for caught fly, 50 for one bouncer, 25 for a grounder
- Objective is to reach 500 then that player gets to bat. At this level the batter will likely have to be changed prior to anyone getting 500, so that they all get to bat.

Key Teaching Points: Hitting, fielding, catching, throwing

GAME PITCHING

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: softballs, pitching plates and a hula-hoop hung in a pop-up net or on a fence. Parents may volunteer as catchers if present.

Activity:

- Tell pitchers they are to imagine they are pitching in a game.
- Ask them to receive the ball in front of the pitcher's plate, then walk behind the pitcher's plate stopping to take a deep breath before stepping onto it with both feet. If a pitcher is right-handed the right foot is forward and left foot slightly behind and vice versa for the left-handed pitcher.
- Instruct the pitchers to step onto the mound with their hands apart (ball should be in the glove and not in the pitcher's hand) and once on the mound they may bring their hands together and pause.
- There are several starting styles and it is recommended pitchers either keep the hands together or swing the pitching arm backward in a rhythmic motion (see online drill description) to begin the pitching motion.
- Once starting the pitching motion, the pitcher's step toward the catcher and arm circle are coordinated. The pitcher turns sideways to the target mid-motion. Instruct them to imagine stepping along an imaginary line straight to the target.
- After landing, the ball is released inside the back hip at the bottom of the arm circle with the intent to throw on a straight line to the target.
- Follow-through includes staying sideways to the target and bringing the pitching arm to the middle of the chest. See online descriptions for further details.

Key Teaching Points: review the game pitching sequence and rules

Note: LTP instructor required at this station

SCRIMMAGE

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

Activity Description:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Key Teaching Points: All softball skills

7 LEARN TO PLAY LEVEL 3