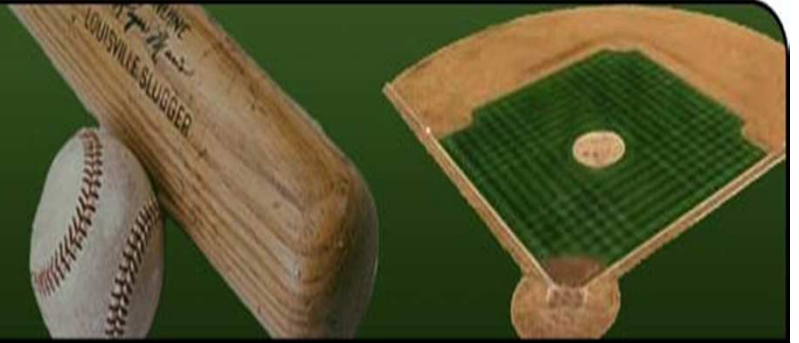


Drills



Alligator Drills - One thing that should be taught to the youngest players is to catch the ball with two hands. This is particularly true of ground balls. Teach youngsters to go after grounders by putting the bare hand over the ball once it is in the glove. This is called the alligator drill because the process of coming down with the bare hand on the ball is similar to an alligator closing its jaws when it bites. Hit ground balls to your players, and give them a reminder by saying "alligator" to remind them to use two hands for grounders.

Bounce to the Bucket - Large basket or cooler put on a base. Outfielders try to throw and bounce the ball into the open container. Can be done as a game with 10 points for getting the ball in, 5 for hitting the bucket and 1 point for the nearest bounce, no matter where the ball ends up. This drill/game teaches throwing from the outfield to a base.

Bucket Drill - Split your into team in half. Line the first team up, one behind another, at the shortstop position. Take the second team and place them behind first base. Next, place a five gallon bucket or garbage can upside down on first base. Make sure that you have plenty of baseballs handy. Depending on the age level, the coach rolls or hits a ball to the first person in line at the shortstop position, who then has three seconds to pick up the ball and throw it at the bucket. The coach should loudly count off the seconds; this will initially fluster some of your younger players, but will also help them to cope with pressure better in the long run. If the bucket is missed, the player behind first base fields the ball and returns it to the coach. Regardless of the outcome, the player who made the throw rotates to the back of the line. After several passes through the line, switch sides.

Catch - Two or more players play catch. Keep score of the number of successful catches.

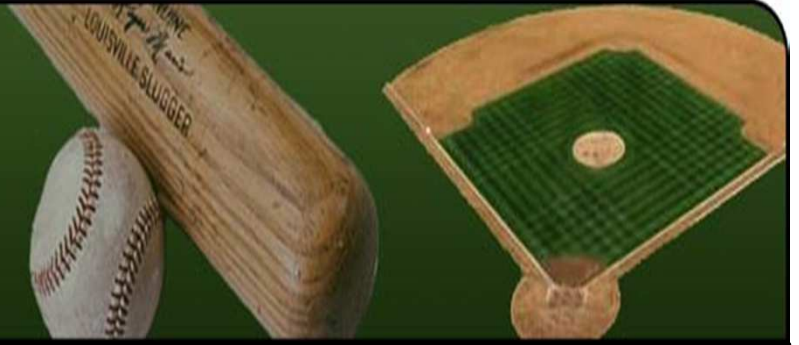
Catching Contest - Players are in pairs and throw the ball back and forth between each other. Last pair that has not dropped a ball wins.

Catching Flies - Hit or throw fly balls to fielders by using a soft baseball, rubber ball or tennis ball. Repetition and practice are the key to success.

Catch the Coach - Coach runs from home plate to first base. After a few steps, couch shouts "tag me" to a player holding a ball, who runs after the coach and tries to tag him out. Coach to decide where/when/if the runner is successful.

Catch the Players - Coach starts four or more players about 10 seconds apart from home plate to circle the bases. Coach starts last, trying to tag the players [alternate: snatch off their caps.

Drills



Crab Drill - Player is in basic fielding set position stance, crouched forward with glove open and down. Player takes three or four steps as coach rolls the ball.

Crow Hop - Classic throwing drill. Player takes a short step and a hop in the direction of the intended throw.

Distraction - Coach rolls the ball to a fielder, but another player runs in front of the fielder and tries to break the fielder's concentration on catching the ball.

Dive - Coach throws or hits ball to one side or the other of a fielder, who has to dive to make the catch. Then, throw to 1st base.

Helmet Drills – Put a batting helmet on top of a tee or the fence. Have Players stand in a line and take turns throwing baseballs or wiffle balls at the helmet. Adjust it up and down for high throws and low throws. This will help with their throwing accuracy.

Just Block It - Coach hits ball directly to a fielder. Emphasis is on stopping the ball from getting through to the outfield. OK to just block the ball; [better, of course, to catch it.] Can be a game with a point scored from every block, two for a catch and zero if the ball is not stopped

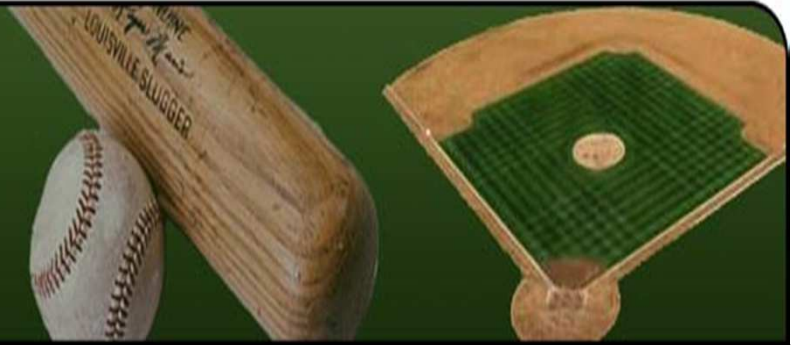
One and Two - Two players play catch. Thrower scores 2 points if ball is caught at or above the shoulders. 1 point if caught between waist and shoulders. No points if caught below the waist or not caught. First player to score 10 points wins.

Run Down - Two fielders and a runner, who tries to run from one base to another without getting tagged out. Participants rotate positions.

Scoop or Pick-up - Two players [or two rows of players] line up about 10 feet apart. From kneeling position, one player rolls the ball to the other. Repeat 10 to 15 times.

Track Meet - Two players at home plate. At the "start", one runs to 3rd base, the other to 1st base. They continue running [in opposite directions] around the bases. First one to return to home plate wins. **Note:** to avoid collisions, instruct the runner that begins via 1st base to touch 2nd base from the outside corner; the other runner, coming from 3rd base, touches the inside corner of 2nd base.

FUNdamentals



POSITIONS

First Base - Show where 1st baseperson is to stand when no runner is on base and when one is on the base. Practice fielding plays; ball thrown to 1B by infielders.

Second base - Position player in place, anticipating action. Practice fielding plays; such as tagging a runner out.

Shortstops - Show positions: one between 1B and 2B; the other between 2B and 3B. Practice action; such as, fielding balls and throwing to 1B or 2B for an out.

Third base - Show position, anticipating action. Practice action; such as, player diving to knock down ball.

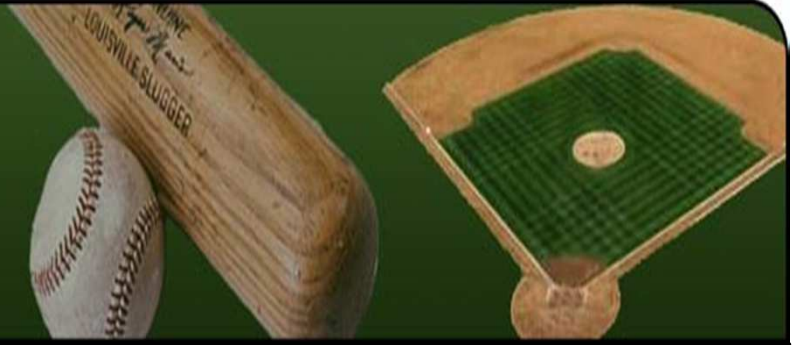
Pitcher - [Stands in pitcher's area but acts as an infielder.] Practice action; such as, fielding ball and throwing to 1B.

Catcher- [Stands behind and away from home plate until ball is hit] Demonstrate: after ball is hit, adult removes tee and bat; catcher moves up to cover plate. Practice actions: catcher tagging base runner out, catcher throwing to 1B.

General infield activity - Staying behind Playing Line until the ball is hit. Catching short fly balls. Field balls and throwing to a base or to home plate. Tagging runners on the base path. Relaying a ball from an outfielder to a base; to the catcher at home plate

Outfielders - Position players. Practice catching fly balls in a crowd. "I've got it" Practice catching ground balls and throwing to infield. Have one outfielder receive relay from another and throwing to an infielder.

FUNdamentals



HITTING

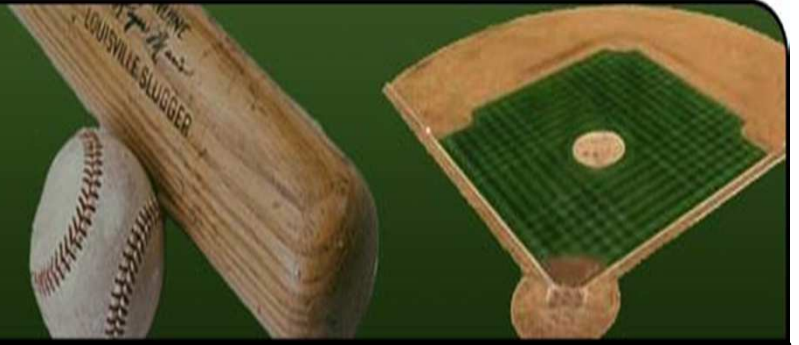
Batting -- the stance, swing and follow-through

- (T-Ball) Adjust the tee with ball set even to the hitter's waist.
- (T-Ball) Face tee with feet spread shoulder-width apart.
- Bend knees, body in slight crouch.
- Weight on balls of feet.
- Grip bat; hands together above knob.
- Hold bat firmly; don't squeeze.
- Bring bat up and away from the body.
- Keep shoulders level; bat and head steady.
- Eyes on the ball.
- Short step with the front foot at start of swing.
- Swing level and bring the bat through the center of the ball.
- Watch bat hit ball; keep head down.
- Weight shifts to front foot; back foot stays on the ground.
- Squash the Bug!
- Extend arms and follow through; swing around.
- Drop the bat; do not throw it

Key points:

- eyes on the ball
- no cross-handed hold
- position of feet
- stride [weight shift]
- rotation
- the swing

FUNdamentals



FIELDING

Catching - Eyes on the ball. Watch the ball go into the glove. Cover the ball with the other hand

Ground Ball - Stand legs apart, shoulder-width or wider. Bend knees. Get low. Lean forward. Run to the ball. Keep body in front of ball. Glove low to the ground. Scoop or catch the ball and cover it.

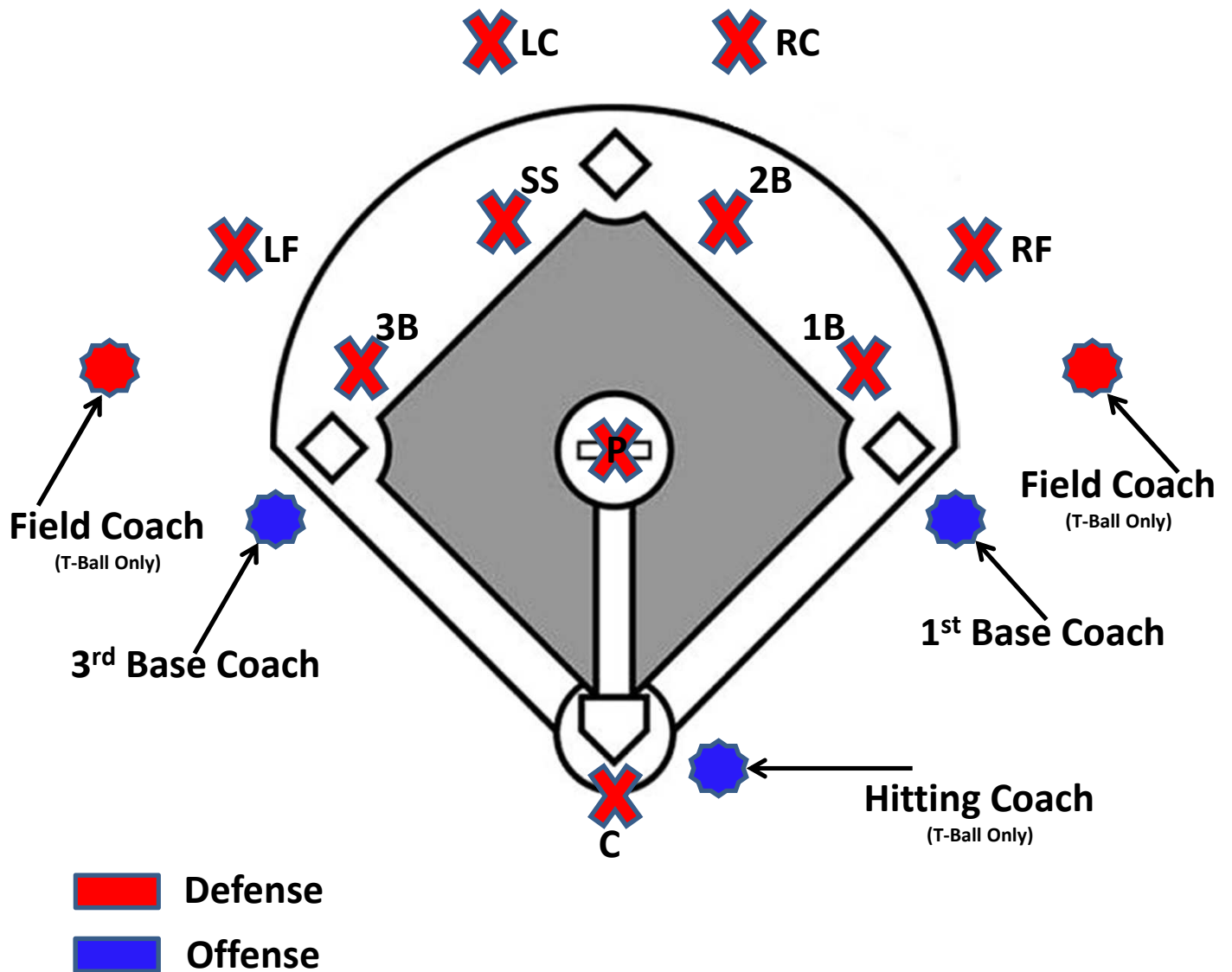
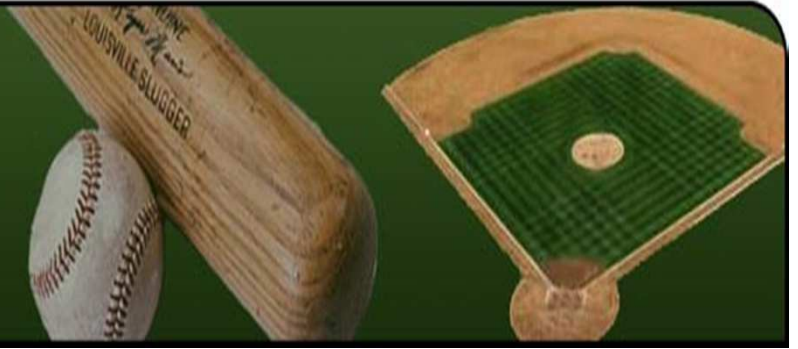
Fly Ball - Run to where the ball is going. Call for the ball: "I've got it." Stop and wait for the ball. Hands together, fingers up, shoulder high or over the head. Watch ball into the glove and cover.

Thrown Ball - Bend knees slightly. Watch the ball. On a ball thrown to player above the waist: Hands together facing out; thumbs up. Catch and cover. On a ball thrown below the waist: Hands together facing down; little fingers touching. Catch and cover.

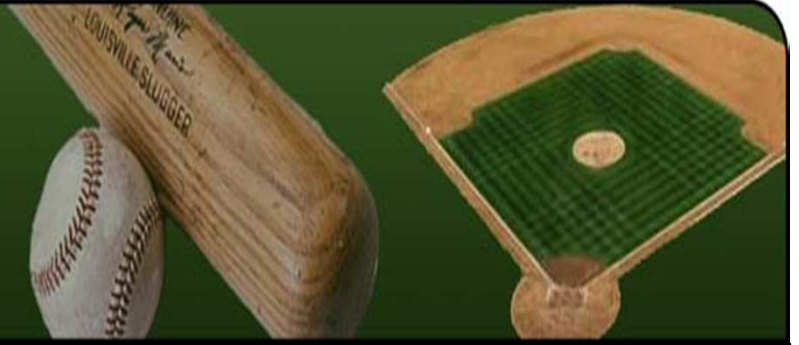
THROWING

Grip & Motion - Thumb under the ball. Two or three fingers on top. Don't worry about the seams. Eyes on the target. Legs apart; foot on throwing arm side behind the body. Arm back and up, front shoulder turned toward target. Step toward target with foot opposite the throwing arm. Right-hander with left foot; left-hander with right foot. Push off on back foot as throw begins; end with weight on forward foot. Release the ball in front of body and follow through.

Field Layout



FUNdamentals



RUNNING

Base Running - Run on the balls of the feet. Pump arms back and forth. After the ball is hit Run behind the tee, unless left-handed. Look at first base, not where the ball has gone. Run outside the foul line. Run straight through first base; don't jump on it or slow down. Watch and listen to coach for instructions. When on base Keep one foot touching the base until the next batter hits the ball. Lean forward; when ball is hit, push off base. Know where the ball is. When passing a base, try to touch it on the side without stopping.

First Base – Always over run first base

Base Coaches – Make sure to have the players watch the base coaches NOT the ball.

Sliding - [not recommended for the youngest players] Start about four to five feet from the base. Arms up, fingers bent, chin down. Bend one leg under the other. Lower leg hits the ground, then the butt and back. Top leg [the extended one] touches the base. No head-first sliding.

Pep Talk!

Coach talking to team, after the game! - Summarize team's activity. Specifics, not generalities. Recognize progress. Note any humorous thing that happened. No public criticism; as necessary, take player aside. What's next [practice at home, next team practice and game schedule; tell parents] Other comment, as appropriate. After the games some coaches give out the game ball to the player who showed the most improvement or had a great play! This is a good incentive to get your players paying attention and focusing during games.