

## **BLASTBALL & T-BALL - Practice Routine**

3 Fundamental Messages to Your Kids

1. Everyone hustles!
2. Be on time!
3. Try your best!

"THE DIFFICULTY OF THE DRILL IS BASED ON THE SKILL LEVEL OF THE PLAYER"

70% of baseball is learning what do to with your feet, the rest is in mechanics of throwing/catching.

### **1. Warm -Up (10-15 mins)**

2-3 minutes stretching, jumping jacks, hopping, shuffling drills. Teach kids that "wide feet" are wide enough for someone to crawl through them.

2-3 games of Coaches are "IT" - 1st game, coaches chase kids, once kids are tagged/frozen, kids must form a bridge, other kids release them from frozen by crawling underneath. 1-2 mins.

2nd game, once kids are caught, they must do 5 jumping jacks before they are unfrozen.  
3rd game, once kids are caught, they must stand on 1 foot for a count of 5 before they are unfrozen.

Shuffle exercise - L-R-F-B & drop. 2-3 mins. For T-Ball you may need to start with coach facing same direction as kids.

Have a parent(s) do the warm up so you can set up your 3 stations. With a roster of 12 kids, best to have 3 groups of 4 kids. Hitting station, catching station, throwing station.

### **2. Throwing Drill**

each kid has Bucket/Bag of 5-8 balls (1 baseball only, rest of them can be any ball as long as it's not hard)

Throw to the OF or at a target against a fence (balloons, etc...), evaluate each child's skill/ability.

Have the kids point to the target with their glove hand.

THE GRIP - thumb is at 6 O'Clock & middle finger is at 12 O'Clock.

### **3. Catching Drill**

Catching has 6 zones, with T-Ballers, work only on zones 1-4. NO BACKHANDS!

Make it fun the first few times with oven mitts. So kids are not scared of the ball. Most kids hands are not strong enough to close their mitts.

Throw 4-5 balls to each child for each zone. Evaluate their ability to catch. You may then want to separate kids based on their skill level for individual drills.

Flyballs - start with low flyballs and progress higher, when they start missing, then you'll know what level they are at.

#### **4. Running Drill**

1. Teach kids to run-through 1B and only touch orange part of the bag and then tag coaches hand. Do not stop at 1st.
2. 2B & 3B has no coaches, so stop on the base. HOME Plate you can run through the base.

Baserunning: As the season progresses, teach kids to face the last base they were at and to start with a "low" stance when running to the next base.

#### **5. Hitting Drill**

teach kids how to swing properly, the hitting will come along itself.

Even though this is the T-Ball level, we will be coach pitching the balls to the kids.

1. Inhale and exhale before swinging the bat.
2. Grip - knuckles should be lined up straight. Use a smelly marker for fun/young kids. Grip bat around the knuckles, not around the palm.
3. Bat - even start out with just using a stick rather than a bat. Get kids to swing until they hit their shoulders.
4. "Bellybutton" swings. The bat height on their swing should be at their belly button level. The kids thinks it's entertaining and easy to remember.

#### **6. Hitting Drill**

Wrap up with a game of Scrub, 2 groups plays the defense, 1 group bats. Change batters after 1 group has batted. How many runs/outs can each group get?

#### **NOTES TO REMEMBER**

GOAL IS TO "KEEP IT FUN & SAFE FOR THE KIDS"

Optional Stuff: STICKERS for kids? Name tags?

Make them feel special about being on YOUR team and keep competition to themselves not against one another.

For Games - keep the kids in 1 position for the entire game, rotate positions per game, not per inning. Rotate kids through all positions except for 1B, C & P. Leave those for now to adults or better kids that can catch.

OF Drills, keep the kids in OF busy with catching drills during OF/IF drills. Most kids won't hit to OF anyway, but why have OF standing around?

#### **FORMAT FOR 2011**

~140 kids in T-Ball & 30 kids for Blastball. 12 teams in T-Ball and 4 teams in Blastball

Only play on weekends, with no games on long weekends. Should be 9 games per team.