



Pahrump Valley Little League

How to Coach Little League Baseball

Table of Contents

CONTENTS

How To Coach Little League Baseball – A Complete Guide	1
Who Are You Coaching?.....	1
Supplies and Gear for Baseball Team Practice.....	2
Medical/Injuries	2
Baseball Gear You Must Have	2
Let’s Talk About Drills.....	3
Little League Practice Plan for Ages 12 and Under	3
Running the Bases.....	3
Coaches’ Responsibilities to Base Runners.....	4
Recommended Running Drills.....	5
Base running from home plate:	5
Leading off the Bag	5
Base Stealing	5
Hitting Drills	5
Swinging at an Upward Angle	5
Recommended Batting Drills	6
Fielding Drills.....	6
Outfield	7
Infield	7
Additional Resources	7
Working with Parents	8
Running the Perfect Practice	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Part 1: There Must be Structure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
• Look Sharp.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
• Hustle	Error! Bookmark not defined.
• Always Take a Baseball Knee	Error! Bookmark not defined.
• Respect Your Teammates	Error! Bookmark not defined.
• Respect the Game.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Identify Newer Players.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Practice Plan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Part 2: Use Stations.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Recommended Training Resources	9
Top 5 BIG Mistakes Youth Baseball Coaches Make // Avoid These and Have Greater Success!.....	9
How to Play Baseball // The Basic Rules of the Game Explained for Beginners (for players new to the game):	9
How to Throw // 5 Easy Steps to Throwing a Baseball	9
How to Catch a Baseball // Best Tips for 3 Types of Catches:	9
How to Hit a Baseball for Beginners & Youth Players // 5 Easy Steps for Hitting Success	9
Other videos that may be of interest:.....	9
10 Best Baseball Drills for Beginners Fun Youth Baseball Drills:.....	9
10 Best Baseball Drills for 7-8 Year Olds Fun Youth Baseball Drills:.....	9
10 Best Baseball Drills for 9-10 Year Olds Fun Youth Baseball Drills:	9
T-Ball Coaching Videos	9
Top 3 Tee Ball Drills! (That Work Like Magic!):.....	9
Top 10 Tee Ball (& "Coach Pitch") Coaching Tips.....	9
Another Resource	9
List of Exhibits	10
Exhibit 1 – Pahrump Little Sample Practice Plan Template	10
Exhibit 2 - Pahrump Little Sample Practice Plan Sample	10
Exhibit 3 - Pahrump Little Lineup Template-with-positions	10
Exhibit 4 – Possible Parent Agreement.....	10

HOW TO COACH LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL – A COMPLETE GUIDE

Written by Mark in Coaching from www.baseballboom.com

The key to good coaching is time management. In the space of an hour to 90 minutes, we are tasked with teaching the fundamentals of baseball, create drills that improve players' performance, make the drills fun so players stay interested and engaged, and finally, to inspire our players to tap into the great potential we see in them. All this can be accomplished in every practice with a well-organized little league practice plan. Having a guide for little league baseball drills will help maximize time, and help coaches get closer to their weekly team practice objectives.

Assembled just for coaches is a checklist which includes how to conduct baseball practice to help get the most out of the time allotted to us. Included are drills, a sample one hour practice, ways to make the drills fun for your players, and at the end, there's a checklist you can print out and study before practice and check off the list when completed.

You can adjust the items on the list after trying so it will conform to your team's strengths and weaknesses. For example, if your team needs to spend more time on fielding and less on hitting, you can increase or decrease the time spent within the hour of practice. Keep in mind that baseball practice should be geared toward the age group you coaching.

Who Are You Coaching?

If you run a team of players 10 years old and younger, you can omit jogging and running at the beginning of practice, and instead go right to base running, lining the team up at home plate and starting a relay. Younger kids especially are already limber so having a fun challenge at the outset is a great start.

Older players 13 and up will benefit from exercises like arm pulls, jumping jacks and toe touches, so starting out with basic calisthenics will get them primed for the rest of the hour. Keep in mind that very young players have spurts of energy, and making them run at the very beginning will take some of their stamina away. Older kids have great energy reserves so they can handle an exercise warmup and drill regimen over the course of practice.

Fine Tuning Your Team's Practice over the Course of the Season

Baseball season begins and the team is essentially a blank slate until you see how they perform in actual games. As the weeks pass, you'll starting noticing strengths and weaknesses in individual players and the team as a whole. Your weekly practice regimen will change as you try to make improvements in either hitting or fielding, as well as pitching and catching.

The drills presented here are designed to improve all these skills, and all that you need change is which drills should be practiced more, and those drills you can put off. So, if the team as a whole is up to par in fielding, you may want to do more batting drills.

Every practice should cover hitting, fielding and running, and as the season progresses, you allocate more time to fielding, less to hitting, and then reverse the focus at next practice to keep players in top form. Developing skill sets lacking in players is a critical part of good time management.

Supplies and Gear for Baseball Team Practice

Coaching baseball is fun and rewarding, and when done right, it will be the same for your players. For an hour at a time, your young players will practice running in cleats on grass and dirt in base running drills, working on hitting and fielding during individual and team drills.

All youth physical activity comes with a degree of uncertainty, and injuries often occur. It's important that coaches have with them first aid kits and their cell phone in case of emergency.

Here is a list of items you should make sure to have on hand for each team practice:

Medical/Injuries

- **First Aid Kit:** Bruises, abrasions and sprained ankles are common during team practice and at games, so first aid kits should include cold packs, elastic bandages and Band-Aids.
- **Cell Phone:** When an injury is severe, including bone fractures, concussions, heat stroke and wounds, having 911 programmed into your phone will help get medical help to the field as quickly as possible.
- **Parent Authorization Forms:** A coach is one of the few adults at practice when emergencies occur and must get the injured player treated as soon as they can. It's important for yourself as well as your player that you are authorized to have a child brought to the hospital for emergencies. Legal authorization forms are available and easy to obtain. It's important for parents to authorize you to have their child treated should it be necessary.
- **Bottled Water:** Encourage your players to bring bottled water with them, but always have a case of water from a grocery store available at practice. Strenuous physical activity makes players thirsty, especially on hot days. You'll want to make sure players don't get dehydrated.

Baseball Gear You Must Have

You will be issued the gear required to run your team. If there is something listed below that is not issued in your equipment, you might want to consider purchasing if you think it will help.

- **Equipment Bag:** Carriers for holding bats, gloves, helmets and baseballs come in a few sizes. Nothing is better than having everything you need in one place. If possible, ask your team to bring their own equipment to practice, and their own equipment bag if feasible, with their own gloves and baseball bats.
- **Baseballs:** "Blem baseballs" are baseballs made by well-known ball manufacturers that have imperfections such as spots or markings on the leather and seams that are the wrong color. Besides cosmetic differences, blemished baseballs are like normal regulation balls, and can be obtained for 1/3 the price of regular baseballs. They often come packaged with a baseball bucket. It's a good idea to have 2 to 3 dozen baseballs for each practice that should last for months.
- **Whiffle Balls:** Lighter and virtually unbreakable, whiffle balls are great to use for infield drills, or for batting drills that test hitters' reflexes (more about these drills below). Whiffle balls can be thrown with greater accuracy into the batter's box, so hitting inside, outside, high and low pitches can be worked on.

- **Batting Tees and Hitting/Pitching Net:** These items are not mandatory but they help players improve hitting and throwing very quickly. Players can use batting tees in small groups when you are focused on one-on-one with other players.
- **Coaches Practice Plan:** It's a great idea to know in advance how practice will be structured and which specific drills you'll be doing. When coaches are organized, more is accomplished in the hour you have to improve the team.

Let's Talk About Drills

Getting the most out of the time you spend with the team in practice means making sure that good fielding, hitting and running habits are reinforced. Drills are all about repetition, and in a perfect world, coaches would have part of the team working on fielding, pitchers and catchers together practicing throws and ball blocking drills, and hitters working off a batting tee and a net, all at the same time.

At some point, your team can separate to work on skills in smaller groups while another part of the team focuses on something else. However, if a skill is practiced over and over again, but it's being practiced the wrong way, unsupervised drills with repetitions will only reinforce the bad approach. A hitter standing incorrectly in the batter's box will only make the wrong stance worse through repeating it, if he's not corrected.

A good rule of thumb is to "practice the same way you play". Though it sounds simple, it should serve as a reminder to coaches to keep an eye on all players while they work. Don't hesitate to go up to a fielder working with a few of his teammates to tell him to keep his glove on the ground to field ground balls. Drills can positively reinforce good habits, or make bad habits worse by repeating them.

LITTLE LEAGUE PRACTICE PLAN FOR AGES 12 AND UNDER

Younger players, as mentioned earlier, don't need to loosen up and run prior to the start of drills and practice plays. Often it can be counterproductive because they tend to expend too much energy by running too fast, making them less productive to practice throwing and hitting. Warm-ups and running works best with older players.

When you start team practice, gather everyone together, and let them know what the team will be working on, and in what order. The three areas to cover during team practice are:

- Running
- Hitting
- Fielding

These three points of focus are summarized here. There are very good drills that will help your team improve in each of these areas that are listed at the end of each section.

Running the Bases

A good practice plan for younger players is to begin practice with base running. Kids love to run bases, so much, in fact, that the start and finish of each practice session can be base running. Players run from

home to first as if they are trying to beat out an infield hit. Watch their feet to make sure they touch the front of the first base bag and then step over it.

Younger players have fun running as fast as they can to first, while you reinforce the proper way for their feet to touch the bag. Next, have your players run from first to third, pretending the adept to get an extra base on the run. Focus again on their feet and how they turn second base on the way to third.

After that they walk home. You can make your players wait less than a minute at home for their turn by letting 4 seconds lapse between runners as they start from home. Coaches would be at first base, signaling the next runner to run to first from home so he can observe their foot on the bag.

You can add to this running drill by making them simulate running for a double, followed by running to home from second base. If they're not too tired you can finally have players run for a triple or a home run. Then they simulate scoring on a hit from second base. Beyond that, if the players are not too tired they can run out a triple or a home run. Your job is to focus on specific base running fundamentals.

In your base running drills, you want to focus on making your players able to do most of the following:

- Able to go from 1st to 3rd base on a base hit to the outfield, whenever possible.
- When on 2nd base, runners should be able to read a line drive and be able to score on a base hit.
- Running hard and in the base line at all times.
- Make sure they understand your signs, and never miss them.
- Advancing whenever possible when the ball is pitched in the dirt.
- Knowing where the infield defensive players are at all times so they can reach the next base successfully.
- Avoiding getting doubled up on a line drive to an infielder.
- Always running hard through home plate, especially when there are two outs.
- Knowing how to lead off a base so they can get that extra base on a hit.

Coaches' Responsibilities to Base Runners

Players running with their heads and feet is important, and to improve their chances of success, coaches must do their part when runners are on base. Here is what the **coach at first base** needs to do:

- Encourage the hitter to run as fast as possible down first base on any hit, especially hits to the infield.
- Remind runners on base of the number of outs. The running options change depending on how many outs the team has.
- Instruct your runners when to take an extra base and when to hold at first. Verbal cues like "round first," and "come back" after the hit.
- Tell runners how far to go on pop flies.

The responsibilities of a **third base coach** include:

- Giving third base runners the green light to continue to home.
- Letting runners know whether to slide into third base or come in standing up.
- Assisting runners when tagging up by letting them know when to run.

- Reminding runners of the number of outs.

Recommended Running Drills

Base running from home plate:

- Straight Line: Running full speed down the baseline in a straight line past first base after tapping the bag with foot.
- Rounding First: Player runs out of the base path, touches the bag at first and heads towards second base.
- Fly Ball/Line Drive: Hitter runs to first and goes out of the base path and heads towards second.

Leading off the Bag

- Tapping first base with foot on the way to second base drill.
- Leading off second base
- Understanding and obeying coaching signals at first and third base

Base Stealing

- Lead off position: Best place in base line between bases when preparing to steal
- Knowing when the pitcher will pitch to home or throw to first base to tag out runner.
- Knowing how to “run smart.”
- Knowing where the baseball is at all times

Practice Time Dedicated to Base Running Skills: 15 Minutes.

Hitting Drills

The time spent doing team hitting drills can be split in half, part batting tee and net (2 players each), and team batting drills with fielders in position.

Players can spend 10-15 minutes with another player with a batting tee and a net to catch the ball when hit. Ideally, if you have only a few batting tees, you split up the team at once, half using tees while the other half practices swinging at the plate. Here are some principles to keep in mind, especially for players under 12:

Swinging at an Upward Angle

After completing base running drills, move to batting drills. These drills should help improve the batter’s swinging motion, his rhythm, and most important, improving his sight when tracking the pitch. The drills presented here serve to improve these hitting fundamentals.

Young players are often taught to simply make contact with the ball, without modifying the swing to produce better hitting. The ball usually ends up as a weak grounder or a swing and a miss.

Kids need to develop their chopping angle. Analysis of major league hitters shows the angle of the bat when the furthest balls are hit, is 10 to 18 degrees. This is also known as a launch angle.

The goal should be for all hitters to swing up through the ball to achieve that angle. Encourage your hitters to swing at this angle until they are able to hit line drives.

Both Arms and Legs are Used Swinging the Bat

Young players tend to use only their upper body when swinging the bat. Coaches should emphasize swinging with the whole body, and kids can use the fungo bat to practice this, which is lighter than a regular bat. Try to have your players take the bat and swing using their feet.

Recommended Batting Drills

Batting Tee: Eyes On Baseball: Players swing at the ball on the tee and keep their eyes focus on the tee through the swing. Observe players and make certain they don't look away, instead swinging through the ball, and eyes on the tee.

Watching the ball connect with the bat is a trained skill, and learning it early will help players throughout their baseball careers. ***This drill requires repetition to get hitters in the habit.***

High Tee Drill: This drill is first performed with the coach and his players. As soon as their swing is appropriate for swinging high, they can practice repetitions with another player to feed baseballs to the batting tee.

Focus on players swinging through the ball in a level motion in order to produce line drives. Correct players who approach the ball and swing upwards.

Low Tee Drill: If the hitting tee doesn't go low enough to be at the knees of a younger player, you can substitute a traffic cone. The objective of this rill is getting hitters to extend their arms and shoulders towards the ball and swing in an upward motion. Swinging straight through results in ground balls. Coaches want to make sure players put as much power into hitting the ball as possible.

Load and Place Front Foot Forward: Coaches should keep in mind the three basics of swinging a bat: Stance, Stride and Shift. Each player has a unique stance and stride, but getting them into the best position for them to hit with power is important at a young age.

The most important part of a hitter's swing is how he loads his front foot and the width of his stride. Work with players to modify stance and stride first, then to swing at the ball in an upward direction. Once they have the best stance, stride and swing based on their size and power, send them to the batting tee to repeat the movement so it becomes habitual.

Practice time dedicated to hitting drills: 20-30 minutes

Fielding Drills

In order to maximize quality time for fielding drills during team practice, encourage your players to practice fielding at home. Young players usually need no more than a wall or a stoop, at which to throw a rubber ball and practice fielding grounders and high flies. A Pitch back net is inexpensive and is players own one, they can spend hours throwing and fielding the ball.

Fielding can be a fun experience for kids, and as you as coaches develop your own skills at organizing team practice, you can integrate hitting and fielding drills. You can create real game simulations by having batters apply the skills they developed in hitting, running and base stealing drills, and fielders work on fielding grounders, pop files and line drives.

Infielders and outfielders should perform their own warm ups before the team comes together in real game scenarios. Both squads should throw the ball around the horn first.

Coaches should use a fungo bat to avoid wearing themselves out hitting out to players. The other advantage is that with fungo bats, it is much easier to hit to a specific part of the field. For example, to work on the shortstop's fielding, you can palace hit the ball to either his right or his left.

Outfield

- Right Field to center field
- Center to left field
- Left to center
- Center to right
- Right field to left field
- Left field to right field

Infield

Infielder drills should include the following:

- **Proper Stance for Fielding Ground Balls:** Coaches will work on how infielders approach the ball, making sure the glove touches the ground.
- **Call and Catch Drills:** This drill focuses on calling a fly ball hit in the area of the left fielder, third baseman and shortstop. Players practice calling the catch while the other two get out of the way.
- **Footwork Drills:** The better the footwork a player has, the easier it is for him to move his hands quickly and easily to field balls. Movement starts with the feet and moves up to the hand and baseball glove. The coach demonstrates the stance players use to field ground balls, such as bending at the knees instead of the back, and placing the glove perpendicular to the ground

Practice time dedicated to fielding drills: 20 minutes.

A balance of running, hitting and fielding that includes individual and team practice, makes for an exciting well-rounded hour that keeps young players involved and having a good time. It's great for coaches to keep a notepad or to use a note app in their phones with a complete list of his players.

You can even use a spreadsheet to list all the players and make notes regarding their individual progress. Parents are usually interested in improving their child's skills, so feel free to discuss your observations with them. The parents can work on the skills needing improvement at home with their player before the next team practice.

Recommended Length: 20 minutes

Additional Resources

For some very good articles, see the following web pages:

- Coaching: <https://baseballboom.com/category/coaching/>
- Hitting: <https://baseballboom.com/category/hitting/>
- Fielding: <https://baseballboom.com/category/fielding/>

WORKING WITH PARENTS

It's very important to have a meeting the team member's parents to go over the following:

- Always show support for my child no matter what happens during the game.
- My main purpose of attending the game is to enjoy myself and support my child and the entire team
- My son's time playing baseball is fleeting. I will help make it a time to remember.
- I will allow the coach to coach my son.
- I will not interfere with any decisions the coach makes.
- I will not yell at or argue with the umpires.
- I will encourage my son to seek out his coach first for a private meeting
- I will refrain from shouting out instructions during a game.
- When any situation arises pertaining to a game situation, I will follow the chain of command and only get involved when asked. This does not include player injuries.
- I will bring my child to practice on time. I will not be late except in extenuating circumstances.
- I will not expect the coach to carpool players to and from practice or games.
- I will arrange meetings between my son and the coach.
- I will arrange a meeting with the coaching coordinator to discuss any disagreements I may have.
- **I will set up an environment at home to practice and improve needed skills.**

If the parent has a complaint and/or has questions for the coach, ask the parent to wait 24 hours after the game is completed before contacting the coach. This gives the parent some time to think about the situation and formulated the question/problem before confronting the coach.

See Exhibit 4 for possible use of parent agreement.

RECOMMENDED TRAINING RESOURCES

These videos are in the Building Better Baseball library (which has many more videos available than listed below): <https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/buildingbetterbaseball>

Top 5 BIG Mistakes Youth Baseball Coaches Make // Avoid These and Have Greater Success!:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vh4NOnip-0g>

How to Play Baseball // The Basic Rules of the Game Explained for Beginners (for players new to the game): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-XlOwoq-BA>

How to Throw // 5 Easy Steps to Throwing a Baseball:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuO8WLwscb0&t=3s>

How to Catch a Baseball // Best Tips for 3 Types of Catches:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iVUe9Vk4ok>

How to Hit a Baseball for Beginners & Youth Players // 5 Easy Steps for Hitting Success:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnHzB2t7eAw>

Other videos that may be of interest:

10 Best Baseball Drills for Beginners | Fun Youth Baseball Drills:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwdBVc6l-C4&t=668s>

10 Best Baseball Drills for 7-8 Year Olds | Fun Youth Baseball Drills:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJzDHd9Tc1M>

10 Best Baseball Drills for 9-10 Year Olds | Fun Youth Baseball Drills:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sV-yNL9A8l4>

T-Ball Coaching Videos

How To Teach A Child To Play T-Ball: <https://baseballboom.com/how-to-teach-a-child-to-play-t-ball/>

How to Coach T-Ball: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8-vN8qmdZQ>

Top 3 Tee Ball Drills! (That Work Like Magic!): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xc-l7B0PGcs>

Top 10 Tee Ball (& "Coach Pitch") Coaching Tips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8ccXY0SIIM>

Another Resource

Another great resource is: <https://baseballboom.com/> - Sections in this website include RECOMMENDED GEAR, HITTING, FIELDING, and COACHING.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 – Pahrump Little Sample Practice Plan Template

Exhibit 2 - Pahrump Little Sample Practice Plan Sample

Exhibit 3 - Pahrump Little Lineup Template-with-positions

Exhibit 4 – Possible Parent Agreement