

## **Practice Ideas**

### **Rookie / Junior Mosquito**

Equipment essentials needed:

25-30 wiffle balls

20-25 kenko balls

20 tennis balls

1-2 tennis or racquet ball racquets

4-6 cones

3-4 bats and helmets

1 or 2 batting tees

Free Time :

Set up a tee or bucket of wiffles or soft core balls for kids to play with a partner or their parent while everyone is waiting for the practice to begin. Once all players show up, gather them together in the group and briefly mention what they will be doing. Be sure to mention some of the "ground rules" of your practice.

- when the coach is talking be sure to give eye contact and be attentive
- when throwing the ball to partner make sure their partner is looking
- when swinging a bat make sure your "area" is clear
- never stand behind a hitter – give them lots of room to swing

**Warm up:**

Knee tag

- using pylons to mark off an area or boundary
- players face each other and one person tries to touch or tag the other player's knee
- the other player must try to evade the tag but can only shuffle or backpedal – they cannot turn around and start running
- change roles once the person has been tagged

Baseball Freeze Tag

- mark off an area or boundary using pylons or cones
- one player is given a ball and has to proceed tagging the other players with the ball
- if a player is tagged with the ball they must form a bridge with their body while waiting for another player to free them as they crawl under the bridge
- once all players are tagged choose another person to be "it"

## Agility and Speed Drills

### 4 corner drill



Start at cone 1 – sprint to cone 2 – shuffle to cone 3 – backpedal to cone 4 – shuffle to cone 1 – sprint back to cone 2 and go around cone 2 and sprint back to cone 1. Next player proceeds when the first player finishes. The team to have all of their players finish is declared the winner. Vary the activity by having the players do “hops” instead of shuffles or skipping instead of sprints.

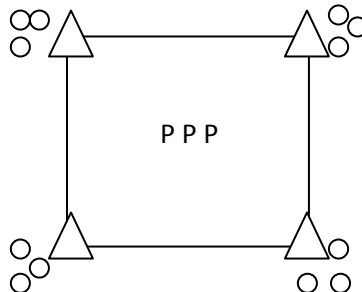
### Create Your Own Relay Drill

Divide into partners or teams. Create a relay drill using the following actions and movements.

- bear crawl
- crab crawl
- hopping
- skipping
- jumping on one foot
- froggy jumps
- wheel barrow with a partner
- running backwards
- shuffles
- or any type of obstacle course where you emphasize a quick change of direction

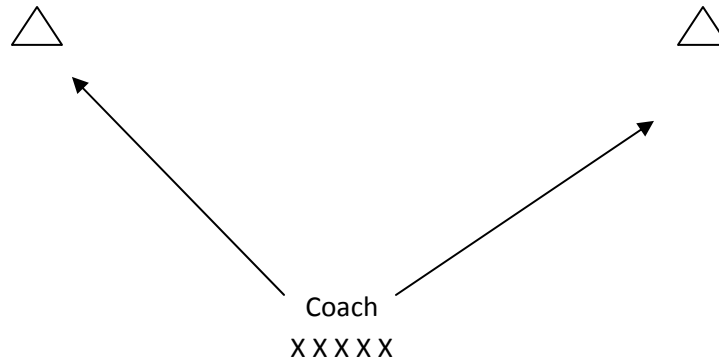
### Eggs in One Basket Relay

Divide players into teams of 3 or 4 depending on the size of your team. Using pylons create 4 corners for each team. Put three baseballs in each of the 4 corners of each team’s square. Players of each team are sitting in the middle of the square. When coach yells “go” one player from each team sprints to each cone and picks up one baseball and brings it back to the middle. Once the first player has collected four baseballs and has placed them in the middle the next player goes. The team that collects all of the balls and places them in the middle is declared the winner.



### Run – Look – Catch – Play of the DAY

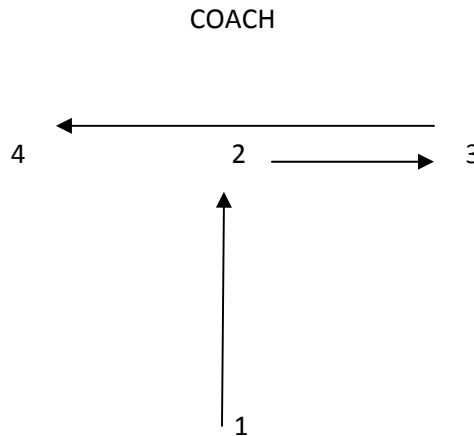
Have your players line up with a wiffle ball or tennis ball in their hand. Place two pylons about 15 – 20 yards away from the line at 45 degree angle from the position of the coach. Point to a cone and have a player run to the specific cone and while they are running they can look up, locate the ball tossed up in the air with an arc and try to catch with glove or bare hand. Player jogs back to the line. Divide into two groups if possible – assistant coach can lead the drill with another group in another area. Encourage players to dive if they have to and reward the catch of the day.



### Agility T Drill

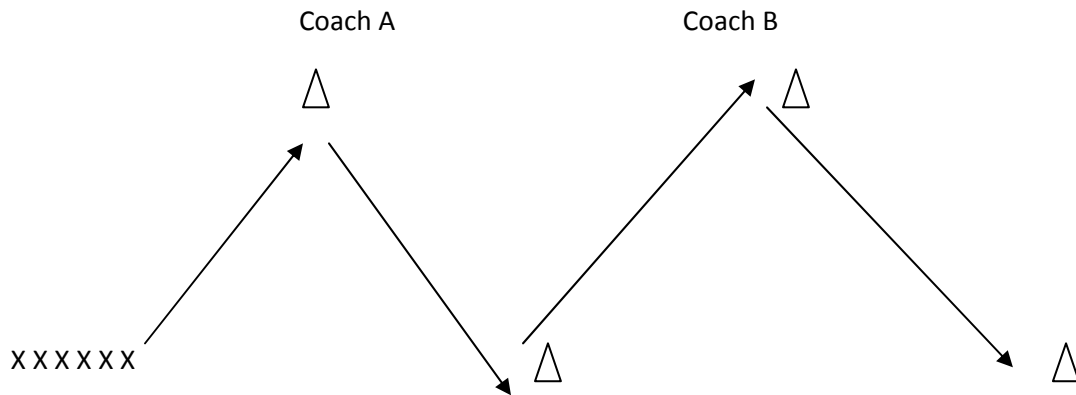
Have players start at cone 1 – sprint to cone 2 – shuffle to cone 3 and then shuffle to cone 4. As players are shuffling between cone 3 and 4 toss a ball as they shuffle that they

receive and toss back to you. How many times can they catch a ball while they are shuffling? Shuffle along with them and toss a ball back and forth. Have your assistant coach lead this drill with the other half of the team in another area.



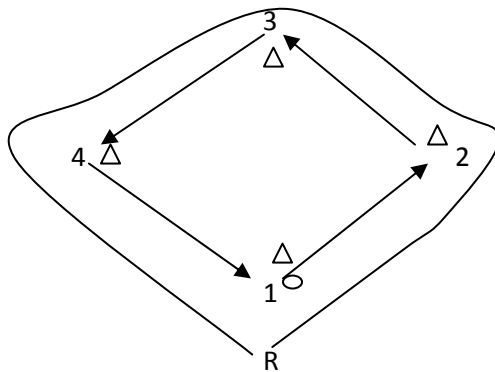
## W Drill

Line up players at cone 1 and have them throw the ball to coach A. Once they throw the ball to coach A have them sprint to cone 2 and touch cone 2 then have them turn around and sprint to cone 3 while trying to catch a ball thrown by coach A. Then they sprint to cone 4 and toss their ball to coach B. The player will then turn and run to cone 5 and receive another ball from coach B. The ball tossed by the coaches should have slight arc to them. Use wiffles or tennis balls so players have confidence in receiving the ball.



## Race Around the Horn

Runner starts near first pylon. Player 1 has wiffle or tennis ball in their glove. Player one starts race by throwing the ball to player 2. Once player one has thrown the ball the runner races around the pylons and make it back to the start before the players complete a "round the horn" (a thrown ball from player 1 to player 2 to player 3 to player 4 and back to player 1). The assistant coach can run the same drill or another drill in a different area.

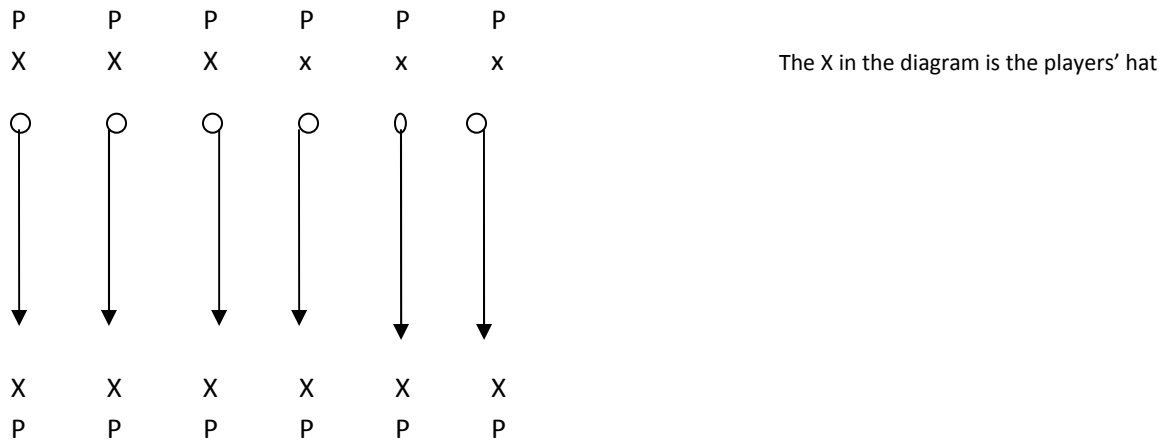


## Throw and Receive Drills

### Hit the HAT

Show proper throwing technique to players – emphasize point your glove to your target and reach back with throwing arm and follow through. Be sure players are using their feet when they throw. Have your assistant coach help introduce the drill.

Players should be with a partner and they should be fairly far part. Have the players take their hats off and place them about 5-7 yards in front of them. Players should begin throwing the ball to their partner but trying to hit their partners hat laying on the ground. The partner who hits their partners hat the first is the winner. Repeat the drill and have players switch partners. Make sure players are playing catch in the same direction.

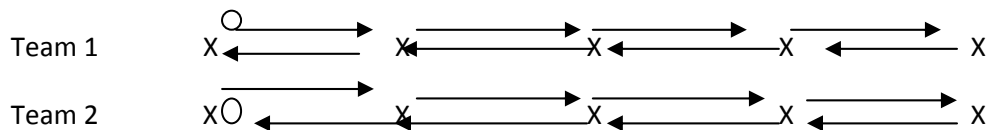


### Quick Catch Drill

Use the above same format but have the players pick up their hats and shorten up the distance between the partners. For this drill younger players can use a wiffle ball or tennis ball. The object of the drill is who can throw and receive 10 times first. Players count out loud on how many times they have caught the ball. Change partners if one group is consistently having success.

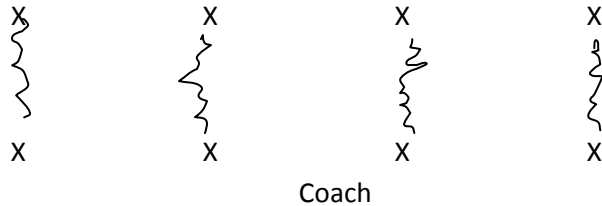
### Throw and Receive Relay Drill

Divide your team into 2 teams and into 2 lines. Space each team and player evenly apart. Each team gets one baseball and the player at the beginning of the line starts with the ball. When coach yells go, player with the ball on the team throws the ball to next player – that player then turns around and throws to next player behind them. Once the ball reaches the last player he then throws it back and the ball eventually goes back to the starting point. The team that brings it back to the starting point first wins.



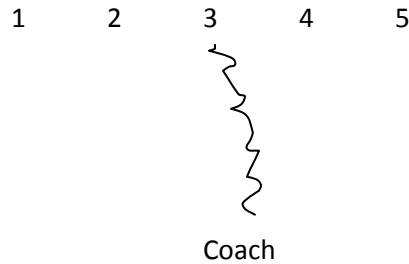
### Garbage Can Lid Ground Balls

Introduce proper fielding position. Introduce the term that on a ground ball the glove is the garbage can and the hand on top is the garbage can lid. Once you catch a ground ball you close the lid. Have players roll ground balls to each other. Make sure there is space between partners. Coaches walk around and provide encouragement. Older players can make it a game by playing a game of H-O-R-S-E. A bobbled ball or a ball between the legs is a letter.



### Coach Pepper

Demonstrate proper fielding technique and the importance of staying down on a ground ball. Coach throws ground balls to each player randomly. Players field the ground ball and throw it back to the coach. Once players get used to the drill make it a competition where player number 1 is the "king of the line" and if he bobbles the ball or has it go through his legs then he goes to the back of the line and all players shift over to their right and a new "king" is crowned. The other coach can lead the same drill or do another drill in a different area in the outfield. Variation: allow players to kneel down and receive ground balls – this allows players to feel what it is like to stay down on the ball – especially young kids who don't have the strength and flexibility to bend down.



### Fly balls

Show players proper technique for fielding fly balls. Give each player a baseball or tennis or soft core ball and have the players throw a baseball up in the air and catch it. Make sure there is plenty of space so players don't interfere with one another. Keep the players on task by making it a game – first player to catch 5 of his own fly balls is the declared winner.

Variations:

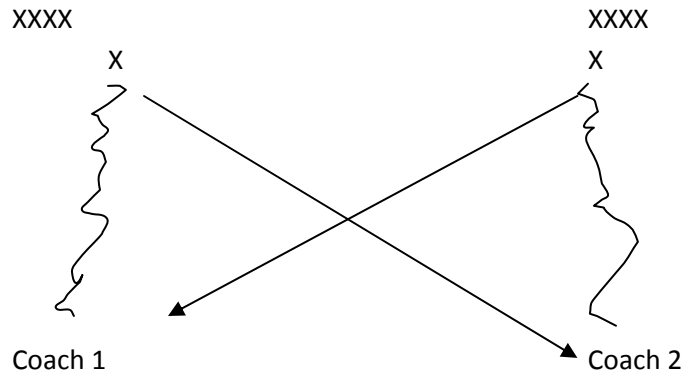
Circus Catch – Allow players to be creative when completing the above drill. Encourage a circus catch – example – throw ball in the air – spin around once and then catch it. Or throw ball in the air – clap 4 times and then catch it.

Tennis Racquet and Tennis Ball Fly balls

For the older players hit a fly ball with a tennis racquet. Players will have more confidence in receiving fly balls.

### ***Attack the ground Ball***

Introduce approaching the ground ball or allowing the players to go get the ground ball. Divide team into two groups. Group 1 receives ground balls from coach 1 and group 2 gets ground balls from coach 2. Once the first player in each line receives the ground ball they then throw the ball to the opposite coach. Balls are rolled by the coaches simultaneously. Once the player has thrown the ball they go to the back of the opposite line. Emphasize with the players to move their feet to throw the ball.



### **Break Through**

The goal for each team is to not allow the ground ball to be hit through their side of the infield. Place 2-3 players on one side of the diamond between 1b and 2b. Call them team 1. Place 2-3 players on the other side of the diamond between 2b and 3b and call them team 2. Coaches should position themselves to hit or roll ground balls to each group – one take the left side the other takes the right side. If the team keeps the ball from reaching the outfield grass they receive 1 point. First team to 21 wins.

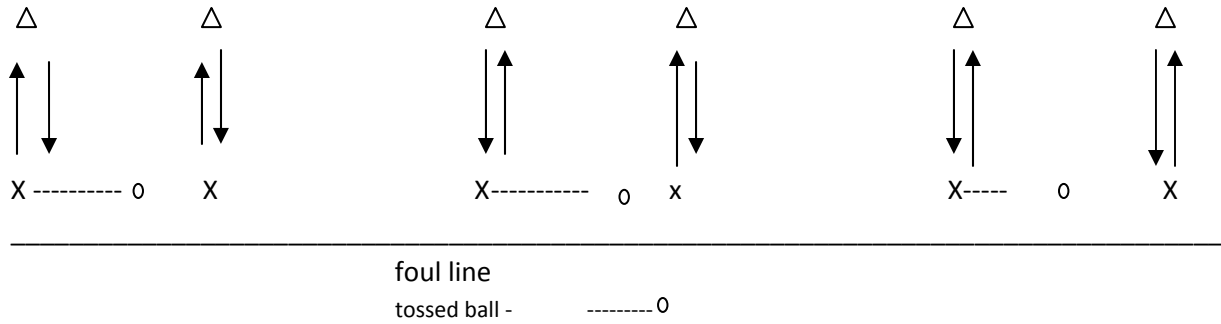
### **Hot Potato**

Have 5 players form a circle and get into an athletic position. Have players toss a ball softly to one another emphasizing soft hands. Use a tennis ball or soft core ball. Players should use their bare hands. Variations: For younger players the coach can be in the middle of the circle and toss the ball back and forth to each player in the circle as quickly as possible.

## Shuffle Catch

Divide players into partners and give each pair a baseball or tennis ball. Each pair will toss the ball back and forth while shuffling sideways between the foul line and two cones placed 10-15 yards away from the foul line. Players should move quickly while shuffling. Coaches can incorporate some kind of relay race.

shuffle side ways while tossing ball back and forth with partner – repeat.

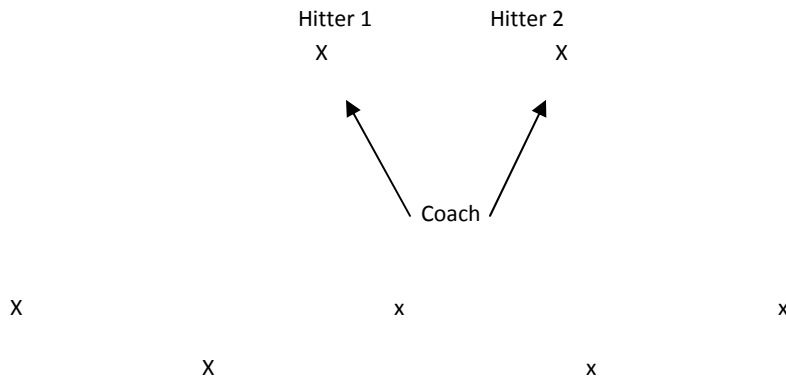




## Batting Practice

### Wiffle Batting Practice

Have 2 players with helmets and a bat positioned ready to hit beside a cone. The two cones should be 10 yards apart. The coach will have a bucket of wiffles or tennis balls. The coach will throw a ball to hitter 1 and then to hitter 2. Players behind the coach will field the ball and place it in the bucket near the coach who is tossing the ball to the players. Once each hitter has hit the ball 10 times rotate the players. This method of batting practice will allow players to receive more reps. The assistant coach can do this drill or another drill in a different part of the outfield. The assistant coach could also have 2-3 players getting used to hitting off the pitching machine on the diamond while this drill is done in the outfield.



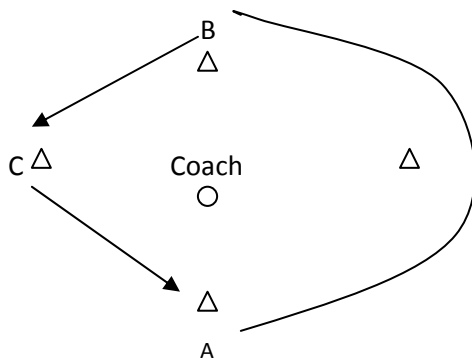
Variation : For younger players have them use a tennis racquet to hit the ball.

### Duck and Cover

Use the above method of batting practice but every second or third wiffle ball thrown , throw the ball at the hitter so they can practice turning their back side to the ball and ducking from the thrown ball.

### Hit – Run – Eat Dirt

Use cones and arrange in a diamond shape but shorter than regular base paths. The coach will be in the middle of the diamond with a bucket of wiffle balls or tennis balls and will be the pitcher. Have player A with bat at home plate. Player B will be standing near cone that symbolizes second base and player C at the cone that symbolizes third base. When player A hits the ball he sprints around first cone on his way to second base. Player B sprints to third base and player C sprints to home and then becomes the next batter. Repeat. Players are encouraged to slide and get dirty at each cone. The other coach can do the same drill or another drill in another part of the outfield. Variation: An extra two players can be placed inside the cones and can be the defense who tries to field the ball and tag one of the runners rounding the bases.



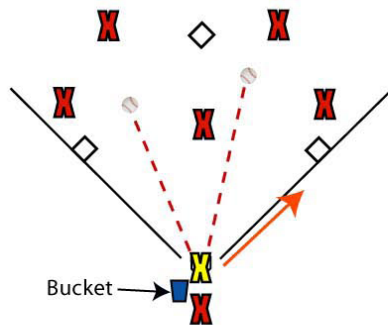
## Bucket Ball

**Goal:** Throwing, fielding, base running, cooperation, and teamwork.

**Description:** 2 teams of 6 - one on offence - one on defense. The defensive team has a catcher at home plate and the other players at appropriate locations. The offensive team has 1 player to THROW from home plate and the other players awaiting their turn from a safe distance.

**Activity:** Offensive "batter" throws out 2 balls, at one time in quick succession and runs around the bases trying to make it home before the fielding team gets both balls in a pail.

**Equipment:** 2 balls, 4 bases, helmet, pail or bag



### Variations and Progressions:

- A** Batter throws 2 balls
- B** Batter hits 2 balls

If the ball is caught, the "batter" is out.

Fielders may NOT run with the ball. It must be thrown Home. Relay the ball if necessary.

Remind players to make sure the catcher is looking; An adult may have to help at home.

## ***Sample 70 minute Practice Plan***

**Free time** – 5 minutes –while waiting for team to show up have players take a ball and play catch with another player or parent or hit off a tee.

**Intro:** 4 minutes

- Remind players of rules and safety
- Briefly mention what will be done in practice

**Warm up : 10 minutes**

- Pick 2-3 agility and speed drills including a tag game.
- Relay drills make this section more fun
- stay away from static stretching for young kids – running, jumping, dodging, skipping will warm up the body

**Throwing and Receiving Drills: 15 minutes**

- Pick 2 or 3 throwing and receiving drills
- Do the drills in stations with each coach leading each different station then rotate
- have lots of balls so you don't have to stop and chase balls – pick up the balls when it is time to rotate
- be creative invent a throwing or target drill of your own – create a drill such as knocking a ball off a tee or hitting a beach ball with a thrown ball.

**Water Break – 3-4 minutes as you set up your batting practice**

**Batting Practice – 20 minutes**

- make sure you have lots of balls – wiffles, tennis, kenkos
- do you hitting in stations
- keep the kids moving
- repetition is key – adjust drills by using tennis racquets or batting tees for players that are experiencing difficulty

**Modified Game – 10 minutes**

### *Wiffle Ball*

- set up bases or cones in outfield grass – use coach as pitcher – divide into two teams and play tennis ball or wiffle ball modified baseball game. Be sure nobody stands near the hitter – have all hitters wear a helmet. Use a tennis racquet for rookies. Encourage players to tag runners out. Older players can use tennis balls.

### *Tee ball*

- use a tee at home plate and have players hit ball off tee in a game format.

### *Homerun Hitting Contest – Jr Mosquito players (need homerun fence)*

- Divide your team into 2 – team one goes with coach one and team two is with other coach
- use tennis racquets and take batting practice with tennis balls in the outfield.
- the team that hits the most homeruns wins – each player get 10 swings

### *Bucket Ball*

- game explained above