



8U - Drills and Practice Plan

INTRODUCTION

The 8U drills below should be familiar to the coaches and players that are advancing from 6U. The focus should still be on fundamentals but with more advanced drills as the season progresses.

FIELDING

1. Teach Big Glove or Alligator Technique
 - a. Crossfire Drill – no throw, use buckets for fielded balls
 - b. 1 Player Roll Back
2. Learn How to Charge Baseball
 - a. Sit in chair, breakdown
 - b. Crossfire – No throw, use buckets for fielded balls
3. Footwork
 - a. Demonstrate from a fielding position to a throwing position
 - b. 3 lines 25 feet apart, coaches roll ball, player demonstrates all three aspects
 - c. Same as above, but coaches bat ball
 - d. Crossfire, no throw (see below for Crossfire details)

THROWING

1. Proper Throwing Technique
 - a. Demonstrate separation of hands. Players repeat
 - b. Demonstrate thumb down, palm down to reach position. Players repeat
 - c. Demonstrate importance of squared shoulders when reach position is achieved. Players repeat previous 2 steps in addition
 - d. Demonstrate follow through and release point always moving towards target. Players repeat all steps
 - e. Simple catch between 2 players, 30-40 feet apart
2. Pivot
 - a. Pivot – turn relay throw (Monkey in the Middle)
 - i. Key is to catch and turn over glove shoulder, pivot, square feet and throw. Drill requires 3 players with the middle player in the pivot position
 - b. After Pivot /Monkey in the Middle drill is successful, form small lines at outfield position, infield cutoff position, and base or plate. Ball is batted to outfield position where it is fielded and thrown to the middle infield/cutoff. Middle infield/cutoff throws to the designated base. Players rotate to end of line at another position. Hustle is a must.
 - c. Crossfire
 - i. Split players between shortstop and second base positions on the field.
 - ii. A catcher and coach lines up on the first base line equal distance from home plate and first base

- iii. A second catcher and coach lines up on the base third base line equal distance from home plate and third base.
- iv. First base line coach will be bats to the short stop position
- v. Third base line coach bats to the second base position
- vi. Players field the ball and make a good throw to the catcher and then move to the back of the line
- vii. After players goes through the line multiple times, switch the lines

BASE RUNNING

1. Running to First
 - a. Teach players how to overrun first base. Use base coach. Players run from home to first with base coach verbally telling them to overrun bag
 - b. Same as above with the exception, player to round the bag
2. Running First to Third
 - a. Player runs from first to third. Pick up third base coach 15 feet before reaching second base. These first two drills can be combined.
3. Sliding
 - a. Teach players to slide feet first. After completion of slide into second, player quickly picks up third base coach. Advance notice required to ensure players wear pants to practice
4. Stop Lead Runner
 - a. When playing stop lead runner rules, teach aggressiveness on bases. Reminder to coaches, a base running error on a player is always the coaches' fault. Don't make it a player confidence issue

DEFENSE

1. Covering Bases – Force Out
 - a. First base - demonstrate proper technique on covering first base for a force out
 - b. Shortstop - Second Base and its Rotation
 - i. Covering Second – ball hit to left side, second baseman covers. Ball hit to right side, short stop covers
 - c. Third base - demonstrate proper technique on covering third base for a force out
2. Covering Bases – Tag Out
 - a. Demonstrate covering bases by tagging sliding runners at bases. Two players 30 feet apart, catch baseball and apply tag on ground
3. Cutoffs & Relays
 - a. Standard outfield cutoff relay drill
 - b. Demonstrate second - short stop cutoff rotation
4. Outfield
 - a. Crossfire drill with outfielders and cutoff man. Line in right field and left field. Cutoff man at second base and shortstop positions.
 - b. Stress fundamentals of first step back on a fly ball and staying in front of a bouncing ball
 - c. Gap Control
 - i. Demonstrate outfield backing up bases for overthrows
 - ii. Demonstrate the technique of using angles to cut ball down in gaps

5. Infield

- a. Stress importance of getting the lead force out on ground balls in the infield
- b. Work on middle infield double play turns
- c. Standard three line three position double play drill with batted ball
 - i. Teach how to finish a rundown
 - ii. Pickle Drill – place infield in position and hang up a runner

BATTING / HITTING

1. Hitting

- a. Early on, focus on eye on the ball, hand position, still head, shoulders, and grip
- b. Start principles of Load, Stride, and Drive technique
 - i. Loading
 - ii. Perfect pivot
 - iii. Straight jacket
 - iv. Wall drill
 - v. Tee
 - vi. Soft toss
 - vii. Live batting practice
- c. After principles of Load, Stride and Drive are instilled, batting practice will consist of the following. Do them in order
 - i. Wall drill – to reinforce proper weight distribution and lockout
 - ii. Tee – head and hand position
 - iii. Soft toss – slow and steady, for technique
 - iv. Live batting practice