

Mount Paran North Sports Ministry



Coach Information Package

*“Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
and your plans will succeed”*

Proverbs 16:3

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Mission Statement / Statement of Faith / Code of Conduct

Mission Statement

Mount Paran North Sports Ministry has a simple mission – we use sports to introduce families to Jesus Christ while providing a place for families to get connected and grow in Christ. We believe the most effective way to reach out to families who don't know Jesus is through sports. We offer sports for children and adults.

Play to Win, Honor God

Maybe playing to win *and* honoring God sounds like a contradiction, but at Mount Paran Sports Ministry we believe that competing to win is the ultimate goal of any game. What is this important? It is *how* we go about winning. In our programs we play hard and play to win, but we do it in a way that honors the game and our Lord. How we go about winning applies to players, coaches, officials and parents. We like to call it “Competition without Compromise.”

In the book of Mark, Jesus was asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself.” *Mark 12: 30-31*. We show our love and honor for God by praying and giving thanks for the privilege of being able to play the game. We also honor Him by following His command to love one another as ourselves. We show love for one another by respecting each other and by thinking of others before ourselves. This includes playing by the rules of the game, respecting our opponents, officials, teammates and parents. We teach life lessons through sports.

Play to Win, Honor God “Competition without Compromise” a concept that works in sports, and one that each player can use as a foundation for living a godly life.

Statement of Faith We Believe:

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation of men and the Divine final authority for Christian faith and life.
2. In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, he arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.
4. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
5. That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore, lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
6. That the shed blood of Jesus and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and, thus, become children of God.
7. In the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to Judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

Code of Conduct (The 10 Commandments)

- We will conduct weekly devotions and pray before and after games/practices. This is a ministry first. Nothing beyond the ministry matters without this.
- We will not sacrifice our attitude or testimony for the sake of competition, in order to win, or to make our point.
- We will emphasize respect for the game, umpires, coaches, teammates, and opponents.
- We will emphasize the teaching of baseball fundamentals.
- We will encourage the players (even opponents). We won't engage in "negative" cheering.
- We will treat others, as we would like to be treated.
- We will follow the scriptural guidelines in Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-16 in solving problems between one another.
- We will not use inappropriate language.
- We will be on time for games and practices.
- We will have prayer before and after each game, demonstrate good sportsmanship, and encourage the players spiritually.
- We will not publicly argue calls with the umpire, addressing them with civility and calm. We will keep our emotions in check, understanding that any call will not harm, but give a chance for, spiritual development.

Expectation and Responsibilities of Coaches

The main responsibility of a coach is to present a Christ-like attitude to the parents and players while teaching the game of baseball. The goal of a coach should always be to keep Christ first, teach at every skill level, allow the kids to have fun and to make sure a devotion is done by either you or someone appointed to lead a devotion at each practice.

What it takes to be a Coach, from Coach Gordie Gillespie - Ripon College:

You have to Love Kids: This has to be number one: you have to like being with kids. Your primary reason for coaching should be to mentor young people and to train them in Godly character. **Sure, everybody likes to win, but if winning is the only thing that counts, you'll never get that deep feeling of pride and satisfaction that comes from watching your kids succeed at life.** You have to be in coaching for the right reasons.

Organization: A favorite expression of many people in all walks of life is: "I have got to get organized." You won't accomplish half of what you set out to do without a concrete, workable plan. Coming to practice and games with a well lay out plan will allow you to accomplish much more. Kids will have more fun and will learn more if a coach and the assistants have a 'game plan'.

Enthusiasm: Enthusiasm is a must in coaching baseball. It is such a fantastic game to each and every one of us. The thought of working with "your kids" should truly motivate you and get you excited about what they are doing. Going back to the first premise of being a good coach, caring and liking kids, it would be a complete contradiction if you were not enthusiastic about teaching them.

Patience: The gift of patience - what a virtue! One of the greatest joys of coaching is to see the least talented suddenly blossom, and all because you never gave up on him or her.

Persistence: Patience and persistence are certainly a marriage. It is difficult to differentiate between these two virtues, and they truly go hand in hand in the coaching profession. You must persist, and you must teach your kids to persist. Each of us fails. It is what we do after we fail that is important. The beautiful aspect about defeat is that it is a powerful learning experience.

Sincerity and Concern: We get back to a coach's most important virtue - caring. You must be sincerely concerned about your athletes first as human beings and secondly about their physical abilities. If it's vice-versa, it won't work and resentment will be the end product of your relationship. Being truly concerned, to listen as well as teach, is not an easy virtue to acquire.

Being Fair: Being fair goes along with sincerity and concern. Everyone wants a fair chance to show what he or she can do. They want the opportunity! This is not the majors - give them a chance. Make practices an opportunity for the less experienced to practice and train at a position they really want to try in a game. Let us remember that this is youth baseball and each child should be allowed to contribute.

Respect Authority: In dealing with umpires, referees and those that govern the game, respect their authority. The important idea here is that you must support your officials rather than tearing them down or ridiculing them or pointing out that you think they made the wrong call or is not calling a 'good' strike zone.

The general responsibilities of a coach are:

- Maintain a Christ-like attitude in all situations
- Show respect at all times – other coaches, other parents, umpires
- Come to all meetings that the Mount Paran Sports Department and Commissioner requests (usually not more than two a season).
- Attend the coach's clinics once a year.
- Participate in the skills evaluation, spring training, and player draft. Coaches should help insure that draft procedures are followed and all teams are as even as possible. The purpose of the Draft is to create equal and competitive teams. Each and every coach should be focused on making the teams fair and equitable.
- Run a *fun and organized* practice.
- Set rules to minimize injuries. Report all significant injuries to Commissioner of the league.
- Direct questions, suggestions, and concerns to commissioner first. If needed, follow-up by contacting the Sports Department at 678-285-3244.
- Utilize parents whenever possible. Parents usually are glad to help as much as they can. Use them during practices, games, and if you are out of town.
- Contact commissioner with final scores in a timely manner (within a day).
- A) To make sure bases are put up after final game and base plugs are put in place. If you are the first team to practice put bases out. If you are the last team to practice put bases up and put base plugs in base anchors. B) Sweep dirt back from the grass into pitcher mound and home base area after last game.
- Find a Team coordinator. **PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO BE THE COACH AND THE TEAM MOM – IT DOES NOT WORK!**
- Selecting in-park all-stars from your team using the guidelines given to you by commissioner.
- Participate in the try-outs for the Pony Tournament Team. The commissioner will organize this and will need help in running it.
- Receive bag of baseball equipment and balls prior to first practice. It is your responsibility to make sure everything is accounted for. Sign check-off sheet.
- Turn in equipment bag immediately after last game of the season to the commissioner or the Sports Department.

Expectation and Responsibilities of Team Coordinator

The team coordinator is a vital part of the team. He/she is the communication between the coach and the parents. He/she enables the coach to concentrate on only on coaching and teaching the players.

The expected behavior of the team coordinator is:

- Maintain a Christ-like attitude in all situations.
- Show respect at all times – other coaches, other parents, umpires
- Use encouraging words and cheering.
- NEVER think about wins and losses, and ALWAYS think about encouraging both teams AND showing a Christ-like attitude.
- Have an attitude for cheering all players, not just your own.
- Above all, show love and respect to all individuals that participate in our league (even those that persecute you!).
- Do not use your title to gain an edge during the games.

The responsibilities of the team coordinator are:

- Attend the team coordinator meeting.
- Assign parents the jobs for each game, which help run the game and maintain the parks appearance. Give to each parent a schedule that they can easily follow for their job assignments.
- Inform all parents of their picture date and time, and any schedule changes that may occur.
- Any communication needed from the coach.

Expectation and Responsibilities of Parents and Fans

- The parents/fans of our league have an awesome responsibility of making sure that our league maintains the Christian atmosphere. It is the actions of the fans that usually set the tone for the team. To insure a successful season, the parents/fans should observe the following guidelines:
- Always use encouraging words to players, coaches, and umpires.
- Never argue or yell at a player, coach, or umpire. Problems should be addressed privately to the person involved (problems with the umpire should only be addressed to the league commissioner).
- Fans should not only think of their team, but should encourage players on the opposing team.
- Follow all park rules and fulfill all your obligations.

General Procedures, Guidelines, and Rules

Skills Test and Draft

Players are to be tested as they come to the park. Coaches should rank the players in the following categories, fielding, throwing, hitting, and running. The ranking is 3 (the best) to 2 (average) to 1 (beginner). Ranking of 1.5 and 2.5 are used. During the draft the coaches will come to an overall ranking for each player. (*Note:* If there are teams who are going to have more players than other teams coaches need to select a number of average players equal to the number of teams with one more player to be drafted by those team at the end of the draft. *Or* these teams can pick the extra players after the sixth round.) The draft order is then chosen. The draft is then commenced. **The objective of the draft is to field equal teams.** Odd rounds (1, 3, 5, etc.) of the draft starts with team 1 and proceeds to the last team. Even rounds (2, 4, 6, etc.) begin with the last team and proceeds backwards to team 1. The coach must select their own child first when all the higher ranked-players have been picked. If the coaches' child is ranked a 3, he is the coaches 1st pick.

Regular Season vs. Tournament:

During the regular season each coach should focus on teaching each and every child and giving everyone a chance to play and have fun. Every team will participate in the tournament. The tournament will be double elimination. During the tournament coaches are encouraged to keep winning in perspective but can establish their own lineups with out regard to rotation of players to positions. Every player still must play the minimum number of defensive innings and continuous batting will remain the rule.

Practices

Overview: Practices should be taught so that players are learning and having fun at the same time. There are two areas of teaching: the fundamental skills and the knowledge of the game. The fundamentals are best taught in small groups with repetition and constant feedback. Teach each area of the game and try not to concentrate only on the best players. You should use the skilled players to show other players how to run drills. If you have weak players who won't be seeing time at shortstop during games, allow them to experience and learn the position in practice. Allow the better players to experience and learn outfield positions as well. The kids are too young to be locked into a certain position. Try your best to teach them everything you possibly can.

Coaches can find several drills in the appendix to this coach's manual. It is the coach's responsibility to prepare a schedule for each practice and communicate the schedule to the assistant coaches and parents in advance of the practice. This communication will facilitate 1) communication with parents and 2) enable parents to more easily step up to assist during practice.

Coaches should really focus on involving as many parents as possible during practices. Practices should consist of three basic parts:

- 1) Initial warm-up and running drills: It is generally best to start the practice with a quick warm-up and then focus on running drills or relay races. This helps to work out "extra" energy kids have built up all day long and helps with concentration during specific drills.
- 2) Stations: Coaches should be prepared to have multiple drill stations going at the same time. With the help of several team parents three or more stations are very feasible. Try to focus on infield and outfield equally. These stations should focus on skills and not situations. This is a great opportunity to work on batting skills as well as fielding skills.
- 3) Game Situations: Last portion of practice should consist of working on game situations.
- 4) Devotions are not mandatory, but this is what makes us different from other parks. Please try to do at least five minute devotion with your team before or at the end of each practice.

Other Rules:

- Stay after practice until all your players are picked up or otherwise taken care of.
- All practices and field use are to be scheduled through the Sports Department. No Exceptions.
- Bases should be put away at the end of each practice and plugs put in anchors. This helps prevent people from other parks using the fields without permission.
- All coaches and assistants must fill out a background check
- No Coach can be alone with any child except his own.

Injuries:

Make sure you are not the only adult. If serious injury occurs, there needs to be another adult available to care for the rest of the team. Report all serious injuries to the league commissioner and the Sports Department as soon as possible. There should be a First Aid Kit on every field or in storage where the bases are kept.

Batting Cage Guidelines:

- Cage usage is only allowed when approved by the Sports Department. Each team will be assigned times in the cages for the season. For access please contact Chris Bryant at 678-285-3244 during the hours of 10-4 pm M-F.
- Metal cleats are not permitted.
- Only use the cage(s) assigned.
- Soft toss is allowed on designated (left side of cages) soft toss areas. **No soft toss** against any fence.
- Always lock the cage gate when you leave. Repeated failure in doing so may prevent usage of cages.

Rain:

In the event of rain call the rainout number (**770-578-4804**) for an update (it should be updated two hours before game time), or you can check on our website www.mpnsports.com, facebook or twitter. You can become instant friends of Mount Paran Sports by signing up for both, contact Sports Department for more info. Always check one of the three main options for rain out information. **Coaches cannot** call off games or practices due to rain; only the umpire and the sports department have that authority.

Parking:

Please park in designated areas only, please do not drive on gravel paths. This is for the Sports department only. Thank you.

Field Preparation:

- Home team is responsible for raking the field after each game.
- Visitors are responsible for keeping score, taking up bases and putting base plugs in anchors.
- Rake the mound, fill in the holes, and pack the dirt. Broom extra dirt off the grass.
- Rake home plate area, fill in the holes, and pack the dirt. Broom extra dirt off the grass. Get rids of rocks were sliding occurs.
- Always be sure to put everything away and lock up.

Warm-ups:

Home team gets five minutes and visiting team gets five minutes.

Equipment:

No metal cleats except for Pony and Colt leagues, and are never allowed in the batting cages. Catchers need to wear full gear as well as an athletic cup. A cup is encouraged for all boys to wear when a regular baseball is used.

At the end of the season please hand your equipment back to the commissioner or at the concession stand.

Lost and Found:

Take found items to the concession stand. They will be held there until the end of the season and then given to charity.

Officials:

The official's call is the last word. Disputes must be handled calmly and privately. Commissioners are just coaches if it is his game, he may not give a park rule clarification; official's call is final.

Lineup:

Have your lineup and rotation strategy planned ahead of the game. Coaches will be required to turn in lineup cards to the umpires prior to the start of each game.

Christian Experience

The difference between Mount Paran and the community parks should be evident. Everything we do and say should be honoring to Christ. We should unashamedly bring Christ into the discussions with the players. Coaches are role models and we should use this position to bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ and His Church.

Coaches

With Umpires:

If you have a disagreement with the umpire, you are to discuss it with them with civility and calmly. 1) Call time, 2) go out to the umpire with the other coach, and 3) discuss calmly. Making your point is secondary to the manner in which you present yourself. Remember that the kids and parents are watching. Once the discussion is finished, you must remember the umpire has the final call.

With Parents:

Please handle all communication with parents promptly. If there is any hostility, please let the commissioner know immediately. Matthew 18:15-20 in light of Matthew 5:23-24 should be followed.

With Players:

God's given you a unique role with the players you have. Please use it to bring glory to Jesus Christ. We are different from the world. Be diligent in teaching the game of Baseball, be an encouragement to your players as well as the opponents.

Parents and Fans

With Umpires:

Quite simply, if it isn't good, keep it to yourself. Remember that complaining amongst yourselves isn't helpful.

With Coaches:

Remember they are volunteering their time. Do not grumble among yourselves. If you have a problem do the coach a favor and privately discuss the matter with him. Again Matthew 18:15-20 in light of Matthew 5:23-24 should be followed. If your involvement will add to the overall pleasure and teaching of the players ask if you can assist.

With Players:

Cheer for your team, not against the opposing team. What has made Mt. Paran different now and in the past is the willingness of fans to appreciate the plays of the opponents.

Note: Every season half the teams lose a majority of their games. Many of those teams have had wonderful season because of the fellowship of the parents, players, and coaches. The season is not made by the number of wins but by the fellowship and attitude of all involved.

Special Teams (In-park All-stars, Traveling, Other)

The need for special teams changes from time to time. Below is the standard procedure; however, changes may happen for a variety of reasons.

In-park all-stars

Each spring the coaches will select players from their teams for the honor of playing in an In-park All-star tournament. Two teams will be selected for each league (excluding Stallion and Pony leagues) and they will play against each other in a double elimination tournament. Both teams will receive some form of prize.

There is an extra cost for this, the cost will be somewhere around \$25-\$40 dollars depending on league to cover jersey and prize.

PONY all-star teams

After the Spring Tournament, the commissioners and the Executive Committee will determine which age divisions will participate in the PONY All-star season. Coaches will be elected by the Executive Committee. Interested coaches will present their names detailing their interest, capabilities, and desire to coach to the executive committee:

Additional fees are charged for those participating. The cost is generally around \$300, but most teams raise the money for this charge.

Travel teams

Mount Paran Sports supports travel teams for the upper age groups (10 and up). The program is intended to provide higher competition and commitment level for players and parents. The program is designed to provide an advanced player more development opportunities while still remaining on a Christ-centered team. These teams will play under the FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) name and will represent Jesus Christ in more than just baseball, but also the character in which they play. They will still follow a program of devotions, prayer for both home and away games, and some form of service project. This is a great opportunity for players, coaches, and fans to let their light shine and to be a witness to others through the thrill of victories and through the agony of defeat! Baseball try-outs will be determined by coaches TBA.

Other special teams

The Board will have the decision to start other teams if we feel that it is in the best interest of the league and is needed to meet our mission statement.

Your board members for the fall 2009 – spring 2010 are:

Jerry Harris, Tony Antoniadis, Jeff Bartik, Rudi Shumpert, Tim McDaniel, David Reynolds, Shellie Reynolds, Brett Mayes, and Chris Maiocco.

Appendix A:

League Specific Rules

Stallion League - 4 year olds

Mount Paran Sports plays by MLB rules with the following modifications:

- Let the kids play and have fun! Teach the fundamentals and watch their skills improve as they grow.
- Games and Practices are on Saturday's. First couple Saturday's will be practices then a couple games. This process will continue on throughout the season.
- There will be an official score kept for park records, however, there will be no score kept on the field. Players must still play to get outs, but runners are allowed to stay on the bases when called out. This league is designed to allow the players to have fun and learn basic fundamentals. Learning what outs really are comes in the Shetland League.
- Games must start on time and will be a minimum of 2 innings; a complete game is 2 innings with 2 at bats. Each team will bat a minimum of 2 times and play defense a minimum of 2 times. Games start and end with prayer.
- Games are 45 minutes long. No inning can start after 45 minutes.
- The **home** team sits on the first base side and provides the umpire. The **visiting** team sits on the third base side and provides the scorekeeper.
- Each batter hits off the tee (No strike outs).
- A team must have 5 to play and all players should play all innings.
- Players must play their positions, 5 infielders maximum, the rest of the team spread out in the outfield. There is no catcher in this league due to the safety of the players from thrown bats. Coaches must rotate their players to allow all players to play at least one infield position per game. Please do not rotate players to give yourself a defensive advantage during an inning.
- No stealing, no playing off, and no bunting: ball must go past the 10' grass line to be in play.
- **If the ball is thrown to 1st base, the runner cannot advance on an over throw. Other runners can not advance more than the next base on over throws to 1st base.**
- The pitcher must have 1 foot inside the circle to the right or left of the pitcher rubber.
- Pitcher must throw the ball to a base (can not run down runners to tag out) unless the ball is hit toward the 1st base line which carries the defensive player toward the runner then and only then the pitcher can tag out the runner.
- The play is dead when the ball is returned to the infield.
- Coaches can direct players.
- The coach of the batting team is responsible for keeping the game moving with no long conversations.
- Home team rakes the field after each game.
- Visitor cleans dugouts, puts bases in storage and puts plugs in anchors after final game.

Shetland League 5-6 year olds

Mount Paran Sports plays by MLB rules with the following modifications:

- Let the kids play and have fun! Teach the fundamentals and watch their skills improve as they grow.
- Games must start on time and will be a minimum of 3 innings; a complete game is 4 innings. Games start and end with prayer.
- Games are an hour long. No inning can start after an hour. If inning is started and game is on the line, you must finish the inning. If game is not on the line inning can be stopped before completion after 55 minutes of play.
- The **home** team sits on the first base side and provides the umpire.
- The **visiting** team sits on the third base side and provides the scorekeeper.
- There will be three outs per inning or 5 runs scored.
- Each batter can receive 3 pitches, and then tee it up (No strike outs). Coach pitching should take 3 balls in glove to begin pitching to speed up game flow. Only retrieve missed balls between batters, also if the coach is using a knee pad/towel/etc to kneel on it has to be removed when the coach stands/the ball is teed up.
- A team must have 6 players to play and all players should play all innings.
- Players must play their true positions, 6 infielders maximum, the rest of the team spread out in the outfield. The catcher must be filled and backed up by an adult. Coaches must rotate their players to allow all players to play at least one infield position per game. Everyone plays outfield & infield at some point during the game; this does not include the catcher's position. No player can play more than one inning in the same position. No player should play in front of second just behind the pitcher. Do not rotate players to give yourself a defensive advantage during an inning.
- No stealing, no playing off, and no bunting: ball must go past the 10' grass line to be in play.
- Players must throw the ball to the catcher at home plate in order to receive an out. Players can not simply run and tag home plate.
- **If the ball is thrown to 1st base, the runner cannot advance on an over throw. If the ball is overthrown at any base, no runner can advance. If ball passes outfielder, base runners can only advance two bases max.**
- The pitcher must have 1 foot inside the circle to the right or left of the pitcher rubber.
- Pitcher must throw the ball to a base (can not run down runners to tag out). **The only exception is when a batted ball takes the fielder towards 1st base and at that point, a pitcher is allowed to tag the runner out running to first but cannot simply step on first base.**
- Players must throw the ball to 1st base. Players can not roll ball intentionally to 1st base to receive an out.
- The play is dead when the ball is returned to the infield.
- Teams can place 3 defensive coaches on the field maximum.
- Coaches cannot touch players.
- The coach of the batting team is responsible for keeping the game moving with no long conversations.
- Home team rakes the field after each game.
- Visitor cleans dugouts, puts bases in storage and puts plugs in anchors after final game.
- In the event of a tie the team with the most outs wins. No extra innings

Pinto League 7-8 year olds (coach pitch)

Mount Paran Sports plays by MLB rules with the following modifications:

- Let the kids play and have fun! Teach the fundamentals and watch their skills improve with age.
- Games must start on time and will be a minimum of 3 innings, complete game is 6 innings. Games start and stop with prayer. **Start time is checked and written into home team scorebook.**
- Games are an hour and 15 minutes long. No inning can start after an hour and 15 minutes. If inning is started and game is on the line, you must finish the inning. If game is not on the line inning can be stopped before completion after an hour and 20 minutes.
- The home team sits on the first base side and keeps the official scorebook.
- The visiting team sits on the 3 base side and provides the scorekeeper.
- There will be 3 outs per inning or 5 runs scored (no open inning).
- Each batter will receive the normal 3 strikes with 7 total pitches. A foul on pitch #7 gets another pitch. (1 extra pitch fair or foul). Batter is out if final pitch is fouled.
- Bats can not exceed 2 1/4" barrel diameter - ***Please make sure parents know this so they don't buy an expensive, illegal bat.***
- We will use continuous batting.
- A team must have 7 players to play and all players should play all innings. Every player plays in the field every inning, no player sits. A player can only play a position 3 innings total throughout the game & this can not be 3 innings in a row.
- Players must play their positions, 6 infielders maximum, the rest of the team spread out in the outfield. Coaches should rotate their players to allow all players to play at least two infield position per game. Only one of the two innings can be at catcher. Also, those two innings must be **prior to the start of the 6th inning.** (The 6th inning is often never played.) **This means by the end of the fifth inning everyone should have played in the infield twice.** Do not rotate players to give yourself a defensive advantage during on inning.
- Every player must play in the outfield one inning (**before the 6th inning**)
- Play is stopped when all runners have stopped advancing (or when play stops).
- All catchers must wear a protective cup when behind the plate.
- No stealing, no leading off, and no bunting.
- On an over throw to first base, runner may advance just 1 base. Over throws to 2nd and 3rd. runner may advance until play is stopped.
- After an overthrow to 1B, if a defensive player retrieves the ball and throws it to attempt to get someone out, the play is live again and the runners can advance until stopped.
- The coach of the batting team is responsible for keeping the game moving with no long conversations.
- For time keeping purposes, the next inning begins as soon as the 3rd out is recorded in the bottom of the previous inning.
- The pitcher must have one foot in the pitcher's circle, to the right or left of the pitching rubber.
- All normal and accepted rules not mentioned above will apply.
- Coaches are not allowed to touch players. No coaches on the field during play (a coach behind the catcher if necessary to keep the game moving).
- Home team rakes field after final game
- Visitor cleans dugouts, puts bases in storage and puts plugs in anchors after final game.
- **The umpire has the final word.**

Mustang League 9-10 year olds (player pitch)

Mount Paran Sports plays by MLB rules with the following modifications:

- Let the kids play and have fun! Teach the fundamentals and watch their skills improve with age.
- Games must start on time and be a minimum of 4 innings (3 1/2 if home team is leading). A complete game is 6 innings.
- Games are an hour and 40 minutes long. No inning can start after an hour and 40 minutes. If inning is started and game is on the line, you must finish the inning. If game is not on the line, the inning can be stopped before completion after an hour and 50 minutes. **Start time is checked and written into home team scorebook.** An inning officially starts when the final out of the previous inning is made.
- Home team sits on the 1st base side and keeps the "Official" score book,
- Visitor's team sits on the 3rd base side and supplies the scorekeeper.
- Both sides are required to keep score.
- Both sides will clean up the dug out area after the game.
- There is a 4 run rule with no open inning.
- A team must have 8 players to play with a maximum of 9 on the field. Continuous batting for all players. If a player has to leave a game due to other than illness or injury, etc., then an out will be assessed to that team each time that players spot the batting order comes up during the remainder of the game.
- All players must sit out before a child sits out more than once.
- All players must play the infield at least 1 inning per game.
- Leading off, pick off moves are allowed. (Leads will be limited to 5 feet from the bag, to be determined by the umpire's discretion. A warning will be issued the first time for excessive leading and thereafter a runner attempting to steal will be sent back to the base where he started.)
- Stealing is permitted only after the ball has reached the catcher.
- No running on dropped 3rd strikes.
- Runners who leave early will be returned to the base or allowed to advance only 1 base ahead of the hitter.
- Pitching rules: Pitcher can throw only 2 innings per game, 6 innings per week and balks are not called. One pitch shall be considered 1 inning pitched. A pitcher removed from the mound cannot pitch again in the same game. Pitchers are allowed 4 warm up pitches between innings and 8 warm up pitches when entering a game.
- The pitcher makes appeals after calling time out and alerting the umpire of the infraction.
- Coaches must run their kids on and off the field to get in as many innings as possible.
- Only one offensive time out is allowed in each inning to allow a coach to talk with a batter.
- Only one trip to the pitcher is allowed per inning. The second trip must only be for replacement of pitcher.
- No slide rule. Runners are not required to slide. However, if a runner elects to slide, it must be a legal slide as defined by NFHS rules. All players are required to avoid collisions with another player while running the bases. A legal slide will be judged as an attempt to avoid a collision. If the umpire's opinion is the runner does not make the effort to avoid a collision, he is declared out. If the act is deemed by the umpire to be malicious, the runner will be ejected from the game.
- Any disagreement on the field should be discussed quietly between the 2 head coaches and the umpire(s) resulting in a fair and equitable solution. **The Umpire has final word.**
- Home team rakes field after final game.
- Visitor cleans dugouts, puts bases in storage and puts plugs in anchors after final game

For National League level or pitching poor leagues, it is recommended that the first half of the season is played under the following “Modified Kid Pitch” rules. These rules are intended to allow various players to try pitching without the concern of walking batters. It builds confidence in the kid pitchers as well as the kid batter who might get to receive some “friendly” pitches from his/her coach.

Modified Kid Pitch

- No walks will be issued. If a kid pitcher reaches a 3 ball count, the coach from the batting team will pitch the remainder of the strike count. (Example: If the count is 3-1, the coach can pitch up to 2 more pitches to his own player.)
- While the coach is pitching, no leadoffs, steals, passed balls, or wild pitches are allowed.
- While the coach is pitching, the kid pitcher remains on the field as a fielding only player.
- No runners can score on a stolen base, wild pitch, or passed ball. Runners must score on a batted ball.

Bronco League 11-12 year olds

Mount Paran Sports plays by MLB rules with the following modifications:

- Let the kids play and have fun! Teach the fundamentals and watch their skills improve with age.
- Games must start on time and be a minimum of 4 innings (3 1/2 if home team is leading). A complete game is 6 innings.
- Games are an hour and 40 minutes long. No inning can start after an hour and 40 minutes. If inning is started and game is on the line, you must finish the inning. If game is not on the line, the inning can be stopped before completion after an hour and 50 minutes. Start time is checked and written into home team scorebook.
- Both sides are required to keep score. Home team sits on the 1st base side and keeps the "Official" scorebook. Visitors' team sits on the 3rd base side and supplies the scorekeeper.
- Both sides will clean up the dug out area after the game.
- There is a 5 run rule with no open inning.
- A team must have 8 players to play with a maximum of 9 on the field. Continuous batting for all players and free substitutions at any time are allowed. If a player has to leave a game due to other than illness or injury, etc., then an out will be assessed to that team each time that players spot the batting order comes up during the remainder of the game.
- Bat drop is 8
- All players must play half of all defensive innings for a 3 game period and play at least 2 complete games per season.
- Leading off, pick off moves and running on a dropped 3rd strike is allowed.
- Pitching Rules: Pitcher can throw only 3 innings per game, 6 innings per week. One pitch shall be considered 1 inning pitched. A pitcher removed from the mound cannot pitch again the same game. Pitchers are allowed 8 warm up pitches between innings and 10 warm up pitches when entering a game. Obvious balks will be called after being warned once by the umpire with no penalty assessed.
- The pitcher makes appeals after calling time out and alerting the umpire of the infraction.
- Coaches must run their kids on and off the field to get in as many innings as possible.
- Only one offensive time out is allowed in each inning to allow a coach to talk with a batter.
- Only one trip to the pitcher is allowed per inning. The second trip in an inning must be for replacement.
- No slide rule. Runners must slide to avoid collisions. Runners are not required to slide. However, if a runner elects to slide, it must be a legal slide as defined by NFHS rules. All players are required to avoid collisions with another player while running the bases. A legal slide will be judged as an attempt to avoid a collision. If the umpire's opinion is the runner does not make the effort to avoid a collision, he is declared out. If the act is deemed by the umpire to be malicious, the runner will be ejected from the game.
- Must attend interlocking meeting if league participates.
- Any disagreement on the field should be discussed quietly between the 2 head coaches and umpire resulting in a fair and equitable solution. **Umpires have the final word.**
- Home team rakes fields after final game
- Visitor cleans dugouts, puts bases in storage and puts plugs in anchors after final game.

Pony and Colt Leagues 13-14 & 15-18

Mount Paran Sports plays by MLB rules with the following modifications:

- We follow the rules found in the Official Pony Rulebook & NFHS (National Federation of High School Associations/GHSA).
- Must attend interlocking meeting if league participates.
- Games are two hours long. No inning can start after 2 hours. If inning is started and game is on the line, you must finish the inning. If game is not on the line, inning can be stopped before completion after 1 hour and 20 minutes.
- Home team sits on first base side and keeps official scorebook.
- Visiting team sits on the 3rd base side and provides scorekeeper (unless interlocking – then home team does both).
- Pony bat drop is 5
- Colt bat drop is 3
- 3 outs per inning – 15 runs per inning for Pony League. No runs max for colt.
- Mercy Rule is 10 runs after the 4th inning & 8 runs after the 5th inning for Pony League
- Metal cleats are allowed in both leagues
- Pony pitchers can only pitch 3 inning max per game.
- No slide rule. Runners are not required to slide. However, if a runner elects to slide, it must be a legal slide as defined by NFHS rules. All players are required to avoid collisions with another player while running the bases. A legal slide will be judged as an attempt to avoid a collision. If the umpire's opinion is the runner does not make the effort to avoid a collision, he is declared out. If the act is deemed by the umpire to be malicious, the runner will be ejected from the game.
- Home team rakes field after final game, takes up bases and puts plugs in base anchors.

Tie Breaker Rules (All Leagues)

- Head to Head record
- Total Runs Scored
- Run Differential
- Flip of a coin

Player Participation Rules (All Leagues)

- There must be 8 players to start the game in all leagues.
- All players will bat in continuous batting order and free substitution with each player playing defensively at least every other inning.
- Pitchers adhere to league rules (Mustang – Colt)
- All players should be present at the game prior to first pitch. Coach must turn in official line-up card to the umpire. If player arrives after first pitch, he/she can be added upon their arrival at the end of the line-up card. Under no circumstance should a player be on the line-up card when they are not present.
- If a player is injured (or becomes seriously ill) during the game and can not return to the field of play, that player will be skipped in the line-up without penalty to the team. The injured or ill player can return to his original field position and batting position. If a player leaves the game before the last official out for any other reason, the team will take an out when the player's turn at bat comes up. If a player for any reason (injury/ill/other) and the team drops below 8 players, the game will be a forfeit.
- No player can participate if they are wearing a cast.
- If a player misses 2 consecutive practices (excluding illness or excused absences) where no contact has been made to the head coach, the player does not have to play the minimum playing time for the next scheduled game. If a player misses 2 consecutive practices and 1 official game with no contact to the head coach, the situation should be reviewed by the League Commissioner and Executive Board for resolution.
- If a player demonstrates actions which are detrimental and abusive to the league, including the use of foul language, inappropriate conduct, or any action found to be non-compliant with the Mount Paran North Baseball Code of Conduct, the player will be asked to immediately leave the field and park. The league commissioner will work in concert with the executive board to find a resolution and render a decision on the player's future with Mount Paran North Baseball.

Appendix B:

Baseball Drills:

Developing Outfielders: Principles & Drills

Quarterback Drill

Outfielder is 10 feet away from the coach with both feet pointing toward the coach. The coach uses the words “drop step and go” and points in the direction to where he wants his player to drop step and go. As soon as the outfielder hears the coach’s command the player uses the drop step and cross over in order to turn his body and sprint in the direction to where the coach has pointed. If the coach points to the players right – the player will drop step with his right foot and cross over with his left. If the coach points to the players left – the outfielder will drop step with his left and cross over with his right.

Once the player has sprinted approximately 20-40 yards (depending on skill and age) the coach will throw a high fly ball, and the outfielder that is sprinting must try to get under the ball in order to make the catch on the run. Once players get comfortable with the drill and make several catches you can increase the difficulty by throwing the ball further in order to make outfielders run harder and possibly make a diving catch.

To make the drill easier and work the players harder, have each player line up with a ball in their glove. When it is their turn they will toss you the ball and wait for your command. Once they have caught the ball they will jog back to the line up with the ball in their glove.

Tennis Racquet Fly Balls

Using a tennis racquet and tennis balls, hit fly balls to your outfielders but add a communication element to the drill. Have half of your outfielders line up in center and the other half in right (or left field). Hit tennis balls with the racquet in places where the two outfielders will have to communicate in order to catch the ball. Hit balls that are over their shoulder and in front of them. This drill also works well if you add your middle infield and work on communication with the outfielders and infielders on fly balls that are hit softly between the outfield and infield.

Fly Ball Principles

- Never "back peddle" to catch a ball that is hit over your shoulder. Always use the drop step and run!
- Once the fly ball is descending the ball must be called by one of the defensive players.
- On balls that are hit softly between the outfield and infield, the outfield has priority. Therefore the infield should go after the ball and try to make the catch until the outfielder calls the infielder off. This method will avoid the ugly collision between the outfield and infield.
- The outfielder always has priority over the infielder on fly balls.

Run to the Ball Race

You have teams of two, everyone wears a glove. One player from each team stays at the starting line. There are two balls on the ground, 30 and 60 feet away from each runner (Or whatever distance is appropriate for the age group).

The object is for the runners to race to each ball, pick it up with the throwing hand, turn, and make a clean throw, and then race back to the starting line. If the throw is not complete, the partner throws the ball back and they try again.

In order to win the race, the runner must make two clean throws to his partner, which must be caught, of course. The idea is to balance speed and control in a pressure situation.

Gap communication drill.

This requires more than one player. Two or more players are separated in the outfield and a fly ball is hit between them. The players are to then communicate and use rules of fly ball priorities to make the catch. The player that is "called off" the fly ball is then responsible for backing up the play and telling the outfielder with the ball where to direct the throw.

Fence or wall balls.

Players stand near a fence or outfield wall. Balls are then hit over their heads. The outfielder must read the flight of the ball to determine the best course of action. Is the ball to be caught, or played off the fence? This drill may be done in conjunction with the gap communication drill to involve more than one player.

Sacrifice fly situations.

The player must work on footwork, form, and momentum to correctly catch and throw a ball with a little wasted time as possible.

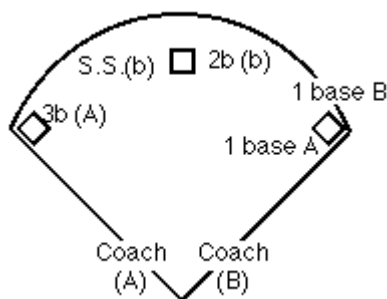
Overall situations.

The player assumes his correct defensive position, whatever that may be. The situation of a hypothetical game is then said allowed. (i.e. The number of outs and where the base runners are.) The coach will then deliver a fly or ground ball and the player must make the correct decision as to what to do with the ball. There are different answers for different game situations.

Infielder Drills

Infielders take up their positions, including a pitcher and catcher. A coach acts as the batter, and the pitcher makes a delivery to the catcher. The coach has a ball in his hand, and after the pitch reaches the plate, he tosses the ball where he wants it to go. This is far superior to having a batter attempt to place the ball by actually hitting it.

Set up particular situations, and have the outfielders and other pitchers act as base runners. Coach hits fungos to each player and in each situation (example: no out, runner on first)



Great Pregame Warm Up Ritual Set up infield with extra players lining up behind the positions and rotating in. Two first basemen line up at first base, one on the outfield side of the bag and one on the infield side. Two coaches at home plate. One coach fungos to the third baseman who fields and throws to the first baseman lined up on the infield side of first base. The other coach fungos to second and shortstop who make double plays - second to first - to the first baseman on the outfield side of the bag. The drill moves quickly and gives the players many opportunities. If they miff a play, they'll get another chance very quickly. It helps a lot if you have many balls. The first basemen can drop the balls in a bucket behind them and get ready for the next throw, or throw to a catcher or two beside the coaches.

1-2-3 Throw

Here's a nice simple infield drill (simple if the boys can count to three). This drill covers all of the throws an infielder will make, and it is so quick paced that the players enjoy it. Position a player at each base and home, give the catcher the ball. The players make three throws around the horn, then on the third catch, that player throws across the diamond to the player diagonally across to him. After four repetitions of this, the players run to the next base and start again.

Here's how it works: C-3b-2b-1b-across to 3b; 3b-2b-1b-c-across to 2b; 2b-1b-c-3b-across to 1b; 1b-c-3b-2b-across to c who makes a sweep tag. Players then run to the next base: c-3b, 3b-2b, 2b-1b, 1b-c. Repeat this four times until the original catcher is back at home plate. Whenever a player throws to the wrong person, stop and give the ball back to him so he can get it to the correct boy. You will be amazed at how often the players will forget to throw across after the third throw. Keep working with them and it will begin to run smoothly. Once your fielders are comfortable with this drill, it makes for a nice pre-game drill. It is just sweet enough to impress your opponent!!

Emphasis good, accurate, properly thrown balls; proper catching technique, and quick feet.

Field and Charge Drill

The last go round of infielders drills are followed with the Field and Charge Drill. Coach hits fungo to each player in turn - P-3b-2b-1b-C. Player fields grounder hit to him and throws to first. 1st throws home. Catcher throws a grounder back to the same player who charges and fields it bare handed and throws it home. Fielder then exits the field except for 1b, who waits out the catchers turn and the pitcher, who waits for the throw from the catcher.

Double Play Drills

Turns at second base on a double play.

The 1st and 2nd baseman and the shortstop will be the only players involved with this drill. The out at second base is the first priority. The out at first base should be thought of as icing on the cake. Work on proper footwork and avoiding the sliding baserunner.

Avoid the sliding runner:

Get ahold of a 5 gallon plastic bucket. As the SS or 2B is about to release the ball to first, throw the bucket at them. If they don't get out of the way they get hit by it, but no one gets hurt. It will take a little practice to get the hang of how and when to toss it, but it will help enforce the need and technique regarding how to get up and out of the way.

Pitchers Defensive Drills

Always use soft baseballs, incrediballs, tennis balls, etc. when working line drives with pitchers.

Full follow through on the pitch will land a pitcher in athletic position. This will provide the balance to field the ball. This is essential for safety also. A pitcher who cannot field their position puts themselves in danger of injury.

- 1 - "Dry pitch" the ball (pretend to throw the ball). Follow through to athletic position. Coach tosses grounders. Start soft and center. Progress side to side and then try harder tosses. After working grounders, work soft line drives, bunts and pop ups.
- 2 - Pitch to catcher. Coach stands to the side. After pitch, coach hits fungos to pitcher with incrediballs, soft t-balls, or tennis balls.
- 3 - Practice fielding grounders and throwing to 1st, Second, Third, Home. Situational practice. This drill needs a pitcher, fielder on base and catcher. This drill can be done with "dry pitching" or pitch and coach hitting like in #2.

Batting Drills**Drill # 1 Top-Hand Drill (Hit-N-Stik Drill)**

The top hand on the grip is the hand that takes the bat to the ball. It is important to develop strength and skill with this hand. To do this we do a one-handed isolation drill. The batter uses just the top hand. Gripping the bat at the top of the grip and using the bat like a tomahawk, the batter tries to get over the top of the ball and hit it into the ground. The batter has a coach or player soft toss the ball above the waist. The batter hits the ball from the top and drives it straight into the ground. Suggested - 25 Swings - 3 Times a week.

Drill # 2 Power Hand Drill (Hit-N-Stik Drill)

A hitters power comes from the bottom or pull hand. This drill develops bottom hand strength. Have batter, using only one arm at a time, take stance, inward turn, stride and full cut at balls off of a tee. Emphasize "staying back" on the ball. Batter will need to choke up a lot, and initially need to place the unused hand under the armpit of the swinging arm for additional support. Take about 20 cuts at a time with each arm, making sure to keep the barrel higher than the hands, and follow through. At first, most players will find their top arm to be stronger; therefore, requiring more reps with the bottom arm. The objective is to reduce the gap between the ability of each arm, ideally becoming equally adept with both. (Many players suffer from a weak lead hand!) You can soft toss to older players.

Drill # 3 Multiple Location Contact Drill (Hit-N-Stik Drill)

The hitter is given three pitch locations to practice hitting; inside, away and middle. On the inside location, the batter must learn to involve the hips and turn on the pitch, pulling it. On the middle pitch the batter hits the ball dead up the middle. On the away pitch, the batter makes sure to take the ball to the opposite field. The coach may want to put spots on the ground showing where the batter attacks each pitch location. The inside pitch is attacked on a spot located in front of the plate. The middle pitch is attacked on a spot located just behind the instep of the hitters front foot. The away strike is attacked on a spot located just inside of the hitters back foot. Suggested - 20 At Each Location - 3 Times Weekly.

**Drill # 4 Colored Ball Soft Toss (need two different colored balls)**

The hitter learns to concentrate and keep the weight back. The coach tosses the two balls at different heights. The coach calls the color to hit after the balls are released. The hitter hits the called ball into the fence or screen. This

drill can be done from different locations. The coach should also fake toss and change the release points as well as vary the speed of the balls.

VARIATIONS:

- 1.) Once you've mastered the first version of this drill, try three balls. Or allow your partner to call out colors that aren't being tossed.
- 2.) You might even try to write numbers on the ball with a magic marker -- simply have your partner call out the number to hit, just like you did with colors.
- 3.) Instead of coloring the balls, simply use regular baseballs and have the tosser call out "high" or "low." By switching between the high and low ball, the hitter learns to adjust to high pitches when he was expecting a low pitch and vice versa.

Drill #5 Long Toss BP

One of the best misconceptions in baseball is that to benefit from batting practice the pitcher must be at regular distance and throw game speed. Much more can be accomplished when the pitcher throws from half the regular distance. At this distance the pitcher has better control and more work is accomplished. The ball is thrown at a steady appropriate speed. The speed at this distance should make the batter develop a quicker bat and great skill. The coach should never do this drill without a L-screen. This drill can also be performed with regular or golf-ball sized wiffles.

Drill #6 Bring-By Drill

The purpose of this drill is the increase of bat speed. The batter hits a ball that is coming from his back side going toward the pitcher. The hitter must see the ball and catch-up with it before it gets by him. The speed of the ball is increased to challenge the hitter more and more.

Drill # 7 HitNStik Closed Eye Drill (Hit-N-Stik Drill)

This is one of my favorite drills. I developed this drill in the late 80s. The hitter assumes a comfortable and correct stance each time. Then the hitter closes the eyes. The coach or stik holder will change the strike height and location each time. A verbal command is given, the hitter opens the eyes and hits the ball correctly wherever it is located. The batter must use the correct swing to hit inside, middle, and away pitches. The holder will also locate the ball out of the strikezone. Any ball above the hands or on the ground is a ball and should not be hit. Suggested - 15 Swings - 3 Times a week.

Drill # 8 Backside Barrier Drill

Method "2"



(Designed for hitters who extend their arms and hands too early in their swing {casting}, sweeping at the ball.) Have hitter take batting stance with the outside of the rear end against a fence or wall. The object is to have the hitter take a normal swing without making contact with the fence or wall. Start in slow motion, for obvious reasons. Improper swing and bat angle will provide immediate negative feedback. The key here is to keep the barrel above the rear shoulder at the proper bat angle (good launch position) and swing through the ball. If a hitter does this with hands in close to the body (inside the ball), allowing back foot to begin first, they will complete the drill properly. If hitter takes a stride, rotates back foot and hips, keeping the bat head above the hands, hands inside the ball, and opens up away from the fence, they can swing down and through the ball without hitting the fence. Full arm extension does not take place until immediately after contact.

Drill # 9 Step in Drill (Hit-N-Stik Drill)

One of the most common faults with young hitters is stepping out. This drill is used to combat that bad habit. The hitter sets up to start the drill one step behind where he should be when he hits the ball. The hitter will step toward the plate with the back foot first then the front foot. When the front foot hits the ground the batter will attack the ball. There should be no hesitation. Step, step, HIT! The hitter will develop the habit of stepping into the ball when he attacks it. His momentum is going toward the plate during this drill so it is very difficult for the hitter to step out.

Drill #10 Bunt Pepper

This is a great drill to develop bunting skills. The drill involves 5 players in each group. The players may use the pivot or square around bunt technique. The batter must bunt the ball to each of the four fielders. The hitter bunts one to each and then takes the left fielders (facing the batter) place. The right fielder comes to bat and the other move over one place. The coach should emphasize that the batters bunt the ball softly to the fielders. The bat should be kept at a 45 degree angle and the batter should change height by bending the knees. Fielders should catch the ground ball, bare-handed, out front, then square the feet around and throw the next strike to the hitter. This makes a great warmup drill for the beginning of practice. Defensive skills should also be stressed.

Drill # 11 Full Count Game

This is a great game simulation drill that teaches hitters to be aggressive and to hit under pressure. Two teams face off in a 7 inning game with each batter coming into the box with a full count. Action is quick and players must be alert both offensively and defensively. The count may also be changed to 2-2 and each team can be given one out to start the inning.

Drill #12 HitnStik Bat Speed Drill (Hit-N-Stik Drill)

The drill begins with the drill stik ball on the ground. The holder will raise the ball to the batters numbers. The batter will hit the ball when it gets to certain called spots, eg. knee, belt, numbers. The speed that the ball is raised is varied to make the batter wait sometimes and react quickly at other times. The drill is great for developing concentration, bat speed, and patience. (note-wouldn't this work better if you lowered the hit-n-stik? like a ball coming in from the pitcher from high to low?)

Drill #13 HIP TWISTS:

Hitter places bat (stick, broom handle, etc.) behind back on waistline. With hands gripping the bat from behind, get in stance. Take inward turn, stride and stop. Keeping the bat horizontal to the ground, bend your arms and keep the bat in the space between your biceps and forearms. Look out at where the pitcher would usually be and imagine him winding up and pitching. Rock back as you would in a game, step, and pivot your back foot. Then forcefully pull bat around waist, rolling up on back foot (squishing the bug) with head down, toward imaginary ball. Knees and belly button should then be facing the "pitcher." Go back to normal stance and repeat. Doing this 10-20 times a day programs young hitters to get that lower body working correctly without conscious thought (Muscle Memory).

THE RESULT: By isolating your lower body, you are allowing yourself to work only on your hips and legs. Make sure to get a good "exploding from your back leg while keeping your front leg straight. This is a very good drill to do in the on-deck circle, especially when your facing a particularly hard thrower.

VARIATIONS:

1.) Set up a tee and practice the drill while actually hitting the ball with the exposed part of the bat. You may not hit the ball at all or you may lightly tap it, but this variation makes it easier to see exactly how much the hips must rotate during a swing.

Drill #14 WIFFLE GOLF BALL SOFT TOSS:

Do this in groups of 3 or 4, with the coach soft-tossing; one player batting and the rest fielding the balls and returning them to the bucket. Have the hitter take their normal stance, inward turn, and stride, and then hit the wiffle golf balls as you toss them. You can make it more challenging by having your hitters use a 1.5 foot broom handle instead of a bat. This forces the hitter to really "SEE" the ball, by keeping their head (both eyes) down on the ball, in order to make contact. Really emphasize the "head down" aspect by making them keep their heads down, even after completion of a proper follow-through.

Drill # 15 CHAIR DRILL: (Good drill for Uppercutters.)

Place a batting tee on home plate, with a folding chair behind the tee, with the seat part closest to the tee. Make sure that the tee is just slightly lower than the back of the chair so that the hitter must swing with a slightly downward angle through the ball. If the hitter uppercuts, they will only hit the back of the chair (again, providing instant feedback). Metal chairs seem to be very effective in teaching the proper bat angle during the swing. This drill can be taught relatively easily and is excellent for developing the necessary "line drive" stroke.

Drill #16 ARM ISOLATION DRILL:

(Used to develop equal strength in both top and bottom arms.) (Hit-N-Stick drill)

Have batter, using only one arm at a time, take stance, inward turn, stride and full cut at balls off of a tee. Emphasize "staying back" on the ball. Batter will need to choke up a lot, and initially need to place the unused hand under the armpit of the swinging arm for additional support. Take about 20 cuts at a time with each arm, making sure to keep the barrel higher than the hands, and follow through. At first, most players will find their top arm to be stronger; therefore, requiring more reps with the bottom arm. The objective is to reduce the gap between the ability of each arm, ideally becoming equally adept with both. (Many players suffer from a weak lead hand!) You can soft toss to older players.

Drills For Everyone

Soft Hands

This drill is great for developing soft hands for your infielders. Get a sheet of 1/2" thick paneling or plywood. Cut out circles approximately 10" in diameter and attach a section of rope with a staple gun that is large enough for a player to slide his hand under and "hold" the wooden glove. We then place the players 20 feet away and roll them ground balls—easy throws to begin with and then progressively turn up the speed. The players must provide a cushion or the baseballs will just bounce off the wooden glove. It also forces them to place the non-catching hand on top of the ball. The players enjoy the drill because of the variety it provides and you can set up competition between your players. The drill emphasizes the use of the top hand, to ensure the ball doesn't become loose and so that the throwing hand is there to throw or flip the ball.

Alligator Drills

Toss grounder to players from 10 feet or so. Players must keep glove hand palm up and off hand palm down. Catch the ball like your hands are the alligators mouth. Do 20 or 30 repetitions then let them use a glove. Increase distance and ball speed as player improves.

Alligator Drill 2

Position player about 5 yards in front of you. Have the player in the fielding position with back flat, head looking forward, and glove down on ground. Throw the ball so that it bounces and forces the player to raise hands from ground to catch ball. Stress the importance of having glove on ground and raising hands up to ball.

3 Man Fungo Drill-benefits fielder and hitter

Drill has one fielder, who stands 40-60 feet in front of the hitter (depending on their age), and one shagger, who stands on the right side of the hitter. (Three person groups.) Drill can have as many groups as desired. The hitter hits 10 ground balls to the fielder. The fielder fields the ground balls and throws them to the shagger. After fielding 10 ground balls, the fielder becomes the shagger, the shagger becomes the hitter, and the hitter becomes the new fielder. The drill continues to proceed in this manner for as long as desired.

Situation Drill

This drill is great. It covers base running, lead offs, fielding, relay throws, pick off moves, rundowns, fly balls, even sliding if you want, etc. You can practice everything except stolen bases. You can even turn it into a competition by seeing which group scores more runs. I would let each group run for three sets of three outs. After the third out each time, remove any runners who are on base and start again.

Position your fielders, including a catcher and pitcher. Take four other boys and they are your first group of runners. A coach who has good bat control stands off to the side of the plate with a bat and ball in his hands. The four runners line up on the other side of the plate, but not so close as to get hit by an errant pitch. Make sure they don't start running until after the ball is hit, and don't let them keep inching their way up the line as they are prone to do! Base runners take their normal lead off, but cannot run until after the ball has been hit. Pitcher can try and pick them off. (some leagues do not allow lead-offs)

The pitcher makes his delivery to the plate (good pitches as this is also a pitching practice), the coach then hits a ball out of his hand, and the "batter" runs as if he has just hit the pitch. That is all there is to this drill, yet you can see how it opens up countless opportunities for practicing all, or a few select areas you want to work on. Double to the left field fence - is the shortstop lining up the throw with third, or did he just run out there and line it up with second? Did the pitcher cover a base after the hit? Did the runner round first properly? Did the infielders communicate with each other while the ball was in play? Did the throw come to the correct man or base? Did the runner know how many outs there were? Was the third baseman in the proper position to apply the tag? As I said earlier, you can work on as much or as little as you like. Have a coach at first and third to direct the runners, and the coach hitting the ball can observe the fielders.

Short Field Drill

Position bases and pitchers plate half the normal distance from home plate. Players take positions, including all outfielders, infielders, pitcher and catcher. Coach walks players through situation drills, back ups, who goes where when, etc. Have pitcher "pitch" to catcher. Coach hits fungo as practiced. Everyone moves as instructed. Fantastic drill to teach rotations, back ups, defense with runners on, etc.

PROGRESSION TEACHING - Fielding Grounders

DRILL #1 - Players paired. First Basemen down first base line with gloves. Fielders two steps behind second-third baseline and two steps to the right of the third base line without their gloves. Fielders place ball 4 to 5 feet in front of themselves. Fielders assume good infield position.

1-On signal, or individually if preferred, fielder advances toward ball aligning at ball with both hands around ball, head down looking at ball, and feet in the manner in which you have coached them. (Note: I prefer for the glove side foot to be even with the ball and the throwing side foot about 6 inches behind.)

2-On the count of two, player picks up ball, crow hops toward the first baseman and gets into a ready position to throw ball. (Glove side foot should be pointing toward first baseman, weight should be on back foot, both hands at chest.)

3-On three, if desired, throw should be made.

DRILL #2 - Start as in DRILL #1, but this time, fielder places ball to their right or left. Remainder of drill is the same as DRILL #1.

These two drills provide opportunity to measure basic fielding fundamentals and emphasize the importance of feet, body and hand position. It also provides the opportunity to check the relationship of the ball to the body when fielded.

DRILL #3 - Start as DRILL #1, except fielder keeps ball in hands. On signal fielder rolls ball forward and continues on to field ball. This is reverse motion, but is effective in teaching the fielder not to overrun ball. If fielder over runs ball, he will have to reach between his legs and will inevitably miss the ball as he tries to reach behind him. It is also imperative that the fielder catch the ball the moment he stops. Having the player stop when he catches the ball will also enable a good lesson in the importance of having good body control when stopping to field a ground ball. The remainder of the drill is done as in DRILL #1.

DRILL #4 - Start as DRILL #3, except fielder throws ball to right or left. These drills add movement and work on body control and balance.

DRILL #5 - Start as DRILL #1, except have first basemen keep ball. First baseman throws an easy grounder (Remember fielders do not have gloves.) to fielder. Fielder fields ball and throws back to first baseman.

It is imperative in these drills that attention be paid to how the fielder fields the ball with their hands. Some may be tempted to pick the ball up with one hand on each side. In doing this, they will have a hesitation in their fielding which will be noticeable. Fielders should field the ball with the glove hand coming in contact first and sort of swooping the ball up with the glove hand moving under the ball and almost pushing it into the throwing hand. This is how one fields with a glove. A fielder who waits for the ball with the glove on the ground and the hand in a 6 o'clock position will miss more balls than he catches. When fielding a ground ball, the glove is brought from a natural 9 o'clock position, sweeping under the ball to a 6 o'clock position, then raising the ball as the throwing hand comes down. When doing progression teaching, you must replicate the task as closely as possible, changing only that which helps teach the part of the skill desired.

These drills give a good take on how well the fielder understands the skill and how well they perform the skill. They can be done fairly quickly with the progression done smoothly. I use DRILL #5 as part of my pre-practice/pre-game loosening up drills.

Team Oriented Practice Drills

1. "50"

This is an infield drill. Players at their spots, one-coach fungoes, another coach times how fast the fungoed ball reaches first base. Players must make 50 straight plays in less than 4.5 seconds each. Any mistake returns count to zero. You can make the time whatever you want. It represents the average runner's time to first base. You also can decide the number of successful plays needed. It doesn't have to be "50".

2. **Perfect innings**

Two teams compete against each other: one on defense, one running the bases. Coach hits the ball wherever he wants. A team must make nine consecutive outs. Any mistake pulls the team off the field and the other team goes on defense. Try to simulate all routine situations that come up in a game.

3. **Ingredients to success**

Teams of eight compete against each other in a timed game. (Timed or number of innings.) Coach throws. Teams coach themselves. Coaches back off. Players try to win the game and complete all ingredients to success that are used that particular day. For example, today during the course of the game you must have each of the following: 1) an attempted sacrifice, 2) an attempted hit and run, 3) a two-out nobody on rally to score a run, 4) a two-out RBI hit, 5) an attempted squeeze, 6) a first and third play and 7) score a runner from third with less than two out. You decide the situations you want to work on and let them play. If Coach lays the ball in there, these and many other situations will arise.

4. **Compete against the line score**

Use your starting lineup for the next day. Batters 1 - 5 are hitting. Batters 6 - 9 and other players fill the positions. Coach pitches and players get two pitches to hit the ball. (two ball) Use your scoreboard to post a score for the inning, say a "1" for the visitors. Your team reacts to the score and plays their half of the inning. After hitter number 5 bats, batters 1 - 5 go on defense and 6 - 9 come in and continue the inning. Each inning you post a new score and have your team squeak out a victory by coming from behind. This is a great drill for simulating a battling, come-from-behind mentality.

5. **"5, 6, 7"**

Play a three-inning scrimmage that simulates the last three innings of a game. Emphasis is on the bunt game, cutting runners down at the plate, etc. Coaches throw. Create different situations to assure that you get the looks that you want.

County Fair

Here is a fun drill we call "County Fair." Our team of 12 year olds love it, and it gives them exposure to nearly every aspect of baseball defense.

The drill starts with 6 players:

- Catcher
- Third Base
- Shortstop
- Second Base
- First Base
- Center Field

The 5-6 remaining players feed into the center field position from Left field. We usually station a coach in Left Field to keep the non-participants busy working on ground ball technique or turning to run down fly balls.

The drill begins with a coach at home plate hitting a ground ball the shortstop

- Shortstop fields the grounder and throws to 1st base
- 1st base throws 3rd base
- 3rd base fields the throw on the bag then fires to 2nd base to start a 5-4-3 double play (Second baseman after throwing to first becomes a baserunner at second)
- 1st baseman then throws to the catcher in his stance behind home plate
- Catcher comes up and fires to second base as if a runner is stealing from first to second (no one is covering second)
- As the catcher fields the throw, the second baseman takes off as if he is trying to score from second on a single to center (as he rounds 3rd he flips his glove toward the dugout)
- Since no one is covering second, the ball bounds into the outfield where the center fielder make a "do-or-die" scoop and then fires the ball to home on a long hop to the catcher who blocks the plate and tries to tag the second baseman who is sliding into home.

The coach then blows a whistle and the players rotate as follows:

- Second baseman/runner to Left field to the end of the feeder line
- Catcher to 3rd base
- 3rd base to SS
- SS to Second base/baserunner
- First base to catcher
- 1st in line in LF becomes the center fielder

- CF sprints to first base

As the centerfielder arrives at 1st base, the coach hits another groundball to the shortstop and the sequence begins again.

Initially, we had to shout out the destination of each throw, but after 2 or 3 reps, they were able to do it without any cues. This is a very snappy drill that really livens up our practice. We have also used it for a pregame warm-up routine. After about 15 minutes, each player will have gone through each position 2-3 times.

Quick Draw Race Drill

Stack two 5 gallon buckets at home plate with helmet on top. Split team into two lines with starting cones about 5 yards behind the pitchers mound. Set two balls equal distance from the bucket on the mound. When coach calls "draw" two players race to the balls, barehand them and throw at buckets. Quickest hit wins match. Fun drill, everyone loves to knock the buckets down. Distance and targets can be varied for age and abilities. Older kids throw from second base or even center field.