



CONDUCTING A PRACTICE

When conducting a practice, it's important to use your time efficiently. Keep your practice simple and use drills that involve all players. The following are points to consider when planning a practice schedule:

1. It's helpful if you can secure a staff of at least two assistant coaches. The basic philosophy of the team should be established and agreed upon by all the coaches.
2. It's important to have enough balls, bats, helmets, etc., on hand for practice and games.
3. Try to secure a field that is properly maintained. It's difficult to teach proper fielding techniques on a poor field.
4. Know the attitudes of the players and parents. Hold a general meeting prior to the season to let both the players and parents know your philosophy and expectations.
5. Try not to get in a rut as you set up your practice schedule. Add new drills and change procedures to keep practice interesting.
6. Require all your players to obey instructions.
7. Practice means work, but it should also be enjoyable.
8. Require your players to always give their best efforts. Hard work and hustle should be expected and rewarded.
9. Teach your players to encourage their teammates at all times. Make it clear that one player criticizing another will not be tolerated.
10. Understand the difference between correction and criticism. Correction deals with the problem. Criticism is directed at the player and almost always has a negative effect.
11. Remember that each player is someone's son and develop a caring relationship with each one.

12. Most importantly - **STAY POSITIVE AND HAVE FUN.**

SUGGESTED PRACTICE SCHEDULE

The time and order of each activity will be dictated by the length of practice.

1. WARM UP

- A. Run. A slow jog stimulates blood flow to the muscles and joints.
- B. Stretch. Stretching exercises should include upper and lower body muscle groups.
- C. Throw. Begin with short throws to get loose and slowly progress to long throws, which will stretch and strengthen player's arms.

2. DRILLS

Divide the team by position and work on fielding fundamentals.

3. BATTING PRACTICE

Only one player at a time can hit live pitching, so it's important to incorporate a number of hitting drills to ensure everyone gets plenty of swings. The three-station approach will allow hitters to rotate from the tee station to the soft-toss station to live batting practice. Fielders should also be getting in quality work during batting practice. They can either play the ball live off the bat or take fungoes between pitches.

4. SIMULATED GAME

The simulated game pulls together everything worked on in practice. Players practice reacting to game situations and learn about the value of thinking before every pitch. Start with one player at each position and have the remaining players be base runners. The coach first gives a situation, then hits a ball in play. The fielders and base runners then react accordingly.

5. CONDITIONING

The last part of practice should be devoted to conditioning. This is a great opportunity to combine a base running drill with conditioning. Have players take turns simulating a swing and running out a single. After a short rest, continue with a simulated double, triple and home run.