

Sample Practice Plan AAA-Majors 2 Hour Practice (with detail)

Meet (5 Minutes) – Stack Gloves in a Pile – Talk about what you will do at practice today.

Exercises (5 Minutes) (While Exercising, have parent or coach line the kids gloves along the foul line beyond first base for the base-running session)

- Have kids run from right foul pole to left foul pole back to right foul pole and back to you.
- Assign each player a stretch or exercise to lead for the entire season. They always follow the same guy.

Examples: Toe touches, Big arm circles, stork stand, spider pushups, push ups, etc.

Base running Routine (5 Minutes) - (with their gloves as 1st base, lined up on the foul line past first base)

Explain proper technique Wide base, hands on knees (Relaxed)

Ready Position (hands out front, looking forward)

Crossover and jog. Relaxed, “Ready” “Go”

Crossover and run to 2nd base (4 times)

Crossover, Shuffle Shuffle, Wait. (With weight on right foot), “Back”

Crossover, Shuffle Shuffle, Wait. “Back” or “Go!”

Race to 2nd Base (with coach at the line to call the winner)

Base running technique (learning how to “round a base”) - 5 Minutes -

- From Home, running around a bucket or cone on the 1st base line, inside cone on 2nd base line, pick up the third base coach after rounding first. On their own to 3rd base line and home.
- Run THROUGH 1st base (with lids or dots), go back quickly to ready position.

Throwing Fundamentals 10 Minutes -

- Demonstrate proper grip (4 Seam), show proper throwing technique – “L” shape (or make a muscle), Elbow Higher than Shoulder. Ball faces behind them, front elbow (or glove) points at target.
- During all throws, kids practice proper two step throw (No lazy catch!)
Power leg instep faces target, glove leg step and throw.
- Kids play catch with partner of equal ability from Short Range (15 steps)
- Kids play catch with partner of equal ability from Medium Range (26 Steps) *This is the most important distance to practice!
- Kids play catch from Long range, practicing bouncing the ball on one hop to their partner. If they are throwing on the fly, they are too close.

Target Contest (5 Minutes)

Players partner holds his glove steady. If player hits his partners glove he gets 1 point. Play for a couple minutes while they concentrate on their targets.

30 Second Contest (5 Minutes)

See how many throws each pair of kids can make in 30 seconds. If they drop the ball, their count goes back to Zero. Ask how many everyone had and declare a winner.

Hat Tag Challenge: (5 Minutes)

Players place their hat on the ground, 26 steps away from partner. This is the distance from Home Plate to 2nd Base.

Throwing back and forth, players try to place ball right above hat.

For every throw between partners legs, 2 points. Every time they just catch the ball, 1 point. For every throw that lands on the hat so that partners glove touches the hat, 5 points.

Do this for 30 seconds to a minute and ask how many points everyone has, then start over from Zero.

5 Minutes Water Break

Catching and How to Use & Wear Your Glove (10 Minutes)

- Glove Size (No bigger than 10.5 inch glove), Finger Out O.K., If strap type, tighten it down.
- Where to Catch the Ball in your glove. Very important to stress not to catch in the web. You want to hear a “popping” sound when you catch the ball. Tell them it is faster to get the ball out.
- Fingers Up, Fingers Down. Not hand behind glove.

Catching

Demonstrate catching hand position at 3 heights. Chest, Waist and Knees

Catching above the waist, fingers up with thumbs together.

Catching at the waist, or below the waist, pinkies together and fingers down.

Explain that catching at knee level or lower, you need to spread your legs a little farther apart, almost hopping them apart.

Whenever you are catching, Stick out your butt and look like an athlete.

Catching Dry Drills

Have everyone get in a position to catch the ball above their waist (with their glove leg ahead) in the ready position, and call out where the ball is received and make them adjust and pretend to catch the ball by slapping their glove. Then have them step and throw.

Footwork Drills

Work on the proper footwork for a ball in front, to the left, and to the right. Crossover step if ball is in front or to side. Drop step if behind.

Split into 3 or 4 groups. Coaches toss to kids working around the catching wheel 1-6 (3 positions above waist, 3 positions below waist) watching for proper glove position with two hands, and correct two step throw.

Fly Balls (Explanation & Drills) - 15 Minutes

- Forehand, Backhand, Can of Corn
- Run Smooth (meaning, don't bounce up and down when you run.)
- Don't run with your glove in the air (get to the spot, then raise your glove.)

Practice Outfield (and Infield) Routine

Relaxed

Ready (Glove leg slightly ahead, with your butt sticking out.)

Little Motor or Creep (take two Steps Forward when pitcher starts to throw). Watch the ball all the way to the plate.

Reset (Go back to starting position)

(We do this routine on EVERY Pitch!)

Group Practice about 5 times.

Popcorn Drill

Kids throw pickle balls, tennis balls or baseballs in the air. Practice getting under the ball to catch the ball with their glove leg ahead, and in a position to throw the ball forward in an athletic position.

Watch for two handed catches, not throwing hand behind glove

Fly Ball Circle Drill

- Kids in a line
- Kids pick a ball they are comfortable with (baseball, tennis ball, squishy ball)
- They come out to the spot, throw the ball to the coach. The kid runs at a 45 degree angle away from the coach and the coach throws the fly ball to their forehand on the run. During the second round balls can be throw to the backhand side, and then random side.

Emphasize getting under the ball with glove leg ahead if possible, catching with two hands.

Fly Ball Shuttle Drill for Points

Similar to Fly Ball Circle Drill, but kids are in two lines, alternating turns.

Kids call out if they want a 1, 2 or 3 point throw.

Individual points (1 for easy catch, 2 for difficult catch, 3 for extremely difficult (diving) play.)

Fielding Fundamentals (15 Minutes)

- Glove Leg Slightly ahead of Power leg
- Hands out front, Hand like an alligator
- Repeat Routine
 - Relaxed (hands on knees)
 - Ready Hands out front Glove leg slightly ahead.
 - Little Motor or Creep
 - Reset

Practice Sucking up the ball (no ball)

Relaxed

Ready

Little Motor

When coach says "Ball", suck up the ball

Make a pretend two step throw to home plate. Go back to ready position.

Work on moving power leg instep throwing to left, right, and straight ahead.

Ground ball Shuttle (3 Stations)

Kids in lines (2nd base, SS, 3B)

Coaches roll balls softly to kids, they throw back to coach, go to end of line.

Rotate Stations every few minutes so they work with all coaches

Eventually give ground balls to left and right

Make them get in ready position before rolling them the ball.

Emphasize fielding the ball between the leg if possible, not to the side!

Basic Pitching Mechanics (This is from the Tom Dedin Clinic) (5 Minutes) - Introduce only the first or second stage of this during your first practice. Then add a step each practice.

- 1. Up/Down** – Like an Elevator (Have the kids lift their front leg along with their glove, and then lower their front leg until it hovers just above the ground. Repeat over and over.
- 2. Up/Hold it/Down** Then have them do the same drill, but pause at the top.
- 3. Up/Down/Out** (Body Weight slightly back or centered) – During this step they raise their glove and leg, lower their leg above ground height, then slide their front leg straight toward the plate keeping their weight centered or slightly back. Stop when their foot lands. Front shoulder still pointing at plate.
- 4. Up/Scrape Down/Out** (Land on Flat Foot) Same as above, but the kids separate their hands down as they lower their leg, and as they stride they continue with their arms to the high power throwing position.
 - Throwing elbow above shoulder
 - Ball facing toward second base in a reverse “C” position
 - Front elbow or glove pointing at target.
- 5. Up/Scrape Down/Out/Throw with Hip Twist** (Have them freeze as their foot lands, then twist their hips while lowering their back knee slightly)
- 6. Up/Scrape Down/Out/Slide/Throw with Hip Twist and Towel Snap** – Same as 5, but they slide toward their target before twisting hip and snapping towel or throwing ball.

Hitting Demo & Wiffles (with gloves as home plates and line drawn in dirt) – 20 Minutes

- Knuckles (Knocking Knuckles Line Up)
- Feet & Shoulders Straight to Plate and both pointing at the pitcher.
- Bat on Shoulder
- Legs Bent. Belly button in front of toes
- Elbows Down (Back elbow is never higher than their hands!)
- Raise bat from shoulder (3-4 inches in front of arm pit and slightly back. Bat points at plate)
- Discuss “Squish the Bug.”

Dry Drills (everybody has their own glove as home plate. Coach leads the drill)

Stance -- Move your feet

Stance -- Stride (Explain that you want a small stride for timing, not a big stride)

Stance -- Stride-- Hips (This drill helps prevent an “arm only” swing. Make sure their back heel is coming off the ground)

Stance -- Stride -- Hips -- Swing

Full Swing

Move into Pickle Ball or Wiffle Ball Hitting Stations

3 Coaches throw to two kids at a time. Each coach has two fielders behind him. When bucket is empty, all players pick up balls and switch hitters to fielders. Do this as many times as your time allows. Kids get a lot of swings this way. Can do 1st round hitting, 2nd round bunting, etc.

(Always do your hitting at the end of practice to encourage cooperation and attention to everything else.)

Wrap Up - 5 Minutes

Kids put their gloves at 2nd Base with Manager. Kids and assistants pick up gear. When done, everyone meets at 2nd base or right field- Hand out any paperwork. Younger kids can get a stamp or sticker from coach.

*Always end your practice on time. At later practices, you can do early bird hitting.

- Many of these drills are in Big Al's 9-12 DVD. You should watch it!