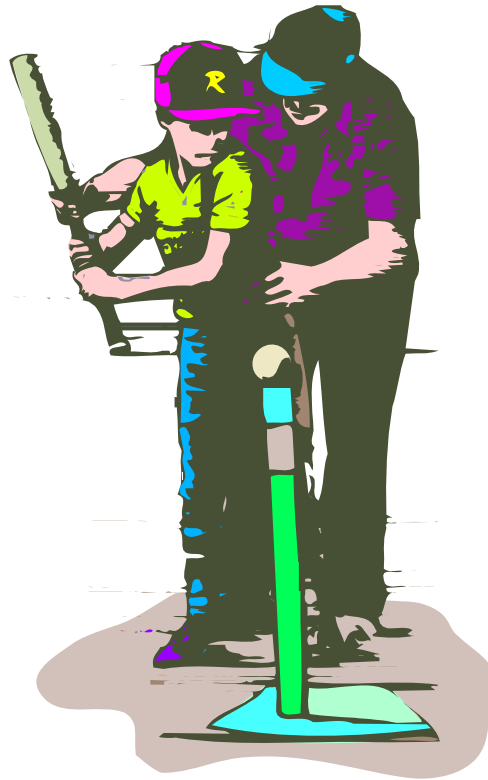


T-Ball Coach/Pitch



Tips and Tricks

A SPECIAL PROGRAM
OF DISTRICT # 8 NY
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DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Tips for T-Ball & Coach/Pitch

Although they are two separate divisions of League, they are so close in age grouping that many of the concepts used in T-ball can be carried over to Coach Pitch.

Therefore carefully review the tips included in this packet, and use them in the division that you feel comfortable with. As you review these tips they can *be* helpful in several divisions.

These tips have been gathered from many sources from within the district to various sites on the internet, they have been presented here for you to use. If they do not fit exactly into your plans feel free to alter them *as* you see fit.

The goal of the district is to help you organize your programs at the lower levels with hopes that your retention level will increase and the organization that you have developed in the lower levels will continue up into the higher levels of baseball and softball.

Improving Glove Hand Coordination - Try this drill...

Cut off the bottom of a plastic gallon container. Turn the jug upside down with the handle in the glove hand of your player. Toss tennis balls to the player and have them catch the balls with the jug.

Whether the motion is scooping, slapping or stationary you are teaching position of the glove for catching the ball.

Improving a hitters swing...

Practice hitting from the tee into the back stop.

Pair left-handed coaches with right-handed batters (and right-handed coaches with left-handed batters.) Have the coach stand on the other side

of the tee from the player (mirror image) and show proper stance and swing. This gives the batters a good visual reference and the coaches can make corrections easily.

Any coach may take a left-handed batter's stance, just be sure the hands and feet are placed in the correct position so the coach is a mirror image of the player(s).

Batting Techniques

Use baking flour or a little bit of chalk to make a batter's box.

Set the tee even with the player's belly button and have them extend their arms fully. Say, "Measure up," and explain to the batter how hitting the ball on the fat part of the bat makes the ball go further.

This helps each batter stand the appropriate distance away from the ball, and swing level.

Have the parent and players, who are waiting to bat, encourage the batter. Using the waiting players to encourage the batter is a good team-building technique.

Teaching Players to watch the ball...

Using a tee, draw a large black dot on the ball. Have the batter concentrate on hitting the dot and watching the dot until after their swing is complete. Using the tee helps to keep their swing level. They will get it - repetition is the key.

In coach pitch, use the same basic idea, only put a different color dot on 3 or 4 balls. Don't let the batter swing. Just have him tell you what color you are throwing. Wait till you see how fast they keep their heads down.

Improving Throwing and Catching...

Put the gloves down and use a tennis or rubber ball. Roll grounders to them and instruct the players to use both hands.

Get the players used to using both hands, then advance to gloves. This drill may also be used to improve catching line drives or pop ups.

Throwing

Have the player(s) make an L shape with their throwing arm, and concentrate on hitting the coach's nose with the ball. Having a focal point helps players understand the ball will go where they aim. Your nose is about as good as focal point as any.

Remember, positive reinforcement!

Love the "Coaches Nose" reference. I know this will work. Players this-age love a challenge."

Controlling swarming...

As a pre-drill of sorts draw large circles in the infield dirt, and ask one player to stand in each of the circles and "guard their circle." The player to whom the ball comes closest to, or the circle the ball comes closest to, fields the ball. In the event the ball travels between two circles, or right down the middle, the player who jumps first gets it and has to make the play.

Learning to play the lead runner...

About mid way through the season have a week of just practice. During this week you will see the need for work on where to throw the ball and how to watch and freeze the lead runner.

Bring a large rubber ball that is easy to catch and play a game of kick ball. Have the player find the lead runner, move to position to catch the ball, and throw the ball to the appropriate base.

At the next practice go back to using a baseball. You will notice a lot of improvement in the players understanding of the game.

Bats are a safety issue...

Keep all bats in one place on the field. Keep one parent there to supervise at all times.

Equipment will be lost.

Tell parents to put players' last name and phone number on all personal equipment. (i.e. under the bill of the cap).

Buying a glove...

Find out which hand the player can throw most accurately with. Buy a glove for the opposite hand. Recommend a glove that closes easily.

Players do not know the field...

For very young players, run them around the bases before each game.

Home Plate is the most Dangerous Position...

With young players, you may choose to eliminate the catcher position.

Always have a coach with the catcher to guard against the following:

- Batter throwing the bat
- Upcoming batters swinging the bat
- Catcher being hurt by runner from third

Young players are unfamiliar with the game

Your least experienced players need your best effort.

Parent's who are impatient with their own children...

Compliment their knowledge of baseball, "I see you know a lot about baseball."

Then ask the parent to coach a specific position other than where their child is playing.

Rubber balls are a great training tool...

Tell the parents and players to practice with a rubber balls at home. Rubber balls are safer and rebound back to them.

Teach your Parents some cheers...

Long game, hot day? Use the cheering parents to energize the defensive players.

Plastic sleeve for your team roster...

Your copy will get a lot of wear and tear. You also need to keep your copy dry.

Call it alligator catching...

Have the players put their glove down close to the ground for grounders. Also, have them position the other hand on the heel of the glove. Otherwise, the ball may pop up and hit the player in the face.

Teach Players to run through first base...

Position a coach five to ten feet behind first base, and just outside the base line, to give each player a high five as they run through.

Call the ball...

Teach players to call the ball while catching grounders; calling grounders makes it easier to teach them to call fly balls later in the season.

Use a Longer Base Path If Possible...

Fifty to 60 feet between bases gives the defensive players time to get the ball and complete the play. A longer base path also gives you more room to place extra players in defensive positions.

Assume all batters are aching to throw the bat...

Place an object (i.e. a bat bag) down the first base line. Instruct all batters to carry the bat to that object and drop the bat at that point.

Parents who are critical of your coaching skills...

Admit you could use more coaches to help the team. Ask them to help at the next practice.

Batting tips...

Repeatedly say, "Watch the ball until the ball hits the bat."

If the player squares up to the plate, the ball will be hit to first base. Instruct the batter to move the lead foot back from the plate so the ball is not hit towards first base for an easy out.

Keep all bats in one place on the field. Keep one parent by the bats to supervise at all times.

Catching:

In Coach Pitch or Machine Pitch Divisions, be sure that catchers always wear their protective gear whenever they are catching in a game or in practice.

Remind catchers to protect their throwing hand by placing it behind their glove or on their back when the batter swings.

Have catchers practice putting their gear on properly and then checked by the coach.

Have the catcher assume the stance, and from 3-4 feet away throw the ball to them softly so they can practice catching above and below the waist with the equipment on.

With the equipment on have the catcher stand and throw the ball up like a pop up so they can practice catching it.

Make it Fun

One night forget that it is baseball

Play a full game of wiffle ball, or kick ball

Keep it cool on the summer nights

Keep all your t-balls in a bucket and reach in and put them on the tee. Then pick a summer night and include a water balloon in the bucket, and set that on the tee. You will find out who is really keeping their eye on the ball, as well as cool off very soon. Relax its only water.

They like to get dirty-

Just before practice, in the baseline between third and home, pour enough water to make a small puddle. I can bet you, that there is no way they will miss the puddle.

Buy a \$3.00 bag of sand box sand, and spread it around 2nd or 3rd base. Don't spend time on teaching them how to slide, but when they get close to the base just yell "slide" and you just might be surprised.

Let them see the Game-

Take them as a team to one of your upper division games and just let them watch the older kids for an inning. And make it just one inning and they will want to play more than ever.

The Hand Shake-

There are so many hand shakes in major league baseball that I doubt as a coach you would even know them all. But take the time to learn a couple and spend some time showing the kids how it is done. Half the part of being a ball player is feeling like a ball player. This will get their mind into more than you think, and you might even learn something.

Special Nights

Pick a night and either you as a coach, or with authorization from you board, buy all your players a hot dog, a piece of pizza or something similar.

Tee Ball Night

Make a Tee ball night where all the teams play on one of your 60' fields and get the chance to have their name announced and the parents can watch from the bleachers. You can make them short games, and still get all your teams to play in the same night.