

5U Practice Plan – Batting Cage – Hitting Only

This is a 60 minute “Split Group” Practice

NOTE: ½ of the Team comes as GROUP 1 for first 30 minutes (six players)

NOTE: ½ of the Team comes as GROUP 2 for second 30 minutes (six players)

Phase One (total time 3 minutes)

WARM-UP, Stretches and running (3 minutes)

- Arm Circles (*forwards and backwards*), Jumping Jacks (*just keep working on it*)
- Skipping, Hopping, Running in Place, High Knees, Running Around the Bases (*get the blood flowing*)

Phase Two (total time 25 minutes) NOTE: Teaching time may be up to 5 five minutes of time allotted

First and foremost, you **MUST** Teach “Safety Position” for holding the bat while not taking active cuts.

- Safety Position is BOTH HANDS on top of the barrel with the handle to the ground. A little awkward to hold and carry, but ultimately that’s the point. Teach SAFETY 1st and continuously reinforce! (Eliminate Injuries, Safety 1st)

This Practice Plan focuses on getting a lot of swings/ reps in with individual instruction from the Head Coach. Head Coach is there for the full 60 minutes. Each session requires two additional helpers/assistants.

Three Hitting Stations (two outside the cage, hitting off a “T”, and one inside the cage hitting off live pitching). Rotate each player after 5-7 swings and rotate each player through all three stations. (See Diagram 1)

FIRST, COVER THE BASICS:

- Bat Grip = Knocking Knuckles Aligned. (*This is foreign to them, so reinforce it until they get it*)
- Do not choke the bat. (*In other words, a comfortable grip with knuckles aligned, VS. squeezing the bat handle*)
- Align feet correctly. (*Don’t let their back foot point to the catcher, in fact exaggerate it slightly forward*)
- Slight Backward Movement with the hands/body (*referred to as “loading”*), transferring weight slightly to the back leg before exploding towards the baseball.
- Attack the baseball, SWING HARD!

THEN, DEMONSTRATE:

- **Head/eyes STABLE**
- **Hips go FIRST** (*You may need to hold their hips and physically move them for the player to understand what you mean by hip rotation—when doing this remove the bat, hold their hips and rotate them several times so they get the feeling of their hips rotating—have them pretend to hold the bat while doing this*)
- **Shoulders go SECOND**
- **Arms/Hands go THIRD**
- **And swing with all your MIGHT at every ball, every time!**

ROTATE THROUGH THE STATIONS

- **2 players per station, 3 stations total, see Diagram 1:** (*rotation is roughly at 6-7 minute increments*)
- **Reps, reps, and more reps.** Encouraging words like: Have Fun, Smile, Swing Hard, etc.!
- **Station 1: “T” work, focus on: Grip/Knuckle Alignment/Hard Swings (*Swing for the fences!!!*)**
- **Station 2” “T” work, focus on: HIPS FIRST, demonstrate it, physically move their hips!**
- **Station 3: Live Pitching Inside the Cage**

PARENT TAKE-A-WAYS:

Beyond aligning their knuckles properly, not choking the bat, and feet placement, we are not looking to create a robotic swing where “their elbow must be up, or this, or that”, etc. Correct Alignment with their hands together on the bat, and feet towards the plate (*back foot pointing slightly forward*), THEN IT’S ALL ABOUT MOTION, RHYTHM AND TIMING, and their HARDEST SWING. Just get them comfortable and get them to get their whole body involved in the SWING and of course, giving MAX EFFORT with every swing. SWING FOR THE FENCES.... HIT THE BALL AS HARD AS POSSIBLE.

Again, just reinforcing this movement pattern, and you can see it if you look closely, it should be:

- **Head/eyes STABLE**
- **Hips go FIRST**
- **Shoulders go SECOND**
- **Arms/Hands go THIRD**
- **And always reinforce a “Swing for the fences” mentality!**

Diagram 1:

