

JCLL Coaches Resource Document

Baseball is about balance and hip rotation – everything we do physically starts from the ground up.

Take a look at how similar the throwing motion and hitting motion is. Balls of our feet, feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, athletic position.

NO DOWN TIME IN PRACTICE!!!! CONSTANTLY MOVING, CONSTANTLY COMPETITIVE!!!

Must make sure all coaches are on the same page; fundamentally and strategically.

If kids are hearing different ideas from their coaches they will be confused and not reach their potential. May also cause rifts between coaches. Communicate with your assistant coaches constantly. Ask for their input and include them in your lesson plan.

YES, lesson plan. Do not “wing it” at practice. You must have a clear idea of how you are going to run your practice. NEVER have one person hit at home plate, while the rest of the team is shagging balls, complete waste of time!!!! Before the season, fundamentals and strategies should be taught. During the season, fix critical errors made in games and reinforce fundamentals. Practices should be run in approximately 10-15 minute increments, depending on the age of your players.

Same number of minutes per drill as the age of the player (ex. 9 year olds do tee work for 9 minutes, then rotate).

ALWAYS model each drill as a whole group before breaking up into stations. Run your practice this way for at least the first couple of practices until the assistants and players know how each drill should be executed. Make sure you always explain why you are doing a drill and how it will make them better!

Focus on the improvement of the individual, team, and league. We are all in this together. Our goal is to make JCLL the premier little league in the state. We will accomplish this through well run practices and thoughtful player development, with the players enjoyment and development going hand in hand.

Example of a Youth Practice (with resources)

IMPORTANCE OF EVERY REP!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Every swing, throw and catch is the game winning catch. Use visualization in every drill!

Dynamic warm-up – Jog from foul pole to foul pole and back to home.

CATCH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE DO!!!!!!

Throwing warm-up

Ten throws in each progression. To ensure proper 4 seam grip, put black electrical tape around the ball, fingers should go across seams with tape splitting the fingers. Partners should be chosen based on positions. Middle infielders should be together, corner infield and outfield should be together, and catchers should be together. Obviously there will be exceptions but do your best to partner up based on position. For example: Your starting shortstop should be playing catch with your starting 2nd baseman, ALWAYS! The ball should never touch the ground (minors and majors)! At your discretion you can tally how many balls hit the ground during throwing warm-up and make your team run accordingly (I used push-ups). Again, your players will take it more seriously and it is data you can track and share with your team to show progress.

On a Knee Wrist Flips - players kneel about 10 feet apart from each other. Hold the arm at a 90 degree angle in front of them (like a basketball jump shot) and use only their wrists to get the ball to their partner.

-This will help players develop a strong wrist for added velocity. The goal is to make the baseball spin as many times as they can before it reaches their partner.

On a Knee Follow Through - players remain kneeling but can spread out to 20 feet apart. On a knee, players throw the ball to one another with a dramatic follow through, reaching towards the pocket opposite of the throwing side (right handers will follow through to their left pocket).

-This will help players develop proper mechanics and follow through, rather than short-arm the ball. Coaches monitor for proper grip and throwing mechanics. Glove arm should be at 90 degree angle, as though they are holding a shield. Throwing arm should be at a 90 degree angle with the elbow at the same height as the shoulder. Grip should be the aforementioned four seam grip, showing the baseball to someone behind them.

Trunk Rotation Throwing Figure 8's – Players stand facing each other 30-40 feet apart. With feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Feet stay planted while the player puts the ball and his throwing hand in his glove. Player rotates the upper body toward their non-throwing shoulder as far as they can, then rotates back to the throwing shoulder and finally releases the ball.

-This will help players isolate their top half and develop core strength and trunk rotation for added velocity. Coach's focus is on the player staying on top of the ball and finishing in their left pocket.

Relief Pitcher Throwing – Players stand about 30-40 feet apart (adjusting according to age and ability). Players are standing as though they are in the stretch (like a relief pitcher). Players focus on keeping toes, knees, hips and shoulders aligned with their partner. Front foot should

stride toward the partner and open up to a 45 degree angle, while keeping everything closed off to the partner. Use lines whenever possible to make sure feet are starting on a line and ending on a line. Players should focus on footwork and follow through (same emphasis as the follow through drill).

-This drill will keep the player in a linear motion towards their target for improved accuracy.

Shuffle Step Throwing – Players stand 60 feet apart (adjusting according to age and ability).

Players should gather themselves into the relief pitcher throwing position. They will then shuffle step into a small crow-hop and throw to their partner. Coaches should be watching to make sure that the player's toes, knees, hips and shoulders are lined-up correctly after the shuffle. Use momentum to throw harder and farther. Make sure the upper half and lower half are working together.

-This drill will show the player how important their bottom half is to adding distance and velocity to their throws.

Long-Toss Throwing – Players stand at a distance so that they cannot catch the partner's throw on a fly. Players use all of their technique to throw the ball as far as possible. Partner is put at an unachievable distance so that the thrower attempts to throw through the partner. Ball should remain as low as possible to the ground (NO rainbows).

-This drill will increase both distance and velocity. Long toss will also help the kinetic chain development of throwing and can clean up mechanical and sequencing issues if done correctly and closely monitored.

BATTLE UP! PLAYER DEVELOPMENT												
Throwing Goals Chart												
For Competitive Baseball Players												
Arm Strength Goals (Using Radar Gun Results)												
1. If your age is >>	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16 and over			
	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)	Velocity (mph)			
>> Outstanding	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	Professional	<<	
>> Above Average	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	Collegiate	<<	
2. And this is your current maximum throwing velocity	>> Average	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	High School	<<
	>> Below Average	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	Recreational	<<
Arm Strength Goals (Using Throwing Distance Results)												
1. If your age is >>	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16 and over			
	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)	Distance (feet)			
>> Outstanding	125	150	175	200	225	250	275	300	325	Professional	<<	
>> Above Average	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	275	300	Collegiate	<<	
2. And this is your current maximum throwing distance	>> Average	75	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	275	High School	<<
	>> Below Average	50	75	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	Recreational	<<
BATTLE UP! PLAYER DEVELOPMENT												

Quick Hands Throwing – Especially for middle infielders and catchers but can also benefit other players by increasing their transition from glove to hand. Players stand 15-30 feet apart. Player's feet are lined up like explained in the Relief Pitcher Throwing section. Players stand in an athletic position and receive the ball at the throwing shoulder, with 2 hands. Player transitions from receiving to throwing as quickly as possible. Emphasis is to get the ball out accurately as quickly as possible.

-This drill will help the player develop quick hands and smooth transitions.

Everydays - Using Skillz pads players field ground balls in the middle of their body. The focus of this is to field the ball with left heel down, left toe up, both hands field the ball out in front. Chin is tucked into the chest, back is flat. After Skillz pad, players will use their gloves to field backhands and forehands from the kneeling position. Players will kneel 10 feet apart and roll ground balls to each other. Focus is to field the ball in the middle of their body, working the glove back towards their partner.

-This drill will improve players' fielding techniques.

End Throwing Session - Bring Team together and discuss goals for the day and what you did well and what you struggled with last game (or last practice).

STAR Drill – Divide your team into 2 even teams, preferably your starting shortstop and 1st baseman with your back-up second baseman and back-up 3rd baseman (outfielders fill in as needed) and vice versa. One team takes the infield at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, shortstop, and catcher (any additional players stand off to the side and rotate in after the first runner). The other team will put helmets on and serve as runners. The drill starts when the coach hits a ground ball to shortstop (the first runner starts running from home on the hit, runner keeps running the bases until he reaches home), shortstop fields the ball and throws to first base, first baseman catches the ball and throws to 3rd baseman, 3rd baseman catches ball and throws to 2nd baseman covering 2nd, 2nd baseman throws home. After the runner touches home, fielders rotate counterclockwise one position and a new runner starts. Turn this into a game. Award points for total bases achieved by the running team or total runs scored. After every player has run once, switch offense to defense. GREAT DATA!!!! Keep a running tally of your team's runs in this game and demonstrate to them how they are getting better. .

-This drill will dramatically improve your defense through stressful catches and throws and your players will love it!

Practice Begins – This is where, at least early in the season, you are going to model the different stations that you have for your players. Walk to each station and give a quick demonstration and explanation of what the drill is about and how to do it. Here is an example of some hitting drills and stations you could utilize (remember players can be pulled from groups to work in bullpens or on catching fundamentals, as you see fit):

Hitting Drills -

1. **Upper Body Isolation Drill (ANY AGE)**-with a tee. Set up a tee for hitters' perfect pitch, something you are looking for on a 3-1 pitch. Hitter starts with the bottom half in contact position (firm, straight front leg, back leg bent at approximately 90 degrees, back heel off ground, hips however are completely closed). Upper half from the waist up is in the load position (proper grip, hands back at approximately shoulder to arm pit level, head still and focused on the imaginary pitcher) . There should be a tremendous amount of torque felt in the front side rib cage, like a spring being coiled or a rubber band being stretched. Batter imagines identifying a fastball from an imaginary pitcher, uses torque to rotate the upper body as quickly as possible, staying inside the ball (no hand casting), to drive the ball as hard as possible up the middle, hard line drives over the pitcher's head are ideal.
2. **Coil Tee Drill (ANY AGE)** - with tee. Set up the tee down the middle or at an ideal pitch location. Player stands facing the pitcher. Player turns their upper body and gets their hands into a loaded position. Player should feel the back hip coil. Players release barrel and drive ball to opposite middle infielder.

[Hitting Tee Drill - Barrel Turn](#)

3. **Hip Rotation Drill (ANY AGE)**-with tee. Set up the tee on the high inside corner of the plate. Hitter stands in their normal spot in the batter box. Bat is placed behind the player's back, locked into place by the inside of the elbows. If done correctly just the barrel of the bat will be sticking out from behind players back at approximately hip height. Player assumes a normal batting stance from the waist down. Player imagines the pitcher throwing an inside fastball, tracks the ball to the tee, then rotates hips to swing the bat from behind back to the contact zone. Players should try to barrel up the ball and drive it as far as possible off the tee.
<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/fY53n4JgKcc>
4. **Heavy Bag Drill (ANY AGE)**-with tee. Using a slightly flat volleyball or basketball, place the ball on the tee at different locations in the strike zone. Assume a normal stance. Imagine picking up the pitch out of the pitcher's hand, identifying the type of pitch and location. Track the ball to the tee and drive the flat ball off the tee in as hard of a line drive as possible. There should be no recoil or hesitation when driving through the ball. Players should drive through the ball and finish with a high follow through. Similar to a boxing heavy bag, the deflated ball should increase power and ability to swing through the ball.

[Train X Baseball - Heavy Bag Hitting Drill](#)

Batted Ball Exit Speeds

AGE	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ELITE
8U	33	42	54
10U	45	54	67
12U	52	62	73
13U	61	68	79
14U	65	72	82
HIGH SCHOOL	70	79	94
COLLEGE ALL LEVELS	80	85	103

5. **Connection Ball Drill (ANY AGE)** -with Tee. Use deflated volleyball or kickball. Place the ball between the player's bat and chest/ back shoulder and the player should take a normal swing. Stay inside the baseball with a swing. The ball should not drop from the bat/shoulder position until contact is made with the ball on the tee. If the ball falls out before contact the player is not staying connected throughout their swing.

[Connection Ball Hitting Drills for a Short, Compact, Powerful Swing! \(Baseball Hitting Drills\)](#)

6. **Off-Speed Pitch Hitting Drill (10U and UP)**-batting cage, tennis ball. Hitter takes a normal batting stance in the batter's box. Pitcher stands just behind the L screen. Pitcher one-hops tennis balls to the batter so that the pitch ends up in the strike zone after the hop. The hitter has to track the pitch, load while keeping weight back, and wait for the ball to reach the hitting zone, then drive the ball, if possible, the other way or up the middle. Teaches hitters to track off-speed pitches and keep weight back. Loading without weight transfer is the key.

[Bounce Toss Drill](#)

7. **Hand Eye Contact Drill (ANY AGE)**-Hitters need wiffle golf balls and a stick (PVC pipe works great). Pitcher takes a knee about 10-15 feet away from the batter. Hitter takes a normal batting stance, using a stick instead of a baseball bat. Pitcher pitches wiffle golf balls to batter in a dart throwing motion. Batters goal is to make contact and hit line drives back at pitcher. Smaller bat and smaller ball at shorter distance should teach hand eye coordination and more frequent contact.

[3 Mini Wiffle Ball Hitting Drills Guaranteed To Skyrocket Your Batting Average! 🚀](#)

8. **Yes, Yes, No Drill (10U and UP)**-While hitting in the cage or off tee. After clearing your mind and taking a deep breath start saying yes, yes, yes, yes, until you recognize whether you're going to swing or not. If the pitch is a quality strike say yes and swing, if pitch is not a quality strike say no and track pitch into catcher's glove. This drill will teach the player to be aggressive but patient. Players should load, stride, and decide on every pitch, whether they swing or not.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPP8HA1AewE>
9. **High Tee Drill (ANY AGE)**- Place batting tee on a chair to reach maximum height of strike zone. Player assumes a normal batting stance. Hitter tries to stay inside the ball. Goal is to hit line drives without popping up. This drill will help players who drop their hands during their swing.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hq5INoNrsCE>

Fielding Drills-

1. **Skillz Pad Ground Balls (ANY AGE)** - Players use flat gloves (Skillz Pad) to field ground balls with two hands. A coach takes 3 to 4 players and has them kneel in a semi-circle around them. Coach rolls ground balls to players while players field the ball with two hands. Coach looks to make sure the bare hand is trapping the ball at the same time the ball hits the Skillz Pad and that the player is tucking their chin to their chest to track the ball all the way to the glove.
[Rawlings 5-Tool Quick Hands Trainer](#)
2. **Goalie Game (Tee Ball and Machine Pitch)** - Set up cones 10 feet apart. Coach rolls ground balls to players. The Player's job is to stop the ball by any means necessary. Roll each player 10 balls, keep score. Make this drill a competition for your team. This drill will increase your players range and ability to keep the ball from getting past them.
[3 SIMPLE Baseball Fielding Drills For Youth Players](#)
3. **On Knees, Glovehand, Straight On, and Backhand Ground Balls (ANY AGE)**- Players kneel in a semi-circle around the coach, using their regular gloves. Coach rolls ground balls (30 total) to the glove side (10), straight on (10), and backhand (10) side of each player.
[Ron Washington runs Braves rookie Ozzie Albies through fielding drills](#)
4. **Tennis Ball Hat Fly Balls (Machine Pitch and Younger)**- Players line up 15 to 20 feet away from a coach. Coach throws tennis ball pop-ups to each player. The Player's objective is to move their feet to get under the ball and to "catch" the ball with the brim of their baseball hat, by letting the ball fall on the brim. Once players show success with this drill, they can be given a Skillz Pad.

Coach will continue to throw short pop-ups while players try to catch the tennis ball with two-hands. Once players show success with Skillz Pad, they can use their regular glove.

[3 great drills for teaching kids how to catch fly balls | Youth baseball fielding drills](#)

5. **Underhand Flip Drill (Machine Pitch and UP)**- Set up 4 cones in a square about 10 feet apart. One player at each cone (5 players total). Players simulate fielding a ground ball as a second baseman and underhand flip the ball to the right (to their shortstop). Players should focus on staying low, underhand flipping the ball to the shortstops throwing arm pit, and following their throw to the next cone. Each player will follow their throw in a counterclockwise rotation. Due this drill for 5 minutes and then switch to clockwise, to simulate a shortstop fielding a ground ball and flipping to the second baseman.

[Underhand Flip Box Drill](#)

6. **Fielding Around the Ball Drill (Machine Pitch and UP)**- Set up a bucket or a series of cones in a backwards "C" (approximately a 3 foot arc) at the first fielder's feet in a ready position. Coach sets up 15-20 feet away from the fielder. Coach rolls ground balls at the players feet. The player is to use short, choppy, quick steps to work their way around the "C" to field the ball with their left heel up, right foot down, and their momentum working towards 1st base. Coaches have the option of having the player throw to first or just roll the ball back to the coach.

[The Bucket Drill to Help Infielders get Around the Ball](#)

7. **Team Relay Drill (Machine Pitch and UP)**- Have players (3-5 depending on arm strength and ability) assume positions on the foul line 40 feet apart (adjust according to ability and arm strength). Players work on relays by throwing the ball to the next player in line. Receiving player should have both arms up to identify themselves as the thrower's target and to focus on catching the ball with 2 hands. Thrower is to try to hit the receiver in the throwing arm pit. Receiver should catch the ball at their throwing arm pit and turn to the glove side to be in a good position to make a throw to the next receiver. Continue the drill as needed, focusing on the importance of accurate throws, 2 handed catches, and getting rid of the ball quickly. Coaches can make a game of this by dividing players into 2 or 3 teams and racing each other.

[Teaching the Game: Game Situations and Drills for Youth Baseball](#)

[Little League Cuts and Relays | DONE RIGHT!](#)