This is a sample document and is for guideline purposes only. Individual coaches will need to customize for their individual teams, age levels etc.

Outdoor Practice Drills

DEFENSE

Team defense is CRITICAL. Defense does not slump. Helps P go deeper into games; keeps pitch counts low. Narrows the gap between lower and top teams. Opponents get frustrated when balls are consistently caught, throws made. They start to "press", make bad swings while batting etc. It enables us to score less runs to win. Teams rarely get 4+ hits in a row so, make the routine plays, we'll be in almost every game. Make sense?

Infield (20 min. with all players)

2 at each position (P, C, all IF)

- Hit ground balls and throw to 1B
- Alternate each hit and 1B
- 3 times per player
- Turn DP (for P the SS takes the throw)
    - For 2B, left foot on back corner of bag, right foot steps toward ball, handcuff target, receive from 3B/SS, strong throw to 1B
    - For SS, right foot clips back corner of bag, handcuff target, receive from 2B/1B, strong throw to 1B
    - For 1B, yell inside in front of baseline, outside behind baseline, avoids throwing across runner, easy for SS to receive
- 2 times per player

KEYS: Proper fielding, accurate throws, get lead runner, turn the DP

P Covers 1B Defense: (15 min. with all players)

1B (2), P (4), runners (4)

- Ground ball between 1B and 2B
- P runs to cover 1B, yells “BAG”, provides target
- 1B moves toward 1B, yells “FLIP”, throws ball to P, leads P to bag
- P touches inside left corner and turns into field of play
- 2 times per player

KEYS: Get the out!

Bunt Defense: (15 min. with all players)

1B (), 2B (), 3B (), SS (), C (), P (), batters () lay down 5 bunts

- P, 3B, 1B charge
- 2B covers 1B, SS covers 3B
- Batter bunts and runs to 1B
- 2 times per player each rotation

KEYS: Get the out at 1B!

Outfield, Cut-off’s to 2B, 3B, HP (20 min. with all players)

2 in CF, 2 in RF, 2 in LF, 2 at 2B, 2 at SS, 2 at 3B

- Hit balls over head to fence
- LF retrieves, throws to cut off SS, relays to 2B bag or 3B bag
- CF retrieves, throws to cut off SS, relays to 2B bag or 3B bag
- RF retrieves, throws to cut off 2B, relays to SS at 2B bag or 3B bag
- Cut off is 1/2way between 2B bag and OF; straight line, hands in air
- While ball in air, cut off opens glove hand shoulder to face target, catches and throws to target
- Rotate LF, CF, RF, 2B, SS

KEYS: Hitting the cut off, cut off positioning, relays to 2B

2 in CF, 2 in RF, 2 in LF, 2 at 1B, 2 at 3B, 2 at C

- Hit balls to OF; base hits and fly ball outs
- LF to home, 3B cuts if needed, C calls “cut/let it go”, relays home
- CF to home, 1B cuts if needed, C calls “cut/let it go”, relays home
- RF to home, 1B cuts if needed, C calls “cut/let it go”, relays home
- Cut off man is at mound (right for RF, closer to 2B for CF, left for LF)
- P backs up C on hits to OF when runner on 2B
- Rotate LF, CF, RF, 1B, 3B, C

KEYS: Low accurate throws, cut off positioning, relays to HP, not letting runners advance

Situational Fungo (20 min. with 12 players)

Players at all 9 positions and remainder at HP

- Coach is batter, calls number of out
- Coach hits ball wherever he wants, runner takes off, defense reacts
- Coach creates variety of game like situations

KEYS: Situational awareness, reactions, baseball intelligence

PITCHING

Team pitching is CRITICAL. K’s, low K’s, change speeds. Defense can’t help with BB. Get ahead in the count and get quick outs. Helps P go deeper into games by keeping pitch counts low. If we “pound the zone” opponents will start to “press” and expand the strike zone. It enables us to keep score less runs to win. Holding runners close to the bag is key to help our catchers and infield defense out. Make sense?

P throws to C with coach umpiring (2 players)

- P throw 40 pitches to C; various in 2 sets of 20
- C provides different targets in, out, up, down; **NOT CORNERS**
- C calls pitches based on count

KEYS: Control, velocity, calling game

Pick Offs with P/C/1B

- P in stretch position
- Varies hold times
- Throws to 1B or HP
- 1B straddles bag to receive throw and swipe tag

KEYS: Shorten leads by keeping runners close

Catchers

Target for P down in zone, set up on both halves of plate, not corners
Block with round shoulders, square up to ball, both hands out front

- Toss balls from 5-10 feet in dirt, 5 right, 5 left, 5 in front
- Smother the ball

Throwing is “quick feet”, shoulders to target, throw through 2B

KEYS: Low target, receive with minimal movement, blocking skills, quick throws to bases

OFFENSE

Team offense is hitting, OBP and base running. OBP is the #1 goal whether BB/hits. Once on base we have options to score by SB, hits and advancing runners by productive outs. Unlike defense, offense slumps through bad luck, good pitching, good defense etc. Our focus will be to 1) look FB until 2 strikes (P taught to get ahead); 2) get good pitches to hit as BB are great, increase pitch counts; 3) hit the ball hard; 4) high contact rate (K’s are unproductive outs); 5) be aggressive on the bases to make P uncomfortable. Make sense?

BP on field (30 min. with all players)

- Player at each IF position, rest in OF, 2 hitting
- Batters get 15 pitches to hit, last 5 are with 2 strikes
- Place bucket at 2B, lob ball to bucket, 2B/SS place balls in bucket

KEYS: Separate hands, stride, arm extension, lots of repetition

Base Running/Sliding (20 min. with 12 players)

1 at P, 1 at 1B, 4 runners (6 players)

- Runner takes 3 step lead
- P throws over, runner slides head first to OF side of base
- 1B straddles base diagonally, sweep tag

KEYS: Proper lead off, sliding technique, sweep tag

Base Running, Lead Offs

- Effort + Aggression = Pressure on defence
- HP to 1B on a ground ball
    - Runner outside baseline (use cones) to 1B
    - Run through 1B by 3 strides and turn to foul ground
- Base hit/FB to OF, thinks 2B and sprint out of box
    - Set up cones 15 feet in front of 1B
    - Runner touches inside of bag and rounds 1B aggressively
    - If going to 2B, coach yells “2, 2”, if 1B coach “just 1, just 1”
- 1B lead is 3 strides off for both RH, LH pitchers
    - RH pitcher shuffle 1-2 strides after pitch
    - LH pitcher **ONLY** shuffle after front foot lands
- 2B lead is 4-5 strides off for both RH, LH pitchers
    - Shuffle 1-2 strides after pitch for both RH, LH pitchers
- On steals runner turns, stays low and **ALWAYS** slides
- On pickoffs **ALWAYS** head first to outside corner of base
- 3B lead is 2 strides off for both RH, LH pitchers
    - Shuffle 1-2 strides after pitch for both RH, LH pitchers
- On PB/WP, advance to next base and watch 3B coach
    - Large backstops so could advance 2 bases if catcher slow
- OF fly balls runners tag up if on 2B, 3B and go half way if on 1B
    - Go back to base, when ball hits OF glove break to force throw
    - On 3B, we will try and score on medium and deeper fly balls

KEYS: Be aggressive, situational awareness, slide