



# Maywood Little League Baseball

**Here is a list of ten points to keep in mind:**

1. Keep things simple and fun
2. Avoid technical information
3. Apply basic fundamentals
4. Use easy to understand terminology and use it consistently
5. Get down to their eye level; you look like a giant to them
6. Celebrate the individual talents and differences ...
7. Work in small groups, we call them stations
8. Keep things interactive and fast moving. This will deal with their attention span
9. Inform parents to practice at home. This is absolutely important
10. Whenever possible, make things into a game



## The Basics



### **Catching**

initially, some players will be afraid of catching a baseball. That fear will make them flinch right before the ball reaches their glove. This will cause them to drop the ball instead of catching it, or worse, the ball may hit them. This can create a fear that can eventually cause players to quit.

Teaching players the correct catching technique is not easy. You must first overcome their fear of getting hit with the ball. Demonstrate that the ball is softer than a standard hard ball. You might want to work with some of your players with a tennis ball for the first couple weeks.

(Ask the parents to practice at home with a tennis ball: Grounders and pop ups **No Glove**)

### **Catching tips**

- keep your eyes on the ball
- have both hands ready, with arms relaxed and extended toward the ball
- bend the elbows to absorb the force of the throw
- watch the ball into the glove and squeeze it

### **Improving catching...**

Put the gloves down. Roll grounders to them and instruct the players to use both hands. Get the players used to using both hands, then use gloves. This drill may also be used to improve catching line drives or pop ups.

### **Catching 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.

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!Remember, positive reinforcement!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### **Throwing**

Throwing is one of the most important skills in baseball. Stress to your players that accuracy is more important than speed. Teach them to throw over the top and not side arm. This creates bad habits that are hard to change later. Thumb under the ball.

### **Throwing tips**

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 look. Your nose is about as good as focal point as any.

### **The Technique of Throwing...**

#### **Windup**

Bring the throwing arm back and up, turn your front shoulder so it is pointing at the target. The glove hand points toward the target. The arm extends behind the body with wrist cocked back and elbow bent.

#### **Delivery**

as you start your delivery you pick up the lead foot and stride toward the target. As the lead foot touches the ground, the hips rotate toward the target. Release the ball in front of the body and follow-through. Always look at the target through out the throw.

#### **Follow - Through**

The follow-through ends with the throwing arm down in the front of the body and the feet almost parallel, in a balanced ready position.

### **Throwing drill...**

Use targets. Have the player start closer to the target hitting the center and as they improve move them further back.

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### **Hitting**

Hitting a baseball is probably the most difficult skill to master in baseball. Five separate hitting components should be taught to young players: 1.grip, 2.stance, 3.stride, 4.swing and 5.finish.

#### **1. Grip**

Grip the bat firmly (don't over squeeze). Position the hands together above the knob with the middle knuckles lined up. (The player at this level should be encouraged to hold onto the bat until contact is made and then to drop the bat vs. throwing it)

**Tip.** Place a glove up the base line and have the player drop the bat on the glove as they run to first base.

#### **2. Stance**

Players should be comfortable in the batters 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 parents and players on the bench encourage the batter.

Don't try to make every batter assume the same stance, but do stress these basics:

- Feet comfortably, square stance
- Toes pointing towards the tee/plate
- Knees slightly bent with weight centered on the balls of the feet.
- upper body bent slightly at the waist, eyes focused on the ball
- bat at a 45 deg angle to the hands
- elbows out from the body and flexed, pointed towards the ground

(Use easy to understand terminology when explaining this to the player)

#### **3. Stride**

The stride is a timing device and begins with the motion of the shoulders, hips, and, knees as the pitcher releases the ball.

This will become a more useful tool as the players develop but for now a small stride of the front foot toward the mound will be a good start to force some weight distributions and begin their swing sequence.

#### **4. Swing**

Adjust the tee with the ball set even to the hitter's waist. The legs and hips initiate the swing (stride). Eyes on the ball. Shoulders level; bat and head steady. The swing should be level and slightly downward bring the bat through the center of the ball. Watch the bat hit the ball; keep your head down. Extend arms and follow through. Focus on making contact and not to swing too hard.

Put 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. They will get it - repetition is the key.

#### **5. Finish**

balanced position when the swing is over. Do not watch the ball. Drop the bat and run hard to first base.

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#### **Playing the field...**

Draw large circles in the infield dirt, and ask one player to stand in each of the circles at there assigned positions and "**guard their circle.**" The player to whom 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 the other has to back off

#### **Running the bases...**

- Have the player's line up behind home plate
- Throw a ball (don't let them hit yet) into the field and then have the players run past first base into foul territory.
- Do this during the first few practices and the players will run in the correct direction each time.

After they have this down, give them a bat and let them hit the ball. (Try not to do this until they have the correct direction down first - this way they don't get too distracted!)

After they have mastered the fine art of running the bases in the correct direction, you can expand this drill by randomly yelling 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Home Run. Have the kids run the correct number of bases depending on which hit you yell out!

**Base Running tips**

Run on the balls of the feet. Look at the base you are running to, not where the ball went. Teach the players to run straight through 1st base; don't jump on it or slow down. Watch and listen for coaches instructions. Keep one foot on base leaning forward until the batter hits the ball and use the base to push off. Know where the ball is. When running the bases touch the inside corner of the base. Make sure you touch every base.

**Stations...**

Incorporate these into your practices (of course you need to have enough coaches) every station teaches a different drill. Rotate frequently to ensure keeping there attention.

**Remember:**

**You should be satisfied if the players have fun, learn the basics of baseball and are enthused to play again next year.**

**Have a great season!!!!!!!!!!**

**Sincerely,  
MYAA**