



Junior Games Pathway

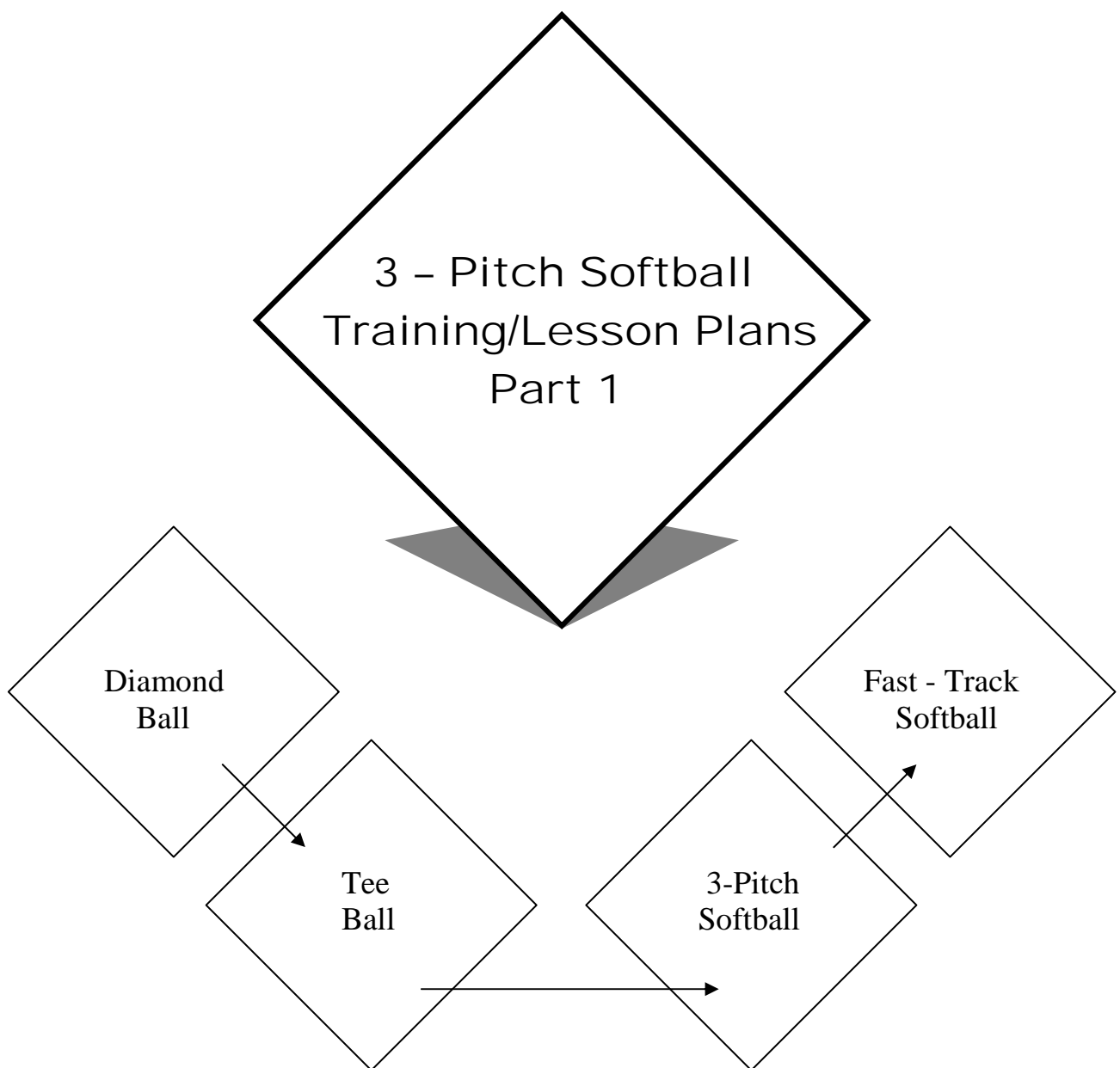


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SESSION 1
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

THROWING

Equipment

- 1 Glove per player
- 1 10.5" or 11" Incrediball per player
- 3 Tennis Balls
- 9 Markers
- Helmets (with chin straps)
- 1 Rubber ball (if hard to get try a netball)

Warm – Up

5 mins

Captain Ball

- Use a medium sized rubber ball or a netball
- Depending on the numbers, have the players make one or two single lines with a leader about 3 metres in front of each line.
- The leader throws the ball, using a chest pass, to each member of the team in turn who throws it back and then bobs down.
- The last person, on receiving the ball, calls “Up” and runs to the front throwing position.
- Meanwhile the old leader joins the front of the team.
- Continue this until the original leader is back at the front throwing position.
- The winners are the team who finishes first and sits down.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

5 mins

OVERARM THROW

Developmental Steps

1. Grip on ball

Tips:

1. Ball in fingers, not palm
2. Index and middle finger or 3 fingers on top of ball
3. Last one or two fingers closed
4. Place thumb directly under your middle and index fingers

2. Throwing Sequence

Tips:

1. Side on – feet outside shoulder width
2. Head over belly button. Hands centred and fingers on top of the ball
3. As you take the ball out of the glove bring throwing hand away from the body and up so that the elbow is higher than the back shoulder.
4. Rotate back foot bringing back heel off the ground
5. Step toward target and transfer weight to front foot (elbow stays higher than back shoulder)
6. Bring throwing arm forward at high 5 position with wrist underneath the ball (elbow stays high)
7. Throwing hand to finish at opposite knee.



G A M E

5 mins

Target Throwing

- Pairs work in straight lines facing a target five metres apart
- Each player takes a turn at throwing the ball to the target
- The receiver counts the number of successful throws out of five
- Increase the distance two steps at a time.

Variations

1. Count the number of successful throws that hit the target in 30 seconds
2. Count the total number of successful throws per pair in 1 minute
3. As above but handicap the winning player by five seconds (a challenge)
4. Change the target to which players must throw
 - Eg. Hoop on a fence
 - To a bucket
 - At a waterbomb on a fence
 - A chocolate on top of a witches hat, etc.

SESSION 2
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

CATCHING A THROWN BALL

E q u i p m e n t

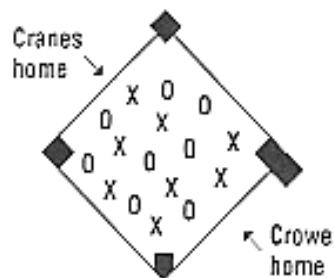
A glove per player
Match ball per player
Set of bases
Helmets
Bats
Wiffle Balls

W a r m – U p

5 mins

Crows and Cranes

- Divide the players into two groups called “Crows” and “Cranes”
- One team is given the third base line as their home and the other team has the first base line
- Every player jogs around the inside of the diamond until either ‘Crows’ or ‘Cranes’ is called out
- This team must chase their opponents and try to catch them before they cross their line.
- Those players caught join the other team.

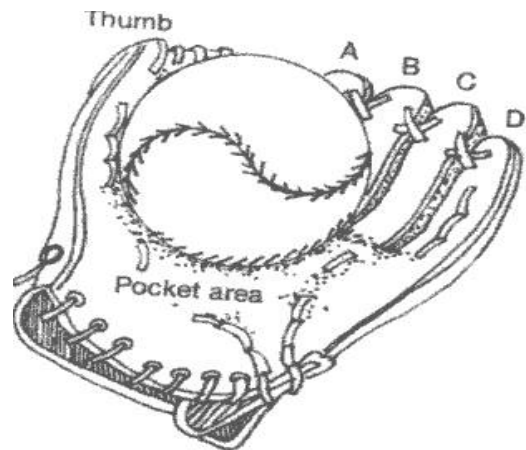


SKILL DEVELOPMENT

GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE GLOVE

TIPS

1. Place thumb in section marked *thumb*
2. 2 fingers (index and middle) in section marked *C*
3. 2 fingers (pinkie and ring) in section marked *D*
4. Catch ball in pocket of glove.
5. Squeeze thumb in glove.
6. Place throwing hand on the ball



10 mins

CATCHING A THROWN BALL

Tips:

1. Hold the glove as a target with palm facing the thrower
2. After the ball is released, move body in line with the ball
3. Adjust glove position depending on the location of the throw
 - If ball is above the waist, fingers of the glove point up
 - If the ball is below the waist, fingers of glove point down
4. Watch the ball into the glove
5. Catch the ball in the pocket of the glove, not the fingers
6. Squeeze the glove closed and cover the ball with bare hand
7. As the ball enters the glove “give” with the hands and arms to cushion its impact and draw the ball and glove towards the body.
8. Take the glove and ball to the throwing shoulder ready to throw

DRILLS

5 mins

1. Break the players into pairs and get them to practice catching the ball using the correct technique that has been discussed.

5 mins

2. Round the Bases
 - Set out the diamond at a distance of about 10 metres between each base
 - Break up the players so that there is a least one player on each base
 - Get the players to throw the ball around the diamond throwing to each base in turn

Variations

1. Get the players to add in a roll and then throw
2. Get the players to throw diagonally across the diamond

G A M E

15 mins

Danish Rounders

- The players are broken up into two teams
- One team bats while the other team fields
- The coach pitches for both teams
- The batter hits the ball and they run as many bases as they wish, but if they are caught between bases when the ball is returned to the coach they are out.
- Any number of runners are allowed on the same base and normal rules for gaining outs don't apply
- If a fly ball is caught the batter is automatically out and the runners cannot run
- Teams change over after all the batters have had a turn

(NOTE: Use foam bat with wiffle balls or foam balls)

SESSION 3
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

FIELDING A GROUND BALL

Equipment

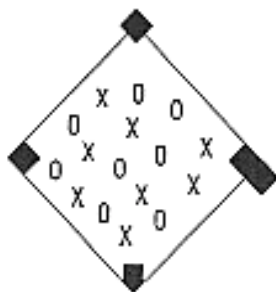
- 1 Glove per player
- 1 Softball per player
- 16 Markers
- 2 Tennis Balls
- Variety of balls

Warm – Up

5 mins

Keep It Off

- Break the players up into two even teams. Each player must have a glove.
- The game is played within the confines of the diamond
- Team mates throw the ball to one another while the opposing team tries to intercept the throws (using a wiffle ball).
- Players must not run with the ball
- The game ends after a set period of time or when a team make ten consecutive catches.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

FIELDING A GROUND BALL

- Tips**
1. Move behind the path of the ball, feet wider than shoulder width apart
 2. Bend knees, lean from the waist; weight on the balls of the feet
 3. Lean forward from the waist so that the glove touches the ground in front of the body. (Players should be able to see their elbows)
 4. Hold glove wide open facing the ball, fingers of the glove pointing down. Bare hand is close to and beside the glove
 5. Watch the middle of the ball into the glove
 6. Close the glove and cover the ball with bare hand.



10 mins

Pairs

- Rolling the ball on the ground to each other using the tips shown above.
- The players can start 2 metres apart and then one player rolls the ball and the other player throws the ball back. The players then swap roles.

Variations

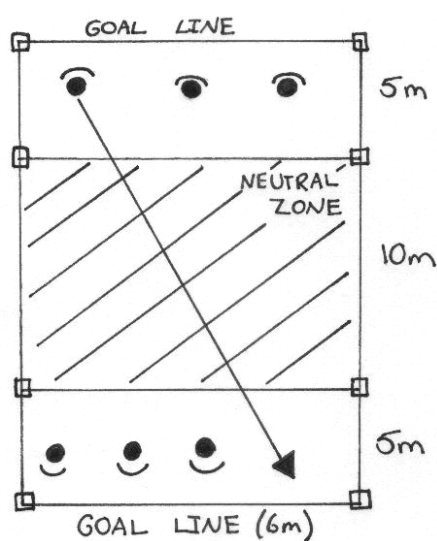
1. Use different types of balls to make the activity fun as well as interesting. (Eg. Bigger balls, smaller balls, different shaped balls, different textured balls etc)
2. Use two balls at the same time so both are rolling a ball back and forward to each other.

GAME

30mins

Roll A Goal

- Use 1 ball for each team and 8 markers per group
- The playing space should be grassed with two 20m x 6m grids
- Break the players into two groups of 6 (each group will work in their own grid space)
- Divide each group of 6 into two teams. Three players in each team.
- The two teams stand at opposite ends of the grid space
- The players must roll the ball along the ground and over the neutral zone towards their opponents. (See diagram)
- The aim being to roll the ball over the goal line before it is intercepted.
- A player from each team must roll their ball at the same time as the opposition.
- The teams score one point for each goal that they score.



Variations

1. Use more than one ball in each team at a time. This will make the game faster and more challenging.

SESSION 4
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

FIELDING A FLY BALL

Equipment

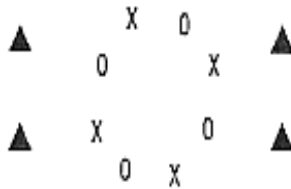
- 1 Glove per player
- 1 Softball per player
- 6 Markers
- 2 Tennis Balls

Warm – Up

5 mins

Fielding Soccer

- Form teams of 3 or 4
- Start the game using just tennis balls then advance to gloves and softballs.
- Place two markers at each end of the field to form two goals. (See Diagram)
- Players roll the ball along the ground for team mates to field
- Players cannot move with the ball and the ball cannot be lifted into the air.
- This continues until the ball passes through the cones
- The opposing team tries to intercept the ball.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

FIELDING A FLY BALL

- Tips**
1. Move feet and body under the ball
 2. Hands above the head and in front of the line of the body
 3. Hold glove wide open facing the ball, fingers of the glove pointing up
 4. Bare hand is close to and beside the glove to secure the ball.
 5. Watch the middle of the ball into the glove, close the glove and cover the ball with the bare hand.
 6. Let hands and arms **give** to soften the impact as the catch is made. Bring hands to the throwing shoulder.



Coaching Point: Calling For the Ball

Players should practice calling for the ball in order to avoid confusion and collisions.

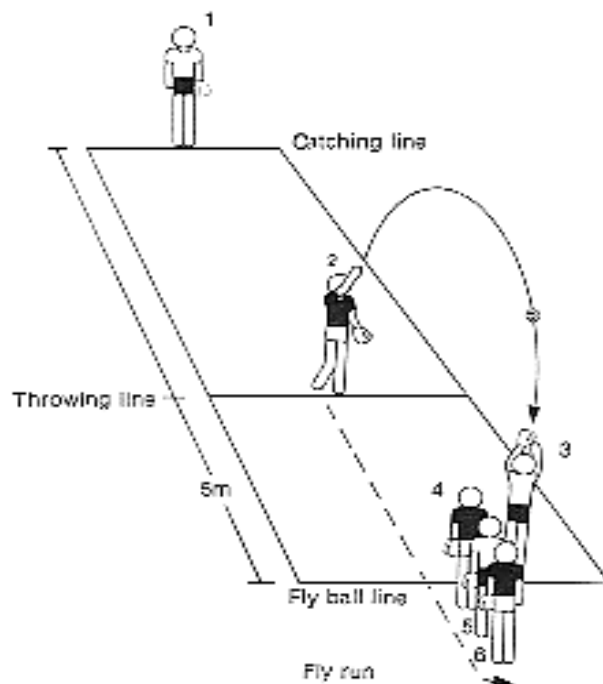
Players should call out “I’ve got it”, the players name or “Mine” each time they are preparing to catch a fly ball.

DRILL

10 mins

Fly Run

- Form groups of 3 (more than 3 can be involved though)
- Player 1 stands at the catching line, 5 metres from Player 2 who stands on the throwing line.
- The rest of the players line up 5 metres from player 2 on the fly ball line. (See Diagram)
- Player 2: Throws a fly ball to one side of player 3
Runs to line up behind player 6
- Player 3: Catches the fly ball
Throws ball to player 1
- Player 1: Runs to take up the position on the throwing line
Throws a fly ball for player 4 to catch
- Repeat until each player is back in their original position
- Practice calling for the ball each time they are preparing to catch a fly ball.



Variations

1. Use ground balls instead of fly balls or alternate between a fly ball and a ground ball.
2. After catching the thrown fly ball from player 3 , player 1 runs and places their ball on the ground beside the coach (who has replaced player 2 on the throwing line) and sprints all the way to the back of the line.
3. After catching the thrown fly ball, player 1 throws the ball to one of two receivers standing five metres to the right and left of the coach on the throwing line. (Note: If the fly ball goes to the right the ball is thrown to the receiver on the same side)

G A M E

15 mins

Force Them Back

- Use one ball per group
- The playing space is roughly half the size of a netball court, divided in half. Can be made bigger to incorporate bigger throws.
- Divide the players into teams of 3. (Roughly 4 teams)
- Team 1 stands at one half of the court with the ball and Team 2 stands in the other half.
- In turn, students throw the ball into the oppositions half.
- The ball should be caught, if it is the team that caught the ball can move forward 3 meters.
- The aim of the game is to force the opposition back to the end of the field.
- The players should attempt to make sure the fly balls that they throw are challenging.
- Encourage the players to move well into the path of the ball to trap and catch it.
- The team who forces their opposition back to the end line are the winners.

SESSION 5
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

BATTING

Equipment

1 Glove per player
12 Softballs
1 Bat and Tee per 3 players
Helmets (with chin straps)
Markers

Warm – Up

10mins

French Cricket

- Divide players into two groups of 6
- Separate the two groups enough so that they do not interfere with each other.
- Each group has one batter and the rest fielders
- The batter stands with their feet together and holds the bat in front of their legs.
- The fielders throw an Incrediball underarm and the batter hits it in any direction.
- The batter is out if the ball is caught or if it hits them on the legs.
- The batter is not required to run but they may move whilst the ball is being fielded.
- The players swap roles when the batter is out or after 10 hits.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

BATTING GRIP

Tips:

1. Hands together on the bat, a comfortable distance from the knob
- NB: If the bat is too heavy move both of the hands away from the knob of the bat until the bat can be swung comfortably.**
2. Right-handed batters place the left hand closest to the knob of the bat
 3. Wrap fingers around the handle
 4. Hold the bat in the base of the fingers not in the palm
 5. Centre the knuckles of the fingers (door knockers) so that they are in a straight line up the handle of the bat with relaxed grip.



BATTING STANCE

Tips:

1. Stance should be comfortable and balanced (equal weight on balls of both feet)
2. Feet about shoulder width apart and parallel to each other.
3. Knees slightly bent and head over belly button.
4. Stand with hips and shoulders facing the plate, front shoulder points to the pitcher.
5. Arms comfortably away from the body with elbows bent and bat held roughly over the shoulder.
6. Head and eyes level.

BATTING SWING

Tips:

1. Front foot takes a small step toward the pitcher. Hands move slightly back.
(NB this sends a signal to be ready to hit the ball).
2. Pivot on the ball of the back foot (squash the bug) allowing hip rotation (This foot must remain in contact with the ground).
3. Swing bat through by turning hips in the direction of the pitch and straightening the arms (ie. Belly button rotates to pitcher).
4. Follow through to finish swing at the back of the front shoulder
5. Head and eyes remain still and on the ball
6. Shoulders should be level throughout the swing.



When teaching batting it is important to remember safety at all times. When batting players must wear a helmet and ensure that all players are a clear and safe distance from the batter.

10 mins

1. Batting Technique Drill

- Form groups of three.
- All groups must have a bat, a tee, 4 balls, a glove each and a helmet.
- Get the players to practice their technique, by hitting the ball off the tee, before they enter the following game.

5 mins

2. Tracking Drill #1 (No bat required)

- Form groups of three
- The coach throws five balls past the batter to the catcher
- The batter (without the bat) stands opposite the plate and watches (tracks) the ball from the release point past the plate and to the catcher.

Tracking Drill #2 (Bat required but no swing)

- Same formation as Tracking Drill #1
- The batter practices grip and stance in the batter's box and takes a small step towards the pitcher (BUT DOES NOT SWING) on each release.
- Again focus on tracking the ball from the coach to the catcher and look to sight the middle of the ball.

5 mins

3. Contact Drill

- As before, now the batter makes contact with the middle of the ball for five pitches.
- Catchers must wear protective equipment.

10 mins

4. Side Toss Drill (Challenge for batters using wiffle balls)

- As for the contact drill but the coach kneels in the opposite batting box and pops the ball up (to waist height) and in front of the plate.

GAME

15 mins

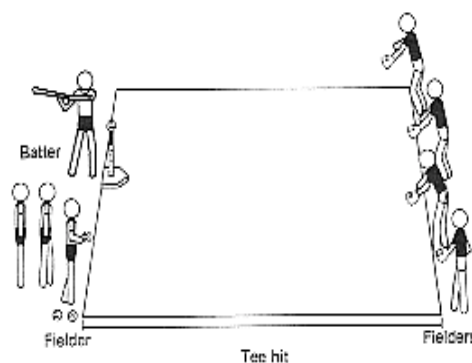
Tee Hit (Objective: Batting Technique - Hit through the centre of the ball)

- Form two even groups
- One group are the batters and the other group are the fielders
- The batters collect 4 balls, a bat, a batting tee and a helmet and stand on one side of the playing grid.
- The fielders collect a glove each and stand 20 metres away on the other side of the grid.
- One of the batters is the feeder and places the ball on the tee for the batter
- The fielders field and return the ball to the waiting batters who put them on the ground for the feeder.

It is a good idea for the feeder to be the coach.

- The batters have 6 hits each and then take turns at being the feeder.
- Once all the batters have batted, the two teams swap.

(NB: If using more than one batter at a time, extend the distance of the fielders to approximately 40 metres)



Variations

1. Score points for hitting grounders past markers/fielders
2. No points for fly balls
3. Score points for hitting the ball between markers
4. Rotate fielding positions



1. Batters must look before they swing
2. Fielders should roll the ball on the ground into the feeder
3. Feeder should stand on opposite side of the batter.

SESSION 6
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

FIELDING POSITIONS

Equipment

A full set of bases
Bats
Balls
1 Glove per player
A batting tee
6 Witches hats or Markers
Soccer ball

Warm – Up

5 mins

Defend the Cone

- Set up a square with witches hats or markers
- Place 2 cones (one on either side of the square) facing one another.
- Break the players into two even teams
- Start the game with the ball in the centre of the square and players pass and dribble the ball to hit their cone.
- The other team must ‘defend the cone’ so that they don’t score
- Every time the “cone” is hit by a team a point is scored

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

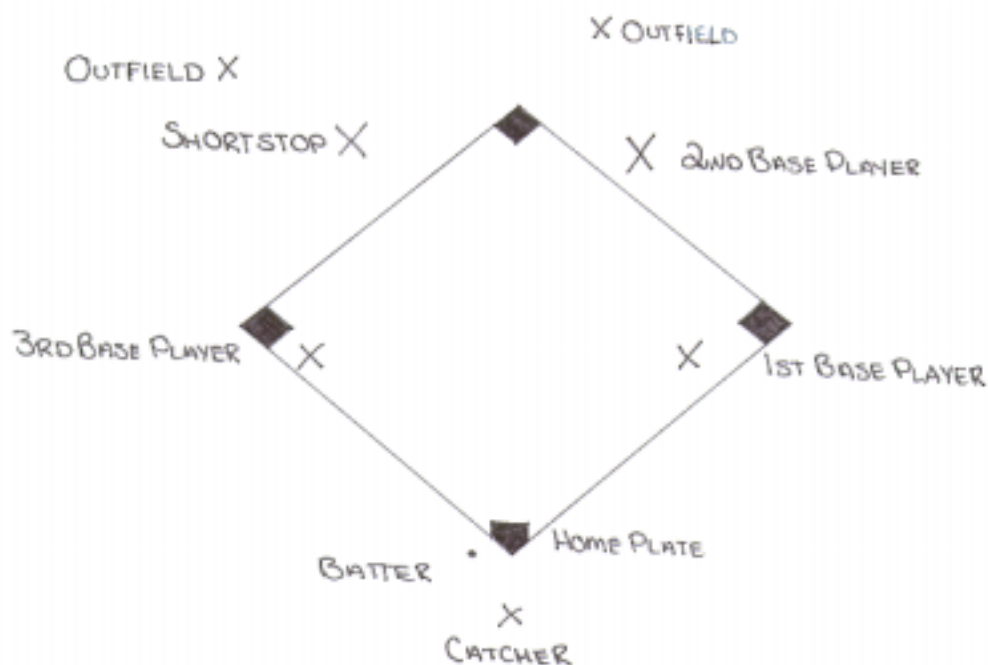
10 mins

FIELDING POSITIONS

Tips:

1. Explain the fielding positions
2. Explain the roles of the infield and outfield
3. Shortstop and second base player share second base depending on which side of the diamond the ball is hit to.

Objective: Team work and Positional Strategy



Further Information is found in the booklet published by ASF and available through either Softball Queensland or Softball Australia called: Basic Fastpitch Skills and Playing Tips

GAME

15-20 mins

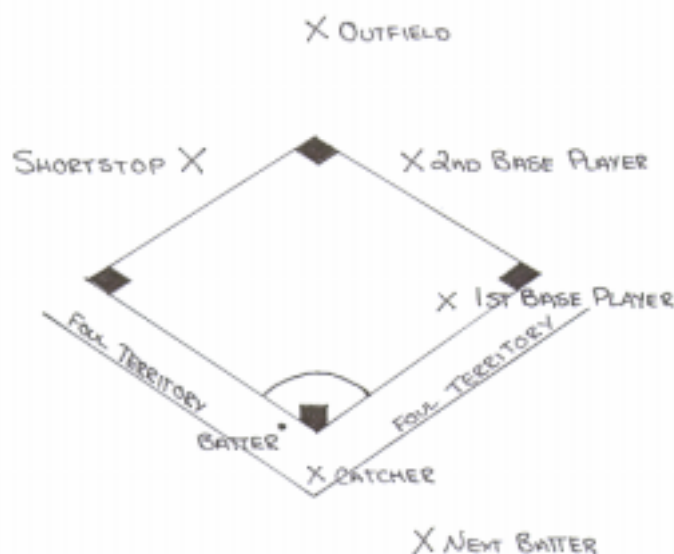
Game Rotation

- Put the players into fielding positions, there must be two batters (helmets must be worn)
- If all positions cannot be filled that is ok
- The fielders take up positions on the field, rotating after each batter.
- One batter stands at home plate, ready to hit the pitched ball
- The other batter is waiting to bat and must be clear of danger
- **The Batter:** Hits the ball into fair territory
Runs around the bases
Scores a point for each base they successfully make
Moves to take up a position in the outfield.
- **The Fielders:** Get the batters out by:
 - 1) Catching the ball
 - 2) Throwing the ball to the base before a runner gets there
 - 3) Tagging the runner with the ball
- Continue the game until all players have had at least 2 bats

Objective: 1. Batting Technique
2. Game play for the fielders

Variations

1. Game Rotation Tee Ball
 - As previous but the batters hit off the tee
2. Game Rotation Throw Ball
 - As previous but the batters throw the ball into fair territory





Junior Games Pathway

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Sport Start ©

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Further information can be obtained from the Australian Sports Commission:

PO Box 176 BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Telephone: 02 6214 1111

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www.ausport.gov.au

Additional Resources

Additional Resources that can be used in conjunction with these training/lesson plans are provided by many organisations including:

Softball Australia (ASF Inc)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Fastpitch Skills and Playing Tips • Coaching Youth Softball • Softball – Orientation to Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Softball – ‘Top Sport Series’ • Basic Fastpitch Skills and Playing Tips • Level 1 Coaching Manual
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Softball Queensland (QSA Inc)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 14 Regional Development Camp Handbook (players and coaches) • Teaching the Hitter by Bob Crudgington 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting Drill Cards (batting drills on laminated cards for circuit activities) • Teaching the Pitcher by Bob Crudgington
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