

# A League

## Stretching and Warmups

- Players should get to the field 15-20 mins before game
- Introduce simple stretches and warmups before doing any throwing or hitting
- After a few games, elect one player team captain for the games to help lead team in stretching/warmups (Note: encourage the captain to call outs and play, i.e., “2 outs and play is at 1<sup>st</sup>, etc.” when in the field during the game). This player can receive a game ball.

## Throwing>Grip>Seams

- 3 fingers ok if small hands
- 4 vs. 2 seam –always throw 4 seams in the field
- Position of thumb should be at 6 o’clock or as close as possible

## Throwing>Ball Rotation

- Rotation axis should be almost horizontal –use black electrical tape
- Drills> “10 in a row with black stripe”

## Fielding>Hands> Glove Position

- Use bare handed catching to remind kids of proper glove orientation
- Drills> “Around the clock”

## Fielding>Positioning>Ready Position

- On balls of feet; “basketball player on defense” ready to move in any direction
- Glove touching ground

## Fielding> Positioning>Calling the Ball

- Demonstrate each fielder’s “zone of responsibility”
- Call loudly “I got it, I got it!”

## Hitting>Grip>Hand Alignment

- Demonstrate the “index finger point” grip
- No clenching
- Positioning of hands and elbows

## Hitting>Stance>Alignment to Plate

- Demonstrate the “foot, step, back foot” method to align to plate
- Straight back; no hunching over

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Hitting>Stance>Loading the Back Foot

- Legs bent, similar to “ready position,” most weight on back foot

Swing>Using a Tee

- Tee placement: should be slightly in front of plate, not directly on it. Locate “sweet spot” on bat in relation to the ball just prior to wrist break
- Make it easy to start; place ball height high in strike zone –between belly button and chest
- Look for:
  - Proper grip
  - Position relative to plate
  - Bend knees and proper loading of back foot

Running> Footwork>Rounding vs. Running Through 1st

- Running drills to ensure turn is to right after running through 1<sup>st</sup>
- Always run out a batted ball

Running> Footwork> Eyes on Ball

- When rounding or running through always locate the ball; esp. on an overthrow; practice returning to bag after rounding with eyes focused on the ball
- Drills>“Count the fingers”