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| 5 mins | <p>INTRODUCTION – What we are focusing on today:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fielding 2. Pitching/Catching 3. Having fun | <p>After reviewing the drills below, introduce the practice to your players by giving an overview of the practice plan in your own words</p> <p>Get pitchers through drills first so they can practice pitching. Utilize players or parents as catchers.</p> <p>Take water breaks when changing station set ups or when players have completed their turns at stations.</p> | |
| 20 mins | <p>WARM UP</p> <p>See Softball Warm Up document for reference, if needed. The Outlaws standard warm up should be used before both practice and games, at all age levels.</p> | | |
| 10 mins | <p>FIELDING – Bare hand grounders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners rolls grounders to each other • 10x straight • 10x forehand • 10x backhand • Players receive ball with two hands, bring up to throw position before rolling ball back to partner <p>TAKE AWAY: receiving grounders with proper mechanics</p> | <p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular softballs | <p>KEYS TO WATCH FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start in ready position – balanced, butts down, hands low • Players charge the ball, use two hands, bring up to throw position • Forehand grounders received with glove foot forward • Backhand grounders, glove hand forward, body rotated <p>LEVEL UP OPTION: partner rolls a mix of grounders (unpredictable)</p> |
| 10 mins | <p>FIELDING – Infield grounders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have 2-3 players at each field position • Balls are hit/rolled to each position, players rotate turns • Players receive ball and throw to 1st • Each player receives 3 and then the whole field moves positions <p>TAKE AWAY: receiving and throwing ball with proper mechanics</p> | <p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bases • Regular softballs • Player gear (fielding masks, glove) | <p>KEYS TO WATCH FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players start in ready position • Players communicate • Players use good mechanics, watching the ball to the glove, throwing to targets • Teach “give up the base, save the ball” on errant throws <p>LEVEL UP OPTIONS: Double play scenarios; covering bases, e.g. work coverage of 2nd base player covering 1st base when 1st has to make the throw</p> |
| 10 mins | <p>FIELDING - Double play drill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players in defensive ready position • Ball is hit, working all positions • Players work double play scenarios • Rotate players through positions <p>TAKE AWAY: double play awareness and skill</p> | <p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bases • Regular softballs • Player gear (fielding masks, glove) | <p>KEYS TO WATCH FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are in ready position • Players communicate • Players charging ball and using proper mechanics • Players are rotating positions <p>LEVEL UP OPTION: work in covering bases on throws</p> |

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| <p>15-20 mins</p> <p>This can be done as a station alongside other drills</p> | <p>PITCHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break out pitchers and catchers to work separately • 10 wrist flicks 6-8’ away from catcher • 10 throws, using 9 o’clock arm position, 20’ away • 10 throws using 9 o’clock position with step, 20’ away • 10 full windmills, with step, standing sideways to catcher, 25’ away • 10-15 full wind-up windmills, full distance - 30’ (U10), 35’ (U12), 38’ (U14) | <p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular softballs • Player gear (fielding mask, glove, catcher gear) • Net (optional for pitching into net if not enough catchers) | <p>KEYS TO WATCH FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full and proper warm up • Proper grip, arm mechanics • Strong, fast arm • Correct release point at hip (too soon goes low, too late goes high) • Follow through • Pitchers take time with each pitch, breathe, don’t rush |
| <p>10 mins</p> | <p>FIELDING - Tennis Ball Drill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player stands in field, with helmet on, in ready position about 80’ from coach • Coach “serves” a fly ball using tennis ball and tennis racket • Player runs under the ball and lets it hit their helmet • Rotate through players, giving each a few turns <p>TAKE AWAY: build confidence and positional awareness for fly balls</p> | <p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennis racket • Tennis balls • Helmets | <p>KEYS TO WATCH FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are watching the ball • Players are moving quickly to position under the ball • Players communicate “mine” <p>LEVEL UP OPTIONS: serve more challenging fly balls, requiring greater speed or movement</p> |
| <p>10 mins</p> | <p>FIELDING – Outfield, fly balls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place 4 cones 20’ apart in a square • Players get in ready position on the outside of each cone • Each player gets 3 fly balls (sent to center of square) while at each cone, rotate through players • Players catch and throw back to designated receiver <p>TAKE AWAY- receiving, then throwing in fly balls with proper mechanics</p> | <p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 cones • Softballs (softies or regular) • Player gear (fielding masks, gloves) • Pitching machine (optional) | <p>KEYS TO WATCH FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players starts in ready position • Players use proper mechanics, drop step, eye on ball, run with glove down, two handed catches • Players communicate “mine” • Return throws are targeted and clean <p>LEVEL UP OPTION: add a cone at the front of the square, in the middle, simulate a hit over their head</p> |
| <p>5-10 mins</p> | <p>TEAM MEETING and CLEAN UP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review concepts from practice • Sandwich critique - what was done well, what needs work, conclude with another positive take away • End with TEAM CHEER <p>TAKE AWAY: Practice ends on a positive note</p> | <p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team cleans up – communal equipment, personal gear and trash | <p>KEYS TO WATCH FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEVER LEAVE until all players have been picked up • All equipment and trash is taken away • Field equipment returned to lock box (if applicable) |