



Session # 8

Equipment: Medballs, Agility Ladder, Surgical Tubing, 1 batting cage (utilize more if you have them), 4 hitting stations w/tees, L-screen, 3 buckets of baseballs, 12 orange cone

Time	LESSON PLAN - Team tactic day		
	Name of Activity	Description	Key Teaching Points
0:00	Warm - Up	Cornerstone Dynamic Warm-Up	1.) Movement Prep 2.) Improve Agility 3.) Rotational Explosive Movement
0:15	Baserunning	1st and 3rd offense* -Straight Steal -Delayed Steal -Other special plays	Reading throw to 2nd, read MIF
0:25	Throwing Program	Cornerstone Throwing Program* Daily Dozen Pitcher Drills*	Coaches stay with groups to ensure proper drill work
0:40	Team Time #1 Water Break	Fast Paced PFP Bunting 1.) Bunt for a hit 2.) Sacrifice bunt 3.) Safety Squeeze	Footwork, keeping your body under control, firm accurate throws 1.) On the line or foul ball 2.) First bunt on the line, get 2nd down 3.) Show late, down 1st base line
0:55	Team Time #2	Cutoffs and relays -Cut off doubles in alleys and down lines -Single cuts to 3rd and home -Tandem relay sure double	1.) Proper angles 2.) Low throws through cut man 3.) Trailer at 10-15 feet, set up 3rd
1:10	Team Time #3	Pop-up communication	Cornerstone communication system
1:20	Team Time #4	Bunt Defense	Get to ball quickly, be under control, get an out!
1:30	Team Time #5	1st and 3rd Defense	
1:45	Team Time #6	21 Outs	Make Routine Plays

End of Practice Announcements:

Notes:

Practice Resources:

1st and 3rd Offense

Whether you are running a straight steal, a delayed steal, or some other type of special play, the runner at third base has the hardest job. They have to read two main reads, the ball, and the middle infield. They have to make sure the ball passes the pitcher, and they watch to make sure no middle infielders are passing in front of the bag that could cut the ball.

To set up this drill, put runners at first and third, have a pitcher (could be a coach), a catcher, and two middle infielders. The pitcher delivers home, the catcher throws to the base or back to the pitcher like he would in a game.

The middle infielders can either cover like a throw through (one covers the bag, one backs up) or have one cover the bag and one cut in front. If the middle infielders cover like a throw through, and the ball gets past the pitcher (read trajectory) the runner at third takes off. If the ball is low and cut-able by the pitcher, or if a middle infielder cuts in front of the bag, they runner should hold.

This is also a time to work on any special first and third plays you might have.

Fast Paced PFP

Caution: This drill needs to be done slowly at first with the utmost caution to ensure every player understands what is going on and knows where to stand to be safe during the drill. If at any point the coach sees an unsafe situation, he should yell “STOP!” and the all players stop immediately and do not throw the ball any more.

Set up: You will need an entire infield at their positions, and several pitchers in two lines, one in foul territory on the first base side, and one in foul territory on the first base side. Each line will supply one pitcher who will set up slightly on their side of the mound. Each pitcher will need one coach working with them and someone catching for them to keep things moving quickly.

If the coach on the first base side:

- 1.) Hits a ground ball to the first baseman (who is playing deep), the player's execute a 3-1 putout.
- 2.) Hits a ground ball right back at the pitcher, he initiates a 1-6-3 double play.

- 3.) Rolls a ball right down the first base line, he fields it like a bunt, clears the line to the inside and throws to first base.
- 4.) Hits a ball between the first baseman and pitcher, they try to get an out at first base (using the method in the "PFP" blog post)
- 5.) Hits a ground ball to the second baseman (perhaps this draws the first baseman away from the bag) they turn a 4-6-3 or 4-6-1 double play if the first baseman leaves the bag.

If the coach on the third base side:

- 1.) Hits a ground ball right back at the pitcher, they initiate a 1-2-3 double play (no throw from the catcher).
- 2.) Rolls a ball down the third base line, the pitcher fields a bunt and throws to the third baseman covering the bag.
- 3.) Rolls a bunt right back at the pitcher, and yells "SQUEEZE!" the pitcher will field the ball and shovel it to home plate.
- 4.) Rolls a bunt hard down the third base line past the pitcher, the third baseman will charge, field the bunt, and perform their footwork to first base (no throw).

Again, make sure each player knows their responsibility on each play. Once they understand what they are doing, have pitchers sprint from foul territory to their side of the mound and begin the next rep as soon as the ball and other pitcher is off the field.

Bunting

Set up one or two throw down plates in right or left field. Have a coach or pitcher throwing at each one. Set up three lanes of cones, one for the first sacrifice bunt attempt from the foul line out about 6 feet, one from that cone out another 6 feet for the second sacrifice attempt, and another lane of cones from the first base foul line about 10 feet for the safety squeeze lane.

ADD competition: Each player gets 5 bunt attempts. The coach calls out the situation right before delivering the pitch, such as "Bunt for a hit," or "safety squeeze" and the batter has to bunt the ball into the appropriate lane. They get 2 points for getting it in the first sac bunt/bunt for a hit lane and 1 point for getting it in the 2nd sac bunt or safety squeeze lane correctly.

Cutoffs and Relays

Depending on where your team is with cutoffs and relays, you could either use “ghost runners” or real runners in this drill. I recommend using real runners whenever possible because it can be difficult for kids to imagine where the ball is or needs to go without a runner.

Cover the following situations all with 0 out:

- 1.) No runner on
 - a.) Ball hit down the line
 - b.) Ball hit in the gap, but not to the fence
- 2.) Runner on 1st
 - a.) Routine single, stop 1st to 3rd
 - b.) Single away from outfielder, keep batter off 2nd to keep double play in order
 - c.) Sure double
- 3.) Runner on 2nd (or 1st and 2nd)
 - a.) Routine single, play at the plate
 - b.) Single away from outfielder, keep batter off 2nd to keep double play in order
 - c.) Deep fly ball, runner tagging to 3rd base.
 - d.) Sure double, tandem relay, line up 3rd base.
- 4.) Runners on 1st and 3rd
 - a.) Routine single, stop 1st to 3rd
 - b.) Shallow fly ball, play at the plate
 - c.) Deep fly ball, keep runner at 1st and keep double play in order
 - d.) Single away from outfielder, keep double play in order
 - e.) Sure double, tandem relay line up play at the plate
- 5.) Runner at 3rd
 - a.) Fly ball, play at the plate
 - b.) Every other situation plays like there is nobody on
- 6.) Runners at 2nd and 3rd
 - a.) Shallow fly ball, play at the plate
 - b.) Deep fly ball, keep runner of third
 - c.) Single at outfielder, play at the plate
 - d.) Single away from outfielder, keep batter off second to keep double play in order

Cornerstone Communication Drill

With a player at each position, one coach hits pop-ups to the right side of the infield/outfield and one hits to the left side of the infield/outfield. They try to hit pop-ups in the “Bermuda triangles” of the field between three defenders.

Players use the following communication system.

Infielders call the ball by saying "I got it." Outfielders call the ball by saying "ball, ball, ball." Outfielders have priority over infielders, centerfielders have priority over corner outfielders, the shortstop has priority over every other infielder.

After the player calls the ball, all other players "echo" his name to give him confidence to go after the ball.

Bunt Defense

Principles of bunt defense:

- 1.) As soon as the bunt is shown, the defenders break to their responsibilities. Pitchers should finish their pitch, then break to their responsibility.
- 2.) Get to the ball as quickly as possible.
- 3.) Third basemen should get to the line as quickly as possible, then attack the ball from the line.
- 4.) Always be under control.
- 5.) Get an out, anywhere.
- 6.) Make sure every base is covered (especially 3rd on bunts w/ runner on 1st)

Calling a bunt defense:

The following numbers give you a baseline for calling a bunt defense. You can decide what you want the "trigger" to be. For example, you may call three numbers and have the first, second, or third number be the "hot" number. If the last number is the "hot" number, then 451 would be bunt defense "1."

Bunt defenses:

"1" - 3rd baseman charges and is responsible for the 3rd base side. The pitcher charges as is responsible for the middle third of the field. The 1st baseman charges and is responsible for the 1st base side. The 2nd baseman covers 1st base. The SS covers 2nd base. Whoever doesn't field the ball between the P and 3rd baseman is responsible for covering 3rd base after the ball is fielded.

"3" - 3rd baseman stays at third and only charges after a hard bunt that the pitcher cannot get. The pitcher covers the third base half of the field, the 1st baseman charges when bunt is shown, and the 2nd baseman breaks to cover first base. The second baseman covers short. This bunt defense is generally run with runners on second, or first and second.

"5" - The 3rd baseman charges on bunt and is responsible for the third base half of the field, the first baseman stays unless there is a hard bunt past the pitcher at him. The pitcher is re-

sponsible for the first base side of the bag. The 2nd baseman backs up the throw to first base, unless the first baseman vacates the bag to get a bunted ball, then they first. The shortstop covers second. This bunt defense is generally run with runners at first.

1st and 3rd Defense Philosophy

There are a number of 1st and 3rd defenses that work at a variety of levels. During this segment, it is best to let players make mistakes, discuss the mistakes, then correct them. Ultimately, your 1st and 3rd defense will depend on what the inning, outs, and score situation dictates.

- 1.) Early in the game, close game, get an out.
 - 2.) Early in the game, down multiple runs, save the run.
 - 3.) Early in the game, up my multiple runs, get the out.
 - 4.) Late and up by 2 or more, get the out.
 - 5.) Late and up by 1, tied, or save the run.
 - 6.) Any time there are two outs, remember, if you can get the out *before* the run scores, the inning is over.
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1st and 3rd Defense

Here is our basic 1st and 3rd defense. There are many others that people use and this one puts a lot of pressure on our 2nd baseman and catcher. Plus it requires players to know and execute the above score, inning, out situations.

- 1.) Catcher throws the ball right to second base
 - 2.) The SS covers the bag
 - 3.) The 2nd baseman comes in from his position until the ball crosses the hitting zone (defending against hit and run), then he breaks over in front of 2nd base.
 - 4.) The 2nd baseman reads the baserunner at third. If he breaks for home, and the out, score, innings combination dictate, the 2nd baseman cuts the ball and throws to the plate. If the runner at third holds, the 2nd baseman lets the ball go through.
 - 5.) The SS must expect the ball to come through EVERY TIME.
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Defending a Walk-off

The ultimate goal of a 1st and 3rd walk off is to have the players analyze the inning, out, and score situation prior to it happening, and have them react in accordance to that analysis. The same rules apply as for the 1st and 3rd defense.

To defend a walk off with a right handed pitcher on the mound (this is unlikely to occur with a left handed pitcher on the mound):

- 1.) Everyone on the field yells “STEP OFF!” to the pitcher.
 - 2.) The pitcher steps off the back of the rubber.
 - 3.) The pitcher freezes the runner on third by making eye contact and showing the ball.
 - 4.) The pitcher turns and looks to the second baseman who has come straight into the baseline from his position.
 - 5a.) If the runner has either walked off or is jogging, the pitcher will throw to the second baseman in the baseline making it approximately a 60 foot rundown.
 - 5b.) If the runner is sprinting, the second baseman will cross his arms in front of his chest as he runs to the baseline staying out of the way of the runner. If this happens, the pitcher will throw the ball to the shortstop at second base.
 - 6.) The pitcher will go to first base after the throw to get in the rundown if necessary.
 - 7.) Regardless of where the ball goes, the goal will be to execute a rundown keeping the score, inning, and out situation in mind (see 1st and 3rd defense).
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21 Outs

Put at least one fielder at each position (including catcher and pitcher). The goal of the game is to get 21 consecutive outs (a full 7 inning game). If your league only plays 6 inning games, call this game 18 outs.

Hit routine ground balls or fly balls to varying positions in the field. They must field the ball cleanly and throw accurately to first base to record an out, or catch the ball in the air. If someone makes an error, other infielders get to “pick them up” by turning a double play on the next ground ball. If they make an error then fail to turn a double play, they will start over at zero. Leave plenty of time for this drill as it is difficult, and your team will need to start over several times.

This tactical game is about making routine plays, so try to hit fungo to your fielders that will result in a routine play. If you hit a line drive or ball in the gap that outfielders can't get to, don't count it. This is supposed to be 21 routine plays.

VARIATION: Put a clock on your player and require that each out be recorded in under 4.5 seconds.

VARIATION #2: Add runners make the game more like an actual game.