

Guide to Coaching a Youth Softball Team

Table of Contents

| | | | |
|--|--------|---|---------|
| Introduction to Coaching Youth Softball | 2 | Game Equipment | 17 |
| CHAPTER 1 BEING A SOFTBALL COACH | | Game Schedules | 17 |
| What is Involved in Coaching | 3 | Warm-Ups | 17 |
| Getting Certified to Coach | 3 | Game Play | 17 |
| Finding an Assistant Coach | 3 | CHAPTER 5 FIRST AID PROCEDURES | |
| Code of Conduct | 3 | Abrasions | 18 |
| Getting a Team | 4 | Lacerations | 18 |
| Game and Practice Schedules | 4 | Nosebleeds | 18 |
| Meeting the Players and Parents | 4 | Tooth Loss | 19 |
| CHAPTER 2 SOFTBALL FIELD AND PLAYER POSITIONS | | Sprains | 19 |
| Softball Field Diagram | 5 | Broken Bones | 19 |
| Softball Positions | 5 | Asthma | 19 |
| Assigning Player Positions | 6 | Bruises | 20 |
| CHAPTER 3 PRACTICES | | CPR | 20 - 21 |
| Practice Equipment | 7 | CHAPTER 6 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS | |
| Warm-Ups & Stretches | 7 | Youth Softball Athletic Coordinators | 22 |
| Throwing Drills | 9 | Make-up Games | 22 |
| Pitching Drills | 9 - 15 | Rain Out Line | 22 |
| Base - running Drills | 15 | End of Season Awards | 22 |
| Additional Web Sites for Drills | 16 | Handling Complaints | 22 |
| CHAPTER 4 GAMES | | | |

Welcome to Coaching Youth Softball

First and foremost, thank you for deciding to coach a youth softball team. Volunteer coaches are a vital aspect to the City of Aiken Parks, Recreation & Tourism softball league. The season would be incomplete without the help from you and other volunteer coaches. It is the coaches that teach players the fundamentals of the game, the value of team work, and discipline to play the game.

We at Citizens Park understand that most youth softball coaches are parents volunteering to coach their child's team. We also understand that the rules, regulations, and fundamentals of the game may not be known to all parents that are asked to coach their child's team. Citizens Park is dedicated to making youth softball coaching an easy and painless process for you. Through intensive research, we here at Citizens Park have created softball manual that will assist you in coaching your team. First time coaches will find this manual to be helpful in learning the rules and fundamentals of the game. Returning coaches will perhaps find new drills or ideas to incorporate in to their coaching technique. Within this manual you will find information on becoming a softball coach, diagrams of the softball field and player positions, ideas for practices and games, detailed descriptions of first aid procedures, and a section for miscellaneous items. The softball material covered in this manual pertains to the basics of the game. It is intended to give ideas on how to coach a youth softball team from the perspective of a first time coach.

Thank you again for taking time to coach a youth softball team. Good luck with the upcoming season!

Citizens Park Staff

Being a Softball Coach

There is more to being a softball coach than just showing up for practices and games. Being a softball coach means becoming a role model and friend to all players on your team.

Coaching a youth softball team requires commitment, dedication, and an overall enjoyment of athletics. Almost all of the coaches for Citizens Park’s softball teams are parents that have volunteered or been asked to coach their child’s team. Many coaches know the rules of the game and have coached for a season or two, and there are some coaches that are new to softball and need assistance in learning about the game. We gladly offer coaching clinics and assist in any way we can to help our coaches be the best they can be.

What is Involved in Coaching

REQUIRED FORMS

 Coach’s Information Sheet

 Coach’s Code of Ethics


 Background Check

In order to become a coach for one of the youth softball teams, there are a few requirements that have to be met. Each potential coach must fill out a *Coach’s Information Sheet*, a *Coach’s Code of Ethics*, and have a *Background Check* performed on them. The background check is a procedure the City of Aiken Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department does to ensure the safety and well being of all players in relation to the individuals assigned to coach a given team. It is done free of charge to the potential coach and all results are confidential.

Getting Certified to Coach

Individuals interested in becoming a youth softball coach are required to be National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) certified. The certification includes participation in two NYSCA interactive video training clinics, completion of a 15 question multiple choice initial level coach’s exam, and completed Coaches Code of Ethics. The first video is an introduction to coaching youth sports and is 82 minutes long. It is after this video that the exam is taken. The second video is specified for coaching youth softball and gives tips and demonstrations of drills and concepts to be used during coaching. This second video is 68 minutes long. After the NYSCA certification a NYSCA membership card will be issued to you. The membership is renewed annually. A mailing will be sent to you asking if you wish to renew, simply fill out the form and turn it in to Citizens Park.

NYSCA REQUIREMENTS

 Coach’s Exam

 Intro. Coaching Video

 Softball Coaching Video

Finding an Assistant Coach

Most coaches opt to have an assistant coach to aide them during practices and games. Since many coaches are working parents, having an assistant coach is beneficial on days that work would prevent you from making it to practices or games on time.

Conduct

1. No parents or spectators are allowed on the field (area inside the fence).
2. Use or display of alcohol, tobacco products, or illicit drugs is prohibited during games or practices.
3. Profanity of any kind is prohibited.

4. Unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the player, coaches, or spectators will not be tolerated. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of his team's fans. If a coach cannot control a fan, APRT staff should be notified immediately.
5. Coaches that are ejected from a game are subject to the following disciplinary actions.
 - a. 1st Offense- suspension for the next game.
 - b. 2nd Offense- Suspension for the remainder of the season and tournament.
 - c. If a coach is ejected two times during the season, he will not be eligible to be an All-Star coach.
- Ejected coaches must leave the dugout and the field area immediately upon ejection. They may continue to watch the game as a spectator, however, may not interact whatsoever with the umpires. This will result in a forfeit.
- Any suspension may be appealed to APRT Staff for review.

Getting a Team

There will be three different divisions to coach, a 9 & under, 12 & under, and an 18 & under. The 12 & under and 18 & under league will have tryouts and a draft. A softball draft is held for children ages 10 – 12 and 13 -18. During the draft, coaches observe players as they execute various softball drills and determine which players they would like to have on their team. The coaches then meet and pick players to be on their team. All players will be on a team, regardless of where they place in the draft. The 9 & under league does not have a draft, a player is placed on a team by the APRT Staff.

Game and Practice Schedules

A coaches meeting will be held to assign practice places, days, and times for each team per every age division. Practice days available are either on Monday thru Friday. It is up to the coach, and assistant coach, to pick which set of days practice will be held on. Locations for practices are assigned to the coaches by the Athletic Coordinator overseeing the given age group. Practice times are at the discretion of the coaches. It is the coaches' responsibility to inform all parents of the days and times that the team will be having practices.

Meeting the Players and Parents

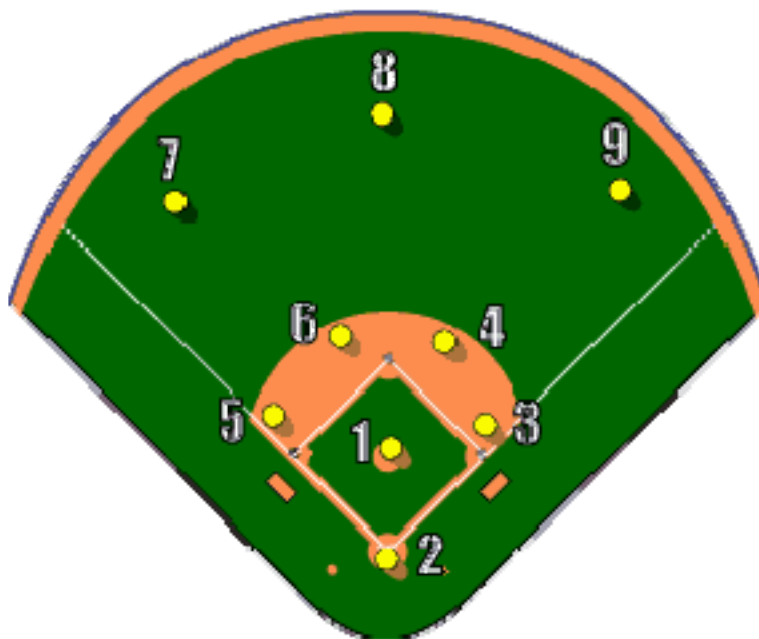
It is the responsibility of the coach to contact all parents and inform them that they will be the coach of their child's softball team. Once teams, practice schedules, games schedules, and equipment bags have been assigned, most coaches have a meeting with the parents and players prior to beginning the season. In the meeting they formally introduce themselves to the players and parents, let parents know about practice and games schedules, have a contact list made, distribute uniforms, and get to know everyone involved with the team. Discuss the goal of the softball program, your goal as a coach, and the upcoming season with parents. Ask if any parents are interested in volunteering for something such as bench management, refreshment schedule, party planning, or making important phone calls. Also let parents know about any discipline guidelines that you set for the team. Discuss with parents any **medical conditions** their child has that you should be aware of. Some conditions could be allergies, asthma, or even heart conditions. Have each parent let you know what the condition is, the symptoms of it, and how to treat it. Ask parents if you should keep medications on you at practices and games for the players. Being informed about the medical conditions of your softball players and what you can do if they occur can save their lives.

Softball Field and Player Positions

One of the most important aspects of coaching a softball team is being familiar with the layout of the softball field and the position of players on the field.

The game of softball is much like any other sport that children play: it has set rules and regulations, a specific playing field, and players are given a position to play the game. This chapter will give an overview of the softball field, player positions and their related responsibilities, and give ideas on how to assign players to positions.

Softball Field Diagram



Softball Positions

The number of players that can be on the field during a game is 9 but a team can start with 8 players. Listed below is description of each softball positions and some responsibilities for each one.

- **P: Pitcher** (Position "number" 1). While the primary role of a pitcher is to pitch the ball, she must also be able to field her position. This consists of fielding ground balls and bunts up the middle of the diamond.
- **C: Catcher** (2). Wears protective equipment: mask, special helmet, shin guards, chest protector. Uses special glove designed as a padded target. She must catch, or at least block, all the pitches to prevent baserunners from advancing, in addition to preventing stolen bases with a strong throwing arm. She must also catch pop-ups into the foul territory behind the baseline, and tag out runners who are attempting to score, while blocking their access to home plate.
- **1B: First Base** (3). The first baseman's job, in addition to fielding balls hit in her direction, is primarily to catch throws from the other infielders (2B, 3B and SS) in order to retire the batter and prevent him from getting on base. When a runner is on first base, the first baseman will tend to stand on or near the bag, holding the runner close to prevent the runner from stealing second base.
- **2B: Second Base** (4). The second baseman has the important defensive role to field ground balls hit toward her and, if necessary, start a double play. When the ball is hit to the shortstop, the second baseman will help "turn" a double play by stepping on second base, fielding the throw from SS, and throwing to first base, to retire both the batter, and the runner on first. Also in softball, it is the second baseman's job to cover first when the first baseman is charging on a bunt.
- **3B: Third Base** (5). Third base is known as "The Hot Corner", since most right-handed hitters will tend to hit the ball hard in this direction. The third baseman must be able to field ground balls and throw strongly to first base, as well as cover fly balls in fair and foul territory.
- **SS: Shortstop** (6). Shortstops, like the second baseman, must field ground balls and start or turn double plays. In addition, they need a stronger arm as the throw to first base is farther from the shortstop side.
- **LF: Left Field** (7), **CF: Center Field** (8), **RF: Right Field** (9). The role of the outfielders is to chase down and catch any ball hit into the outfield and, if necessary, make a rapid and accurate return throw, either to a base or to the "cut-off man", a infielder who has moved into a position specifically to make a relay throw.

Assigning Player Positions

When it comes to softball programs, there is not a defined way to assign players to a position. Most coaches observe each players skill level during practice to determine what position they should play at. Ask the players where they would like to be positioned at and practice them at that position to see if they are capable of playing it.

Practices

As the old adage says “practice make perfect.” The best way to play like a team is to practice together as a team.

Each coach has a practice regime that suit them and their teams needs. Listed in this chapter are some practice drills to work on players throwing, hitting, and fielding. Also in this chapter are warm-up drills that players should do prior to practicing or exercising and a list of equipment that may be useful for practices.

Practice Equipment

All practice equipment issued by Citizens Park is given to softball coaches at the coach’s meeting for each age division. We encourage coaches to use the equipment issued by Citizens Park and to also employ the use of additional equipment, if so desired.

All players are encouraged not to wear jewelry, metal devices, or hazardous equipment while practicing or playing. Parents are usually good at remembering to remove their child’s jewelry, but sometimes they do forget. As a coach, it is your duty to ensure the well-being of each player when they are practicing and playing a game under your supervision. Please try to make sure that players are not wearing jewelry or any other hazardous equipment while practicing or playing games.

Warm-Ups/Stretches

Sports related injuries have become more common in younger athletes in recent years. Many of the injuries that occur could have been prevented if proper warm-up drills and stretching were done prior to practices and games. It is important to do warm-ups and stretch players in order to prevent muscle pulls.

Warm-up drills are important because they “warm up” the muscles, making them easier to stretch easier and less likely to pull or tear. Listed below are some warm-up drills that may be useful for your team.

Logging

Have players jog (not run) a lap or two around the softball field prior to practices and games. This will get their heart rate up and prepare muscles for exercise.

Jumping Jacks

Having players do these will increase their heart rate and stretch leg, back, and arm muscles. After the warm-ups are completed, lead the softball players in a group stretch. Try to incorporate stretches that

work on the back thighs (hamstrings), inner thighs (groin), shoulders, and the calves. Stretches should be done slowly and held for 10-15 seconds. If players complain of pain during stretching advise them not to stretch too far. Over stretching is what leads to pain during stretches. On the next page are some stretches that can be useful for the health and well-being of your players.

Hamstring Stretch

- *Dual Hamstring Stretch* – sit on the ground with both legs extended in front of you. Keeping your back straight, lean forward and reach for your toes. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds. Repeat 2 times. If the stretch is painful, do not stretch as far down. This stretch can also be done standing up. Simply stand with both legs together and straight. Bend down and try to touch your toes.

Groin Stretch

- *Dual Groin Stretch* - sit on the ground with both legs bend inward and soles of feet touching. Hold feet together with your hands and use you elbows to press your thighs down. If the stretch is painful, move feet further from body or do not press thighs down as far.

Quadriceps Stretch

- *Standing Quadriceps Stretch* – stand straight on one leg. Bend the other leg up-behind you and grasp the ankle with the corresponding hand. Gently pull the leg closer until the quad stretches. Hold this stretch for 10-15 seconds and relax. Stretch the other leg. Perform each leg stretch twice.

Calf Stretch

- *Tip-Toe Stretch* – standing straight with legs together, roll onto your tip-toes. Push up on your toes to stretch as far up as possible. Hold this stretch for 10-15 seconds and relax. Perform this stretch 5 times.

Shoulders/Arms

- *Shoulder Rotations*- Raise your arms out to your side to shoulder level. Start with small clockwise circles. Work your way to bigger circles. Then reverse directions and progress from small to larger circles.
- *Cross-Arm Stretch*- Take your right arm across your chest and try to touch the left shoulder. Using the left hand, pull the right elbow over until you feel a stretch. Hold. Repeat on the other side.
- *Triceps*- With your arms overhead, use your left hand to pull the right elbow behind your head. You should feel the stretch in your right triceps. Hold, repeat with the left arm.

Drills

Grounders -Position players in two lines: one line at the midpoint between First Base and Second Base and one line between Second and Third. Two coaches hit the balls from opposite sides of home plate. One player shags balls for each coach. Hit three balls to the first fielder who throws to the shagger. After third grounder, fielder moves to shagger (running around other coach/hitter) and shagger moves to the end of the opposite fielding line. Mix in line drives and pop ups as drill progresses.

Fly Balls -Position players in two lines in outfield about 30 feet apart. Put one player in the ready position and one player as shagger. Hit fly balls between first two players in the line and have them call for the ball while the other backs up the play. The player in the right line moves to the end of the left line; the player in the left line moves to the relay position. Players in the relay position moves to shagger. Shagger moves to the end of the right line.

Lateral Movement-Place six balls in a row, each ball 1- to 15 feet apart. Put three to five players in defensive positions in a line between balls 3 and 4. The players use a cross-over step to first ball on the right, return to starting position, pause, and the cross-over step to the first ball on the left. They continue in this manner until all the balls have been covered. Bring in a new group until all players have gone.

Throwing-Player pair up and kneel on the ground 10 yards apart. Right handed players kneel on right knee with left leg out front. Players throw to each other for desired period, the move another five yards apart. Emphasize proper shoulder turn, hip turn, and follow through. Continue moving apart throwing for desired period and distance.

Throwing-Players pair up and stand sideways facing each other at a 90 degree angles and 10 yards apart. Players throw to each other using only shoulders and hip turn—no stride. Players throw to each other for desired period, and then move another 5 yards apart. Continue moving apart to reach distance.

Hitting Drill- Place ball on the tee at hip height. Have the hitter take a normal batting stance, but place the bat behind his hips with his arm holding it in place. Have him pivot and knock the ball off the tee. This teaches the proper hip rotation and explosive.

Wrap Around

- 1) Have two players stand 10-20 feet apart.
- 2) Player one throws a ground ball to player two. Player Two fields and throws back to player One.
- 3) Player Two then runs toward Player one. She will circle player one, returning to her spot. Player one will throw fly ball as a quarterback to a receiver. We also throw short and long and to right and left.
- 4) Then after player two gets the ball she throws it back to player one. Then player one throws back to player two. Then player two gives the ground ball to player one repeating the process.

Pitching Tips and Drills

Overview of Pitching

To become great pitchers, girls must practice nearly every day. The fundamentals that follow provide a good foundation for getting started in pitching, but they are not a substitute for professional coaching. If a girl shows talent, she should attend pitching clinics periodically or receive one-on-one instruction so an expert can offer advice and correct the inevitable flaws that can hinder progress. The tough part is getting started, and these instructions can help in that regard.



Getting Started

A few of the most often asked questions about pitching include: at what age should a girl start pitching; should she use the windmill when she starts out; and should she concentrate on accuracy or speed at first?

It is not too early to teach a girl the mechanics of pitching at the age of six or seven. At all levels of play, the preferred, and practically only, style of pitching is the windmill (as described in this guide) and girls should use that style as early as possible. It is far better to teach one method and stick with it, rather than first teach something like the slingshot and then change to the windmill later.

The last question, whether to work on accuracy or speed when a girl first starts pitching, always seems to be controversial. The correct answer, however, is to work on the mechanics first. To become a very good pitcher, a girl must throw hard while executing the mechanics properly. While control is important, it should not override everything else. To sacrifice proper mechanics and speed to achieve control will result in the development of bad habits that will have to be broken later. It takes a few years for most pitchers to be able to throw strikes at will. It takes a few more years for pitchers to attain the necessary control so they can spot the ball anywhere in the strike zone. However, pitchers cannot achieve this skill level unless they learn and practice the mechanics first. Correct arm speed, wrist snap, body rotation, balance, stride length, and follow-through are the prerequisites to becoming a great pitcher.



The following instructions describe how a typical pitcher executes the windmill style in fastpitch softball. They are not meant to be the last word about pitching fundamentals. Many very fine pitchers execute some of the mechanics differently than described here. However, this guide is useful in getting a young pitcher started and in helping a parent or coach teach basic techniques. All descriptions that follow are for right-handed pitchers and should be adjusted, as appropriate, for left-handers.

Setting Up To Pitch

- by rules the pitcher must initially stand behind the pitching rubber with both hands apart -- the ball may be in either the bare hand or the glove hand -- she then may step on the rubber -- before initiating the pitching motion, both feet must be in contact with the pitching rubber
- the right foot should be placed over the front edge of the rubber -- the left foot should touch the back edge of the rubber -- feet should be comfortably apart
- the ball should be gripped with the padded parts of the fingertips and thumb resting on seams -- the ball should not rest in the palm

- there should be space between the ball and the hand in the area between the thumb and index finger
- the thumb should be opposite the fingers to the extent possible
- by rules before initiating the pitching motion, the pitching hand and glove hand must touch for at least one second

Initiating the Windmill Pitching Motion

- after hands touch (usually at or below the waist near the right hip) and after a slight rocking back motion, the initial forward motion should be to extend the arms towards the catcher -- the back foot also begins its stride forward as the arms are extended
- the pitching arm should remain extended (but not locked) throughout the pitching motion -- the elbow should be relaxed (but not bent)
- when extending the pitching arm forward, the hand should be on top of the ball or on the outside of the ball, but not under the ball
- as the arm travels in a circle upward, back, down and forward towards the target, the wrist should rotate to present the ball towards third base and then second base (at the top rear of the arc)
- the glove hand is pulled back and down past the left hip as the pitching arm is extended backwards and downward
- the cocking of the wrist should occur naturally on the downward swing of the pitching motion
- the arm circle must remain true to the "power line" between the pitcher and catcher -- any initial deviation from the power line must be towards the glove hand side, not the throwing hand side
- increase arm speed throughout the pitching motion with the highest speed occurring as the hand approaches the release point -- there should be no hesitation in the pitching motion once it begins

Body Rotation

- at the beginning of the pitching motion, hips are square to the catcher
 - hips open (towards third base) as the arms and stride leg are extended forward and until the ball is released -- full rotation is generally around 45 degrees but may be as great as 90 degrees
 - hips return to a closed or square position (facing the catcher) after release of the ball
 - shoulders and hips must rotate together back to the square position
-

Leg Stride

- get as much leg drive forward as possible while keeping the upper body balanced
- stride length should be aggressive, yet comfortable -- the pivot (or rear) foot should stay in contact with the ground as it is being pulled forward by the momentum generated by the leg stride -- the pivot foot should scribe a banana shaped figure in the ground from the pitching rubber to a point behind the stride foot -- the closing of the hips creates the banana shape figure by pulling the pivot foot towards the third base line at the end of the pitching motion
- the stride foot should be planted at a point on the power line between the pivot foot and the catcher and the toe should be aimed at a point halfway between third base and the catcher -- plant the stride foot so that the toe hits the ground first, then the heel

Wrist Snap

- proper wrist snap is the key to control and speed
- the natural cocking of the wrist on the downward swing of the arm should be followed by a strong snap of the wrist at the bottom of the arm circle just off the right hip -- the inside of the right forearm may actually brush the side of the hip as the wrist snap occurs
- the snap of the wrist should be firm, but relaxed

Balance

- at the point of release of the ball, the body should be in an upright posture and balanced between the feet
- after release of the ball, forward momentum will carry the pitcher's weight forward while the toe of the pivot foot is being dragged towards the stride foot -- the pitcher's weight should remain balanced between the feet -- a toe first, then heel, planting of the stride foot helps achieve the proper balance

Follow Through

- after releasing the ball, the pitching arm should follow through in a natural motion -- the hand generally ends up in a position near the right shoulder -- pitchers should not be forced to achieve a particular arm/hand position when first learning to pitch, however
- while the pitching hand may finish in a number of different positions, the correct position for a given pitcher will be achieved as long as the elbow is relaxed and continues past the hip after release of the ball
- as pitchers begin throwing a variety of pitches (e.g., drop, curve, rise ball), the different follow-through positions will be used to create the spin necessary to achieve the desired pitch

Broom Drill

Here is a drill for younger players trying to learn the wrist flip.

1. Have a friend or parent hold a broom where the long part is horizontal and touching the arch in your back right where your wrist would hit on your release point.
2. If you take your arm behind you and slowly pitch, your wrist will hit the broom making your wrist flick the ball.
3. Note, you don't want to throw the ball hard; it should not go far and will go slow.

Towel Drill

1. Go and get a towel.
2. If you are a right handed pitcher then you would face to the right of the rubber and put your knee on towel which is on the rubber.
3. Next you will put your other knee facing home plate.
4. Put your hands in front of you.
5. Then you will do the windmill motion.
6. On your way around stop your left hand right above your knee.
7. Come all the way around with to your right hand.
8. Then drop both of your hands and pop your wrist and the ball should go right across the plate. It will take a while to get the accuracy down.

3 Keys to Pitching

The secret to an effective softball career is muscle memory, which is obtained with the constant repetition of proper mechanics used in playing the game. Good muscle memory is gained by drills, drills and more drills.

Those of you, who are not pitchers, please read the keys and apply the concepts to your position. Figure out a routine for you to follow for practice and games. The keys are the same for any position, Preparation (drills and muscle memory), Confidence (knowing that you can perform any athletic task required because of your hard work and muscle memory) and Relaxation (when you have confidence in your preparation you are relaxed and can focus on the game).

3 KEYS TO PITCHING

1. PREPARATION

To become a successful pitcher you must practice at least every other day. This means, after warm-up, pitching 75-150 balls, hitting locations and working on rotations and if at all possible, throwing long toss.

WORKOUT: (ALL PITCHES MUST BE THROWN USING THE NORMAL PITCHING ROUTINE)

1. Warm-up with snap drills (3 ball drill) Do 25-50 snaps
2. Once warmed, work on locations. Start with pitches right down the middle and then work the corners (inside and outside) also high and low. Do 25-50 locations

3. Throw some heavy balls or close rotation drills to perfect rotation of the ball for certain pitches.
4. If you have the room, do the long-toss drill.
5. Finish up with 5 fastballs on the corners.

2. RELAXATION

1. Before each pitch take, a deep breath, wink or do whatever is comfortable in order to get relaxed. Use this every time!! You cannot deliver a quality pitch if you are tense.
2. If you are in a game and you get tense, try playing with the dirt in the pitcher's circle. This will relax you. You may also call time out to talk to the catcher.
3. Take your time. Everyone waits for you. The play does not start until you make a pitch.

3. CONFIDENCE

If you are prepared and relaxed, you will be confident. The batters can sense your confidence and you have already won half the battle. Just deliver the pitch in the location called and you have done your job.

NOTES FOR BECOMING A BETTER PITCHER:

1. Focus your best on the first batter of every inning. Try very hard not to walk her.
2. You must finish each pitch in a "ready position". This will enable you to field your position and protect you from line-drives back at you.
3. Even in practice, deliver each pitch from the normal pitching routine. This will help you deal with pressure situations because all you need to do is to relax and deliver the pitch just like in practice.
4. With a runner on base, you cannot throw a pitch in the dirt. This will give the runner the next base. If you do (everybody does) go through your relaxation routine and increase your focus the next time you are in that situation.
5. Pitchers need short memories. If you have just thrown a homerun ball or walked the last batter, Shake it off! Go through your relaxation routine. "Never let them see you sweat!!"
6. If you are hurt, TELL THE COACHES. Pitching when you are hurt will only make your injury worse.
7. HAVE FUN!!, but focus on the job at hand.

Impact of the Glove While Pitching

Many coaches and players overlook the importance the glove hand plays in the ability to control the ball when pitching. When you watch a pitcher, a lot of times all you do is hear the slap of the glove on the thigh and think that the glove is used only as a way to make some noise, in order to perhaps distract the batter, or time the release of the ball. While it can do these things, the main job of the glove in pitching is to aim the ball.

In the normal delivery, the hands separate and the ball hand moves back and up in a rocker motion. For some pitchers, this motion is shortened and they come right out of the glove. After this motion, both hands come forward with the glove hand pointing directly at the target as the stride is taken. This motion does a couple of different things. The motion of the hands going forward as the stride is being taken helps move the body forward and helps elongate the stride, but the important job here is the aiming. If your pitcher is having problems with control, this is one area I would take a long look at. This motion happens so quickly it is tough to see sometimes, but it is always there in good pitchers. Make sure your pitcher is pointing her glove at the target with the wrist pointing up, which will in turn point the glove webbing straight up.

A lot of pitchers get lazy, overlooking this mechanic, and then wonder what happened to their control. If the wrist on the glove hand is pointing to one side, chances are very good that they will be throwing to that side of

the plate. Video tape your pitcher if you cannot see this motion and run it back slowly. Watch the placement of the glove, the angle of it, and the angle of the wrist.

The majority of control problems I see are directly related to 2 areas. The release of the ball is incorrect due to the pitcher working on the rise ball, (that is another discussion for another time), and the pitcher not using her glove to aim at the target. Make sure these two areas are correct and your pitcher will have much better control, and, in turn, will be more effective.

Base running Tips and Drills

3-2-1

THIS IS A GAME WE USE AT THE END OF PRACTICE.

3-2-1: Place three balls equal distance apart about three fourths of the way from third to home. Have a runner (team 1) and have a fielder on third base and one 2nd base (team 2).

When you say "go", the runner must reach 2nd base before the fielder fields and throws the balls to the fielder at second base. All throws must be accurate. If the fielders get all balls to second base before the runner gets there, the fielders get 1 point. If the runner gets there first, they get 1 point.

CONDITIONING

Relay Race

Have half of the team line up at second base and half the team line up at home. On the signal, one player from each team runs the bases until she reaches the base she started out at. When she gets there, she tags the next runner in line and she runs the bases. This is done until all the runners have run. Whoever reaches their base first wins. The other team has to pick up the bases. This is a drill that you can do at the end of practice for conditioning.



WEBSITES FOR EXTRA HELP

<http://www.girls-softball.com/2005/08/working-with-beginner-windmill-pitcher.html>

- THIS IS THE BEST WEBSITE FOR LEARNING THE MECHANICS OF PITCHING

http://www.decatursports.com/softball_drills.htm#Pitching

<http://eteamz.active.com/baseball/instruction/tips/>

<http://www.webball.com/>

<http://www.qcbaseball.com/drills/drills1.aspx>

http://www.scbca.net/4way_fungos.htm

<http://www.scbca.net/bunting.htm>

http://www.scbca.net/infield_drills.htm

http://www.scbca.net/combination_catching_drill.htm

<http://www.y-coach.com>



Games

It is the skills acquired and perfected during practices that allow a team to play well in games.

Game time reflects all of the skills your team has learned from practices. An important concept to remember during game time is fun and participation. Each player should receive equal amounts of game time. While softball is a competitive sport, recreational league softball is intended for fun and enjoyment. The desire to win is great to have, but your players' enjoyment and satisfaction with the league is priority. This chapter will describe what equipment your team will need for games, what game schedules will be like, pre-game warm-ups, and game play.

Game Equipment

Most of the equipment for game play is provided by Citizen's Park. However, many players will use their own bats. Players will be responsible for bringing their own gloves to practices and games. Game balls will be given to the team or the umpire.



Game Schedules

Game schedules are issued to coaches at the coaches' meetings. Each game schedule packet includes copies to hand to all parents, copies for the head coach, and copies for the assistant coach. Additional copies can be picked up from the front desk at Citizens Park Complex II.

Warm-Ups

Pre-game warm-ups normally consist of jogging, stretching, throwing drills, fielding drills, and hitting drills. Following drills used in practices will instill the basic concepts of the sport and allow them to be utilized in a game situation.

Game Play

Each player on the team should receive their share of playing time during the game. Substitution rules are available in the rule book that was handed out at the coaches' meeting.

First Aid Procedures

As with any sport, there will be injuries inflicted when playing the game of soccer and as a coach, you should be aware of some basic first aid procedures to administer to hurt players.

Basic first aid procedures are a necessity when children play sports. If a mild or serious injury does occur, have the assistant coach or a parent locate a staff member. All staff members are CPR and First Aid certified and is capable of treating injured players. Staff members will determine if the injury is serious enough to warrant advanced medical attention and will recommend a doctor's visit. The injured player can be transported to the hospital in an ambulance or via the parents; it will be up to the parents to decide this. *Accident Reports* are required to be filled out for mild to serious injuries. Listed in this chapter are basic first aid techniques that coaches can utilize to treat baseball injuries obtained during practices and games. Within the baseball equipment bag is a first aid kit that can be used to treat any injuries that may occur.

Abrasions

An abrasion is classified as superficial damage to the skin, generally not deeper than the epidermis. There is generally no to mild bleeding. Most mild abrasions do not scar, but deep abrasions can lead to scar tissue development.

Treatment for an abrasion is cleansing the area with soap and water. Pat dry the area, treat it with antibiotic ointment if desired, and apply a bandage. To prevent infection keep the abrasion site clean and free of dirt.

Lacerations

A laceration is classified as a physical trauma where the skin is torn, cut, or punctured. The laceration site will have mild bleeding and has a chance to develop scar tissue.

Treatment for an abrasion is immediate cleansing of the area with soap and water. Apply pressure to the laceration if bleeding continues after the site has been cleaned. Use a gauze pad when applying pressure. This will help the blood clot. Once the bleeding has stopped pat the site with a wet cloth and pat dry. Treat with antibiotic ointment if desired and apply a bandage. To prevent infection keep the laceration site clean and free of dirt. Swelling can be reduced by applying an ice pack to the injured site.

Nosebleeds

A nosebleed is the result of trauma to the nose that causes the mucosal lining and small blood vessels inside the nose to tear and bleed. There are several causes of nosebleeds, including: trauma, fracture, altitude, excessive nose picking, arid conditions, and allergies.

Treatment for a nosebleed is simple. Have the injured person sit down and apply pressure to their nose by pinching it at the fleshy part. The applied pressure will help the blood clot and stop the bleeding. Have the injured person lean forward as they pinch their nose. Tilting the head forward will prevent blood from running down their throat and into their stomach. If blood is swallowed, the injured person may feel the need to vomit (it is okay to allow this). To aid in the clotting process, roll up a gauze pad and place it in the nostril that is bleeding.

Place an ice pack on the nose to prevent excessive swelling. If the bleeding does not cease in 20-30 minutes, immediate medical attention is required because side effects of blood loss can occur.

Tooth Loss

If a tooth is knocked out, or loose, a child should stop play and seek immediate medical attention. The type of tooth injured and the location of the tooth can have an affect on the seriousness of the injury. Ask parents if the injured tooth is a baby tooth or a permanent one. If it is a baby tooth, the injury to it is not serious and loss can be handled. If it is a permanent tooth, a dentist visit will be required.

If a tooth is knocked loose, have the child bite down on a gauze pad. This will keep the tooth in place and prevent the nerves from being exposed. If a nerve is exposed there will be sharp pain from contact with air, fluids, and any material used to stop the bleeding. Have the parents determine if a doctor's visit is necessary.

If a tooth is knocked out, immediately locate the tooth. Once the tooth is located, handle it only by the top, never by the roots. If there is dirt on the tooth, do not rub or scrape it off. Place the tooth in a bowl of tap water. **Do not** place it under running water. Try to replace the tooth in the socket. Bite down on gauze pad or cloth to hold it in place. If the tooth can not be placed back in the socket, submerge it in milk or the individual's own saliva. Seek attention from a dentist or emergency room immediately.

Sprains

Most sprains occurred during baseball season are ankle sprains. Typical symptoms of a sprain include pain, swelling, guarding of the area, loss of function, and deformity (in serious cases). Sprains are caused by overstretching the ligaments in a given area. In serious cases, a sprain can lead to torn or ruptured ligaments, which will require a longer healing period.

To treat a sprain, remember PRICE: protection, rest, ice, compression, elevation. Protect the injured area from further injury by not using the joint. Rest the injured area, but do not avoid all activity. Excessive use can do further damage to the injury and not using the joint can injure it also. Ice it down to prevent excessive swelling and to decrease the pain by numbing the area. Be sure not to apply the ice too long, for excessive cold can lead to tissue damage. Wrap the injured area with an elastic bandage to stabilize the area. This will prevent further stretching or tearing of the ligament. Elevate the injured area to prevent or limit swelling.

Broken Bones

If a player is injured and a broken bone is suspected, immediately locate a staff member.

Asthma

If a player has an asthma attack, quickly locate their parents. Locate their inhaler, if they have one, and use it. If the inhaler can not be found try to have them drink fluids. This can thin the mucus and can aid in unblocking their airway. Placing a damp cloth over their mouth and nose as they breath can also help. If the asthma attack can not be stopped, seek immediate medical attention.

Bruises

Bruises are the result of an injury, usually caused by blunt impact, in which the capillaries are damaged, allowing blood to seep into the surrounding tissue. Most bruises are normally minor and painful. However, bruises can be serious, leading to hematoma, or can be associated with serious injuries such as fractures and internal bleeding. Minor bruises are easily recognized by their characteristic blue or purple color in the days following the injury.

To treat a bruise, immediately ice the area that was impacted. The cold will reduce swelling and relieve some pain that may result from the injury. If the bruise is abnormal in any way, have the player seek medical attention.

CPR

In an emergency, you have only minutes to respond. The steps you take in the first minutes of a medical emergency can make a significant impact on the overall well being of the victim. When a crisis happens, it may be difficult to keep calm and remember the things you learned in training. This is why it is critical that you obtain regular safety training, study the materials provided, and most importantly, keep up-to-date on the skills you learn.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) should only be performed by individual's that are have been trained in the technique and certified. CPR is a lifesaving technique that incorporates rescue breathing and chest compressions in an attempt to keep oxygenated blood pumping to the brain and other vital organs until advanced medical personnel are present. CPR should only be administered to someone who has **no signs of circulation and is not breathing**. The victim is in cardiac arrest.

Rescue breathing involves mouth-to-mouth contact between the rescue breather and the victim. Also known as mouth to mouth, rescue breathing is done on a person who **has a signs of circulation, but is not able to breathe**. This victim is in respiratory arrest. The purpose of rescue breathing is to provide oxygen rich air to the victim, who is unable to breath on their own.

Chest compressions are used to manually circulate the victim's blood through the heart to organs such as their brain, kidneys, lungs, etc. It is important to incorporate this aspect of CPR, even if rescue breathing is not utilized.

If you suspect someone is in need of CPR give your aid if it is possible. Before helping, survey the scene. Make sure there are no hazards such a down electrical lines, fires, or any other life-threatening dangers that could harm you as you give assistance. If the scene is clear, proceed with the steps listed below.

CPR and Rescue Breathing – Quick Reference Guide

| STEP | Adult CPR (8 Years and Up) | Child CPR (1 to 8 Years) | Adult Rescue Breathing | Infant CPR (Birth to 1 Year) | Infant/Child Rescue Breathing |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| Check for Consciousness | Tap and shout “Are you OK?” | | | Tap and shout; tickle bottom of feet” | |
| ACTIVATE EMS - CALL 911 | | | | | |
| A – Open the Airway | Carefully clear any foreign materials from the mouth with your fingers. Place one hand on the victim’s forehead and tilt the head back gently. Place the fingers of your other hand under the chin and lift to pull it forward. | | | Use care not to tilt the head back too far. | |
| B – Check breathing. | Take a deep breath and place your mouth over the victim’s, making a tight seal. Pinch the nose. Slowly blow air in until the victim’s chest rises. Take 1½ to 2 seconds for each breath. | | | Place mouth over baby’s mouth and nose. Slowly blow air in until the victim’s chest rises. Take 1½ to 2 seconds for each breath. | |
| C - Check circulation. | Check for signs of circulation including normal breathing, coughing or movement. If you see signs of circulation, but the person is still not breathing, begin rescue breathing. If the person is not breathing, coughing or moving, begin CPR. | | | | |
| Position hands. | Use both hands (heel) Position hands between the breasts | Use one hand. Position hand between the breasts. Place other hand on forehead to keep airway open. | Place one hand on forehead to keep airway open | Use 2 fingers. Position fingers between nipples – one finger-width below the nipple line. Place other hand on forehead to keep airway open. | Place one hand on forehead to keep airway open |
| Perform chest compressions. | Perform 15 compressions Compression rate is 100 times per minute. | Perform 5 chest compressions Compression rate is at least 100 times per minute | | Perform 5 chest compressions Compression rate is at least 100 times per minute | |
| Give rescue breaths. | Cover mouth with your mouth and pinch nose. Give 2 breaths of air | Cover mouth with your mouth and pinch nose. Give 1 breath of air | Cover mouth with your mouth and pinch nose. Give 1 breath of air every 5 seconds | Cover infant’s mouth and nose with your mouth. Give 1 breath of air | Place one hand on forehead to keep airway open. Give 1 breath of air every 3 seconds. |
| Check signs of circulation and repeat if necessary. | Perform 4 cycles (one minute of CPR) then recheck signs of circulation. If no signs of circulation, continue CPR starting with compressions. | Perform 20 cycles (one minute of CPR) then recheck signs of circulation. If no signs of circulation, continue CPR starting with compressions. | Recheck signs of circulation after each minute or every <u>12</u> breaths. | Perform 20 cycles (one minute of CPR) then recheck signs of circulation. If no signs of circulation, continue CPR starting with compressions. | Recheck the signs of circulation after each minute or every <u>20</u> breaths. |
| Key Numbers to Remember | 15 & 2 4 Cycles | 5 & 1 20 Cycles | 5 seconds between breaths 12 Cycles | 5 & 1 20 Cycles | 3 seconds between breaths 20 Cycles |

Miscellaneous Items

Many questions and situations arise about the sport as the softball season progresses. Some you may know the answer to and be able to handle, while others may require a staff member to handle.

In this chapter you will find a contact list of Athletic Coordinators and the age divisions they oversee. Also discussed in this chapter are how to know if a game is being played in the event of inclement weather, what happens when games are rained out, and when player participation medals are handed out.

Youth Softball Athletic Coordinators

Listed below are the age divisions for youth spring softball and the Athletic Coordinators that oversee each age division. Contact numbers for each Athletic Coordinator is also included.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 8 and under softball | Jami Oliver |
| 10 and under softball | Jami Oliver |
| 12 and under softball | Jami Oliver |
| 18 and under softball | Jami Oliver |

Jami Oliver Office Number 803-643-4662

Weather/Rain line

One aspect of all outdoor sports that can never be controlled is the weather. Citizens Park has a Rain-Out Line in service that allows you to call ahead and find out if the events for the day have been cancelled. Each day the Rain-Out Line is updated around 4:30 pm to inform callers of the status of practices and games. The number for this line is **803-643-4661**.

Make-Up Games

Games that are cancelled due to inclement weather are scheduled to be made up at a later date in time. Games can be scheduled for later that week or towards the end of the season. All coaches will be contacted if games are cancelled and will be informed when the games will be made up.

End of Season Awards

At the end of softball season the 9 and under league will receive Player Participation Awards. Awards are handed at the end of regular season games. Awards will be given to the season champions and runner ups along with the tournament champions and runner ups for the following leagues: 9 and under, 12 and under, and 18 and under.

Handling Complaints

All complaints, whether from a player or parent, should be referred to the Athletic Coordinator in charge of your specific age division and will be handled accordingly.