

**JERICHO LITTLE LEAGUE
SPRING 2008**

COACHING MANUAL

KEY CONCEPTS FOR BASEBALL
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. SAFETY ISSUES
2. ORIENTATION TO THE GAME
3. BEING PART OF A TEAM/A TEAM PLAYER
4. SPORTSMANSHIP
5. BALL GRIP
6. THROWING
7. BASE RUNNING
8. BATTING STANCE
9. BATTING SWING
10. CATCHING
11. FIELDING GROUND BALLS
12. HITTING A PITCHED BALL
13. GIVE THEM A REASON TO COME BACK NEXT SEASON

HAVING FUN

JERICHO LITTLE LEAGUE 2008

<u>WEEK DATE</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>
1	Orientation to baseball/Safety issues Base running Grip on baseball/throwing
4/5/08	OPENING DAY
2	Review of orientation Review of ball grip/throwing Batting stance/position
3	Review of ball grip/throwing Review of batting stance Review batting/swing Catching
4	Orientation to fielding (ready position, positions) Review catching Review batting/swing
5	Overall review
6	Mechanisms of fielding ground balls Review catching Review batting/swing
7	Hitting a pitched ball
8	Hitting a pitched ball
9	
10	

* TO REVIEW RUNNING THROUGH FIRST BASE EVERY WEEK

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

You're A Role Model

It doesn't matter if you're coaching tee ball or coaching at the college level, you're probably the most important role model that your players have during the season. Players are going to look to you not only for guidance and instruction, but they will be watching and listening to how you react to every situation. I'm a strong believer that a coach can be one of the most influential people in a young players' life. Many players and former players attribute a large portion of their success in life to the things they learned on the baseball field and from a few great coaches. We're not talking about fielding ground balls, or how to hit; we're talking about teamwork, perseverance, work ethic, having a positive attitude, to just name a few. Skills that not only helped them on the baseball field but helped them in life.

Be Positive

Players need a patient, supportive coach that can teach and motivate in a positive way. Knowing how to be positive and having the ability to communicate with your players is more important to a successful season than knowing many aspects of the game.

Show Them You Care

Each player needs to know that you care for him as an individual and that you believe he is an important part of the team. Take time to talk to all players individually. Try to take interest in what is going on in their life outside of baseball.

Have Fun

Fun is essential for kids of all ages. Develop practices that let them do the things they enjoy. It's also important for you to have fun. Create an environment that is structured and varied enough for you to enjoy what your doing. If you're having fun, chances are your players will be having fun also. Don't make the mistake of emphasizing results instead of effort.

Organization and Discipline

Kids quickly pick up on a coach that is unorganized and doesn't communicate his expectations. If you don't establish certain rules and don't follow up with an appropriate punishment if the rules are broken, you will quickly lose control of your team. I always have a rule about talking when I'm talking during practice. I expect when I'm explaining something that the players will have their eyes on me and pay attention. If they interrupt or don't pay attention, I stop talking and we wait as a team for the individual to stop. If he does it again in the same practice he sits down and watches for awhile.

Players Learn By Doing

Give a quick explanation while you show them the skill you want them to perform. Then have them do it.

Attitude and Effort

Coaches that believe winning is everything have only one direction to take the team...down.

Sportsmanship

The idea of sportsmanship seems to be lost on many youth players. The fact is, sportsmanship must be taught. If children watch professional sports then their idea of sportsmanship may be to trash talk, spike the ball in the opponents face, or to mimic some other visual statement that demonstrates their superiority. As a coach it's important that you teach the value of sportsmanship. I want my team to show joy when they make an exciting play, but not at the expense of the player on the opposing team. I want my players to always show the other team respect. Your leadership is the best way to get this across to your players. Interact with the players on the other team. Compliment them when they make a good play. Show your players that you appreciate the other team and the opportunity to play against them.

Dealing with Parents

Dealing with parents might be the most difficult part of being a coach. It's a common problem, but one that can be difficult to solve. Communication is essential.

Get Parents Involved

Getting parents involved can really help in avoiding potential parent problems. If you think that a parent is going to be a problem, try to get that parent involved in some way. If that parent only shows up to games, have him/her coach a base, help line the kids up to bat, or snack duty. If they feel like they are part of the team, they will often be less likely to complain. They also will have less time to focus on how their child is being "treated unfairly" If the parent makes it to practices, have them help by working with some of the kids. They may soon find out that coaching is more difficult than it looks from the bleachers.

WEEK 1

1. ORIENTATION TO BASEBALL

(a) SAFETY ISSUES

***** ANY INJURY/ACCIDENT COACH MUST FILL OUT ACCIDENT REPORT IMMEDIATELY *****

- Only the batter in the batter's box can swing a bat
- There is no "on deck circle"
- All others behind fence, no hands in fence, no climbing on fence
- All bats on ground
- No ball playing or running around while waiting to bat (Need bench coach)
- If a bat is in your hand, a helmet is on your head
- Helmets are worn while on base
- No jewelry
- No shorts
- JAA bats to be used

"Bat Drop" = Difference between the length and weight of the bat. A 30"/18oz. bat has a bat drop of -12. A 30"/23oz. bat has a bat drop of -7. The higher the bat drop the easier it is to swing.

(b) Structure of game - how the game works

Baseball in general

JAA - No scoring, No outs, Everyone bats, Batters stay on base, Everyone Wins!

©) Field - location of positions, bases

2. BASE RUNNING

(a) First base - *to stress running through the base*

Run Every Ball Out

Few players in the Majors run out every ball. Lead by example, run every ball out and run it out hard. It doesn't matter if it's a slow roller to the pitcher or a pop fly to the center fielder, get your legs going and hustle down the line.

Run Through First Base

Once you've determined that the ball is going to be fielded by an infielder, focus on the front part of first base. As you hit the base, start breaking down. This gives the illusion to the umpire that you were at the bag sooner than if you breakdown after you pass the base. After you have crossed the base, slow down and look to your right to see if there was an errant throw

After contact, learn to watch 1st base coach, not the ball

3. GRIP ON BASEBALL/THROWING

GRIP

Four Seam

The best way to grip the ball is across the seams.

The fingers are placed over the top of the seams to provide a good grip on the ball.

Try to keep the ball out on the fingertips not back in your hand. Gripping the ball in the palm of your hand and not out on your fingers will cost you velocity and accuracy. Younger players may need to grip the ball with three fingers instead of two, but unless their hands are very small they should still try to grip the ball out on the fingers.

Youth Coaching Advice

Young players will not be able to grip the ball across the seams while playing in the field. Work with your pitchers on getting the correct grip but have your other players work on other parts of their throwing mechanics. They can work on this skill when they get older. Do work with them on getting the ball out on the fingertips. This can be difficult with small hands, but it is still an important concept for them to understand.

THROWING

Wrist

Many young players don't use their wrist much when throwing the ball. When the ball is brought back in the throwing motion, the wrist should be cocked back. Watch young players throw and you will see most will throw with a stiff wrist. It is very difficult to throw the ball accurately with a stiff throwing wrist. This is a skill that young players should work on from the start. You can practice this skill by holding your throwing arm just above the wrist with your glove hand (see image to the left). Bend your throwing arm at the elbow with your forearm vertical. Keeping your arm in this position, practice throwing the ball with just your wrist and fingers. It may feel strange at first, but keep working on this skill. The wrist and fingers play a major role in the accuracy and strength of your throw.

Mechanism

Turn body perpendicular to the target. LOOK at the target

During this move, throwing hand retrieves ball from glove, gripping across seams

Throwing arm parallel to ground with elbow flexed, must have eye contact with target

Step toward target

Let it go (weight shifting forward) and follow through

WEEK 2

1. REVIEW OF ORIENTATION (see week 1)
2. REVIEW OF BALL GRIP/THROWING (see week 1)
3. BATTING STANCE/SWING (NEW TOPIC)
 - (a) Location of batter's box/position within batter's box
 - (b) Stance (location of feet, arms, hands, head, etc)
 - ©) Mechanism of the swing

STANCE

Gripping the bat

Hold bat in finger, not palm

Firm, not tight grip

Foot Position

Feet slightly wider than shoulder width

70% of body weight on rear leg

Toes pointing toward the plate

Use a line or bat between feet to show alignment to pitcher's mound

Bat Position

The bat should be behind the right shoulder

Right elbow flexed and pointing down, NOT UP

Bat at 45 degrees to the hands

SWING

Turn

Initial swaying back, shifting weight to back foot

Shoulders and hips begin to turn open

Hands and wrist remain

Look

Remind to keep looking forward at ball with head still

Tracking the ball with their eyes

Step

Small step forward towards pitcher, not toward 1st or 3rd base

Bat still remains back

Swing

Legs and hips begin to move forward

Weight is shifted from rear to front

Shoulders begin a wide, powerful turn open

Hands are dropped and bat move forward

WEEK 3

1. REVIEW OF BALL GRIP/THROWING (see week 1)
2. REVIEW OF BATTING STANCE (see week 2)
3. REVIEW OF SWING MECHANISM (see week 2)
4. CATCHING THE BALL (NEW TOPIC)

- (a) The basic - Ball above waist, glove/fingers other hand UP
Ball below waist, glove/fingers other hand DOWN

TOM'S 4 QUADRANT DRILL

- 4 QUADRANTS: UP/GLOVE SIDE
UP/OPPOSITE SIDE (slight turn of glove)
DOWN/GLOVE SIDE (
DOWN/OPPOSITE SIDE (backhand)

Coach stands a few feet away

Use 8-10 tennis balls, it won't hurt

Stressing to use 2 hands

Always watching the ball into glove

Turn glove for crossover

Coach tosses balls to each quadrant

WEEK 4

1. ORIENTATION TO FIELDING (NEW TOPIC)

- (a) Ready position - See below
- (b) Location of positions

Ready Position

Bend your knees and back comfortably

Place your feet a little wider than shoulder width apart

Put your weight on the inside balls of your feet so you can push off in either direction easily

Place your arms out in front of your body but comfortable and not too far away

Extend your hands naturally; while you don't want the back of your glove facing the pitcher, you also don't need to have it completely open and facing the hitter. Many players have their palms facing each other at the ball crosses the plate.

2. REVIEW THROWING / CATCHING (see week 1,3)

3. REVIEW BATTING (see week 2)

WEEK 5

REVIEW OF ALL FUNDAMENTALS

WEEK 6

1. FIELDING GROUND BALLS (NEW TOPIC)

Unless the ball is absolutely ripped at you and you don't have time, get in the habit of moving toward the grounder as you prepare to field it. Notice the word 'charge' wasn't used - that word implies running towards it as fast as you can. .

Young players will initially be afraid of the ball.

Keep eyes on ball

Always in ready position; bend not only at the knees but also with your back

Concentrate on moving to the ball, not charging; and then field ball

Arms relaxed, both hands ready, elbows flexed, extend glove in front of body toward ball

Keep glove low to ground, bare hand on top, and watch the ball into the glove

Turn, look, step, and throw