

Munster Girls Softball

Manager's Guideline: "Practice Planning Guide" – U10, U12

This document attempts to educate the manager on how to prepare for and conduct games that are efficient and positive for your players, coaches and fans.

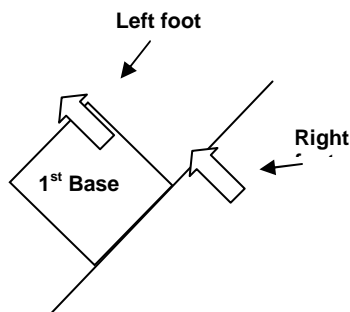
Pre-Season Plan – below outlines a good set of practices to start your season. The idea is to focus on basic skills development and reinforcement. Then, after selecting which positions you are likely to play each player, develop your fielders with game situations.

1. **Introductions & skills assessment** - *Mini-Clinic style practice covering all basic skills including throwing & catching, hitting, infield and outfield*
2. **Skill assessment** – *Mini-Clinic style practice covering all basic skills including throwing & catching, hitting, infield and outfield*
3. **Reinforce skills and finish assessment** - *Mini-Clinic style practice covering all basic skills including throwing & catching, hitting, infield and outfield*
4. **Game Situations** – *no runners or pitchers*
5. **Game Situations** – *with runners and pitchers*
6. **Stealing, sliding and more game situations** – *More advanced game situations, introduce stealing, etc.*

In subsequent practices you will want to focus on the weaknesses observed in game situations. Also, the point of continued practices throughout the season is the improve skills through repetition.

Sliding Practice – use a 8-12ft long piece of cardboard (check for staples). Have the players take off there shoes and place something like a base on the end. Hold the cardboard in place and have the players run and slide toward the base. Remind them to keep their hands up, and slide on their back side.

Base Running – Runners should put the left foot on the outer leading edge of the base, and their right foot behind the base as shown (1st base shown). The runner should start their jump off the base when the pitcher releases the ball. This will provide forward momentum and a strong push off the base as the ball crosses the plate.



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Typical Practice – It is important to develop a "routine" to your practices. Players need to recognize that there is a purpose to practicing, that they are learning and benefiting, and that they are having fun.

Time	Activity	Coaching Instruction	Purpose
10 minutes	Throwing and Catching – line the girls up in two straight lines and have them throw back and forth to each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact with recipient • Proper ball grip • Proper catching technique • Throw some grounders • Play game – first team of two to throw 10 back and forth without dropping the ball wins. 	Activity while you are waiting for the other players to show up. Important to warm up arms for more strenuous play.
5 minutes	Warm-up and Stretch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some coaches have the players run to the center field fence and back, at a jog – this is to warm up legs and cardiovascular system. • Choose a leader – try alphabetical by name (it suggests to the players that all practices will include stretching. Have the players go through 7-10 standard stretch and hold exercises. The leader counts to 10 – the team echoes the even numbers. 	Players need to stretch before vigorous exercise to avoid injury.
15,15,15 Total of 45 minutes	Mini Clinic Coach #1 – Hitting Coach #2 – Infield Coach #3 – Outfield -or- Drills, Drill, Drills - and always - Pitchers throw 25-50 pitches each	This is the central part of the practice. You work to introduce or reinforce skills. In later practices you work to create game situations to provide experience on how to handle special situations.	Reinforce fundamental skills – repetition – split into small groups and keep everyone working continuously.
15 minutes	Competitive drill	Choose a drill where the players can work independently or in teams to win an activity. Competition makes the drill exciting and fun.	
5 minutes	Wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the players help collect equipment and their belongings. • Remind them when the next practice is. • Answer any questions. 	

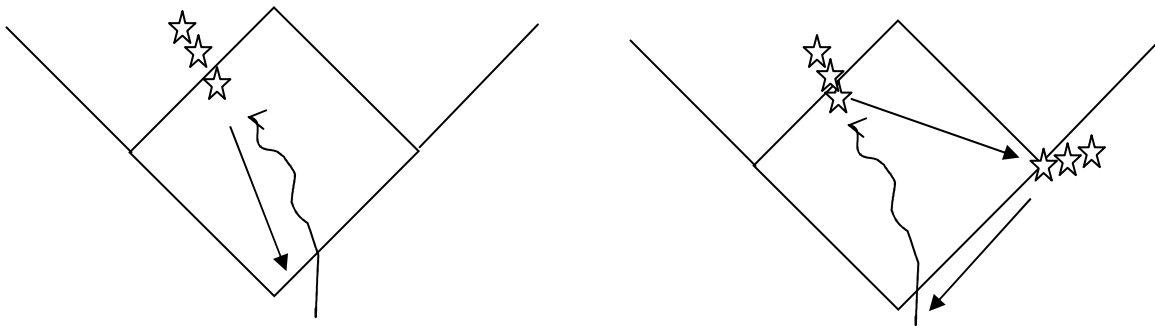
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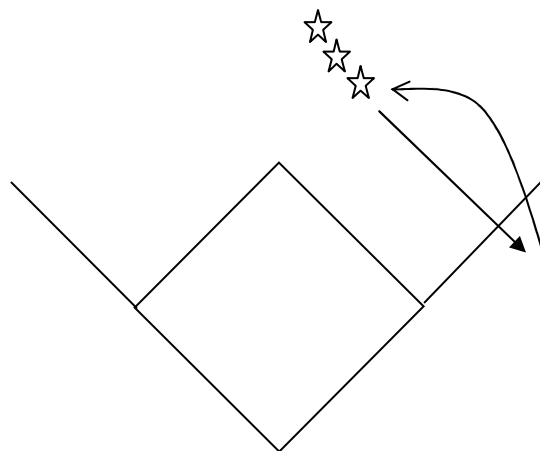
Assessment Practices with Mini-Clinics - Break the players into three groups, batting, infield and outfield. Three basic drills are described below, but you can substitute any number of drills depending on the skills you want to assess or develop.

Batting – Have the players hit off a tee. Work on stance, bat grip and swinging fundamentals. Hit 20 balls each. Then remove the tee, and soft toss 20 more. Using tennis balls or rag balls is easier of the fence. Focus on the proper fundamentals not on how hard or consistently they hit the ball.

Infield – Line the players up as indicated below. Have them scoop ground balls, alligator with their other free hand, pop-up toward their target, and make a proper throw at game speed.



Outfield – Line outfielders up and hit or throw fly balls and grounders. Have them throw back to you. Focus is on learning to catch flies which are traveling at a much higher velocity. Also, learning how to judge distances, and running quickly to the ball with hands in a running position, not with mitt outstretched. Also learning proper turning technique for over the shoulder flies, and proper defensive positions to ensure rolling ball does not get past you.



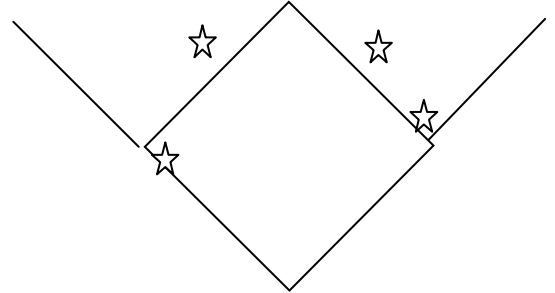
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Infield Situational Practices

The purpose of these practices is to learn what to do with the ball when you get it, depending on the number of outs and the location of runners.

- I like to introduce this topic without a pitcher or runners.
- The coach announces the situation, one out, runners on first and third, then hits the ball somewhere in the infield.
- Get one
- Get two
- Pop-ups with runner on first
- First and second, combinations (grounders and pop-ups)
- First and 3rd combinations (grounders and pop-ups)
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During this session, the other players will need to be doing another drill. Then, after 15-20 minutes, switch the two groups.

In the second practice on infield situations, introduce a pitcher to the infield. Work on bunt defense. U12 will need to work on covering the plate for a pass ball and how to handle drop third strikes with runners on base. Next, introduce runners. Have the runner from home position count one second before starting. Runner must wear helmets!