



## Coaching Tips – Tee Ball

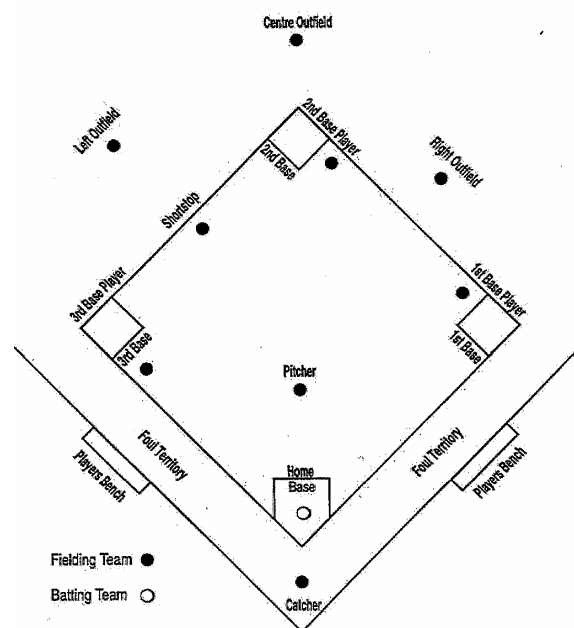
### Tee Ball Overview

The great thing about tee ball is that there are very few rules to learn and that the game is all about involving lots of kids. It's about making sure all players have a turn and that everybody has lots and lots of FUN.

There are two main parts to the game –

- **Batting**, which each player gets a turn to hit the ball off a tee and has to try to hit it past the fielders in fair territory. After hitting the ball in fair territory, they have to run to first base as fast as they can before the fielder's field the ball and get it to first base. If the batter gets to first base first then they are 'Safe'. Once they make first base they then rely on other batters of their team to hit them around the bases. Each batter who advances around all the bases scores a run for their team.
- **Fielding**, which each player has to try to field the batted ball that comes to them and throw it to first base before the batter gets to first base. At tee ball level this is very hard to do so don't expect too many outs.

### Field Layout



The field includes fair territory inside the two foul lines and foul territory outside the foul lines. The distance of the base paths is 50ft and the pitcher's plate is 37ft from home plate.

After each team has had a turn at batting and fielding, this is called an inning. A game can go for a few innings as long as it is under the allocated time frame.

## Coaching Hints

Children play sport for FUN. As coaches, we have to keep them interested. Besides fun, children want to play with friends, and learn some new skills. It is important that coaches make sure that training and games are well planned and keep their interest. Try to include drills that involve everybody. It is a known fact the children are very active at this age level, but tire easily. Be positive, vary the lesson and have FUN.

Included in this document you will find some training drills for you to use. Feel free to use these drills and also think outside the box and make up some great drills yourself.

Drills and games from one sport can be adapted to suit another.

If you and the kids have fun then you really can't go wrong.

Good Luck and have FUN !

## Basic Throwing Mechanics



Your fingers should always be on top of the ball. Two or three depending on the size of the hand and the thumb on the bottom.



Stand side-on to whoever you're throwing to.



Point the shoulder of your non-throwing arm (glove arm) at the target.



Your throwing arm should rotate down, then up



Step into the throw... Push off from your back foot to transfer your weight to your front foot



Your elbow should end up equal to or higher than the shoulder of your non-throwing arm (glove arm)



Bring the throwing arm through - down and across

## Basic Skills – Throwing

Some basic training drills to assist you with a focus on **THROWING**

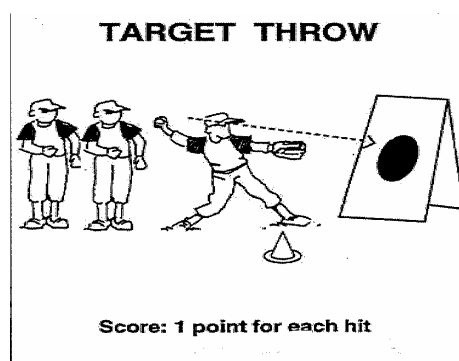
### **NOSE, TOES and THROWS**

For beginning players, it is useful to use rhyme to help them remember the throwing motion. At Forest Baseball, we use the term “Nose, Toes and Throws” when teaching first timers. “Nose” is for looking at the target before throwing. “Toes” is for stepping forward to the target with their glove side foot and “Throws” is for throwing the ball. It really works. Have them begin their throwing motion with their glove side shoulder facing the target to force them to turn their shoulders as they throw.

### **THROWING ACCRURACY**

To develop accuracy, set up a bucket or milk crate on the ground with the open end facing the player. Have them throwing into the bucket or crate using their throwing technique (Nose, Toes and Throws) Award them points if that get it in.

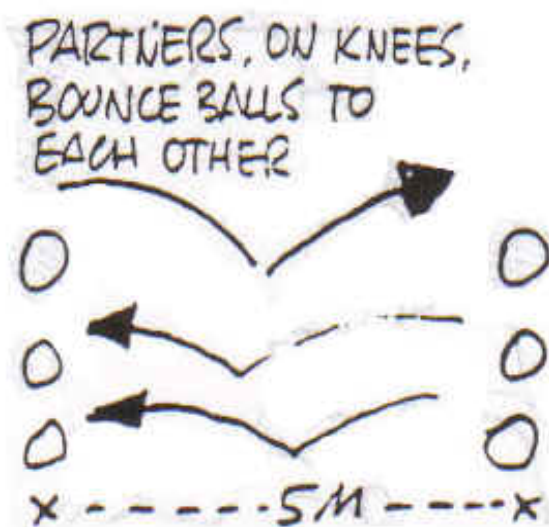
Another way is the tie a towel, rag or a handkerchief on the fence and have them try to hit that target. Line the players up and give each one the same number of throws at the target. Again to make it fun, award points if they are accurate. You will see a huge difference in their accuracy and the best part is its fun....



## BOUNCING BALL DRILL

This next drill is a great drill after the kids become a little bit more comfortable with throwing. It is probably best to start this drill with really soft baseballs or even tennis balls.

- ❖ Pair children off with each other in a line.
- ❖ Partners kneel on one knee facing each other, about 5m apart.
- ❖ Put a mark (target) on the ground in between the players
- ❖ One partner bounces the ball with an overarm throw to the other and vice versa.
- ❖ Remember high arm with elbow above shoulder height.
- ❖ After two successful throws each, partners each move back two paces.
- ❖ Ball should bounce high, so that the throwing arm is high.



This also teaches accurate throwing, reading of the field (grass) conditions, and consideration of the receiver when making a throw

## Basic Batting Mechanics



Grip the bat with your fingers (not in your palm), hands together and line up the 2<sup>nd</sup> knuckles.



Stand side-on to the direction of the hit.



Your feet should be the same distance apart as your shoulders.



Knees bent, hands back and at the top of the strike zone.



Pivot at your hips, and "throw" your hands at the ball. Head down and eyes focused on the ball. The bat will do the rest!

## Basic Skills – Batting

The starting point for any batter is the bat selection. Have the player grip the bat at the end of the handle and lift it with one arm, fully extended straight out in front of their body. They should be able to hold it parallel with the ground for 3 or 4 seconds without shaking or trembling. If they can't, they probably need a lighter bat.

Be aware that young players don't pay attention to others around them when they have a bat in their hands. For everybody's safety, make a rule early on that no player picks up a bat unless instructed to by a coach.

Here are some training drills to assist you with a focus on **BATTING**

### PROPER STANCE

A good training aid at practice can be useful in helping a beginning batter learn the proper stance in the batters box. Try using some sort of marker on the ground (spray can paint, line marking paint or even just draw marks on the dirt with a stick or a bat). The marks should be shoulder width apart with the front mark just back behind the front of the plate. Place some marks on the ground where the toes of the batter need to be. Over time the player will learn where to stand without assistance.

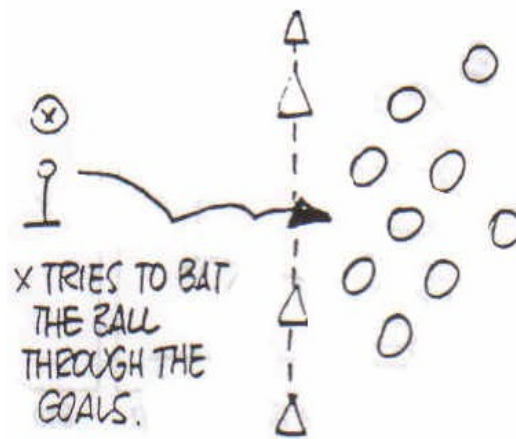
### TEE FENCE DRILL

- ❖ Split children into even groups (this depends on how many tees you have).
- ❖ Adjust the tee height to the batters waist.
- ❖ Batters then assume proper stance and distance from the tee. (Batter should line up the bat to the tee with outstretched arms)
- ❖ Put targets on the fence for them to aim at.
- ❖ Reinforce with them "Eyes on the ball"
- ❖ Get children who are waiting for their turn to count, 1, 2, 3 hit.
- ❖ Follow batting techniques that are listed above and hit balls in fence.
- ❖ Use only soft type balls in this drill to protect fences (tennis or wiffle balls).
- ❖ Use terms that kids love. "Step on an egg" (front foot) and "Squish a bug" (back foot).



## AUSSIE RULES DRILL

- ❖ Form groups of five or six. Each group will need four markers to set up goals as in Australian Rules Football.
- ❖ One player, selected as the batter, tries to hit the ball through the goals – award points just like aussie rules.
- ❖ Fielders are placed behind the goal line. Give each batter a set number of balls before changing over.
- ❖ The batter must set up with feet parallel to the centre point of the goal.
- ❖ Pair children off with each other in a line.

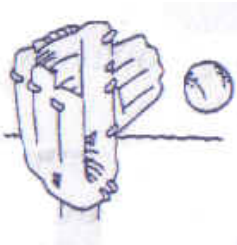


This teaches directional hitting

## Basic Catching Mechanics



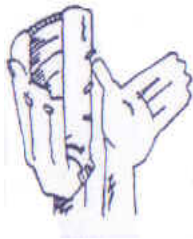
Keep your thumbs together.



Place your throwing hand behind the glove.



Extend your arms so you can catch the ball away from your body.



Fingers up to catch the ball above the waist.



Fingers down to catch the ball below the waist.



Move behind the ball



Close the glove over the ball, and then put the other hand over the glove, ready to take the ball out.

## Basic Skills Catching

Catching a baseball can be a very daunting task for a young player. Fear is the biggest challenge. Encourage the players and demonstrate the catching mechanics that are shown above. Repetition and practice are the keys to success.

Some training drills to assist you with a focus on **CATCHING**

### TOSS AND CATCH

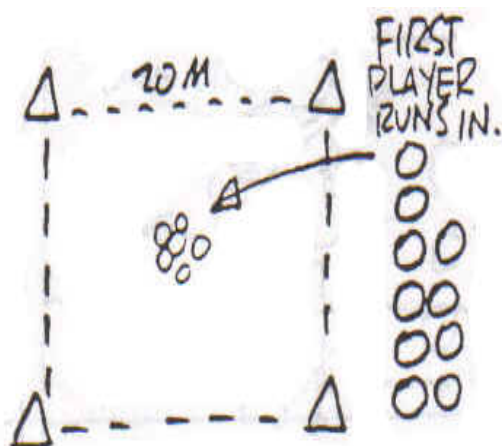
A great way to start children to catch is to go slowly with them. Some pick it up easy and quickly, but others find it very hard. Be positive with them and reassure them that the ball won't hurt them. This drill is a great entry into getting them to gain confidence.

- ❖ All players to all have a ball for themselves. (tennis or wiffle balls)
- ❖ Spread out so they have lots of room.
- ❖ Toss the ball into the air no more than 1 metre high.
- ❖ Each player tries to catch their own ball.
- ❖ As they get better increase the height (no more than 3 metres)
- ❖ Award points for every time they catch the ball.
- ❖ Make it a challenge that the last person to drop the ball wins the game.
- ❖ It doesn't really matter if they only toss at small heights. It's amazing how they will forget about fear and will try to win the game. (This will build confidence).
- ❖ As they get better at this, pair the children up where one player tosses and the other catches.
- ❖ Again make it a contest where the last pair that has not dropped the ball wins. (like an egg toss game).

## CATCH CHALLENGE DRILL

As the children get more comfortable with catching and throwing, try this drill for some FUN.

- ❖ Split the children into two teams.
- ❖ Use soft balls (tennis balls are great for this)
- ❖ Place all the balls in the centre of a 20m square.
- ❖ On a signal, one child from each team runs to the centre and throws a ball to the next child in the line.
- ❖ The receiver places the ball on the ground, runs to the centre, picks up another ball, and throws it to the next child. And so on.
- ❖ Once all the balls are out of the square, the teams repeat the exercise in reverse. The first child runs to the centre, the next child throws a ball to them and they run to the centre, the third child throws a ball to the second, and so on.
- ❖ First team to have all the balls back in the centre wins.



This drill teaches gross motor skills & teamwork.

## Basic Running Techniques



Drop the bat and take the initial step with your back foot.



At first, take short steps, lengthening as you speed increases.



Run straight through 1st base and at least a metre beyond it.

Don't slow down or jump to reach the base. (Remember, you are allowed to over run 1<sup>st</sup> base.)



When rounding a base, about two-thirds of the way between bases, swerve to the right, starting a controlled shallow arc through the base you're approaching.



Touch the base with either step in stride. Lean your upper body towards the centre of the diamond.

## Basic Skills - Running

Some training drills to assist you with a focus on **RUNNING**

### STARTING POINT OF RUNNING BASES

In the beginning players will not know how to run to first base when the ball is hit. A simple drill to get them started. At the end of every practice session, line up all the players on the first base side of home plate. Let them take turns running all the way around the bases and back home without stopping. With each practice session add something new like having coaches at 1<sup>st</sup> base and 3<sup>rd</sup> base stopping the runners randomly at different bases. This will get the players to watch their coaches for instruction and reinforce the need to be on the base when they stop. Later let them start with a bat and get them into the habit of dropping the bat as they start. If they sling the bat, get them to start again.

### RUN THROUGH FIRST BASE DRILL

A great drill to get kids started in the habit of running to first base is to have a base coach at the back of first base. They should be about 5 metres beyond the base. Get the kids to run to first base and beyond to high five the coach.

Key points to this drill –

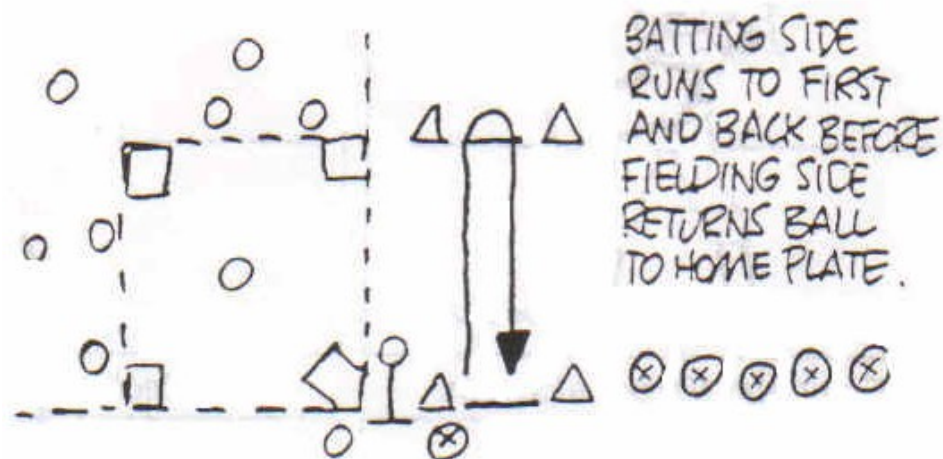
- ❖ Reinforce that they have to touch the base and then high five the coach.

### COYOTE AND ROAD RUNNER

This drill is a foot race between two players with one chasing the other around the bases. The goal is for the Coyote to try to catch the Road Runner.

- ❖ Line up players behind home plate and identify the first player as the Road Runner and the second player as the Coyote.
- ❖ Send the first player running towards first base. Depending upon the speed of each child, send the second player after the first, the idea is to make it a close race.
- ❖ This is really FUN for the kids and is a great way to end a training session.

## TEE BALL CRICKET STYLE DRILL



- ❖ Split the children into two teams Only home plate and 1st base are used. Set up cones to provide running lines from home plate to 1st base and back.
- ❖ The batting team must hit the ball and then runs to 1st. Fielders try to get the ball and throw it to home plate.
- ❖ If the throw beats the runner, the runner is out. Batters can run only to 1st base. Runners at 1st base try to run home and beat the throw. Each runner who gets back to home plate scores a run.
- ❖ Three outs and sides change over.

This drill teaches gross motor skills and field awareness.

## Basic Groundball Techniques



Move towards the ball



Bend at the waist and the knees, with your back almost parallel to the ground.



Keep the glove touching the ground in front of your body.



Elbows beside the inside of the knees, head down - watch the ball into the glove.



Follow the ball into the glove with your throwing hand.



Bring both hands up together, towards the shoulder of your throwing arm.



Throw the ball.

## Basic Skills – Fielding Groundballs

Some training drills to assist you with a focus on **GROUNDBALLS**

### STARTING RIGHT

With groups of three or four, teach beginners how to field by showing the proper hand and body position for fielding grounders. (See groundball techniques above). With their gloves off, have them hold their hands in front of them and place their pinkie fingers side to side in a cupped position. Next, demonstrate for them how to bend their knees and get their hands near the ground out in front of feet (forming a triangle) with their pinkies together. Remind them to keep their backs as straight as possible. With their gloves still off, roll them grounders from about five to ten metres away. By starting this drill without gloves, it allows the players to see the correct hand position. Let them try it a few times and then get them to try it with their gloves on.



Keep the glove touching the ground in front of your body.

### FIELDING IN PAIRS

This next drill is a great drill after the kids become a little bit more comfortable with fielding.

- ❖ Pair off the children in a line
- ❖ Spread out so they have plenty of room.
- ❖ Children to follow the basis groundball fielding techniques.
- ❖ Players roll the ball to each other.



Move towards the ball and place the feet shoulders width apart - watch the ball into the glove.

## SCORING GOALS DRILL



- ❖ Split the children into two teams, hats on and hats off is a good way to do this.
- ❖ By rolling the ball to team-mates, players attempt to score goals. Players attempt to roll the ball through the legs of the other players, or past them.
- ❖ The ball can only roll through the goal, and cannot be lifted into the air. A player holding the ball cannot move off the spot or run.
- ❖ No boundaries.

This is a great drill that teaches fielding balls on the move on the ground.