

Before Game Insights for baseball and softball:

6YOs & Younger

Coaches should focus on teaching a few items during the season and giving parents homework for them to teach some items at home such as understanding the bases, where you stand for a position, etc. It is impossible to teach all aspects at the youngest age so we would suggest coaches focusing on 3-4 items consistently in practices and games.

We would encourage coaches to use the batting tee throughout the season. Developing a level swing is much easier off a batting tee. With a batting tee, players can focus on hand placement, batting stance and the bat path of the swing. When a ball is thrown to hit, a batter reacts to where the ball is thrown. This is needed as they progress but they can work on that at the next division.

We would suggest avoiding the process of changing players to different positions every inning. Let players play the same position in a game multiple innings or at least two innings in a row. This speeds up the game – we often see players in a huddle with the coach at the first of the inning in front of the dugout asking where they play. But, since players are learning where positions are, repetition at the same place can help.

Find coaches that will be at most or almost all games. Players will get used to the same base coaches and more easily remember to follow the coach when they get on base.

Check your bats at the start of the season. We only allow USA Baseball stamped bats. All others such as 'USSSA' ones are illegal and will be called as an out at 7YO and older.

7YO & 8YO

Coaches should review the rules together, particularly the overthrow rules and how to stop the play. It is common that coaches never understand these two rules during an entire season. Understanding the rules allows your players to know what to do – you are teaching them correctly – and then they are making defensive plays. And then for coaches, your understanding lessens your frustration.

We would suggest avoiding the process of changing players to different positions every inning. Let players play the same position in a game multiple innings or at least two innings in a row. This speeds up the game – we often see players in a huddle with the coach at the first of the inning in front of the dugout asking where they play. The constant change of positioning less prepares the player to make a play. They played 2B in the last inning, OF the inning before and so on.

Immediately find an adult pitcher that can throw strikes. We see games negatively impacted because the adult pitcher cannot get the ball over the plate. And please be aware that the 'pitcher-coach' cannot coach the runners. They can encourage and instruct the batter while batting but that is the coach limit.

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9YO, 10YO & 11/12YOs – Baseball, and 9/10YOs & 11/13YOs – Softball

You will need to find your pitchers and you should give every player interested in pitching the opportunity to demonstrate whether they can pitch. They should be given multiple opportunities although with some, you may know immediately. But throwing strikes is the key, not pitcher velocity. Start this process at first practice.

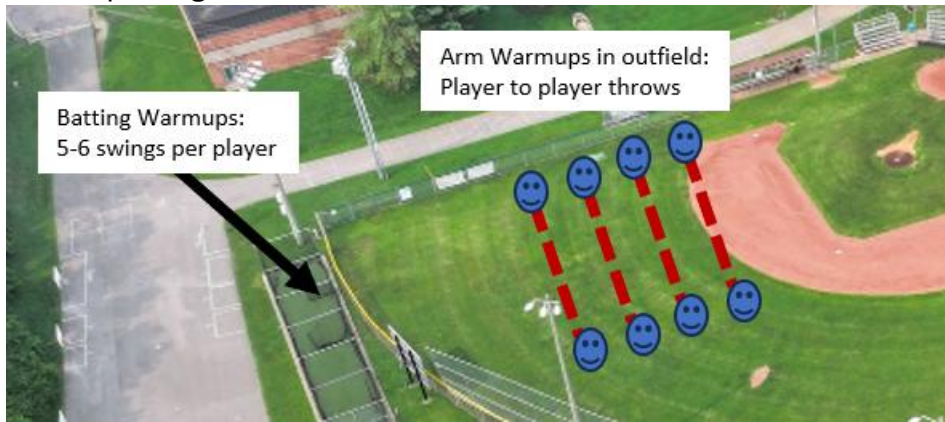
For those that remain interested in pitching but not likely to be used initially in a game, give them opportunities during the season. Let their parents know they are interested but need their help at home. Pitching needs repetition.

Find coaches that will be at most or almost all games. Players will get used to the same base coaches and more easily remember to follow the coach when they get on base.

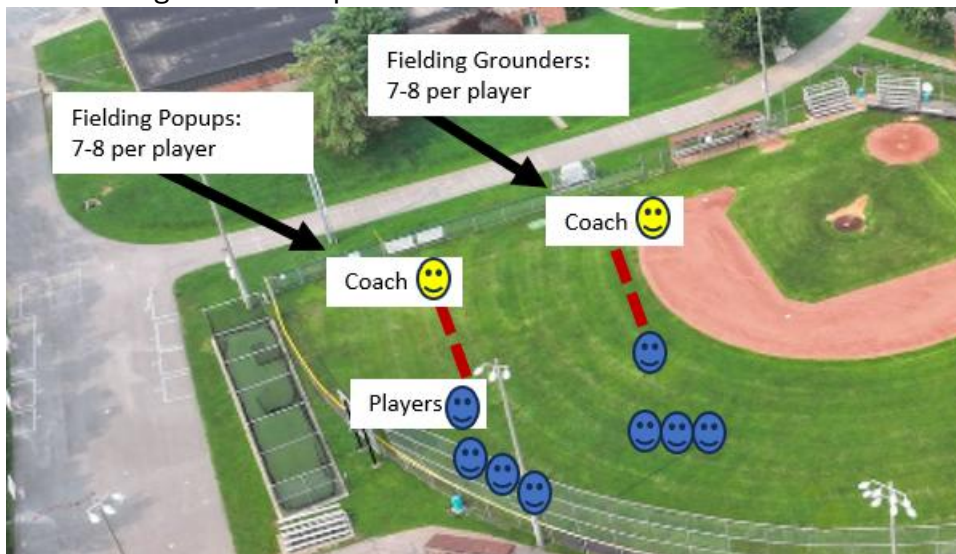
Check your bats at the start of the season. We only allow USA Baseball stamped bats for baseball. All others such as 'USSSA' ones are illegal and will be called as an out if they are used to bat the ball in play. Our softball explanation is a bit more complicated and can be found in section 1 of the rules [link](#). It follows the rules in the county league hosted by WCPR.

Designate one of your coaches to be the pitch counter. The number of pitches will matter, and you will need to count them.

Warmups for games



Additional game warmups if time allows:



Early in your practice schedule, engage with coaches or coach helpers prior to practices to understand their best ability (helps designate what each specific person could focus on – i.e. maybe someone with catcher's experience, someone for pitchers, someone for infield, someone for outfield). If you are planning to have treats or snacks after the games, get a Team Mom or Team Dad to run with that approach and coordinate with parents.

10-Minutes: Conduct warmups

This should mirror what occurs for games to create a routine

Use the same warmup approaches every time and not just parents and kids all over the field

60-second huddle for what will occur in the practice (helps get parents involved)

Rotating Stations (will need assistant volunteers)

Game Situations

Something fun

Station #1 – Fielding

- The approach depends on the age: grounders,

Station #2 – Batting

- The approach depends on the age: tee, cages, into net, plastic balls

Station #3 – Baserunning

- The approach depends on the age:

For 8YO and younger, there should be repetition of game situations such as ball hit to pitcher to practice the throw to 1B.

Your team will not get any outs if you do not have a first baseman that can catch.

Game Insights:

In 8YO & Younger, you need a capable player at 1B and a capable player pitching. The most common out opportunity is a ball hit to the pitcher. As such, this should

Avoid the process of changing players to different positions every inning. Let players play the same position in a game multiple innings.

Forming teams

- Through player registration, which is expected to end by 07/18, we will send player info out to those that registered to head coach so they can see who has registered. We will do this 2-3 times before rosters are created.
- Our rosters are created based on coach and teammate requests that are created when a parent registers a player. If someone doesn't have any specific requests, we attempt to place players based on school or neighborhood. Being able to do that just depends on the number of players and teams.
- As the divisions get older, you will see returning head coaches have a lot of requests by parents to be on their team. As such, by 8YOs, it is not uncommon for a head coach to have more requests than roster spots. In those situations, the head coach must decide who to keep. This can be challenging to let someone know you won't be able to have their player on your team.
- Our target roster is 12 players per team. A head coach can choose to go above 12 but just be aware that limits playing time for all players. The reason someone would go above 12 is based on the number of parents requesting them as a head coach.
- We expect to have preliminary rosters out to head coaches by 07/22. What happens when that occurs, we send an excel file out to head coaches showing players by team. This doesn't include contact info. We attempt to give head coaches 24 hours for feedback in case any changes are needed.
- Once rosters are final, we send complete player info with contact details to head coaches. A short time later, rosters are updated into Team Central. We click to "post" and then parents receive a system email identifying their head coach and teammates, all with contact info for each.

Equipment we provide

- We will provide all 5YO teams with a batting tee and game balls.

- We will provide all 6YO teams with a game ball and if any request one, we can provide a batting tee.
- We will provide all 7YO to 12YO teams with catcher's gear and game balls. Catcher's gear will be in bags numbered as BBC123, etc.
- We will provide 13YO and older with game balls.
- There will be an "equipment date" to pick up the above, currently planned for 07/24.
- When the season is over, all catcher's equipment must be returned.

Parks

- All 12YO and younger practices will occur at Crockett Park (city park) or Civitan Park (county park). All games in the fall are planned for Crockett Park.
- All 13YO and older practices and games will occur at Granny White Park (city park) or Woodland Middle School (city park).
- After each game and practice, we would really appreciate teams picking up whatever trash the team created during their use.
- City workers pick up trash at the city fields. Our club often picks up trash too. If anything is left at a city park, city workers at the end of the night or next morning may take it to their Lost & Found on General George Patton.
- If anything is left at Civitan Park, we leave it where it was left so someone can return to pick up. There is also a lost and found bin up by our clubhouse. See the Links section of our website for a view of the park.
- There are electrical plugs behind the backstops at all fields. While these are typically for scoreboards, some coaches may use equipment – their own – that needs power.
- There are L-screens for league use at Crockett Park, Civitan Park and Granny White Park. The ones at Crockett are currently on fields 5,6,7 and 8. The ones at Civitan Park are on fields 1,2 and 6.

Practice Times

- Teams will have up to 6 scheduled practices before games start. Considering weather, teams should expect 3-6 practices before games.
- Before each practice, it is quite helpful to have a practice plan. Upon request, we will provide a practice approach and plan prior to rosters being set. A head coach does not have to follow the plans, but they are intended to help.
- We don't set practice schedules until all head coach names have been identified.
- To set practice times, our club will ask head coaches for their desired practice days and time slots. We will send a template out to head coaches to identify, based on the schedule file shared, what practice days/times they desire. We won't be able to meet all the requests because we often see many coaches requesting the same day/time. For example, most head coaches for the younger division will request Saturdays at 9:00.
- We expect to have practice schedules out to head coaches the evening of 07/26. Practices will start 08/01. Between those two dates, we will upload the schedules into Team Central on our website. Once we click "post", all parents and coaches will receive a system email identifying their practice schedule.

Weather

- We decide on the field status based on weather conditions. Refer to the Weather Policy in the Links section of our website for more information.

Baseball Games

- All teams will have 10 scheduled league games, starting 08/23.
- The 7YO to 12YO teams will have an end of season tournament after fall break, from 10/17 to 10/21.
- We will attempt to schedule any games that are cancelled due to the weather. We have designated makeup dates 09/29 to 10/02 for all 12YO and younger ages, and then two additional dates of 10/13 to 10/14 for our 7YO to 12YO divisions.
- Our 13YO and older will play mostly Saturday doubleheaders.
- Our game times on weekdays are at 5:30. In some situations, we might try to start 5-10 minutes earlier to help the second game start less late.
- Our 7YO and 8YO second games on weekdays start at 6:45PM, while our 9YO and older start at 7:15PM.
- Saturday games may start as early as 8:00AM.
- We expect to have the game schedule to head coaches on 08/05. A few days after that date, we will upload the schedules into Team Central on our website. Once we click “post”, all parents and coaches will receive a system email identifying their practice schedule.

Uniforms

- When parents register their player, we collect player sizes. Unfortunately, once ordered, the parent owns.
- We will review orders prior to our order with the vendor to see any irregularities such as requesting a youth medium shirt and adult medium shirt. If that occurs, we will reach out to the parents to see if a change is needed.
- There will be a uniform pick up day for all team uniforms. This will occur at Civitan Park. We will provide the location and date specifics in advance. Each team will typically have two bags – player shirt, player pants, player belt, player cap, coach shirt, coach cap – to pick up.
- For 8YO and younger, we provide socks because the pants at those ages have elastic at the bottom and are intended for the pants to be pulled up so you can see the socks. At 9YO and older, the “open bottom” pants do not need socks.
- If someone requests a youth small sized shirt and ends up needing a youth medium, that can be ordered but the parent will have to pay for it.
- Pants exchanges can occur if needed as long as the parent shows up for the ‘Pants Swap Date’.
- We will fund (i.e. we pay) names for players on the back of their shirt. Unless you are head coaching one of the youngest ages, where all sizes are the same, such as Youth Small, we recommend handing out shirts to check for sizes, having player-to-player adjustments (swaps) as needed, and then putting the shirts in a bag and taking them back to our vendor for names. It usually takes 3-4 business days for name placement although sometimes it can be quicker.

Picture Day

- Picture Day is our only fundraiser of the season. Our hope is that every head coach will get their team to the event.

- We will supply head coach email addresses to Legends Photo. They will reach out and provide access to where head coaches can select a photo slot for their team. Typically, an hour before game time is ideal to set your reservation.
- The team photo is created based on individual player photos so a coordinated one picture of the team does not occur.
- If anyone does not attend Photo Day, there will be a makeup date where they can just walk up without an appointment.