



Coaching AA: **Skills and Player Development**

1. Coaching The Players

- a. Little League is devoted to fostering Good Sportsmanship, Teamwork and Fostering a Love for baseball while developing the players' skills
- b. Teams are expected to practice
 - i. At least 2-3 times a week leading up to the start of games
 - 1. Weather permitting
 - 2. A Division and Tee Ball at least once a week, but more are encouraged
 - ii. At least once a week during regular; twice a week is preferred
 - 1. Sharing of fields and facilities may be required
- c. Managers and Coaches are expected to treat all players, coaches, umpires and officials with respect
- d. Coaches must focus on developing every player, not just their child or the best players
- e. Players' skills and development should progress as they move up through the divisions

2. AA Skill Development

- i. Developmental Division to translate skills taught into traditional game play
- ii. Playing IQ that must be introduced
 - 1. Use of cutoffs
 - 2. Cutoff players and positioning
 - 3. Where to throw balls in play vs number of outs
 - 4. Where to throw balls in play vs runners on base
 - 5. Force out vs tag out
 - 6. Lead runner vs trailer runner
 - 7. Communication in game play
- iii. Skills that must be developed
 - 1. Proper pre-game/pre-practice warm-up
 - 2. Proper pre-practice/pre-game throwing routine
 - 3. Pitching
 - a. Windup
 - b. Mechanics
 - c. Follow through
 - d. Strike zone
 - e. Arm care/injury prevention
 - f. Covering home on pass balls

4. Catching
 - a. Putting on and taking off gear
 - b. Positioning and stance
 - c. Footwork used to throwing to bases
 - d. Introduction to blocking
 - e. Throwing to pitcher on pass balls
5. Infield Positioning and Footwork through fielding
 - a. Backhand, forehand
 - b. Charging the ball
 - c. Covering bases on all balls put in play
 - d. Rotation on ball put in play
6. Outfield Positioning and Footwork through fielding
 - a. Footwork on flyballs
 - b. Cutting off balls down the line or in the gaps
 - c. Backing up partner outfielder
 - d. Backing up throws in the infield
 - e. Rotations on ball put in play
 - f. Hitting cut offs vs throwing through
7. Base Running
 - a. Picking up signs from coach
 - b. Secondary lead on pitches
 - c. Stealing a base
 - d. Advancing on pass balls
 - e. Running through first vs not over running 2nd and 3rd
 - f. Rounding bases on extra base hits and scoring
 - g. sliding
8. Hitting
 - a. Batting mechanics
 - b. Identifying strikes vs balls
 - c. Positioning in batters box
 - d. Reaction to pass balls
9. Communication
 - a. Defensive
 - i. Communicating outs
 - ii. Lining up cutoffs
 - iii. Calling out cuts and locations
 - b. Offensive
 - i. Getting signs from coach
 - ii. Batter assisting runner coming home
- iv. By the end of AA, players should be able to
 1. Effectively lead a pre-practice/pre-game warm-up
 2. Begin to consistently follow a pre-practice/pre-game throwing routine
 3. Pitching
 - a. Begin to understand pitching mechanics

- b. Be comfortable pitching from the "Stretch" position
 - i. Begin to incorporate a full wind up
 - c. Be consistently pitching from the pitcher's plate
 - d. Understand the Strike Zone
 - e. Demonstrate an understanding of arm care and injury prevention
 - i. Pitch counts
 - ii. Icing
 - f. Consistently cover home plate on pass balls with runner on third
- 4. Catching
 - a. Put on and take off catcher's gear with minimal assistance
 - b. Be comfortable in the traditional catcher's position
 - i. Not on knees
 - c. Be comfortable attempting to throw out advancing runners
 - d. Understand the basics of blocking wild pitches
 - e. Start trying to get ball to pitcher covering home on pass balls
 - f. Know how to tag out an unforced runner trying to score
- 5. Infield
 - a. Understand "Obstruction"
 - i. Can't hinder base runner when not trying to field a batted or thrown ball
 - b. Be able to correctly position themselves to field a ball
 - c. Begin to utilize the footwork needed to get into throwing position after fielding a ground ball
 - d. Start charging slow ground balls
 - e. Begin to consistently cover and back up appropriate bases on runner advancement attempts
 - f. Begin to properly rotate to cover vacant bases on balls in play
 - g. Begin to back-up teammates on batted balls and throws
 - h. Identify force plays vs tag plays
 - i. Begin to consistently position themselves to field throws at bags
 - j. Begin to effectively make tag plays
 - k. Begin to attempt plays vs lead runner
 - l. Begin to communicate on fly balls on the infield
 - i. Calling for the ball: "I got it!," "Me, Me, Me!"
 - ii. Backing off when teammate calls for ball
 - m. Start working cutoffs with minimal prompts from coaches
 - i. Identifying who is cutoff and who covers bags
 - ii. Begin calling out cutoff commands; lining up, and where ball is being cut to
- 6. Outfield Positioning and Footwork through fielding
 - a. Begin to demonstrate proper footwork on flyballs
 - i. First step back
 - ii. Drop and run
 - b. Cutting balls off down the line or in the gaps

- i. Cutting down angles
 - ii. Begin to start backing up partner outfielder in gaps
 - c. Backing up throws in the infield
 - i. With minimal prompting from coach, begin getting into back up position on groundballs
 - ii. With minimal prompting from coach, begin to back up throws to bases on runner advancement attempts
 - d. Communicating on Fly balls
 - i. "Me, Me, Me"
 - ii. Backing up teammate that calls for fly ball
 - e. Hitting cut offs
 - i. Begin to recognize when to hit cutoff vs when to throw through
 - ii. Throwing to correct bag
- 7. Base Running
 - a. Begins to consistently look for signs
 - b. Begins to consistently take secondary lead on pitches
 - c. Knows when they are allowed to leave bag to steal
 - d. Understands what "Interference" is
 - i. Cannot hinder a fielder from fielding a batted or thrown ball
 - e. Begins to consistently advance on pass balls
 - f. Consistently runs through first base on infield hits
 - g. Begins to round first on singles to the outfield
 - h. Consistently does not run through 2nd and 3rd base bags
 - i. Safely demonstrate the ability to slide into bases and home
 - j. Begins to consistently slide into bags on steals and when the defense is setting up to make a play at a bag
 - i. Understands that head first slides are not allowed in Little League
- 8. Hitting
 - a. Begin to understand the mechanics of a swing
 - i. High hands
 - ii. Being on top and inside pitch
 - iii. Knee bend and hip hinge
 - iv. Swing comes from back hip; hip and core rotation
 - v. Balanced finish
 - vi. Head/chest down over zone
 - b. Begin to step out with front foot to get signs from coach
 - c. Begin to eliminate swings at unhittable balls
 - d. Can consistently get into proper stance with no assistance from coach
 - e. Consistently gets out of batters box on pass balls with runner on third
- 9. Communication

a. Defensive

- i. Begin to consistently communicate number of outs
- ii. Begin to consistently communicate where throws need to go pre-pitch
- iii. Begin to consistently line up cutoffs
- iv. Begin to consistently call out cuts and where throw needs to go
- v. Begin to confidently take charge of balls in air

b. Offensive

- i. Begin to consistently look for signs from coach
- ii. Consistently recognize offensive signs