



Coaching AAA: **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. AAA Skill Development

- a. Developmental Division to fine tune skills taught and apply to game play
- b. Playing IQ that must be developed
 - i. Use of cutoffs
 - ii. Cutoff players and positioning
 - iii. Where to throw balls in play vs number of outs
 - iv. Where to throw balls in play vs runners on base
 - v. Force out vs tag out
 - vi. Lead runner vs trailer runner
 - vii. Communication in game play
 - viii. 1st and 3rd Situations
 - ix. Bunt coverages
 - x. Thinking a play ahead
- c. Skills that must be developed in AAA
 - i. Proper pre-game/pre-practice warm-up
 - ii. Proper pre-practice/pre-game throwing routine
 - iii. Pitching
 - 1. Windup
 - 2. Mechanics
 - 3. Follow through

4. Strike zone
5. Arm care/injury prevention
6. Covering home on pass balls
7. Covering bunts
8. Backing up plays at 3rd and home
9. Catching
 - a. Putting on, taking off gear and bagging gear
 - b. Positioning and stance
 - c. Pitch location
 - d. Footwork used throwing to bases
 - e. Blocking
 - f. Throwing to pitcher on pass balls
 - g. Covering bunts
 - h. Positioning on pop up foul balls
 - i. Pre-pitch communication
 - j. Post hit communication
10. 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
 - e. Rundowns
11. 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
12. 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
 - h. Rundowns
 - i. Begins to identify when to go half way vs immediately back to bag on balls hit in the air
13. Hitting
 - a. Batting mechanics
 - b. Bunting
 - c. Identifying strikes vs balls

- d. Positioning in batters box
- e. Reaction to pass balls

14. 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 AAA, players should be able to

1. Effectively lead a pre-practice/pre-game warm-up without prompting by coach
2. Begin to consistently lead a pre-practice/pre-game throwing routine without prompting by coach
3. Pitching
 - a. Begin to fine tune pitching mechanics
 - i. Begin to feel when mechanics are off and can adjust with minimal correction from coach
 - b. Be comfortable using a full wind up
 - c. Begin to mix up pitch location
 - d. Begin to utilize different fast ball grips
 - i. Throwing with finger tips
 - ii. Four seam
 - iii. Two seam
 - iv. Cutter
 - e. Begin to incorporate an "Off Speed" pitch
 - i. Change up
 - ii. Knuckle ball
 - iii. Splitter
 - f. Demonstrate an understanding of arm care and injury prevention
 - i. Pitch counts
 - ii. Icing
 - iii. Strength and condition exercises
 1. Bands
 2. plyos
 - g. Always cover home plate on pass balls with runner on third
4. Catching
 - a. Put on, take off and bag gear with no assistance
 - b. Begin to incorporate multiple receiving positions
 - i. Traditional
 - ii. Runners on
 - iii. Modified crouch

- c. Begin to adjust positioning for pitch location
- d. Consistently attempts to throw runners out
 - i. Able to identify where to throw
 - ii. Able to distinguish when to and when not to throw ball
- e. Able to identify when blocking is required
- f. Effectively able to get into blocking position
- g. Consistently throw ball to pitcher covering home vs pass balls with runner trying to advance
- h. Effectively able to apply tag to runners trying to advance home
- i. Begins to try to locate and make play on foul ball pop up around home plate
- j. Begins to communicate with defense pre-pitch
 - i. Number of outs and where ball is going
 - ii. Bunt defense
 - iii. 1st and 3rd situations
 - iv. Signals pitch and location to pitcher
- k. Begins to communicate with defense post hit
 - i. Calling out where play needs to go
 - ii. Assist defense with correcting rotations and coverages

5. Infield

- a. Consistently able to position themselves vs groundballs
 - i. Ball at
 - ii. Backhand
 - iii. Forehand
- b. Consistently attempts to work around the ball to get body in position to throw to first
- c. Consistently charges slow rolling ground balls
- d. Begins to try barehanding slow rolling ground balls
- e. Consistently cover and back up appropriate bases on runner advancement attempts
- f. Consistently rotate to cover vacant bases on balls in play
- g. Consistently back-up teammates on batted balls and throws
- h. Knows the difference between force play and tag play and adjusts accordingly
- i. Able to position themselves to field throws at bags
- j. Able effectively make tag plays
- k. Consistently attempts plays vs lead runner when appropriate
- l. Begins to react to rundown situations
 - i. Timing the throw

- ii. Receiving the throw and attempting a tag
 - iii. Rotating through a rundown
- m. Consistently communicate on fly balls on the infield
 - i. Calling for the ball: "I got it!," "Me, Me, Me!"
 - ii. Covers appropriate bag when teammate calls for ball
- n. Consistently rotate to cutoff positioning and coverages
 - i. Identifying who is cutoff and who covers bags
 - ii. Consistently call out cutoff commands; lining up, and where ball is being cut
 - iii. Begins to adjust cut command to throw behind runner

6. Outfield

- a. Consistently utilizes proper footwork on flyballs
 - i. First step back
 - ii. Drop and run
- b. Consistently adjusts path to cut off balls down the line or in the gaps
 - i. Cutting down angles
 - ii. Consistently backing up partner outfielder in gaps
- c. Backing up throws in the infield
 - i. Consistently gets into back up position on groundballs
 - ii. In position to get into rundown rotation if needed
 - iii. Consistently positions themselves to back up throws to bases on runner advancement attempts
- d. Consistently communicates on Fly balls
 - i. "Me, Me, Me"
 - ii. Consistently backs up teammate that calls for fly ball
- e. Hitting cut offs
 - i. Recognizes when to hit cutoff vs when to throw through
 - ii. Demonstrates ability to throw through cutoff and straight to bag
 - iii. Begins to anticipate play and where to throw
 - iv. Begins to understand when to attempt a play at home vs when to keep batter from getting extra bases

7. Base Running

- a. Consistently look for signs
- b. Consistently take secondary lead on pitches
- c. Knows when they are allowed to leave bag to steal
- d. Understands what "Interference" is

- i. Can not hinder a fielder from fielding a batted or thrown ball
- e. Consistently advance on pass balls
- f. Consistently runs through first base on infield hits
- g. Begins to understand how to work out of a rundown
- h. Begins to utilize Tagging Up on flyballs
- i. Begins to understand dynamics of a squeeze bunt
- j. Consistently rounds first on singles to the outfield
- k. Does not run through 2nd and 3rd base bags
- l. Able safely to slide into bases and home
- m. Consistently slides 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. Begins to consistently utilize the mechanics of a swing
 - i. Knob to ball
 - ii. Staying on top of and inside the pitch
 - iii. Knee bend and hip hinge
 - iv. Begins to understand bat path and plane
 - v. Begins to understand directional hitting vs inside or outside pitches
 - vi. Consistently able to hit from legs, hips and core
 - vii. Consistently balanced throughout swing
 - viii. Head/chest down over zone
- b. Consistently steps out with front foot pre-pitch to get signs from coach
- c. Begins to have command of strike zone
- d. Begins to demonstrate ability to bunt
 - i. Sacrifice
 - ii. Bunt for a hit
 - iii. Squeeze
- e. Consistently able to repeat stance and swing
- f. Does not stay in batter box on pass balls with runner at third

9. Communication

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

b. Offensive

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