



## **Program Objectives**

The purpose of this coaching curriculum is to equip our association coaches with the best possible tools and training to meet our intended outcomes and prepare all participants for each subsequent level of play, regardless of skill level. In order to meet our objectives, we have adopted this training curriculum that establishes coaching consistency within age groups and developmental progression across age groups.

While SYBL recognizes that athletes and families have varying goals and expectations with regards to youth baseball, the Program will be structured in a manner where all participants are prepared as best as possible for each subsequent level of play, providing a path for those who will eventually compete for our local middle school and high school programs. Our focus on individual growth and development, as well as team building and the spirit of competition, is imperative in ensuring the best possible outcomes for every participant in our Program.



## Age-Specific Program Objectives

### Rookie League T-Ball & A League Coach Pitch: Ages 5-8

The primary purpose of tee-ball/coach pitch is to develop a love of the game and create an environment that leads to participants seeking additional opportunities to practice and play. The ultimate goal is to get participants to stick around until age 9-10, when the game begins to resemble something like 'baseball'. Coaches should focus on enhancing gross motor skills, learning basic baseball concepts, building social relationships with teammates, identifying opportunities to develop team concepts, and having fun competing.

#### Non Sport Specific Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, and being a positive and supportive teammate
- Demonstrate respect for coaches, teammates, and opposing players
- Remain engaged throughout practices and games
- Understand the flow of practices and games
- Dress properly for practices and games
- Be responsible for personal and team equipment
- Positively respond to negative outcomes

#### Baseball IQ Outcomes:

- Understand basic baseball rules—the right direction to run when the ball is hit, touching the bases; how to record outs (catch the ball in the air, throw to first, or tag the runners); running past first base, staying behind the lead runner when advancing to the next base, and scoring a run.
- Identify the 9 positions on the field and their basic responsibilities, including covering bases and backing a teammate up
- Understand safety rules – not swinging bats around teammates and throwing the ball only when teammates are looking

#### Skills Development Outcomes:

- Demonstrate Tracking Skills — following the ball with the eyes into the glove, using two hands to catch and field, trying to catch the ball out in front of the body, and hit a pitched ball
- Demonstrate where to stand in the batters box, how to correctly grip the bat, and swing through the baseball
- Learning positional play—if the ball is hit to a teammate, let him or her field it



## AA: Ages 9-10

This may be the first introduction to a team sport for some young athletes at this age, especially those who did not participate in our T-ball/Coach Pitch Program. The goal at this level is to cultivate a genuine interest in the sport, while at the same time introduce basic rules and flow of the game. As a primary objective, participants need to enjoy their experience while embracing a willingness to learn, participate, and take risks. Mistakes must be seen as opportunities for learning - not failures - and coaches are expected to stress growth, development, and process over personal outcomes and winning. Coaching success is primarily measured by the percentage of their roster's willingness to register for baseball the following season.

### Non-Sport Specific Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, and being a positive and supportive teammate
- Demonstrate respect for coaches, teammates, umpires, and opposing players
- Remain engaged throughout the entire game
- Sprint on and off the field
- Realize the importance of practice to improve
- Dress properly for games and practices
- Be responsible for personal and team equipment; develop an understanding of an organized and focused dugout
- Positively respond to negative outcomes

### Baseball IQ Outcomes:

- Perform basic warm-up drills and understand their importance
- Understand general baseball field layout, positions, and fundamental rules of the game - such as force out versus tag out plays, balls and strikes, foul balls, and what part of the field is in play

### Hitting Outcomes:

- Demonstrate where to stand in the batter's box and how to start in a balanced and athletic position with proper hand and head position
- Show ability to keep head and eyes at the point of contact
- Exhibit dynamic balance with early development and introduction to lower body rotation and direct bat path

### Fielding Outcomes:

- Demonstrate proper glove position when playing catch (fingers up for ball above waste – elbow down – and fingers down for ball below waste)
- Field ground balls out in front of body using two hands, with early development of forehands and backhands
- Catch fly balls in front of body using two hands
- Demonstrate correct fielding stance, where to position themselves, proper base coverage, and calling for the baseball
- Demonstrate proper throwing mechanics (proper alignment of feet, hips, and shoulders, taking ball out of glove with thumbs and palms down, releasing baseball with fingers on top of the ball, and flipping the back hip to get over the front side), how to properly grip the baseball, who to throw the ball to and to what base to throw the ball (throwing to first base from the infield and trying to get the lead runner when necessary, and throwing to second base from the outfield)



#### Pitching Outcomes

- Demonstrate basic wind-up mechanics – head staying centered throughout, maintaining dynamic balance, proper alignment at foot strike with arm positioned to be on time, and complete back hip rotation and follow through to enable body to completely get over front side

#### Baserunning Outcomes:

- Understand what base to run to next and when to run
- Know when to run through first base and when to round first base



### AAA: Ages 11-12

At this level, the emphasis is a combination of having fun with more advanced instruction on fundamental baseball skills and team play. Participants must learn the value of practice, in particular the importance of practicing on their own to enhance skill development. Although the idea of winning is not an area of emphasis, participants will begin to develop an understanding of competing, regardless of the score, in addition to the idea of winning and losing as a team. Individualism and "star" status should always be discouraged; a collective approach emphasizing roles and responsibilities should be highlighted and stressed instead. Although there still may be many newcomers to the sport at this level, it may be assumed that many of the kids have a foundational understanding of basic rules and fundamentals.

#### Non-Sport Specific Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, and being a positive and supportive teammate
- Demonstrate respect for coaches, teammates, umpires, and opposing players
- Remain engaged throughout the entire game
- Sprint on and off the field
- Realize the importance of practice to improve
- Dress properly for games and practices
- Be responsible for personal and team equipment; develop an understanding of an organized and focused dugout
- Positively respond to negative outcomes

#### Baseball IQ Outcomes:

- Revisit basic fundamental rules of the game, such as force out versus tag out plays, balls and strikes, foul balls and leadoffs
- Understand tagging up

#### Hitting Outcomes:

- Demonstrate basic bunting techniques
- Demonstrate full lower body rotation and early understanding of hip/shoulder separation
- Exhibit direct bat path and proper extension with hands staying inside the baseball
- Exhibit understanding of the strike zone with early development of plate discipline

#### Fielding Outcomes:

- Exhibit fluid throwing mechanics with increased arm strength and limited tail on the baseball
- Develop defined position play with an understanding of positional responsibilities
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of situational defense – where to throw with runners on base
- Understand throwing to the cut-off man – throwing to the second base bag or the shortstop taking the cut
- Begin to understand the concept of thinking ahead – knowing where to be and what to do before the ball is hit
- Understand that each player has a place to go on every play
- Recognize the need for outfielders to back up infield plays/throws
- Development of catchers and the appropriate skills – more specifically set-up, receiving, and blocking

#### Pitching Outcomes

- Continued development of basic wind-up mechanics – head staying centered throughout, maintaining dynamic balance, proper alignment at foot strike with arm positioned to be on time, and complete back hip rotation and follow through to enable body to completely get over front side



- Develop ability to throw 4 seam fastball for strikes a majority of the time
- Understand wind-up versus stretch mechanics
- Cover first base on ground balls hit to right side

Baserunning Outcomes:

- Touch the inside corner of each base when rounding
- Touch the front part of 1st base when running through the bag
- Demonstrate an ability to listen to base coaches and understand signals
- Understand basic base stealing moves – crossover and/or jab step
- Exhibit proper sliding techniques
- Understand how to properly tag up on a fly ball



### Majors: Ages 13-17

Once a player reaches this level, most of the basic skills have already been taught and coaches can now focus on the finer points of baseball that will be refined as they mature and enter high school competition.

#### Non-Sport Specific Outcomes:

- Understand the meaning of being a good teammate and the importance of accepting assigned roles within a group setting
- Learn not only how to overcome adversity, but to embrace it as well
- Realize the importance of controlling emotions and channeling negative energy into productive practice
- Discover the power behind focusing on aspects within a player's control, and creating attainable goals that are rooted in process
- Recognize that excellence is a habit that includes a systematic process of hard work, habitual effort, steadfast discipline, and daily pursuit of continuous improvement
- Display humility in good times, empathy for those who are struggling, and respect for others
- Being accountable for mistakes

#### Baseball IQ Outcomes:

- Understand more advanced rules of the game – such as dropped third strikes, infield fly rule, and balks

#### Hitting Outcomes:

- Demonstrate ability to lay down bunts to both sides of the line, and understand the difference between a sacrifice bunt and bunting for a base hit
- Exhibit ability to hit to the opposite field
- Demonstrate understanding of properly getting on plane with the pitch
- Demonstrate the ability to stay behind baseball and adjust to off-speed pitches
- Demonstrate ability to create hip-shoulder separation with lower body leading the hands
- Understand situational hitting and the existence of varying approaches that are dependent on the count, score, and opposing pitcher

#### Fielding Outcomes:

- Generate momentum towards the target with proper foot work and body position
- Read hops effectively and manage to approach ground balls more efficiently
- Analyze catcher's signs and use that information to position accordingly
- Understand cut-off responsibilities (correct alignment and communication) and run-down responsibilities
- Exhibit ability to turn several combinations of double plays (6-4-3, 4-6-3, 5-4-3, 3-6-3, 1-6-3, 1-2-3)
- Show understanding of basic bunt coverages and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> plays
- Refined understanding of thinking ahead – knowing where to be and what to do before the ball is hit
- Demonstrate proper outfield fly ball mechanics – catching ball over throwing shoulder on balls of feet
- Understand priority on fly balls hit in between infield and outfield
- Understand the unique responsibilities of different positions
- Further development of catchers and the appropriate skills – more specifically receiving, framing, blocking, calling a game, fielding bunts, and throwing out runners.



Pitching Outcomes:

- Exhibit ability to attack all four quadrants with 4 seam fastball
- Early development of an effective off speed and breaking pitch
- Ability to hold runners and control the running game

Baserunning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate proper lead-offs, secondary leads, and an ability to read and react to pick-off attempts and varying baserunning situations
- Begin to show initiative in taking the next base when the situation presents itself