

SOFTBALL DRILLS AND MODIFIED GAMES

This booklet has been developed as a resource guide for coaches. It has the detailed descriptions of drills and modified games listed in the National and Academy Coaches Handbook.

The booklet is in two parts:

1. **Softball Drills**
2. **Modified Games**

The softball drills are grouped into sections related to Offense and Defense.

They are only a small selection of many drills that are used in the game of softball. No coach should feel they should only use the ones listed. You are only limited by your imagination!

The modified games are designed to compliment the skills needed to play softball effectively. But most of all they are fun and add variety to any training session. The modified games can be adjusted to suit all age groups. Enjoy!

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Acknowledgement

This handbook was developed and put together from the collective resources and materials available to us from many different sources.

We collectively acknowledge all concerned and hope this handbook will play an important role in the development of the players we have the pleasure of coaching.

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SOFTBALL DRILLS

BATTING

The key to successful batting is practice. Batting drills allow the batter to perform many swings in a short period of time which is important because muscle memory depends on repetition, and each drill helps the batter to focus on one particular aspect of the swing, thereby accelerating the learning. When a drill is performed, it is critical that each swing is executed to perfection. Remember, only PERFECT practice makes perfect. The drills included in this section are some examples. Use your imagination and compile others.

1. Hitting Rhythm Drill

This drill will help promote the rhythm and coordination needed to develop power in the swing. It is done in four phases at moderate speed.

- Phase 1: Stride only. Stand in normal batting stance with hands on hips. Take a short stride and note position of stride foot. Repeat until stride is consistent and controlled.
- Phase 2: Stride and hip. Repeat the stride movement, but follow with a strong hip rotation toward the pitcher. Maintain head position throughout pivot. Repeat this sequence until smooth and comfortable.
- Phase 3: Stride - hip - swing. Now add the swing without a bat, using arms only. Focus on a continuous stride/hip/swing flow, with a complete follow through.
- Phase 4: With a bat. Continue easy swings using a very light bat or broomstick. Maintain the three step sequence while concentrating on smoothness.

Drill should include about 50 - 75 repetitions total.

2. Dry Swings

This is a continuation of Drill #1. The idea here is to promote the efficiency of the swing mechanics through perfect repetitions. The idea of technique swings is to entrench an automatic correct response to fast pitching. Make sure correct technique is used on every swing. Modify the number of repetitions to suit the age and experience of the player.

100 Technique swings:

- 10 swings - moderate speed, work on stride. Consistent, short, soft step.
- 10 swings - moderate speed, work on hip rotation. Bell-button the ball, pivot for power.
- 10 swings - moderate speed, work on stiff front side, straight and strong principle.
- 10 swings - moderate speed, work on quick hands - going straight to the ball.
- 10 swings - moderate speed, still head and eyes.
- 10 swings - fast speed, "outside-in" swing, throw bat head out in front.
- 10 swings - fast speed, "inside-out" swing, lead with the hands, go to opposite field.
- 10 swings - 5 swings at three-quarter speed with eyes closed. 5 swings slow motion, eyes closed. Focus on power points & leverages.
- 10 swings - full speed. Swing light bat or hold large end of normal bat. Focus on smoothness, flow, rhythm, timing, coordination.
- 10 swings - maximum speed. Snap-backs using concentric & eccentric contraction. Work on developing power. Maximise speed.

3. Snap-backs

This drill will promote strength through the complete swing, improve bat speed and swing quickness. It works the swing muscles in both directions (concentric and eccentric) thus accelerating strength improvements.

- Use regular bat or one slightly heavier.
- Start in regular stance and take a full swing at maximum velocity.
- Hold follow through position for a split second and reverse the swing at maximum velocity. Do 10 repetitions.

4. Front Arm Swings

Designed to develop proper hand movement while promoting front arm strength.

- Use a short, light bat.
- Start in regular stance but use only the front arm and hips to swing as hard as you can.
- Try to visualise the ball on each swing.
- Take "knob to the ball" first then snap the bat through.
- Stress should be felt on the tricep muscle.
- Do 10-20 repetitions at maximum velocity.

5. Rear Arm Swings

Designed to develop fast hand movement and promote rear arm strength in the swing.

- Same as for front arm but use the rear arm and hips only.
- Movement is very much like throwing a ball but the bat should go straight to the point of contact.
- Do 10-20 repetitions at maximum velocity.

6. Tracking Drill

Designed to improve concentration, eye movements and judgement of the strike zone. See previous description. Need a batter, pitcher, catcher.

- Batter stands in regular batting stance.
- Pitcher throws easy pitches while batter practices watching the ball all the way into the catcher's glove. Do not swing at any pitches.
- Do this for 15 - 20 pitches or until the batter sees the ball into the catcher's glove on every pitch.
- The batter then starts calling the pitches either ball or strike. Call the pitch as soon as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand and follow it all the way in.
- Continue this drill until the batter is consistently right with the calls.
- As an extension, the batter can now start calling the types of pitches by the rotation of the ball. The pitcher needs to be able to create different spins for this part but it will force the batter to concentrate more intensely on the ball and increase the batter's visual effectiveness.
- Track 30-50 pitches.

7. Finger Tracking

- One partner kneels to the side of the plate and moves 1, 2, or 3 fingers through the strike zone, front to back.
- Other partner does an imaginary swing (no bat) calling out the number of fingers shown.

8. Body Rehearsal Drill

The purpose of this drill is to fine tune the batter's sensations of a perfect swing. Knowing what the perfect swing feels like will enable a batter to self-correct when he/she makes a poor swing. The batter performs normal swings, concentrating on where he/she feels pressure, where the power seems to be coming from and where he/she feels muscle tension. The batter should pay attention to balance points, especially where the head and weight are located.

Perform normal swings

- (a) at game speed, eyes open.
- (b) in slow motion, eyes open.
- (c) at game speed, eyes closed.
- (d) in slow motion, eyes closed.

Do at least 5 repetitions under each condition.

9. Fence or Curtain Drill

Develops quick hands and avoids looping swings.

- Stand bat length away from and facing fence/curtain.
- Complete swing without hitting fence/curtain.
- Make sure batter's stride is straight and that they do not fall away when swinging because both of these will also prevent bat from hitting fence/curtain.

10. Tee Drill

The tee is the best single teaching aid in softball and should be used regularly. Its purpose is to help perfect all aspects of the swing, maximising the number of repetitions per unit of time.

- Make sure tee is placed where it should be at the point of contact.
- Make sure batter is not standing directly opposite tee or contact point will be incorrect.
- Make sure to practise with ball in a variety of locations (inside-outside / high-low).
- Hit 30-50 balls every practice.

VARIATIONS:

- (a) Left arm extension -use wiffle balls and light dowel as bat.
- (b) Right arm extension -use wiffle balls and light dowel.
- (c) Knee drills -isolates the arm action.

11. Fungo Hitting

- Place target on screen at line drive height. Batter fungo hits into target.
- Players should also be asked to fungo hit in drills as often as possible instead of the coach doing it. It makes better use of time, as coaches rarely need to become better batters. It also releases the coach to provide more coaching instruction.

12. Toss Drill

This is an extension of the tee and has the added advantage of hitting a moving ball. It promotes coordination, rhythm, timing, balance and hand quickness. It can be used in addition to or in lieu of the batting tee.

- Batter stands 15 feet (4.5m) away from a fence or screen or hits out into the field.
- Tossers kneels about 7 feet (in front and at a 45 degree angle to batter).
- Ball is tossed softly underhand into batter's strike zone.
- Make sure ball is tossed in front of batter so it is at correct contact point.
- Work on a specific aspect of the swing with each set of hits.
- Hit 30 - 50 balls every practice.

VARIATIONS:

- (a) *Hip Rotations* -bat is hooked behind back with elbows. Ball is hit into screen using 'hip rotation' only. This can be done using a tee as well.
- (b) *Thunderstick* -very narrow bat to really see ball and make contact.

- (c) *Smaller Ball* -use tennis balls or wiffle golf balls.
- (d) *Drop Drill* -instead of kneeling, tosser stands on bench and drops ball into strike zone. This is a more advanced drill and requires a very fast bat to make contact.
- (e) *Left Hand -Right Hand* -isolate one hand at a time. May require using light dowel for players not having the strength to swing bat level with one hand.
- (f) *One -Knee Batting* -isolates arms in swing.
- (g) *Pitch Location* - practise hitting pitches in different locations of strike zone.
- (h) *From Behind Drill* - improves bat speed and co-ordination. The batter should stand even with the plate. The tosser stands 3 feet behind and 2 feet outside of the batter. The tosser tosses the ball level and in front of the plate. The batter, following the ball with only his/her eyes not the whole head, waits until the ball is in the proper position before hitting it.

13. Double Tee's

(a) *Back on Front*

- Stems lined up and of equal height.
- Batter aligns to ball so it can be hit directly up the middle.
- Batter attempts to hit back ball onto front ball.
- In order to achieve this the batter will have to swing level and THROUGH the ball not around it.

(b) *Eliminate Loop*

Works on proper bat angle.

- Stems lined up 6 inches (15.24 cm) apart with back stem equal or slightly lower than front.
- Batter tries to hit ball on front stem without making contact with back one.
- If bat hits rear stem, bat is looping.

(c) *Screen Drill*

- One stem placed outside and one inside.
- Contact ball off inside Tee and avoid hitting outside tee.
- Teaches quick hands because if bat head gets too far in front, ball will be hooked foul.
- This drill is similar to fence drill.

(d) *Stride Consistency*

Teaches a consistent stride for different pitches.

- One stem set up on outside of plate to simulate outside pitches, and one set up on inside and out in front to simulate inside pitches.
- Partner commands "inside" or "outside" as batter makes stride.
- Batter must react to position of ball.

14. Self Strike Zone Realisation

Helps batter know the strike zone.

- Using tape and a wall (or a piece of cloth on a fence), each player establishes own strike zone, measuring out from top of knees to sternum (17 inches wide).
- Place simulated softballs in strike zone.
- Batter visualises a pitch in a certain location and swings at variety of pitches.

Batter stands far enough away from wall so bat does not hit it.

15. Coloured Balls

Improves batter's ability to "see" the ball.

- Using marking pen, colour dots on 4 sides.

(a) *Tracking*

- Players track pitch into catcher's glove and call out the colour on the ball as soon as possible.
- Could also use a pitching machine for this drill

(b) *Hit only Black*

- Use black and red dots.

- Black balls are hit. On red balls the batter squeezes the handle and holds up.

16. Shadow Drill

Detects lunging in a batter.

- Need a sunny day to do this.
- Have batter stand with sun to back so shadow is projected on ground.
- Mark where shadow of head hits ground during normal stance.
- After normal swing, mark where shadow ends up.
- The shadow should move only a little because the head should remain still throughout the swing. Batters who lunge move their head up to 2 feet (0.6m).

17. Peppers

Improves controlled batting.

- From 3 -6 fielders in a line.
- Batter stands 20 feet (6.1m) in front of fielders.
- One of the fielders throws the ball to the batter.
- The batter concentrates on short stride, swinging down on the ball and hitting it back to the fielders.

18. Hit with Knob of Bat

Improves taking the hands to the ball and developing "fast hands" rather than a slow sweeping swing.

- Batter stands 15 feet (4.5m) away from fence with tosser kneeling in front and to the side.
- The ball is tossed HIGH in front of batter.
- Batter makes contact with knob of bat rather than the bat head.

19. Drop Drill

Quickens the batter's reaction time.

- One player stands on a bench (or similar structure), if no bench is available, the batter can kneel.
- The batter faces the tosser on the bench.
- The tosser drops the ball from above the batter's head.
- The batter, with emphasis on quickness rather than power, tries to hit the ball.

(Caution: stay well clear of the bat when dropping the balls).

20. Pause Drill

Increases bat speed.

- The tosser tosses the ball to the batter who, concentrating on wrist speed instead of shoulder power, will wait to hit the ball as long as possible before it hits the ground.

21. Bat Resistant Partner Drill

Increases bat speed by strengthening the muscles.

- Batter in batting position and partner behind the batter, holding the bat toward the end.
- The batter tries to swing the bat with a short, compact swing, keeping hands close to the body.
- The partner slowly allows the bat to move through the hitting zone.
- After completing the swing, the batter takes the bat back to starting position, also against resistance by partner.
- Do 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions.

22. Bat Behind Hips

Improves hip rotation.

- Batter places a bat (hitting end on hitting side) behind his/her hips and secures it with his/her hands or wrists.
- Normal batting stance with lower body, step and rotate hips (and bat) to simulate batting motion.
- Check position of feet and legs and make sure weight is in mid-line of body.
- VARIATION - Hit ball off tee.

23. Pivot Drill

Improves back foot pivot.

- Batter takes normal batting stance (with or without bat).
- Place a ball at side of heel of back foot.
- Step and rotate body. Ball should be kicked by heel of back foot during pivot.

24. Compact Swing Drill

Changes sweeping swings to more compact swings.

- 1) Have batter hold the bat in the compact swing position (hands in at shoulder, elbows down, knob of bat towards 1st or 3rd) and actually lay the bat against the neck. Thus, when the swing begins, the player will feel the bat move towards the ball. With a sweeping swing the bat will come off the neck almost immediately with the hands moving across the plate initially, instead of moving directly to the ball. This decreases speed and power, and often creates a "loop" in the swing as well.
- 2) The batter places a ball (tennis or softball) under their rear armpit. When she swings, the ball will fall to the ground immediately if it is a sweep swing. A compact swing will allow for the ball to stay in the armpit until the swing is virtually complete, and then it rolls towards the mound.
- 3) Hang a ball on a string from the ceiling so it hangs directly across from the hands as they are positioned in the compact swing. The player takes her natural stance, and instead of swinging, simply moves her hands to the hanging ball, touching the knob of the bat to the ball. Over and over she repeats that simple movement until neuromuscularly it is held in memory.
- 4) Stand facing a net or wall. Hold the bat upright with arms fully extended toward the wall, add about six inches, and take your natural stance. Swing fully. With a compact swing the bat will not hit the net, though the end of the bat may lightly brush against it. With a sweep swing the bat will hit the net.

25. Focussing Drill

- Sit in a comfortable position looking straight ahead. Soften or relax your eyes and see as many things around you as possible without moving them. Maintain this soft focus for several seconds. Note what that feels like.
- Quickly shift your eyes to one specific thing in front of you. Harden your eyes and concentrate only on that thing. Notice how other objects in your peripheral vision lose their focus. Maintain this fine centre for no more than 3 or 4 seconds. Note what that feels like.
- This procedure should be repeated 10 to 20 times daily, and used by batters whenever they are at bat.

26. Coffee Lid Drill

- Use the plastic coffee lids as balls for batters to hit and throw coffee lid like a frisbee.
- Provides practise hitting curves.

27. Three Way Tracking

- i. Player 1 pitching, player 2 the hitter, player 3 the catcher. Track the ball from the pitcher to the catchers glove and back to the pitcher. (Conditioning the eyes and being focused)
- ii. Track the ball to the catcher, and if a strike wait until the catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher and then swing the bat where the ball was pitched. (Inside pitch pull the ball, outside pitch, go the other way.)

28. Two Man Drill

- One player hitting and one player on one knee 4 feet away in front of the hitter. Directional Hitting. The player on one knee will hold a ball in different parts of the strike zone and the hitter will swing at the ball. IT IS NOT A FULL SWING. It is a slow controlled swing to the ball in the zone.

29. Bat Kelly's

- All the hitters standing in three lines facing a pitcher. Give yourself room to swing the bat. The pitcher delivers the pitch and calls the pitch at the same time. Eg. Fastball on the outside corner. The hitter waits a second and swings at that pitch in that location. (Working on proper technique - head still and level, hands above the ball, good balance, hitting the ball in the proper zone).
- Close your eyes and swing the bat, listen to your bat. Where does it cut through the air? Swing forward and then swing forward and swing back with the same speed. (this will develop a level swing and a consistent swing and help you to get bat speed).

30. Dynamic Balance

Use of the Balance beam in hitting training

1. Starts with the feet - weight is on the balls of the feet
2. Balance boards - foot-hand co-ordination blending with hands in a properly sequenced (timed) manner.

Teaching points of emphasis

- a. Stride back at the pitcher - soft and smooth
- b. Weight is on the balls of both feet - weight inside both ankles
- c. Hands have gone back - at the top of the strike zone - barrel head above hands
- d. Head is over the belly button

3. Dry cuts on Balance beam with use of a mirror

Teaching points of emphasis

- a. Foot position on follow through - front foot at about 45°
- b. Back foot on follow through - centred (scale 3 to 4 to 5 hitters evaluate)
- c. Hands have finished high (around shoulder vicinity) arms bent in L's
- d. Head and eyes are looking into contact point

4. Hitting off of tee with balance beam - hitter should be looking out at pitcher.

Teaching points of emphasis

- a. Dynamic balance - start to finish
- b. Feeling the weight being inside
- c. Head and eyes at the point of contact

5. Controlling the Stride - Proper weight distribution, the weight is centred, hands are back and the head is over the belly button.

Teaching points of emphasis

- a. Controlled stride - keeping the weight inside the front ankle upon landing and weight is on the ball of the back foot triggered, front knee is in also.
- b. Stride is directed at the pitcher - shortest distance between two pints is a straight line.
- c. Hands have gone back and the head position is over the bellybutton

APPLICATION OF FUNDAMENTALS

Once the fundamentals have been learned, it is necessary for players to practice under game conditions so they are able to apply their skills in games. Set up drills where batters, for example, have a 0-2 count, have a runner on various bases, have 2 outs, etc. Practise the strategies under pressure so they become automatic in the game situation.

BUNTING

1. **Tee Bunts**

By using a batting tee, players can work on both their accuracy and technique. By adjusting the level and location of the tee, batters can practise getting the bat on balls in different locations while at the same time breaking toward 1st base.

2. **Target Bunts**

Accuracy is important in bunting and a good way to develop accuracy is to practise bunting at a target. This is done by establishing the ideal bunt area down both 1st and 3rd baselines and calling for the players to put the ball into the requested area.

3. **Direction Bunts**

This drill helps players become familiar with the angle of the bat and better control the placement of the ball. The idea is for players to alternate bunting the ball down the 1st and 3rd baselines.

4. **Dry Bunts**

Players can work on their bunting skills by forming groups of 3 or 4, spreading out around the diamond, and taking turns bunting, tossing and fielding. This is very similar to the standard game of "pepper".

FIELDING

(These can be modified to suit the ability of your players).

1. **1. "Incrediball" Drill**

- Players assume set position.
- Coach hits balls sharply at the player's feet.

(Because the ball is soft the chance of injury is greatly reduced and, hence, reflex glove work can be practised).

2. **Positional Reflex Drills**

Catcher

- Catcher in full catching gear assumes catcher's receiving position.
- Partner (or coach) throws ball hard either into the ground or above head of catcher.
- Catcher either blocks the bounced ball, moves their glove quickly to catch an ill aimed pitch or explodes upwards with their legs in order to get to the high wild pitch.
- Every five turns, partner (or coach) drops the ball in front of the catcher (bunt location) so that the catcher has to get up and field the ball quickly (they should get into throwing position as quickly as possible).

First Base Player

- First base player assumes normal fielding position (about forty feet away from batter).
- Batter hits the ball hard at the feet of the player or hard into the ground in front of the player.
- Every now and then, the batter drops the ball into the ground so that the player is required to get in and field the bunt.

Third Base Player

- Third base player assumes normal fielding position (about thirty five feet away from batter).
- Batter hits the ball hard at the feet of the player or hard into the ground in front of the player.
- Every now and then, the batter drops the ball into the ground so that the player is required to get in and field the bunt.

Second Base Player

- Player assumes normal fielding position between the bases.
- Batter hits the ball hard at the feet of the player and, every now and then, hits a slow roller which has to be attacked by the fielder.
- Pop flies over the player's head should be hit occasionally.

Shortstop

- Player assumes normal fielding position between the bases.
- Batter hits the ball hard at the feet of the player and also to each side.
- Also hit a number of bouncing balls to the back side of the shortstop, some well in front so they are required to attack the ball and, pop flies back over their head.

Outfielders

- Outfielders stand about forty metres from the batter.
- Outfielders run towards the batter who then hits the ball sharply to one side or the other so the outfielder is required to move laterally (or dive).
- Every now and then, hit a fly ball just back over their head forcing them to break and try and get back to catch the fly ball.
- If there is a fence, hit the ball hard into the fence so they can practise retrieving the ball on the bounce.

3. Positional Base Coverage

Catcher

- Catcher in full catching gear assumes catcher's receiving position.
- Player pitches the ball to the catcher.
- As the catcher receives the ball, the player throws another ball either into the air (pop fly), back towards the back stop (passed ball), or drops the ball in front of the catcher (sacrifice bunt).
- After catching the first ball, the catcher should drop it and then get to the second ball as quickly as possible.
- Pop flies should be thrown to a specified base where a fielder will make an attempted tag, passed balls should be thrown back to the pitcher at home plate to make a tag, and on bunts, the catcher should make the throw to the appropriate base (lead runner where possible).

First Base Player

(a) First base player in normal fielding position.

- Partner drops the ball into the bunt position so that the player has to charge the ball.
- Player executes following throws - to 1st base for force, to 2nd base for force, to 3rd base (tag and force plays) and to home plate for tag plays.

- Player should return to normal fielding position between throws.

(b) First base player in bunt defence position.

- On command they sprint back to 1st base to receive a throw (throws should be mixed, i.e. low, high, wild, etc. to enable the player to practise stretching and base play.
- First base player should then practise the following throws - to home plate for tag, to 3rd for tag plays and 2nd base to tag overrunning runner.

Third Base Player

(a) Third base player assumes normal fielding position.

- Partner drops the ball into the bunt position so that the player has to charge the ball.
- Player executes following throws - to 1st base for force, to 2nd base for force, to 3rd base (tag and force plays) and to home plate for tag plays.
- Player should return to normal fielding position between throws.

(b) Third base player in bunt defence position.

- On command they sprint back to 3rd base to receive a throw.
- Player should then practise the following - make a block and tag, stretch for a force play (close play), throw to 2nd for attempted tag.

Second Base Player

Second base player in normal fielding position.

- Player practises covering 1st base on throws from first base player fielding a bunt.
- Player practises making the force out at 2nd base on throws from the shortstop and third base player and throwing to 1st for the double.
- Player practises fielding the hit and throwing to 3rd and home for force and tag plays.

Shortstop

Shortstop in normal fielding position.

- Batter drops the ball as if a bunt and a player throws to 2nd for the shortstop to practise stretching to make the force out.
- Batter hits to second base player who throws to 2nd where shortstop receives the ball, touches 2nd and throws to 1st for the double.
- Shortstop fields the hit and practises throwing to 3rd and home for force and tag plays.
- Shortstop practises charging slow rollers and throwing to 1st quickly.
- Shortstop practises fielding chop hits to backhand side and throwing to 1st and 2nd bases.

Outfielder

- From an outfield position, the outfielder runs back and touches the fence. As soon as he/she touches the fence, hit a fly ball (batter can stand close to 2nd base) about halfway between the fence and 2nd. Outfielder tries to make the catch and throw to 2nd as quickly as possible.
- Outfielder in normal fielding position. Place 5 balls, 10 metres on either side of the player's starting position. From home plate, hit hard grounders and fly balls that the player throws home for the tag. Immediately after fielding and throwing the batted ball, the player moves to the still balls (alternate left and right) and throws the still balls on left to 3rd base for tag play and still balls on right to 2nd base for force play. Allow short recovery between batted balls. Fielder returns to normal fielding position before each batted ball.

(Order of drill: Hit ball - throw home, move to left - throw to 3rd for tag, return to original position, recover, hit ball - throw home, move to right - throw to 2nd for force, etc.)

OUTFIELDING DRILLS

1. Throwing drill

This drill contains all of the ingredients of a line drive during the game: reaction to the ball, fielding (steps, set up), body control, throwing mechanics and accuracy.

The player place hat 15" in front of where they are set up

Player 1	Player 2
Player 3	Player 4
Player 5	Player 6

Player 1 begins by throwing to Player 2 as if throwing a one-hop throw to the bag. Player 2 throws to Player 3 and so on down the line. Then reverse the process.

Objective: Teach players to have proper set-up steps in approaching the ball, proper exchange, proper step through and release (follow through). The players should concentrate on quick release and accurate throw. Stop watch may be used to time release.

2. The Side to Side Drill

(No Fungo - Using the wheel concept)

This drill simulates a running catch in the gaps or near the foul lines. Players begin in CF at their normal depth and sprint into LCF at about 2/3 speed. Ball is thrown in front and catchable with the emphasis on an under control catch with one hand. Drill should alternate from LCF to CF to RCF and back, with the degree of difficulty increased on the last 3 - 4 plays (12 - 15 minutes).

3. Straight on Drill

No Fungo

Outfielders begin drill 100' from the coach and in regular depth to centre field. Player charges directly at the coach under control and coach throws a simulated line drive slightly below the waist or lower. This forces the player to commit to the ball without the normal read and jump off the bat. After the play has been made several times, the players become more aggressive. Adding the proper jump during the game, the play becomes natural for them. (8 -10 minutes) Look for glove palm down when ball isn't caught off to the side. Make sure player is bending over instead of just reaching.

4. Overhead Drill

Begins in shallow centre field with players facing the coach about 60' away. On cue, the player spins away and sprints directly toward the fence looking over either shoulder as they run. The ball is thrown over the opposite shoulder as player reaches a full sprint forcing the fielder to turn their head away from the ball for a split second and then to adjust as they prepare to make the catch. This play is probably the toughest play for an outfielder and once they become comfortable with taking their eyes off the ball, their range should increase considerably (12 - 15 minutes). Make sure each player extends glove out as late as possible so they can keep running form and speed.

5. Combo Drill

(Fungo)

The purpose of this drill is to show ground ball, fly ball, line drive and basically loosen up prior to game time. It can also be used to test the wind and sun on that given day (10 - 12 minutes).

6. Do or Die Drill

(Fungo)

Hard ground balls and one hop line drives directly at the outfielder with the game on the line. Emphasis is on charging the ball, breaking down to field it and the quick release on the throw. Accuracy is not a major factor initially in this drill as we are looking for the approach and the mechanics of fielding prior to the throw. (15 - 18 minutes). Watch for extra crow-hops, bad exchange, stepping to where they are throwing. Mix in some half mooning so outfielders learn to be moving towards where they are throwing.

7. Do or die Sacrifice Fly

(Fungo)

Now we zero in on body position and the depth of the fielder as they prepare to make a throw as a runner tags up and prepares to advance. This drill will stress a quick and accurate release involving some competitive technique (throwing with no cut-off man to a hat placed so that perfect on-the-top throw will hit it on the fly). A stopwatch may be used initially to encourage a catch and release under 1 second (10 - 15 minutes).

8. Reverse Pivot Drill

(Fungo)

Simulates a ball that takes the outfielder parallel or slightly away from the infield and away from their throwing side. It will force them to turn and pivot away from the infield, thus quickening their footwork and increasing their ability to throw the ball in a more accurate fashion back to the infield with more velocity. (10-12 minutes). Watch for shoulder flying open.

9. Fence Drills

(Fungo)

Practice balls hit off the wall, angles of ball. When ball is still moving always use glove.

Any throw made with a dead ball close to the wall or dead in the grass should be made with the bare hand. This requires total concentration as it is being picked up; body position is chest over ball (10 - 12 minutes). After they pick the ball up crow-hop and hit cut-off person. Make sure they circle the ball so their feet are in position when they pick ball up.

Teach outfielders to get to the wall first, then play along fence. When making a running catch near the wall, teach to spin towards wall with glove hand (don't stick throwing arm out to brace up against fence).

10. 3 - 5 Person Priority Drill

(Fungo)

Best initiated with 3 people in straight away CF about 50' apart. Fungo can be hot hard on a line between the players causing them to call for the ball and to take charge. After this drill has been done to satisfaction, 2 additional outfielders can be placed in the gaps about 50' - 60' in front of the other 3. At this point, the coach should begin a mix of fly balls, line drives and ground balls. Communication is very important in this drill and after a few minutes the group should rotate so each player has the opportunity to play all positions (25 - 30 minutes).

11. Sun Drill

(Fungo or throw)

Teaches player how to use sunglasses properly and how to use their glove as a shade (12 - 15 minutes). Outfielders should not wait for ball to get into the sun, try to angle themselves away from sun.

12. Pop-up Priority

(Infielders & Outfielders; Use the Casey)

Change to get the 2 groups together and demonstrate exactly how they should interact properly on pop-ups and shallow fly-balls. During execution, several coaches should be on the field helping direct and explain each play. Drill should be done at least twice each spring, with the initial one carried out somewhere below full speed and then at full speed toward the end of Spring Training (25 - 35 minutes).

13. Quick hands - Quick Feet

(Fungo)

A footwork and one hand drill to force outfielders to concentrate (with a degree of confidence) on short hops and bad hops, and not panic as they charge a hard hit ball (20 - 25 minutes).

14. Kamikaze Drill

(Fungo)

Everyone loves this drill. All outfielders begin in deep CF and take part one at a time until they reach the coach with the fungo. 1st player takes a long fly ball and immediately begins looking for a line drive in their move towards the coach. Players sprint under control and receive 5 - 6 chances as they close in on the coach. As the catches are made, they flip the balls to the side to the other players out of the line of fire. The last chance should be about 50' in front of the coach and must be made with one hand as the ball will be hit firmly and directly at the player. The idea is to play the ball to one side or the other and not to stand flat footed and let the ball play them (15 - 20 minutes).

15. Agility Drill

(No fungo)

Most of this drill is done in slow motion to half speed and the purpose is to teach how to play around the fence, diving catches, sliding catches and how to roll over in the event the player loses their balance coming in on a shoestring catch. The emphasis is on safety in this drill and we are educating the players with the information necessary to prevent injury. (25 - 30 minutes).

16. Soft Toss

Coach is at Home Plate hitting soft tossed balls. Outfielders get chance to read balls and swings from hitting zone.

17. OUTFIELD DRILLS - AWARENESS-APPROACH

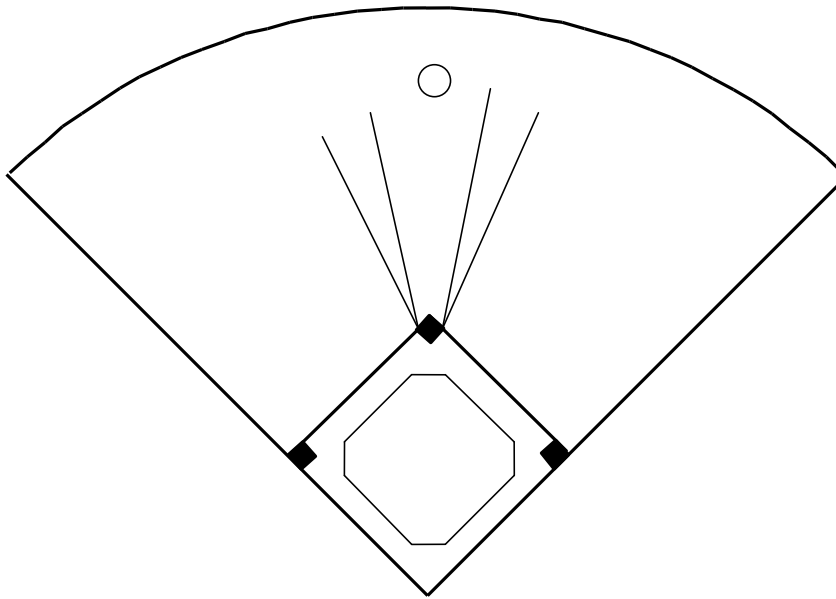
Stretch

- Running (Technique - form)
- Jumps (first three steps with explosion)
- 15-20 metres, routes, straight angle (4)
- Done with glove

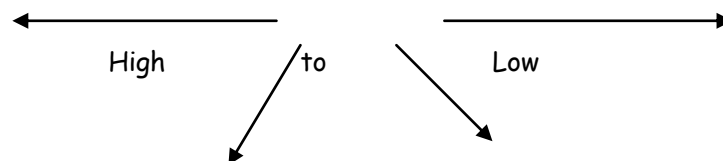
Warm-up (Throwing with a purpose)

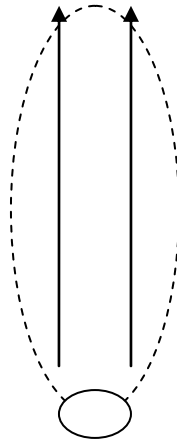
- Emphasise balance and legs (KEY to velocity & carry on throw, LEGS)
- Long toss with ball thrown on a line (one hop if needed)

Toss Drills



- Explode with first three steps. They are the most important. Extend when catch to be made.
- Extend with the glove hand only. Angles / Routes should not be rounded. Should be straight and precise.
- Emphasise Feet (Jumps). Lead leg drive. Do not replace feet!
- Descend into route, extend glove and make catch. Gather feet, get into throwing position
- Make sure the route is with conviction. No hesitation, player should not try and make catch.





18. Headflips (full back)

The head must flip back (quickly) which will allow to continue straight.

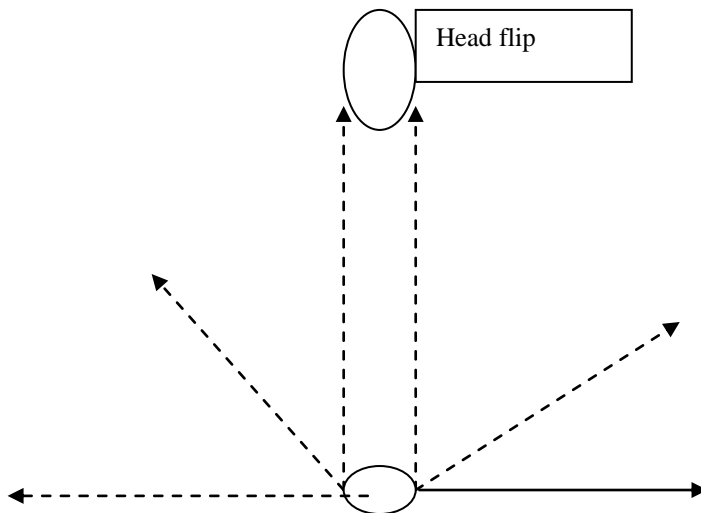
The butt must be under the trunk of the body to allow the player to open to ball freely. Simulates a line drive with tail movement.

- S Bolt Drill** Cut
 Across
 Gap (Cover head)
- 3 Ball Drill** High
 Low
 Extend (run ball down)

19. Fungo Drills

Fungo Drills and Situational plays

- Place runners on base or bases to dictate game situations. Must be done at game speed.



20. Turns and Goes

- Descend with angle right and left. Purpose is to work on jumps, angles, positioning of body. This is a ball hit in the gap; player is working on running the ball down.
- Allow the player to start route, simulate running the ball down and making a one handed grab. Be aggressive to the ball and precise with the route.

21. Ground Balls (Straight)

- Gain ground, be aggressive, which will allow the player to have momentum, giving the throw the chance to have velocity and carry with a 12/6 rotation.

22. Line Drive (Simulation)

- Straight across with slight angle, extending to the ball as catch is to be made. Player must adjust the angle according to the ball off the bat.

23. Ins and Backs (Straight up)

- Player is positioned close to the fungo man. When the player reacts to short balls (INS) the must play through, trying to make a catch one handed on the run.
- When the player reacts to a ball hit over their head they are to turn and go (drop head and run) to position (area or point) where the ball is going to be caught. They should move quickly and make position before the catch if possible.

24. Communication

- Communication is verbal. "I Got It" , "Mine", Player backing up must expect they are going to make a play. Get behind the player making the catch and expect to be involved. Verbalise.

25. Communication Drill

- Two fielders must converge with intentions of making the play and forcing the issue of communication. Designate one of the players as the centre fielder.

26. Throwing Drills

- **Drill 1**
 - Roll ground ball, short distance. Player must gain momentum and get into throwing position.
- **Drill 2**
 - Player throws to a target (3rd base or Home) from 50-60 metres.
- **Drill 3**
 - Double cuts and Relays
 - Position the body to throw (trunk over the ball) then pick-up ball with bare hand.

BASE RUNNING

Sprint and Running Technique Drills

A player;s running speed and therefore their baserunning speed can often be increased by improving their running technique.

1. Correct Sprint Technique.

- All body parts should be pointing in the direction of travel.
- The foot should make contact with the ground directly under the mid-line of the body.
- Outer edge of the ball of foot makes contact with the ground first, followed by the heel.
- Elbows should be close to body.
- Shoulders initiate arm action - upper and lower arm should form a 90 degree angle.
- Hands relaxed.
- Forward lean of body - head should move forward in a straight line, parallel to the ground.

2. Sprint Technique Drills

- High knee lift while standing in place - lift knees to hip height.
- High knee lift while slowly walking forward (as if marching).
- High knees lift while running (accentuate knee lift to hip height while slowly running).
- Arm action while standing in place. (Hands are loosely cupped while being brought vigorously forward to shoulder height and backward to slightly behind hips).
- High knee lift and vigorous arm action while running in place.
- High knee lift and vigorous arm action while running slowly.

3. Sprint Drills - choose from the following:

- 3 x 40m
3 x 60m
3 x 40m
(2 minute recovery)
- 5 x 20m - bounding (least number of strides)
5 x 20m - prancing (high knee lift)
5 x 20m - buttock kicks
- Ladder Runs - 20m, 30m, 40m, 60, 50m, 40m, 30m, 20m.
- Sprint 8 times back to back, alternating 10 seconds work with 10 seconds rest.
- Sprint to 1st then jog rest of the diamond
Sprint to 2nd then jog rest of the diamond.
Sprint to 3rd then jog rest of diamond.
Sprint around the diamond (3 minutes rest then repeat).

Base Running Drills

Note:

- *Drills should be executed with coaches in the coaching box so the players can get a feel for the coaches verbal and hand signals.*
- *Drills can be timed or set up in an elimination to determine the team's fastest runners.*

4. Swing & Run

The batter simulates a swing and runs:

- a) Home to 1st
- b) Home to second
- c) Home to third
- d) Home to home

Ensure the correct technique is practised.

5. Relay Run

Divide into two teams with equal numbers (2 diamonds). Each person must start on the right side of home plate. The next person cannot go until the previous person has crossed the plate.

6. Delivery

Place balls 3 metres from each base. The player must run to the bases to retrieve the balls, returning each one individually to home by running the bases in reverse order. Finish by running around all the bases.

CATCHING

All drills except blocking drills can be initially performed without catchers in full protective gear, however, as skill develops, drills should be performed in full protective gear to simulate game conditions.

1. Soft Hands

Improves relaxation of the hands, which aids in developing the soft hands necessary for receiving the ball properly. Partner throws tennis balls from 20-30 ft (6.1 -9.15m) away. Catcher, without a glove, practises giving with the hands when catching the ball.

2. Oneknee Throwing

Improves arm and shoulder strength. Gradually increase distance of throw until the throws equal the distance from home plate to 2nd base. No catching gear required.

3. Throwing

Stand the catcher next to a wall, throwing shoulder is approximately 6 inches from the wall. Catcher throws without moving away from the wall. Start slowly and gradually increase speed of throwing motion. This drill forces the catcher to lead with the elbow and to keep the ball above the head. No catching gear required.

4. Ball Drop

To test a catcher's quickness and explosiveness into the throwing position, stand in front of him/her holding a ball at shoulder height. Catcher is in catching stance and ball is concealed with a glove. Drop the ball. Catcher attempts to be up in throwing position by the time the ball hits the ground. As catcher improves, lower the starting height for the ball drop.

5. Quick Release

Catcher throws with a partner, working on taking the ball out of the glove quickly and on utilising proper footwork while emphasising quick releases on the throws. No catching gear required.

6. Throwing to bases

Catcher practises receiving the pitch and throwing to the different bases with both left and right handed batters in the box.

7. Steal Attempts

Improves catcher's ability to throw out runners on steal attempts. Runners line up at 1st base. Pitcher pitches a ball to the catcher. On the release of the pitch the first runner runs to 2nd base, catcher attempts to throw the runner out. On the release of the next pitch, the runner from 2nd runs to 3rd, catcher attempts to throw the runner out, etc. Catchers may be rotated. Fielders alternate taking the throws at the bases.

8. Throwing against a wall

Catcher squats in position 6 ft (1.8m) from the wall. Catcher throws the ball against the wall and catches it. If the ball is thrown low, the catcher can practise blocking low balls and vice versa. An alternative is to have a partner stand behind the catcher and throw the ball at the wall. The catcher develops quick reactions since they do not see the ball coming from their partner.

9. Blocking low pitches

A partner stands about 10 feet in front of the catcher who is in receiving position. The ball is slowly rolls a ball to one side of the catcher to block. Work one side 10 - 15 times the repeat to

other side. Each catcher will have a side that he/she moves to with greater ease and speed. Determine the strong and weak side and spend greater time on the weak side. Use tennis balls or rubber balls, at first then progress to softballs. As skill develops, increase distance and speed of tosses.

10. No Hands

Catcher wears all catching gear except glove. This drill improves the technique of blocking wild pitches thrown to the left, right, and in front of the plate. Catcher is in crouch position with hands behind the back. Partner throws wild pitches and catcher practises blocking them with the body and forcing the ball down in front of him/her. Use tennis balls, rubber balls at first.

11. Fielding Bunts

Improves the catcher's ability to field bunts and throw to specific bases. Six (6) balls are placed in a semi circle in front of home plate. Catcher moves from crouch position and throws to 1st, to 2nd, and to 3rd base, while returning to the crouch position between throws. Drill continues until two balls have been thrown to each base.

12. Bunt Drill

Catcher in receiving stance. Stand in batter's position and toss a ball out the distance a bunted ball will travel. The catcher works on quickly moving from his/her receiving position to pick the ball up using both hands. To work on using both hands, toss a large rubber or inflatable ball that is large enough to require two hands to pick it up.

13. Lining the Feet Up

Stresses lining the feet up with the throw when fielding bunts. Catcher in receiving stance behind the plate. Place 4 - 5 balls near home plate at bunting distance. With a bat, draw a line from each ball toward the base to which you want that particular ball thrown. The catcher moves from the receiving position to a fielding position beside the ball. The catcher aligns his/her feet so that the toes of both feet touch the line, picks the ball up with both hands and comes to a throwing position. As skill develops add throwing the ball to the base.

14. Two Ball Shuffle

Quickens a catcher's reaction time on bunts, pop flies, passed balls, etc. With the catcher positioned behind the plate, the coach standing in the batter's box with a bucket of balls and the pitcher on the pitcher's plate with a bucket of balls, the pitcher begins to pitch to the catcher. At this point, the coach confuses the situation by dropping a second ball either in front of the catcher (bunt), tosses it back behind the catcher (passed ball) or tosses it up in the air (pop fly). The catcher drops the pitched ball and moves quickly to field the ball thrown by the coach and throws it back to the pitcher. The catcher then gets back into position and the coach removes the pitched ball at the plate. Use this drill to have catchers practice skills and improve conditioning at the same time.

15. Pop Flies

A partner stands near the catcher and uses an underhand toss to throw pop flies to the catcher. The catcher starts in the crouch position. The catcher moves to catch the pop flies.

16. Passed Ball Coverage

A partner tosses the ball against a screen or wall. The catcher retrieves the ball and throws the ball to the player covering home plate or to 1st, 2nd or 3rd bases.

17. Force Play at Home

Improves catcher's ability to catch throws from the infield and make throws to 1st base. Drill has one batter at home plate. Catcher, 1st baseman, 2nd baseman, 3rd baseman, and shortstop are at their defensive positions. The batter hits a ball to the 3rd baseman who fields the ball and throws it to home plate. The catcher touches home plate and throws to 1st for the second out. The drill continues in the same manner with the batter hitting a ball to each fielder. On balls hit to the 1st baseman, the 2nd baseman will need to cover 1st for the second out.

18. Tagging the Ball

Improves the catcher's ability to apply a tag. While one player throws the ball to the catcher from the outfield, another rolls a ball towards home plate from about three quarters down the third baseline. The catcher must receive the ball from the outfield and tag the rolled ball before it goes past. The catcher can block the rolling ball but not until the ball from the outfield has been caught. If the rolled ball is already past the catcher, the catcher throws the other ball to 2nd base.

19. Tag Play

Improves catcher's ability to catch throws from the outfield and make tag plays at home plate. Fielders spread out in the outfield with a number of balls each. Outfielder 1 starts by rolling a ball a few feet out in front, picking up the ball, and throwing home. After catching the ball, the catcher simulates a tag at home plate, blocking and not blocking the plate. The drill continues until the fielders have thrown all the balls. By spreading the fielders out, the throws to home plate will vary giving the catcher all types of throws to handle.

20. Cut Off Play

Improves communication between the catcher and the cut off player on throws from the outfield. Fielders are at defensive positions. Outfielders have several balls each. In turn, the outfielders throw the ball to home plate and cut off player moves into position. Catcher communicates with cut off player to "cut" or "let it go". The catcher should tell the cut off player where to throw the ball when it is cut, eg. "Cut 2nd" or "Cut 2" means cut the throw and throw to 2nd base. If the catcher does not want the throw cut, rather than say "Let it go" it is better to say nothing. Drill continues in the same manner until outfielders have thrown all the balls in to home plate.

21. Relays

Improves communication between the catcher and the relay players. Fielders are at defensive positions. Outfielders have several balls each. Outfielder 1 starts by rolling the ball to the side, relay player moves into position, outfielder fields the ball and throws to relay player. Catcher communicates with relay player to line them up with home plate and the outfielder.

PITCHING

1. Reverse Chaining Drill (Pendulum Drill)

PHASE 1

- Start in the throwing position - stride foot well advanced.
- Raise pitching arm to start of "power phase".
- Bring pitching arm down to hip - stop there.
- Allow arm to continue to follow through position.
- Repeat several times.

PHASE 2

- Start in the throwing position - stride foot well advanced.
- Raise pitching arm to start of "power phase".
- Bring pitching arm down past the hip in one continuous motion.

- Emphasise hip action.
- Repeat until smooth.

Chaining Drills

- Wrist snap
- 45 degrees pendulum
- 90 degrees pendulum
- 180 degrees pendulum
- 360 degrees pendulum

2. Push Off Drill

- Start in normal pitching position with weight back on stride foot and without a ball.
- Transfer weight forward to pivot foot.
- Take a step with stride foot directly towards target.
- Bend knee of pivot leg as stride foot steps and turn pivot foot towards 3rd base.
- Land with stride knee flexed.
- Follow through by dragging pivot foot forward to fielding position.

3. Static Pitching Drill.

- Assume stance with feet parallel, shoulder width apart.
- Execute pitch without moving the feet.
- Focus on maximum shoulder and hip rotation.

4. Wrist Snap Drills.

- 1) Start in stride position.
 - Using pendulum motion of the arm, concentrate on wrist position and ball rotation as snap occurs.
 - Release ball with arm/hip co-ordination.
- 2) Hold wrist of pitching arm against pivot leg thigh with other hand.
 - Flick the ball forward with wrist without moving forearm.
- 3) Pitching arm at side of body.
 - Keep pitching shoulder stationary.
 - Using wrist and forearm only, flick ball back over shoulder imparting back spin on the ball.
- 4) This drill can be performed with any ball, including a weighted ball.
 - Kneel on non-throwing side knee and rest forearm of pitching arm on pitching side thigh with wrist and throwing hand extended out over knee. (Initially hold forearm down with other hand to ensure only wrist muscles are used.)
 - Cock and snap wrist to throw the ball straight up.

5. Dry Pitching Drill.

- Start with feet astride.
- Use full pitching motion.
- Do not move feet.
- Focus on leg drive and body rotation.

6. Wall Pitching Drill

This drill is designed to produce maximum repetitions in a short time, emphasising delivery technique and co-ordination rather than accuracy.

- Stand 3-5 steps from a solid wall (one that won't chip, crack or disintegrate).
- Stand with feet astride and arm at start of "power phase".
- Pitch ball against wall and catch rebound.

- Do not move feet.
- Repeat using full pitching motion - do not move feet.
- Adjust distance from wall according to pitching speed.

7. Hip Thrust Drill

- Start in stride position.
- Raise arm straight up above head.
- Drop arm and release ball whilst thrusting hip forward into a closed position.

8. Arm Curl Drill

- Standing in a front on position, place a piece of dowel between the elbow and the small of the back.
- Coach holds dowel in place and pitcher takes arm back.
- Drop arm and release the ball. Elbow will stop at dowel and flex around it.

9. Arm Circles

- Rotate pitching arm a set number of times as quickly as possible.
- Start young players on 10 revolutions and gradually increase number of circles as pitchers develop.

10. Horse Drill

Two pitchers challenge each other to make specified pitches. Pitches can be made to a catcher or a target. If one pitcher makes the specified pitch and the other does not, the other pitcher must add a letter in the word "Horse". The first pitcher to spell the entire word loses. Pitches can be specified by their type (fastball, drop ball, rise ball, curve, etc.) and by location (strike zone or one of its corners).

11. Balls & Strikes Drill

The pitcher throws to a catcher who calls balls and strikes as if a batter is present. Score is kept as follows: Strike out = plus 1, Walk = minus 1, aggressive strike out = plus 2. An aggressive strike out is achieved when the third called strike on the pretend batter is a pitch that is challenging to the pitcher, e.g. an advanced pitch or a pitch to a specific corner of the strike zone. This game rewards the pitcher who gets ahead in the count with a good control pitch so she can try to get the strikeout with a difficult pitch. It also introduces the pitcher and catcher to the risk/reward result of pitch selection. Total the score after a specified number of innings.

12. Target Practice Drill

Draw a target the shape of a U on the wall. The sides and bottom of the U should be about 2 inches wide. Each pitcher throws a specified number of pitches and the score is kept. Score is kept as follows: hits the tape = plus 2, hits inside the U = plus 1, hits outside the U = minus 1. This game promotes hitting the low inside or low outside corners of the strike zone.

13. Sequence Drill

Using a target divided into 6 segments (HI, HO, CI, CO, LI, LO). Count the number of pitches required to hit all six areas. As a variation, add two pitches to the count each time the centre is hit. For advanced pitchers, hit HI and HO areas with rise balls, LI and LO areas with drop balls, CI and CO areas with fastballs and curves.

14. "3 and 1" Drill

Using a target, count the number of pitches required to hit one corner region three times and then the opposite corner once. One variation is to add two pitches to the count each time the centre is

hit and another variation is to hit three times in a row. Advanced pitches can throw rise balls to the upper areas and drop balls to the lower areas.

15. Simulated Game

This drill can be performed with a catcher who calls balls and strikes or with a target of the strike zone on a wall. The drill is appropriate for beginner pitches preparing for their first games. The player pitches a set number of innings in which balls and strikes are called on pretend batters. An inning is completed with 3 strikeouts. For each walk given up, the opponents get a hit. If the walk occurs with two strikes on the batter, the hit is a single. If there is one strike on the batter, the hit is a double. If there are no strikes, the hit is a home run. The number of runs scored as a result are kept.

16. Using the L Drill

Draw a target the shape of an L or U on the wall and number low inside, low outside, high inside, high outside pitches, 1 through to 4. The pitcher tries to hit each area in sequence a pre-determined number of times. He/she must hit one before proceeding to two, etc.

17. Location Drill

Using a target, one high inside, one low outside, one low inside, one high outside equals one set. Do at least 5 sets.

18. Two Strike Pitching

Using a target and pitching to the pitcher's strike zone, pretend the count is 3-2 and the pitcher must hit on the L every time for a strike. Strike out 10 batters in a row.

19. Wall Throws

This drill also helps to aid in fielding balls hit right back at the pitcher. Pitcher throws against a wall.

- Close up to the wall, throw as hard as possible from a normal starting position.
- Throw as many pitches as possible in one minute, catching and then throwing immediately.
- Throw easy for 2 minutes to recover, then throw again hard for 1 minute.

20. Distance Pitching Drill

This drill may not be suitable for very young pitchers if they lack the strength to control the ball. It will help develop strength, endurance and co-ordination if performed regularly. Do this drill in moderation depending on the age, size and strength of the pitcher. In all cases, introduce and increase workload gradually.

- Start pitching from regulation distance.
- Gradually move back two steps every pitch.
- Continue to a distance where pitcher can reach the catcher without bouncing the ball.
- Retreat to maximum double regulation distance, throw 10 repetitions.
- Gradually move in two steps every pitch until back to normal pitching distance.

20. Speed Pitching

Ensure proper warm-up before this activity.

- Throw first pitch at maximum velocity from regulation distance.
- Try to throw each successive pitch a little harder.
- Important to push off the plate.
- Maximum 10 pitches only.

21. Speed Circles

From a throwing position the pitcher makes three revolutions, releasing the ball on the third. The focus is on increasing arm speed. Pitcher should stay relaxed. Do 5 times hard, 5 times easy to recover, then 5 times hard again. Pitcher should not go around so fast that she loses her wrist snap. Spin arm as fast as possible but still maintain wrist snap.

22. Step Throwing

Begin with the throwing side foot back, take a step then throw hard. The focus here is to develop an aggressive step. Do 10 times, 5 times easy, then 10 times again.

23. Speed throws against a wall

Good drill for working on control and fielding. Mark a target on the wall with chalk or tape and place at different areas of strike zone to develop control. Targets can be any size. For advanced pitchers try a 7 inch square. Pitcher has 1 minute to see how many times he/she can hit the target. Pitchers should throw from about 25 - 30 feet away from the wall. Try varying the distance and use different pitches.

24. Batter Simulation

Using a catcher who acts as an umpire, the pitcher pitches 3 complete innings. The pitcher should visualise the batter and not allow themselves to become predictable. Change of location and speed is important as well as using movement pitches. The pitcher should use these guidelines: Try to get up in the count, Don't be predictable.

MODIFIED GAMES



VARIATION SOFTBALL

Description

- Two even teams are chosen. (One fields, the other bats).
- Batters sit down outside the playing area.
- First batter comes to batting line and attempts to hit a lobbed volleyball with open hand, foreword of batting line (behind batting line is foul territory) lobbed volleyball must bounce once.
- After hitting the ball, batter must run to far end to the "Safe Area".
- Batter can choose to stay in safe area and wait or run straight back across batting line to score home run.
- Once batter leaves "safe area" they must run home they cannot go back.
- Next batter repeats.
- Batting team can have no more than 3 runners in safe area.
- Fielders attempt to field ball and hit runner (below the shoulders) with the volleyball while they are running between safe area and batting line.
- Fielders can pass ball between themselves, can move into any position but they cannot move when they have the ball.
- All batters bat and change innings.
- Out if caught or hit between safe area and home.

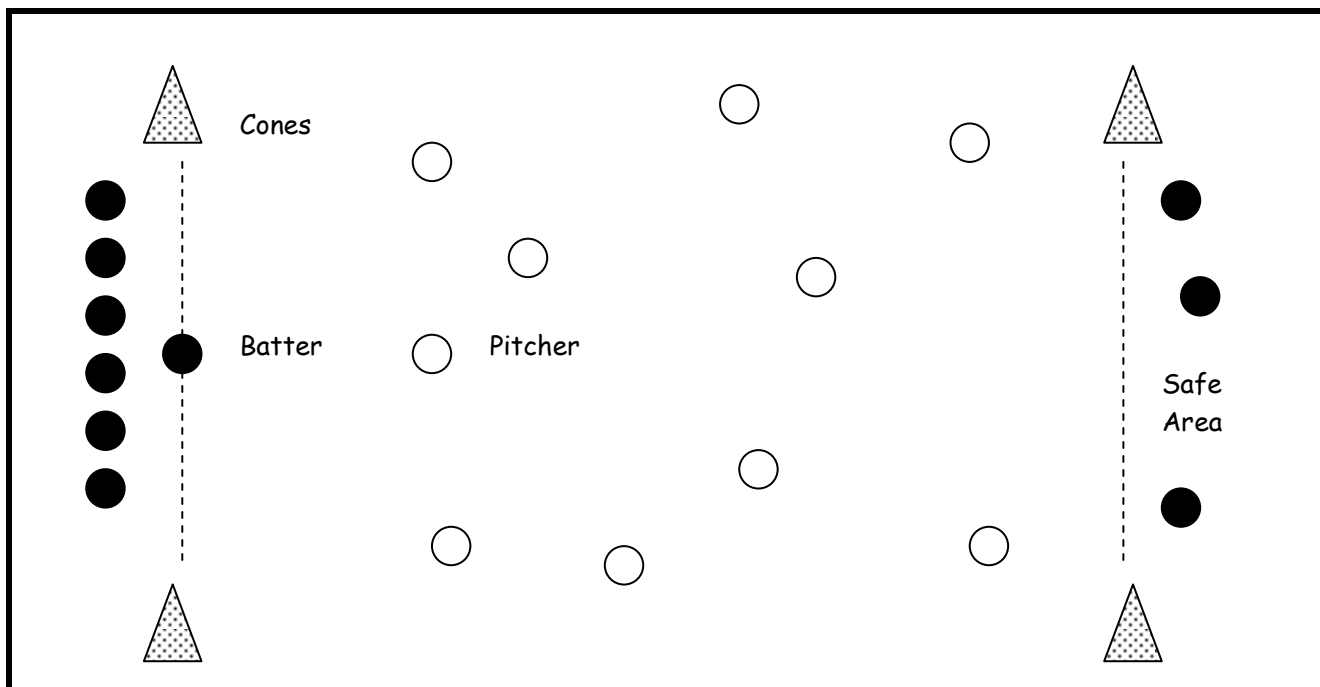
Equipment

- Volleyball or any soft foam-type ball of similar size.
- Cones to mark areas

Skills

- Running
- Teamwork
- Fielding
- Tactics
- Hitting

Diagram



BEAT THE BALL

Description

- Normal positions as for softball/Tee ball (can have more infielders or outfielders but must have four fielders on bases).
- All batters must wear a helmet for safety reasons.
- Batting team hits pitched ball into fair territory and attempts to run around all the bases to home base.
- Fielders field the ball and throws it to first base who tags the base, to second base who tags the base, to third base who tags the base, to home base who also tags the base.
- If ball beats runner to home then runner is **out**.
- If runner gets to home base before the ball then **1 run** is scored.
- All batters hit then change positions.
- (N.B. only way out is at home base).

Variations

- Hit volleyball with open hand
- Type of pitch used.

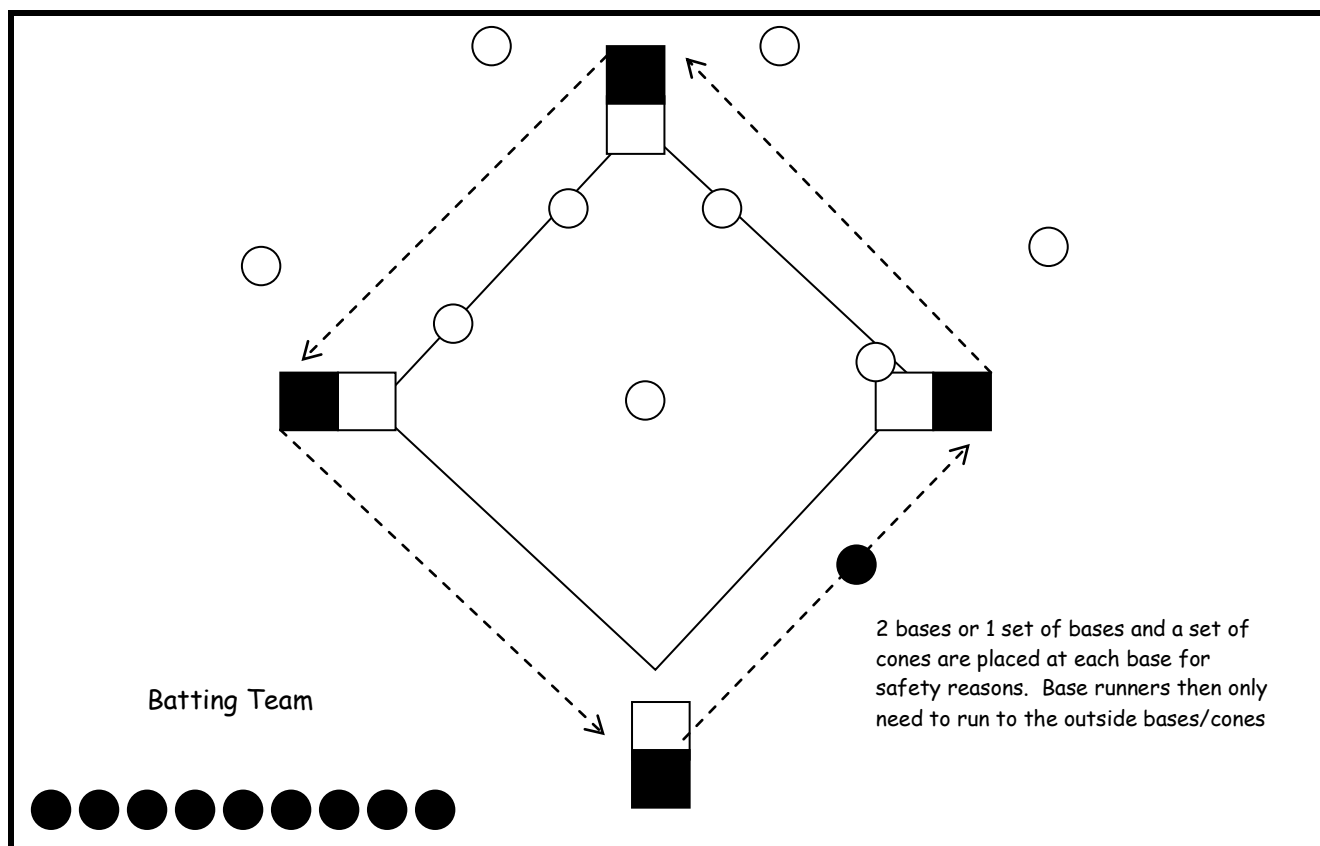
Equipment

- Bat • Ball • Helmets (for safety) • 2 sets of bases • or 1 set of bases and 4 cones

Skills

- Base Running • Fielding • Throwing • Base Fielding
- Tagging • Catching • Teamwork

Diagram



TWENTY ONE OUTS

Description

- Select two even teams: One running team and one fielding team
- Coach sets up set plays eg. Runner on 1st, runner on 2nd, runner on 3rd; loaded bases etc.
- Coach hits ball to simulate set plays and encourage runners to successfully complete play and fielders to successfully react to situation of base runners.
- Coach can repeat plays until understood.
- Coach can rotate fielders, and can change fielding teams and batting teams after a set number of plays or after 3-5 outs.
- 21 outs simulates a team's game (7 innings x 3 outs).

Variations

Limited only by plays

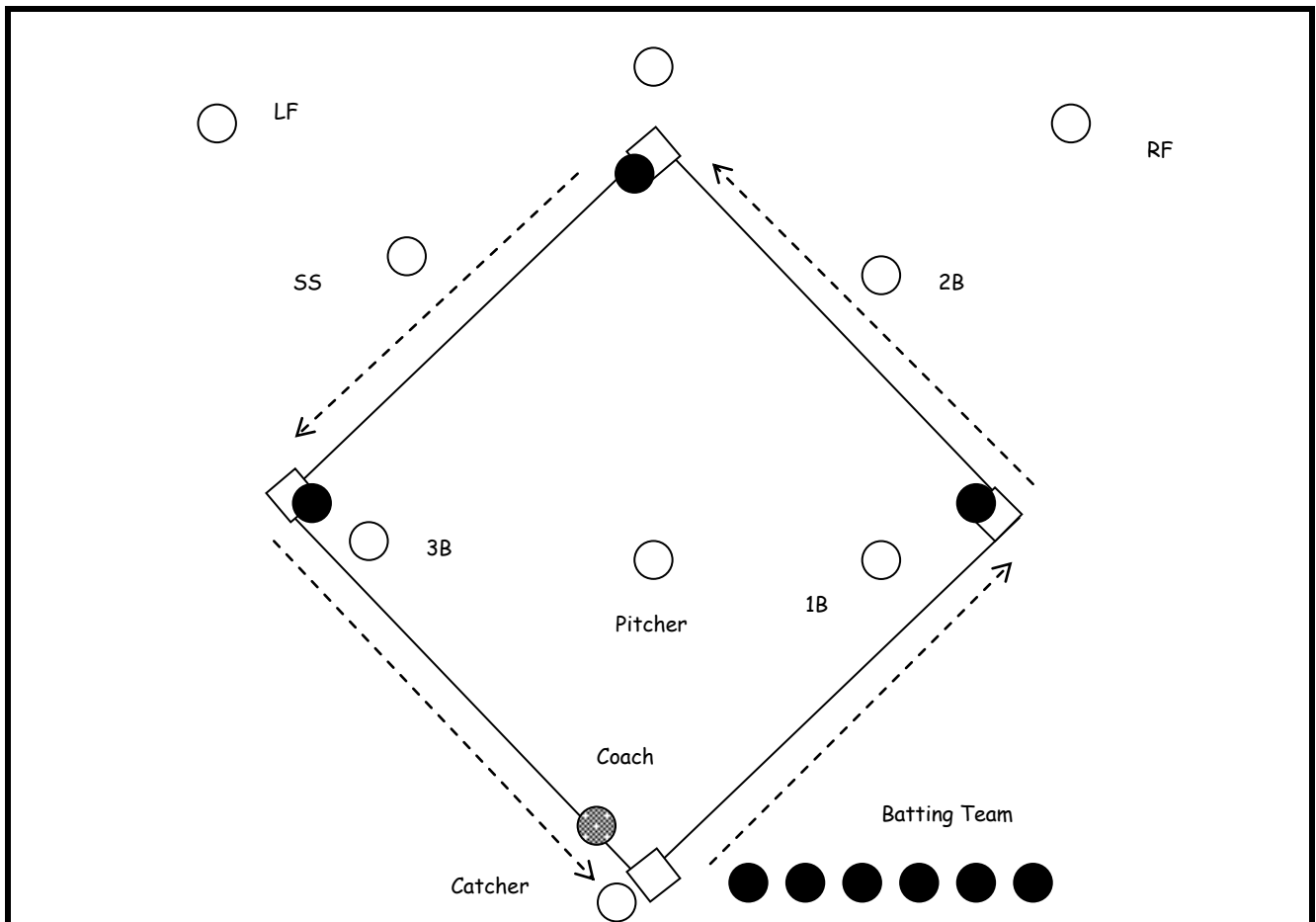
Equipment

- Bases
- Gloves
- Bat
- Balls
- Helmets

Skills

- Throwing
- Fielding
- Tactics
- Base Running

Diagram



KICK BALL

Description

- Select two even teams. One batting and one fielding.
- The batting team lines up behind the kicking line and in turn kick the ball into the playing area.
- Batters then attempt to run around the bases to score runs.
- Pitchers pitch the ball toward the home plate where a strike zone hoop is placed. Batters only "kick" balls that will pass over the hoop.
- Fielders stop ball with their feet and using dribbling and passing skills (soccer), pass the ball back to the pitcher who calls out "stop".
- Runners must be on base when the pitcher calls out "stop".
- If off the base or between bases then the runner or batter runner is out.
- You can have any number of runners on base and runners can pass others.

Variations

- Players can use hands to pick up the ball and kick.
- Players can use Australian Rules footballs.

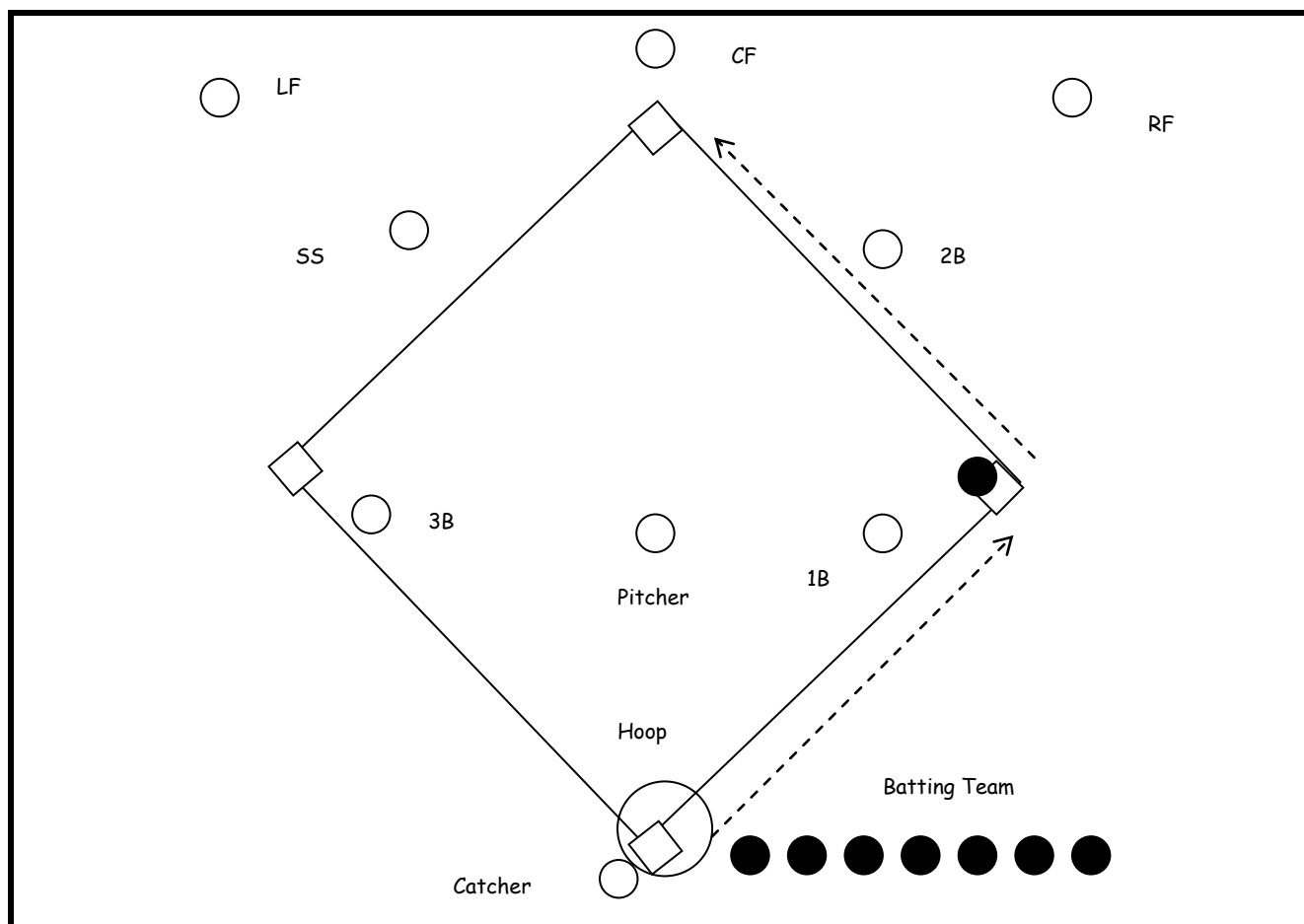
Equipment

- Target (strike zone hoop)
- Cone
- Soccer or Volleyball (slightly flat)

Skills

- Hitting
- Base Running
- Catching
- Teamwork
- Fielding

Diagram



DODGE-BALL ROUNDERS

Description

- Two even teams are chosen. Batters work in pairs.
- Diamond to be marked out with four (4) cones.
- One of the batting pair throws the volleyball into the infield and then runs the diamond.
- Meanwhile the other batter attempts to avoid being hit by the ball, which is passed between the fielders.
- Fielding team all field inside the diamond and attempt to pass the volleyball amongst themselves to hit a dodger below the waist with the ball.
- The dodger is safe when the runner returns to home plate.
- Change innings when last dodger is tagged.
- Next inning dodgers become runners and vice versa.

Variations

- 1 point to the batting team if their dodger has not been hit by the time their partner gets home.
- Batting side is out if the dodger is hit - 3 out, side retired.
- 1 point to fielders each time the dodger is hit.

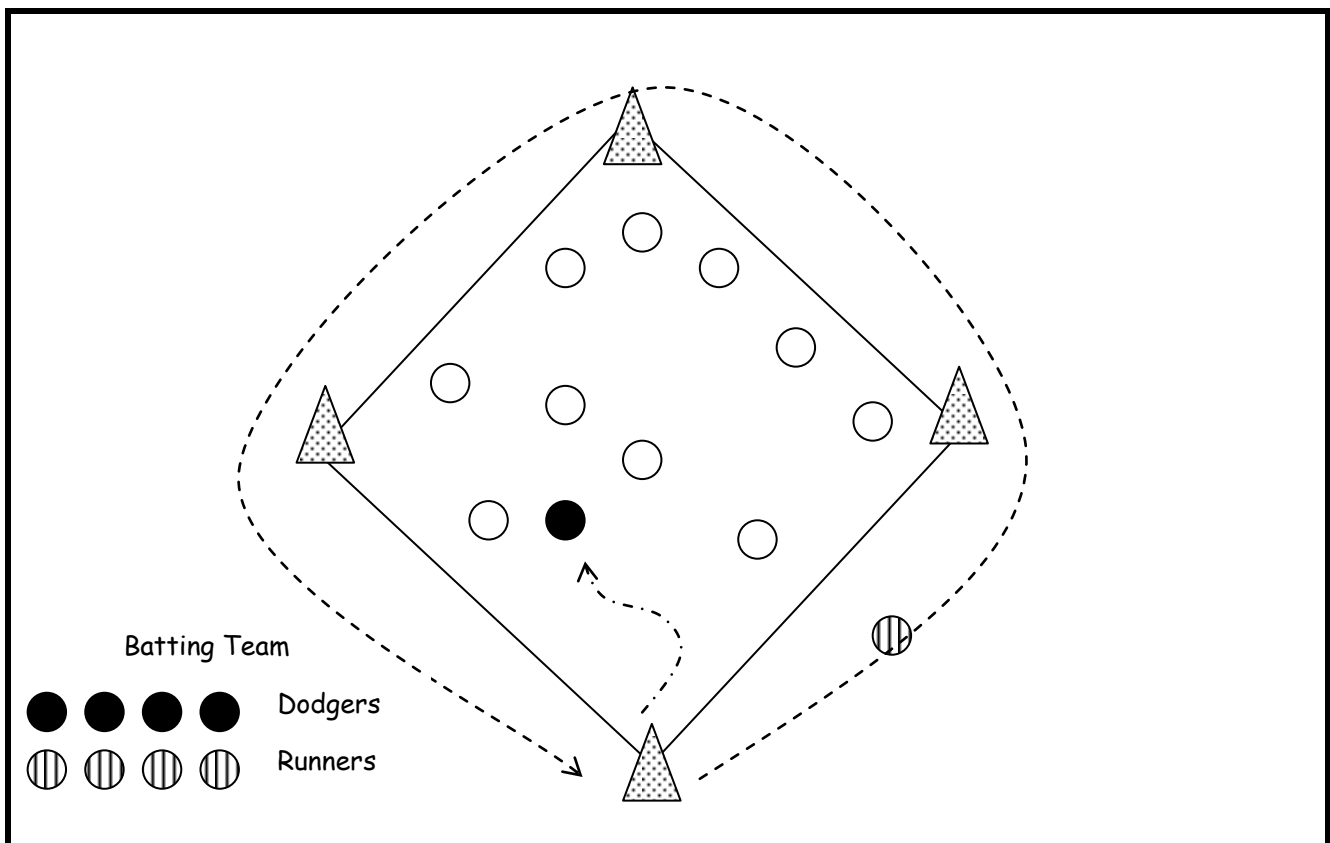
Equipment

- Volleyball
- 4 cones
- Coloured bands (to indicate dodgers)

Skills

- Hitting
- Running
- Catching
- Teamwork
- Fielding

Diagram



DANISH ROUNDERS

Description

- Select two teams, one for fielding and one for batting.
- Pitcher lobs volleyball to batter (ball must bounce once).
- Batter hits ball out into fair territory.
- Batter runs as many bases as possible.
- Fielders field the ball and return it to the pitcher who calls "stop". Then batter is out.
- Batter can bat twice as game goes on until 7 out or whole team bats.
- Any number of runners can be on one base at any time.
- Runners can pass each other.
- Batters are out if the ball is caught, or if off base when the pitcher calls out "stop".

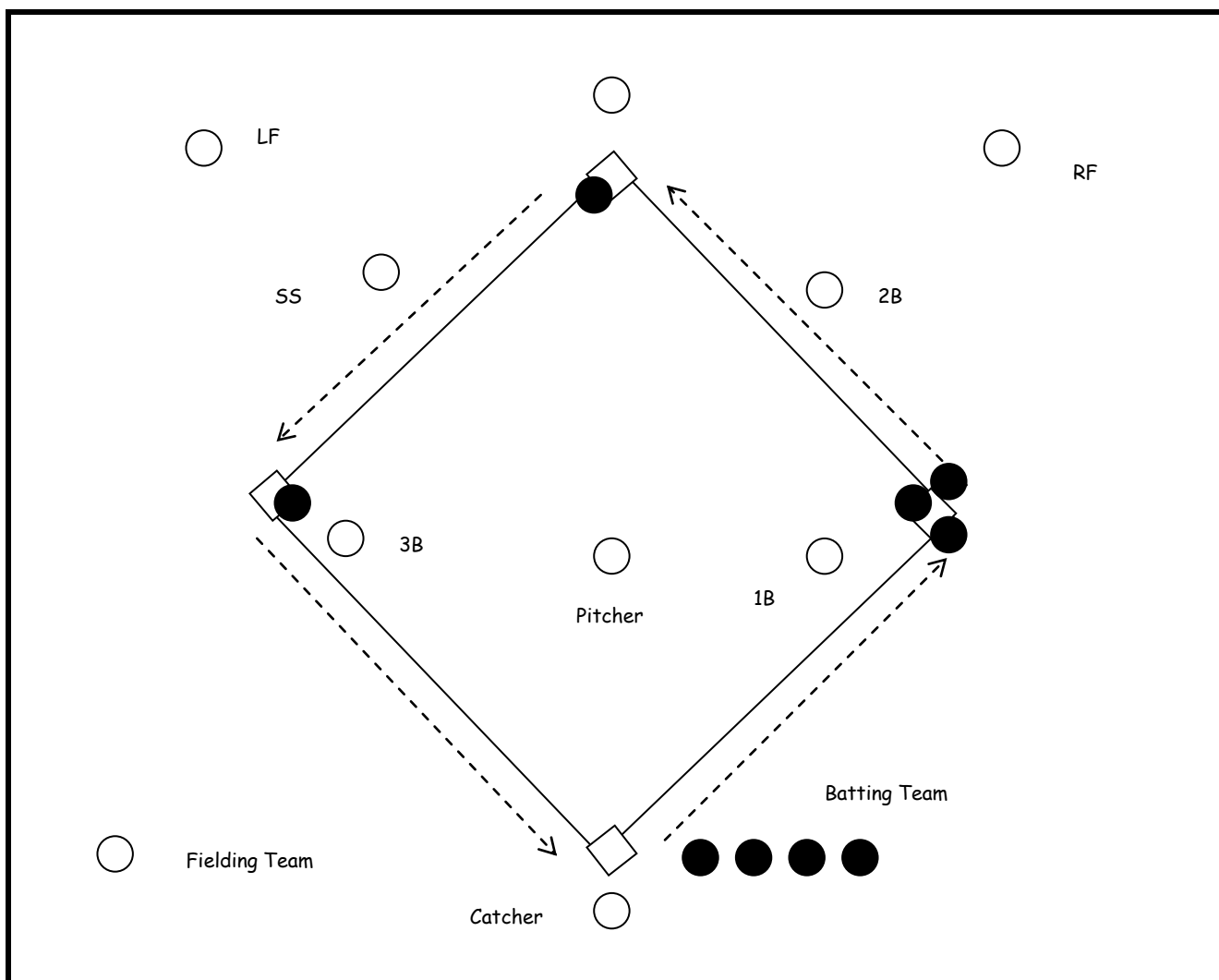
Equipment

- Volleyball
- Bases
- Bat

Skills

- Hitting
- Catching
- Base Running
- Teamwork
- Tactics

Diagram



CONTINUOUS SOFTBALL

Description

- Select two even teams, one batting and one fielding.
- Fielders spread out in playing area with pitcher standing 10-12m away from the target marked on a wall (strike zone or hoop).
- Fielders field the ball and throw it back to the pitcher who attempts to lob the ball underarm to hit the strike zone, whether batter is back or not.
- Batter is out, if hit ball is caught, or if pitcher pitches lobs the ball to hit the strike zone.
- Batter once out must pass the bat to the next batter before the pitcher pitches the ball.
- Game is continuous i.e. pitcher pitches whenever they have the ball.
- Batting team change over at the end of the inning.
- Batters score runs by running around a cone placed 10m away (from strike zone and back to home plate).
- All out change over.
- Change pitcher regularly.

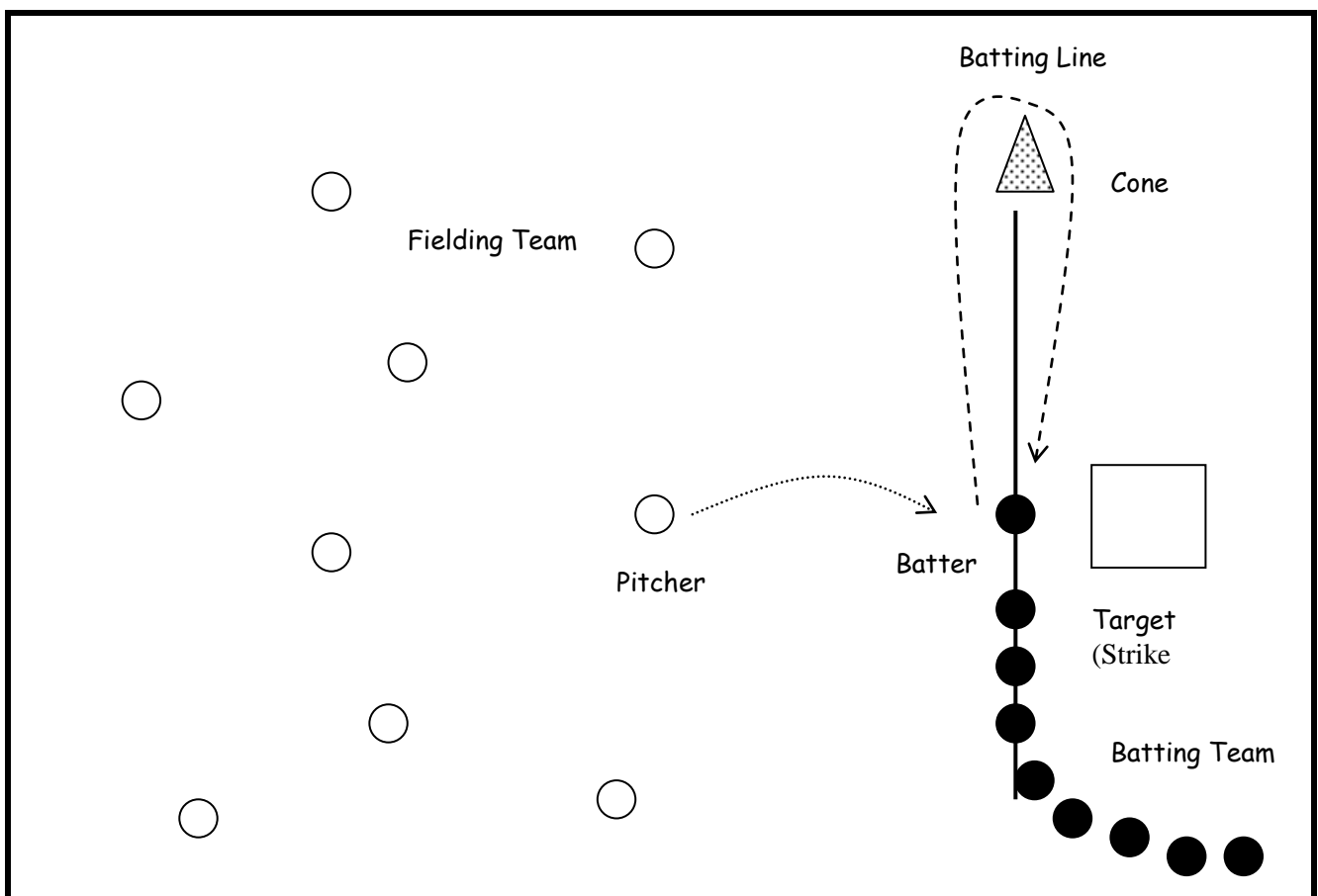
Equipment

- Target (strike zone hoop)
- Cone
- Bat
- Ball (soft)
- Gloves

Skills

- Hitting
- Base Running
- Catching
- Teamwork
- Fielding

Diagram



FIELDING SOCCER

Description

- Select two even teams, each member wears a softball glove.
- Game begins with one team in possession of the ball at the centre court set up on the field.
- Teams attempt to pass the softball with underarm throws only, keeping the ball below shoulder height at all times.
- Ball is passed to teammates down the field to the scoring half of the ground.
- When close enough to the scoring cones the fielder calls out "shot".
- All players stop, and allow a free shot at the cone (underarm or overarm).
- Cone must be hit on the full to score one goal.
- When goal is scored or missed, opposition gets the ball to start at the cone.
- Balls must be caught on the full, if the ball hits the ground, last team touching the ball lose possession.
- No running with the ball.
- Only one person can block or defend the player with the ball. (This stops player with the ball being totally blocked out).

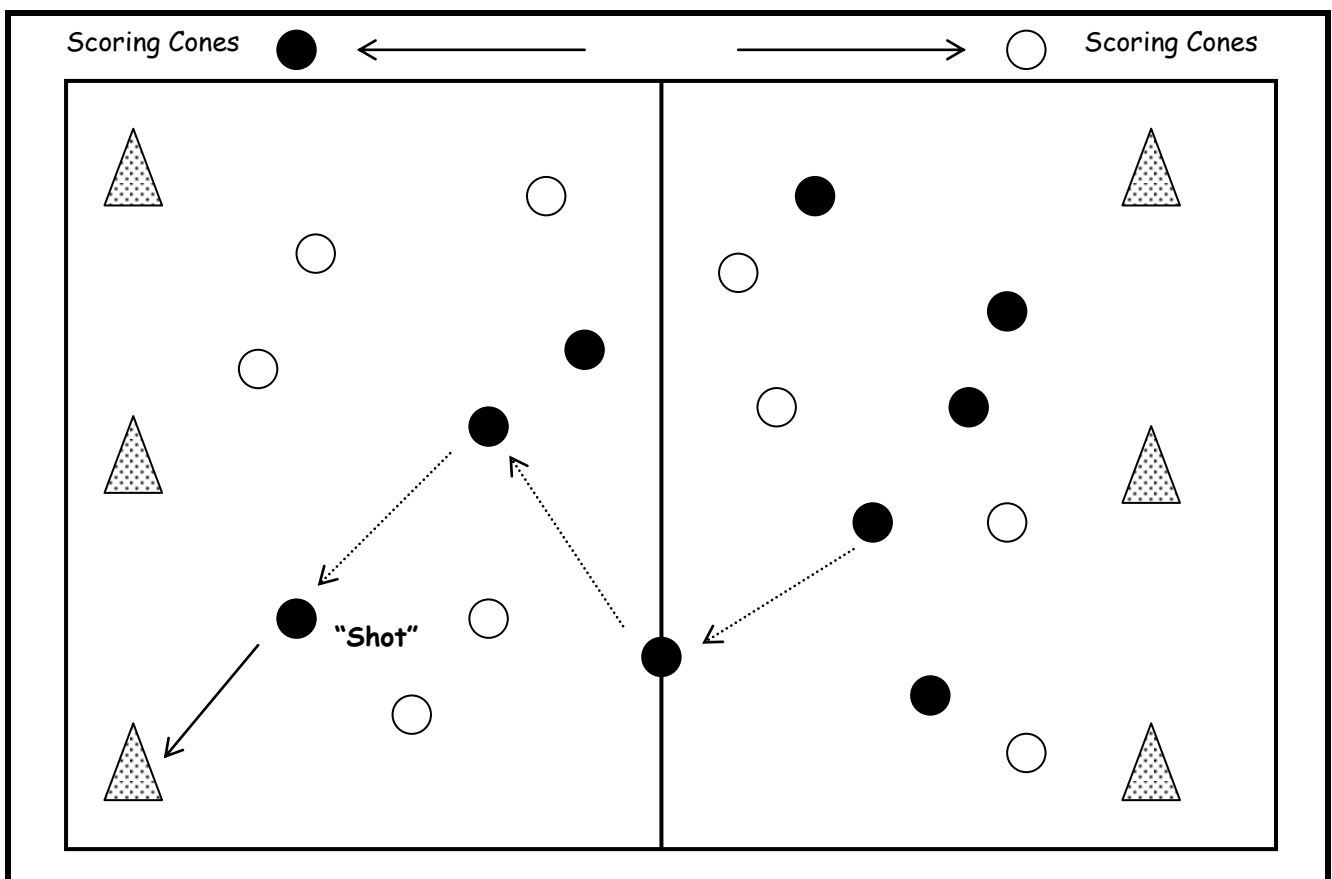
Equipment

- One glove each
- Softball
- 4-6 Scoring cones

Skills

- Catching Reflexes
- Teamwork
- Throwing
- Coloured bands

Diagram



STOP BALL

Description

- Select 2 teams, one fielding and one batting.
- Pitcher lobs volleyball to the batter who hits the ball forward of the batting line into the fielding area.
- Pitched ball must bounce once before being hit.
- Once ball has been hit, batter runs around their team that are standing shoulder to shoulder along the batting line.
- Batter scores one run for each lap of their team.
- Batter keeps scoring until the fielding team calls out "stop".
- Fielders spread out in the fielding area.
- When ball is hit and fielded, the rest of the fielding team line up in single file behind the original fielder.
- Once the whole team is lined up, the ball is rolled so that it rolls between each fielder's legs.
- The last fielder in line collects the rolled ball and runs to the front of the line and calls out "stop".
- All bat and then change over.

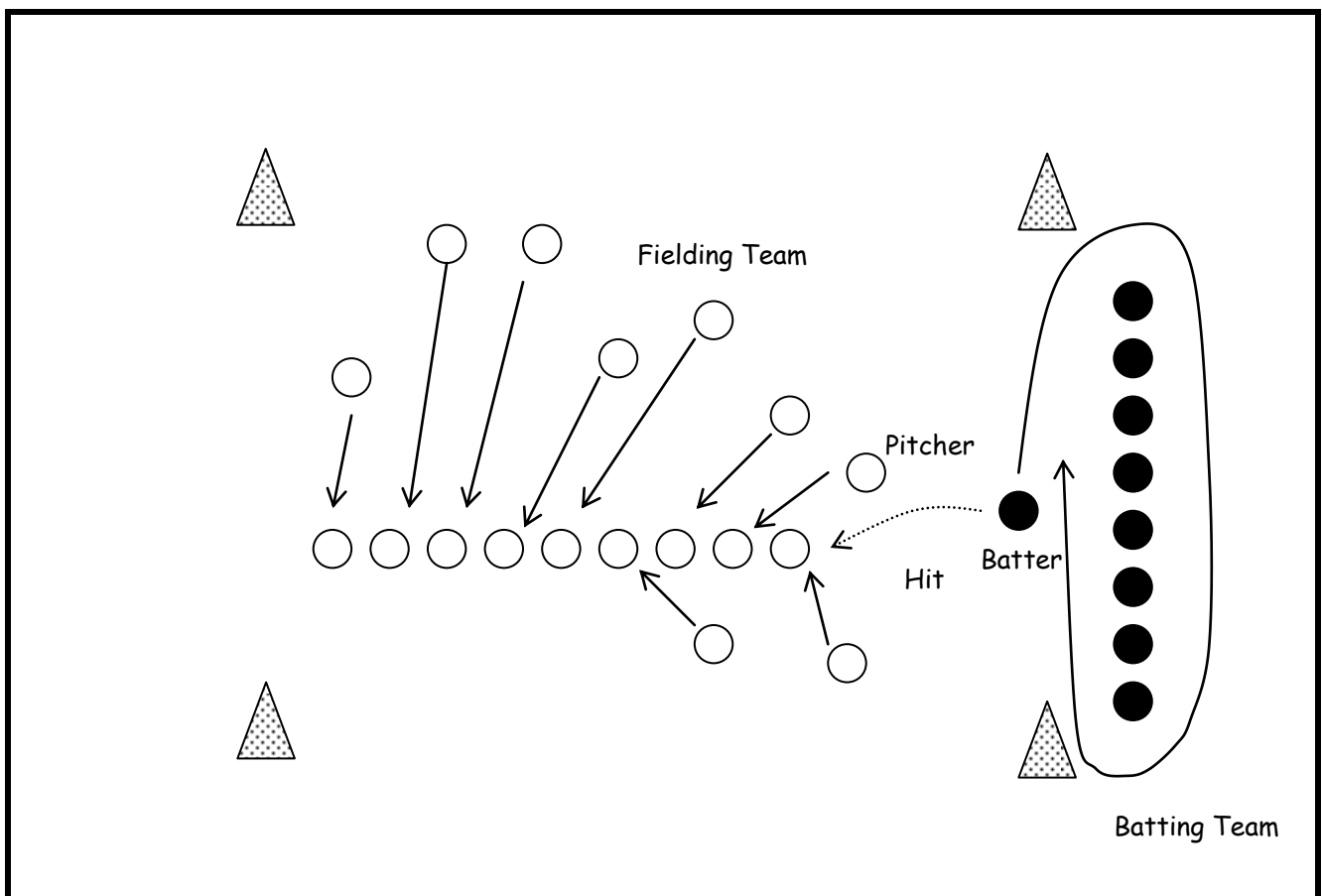
Equipment

- Volleyball
- Cones to mark area

Skills

- Running
- Fielding
- Teamwork

Diagram



LINE BALL

Description

- Two even teams are selected.
- Batters line up behind home base.
- Each batter stands at home base throws the ball out into fair territory (ball must be thrown so that it lands in the infield area, throws can be flat or high).
- Batter then attempts to run as many runs between cones marked at home base and first base.
- Fielders must field the ball and all line up behind the original fielder, the ball is then rolled between each fielders legs and then thrown by the last in line to the catcher who remains on home base.
- Runner scores as many runs as they can and stops when the catcher calls out "stop".
- Allow for two innings each if time permits.

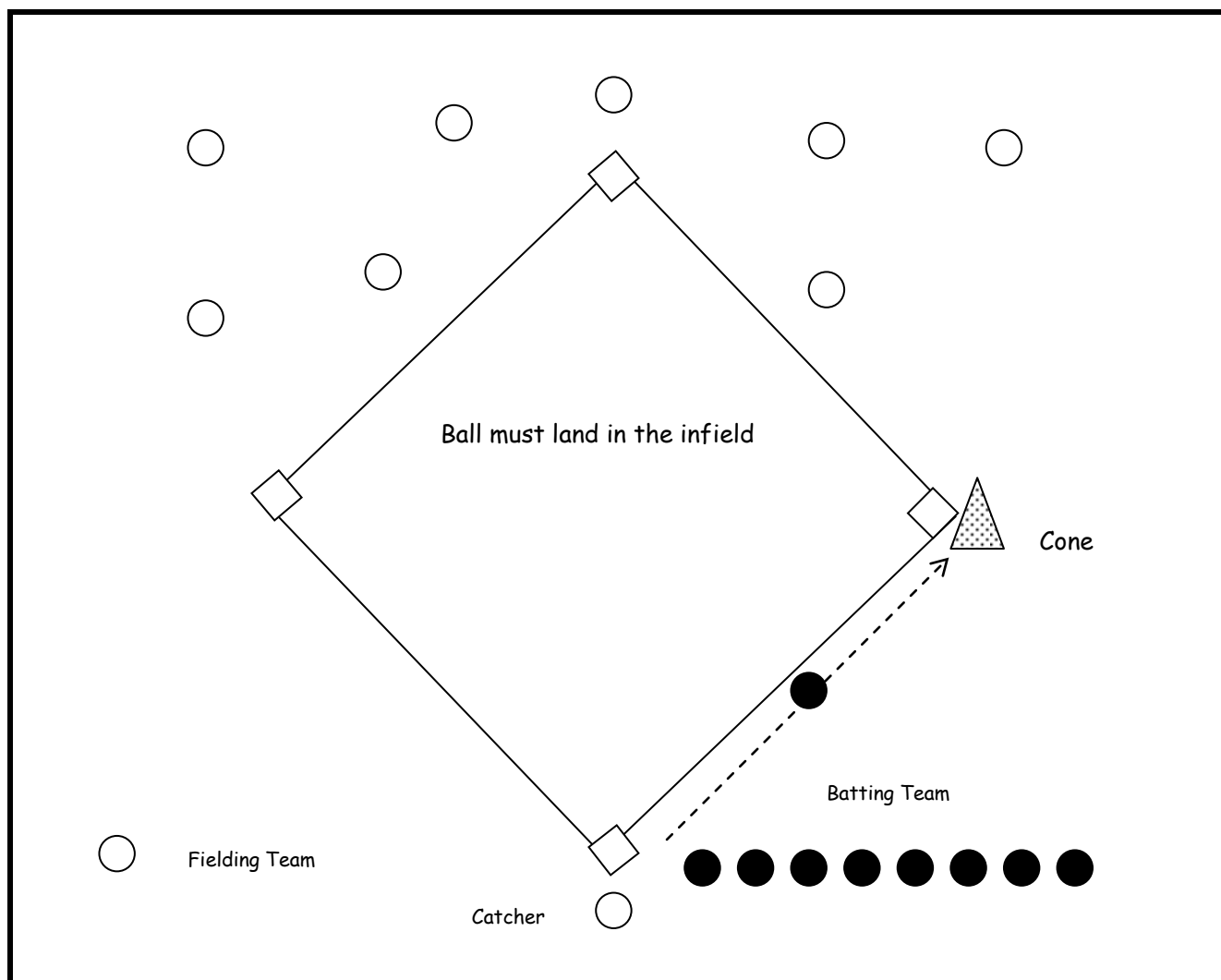
Equipment

- Softball
- Cones

Skills

- Base Running
- Fielding
- Throwing
- Teamwork

Diagram



500

Description

- Groups of 6-10. (Can have two or three games at the same time).
- Batter hits the ball off the Tee to fielders who catch or field the ball.
- Fielders score:
 - 100 points for a fly ball;
 - 75 points for fielding as one bounce ball;
 - 50 points for a moving grounder and
 - 25 for fielding a stationary ball.
- Fielder who gets to 500 points first takes the place of the batter.

Variation

- After 10 hits the highest scoring fielder takes the place of the batter.
- Alter the points system.
- Points system can go negative eg. If you drop a fly ball -100 points).

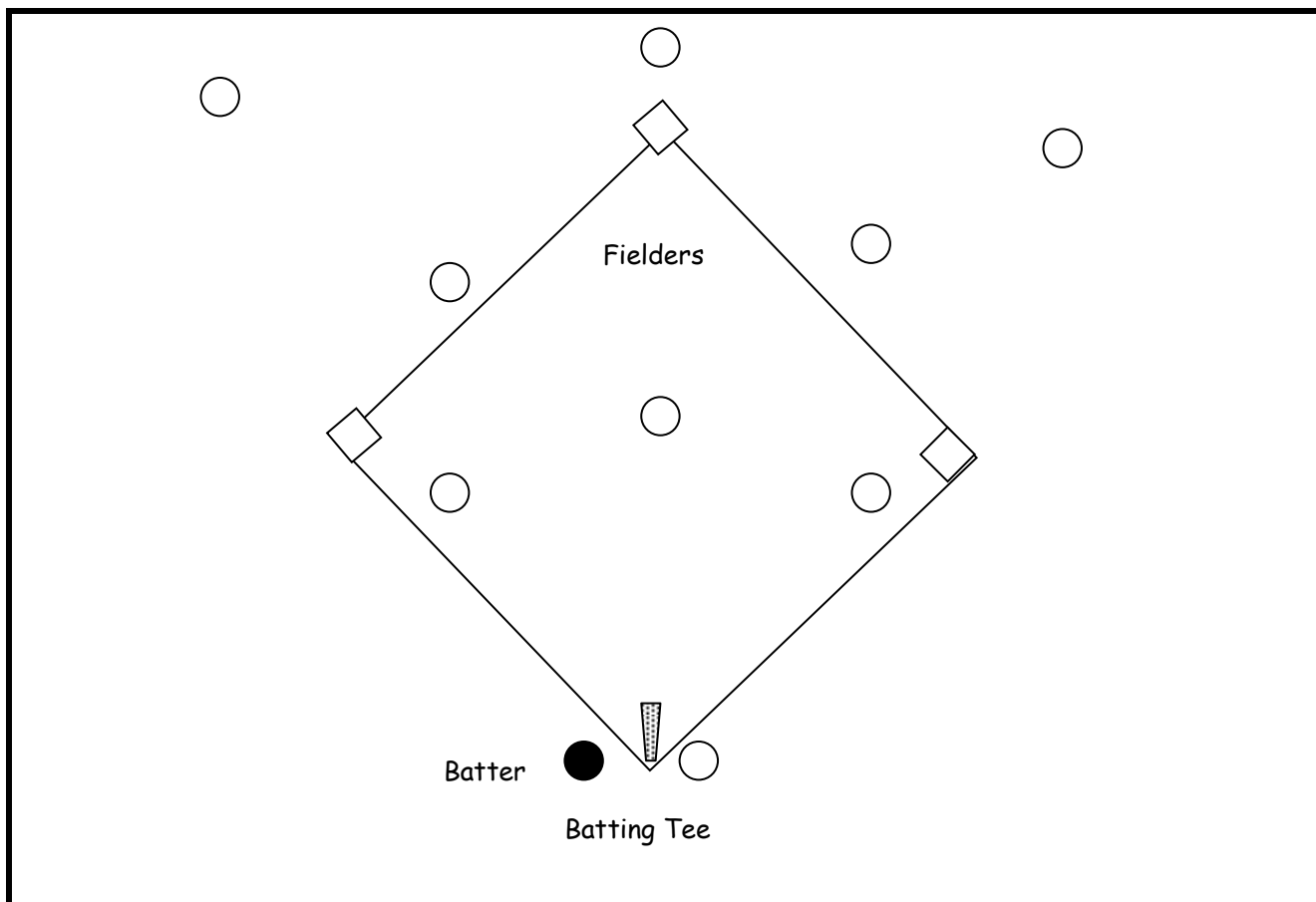
Equipment

- Softballs
- Bat
- Tee
- Cones

Skills

- Fielding
- Hitting
- Catching
- Teamwork
- Tactics

Diagram



OVER THE LINE

Description

- Divide the group into 4's. This game is a 4 vs 4 situation.
- One group of 4 is the batting team; the others are the fielding team.
- Fielding team protect an area (line between two cones) 20m from the batters and 3m deep.
- Fielders must be on or behind the line of the fielding cones.
- Batters attempt to hit the ball over the line (linedrive).
- Ball is lobbed to the batter by one of their teammates.
- Scoring is similar to softball. Score 1 base for each "linedrive" (4 bases = 1 homerun).
- Batting team bat until there are 3 outs. Batter is out if the ball is caught or hit outside the cones.
- The ball cannot be hit above head height.
- If no 3 outs by the third time through the batting line up, the innings will automatically stop.

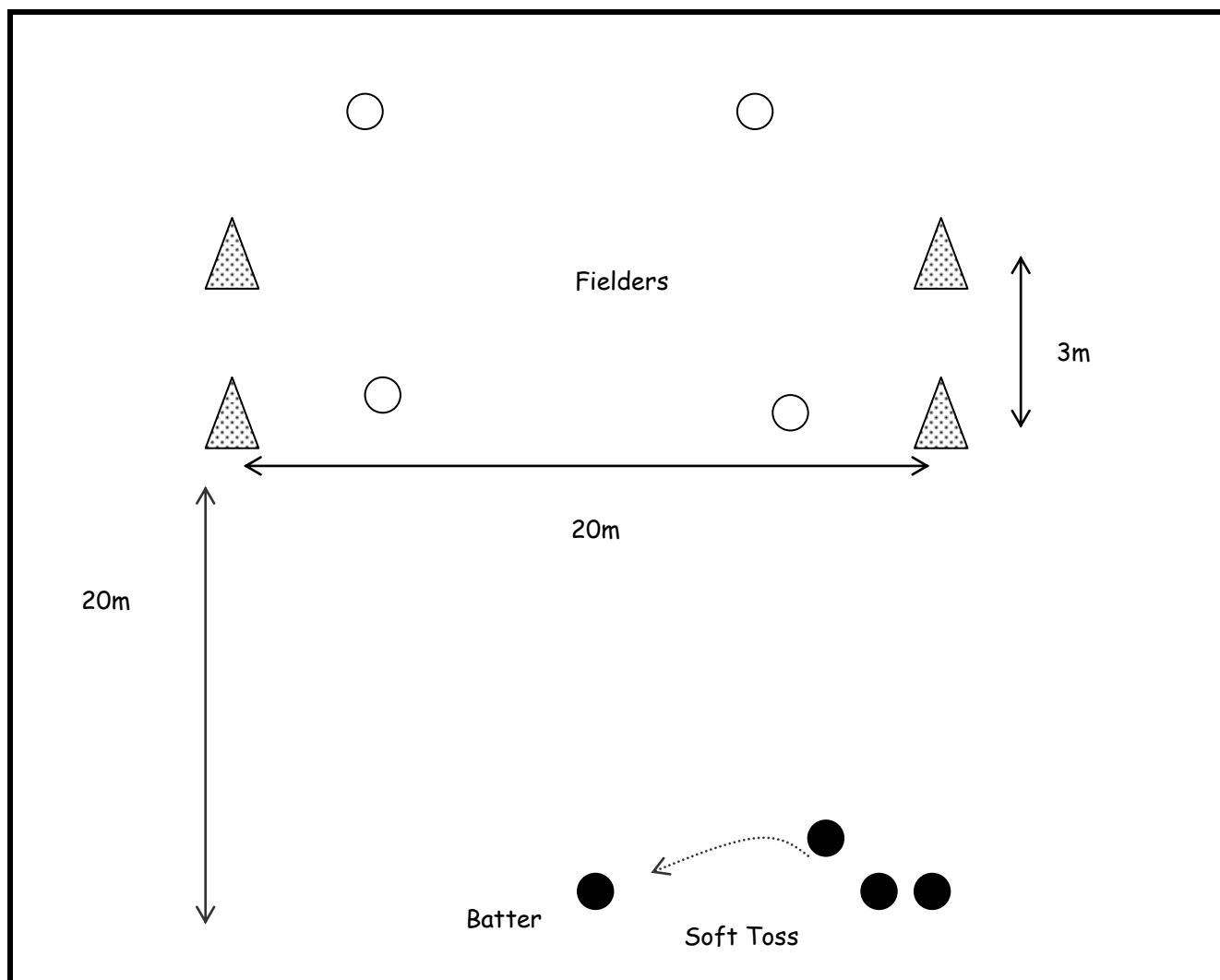
Equipment

- Softball
- Bat
- Cones

Skills

- Fielding
- Hitting
- Catching
- Teamwork
- Tactics

Diagram



SOFTBALL TAG

Description

- Two fielders with gloves are "IT"; they share ONE ball, passing it between each other.
- The "IT" players try and tag the runners with the ball in the glove.
- "IT" players can not run with the ball, they can only pivot.
- Those "IT" without a ball are free to move wherever they like within the boundaries.
- "IT's" can only tag one person in a row before passing the ball to another "IT".
- Runners can not go outside the boundaries.
- When runners are tagged, they get a glove and become "IT".
- Last player standing is the winner.

Variations

- Add additional balls at the end of the game to speed it up.
- Start with more than two players being "IT".

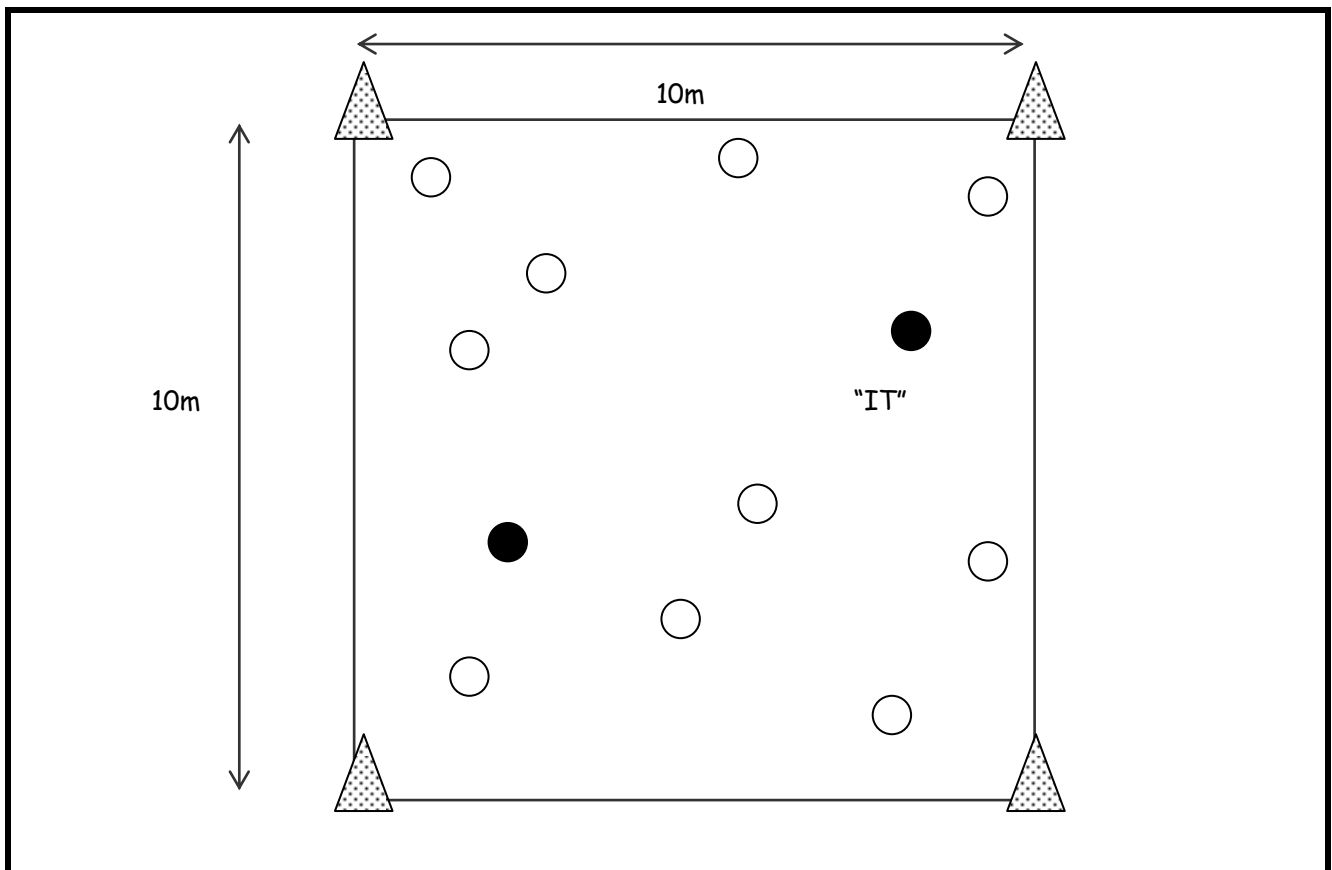
Equipment

- Markers or cones
- Gloves
- Balls

Skills

- Running
- Throwing
- Catching
- Teamwork
- Tagging
- Rules
- Glove work

Diagram



SCARECROW TAG

Description

- Players, play within the boundaries.
- 2-4 taggers with a ball and a glove.
- Runners each have a ball but no glove.
- Taggers can run freely within the boundaries.
- Both taggers and runners must stay within the boundaries.
- Taggers, tag runners with the ball in the glove and the other hand securing the ball.
- Those tagged stand like scarecrows, until their ball is exchanged with another with an underarm throw.
- If the ball is dropped then both players are scarecrows.

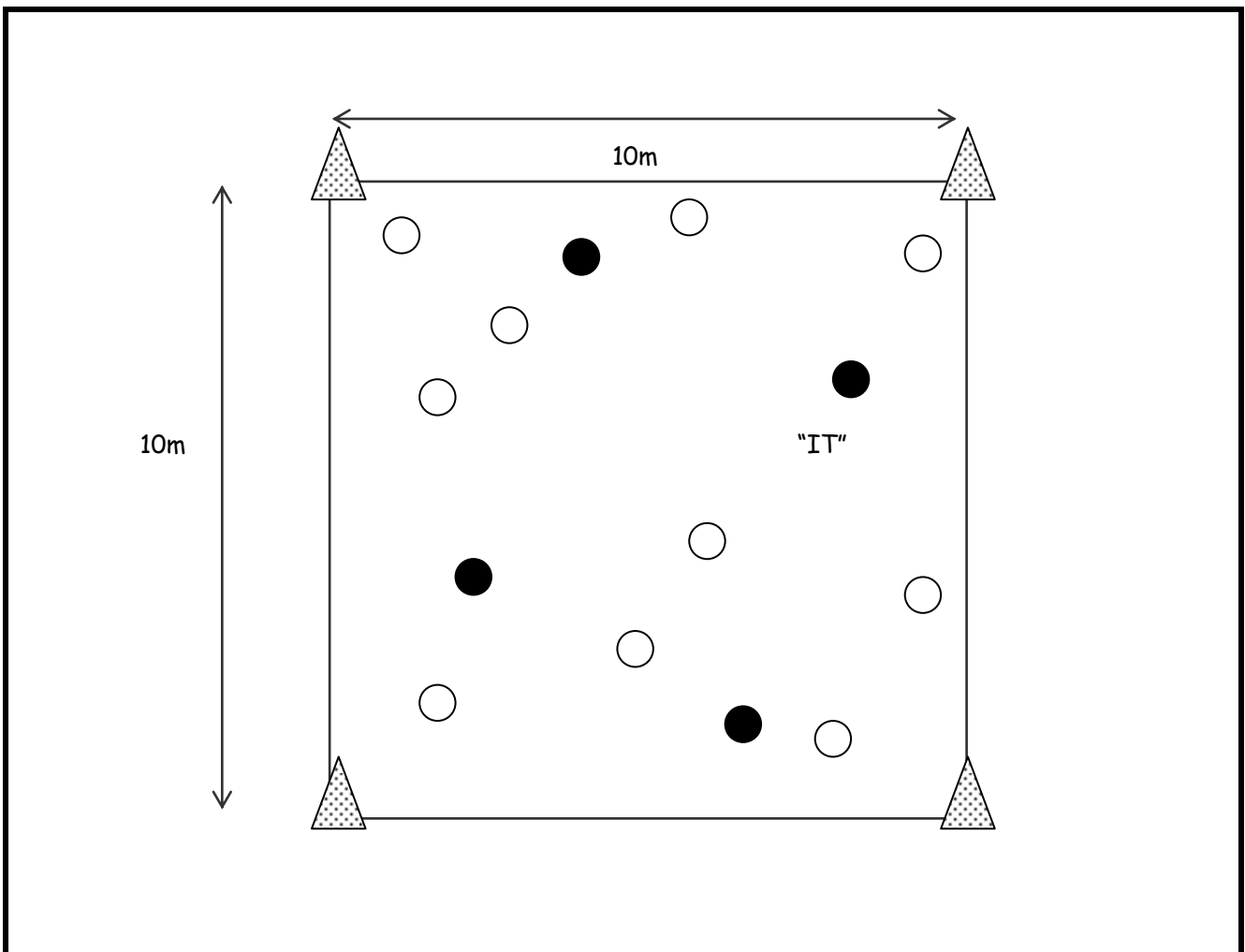
Equipment

- Markers or cones
- Gloves
- Softballs or Foam Balls

Skills

- Running
- Throwing
- Catching
- Teamwork
- Tagging
- Rules
- Glove work

Diagram



CUT OFF RELAY

Description

- Two teams of even numbers, stand in a single file approximately 10m apart.
- On signal first player throws to the 2nd player who turns and throws to the third player etc.
- Last player runs to the start of the line and repeats until all players have gone through.

Variations

- No gloves
- Half volleys
- Fly ball to last player
- Any number of players

Equipment

- Gloves
- Softballs
- Markers/Cones
- Flat playing field

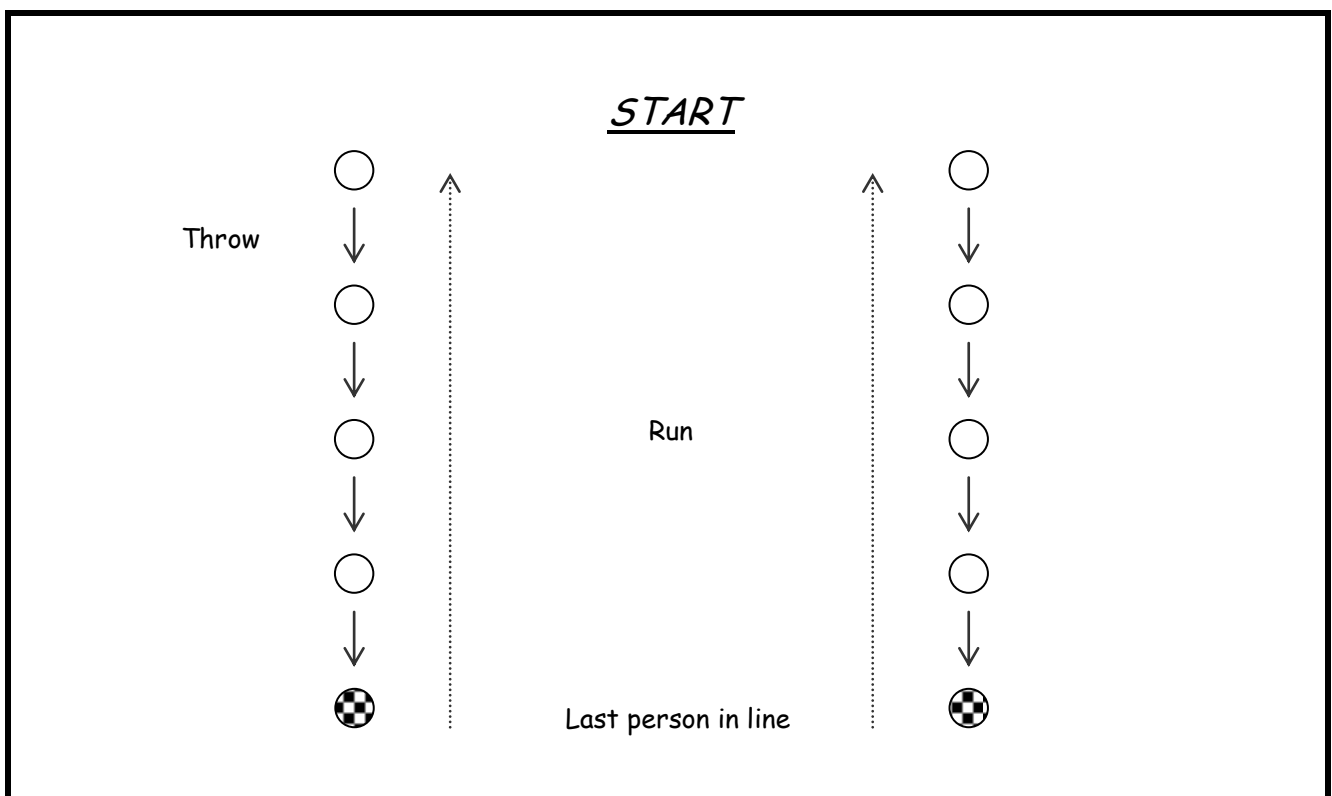
Skills

- Running
- Throwing
- Catching
- Team Work
- Outfield Relays

Teaching Tip

- Emphasize that partners should use glove shoulder as a target when throwing.
- Quick release and hard flat throws are required.
- Stress this is how to get the ball from the outfield.

Diagram



SOFTBALL RELAYS

Description

- Relays are a great way to disguise skills amongst activities.
- Divide players into even groups (approximately 5 in a group).
- Design a relay that involves some of the skills you have covered:
 - Fielding
 - Ready Freddie
 - Glove skills
- Have players run to the end line, pass the ball (with glove on) around the head, waist and feet.
- Students run back rolling the ball on the ground to their partner whom (fielding in correct Ready Freddie position) field the ball and take off again.

Variations

- No gloves
- Players throw the ball not roll
- Players pitch the ball to each other
- Limited only by imagination!

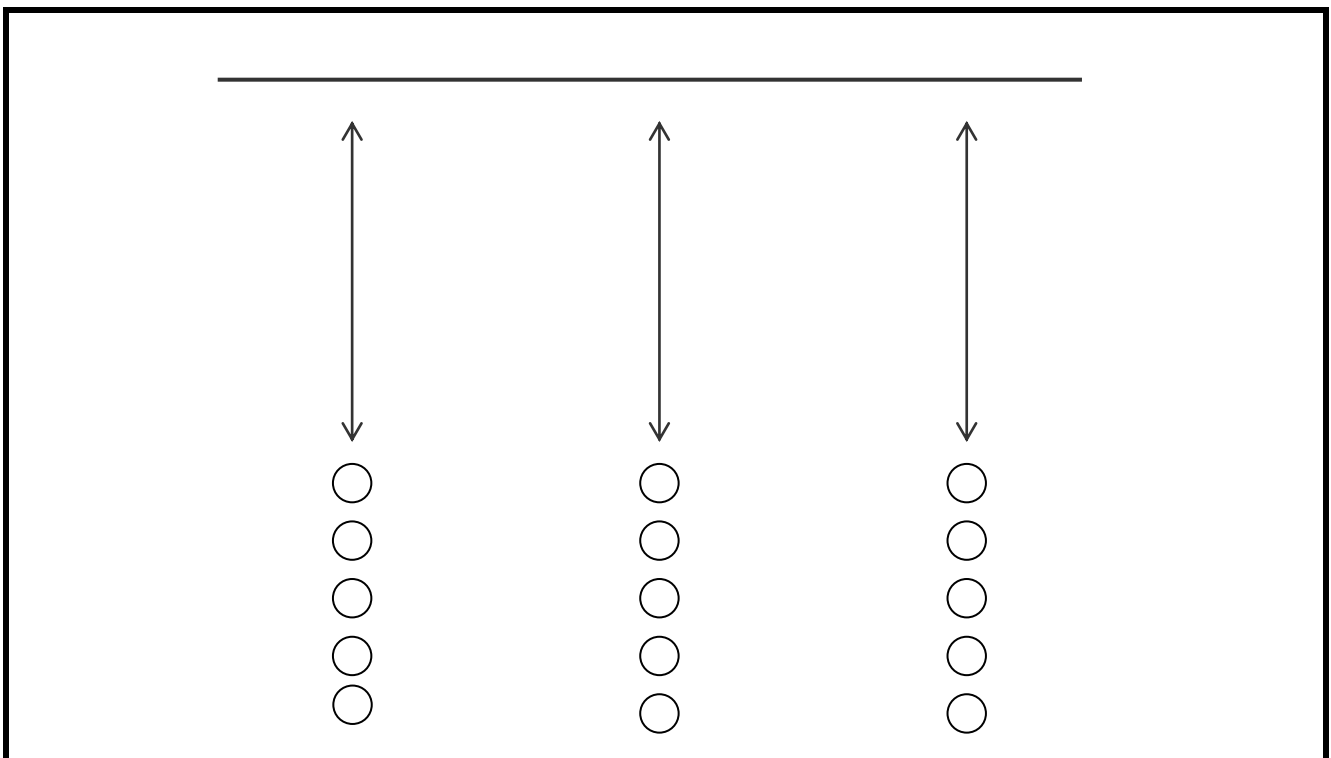
Equipment

- Gloves
- Softballs
- Cones/Markers

Skills

- Running
- Throwing
- Catching
- Team work
- Fielding
- Coordination

Diagram



END BALL

Description

- 2 Teams are selected.
- Teams aim to roll or bounce the ball through the opposite team's end line. (Simulate ground balls).
- Players field the ball and return to the opposition.
- Players may not go outside the boundaries.
- Ball must be rolled or bounced within boundary or other team scores a point.
- End ball that goes over the end line constitutes one point to the other team.

Variations

- Add additional ball to speed up the game.
- No gloves
- Throw fly balls and call it softball volleyball
- Use different types of balls.

Equipment

- Softballs
- Other types of balls
- Gloves
- Cones/Markers

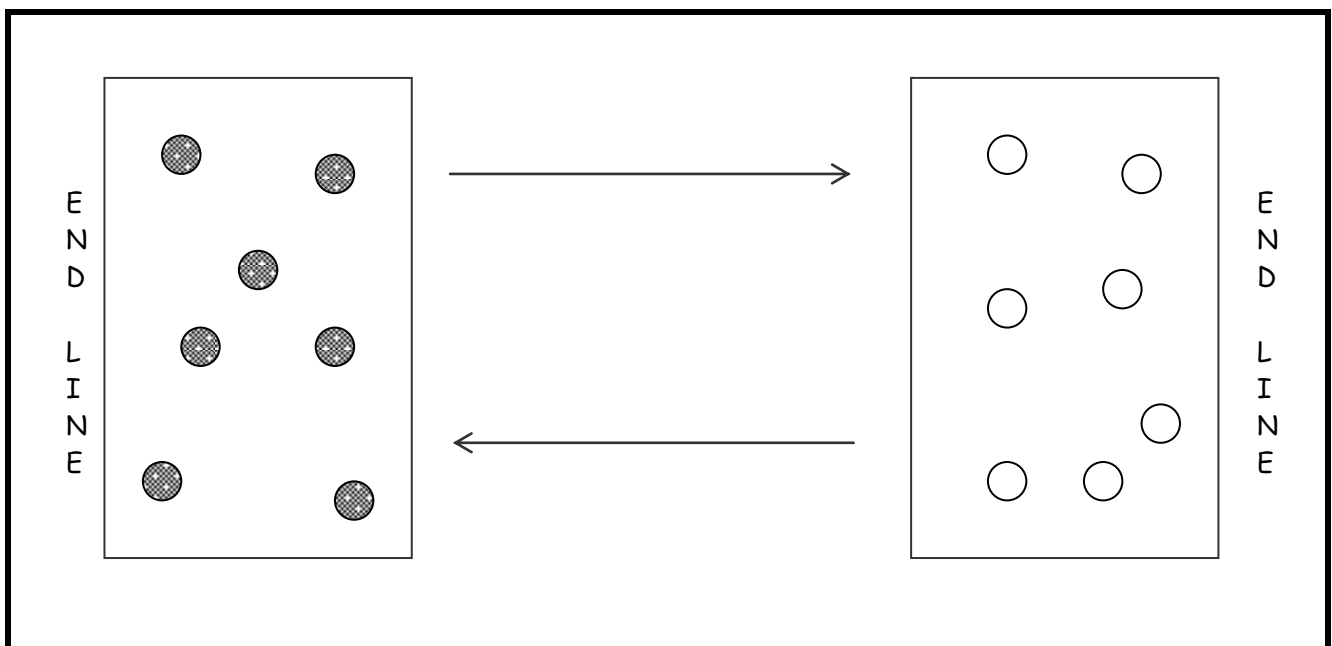
Skills

- Fielding
- Throwing
- Team work

Teaching Tips

- VERY IMPORTANT that players watch where the ball is being thrown or rolled to avoid being hit, especially when more than one ball is in the game.
- Stress correct fielding positions. (Ready Freddie).
- Emphasize quick ball release and teamwork.

Diagram



SOFTBALL SOCCER

Description

- Select 2 even teams. Give out coloured bands to one team.
- Rolling and fielding the ball, players attempt to score goals.
- The ball can only roll through the goals and can not be lifted into the air.
- A player can not run or move off the spot with the ball.
- Players can't go outside the boundaries.

Equipment

- Gloves (not essential)
- Softball
- Cones/Markers

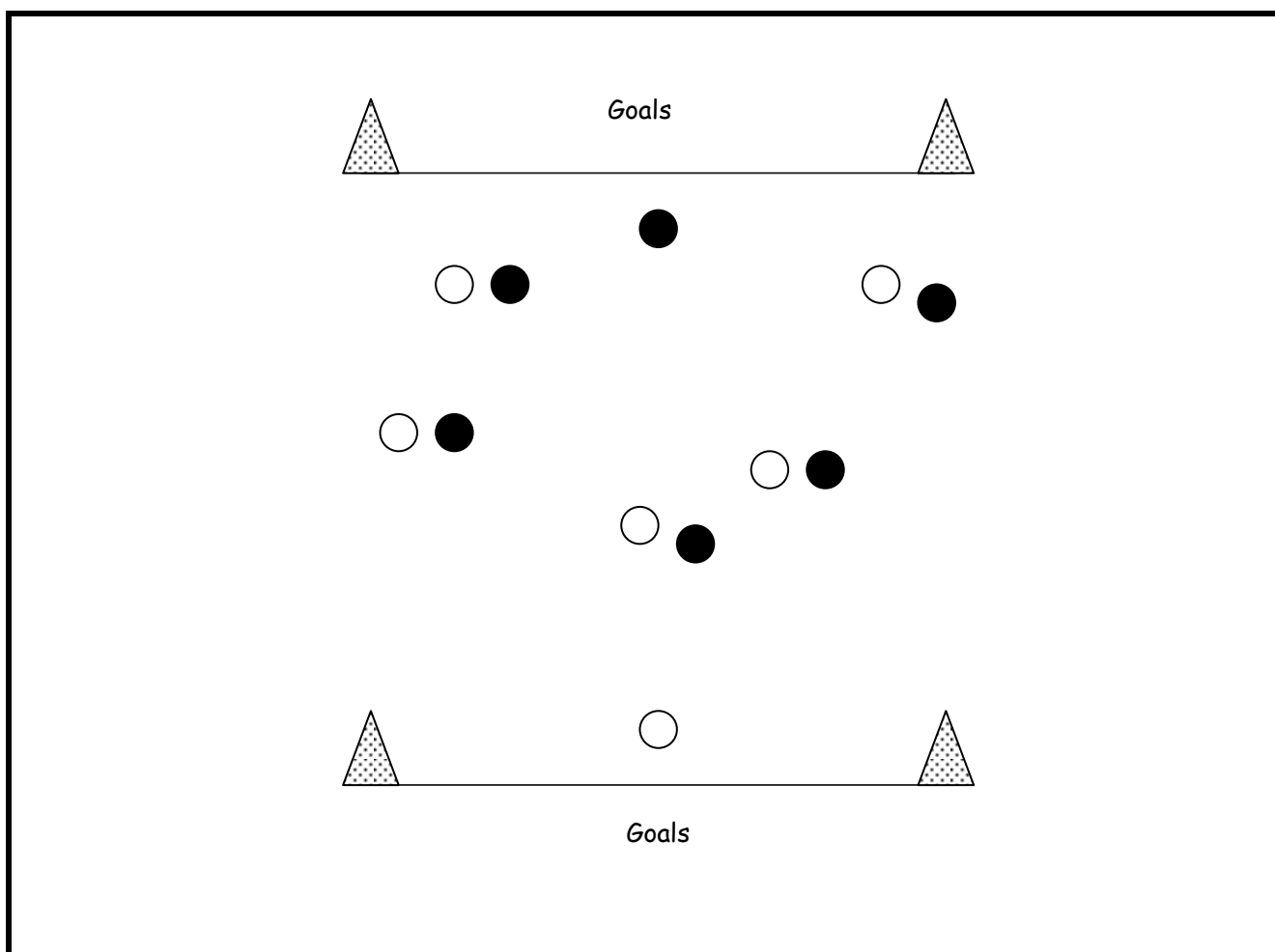
Skills

- Fielding
- Team work
- Fitness

Teaching Tips

- Stress correct fielding positioning (ready Freddie)
- Emphasize quick ball release and teamwork.
- Award penalty shots against students who tackle and break rules.

Diagram



MODIFIED T-BALL

Description

- Split the group into two even teams.
- Batting team hits from the tee and run to first base and back to home to score a run.
- Runners may stay at first as long as they want, but if not home by the last hitter, they don't count.
- All batters bat through.
- Fielders get you out by catching you, tagging you or throwing the ball to the fielder in the circle while the runner is stuck between home and first.
- Runners must hold up on base on a fly ball (as in softball)
- After all batters have had their turn, teams swap over.

Variation

- 3 out all out
- Allow continuous running between home and 1st, on one hit
- Play with a pitcher, not a tee.

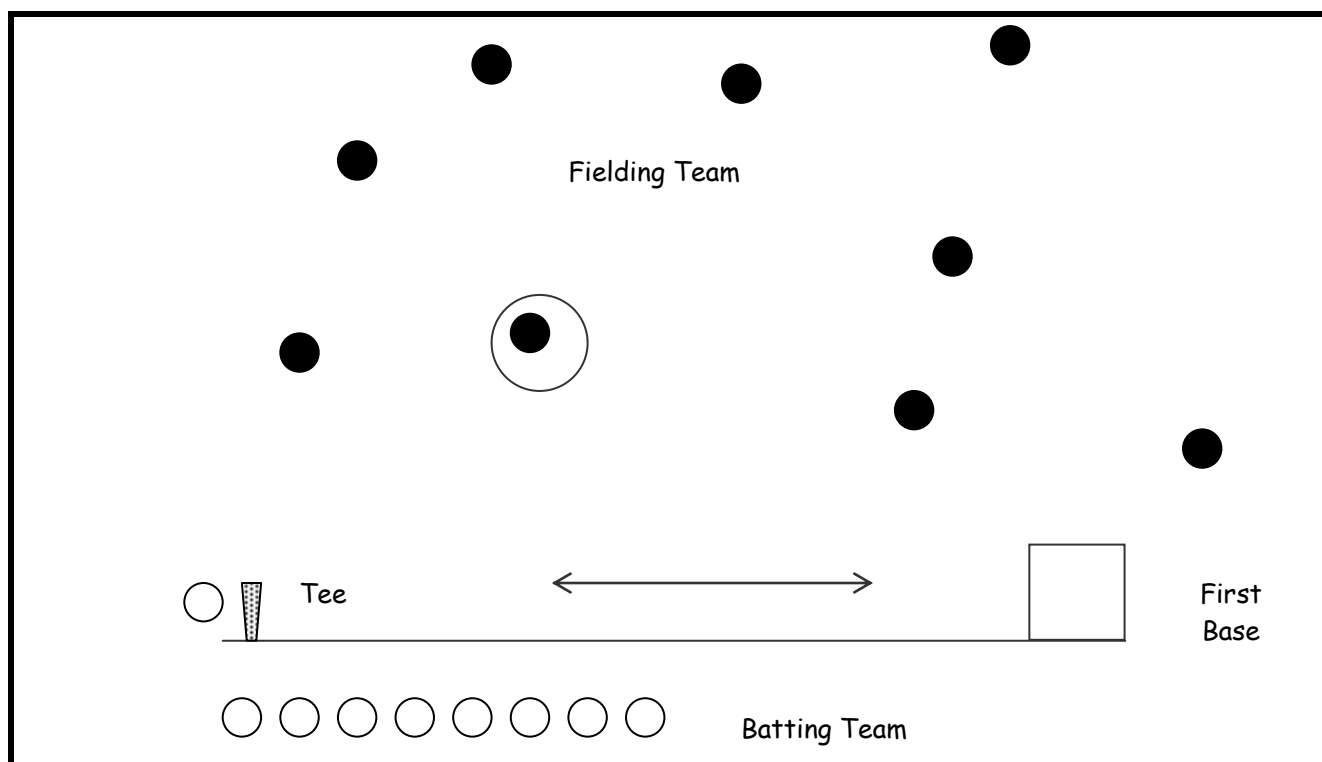
Equipment

- Cones
- Softball
- Gloves
- Tee
- Bat
- Helmets
- Hoop

Skills

- Throwing
- Base Running
- Hitting
- Fielding
- Catching
- Team work

Diagram



AUSSIE BALL

Description

Modified rules to normal softball/tee ball as follows:

- No limit to foul balls, but 3rd swing and miss at the ball on the tee is out.
- Each team bats right through the line up to complete an innings.
- The ball is dead once the fielding side gets it back into the centre circle.
- Outfielders change places with infielders each innings.

Variations

- Play as handball with a volleyball.
- Three out all out.
- Change player in circle every innings/out.

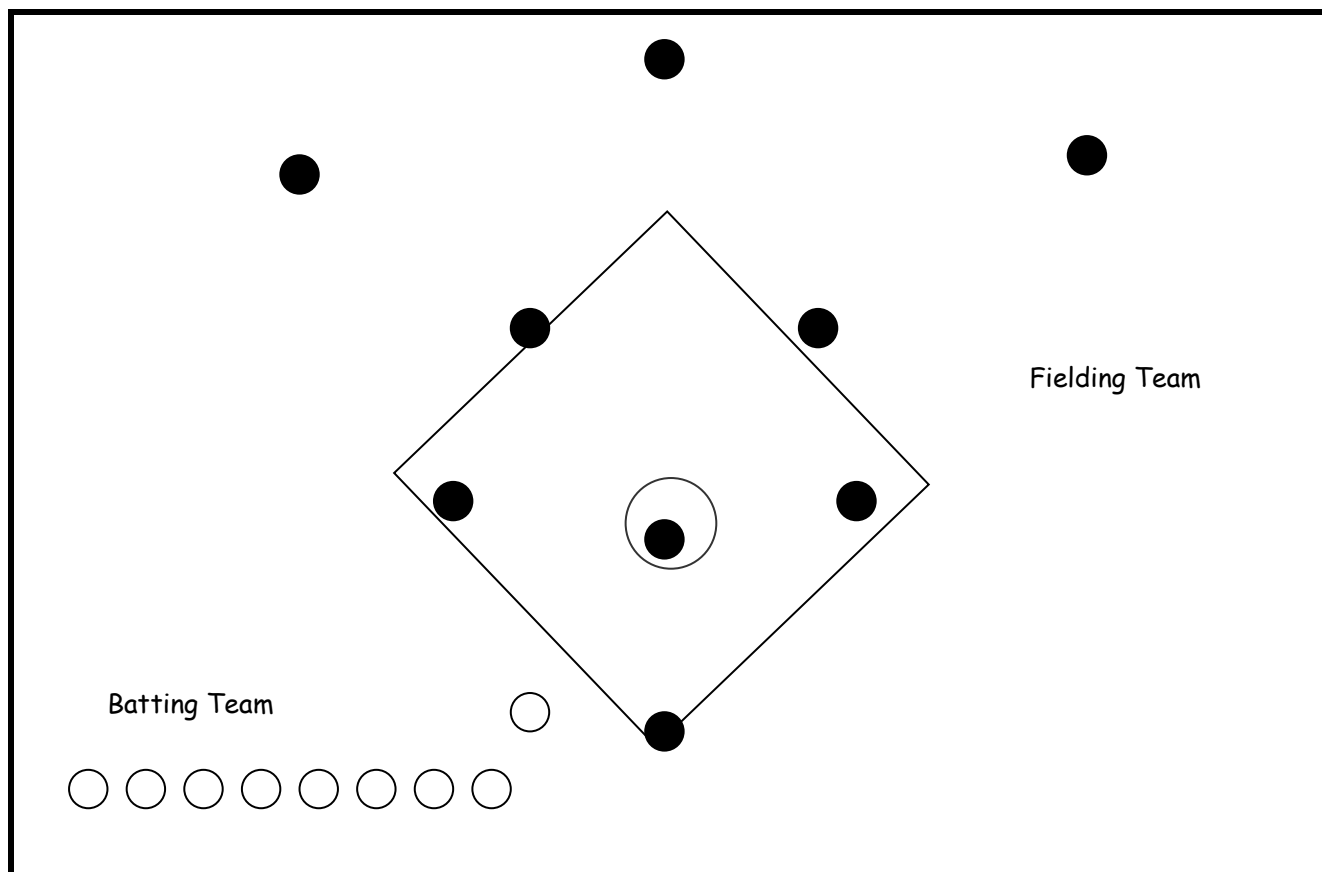
Equipment

- Diamond
- Bases
- Bat
- Softball
- Gloves for one team
- Helmets
- Line markings for circle

Skills

- Throwing
- Catching
- Game Skills
- Rules
- Hitting
- Teamwork

Diagram



PROGRESSIVE SOFTBALL

Description

Players play softball/tee ball as in standard rules with the following variations:

- Players all play as one team.
- Once a player goes out they get a glove and join the field at right field (1), and the remaining team rotates one place. (See diagram from 1-9 and then the end of the batting line up).

Equipment

- Diamond
- Bases
- Bat
- Softball
- Gloves for one team
- Helmets
- Line markings for circle

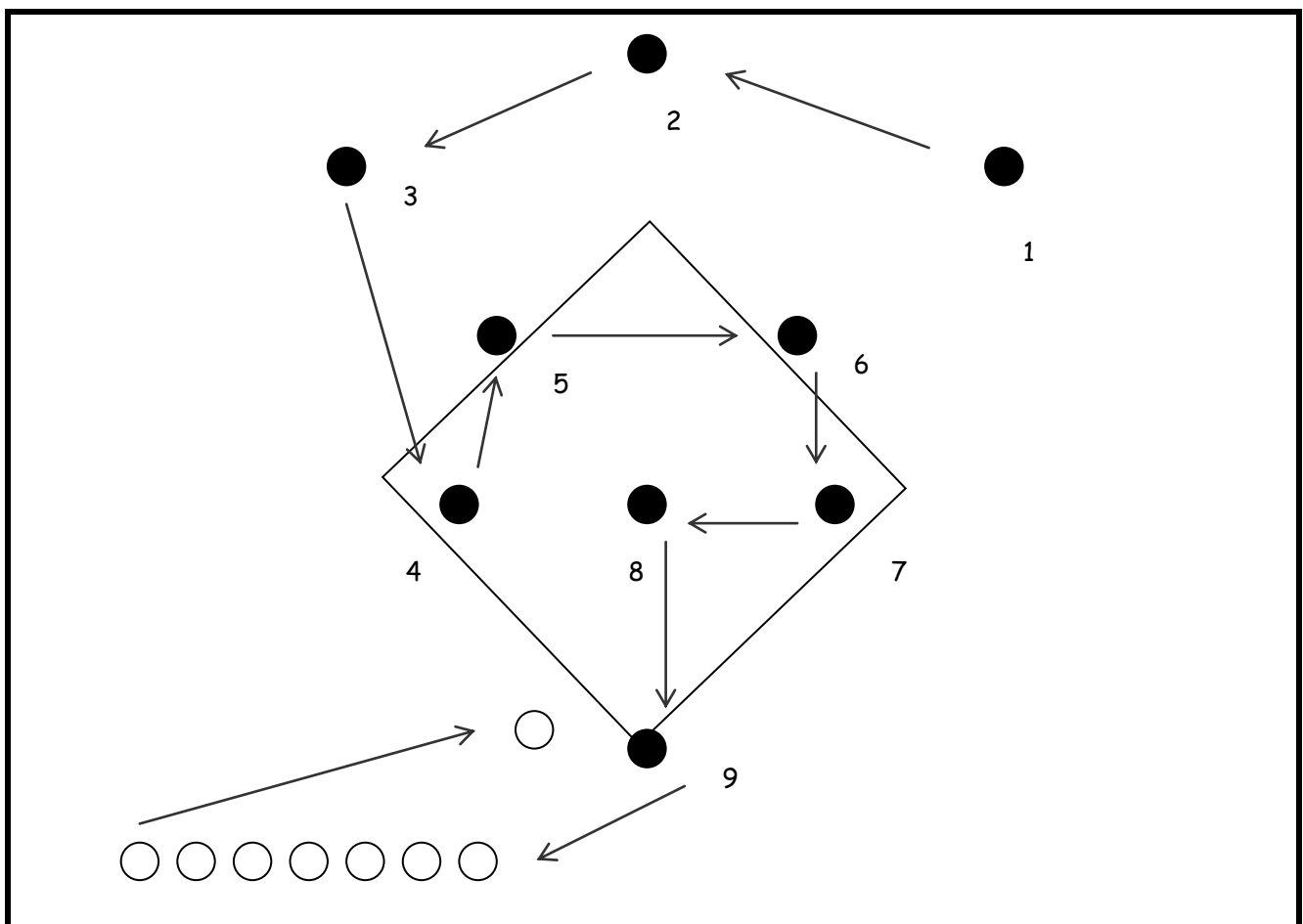
Skills

- All players are given the opportunity to play all positions.

Teaching Tip

- Make sure all players take the field, 5 bats in a row could constitute an out.

Diagram



ASTRIDE BALL

Description

- Players stand feet apart (fielding positions), feet touching the players along side.
- Gloves on (off for variation)
- Players attempt to roll ball between legs of other players.
- Players use glove to stop ball.
- A player gets the letters of the word T-U-R-K-E-Y each time the ball passes between their legs.

Equipment

- Ball
- Gloves

Skills

- Fielding
- Teamwork

Diagram

