

Session #16

~ Warm Up ~

DEFEND

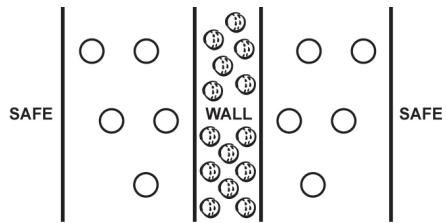
Learning Objective: Agility, quickness, running, teamwork

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Ball

How to:

- Mark out a “safe” area at both ends of the playing area and an area to be defended in between them.
- Place balls in the area to be defended (wall). Select 3-4 players to defend the “wall”. Rest of the players are scattered in the playing area.
- “Defenders” try to keep the others from grabbing a ball and getting it back to a “safe” area without being tagged
- If caught, they become a defender
- Game ends when all balls are in safe area OR all players are caught and are defenders



GAME PITCHING

Learning Objective: Review the game pitching sequence and rules

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: softballs, pitching plates and a hula-hoop hung in a pop-up net or on a fence. Parents may volunteer as catchers if present.

How to:

- Tell pitchers they are to imagine they are pitching in a game
- Ask them to receive the ball in front of the pitcher’s plate, then walk behind the pitcher’s plate stopping to take a deep breath before stepping onto it with both feet. If a pitcher is right-handed the right foot is forward and left foot slightly behind and vice versa for the left-handed pitcher

- Instruct the pitchers to step onto the mound with their hands apart (ball should be in the glove and not in the pitcher's hand) and once on the mound they may bring their hands together and pause
- There are several starting styles and it is recommended pitchers either keep the hands together or swing the pitching arm backward in a rhythmic motion (see online drill description) to begin the pitching motion
- Once starting the pitching motion, the pitcher's step toward the catcher and arm circle are coordinated. The pitcher turns sideways to the target mid-motion. Instruct them to imagine stepping along an imaginary line straight to the target
- After landing, the ball is released inside the back hip at the bottom of the arm circle with the intent to throw on a straight line to the target
- Follow-through includes staying sideways to the target and bringing the pitching arm to the middle of the chest. See online descriptions for further details

~ Main Activities ~

THROW 'EM OUT

Learning Objective: Fielding ground balls, throwing, catching at 1st base

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 1 ball for every 3 players, 4 bases

How to:

- 4 groups of 3
- Set up in triangular formation with one player at a base
- P1 throws a grounder to P2 who fields it and throws to P3 who is playing 1st base
- P3 is practicing how to catch the ball with 1 foot on the base
- Give players 5 tries then rotate
- Set goals for each group (i.e. Team goal: how many out of 15 (5 each) can be fielded and thrown accurately Individual goal: each player keeps track of how many grounders are picked up cleanly and/or thrown accurately
- Player on the base (P3) can keep track of how many they caught correctly

HOT BOX

Learning Objective: Agility, stopping and starting, run-down skills

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: 4 bases, 4 helmets, 4 balls

How to:

- 4 groups of 3
- 2 defensive players (DP) and 1 runner (R) wearing a helmet
- Defensive players stand 3 to 4ft in front of bases
- Defensive player has a ball and tries to tag runner with ball
- Runner tries to avoid being tagged by running away from whatever defensive player (DP) has it
- DP's throw the ball to their partner ahead of runner who again tries to avoid a tag
- The runner will switch with the person who tagged them
- If one player doesn't make a tag after 3 or 4 switches have occurred, let them be the runner

Tips/Modifications:

Coaches need to demonstrate the proper throw for the run down; hand is up with the ball out in front, player with the ball should be able to see the ball and the ball is delivered by snapping the elbow. It is never a full throw to a partner in a run down.

~ Modified Game ~

MODIFIED SOFTBALL GAME

Learning Objective: All softball skills

Time: 60 minutes

Equipment: Ball, bat, bases

How to:

- Coach will pitch to their team
- 7 pitches are thrown to each batter to allow them to hit a fair ball. If the player does not hit a fair ball, they go to first base if a swing was taken on at least four pitches
- All players will play defense
- All players will bat each inning
- There will be no advances on overthrows

Tips/Modifications:

Refer to the U9 introduction for scrimmage modifications that apply to the developmental stage of your players.