

Coaches guide

First and foremost--- **Thank you coaches!** This serves as a guide to help coach's consistently prepare players to advance through the program, building on their skills at each age level. It is important to be consistent with coaching goals and player expectations at each age level so that each player has the same experience and opportunity to improve their skills. We strive for each player to be ready for the next level of coaching.

Guidelines for all ages:

- Be positive, have fun, keep improving!
- Good sportsmanship, support each other
- Chatter on the field, get pumped up!
- No siblings/parents in or around the dugout during game time
- Encourage players in positions they can succeed at.
- Encourage players to play in at least two positions.
- Be engaged in the game
- Equal playtime in league, play to win in tournaments

U10

Keep it simple, build confidence. Coach on:

- Basic rules of the game- overrun 1st base, 3 strikes/4 balls etc.
- Good sportsmanship and teamwork
- Skills needed for the positions of the field- Move players around to get experience.
- Baseline mechanics of hitting, throwing, base running and fielding- avoid them starting bad habits.
- Equipment needed for play
- Encourage players to assist with practice organization and field/equipment wrap up after practice. Team effort!

U12

- Continue to build on the basic mechanics of hitting, throwing, base running, and fielding. Be consistent at correcting bad habits and encouraging practice and improvement.
- Players need to have necessary equipment (glove, cleats)
- Highly encourage face mask for pitcher and first and third base.
- Consistent practice warm up routine led by the players
- Players should be pretty independent in remembering batting line up, on deck, strike/ball count, number of outs in the inning. **Encourage them to be engaged in the game.**
- Field-
 - Defensive stance for infield and outfield. "Ready position"
 - Encourage team chatter and encouragement.
 - Expectations of position played- every position has a responsibility on every play. No player should be standing still. Example- responsibilities of Left and Right field backing up 1st and 3rd base
 - Communication on the field- # outs, plays at..., general team encouragement out on the field.

- Warm up expectations
 - Ball goes out with pitcher, first base and Left and Right field.
 - Extra player warms up the outfielder closest to the bench.
 - Hustle on and off the field
 - Ability and openness to sliding and bunting. Encourage appropriate equipment for sliding- pants and slider shorts. Practice on the grass.
 - Leading off base the appropriate distance (4 steps) without coaches constantly reminding
 - Half way on pop-up, tagging on fly ball, running on third out.
 - Use of cutoff, appropriate alignment of cut-off (with base)
 - Calling LOUDLY, a fly ball.
 - Do not watch the ball running to first base.
 - Runners are picking up 3rd base coach when running bases and when on base for signals.
 - Able to focus on base coaches and able to follow coach's signs.
 - Batter on deck is talking to a runner coming home guiding whether to slide or not. "Up or down".
 - Catchers beginning to give basic signs to pitcher.
 - Out #2, players are getting ready to take the field. Glove located and with ball if needed, visor on, ready to hustle out. Encourage focus on the game.
 - Players assist with closing the field and loading equipment after every game.
- Position
 - Each player must begin to have a focused area of play- infield, outfield, pitcher, catcher
 - Coach should place and encourage the player in a position they can be successful at.
 - Each position should have at least 2 players rotating and each player should have 2-3 positions of competence.
 - Consistent expectations and encouragement at each position. No preferential treatment.
 - General
 - No parents or kids in or near the dugout during the game. Players should be focused on the game.
 - No cell phones active in the dugout.
 - Food should not be a distraction
 - All players engaged in the game, cheering their team on. You can learn a lot by watching the game and listening to the coaches instruct in real time game situations.
 - Recommend a 24 hour rule when discussing issues/concerns with parents to avoid an "emotional" discussion.

U14

- Same as U12, plus
- Must:
 - Sliding and bunting
 - Player independence with batting order, take a warm up ball out, be ready, hustle out, etc.
- Players engaged in the game at all times. Chatter- get pumped!
- Consistently picks up base coaches and follows signs given when running and at bat
- Strong running skills- lead off and stealing skills, half way on pop up. Pick up third base coach
- Player has focused field position(s).
- Limited need to remind players of the basics
- Catcher routinely gives signs to pitcher
- Coach should place and encourage the player in a position they can be successful at.
- Consistent expectations and encouragement at each position. No preferential treatment.
- Correct the players, constructive feedback. Repeat multiple times and every time if necessary. **They can't/won't fix what they don't know.**