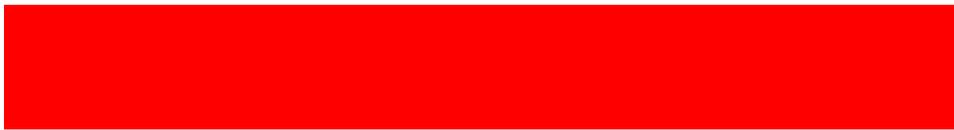


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**Softball New Zealand “Kiwi Sox” A Quick Guideline for Coaches**

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## INTRODUCTION

This resource has been designed to provide you, as the **deliverer/presenter/coach**, a basic guideline of how to prepare when presenting to bigger groups such as school classes.

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## SAFETY

Safety is a factor to always keep in mind. Careful thought is needed to determine the fine line between challenge and unacceptable risk. This varies greatly with individuals and groups and it is the responsibility of those with children in their care to establish safe procedures.

The standard set must be at the child's level, both physically and intellectually, not at a level deemed suitable for adults only.

It should be an on-going objective to help children accept responsibility for their personal safety and that of others by becoming aware of the effect or repercussions of their own behaviour.

Listed below is a checklist of actions which can be taken to help achieve a safe environment.



### Check List

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Have you eliminated potential risks, e.g. Spare equipment?   |
|  | Have you checked equipment and make sure you don't use anything faulty.  |
|  | Is the equipment of appropriate size and materials for the age group you are presenting to?  |
|  | Have you established a working space that allows free movement?  |
|  | Have you clarified rules for using equipment especially bats, balls, racquets and sticks.  |
|  | Have you anticipated any potential unsafe action?  |
|  | Demonstrate how safe practices enhance enjoyment.  |
|  | Have you organised safe movement and throwing patterns by using circuits, waves etc.   |
|  | Have you warned about potential dangers within the environment you are working in – posts, holes in the field, slippery areas etc.   |
|  | Insist on an immediate response to the whistle and other agreed signals. It is suggested to use a whistle to signal the participants to 'stop' only.   |
|  | Have you talked about what to do in an emergency   |
|  | Have you equipped yourself for dealing with an emergency – ask for training if needed  |
|  | Have you checked with the teacher or group leader about any medical or behavioural issues that a participant may have. An understanding of this can make a huge difference to your coaching and how you engage with a participant. |

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Being able to communicate clearly and engage the class is essential and makes the session more enjoyable for both you and the participants.

Please refer to the below common “do’s” and “don’ts” to help you on the way to having an awesome time with the class.



## Do

- Identify exactly how many children you must have, check roll with Teacher
- Find out if there are any children you need to be aware of. Careful consideration must be given to children with disabilities and/or illness
- Build a professional relationship with the lead teacher, encouraging them to participate.
- Break the class into groups fairly to allow even competition
- Speak slowly and clearly so as children can understand instructions
- When talking to the children make sure they can all see and hear you (put them in a semi circle in front of you) and make sure they are not facing into the sun
- Refer disruptive children to the Teacher
- Vary the activities you are doing and change the activity if you think the children are either getting bored with it or find it too easy/hard
- Make activities and games fun, small sided on relevant to the age group
- Commend children on their ability or their attempts to undertake the skill. Remember all children have a different skill level, so it's important to praise each student based on their individual effort or progress
- Pair a positive comment with any negative comments. E.g. “Timmy you aren’t throwing the ball accurately due to...however you are creating some excellent spin on the ball and have some great speed”
- Stay calm in all situations.



## Don't

- Don't raise your voice or discipline a child. This is the teacher's responsibility
- Don't use technical jargon that the kids or teacher won't understand
- Don't constantly single out the naughty child or the child that is struggling
- In addition don't constantly single out the child that is excelling. Obviously some recognition is deserved but constant recognition will either diminish other children's feelings or may even embarrass the over achiever.

## SESSION PLANNING

Planning out your session sounds obvious but it will make your session(s) with the participants flow a lot easier.

Remember to keep your session's fun and simple, make sure your sessions keep all participants actively involved at all times (no standing around picking daisies, are relevant to their age and ability and you have the equipment required to run each activity).

To throw a spanner into the works with your session planning, it is important to remember, as a coach, you need to be *flexible* and able to adapt quickly and easily if you realise that the activity is too challenging or easy for participants or if your participants are becoming restless.

It is suggested that each coaching session includes no more than 3 activities, excluding the warm up (this is based on a 30 - 45 min session).

Below is an example of the first 3 weeks of a coaching session plan (based on a 6 week coaching project for 8 year old children).

The below example is utilising warm up, activities and games from the SNZ Resource; **Kiwi Sox Fundamentals of T-Ball and Softball** which allows for a progression in skill base.

The timeframes allowed includes coach demonstration time.

| Timeframe     | Session Description                             |  | Time allowed  |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Week 1</b> | <b>Introduction, safety and what's the plan</b> |  | 5 mins  |
|               | <b>Warm up</b>                                  | Base Relay                                       | 5 mins  |
|               | <b>Activities</b>                               | -Spring clean<br>-Bulls eye<br>-Base chase       | Up to 10 mins for each activity, rotating against teams               |
| <b>Week 2</b> | <b>Introduction, safety and what's the plan</b> |  | 5 mins  |
|               | <b>Warm up</b>                                  | Simon Says                                       | 5 mins  |
|               | <b>Activities:</b>                              | -60 Second passing challenge<br>-Batting Bonanza | Up to 10 mins for each activity, rotating against teams               |
|               | <b>Game:</b>                                    | Batter Up  | Remainder time  |
| <b>Week 3</b> | <b>Introduction, safety and what's the plan</b> |  | 5 mins  |
|               | <b>Warm up</b>                                  | Position hunt                                    | 5 mins  |
|               | <b>Activities:</b>                              | -Base relay with progression<br>-Catch This      | Up to 10 mins for each activity, rotating against teams when possible |
|               | <b>Game:</b>                                    | 6 aside T-Ball                                   | Remainder time  |

## QUICK TIPS FOR FESTIVAL & INTERSCHOOL COMPETITION DAYS

It may be a requirement that each school would like you to hold festival days or interschool competition days at the end of your coaching period.

Planning for either event is critical and it is important that you;

### Check List

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Know the amount of children that will participate  |
|  | Find out if they will come out in groups or as individuals (if the latter, this may mean you have to group people together)  |
|  | Know the total amount of time you have available for the event and set the amount of time for each game or station you set up.                                       |
|  | Make sure you have enough volunteers and teachers helping on the day   |
|  | Make sure your volunteers and teachers are aware of the format of the day, what they will be doing exactly, and have a simple understanding of activities or rules   |
|  | Have a draw or rotation sheet made up (A3) and visible in several locations and provided to group/team leaders   |
|  | Allow enough time to set up early and ensure you have enough equipment   |
|  | Find out or set what the emergency procedures would be for the day, in case of an emergency  |
|  | Think about what resources you would like to hand out to the children at the end of the session e.g. posters, information on local clubs, participation certificates |
|  | Thank your volunteers and teachers that helped out on the day  |

### **Festival or Give Softball a Go days station ideas**

Time is critical and setting up activity stations is one way to organise large groups and have every child active.

Below is an example of what activity stations you can set up. Remember, each Station must be fun and challenging and you require a lot more volunteers for a successful day.



## MODIFIED GAMES

It would be a good idea to understand “games” that are easy to set up with a limited amount of time and equipment.

Modified games are great;

- For helping participants understand aspects of the softball
- For rainy days
- If you have a limited amount of space to work in
- If you have a limited amount of time to run games
- If you want a buzzing competition or game time with a limited numbers of kids
- For Interschool competition days or festival days as an alternative to T-Ball or Fastpitch
- For Personal Development Days or teacher development
- For social leagues.

Below are a couple of examples of modified games that would suit primary school participants. For further ideas on modified games (for all age groups) please refer to the following website and resources;

- [www.softball.org.nz](http://www.softball.org.nz)
- Kiwi Sox Fundamentals of T-Ball and Softball.

### Over the Line

This is a perfect game that requires little equipment and only a handful of players.

This means that you can run a competition with only one class, or have an amazing competition with several classes.

Over the line is all about hitting the ball. There is no running and is about pure fun.

For further information contact your local Softball NZ Softball officer or refer to the Softball NZ website.



### 6 Aside T-Ball

Great game that gives participants maximum time “on the ball” whether it be fielding or hitting. It gives participants the basic understanding of how to play softball.

The fact that is a small sided game means you can have more than one game going at a time per class room.

You can make 6 aside T-Ball time based (teams bat as many times as they can in a 5 minute period no matter how many outs they get - then teams change sides) or you can make it that if a team gets three outs, they then change sides.

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS & COACHES

## Coach T-Ball Unit - \$10.00 RRP



### For T-Ball Coaches, Parents or Teachers

The Coach T-Ball Unit is the first step on the Softball New Zealand Coach Pathway. The 1 hour practical unit is ideal for someone with little or no experience of coaching who wants to learn how to teach T-Ball to children. The unit provides information on basic coaching guidelines and skills and drills specifically for T-Ball.

Participants receive accreditation, a course booklet and certificate of recognition.

## Induction Unit - \$10.00 RRP for coaches or Free to teachers

### For Primary, Intermediate or Secondary School Teachers



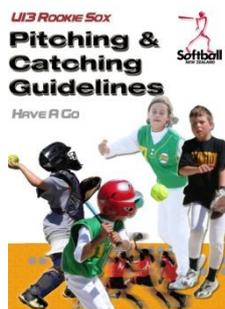
A 1 ½ hour practical course for TEACHERS wanting to know the basic fundamentals of SOFTBALL.

This unit covers off equipment; playing positions; batting order; pitching; catching; throwing; fielding; hitting & bunting; base running; basic game strategy; softball jargon; correcting common errors & simple rules.

This is a **FREE COURSE FOR TEACHERS**. Participants receive accreditation, a certificate of recognition and the workshop booklet will be forwarded by email.

## U13 Rookie Sox Pitching & Catching Module - \$10.00 RRP

### For Beginning Coaches, Parents or Teachers



This coaching module is a 1 hour session designed for coaches who are in transition from T-Ball to real softball.

Learn how to coach your U11 / U13 beginner pitchers and catchers.

Bring a ball and glove along and “have a go” at both these key positions.

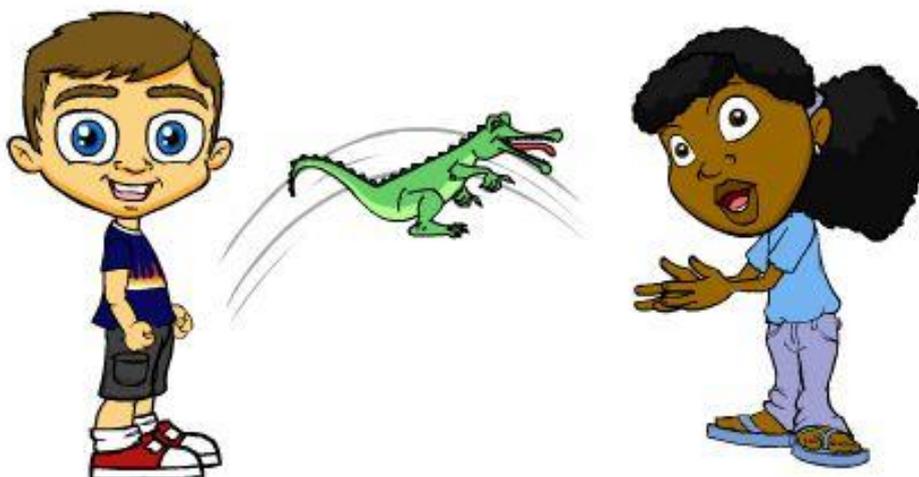
Participants receive accreditation, a course booklet and certificate of recognition

## KEY SOFTBALL CATCH PHRASES

Kids love a key catch phrase, and it is easier for both them and the teacher to remember a skill. Below are some catch phrases that will make softball fun for the children.

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Alligator Catch</b>           | Use 2 hands even with glove, explain that an Alligator has a big mouth |
| <b>Hang like a monkey</b>        | Ready position swinging  |
| <b>Door Knocking Knuckles</b>    | Line knuckles on bat   |
| <b>Pinkie's down</b>             | Fingers down for low balls, Pinkie's up for balls above belly button   |
| <b>Nose, toes, throws</b>        | Nose down when throwing  |
| <b>Squash the bug</b>            | On the back foot when hitting  |
| <b>Gorilla or ready position</b> | Swinging side to side when in ready position                           |
| <b>Fingers to the sky</b>        | Fingers pointed to the sky on fly balls                                |

### Alligator Catch



## CORE SKILL BREAK DOWN – QUICK TIPS



| Throwing               |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Catch Phrase</b>    | Nose, toes, throws   |
| <b>Quick breakdown</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow through with your throwing arm</li><li>• You can follow through with your throwing arm to get more power and accuracy</li><li>• Throwing hand should finish to or past the hip</li><li>• Throwing shoulder pointed at target</li><li>• Back leg swings forward naturally to a balanced position</li></ul> <p>This represents a complete follow through which will ensure maximum power with minimum stress on the elbow and shoulder.</p> |
| <b>Test</b>            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Kneel on the ground facing a partner; throw a ball to your partner, following through by slapping your throwing hand against your opposite leg after release</li><li>2. Repeat above from a standing position.</li></ol>  |



## Hitting

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Catch Phrase(s)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Door knocking knuckles</li> <li>• Squash the bug</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Look for</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The grip on the bat &amp; the batting stance</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Quick breakdown</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the bat in the fingers – this helps to maintain the wrist flexibility</li> <li>• Align the middle knuckles of the hands, which will put the wrists in a more efficient position to apply leverage</li> <li>• Batting Grip: hold the bat with the middle knuckles lined up, and the fingers and thumb curled around the bat</li> <li>• Batting stance: knees slightly bent, body bent forward slightly at the waist bringing the head closer to the strike zone, hands at the top of the strike zone</li> <li>• Stand slightly behind the tee so that when you strike the ball you are hitting it in front of your body.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Test</b>            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show correct grip. Simply have the athlete show you their grip in a batting stance</li> <li>2. Batting stance. Pick up bat and stand in the correct batting stance.</li> </ol>   |



## Fielding

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Catch Phrase(s)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gorilla or ready position</li><li>• Alligator catch</li><li>• Pinky's down</li><li>• Fingers to the sky</li></ul>   |
| <b>Quick breakdown</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Glove wide open, both hands to trap the ball.</li><li>• Stride foot slightly ahead of the other foot.</li><li>• Arms slightly extended in front of the body.</li><li>• Watch the ball into the glove.</li><li>• Knees bent and bottom low to the ground.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Test</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soft hands from knees. Kneeling with knees shoulder width apart, field a rolled ball and pull it into your belly button. Use the bare hand to cover the ball. Keep the head down</li><li>• Soft hands fielding. Standing in the ready position field a rolled ball and use soft hands to pull it into the belly button. Use the bare hand to cover the ball. Keep the head down</li></ul> |



## Catching

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Catch Phrase(s)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pinkie's down</li><li>• Fingers to the sky</li></ul>  |
| <b>Quick breakdown</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Glove wide open, both hands to trap the ball</li><li>• Stride foot slightly ahead of the other foot</li><li>• Arms relaxed and slightly extended in front of the body</li><li>• Watch the ball into the glove</li><li>• Catch ball on your throwing side if you can</li><li>• Weight slightly on the balls of the feet</li><li>• Balls above the waist, thumbs together</li><li>• Balls below the waist, little fingers together.</li></ul> |
| <b>Test</b>            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Below the waist (no glove). Make 10 catches of a ball tossed below your waist height. Catch with 2 hands, with little fingers together, pointing down</li><li>2. Above the waist (no glove) Make 10 catches of a ball tossed above your waist height. Catch with 2 hands, with your thumbs together, fingers pointing in the air.</li></ol>  |



## WARM UP: QUICK IDEAS

Warm ups don't have to consist of a boring run and class rooms like to mix it up (as do coaches). Over the next two pages are a couple of warm up or warm down ideas.

Further ideas can be found in the following resource;  
**Kiwi Sox: The FUNdamentals of T-Ball & Softball**



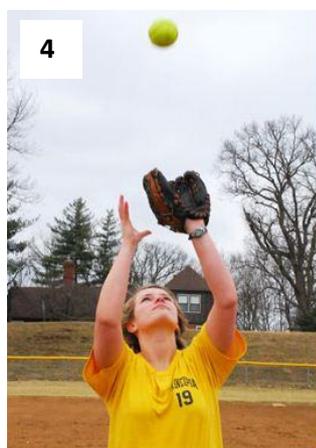
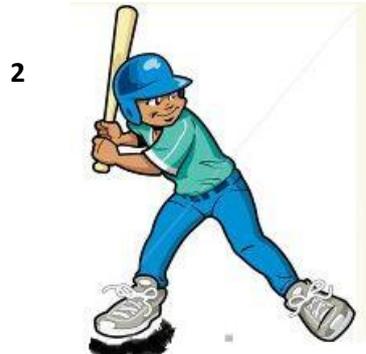
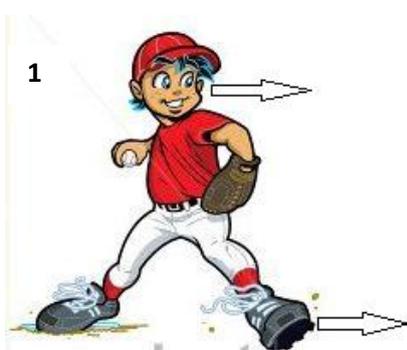
## Warm up/down: Position Hunt

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Benefits</b>  | <p>This is good to start or end with. It is about recognizing either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bases in T-Ball/Softball</li> <li>• Certain fielding positions.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Push Play</b> | <p>Simply call out a position i.e.” ‘where is third base” and have the entire group run to that position.<br/>By having the team try to find the position together you are helping with team work.</p>   |
| <b>Detail</b>    | <p>Positions (relating to diagram)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pitcher</li> <li>2. Catcher</li> <li>3. First Base</li> <li>4. Second Base</li> <li>5. Third Base</li> <li>6. Home Base</li> <li>7. Left Outfield</li> <li>8. Centre Outfield</li> <li>9. Right Outfield</li> </ol> |



## Warm up/down: Simon Says

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Benefits</b>   | This is a good exercise to start with. It is about recognising the body positions or movements we will use in T-Ball/Softball   |
| <b>The Set up</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a softball diamond using 4 bases. Don't make it too big</li> <li>• All participants to stand inside the diamond</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Push Play</b>  | Simply call out a body position or movement and players have to imitate it only if you say 'Simon says' I.e. Simon says 'gorilla position' If you stated the above sentence without the 'Simon says' and a player does the movement they have to run around the bases |
| <b>Detail</b>     | <p>Positions (relating to diagram)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nose, toes, throws</li> <li>2. Squash the bug</li> <li>3. Gorilla or ready position</li> <li>4. Fingers to the sky</li> <li>5. Alligator catch</li> <li>6. Chop the wood</li> </ol>  |



## SMALL SIDED ACTIVITIES: QUICK IDEAS

Small sided activities are what kids love and as they are fun, can have an element of competition, are on the move and allow kids to get involved more frequently (more touches of the ball or hitting opportunities)

Below are some ideas for small sided activities. They incorporate some or multiple aspects of core skills for softball such as hitting, fielding, throwing and catching and also incorporate decision making and spatial awareness

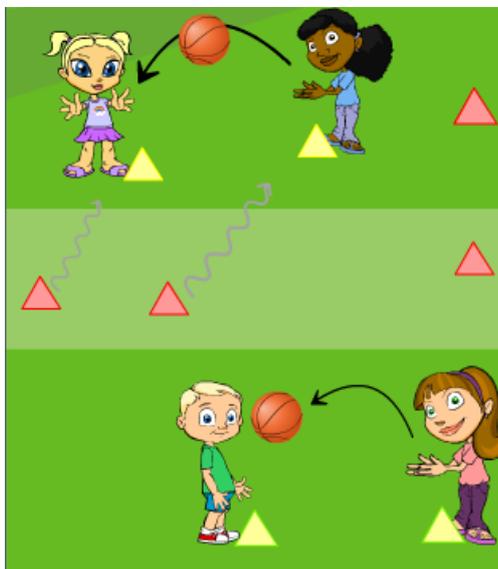
Further ideas for small sided activities can be found in the following resource;

**Kiwi Sox: The FUNdamentals of T-Ball & Softball**



## Activity: 60 Second passing challenge

**FUNDamental Skills**  
throwing, catching,  
spatial awareness,  
decision making



### The Set up

- Players need to get into pairs
- Set up cones/gates as per diagram. (Colour code the gates) and make sure there is at least 2 more gates set up than pairs. I.e.: if you have 10 pairs of students set up 12 gates)
- One ball between each pair of people
- You can alter the size of the ball depending on abilities.

### Push Play

- Each pair to start at a different gate. Each pair has to stand on one cone each throwing and catching the ball to each other
- Start with underarm throwing
- Before the pair can move onto the next gate they need to have caught and thrown the ball once each. A dropped ball doesn't count
- You can go to any gate next, as long as by the end of the task you have tried to get to every gate set out. You however can't go to a gate where another pair is
- This is a 60 second challenge to see how many different gates each pair can get to.

### Variation/progression

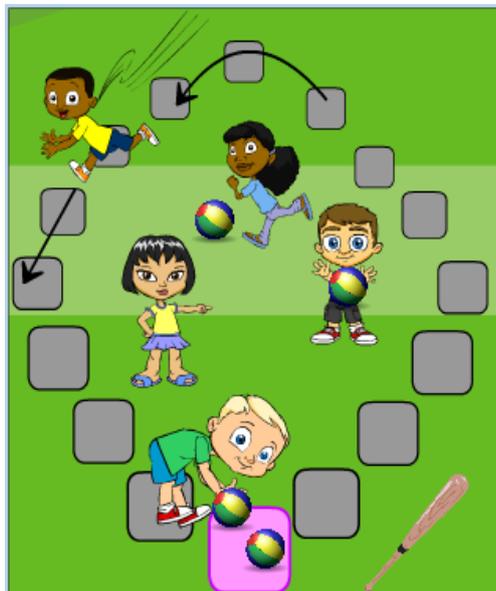
- Alter the distance between each pair of cones
- Vary the type of pass (bounce pass, over arm throw, under arm throw)
- Use a bucket or basket to help aid catching if require.

### Hey guys, what are you thinking?

- Name 3 skills you need to complete this activity.

## Activity: The base chase

**FUNDamental Skills**  
striking, fielding, change  
of direction



### The Set up

- Put class into groups of 5 or 6 players
- Create a very large diamond shape with 8 - 16 bases for each group  
i.e.: 5 groups = 5 diamonds
- Label one base your home base
- 1 x tee ball stand is to be stationed at home base
- Get 4 x larger balls that are soft and won't hurt anyone (i.e.: practice volley ball = pass guard ball)
- For each group, nominate a 1 x batter 1 x backstop (person to set the balls up on the tee) and the rest will start as fielders
- Have more than one game going at once.

### Push Play

- The back stop will set the balls up on the tee after each hit
- Batter to hit all four balls into the diamond area one at a time
- Once the 4th ball is hit – the aim of batter is to run around the diamond and see how many bases they can touch on their way round while fielders collect-Balls
- Batter to keep running around circuit until all 4 balls are back at home base
- A batters score is totalled by how many bases they touch until all balls are back at home base
- Fielders aim is to get all 4 balls back to “home base” to stop batter getting a high score
- Fielders cant move to collect-Balls until the 4th ball is hit
- Rotate the players around after each turn at hitting. (i.e. Backstop – batter – fielder – backstop).

**Hey guys, what are you thinking?**

- Name 3 skills you need for this drill
- How could you get the ball back to the home base quicker



