

# 6x WEEK OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE PROGRAMME



## WEEK 1

### Honouring the Game:

Page 2 - Messages from Rookie Sox Ambassadors

### Position Focus:

Page 4 - First Base

### Hitting Focus:

Page 12 - Hitting Fundamentals

### Base Running:

Page 18 - Running Angles

## INTRODUCTION & HONOURING THE GAME

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome the players</li><li>• Messages from our Rookie Sox Ambassadors Cole Evans and Lara Andrews.</li></ul>	
Coaches Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play the following videos from our Rookie Sox Ambassadors before the start of training on a tablet or ask the players to view the videos as homework.</li></ul>	
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 mins</li></ul>	00:00 – 00:05




[COLE EVANS - Rookie Sox Ambassador](#)




[LARA ANDREWS - Rookie Sox Ambassador](#)

## WARM UP – DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamic stretching means you are moving as you stretch and is important as it activates muscles during your workout, improves range of motion, improves body awareness and enhances muscular performance and power.</li> </ul>		
Coaches Notes:	<p> Example of dynamic warm up exercises Refer to the <b>“Coach Support Notes” page 4</b></p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lateral Shuffle</li> <li>High Knees</li> <li>Butt Kicks</li> <li>Trunk Rotation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forward Lunges</li> <li>Arm Circles</li> <li>Leg Swings</li> <li>Shuttles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stretch Shoulders &amp; Back</li> <li>Squats</li> <li>Add additional dynamic stretches if needed</li> </ul>
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 mins</li> </ul>	00:05 – 00:15	

## WARM UP – THROWING MECHANICS & LONG TOSS

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce the importance of using this time to develop and embed good throwing mechanics versus just throwing the ball around to warm up.</li> <li>As a coach utilising this time to check and address good throwing mechanics will save you time during the drills.</li> </ul>		
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to the <b>“Coach Support Notes” pages 7 – 10</b> for the detail relating to good throwing mechanics.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Grip</li> <li>Arm Action</li> <li>Underhand Toss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step/Stride</li> <li>Release / Wrist Action</li> <li>Overhand Toss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hip / Shoulder Rotation</li> <li>Follow Through / Glove Arm Movement</li> <li>Long Toss</li> </ul>
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 mins</li> </ul>	00:15 – 00:25	




# FIELDING DRILLS

FOCUS: FIRST BASE



## WATER BREAK & SET UP

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick water break</li> <li>• Setup stations and ensure those leading those stations are clear on what is happening.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:	<p> Split the team into 4 groups the ideal size is of groups is 4. For larger groups you may need to allocate more time for this drill.</p>	
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 mins</li> </ul>	00:25 – 00:30

### STATION 1: FIELD AWARENESS

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whiteboard and diamond positions.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

### STATION 2: COVERAGE RESPONSIBILITIES

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diamond, balls.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

### STATION 3: RECEIVING THE THROW

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balls and bases.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

### STATION 4: FIELDING THE BUNT

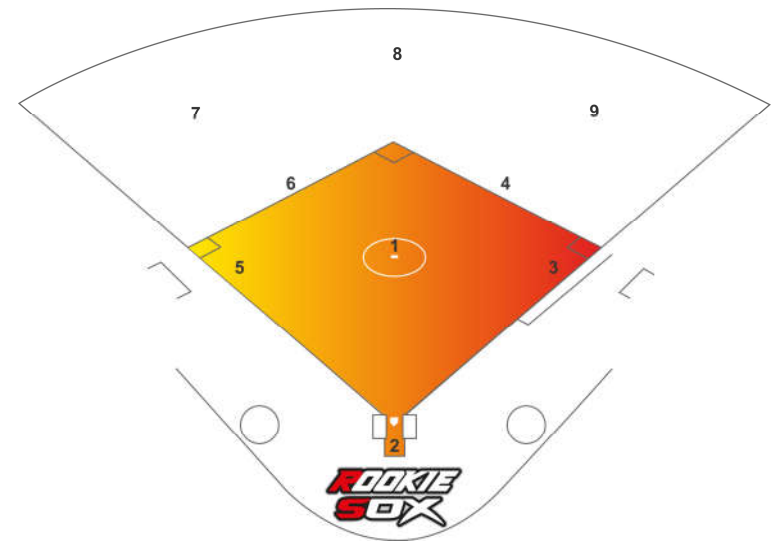
Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balls and bases.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

## STATION 1: FIELD AWARENESS (6 mins)

Role of the First Baseman:	The First Baseman will stand slightly in front of the first base and to the left of the foul line. The first baseman is responsible for bunts, receiving throws at first base from infielders, fielding balls hit down the first base line as well as foul balls, cut off plays from the outfield, and pick offs at first base.
Physical Qualities of a First Baseman:	Quick reactions and ideally tall to allow a greater range of receiving the ball. The left-handed first baseman's glove is on his right hand and that puts them closer to the fielders when a ball is thrown. It also allows a better angle when it comes to stretching for the ball and picking up errant throws in the dirt. When an opponent bunts, the left-handed first baseman can pick up the ball and step directly toward second or third base to make a throw. Right-handed first basemen must spin around to make those throws.

The diagram to the right highlights the general location for each position on the softball field. However, each position requires movement and strategy prior to the pitch depending on the given game situation.

It is important to touch on “what if scenarios”. Using the game situations outlined below discuss with your players where “First Base” might position themselves.



## DRILL:

### Objective:

To develop greater awareness of set up for different game situations at first base.

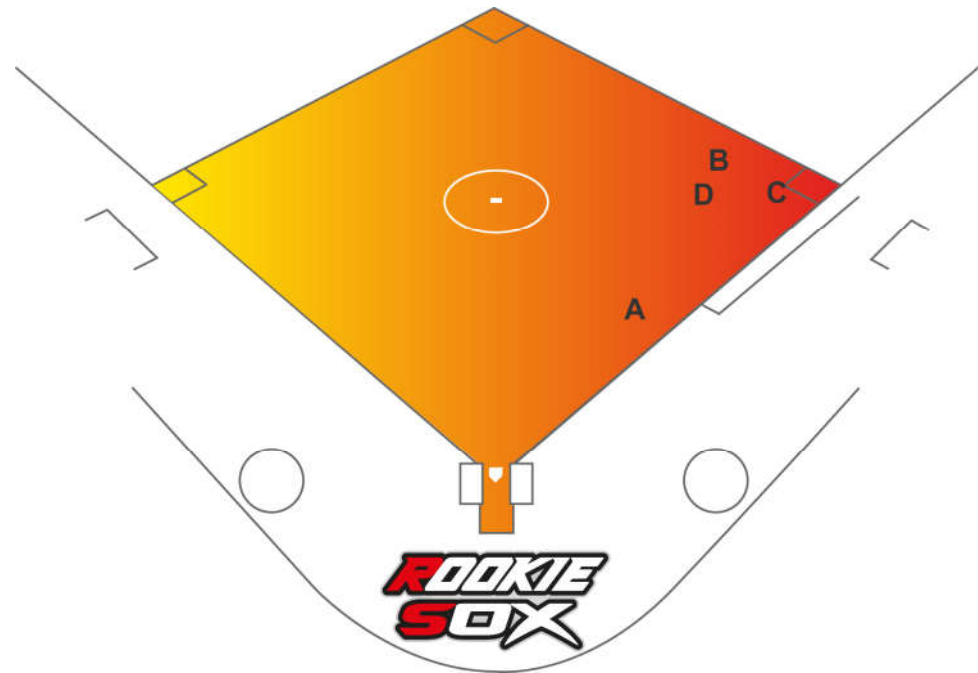
### Task:

In groups of 3-4 ask the following questions allowing them to reply and demonstrate where they would position themselves and why.

- A. What if... there is a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base with none out (bunt situation)? Where might you position yourself?  
**Answer:** First baseman would move themselves 2-3 metres from home plate to anticipate the bunt. If a bunt is put down the first baseman will ultimately field the ball and throw to the short stop waiting at 2<sup>nd</sup> base to get the runner advancing from 1<sup>st</sup> base out. If throwing to 2<sup>nd</sup> base is not an option, then a throw to 1<sup>st</sup> base is the next best play.
- B. What if... the hitter is a right handed and pulling the ball early? Where might you position yourself? Pulling the ball means the hitter is hitting the ball early, the ball is likely to be hit more towards one side of the diamond of the other i.e. Right handed hitter towards 3<sup>rd</sup> base and Left handed hitter towards 1<sup>st</sup> base.  
**Answer:** First baseman would stand more inside the field of the play, how far depends on how likely the hitter is to pulling the ball towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the diamond. NB: All other fielders would move towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side too.
- C. What if... the hitter is a left handed and pulling the ball early? Where might you position yourself?  
**Answer:** First baseman would stand closer to 1<sup>st</sup> base to ensure they can field a ball hit down the 1<sup>st</sup> base line. NB: All other fielders would move towards the 1<sup>st</sup> base side too.

- D. What if... there is a hit to the outfield and the runner is going to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Where might you position yourself?

**Answer:** If first baseman is not making a play they need to stay clear of the base path and the runner. If the runner touches the first baseman (who does not have the ball) it will be an obstruction and the runner will receive another. First baseman should stand inside the diamond.



## STATION 2: COVERAGE RESPONSIBILITIES (6 mins)

Play the Ball, or  
Cover the Base:

There are four infielders, the game is played with one ball and three bases. The rule for infielders is 'Play the Ball or Cover the Base'. Each infielder has only two responsibilities:

1. Ball or
2. Base.

The formula for infield base coverage: 4-1=3; the three infielders that aren't playing the ball cover a base.

The First and Third Baseman have one base they are responsible for; the Short Stop and Second Baseman have two bases they are responsible for; one to their Left and to their Right. These two players, positioned in the middle of the field, follow this simple rule: if the ball is hit to your Left and you aren't playing the ball, sprint to the base on your Left; if the ball is in the middle to your Right and you aren't playing the ball, sprint to the base on your Right.

The rule for the players in the middle of the field is "always move towards the ball".

### DRILL:

#### Objective:

To help players understand their two responsibilities as an infielder.

#### Task 1:

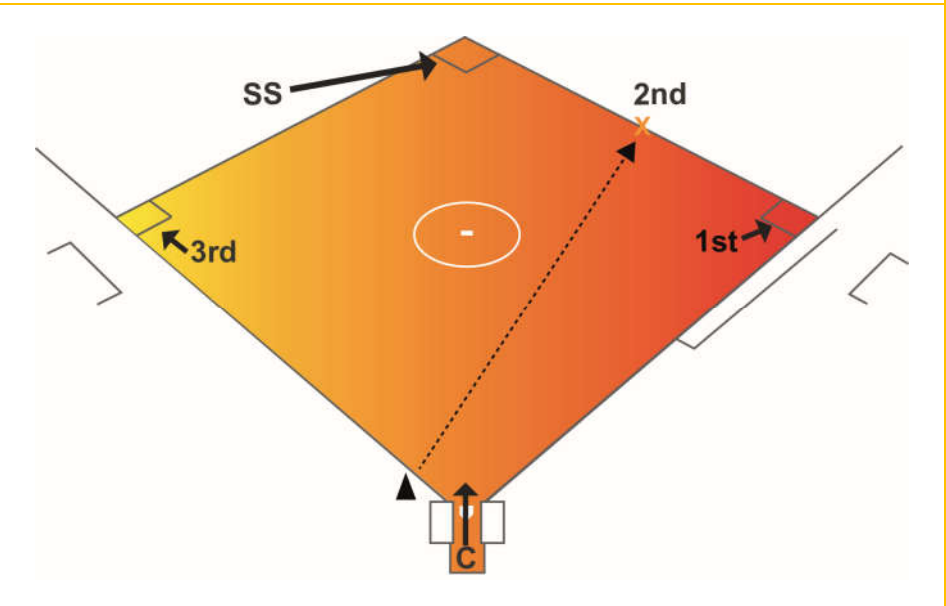
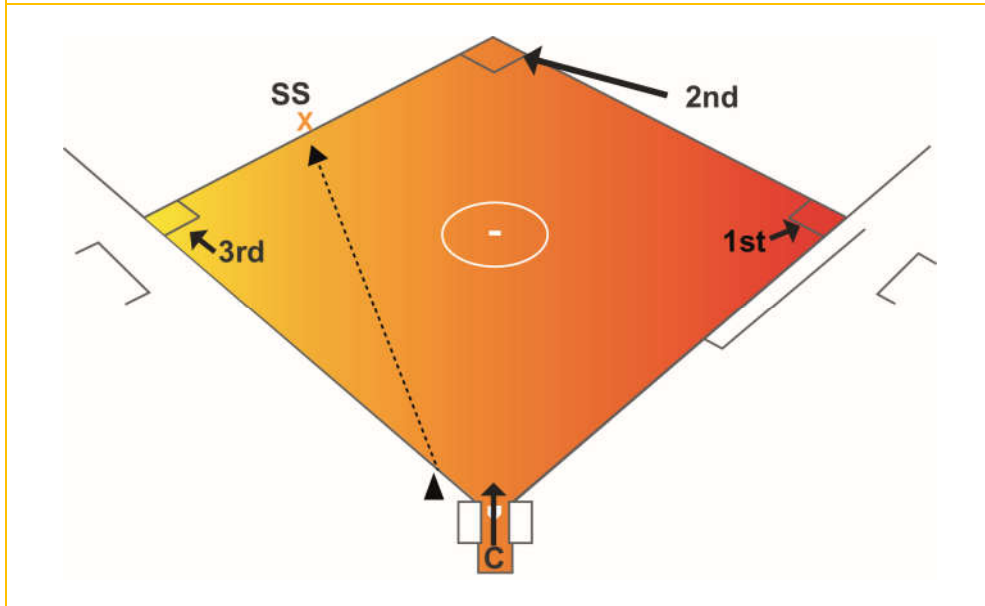
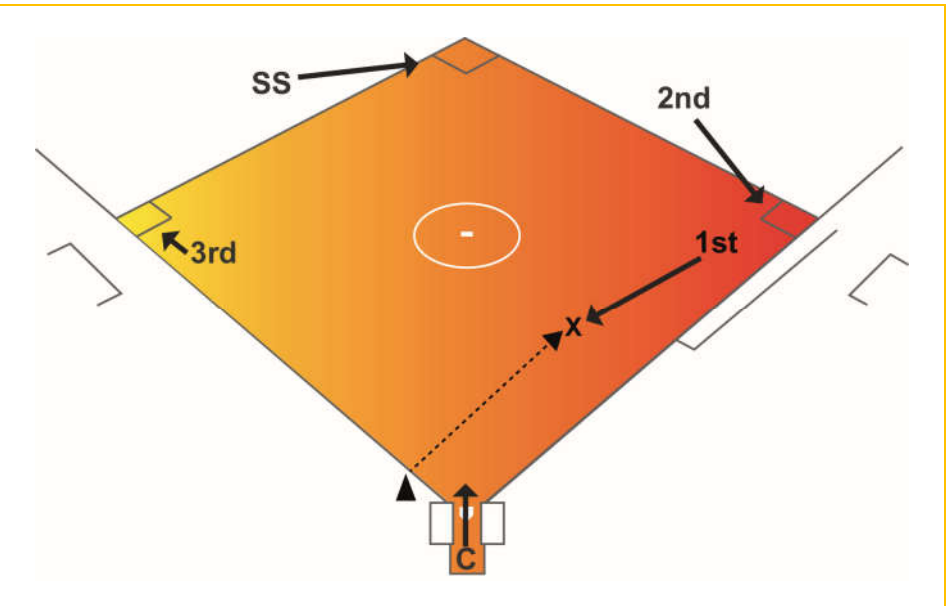
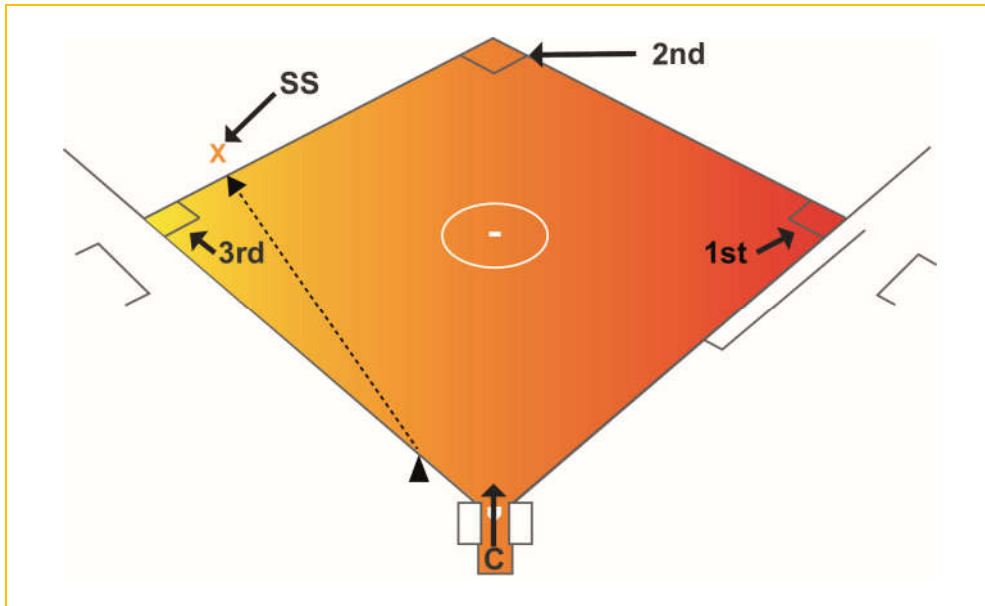
1. The coach rolls a ball to one of the four infielders (no pitcher required)
2. When rolling a ball to an infielder, the coach calls out "ground ball to (position)"
3. The player fielding the ball does not throw the ball after fielding it
4. The three infielders not fielding the ball move quickly to their base, then turn and face the ball in a 'Ready position'
5. The players return to their positions and the coach rolls the ball to another fielder
6. Be sure to rotate the players in different positions.

#### Task 2:

Once the players have demonstrated they clearly understand their movement responsibilities, modify the drill by having the catcher call out which base they can throw the ball to. If the ball goes to second, the infielders can 'turn a double play' and if the ball goes to a corner (1st or 3rd base) they can throw the ball around the bases and back in to the catcher.

NB: When delivering the ball to the first baseman or third baseman, only roll the ball about one third of the way toward the base. This forces the player to move far away from their base making it clear to the other infielders that is not covered. When working on movement responsibilities this clear visual of an uncovered base helps the players recognise where they are needed.





## STATION 3: RECEIVING THE THROW (6 mins)

First Base, “the receiver”

First baseman needs to be able to catch every throw, good throws and bad throws. A first basemen should always expect and be prepared for a bad throw. Own your spot! Jump and stretch for loose throws.

### DRILL:

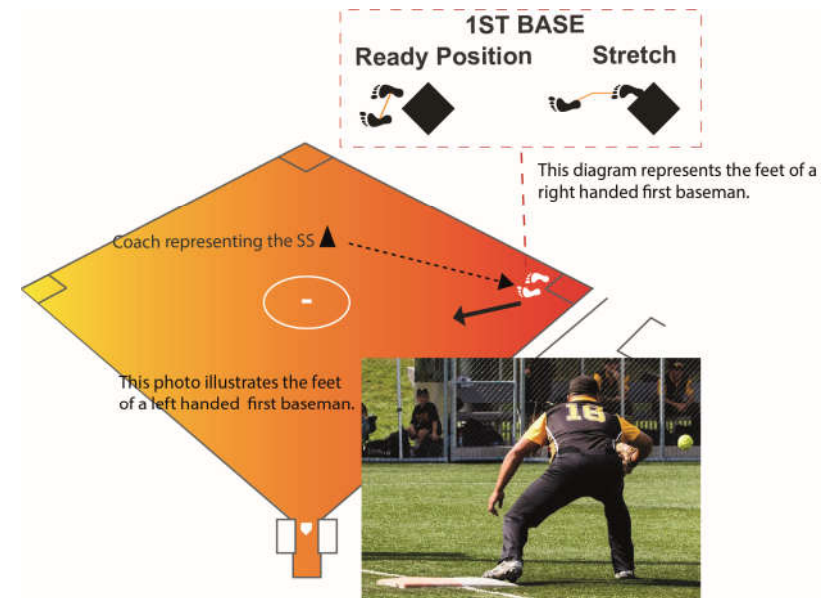
#### Objective:

To improve the footwork of the First Baseman.

#### Task:

1. Get to the base as quickly as possible – “cover the base with your eyes” (Player does not look for the ball until they get all the way round to the base. If they look to the ball before getting to the base, start the drill over.)  
**Rationale:** In almost all instances the first baseman has time to ‘look’ for 1<sup>st</sup> base while the ball is in play, this allows them to set their feet and prepare to receive the throw. If the First baseman keeps their eyes on the ball while attempting to locate the base with their feet it will prove a difficult task and often result in the runner getting lost and unable to make the play.
2. Get in a “ready position” with feet squared up (or pointed) to the thrower. Important: the throwing hands foot’s heel is positioned at the centre of the base a few inches from the bag (not touching.).
3. “See the ball before making a stretch” to catch. (In the first phase of this drill, where the player is learning the timing of moving their feet from a “ready position” to the stretch position, we want to make accurate throws to the first baseman (and slow throws).
4. After the first baseman sees an accurate throw coming, they slide their throwing hand foot against the edge of the bag, then step with the glove-hand foot towards the point where the catch will be made. After the player becomes familiar with this action they may be able to progress to moving both feet simultaneously. This involves a slight jump – just a couple of inches.

5. Over time we want the first baseman to “beat the ball to the spot”. This means getting their glove to where the ball is going to be caught before it arrives.
6. After making the catch the first baseman, in a “power position”, shuffle a couple of steps toward the middle of the infield, to “look for other runners”.



## STATION 4: FIELDING THE BUNT (6 mins)

### DRILL:

#### Objective:

To react and play the bunt.

#### Task:

Players assume their on-field positions as first and second base.

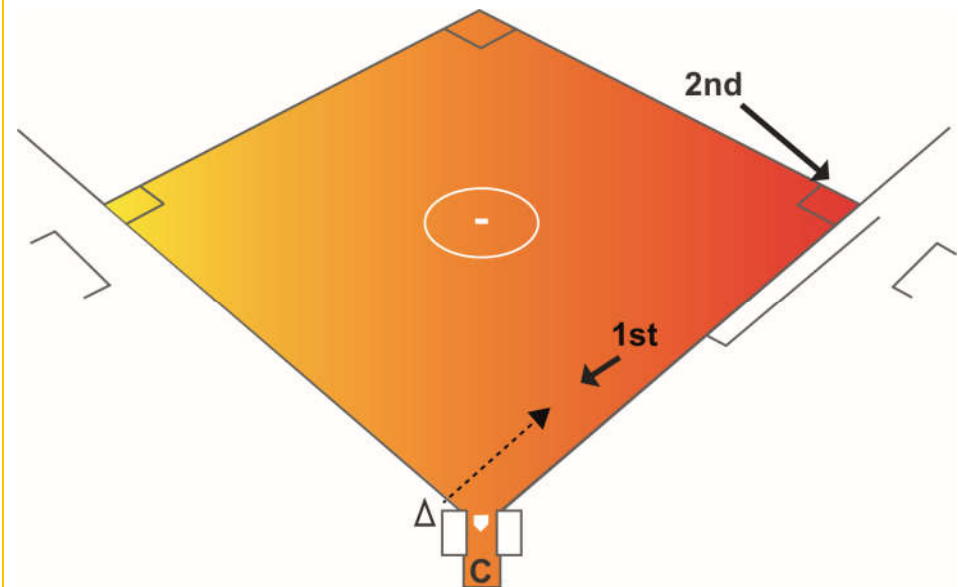
A coach standing at home plate simulates a bunt by rolling a ball (or placing several balls in the first base player's area of responsibility).

The First Baseman can do one of two things to finish the play after a bunt, both depending upon the runner and situation:

1. If the runner is slow and the bunt is only an attempt to advance a runner: Field the ball, secure it with two hands, and tag the runner on the base path. OR
2. Field the ball, stay low, plant the throwing-side foot next to the ball while bending down and picking up the ball with the bare hand (if the ball is stationary or with the glove hand (if the ball is moving). Finish the play with a throw to 1<sup>st</sup> base where the Second Baseman will be covering.

#### Advanced Variations:

- Add a base runner at home plate who will run to first base.
- Play a live situation with a batter at home plate and a catcher in full equipment.






# HITTING DRILLS

FOCUS: HITTING FUNDAMENTALS

## WATER BREAK & SET UP

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick water break</li> <li>• Setup stations and ensure those leading those stations are clear on what is happening.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to page 18 of the <b>“Coach Support Notes”</b> for an overview of fundamental hitting mechanics.</p>	
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 mins</li> </ul>	01:00 – 01:04

### STATION 1: SET UP & SWING

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All players should have a bat.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

### STATION 2: LEVEL SWING

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 x tees, bats</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

### STATION 3: UP THE MIDDLE

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bucket of balls, bat, 2 x cones, home plate, tees</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

### STATION 4: BOUNCE TOSS

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backstop or screen, bat, Tennis Balls</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

### STATION 5: BAG DRILL

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backstop or screen, bat, tennis Balls</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40



Hitting Drills  
“Quality”

Hitting drills should be used by all youth softball players frequently in order to develop a consistently good swing. The purpose of hitting drills is to give quality repetition to the hitter so they can work on their swing. Quality repetition comes from the coach that “feeds” the ball to the hitter in the strike zone on a consistent basis.

During the drill, a hitter can hit a high quantity of balls with a quality swing. If the hitter gets tired, they should take a break because getting tired will only teach bad habits which will lead to a poor quality and erratic swing. Recommended having two players working together so they can give each other breaks.

Typically, the hitter will be focusing on one or two things during the drill. By focusing on a just a couple swing elements, the drill becomes simple and focused, very important when developing muscle memory and a good swing.

## **STATION 1: SET UP & SWING** (7 mins)

### **DRILL:**

**Objective:**

To cover the fundamentals of good hitting mechanics.

**Task:**

Work through the fundamentals of the set up and swing. Hitters to take dry swings as the coach covers off these key mechanics.

## STATION 2: LEVEL SWING (7 mins)

### DRILL:

#### Objective:

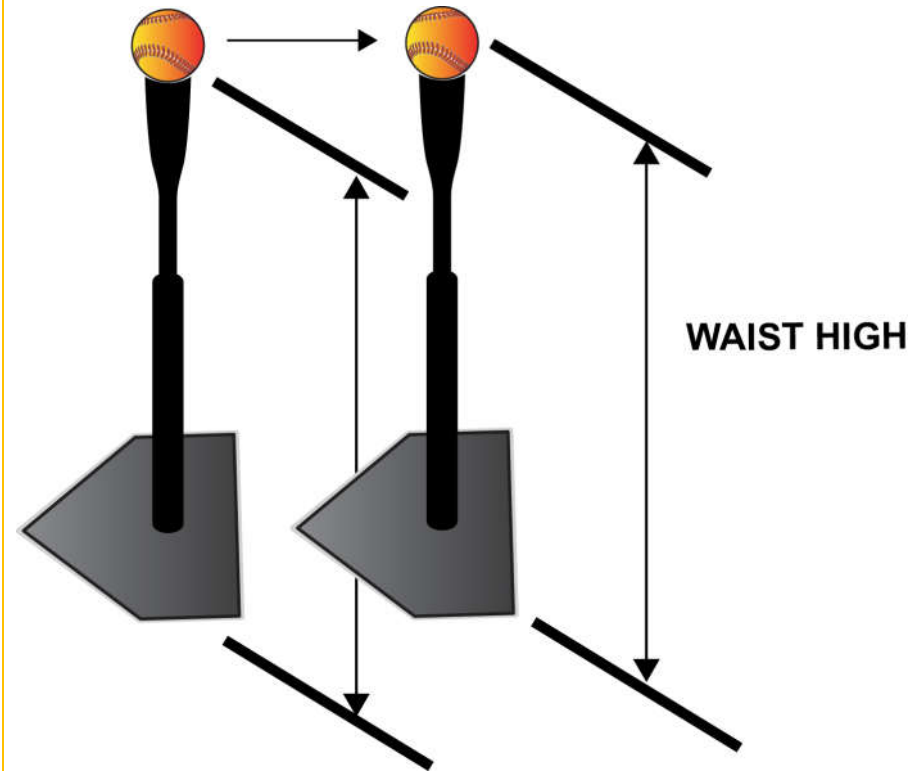
To practice hitting the ball with a level swing.

#### Task:

A batter sets up in their batting stance facing the backstop or screen, next to two batting tees, set up at the same height (around waist high). A coach will place a ball on each tee and steps a safe distance away.

On the batter's cue the batter strides with proper backside rotation, executes the ball on the back tee into the backstop or screen.

A level swing will make the first ball hit the second ball off the front tee into the backstop or screen. Reaching for the ball or upper cutting will result in the first ball not hitting the second.



### STATION 3: UP THE MIDDLE (7 mins)

#### DRILL:

##### Objective:

To drive the ball with solid contact through the middle of the field.

##### Task:

Use a bucket of balls, a home plate and a tee. The hitter will set up over the plate in their normal stance.

Take 5-10 swings with the ball in the middle of the plate, practice hitting to centre field. Use two cones as a target, bring the cones closer together to make the drill more of a challenge.

### STATION 4: BOUNCE TOSS (7 mins)

#### DRILL:

##### Objective:

To practice hitting low pitches with proper timing.

##### Task:

A batter sets up facing the backstop or screen.

A coach sits on a stand several feet to the side (in front) and 1.5m away bounces a tennis ball so that it enters the strike zone in front of the batter.

The batter loads prior to striding when the ball bounces on the ground, not before. The hitter strides with proper hip rotation, swings and hits the ball as it comes off the ground and into the strike zone.

The coach should bounce the tennis ball high and low. Note that it may take some time to get the timing right and an accurate bounce.



## STATION 5: BAG DRILL (7 mins)

### DRILL:

#### Objective:

To develop good mechanics on contact with the ball.

#### Task:

Take a large punching bag and position it at a height that approximates the strike zone for the hitter. Secure it against a fence or a pole with duct tape, velcro straps or rope. If a punching bag is not accessible use a basketball on a solid hitting tee.

The hitter should set up in their normal stance facing the punching bag. The hitter will go through their normal swing sequence (relax - ready position - stride - swing) and make contact by swinging the bat into the punching bag.

Practice hitting the middle pitch by setting up with the front foot lined up with the middle of the bag.

Also practice hitting high and low pitches by adjusting the hands to the pitch location. Take 5-10 swings for each type of pitch they are working on.

On contact, the bottom hand should be palm down while the top hand is palm down (position of strength).





# BASE RUNNING

FOCUS: RUNNING ANGLES



## STATION 1: RUNNING ANGLES (10 mins)

### DRILL:

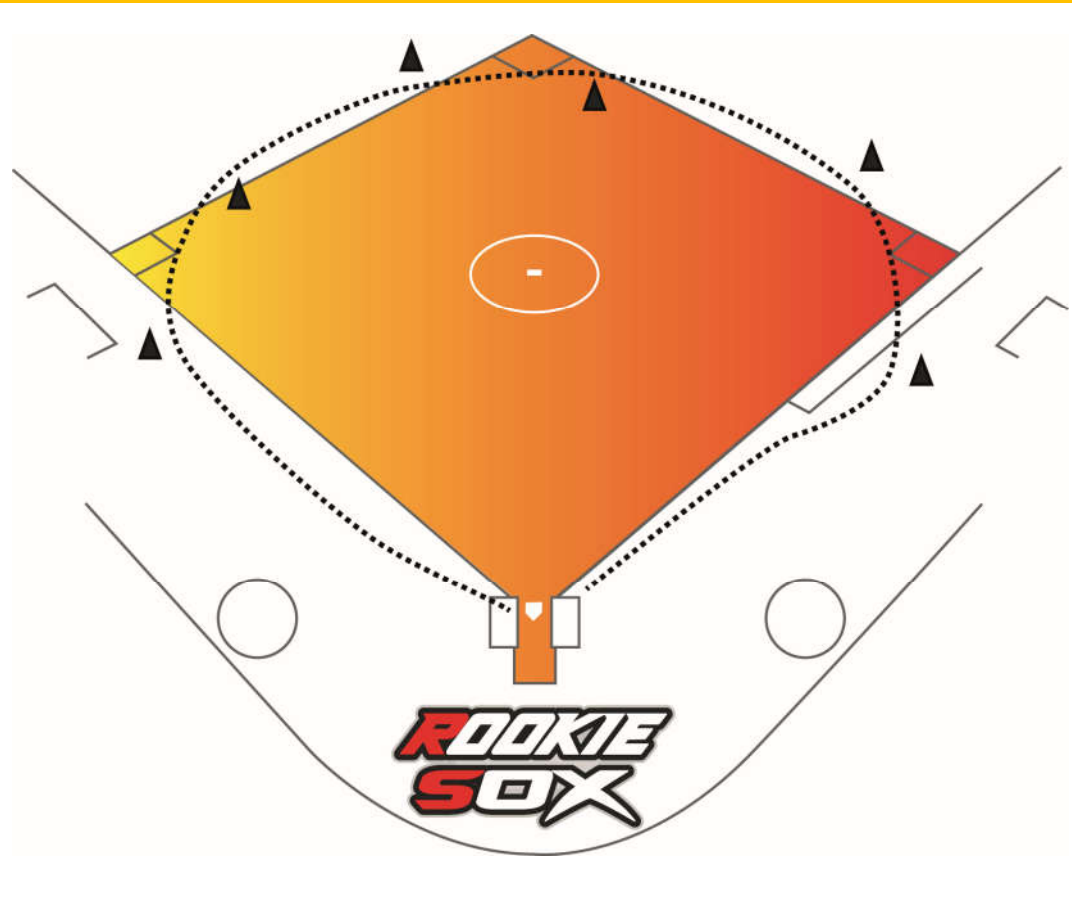
#### Objective:

To learn how to run the shortest possible distance between bases.


#### Task:

This is achieved through practice of the following technique:

- Run just outside of an imaginary line between the two bases.
- Loop 1-2 metres outside the base line on approach to the base.
- Lean inward as much as possible when making the turn.
- Touch the inside corner of the base.
- Not breaking stride is more important than touching with a specific foot.
- Look for the ball and be alert to signals from the base coach.
- Be ready to advance to the next base.



## WARM DOWN

Cool Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooling down after a workout is as important as warming up. After physical activity, your heart is still beating faster than normal, your body temperature is higher, and your blood vessels are dilated. This means if you stop too fast, you could pass out or feel sick. A cool-down after physical activity allows a gradual decrease at the end of the episode. It's good to stretch when you're cooling down because your limbs, muscles and joints are still warm. Stretching can help reduce the build-up of lactic acid, which can lead to muscles cramping and stiffness.</li> </ul>	
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to the <b>“Coach Support Notes”</b> page 27 for the detail relating to warm down</p>	
	<p><b>Stretching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold each stretch 10 to 30 seconds. If you feel you need more, stretch the other side and return for another set of stretching</li> <li>The stretch should be strong, but not painful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not bounce.</li> <li>Breathe while you're stretching. Exhale as you stretch, inhale while holding the stretch</li> </ul>
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 mins</li> </ul>	1:50 – 2:00

## REVIEW OF WEEK 1:

How successful was Week 1? Areas to consider; your delivery, preparation, feedback from players and coaches.

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What areas would you change to ensure future sessions are a greater success?

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