

TGSL Offensive Drills

Drop Drill Hitting

Purpose: To increase bat speed.

Procedure: The hitter takes his/her normal batting stance facing a fence or net that is about 6-8 feet away. The coach stands about 1-1/2 steps in front of the hitter so that the ball will drop directly in the contact zone out in front of the hitter. The coach simply drops the ball in the contact zone; the hitter must see the ball and hit it before it hits the ground with a level swing and proper stride. Begin dropping the ball from over the head and slowly begins dropping the ball from lower heights.

Beginning Slide Drill

Purpose: Great sliding drill for teaching beginners how to slide.

Procedure: Line up your players in a single line, space arm length apart. Talk to them about the cadence of the slide. Left, right, left, sit. Then have the player's start walking left leg first, right leg, left leg and then have them fall to their butts with the right leg extended and the left leg folded underneath in a figure four. Once the players get better then begin having them slowly run the three steps, left, right, left, sit.

Fence Drill

Purpose: Helps develop quicker bat swing by not extending.

Procedure: Setup your players against a solid surface, such as a chain link fence, that is at least six feet tall. A backstop, concrete wall, or brick wall will work, but a freestanding net will not. Position your players with their feet in a parallel stance a foot to a foot and a half away from the fence or wall. To check for proper distance have the player reach out with their back arm and touch the fence. If they are in the correct position, their arm will be slightly bent. The object of the drill is to take as normal a cut as possible without making contact with the fence. It is important to go through the drill as slowly as possible the first few times. Have the players take a slow motion cut the first few times. The player should take a stride parallel to the fence.

Hip Rotation Drill

Purpose: Helps the development of quicker hips and the relationship of hip speed to the entire swing.

Procedure: Place a bat behind the waist, horizontal to the ground, and use a glove as home plate. While holding the ends of the bat in the hands assume a normal batting stance and watch an imaginary pitch being delivered. Execute a stride and quick turn using the bat to help turn the hips faster. Finish in the proper contact position.

In The Dirt Drill

Purpose: To help base runners learn to read the trajectory of a pitched ball.

Procedure: Set players up at all three bases. They are independent of each other because each base has different rules for a ball in the dirt. A coach pitches from the mound and mixes in good and bad pitches to the catcher. Any time a ball is about to bounce the whole team yells "Dirt". This helps you make sure everyone is paying attention. Base runners on first should automatically go when the ball is in the dirt. Runners on second should react to the ball in the dirt by getting a good lead and deciding if they can make it safely to third. If the ball gets away from the catcher they should go, if the catcher digs the ball out of the dirt, they should return to second. Runners at third should follow the same principles as the runner at second, get a good lead, and then react to whether the catcher digs the ball out of the dirt or not.

Lead and Follow Drill

Purpose: The lead hand swing allows a hitter to establish proper timing and power with the lead side of the body, giving the hitter proper contact with the ball. The follow hand swing establishes the feeling of throwing the bat at the ball.

Procedure: Setup a tee for hitting (soft-toss can also be used). When executing swings, the lead hand, you should concentrate on keeping the hand above the plane of the ball. If the lead hand drops under, a pop up, strike out or fly out will usually occur. The hitter must also turn the hips quickly for proper timing and power. The lead elbow should not extend fully before contact with the ball, since that will slow down the bat swing.

Quick Hit Drill

Purpose: Helps to increase the strength and quickness of the hands for hitting. Great drill for getting a lot of cuts in.

Procedure: The hitter stands 12-15 feet from a screen or fence. The tosser kneels on one knee, 12 feet in front and to the side of the hitter and tosses the ball underhanded at a fast rate into the hitter's strike zone, so the hitter can take a full swing. The hitter swings hard at the ball, after each swing, the bat is rapidly returned to the ready position.

Rocking Drill

Purpose: Helps players develop an inward turn for more hitting power.

Procedure: Breakdown your players stance and inward turn, into a four step process. Position the hitters in their stance and have them begin rocking back and forth between the catcher and the pitcher, lifting each heel off the ground in a rhythm. The four steps are rock towards the pitcher, rock towards the catcher, rock towards the pitcher, rock towards the catcher. The motion is not exaggerated but very slight. As the players rock back and forth call out 1, 2, 3, 4 to help develop a rhythm.

Stride Drill

Purpose: Helps the player learn to automatically step to the ball, instead of stepping out of the box while hitting. After enough practice this will become a natural instinct.

Procedure: Have a coach lay face down (with a batters helmet on) and hold both ankles of the batter. The coach will control the batter's step and prevent the batter from stepping out of the box/ This will be uncomfortable for the batter, but a few reps every practice for awhile will payoff for those players who tend to bail out of the box.

Wrist Roll Drill

Purpose: To enhance bat speed and control by facilitating the maximum efficiency in "throwing" the bat at the ball.

Procedure: Players place themselves in the contact position, and then roll the bat forwards and backwards causing the bat to touch each shoulder as it completes a full arc. Players should only use their wrists and forearms to rotate the bat. You should be able to do about 60-80 wrist-rollers in 1 minute.

Watch the Ball through Drill

Purpose: Teach players to watch the ball through as base runners, before taking the next base.

Procedure: Line up a player at first base, shortstop, second base and in shallow left, center and right fields. Line-up remaining players in foul territory at first base. Start off the drill with a runner on first base. The coach hits to one of the fielders. If it's a fly ball to left field the runner at first should go half way between first and second and watch the ball to see if the fielder catches it. If the fielder catches it, then the runner should return to first. If the fielder misses it then the runner needs to continue to second base. Have the fielders' play the ball live. Continue the drill with different base running situations and hitting to different areas of the field.

Top Hand/Bottom Hand Drill

Purpose: Works on releasing the hands to the ball.

Procedure: The top hand is the "power hand" in the swing. It starts out on top, trails the bat and lower hand as the hands go to the ball and eventually becomes the lower hand.

Take a light bat and hold it with the top hand only in the proper hitting position. Place your other hand across your chest. Take your bat directly down to the ball on the T without rolling over your wrist. Keeping your fingers visible, flip your wrist slightly to bring the barrel of the bat down at the point of impact.

The bottom hand is sometime referred to as the guide hand or action hand. It leads the way and provides the action in your swing.

Take a light bat and hold it with your bottom hand only in the proper hitting position. Take the knob of the bat directly to the ball on the T; You should be looking at your thumb knuckle. To complete the motion, simply roll the wrist and forearm and continue the follow through up and over the shoulder.

Coaching Philosophy

Many people believe that the only qualification needed to coach is to have played the sport. It's helpful to have played, but there is much more to coaching successfully. Believe me the first time I stepped in front of a group of 6 year olds, it didn't make any difference to them if I had played the game before or not. Even if you haven't played the game before, you can still learn to coach successfully by following this basic IDEA:

I - Introduce the skill

D - Demonstrate the skill

E - Explain the skill

A - Attend to players practicing the skill

Introduce the skill

Players, especially young and inexperienced ones, need to know what skill they are learning and why they are learning it. Therefore, you need to take certain things into consideration when introducing a new skill.

Get your players' attention

Speak a little above your normal volume, be enthusiastic, and show them you are interested in them by looking them in the eye. Young players will see right through you if you are not sincere.

Name the skill

Give the skill a name and stick with it. This will help reduce confusion and enhance communication among your players. In addition during game time it will be easier to refer to a skill that they have learned.

Explain the importance of the skill

It may be obvious to you why the skill is important; to your players however it may not be as clear. Offer them a reason for learning the skill and describe how the skill relates to the game they are learning to play.

Demonstrate the skill

The demonstration step is the most important part of teaching sport skills to young players who have never had the opportunity to play a sport. They need a picture to go along with the words. You as a coach will also find that you think of better ways to visually explain the skill as you are performing it.

If you are unable to perform the skill correctly, have an assistant coach (parent) or an older brother or sister perform the demonstration. Make sure that you demonstrate the skill several times; slowing down the action so players can see every movement.

Explain the skill

Players learn more effectively when they're given a brief explanation of the skill along with the demonstration. Use simple terms and, if possible, relate the skill to a previous skill that was taught. After explaining the skill, ask your players to repeat your explanation. Ask questions like "What do we do first?" "Then what"? Look for confusion and uncertainty and repeat your explanation of the points that caused the confusion.

Remember, young players have a short attention span, a long explanation or demonstration will bore them. So don't spend more than a few minutes combined on the introduction, demonstration and explanation of the skill. Don't worry if the players don't seem to get it the first few times you try the skill. After a few weeks you will be amazed at how much better they have gotten as long as you continually re-enforce the skill.

Attend to players practicing the skill

After introducing, demonstrating and explaining the skill your players should be ready to attempt it. Some players will be better than others. Some won't need much guidance from you at all, while others will need to be physically guided through the movement during the first few attempts. Helping these athletes through the skill will help them gain confidence to perform the skill on their own. Make sure you offer plenty of positive, corrective feedback.