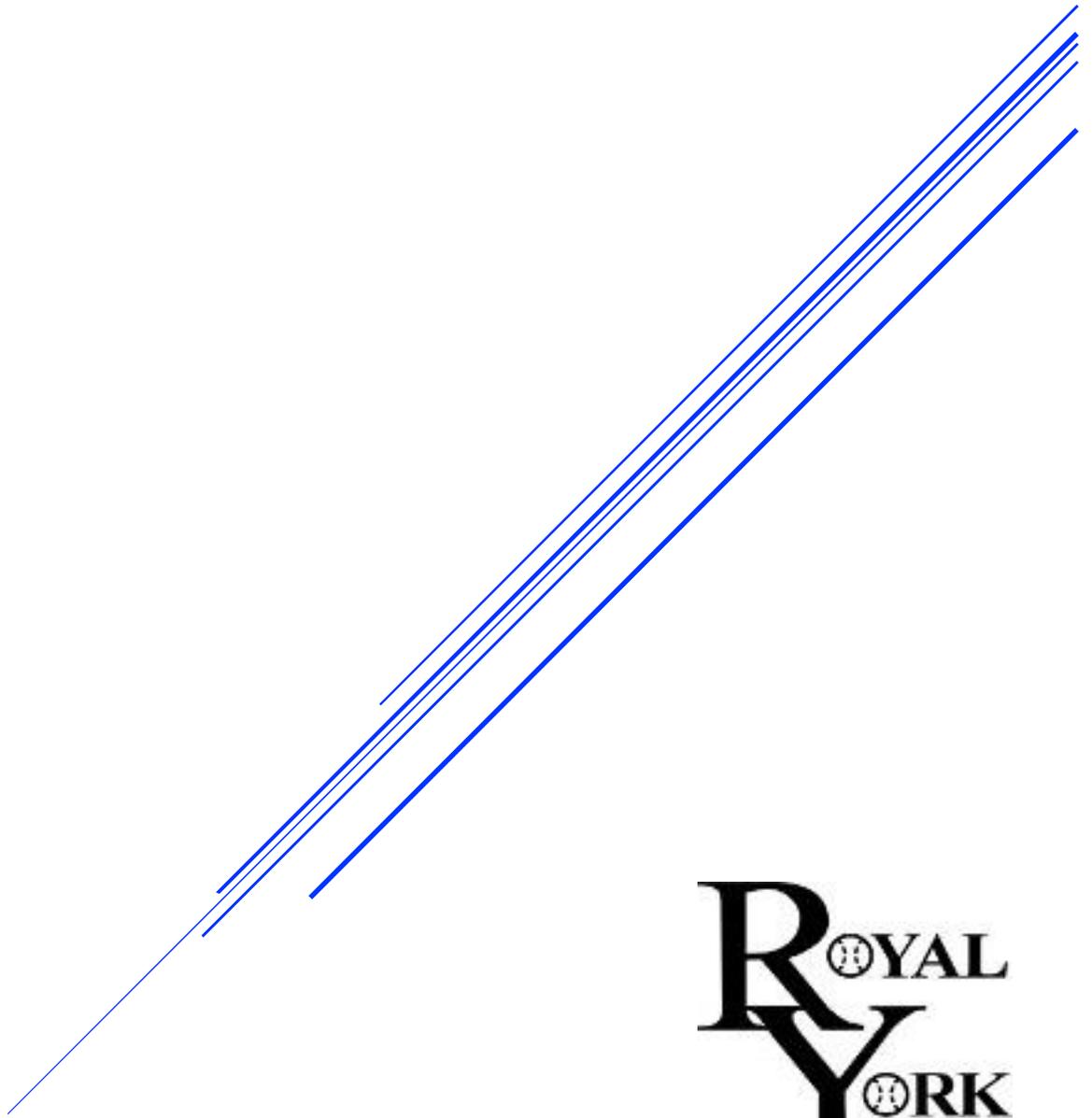


RYBL GIRLS BASEBALL QUICK REFERENCE SKILL GUIDE: 5U – 17U



ROYAL
YORK
BASEBALL

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INTRO

Welcome to RYBL

Royal York Baseball League (RYBL) is the longest running baseball league in Ontario offering divisions of **fully dedicated girls only baseball**. RYBL is committed to improving and expanding the quality of baseball programming for our girls. This document is freely available for coaches and parents alike to find fun and helpful information with the sole intention to improve skills in our female players. The strength of our league lies in the hard work and effort of our many volunteers that have and continue to give their time and energy to this sport for the benefit of our baseball community. By giving coaches the right instruction and opportunity to ensure that all players learn the same fundamental skills, we will have a more consistent baseline in player development. Better skill development builds better confidence; this transcends into stronger games, all the while increasing the likelihood that our girls will remain engaged and active in sport. Our young women deserve the best opportunities that this sport can offer! Not only do we want more girls playing baseball, we want more girls playing better baseball and developing a love for the game.

Program Goals

- Offer a program where girls can develop their baseball skills in a positive, and safe environment!
- Build confidence & self-esteem
- Create a fun atmosphere
- Foster a sense of belonging
- Create opportunities to build friendships
- Enable character building alongside athletic development
- Offer opportunities for female athletes to connect with one another
- Create a sense of community among sport-minded girls

Girls in Sport

Girls engage in sport differently from boys. Girls often need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in order to see more effort and better performance¹ There is a measure of truth to the popular 80's song, "Girls just wanna have fun". The number one reason that girls drop out of sport is because they are not having fun. To have fun, all girls need to be engaged and feel as though they are contributing members of the team.

Why is it so important to have girls only programming?

- Only 26% of girls aged 5-17 are getting enough physical exercise to benefit their health²
- Regular physical activity among children and youth is related to improvements in cholesterol levels, blood pressure, body composition, bone density, physical fitness, academic achievement and aspects of mental health including self-esteem.³

¹ Engaging Girls in Sport, Canadian Tire Jumpstart

² Canadian physical activity guide

³ [Statistics Canada](#) (April 2019)

- 1 in 4 girls are not committed to return to sport post COVID-19⁴
- Sport participation levels for Canadian girls is much lower than boys
- Among the girls who have participated in sport, 1 in 3 girls leave sport by late adolescence, compared to boys which is 1 in 10⁴
- As many as 62% of girls are not playing any sport by late adolescence⁴
- There are 4 major differences between girls who are involved in sports compared to their non-sport peer: higher levels of confidence, higher GPAs, over-all less sadness and depression and lower use of social media⁵
- If a girl hasn't participated in sport by the age of 10, there is only a 10% chance that she will be physically active as an adult⁴
- Girls who play sport are 11 percent more likely to say they're "happy the way they are"⁵

Promoting Fun

1. Good Team Dynamics: celebrate successes big and small, establish routines like pre game team cheers, encourage interaction between different players to build new friendships
2. Positive Coaching: engage with your athletes, it builds a certain camaraderie, use teachable moments in a positive way so all girls learn correct strategy
3. Build Confidence: no matter what the age, use progression in drills to improve skill set, encourage girls to try, and praise effort

Using this manual

This document has been prepared in such a way that you can find your specific age group and utilize some of the drills or skill instruction presented. The skills start off with the most basic instruction and build towards more advanced play. RYBL house league is structured such that the months of May and June are really 8 weeks meant for instruction and skill development for any level of player. As our season breaks for the summer months, players have an opportunity to continue to practice and improve on their own, with friends, or through programming offered at [ProTeach Baseball](#), and then return for our three weeks of playoffs in September. Typically, players return in September with a better skill set and we see some really fun baseball. For all coaches, new and seasoned, this could act as a template for organizing consistent skill development in your first 5-6 weeks with the ability to put it all together in the last few practices.

5U – 6U	T-Ball
7U – 9U	Rookie Ball
10U – 13U	PeeWee
14U – 17U	Bantam

⁴ [Canadian Women & Sport](#)

⁵ [Ruling Our Experiences](#)

The Baseball Stuff

Warm-Ups

Warm up to throw, don't throw to warm up!

Why are they important?

- Prepare players for physically and mentally for the game
- Help prevent injury
- Team building when warm-ups are done as a group

Types of Warm-Ups

- **Dynamic Warm-Up (Alana): Toronto Fusion**
[LINK](#)
- **Light jog:** have all the players drop their gloves and take a light jog to a nearby landmark. Give different players an opportunity to be the leader, setting the pace and choosing the landmark.
- **Run the bases:** have players line up and run around the bases. Give players a 1 base lead before allowing the next player to start.
- **High knees:** encourage players to get their knees up as high as possible while jogging forward. They can hold their arms at 90 degrees and try to make their knee touch their hand.
- **Butt kicks:** heels to butt allows for muscles to get warmed up.
- **Side step or shuffles:** laterally shuffle the feet without touching them together to the right for 8-10 steps and back to the left. This can also be done in a squatting position to build strength, as well as practice good athletic fielding position with butt down and chest and eyes up.
- **Toe to Hand:** Hold arms straight out in front, palms down. Walk forward and with each step, have players try to kick their hand with opposite leg.
- **Grapevine or Crossover (front and back)** Cross the left foot over the right and then the right foot over left
- **Lunge and twist:** Lunge forward with the right leg and twist torso to the right than the left, lunge forward with the left and twist torso to the left and to the right. Be sure the front knee never goes in front of the player's toes.
- **Jumping Jacks**
- **Arm circles:** move arms in small forward circles, and slowly increase the size of the circles. Then slowly bring them back down to little circles. Repeat, circling arms backwards.

THROWING

Skills by age

	Age Groups						
	T-Ball		Rookie Ball			PeeWee	Bantam
THROWING	5U	6U	7U	8U	9U	10U-13U	14U-17U
Athletic position	●	●	●	●			
Grip – 4 seam (across the “C”)	●	●	●	●			
Ready – hand up, ball facing back	●	●	●	●			
Aim – point to target with glove hand	●	●	●	●			
Throw – controlled, balanced body	●	●	●	●			
Arm follow-through			●	●	●		
Leg follow-through			●	●	●		
Square up – chest to target			●	●	●		
Weight Shift			●	●	●		
Throwing to a target			●	●	●		
Creating momentum						●	●
Throwing mechanics (Bekki): Toronto Fusion LINK			●	●	●	●	●
Outfield throw/footwork (Steph): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
Pick offs to 1st (Andrea): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
Pick offs to 2nd (Andrea): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
Pick offs to 3rd (Andrea): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
Left-handed pick offs (Bekki): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
Towel Drill (Valerie): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●

ALWAYS WARM UP FIRST!

**5U – 6U
TECHNIQUE**

**Athletic
Position**



Knees slightly bent

Feet hip width apart

Grip



2 seam

4 seam (better for ball control with younger players)

Younger players with small hands may use 4 fingers to grip the ball

Ready



Arm up and back, ball facing out

Aim



Point at target with glove

Throw



Note release point

Tuck glove hand in to chest

DRILLS

Simon Says

Play Coach Says (i.e.: Simon Says) using the ready, aim, throw commands. Have players throw to each other, or against a wall

Hula Hoop Challenge

Have a hula hoop or target on the fence or wall and see who can get the ball near the target. This helps save time in having kids chase the ball on wild throws

7U – 9U

TECHNIQUE

Arm Follow Through



Glove hand tucks in to chest

Throwing hand falls over opposite leg

Leg Follow Through



Back foot follows through and lands beside front foot

Toes point towards target

Weight Shift



Shift weight from back leg to front leg as they throw

Square Up



Finish with chest facing target

DRILLS

Surfing

Have players stand with their feet hip width apart and shift their weight back and forth from their back leg to their front leg without losing their balance.

Bulls-eye!

Place a large bucket, old tire or hula hoop on ground or against a fence/wall at appropriate distance from players. and see who can get the ball in the target.

Take a Knee

Players are kneeling (on two knees) facing their partner, slightly off center of each other. Throw ball to partner, kneeling helps to emphasize the need to get your arm to follow through across the chest in order to have enough momentum to make it to their partner.

Momentum/Distance

Have players stand 2m apart and throw ball back and forth emphasizing grip on ball as well as wrist and elbow motion. After 10-15 throws, move back another 2m and use whole arm but feet remain stationary. After another 10-15 throw, move another 3m back and incorporate leg momentum. After 10-15 throws, move a few more meters back and use whole body creating momentum for a longer throw. After several throws, the players can start moving toward each other so that the throws get progressively shorter until they are just a couple of meters apart.

10U – 13U & 14U – 17U

Take a Knee – Develop momentum

Players are kneeling (on two knees) facing their partner, slightly off center of each other. Throw ball to partner, kneeling helps to emphasize the need to get your arm to follow through across the chest in order to have enough momentum to make it to their partner.

Crow Hop

[VIDEO](#)

Back Leg Power

[VIDEO](#)

Accuracy drill on Long Throws

Place a Gatorade bottle on a tee, if you have two tees it will allow more opportunity for players to practice. Place the tee on home plate or a distance that is similar to the distance for a throw from 3rd to 1st or 2nd to home. Girls will throw the ball and try to knock off the Gatorade bottle. It can be a fun challenge that focuses on encouraging accuracy for the long throws.

RECEIVING (Catching)

Skills by age

RECEIVING (CATCHING)	Age Groups						
	T-Ball		Rookie Ball			PeeWee	Bantam
	5U	6U	7U	8U	9U	10U-13U	14U-17U
Ready – Both hands together and out in front	●	●	●	●			
Look – eyes on ball	●	●	●	●			
Catch above the waist	●	●	●	●			
Catch below the waist	●	●	●				
Squeeze the ball	●	●	●				
Catch – use two hands			●	●	●		
Catch – close hands and pull (cradle) ball to chest			●	●	●	●	

ALWAYS WARM UP FIRST!

5U – 6U

TECHNIQUE

Ready & Look



Athletic position

Eyes on ball

Glove in front

Catch above the waist



Athletic position

Glove up (thumbs together)

Eyes on ball

Catch below the waist



Athletic position

Glove down (pinkies together)

Eyes on ball

Squeeze the ball



Squeeze glove around ball once caught

Drills

Simon Says

See drill from throwing, but add in commands “above waist”, “Below waist” and “squeeze” so that players can practice holding their glove the right way to receive balls.

Alligator Chomp

Have players stand in ready position with hands on knees. Roll balls to them and have them trap them with two hands.

Egg Toss

Have players stand in ready position to catch ball below their waist. Gently toss ball underhand so that they can receive it below their waist with two hands.

Wiffle Toss

Have players stand in ready position to catch ball above their waist. Toss wiffle balls in the air and have players try to get under it so that it lands on their glove (do not focus on it staying in their glove at this point. The idea is to get them used to getting under the ball)

7U – 9U

TECHNIQUE

Two Hands



Use second hand to trap the ball

Cradle the ball



*Pull glove and ball
in to chest after
you receive it*

DRILLS

Baseball Bowling

Have players in partners facing each other. They roll balls back and forth to each other. Increase distance. As players advance, have players roll balls to the left and right so that they practice side step/shuffles (lateral movement).

Receiving Drill

Two players approximately 2m apart. One player is the dedicated receiver the other will feed them balls. Both players are on their knees. The object is to be quick with the glove to receive the ball. The thrower will bounce 5 balls directly to the player. Next the thrower will bounce 5 balls to their glove hand side and lastly to their opposite glove hand side. The object of this drill is to get the receiver comfortable with glove placement in all three positions. Once completed, the players change positions so the thrower is now the receiver.

HITTING

SKILLS BY AGE

	Age Groups						
	T-Ball		Rookie Ball			PeeWee	Bantam
HITTING	5U	6U	7U	8U	9U	10U-13U	14U-17U
Bat safety	●	●	●	●	●		
Set feet – bellybutton to tee (plate)	●	●	●	●	●		
Set hands – fingers stacked	●	●	●	●	●		
Bat position – barrel to sky	●	●	●	●	●		
Drop the bat	●	●	●	●	●		
Strike zone			●	●	●		
Set feet – power position			●	●	●	●	
Set hands – knocking knuckles & power position			●	●	●	●	
Squish the bug			●	●	●	●	
Follow through			●	●	●	●	
Hitting with Alana: Toronto Fusion LINK			●	●	●	●	
Protect yourself at the plate (inside pitches)						●	●
Directional hitting						●	●
Bunting						●	●
Dropped third strike							●
Basic Bunting Drills (Valerie): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
At Home Hitting Drills (Cassie): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
Batter up: the Mental Game (Shawna-Marie and Steph): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●

BAT SAFETY: Only swing the bat when nobody is nearby

5U – 6U
TECHNIQUE

Set feet



Feet parallel to each other, hip width apart

Front foot should be in line with the front of the plate

Bellybutton lined up with tee

Set hands



Hands together.

Don't squeeze too hard

Relaxed hands

Bat position



Bat barrel points to the sky

Drop the bat



Place the bat on the ground after hitting the ball, and before starting to run

DRILLS

Copy Cat

Have players stand in a line facing coach and copy what the coach does (set feet and hands)

Simon Says

Use hitting terms so that you can assess and correct each step of their swing. Eg. Set feet, Set hands, swing.

Tee Work

Have players take turns hitting a ball off of a Tee. 5 swings each. ONLY SWING A BAT WHEN YOU ARE AT A TEE AND NOBODY IS NEARBY

Drop in the Bucket

Place a hula hoop behind the batter. When they swing and hit, they need to make sure the bat lands in the hula hoop before they can run.

7U – 9U

TECHNIQUE

Set feet – power position



Weight on back foot

Set hands – knocking knuckles & power position



*Hands together on the bat
Line up knuckles that they use to knock on a door with*

Squish the bug



Pivot on back foot toes

Follow through



Rotate hips as they swing so that hips face out towards the pitching machine

Watch the bat hit the ball

DRILLS

Simon Says

Use hitting terms so that you can assess and correct each step of their swing. Eg. Set feet, Set hands, swing, power position, squish the bug, follow through.

Tee Work

Have players hit into a fence with wiffle balls. This is great for correction the player's form (focus: set feet, set hands/bat position, power position, full swing (shoulder to shoulder and smack the ball at contact, full follow through to drive the ball).

Soft Toss

Coach or player on one knee "beside" batter. Underhand toss balls to batter for them to swing at.

10U – 13U & 14U – 17U

Technique

Protect Yourself



Turn your back to the ball

Lower the bat (so no foul tips occur)

Bunting



Stand at the front of the batter's box

Squish bug with back foot

Fingers protected behind bat barrel

Knees bent – use them to adjust to the pitch

Barrel slightly up

Bat out in front

“Catch” the pitch – cushion the impact of the ball on the bat

Drills

Coach Toss

Coach throws balls in to strike zone area for players to swing at. invariably there will be mixing as not all balls are in the strike zone - have the player make the decision on whether to hit it or not. Correct mechanics as needed.

Target Practice

Set up a tee on home plate. Place a pylon or other marker at 3rd base, SS, 2nd base and 1st base. For right-handed batters, the area between 3rd and SS is 10pts, SS and 2nd is 5pts, 2nd and 1st are 15pts. For left-handed batters, the area between 3rd and SS is 15pts, SS and 2nd is 10pts, and 1st and 2nd are 5pts. Each player gets 5 swings. Goal is to get the highest number of points.

Protect yourself

With live pitching, there will be the occasional wild or inside pitch and it is important that players understand how to properly protect themselves. Coaches need to take a moment to show girls how to turn their face away from the pitch and lower their bat so they it does not cause a foul ball. Use wiffle balls to pitch in to players and have them practice protecting themselves and freeze in that position for feedback.

Bunting – Simon Says

“Get low” – players squish the bug with their back foot, and bend knees

“Top Hand” – moves up to the base of the barrel, tucking fingers and thumb behind the barrel

“Bat out” – barrel angled slightly up

“1st base” – angle the bat as if trying to bunt down 1st base line

“3rd base” – angle the bat as if trying to bunt down 3rd base line

“high” or “low” – players bend their knees to move to the ball

Bunting

Occasionally, it may be advantageous for a batter to bunt the ball. Players need to square their body to the ball and slide upper hand toward the barrel of the bat. Players must keep their fingers and thumb behind the bat to for protection. A bunted ball does not require a swing, rather the goal of a bunt is to intentionally tap the ball so that it falls a few feet into play. With practice, batters can work to bunt the ball toward the 1st or 3rd base lines.

FIELDING

Skills by age

	Age Groups						
	T-Ball		Rookie Ball			PeeWee	Bantam
FIELDING	5U	6U	7U	8U	9U	10U-13U	14U-17U
Ready position – athletic position	●	●	●				
Trap the ball – alligator chomp	●	●	●				
Fielding Ground Balls (Hannah): Toronto Fusion LINK		●	●	●	●		
Ground ball mechanics			●	●	●		
Fly ball mechanics			●	●	●	●	
Catching Fly Balls (Valerie): Toronto Fusion LINK			●	●	●	●	
Call the ball			●	●	●	●	
Where is the play?				●	●	●	
Lateral movement – side step/shuffle				●	●	●	●
Receive, cradle, step & throw					●	●	●
Charging the Ball in the outfield (Maureen): Toronto Fusion LINK					●	●	●
Fielding a ball outside of your reach					●	●	●
Infield positioning to receive a ball at 1B, 2B & 3B					●	●	●
Underhand Flip						●	●
Run Downs						●	●
Catch on the run (over shoulder)						●	●
Communicating in the Outfield (Steph): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●

ALWAYS WARM UP FIRST!

5U – 6U
TECHNIQUE

Ready Position



Athletic position

Eyes on ball

Glove in front

Trap the ball



Glove touching the ground

Use two hands to trap the ball

DRILLS

Ground Balls

Roll ground balls to players and have them focus on getting their glove right on the ground and using alligator chomp to trap the ball

Ball Toss

Gently lob balls to players and have them try to catch it in their glove.

7U – 9U

TECHNIQUE

Ground Ball Mechanics



Athletic position

*Glove on the ground, out
in front of body*

Eyes up, chest up

Bum down

Lateral Movement



Shuffle feet side to side

Do not cross one foot of the other!

Do not bend over sideways!

Body as centered to the ball as possible

Fly balls



*Take one or two steps
back before running in*

*Discourage catching the
ball basket style (below
waist)*

DRILLS

Ground Balls

Catching ground balls - line players up on the infield and either hit or roll balls directly to them from home plate. Once comfortable with this skill, challenge them by targeting the ball to the right/left of the player so get them to move their feet or shuffle to get the ground ball

Fly Balls

Introduce catching balls on the forehead. Bare hands, no glove. Gently toss wiffle balls in the air and have players try to make it land on their forehead. Start by throwing them directly to them from a close distance, and once comfortable, throw slightly left or right so they can practice shuffling their feet to get under the ball. Option to wear batting helmet. Goal is to get them used to getting under the ball. Then introduce using a glove, same drill but goal is to catch the ball in their glove. Eventually move to using baseballs.

Jackpot

Have players stand in a line, in ready position to receive above their waist. Throw the ball in their air and call a number between 50 and 900. If the player catches the ball, they get the number of points you called. Points are cumulative, first player to 1000 wins. After each throw, even if not caught, the player goes to the back of the line. Consider splitting players in to smaller groups. Add side step/shuffle as players advance.

Field & Throw

Form a line of players and put one player on first base. Hit a ground ball to the line of players and get them to throw to first base.

Make an Out

Using the field and throw drill above, add a runner so players get the feel of how quickly they need to react. As you add runners to this drill you can teach players how to make outs through catching fly balls, tags or force plays. NOTE – **helpful for players to understand base running before working on making outs.** If the player understands where the baserunner is going ahead of the play, they will know where to throw the ball to make an out. It is helpful for a player on the infield (or coach) to call the play before the ground ball is hit.

Ship Shore Deck – baseball style

Players stand at home plate and coach calls a position in the field (1B, 2B, SS, 3B, P, C, LF, RF, CF). Players run to that position and assume ready position.

Try this!

- Use wiffle balls for new or younger players
- Encourage more advanced players to move **towards** the ball.

10U – 13U & 14U – 17U

TECHNIQUE

Receive, Cradle, Step & Throw



[VIDEO 1](#)

[VIDEO 2](#)

Underhand Flip



Backhand, Forehand, Barehand



Catch over shoulder



Run Downs



Run towards the ball

Step & Throw

Keep momentum moving forward

[VIDEO](#)

FOREHAND: Glove foot forward, throwing foot back

BACKHAND: Throwing foot forward, glove foot back

Glove in front of front foot

On slow rollers, charge and field ball using throwing hand, not glove hand

Drop step - Step back with the foot that is on the same side of you as the ball (eg. ball over left shoulder, step back and pivot on left foot)

Eyes on the ball

Avoid back-peddalling

Set under the ball for catch

Don't run with glove out

Receiver – a couple of feet off the base, glove up

When you catch the ball, get it out of your glove right away ready to throw

Thrower – running towards the runner, arm up ready to throw ball (like a dart)

Follow your throw

Goal is to force runner back to the base they came from, or get them out

DRILLS

Drop Step

Have fielder stand 10-15' in front of you, facing you. Hold a ball in the air and point over their left or right shoulder (don't throw the ball). Player takes a drop step (if you pointed over their left shoulder, their left foot steps back and pivots, so that their body turns to the left the same side as the ball is going to be, if you pointed over their right shoulder, their right foot steps back and pivots, so that their body turns to the right the same side as the ball is going to be). Players take turns, coach mixes up sides so that they practice turning both ways. **More advanced:** Player runs apx. 10', keeping their eyes on you (the ball). Point in the other direction so that they have to change direction on the move. **More advanced:** When players have practiced both ways, throw the ball for them to catch with two hands.

Jackpot

Have players stand in a line. Throw the ball in their air and call a number between 50 and 900. If the player catches the ball, they get the number of points you called. Points are cumulative, first player to 1000 wins. After each throw, even if not caught, the player goes to the back of the line. Consider splitting players in to smaller groups. Include side step/shuffle. As players advance, throw the ball ahead of them and behind them, having them run to make the catch.

Mine!

Have players stand in 2 lines, a few meters apart. First player in each line moves ahead so that you can throw the ball in the air to them. Initially, throw the ball directly to one or the other player. Then transition to having the ball go somewhere in between them. Players must yell MINE if they think the ball is closest to them, and if they call it try to catch it. Player who does not call the ball runs behind the player who called it (introduces backing each other up).

Scoop and Set

Form a line of players and gently hit ground balls to them. They have to scoop the ball and come up set to throw. Freeze in that position (opportunity for corrections to be made). Add in throw when ready.

Around the horn

Have players in each position, coach at home plate. Call a play (eg. play is to 1) and then hit ball to 3rd base. They field and make the throw to 1st. Hit ball to SS, same play. 2nd base, same play, 1st base same play. When comfortable, call a different play (eg. Play is to 2 then 1) and hit the ball around the infield again. After players are comfortable fielding and making a throw to get an out, shake it up. Randomly hit the ball in the infield, it will force the players to put all the pieces together. This takes lots of practice and provides some teachable moments for best decisions on where to make the play. Remember positivity with coaching, celebrate the successes and supportive instructional coaching. Always tell them where the play is. Work on who covers what base, position changes for left-handed batters, etc. Rotate players through the different positions over time so they get used to different distances and positioning to field and throw the ball. More advanced: Use 1-3 base runners to simulate game scenarios. Rotate players so everyone has a chance to run & field. Good baserunning practice as well.

Relay

Start the players out about 30 feet away from each other, and the coach another 15 feet from the 'relay' player. This drill begins with the coach rolling a grounder to the player that is furthest away. That player must stop the ball, control it, pick it up and make a good throw to the relay player. The relay player must then grab the ball from the glove and make a good throw to coach. Repeat and switch players.

Underhand Flip

This is a drill for that quick play to a base when the player receiving and making the throw to the base for an out is less than 2m from the bag and does not need an overhand throw. A quick, accurate underhand toss at chest level is more efficient. A square is formed with 4 players approximately 2m apart. Have remaining players form equal lines behind the four points. Motion is in a counter clock wise motion. A player will make a quick underhand throw to the left and move to the end of the line. Moving in a clockwise direction repeat the drill.

Quick flip to 2nd base

Form two lines, one behind short stop the other behind the 2nd base player position. The coach will hit a grounder to the short stop and the 2nd base player will run to the base to take the underhand flip throw from the short stop. Then the coach will hit to the 2nd base player and the short stop will run in to cover the base. The coach can then randomly hit to either short stop or the 2nd base and have the players cover the base to take the short underhand flip.

Run Down

Set up two bases, have a player at each base and a runner with helmet on. Practice a basic rundown. When ready, add other fielding positions and practice rundowns with players running in to cover and rotate through for scenarios where more than one or two throws are needed in a run-down.

Run down drill (between 1st and 2nd)

This requires two base players and one runner. Essentially, this is a drill of throwing and catching. It is an easy out and one that requires good fundamental skill. The object of the base players is to shorten the distance with the runner in the middle as it makes the throw shorter. The drill starts with the coach tossing the ball to the 1st baseman and the runner is caught off base with the only option to advance to 2nd base. The 1st baseman needs to have the ball in the throwing hand with arm in a ready to throw position and very visible. The next task is for the 1st base player to run hard at the runner to make them commit to 2nd base. The short stop will position themselves a few feet in front of 2nd base to both protect the base and receive the ball. Once the runner is approaching the bag and too far away to run back to 1st, the 1st base player will make a dart like throw to the short stop who upon receiving the ball will take one or two steps and tag the runner. It is important that the 1st base player not make a pump fake throw, it messes with the positioning and confuses the short stop. Done properly, it should only take one throw to get the runner out. This drill can be easily executed and will have all the players cycle through as base runners. Coaches can have the different players assume the roles of 1st base or short stop.

BASE-RUNNING

Skills by age

	Age Groups						
	T-Ball		Rookie Ball			PeeWee	Bantam
BASE-RUNNING	5U	6U	7U	8U	9U	10U-13U	14U-17U
Run towards and through first (clockwise)	●	●					
Stop on the other bases	●	●	●				
Run through first			●	●	●		
Ready position				●	●		
Rounding bases – inside corner				●	●	●	
Base running exercises (Steph): Toronto Fusion LINK			●	●	●		
Tagging up				●	●	●	●
Lead offs						●	●
Sliding						●	●
Run downs						●	●
Base running basics (Steph): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●
Sliding (Andrea): Toronto Fusion LINK						●	●

5U – 6U

DRILLS

Follow the leader

Have a leader (coach or player) and run around the bases, name the bases as you go and have players stomp on the base. They need to know that they have to step on the base when running or making a play, and they can't pass the player ahead of them

High Five

Split team in to two lines at home plate and have 2 first bases set up not far from each other. Have a coach stand just beyond each base on the foul side of the base. When coach says go, first player in each line runs THROUGH first base to high five coach (having coach towards foul territory teaches kids to turn away from the field. When high five has been given, next player in line can go. First line to have all players behind first base wins.

7U – 9U

Drills

High Five

Players line up at home plate. Have a coach stand just beyond 1st base. When coach says go, first player in each line runs towards first and listens for coach to say STAY or GO TO SECOND. If coach says stay, player runs through base and high fives coach as they turn away from the field. If coach says go to second, player rounds first (inside corner) and runs to second stopping ON the base.

Tag Up

Divide the team into two lines, one will be runners on first the others will have a glove and form a line on the infield. One player starts on the base and the coach throws a fly ball to the first player in the fielder line. The fielder will attempt to catch the ball, the runner needs to start running slowly and needs to watch the ball to see if it is caught. When the ball is in the air, if it looks like the player will catch the ball, have the player run back to the base and tag up but stay ready to run if it drops. If the ball is not caught, the runner advances to second.

10U – 13U & 14U – 17U

Technique

Lead Offs



Stay on the base to watch coach for signs

Primary lead off - Eyes on the pitcher, leaning/reaching for the bag you are leaving

Secondary lead off – shuffle steps towards the next base (momentum in the right direction), eyes on the ball/catcher

Never cross your feet

Sliding



Kick out lead leg, heel a couple of inches off the ground

Tuck in other leg

Hands up

Drills

Tag Up

Same drill as above but spread your fielders out and randomly hit or throw balls to them so the baserunner has to be more aware of where the ball is to decide if they will advance if caught or not. Vary combinations of baserunners (eg. runner on first, runner on second, runners on first and second, etc.). The key to this drill is to get players thinking ahead of the play, they need to decide ahead of time if they have to advance or not.

Lead offs

For this drill you need a pitcher, first base player, and a runner. The runner will keep her eye on the pitcher's back leg for indication to make the throw to the bag. The runner will take two to three steps followed by two shuffles. Keep your eye on the pitcher to see if she comes over with a pick-off throw or moving forward with a pitch. Once the pitcher is committed to the plate, the runner takes off for the next base with a steal. During this drill, the pitcher will watch the runner and make pick off throws, the runner must determine a reliable distance so that they can make it back to the bag safely if there is a pickoff throw. This drill should be practiced at all three bases as each base has a different set up.

Sliding drill

Best to try this indoors on a mat or with a piece of cardboard to allow for an easier slide, outside on the grass with cleats off, or a slip and slide mat is a lot of fun for learning how to slide! Coaches can have players form a line heading toward second base with players taking turns practicing their slides. A cone can be placed to help mark the distance. The goal is to keep the momentum and reach the safety of the bag with the straight leg.

GENERAL

SKILLS BY AGE

	Age Groups						
	T-Ball		Rookie Ball			PeeWee	Bantam
GENERAL	5U	6U	7U	8U	9U	10U-13U	14U-17U
Infield positions	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Outfield positions	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Types of outs (force, tag, fly ball)				•	•		
Calling plays					•	•	•
Basic Catching Stance (Maureen): Toronto Fusion LINK						•	•
Catcher position (no runners on)						•	•
Catcher position (runners on base)						•	•
Throw downs to 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd						•	•
Blocking 101 (Maureen): Toronto Fusion LINK						•	•
Dropped third strike							•

Putting it all Together

Putting it all together in practice....where to start?

The way house league is set up, there is one practice per week and two games. Girls will have variable skill sets; the goal is to always provide instruction so that girls at any skill level can join and learn the game.

Generally, the best way to start is to provide the opportunity to learn each skill with progressive development at each practice with a greater focus on one key element of each skill.

Divide the time equally in each practice to allow for catching/throwing, fielding, batting and a smaller dedication to base running. There are a lot of skills to master but it is done over time. The younger the player, the shorter the attention span. Keep the players moving and working on small skill development and lots of activity. Don't forget the water breaks!!! This is also a great time to point out successes and improvements and get the girls cheering each other on.

House league is the foundation to any competitive baseball league, without it, our competitive division would eventually cease to exist. The best way to preserve all aspects of our girls' division is to invest in improving the quality of baseball at our house league level. The purpose of this document is quite simply to do just that. The knowledge base in this document is the culmination of many coaches over many years of both practice and games. Much of the lingo is common phrases that have been used to get the players to learn and understand the game.

Special thanks to the women from Toronto Fusion for their fantastic YouTube instructional videos on the more advanced skills. A super special thanks to our volunteer Elizabeth Lindsay featured in our photos of the various skills, as well as players from our 14U and 17U development teams. Thanks also to Baseball BC that provided the inspiration for the creation of this particular document, and to our tech team for creating a user-friendly resource that provides easy access to skill development for both coaches and players. Lastly, thanks for the continued support and motivation from our league presidents, both past and present and all the coaches that have volunteered with RYBL over the last 30 years—you are all a part of the dream to build better female baseball players.

**Karen Proctor
VP of Girls baseball development**