

6x WEEK OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE PROGRAMME



WEEK 3

Honouring the Game:
Page 2 - Respect for the Game

Position Focus:
Page 5 - Third Base

Hitting Focus:
Page 11 - Outside Pitch

Defence:
Page 16 - Receiving Throws at a Base

INTRODUCTION & HONOURING THE GAME

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the players • Outline the importance that everyone in softball should have respect for the game from players, to coaches, fans and officials must realise there is certain etiquette (sportsmanship) that determines how all should act. Everyone should treat each other with respect by never making the situation about them, instead of about the game itself. 	
Coaches Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches have the responsibility to act with respect, coach players what that respect means. • Keep parents in line when that respect has been breached. 	
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins 	00:00 – 00:05

RESPECT FOR THE GAME

How does one know when the respect for the game (game etiquette) has been broken?

The answer is simple, when people leave the field talking about incidents which are not related to playing softball itself.

Most common signs players do not have respect for the game.

- Wearing uniform, the wrong way
- Arguing with umpires
- Showing up another player on the field or after the game
- Lack of hustle
- Showing an “I don’t care” attitude
- Not being a team player
- Kicking or throwing objects
- Playing with a win at all cost attitude
- Any display that brings attention to the stands during games. Throwing bats / helmets and gear without regard to the safety of those around them.

Question to the Players

What are some good signs or things that players can do to respect the game?

Possible Answers

- Wear the uniform and cap with pride
- Acknowledge and respect coaches, umpires
- Showing sportsmanship to the opposition and your own team
- Being energetic and having a positive demeanour
- Showing a good attitude
- Playing for the team and not yourself
- Taking negative emotions (e.g. upset with a decision), away from the diamond and out of sight.

Being a good winner is hard. You must appear to appreciate the win, but not act arrogantly. Here are a few tips to be a good winner.

Good winners will:

- Smile appropriately
- Be humble and not boast
- Acknowledge the skill or game of the opposition
- Be respectful

Take time to mourn the loss. It's natural to get upset after a loss and hard not to show it. Here are a few tips to be a good winner.

Good losers will:

- Congratulate the other team
- Own their loss and take it as a learning experience
- Shake hands with the opposition
- Be respectful
- Be positive. Winning without honour is worse than a loss
- Remain true to your values
- Determine why you lost
- Raise your game
- Turn barriers into hurdles
- Don't quit.



WARM UP – DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 		
Coaches Notes:	<p> Example of dynamic warm up exercises Refer to the “Coach Support Notes” page 4</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lateral Shuffle High Knees Butt Kicks Trunk Rotation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward Lunges Arm Circles Leg Swings Shuttles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretch Shoulders & Back Squats Add additional dynamic stretches if needed
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 mins 	00:05 – 00:15	

WARM UP – THROWING MECHANICS & LONG TOSS

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



FIELDING DRILLS

FOCUS: THIRD BASE

WATER BREAK & SET UP

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick water break • Setup stations and ensure those leading those stations are clear on what is happening. 	
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"> • 5 mins 	00:25 – 00:30

STATION 1: FIELD AWARENESS

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard (ideal but not necessary) 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

STATION 2: READ THE HOP

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

STATION 3: 5 BALLS FIELDING

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

STATION 4: THE BACKHANDER

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

STATION 1: FIELD AWARENESS (6 mins)

Role of the Third Baseman	The Third baseman is responsible for slow roller ground balls, pop up's, bunts, fielding balls hit down the third base line as well as foul balls and cut off plays from the leftfield.
Physical Qualities of a Third Baseman	Physical Qualities of a Third Baseman - Arm strength, Quick reactions.

DRILL:

Objective:

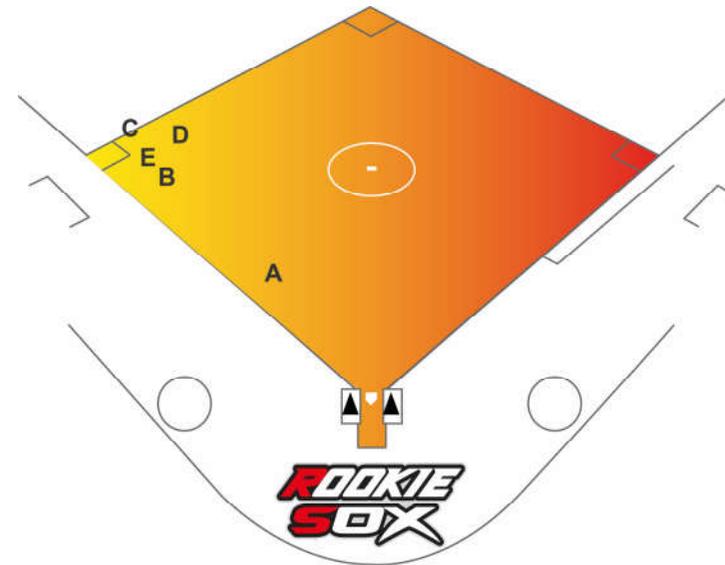
To develop greater awareness of setup for different game situations.

Task:

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

Third Baseman game situation locations:

- A. Runners on 1st base (with less than 2 out)
Answer: This location is to anticipate the bunt and be in a position to throw the ball to first base for an out.
- B. Runners on 3rd, 2nd and third or loaded (with less than 2 down)
Answer: Standing closer to home plate will allow 3rd baseman to field the ball quicker and throw the ball to home plate to get the runner from third base out
- C. Big hitting right handed hitter, slow runner, no runners on.
Answer: Back at third base, even or slightly deeper
- D. Left handed hitter with a tendency to pull the ball.
Answer: Back at third base and inside the diamond
- E. Runners on 2nd base (potential to steal)
Answer: Back towards third base (behind or in front depending on the speed of the runner on 2nd).



The image above outlines typical setup locations for the 3rd baseman.

STATION 2: READ THE HOP (6 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

For Third Baseman to be able to read the hop and make a good approach to the ball and make a good throw to first base.

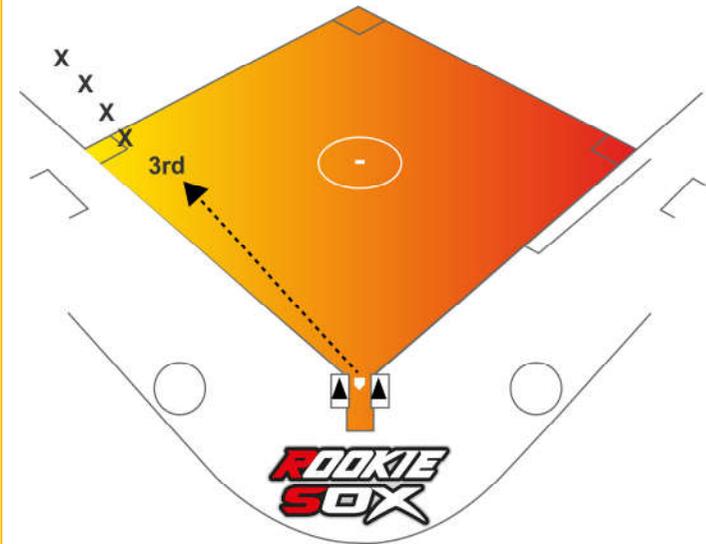
Task:

On the coach's signal, the players will drop down into ready position. The coach will then hit a ground ball to the infielder. The fielder will charge the ball aggressively, field it and make a strong throw to first base.

The coach will vary the speed and type of ground ball, giving the player a variety of short hops, long hops, slow rollers and straight ground balls. Vary the direction of the hit, going to the left, right, and directly at the fielder.

Observation notes:

The easiest ball to field is a big hop, this allows the fielder to see the trajectory and speed of the ball early and then line themselves up to make a play. With practice, short hops can also become routine, if the fielder can scoop them directly off the ground before they can move too much in any direction. Regular ground balls are the most difficult, as the ball makes contact with the ground multiple times and can make multiple changes of height and direction.



Fielders should:

- Players should be in a ready position before the ball is hit. Do not hit a ball until they have assumed that position, we are training good habits.
- Time their footwork with the pitch so that they can quickly move in any direction (weight on the balls of the feet)
- Read the placement of the pitch and angle of the bat to determine where the ball will be hit
- Try to see which way the head of the bat is going, and shift weight in that direction, to get a good jump on the ball
- Charge hard to get to the ball faster and shorten the distance of the throw
- Circle the ball when possible, so that their momentum is going toward the target (first base) as they field it and begin their throw
- Align their body toward the target as they break down to field the ball
- Follow through toward the target
- On slow rollers, field the ball with the glove and quickly transfer it to the bare hand to make the throw. If the ball has stopped rolling completely, field with bare hand.

STATION 3: 5 BALLS FIEDING (6 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

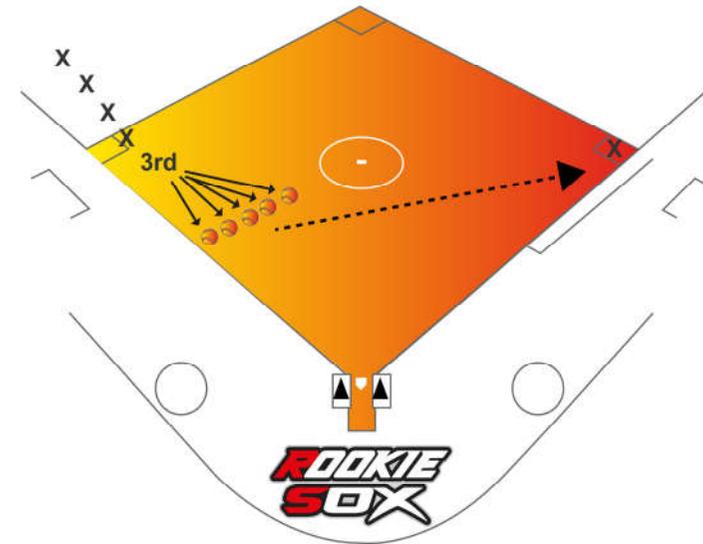
To help players charge a ball and make a quick play.

Task:

1. One player at a time performs this drill with five balls and a player to throw the ball to. The balls will be placed ahead of the player and the player will have to charge the ball and throw to a designated base.
2. For example, for a third baseman you would place five balls between the pitching mound and the third base line. The third baseman would charge the ball that's farthest on the right, pick-up the ball, and throw it to first.
3. This would simulate a bunt or weak hit off the bat. Once the third baseman throws the ball, they should return to their position and then charge the next ball on the right.
4. This drill can be run in a similar fashion for any position on the field. Obviously, the position of the balls will change and the place where the player must throw the ball might change too.

Observations notes:

- The fielder is in a ready position to start.
- The coach should make sure the player surrounds the ball and fields it cleanly. The player should move quickly but still be under control.
- If the player somehow loses their balance, then they should regain their balance before making the throw or they shouldn't throw the ball at all.
- It should be stressed that it's a tough play to make and the worst thing that could happen is a bad throw that will give the opponent extra bases.
- Use multiple diamonds where possible to set up more stations allowing more frequency.



STATION 4: THE BACKHANDER (6 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

To bet the ball to the spot, create a better angle allowing more time, good positioning and a better throw to 1st base.

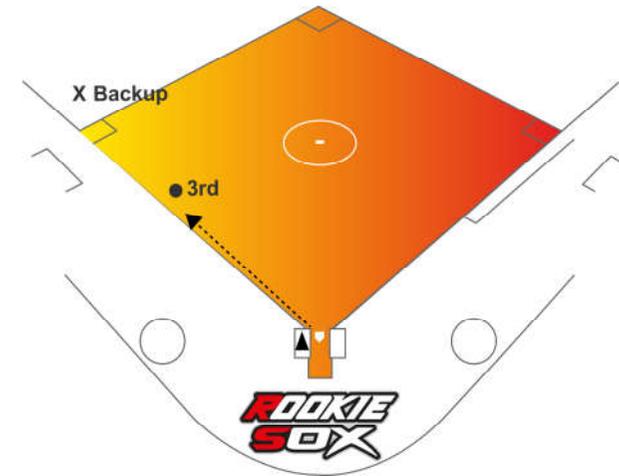
Refer to page 13 of the Coach Support Notes for an overview of groundball mechanics.

Task

1. The first player stands facing a coach standing 9 metres away. This player will act as backup.
2. The 3rd baseman stands facing the coach (or thrower) 6 metres away and to the side.
3. The coach throws a line drive down (or close to) the line.
4. The 3rd baseman fields with the backhand and throws across to first.

Observations notes:

- The 3rd baseman should be in a good ready position prior to fielding
- The fielder should take their glove through the softball on the backhand when receiving
- The fielder then pushes off the back (right) foot with momentum toward first base to make a throw.





HITTING DRILLS

FOCUS: OUTSIDE PITCH

WATER BREAK & SET UP

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick water break • Setup stations and ensure those leading those stations are clear on what is happening. 	
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to page 18-22 of the “Coach Support Notes” for an overview of fundamental hitting mechanics and the outside pitch.</p>	
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins 	01:00 – 01:04

STATION 1: OUTSIDE PITCH FUNDAMENTALS (ALL)

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone should have a bat and share a plate between 2-3 players. 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 2: TEE WORK

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees, balls, bats screen or cones 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 3: FRONT TOSS

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees, balls, wiffle balls, bats, screen and cones 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 4: INSIDE-OUTSIDE

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backstop or screen, bats, balls, tees 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 1: OUTSIDE PITCH FUNDAMENTALS (ALL) (7 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

To cover the fundamentals of hitting an outside pitch.

Task:

Work through the fundamentals of the outside pitch. Hitters to take dry swings as the coach covers off these key mechanics.

STATION 2: TEE WORK (7 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

Visualising the ball travelling deep into the zone and hitting the ball the other way (off field).

Task:

1. Hitters pair up.
2. The tee and ball are placed in the proper position. The tee should be set up on the outside of the plate and in line with the hitter's back hip.
3. Hitters practice how they would hit an outside pitch in a game focusing on good mechanics.
4. Hitters take 10 swings and change.

Note:

- A hitter should always make contact with the ball in line with the back hip.
- It is important hitters only take 10 swings, so they are focusing and having quality and reps.
- Softballs can be hit into a screen or through two cones (as a target) in an open area.



The photo above illustrates an outside ball (A) and an inside ball (B) travelling across home plate and where the hitter should make

Off field hit – An off field hit is a ball hit to the opposite field i.e. A left handed hitter would hit the ball to 'left field' and a right handed hitter would hit the ball to 'right field'.

contact.

STATION 3: FRONT TOSS (7 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

To hit the ball to opposite field pitch (off field) on an outside pitch.

Task:

1. Hitters pair up.
2. A hitter sets up at the plate in their ready position.
3. The partner (or coach) lobs 10 balls from behind a screen across the outside of the home plate.
4. Hitters practice how they would hit an outside pitch in a game focusing on good mechanics.
5. Hitters take 10 swings and change.

Note:

- A hitter should always make contact with the ball in line with the back hip.
- It is important hitters only take 10 swings, so they are focusing and having quality reps.
- Balls should be hit through two cones (as a target) on the off field side to provide instant feedback.
- When undertaking front toss, the person who is tossing should position themselves 2-3 metres away from the hitter behind the hitting screen. They should be directly in front of the hitter so when they toss the ball it closely simulates a live pitch.

No screen

- Use wiffel balls or
- Have the hitter set themselves first, preferably using a plate at their feet so that they can have a point of reference on where to stand. Once the batter is situated, the soft tosser should angle themselves 45 degrees in front of the hitter in the opposite batter's box and then toss the balls to the batter on the outside part of the plate.

STATION 4: INSIDE-OUTSIDE (7 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

Teaches batter to adjust to inside and outside pitches. This drill will also allow hitters to include the mechanics (hitting the inside pitch) they learnt the previous week.

Task:

Batter gets in their stance next to a double tee. Place a ball on both tee stands. Note: You can create your own double tee by using two separate tees.

1. Coach says, "Stride."
2. Batter goes into stride position. This is where the hitter has loaded and taken a stride/step.
3. Then coach says either "inside" or "outside" and player adjusts and hits the ball that was called by the coach.
4. Repeat.





DEFENCE

FOCUS: RECEIVING THROWS
AT A BASE

STATION: RECEIVING THROWS AT A BASE (10 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

To develop the habit of always being in a “ready position” to receive a throw and improve footwork around the base.

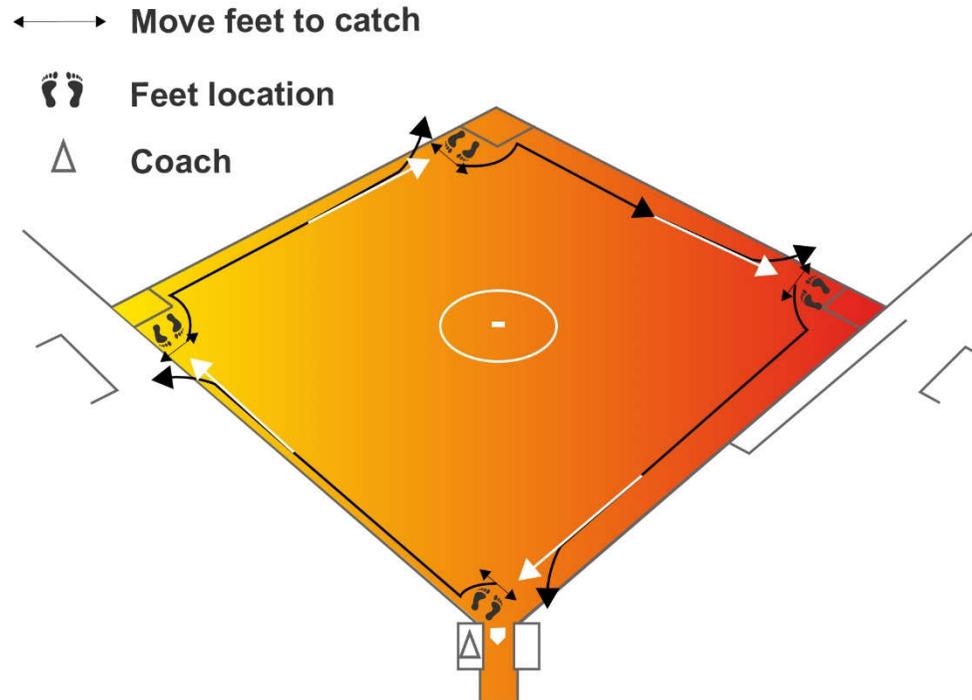
Task:

Create mini diamonds set up in an 8m square (cones work fine as bases). One player at each base with coach at home, coach participates in this drill (5 players are required).

Players must be in a “ready position”, on the side of the base the ball is coming from, prior to each throw. “Move Feet to Catch”, move and make a tag, on the ground in front of the base, “Move Feet to Throw”. Momentum continues in a straight line towards the target.

Balls starts at home plate. Players run toward the next base and use an underhanded toss (3-5m) to deliver the ball. The player at first base tags where a runner would slide into first (hypothetical).

Each player delivering the ball follows their throw, “Follows their Head”, and takes over the base they are running to.



WARM DOWN

Cool Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to the “Coach Support Notes” page 27 for the detail relating to warm down</p>	
	<p>Stretching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold each stretch 10 to 30 seconds. If you feel you need more, stretch the other side and return for another set of stretching The stretch should be strong, but not painful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not bounce. Breathe while you're stretching. Exhale as you stretch, inhale while holding the stretch
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 mins 	1:50 – 2:00

REVIEW OF WEEK 3:

How successful was Week 3? Areas to consider; your delivery, preparation, feedback from players and coaches.

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