



## Rookie Sox

A SNZ resource designed for coaches of U13 boys and girls providing guidelines and options to assist with the smooth transition for players to “Jump” from T-Ball to Softball.

### Key Concepts

- Have a Go at pitching & catching, fielding & throwing, hitting & running
- Rotation of positions
- Larger strike zone and flexi ball.



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## Introduction

This Softball New Zealand (SNZ) resource is designed to provide administrators, coaches, managers, umpires, scorers and players with some information, guidelines and options to assist with the smooth transition for players to jump from T-Ball to Softball.

Rookie Sox is the SNZ name for the U13 year old softball. This term applies to both genders.

### There are two levels of Rookie Sox:

1. Novice Rookie Sox . the child has never played before
2. Rookie Sox . the child who has a good command of fundamentals & basic game knowledge

### For Rookie Sox development it would be expected that:

- The coach understands that kids want variety, high level of activity, have fun and keep them mentally stimulated
- The coach offers equal opportunity to boys and girls in key positions along with rotation of positions
- The coach is supportive and understands the needs of the players
- Sessions are planned, organised and varied
- The coach provides a fair, positive and safe environment keeping them mentally and physically stimulated.

It is important for the future of softball that children of this age group have a fun, challenging and exciting experience and want to come back for more.

At T-Ball, a child learns simple skills and fundamentals of softball. However, once they move from hitting a static ball off a tee to hitting a moving ball, the skills required are harder. Equally, pitching & catching to a pitcher are difficult skills to master for this age group. Some players will not have the motor skills, strength or confidence to pitch or catch and others will readily take up the challenge.

How we manage this transition for the Rookie Sox player is the aim of this resource.



## Rookie Sox Champions – Who are they?

These are the groups of people who are going to make sure that the Rookie Sox player has a fun, challenging and exciting experience in softball and wants to come back for more. Champions must be flexible when coaching or managing this particular age group so that the outcomes above are achieved.

### Management & Administrators

Plan the transition from T-Ball 2 Softball:

- Keep the game simple, modify the rules, use an 11 or 12+flexi ball
- Educate %Champions+on the game plan for this beginners age group
- Encourage the players to %Have a Go+at pitching and catching in practice
- In games %Share the Load+in all positions.

Who is the key to the plan?

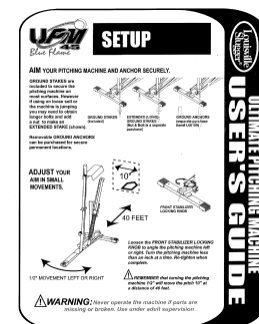
The adults attitude:

- Coaches
- Umpires
- Scorers
- Spectators



How are you going to be able to get the players to hit a moving ball?

- Parent pitch
- Coach pitch
- Slow pitch
- Mechanical pitching device



Ways to encourage kids to pitch.

- Modify the rules
- Big home plate
- Big strike zone
- Have a Go
- Game plan
- Player rotation
- Share the Load





Ways to encourage kids to catch.

- Flexi ball
- Have a Go
- Game plan
- Player rotation
- Share the Load



## Coaches

The most important thing you can do as a coach with the Rookie Sox player is to encourage to have a Go+at both pitching & catching, fielding & throwing, hitting & running in a supported environment.

Ensure a rotation policy exists so that children get an opportunity to experience playing different positions.

Hey coach . make sure you give the girls a chance to play in the key positions as well+.



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## Parents, Caregivers & Whanau

Encouraging your kids to play sports is one of the best ways to help them develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime. But some parents take that support too far by emphasising winning rather than developing skills and having fun.

The line between encouraging your child and pushing them beyond their abilities can be somewhat easy to cross. Parents of children in sport occasionally need to be reminded of some basic "do's and don'ts" to help them become happy, healthy and confident young athletes.

### Parent Do's:

- Encourage your child to try and play any sport he or she enjoys. The biggest motivation for kids to play sports is having fun, and they often drop out because they are no longer finding the activity pleasurable
- Support your child's decision not to play a sport if he or she doesn't want to. Pushing a child into sports may lead to conflict, poor motivation and other problems at home
- Let your child make mistakes. Doing so is part of learning, and if kids are so afraid of messing up that they quit trying, they unknowingly stop improving
- Enjoy what your child does and can do. A parent, who is interested and supportive, but not too serious or directive, will allow the child to set her own goals and be accountable for her achievements
- Encourage your child to set goals, and measure their progress. A child who plays sports often needs help defining appropriate and realistic goals that stretch them without becoming overwhelming. This is one of the best things a parent or coach can influence
- Remind your child of all the health benefits of playing sports, and encourage them to focus on positive health behaviours
- Encourage your child to compete against them self, and use competition as a way to improve their own abilities.

### Parents Don'ts:

- Don't push your goals on your child. Many parents get into trouble by trying to seek out their own identity through their child's success. Remember that your child is a unique person with individual interests and goals, and allow him to define his own goals
- Don't look for excuses for losing a game. Many parents think they are helping by finding blame in the weather, equipment, or field. However, this attitude often backfires because kids fail to learn accountability for the outcome. These kids may never learn from their mistakes or try something new because they are quick to blame others for their short-comings
- Don't focus on winning - focus on fully participating. Children who are expected to win are often too anxious to do their best during a game. Additionally, they may lose interest in sports and competition of any kind. Parents who choose not to focus on having fun, developing new skills and doing one's best encourage kids to become resistant and resentful, unsure of themselves and their abilities, and disinterested in trying again



- Don't criticise or yell instructions during the game. This only embarrasses your child and adds to the pressure they feel. If your child needs some simple feedback, provide it calmly and clearly in a positive way. Tell them one or two things to do, not a list of things not to do. Kids can only handle a little information at once, so be clear and calm.

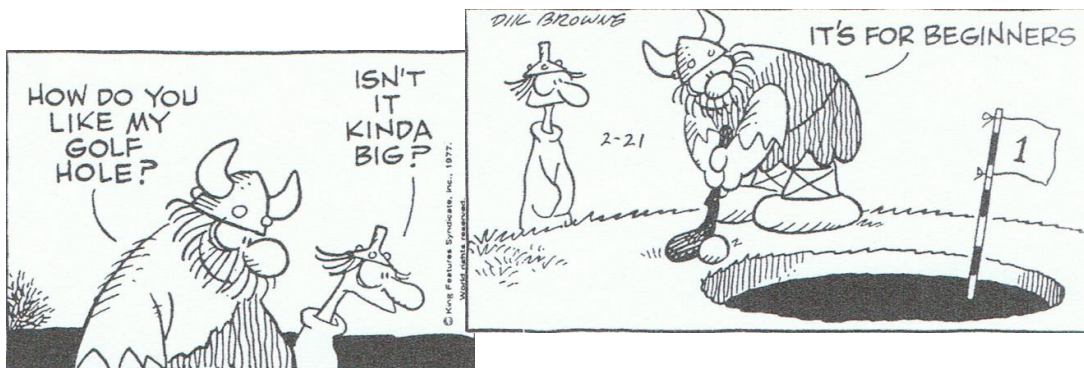
Remember that playing sports as a child should be all about growing, developing, having a good time, and learning important social skills. Most kids want to play sports because they enjoy it. If the sport becomes pressure-filled or overly stressful, kids may lose interest or even develop serious coping issues that take a lot of the joy out of being a kid. Parents can help make sure kids stay kids, have fun playing sports and develop new healthy habits with the right balance of encouragement and support.

Source: Kay Porter, Ph.D. The Mental Athlete, Human Kinetics, 2003

## Umpires

### Tips for the Rookie Sox Umpire:

- Make the game easier for the pitcher and the batter by calling anything hittable a strike
- The more success a young pitcher has, the more likely they will want to pitch
- The novice batter is not sure which pitch to swing at, so instead of restricting them allow them to explore and learn which pitches are hittable.



The effect of calling a BIG strike zone at the Rookie Sox age is huge. A players feeling of self belief will be enhanced toward both pitching and batting.

**Optional:** The umpire can stand behind the pitcher to call the plate or set up behind the catcher with some equipment on.



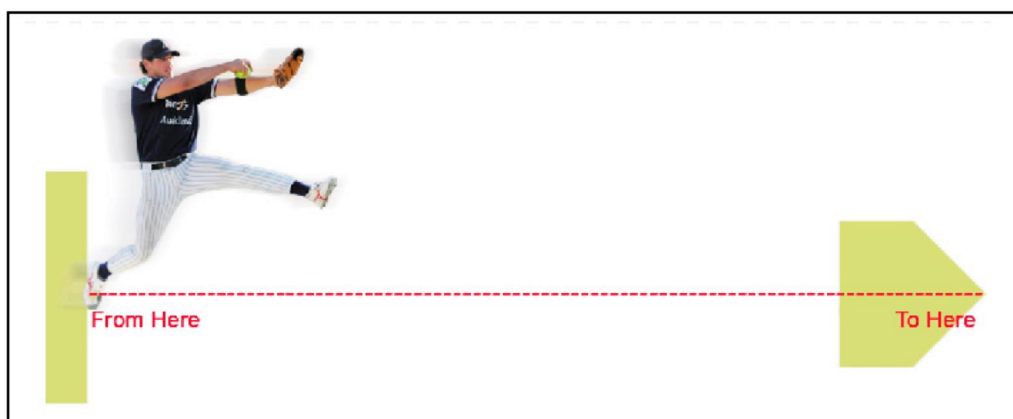
### Big Strike Zone

- The official strike zone in the softball rulebook is when any part of the ball is pitched over the home plate and between the batters armpits and the top of the knees when the batter is in their natural batting stance
  - The official strike zone is too small for the U13 Rookie Sox age group
  - The smaller the player, the smaller the strike zone. It is difficult for an U13 player to pitch consistently to a smaller area
  - A child's strike zone is much smaller than an adult's strike zone
  - The success of the game is very dependent on the umpire's strike zone.
  - The Rookie Sox extended strike zone will ensure that there is more action in a game
- If a pitch is hittable, the umpire should call it a strike
  - Call the game so that the home plate is wider and the height of the zone is stretched lower and higher
  - This will mean the pitcher will have more success at pitching strikes, and batters will be encouraged to swing at more pitches
  - As a consequence there will be less walks in the game and more action and more enjoyment
  - Use of an extended home plate (600mm) will help with the calling of pitches.
  - Optional: The umpire can stand behind the pitcher to call the plate or set up behind the catcher with some equipment on.



### Rookie Sox Pitching Distances

Boys	Girls
- U10 = 10 metres	- U10 = 9 metres
- U12 = 11 metres	- U12 = 10 metres
- U13 = 12 metres	- U13 = 11 metres





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## Scorers

### How to keep score at a Rookie Sox game

Ask the coach to let you keep score during the game. Even if someone has already been designated as scorer, anyone can score for fun. This gives you a purpose for being at the game, besides supporting your child and gets you involved in the outcome of the game.

#### Instructions

- Arrive early with your child so they can practice and you can ask the coach if you can keep score at the game
- Write down the names of the children who will be playing in the game. The coach may already have their players listed. You will also need to get the names from the opposing team
- List the children in the order they will bat and put their position in the appropriate place. For example, you may have Joe leading off and playing first base, Jarred batting second and playing right field and Tana batting third and playing second base. Last names are not important unless there are more than one Joe
- Record the action of the game as per the instructions on the scorecard provided.
- Please find an easy to use scorecard (Appendix A) at the back of the manual to copy and use as you wish.
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## Key tips to help “Champions”

Key tips to help Champions understand the characteristics & needs of players in the Rookie Sox age group

### Encourage fun and learning together

- This age group sees some players reaching puberty; they are becoming more independent, sometimes moody and are capable of developing leadership skills. They react badly to being compared to others in their group as this is regarded as a form of failure, but they are easily motivated and will happily take risks and try to adapt or find ways around rules to achieve success
- In your activities you can start to take a step away from skills that are purely fundamental based and start incorporating activities or situations that are more sport specific
- Your activities will mimic situations in game play and allows players to have the opportunity to increase their decision making
- Competition becomes more important at this age group, but make sure that you encourage the way to win is via improvement not luck. This age group understands that if they work hard or try harder there is the likelihood that they will improve which means success
- Remember to acknowledge not only the more able players, but the players that are showing some kind of improvement for their own level of ability. You can start to incorporate role models (if you have some available) to motivate players
- This age group starts to show leadership characteristics, so incorporate leadership into your game sense activities and make sure you change the leader allowing everyone the opportunity to take on this role and feel accomplishment
- Encourage your athlete centered questioning and get the players to learn through mistakes they have made and giving them the opportunity to take on challenges
- Remember to make your drills/activities/games to include cooperation with each other and reinforce the enjoyment with playing with others. This age group likes group activities and to feel included in a group.

### The big ‘no no’s’

- Don’t allow players to feel isolated and bored
- Do not provide negative criticism or compare players abilities
- Don’t take away any decision making opportunities.

### Remember

Players will start to identify or want to be in groups with their friends or those of the same gender.



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## Rookie Sox Modified Game Options

Novice Rookie Sox and Rookie Sox offer various differences from standard softball. The following options exemplify what Rookie Sox is all about; fun, development of players and fair playing time.

### Novice Rookie Sox– Parent/Coach Pitch

**Equipment Required:** Medium bat, 11 or 12+flexi balls, set of bases including safety base, home plate (600mm wide) pitching strip, gloves, catching equipment, batting helmets.

**Rules:** The normal rules of softball apply unless modified as stated below

- A minimum of 7 and a maximum of 12 players on the field
- A parent or coach shall lob (pitch) the ball over the plate for their own hitting team and should not be any closer than 10 metres. The coach does not field any hit balls
- A defensive player should be fielded in the normal pitching position and fields any ball hit in that direction
- There will be no walks. The batter remains in the batter's box until the ball is hit, unless they have swung and missed the 3rd strike where the batter shall then be called out
- There are only swing and miss strikes. Foul balls will not be counted as strikes. Three swing and misses and the batter are out
- Try to keep a gender balance between infield and outfield and allow players to rotate positions in new innings
- Games run for approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes and both teams must have had an equal turn at fielding & hitting
- Everyone has a turn at bat per innings
- No penalty for batting out of order
- Infield fly rule and dropped third strike rule not in affect
- Base runners are encouraged to run anytime the ball is hit, either in the air or on the ground. If the ball is caught the batter is out and the base runners must go back to the base they started from when the ball is hit
- No stealing bases
- Play will be deemed suspended, at the call of the umpire, once control of the ball has been maintained, usually within the framework of the infield
- Catchers must wear a mask, leggings and helmet, all batters and base runners must wear helmets
- Metal cleats prohibited
- Recommended base distance for 9-10yr olds: 12.0 metres



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- Recommended base distance for 11-12yr olds: 14.0 metres
  - No score is taken as the focus is on participation not competition.

## Novice Rookie Sox – Machine Pitch

**Equipment Required:** Medium bat, 11 or 12+flexi balls, set of bases including safety base, home plate (600mm wide) pitching strip, gloves, catching equipment, batting helmets.

**Rules:** The normal rules of softball apply unless modified as stated below.

Novice Rookie Sox Machine Pitch is the same concept as Parent pitch (above) but uses a machine to pitch the ball as opposed to a parent.

- The offensive team will be responsible for providing an adult coach to load the pitching machine while their team is batting. The pitching coach is NOT allowed to give directions to the base runners.

The following will be required on the part of the pitching coach:

1. The pitching coach will not load the machine until the umpire signals to ~~play~~ ball+
  2. On every pitch, the pitching coach will raise the ball over their head signalling to the defensive team that the ball is about to be loaded into the machine
  3. Load the ball onto machine
  4. The pitching coach must stand behind the pitching machine and not interfere with the field of play.
- Failure to comply with these rules will result in a ~~no~~ pitch+. This will be called at the umpire's discretion
  - The catcher should return the ball to the defensive pitcher after each pitch
  - Should the pitched ball be hit and strike the pitching machine, the ball will be dead and all runners will return to their bases. No strike will be charged to the batter
  - There will be a two metre diameter space around the pitching machine. Any thrown ball that settles in area is a dead ball and runners may not advance. If a runner is half way to next base he can continue to that base.
  - The umpire will verify the machine speed is set correctly following each half-inning prior to calling ~~play~~ ball+
  - Adjustment of the pitching machine can only be recommended if three (3) consecutive non-strikes are thrown
  - The pitching machine will only be touched or used by an adult
  - A ~~No~~ Pitch+ will be called if the Machine pitches outside of the normal strike zone due to wind or mechanical adjustment






- Play ends when the pitcher has control of the ball next to the Mechanical Pitching device or umpire calls time. If a runner is 1/2 way to next base standard softball rules apply, runner must make a decision to progress or return to base
- Machine can be adjusted when throwing inconsistently. Umpire should notify both teams.






## Mechanical Pitching Device (Ultimate Pitching Machine)



# SETUP

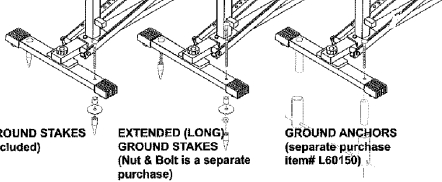


# ULTIMATE PITCHING MACHINE USER'S GUIDE

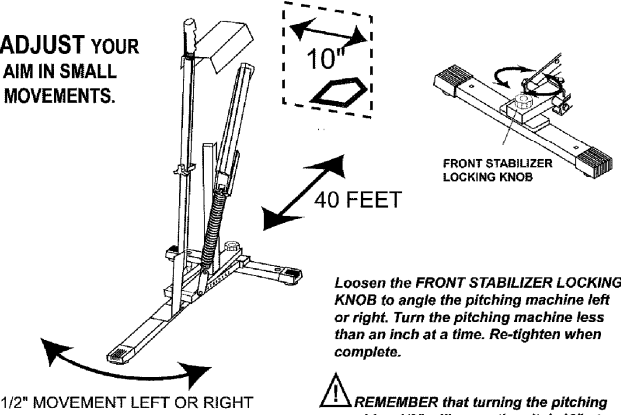
**AIM YOUR PITCHING MACHINE AND ANCHOR SECURELY.**

GROUND STAKES are included to secure the pitching machine on most surfaces. However if using on loose soil or the machine is jumping you may need to obtain longer bolts and add a nut to make an EXTENDED STAKE (shown).

Removable GROUND ANCHORS can be purchased for secure permanent locations.



**ADJUST YOUR AIM IN SMALL MOVEMENTS.**



Loosen the FRONT STABILIZER LOCKING KNOB to angle the pitching machine left or right. Turn the pitching machine less than an inch at a time. Re-tighten when complete.

**REMEMBER** that turning the pitching machine 1/2" will move the pitch 10" at a distance of 40 feet.

1/2" MOVEMENT LEFT OR RIGHT

**WARNING:** Never operate the machine if parts are missing or broken. Use under adult supervision.

### UPM (Mechanical Pitcher) Settings

The following are the settings to be set on the Mechanical Pitching device for all games:

Foot pedal . 5

Release bar . 4

Throwing arm . 2

Mechanical Pitching Devices available from:

[sales@exclusivesports.co.nz](mailto:sales@exclusivesports.co.nz)

## Rookie Sox – Regular Game

**Equipment Required:** Medium bat, 11 or 12+flexi balls, set of bases including safety base, home plate (600mm wide) pitching strip, gloves, catching equipment, batting helmets.

**Rules:** The normal rules of softball apply unless modified as stated below

- A minimum of 7 and a maximum of 12 players on the field
- A pitcher is not allowed to pitch more than once through the batting order
- Therefore each pitcher can only face each batter once per game
- Teams should be encouraged to use as many pitchers and catchers as possible.
- Umpires calling of the strike zone at this level should be generous



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- Have the coach/umpire stand behind the pitcher to call the plate. From this position, they can call the plate, encourage the pitcher and help direct the field
  - Try to keep a gender balance between infield and outfield and allow players to rotate positions in new innings
  - Games run for approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes and both teams must have had an equal turn at fielding & hitting
  - Everyone has a turn at bat per innings
  - No penalty for batting out of order
  - Infield fly rule and dropped third strike rule not in affect
  - Base runners are encouraged to run anytime the ball is hit, either in the air or on the ground. If the ball is caught the batter is out and the base runners must go back to the base they started from when the ball was hit
  - Stealing bases is to be encouraged
  - Play will be deemed suspended, at the call of the umpire, once control of the ball has been maintained, usually within the framework of the infield.
  - Catchers must wear a mask, leggings and helmet, all batters and base runners must wear helmets
  - Metal cleats prohibited
  - Base distance should be the normal distance of 18.3m
  - The score will be recorded and the team with the most runs wins
  - Please refer to the following page for guidelines on the %Rookie Sox Strike Zone+.



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## Rookie Sox – Share the Load

Rookie Sox Share the Load is the same concept as Rookie Sox (regular game) but with the following pitching differences.

- Players may not pitch in more than three (3) innings in a game.
- Delivery of a single pitch consists of having pitched an inning.
- A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once in the same inning as he/she was removed from play.
- Any player on a team may pitch. (NB: there is no limit to the number of eligible pitchers a team may use in a game).

## Rookie Sox – Fastpitch

Rookie Sox Fastpitch rules can be applied to %Rookie Sox+and %Rookie Sox Share the load+.

Rookie Sox Fastpitch provides the offensive team with a runner positioned on a particular base each innings. There are a number of reasons for this; 1) installs more action, and 2) allow teams to play and understand defensive situations.

- 1st inning - play as per normal
- 2nd inning - runner starts on 1<sup>st</sup>
- 3rd inning - runner starts on 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 4th inning - runner starts on 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 5th inning - runner starts on 1<sup>st</sup>
- 6th inning - runner starts on 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 7th inning - runner starts on 3<sup>rd</sup>



## Coaching Modules

### The Novice Rookie Sox Pitcher

#### How to coach the Novice Rookie Sox pitcher

##### Fast Spin



- Encourage and develop the confidence and self belief of your young pitchers by ensuring there is a level of success
- Creating a fast spin on the ball is one of the things a novice pitcher can achieve
- Show the player how to grip the ball with 3 or 4 fingers on the Letter C seam
- Use the fingers and the wrist to create a fast spin.

##### Fast Arm



- Create the right %Have a Go+environment.
- Encourage all the players in the team to %Have a Go+at pitching at practice. Do this at every practice for 15 minutes. Practice time is needed more than game time at this age
- Encourage your pitchers to have a %Go for It+attitude
- We do not want pitchers to be careful
- Pitch it hard with an extra fast downswing from 12 o'clock, the top of the pitching motion.

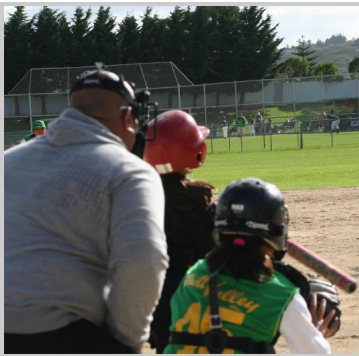
##### BIG Strike Zone



- Be realistic with your expectations and provide lots of encouragement
- The novice pitcher will always pitch more balls than strikes, so don't expect too many strikes
- The umpire on junior games should have a generous strike zone. The Rookie Zone extended home plate will help
- If the pitch is hittable call it a strike
- Encourage batters to hit pitches they can reach.



## Game Plan



- Share the Load+of pitching in games
- Have 5-6 players try pitching in each game. Don't expect one player to pitch the entire game
- Players can change defensive positions at anytime during the game
- Most players are keen to have a Go+at pitching in a game, but not if they have to pitch the whole game
- Make sure you change the pitcher if they are struggling eg: if they walk 3 batters in a row, give the pitcher a break.





## Rookie Sox Pitching Guidelines

### Rookie Sox Pitching Sequence

#### Description

##### Set Up



- Stand on the mound with hands apart and feet a comfortable shoulder width apart
- Put hands together with arms resting on the body
- Pause for a 2 second count
- Breathe
- Breathe in and blow out longer.

##### Pitching Rules for the set up

###### Hands apart

- Once the batter has stepped up to the plate, the pitcher must firstly stand on the mound with both hands apart
- Hands together: Then the hands are put together and the pitcher must pause for a minimum of 2 seconds and no longer than 5 seconds

###### Step & pitch

- The next move is to step forward and pitch.

##### Use Both Arms



- Relaxed arm swing in form of a reversed letter C out in front of body , arms back to body in ready position to begin pitch

### Stay Tall



- The pitcher will bend to start the pitch but once the arms are out in front of the body the torso should be upright and remain upright until after the follow through.
- Push off hard from the mound
- Body is upright when stride foot contacts with ground

### Up & Close



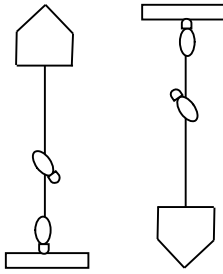
- Pitching arm circle to rotate in straight line with bicep brushing near ear and palm/ball to rotate outwards at the top of arm circle.

### Letter K



- At the top of the upswing the shoulders have turned and the body has opened
- The body and arms have formed the Letter K.
- Pivot foot laces are facing foul line.

### Power Line



- Step on a direct line toward home plate with the stride foot landing on imaginary line to catcher at 1-2 o'clock (RHP), 10-11 o'clock (LHP).
- This is called the power line
- The landing foot helps to open and close the hips better. It also keeps flex in the knee, which is a safer option.

### Fast Arm



- Fast downswing from the 12 o'clock position.
- A fast arm should be consistent, in coordination with the body.
- The arm should be quicker at the bottom of the motion.

### Fast Spin



- Use the fingers and wrist to create a fast spin and keep the pitching arm fast at the bottom of the motion.

### Stride & Follow Through

- Slide the back leg in behind the front leg quickly to add more power to the pitch
- The back toe of the back foot should be pointing into the ground
- Allow the pitching arm to follow through up to the chest.



## The Novice Rookie Sox Catcher

### How to coach the Novice Rookie Sox catcher

#### Get The Gear On



- Safety is a priority
- Mask, Chest protector, Leg guards
- Your equipment must fit the child properly in order for them to feel safe
- The combo facemask and helmet is recommended for children
- Encourage all players to try the catchers equipment on and
- Experience the position of catching

#### Have A Go



- Practice at training with all the catchers equipment on so the child can get familiar with the gear
- Start by tossing some easy pitches to the player in the gear
- Get your Novice Rookie Sox Pitcher to pitch to the catcher in practice
- Practice with a batter in the batter's box at practice
- Set up a game situation at practice

### Game Plan






- Have a game plan of playing 3 or more players at catcher in each game. Don't expect one player to catch the entire game
- Make sure these players have had enough practice time at receiving a pitch with a batter and all the gear on
- The full catcher's equipment must always be worn by the catcher in a game
- If the catcher is really struggling, change them during the inning; otherwise change them when the new innings starts.



## Rookie Sox Catching Guidelines

### Squat & Receive

Description	
<b>Position in Crouch</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Feet under the knees and shoulder width apart</li><li>- Knees are pointing straight ahead toward the pitcher</li><li>- Throwing hand is behind the back or behind the leg for safety</li><li>- Catch with the glove hand only</li><li>- Bring the throwing hand around only when the ball is in the glove to avoid being hit by a possible foul tip</li><li>- Position the catcher a safe distance directly behind the home plate a good bat length away from the batter.</li></ul>
<b>Catch the Ball</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Catch the ball out in front of the knees where you can see it.</li></ul>
<b>Catch &amp; Hold</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- When the pitched ball is close to the strike zone, hold the ball in the glove for a moment and wait for the umpire to call it a strike</li><li>- If the pitched ball is nowhere near the strike zone, just catch it.</li></ul>

### Eyes Open



- Watch the ball all the way into the glove.
- Try to keep eyes open when the batter swings and misses the ball.

**Notes:**

## Rookie Sox Fielding & Throwing

### Fielding

#### Description

##### Ready Position

###### Infield



##### Body position

- Feet are shoulder width apart
- The knees are well bent with the tail low
- Head is up and eyes are focused on the strike zone
- Upper body is relaxed.

##### Weight distribution

- The weight is forward, but spread along the entire foot.

##### Hand position

- The hands are low, with the glove close to the ground
- Elbows should be out in front of the knees.

###### Outfield



The ready position for an outfielder is different from that of an infielder as the outfielder has a lot more time to react to the ball.

- The body is taller for outfielders than for infielders
- Walk 3-4 steps on every pitch
- Both arms out in front of the body, palms to the batter.

##### Fielding the Ball

##### Body position

- Stay low, with the knees well bent and tail down. The head should move only to enable the fielder to watch the ball into the glove.

##### Body Angle

- The body should be directly facing the oncoming ball.



#### Feet position

- Feet are at least shoulder width apart
- Striding foot should be slightly ahead of the pivot foot or square onto the ball.

#### Hand position

- Hands should be well out in front, and should touch the ground creating a triangle
- The ball is fielded from the ground up
- The glove is held wide open facing the ball
- As the ball hits the glove, give with the ball and trap with the free hand. Transfer both hands into a continuous throwing motion.

#### Catching a Fly ball



- Get under the ball fast, move feet & body behind and under the ball
- Call loudly for the ball
- All fly balls must be caught above eye level
- Place throwing hand beside glove, thumbs together, glove up
- Extend arms - make a target for the ball
- Look for the middle of the ball into the pocket of the glove
- Make the catch and throw one single smooth action.

## Throwing (Over arm throw)

### Description

#### Grip



- Hold the ball with two or three fingers across the seams. The right one for you is the one, which is most comfortable and natural
- Holding the ball across the seams gives you a better grip and achieves more accuracy and speed.

#### Step / Hip / Arm Action



- Stride, with the foot opposite the throwing hand. When completed, the toe of the stride foot should be at a 45 degree angle
- Point the elbow or glove towards the target for accuracy
- As the step is taken, the hips, upper body and shoulders rotate towards the throwing side
- As the step is taken, the throwing arm is swung down and back behind the body, then up so that the elbow of the throwing arm should be extended but relaxed.

#### Release / Follow Through



- Release the ball with plenty of wrist snap
- The body should continue its forward rotation until the throwing shoulder is pointing at the target
- The throwing hand is allowed to continue down to, or even past, the opposite hip, and the back leg swings forward naturally.



## Rookie Sox Hitting & Baserunning

### Hitting

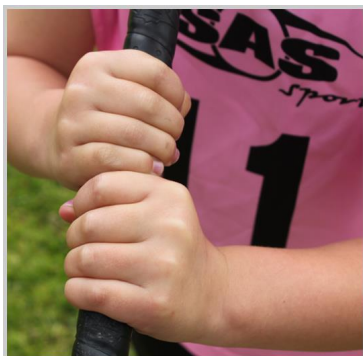
#### Description

##### Bat Selection



- Softball bats are available in a variety of lengths and weights. The main thing is to ensure that the bat is comfortable for the athlete to handle
- Hitting a ball hard depends more on bat speed than on the bat weight, so players should use a bat they can swing easily and quickly.

##### Grip



- Hold the bat in the fingers . this helps to maintain the wrist flexibility
- Try to align the middle knuckles of the hands.

##### Set up



- The batter must be set up and ready. Being ready means the body and bat are poised to launch into a smooth, swing. These are the main points to address:
- Feet should be comfortably spread a little more than shoulder width apart. Weight should be slightly on the back foot
- Knees should be slightly bent and comfortable to give stability
- Arms should be comfortably away from the body
- Hands should be at the top of the strike zone
- Eyes are fixed on the spot where the ball will be released by the pitcher.

### Load / Step



- Players should transfer weight from their setup position to the backside of their body before making a forward movement. This is called loading and will develop a powerful swing.
- The step should be short, smooth, and consistent (always the same length).
- The toes should be towards the plate.

### Hip Rotation



- Hip rotation should occur when the stepping foot has contacted the ground.
- Get your players to be %explosive+at this point.

### Swing



- The keys to an effective swing are balance, timing, and fast hands.

The swing can be viewed as a three-step process.

- First, the batter takes loads / steps
- This is followed by a quick rotation of the hips
- This leads to the swing executed by the shoulders, arms and hands in that order. Hands drive inside the ball.

### Follow through



- The shoulders rotate and the arms and hands complete the arc, with the bat ending up behind the body.

## Baserunning

### Description

#### Exiting the Batter's Box



- The runner uses a good follow through on the swing and shifts their weight to the front foot
- The player stays low, drives the elbows down, and explodes out of the box
- Lean forward when running and getting out of the box to help drive the body forward
- High knees to front
- Drive with arms in straight line (not swinging arms across the body)
- Relaxed muscles go faster.

#### Running through First Base



- Run in a straight line toward first base/safety base
- Do not watch the ball
- Take a quick look at your First Base Coach for signals
- Do not lunge or extend the final step, stride naturally. Touch the front edge of first base.
- Turn right and return directly to 1B (Not the safety base),

#### Braking



- Once through first base it is important to slow down (brake) as quickly as possible so there is a chance to go to second base
- Slow down with short choppy steps
- Body weight on the back of heels
- Lean backwards with arms stationary (not pumping).

### Rounding bases



- Run the shortest possible distance between bases. Loop 2-3 meters outside the baseline when running to the base
- Step on the INSIDE corner of the bag with either foot
- Lean in and turn as the base is touched to help get a sharper turn on the corner
- Be ready to advance to the next base.

### Leading off



- The left foot is placed on or against the outside/front edge of the base i.e. the edge closest to the outfield. The right foot is extended backwards, behind the base
- Lead off with every pitch
- Be in a position to use a cross over step to either return quickly to the base or advance to the next.





# Training Session

## Pitching Session

<b>Key Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thinking - Figure out how to get the ball spinning quickly</li> <li>- Participating.</li> </ul>	<b>Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn the movement involved in pitching a softball</li> <li>- Positive attitudes . Discover the joy of having a go with a go for it attitude.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b> <p>A softball glove and a softball for each participant. A high block wall or high net to pitch into, and a field or a court to pitch in pairs and to play the TGFU (Teaching games for understanding) game.</p> <p>Assessment / What would success look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All students actively having a go at pitching</li> </ul>	

Activity	Organisation/Management/Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the children to help themselves to a glove and a ball. A right handed person would wear the glove on the left hand and a left hander person would wear the glove on the right hand. The other hand is then free to throw the ball</li> <li>- Ask the children to look at the seams on the ball</li> <li>- There is a wide seam and also a narrow seam. Can they see the wide seam? It looks like a letter C</li> <li>- Put 3 or 4 fingers across this letter C seam</li> <li>- Ask the children to toss the ball up in the air to themselves and catch it in the glove</li> <li>- Do this 10-20 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Next step have all the children lined up facing the same direction</li> <li>- Ask the children to hold the glove at hip height to side of bare hand. Bare hand tosses the ball into the glove</li> <li>- Get it spinning quickly and feel it roll off the fingers as it is tossed into the glove.</li> </ul> <p><b>Get a grip – Letter C</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure the children have the pads of their fingers on the seam rather than just their fingertips so they can feel the seam</li> </ul> <p><b>Fast Spin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask how can we get the ball spinning faster?</li> <li>- Use the fingers and the wrist to apply a faster spin</li> <li>- The ball should be held comfortably in the</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasis is fast spin on the toss</li> <li>- Ask the children to push the ball back further into their palm. Does this make it easier or harder to get a faster spin?</li> <li>- Definitely a slower spin back in the palm because you can't use your fingers very well</li> </ul>	<p>fingers not the palm and this grip will help toward a faster spin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure the children are facing in same direction so as not to hit each other with missed ball.</li> </ul>
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## Drills

### Hip Thrust Drill

- Start in stride position
- Raise arm straight up above head
- Drop arm and release ball whilst thrusting hip forward into a closed position.

### Arm Curl Drill

- Standing in a front on position, place a piece of dowel between the elbow and the small of the back
- Coach holds dowel in place and pitcher takes arm back
- Drop arm and release the ball. Elbow will stop at dowel and flex around it.

### Arm Circles

- Rotate pitching arm a set number of times as quickly as possible
- Start young players on 10 revolutions and gradually increase number of circles as pitchers develop.



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## Running a Training Session

Remember to make your drills/activities/games one where players need to cooperate with each other which reinforces the enjoyment of playing with others. Involve all children equally in practices and games and encourage FUN and LEARNING together. This age group likes group activities and to feel included in a group.

Things to consider when planning a session may include some or all of the following:

- What do I want the children to learn today?
- What areas do we need to improve on from last week's game?
- How can I best get the children to work on areas of weakness?
- How will I know if they understand what I am telling them?
- How do I plan for the different players abilities?
- Have I included %Game Sense+coaching activities into my training session?
- What resources do I need during the practice session?

Coaching sessions will be most effective if the following strategies are adopted.

### Introductory Activity

Physical warm-up: Children will arrive eager to begin the session.

- Engage them in jogging and dynamic muscle stretching (stretching with movement)
- Include fun competitive team games using a spongy ball or flexi ball.

Skills warm-up: Use fun skill drills for warm-up activities

- As the children practice, circulate amongst them reinforcing key teaching points and helping them with technique
- Start incorporating activities or situations that are more sport specific. Make sure that your activities mimic situations in game play and allows players to have the opportunity to increase their decision making
- Praise and comment on improvements that are occurring.

### Individual and team skills practice

- Demonstrate, or have demonstrated each new skill
- Describe and demonstrate the skill in simple terms, in a supporting and encouraging way
- Ensure that all children can clearly see the demonstration
- Gradually move the activity from individual, to partner, to small groups of practices
- Observe and talk with the children as they practice
- As the group performance improves, gradually increase the demands of the practice by increasing the speed and/or accuracy of the task and training in game . like situations.



### Modified Game Play:

- Allow the children to practice newly acquired skills in modified game situations where the number of skills is limited
- Gradually increase the number of skills involved in the games by changing the rules or changing the game
- Move to the next stage of game play only when the children have reached a good level of understanding and performance.

### Conclusion

- Conclude the session with a slow jog and muscle stretching
- Make sure the children help collect in the equipment used
- Prior to dismissing the group, highlight some of the interesting aspects of the session and talk about what will be happening next time
- Remind parents and children of your next game time and venue and what time you expect them there ready to go.



## Training Plan #1 (example) – Emphasis on Pitching & Catching

Date	Training #1	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, hitting tee, flexi balls, bats, wiffle balls, bases, home plate, coloured bands</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delegate tasks to helpers</li> <li>- Give a brief outline of the days training</li> <li>- Indicate to parents what time it will finish</li> <li>- Ensure children have drinks and snacks accessible</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up: Start with a short jog</b>  Demonstrate dynamic stretching routines between cones set 15m apart Get players to take turns providing a different exercise each training  <b>Skills Warm Up: Goalie Softball</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Select 2 even teams. Give out coloured bands to one team</li> <li>- Set out cones for a suitable size rectangular field with extra cones for goal posts and a goal area at each end of the field.</li> <li>- The object of this game is to get the ball to your goalie+catcher.</li> <li>- The game starts with one team throwing the ball in from the end line opposite their goalie.</li> <li>- The ball must be passed at least 4 times before the goalie receives it.</li> <li>- The goalie must remain in the goal area at all times and must catch the ball on the full when it is thrown to them. A point is awarded when the goalie receives the ball. The ball is handed over to the opposition to restart the game from the end line</li> <li>- A player cannot run or move off the spot with the ball.</li> <li>- The ball goes to the other team if: the ball is dropped; the other team intercepts the ball; someone steps outside the boundary; they step or run with the ball; they catch the ball with their non-glove hand or if someone other than the goalie steps into the goal area.</li> <li>- Set a score to be reached according to the time you have and the ability of your group eg first team to score 3 points wins.</li> </ul>				
<b>Skills Development Activity:</b>  <b>Pitching – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up, grip, letter C</li> <li>2. Arm actions, letter K, hips, power line</li> <li>3. Fast arm, fast spin, slide, follow through</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get the children to mimic or shadow your pitching demonstration.</li> <li>- Line them up opposite a fence with a ball each. Start in stride position (side on to fence); raise arm straight above head; drop arm and release</li> </ul>				



<p>ball (pitch) whilst thrusting the hip forward into a closed position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On your instruction they retrieve their own ball at the same time (safety) and return to the line. Repeat</li> <li>- On go+now get them to pitch the ball as hard as they can using a full pitching motion. Repeat</li> <li>- Allow lots of space between children and expect the ball to be pitched wayward in the early stages of practising this skill.</li> </ul> <p><b>Catching – Demonstrate key points</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Crouch position</li> <li>2. Glove and hand placement</li> <li>3. Catch the ball in front of the knees</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get the children to mimic or shadow your catching demonstration.</li> <li>- Pair the children up with similar abilities. Form lines 10m apart with plenty of space between each pair (safety)</li> <li>- Take turns to pitch and catch</li> <li>- Have 10 consecutive pitches before changing roles</li> <li>- How many times can you hit the target in 10 pitches?</li> </ul> <p><b>Concluding Activity: Three Team Hitting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divide children into three teams, A, B, &amp; C.</li> <li>- B and C play defence, A is up to bat</li> <li>- Coach pitches or player pitches, depending on age level &amp; capability</li> <li>- Team A bats until 3 outs are made</li> <li>- After 3 outs, Team B goes to bat, Team A goes into field and so on</li> <li>- Players must remember who made the last out so next in order leads off in the following inning</li> <li>- Play until each team has batted three times to determine the winner</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyone to collect in the equipment</li> <li>- Go briefly over what went well and what might be worked on at the next training</li> <li>- Announce the next training time and venue</li> <li>- Announce game time, venue and what time players are expected to be there ready to go.</li> </ul>		

**Notes:**

## Training Plan #2 (example) – Emphasis on Throwing, Fielding & Hitting

Date	Training #2	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, hitting tee, flexi balls, bats, wiffle balls, bases, home plate</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delegate tasks to helpers</li> <li>- Give a brief outline of the days training</li> <li>- Indicate to parents what time it will finish</li> <li>- Ensure children have drinks and snacks accessible</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up: Start with a short jog</b>  Demonstrate dynamic stretching routines between cones set 15m apart Get players to take turns providing a different exercise each training  <b>Skills Warm Up: Throw, Bounce &amp; Catch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collect a ball and find a free space</li> <li>- Underarm throw the ball into the air, allow the ball to bounce once, then catch it (repeat)</li> <li>- Run slowly and underarm throw the ball into the air. Allow it to bounce once before catching it (repeat)</li> <li>- Form 2 teams standing opposite each other 10 metres apart</li> <li>- Underarm throw the ball to the opposite team</li> <li>- The receiving team returns the ball in the same way</li> <li>- The winning team is the one that catches the ball the most over a 2 minute period</li> </ul>				
<b>Skills Development Activity:</b>  <b>Throwing – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grip</li> <li>2. Step / Hip / Arm Action</li> <li>3. Release / Follow Through</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get the children to mimic or shadow your throwing demonstration</li> <li>- Each child has a ball</li> <li>- Line them up opposite a fence and on go+they all throw the ball at the fence at the same time (emphasis on demonstrated skills)</li> <li>- On your instruction they retrieve their own ball at the same time (safety) and return to the line</li> <li>- Repeat</li> </ul> <b>Fielding – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ready position</li> <li>2. Fielding the ball</li> <li>3. Catching the ball</li> </ol>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children line up opposite each other 5 metres apart</li> <li>- Roll the ball to each other adopting the low ready position</li> <li>- Emphasise collecting the ball into the glove with 2 hands</li> <li>- Advance to lobbing fly balls to each other; emphasis on catching with 2 hands</li> </ul> <p><b>Hitting – Demonstrate key points</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grip</li> <li>2. Set up</li> <li>3. Swing</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up 2 hitting stations (i) hitting tee (ii) soft toss station</li> <li>- Have adults manage each station using the same fielding group for both stations (make sure hits are alternated so that the fielding team is watching for balls hit from both stations)</li> <li>- Rotate the children from the hitting tee, to the soft toss station to the fielding group</li> <li>- Allow only 5 swings at each station to keep the activity busy and moving</li> </ul> <p><b>Concluding Activity: Throw Relay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form groups of 4</li> <li>- Players 1, 2, and 3 line up behind the catching line. Player 4 stands 5 metres in front of the line, facing 1</li> <li>- On go, 4 throws the ball to 1</li> <li>- 1 throws it back and runs to the end of the line</li> <li>- 4 throws to each player in turn, until all players are back in their original positions</li> <li>- Continue until the first leader is back in place.</li> <li>- For variation; repeat the relay at 10m, 15m, 20m</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyone to collect in the equipment</li> <li>- Go briefly over what went well and what might be worked on at the next training</li> <li>- Announce the next training time and venue</li> <li>- Announce game time, venue and what time players are expected to be there ready to go</li> </ul>		

**Notes:**

## Training Plan #3 (example) – Emphasis on Hitting, Baserunning, Pitching & Catching

Date	Training #3	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, hitting tee, flexi balls, bats, wiffle balls, bases, home plate, coloured bands</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delegate tasks to helpers</li> <li>- Give a brief outline of the days training</li> <li>- Indicate to parents what time it will finish</li> <li>- Ensure children have drinks and snacks accessible</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up: Start with a short jog</b>  Demonstrate dynamic stretching routines between cones set 15m apart Get players to take turns providing a different exercise each training  <b>Skills Warm Up: Softball Soccer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Select 2 even teams. Give out coloured bands to one team.</li> <li>- Rolling and fielding the ball, players attempt to score goals.</li> <li>- The ball can only roll through the goals and cannot be lifted into the air.</li> <li>- A player cannot run or move off the spot with the ball.</li> <li>- Players cannot go outside the boundaries</li> </ul>				
<b>Skills Development Activity:</b>  <b>Hitting – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grip</li> <li>2. Step / Hip / Arm Action</li> <li>3. Wrist Snap / Follow Through</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get the children to mimic or shadow your hitting demonstration without a bat.</li> <li>- Set up a tee with a ball on top. Children line up at a designated safe spot and take turns to hit the ball off the tee. Have adults available to help manage this activity and retrieve balls.</li> <li>- Swing at the ball, drop the bat and swing arms hard to help maintain balance and increase speed</li> <li>- After hitting the ball, children run straight through 1<sup>st</sup> base and do not slow down until they are 3 steps past the base</li> <li>- Repeat; but this time have them run past 1<sup>st</sup> base towards 2<sup>nd</sup> base</li> <li>- Emphasise touching the inside of the base with either foot, depending on the stride and lean toward the centre of the diamond</li> <li>- Repeat; but have them run around the whole diamond</li> </ul>				

<p><b>Pitching &amp; Catching (Battery) – Demonstrate key points</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pitching set up, grip, letter C</li> <li>2. Pitching arm actions, letter K, hips, power line</li> <li>3. Pitching with fast arm, fast spin, slide, follow through</li> <li>4. Catching crouch</li> <li>5. Catching glove and hand placement</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get the children to mimic or shadow your demonstration</li> <li>- Without a ball, get the children to stand side on and rotate the pitching arm as quickly as possible</li> <li>- Start young players on 10 revolutions and gradually increase the number of circles as pitchers develop</li> <li>- Pair the children up with similar abilities. Form lines 10m apart with plenty of space between each pair (safety)</li> <li>- Take turns to pitch and catch</li> <li>- Have 10 consecutive pitches before changing roles</li> <li>- How many times can you hit the target in 10 pitches?</li> </ul> <p><b>Concluding Activity: Home Run or Out</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lay out a diamond, adding 4 extra bases 3m outside the normal bases</li> <li>- Set up a batting tee at the home base position</li> <li>- Form 2 teams of 7 and take turns to bat or field</li> <li>- The batters; hit the ball off the tee into fair territory and then run the outside bases touching all 4 bases</li> <li>- The fielders; spread out inside the field and try to catch or field the batted ball then throw the ball to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and then home base to beat the runner</li> <li>- If the ball reaches home base before the runner, the runner is out. If the runner reaches home base before the ball, the batting team scores 1 home run</li> <li>- When all batters have had a turn, change over</li> <li>- The team with the most home runs is the winner</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyone to collect in the equipment</li> <li>- Go briefly over what went well and what might be worked on at the next training</li> <li>- Announce the next training time and venue</li> <li>- Announce game time, venue and what time players are expected to be there ready to go</li> </ul>		



## Training Plan #4 (example) – Throwing

Date	Training #4	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, 11+&amp; 12+flexiballs, wiffle balls, tennis balls, 3 different size hula hoops, 10m rope, duct tape</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction</li> <li>- Brief on equipment and safety</li> <li>- Brief outline: Throwing &amp; Games</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jog between cones set at 20m; forwards, backwards, sideways, cross over step etc</li> <li>- Dynamic Stretching Routines over 20m; specific focus on shoulder area</li> </ul> <p>Fox and Geese:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form groups of 5. In each group, one is the fox, the others are the geese</li> <li>- The geese must be linked by holding the waist of the person in front.</li> <li>- The front goose tries to protect the others by blocking the path of the fox, who is attempting to tag the last goose.</li> <li>- After a few minutes, rotate positions so that there is a new fox</li> </ul>				
<b>Throwing – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Face target</li> <li>2. Grip the ball across the seams . backwards letter C</li> <li>3. Hold the ball in the fingers . rabbit ears grip</li> <li>4. Arm goes back in a circle into a 90°-shaped position . like winding a spring</li> <li>5. At the same time pivot the feet to rotate the hips . squash the bug</li> <li>6. Step forward with opposite foot (than that of throwing arm)</li> <li>7. Move arm quickly down and let the ball go with a strong wrist snap down . uncoil the spring</li> <li>8. Non-throwing hand should be pointing to the target - where you want the ball to go</li> <li>9. Throwing hand should finish at or past the hip - follow through</li> <li>10. Throwing shoulder pointed at the target</li> <li>11. Back leg swings forward naturally to a balanced position</li> </ol>				
<b>Throwing Activities:</b> <p>Shadowing: Without a ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find a clear space</li> <li>- Everyone is to copy the throwing actions of the coach. Repeat several times</li> </ul>				



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pretend you are a baseball pitcher . wind up for the big pitch</li> </ul> <p><b>Basketball Spins:</b> With a ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lift the ball above the head as if to shoot a basketball.</li> <li>- Elbows pointed forward</li> <li>- Back of the hand parallel to the ground</li> <li>- Spin the ball towards the sky for as many rotations as possible</li> <li>- The wrist should follow through with the palm facing down ward</li> <li>- Repeat 10 times</li> </ul> <p><b>Hula Hoop Throw</b> (tennis ball or suitable size flexiball each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form 3 equal groups facing a hula hoop that has been roped onto a fence or wall at above shoulder height</li> <li>- Students stand in a line behind each other 10m away from the hoop</li> <li>- On go, the first person in the line throws the ball at the hoop target.</li> <li>- Once every front person in the 3 lines has thrown their ball, on the coaches command, they retrieve the ball and move to the back of the next line</li> <li>- Repeat until every student has thrown the ball at each of the hoop targets</li> <li>- Variation . Extend the distance of the throwing line</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Game Activities: Two Touch – use a wiffle ball</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form 2 groups within a defined area. One group is %10+ and they have possession of the ball. Each team has a goal area.</li> <li>- The objective is to get the ball across the line on the full to a catcher in the goal area.</li> <li>- The ball is thrown amongst team members to get the ball to their person in goal. You can be touched twice before you have to hand it over.</li> <li>- Turnovers occur if you drop the ball, if you are tagged with the ball twice or if the ball goes out of bounds.</li> <li>- Make it a timed exercise with each team counting the number of %goalsq they get. Emphasise team work</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recap of lesson</li> <li>- Collect equipment in</li> <li>- High fives all around</li> </ul>		

**Notes:**

## Training Plan #5 (example) – Emphasis on Catching & Fielding

Date	Training #5	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, 11+&amp; 12+flexiballs, gloves, bases</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction</li> <li>- Brief on equipment and safety</li> <li>- Brief outline: Catching, Fielding &amp; Games</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jog between cones set at 20m; forwards, backwards, sideways, cross over step etc</li> <li>- Dynamic Stretching Routines over 20m; specific focus on shoulder area</li> </ul> <p>In and Out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form teams of 6-7 children in a circle with 1 child at the centre.</li> <li>- Using a flexiball (and no gloves) 1 passes underarm to 2 then runs to the centre.</li> <li>- 2 passes to 3 then follows to number 3's place</li> <li>- 3 passes to 1 then goes to the centre. 1 passes to 4 etc</li> <li>- Progress to using soft lob throws with a larger circle if necessary</li> </ul>				
<b>Throwing – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Face target</li> <li>2. Grip the ball across the seams . backwards letter C</li> <li>3. Hold the ball in the fingers . rabbit ears grip</li> <li>4. Arm goes back in a circle into a 'L'-shaped position . like winding a spring</li> <li>5. At the same time pivot the feet to rotate the hips . squash the bug</li> <li>6. Step forward with opposite foot (than that of throwing arm)</li> <li>7. Move arm quickly down and let the ball go with a strong wrist snap down . uncoil the spring</li> <li>8. Non-throwing hand should be pointing to the target - where you want the ball to go</li> <li>9. Throwing hand should finish at or past the hip - follow through</li> <li>10. Throwing shoulder pointed at the target</li> </ol> <b>Catching – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Put all fingers into the glove. Keep the glove wide open</li> <li>2. When catching the ball above the waist . thumb to thumb</li> <li>3. When catching the ball below the waist . pinky to pinky</li> <li>4. Move to the ball</li> <li>5. Fingers soft and slightly cupped . soft fingers, big hands</li> <li>6. Watch the ball go into your glove</li> <li>7. Absorb impact on catching . elbows bend, pull the ball into your tummy</li> </ol> <b>Catching Activities: With a ball</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Toss the ball high in the air and catch the ball above the shoulder</li> <li>- Repeat x 10</li> </ul>				



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Now partner up and toss the ball to your partner on the full and below the waist</li> <li>- Repeat x 10</li> </ul> <p><b>Fielding – Demonstrate key points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasise getting into a low ready position with palms up</li> <li>- Bottom low to the ground</li> <li>- Arms are loosely extended in front of the body</li> <li>- Weight is forward and balanced evenly on both feet</li> <li>- Hang like a gorilla</li> <li>- Cover the ball with the bare hand</li> <li>- Bring the glove, ball and hands back into the belly button</li> </ul> <p><b>Fielding Activities: In pairs with 1 ball between 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Standing 10 metres apart, roll the ball backwards and forwards to each other</li> <li>- Repeat x 10</li> <li>- 1 person rolls the ball; their partner fields the ball and throws it accurately back to their partner</li> <li>- Repeat x 5</li> <li>- Change so that the roller becomes the fielder</li> <li>- Repeat x 5</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Game Activities: Fly Ball Run Relay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form groups of 6, collect a glove each and a ball.</li> <li>- Player 1 stands on the catching line, 10 m from player 2 who stands on the throwing line.</li> <li>- The rest of the players line up 5 m from player 2 on the fly ball line</li> <li>- Player 2 throws the ball high and to one side of player 3, then runs to line up behind player 6</li> <li>- Player 3 catches the fly ball, throws the ball to player 1, then runs to take player 1's place</li> <li>- Player 1 runs to take up the position on the throwing line, then throws a fly ball for player 4 to catch</li> <li>- Repeat until each player is back in their original position</li> <li>- Once the teams have got the routine, then make the relay competitive by making it the fastest team to finish wins</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recap of lesson</li> <li>- Collect equipment in</li> <li>- High fives all around</li> </ul>		

## Training Plan #6 (example) – Emphasis on Throwing, Fielding & Catching

Date	Training #6	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, 11+&amp; 12+flexiballs, gloves, bases, tee, hoops, rope</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction</li> <li>- Brief on equipment and safety</li> <li>- Brief outline: Catching, Fielding &amp; Games</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jog between cones set at 20m; forwards, backwards, sideways, cross over step etc</li> <li>- Dynamic Stretching Routines over 20m; specific focus on shoulder area</li> </ul> <p>Hand Push:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children in pairs, similar height and size</li> <li>- Partners stand facing each other, 1 foot slightly forward of the other . both knees slightly bent and body leaning forwards.</li> <li>- Place palms of hands against partners at shoulder height and push against each other's hands</li> <li>- Keeping palms together push upwards, sideways and downwards trying to maintain balance</li> </ul>				
<b>Throwing – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Face target</li> <li>2. Grip the ball across the seams . backwards letter C</li> <li>3. Hold the ball in the fingers . rabbit ears grip</li> <li>4. Arm goes back in a circle into a L-shaped position . like winding a spring</li> <li>5. At the same time pivot the feet to rotate the hips . squash the bug</li> <li>6. Step forward with opposite foot (than that of throwing arm)</li> <li>7. Move arm quickly down and let the ball go with a strong wrist snap down . uncoil the spring</li> <li>8. Non-throwing hand should be pointing to the target - where you want the ball to go</li> <li>9. Throwing hand should finish at or past the hip - follow through</li> <li>10. Throwing shoulder pointed at the target</li> </ol> <p><b>Catching – Demonstrate key points</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Put all fingers into the glove. Keep the glove wide open</li> <li>2. When catching the ball above the waist . thumb to thumb</li> <li>3. When catching the ball below the waist . pinky to pinky</li> <li>4. Move to the ball</li> <li>5. Fingers soft and slightly cupped . soft fingers, big hands</li> <li>6. Watch the ball go into your glove</li> <li>7. Absorb impact on catching . elbows bend, pull the ball into your tummy</li> </ol>				





<b>Game Activities: Non-Stop Rounders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divide the group into two even teams (one batting and the other fielding)</li> <li>- Fielders spread out in the playing area.</li> <li>- The catcher stands on a marker behind the target placed behind the batter.</li> <li>- The ball is hit off the Tee</li> <li>- The batter hits the ball and scores points by running around a cone (placed 10m away) and back to the batting marker.</li> <li>- The batter is out if the fielders hit the target or if the ball is caught by a fielder.</li> <li>- As the game is continuous, the catcher can put the ball on the tee whenever they have the ball</li> </ul>		
<b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recap of lesson</li> <li>- Collect equipment in</li> <li>- High fives all around</li> </ul>		

**Notes:**

## Training Plan #7 (example) – Emphasis on Hitting & Bunting

Date	Training #7	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, 11+&amp; 12+flexiballs, wiffle balls, gloves, tees, bats, bases, extra soft foam ball</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction</li> <li>- Brief on equipment and safety</li> <li>- Brief outline: Hitting, Bunting &amp; Games</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jog between cones set at 20m; forwards, backwards, sideways, cross over step etc</li> <li>- Dynamic Stretching Routines over 20m; specific focus on shoulder area</li> </ul> <p>Brand Ball: Use a very soft foam ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form 2 groups within a defined area. One group is %a+and they have possession of the ball. The objective is to pass the ball amongst players until you get in a position to hit the opposition with the ball. If any of the team running free get hit, they have to stand outside the defined area. Make it a timed activity and see how many players have been hit in that time</li> </ul> <p>Change teams</p>				
<b>Hitting – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stance . Stand opposite the plate, feet wide as your shoulders, bottom hand</li> <li>2. at the top of the strike zone with elbows relaxed pointing downwards</li> <li>3. Grip . Hold the bat in the fingers, and line up the door knocking knuckles</li> <li>4. Step &amp; Swing . Transfer weight from the back foot as the front foot steps forward at contact point. Pivot the back foot (squash the bug)</li> <li>5. Hips . then shoulders rotate forward, load and explode</li> <li>6. Swing . hit the ball in front of the body, keep the head still and the eyes level</li> <li>7. Follow Through . once the ball is struck, the top hand should roll over the bottom hand (wrist snap) and the arms and hands continue to rotate</li> </ol> <p><b>Hitting Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form groups of 4 with 1 tee, 6 balls (ideally wiffles) and a bat each</li> <li>- Ensure that all tees are set a safe distance apart &amp; all hitters are hitting the ball in the same direction with the fielders a safe distance away. Ideally hit into a fence if you can</li> <li>- 1 x Hitter, 1 x person to put a ball on the tee (shagger), 2 fielders to field and roll the ball back to the shagger</li> <li>- Each hitter has 5 hits off the tee</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rotate hitter to fielder, fielder to shagger, shagger to hitter</li> </ul> <p><b>Bunting – Demonstrate key points</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide the group into two even teams (one batting and the other fielding)</li> <li>2. Fielders spread out in the playing area</li> <li>3. The catcher stands on a marker behind the target placed behind the batter</li> <li>4. The ball is hit off the Tee</li> <li>5. The batter hits the ball and scores points by running around a cone (placed 10m away) and back to the batting marker.</li> <li>6. The batter is out if the fielders hit the target or if the ball is caught by a fielder</li> <li>7. As the game is continuous, the catcher can put the ball on the tee whenever they have the ball</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Game Activities: Non-Stop Rounders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form 2 teams, one on offence (hitting) and the other fielding (defence)</li> <li>- Set out bases with a tee on home plate</li> <li>- First 'batter' hits a ball off a tee into the field and runs around as many bases as they can before the ball is returned home. They may circulate the bases more than once to gain extra points</li> <li>- The batting team earns a point every time a batter reaches a base. Eg. 3 points if they get to third</li> <li>- Once the batter has had a turn at bat they come off the base so that the next batter has a clear set of bases</li> <li>- Fielders can't move until the ball has been hit</li> <li>- Fielders earn a point if they catch a ball</li> <li>- Swap sides once all batters have had a turn.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recap of lesson</li> <li>- Collect equipment in</li> <li>- High fives all around</li> </ul>		

**Notes:**

## Training Plan #8 (example) – Emphasis on Baserunning & Sliding

Date	Training #8	Venue	Mins	Time
<b>Equipment Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cones, 11+&amp; 12+flexiballs, gloves, bases &amp; home plates, bats, tarp &amp; detergent, broom handle</li> </ul>				
<b>Welcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction</li> <li>- Brief on equipment and safety</li> <li>- Brief outline: Hitting, Bunting &amp; Games</li> </ul>				
<b>Warm Up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jog between cones set at 20m; forwards, backwards, sideways, cross over step etc</li> <li>- Dynamic Stretching Routines over 20m; specific focus on shoulder area</li> </ul> <p>Tricky Touch: 6 cones are needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up a designated area 20m x 20m with cones set another 5m out forming an end zone. Form 2 teams. One team is the attacking team. A nominated person in the attacking team is %T+and they run with their hand in the air, attempting to get in the end zone. The player in the defending team who tags %T+becomes %T+and they then run with their hand in the air, attempting to get into the end zone without being tagged. Players cannot tag the player who tagged them. If players run out of the area, the opposition restarts the game in the middle of the pitch in line with where the player ran out. The winner is the first team to five points or the team with the most points after a certain amount of time.</li> </ul>				
<b>Baserunning – Demonstrate key points</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Running to 1st base . After dropping the bat, pump arms and legs. Stress pushing off from balls of feet and lean into the run. Pump the arms, keep the head up and the elbows in. Make sure they run %through+1st base at top speed</li> <li>2. Running to 2nd, 3rd base or home . Loop out 5 metres before 1st base, touch the inside edge of the bases as you %ound+the corners</li> <li>3. Leading off base . the left foot is placed on or against the outside front edge of the base. The right foot is extended backwards behind the base</li> </ol> <p><b>Baserunning Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form groups of 4, collect a bat and 2 bases and place the bases 10m apart with a cone another 3m away from each base</li> <li>- Sit in a line 5 m to the right of 1 base. Left handed batters sit at the end of the line</li> <li>- In turn, stand on the base and swing the bat at an imaginary ball. DROP the bat and run through 1st base to the cone. Sit behind the base ready to repeat the activity the other way.</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure there is plenty of space between the groups</li> </ul> <p><b>Sliding – Demonstrate key points</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Form players into a circle with the coach in the middle</li> <li>2. On command have the players sit+down cross legged.</li> <li>3. When seated have the player stick the favoured sliding leg out in front of the body, then lie back with the shoulders touching the ground and the arms and hands crossed on the chest.</li> <li>4. They are now in their natural position for a bent leg slide</li> </ol> <p><b>Sliding Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whilst still in a circle, give the command slide+and have players sit in the sliding position</li> <li>- Have the players face the same direction and walk slowly in a circle</li> <li>- Give the command slide+and have them assume the sliding position from a slow walk.</li> <li>- Gradually increase walking speed and have them repeat the same procedure while jogging</li> <li>- Set up a base on some soft grass or alternatively lay down a wet tarp that has had dishwashing detergent sprinkled on it (to aid slippery sliding)</li> <li>- Get them to run in their socks only</li> <li>- Have players approach the sliding area at jogging speed and slide 3m BEFORE the base. Repeat</li> <li>- Hold a broom handle across the sliding path about 1 ½ body lengths from the base. Players run 10m and slide under the bar.</li> <li>- Gradually increase speed and distance.</li> <li>- Encourage all players to have a go+but do not force anyone to do this activity until they are able to with confidence at their own pace</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Game Activities: Home run or not</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lay out a diamond adding 4 extra bases 3m outside the normal bases.</li> <li>- Set up a batting tee at home base</li> <li>- Form 2 equal teams and take turns to field and bat</li> <li>- The BATTERS take turns to; hit the ball off the tee into fair territory; run around the outside bases touching all 4 bases</li> <li>- The FIELDERS spread out inside the field and try to; catch or field the batted ball</li> <li>- Throw the ball to 1st, 2nd, 3rd and then home to beat the runner</li> <li>- If the ball reaches home base before the runner, the runner is out.</li> <li>- If the runner reaches home base before the ball, the batting team scores 1 home run.</li> <li>- The team with the most home runs is the winner</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Conclusion / Team Talk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recap of lesson</li> <li>- Collect equipment in</li> <li>- High fives all around</li> </ul>		



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## Case Studies

### Hutt Valley

The Rookie Sox coach adopted a ~~have~~ Have a Go+pitching and catching theme for the players in her team. 60% of training time was dedicated to the key focus positions of pitching and catching. The rest of the training time was spent on hitting and fun games that incorporated other skills of the game. Every Saturday 5 hands would shoot up to say it was their turn to pitch or catch today.

### Otago

An Otago club introduced a rotation policy that allowed players to experience playing different positions. The outcome was that girls got the opportunity to play in a key position rather than being put in right field to pick daisies.

### Hawkes Bay

The Novice Rookie Sox team pitcher was struggling to put the ball across the plate and the game was becoming boring. There wasn't anyone else who wanted to pitch that day so the coach stepped onto the mound and lobbed the ball across the plate to let the opposition team hit the ball. Immediately the game became more interesting, no one was interested in who won and everyone was having fun.

### North Harbour

The North Harbour Softball Association introduced a modified game with the use of a mechanical pitching device for the Rookie Sox age grade for the first 6 months of the season. The intention was to allow players the opportunity to experience a hitting game with the pitched ball being delivered consistently.

Practices in the first six months were also focused on enabling the children to ~~have~~ Have a Go+at pitching and catching in a supportive environment.

In the 2nd half of the season, the competition progressed to the more competitive game with lots of encouragement and rotation (share the load) of Rookie Sox pitchers and catchers. Once the child becomes more familiar with the special skills required they will become more confident in playing these key positions.



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## Top 6 tips to fuel your game

Players only get out what they put in. But it is not just about how hard they train, it is also about how well-fuelled the body is when playing ball.

Experts have put together six top tips to help fuel training, games and tournaments.

**Please Note** . this is general nutrition information.

### 1. Kick start your day with breakfast

Breakfast provides a real head start. Breakfast improves focus and concentration, helps re-fuel the body after the overnight fast. Stay sharp by starting the day with a good breakfast.

Some tasty, easy breakfast ideas:

- porridge or wheat biscuits with milk and sliced banana
- wholegrain toast with a poached egg or baked beans
- microwave baked potato
- banana smoothie
- toast and spreads with a glass of milk
- left-over pasta, taro or kumara
- sandwiches



Drink some water or milk to drink too.

For more tasty breakfast ideas go to [www.breakfast-eaters.org.nz](http://www.breakfast-eaters.org.nz)

### 2. Plan ahead

Planning is the key to success. Planning ahead so players are fuelled and hydrated before each game or training.

Before playing a tournament, prepare a plan of tournament meals . breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and drinks.

It's cheaper to make your own food, and easier to make sure the body is well fuelled for the next day's competition.

For easy low-cost meals for families and large groups go to [www.feedingourfamilies.org.nz](http://www.feedingourfamilies.org.nz)

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### 3. Re-fuel with vegetables

Load meals with a variety of colourful veggies and the end of the day. A rough guide is to try and make the plate  $\frac{1}{2}$  vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  protein (e.g., lean meat, chicken, fish, legumes), and  $\frac{1}{4}$  carbohydrate (e.g., rice, pasta, taro, potato, kumara).

Making at least half the meal vegetables is an easy way to make sure the body receives all the goodness needed to repair and re-fuel the body.

Canned and frozen veggies are just as good as fresh ones plus they are a fast, easy option . no cutting or chopping at the end of a long day!

For tasty, low-cost meal ideas go to [www.feedingourfamilies.org.nz](http://www.feedingourfamilies.org.nz)

### 4. Keep fuelled through the game

During a game a big meal between games isn't practical, so good snacks can help fuel the body and keep the mind sharp.

Be prepared and have water and a variety of healthy snacks on hand in the team chilly bin or in the sports bag for easy access between games.

The best snacks are often the ones prepared by the individual . low-cost, tasty and easy to prepare.

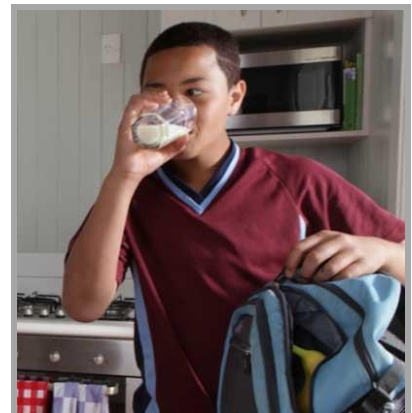
### 5. Drinks – make water and milk the first choice

Water is freely available from the tap and is perfect for quenching thirst.

Players should always have a water bottle on hand drinking often during training and on game day, especially when the weather is humid or hot. Players should sip on the water bottle in the dugout.

On game days when players are playing multiple games, extra filled water bottles should be available. Freezing a couple of drink bottles to put in the chilly bin . will keep water be nice and cold on a hot day, they will act like slicker pads and keep food cool as well.

Milk is another great drink choice as it's important for strong bones and is rich in nutrients. A glass of milk is a perfect snack that can help repair the body after a tough game or training session.



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## 6. Choose high-quality fuel

Takeaways are usually high in fat, low in vitamins and minerals, in larger portions than you need, and expensive when compared to cooking at home.

Just like petrol is the fuel for the car, food is the fuel for the body. Poor fuel will reflect on the, body and mind (the engine) and run poorly and break down. Good quality fuel, results in strong, healthy and focus with the energy required to achieve goals.



There is no need to give up pizza and burgers . homemade takeaways can be fast, tasty and economical. For ideas and recipes go to [www.feedingourfamilies.org.nz](http://www.feedingourfamilies.org.nz)

## Player of the Day Certificate

Rookie Sox

# PLAYER OF THE DAY



Download your free Player of the Day certificate from the Rookie Sox page on the Softball New Zealand website.



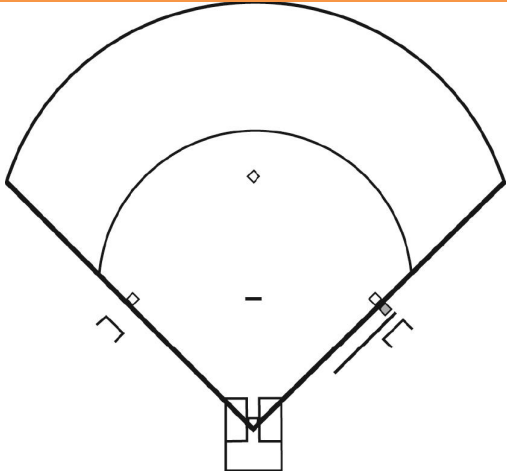


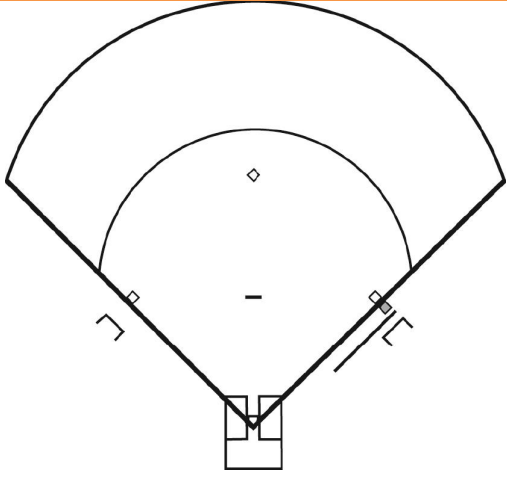
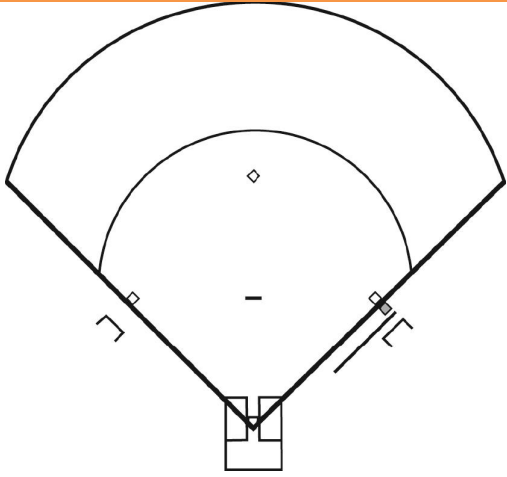
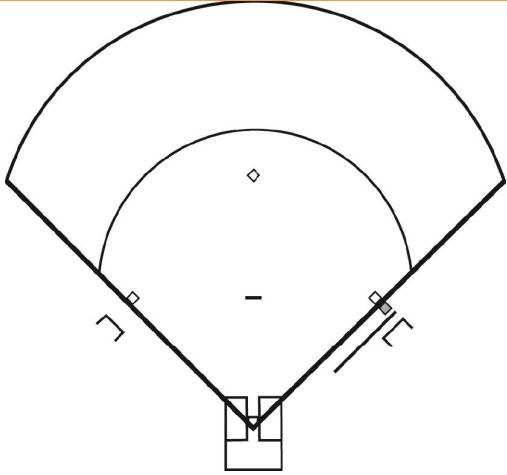
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Download your scorecard from the Rookie Sox page on the Softball New Zealand website



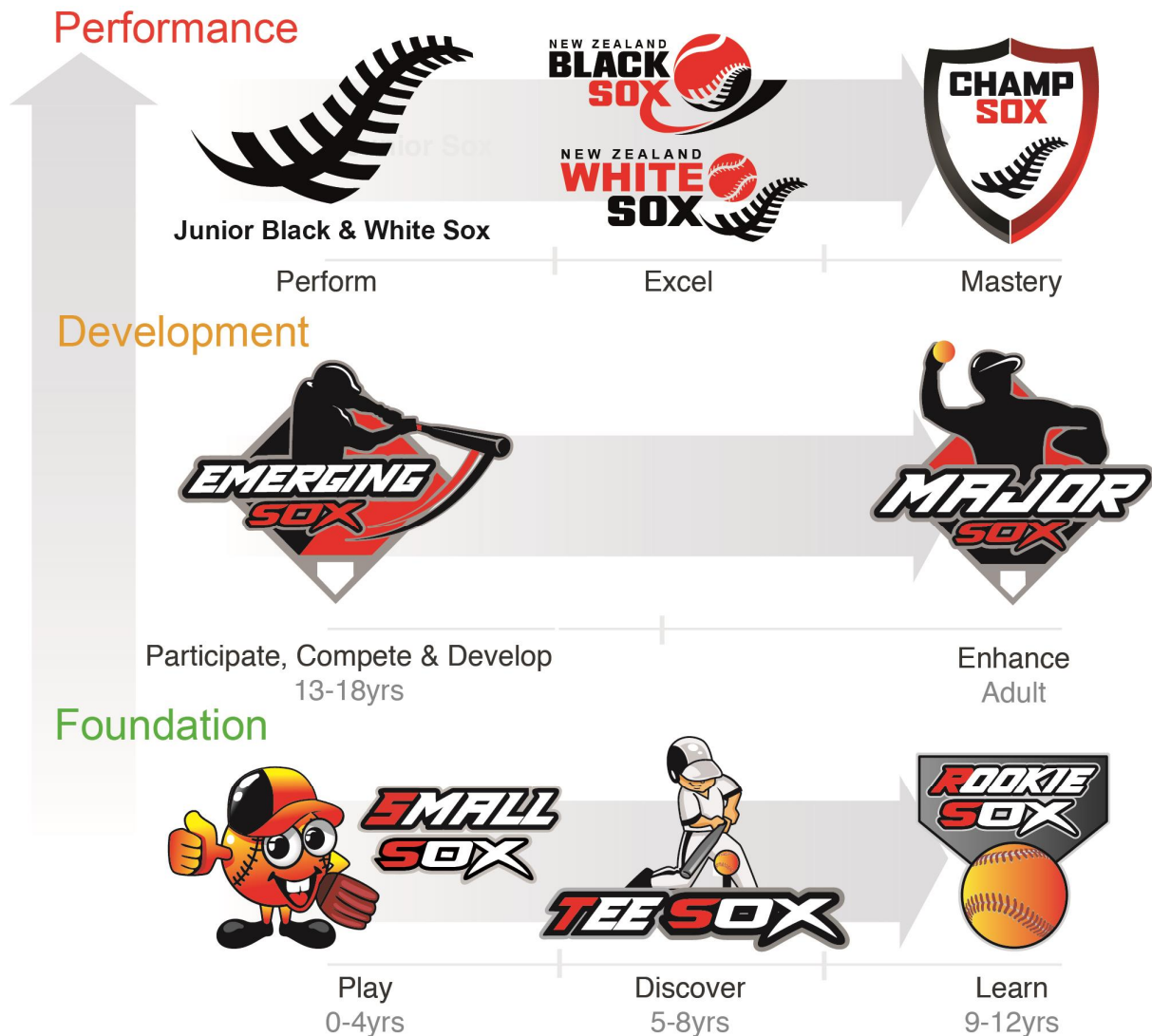
## Appendix B - Training Plan

Date:	Training no #1	Venue:	Mins	Time
Equipment				
Welcome:				
Warm up:				
Skills Warm Up				
Skills Development Activity				
				
Skills Development Activity				

	
<div>Skills Development Activity</div> <div></div> <div></div>	
	
<div>Concluding Activity</div> <div></div> <div></div>	
	
<div>Conclusion / Team Talk</div> <div></div> <div></div>	

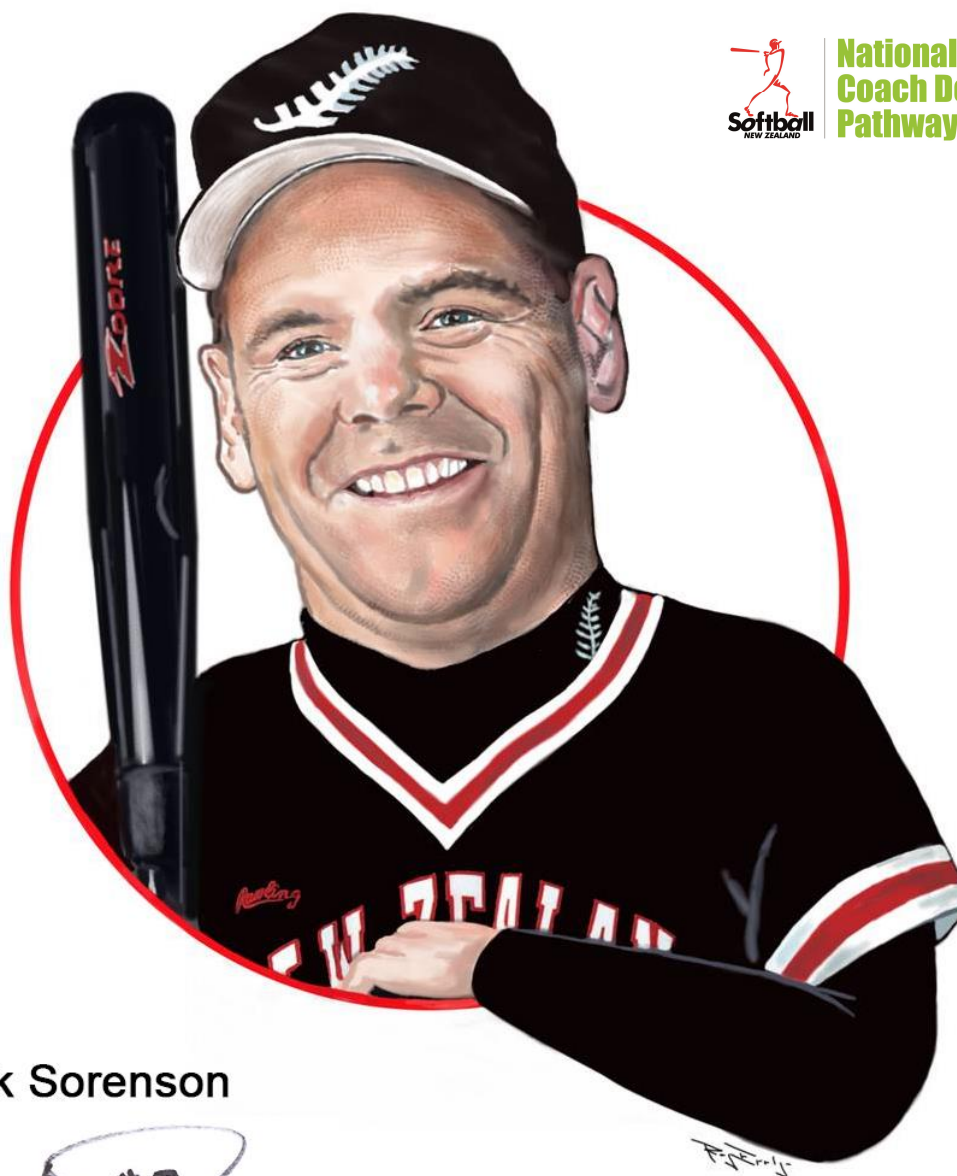
## National Player & Coach Development Pathway

The SNZ coaching pathway aligns to the 3 phases of player development; Foundation, Development and Performance. These 3 phases encompass the learning and development needs of the player and coach as they progress through the pathway.





## National Player & Coach Development Pathway



Mark Sorenson

New Zealand softball teams have produced some outstanding results on the world stage over a number of decades which we are proud of as a softball community. In order to consistently continue that momentum on the world stage we as a sport need to continually raise the bar. The National Player and Coach Development Pathway will help us do just that by providing a pathway or a bridge between our grassroots and high performance objectives. The Player and Coach Development Pathway is about developing all coaches and players to their full potential in order to increase their chance of success at whatever level they pursue.

More information on the National Player and Coach Development Pathway can be found on the Softball New Zealand website, [www.softball.org.nz](http://www.softball.org.nz).