National Coach Accreditation Scheme

Level 4

Manual

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Overview of NCAS Competencies at each Level

Level 1 Under 8 (Aussie Tee-Ball)

Knowledge

- Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball
- Demonstrate understanding of the value of a game based learning approach to develop skills, and to maximise fun and participation
- Identify the elements of a tee-ball training session
- Use inclusive coaching principles to provide player equally opportunity throughout the game and season

Activities

- Conduct a FUNdamental warm-up
- Plan and conduct throwing, running, fielding and hitting activities using a game based learning approach to ensure fun and maximum participation
- Organise an Aussie Tee-Ball game

Level 2

Knowledge

General:
- Demonstrate awareness of a coach's duty of care
- Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball
- Identify the elements of a rookie-ball training session
- Plan a rookie-ball training session
- Name and locate the nine standard defensive positions on a baseball field
- Develop a philosophy and strategies for maintaining "good tempo"
- Recall the rules of the Rookie Ball modified baseball game
- Use inclusive coaching principles to rotate player positions equally throughout a game/innings/season

LTAD:
- Provide an outline of the simplified LTAD model and approach

Running:
- Outline a progressive approach to developing sliding technique

Activities

General:
- Modify activities as required according to the TREE guidelines
- Plan and conduct throwing, running, hitting and fielding activities using a game based learning approach to ensure fun and maximum participation
- Include cross-sport activities
- Use a game based learning approach to conduct activities and mini-games
- Organise a coach-pitch baseball game

LTAD:
- Conduct a structured warm-up which ties into LTAD model for this age/level of athletic competence

Hitting:
- Conduct activities designed to encourage hitters to track the ball and hit it hard

Throwing:
- Engage players in a variety of activities to develop their throwing ability

Defence:
- Involve players in fielding activities with varying levels of challenge
- Utilise activities designed to encourage players to catch a fly ball

Running:
- Conduct base-running activities
- Conduct low risk sliding activities

Instruction

General:
- Explain fundamental safety guidelines to players
- Communicate philosophy: " Take every chance you get to show good tempo"

LTAD:
- Provide instruction on the correct execution of the BW squat and the lunge walk

Hitting:
- Explain the intent of the swing
- Teach hitters effective drills for developing their swing

Defence:
- Position the catcher correctly in relation to hitter/home plate
- Teach ground-ball basics

- Instruct catching the ball with hand in backhand position
- Teach the fielding positions

Running:
- Ensure that players run hard on every batted ball
- Devise ways to encourage base-runners to make their own decisions

Level Three

Knowledge

General:
- Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball
- Demonstrate awareness of a coach's duty of care
- Recall the basic rules of junior and Little League baseball
- Outline the meaning and use of the RICED approach to soft tissue injury management
- Understand the basics of base coaching

LTAD:
- Name the first four stages of LTAD theory, and outline the key points of the FUNdamental stage
- Outline the LTAD model of athletic development (movement competency)
- Outline a suitable on-field strength and conditioning program based on the ABF LTAD model

Hitting:
- Organise a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions

Defence
- Name and briefly explain the key points of each of the 6 Fs

Activities

General:
- Assess prescribed competencies of candidates for Level 1 & 2 Accreditation
- Plan a suitable training session
- Use a game based learning approach to plan and conduct activities and mini-games
- Encourage players to participate in other aspects f baseball: umpiring, coaching, scoring etc
- Organise a team to participate in the applicable modified baseball game

LTAD:
- Conduct a suitable on-field strength and conditioning session based on the ABF LTAD model
- Conduct a structured warm-up which ties into LTAD model for the relevant age/level of athletic competence

Hitting:
- Conduct hitting activities to encourage tracking the ball, swinging hard and making contact
- Conduct swing practice designed to expand the contact zone
- Conduct a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions

Throwing:
- Demonstrate the across-seam grip of ball
- Conduct 2 throwing drills which emphasise grip and backspin
- Supervise an effective long-toss throwing session

Pitching:
- Conduct a 30 pitch bullpen
- Use simple drills to teach pitching mechanics

Defence:
- Implement use of self-monitored game-sense activities to develop fielding skills
- Engage players in groundball fundamentals using the 6 Fs
- Rehearse basic double plays
- Have players (infielders and outfielders) practice throwing to different bases
- Practise outfield basics
- Conduct drills for catchers to emphasise receiving the ball
- Utilise activities designed to encourage players to catch a fly ball
- Conduct practice of the basic cut-off plays
- Develop pitchers' fundamental fielding skills
- Rehearse basic pickoffs
- Conduct the figure-8 double-play exercise, with minor variations

Running:
- Deliver the 5-drill sequence for sprint mechanics
- Conduct base-running activities
- Conduct low risk sliding activities

Instruction

General:
- Present competency training for candidates for lower levels of accreditation
- Communicate appreciation of the ethics of baseball
- Teach basic situational strategy

LTAD:
- Teach correct execution of each exercise in the LTAD warmup
- Teach correct execution of each of the key exercises for the age level
- Instruct all players in the basic tubing exercises

Hitting:	- Explain that the intent of the swing is to hit long, hard line drives - Provide simple instruction on an effective swing: rhythm, load, release - Teach hitters effective drills for developing their swing
Throwing:	- Teach pitching from a set position using the key coaching points for this age level - Outline the rules for pitchers at relevant level
Defence:	- Explain "squeezing the middle" - Guide the catcher on posture with no runner on base - Provide coherent instruction in the basic points of each of the 6 Fs - Teach the basics of outfield play
Running:	- Devise ways to encourage base-runners to make their own decisions - Ensure that hitters run hard on every batted ball - Instruct general guidelines for leads at 1B - Instruct general guidelines for returns at 1B

Level 4

Knowledge

General:	- Demonstrate knowledge of a coach's duty of care - Outline a comprehensive schedule for a 3 hour training session - Explain the meaning and strategic relevance of "the big inning" - Justify the use of bunts and the hit & run - Outline the fundamentals of individual learning styles - Demonstrate awareness that the players are still learning - Outline specified cutoff plays according to the National playbook - Explain the important basics of giving signs, and the implications of thinking ahead when coaching in a game. - Outline, with examples, the 'volume' approach to planning a training session.
LTAD:	-Explain the seven streams of movement utilised in the ABF LTAD approach, and the key points in progressing a player through each stream - Plan suitable on-field strength and conditioning programs based on the ABF LTAD model - Plan a simple annual periodisation plan for one of his or her players
Hitting:	- Design a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions - Show an understanding of the conventional manner of setting a hitting line-up - Show how the team objective relates to adjusting the level of aggression in offence and defence.
Pitching:	- Outline the key risk factors for young pitchers - Recall the various pitch limits and related rules for all National junior tournaments
Defence:	- Name the five tools of a ballplayer and provide a basic outline of the positional relevance of each - Demonstrate solid knowledge of the 6Fs approach to fielding a routine groundball and making a backhand play - Outline the 6Fs approach to executing a double play, and to a 1st baseman receiving an infield throw - Explain the impact of common situations on offensive and defensive strategy - Outline the reasons for and execution of varying infield depth
Running:	- Explain why acceleration training is important of baseball

Activities

General:	- Assess prescribed competencies of candidates for Level 1, 2 & 3 Accreditation - Implement strategies to develop athlete decision-making and accountability - Plan a suitable training session for an individual, a specific group or a team - Demonstrate correct base-coach positioning, at both 1st and 3rd bases. - Demonstrate basic non-verbal communications with baserunners.
LTAD:	- Conduct a full warmup incorporating speed, acceleration and agility drills - Individualise on-field strength and conditioning according to the ABF LTAD model
Hitting:	- Conduct on-field pre-game batting practice so as to develop situational awareness and execution - Organise and conduct a hitting circuit - Provide consistent flips for swing practice
Throwing:	- Conduct activities which encourage infielders to use a variety of throws

- Run an arm development session

Pitching:
- Conduct an execution-centred bullpen session to develop control of various pitches
- Conduct pitchers' fielding practice
- Train pitchers to complete the on-field leg circuit

Defence:
- Conduct catcher's blocking drills: ball directly in front, to either side, and catcher regaining feet to throw
- Conduct other catcher's drills: throwing to all bases, pop-ups, bunt plays and tags
- Drill backhand skills using the 6Fs sequence
- Provide drills to help develop skills on forehand plays and slow rollers
- Arrange practice activities for 1st Baseman: practising tags, moving off the base
- Drill middle infielders on the following: SS double play feeds and turns (feed from 2B &1B); 2B double play feeds and turns; steal coverage; 3B double play feeds; tag plays; fielding bunts
- Utilise triangle drills for the rehearsal of DP feeds etc
- Throw or fungo the ball to provide outfielders with practice on: going back on ball; charging a ground ball (do or die); reverse turns; backing up.
- Conduct practice for double cuts and relays, and flyball priorities.
- Rehearse regular 1st & 3rd plays, and bunt defence

Running:
- Train players in the prescribed acceleration drills
- Engage players in rehearsing base-running: using their own judgement;
- Rehearse the runner's role on bunts and in the hit & run play
- Conduct sessions for runners to practise stealing 3B; reacting on balls in dirt; reading ball off bat on all bases; getting good angles on the turn; breaking up double play

Instruction

General:
- Present competency training for candidates for lower levels of accreditation
- Utilise a variety of instructional methods
- Guide players on composure and body language (set an example): show no emotion, look alert and look ready; double-time to and from your position.

LTAD:
- Instruct players on the 4 properties to be developed, the 7 streams of movement and other fundamental understandings of the ABF LTAD model

Hitting:
- Outline to hitters the process and importance of building on their database
- Correctly instruct players in the purpose and key points of the one-hand tee drill
- Explain the difference between swing practice and game practice in hitting
- Teach the fundamentals of bunting

Throwing:
- Provide players with effective guidelines for developing arm strength

Pitching:
- Outline the characteristics and execution of these types of pitches: 4-seam and 2-seam FB, curve ball (CB), change-up (CH)
- Teach basic pickoffs
- Explain the fundamentals of a sound pitching approach: 1st pitch strike, stay ahead, change speeds, locate FB
- Emphasise the importance of good tempo and body language by all players, especially pitchers: waste no time between pitches.
- Instruct players in how to prepare themselves to pitch: annual periodisation, weekly routine, game day

Defence:
- Provide key points in the execution of slow roller plays using the glove and using the bare hand
- Use the following 6Fs sequence to instruct an infielder on the backhand play: no glove, receive with glove, replace feet to throw, no-step throw)
- Guide the 1st Baseman in: positioning with no runner on base, with a runner on 1B, and with runners on 1B & 2B (less than two out); tagging on pickoffs; moving off the base; initiating the double play
- Instruct middle infielders on the key points of: SS double play feeds (glove side, straight at SS, backhand side) and turns (Feed from 2B, 1B – inside the line); 2B double play feeds (bare-hand side; straight at 2Bman; glove side) and turns (feed from SS, 3B); steal coverage; holding runner close, positioning, communication
- Provide simple instruction to a 3rd Baseman on: double play feeds; PO5-3 double play; tag plays; fielding bunts.
- Instruct an outfielder in the following: going back on ball, charging a ground ball (do or die), reverse turns, backing up.
- Instruct catchers on the basic postures: no runner on; runner on; pitch signs

- Educate catchers on pitching strategy
- Outline key communication expectations of Catchers
- Provide guidelines for the adjustment of infield depth

Running:
- Explain the relative merits of sliding head first vs feet first
- Instruct leads - general guidelines; leads at 1B, 2B & 3B;
- Instruct returns – general principles; return to 1B, 2B & 3B

Section One: General Coaching

Knowledge

i. Understand the requirements for presenting competency training for candidates for lower levels of accreditation
ii. Demonstrate knowledge of a coach's duty of care
iii. Understand accepted theory of skill acquisition
iv. Outline the fundamentals of individual learning styles

Activities

i. Assess prescribed competencies of candidates for Level 1, 2 & 3 Accreditation
ii. Implement strategies to develop athlete decision-making
iii. Develop athlete accountability

Instruction

i. Present competency training for candidates for lower levels of accreditation
ii. Utilise a variety of instructional methods
iii. Guide players on composure and body language (set an example).

Demonstrate knowledge of a coach's duty of care

Coaches have obligations to players, parents, leagues and associations as well as to their sport generally. They are bound by the law, and by the policies and rules of Australian baseball. This means coaches can be liable or legally responsible for a wide range of issues including those relating to negligence, sexual harassment and personal misconduct.

Coaches are bound to the rules and policies of sporting organisations, including the Coach's Code of Conduct. The ABF manages its own risk by introducing policies and codes of behaviour for people in specific roles including coaches, athletes and officials. Coaches should know and understand the rules they will be judged against in a worst case scenario.

The ABF now has provisions prohibiting conduct which has the potential to bring the sport into disrepute. This includes personal conduct. Coaches, like athletes, must act professionally and behave ethically in their role. Codes give guidelines to coaches on how they can manage risk. For example, the code of behaviour that accredited coaches are required to sign includes the following:

- Wherever practical, avoid unaccompanied and unobserved one-on-one activity (when in a supervisory capacity or where a power imbalance will exist) with people under the age of 18 years.
- Adopt appropriate and responsible behaviour in all interactions.
- Ensure your decisions and actions contribute to a harassment free environment.
- Any physical contact with a person should be appropriate to the situation and necessary for the person's skill development

In light of this it becomes very important that coaches protect themselves as far as possible.

The test regarding a breach of care is whether a reasonable person in the position of the coach would have foreseen that the act or omission involved real risk, and that it was the act or omission that caused the injury. For example, if a coach directs a player to play knowing they are injured, they may be legally liable for the injury that follows.

Coaches have a duty to supervise, that is, to observe and control athletes under their care. The more risk involved in an activity, the more critical it is that proper supervision is provided. Open communication with athletes is important and coaches should tell athletes of the risks involved with the sport.

Although the coach cannot control the actions of another competitor, activities should be stopped immediately when they appear to be too dangerous. A coach supervising a high risk activity must not get distracted even momentarily or they could be held liable for injury that occurs.

Coaches should not teach or encourage dangerous behaviour. They should discourage dangerous methods and communicate with athletes as to the risks involved in adopting such methods.

Coaches should refer to other people if they are in doubt. For example, if a coach is unsure whether an athlete will cause further injury if they continue to participate, the coach should suggest to the athlete that they consult a medical practitioner. Coaches can undertake some form of medical training so they are aware about the possibilities of injury and the basic treatment necessary if injury does occur.

A coach accredited and registered by Australian Baseball is essentially covered against negligence claims, provided they adhere to the ABF's rules and guidelines. The club, association, state or national body which engages the coach carries the liability.

Understand the requirements for presenting competency training for L1, L2 & L3 candidates

The ABF National Coach Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) is a competency based scheme, and how a coach attains the necessary competencies is irrelevant. As an accredited coach yourself, you should be well qualified to assist other candidates in acquiring the competencies required to be accredited at Level 1, 2 or 3, and you are certainly invited to do so.

This can be done in quite an informal way, or as part of a structured course. The list of required competencies, and the detailed description of each, defines what needs to be learnt. By referring to these, you can be confident that you are passing on relevant skills and knowledge.

The ABF will be gradually making more and more resources available, for the most part, online, but many pre-existing resources can be utilised: significant amounts of the material remains perfectly valid. IT may be that the instruction of some competencies will initially require specialist training, but ultimately, the knowledge should be widespread and thus accessible to all.

Assess the prescribed activity and instruction competencies of candidates for Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3

- Once Accredited as a L4 coach, you may receive training to become an Assessor of candidates for lower levels of Accreditation.
- Objective assessment is vital to the integrity of the Accreditation scheme, to the quality of coaching in Australian baseball and ultimately to the survival of our sport. You are asked to take this role seriously, and contribute to advancing our sport.
- Be familiar with the assessment tools for these levels.
- Base the marking on what the coach actually shows, and how it matches up to the requirements outlined in the assessment tool.
- Place a single tick in the space provided in the left column if the coach shows that specific competency (two ticks can be used to indicate excellence).
- The key points of each competency (in the middle column with the circular bullet point) are there to remind you of what you need to see. Mark these as you witness them so that you have a record to substantiate the specific competency, and to identify any missing elements.
- Provide specific feedback, particularly to a coach who is not yet competent.

Implement strategies to develop athlete decision-making

Decision-making is a critical part of expertise which takes deliberate practice and support over a long period to develop. You should be encouraging your players to develop this skill, rather than making all their decisions for them. They will make mistakes, and cost games, but a good coach continues to support their learning.

Here are three very valuable ways to develop autonomous players (please note, these will turn your hair grey):

1. Baserunners make their own decisions:
    - Runners decide to try for extra base or not: they must assess situation prior to the pitch (BOSO), then read ball in play and react accordingly.
    - The coach does not wave runner on or stop him when runner can see ball and other information for himself.
    - Runners must attack the next base and stop only when someone forces them to: H-2B, 1B-3B, 2B-H etc.
    - A coach may assist when ball is behind runner

2. Pitchers and catchers make pitch selections. This is critical for developing autonomous, knowledgeable players. Coach does not call pitches.

3. Coaches review defensive and offensive decisions made by players during game. In a manner which encourages experimentation and learning, discuss decisions made during game and their consequences (important life lessons to be learnt)

Develop athlete accountability

1. Define team values:

- Hold a team meeting and have the team generate some phrases and adjectives to define how they want to be seen as a team.
- Formulate these points into a charter to which all will try to adhere
- Use this charter to provide both positive and negative feedback about behaviour, effort, team attitude, sportsmanship etc

2. Feedback activities.

- Hand all players a team list, have them number each team-mate in order of how well they live up to team's charter. Work out each player's average "score", and have a meeting about the results.
- Have players elect a leadership group based on who can best be trusted to adhere to team's ideals
- Each player in turn is subjected to feedback from group: what he should keep doing, stop doing and start doing. (This process will need to be well managed, but is very worthwhile once players take it seriously)

3. Give the leadership group (see above) definite functions. These can be decided by coach, by the leadership group itself, the team or the club, and may include:

- Conducting team warmup, leading drills etc
- Devising/implementing strategies to include players with disabilities, or financially, socially or culturally disadvantaged groups and individuals.
- Plan & conduct challenge games or tournaments with other teams
- Plan training sessions, seminars, projects including invitations to guest coaches etc
- Organize working bees, social, fundraising and/or charitable functions, end of year events

Guide players on composure and body language (set an example):

The way coaches or players carry themselves and behave makes an impression on others: make sure you send the message you want to send:

- Set an example for your players: exemplify enthusiasm, hustle and "game face"
- Show no emotion: it shows a lack of objectivity, and one way or another, you are providing the opposition with information.
- When coaching bases, look alert and look ready: no folded arms, no hands in pockets, no slouching. Be energetic and under control.
- Double-time to and from your position in the coaches box

Outline the fundamentals of individual learning styles

Although most people gain information through all of their senses, most have one which dominates the way the acquire information, and the way they process it.

- Visual learners most trust what they can "see for themselves", and need good demonstrations
- Auditory learners most trust what they hear, and need clear explanations
- Kinaesthetic learners trust most what they actually experience, and need the chance to have a go at things themselves.

An effective coach, therefore, makes sure that he provides quality demonstrations, explanations and substantial practice opportunities.

It is worth making the point that many people acquire information in one way, and process it in another, and all sports people need to develop a feel for a technique (a kinaesthetic image) before they can start to execute it properly. This is one more reason why it is important to provide lots of activity for players.

Utilise a variety of instructional methods

An effective baseball coach can use many different methods in assisting his players to learn, including:

- Direct instruction: verbal communication, written materials
- Discussions and think-tanks, post-training feedback sessions, game reviews.
- Demonstration: self, skilled player, guest, video footage
- Games-based learning: adjusting the task, questioning, directed exploration

Understand accepted theory of skill acquisition

Stages of learning model: This is a model of the way learning occurs, and presents the acquisition of skills as moving through three stages.

1. Cognitive stage
    - Learner is forming mental image: thinking & planning
    - Movements are inconsistent and uncoordinated
    - Frequent mistakes in decisions and execution
    - Rapid improvement
    - Good instruction & demonstration is essential

2. Associative stage
    - Learner is now focusing on fine-tuning the movement skills
    - Movements more consistent and accurate
    - Improvement becomes more gradual (can be frustrating)
    - Movements learnt in this stage tend to become permanent
    - Practice should become more complex in order to familiarize player with perceptual and decision-making demands of the skill

3. Autonomous stage
    - Control of required skills is now automatic (not all players reach this stage)
    - Movements accurate and consistent
    - Can now move attention to other tasks (eg: watching what opponent does)
    - Skills can continue to improve, even after millions of repetitions, provided the practice is challenging enough.
    - Any technique errors learnt in earlier stages may be impossible to correct now

Intrinsic vs extrinsic learning: not all skills and knowledge is a result of verbal instruction

Extrinsic learning: this is when the learner is aware of the learning; something is being deliberately taught; eg: through instruction, explanation and breaking skill into parts

Intrinsic learning: occurs without learner being aware of it; eg ball tracking skills by child playing tennis.

There is some evidence that skills learnt extrinsically are less permanent and more likely to break down under pressure. Intrinsic learning may be the best way, as the conscious mind is not interfering.

When you consider that in order to develop skilled execution a player must develop a kinaesthetic "feel" for the skill eventually, well-designed physical activities, which develop skills intrinsically, make a lot of sense.

Section Two: Coaching Baseball

Knowledge

i. Explain the important basics of giving signs, and the implications of thinking ahead when coaching in a game.
ii. Demonstrate knowledge of important rules for this level
iii. Outline, with examples, the 'volume' approach to planning a training session.

Activities

i. Outline a comprehensive schedule for a 3 hour training session
ii. Explain the meaning and strategic relevance of "the big inning"
iii. Plan a suitable training session for an individual, a specific group or a team
iv. Assess prescribed competencies of candidates for Level 1, 2 & 3 Accreditation
v. Demonstrate correct base-coach positioning, at both 1st and 3rd bases.
vi. Demonstrate basic non-verbal communications with baserunners.

Instruction

i. Show how the team objective relates to adjusting the level of aggression in offence and defence

Demonstrate knowledge of important rules

1. Infield fly. The purpose of the Infield Fly rule is to prevent infielders from deliberately dropping the ball, thus forcing the runners to advance, and presenting an easy double-play. The following conditions must be present in order for the Infield Fly rule to be applied:
    - less than two out
    - runners on 1B and 2B, or loaded bases
    - a fly ball which would normally be caught by an infielder with reasonable effort is hit in fair territory
    - the umpire calls, "Infield fly!" or "Infield fly, if fair!"
    - it cannot be a line drive or a bunt
2. Foul tip. A foul travelling sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hand glove, with no visible deviation, is called a foul tip. It is not considered a fly ball: the ball is alive and in play; runners may advance at their own risk, and need not "tag up".
3. Advancing on overthrows. If a fielder's throw passes out of play, all runners are awarded extra bases:
    - If it is the first throw by an infielder, two bases from the time of the pitch
    - If it is the second or subsequent throw by an infielder, two bases from the time of the throw
    - Throw by an outfielder, two bases from the time of the throw.
4. Balls caught in foul territory.
    - A fly caught in foul territory is designated as a "live ball".
    - Runners may tag and advance after the first touch (provided the catch is made).
    - If the fielder makes the catch, then falls over a fence or falls in dead ball territory (on an unenclosed field), the hitter is out, and any runners are awarded one base.
    - Also, on an unenclosed field:
        - If the fielder makes the catch, and stays on his feet, even if he runs into dead ball territory, the hitter is out, and the ball is alive and in play.
        - If the catch is made with any part of the fielder touching the dead ball line, it is a dead ball, and the hitter is not out.
5. Balks. Common balks:
    - Moving some part of the body without pitching or picking off
    - Failing to step toward the base properly on a pickoff
    - Beginning to go into a set position or windup, then stopping
    - Touching the face while on the mound
6. Mound visits. Mound visits by a coach slow the game down and can make the pitcher unnecessarily reliant on the coach. They are therefore discouraged. There are rules limiting these visits:
    - A coach may make one free visit per inning. On the second visit in an inning, the pitcher must be removed from the game. (Some leagues allow the player to move to another position provided the manager informs the umpire directly before going to the mound).
    - In national tournaments (and in some club competitions), a coach may make only three free visits throughout the game. On any subsequent visits, the pitcher must be removed.
    - A coach must ensure that time has been granted before making the visit.
    - The visit commences when the coach crosses the foul line, and ends when he leaves the 18ft circle (surrounding the mound)
7. Appeal plays. Some methods of making an out require that the fielder appeal to the umpire for the out. The out does not actually occur until the umpire upholds the appeal. Common appeal plays are:
    - Leaving a base early on a fly ball.
    - Runner missing a base.
    - Missing either 1B or H and failing to return immediately
    - Batting out of order (remember that this cannot be appealed until the At Bat has been completed, and the appeal must be made before the next hitter's AB commences)

Name the five tools of a ballplayer and provide a basic outline of the positional relevance of each

The "Five Tools" are:

1. Arm strength
2. Running speed
3. Hitting ability (for average)
4. Hitting power
5. Defensive ability

While it would be great to have players in every position with a full complement of outstanding tools, in reality individuals have particular strengths and weaknesses, which have a major influence on how they are used.

Generally, the relative importance of these attributes varies according to position.

- Arm strength is by far the most important attribute of a pitcher.
- Defensive ability is critical "up the middle": catcher, shortstop, centre-field and, to a lesser extent, 2nd base.
- At 2nd base, many teams now prefer a good hitter, even if his defense is moderate, over a weak hitting defensive specialist – Major League statistics show that most plays made in this position could have been made by any reasonably competent infielder.
- Running speed is more important to a centre-fielder than arm strength, a catcher needs arm strength but not speed, and a great shortstop will have both.
- The corner positions, in both the infield and outfield, are usually filled by someone capable of making a substantial offensive contribution.
- Left-field and 1st base, both of whom have relatively straightforward defensive responsibilities, must hit, and often have good power.
- A right-fielder with arm strength can prevent more runners from going 1st to 3rd.

Outline a comprehensive schedule for a 3 hour training session

A comprehensive session for alder junior or adult players should include these elements:

1. Team meeting (5 minutes)
    - Review last game etc
    - Outline the session
2. Moving warmup (15 minutes)
    - Activity to raise body temperature
    - Joint mobility: rotations etc
    - Range of motion (use active or ballistic stretches, not static)
    - Graduated increase in speed of movement and complexity of movement
3. Speed work (15 minutes)
    - Sprint mechanics drill
    - Acceleration
    - Short, fast starts and sprints (10-25m)
4. Throwing program (15 minutes)
    - Rehearse mechanics
    - Long-toss program
    - Position-specific throwing
5. Individual defence (15 minutes)
    - Break into groups, conduct drills to enhance techniques
6. Team defence (20 minutes) – one or more of the following
    - Team fundamentals: cutoffs, bunt defence etc
    - Repetition of routine plays, eg: box infield
7. Hitting (45 minutes) – one or more of the following
    - Swing practice: individual tee drills, flips etc
    - Hitting circuit, incorporating several drills in sequence
    - Regular batting practice
    - Bullpens can be conducted at this time
8. Baserunning (10 minutes) – one or more of the following
    - Baserunning can be conducted during regular batting practice, or can be used as one part of the conditioning segment.
    - Concentrate on a specific aspect, eg: scoring from 2B
    - Complete a specific sequence, eg: H-1B, 1B-3B, 3B-H (sac fly), H-2B, 2B – H (back on a line drive, then score)
9. Conditioning (15 minutes)
    - Interval running
    - Low-tech strength work: eg, chin-ups, SL box squats etc
10. Stretch (20 minutes)
    - Light activity to gradually cool the body
    - A combination of light ballistic and static stretches, each held for >30sec in order to increase range of motion
11. Review (5 minutes)
    - Feedback from players to coach
    - Feedback from coach to players
    - Communication regarding next game, training session etc.

Explain the meaning and strategic relevance of "the big inning"

In most games, the winning team actually scores more runs in a single inning than the losers score in the game. This is known as the "big" inning. Conventional wisdom recommends, for the first two-thirds of the game or so, do what you can to make sure that it is your team that has the big inning, and not the opposition.

When hitting:

- Don't sacrifice outs for a single run; eg: encourage the hitters to drive the ball rather than having them bunt.
- Runners should take every chance they can to get into scoring position
- Put pressure on the defence by "always" taking two bases on a hit to the outfield; eg: attack the plate from 2B

On defence:

- Take the sure out or, even better, the double play, even if it means giving up a run
- Outfielders must make sure they keep the hitter-runner off 2B and the double play in order, even at the expense of a run.

Keep in mind that this is just one point of view, but it is valid and worth being aware of. Whatever strategic position you adopt, make sure that your approach and defence and offence are consistent with one another.

Show how the team objective relates to adjusting the level of aggression in offence and defence

1. At the beginning of a game, a team has 27 outs to utilise in scoring as many runs as they need to win, so the relative cost/benefit is small and it is worth taking extra chances in order to score.
    - Be aggressive at plate
    - Take extra bases
    - Steals
    - Bunts for base hits

2. As the game goes on, and outs become more precious, a coach should minimise extra chances for outs or at least to ensure that each out is productive:
    - Hitters should be more patient
    - Use hit and runs
    - Use more sac bunts
    - Increased emphasis on moving a 2B runner over with 0 outs
    - Less stealing: each attempt provides another chance to make an out

3. With a critical run on base late in the game, any scoring chance may need to be taken (depending on outs, next hitter etc):
    - Score a 3B runner on any outfield fly ball or pass ball.
    - Score a 2B runner on any hit to outfield
    - Score a 1B runner on any double

Illustrate understanding of specified relays according to the National playbook

You must be familiar with the following defensive plays (see the National Playbook Cutoffs & Relays)

1. No runner on base:
    - Double, possible triple, to left field line
    - Double, possible triple, to left field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field line

2. Runner on 1st Base
    - Double, possible triple, to left field line
    - Double, possible triple, to left field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field line

Explain the important basics of giving signs, and the implications of thinking ahead when coaching in a game

1. To give signs, stand in a location where hitter and all baserunners can clearly see you.

2. Once you have given signs, move to best location to assist priority baserunner.

3. Usually, runner on 2B is the priority (even with loaded bases or runners on 2nd and 3rd); best location to assist 2B runner is 1/3 of way up line closer to hitter – you can look back see middle infielders better from there, and are already in good location for him to see you as he turns 3B. NB: for safety reasons, turn your head to pick up hitter as pitch is made.

4. Runner on 1B or 3B only: down the line, away from hitter, so that 1B baserunner can find you as he rounds 2B, and you can let 3B runner know if 3Bman is moving in for a pickoff.

5. To avoid rash mistakes, stay calm and plan the moves you will make in a given situation before the situation actually occurs; eg: "I know that John can possibly steal a base, but if he gets on here, I will let the next hitter, David, swing away, because he is our best hitter and John can score from first on a double anyway. If David cannot get John to 2B at least, then I will steal him so that a single from Phil can score him".

6. It is possible to keep signs simple for your players to read, but difficult for the opposition. For example:
   - Get your signs on quickly, when the opposition is not concentrating on you.
   - Use an indicator (a "key"): no sign is "on" unless you first touch a key spot (eg: the bill of the cap)
   - Use a wipe-off (or several) to put the sign on and then wipe it off.
   - Floating indicator: the first place you touch becomes the "key" for that sequence: players keep watching that spot, if you touch it again, the sign that follows is "on".
   - Hot spot: each play is put on by touching a designated spot a specified number of times; eg: the left arm – one touch for a bunt, two for a steal, etc
   - Have rules for the hot spot: eg, "If it is my first touch, no play will be on".
   - etc

7. Do not give any signs in situation where there is clearly no offensive tactic to be implemented.

Outline, with examples, the 'volume' approach to planning a training session

A valid and effective strategy for developing athlete responsibility and ensuring each gets his individual work done is to set a minimum volume of work for each to get done at training; eg:

- complete specified warm-up procedure
- long toss finishing with 15 long throws
- 20 position-specific throws
- 80 swings
- 20 ground balls
- run 5 doubles
- each pitcher to throw 30 pitch pen
- if you throw a pen, you have to catch one

Each player must make sure they get this work done themselves.

You will need sufficient equipment: balls, tees, catcher's gear etc, but players can act as coaches for one another – hitting fungoes, throwing BP etc.

This work approach can be set up to be done outside a period (20-30 minutes) set aside for team fundamentals.

This approach really works best with more experienced players who are familiar with the various activities

Demonstrate correct base-coach positioning, at both 1st and 3rd bases

3rd Base

1. To give signs, stand in a location where hitter and all baserunners can clearly see you.
2. Once you have given signs, move to best location to assist priority baserunner.
3. Usually, runner on 2B is the priority (even with loaded bases or runners on 2nd and 3rd); best location to assist 2B runner is 1/3 of way up line closer to hitter – you can look back see middle infielders better from there, and are already in good location for him to see you as he turns 3B. NB: for safety reasons, turn your head to pick up hitter as pitch is made.
4. Runner on 1B or 3B only: down the line, away from hitter, so that 1B baserunner can find you as he rounds 2B, and you can let 3B runner know if 3Bman is moving in for a pickoff.

1st Base

1. The role of the 1st base coach is much simpler: ensure that the 1st base runner knows the situation, and to that he or she is not surprised by any defensive tactics. The coach may also be required to hold batting gloves, shin guards etc.
2. Between pitches, stand right beside the runner and, if needed prompt him with his review of the situation (BOSO).
3. Once that is done, move to best location to assist the 1st base runner. If the 1st baseman is fielding behind the runner, you can move back there with him so that you can clearly see if he tries to sneak in for a pickoff.
4. Otherwise, there is no need to be out of the coach's box.

Demonstrate basic non-verbal communications with 1B runners.

Many coaches use non-verbal communication to remind runners of the task in the given situation. These are some possibilities with a runner on 1B:

- "outs" given above shoulder-height: red light – do not take any extra chances on base
- "outs" given below shoulder-height: green light – be aggressive; steal if you can get a good jump, try for an extra base etc.
- lateral, belt-high chopping motion with right hand: slide hard at 2B to break up the double-play
- point to 3B: remind runner that there is one out, and that he should try for 3B if there is a chance he can make it.
- point to 3B, followed by a palm-up lifting motion: remind runner that there is none or two out, and that he should try for 3B only if he can make it standing up (ie, without any risk).
- palms facing one another, hands moving apart: extend your lead

3. Long Term Athletic Development

Knowledge

i. Understand relevant aspects of LTAD theory
ii. Explain the four properties to be developed and the seven streams of movement utilised in the ABF LTAD approach, and the key points in progressing a player through each stream
iii. Plan suitable on-field strength and conditioning programs based on the ABF LTAD model
iv. Plan a simple annual periodisation plan for one of his or her players

Activities

i. Conduct a full warmup incorporating speed, acceleration and agility drills
ii. Individualise on-field strength and conditioning according to the ABF LTAD model

Instruction

i. the 4 properties to be developed
ii. the 7 streams of movement
iii. other fundamental understandings of the ABF LTAD model

Instruct players on the 4 qualities to be developed, the 7 streams of movement and other fundamental understandings of the ABF LTAD model

The qualities to be developed: Four fundamental qualities form the foundation upon which excellence in movement can be built. The goal is to develop each property in every joint and in the body as a whole. These qualities overlap, but should initially be looked at as separate aspects:

1. Stability: the joint should move smoothly in the direction which it is intended to move: no wobbling, trembling or collapsing. A good analogy is a door hinge: if it is loose or weak, the door cannot be opened or closed as it should.
2. Range of motion: the joint must move freely through the full range intended.
3. Control: the muscles must be able to control the joint throughout the whole range. They should be able to stop and hold at any place, reverse the direction of movement, continue it, do it fast or slow; in other words, have full control.
4. Strength: stable movement can be controlled throughout the full range of motion against a resistance.

An individual who has developed these properties in every joint and throughout the body is well on the way to becoming a superior athlete.

The streams of movement: In Australian baseball, we develop these properties by grouping exercises into "streams", so called because in each stream, the exercises increase steadily in difficulty, from very simple foundational exercises to very challenging ones. There is a never-ending stream of hurdles to overcome!
The seven streams are:

1. The double leg stream (DL): the legs are doing the same thing at the same time. This eventually leads to the Olympic lifts, which are essential in developing maximum explosive power. Eg: Unloaded squat (bodyweight squat):
    - Feet remain flat on ground throughout the movement
    - NO wobbling of the knees (stability)
    - Knees remain directly above the feet (stability and control)
    - Back remains straight: it may lean forward, but not bend forward
    - Hips go lower than the knees: many will be unable to do this, but that is the goal
    - Ultimately, they should be get the buttocks down near the heels: this is an example of full range of motion.
2. Single-leg (SL): exercises in which, at any given time, each leg has a slightly different task. Since this is the way we generally use our legs in life (eg walking) and in a game, this stream produces significant on-field benefits. Eg: single leg (SL) supported squat:
    - Place the rear foot "laces down" on a chair or bench behind the player
    - Front foot is well away from bench.
    - Bending the front leg, lower the back knee to barely graze the ground.
    - NO wobbling, particularly front knee (stability).
    - Keep trunk upright throughout the movement.
3. Jumping: develops dynamic balance, coordination and power. Eg: Double-leg (DL) take-off to DL landing:
    - The most important part of all jumping exercises is the landing.
    - 'Stick the landing': land under full control, feet flat on ground, knees behind toes, glutes act as shock absorbers, trunk strong
    - Start in half-squat posture, jump forward and land in the same posture
    - Distance is only important once the landing has been mastered: "make sure you can land before you try to fly".
4. Pushing: upper body exercises where weight is moved away from the body (or the body away from a resistance: eg, a pushup). Eg: knee pushups:
    - Hands on ground a little either side of the chest. Throughout the movement, the body is held rigid from shoulders through to knees.
    - Using the arms only, push on the ground until arms are fully extended.
    - Lower the body under control and repeat.
5. Pulling: upper body exercises where weight is moved towards the body (or the body toward a fixed object: eg, a chin-up). Improvement in this stream is far more important to baseball than the previous stream. Eg: cable pullups:
    - This exercise is like a reverse pushup.

- Equipment needed: a 3m piece of strong rope with a handle at each end (a loop tied through a piece of hose for a handle will do). This rope is wound around a high horizontal bar with the handle hanging low enough for the player to be able to reach while lying on the ground.
- The player lies on his back, holds the handles, and keeping the body rigid, pulls himself up, instead of pushing up off the ground.
- Many will need to start from a higher position, so that the body is at about 45 degrees, instead of horizontal

6. Shoulder function: Exercises which improve the function of this critical joint. The rubber tubing exercises are an example. Another eg: lying supermans:
    - Lying on stomach with the shoulders, elbows and wrists lifted as high as possible off the ground, arms bent and fingers pointing forward past the head (as if in a horizontal surrender posture).
    - Slowly extend the arms slowly out in front of face, then pull slowly back, keeping elbows, wrists and hands high off the ground throughout.
7. Core: exercises to develop the function of the trunk Eg: knee-planks
    - Assume bent-leg sit-up posture, with hands resting on thighs.
    - Perform abdominal curl, sliding hands up thighs until wrists reach knees.
    - Reverse movement under control, and repeat

Fundamental understanding:

1. There is certainly overlap between the streams (particularly as one progresses), but to ensure complete coverage, the player should do at least one exercise from each stream in each session.
2. Each individual progresses in each stream in their own way, according to individual strengths and weaknesses, independently of the others. One player may be further up the Single Leg stream then the Pulling stream, for example; while another player may be quite the reverse. Each must be encouraged to work on the weaker streams in order to become a more competent athlete.
3. If one is to gain maximum benefit and minimise the risk of injury, it is important not to rush progress. The individual should have full mastery of one exercise before moving on to a more challenging one. We are seeking permanent and systematic adaptation.

Conduct a full warmup incorporating speed, acceleration and agility drills

This looks very involved, and time-consuming, but it is much more than a warmup. It incorporates important exercises for developing fundamental movement skills and athleticism.

Moving: (in lines from outfield foul line; 5-20m each way)

1. side skips (with arm swings)
2. 360s
3. Carioca
4. Frankensteins
5. Walking knee circles
6. Butt kicks (out) and then reverse butt kicks (coming back)
7. Side squats
8. 2 lunges and 3 skips

Sprint mechanics drills:

9. Walking Knee-to-chest stretch
10. Lunge walk with high knee
11. Sprinter's march
12. A-skip
13. 3s

Acceleration drills

14. 3-point starts (2 each side)
15. Steal starts (3 x)
16. flying 5m sprint (3 x)
17. 10m beach flag starts (3 x)

Stationary:

18. shoulder retraction and protraction (5-10)
19. resisted shoulder rotations
20. resisted elbow extension and flexion
21. arm marches (5 each side)
22. scapula supermans (5-10)
23. swimmers (5 each side)
24. reverse swimmers (5 each side)
25. Arm swings (5 of each): up and down; across and back; goals posts; back pats; trunk twists

Teach correct execution of each exercise in the LTAD warmup

Moving: (in lines from outfield foul line; 5-20m each way):

1. side skips (with arm swings)
   - Stay lateral
   - Arms swing laterally from side of hip to above shoulder-height
   - Be smooth and rhyhtmic
2. 360s
   - Rotate fully while jogging, maintaining speed
   - Alternate directions
3. Carioca
   - Move sideways (not ¾)
   - Trailing foot goes in front of other foot on one step, behind on the next
   - Be smooth and rhyhtmic
4. Frankensteins
   - Alternate legs in a high front kick, stretching the hamstrings
   - Control leg coming back down: keep it in the air for a short pause, then step onto that foot and swing other leg forward and up.
   - Keep trunk up right and strong throughout
5. Walking knee circles
   - Maintain control on support leg
   - Work to keep trunk in upright posture
   - Move circling knee through best range of motion (without moving trunk)
6. Butt kicks (out) and then reverse butt kicks (coming back)
   - Trunk and head stay steady
   - Support leg firm and fully extended

Sprint mechanics drills:

7. Walking Knee-to-chest stretch
   - Alternatively pull each knee to chest while fully extending the support leg.
   - Take one step forward between each repetition.
8. Lunge walk with high lift
   - Lowest position: trunk upright, long lunge with no wobbling, rear knee brushing ground, front knee remains behind front toe
   - Highest position: no wobbling, support leg fully extended, other leg fully folded up.
9. Sprinter's march
   - Remain tall throughout, taking short steps and adhering to high position described in lunge walk.
   - Stress upright posture
10. A-skip
    - Rhythmic version of Sprinter's March, with a small, rhythmic skip between each step.
    - Emphasise folding the recovering leg up fully (see above): "toe over knee".
11. "3s"
    - Jogging under control, rapidly lift and put down one leg every 3rd step (hence the name "3s"), using vigorous arm action at the same time.
    - Emphasise getting that foot all the way up (toe over knee) and all the way down quickly.

Acceleration Drills

12. 3-point starts
    - Starting posture for this drill is important
    - To get into correct posture, put one knee on the ground and the other foot beside it.
    - The hand on the same side as the knee-down leg is about 20cm in front
    - On the "Set!" command, the player raises the hips until they are higher than the shoulders, leaning forward and taking a moderate amount of weight on the supporting hand. The other hand is moved back up higher than the hip of the forward leg.
    - On "Go!", the player explodes out of the blocks, with a heavy emphasis on powerful arm action: on the initial explosion, the hand that was back should swing fully and powerfully over the head. The arm swing graduates back to normal sprinting range after the first couple of steps.
    - Accelerate as hard as possible for 5-15m
13. Steal starts
    - Starting in lead-off posture

- On "Turn!" command, turn the body to 2nd base, ensuring the head is moved out to the 2nd base side of the feet; the right hand is moved well back past the right hip, in the same position used in 3-point starts.
- On "Go!" the player accelerates as explosively as possible, using vigorous, large arm swings for the first few steps.
- Once familiar with the drill, the players may turn and go in one motion. The emphasis on full arm action to assist acceleration must be maintained.

14. Flying 5m sprint
    - Players take a running start so as to be a top speed by 1st marker
    - Run at absolute top speed to the 2nd marker (5m distance)
15. 10m beach flag starts
    - Players lie chest down with both hands under chin, facing the direction to be sprinted
    - At coach's call, get up as quickly as possible and accelerate hard past marker (10m distance)

Stationary:

16. Shoulder retraction and protraction
    - Standing with arms extended forward at shoulder height
    - Push shoulder forward, then pull them back as far as possible
    - Emphasise maximum movement of the shoulder blade
17. Arm marches
    - Face down in pushup position, arms extended
    - Alternatively touch hand to same side shoulder
    - Try to hold trunk as still as possible throughout
18. Lying supermans
    - Lying on stomach with the shoulders, elbows and wrists lifted as high as possible off the ground, arms bent and fingers pointing forward past the head (as if in a horizontal surrender posture).
    - Slowly extend the arms out in front of face, then pull slowly back, keeping elbows, wrists and hands high off the ground throughout.
19. Swimmers
    - Face down in pushup position, arms extended
    - Alternatively touch hand to same side hip
    - Try to hold trunk as still as possible throughout
20. Reverse swimmers
    - Face up on hands and feet, trunk off ground, knees bent, arms extended
    - Alternatively touch hand to opposite side shoulder
    - Try to hold trunk as still as possible throughout
21. Arm swings. Keeping arms as tension- free as possible, swing them:
    - up and down, in unison, then one up, one down
    - across and back at chest height
    - goals posts: cross arms in front, swing them then up and back to surrender position (stretches the pecs)
    - back pats: alternatively swing arms up beside head, bending elbow to pat yourself on the back (stretches triceps)
    - trunk twists: let arms swing like ropes while rotating trunk one way then the other

Plan suitable on-field strength and conditioning programs based on the ABF LTAD model

The ABF's LTAD approach to exercise can be used for any age group, because at all times, the individual is working on mastering the appropriate exercise in each stream.

Your job as a coach (and a member of a club) is to:

1. Learn the material: know the 4 properties, the 7 streams and the requirements for progressing to the next exercise. Suggested progressions are available from the ABF. Keep in mind that most of the exercises are to be done at slow to moderate speed: the player should to concentrate on stability, range of motion and control; let strength come by itself.
2. Organise the equipment required at the field:
    - Double leg stream: no equipment needed at introductory level. Later on, some weight is required: sandbags, car tubes filled with sand etc are safe and practical options (injury from dropping these is unlikely).
    - Single leg: benches to put back foot on or to stand on as players progress are useful. May also use weights mentioned in DL stream.
    - Jumping: no equipment needed. Can use low hurdles later on.
    - Pulling: bar or similar needed for chinning; low bar or "cables" needed for horizontal pullups. Each player could have their own: individual "cables" can be made from a 3m piece of strong rope with a loop tied at each end (tie the loop through a piece of hose for greater comfort). The cable is looped over a high bar so that the player can lie face up underneath and pull themselves up.
    - Pushing: no equipment needed. Variations of the pushup will suffice.
    - Shoulder function: rubber tubing or light hand-weights needed. The latter can be manufactured by filling small juice bottles etc with sand.
    - Core: no equipment needed.
3. Implement the program! Put it in every training session: it's one of the best things you can do for your players.

Individualise on-field strength and conditioning according to the ABF LTAD model

If the LTAD model is applied strictly, each player will be concentrating on mastering the "perfect" exercise for him or her in each stream. Progress must be earned, for safety reasons and because it then becomes very motivational.

1. Know the 4 properties to be develop
2. Know the streams
3. Know the exercises
4. Know the rules for progressing
5. Know how to assess: look for the presence of each property

Keep a record of where each player is up to in each stream, then supervise to ensure that they are focusing on the right things.

Plan a simple annual periodisation plan for one of his or her players

"Periodisation" is a term used for the practice of breaking the training year into different phases in order to

- maximise overall progress
- reduce overuse injuries
- make sure that peak performance is achieved at the right time
- minimise boredom and staleness.

It can get very complex, but in its simplest form, periodisation for baseball can follow these guidelines:

1. Post-Season (2-6 weeks). Rehab any injuries, but try not to lose any conditioning
    - A short period of absolute rest, if needed. Review the season, plan your work etc (1-2 weeks)
    - Active rest: time away from the usual training regime; staying active without putting the same old stresses on the body: golf, swimming, hiking etc(4-5 weeks)
2. Off-Season (12-20 weeks). Build technique and physical properties.
    - Make any significant technique adjustments: swing mechanics, throwing etc
    - Develop mental skills
    - improve athleticism: coordination activities; build strength, power, speed, agility, range of motion
    - do more specific baseball stuff in the latter part of this period
3. Pre-Season (4-8 weeks). Prepare for the season
    - Baseball-specific drills
    - Condition yourself to the specific stresses of the game and/or season
    - Simulated competition, including pre-season games
4. In-Season. (12-30 weeks). Maintain the body and the mind.
    - Trust your preparation and concentrate on competing
    - Use daily and weekly routines to maximise recovery from one game and preparation for the next

4. Hitting

Knowledge

i. Justify the use of bunts and the hit & run
ii. Design a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions
iii. Show an understanding of the conventional manner of setting a hitting line-up
iv. Show how the team objective relates to adjusting the level of aggression in offence and defence.

Activities

i. Conduct on-field pre-game batting practice so as to develop situational awareness and execution
ii. Provide opportunity for players to develop bunting skills
iii. Organise and conduct a hitting circuit
iv. Provide consistent flips for swing practice

Instruction

i. Explain “hitting counts” and a “2-strike” approach
ii. Instruct offensive strategy: adjusting the level of aggression
iii. Explain how a hitter may adjust his approach according to the count
iv. Outline to hitters the process and importance of building on their database
v. Correctly instruct players in the purpose and key points of the one-hand tee drill
vi. Explain the difference between swing practice and game practice in hitting
vii. Teach the fundamentals of bunting

Correctly instruct players in the purpose and key points of the one-hand tee drill

The one-handed tee drill is arguably the best drill available to assist players in developing a feel for a good swing, but it is often poorly taught. The drill involves using each hand in isolation to produce an intended result. It is very important that player tries to complete the drill with an absolute minimum of effort, so that the development of coordination is accelerated. Instructions should be minimal, as the ball itself tells the player about the quality of technique: if the ball consistently hits the target travelling on an angle somewhere between 45° and level, the swing mechanics are, by definition, fine.

- The tee must be at least 10m from the target so that the trajectory of the ball can be seen.
- The target should be at about head-height so that the ball is lifted slightly when hit ("keep the ball out of the infield").
- The ball should travel with backspin on a trajectory "slightly above level". The speed of the ball is not important for this drill.
- Technical advice is initially limited: get your starting position, load and release. The most important points are to work with as little muscular effort as possible and to find a way to get the ball to travel consistently as intended. Very raw hitters may need slightly more help, but instruction should be limited to assisting the hitter to get the ball to travel as intended consistently.
- The hitter makes three attempts with the left, then three with the right, and repeats this for up to half an hour. If this is too fatiguing, the hitter is using too much tension, trying to muscle the bat through, rather than developing coordinated technique.

Provide consistent flips for swing practice

Flips (front toss) are the most commonly used swing drill in professional baseball. The player has to track the ball coming in the same direction as would a pitch, but can still concentrate on the technical aspects of the swing.

The coach stands behind a strong screen set about 5m directly in front of the hitter, and uses an easy underhand toss to enable the hitter to drive straight back in the direction of the coach. It is important that the coach is able to provide good quality flips to the hitter.

1. Safety:
    - the screen must have no holes
    - the screen must be strong enough to withstand the considerable stresses it will encounter
    - the coach must remain entirely behind the screen, except that the throwing hand will briefly protrude for the split second of ball release.
    - The hand must be back behind the screen before the ball reaches the hitter
    - The hitter must wear a helmet: the ball can bounce back off screen
2. Consistency:
    - The flipping action must be rhythmic and consistent to allow the hitter to load, get his timing etc. This simulates the time available in a game as the pitcher goes into his delivery.
    - flips must be delivered with consistent accuracy and speed

Design a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions

In a club situation, where one coach is usually training many players, a hitting circuit can be an excellent way to keep them profitably busy. A number of activities set up, with a given number of players at each one, moving on to the next at the coach's signal.

Think about available player groups, coaches, space, screens, fences, bats, balls (of different types), tees etc, and plan a session which provides players with a lot of swings and time to work things out.

The drills below can be incorporated into a circuit quite easily, but there are others you may find a way to use.

- Tee drill
- Side toss
- Rag ball
- Wiffle ball
- Flips
- Overhand toss (thrown while in a kneeling or seated position from behind a L-screen)
- Live batting practice

Organise and conduct a hitting circuit

If resources are sufficient (balls and protective screens), hitting drills can be set up as a circuit to maximize the volume of hitting activity even without an excess of coaching assistance. Eg

1. Dry swings
2. Tee work into screen or fence
3. Soft toss
4. Flips (or overhand toss)

Two people (or two pairs) per station; all stations for a fixed duration, or everyone move on at a given signal. Be mindful of safety issues, and the need for ball retrieval.

Teach the fundamentals of bunting

1. Bat:
    - Gripped for maximum control (eg, hands divide bat into three)
    - At top of strike zone and out toward pitcher
    - Held in line of sight so that ball can be more easily tracked to bat
    - Angled in the intended direction of the bunt
2. Posture:
    - Upper body squared off to pitcher
    - Lowered athletic stance
3. Making contact:
    - Bunt strikes only
    - If necessary, take head down to the ball (lowers body under control)
    - Keep bat at desired angle
    - Use bat to block the ball, not hit it
    - Ball must go to ground
4. Preferred direction of bunt:
    - With runner on 1B, bunt to 1B side
    - With runner on 2B, bunt to 3B side.

Conducting on-field practice for bunting

Coach provides positive feedback on correct execution, or makes corrections as required, on these key points of execution:

1. In groups of 3-6, hitter bunts ball thrown 10-15m by team-mate, attempting to master these tasks in order:
    - Anywhere on the ground;
    - Once this is mastered, attempts to bunt on the ground in fair territory
    - On ground to a specific target (cone, or between teammates feet etc)

2. Set up as for team batting practice
    - Coach (or other) pitching,
    - Hitter and runner in appropriate location (others awaiting their turn).
    - Each player makes one attempt to execute (as a hitter or a runner), then moves off to join other line.
    - Runner reads ball and runs to next base once it is clear it will hit the ground.
    - Hitter bunts, attempting to master these tasks in order (depending on ability):
        1. Anywhere on the ground (for beginners)
        2. On the ground in fair territory
        3. On ground to right side if runner is on 1B (more advanced players)
        4. On ground to left side if runner is on 2B (more advanced players)

Conduct on-field pre-game batting practice to develop situational awareness and execution

Set up as for team batting practice, coach (or other) pitching, hitter and runner in appropriate location (others awaiting their turn). Each player makes one attempt to execute (as a hitter or a runner), then moves off to join other line.

1. Hit & run: 1B runner ensures pitch goes to plate, then steals, ensuring that he turns his head to see pitch reach plate. Hitter must hit the pitch (unless it bounces), aiming for a hard ground ball. Runner reads ball off bat and reacts accordingly:
   - GB: keep going hard to prevent double play
   - Line drive: keep going hard with the intent of reaching 3B (don't have time to stop and go back).
   - Pop-up or long fly: slow down, read and react
   - Safe hit: get to 3B.
   - Hitter misses pitch: try to steal base.

2. Moving 2B runner to 3B with 0 outs: Hitter is trying to do one of two things: hit a long fly ball, or hit a ground ball on right side. Runner gets a good secondary lead, reads ball off bat, and reacts accordingly:
   - Safe hit: score
   - GB at or behind runner: get to 3B, score if possible (soft hit to outfield is easy to score on)
   - Line drive: start back to base, dive back to base if infielder catches ball, or run to 3B if ball gets through
   - Fly ball: from about 30' off base, read ball and relevant fielder; react accordingly
   - Long fly ball: tag up and go to 3B on catch
   - Shallow fly ball (may not be caught): get the best lead you can while retaining chance to return to base if ball is caught

3. Score runner from 3B: There are two main situational variations – the infield remains back (making it easy to score on a soft GB); or the infield comes in (to make it difficult for 3B runner to score). With the infield back, a ground ball will score the runner, so the runner attacks plate on a GB. If the infield is in, runner reads ball and reacts accordingly:
   - Safe hit: score
   - GB: wait until ball gets past infield before scoring.
   - Soft GB, or "chopper": attack plate and score
   - Line drive: start back to 3B, get back to base if infielder catches ball, or score if ball gets through
   - Medium or deep fly ball: return to base, read ball, score if possible after catch or balls hits ground.
   - Shallow fly ball: get the best lead you can while retaining chance to return to base if ball is caught

Outline to hitters the process and importance of building on their database

Experience is irreplaceable in the development of a hitter, but merely being in a situation is does not guarantee maximum learning is occurring. The ability to focus on a task, and to maintain the intent and effort to improve, are critical elements in allowing the hitter to add to his "database": the amount of information available in a given situation and the skill with which it can be used.

A lot of the information is stored sub-consciously: elite hitters may "not know what they know". Whether they can tell you about it or not, they have a large database of relevant information:

- Different pitch types: velocities, movement etc
- What each of those pitches looks like in the first 15 feet, and what they do over the last 15 feet.
- Individuals pitchers' tendencies.
- Situational probabilities: what's likely to happen next?
- Their own strengths and weaknesses, what works for them.
- How to get themselves ready: off-season, in-season, week by week, day by day, pitch by pitch.

How can hitters build their database?

- First of all, pay attention; don't be half-hearted about getting better.
- Watch good hitters and pitchers in action: TV games, National League, practice sessions (hitters and pitchers)
- Be determined to learn from every opportunity: focus hard on the ball in your own games, especially if you get to face an outstanding pitcher, talk to experienced players and coaches, read, attend clinics.
- Form the habit of replaying pitches, particularly good pitches (if you get the chance to watch a good pitcher throw a bullpen, memorise the flight of every pitch). Every time you re-run a pitch in your head, you are teaching your subconscious the trajectory of a ball in flight. This improves your ability to predict where a pitch will end up from the clues you pick up before, at and soon after release.
- Play other hitting sports (tennis, squash, table tennis etc): research shows that practicing different hitting tasks improves your ability to adapt your swing.

Explain the difference between swing practice and game practice in hitting

The difference is important!

- Swing practice is practice designed solely to improve the way in which a hitter swings the bat. It may involve tee work, flips, soft toss, dry swings etc: all activities where the result achieved serves solely as feedback on the quality of the swing.

- Game practice is designed to rehearse the execution of specific tasks which frequently occur in a game. It is not productive, during game practice, to be concerned about the quality of the swing: the result is all that matters.

Show an understanding of the conventional manner of setting a hitting line-up

It is very rare for any team to have the ideal person for each position in the lineup. One approach is to compose your lineup according how likely each player is to the lead in a key statistic (each reflects particular characteristics).

The top of the order will usually be your best offensive players; the bottom four will usually be defensively oriented, and thus their hitting characteristics are less defined.

1. Leadoff: runs scored - (get on base, run the bases well).
2. 2nd leadoff type: runs scored is key; ideally will naturally hit to right side (left-hander?)
3. Best hitter (batting average).
4. RBIs
5. RBIs
6. RBIs or runs scored

7-9. As you see fit. If possible, avoid having a slow runner at number 9, as this could negate the strengths of your leadoff guys.

Show how the team objective relates to adjusting the level of aggression in offence and defence

Situational strategy is based on the relationship between the number of outs remaining and the number of runs needed to win.

1. At the beginning of a game, a team has 27 outs to utilise in scoring as many runs as they can, so the relative cost/benefit is small and it is worth taking extra chances in order to score.
    - Aggressive at plate
    - Take extra bases
    - Steals
    - Bunts for base hits

2. As the game goes on, and outs become more precious, a coach should minimise extra chances for outs or at least to ensure that each out is productive:
    - Hitters more patient
    - Hit and runs
    - Sac bunts
    - Increased emphasis on moving the 2nd base runner over with no outs.
    - Less stealing

3. With a critical run on base late in the game, any scoring chance may need to be taken (depending on outs, next hitter etc):
    - Score 3B runner on any outfield fly ball or pass ball.
    - Score 2B runner on any hit to outfield
    - Score 1B runner on any double

Explain "hitting counts" and a "2-strike" approach

1. Hitting counts. A hitter should understand that on certain counts, when the pitcher is behind, he or she is under increased pressure to throw a strike. A hitter can never be guaranteed that a particular pitch is coming, but this pressure makes it a bit easier to predict what the pitch will be (usually a fastball). That assists the hitter in timing, and therefore hitting the pitch. These counts are therefore referred to as "hitter's counts":
    - 3-0, 3-1, 2-0 (count strongly in hitter's favour)
    - 1-0, 2-1
    - 3-2, 0-0 (in most situations, pitcher wants to throw a strike)

2. A two-strike approach. Many productive hitters will sacrifice aggression to ensure they put the ball in play when they have 2 strikes on them. These adjustments are designed to simplify the swing, improve plate coverage and give hitter more time to see the ball. They can include:
    - Focus on hitting ball deeper in the zone (as opposed to catching it way out in front).
    - Shortening up on the bat
    - Widening the stance – less body movement

Justify the use of bunts and the hit & run

Bunts and hit & run plays diminish the chances of having a big inning, and are generally only used late in a game where the scores are close.

Bunts are best used:

- to get a runner into scoring position when a single run is critical
- to avoid a double-play at all costs
- when the hitter is unlikely to contribute anything if allowed to swing (eg, pitchers at a professional level)

The hit & run is used:

- to minimize the chances of a double-play
- when the hitter has good bat control but little power
- when the pitcher is consistently throwing strikes

5. Throwing

Activities

i. Conduct activities which encourage infielders to use a variety of throws
ii. Run an arm development session

Instruction

i. Provide players with effective guidelines for developing arm strength

Provide players with effective guidelines for developing arm strength

- You must practice throwing in order to improve – you can't avoid all throwing and expect to have a strong arm. On the other hand, too much throwing can cause injury.
- You must gradually build up the volume and intensity of throwing gradually: if you increase either one too suddenly, you will cause an injury.
- Long-toss is one good way to build up your arm strength:
    - Start throwing about 20m
    - Throw as easily as you can, but directly at a specific target (eg, partner's face)
    - After 5-10 throws, one partner moves back 3 or 4 steps
    - This continues, always throwing as easily as you can for the distance, until you are throwing nearly as far as you can. There is no need to keep the trajectory flat: let it have some air.
    - After 5-10 throws at that distance, shorten the distance and throw 5-10 throws hard and flat to re-establish the mechanics required in a game
- You cannot throw at maximum speed every day. If you are trying to improve velocity, throw hard twice a week, and throw easy ("take your arm for a light jog") on three or four other days.
- Pay attention to any signs your body sends you that you are doing damage. Pain or discomfort, particularly in the elbow or the shoulder, means you need to give it a rest. And you will then need to build back up gradually when you do return to throwing; its much better if you don't overdo it in the first place.
- To be safe, you should have at least three months of the year where you don't throw. This allows all the connective tissue time to heal and adapt to the stresses of throwing.

Run an arm development session

Although one of the simplest of drills, long toss one very effective way to build throwing ability (mechanics, velocity and arm endurance), and is thus a critical part of team's training program. As with all activity, players must be eased into it, so that the body can gradually adapt to the specific stresses.

1. After warming the body up, players commence throwing in pairs 5-10m apart, always aiming at a specific target: eg, the face of their partner.
2. Each has 5-10 throws at that distance, and then one partner takes a couple of steps back.
3. This process is repeated (5-10 throws at each gradually increasing distance) until, after they have been doing the drill for a couple of weeks, each player is throwing as far as they can.
4. Players should be encouraged to throw as easily as possible for the given distance, and to "give the ball some air": there is no need to keep the throw flat.
5. Once well-conditioned, they can make 20-25 throws at their maximum distance, then shorten up the distance to make some flat throws.
6. Start at about 8 minutes; as players become stronger, this drill can last up to 20 minutes.

Conduct activities which encourage infielders to use a variety of throws

Players start with the ball in their glove (graduating to having the coach hitting fungoes) and are encouraged to experiment with the way they throw the ball. Players are asked to assess the best way to deliver the ball to different bases in different situations:

- Infielders should appreciate the differences involved in consistently delivering the ball to the various bases, and the different throws required by different groundballs.
- Outfielders should appreciate the different demands resulting from balls hit in different locations, and from various games situations and runner locations.

6. Pitching

Knowledge

i. Outline the key risk factors for young pitchers
ii. Recall the various pitch limits and related rules for all National junior tournaments

Activities

i. Conduct an execution-centred bullpen session to develop control of various pitches
ii. Conduct pitchers' fielding practice

Instruction

i. Outline the characteristics and execution of common types of pitches.
ii. Teach basic pickoffs
iii. Explain the fundamentals of a sound pitching approach
iv. Emphasise the importance of good tempo and body language by all players, especially pitchers.
v. Instruct players in how to prepare themselves to pitch: annual periodisation, weekly routine, game day

Outline the key risk factors for young pitchers

The most important factors contributing to arm injuries in pitchers, particularly young pitchers, are:

1. Fatigue and overuse: the more they are pitch, the more connective tissue is overloaded, and the greater the likelihood of injury. This is by far the most important factor, and must be carefully monitored.

2. Throwing velocity: the harder they throw, even if they have "good mechanics", the more stress they put on key structures. All the force has to be transmitted through the shoulder and elbow at some stage. One problem is that a coach will often want to use the hard thrower more often, when in fact, he should be throwing less.

3. Throwing mechanics: a poor delivery can put even more stress on the arm.

4. Conditioning: if the arm or the body is not conditioned to do the work, chances of injury increase.

5. Pitch type: contrary to popular belief, the fastball places more stress on the arm than any other pitch type (assuming all are thrown with proper mechanics). The problem with the curve ball, for example, seems to be two-fold:

    - coaches overuse young pitchers who can throw one because they win a lot of games: fatigue and overuse are the issue
    - young pitchers, because they have small hands or a lack of coordination and strength, often throw it with bad mechanics

Outline the characteristics and execution of common types of pitches:

Types of pitches

1. 4-seam and 2-seam FB. Pitchers should experiment with grips to understand the different properties of the 4-seam and 2-seam fastballs:
    - Arm action should not vary between the two; the grip accounts for the difference in flight properties.
    - for a given arm action, the 4-seam will hold its altitude better than the 2-seam, and will usually have greater velocity.
    - The increased "sink" of the 2-seam is what makes it useful.
2. Curve ball (CB). Use same general mechanics as for FB; the break comes from topspin put on ball by rolling the fingers over the top of the ball at release.
    - A true CB breaks down more than across
    - "High elbow" is particularly important (angle of break and injury prevention).
    - Ball is still thrown, not guided; full arm action and follow-through.
3. Change-up (CH). Use same general mechanics as for FB; the grip and hand tension takes care of speed variation.
    - There are many variations: grip, pressure etc. All aim to make wrist action less efficient and thus reduce velocity while retaining same arm speed as for FB.
    - Initial goal is to master the reduction of velocity, then to throw pitch for a low strike.
    - Ball is still thrown, not guided; full arm action and follow-through.
    - Movement can be developed later.

Explain the fundamentals of a sound pitching approach.

At every level of the game, a pitcher must avoid giving the hitters an advantage, so it is important that pitcher and catcher to work together on pitching strategy and strive to adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1st pitch strike. If FB is his only consistent pitch, then it must be used.
- Stay ahead. All pitch selections based on the intent to stay ahead in the count.
- Change speeds. Keeps hitters off balance and reduces their effectiveness.
- Locate FB. Mastery of the FB gives pitcher a lot of options. From the hitter's perspective, FB in a different location is actually a different pitch.

Patience is required by coach: it takes time for a pitcher to be capable of doing these things.

Emphasise the importance of good tempo and body language by all players, especially pitchers.

Pitchers must work fast: pitcher should ensure that he wastes no time between pitches.

- Keeps game moving – makes it a better spectacle
- Keeps defensive players alert and active
- Reduces ability of hitter to make between-pitch adjustments.

Instruct players in how to prepare themselves to pitch: annual periodisation, weekly routine, game day

Pitchers should be trained to know how to prepare themselves.

1. Periodisation. Break the year into different periods (phases): post season, off-season, pre-season, competition. Plan the work done in each period to maximize development and progress. Eg:
   a. Post-season (2-3 weeks): active rest and recuperation; may be longer if treatment of injuries is required
   b. Off-season (8-24 weeks): arm development, strength training, sprinting, modifications to technique etc. Include some short breaks from training
   c. Pre-season (2-6 weeks): conditioning and skill work become more specific and more game oriented.
   d. Competition(10-20 weeks): built around weekly routine, but also with the aim of peaking at critical time.

2. Weekly routine. Each pitcher should establish an individualised regular weekly schedule to ensure they maximise recovery and progress. For example (assuming no injuries), during regular season competition:
   Sunday: Pitch, then cool-down throwing, and a mix of light dynamic and static stretching
   Monday: Lift, light throw, stretch
   Tuesday: throw lightly, agilities, run, stretch.
   Wednesday: Lift, light throw, stretch
   Thursday: Bullpen, PFP, run, stretch
   Friday: Touch and feel pen, light lift, stretch
   Saturday: stretch.
   Of course, many young players will not be lifting, and can thus ignore that activity. Alternatively, bodyweight-type strength activities can be incorporated into on-field work.

3. Game day: establish a routine by working backwards from game time. The following is an example of a game day schedule for a home team starting pitcher :
   On rising, eat a good breakfast
   Hydrate all day
   At least 3 hrs prior to game: thorough stretch
   45 minutes before game: active warmup routine, including jogging, mild agilities, ballistic stretches.
   25 minutes before game: play catch, stretching arm to 75% max distance
   15 minutes before game: bullpen warmup
   5 minutes before game: finish warmup, head to dugout, catch breath, have a drink etc; head out to mound
   After outing: play light catch, run, stretch, review performance.

This schedule will need to be adjusted to suit the individual: how long do they like to throw before heading to pen? How long do they like to throw in pen? Etc

Conduct an execution centred bullpen session to develop control of various pitches

Bullpens can be conducted on flat ground, or on a mound. You will need a catcher in full gear. As part of his leadership duties, the catcher should be trained to run the bullpens: he should have the authority to do so, know the routines, the rules etc.

1. The pitcher must be warmed up and ready to start (long toss etc) before the bullpen starts. Do not allow them to warmup with the catcher.
2. The purpose of this type of pen is to rehearse making pitches: focus on hitting the target, not how hard they can throw etc. Emphasis is on pitcher focusing on a small target; eg, a spot in the catcher glove, not the whole glove.
3. Generally, the target should be in the bottom 1/3 of the strike zone: "the box".
4. It is the pitchers job to know the purpose of the pen session and his routine, and be able to do it unsupervised. (This may take a little time).
5. A pitcher should easily be able to throw 6 pitches per minute, so this session should take around 5-6 minutes. Any longer, and they are throwing too many pitches or wasting time.
6. It is possible to have two pitchers throwing to one catcher, alternating pitches. This can be much more time-efficient without requiring the pitchers to rush.
7. A good routine (39 pitches):

    3 "1/2 box" fastballs away (outer half of the bottom 1/3 of the strike zone) from a windup
    3 "1/2 box" fastballs in (inner half) from a windup
    3 "1/2 box" fastballs away from set
    3 "1/2 box" fastballs in from set
    2 FB tilts to RHH (up & in, then down & away; 2 sets of two makes 4 pitches)
    2 FB tilts to LHH (up & in, then down & away; 2 sets of two makes 4 pitches)

    3 "box" change-ups from a windup
    1 changeup tilt to RHH (FB up & in, then box changeup - 2 pitches) from set
    1 changeup tilt to LHH (FB up & in, then box changeup - 2 pitches) from set

    3 "box" curveballs from a windup
    1 curveball tilt to RHH (FB up & in, then box curveball - 2 pitches) from set
    1 curveball tilt to LHH (FB up & in, then box curveball - 2 pitches) from set

    5 "tough pitches": imagining full count on hitter, how many strikes can be thrown out of 5 pitches?
        1 FB
        1 changeup
        1 FB
        1 CB
        1 FB
    1 pitchout to a right-handed hitter
    1 pitchout to a left-handed hitter

NB: If the pitcher achieves a poor result when attempting a pitch, he does not "get another try". That is, the first round of 5 fastballs consists of 5 attempts, and no more. The catcher should keep count of how many times the pitcher "makes the pitch": pitches the ball to the intended location. This number becomes as assessment of the pitcher's success.

Teach basic pickoffs

The purpose of a pickoff is to make it harder for the runner to get a good jump to the next base (to "keep him honest"). Making an out on a pickoff is just a bonus.

1. Pickoff to 1B for a right hander

- Split hands and move both feet at the same time.
  - Right hand is lifted directly to head height on the 3B side: as the body turns away, the arm will be in perfect position for a short-arm throw.
  - Quick repositioning of feet: right foot is turned square to 1B; left foot takes short step to 1B.
- Without pause, make an accurate throw knee height over the base

2. Pickoff to 1B for a lefthander

- Knee lift and early hand movements should look exactly like the commencement of a pitch.
- As knee reaches highest point, step directly to 1B and make knee-high throw over 1B.
- As skill improves, learn to minimize turning the shoulders to 1B

3. Pickoff at 2B

- The mechanics are the same for both RHP and LHP.
- In one short jumping movement, swap feet: the stride foot should come down slightly on the 2B side of the mound.
- Ensure that the turn is to the glove side; ie: clockwise for LHP, anti-clockwise for a RHP.
- Using a short arm action, make a knee-high throw over the 2B.

Conduct pitchers' fielding practice

Use a fungo or roll the ball to have pitchers rehearse:

1. Routine comebacker: 1-3, 1-6 and 1-2.

2. Bunts to both sides, 1-3

3. Bunt on 3B side, 1-5

4. Covering first base on a groundball to right side:
    - Routine play: get ball from 1Bman early, then step on base, staying in fair territory, then turn to look for the next play (often at 3B).
    - 1Bman fumble (pitcher will have to stop on base)
    - Self-executed

7. Defence

Knowledge

i. Illustrate understanding of specified relay plays according to the National playbook
ii. Name the five tools of a ballplayer and provide a basic outline of the positional relevance of each
iii. Demonstrate solid knowledge of the 6Fs approach to fielding a routine groundball
iv. Demonstrate solid knowledge of the 6Fs approach to making a backhand play
v. Outline the 6Fs approach to executing a double play
vi. Outline the 6Fs approach to a 1st baseman receiving an infield throw
vii. Outline the reasons for and execution of varying infield depth

Activities

i. Conduct catcher's blocking drills: ball directly in front, to either side, and catcher regaining feet to throw
ii. Conduct other catcher's drills: throwing to all bases, pop-ups, bunt plays and tags
iii. Drill backhand skills using the 6Fs sequence
iv. Provide drills to help develop skills on forehand plays and slow rollers
v. Arrange practice of key tasks for 1st Baseman
vi. Drill key tasks for middle infielders
vii. Use triangle drills for the rehearsal of DP feeds etc
viii. Run drills for key tasks of 3B
ix. Throw or fungo the ball to provide outfielders with practice on specific tasks.
x. Conduct practice for double cuts, relays and flyball priorities.
xi. Rehearse regular 1st & 3rd plays, and bunt defence

Instruction

i. Provide key points in the execution of slow roller plays using the glove and using the bare hand
ii. Use the 6Fs sequence to instruct an infielder on the backhand play.
iii. Guide the 1st Baseman in positioning and important routine tasks
iv. Instruct middle infielders on the key points of double play feeds and turns, and steal coverage
v. Provide simple instruction to a 3rd Baseman on key plays
vi. Instruct an outfielder in the following important routine plays.
vii. Instruct catchers on the basic postures: no runner on; runner on; pitch signs
viii. Educate catchers on pitching strategy
ix. Outline key communication expectations of Catchers
x. Provide guidelines for the adjustment of infield depth

Demonstrate solid knowledge of the 6Fs approach to fielding a routine groundball

"The Six Fs" is an approach developed by Perry Hill, a very prominent infield coach in professional baseball. It provides an excellent framework for teaching and assessing the fundamentals of fielding a groundball. The steps should be rehearsed separately and then together, with lots of repetition through roll drills, so that the method becomes fluid and automatic.

1. **Feet:**
   - Develop a routine to ensure that your feet are 'alive' and your posture is athletic as the ball reaches the contact zone – every pitch. You must be ready to move immediately in any direction
   - Your feet carry you to the ball. As you approach the ball, lower your body gradually into fielding posture, like a plane coming in to land
2. **Field:**
   - Use a wide base: have you feet wide apart for stability and balance, so that your knees don't get in the way, and so that you can bend down more easily
   - Move through the ball as you field it: do not be static. The left foot comes onto the ground just as the ball hits the glove
   - The hands should be out in front so that you can see the ball into the glove.
3. **Funnel:**
   - Bring the ball to your centre of gravity (belly-button) with two hands, before splitting the hands to make the throw
4. **Footwork:**
   - While funnelling the ball then splitting the hands, rhythmically take the right foot to the left and the left to the target, so as to land with the feet lined up to the target. (Your feet should never cross over).
5. **Fire:**
   - Continuing in one smooth motion, fire the ball firmly and accurately to the target. The momentum of your footwork provides a substantial amount of the force for the throw.
6. **Follow:**
   - Follow the ball after you throw it: you should be taking two or three steps directly toward the target after you release the ball. This ensures that you have momentum in the right direction

(The notes above describe technique for a right-handed thrower. Left-handers will use opposite leg and arm where appropriate)

Provide key points in the execution of forehand and slow roller plays

1. Forehand: when ball is too far to left side, player get as far as he can and reaches for ball with glove only, then replaces feet (right to left, left to target) to come into a good throwing posture. Reverse pivot may be preferable, but player can still replace feet.

2. Slow rollers: player runs hard toward ball, gaining control as he gets near, catches ball in glove or bare hand and throws to 1B on the run.

Provide drills to help develop skills on forehand plays and slow rollers

Coach uses roll drill to practice:

1. Forehand
2. Slow rollers

Conduct activities which encourage infielders to use a variety of throws

Players can start with the ball in the glove (graduating to balls fungoed by coach) and are encourages to experiment with the way they throw the ball. Players are asked to assess the best way to deliver the ball to different bases in different situations:

- Infielders should appreciate the differences involved in consistently delivering the ball to the various bases, and the different throws required by different groundballs.

- Outfielders should appreciate the different demands resulting from balls hit in different locations, and from various games situations and runner locations.

Demonstrate solid knowledge of the 6Fs approach to making a backhand play

An infielder needs to develop confidence in his ability to field a ball hit too far to the right side to be able to use the routine approach. Many of the 6 Fs still apply, but the fielding posture is necessarily different:

- The head and right foot are directly in line with the path of the ball,
- The glove is in a backhand position well on front of the eyes.
- The body is side on to the path of the ball, but still low with a wide base

Once again, lots of roll drill is the key to developing this skill. A player should develop these skills in order:

1. No glove: player positions himself with right foot behind the line of the ball (wide base and head over path of ball). Allows ball to roll so that it is blocked by that foot. This is to ensure that the right foot is behind the ball.

2. Receive with glove: same positioning as above, but this time use glove in backhand position to receive ball NB: make contact with ball well in front of foot..

3. Replace feet to throw: once ball is caught, replace feet (right to left, left to target) to come into a good throwing posture with momentum.

4. Power turn & drive (for when there is not much time): once ball I caught, transfer it quickly to throwing hand, drive off right leg to make throw.

(The notes above describe technique for a right-handed thrower. Left-handers will use opposite leg and arm where appropriate)

Drill backhand skills using the 6Fs sequence

Coach rolls ball to backhand side, emphasizing wide base and head-over-ball, specifically:

1. No glove
2. Receive with glove
3. Replace feet to throw
4. No-step throw

Outline and instruct the 6Fs approach to executing a double play

1. **SS double play feeds:**

Glove side

- Field the ball according to 6 Fs fundamentals
- Clear the ball from the glove; give the 2nd Baseman a good view of ball
- Little or no backswing (of throwing arm)
- Maintain momentum under control
- "Stiff-wristed" push-feed to face of 2nd Baseman
- Follow the ball after release; hand reaches out as if shaking hands with 2B

Straight at SS

- Field the ball according to 6 Fs fundamentals
- Funnel
- Retain low position
- Keep body steady
- Throw face-high to 2B

Backhand side

- Field in front of right foot, as per 6 Fs backhand fundamentals
- Open left leg to target
- Stay low
- Throw face-high to 2B

2. SS double play turns: "right foot on the bag, left foot to the ball"

Feed from 2B

- Right toe on left-field corner of bag
- Athletic, lively posture
- Anticipate a bad throw
- Read 2B throw, take large step with left foot toward the ball
- Replace the feet to create distance & direction
- Make a firm accurate throw to 1B
- Lift cleats ready to lift cleats out of ground (in case of a collision with runner)

Feed from 1B (inside the line)

- Left foot on base, give big target inside the base.
- feet well spread, good balance, chest to 1st baseman, athletic, lively posture
- Catch, step and throw

3. 2nd Base double play feeds

Bare-hand side

- Field ball cleanly
- Maintain momentum toward base (under control)
- Throw face-high over the base to SS
- Walk after the feed

Straight at 2Bman
Traditional method:

- Field and funnel ball as per 6 Fs
- Turn trunk toward SS, dropping left knee toward ground as throwing hand comes back over thigh, close to trunk.
- Keeping elbow quite close to body, make a side-arm throw uphill to SS.

Power feed:

- Approach ball on a curved path bending toward SS.
- Field as per 6 Fs
- With a strong lateral leg drive, throw the ball to the SS with a backhand motion. NB: push the ball with the hand side-on to the target, and finish with the palm facing the target.
- Follow the ball for at least two steps.

Forehand side

- Try to glove the ball as the left foot plants
- Replace feet with a reverse pivot
- Make a face-high throw to SS

4. 2nd Base double play turns: "Left foot on the bag right foot to the ball"

Feed from SS

- Get to the base quickly
- Wide base and athletic posture with left foot on the centre of the base, feet aligned to 1B.
- Expect a bad throw and take the right foot to the ball once SS throws it, then step with left to 1B and throw
- Lift cleats off the ground, so that the take-out slide can do no great harm.

Feed from 3B

- As above, but it is nearly always best to have the left foot on the bag and take the right foot to the ball (rather than rock & fire)

Instruct middle infielders on steal coverage

- Ensure you know who is covering: if both infielders break to the bag, there will be a lot of gaps in the defence.
- Before the pitch, position yourself so that you can get to the bag in time without having to break before the ball reaches the hitter.
- When the runner steals, break and get to the bag in time to receive the throw
- If the throw is accurate, straddle the bag (which prevents the runners from sliding around you) and put the tag straight down in front of the base. If the throw is down the line, try to catch it down the line so that you can still tag the runner.
- If the throw is not accurate, make sure the ball does not get by you and allow the runner to advance to 3B, especially with less than two down

Drill key tasks of middle infielders.

With other relevant players in position, Coach (or other) rolls, throws or fungoes ball as appropriate to have middle infielders practice the following skills:

1. SS double play feeds:
    - Glove side
    - Straight at SS
    - Backhand side

2. SS double play turns:
    - Feed from 2B
    - Feed from 1B

3. 2B double play feeds
    - Bare-hand side
    - Straight at 2Bman
    - Forehand side

4. 2B double play turns
    - Feed from SS
    - Feed from 3B
5. Steal coverage

Use triangle drills to practice DP feeds

Triangle drills are an excellent way to practice basic skills: a large number of repetitions can be completed in a short time, without the involvement of a coach.

- Three players stand 5-15m apart to form a triangle.
- The first player rolls the ball to the second who fields it and feeds it to the third using the correct throw for the particular play being rehearsed.
- The third player now rolls to the first who fields it and feeds it to the second etc.
- In this way, all the double-play feeds can be rehearsed:
    - SS feeds
        a. Ball on the base side
        b. Ball straight at SS
        c. Ball on the backhand side
    - 2B feeds
        a. Ball on the base side
        b. Ball straight at 2Bman (backhand feed and regular)
        c. Ball on the glove side

Provide simple instruction to a 3rd Baseman on key plays

1. **Double play feeds**
    - Field ball according to 6 Fs guidelines
    - Replace feet and make a face high throw to 2B
2. **PO5-3 double play**
    - Used when ball is taking 3Bman toward base
    - Field ball cleanly, maintain momentum and continue to 3B
    - Placing right foot on base to force out lead runner, step directly to 1B with left to make the throw and complete double play
3. **Tagging a stealing runner**
    - 3B man must be prepared any time there is a runner on 2B
    - Every pitch, start the break toward 3B before checking whether runner is stealing or not: if 3Bman waits to check before breaking, he will often be too late to the base.
    - Straddle base, side-on to catcher, chest-on to runner.
    - On a good throw, catch ball and drop glove straight down in front of base.
    - Make sure a bad throw does not get past: the runner will score.
4. **Fielding bunts**
    - Attack ball
    - Gain control as you get close to ball
    - Field ball (glove or bare hand) and throw to 1B

Run drills for key tasks of 3B

With other relevant players in position, Coach (or other) rolls or fungoes ball as appropriate to have 3rd basemen practice the following skills.

1. Double play feeds
2. PO5-3 double play.
3. Tag plays
4. Fielding bunts

Outline the 6Fs approach to a 1st baseman receiving an infield throw

- Read the ball off the bat
- As soon as you know you cannot field it, hustle to the base and locate it with your throwing-side foot
- Retaining the feel of the base with the heel of that foot, turn to face the direction of the throw
- Be in an athletic position, ready to move in any direction
- Read the throw
- Turn back foot sideways
- Step to the ball with glove-side foot: this foot should come onto the ground as the ball hits the glove. This ensures that you do not "get out there" before you know where the throw is headed.
- Back foot, being sideways, provides more stability and is less likely to drag off
- Step off base once out is made

Guide the 1st Baseman in positioning and important routine tasks.

1. Positioning with no runner on base:
   The 1st baseman must be comfortable that he can get to the base in time to receive a throw from an infielder. Keeping that in mind, he should field as deep and as far off the foul line as possible. His first job is to be an infielder: must be ready to field the ball that is hit in his vicinity. His ability to do that will be restricted if he is worried about getting to the base in time. Adjustments can be made according to hitter.

2. Positioning with runner on 1B:
   Holding the runner on: right foot along-side home-plate side of base, left foot in fair territory, chest facing pitcher. Athletic posture, glove at the ready: must be ready to receive a pickoff throw, or to move into better fielding position if ball is pitched.

3. Tagging:
   If the pickoff throw is accurate (knee-high over bag), allow ball to travel as far as possible, turn the trunk and lower the body (may go onto left knee) while catching ball and tag to centre-field corner of base. If the throw is inaccurate, or the runner is clearly back, no tag is required: just make sure the ball does not get past.

4. Moving off the base
   Develop a set routine and master it. Eg, one big step with the right foot while squaring up to face home, then one big side shuffle. This allows baseman to make reasonable distance and be in an athletic fielding stance when the pitch reaches the plate.

5. Positioning with runner on 1B & 2B (less than two out).
   Stands at "double-play depth": behind the runner, close enough to bag to make him think baseman could get back for a pickoff, still well off the line but not as deep as he would be with no runner on base. (With two out, he can field in normal fielding position)

6. Initiating the double play
   Field the ball cleanly and make an accurate throw to the inside of 2B. Use a reverse pivot on balls hit straight at him or to the left. Can often glove the ball using the backhand catch on ball hit to his right.

   As soon as the ball is thrown, get back to base to receive throw from middle infielder (pitcher makes a loud call if he can cover the base for you).

Arrange practice of key tasks for 1st Baseman.

1. Practising Tags:
   1st baseman adopts posture to hold runner on. Coach (or other) throws ball to simulate pickoff. Baseman catches ball and applies tag to opposite corner.

2. Moving off the base
   1st baseman adopts posture to hold runner on. Coach (or other) simulates pitcher's delivery; baseman uses correct technique to get into fielding position. Coach may fungo groundball and have baseman execute putout or initiate DP.

Provide guidelines for the adjustment of infield depth

Managers often have non-verbal signs to inform the infielders of the depth at which to field in certain situations. This can be as simple as pointing to 1B to indicate that they should just get the hitter (and thus field at normal depth) or home to indicate they must make get the runner trying to score from 3B (and thus field move in to a shallower starting position).

Adjustments are made infield depth according to game situation, for example, with less than two out and a runner on 3B. Keep in mind that bringing the infield in makes it easier for hitters to penetrate the infield, and should only be done when the cost of allowing the 3B runner to score outweighs the cost of improving the hitter's chance of reaching base. Late in the game, bring the infield in:

- If you are the visiting team: when the winning or tying run on is on 3B
- If you are the home team: when the go ahead run on is on 3B

Many coaches will also bring the infield with a runner on 3B in any inning:

- Any time there is one out and a close scoreline, as long as the hitter is not capable of stealing a base: even if a slower runner gets on base, the inning can be ended with a double-play.
- In any inning where each side has a very dominant pitcher on the mound, and thus one run can win the game.

Instruct catchers on the three basic postures.

1. No runner on:
    - Priority is to be able to effectively receive any pitch around the strike zone
    - Comfortable and balanced posture (several variations are illustrated); rear can be "down"
    - Glove at bottom of strike zone, arm in relaxed position with elbow clear of knee
    - Provide open glove as target for pitcher
    - Throwing arm protected behind right leg (hung loosely to right heel)

2. Runner on
    - Additional priorities are to be able to: a) prevent any wild pitch getting past (high, low or wide); and b) throw to bases when required
    - More active posture (several variations are illustrated)
    - Wider feet
    - Butt up somewhat
    - Throwing hand in a position to make a quick exchange
    - Glove at bottom of strike zone, arm in relaxed position with elbow clear of knee
    - Provide open glove as target for pitcher
    - At an advanced level, posture may be varied according to situational probability. Eg. Slightly higher and wider stance in blocking situations, lower and slightly narrower stance for throwing situations

3. Pitch signs
    - Right knee points just right of pitcher
    - Left knee to points to shortstop
    - Glove on end of left knee, thumb toward pitcher
    - Trunk held vertical

Educate catchers on pitching strategy

Catchers must understand pitching strategy in order for the pitcher to get the most out of his ability.

No matter what level you are playing, the pitcher must avoid giving the hitters an advantage, so it is important that pitcher and catcher to work together on pitching strategy and strive to adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1st pitch strike. If FB is his only consistent pitch, then it must be used.
- Stay ahead. All pitch selections based on the intent to stay ahead in the count.
- Change speeds. Keeps hitters off balance and reduces their effectiveness.
- Locate FB. Mastery of the FB gives pitcher a lot of options. From the hitter's perspective, FB in a different location is actually a different pitch.

These are the basics of pitching strategy. As they progress, catchers must come to understand a pitcher's strengths and weaknesses, and be able to make adjustments accordingly.

Patience is required by coach: it takes time for a pitcher to be capable of doing these things.

Outline key communication expectations of Catchers

- When communicating with the defence, command attention first, and then move out in front of home plate
- Use a loud, clear voice – sound authoritative, not panicky
- Ensure your body language is that of someone who is in control of the situation
- Make signals very clear (ensure everyone's eye contact before beginning)

1. Let pitcher know which base to throw to as he fields a bunt
2. Remind pitcher to cover 1st base when a LHH comes to plate
3. Tell him to "Get over!" any time a groundball is hit to right side
4. When appropriate, remind infielders (and opposition) to "be alive for delayed steal!"
5. When a bunter comes to plate, tell 3rd baseman to be aware of the possible bunt.
6. On full count and two down with a force in place, remind infield that the play is at 1st base.
7. With a runner on 2nd base and 2 down, remind infield to keep the ball in the infield at all costs, even if they can't make the out at 1st base, it will save a run.
8. If a pitcher is throwing too many balls, and is not showing the ability or intent to make an adjustment on their own, go visit him, remind him to settle down and make the necessary adjustment, forget everything but hitting the glove etc.

Conduct catcher's blocking drills: ball directly in front, to either side, and catcher regaining feet to throw

With catcher in full protective gear; from 3-5m, coach or teammate short-hops ball to catcher, which he correctly blocks using his chest protector.

1. Ball directly in front

2. Ball to either side

3. All locations with catcher regaining feet quickly to gather ball and prepare to throw.

Conduct other catcher's drills: throwing to all bases, pop-ups, bunt plays and tags

1. Throwing to all bases: from 8-10m, coach or teammate throws ball to catcher in receiving posture, who catches it and throws it accurately to each base (5-6 to each base)

2. Pop-ups: with catcher in receiving posture, coach lobs or hits ball up to simulate a pop-up; catcher stands, locates ball and makes catch

3. Bunt plays: with catcher in receiving posture, coach rolls ball to simulate a bunt. Catcher retrieves ball and comes up ready to throw (throwing is optional). Catcher practices reverse pivot as well as rounding up on bunt to 3B side.

4. Tag plays: Coach or teammate throws or hit ball to simulate a throw to home; catcher receives ball and executes a tag on a sliding runner, or on a standing runner.

Outline the reasons for and execution of varying infield depth

With less than two out and a runner on 3B, adjustments can be made infield depth according to game situation. Because they are closer to the bat, bringing the infield in makes it easier for hitters to penetrate the infield, and should only be done when the cost of allowing the 3B runner to score outweighs the cost of improving the hitter's chance of reaching base. Late in the game, bring the infield in:

- If you are the visiting team: when the winning or tying run on is on 3B
- If you are the home team: when the go ahead run on is on 3B

Many coaches will also bring the infield with a runner on 3B in any inning:

- Any time there is one out and a close scoreline, as long as the hitter is not capable of stealing a base: even if a slower runner gets on base, the inning can be ended with a double-play.
- In any inning where each side has a very dominant pitcher on the mound, and thus one run can win the game.

When the infield is in, all infielders will be on or inside the basepaths, or close enough to ensure that a 3rd base runner cannot score on an infield ground ball. The middle infielders also move closer to the foul lines, so that when viewed from home plate, the five defensive players (including the pitcher) are equally spaced.

Instruct an outfielder in important routine plays.

1. **Going back on ball**
   - Run "sideways" - never back-pedal
   - Maintain good sprinting form for as long as necessary – holding the glove up will slow fielder down
   - Practice taking eyes off the ball for when there is a lot of distance to be covered.
2. **Charging a ground ball** (do or die)
   - Attack the ball hard early, easing slightly as you near ball to be under control
   - Field the ball with glove-hand only, take a quick crow-hop to re-gather for the throw
   - Make a long hop or flat throw to the correct base
3. **Reverse turns**
   - When fielding a ball on the glove side which is taking you away from the target base, a reverse pivot is quicker and will produce a better throw
   - Glove the ball, replace the feet to pivot, and make a flat throw to the correct base.
4. **Backing up**
   - On every play, an outfielder who is not fielding a ball will have backing up responsibilities somewhere.
   - Whether it is an infield or outfield play, back up the player fielding the ball or the base to which a throw may be made.
   - The outfielder will often be unable to stop the runner advancing one base, but can prevent him taking two bases.

Throw or fungo the ball to provide outfielders with practice of specific tasks

With other relevant players in position, Coach (or other) throws or fungoes ball as appropriate to have outfielders practice the following skills.

1. Going back on ball
2. Charging a ground ball (do or die)
3. Reverse turns
4. Backing up

Conduct practice for double cuts, relays and flyball priorities.

(See National Playbook Cutoffs & Relays)

1. No runner on base:
    - Double, possible triple, to left field line
    - Double, possible triple, to left field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field line

2. Runner on 1st Base
    - Double, possible triple, to left field line
    - Double, possible triple, to left field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field gap
    - Double, possible triple, to right field line

3. Flyball priorities. In order to avoid confusion on a flyball which has been called by more than one fielder, the decision on which of them has the right of way is made in advance. The non-priority player leaves the catch to the priority player whenever a possible conflict arises. This is done for safety reasons, and also to increase the chance of the out being made.

    - Centre field has priority over everybody
    - Left and right field have priority over infielders
    - Shortstop has priority over the other infielders
    - 2nd base priority over everyone in the infield except for the short stop
    - Corner infielders have priority over the catcher and pitcher
    - Catcher has priority over the pitcher
    - Pitcher must be prepared to catch an easy fly ball to the mound area, but must vacate the area if called off

Rehearse regular 1st & 3rd plays, and bunt defence

Using pitchers and all necessary positional players, conducts training in the following plays (see National Playbook):

1. 1st & 3rd plays
    - Throw through
    - Hold

2. Regular bunt defense
    - Runner on 1B and 2B

8. Running

Activities

i. Train players in the prescribed acceleration drills
ii. Engage players in rehearsing base-running: using his own judgment;
iii. Rehearse the runner's role on bunts and in the hit & run play
iv. Conduct sessions for runners to practice situational baserunning

Instruction

i. Instruct key base-running skills
ii. Explain the relative merits of sliding head first vs feet first
iii. Instruct leads at 1B, 2B & 3B;
iv. Instruct returns to 1B, 2B & 3B

Train players in the prescribed acceleration drills

1. 3-point starts (5 m)
    - Crouch start, one foot 20-30cm in front of other
    - Forward lean
    - Hand on side of rear foot is on ground
    - On "Set!" command, hips are raised above head height and free hand (same side as front foot) is moved well back and high near hip
    - On "Go!" player explodes out with large and vigorous arm action

2. Steal starts (10 m)
    - Start in primary lead position
    - On "Set!" command, without moving feet, turn them so as to face 2B, moving head outside right leg to get forward lean.
    - Right arm is moved up and back, left arm forward to 2B – recalling posture for 3-point start
    - On "Go!" player explodes toward 2B with large and vigorous arm actions
    - With proficiency, players can make these movements smoothly and without break

3. Beach flag starts (15 m)
    - Start lying on stomach, both hands under chin, facing direction of race
    - On "Go!" get up and sprint forward as quickly as possible
    - Avoid standing up straight: drive out on an angle.

Instruct key baserunning skills

1. Stealing 2B
   - There is always an element of risk in stealing
   - Study the pitcher: what is his first movement when he starts to pitch?
   - Get a good lead, making sure not to give away your intent
   - Break hard as soon as he makes that first pitching movement – if you wait until you are sure, you will be out at 2B
   - Accelerate hard for two steps
   - Then, without slowing down, turn your head to see the ball reach the hitter.
   - If the ball gets to the catcher, continue to accelerate and slide hard into 2B
2. Hit & run
   - Similar to stealing
   - Biggest difference is that runner must make sure pitch is going to plate before breaking; never get picked off
   - Get a good break and keep your eyes on the ball while maintaining acceleration..
   - Read and react to ball
   - If the hitter hits a line drive, keep running hard : you are not going to get back to the base if the ball is caught by an infielder anyway.
3. Angles
   - All runners must find the best compromise between maintaining speed and running the shortest path
   - Angle in and angle out should be about the same (relative to baseline)
   - Use base to assist turn by getting a good lean
4. Stealing 3B
   - "Never be the 1st or 3rd out at 3B".
   - Momentum and timing are critical
   - Gain momentum with some short side-shuffles while pitcher is still in set position
   - If you have good momentum as he commences delivery, break hard and steal 3B.
   - If he holds set for longer than expected, quit on the steal
5. Balls in dirt
   - Read the flight of every pitch while taking secondary lead (see below).
   - Anticipate that every pitch is in the dirt; that way, you will be ready to go. If it doesn't, and it isn't hit, get back to the base!
   - As soon as you read that ball is going to bounce, steal
   - Rely on the fact that the time it takes the catcher to block, locate, and regather ball, then to stand up and throw it, will give you time to reach next base.
   - This is particularly true for a 1B runner.
   - Don't not wait for the ball to bounce: precious time will be lost.
   - If situation demands that you run cautiously, you can read the ball's position after the catcher's block. Many times it will be possible to advance to the next base.
6. Reading ball off bat on all bases

- Before each pitch, check where the spaces are in the outfield.
- You then know you can break immediately if the ball is heading to one of those spaces.
- You must always see the ball reach the plate so that you can see the trajectory of a batted ball from the beginning.
  - Read path of ball and react accordingly.

7. Own judgement
    - When you reach any base, use BOSO to assess the current situation: Ball (where is it?); Outs (and score and inning etc); Signs (get them from the coach); Outfield (where are they fielding? Where are the spaces? What are the arms like?). This information helps you plan what you will do in various situations once the ball is in play etc.
    - You decide for yourself whether to try for extra base or not: you have assessed situation before the pitch, now you read ball in play etc
    - Coach does <u>not</u> wave you on or stop you when you can see ball and the fielders for himself.
    - You must attack next base and stop only when someone forces you to (H-2B, 1B-3B, 2B-H etc)
    - Coach may assist when ball is behind you
8. Breaking up double play
    - It is your duty to the team to make it difficult for middle infielder to turn double
    - Run hard and slide hard (feet first)
    - Avoid contacting infielder with spikes
    - Slide must be within reach of base

Instruct leads at 1B, 2B & 3B

1. Leads - general guidelines:
   - Always know where the ball is, and keep eyes on player with ball any time you leave a base
   - Primary lead is taken when pitcher is in set position or preparing to start windup. Runner must measure a consistent distance so that he knows how far he is off base without having to look back. Finish squared off to baseline, in athletic posture, ready to go in either direction
   - Secondary lead is a balanced side-shuffle taken when pitcher commits to pitch. It is used to gain momentum and decrease distance to next base, while remaining under control. Shuffle should be timed so that right foot comes down immediately after catcher receives ball.
   - Runner must watch flight of ball while he takes his secondary.

2. Leads at 1B
   - Primary lead: 1B receives most and quickest pickoffs, so the lead must be very exact. Eg: start with left foot, two steps then a side step.
   - Secondary lead: once again, be exact and finish on a strong, low posture, ready quickly move either way. Getting a good jump is important but catcher's frequently attempt pickoffs.

3. Leads at 2B
   - Primary lead: must still be measured, but can be longer than at 1B as pitcher will take longer to turn and throw. Eg: 5 steps and a lateral step. 3B coach communicates movements of middle infielders.
   - Secondary lead: as for 1B, but can be longer as the catcher has a longer throw.

4. Leads at 3B
   - Lead off in foul territory (runner is out if hit by a batted ball in fair territory).
   - Primary lead: can vary according to how aggressively you are attacking the plate (situational). Pickoffs by pitcher are rare, but runner must still be aware.
   - Secondary: measured lead timed to have right foot coming down as catcher receives ball. Eg: half step with right foot, then two walking steps. Delay start if the pitcher is working from windup: runner could end up too far down the line, or flatfooted, if he starts too early.

Instruct returns to 1B, 2B & 3B

1. Returns – general principles:
   - Immediately catcher has ball, quickly get back to within a safe distance.
   - If the catcher returns ball to the pitcher, move back to base under control, and prepare for the next pitch (BOSO)
   - If the catcher throws to your base, a dive back may be required.

2. Return to 1B:
   - On a catcher's throw, it is best to dive back in with the right hand touching the right-field side of the bag. The left hand can go out to right-field for support and balance.

3. Return to 2B:
   - When needed, diving back is done in the same way as at 1B.

4. Return to 3B:
   - Keeping eyes on ball, cross into fair territory to return to base. This provides visual and physical interference in the event of a catcher's throw.

Conduct sessions for runners to practice situational baserunning

Assemble the group at the relevant location, with pitcher on the mound (and pitching) if appropriate, and have player(s) rehearse correct technique, individually or in small groups. Provide feedback and correction as required.

1. Bunts
2. Hit & run
3. Stealing 3B
4. Balls in dirt
5. Reading ball off bat on all bases
6. Angles
7. Own judgement
8. Breaking up double play
9. Leads & returns - general guidelines
10. Leads at & returns at 1B
11. Leads & returns at 2B
12. Leads and returns at 3B

Explain the relative merits of sliding head first vs feet first

Sliding feet first is statistically safer: hand injuries are baseball's most common, and many of these occur when diving into a base. Most studies indicate feet-first slides are also faster.

Australian Baseball Federation Coaches Updating Policy

Updating is a requirement of the ABF and Australian Sports Commission's National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS), and is necessary if the coach wishes to retain accreditation levels achieved and maintain coaching currency within the Australian Baseball Federation.

Coaches are required to meet updating criteria or become reaccredited every four years. Otherwise, Accreditation acquired in 2010, for example, will expire in 2014, at the anniversary of their initial accreditation.

Updating responsibilities:

State Associations and the National Organisation are jointly responsible for updating:

Level 1-4 State Associations
Level 5-6 Australian Baseball Federation

Accreditation responsibilities:

Accreditation responsibilities in Baseball are apportioned as follows:

Level 1-4 State Associations
Level 5 State Associations & Australian Baseball Federation
Level 6 Australian Baseball Federation

Updating Criteria

In order to update his or her accreditation, a coach must in a 4 year period:

- Complete the next level of accreditation

  OR
- Complete re-assessment at the current level of accreditation

  OR
- Complete the following number of hours of updating activities:

  Level 1 – 24 hours
  Level 2 – 48 hours
  Level 3 – 60 hours
  Level 4 – 100 hours
  Level 5 – 120 hours
  Level 6 – 120 hours
  Level 7 – 120 hours

Coach's Responsibility

It is the coach's responsibility to provide evidence to the relevant body (see above) that she/he has met updating requirements. Participation in qualifying activities must be verified by an authorised person (e.g. convenor of the course / workshop / clinic, or regional or state coaching director).

Timeframe for updating activities:

Updating activities must be spread out over at least two years. They cannot be completed in the space of a single year (they would ideally be spread over 4 years). In special circumstances, the ABF or the relevant state body may negotiate on a case-by-case basis.

Updating Activities

There are three activities acceptable for the purposes of updating: practical coaching, self education, and assisting other coaches.

1. Practical coaching: At least 50% of the required updating hours for each level must be completed through practical coaching; in many cases, you will be able to maintain your accreditation through this means alone. This can be undertaken with any level of baseball player or team and may occur on a regular basis (weekly, fortnightly) or in specific situations such as camps and clinics.

- Coaching at club, regional, state, or national level; recorded as done in your own log book. Half your practical coaching requirement can be earned in this way.
- Coaching at club, regional, state or national level, supervised & signed off by authorised coach (state or regional coaching director or a coach with a higher level of accreditation)
- Coaching as a member of regional, state or national coaching or scouting committee
- Coaching as a member of an international coaching exchange program
- Coaching as a coaching director or development officer at club, regional, state or national level
- Coaching in regional, state or national development programs
- Coaching as a member of an international Baseball tour group

2. Self education: Up to 50% of the updating hours can be completed through completion of an approved course or seminar.

- Baseball specific coaching seminar
- General coaching seminar or course
- Strength & conditioning course
- Sports Trainers course
- Recognised First Aid, Advanced Resuscitation, Sports massage courses
- Sports related tertiary education e.g. Sports Coaching, Human Movements, Physical Education
- Sports Administration course (e.g. ASSA)
- Leadership / communication training programs
- Observe a coaching session of a coach of a higher accreditation level
- Become a member of a coaches' association (hours claimed must be equivalent to activities e.g. hours spent at meetings)
- Undertake a coaching scholarship
- Other activities negotiated and approved with & by your state association or the ABF

3. Assisting other coaches: Again, up to 50% of the updating hours may be completed by assisting in the development of other coaches.

- Lecture or present at a coaching course
- Become a mentor for another coach
- Supervise coaching practice hours of another accredited coach
- Assist in the development of coaching resources and reference materials e.g. journals, videos, CD's, course presentations
- Other activities negotiated and approved with & by your state association or the ABF

How to apply for updating

1. Make sure your log book (or other evidence) is signed off by the appropriate people across all areas of updating activities

2. Itemise your updating activities according to:
    a. which section they apply to (e.g. Practical Coaching)
    b. description of each activity and the number of hours claimed for it

3. Submit your evidence, together with your current contact details and the updating fee, to the appointed person in your state association (or to the ABF where required).

4. Be sure to include a signed Coaches Code of Conduct Agreement form with your updating submission. This form is available from your state association office.

It is always a good idea to provide any relevant extra background to your updating activities and attach it to your submission. Make sure your submission includes your accreditation number and level, as well as your current contact details (postal and phone).

Updating example: (Level 1)

Practical coaching	6 hours self monitored coaching in club
Practical coaching	6 hours supervised coaching
Self education	3 hours Baseball Seminar
Self education	6 hours Red Cross First Aid course
Assisting other coaches	3 hours presented at Level 0 coaching course

TOTAL 24 HOURS

*Enclose signed log book etc to verify participation or activity

Remember, all updating for Levels 1-4 is submitted to your STATE¬ association

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Contact details for ABF

Postal: Australian Baseball Federation
PO Box 1028
Mudgeeraba
QLD 4213

Phone: (07) 5510 6822
Fax: (07) 5510 6855
Email: peter.gahan@baseball.org.au
Website: www.baseball.com.au

Pre-Requisites for Practical Assessment

Practical assessment is the final assessment step at each level in the accreditation process.

Evidence of having met pre-requisites must be supplied prior to commencement of the practical assessment tasks.

Candidates must have previously:

1. acquired the specified baseball experience
2. successfully completed the ASC's Beginning Coaching General Principles assessments
3. acquired the competencies needed to pass the practical assessment tasks
4. paid the appropriate assessment fee

Practical Coaching/Playing Experience

- Level 1: Minimum age of 14; no prior baseball experience required
- Level 2: Minimum age of 16; and at least one of the following
  - Two (2) years of coaching with Level 1 Accreditation
  - Four (4) years of coaching without Accreditation
  - Six (6) years of playing with no coaching experience
  - One (1) year of coaching with Level 1 Accreditation plus three years as a player
- Level 3: Minimum age of 18; and at least one of the following
  - Two (2) years of coaching with Level 2 Accreditation
  - Six (6) years of coaching without Accreditation
  - Eight (8) years of playing with no coaching experience
  - One (1) year of coaching with Level 2 Accreditation plus three years as a player
- Level 4: Minimum age of 20; and at least one of the following
  - Two (2) years of coaching with Level 3 Accreditation
  - Eight (8) years of coaching without Accreditation
  - Ten (10) years of playing with no coaching experience
  - Four (4) years in Australian state team, national league team, or at US college level
  - Three (3) years of Australian national team or recognised professional experience
  - One (1) year of coaching with Level 3 Accreditation plus four years as a player
- Level 5: at least one of the following
  - Two (2) years of coaching with Level 4 Accreditation
  - Fifteen (15) years of coaching without Accreditation
  - Ten (10) years total in Australian state team, national league team, pro ball and/or at US college level
  - Five (5) years total in Australian national team or recognised professional experience
  - One (1) year of coaching with Level 4 Accreditation plus five years as a player
- Level 6: at least one of the following
  - Two (2) years of coaching with Level 5 Accreditation
  - Fifteen (15) years total in Australian state team, national league team, pro ball and/or at US college level
  - Ten (10) years total in Australian national team or recognised professional experience
  - Five (5) years of professional experience at AA or above
  - Experience at professional Major League level (US or Japan)

Beginning Coaching General Principles Pre-Requisites

All coaches must have achieved the competencies covered in the Australian Sports Commission's Beginning Coaching General Principles course. In most cases, this can be done in three ways:

- Online: Complete the assessment tasks in the ASC's online course (https://learning.ausport.gov.au/jPortal/default.aspx) and then obtain the Statement of Module Completion, in your own name. This can then be forwarded as a hard copy or email to the relevant Assessor (ensure that this is done prior to the deadline). Please note, that the course and the assessment are free of charges.
- General Principles through an external provider: The Sports Commission has contracted various bodies (Sport & Rec etc) in each state to provide the General Principles course in a face-to-face setting. This course includes assessment tasks. Official evidence of completing these tasks satisfactorily must be provided to the practical Assessor. Please note, that with this option, course fees are payable and there is no provision for attempting the assessment tasks without attending the course.
- ABF General Principles exam: Satisfactorily complete the written assessment tasks under the supervision of an accredited ABF Accreditation Assessor. This can be done prior to, or following, the ABF course designed to assist candidates to demonstrate required competencies. This course will cover the same material as that available online, but is more baseball specific.

Please note: Beginning Coaching is the only General Principles course with assessments which must be satisfied in order to be accredited. The ASC also has General Principles Courses for Intermediate and Advanced coaches, but at this stage neither is a requirement for any level of accreditation.

Physical Screening Check

Participants will need a personal fitness level that will enable them to physically complete the practical requirements of the course. Assessors reserve the right to request proof of fitness from a medical practitioner. Participants who are unable to meet this requirement will undertake alternate activities during the practical components of the course.

Coaches' Code of Conduct

To attain or retain Coach Accreditation under the ABF NCAS, a coach must have read, understood and signed a current Coaches' Code of Conduct. Failing to adhere to the requirements of the Code of Conduct may result in a coach being stripped of accreditation.

Qualifications and Training of Presenters, Assessors and Mentors

Gaining a particular Level of Accreditation is a matter of passing the relevant assessment tasks to demonstrate the competencies required for that Level; it is not a matter of attending a course. There is no reason why the assessment task cannot be attempted at, or prior to, the commencement of any course or courses. Those who can already pass the assessment task need not complete any course. Those who can't complete the tasks need to find a way to develop the necessary competencies, and one of the best ways to do this is to complete a course purpose-built to equip candidates with the skills required to pass the assessment.

These courses can be designed and run by states, associations or even clubs. The crucial thing is that the assessment of an individual's competencies will always be conducted according to NCAS guidelines and only by authorised personnel. It will be rigid and objective, as it is the key to quality control.

In order to satisfactorily present a baseball-specific portion of an ABF National Coach Accreditation Scheme course, individuals must themselves have completed requirements for the specific competency in the NCAS.

Course Level	Minimum Accreditation Level of **Presenter**	Minimum Accreditation Level of **Assessor**
1-2	3	3
3	4	4
4	45	4
5	5	4

- As all assessment will be done according to defined competency standards, it is not necessary that an assessor have a higher level of accreditation than the candidate.

- Presenters and assessors for Level Five and above may have a variety of qualifications. There are a number of ways by which a coach may achieve a Level 5 Accreditation, for example, and Level 6 will be largely individualized according to need.

- Criteria for Levels 5-6 may include, or consist wholly of, demonstrated competencies in a specialist area (Pitching Coach or Manager, for example), or completion of a combination of specified modules for Coaches of Hitting, Infield, Outfield, Catching, Baserunning, Offensive Strategy and Defensive Strategy.

- The completion of coaching duties under the supervision of a mentor will also be a significant education strategy at these higher levels.

Complaints Handling Procedure

Any coach assessed as not yet competent in all required areas, and thus not granted the relevant level of Accreditation, may lodge an official complaint. Complainants should be aware that they must feel confident that they did in fact satisfy the specific criteria during the assessment process, or that the process was in some way flawed. If this cannot be substantiated, any complaint is unlikely to be upheld.

This complaint must be in writing (optional pro-forma attached), and lodged with the relevant state body along with a $50.00 lodgement fee within two (2) weeks of being informed of the assessment. The lodgement fee will be refunded if the complaint is upheld.

This complaint will be handled in the following manner:

1. For Levels 1-4, the state body will evaluate the complaint, the supporting evidence and any contradictory evidence (including feedback from the assessor). It will then make a decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint.
    a. If the complaint is dismissed, the complainant will be informed in writing of the state body's decision to uphold the original assessment. The complainant may then seek reassessment at a mutually suitable time.
    b. If the complaint is upheld, the state body may, based on the strength of the evidence, either reverse the assessment decision or arrange for the candidate to be reassessed at a mutually suitable time within one month of the decision being reached.
    c. If the state body decides to reverse the original decision, they must within two weeks provide the National Coaching Coordinator with a written account of the case, including all evidence and the reasons for the reversal.
2. For Level 5 assessments conducted by the state body, the state body will initially evaluate the complaint, the supporting evidence and any contradictory evidence (including feedback from the assessor). It will then formulate a recommendation to either uphold or dismiss the complaint; this recommendation, along with supporting evidence, will be forwarded to the appropriate ABF officer, who will review the case and come to the final decision.
    a. If the complaint is dismissed, the ABF will inform the complainant of the decision in writing. The complainant may then seek reassessment at a mutually suitable time.
    b. If the complaint is upheld, the ABF may, based on the strength of the evidence, either reverse the assessment decision or arrange for the candidate to be reassessed at a mutually suitable time within one month of the decision being reached.
    c. If the ABF decides to reverse the original decision, they must within two weeks provide the state body with a written account of the case, including all evidence and the reasons for the reversal.
3. For Level 5-6 assessments conducted by the ABF, the state body will forward the complaint on to the ABF, with or without additional evidence (at their own discretion). The appropriate ABF officer and a panel of suitably qualified people will review the case and come to the final decision. The outcome of this review will be communicated according to the above guidelines (see paragraph 2a, 2b and 2c).

Complaint about Competency Assessment:

Coach's last name		Other names	
Contact phone		Email	
Date of Accreditation Course			
Accreditation Level attempted			
Location of Accreditation Course			
Name of Course deliverer			
Date of Assessment			
Name of Assessor (if known)			

In what area(s) were you assessed as "not yet competent"?
Why do you believe this was an invalid assessment?
In what way was the assessment process flawed?
What evidence can you provide to support your case?

Coach's signature	

(Office use only)

Signature of state body representative	
Date received	

Baseball RCC/RPL Application Form

SECTION 1 – PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....

Phone: ..... Fax:.....

Mobile: .....Email: .....

SECTION 2 – ASSESSMENT (COMPULSORY)

Most coaches will need to complete the Australian Sports Commission's Coaching General Principles course and be assessed using the standard assessment tools.

Current Accreditation Level (if any):.....

Accreditation Level sought: .....

Evidence of completing the ASC's General Principles Course

Please tick and attach relevant documentation to this application form.

	Online BCGP certificate (to enrol in the free BCGP online course, go to: https://learning.ausport.gov.au.
	BCGP certificate from an approved Australian Sports Commission training agency
	Active After-school Community Coach Training Program Certificate
	NCAS accreditation from another sport (specific evidence of GP completion must be included)
	Completion of a sports coaching, physical education or equivalent tertiary qualification

Baseball Assessment Responsibilities for RCC and RPL

Levels 1-4 State body

Level 5-6 ABF

Please contact the state or national baseball federation to complete the assessment tasks to the required standard and or supply evidence of meeting the required competencies below.

SECTION 3 – EVIDENCE (OPTIONAL)

Please supply evidence relating to each competency in the form of education and training, work related experiences and life experiences. Please attach copies of documents and /or references to the application form.

Competency

Summary of evidence provided

Please supply evidence relating to each competency in the form of education and training, work related experiences and life experiences. Please attach copies of documents and /or references to the application form.

List the competency for which recognition is being sought	

Note: Continue to insert extra spaces for additional competencies/learning outcomes and assessment criteria

I declare that the evidence I have provided is a true and accurate record of my work and life experiences:

....

Signature of applicant Date

Payment

Applicants must pay an RPL/RCC administration fee of $50.00 payable to the. This can be paid by card, cheque or by direct transfer:

Australian Baseball Federation
BSB 084 917
Account no 640 185 998

Please quote your name and RPL/PCC for reference purposes.