

# Hopkins Minnetonka Babe Ruth

## **Coaches' Guidelines for HMBR**

Player development is the starting point from which the coaches should work. From player development, team development will follow naturally.

Our philosophy as coaches should be:

- Total enjoyment for all players – baseball is fun!
- Excellent communication between coaches and players
- Use of cooperative coaching styles (hands on teaching encourages the players to think for themselves).
- Collaborative coaching – we can all learn from each other

It's important for all coaches to understand how the many aspects of team play start with individual skill development. Attached is a comprehensive list of 200 baseball skills sorted by position. This list is available online at [www.baseballexcellence.com](http://www.baseballexcellence.com).

Another great source for detailed information on hitting skills is <http://www.swingthebat.net/>. There are some excellent skills and drills there with some free downloads that will help you evaluate players, teach skills and run practices.

The HMBR website; <http://www.hopkinsbaseball.com/>, also has a Baseball Links page where excellent resources are available for your use. Please feel free to use these resources and share other ones that you discover.

As a coach for HMBR, it is important that you address these skill development aspects and include them in your coaching program. We owe it to the players to continue to encourage, reinforce and help them to develop their game in the correct way.

It is development, not just winning, that is the aim. In time, winning will come from it and your team will develop and be successful because of it, and the level of satisfaction of coaches, players and parents will be much greater as a consequence.

## **HMBR Coaches are expected to:**

1. Provide coaching to the best of your ability. This means teaching players in practice and allowing them to learn for themselves in games and thus implement what you have taught them.
2. Adhere to the codes of conduct.
3. Attend all games and coaching sessions where possible, and when unable to do so, ensure that an assistant coach is able to cover the game or session.
4. Keep up-to-date, accurate records of all the games on the HMBR website.
5. Focus on creating self-thinking, self-determining players.
6. Work with the League Coordinator should any problems occur with the team.
7. Do your best to make sure that player injuries are properly attended to. Knowing basic first aid is encouraged for all coaches. The health and safety of players is critical to their success and enjoyment of the game.
8. Monitor the players' progress on a collective and individual basis, including private discussions with parents and players where appropriate.
9. Submit team evaluations. In doing so, maintain an accurate record of the commitment to practices and games of each and every player to be available for use a part of the assessment of the level of play a player is to play at. Differentiate between missing training or games because of illness or injury and just not attending, as the former should not count as a lack of commitment. Bear in mind that players are expected to attend games even when injured, to watch and learn; with illness as a different matter.
10. Attend the HMBR coaches' clinics and meetings to help reinforce, as a group of coaches, continuity of coaching direction.
11. As appropriate, participate in the national Babe Ruth coaching certification program. Travel, Tournament and all head coaches may be asked to participate.
12. Use the resources provided by the HMBR Coordinator of Player & Coach Development to the best of your ability to ensure the players get the best training you can give them.

The aim here is to start a development program for coaches to follow into the future, thereby ensuring that we are all working toward the same end for continuity of coaching direction throughout HMBR. From this, over time, a clear coaching program and style of play will develop. As a consequence, all HMBR teams will be identified by it, proud of it, and be successful as a result.

## THE TWO HUNDRED SKILLS

I collaborated with Tim Hopkins on this list. He already had most of it prepared and I merely added a few things.

These are the skills necessary to play baseball effectively and at a superior level. They are broken down so coaches can see the task they have and so they may coach and develop their players. Each skill must be **taught**, as they do not come “naturally.”

Some of these skills may seem redundant to you but each one requires a different skill or technique. For instance; a pitcher’s footwork for fielding a bunted ball along the first base line is different than fielding a ball along the third base line.

Ted Williams once said the thing that made him the most furious was when someone called him a natural hitter. He felt he worked harder at the skill of hitting than anyone else. Baseball at a high level requires that kind of commitment and work ethic.

### GENERAL INFIELD DEFENSE

Skill to:

1. throw a baseball correctly\*
2. throw with adequate arm strength\*
3. catch, both one-hand and two-hands\*
4. catch line drives
5. field a routine ground ball consistently
6. use proper footwork on ground balls
7. have soft hands when fielding ground balls
8. field a ground ball to his left
9. backhand a ground ball and make it a routine play
10. field a slow roller
11. take a “banana” route on many slowly hit ground balls
12. field a short-hop ground ball
13. routinely make accurate throws.
14. make an underhand shovel toss
15. execute proper techniques on relays and cutoffs
16. learn “set” and “ready” positions and use them at the proper time
17. understand the importance of communication with the other players

### First Base

18. move to the base and set up correctly
19. use proper footwork around the bag\*
20. provide a target for the infielder
21. take throws from infielders
22. make bad throws in the dirt a routine play
23. make an accurate throw to all bases
24. set up to hold a runner on
25. take the throw from the pitcher and make the tag on a pick-off move

26. correct footwork for the double play throw to second
27. know when to charge in preparation to field bunted balls (“read” the barrel of the bat off the hitter’s shoulder)
28. field bunts with proper footwork and make accurate throws
29. know all possible situations
30. become the cutoff man on throws from center and right fields
31. be able to execute a rundown
32. trail the runner to second on double cut defense

### **Second Base**

33. field and make the throw (ground ball at the infielder)to the shortstop on double plays
34. field and make the throw (ground ball to the infielder’s left)to the shortstop on double plays
35. field and make the throw (ground ball to the infielder’s right)to the shortstop on double plays
36. field and make the throw (on slower hit ground balls)to the shortstop on double plays
37. execute footwork at pivot on double plays
38. take throws and make tags from the catcher
39. take throws and make tags from the outfield
40. become relay man on throws from the outfield
41. become the trailer on double cuts on base hits deep in the LF gap
42. execute pick-off plays from the pitcher
43. take come-backers from the pitcher
44. be able to execute rundowns
45. know all possible situations
46. back up second base on throws to the shortstop at the bag
47. cover first base in bunt situations

### **Shortstop**

48. field and make the throw (at the infielder) to the second baseman on double plays
49. field and make the throw (to the infielder’s left) to the second baseman on double plays
50. field and make the throw (to the infielder’s right) to the second baseman on double plays
51. field and make the throw (on slower hit ground balls) to the second baseman on double plays
52. execute footwork at pivot on double plays
53. take throws and make tags from the catcher
54. take throws and make tags from the outfield
55. become relay man on throws from the outfield
56. become the trailer on double cuts on base hits deep in the RF gap
57. execute pick-off plays from the pitcher
58. take come-backers from the pitcher
59. be able to execute rundowns
60. know the correct timing and moves on the wheel (rotation) play

61. in certain defenses cover third base when the third baseman crashes on some bunt defenses
62. know all possible situations

### **Third Base**

63. field and make the throw to the middle infielder on double plays
64. have the courage to handle hard hit ground balls
65. be able to throw accurately from third to first
66. be able to quickly "read" the bunt
67. field bunts
68. become the cut-off man on base hits to LF with a runner on second
69. know all possible situations
70. make tags on throws from the infielders and catcher
71. make tags on throws from the outfield
72. execute rundowns
73. make the slow roller a routine play

### **Outfield**

74. track a fly ball (take the correct route to the ball)
75. field a routine fly ball
76. throw to the correct base
77. field a ground ball on the run
78. lay out for a ball
79. come in on a fly ball
80. catch a ball over his head
81. use good running form when chasing a fly ball. (Put glove up last three steps only.)
82. hustle to the spot where a fly ball will come down. Don't "drift" to the ball.
83. hit the cutoff man but be able to throw "through" him.
84. throw accurately on a line
85. back up bases and other outfielders on every play.
86. read the ball off the bat
87. communicate with other outfielders without taking eyes off the ball

### **Catcher**

88. understand the overall generalship of the game
89. know that his number on job is to make the pitcher look good
90. frame all pitches so that borderline strikes remain strikes
91. set up for the pitcher at the correct time-not too early
92. block all balls in the dirt
93. execute proper footwork on throws to each base
94. throw accurately to all bases
95. throw inside or outside to first base on dropped third strikes
96. field all bunts
97. throw accurately back to the pitcher
98. field all throws from the cutoffs and relay men

99. execute proper footwork on \_-2-3 double plays
100. quarterback the defense
101. catch bullpens effectively
102. know and practice the three catching stances
103. pitchouts
104. technique for blocking the plate with runner trying to score
105. react to and catch pop-ups correctly
106. trail runner to first base on balls hit in the infield and with no other runners on base.
107. intentional walks
108. don't show up the umpire
109. don't backhand balls in the dirt with runners on base. Block them.
110. Execute rundowns

### **Pitcher**

111. develop and continue to work on improving mechanics
112. develop a sound, fluid arm action
113. develop fastball command
114. throw to specific locations
115. throw 6 out of 10 strikes consistently
116. develop movement on pitches (comes with sound mechanics)
117. change speeds
118. throw a change up and throw it for strikes
119. throw a breaking pitch
120. field ground balls and throw to bases
121. correct footwork on throwing to each base
122. field bunts along the first base line and throw to a base
123. field bunts along the third base line and throw to a base
124. field come backers to start the DP
125. back up bases (third and home)
126. develop mental toughness
127. throw a bullpen correctly
128. pitch well from the stretch
129. develop a quick delivery from the stretch and still maintain good mechanics
130. do or die field a squeeze bunt (game winner only)
131. pick-off move to first
132. pick-off moves to second
133. pitch out
134. intentional walk
135. understand the balk

### **Hitting**

136. develop sound hitting mechanics and constantly strive to improve
137. make consistent contact- line drives
138. hit the ball hard consistently
139. learn not to pull outside pitches

140. learn the effective contact points of each pitch location.(inside, middle ,outside)
141. develop good bunting mechanics
142. bunt consistently on the first attempt
143. bunt to locations (not back at pitcher)
144. bunt for a base hit-drag bunt
145. bunt for a base hit-push bunt
146. squeeze bunt
147. understand the mentality of the sacrifice bunt
148. learn the slash (slug or butcher boy) bunt.
149. become a good situational hitter
150. hit behind the base runner at second to move him over
151. consistently execute the hit-and-run
152. hit the ball on the ground to the middle infielders to drive in a runner from third base  
(If the infield is playing back.)
153. hit a fly ball into the “vee” of the outfield to drive in a runner from third base
154. become a good 2-strike hitter (choke up, shorten up and look away)
155. learn to understand “quality” at bats and not concern yourself over average
156. learn to quickly recognize the differences between the breaking pitch and the  
fastball
157. learn to hit the breaking pitch
158. learn the fastball counts (0-0,1-0, 2-0, 2-1, 3-0, 3-2) and “gear up” to hit the  
fastball in those counts.
159. in batting practice work on hitting the ball up the middle
160. develop discipline to lay off pitches over your hands
161. learn how to “see” the ball out of the pitcher’s hand (recognize the pitch)
162. learn pitchers’ tendencies. Study them from the dugout.
163. Recognize each pitcher’s release point (arm slot)
164. Swing at fastball strikes
165. Learn to hit to all fields
166. Develop a sound mental approach

### **Base Running**

167. Develop good running mechanics
168. leave the box correctly and run to first base on contact with the ball
169. use technique of looking for the ball while running full speed to first base
170. on all balls hit in the infield- run through base, break down and look right
171. when approaching first base, touch the **front** of the bag.
172. use sound sliding techniques
173. take correct primary and secondary leads off each base
174. run correctly on a hit-and-run
175. never get picked off on a hit and run
176. when on third how to react to a fly ball
177. when on third how to react to a ground ball
178. lead off third in foul territory and return in fair from third
179. “read” a ball in the dirt
180. take a 2-out lead at second base
181. take a 3-step walking lead at third when pitcher pitches from the stretch

182. take a 5-step walking lead at third when pitcher pitches from windup
183. “read” the ball off the hitter’s bat down or up angle
184. when on first concentrate on (RH) pitcher’s back heel
185. take one-way lead only with LH pitcher
186. LH pitcher-steal on first movement. Take full lead
187. If stealing (LH) and the pitcher throws to first “read” the middle infielder’s eyes as you approach second base. This helps you to keep your body between the throw and the fielder.
188. Learn the delayed steal
189. Always run hard to all bases. This shows how much you want to win.
190. Never turn you back on the ball.
191. Touch the **inside** of the bag when rounding bases.
192. Major league players’ average time in the 60-yard dash is 7.0 seconds.
193. It takes no talent to hustle
194. Understand when to attempt to stretch a base hit
195. Understand your job in relation to where you are in the batting order
196. On-deck:
  - Study the pitcher
  - Relax and take good swings
  - Understand each situation
  - Coach runner trying to score

### **Attitude**

197. Play with class.
198. Take Pride in your game.
199. Show an aptitude to learn (Coachable)
200. Understand that failure is a part of baseball and learn to react in a mature fashion.

### **Team**

201. First and third defenses
202. Bunt defenses
203. Defensive positioning
204. Dugout responsibilities
205. Pop fly Priorities
206. Team Communication
207. Situational Defenses
208. Jog back to your position after every play and always jog onto the field.
209. Understand :
  - That every base must be covered on every play.
  - Who represents the priority out
  - How to prevent and deal with the possibility of a big inning
  - How to play defense based on the score and the stage of the game
  - What hitters are the best hitters
  - Base stealing situations
  - Condition of the field