

# **SPAIN PARK YOUTH BASEBALL**

# **COACHES HANDBOOK**

***SOUTHERN LEAGUE***



***"Striving for Excellence in Life Through Baseball"***

2017 EDITION



# 2017 SPAIN PARK YOUTH BASEBALL

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# INTRODUCTION



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## ***Our Mission***

### **“Striving for Excellence in Life Through Baseball”**

Our Mission is to create a healthy, fun and competitive environment to promote the core values of SPORTSMANSHIP, CHARACTER, CITIZENSHIP and COMPETITIVENESS.

Our focus is to:

- Build self-confidence and self-esteem
- Develop character and discipline
- Promote teamwork and accountability
- Promote community pride
- Develop fundamental baseball skills
- Promote sportsmanship and fair play
- Drive courage and competitiveness
- Foster a love for the game of baseball
- Make it FUN!!



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## ***Park Goals and Objectives***

### **1. Teach the fundamentals of baseball correctly**

1. Mandatory Coaches Clinic for all head and asst coaches Saturday February 13<sup>th</sup>
  - i. Rookie/Coach Pitch
  - ii. Southern
  - iii. Minor
  - iv. Major/Junior
2. Coaches playbooks for drills will be passed out during clinic
3. Every practice should start with 25 minutes of the fundamental drills outlined in the coaches playbook (stations)
4. Repetition, repetition, repetition

### **2. Make it fun for the kids – we want them to love the game**

1. This is not about YOU
2. Head coaches set the tone for the assistant coaches and the parents – control it
3. Park is a family destination to hang out – interact with the kids
4. Make practice fun and energetic – the game of baseball can be boring if not taught properly. Your practices need to be organized in a way that maximizes repetitions, is challenging for all and also obtainable for all.
5. REMEMBER – kids (and people in general), like to do things they are successful at. Put your kids in a position to be successful each and every day. Don't just celebrate the scoreboard – celebrate, reward and encourage how they go about addressing each individual task.

### **3. Embed the Life Lessons that baseball and sports can teach**

*“On the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days and other fields will bear the fruits of victory” - General Douglas MacArthur*

We will focus on three primary themes...RESPECT, CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL, and COMPETE.

#### **1. RESPECT**

- i. **Authority** (coaches, umpires, adults) – treat them all with respect by remaining positive and listening



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1. **“Podium Rule”** – teach kids that whenever someone of importance is in front of you...an adult, a parent, a coach or umpire...don’t talk, sit-up or stand-up straight, give them full eye-contact and pay attention
- ii. **Teammates** – be accountable to your teammates – must cooperate together to reach a common goal (teamwork); teach them to work hard and if something needs to be done, do it yourself and help others. Great examples are picking up the balls, cleaning out the dug-outs, etc. Have your team line their equipment up when they get to practice in an orderly fashion.
- iii. **Opponents** – always cheer for your team and reward good plays from both teams. “Ragging” or negative comments will not be tolerated. Assume your opponent is working hard and you will have to do the same in order to match or surpass their play
- iv. **Family** – remember...whether you are a player, coach or parent, no matter what the name on the front of your shirt says, others (your family members) wear the same name on the back of their shirts. Represent them well.

## 2. CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

As a baseball player, there are many things that you cannot control:

- The weather, your size, a bad hop, a bad call from the umpire....

We want the kids to focus on the things that they CAN control:

- i. **Effort/hustle**
  1. Kids will run on and off the field
  2. Kids should run from drill to drill
- ii. **Attitude**
- iii. **Body language**
  1. What does a kid do after a missed ball? Getting out?
  2. Focus them on controlling their body language...finishing the play...not hanging their head...not sulking.
- iv. **Energy** (Be an energy GIVER, not an energy TAKER)
- v. **Being a good teammate**

## 3. COMPETE

- i. Never quit...never give up...have the desire to compete until the end



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## ***LIFE LESSONS***

### **RESPECT**

1. *Authority*
2. *Teammates*
3. *Opponents*
4. *Family*

### **CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL**

1. *Effort/hustle*
2. *Attitude*
3. *Body language*
4. *Energy* (Be an energy GIVER, not an energy TAKER)
5. *Being a good teammate*

### **COMPETE**

*Never quit...never give up...have the desire to compete until the end*



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# **COACHES CLINIC INSTRUCTION AND NOTES**





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## ***Southern League (Ages 7-8)***

Coach Joe Sottolano and Coach Will Smith

Saturday, February 4, 2017 – 4:00pm

1. Be organized because they won't be (teach them organization, "sell it to them")
2. Keep it changing but introduce more game like situations
3. Keep it moving

### **Throwing Mechanics:**

- Would not segment throwing too much at this age. Difficult to control for young kids and not a great attention span.
  - o Plan:
    - Always use lines when throwing (when possible)
    - Shoulders parallel to partner, base outside shoulders, no step, throw to partner that is close. (gets their arm moving, but have to keep head still) start into net
    - Start with shoulders lined up to receiver
    - Hands together at chest high in center of body and encourage full arm circle
    - Shuffle feet twice at target and then throw
    - Ensure head stays straight and stays on target
    - When feet are moving hands stay together
      - Start with shoulders square or parallel to partner
      - Have them turn and shuffle feet twice and throw
      - Start close to target and slowly move back
- Throwing starts by being controlled by coach then progresses to them controlling it
- Throwing into backstop and or nets is great at this age for challenged kids
- Never allow them to throw a ball without moving their feet and gaining ground first
- Teach them how to keep head on target and take two steps towards target after throwing
- Full arm circle at this age (Can always shorten)

### **Hitting:**

1. Grip – point fingers and try to line up best as possible (small hands, can't get bat in fingers and control it)
2. Stance – make sure bat is up off back shoulder. Knob pointing to catchers knees, feet lined up in a straight line to the pitcher. Can place bat down from toe to toe to see if pointing at pitcher. Use of line for hitting is a must.



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## 3. Swing:

- Hit everything through the middle
- Use a lot of tee work with hitting ball down into the bottom of the net and through the middle
- Once stride foot lands, head stays still
- Keep weight in the middle when hitting
- Checkpoints at end when holding swing
  1. Weight in middle
  2. Back foot turned, laces at pitcher
  3. Front leg straight, back leg bent
  4. Bat parallel to ground at top or just below shoulder

## Fielding:

### Ground Balls:

1. Glove side eye when possible
2. Catch bottom and back of ball
3. Move feet to throw
4. Miss high in the infield

### Focus:

- Make sure feet are just outside of shoulder width with toes facing forward
- Knees to hip angle parallel to ground
- Back parallel to ground (this and knee hip angle allow glove to get out in front of body and catch bottom and back of ball)
- Move feet to field and throw (two shuffles to throw in warm ups and one to two shuffles to throw in infield practice and games)
- Work through baseball with body and glove when needed, do not funnel
- Ball to ear when ball is dropped (whole team yells it out)

## Fly Balls:

### Catch ball in slot:

1. Glove just off glove side eye
2. Glove just in front of face
3. Throwing hand in center of body, glove high and it covers ball on catch
4. Glove side foot forward

### Tendencies:

- Catch ball on side of body, especially throwing side - this is a fear factor for getting hit with the ball.
  - o Ensure success by putting them in proper position and tossing ball underhand into their glove
  - o Slow progression from underhand toss into their glove to higher underhand toss, to them having to move to it, machine toss when possible, to eventual coaches hit, to game.



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- Needs to be worked on every day and ensure success
- Can start moving this group around with errant tosses with having them freeze on contact with ball to glove
- Catch ball with one hand on run

## Base running:

- Break tape and run through first base
- ¼ turn after hitting bag, while breaking down.
- Soon as you get to first, pick up third base coach. If need to speak with first base coach, always keep eyes on third base coach.
- Once signs are over, always keep eyes on ball
- Two shuffles off of bag

## Practice Organization:

- Rotations for getting loose so you can teach, based on number of coaches
  - o agility drill station
  - o catching station
  - o fly ball station
  - o ground ball station
  - o base running station
  - o hitting station
  - o cut off station

**Breaking kids into smaller groups is always beneficial at this age....**

## Cut offs and Relays:

1. Communication starts from the catcher and works out
2. Communicate just before each person touches ball
3. Cut off man starts with shoulders square to player throwing ball, hands up, communicating
4. Listen and line self up with base you are throwing to
5. Marry hands
6. Catch ball on glove side of body with shoulders lined up to target whenever possible (get around ball)
7. Always move feet and gain ground in the direction you are throwing when relaying ball

## Suggestions:

- Partner them up and have them toss balls underhand to each other to start and have them work on getting around ball
- Put them into multi person lines to work cut offs
- Progress into putting them into a small field, smaller than an infield and teach them cut off plays and responsibilities
- Progress into coach hitting cut off and relays... No base runners.



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# PRACTICE PLAN



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## Proposed Practice Plan

*(Drills will change based on age group and # players/# coaches)*

12:00 - 12:25	Three group rotations (7 min rotations with transition added on)
12:30 – 12:42	Infield Drills (Group 1) / Outfield Drills (Group 2)
12:43 – 12:55	Outfield Drills (Group 1) / Infield Drills (Group 2)
1:00 – 1:10	Team Concept (Cuts and Relays)
1:15 – 1:45	Batting Practice (Live Defense – to the ball in the outfield through the ball in the infield)
1:50 – 2:00	Base running Drill (How to run through 1 <sup>st</sup> base)

### Batting practice three groups timed BP (7 minutes a piece)

Group 1	No more than 6 swings at a time (Practice what they were working on in cages)
Group 2	Live Defense (Infielders through the ball, Outfields to the ball)
Group 3	Cage hitting (Teaching and mechanics)

***Group hitting groups so that outfielders are together and the infielders are together.***

### Rotation Options:

1. Throwing mechanics
  2. Infield mechanics
  3. Outfield mechanics
  4. Footwork drills
  5. Base running drills
  6. Rundown lead-ups
  7. Cutoff and Relay lead-ups
  8. Bunting station
  9. Stretching Station
  10. Arm Care station
  11. Two strike hitting station
- ETC.....

PITCHERS AND CATCHERS GET THEIR WORK IN DURING INFIELD OUTFIELD TIME, OR DURING THE DEFENSE PORTION OF BATTING PRACTICE.



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# DRILLS



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## ***Infield (Ground Ball Drills)***

1. Field off of glove side eye
2. Field bottom and back of baseball
3. Move feet to throw
4. If you are going to miss, miss high

### **From Knees**

1. Start on knees with body straight up, have them hold glove in front of them with arm at 90 degrees. Notice that the glove is out in front of their face. Have them bend at the waist till back is parallel to the ground with glove remaining out in front of face (glove side eye) and arm at 90 degrees. From that position, they can role ground balls to each with throwing hand over top of ball. They should work glove to throwing hand pushing throw ball freezing at contact out in front.
2. Do the same as above, but continue working through ball and bring glove through ball and to the chin. Have players remain parallel to the ground with their backs.

### **Standing**

1. From standing position with feet just wider than shoulder with apart, do the same as above, adding players bending their knees so that their from their hips to their knees is parallel to the ground as well. Freeze at contact out in front.
2. Same as previous but now have them work through ball and bring ball to chin without standing up.
3. Same as last drill but now incorporate the player falling forward with throwing foot first, then turning and shuffling to their target. (Hands always stay together when their feet are moving.
4. Add throwing to the drill above

Can do same progression for forehands and backhands



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## *Outfield Drills*

1. Keep singles to singles
2. Keep doubles to doubles
3. Make sure outs are outs
4. If you are going to miss with a throw, miss low

1. Have two lines going at once with coach tossing ball and players freezing at contact. Players should work all baseballs that they can get too off of their glove side eye just in front of their bodies at chin level with fingers of glove pointing up and shoulders parallel to their target. Throwing hand should cover baseball after receiving. Have players freeze at contact to insure proper positioning. If player is not in proper position put them there before the next rep to ensure muscle memory. With real young players, may have to have them start with their gloves already in position and toss it into their gloves to insure success and develop confidence.

2. Toss baseballs to their right and left with hem freezing at contact. Players should always get around baseball baseballs so that their shoulders are always parallel to the target they want to throw to.

3. As players develop, have them work through baseballs with catching in proper position and transition into throwing.

4. Have line start on one side and have player run to the other catching the ball on the run. Whenever players catch the baseball on the run, they should catch it with one hand. Work both sides, in and out.

5. Ground ball positioning is throwing foot forward. Repeat first three drills from above but in ground ball position.





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## ***Cutoff and Relays***

1. Work all baseballs that you can to your glove side
2. Open up body so that your shoulders are facing your target
3. Always get momentum to your target when possible
4. On throw knees or lower player may need to go get baseball and use a jab step to throw
5. Catch with two hands when not reaching for the baseball

1. Have players in lines with coach underhand tossing the baseball to their glove hand side. Have players freeze at contact and make sure they are proper position to throw the baseball.
2. Same drill as above, but now add the throwing into backstop
3. Same drill as above, but now add a receiver
4. Form a long line or two from foul line to center field. Have players space out throughout the line and work the ball down the line and back. Can make a competition if you have more than one line or can use a stop watch to see how long it takes them to do it (must be done correctly)

### **Throwing**

1. Always move your feet to throw
2. Infielders, if you are going to miss, miss high.
3. Outfielders, if you are going to miss, miss low
4. Always keep your head on your target
5. Follow your throws with two steps toward target after release

1. Can start on knees or standing, hold elbow or wrist out in front of body and toss baseball to a partner just using your wrist. You want the player to follow straight through with wrist and create 12-6 rotation.
2. Can start with throwing hand out in back of them with fingers pointing away and glove arm up. No step, have them take throwing hand directly to their target trying to create 12-6 rotation.
3. Have them start with their hands at their chest, elbows down and fingers pointing up. Have them drop their hands with the thumbs going down and close enough to their chest that they can unzip a zipper. Throw to target creating 12-6 rotation.
4. Same drill, but have them shuffle feet two times to target. Hands stay together when feet are moving. Follow throw with two steps after. (Use a line on field whenever possible so that they can stay on target.
5. Start with shoulders facing parallel to partner, step with throwing arm foot with hands together turn and shuffle once to target and throw.
6. Start down in infield fielding position with ball in glove. Step with throwing arm foot, turn, shuffle throw.
7. Start in outfield fly ball and ground ball position (see above) and step, shuffle to targets and throw.
8. Put kids in a box, have them throws diagonal and side to side, with players moving their feet and to receive and throw. Player should always have a step and shuffle or two shuffle with direction at their targets before throwing.