

6U MHAA Softball Guide

Contents

- 6U Coach Pitch Rules 2
- Clinic Planning 4
 - Clinic 1 – Introduction to Throwing, Catching & Hitting 4
 - Clinic 2 – Introduction to Throwing, Catching & Hitting 4
- Team Practice Planning 5
 - Every Team Practice 5
 - General breakdown of a practice: 5
 - Drills & Mechanics 5

6U Coach Pitch Rules

GAME RULES

- Coach Pitch. Scores are not kept, Wins and Losses are not recorded
- 6U will use 10 inch softies.
- **Game duration is 45-50 minutes.**
 - Game nights scheduled for 60 minutes.
 - Players will warm up for 10-15 minutes and then play a 45-50 minute game.
- Teams will bat their lineup each inning. No outs are recorded. No runs are recorded. The last batter will be a "homerun" to clear the bases.
- All batters and base runners must wear helmets.
- 2 teams will be scheduled on 2 neighboring fields.
 - 2 separate games should be played on each field after the teams warmup so the kids are playing 5 on 5 or 6 on 6.
 - If there are not enough kids to split into 2 games, merge to one field for the game.
- Coaches should setup temporary bases at around 45-50 ft to make the field smaller for the players.

HITTING

- Batters will receive 6 pitches from a coach to hit the ball.
- If the last pitch is fouled off, the player may receive an additional pitch.
- After last pitch (6th pitch or following last non-foul ball), the tee will be pulled out and the player will hit the ball off the tee.
- A coach/parent volunteer should be responsible for having the tee ready and immediately getting the tee in place following the last missed pitch to keep the game moving.
- All players on the team will bat in order. A coach/parent volunteer should be on the bench ensuring players are in order and a player is on deck ready to hit and next player in the hole has helmet on ready to hit.
- Players should be taught not to throw the bat and to instead drop the bat. Run drills to prevent players from throwing the bat.
- No players should be inside the field area when hitting without a helmet on.

BASE RUNNING RULES

- Baserunners leave the base once the bat has contacted the ball.
- Teach baserunners proper footwork to be ready to run on contact.
- Teach baserunners to run through 1st base.
- Players will never advance more than one base.
- Players will stay on base even if "an out" was recorded by the defense.
- No sliding.

FIELDING RULES

- Teams should play no more than 6 infielders (2 Pitchers, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS) in the game at one time.

- If there is more than 6 players, a coach should go to the outfield with those players and work on drills with them and switch them in and out of the game every 3-4 hitters to give all kids an opportunity in the field.
- Pitchers should line up to the left or right of the coach and no closer than the coach.
- Teach kids the proper location of playing 3B, SS, 2B and 1B.
- Players should always attempt to make the throw to 1st base or the force out. Coaches should be teaching players where to go with the ball before the pitch.
- Teams should not have a catcher. A parent volunteer should collect balls behind the plate and place them into a bucket.
- Coaches should make sure that kids are rotating through all positions equally. If possible, players should not play the same position twice in the same game.

PITCHING RULES FOR COACHES

- Coaches should be back far enough for players to react with enough time to the pitch but not too far away where it is difficult to throw strikes.
- Coaches should throw underhand but do not need to throw windmill (fastpitch style).
- Coaches should throw the ball softly to encourage hitting but not with an arc. We should be teaching players how to hit for fastpitch, not slow pitch softball.
- It is encouraged to pitch from one knee to get lower with the players height. Gardening pads are a great option if you do this.
- Coaches should not give players more than 6 pitches unless the last ball is fouled off. As much as we'd like to see every player hit off the coach, the tee should be pulled out after 6 pitches to keep the game moving.

MISCELLANEOUS RULES

- If a team has less than 5 players in the field, the opposing team can have a player join them in the field until it is their turn to hit for their own team so there are at least 5 fielders.
- Throwing of helmets or bats is not allowed and players should be taught in drills to not throw bats or helmets.
- Focus on fun and staying active. Keep the kids alert and moving.

Clinic Planning

Clinic 1 – Introduction to Throwing, Catching & Hitting

6p-6:05p – Players arriving

6:05p-6:10p – Introduce Players & Coaches to the clinic stations and proper way to throw, catch and hit

6:10 – 6:50p – Rotate 4 Stations

- Station 1 – Throwing & Catching (Field 1 outfield)
 - Players in outfield, paired with partners
 - Throw and catch with tennis balls and no gloves up close to start
 - Add gloves with tennis balls
 - Add real balls throwing with coaches
- Station 2 – Groundballs (Field 1 Infield)
 - Players learning to field groundballs in lines with coaches
- Station 3 – Baserunning (Field 2 Infield)
 - Players learning to swing at home plate and run through first base
- Station 4 – Hitting (Field 2 Outfield)
 - Multiple Tees setup across foul line for multiple players learning to swing

6:50p – 7p – Relay races on field 1 and field 2

Clinic 2 – Introduction to Throwing, Catching & Hitting

6p-6:05p – Players arriving

6:05p-6:10p – Introduce Drills

6:10 – 6:50p – Rotate 4 Stations

- Station 1 – Throwing & Catching (Field 1 outfield)
 - Players in outfield, paired with partners
 - Throw and catch with tennis balls and no gloves up close to start
 - Add gloves with tennis balls
 - Add real balls throwing with coaches
- Station 2 – Groundballs (Field 1 Infield)
 - Players learning to field groundballs in multiple lines with coaches
- Station 3 – Learning Positions (Field 2 Infield)
 - Coach walks players around to each position, shows them where to lineup.
 - Players go near home plate. Coach yells a position. Players run to the position.
- Station 4 – Hitting (Field 2 outfield)
 - Coaches pitching tennis balls or wiffle balls to players to learn how to hit off live pitching

6:50p – 7p – Relay races on field 1 and field 2

Team Practice Planning

Every Team Practice

- This should be the general format of most practices
- All skills should be touched on in each practice, but you can focus more time on specific skills. For example, if you want to focus on hitting for a night, abbreviate throwing and fielding time, but do not eliminate it. With as little practice time as they get each week, it is important to hit each skill, even if just for 5 minutes.
- Later in the season as players have progressed, include practices that increase the amount of time working on scenarios.

General breakdown of a practice:

5 minutes – Stretching/Jog to get players warmed up

10 minutes – Throwing and Catching Drills

10 minutes – Fielding Drills

10-15 minutes – Hitting Drills

10-15 minutes – Learning positions, scenarios, etc.

5-10 minutes – Fun game to end practice

Drills & Mechanics

View the MHAA Softball Coaches Guide for more details.