

Des Plaines Youth Baseball Falcon (AAA) Baseball Skills to Teach

- Play to have fun
- Follow the instructions of coaches
- Learn to be part of a “team” respecting other players, coaches, and parents
- Identify bases and order in which they should be touched
- Identify and play the nine field positions
- Understand the “Force Play”
- Fielding Ground Balls with two hands
- Catch ball in the air with two hands, fingers to the sky
- Run straight through the base at first on infield hits
- Take a turn at first base on outfield hits, watch and listen to first and third base coach
- Slide into bases (exception being 1st base) on close plays – teach proper sliding technique
- Warm-up in outfield grass prior to a game
- Make contact with a pitched ball
- Catching the baseball
- Safety – Learn how to “Defensive Roll” out of the way of a pitched ball
- Cut-offs and Relays, basic bunt defense, basic 1st and 3rd defense
- Underhand flip and double plays
- Infield/Outfield communication and priorities

Falcon (AAA) Practice Plan

- 6:15 to 6:25pm – warm up jog, stretches, rocket arm drills (10 throws each of Phase 1, 2, & 3), standard throwing warm ups
- 6:25 to 6:30 – hotbox drills w/ no runners; three groups of 4 players – “follow the ball”)
- 6:30 to 6:35 – hotbox competition (3 or 4 runners w/ helmets; remaining on defense; rotate after 2 times running; soft core balls)
- 6:35 to 6:45 – fly balls, including drop step drills (two groups)
- 6:45 to 6:55 – 1st & 3rd or tag up situation drills (runners w/ helmets; soft core balls)
- 6:55 to 7:30 – 3 batting stations
 1. Station #1 - 2 batters alternating - soft toss plastic golf balls (*other nights use tee with wiffles*) – 10 each with right hand (tee ball bat), 10 with left (tee ball bat), 20 with both hands (regular bat) - - first 10 same pitch speed; second 10 with some tossed higher to mimic change ups. Special coaching instructions (*coaches need to communicate the same message*):
 - a. All batters – back foot perpendicular to plate, NOT pointed backward toward catcher (this is the most common power leak). Overcorrect w/ Manny Ramirez-type pigeon toes, if necessary.
 - b. All – keep weight on instep of back foot during stride for increased power
 - c. All – consider slightly wider stance and shorter stride to keep head steadier and help with adjustment for off-speed pitches
 - d. All – every swing is important, so strive to improve on each! Don’t rush through - - balanced stance to start and full follow through on each swing
 - e. Specific player(s) – tend to fall back on heels and upper cut. Extra round of single hand swings. Focus on hitting to right field with full swings.
 - f. Specific player(s) – choke up – their bats are too long for them. Choke 1 inch for player; ½ inch for player
 2. Station #2 – 5 batters & fielders - live BP, including curve balls and change ups – 3 bunts and 10 swings – run last one out
 - a. Foam trick balls for curves
 - b. Soft core for straight pitches
 3. Station #3 - 5 batters & fielders
 - a. close in faster pitching - 3 bunts and 10 swings
 - b. Tennis balls or wiffles for safety
- 7:30 to 7:45 – If time, play Thunderball or other (if time is short, run bases for five minutes)

**Re-emphasize throwing skills and fielding with two hands.
Give players tips for practicing at home and set up next practice time.**