

## The Warrior Way



The purpose of this document is to outline coach expectations and player mastery by level. (Low T-Ball, High T-Ball, Pinto, Mustang, Bronco etc)

The hope is by starting with writing it down we can give coaches a clear understanding of what is expected and collectively develop all the kids better than if it's haphazard by team.

### Coaches

Coaches set the tone for the team and the league. The most important things to focus on are:

- **Encouragement** - Praise effort rather than results. "Great swing" during a miss rather than only praising the hit.
- Be **positive** for every player
- Have good **sportsmanship**
- Find ways to have **fun!**

There are five fundamental qualities that make every team great:

1. Communication
2. Trust
3. Collective responsibility
4. Caring
5. Pride

### Low T-Ball

- Baserunning
  - Teach what each base is and the order they must proceed in order to score a run which ends in touching home plate (tip: i have kids stand at home plate and tell them to run to second base. When they all run straight to second you show them the order to touch is first base first in order to get to second)
  - Learn that if a player has the ball and touches first base before the hitter gets to first then the hitter is out
- Throwing/Catching
  - Have an understanding that the throw is made by raising the ball above or behind the players ear and not thrown underhand

- Basket catching is fine at this level with hands pinky-to-pinky but be taught that the glove is used to make the catch and the other hand only covers up after the ball hits the glove (have kids stand close and take a step back each time they make a catch and come closer if they miss). Kids are not expected to catch at this level but just experience tracking a ball even (whiffle balls are better used for this from further distances)
- Fielding
  - Should learn each position on the infield so when asked to run to a position on the field they can get there on their own (having them ask a friend where to go if they have forgotten is a good way to build team play)
  - When getting the ball, learn that the ball needs to be thrown to first before the hitter gets there
  - Understand that when the ball is NOT hit to their side of the field that they do not chase it down and let their teammates get it (make an imaginary line between home plate and second base and don't cross it)
  - Constant reminders to players to keep eyes on the hitter is important
- Hitting
  - Hold bat with two hands next to each other
  - Learn not to stand on top of home plate to hit ball
  - Teach the sweet big barrel part of the bat is what needs to hit the ball while hands are extended
  - Should have a light enough bat so that they learn to swing as hard as they can at the ball even if they miss it.

## High T-Ball

- Baserunning
  - Kids should learn that they can and should run through 1st base and home plate, but they must stop and be touching a part of their body on second base and third base to be safe
  - Learn that fielders can get runners out going to 2nd base, 3rd base, and home and the importance of sprinting to the next base
  - Know that you cannot pass a teammate in front of you on the bases even if your teammate is running slower.
- Throwing/Catching
  - When attempting to throw further, they should not run the ball to a base.
  - When throwing far, front foot should be stepping to the target or even better both feet should be shuffling toward the base as they throw while arm goes back and attempts throw
  - Practice throwing against fences with strong force and increasing distance
  - Learn balls thrown above their waste should be caught with hands up thumb to thumb
  - Kids are not expected to catch at this level but just experience tracking a ball even (whiffle balls are better used for this from further distances)

- Fielding
  - Should learn how to get glove to ground on ground balls and field in the correct fielding position
  - Players should not be falling to the ground to pick up the ball and rather use their glove or bare hand to crouch and pick up a ball
  - Balls hit in between players, players should learn how to call for the ball (no more than two players should EVER be going for the ball but also making sure they always respond to balls hit to them to get the ball)
  - Learns moving feet to get in front of ground balls
  - Balls not hit to players, players should learn to cover a base rather than chase down balls far away from them and keep your eyes on the ball in case someone throws the ball to them
  - Fielders learn that they can choose to force runners out at the nearest base IF a runner is headed to their base (very important: whatever base they choose that unless they are a couple of steps away from the base, they should be throwing the ball to that base)
  - Constant reminders to players to keep eyes on the hitter is important
- Hitting
  - Players should learn proper hitting stance with bat held in a good hitters position, feet apart, knees bent in a balanced position, and eyes on coach pitching or on the tee
  - Should have a light enough bat so that they learn to swing as hard as they can at the ball even if they miss it. Those already swinging hard should use bigger or heavier bat (recommended bat...)
  - Learns to hit underhand pitches if not overhand too
  - Learn to pivot back foot and knee as they swing through ball
  - Learn to throw knob of bat at the ball rather than top hand coming down over the ball during the swing to avoid chopping action

## Pinto

- Baserunning
  - Runners learn to advance to an extra base if the ball is still in the outfield
  - Runners know the “tag up” rule. Learn that balls must hit the ground in order to advance without tagging up. Learn when you can run when ball is caught.
  - Know that if there is no runner behind you AND no runner on first base then the player can return to 3rd base or 2nd base.
  - Batters who become runners after the ball is hit can always return to any base they came from if they think they can't make it
  - Know to stay in the baseline. If they want to avoid a tag the only choice is to run back to previous base and not around tags
  - Listens to coaches telling them to advance or come back to bases
- Throwing/Catching
  - Practice throwing from further distances and learning to throw ball higher when further away

- Practice throwing against fences with strong force and increasing distance
- Master balls thrown above their waste should be caught with hands up thumb to thumb
- By end of Pinto, players master catching a ball
- Fielding
  - Balls caught on flies are outs
  - Player calls for the ball when hit to them
  - Makes plays at bases other than first base to get runners out
  - Masters moving feet to get in front of ground balls
  - As an infielders, learns to cover a base if the ball is not hit to them
  - Learns the difference between a force out and tag out and what the rules are to apply each type of out, including plays at home
  - Outfielders know to stand a good distance from infielders
  - Outfielders throw batted balls into second base
  - Start to learn to find runners they can get out at 3rd base or home and throw ball there instead
- Hitting
  - Should be swinging hard so if hitter contacts ball then it should be done with force and not just so they can tap it
  - Reiterate hitting stance
  - Locates on their own where in the batters box they should be standing when ready to hit
  - Coach can slowly increase distance of pitches and try to move from underhand to overhand throws
  - Learn/Masters to pivot back foot and knee as they swing through ball
  - Learn/Masters to throw knob of bat at the ball rather than top hand coming down over the ball during the swing to avoid chopping action

## Mustang

- Baserunning
  - Knows how to steal bases
  - Rounds a base to attempt to advance to next base
  - Balls hit to outfield, batter does not run through 1st base but instead looks to go to 2nd base unless coach has the batter stay
  - Taught the infield fly rule
  - Masters tagging up
- Throwing/Catching
  - Works on making throws from 3rd base or SS to 1st base
  - Masters catching ball
  - Can turn glove over to make backhand stops and at least get glove to ball
- Fielding
  - As an infielders, masters covering a base if the ball is not hit to them
  - When it appears runners are safe, make decision to get ball to pitcher to stop the play

- Hitting

#### Bronco

- Baserunning
  - Learn lead offs
  - Learn what to look for to not get picked off
  - Learn when to steal (straight steals, wild pitches)
  - Learn what drop third strike is
  - Learn ways to steal home and using safety to not be hit by batter or batted ball on third base
- All other aspects should be taught as if they are learning to advance real baseball skills