

# WAA Softball



# Coaches Manual



## Coaches Skills Training

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Coaches Skills Training is to prepare WAA Girls Softball coaches with some basic skill and fundamental techniques, which can be used at practices and taught during the season. These drills stress a fundamental philosophy, which is consistent not only across WAA Girls Softball but also both Webster High Schools.

**Coach Preparation:** Coaches are expected to study this packet and organize practices consistent with these teachings. In preparation, coaches will be trained on the specific skill fundamentals, which will emphasize basic drills to instruct players. During season practices coaches are encouraged to organize and teach based upon these training sets. Fundamentals should be the primary function of all practices with strategy play worked in. An example practice format is attached.

## **Warm-Up/Agility**

Before every practice 10 minutes of agility/warm-up should be performed. Static stretching has been de-emphasized by most athletic trainers. New philosophy is dynamic/ballistic warm-up.

### **Drills**

- 20 Arm circles – palms out like washing windows
- 20 Arm circles – palms down, fingers pointing down
- 10 Swimmer Arm rotations front and back each arm
- Cross Arm/Triceps Stretch – arm cross under chin then up overhead triceps
- Pot Stirrers - 10 each arm/each direction
- 25 Jumping jacks
- 15 Stationary knee raise
- 15 Stationary Butt kickers
- 15 Stationary Run Lunge
- Slow knee's (High Knees)
- Forward Lunges
- Frankenstein
- Quick Knees o Shuffles o Cross Over's
- Cherry Pickers (explosions)
- Sprints (heels up proper base running stance)

## **Throwing**

Throwing and catching are the most important fundamental skills needed and proper form should be emphasized. At least 10 minutes of practice should be spent on throwing and catching. You can never spend too much time teaching throwing and catching.

### **Drills**

- ① Knee Wrist Snaps - Partner up girls, glove knee up, brace elbow with glove, snap throw.
- ① Knee Throws - Same as above except full follow through with hands touching ankle.
- ① Long Throws - Same as above with a bounce in from with arc.
- ① Standing Statue Throw - Standing, girls start with high elbow throwing at once.
- ① Standing Statue Throw with quick return throw.
- ① Full throw - Regular position.
- ① Speed Throwing - Partner up girls, throw to one another practice rotation and quickness of throw by getting ball out of glove fast.

### **Games**

- ① Open Bucket Throw - From distance have girls throw into bucket flat on ground using snap and follow thru from above – LS/MM could use hula hoop.
- ① Star Drill - Have girls in IF positions except for pitcher – throw around the bases calling base or perform star drill demo – LS,MM ok to perform with girls on each base.

## Catching

Throwing and catching are the most important fundamental skills needed and proper form should be emphasized. You can never spend too much time teaching throwing and catching. Safety is a concern that needs to be addressed to build each girl's confidence. Hand eye coordination is very important and needs to be implemented in the drills.

### Drills

- ① Partner (coach) Tennis Ball Toss - Partner up girls, without gloves have girls bounce 1 tennis ball to partner.
- ① 2 Tennis Ball Toss - Same as above except each girl has a tennis ball and bounce pass to one another – as they get comfortable go faster.
- ① Overhead Standing Catch - Toss ball over head having girls emphasize straight arms while catching – can use large balls with LS/MM.
- ① Catching Reaction Drill - Break girls up into a couple groups. One at a time throw softballs to the left and right.
- ① Shoulder Throws - Facing coach – balls are thrown over right and left should emphasize proper rotation and position.

### Games

- ① Running Catch - Line up girls on 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line. Player sprints to LF while coach throws leading line drive, continue to CF with fly ball, continues to RF with short pop up.
- ① Relay Line Drill - Break girls up into groups of 3. 1 girl will be placed at each end mark with the other one in the middle. Girls throw ball to each girls down and back. First team to 10 wins

## **Fielding**

Focus on primary fundamentals of proper fielding position. Take time to explain responsibilities of each position and where to stand. Work in situational strategy after proper teaching of fundamentals. Allow 40 minutes for fielding.

### **Infield Drills**

- Side to Side Toss - Set up parameters and quickly roll softball to players without gloves. Time each girl for 20-30 seconds.
- Run-Through - Have girls line up in a straight line and coach bounce tennis balls to players without gloves. Player's first step is forward and challenge them with left to right.
- Quick Glove - Position girls at SS and 1<sup>st</sup> base – short hop (bounce) ball to SS with quick transition throw to 1st base.
- 2 coach fielding drill - 2 coaches at home plate one hitting to girls positioned at 3<sup>rd</sup> base the other hitting to girls positioned at 1<sup>st</sup> base, field and drop in bucket.

### **Outfield Drills (see catching)**

- Shoulder Throws
- Relay Line Drill

### **Games/Advance Drills**

- Hot Box Hitting - Line up girls on 2<sup>nd</sup> base with 2 retrievers located with 2 coaches hitting. Left coach hits ground ball players throws to left retriever – 2<sup>nd</sup> coach immediately hits another ground ball and player throws to right retriever. Everyone rotate clockwise.
- Five Ball Fungo - Position players in every position except for catcher and pitcher. Each position gets 5 ground balls hit by coach and girls throw to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Base Running**

As girls begin to play at higher levels base running becomes increasingly important.

### **Drills**

- Run through 1<sup>st</sup> - Line up girls at home plate run through 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- Feet Position on Base - Show proper stance with front foot on right corner of base and right leg back.
- Base Rounding - Position girls on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>, run 2 bases focusing on rounding corner of base. Use cones or object to stress straight line attack.
- Sliding - Teach proper fundamentals of sliding, even having the younger girls sit down. Sliding, especially at home, become a major safety factor and rule.

### **Games/Advance Drills**

- Relay Race - Break up girls into 2 groups with one group on 2<sup>nd</sup> base and other group at home. Groups run full bases and team to get back to original base first wins, usually after games vs. other team.
- Indian Run: Have girls start at home. 1<sup>st</sup> leg is to run to 1<sup>st</sup> (come back to home), 2<sup>nd</sup> leg run to 2<sup>nd</sup> (come back to home) 3<sup>rd</sup> leg run to 3<sup>rd</sup> (come back to home) last leg all the way around the bases.

## Hitting

The main part of the game most girls look forward to participating. Also can be stressful as only time girls are really individualized. Some girls may have some anxiety with ball hitting them. Allow 25-30 minutes.

### **Hitting Position and Safety**

- Knocking knuckles
- Stance – position at home plate
- Bat position
- Bent knee back foot pivot
- Dropping bat (can use circle to illustrate)

### **Drills: Split up team into 6 groups and rotate every 4-5 minutes**

- Station 1 - Soft Toss
- Station 2 - Tennis Ball Bounce (From 45 degree angle, coach bounces in front of batter)
- Station 3 -Live Coach Pitching Softy ball or whiffle
- Station 4 - Straight Tee hitting
- Station 5 - Top/Bottom (Place large waffle balls on top of one another on tee have player hit bottom ball. Goal is to have top ball drop straight down)
- Station 6: Bunting – set up spots to bunt toward 1st, 3rd, and pitcher

### **Hitting Games:**

- Soft Toss/ Fielding Line – coach soft tosses to batter, who hits into 2 lines of fielders. Score 1 point pass first line and 2 points pass second line.
- Pressure Hitting - coach pitches, one pitch, to batters providing the player with a situation and asking them to either get base hit, bunt, hit to right side.



## **Pitching**

Girls softball pitching is one of the most mechanical techniques in all of sports. All teams should have general pitching instruction for all players. Focus on fundamentals. Teach them the right way every time so bad habits are not formed. All pitching drills should be done in small groups with coach or adult as catcher.

### **Drills**

- Wrist Snaps - From close distance, girls will only snap wrist to simulate finish.
- T's - From a "T" position, player rotates and finishes with a snap.
- X's - Same as above except from a "X" position.
- Arm Isolation - To isolate arm motion only (no legs), a good drill is getting on one knee and throwing T formation and also with complete arm circle. Instructor can focus on whether circle is correct and make sure the pitcher is not bending at the waist.
- Full Motion - Emphasis both feet on rubber, show of ball, and stride outs.

### **Games/Advance Drills**

- Spots - Catcher places glove in positions where pitcher needs to throw.
- Bucket on bucket and have girls try to hit top bucket out of the "T" formation at about 20 feet then doing full arm circle three times, releasing on the third circle. Can change top bucket to a 2 liter bottle to make it more challenging, depending on age and ability.

## **Other Games**

**Group Cut off Game:** Split girls into groups of 4 or 5 and position them in center of gym/field. Other team of 4-5 girls hit a soft toss. Girls in the field have to relay the ball back to home and every girls must touch/receive the ball. Girls hitting run the bases. Count bases of girls hitting until ball is back at home. Keep score against teams. Position players in every position except for catcher and pitcher. Each position gets 5 ground balls hit by coach and girls throw to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup>).

**Advanced Line Drill:** Line up team on 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line with cones positioned in the field. First throw fly ball to girl running toward outfield, girl then runs in for short fly ball, then gets fly ball over left shoulder, charges in for ground ball – can switch sides for right shoulder.

## **Sample Practice Plan**

6:30-6:40 – Warm-up/Agility

6:40-6:50 – Throwing/Catching

6:50-7:30 – Infield and Outfield

7:30-8:00 – Hitting

8:00-8:30 – Team/Group Drills – base running/pitching

Thank you for volunteering your time.

