



FIRST EDITION

OCCP

RESOURCE PACKAGE

A Coach's Guide to
Fundamental Baseball



Wayne Parro, Coaching Supervisor
Bob McKillop, Executive Director



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First Edition



INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Coach Certification Program (OCCP) was created in response to feedback received by Baseball Ontario indicating that a major reason behind the declining numbers of young people participating in baseball was ineffective coaching at the “grass roots” level of the game. In fact, there was no program geared toward the recreational baseball coach that provided direction in teaching the fundamentals of baseball skills, and the basics of coaching children in sport.

The OCCP program was conceptualized in 1998 by the OBA Supervisor of Coaching Barrie Salt, Executive Director Bob McKillop, and Assistant Supervisor of Coaching Wayne Parro. It was run as a pilot project in five centres in Ontario in 1999 based on a simple baseball technical curriculum written by Wayne Parro. The accompanying resource package was assembled in the Baseball Ontario office by Bob McKillop and has undergone further refinements including this updated Resource Package under current Supervisor of Coaching, Chick McKenzie.

Each year, representatives from each OBA Affiliate Association have been taught to deliver the program to coaches in their geographic region and the response has been outstanding. This booklet is designed to help you run a practice in order that the players have some fun and learn some things about the game and skills of Baseball. This is by no means everything you need to know, but it will help in getting you started.

Before you go on the field with your team, you **MUST** have your practice planned. It needs to be planned right down to the minute. Obviously things change as the practice goes on and you may decide to vary from your original plan.

As you decide on what areas you are going to practice, and what drills you want to use, make sure that you understand what you want to teach and that the drill you have selected does teach or practice that skill. Set the drill up in your mind and on paper **BEFORE** you go on the field.

The blank practice plans included in this package suggest that you break your practice into six parts. The first of which is **Warm-Up** and the last being **Cool Down**. It is highly recommended that each of these areas be included every time your team gets together. Practices or games.

The younger your group, the less intense a stretching warm-up needs to be. It is essential that you make the team do a warm-up together so that all players have at least reached the same minimum.

Our thanks to the Coaching Association of Canada who have allowed us to use some material from their publication *Getting Started in Baseball* which is sponsored by 3M.

Enjoy your coaching experience. You are a much more important role model than you may think to the youngsters that you are coaching. “By being prepared and by coaching with care, you can help make a sport a positive and enjoyable experience for children and encourage more young Canadians to make sport and recreation a daily part of their lives For life.”¹

Yours in baseball,

Chick McKenzie, Supervisor of Coaching

Bob McKillop, Executive Director

Wayne Parro, Assistant Supervisor of Coaching

¹ *Getting Started in Baseball* — Prologue.



Stretching

Stretching

Stretching is an integral part of any warm up for baseball. Stretching should be done **AFTER** a cardio-vascular warm up. This may only require a jog for a minute or two but it is a necessity.

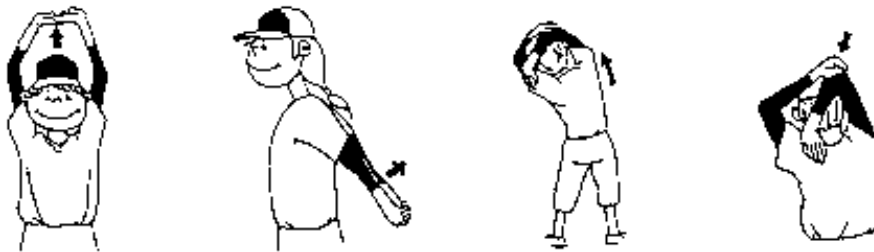
The stretching diagrams included here are very basic. Make sure you follow the directions and implement the exercises correctly. Many young people do not take this period very seriously. The coach must put the right attitude into the session at this point.

This is a good place to put various players in charge of the drill. This gives warm up a different flavour each time and allows each player some responsibility.

STRETCHING AND WARM UP EXERCISES DECREASE THE RISK OF INJURY.

STRETCHING FOR BASEBALL

- Stretch and hold the positions shown — don't bounce or jerk!
- Hold each position for 15 seconds, then relax and move on to the next exercise.
- As you progress, hold the positions longer (up to 30 seconds) and add more repetitions (do two or three of each exercise).





Receiving

Receiving

SOFT HAND DRILLS

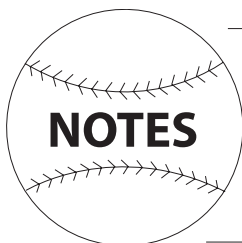
Split team up into partners. It is best if the partners are of similar ability. Align team in two rows facing each other spread out far enough so that errant throws will not hit another player. This drill is intended to illustrate the importance of having “**Soft Hands**” or “**Give**” when receiving the ball. Position players 15 feet (5 metres) apart. Start with a tennis ball, wiffle ball, nerf ball, bean bag, eggs etc. and no gloves. Lightly, gently, softly toss the object to partner. Partner receives (catches) the object as softly as possible. Stress two hands, thumbs correct, arms out front.

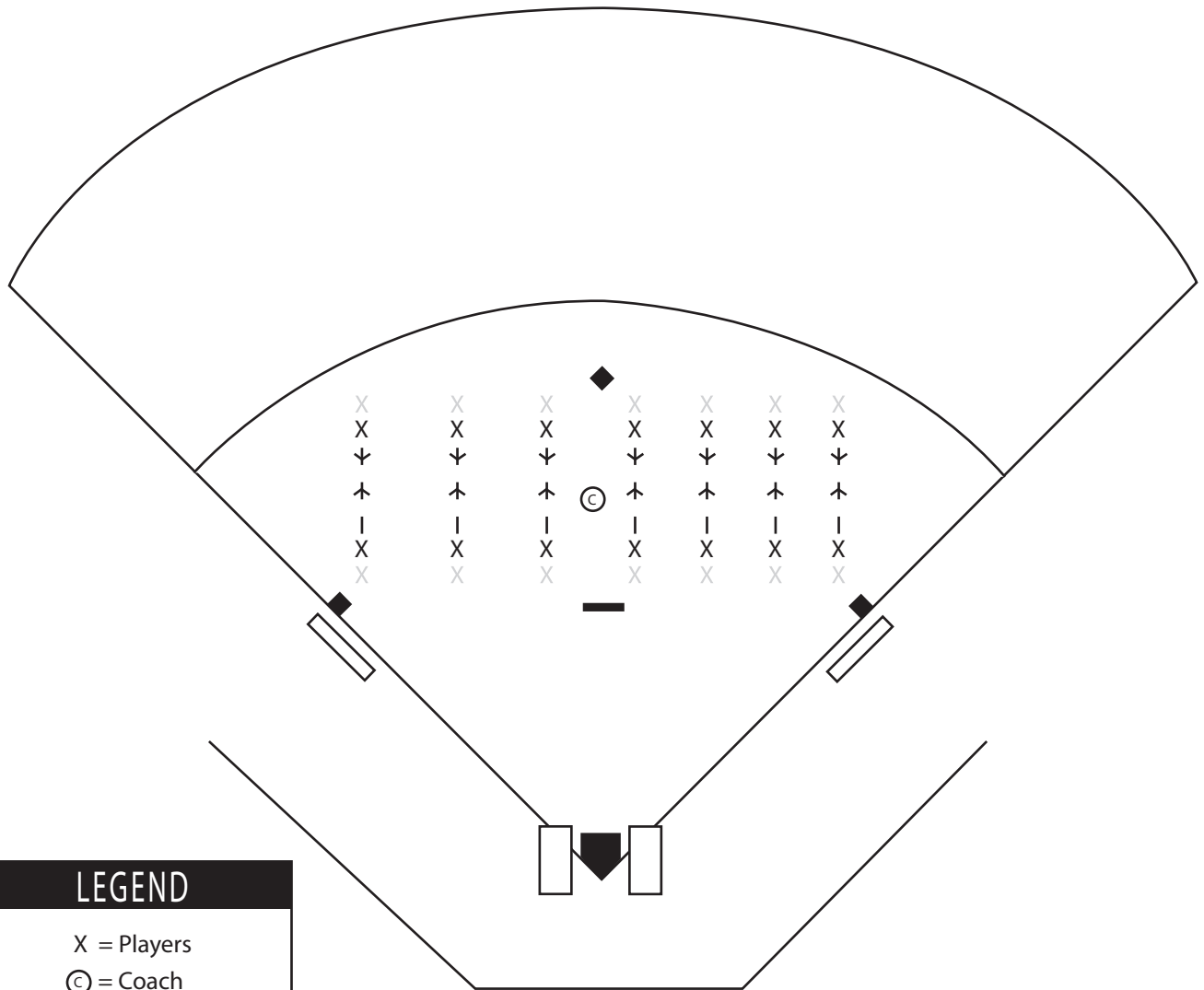
KEY POINTS

- use two hands to catch
- thumbs together for above waist
- little fingers together for below waist
- arms extended for first touch
- give or cradle ball to body
- watch ball all the way into hands
- set up to catch ball in front of body, chest high - in front of throwing shoulder

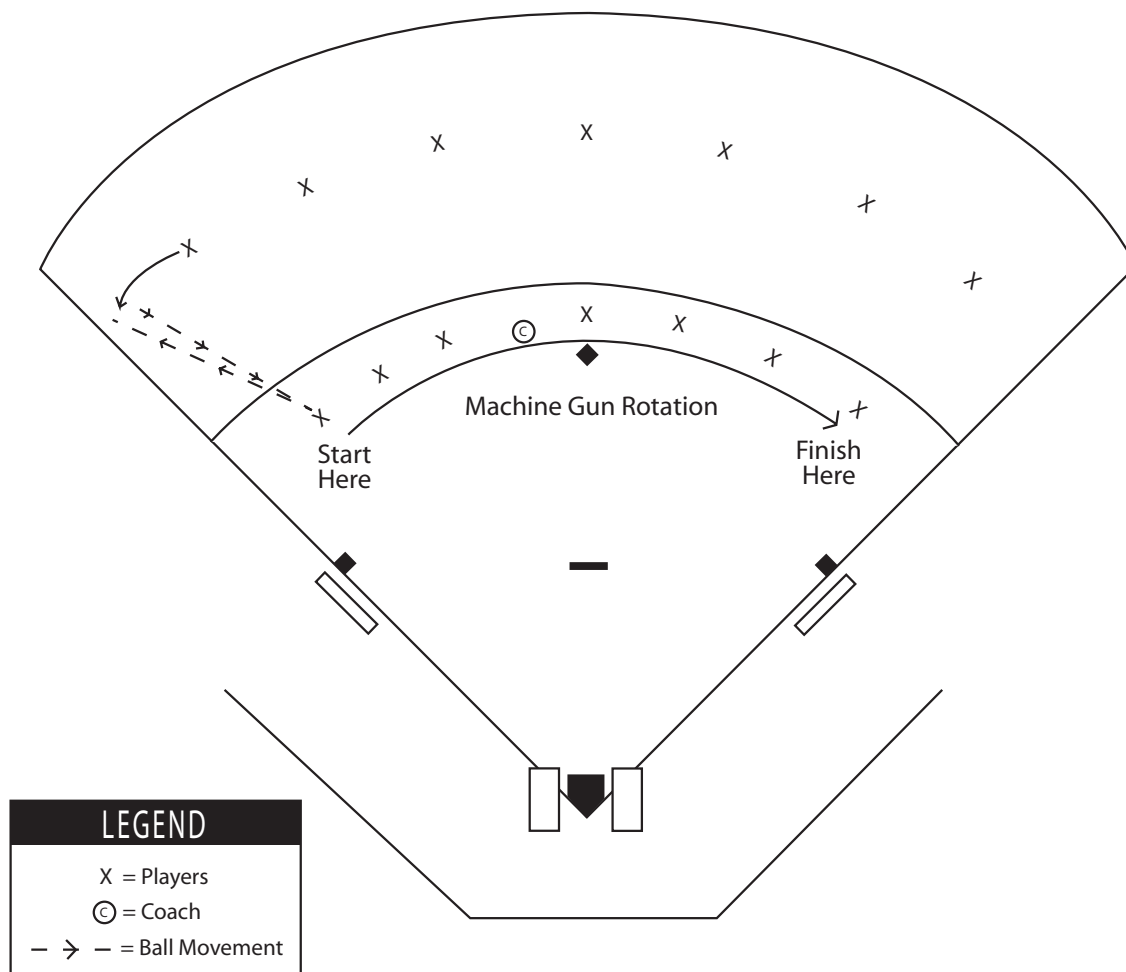
VARIATIONS

- A) use baseball no glove
- B) use baseball with glove
- C) extend distance
- D) throw object harder or overhand
- E) one practice have small water filled balloons or eggs
Play game — each time a pair makes a successful catch they each take a step back until object finally breaks
- F) throw each other pop ups
 - in front
 - behind (watch available space)
 - side





LEGEND	
X	= Players
Ⓢ	= Coach
- → -	= Ball Movement



CHALLENGE DRILL (Can be used for Receiving and Throwing)

Pair players up. One player with ball is on the infield. This player will throw the ball to partner who starts at least 50 feet (15 metres) from partner. The challenge is to make it difficult **but not impossible** for partner to catch ball. Do drill in machine gun fashion. As soon as one pair completes attempt, next pair starts. Move across field one after another. Coach can determine where ball is to be thrown.

KEY POINTS

- coach must emphasize to thrower that ball must be catchable
- Receiver:
 - “Ready Position”
 - Quick Reaction
 - Mid-line alignment if possible
 - Two hands if possible
- Cradle ball
 - Get to throwing position quickly
 - Accurate throw back to partner
 - Always throw ball infield to outfield

VARIATIONS

- A) make all throws target accurate
- B) everyone throw at same time to same place for each partner
- C) receiver in machine gun format catches ball and throws it to coach or person at home plate or any specific place
- D) good “fly ball” drill for outfielders



Throwing

Throwing

A. FLICK OR SNAP DRILL

The purpose of this drill is to get the player to realize that there is wrist action at the end of the throw. This wrist action largely determines the rotation of the ball and the direction of the ball. Pair up, face each other 10 feet apart (3 metres) and grip the ball correctly. Glove supports elbow of throwing arm at, or a little above chest height. Throwing arm has elbow bent at 90°. Bend wrist back so palm faces sky. The ball is now above eye level. Now **without using any arm action** flick the ball to partner using only wrist action.

KEY POINTS

- make sure player uses no arm action
- watch rotation of ball. It should be 12 to 6 rotation. If it is 10 to 4 or 9 to 3 wrist is turning over incorrectly or grip is wrong.
- as skill is mastered encourage player to put more power into action.

B. ONE KNEE DRILL

To develop good gather and arm route, pair up, facing each other 10 feet (3metres) apart. Throwing side knee on ground, glove side knee bent at 90° angle, foot flat on the ground pointing at target. Upper body is erect, do not slouch or put weight back on heel. Start facing partner with throwing hand holding ball in glove close to body immediately in front of chest. Break hands slowly with thumbs down and rotate to good “T” position. Now throw ball to partner releasing ball out in front, with throwing arm coming down past lead knee on the glove arm side and slapping side.

KEY POINTS

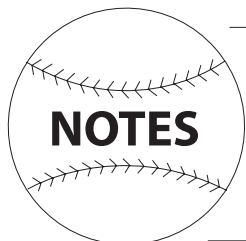
- explain proper grip technique
- good arm break with thumbs down
- player is “sitting” tall
- good “T” position
- full extension on release
- arm stays up
- good rotation on ball

C. T-DRILL

Move players back to 20 feet (6 metres). Have the thrower adopt the “T” position as described above. Thrower tosses the ball to the receiver, completing the throwing action as described above.

KEY POINTS

- Retain mechanics from “Flick or Snap” Drill and “One Knee” drill.
- Try to throw the ball on a line to the receiver’s throwing shoulder.
- Be sure receiver uses proper mechanics as taught in the “Receiver” section.

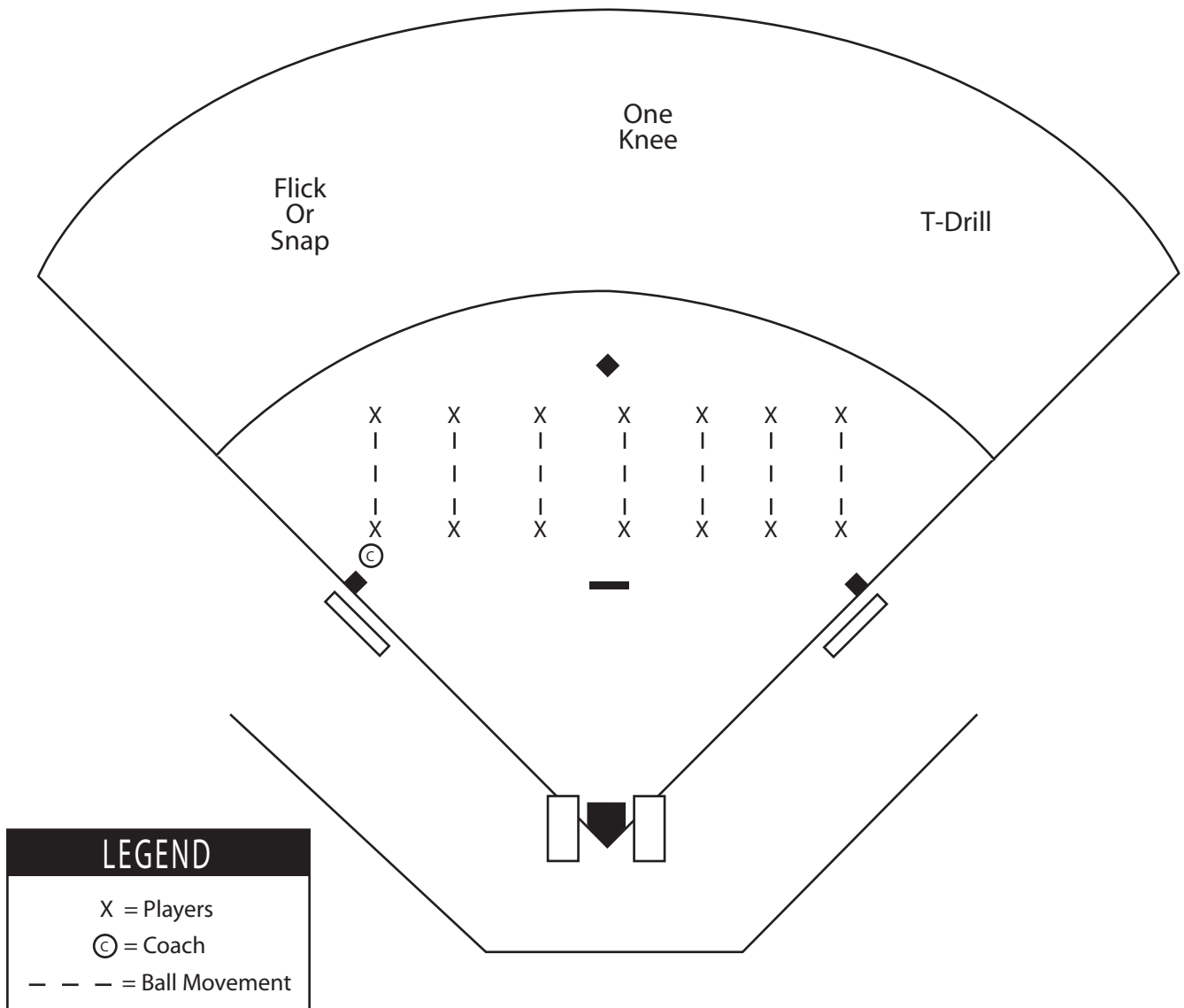


Throwing

A. FLICK OR SNAP DRILL

B. ONE KNEE DRILL

C. T-DRILL



Throwing

STRIDE DRILL

This drill is to demand a good stride from the player when throwing the baseball.

Pair up facing each other at a distance of approximately 40 feet (13 metres).

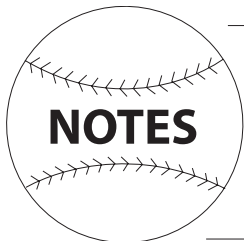
Start with back foot squared to target. Stride foot is at a comfortable distance and the toes of the stride foot are pointed at the target. Weight on balls of feet. Head aligned at mid-point of body. Start with hands together in front of body, slowly break to “T” position. Throwing elbow up, throwing arm extended, glove arm out. Throwing action starts, accelerate to release point, push off back foot, weight transfers to front foot, follow through when throwing ball to partner.

KEY POINTS

- make sure back foot is square 90° to target
- make sure front foot is not too far in front
- make sure back foot does **not** remain planted
- throwing elbow high
- good weight transfer
- keep balance

VARIATIONS

- A) Step and Stride Drill. Stand sideways with glove arm closest to partner. Take cross over in front of front leg with back foot landing square to target, now initiate same process as in stride drill. This provides momentum.
- B) Crow hop Drill. This is a very important skill for baseball players. Increase distance between partners to approximately 60 feet (20 metres). Start with hands together in front of body, both feet pointed at partner. Place a base, a glove, a hat, or something on the ground about 1 foot (35 cm) in front of thrower. Right handed thrower will push off with left foot while stepping with right foot over the object, Land on right foot 90° to target. This turns body and allows full throwing progression to happen. Left handed throwers push off with right foot and land 90° on left foot. Speed and balance become very important to this.

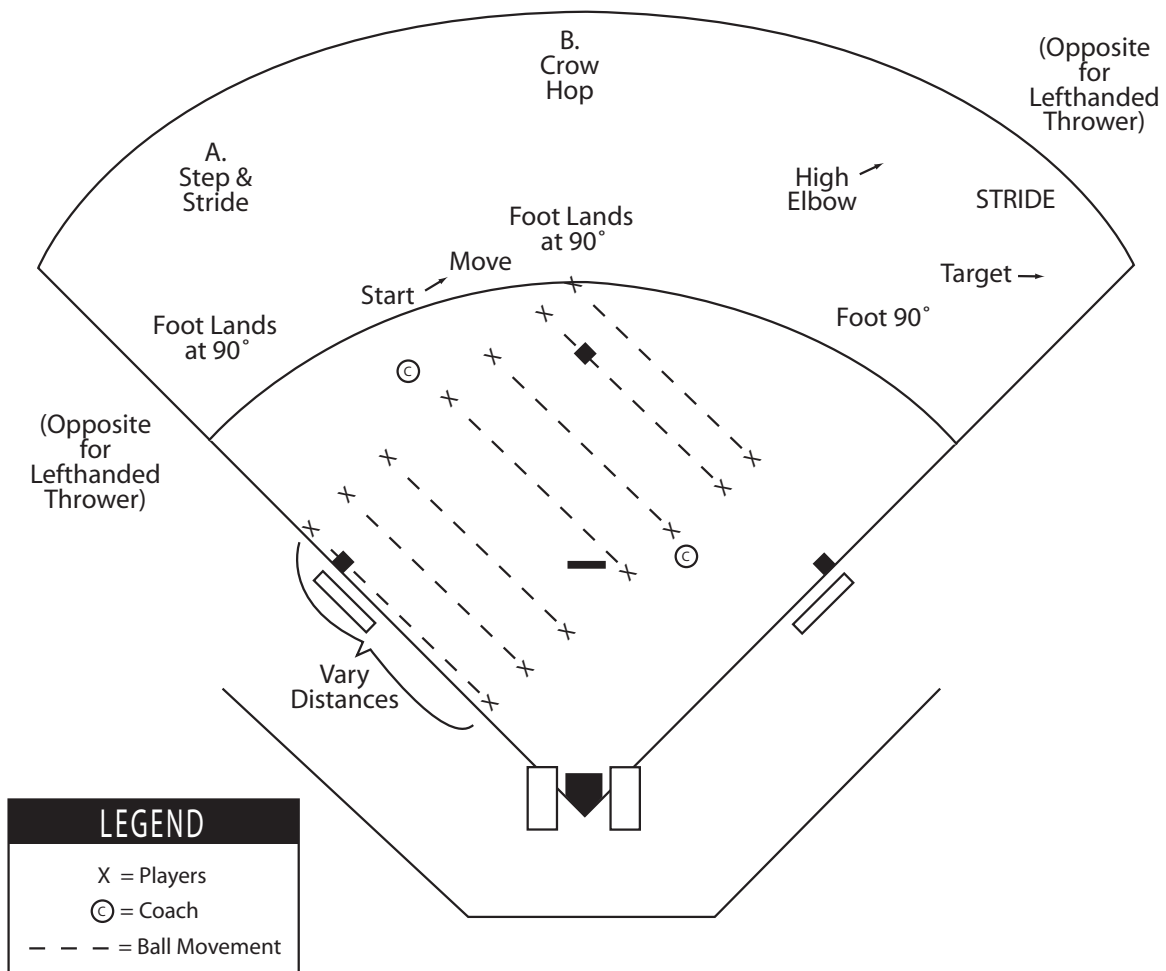


Throwing

STRIDE DRILL

A. STEP & STRIDE DRILL

B. CROW HOP DRILL



Throwing

ACCURACY DRILL

To work on mechanics of throwing accuracy and strength of arm.

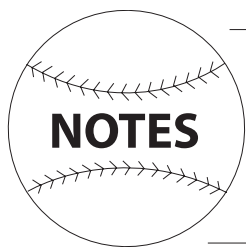
Split the team into 2 groups. Align groups 25 feet (8 metres) apart, facing coach. Turn trash can, cardboard box, bat bag, etc. on side with open end facing two lines of players. Coach tosses the ball into the air. First player in line sets up on the ball, catches it and throws the ball at the trash can or target. One point for hitting target, 2 points if ball goes in, 0 points for bad mechanics or poor trajectory on ball.

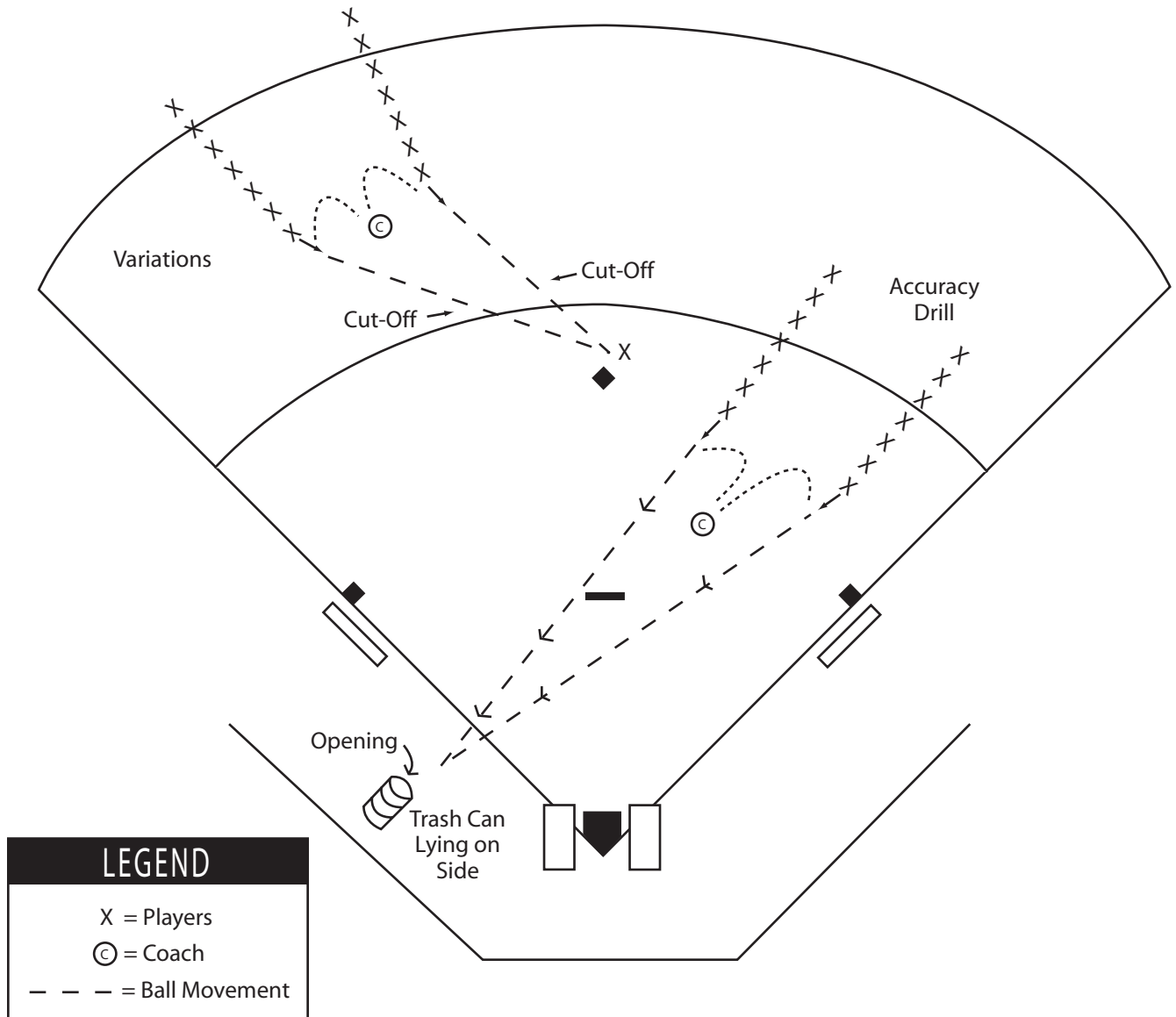
KEY POINTS

- keep track of score, have some fun
- when splitting team, make each group as equal ability wise as possible
- do not accept poor fundamentals

VARIATIONS:

- A) do this drill deep in the outfield, have players throw to player at second base
- first throw must bounce once before getting to target
 - second throw must reach target in the air
 - 2 points if target catches ball without moving feet
 - 1 point if target has to move or if bounces are not correct
- B) this drill adding cut-off person,
- 2 points if throw could have been cut-off but wasn't, and throw reached target without target having to move
 - 1 point if ball is cut off without hitting ground





Throwing

SPACE DRILL

Object is to get as much space between partners as possible while throwing and receiving baseball correctly.

Pair up one partner standing on third base foul line facing toward fair territory. Other partner facing partner at a distance where all players can complete throw and catch. Ball starts with partner on foul line, on command of coach “STRIDE”, each player with a ball will stride in unison and throw to partner. Receiving partner catches ball like a first baseman. If receiver does not have to move and catches ball, 2 points. If movement with feet but catches ball 1 point. Receiver now becomes thrower and throws ball back to partner in unison, on coach’s command. After each round of 2 throws, player not on foul line moves back 5 feet (2 metres), carry on drill as long as players can complete throws and catches, count total points.

KEY POINTS

- coach demands good fundamentals
- keep players spread out
- do not allow throws to become too long

VARIATIONS

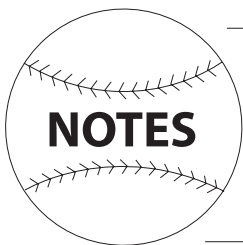
- A) have first throw a fly ball to partner, after catching ball, receiving partner makes a good hard throw back
- B) have first throw to partner a ground ball, after catching ball, receiving partner makes a good hard throw back
- C) reverse roles of partners
- D) LONG TOSS

This is a variation of space drill which is a very important aspect of all team’s workouts. Long toss is meant to increase player’s arm strength, mechanics, conditioning and confidence. Same alignment at short distance always conscious of fundamentals of throwing and receiving. (Back foot square, separate hands, step at target, follow through etc.)

- increase distance every five throws until player reaches maximum throwing distance.
- when throwing a long distance, make player throw ball on a 45° trajectory to strengthen arm

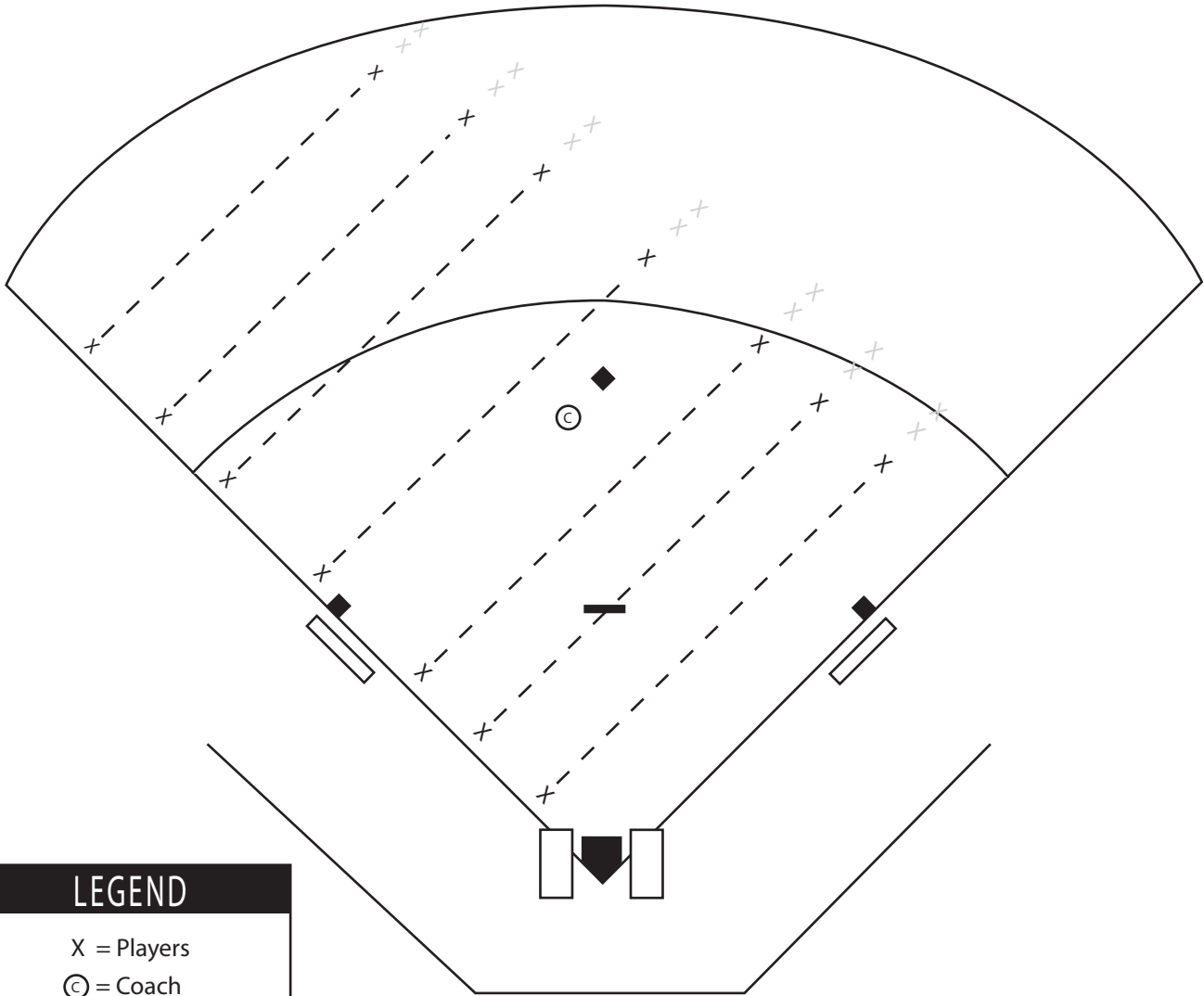
KEY POINTS

- start off slowly
- maximize correct fundamentals
- as distance increases, do not allow “rainbow”
- Throws with one hop are O.K. Get good flat hop
- do not allow player to throw long toss with “tired arm”



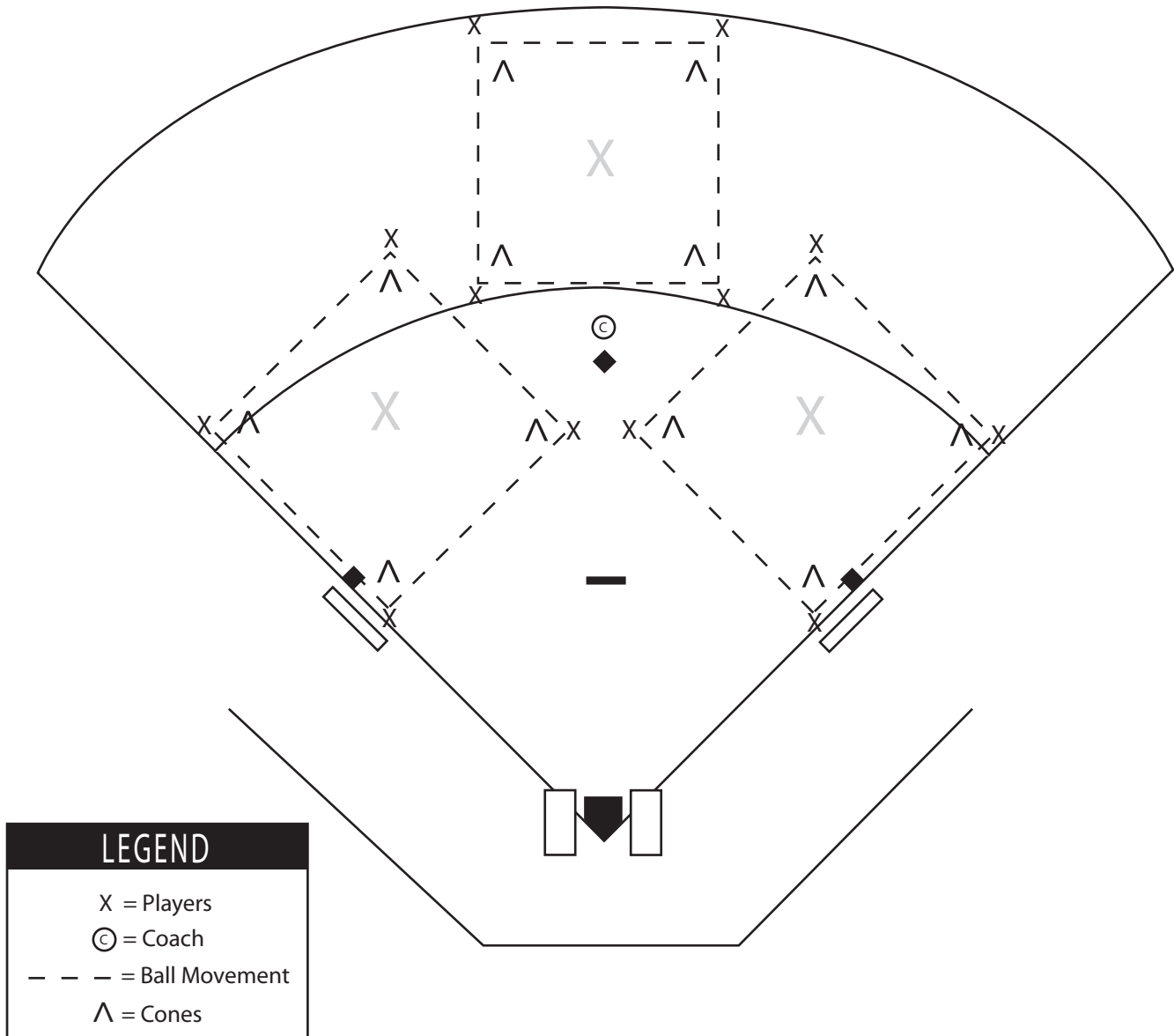
Throwing

SPACE DRILL LONG TOSS



LEGEND

- X = Players
- Ⓢ = Coach
- - - = Ball Movement



BOX DRILL

Break team into groups of 4, set up squares of 50 feet on each side. All players facing centre of square. On coach's command "throw left", player with ball throws ball to player on left, each player upon receiving ball throws ball to left until coach changes command to "throw right". Object of this drill is to throw and receive ball quickly and correctly. Coach emphasizes fundamentals.

KEY POINTS

- accuracy, speed and mechanics
- stress proper throwing and receiving techniques
- change direction often

VARIATIONS

- A) add 5th player in the middle, this player becomes the "caller" for that square, anyone can throw this player the ball at anytime
- B) shorten length of sides of square
- C) make square rectangle where short sides must toss underhand



Infielding

Infielding

SQUARE DRILLS

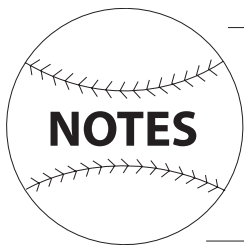
Players align themselves as shown in diagram. Player rolls ball to player in front of line That is facing him/her. Player receiving ball starts from “Ready Position” and moves to pick up ball. When ball is picked up, roll ground ball back to player in the line from where the original ball came from. Go to the back of the line you rolled ball to.

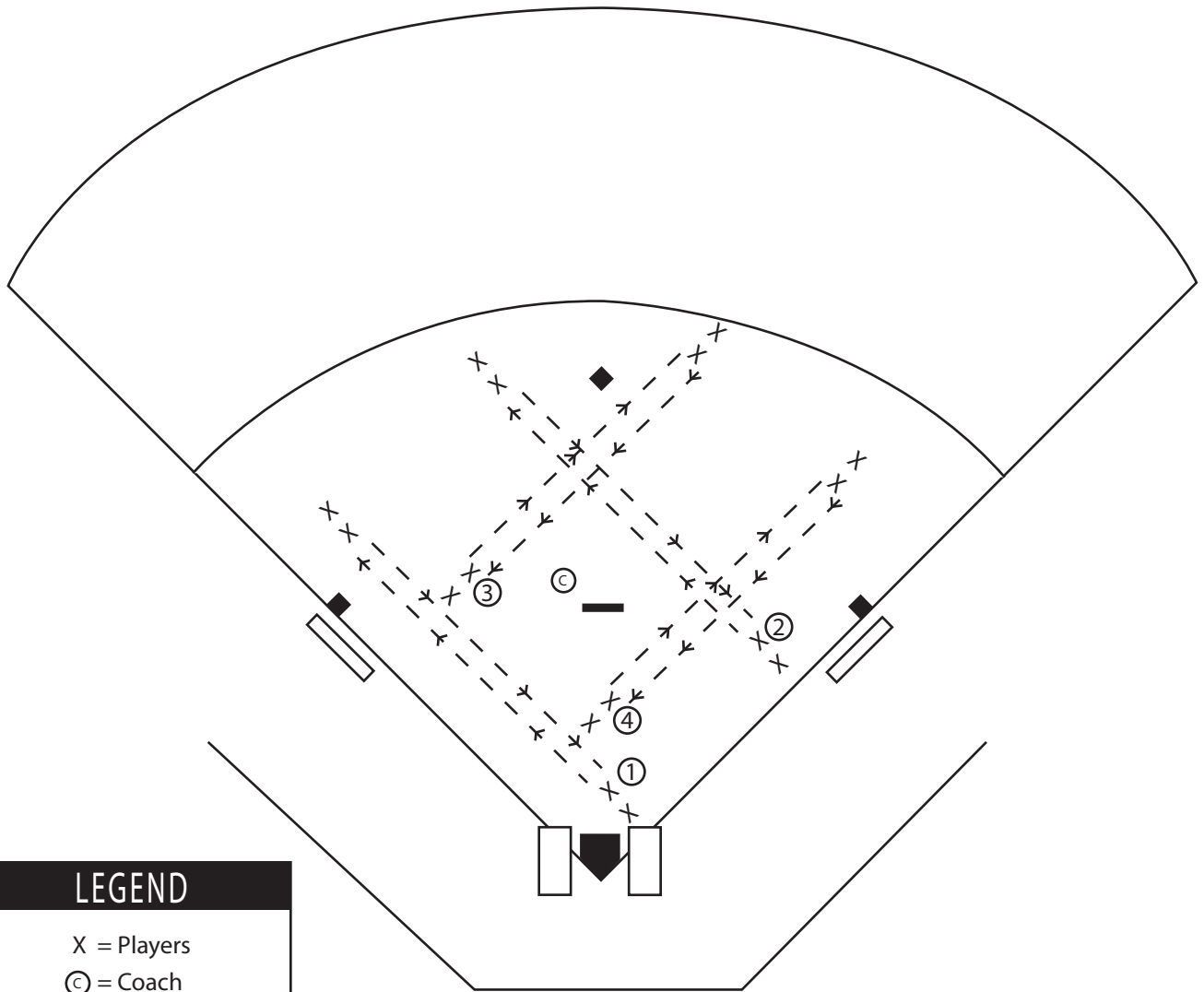
KEY POINTS

- start from “Ready Position”
- approach ball under control
- head up
- knees bent
- hands out front
- ball on mid point or mid line of body
- watch ball all the way to glove
- “cradle” ball to body
- transition to throwing

VARIATIONS:

- A) roll ball
- B) bounce ball
- C) move player right & left
- D) hit ground ball from ①, ②, ③ & ④

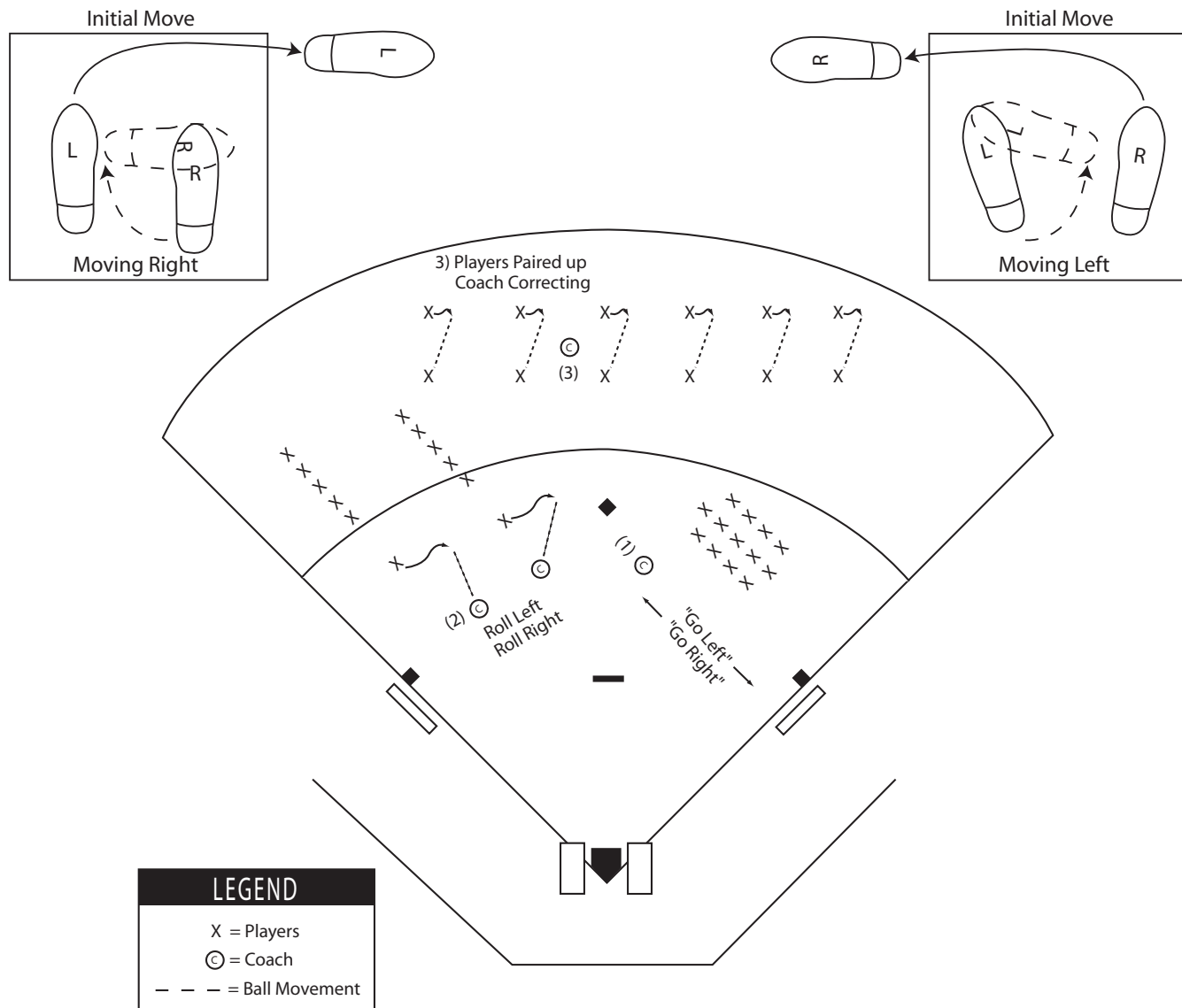




LEGEND	
X	= Players
⊙	= Coach
- - -	= Ball Movement

Infielding

PIVOT DRILL



PIVOT DRILL

Coach stands in front of players aligned in the infield. Explains and demonstrates "Pivot".

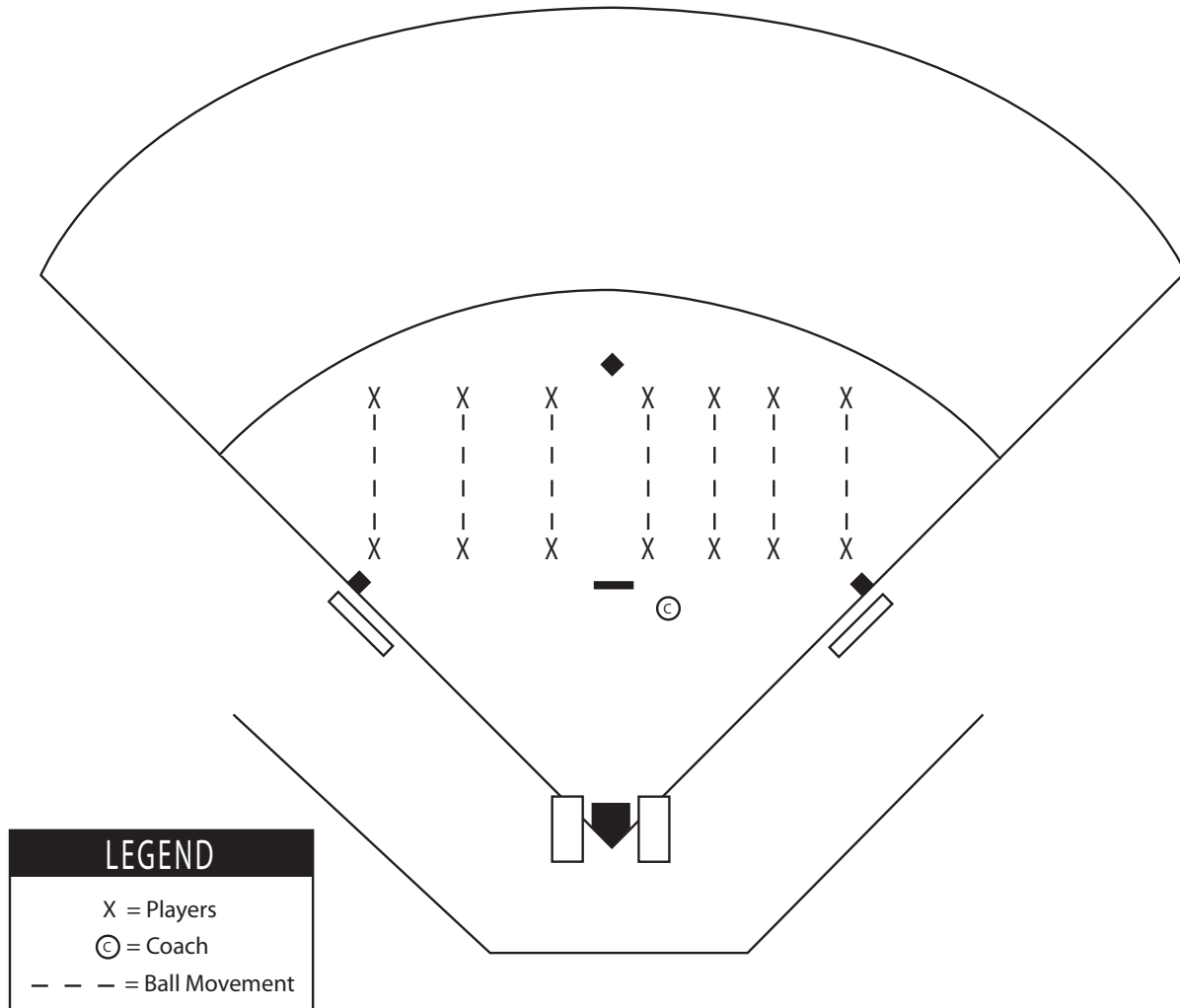
Points in the direction he wants players to move using correct pivot. With the addition of "Right" or "Left" players move to their right or left on coach's command.

Coach stands in front of players. Coach rolls ball to player's left. Player starts from "Ready Position" then pivots to move to the ball, fields ball, throws back to coach, returns to end of line. (Best if this can be done in three separate groups. Use player to roll ball.)

Players pair up and roll ball to each other.

KEY POINTS

- make sure player pivots on correct foot
- make sure cross-over is full step, player must stay down



LINE DRILL

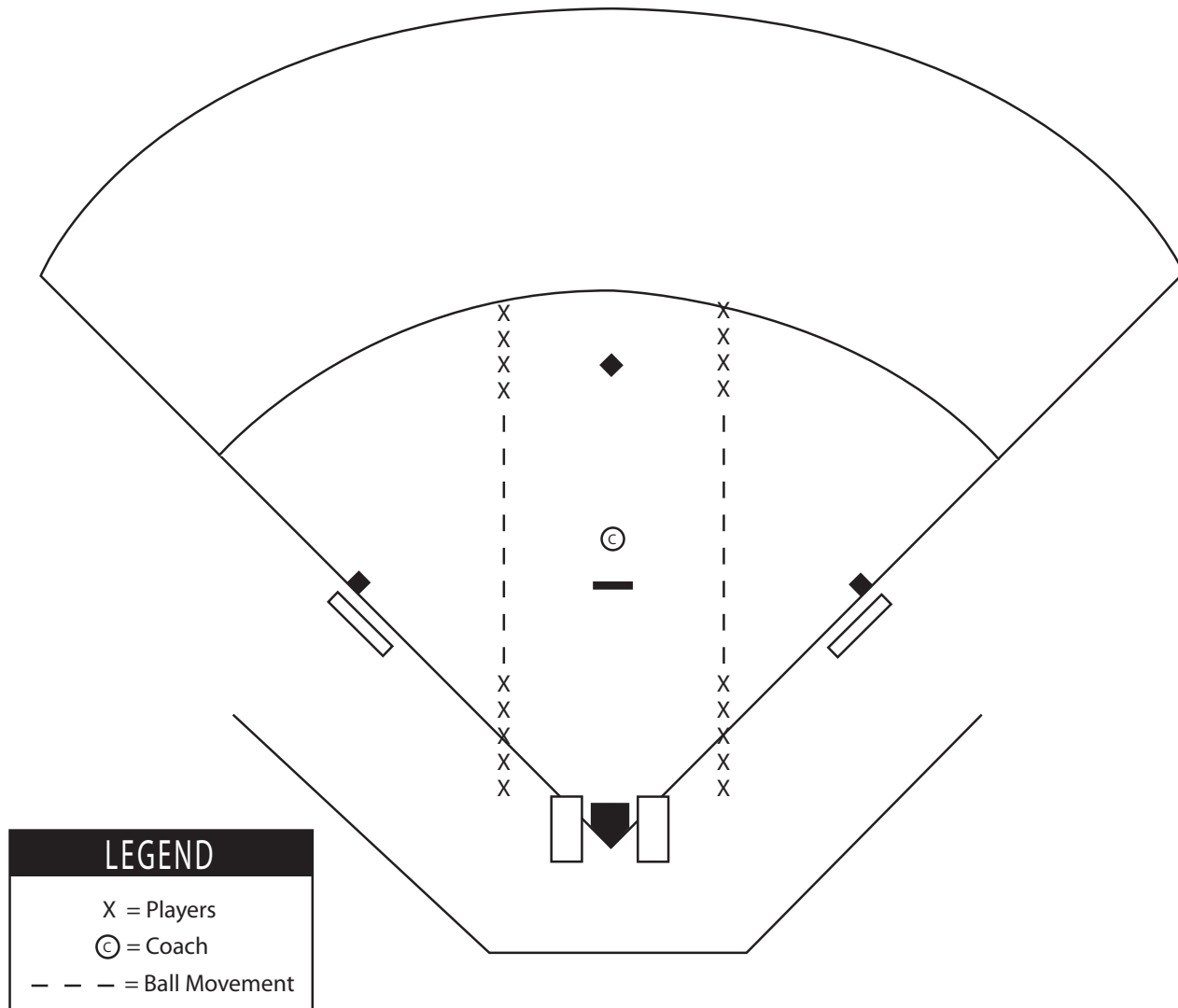
Align players in the infield with partners facing each other. Partners roll each other a ball, receiving player starts from “Ready Position” and fields ball correctly, then rolls ball back to partner, coach correcting.

KEY POINTS:

- start from “Ready Position”
- approach ball under control
- head up
- knees bent
- hands out front
- ball on mid point or mid line of body
- watch ball all the way to glove
- “cradle” ball to body
- transition to throwing position

VARIATIONS

- A) bounce ball
- B) do drill from knees
- C) go right and left
- D) throw ball back every other time
- E) increase distance
- F) throw ball harder



CONTINUOUS LINE DRILL

Group players into lines with at least two players in each line. Player from first line throws ground ball to first player in other line. Player in second line starts from “Ready Position” and fields ball, then throws ground ball to first player in the other line, player follows the ball and goes to the back of that line.

KEY POINTS

- start from “Ready Position”
- approach ball under control
- head up
- knees bent
- hands out front
- ball on mid point or mid line of body
- watch ball all the way to glove
- “cradle” ball to body
- transition to throwing position

VARIATIONS

- have one line always throw ball in the air to the other line
- speed up drill
- reduce number of players in each line
- increase distance between lines

QUICK BALL DRILL

SET UP DRILL

Break team into two groups. Half on either side of infield. Best to have two coaches, one for each group, but player can run one group. Need player with coach to receive balls being thrown in.

Start by throwing ground ball from plate angled to player. Get player familiar with angle required to get to the ground ball. Set up on ball. Field ball and throw ball to coach's assistant, return to back of the line.

KEY POINTS

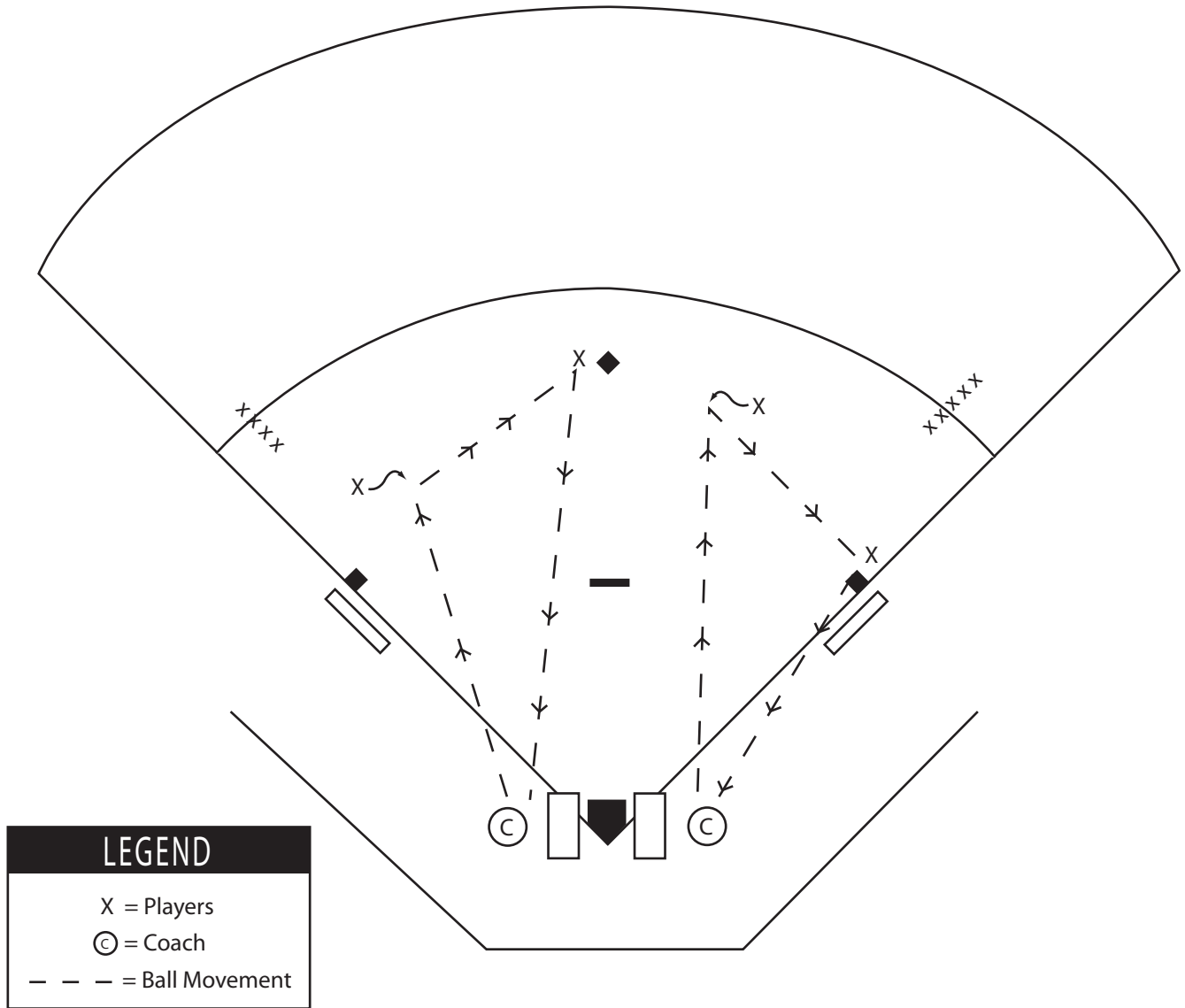
- Quickness
- Set-up
- Release

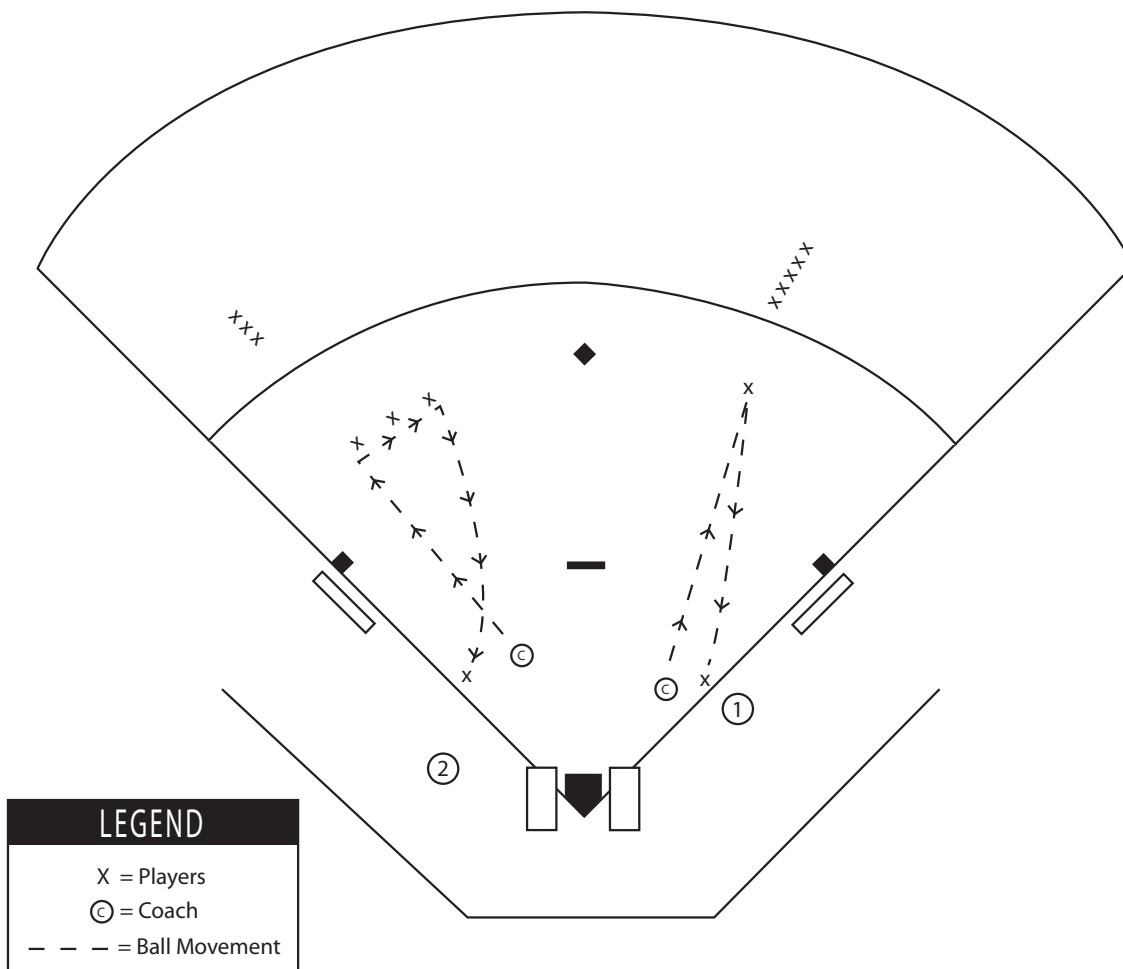
VARIATIONS

- A) coach hits ground ball
- B) alternate groups and throw to first base
- C) one group throws to first base, the other to second

Infielding

SET UP DRILL (VARIATIONS)





GROUND BALL ROTATION DRILLS

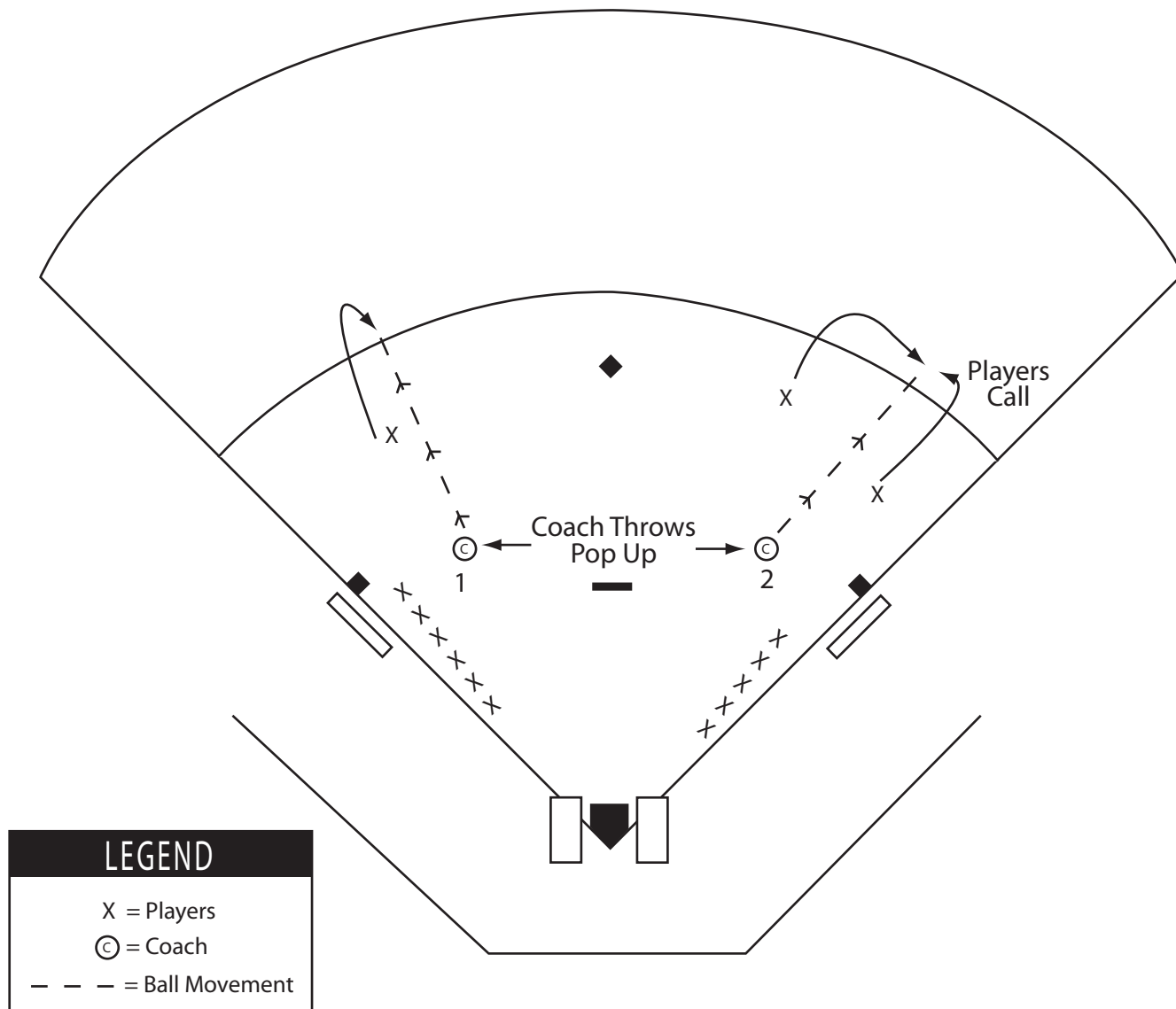
Split team in half. Half line up at shortstop position, half at second base position. A coach lines up directly in front of each line and hits ground balls to first person in the line. Player fields the ground ball and throws it back to player acting as catcher for the coach.

KEY POINTS

- start from “Ready Position”
- approach ball under control
- head up
- knees bent
- hands out front
- ball on mid point or mid line of body
- watch ball all the way to glove
- “cradle” ball to body
- transition to throwing

VARIATIONS:

- A) put player at closest base and throw ball there first
- B) hit ball far to side of player ②, work on forehand and backhand pick-ups
- C) same set up as ① except have 3 players ready to field ball. Hit ball at one of them, ball must then be “flipped” by glove hand to each of the other two, third player throws ball back to catcher.



POP UP DRILLS

- ① Coach has player in “Ready Position” with head down looking at ground. Coach throws pop up behind player and simultaneously yells “go”. On “go” player locates ball and goes to catch it, calling ball when player knows the ball will be caught.
- ② Coach has two players in “Ready Position” head down looking at ground. Coach throws pop up and yells go, players locate ball and “Call it”. Coach teaches when & how to call.

KEY POINTS

- set up on ball correctly
- catch ball high
- call “ball” or “I got it” or “mine, mine, mine” when sure of catching ball
- give way when other player calls

Infielding

GAME SIMULATION DRILL

One coach on each baseline 15 feet (5 Metres) from the plate. Coach on first baseline hits ground ball to player at third base who throws ball to player covering second base. This player throws ball to player with coach who hit ball.

At the same time coach on third baseline hits ground ball to player at shortstop. Shortstop fields ball and throws to player at first base. This player throws ball to player with coach who hit the ball.

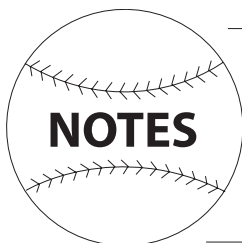
KEY POINTS

- start from “Ready Position”
- approach ball under control
- head up
- knees bent
- hands out front
- ball on mid point or mid line of body
- watch ball all the way to glove
- “cradle” ball to body
- transition to throwing
- safety important
- all players must watch ball coming to their position
- coach on first base line only hits ground balls to third base and to second base.
- coach on third base line only hits ground balls to first base and shortstop

VARIATIONS

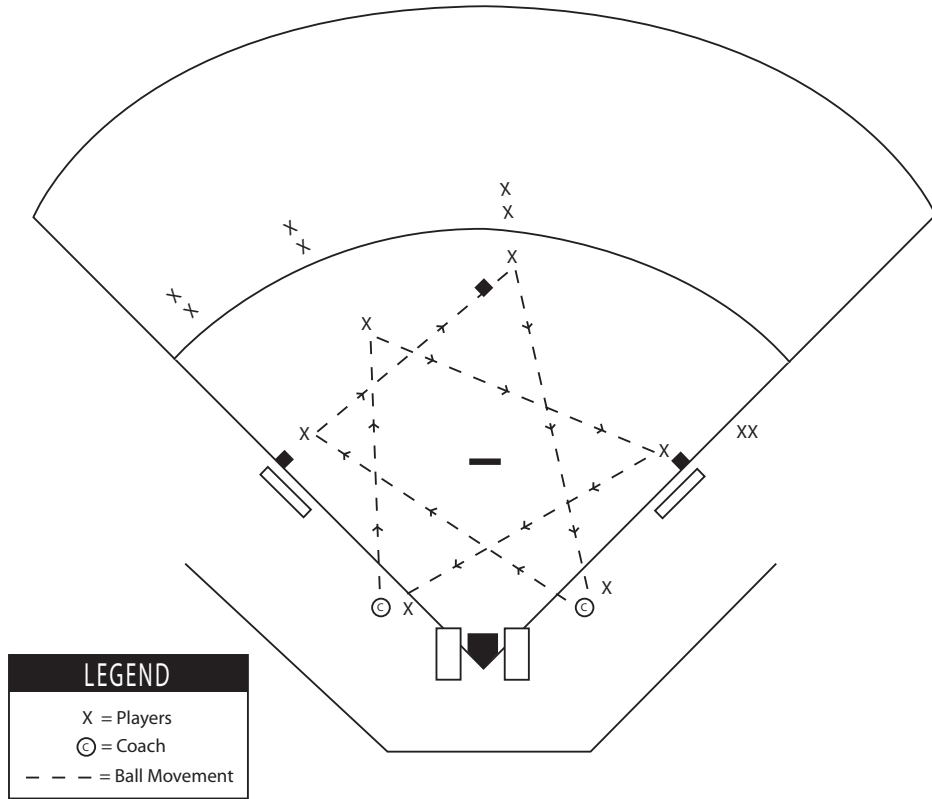
A) hit ball to other positions and they throw to different base.

NOTE: When throws are being made make sure only one ball is coming to each position.

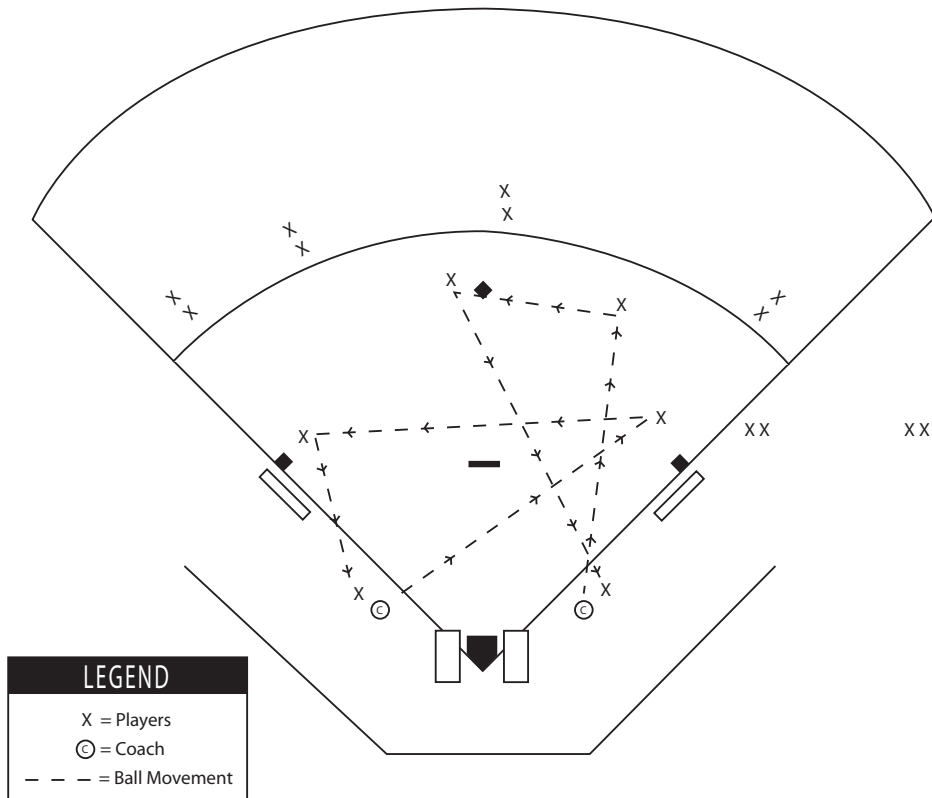


Infielding

GAME SIMULATION DRILL (1)



GAME SIMULATION DRILL (2)



Infielding

BLOCKING DRILL (NO DIAGRAM)

You need soft balls for this drill, tennis balls, Nerf balls, RIF balls etc.

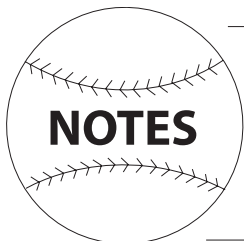
Pair players up, one player with ball throws ball so that it will bounce (1 metre) in front of infielder. Infielder starts from “Ready Position”, squares up on ball and keeps ball in front by using all basic fundamentals.

KEY POINTS

- start from “Ready Position”
- approach ball under control
- head up
- knees bent
- hands out front
- ball on mid point or mid line of body
- watch ball all the way to glove
- “cradle” ball to body
- transition to throwing

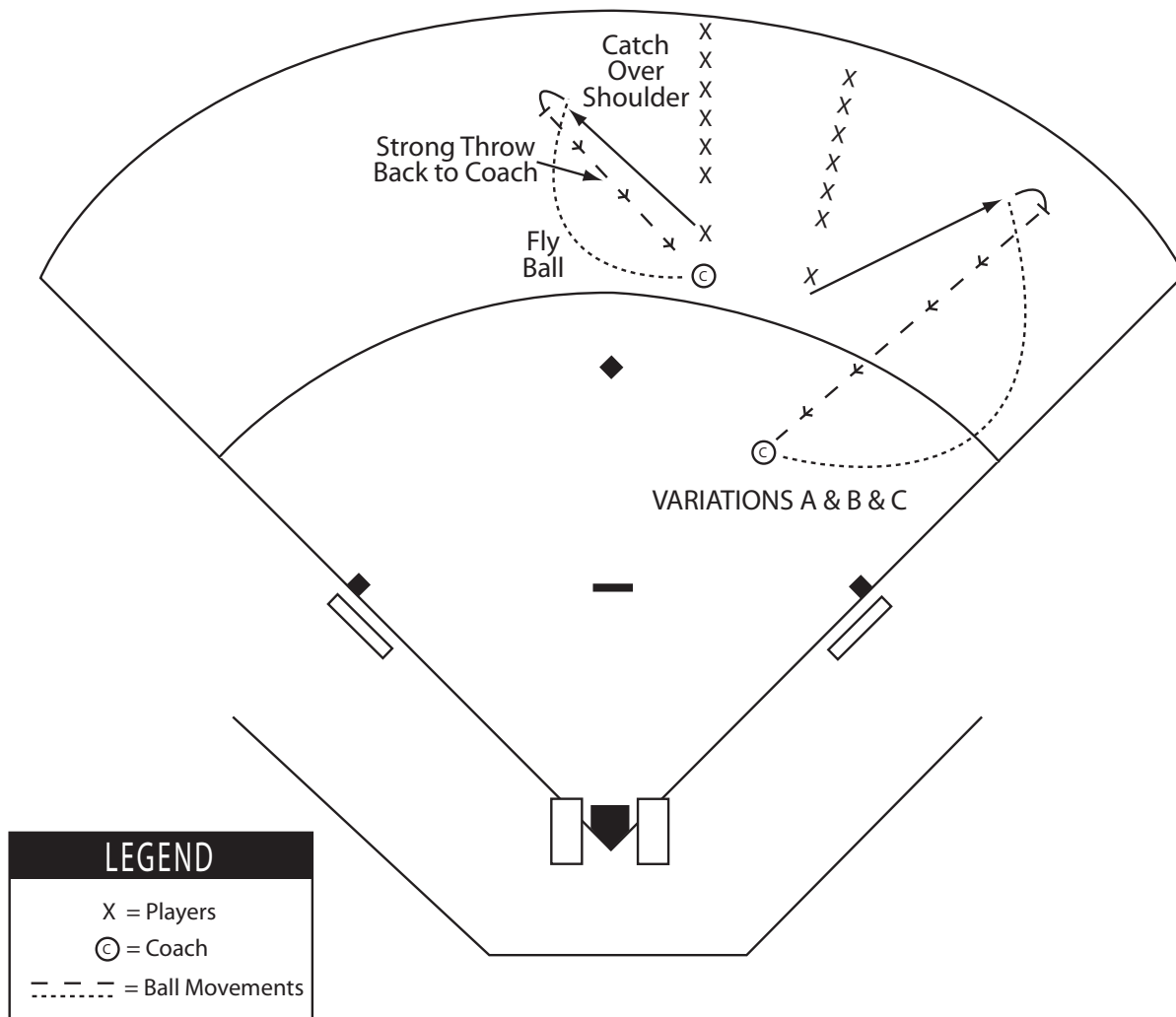
VARIATIONS

- A) play goaltender, try to score
- B) vary distance in front ball bounces
- C) use real baseball
- D) have blocker, block on knees
- E) block with no hands





Outfielding



TOUCHDOWN DRILL:

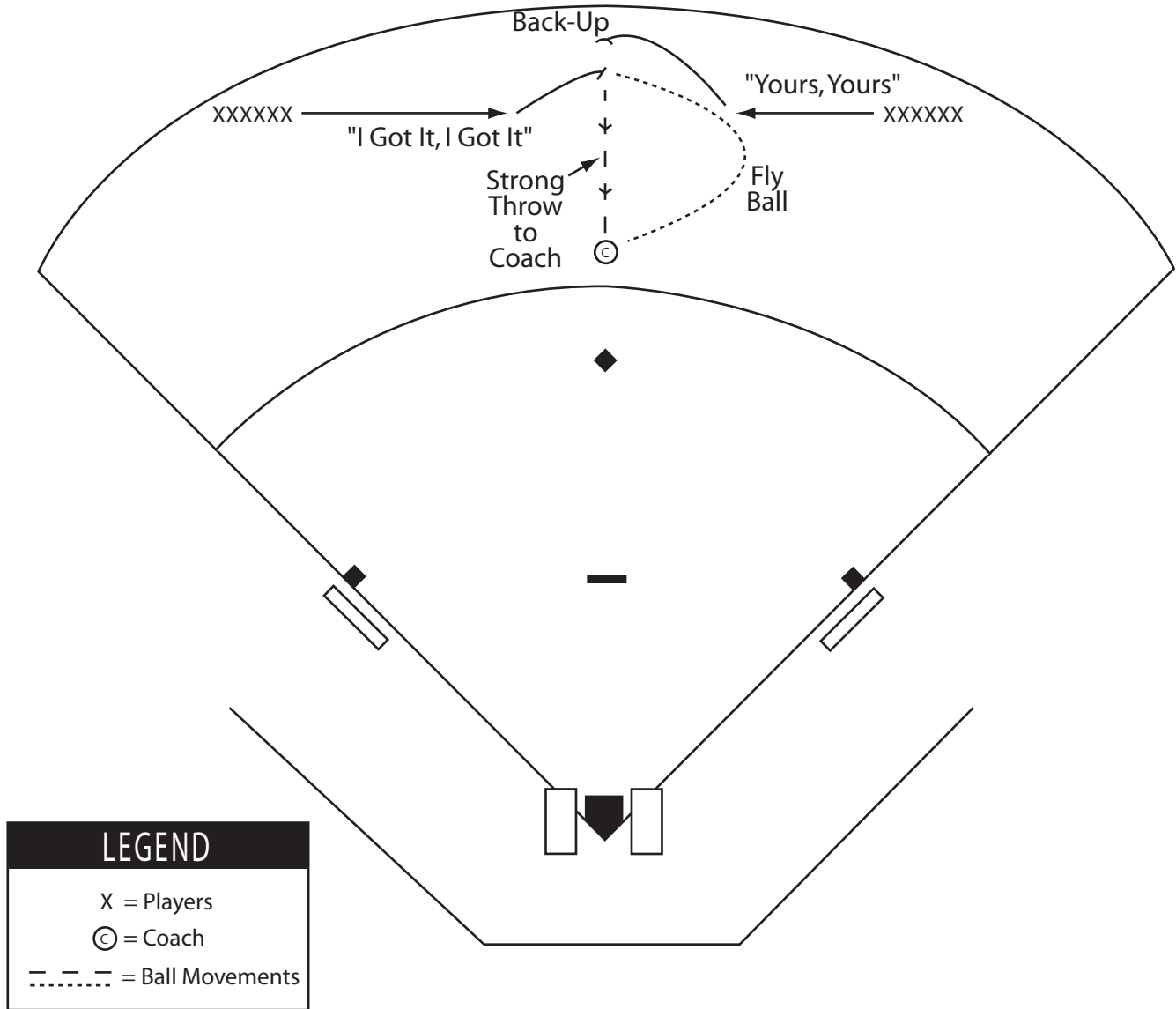
Players line up in single line in front of coach, player assumes “Ready Position”, coach calls “Ball”, fielder performs quick drop step and looks at coach. Coach throws fly ball making outfielder make good over the shoulder catch. Fielder gathers self, sets up and makes strong throw back to coach. Player goes to the end of the line.

KEY POINTS

- good efficient drop step
- peek at coach, don’t turn whole upper body
- keep glove down, run with normal arm action until last moment

VARIATIONS

- coach move farther away (70-80) feet and let fielder react to his throw or hit
- have fielder look at ground, coach hits or throws fly ball and yells “Ball”, fielder locates and reacts, catches and throws
- start outfielder lying down in prone position, coach throws or hits fly ball and yells “Ball”, player gets up locates ball, reacts, catches and throws

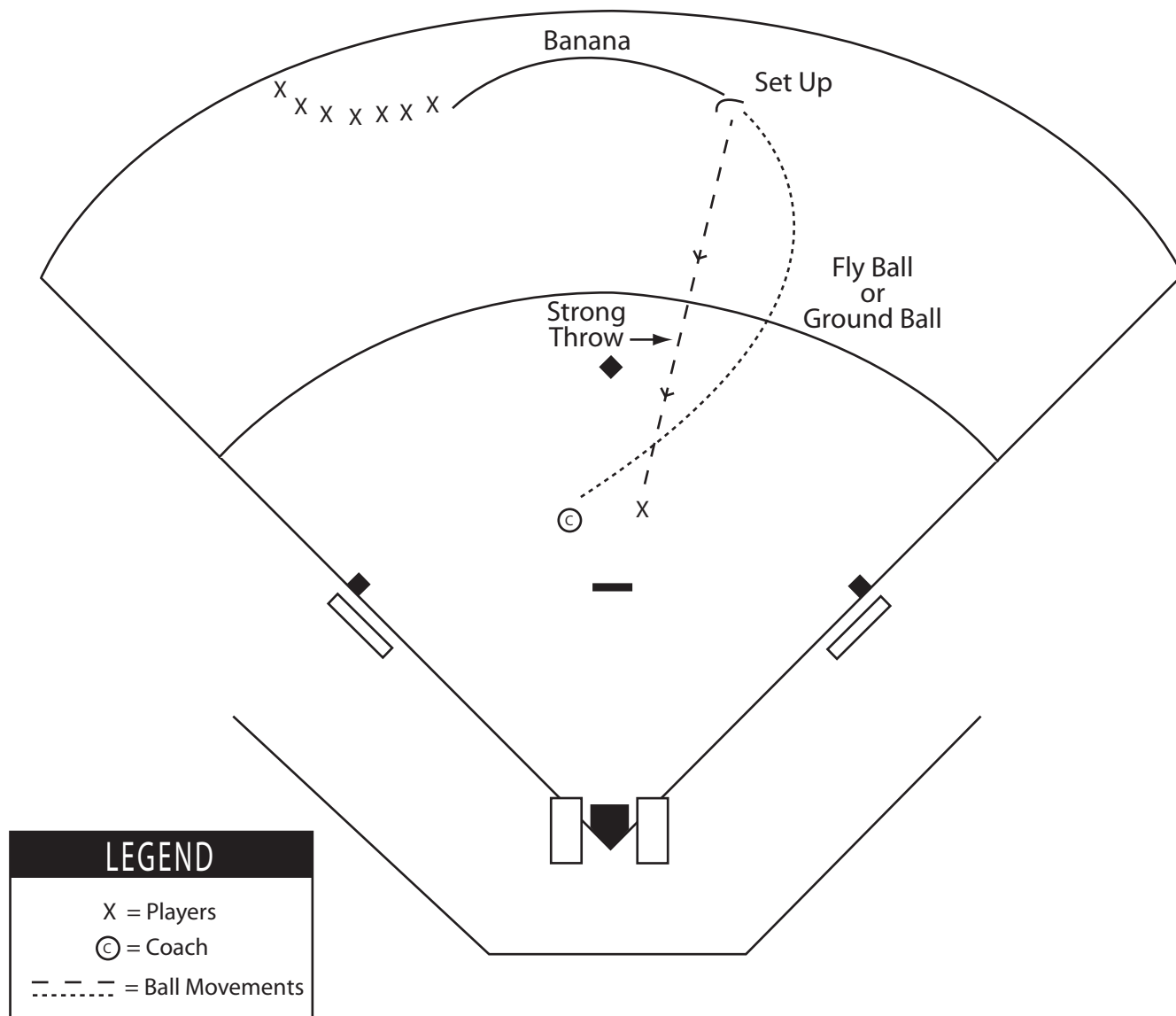


HEADS UP DRILL

Split squad into two groups. Groups face each other in two straight lines approx 100 feet (30 metres) apart. Coach throws fly ball in between two lines. Front player from each line goes after ball. Players must call ball “I got it, I got it” other player returns “Yours, Yours”.

KEY POINTS

- don't let ball be called too early
- communicate on all balls
- make sure there is an answer
- good set up, catch and strong throw



BANANA DRILL

This drill is to get the outfielders aware of taking the most efficient route to fly ball or ground ball coming in their direction.

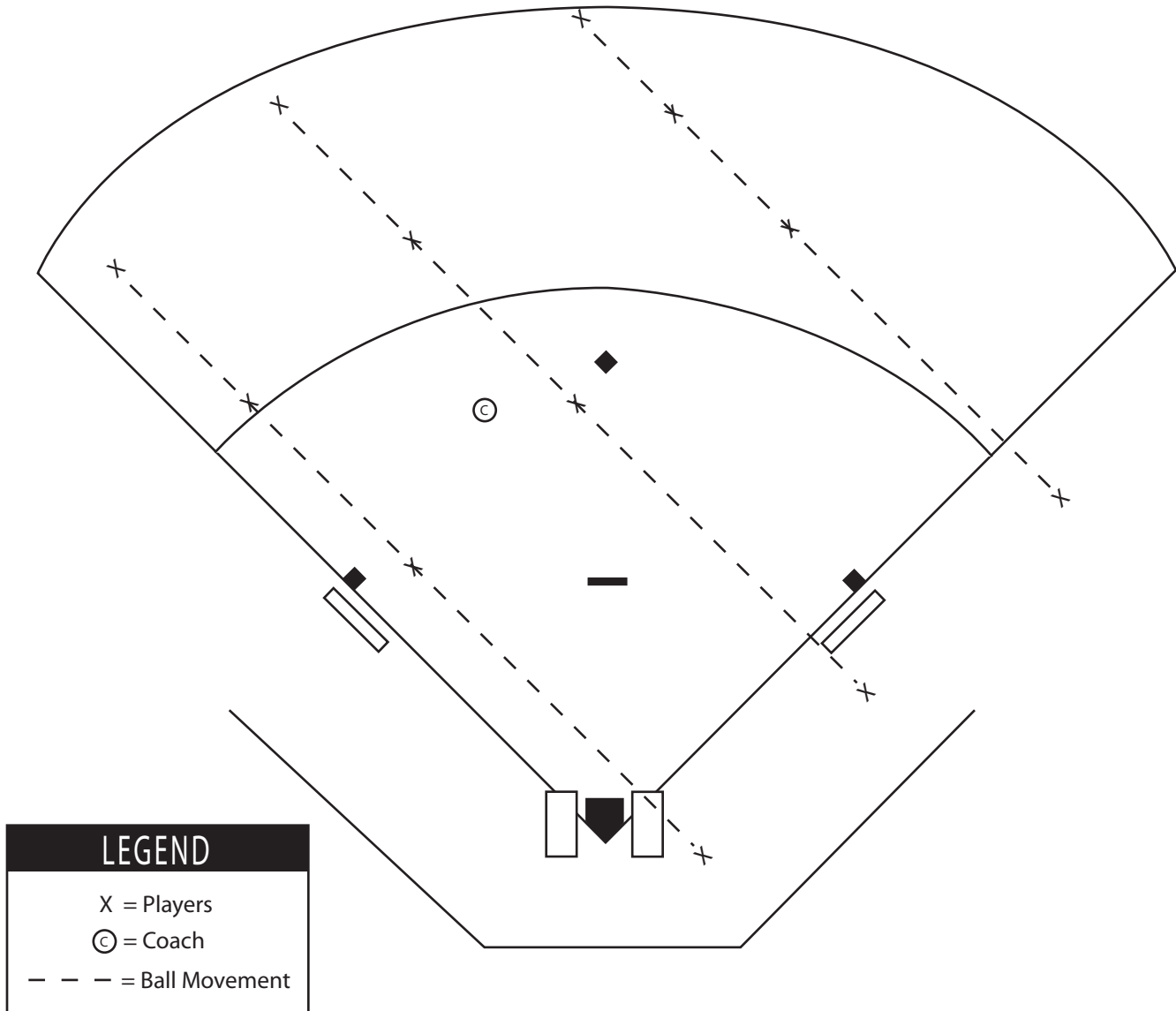
Align outfielder in single line in outfield one behind the other. Coach located in the infield will hit ground ball or fly ball towards outfielder. Outfielder must gauge how much of a “Banana Route” can be taken to efficiently set up to receive ball and make an accurate, strong throw back to infield.

KEY POINTS

- outfielder must be able to get to the ball
- route must result in good alignment to throw
- player must be under control when fielding ball

VARIATION

Coach move back to plate to hit ball



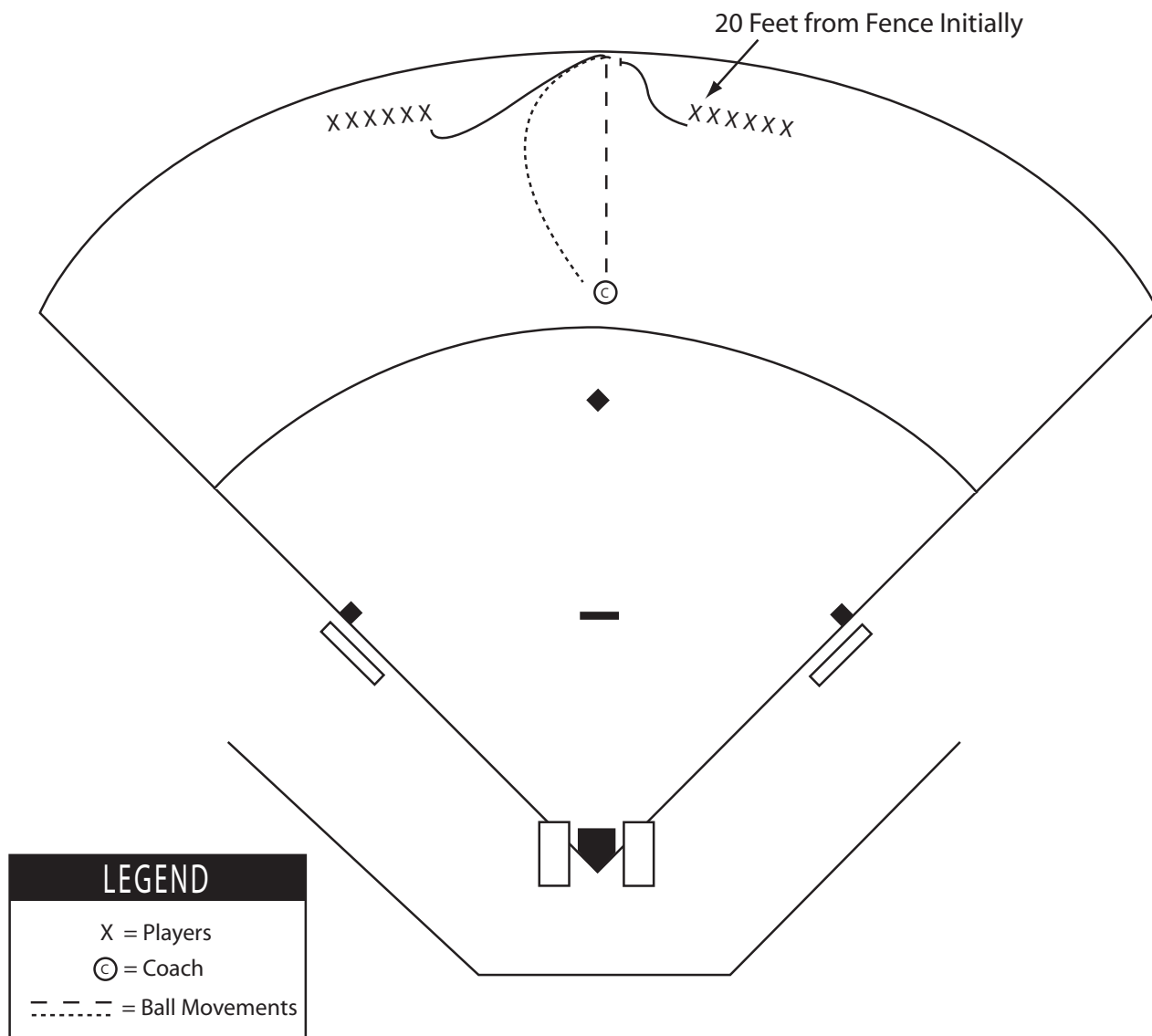
RELAY DRILL

Get outfielder to realize the importance of good line drive throws to relay or cut off person.

Break team into groups of 4. Align group members in a straight line. Distance apart depends on level but make sure distance requires long, accurate throw. Relay person stands facing thrower with both hands up. Thrower wants to hit relay person in the chest. As ball is being received, person opens up with glove side facing next person. Receive the ball and initiate good throw mechanics throwing ball to next person.

KEY POINTS

- line drive throws
- accuracy
- good relay technique
- keep drill going up and down the line



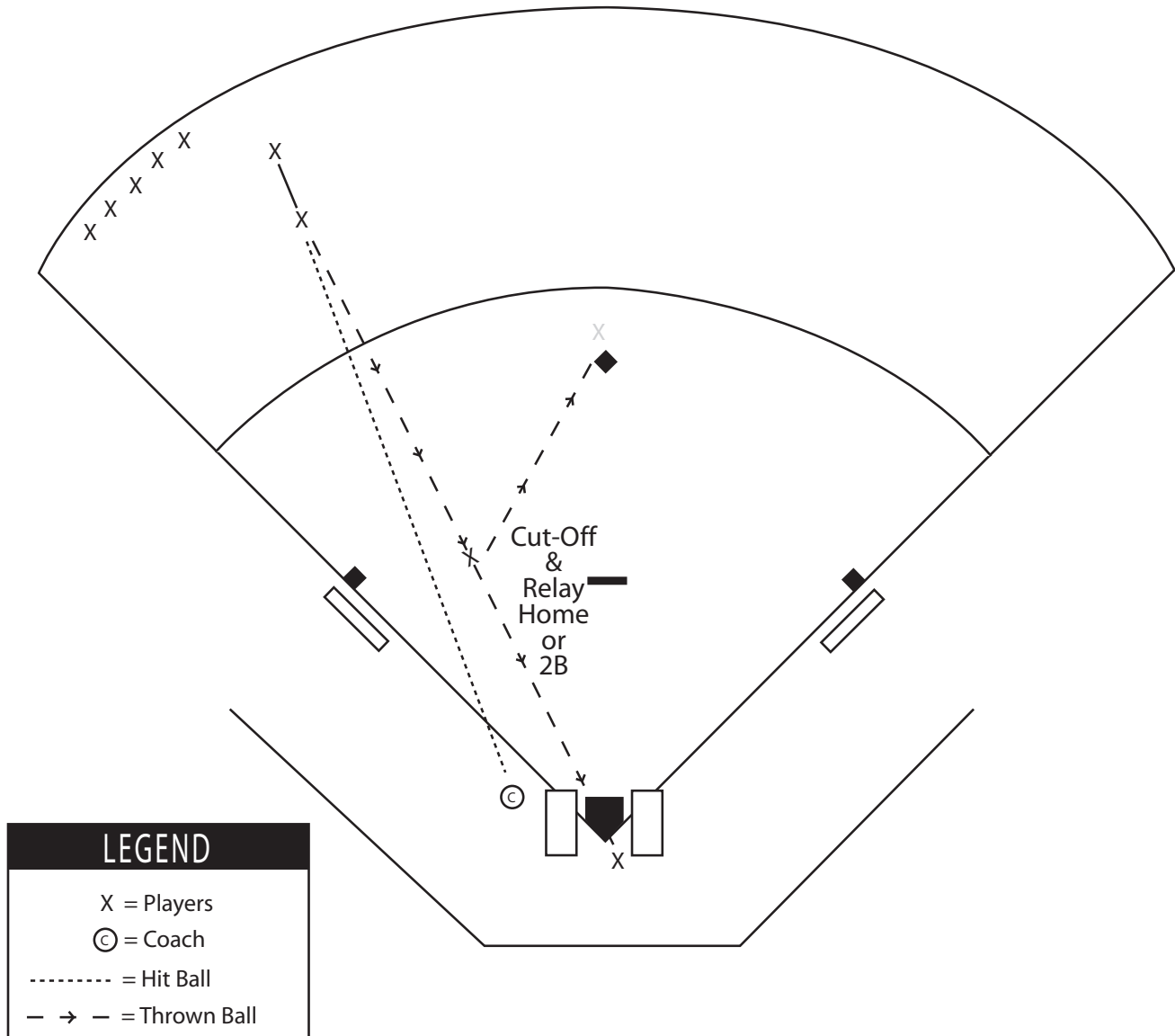
FENCE DRILL

To make outfielders aware of the fence and how to play it.

Break team into two groups as shown. Players are only 20 feet from fence. First players in each line are in “Ready Position”. Coach throws high fly ball close to fence. Two outfielders go after ball, call ball, locate fence, set up, catch ball, strong throw. Non-catching outfielder indicates “Yours” and helps catching outfielder by verbally telling player where the fence is.

KEY POINTS

- start this drill slowly, with short distances and high fly balls
- gradually increase distances and how hard the ball is hit
- make outfielders aware they must locate fence and come back to ball
- teamwork essential, non-catching outfielder is the “eyes” of teammate for the fence



THE "MUST" DRILL

To encourage outfielders to charge ground balls aggressively and come up throwing with a strong, accurate throw.

A line of outfielders in normal outfield position. Coach hits ground ball from home plate directly at outfielder. Outfielder from "Ready Position" aggressively charges ball, fields it and throws strong throw to cut-off person. Hitting cut-off in the chest to head area. Cut-off cuts the ball and relays it to catcher at the plate.

KEY POINTS

- charge ball aggressively but under control
- field ball in efficient position that enables a strong, accurate throw
- hit cut off
- have line drive throw
- line up cut-off person with catcher

VARIATIONS

- A) do not hit ball right at fielder, make player move, cut-off has to align
- B) hit to all fields with appropriate cut-offs
- C) throw to different bases
- D) hit fly balls



Pitching

PITCHING

A good pitcher will have mastered the basic fundamentals of throwing the baseball. Many throwing drills can be used specifically for pitchers as well. Emphasize consistency and control. This will give player confidence.

DROP STEP AND PIVOT BALANCE DRILL

This drill is to familiarize player with procedure of pitching.

Start with both feet on rubber. If no rubber, make straight line 2 feet long square (90°) to the plate, throwing side foot is pivot foot. Step back slightly with stride foot. All weight on stride foot. Turn pivot foot 90° to target. Change weight to pivot foot, knee slightly bent. Lift stride foot off the ground. Lift stride foot knee up to waist level. Hands together in front of chest. Hold this position. Repeat 10 - 15 times.

KEY POINTS

- watch balance of player
- pitcher should be motionless and completely under control
- pivot foot knee slightly bent
- stride foot directly below knee

STRIDE DRILL

From rubber, draw a line directly toward point, of the plate. From balance point push off pivot foot making sure stride foot lands to the stride foot side of line drawn from rubber. Go through full pitching motion bringing pivot foot up beside stride foot with hands up in front of body ready to react to ball coming back at pitcher. Land on balls of feet.

No baseball used early in this drill.

KEY POINTS

- balance at balance point
- break hands downward on initial movement
- watch for stride foot landing. Make sure toes pointing at least 70° to plate. (Straight to plate would be 90°)
- emphasize arm action
- repeat 10 - 15 times
- add baseball with throw

VARIATIONS

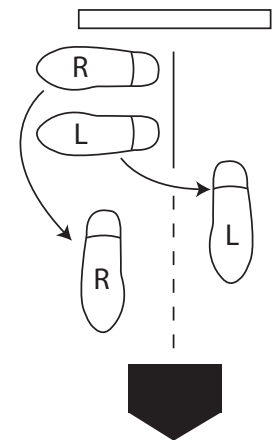
- have coach hit ball back at pitcher when ball passes plate
- do drill from stretch position: slowly lift knee to balance point and then enter throwing motion, this can be used with player that has trouble with drop step drill

PYLON DRILL

Put pitcher through full pitching motion. Put pylon 1 foot beside stride foot. Have pitcher touch top of pylon with follow through.

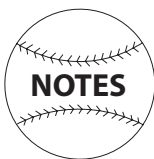
KEY POINTS

- watch pitcher's balance
- make sure pitcher does not throw across body





Catching



Horizontal lines for writing notes.

CATCHING

Drills done in full catching gear.

RECEIVING DRILL

Catcher in receiving position, throwing hand tucked behind non-catching-side knee. Coach stands sideways 6 to 8 feet (2-3 metres) in front of catcher. Coach holds ball out in front of body and snaps ball at the catcher. Catcher reacts to ball, catches ball, shifts ball to throwing hand. Repeat 6 to 8 times in quick succession. Give catcher a rest. Repeat drill 3 times.

KEY POINTS

- make sure catcher brings ball back to strike zone
- make sure catcher “receives” ball and does not go out after it
- make sure catcher is not sitting on heels
- check stance with runners on base

VARIATION

A) have two catchers in gear throw ball back and forth from crouch position following all of above procedures. Coach emphasize receiving mechanics

BLOCK IT DRILL

Catcher in full gear assumes blocking position. Knees apart, head in front of knees, glove in between knees, bare hand behind glove. Coach, from 10 feet, will bounce 6 to 8 balls consecutively, that short hop in dirt and hit catcher. Watch where ball deflects to. Try to get ball to deflect straight down and in front.

KEY POINTS

- with first time catcher use soft balls at first
- Catcher relax let ball hit you — watch for anxiety in catcher
- build confidence
- don't let ball through
- convince player that he/she is a wall

VARIATIONS

- A) advance to real baseballs
-add forearm protection
- B) move coach to 20 - 25 feet (6-8 metres)
-catcher in regular catching stance
-coach throws ball in dirt
-catcher blocks ball keeping it in front
-coach throws odd strike to keep catcher honest
-catcher must “beat the ball to the ground”
- C) same set up as b) coach throws ball in dirt
-slightly to the side of catcher
-catcher pushes with “off” foot goes to side and gets in front of ball, keeps ball in front
- D) same drill as c) add that catcher, after blocking ball, jumps to feet scoops up the ball with two hands and ready to throw. **Emphasis here is on speed.**

KEY POINTS

- catcher must react not prejudge
- drop down quickly tuck chin in slightly
- keep ball in front

IMPORTANT: These drills must be done often and with all catchers, but do not wear them out.

Catching

RELEASE DRILL

Catcher must constantly work on release of the ball when throwing. Key is quickness and progression.

Catcher in full gear in “Runners on” receiving position. Coach throw pitch from 30 feet (10 metres) in one explosive move catcher jumps shifts feet. Pivot foot square ball to ear, release, follow-through, 4-6 repetitions only at a time, 3 sets.

KEY POINTS

- keep rear down when set up
- do not sit on heels
- feet spread well apart
- receive ball and explode
- no round arm action
- line drive throw
- better to bounce ball to base than to throw rainbow

POP UP DRILL

Position catcher in full gear behind plate. Player fakes throw to catcher. Coach standing in batters box throws ball straight up, and yells “Ball”. Catcher takes off mask with throwing hand but holds on to mask, locates ball, then throws mask away, sets up on ball, catches ball.

KEY POINTS

- get mask off in a hurry
- hold on to mask until ball located
- throw mask away from where ball is
- turn back to the infield
- catch ball high



Hitting

Hitting

MASS HITTING DRILL

Break team into groups of three. You need 10 wiffle balls, a batting tee and at least 5 bats.

Team will work in stations with the coach circulating. Rotate every 6 minutes.

STATION 1: BUNTING

One player bunts, one player pitches, one player retrieves

KEY POINTS

- Bat out in front
- Catch the ball with the bat
- Bunt down both lines
- Drag bunt as well
- Grip bat where fingers meet the palm of hands, and align the “knocking knuckles” of both hands

STATION 2: HITTING OFF THE “T”

One player hits, second places ball on “T”, third retrieves

KEY POINTS

- Good quick swing
- Hit ball on line
- Only take 6 swings per turn
- Swing as quickly as possible

VARIATIONS

- A) Hit ball to “opposite field”
- B) “Pull” the ball
- C) Use only upper hand to swing
- D) Use only lower hand to swing
- E) No Stride

STATION 3: SOFT TOSS

One player hits, one player pitches, one player retrieves

KEY POINTS

- Players must be taught how to pitch soft toss
- Location and speed are critical
- Batter fundamentally correct
- Short
- Quick
- Roll over with wrist
- Only 6 swings per turn
- Safety of pitcher important

VARIATIONS:

Same as “T” drill, except do not hit to opposite field

STATION 4: PEPPER DRILL

- One player hits, two players field and pitch.
- Batter is located 15 feet from fielders
- Fielders toss ball to hitter. Hitter gently hits ground balls back at fielders.

KEY POINTS:

- Bat on ball out in front
- Small stride
- Hit all pitches
- Concentration
- Fun

STATION 5: WIFFLE BALL BATTING PRACTICE

Use only wiffle balls. Pitcher has batting helmet on. 1 player bats, one player pitches, one player retrieves. Full pitch from pitcher. Batter takes full swing

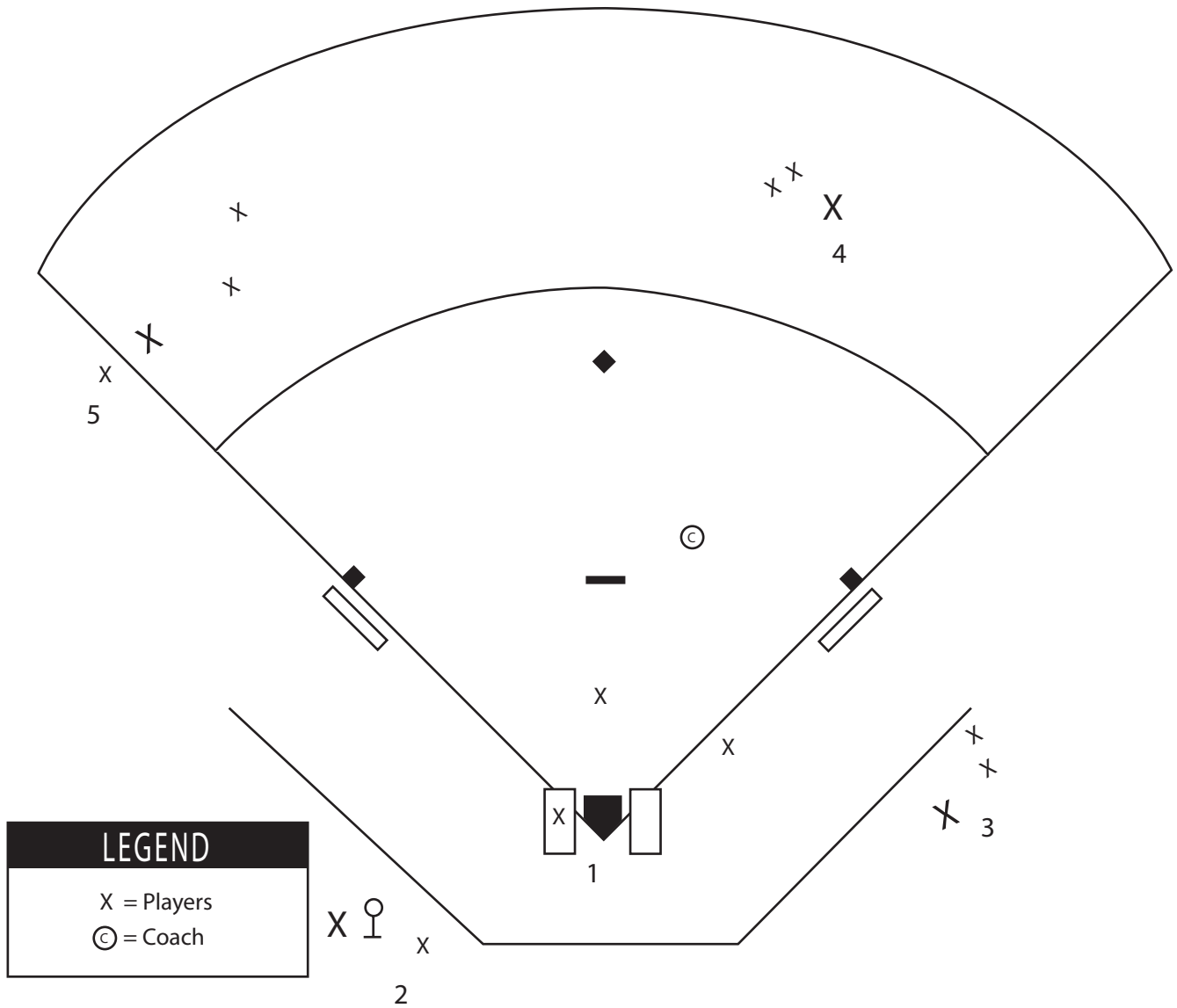
KEY POINTS:

- Pitching very important
- Must throw strikes
- Batter fundamentally correct
- 6 swings per turn

NOTE: It is important that coach establish discipline with all players regarding this drill. Retrievers never go near batter. Batting fundamentals is why the drill is being done.

Hitting

MASS HITTING DRILL



Hitting

HIP DRILL

Place bat behind hitter's back. Hold bat with elbows pulling bat to back.

Take stride and thrust back hip through.

The back foot should "Squish the Bug".

This action should be done at very controlled pace at first. Gradually build to explosion.

KEY POINTS

- Belly button facing pitcher
- Bug is squished
- Back leg has bend in knee
- Give player chance to understand this drill and put it together with hand action quickly
- Weight is more or less balanced between the feet, and should remain so during the swing

Hitting

SWING BREAKDOWN SEQUENCE DRILL

All players have a bat. Aligned in a circle with the coach in the middle. Spread out so they can swing bat with no possibility of hitting anyone else. Players imagine they are standing at home plate and the coach is the pitcher.

The coach on command asks the players to perform required sequence.

Coach says “Stance”. *Players respond by assuming comfortable hitting stance.*

KEY POINTS

- always keep eyes level in order that the ball may be seen as soon as possible
- feet shoulder width apart
- weight evenly distributed
- shoulders slightly ahead
- arms clear of body
- bat back comfortably

Coach says “Stride”. *Players respond by striding and loading.*

KEY POINTS:

- short stride
- Hands go back to load position
- weight transfers back to back foot
- ready to explode

Coach says “Pivot”. *Players initiate swing concentrating on good explosion and pivot.*

KEY POINTS:

- Bug is squished
- back leg bent slightly
- Belly button at pitcher

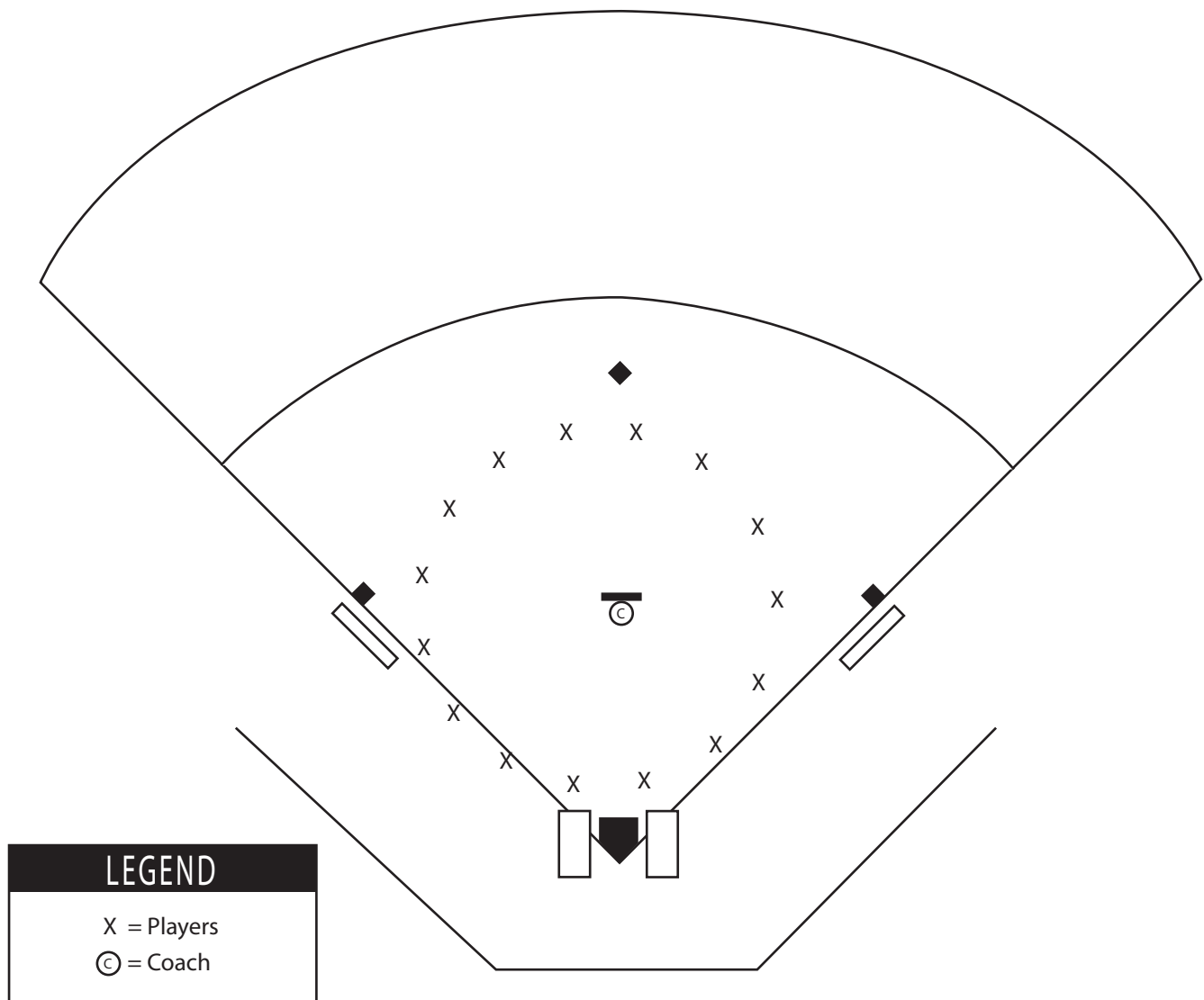
Coach Says “Swing”. *Players initiate full swing from beginning.*

KEY POINTS

- Short compact swing
- Quick through the strike zone
- No hitch
- Good follow through
- Imagine contact

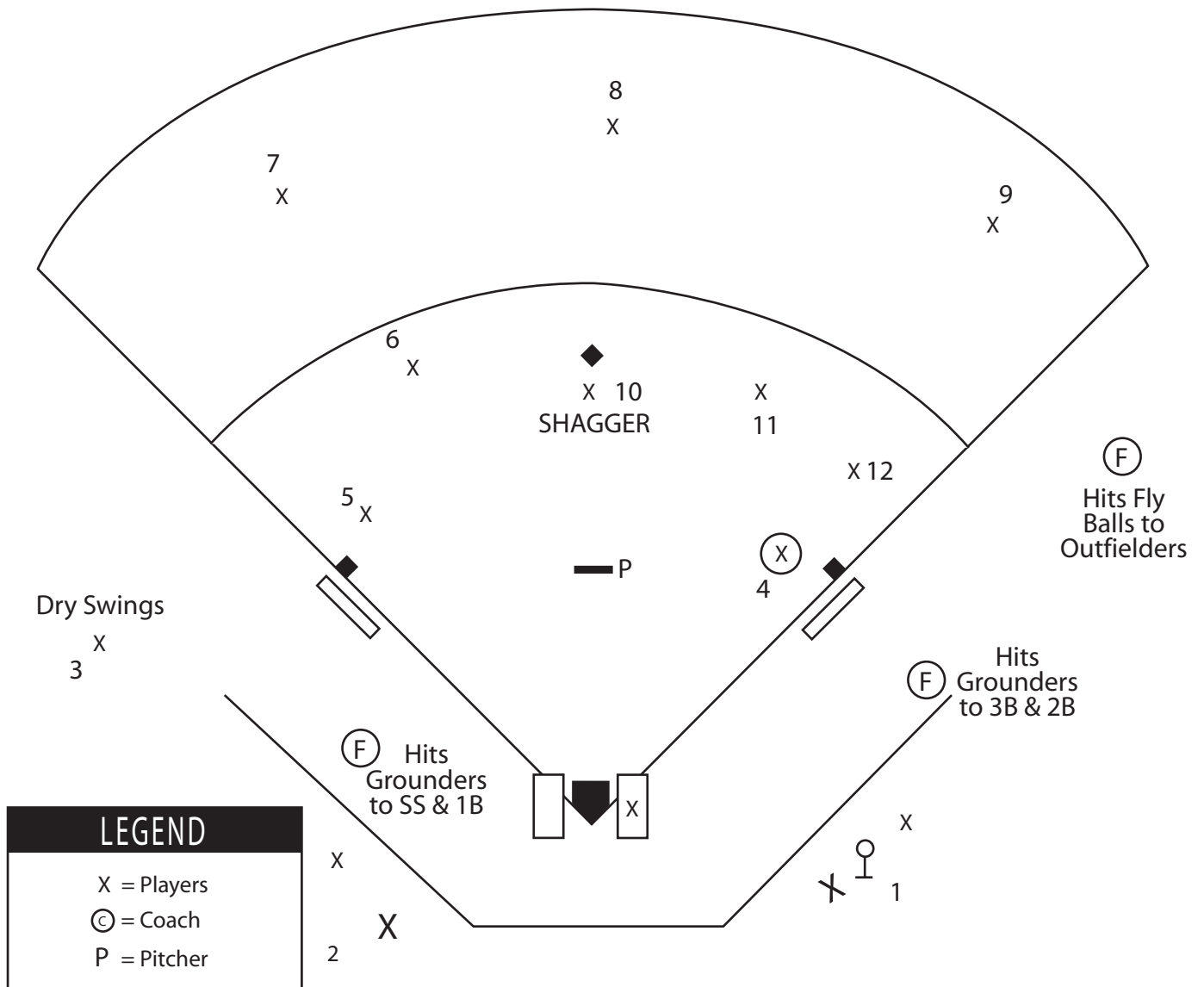
IMPORTANT:

Coach needs to assist all players in this drill. For young players this is the easiest place to make corrections.



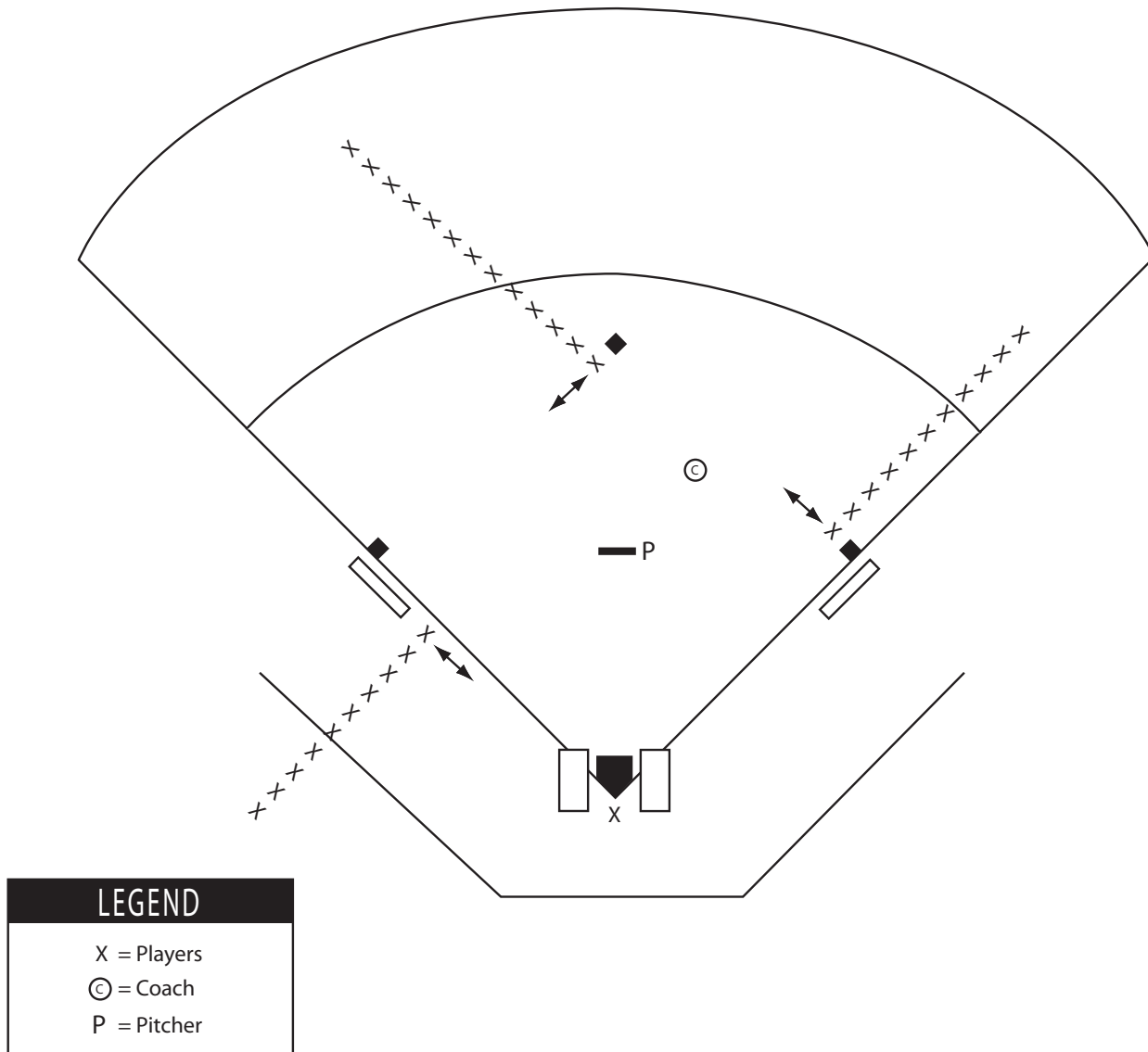
Hitting

BATTING PRACTICE





Base Running



LEAD OFF DRILL

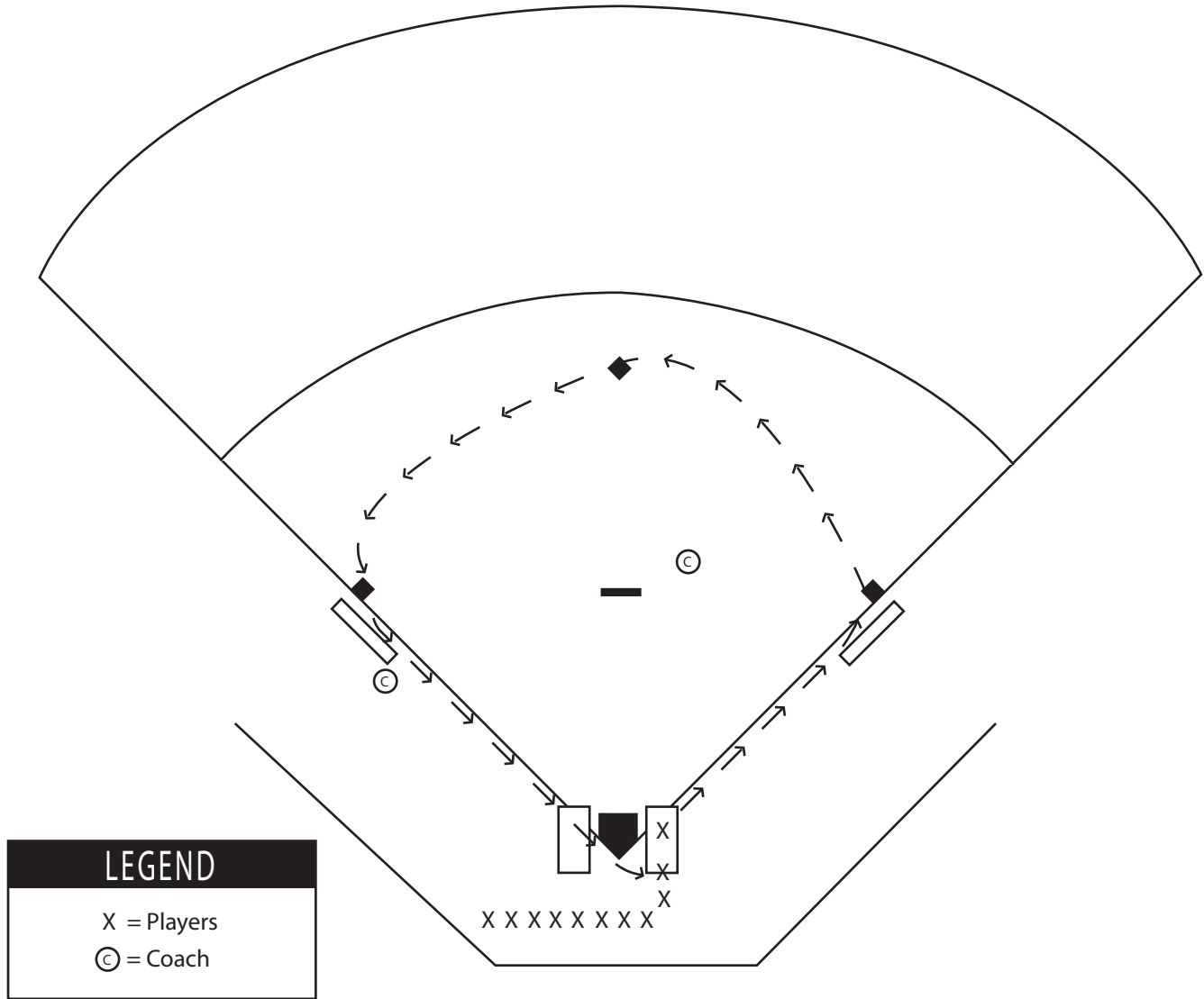
Have pitcher on mound. All players in line down first base line acting as runner on first base. Runners watch pitcher, as pitcher goes into stretch, runners take primary lead using shuffle step, if pitcher throws over to first, runners come back using cross over step. If pitcher throws home, runners take secondary lead using shuffle step and react to pitch.

KEY POINTS

- watch the pitcher until sure where ball is going
- weight evenly on balls of feet
- arms free of body

VARIATIONS:

- when coming back to base take cross-over step, one additional step and dive to back corner of base
- when ball is thrown home, runner uses cross-over step and steals second base
- do drill at all three bases



TOUCH DRILL

Players line up against backstop. One player starts in batters box and runs towards first base. Before first base, angle outwards to create easy curve to touch inside of first base and run directly towards second base. Minimize rounding of curve. Do this at each base. Pick up third base coach before second base.

KEY POINTS

- shortest distance is a straight line
- enough of “curve” to keep speed
- pick up coaches
- touch bases on inside corner
- stay away from head-first slides

VARIATIONS

- A) run right through first base
- B) have coach stop runners at second base and/or third base
- C) have fielders in field and run game situations



Practice Plans

The practice plans, and some of the other material contained in this package is taken from *Getting Started in Baseball* which is published by the Coaching Association of Canada with sponsorship from 3M. Baseball Ontario is grateful to the CAC for allowing us the use of these materials.

PRACTICE PLAN

1

DATE _____ TEAM _____ LOCATION _____

WARM-UP

15
MIN

Glove-Ball Relay

Players: 3 groups of 4 players
Equipment: 3 gloves and 3 balls per group

Groups line up single file. Each group has 3 baseballs. Place 3 gloves 10 metres apart in front of each group. First player from each line picks up a baseball, runs, and places it in one of the gloves, then repeats the run with the second and third ball. The next player retrieves the balls one at a time and returns them to the third player. Players 3 and 4 continue the drill. When a group finishes, all players sit down.

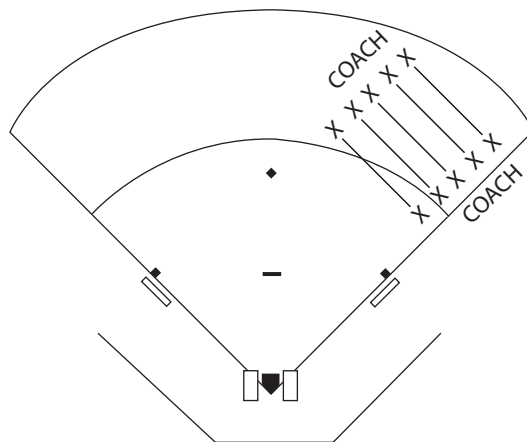
Stretch

- Led by the coach

THROWING AND RECEIVING

10
MIN

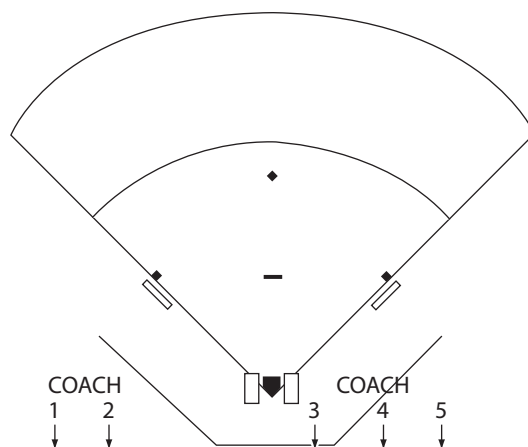
- In the outfield throwing from first baseline into centre field
- Players in pairs - 1 ball per pair
- Spend one minute on each of the following:
 1. Underhand toss
 2. No glove - catch with two hands
 3. No glove - catch with one hand
 4. With glove-catch ball in middle of body
 5. Grip
 6. Throw at a target
 7. Step onto opposite foot
 8. Full arm extension backward
 9. Throw from sitting position
 10. Throw slightly longer distances



BATTING

20
MIN

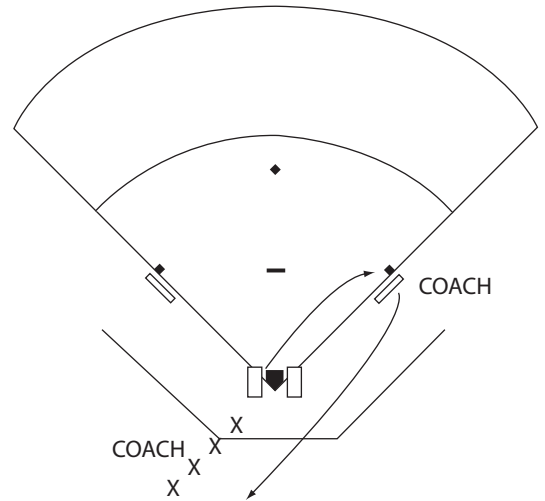
- Facing the screen behind the plate
- Groups of 3 players, taking turns, 1 bat per group
 - 1. Stance and practice swings
 - 2. Tees — 4 in total (1 per group) and 5 balls per group. Players take turns hitting 5 balls off the tee into the screen. Each player should get 4 or 5 turns.



BASERUNNING



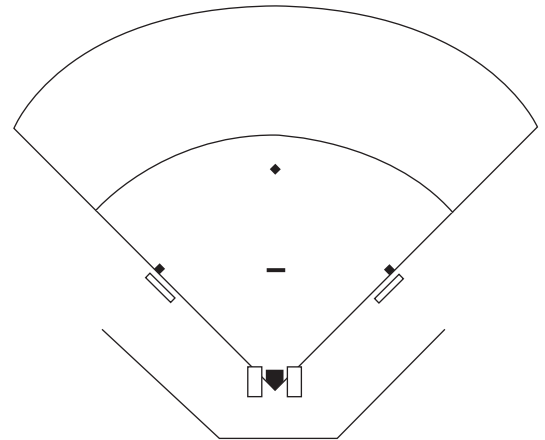
- Home to first base
- Players line up at home plate
Pretend to swing the bat and run to first base, then return to home plate



GAME:T-BALL



- Players: 2 teams (8-15 players per team)
- Equipment: bases, ball, bat, adjustable batting tee, baseball field or open playing field
- Teams take batting and fielding positions as in baseball. The game begins with the coach placing the ball on the batting tee when all players in the field are ready. The batter puts the ball in play by batting it off the tee. Outs are made in the usual way. All players on a team bat every inning. The last batter in each inning can be put out by having the catcher touch the home plate with the ball.



COOL-DOWN



- Stretch
- New Rule - Dropped 3rd Strike
- Players put equipment away

NEXT PRACTICE: _____

PRACTICE PLAN

2

DATE _____ TEAM _____ LOCATION _____

WARM-UP

15
MIN

Base Tag

Players: entire team in infield area

Equipment: set of bases

Players play a game of tag within the infield area of the park. One player is chosen to be "it." Bases represent safe areas. Players standing on a base may not be tagged, but only two players at a time are allowed on a base. When a third player comes along, the first player at that base must leave.

Stretch

- Led by the coach

Sprints

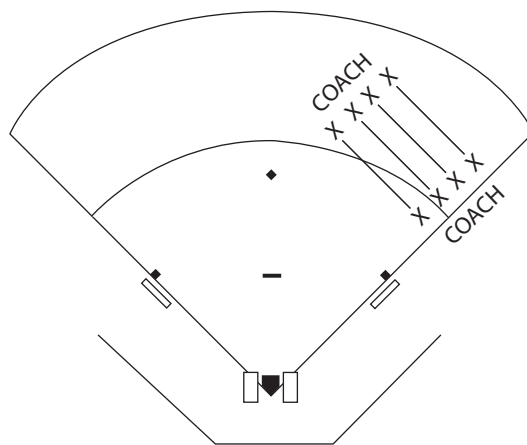
- 4 sprints of 40 metres. Walk back — knees high.

THROWING AND RECEIVING

10
MIN

- Spend one minute on each of the following:

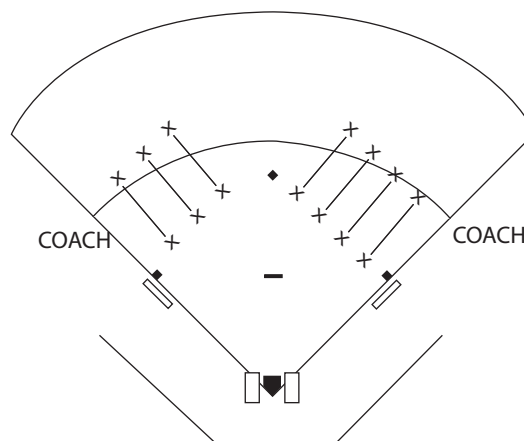
1. Underhand toss
2. Proper grip
3. Full arm extension back
4. Elbow above shoulder
5. Throw from both knees
6. Throw from sitting position
7. Aim at a target
8. Catch ball with two hands
9. Step onto opposite foot
10. Long toss



FIELDING GROUND BALLS

10
MIN

- Players in pairs — 1 ball per pair
- Using an underhand motion, roll ground balls back and forth

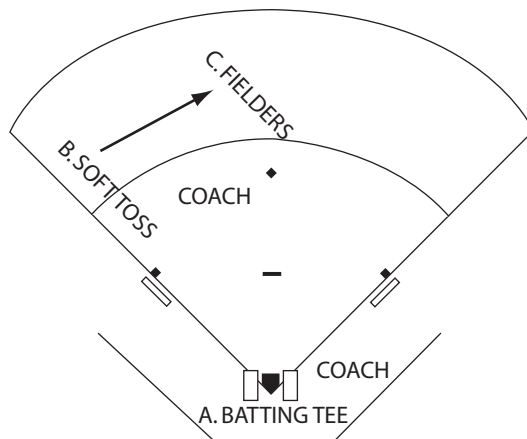


BATTING PRACTICE

- 3 groups of 4 or 5 players



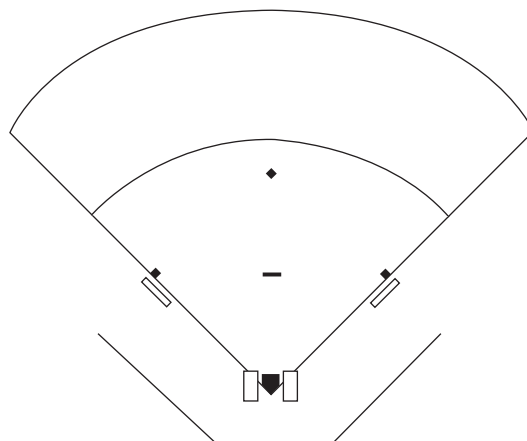
- Groups rotate between stations after 8 minutes
- A. Tees: Set up behind the plate facing the screen with hitters hitting into it.
- B. Soft Toss: Facing centre field, but set up along the third base line in the outfield. One hitter at a time.
- C. Fielders: In centre field, fielding for the soft toss station.



GAME: PUNT & GO



- Players: 2 teams (6-10 per team)
- Equipment: bases, foam football
- Teams take batting and fielding positions; the batting team provides the pitcher. Pitcher "snaps" the ball through his/her legs to the batter. The batter punts (kicks) the ball into the field and then runs the bases. The fielding team makes an out as in a game of baseball.



COOL-DOWN



- Jog one lap of the field
- Stretch
- New Rule - Infield Fly
- Players put equipment away

NEXT PRACTICE: _____

PRACTICE PLAN

3

DATE _____ TEAM _____ LOCATION _____

WARM-UP

15
MIN

Chain Tag

Players: entire team in infield area

Two players link hands and try to tag other players with their free hands. Tagged players must join the chain. Game ends when all players are caught or if the chain is broken.

Stretch

- Led by the coach

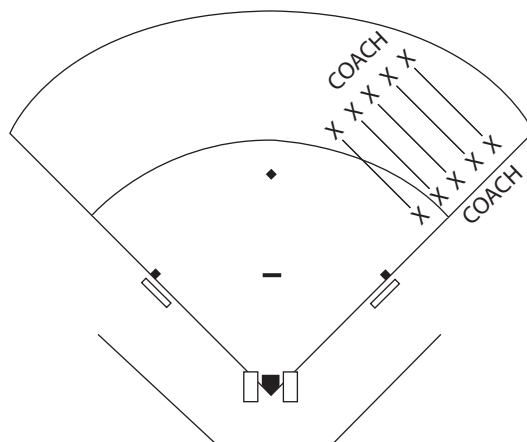
Sprints

- 4 sprints of 40 metres from lead-off position. Walk back.

THROWING AND RECEIVING

10
MIN

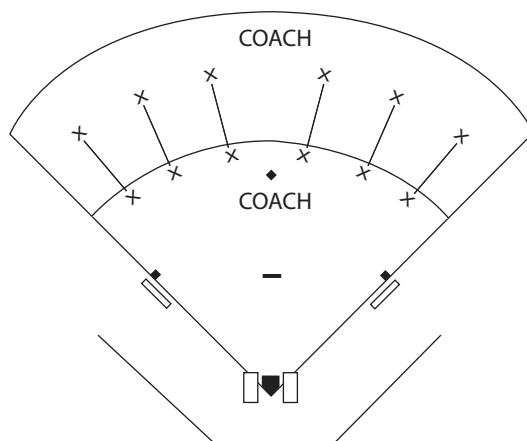
- Pairs, 1 ball — in the outfield.
- Spend one minute on each of the following:
 1. Grip
 2. Catch with two hands
 3. Throw at a target
 4. Catch ball in middle of body
 5. Step onto opposite foot
 6. Throw from both knees
 7. Throw from sitting position
 8. Throw from one knee
 9. Catch balls thrown in all directions
 10. 30-second timing - count number of throws



FLY BALLS

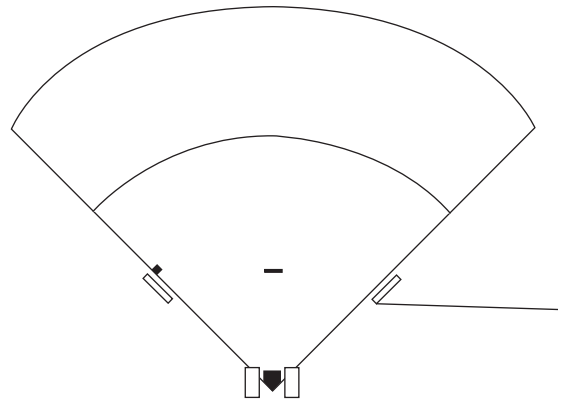
10
MIN

- Pairs, 1 ball — in outfield, 8 metres apart
- Toss underhand fly balls to partner
- Gradually increase the height of the tosses
- Spread out for safety
- When moving for the ball, run smoothly on the balls of the feet
- Catch the ball at eye level with two hands



PICK-UPS

15
MIN



NEXT PRACTICE: _____

PRACTICE PLAN

4

DATE _____ TEAM _____ LOCATION _____

WARM-UP

15
MIN

Baserunning Relay

Players: entire team in two groups

Equipment: 1 ball and glove per group, set of bases

Both groups are behind home plate. Place ball in a glove on each side of second base. Group A's relay route is from home to 1st to 2nd; Group B's from home to 3rd to 2nd. A player from each team runs to second base to retrieve their ball, runs back, and hands it to the next player who runs back and places the ball in the glove at 2nd base, then runs back. When all players in a group have run the relay they sit down. (Make sure home plate area is kept clear for runners.)

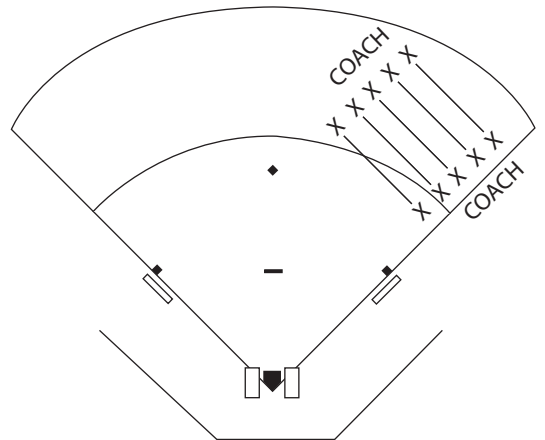
Stretch

- Each player leads one stretch

THROWING AND RECEIVING

10
MIN

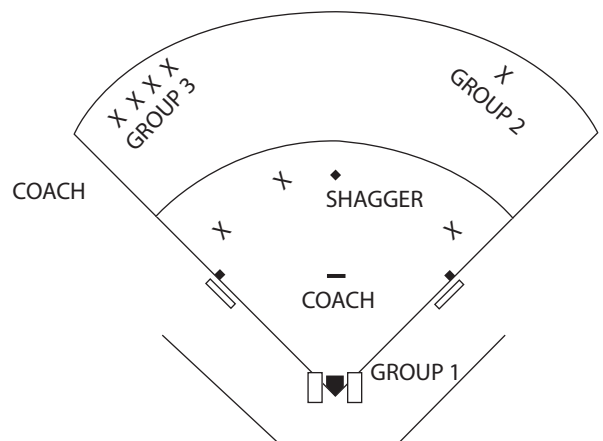
- Pairs, 1 ball — in the outfield
- Players play catch on their own
- Begin close together and gradually increase the distance and force of their throws



BATTING PRACTICE

25
MIN

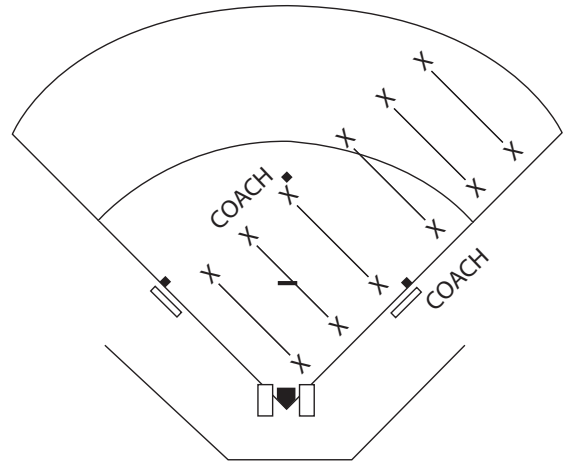
- 3 groups of 4 or 5 players at stations
 - Groups rotate between stations
1. Hitters: - Batter gets 7 swings — runs to 1st after last swing
- Coach tosses from 8 metres away from behind screen
 2. Fielders: - Field balls hit by hitters
- Toss ball to “shagger” behind second base (shagger protected by player or screen)
 3. Tees: - Players hit balls off tees into fence in the outfield



INFIELD PLAY

10
MIN

- Pairs, 1 ball
- Player A rolls ball to player B
- B fields ball and throws it to A
- A acts as first baseman
- Repeat 10 times
- Reverse roles

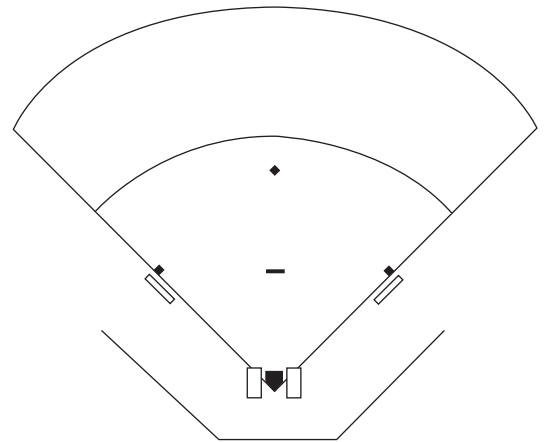


GAME: SCRUB

20
MIN

Players: any number can play
Equipment: bases, ball, bats, gloves

Four players are chosen to begin as batters. The remaining players are positioned in the field. The coach is the pitcher. Play begins with one person batting. The coach pitches the ball to the batter. Each batter gets 3 swings to put the ball in play and runs the bases. An out is made by catching a batted fly ball or by throwing a batter or runner out. A batter continues to bat and run bases until put out. When a fly ball is caught, the batter switches positions with that person. When an out is made any other way, the catcher becomes a new batter, and all defensive players rotate up one position. Variations: Vary the game to suit the players, e.g. 2 foul balls make an out, run bases in reverse order.



COOL-DOWN

5
MIN

- Stretch
- New Rule — Offensive Interference
- Players put equipment away

NEXT PRACTICE: _____

PRACTICE PLAN

5

DATE _____ TEAM _____ LOCATION _____

WARM-UP

15
MIN

Base Tag

Players: entire team in infield area

Equipment: set of bases

Players play a game of tag within the infield area of the park. One player is chosen to be "it." Bases represent safe areas. Players standing on a base may not be tagged, but only 2 players at a time are allowed on a base. When a third player comes along, the first player at that base must leave.

Stretch

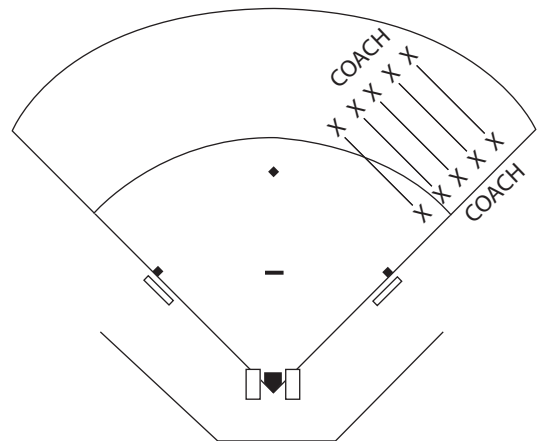
- Led by 2 players

THROWING AND RECEIVING

10
MIN

- Pairs, 1 ball — in the outfield.
- Spend one minute on each of the following:

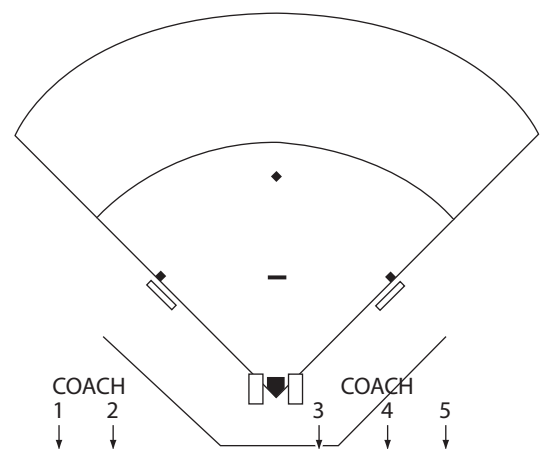
1. Grip
2. Proper throwing mechanics
3. Catch with two hands
4. Throw at a target
5. Throw from both knees
6. Throw from one knee
7. Throw from sitting position
8. Throw while running toward partner
9. & 10. Long toss



BATTING PRACTICE

10
MIN

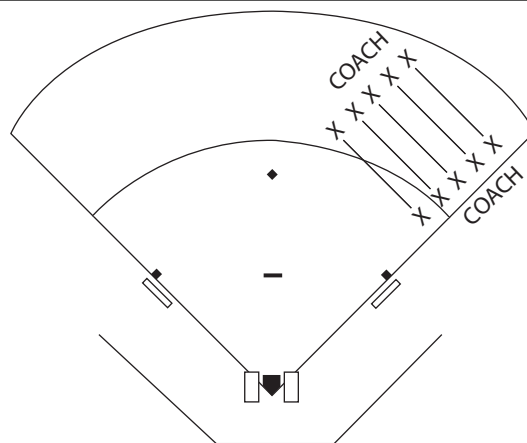
- Pairs, 5 balls
- One hitter and one tosser
- Soft toss
- All hitters hit into the screen behind the plate
- On many fields, both sides of the screen can be used
- Spread out players for safety
- Hitters try to hit line drives into the screen
- Partners switch roles after 5 hits



PITCHER AND CATCHER



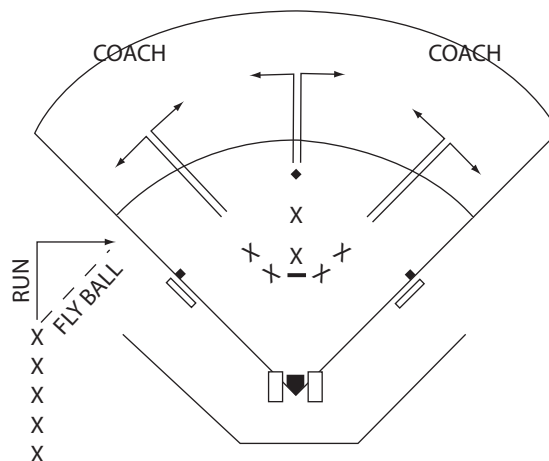
- Pairs, 1 ball
- One player acts as pitcher and the other as catcher
- Pitcher throws to catcher who calls strikes and balls
- Switch roles after 20 pitches



PASS PATTERNS FOR FLY BALLS



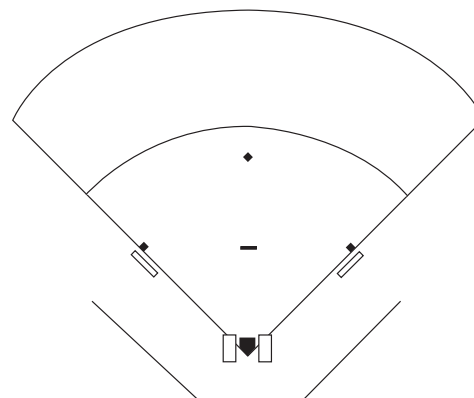
- 3 groups
- First player runs 10 metres and breaks right
- Second player throws fly ball to first player
- Second player runs 10 metres and breaks left
- Third player throws fly ball to second player
- After catching ball, player goes to end of line



GAME: T-BALL



- Players: 2 teams (8-15 players per team)
- Equipment: bases, ball, bat, adjustable batting tee, baseball field or open playing field
- Teams take batting and fielding positions as in baseball. The game begins with the coach placing the ball on the batting tee when all players in the field are ready. The batter puts the ball in play by batting it off the tee. Outs are made in the usual way. All players on a team bat every inning. The last batter in each inning can be put out by having the catcher touch home plate with the ball.



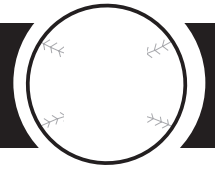
COOL-DOWN



- Stretch
- New Rule — Pitcher Wind-up and Stretch Position
- Players put equipment away

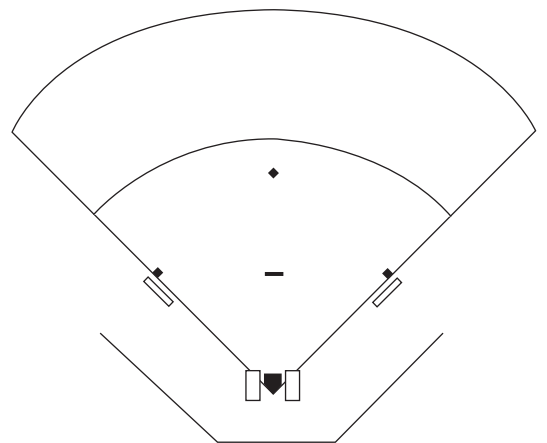
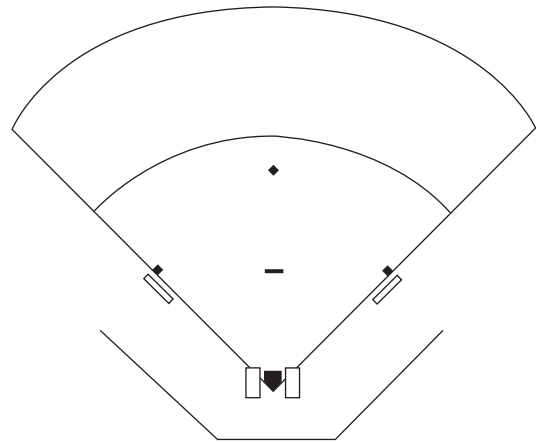
NEXT PRACTICE: _____

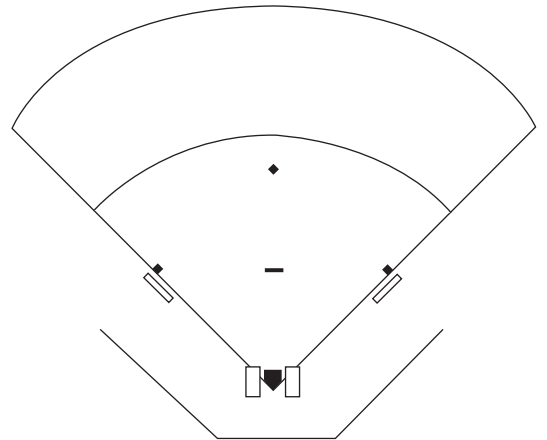
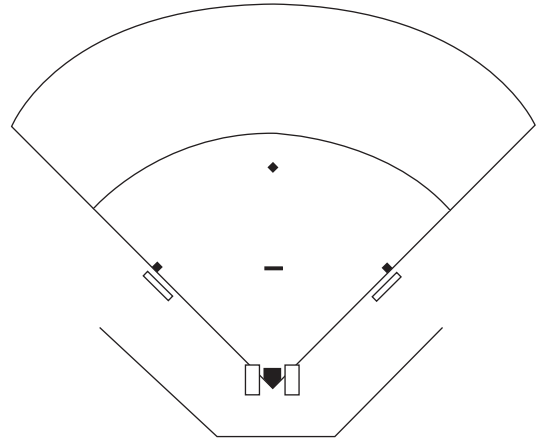
PRACTICE PLAN



DATE _____ TEAM _____ LOCATION _____

WARM-UP





COOL-DOWN



NEXT PRACTICE: _____
