



Jamaica Plain Regan Youth League



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COACHES HANDBOOK 2024

2024 JP Regan Youth League Contacts

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The Jamaica Plain Regan Youth League

History, Mission, and Rules

History of the League

The Jamaica Plain Regan Youth League is an independent youth baseball league. Started in 1969 by a few parents in the Hyde Square section of Jamaica Plain, the league has grown to serve more than 800 local children ages 5-18.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Regan Youth League is to provide the children of Jamaica Plain with the opportunity to play organized baseball and softball in an open, safe, and friendly environment. The League aspires to foster the discipline and fun that are part of learning a challenging team sport, to encourage a spirit of community among participants from diverse backgrounds who practice and play together, and to promote good sportsmanship and respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, umpires, and the great games of baseball and softball.

The Regan Youth League expects that all coaches, players and parents subscribe to the following operating principles:

- Healthy competition is to be encouraged, but never at the expense of responsible behavior. Good sportsmanship is always more important than the final score.
- All players, regardless of their prior experience or apparent talent, will have their fair share of time and attention for developing and practicing their baseball skills. Likewise, all players will be offered ample opportunity to demonstrate their skill during scheduled games, including the opportunity to play as many different positions in the field as is reasonably possible. After due consideration of all relevant factors, equal effort will be rewarded with equal playing time; at a minimum all players are entitled to play at least one half of each scheduled game in which they appear.
- The League encourages coaches, teammates, parents and fans to enthusiastically support their team during scheduled games. Such support should never come at the expense of other participants on the field. Disparaging, rude, or intolerant comments or behavior directed at players, coaches, umpires, or League officials will be actively discouraged, and if unchecked, will become grounds for expulsion from a scheduled game or, after consideration by League officials, suspension or expulsion from the League.
- All players and their parents or guardians should be aware that the League relies entirely upon volunteers. The league needs and expects the active participation of parents and guardians to function effectively.

JP Regan Youth League Rulebook

League Divisions and Teams

- Ia. The Regan Youth League of Jamaica Plain consists of five Divisions: Tee-ball, Farm Division, Junior Division, Senior Division, and Pony Division. Boys and girls ages 5 and 6 are eligible for T-Ball, ages 7 and 8 are eligible for Farm Division, ages 9 and 10 are eligible for Junior Division, ages 11 and 12 are eligible for Senior Division, and ages 13 through 16 are eligible for Pony Division. The Regan League is an age-based league, with assignments to a division based on a player's age as of August 31st of the year the season occurs. Players are required to play in the division that corresponds to their age group.
- Ib. Up to 10 teams will be formed each season for Farm, Junior, and Senior Divisions and 8 for Pony. In all divisions, a maximum of 15 players and minimum of 11 players will constitute a team. In the event that more players are registered in any Division than can be accommodated, preference will be given first to Jamaica Plain residents, second to players returning to the League, and finally to order of registration.
- Ic. Teams will be constituted each year. For T-ball, players will be assigned by the Division Coordinator, with consideration for family convenience. In Farm, Junior Division, Senior Division, and Pony, players will go through a skills evaluation and teams will be drafted by Coaches under the leadership of the respective Division Coordinator.
- Id. Equipment appropriate to the Division will be issued to each Coach. It is the responsibility of the Coach to replace any missing equipment in cooperation with division coordinator. Players may use their own equipment if it meets the criteria of accepted equipment for that Division. In Junior and Senior Divisions bats must meet the USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) and be stamped approved by USA Bat.
- Note on enforcement of the USA Baseball Bat Standard: It is recommended that coaches enforce this safety rule by checking their team's equipment, including bats brought by players, before each game.*
- Ie. Any League Official, Coach, or Umpire under the influence of alcohol or drugs, before, during or between games will be asked to leave the field immediately. Any violations of this rule will result in a hearing before the RYL Board of Directors.
- If. Team rankings will be reported throughout the season and will determine teams' standing in the playoffs. Points will be: two points for a win, one point for a tie, and zero points for a loss.

Ig. In Junior, Senior, and Pony Divisions a playoff bracket involving all teams will be used to identify two winning teams. The two winning teams shall play each other for the Division championship. Farm Division champion will be team or team(s) with best record at the end of the season. The League may amend these methods for determining a champion in any season or division due to problems with weather or field availability.

Ih. In Junior Division, Senior Division, and Pony Division, trophies will be awarded to the playoff champion and runners-up.

Ii. In all Divisions except Pony, players will receive a participation medal or a trophy at the end of the season.

Ij. As part of the player draft process, each team must give the division coordinator the name of one Head Coach and one Assistant Coach. The children of these coaches will be guaranteed a slot on the team and will be drafted according to their skill evaluation ranking. Children of any additional Coaches must be drafted as part of the normal draft process.

Ik. At the end of the season, Junior and Senior Divisions will hold All-Star games with the following guidelines:

- a. Each coach will give the Division Coordinator the names of four players to play in the All-Star game
- b. The teams will be organized in the following way:
 - i. Teams 1, 4, 5, 8 vs. Teams 2, 3, 6, 7
 - ii. If there is an odd number of teams, the players on the lowest-finishing team will be split among two teams
 - iii. All players will be in the batting lineup and will get a chance to play the field

Il. For the purposes of setting playoff seeds the following system will be in place.

- a. Teams are ranked in order of point total (Win= 2 points, Tie = 1 point, Loss = 0 points)
- b. Teams that finish the regular season with an equal number of points will be seeded in the following way:
 - i. Head to Head Record
 - ii. Run Differential in Head to Head games
 - iii. Run Differential for Season
 - iv. Coin Toss
- c. Following the first round of the playoffs, the teams will not be re-seeded.
- d. In any playoff game, the higher-seeded team will be the Home team.

II.

Game Management

IIa. Coaches of the home and visiting teams and the Division Coordinator are responsible for canceling games due to inclement weather or poor field conditions prior to the start of the game. Games may be canceled with the agreement of two of these three parties. (If the Division Coordinator or a Coach is unreachable, the President or other League Official can stand in for that individual.)

IIb. Umpires will officiate at Farm Division, Junior Division, Senior Division, and Pony Division games. In the event that an umpire is unavailable at any of these games, the Coaches must agree to a substitute (a parent or a Coach) for the game to be played.

IIc. Fifteen minutes prior to scheduled game time, the Umpire becomes in charge of the game and the field.

IId. All players must be in the uniform provided by the RYL in order to participate in a game. Uniforms must be worn properly. No one may play in shorts.

IIe. Prior to the start of game play, the Umpire will review the Ground Rules with the Coaches, specifying dead ball areas and other rules specific to the field.

IIf. Farm and Junior Division teams will field ten players when possible with four Outfielders. Senior Division teams will field nine players with three Outfielders. In Farm through Senior Divisions, "Outfielders" to be defined as being on the outfield grass as pitch crosses home plate. In Farm division there will be allowed only one position player within fifteen feet of the pitching Coach. In Pony Division, ten players will be fielded, including three Outfielders and a Designated Hitter.

IIg. A team must be able to field at least eight players for a game to begin. If a team begins with eight players, the ninth spot in the batting order will be considered an automatic out. If a ninth player arrives, they can be placed in the batting lineup in the ninth spot and immediately be allowed to play the field. If a team is unable to field at least eight ballplayers or if the coach or the assistant coach is not present fifteen minutes past scheduled game time, the Umpire will call the game a forfeit.

IIh. A game may end with only eight players due to injury or other reason; however, every time that the last player to leave the game comes up in the batting order, there will be an automatic out.

Ii. Prior to the start of the game, coaches will exchange lineups, including name and number of each player.

Iij. In Farm, Junior, Senior and Pony Divisions, all players on the official roster in attendance will be in the batting order throughout the game. Players removed from the field are permitted to return later in the game

Iik. In all divisions, each ballplayer must play a minimum of three full innings during regular season and playoff or championship games. For players who arrive before the game begins, the only exceptions to this rule are 1) if a ballplayer is injured, or 2) if a ballplayer is being disciplined. If a player is injured and must come out of the game, a substitute may reenter the game. If there is a special circumstance that causes a player to arrive late or leave early from a game, that player shall be given the opportunity to play, even if they are unable to fulfill three innings. Coaches should inform each other during the pre-game meeting if there are players who are leaving early or arriving late and may not be able to complete three full innings.

III. If a player is being disciplined for a game, the coach must inform the opposing coach and umpire in charge prior to the first pitch of that game that the player will be ineligible for the game. Failure to inform the opposing Coach and Umpire of a suspended player prior to the start of the game will be viewed as a violation. In the case of a playoff game, the coach must inform and secure the permission of the President in advance in order to suspend a player. Violation of this rule is a forfeit.

IIm. In Junior and Senior Divisions, any player may pitch a maximum of four innings per game and a maximum of four innings in a two day period. In an extra inning game, a player may pitch only four innings. A player may only pitch a maximum of eight innings over a seven day period. For the purposes of rule IIm, four innings will constitute 12 outs. Coaches are responsible for tracking and recording the innings of each of their pitchers.

IIn. In Junior, Senior and both Pony Divisions, a pitcher may make only one appearance per game. For rule IIn, an appearance is defined as the throwing of one pitch in any inning. Once a player is replaced on the mound, the appearance is concluded. Violation constitutes a forfeit.

IIo. A player who pitches four innings in a game may not also catch in the same game. A player who pitches less than four innings can pitch and catch no more than five innings combined.

IIp. All coaches are required to keep an accurate scorebook throughout the game.

IIq. All regular season games will last six innings with no extra innings. Playoff games will go into extra innings to determine a winner.

IIr. In Farm Division, all pitching will be done by coaches and/or parents associated with the at-bat team. All pitching will be overhand and from no closer than three feet in front of the mound. Runners should be coached only by coaches positioned in foul territory near first base and third base; the coach/pitcher may not coach runners from his position on the playing field. If this rule is violated, the umpire will call the play ended and return runners back to the bases they most recently occupied.

IIs. In all divisions, there will be no more than four runs scored in an inning by one team through the innings prior to the last inning, even if that last inning is determined by umpire due to darkness.

IIt. A regular season game is official after 3 ½ innings are played provided the home team is ahead. All regular season games are official once the fourth inning has been completed. Suspended playoff games will resume on the next available date determined by division coordinator and continue to normal innings conclusion. Game to be resumed with the same score, inning, and count. All roster moves are still viewed from first day and if a player is unable to attend the continuation, a substitution is made in that player's fielding position. Any players new to the game will be inserted at end of line-up, and will not be subject to the three inning playing time rule.

IIu. The Umpire will not allow an inning to start after 8:00 pm unless there is adequate lighting. The Umpire will end a game due to darkness, weather, or other safety considerations. If the umpire discontinues a game in the fifth or sixth inning the score reverts to the score of the last complete inning.

IIv. Coaches may protest an Umpire's call only if they believe a ruling was incorrect, not based on judgment calls. In order for a protest to become official the protesting coach must announce the protest to the umpire in charge and the opposing coach. The protest must be noted in both scorebooks and initialed by the Umpire before the next pitch is through or the protest is illegal. After the game, protest must be presented to the officers of RYL for consideration. At no time will a league officer rule on a protest while a game is in progress. Note: Protests of judgment calls are invalid as all judgment calls are the responsibility of the umpire in charge. The only protests the League officials will rule on are violations and/or misrepresentations of League rules.

IIw. Players, fans, coaches, and league officials should contribute to the ongoing quality of the fields of Jamaica Plain, including properly disposing of litter and trash, respect for trees and natural surroundings, and care of the fields.

IIx. Any Coach displaying abusive behavior to other Coaches, Officials, Umpires, or Players will be thrown out of the game immediately. Violations will be reviewed by the League Officers for possible further disciplinary action.

IIy. Any Player throwing any League equipment or being abusive to any Player, Coach, Official, or Umpire will be thrown out of the game immediately. Severe violations can and will be reviewed by the League officers for further disciplinary action.

IIz. Fans and players should not stand directly behind the backstop. Umpires will suspend the game, if necessary, to enforce this rule.

Ilaa. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of Players, Parents, and Fans associated with their teams. The Umpire has the right to end a game at any time.

Playing Rules

The following playing rules are those specific to JP Regan Youth League. Standard rules of baseball or softball apply unless otherwise noted.

IIIa. There is no Infield Fly Rule in Farm or Junior Divisions of baseball.

IIIb. There are no leads allowed on bases in Junior or Senior Divisions.

IIIc. In Senior Division, players may not leave the base they are on from the time the pitcher steps on the rubber until the pitched baseball crosses home plate. Violation of this rule will result in the base-runner being called out. However, the first time in the game this occurs, the team in violation will be issued a warning and that base-runner will not be called out. If a base-runner leads on a pitch in which the ball is put into play (i.e. a hit) that base-runner will be out. There will be no warning issued in this case.

IIId. In Farm and Junior Divisions, base-runners are not allowed to leave the base until the ball is put into play by a batter. Violation of this rule will result in the runner being called out. Each team will receive one warning per game.

IIIe. In Junior and Senior Divisions, the batter is out on the third strike and cannot advance to first base, even if the catcher misplay the ball.

III f. In Senior Division, play ends when 1) the pitcher has the ball and makes contact with the rubber and 2) all base-runners have returned to their bases.

III g. In Junior Division, play ends when the pitcher has the ball and makes contact with the rubber.

III h. In Farm Division, play ends when the ball is thrown back to the pitcher position, whether or not it is caught.

III i. In Farm, batters will be called out after three swinging strikes. There will be no balls or walks. Although pitches are not counted, in the case of a batter who does not swing at numerous good pitches during an at-bat, it is at the Umpire's discretion to declare "Five more pitches."

III j. In Junior, Senior, and Pony Division, the pitcher must be in contact with the rubber at the time the pitch is delivered.

III k. Pitchers in Junior and Senior Divisions are not allowed to throw curveballs, i.e. snap their wrist in the delivery of a ball. If, in the umpire's judgment, a pitcher throws a curveball, that pitch will be called a ball. If a pitcher continues to throw a curveball, the umpire will direct the Head Coach of the pitching team to remove the pitcher.

III l. Pitchers will not be allowed to intentionally walk any hitter. If in the umpire's judgment, a pitcher is trying to intentionally walk a hitter, he may call no pitch.

III m. Pitchers in Junior and Senior Divisions will not be called for balks.

III n. In Senior Division, if a batter steps on home plate in the process of hitting a fair ball, that batter is out.

III o. A coach is not allowed to be on the playing field without having time out called by the umpire. When a coach comes on to the playing field for the second time in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed from the mound.

III p. A runner is out when s/he does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. If a runner fails to slide or attempt to get around a fielder to avoid contact with the fielder on a close play, the runner will be called out. However, the fielder cannot impede the runner's access to the base unless he's holding or fielding the ball.

III q. Runners may not come in contact with fielders with malicious intent. For example, if a runner is perceived to make an attempt to come into physical contact with the second baseman during a double play, both the runner and batter will be called out. If an incident is serious enough, the runner will be ejected from the game.

IIIr. Head-first sliding is prohibited in Farm, Junior and Senior Divisions. A runner sliding head first trying to advance on the bases will be called out. This does not apply to a runner trying to return to a base on a fly out or pickoff play.

IIIs. For games played at Daisy Field: Balls hit at Daisy 1 and 2 that roll into the woods will be considered in play and the batter and runners can advance at their own risk. If the ball is hit in the air into the trees at Daisy 1 or 2 or over the track at daisy 1 it will be an automatic home run.

IIIt. See attached document of summarized rules for Farm, Junior and Senior Divisions.

JP Regan Youth League Rules Summary 2024

Rule Items	Farm	Junior	Senior
Player age on August 31st	7-8	9-10	11-12
# kids on team	12 to 15	12 to 15	12 to 15
# kids in field	10	10	9
Minimum # kids to start	8	8	8
Minimum # kids to end	8	8	8
Umpire location	Behind pitcher's mound	Behind home plate	Behind home plate
Total innings	6 innings per game	6 innings per game	6 innings per game
Extra innings allowed	No	Playoffs only	Playoffs only
Official game	4 complete innings (3½ innings if home team ahead)	Regular season: 4 complete innings (3½ innings if home team ahead) Playoffs: Suspended games resumed to completion	Regular season: 4 complete innings (3½ innings if home team ahead) Playoffs: Suspended games resumed to completion
# of innings per player per game	Minimum 3 innings for each player	Minimum 3 innings for each player	Minimum 3 innings for each player
Player substitution	Coach discretion, no limits	Coach discretion, no limits	Coach discretion, no limits
Who bats	All players in attendance are in	All players in attendance are in	All players in attendance are in

	the batting order throughout game	the batting order throughout game	the batting order throughout game
Who pitches?	Adult on the at-bat team (Adult cannot coach from mound)	Kids	Kids
Pitcher # of innings per regular game	n/a	Maximum 4 innings	Maximum 4 innings
Pitcher # of innings per extra innings game	n/a	Maximum 4 innings	Maximum 4 innings
Pitcher # of appearances per game	n/a	Maximum 1 appearance	Maximum 1 appearance
Pitching distance	No closer than 3 feet in front of mound	46 feet (second rubber)	46 feet (second rubber)
# runs allowed inning	Maximum 4 runs except last inning	Maximum 4 runs except last inning	Maximum 4 runs except last inning
Who catches	Kids	Kids	Kids
Infield fly rule	No	No	Yes
Leading off bases	No	No	No (can leave base after ball crosses plate)
When to leave base	Ball put in play by batter	Ball put in play by batter	After pitch crosses home plate
Stealing allowed	No	No	Yes, after ball crosses plate
Stealing of home allowed	No	No	Yes, after ball crosses plate
Bunting allowed	No	Yes	Yes

Batter out on foul bunt with 2 strikes	n/a	Yes	Yes
Batter awarded first base if hit by pitch	No	Yes	Yes
Out on dropped 3rd strike	Yes	Yes	Yes
Play stops when	Ball is back in pitching area, whether or not it is caught	Pitcher has ball and makes contact with rubber	Pitcher has ball and makes contact with rubber and all base-runners have returned to bases
Batter is out after	3 swinging strikes	3 strikes	3 strikes
Any balls or walks	No	Yes	Yes
Intentional walks	n/a	No	No
Pitching balks called	No	No	No
Slide rule	Mandatory slide or avoid contact	Mandatory slide or avoid contact	Mandatory slide or avoid contact
Mercy rule	No	No	No

Resources for JP Regan Youth League Coaches

- Heads Up Online Training Course
- Sample Parent Information Sheet
- Player Development Goals by Division
- Sample Drills by Division
- Sample Practice Plans
- Game Management Tips
- Teaching Hitting: Tips for Coaches
- Other Resources (website links and books)

HEADS UP ONLINE TRAINING COURSE

[HEADS UP to Youth Sports: Online Training | HEADS UP | CDC Injury Center](#)

(Link is also available through the Info for Coaches section at www.reganyouthleague.org)

HEADS UP Concussion in Youth Sports is a free, online course available to coaches, parents, and others helping to keep athletes safe from concussion. It features interviews with leading experts, dynamic graphics and interactive exercises, and compelling storytelling to help you recognize a concussion and know how to respond if you think that your athlete might have a concussion.

Once you complete the training and quiz, please print out a certificate, making it easy to show the Regan League that you have completed the course. One coach or assistant coach per team must be trained.

What Will I Learn in This Training?

This course will help you:

- Understand a concussion and the potential consequences of this injury,
- Recognize concussion signs and symptoms and how to respond,
- Learn about steps for returning to activity (play and school) after a concussion, and
- Focus on prevention and preparedness to help keep athletes safe season-to-season.

SAMPLE PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

JP Regan Youth League Farm Division – Team X

Coaches:

Name – 617-555-0101

Name – 617-555-0202

If your child can't come to a practice or game please call or text one of us above ASAP!!

Key Goals and Rules for the League:

- 1) This league is an INSTRUCTIONAL league, not a competitive league. The goals are for the kids to:
 - HAVE FUN!
 - LEARN TO PLAY BASEBALL BETTER/IMPROVE SKILLS
 - LEARN TEAMWORK

- 2) Parents need to support their child and the team by:
 - NEVER ARGUING WITH UMPIRES
 - NEVER CRITICIZING YOUR CHILD OR ANY OTHER PLAYER WHILE IN PRACTICE OR A GAME
 - NOT TELLING YOUR CHILD WHAT TO DO WHILE IN PRACTICE OR DURING A GAME (This is the role of the coaches; it's confusing for a child to hear multiple voices and instructions)

- 3) If a parent/guardian thinks their child should be doing something differently, tell one of us coaches your concern.

- 4) What to bring to practices: glove, cap, bottle of water, sneakers or cleats and comfortable pants and shirt

- 5) What to bring to games: wear uniform (cap, jersey, pants and either sneakers or cleats) and bring glove and a bottle of water.

**JP Regan Youth League
Player Development Goals by Division**

TeeBall (5-7 years)

- **Learn the basic rules**
 - Run in right direction when ball is hit
 - Runners must touch bases
 - How to record outs (catch ball in air, throw to first, or tag runners)
 - Run past first base
 - Scoring a run

- **Throwing mechanics**
 - Turn body so front shoulder points toward target
 - Elbow above shoulder- L shape
 - Bow and Arrow-point glove towards target
 - Step towards target w/ non-throwing foot
 - Release the ball

- **Tracking the ball**
 - Follow ball with eyes into glove
 - Use two hands to catch and field
 - “Alligator” hands to field ground balls
 - Catch ball out in front of body

- **Hitting**
 - How to hold and swing the bat
 - Batting safety (when not to swing bats)
 - Hitting off a tee
 - Hitting softly tossed balls (in practice for Teeball)
 - Go back to Go Forward- shifting weight from back to front

- **Learning Positional Play**
 - If ball is hit to your teammate let him/her field it
 - Everyone stay in their positions
 - Throwing ball to first base

**JP Regan Youth League
Player Development Goals by Division**

Farm (7-8 years)

- **Learn the basic rules**
 - Force outs
 - Tagging up
 - Baserunning (when you do and don't have to run, not running past teammates)
 - Balls and strikes

- **Throwing Mechanics**
 - Introduce proper grip
 - Point front shoulder, step, and throw
 - Generating momentum toward the target and executing follow-through

- **Catching and Fielding**
 - Thrown and hit balls
 - Watch the ball into glove
 - Use Two hands
 - Forehand and backhand
 - Underhand flip

- **Hitting**
 - Choosing right bat
 - Proper grip
 - Hitting pitched balls from coach
 - Introduce "soft toss" and other hitting drills
 - Execute weight shift- Go Back to Go Forward to generate power

- **Learning positional play**
 - Learn different positions and areas each player should cover
 - Cover nearest base when ball not hit to you
 - Basics of cutoffs and relays
 - Making throw to bases- understanding force outs vs tag outs

**JP Regan Youth League
Player Development Goals by Division**

Junior/Senior (9-12 years)

- **Learn the basic rules**
 - Infield fly rule (Seniors)

- **Hitting**
 - Hitting pitched balls from live pitcher
 - Understanding strike zone- swinging at good pitches
 - Working the count
 - Bunting
 - Develop weight-shift to generate power
 - Learn variety of hitting drills

- **Pitching and throwing mechanics**
 - Learning control- throwing strikes and pitching to locations
 - Pitcher covering first
 - Long-toss to strengthen arm
 - “Crow-hop” after fielding balls

- **Baserunning**
 - Stealing after ball crosses plate (Seniors)
 - Extra-base hits
 - Sliding
 - Listening to base coaches

- **Learning team fundamentals**
 - Cutoffs and relays
 - Basic bunt defenses
 - Basic first and third situations
 - Defending the steal (Seniors)
 - Infield and outfield communication

SAMPLE DRILLS BY DIVISION

Teeball Drills

RUN PAST FIRST

Put coaches at shortstop and first base. Throw grounders to the shortstop and have them make throws over to first. Have players line up at home and have one player run on each ground ball. Having a fielder gets the baserunners used to seeing someone covering the base and gives them a little more incentive to beat out the throw.

PRACTICING HITTING WITH THE T

When hitting off of a tee we want the players to concentrate on their weight shift. We want them to think about going back to go forward. The hitter should load all of the weight onto the back foot (almost like a pitcher's wind-up) and then take it all forward as the swing is completed. The hitter should swing hard. You can use wiffle balls at the start as they are learning to hit the ball off the T.

BOW AND ARROW THROWING

- Turn your body to the side
- Point glove at target- arm out straight- Throwing arm forms an L
- Throw without stepping and follow through with throwing arm

DON'T SWARM FIELDING DRILL

One of the biggest problems you may face on the field is swarming. That is, once the ball is hit, ALL your players will rush towards the ball and wrestle each other for it. To prevent swarming, set-up designated zones that each player is "allowed" in. Cones can be used to set-up these zones. If the ball enters a player's zone he/she is allowed to field it. If the ball is not in their zone, the player should cover their base awaiting a throw.

ALLIGATOR ARMS

Prior to the drill starting, explain to the young ball players the idea of how an alligator jaw works. Then show them how catching the ball and fielding grounders works the same way. The ball is just like an alligator's food, and they need to capture it with both hands. Have the children stand in a single file line in the ready position. When you roll the ball, have them place their glove down in front of the ball, and explain to them that when the ball reaches their glove, the other hand should clamp down to secure the ball – just like alligator jaws – but only with their arms.

IMAGINARY LINE

Set up two cones about ten feet apart. Explain to the kids that they cannot let the ball

get past them and cross the imaginary line between the two cones. You will roll or bounce the ball towards the player in an attempt to get the ball past them. Instruct them on how to shuffle from side to side with their glove in front of them to get their entire body in front of the ball.

LEARN THE BASES

Have the players follow you from base to base, starting with first base, and then in order (second, third, home). Explain to the youngsters what happens after you hit the ball, and then where you go after first base, where to go after second, etc.

Farm Drills

SOFT TOSS

A coach sits on a bucket slightly in front and to the plate side of the hitter. The coach should be 3-4 feet away from him/her so as not to get hit by the bat. He/she tosses a ball to batter who hits it into fence. Use tennis balls or soft balls for this drill.

COUNTDOWN DRILL

Have the players line up across from a partner about 20 feet apart. They are to make good throws back and forth as many times as they can while the coach counts down from 30 to zero. The player who does not have the ball at zero wins. (You should see the kids scramble for a dropped, or loose ball.)

RELAY GAME

Divide players into equal teams, numbers determined by space available, and age of players. Put each team in an extended line, spaced according to their age and throwing capabilities. Start the ball for each team at the same end of each line. Player with the ball turns his back to his line. On the signal, each player with a ball turns and makes a throw to the next player in line, who catches the ball, turns and throws to the next, all the way down the line. Winning team is the first team to complete one time down the line, or whatever standard you wish to set.

BALL TO FIRST

It is important for younger players to understand what happens when the ball is hit and it comes to them. Most will be focused on actually stopping the ball, but when they do secure it in their gloves, they need to know where to throw it.

The kids should have their gloves on and you can send them out to second base. Have one player play first base to field the throws. You can also have one near you (home plate) to field balls from first base to home. You can either toss or lightly hit the ball to the players in line at second base. Explain to them that when they get the ball, one of the first places they are going to throw is first base. So, they practice their fielding skills, and then add one more step to it by throwing it to first base. Then the first baseman

can throw it home. Players can then rotate: the fielder goes to first, the first baseman goes to home plate, and then the 'catcher' will go to the back of the fielding line. Once the players get the hang of it, you might be able to just keep hitting in succession as all the players go through the drill.

SITUATIONAL PRACTICE

Have players take infield positions including pitcher and catcher. Other players are runners and line up at backstop. Coach hits ball and runner goes to first while fielders try to throw them out. Drill then continues with next runner and goes on until fielders have recorded three outs. When runners are tired, rotate. Teaches kids what to do in different situations.

Junior/Senior/Softball Drills

3-2 RUN

Place 3 balls on the ground evenly spaced, about 3/4 of the way from third base to home. The fielding team has a third baseman and a group at second base. Another team is at bat (without bats). When the coach yells, "Go", the batter (runner) runs as fast as s/he can to first base and on to second. The fielder at third base runs to the first ball and makes a throw to a teammate at second base, then goes to the second ball and makes a throw to the same fielder at second base and does the same thing with the third ball. The object of this game is to make 3 good throws from third base (third base line) to second base before the runner gets to second base.

PEPPER

This is a great drill to build hand-eye coordination, quick reaction and to teach older players the value of knocking the ball down at all costs. Have one or two groups set up with 5 or 7 players in a line facing the coach. Gloves on and players are spread out about 10 to 15 feet apart. One player should be snagging balls for the coach.

The coach will be about 15 feet away from the player and will begin by hit grounders and line drives to the players. He or she does this in random order – the players do not know where the ball is going to be hit. They need to react quickly and then throw the ball to the player fielding balls for the coach. The coach will hit the ball as quickly as he or she can to the different players. Players are eliminated from pepper for missing balls or making errant throws. The focus should be on: reading, reacting, and making a good throw to person collecting balls for the coach.

BALLS AND STRIKES DRILL

Have the pitchers throw pitches and the batters just watch the ball into the glove and call balls and strikes. You'll be amazed at what batters think are balls. The best thing for good eyes are just seeing live pitching...lots of it, even if it is just being a batter while

your pitcher is doing a workout. You can learn to read different pitches, and the pitcher gets better practice when there is a batter in the box.

HITTING DIFFERENT OBJECT

Try golf whiffle balls, small coffee can lids (thrown like frisbees), pinto beans, etc., anything that has them concentrating on a smaller than usual target and hitting something that moves, rather than moving in a straight line. This will improve their concentration and teach them to follow the ball all the way in.

PICK A NUMBER

Take 3 or 4 balls, write a number on each ball. The player's job is to see the ball well enough to tell you which number is on the pitched ball.

THROWING DRILLS

- These drills allow the players to focus on the "mechanics" of proper throwing techniques, using certain isolation drills.

1) One Knee: Have the players proceed to the one knee position, stride leg in front pointing towards their partners. The players should move back to approx. 15-20 yards. This focuses on upper body mechanics and accuracy. Players should follow through with their throwing elbows outside their knee with bend in waist.

2) Standing: Players begin throwing from the standing position without taking step. Emphasize using the glove hand to point at the target as well as proper follow through.

3) Step and Throw: Players put everything together and play catch.

4) Quick throw: Players work on framing and quick release. Players catch and throw without hesitation for approximately one minute straight.

5) Throwing for distance: Once the series has gone through, continue to have the players back up until they are able to make accurate, strong throws DIRECTLY to the receiver. No lob throws. This allows arm strengthening.

GAME SITUATION

- Defense consists of infield, outfield.
- Coaches pitch. Coach may also fill the catcher position, or use cage.
- When a batter, or a base runner makes an out, they get their glove and move to right field.
- All defensive players rotate up, as offensive players are put out and move to defense. Example, one player coming out, one position move up. Two players erased on a double play, two positions moved up.

- Rotation goes: RF to CF to LF to 3B to SS to 2B to 1B to Hit.
- Play everything as a game situation, to include clearing the bases when the third out is made, starting a new inning.

SAMPLE PRACTICE PLANS

TEEBALL (One hour)

5:00: Calisthenics/Warm up

5:05: Run around bases- one at a time- start next kid when runner gets to first

5:15: Fielding and Hitting Stations (7 minutes per station)

- Batting off T into fence
- Infield practice on field- ground balls
- Outfield practice- pop ups
or substitute with a fielding or running game/exercise

5:35: Batting Practice

- Have 4 kids in to hit and the rest in the field. Players hit off T or coach pitches underhand to players. Seven swings per kid and they run the bases on last swing. One coach works with hitter, one with fielders, and one pitches.

5:55: Running Bases

6:00: End of practice and snack

FARM (One hour)

5:00: Calisthenics

5:05: Throwing practice: one knee and work up to standing throw.

5:15: Fielding and Hitting Stations (7 minutes and rotate)

- Soft Toss into fence
- Ground balls
- Pop ups/Fly balls

or substitute for a fielding/situational drill

5:35: Batting practice

- Have 4 kids in to hit and the rest in the field. Coach pitches overhand to players. Seven swings per kid and they run the bases on last swing. One coach works with hitter, one with fielders, and one pitches.

5:55: Running Bases

6:00: End of practice (Note: Could extend to 1 ½ hours and have time for additional drills/games.)

SAMPLE PRACTICE PLANS

JUNIORS/SENIORS/SOFTBALL (90 minutes)

5:00: Calisthenics

5:10: Throwing practice: one knee and work up to standing throw.

5:15: Fielding and Hitting Stations (7 minutes and rotate)

- Soft Toss into fence
- Ground balls
- Pop ups/Fly balls

5:40: Game Situation drill

6:00: Batting Practice

6:25: Running Bases

6:30: End of practice

Rules of practice for youth baseball/softball

1. Fun! If practice is fun, the players will be focused. They will give 100 percent, and they certainly will look forward to each and every practice.
2. Keep them moving. Players should not be standing around. They should always be moving or learning.
3. Always focus on positives.

Game Management Tips

- Prepare your lineup and substitution plan the night before and modify based on attendance
- Verify score with coaches after each inning.
- Ask players to hustle on and off field to move game along
- Have parent or assistant coach keep score
- Make sure hitters and on-deck batters are ready; only on-deck batter swings bat
- Keep parents off the bench!
- Ask parents not to shout out instructions to players during game to prevent confusion
- Have extra balls handy

Teaching Hitting: Tips for Coaches

OBSERVE THESE 6 STEPS OF EACH BATTER:

1. angle of bat before swing
2. weight shift, back to front, load
3. rear foot pivot, up on toes
4. top hand elbow tuck
5. firm front leg at contact
6. swing finishing high, after extension

SOME BASIC REMINDERS:

1. Keep your whole body loose
2. Stay tall and balanced
3. Relaxed grip on bat
4. Stay in motion, must have movement to keep you relaxed. Don't stand stiff like a statue.
5. Head and eyes level to start. Both eyes track path of ball to contact.
"Can't Hit What You Can't See!"
6. Hitting the ball hard is the most important thing. Not your batting average.

"PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT"

Useful Web Site:

www.chrisoleary.com (Click on rotational hitting 101 and follow video links)

Other Resources for JP Regan Youth League Coaches

Websites

- <http://www.coachteeball.com>
- <http://www.weplay.com/youth-baseball/drills>
- <http://www.weplay.com/youth-softball/drills>
- <http://www.weplay.com/groups/9755-Regan-League-Softball/public>
- <http://www.eteamz.com/fastpitch/instruction/tips/index.cfm?m=1,2,3,4,5>
- http://www.qcbaseball.com/drills/baseball_drills1.aspx
- <http://www.theoleballgame.com/baseball-resource.html>
- <http://www.baseballcorner.com>
- <http://www.youtube.com> Type “youth baseball drills” or “youth softball drills”
- <http://www.chrisoleary.com/projects/Baseball/Hitting/RethinkingHitting/Essays/RotationalHitting.html>

Books

Softball Skills & Drills, Judi Garman

Coaching Youth Softball, American Sport Education Program

Coaching Youth Baseball the Ripken Way, Cal Ripken Jr.

The Baseball Drill Book, American Baseball Coaches Assn.

Baseball Skills and Drills, American Baseball Coaches Assn.