



ELLL Minor League Player Progression, Expectations and Drills

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Teeball

	Starting the Season	End of Year Goals for Most	Stretch Goal for Advanced Players
Playing Catch	Most players have had no instruction on how to throw or catch. Coaches will have to teach players proper throwing and catching form. Catching should start with ground balls and progress to underhand tosses to the chest thrown by a coach.	When throwing, players should know to 1) turn their bodies and point their glove shoulder to the target, 2) step to their target and make a “T” with their arms, and 3) throw the ball. The ball should go to the target some of the time. When catching, players should understand that when someone is throwing a ball to them they need to position their glove up at their chest.	When throwing, advanced players should be able to consistently throw the ball to their target (close by). When catching, they will be able to catch some balls that have been underhand tossed to their chest.
Fielding	Players will not have any knowledge on how to field a ground ball.	Players know how to move their feet to field the ball centered between their legs, then use “alligator” technique to field the ball, often very robotically. They will then pause or need to be told before they throw to first base.	Advanced players will be able to field ground balls athletically and throw fairly accurately to first base.
Pitching	Not Applicable. Pitcher is only a fielding position.	Not Applicable. Pitcher is only a fielding position.	Not Applicable. Pitcher is only a fielding position.
Base Running	Players will not know how to run the bases.	Players will know where and when to run.	Players will know where and when to run without being told.
Hitting	Players will have poor form and will not make consistent contact.	Players will know how to stand and make contact fairly regularly.	Advanced players will be able to hit pitched/underhand thrown balls.
Rules Knowledge	No rules knowledge.	Players should know which direction to run after a batted ball. Also, players should know that defensively, they are trying to field the ball and throw it to first base (only).	Advanced players may know that they can catch the ball in the air to make an out or tag a base other than first to make a force out.



A-Ball

	Starting the Season	End of Year Goals for Most	Stretch Goals for Advanced Players
Playing Catch	When throwing, players should know to 1) turn their bodies and point their glove shoulder to the target, 2) step to their target and make a “T” with their arms, and 3) throw the ball. The ball should go to the target some of the time. When catching, some players will understand that when someone is throwing a ball to them they need to position their glove up at their chest.	When throwing, players should know to 1) turn their bodies and point their glove shoulder to the target, 2) step to their target and make a “T” with their arms, and 3) throw the ball. The ball should go to the target some of the time. When catching, players should consistently know how to position their glove at their chest and then know how to move and use/squeeze their glove to catch the ball. They won’t catch the ball most of the time, but will be close to catching most.	When throwing, advanced players will be able to throw with good form and to a target most of the time. When catching, advanced players will be able to catch a ball thrown underhand or lobbed overhand most of the time.
Fielding	Players know how to move their feet to field the ball centered between their legs, then use “alligator” technique to field the ball, often very robotically. They will then pause or need to be told before they throw to first base.	Players will know how to position their bodies and gloves to catch a ground ball. After fielding the ball, they should know to throw the ball to first base in a timely manner. They will stay in their positions and not fight over the ball.	Advanced players will know how to move their bodies to the ball, field the ball most of the time and make a strong throw to first base. They will occasionally throw out the runner.
Pitching	Not Applicable. Pitcher is only a fielding position.	Not Applicable. Pitcher is only a fielding position.	Not Applicable. Pitcher is only a fielding position.
Base Running	Players will know where and when to run.	Players will know where and when to run without being told.	Players will know where and when to run without being told.
Hitting	Some players will know how to stand. Many won’t be able to make regular contact with an underhand pitched ball. Coaches should start by pitching underhand and work to pitching overhand from a knee.	Players will know how to stand and make contact fairly regularly with a ball pitched by a coach from a knee at the pitcher’s rubber. Some players will need the coach to move in to the front of the pitcher’s mound to make solid contact.	Advanced players will be able to regularly hit a coach kneeling on the pitcher’s mound.
Rules Knowledge	Players should know which direction to run after a batted ball. Also, players should know that defensively, they are trying to field the ball and throw it to first base (only).	Players should know which direction to run after a batted ball. Also, players should know that defensively, they are trying to field the ball and throw it to first base (only).	Advanced players may know that they can catch the ball in the air to make an out or tag a base other than first to make a force out.



AA-Ball

	Starting the Season	End of Year Goals for Most	Stretch Goals for Advanced Players
Playing Catch	When throwing, players should know to turn, step and throw the ball. The ball should go to the target some of the time. When catching, players should consistently know how to position their glove at their chest and then know how to move and use their glove to catch the ball. Most players won't catch the ball, but they will be close.	Players should be playing catch with each other. Most throws will be overthrows or missed catches, but some will be caught. Players should always be trying to throw the ball to their partner's chest. Players will have been introduced to parts of "The Throwing Series" throwing progression.	Advanced players will be able to play catch with an adult or another advanced player with a some bad throws and/or missed catches mixed in.
Fielding	Players will know how to position their bodies and gloves to catch a ground ball. After fielding the ball, they should know to throw the ball to first base in a timely manner.	Players will know how to charge a ground ball, and position their bodies and gloves to catch a ground ball. After fielding the ball, they should know to throw the ball to first base in a timely manner. More outs will be made each week. Players will also be taught some basic situational awareness for positions like 1B, SS and 2B.	Advanced players will be able to field ground balls and balls in the air. Their throws will be strong and fairly accurate. They will also have a greater understanding of situational awareness at a variety of positions.
Pitching	Players have not received formal coaching. Some players will have a "wind-up" they learned from watching an older sibling or TV, while others won't know what to do. Pitchers should start the season in front of the mound and will be wildly inaccurate for a some, if not all year.	Players interested in pitching should know how to pitch from the stretch (NOT wind-up) and should pitch from in front of the mount. Most kids should be given a chance to pitch during the season if they want to.	Advanced players will eventually pitch from the pitcher's rubber and will be fairly accurate with decent mechanics.
Base Running	Players will know where and when to run without being told.	Players should know where and when to run without being told. They should also know what to do when an out is made.	Advanced players will run the bases aggressively. They may also understand they need to tag up on a ball in the air.
Hitting	Players will know how to stand and make contact fairly regularly with a ball pitched by a coach from a knee at the pitcher's rubber. Many won't be able to or will be scared to hit against a player pitcher. Also, player pitchers will be inaccurate and may not provide any good pitches to hit.	Most players will be confident enough to stand in and hit against a player pitcher. They will have success against coach pitching. Player pitchers will start to throw more good pitches to hit.	Advanced players will hit consistently off of player pitchers and coaches.
Rules Knowledge	Players will know that defensively, they are trying to field the ball and throw it to first base (only). Some players will understand that outs can be made in other ways (force outs, catch balls in the air, etc.)	Players should know additional ways to make outs: striking out, force outs at other bases, tagging a runner, and catching a ball in the air.	Advanced players will understand situational awareness to properly cover bases, make force outs at other bases and "double up" runners who have not tagged up on a ball in the air.



AAA-Ball

	Starting the Season	End of Year Goals for Most	Stretch Goals for Advanced Players
Playing Catch	Players will play catch with each other. However, quite a few throws will be overthrows or missed catches. Players should always be trying to throw the ball to their partner's chest. Most players will not have learned the "Throwing Series" or similar.	Players should be able to play catch with each other, and there will be overthrows or missed catches. Players will have learned "The Throwing Series" throwing progression.	Advanced players can play catch with few overthrows or missed catches. Advanced players lead "The Throwing Series" throwing progression.
Fielding	Players will know how to charge a ground ball, catch a ground ball and throw the ball to first base in a timely manner. Players will know some basic situational awareness for positions like 1B, SS and 2B.	Most players will have experience playing many if not all infield and outfield positions.	Advanced players can play make a high percentage of plays at any position.
Pitching	Players interested in pitching should know how to pitch from the stretch (NOT wind-up) and should pitch from the pitcher's plate on the mound. Pitchers will be able to throw a strike or two per batter, especially those who are 9 or 10.	The pitching staff should be whittled down 4-6 players who pitch regularly in games, however, more are encouraged to participate in bullpen sessions during practice. Those who pitch in games should be able to throw at least 2-3 strikes per batter, but walks may outnumber strikeouts/batted balls for most pitchers. Pitchers also need to learn how to field their position and when to cover first base.	The advanced pitcher will be able to throw a high percentage of strikes to each batter.
Base Running	Players should know where and when to run without being told. They should also know what to do when an out is made.	Most players should know how to take leads, advance on overthrows, steal bases, round bases, slide, tag up and look/listen for base coach's instructions.	Advanced players will know how to take leads, advance on overthrows, steal bases, round bases, slide, tag up and look for base coach's signs. They will also have the situational awareness and intuition to run the bases without a lot of help from base coaches.
Hitting	Most players will be confident enough to stand in and hit against a player pitcher. Hits will be sparse as the pitchers work to throw strikes.	Most players will be able to stand in against a player pitcher, but a couple may still be scared. Most players will have had some level of success against player pitchers. Batting stances and swings should start to look athletic. Players will have a better understanding of where the strike zone is. Players should be encouraged to swing and not walk.	Advanced hitters will be aggressive at the plate and make solid contact fairly consistently. They will also have very athletic stances and swings. They will have a strong understanding of the strike zone and be patient.
Rules Knowledge	Players will know additional ways to make outs: striking out, force outs at other bases, tagging a runner, and catching a ball in the air.	Players should understand most of the ways to make outs on the field at all defensive positions. Coaches need to understand pitch count rules, sliding into home, and other rules such as player interference.	



DRILLS

TEEBALL DRILLS			Drill 1	Drill 2	Drill 3
Playing Catch	Throwing is combined with ground balls.				
Infield	Ground Balls - Make 3-4 groups. Roll ground balls and have player field it and throw it back. Ensure: 1) they are moving their feet and trying to catch the ball in the middle of their bodies, 2) their glove is palm up and 3) their throwing hand is being used on top to make an “alligator” when catching. - Then, when players throw it back, ensure they are: 1) pointing their shoulders and glove at their target, 2) stepping to their target, 3) making a big circle back with their throwing arm, 4) getting their arm up, 5) following through.				
Outfield	Not Applicable				
Pitching	Not Applicable				
Base Running	Homerun - Line players up at home and have them run all the way to home. 2 Station Relay Race - Players line up at home and 2B. Players touch all bases until they get back to their starting place. Next player goes until all have run.				
Hitting	Hitting Circuts (3-4 groups, rotate groups) - Tee - Underhand Toss by Coach (work to up to this. They can do it.) Note: hitting groups can be spaced out in the field without a safety risk. Tee or Underhand Toss Scrimmage				
Rules Knowledge	- Running the bases when the ball is hit. - Throwing to 1B (only) after fielding the ball. Do not confuse players by having them throw to other bases.				

A DRILLS	Drill 1	Drill 2	Drill 3
Playing Catch	- Throwing - is combined with ground balls. - Catch Game – Coach stands 6-8 feet away. Player stands feet squared to t he coach with their glove up at their chest thumb-to-thumb ready to catch. Coach firmly underhand tosses the ball to the player starting with balls to their glove. Player catches the ball, then drops it. Repeat in a semi-rapid fire manner for 5-10 tosses in a row. Switch players. After weeks of tosses right at their gloves, progress to tosses that force the player to move their glove. (It’s called a “game” because kids think games are fun).		
Infield	Ground Balls - Make 3-4 groups. Roll ground balls and have player field it and throw it back. Ensure: 1) they are moving their feet and trying to catch the ball in the middle of their bodies, 2) their glove is palm up and 3) their throwing hand is being used on top to make an “alligator” when catching. - Then, when players throw it back, ensure they are: 1) pointing their shoulders and glove at their target, 2) stepping to their target, 3) making a big circle back with their throwing arm, 4) getting their arm up, 5) following through.		
Outfield	Not Applicable		
Pitching	Not Applicable		
Base Running	Running Through 1B Line kids up at home and have them run to and through 1B, not stopping until they reach the outfield grass.	2 Station Relay Race Players line up at home and 2B. Players touch all bases until they get back to their starting place. Next player goes until all have run.	Homerun Line players up at home and have them run all the way to home.
Hitting	Hitting Circuts (3-4 groups, rotate groups) Coach Pitch Note: hitting groups can be spaced out in the outfield without a safety risk.	Soft Toss Scrimmage Batter stands in the box. Coach soft tosses to batter. This is a fast and fun alternative to a full scrimmage.	Live Pitching Scrimmage Coach pitches. Beginning of the year can be underhand, but coaches should progress to throwing overhand from a knee at the pitcher’s mound.
Rules Knowledge	- Running the bases when the ball is hit. - Throwing to 1B (only) after fielding the ball. Do not confuse players by having them throw to other bases.		

AA DRILLS		Drill 1	Drill 2	Drill 3
Playing Catch	Throwing Series (Abbreviated) - Receiver Drill 1 - no glove, feet squared, underhand toss, receive the ball thumb-to-thumb and turn upper body to a throwing position (upper body only), reset, underhand toss back.... - Step and Throw – ensure players are: 1) pointing their shoulders and glove at their target, 2) stepping to their target, 3) making a big circle back with their throwing arm, 4) getting their arm up, etc.... - Catch Game – Coach stands 6-8 feet away. Player stands feet squared to t he coach with their glove up at their chest thumb-to-thumb ready to catch. Coach firmly underhand tosses the ball to the player starting with balls to their glove and progressing to tosses that force the play to move their glove. Player catches the ball, then drops it. Repeat in a rapid fire manner for 5-10 tosses. Switch players.			
Infield	Fielding Progression 1 foot drill (glove side) – Coaches 10-15 ft away. Players balance on throwing side leg with glove pointed straight out. Coach roles ball to player. Player waits until the ball is ~3ft in front of them and breaks down into a fielding position w/ glove side foot forward. 2 foot breakdown drill – Coaches 15-20 ft away. Players start with ready positions: Short Left-Right steps (right-left for lefties). Coach roles ball to player. Player charges ball and breaks down into the fielding position w/ glove side foot forward. ADVANCED: Crossfire (4 groups, switch groups around) - Variation 1: SS→1B, 2B→3B - Variation 2: SS→2B, 3B→1B - Variation 3: 2B→SS (flip or throw), 1B→3B - Variation 4: 3B→2B, 2B & 1B→P (covering 1B) - Variation 5: P→SS (covering 2B), 3B→1B Note: If players are having trouble catching thrown balls, have either a coach receive the throws.			
Outfield	Drop Step Fly Balls - Divide players into 3 groups close to coach. - Coach throws fly ball forcing player back to right side. Player should drop step with right leg, turn and run back for the ball, trying to get to the spot early. Catch with 2 hands, glove up and in front of body, and coming through the ball towards the target. Move line and switch directions after a few times through the line.			
Pitching	Mechanics Break Down (stretch only) Players line up across from a partner. Coach calls out the numbers below as the players step through the progression. - Take the sign - Foot on rubber, shoulders in line with the target, feet greater than shoulder width apart, ball in the glove or hand, throwing hand NOT in the glove - Come set – move ball in throwing hand to the glove, shoulders remain in line with the target, move feet shoulder width apart. - Power/post position – glove-side leg raised up so thigh is at least parallel with the ground, pause in balance. - Throw & follow-through Bullpen Sessions - Pitch to a catcher or to another pitcher 20-30 pitches (Pay attention to pitch counts and upcoming game schedule. Greater than 20 pitches requires at least one day of rest, etc.) - Pitch off a mound, if possible. Flat ground in the outfield is fine too. Another way to fit it in to practice is during team batting cage work between field 1 & 2, break pitchers into one group and have them throw bullpens while the rest of the team hits. When it is time to rotate, have the non-pitcher group go to bullpen but work on throwing, catching or fielding mechanics.			
Base Running	3 Station Drill - Home→1B 1B→3B (pick up 3rd base coach) 3B→Home (tag up) 2 Station Drill - Home→2B (round first) 2B →Home (pick up signal from 3rd base coach)			
Hitting	Hitting Circuts (3-4 groups, rotate groups) - Tee work - Soft toss - Heavy ball - Front toss (L-screen in close, coach underhand tosses) - Typical BP (L-screen in grass in front of mound) - Live Pitching (players pitch from a mound in the cage) Soft Toss Scrimmage - Batter stands in the box. Coach soft tosses to batter. This is a fast and fun alternative to a full scrimmage. Live Pitching Scrimmage - Gives all your pitchers an opportunity to throw and batters opportunity to see live pitching. - Coach pitches after player pitchers 4 balls.			
Rules Knowledge	Striking out Force outs vs tag plays Tagging up on pop ups			

AAA DRILLS			
Drill 1		Drill 2	
Drill 3			
Playing Catch	Throwing Series (Abbreviated) - Receiver Drill 1 - no glove, feet squared, underhand toss, receive the ball thumb-to-thumb and turn upper body to a throwing position (upper body only), reset, underhand toss back.... - Receiver Drill 2 - no glove, feet squared, underhand toss, receive the ball thumb-to-thumb and transition to a throwing position (whole body shuffle), reset, underhand toss back.... - Rhythm rock – feet and shoulders inline with target, rock forward, rock back, throw, follow through. - Shuffle step – shuffle feet and throw. - Long Toss – back up so throws take one bounce. - Quick Hands, Quick Feet – In close, players focus on: 1) making a good throw to partner’s glove side, 2) receiving the ball thumb-to-thumb, 3) transitioning to a throwing position.		
	Infield	Fielding Progression 1 foot drill (glove side) – Coaches 10-15 ft away. Players balance on throwing side leg with glove pointed straight out. Coach roles ball to player. Player waits until the ball is ~3ft in front of them and breaks down into a fielding position w/ glove side foot forward. 2 foot breakdown drill – Coaches 15-20 ft away. Players start with ready positions: Short Left-Right steps (right-left for lefties). Coach roles ball to player. Player charges ball and breaks down into the fielding position w/ glove side foot forward. - Full Fungo – Coaches back up to around home plate. Player back up to typical position depth. Coaches hit ground balls from around the plate.	Crossfire (4 groups, switch groups around) - Variation 1: SS→1B, 2B→3B - Variation 2: SS→2B, 3B→1B - Variation 3: 2B→SS (flip or throw), 1B→3B - Variation 4: 3B→2B, 2B & 1B→P (covering 1B) - Variation 5: P→SS (covering 2B), 3B→1B
Outfield		Drop Step Fly Balls - Divide players into 3 groups close to coach. - Coach throws fly ball forcing player back to right side. Player should drop step with right leg, turn and run back for the ball, trying to get to the spot early. Catch with 2 hands, glove up and in front of body, and coming through the ball towards the target. Move line and switch directions after a few times through the line.	Cutoff Drill Crossfire (4 groups, switch groups around) - Place groups at: LF, RF, SS, 2B - Bucket at 2nd base 2 coaches hit ground balls to outfielders, cutoff man lines up with 2nd base, outfielders throw to cutoffs, cutoffs try to hit bucket at 2nd base.
	Pitching	Mechanics Break Down (stretch only) <i>Players line up across from a partner. Coach calls out the numbers below as the players step through the progression.</i> - Take the sign - Foot on rubber, shoulders in line with the target, feet greater than shoulder width apart, ball in the glove or hand, throwing hand NOT in the glove - Come set – move ball in throwing hand to the glove, shoulders remain in line with the target, move feet shoulder width apart. - Power/post position – glove-side leg raised up so thigh is at least parallel with the ground, pause in balance. - Throw & follow-through	Bullpen Sessions - Pitch to a catcher or to another pitcher 20-30 pitches (Pay attention to pitch counts and upcoming game schedule. Greater than 20 pitches requires at least one day of rest, etc.) - Pitch off a mound, if possible. Flat ground in the outfield is fine too. Another way to fit it in to practice is during team batting cage work between field 1 & 2, break pitchers into one group and have them throw bullpens while the rest of the team hits. When it is time to rotate, have the non-pitcher group go to bullpen but work on throwing, catching or fielding mechanics.
Base Running		3 Station Drill - Home→1B 1B→3B (pick up 3rd base coach) 3B→Home (tag up)	2 Station Drill - Home→2B (round first) 2B →Home (pick up signal from 3rd base coach)
	Hitting	Hitting Circuts - Tee work - Soft toss - Heavy ball - Front toss (L-screen in close, coach underhand tosses) - Typical BP (L-screen in grass in front of mound) - Live Pitching (players pitch from a mound in the cage)	Soft Toss Scrimmage Batter stands in the box. Coach soft tosses to batter. This is a fast and fun alternative to a full scrimmage.
Rules Knowledge		- Tagging up on pop-ups - Overthrows - Stealing bases - Pitch counts	- When to take a lead - Force outs vs tag outs - Running in the base line - Sliding into home and other bases