

# National Coach Accreditation Scheme



## Level 3 Manual

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## Welcome the ABF National Coach Accreditation Scheme - Level 3

As the National Head Coach I would like to welcome you to the new NCAS Level 3 Resource Manual. The National Coach Accreditation Scheme, developed in close cooperation with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), is a competency based scheme, structured to provide a graduated series of standards which coaches must achieve in order to gain the relevant level of accreditation. This manual is designed as a resource to help you acquire the competencies required for Level 3.

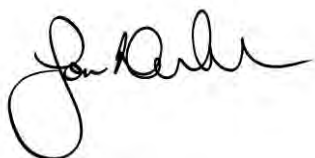
The NCAS is part of Baseball Australia's Coach Development structure, intended to help improve the baseball's appeal to participants and spectators. The National Coach Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) is one of the key vehicles to share the philosophy, activities and instruction being used to develop a lifelong interest and expertise in our game.

The breadth and depth of baseball knowledge available in Australia has advanced greatly over the last twenty years, so our approach to the development of our coaches and players has been steadily evolving, and will continue to do so. You will find that the NCAS places a huge emphasis on coaches being equipped with a large number of ideas on activities and drills, and less on technical instruction. This bias has a strong scientific basis: humans develop physical skills by being actively engaged in purposeful activity, rather than by listening to someone tell them how the experts do it. Variety of activity also makes training and learning a lot more fun!

There is no benefit in having players attempt activities for which they are just not ready. The NCAS presents a graduated approach to types of activities best suited for each level of player, from Aussie T-Ballers and others with less expertise, through to the drills and routines regularly used by Major League players. The coaching material is carefully designed to provide the optimal long term development of your players, while keeping the emphasis firmly on participation and enjoyment.

The contents of this manual are designed to be beneficial to players and coaches at the intermediate to advanced levels of the game in Australia. I hope that it will provide the necessary guidance for the ABF's exciting new challenges and expectations.

Yours in baseball,



**Australian National Team Manager**



## Helping players to acquire skills

Consider how children learn to walk. To talk. To ride a bike.

Very rarely is because an adult sat them down and gave the detailed instructions, cajoled them into practicing things they didn't enjoy, and criticised them when they didn't do it "properly".

Children learn skills best when they see others doing something they want to be able to do, so they try doing it themselves, and gradually make better and better approximations at it until they can do it. Parents and other adults may provide encouragement and support, but mostly, kids (and adults for that matter), learn skills by doing.

In the ideal learning situation, the skill acquisition takes place subconsciously while the participant is having fun. This type of learning is called Implicit Learning.

To the untrained eye, our approach to tee ball and little league training may appear to lack structure, to be disorganised and lack instruction. However, there is actually a proven coaching technique at work.

Simply stated, it means that since kids learn skills by doing, and active learning is more enjoyable, a coach who wants to be effective, and to establish a positive attitude towards physical activity in the players, should concentrate on arranging learning opportunities using interesting and varied activity.

This booklet explains the benefits of implicit learning and is summarised from a report for the Australian Institute of Sport, written by Damian Farrow, one of the world's leading authorities on skill acquisition.

### ***What is implicit learning?***

Implicit learning is the learning that is built into the activity itself – it doesn't have to be explained or reviewed: just do the activity and learning will take place.

One of the biggest mistakes the coaching community has made over the last decade or two is to think that if we can just figure out how the experts do things, we can somehow give that to novices. If, right from the beginning, we can just supervise them closely enough, tell them how to do things clearly enough, spell things out with perfect clarity, a youngster with potential cannot fail to "make it".

It just doesn't work that way. In the real world, skill and expertise are acquired only through a lot of experience. Experimentation, creativity and "getting it wrong" are a big part of the learning process.

Many "traditional" coaches use a form of explicit teaching: using verbal instruction to explain how to do things, often concentrating on "correct" technique rather than activity, to teach a student how to perform a skill.

Explicit learning typically results in the student being able to verbalise how to perform the skill, without guaranteeing that he or she can physically do it (although of course people can learn to do things in this manner).

Well-structured implicit learning activities, on the other hand, typically lack instruction about how to perform the skill. Instructions are usually limited to what the learner is trying to accomplish in this activity ("Hit the target with the ball", for example). The activities are shaped so that by attempting to accomplish the goal, the child is subconsciously acquiring a skill or group of skills.

Implicit learning often results in a student being able to perform the skill without necessarily being able to say how they do it. Interestingly, this is a characteristic possessed by many champion athletes: they can "just do it", but they often can't tell someone else how they do it.

This is also how children learn to walk, talk, and ride a bicycle. Parents guide their children as they learn, but they don't usually give much instruction about how to do things.

### ***What are the benefits of implicit learning?***

Several scientific studies have found that skills learned implicitly are:

1. more permanent
2. less likely to break down under pressure

On the other hand, it seems that skills which have been explicitly taught are more likely to falter under stress. Apparently, the learner is more likely to start thinking too much about how to do things ("paralysis by analysis"),

rather than concentrating on getting the job done. This can compound into unnecessary anxiety and have a negative long term effect on their confidence.

Implicit learning strengthens subconscious processes (the brain subconsciously tries to work out the best way to achieve the desired result) and allows the body to make adjustments naturally without interruption from the conscious brain. Over time (and quite quickly in youngsters – have you ever seen those little kids on the ski-fields?), the body will find the most efficient way to do something; that is, it will acquire skills. Young athletes are then able to play, and learn as they play, which makes for a happy and healthy experience.

### ***Is there no place for explicit learning?***

Explicit instruction is most effective when the athletes have enough experience at trying something for themselves to be able to put things in context, relate to the explanation and understand its benefits. But first, players need to build their database of physical activity and challenging situations, so that they are equipped to get good value from a coach's suggestions and advice.

### ***How does a coach design implicit learning activities?***

Evidence supports the use of an implicit learning approach with players of all ages, including young beginners. It is the basis of the games-based learning approach, where skills are taught via a variety of mini-games and drills which are fun but challenging, continually testing not only physical skills, but decision-making and tactics as well.

However, it is not realistic to simply remove instruction and expect learning to occur. The tasks and activities need to be structured with a particular purpose in mind. The materials and activities in Aussie T-Ball are designed in such a way.

The secret is to draw the student's attention away from thinking about the technique required to perform the task at hand. Learners will watch and learn from others who are better than themselves, and this is much more valuable than a coach trying to tell them how to do something. The coach's job is to ensure that safety issues are taken care of, make sure everyone knows what they have to do in this activity, and then let them try it.

Other implicit learning strategies include:

- Explain skill requirements by analogy or metaphor, so the need for explicit verbal information is minimised (eg, "swing like you are chopping down a tree").
- Encourage experimentation by giving instructions which have nothing to do with achieving a particular result, but will lead them to discover things for themselves about the best way to do something (eg, "try holding your glove in different positions"). They always remember things that they have taught themselves, and it's great for developing genuine self esteem
- "Let's see what happens if....." Using this phrase (or something similar) when you adjust a task reinforces a sense of fun and exploration in learning.
- Asking, "What do you think will happen if.....?" Or "What can we try to make this easier (or harder, or faster, or more consistent etc)", helps develop their imagination and creativity, and their awareness of the link between actions and consequences.
- Get players to perform a secondary task while simultaneously performing a primary skill; (eg, "hit only the balls with the red dot on them" – while looking for the red dots, they are actually developing the ability to track a moving ball)
- Design games using different scoring systems and/or court boundaries that require players to use strategies to win the game – simply tell the players the adjusted scoring system and/or boundaries and then just let them play. (eg, "Ok, double points if you catch it with one hand, but you also lose two points if you drop it using only one hand")

It is very important to allow young athletes the time they need to determine the most appropriate strategies and responses, rather than explicitly explaining the solution to them.

(And of course, good coaches safeguard their players and consistently provide encouragement to their young athletes.)

Many coaches use the T.R.E.E anagram to remind themselves to consider all sorts of adjustments:

<b>T</b> eaching	adjust the type of instruction you provide
<b>R</b> ules	changing a few rules can make a big difference
<b>E</b> nvironment	play on different surfaces, or on a windy day
<b>E</b> quipment	use different types of balls or bats

As you get more confident with your coaching, you will become quite expert at adjusting an activity to achieve the kind of learning you want.

### **Conclusion**

Explicit instruction will always be a part of coaching, but coaches should remain aware of the fact that it is not very effective for players inexperienced in physical activity generally or baseball specifically.

While you are providing that experience for your players, remember that you are utilising the most appropriate and effective learning strategy available: implicit learning.

Young athletes develop best when given the opportunity to actively involved in a wide variety (and a large volume) of physical activity. They will not only be learning, they will be learning how to learn by learning to figure things out for themselves.

Oftentimes, the best instruction for a young athlete is:

“See if you can!”

Peter Gahan

National Manager  
Coach Development

## **Overview of NCAS Competencies at each Level**

### **Level 1 (Aussie Tee-Ball)**

#### **Knowledge**

- Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball
- Demonstrate understanding of the value of a game based learning approach to develop skills, and to maximise fun and participation
- Identify the elements of a tee-ball training session
- Use inclusive coaching principles to provide player equally opportunity throughout the game and season

#### **Activities**

- Conduct a FUNdamental warm-up
- Plan and conduct throwing, running, fielding and hitting activities using a game based learning approach to ensure fun and maximum participation
- Organise an Aussie Tee-Ball game

### **Level 2**

#### **Knowledge**

##### General:

- Demonstrate awareness of a coach's duty of care
- Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball
- Identify the elements of a training session for young juniors
- Plan a junior baseball training session
- Name and locate the nine standard defensive positions on a baseball field
- Develop a philosophy and strategies for maintaining "good tempo"
- Recall the rules of a baseball game modified for juniors
- Use inclusive coaching principles to rotate player positions equally throughout a game/innings/season

##### LTAD:

- Provide an outline of the simplified LTAD model and approach

##### Running:

- Outline a progressive approach to developing sliding technique

#### **Activities**

##### General:

- Modify activities as required according to the TREE guidelines
- Plan and conduct throwing, running, hitting and fielding activities using a game based learning approach to ensure fun and maximum participation
- Include cross-sport activities
- Use a game based learning approach to conduct activities and mini-games
- Organise a coach-pitch baseball game

##### LTAD:

- Conduct a structured warm-up which ties into LTAD model for this age/level of athletic competence

##### Hitting:

- Conduct activities designed to encourage hitters to track the ball and hit it hard

##### Throwing:

- Engage players in a variety of activities to develop their throwing ability

##### Defence:

- Involve players in fielding activities with varying levels of challenge
- Utilise activities designed to encourage players to catch a fly ball

##### Running:

- Conduct base-running activities
- Conduct low risk sliding activities

#### **Instruction**

##### General:

- Explain fundamental safety guidelines to players
- Communicate philosophy: "Take every chance you get to show good tempo"

##### LTAD:

- Provide instruction on the correct execution of the BW squat and the lunge walk

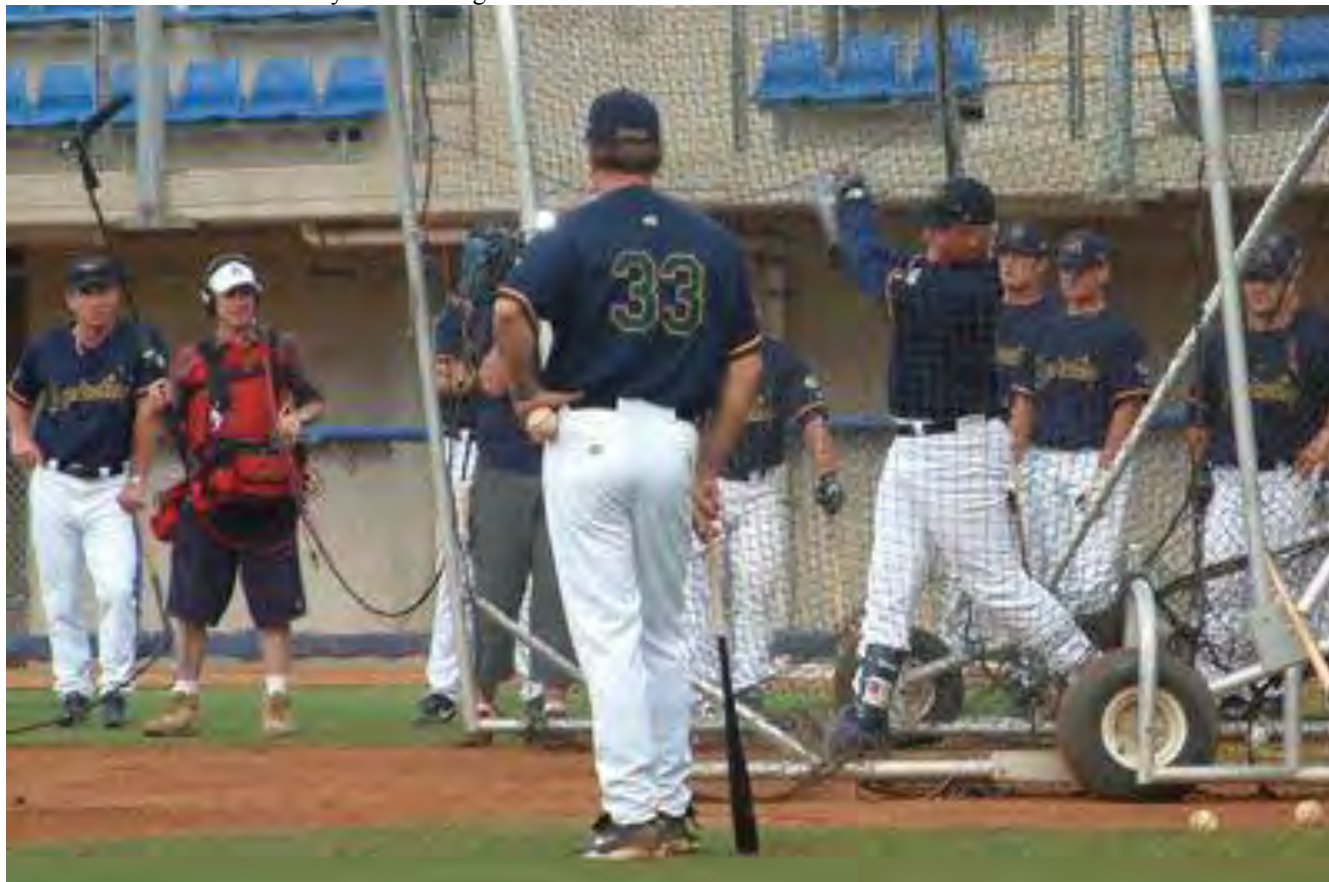
##### Hitting:

- Explain the intent of the swing
- Teach hitters effective drills for developing their swing

##### Defence:

- Position the catcher correctly in relation to hitter/home plate

- Teach ground-ball basics
  - Instruct catching the ball with hand in backhand position
  - Teach the fielding positions
- Running:
- Ensure that players run hard on every batted ball
  - Devise ways to encourage base-runners to make their own decisions



## Level Three

### Knowledge

- General:
- Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball
  - Demonstrate awareness of a coach's duty of care
  - Recall the basic rules of junior and Little League baseball
  - Outline the meaning and use of the RICED approach to soft tissue injury management
  - Understand the basics of base coaching
- LTAD:
- Name the first four stages of LTAD theory, and outline the key points of the FUNdamental stage
  - Outline the LTAD model of athletic development (movement competency)
  - Outline a suitable on-field strength and conditioning program based on the ABF LTAD model
- Hitting:
- Organise a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions
- Defence
- Name and briefly explain the key points of each of the 6 Fs

### Activities

- General:
- Assess prescribed competencies of candidates for Level 1 & 2 Accreditation
  - Plan a suitable training session
  - Use a game based learning approach to plan and conduct activities and mini-games
  - Encourage players to participate in other aspects of baseball: umpiring, coaching, scoring etc
  - Organise a team to participate in the applicable modified baseball game
- LTAD:
- Conduct a suitable on-field strength and conditioning session based on the ABF LTAD model
  - Conduct a structured warm-up which ties into LTAD model for the relevant age/level of athletic competence
- Hitting:
- Conduct hitting activities to encourage tracking the ball, swinging hard and making contact
  - Conduct swing practice designed to expand the contact zone



- Conduct a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions
- Throwing:
  - Demonstrate the across-seam grip of ball
  - Conduct 2 throwing drills which emphasise grip and backspin
  - Supervise an effective long-toss throwing session
- Pitching:
  - Conduct a 30 pitch bullpen
  - Use simple drills to teach pitching mechanics
- Defence:
  - Implement use of self-monitored game-sense activities to develop fielding skills
  - Engage players in groundball fundamentals using the 6 Fs
  - Rehearse basic double plays
  - Have players (infielders and outfielders) practice throwing to different bases
  - Practise outfield basics
  - Conduct drills for catchers to emphasise receiving the ball
  - Utilise activities designed to encourage players to catch a fly ball
  - Conduct practice of the basic cut-off plays
  - Develop pitchers' fundamental fielding skills
  - Rehearse basic pickoffs
  - Conduct the figure-8 double-play exercise, with minor variations
- Running:
  - Deliver the 5-drill sequence for sprint mechanics
  - Conduct base-running activities
  - Conduct low risk sliding activities

### **Instruction**

- General:
  - Present competency training for candidates for lower levels of accreditation
  - Communicate appreciation of the ethics of baseball
  - Teach basic situational strategy
- LTAD:
  - Teach correct execution of each exercise in the LTAD warmup
  - Teach correct execution of each of the key exercises for the age level
  - Instruct all players in the basic tubing exercises
- Hitting:
  - Explain that the intent of the swing is to hit long, hard line drives
  - Provide simple instruction on an effective swing: rhythm, load, release
  - Teach hitters effective drills for developing their swing
- Throwing:
  - Teach pitching from a set position using the key coaching points for this age level
  - Outline the rules for pitchers at relevant level
- Defence:
  - Explain "squeezing the middle"
  - Guide the catcher on posture with no runner on base
  - Provide coherent instruction in the basic points of each of the 6 Fs
  - Teach the basics of outfield play
- Running:
  - Devise ways to encourage base-runners to make their own decisions
  - Ensure that hitters run hard on every batted ball
  - Instruct general guidelines for leads at 1B
  - Instruct general guidelines for returns at 1B

## **Level 4**

### **Knowledge**

- General:
  - Demonstrate knowledge of a coach's duty of care
  - Outline a comprehensive schedule for a 3 hour training session
  - Explain the meaning and strategic relevance of "the big inning"
  - Justify the use of bunts and the hit & run
  - Outline the fundamentals of individual learning styles
  - Demonstrate awareness that the players are still learning
  - Outline specified cutoff plays according to the National playbook
  - Explain the important basics of giving signs, and the implications of thinking ahead when coaching in a game.
  - Outline, with examples, the 'volume' approach to planning a training session.
- LTAD:
  - Plan suitable on-field strength and conditioning programs based on the ABF LTAD model
  - Explain the seven streams of movement utilised in the ABF LTAD approach, and the key points in progressing a player through each stream
  - Plan a simple annual periodisation plan for one of his or her players

Hitting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions</li> <li>- Show an understanding of the conventional manner of setting a hitting line-up</li> <li>- Show how the team objective relates to adjusting the level of aggression in offence and defence.</li> </ul>
Pitching:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outline the key risk factors for young pitchers</li> <li>- Recall the various pitch limits and related rules for all National junior tournaments</li> </ul>
Defence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name the five tools of a ballplayer and provide a basic outline of the positional relevance of each</li> <li>- Demonstrate solid knowledge of the 6Fs approach to fielding a routine groundball and making a backhand play</li> <li>- Outline the 6Fs approach to executing a double play, and to a 1<sup>st</sup> baseman receiving an infield throw</li> <li>- Explain the impact of common situations on offensive and defensive strategy</li> <li>- Outline the reasons for and execution of varying infield depth</li> </ul>
Running:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain why acceleration training is important of baseball</li> </ul>
<b><u>Activities</u></b>	
General:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess prescribed competencies of candidates for Level 1, 2 &amp; 3 Accreditation</li> <li>- Implement strategies to develop athlete decision-making and accountability</li> <li>- Plan a suitable training session for an individual, a specific group or a team</li> <li>- Demonstrate correct base-coach positioning, at both 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases.</li> <li>- Demonstrate basic non-verbal communications with baserunners.</li> </ul>
LTAD:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct a full warmup incorporating speed, acceleration and agility drills</li> <li>- Individualise on-field strength and conditioning according to the ABF LTAD model</li> </ul>
Hitting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct on-field pre-game batting practice so as to develop situational awareness and execution</li> <li>- Organise and conduct a hitting circuit</li> <li>- Provide consistent flips for swing practice</li> </ul>
Throwing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct activities which encourage infielders to use a variety of throws</li> <li>- Run an arm development session</li> </ul>
Pitching:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct an execution-centred bullpen session to develop control of various pitches</li> <li>- Conduct pitchers' fielding practice</li> <li>- Train pitchers to complete the on-field leg circuit</li> </ul>
Defence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct catcher's blocking drills: ball directly in front, to either side, and catcher regaining feet to throw</li> <li>- Conduct other catcher's drills: throwing to all bases, pop-ups, bunt plays and tags</li> <li>- Drill backhand skills using the 6Fs sequence</li> <li>- Provide drills to help develop skills on forehand plays and slow rollers</li> <li>- Arrange practice activities for 1<sup>st</sup> Baseman: practising tags, moving off the base</li> <li>- Drill middle infielders on the following: SS double play feeds and turns (feed from 2B &amp; 1B); 2B double play feeds and turns; steal coverage; 3B double play feeds; tag plays; fielding bunts</li> <li>- Utilise triangle drills for the rehearsal of DP feeds etc</li> <li>- Throw or fungo the ball to provide outfielders with practice on: going back on ball; charging a ground ball (do or die); reverse turns; backing up.</li> <li>- Conduct practice for double cuts and relays, and flyball priorities.</li> <li>- Rehearse regular 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> plays, and bunt defence</li> </ul>
Running:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Train players in the prescribed acceleration drills</li> <li>- Engage players in rehearsing base-running: using their own judgement;</li> <li>- Rehearse the runner's role on bunts and in the hit &amp; run play</li> <li>- Conduct sessions for runners to practise stealing 3B; reacting on balls in dirt; reading ball off bat on all bases; getting good angles on the turn; breaking up double play</li> </ul>
<b><u>Instruction</u></b>	
General:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present competency training for candidates for lower levels of accreditation</li> <li>- Utilise a variety of instructional methods</li> <li>- Guide players on composure and body language (set an example): show no emotion, look alert and look ready; double-time to and from your position.</li> </ul>
LTAD:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instruct players on the 4 properties to be developed, the 7 streams of movement and other fundamental understandings of the ABF LTAD model</li> </ul>
Hitting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outline to hitters the process and importance of building on their database</li> <li>- Correctly instruct players in the purpose and key points of the one-hand tee drill</li> <li>- Explain the difference between swing practice and game practice in hitting</li> <li>- Teach the fundamentals of bunting</li> </ul>

- Throwing: - Provide players with effective guidelines for developing arm strength
- Pitching: - Outline the characteristics and execution of these types of pitches: 4-seam and 2-seam FB, curve ball (CB), change-up (CH)  
 - Teach basic pickoffs  
 - Explain the fundamentals of a sound pitching approach: 1<sup>st</sup> pitch strike, stay ahead, change speeds, locate FB  
 - Emphasise the importance of good tempo and body language by all players, especially pitchers: waste no time between pitches.  
 - Instruct players in how to prepare themselves to pitch: annual periodisation, weekly routine, game day
- Defence: - Provide key points in the execution of slow roller plays using the glove and using the bare hand  
 - Use the following 6Fs sequence to instruct an infielder on the backhand play: no glove, receive with glove, replace feet to throw, no-step throw)  
 - Guide the 1<sup>st</sup> Baseman in: positioning with no runner on base, with a runner on 1B, and with runners on 1B & 2B (less than two out); tagging on pickoffs; moving off the base; initiating the double play  
 - Instruct middle infielders on the key points of: SS double play feeds (glove side, straight at SS, backhand side) and turns (Feed from 2B, 1B – inside the line); 2B double play feeds (bare-hand side; straight at 2Bman; glove side) and turns (feed from SS, 3B); steal coverage; holding runner close, positioning, communication  
 - Provide simple instruction to a 3<sup>rd</sup> Baseman on: double play feeds; PO5-3 double play; tag plays; fielding bunts.  
 - Instruct an outfielder in the following: going back on ball, charging a ground ball (do or die), reverse turns, backing up.  
 - Instruct catchers on the basic postures: no runner on; runner on; pitch signs  
 - Educate catchers on pitching strategy  
 - Outline key communication expectations of Catchers  
 - Provide guidelines for the adjustment of infield depth
- Running: - Explain the relative merits of sliding head first vs feet first  
 - Instruct leads - general guidelines; leads at 1B, 2B & 3B;  
 - Instruct returns – general principles; return to 1B, 2B & 3B

## 1. General Coaching

<u>Knowledge</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Demonstrate awareness of a coach's duty of care</li><li>- Outline the meaning and use of the RICER approach to soft tissue injury management</li><li>- Demonstrate some understanding of a game based learning approach to plan and conduct activities and mini-games.</li></ul>
<u>Activities</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assess prescribed competencies of candidates for Level 1 &amp; 2 Accreditation</li><li>- Plan a suitable training session</li><li>- Encourage players to participate in other aspects of the sport: umpiring, coaching, scoring etc</li></ul>
<u>Instruction</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Present competency training for candidates for lower levels of accreditation</li></ul>

## Demonstrate awareness of a coach's duty of care

A coach accredited and registered by Australian Baseball is essentially covered against negligence claims, provided they adhere to the ABF's rules and guidelines, which is why the Coaches Code of Conduct must be read, signed and adhered to. It is an integral part of Australian baseball.

The ABF manages its own risk by introducing policies and codes of behaviour for people in specific roles including coaches, athletes and officials. Coaches are bound to the rules and policies of the ABF, including the Coach's Code of Conduct. Coaches should know this Code, and understand the rules they will be judged against if worst comes to worst.

A coach must treat and supervise team members in the same way as would a prudent parent. Harassment, bullying, abuse, and discrimination on the basis of gender, race or religion, are completely inappropriate, whether by team members or the coach.

Coaches need to know how to minimise the risks for themselves and their players:

- Wherever practical, avoid unaccompanied and unobserved one-on-one activity (when in a supervisory capacity or where a power imbalance will exist) with people under the age of 18 years.
- Adopt appropriate and responsible behaviour in all interactions.
- Ensure your decisions and actions contribute to a harassment free environment.
- Any physical contact with a person should be appropriate to the situation and necessary for the person's skill development



## Understand the requirements for presenting competency training to candidates for L1 and L2 accreditation

This is a competency based scheme, and as such does not restrict the instructor's role to particular individuals: if you can assist candidates in developing the specific competencies required at that level, you are invited to do so. The list of required competencies, and the detailed description of each, defines what needs to be learnt.

The ABF will be gradually making more and more resources available, for the most part, online, but many pre-existing resources can be utilised: significant amounts of the material remains perfectly valid.

The instruction of some competencies may initially require specialist training, but ultimately, the knowledge should be widespread and thus accessible to all.



## Assess the prescribed activity and instruction competencies of candidates for L1 and L2

- Objective assessment is vital to the integrity of the Accreditation scheme, to the quality of coaching in Australian baseball and ultimately to the survival of our sport. You are asked to take this role seriously, and contribute to advancing our sport.
- Be familiar with the assessment tools for these levels.
- Base the marking on what the coach actually shows, and how it matches up to the requirements outlined in the assessment tool.
- Place a single tick in the space provided in the left column if the coach shows that specific competency (two ticks can be used to indicate excellence).
- The key points of each competency (in the middle column with the circular bullet point) are there to remind you of what you need to see. Mark these as you witness them so that you have a record to substantiate the specific competency, and to identify any missing elements.
- Provide specific feedback, particularly to a coach who is not yet competent.





## Demonstrate some understanding of a game-based learning approach to plan and conduct activities and mini-games.

“Games-based learning” is a coaching approach which involves providing players with cooperative and competitive activities designed to facilitate their learning of skills, conditioning, tactics and strategies. It is a very effective approach because the players intuitively develop understandings and skills which tend to stand up well under pressure; it is also more fun. Two important keys to the use of games-based learning are:



1. The ability to modify tasks in order to shape the behaviour of the participants. This can be done by modifying:
  - Teaching: how much information you give them, the questions you ask, demonstrations you provide etc.
  - Rules: how to score points, how many points one thing is worth compared to another, how far you can run etc.
  - Equipment: type of ball, bat, glove, goal etc
  - Environment: indoors or out, field size, surface, etc
2. Questioning, in order to get the players to think, imagine, create and thus understand. Open questions (not those with yes or no answers) are the most effective, eg:
  - What would happen if.....?
  - Can anyone think of a better way to .....?
  - How can we stop that happening .....?
  - What is Mary doing that is helping her score points?
  - Etc



## Encourage players to participate in other aspects of the sport: umpiring, coaching, scoring etc

Other aspects of the game can appeal to different individuals, and the game certainly needs all aspects covered. Involving players in tasks other than playing gives them a chance to broaden their experience and understanding, and perhaps find a niche which ultimately gives them more fulfilment than playing. Players can be asked to umpire in modified games, to score while they are on the bench, and even coach a base during a game. It is important that they know exactly what they are required to do, and supported in their efforts to comply.





## Outline the meaning and use of the RICER approach to soft tissue injury management

**RICER** is the acronym for First Aid for a soft tissue injury (impact or sprain) aims to reduce pain and blood flow to minimize damage, and restrict swelling and internal bleeding while the injured party gets to a doctor.

**Rest:** cease exercising immediately; continuing will increase swelling and bleeding.

**Ice:** apply an ice pack or gently massage with smooth ice; this restricts blood vessels and eases pain.

**Compression:** wrap a broad bandage (preferably elastic) around the injured area; this restricts movement and swelling.

**Elevation:** get the injured area up above heart level if possible; this slows blood flow (as it will have to go up hill)

**Refer:** get the injury assessed by a health professional; don't make yourself out to be an expert if you are not.



## **Section Two: Coaching Baseball**

### **Knowledge**

- Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball
- Recall the basic rules of junior and Little League baseball

### **Activities**

- Organise a team to participate in the applicable modified baseball game

### **Instruction**

- Communicate appreciation of the ethics of baseball
- Teach basic situational strategy

## Identify the safety issues and manage the risks of baseball

The major safety issues in baseball arise from the hardness of the bat and the ball, the speed at which they travel, and from the fact that contests within the game are played at speed. These can inflict painful injuries, and the risk is increased by an unsafe playing or training facility.

1. The facility, including playing equipment and protective screens, must be inspected regularly for possible risks: rough surface, loose bases, sprinkler heads, scrap metal pieces etc.
2. Hitters and base-runners must wear helmets. Non-hitters must remain a safe distance from the hitter, and beware of errant balls, bats etc.
3. Players must not practice throwing or hitting in high traffic areas; eg, in front of the dugout
4. Sliding is an essential skill for stopping at a base safely and effectively. It must be learnt and practiced.
5. When playing catch, organize players to be safely spaced and to throw parallel.



## Communicate appreciation of the ethics of baseball

The ABF has developed the “Baseball the Australian Way” document, which summarises important aspects of the manner in which we strive to play the game. You should be familiar with this document and its meaning.

Baseball has been played professionally for over 150 years, and competitively in Australia since the 1878 and has certain traditions which we respect, remembering the obligations owed to those who have gone before, and those who will come after.

- No matter what level you are involved with, play the game hard and take pride in what you represent.
- Keep the game moving: change over quickly between innings, have your team organized and well-prepared
- Ensure your players know what is expected, and demand that they come up to scratch.
- Respect your opposition: never ridicule them by word or action. For example, don't steal when you have a big lead, nor start doing things you would not do in a close situation (eg: try switch-hitting), nor laugh at the oppositions mistakes, nor start bullying an obviously inferior team.
- Be the best you can be, organise yourself: your attendance at training, your equipment, your extra work, your timetable, your annual plan, your game day routine. Have your players do the same.
- Educate each of your players to be a good team-mate: don't let egos hamper your team's performance. Encourage accountability.
- Master your body language: stay upright and alert when things are going bad. Never allow yourself to look beaten.



## Teach basic situational strategy

- Play for the big inning early in the game.
- Late in a close game, understand the value of a single run, and play accordingly.
- Ensure that your defensive and offensive strategies are consistent with one another.



## Recall key rule differences between Little League and regular baseball

There several key rules specific to Little league baseball which do not necessarily apply in regular baseball.

1. In every game, every player must field for at least 3 defensive outs and have at least one plate appearance. This is not a requirement in regular baseball.
2. In regular baseball, runners may take a lead on any base at their own risk. In Little League, they may not leave the base until the pitch crosses the plate.
3. There is no balk rule in Little League.
4. In Little league, collisions (or dangerous slides) are not permitted: when there is a play at any base other than 1<sup>st</sup> base, the runner must slide. While they are to be avoided in all forms of baseball, these are not prohibited in regular 'ball.

Some of these rules are used in other forms of junior baseball. As a coach, you need to familiarize yourself with the rules used in your team's league.





## Plan a suitable 2 hour training session

A comprehensive training session for this age should follow these guidelines:

1. Team meeting (5 minutes)
  - Review last game etc
  - Outline the session
2. Moving warmup (10 minutes)
  - Activity to raise body temperature
  - Joint mobility: rotations etc
  - Range of motion (avoiding static stretches)
3. Speed work (10 minutes)
  - Sprint mechanics drill
  - Acceleration
  - Short, fast starts and sprints (10-25m)
4. Throwing program (10 minutes)
  - Long-toss program
  - Position-specific throwing
5. Defence (25 minutes)
  - Small group games etc
  - Team drills: larger modified games, some instructional drills, bullpens
6. Hitting (30 minutes) – one or more of the following
  - Swing practice: individual tee drills, flips etc
  - Hitting circuit, incorporating several drills in sequence
  - Regular batting practice
7. Baserunning and Conditioning (15 minutes) – one or more of the following
  - Cover a specific aspect or complete a specific sequence of baserunning, including some to build fitness
  - Low-tech strength work: eg, chin-ups, SL box squats etc
8. Stretch (10 minutes)
  - Light activity to gradually cool the body
  - A mixture of light ballistic and static stretches (each held for >30sec), in order to increase range of motion
9. Review (5 minutes)
  - Feedback from players to coach
  - Feedback from coach to players
  - Communication regarding next game, training session etc



## Understand the basics of base coaching

1. Base coaches are very visible, and so must make an effort to embody the qualities we desire in our players: hustle, enthusiasm, fair play, inclusiveness.
2. The major base coaching duties are conducted from the 3B coaches' box.
3. The 3B coach gives offensive signs, reminds runners of the game situation, and signals to a runner approaching 3B from 2B that he should stop at the base etc. (There should be no need to tell the runner to continue home: he or she should be heading that way until stopped).
4. In keeping with the need for runners to learn to make their own decisions, the 3B coach does not assist the runners if they can see the ball for themselves.
5. The 1B coach reminds the 1B runner of the game situation (score, outs, inning etc) and of their task in the particular situation (slide into 2B, tag up on a fly, get to 3B etc).





## Organise a team to participate in a regular or modified baseball game

1. Safety issues: hitters and base runners in helmets, 15m distance from hitter, awareness of flying bats and balls; avoid collisions at bases and on fly balls (calling).
2. Philosophy: competitive games are fun, but winning on the scoreboard is not the main issue. Promote good sportsmanship, stay enthusiastic and reward effort rather than success. No negative comments about or to umpire etc.
3. Organisation of young players on the bench: sit in hitting order; one hitter on deck; gloves and drinks arranged for ease of access; parents stay out. 60 sec changes between inning: everyone runs to position (and off when opposition inning is over), take gloves out to those on base etc
4. Preparing for a game: write out your line-up (offensive and defensive), including copies for scorer, umpire and (according to local rules); team meeting; warm-up, including hitting and fielding practice if feasible. Have everyone ready on time.
5. Basic rules: foul balls, fly balls, force outs, tagging, hitting in order, scoring. Positioning of coaches. League-specific rules about leads, balks, number of strikes, number of hitters per inning, outs per inning, throwing bat etc



## **Section Three: Long-Term Athletic Development**

- Knowledge** - Name the first four stages of LTAD theory, and outline the key points of the  
FUNDamental stage
- Outline the LTAD model of athletic development (movement competency)
  - Outline a suitable on-field strength and conditioning program based on the ABF LTAD  
model
- Activities** - Conduct a suitable on-field strength and conditioning session based on the ABF LTAD  
model
- Conduct a structured warm-up which ties into LTAD model for the relevant age/level of  
athletic competence
- Instruction** - Teach correct execution of each exercise in the LTAD warmup
- Teach correct execution of each of the key LTAD exercises for the age level
  - Instruct all players in the basic tubing exercises

## Name the first four stages of LTAD theory, and outline the key points of the FUNdamental and Train to Train stages.

1. LTAD stands for Long Term Athletic Development
2. Based on research into all aspects of human development, outlines current understanding of best methods for athletic enhancement from early childhood to adulthood.
3. The name of the stages refer mainly to the coach's job during that phase. The stages are:
  - I. FUNdamental stage
    - a. Lasts from early childhood until the onset of puberty. Focuses on establishing all-round movement capability, learning through activity (games-based approach) and establishing a positive attitude toward physical activity.
    - b. Foundations for all aspects of athletic competence (strength, speed, balance, flexibility, hand-eye coordination etc) can and should be established at this stage.
    - c. Coach's job is to involve kids in a wide range of enjoyable and stimulating activities of an appropriate level of challenge. Their bodies are geared to adapt quickly, so a large volume of training is not needed to stimulate a strong training response.
    - d. At this stage, adult-imposed competition is of little, if any, value. Let the competitive urge emerge by itself.
  - II. Train to Train stage
    - a. Lasts through the growth spurt. Changing bodily proportions and dimensions makes the maintenance of coordination and skills difficult, but evidence strongly suggests that activities which challenge coordination through this phase will play a big role in developing an adult with superior skills.
    - b. The coach's job here, as well as helping the players enjoy sport, is to assist them in learning how they can get better if they want to: drills, drills and more drills; correct execution of exercises; nutrition and fluid maintenance, etc.
    - c. Response to training (improvement) can be slow, as most of the body's resources are directed toward growth, but it will all start to come together once they have reached their maximum height and start to "fill out".
    - d. The emphasis should still be on understanding and enjoying the process of getting better themselves, rather than winning competitions.
  - III. Train To Compete stage
  - IV. Train to Win stage
4. The warm-up provided is much more than a warm-up: it is a mild conditioning activity to start the LTAD process



## Outline the ABF's LTAD model of athletic development (movement competencies)

1. In order for a player to develop efficient technique, his or her body must be capable of executing the required movements. Many individuals, due to a somewhat sedentary lifestyle, are unable to execute basic movements because of restrictions that have developed. The aim of the LTAD model is to assist players to systematically overcome those restrictions, give them more functional bodies, enable them to develop the skills of the game to a much higher level, and in fact to enjoy a healthier life generally.
2. Children can begin the process of developing movement competency at a young age: a well-designed and properly implemented program is good, healthy exercise. We are not trying to produce muscle-men or -women.
3. There are **four properties** we are trying to develop and improve throughout the life of the player: stability, range of motion, control, and strength. An individual possessing these properties to a high degree in each joint and in their body as a whole can be said to have superior physical competence.
  - **Stability:** if the joint is injured, or has an inherent instability problem, it will be impossible for it to function properly. Any problems of this type must be overcome before athletic development in that area can occur. At all times through the LTAD process, there should be no wobbling during the movement – take care to ensure that the joint bends and straightens smoothly in the intended direction.
  - **Range of motion:** the movement is not restricted by muscular tightness
  - **Control:** the movement can be done slowly, stopped half way, reversed etc; they individual can control the movement.
  - **Strength:** the movement can be made in a controlled and stable manner throughout the full range of motion against a resistance.
4. The exercise progressions are organized into seven equally important movement “streams”, so called because there is a never-ending stream of ever more challenging exercises through which the individual may progress, starting with very simple activities and progressing to extremely challenging ones.
5. The **seven streams** are (there is some overlap):
  - Double-leg: the legs are doing the same thing at the same time. This eventually leads to the Olympic lifts, which are essential in developing maximum explosive power.
  - Single-leg: exercises in which, at any given time, each leg has a slightly different task. Since this is the way we generally use our legs in life (eg walking) and in a game, this stream produces significant on-field benefits.
  - Jumping: develops dynamic balance, coordination and power.
  - Pushing: upper body exercises where weight is moved away from the body (or the body away from a resistance: eg, a pushup).

- Pulling: upper body exercises where weight is moved towards the body (or the body toward a fixed object: eg, a chin-up). Improvement in this stream is far more important to baseball than the previous stream.
  - Shoulder function: Exercises which improve the quality of rotation in this critical joint. The rubber tubing exercises are an example.
  - Core: exercises to develop the function of the trunk
6. The player should do at least one exercise from each stream in each session.
  7. Each individual progresses in each stream in their own way, according to individual strengths and weaknesses, independently of the others.
  8. To gain maximum benefit, it is important not to rush progress.



### Conduct a structured warm-up which ties into LTAD model for this age/level of athletic competence

This is much more than a warm up: it incorporates important exercises for developing fundamental movement skills and athleticism. These activities are illustrated on the pages following.

Moving: (in lines from outfield foul line; 5-20m each way):

1. side skips (with arm swings)
2. 360s
3. Carioca
4. Frankensteins
5. Walking knee circles
6. Butt kicks (out) and then reverse butt kicks (coming back)

Sprint mechanics drills:

7. Walking Knee-to-chest stretch
8. Lunge walk with high knee
9. Sprinter's march
10. A-skip
11. 3s
12. 3 x flying 5m sprint
13. 3 x 10m beach flag starts

Stationary:

14. shoulder retraction and protraction (5-10)
15. arm marches (5 each side)
16. scapula supermans (5-10)
17. swimmers (5 each side)
18. reverse swimmers (5 each side)
19. Arm swings (5 of each): up and down; across and back; goals posts; back pats; trunk twists



## Teach correct execution of each exercise in the LTAD warm up

Moving: (in lines from outfield foul line; 5-20m each way):

1. Side Skips (with arm swings)
  - Stay lateral
  - Arms swing laterally from side of hip to above shoulder-height
  - Be smooth and rhythmic



2. 360s
  - Rotate fully while jogging, maintaining speed
  - Alternate directions



### 3. Carioca

- Move sideways (not  $\frac{3}{4}$ )
- Trailing foot goes in front of other foot on one step, behind on the next
- Be smooth and rhythmic



### 4. Frankensteins

- Alternate legs in a high front kick, stretching the hamstrings
- Control leg coming back down: keep it in the air for a short pause, then step onto that foot and swing other leg forward and up.
- Keep trunk up right and strong throughout





5. Walking knee circles
  - Maintain control on support leg
  - Work to keep trunk in upright posture
  - Move circling knee through best range of motion (without moving trunk)



6. Butt kicks (out) and then reverse butt kicks (coming back)
  - Trunk and head stay steady
  - Support leg firm and fully extended



**Sprint mechanics drills (illustrated in Section 8 – Running, on page 109):**

7. Walking Knee-to-chest stretch
  - Alternatively pull each knee to chest while fully extending the support leg.
  - Take one step forward between each repetition.
8. Lunge walk with high lift
  - Lowest position: trunk upright, long lunge with no wobbling, rear knee brushing ground, front knee remains behind front toe
  - Highest position: no wobbling, support leg fully extended, other leg fully folded up.
9. Sprinter's march
  - Remain tall throughout, taking short steps and adhering to high position described in lunge walk.
  - Stress upright posture
10. A-skip
  - Rhythmic version of Sprinter's March, with a small, rhythmic skip between each step.
  - Emphasise folding the recovering leg up fully (see above): "toe over knee".
11. "3s"
  - Jogging under control, rapidly lift and put down one leg every 3<sup>rd</sup> step (hence the name "3s"), using vigorous arm action at the same time.
  - Emphasise getting that foot all the way up (toe over knee) and all the way down quickly.



12. Flying 5m sprint

- Players take a running start so as to be at top speed by 1<sup>st</sup> marker
- Run at absolute top speed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> marker (5m distance)



13. 10m beach flag starts

- Players lie chest down with both hands under chin, facing the direction to be sprinted
- At coach's call, get up as quickly as possible and accelerate hard past marker (10m distance)



Stationary:

14. Shoulder retraction and protraction

- Standing with arms extended forward at shoulder height
- Push shoulder forward, then pull them back as far as possible
- Emphasise maximum movement of the shoulder blade



15. Arm marches

- Face down in pushup position, arms extended
- Alternatively touch hand to same side shoulder
- Try to hold trunk as still as possible throughout



16. Lying supermans

- Lying on stomach with the shoulders, elbows and wrists lifted as high as possible off the ground, arms bent and fingers pointing forward past the head (as if in a horizontal surrender posture).
- Slowly extend the arms out in front of face, then pull slowly back, keeping elbows, wrists and hands high off the ground throughout.





### 17. Swimmers

- Face down in pushup position, arms extended
- Alternatively touch hand to same side hip
- Try to hold trunk as still as possible throughout



### 18. Reverse swimmers

- Face up on hands and feet, trunk off ground, knees bent, arms extended
- Alternatively touch hand to opposite side shoulder
- Try to hold trunk as still as possible throughout



### 19. Arm swings. Keeping arms as tension- free as possible, swing them:

- up and down, in unison, then one up, one down



- across and back at chest height



- goals posts: cross arms in front, swing them then up and back to surrender position (stretches the pecs)



- back pats: alternatively swing arms up beside head, bending elbow to pat yourself on the back (stretches triceps)



- trunk twists: let arms swing like ropes while rotating trunk one way then the other





## Outline a suitable on-field strength and conditioning session based on the ABF LTAD model and Conduct the session in accordance with the ABF LTAD model

These exercises are usable from a young age, and form a foundation for more demanding work to be done in the future. The pattern of doing one exercise from each stream is established. They are to be done at slow to moderate speed: the player should concentrate on stability, range of motion and control; let strength come by itself.

One set of 5-10 repetitions is sufficient to start with –this will mean that the whole series can be done in about 10 minutes. More sets can be added for keen individuals once they adapt to the training load. Growing bodies are better equipped to adapt to a given activity than are mature bodies.

1. Double leg (DL): Bodyweight squat (5-10 repetitions). Key points:
2. Single Leg (SL): Supported SL Squats (5-10 reps each leg).
3. Jumping: DL take-off to DL landing (5-10 reps).
4. Pushing: Knee Pushups (5-10 reps).
5. Pulling: Cable Pullups (5-10 reps).
6. Shoulder function: Supermans (5-10 reps).
7. Core: Knee planks (30-120 seconds).



## Teach correct execution of each of the key LTAD exercises for the age level

Ensure that your players adhere to the key points in executing these exercises:

1. Double leg (DL): Bodyweight squat:
  - Maintain athletic posture and keep feet flat on ground throughout the movement
  - NO wobbling of the knees (stability)
  - Knees remain directly above the feet (stability and control)
  - Back remains straight: it may lean forward, but not bend forward
  - Hips go lower than the knees: many will be unable to do this, but that is the goal. Ultimately, they should be get the buttocks down near the heels: this is an example of full range of motion.



2. Single Leg (SL): Supported SL Squats  
(must be mastered without weight firstly; pictures show being done with weight, which is more advanced)
  - Place the rear foot “laces down” on a chair or bench behind the player
  - Front foot is well away from bench.
  - Bending the front leg, lower the back knee to barely graze the ground (range of motion – ROM).
  - NO wobbling, particularly front knee (stability).
  - Keep trunk upright throughout the movement.



3. Jumping: DL take-off to DL landing
  - The most important part of all jumping exercises is the landing.
  - ‘Stick the landing’: land under full control, feet flat on ground, knees behind toes, glutes act as shock absorbers, trunk strong
  - Start in half-squat posture, jump forward and land in the same posture
  - Distance is only important once the landing has been mastered: “make sure you can land before you try to fly”.



4. Pushing: Knee Pushups
  - Hands on ground a little either side of the chest, throughout the movement, the body is held rigid from shoulders through to knees.
  - Using the arms only, push on the ground until arms are fully extended.
  - Lower the body under control and repeat.



5. Pulling: Cable Pullups
  - This exercise is like a reverse pushup.
  - Equipment needed: a 3m piece of strong rope with a handle at each end (a loop tied through a piece of hose for a handle will do). This rope is wound around a high horizontal bar with the handle hanging low enough for the player to be able to reach while lying on the ground.
  - The player lies on his back, holds the handles, and keeping the body rigid, pulls himself up, instead of pushing up off the ground.
  - Many will need to start from a higher position, so that the body is at about 45 degrees, instead of horizontal





6. Shoulder Function: Scapula Supermans (aka Lying Supermans) (5-10 reps).
  - Lying on stomach with the shoulders, elbows and wrists lifted as high as possible off the ground, arms bent and fingers pointing forward past the head (as if in a horizontal surrender posture).
  - Slowly extend the arms slowly out in front of face, then pull slowly back, keeping elbows, wrists and hands high off the ground throughout.



7. Core: Knee planks (30-120 seconds).
  - Assume a knee-pushup position with the arms straightened, trunk held firm.
  - Maintain the position for 30 seconds (this can be extended to 2 minutes).



Left: knee plank



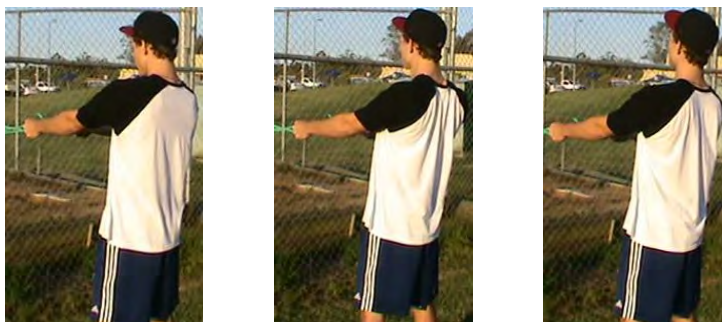
Right: full Plank



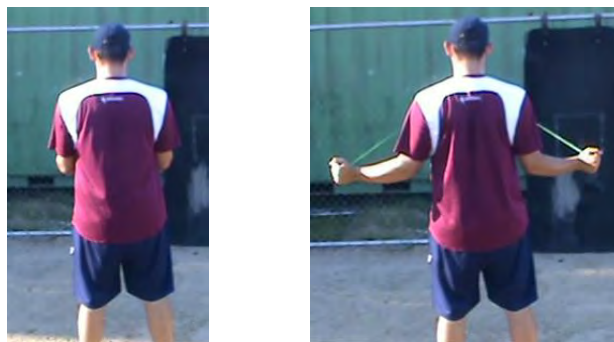
## Instruct all players in the basic tubing exercises

“Tubing” exercises are an excellent way to improve stability in the shoulder joint.

1. Scapula retraction: trunk stays still, arms stay straight, shoulder blades move forward and backward



2. Bi-lateral external rotation (elbow at waist)



3. Robberies



4. Bow & arrow (tubing anchored chest high, so direction of pull is horizontal)



5. Lawn mower (tubing anchored low, so direction of pull is on upward angle)



## **Section Four: Hitting**

- Knowledge** - Organise a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions
- Activities**  
contact - Conduct hitting activities to encourage tracking the ball, swinging hard and making
- Conduct swing practice designed to expand the contact zone
- Conduct a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions
- Instruction** - Explain that the intent of the swing is to hit long, hard line drives
- Provide simple instruction on an effective swing: rhythm, load, release
- Teach hitters effective drills for developing their swing

## Explain the intent of the swing

The goal of the swing is to hit long line drives. A “line drive” is ball that is “driven” hard so that it travels in a straight line. In order for the ball to travel a long way, it will need some elevation, but should not be lifted in a loopy arc: the aim is to drive it to the wall. This fact must over-ride all your hitting drills and each AB.





# Provide simple instruction on an effective swing

1. Rhythm (in starting posture)
  - a. Side-on to pitcher
  - b. Hands in vicinity of rear shoulder
  - c. Weight evenly distributed
  - d. Rhythmic shifting of weight from one foot to the other
  - e. Balanced and athletic
2. Load (preparing to swing)
  - a. Shift weight laterally to the back side (onto the rear leg)
  - b. Minimal rotation of trunk or legs
  - c. Rhythm, balance and control
3. Release (the swing)
  - a. Swing so that barrel is released through the contact zone
  - b. The first 1/3 of swing path should be short
  - c. The rest of the swing path is long “through the ball”



## Teach hitters effective drills for developing their swing

Hitters should be taught these drills at this age:

1. Flips (front toss). Make sure the “flipper” is well protected behind a good screen.



2. Stick-ball. Baseball played with a tennis ball and a stick, hitter's own side pitches to hitter, ball must bounce once before it is hit and hitter only gets one pitch.
3. Dry swings. Hitters practice their best, most aggressive swing with no ball involved at all. Learn to swing hard while keeping the head quiet.
4. Tee work. Hit ball off tee with a variety of foci: at different heights; inside and outside; to a distant target; to produce backspin; or just for distance





## Conduct swing practice designed to expand the contact zone

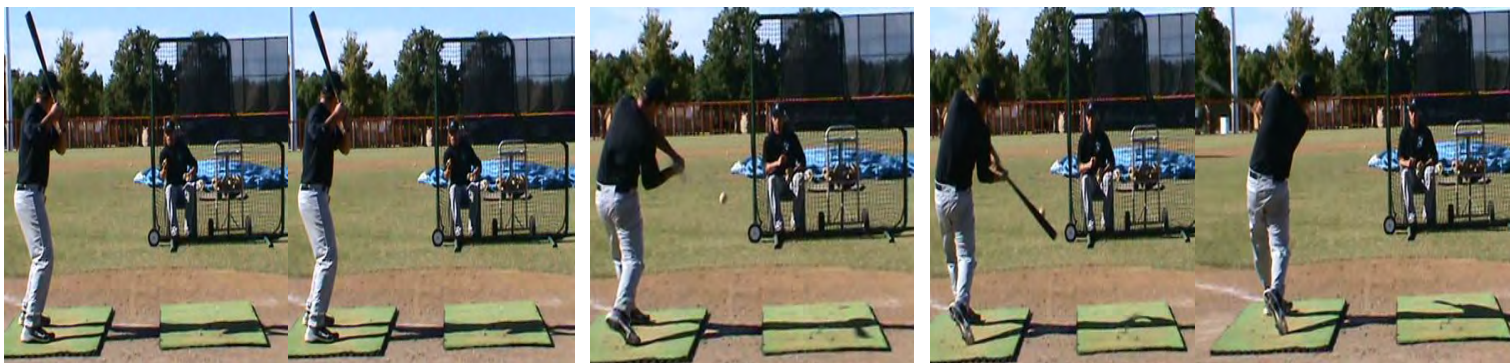
It is important that hitters develop the ability to hit the ball in a variety of locations. This is developed by the simple means of varying the location of the tee (up & down, in & out, forward & back) so that the ball duplicates the position of a pitch in various places.

This practice should also be encouraged in other swing drills: side toss, flips, live batting practice, and even in games. Do not encourage hitters to learn to hit only one type of pitch in one location. This may help a team to win in the short term, but hinders the hitter's progress in the long term.



## Conduct hitting activities to encourage tracking the ball, swinging hard and making contact

1. Flips (front toss). Good protective screening is required: coach must stay fully behind screen except for the instant the throwing hand is exposed while releasing the ball. Maintaining good rhythm coach uses underhand action to toss ball 4-6m into hitting zone.



2. Soft toss (side toss). No protective screen is required; coach lobs ball from 45° into hitting zone, hitter hits ball as directed. Emphasize a quiet head and an aggressive swing.

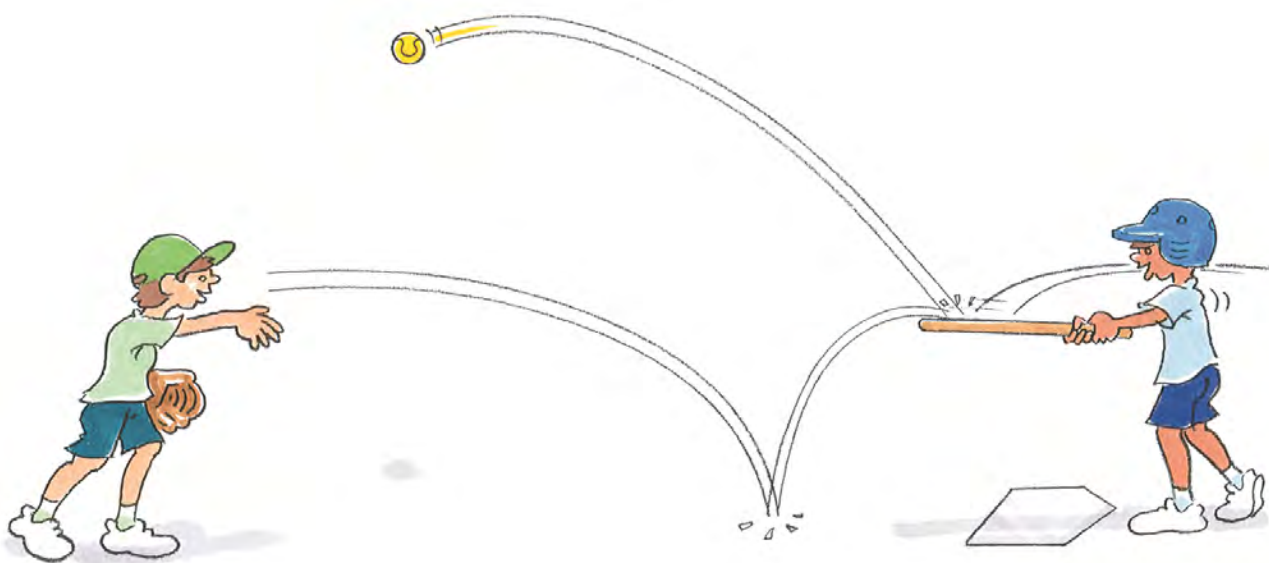


3. Rag ball (competitive game). “Ball” consists of a tightly-knotted rag, bat may be any suitable stick (eg broomstick). Invent a modified game to suit: Over-the-Line, yardball, short-distance baseball etc.





3. Stick-ball. Baseball played with a tennis ball and a stick, hitter's own side pitches to hitter, ball must bounce once before it is hit and hitter only gets one pitch. (For safety reasons, it's a good idea to manufacture a knob for the stick, using tape or some other suitable material.)



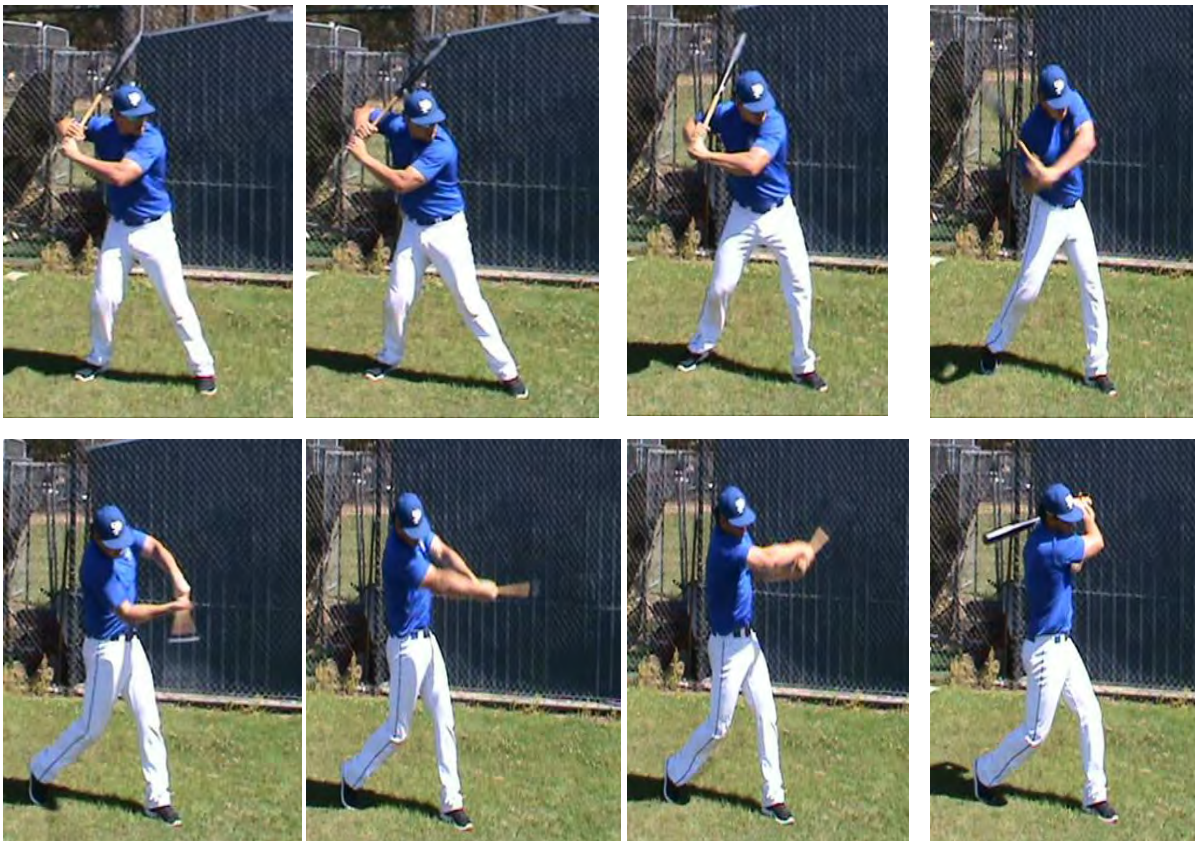
4. Overhand toss. Good L-screen required. This is just batting practice done with the thrower seated or kneeling, and the ball lobbed 5-10m overhand rather than underhand.



5. Live BP (batting practice). Good L-screen and a consistent thrower required. Ball thrown with full delivery but still in a manner that encourages success for hitter. Thrower must remain fully behind screen throughout (except for throwing hand at release point).



6. Dry swings. Hitters practice their best, most aggressive swing with no ball involved at all.





7. Tee work. Hit ball off tee with a variety of foci: at different heights; inside and outside; to a distant target; to produce backspin; or just for distance



## Organise and conduct a hitting circuit which incorporates several drills and progressions

In a club situation, where one coach is usually training many players, a hitting circuit can be an excellent way to keep them profitably busy. If resources are sufficient (balls and protective screens), hitting drills can be set up as a circuit to maximize the volume of hitting activity even without an excess of coaching assistance, the players moving on to the next at the coach's signal. Eg

1. Dry swings
2. Tee drill (4 players on two tees)
3. Side toss (two pairs hitting into a screen, ball flipped from a safe position on the hitter's open side.
4. Rag ball (one hitting, one pitching, two fielding).
5. Whiffle ball (hitting golf-ball sized whiffles with a broomstick)
6. Flips, overhand toss or live batting practice (thrown by coach or other players from behind a safety screen).

For example: two people (or two pairs) per station; all stations for a fixed duration, or everyone move on at a given signal. Be mindful of safety issues, and the need for ball retrieval

