

T- Ball Division

Coaches Package



Welcome to T-Ball, an introduction to baseball that focuses on fun activities at stations which introduce and re-enforce fundamental baseball skills

Session Plan Methodology:

- First and foremost, the kids should be having FUN!!!
- The program is centered around Five Cores – Throwing, Catching, Hitting, Fielding, Agility/Running
- Each practice session will incorporate all or most of the Cores with the objective of giving the players the opportunity to progress their development each week.
- ***Focus on them having safe fun, the skill development is hidden and will occur without most of them knowing about it.***

Important Dates

- April 2 – 6 -7:30 pm: Coaches and team managers' night at Elm Lawn Bowling Club
- April 5 – Fields Day: volunteers prep the field for play – fixing the sand, weeding, setting up the scoreboard, etc. (volunteers needed)
- April 8/9 – T-Ball Starts!
- April 26 – Opening Day Parade and Celebrations. It goes from the Kerrisdale arena down 41st to Elm Park. This coincides with Kerrisdale Days. You don't want to miss this. It was so much fun for kids and parents alike last year - even rainy!
- April 27 – Photo Day at Elm Park
- June 1 – Coaches/Managers World Series Game (who says only kids can play?)
- June 14 – Closing Day at Elm Park

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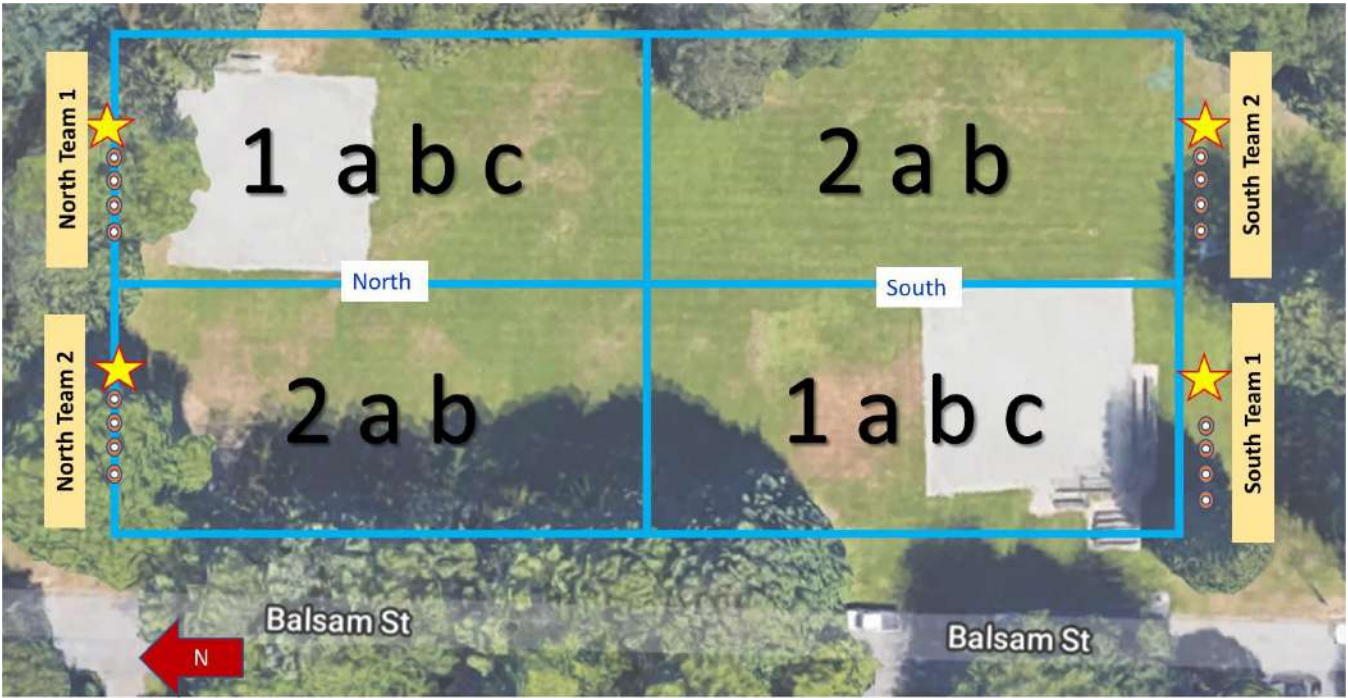
Season goals for Players – T-Ball

Overall goal: Players will have a fun introduction to sport , learn various ways to move their bodies, listen to coaches, and work together with others		
Skill	Time in Season	
Throwing	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Throw for distance - Throw with a variety of balls (bean bags, wiffle balls, tennis balls, incrediballs) - Take a step / Transfer weight while throwing (ball will come across the body) - Large target (e.g. 'past a row of cones'; through a large hula hoop)
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue distance throws - 'playing catch with friend' (underhand throw; bare hand; variety balls)
	End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plays catch with friends (glove; tennis ball) - Throw accurately towards first base
Catching	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some success catching a variety of balls from skilled thrower - Understanding of 'crocodile' catch & ready position
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hands (or glove) respond to incoming ball (understanding and moving to ball)
	End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catching high number of throw from skilled catcher - Catching some throws from friends
Fielding	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin to understand positioning of fielding - Learning to 'Throw left' (towards first) - Crocodile catch from gentle throw/roll from skilled thrower
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can set up fielding position - Move to ball, crocodile catch
	End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness in fielding positions - Understand how to move to retrieve ball (using crocodile catch)
Hitting	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can demonstrate proper hitting stance - Beginning concept of swing (e.g. no spin after, controlled, watch the ball)
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong hitting stance & swing - Swing flat - Controlled swing and solid contact - Solid contact with ball
	End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning to hit from pitch (coach thrown)
Agility/ Running	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run through first base to the outside; - Quickly set up with foot beside next base
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand arms pumping motion - Increasing reaction time to start running (e.g. drop bat & run; watch for hit & run; see ball coming towards them & run) - Beginning agility/new run patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Zig zag pattern o Cross step to get moving o Pivot & run
	End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comfortable running - Increasing speed - Comfortable with a variety of footwork patterns (shuffle/slide to side; cross step and run)

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Field Layout



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Weekly Practice Plan Schedule

Week	Dates	Station 1			Station 2	
		1a	1b	1c	2a	2b
1	Apr 8/9	Running Bases	1. Fielding/ Grounders	Catching	Hitting T	Throwing
2	Apr 15/16	Running Bases	2. Ground / Crocodile	Catching	Hitting T	Throwing
3	Apr 22/23	Running Bases	3. Fielding Throw to 1st	Catching	Hitting T	Throwing
4	Apr 29/30	Running Bases	4. Fielding Positions	Catching	Hitting T	Throwing
5	May 6/7	4. Fielding Positions	Obstacle Course	Running High Catch / Catching	Hitting T	Throwing
6	May 13/14	Fielders vs Runners	Over the Dugout	Playing Catch	Hitting T / Wiffle Toss	Throwing
7	May 20/21	4. Fielding Positions	Obstacle Course	Running High Catch / Catching	Hitting T / Wiffle Toss	Throwing
8	May 27/28	Fielders vs Runners	Over the Dugout	Playing Catch	Hitting T / Wiffle Toss	Throwing
9	June 3/4	4. Fielding Positions	Obstacle Course	Playing Catch	Hitting T / Wiffle Toss	Throwing
10	June 10/11	Fielders vs Runners	Playing Catch	Running High Catch / Catching	Hitting T / Wiffle Toss	Throwing

1c - Catching – Rotate between the Toss and Catch, Coach to Player and other variants. Include Parents to get as many reps as possible

2b – Throwing – Rotate through the Throwing Lessons Plans as you see works best for your team, work on rotating between Distance, Accuracy, One Knee Throwing, Rub/Grab/Throw – use creative targets

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Practice Sessions (60 min session)

- Coaches, please try to arrive a bit early each practice/game to get stations ready
- Day 1 will include handing out uniforms (remember this will take some time)
- Approx practice schedule:
 - o 5 min warmup
 - o 25 min (Stations 1 a b c)
 - o 25 min (Stations 2 a b)
- Depending on your numbers of players and coaches, either work as a whole group or split group or 3 groups for a/b/c (less than 6 ideally in a group) and work through your a/b/c or a/b stations as you see your players attention stay focused. Try to split your time between your sub-stations fairly evenly but rotate as you see fit. Adapt to your kids and pivot/change it up if they are losing attention. Keep them having fun!

Equipment:

- Equipment is located in the locked box beside each of the diamonds (Maple Grove South & North)
- Please ensure equipment is returned to box/locked

Field Set up/clean up:

- Teams will meet at their 'home cones' (near the star on map). Teams will alternate starting areas (Start at 1 a b c or 2 a b) and then switch. Do the take-a-knee debrief in the field with players (they can get distracted back at their 'home cones' with that gear and parents, and do a final cheer to finish
- Tuesday 6 pm Teams will modify the Blastball stations to get their starting areas ready each week & clean up stations after
- Wednesday 5 pm teams will set up their starting areas, and leave set up for next group
- Wednesday 6 pm teams will use the set up from previous session and clean up after

****teams are encouraged to follow the approximate timing listed, however, each team might vary the length of time on each drill. Teams change areas at half past the hour!**

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Games – approx. 75 minutes

**talk to the other coach before game to discuss how many innings you are aiming for 😊 and which balls you plan to use

Warm-up – 10 minutes (fun games involving throwing/catching/running/stretching)

Game: 60ish minutes

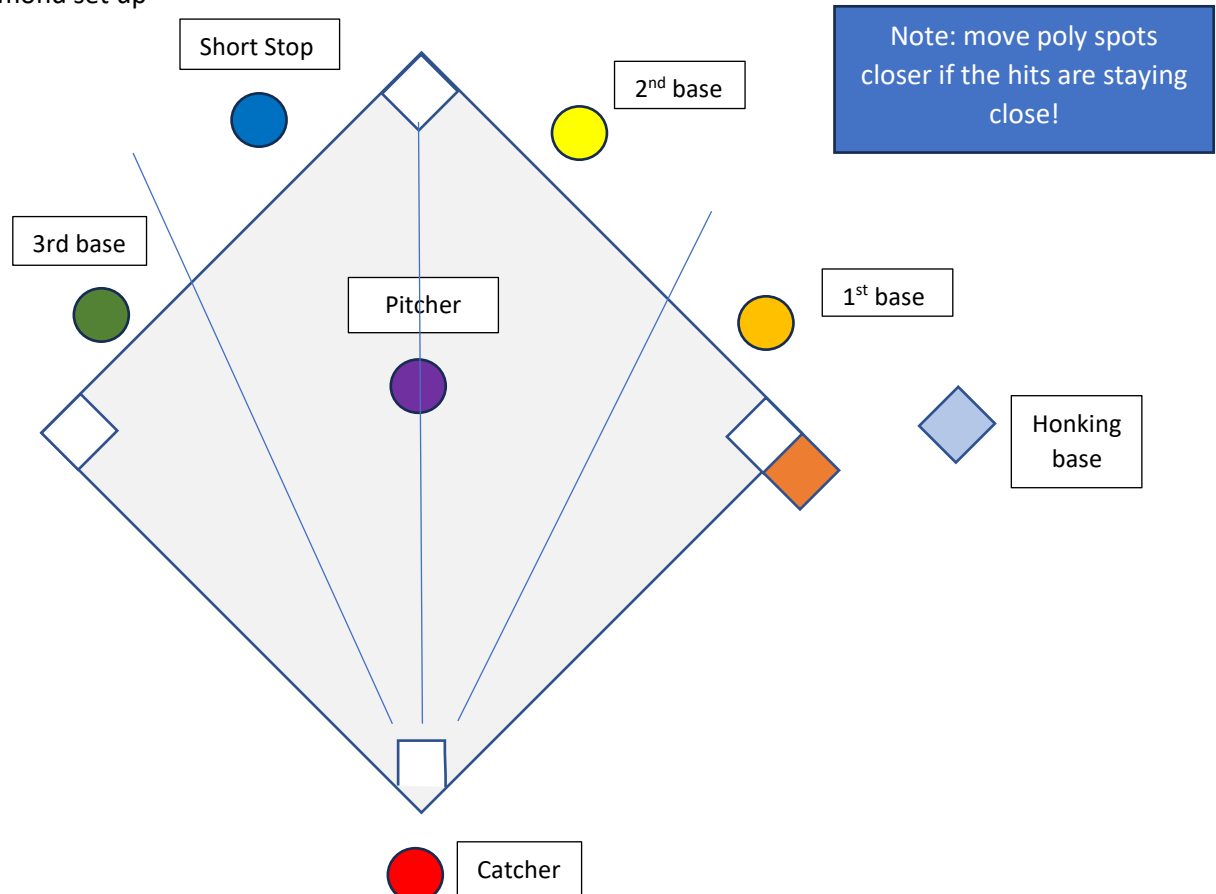
- 2-3 innings (about 20 min/inning) can vary depending on # of players/speed of game, always go once through batting order
- no outs/no scoring

Game setup:

Fielding

- Set out poly spots for players to stand on – they will run to catch/retrieve the ball and return to their spot
- Draw lines in the sand to set up the Diamond into 'slices' that each player is to get the ball
- If you have **6 players or less**, they will all play every inning
 - o Position players at: 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, short stop, catcher, & one extra infielder 'pitcher'
- If you have **7 or more players**
 - o 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, short stop, catcher
 - o Remaining players in the outfield with extra coach for the inning working on fun throwing games and/or catching pop flies

Diamond set up



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- During game:
 - o All (or many) fielders will likely run to the ball but encourage your players to stay in their 'slice'
 - o whoever gets the ball will throw to 1st
 - o 1st base player will catch the ball (or retrieve the ball) and then touch 1st base
 - o 1st base player will throw to catcher
 - o (catcher gives it to opposing coach to help set up next batter)
- **Note, this means at least 3 players touch the ball every play! 😊 Rotate fielders every 2ish hits**
- **when you rotate positions you might want to rotate players from the outfield... however, you might find it easier to switch outfielders each next inning (keep track of who has done what position if you can)**

Hitting

- One Coach working on Tee with hitter, one Coach working with the runners from 1st base, one Parent/Coach managing the kids on the bench
- **Start with the bases loaded! You can choose 3 players to run around the bases with one stopping at 1st, one at 2nd, and one at 3rd (change players next inning)**
 - o **Once the game starts, these players will be engaged – they wait for the hit and then run to the next base. Once they are home, they join the batting line up**
 - o ****This is based on Baseball Canada's 'Rally cap' program designed to keep players active and engaged**

Base Race (Relay) 5 minutes

- Split each teams in half to make a total of 4 groups (aim for equal numbers at each base; can mix teams!)
- Home Team lines up behind home plate with a coach/volunteer
- Away Team lines up behind 2nd base with a coach/volunteer
- When the coach says 'go', first player of each team races around the bases with a ball in their hand, then hands off to teammate and sits down away from other players waiting/running players.
- First group to finish all their players wins!
- Three cheers for other team to promote sportsmanship!

Take-a-Knee (baseball tradition for wind-down/session debrief) 2 minutes

- Have players come up with one thing they liked about the game; one thing they did well in the game; and one thing they would like to work on for next game!
- Try to point out specific moments that you really liked (e.g. I like how you all worked as a team; I like how quickly you ran the bases; I saw a huge improvement in your throwing/hitting/etc today)

Game Progressions for the Season

- Week 6+ Progress to more innings depending on available time
- Week 6+ Progress to Introducing Outs, ensure to not just put your 'best' players on first all the time but start introducing Outs as it will speed up running to the bases and speed of grounders and tosses to closest base. You will be surprised how they progress. Maintain everyone bats for the inning, not 3 outs for an inning.
- Game Balls – adjust for your teams – discuss with Coaches Pre-game

Weeks	1-4	5-7	8-10
Game Balls	Tennis	Incrediball	Level 1 (T-Ball) Baseball

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Feedback

Tips for providing feedback

Focus on the process, not the outcome

- We often cheer VERY loud when the child hits the ball or target... but it's important to give positive feedback based on the technique or the effort **"wow, did you notice how when you took a step the ball went farther - what did that feel like?"** (this will build the child's confidence/self-esteem as they see improvement through effort)

Provide meaningful/specific feedback

- It's easy to fall into the trap of becoming a 'cheering squad' - 'good job, well done', but ...
 - o If they actually didn't do a good job, they will know and stop believing you when you say it; and/or the words just become part of the backdrop... and the player stops listening to them at all.
 - o They will continuously look to you (externally) for the appraisal, instead of learning to enjoy the movement for what it is;
 - o They don't **learn** anything from good job ... instead, try 'I like the way you held the bat over your shoulder that time! Let's see if you can keep your arm up like a chicken wing next time' is positive & provides information they can improve from

Less is more: Don't over-analyze / over-coach

- 3-6 year old's will get the 'feel' of swinging a bat & throwing a ball through exposure and then they will begin to fine tune a skill... if we provide too much feedback, too often, they rely on us - sometimes, just letting them swing the bat a few times lets them feel what might work better
- Providing visuals/imaginary ideas can help the movement more than explaining it. e.g. Step on the bug with your foot as you throw or hold your back arm up like a chicken wing before you swing
- As a coach, we are watching for technique & working to build strong skills... but to the players – they are having FUN!