

FLLGS

AA

Practice Plan

General Manager Guidelines

When you get your roster be sure to contact all of your parents as soon as possible and introduce yourself. Parents are often just as excited as the girls to start the season and this is a great time to invite your parents to participate. All a parent needs to do to participate is submit a volunteer application and a signed Code of Conduct to the Safety Officer.

Give the parents your practice schedule and explain how important their help can be to the success of the season. Always have an open line of communication with your parents and provide them with an easy way to contact you (either cell or e-mail). They are trusting you with the safety of their daughter and we expect you to take your responsibility seriously.

Direct your parents to our website www.fllgs.org and explain this is where their season schedule and team page will be located. Be sure to direct them to our contacts page where they can find contact information for your Division's Commissioner, Safety Officer, Player Agent and League President.

AA Division

At this level girls will be introduced to many different aspects of the game. Girls will be learning how to pitch, bunt and steal. Girls will be going from 1st to 3rd on base hits and will no longer go from base to base. Third base will most likely be gated.

AA Division is an instructional level and this includes during games. The games should be stopped as needed to demonstrate proper technique or to explain the rules of the game. Instruction should be give to both teams at once. Think of game settings as an on-the-field classroom. You should not be trying to win AA games.

Only normally positioned defensive players should be used and free substitution is expected. All players should rotate through as many defensive positions as possible. No player should sit defensively more than one inning until all players have sat at least one inning.

First Practice

First practice is the time to get to know the girls. Commit yourself to learning all of your player's names by the end of the practice.

A nice ice breaker is the "**Hot Potato, Name Game**". Have the girls form a circle with you and your coaches joining in. Once in the circle everyone goes around and introduces themselves. Then you grab a ball and the girls have to soft toss (underhand) the ball from girl to girl in no particular order in the circle. Before a girl passes the ball they have to say the name of the girl they are passing the ball to. The girls have fun and learn their teammate's names very quickly.

When the Name Game is complete it is a good time to take your first water break and explain the ground rules for FLLGS and your team. Make it a positive experience and tell them what you expect from the girls whenever you get together.

Ground rules are very important in maintaining control of your team at all times. You might be tempted to skip this step but it is critical to the success of your team that the girls know what is expected of them. All children have a tendency to lose focus when in a group and our girls are no different. Always demonstrate patience and remain composed when addressing your girls. Keep it fun, but remember that above all else you are responsible for the girl's safety and need to take charge.

Here are some basic rules you should follow:

- Have fun practicing and playing the game. Softball time is softball time.
- Always respect your teammates, coaches, umpires and opponents.
- Always try your best.
- Don't worry about the score.
- Nobody else talks when a coach is speaking (this can unravel very quickly so stay on top of it).
- Always hustle to all stations including water breaks.
- Never leave the field at end of practice or game without permission from a coach.

Coaches Notes:

General Practice Outline

90 to 120 minutes Total

Warm-ups & Stretching (10-15 minutes)

- Light jog around the bases. Not a race & not for speed.
- Form running from base to base
 - o High knees
 - o Butt kicks
 - o Lunges
 - o Statue of Liberty
 - o Shuffles

- Afterwards call them into a circle & have them stretch out there arms
 - o Forward arm circles
 - o Backwards arm circles
 - o Flex wrists up
 - o Flex wrists down
 - o Arm over head & pull down.
 - o Arm bars across chest

- **Water break**

Practice Stations (15 to 20 minutes each station)

Put the girls into groups of 3 or 4 with 3 to 4 different stations, depending on number of coaches and rotate them through all stations.

STATION #1: Hitting T-station.

It would be preferable for the girls to hit into a hitting net. If a net is not available, hit into open space or the backstop. The Tee should be positioned in the front edge of where home plate would be located (use a throw down plate if available) as that is where contact should be made. Make sure the girls line up even and square to the plate. You can put your foot imprints in the batters box so girls know where to stand. As the weeks progress you can incorporate soft toss into the backstop then soft toss into the field where the fielders field the balls and throw them back to the coach.

STATION #2: Throwing station.

Pair the girls up with a teammate and have them throw to one another. If you have more parent volunteers the players can throw to them. The ball should be held by the laces in a 4 seam grip. They should step with their glove foot and get their body into a T position with the ball facing down and away from their body and with their glove pointing towards the target. As they throw the ball at a three quarter angle their bodies should rotate back square to the target.

STATION #3: Fielding station-ground ball.

Girls should get on one knee and “snatch” the ball up. Player should have her glove on the ground palm up and open. If you have four girls you can have them pair up and roll the ball to one another. As weeks progress have the girls get into an “Athletic Position”, feet shoulder width apart, bent knees, glove out in front and low to the ground.

STATION #4: Fielding station-thrown or fly ball.

Explain to the girls when to catch the ball with “fingers up or fingers down.” Anytime the ball is over the girl’s waist fingers should be pointing up towards the sky. Anything below the waist girls should have fingers pointing down towards the ground. A coach should toss the ball to the girls one at a time ensuring proper technique.

As the weeks progress Stations 2, 3 & 4 can be combined into one drill where they have to field the ball properly using the “Fairfield Crocodile”, step and then throw the ball to a coach.

- **Water Break**

Base Running (5 to 10 minutes)

Have the girls line up at home plate. Girls should swing without a bat, and run straight through 1st base. One of your coaches should stand by the outfield grass and have the girls give them a “high five” after they run through the bag. Make sure the girls don’t start to slow down until two full strides through the bag.

End of Practice Running Drill (5 minutes)

Try to end each practice with something fun and energetic. You can then return the girls to their parents with their blood pumping and energized.

“Peanut Butter & Jelly” is a fun relay race girls love to play. Line up half the girls at 2nd base and the other half of the girls at home plate. Try to split the girls evenly by speed.

The first girl at home and the first girl on 2nd base leave at the same time running counter clockwise around the bases returning back to where they started and tags the second girl who now runs around the bases. The first team to have all the girls back to there original starting point wins the drill.

The above five stations and running drills should be the basis for all of your practices. You can modify them to keep the girls interested but always dedicate the bulk of your practices to the basics done properly: Throwing, catching, fielding, hitting and running.

- **Water break and chat time.**

Coaches notes:

Additional Drills

1, 2, Ready Position

This drill will help the girls learn proper footwork when the pitch is being delivered. When the pitcher goes into her windup, all the girls on the field take two steps forward and get into an athletic position. Their feet should be shoulder width apart, their weight on the balls of their feet, knees bent with glove out front and low to the ground.

Outfielders should also get into an athletic position but they can stand more upright.

Cut off Drill

Set up lines of three or more girls each. Space them 15-20 feet apart. Each line of girls has their own ball. The drill starts with the ball on one end of the line with that player throwing to the player in the middle. The girl in the middle then makes a proper turn (following her glove hand) and throws the ball to the player at the other end of the line. The ball then goes back down the line and the drill repeats as required. The lines of girls can be more than three players and can stretch across the field. This is a great relay game to play with two or more groups.

Golden Glove

Line up all the girls at second, shortstop or third (depending on arm strength). Hit ground balls to them and have them complete the throw to first. After several reps by all the girls you can then make it an elimination game with the last girl remaining winning the Golden Glove.

Sliding Drill

Rainy days on wet grass are a good day to practice sliding. The girls get muddy and have a good time (although their parents don't love it). A slip and slide is also a useful teaching tool. When sliding the girls should always go feet first, legs in a figure four with hands up. The girls should not jump and land hard on their bottoms. Encourage them to keep their hands up to avoid injury to fingers and wrists.

Take the Turn Base Running Drills

On any ball that is hit to the outfield the batter should always look to take the extra base. Only on ground balls to the infield should girls run straight through first base.

Have the player swing (with or without bat) and have them run to first and round the bag. To encourage them to make a proper turn, position a coach directly in the first base line seven to ten feet in front of the bag towards home plate. The girls should go around the coach and cross the first base bag at roughly a 45 degree angle and

proceed seven to ten feet towards second base along the same arc. Position another coach or player at this location for the runner to tag and then return to first quickly.

You can enhance this drill by having the girls go from home to second base and finish with a proper slide.

Bunting Drill

Girls start in their normal batting stance but positioned further up in the box towards the pitcher. When the pitcher begins her motion the batter rotates her torso square to the pitcher. The batter's feet should not move location but should pivot towards pitcher on the balls of the feet. The batter's top hand slides up the handle of the bat and pinches the bat just below the barrel where the handle begins to taper. Her top hand fingers should not wrap the barrel-they should be in trigger pulling formation with the bat barrel resting on top of her index finger knuckle with her thumb over top to stabilize the bat.

The bat should be angled up and out in front of the plate. The bat starts at the top of the strike zone. Any pitch above the bat is a ball and the bat should be swung back out of the strike zone. On a lower strike the player bends her knees to meet the ball; she does not lower the bat with her hands and more than necessary. The batter should "catch" the ball with the bat. She should not lunge or stab at the pitch. As long as she is positioned up in the box with the bat in front of the plate she will lay down a bunt in fair territory.

Coaches Notes: