

## Spring Training Checklist -2005

### Cal Ripken League

All Coaches are expected to use the following checklist and teach these skills during the Spring Training Session and throughout the year (Superior Youth Baseball Organization)

Please direct any questions on these drills or points of emphasis to Coach Dembroski (SHS) dembrd@superior.k12.wi.us  
395-1707

#### **Throwing and Receiving**

- Three Step Throwing - practice throwing motion of taking ball out of glove 3 times before throwing (point front shoulder and glove at target while bringing throwing arm & ball back, keep thumb under baseball)
- Practice keeping their glove from falling or dropping back during and after throw (glove should end up around chest & side)
- Firm Front Side Throwing - have your chest face your partner and practice taking ball out of glove and throwing without moving your glove from a starting position in front of your chest
- Regular catch - after catching ball, pivot back foot, step with front foot, and throw (using techniques learned above)
- Catch the ball using two hands and do not reach - move your feet to catch the ball in the middle of your body whenever possible
- Have your glove in the proper position - glove (thumb) is pointing up on throws above your waist and glove (thumb) pointing down when below your waist
- Play catch with out gloves - soft tosses, catch with two hands (help develop soft hands and decrease fear of ball)
- Catch with a purpose: Target Toss contests (anything between your shoulders and knees = 1 point), short hop contest (toss short hops to partner, and the first to make partner miss three wins) & Play long toss 75-95 feet (get beyond length of bases when playing catch in outfield)

#### **Infield**

- Step to the ready position on each pitch - end up in an athletic position, knees bent, with glove out in front of body, ready to field (step with glove side foot, then throwing side foot at time of pitch, end with feet wide/parallel and with glove out in front of body)
- Fielding ground balls - top hand above glove, field and funnel glove to belly button
- (coach should see button on top of cap, back should be flat, field ball in front of body)
- Making the throw after fielding - "getting on the skateboard" by pivoting, stepping and throwing (point front shoulder and glove at target)
- Roll Ground balls from side to side, roll slow rollers, one hoppers, and hitting regular ground balls (two or more coaches hitting at a time) (ground balls to the left, middle, & right, short hops to the left, middle, and right and slow rollers and hot shots)
- Double play feeds and throws, 1B scoops, 3B slow rollers/bunts
- covering bases on steals and tags

#### **Outfield**

- Also step to ready position on each pitch
- Practice a drop step and cross over step for ball hit over right and left shoulder
- Practice catching fly balls with two hands on throwing side of body, glove side foot forward

#### **Outfield continued**

Two kinds of fielding for ground balls - with nobody on base, drop knee and be ready to block any ball that takes a bad bounce  
- with runners on base glove down, one hand fielding, while moving toward ball

Use tosses by coach to practice fly balls - tosses over right shoulder, left shoulder, over head, bloopers in front, point to have fielders change direction (in addition to actually hitting fly balls)

Teach outfielders to crow hop (catch with glove side foot forward, kick back leg forward and through - land, then step and throw)

### Catching

Drop and Block - Do not try to glove balls that are in the dirt, keep bare hand behind glove, glove on the ground between legs, using your gear as protection

practice fielding bunts/dribblers (get around ball so that front should be facing target when you pick up)

receiving: do not let ball push glove around, do not move entire arm to frame - only wrist, above all catch the ball!

Throws on steals and picks: to 2B: butt off your legs, jump switch & separate (do not jump forward), elbows high, shorter arms,

Foul fly balls: remove mask, find ball, get your back to the plate, toss the mask only afterward,

### Hitting

Bat Grip -- line up middle knuckles and hold bat more near base of fingers (do not choke bat deep in your hands)

You DO NOT need to have your back elbow up! Your elbows can stay pointed down (try swinging with your back elbow up - it is impossible)

Height of your hands - start letter high or higher and finish letter high or higher

DO NOT Drop your hands then swing - simply step then pull hands through the strike zone

Start with a wide stance using both eyes to see the pitcher (feet 2x's shoulder width) - this will encourage short stride and better balance

Stride should be extremely short, soft, and low - again to keep batter balance and decrease the amount of time foot is in air (try hitting with front foot in air).

Slow motion "Picture Perfect": Stance, Load (step without dropping head or hands), squish (start to squish bug without starting hands), finish (complete

swing with hands finish above letters and belly button facing direction you hit)

Batting Practice with coach pitching, soft toss from coach, big and little whiffle ball batting practice, Batting T, Pitching machine, dry swings,

### Bunting

Stance: move up in the batters box, slide top hand up on the bat, pivot on the balls of your feet (so your toes face the pitcher), have bat at the top of the strike zone

Bat Angle: extend barrel of bat (right hand batter) to bunt down the third base line, avoid bunting back to the pitcher

Making Contact: keep your bat almost level (slight up angle), bend your knees to bunt lower strikes (don't drop barrel), only bunt, strikes, pull back bat on balls

Have players bunt regularly before (during) batting, make it contest (who can get more down the third base line), practice two strike bunting,

### Pitching

Learn Proper Windup (broken into three parts): 1. Stance on rubber to balance point 2. Balance point to front foot strike 3. Foot strike to finish

1. both feet on rubber, small step back with non pivot foot, pivot foot so that side of foot in contact with rubber, lift knee to chest, head stays locked on target entire time, hands are still together (the balance position)
2. drive leg goes down then straight to target (slide fwd), hands break once leg starts to go forward, at foot strike throwing arm should still be all the way back, extended (not coming forward yet) and glove should be pointing toward target, head and eyes have not changed - still locked in on target
3. From foot strike: front foot is slightly closed and facing in line with the catchers glove, arm begins forward with great velocity, glove side does not fall down or pull back until after release (see firm front side throwing), head and eyes do not move and stay locked on target

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|  | Introduce the idea of throwing to spots vs. throwing strikes: low and in/low and away, 0-2 pitches, change locations, etc. using a basic two seam fastball  |
|  | Learn to throw a change up: same arm speed, only the grip is different: as simple as a three finger fastball, have the ball deeper in hand, or circle change (index and thumb make circle) comfort of grip is key (tell them they can throw curve balls when they start shaving!) |
|  | Have pitchers experiment with different grips while warming up (ie. Pitchers warm up today using change grip)   |
|  | Five minute mechanics: at every practice have all players practice developing the proper windup, using the 3 steps  |
|  | Pitchers fielding Practice: covering first, comebackers, fielding bunts, covering home, squeezes, etc.  |
|  | Introduce towel drills to help players work on mechanics and the concept of a late release (pitcher uses a 12-15" towels instead of ball and completes a proper windup and snaps the towel on a partner holding his glove 5-6 shoe lengths from the pitchers front foot)          |

**Team Defense:**

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|  | Learn traditional infield/outfield cut offs to each base  |
|  | Teach basic bunt coverages (what if runner on first, runner second, etc.)   |
|  | Teach back up responsibilities of all fielders  |
|  | Practice defensive positioning adjustments (Situations: infield in when you expect a bunt, infield in for play at plate, double play depth, etc.)   |
|  | Set plays to defend first and third situations  |
|  | Continue Learning the rules of the game (practice situational baserunning on the bases, in the outfield as a large group)   |
|  | Teach players how to & when to slide: do it in the outfield in foul territory, on a wet day (tuck leg and straight leg, stay off knee, slide on butt)   |
|  | Practice rundowns: (separate and sprint, ok to make a fake, call for ball, follow throw, & do not stand in straight line with runner, zero or one throw)<br>(you can practice this at two maybe three bases at once with multiple pitchers) |

**Practice Outlines - 10 to 20 minute sessions/skill**

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|  | warmup & throw (include 5 minute pitching mechanics and throwing contests)  |
|  | Individual Defense (infield and/or outfield fundamentals) *maybe catchers as well   |
|  | Hitting (create 2-3 hitting stations & rotate) *Avoid one player batting and the rest doing nothing, but being bored!                           |
|  | Team Defense (situational play, if ball hit to left.... If a runner on second....)  |
|  | Baserunning (again situational, if nobody out.... Etc)  |
|  | Pitchers: mechanics, towels, on the mound, pitchers fielding practice (PFP), *maybe non pitchers work on fly balls or grounders for 15 minutes? |