

FLLGS

Majors 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.

Majors Division

At the Majors level girls will be playing competitive softball and should practice and prepare accordingly. Teams at this level are selected by straight draft. Instruction is primarily done at practices and the games should be played competitively. During games teams will use a continuous batting order and field nine properly positioned defensive players.

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.

First practice is the time to find out what the girls know or don't know. Get a feel for their knowledge of the game so you can tailor your practices to prepare them for the challenges and expectations of Majors.

As always, you should 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.

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 with arm up and twist
 - o Statue of Liberty
 - o Shuffles
 - o Kareokee
 - o Toe touch to opposite hand
 - o High knee touch to opposite elbow
 - o Full sprints

- 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**

Once water break is over, have the girls pair up and begin to throw. While they are throwing you and your coaches should be walking around the group to make sure they have proper form. They should have proper "T" formation and follow through.

Practice Stations (15 to 20 minutes each station)

Put the girls into groups as required. Make sure to rotate the players through all stations.

STATION #1: Soft Toss Hitting Station (half the team)

This station can be combined with fielding. Take the girls out to the left or right field line with their bats helmets and gloves. One girl will hit soft toss thrown from the side by a coach. One girl will be catcher for the coach and the remaining girls will be in the field. It works well in this drill if each player hits a half bucket or more of balls and the balls are kept in the field until she is finished. At that point the fielders will throw the balls in one at a time to the catcher who reloads the bucket. The catcher becomes the hitter, the hitter becomes a fielder and one fielder now becomes the catcher.

STATION #2: Fielding Station (half the team)

Set a basic infield and hit groundballs to the girls ensuring proper form. The girls should be using the **1,2, Ready** technique they learned in AA. Work around the entire infield making plays at all bases and rotate the girls through all positions.

STATION #3: Pitchers and Catchers.

In Majors you have hopefully drafted two or three players with already have pitching skills. Make sure you dedicate adequate time at each practice to allow your pitcher's to do their work and continue their development. Your pitchers might be working with their own instructor and is critical that you do not try to change anything in your player's mechanics. If you have any concerns about your players pitching bring them up to her parent.

Stations should be used at all of your practices. Feel free to change the sequence of the stations or run different drills to keep the girls interested and learning. A regular infield and outfield practice session should be done at every practice. Girls should be rotated through all positions including catcher.

- **Water Break**

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 and can start with a slight shoulder turn. This is to help them with their first step, which is always backwards.

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 Drill

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 puling 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 should bend her knees to meet the ball; she does not lower the bat with her hands any 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.

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 & the other half 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: