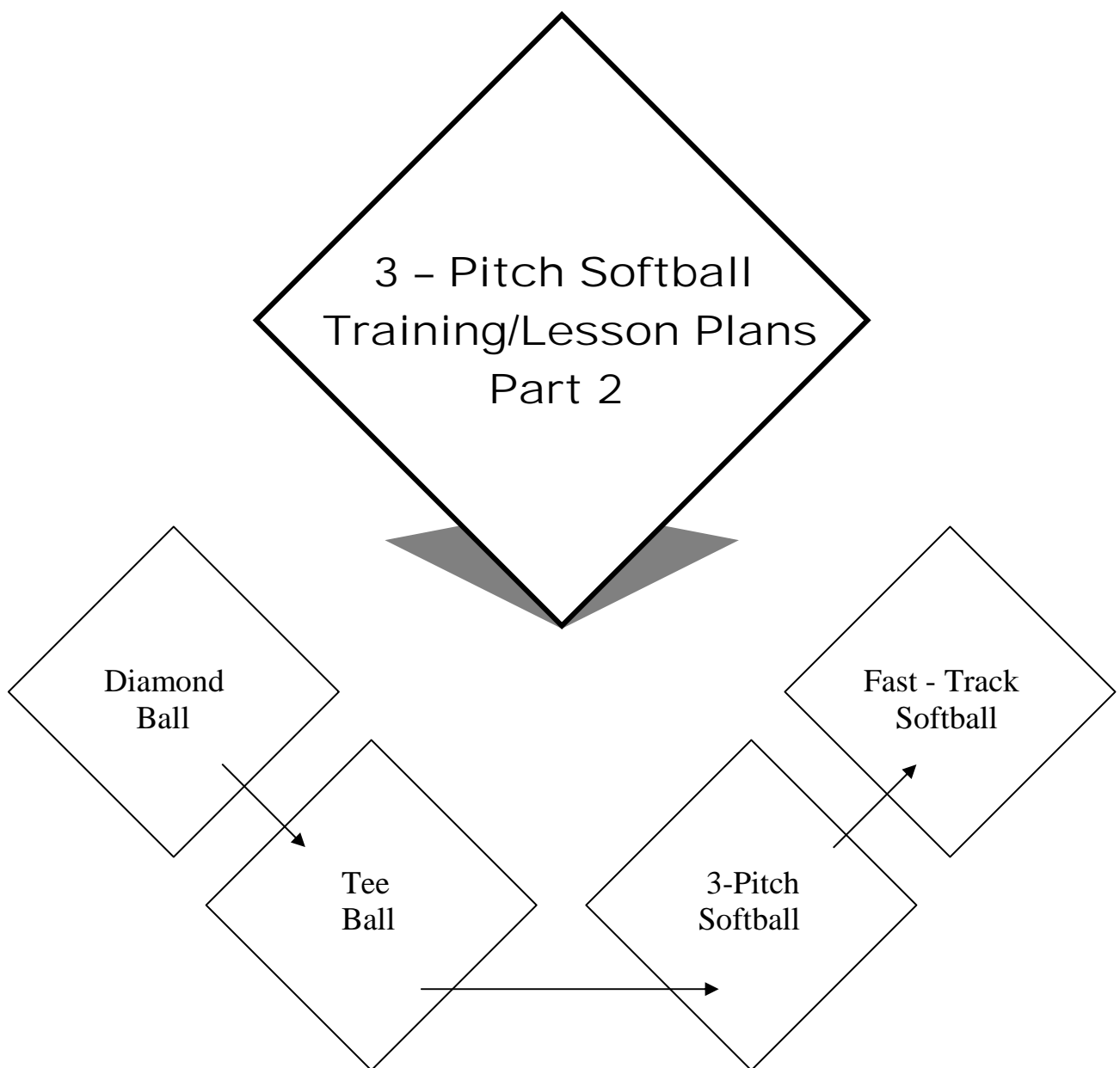




## Junior Games Pathway



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**SESSION 7**  
**3-PITCH SOFTBALL**

# BASE RUNNING

---

## Equipment

A full set of bases  
1 soccer ball  
2 Bats

## Warm – Up

*5 mins*

### Stick In the Mud

- Using the confines of the diamond one player is “IT”
- The other players run around inside the diamond.
- The player that is “IT” tags the other players running around inside the diamond.
- When a player has been tagged they must stand still with their legs apart.
- A player that hasn’t been tagged must crawl through the “stuck” players legs so that they can run around again.

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

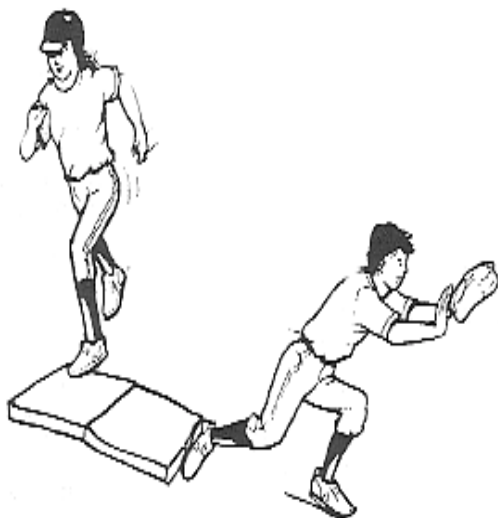
*10 mins*

### RUNNING TO FIRST

#### Tips:

1. Drop the bat, do not throw it.
2. The first step is always with the back foot
3. Run (on your toes) just outside the base line (pump arms)
4. Touch the front edge of the outside base.
5. Don’t slow down until after touching the base (Take short steps to reduce speed)
6. Turn left on the spot and return directly to the base

## Running Through First Base

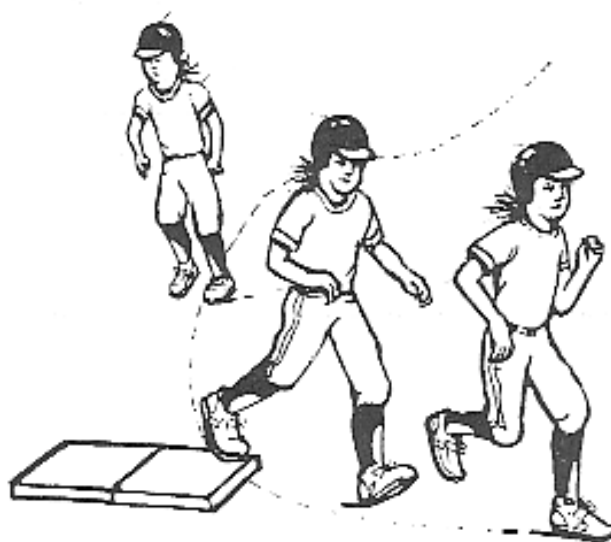


*10 mins*

## ROUNDING THE BASES

### Tips:

1. Run in Foul Territory
2. Swing out to the right when within 2 metres of the base
3. Run in a small arc
4. Contact the inside corner of the base.
5. Do not slow down to touch the base.



## ACTIVITY

- Get the players to run through first
- Practice rounding first then running through to second base

G A M E
---------

*10 mins*

### **Tunnel Ball Rounders**

- Divide the players into two teams
- One team is the fielding team the other one is the batting team
- The fielding team spreads themselves out in the diamond area, including the outfield.
- The batting team line up at home plate
- The soccer ball is placed on home plate and the batter must kick the ball as hard as they can.
- They then have to run around the bases, using the correct technique that has just been taught, if they run the bases incorrectly then any points that they score are not counted.
- The fielding team must field the ball and form a straight line. They must then roll the ball through the legs of every player in the line just like tunnel ball
- If the fielders get the ball through every players legs before the runner gets home then they get one point.
- If the runner beats the fielders then they get one point
- Once every one has batted then the teams swap over

**SESSION 8**  
**3-PITCH SOFTBALL**

# LEADING OFF BASE ON A PITCH

---

## Equipment

A full set of bases  
Balls  
Helmets  
Bats  
1 Glove per player

## Warm – Up

**5 mins**

### **Red Rover**

- One player is “it” and stands in the middle of the diamond facing towards the third base/home plate baseline
- All other players stand on the baseline
- The player that is “it” calls out a player to try and cross the diamond to the first base/second base baseline without being tagged by the player that is “it”
- If the player makes it successfully the rest of the players then all run across trying not to get tagged.
- If they are tagged though they then join the player in the middle and become “it” as well
- At any stage the player that has been chosen to cross the diamond can yell out “Bullrush”. When this is called the rest of the players can all cross at the same time as the chosen player.

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

*10 mins*

### **LEADING OFF A BASE ON A PITCH- TRACK START**

#### **Tips:**

1. Face the next base, place left foot on front edge of the base and right foot in front of the base (If at first the white base is used)
2. Crouch slightly by bending knees and bending forward from the waist
3. After the pitcher releases the ball push off the base to start running
4. Take a few strides then be ready to return to the base if necessary



**NOTE:** As the players get more advanced in leading off from the bases they can then go on to do the following rolling start. Either, though, can be used at the beginning level.

*5 mins*

#### **Activity**

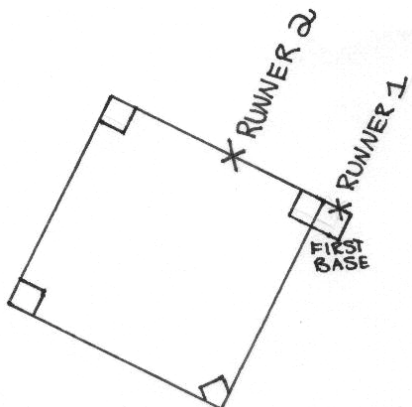
- Get the players to break up into even groups at each base.
- Get them to lead off the base on the clap of your hands so that you can see all of the players
- Practice until all players have got some idea of the of the technique

# GAME

10 mins

## Chase Running Drill

- Break the players up into pairs
- Runner 1 starts at first base, while runner 2 stands 3 metres from first base and in the direction of second base.
- On 'Go' both runners take off for second base with the player at first base using the correct technique for taking off from the base
- Runner 1 tries to catch runner 2 before runner 2 reaches second base
- Continue until all of the pairs have had a go then the players swap roles



### Variations

1. Run two bases (practising rounding)
2. Run three or four bases



SESSION 9  
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

# THROWING FOR ACCURACY

---

## Equipment

1 Glove per player  
Match ball per player  
2 Soccer balls (or similar)  
2 Batting Tees  
8 Markers  
Tennis Balls (1-2 per player)

## Warm – Up

*5 mins*

### Chain Tag

- One player is “it”
- All of the other players run freely around in the grid set up with markers
- The player who is “it” tries to ‘TAG’ the other players
- As a player is tagged they must link arms with the person who is “it” like a chain
- As more players get tagged, they join the chain
- The chain **must not** be broken trying to tag a player
- Only the players on the end of the chain are able to tag players
- The last player left is the winner

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

*10 mins*

### THROWING

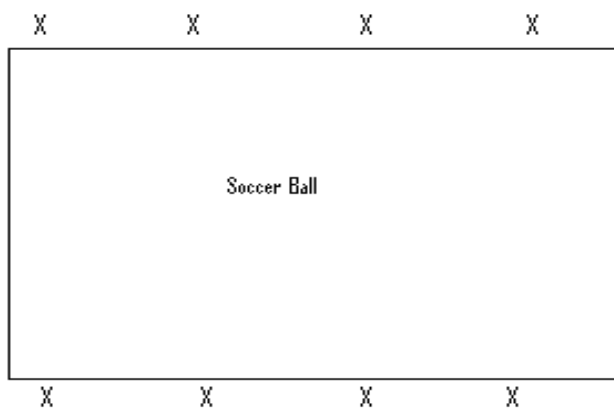
- Revision from Session 1 (Refer to Session 1)
- Set up the players into pairs throwing the same way
- Get the players to hold up the glove in front of their throwing shoulder so that their partners have a target to throw to
- Get the players to see how often they can hit the glove without their partner moving their glove too far from their throwing shoulder.

### GAME

*10 mins*

### TARGET BALL

- Break the players up into two even groups and set them up on two opposite sides of the diamond
- Place the soccer ball in the centre of the diamond
- Each player has 1 to 2 tennis balls each
- The players throw the tennis balls at the soccer ball (using correct overhand technique)
- The goal of each team is to make the soccer ball roll and pass the opposite line to them
- The soccer ball is not to be touched by the players, only the tennis balls.



# G A M E

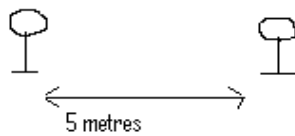
*10 mins*

## Hit the Tee

- Place the two batting tees approximately 5 metres apart in a straight line on the highest possible height
- Place the soccer balls (or similar) on top of the tees
- Break the players into two even groups, one group per tee
- Every player must start with a match ball (tennis balls can also be used as well if extra balls are required)
- Using the correct technique the players must try to knock the soccer ball off the tee by throwing overarm at it
- A point is scored each time a player is successful at knocking off the soccer ball

### Variation

- Once the players have mastered hitting the soccer ball, a smaller ball can be used such as a match ball.
- Any sort of ball can be used depending on the degree of challenge that is needed for the players



SESSION 10  
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

# HITTING A MOVING BALL

---

## Equipment

1 Bat per player  
Match Balls  
A full set of bases  
Batting Helmets (with chin straps)  
Wiffle Balls  
2 Rolled or taped newspapers  
Tennis Balls  
Sock Ball (football socks rolled up)

## Warm – Up

**5 mins**

### **Sock Ball Brandy**

- One player is “it”. This player has a sock ball
- All of the other players run around inside the diamond space
- The player that is “it” tries to hit the other players with the sock ball by throwing it at them
- Once a player has been hit with the sock ball they can then pass the ball to other “its”
- The last player left is considered the winner

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

10 mins

### BATTING – HITTING A MOVING BALL

#### Tips:

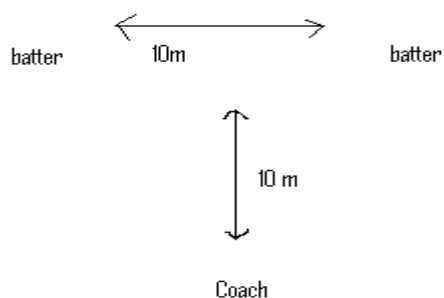
1. Revision from Session 4 for grip, stance and swing
2. Contact point for the ball must be in front of the plate
3. Only swing at pitches that can be reached to hit without altering technique
4. Be ready to hit every ball



**Have all the players pick up a bat and practice swinging at least 10 m apart**

### DRILL

- Set up 2 players to bat at different positions 10 metres apart
- One batter has a rolled up newspaper and the other uses a softball bat
- The coach stands 10 metres away from the batters and pitches wiffle balls to each batter in turn.
- Each batter has 5 hits each and then they swap over
- Batter is to focus on making contact with the middle of the wiffle ball and follow through



NB: The player with the softball bat stands to the right of the pitcher if right-handed.  
Just in case the player accidentally releases the bat.

# G A M E

*10 mins*

## Hit the Ball

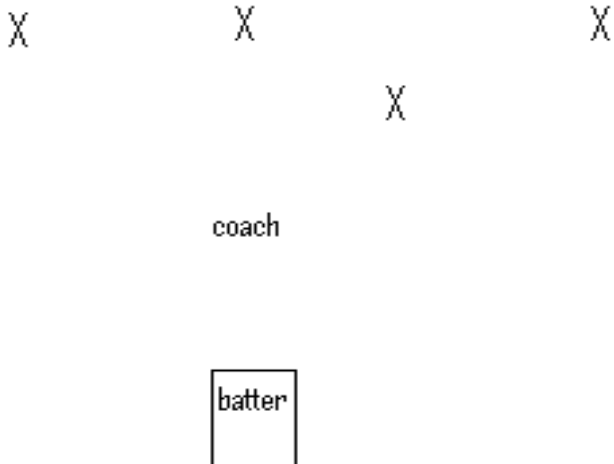
- One player bats and the other players are in the field
- The batter **must** be wearing a helmet
- Using a softball bat and tennis balls, the coach pitches the balls to the batter
- They must attempt to hit the ball using the correct technique
- For each ball that is hit the player receives one point
- Each batter faces six pitches and then swaps over
- Repeat this until all of the players have batted twice

### Variations

1. Tennis balls or Incrediballs can be used
2. Also markers can be placed out and each one is given a points value.

When the batter hits the ball past a certain marker they earn that amount of points

3. Fielders can earn points by good fielding or by catching the batter out.



SESSION 11  
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

# SLIDING

---

## Equipment

A full set of bases  
Players must all have knickerbockers or long pants  
Markers  
Tarp  
Water  
An extra change of clothes for all players  
Towels

## Warm – Up

*5 mins*

### **Beach Flags**

- Get the players to lie in a straight line on their stomachs facing the opposite direction to what they have to run with their chin resting on their hands.
- Set up the markers so that there is one marker per player to start with
- On “Go” the players round the marker and return to the start position.
- After the first one take one marker away so that there is not enough for each player
- On “Go” the players run around the markers again but this time the last player back sits out.
- Repeat until there is only one player left, this player is the winner.

(This drill is so the players get use to being on the ground before they have to start sliding)

markers for them to run for

x            x            x            x

---

players on their stomachs facing this way



# SKILL DEVELOPMENT

10 mins

## BENT KNEE SLIDE

### Safety Tips:

1. Make sure that all players have long pants or knickerbockers on before starting any sliding drills
2. Relaxation is a must, practice until the players feel comfortable with the technique
3. Learn to slide in bare feet or socks until the technique is mastered.
4. Get the arms up quickly, helping to keep the weight back and avoid scraping hands
5. Tuck chin to chest to avoid hitting your head on the ground

### Tips:

#### STARTING OFF

- Get the players to sit down from a standing position
- The leg that they tuck under is their natural sliding leg
- Try to get the players to realise that sliding is a natural motion

#### FINISHING POSITION

##### **Feet and Legs**

- Sliding leg is bent at about 90 degrees and **tucked under** the other leg which is extended
- The foot of the sliding leg is placed **sideways**
- Extended leg is slightly bent and foot is kept **off the ground** with toe pointed up
- Base is contacted with the **extended** foot.

##### **Body Position**

- Weight is well back with chin **tucked** to chest
- Slider should get the back of their shirt dirty

##### **Arms and Hands**

- Hands and arms are **raised above the head** to prevent scraping on the ground.



## Coaching Steps

- Get players to all take their shoes off and get them to practice getting down on the ground before getting them to go straight into sliding
- The use of a slope or a wet area is useful when first teaching players to slide
- Introduce a soft-moving base for players to slide into.

## **Distance**

Start the slide about one and a half body lengths from the base, depending on your weight and running speed

<b>G A M E</b>
----------------

*15 mins*

### **Tarp Sliding**

- Lay down the tarp and cover it with water
- Get players to practice sliding on the tarp
- As each player goes down the tarp look for correct technique
- After each player has had a few slides then the following game can be played:
  1. Get the players to stand along the side of the tarp
  2. One player at a time slides down the tarp
  3. The players on the side must give the player a mark out 5 as to how well they slid and how good the technique was
  4. The points are added up to see which player has the best technique

SESSION 12  
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

# PITCHING DEVELOPMENT

---

## Equipment

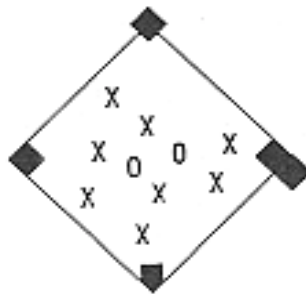
Set of Bases  
Match ball per player  
Glover per player  
2 Soccer Balls  
Incrediballs

## Warm – Up

*5-10mins*

### Poison Ball

- Two players are “IT”
- The other players run around inside the diamond
- The players that are “IT” must roll the soccer balls on the ground and try to hit below the knees of the other players
- Once a player has been hit they are out and must leave the diamond
- The last player to get hit is the winner
- Play the game twice so that all players have a chance to avoid being hit by the ball



o are 'it'

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

**10 mins**

### **PITCHING**

(After explaining each section of pitching the coach should get the players to practice each isolated skill before putting it all together at the end)

#### **Tips: GRIP**

1. Hold the ball in the tips of fingers not in the palm
2. Grip the ball comfortably, do not strain
3. Hold the ball firmly to avoid slipping from fingers
4. Place the fingers in contact with the seams whenever possible
5. Release off the ends of the fingers

#### **Tips: STANCE**

1. Ensure both feet are in contact with the plate
2. Hold the ball in both hands in front of the body
3. Entire body must remain motionless for at least one second and not more than 10 seconds

#### **Tips: STRIDE**

1. Take a stride straight towards the catcher
2. Use an exaggerated or extended walking step
3. Accompany the step with a hard push off the plate by the back (pivot) foot
4. Point the toes of the stride foot almost towards the catcher (45 degree tolerance)

#### **Tips: ARM ACTION**

1. Move the pitching arm in a complete circle
2. Move the arm straight up the front and straight down the back to complete the motion
3. Extend the arm but keep it relaxed
4. At the top of the circle, have the arm close to your head (brush your ear as it passes your head)
5. Ensure your arm makes the largest circle possible for maximum force

#### **Tips: POWER PHASE (hip thrust/rotation)**

1. As you stride, rotate your shoulders away from the batter (right hander towards 3<sup>rd</sup> base, left hander towards 1<sup>st</sup> base)
2. As the stride foot is planted push strongly off the back (pivot) foot
3. This causes the hips to rotate back towards the batter followed by the trunk and shoulders
4. Drive total body weight towards the catcher

#### **Tips: FOLLOW THROUGH**

1. Allow the pitching arm to continue forward naturally
2. Allow the pivot foot to come forward naturally to a position parallel with the front foot
3. The body should be well forward with weight over the toes and evenly distributed on both feet.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

*5 mins*

**DRILLS**

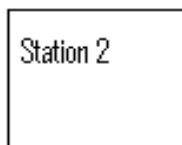
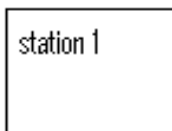
- Get the players into pairs and get them to practice pitching to each other  
**(NOTE: The player that they are pitching to must be standing, not in a crouched catching position)**
- Start off at a small distance apart and gradually move back to the distance that they will be using in Fast Track Softball (30ft)

GAME

*15 mins*

**Pitching Practice**

- Set up the players into two separate stations
- One player bats, one pitches and the others are fielders
- Each player pitches to at least one batter
- Each batter gets 10 pitches, no matter where they are pitched
- The pitcher uses incrediballs as it is the first time they would have pitched to a batter



SESSION 13  
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

# CATCHING DEVELOPMENT

---

## Equipment

2 Sets of Catching gear (if possible)  
Wiffle Balls  
Incrediballs  
Sponge Balls  
A glove per player  
Markers  
Bats  
Tennis Balls

## Warm – Up

*5 mins*

### Leap Frog Relay

- Set the markers up directly opposite each other and three metres apart. Have 3 or 4 players behind each marker.
- For this drill you should be using tennis balls or foam balls
- Player 1 leap frogs over to Player 2 at the opposite marker.
- As Player 1 approaches Player 2 they must throw the ball to them.
- Player 1 then goes to the end of the opposite line and Player 2 leap frogs towards Player 3 at the opposite marker to them.
- Player 2 then throws the ball to Player 3 and goes to the end of the opposite line.
- Continue this until all players are back in their original position

# SKILL DEVELOPMENT

10 mins

## CATCHING

### **Tips: Equipment**

- Full protective equipment must be worn at all times. This includes:
  1. Mask
  2. Chest protector
  3. Leggings
  4. Helmet
  5. Throat Protector

### **Tips: Position in the Catcher's Box**

1. Wait for the batter to set up
2. Position about one bat length behind the back foot of the batter
3. Do not reach for the ball

### **Tips: Stance**

1. Squat like a frog
2. Trunk is forward
3. Glove is in front
4. Throwing hand is hidden behind the glove

### **Tips: Receiving the ball**

1. Knees and shoulders are square to the pitcher
2. Catch the ball in the centre of the body
3. Catch the ball out in front
4. Watch the ball all the way into the glove
5. 'Give' with your arms on the catch
6. Stay low



**Note:** For beginners the throwing hand is behind the glove.

**Tips: Blocking the ball**

1. Directly face the ball
2. Bend upper body slightly over the ball
3. Place the glove between the knees (Diagram 1)
4. Keep both eyes on the ball
5. If to the left, step sideways with left leg first and drop right knee (Diagram 2)
6. If to the right, step sideways with right leg first and drop left knee (Diagram 3)



Diagram 1

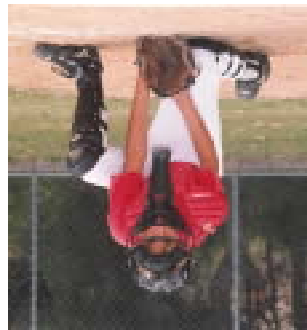


Diagram 2



Diagram 3

***10 mins***

**DRILLS**

- Using tennis balls and no gloves to start with, the players squat into the correct catching position for receiving a pitched ball.
- Players throw the ball to each other staying in the catching position
- Still using tennis balls, one player to receive in the catching position and the other player to pitch to their partner. Each player pitches 10 balls then swap over.



# G A M E

*15-20 mins*

## **Rounders**

- Three players bat (wearing a helmet), one pitches, one catches (**using the full protective equipment**) and all other players field as well as the coach
- An incrediball must be used as this is the first time the players would have caught with a batter.
- The batters hit the ball and run as many bases as they can. If the ball is thrown back to the pitcher before they reach a base then they are automatically out but if they stay on a base they are safe.
- No more than 2 batters are allowed on base at any time.
- Outs are made by catching fly balls and getting the ball back to the pitcher before the runners reach a base.
- The catchers take up position behind home plate using the correct technique for receiving the ball and blocking the ball.
- Each batter has two bats and then they field. The pitcher and catcher bat and then two fielders become the pitcher and catcher. Any leftovers become fielders.
- The game is continued until all players have batter twice (four turns at bat).

SESSION 14  
3-PITCH SOFTBALL

# GAME DEVELOPMENT

---

## Equipment

Full set of bases  
Glove per player  
Match Balls  
Bats  
Helmets  
Full set of catchers' gear  
All players must wear knickerbockers or long pants

## Warm – Up

*5 mins*

### Tag

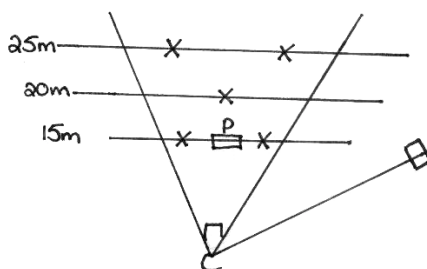
- One player is “IT”
- The other players run around inside the diamond
- The player that is “IT” must try and tag other players
- Once a player is tagged they must leave the diamond
- The player that is left is the winner
- A variation on this is to have two players that are “IT”.

## GAME

25 mins

### Triangle Game (Objective: Hitting for placement Practicing pitching and catching)

- Using an Incrediball the pitcher pitches the ball into the catcher
- The batter must attempt to hit the ball out past the lines within the triangle. There are three lines set at different distances. (See Diagram)
- The pitcher and catcher field in their normal positions and all other fielders field on one of the three lines.
- Individual points are scored if the hit ball passes each line.
- The batter scores one point for hitting it past the first line, one point past the second line and one point past the third line.
- There is no strike zone and every batter must have one clean hit.
- The batter can be out if:
  - 1) a fly ball is caught
  - 2) 3 foul balls are hit
  - 3) the first line of defence fields the ball cleanly.
- Once the batter has hit the ball cleanly they must run through first base as normal.



30 mins

### 3 PITCH SOFTBALL

- Get the players to put on their long pants
- Get two players to be the batters (they must wear helmets)
- Two players are the pitcher and the catcher (they must wear full protective gear)
- The rest of the players are fielders and the coach plays somewhere in the infield
- A 3 Pitch ball is used
- The game is played just like 3 Pitch Softball except for there being fewer players in the field.
- The fielders make the plays at first and the outs are counted.
- Once each pair of batters have been out four times a new pair is selected for batting and the pitcher and catcher are changed.
- Correct technique must be enforced through out the whole game
 

For all aspects including:

1. Pitching	6. Base Running
2. Catching	7. Leading off
3. Batting	8. Sliding (if needed)
4. Throwing	
5. Catching a thrown ball	



## Junior Games Pathway

Softball Australia wishes to acknowledge Queensland Softball Association and the work of the following people who developed the lesson plans and contributed to the development of these coaching resources:

Liz Fresser	(Cairns Softball Association)
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Debbie McColm	(Brisbane Softball Association)
Leigh Muller	(Brisbane Softball Association)
Jude Nestor	(Cairns Softball Association)
Sue Nisbet	(Queensland Softball Association)
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Peta Tolputt	(Toowoomba Softball Association)

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Fax:

[www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)

### Additional Resources

Additional Resources that can be used in conjunction with these training/lesson plans are provided by many organisations including:

#### Softball Australia (ASF Inc)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Fastpitch Skills and Playing Tips</li> <li>• Coaching Youth Softball</li> <li>• Softball – Orientation to Coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Softball – 'Top Sport Series'</li> <li>• Basic Fastpitch Skills and Playing Tips</li> <li>• Level 1 Coaching Manual</li> </ul>
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#### Softball Queensland (QSA Inc)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 14 Regional Development Camp Handbook (players and coaches)</li> <li>• Teaching the Hitter by Bob Crudgington</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting Drill Cards (batting drills on laminated cards for circuit activities)</li> <li>• Teaching the Pitcher by Bob Crudgington</li> </ul>
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