

U.S. BASEBALL ACADEMY

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Site Directors:

Attached to this email you will find a demonstration of drills for the hitting, pitching, fielding and catching program. Please share these with your coaching staff in advance to get everyone on the same page.

Also attached is a week-by-week itinerary of stations and drills for the hitting, pitching, fielding and catching portions of the camp. This hitting setup is based on five hitting groups of 5 or 6 in a group. If your program has fewer players in a hitting session, such as 24, make 4 groups and adjust stations accordingly, so that each of these drills or points is covered at some point during the program. If you have a similar drill that teaches the same thing and you think it is better, go ahead and use it, and please pass it along to me so we can incorporate it into the program. Remember, most of the kids in this program will be younger than middle school age, so be careful about running drills that may work for older kids but not for these kids.

The drills have been proven to work well and are enjoyable for all ages. Also, though, it is important that your coaches adjust their teaching and the degree of difficulty of the drills as the kids get older. Don't let older players breeze through the same drill you ran for 4th graders, with the coach telling him just, "nice job." Push them. Advance them. Nobody will call and complain that the program was too advanced for their kid. However, if your coaches don't push and extend the middle and high school players, parents/players will not be getting their money's worth. If you ran the program last year, please be aware that there are a number of new drills.

We will visit as many locations as possible, either before the program begins or during the first week of the camp. We will probably not visit locations that ran the program in previous years. The Friday before your start date, we will provide you with a list of names, grades, and emergency contact phone numbers for each person in the program, broken down by session.

In addition to what is included in the videotape, here are some important points regarding check-in and camp management that apply to you but not your coaches. Please pay particular attention to making sure that any talk to the group is limited to no more than 5 minutes per week. Every kid must make it through every station in that time frame. Make your points quickly at the beginning of the session and get them into their groups as soon as possible. Regardless of how engaging you are, after about 7 minutes of lecturing, the kids just want to hit and the parents are ready to call and complain.

Limit the number of reps in each station, even if the kid is having trouble, or you'll find some kids don't make it through. By the time you talk to them and get them in their groups, you'll have about 10 minutes per station, based on 24-30 players per hour. If you have 12 or 18 kids per hour, you should still cover all five stations, or you will leave holes in the program.

If we are able to attend the first week of your program, we will help you by handling your check-in process while you get your coaches ready. You'll know in advance if we'll be there. Otherwise, here are some important points regarding check-in:

- ☐ Call roll quickly each week and check off who's there. I don't need to know who's absent, but make sure nobody is there who doesn't belong there, or the insurance can be voided. If someone is there but not on the list, check to see if they are in the session at another hour time. If not, have them fill out a "first-day registration form" enclosed and pass the information on to me to track down.
- ☐ The first week, after the welcome, get them into hitting groups of 5 or 6 based on grade level. Let the kids be with their friends, even if it means having 4 kids in a couple groups and 6 in another, or having a fourth-grader with sixth-grade teammates. Tell them to remember the people in their group, because that will be their group for the rest of the camp. No need to do this again after the first week, but anyone who misses the first week will need help getting in a group. DO NOT have them count off by 6s or 5s or whatever to get in their groups. If you do this, you will have 3rd graders with 1st graders and 8th graders with 4th graders.
- ☐ First week, tell the kids to concentrate on all the drills, even if they think hitting off a tee is stupid. Every drill teaches a different aspect of hitting, and if they don't work hard, they'll be missing that skill.
- ☐ Quickly explain new stations each week before starting groups, because this eliminates the need for the station coach to explain it six times.
- ☐ Remind the kids of safety rules; NO SWINGING A BAT UNLESS AT A STATION BEING INSTRUCTED. THAT INCLUDES BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS.
- ☐ First week, tell them to mark their bats and gloves before Week 2. Kids will have identical bats and bats will get lost and mixed up if they are not marked.
- ☐ Regarding pitching, if a kid doesn't have a catcher the first week, have him share with someone else if possible, and remind him/parents that someone needs to be there to catch following weeks. You can also tell the kids/parents that if there are catchers who want to get some work in for free, they can bring their gear/mask and catch in the pitching sessions if the dads want a break. If a pitcher brings a catcher who is a teammate or brother, the youth catchers should wear masks where appropriate.
- ☐ You can expect to receive your t-shirts by week 4. The best way to handle distribution is to make that part of one station that week, as the itinerary indicates. Be sure to check off who gets a shirt because some kids will be missing each week. Do not wait until the last week to hand out shirts, or every kid not there will call asking for a shirt to be mailed to them.
- ☐ In pitching, as with hitting and catching, coach each kid at his own level. You may have a good pitcher standing next to a kid who is very weak.
- ☐ DO NOT have kids partner up and set Ts or throw soft-toss to each other in hitting. That's what your assistants are for. The young kids will get hurt. DO NOT let pitchers partner up and play catch. The young kids can't catch it and will get hurt. That's why they bring a catcher.

Please handle any on-site issues as if you own the camp. In advance, contact Joe Marker at 800-592-4487 to discuss the itinerary and questions regarding the instructional program.