

2026 Sluggers Winter Team Practice- Week 14

Mental Approach



Mental Approach - Making Adjustments

The most talented players are not the ones that win consistently. The players that are able to make the best adjustments during the game or between games beat talent over time.

Winning Players....

- Obtain knowledge and versatility by studying the game while not on the field. They research drills and information on mechanics
- “Train uncomfortably” to try new things that are out of their comfort zone. New drills, new movements, and explore new ideas while training.
- Actively embrace the adjustment process during training. They pursue problem solving and are not afraid to fail in practice. They understand that change requires adjustments and embrace the process.
- Gather knowledge before games in their pre-game routine. They know how they feel and know what adjustments are necessary to compete better in the moment with what they have.
- Compete every pitch by observing and gathering information from weather (wind, sun, elements, field conditions) and their opponents (pitcher, hitter, umpire tendencies) to make the necessary adjustments throughout the game to win.
- Understand their current strengths and weaknesses. They can use their current strengths to compete better in the moment (strategy), and put in the work on and off the field to turn their weaknesses into strengths (work ethic).

Players: Take inventory of what you currently possess on the list above, and actively work on anything on the list that you could improve.

DAILY ROUTINES - FIRST 30 (Players lead - Everyone Together in open areas) via

a. Dynamic Warmup

- 20 foot wakeup (20 feet up and back- 5 times for each movement)
 - Forward/backward run
 - Side Shuffle
 - Karaoke (big steps forward and back)
- Knee/Hip Circles - 10 each side - [Video](#)
- Over/Under the Fence - [Video](#)
- Single Leg RDL Airplane - [Video](#)
- Walking Lunge with Reach and Rotation - [Video](#) (add reach up to sky on lunge with back foot side)



- Lateral Power Shuffles- [Video](#)
- A-Skips - [Video](#)
- Single Leg Diagonal Hops - [Video](#)
- Power High Knee Jumps
- Power Shuffles to Sprint
- b. **2 (or 3) ball juggling - 120 seconds**
 - Switch directions after 60 seconds
- c. **Resistance Band**
 - Pull Aparts, Overhead Pull Aparts, Diagonals, External Pulses
- d. **Towel Drills**
 - Rocker
 - Quick Shoulder Turn (Head Still)
 - Hop Stride Throw
 - Quick Pivot Pick
- e. **Heavy Ball Throws**
 - Flips
 - Shoulder Turn
 - Rocker Drill
- f. **2 (or 3) ball juggling - 120 seconds**
 - Switch directions after 60 seconds
- g. **Short Hops- [Ron Washington Short Hops](#)**
 - 10-10-10 from knees
 - 10-10-10 on feet
 - 10-10-10 Drop step and drive short hops
 - One left, one middle, one right
 - Work back through every short hop
- h. **Quick Catch (focus on catch and release efficiency and timing)**
 - **Always throw lengthwise (not toward windows or drywall)**
 - With Tennis ball on basketball court
 - No feet/stride- Partners at about 25 feet apart
 - 1- Straight Catch, no stride, 20 each (feet stay planted)
 - 2- Short Hop (20 each player) - One player take 20 in a row, switch
 - One foot throws
 - Balance on throwing side foot, catch, throw, finish all on one foot
- i. **Partner Ground Balls- Getting Around Ball**
 - **Video- <https://youtu.be/R3qra149xjA>**
 - Partners roll ground balls to each other
 - Fielder works from outside of ball, field and set feet to throw, two low shuffles
 - Work on getting around the ball, Field through the ball, funnel, footwork to throw
- j. **Partner Ground Balls- Backhand Focus**
 - Partners throw 20 backhands to each other- Fielders focus on proper backhand mechanics
- k. **4 Person Gauntlet Drill (Short Hop Pepper)**
 - <https://coachesinsider.com/baseball/infielders-gauntlet-drill-with-tyler-gillum-sa-vannah-bananas/>
- l. **Partner Drop Step Fly Balls**
 - Tennis ball, no glove
- m. **Tennis ball run downs**
 - 3 groups, play “hot box” (rundowns) on the basketball court
 - No hesitation between plays.
- n. **Two line tag and throw drill**
 - Get in two lines...catch, tag, throw as quickly as you can to your partner.
 - Focus on perfect tag mechanics, quick feet and hands
- o. **3 person (short swing) pepper - with tennis balls**



- No gloves
- Hitters choke up, and watch ball hit bat
- Short, easy swing (not much more than a bunt)
- a. **Fielding- Turn Drill**
 - Two Lines
 - Player 1 has ball, player 2 about 30 feet away, facing away from Player 1
 - Player 1 throws a short hop at Player 2
 - When player 1 is about to release the ball, the next person in line behind player 2 yells "Turn".
 - Player 2 has to turn quickly and react to catch the short hop

Coaches Choice Practice Day

Coaches choice - Our coaches will create a practice plan specifically for your team.

Players, be prepared for all of the following. Use visualization techniques to prepare.

Fundamental List (with reminders)

- **Baserunning**
 - 3 types of leads from second base
- **Run Downs**
- **Fielding and Throwing Drills**
- Position Specific Work
- Team Defense
 - 1st and 3rd defense
 - Signs and plays from
 - Early steal
- Pitching and Hitting
 - Pitching Focus - Live Pitching Situation
 - Hitting Focus - Drills and Live Hitting
- Competition
 - Pick a team competition or game that can increase our ability and skill to compete.

Baserunning - Proper Leads from 2nd base

- Straight lead - right, left, right, shuffle, shuffle (18-20 foot lead)
 - 2 steps and dive back to base
- Walking lead - Start short and walk into lead. Purpose is to get momentum to steal third
- Jump Lead - Start at about 15 feet. Take a secondary lead hop to try to time the landing with the pitchers move to home.



Purpose is to create momentum to steal third, and also to disrupt the timing of the pitcher.

Rundown- Chaos Drill (with heavy ball / regular ball)

[Run Down Rules Document](#)

- Use a heavy ball to throw during rundowns – Players must make appropriate adjustments to get outs with the heavy ball
- 3 groups of players (2 groups of fielders, 1 group of runners)
- Run down starts on one side and players compete through run down to finish
- Immediately on finish on one run down, ball is thrown to the next fielder and run drops into baseline for the next rundown.
- No hesitation / constant movement and communication
 - Sprint to the runner to get him/her on the move
 - Keep ball out of glove and up in throwing position while running
 - Create a throwing lane
 - Call ball and move into catch toward the runner
 - Never catch the ball at the base, catch in front of the base

Team Fielding and Throwing

Throwing Reminders

- Head, nose and chin moves to the target to throw
- Glove/Forearm to the target, shoulder height
- Elbow and glove tuck into glove side at release
- Finish and follow throw to the target

Instructional- Sluggers Infield and Outfield Philosophy

- Silver Sluggers Infield Philosophy
 - Play deep and attack the ball with your feet
 - Catch ball on the run through the ball, set your feet and throw without losing momentum
 - Footwork (if not running through the catch)
 - Right Handed fielder
 - Right / Left / Catch / Right / Left / Throw
 - Move through the ball to field
 - Stay low and below the ball
- Silver Sluggers Outfield Philosophy
 - Positioning depends on the hitter (outfielders make a quick read to adjust before and during the at bat)



- Sprint to the spot where the ball will land
- Understand the positional priorities and communicate before the play with your fellow outfielders.
- Understand the environment (wind, sun, situation) to determine any shift in priorities between outfielders.
- Do not put your glove out to catch until you get to the ball with your feet
- NEVER HOLD THE BALL AFTER CATCH!!
 - Always know where you will be throwing the ball before the play
 - No hesitation from catch to throw

Team Fielding- Quick Drills (quickly run through these 3-5 minutes each)

- **Short Hop Triangle Drill- Quick Hands**
 - a. 3 player triangle drill for speed
 - 1- Short hop fielder, 2- catch/throw, 3- feeder
 - All Back hand short hops
- **Throwing and Catching Detail (5 minutes)- Follow Throw Drill**
 - Players get in groups of 4 or 6
 - Set up Bucket or cone 15 feet in front of player
 - Player catches ball, athletic shuffle, Fire and follow throw through the cone/bucket
 - Next player be ready to catch and throw.
 - Catch and Tag Option - All players catch and tag, then set feet to make throw
 - Catch out front, Athletic positioning at all times
- **Sprint around cone to get around ground ball**
 - a. Fielder sprints right, around cone then attacks ground ball to the left
 - b. Set feet or running throw depending on ground ball
- **Touch Bucket Fly Ball Drill**
- **Two fly ball drill**
 - a. Player drop steps to run around cone, then sprints in to catch short ball, then drop step sprint back to catch second fly ball
- **TCU - Quick release (quick hands to release and footwork)**

Position Specific Work

- **1B**
 - a. **First Basemen Feed to Pitcher**
 - Field Ground ball
 - Drive feet and body toward pitcher or 1st base (push toward throw)
 - Push ball underhand (not bowling), leading pitcher to catch the ball on the run
 - Follow throw (keep momentum)
 - b. **Back Pick from Catcher - Tags**
 - Focus on feet setup and tag speed
- **2b/SS - Double Play Turns**
 - a. Keys to Double Plays
 - Feeds- Field, Firm Flip and Follow
 - Second Base Turns- Left foot on base, take right foot to ball (flip), quick right left throw
 - Shortstop Turns- Come through the base, right foot tap on outside corner of base, athletic throw
 - b. Holding Runners - Pick off Tags
 - Focus on footwork and tag speed/mechanics
- **3b-**
 - a. Double play feeds to second



- b. Slow Roller / Bunt Field to Throw
 - On short ground ball, 3B must make decision to either field through the ball and throw to 1st base, or throw to second base.
 - Must assess time to throw to second and angle/momentum to first base
 - c. Catcher Back Pick Tags
 - Focus on footwork and tag speed
 - **Catchers**
 - a. Receiving and Blocking drills
 - b. Footwork throwing to second
 - **OF**
 - a. Running through the fly ball (getting behind the ball and sprinting to the short fly ball)
 - **PFP Situations with runners-** Quick moving and faster than game speed (let the players make mistakes and correct quickly)
 - a. Bunt plays
 - 10-14U Teams review and go through bunt plays
 - 1st base only (baseball)
 - 1st basemen stay at first (read bunt) with runner on first only.
 - Pitcher has 1st base line
 - 3rd baseman has 3rd base line
 - 1st and second
 - 1st baseman charge
 - 3rd basemen stay near 3rd and read bunt
 - Pitcher has 3rd base line
 - b. 3-6-1 double play
 - c. 1st and third double steal
 - d. 1st/3rd Comebacker to pitcher
 - e. Run through these plays as quickly as possible, almost like a conditioning drill

Pitching Focus (Baseball)

Mechanics Overview- Pitching from the Stretch / Quick Step

- a. Preset weight into back foot (drive leg)
- b. Goal is to be quick to home without compromising velocity and control
- c. With weight into back leg, pick up front (stride) foot quickly with a very short and quick knee back movement to set hip positioning
- d. Maximum stride speed and push directly to the target.
- e. Attack the target first with your feet and legs (for momentum)
- f. When front foot lands, explode back shoulder to the target while face, nose and chic stay on the target

Strategy - Establish Aggressiveness Early

- Your first batter, first three pitches set the tone for your game on the mound.
- Treat your first three pitches like the last three pitches of the game with the game on the line.
- Attack the strike zone with confidence and aggressiveness

Team Hitting



Hitting Clinic- Extreme Pitches

Theme: 1) Stance/Posture 2) Weight Transfer /Bunting 3) Front Foot and Hands Mechanics 4) Push Off 5) Bat Speed Training/Hitting High Velocity 6) Back Side Path / Hit and Run 7) Hitting Off Speed Pitches 8) Power and Launch Angle 9) Pull Side Power 10) Opposite Field Power 11) Hitting Coordination (Feet, Hips, Hands) 12) Hitting Extreme Pitches 13) Hitters choice - Choose your area of focus and tell the coach

Mechanic and Strategy Overview- Know your Strengths and Weaknesses

- To be a great hitter, you have to know your strengths and your weaknesses
- Your strategy each day is created to exploit your strengths and minimize your weakness
- If your strength is middle in fastball, a strategy could be getting close to the plate early in the count and hunting the pitch middle in, while taking the pitch on the outer $\frac{1}{3}$ of the strike zone.
- Mechanical Flaw - Great hitters work hard to minimize the flaws in their swing. For example, if you struggle hitting the outside pitch, research and work with coaches to know what to work on and the adjustments necessary. Then attack your flaw to minimize your weakness on the outside pitch (front shoulder to the pitcher, and rotate from the back side through home plate)

Hitting and Live Competition

Warm Up

- Windshield Wiper
- Strides x 30
- Shoulder Rotations
- Contact Position
- One Handed Pendulums/Swings
- Hand Activation-Pulses
- Shoulder Hip Separation
- Full Swing-Balance

Drill Stations

- 1. Tee 1 - Stride- Stride...Swing (Josh Donaldson)**
 - a. 2 strides to check in on positioning
 - i. hands back'
 - ii. shoulder down
 - iii. head centered
 - b. On third stride, swing
- 2. Tee 2- Hover to Hit**
 - a. Front leg up, Balance into back foot
 - b. Push into stride,
 - c. Hands back
 - d. Head over front shoulder
- 3. Tee 3- Extension Tee**
 - a. Tee position out front
 - b. Bottom hand/knob of bat past ball
 - c. Top hand and back hip through the ball
 - d. Full extension through the net/pitcher
- 4. Bunting Pepper Station**
 - a. Middle of open area
 - b. Proper Bunting Stance and set up
- 5. Wrist Weight Hit Downs (into power net)**
 - a. Soft toss with wiffle ball



- i. 15 bottom hand
 - ii. 15 top hand
 - iii. Must hit the top of ball (bat control)
 6. **Heavy Bat, Heavy Ball– Stride Pause Swing**
 - a. Thrower makes hitter pause at stride position
 - b. Hitter must be in a strong, athletic position to hit at stride
 7. **Light Bat Wiffle Ball Hit Downs**
 - a. Quick Swings / No Stride / All hands
 - b. Stay on top of ball
 8. **Live Hitting - Pitching Machine Swings (Pitch location is coaches choice)**
 - a. 2 Bunts - 1 Slash Hit (Fake Bunt and Hit) - 1 hit and run - 8 swings
 9. **Tracking Station (Ronald Acuna Strides)**
 - a. Pitcher give the hitter some time for movement back and into stride
 - b. Hitter focuses on pre-pitch and swing movement
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Game Speed Finishers: Coaches choose 1 or 2

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1. **Step and Dive Drill**
 - a. <https://coachesinsider.com/baseball/outfield-step-and-dive-drill-with-kerrick-jackson-southern-univ/>
2. **Game Speed Cutoff and Relay Drill**
 - a. Set up Defense and baserunning situation
 - b. Run through situational cutoff and relays
 - c. Make it a game or competition of some sort.
3. **Wiffle Ball Game**
 - a. Divide up teams and play!!
4. **2- Ball Drop Step Fly Ball Contest**
 - a. First ball Diagonally across field
 - b. Second ball short, back into the line
5. **Triangle ground ball to throw drill**
 - a. Divide into 3 groups
 - b. Group 1 is first baseman
 - c. Group 2 are shortstops
 - d. Group 3 Catching for coach
 - e. Coach hits (or throws) ground ball to forehand or back hand of shortstop.
 - f. Shortstop makes quick and accurate throw to first baseman.
 - g. Shortstop follows throw to get in line for first base
 - h. First baseman catches throw, quick shuffle to flips ball to player catching for coach
 - i. First baseman rotates to line catching for coach
 - j. HANDLE THE BALL!!!
6. **Diagonal Ground Ball Drill**
 - a. Two lines at opposite sides of facility (diagonal)
 - b. Player one throws ground ball to open end
 - c. Fielder runs to ball, fields and throws to opposite end of facility
 - d. Fielders continue to run/field/throw continuously.
7. **Run Downs with Runners- [Run Down Rules Document](#)**
 - a. Two run down stations- 4 players each if possible
8. **The Gauntlet Fielding Drill**
 - a. Five players spaced about 10 feet apart with ball in hand
 - b. Five players in line as first basemen



- c. 1 Fielder
 - d. Five cones set up 10 feet away from each of the five players
 - e. Fielder must run around cone toward players with ball.
 - f. Players throw a ground ball to fielder
 - g. Fielder fields ground ball, throws to first basemen, runs around next cone
 - h. Next player throws ground ball to fielder as fielder runs around cone.
 - i. Fielder goes through all five cones and ground balls for time.
9. **PFP Situations with runners-** Quick moving and faster than game speed (let the players make mistakes and correct quickly)
- a. 1-6-3 double play
 - b. Bunt plays
 - c. 3-6-1 double play
 - d. 1st and third double steal
 - e. 1st/3rd Comebacker to pitcher