

2026 Sluggers Winter Team Practice- Week 2

Middleton Facility Rules

- a. [Review Sluggers Indoor Facility Rules](#)



STRATEGY / MENTAL APPROACH

- **Coaches Give you the Tools- Players are Responsible for Using Tools for their Success**
 1. 80% of players hope and wait for a coach to make them better, relying only on the coach to motivate them and teach them everything they need to know. 20% of players take full responsibility for their improvement, using information provided by coaches as tools to use for work on their own to improve.
 2. Great players often have great coaches, but they do not rely on coaches to make them a great player. Ben Rortvedt told me that he never really had a catching coach. He taught himself how to catch from going online, watching catchers in games, and working with teammates on drills.
 3. We see 100's of players come through the Academy every year. We give them all the same information. Every year, we see so many players improve in every aspect of on field skills and work ethic. We also see other players that do not improve much at all. The players that improve and have success in this game are the ones who put in the work outside of practice.
 4. Going to practice is just like attending school. If you are just going to practices with the team, you are destined to be average. If you want to be excellent, you have to work harder than everyone else outside of practice by taking what you learn in clinics and practice, and training outside of practice on your own to earn that improvement.
 5. Great players are 1) Self Motivated 2) Resourceful 3) Train harder and smarter than their competition 4) Learn more than others from their experience in games 5) See failure and adversity as an opportunity to improve
 6. At Silver Sluggers, we will evaluate you on these factors. We cannot make you a great player. You will make yourself a great player. We can only give you the tools and the blueprint for becoming a great player. You have to put these tools to work for yourself.

Obscure Rule- Tagging Up on Fly Balls

1. Infield Fly Rule: If infield fly is called, the hitter is automatically out. Can the runners still tag up and advance if the ball is dropped?
2. What is the width of the strike zone (or home plate)?

Goals for Week 2:

1. **Increase Speed of Practice**
 - After week 1, we can anticipate many of the things we will do so we can anticipate better. Decrease transition time, and increase the energy of practice now that players and coaches are more comfortable with the environment.
2. **Increase Competitiveness**
 - Compete with yourself and teammates to do our daily drills and reps better, with more attention to detail.
3. **Stay Athletic**
 - This will be on our goal list every week!! Remind yourself to be quick, balanced, and athletic in all aspects of our practice.



DAILY ROUTINES - FIRST 30 (Players lead - Everyone Together in cage 5-6 near weights)

"Embrace your routines"

- Our routines are what makes us consistent
 - Our routines are what trains our body for great instincts on the field.
- a. **Dynamic Power Warmup- 5 minutes**
 - Over the Fence Hip Openers- Lateral
 - Knee/Hip Circles - 10 each side
 - Under the Fence - Wide Stance
 - Lateral Power Shuffles
 - Diagonal Single leg hops
 - Quick to Slow High Knees
 - Power High Knee Jumps
 - Power Shuffles to Sprint
 - b. **Resistance Band**
 - Pull Aparts, Overhead Pull Aparts, Diagonals, External Pulses
 - c. **Towel Drills**
 - Shoulder Turn (Head Still)
 - Power Position/Rocker
 - Hop Stride Throw
 - One Foot Throws with balance at finish (glove side foot on ground)
 - Pivot Pick
 - Quarterback/Shuffle Throws
 - d. **Heavy Ball Throws**
 - Flips
 - Shoulder Turn
 - Rocker Drill
 - e. **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
 - f. **Quick Catch (focus on catch and release efficiency and timing)**
 - No feet/stride- Partners at about 25 feet apart (width of 2 cages)
 - 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
 - g. **Two Line Quick Catch**
 - Split up into two groups
 - Run quick catch from a line
 - Catch - Quick Release throw - follow throw to the opposite line
 - h. **Two Line Quick Catch- Short Hop Version**
 - Split up into two teams
 - Run quick catch from a line
 - Drive through short hop- Quick Release throw - follow throw to the opposite line
 - i. **Partner Drop Step Fly Balls**
 - Tennis ball, no glove



Full Facility Work

Rundown- Chaos Drill

- 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

Throwing Segment

- **Partner Throwing and Catching Detail (5 minutes)**
 1. Depending on numbers, coaches can decide whether to have everyone throw at the same time or do staggered throwing (2 groups) or lines
 2. Everything is easy (60%), no hard throws - focus on easy release and catching with face behind catch.
 3. Catch out front, Face behind catch, Short Shuffle, Shuffle Throw
 - Athletic positioning at all times
 4. **Baseball/Softball Throws**
 - **Sideways step and throw**
 - Focus on front side mechanics and staying sideways through stride
 - Front shoulder on target until foot strike
 - **Power Shuffle to Throw**
 - Drive off of back foot (power shuffle) to get momentum
 - Finish long to the target (nose and throw shoulder to target)
 - Follow throw with feet
 - **Sprint through Short Hop Pull Downs**
 - Drill moves very quickly - Keep players moving fast.
 - Player 1 is 30 feet from player 2 with ball basket
 - Player 1 tosses a ball to hit ground about 10 feet from player 2
 - Player 2 sprints through the short hop, and throws on the run (pull down).
Week 1 is easy throws, working on footwork and momentum to target
 - Player 2 follows throw to ball basket, quickly get ball and tosses the ball to next player in line
 - Option 1 - Create angles so that fielder must sprint around the ball to get in position to throw
 - Option 2 - Thrower is closer, throwing true short hop to fielder
 - Fielder steps into ball with left (glove side foot) to "catch in rhythm"
 - Explode to target with right/left footwork to throw

Fielding Segment

- **Short Hop Triangle Drill**
 1. Players in groups of 3 around turf
 2. All players in extra low fielding position
 3. Quick hand short hops clockwise for 90 seconds, then switch directions
- **Fielding Machine- Double Play / Follow the Ball Drill**
 1. Fielding machine is placed on mat in cage 1 or 2
 - Players get in three lines (behind machine, back corner of cage 5 or 6, and top of cage 1)
 - Player 1 puts ball in machine then sprints to next station
 - Player 2 fields and throws to player 3 (top of cage 1), then sprints to next station



- Player 3 turns double play (as if playing second base) to Player 4 next to fielding machine, then sprints to next station
- **Fielding Machine - Sprint to catch**
 1. Configure 2 lines so that players can sprint to a short pop up/line drive
 2. This should be an almost dive and reach to catch play
 3. After catch, set feet and throw to the next line
- **Fielding Machine - Step and Dive Drill**
 1. 2 lines - player dives for ground ball then hops up and throws to next line near fielding machine
- **Diagonal TCU Short Hop Drill**
 1. 2 Lines at opposite ends of the facility
 2. One ball - first players tosses ball to the opposite corner of facility
 3. Player 2 runs to the short hop and plays through it, quick release toss to the next player at the opposite end of facility

Hitting Segment

1. **Swing Build Routine**
 - Windshield Wipers- 10 each arm
 - Forward/Backward Bat Raises- 8 each arm
 - Pendulum Swings- 10 each arm
 - Contact Pulses- 20 seconds
 - Stride and Separate - 30 reps
 - Contact Position - 5 oppo, 5 middle, 5 pull
 - Donaldson Swings with Balance hold at finish
2. **Bunting Pepper (5 minutes)**
 - Groups of 3 players
 - Fast moving and athletic (1 bunt every 2 seconds!!)
 - Off balance throws- catch and release

Mechanical Theme: 3) Weight Transfer /Bunting

Week 1- Stance/Posture / Attacking the inside of the ball

Instructional Points:

Coaches can look at this as an add-on to last week when we worked on staying inside the ball. We are still focused on staying inside the ball, but layering on a weight transfer to get through the ball more aggressively.

1. **Review Stance/Posture, and Staying through the inside of the ball**
2. **Weight Transfer**
 - a. An aggressive weight transfer is the key to power in the swing.
 - b. Weight Transfer should be 100%/100% transfer from back to front foot
 - c. Think of an aggressive move through the ball with feet, back hip, and hands
 - d. Front foot should be point of stability in our rotation...if weight transfer happens correctly, the front foot stays down while the backside turns through the ball.
 - e. Head moves on the track to the pitcher, but stays behind the point of contact. Head is positioned between feet for balance.
3. **Extension through the ball**
 - a. If we begin our swing on an inside path through the ball, it allows our hands to work the barrel of the bat through the ball instead of around it.
 - b. Our goal is to keep the bat in the strike zone or in the path of the ball as long as possible.
 - c. More about extension coming next week (when we talk about backside turn)
4. **Scap Load**
 - a. Scap Load- Hitter takes top hand arm and pulls back slightly behind shoulder. It is not important how high your elbow goes, but engaging the back arm and shoulder...while keeping the front shoulder on the target.

Hitting Drill Set

5. **Bunting for Burpees**
 - a. Divide into two teams
 - b. Successful Bunt - Other team does burpees



- c. Failed Bunt - Your own team does burpees
 - d. Keep team score - Coaches choose prizes/consequences
- 6. Drill Set (Groups of 2 players at each station)**
- a. **Dry Swings**
 - i. 15 Stride Only Reps: Get to front foot down -- Hands Back -- Front Shoulder to Pitcher -- Head on Centerline (track to Pitcher)
 - 1. Focus on Athletic Balance and getting into a powerful launch position
 - ii. 15 Reps - Getting to Strong Contact Position and shifting weight from back foot (load) to front foot (at contact)
 - 1. Coach calls out "Load -- Contact" to verbalize weight transfer. Hitter compresses into athletic load position, then drives from back foot to front foot into contact position. Head/face behind the point of contact.
 - 2. 5 Outside - 5 Middle - 5 Inside Pitch
 - 3. 15 full swings- Focusing on weight transfer and extension through the ball.
 - b. **Tee 1: Wide Stance/No Stride**
 - i. Focus on movement into front foot, turn and punch through the inside of the ball
 - c. **Tee 2: Close Tee with Scap Load (with back leg Compression and weight transfer through the ball)**
 - i. Set Up for this drill is most important. Tee at the top of the strike zone even with the belly button. Put knob of the bat on front hip, and the barrel of the bat on the ball (on the tee).
 - ii. Hitter sets weight into back leg (flexed back leg with good posture) with head slightly to the back of center between feet.
 - iii. Scap Load- Hitter takes top hand arm and pulls back slightly behind shoulder. It is not important how high your elbow goes, but engaging the back arm and shoulder...while keeping the front shoulder on the target.
 - iv. Hitter drives from back foot into front foot, moving through the ball, keeping hands past/through the inside of the ball.
 - v. Ball should be hit through the second baseman (opposite field)
 - vi. Video: <https://youtu.be/1Q7Qs0REgg4>
 - d. **Tee 3: Hover to Hit Tee Drill**
 - i. Tee is positioned for an off-speed pitch, in front of home plate, toward the pitcher
 - ii. Hitter focuses on bottom hand and back hip to extend swing through the ball with long finish to the pitcher
 - iii. Ball should be hit up the middle through the pitcher.
 - iv. Video: https://youtu.be/bg_3zuGGi48
 - e. **Tee 4: Mark McGuire Drill**
 - i. Hitter is in stance, doing pendulum swings shifting weight front to back with bat action
 - ii. Count 1 (front), 2 (back), 3 (front), and on 4 load and swing all in rhythm.
 - iii. Goal is to shift weight and hands back on 4, then drive out of back to front to hit
 - f. **Optional -- Happy Gilmore Tee Drill**
 - i. Hitter stands 2 steps back at a 45 degree angle from the tee.
 - ii. Hitter (RH) steps first with the right foot, then left foot landing slightly short of the tee position.
 - iii. Hitter may skip or hop into the tee if preferred.
 - iv. Video: <https://youtu.be/H4KwWwrrkl>
 - g. **Optional -- Bottom Hand Down and Away Tee with weight Transfer**
 - i. Focus on the simple movement of controlling the knob of the bat through the ball with the bottom hand while transferring weight through the ball.
 - ii. Good Posture -- Knob through the Pitcher -- Move through the ball -- Long finish
 - iii. Ball should be hit through the second baseman
 - iv. Video: https://youtu.be/_6bXl9rrlCg
 - h. **Short Toss 1: Combo Quick Hands -- Long Finish**
 - i. 2 reps of quick hands - 2 Reps of out front toss
 - ii. Quick hands
 - 1. Thrower throws ball firmly through the front hip of the hitter
 - 2. Hitter focuses on beating the ball to the spot by driving hands through the inside of the ball.
 - iii. Out Front Toss
 - 1. Thrower tosses ball, dropping it on a cone set up 6 inches in front of home plate
 - 2. Hitter attacks the ball with weight transfer and extension, taking swing through the ball hitting it up the middle.
 - iv. Video: <https://youtu.be/mgAjtKGBZkk>
 - i. **Live Swings: Move through the ball weight transfer**



- i. **Live Hitting: Cage 1 (smash factor balls)**
 1. Above average velo for quick hands
 2. Make sure players are staying behind L screen
- ii. **Live Hitting: Cage 3 (standard machine balls)**

Competition Set

Coaches come up with creative competitions in hitting, throwing, fielding

Game Speed Finisher: Drop Step Fly Ball Contest

1. Player starts in corner of facility
2. Coach throws fly ball to other corner
3. Player sprints to catch it
4. Last man standing wins

Rapid Fire - Two Goal Fireball Contest

1. Set up 2 smaller goals about 15 feet apart on each end of facility
2. One team player throws ball to try to score goal in one of the goal
3. 1 player from opposing team has to cover both goals to make diving or running stops
4. Goalie catches and quickly tries to throw ball into goal of opposing team
5. Players switch to new goalie after each throw

Last Drill: Player Name Game

Coaches test players to learn names of teammates. Every missed name is 5 burpees.