

Leesburg Girls Softball League

Tiny Tee Ball Coach's Manual





Coaches,

Welcome to Leesburg Girls Softball League's (LGSL) Tiny Tee-Ball. Thank you for volunteering to coach what will be many of your player's first team sport. Without volunteers like you, our league could not function.

Tiny Tee-Ball is a developmental, skill-building program designed to introduce four-year old girls to the game of fast pitch softball.

COACHING TEE BALL TEAMS - A CHECKLIST



One of the most frequently asked questions is: "I am a new coach. Can you help me teach my players what to do." The following checklist outlines instructional actions by position that should be repeated in practice sessions during the tee ball season. It is equally valid as a reference for experienced coaches.

First base

Show where 1st baseperson is to stand when no runner is on base and when one is on the base. Practice fielding plays; ball thrown to 1B by infielders.

Second base

Position player in place, anticipating action. Practice fielding plays; such as, tagging a runner out.

Shortstops

Show positions: one between 1B and 2B; the other between 2B and 3B. Practice action; such as, fielding balls and throwing to 1B or 2B for an out.

Third base

Show position, anticipating action. Practice action; such as, player diving to knock down ball.

Pitcher

[Stands in pitcher's area but acts as an infielder.] Practice action; such as, fielding ball and throwing to 1B.

Catcher

[Stands behind and away from home plate until ball is hit]
Demonstrate: after ball is hit, adult removes tee and bat; catcher

moves up to cover plate. Practice actions: catcher tagging base runner out, catcher throwing to 1B.

General infield activity

Staying behind Playing Line until the ball is hit. Catching short fly balls. Field balls and throwing to a base or to home plate. Tagging runners on the base path. Relaying a ball from an outfielder to a base; to the catcher at home plate

Outfielders [there may be five or more]

Position players. Practice catching fly balls in a crowd. "I've got it" Practice catching ground balls and throwing to infield. Have one outfielder receive relay from another and throwing to an infielder.

Batter

Give basic hitting instructions. Practice hitting ball, then dropping bat properly and running to first.

Base Runners

Instruct actions at 1B [Coach at 1B signals to run past base or to turn and go on to 2B] Instruct that forced runner on base must advance. non-forced runner can hold position on base. player on base watch what next batter does; where the ball goes. Instruct sliding.

Bench

Team sits in batting order, encouraging the batter. Coach talks to team: Listen for instructions. Play fair; follow the rules. Have fun.

Coach talking to team, after the game

Summarize team's activity. Specifics, not generalities. Recognize progress. Note any humorous thing that happened. No public criticism; as necessary, take player aside. What's next [practice at home, next team practice and game schedule; tell parents] Other comments, as appropriate.

COACHING TEE BALL SKILLS - A CHECKLIST



This outline was developed as a reminder for experienced coaches and as a guide for coaches new to the sport. The actions listed are important for girls beginning tee ball and for those wanting/needing to improve their existing skills.

HITTING

Batting -- the stance, swing and follow-through

- Adjust the tee with ball set even to the hitter's waist.
- Face tee with feet spread shoulder-width apart.
- Bend knees, body in slight crouch.
- Weight on balls of feet.
- Grip bat; hands together above knob.
- Hold bat firmly; don't squeeze.
- Bring bat up and away from the body.
- Keep shoulders level; bat and head steady.
- Eyes on the ball.
- Short step with the front foot at start of swing.
- Swing level and bring the bat through the center of the ball.
- Watch bat hit ball; keep head down.
- Weight shifts to front foot; back foot stays on the ground.
- Extend arms and follow through; swing around.
- Drop the bat; do not throw it

Key points:

- eyes on the ball
- no cross-handed hold
- position of feet
- stride [weight shift]
- rotation
- the swing

FIELDING

Eyes on the ball. Watch the ball go into the glove. Cover the ball with the other hand

Ground Ball

Stand legs apart, shoulder-width or wider. Bend knees. Get low. Lean forward. Run to the ball. Keep body in front of ball. Glove low to the ground. Scoop or catch the ball and cover it.

Fly Ball

Run to where the ball is going. Call for the ball: "I've got it." Stop and wait for the ball. Hands together, fingers up, shoulder high or over the head. Watch ball into the glove and cover.

Thrown Ball

Bend knees slightly. Watch the ball. On a ball thrown to player above the waist: Hands together facing out; thumbs up. Catch and cover. On a ball thrown below the waist: Hands together facing down; little fingers touching. Catch and cover.

THROWING

Grip and motion

Thumb under the ball. Two or three fingers on top. Don't worry about the seams. Eyes on the target. Legs apart; foot on throwing arm side behind the body. Arm back and up, front shoulder turned toward target. Step toward target with foot opposite the throwing arm. Right-hander with left foot; left-hander with right foot. Push off on back foot as throw begins; end with weight on forward foot. Release the ball in front of body and follow through.

RUNNING

Base running

Run on the balls of the feet. Pump arms back and forth. After the ball is hit Run behind the tee, unless left-handed. Look at first base, not where the ball has gone. Run outside the foul line. Run straight through first base; don't jump on it or slow down. Watch and listen to coach for instructions. When on base Keep one foot touching the base until the next batter hits the ball. Lean forward; when ball is hit, push off base. Know where the ball is. When passing a base, try to touch it on the side without stopping.

TEE BALL DRILLS AND GAMES



LGSL has gathered effective drills from successful programs around the country. Given the ages and attention spans of the participants, it is important that these activities also have fun content. Here are 15 to consider. They cover defense [catching, fielding ground and fly balls, throwing] and running. The best drill for hitting is batting practice, practice, practice.

Bounce to the Bucket. Large basket or cooler put on a base. Outfielders try to throw and bounce the ball into the open container.. Can be done as a game with 10 points for getting the ball in, 5 for hitting the bucket and 1 point for the nearest bounce, no matter where the ball ends up. This drill/game teaches throwing from the outfield to a base.

Catch. Two or more players play catch. Keep score of the number of successful catches.

Catching Contest. Players are in pairs and throw the ball back and forth between each other. Last pair that has not dropped a ball wins.

Catching Flies. Hit or throw fly balls to fielders by using a soft baseball, rubber ball or tennis ball. Repetition and practice are the key to success.

Catch the Coach. Coach runs from home plate to first base. After a few steps, couch shouts "tag me" to a player holding a ball, who runs after the coach and tries to tag him out. Coach to decide where/when/if the runner is successful.

Catch the Players. Coach starts four or more players about 10 seconds apart from home plate to circle the bases. Coach starts last, trying to tag the players [alternate: snatch off their caps.]

Crab Drill. Player is in basic fielding set position stance, crouched forward with glove open and down. Player takes three or four steps as coach rolls the ball.

Crow Hop. Classic throwing drill. Player takes a short step and a hop in the direction of the intended throw.

Distraction. Coach rolls the ball to a fielder, but another player runs in front of the fielder and tries to break the fielder's concentration on catching the ball.

Dive. Coach throws or hits ball to one side or the other of a fielder, who has to dive to make the catch. Then, throw to 1st base.

Just Block It. Coach hits ball directly to a fielder. Emphasis is on stopping the ball from getting through to the outfield. OK to just block the ball; [better, of course, to catch it.] Can be a game with a point scored from every block, two for a catch and zero if the ball is not stopped

One and Two. Two players play catch. Thrower scores 2 points if ball is caught at or above the shoulders. 1 point if caught between waist and shoulders. No points if caught below the waist or not caught. First player to score 10 points wins.

Run Down. Two fielders and a runner, who tries to run from one base to another without getting tagged out. Participants rotate positions.

Scoop or Pick-up. Two players [or two rows of players] line up about 10 feet apart. From kneeling position, one player rolls the ball to the other. Repeat 10 to 15 times.

Track Meet. Two players at home plate. At the "start", one runs to 3rd base, the other to 1st base. They continue running [in opposite directions] around the bases. First one to return to home plate wins.

Note: to avoid collisions, instruct the runner that begins via 1st base to touch 2nd base from the outside corner; the other runner, coming from 3rd base, touches the inside corner of 2nd base.

Remember -- have fun!

Tiny Tee-Ball Rules

- Players' ages are four years old on January 1 of the year of play.
- Players on a team - 6 minimum, 20 maximum
Note: more than 15 players on the field or batting is not advised.
- 60 feet between the bases.
- Every player bats and plays in the field.
- The ball is hit off a batting tee; there is no pitching.*
- There are no walks or strikeouts.
- The ball must travel 6 feet or it is a foul.
- No fielder may charge for a ball until the ball is hit.
- The pitcher, 3rd base girl and 1st base girl must wear a batting helmet when playing in the field.
- No stealing. Player stays on the base until the ball is hit.
- An inning is over when all the players have batted once.*
- Standard game is four innings.
- Scores are not kept.
- Safety helmets must be worn.
- Bats - 25"/26" long. 2¼" diameter, max. 17 to 20 ounces.
- Ball - 9" safety softball.
- Gloves - 12" long, max.
- Tee - adjustable, flexible tube on a moveable base.
- Athletic footwear.

The major differences in play concerns winning / losing and what constitutes an inning. As children play to win in other games and view competitive sports on TV, many tee ball leagues sanction scoring and winning for the older and / or more mature players (usually six years and up). This also permits another level of play; specifically, tournaments and other competitive events.

Otherwise, tee ball can be positioned as a skill-building, learning experience, where the score is not the focus of the game. Some leagues prefer to consider an inning to be the traditional three outs but the majority of play is "bat around" where an inning is over after every player has batted one time.

LGSL Tiny Tee Ball Coaching Curriculum

Table of Contents

General Coaching Tips -----	2
Stretching Exercises -----	3
Practice #1 -----	4-5
Practice #2 -----	6-7
Practice #3 -----	8
Practice #4 -----	9
Practice #5 -----	10
Practice #6 -----	11
Practice #7 -----	12
Practice #8 -----	13

GENERAL COACHING TIPS

1. Plan short drills with many repetitions.
2. Every child should be doing something at all times.
3. End practice with a fun activity.
4. Expect the unexpected!
5. Set out the necessary equipment before practice.
6. When talking to players, kneel down so that you are eye level.
7. Don't display negative criticism, hostility, abuse or anger.
8. Remember the 4 "P-words":
 - **Preparation**-Plan for meetings and practice, obtain needed equipment, etc.
 - **Patience**- Take the time to build self-esteem and confidence in each player.
 - **Poise**- Maintain your composure and remember that mistakes will happen.
 - **Praise**- Recognize effort and performance verbally.

STRETCHING EXERCISES

1. Arms/Neck

Roll arms around in a 'windmill type' action. First rotate right arm forward 10 times, then switch to left arm. This can be done using both arms at the same time. Then, change to rotating arms backwards using the same sequence.

Move head up and down holding each position for 8-10 seconds. Move head from side to side holding each position for 8-10 seconds.

2. Quadriceps

These muscles are the big muscles that cover the front of your thigh. Stand straight. Bend one leg and hold your ankle or the top of your foot. Pull your bent leg until your heel is close to your bottom. Use a wall or a teammate to balance. Hold for 10 seconds. Switch legs. (

3. Hamstrings

These are the muscles at the back of your thigh. In a sitting position with your left leg straight, place the sole of your right foot against the inside of your left thigh. Bend your trunk toward your extended leg, keeping your knee straight and foot in a relaxed position. Hold for 10 seconds. Switch legs.

4. Groin (Butterfly stretch)

In a sitting position with your back straight, bend your knees and place the bottoms of your feet together. Pull your feet towards your groin. Place your elbows on your knees and gently push the knees toward the floor. Hold for 10 seconds, rest and repeat.

5. Calves

In a sitting position with legs straight, place right heel on top of left toes. Pull right toes towards body with hands. Hold for 10 seconds. Switch legs.

PRACTICE #1

Team Meeting

1. Introduce all coaches
2. Attendance
3. Announcements
4. Explain the basic rules of the game
5. Show your kids the baseball field and all the positions

Warm-up and Stretching

Skill Stations

1. If possible, divide the team into 2-4 groups and send to a station with a coach.
2. All groups should rotate to each station.
3. Teach the fundamentals (page 6-7) within each activity.
4. Evaluate and note individual skill level, attention span and personality.

Throwing and Catching Activities

1. Ready to Throw: On your whistle, all players quickly get into the throwing position. Have coaches go around to each player and check that they are holding the ball correctly. Also check their throwing stance (legs apart, foot on throwing arm side behind the body, throwing arm back and up and front shoulder toward the target). Repeat.
2. Throw to Me Coach: Line players up on a line facing a coach. Throw to the first player, who catches the ball and throws back. Continue down the line, throwing to each player. After a few practice rounds, have the kids count the number of successful catches. If necessary, start beginners with a tennis ball.

Fielding Activities

1. Basic Fielding: Each player stands in various positions in the fielding stance. A coach slowly rolls or hits a ball to various players. The player closest to the ball takes a few steps to the ball, fields the ball and throws it back to the coach. Rotate player positions throughout the drill.
2. Partner Pickup: Players partner up and stand 10 feet apart from each other. One player rolls the ball for his or her partner to field. Repeat back and forth.

Batting Activities

1. Practice Swing: Space the players out, each holding an imaginary bat. On your whistle or call, players should go through the batting sequence (stance, swing, follow-through and dropping the bat). Coaches should watch and correct any bad habits.

2. Practice Swing 2: Each player swings a real bat at a tee without a ball. The batter should swing the bat where the ball would be. Coaches should evaluate the full batting sequence.
3. Batting Practice: Each player should get at least 5 hits off a tee. A coach should help adjust the tee for each player and make suggestions for improvements after each swing. On the last hit, have the batter run to first base.

Running Activities

1. Run to First: Line players up a few feet behind home plate. The first runner stands at home plate. On your whistle or call, the player runs to first base. Be sure the player is running with correct form.
2. Catch the Players: Start 3 or 4 players about 5 seconds apart from home plate to circle the bases. Coach starts last, trying to tag the players (or snatch their caps) before they reach home.

PRACTICE #2

Team Meeting

1. Re-Introduce all coaches
2. Attendance
3. Announcements
4. Review the basic rules of the game
5. Review the baseball field and all the positions

Warm-up and Stretching

Skill Stations

1. If possible, divide the team into 2-4 groups and send to a station with a coach.
2. All groups should rotate to each station.
3. Teach the fundamentals (page 6-7) within each activity.
4. Evaluate and note individual skill level, attention span and personality.

Throwing and Catching Activities

1. One-Knee Throws: Players set on one knee (on the same side as the throwing arm). Players reach back and throw to a partner or coach.
2. Bounce to the Bucket: Place a large basket or cooler on a base. Players try to throw the ball into the container from a distance. This can be turned into a game by giving 3 points to balls thrown into the bucket, 2 points for hitting the bucket and/or 1 point for the nearest ball.

Fielding Activities

1. Left or Right: Throw or hit the ball to one side of a fielder, who has to run to get in front of the ball.
2. Fast Fingers: Line up fielders side by side facing home plate. Place a tee ball 10 feet in front of each player. On the coach's whistle or call, the first player charges the ball, picks it up with their bare hand and throws it to the coach. A coach can count out loud the time it takes to throw the ball to add competition. Repeat for the other players.

Batting Activities

1. Coach Says: This game is similar to Simon Says. Coach rapidly calls out one of five commands:
Hands: players grip an imaginary bat
Feet: players jump with feet apart facing an imaginary tee
Stance: players stand in batting position with arms raised toward rear shoulder
Squash the bug: players step, swing and rotate on the ball of their back foot
Swing and drop: players do a full swing, including dropping the "imaginary" bat

2. Batting Practice: Each player should get at least 5 hits off a tee. The coach should help adjust the tee for each player and make suggestions for improvements after each swing. On the last hit, have the batter run to first base.

Defense and Running Activities

1. Game Simulation: Simulate a real game situation. Place defensive players on the field in various positions and keep 2-3 players in as the first batters. Have the batter step up to the tee, hit the ball and run to first base as in a real game.

Rotate batters and defense so everyone gets a chance to bat and field. Coach the fielders on decision-making. Where should they throw the ball to get the out?

2. Team Race: Two players start at home plate. One runs to 3rd base, the other to

1st base. They continue running in opposite directions around the bases. First one back to home base wins. To avoid collisions, have a coach stand on second base. Instruct one runner to go in front of the coach and one runner to go behind the coach.

PRACTICE #3

Team Meeting

1. Attendance
2. Announcements
3. Highlight the positives from the previous game

Warm-up and Stretching

Skill Stations

Teach the fundamentals (page 6-7) within each activity.

Throwing and Catching Activities

1. Catching Contest: Line the team up in two lines a few feet apart, facing a partner. Each pair should have one ball. Partners should throw the ball back and forth, taking one step back after each successful catch. See how many successful catches the players make (and how far apart they get).

Fielding Activities

1. Block It: Coach hits the ball directly to a fielder, who tries to stop the ball from getting through to the outfield. Turn this activity into a game by awarding 2 points for a catch, 1 point for a block and 0 points if the ball is not stopped.
2. Charge It: Set a ball about 5 feet in front of a fielder or throw a ball that stops a few feet in front of the fielder. The fielder should run to the ball, pick it up with his or her bare hand and throw it to the proper base.

Batting Activities

1. Practice Swing 2: Each player swings a real bat toward an actual tee, without a ball. The batter should swing the bat where the ball would be. Coaches should evaluate the full batting sequence, using the teaching tips on page 6.
2. Batting Practice: Each player should get at least 5 hits off a tee. The coach should help adjust the tee for each player and make suggestions for improvements after each swing. On the last hit, have the batter run to first base.

Running Activities

1. Run to First: A player swings a bat, drops it and then runs from home plate to first base. The next player does the same with the first runner running from first base to second base after the swing. Teach your players that they can only overrun first base. They must stop on all the other bases. Continue the batting and running sequence with the entire group.
2. Catch the Team: This drill is the same as Catch the Players from practice #1, except the coach runs after the entire team.

PRACTICE #4

Team Meeting

1. Attendance
2. Announcements
3. Highlight the positives from the previous game

Warm-up and Stretching

Skill Stations

Teach the fundamentals (page 6-7) within each activity.

Throwing and Catching Activities

1. Catching Flies: Throw fly balls to fielders to catch and throw back. If possible, start off with a rubber ball or tennis ball before moving onto a tee ball.

Fielding Activities

1. To Second Base: Position a coach or a more experienced player at second base. Divide the players into three lines at right field, center field and left field. Hit or throw a ball to the first player in the right field line. The player throws the ball to second base. Repeat through each player in each line, teaching the outfield to throw the ball to second base after fielding.

Batting Activities

1. Home Run: Set out cones or markers in 5-foot increments from the batting tee. Each "zone" is worth a certain amount of points as determined by the coach. Give each player 5 hits to score as many points as possible. A ball may be hit on the ground or in the air to receive points.

Defense Activities

1. Team Defense: Place 8 players on the field at the proper positions. The rest of the team serves as base runners. Start a base runner on first and second base. The coach at home plate throws the ball randomly to each fielder as the runners try to advance. The fielders catch the ball and try to get the runners out. Before the coach throws each ball, the defense should shout out the next situation, such as "The play is at third base!" Be sure each fielder receives a ball to field.

PRACTICE #5

Team Meeting

1. Attendance
2. Announcements
3. Highlight the positives from the previous game

Warm-up and Stretching

Skill Stations

Teach the fundamentals (page 6-7) within each activity.

Throwing and Catching Activities

1. Catching Contest: Players are in pairs and stand about 10 feet apart. Coach yells, "Throw!" and one partner throws the ball to the other. See what pair can throw the ball back and forth the most times without dropping it. The distance can be increased if needed.
2. Diamond Throwing: Place one player at each base and one at the pitching area. Players throw the ball in a diamond shape (Pitcher-First-Second-Third-Pitcher). After this sequence, rotate players and/or reverse direction of the throw.

Fielding Activities

1. Infield Practice: Place players at the infield positions and hit ground balls to each fielder. Instruct players to make plays at different bases.

Batting Activities

1. Game Simulation: Simulate a real game situation. Place defensive players on the field in various positions and keep 2-3 players in as the first batters. Have the batter step up to the tee, hit the ball and run to first base as in a real game. Rotate batters and defense so everyone gets a chance to bat and field. Coach the fielders on decision-making. Where should they throw the ball to get the out?

Running Activities

1. Team Race: Two players start at home plate. One runs to 3rd base, the other to 1st base. They continue running in opposite directions around the bases. First one back to home base wins. To avoid collisions, have a coach stand on second base. Instruct one runner to go in front of the coach and one runner to go behind the coach.

PRACTICE #6

Team Meeting

1. Attendance
2. Announcements
3. Highlight the positives from the previous game

Warm-up and Stretching

Skill Stations

Teach the fundamentals (page 6-7) within each activity.

Throwing and Catching Activities

1. High and Low: Two players play catch. The thrower scores 3 points if ball is caught above the shoulders, 2 points if caught between waist and shoulders. No points are awarded if the ball is not caught.

Fielding Activities

1. First Base-Third Base: Line a group near first base, with the first fielder to the right of the base facing home plate. Throw or hit a ground ball toward the first fielder. The player fields the ball and then runs to step on the base, simulating a tag out. The player drops the ball to the side and prepares for the second part of the drill. Now, throw a ball in the air to the fielder who should have one foot on the base, practicing lunging to the ball to get a runner out by a throw. The same drill can be done simultaneously at third base.

Batting Activities

1. Home Run: Set out cones or markers in 5-foot increments from the batting tee. Each "zone" is worth a certain amount of points as determined by the coach. Give each player 5 hits to score as many points as possible. A ball may be hit on the ground or in the air to receive points.

Running Activities

1. Run Down: Place two more experienced players (or two coaches) at first and second base. Runners try to run from one base to another (back and forth) without getting tagged out by the fielders.

PRACTICE #7

Team Meeting

1. Attendance
2. Announcements
3. Highlight the positives from the previous game

Warm-up and Stretching

Skill Stations

Teach the fundamentals (page 6-7) within each activity.

Throwing and Catching Activities

1. Back and Forth: Line the players in two lines facing each other. The first player in one line throws to the first player in the other line. After throwing, the player runs to the end of the line and all other players move up one spot. The player with the ball now throws it to the new first player in line and goes to the end of his or her line. Continue the drill until every player has thrown and caught a ball.

Fielding Activities

1. Shortstop-Second Base: One player is in position between 1st and 2nd base and another player is in position between 2nd and 3rd base. Throw the ball on the ground toward the second-base player. That player fields the ball while the shortstop runs to second base. The fielder throws the ball to the shortstop for the out. For the second part of the drill, reverse the activity. Throw the ground ball to the shortstop. The shortstop throws to the second-base player for the out.

Batting Activities

1. Game Simulation: Simulate a real game situation. Place defensive players on the field in various positions and keep 2-3 players in as the first batters. Have the batter step up to the tee, hit the ball and run to first base as in a real game. Rotate batters and defense so everyone gets a chance to bat and field. Coach the fielders on decision-making. Where should they throw the ball to get the out?

Running Activities

1. Team Race: Two players start at home plate. One runs to 3rd base, the other to 1st base. They continue running in opposite directions around the bases. First one back to home base wins. To avoid collisions, have a coach stand on second base. Instruct one runner to go in front of the coach and one runner to go behind the coach.

PRACTICE #8

Full Game