



AGSA

ARLINGTON GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION



COACHES

MANUAL

2006

2006

III. DRILLS AND PRACTICES TO IMPROVE PLAYER SKILLS

We have included a number of basic drills that will help you develop both the individual and team skills of your players.

POSITIONING DRILL

Basics:

Nine players are placed in fielding positions. A runner with a helmet is placed at home plate. Coach hits the ball indiscriminately to any fielding position. Runner goes to first on hit ball. Runner remaining at first, Coach hits ball to another position. Runner advances. Fielder attempts to make play on runner throwing to appropriate base. Regardless, if runner is out or safe, the runner remains at next base. Drill continues until runner reaches home.

Object:

This drill trains players to react to runner movement. Excellent for Pixie and Pigtail Leagues, where players are unsure as to where to make the play. Good fundamentals drill for older leagues as well.

CATCHING DRILL

Basics:

Two players are placed about six feet apart. The players are back to back. The first player says "Ball" to alert their teammate that they are throwing the ball. They then toss the ball backward over their head towards the partner. The partner looking up then has to adjust to the ball and make the catch. The second player then calls 'ball' and returns it.

Object:

This drill trains players to work together. It gives them work finding 'fly' balls, as well as catching balls hit over their heads.

NOTE: Good drill to keep players' minds on the game. Good to use when other games are running late. It is fun to watch and if done well, it's impressive to the opposing team.

BLIND TOSS

Basics:

Player lines up approximately 20-25 feet from Coach, with back toward Coach. Coach yells "Ball, throwing ball high into air toward player. The player should turn around upon hearing "Ball." locate ball, move under it, and catch it.

Object:

This drill trains players to react quickly, and builds confidence that they can get to a ball faster than they thought.

CATCHER'S DRILL

Basics:

Infielders stand at fielding positions. Catcher in catching position, behind the plate. Coach tosses ball behind catcher against backstop, as if an errant throw or wild pitch has been made. As Catcher reaches ball, Coach indicates base to be thrown to. Catcher makes throw to base indicated.

Object:

Catchers rarely get practice on throws other than throws back to pitcher and steals at second base. This drill allows the catcher to simulate game situations where unexpected throws require the catcher to react quickly and accurately.

PLAYING PEPPER

Basics:

A hitter awaits the thrown ball. Two or more fielders stand in a line, arms-length apart, about six to eight feet away facing the hitter. One of the fielders tosses the ball to the hitter, who then hits the ball, preferably on the ground, to one of the fielders. The fielder who catches the ball tosses it back at the hitter who then hits the ball to another fielder. The idea is for the hitter to move the ball around so that all the fielders are involved. After the hitter has hit for awhile, the hitter will change places with one of the fielders.

Object:

This drill will improve bat control of hitters, as well as being a good drill to improve hand/eye coordination needed to hit. This also gives the fielders hitting practice.

BATTING DRILL

Basics:

Coach purchases two dozen 'WHIFFLE' ball golf balls at the local golf store. Batter stands in batting position with bat at ready position. Coach stands approximately three feet to the side and slightly in front of batter (safely out of bat swing) Coach feeds or tosses golf balls toward batter who must hit the ball to score a point. Coach keeps score of how many balls were hit. Next player attempts drill. Coach announces best score after all have done exercise.

Object:

Improving hand to eye coordination. Adds a little diversity and competition to practice.

HINT: Have batter retrieve golf balls. This can be an exhausting exercise for the Coach, as it is.

INFIELD DRILL

Basics:

Four infielders plus the pitcher in the fielding position. A runner at home plate and other runners on base as desired. Before hitting the ball, all infielders call out where they will throw the ball if it is hit to them. Hit the ball randomly to any of the infielders or pitchers.

Object:

Good drill for making all types of plays required during the course of a game. It also forces the infielders to think about the position of the runners and possible options for plays BEFORE the ball is hit.

GROUND BALL DRILL

Basics:

Place all players (except a catcher for the hitter) in two lines about 15 feet apart on either side of the shortstop's normal position. Have a coach stand between the two lines (or a coach for each line if available.) Coach stands at home plate with catcher to side, ready to hit ground balls. Hit ground balls alternately to each line. (Hit the ball to one line while the fielder from one line is returning the ball to the catcher.)

Object:

Rapid-fire nature of the drill is very efficient, as each fielder gets a lot of ground balls in a relatively short amount of practice time. Also, the coach in the field can devote time as required to instruct on proper fielding and throwing techniques.

PIVOT ROTATION DRILL

Basics:

Place bat behind your back and hook your elbows around the bat to hold it in place. Assume normal batting stance. Rotate hips quickly while pivoting on back foot. This can be done indoors or outdoors with coach present for instruction or without coach as source of practice.

Object:

Good drill for practicing lower body movements to get a good normal swing.

GROUND BALL DRILL # 2

Basics

Each of the infielders will get five grounders to play at her specific position: field a bunt or slap, field a grounder and turn to field three grounders hit to inside and outside her position, and then make the throws to first base. Watch their feet, do they shuffle or cross over to make the throws to first base? If they drop or juggle the ball, they start over. If it's a bad throw, they start over. If the ball is thrown wild, start over. They soon find out what is expected of them. Outfielders will get fly balls on the run from left field running to center field to right field, with a proper throw to third, second and first (watch how they set their feet). Catchers in full gear in their ready position, balls are rolled from behind; make plays at first, second and third. Pitchers field bunts, turn and pivot to make plays at first, second and third.

Object:

This drill is for infielders and outfielders, including pitchers and catchers, to improve fielding abilities.

3-2-RUN DRILL

Basics:

Split the team up, with approximately half the team at third base and the other half at home plate. Have one player at second base to receive throws from third base. Set three balls down the third base line an equal distance apart, covering approximately 3/4 of the distance to home plate. The first player is in the batter's box in her batting stance with a helmet on. When the coach says "Go" the batter swings and runs like the wind to reach second base before the player at third base fields each ball and throws to second base. The goal is to make all the throws cleanly from third to second before the runner gets to second. Players rotate after each play, home to second to third base. Once your players become efficient at your set distance, increase the distance.

Object:

The drill works arm strength, direction, foot position and body awareness. Also checks for runners' speed and quickness out of the batter's box.

THROWING DRILL

Basics:

Take a bucket of balls about ten feet behind where the shortstop or second baseman would normally line up. Then scatter the balls across the ground. Have the fielder, with her back to the infield, jog to the balls one at a time, pick them up and throw them to home plate. Have them pick up the balls with their gloves one time and with their bare hands the next. If there is no catcher to help, set a bucket about five feet away from home plate along the third base line. If the ball does not go to home plate, at least make sure it goes in between home plate and the bucket. This is the out zone.

Object:

This drill is aimed at the fielder who is most often the cut-off person. This gives them practice at getting the ball with their backs to the infield, then turning and finding home plate and making the throw to home.

NOTE: *The placement of the bucket is a target for the fielder to throw. It reinforces the idea that if the fielder can't hit home plate, at least miss on the third base side so the catcher still has a chance of getting the out. This drill is used primarily for short stops and second basemen and sometimes outfielders.*

CHARGING GROUND BALLS DRILL

Basics:

As the fielder is set up in a ready position, have her imagine a line about six feet in front of her. Actually drawing a line can help. As the ball is hit, she needs to try to field it before it crosses the line. They may not always get to it before it does, but it does get them to approach the ball. This is better than waiting

for the ball to come to them. Being in position and charging the ball will do no good at all if the fielder does not put the glove where the ball is. To get the fielder used to keeping her glove down, have her drag it in the dirt. This means they will be bending over more than needed to pick up the ball. It will teach them to move while in a bent-over position. It also teaches them to keep their gloves at the lowest point. After they do this for awhile, bending over and getting the glove down will become a habit. Some may need to do this more than others. Digging some dirt with the glove is a good thing to practice.

Object:

Improve fielding. A fielder in position to field the ball off the ground is in a better position to adjust to a ball that might take a hop. It is easier to bring the glove up then it is to take it down. Bringing the glove up is a natural reflex. When working on these techniques you may just want to try them one at a time.

FLY BALL DRILL

BASICS:

Start with the fielder facing a thrower about ten feet away. This distance can be increased or decreased depending on the surroundings. The fielder will need room to run backwards. The thrower will toss the ball over the fielder's head at an eight-to-ten foot arc. The ball needs to be thrown so the fielder is forced to run backward to catch it. The fielder returns the ball to the thrower, and then returns to her starting point. The thrower should toss the ball left and right, as well as directly over the fielder's head. Try to get it so they catch the ball over their shoulders. The height should be varied.

Object:

This drill is good for getting the fielder used to running backwards. It is good for practicing catching the ball while moving backward, or while running left or right. It can help with footwork. It also provides practice on turning and catching the ball.

ADVANCED

Another variation is with the fielder having her back to the thrower. The thrower will say "Ball" to alert the fielder the ball is being thrown, and then toss the ball over the fielder's head at an eight-to-ten foot arc. The fielder has to look up, find the ball, adjust to the ball and then catch it. The fielder returns the ball to the thrower, and then returns to her starting point. The thrower should toss the ball left and right, as well as directly over the fielder's head. This is very good for building confidence on turning and running after the ball, yet not giving up on the idea of catching it.

Object:

Doing this drill lets fielders work on how they should hold their gloves. It gives the fielder a chance to decide the best way to find, follow and look at a ball that is going over her head. This is really important because balls that are hit like this are usually really hit hard. That can mean extra bases for the base runners.

THROWING & CATCHING ACCURACY DRILL

Basics:

Players line up in pairs in two parallel lines about 20 feet apart. Coach calls out the signal to throw. Each pair throws back and forth to each other at the Coach's call. A missed ball eliminates the team from competition. After 10 throws, the pairs move 30 feet apart. Repeat the process until there is only one pair left: they are the winners.

Object:

This drill is good for teaching players to focus on throwing accurately and catching the ball. Adjust distance between players depending on age group.

THROWING AND CATCHING ACCURACY, QUICKNESS & SPEED DRILL

Basics:

Players line up in pairs in two parallel lines about 20 feet apart. Players throw the ball back and forth, shouting out the number of completed throws. With a missed ball, the pair must start again at zero.

Coach times the drill and calls out “Stop” after two minutes. The pair with the highest number of successful throws wins.

Object:

This drill is good for teaching players to focus on throwing accurately and catching the ball. By applying a time factor, players must react quickly and accurately. Adjust distance between players depending on age group.

ROUND THE DIAMOND THROWING AND CATCHING DRILL

Basics:

One player stands at each of the four bases. Player at home plate throws to player at first base. Player at first base catches the ball, gets in throwing position, and hurls the ball to the player at second base, who then throws to third base, then to catcher at home. When the ball arrives at home, direction is reversed. Catcher throws to third base who throws to second base who throws to first, then home. Coach times the complete circuit and announces the time. A dropped ball delays the round; an errant throw stops the round. Best done by having sets of four players competing against each other; however, one foursome can compete against itself to determine best time.

Object:

This drill is good for teaching players to focus on throwing accurately and catching the ball. By applying a time factor, players must react quickly and accurately. A caution is that alternating groups of players should be watchful of errant throws.

SOFT HANDS & SOFT TOSS FIELDING & THROWING DRILL FOR SS / 2B

Basics:

Position a shortstop and second baseman on the field. Coach can be positioned at home plate or closer to the fielders. Coach throws or bats ball to the left or right of the shortstop, who fields the ball, sets up and tosses it to the second baseman, who runs to cover second base and fields the ball. (Tosses can be overhand or underhand and alternated.) Drill can be reversed by Coach, hitting or throwing the ball to the second baseman, who throws to the shortstop to cover second.

Object:

This drill emphasizes how to throw the ball to another player when the distance between players is extremely close.

THE SNOW WHITE PITCHING DRILL

Basics:

Pitcher winds up in front of a full-length mirror. In this way she can observe her motion and make the necessary corrections.

Object:

This drill is best practiced at home. Player should work on hips and body motion.

WRIST SNAP PITCHING DRILL

Basics:

Position pitcher five feet from coach or other player. With the fielding hand, pitcher holds the pitching arm in place against the leg. While holding the pitching arm still, throw the ball to the coach or other player by snapping the wrist. After 10 throws, increase the distance to 10 feet and do 10 more, then to 20 feet, if possible.

Object:

This drill is designed to improve wrist snapping action.

WINDMILL TOSSING DRILL

Basics:

Position pitcher 20 feet from coach or other player. In the open or “Leap” position, the player will have both feet at a 45 degree angle to the pitcher's mound. Player rotates arm in 360 degree circle and releases ball at hip, not moving feet, but swiveling hips to simulate the “closing the door” motion. Increase the distance by 10 feet after the pitcher is comfortable with the shorter distance. A variant on this is to have the player perform the 360 degree arm rotation but deliver the ball into her glove which is positioned outstretched at her waist. Once she becomes proficient at delivering the ball into her glove, have her throw under the outstretched glove to the catcher.

Object:

This drill is designed to improve motion and delivery of the ball.

WINDMILL RUNNING PITCH DRILL

Basics:

Pitcher runs two or three steps, and while running, performs 360 degree rotary arm swing, releasing the ball at the back of the leg. Catcher should be positioned 30 to 40 feet from the pitcher. Pitchers line up in a line to deliver the ball.

Object:

This drill works on delivery of windmill pitch.

IV. THE PITCHING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

HOW DO YOU LEARN THE WINDMILL PITCH?

At first glance, the WindMill Pitch appears to be a complicated, hard-to-understand delivery. It frustrates both coaches and players. But if understood, it is really a very simple and effective pitching style. The question often asked by parents and players is: “If I go to pitching clinics will you teach me how to pitch?” The answer is NO. What we can teach you are the basic mechanics to become a pitcher. We can show you drills that will help you develop your mechanics. We will identify flaws in your current windup and suggest ways to correct these flaws. Finally we can recommend a regimen to apply these drills. But only the player, herself, can learn to be a pitcher. To become a pitcher requires a combination of dedication, attitude and ego. The tide of a game will ebb and flow on the capabilities of the pitcher. In Fast Pitch softball, the pitcher controls the game more than any other player in any other team sport.

HOW MUCH WORK IS INVOLVED IN BECOMING A PITCHER?

As a coach you must advise your players that if they want to be a pitcher they will have to work harder and longer than any other player on the team. There are simply no shortcuts. It is estimated that tournament quality pitchers throw an average of a hundred balls a day, seven hundred a week and twenty five thousand pitches a year. Coaches are advised to tell pitchers to come early or stay late after practice to work on their skills. There is just not enough time in a regular practice to work on pitching. Some coaches have alternative practice schedules for pitchers. Others just have the pitchers come an hour before practice to work on their delivery. Whatever way you do it, you must communicate to those players who want to be pitchers that it takes work.

SHOULD I ALLOW ANY PLAYER TO TRY TO BECOME A PITCHER?

Sure, but remember the player must first make the commitment to develop her skills. What we do strongly recommend against is allowing a player who has not had any training to pitch in a game. We all fall victim at times to the player who sees the “glory” others get from pitching and wears us down asking to pitch to the point where we finally give in and let her pitch. Believe us, she will not enjoy it. Two things are likely to happen. The umpire will continually declare her pitch illegal, and she will not be able to find the strike zone. In either case, no one gains. It is better to tell any player who asks to pitch, “Sure you can pitch, but first you have to demonstrate to me as the Coach that you are willing to understand the basics of how to become a pitcher.”

HOW TO DO A “LEGAL” WINDMILL PITCH, ACCORDING TO THE RULES

FIRST, the pitcher must stand with both feet positioned on the “rubber.” The “rubber” is the commonly used reference to the rectangular step placed in the center of the pitching circle, which is the eight-foot diameter circle between home plate and second base. There may be as many as three rubbers within any one pitching circle. Each is used for particular league or age groups.

NOTE: The rule that both feet must be in contact with the pitching rubber is an Amateur Softball League (ASA) rule. We abide by this rule. However, Virginia high schools require only one foot to be placed on the rubber.

SECOND, before beginning her motion the pitcher must “present the ball” to the batter. The pitcher faces the batter with both feet in contact with the rubber, comes to a full stop with arms separated and the softball visible in one hand, for at least one second, before beginning her pitching motion.

THIRD, once stopped and conceivably acknowledging the pitch sign from the catcher, the pitcher can begin the 360-degree circular motion of the WindMill.

FOURTH, as the pitcher begins the WindMill, she can make only one full-circle arm motion with the ball. Any more than that is considered a “double pump” or illegal pitch.

FINALLY, as the pitcher delivers the ball, the back (power) foot or pivot (right) foot must remain in contact with the ground. Any skip or hop that results in the foot leaving the ground is considered an illegal “Crow Hop pitch.”

WHAT’S AN ILLEGAL PITCH?

At times an umpire will call an illegal pitch, usually for:

- Not coming to a full stop and presenting the ball for pitching
- Not having both feet in contact with the rubber
- Double pumping or making more than one counter-circular revolution to deliver the ball
- Skipping or jumping off the pitching rubber during the delivery of the pitch, resulting in the back foot leaving contact with the ground
- Pitching in a "side arm" motion rather than underhand

The penalty is usually a warning, and the call of illegal pitch, resulting in a “ball” being called on the batter.

THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF PITCHING

To pitch the WindMill, your players must have the proper ego. It is highly unlikely that your player will have very much success her first outing as a WindMill pitcher. In fact, the norm is that it takes practice, practice and more practice under game conditions before your player becomes a WindMill pitcher.

Your player will throw more wild pitches; hit more players with pitched balls and walk more batters than throw strikes and get players out. Understand that, and make sure that your player and their teammates understand that.

If you have a player who becomes easily flustered and upset over walking batters and throwing wild pitches, then she's probably not ready to pitch. In fact, she may never be a pitcher until she can control her emotions. Explain that it will take time and practice to learn to pitch and to build the confidence that she can, indeed, master the WindMill.

THE WINDMILL PITCHER AND HER COACH

You as the Coach must have patience. Give your potential pitchers every opportunity to learn to pitch. But do it at your pace. Don't let a player pitch who has not pitched before or is not ready from your

perspective. The absolute worst thing you can do is to embarrass a potential pitcher. Despite her protestations that “I can pitch,” you need to see her pitch firsthand and NOT in a game situation.

When you are ready to let your player pitch, do it in moderation. Watch her closely. If she begins to become upset from too many walks or wild pitches, or just is too wild, call time and try to calm her down. Use your new pitchers sparingly and if at all possible in situations where the game decision is not at stake. This would be when you have a huge lead or huge run deficit or if it's a scrimmage game.

PROVIDING THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF GUIDANCE AT THE RIGHT TIME

When an experienced pitcher begins to have control problems, the one common refrain heard from coaches is, “JUST THROW STRIKES.” Well, don't you think that is what your player is trying to do? It's just not happening. She doesn't know why. Your job as the coach is to give her the consulting advice she desperately needs.

The worst advice you can give as a coach is to have your pitcher slow down her delivery and aim the ball. Yes, she will probably throw more strikes, but you will do irreparable damage to her. Instead, encourage her to continue to throw hard, but to remember the fundamentals of how to position and deliver the pitch.

Try to refrain from calling out advice after every pitch. Develop some hand signals that cover some of the basic correcting advice you would normally give verbally. This avoids drawing too much attention to what may already be an embarrassing situation to your pitcher.

At the end of a half inning, take your pitcher aside and talk to her privately, a non-emotional, restrained voice. If it's during an inning, ask for time from the umpire and go out to talk to your pitcher. Most likely she is doing something fundamentally wrong. Suggest she reflect back on her training, specifically, with regard as to how to stand, how to leap, how to pivot, how to rotate her arm and release the ball.

Sometimes, your pitcher will be doing everything right, but she can't get a strike called. A basic rule to remember is that the strike zone, regardless of what the rulebook states, is “**WHATEVER THE UMPIRE WANTS IT TO BE.**” Given that, advise your pitcher where you think the umpire is calling strikes and suggest that she try throwing the ball toward that location.

The bottom line is that she is already under enough pressure. Your job is to calm and guide her. If that doesn't work, take her out as pitcher. Remember there's always another day to pitch, but not always another pitcher if your player loses her confidence.

Finally, you have a responsibility to know as much as your pitcher does about pitching. Therefore it is essential that you make every effort to attend the pre-season pitching clinics, secure a pitching video, watch the video and finally, ask questions of the AGSA pitching instructor as to how best to teach the motion. Don't feel ashamed of not knowing how to do this, we all had to learn this delivery. It takes time and effort. **The worst thing you can do as a coach is not to ask.**

V. FOUR RULES, IF YOU DON'T KNOW THEM, THAT WILL KILL YOU!

THE INFIELD FLY RULE

In the AGSA, the Infield Fly Rule applies only in the Underwood Leagues. Its purpose is to prevent infielders from intentionally dropping a pop-up to get a double play. The Amateur Softball Association defines it in the Official Rules of Softball:

“Infield Fly: An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second, and third bases are occupied before two are out. Any defensive player who positions herself in the infield at the start of a pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of the rule. The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches the highest point based on the position of the closest fielder, regardless who makes the play. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, ‘Infield fly. The batter is out,’ for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near a foul line, the umpire shall declare, ‘Infield fly. The batter is out if fair.’ ”

“The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught. The runner can tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (prior to catching), the same as on any fly ball. If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.”

Here are some things to remember about the rule:

- It must be called by the umpire
- It applies only when there are fewer than two outs
- It applies only when there are runners on first and second bases, or runners on first, second and third bases
- When it is called by the umpire, the batter is automatically out
- The ball is not dead
- An infield fly is treated as a regular fly ball. Base runners are not forced to run, but they must tag up, before advancing with the risk of being thrown out

THE DROPPED THIRD STRIKE

In the Underwood Leagues, a batter has the ability to reach first base, if the catcher should "drop" the pitched ball. Once dropped, the catcher must either "tag" or "throw out" the runner. Should the runner reach first base without being "tagged" or "thrown out" the runner is considered safe and no out is recorded.

A batter can advance to first base on a dropped third strike if first base is not currently occupied by a runner. However, if there are two outs in the inning, the batter can advance to first on a dropped third strike even if there is a runner on first (who must try to advance to second, and if second is occupied, that runner must also try to advance, and so on). This one rule is the most commonly forgotten and overlooked rule in softball. Coaches should continually remind their catchers of this rule during game situations where the ball/strike count is at two strikes and first base is unoccupied or there are two outs.

THE OVERLY AGGRESSIVE RUNNER OR “LOOK BACK” RULE

In the Ponytail, Underwood and Glover Leagues, there is a little-known rule that drives coaches to insanity. Here’s the scenario: You have a rally developing. Your player has just hit a double and she at first races to second, turns toward third base and stops. The ball is thrown to the pitcher who is standing in the pitcher's circle. The pitcher faces your runner and “looks her back,” then your runner fakes a run motion toward third. All of a sudden you hear the umpire scream. “Base Runner, you are Out!” So ends the rally.

What happened? Any base runner can try to advance to any base they wish. But they cannot stop and then give any indication that they will again advance, while the ball is in the control of the pitcher within the pitcher's circle, without being declared as out.

THE DROPPED BATTING HELMET RULE

This rule is present in the Ponytail and Underwood Leagues. Any runner who loses her helmet while running the bases and does not attempt to pick it up and put it on can be called out by the Umpire. The runner can also be called out if, in the umpire's judgment, she did not make an attempt to keep the helmet on her head.

Picky? Maybe. Difficult to interpret? We agree. Is it called often? Depending on the umpire, you bet. Best defense against this being called: tell all your players to wear the right size helmets and make sure they are secured tightly on their heads.

V. KEEPING THE SCOREBOOK, OR, HOW TO WIN BY USING THE NUMBERS

AGSA rules provide that the home team is responsible for keeping track of the number of runs scored each inning, as well as the number of innings each player pitches. It's a good idea for the away team to keep score also, and check the score with the home team periodically. This will help to avoid confusion and misunderstanding.

Each team is responsible for keeping its batting order straight.

It is courteous to give the other team your batting order, with players' numbers, at least five minutes before the game time. Few things are more hectic than a coach trying to get his or her team on the field, or ready to bat, while also having to write down the opposing team's batting order in the scorebook during the pitcher's warm-up!

If you want to do so, you can keep your scorebook in a way that allows you to keep track of what each player did, and, if you are so inclined, keep a set of batting and pitching statistics. If you are really so inclined, fielding statistics can be kept too!

There is no one official method of keeping score. What follows is a simple system that is an amalgam of several systems.

EACH FIELDER HAS A NUMBER:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Pitcher=1 | Shortstop=6 |
| • Catcher=2 | Left Fielder=7 |
| • First Base=3 | Center Fielder=8 |
| • Second Base=4 | Right Field=9 |
| • Third Base = 5 | Short Fielder(Pigtail League) = 10 |

USE LETTERS OR ABBREVIATIONS TO DESCRIBE GAME OCCURRENCES

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • BB =Walk (base on balls) | SB =Stolen Base |
| • KS =Strike out swinging | CS =Caught Stealing |
| • K (written backwards) =Strike out looking | |
| • HBP =Hit By Pitch | DP =Double Play |
| • E =Error | PB =Passed Ball |
| • 1B =Single | RBI =Runs Batted In |
| • 2B =Double | SF =Sacrifice Fly Ball |
| • 3B =Triple | G =Ground Ball |
| • HR =Home Run | LD =Line Drive |
| • WP =Wild Pitch | FB =Fly Ball |
| • FO =Foul Out | SAC =Sacrifice Bunt |
| • SLB =Slap Bunt Hit | |

Combining the numbers and letters tells a lot about each play. For example, *E-4* means that the second base person made an error. *E-4g* would add the information that a ground ball was "flubbed."

Mark a batter's progress around the base paths by drawing a line from base to base on the template printed in your scorebook (AGSA will provide the scorebook). If a batter reaches home safely and scores, lightly color the diamond in. Why lightly? Otherwise, you may obscure information written inside the diamond.

It helps to record outs (first out=1, second out=2, and third out=3) and then circle the out number so that you can easily keep track of the outs.

For the brave of heart, a scorebook can provide the basic data you need to keep a set of statistics for your team. Stats can be handy in making decisions about the batting order and in helping your pitchers develop.

They can hold surprises, too: For example, your quiet sixth hitter may steadily and unobtrusively be poking singles through the infield and piling up a lot of runs batted in (RBIs).

Batting statistics are easy to generate from the scorebook. To develop pitching statistics, you'll need to consult the score you have kept for the other team.

A FEW TIPS ON KEEPING SCORE IF YOU WANT TO DEVELOP PITCHING STATISTICS:

- ✓ As noted above, keep a detailed account of the other team's batting.