

## **Base Running & Sliding**

### **General Comments**

- first base coach handles runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base and the batter when he becomes a runner, third base coach handles runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base, batting coach will usually instruct runner coming home ( slide/clear the area )
- emphasis should be on instructing players how to run the bases and to follow coaches instructions
- coaches should use consistent instructions/signals such as 'go'/arm doing a wind mill, 'stop'/arm towards player showing palm to player, tag up, slide etc
- when possible have base runners take extra base to prevent outs being made on force plays

### **Drill**

- simple base running progression is shown below, this can be used both as base running and conditioning drills

- players line up at home plate, player steps into batters box and takes a full swing at an imaginary ball then runs 'through' first base then returns to end of line
  - players line up as before, makes turn at first and continues to run to second stopping on the base, then returns to end of the line
  - as in b but continues to third base, then returns to end of the line
  - as in c but continues 'through' home plate, have players in line move back so runner can score
- for b/c/d have pylons or gloves on the outside corner of the base to instruct players to use the inside, also have pylons or gloves about 10 feet past the base about 10 feet outside the base line, players must stay inside these markers
  - progression is to have players slide into second, third or home

### Instructions for Infield/Single Base Hit

- batter turned runner
    - should run through first base, not to first base, a good rule is that they should be going full speed one step past the bag
- Note – runner running past first base cannot be tagged out irregardless of which way they turn to go back to the bag unless they make a attempt/gesture to advance towards second base
- the runner should try to step on the front of first base, should not leap at the bag, a slide is only used to avoid a tag
- runners on first and second advance to the next base as fast as possible in a straight line, they should not overrun the bag as they can be tagged out, runner on third should run though home plate similar to at first base
- runners on base should be instructed if they have to run do to a force or have the option of waiting to see if the ball gets through, ie watch the coach for instructions

### Instructions on an Outfield/Extra Base Hit

- batter turned runner
  - must run full speed to first and make an aggressive turn, approximately 10 to 15 feet before reaching the base the runner goes wide into foul territory to start the turn, most of the turn is completed before reaching first base, runner should lean into the turn dipping the left shoulder
  - the runner should step on the inside corner of the bag and push off
- runners on first and second run turns similiar to batter-turned-runner at first base

Note: players should look for coaches signal well before reaching the base they are approaching

Example: base runner on first should know before he reaches second base whether he should be stopping at the base or rounding off his approach to advance to third base

### Tagging Up

- players should be instructed to return to the base they started at when a fly ball is caught or be on the base when it is caught, they can then try to advance to the next base
- Drill - runner(s) on base(s) and have a coach at the plate who hits fly balls, place a few coaches around the infield/outfield, if fly ball is dropped runners advance, if ccaught the runners must tag up*

## Sliding

- inform parents that part of the next practice will be sliding practicing, suggest older heavier pants and long sleeve shirts

### Basic Form

- have players them lie down on the ground on their backs
  - one leg should be more or less straight out ( slight bend in the knee ) toes pointing up, the other leg is bent underneath the straight leg and should form a figure four, bent leg should remain parallel to the ground
- Note: the last step taken or push off leg is the bent leg
- buttocks remain completely on the ground, should not lean to one side or the other, hands and arms should be in the air about 45 deg angle from the ground
  - shoulder blades are off the ground and neck is bent with the chin down so that the player can see the bag

### Drill

- start by instructing players on the proper form, ensure that they know this before practicing sliding
- start sliding practice in the grass, if wet even better, also can be done in socks to ensure that cleats do not dig in, when learning to slide players should go approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  speed and relax, coaches should concentrate on form as the grass will be more forgiving than the infield dirt
- start by sliding in the grass without a base, practice form, progress to sliding into a base that is not pinned down, this is to help the player judge when they need to start the slide without running into a steel peg, then progress to a base pegged into the grass