

## **“A universal game”**

**Think of baseball as a language:** Once you learn it, you can communicate anywhere on earth with other individuals and teams that know it. There are different aspects of a language that you must learn, however, before you can be considered “*fluent*” (reading, writing, and speaking for example). Learning the game of baseball is very similar:

**Think of individual skills as reading.** It is the foundation of baseball, and you cannot compete without them. Reading alone won’t allow you to effectively communicate, however, just like great individual skills won’t automatically make you a great baseball player.

**Now think of team skills as writing.** Players must learn how to apply their individual skills within a team concept. You might have great individual skills in the infield, but if you don’t know your job in different baserunning situations, or when the ball *isn’t* hit to you, that limits your value as an infielder no matter how good your individual skills are!

**Lastly, think of game skills as speaking.** This is the ability to understand how to best use your *individual* and *team skills* throughout a game to give your team the best chance to win. This includes the ability to create a game-plan (called “*approach*”) for each at-bat based on what your team needs. Also included is the ability to run the bases with *intelligent* aggressiveness, based on the score of the game and the other team’s skill level at different positions. Equally important is the ability to pitch and play defense based on what gives you the best chance to win the game, and not necessarily stop the other team from scoring. Sometimes, in trying so hard to stop a team from scoring 1 run, you *increase* your chances of giving up multiple runs!!!

Individual, team, and game skills are all critical components to the baseball language. Our goal for our players is *fluency* in baseball.....welcome to the journey!

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## ***Pregame Approach***

*\*Arrive 45 minutes before game*

### ***Pregame Drills***

- throwing program (page 6)
- individual skills (pages 8 - 13)
- team skills (page 7)
- opponent strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies (effects our approach)
- field conditions (effects our approach)

### ***No infield and outfield***

- pregame infield and outfield is a routine used by high schools and colleges to allow scouts and recruiters to evaluate players. College recruiters and professional scouts want the opportunity to see arm strength from catchers and outfielders, and arm strength and actions from the infielders. Many coaches have seen this and misinterpreted it as a *practice* tool instead of a *scouting* tool

## ***In-Game Approach***

### ***Hitting***

- take vs hit
- work early
- emphasize the type of at-bat it is, and reinforce that the hitter's approach should reflect this - statistics are not as important as the hitter's attempt to have a quality at-bat based on the game situation

### ***Pitching***

- absolutely no curve balls
- maximum 45 pitches per weekend
- quick tempo
- change rhythm/delivery to hinder running game

### ***Baserunning***

- green light vs red light
- base coaches only tell them whether to run when they *cannot* see the ball (when they can see the ball use reminder verbals)

### ***Defensive Positioning***

- holding runners
- bag coverage
- double-play depth
- take it away
- no doubles
- big infield
- 4 hole/6 hole
- OF positioning (defend *catchable* flyballs)

### ***Reminder Verbals***

- round the base, find the ball
- stop on the base, find the ball
- as much as he allows you to get
- extend your look
- pick up your lead runner
- see the ball down
- show it early, read the defense (or particular defender)
- two out two strikes, hands go you go
- take a chance, make a play
- he commits before you commit
- yes vs no

### ***Overall In-Game Coaching Approach***

- avoid the temptation to tell our players what to do during the play - allow and encourage them to react to what they see, and to trust what they have learned in practice - the more *you* try and do during a play, the more you hinder *their* ability to see and react on their own - our job is to instruct and remind them in-between pitches, and evaluate constructively the decisions they make

## ***Practice Approach***

***\*All practices are optional, and are open to all Carolina Elite Baseball members, regardless of their team affiliation***

### ***Small Group (1 – 8 players)***

- focus on individual skills and fundamentals (see pages 8 - 13)

### ***Large group (9 or more players)***

- focus on team skills and general baseball fundamentals(see page 7 and 10)

***\*Carolina Elite Baseball does reserve the right to restrict some practices based on age, ability, and/or experience. This will be done to ensure players are attending workouts with other players similar in age, ability, and baseball experience based on the material being covered during the workout.***

## ***Throwing Programs***

### ***Pitchers***

- face forward lock downs
- throwing side lock downs
- throwing side equal and opposite shuffles (maintain direction on follow through)
- flat ground catch from stretch (maintain direction on follow through)

### ***Infielders***

- receiving (pop – tags – dp's – relays)
- throw of each leg and from all arm slots (top –  $\frac{3}{4}$  - side – sub)

### ***Outfielders***

- over top arm slot
- follow all throws (maintain direction on follow through)

### ***Catchers***

- throw from ear (short arm release)
- rake when receiving
- shuffle drill
- ball on ground drill

## ***Team Defensive Skills***

### ***Positioning***

- holding runners
- bag coverage
- double-play depth
- take it away
- no doubles
- big infield
- 4 hole/6 hole
- OF positioning(defend *catchable* flyballs)

### ***Pickoffs***

- quick picks
- daylights
- inside moves
- 31/53
- rundowns

### ***Outfield throwing***

- standard cuts (singles/balls in front of outfielders)
- double/tandem cuts (extra base hits, balls that get beyond outfield)
- no cut situations

### ***Flyball Priority/Communication***

- sun-field communication

### ***Bunt Defense***

- standard
- wheel
- wheel pick

### ***1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Defense***

- forced balks
- stink

## *Hitting Skills*

*When in doubt.....simplify!*

### *Mental “Musts”*

- **compete**
- learn from your at-bat, don't dwell on it
- make adjustments, not excuses
- thumbs & fists, never fingers

### *Short Swing Drills (Lazy/Dragging Barrel)*

- high tee
- deep tee
- high side toss
- jam job side toss
- deep side toss
- high tiny toss
- top hand drills

### *Stay Inside-the-Ball Drills*

- tong tee
- long side toss
- closed side toss
- step-throughs

### *Set-Up Drills*

- dry set-ups
- set-up side toss
- set-up tiny toss
- live takes

### *Situational Drills*

- hit & runs
- do the jobs
- backside
- slash
- infield back
- infield in

### *Bunting Drills*

- one knee bunting (two hand and top hand only)
- one knee to off the ground bunting (two hand and top hand only)
- bunt hits from hitting stance

## *Pitching Skills*

### *Mental “Musts”*

- **compete**
- control tempo
- attack zone
- challenge contact
- maintain composure
- outs after “E’s”
- make adjustments, not excuses
- thumbs & fists, never fingers

### *Delivery Mechanics*

- balance drills
- towels (stride + 5)
- lock downs
- shuffle drills
- flat-ground catch

### *Pitching Defense (PFP)*

- picks
- comebackers
- getting over
- DP’s
- bunt coverage

## ***Baserunning Skills (Reads)***

### ***Mental “Musts”***

- **compete**
- do your homework
- which is more valuable – your out or your run
- thumbs & fists, never fingers

### ***Leads***

- primaries
- secondaries
- one-way leads
- predetermined vs reader LHP leads

### ***Stealing***

- 1<sup>st</sup> base vs LHP (reader vs predetermined)
- 1<sup>st</sup> base vs RHP
- double steals
- extending look (slide steps – 31’s – contact)
- stealing 3B

### ***General Baserunning Fundamentals***

- dirt ball reads
- hit & runs
- run & hits
- two-out, two-strike secondaries (hands go you go)
- apply the rule
- contact vs see-it-through at 3B
- tagging up vs as much as you can get
- fake steals

## *Infield Skills*

### *Mental “Musts”*

- **compete**
- stay in the moment
- want the ball
- own your mistake
- thumbs & fists, never fingers

### *Two-Mans*

- kneeling gators
- wide leg gators
- wide leg glove-hand transfers
- wide leg feeds
- wide leg footwork to throw
- short hops
- short hop tags
- short hop transfers
- DP turns
- slow rollers (barehand – gators – glove-hand transfers)

### *Fungos*

- gators
- glove only (hand behind back)
- feeds
- hard surface fungo catch

## *Outfield Skills*

### *Mental “Musts”*

- **compete**
- get noticed doing the unnoticeable
- stay in the moment
- want the ball
- own your mistake
- thumbs & fists, never fingers

### *Two-Mans*

- breakbacks (get around – on the run – blind)
- head flips
- ball adjustments
- figure 4’s
- stationary ball

### *Fungos*

- flyballs (throwing situation – triangle – communication drills)
- ground balls (run throughs vs infield technique)
- fence drills
- throwing to bases

## *Catching Skills*

### *Mental “Musts”*

- **compete**
- be responsible for your pitcher (own his performance)
- stay in the moment
- thumbs & fists, never fingers

### *Receiving Drills*

- barehand receiving
- frisbee drill
- machine/live arm receiving

### *Blocking*

- sit and get hit
- drop downs

### *Throwing*

- land and turn
- ball-on-ground drill
- shuffle drill

### *Other Skills*

- pop-ups
- bunt coverage
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> situations