

LESSON 7: WIFFLE BALL STATIONS

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

- Throwing:** Throws with a mature pattern for distance or power appropriate to the activity in a dynamic environment. (S1.M2.7)
- Catching:** Catches, with a mature pattern, from different trajectories using a variety of objects in small-sided game play. (S1.M21.7)
- Striking:** Strikes a pitched ball with an implement with force in a variety of practice tasks. (S1.M20.6)
- Rules & etiquette:** Applies rules and etiquette by acting as an official for modified physical activities and games and creating dance routines within a given set of parameters. (S4.M6.8)

Embedded Outcome

- Personal Responsibility:** Exhibits responsible social behaviors by cooperating with classmates, demonstrating inclusive behaviors and supporting classmates. (S4.M1.7)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- demonstrate proper throwing technique using all critical elements of a mature pattern during the post-assessment.
- demonstrate proper catching technique using all critical elements of a mature pattern during the post-assessment.
- demonstrate proper technique to field a ground ball using all critical elements of a mature pattern during peer assessment.
- demonstrate proper base-running technique using all critical elements of a mature skill pattern during the team base-running activity.
- provide correct visual and verbal direction to batter-runners during the base-running activity.

Equipment and Materials

- Ball options: tennis balls, Wiffle balls, racquetballs, foam balls, etc.
- Bat options: Wiffle bats of different sizes
- Home plates or bases
- Batting tees
- Pedometers, iPads, and stopwatches

Introduction

Begin with a review of base running. Ask students to find a partner and discuss what is important for a base runner to do when hitting a single, a double, a triple, and a home run. Give partners time to converse and then have groups report on their base-running suggestions. Provide a team of four students a step-count goal for today.

Instructional Task: Review Base Running

■ PRACTICE TASK

Explain and demonstrate visual and verbal signals given by a first base coach.

Fantasy teams:

Groups of four to six use a grid of four bases. One student begins as a first base coach. One student role-plays as the game announcer, reporting on the base runner's pretend hit, defensive play, and

base-running result. One student is the batter/base runner, who pretends to hit a ball and then runs to first. The base coach gives the runner direction to run through the base, round the base, or continue to second base. One or more students are on deck to become the batter. Students rotate from announcer to on deck, to batter/runner to base coach.

Extension

With the same setup, batter/runners are timed by another student swinging a bat and then running through first base. Students repeat to improve their time. Students can then predict their time for a double, attempt a double, and use group members' feedback to improve their times.

Refinements

- Pump your arms from “pocket to chin” when running.
- Lean toward the infield when rounding a base.
- To get faster, increase your stride length, increase your stride rate, or do both.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Groups can extend or shorten the size of their grids.

What to Look For

Critical elements for base running:

1. Drop the bat after the swing.
2. Sprint out of the batter's box.
3. Run on the outside of the imaginary first-base line.
4. Step on the front edge of the base.
5. Run through first base.
6. Make proper decisions about advancing to the next base.

Critical elements for first base coaching:

1. Point toward the right field foul line; say, “Run through, run through!”
2. Make small circle with one arm; say, “Round, round, round!”
3. Point toward second base; say, “Go two, go two, go two!”

Instructional Task: Station work

■ PRACTICE TASK

In groups of four, students rotate through all stations. Set up the stations so that you can monitor the written test station while also completing the throwing and catching post-assessment station.

- Throwing and catching post-assessment done by teacher
- Written test on rules
- Peer assessment of fielding grounders (one hitter, one catcher, one fielder, one assessor); use written checklists, iPads, or both
- Stacked Wiffle balls on tee challenge: Stack two Wiffle balls on a tee. Batter attempts to hit the bottom ball and make the top ball drop onto the tee. (A quick swing is needed for this to work!)
- Catching tricks: Toss, clap hands, catch; toss, turn 180 degrees or 360 degrees, catch; toss and catch behind back; juggle three small balls.
- Pitching with a Wiffle ball: Experiment with different grips and wrist snaps when throwing over-hand; have an iPad at this station to show video clips of athletes throwing different baseball pitches (fastball, curve, slider).

Refinement

Stop activity and refine any skills taught that need to be corrected.

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S4.M1.7. Students should cooperate with others in their group to successfully complete the station tasks.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Groups of students choose the type of bat and ball used, along with the distance apart in the station activities.
- In the hitting assessment, allow students to hit a soft toss or off of a tee.

What to Look For

- Grip the ball like a softball or baseball, with two or three fingers on top of the ball (depending on the size of students' hands).
 - Different pitches can be thrown overhand like a baseball.
 - The direction of the wrist snap is not crucial in making the ball move. Because the holes are on just one half of the ball, the air pressure difference will make the ball move if it is thrown hard enough.
 - Straight: The holes of the Wiffle ball are on the top by the two or three fingers and the wrist is snapped over the top of the ball.
 - Curve: The holes of the Wiffle ball are on the thumb side of the grip. The wrist is snapped so the palm goes toward the middle of the body. The throwing-arm elbow goes toward the opposite hip on the follow-through.
 - Slider: The holes of the Wiffle ball are on the pinkie side of the grip. The wrist is snapped so the palm goes away from the middle of the body. The follow-through stays on the throwing side of the body.
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Formal and Informal Assessments

- Peer assessment of fielding grounders as one of the stations
- Written test on the rules of striking games as one of the stations
- Teacher assessment of catching and throwing skills as one of the stations (same as in Lesson 1)

Closure

- Ask questions about performance at stations regarding technique, strategies, and success.
- Collect homework and ask students questions about muscle groups that extend and contract when running.

Reflection

Enter assessment results (knowledge, catching, throwing, hitting) into spreadsheet and analyze the data. Determine what skills and knowledge should be reviewed in the next lesson.

Homework

Research the rule about a base runner being hit by a batted ball.

Ask students to update their physical activity logs.

Resources

Internet keyword search: "baseball pitching grips," "softball hitting tee drills," "three-ball juggling"