



COACH'S GUIDE

to Successful & Effective Practices

Thank you for volunteering your time to coach a Junior Giants team this summer! New to coaching? Great! We created step-by-step Practice Plans for volunteers to utilize each week. Plans are located in every WOW pack, as well as online at gojrgiants.org. Before the season begins, please read through the following guide to learn a few helpful tips on how to host successful and effective team practices.

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- Coordinate and communicate with your assistant coach(es) and team parent(s) to go over the week's responsibilities.

DURING PRACTICE:

BREAK IT DOWN

Follow the structure below when introducing skills/drills:

- Name and explain the skill/drill
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- Observe for proper execution and technique of skill/drill rather than focusing on the result

KEEP IT ACTIVE

- Keep players moving and engaged throughout practice time by running the same or different drills simultaneously in 3 smaller groups (or 2 groups if needed).

BE PRESENT

- Although practices may be hectic at times, do your best to remain present when out at the field.
- Be attentive to the needs of each player, get to know their strengths and weakness and continue to uphold the noncompetitive spirit of the Junior Giants program.

AFTER PRACTICE:

REFLECT

Ask yourself:

- How did the practice go? What drills were the most successful? What drills should the team return to?
- Were the players able to complete the drills? Was it too advanced? Not advanced enough?
- How can I improve next week as a coach?

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

WELCOME & HANDBOOK OVERVIEW

15 MINUTES

1. Gather and welcome the team.
2. Introduce the team parents and coaches.
3. Read through the Junior Giants Player & Parent Handbook.

STRETCHES & WARM UP

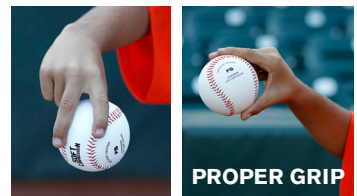
7 MINUTES

1. Have players introduce themselves (name and favorite color).
2. Have players lightly jog for 2-3 minutes to a designated spot and back.
3. As the team returns, have them spread out and prepare for stretches.
4. Altogether, count to 10 while completing each of the stretches below:
 - Arm Circles: Circle arms 10 times forward then 10 times backwards.
 - Shoulder Stretch: Place one arm behind the head and pull on elbow with opposite hand, switch.
 - Wrist and Forearm Stretch: Kneel down and place palms on ground with fingertips facing knees.
 - Toe Touches: Reach for toes without bending knees.
 - Flamingo Stretch: Bend right knee and grab right foot with right hand, balance, then switch to the left.
5. Finish with 10 jumping jacks.

PROPER GRIP

5 MINUTES

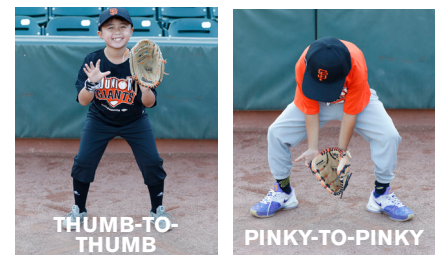
1. Direct players to hold the ball in their "favorite hand."
2. Demonstrate the proper grip on the ball with fingers on top across the laces and the thumb underneath.
3. The ball should be held in the fingers if possible and with the same pressure the players hold a tube of toothpaste. They should control the ball, but not squeeze it.
4. Have each player take a ball and practice the grip while still in the circle. Check grips.



THROWING

5 MINUTES

1. Throw to another coach while emphasizing holding the ball correctly in the "favorite hand," turning sideways, pointing to the target, stepping and throwing.
2. Emphasize catching thumb-to-thumb (fingers pointing up) when the ball is above their waist, and pinky-to-pinky (fingers pointing down) for balls thrown below the waist.
3. Break into small groups, one coach/team parent with each.
4. Line up players and take turns throwing the ball to each player.
5. Have player catch the ball and throw it back to the coach. Do this five times each.



CATCHING

5 MINUTES

1. In the same groups as the above drill, switch the focus to catching technique.
2. Once the player shows a two-hand-target the coach will toss the ball.
3. Player catches the ball with two hands and transitions into the proper grip.
4. Repeat until all players have practiced catching the ball five times.



WEEK 1

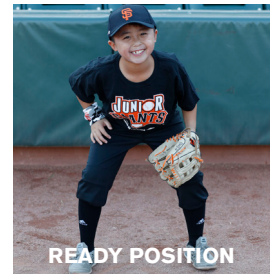
WATER BREAK

3 MINUTES

INFIELD POSITION TOUR GUIDE

5 MINUTES

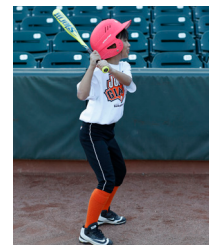
1. Have players line up at home plate.
2. Coaches introduce themselves as the tour guides and jog with the team to first base.
3. Pause the "tour" and introduce the roles of a first baseman.
4. Demonstrate what the ready position looks like for a first baseman.
5. Ask players to mimic the stance.
6. Complete this same sequence with all infield positions until the team reaches home plate again.



SWINGING THE BAT

10 MINUTES

1. Sit players down and discuss safety rules when holding a bat.
 - Ex. two hands on the bat at all times, never throw the bat
2. Demonstrate stance: favorite hand on top, bend knees, stand "sideways," eyes on the ball.
3. Line up and have each player practice their bat grip.
4. Have players spread their feet slightly wider than their shoulders in an athletic position, knees slightly bent.
5. Have them carefully take a swing, trying to have the bat stay level to the ground.
6. Split your team into small groups, one coach/team parent with each. Line up.
7. Grab a tee and practice hitting the ball.
8. Rotate through all the players 2 or 3 times.
9. Once you have gone through the line, ask players to put down their bats and pick up the balls.



RUNNING THE BASES

5 MINUTES

1. Line up all players at home plate.
2. Have the first player take a practice swing and then run to first base.
3. Emphasize running through first base rather than stopping right when they reach the base.
4. Rotate through the entire line.

COOL DOWN & WOW TALK

15 MINUTES

1. Review what you worked on at practice.
2. Talk about game or practice details for the week.
3. Ask the WOW discussion questions for Week 1 (see handout).



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STRETCHES & WARM UP

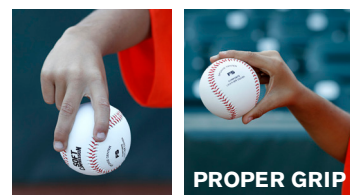
7 MINUTES

1. Have players introduce themselves (name and favorite color).
2. Have players lightly jog for 2-3 minutes to a designated spot and back.
3. As the team returns, have them spread out and prepare for stretches.
4. Altogether, count to 10 while completing each of the stretches below:
 - Arm Circles: Circle arms 10 times forward then 10 times backwards.
 - Shoulder Stretch: Place one arm behind the head and pull on elbow with opposite hand, switch.
 - Wrist and Forearm Stretch: Kneel down and place palms on ground with fingertips facing knees.
 - Toe Touches: Reach for toes without bending knees.
 - Flamingo Stretch: Bend right knee and grab right foot with right hand, balance, then switch to the left.
5. Finish with 15 jumping jacks.

PROPER GRIP

5 MINUTES

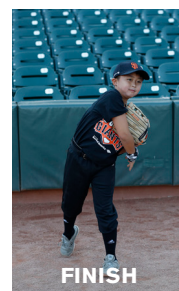
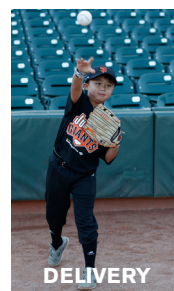
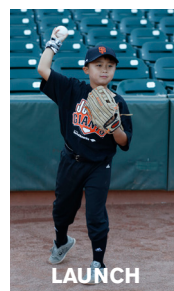
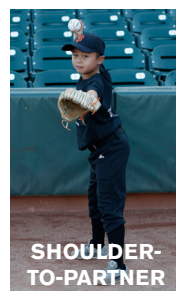
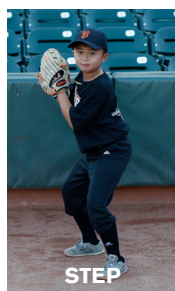
1. Gather team. Demonstrate the proper grip on the ball with fingers on top and the thumb underneath.
2. Form line 15 feet away from the coach.
3. Have players run up to the ball, pick it up and show the coach the proper grip.
4. Return to the end of the line.
5. Once players return to the back of their line the next player can go.
6. Perform this drill until all players in their line have gone then ask the groups do a relay race game doing the same as above.



THROWING & CATCHING

10 MINUTES

1. Break into two or three groups to demonstrate and practice the Five Steps of Throwing:
 - Step One: Step
 - Step Two: Shoulder-to-Partner
 - Step Three: Launch
 - Step Four: Delivery
 - Step Five: Finish
2. Line players up in one line facing the coach.
3. Once the player shows a two hand target the coach will toss the ball.
4. Player catches the ball with two hands and transitions into the proper grip. Then use the five steps of throwing form to throw the ball back to the coach.
5. Repeat until all players have gone five times.



WEEK 1

WATER BREAK

3 MINUTES

HITTING

12 MINUTES

1. Break into small groups, one coach/team parent with each.
2. Demonstrate the three steps of hitting and have players take a few practice swings:

ONE: GRIP

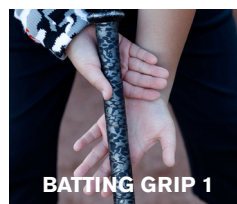
- Place both hands out flat and lay the bat at the base of the fingers. Lightly wrap your fingers around the bat. This grip will align the player's knuckles up.

TWO: STANCE

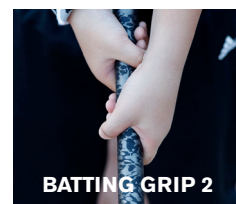
- Have the players get into an athletic position with knees bent slightly and shoulder width apart. There should be more weight on the back foot, with the weight distribution being about 40% on the front foot and 60% on the back foot.

THREE: COVERAGE

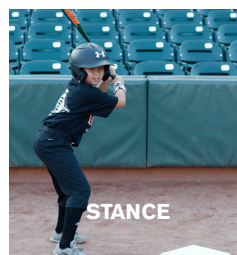
- The bat needs to cover the entire plate. Have the player get in their stance; place the bat at the corner of the plate closest to the catcher. You want to be sure that your stance allows you to have complete plate coverage so you can hit the outside pitch.



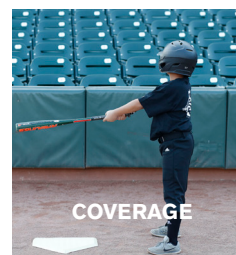
BATTING GRIP 1



BATTING GRIP 2



STANCE



COVERAGE

BASE RUNNING

10 MINUTES

Drill 1:

1. Form one line of players at home plate.
2. Explain that on a ball hit in the infield, players should run as fast as they can through first base.
3. Do not slow down in front of the base.
4. A player will run through first base hitting the front of the base with either foot.
5. Once the player runs through the base the player will quicken their steps to stop, while looking to the right to see if the ball was overthrown.
6. Ask each player to complete the drill two times each.

Drill 2:

1. Break the players up into two even groups; one group goes to home plate and the other group to second base.
2. Explain the race rules – players will run around all the bases and finish on the base they started. Once the player touches that base the next player can go.
3. Race ends when all players in their group finish.

COOL DOWN & WOW TALK

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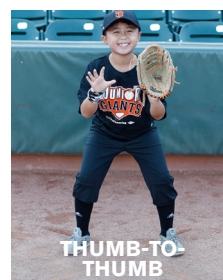
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CATCHING

10 MINUTES

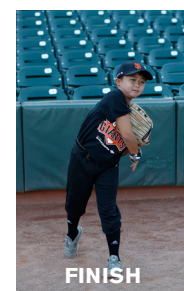
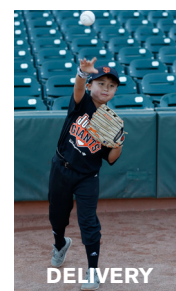
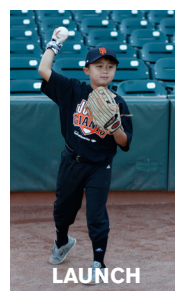
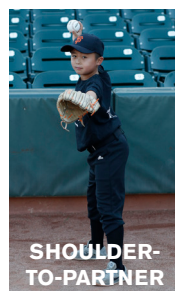
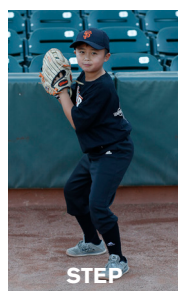
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2. Emphasize catching thumb-to-thumb (fingers pointing up) when the ball is above their waist, and pinky-to-pinky (fingers pointing down) for balls thrown below the waist.
3. Break into small groups, one coach/team parent with each.
4. Line up players and take turns throwing the ball to each player.
5. Have player catch the ball and throw it back to the coach. One at a time, coach will throw balls above waist, then below waist.
6. Make sure players are catching thumb-to-thumb (fingers pointing up) when the ball is above their waist and pinky-to-pinky (fingers pointing down) for balls thrown below the waist.
7. Perform this drill five times each.



THROWING

7 MINUTES

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MAJORS PRACTICE PLAN



WEEK 1

WATER BREAK

3 MINUTES

FIELDING

10 MINUTES

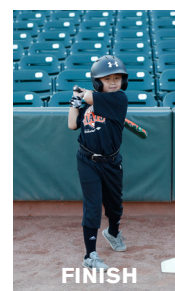
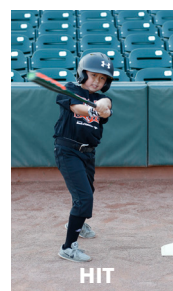
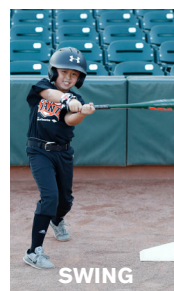
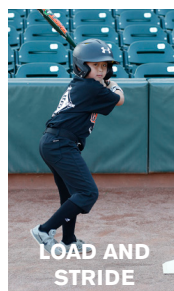
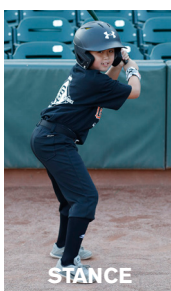
1. Have players partner up.
2. Form two separate lines, 12 feet apart and facing each other. Give each pair a ball.
3. The receiving player starts in fielding position with the glove on the ground and extended out past the bill of their cap.
4. The player with the ball rolls it underhand directly toward their partner's glove.
5. The receiving player rolls it back the same way.
6. As the drill progresses, players should vary the ball speed.
7. Check each player's position. Look for a balanced athletic stance with weight inside the knees and on the balls of feet. Hands are carried below the belt and aren't touching the knees.

HITTING

10 MINUTES

Conduct dry drills (exercises without a bat; bat shown for reference) covering each fundamental step below:

1. Stance
2. Load and stride
3. Swing rotation at contact point
4. Hitting through the ball



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