

AIA Academy Baseball/Softball Drills

Pitching and Umpiring –

Set-Up: Set up several pitching strips/home-plates lanes (total team members divided by 3). Form groups of 2-3 players; each group will have a pitcher, a catcher, and an umpire.

Drill: Pitchers will pitch an inning to their catcher. There is no batter in this drill. The umpire will call the pitches (strikes and balls) and keep track of the count. Each pitcher pitches to 3 imaginary batters.

Technique:

- Pitchers – (Baseball) Pitcher grips ball with middle and index fingers across the seams. Turn the non-throwing side toward the direction of the throw. Raise the throwing arm to shoulder height keeping the elbow high and back. The throw initiates by stepping forward with the non-throwing side leg and turning the hips. The elbow leads the throw forward and the wrist is snapped upon release. The arm and body follow through in the direction of the throw.
- Pitcher – (Softball) Start with two feet on the pitcher's mound. Move arm through a large circle in a windmill motion. Pitcher pushes off the mound using legs as the ball rounds the bottom of the motion. The ball is released at the hip. Arm and body follow through with athlete landing in a defensive position should the ball be hit back the pitcher's direction.
- Umpires – Visualize the strike zone, which is between the knees and shoulders of each individual batter and plate width. Encourage the players' dramatic sides by giving style points to how they call the 'stiiiiikes', balls, and outs.

Alternatives: Have a batter stand at the plate to assist the umpire in finding the strike zone and the catcher practice a live batting situation.

Tips: Not every player will end up playing the pitching position, but it is important to allow them to try each position. Focus on accuracy and speed for the majority of players. Coach may direct specific technique points to players who are familiar with different pitches.

