

# Practices Make Perfect

This is the era of more games and less practices  
in youth sports.

**I am begging you to practice more and  
practice efficiently.**

Practices do not have to be boring, plan out everything you want to accomplish in each practice. It is helpful during the off season, if coaches would make a yearly, monthly, weekly and daily plans.

Of course, plans will always change and that's ok. At least, coaches have a starting point and a plan to refer to, tweak often and move through the practice season smoothly with a starting plan.

I run three tournaments every year in St Louis. We have a lot of teams come to the tournaments-one in June and two in October.

**We see a lot of two very important aspects of softball: a  
lack of fundamentals and strategy!!!**

I watch teams warming up and most of the teams do not follow through while throwing. That is a basic skill and one that is easily taught. Just look at the throwing hand leg while releasing the ball. That leg should be off the ground and following the arm. If the player does not do this, a couple of things happen:

- the player eventually will hurt the throwing arm in the shoulder area
- the ball will die in the air because of lack of force behind the throw that is produced during the follow through
- the throw will not be accurate.

Simple fix-the leg must come off the ground and follow the arm around the body.

Kids love to be active! Make your plans for practices with that in mind. Even if you are the only coach there, you can make plans for every player to be involved somehow.

Example. While the coach is hitting, players can be catching, covering bases and putting the ball in a bucket or throwing to a designated player on each side of the coach to receive the ball and then give to the coach. The coach should hit to one side then immediately the middle and then immediately to the other side while players on

the side already fielding are retrieving and throwing in to their designated catcher and so on.

Station work is great to be efficient and get more players involved. Decide on the number of stations and the skill s to be taught, put half the kids on stations and half on the field working.

There are tons of different skills to work on and that's where planning everything out everything early comes into play. It also builds confidence in the players that the coach knows what's up teaching the game of softball.

**Softball is an awesome sport and is based on fundamentals and strategy. When those two things are taught properly, the game is so much fun.**