



Highlands Little League

A Ball – Coaches Overview (Ages 7–8)

The A Ball Coaches Overview is designed to guide coaches working with our 7-8 year olds. The goal is to create a fun, positive environment while introducing the core fundamentals of baseball.

This document outlines:

1. High-Level Objectives for the Season
2. The Highlands Way – Standard Warmup Routine
3. Practice Ideas
4. Game Setup and Rules

A. High Level Objectives

At the **A Ball level (ages 7–8)** the focus is on **learning the basics of baseball while building confidence and having fun.**

Most players are still developing coordination, throwing mechanics, and an understanding of how the game works.

Important:

All batting will be done using a **pitching machine**, so the focus shifts toward hitting, fielding, and learning how to play the game.

Our Goals for the Season

- Create a **fun and encouraging environment**
- Teach **basic throwing and catching**
- Introduce **simple fielding concepts**
- Help players learn **how the game works**
- Encourage **teamwork and communication**
- Build **confidence at the plate using the pitching machine**
- Ensure **every player gets involved**

At this age, success means players **leave the season loving baseball and wanting to play again next year.**



B. The Highlands Way: Daily Warm-Up Routine

Every practice and game should begin with the same warm-up routine so players develop structure and habits.

Running

- Jog – 50m
- Sprint – 25m
- High Knees – 25m
- Butt Kicks – 25m
- Kareoka - 25m
- Bounding - 25m
- Can add in an agility ladder to keep it fun!

Stretching

Players circle around a coach or team leader.

- Arm circles (forward and backward)
- Cross-body arm stretch
- Quad stretch
- Hamstring stretch
- Groin stretch

Keep stretching **short and active (3–4 minutes)** so players stay engaged.

C. Dailies (Do Every Practice)

Dailies Do these every practice and game, without fail. Pair up the athletes and have them stand 10 feet away from each other in an athletic stance. Athletes will roll the ball back and forth, giving their partner a grounder to field. They should be able to touch the ground with their glove. Knees bent, back straight.

Ideally your team can show up a 10 mins early for practice and get started on these. This is the baseline for learning how to play catch and field in baseball.

FIELDING

1. Ground ball position up the middle (x10 per partner)
2. Forehand position (x10 per partner)



3. Backhand position (x10 per partner)

THROWING

4. Tens Toes – Partners 10 feet apart Players start by being grounded with ten toes facing partner, feet shoulder width apart, player should rotate their upper body so their chest faces 90 deg, getting into the proper throwing position each time (both elbows at shoulder height, throwing arm close to 90 deg upward, front elbow/glove pointing at target)

5. Rockers - Feet facing 90 deg to partner, slightly more than shoulder width apart. Keeping feet grounded, player rocks forward, then back, extending front leg straight and taking majority of their weight on their back leg, separating glove and throwing hand as they rock back, bringing elbows to shoulder height and using proper throwing technique

6. Regular Throwing – 10-15 feet apart Players face each other, feet shoulder width apart, throwing foot steps forward and turns 90deg, player raises their glove leg and rotates 90deg to their partner, glove and ball hand separate into proper throwing form, back leg is loaded and player pushes off with back leg and throws the ball, when throwing, glove hand should be pulled to hip

D. Practice Structure

Practices should be **fast moving and fun**. Young players lose focus quickly, so avoid long lectures.

A good 60–90 minute practice might look like this:

1. Warm Up (10 minutes)

Highlands Way running + stretching

2. Dailies - 15 minutes

Partner throws and ground balls

3. Skill Stations (30 minutes)

Split players into small groups - ideally 3-4 stations 10 mins each

Examples:

- Fielding ground balls - build up to fielding and throwing to 1st base, 2nd base etc.
- Hitting off a tee into fence
- Pitching machine hitting
- Fly balls

4. Team Drill (10–15 minutes)



- Use this to play a mini scrimmage, encourage base running, more reps off the machine and players working on live game fielding.

5. Fun Game (10–15 minutes)

Examples:

- Wiffle ball circle
- Relay races
- Knockout throwing game
- Hitting competitions

Fun competitive drills help players stay engaged.

E. Key Skills to Teach

Fielding

Focus on **simple mechanics**.

Teach players:

- Ready position and prep step (knees bent, glove down)
- Field the ball in front of their body
- Throw to **first base**

Avoid complicated defensive strategies.

Hitting (Pitching Machine)

The pitching machine allows players to focus on **making contact**.

Key points:

- Watch the ball out of the machine
- Coaches - Raise one hand and lower it while you pull the slinger to simulate a pitch and to work on timing
- Swing level through the ball
- Run hard to first base

Additional drills:



- Hitting off a tee
- Soft toss
- Machine batting practice

Base Running

Teach players:

- Run through first base
- Stop and listen to coaches
- Watch the ball
- Always run hard

Avoid complicated concepts like stealing at this age.

F. Game Play

Games at the A Ball level are about **participation and learning**.

Focus on:

- Rotating the batting order early in the season
- Rotating players through positions (1st base, pitcher will see the most action)
- Teaching them how innings work
- Encouraging hustle and teamwork

Focus is on keeping it fun and developing basic baseball skills.

G. Field Setup

- Bases: **60 feet apart**
- Pitching: **Pitching machine set at speed 4**
- Coaches should help set up the field before games
- Both teams should help clean up after games

H. Coaching Expectations

During games:

- One **bench coach**
- One **first base coach**



- One **third base coach**
- **Team up to bat will have a coach on the pitching machine**

Most importantly:

Be positive.

Encourage effort.

Celebrate improvement.

At this age, the best outcome is **kids who can't wait to come back to the field next week.**