



Baserunning Relays

Objective

To learn how proper turns at each base can help players get to their destination faster

Setup

Field with bases (preferably pegged bases), a stopwatch

Execution

Have groups of two or four players compete by running around the bases to see who can finish with the fastest combined time. One player circles the bases, and then as soon as he or she touches home plate, the next player in the group starts. You'll find that the groups that run the bases the best fundamentally can and will beat the groups with the faster players. You can use cones to show the path for the proper turns at each base.





Big League Baserunning

Objective

To work on various baserunning situations and conditioning

Setup

Field with bases (preferably pegged bases)

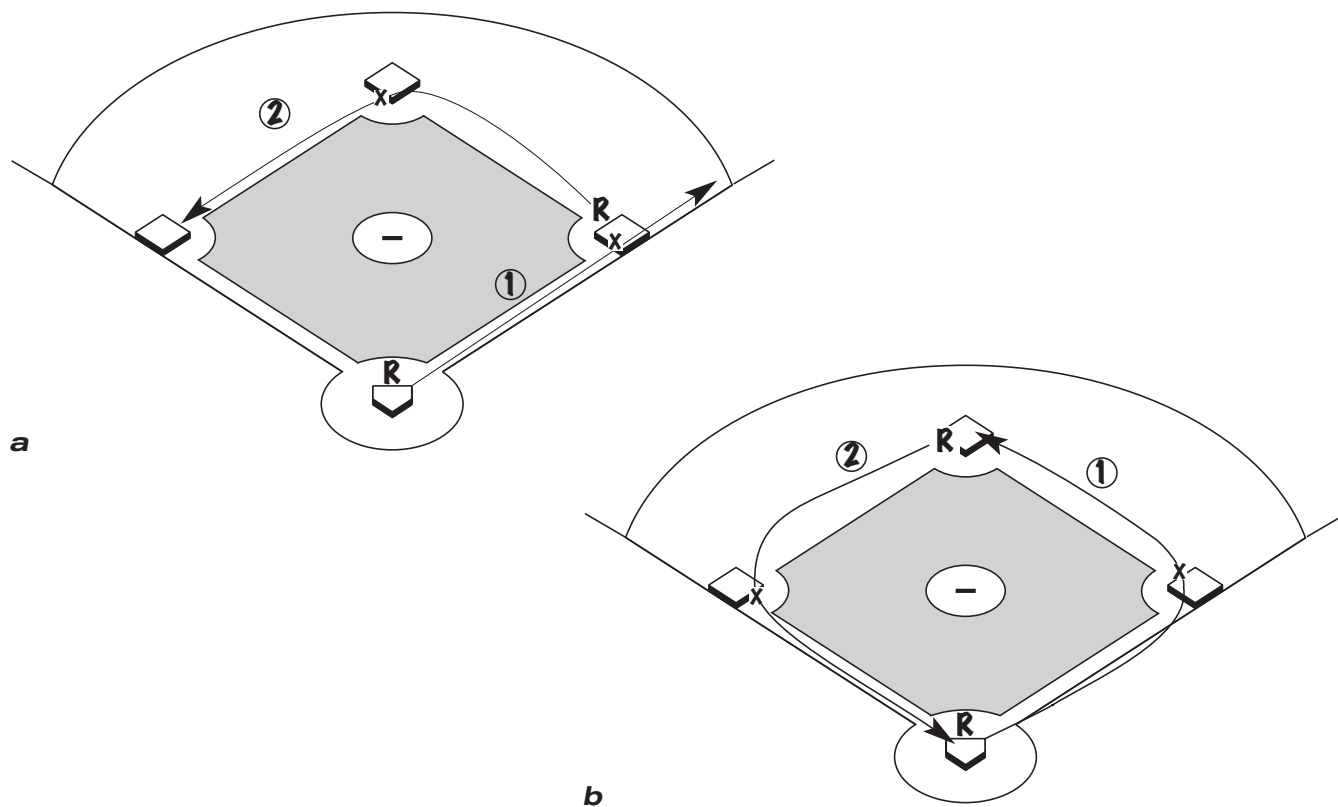
Execution

Players line up at home plate and run home to first, all the way through the bag. Then they shuffle off of first, take a crossover step and run first to third before jogging to home plate (*a*). Players line up at home again and run out a double. They then simulate scoring from second on a hit (*b*). Then have them run out a triple or a home run, if you wish. Emphasis should be on making a proper turn at each base as well as stepping on the inside of the base and using the bag to push off of (like a starting block) toward the next base.



Coaching Keys

If players are having trouble making correct turns and taking a proper route to the next base, set up cones to mark the proper path. Players will take a path to the outside of the cones.





Head to Head

Objective

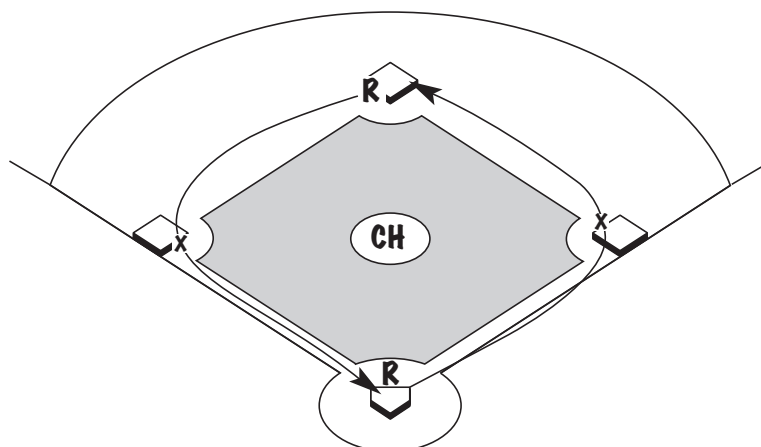
To demonstrate that the fastest player isn't always the best baserunner; to understand how to make a proper turn when going from home to second and second to home

Setup

Field with bases (preferably pegged bases)

Execution

One player starts at second, and the other starts at home. The coach stands on pitcher's mound and yells, "Go!" Player from second is simulating scoring on a hit. Player at home simulates running out a double. Whoever gets to his or her destination first wins. Point out players who adhere to proper fundamentals when running the bases well.





Slip and Slide

Objective

To develop proper sliding fundamentals in a safe, fun environment

Setup

Slip-and-slide, hose, base to slide into

Execution

Use a slip-and-slide on a soft, grassy surface to illustrate the proper sliding techniques. This is a fun way to show players how to slide without risking cuts and bruises. Place a base at the end of the slip-and-slide. This is a great way to end a hot practice.



Coaching Keys

Although you should avoid teaching the head-first slide, it can be fun to let players go head first at the end of the drill. If players tend to roll over on their sides when attempting to slide properly, remind them that they must slide on their butts, not on their hips. This will keep their toes pointed up instead of sideways and lower the risk of knee injuries. Their weight can be more on one buttock than the other, but the butt should be in contact with the ground. Have them focus on bent-leg or pop-up slides and hook slides.

Baserunning

KEY POINTS FOR FORM RUNNING

1. Keep your head up.
2. Lean forward.
3. Run on your toes.
4. Lift your knees high.
5. Pump your arms front to back; opposite arm with opposite knee.
6. Relax the upper body; don't tense up.

KEY POINTS FOR RUNNING OUT A GROUND BALL

1. Run hard toward first upon contact.
2. Don't watch the ball too long.
3. Run straight to first base on ground balls to infielders.
4. Step on the front of the base.
5. Don't lunge or slow down.
6. Run hard all the way through the base and listen for instructions from the coach.
7. Don't slide unless you are avoiding a tag play on an errant throw.

KEY POINTS FOR MAKING A TURN

1. Take a gradual line toward the coaching box once you are assured to have a hit; don't wait until the last minute and make a "question-mark" turn.
2. Think "double."
3. Don't break stride; touch the base with either foot.
4. Step on the inside of the bag and use it to propel you toward second.
5. Don't aim for the corner of the base; you could miss it or trip.
6. Pick up the ball with your eyes as soon as you make the turn.
7. Run until the fielder stops you.

Baserunning

GENERAL BASERUNNING RULES

1. Always know the situation: outs, other runners on base, count.
2. When in doubt, slide.
3. For older players, when taking a lead never cross your feet.
4. Where the rules permit, take a couple of hard shuffle steps toward the next base as the ball is delivered or when it crosses home plate; anticipate a bad pitch or a ball in the dirt.
5. Use the crossover step as the first step toward the next base on batted balls or stolen base attempts.
6. Tag up on all foul balls.
7. Freeze on all line drives.
8. "Go halfway;" get as far as you can off the base when a ball is hit in the air and still make it back if it's caught.
9. Know where the ball is and listen for instructions from base coaches.
10. Take your lead or secondary lead from third in foul ground; return to the base in fair territory.
11. Tag up on all fly balls and line drives to the outfield when on third.