Softball Unit Plan

Middle School/Junior High

Cortney Jones
Cognitive Standard:

IN Standard 2: TSW demonstrate understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.

Cognitive Performance Objective:
- TSW understand the correct technique used to throw a softball 10 feet 5 out of 10 times. (7.2.4)
- TSW understand the proper positioning on a softball field. (7.2.3)

Affective Standard:

IN Standard 5: TSW exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects the self and others in physical activity settings.
IN Standard 6: TSW value physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.

Affective Performance Objective:
- TSW learn to use their softball skills as a team to be able to do softball drills. (7.6.2)
- TSW learn to work as a team to successfully play softball and score at least 2 runs during a game of softball. (7.6.2)

Psychomotor Standard:

IN Standard 1: TSW demonstrate competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.
IN Standard 3: TSW exhibit a physically active lifestyle.
IN Standard 4: TSW achieve and maintain a health enhancing level of physical fitness.

Psychomotor Performance Objective:
1. TSW be given a test to show their knowledge of correct positions on a softball field that they must pass with a score of 8 out of 10. (7.1.1)
2. TSW demonstrate a softball throw by successfully throwing a softball 10 feet 2 out of 5 times. (7.1.1)
3. TSW demonstrate fielding a softball correctly by using the proper technique to field the softball 5 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)
4. TSW demonstrate the proper technique to hitting the softball and will make contact with the softball 3 out of 7 times. (7.1.1)
5. TSW demonstrate the proper way to bunting the softball and putting the softball in play 3 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)
6. TSW use proper technique in learning the correct way to run the bases properly and correctly by running them properly 3 out of 5 times. (7.1.1)
7. TSW use proper technique in sliding into the bases correctly by using the proper technique to sliding correctly 3 out of 5 times (7.1.1)
8. TSW demonstrate proper technique by pitching a softball using the correct technique and throwing a strike 2 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)
9. TSW demonstrate proper use of techniques that apply to the game of softball 8 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)
10. TSW work as a team to be successful by playing a variation of the game of softball while using proper techniques 8 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)
11. TSW demonstrate proper use of techniques that apply to the game of softball 8 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)
12. TSW demonstrate the proper techniques of the game of softball by successfully using their techniques to play a real game of softball 8 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)
13. TSW demonstrate the proper techniques of the game of softball by successfully using their techniques to play a real game of softball 8 out of 10 times. (7.1.1)

**Motor Skills**

- Rules, fielding positions, and safety precautions.
- Throwing: Gripping, Arm Motion, and Body Movement
- Fielding the Ball: Ground Balls and Fly Balls
- Batting: Grip on bat, Stance, Stride, Rotation of body and arms, and follow through
- Bunting: Grip on Bat, Stance, and Direction of Punting
- Base Running
- Sliding
- Pitching and Catching
- Crazy Ball
- Lightning Ball
- Jug Ball
- Mush Ball
- Tournament
- Tournament
- Tournament

**Motor Skills**

1. Fielding Positions
   a. First Baseman
      i. Must have good catching skills and be able to handle high and low throws.
      ii. Should cover the base, but should not interfere with the runner.
      iii. Should play the inside of the base on throws from the infield.
      iv. Should play about 6 feet to the right and behind the base when no runners are on base.
   b. Second Baseman
i. Must be agile to move both left and right to catch ground balls.
ii. Must be able to relay the ball to the shortstop and first baseman, but a strong throwing arm is not required.
iii. Should play about 10 to 12 feet to the left of and behind the base.

c. Shortstop
   i. Must be quick and able to move both ways very well
   ii. Should be fielding ground balls.
   iii. Must have a strong throwing arm.
   iv. Must be able to make highly skilled plays with the second baseman, particularly in turning a double play.
   v. Should play between second and third base about 10 to 12 feet behind base line.

d. Third Baseman
   i. Must have quick reactions and be very agile.
   ii. Must have a strong throwing arm
   iii. Must be able to move to the left well and quickly field sharply hit ground balls.
   iv. Should play 6 to 10 feet left of the base and even with or slightly behind it.

2. Gripping the Ball
   a. Hold the ball with the fingers (off the palm of the hand).
   b. Grip the ball tightly across the seams.
      i. For the 2-finger grip, place the index and middle fingers across the seams and rest the finger on the side of the ball.
      ii. Students with smaller hands should use the 3-finger grip, which requires placing 3 fingers (the index, middle, and ring fingers) across the seams.
   c. Place the thumb under the ball and on the side opposite the little finger.

3. Throwing
   a. Use a forward stride position (one foot in front of the other) with the dominant leg back. Right-handed throwers will have the right leg back; left-handed throwers will have the left leg back.
   b. Throw from a stable base.
   c. Face the target.
   d. Increase the speed of movements.
   e. Shift the center of gravity from backward to forward.
   f. Rotate the throwing side forward and transfer weight to the front leg.
   g. Lead the arm motion with the elbow.
   h. Release with a wrist snap.
   i. Follow through in the intended direction of flight.

4. Catching
   a. Maintain stability by using a forward stride position.
   b. Focus on and track the oncoming ball; align the body squarely behind the ball as it comes toward the catcher.
c. Use a large surface (the glove) to catch the ball, and on contact give with the arms and hands to absorb the force of the ball. Transfer weight backward to help absorb the force of the ball.
d. If the ball is above the waist level, turn the glove so that the fingers are pointing upward; if the ball is below the waist, point the fingers downward.
e. Use the glove hand for initial contact, then use the other (bare) hand to immediately stabilize (trap) the ball.

5. Fielding a Ground Ball
   a. Align the body with the ball, shuffle the feet whenever possible, and charge forward on slowly hit balls.
   b. Have a firm base of support (use a forward stride stance).
   c. Tuck the chin as the eyes follow the ball.
   d. Keep the arms and hands relaxed.
   e. Hold the palms perpendicular to the path of the oncoming ball, out in front of the body.
   f. Give with the ball on contact.
   g. In one motion, field the ball and bring it up to the dominant hip in preparation for the throw.

6. Fielding Fly Balls
   a. Keep the eyes focused on the ball when running to catch it.
   b. When the ball is falling short, extend the glove toward the oncoming ball while running. Keep the glove open with the fingers down. Experienced players may even slide to get under and catch a ball that is falling short.
   c. Get to the ball quickly, trying to get in front of it.
   d. If the ball comes down, try to catch the ball above eye level on the throwing side of the body, holding the glove with the fingers up.
   e. Place the throwing hand over the ball as it goes into the glove to trap the ball in the glove.
   f. Flex the elbows to absorb the force of the ball.

7. Batting
   a. Select a bat of proper length and weight.
      i. The bat should be long enough to reach across the plate.
      ii. The bat should be light enough to control on a forceful swing but not feel too heavy.
   b. Take a firm grip on the bat by placing the front hand (closest to the pitcher) on the bottom of the bat and the rear hand on top of the bottom hand. The hands should be together and the knuckles aligned.
   c. Face home plate with the feet parallel and shoulder-width apart. Slightly bend the knees, keeping the weight on the back foot. Stand about 6 to 8 inches away from the plate, the front foot aligned with the middle of the plate.
   d. Lift the rear elbow away from the body and hold the bat off the shoulder in a vertical position perpendicular to the ground.
   e. Focuses on the ball as it is released; do not watch the pitcher’s arm motion.
f. With the eyes focused on the ball; step forward with the front foot about 12 inches while starting to swing the bat with both arms. The bat should cover the entire surface of the plate during the swing.
g. Keep the rear foot planted while shifting weight forward.
h. Keep the hips and shoulders level.
i. Make contact with the ball in front of the plate, not over it.
j. Swing the bat as quickly as possible to produce power.
k. Roll the top hand over the bottom hand when contacting the ball.
l. Keep both hands on the bat at all times.
m. Swing the bat all the way around to the front shoulder during the follow-through.

8. Bunting
   a. The initial stance is the same as for hitting.
   b. Just before the pitcher releases the ball, the batter should pivot on the front foot and bring the back foot forward parallel with the front foot so that the batter is facing the pitcher and is near the front of the batter’s box.
   c. The knees should be bent and the body should crouch low, especially on low balls. Move the body up and down and maintain the bunting stance rather than moving the arms for high and low pitchers.
   d. The arms bring the bat downward to a position parallel with the ground in front of home plate and perpendicular to the ball’s line of flight. As the bat comes down, slide the top hand up the bat to a position beyond the center of the bat, where the thumb and index finger grasp the bat on the rear side to avoid having the fingers hit. Arms should be flexed.
   e. The ball should contact the bat slightly above the top hand.
   f. The arms should give slightly as the ball hits the bat to keep the ball from rebounding too far into the playing field.
   g. Keep the bat higher than the ball and hit the top half of the ball so that the ball is more likely to be hit downward.

9. Base Running
   a. When running from home to first base, take the first step out of the batter’s box with the rear foot.
   b. Run in a straight line on the right side of the foul line.
   c. Keep a constant stride, running through first base.
   d. Run as quickly as possible.
   e. Focus on the base when running; do not watch the ball.
   f. Always turn to the right when overrunning first base.
   g. Do not overrun second or third base; runners must stop on these bases, or may be put out by the defense.
   h. When taking two bases in succession, curve outward slightly when approaching the first base to straighten the path to the final base. Stride to touch the first base with the left foot on the inside corner of the bag.
   i. When running to home plate, focus on the plate, maintain a consistent stride, and run over and through the plate, being sure to touch it.
   j. No stealing or leading off base is allowed; runners are not permitted to leave a base until the batter swings at the ball.
10. Sliding
   a. Slide on the thigh and hip with the body leaning away from the base.
   b. The base is hooked with the left toe, and the right leg is either bent under the left leg with the right toe pointing backward or is extended forward in the air.
   c. The left leg is raised slightly off the ground and as the body, which is slightly to the right of the base line, approaches the base, the toes hooks onto the base.
   d. Start the slide soon enough so that by the time the toe hooks the base, the body’s momentum is slow enough to avoid pulling the toe off the base.

11. Pitching
   a. The slow pitch involves a clockwise three quarter circular motion backward to full extension and then forward.
   b. The ball must arc higher than the batter’s head as it approaches the plate.
   c. Grip the ball across the seams for better control.
   d. Cock the wrists at the top of backswing.
   e. Keep the shoulders square to the target (across home plate).
   f. Observe the strike zone for a batter: from the bottom of the armpits to the top of the knees, as well as the width of home plate.
   g. Step with the leg opposite the pitching arm when beginning the downward motion of the pitch.
   h. Snap the wrist and release the ball between the waist and knee level.
   i. Extend the arm upward in the follow-through and step forward on the trailing leg to take fielding position.

Drills and Lead Up Activities

1. Fielding Positions (PG. 1)
   a. Go through and hit ground balls to get them comfortable with their positions, so the students know where to be and their correct positioning.
   b. We will then play a mini game of softball with different groups of teams playing.

Warm-Up: The students will play a game of Blob Tag, which is a form of tag only when you get tagged you link hands with the tag and help tag the other students.

2. Throwing and Catching (PG. 1-2)
   a. Give them balls with markings on the ball to show placement of their fingers and have them start at close distance throwing and catching to one another to give the feel of the correct motion. Have a competition to see which pair can throw and catch the ball the furthest kind of like the egg or balloon toss.
   b. Set up a net at different distances and have the students practice throwing the balls into the net at the different distances.

Warm-Up: The students will play a game called stuck in the mud. In this game when the students get tag they must spread their legs and not move until another students crawls underneath their legs to set them free.

3. Fielding Ground Balls and Pop Flys (PG. 2)
a. For a ground ball I will have them set the ball a few feet in front of them and practice walking up to the ball using the correct steps to field the ball. Then we will work our way to actually hitting the ball to the students to field the ball.

b. For pop flies I will start out with a foam football and have the students’ practice catching and positioning them under the football. Then we will work our way up to hitting actual pop flies to the students.

**Warm-Up:** The students will play a game called smugglers where there will be different teams with bola hoops full of different items. Each team must try to take as many things from the other teams hoop to win the game.

4. **Batting (PG. 2-3)**
   a. I will start out by having them hit off a tee to get comfortable with the correct way to hit the ball and using the correct techniques to striding and the placement of their hands on the bat.
   b. I will then have them practice hitting off live pitching after they have gotten comfortable and familiar with the correct way to hit the ball.

**Warm-Up:** The students will play a game called toilet tag which is when the students get tagged the must sit with one leg up so another student can come sit on their leg push on the students arm like they are flushing the toilet.

5. **Bunting (PG. 3)**
   a. I will have them practice bunting off of a tee to get the feel of the correct way to bunt the ball and this way we can slowly walk through the motion of doing a bunt.
   b. We will then do live pitching to after the student has gotten comfortable with bunting off of tee.

**Warm-Up:** The student will play a game called Cat and Mouse which is when there will be some students who are the cats trying to capture the mice and put them into jail. The mice can try to free the other mice without getting tagged.

6. **Sliding (PG. 4)**
   a. We will do partner sliding where there will be groups of three people. Two of the people will hold the other students arm and walk them through sliding to get the motion down.
   b. We will then go on to use a slip and slide to get the idea of the correct positioning of their feet when sliding.

**Warm-Up:** The students will play a game called three blind mice which is where there are teams who are trying to get their blind mice to a destination before the other teams get their mice to theirs.

7. **Base Running (PG. 3-4)**
   a. We will start at home and practice running around the bases to get the feel of where were should hit the bag with our foot.
   b. Then we will put on base runners and have other students hit a ball of the tee and the runners will have to move according to where the ball was hit.

**Warm-Up:** The students will play a game called sharks which is where the students try to catch all of the other fish before they escape.

8. **Pitching (PG. 4)**
a. Each of the students will be in groups with nets across from them. We will then slowly practice going through the pitching motion and throwing the ball into the net.

b. We will then have a competition to see which group can throw 3 strikes the fastest in a 5 innings or however many innings are necessary.

**Warm-Up:** The students will play a game called hoops which is similar to musical chairs only when they get into their hoop they must link arms with other hoops who have the same color or you can pick other colors for them to link to.

Resources:

