



The Games Approach to Teaching Baseball

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Traditional Baseball Practice

- n Warm up
- n Teaching of a basic or advanced skill
- n Repeated practice of this skill through one or more drills
- n BP
- n Practice Game; scrimmage
- n Also, some physical training



Shortcomings of Traditional Approach

- n Overemphasis on technical skills....at the expense of decision-making skills
- n Overemphasis on direct instruction; command style teaching
- n Mindless drills...out of context of the game; these skills are hard to apply to game skills
 - n Example: BP...20 swings/5 swings
- n Risk of Boredom



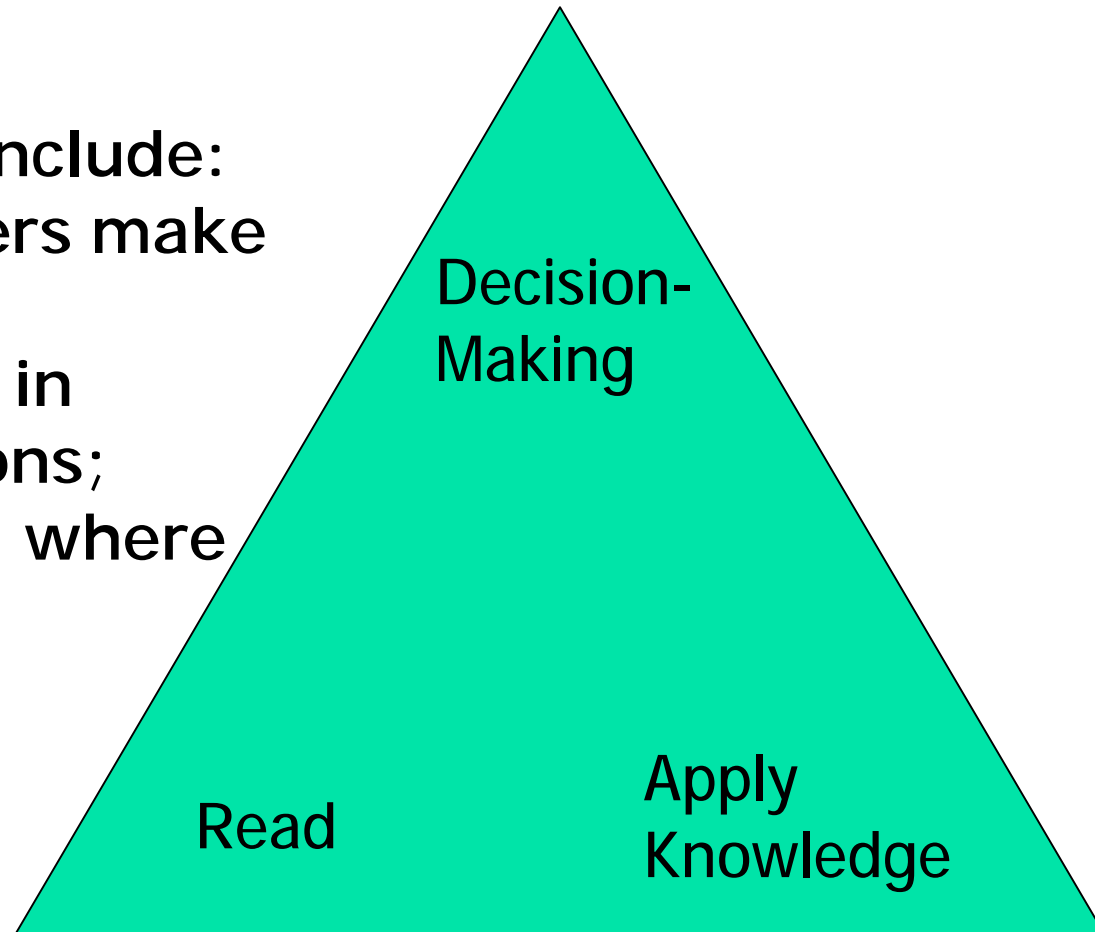
What are tactics?

- n A tactic is a plan used to gain advantage in a contest
- n A strategy is a season plan of action



The Tactical Triangle

Tactical skills include:
decisions players make
to use various
technical skills in
certain situations;
plays they use; where
they position
themselves.





Applying the Tactical Triangle

- n A crucial baseball situation: a runner at third base with less than two outs. He's only 90 feet away from home plate and from scoring a run. He knows that mistakes should not be made on this part of the diamond. So before each pitch he must mentally cover the "bases" of the triangle: first, read the play; second, review the information gathered in step 1 to help him make a sound decision; and third, make the decision to move forward or go back.
- n Doing this develops....Game Sense



So....AN ALTERNATIVE.....

- n There is a different way to teach the game – one that allows players to learn the game through game-like practices that create realistic and enjoyable learning activities and allow players to develop “Game Sense”

- n This is...



The "Games" Approach

- n To become an effective performer in a baseball game, a player need perfect practice under conditions as similar as possible to the environment in which the new learning will be applied.
- n Game speed
- n Game conditions



The Games Approach...

- n Is Athlete centered
- n Gives ownership for improvement to the player
- n Is Holistic

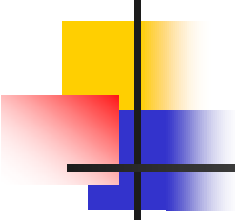


The 3 Elements of the Games Approach

n SHAPING

n FOCUSING

n ENHANCING



How can a coach practice?

SHAPE

- n Change rules
- n Change # of players
- n Change size of the field
- n Modify the goal of the game and scoring
- n Modify the equipment

KEY: Redesign the Game!



How can a coach **FOCUS** play?

- n Explaining
- n Stop Play and correct
- n Use Questioning Method
- n Freeze Replay



How can a coach play?

Enhance

- n Present Challenges
- n Handicap the drill...helps keep results competitive



How to Make It Work for You

- n Begin practice with a game
- n Redesign drills to make them more game-like
- n Try freeze replays and let the players come up with the answers
- n Design drills to help players grasp tactical principles



Sample GA Drills

- n The Bunt Game

- n Divide team in half
- n 4 infielders, catcher, pitcher on one team
- n Other team bats
- n No strikeouts, no walks, no steals
- n Pitchers must throw fast balls
- n Infielders must stay on dirt until ball hits home plate



Sample GA drills

- n Bingo, Bango, Bongo
 - n BP with a twist
 - n Baserunner at first to start
 - n Hit and run
 - n Sacrifice
 - n Suicide
 - n Hits
 - n Drag Bunt/Run



Sample GA drills

n 21 Outs

- n 9 players in field
- n Rest of players bat
- n Change players occasionally
- n No walks, no steals
- n Pitchers can only throw fast ball/changeup
- n Clear bases after 3 outs
- n Use stop watch; time for 21 outs
- n No bunting



Sample GA drills

- n Outfield Minus One
 - n Divide team in half
 - n Place cones approximately 4 metres left of 2nd base and in outfield
 - n Batters can't hit to left field; only RF or CF
 - n Pitchers can only throw fastballs/changeups
 - n Award points instead of runs



Sample GA drills

- n PFP²

- n Need pitcher/1B/2B/C/3B
- n Runner on 2nd
- n Hit fungoes to 1B or P just like regular PFP
- n If ball hit to P, C can call base
- n TWIST: Put batter in box; toss hit instead of fungoes



Sample GA drills

n Long Pepper

- n Three outfielders, pitcher (machine), hitter, catcher
- n Outfielders stationed straight-away 55 meters away (deeper if more challenge wanted)
- n Batter gets 25 points each trip to plate
- n Hard ground ball – one point; chopper – three points; Fly ball at fielders – 10 points; (scoring can be anyway you want it)
- n Emphasize hitting at target and hitting hard



Sample GA drills

- n First – Third Challenge
 - n Full infield
 - n All others are runners
 - n Practice all double steal defenses and offenses
 - n Offense gets 1 point for each run scored
 - n Defense gets 2 points for each out
 - n Play to 10



Sample GA drills

n Long Tee

- n Need hitters paired; each one has a tee
- n Each tee hitter has a partner with glove
- n Tees 50m apart
- n Use cones to define an area
- n Players hit to other tee
- n Forces concentration and keeping hands in zone
- n Devise point system