



# Zionsville Eagles Select 11-12U Team Hitting Plan

**Plan Description:** At 11-12U we start with basics, but progress into some very challenging work. At this age group the pitching begins to rapidly improve. Hitters will have to deal with harder throwers and pitchers who can change speeds. The plan is designed to prepare them physically and mentally to face off against tougher, more challenging pitching. Each block contains hitting drills suggested for tee work, some for short/soft toss, and some for live batting practice off of a coach or pitching machine. Some of the drills will be carried over from tee and also done in front toss or live bp. As the season nears, we will have live pitchers throwing to hitters.

**Prerequisite Videos:** Some blocks will include informational videos that are to be viewed before beginning training. It is important that all coaches watch the videos prior to beginning the block, but they may also show the videos to the players if desired.

**Training Block Length:** Training blocks vary with each age group. There is some leeway here. *You*, as the coach, can determine when it is time to move on to the next training block based on the benchmarks listed within each block. However, we want to be sure that we have spent at least 2 weeks in the last off-season block before games begin.

**Benchmarks:** These are the goals for each block of training. While we would love for every hitter to pass all benchmarks before moving on to the next block of training, we have to be realistic in our expectations. If you have seen significant progress among most hitters and it seems that the majority understand the concepts within the benchmarks, it may be a good time to move on to the next block.

**Training Frequency & Volume:** Each training block is based on 1 team practice per week & 1-2 parent led sessions per week. Please continue to encourage parents and players to take advantage of the facility and/or to have some sort of set up at home that allows for additional hitting. Target rep counts throughout the plan are at least **10-15 swings per player for every drill**. It is understood that practice times and available resources can vary. Feel free to adjust by skipping a drill or two, or by adjusting rep counts as needed. Also, you may add in as many regular, non-drill swings as you would like.

**Practice Organization & Flow:** Utilize your resources the best you can! Time spent waiting around to hit should be minimal. Feel free to utilize a couple of tee drills to add additional

stations while you are doing front toss and/or live/machine batting practice. Keeping them moving between stations will keep them engaged and ensure that each hitter is getting a similar rep count.

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# TRAINING BLOCK ONE

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**Suggested Dates: October & January**

## **Block One Benchmarks:**

- **Consistency in batting stance** - Young hitters often are unaware of their body positioning in their stance. By the end of this training block we would like them to be consistent with their feet positioning, hand and arm positioning and their weight distribution within their stance.
- **Consistency in posture** - We would like to see the hitter having proper hip hinge and maintaining a good spine angle into their launch position (moment stride foot lands and swing begins). Checkpoints include that they are consistently landing their stride and swinging from a position in which their torso and femur are at roughly the same angle, and their center of gravity (chest and head) is over their toes.



**Example Launch Position Posture**

- **Consistent balance** - Hitters should be able to control their body through the entire swing, and when attempted, they should be able to hold a balanced finish for 2 seconds after a completed swing. (This is not necessary on every swing, but is a good benchmark for testing balance, body awareness and control.)
- **Consistent Grip** - Hitters should have big and little knuckles aligned. Their wrists should have some slight inward bend. This will take constant reinforcement.

### **Block One Prerequisite Informational Videos:**

1. Grip
2. Stance
3. Stride Tips
4. Hitting Position Tips for Beginners

## **Block One Routines**

### **Team Practice Hitting Routine**

#### **★ Movement Prep Drills:**

These are non-hitting movement exercises that help prepare a hitter to move fundamentally better. Begin hitting sessions with these exercises. These are to be done

slowly, while focusing on quality, control, and full range of motion. They will try to go fast, but encourage them to slow down and do it slower and better!

**1 set of 12 slow reps each**

1. Pelvic Control Drills (1 set rotation, 1 set tilt)
2. One Knee Hinge Drill (1 set each side)
3. Hip Advancement Drill (PVC or a Bat can be used)
4. Side-Bend/Shoulder-Tilt Drill (PVC or a Bat can be used)

★ **Hitting Drills:**

Be sure to thoroughly explain all drills. Watch each hitter closely, especially their first time to make sure they are setting up and performing the drill properly. It may work best to begin with several tee stations spread out among the cages. Have the hitters perform all tee drills at the tee stations while you watch closely. Then move onto front toss and live batting practice.

☐ **Tee Drills**

Have hitters warm up with some or all of these tee drills. It is up to you to determine whether it's best to have them all do the same drill at once or have them rotate through different drills at each station.

1. Get-Up Drill
2. Crossover Drill
3. Stride, Pause, Hit Drill
4. High Tee Drill COMBINE w/ Hold Your Finish Drill
5. Low Tee Drill COMBINE w/ Hold Your Finish Drill

☐ **Short/Front Toss Drills**

1. Rolled Ball Drill COMBINE w/ Weight Transfer Bucket Drill
2. Over the Screen Drill COMBINE w/ Weight Transfer Bucket Drill
3. Hold Your Finish Drill
4. 3 Time Rhythm Drill
5. Hip Hinge Chair Drill &/or Regular Swings

☐ **Live Arm or Pitching Machine Batting Practice Drills**

1. Hold Your Finish Drill

2. Barrel/Line Drive Count Hitting (no video)- Have hitters keep track of how many balls they hit on the sweet spot and how many they hit for a line drive. Can make it competitive among players or groups and assign point values to each if desired.

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# TRAINING BLOCK TWO

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## Suggested Dates: Early to Mid February

### Block Two Benchmarks:

**Loading & maintaining upper body tension** - Before moving on to the next block, the hitter should be properly loading the upper body, and maintaining that load into their launch position on a consistent basis. A couple checkpoints from the pitcher's point of view are that the hitter's back elbow becomes slightly visible behind their back and their top/back hand becomes hidden behind their head. Be sure they avoid over-rotating their shoulders to do this. Notice in the example below, the hitter's front shoulder has only slightly rotated back and down toward the catcher during the load. Excessive rotation of shoulders during the load can negatively affect bat path.



**Example Upper Body Load**

## Block Two Prerequisite Informational Videos:

1. Explaining Upper Body Load to Beginners
2. Twist vs Spin

**Rotating fully & efficiently** - When hitting off of the tee or when properly timed up with a moving pitch, the hitter should be consistently finishing their swing with full rotation, meaning their upper body should be rotated significantly beyond their lower body.

A few checkpoints to look for in the hitter's finish include:

- Hitter's belt buckle should be pointing toward their opposite field gap, but not have gone past the pitcher.
- Hitter's shoulders should have nearly replaced each other, meaning the back shoulder is now where the front shoulder began and vice versa.
- Hitter's back should almost be facing toward home plate.



**Example of Full Rotation Finish**

# Block Two Routines

## Team Practice Hitting Routine

### ★ Movement Prep Drills:

These are non-hitting movement exercises that help prepare a hitter to move fundamentally better. Begin hitting sessions with these exercises. These are to be done slowly, while focusing on quality, control, and full range of motion. They will try to go fast, but encourage them to slow down and do it slower and better!

#### 1 set of 12 slow reps each

1. Single Leg Disassociation Drill (each side)
2. Full Turn Drill
3. Walk Down Drill
4. Scap Load Drill

### ★ Hitting Drills:

Be sure to thoroughly explain all drills. Watch each hitter closely, especially their first time to make sure they are setting up and performing the drill properly. It may work best to begin with several tee stations spread out among the cages. Have the hitters perform all tee drills at the tee stations while you watch closely. Then move onto front toss and live batting practice.

#### ☐ Tee Drills

Have hitters warm up with some or all of these tee drills. It is up to you to determine whether it's best to have them all do the same drill at once or have them rotate through different drills at each station.

1. Forward Facing Drill COMBINED w/ Target Drill (LINE DRIVE UP THE MIDDLE)
2. Posted Front Leg & Closed Stance Drill COMBINED w/ Target Drill (LINE DRIVE UP THE MIDDLE)
3. Contact Points Tee Drill COMBINED w/ Efficient Rotation Drills



☐ **Short/Front Toss Drills**

1. Freeze at Contact Drill
2. Connection Ball Anti-Cast Drill
3. Wrap & Bounce Drill
4. Efficient Rotation Drills
5. Mixed Speeds Front Toss Drill COMBINED w/ Check Flips Drill

☐ **Live Arm or Pitching Machine Batting Practice Drills**

1. Wrap & Bounce Drill
2. 3 Plate Timing Drill
3. Barrel/Line Drive Count Hitting (no video)- Have hitters keep track of how many balls they hit on the sweet spot and how many they hit for a line drive. Can make it competitive among players or groups and assign point values to each if desired.

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# TRAINING BLOCK THREE

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**Suggested Dates: Mid to Late February**

**Block Three Benchmarks:**

**Ability to time up different pitch speeds** - The hitter should now be able to quickly and seamlessly adjust their timing to various pitch speeds. No matter the level of development, there will always be occasions when timing is slightly off, but at this point we would hope that they are on time the majority of the time.

**Adjustability when out front** - When the hitter does happen to be fooled by a pitch and is early or out in front, we would like them to have the ability to still successfully barrel the ball up. If they are still hitting nearly all of those pitches off the end of the bat, swinging and missing, or slowing their swing down in order to make contact with them, continue to work on the drills in this training block.

This is going to require some judgment on the coach's end. Regardless of the level of development, there will still be some balls that the hitter pulls off of and swings and misses or hits it off the end of the bat. We just hope that at the completion of this block, that the hitter can occasionally be fooled by a pitch and be out in front, and still create a positive result by hitting it hard on the barrel of the bat.

**Adjustability to difficult pitch locations** - The prior training block on bat path should have helped the hitter be consistently barreling up balls in the middle of the plate. By the end of this block, we would like the hitter to be able to regularly barrel up pitches that are on all edges of the strike zone (up, down, out and in).

## Block Three Prerequisite Informational Videos:

1. Adjustability Intro
2. Yes, Yes, Yes/Yes, Yes, No
3. Easily Adjusting Timing

# BLOCK THREE ROUTINES

## Team Practice Hitting Routine

### ★ Movement Prep Drills:

These are non-hitting movement exercises that help prepare a hitter to move fundamentally better. Begin hitting sessions with these exercises. These are to be done slowly, while focusing on quality, control, and full range of motion. They will try to go fast, but encourage them to slow down and do it slower and better!

#### 1 set of 12 slow reps each

1. Single Leg Disassociation Drill (each side)
2. PVC Strides & Turns Drills
3. Efficient Launch Drill
4. Top Hand Catch Drill

## Hitting Drills

### ☐ Tee Drills

Have hitters warm up with some or all of these tee drills. It is up to you to determine whether it's best to have them all do the same drill at once or have them rotate through different drills at each station.

1. And..."Go" Drill
2. Yes, Yes, No Walk Up Drill
3. Coil Rhythm Drill
4. Contact Points Tee Drill **EXTENDED** - When doing inside/outside, place the tee a little off the corners of the plate so it is slightly out

of the strike zone. DO NOT allow the hitter to move closer or farther from the tee, and DO NOT allow the hitter to adjust by striding toward or away from the tee. If necessary, do this without a stride so they cannot cheat!

☐ **Short/Front Toss Drills**

1. Bounce Drill
2. Swing at Everything Drill (mixed speeds)
3. Hot Pitch Drill (mixed speeds)
4. Colored Ball Drill (mixed speeds)
5. 2 Ball High/Low Drill

☐ **Live Batting Practice or Pitching Machine**

1. Load and Go Drill
2. Barrel/Line Drive Count Hitting (no video)- Have hitters keep track of how many balls they hit on the sweet spot and how many they hit for a line drive. Can make it competitive among players or groups and assign point values to each if desired.
3. Weight Transfer Takes (while tracking teammates) - If you have hitters throwing bullpens, have hitters stand in while they do. DO NOT allow them to swing. This is only about tracking and timing. You could even take their bat away if you're afraid they will swing. Have them focus on seeing the seams of the ball as it comes in and being on time with their stride landing and weight transfer.

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# TRAINING BLOCK FOUR

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## Suggested Dates: March

### Block Four Benchmarks:

**Comfort in the box against peers** - The hitter should be comfortable staying in the batter's box and show clear intent to hit the ball hard while their peers are pitching to them.

**Ability to catch up to faster pitching** - While the pitch speeds are likely to vary widely at this age, there will be some pitchers who throw harder than what the hitters were used to facing in coach pitch. The hitter should be able to make contact when the speeds increase and not be completely overmatched.

**Understanding basics of the hitting approach** - The hitter should begin to become aware of their thinking while at the plate. They should have a general game plan and know how to adjust it for each count within an at-bat.

**Understanding of what different pitches will look like** - The hitter should be aware of the various pitch types and what they may look like. They should begin to look for what opposing pitchers are throwing while warming up and while pitching to their teammates.

### Block Four Prerequisite Informational Videos:

1. Plate Discipline
2. Ahead in the Count Hitting
3. 2 Strike Hitting

#### 4. Recognizing Different Pitches

## BLOCK FOUR ROUTINES

### Team Practice Hitting Routine

#### ★ Movement Prep Drills:

These are non-hitting movement exercises that help prepare a hitter to move fundamentally better. Begin hitting sessions with these exercises. These are to be done slowly, while focusing on quality, control, and full range of motion. They will try to go fast, but encourage them to slow down and do it slower and better!

#### 1 set of 12 slow reps each

1. Single Leg Disassociation Drill (each side)
2. Hand & Wrist Drills
3. Bat or PVC check swing Drill
4. Speed Check Swing Drill (Lightweight PVC or Bat)

### Hitting Drills

#### ☐ Tee Drills

Have hitters warm up with some or all of these tee drills. It is up to you to determine whether it's best to have them all do the same drill at once or have them rotate through different drills at each station.

1. Yes, Yes, No Walk Up Drill
2. Contact Points Tee Drill

#### ☐ Short/Front Toss Drills

1. 3 Plate Timing Drill
2. Front Toss/Tee Interchange Drill
3. Angle Toss (Two Rounds - one offset to right side and one offset to left side \*NOT SHOWN)

#### 4. Alternating Overhand/Underhand

#### ☐ Live Batting Practice or Pitching Machine

1. Weight Transfer Takes (With Machine Cranked up High or throwing fast from short distance)
2. High Failure Rate Round w/ 2 Strike Approach - Have hitters pretend they have two strikes and have to fight and battle.
3. Barrel/Line Drive Count Hitting w/ Ahead in the Count Approach (no video)- \*\*\*Go back to an average or regular pitch speed.\*\*\*  
Have hitters keep track of how many balls they hit on the sweet spot and how many they hit for a line drive. Can make it competitive among players or groups and assign point values to each if desired. Hitters should pretend they are in an advantageous count and are looking to drive the ball.
4. Live At-Bats vs. Teammates Pitching (no video) - In batting cage or on a field (when possible), have your pitchers throw live to your hitters. Keep a count and treat it like a game. If needed, you can start hitters out with a strike or a 1-1 count to speed it along and allow more hitters to get at-bats.

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# TRAINING BLOCK FIVE

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**Target Dates: April-July**

**Block Five Tips:**

The goal is to continue a long-term upward trend of hitting development. Use the drills your hitters enjoyed and benefited from the most, and create a routine they will want to work on week in and week out. Make it fun, but also challenging. Regularly try to make the training more difficult so the hitter continues to progress. Keep in mind though, hitters can often slide back into old habits. If this happens, return to the training block that will best suit your hitters' needs.

**Block Four Prerequisite Informational Videos:**

1. Common Hitting Coach Mistakes - In-game coaching

## BLOCK FIVE ROUTINES

**Create a Routine Based on Your Favorite Drills**

### Team Practice Hitting Routine

★ **Movement Prep Drills:**

These are non-hitting movement exercises that help prepare a hitter to move fundamentally better. Begin hitting sessions with these exercises. These are to be done slowly, while focusing on quality, control, and full range of motion. They will try to go fast, but encourage them to slow down and do it slower and better!

**1 set of 12 slow reps each**



**Choose 3-4 favorites**

1. Pelvic Control Drills
2. One Knee Hinge Drill
3. Side-Bend/Shoulder-Tilt Drill
4. Scap Load Drill
5. Hip Hinge Chair Drill
6. Platform Drill
7. Walk Down Drill
8. Wall Drill
9. PVC Hip Advancement Drill
10. Full Turn Drill
11. One Leg Disassociation Drill
12. PVC Strides & Turns Drills
13. Efficient Launch Drill
14. Hand & Wrist Action Drills
15. Throws Progression Drill
16. Band Arm Path Drills
17. Hop Down Swings Drill
18. Top Hand Catch Drill

★ **Hitting Drills:**

Be sure to thoroughly explain all drills. Watch each hitter closely, especially their first time to make sure they are setting up and performing the drill properly. It may work best to begin with several tee stations spread out among the cages. Have the hitters perform all tee drills at the tee stations while you watch closely. Then move onto front toss and live batting practice.

**Tee**

**Choose 2-4 favorites and end with FINISHER DRILL**

1. Get-Up Drill
2. Crossover Drill
3. Stride, Pause, Hit Drill
4. High Tee Drill COMBINE w/ Hold Your Finish Drill

5. Low Tee Drill COMBINE w/ Hold Your Finish Drill
6. Forward Facing Drill COMBINED w/ Target Drill (LINE DRIVE UP THE MIDDLE)
7. Posted Front Leg & Closed Stance Drill COMBINED w/ Target Drill (LINE DRIVE UP THE MIDDLE)
8. Separation w/ "No" Drill
9. Belt Arm Tension Drill Just Right Drill
10. Inside-Outside Tee Command Drill
11. And... "Go" Drill
12. Yes, Yes, No Walk Up Drill
13. Coil Rhythm Drill

**FINISHER DRILL:** Contact Points Tee Drill COMBINED w/ Efficient Rotation Drills

☐ **Short/Front Toss Drills**

**Choose 2-4 favorites and end with FINISHER DRILL**

1. Rolled Ball Drill COMBINE w/ Weight Transfer Bucket Drill
2. Over the Screen Drill COMBINE w/ Weight Transfer Bucket Drill
3. w/ Hold Your Finish Drill
4. 3 Time Rhythm Drill
5. Hip Hinge Chair Drill &/or Regular Swings
6. Freeze at Contact Drill
7. Connection Ball Anti-Cast Drill
8. Back & Front Arm Connection Ball Progression
9. Efficient Rotation Drills
10. Top Hand Point Drill
11. Floaters Drill
12. Extended Outside Drill
13. Pull Side Angle Flips Drill
14. Bounce Drill
15. Swing at Balls & Take Strikes
16. Hot Pitch Drill
17. Colored Ball Drill
18. 2 Ball High/Low Drill

**FINISHER DRILL:** Mixed Speeds Front Toss Drill COMBINED w/ Check Flips Drill

**Live Batting Practice or Pitching Machine**  
**Use any favorites and end with FINISHER DRILL**

1. Hold Your Finish Drill
2. Efficient Rotation Drills
3. Off the Hip Tracking Drill
4. Load and Go Drill
5. 3 Plate Timing Drill

**FINISHER DRILL:** Barrel/Line Drive Count Hitting (no video)- Have hitters keep track of how many balls they hit on the sweet spot and how many they hit for a line drive. Can make it competitive among players or groups and assign point values to each if desired.