

# **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PLAN**



**RAWLINGS TIGERS**

## INTRODUCTION

The following curriculum plan outlines the Rawlings Tigers step by step player development plan as they progress through the organization from 5U all the way into our high school program at 15U. A player should never be considered too young or too experienced to practice these skills. Please keep in mind that young players will develop physically and mentally at different rates.

This model has been developed by key members of the Tigers High School staff, along with outside research and resources. This curriculum plan will provide coaches and parents obtainable benchmarks as to what players should be able to perform after playing at a particular age level and before progressing to the next age level. Expectations increase with progression steps for both players and staff members. Coaches and parents should use this as a general guide to help with team development and efficiency.

## GENERAL PHILOSOPHY

Coaches should keep players constantly moving throughout practices while changing up activities often. Acknowledge kids when they do things correctly and use a positive tone when making corrections. Keep the practices and games fun. It should be all about the kids and we aim to develop their baseball skills while providing an environment in which they will flourish and want to come back the following season.

## TIGER COACHES

Coaches should view this model as a guide and don't feel like we are requiring you to follow all the content exactly. Every team is constructed differently with strengths and weaknesses at different stages. Our hope is this curriculum plan will provide resources for you and will enhance your experience and knowledge of coaching youth baseball.

This model does not give you everything, and don't worry if you don't follow every detail exactly. Your greatest education as a coach is through experience... each day, week, month, and season. You will learn more and more and your skills will improve. Enjoy being with the kids and be a positive role model for them. Keep these activities in perspective, these are youth kids playing baseball. We encourage you to reach out to our Tigers staff if you need help or have questions about anything. We will be there for you; you can count on that. Always remember... *"WIN, LOSE, TEACH...the first two words mean nothing, the last word means everything"*.

Wear Your "T" With Pride, Thanks and GO TIGERS!!

Rawlings Tigers Baseball Club

## THE TIGER WAY

### CHARACTER

**TIGER** players MUST HAVE FUN.

**TIGER** players always give their best effort.

**TIGER** players learn from their mistakes.

**TIGER** players are expected to HUSTLE, HUSTLE, HUSTLE.

**TIGER** players look, act, and play like a Tiger. Clean uniform, clean cleats, shirts tucked-in, hats worn forward, and we hustle everywhere.

### RESPECT

**TIGER** players must always make eye contact when spoken to.

**TIGER** players encourage other teammates.

**TIGER** players shake hands with opponents and umpires after each game.

**TIGER** players have respect for uniform and always wear designated shirts, pants, belt, socks, and hat.

a. Tigers always wear their hats forward and jersey tucked into pants.

b. The practice and game uniforms are always washed and cleaned before training or games.

c. Tigers arrive to the field in full uniform.

**TIGER** players act professionally and treat their opponent's players, coaches, and fans with respect.

## COACHES COMMITMENT

**TIGER** coaches' number one commitment is to create a fun environment for everyone to learn and thrive. We want this to be a memorable and enjoyable experience for all.

**TIGER** coaches' number two commitment is to develop Tiger players and give you the best opportunity to succeed at the next level.

**TIGER** coaches' number three commitment is to never pass on an opportunity to teach young players life skills.

## PROGRESSION CHART / AGES 5-7

WARM UP	THROWING	CATCHING	BASE RUNNING
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding how and where to form stretching lines</li> <li>Emphasize a stretch routine (Ask Tigers staff for routine if needed)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to execute a throw with eyes on target (proper grip)</li> <li>Front shoulder points at the target (point with glove if needed)</li> <li>Throwing elbow above shoulder</li> <li>Step with proper foot towards target before throwing (keep body in line with target)</li> <li>Establish where to go play catch (down left or right field line)</li> <li>Introduction to moving back during catch</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ready position-feet wide, knees bent, rear end down, palms down</li> <li>Glove under the hat or slightly out front to field ground ball</li> <li>Throwing to 1st base once ball is fielded</li> <li>Catch the ball fingers up (fly ball)</li> <li>Catch the ball in front of the body</li> <li>Squeeze glove with two hands</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowing how to run the bases in sequence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1st Base</li> <li>2nd Base</li> <li>3rd Base</li> <li>Home Plate</li> </ul> </li> <li>Understand the rules of when to run (ball hit on the ground) and when to not run (ball caught in the air)</li> <li>Begin to understand when and how to slide (feet first, one foot out front, land on the butt, hands off the ground)</li> <li>Don't watch ball once hit, focus on running to base</li> <li>Running through first base</li> </ol>
TEAM DEFENSE	HITTING	OUTFIELD	INFIELD
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn how runs can be scored</li> <li>Knowing the Positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pitcher</li> <li>Catcher</li> <li>1st, 2nd, 3rd Baseman</li> <li>Short stop</li> <li>Outfield</li> </ul> </li> <li>Foul Balls - 1st and 3rd base lines</li> <li>Outs - ways to record outs</li> <li>Understanding balls, strikes, and innings</li> <li>Understanding when runners can advance</li> <li>Understanding force out and tag out situations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always wear a helmet</li> <li>Proper bat grip, hands together</li> <li>Square stance, athletic position</li> <li>Level swing</li> <li>Establish a tee routine</li> <li>Establish hitting soft toss</li> <li>Repetition on mechanics</li> <li>Do not over coach</li> <li>Understanding a strike and a ball</li> <li>See it and hit it mentality</li> <li>Keep your eyes on the ball</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ready position when batter is in the batter's box</li> <li>Catch the ball with fingers up (fly ball)</li> <li>Move towards a hit ball</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ready position when batter is in the batter's box</li> <li>Proper throwing technique – throwing over the shoulder</li> <li>Proper ground ball fielding – athletic position palm down, fingertips on the ground</li> <li>Proper catching technique – fingers facing up, palm out</li> </ol>

## PROGRESSION CHART / AGES 8-9

WARM UP/THROWING	PITCHING	CATCHERS	BASE RUNNING
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Importance of stretching routine, and arm preparation</li> <li>2. Athletic position while throwing</li> <li>3. Stepping to target while throwing</li> <li>4. Establish grip of ball</li> <li>5. Throwing accuracy and strength improvement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the basic foot positioning on the rubber/mound</li> <li>2. Establish grip of ball</li> <li>3. Teach the windup &amp; stretch</li> <li>4. Come to a "pause" in the stretch position</li> <li>5. Point and tuck with glove arm</li> <li>6. (Lower Half) Understanding balance</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve their ability to catch the ball while moving</li> <li>2. Learn and perform the basic signal &amp; receiving stances</li> <li>3. Know and perform the basic bare hand and glove positioning while receiving</li> <li>4. Begin working on basic blocking skills (stay square, glove down first, then knees, chin &amp; eyes down)</li> <li>5. Learn the proper way to wear catching equipment</li> <li>6. Show less fear of getting hit with a thrown pitch. Use tennis ball, wiffle balls to help build kids' confidence</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve aggressiveness</li> <li>2. Eyes on 3rd base coach for instruction when running bases</li> <li>3. Touching inside corners of bases while running</li> <li>4. Fly balls require hesitation of running to next base to confirm whether ball is caught. If fly ball is caught, runner needs to return to base</li> <li>5. Leading off once pitch crosses home plate</li> <li>6. Interpret signs given from coach</li> </ol>
TEAM DEFENSE	HITTING	OUTFIELD	INFIELD
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Execution of a cutoff for balls hit to outfield</li> <li>2. Understanding what bases are force outs throughout the game and when to cover these bases</li> <li>3. Concept of backing teammates up</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stance: feet shoulder width apart, knees bent, hands near back shoulder</li> <li>2. Load/trigger hands, weight shift back as pitcher hand comes forward</li> <li>3. Pivot back foot "shoelaces towards pitcher"</li> <li>4. Swing: Hips, arms, two hands follow through</li> <li>5. Demonstrate pitch selection</li> <li>6. Comfortable with batting drills (tee, soft toss, live toss)</li> <li>7. Begin to develop a better idea of the strike zone</li> <li>8. Make more consistent contact</li> <li>9. Be aware of players fearing the baseball</li> <li>10. Start teaching strike zone awareness</li> <li>11. Keep your eyes on the ball</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve ability to catch the ball on the run</li> <li>2. Quicken their ability to get the ball back to the infield</li> <li>3. Understand and demonstrate the need for "circle" arm motion on throws</li> <li>4. More consistent throws over the top</li> <li>5. Begin to recognize the need for outfielders to backup infield plays/throws</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better understanding the responsibilities of each position</li> <li>2. Know how to make force-outs</li> <li>3. Knowing where to go with the ball</li> <li>4. Backing up throws from the catcher to pitcher</li> <li>5. Showing better use of fielding mechanics</li> </ol>

## PROGRESSION CHART / AGES 10-12

PITCHING	CATCHING/THROWING	CATCHERS	INFIELD
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pitching from the windup and the stretch</li> <li>Focus is on mechanics and accuracy not velocity</li> <li>Demonstrate proper follow through on all throws (momentum should take you towards your target)</li> <li>Start to learn changeup grip (players should not throw change up until they establish fastball)</li> <li><b>Lower Half:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>loading on back leg and driving</li> <li>work on follow through over front foot towards target</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Upper Body:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on separation</li> <li>Staying closed with upper body until foot strike</li> <li>starting to feel extension towards target (glove tuck) establish proper decelerate follow through on throwing arm</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue making their catching to throwing motion more efficient using better, quicker footwork and glove work</li> <li>Continue to develop multiple throwing angles and use them in different situations</li> <li>Become more consistent in finding the correct grip in all transitions</li> <li>Demonstrate four-seam grip, change up, etc.</li> <li>Demonstrate throwing for accuracy (all distances including long toss)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catchers demonstrate signal calling, framing, blocking, reliable throws to all bases</li> <li>Use proper form consistently (signals, stances, glove-hand positioning)</li> <li>Continue to improve on blocking basic (consider adding tennis balls, wiffle balls for drill)</li> <li>Begin to learn and develop the proper fundamentals of throwing to bases on steal attempts (footwork, transition, and throws)</li> <li>Learn to turn back to infield while catching pop-ups at home plate</li> <li>Begin to "frame" pitches correctly</li> <li>Show no signs of being afraid of thrown or foul tipped balls</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to understand reading hops and manage charging ground balls accordingly</li> <li>More consistent on fielding mechanics</li> <li>Begin to develop the ability to move through the ball when fielding and throwing</li> <li>Throwing accuracy needs to be more consistent</li> <li>Fear of batted balls should be limited</li> <li>Begin to read batter's swing</li> <li>Good, fast consistent footwork/glove work around the bag on force &amp; tag plays</li> <li>Demonstrate infield communications (plays, coverages, pop up priority)</li> <li>Demonstrate double play depth and footwork for all infield positions</li> </ol>
TEAM DEFENSE	HITTING	OUTFIELD	BASE RUNNING
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin to demonstrate ability to read pitchers for teammates</li> <li>Demonstrate coverages and backup responsibilities on every hit (everyone has a place to be)</li> <li>Execute bunt defense</li> <li>Execute 1st and 3rd plays</li> <li>Execute run-down techniques with runners on base</li> <li>PFP pitchers covering first base &amp; comebackers</li> <li>Execute pick off moves to first &amp; second base</li> <li>Execute holding runners on</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on strong hitting mechanics</li> <li>Attack first pitch fastballs</li> <li>Stress line drives and hard ground balls</li> <li>Build routine with drill work (tee, soft toss, front toss, live pitching)</li> <li>Understand the concept of pitch counts</li> <li>Coaches add in offensive signs</li> <li>Accustomed to selecting pitches based on count &amp; situation</li> <li>Introduce having an approach prior to the at-bat (what they are looking for, what they want to accomplish, etc.)</li> <li>Introduce situational hitting (hit and run, sacrifice bunts, bunt for hit, etc.)</li> <li>Begin to install an on-deck routine</li> <li>Keep your eyes on the ball</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catches the ball on the run</li> <li>Able to catch fly-balls and line-drives not hit directly at them</li> <li>Get to the ball and get rid of it quickly using consistent footwork and body positioning</li> <li>Routinely hits all cut-off men</li> <li>Throws in an over the top motion with additional carry on the ball (can throw to the base and not just the cut-off man)</li> <li>Back up infield plays/throws as needed</li> <li>Demonstrate outfield readiness, breaking (angles) to the ball. Square to target, footwork, throwing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading off once pitch crosses the plate (10u)</li> <li>Demonstrate coach communications / signal pick-up</li> <li>Begin to demonstrate self-thinking/ decision making on the base path</li> <li>Improve running angles (turns) around the bases</li> <li>Improve aggressiveness</li> <li>Learn proper steps when taking leads</li> <li>Execute signs given from coach</li> </ol>

# PROGRESSION CHART / AGES 13-14

PITCHING	CATCHING/THROWING	HITTING	INFIELD
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting ahead in the count</li> <li>Comfortable throwing fastball</li> <li>Changeup should be an established pitch</li> <li>Pitcher may be able to start learning curve ball only if they have command of other pitches</li> <li><b>Lower Body:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progression on back leg drive</li> <li>Stabilization on front leg should be occurring</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Upper Half:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glove tuck</li> <li>Decelerate follow through should occur on all throws</li> <li>Long toss routine (ask Tiger staff)</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Pitch Theory:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1st pitch strike</li> <li>Change speed &amp; location</li> <li>Understand what we are doing with certain hitters</li> <li>Dominant count</li> <li>Expanding the zone</li> </ol> </li> <li>Preach &amp; practice holding runners on (0,1,4, infinity timing)</li> <li>Start to build a running routine for after pitching and during the week.</li> <li>Pick-off catch routine should be weekly (practice every throw that they do)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent proper grip on all throws</li> <li>Implement pre-game/practice throwing program</li> <li><b>Step 1</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>begin throwing from 15 feet on one knee (throwing arm side knee down)</li> <li>Emphasis on elbow up, throwing over the front knee</li> <li>5 easy throws</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Step 2</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throw from 30 feet</li> <li>Face your partner-upper body and feet parallel to your partner</li> <li>Feet shoulder width apart</li> <li>No step – All upper body movement</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Step 3</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throw from 50 feet</li> <li>Body at 45 degrees to your partner</li> <li>Feet shoulder width apart</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue hitting &amp; bunting mechanics</li> <li>Begin to develop hitting strategies vs. specific pitchers</li> <li>Should be consistent with line drives and hard ground balls</li> <li>Accustomed to drill work (tee, front toss, live hitting)</li> <li>Introduction to Tigers situation rounds               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2 Bunts</b></li> <li><b>5 Opposite field</b></li> <li><b>5 Hit and Run</b></li> <li><b>5 Get the runner over to 3rd</b></li> <li><b>5 Get the runner in from 3rd</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>Accustomed to selecting pitches in certain counts</li> <li>Understand hitter's counts               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Offensive:</b> 0-0, 1-0, 2-0, 2-1, and 3-1</li> <li><b>Neutral:</b> 0-0, 1-1, and 2-2</li> <li><b>Defensive:</b> 0-2, 1-2, 2-2, and 3-2</li> </ol> </li> <li>Understand the coaches signals and why they are giving them</li> <li>Keep your eyes on the ball</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master Fielding Mechanics (Ready position, Fielding, Throwing, Footwork, Follow throws)</li> <li>Knowing double play depth and turns from all positions</li> <li>Awareness of cutoffs and relays</li> <li>Ability to read hops and manages their approached to ground balls more correctly</li> <li>Consistently uses good fielding mechanics</li> <li>More consistent with moving through the ball when fielding and throwing</li> <li>Throwing accuracy is consistent, even from longer distances</li> <li>Ability to read hitter's swing and anticipate where the ball will be hit</li> <li>Begin to understand the responsibilities of their positions (bunt plays, double-plays, 1st and 3rd plays, cut-relays, rundowns, pop-up priority, pick offs and drop 3rd strikes)</li> </ol>
TEAM DEFENSE	CATCHERS	OUTFIELD	BASE RUNNING
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backing up the throw to the pitcher</li> <li>Begin to understand the responsibilities of their positions (bunt plays, double-plays, 1st and 3rd plays, cut-relays, rundowns, pop-up priority, pick offs and drop 3rd strikes)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use proper form consistently (signals, stances, glove-hand positioning)</li> <li>Continue to improve on the blocking basics</li> <li>Improve fundamentals and times of throwing to bases on steal attempts (footwork, transition, and throws)</li> <li>Execution of the home plate pop up play more consistently</li> <li>Become more efficient in their bunt fielding and throwing mechanics by improving footwork/glove work</li> <li>Consistently frames pitches correctly when able to</li> <li>Begin to cut down body/glove movement when receiving pitches</li> <li>Be more vocal and begin to show leadership on the field</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catches the ball on the run with more ease</li> <li>Able to catch fly-balls and line-drives not hit directly at them</li> <li>Ability to get to the ball and get rid of it quickly using consistent footwork and body positioning</li> <li>Routinely hits all cut-off men</li> <li>Throws in an over the top motion with additional carry on the ball (can throw to the base and not just the cut-off man)</li> <li>Ability to back up infield plays &amp; throws as needed</li> <li>Begin to recognize that there are times to dive and times to the play the ball safely in front.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Execute one way leads and proper lead off at all bases</li> <li>Execute breaking on the pitcher's first movement</li> <li>Understanding tag-up situations</li> <li>Understand No-Out, One-Out and Two-Out rules</li> <li>Execute self-thinking / decision making on the base path</li> <li>Executing delay steals and reading ball in the dirt</li> <li>Rarely misses signs from coaches</li> <li>Improve their study of pitchers for patterns, timing, tendencies, etc for getting better jump</li> <li>Act on pitcher's tendencies (early jump)</li> </ol>