

Rowan University
Teaching Concepts of Team Sports
Unit Plan by Kim Weiss

Title: Softball

SECTION A. (Overview)

Background Information:

- Number of Classes: 10
- Duration of Each Class: 40 minutes
- Grade Level: 7th and 8th grade
- Number of Students: 30

Entry Level Assessment of Learner:

- **Age:** 12 through 14 years old
- **Class consists of:** Females and males
- **Interests:** Students within this age range have a variety of interests, and many begin to pursue hobbies and activities that they most enjoy as opposed to what their parents solely register them to do. Similar to adults, some adolescents are interested in sports, while others enjoy reading, dancing, or playing with music, computers, and video games. Many students appreciate all or a combination of these activities. Between these ages, maintaining close friendships is extremely important to students. Also, many adolescents gain interests in others as more than friends, and may take more of an interest in the opposite sex. Sexual identity may become more of a personal concern as well. Pertaining to student interest in physical education class, there will be many whom enjoy the hands-on learning experiences, with opportunities for skill and fitness improvements, and healthy competitions. Seventh and eighth graders might even take more of an interest in the physical activities, showing more enthusiasm than ninth and tenth graders because the younger students are not in the more intimidating high school environment with older students. Some students might start the first day of class with the feeling that he or she does not enjoy physical education class (preconceived ideas), but the teaching methodology used in this unit is structured to maintain the attention of all the students.
- **General and Specific Abilities:** Students who are twelve through fourteen years old possess a variety of abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Most should be able to understand the directions, class and softball rules, follow instructions, and show respect for others. Sport-related skill levels will vary among students and the specific skill. Many of the students will have had experiences participating in sports and other fitness activities in informal situations and organized leagues.

- Some will not have had any involvement in recreational-type sport activities, but from participating in physical education classes in previous grades, will have acquired locomotor, nonlocomotor, fitness, and sport-related skills. Pertaining to the sport of softball, students' abilities will vary from beginner, to intermediate, and to advanced, since they will have already participated in softball units in earlier grades, but personal involvement in softball and similar sports outside of school will be different as well.
- **Social and Emotional Level (Characteristics):** Students in this age group spend an increasing amount of time with peers, but relationships with parents continue to be close and influential. Conflict with parents tends to be most frequent during this time as well. The peer group can have both positive and negative influences. Friendships, especially among girls, become more intimate and supportive during these grades. Pertaining to emotional development, mood swings may be frequent, and may include feelings of embarrassment, self-consciousness, loneliness, and depression. Adolescents going through rapid physical changes take comfort and receive emotional support from being with others going through similar changes. During this time period, students might not completely agree with their parents' behavior, but are usually not sure enough of themselves to stand alone, so they look to their peers to show them what's "in" and what's "out." The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and moral guidance; a place for experimentation; and a setting for achieving autonomy and independence from parents. It is also a place to form beginning intimate relationships.
 - **Previous Experience:** Seventh and eighth graders will have already learned about, practiced, and participated in skills, activities, and games related to softball in at a minimum, previous physical education classes throughout the upper elementary grades. However, many students will have had softball-related experiences outside of school, such as in friendly neighborhood games, softball or baseball teams, recreation or other organized leagues, traveling all-star teams, and sport camps. It is important to remember that although many will have had several years of experience playing this sport in and out of the school, many students' skills will be based solely on what they learn and practice in physical education classes. Most importantly, it must be recognized that students will possess varying levels of skills, but proper techniques and strategies can be improved upon at every level in this unit.

Rationale:

The lessons in this unit pertaining to softball are important for students to participate in because they encourage physical activity and promote movement concepts and skills. This unit is also valuable for students because it teaches the fundamental concepts and rules of softball, which may be applied outside of the classroom and into adulthood as well.

References:

- Baker, D.I. & Cole, S.S. (1989). Winning Softball Drills: A Complete Drill Book for Coaches (1st edition). Doylestown: Diamond Press.
- Carnes, L.A., Pettigrew, F.E., Zakrajsek, D.B. (1994). Quality Lesson Plans for Secondary Physical Education (1st edition). Champaign: Human Kinetics.
- Feldman, R.D., Olds, S.W., Papalia, D.E. (2004). A Child's World: Infancy through Adolescence (9th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Griffin, L.L., Mitchell, S.A., Oslin, J.L. (1997). Teaching Sport Concepts and Skills: A Tactical Games Approach (1st edition). Champaign: Human Kinetics.
- http://webct.rowan.edu/webct/public/home.pl?action=setup_frames&curr=top
- Schmottlach, N. & McManama, J. (2002). Physical Education Activity Handbook (10th edition). San Francisco: Benjamin Cummings.

Resources, Equipment, and Materials:

- Large open outdoor area (or gymnasium), preferably at least 1 regulation softball diamond
- Bases, cones, polypots
- Softballs (softer and rubberized), yarn balls, wiffle balls
- Fielding gloves
- Bats
- 1 Fungo bat
- Batting tees
- Music

Anticipated Difficulties and How They Will Be Addressed:

When using bats and balls, safety precautions and regulations are always a necessity. To ensure safety, the entire class will always be in the teacher's view. Beginning on Day 1 in this unit, the students will learn the proper uses of the equipment and will have guidelines on when, where, and how they can use it. Most of the lessons in this unit would be most beneficial if taught outside in a large open area, and so weather may interfere. However, the lessons can be modified to be used in a gymnasium. Another anticipated difficulty is the risk that students could be hit by balls. To make this less likely, for throwing or fielding practice the class will be arranged so all students throw in the same direction. Batting stations must have ample room so students will not carelessly walk by and be hit with a bat or batted ball. All students should be required to wear fielding gloves when catching thrown or batted balls (except yarn balls). In the modified games, a catcher will not be used to prevent any related injuries. Students who are not in the field must stand away from the playing area to keep from getting hit. Finally, "the cloverleaf arrangement" (4 playing areas with the home plate areas at the center) will be used to promote safety and efficiency in the small-sided softball games.

SECTION B. (Standards and Objectives)

NJCCC Standards:

Standard 2.2 (Integrated Skills): All Students will use health-enhancing personal, interpersonal, and life skills to support a healthy, active lifestyle.

Standard 2.5 (Motor Skill Development): All students will utilize safe, efficient, and effective movement to develop and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

Standard 2.6 (Fitness): All students will apply health-related and skill-related fitness concepts and skills to develop and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

Objectives:**Day One:**

Cognitive

- Students will identify the proper use of softball equipment for safe and effective purposes (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.2).
- Students will describe how to throw a softball and how rotation impacts the performance of this skill (NJCCC Standard 2.5.B.1).
- Students will describe how an individual's equilibrium impacts the performance of catching a softball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.B.1).

Psychomotor

- Students will demonstrate an overhand throw using mechanically correct form and control (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.1).
- Students will demonstrate the proper technique used in catching (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.1).

Affective

- Students will give feedback on their partners' throwing and catching techniques (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.4).

Day Two:

Cognitive

- After learning about the history of softball, students will describe the influence of history and culture on softball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.B.6).
- Students will learn how to field a ground ball properly (NJCCC Standard 2.5).
- Students will understand how to move to field a ball not directly hit to them (NJCCC Standard 2.5).

Psychomotor

- Students will demonstrate how to field different types of ground balls (NJCCC Standard 2.5.B.2).

Affective

- Students will offer feedback and suggestions to their partners about ground ball fielding techniques (NJCCC Standard 2.5.E.1).

Day Three:

Cognitive

- Students will understand the basic rules of softball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.9)
- Students will apply their acquired softball knowledge on a take-home quiz (NJCCC Standard 2.5.9)

Psychomotor

- Students will practice catching fly balls using the stages of movement skill development to repeatedly show proper technique (NJCCC Standard 2.5.B.5).
- Students will demonstrate moving into the proper position within their environment (the field) to catch a fly ball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.4).

Affective

- Students will work well with other team members by taking turns catching the ball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.1)

Day Four:

Cognitive

- Students will identify which health fitness components the Micro1 activities contribute to and why (NJCCC Standard 2.6.10)

Psychomotor

- Students will demonstrate the proper mechanics of the slow pitch delivery (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.1).

Affective

- Students will assess their partners' pitching techniques and provide positive feedback to help assess their effectiveness (NJCCC Standard 2.5.E.1).

Day Five:

Cognitive

- Students will describe the best position for them to stand in the batters box in order to maximize their ability to strike the ball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.B.3).
- Students will understand the proper form used in batting (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.1).

Psychomotor

- Students will improve their hand-eye coordination (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.6).
- Students will practice hitting the ball off of a tee (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.1).
- Students will demonstrate batting in conjunction with specific skill cues (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.5).

Affective

- Students will learn from each other and value how it feels to strike the ball when batting (NJCCC Standard 2.5.E.1)

Day Six:

Cognitive

- Students will identify the basic rules governing softball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.2).
- Students will understand the proper techniques of base running as in when to run and when to stay depending on the situation (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1).

Psychomotor

- Students will improve their endurance for base running (NJCCC Standard 2.6.C.2).
- Students will demonstrate proper technique when running the bases (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1).

Affective

- Students will support their team members when participating in the Team Competition Running Drill by incorporating cooperative strategies (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1).
- Students will develop camaraderie with their classmates and show enthusiasm for physical activity in class (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1).

Day 7:

Cognitive

- Students will identify the responsibility of each position in softball (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.2).
- Students will understand the offensive strategy of baserunning (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1).

Psychomotor

- Students will demonstrate various offensive situations and what impacts they have on the current setting of the game (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1).
- Students will practice playing different defensive positions in order to learn the various strategies of each (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1).

Affective

- Students will appreciate how the different positions work together to help win the game (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1, 2.2.D.1).

Day 8:

Cognitive

- Before the ball is pitched students will identify what play to make if the ball is hit to them (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1)
- Students will explain when to cover their base for a force or tag play (NJCCC Standard 2.5.C.1)

Psychomotor

- Students will practice defensive and offensive skills using the stages of movement skill development during selected modified game situations (NJCCC Standard 2.5.B.5).

Affective

- Students will monitor communication between players as to whose turn it is to catch the ball and determine if there was good sportsmanship (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.1).

Day 9:

Cognitive

- Students will explain basic softball rules (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.2).

Psychomotor

- Students will participate in a modified softball game to assess their responses to a more dynamic game-like atmosphere (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.4).

Affective

- Students will play by the rules (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.1).
- Students will demonstrate good sportsmanship throughout the lesson with their team mates as well as competitors (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.1).

Day 10:

Cognitive

- Students will understand the related tournament procedures and processes (NJCCC Standard 2.5.D.1).

Psychomotor

- Students will perform the softball-related skills of batting, pitching, fielding, catching, throwing, and baserunning in modified game situations (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.4).
- Students will perform combined locomotor skills while playing the modified softball games (NJCCC Standard 2.5.A.1).

Affective

- Students will identify the potential benefits of softball for physical and mental health (NJCCC Standard 2.6.10).
- Students will coach and encourage their partners and teammates (NJCCC Standard 2.5.6, 2.5.9).

SECTION C. (Learning Experiences)

Unit Schedule (Day 1-5):

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Opening Activity:	Know the Equipment Circuit	History of Softball Interactive Presentation (PowerPoint)	Learn the Rules Circuit	Blast Ball	Softball Aerobics
Fitness Activity:	See below (Omit Cardiovascular Endurance Activity)	See below	See below (Omit Cardiovascular Endurance Activity)	See below	See below (Omit Cardiovascular Endurance Activity)
Skill Focus:	Throwing and Catching	Fielding Ground Balls	Fielding Fly Balls	Pitching	Batting
Culminating Activity:	All-star Throw and Catch Game	Three Student Softball Game	Six Player Fly Ball Game	Knock-down Cone Pitching	Wiffle Ball with Batting Tee (4 Modified Fields)
Closure:	Review and Preview	Review and Preview	Review, Preview, and Take-home Rules Quiz	Review and Preview	Review and Preview

Unit Schedule (Day 6-10):

	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Opening Activity:	Rules Quiz Collected / Team Trivia Circuit	Softball Diamond Jogging Review	Playing Catch with a Partner	Ms. Weiss' Softball Draft for Teams	Blast Ball
Fitness Activity:	See below (Omit Cardiovascular Endurance Activity)	See below (Omit Cardiovascular Endurance Activity)	See below	See below	Softball Aerobics
Skill Focus:	Base Running	Offensive and Defensive Position Play	General Defensive Strategy	Modified Game Play	Modified Game Play
Culminating Activity:	Team Competition Running Drill	Fast Offense and Defense with Fungo	Game Situations Softball	Modified Game Tournament	Modified Game Tournament
Closure:	Review and Preview	Review, Distribute Handouts, and Preview	Review and Preview	Review, Celebration, and Preview	Review, Celebration, and Preview Next Unit

Unit Fitness Activities:**Fitness Component:** Cardiovascular Endurance**Author:** Kimberly Weiss**Set-Up:**

Five stations are widely spread within the practicing area and correspond to the pitcher's plate, first base, second base, third base, and home plate. Equipment used is based on availability, level of students, and safety issues. Ideally, each station has a polyspot specifically spaced for every student in the group, so that each student remains in his or her own area near their spot for that skill. The following quantities of equipment are used in a class with twenty-six to thirty students. Six softballs are used at Station One (pitcher's plate), and six bats or bat-like equipment are used at Station Two (home plate). Station Three (first base) has six yarn balls; Station Four (second base) has a total of twelve polyspots. At Station Five (third base) three yarn balls are used.

Directions:

Discuss the health-related fitness component of cardiovascular/cardiorespiratory endurance with students, and explain that it is "the ability of the heart, respiratory, and circulatory systems to supply oxygen and nutrients to, and to remove waste products from, the working muscles." Teach that circuit training involves performing several different exercises at various stations, and that students move from one station to the next until the circuit is completed. Next, explain to students that they will be doing circuit training to improve their cardiovascular endurance and practice the softball-related skills of pitching, batting, catching, fielding ground balls, and throwing. The skill of baserunning is incorporated by running to each station.

Demonstrate pitching a softball without releasing the ball (to be practiced at Station One), and at Station Two demonstrate the motions of batting. At Station Three (first base), demonstrate throwing a yarn ball high into the air with the dominant hand, catching it with the nondominant hand, and then covering the ball with the dominant hand. With two polyspots per student spaced several feet apart and parallel to the baseline between first and second base, show students the ready position for fielding ground balls and the technique involved. Do this near the polyspot closest to first base, and then run to the next polyspot towards the right. Also, show the motions of tagging the second polyspot as if it is second base (Station Four). Lastly, at Station Five, show students the proper technique for throwing and catching with a partner.

Explain to the class that the demonstrated skills at each station are constantly repeated for about thirty seconds while the music plays, and that when the music stops students run to the next station. This results in continuous, aerobic activity throughout the warm up. Quickly divide the class into five groups (one group per station) by giving each student an index card that reads 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. Have students run to their corresponding station where they begin the circuit. A softball group member leads the

students in the activity at each station. Play the music for the aerobic circuit training to begin. Stop the music after thirty seconds, remind students to run to the next station, and re-start the music for students to begin the continuous softball-related skill movements at their new station. Repeat these steps until each group has completed the entire circuit one time. At the end of this warm up activity, have the students collect the equipment at their last station, and return it to an area designated by the teacher.

Other Considerations:

If possible, set the stations up before class starts. Also, promote safety by spreading out polyspots as markers to designate students' personal space in each station with plenty of room to maneuver the equipment and perform the activities. It is important to tell everyone to remain in their own path when running to the next station. Finally, when the stations are set up before class begins, and most of the students have had prior experience with the softball skills utilized in the activity, only a minimum amount of time is needed to explain and demonstrate the activities at each station. Therefore, more time can be devoted to improving cardiovascular endurance through this softball-related warm up activity.

Fitness Component: Flexibility

Author: Argiris Hristofis

Have the students sit in a group and introduce the flexibility unit. Three stretches you can perform to have students stretch key areas in softball are: throwing arm stretch, batters box stretch, and the stolen base stretch. Demonstrate each stretch in front of the students before you have them stretch to reduce questions or confusion later.

Throwing Arm Stretch:

The students will start out their flexibility routine by pairing up with partners. They will be stretching out their throwing arms by one partner putting their arm across the other partners chest. The partner with the arm across the chest then moves forward to stretch their partners arm. Hold stretch for about 10 seconds and then switch.

Batters Box Stretch:

Have students give themselves some personal space. With legs shoulder width apart, the students will raise both hands to the sky pretending to hold a bat. Hold that stretch for 10 seconds then have the students bring their bat down in front of them, with their arms bent at the elbows at ninety degrees. Perform trunk twists with repetitions of 3 to the left and 3 to the right. Then have students take 3 practice swings.

Stolen Base:

Tell students to position themselves as if one foot was on first base and the other in position to take a lead. They will lean towards an imaginary second base and hold that

stretch of the groin for 10 seconds, then will step towards "second" and pretend that they were in a run down and now are in a position to run back to first and hold that stretch for 10 seconds.

Fitness Component: Agility

Author: Liz Grusemeyer

Have the students line up on the sideline, depending on the number of students in the class count off so that you have only two people with the same number. They will then find their matching number who will be their partner for the softball drills. The first drill is a ground ball drill. One person in the pair will get a cloth softball, the point of this drill is to get in front of the ground ball but you will not know what side your partner will roll the ball to, either the left or the right. You must get to the ball as quickly as you can then roll it back to your partner so they can field the ground ball too. Do this about 5 times each. The next drill is a fly ball drill. With the same partner get a yarn ball for this drill. You and your partner will stand facing the same direction. The tosser will yell go and the catcher will run forward, the tosser will then yell left or right and the catcher will turn in the specified direction and look up to catch the fly ball. Do this about 5 times then switch. The point of this drill is to get your body in the right direction as quickly as you can to catch the ball. When the drills have been completed have the students put away the cloth softballs and yarn balls.

Fitness Component: Muscular Strength

Author: Anthony Martucci

To start off, number the students by twos and have the number ones grab a bat and go to the far end of the basketball court, and then have the twos go to the opposite end of the court. Have the students stand with their feet shoulder width apart and grip the bat at the bottom and hold it with the barrel on their right shoulder. They will now perform a walking lunge with a twist. They will take a step forward with their left leg and lunge until their right knee almost touches the floor and before their left knee extends past their left foot. They will then hold this position and simulate a softball swing twisting at the waist so that the bat head faces to the left. They will then rotate back to the original position and bring up their right leg and place it next to the left. Next they will repeat this; however starting with the bat on the left side and lunging forward with their right foot and follow the same directions with the opposite side. They will walk to the center court line turn around and continue the other way until they return to their starting point. This exercise will work the students' quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, and abdominal muscles. The next exercise the students will perform will be a push-up/pull-down with a partner. Each student will select a partner from their side and find a

personal space that they can comfortably work in. One partner will place their bat on the floor and lie down next to it on their back while the other partner straddles over them with their bat. The partner on the ground will grip the bat with one hand on the handle and the other on the barrel just past shoulder width apart and hold it across their chest. The partner straddling will then grip the bat just inside of their partners' hands and on the teachers instruction the partner on the ground will push the bat away from their body while the partner on top resists. Once the elbows are locked out away from the body the partner on the ground will then pull the bat back towards their body once again with the partner on top resisting. The movement away and towards the body will count as one repetition and each person will perform ten. The pushing part of the exercise will work the students' chest, deltoid, and triceps muscles while the pulling part will work the upper back and bicep muscles. The final exercise the students will perform are crunches with three parts to them. First they will find their own personal space in the gym and place their bats next to them. Each student will then lie down on the ground with their knees bent up, feet on the floor and about shoulder width apart. On the teachers signal they will start with an oblique crunch to the left where they will bring their right arm across the body having the right elbow touch just outside the left knee. Next they will perform a basic crunch forward with their arms stretched out in front of their body and pushing their hands through the middle of both knees. The final part of the exercise will be an oblique crunch to the right side where their left elbow will touch just outside their right knee. All three parts will count as one repetition and they will perform ten all together. This exercise helps with the abdominal muscles which contribute to a quicker rotation on their swing as well as when they throw. After this is over bring in the students for a closing and explain how each exercise will benefit them to become a more successful and stronger softball player.

Teaching Methodology:

The predominant teaching style is **teacher led** because throughout the unit the instructor directs the skills that are to be practiced, and also instructs when, for how long, and where, the students will participate in the activity. There will be brief stints of **lecturing** and a great deal of **teacher** as well as **student modeling/demonstrating** of the softball skills in the daily skill focus. Whenever applicable, **verbal skill cues** will be repeated to emphasize proper technique. An **interactive PowerPoint presentation** on the history of softball will be incorporated on Day 2. **Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic activities** are used daily because each promotes softball-related values. For instance, on Day 1 and Days 5 through 10, students are divided into teams and groups, in which team members work together for success, yet the other teams serve as competition. In the Knock-Down Cone Pitching culminating activity on Day 5, the **task** is individualistic in that each student tries to knock over the softball on his or her cone with the pitch as many times as possible, and this is not to be in competition with others. Finally, since it is important that students understand the fundamental rules of softball, the class will receive a **take-home rules quiz** to be completed and returned to the teacher for a grade.

SECTION D: (Unit analysis/reflection)**Student Assessment:**

- Informal observations of demonstrated skills in practice situations, activities, and modified games
- Take-home Softball Rules Quiz
- Peer evaluations through feedback
- Self and group evaluations at close of class during review time
- Verbal questions posed by teacher to students relating to class topics

Teacher Assessment:

- To what extent did your preparation and actions help the students accomplish the lessons' objectives?
- Were the students highly engaged or bored in the teacher-decided activities?
- What improvements should the teacher make pertaining to classroom management?

Unit Evaluation:

- Overall, was this an effective unit plan for the students in this grade level?
- Did the majority of students achieve the objectives described in the unit plan?
- Were there any objectives in the unit that were not accomplished by a majority of the students?
- What activities were the most effective, efficient, and fun for students?
- What activities did not work well and should be either changed or removed?
- What overall improvements should be made, in any aspect of the unit plan, to make it more successful?