

Shuttle® Baseball

Item #17815

What Are the Educational Applications?

While baseball is truly a fantastic sport, the game can be very dangerous. Baseballs are very hard and can often travel over 100mph when hit with a bat. That amount of force can do incredible damage to windows and cars, not to mention the human body.

Baseball can also be a very sedate activity at times. Since the baseball isn't continuously in play or in motion (unlike in basketball or soccer), a lot of time is spent either sitting down or standing still. There's generally not a whole lot of action going on aside from the back-n-forth interchange between the pitcher and catcher. Given the above points, one might conclude the game of baseball doesn't belong in the PE curriculum...and they'd be right...at least until now!

Beyond the obvious advantages of using a foam baseball, there are many other not-so-obvious benefits associated with this truly innovative new training baseball. Shuttle Baseballs were initially developed as a training aid to assist novice players get over their fear of being hit by the ball and to help batters improve their swing timing. This was accomplished by attaching a badminton shuttlecock to a soft foam baseball—hence, a new idea was born.

The goal is for your students to learn many of the fundamental skills and abilities used in the game of baseball. This new instructional baseball can facilitate the learning exchange and allow students the chance to gain, first hand, a newfound appreciation and understanding of what a great sport baseball is. The Shuttle Baseball Game promotes success and encourages participation and teamwork. Set contains: 3 balls, rubber base set, and plastic bat

How Can I Use This Product With My Students?

Shuttle Baseballs are not designed to be pitched like a traditional baseball (i.e., using a “four-seam” backwards rotation or spin). Instead, they are best thrown like a football, using a “spiral” rotation. This allows the ball to work as originally intended. When thrown in this fashion, the tail orients behind the ball during flight causing wind drag and slowing the speed of the ball by 25%. This benefits students by giving players more time to react to what they see. And, once this ball hits the ground, it quickly stops rolling. This benefits the instructor since less precious class time is wasted chasing down passed balls.

Shuttle Baseballs move through the air like an arrow, promoting easy visual learning. A batter or fielder can instinctively sense the ball's speed, direction, and depth of travel and react naturally to what they see. This is because the trajectory of the ball is clear from the initial liftoff, through its flight apex (highest point), and onto its final landing spot. This unique attribute benefits throwing too, helping pitchers have more ease finding the strike zone. And the bold, two-color design is easy to see indoors or out.



(position hands and grip as shown)



(throw like a football)

WEEK #1 – OBJECTIVE (NASPE 1, 2, AND 3)

Use Shuttle Baseballs as an implement for teaching the fundamental skills and techniques necessary for successful **throwing** and **catching**. This ball is great

for just tossing around on the playground at recess (for younger children). Teaching should come fairly naturally as much of what is learned is communicated visually. For teachers of physical education in grades 7-12, our focus for Week 1 is to introduce your students to a number of toss-n-catch activities that will allow you to:

- Explain how the non-throwing arm and hand provide balance and can influence the direction a tossed object and a thrown object will travel.
- Explain key elements of throwing for distance, such as using a long throwing arc, altering the angle of the elbow, increasing arm speed, and preparing for the throw using good body positioning and alignment.
- Identify the key elements for increasing accuracy in throwing a ball such as developing and maintaining correct form, and using the fingers to generate the correct spin that allows the ball true flight and carry toward the target.
- Explain and demonstrate the correct technique for tracking the direction, speed, and depth of a hit fly ball.
- Describe the proper hand and finger position for catching a ball (overhead versus a basket catch) and how to reduce the impact force while catching an object by using soft arms, hands and fingers.

Drills – Week 1

Mix and combine the drills below to keep class attentive and motivated.

1) Wrist and Fingers – Eye Tracking

Description - Partners sit (or stand) 10-15 feet apart, facing each other. Option 1: Forearms are perpendicular to ground, elbow held in fixed position with non-throwing hand. Option 2: Underhand tosses, throws varied high/low. Teaches eye tracking.

2) Upper Body Mechanics

Description - Partners face each other about 20-30 feet apart. Players kneel on the throwing-hand side knee with lead leg forward, foot touching ground (bended knee). Torso and shoulders work in unison. Practice throws overhand and sidearm.

3) Weight and Energy Transfer – Long Toss

Description - Partners facing, about 50 feet apart. Play toss-n-catch, aiming throws at partner's chest. Shoulders lined perpendicular to target, step forward to transfer ball. Back foot lifts off ground in follow-through.

4) Fielding a Ball Thrown to a Stationary Target

Description - Learn to catch a ball with either 1) the thumbs of both hands together and the fingertips up (overhead), and 2) with the pinky fingers together and letting the ball drop into nested hands (basket catch).

5) Agility, Footwork, Balance and Break on Ball

Moving Away

Description - Players stand 20-30 feet apart, balls over thrown to partner in various directions. Initial break on ball begins with a shoulder turn. Player judges the speed, direction, and depth of the approaching ball. Initial steps are “scissor feet”, then route tracking.



Fun Games – Week 1

Below is a list of activities that can be played during the last 15 minutes of class time. Students will have fun practicing the skills they just learned, helping reinforce their knowledge gained.

1) Shuttle Orbit Game (aka) Around the World

Description - Teams are formed in groups of 6 students. Each student stands equi-distance from one another, forming a circle. The ball is tossed clockwise and then counter clockwise. Group with the highest number of round trips (forward and back) wins. The catch: If a ball hits the ground, the trip is returned to the starting block.

2) Shuttle Football (aka) Two-Hand Touch

Description - For a new twist on football, form three student teams in a game of touch football. One player rushes the quarterback (using 7 second count), teams alternate possession and attempt to score touchdown. Play on football sized field, perpendicular so that sidelines are 10-20 yards apart and actual sidelines mark end zone. The first team to have each player score a TD as a QB wins.

WEEK #2 – OBJECTIVE (NASPE 2 AND 3)

Use Shuttle Baseballs as a tool to help students learn key manipulative skills and movements necessary for successfully striking a stationary and moving target. In their 2nd week, students will be exposed to a number of challenging ball striking scenarios designed to emphasize the importance of key batting fundamentals such as grip, balance, stride, and rotational mechanics. During this week, the students' physical education will rely on the instructor's ability to:

- Explain the purpose of using a side orientation (center of gravity, full extension of arms, etc.) when practicing striking a ball off a batting tee or side-toss
- Explain the role of the eyes when striking objects, such as tracking or reading the movement and pace of a pitched ball and knowing how to time their swing
- Identify the following phases for striking a ball: preparation (stepping up to the plate), application of force, follow-through, and recovery
- Identify methods for improving striking skills by manipulating batting stance (open vs. closed feet position), using short and compact swing with a long follow through, the importance of a complete and level swing

Drills – Week 2

The art of hitting: Practice. Patience. Repeat. (20-30 minutes). K.I.S.S. Method. For more specific drills, we suggest you visit: www.QCBaseball.com

Teaching Approach: Not all hitters are alike. A good coach/instructor must be willing to let a hitter "find" his/her swing. Each individual has distinct talents, gifts, and quirks. Resist pointing out flaws and coming across as a nagging critic. Instead, identify the good and praise it, and then build on it. In fact, success in hitting is best attained simply by being encouraging. Hitting a baseball isn't easy. Consider this - the game's best hitter, T. Ray "Ty" Cobb, had a career batting average of only .367. What other sport is there where you can succeed just 3 times out of ten and be considered among the all-time greats! Let them know this truth; it'll show you truly care. Take the opportunity to share a great lesson in life - not everything we do has to be perfect! "Success comes from simply knowing that you did the best you're capable of." - John Wooden

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: Understanding the meaning of "paralysis by analysis". To be effective, minimize the use of baseball jargon.

"Keep your hands inside the ball." "Stay tall on the back side." This "jock" language means absolutely nothing to a student that cannot picture in his/her mind the mechanics you are teaching. Instead, simply explain the importance of core hitting competencies: knowing when to swing (patience), controlling aggression (poise), having a plan at the plate and sticking to it (persistence). Your students may surprise and even amaze you with the pace of their learning!

KEEPING IT SIMPLE: Whether using a batting tee or throwing B.P., the secret to getting good at batting really boils down to just one thing: doing lots of practice!

The body needs to fatigue in order to develop a procedural memory, aka "muscle memory". This week is about getting in a lot of at-bats. Eventually, the motor and memory systems will synchronize and students will be able to perform on auto-pilot. Basically, "see ball, hit ball". The only coaching needed is making sure the batter's stance is comfortable and balanced, and not too close to the plate. The right distance is wherever the swung bat head can cut a swath through the pitcher's favorite part of strike zone, generally the center of the plate.

TIP: Tee up a Shuttle Baseball with the tail pointing toward the side of the field you want the batter to aim for (see Figure 1). Teach the batter develop a level swing by making the bat head move directly "through the ball". A level swing does NOT mean parallel with the ground. Instead, it means having a swing that cuts through the contact or "strike" zone on the same linear plane as the angle of the incoming pitch (see Figure 2). A level swing boosts the odds of hitting a line-drive for a base hit, as opposed to a pop-fly (occurs when an uppercut, or non-level swing, is attempted; giving the opposing defense an all too easy out).



Swing level (or through) a pitch's...

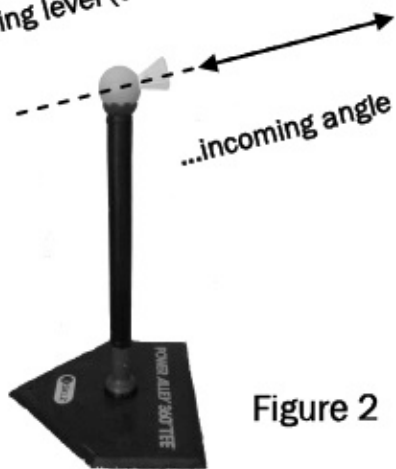


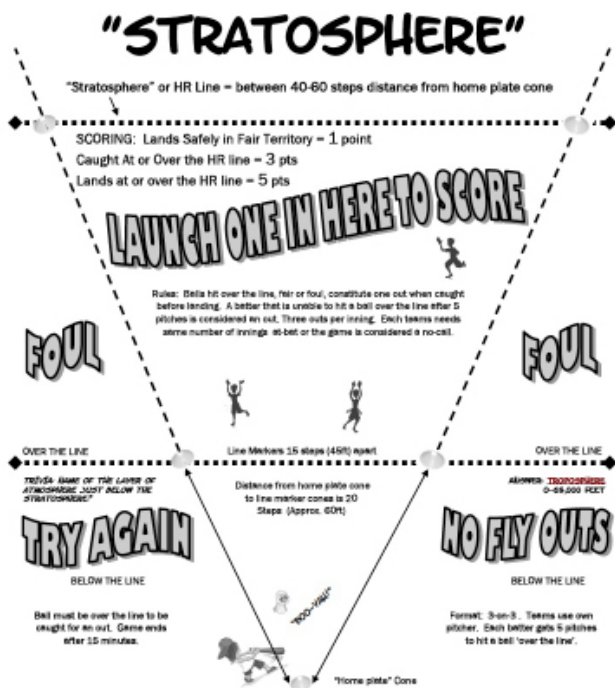
Figure 2

- Demonstrate basic offensive and defensive skills and strategies in team physical activities
- Identify the contributions of members of a group or team and reward members for accomplishing a task or goal
- Describe leadership roles and responsibilities of each player position, instruct about and how to communicate basic offensive tactics (i.e., “tagging-up”, coaching base runners to stay or advance), explain defensive responsibilities (talking to each other as an outfield unit, when and how to back-up the play).
- Explain how the skill-related components of balance, reaction time, agility, coordination, explosive power, and speed impact one’s performance in different areas of the field both offensively and defensively.
- Evaluate the relationships of physical, emotional, and cognitive factors affecting individual and team performance (encourage students to build-up each other’s confidence and grasp the benefits of camaraderie on and off the field).
- Include others in physical activities and respect individual differences in skill and motivation (i.e., knowing how/when to modify game for lesser skilled players).
- Describe the enjoyment, self-expression, challenge, and social benefits experienced by achieving one’s best in physical activities (i.e., baseball is a game that reveals one’s character; how you react on to a particular situation tells a lot about your attitude in life and how others might perceive you as a result).

Fun Games – Week 2

1) Stratosphere Batting Game

Description - A variation of the popular game, Over the Line (OTL) - Break up the class into groups of 6 for a game of three on three. Teams should be randomly selected each day to allow new social interactions and to avoid stacking teams. See Diagram below.



WEEK #3 – OBJECTIVE (NASPE 1, 3, and 5)

Play a game of Shuttle Baseball in the traditional game of 9-vs-9 team format. Instructors will instruct students on the proper strategies and tactics needed for the team to succeed in the areas of offense and defense. In this final week, students will participate in live-action in a competitively scored baseball game. Instructors are encouraged to:

Fun Games – Week 3

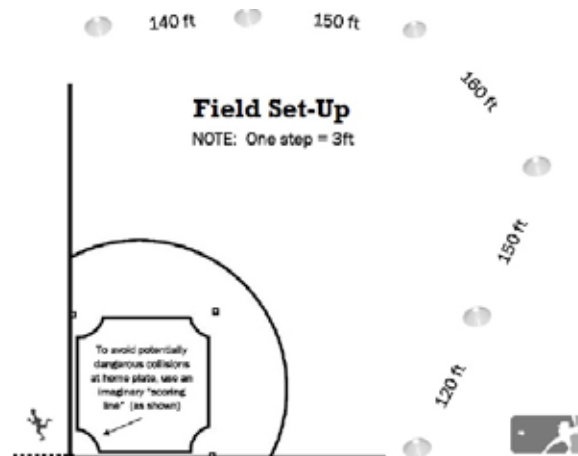
1) Traditional Shuttle Baseball Game

Description - Traditional rules are followed with ONE EXCEPTION:

IF A PITCHED BALL BOUNCES ON HOME PLATE, THE BATTER is OUT.

This rule change is to meant to create higher scoring games because:

1. It challenges pitchers to aim for strikes
2. Batters get more hittable pitches.





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