

INDIANS YOUTH
BASEBALL
PRESENTS...

Rally Cap Program



Introduction

Welcome to the Indians Youth Baseball Rally Cap Program. In this booklet, you'll find all the information necessary to run Indians Youth Baseball's official initiation program.

Our Program was designed to ignite passion for baseball and make the game more attractive to youth baseball players. We're confident that this program will satisfy youth baseball players and their parents, and will be a useful tool for those involved in teaching baseball at the community level.

Enjoy the Indians Youth Baseball Rally Cap Program!



Indians Youth Baseball Development

Mission

We positively impact the youth baseball and softball experience—The Indians Way

Vision

Use Baseball to transform lives in Greater Cleveland

The Indians Way

We Prepare - We Play - We Persevere

The Indians Way is about preparation, play and perseverance. The Indians Way shapes every Indians Youth Baseball experience. We simplify the process, we ignite passion and a respect for the game, and we build positive character traits, with our aim to form a life-long bond with baseball and the Cleveland Indians.

Core Pillars

Simplify the Process: *Physical + Fundamental + Mental = A holistic development model*

Ignite a Passion and Respect for the Game: *The glue that strengthens the bond*

Build Character: *Relentlessly focus on the things we can control, Attitude-Concentration-Effort*



Long-term Athlete Development

The Rally Cap program structure was developed based upon the principles and research of Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD). Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) is a sports development framework that is based on human growth and development. In short, it is about adopting an athlete centered and coach driven approach to athlete development. LTAD is a multi-stage training, competition and recovery pathway that guides an individual's experience in sport and physical activity. The stages in the LTAD pathway provide developmentally appropriate programs for all ages with the aim of increasing participation and optimizing performance.



The following are some general observations of sporting systems from around the world:

- Young athletes under-train, over-compete
- Low training to competition ratios in early years
- Training in early years focuses on outcomes (winning) rather than processes (optimal training)
- The best coaches are encouraged to work at elite level
- Coach education tends to skim the growth, development and maturation of young people
- Coaches, Players and Parents need to be educated in LTAD principles
- Administrators and officials need to be educated in LTAD principles

Most Americans are not instructed in fundamental movement skills at an early age. Instead, young athletes find that much of their training comes in the form of competitive games in a “win at all costs” environment. This omission in basic athletic preparation is the first key failure that prevents American athletes in all sports from developing their full genetic potential.

Due to shortcomings in coach education, many coaches are not aware that this approach fails to utilize the natural windows of “trainability” for developing certain playing qualities and skills. Sadly, the deficits that players develop can never be fully remedied.

As these players progress through their playing careers, their lack of basic skill mastery means that they are unable to play and enjoy baseball to their full capacity. Consequently, they fail to develop the deeper satisfaction and appreciation of the game that would motivate them to remain lifelong participants or inspire them towards long-term advanced development.



Goals

The Goals of the Indians Youth Baseball Rally Cap Program are to:

- 1) Create a fun, positive and nurturing developmental environment for children and adults
- 2) Teach and develop basic fundamentals, rules and strategies to players
- 3) Model and teach a competitive spirit with an emphasis on sportsmanship and respect for the game.
- 4) Promote an A-C-E mindset, which focuses on controlling three elements: Attitude, Concentration and Effort
- 5) Engage and empower parents and new coaches



The Crucial Role of Coaches

The most important individual in the Rally Cap Program is the coach. The coach is the person players look at for instruction, encouragement and inspiration. The assistant coaches, as well as parents, take their cues from the coach. Therefore, success of the program is dependent on the coaches embracing the goals and working to achieve them.



How coaches can help achieve rally cap goals:

Goal #1

Create a fun, positive and nurturing development environment for children and adults

- *Encourage players often. Demonstrate through behavior, words and embodying the A-C-E mindset*
- *Redefine success as: achievement of process*
- *Allow each player equal opportunity*
- *Relentlessly focus on the process vs. results/outcome*

Goal #2

Teach and develop basic fundamentals, rules and strategies to players

- *Focus on principles and objectives. Provide clear specific direction and instruction. Clear objectives enhance feedback for both players and coaches*
- *Frequently check for understanding with all players*
- *Organize practice to maximize learning and minimize inactivity*



How coaches can help achieve rally cap goals:

Goal #3

Model and teach a competitive spirit with an emphasis on sportsmanship and respect for the game

- *Always encourage the importance of hustle, playing hard, being a good teammate and having FUN*
- *Model the importance of respecting the following: rules, opponents, umpires, teammates and self*

Goal #4

Promote an A-C-E mindset, which focuses on controlling three things: Attitude, Concentration and Effort

- *Stay focused on the development process not the scoreboard*
- *Relentlessly look for and praise positive examples of the A-C-E mindset*

Goal #5

Engage and empower parents and new coaches

- *Encourage and engage parents throughout the season*
- *Effectively communicate the principles of Indians Youth Baseball*
- *Promote parent involvement during games and practices*



LTAD Stage 2: FUNdamentals



Stage 2: FUNdamentals

Summary of Stage 2:

Children require a structured, fun and stimulating environment in this stage that focuses on developing the ABC's of athleticism (agility, balance, coordination and speed), hand-eye coordination and basic baseball specific skills. Programs must be developed that keep their interest and promote a feel for the sport without any focus on structured competition. Children should be introduced to simple rules and ethics as well as encouraged to cooperate within a group environment.

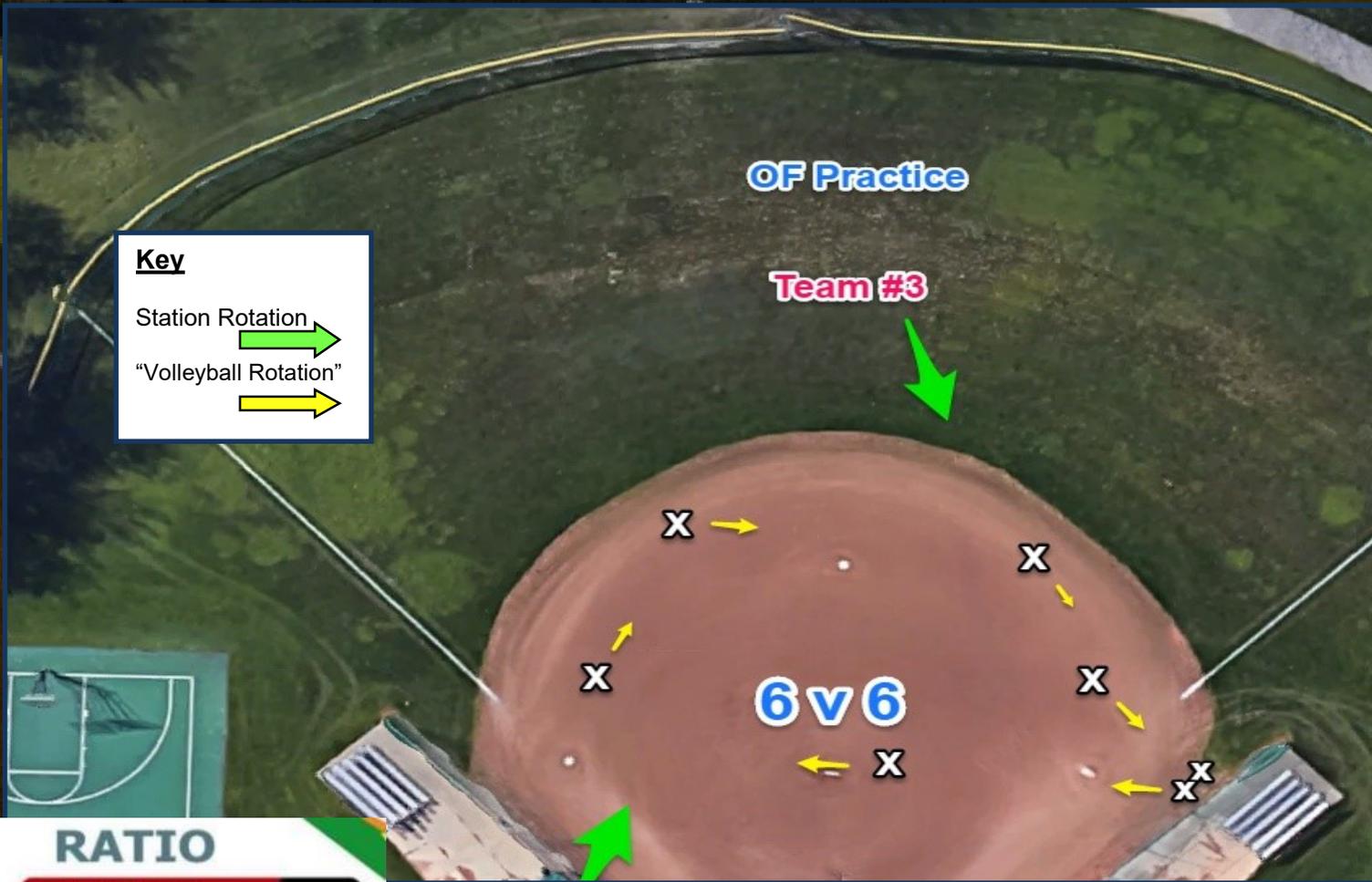
Ages: 5-9 Male / 5-8 Female

“My First Cap” Main Goal: To develop fundamental movement and basic skills in a fun environment

Technical aspects covered:

- Hitting
- Throwing
- Catching
- Running
- Agility, balance and speed

The Game



About

FUNdamentals

PLAYERS PER TEAM

6-8

Competition Format

RALLY CAP FORMAT: 3 team rotation (1 practicing, 2 playing)

Special Rules

No bunting, strike outs, walks, steals. No players cut from teams. All players hit every inning. Points awarded on offense and defense.

Game Format

6 vs. 6. All players hit every inning. Rotate batting order each inning. Volleyball rotation on defense.

Specialization

All players should play equal time and try all team positions, including catching, and equal time should be allowed to both practice and games.

RATIO

Train 80%

Game 20%

One hour per week for 8 - 12 weeks total

Parents act as umpires.
No scorekeepers.

1 coach for every 3 players
(2 per team minimum)

Game Rules

Recommended game times

5/6 year old
division

7/8 year old
division

60 minutes

**75-90
minutes**

There are no walks, strikeouts, or base stealing. Runners can only advance on batted balls.

Score runs the same way they would during a regular game (touch home plate), leagues may also decide to award runs on defense as well.

Each hitter will have a maximum of five baseballs. If the fifth ball is not hit, a coach will roll the ball onto the field to allow the hitter to run the bases and the defense to field the ball and make a play.

Since hitting can be the most exciting part of the game, the program has been designed to help players hit the ball no matter what their skill level. The different formats that can be used: tee, coach pitch, or machine pitch.

An out can be made by throwing the ball to the pitcher's mound, to any base, or to first base. The league may decide how they choose to make outs.

When the last hitter in each lineup comes to the plate, the ball must be thrown to home plate in order to get the hitter out if teams are playing with a catcher. If there isn't a catcher, normal gameplay rules apply.

The batting order will change each time a team comes to bat (first hitter becomes last, etc.) Defensive positioning will also change each time a team comes to bat. (3B to SS, SS to 2B, etc.) The league may choose to do this every batter, or after each rotation.



The Practice

While in the outfield area, each team will practice different drills with respect to the fundamentals of throwing, hitting and catching. A coach's guide, including all drills, will be given to coaches to help prepare the practice sessions.

Players in the outfield will practice 2 fundamentals while the other two teams play their inning on the infield. Example: While one team hits in the infield, the team in the outfield will be doing a hitting drill and then switch to practicing throwing, fielding or catching when the second infield team begins to hit.



The Rally Cap System

During the season, the teams will be working on the FUNdamentals of baseball. Two official Rally Cap days will occur during the season. During these events, the players will have an opportunity to perform different skills they have developed in order to earn different colored wristbands (similar to a belt system in karate). We recommend two official Rally Cap days during a season to create the most interest.

During the Rally Cap event, all players will go through stations where they will perform different skills for each. Players will receive the appropriate colored wristband when they successfully complete all designated tasks on the Rally Cap report card.



What's included

Rally Cap Package:

- Indians Hat
- 2 wristbands per child
 - o League will purchase the hat/wristband package from Indians (at discounted price)
- Coaches Training (2 coaches per team)
- Each participant receives one (1) ticket to Indians game, Rally Cap Day on June 23rd
- Right to use select Indians logo on webpage for marketing purposes.



Acknowledgement

Acknowledgments:

The Rally Cap Program concept is the official initiation program of Baseball Canada. Indians Youth Baseball and Baseball Canada are committed to providing players and coaches with the highest quality programming and resources.

We would like to thank Baseball Canada for allowing us to input the Indians Youth Baseball curriculum and philosophy into the framework of their successful program.

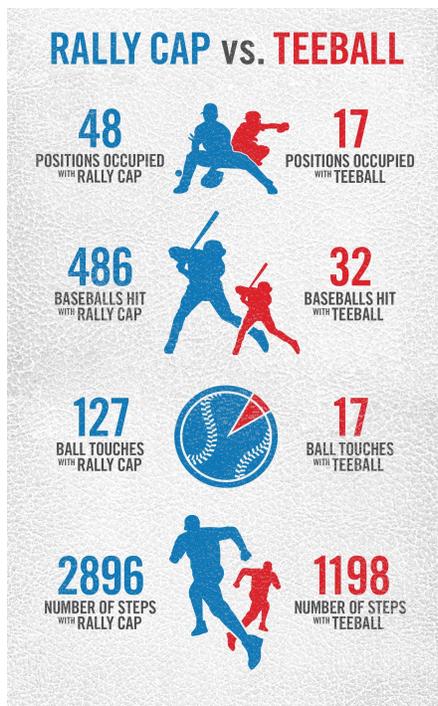


Resources

Baseball Canada:

<http://www.baseball.ca/>

[Rally Cap Experiment video](#) –Baseball Canada



Long-Term Athlete Development:

<http://www.humankinetics.com/products/all-products/Long-Term-Athlete-Development>