

DRILL BOOK



The **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine is designed to:

- Teach the hitter to track the ball from the release point to the impact zone.
- Increase the hitter's mental concentration by teaching to hit a small object with a small bat.
- Help the hitter improve depth perception by keeping his or her head still and eyes level.
- Teach the fundamentals of hitting by removing the fear factor.
- Practice hitting indoors safely and in a limited space.
- Allow players to practice hitting without a batting cage.
- Allow players to practice by themselves.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO PROPERLY IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING DRILLS:

1. JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine
2. JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® (at least 1 dozen)
3. JUGS Hitting Stick™ or regular bat
4. JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Protective Screen
5. Batting Helmets

FASTBALL DRILLS

POINT OF CONTACT—UP THE MIDDLE

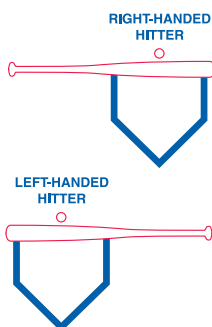
PURPOSE:

- Teach the contact point (where the Hitting Stick™ meets the ball) for the ball down the middle of the plate.
- Teach the hitter to track the ball from the release point to the impact zone.
- Increase the hitter's concentration by hitting a small object.
- Focus on the ball.

Figure 1



Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'. See Figure 1.
2. Set the machine to throw waist-high pitches down the middle of the plate.
3. Hitter assumes a normal batting stance.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTER ENTERS BATTER'S BOX.

4. Hitter should concentrate on hitting the ball back through the middle, into center field.
5. Barrel and Hitting Stick™ are even at the point of contact (even with the lead knee). See Figure 2.
6. Keep the head down. This helps the hitter keep eyes on the ball and minimizes head pulling.
7. Try to see the Hitting Stick™ hit the ball.

FASTBALL DRILLS

POINT OF CONTACT—INSIDE PITCH

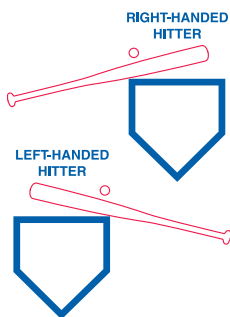
PURPOSE:

- Teach the contact point (where the Hitting Stick™ meets the ball) for the ball on the inside of the plate.
- Teach the hitter to track the ball from the release point to impact zone.
- Increase the hitter's concentration by hitting a small object.
- Focus on the ball.

Figure 1



Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'.
See Figure 1.
2. Set machine to throw waist-high pitches on the inside third of the plate.
3. Hitter assumes normal batting stance.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTER ENTERS BATTER'S BOX.

4. The ball should be hit anywhere from a foot to two feet in front of home plate. See Figure 2.
5. The barrel of the Hitting Stick™ is ahead of the hands—inside pitch must be pulled.

COACHING TIP: Keep head down and eyes on the ball. Try to see the Hitting Stick™ hit the ball—this minimizes head pulling, which often happens when pulling the ball.

FASTBALL DRILLS

POINT OF CONTACT—OUTSIDE PITCH

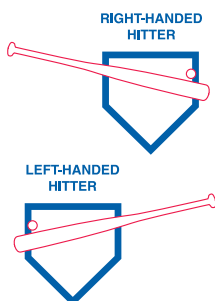
PURPOSE:

- Teach the contact point (where the Hitting Stick™ meets the ball) for the ball on the outside of the plate.
- Teach the hitter to track the ball from the release point to impact zone.
- Increase the hitter's concentration by hitting a small object.
- Teach the hitter to keep front side closed.
- Prevent head pulling.
- Keep the head down and focus on the ball.

Figure 1



Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'.
See Figure 1.
2. Set the machine to throw waist-high pitches on the outside third of the plate.
3. Hitter assumes normal batting stance.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTER ENTERS BATTER'S BOX.

4. The outside pitch must be hit when the ball is over home plate. *See Figure 2.*
5. The barrel of the Hitting Stick™ is behind the hands on contact—an outside pitch must not be pulled.

STRIPED-BALL DRILL

PURPOSE:

- Increase mental concentration.
- Learn to focus on the ball.
- Improve depth perception.

Figure 1



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**[®] Pitching Machine at 20'. See Figure 1.
2. Set the machine to throw waist-high pitches down the middle of the plate.
3. Hitter assumes a normal batting stance.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTER ENTERS BATTER'S BOX.

4. Intermix both red- and white-seamed **SMALL-BALLS** into the feeder on the machine.
5. If the hitter sees a red-seamed **SMALL-BALL**[®], he or she swings at it.
6. If the hitter sees a white-seamed **SMALL-BALL**[®], he or she takes the pitch.

STRIPED-BALL DRILL

TRACKING THE BALL

PURPOSE:

- To teach hitters to visually track the ball through the strike zone.

Figure 1

Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'. See Figure 1.
2. Set the machine to throw waist-high pitches down the middle of the plate.
3. Intermix both red- and white-seamed SMALL-BALLS into the feeder on the machine.
4. Place a hitter in each batter's box. See Figure 2.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTERS ENTER BATTER'S BOX.

5. Hitters assume a normal batting stance without a bat.
6. Hitters should take a normal stride.
7. Hitters attempt to identify the color of the seams on the ball before their opponent does.
8. Award a point for calling the correct color.
9. Subtract a point for each incorrect color (this will discourage indiscriminate guessing).
10. Hitters must not only identify the color of ball, but also call out "ball" or "strike." Give one point for each.
11. After ten pitches, declare a winner and rotate two new hitters in.

OPTION: Add a catcher to the drill to act as an umpire.

BUNTING DRILL

PURPOSE:

- Improve the ability to track a ball from the release point to the impact zone. (This drill will force the hitter to track the ball longer).
- Improve depth perception.
- Focus on the ball.

Figure 1

Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'. See Figure 1.
2. Set the machine to throw waist-high pitches down the middle of the plate.
3. Hitter assumes a normal batting stance.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTERS ENTER BATTER'S BOX.

4. Hitter bunts 5 balls down the third-base line and 5 balls down the first-base line.

VARIATION—KNEELING PHASE:

SMALL-BALL MACHINE MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED SLIGHTLY FOR THIS DRILL.

1. Hitter kneels on the back leg with the front leg extended. See Figure 2.
2. Hitter bunts 5 balls down the third-base line and 5 balls down the first-base line.
3. At contact, hitter's eyes should be directly behind the barrel of the bat.

CURVEBALL HITTING DRILL

PURPOSE:

- Learn to hit the curve correctly and consistently.
- Understand that a curveball is an off-speed pitch and that off-speed pitches should be hit to the opposite field.
- Learn to pull only those curveballs that are hung high and inside.
- Learn to hit the ball the way it is breaking.
- Learn to wait on the curveball by keeping your weight back and keeping the front shoulder closed as long as possible.

COACHING TIP: Always look for the fastball and react to the curveball.

Figure 1

Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'. See *Figure 1*.
2. Set the machine controls to Curveball, to throw waist-high pitches down the middle of the plate.
3. Hitter assumes a normal batting stance.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTERS ENTER BATTER'S BOX.

4. Hitter should attempt to drive the ball back through the middle. See *Figure 2*.
5. Hitter should roll the front shoulder inward when hitter recognizes the pitch as a curveball.

STRIPED BAT DRILL

PURPOSE:

- Emphasize mental concentration.
- Emphasize keeping the head down and focusing on the ball.

Figure 1

Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'. See *Figure 1*.
2. Set the machine to throw waist-high pitches down the middle of the plate.
3. Hitter assumes a normal batting stance—head still, eyes level.

IMPORTANT: MACHINE MUST BE SET BEFORE HITTERS ENTER BATTER'S BOX.

4. Place a piece of brightly colored masking tape or paint an orange stripe, around the "sweet spot" of the Hitting Stick™. The "sweet spot" is approximately 4.5 inches from the end of the bat. See *Figure 2*.
5. Hitter attempts to hit the **SMALL-BALL**® on the striped portion of the Hitting Stick™.
6. Hitter should concentrate on the **SMALL-BALL**® and attempt to see the stripe hit the **SMALL-BALL**®.

COACHING TIP: When the hitter assumes a normal stance, the eyes should be level to maximize depth perception. *Keep your eyes behind the barrel.*

PLAYING CATCH DRILL

SOFT HANDS

PURPOSE:

- Teach catching the ball with soft hands.
- Learn to track the ball into the glove.
- Develop hand-eye coordination.
- Develop confidence in young players.

Figure 1

Figure 2



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine at 20'. See *Figure 1*.
2. Adjust the velocity appropriate to the age group.
3. Throw the **SMALL-BALL**® chest-high to the receiver.
4. With no glove, the receiver catches the ball with the fingers pointed up and hands between the eyes and the ball. Hands are not blocking vision.
5. As the ball is received, the hands are **relaxed and give with the impact of the ball**. Hands are brought into the center of the body as balls are caught. Hands are not rigid. See *Figure 2*.
6. Each player catches 5 balls and then rotates.

COACHING TIP: Do not throw the ball too fast for younger players, because this will destroy their confidence.

ROUTINE FLY BALL DRILL

PURPOSE:

- To teach the player to catch the fly ball correctly.
- To teach the player to use “soft hands”.
- To force the player to focus on the ball.



PROCEDURE:

1. Set the JUGS **SMALL-BALL**® Pitching Machine or the “tossler” to throw lazy fly balls to the fielder about 30' away.
2. Fielders form a single-file line away from the direct flight of the ball—at least 10' from one side or the other. Place a pylon to mark this spot.
3. First fielder in line steps out and away from the line and in a direct line with the flight of the ball. Place a pylon to mark this spot.
4. Fielder assumes the set/ready fielder's position.
5. Fielders are bare-handed to increase concentration, focus and use of soft hands.
6. Throw lazy fly ball to the fielder
7. Fielder makes the catch and places the **SMALL-BALL**® in the bucket and returns to the end of the line.

SMALL-BALL® Pitching Machine Drills were compiled by legendary baseball coach Jack Dunn.



A baseball legend, Jack Dunn is retired from coaching after his 20th season as head coach at Portland State University and his 39th year of coaching baseball. He never had a losing season at PSU, compiling 630 wins. His lengthy career also included 19 years at Portland high schools Cleveland (14 years) and Wilson (5 years).

In the Division I PAC-10 North Conference, Portland State won the title in 1984 and advanced to the championship game of the league's post-season tournament in 1986 and 1990.

The Vikings also won the NorPac in 1977 and traveled to Tempe, Arizona, for the NCAA Regionals. In 1984 and 1986, Dunn's teams won 39 games, the state's collegiate record.

Since 1975, 35 Portland State players have signed professional baseball contracts. Most notable of Dunn's graduates to play major league baseball were pitchers Jeff Lahti, Eric Gunderson, the late Steve Olin, two-time National League MVP Dale Murphy and Baltimore Orioles coach Tom Trebelhorn, who played for Dunn when he coached Portland high schools Wilson and Cleveland.

Prior to succeeding Roy Love at PSU in 1975, Jack's Wilson High School team won three straight league titles. His American Legion team, Watco Electric, was so successful that he earned the Slats Gill Award as **Oregon's Coach of the Year** for all sports in 1973, when Watco finished third at the American Legion World Series. In 18 years under Dunn, Watco won 14 division titles and three state championships.

The "Mentor" has also been published in numerous coaching magazines and, in 1972, received the **Rollie Truitt Award** for his contribution to baseball. In 1998, he received **The Oregonian's Distinguished Sports Career Award** and, in 1999, he was inducted into the **Oregon Sports Hall of Fame**.

For more articles written by coach Dunn, visit JUGS website at <http://www.jugssports.com/coaches/thirdbasebox.cfm>.

JUGS Sports

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