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THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION



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The Ontario Trillium Foundation

Softball Ontario

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BLASTBALL MANUAL

Softball . . .



. . . what a Blast!

Notes

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Acknowledgments

Appreciation is extended to Softball Ontario's House League Services Committee who created the BlastBall Manual:

- “ John Ariss – House League Services Committee member
- “ Todd Bannister - House League Services Committee member
- “ Stefan Backer - House League Services Program Staff person
- “ Irv Bruck - House League Services Committee Chairman
- “ Arlene Chrisztopoulos - House League Services Committee member
- “ Steve Hayes - House League Services Committee member
- “ Ken Naylor - House League Services Committee member
- “ Wayne Triemstra - House League Services Committee member
- “ Ken Uyesugi - House League Services Committee member

Appreciation is also extended to Sophie Bedard of Softball Quebec who provided us with the "3 examples of different games that can be played with BlastBall"

Layout Designer - Nancy Huang

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Glossary of Terms

Thumbs Together

Refers to proper ball catching technique when the ball is in the air and below the child's waist.

Pinkies Together

Refers to proper ball catching technique when the ball is in the air and below the child's waist.

Palms Up

Refers to proper fielding/catching technique when the ball is coming to the child on the ground when "fielding" a ground ball, a child's wrists should be turned out so that their palms face away from the body.

Overrunning the Base

Refers to making sure the children know they don't have to stop on first base but can "run through" it. This lets a batter run to first base without having to slow down. First is the only base they can run through.

Great for Schools and Camps

- “ Set up a Hula Hoop or rope in the outfield, fairly far from the Blastbase.
- “ Once defensive team field the ball, they have to run to the hoop and perform a task (over-under, hot potato).
- “ Once the batter reaches the Blastbase, they must turn back and tag the next person on the offensive team similar to a relay race.
- “ All members of the batting team must touch the Blastbase and reach home before the defensive team completes their task to score a run.
- “ If the defensive team finishes first, they get a run.
- “ The first team to 10 runs wins, and then offensive and defensive teams switch and play again.
- “ You may need to adjust the distance to the Blastbase accordingly.

Overview

One common criticism of tee ball is that the majority of players involved in the game are standing around doing nothing. What parents or coaches haven't noticed is that tee ball players are more interested in what is going on anywhere else, but what is going on in the game. Young children have short attention spans and the lack of action and excitement in the traditional game of tee ball causes many children to become easily distracted.

BlastBall is a totally new concept for introducing the basic fundamentals of softball (hitting, throwing, catching, running and fielding) and is aimed for the younger children. There are no complex rules, no umpires, no personal equipment and no ball

diamond. It is designed to put the fun back in to the game of softball and to generate fast-paced action, provide recreation and exercise, create enthusiasm and through simplicity, allow retention of youth participants in the game.

BlastBall is played with a hard foam ball and bat for optimum safety and can be played indoors or out. Ball gloves or mitts are not required because of the softness and size of the ball. The area of the field set-up can be adjusted to any size to suit the respective age group and skill levels.

BlastBall provides an ideal entry level of play for the youngster who will go on to other advanced levels of the game. It is also a great fitness and recreational activity for schools and community programs as well as for family and friends.



Benefits of BlastBall

BlastBall is very simple to organize and allows:

- “ An inexpensive start-up budget.
- “ Minimal operational expense for facilities, equipment or administration.
- “ Players will have fun while still learning the fundamental skills of playing ball and working as a team.
- “ Does not require significant space to play like soccer, multiple Blastball games can be played on the same ball diamond at once.
- “ The safety first design of the bat and ball not only eliminate injury, but they take the kid's fear out of the game.

Objective

BlastBall is meant for children ages 4 to 6 and can be played with any number of players. The defensive players take any position in the field to ensure maximum coverage. A BlastBall is placed on the BlastTee and the first batter hits the ball and runs to the BlastBase. If the batter reaches the base (the only base used) before a defensive player either catches the BlastBall in the air (an automatic out) or fields it and yells "BLAST", they score a run. If the ball is caught or fielded and "BLAST" is yelled before the runner gets to the BlastBase, then the runner is out. **It's just that simple!** You may end the (half) inning by batting once around the line-up or making 3 outs. For younger players it is recommended that everyone bat every inning and you may not even want to keep score. The BlastBase is audible, emitting a loud "H O N K" that the kids love whenever the runner stomps on the base. When fielded, the defensive player can throw the BlastBall back to another player or an adult positioned near home plate (safely away from the BlastBall Tee). Gloves/mitts are not needed because of the softness and size of the Ball. The fear factor of being hit is eliminated from the game altogether. While batting helmets are not needed because the BlastBall is not being pitched or thrown to make the out, for optimum safety helmets are recommended.

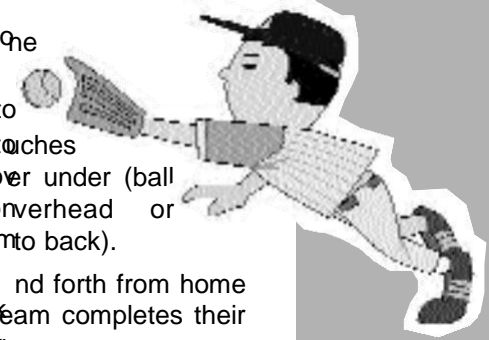


Great for Schools and Camps!

Game 3

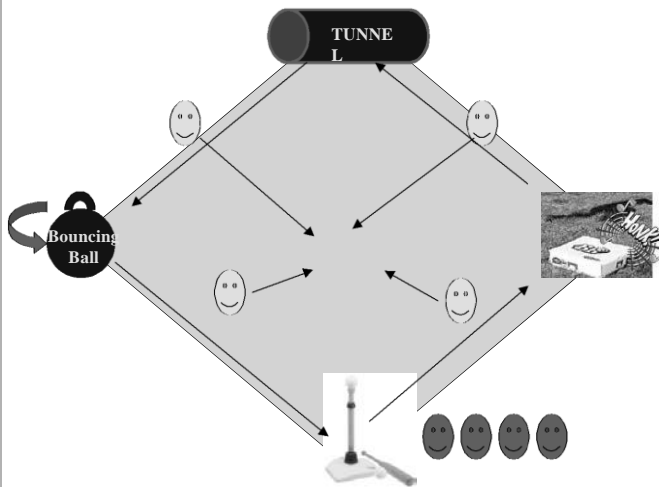
A Lot of Kids???

- “ One batter at a time, everyone else on the field.
- “ The kids fielding have to play hot potato (everyone touches the ball and passes it) or over under (ball goes person to person overhead or through their legs front to back).
- “ Batter keeps running back and forth from home to Blastbase until fielding team completes their task and shouts "Blast."
- “ Batter gets a run for each honk of the Blastbase..
- “ Rotate after each batter, with everyone getting to bat 3-4 times.
- “ Total up number of "Blasts" for each child to determine the winner.



Variable

- “ Distance between the bases can vary depending on the age group or the level. We recommend 40 feet to start with. Feel free to adapt it according to your needs.
- “ Modify the game as often as you want in order to keep it fun. You can ask for more tasks if you feel that the game is getting too easy for one of the teams.
- “ We suggest you leave the runners on their base even if they are officially out since it is more fun for them. You can modify this variable after a few weeks.
- “ Since all the kids will go to bat twice before there is a rotation, there are no outs. The runs are scored when the ball is hit. If the runner reaches the Blastbase before the arrival of the ball in the center of the diamond, he or she gets one run. If the ball gets in the center of the diamond first, the defensive team gets the run.



BLASTBALL Tips

1. Although you can use more, the ideal number of kids per Blastball team is 5-6. This keeps the game moving quickly and makes the kids more active.
2. Teach the kids to “hustle in” and “hustle out.” The goal is constant motion!
3. When the defensive team is “hustling out,” have each of them hop on the Blastbase on their way to the field.
4. BE CREATIVE! Kids get bored quickly, add new twists and wrinkles to the game each week so it is always fresh and exciting.
5. If using the Blastbase indoors, duct tape a piece of shelf covering (thin rubber like sheets) to the bottom of each base to prevent the base from sliding. You can find that material at any dollar store.



Equipment

BlastBall! Set includes:

- “ BlastBase
- “ BlastBall (2)
- “ BlastBat
- “ Field Cone
- “ Line Marker
- “ BlastTee



Field Set-Up

In an open area, like a backyard, field or park, position your BlastTe/home plate so that hitting allows you a safe area of play. Like a regular ball diamond, from the Tee pace off 30 to 50 feet to the right and position your BlastBase. This establishes your fair/foul lined the right.

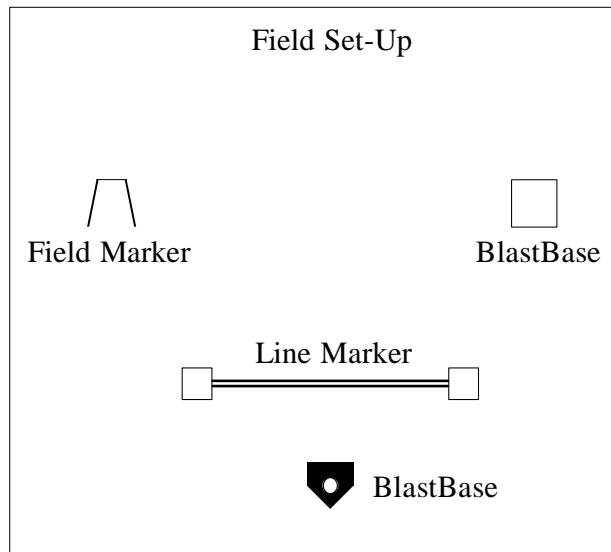


To the left of the Tee and perpendicular to your BlastBase lie, pace off an equal distance and position your Cone. This establishes your fair/foul line to the left.



Now pace off 15 feet directly in front of the Tee and lay out your Line Marker running between the (hypothetical) first and third base lines.

This becomes the fair/foul line for play. If a ball is hit inside of that line it is foul and should be re-teed for another try. If it goes beyond the line, either in the air or on a roll it is considered in play.

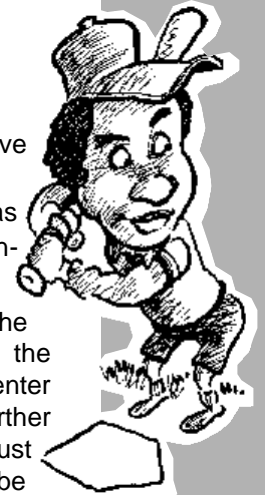


Recommend for Children Ages 3-?

Game 2

Two Teams Traditional

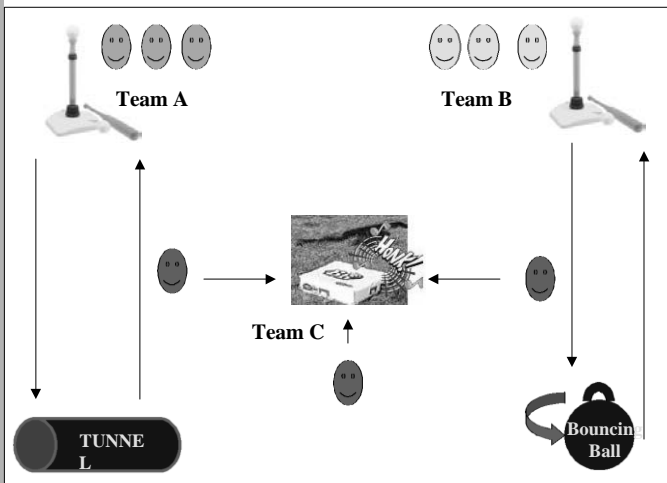
- “ 2 teams of 4 or 5 kids. Once everyone have come to bat twice, there is a rotation.
- “ There is no time limit to a game, you play as long as you want (we recommend 30 minutes).
- “ The batter must hit the ball and reach the Blastbase before the ball gets caught by the defensive team and brought back to the center of the game. The batter can try to reach further bases if the ball is hit very far. He or she must reach and go through the tunnel for his hit tbe considered as a double. He or she must reach and bounce three times on the bouncing ball for his hit to be considered as a triple and he or she must reach the home plate in order to consider the hit as a home run (4 runs).
- “ The defensive players can throw the ball to each other in order to accelerate its arrival at the center of the diamond. The defensive player must have the ball in his or her hands and shout «BLAST». If the word «BLAST» is heard before the sound of the Blastbase or before the runner reaches a further base, the run will go to the defensive team.
- “ If the defensive player catches the ball before it hits the ground, he or she does not have to touch the Blastbase for the run as it is an automatic run for their team.



- “ If the defensive player catches the ball before it hits the ground, he or she does not have to touch the Blastbase for the run as it is an automatic run for their team.

Variable

- “ Distance between the T-ball and the tunnel or the bouncing ball can vary depending on the age group or the level. We recommend 30 feet for the tunnel and 40 feet for the bouncing ball to start with. Feel free to adapt it according to your needs.
- “ Modify the game as often as you want in order to keep it fun. You can ask for more tasks if you feel that the game is getting too easy for one of the teams.

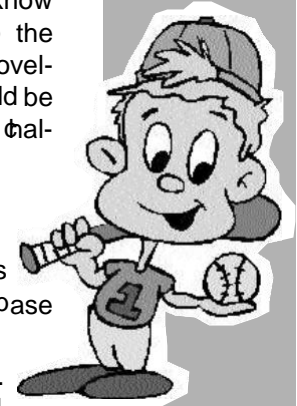


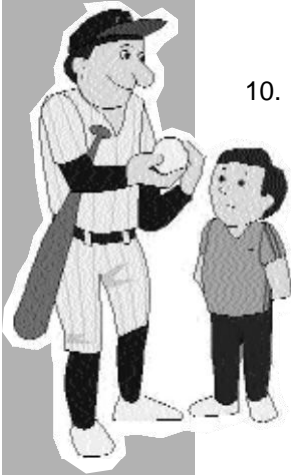
Modifications to the Game of BlastBall

The challenge for local administrators is to know when to add difficulty and competitiveness to the game. The kids catch on very quickly and the novelty of the noisy base may wear off. You should be ready to modify the game to keep the players challenged.

Suggested modifications include:

1. Move the base back. If the defensive team is struggling to make outs, simply move the base back a few feet.
2. Add one throw and catch to make an out. Each time the defensive team fields the ball, one successful throw and catch has to be made in order to get the batter out.
3. Hot Potato. Each member of the defensive team has to pass the ball on to the next person until the whole team has touched it. This way everyone gets involved.
4. Over-Under. Once the ball is fielded the defensive team must get in a single file line and pass the ball backwards, alternating over their head and between their legs. The last person yells "Blast."
5. Use additional bases. Once the fielder gets the ball, they either have to throw it or run to the new base to make the out.
6. Be sure to change the defensive player's position each inning so that the same kids don't always get the ball.
7. Let the batter keep running. This is a good idea to use when the entire defensive team has to touch the ball. When the batter hits the Blastbase, they head back home, touch the tee and they head back to the Blastbase until the fielding team completes their task. Each time they touch the base they get one run!





8. Have the defensive players make animal sounds or shout out "Spongebob" instead of yelling "Blast" when they field the ball.
9. Have three teams on the field, one hitting, one fielding and the other learning fundamental skills. Have them rotate each half inning.
10. Have the offensive players line up a few feet behind the Blastbase in a single file line. The hitter runs through the Blastbase and high fives all his/her teammates in a row. The person at the front of the line then runs home to bat while the last batter goes to the end of the line. This keeps them all moving, promotes team spirit and a fun atmosphere.

Examples of Basic Drills

- a. Toss ball in air and catch with 2 hands (thumbs or pinkies together)
- b. Short catch with a partner (close at first, gradually get farther apart)
- c. Grip on throwing ball, two or three fingers along with thumb
- d. When throwing, stepping in opposition with proper leg
- e. Pointing shoulder when throwing to a target
- f. Overrunning the base
- g. Proper positioning next to batting-tee while hitting. HINT: Most kids have a tendency to want to stand too close to the tee when batting. Keep them back to allow arms to extend.
- h. Fielding ground balls with "Palms Up".

Different Games that Can Be Played (*Tunnel and Ball not included*)

Recommend for Children Ages 3-6

Game 1

Square with 3 Teams

- “ 3 teams of 3 or 4 kids. Once everyone has come to bat, there is a rotation.
- “ There is no time limit to a game, you play as long as you want (we recommend 30 minutes).
- “ Teams A and B players bat at the same time in order to facilitate the defensive players movements.
- “ It is easier to make the kids aware of their defensive responsibility since they can focus on a particular ball to catch with a specific colour.
- “ Team A batter must run and go through the tunnel before the ball is caught by a defensive player (team C) and that he or she has reached the blastbase (sound). Team B batter must run and bounce three times of the bouncing ball before the ball is caught by a defensive player (team C) and that he or she has reached the blastbase (sound). The running batter can come back to the t-ball once their teammate has hit the ball. If the ball is hit very far, the batter can come back to the T-ball immediately and if he or she reaches it, it will be considered like a HOME RUN. If the batter tries to go for the HOME RUN and misses, the run will go to the defensive team.
- “ Players on defense can throw the ball to each other in order to accelerate their contact with the Blastbase. They can also run to it.

