

6U Softball Drills for Beginners: 10 Fun Stations

6U

Drills

Coach Nick & the YSC Coaching Team

The first time I ran a 6U softball practice, twelve kids showed up and exactly zero of them knew where first base was. Two were chasing butterflies before I finished explaining the first drill. One was in tears because a ball had bounced off the infield dirt and surprised her.

That afternoon taught me more about coaching 6U softball than any clinic I have attended since.

At this age, "drill" is almost a dirty word. The moment something feels like work, you have lost them. Every station needs to look and feel like a game, run under five minutes, and wrap up before the energy drops. Build practice that way, and you will be stunned how much real skill these kids absorb without ever realizing they are learning.

The short answer: The best 6U softball drills are game-shaped, under five minutes each, and built around removing the two biggest blockers at this age — fear of the ball and wandering attention spans. Start any fly-ball work with soft-core balls (lite flites or smush balls) before moving to regulation softballs, and design every station around movement, competition, or a short pretend storyline. Skill follows fun at 6U.

Why 6U Softball Is Its Own Animal

The skills we build at 6U are not really softball skills — they are athletic foundations: tracking a moving object, running toward something instead of flinching away from it, throwing with intent, using both hands together. Sport-specific technique comes later.

Most drill guides you will find list 10 stations and call it done. What they almost never address is the fear ladder — the systematic progression from rolling-ball fielding to live fly balls — and that is the real coaching challenge at 6U. A kid who flinches every time a pop-up comes her way will not develop into a confident outfielder unless you earn that trust step by step.

The attention-span ceiling is equally real. After four to five minutes on any single activity, gloves come off, kids stare at the sky, and someone starts a fight about something entirely unrelated to softball. Rotate on the clock, not on feel — five minutes, whistle, next station.

The Ball Fear Problem — and How We Fixed It

I had a player last season who was genuinely one of the best athletes on our roster — she could run down anything on the dirt — but she full-body flinched every time a fly ball came her way. Her mom had mentioned it at registration: she had been hit at a birthday party carnival game and had never gotten over it.

Our solution is simple and it works every time: **start with smush balls, then build up to lite flites.**

Smush balls are ultra-soft foam training balls — they look like a softball but compress completely flat on contact, zero sting. Lite flites are standard reduced-impact foam balls used across youth baseball and softball programs nationwide. We used smush balls exclusively for the first three weeks of all fly-ball stations. Week four we switched to lite flites. By week six, that same player was calling off her teammates to take pop-ups herself.

You can find reduced-impact training balls and lite flites at theranchsports.com — they carry both styles and offer 10% off with no sales tax for coaches ordering team supplies.

10 Game-Shaped 6U Softball Drills

Station 1 — Freeze Tag Warm-Up (5 min) One coach is "it." Kids run freely in the outfield grass and try not to get tagged. When tagged, they freeze in an athletic stance — feet wide, knees bent, hands ready — until a teammate crawls through their legs to unfreeze them. Coaching cue: "Show me your ready position before you unfreeze someone!"

Station 2 — Alligator Grounders (5 min) Kids line up single file. Coach rolls a ball on the ground directly toward each player. Player charges it, gets in front, opens both hands like an alligator mouth, and clamps down with two hands. Go back to the line after each rep. Coaching cue: "Charge the ball — it cannot bite you if you get there first!"

Station 3 — Smush Ball Fly-Balls (5 min) Parent volunteer underhand-tosses smush balls 3–4 feet in the air directly to each player's glove — no lateral movement required yet. Progress to tosses one or two steps away only after each kid catches three in a row without flinching. Coaching cue: "Eyes on the ball all the way in — watch it land in your glove."

Station 4 — Target Throwing (5 min) Pairs stand 20 feet apart — closer for anyone struggling. A hula hoop hangs from a fence or cone as the target. Kids throw overhand and earn a point for each hoop hit. Coaching cue: "Point your belly button at the target, step with the front foot, and throw right through the middle of the hoop."

Station 5 — Tee Bombs with Arch Fielding (5 min) One batter hits off the tee while teammates fan out in a shallow arch 20 feet in front. Each clean field or catch earns the fielding team a point. Rotate the batter every three swings. Coaching cue to batter: "Squish the bug with your back foot — turn it into the ground as you swing through."

Station 6 — Base Race (5 min) Split into two teams at home plate. Coach yells go and both teams race the bases in the same direction. First team to get every runner safely to first base wins the round. Run three rounds and alternate which team starts first. Coaching cue: "Run through the bag — do not slow down until you are past it!"

Station 7 — Bucket Toss Challenge (5 min) Place a bucket or large laundry basket 10 feet away. Each player gets three underhand tosses to land the ball inside. Track personal bests each week and make it competitive with themselves: "Can you beat your score from last practice?" Coaching cue: "Swing your arm straight through like a pendulum — no sidearm."

Station 8 — Hot Potato Fielding Circle (5 min) Players sit in a circle with gloves on. Coach rolls a ball around the outside of the circle. Whoever it reaches fields it cleanly with two hands. First to drop it does five jumping jacks — kids love being the one who makes a teammate do them. Coaching cue: "Two hands, clamp it shut, do not let it squirt away!"

Station 9 — Lite Flite Pop-Ups Level-Up (5 min) Return to fly balls but swap smush balls for lite flites. Toss slightly higher — six to eight feet — with a short arc the player has to track. Introduce communication now. Coaching cue: "Call the ball before you move — say mine so your teammate knows you have it."

Station 10 — Wiffle Game (5–10 min) End every practice with live game play using a wiffle ball. No strikeouts. Coach pitches underhand from 20 feet. Run bases, score runs, celebrate every single hit. This is the carrot that makes every other station worth doing. Coaching cue: "Have fun — this is the whole point of all of it."

Practice Structure at a Glance

- **0–5 min:** Freeze Tag Warm-Up
- **5–10 min:** Alligator Grounders
- **10–15 min:** Smush Ball Fly-Balls
- **15–20 min:** Target Throwing
- **20–25 min:** Tee Bombs with Arch Fielding

- **30–35 min:** Bucket Toss Challenge
- **35–40 min:** Hot Potato Fielding Circle
- **40–45 min:** Lite Flite Pop-Ups Level-Up
- **45–55 min:** Wiffle Game

Building Athleticism, Not Just Softball Skills

At 6U, the athletic foundation matters more than sport-specific technique. Freeze tag builds lateral agility and reaction time. Base races build acceleration and straight-line speed. Target throwing builds cross-body coordination and proprioception. These are not softball exercises in a costume — they are genuine athletic development tools working under the surface of every station.

For kids who want extra work on footwork and change of direction between practices, pair this sequence with agility ladder drills — the same movement patterns that make a 6U player quick to the ball also transfer to every other sport she will play. Our full coordination drills for youth athletes guide covers the foundational progressions that matter most for athletes under 10.

For how to apply the same station-rotation structure at a slightly older age group, our 8U baseball practice plan runs on identical principles — same format, same clock discipline, one age tier up.

Browse more resources on our softball coaching hub.

Your First Practice of the Season

Do not run all 10 stations in week one. Do three things: Freeze Tag, Alligator Grounders, Wiffle Game. That is it. Get them leaving with a smile and counting down to next practice. Add stations in week two once they know the format and trust the environment.

The goal at 6U is not to build a travel-ball pitcher. It is to build a kid who loves the game enough to come back next season. Everything else follows from that.
