



THE PARENTS GUIDE TO

TRYOUTS

ONE DADS JOURNEY WITH TIPS AND
INSIGHTS



Follow us!
[@the_coaching_dad](https://www.instagram.com/the_coaching_dad)



TheCoachingDad.com

Team Discovery and Tryout Scheduling

One of the first major steps in the tryout process is figuring out which clubs to even try out for. There's no master list that says, "Hey, this is the best fit for your kid."

For us, team discovery was part research project, part gut instinct. Some of it came from playing against other teams during our club season. When you watch a team up close you start forming impressions.

Then there were conversations with other parents. This is underrated. If you have a circle of sports parents you trust, lean into those chats. Ask what they've heard. Ask how their kid's experience has been — the coaching, the team culture, how much development actually happens.

We also did some web research visiting club websites, practice locations, and social media presence. And yes, we absolutely considered distance from home. I'm all about committing to a team, but I don't want to be driving 60 minutes for every practice on a weeknight.

Once we narrowed it down, we settled on four organizations we felt good about. That number felt right for us — enough to give our son real exposure and options, but not so many that he'd get burnt out. Too many tryouts can absolutely wear a kid down. Mentally and physically.

Which brings me to the second piece: tryout scheduling. There's some strategy here, and I really believe in this part. Our approach was to stagger the tryouts and put the club we were most excited about last. We wanted our son to walk into that final tryout already familiar with the format.

That strategy seemed to work. By the time we reached that last tryout, our son looked and felt more confident. He wasn't trying to figure out how to act or where to go — he just showed up and played his game.

So if you're planning your own tryout circuit, I'd recommend thinking through these two things:

1. Which clubs are truly worth your time — and fit your values, location, and developmental goals.
2. How you sequence them — not just to give yourself options, but to set your child up for success when it matters most.

And remember: this is your journey as much as it is theirs. You get to make decisions based on what's best for your family — not just what everyone else is doing.

The Work Leading Up

With tryouts looming in the last few weeks of our summer season, I sat my son down and told him we really need to dial things in and use our baseball time well. Not just to go through the motions at practice, but to use each rep as a tryout prep moment.

I kept our focus simple. We worked on four core areas:

- **Fielding Ground Balls** – Glove low, center the ball in your stance, glove and feet make a triangle (glove being under the chin and on the ground), follow the ball with your eyes all the way into the glove. The quick directional statement I'd make is "get your glove dirty" – meaning, get that thing down and focus.
- **Throwing Mechanics** – Take your shuffle steps and fire with purpose. No lazy "rainbow" throws. Throw hard and hit the chest.
- **Fly Balls** – Run to the spot first and then glove up, and squeeze it tight before making any other motion to secure the ball. We talked about not reaching too early with the glove while we're running to the spot of the ball.
- **Hitting** – He's a good contact hitter, but we talked about finishing swings with more intent. That we need to swing all the way through. He bats right-handed, so to make things a little more visual I have him imagine that his right hip can shoot a laser and in order to get power we have to shoot the pitcher with the laser. So, the simple direction reminder I give him is "shoot the laser".

I know some coaches say not to give too many instructions at once. I agree, completely and I know the above four things can be a lot to feed a kid at one time. So we split it up—focused on two things per session. Rotate the focus, keep it fresh, keep it manageable.

Outside of team practices, we added a couple of solo practices each week—just me and him at a local field. Forty-five minutes of focused work: reps, feedback, laughs, maybe a gas station treat after. Honestly, this wasn't really a "practice", this was some of the most fun that I have with him. We truly enjoy it so much. And I have a feeling it's these moments, that I'll remember for the rest of my life (and I hope he does too).



The Mental Prep

This part gets overlooked—but it's everything. Because as important as mechanics are, confidence and mindset might matter more.

We talked constantly about what we could control.

That meant:

- Not worrying about other kids. If they make a great play then that's great for them, but it does not effect you or your tryout.
- Not chasing perfection. Understanding that mistakes might happen, but we need to be able to move on quickly.
- Just doing our best, staying locked in, and bouncing back when mistakes happen.
- Taking deep relaxing breaths when he felt some pressure.
- Visualizing making the play before it was his turn (as he watched the plays happen before him in line.

We kept constant focus on the “no-skill” things that set players apart:

- Effort – Hustle everywhere. To water. To the cage. After a missed grounder. No matter what, it stands out when a kid is giving 100% no matter what.
- Attitude – Smile. Be coachable. Show you love being there.
- Focus – Eye contact. Listening. Being locked in on every rep.
- Appreciation – Shake every coach's hand when it's over and say thank you.

If he could do those four things well, I told him, he'd be remembered. Even if he doesn't make the team.



The Pre-Tryout Routine

While I don't think of tryouts like a test you can cram for, I do believe in preparing your child the right way—physically and mentally—so that when the time comes, they're not caught flat-footed. Walking into a tryout cold is like jumping into a sprint without stretching.

So we created a simple, repeatable pre-tryout warm-up routine that helped ease my son into the moment. This wasn't an intense workout—it was a tune-up.

Here's what it looked like:

- **Play Catch:** Start close and work into long toss. I made sure we took time to warm up the arm fully, increasing distance and velocity slowly.
- **Ground Balls:** I'd hit him a variety of rollers—up the middle, to his left and right, and some short choppers to work on attacking the ball. These weren't about perfection; they were about rhythm and confidence.
- **Fly Balls:** We'd work both short-range and longer throws. First, I'd toss balls just over his shoulders from about 10 yards away to simulate quick-tracking drills. Then we'd back up to around 25 yards and go deeper—more time in the air, more focus on footwork and positioning.
- **Hitting:** I used some weighted balls and did soft toss to get him swinging with intent. We weren't looking to launch bombs—we were trying to feel the barrel and get the swing path dialed in.

All of that took about 25-30 minutes. It was enough to shake off any stiffness and get him mentally in the zone before we even got to the tryout field. But maybe the most important part of our routine wasn't the physical work—it was the car ride.

Every drive to a tryout gave us one final chance to reset. And I never used this moment to flood him with corrections or overdo the pep talk. That's a mistake I think some parents make.

Instead, I had 3 simple reminders:

1. Effort – "Throw the ball hard. Swing hard. Hustle after everything."
2. Focus – "Lock in. Look coaches in the eye. Be ready for every rep."
3. Love – "No matter what happens out there, I'm proud of you. We put in the work. You've already won in my book. I love you."

It might sound simple, but those three messages helped him walk into each tryout with the right mindset. Calm, confident, and ready to go.



THANKS FOR READING

We hope you've gained some valuable insights. Should your coaching or parenting journey need more assistance, wander over to TheCoachingDad.com. There, you'll discover an abundance of insightful articles, a number of coaching resources, and our curated selection of top-tier products by sport. Visit us and enhance your coaching skills today!

WHAT WE DO

We aim to elevate the Parents and Coaches through essential coaching resources and insights.

Drawing from real experiences, we offer the support you need to coach with confidence and connect with your child on and off the field. Join us to make your coaching more effective, rewarding, and impactful

Follow us!
[@the_coaching_dad](https://www.instagram.com/the_coaching_dad)



WHAT WE OFFER

Free coaching resources and blog articles for a variety of sports.

Curated equipment and other product recommendations.

Free newsletter providing key seasonal insights.