

The Numbered Tennis Ball Drill

The purpose of this drill is to improve reaction time and thinking at the plate.

Mark several tennis balls with different numbers, usually numbered 1 through 4 and place them in a bucket. I like to use a drop down plate. Have the batter address the plate in their normal stance. Have a coach pull a numbered tennis ball out of the bucket without the batter seeing the number. Bounce the ball into the contact zone and have the batter call out the number before hitting the ball.

Always reinforce the proper hitting mechanics. Make sure the batters are:

1. **Relax:** (Some batters get in their hitting position before the pitcher or coach is ready to pitch. Have the kids relax then load)
2. **Load:** (By simply lifting up the heel, put the weight on the backside, keeping the center of gravity)
3. **Step:** (Short, soft and straight)
4. **Launch:** (Rotating their hips with an explosion toward the ball, keeping the hands back so they can still recognize the location of the pitch)
5. **Contact:** (Now drive the bat to the contact point) one palm up and one palm will be facing down)
6. **Extend:** (Now we want to extend through the ball)
7. **Extend Again:** (Finish high with bat over the shoulder)