

Approach Lab: Naming the Plan

Indoor	90 min	Tier: 1
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OBJECTIVE

Build the habit of walking into an at-bat with a stated plan. Indoor time is short and the temptation is to fill every minute with swings — resist it. These kids can already swing. What most of them can't yet do is tell you what they're up there trying to accomplish.

BENCHMARKS THIS PLAN FEEDS

- B1 — Approach

PREP — BEFORE PLAYERS ARRIVE

Equipment	batting tee + short-toss net + soft-core baseballs + cones + gloves
Setup	Tape or cone a strike-zone grid in one cage — inner third, middle, outer third — so a named zone is a spot he can point at.
Staff	Three coaches gets you one per station; with two, the tee station can run on its own once the group knows the routine.

PRACTICE TIMELINE

0:00-0:05	Dynamic warm-up (5 min) Run the routine, all 12 movements, down and back on each. Card's on its own sheet.
0:05-0:15	Throwing ladder (10 min) Partner throwing along the wall, wrist flicks up through feet-set. Accuracy at a target, not distance — the short space works in your favor here.
0:15-0:55	Attack — Approach (40 min · 4 × 10 min) Four groups, three cages of approach work that get harder as they go, plus a fielding station. — Station 1 — Name it on the tee. He calls the pitch and the zone, then takes the swing that plan asks for. Eight swings, four different plans. — Station 2 — Hold the plan. Short toss. He states a plan for a three-pitch sequence and holds it even when the first pitch isn't the one he wanted. Taking a pitch outside the plan is a win here, and say so out loud when it happens. — Station 3 — Plan against a count. Call a count before each round — 0-0, 2-0, 1-2 — and he names the plan that count calls for. — Station 4 — Glove work. Short-hop reads and clean transfers, one at a time, at each kid's own spot. — A kid who names "fastball middle" four rounds running has a default, not a plan. Make him call an outside pitch and drive it the other way.
0:55-1:10	Dailies: light ground-ball work (15 min) Infielders take simple ground balls at their own spot, one at a time, in place — glove work and a clean transfer, nothing past a bucket a few feet away. No fly balls, no coverage calls today.
1:10-1:25	Close: "Called Shot" (15 min) Two teams. Hitter announces plan and zone before stepping in. A hard-hit ball to the called field scores two, a take on a pitch outside the zone scores one, a swing at a pitch outside the named zone scores nothing no matter where it lands.
1:25-1:30	Wrap-up (5 min) Whoever defaulted to the same call every round is who needs the count-based station again next time this comes around.

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COACH'S NOTES

Naming the plan will feel slow and a little awkward the first couple of times you run it, and a couple of kids will treat it as a joke. Run it anyway — the habit is what lets a hitter walk up with an idea and hold it when the pitcher won't cooperate. If you're short on time, cut the count-based station before you cut the other two; it's the advanced version and it doesn't pay off until the basic habit has landed.