

Catching Program--Beginner Catching Outline

- I. Five skills to focus on
 - a. Stances
 - b. Receiving
 - c. Blocking
 - d. Throwing
 - e. Fielding Bunts

Stances

- 3 Stances: 1. Sign Giving 2. Receiving 3. Receiving with men on base or 2 strikes

Sign Giving

- a. feet close and sit on toes- slight turn to SS
- b. knees tight (point knees to pitcher)
- c. throwing side forearm and wrist on thigh – very little movement
- d. place sign deep on cup to hide as best as possible
- e. bring glove to signal hand before pulling it out then shift

Receiving

- a. feet flat, toes pointed slightly out (squat position)
- b. shoulders upright/hips down
- c. do not shift too early to show hitter the location (pitcher to target)
- d. target out front, cock glove to right, point elbow out
- e. eye focus → as you get set in stance, glance away and then pick up the pitcher and ball, same as hard/soft focus

Receiving with men on or 2 strikes

- a. make two adjustments from receiving stance
 - unlock hips by raising them up 1-2 inches
 - keep bare hand behind glove or behind Achilles for relaxation
- b. keep both hands on the same plane for safety and quickness

Framing

1. Keep strikes, strikes!
2. Catch the ball as close to the plate as you can; give the umpire a better view of the pitch
3. Must achieve quick hands
 - beat ball to the spot – if the ball is 1 inch outside, get glove 2 inches outside and catch coming in with glove
4. Control the ball
 - catch and stick ball – do not let ball play catcher
 - never hold ball and show up the umpire
 - relax the glove prior to catching the ball
 - ⇒ this is not a flip, but a relaxed motion where the glove hand will relax prior to catching the ball
5. Body movement is an ankle sway
 - nose starts in middle of plate and movement is to have nose go to the corners of the plate
 - keep shoulders square to the ball

Blocking

1. Never show pain or disgust -- pitcher may lose confidence to throw off-speed pitch in the dirt
2. Expect 100% of the balls in the dirt
3. Use 1 basic blocking position:
 - glove on ground and perpendicular to the ground; glove moves first when blocking
 - hide the glove by keeping it as far back as possible
 - keep the head down so you can see the ball and protect the throat
 - shoulders are forward and back is in 'umbrella' position (exhale)
 - hips low and both knees on the ground - MULE KICK TECHNIQUE
 - elbows in
4. Anticipate! You must be quick to get down and move body.
5. WE like to think of a MULE KICK when blocking
6. From receiving to blocking, turn glove over and get glove down first – lean forward
7. **Blocking balls in the middle**
 - keep the nose on the ball and lean forward
 - let ball hit off of you and place back on plate
8. **Blocking to the right (left)**
 - goal number one is to get ball back to the plate
 - moving to the right (left), get right (left) knee outside ball and keep shoulders up
 - your body must be angled so when the ball hits you, it will go back to the plate and not skip away

Throwing to 2B

- 3 major steps:
1. Get feet underneath the body
 2. Close the front side
 3. Get body into proper (power) throwing position

Lower Body: 2 types of footwork

1. Pivot (Rock and Fire)
 - a. used when the ball is received close to the right shoulder and outside
 - b. allow the ball to close the body – catcher will already be closing as the ball is being received
 - c. turn and quickly load on back leg
2. Jump Shift – take ball directly to midline for throwing
 - a. use this technique when the ball is inside or down the middle
 - b. replace the left foot with the right foot

Upper Body:

1. Use 2 hands when possible
2. Glove pushes shoulder closed and ball back to proper throwing position
3. Keep throwing elbow parallel to ground as arm and ball go back
4. Use 4 seam grip
5. **When the hand and ball come out of glove, thumb must always stay underneath ball**

Common Faults:

1. Step with a false step → where right foot goes back and not to left side
2. Throwing around corner → throwing sidearm and not from short L position
3. Feet coming together → moving only one foot at a time, move both at same time
4. Butt comes up too fast → keep butt below the ball; keeps body in proper throwing position
5. Not closing the body → ball will go to right field; throw will be sidearm and with no power
6. Balanced position for throwing → release ball as soon as front foot hits the ground

Throwing to 3B

1. Easiest throw to make
 - batter is blocking view of base and runner, not a problem only an advantage
2. If ball is received at the right shoulder or to outside of midline of body
 - step up forward and throw
3. If ball is received inside or at midline -- replace left foot with right foot and throw

Throwing to 1B

1. Glove shoulder will automatically close the body
 - glove shoulder must point to the base
2. Inside pitch must go directly across the body so that the front side gets closed
3. Throwing arm must get into proper throwing position
 - sidearm will cause the ball to tail to the right

Bunts

1. Glove is made to field bunts easier
2. Look ball in the eye when picking up
3. Keep feet under body for control and throwing
4. Butt must stay low; will keep body in proper throwing position
5. Keep hands together until ready to throw; creates better control
6. 3 footwork fundamentals to picking up ball:
 - a. inside turn - for most bunts; step past ball and open up to face first
 - b. outside turn - step past ball with back toward first, keep butt low, face first, and keep hands together until ready to throw
 - c. down 1B line - sweep ball and power step back with right foot, stay balanced > same technique as a third strike that bounces away from the catcher

Drills and Stations

1. Blocking

1. Have chest protectors and masks (#), tennis balls
2. Use a plate and stress the mule kick to block balls straight and pushoff technique for sides
3. Drop – Block – Fetch - Throw

2. Throwing

1. Stress transfer of ball at midline and high
2. Thumb underneath ball, elbow, eyes, follow throw
3. Dry Throws with both techniques – jump shift and pivot
4. Live with colored balls – runners on 1B or 2B and throw to base when receiving

3. Bunts

1. Glove touch, look ball in the eye, balanced on throw
1. Bunts on 1B, 3B sides – bunts in middle, and using a reverse pivot to get in line with target
2. Add arm fakes and look at lead runner – will help to learn 1st- 3rd arm fakes, too

4. Receiving

1. Think about catching ball with thumb and first finger
2. Think about nose in front of ball when moving to receive
1. Piano Drill – start with bare hand and move around strike zone and move to glove
2. Bare hand drill – catch a tennis ball with bare hand and focus on ankle sway and nose
3. Rapid Fire – catch 3-5 balls in a rapid time and make sure to stress techniques