

Defense. How do you play good defense? We spend all kind of time on technique: infield routes, outfield routes, catcher's framing and blocking, glove and footwork work for all fielders and proper throwing arm action/angles etc.

But do you know what defense really is? A game of throw and catch. When you strip away all of the technique talk – it is all about throwing and catching.

How can we play a good game of throw and catch? Let's break it down into a few simple points. When throwing concentrate on your head staying on the target and your body following the throw by taking two steps toward the target. When catching the ball – simply concentrate on looking it in. My guess is that 95% of all errors occur when we don't look it in.

A good drill to work these – Put your guys in the four-corner box drill set up. Have them in teams. The challenge is to go “around the box” 5 times as fast as they can. Put a stop watch on them and have them work to keep getting faster. A dropped ball or bad throw they must start over. Make it a competition. The coach should keep yelling the cues of “look it in and follow your throw”. He can even yell “reverse” or put in some additional challenges.

The principal? Train faster than game speed and the game becomes slower.

Below are the throwing drills for infielders and catchers. The learning cues are also noted.

Infield Throwing Warm up Drills/Progression

Throwing drill #1 – 10 Toes

- Body square don't rotate the shoulder
- Que - on back shoulder to target and don't throw with hand, throw with back shoulder

Throwing drill #2 - Power Position

- Take ball to power position then drive back knee down (Don't rotate)
- Front side is for control, back side is for power
- Que on keeping posture

Throwing drill #3 – Stride/Step to power position

- Que - Back shoulder to target

Throwing drill #4 - Shuffle to power position

- Que – Emphasis on getting to power position, back knee, back shoulder

Throwing drill #5 – Routine Fielding position

- Que – walk through to power then throw

Throwing drill #6 – Forehand Play to left

- Que - shuffle to power, gather then throw

Throwing drill #7 - Short backhand – (inside the body)

- Make sure you can read your watch for your glove position
- Que - Hinge to chest – get to power position then throw
- Shuffle to power, gather then throw

**Throwing drill #8 - Extension forehand

- Que - Spin to gather momentum
- Then get to power position

**Throwing drill #9 - Extension backhand (Both including My play)

- Que - Make sure you can read your watch for your glove position
- Hinge backhand and shuffle
- (My Play) “Kick” through to power position

**Throwing drill#10 - Ball on Ground

- Que – Look it in, push it in, screw it in
- Shuffle then throw

**First basemen work on picks – partners throw short and long hops

Note

At least 3 to 5 throws per drill

Gradually back up

After Warm up Throwing Drills go to 4 Corners Box Drills

4 Corners Box Drills

- 4 Corners Narrow
 - 4 Corners Narrow – change direction
- Que – Look it in/Quick transfer (throw from where you catch ball)/Accurate throws

- 4 Corners Wide
 - Glove side
 - Que - Move your feet/catch with 2 hands
 - Arm side
 - Que – Get head around (and no false steps) – throw comes to glove shoulder
- Que – Follow your throw
- Routine Ground Ball – roll ground ball
- Que – Work routes – mainly routine ground ball
- Fielding slow rollers (use both one and two hands)
 - If ball has some bounce to it, use one hand – field off of glove foot
 - Pinch and roll
 - If ball is hugging ground use two hands – field off throwing foot
 - Emphasize head down
- Que – Work routes and pinch and roll

Note

Preform 3 to 5 throws per drill

Finish with - Step behind throws – 120 to 180 feet

** (over emphasize getting chest out over knee and deceleration of the arm)

Team Throwing Drills

Works all facets of the relay – now working with Catchers and Outfielders

- Tandem Cut Third
 - Outfielder works ball on wall
 - Infielder works throws from 120-150
 - Long hop or no hop to 3rd base
 - 3rd base works picking and tagging
 - First baseman and catcher work on dropped third strike
- Tandem Cut Home
 - Outfielder works ball on wall
 - Infielder works throws from 120-150
 - Long hop or no hop to catcher
 - Catcher works picking and tagging

- Then he throws a strike to 3rd as if trying to get the batter stretching the double
- Relay to Home
 - Outfielder works on throwing through/to Cut off man's hands
 - Set up so it would be a Long hop to catcher
 - 1st and 3rd baseman working on relays to home
 - Catcher works picking and tagging
 - 2nd baseman is at 2nd base and SS is at 3rd base
 - Catcher can also call cut 2 or cut 3.

Catcher Throwing Drills

Throwing opportunities:

1. Pickoffs to all bases
2. Steals from first and second
3. From a pitch out
4. First and Third Defense - hitting the cut men
5. Blocked ball and runner advance or caught off base
6. Fielding bunts
7. Blocked third strike
8. Tag play at home then throwing to get a batter advancing
9. Late throw to plate, cut off, then throwing to get batter advancing

Warm up

- Quick hands – feel the ball
- Regular warm up
- Follow your throw

Catchers Box Drills

Four Corners

- Pickoffs to all bases – standing and from knees
 - Cues – Quick feet
- Fielding bunts
 - Cues – Look it in, push it in and screw it in
- Tag play at home then throwing to get a batter advancing
 - Square your shoulders
- Blocked third strike
 - Cues – two feet pop up

Rotate at plate

- Steals from first and second
 - Cues – Follow your throw
- From a pitch out
 - Cues – move your feet, look it in
- First and Third Defense - hitting the cut men
 - Cues – Strong throw
- Blocked ball and runner advance or caught off base
 - Cues - Cues – Look it in, push it in and screw it in

With Team Throwing

- Late throw to plate, cut off, then throwing to get batter advancing
 - Cues – look it in and follow your throw