

Throwing & Fielding Mechanics/Fundamentals, and Position Assignments

Jack Parks – Wreckers Player Development



Throwing Fundamentals	
Grip	Medium grip, 4 fingers (pinky not used), fingers on ball stitching if possible, space between ball and palm. NO palm balls! Thumb beneath the ball aligned with the middle finger.
Targeting	<p>“Square up” to target: Glove hand elbow, shoulder, and hip all pointing at the target.</p> <p>The player’s chest rarely faces the target when throwing the ball.</p>
Glove Arm/Hand	<p>Glove hand elbow raised to chest height and pointing elbow at target.</p> <p>After release, glove wrist begins to tuck in towards arm pit (like holding football to run).</p>
Throwing Arm/Hand	<p>With ball in throwing hand, sweeping thumb to thigh for long outfield throws, sweeping thumb to waist for infield throws.</p> <p>Throwing arm extended and raised at shoulder height, elbow slightly bent, wrist slightly bent back, ball above the shoulder and ball facing away from target.</p>
Throwing Hand	<p>Bring the ball forward, elbow raised at shoulder level, ball above the elbow close to the ear.</p> <p>Wrist snaps downward as ball is released. Ball should be spinning end over end in a 12-6 (clock) rotation.</p> <p>After release, allow throwing arm to follow through in a downward motion towards front thigh.</p> <p>Player throwing sidearm may result in injury, especially for long throws.</p>
Lower Body	<p>Feet apart at shoulder length.</p> <p>Weight on rear foot, step into the throw with front foot open at a 45-degree angle.</p> <p>Twisting rear hip forward towards the target.</p> <p>Transferring weight from back to front foot.</p>

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Fielding Fundamentals	
Ready Position	<p>Player in “ready position” with the fingers pointing down, heel of glove hand pointing to the batter, glove arm extended, throwing hand in similar position (punch the glove).</p> <p>Player taking short steps towards batter, knees slightly bent in a slightly crouched/athletic stance, on the balls of their feet, feet apart at shoulder width, and glove foot slightly ahead of throwing side foot at set position.</p> <p>Player is set and in “ready position” when pitcher releases the ball.</p>
Charge the Ball	<p>Charge the ball! Do not wait for the ball to come to you.</p> <p>The fielder ALWAYS has the right to the ball if there is a base runner passing by. Interference is when the baserunner gets in the way of a fielder making a play on the ball.</p> <p>Curved attack technique - Start by advancing to the right and then to the left when attacking the ball (advanced technique).</p> <p>Turn and drop step at a backwards angle for short hops (advanced technique).</p> <p>Keep head behind and over the glove (advanced technique).</p>
Receive the Ball	<p>Do not stab glove at the ball, instead absorb the ball’s energy towards body (advanced technique).</p> <p>Receive ball at the base of the index finger of the glove hand (advanced technique).</p> <p>Use throwing hand to secure ball in the glove (gator).</p> <p>Recoil both hands with ball in glove towards stomach while securing grip.</p>
Footwork	<p>Footwork is everything! Player must move towards target as they transition to the throw.</p> <p>Right-handed throwers begin with their left hip and shoulder pointing towards the target, moves towards the target with the left foot, the right foot moves behind the front (left) foot OR player “replaces feet” with a crow hop movement towards the target, then plants the front (left) foot and begins the throw mechanics.</p>

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Position Assignments/Defensive Strategies	
Basic Fielding	<p>Ball hit to the right of 2nd base; shortstop covers 2nd base/outfield must get in position to backup.</p> <p>Ball hit to left of 2nd base; 2nd baseman covers 2nd base/outfield must get in position to backup.</p> <p>The ball is ALWAYS live unless the umpired calls "dead ball", after a foul ball, or after a time out.</p> <p>Always keep the pitcher near or in the pitching circle, except if there is a runner on 3rd and the pitched ball gets past the catcher. The pitcher must then cover home base.</p>
Get every player moving on every defensive play	<p>Players need to play the game, not watch the game while they are on the field.</p> <p>Left Field to back up 3rd, Center Field to back up 2nd, Right Field to back up 1st, 3B covers the bag (do NOT obstruct), 1st to the bag unless ball through infield (do NOT obstruct)</p> <p>2nd base is backing up throws from catcher to pitcher when there are base runners</p> <p>2nd baseman is covering 2nd base after each pitch when the lead runner is at 2nd base</p> <p>Back up the bases, especially 1st base. Use the right fielder to backup 1st when they are younger, as they get older the catcher is running to 1st to backup when the bases are empty.</p>
Prepare and Communicate	<p>"What do I do with the ball if it's hit to me?" Unfortunately, it depends on your position, where the base runners are located, number of outs, and at times, the inning (time remaining), and the score.</p> <p>Players yell to each other how many outs, where the runners are on base, where is the next play?... All players, especially catcher shouts to infield, shortstop relays shout to outfield, "1 out, runner on 1st, play is at 2nd, watch the steal!"</p> <p>Fielder ALWAYS shout, "I got it!" or "Mine, mine, mine!" several times for infield and outfield pop-flys.</p>

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	<p>When a base runner steals, the entire team, including bench (keep eyes on runners), should shout "STEAL!"</p> <p>When a batter bunts, the entire infield should shout "BUNT!"</p>
Base Running Defense	<p>Get the ball back to the pitcher in the pitching circle immediately to enforce the "look-back rule" when runners are on base.</p> <p>Good base running teams will prey on pitchers that do not pay attention to base runners. Pitchers NEVER turn their back to a base runner when they have the ball and are OUTSIDE the pitching circle or the runner is off base.</p> <p>Be aware for the continuous walk when 1st and 2nd base is vacant and a runner is on 3rd base! The pitcher can have the ball in the circle BUT the walked batter may advance to 2nd base if the baserunner stays in motion and does not stop at 1st base. The pitcher either concedes the steal to 2nd base which holds the runner at 3rd base (look-back rule) or the pitcher can make a play to get the stealing runner out, which releases the 3rd base runner from the look-back rule and ALL baserunners can advance or retreat to the nearest base.</p> <p>Steals from 1st to 2nd, in general its best for the shortstop to cover 2nd base to receive catcher throw, 2nd baseman is ALWAYS the backup 10 – 15 feed behind 2nd base.</p> <p>Steals are NOT force outs; therefore, the base runner must be tagged with the hand that contains the ball. Apply all tags below the knee so a base runner does not slide under the tag.</p> <p>Defender must leave half of the base open to the base runner.</p>
Bunt Defense	<p>Bunt 1st base line – 1B, P, and C charge the ball and communicate, 2nd baseman covers 1st base, shortstop covers 2nd base, outfielder run in to cover overthrows.</p> <p>Bunt 3rd base line – 3B, P, and C charge the ball and communicate, 2nd baseman covers 2nd base, shortstop covers 3rd base, outfielders run in to cover overthrows.</p>
Outfield	<p>Balls hit between outfields, one player charges the ball, the other is in position to back up.</p> <p>Flyball caught by the outfield – where are the runners? How many outs? If there are 0 or 1 out, generally the ball should be advanced 1 base ahead of the lead runner at the start of the play, unless the base runner did NOT return to the base (tag up)</p>

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	<p>prior to the ball caught on a fly. IF the runner did not “tag up”, the fielder should then return the ball to the base before the runner advanced (“doubled up”, Force Out)</p> <p>Ground ball hit into the outfield – where are the runners? The ball should be advanced 2 bases ahead of the lead runner at the start of the play... runner at 2nd base, then play at the plate with a cutoff standing by to cut and get the batter out advancing to 2nd base.</p> <p>Cutoff vs. Relay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relay is executed when a ball is hit to <u>deep outfield</u> and the outfielder needs to relay the ball to the shortstop/2nd baseman, and then to home plate. • Cutoff is when a ball is hit to <u>shallow/mid outfield</u> and the outfielder can throw the ball to home plate on a single hop. For balls hit.
Force Outs	<p>Review with your players the difference between a force out vs tagging the runner with the ball.</p> <p>Always try and get a force out as the 3rd out, versus a tag out, when there is a runner at 3rd base (score will not count).</p> <p>In most circumstances, its best to force out the lead runner.</p>

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Additional Resources	
How to Throw a Softball with Mike Candea	Mike Candrea, former head softball coach for Team USA has a series of videos the break down the fundamentals of the game. https://youtu.be/fB6-rRxMVE
How to Field Groundballs in Softball with Mike Candrea	Mike Candrea, former head softball coach for Team USA has a series of videos the break down the fundamentals of the game. https://youtu.be/TM6hnPz8-u0
How to Play the Infield and Outfield in Softball with Mike Candrea	Mike Candrea, former head softball coach for Team USA has a series of videos the break down the fundamentals of the game. https://youtu.be/yV0Cljuiz4o
Cutoffs and Relays	1 st half of the video (chalkboard) illustrates the difference and proper player positioning for cutoffs and relays. https://youtu.be/2qgxKFgdDks
Advance drills illustrating position assignments	http://www.baseballpositive.com/team-drills