

Coach Tips for Assessments:

1.) 2 FLY BALLS IN RIGHT OR LEFT FIELD WITH THROWS TO CUT-OFF OR 2B (10-15 MINUTES PER DAY)

How to prepare during the week:

1.1 Work with a parent or friend. Have fly balls thrown or hit to you from a short-long distance. 10 per day

Work on taking your 2 steps to get in your ready position before the ball is thrown or hit. Be ready to pounce/open up back, forwards, or to either side.

Work on getting under and behind the ball as fast as you can. Remember, it is easier to catch a ball when your head is still and getting to the ball quickly will allow you to setup for an easier catch.

Then when catching use 2 hands if you have gotten under the ball (use only one hand on the run-practice both). Work on working through the ball so you gain momentum for your throw.

1.2 While working on your pop flies, work on your throws.

You should work on your crow hop or back step on each pop fly. Set a goal for yourself for each session. For me, I would set a goal for myself of making 4 great throws in a row before I would call the session good for the day

On your throws, remember to get under the ball as fast as you can so you can work through the ball and start your momentum to your target. Remember to follow through towards your target....outfielders aren't pitchers, use your entire body and momentum to your target to ensure more power and accuracy on your throw.

For AA, work on throws from a distance of 60-75 ft. (ave. distance from corner OF to 2B for AA)
For AAA, work on throws from a distance of 70-85ft. (av. distance from corner OF to 2B for AAA)

2.) 2 GROUND BALLS @ SHORTSTOP WITH THROWS TO 1ST BASE (10-15 MINUTES PER DAY)

How to prepare during the week:

2.1 Work on your mechanics and footwork

Work on your 1-2 step, 1-2 throw 5 times per day. Remember it is your throwing side foot first followed by your glove side foot. You can do this with or without a ball.

Work on your fielding form. Start slowly by adding all of the steps together until you feel it is near perfect. Remember:

- a.) stutter your feet to setup your 1-2 field/approach
- b.) wide base
- c.) butt down
- d.) straight back
- e.) eyes and head down (should be able to show the top button on your hat to partner or mirror)
- f.) do not bend at the waist but rather bend and sink in at the knees to get low
- g.) glove needs to be out front ahead of hat bill.

Work on each and add them together. Do this before even taking 1 ground ball. Do this every day.

With a partner or parent (or even a parent approved wall with a tennis ball) take 15 ground balls per day while working on your footwork and major mechanics. (your partner can throw/roll or hit them to you...you don't always need a ball off a bat to get better)

Remember soft hands and small movements. The harder your movements to the ball are, the more likely it will bounce out.

Work on ground balls in the middle, backhand plays, and forehand plays. Remember: 2-hands on grounders that you can field in the middle but only 1-hand on backhand and forehand.

2.2 While working on your ground balls, work on your 1-2 step and follow towards your target for your throw.

Remember that we are not pitchers in the infield. Don't stop after your release, follow through to your target (taking 1-3 more steps after your release and follow through). Get the most on your throw by working on your power position and following through.

For AA, work on throws from a distance of 60-75 ft. (rough distance from SS to 1B for AA)

For AAA, work on throws from a distance of 70-85ft. (rough distance from SS to 1B for AAA)

Remember to set a goal for yourself. Maybe set a lower goal on day one and by day 5 set tougher ones.

3.) 2-3 PITCHES TO HIT AND RUNNING THE BASES (10-15 MINUTES PER DAY)

How to prepare during the week:

3.1 Work on your swing! Most players want to hit better in the box but don't put the time in and end up wondering why too often.

20 near perfect swings a day will make you stand out when this part of assessments happen. You do not need a partner to work on your swing! Do this and you will stand out on assessment day

Remember when working on your swing, (or anything in baseball) start slow! The major things you should work on are:

- a.) wide athletic base with knees "sunken" in
- b.) "door knocking" knuckles lined up on grip, with a low tension grip
- c.) hands high with elbow into a comfortable position (back elbow doesn't need to be above shoulder)
- d.) front elbow should be tucked into midsection
- e.) load where you put most of your weight on the back-side/back leg
- f.) load where your head and hands move with your body and not by themselves
- g.) stride that is small, straight to the pitcher, and controlled with the front heel planting as soon as possible
- h.) backside rotation/squashing the bug with back knee bent to start the transfer of power and hip rotation
- i.) swing that is compact and "inside" the path of the baseball or target
- j.) swing follows through with 2 hands after "point of contact"/out front
- k.) head should be as still as possible to keep eyes on target
- l.) as power transfers, the top half of your body should "stay back" and in the middle or more so on your back leg. Do not lean forward with your top half as you finish your swing
- m.) balance, balance, balance. After your bat swings through on your backside, you should be able to do all of these steps and not stumble. Advanced- after your swing, no one should be able to push you over either.

I recommend that your first 10 swings per day are very slow while you work on putting each step together. Your next 5 swings (once you have it together) should be medium speed while you still work on each part. After you have perfected your swing, your final 5 swings should be full speed and great.

You can take 20 full speed swings a day but if you didn't work on putting everything together you are just creating bad habits. You want to get more hits? Start slow, speed it up, then go full speed. I promise you, do this and you will stand out.

Yes, you are going to be hitting so why am I only telling you to swing? One, because the good coaches at assessments are more impressed with mechanics rather than if you can hit the pitches. Yes, you get bonus points for hitting it.... So, after your swings work on a tee or have a partner give you soft toss or batting practice toss 2 times this week. When you do, don't work on a bad swing, keep your mechanics while adding focus on contact. Focus more on your swing and contact rather than power.

3.2 You will probably be running from home to 3B after you get your swings in @ assessments. Coaches are looking for speed, proper rounding of the bases, and HUSTLE! Work on this at home 2-3 times this week.

Remember to:

- a.) "arc out" or "banana" when you start to approach each base
- b.) Hit each base on the inside corner with either foot
- c.) If you "arced" appropriately, you will be running straight to the next base
- d.) When you approach the next base start another "arc"
- e.) Run hard, pick em' up and put em' down fast! Do not jog!

At home, practice your quickness out of the box and rounding a base properly.

I think that 10 yrs old & under=60ft base paths (means 60ft from one base to the next)

11 & 12yr olds=70ft base paths

4.) MORE THINGS TO CONSIDER

4.1 Get there early. Make sure you are there early so you can properly warm up. Also, just a tip, the first groups to go through are usually ranked higher.

Also, I see it too often at assessments where players get there and warm up at a distance of around 20ft, take no ground balls, don't work on their pop fly mechanics, and don't take any warm up swings. Get there early and:

- a.) Stretch, do some sprints, and a distance run to get sweaty. Sweaty means you are ready to go and perform at a higher level.
- b.) There is a lot of room at the park, if you get there early you can go further into the park where there is more room. Warm up your arm starting at a "normal" distance. Then scoot back to LONG TOSS. Doing this will lead to better throws throughout your assessment.
- c.) Have a parent or partner throw/roll ground balls to you so your hands get in rhythm with your feet and brain. Even pros don't start playing a game without a few practice balls
- d.) Same thing for pop flies. Work on getting in rhythm and getting under the ball as quick as you can. Practice working through the ball and making a throw. Again, practice what you are going to do live.
- e.) Take some swings! Don't go into the batter's box cold. Warm up your shoulders, hips, arms, and legs. Trust me, if you do this your bat speed will be higher without you having to "over swing" in the box. If you have a bat weight I recommend using it for about 5 swings.

If you do these you will be ready to rock n roll on the field. Doing this will also help with your confidence. Warm up right and go in confident.

4.2 If you miss the ball, hustle after it as fast and controlled as you can. Pick the ball up with your throwing hand, not your glove and make a good throw.

On an error, don't show negative emotion, be positive and hustle to the ball. The good coaches aren't there to see you be perfect, they are there to see if you are coachable and have the will to improve/learn.

4.3 If you make a bad throw get it in your head that your next one is going to be better. Believe in yourself. Be confident. Confidence leads to some great play.

For Outfield: I believe you will have the option of throwing to the cut-off or straight to 2B. While a throw straight to 2B is impressive, an accurate and strong throw to the cut-off is more impressive than an errant throw to 2B. On your first throw, throw to the cut-off...if your first one was good and your arm feels good, try throwing to 2B (only if you are sure you are going to make it). Playing it safe isn't a bad thing, if you are unsure...make your second throw to the cut-off again.

Do long toss 2 times this week to add to your arm strength. Get warmed up at normal distance and then start moving back. Get to the furthest point where you can still make it on a "line" to

your target. Long toss with a huge arc is not doing anything for you but creating bad habits. The second time you do it this week you should try to do it at a further distance. Every person in baseball with any smarts knows that long-toss is the best way to get stronger with your throws. Do it, do it more often. Remember, get better always.

4.4 Be smart!

Dress appropriately. The weather is ever changing so wear layers. You put the time in to get properly warmed up. Don't go cold instantly because you decided to only bring a t-shirt. Stay warm, perform better. You can always take off layers if the weather is comfy.

Stay hydrated. Staying hydrated helps your joints, muscles, and brain perform at their highest levels. Be a smarter player by getting and staying hydrated.

4.5 Hustle, Focus, Work Hard ALWAYS! Coaches are watching more than you just fielding or hitting. Coaches are watching how you present yourself.

When in a group listen to the instructions carefully and follow them. That shows that you can be coached properly and quickly.

Hustle always! Hustle to your spot for each station, every ball, from station to station, on the bases, etc etc etc.

Work hard in each station. Don't lollygag in anything. Show that you are a hard-worker.

Be positive with everyone. Never make fun of another player. If they make an error, lift them up with words of encouragement. You should always want to compete against another player's best effort. Plus, if your group looks good, it makes you look better. If they are struggling, get them to a better level of confidence. This shows leadership and great competition/teamwork.

Lastly, HAVE FUN! This is supposed to be fun. Enjoy it even if you struggle. At the end of the day, you probably did better than you think. This is just the first step to your season. Have fun, enjoy the process because you should go in positive to your spring teams no matter how you do or how you think you did.

Good luck to you all. I wish you all the best, but that takes practice and hard work. If you fail in anything, including your practice time, it only means you are getting better. Get better always, keep it positive, and have fun. Good luck.

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