



Catching

Catching is the act of receiving the thrown, hit or pitched ball in the air. (Firmly held in the athletes hands or glove)

The skill of catching a thrown ball is often difficult for our athletes, as it requires good hand-eye coordination. Sometimes our athletes are afraid of the ball. They may even close their eyes and turn away from the ball.

When teaching athletes how to catch a thrown ball, focus on the following:

Ready Position:

- feet shoulder-width apart with knees slightly bent,
- weight on balls of feet
- shoulders, hips, and knees are square to the target
- Hands start in “neutral” position ~ approximately waist high, thumbs up, palms facing each other
- Receive ball with hands in front of the body, palms facing the ball
- Catch the ball in the middle of the body
- When the ball is coming in above the waist, catch the ball with fingers towards the sky “high to the sky”
- When the ball is coming in below the waist, catch the ball with fingers towards the ground: “down to the ground”





Teaching Points – Assume the correct position for catching the ball below the waist

1. Demonstrate the proper position of hands.
2. Point out the similarity between the below-the-waist catch position in softball and trying to hold water in one's hands.
3. This is the 'Below the waist' catching position.
4. If your athletes are struggling to play catch with each other, there are many progressive steps you can use to lead up to catching a regular softball.
 - a) Use rag balls, rubber balls, or whiffle balls to decrease hardness of a regulation softball.
 - b) Use larger balls such as playground balls, soccer balls, or beach balls. This also helps to encourage the use of two hands.
 - c) Deflate balls slightly to soften impact. This helps diffuse fearful tendencies and decrease chance of hurting fingers.
 - d) Use bean bags to encourage "flexible fingers"
 - e) Start closer together and slowly increase distance between
 - f) If still having difficulty, use balloons to alleviate fear and emphasize "tracking the balloon with your eyes"