



Fielding

Fielding is the ability to stop a hit/batted ball by receiving the ball into the glove, which is traveling on the ground or in the air.

Assume the correct ready-to-field position,

Ready Position:

- Feet shoulder-width apart with knees slightly bent,
- Weight on balls of feet, with balance slightly forward
- Shoulders, hips, and knees are square to the ball
- Bend at knees, not at waist, to lower the body into good fielding position

Advanced Fielding

Double Plays

As softball coaches, we know that game momentum can easily be changed by a double play ball ending a scoring threat. It's very exciting to witness the execution of getting two outs off a single ground ball. The following drills are based on turning the double play from 2nd base to 1st base. Many various double play situations can be implemented into the drill format. Ex. If there are runners on 1st and 2nd, or if bases are loaded, do you want to try to stop the runs from scoring if there are no outs by throwing from home to first?

Part I ~ Shortstop Execution

- On the field: Shortstop, 2nd baseman, 1st baseman
- 2 base runners: Runner at home going to 1st base, and a runner at 1st base going to 2nd base (extra runners nearby to alternate in)
- Coach stands at home plate with bucket of balls.
- The coach will hit ground balls to Shortstop.
- On contact, the base runners will advance to 1st base and 2nd base at full speed.
- The shortstop will execute the double play with the 2nd baseman.
- The 2nd baseman will practice their footwork on catch/throw situation and throwing through the advancing runner.
- REPETITION REPETITION REPETITION!!

Variation: "take-it-yourself-shortstop" Repeat the drill with the Shortstop executing all the parts of the double play: fielding, tagging 2nd base, and throwing the ball to first.

Part II ~ 3rd Baseman Execution

- Same format as above except coach will hit grounders to the 3rd baseman
- The 3rd baseman will execute the double play with the 2nd baseman
- Throws will be from 3rd to 2nd to 1st

Part III ~ 2nd Baseman Execution

- Same format as above except coach will hit grounders to the 2nd baseman
- The 2nd baseman will execute the double play with the shortstop (who will receive the throw at 2nd base *from* the 2nd baseman)
- Throws will be from 2nd to SS to 1st



Part IV ~ 1st Baseman Execution

- Same as above except coach will hit grounders to the 1st baseman
- The 1st baseman will execute the double play with the shortstop
- Throw will be from 1st to 2nd to 1st

Note: The 1st baseman fields the grounder, throws to 2nd, and then goes to 1st to record the second out. If they tag their base first, then the runner going to 2nd, must be tagged out since there is no longer a force play there. A variation of this situation is having the 2nd baseman cover the bag for the 1st baseman.

Part V ~ Pitcher Execution

- Same as above except coach will hit grounders to the Pitcher
- Throw will be from pitcher to 2nd to 1st
- Usually the Shortstop will receive the ball at 2nd base.

Relay Throws

Throwing accurately to the cut-off person is vital for preventing too many runners from advancing/scoring. Proper positioning of the cut-off person is important so appropriate throwing distances of the fielders are gauged correctly. The cut-off person is the key for controlling the defense; proper positioning for receiving throws, deciding when and where to throw, or whether to hold the ball when no play can be made.

NOTE: When playing in the outfield, use the cut-off person for relaying the throw into the infield.

Teaching Points – Relay Throws

1. Diagram relay throws on paper or a whiteboard. Discuss the reason for using relay throws: i.e., to get the ball back into the infield as quickly as possible.
2. If there is to be play at the base, no verbal direction is needed. Shouting any command other than “cut,” may be confusing and misinterpreted.
3. On a very short ball to the outfield, the cut-off person can back up the base. Positioned as a cut-off person, they may be in the way of the throw.
4. Have cut-off person offer a target, with their glove, to the outfielder.
5. On possible plays at home plate, the pitcher or first-baseman would serve as the cut-off person, and the catcher would be the baseman. Be sure to designate which player will be the cut-off person.
6. Note: if the shortstop has the stronger, more accurate throwing arm, he/she could take all outfield relays