



Introduction

The Strike Zone wants to thank you for your commitment to the youth of our community. It takes a special person to coach and the time, patience and all that you have to give is really appreciative. We hope that you enjoy this book and it helps you in your endeavor to make your players be the best that they can be.

Strike Zone Mission Statement

The Strike Zone Program regards each player as the “Most Valuable Player” in each of our programs and realizes that their dedication deserves special recognition. As baseball and softball teachers, we understand how challenging baseball and softball skills can be to master and value the idea that baseball is a game designed principally for enjoyment. Players are provided ample opportunity to develop their skills in a friendly and controlled atmosphere designed to be constructive and encouraging. Key elements in our program include: a disciplined environment; qualified instructors; cooperative learning and an ethic of hard work. Overall, the Strike Zone’s main objective is to offer the very best in baseball and softball training in the Omaha and surrounding areas.

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Hitting



I. Introduction

Hitting is an individual accomplishment and no two hitters hit exactly alike. Each hitter should develop his own style to meet his own physical ability. There is no set pattern or style to follow in order to be a good hitter. However, there are some basic rules and fundamentals, which, if carried out properly, will help a young ball player to be a better hitter. On the other hand, there have been some good hitters who were unorthodox and violated some of the basic rules of hitting. Every young hitter should take notice of his physical abilities and adopt a style of batting which best suits him, and hit in the manner in which he is most successful. It is natural to assume that a little fellow wouldn't swing for the fence like a big, powerfully built player. However, this same little fellow might have tremendous wrists and hit just as many homeruns as the big, strong fellow.

II. The Ideal Hitter

A combination of the ideal hitter would probably find him having these qualities: strength, determination, coordination, confidence, vision, rhythm style, body control, quick hands, and the will to learn and to take advice. He would have a relaxed body and a loose natural arm action. He would blend the five important parts of hitting: bat & grip, stance, stride, swing, and follow through in a smooth, graceful motion. While waiting for the pitch, he would be perfectly relaxed with his feet spread comfortably and the body turned toward the plate. Eyes, hips, and shoulders would be level, and the weight of the body would be distributed almost evenly on both feet. His bat is back and ready. He would watch the ball until it hits the bat. His swing would be a clean, free, crisp motion and the ball would be struck out in front of the plate 1 to 1 ½ feet in front of the body with the full power of the shifting weight behind it. The body follows through in the direction the ball is hit and the bat continues under its own momentum to the rear of the body. At no stage of the swing does the batter's head jerk out of line. He follows the course of the ball from the moment it leaves the pitcher's hand until it has hit the bat and is on its way.

III. Fundamentals of Hitting

A. The Bat & Grip

In selecting your bat, don't go by the weight of the bat, but pick one out that feels good to you. Be sure that it is one you can handle easily. This is very important. The grip of the bat is also important. Take a comfortable grip on the bat any place that feels good to you, either on the end or "choked up." This depends on the type of hitter you are, but swinging from the end with too much bat will cause you to miss many swings, swing late, and swing at bad pitches. With two strikes "choke up" slightly; this will help you get a "piece of the ball" and not strike out. Ted Williams did this. Bat control is very important. The grip should be comfortable and firm, but not tense and tight. If you have a comfortable and firm group, you obtain better coordination and timing. If you grip it too tight, the muscles of the forearms and wrists become tense, causing an undesirable stiffness and preventing a crisp, free swing, and follow through. It destroys the looseness, which is so necessary to the timing, the whip of the wrists, and a good follow through. Your fingers should go around the bat so that the clinched fists point away from the body. The bat should rest in the fingers toward the front of the hand; this keeps the gripping muscles relaxed and makes it possible to snap the wrists in hitting the ball. The bottom hand should be slightly firmer than the top hand. The top hand "throws" the bat head to enable a hitter to hit the ball out front- also puts the bat on the to of the ball, rather than under, which would create an upper-cut. Have complete control of the bat and swing it with authority.

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Hitting Tips

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



B. The Stance

There is no set location of the feet in hitting. You can stand up in front of, even with, back of, away from, or close to the plate, as long as you use the position which is best suited to you. Whichever stance you use, you must have plate coverage. Make sure you can swing freely and that you are in position that will enable you to reach with the bat any ball that is pitched in the strike zone. Learn the strike zone and only hit strikes. The feet should be spread comfortably and the body turned toward the plate. Hips and shoulders, head and eyes, should be level, and the weight of the body should be distributed almost evenly over both feet. Hold the hands and the bat high and keep arms away from the body. Holding the bat low or the bat well back with the hands clear of the body, making possible a crisp, clean, free swing. The knees should be bent slightly to avoid stiffness, and the knees bent to provide a slight crouch. The front foot should be planted firmly and the back foot remains in contact with the ground during the swing, insuring maximum power.

C. The Stride

Some hitters stand with feet far apart and take a short stride. Others stand with feet close together and take a long stride. A short stride is ideal, because you are not likely to be fooled on a pitch and you can wait longer to swing. Don't over stride. This causes your weight to shift to the front foot too soon and takes your bat out of the hitting position. It takes away your power and throws your timing off. Don't step and hit, but step to hit. When taking your stride, make it easy and firm so the body maintains balance. Contact the ball simultaneously with the finish of the stride, never before, never after. The arms lag slightly behind the stride. The power to hit the ball comes with the shifting of the weight from the back foot to the front foot coordinated with the swing. Normally, the step should be toward the pitcher, keeping the head, front shoulder, and front hip in a "cocked" position. Opening the front shoulder and hip before the swing will remove the hands and bat from the normal hitting position, causing the hitter to feel for the ball and not have a full, natural swing. Don't turn your head; keep it down on the ball. Don't move your head while batting. Someone once said, "A motionless head with a watchful eye is one of the greatest assets of any hitter." Keep your eye on the ball at all times. Watch the ball from the moment the pitcher takes position and watch it all the way until it makes contact with the bat.

D. The Swing

While awaiting the pitch, the ideal way is to cut to a minimum all unnecessary motion. Some hitters prefer to swing the bat back and forth. Sometimes this is good for the hitter because it relaxes him, but too much bat wiggling may hurt the timing and may add a hitch, which is a short back swing or down swing, before the bat is brought forward. Be ready to hit by having the bat in a hitting position when the pitcher rears back to pitch. The normal swing of the bat should be level with the ground. However, on high pitches a "chop stroke" is suggested. This is a slight down swing, which puts the bat on top of the ball and enables the hitter to be on top of the ball instead of underneath it. This stroke comes from an emphasis on the top hand and enables the hitter to hit more line drives, rather than "popping up" the high pitch. Be quick with the hands! The hands do the hitting for you. Quick hands and wrists enable a hitter to hit the ball out front and insures more power. Meet the ball" out in front." You must step into the pitch so that you meet the ball before it passes over the plate. In stepping into the pitch, transfer your weight from your rear leg to your front leg-putting power and forward movement into your bat. Brace your forward leg as your weight shifts to it. Drive the ball with a firm pivot of your rear hip without lifting your rear foot off the ground.

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Hitting Tips

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E. The Follow Through

A good pivot and follow through is necessary. Don't stop or "chop off" your swing. After contact with the ball is made, the bat should continue its swing to the back of the hitter, thus completing approximately a 360 degree arc from start of the swing to the finish of the swing. A complete follow through insures power and gives distance to your hits. Pivot sharply at your waist as you swing. Open the front hip quickly and bring your rear hip around so that you have your body weight going into the swing.

F. Conclusion

One of the biggest things in hitting or any phase of baseball is practice. Practice every chance you get and work on your weaknesses. As great as some hitters are, you will find them taking batting drills at every opportunity, notably Ted Williams and Stan Musial. The only short cut to success is work. Good hitters are constantly studying the opposing pitchers, searching for giveaway actions of the pitcher, which reveal the type of pitch he will throw. They also study the pitcher's pattern of thought, knowing the different type of pitches he throws and when he likes to throw them. Application can accomplish a great deal, correct mistakes, and eliminate faults. The good hitter can become better and the weak one more effective. You have to work, work, and work. The greatest essentials of a successful hitter are eyes, coordination, and the will to learn. Size isn't important. Comparatively small men hit the ball as far and as good as the biggest men in the game. Obtain a thorough knowledge about your hitting. Think about what you do when you hit a ball good- also when you do not hit a pitch good. Be confident, aggressive, and determined at the plate. Bear down 100% every pitch and every time at the plate.

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Hitting Tips

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Set-up Stance:

- Weight evenly distributed with knees slightly bent.
- Hips level, slightly bent at the waist.
- Back elbow down, 4-5" from side.
- Hands over back foot.
- Grip strength in bottom three fingers of each hand.
- Middle knuckles close to being aligned.

Preliminary Movement to Launch Position:

- At launch position, the stride foot is down while the hands are over or behind the back foot, inside the toe line, and approximately shoulder height.
- Start stride and movement to launch position at pitcher's release.
- Weight shift more toward the back foot.
- The stride is a short, controlled step toward the pitcher, with the toe closed and the heel down.
- Knees slightly bent and inside the feet.
- Hips and shoulders remain level.
- Eyes are level and square to the pitcher.
- Hands slide back and front shoulder closes slightly.
- Bat barrel behind head.

Approach and Release- This Phase Never Flows into (2):

- Back foot and knee rotates to contact point.
- Front foot remains closed.
- Weight shifts toward pitcher.
- Wrists level with Ulnar Flexion.
- Hands take a direct path from the launch position to contact.
- Arms extend to contact point.
- Inside pitches—Out in front
- Middle pitches—Opposite front hip
- Outside pitches—Middle of body
- Rear elbow down
- Hands behind bat with rear palm up.
- Head down and track ball in.

Follow Through:

- Weight transfer and body rotation forces rollover and opening of foot.
- Head tilted toward plate.
- Arms/Hands roll over after contact.
- Top hand may release after contact.

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FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



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Stance



Stride



Knob to the Ball



Contact



Extension



Follow Through



8

Practice the way you play games... All go, no quit

Stance



Stride



Knob to the Ball



Contact



Extension



Follow Through



8

Practice the way you play games... All go, no quit

Bunting Tips

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- Move forward in the batter's box.
- Pivot/Turn so that your shoulders and toes face the pitcher. Knees are bent.
- Slide your hands up the bat for better control. Place the bat in front of you at the top of the strike zone. The bat should be at an angle with the barrel up.
- Use your knees to bunt the low pitch – take the bat and the body down to the ball. Don't dip the bat if the pitch is down – use the knees.
- Catch the ball on the head of the bat. Bunt the ball first, then run. Remember, it is a sacrifice bunt.
- Concentrate and do the job to help your team. Take pride in being able to get the job done...
- Use these ideas when you come to The Strike Zone to hit in the cages. You need to practice these things to improve your game and ability. Make the most of your time, and work on your weaknesses to improve.

Remember:

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“DON'T WISH IT WOULD BE EASIER –
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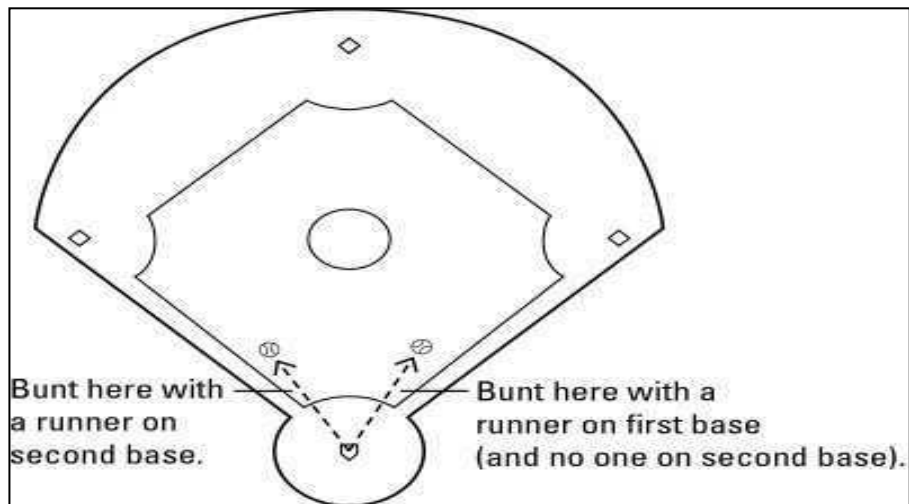
Types Of Bunts

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Sacrificed Bunt

With the *sacrifice bunt*, the bunter advances the base runners while giving up a chance for a base hit. With a runner on first, bunt toward the area between the mound and the first baseman. With a runner on second or runners on first and second, bunt toward the third baseman to bring him off the bag (see Figure 4).



Squeeze Play

Running the squeeze play: The *squeeze play* is a sacrifice bunt with a runner on third base. If a manager calls for a squeeze play, it's usually during the later innings of a close game with less than two outs.

Safety Squeeze:

Running the safety squeeze: On a *safety squeeze*, the runner breaks for home only after you drop your bunt on the infield. If the bunt isn't good, the runner stays at third. As the bunter, your job is to push the ball away from the pitcher and towards first or third base.

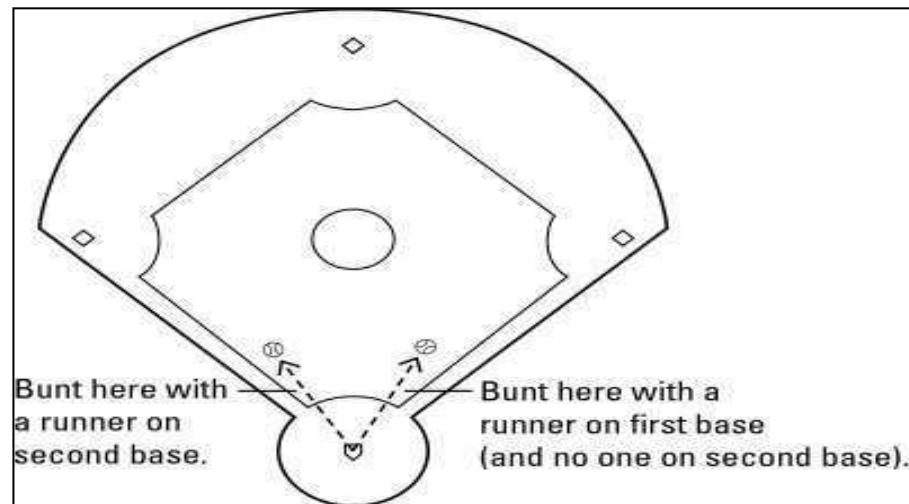
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Types Of Bunts

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Suicide Squeeze

Running the suicide squeeze: The *suicide squeeze* is a riskier play. It requires the runner to dash toward home plate as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand — he is coming home no matter what kind of bunt you drop! So you can't take the pitch even if it is out of the strike zone. You must bunt the ball somewhere. Don't be too finicky about placement. With the runner bearing down on home, just bunt the ball to the ground in fair territory, and you drive in a run. Even if you bunt it foul with less than two strikes on you, the worst that can happen is the runner gets sent back to third. If you don't make contact with the ball, the catcher has the runner dead at the plate (which is why it's called the suicide squeeze).

Other bunts include:

Drag Bunt

Drag bunting for a hit you delay showing your intention and bunt to the same side you bat, i.e. right-handed batter to third, left-handed batter to first. To execute the drag bunt, shift your weight onto your right foot as you pivot and step toward first base. Hold the bat solidly with its head pointed toward third. Don't pull back the bat or the ball will go foul. You should be moving into your second stride as you make contact with the ball. With your running start, you should beat out the bunt, if it stays fair.

Push Bunt

To push bunt successfully for a hit, you must catch the opposition unaware. This is where the pivot gives you an advantage: It enables you to deceive the infielders longer than the squared-around stance. To bunt for a hit, you should be in motion as the bat makes contact with the ball. You should also grip the bat a little more firmly than you did for the sacrifice.

The purpose of the push bunt, like the drag bunt, is to get a base hit. For right-handed hitters, look for the same situation that left-handed hitters look for when performing a drag bunt. Look to push the bunt past the pitcher toward the second baseman. For left-handed hitters, look for the same situation right-handed hitters look for when laying down a drag bunt. Push the bunt down the third base line.

The push bunt is generally more difficult for a player to master than a drag bunt. Make sure the player is not only a good sacrifice bunter but also a good drag bunter before having them work on the push bunt. For the left-handed hitter, the push bunt is difficult because the instinct is to run during the bunt. This works much better with a drag bunt than with a push bunt. Emphasize laying down the bunt before running. For the right-handed hitter, the push bunt requires the hitter to move the bat towards the ball on contact to provide enough force to push it past the pitcher. A common error is to try and hit the ball too hard.

Types Of Bunts

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Suicide Squeeze

Running the suicide squeeze: The *suicide squeeze* is a riskier play. It requires the runner to dash toward home plate as the ball leaves the pitcher's hand — he is coming home no matter what kind of bunt you drop! So you can't take the pitch even if it is out of the strike zone. You must bunt the ball somewhere. Don't be too finicky about placement. With the runner bearing down on home, just bunt the ball to the ground in fair territory, and you drive in a run. Even if you bunt it foul with less than two strikes on you, the worst that can happen is the runner gets sent back to third. If you don't make contact with the ball, the catcher has the runner dead at the plate (which is why it's called the suicide squeeze).

Other bunts include:

Drag Bunt

Drag bunting for a hit you delay showing your intention and bunt to the same side you bat, i.e. right-handed batter to third, left-handed batter to first. To execute the drag bunt, shift your weight onto your right foot as you pivot and step toward first base. Hold the bat solidly with its head pointed toward third. Don't pull back the bat or the ball will go foul. You should be moving into your second stride as you make contact with the ball. With your running start, you should beat out the bunt, if it stays fair.

Push Bunt

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Offensive Routine

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Go through this routine once with your entire team during pre-season training and follow up as needed throughout the season.

Starting with the bench, tell your players what to look for. Have your entire team sit on the bench when you go over these.

- Watch the pitcher warm up prior to the game.
- Be alert to all play situations so that you will know what to look for in the way of signs and plays when you step into the batter's box.
- Study the pitcher's every move so that you will be prepared to get the proper jump to advance a base.
- Study the qualifications of all your opponents. Do the outfielders on the other team have good throwing arms?
- Let your players know what to look for during the game while sitting on the bench.

It is important to eliminate confusion in the mind of the player and enable him to focus his attention on the proper thing at the proper time.

Next, take all your players to the on-deck circle.

- Know position of the base runners so you can get the mask and bat out of the way in the event of a close play at the plate. Get on the first base side of the plate so the runner can see your signal to stand up or slide. It is important to be in the runner's line of vision since crowd noise may make it impossible for a word sign to be heard.
- Watch the pitcher to check on type of pitches he is throwing. Always be on the lookout for any movements or mannerism by the catcher, pitcher, shortstop, or second baseman that may tip off signs.
- Be aware of possible play situations and be ready to take signs when you get to the batter's box.
- Know the hitter that follows you.

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Next, take your team to the batter's box

- How many outs are there? What is the inning? What is the play situation? Is the infield in? Do we have men on first, second, or third bases, or on all bases?
- Am I going to bunt, hit and run, hit the ball to the right side? Will a fly ball score an important run? What type of pitch do I need to execute the play?
- With all of the above points in mind, next look for the sign. Do not stare at the coach and immediately attempt to execute the play. This is a dead give away and permits opponents to steal your signs. Stay focused on the coach until he finishes giving the signs.
- Run hard on every batted ball from home to first. Make sure you touch first even on plays where you are thrown out; the first baseman may drop the ball.
- Run through first base at least five yards past the bag and slow down gradually to prevent muscle injuries.
- On wild throws to first be aware of the catcher and second baseman backing up the play. Listen for the coach to help you, but be aware of the possibility to take second.
- When the ball is hit to the outfield, make the turn as if every ball is a potential extra base hit.
- Do not make wide sweeping turns but develop the ability to cut the base short, hitting with the inside foot if possible. (Do not alter your stride to hit with the inside foot.)
- On balls to the left side of the infield, help yourself with the turn possibility by glancing to see if the ball has gone through the infield.

Take your team to first base.

- Find the ball. How many outs are there? Is the pitcher on the rubber? Does he have a good move? Where are the outfielders playing the hitter? Will the ball be on his glove hand side or throwing side?
- Stay on the bag while getting the sign.
- What type of lead should be taken? The situation will dictate the aggressiveness of the runner's lead. Run the situation through your mind.
- Know your ability for specific types of leads. Players' leads will be of different distances depending on individual quickness and agility.



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Take your team to second base.

- Assess the situation. The game situation may have changed in regard to number
- of outs and defensive alignment.
- Does this team have any trick pick-off plays? Does the catcher like to throw behind base runners and does he have a strong arm?
- How important is my run? Am I the tying or potential winning run?
- Get the sign from the coach; he might want you to steal third.
- What am I going to do on a short passed ball? Will I be able to take a chance to get to third?
- If first base is not occupied with less than two outs I have to be careful on trying to advance with the ball hit to the left side.

Take your team to third base.

- What is the situation? Is the infield in? Does the coach want me to go on any ground ball or make the ball go through?
- Tag up on all fly balls and line drives to the outfield. What type of fly balls will I have to stay on instead of tagging?
- Make sure I know what to do on the double steal—go or stay. Will the runner breaking for second be holding up? What kind of steal is on—delay or straight?
- With runners on second and third and one out the runners should be advancing on ground balls.



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Five Step Throwing

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Keep hand on top of the ball at all times
- Get throwing elbow as high as possible when throwing
- Point non-throwing shoulder at target every time
- Don't wrap throwing arm behind body
- Concentrate on throwing at partner's chest each time
- Don't drop throwing elbow when throwing
- Grip ball across fat seams – Four seams

STEP 1: FLICK DRILL

- Down on throwing-side knee, glove-side knee extended
- Throwing elbow above shoulder, supported by glove
- Flick with wrist, encouraging good rotation of ball

STEP 2: BACK KNEE, FRONT FOOT UP

- Front leg extended when foot flat on ground
- Keep front shoulder down – don't tilt up
- Back of hand toward partner
- Bring throwing shoulder forward to throw
- Chest over front knee – chin at target

STEP 3: STRIDE LEG – POWER - THROW

- Point front foot directly at partner
- Back of hand toward partner while bringing ball back
- Open hips when throwing
- Turn back foot over on follow-through
- Follow-through low – take throwing shoulder to stride knee – pivot on back foot

Check 5 key areas –

- Front toe pointed in slightly
- Flat back
- Chin up
- Chicken wing front side
- Rotate laces on back foot

STEP 4: SWING BALL UP TO THROWING POSITION

- Swing straight back and away from partner
- Starting power position
- Finish over front knee
- Check 5 key areas listed above

STEP 5: STEP – CATCH – THROW

- Step with throwing foot first
- Catch with two hands
- Throw at target on partner
- Remember important points mentioned above

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THROWING IMAGES



FLICK



CATCH



DOWN



BACK



POWER



THROW



CATCH



DOWN



BACK



POWER



TURN



THROW



STEP TO CATCH



STEP TO POWER



POWER



THROWING IMAGES



FLICK



CATCH



DOWN



BACK



POWER



THROW



CATCH



DOWN



BACK



POWER



TURN



THROW



STEP TO CATCH



STEP TO POWER



POWER

Basic Pitching Mechanics (Wind Up)

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



I. Ready Position

- Both feet on the rubber, toes pointing to throwing arm side about 45 degrees.
- Body relaxed and comfortable
- Throwing hand holding ball in glove, in front of body, stomach & Chest high, with the back of the glove facing home plate.

II. Preliminary Motion

- Glove (stride) foot takes a small step back, the throwing arm (pivot) foot is placed in front of and parallel to the rubber.
- Body remains turned 45 degrees toward throwing side.
- Arms & hands can range from no motion to touching behind the head.
- Head & Eyes maintain contact with the targets.

III. Posting Movement to Balance Point

- Weight shifted to pivot foot while stride knee is lifted to waist height or higher and behind mid-line of body. The strike knee is bent with toes relaxed and pointing down. The pivot knee is slightly bent.
- Hips & shoulders are rotated slightly past the H-2B line. Waist is slightly bend and the shoulders are rounded.
- Hands can be separated at mid-line of the body:
 - ◆ Outside the knee
 - ◆ Over the thigh
 - ◆ Close to the body at the waist

IV. Stride and Movement Home

- The stride knee turns toward home plate and the foot lands on a direct line at home, with the toes slightly closed. The foot should land on the ball or flat.
- Glove arm reaches toward home plate with the thumb rotating down and under. The front shoulder is closed.
- The throwing arm makes a full circle to a point above the shoulder and toward centerfield.
- Head & eyes pick up the target early.

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Basic Pitching Mechanics (Wind Up)

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



V. Uncoiling and Pulling Motion

- The glove hand rotates back to pocket up. The elbow bends & is pulled back toward 2B.
- The throwing arm pulls through to extension with shoulder leading the elbow, the elbow leading the wrist and the wrist leading the ball. The release point is out in front.
- Shoulders & hips open to lead throwing action.
- Waist is bent forward at release, with the chest over the stride leg.
- The stride knee is bent. The pivot foot is rotated over with the heel outside the toe.
- Head & eyes are square and towards the target.

VI. Follow Through

- The throwing arm finishes low and outside the stride leg.
- The glove arm is bent with the elbow behind the back line.
- Shoulders rotate to H-2B line.
- Chest down and over the stride thigh.
- „The stride leg is still bent. The pivot foot lands past the stride foot

Basic Pitching Mechanics (Set Position)

I. Ready Position

- The pivot foot is in front of and parallel to the rubber.
- Feet are relatively square and about 8-12 inches apart.
- The throwing arm is by back leg. The glove can be held at side or in front of the chest. The ball can be in the throwing hand or in the glove.
- Head & eyes turned and facing home plate to receive the signs from the catcher.

II. Preliminary Motion

- Bring the throwing hand into the glove to secure the proper grip.
- Hands should set level with or slightly high than the elbows.
- Hips & shoulders on line with 2B and home.
- Head & eyes check runner(s). Vary the looks and timing.

III. Posting Movement to Balance Point- See Wind Up

IV. Stride and Movement Home- See Wind Up

V. Uncoiling and Pulling Down- See Wind Up

VI. Follow Through- See Wind Up

Basic Pitching Mechanics (Wind Up)

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VI. Follow Through- See Wind Up



Wind up



Stretch



19

Your friends are not more important than your future.



Wind up



Stretch



19

Your friends are not more important than your future.

Pitching: Fastball Grip, Wrist, and Hand Action



FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE

I. Grip

- Position the 1st and 2nd fingers together on/between the narrow part of the seams.
- Bend the ring and little finger to the side and under the ball.
- Place the thumb opposite of the 1st and 2nd fingers with its side in contact with the ball. When possible, bend the thumb under.
- The ball should be gripped as far out in the fingers (usually the last joint) and still allow for control. "Daylight" should show between the ball and pitchers hand.
- Pitchers can experiment with:
 - ◆ Moving the thumb to generate movement on the fastball.
 - ◆ Moving 1st and 2nd finger location to other parts of the ball (like across the narrow or wide seams.)

II. Delivery

All pitchers throw with the same motion and general techniques covered in the basic mechanics section. The differences occur during the action in the forearm, wrist, hand, and fingers.

III. Execution

- As the arm comes forward to the release point, the thumb is towards home plate and the 1st and 2nd fingers are behind the ball.
- Just prior to and at release the 1st and 2nd fingers are on top of the ball and pulling down and through.
- Conceptualize throwing the top of the ball with the 1st and 2nd fingers.
- The wrist flexes and the forearm pronates during the follow through.

4 Seam



2 Seam



20

Don't give into peer pressure.

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2 Seam



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Pitching: Interval Throwing Program from the Mound

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Stage One: Fastballs Only

- Step 1: Interval throwing
15 throws off mound at 50%
- Step 2: Interval throwing
30 throws off mound at 50%
- Step 3: Interval throwing
45 throws off mound at 50%
- Step 4: Interval throwing
60 throws off mound at 50%
- Step 5: Interval throwing
30 throws off mound at 75%
- Step 6: Interval throwing
45 throws off mound at 75%
- Step 7: 45 throws off mound at 75%
- Step 8: 60 throws off mound at 75%

Stage Two: Fastballs Only

- Step 9: 45 throws off mound at 75%
15 throws in batting practice
- Step 10: 45 throws off mound at 75%
30 throws in batting practice
- Step 11: 45 throws off mound at 75%
45 throws in batting practice

Stage Three: Fastballs and Breaking Balls

- Step 12: 30 throws off mound at 75%
15 throws off mound
50 breaking balls
45-60 throws in batting practice (fastballs only)
- Step 13: 30 throws off mound at 75%
30 breaking balls at 75%
30 throws in batting practice
- Step 14: 30 throws off mound at 75%
60-90 throws in batting practice—25% breaking balls
- Step 15: Simulated Game: Progressing by 15 throws per workout

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Recommended Pitch Counts

AGES	MAX. PITCHES / PER GAME	MAX. GAMES / PER WEEK
8 - 10	52	2
11 - 12	68	2
13 - 14	76	2
15 - 16	91	2
17 - 18	106	2

RECOMMENDED AGES FOR LEARNING VARIOUS PITCHES

FASTBALL: ALL
 CHANGE UP: ALL
 CURVE BALL: 14
 KNUCKLEBALL: 15
 SLIDER: 16
 FORKBALL: 16
 SCREWBALL: 17+

AGES	1 DAY REST AFTER	2 DAY REST AFTER	3 DAY REST AFTER	4 DAY REST AFTER
8-10	21	34	43	51
11-12	27	35	55	58
13-14	30	36	56	70
15-16	25	38	62	77
17-18	27	45	62	89



22

Maintain eye contact, it shows maturity and respect.



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22

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Strike Zone Pitching Cycle

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- Station #1** Ground ball to mound---force play at home
Shuffle toss to plate---squeeze play
Cover home on short passed ball
- Station #2** Holding runners---Slide step
- Station #3** Ground balls to first base---Cover first
In between play
- Station #4** Bunts down first---Throw to first
Bunts down third---Throw to third
Ground balls to mound---Throw to first
- Bull Pen** Throwing on side as determined by pitching instructor.

****Rotation for the cycle stations:**

Station #1
Bull Pen
Station #2
Station #3
Station #4

*Change shirts after throwing in bullpen and before reporting to pepper area.

During the cycle, all catchers will be in the bullpen unless listed above on a specific situation.

All position players will be in the batting cage unless listed above on a specific situation.

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Fielding Drills For Pitchers

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



COVERING FIRST BASE:

- Hit ball to first baseman with pitcher covering first.
- In between play—Pitcher calls the play “I got it” if he can make the play. “Take it” if he wants the first baseman to handle the play.
- Double play ball to first baseman. Pitcher goes direct to the bag and takes throw from SS. First baseman will let the pitcher know if he can get back to the bag.

BUNT PLAYS:

- Bunts down first and third with throw to first.
- Bunts back to mound with force at second.
- Bunts down third with force at third.

GROUND BALLS TO MOUND:

- Ground balls with throw to first base.
- Ground balls with throw to second for force.
- Double play balls with throw to second.

SPECIAL SITUATION PLAYS:

- Squeeze bunts to mound; shuffle toss to plate.
- Cover home on short passed ball.
- High choppers off plate with throw to first.

QUICK STEP SEQUENCES:

- Back off
- Throw over to first
- Quick step
- Pitch out
- Hold the ball
- Regular pitch

PICK OFF MOVES:

- Throw to first
 - Man on first
 - Men on first and second or bases loaded
- Throws to second
 - Second baseman covering
 - Shortstop covering

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Pick Off Plays

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Man on second---Pick off with shortstop. Play initiated by pitcher or shortstop with a sign. Pitcher comes set and looks at second base. Shortstop moves in behind the runner and flashes glove before breaking for the bag. Pitcher turns on flash of glove.

- The shortstop must shorten the distance before moving on the runner. Also, give the pitcher a chance to zero in on the shortstop before breaking for the bag.
- Pitcher should come to the set position before looking at the shortstop. Don't swing head to look at shortstop as you are coming to the set.

Man on second---Pick off with second baseman. Play initiated by pitcher or second baseman with a sign. Pitcher comes to set and looks at second base. Turns head to pick up plate and second baseman breaks for the base on the head turn. When pitcher's head hits home he turns to throw to second.

- Timing of head turn is the key to execution. Some pitchers have faster head turns than others. Emphasize the head turn should be a deliberate and steady process.

Runners on first and second or bases loaded---Pick off with first baseman. Play initiated by pitcher or first baseman. Pitcher comes set and checks runner at second base. Pitcher keys off first baseman breaking to bag (RHP). First baseman breaks off LHP's leg pick up.

INSIST THAT PITCHERS AND INFIELDERS PUT ON PICK OFF PLAYS. LET'S GIVE THE CATCHERS A BETTER CHANCE AT THROWING OUT BASE STEALERS BY HOLDING OPPOSING RUNNERS CLOSE.

DEFENSE AGAINST THE DOUBLE STEAL

Three situations to work on: Runners on first and third.

- Throw through to second, shortstop and/or second baseman takes the throw and reads the runner at third.
- Throw back to the pitcher. Pitcher cuts ball off and checks runner at third. React as play develops.
- Throw directly to third. Can be done by directly going to third or faking to second and throwing to third. Throw the ball—do not hold it!

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Rundown Play

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Make the runner commit himself. Most baseball coaches through the years tell players to run an offensive player back to the base he came from. This is not always possible and many times leads to unnecessary throws. Execute rundowns with the least number of throws possible.

- The chase man runs the runner hard and tags him if he can.
- The receiver moves forward and calls for the ball when he determines the runner cannot stop and get away from him.
- Both chaser and receiver should line up on the same side of the runner.
- The key to execution is timing; chaser makes the runner commit and the receiver cuts down the distance.
- Player chasing runner should hold the ball at shoulder level of throwing arm. Once he releases the ball make sure to get out of the runner's way so as not to cause an obstruction.

RUNDOWN SITUATIONS TO WORK ON:

- Pitcher picks off man at first base. Pitcher follows throw to cover first until catcher gets into the play. Catcher must stay home if other bases are occupied. Shortstop should be the receiver from the first baseman in most instances.
- Ground ball to pitcher---Trap man off second. Pitcher cuts runner off from third if possible. Give ball to third baseman if necessary and back up third.
- Man on third---Ground ball to drawn in infield. When runner holds up before reaching home the third baseman must come down the line to shorten the distance. He needs to take the return throw from the catcher quickly to keep the batter-runner from reaching second.

A GOOD OFFENSIVE RUNNER WHO IS TRAPPED BETWEEN BASES WILL TRY AND GAIN TIME FOR HIMSELF AND/OR OTHER RUNNERS BY GETTING IN "NO MAN'S LAND" AND JOCKEYING FOR POSITION. DEFENSIVELY, DO NOT LET HIM DO THIS!

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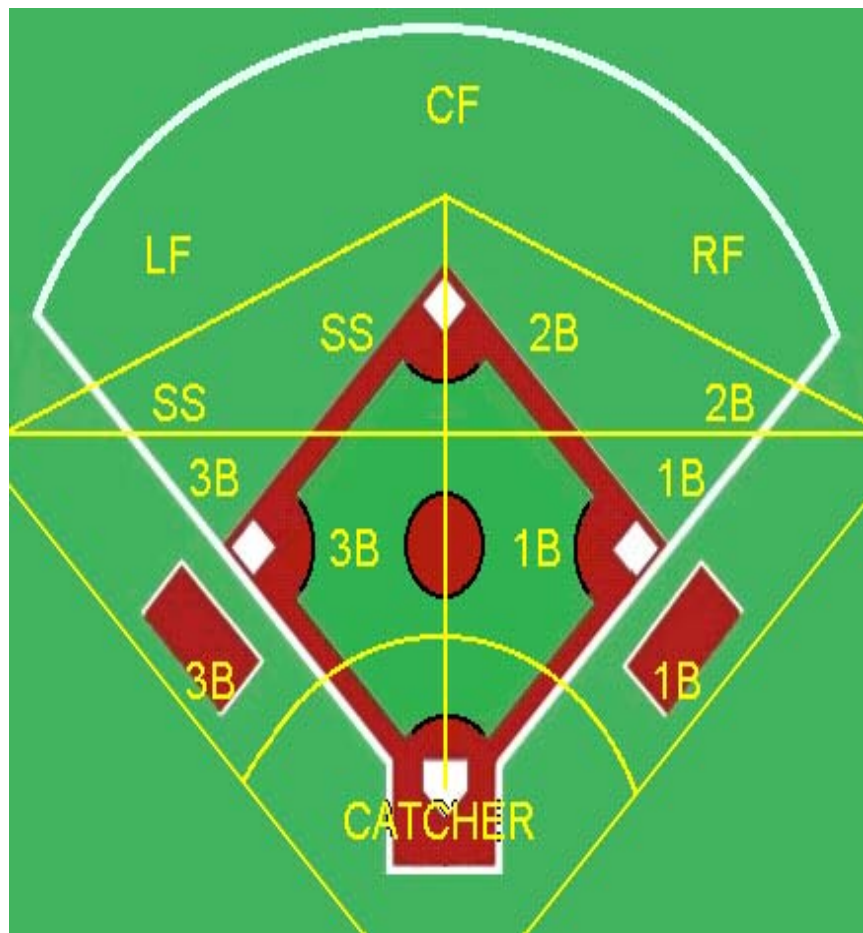
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Pop Fly Priority

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



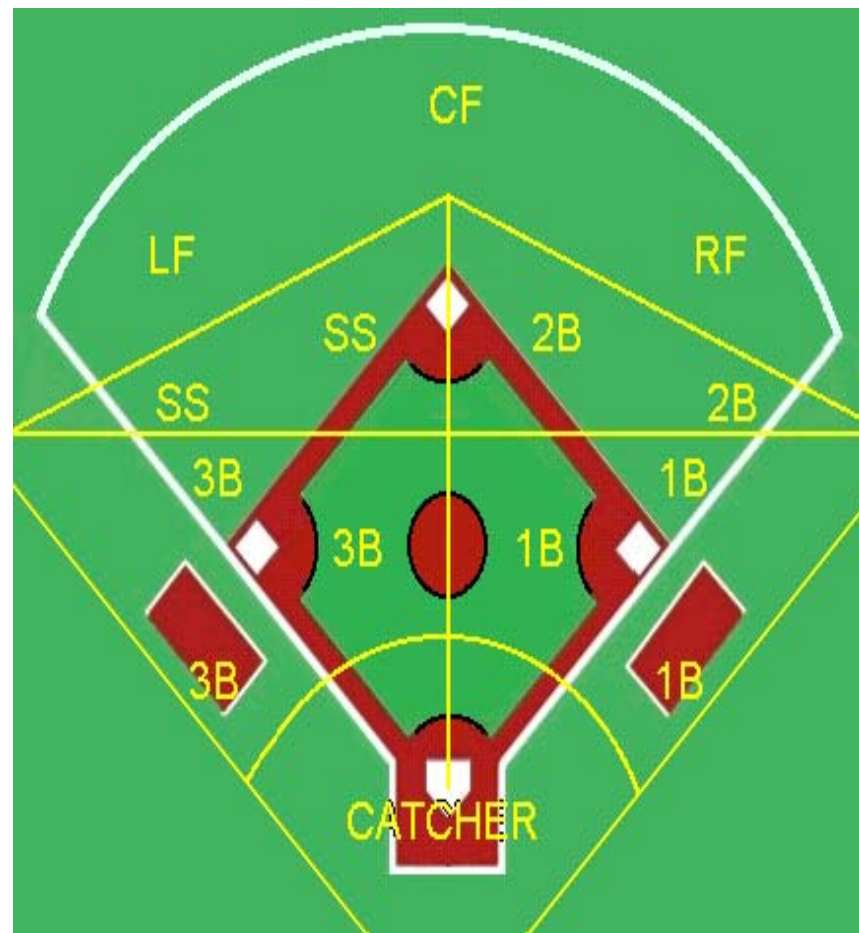
- All outfielders have priority over infielders.
- Shortstops has priority over 3B, 2B, and 1B.
- Second baseball has priority over first baseman.
- Third baseman has priority over the catcher.
- First baseman has priority over the catcher.
- Pitcher should only catch any short Popfly that no other infielder can get to.

27

Love the game.

Pop Fly Priority

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Defense Against Bunt

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Runner on first base
Bunt in order



Pitcher:

Cover middle.
React to the ball-then go
To 3rd base to help cover

Catcher:

Cover area immediately in front
of home plate. Move to cover
third base when third baseman
fields ball and cannot get back
to third base. Call play as it de-
velops

First Baseman:

First base line and ball past
Pitcher (first base side).

Third Baseman:

Cover third base line-if not
fielding ball return to cover
3rd base.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Leftfielder:

Back up second base area.

Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

Rightfielder:

Back up first base.

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Defense Against Bunt

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Runners on first and
Second

Play #1
(Regular)



Pitcher:

Cover third base line.

Catcher:

Cover immediate area in front of home. Call play as it develops.

First Baseman:

Cover first base line.

Second Baseman:

Move in then over to cover first base.

Shortstop:

Keep runner close at second Base, then cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Hold position and cover third base If pitcher can field bunt. Call pitcher off ball if situation warrants.

Leftfielder:

Back up third base.

Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

Rightfielder:

Back up first base.

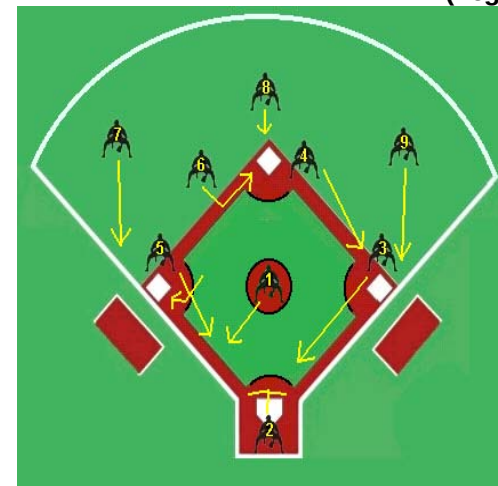
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Leftfielder:

Back up third base.

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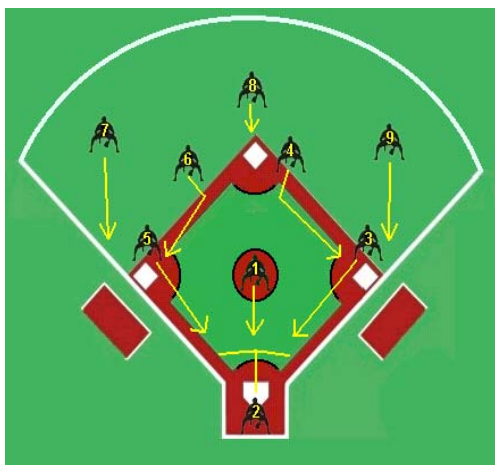
Back up first base.

Defense Against Bunt

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Runners on first and
Second
Play #2
(Trap at 3B)



Pitcher:

Covers straight in toward home plate. Pitcher delivers when shortstop breaks to third base.

Catcher:

Covers immediate area in front of home plate. Call Play as it develops.

First Baseman:

Cover first base line.

Second Baseman:

Move in then over-cover first base

Shortstop:

Move in behind runner; break to cover third base.

Third Baseman:

Charges hard and covers third base line. Break for home as shortstop breaks for third.

Leftfielder:

Back up third base.

Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

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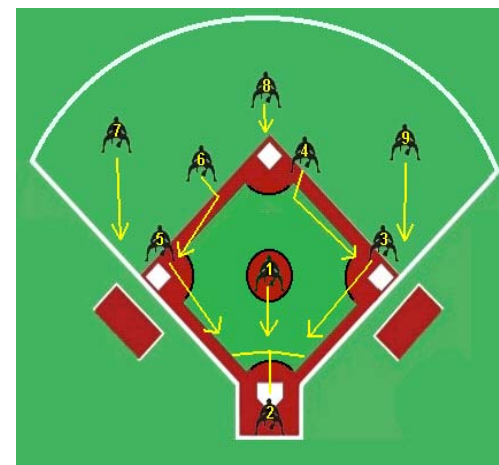
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Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

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Defense Against Bunt: Pick-Off

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Runners on first and
Second

Play #1



Pitcher:

Keys off shortstop's fake
Break to third base.
Pick off throw to second
base.

Shortstop:

Fake runner and break
toward third base.

Third Baseman:

Fake break to home plate
off shortstop's break.

First Baseman:

Charge toward home.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base on pick off.
Key off shortstop's fake break
to third base.

Leftfielder:

Back up second base.

Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

Rightfielder:

Move in toward second base area.

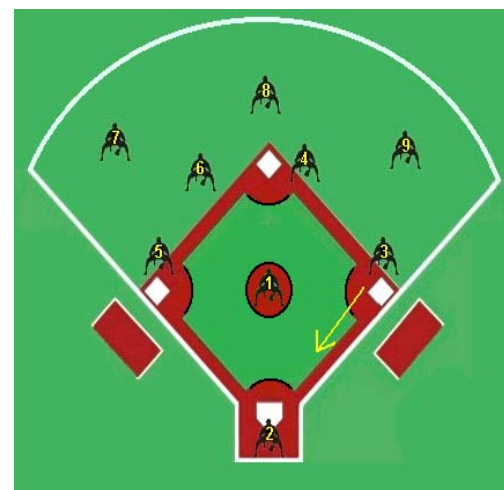
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Rightfielder:

Move in toward second base area.

Sliding

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



It will be satisfactory if every player on the team can slide properly on his or her "strong side". Emphasize to the players to keep their hands and arms up when sliding to avoid jammed hands and elbows.

In sliding drills, be safety conscious. Use wet or damp areas on the grass whenever possible. Players should be in good shape and spikes removed when practicing. The real work in this area is for those who are timid or can't slide at all. Another problem is the player who has had broken bones from sliding. Players with any problems concerning sliding should be worked with on a "one to one" basis.

Those who are skilled in base running, especially those who are base stealers, should be challenged with all types of slides.

Sliding should be taught with pride and enthusiasm, just as all fundamentals are taught. Stress aggressive sliding and good contact in breaking up double plays. A good general rule in breaking up the double play is to slide to the side of second that the ball is hit; usually the pivot man will cross the bag when throwing to first! Sliding is much like hitting—if you can remove the element of fear, it's fun and players will want to slide. Eliminate the negative with good instruction and demonstration. Encourage each player to develop a sincere desire to slide.

Get all of the players into the habit of sliding to break up double plays and sliding on force outs at second. Do not allow them to pull up short or run out into the outfield, as this oversight will pave the way for other bad habits. With the proper lead and break, if the man runs hard the play at second will almost always be close enough to slide.

Straight Slide



Pop-Up Entry



Pop-Up Up



Pop-Up Go



Hook Slide-Outside



Head First



Hook Slide-Inside



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Strike Zone Catching Instruction

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



THROWING

THROWING MECHANICS

- All throws to second should be made overhand.
- Strive to get seams every time (4 Seam Grip)
- When catching the ball, keep throwing hand to mitt. Upon catching the ball, both hands move to right shoulder until the ball is gripped across the seams, then stop the mitt and take throwing hand to throwing position.
- Left shoulder should be pointed toward target.
- Make sure not to long arm the ball.

FOOTWORK

- Weight must be started forward when the ball is caught.
- First step made with right foot and step should be as short as possible for quickness. (Catch-Step-Throw)
- Stride foot must be straight in front of right foot or slightly open to keep from throwing across the body.
- Try to have the same footwork on every pitch.

KEYS TO THROWING RUNNERS OUT

- Quickness and accuracy.
- Developing rhythm in footwork and throwing.
- Anticipate the runner may steal or you won't throw good runners out.
- If the runner gets a real good jump, don't try to be too quick or you will make a lot of wild throws.
- Start at a short distance but lengthen to 200-225 feet to make sure the arm is stretched out. Do this especially in pre-season practice. Good to do before practicing throwing to second.
- Practice getting seams by fingering the ball a lot while sitting on the bench, riding the bus or any idle time. Getting seams is more important than most people realize. Really stress seams. If the catcher doesn't get seams, make sure he really pulls the ball down for a true throw.
- Catchers should practice footwork whenever playing catch. Develop a rhythm.

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RECEIVING PITCH

- To catch the ball properly, the catcher's hand and wrist must be relaxed.
- The ball should be caught as far in front of the catcher as possible without the elbow being locked (give umpire good look). Give a little.
- All fastballs in the strike zone should be caught with fingers up unless the pitcher has a real good sinker. (If Umpire sees the face of glove, he thinks the pitch is a ball.)
- Only pitches caught with fingers down are curve balls at knees and any tough pitch low out of the strike zone.
- The toughest pitches to catch correctly are pitches on corners. Be sure to keep the pitch in the strike zone.
- Low strikes can't be pushed down out of the strike zone or the umpire will call a ball.
- Keep strikes in the strike zone but don't try to pull balls into the strike zone.
- With hinged mitt, must catch one-handed but learn to keep throwing hand close with men on bases.
- Must concentrate to catch ball properly.

DRILLS TO HELP IMPROVE

- Work on receiving the ball in the bullpen and don't get lazy (best practice).
- Concentrate on catching the ball properly during batting practice. Try not to catch more than ½ hour of batting practice without getting relief. Batting practice is a good place to develop bad habits.
- Have catcher catch pitching machine with no one hitting (especially beginners.)

MANAGERS AND COACHES MUST STAY ON CATCHERS TO NOT ONLY CATCH THE BALL PROPERLY BUT TO CATCH EVERY PITCH. IF CATCHER CONSTANTLY DROPS OR MISSES PITCHES, IT IS ONE

OF THREE THINGS:

HE IS LAZY.

LACK OF CONCENTRATION.

HANDS AND WRISTS NOT RELAXED.

*Third reason happens to a lot of young catchers.

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BLOCKING BALL

- Most important thing is to anticipate ball in dirt, men on base.
- Go down to ground with both knees at same time (If possible)
- Body should be slightly bent forward from waist.
- Chin tucked in to protect throat.
- Mitt should be on ground protecting hole between legs.
- Let ball hit chest protector instead of trying to catch.
- Must have body relaxed so ball doesn't bounce too far away after hitting protector.
- Balls to side, catcher must work up some.
- Curve balls in dirt – skip back in opposite direction from break.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

- Make sure anticipating ball in dirt. ***MOST IMPORTANT***
- If ball hitting arms, often not bent from waist.
- Balls hitting protector and going to side, catcher not keeping shoulders square or
- flinching just before ball hitting him.
- Some want catcher to block ball when no one on base but often impossible because
- catching stance is different when no one on base.



BLOCKING BALL

- Most important thing is to anticipate ball in dirt, men on base.
- Go down to ground with both knees at same time (If possible)
- Body should be slightly bent forward from waist.
- Chin tucked in to protect throat.
- Mitt should be on ground protecting hole between legs.
- Let ball hit chest protector instead of trying to catch.
- Must have body relaxed so ball doesn't bounce too far away after hitting protector.
- Balls to side, catcher must work up some.
- Curve balls in dirt – skip back in opposite direction from break.

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Strike Zone Catching

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



The general opinion of many people is that the catcher's credentials for his position must first of all include, "guts." This is of course very true, but there are many more responsibilities that a catcher has besides that of catching the pitch and returning it to the pitcher. He must be able to be a fielder of ground balls, pop ups, wild pitches, and a decision maker. He must also:

1. Give a steady target.
2. Receive pitch out in front of you. Catch ball as close to the plate as possible.
3. Get set and don't bob up and down. Ump gets cut off.
4. Solid throws back to the pitcher.
5. Hide your signs—change signs with men on base.
6. Know your pitcher, his strengths and weaknesses.
7. Bring glove up to shoulder when throwing.
8. Figure pop flies to hit you in the nose.
9. Pitch strength against strength, not weakness against weakness in tight situations.
10. Catcher calls plays that are out in front of him.
11. You must take charge of your pitcher and the game.
12. With men on base, don't backhand or reach for the ball. Get your whole body in front of every pitch.
13. Try to catch the latter part of a pitcher's pre-game warm up.
14. Give signals well back in the crotch. Your right leg hides signs from first base coach and your glove hides signs from third base coach.
15. Find out which pitch is working best early.
16. Watch the hitters position in the box and call your pitches accordingly.
17. Receive each pitch from the same position.
18. If your pitcher is wild or exceptionally fast, use a wider stance.
19. One of your chief functions is a target. You should be as still as possible until the pitcher throws.
20. Remember you are the one to control how fast your pitcher works.
21. Step in the direction of a bad ball with the foot nearest the ball. Move forward as well as to the side on an outside pitch particularly with men on base, you can do this since the batter is not in the way and it will save time in throwing to get a runner.
22. Go down on both knees (left leg first) on a low pitch; move forward to shorten the hop. If a runner is stealing, you must scoop ball up and throw instead of getting down on your knees.
23. On an inside pitch (right hand batter and men on base) use a hop, replacing the left foot with the right.
24. Catch high pitches from above—bring them down.

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Strike Zone Catching

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25. Catch high pitches with a minimum of body raising—don't block the umpire's vision.
26. The fingers of right hand should never point toward the pitcher when receiving the ball. Closing the fist will also help to prevent injuries.
27. Toss mask away from pop fly. Remember, pop flies drift back toward the infield unless wind is blowing opposite direction.
28. On fly ball to your rear, always position yourself with your back toward the infield to allow for drift.
29. A right hand batter will always foul an outside pitch to your right, an inside pitch to your left. The opposite applies to left handed batters.
30. Run the ball back into the infield after catching a foul ball with men on base.
31. Stay as close to the batter as possible with men on base (about arms length away).
32. Take only one step in throwing to a base unless it is a bad pitch. On an inside pitch, use your little hop of replacing left foot with right and don't be afraid to move the batter out of your way with your left shoulder, head or face.
33. Throw the ball directly to base chest high.
34. Always put on a play with an infielder when signaling for a pitch out.
35. Never make a random throw to a base.
36. Use your hop motion by replacing left foot with right, pivot on right foot, and step with left when you call for a pitchout to left hand batter.
37. Always make your throw to third on the inside of the diamond. The pickoff with a man on third should be automatic on a missed swing. You must let your third baseman know this at the start of the season.
38. Best time for pitchouts is when there are two outs. Pitchouts should always be outside pitches.
39. Correct way to cover home on throws from left or right field.
40. Block the plate when you have the ball. You can't block plate without the ball.
41. Use a pitchout for your pickoff attempts and get a return sign from the infielder who is to cover the bag.
42. When tagging a runner at home, drop your right knee in front of home plate and have back of glove toward runner's foot. Have ball in glove using both hands.
43. When fielding a bunt or topped ball down the third base line, face towards first base in position to throw before picking up the ball. Get the glove in front of the ball. Use both hands.
44. Cover third on a bunt with a runner on first if the third baseman fields the bunt.
45. If a bunt attempt is missed, don't be afraid to call for pitchout on next pitch.
46. On a bad throw or bounce, especially with an important run on base, run up to meet the ball and keep the other runner or runners from advancing.
47. Back up all throws to first base with no one on base or runner on third who is scoring and is not played on. Get as deep as you can to back up throws.

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FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



48. Remember that championship teams must have a good catcher. You must be a take-charge man and a real hustler.
49. Picking runners off base—use a particular sign.
50. Remember that any ball you catch above your wrist is considered only a trap, and not a true catch. (This is off a fouled tip or missed third strike.)
51. On force out at home, wait for the ball on the third base side and step on home plate with your right foot, then step toward first with the left foot and throw. On close force outs and bad throws, you may have to vary this procedure.
52. Keep your body square to diamond on low pitches as to prevent ball from sliding off your body and going deep.
53. On a pitchout with a right-handed batter, you should move your left foot towards the middle of the back line of the left hand batters box. As the left foot lands the ball is caught and a quick jab step is implemented creating momentum towards second.
54. With a runner caught between third and home, the catcher should run the runner toward third and one throw should get the runner.
55. Yell “relay, relay” if you want the cut off man to relay the ball. Yell nothing if you want the throw to the plate to get to you.
56. If only one runner is on base or if lead runner stops between bases, you should run directly at the runner.
57. To show you how close you can get to the batter, you can reach out with your glove arm until you are 36 inches from his hip.
58. Try to throw with your fingers across the seams.
59. On balls that get by you and runner on third, you should plant your right foot at the right side of the ball and make a quick knee-high throw to your pitcher. It can be underhand, sidearm, or overhand as long as on target.
60. On balls to catcher's right that are in the dirt, you must drop your left knee, chest perpendicular to the path of the ball with the face of the glove and palm of the hand at 90 degree angle to the dirt.
61. On balls to your left the procedure is the same as above except that the right knee is down.
62. On balls that hit directly in front of the catcher, the catcher should drop both knees to the ground.



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STATIONARY



PRIMARY



ONE KNEE POWER



FIELDING BUNT



SIGNAL



SECONDARY



BLOCK POSITION



CATCHERS POWER



STATIONARY



PRIMARY



ONE KNEE POWER



FIELDING BUNT



SIGNAL



SECONDARY



BLOCK POSITION



CATCHERS POWER



SZ Outfield Play Instruction

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



STANCE

- Feet squared toward plate.
- Weight on balls of feet.
- Hands off knees as ball nears strike zone.
- Knees bent and ready to go in any direction.
- Concentrate on strike zone and watch ball off bat to get a "jump on ball."

WARMING UP ARM

- Grip the ball across the seams.
- Throw overhand.
- Use a target when playing catch.
- Stretch out distance of throw as you start to get loose.
- Outfielders should try to stretch the arm out and get the ball to carry.

It is important to prepare the arm for throwing long distances

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Throwing Fundamentals

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



THROWING FUNDAMENTALS

- Grip ball across the seams.
- Reach back and throw overhand.
- HIT THE CUT-OFF MAN. Many big innings are the result of missing the cut-off man.
- On cut-offs and relays, it is important to hit infielder on his glove side about shoulder high so he can turn and throw more easily.
 - In a relay situation, it is better to throw too high than too low to the relay man because we have a trailer to back him up.
 - In a cut-off situation, it is better to throw too low than too high so the throw can be cut if necessary.
- The farther distance an outfielder has to throw, the more momentum he needs. He can gain this momentum by using a crow-hop. The longer the throw is, the bigger the crow-hop. The crow-hop should be more forward toward the target rather than high in the air.

ROUTINE GROUND BALL (with no one on base)

- Break hard on contact to charge ball and break down with short steps to get under control.
- Round the ball moving toward second base.
- Line up ball in center of body.
- Stay off the knee.
- Bend knees, use two hands and anticipate the ball to stay low.
- If ball is bobbled, pick it up with bare hand.

ROUTINE FLY BALL

- Get to the ball as soon as possible and avoid "drifting" or "timing" the ball.
- Round the ball moving toward the infield.
- Get into position to catch ball on throwing side, shoulder high, moving in as making catch with two hands.

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FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



GOING BACK ON FLY BALL

Two methods

- Drop step straight back, turn and go for ball. Cross over and round ball as going back.
- Most important thing on this play is to get a good jump on ball using method that is the most natural.
- Keep your eye on the ball as much as possible.

POINTS FOR OUTFIELDERS

- Round the ball whenever possible.
- Get to the ball as soon as possible and avoid "drifting" under fly balls.
- Shade toward alleys because there are more balls hit in gaps than down lines.
- Be aware of where other outfielders are playing as well as infielders.
- Anticipate that every pitch will be hit to you.
- Back up the bases.
- Back up infielders on ground balls WHEN THE BALL IS HIT, not after it is missed. Anticipate infielders missing ground ball.
- On throws to bases, always KEEP THE BALL LOW. HIT THE CUTOFF MAN!
- Centerfielder has priority on fly balls.
- Call infielders off fly balls that you can get to under control.
- Be aware of the condition of field you are on.
- Check wind and sun regularly.

GET AS MANY FLY BALLS AS POSSIBLE OFF THE
BAT IN BATTING PRACTICE.

POSITION PLAY

- Play deeper with two outs, no one on base. Keep the hitter from scoring position.
- Be aware of tying and winning runs at plate.
- Play deeper with runner on 1st base, two outs. Keep ball from going over your head for RBI.
- Play deep with big lead to avoid big innings.
- Know the stuff of your pitcher on a particular day and shade the hitter accordingly.

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FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- Remember that most left-handed hitters DO NOT PULL left-handed pitchers.
- Overplay elements such as sun and wind.
- With runner on 3rd base, bottom of 9th inning, less than two outs
PLAY CLOSE ENOUGH TO THROW RUNNER OUT ON FLY BALL.
 - Anything hit over your head will end the game anyway.

FIELDING MECHANICS (to throw runner out)

- Break hard and fast to get to the ball quickly.
- Round the ball moving toward base.
- Left foot (for right-handed thrower) in front when fielding ball.
- Field ball with one hand slightly in front of body and inside of left foot. (For RH thrower)
- Bend left leg and watch ball into glove (anticipate ball to stay low).
- Push off with left foot after fielding ball and crow-hop to right foot to build momentum.
- At the same time, take ball out of glove and get into throwing position.
- Momentum is more forward toward target than up in the air. (Try to eliminate high crow-hop on this play.)
- Outfielders can get rid of ball with two steps and save valuable time.

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Drills

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



DROP STEP DRILL

One coach & outfielder group. Outfielder faces coach in ready position.

- Coach points over either shoulder, outfielder drop steps according to which shoulder and sprints out to full speed. Coach throws the ball, outfielder catches the ball, gathers himself quickly to a throwing position, and throws the ball back in.
- Coach then goes to pointing directly over head, player drop steps to the glove side and does same as above.

COMMUNICATION DRILL

Place two outfielders approximately 60-75 feet apart in 2 Groups

- (Designate one group as centerfielder).
- Hit fly ball between them.
- Centerfielder has priority. Players switch lines after each turn.
- PURPOSE: Pre-season drill to give players practice at calling for fly balls and also practicing at catching ball in throwing position.

FENCE DRILL (Fly Balls)

Hit outfielder high fly balls by fence.

- PURPOSE: Gives player practice at playing fence.
- Has got to get to fence as soon as possible
- PREGAME – Outfielders should take off on a sprint toward the warning track. They should then count the steps from the time they hit the track
- to the fence. This tells them how many steps they have to work with
- when chasing down a ball in a game.

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Drills

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FLY BALL DRILL

SAME AS DURING INFIELD. Have outfielders in centerfield and have fungo down foul line between foul pole and 1st base.

- Have one outfielder in position and others to the side.
- Give player practice on balls hit in every direction.
- Give player practice on rounding ball and getting into throwing position.
- Helps when playing at an unfamiliar ballpark. Gets player more familiar with surface.
- Try to hit line drives directly at outfielders and give them practice on balls in every direction.
- Outfielders have a tendency to get too deep in this situation. Remind them to move in so they are not too deep.

BALL ON WARNING TRACK (use as drill)

HIT OR THROW BALL AGAINST OUTFIELD FENCE.

- Run hard to get to ball quickly.
- Round the ball to get body in position as approaching ball.
- Break down with short steps to get under control to pick up ball.
- Center body over ball whenever possible.
- On ball close to or against fence, plant the right foot (for right-handed thrower) 3-4 inches from ball to pick it up.
- Use two hands and watch BALL into glove as picking it up.
- Crow-hop while finding relay man and hit him on glove side shoulder-high.

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Outfielders

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



1. Don't hold the ball in the outfield. After catching the ball get rid of it quickly.
2. Make good, low, hard throws to the cut-off man, and also into the bases.
3. Don't make unnecessary or foolish throws. When you throw behind the runner, you are asking for trouble.
4. Make sure you back up all plays.
5. Call off all infielders on all pop flies when you think you can make the catch.
6. In the late innings with your team leading, play deep to help eliminate the possibility of the extra base hit. With two outs and no one on or runner on 1st base, play deep to prevent extra bases and runner from scoring.
7. Before each game, study how the balls bounce off the wall and travel the ground.
8. Know what field or fields require sunglasses. Practice using the glasses whenever possible.
9. Take a note of the wind and how much bearing it will have on fly balls hit your way.
10. Always hustle to and from your position.
11. Run on the balls of your feet when chasing fly balls, this will keep the ball from appearing to bounce in the air.
12. Get rid of all caught fly balls quickly (1 ½ steps). Catch the ball with glove hand foot forward, step on to the other foot to throw.
13. When possible, on all routine fly balls, make the throw all the way to the base so that you are practicing throwing to the base.
14. On base hits to any field, with tying run at the plate and runners on base, and it is late in the game...throw the ball to second base to keep the tying run from getting into scoring position.
15. The center fielder is the take charge outfielder; he should take all fly balls he can reach with reasonable ease.
16. Expect every pitched ball to be hit to you. Keep your weight on the balls of your feet, so you are ready to move every way.
17. Watch your dugout for any change of positioning given by the coach.
18. Always think ahead, and know where you are to throw the ball when it is hit to you.
19. On balls hit over your head, get back to the wall as quickly as possible. Once the wall or fence is located, the fielder no longer has to worry about hitting the fence or wall.
20. Get to the area of the fly balls quickly to help eliminate misjudgment on errors.
21. Get to all fly balls in a straight line. Don't circle to the ball, unless it is a high fly and you are getting in position to make a throw.

Outfielders

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



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Outfielders

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 22. With men on base, watch for the pitcher and catcher trying to pick-off runners, so you will anticipate backing up the play.
- 23. Use voice commands on fly balls. This will cut down the possibility of collisions and mix ups in the outfield.
- 24. If the batter check swings, charge towards the infield, if contact is made the ball should not carry very far.
- 25. The center fielder takes the inside track on all balls heading into the alleys. The center fielder takes the outside track on all balls hit in alleys to the opposite field. This allows for better outfield coordination and will reduce collisions in the outfield.

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Outfielder Play: Special Situations

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



I. Sunball

Perform proper fly ball mechanics—see outfield—Fielding Flyballs/Groundballs.
Sunglasses should be flipped down after the ball is picked up off the bat and before it reaches its peak.
Extend the glove above the head and block the sun.
Sight the ball with line of vision under or to the side of the glove.
If the ball disappears, keep the glove in the sun. Bend knees and sight underneath until ball reappears.

II. Extra Base Hit- Ball on the Ground

Approach and step over the ball with the throwing foot.
Pick up the ball with the throwing hand- use the glove as backstop if the ball is still moving.
The chest is directly over the ball.
Find the relay man and throw accurately to him.

III. Flyballs at the Fence

Check width of the warning track compared with stride before the game.
When possible, run to the fence and come back to the ball.
Find the fence with the throwing hand, if possible.
The off fielder yells loudly either "plenty of room", if no contact with the fence is anticipated, or "fence" at three strides from the fence.
Backing away from the fence is made at a minimum of ten feet from the fence, farther away if the fence is brick or wood.
Utilize proper fly ball fielding mechanics.

IV. Communication

Center fielder is always in charge.
Outfielders have the right of way over the infielders.
The outfielder going towards the throw has the right of way over the outfielder going away from the throw.
The outfielder taking the ball calls early and loudly "Ball, ball, ball."
The outfielder closest to the play calls loudly "Yours, yours, yours!" and continues to back up the other outfielder.
The back up is at least 15 feet behind the other outfielder.
Always wait for "ball" call before calling "yours."

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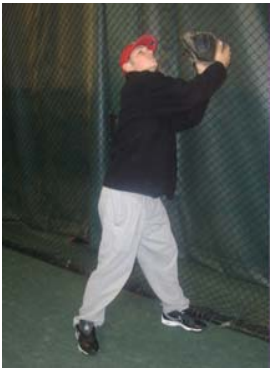
Routine Ground Ball



Do or Die



Drop Step Left



Drop Step Right



Routine Ground Ball



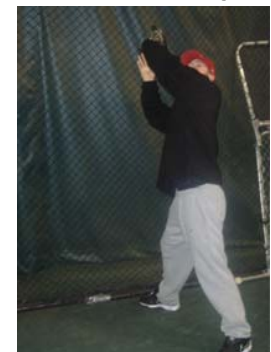
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Drop Step Left



Drop Step Right



Developing Infielders

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



CATCH

- Insist on your infielders playing good catch
- Good catch (90 ft.) to long catch (125 to 150 ft.)
- Develop quickness in your players' feet and hands by playing quick catch
- Play catch on the heel of the glove to force you to watch the ball
- Play catch with board gloves
- Catch with thumbs parallel
- 4-Corner & Quick Catch Drill develop footwork and hands

READY POSITION

- Feet are shoulder width apart – not too wide
- Feet are parallel
- Hands relaxed – glove open
- Middle infielders in athletic position – not too low – must be able to move easily in all 4 directions
- 1B & 3B – lower than middle infielders because ball gets to them faster

FIELDING POSITION

- Feet are wider than shoulder width apart
- Knees bent – back parallel to the ground
- Reach with glove out front – glove flat on the ground
- Field the ball just left of the center of the body

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Developing Infielders

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE

APPROACHING THE BALL INTO A THROW

Work the ball off the left shoulder during your approach
Body is lowered as you close on the ball
Finish with a Right-Left-Field (Head Down, Stay Down)
Come up to a Right-Left Throw
Push off with the left foot – Cut down distance on your throw

FIELDING DRILLS

Short hop and back hands
Circle drill work & double play work using underhand toss and backhand flip
Middle infielder pivots and feeds (calling inside & outside)
Four-corner pivot drills (clockwise & counter-clockwise)
Pivots for 2nd baseman
 Left foot on base & come across with right foot
 Left foot on base & back off base with right foot
 Left foot on base & right foot on outfield side of the base
Plant and throw
Four-corner 2nd baseman
 Get ball out of the glove
 No fake throws
 Receiver goes to same side as the thrower (inside to inside; outside to outside)
 Receiver yells "Ball" and steps forward for the ball
 Short, quick throws
1st baseman—work on balls in the dirt
1st baseman—communication with pitchers on bunts and ground balls
1st baseman—pop-ups between 1st base and home plate
3rd baseman—slow rollers (circle the ball and throw off the right foot)
3rd baseman—communication with pitchers on bunts and pop-ups
3rd baseman—plays to the left



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FIELDING POSITION



SLOW ROLLER



POWER POSITION



BACK-HANDER



THROW-ON-RUN



52

Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.



FIELDING POSITION



SLOW ROLLER



POWER POSITION



BACK-HANDER



THROW-ON-RUN



52

Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.



Baserunning Instruction

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE

Base running is a combination of many factors: knowledge, anticipation, aggressiveness, speed, and practice. However, a common misconception is that a player must be a fast runner to be a good base runner. A runner with average speed can become an excellent base runner with hard work.

There are three important phases of base running, which we want to emphasize in our teaching procedure. Running on a batted ball from the batter's box, after a player becomes a base runner and stealing bases.

Base running is a big part of our total offense. Give the runners the ways and means to improve that part of their game. Lecture is important but it is the least effective means of teaching. Demonstration and practice are more important than achieved in the actual game under pressure. Encourage the players to use the methods and techniques in the game situation. Point out mental and physical mistakes and compliment heads up and aggressive base running.

The information below represents an overall view of what is a sound and progressive base running program.

In the dugout – Base running starts here. Players should get in the habit of watching the defensive players' arms during infield practice. They should know all strengths and weaknesses of the opponent. During the game, have them watch the pitcher closely, from both the wind-up and stretch positions. Talk about his moves on the bench. If one man picks up something, pass it on. Observation of all phases is vital; encourage it.

On-deck circle – After the player gets loose, get him to think about the opponent's strengths and weaknesses again. Study defensive positions. Know where left and right-handed throwers are in the outfield. (Run accordingly) Stress being prepared to assist the runner coming into home plate by telling him to slide or stay up. (Use hand and arm signals well in advance.) If there is any doubt, always slide. Also remove any equipment scattered around home plate, thus preventing possible injury to teammates. The on-deck circle is the perfect place to get mentally prepared for when the player gets to the plate. Have him anticipate the situation so all he will have to do is execute and run hard.



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Baserunning Instruction

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE

- Insist that all of the players run out every ball hard no matter what kind of contact they make. 100% effort is a must. Stress proper running form and encourage runners to work at getting out of the batter's box. Run through first base hitting the front part of the bag. Emphasize getting past the bag before slowing down. Avoid jumping at the bag in the last stride; this common base running mistake causes injury and slows down the runner's time to first. Only slide into the bag to avoid a tag. This is an instinctive play and is very difficult to teach.
- Turns at all the bases should be made as sharp as possible. Body agility and quickness will determine the runners turn. However, improvements can be made for all runners with proper instruction and practice.
 - Hit the inside corner of the bag with the left foot; however, do not alter stride if runner is going to hit with his right foot. Touch part of the bag and part of the dirt. Avoid stepping on top of the base as this acts as a springboard to carry the runner out into the infield area.
 - Prior to reaching a base, make a gradual swing to give the runner a better angle. Do not make a big loop or run in toward the center of the diamond before veering out.
 - Always run with the extra base in mind until the defensive man stops you; i.e. turn a single into a double or a double into a triple. *Situation will dictate the aggressiveness of the runner.
- In teaching leads and breaks, stress situations and how they influence our leads and breaks. How many outs are there? What is the score? Where is the ball? Where are the defensive men stationed? Should I be aggressive or should I be cautious? How important is my run?
- In taking all leads, it is vital for the player to know exactly how far he is from the bag at all times. Then he can obtain the proper lead for the proper situation.

Eyes on Ball



Baserunning Instruction

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Eyes on Ball



Types of Leads

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



FIRST BASE

- One way lead – Weight leaning toward first base. Used to check pitchers move for quickness.
- Two way lead (dive back or stealing lead) – This lead should be the runners lead on each pitch except in situations which call for safety.
- Safe lead – Primary or step back lead. Should be inside defensive man when situation calls for not getting doubled off. Runner must not over-commit on secondary lead.

SECOND BASE

- Two way lead – This is not a stealing lead. It is a dive back lead if the pitcher attempts to pick you off. If pitcher delivers to the plate, the runner moves into his secondary lead. Do not let infielders bluff the runner back.
- Moving lead – stealing lead.
- Two-out lead – Maximum dive back limit with aggressive secondary lead.
- Safe lead – Taken inside SS and 2B defensive positions. Controlled secondary.

THIRD BASE

- Walking Lead
- Safe lead – Taken inside third baseman.

BASERUNNING ROUTINE FOR BATTING PRACTICE

- On last swing, batter runs hard to first and rounds the base, then returns to the bag.
- With pitcher throwing from the stretch, hit and run on the first pitch. Take a two way lead and make sure pitcher delivers the ball to the plate. Pick up the ball off the bat by glancing immediately to home.
- On the next pitch the bunt is on. Take a two way lead at second and when pitcher delivers, a controlled secondary lead. Read the ball off the bat and continue to third if the ball is on the ground.
- At third base practice the walking lead for the entire time the next hitter is swinging.

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Types of Leads

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



STEALING – LEADS AND BREAKS

First Base Find the ball and pick up the third base coach before moving off the bag.

- Move to your primary lead before the pitcher gets his sign. This is a step back or 10 foot lead.
- Next move to your dive back or two-way stealing lead by moving right foot first with stagger step to 13 plus feet. Make sure lead is taken from back edge of the base with weight on the balls of your feet. Heels should be resting on the ground and toes of right foot even with or slightly in back of toes on the left foot.
- Bend knees and maintain good body balance. First step should be short cross over; body thrust should be low, driving across with left shoulder. Development of first step quickness is all-important.
- Read the pitcher to obtain jump in breaking for second base. Some things to look for:
 - Heel movement
 - Open left shoulder
 - High leg kick
 - Wasted hand and arm motion
 - Slow delivery time
- The technique for diving back to first on the pitcher's attempted pick-off should be practiced as follows:

Take your two-way lead beyond maximum limits (15 plus feet). Right foot crossover, left hand down and dive back to the bag with right hand. Keep body low on dive back to avoid upper body injury. Practicing the dive back technique at 15 plus feet will allow you to increase confidence at the regular two-way distance. The only reason a runner cannot have a lead beyond 15 feet is because the pitcher will out-quick him to first – not because he cannot reach first with the dive back method.
- A good lead and a good jump equals success in stealing bases. If you do not have both ingredients, do not go but wait for another pitch.

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Some Points To Consider For Stealing Bases

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



Some Points To Consider For Stealing Second

- Second base is usually stolen on the pitcher.
- Pitchers generally fall into four categories:
 - Slow to first and quick to home
 - Quick to first and slow to home
 - Quick to both first and home
 - Slow to both first and home

The last of these is very easy to steal on. Number three is very difficult if not impossible to steal on. However, most pitchers fall into the first two groups and thus the base runner with adequate study can alter his lead to take advantage of this situation.

- The combination of pitcher's time to the plate, catcher's time to second, and tag time is what the runner must work to beat. Therefore, it is important to know the time you are working against and the time you are capable of achieving from first to second on an attempted steal.

Second Base You must develop a moving lead to be effective at stealing third base.

- The initial lead should be 15-17 feet depending on the runner's quickness and agility. Each runner should know exactly where his starting point is.
- From the primary lead there are two methods that can be used to get the jump on the pitch:
 - Walking lead
 - Secondary shuffle or hop
- In either case, the break for third must be initiated prior to the pitcher breaking his hands to deliver to the plate. If you are early or late in your break, hold up and wait for another pitch.
- Encourage runners to study the pitchers in their delivery from the set position as the success of stealing third depends upon timing.
- Be aggressive. If there is an out made on the play, it is better to be picked off second than thrown out at third.

Third Base The walking lead.

- The primary lead against the pitcher who is working from the wind-up position is close to third, two or three feet from the bag. You will have plenty of time to move down the line as the pitcher winds to throw.

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- The combination of pitcher's time to the plate, catcher's time to second, and tag time is what the runner must work to beat. Therefore, it is important to know the time you are working against and the time you are capable of achieving from first to second on an attempted steal.

Second Base You must develop a moving lead to be effective at stealing third base.

- The initial lead should be 15-17 feet depending on the runner's quickness and agility. Each runner should know exactly where his starting point is.
- From the primary lead there are two methods that can be used to get the jump on the pitch:
 - Walking lead
 - Secondary shuffle or hop
- In either case, the break for third must be initiated prior to the pitcher breaking his hands to deliver to the plate. If you are early or late in your break, hold up and wait for another pitch.
- Encourage runners to study the pitchers in their delivery from the set position as the success of stealing third depends upon timing.
- Be aggressive. If there is an out made on the play, it is better to be picked off second than thrown out at third.

Third Base The walking lead.

- The primary lead against the pitcher who is working from the wind-up position is close to third, two or three feet from the bag. You will have plenty of time to move down the line as the pitcher winds to throw.

Some Points To Consider For Stealing Bases

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- Move to a point down the line where you can safely get back to third if the catcher makes a pick-off attempt after receiving the ball.
- As the ball reaches the plane of the plate, the left foot should be going down; maintain your momentum until the ball is secured in the catcher's mitt. The right foot continues you toward home or stops your forward movement.
- The key to maintaining momentum is a controlled movement down the line. A common mistake with many runners is that they move too fast and consequently, reach their safety limit too soon causing them to stop their movement. This defeats the whole purpose of the walking lead and prevents scoring on some passed balls and on certain grounders.

The primary lead against the pitcher who is working from the set position is farther from the bag; 6-10 feet depending upon the position of the third baseman.

- Remember that you are more susceptible to a pick-off attempt by the pitcher in this situation.
- Move down the line to your safety point; always maintaining your momentum.
- The third base coach should always tell the runner whether he is going or staying on a ground ball. This eliminates confusion in the mind of the runner and makes the walking lead more effective.

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Points To Emphasize At Each Base

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



FIRST

- Don't get doubled on line drive – make ball go by the pitcher and infielder with less than two outs.
- Don't let the second baseman tag you on ground ball, especially with third base occupied.
- Break up double play by sliding to the side of second to which the ball is hit.
- Watch infielders after the pitch; if they drop their heads, they are susceptible to the delayed steal.
- Fake a break sometimes on a pitch—you might draw an infielder out of position. You also can determine who is covering and let the hitter know where the hole will be to hit and run.
- Be aware of runner ahead of you. Don't overrun him on single when he stops at third.
- Think about the situation as the count changes. Determine when a pitch out is in order or when a breaking pitch is likely.
- Be aware of the defensive catcher's ability to throw on pick-off attempts. Does he try often?

SECOND

- Know the situation so you can determine the proper lead. Safe lead, two out lead, moving lead, etc.
- Run hard through home on base hit. If third out is made before you cross the plate, the run does not count.
- Be ready to take third if catcher throws to first on a pick-off attempt.
- Make sure you can take third on ground ball with first unoccupied. You must know where the shortstop and third baseman are playing to move up on certain balls to the left side.
- Know when to tag and take third. Number of outs and depth of fly ball are critical.
- You cannot use the moving lead on every pitch; time the pitcher and pick a pitch to steal on.

THIRD

- Do not make first or third out at third base.
- Take lead off in foul territory and return to bag in fair territory after the pitch.
- Think about the depth of a fly ball needed to tag and score on. Which fly will I need to move down the line on?
- Will the catcher throw at me if I am using the walking lead?
- Where is my safety point on this catcher?
- Anticipate the ground ball or passed ball if the coach has you going on the grounder.

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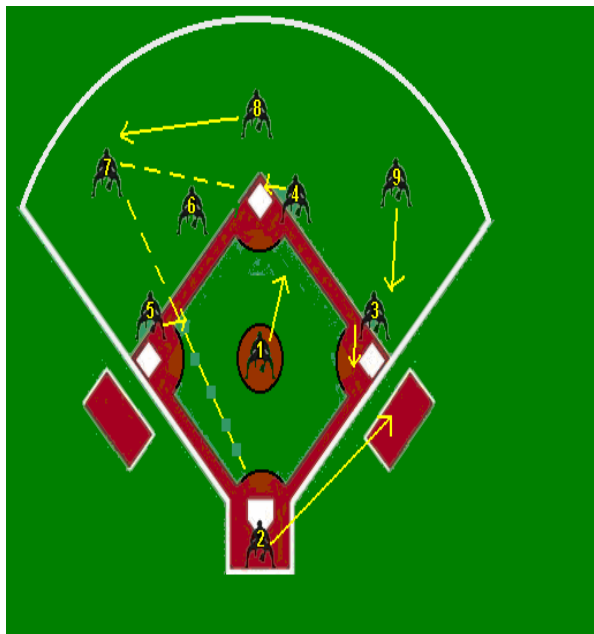
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SITUATION #1

Single To Left Field...No one on base.



Pitcher:

Move to a position half way between mound and second.

Catcher:

Follow runner to first.

First Baseman:

Make sure runner tags first, then cover first base.

Shortstop:

Take throw from left fielder.

Second Baseman:

Go to bag and back up throw

Third Baseman:

Protect 3rd base area.

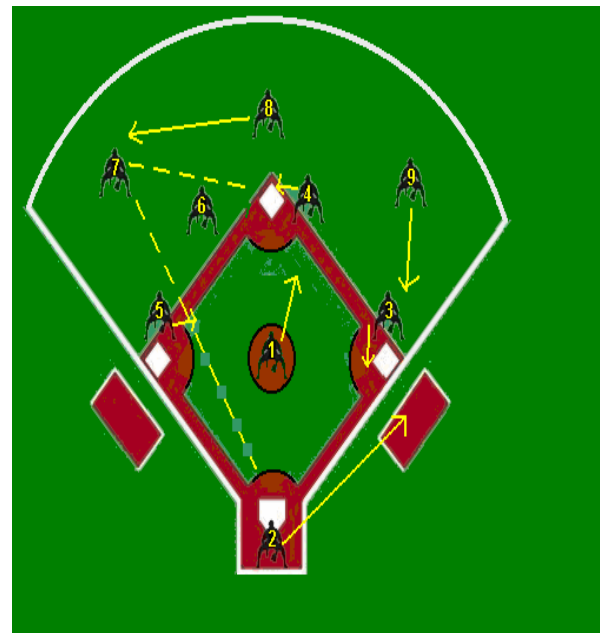
Outfielders:

CF – Back up left fielder.

RF – Move in toward first base.

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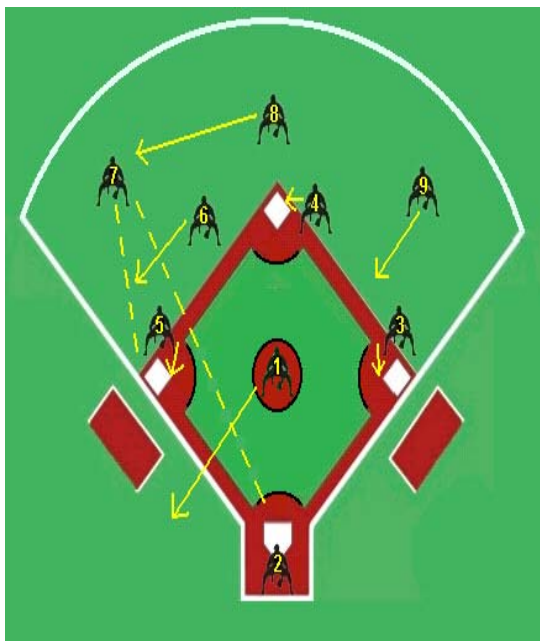
Outfielders:

CF – Back up left fielder.

RF – Move in toward first base.

SITUATION #2

Single To Left Field...Man on first.



Pitcher:

Back up third base.

Catcher:

Protect home plate area.

First Baseman:

Cover first base.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Move to cut-off position on the throw to third base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Centerfielder:

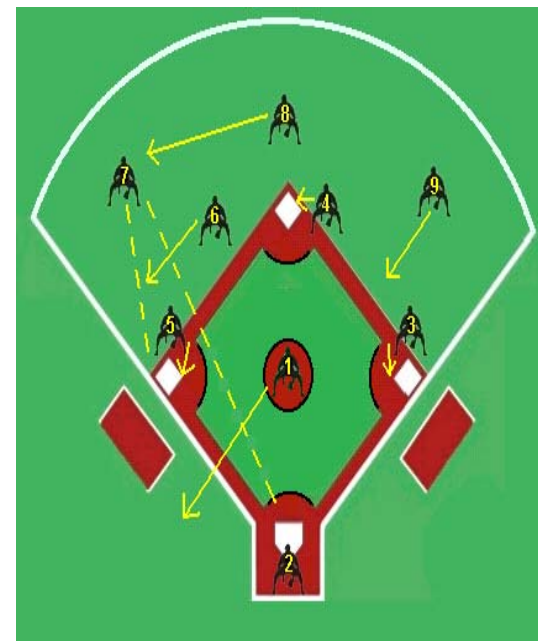
Back up left fielder.

Rightfielder:

Move in toward infield area.

SITUATION #2

Single To Left Field...Man on first.



Pitcher:

Back up third base.

Catcher:

Protect home plate area.

First Baseman:

Cover first base.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

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Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Centerfielder:

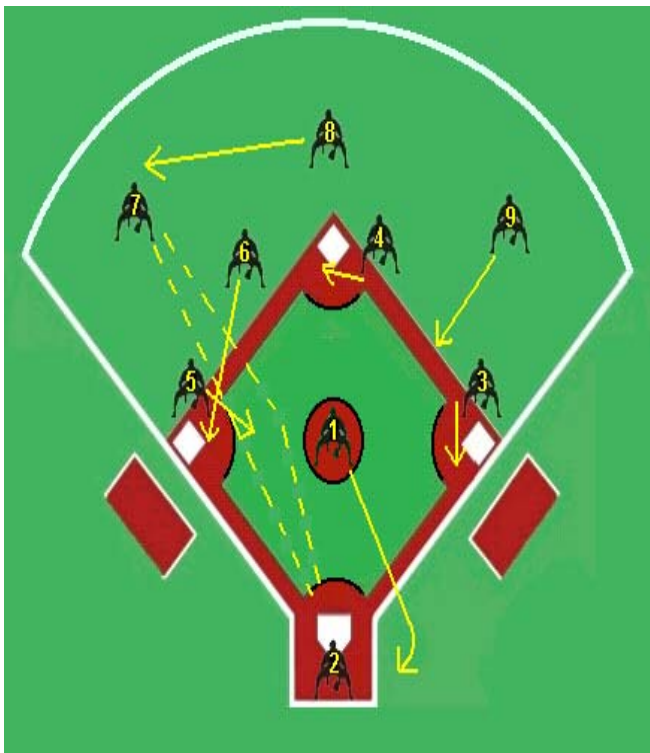
Back up left fielder.

Rightfielder:

Move in toward infield area.

SITUATION #3

Single To Left Field...Man on 2nd base.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First baseman:
Cover first base.

Second baseman:
Cover second base.

Shortstop:
Cover third base.

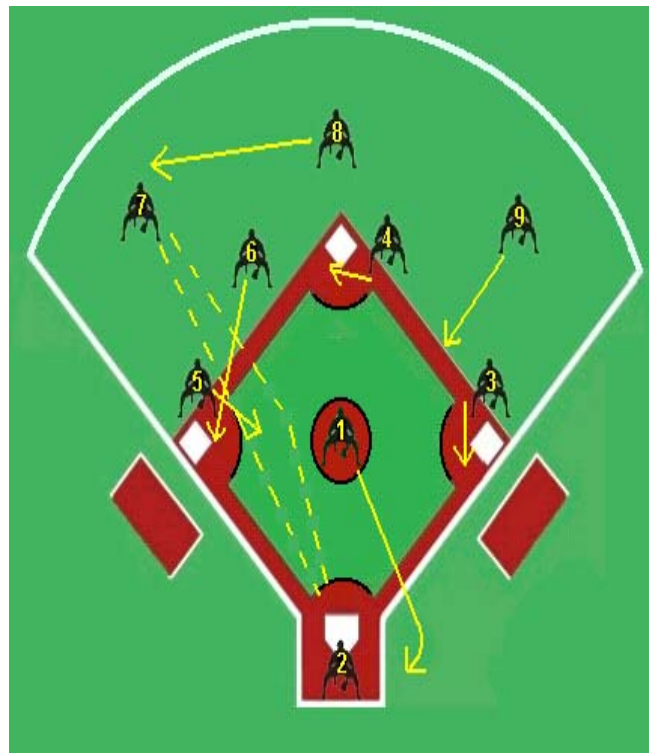
Third Baseman:
Out-off position to home.

Centerfielder:
Back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:
Move in toward second base area.

SITUATION #3

Single To Left Field...Man on 2nd base.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First baseman:
Cover first base.

Second baseman:
Cover second base.

Shortstop:
Cover third base.

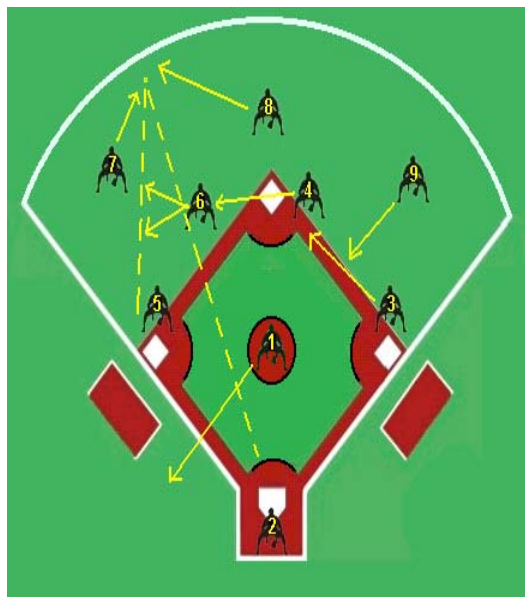
Third Baseman:
Out-off position to home.

Centerfielder:
Back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:
Move in toward second base area.

SITUATION #4

Double, possible triple to left-center field...no one on



Pitcher:

Back up third base in line with throw.

Catcher:

Protect home plate area.

First Baseman:

Trail runner to second base after watching him touch first.

Second Baseman:

Trail 30-35 feet behind shortstop in line with throw. Call play for shortstop.

Shortstop:

Relay man on throw from outfield to third base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Centerfielder:

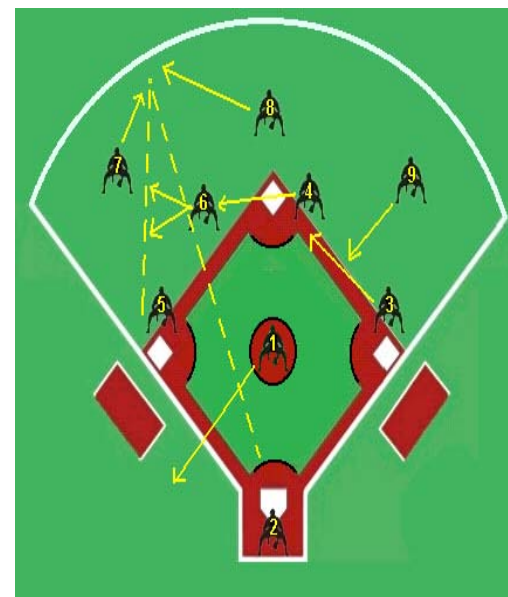
Retrieve ball or back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:

Move in toward second base.

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Shortstop:

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Third Baseman:

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Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:

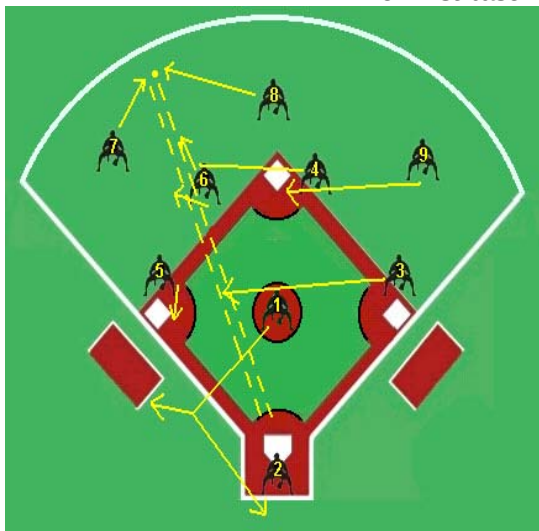
Move in toward second base.

SITUATION #5

Double, possible triple to left-center field. Man on first



Double, possible triple
to left-center field. Man
on first base.



Pitcher:

Half way between home and third. Back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Cut-off man to home

*Shortstop:

Relay man in left center line up for play at home.

*Second Baseman:

Trail shortstop about 30-35 feet behind and call play as it develops.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up leftfielder.

***Relay and trail man line up for home.**

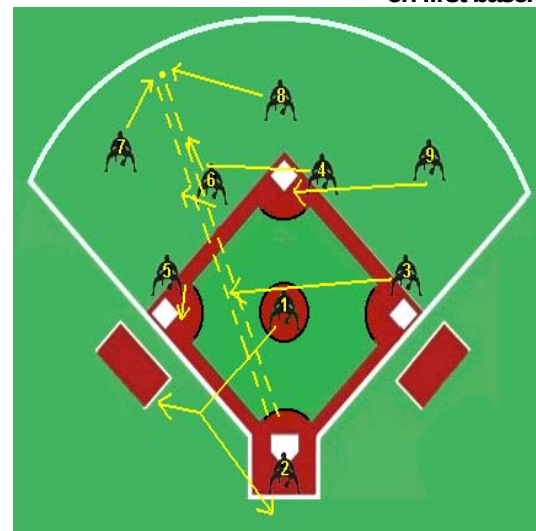
Adjust their position to third base if there is no play at home.

SITUATION #5

Double, possible triple to left-center field. Man on first



Double, possible triple
to left-center field. Man
on first base.



Pitcher:

Half way between home and third. Back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Cut-off man to home

*Shortstop:

Relay man in left center line up for play at home.

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Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Centerfielder:

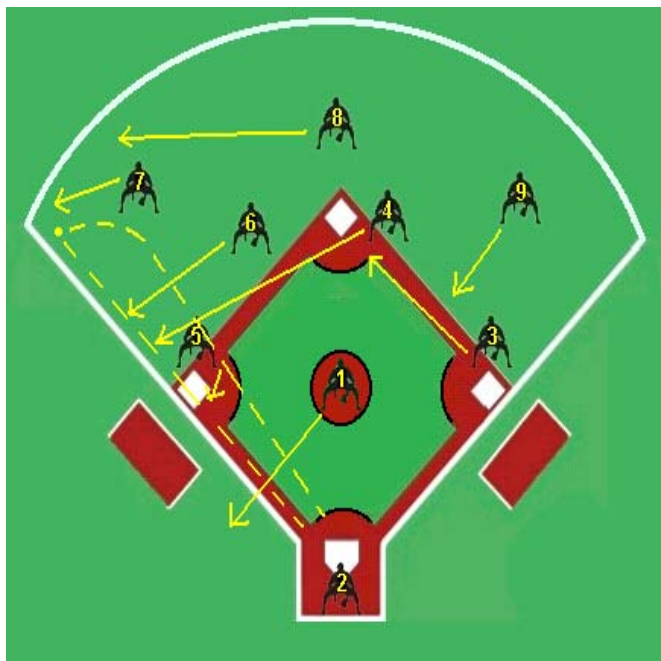
Retrieve ball or back up leftfielder.

***Relay and trail man line up for home.**

Adjust their position to third base if there is no play at home.

SITUATION #6

Double, possible triple down left field line.
No one on base.



Pitcher:
Back up third.

Catcher:
Cover home plate area.

First Baseman:
Trail runner after watching him touch first base.

Second Baseman:
Trailer behind shortstop call play as it develops

Shortstop:
Relay man line up for third.

Third Baseman:
Cover third.

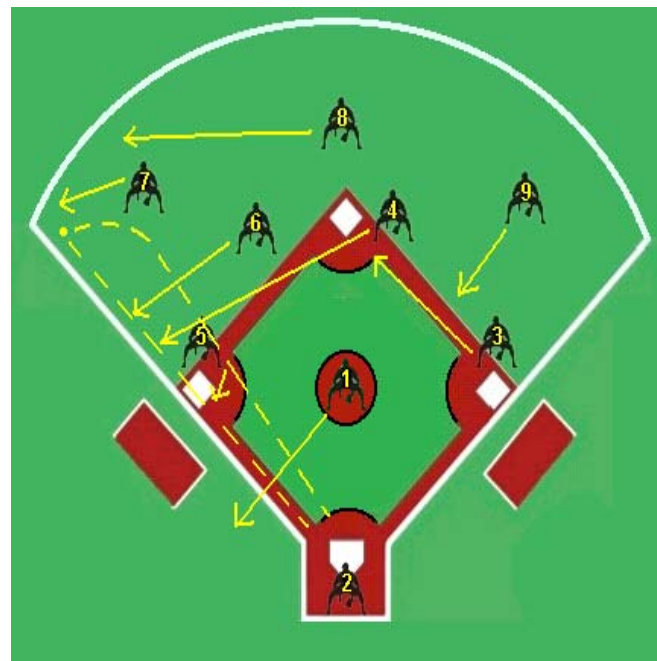
Leftfielder:
Retrieve ball.

Centerfielder:
Back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:
Back up second base area.

SITUATION #6

Double, possible triple down left field line.
No one on base.



Pitcher:
Back up third.

Catcher:
Cover home plate area.

First Baseman:
Trail runner after watching him touch first base.

Second Baseman:
Trailer behind shortstop call play as it develops

Shortstop:
Relay man line up for third.

Third Baseman:
Cover third.

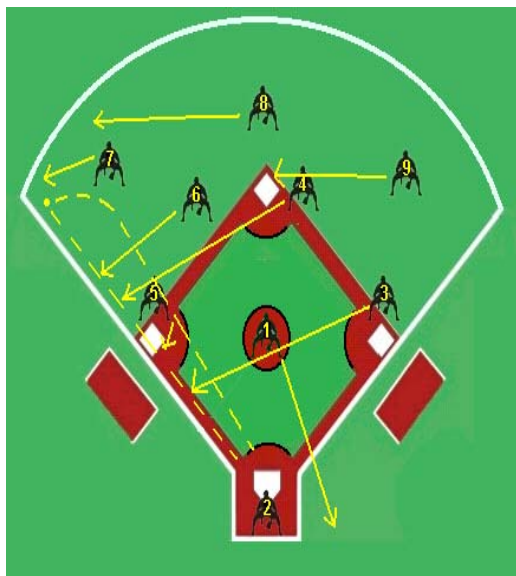
Leftfielder:
Retrieve ball.

Centerfielder:
Back up leftfielder.

Rightfielder:
Back up second base area.

SITUATION #7

Double, possible triple down left field line.
Man on first.



Pitcher:

Back up home plate.

Catcher:

Cover home plate.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home.

Shortstop:

Relay man down leftfield line.

Second Baseman:

Trail man behind shortstop
call the play as it develops.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Centerfielder:

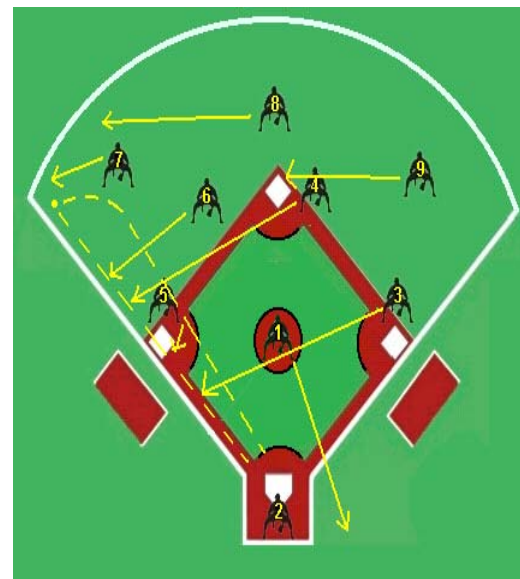
Back up left fielder.

Rightfielder:

Cover second base.

SITUATION #7

Double, possible triple down left field line.
Man on first.



Pitcher:

Back up home plate.

Catcher:

Cover home plate.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home.

Shortstop:

Relay man down leftfield line.

Second Baseman:

Trail man behind shortstop
call the play as it develops.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Leftfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Centerfielder:

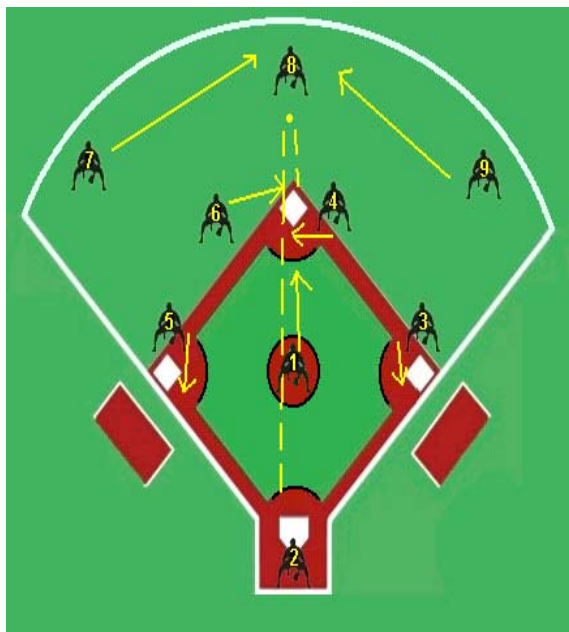
Back up left fielder.

Rightfielder:

Cover second base.

SITUATION #8

Single To Center Field...No one on base.



Pitcher:

Back up second base area.

Catcher:

Protect home plate area.

First Baseman:

Cover first.

Second Baseman:

Back up second base.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

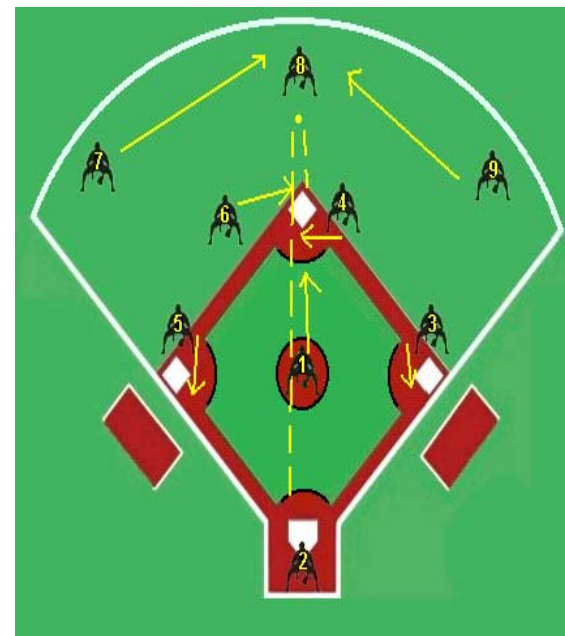
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:

Back up centerfielder.

SITUATION #8

Single To Center Field...No one on base.



Pitcher:

Back up second base area.

Catcher:

Protect home plate area.

First Baseman:

Cover first.

Second Baseman:

Back up second base.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

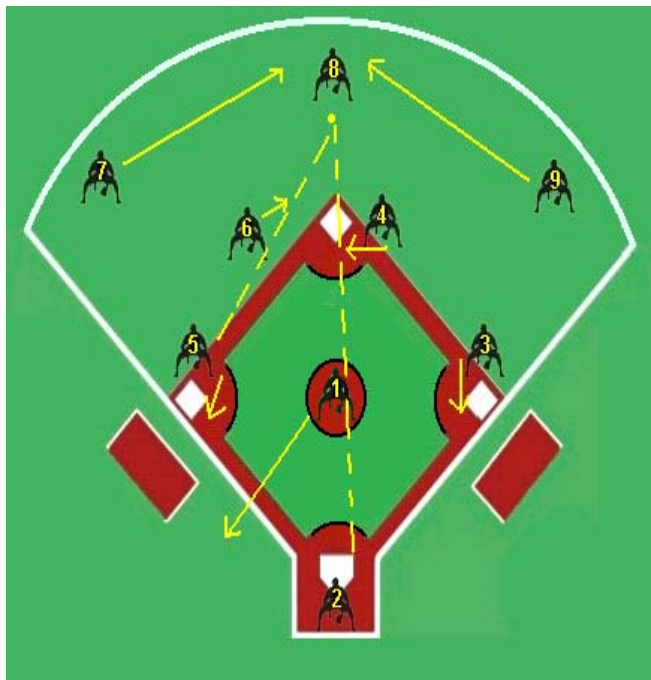
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:

Back up centerfielder.

SITUATION #9

Single To Center Field...Man on first.



Pitcher:

Back up third base.

Catcher:

Protect home plate.

First Baseman:

Cover first.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Shortstop:

Cut-off man to third base.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

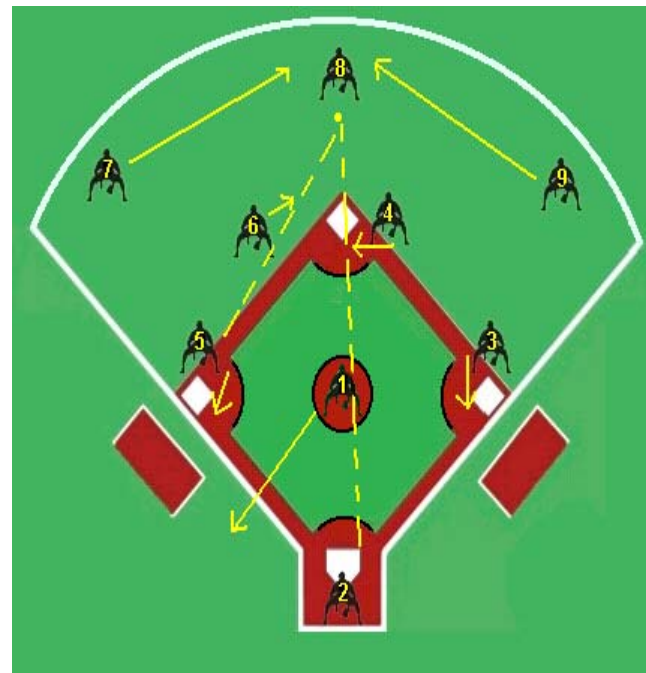
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:

Back up centerfielder.

SITUATION #9

Single To Center Field...Man on first.



Pitcher:

Back up third base.

Catcher:

Protect home plate.

First Baseman:

Cover first.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Shortstop:

Cut-off man to third base.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

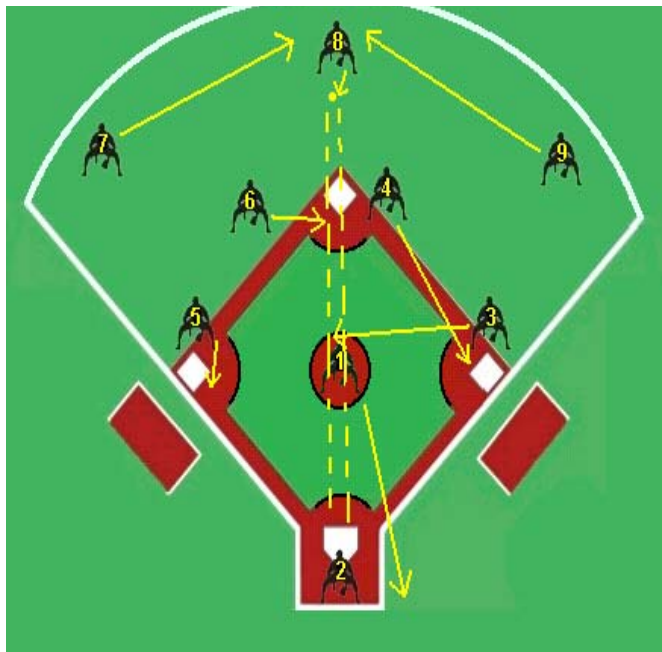
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:

Back up centerfielder.

SITUATION #10

Single to Center Field...Man on Second Base.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First Baseman:
Cut-off man to home.

Second Baseman:
Cover first base.

Shortstop:
Cover second base.

Third Baseman:
Cover third base.

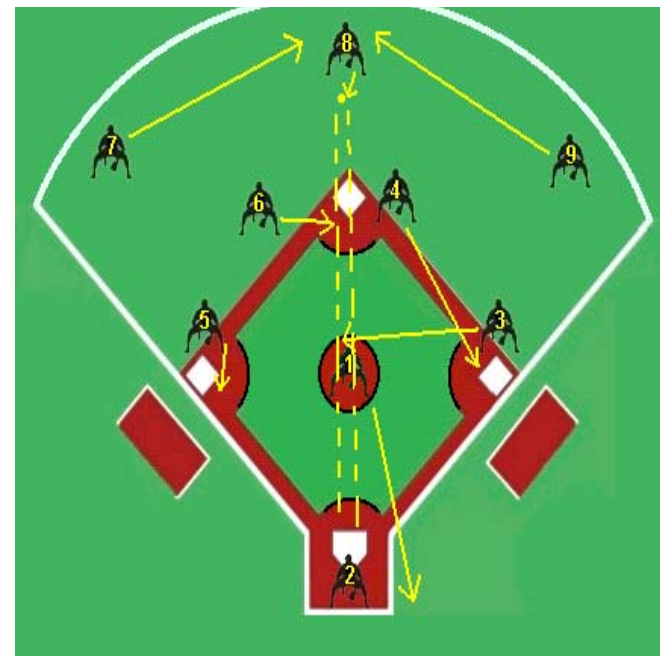
Centerfielder:
Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:
Back up centerfielder.

SITUATION #10

Single to Center Field...Man on Second Base.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First Baseman:
Cut-off man to home.

Second Baseman:
Cover first base.

Shortstop:
Cover second base.

Third Baseman:
Cover third base.

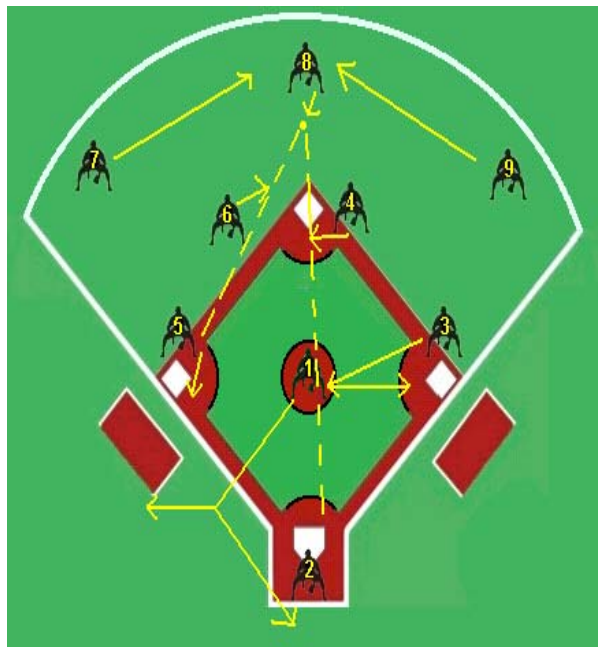
Centerfielder:
Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:
Back up centerfielder.

SITUATION #11

Single To center field...Men on first and second.



Pitcher:

Halfway between home and third. Then back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home. If throw goes to third, hustle back to first base.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Out-off man to third.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

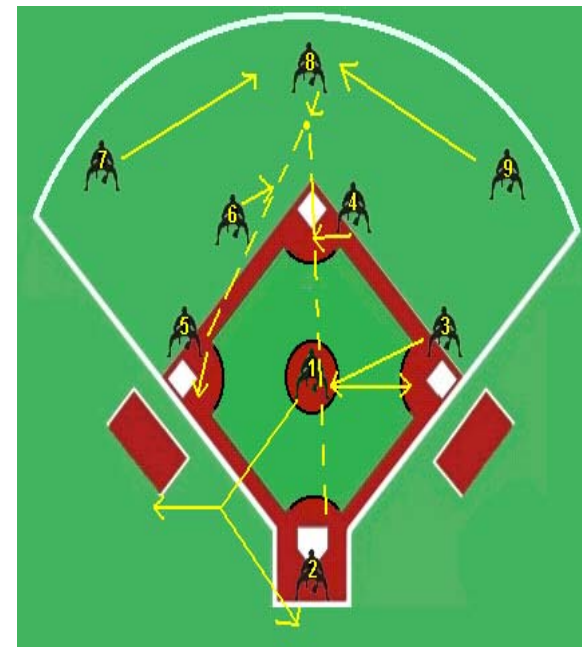
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:

Back up centerfielder.

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Pitcher:

Halfway between home and third. Then back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

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Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Out-off man to third.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

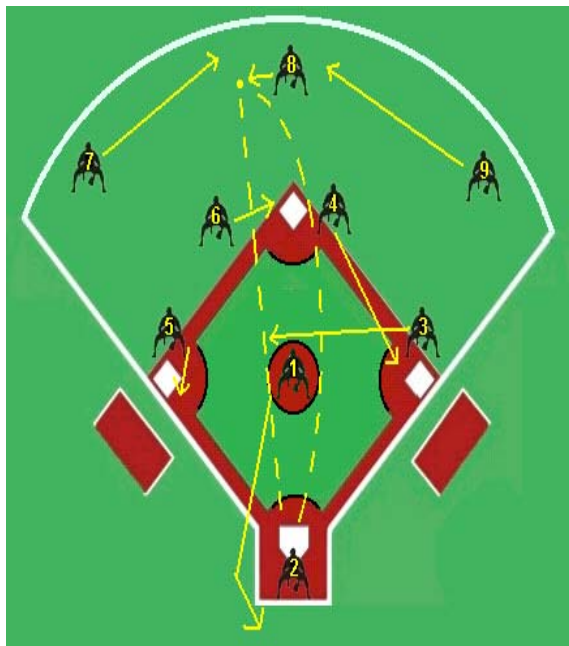
Back up centerfielder.

Rightfielder:

Back up centerfielder.

SITUATION #12

Fly ball to center field...Men on first and third.



Pitcher:

Back up home plate.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home.

Second Baseman:

Cover first base.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Leftfielder:

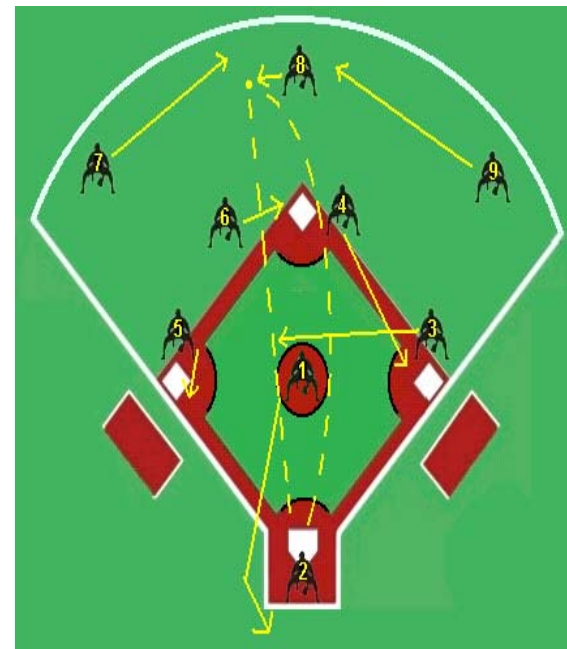
Move toward fly ball.

Rightfielder:

Move toward fly ball.

SITUATION #12

Fly ball to center field...Men on first and third.



Pitcher:

Back up home plate.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home.

Second Baseman:

Cover first base.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Leftfielder:

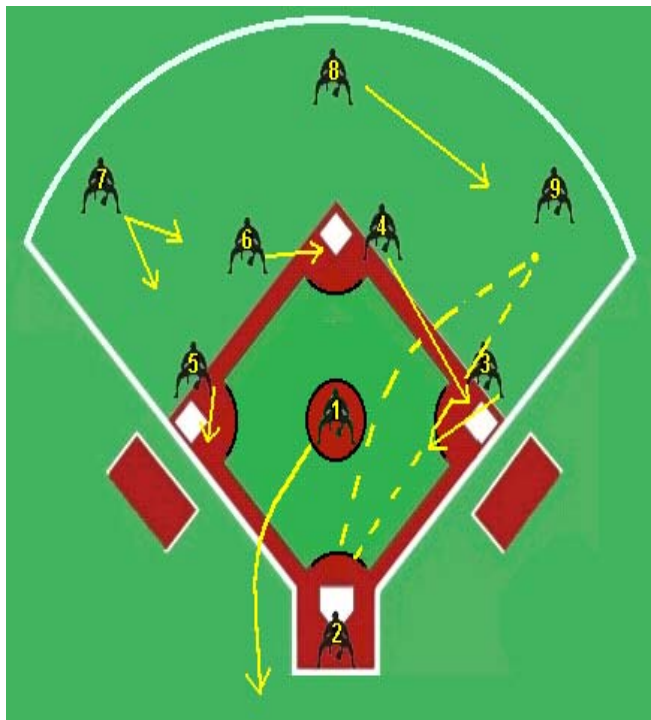
Move toward fly ball.

Rightfielder:

Move toward fly ball.

SITUATION #13

Fly ball to right field...men on first and third.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First Baseman:
Out-off man to home.

Second Baseman:
Cover first base.

Shortstop:
Cover second.

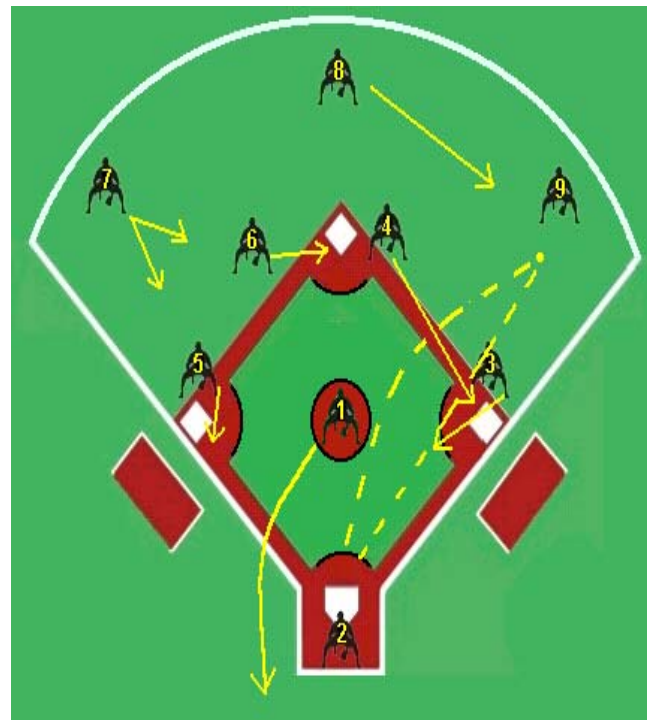
Third Baseman:
Cover third.

Centerfielder:
Move toward fly ball.

Leftfielder:
Back up second base. Actual position to depend on where rightfielder throws.

SITUATION #13

Fly ball to right field...men on first and third.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First Baseman:
Out-off man to home.

Second Baseman:
Cover first base.

Shortstop:
Cover second.

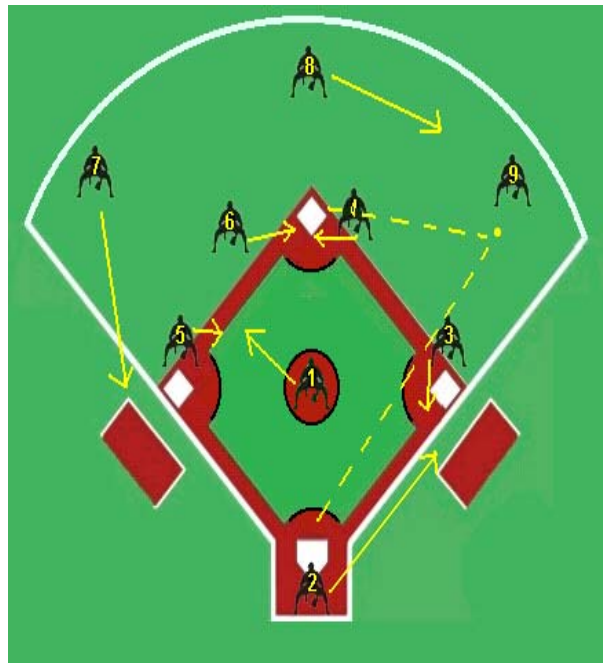
Third Baseman:
Cover third.

Centerfielder:
Move toward fly ball.

Leftfielder:
Back up second base. Actual position to depend on where rightfielder throws.

SITUATION #14

Single To right field...No one on base.



Pitcher:

Move to back up second base area.

Catcher:

Follow runner to first.

First Baseman:

Cover first base.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Back up second base.

Third Baseman:

Protect third base area.

Centerfielder:

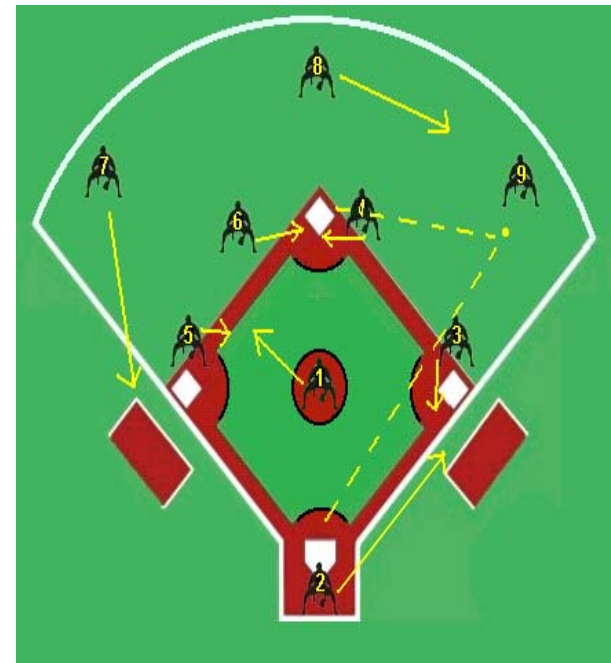
Move to back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:

Move in toward third base.

SITUATION #14

Single To right field...No one on base.



Pitcher:

Move to back up second base area.

Catcher:

Follow runner to first.

First Baseman:

Cover first base.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Back up second base.

Third Baseman:

Protect third base area.

Centerfielder:

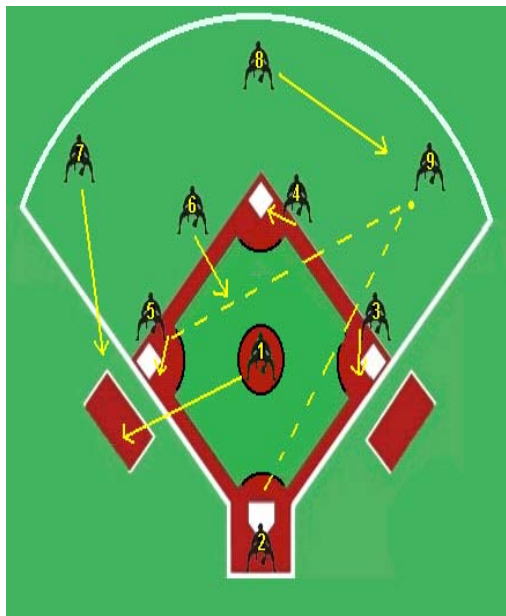
Move to back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:

Move in toward third base.

SITUATION #15

Single To right field...man on first base.



Pitcher:
Back up third base.

Catcher:
Protect home plate.

First Baseman:
Cover first.

Second Baseman:
Cover second.

Shortstop:
Out-off man to third base.

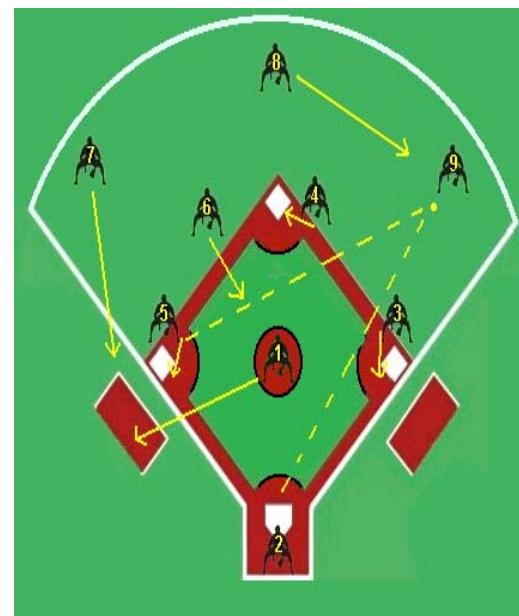
Third Baseman:
Cover third base.

Centerfielder:
Back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:
Move in toward third.

SITUATION #15

Single To right field...man on first base.



Pitcher:
Back up third base.

Catcher:
Protect home plate.

First Baseman:
Cover first.

Second Baseman:
Cover second.

Shortstop:
Out-off man to third base.

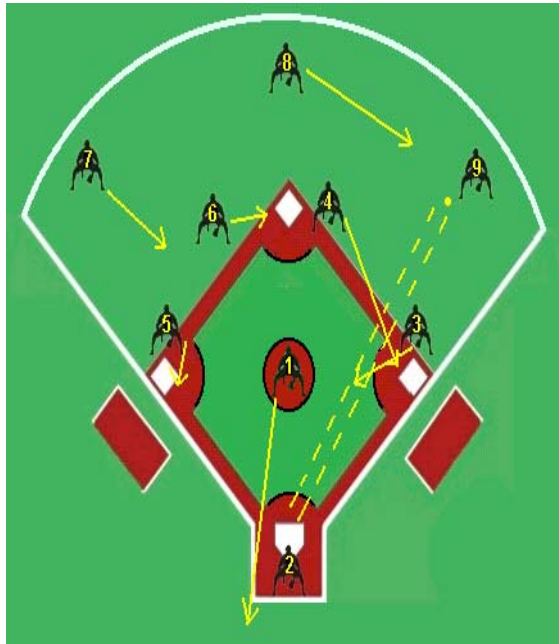
Third Baseman:
Cover third base.

Centerfielder:
Back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:
Move in toward third.

SITUATION #16

Single To Right Field...man on second base.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First Baseman:
Out-off man to home.

Second Baseman:
Cover first base.

Shortstop:
Cover second base.

Third Baseman:
Cover third base.

Leftfielder:
Move in toward second base.

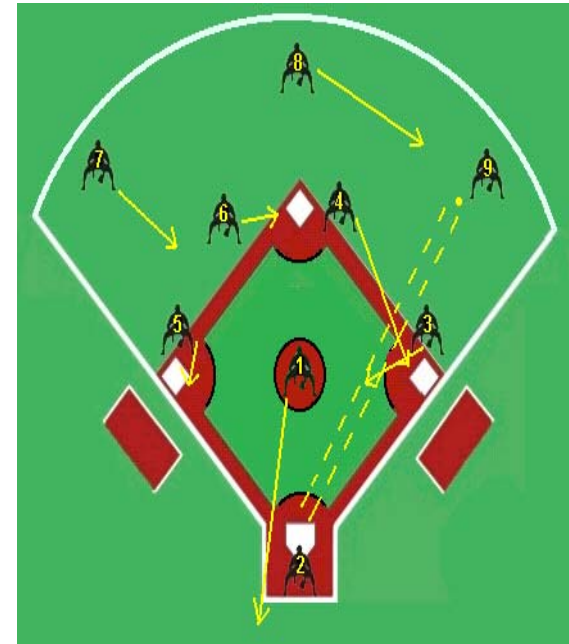
Centerfielder:
Move to back up rightfielder.

75

If you don't think you can...you won't

SITUATION #16

Single To Right Field...man on second base.



Pitcher:
Back up home.

Catcher:
Cover home.

First Baseman:
Out-off man to home.

Second Baseman:
Cover first base.

Shortstop:
Cover second base.

Third Baseman:
Cover third base.

Leftfielder:
Move in toward second base.

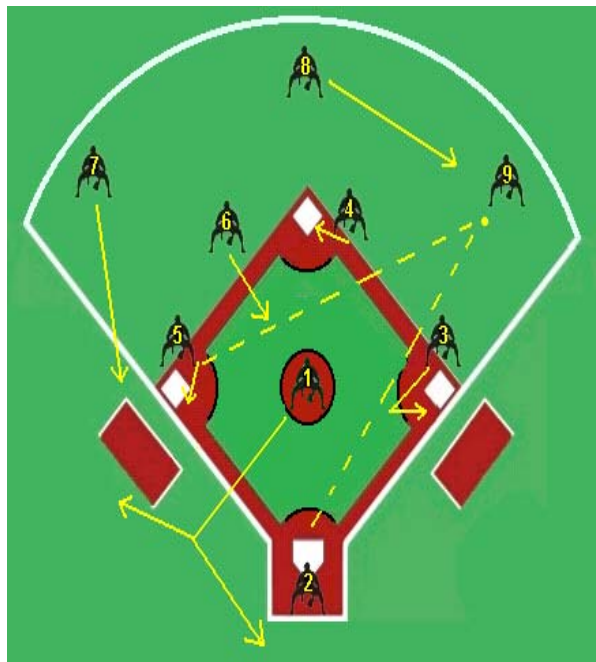
Centerfielder:
Move to back up rightfielder.

75

If you don't think you can...you won't

SITUATION #17

Single to right field. Men on first and second.



Pitcher:

Half way between third and home. Back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home. Cover first if throw goes to third.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Out-off man to third.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Centerfielder:

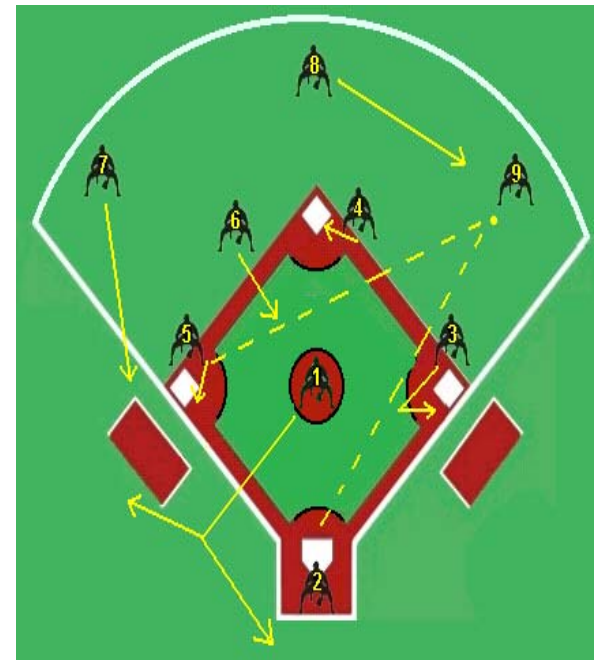
Back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:

Move toward third base area.

SITUATION #17

Single to right field. Men on first and second.



Pitcher:

Half way between third and home. Back up base where play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home. Cover first if throw goes to third.

Second Baseman:

Cover second base.

Shortstop:

Out-off man to third.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Centerfielder:

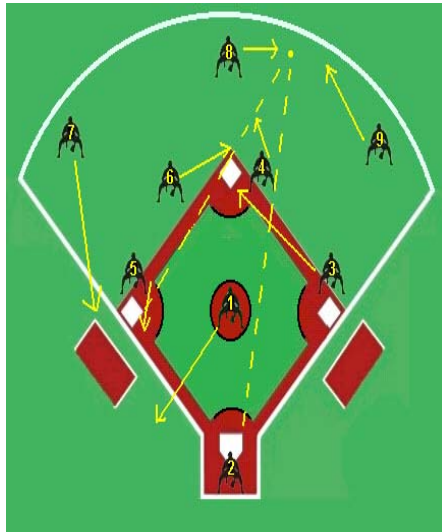
Back up rightfielder.

Leftfielder:

Move toward third base area.

SITUATION #18

Double, possible triple to right-center field. No one on base.



Pitcher:

Back up third base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Catcher:

Cover home plate.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up rightfielder.

First Baseman:

Trail runner to second base after watching him touch first base.

Rightfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Second Baseman:

Relay man to third base.

Leftfielder:

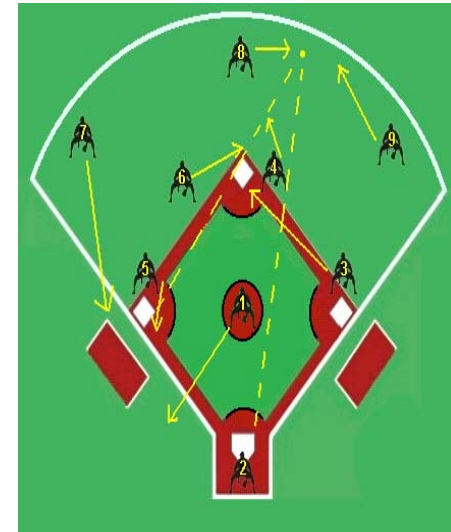
Move in toward third base.

Shortstop:

Trailer behind second baseman.
Call play as it develops.

SITUATION #18

Double, possible triple to right-center field. No one on base.



Pitcher:

Back up third base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Catcher:

Cover home plate.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up rightfielder.

First Baseman:

Trail runner to second base after watching him touch first base.

Rightfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Second Baseman:

Relay man to third base.

Leftfielder:

Move in toward third base.

Shortstop:

Trailer behind second baseman.
Call play as it develops.

SITUATION #19

Double, possible triple to right-center field,



Pitcher:

Half way between first and home. Back up base at which play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home plate.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home.

*Second Baseman:

Relay man to home or third.

*Shortstop:

Trailer behind second baseman.
Call play as it develops.

***Line up for home (primary). If no play at home, line up third.**

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up rightfielder.

Rightfielder:

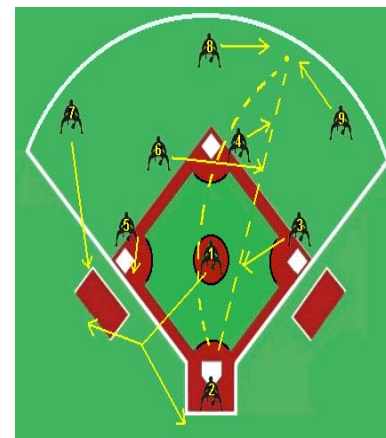
Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Leftfielder:

Move into area behind third base.

SITUATION #19

Single To Left Field...No one on base.



Pitcher:

Half way between first and home. Back up base at which play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home plate.

First Baseman:

Out-off man to home.

*Second Baseman:

Relay man to home or third.

*Shortstop:

Trailer behind second baseman.
Call play as it develops.

***Line up for home (primary). If no play at home, line up third.**

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Centerfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up rightfielder.

Rightfielder:

Retrieve ball or back up centerfielder.

Leftfielder:

Move into area behind third base.

SITUATION #20



Pitcher:

Backs up third base.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Trails second baseman and calls play.

Second Baseman:

Relay man to third base.

Shortstop:

Covers second base.

Third Baseman:

Covers third base.

Centerfielder:

Backs up rightfielder.

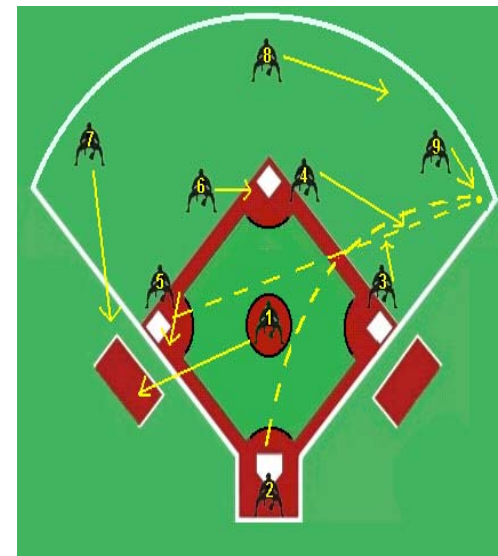
Rightfielder:

Retrieves ball.

Leftfielder:

Moves into area behind third base.

SITUATION #20



Pitcher:

Backs up third base.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Trails second baseman and calls play.

Second Baseman:

Relay man to third base.

Shortstop:

Covers second base.

Third Baseman:

Covers third base.

Centerfielder:

Backs up rightfielder.

Rightfielder:

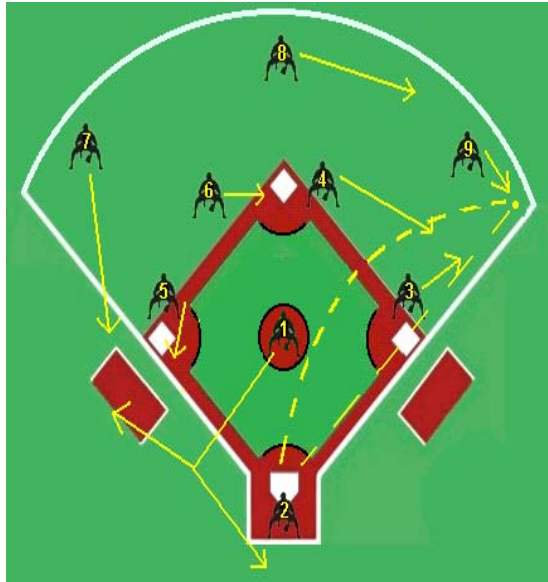
Retrieves ball.

Leftfielder:

Moves into area behind third base.

SITUATION #21

Double, possible triple down right field line.
Man on first.



Pitcher:

Half way between third and home. Back up base at which play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Trail second baseman, call play.

Second Baseman:

Relay man to home or third base.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Centerfielder:

Back up rightfielder.

Rightfielder:

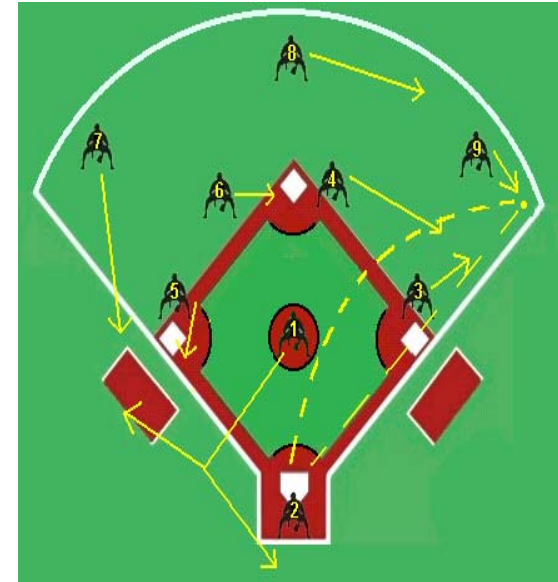
Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

Move into third base area.

SITUATION #21

Double, possible triple down right field line.
Man on first.



Pitcher:

Half way between third and home. Back up base at which play develops.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Trail second baseman, call play.

Second Baseman:

Relay man to home or third base.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Centerfielder:

Back up rightfielder.

Rightfielder:

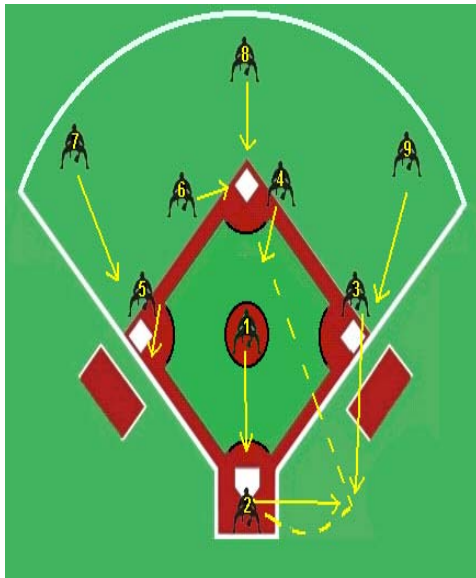
Retrieve ball.

Leftfielder:

Move into third base area.

SITUATION #22

Pop fly behind home. Runners on first and third.



Pitcher:

Cover home.

Catcher:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

First Baseman:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

Second Baseman:

Out-off man—react to runners.

Shortstop:

Cover second base—call play for second baseman.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Rightfielder:

Move to first base area.

Centerfielder:

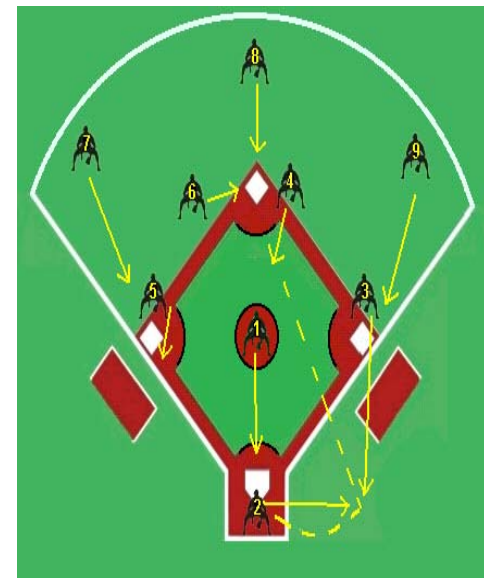
Back up second base.

Leftfielder:

Back up third base.

SITUATION #22

Pop fly behind home. Runners on first and third.



Pitcher:

Cover home.

Catcher:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

First Baseman:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

Second Baseman:

Out-off man—react to runners.

Shortstop:

Cover second base—call play for second baseman.

Third Baseman:

Cover third base.

Rightfielder:

Move to first base area.

Centerfielder:

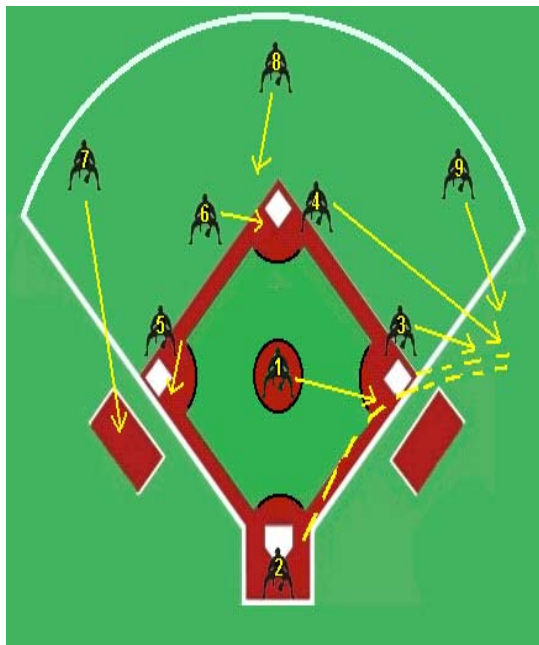
Back up second base.

Leftfielder:

Back up third base.

SITUATION #23

Pop fly behind first. Runners on first and third



Pitcher:

Out-off man—inside first base bag.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

Second Baseman:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Rightfielder:

Move to pop up.

Centerfielder:

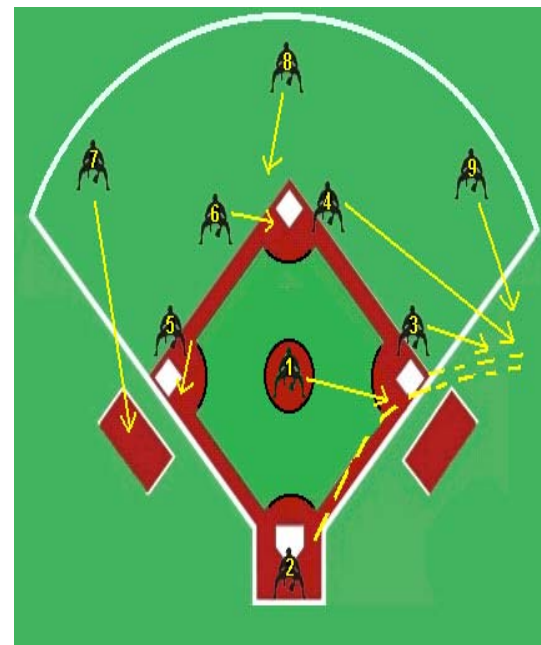
Back up second base.

Leftfielder:

Back up third base

SITUATION #23

Pop fly behind first. Runners on first and third



Pitcher:

Out-off man—inside first base bag.

Catcher:

Cover home.

First Baseman:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

Second Baseman:

Catch ball—throw to out-off man.

Shortstop:

Cover second base.

Third Baseman:

Cover third.

Rightfielder:

Move to pop up.

Centerfielder:

Back up second base.

Leftfielder:

Back up third base

Practice Sessions

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



There are numerous elements involved in planning a practice. The coach should know what his team needs to work on each day. Always write out a practice schedule and post it where the players can see what is to be worked on that day. Keep practices moving by planning every minute of the practice session. Don't spend too much time on one drill.

Batting practice is the longest, and usually the most boring time, in any practice session. There are ways to combat this problem. Divide the players into groups of three or four and when one group is hitting the other groups are taking ground balls, shagging batted balls, hitting in the cage, or working on some other element of the game. Typically, early season practices are designed to drill the team on fundamentals of team play as well as individual skills. Once the season starts, practices will concentrate on sharpening individual skills with occasional team drill to keep the players fresh on the team aspect of the game.

Begin each practice with a warm-up phase and a good solid stretch routine. Stretching as a group is a great opportunity to get the players working cohesively as a team. Stretching should be done prior and after practice. Below is a listing of stretches designed to get the whole body warmed up:

Recommended Stretch Routine

Trunk Twists
Feet Together Hangs
Spread 'Em
Quad Stretch
Upright Lunge
Across the Chest Pulls
Behind the Neck Pulls
Arm Circles-Small to Large
Interlock Finger Stretch
Wrist Stretch

Recommended Warm Up Routine

Heel Kicks
High Knees Forward
High Knees Backward
Side Shuffle
Back Pedal
Carioca
Form Running
Falling Sprints

Practice Sessions

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



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Wrist Stretch

Recommended Warm Up Routine

Heel Kicks
High Knees Forward
High Knees Backward
Side Shuffle
Back Pedal
Carioca
Form Running
Falling Sprints

Practice #1

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:20 Wiffle Ball Game
- 6:20-6:35 Jog/Stretch
- 6:35-6:45 Jog
Head up around cones
Shuffles
Backwards jog
High knees
- 6:45-6:50 Leads and Breaks (eyes on pitcher) –Three Groups of Four
- 6:50-7:10 Catch (demonstrate)
Flick (tape balls)
Down-back-up (6 of them)
Side throws
Step catch step throw
- 7:10-7:25 Grounder Rolls (Introduce)
Alligator (2 bounces)
Short hop (1 bounce)
Picks
- 7:25-7:35 Ground Ball Fielding
Eyes on ball
Legs wide
R-L field, R-L throw
Follow throw (3 steps)
- 7:35-7:40 Juggling
- 7:40-7:50 Hit on Tees
Work on stance, stride, hit
Align the knuckles
- 7:50-8:00 Soft Toss
Don't bat wrap
Mike to Ike
- 8:00 Meeting

Practice #1

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



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Work on stance, stride, hit
Align the knuckles
- 7:50-8:00 Soft Toss
Don't bat wrap
Mike to Ike
- 8:00 Meeting

Practice #2

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00  Lap, Stretch, Form run
- 6:15  Leads-Breaks-Live
- 6:30  Catch
Flick Drill
Down-back-up
Power-throw
Step to catch, step to throw
- 6:45  4 Corners/ 2 Knee Quick Catch
Throw clockwise, then counter clockwise
Work on quickness
Step to the ball
- 7:00  Bunting
Proper grip
Barrel head up
Show where to bunt, 3rd base or first base side
- 7:15  Tee Work
Work on stance, stride, and hit
Work on low, medium, and high pitches
- 7:30  Soft toss
Head on the ball
- 7:45  Hit off coach
Don't step in bucket
Have players shag live off bat
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #2

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00  Lap, Stretch, Form run
- 6:15  Leads-Breaks-Live
- 6:30  Catch
Flick Drill
Down-back-up
Power-throw
Step to catch, step to throw
- 6:45  4 Corners/ 2 Knee Quick Catch
Throw clockwise, then counter clockwise
Work on quickness
Step to the ball
- 7:00  Bunting
Proper grip
Barrel head up
Show where to bunt, 3rd base or first base side
- 7:15  Tee Work
Work on stance, stride, and hit
Work on low, medium, and high pitches
- 7:30  Soft toss
Head on the ball
- 7:45  Hit off coach
Don't step in bucket
Have players shag live off bat
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #3

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Laps, Stretch, Form Run
- 6:15-6:20  Leads, Breaks
- 6:20-6:30  Catch
Review the same drills as the first two practices
- 6:30-6:40  Relays
Work on hitting the cutoff man in the chest
Step to the ball-Catch ball on glove side
- 6:40-6:50  Base running
Work on 3rd step peek to 1st base
Proper bananas (rounding singles)
- 6:50-7:00  Sliding
Introduce figure 4, hook, swim, and pop-up slides
- 7:00-7:15  Ground Balls
Review same material as practice 1
- 7:15-7:50  Hitting
Soft toss (introduce)
Top hand
Bottom hand
Short toss
Toss 5-10 feet in front of batter behind L screen
- 7:50-8:00  Meeting

Practice #3

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Laps, Stretch, Form Run
- 6:15-6:20  Leads, Breaks
- 6:20-6:30  Catch
Review the same drills as the first two practices
- 6:30-6:40  Relays
Work on hitting the cutoff man in the chest
Step to the ball-Catch ball on glove side
- 6:40-6:50  Base running
Work on 3rd step peek to 1st base
Proper bananas (rounding singles)
- 6:50-7:00  Sliding
Introduce figure 4, hook, swim, and pop-up slides
- 7:00-7:15  Ground Balls
Review same material as practice 1
- 7:15-7:50  Hitting
Soft toss (introduce)
Top hand
Bottom hand
Short toss
Toss 5-10 feet in front of batter behind L screen
- 7:50-8:00  Meeting

Practice #4

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Laps, Stretch, Form Run
- 6:15-6:20  Leads, Breaks
- 6:20-6:35  Base running
Give signals
Practice by giving signals
- 6:35-6:45  Break into Positions
Infield/outfield
Hit groundballs, pop-ups
- 6:45-6:55  Bunt Coverages
With runners on and no runners on
Get at least one out
- 6:55-7:05  Leads on 3rd base
L-R, shuffle shuffle
Should be a step and a dive away from bag
- 7:05-7:20  Catching
Work on blocking
Practice throw downs to each bag
- 7:20-8:00  Live Batting Practice from Coach
Have 3 Groups
One hitting
One shagging
One soft tossing before batting
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #4

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Laps, Stretch, Form Run
- 6:15-6:20  Leads, Breaks
- 6:20-6:35  Base running
Give signals
Practice by giving signals
- 6:35-6:45  Break into Positions
Infield/outfield
Hit groundballs, pop-ups
- 6:45-6:55  Bunt Coverages
With runners on and no runners on
Get at least one out
- 6:55-7:05  Leads on 3rd base
L-R, shuffle shuffle
Should be a step and a dive away from bag
- 7:05-7:20  Catching
Work on blocking
Practice throw downs to each bag
- 7:20-8:00  Live Batting Practice from Coach
Have 3 Groups
One hitting
One shagging
One soft tossing before batting
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #5

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



6:00-6:15



Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing

6:15-6:30



Fungoes
Fly balls to outfielders (communication)
Ground balls to infielders (slow rollers)

6:30-7:00



Practice Cut-offs
Align them between bag and ball
Yell base where you want ball thrown to
Have outfielders back up ball or bases
Have pitcher back up proper spot in case of overthrow

7:00-8:00



Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station

8:00



Meeting

Practice #5

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



6:00-6:15



Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing

6:15-6:30



Fungoes
Fly balls to outfielders (communication)
Ground balls to infielders (slow rollers)

6:30-7:00



Practice Cut-offs
Align them between bag and ball
Yell base where you want ball thrown to
Have outfielders back up ball or bases
Have pitcher back up proper spot in case of overthrow

7:00-8:00



Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station

8:00



Meeting

Practice #6

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



6:00-6:15



Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing

6:15-7:15



Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station

7:15-7:40



Specialty Defense
Pitchers- Pick off
Outfielders- Fence Drill
Infielders- 3rd baseman- Slow rollers
SS & 2nd Baseman- Double plays
1st Baseman- Cover 1st
Catchers- Throw to 2nd

7:40-8:00



Conditioning and Practice Running Bases
3 singles
2 doubles
1 triple
1 inside the park homerun
1 outside the park homerun

Practice #6

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



6:00-6:15



Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing

6:15-7:15



Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station

7:15-7:40



Specialty Defense
Pitchers- Pick off
Outfielders- Fence Drill
Infielders- 3rd baseman- Slow rollers
SS & 2nd Baseman- Double plays
1st Baseman- Cover 1st
Catchers- Throw to 2nd

7:40-8:00



Conditioning and Practice Running Bases
3 singles
2 doubles
1 triple
1 inside the park homerun
1 outside the park homerun

Practice #7

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing
- 6:15-6:30  Base running
Teach 3rd step Peek
Practice Leads and Steals
Practice Offensive Plays
- 6:30-7:30  Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station
- 7:30-8:00  Situations
Put players into positions
Put runners on base or off
Hit the ball from the plate like a live game
Play it just like a ballgame
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #7

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing
- 6:15-6:30  Base running
Teach 3rd step Peek
Practice Leads and Steals
Practice Offensive Plays
- 6:30-7:30  Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station
- 7:30-8:00  Situations
Put players into positions
Put runners on base or off
Hit the ball from the plate like a live game
Play it just like a ballgame
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #8

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



6:00-6:15



Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing

6:15-7:15



Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station

7:15-7:40



Pickoffs (Use Outfielders as Base runners)
Have pitchers pickoff actual runners
Can also practice run downs at same time
Pick off to each base

7:40-8:00



Agility
Jump rope
Line jumps
Short sprints

8:00



Meeting

Practice #8

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



6:00-6:15



Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing

6:15-7:15



Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station

7:15-7:40



Pickoffs (Use Outfielders as Base runners)
Have pitchers pickoff actual runners
Can also practice run downs at same time
Pick off to each base

7:40-8:00



Agility
Jump rope
Line jumps
Short sprints

8:00



Meeting

Practice #9

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing
- 6:15-7:15  Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station
- 7:15-7:40  Offensive Execution
Bunting
Hit and Run
Slash
Squeeze
- 7:40-8:00  Catching
Practice throws to each base
Have actual runners steal
Pitchers can work on keeping runners close
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #9

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing
- 6:15-7:15  Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station
- 7:15-7:40  Offensive Execution
Bunting
Hit and Run
Slash
Squeeze
- 7:40-8:00  Catching
Practice throws to each base
Have actual runners steal
Pitchers can work on keeping runners close
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #10

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing
- 6:15-7:15  Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station
- 7:00-8:00  Intersquad (Coaches at 1st and 3rd Bases Giving Signals)
Divide teams into two equal teams
Play three Innings
- 8:00  Meeting

Practice #10

FROM THE COACHES AT THE STRIKE ZONE



- 6:00-6:15  Exercise & Warm Up
Running and stretching
Throwing
- 6:15-7:15  Batting Practice
Group I-Hit
Group II- Ground Balls/Fly balls
Group III- Cage (Soft Toss, Simulated Swings, Tees
Group IV- Shag
Each group spends 15 minutes at each station
- 7:00-8:00  Intersquad (Coaches at 1st and 3rd Bases Giving Signals)
Divide teams into two equal teams
Play three Innings
- 8:00  Meeting



WHAT TO DO IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS



HITTER'S COUNT

	0 strikes	1 strike	2 strikes
0 balls	swing only at hitter's pitches	swing only at hitter's pitches	- throw only pitchers pitches or balls - do not hit and run, make sure any bunt is fair - If 2 out, all forced runners go on swing
1 ball	swing only at hitter's pitches	swing only at hitter's pitches	- if 2 out, all forced runners go on swing - make sure any bunt is fair
2 balls	swing only at hitter's pitches	swing only at hitter's pitches	- if 2 out, all forced runners go on swing - make sure any bunt is fair
3 balls	swing only at hitter's pitches	swing only at hitter's pitches	- if 2 out, all forced runners go on pitch - make sure any bunt is fair

LAST INNING, TYING RUN

	at plate	at 1st	at 2nd	at 3rd
0 out	base runners wait for batter to move them around	outfield use infield technique on grounders	outfield use infield technique on grounders	- infield in to throw runner out at home - outfield let foul fly drop; use do-or-die technique on grounders and flies
1 out	base runners wait for batter to move them around	outfield use infield technique on grounders	outfield use infield technique on grounders	- infield in to throw runner out at home - outfield let foul fly drop; use do-or-die technique on grounders and flies
2 out	base runners wait for batter to move them around	outfield use infield technique on grounders	outfield use infield technique on grounders	- outfield use do-or-die technique on grounders - maximum aggressiveness by base runner at 3rd

LAST INNING, GO-AHEAD RUN

	at plate	at 1st	at 2nd	at 3rd
0 out	base runners wait for batter move them around	outfield use infield technique on grounders	outfield use infield technique on grounders	- infield in to throw runner out at home - outfield let foul fly drop ; use do-or-die technique on grounders and flies
1 out	base runners wait for batter move them around	outfield use infield technique on grounders	outfield use infield technique on grounders	- outfield in to throw out tagging runner - outfield let foul fly drop; use do-or-die technique on grounders and flies
2 out	base runners wait for batter move them around	outfield use infield technique on grounders	outfield use infield technique on grounders	- normal defense positions - outfield use do-or-die technique on grounders - maximum aggressiveness by base runner at 3rd

RUNNER HAS BASE STOLEN

	0 strikes	1 strike	2 strikes
batter should	take the pitch	take the pitch	protect the strike zone



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2 balls	swing only at hitter's pitches	swing only at hitter's pitches	- if 2 out, all forced runners go on swing - make sure any bunt is fair
3 balls	swing only at hitter's pitches	swing only at hitter's pitches	- if 2 out, all forced runners go on pitch - make sure any bunt is fair

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	0 strikes	1 strike	2 strikes
batter should	take the pitch	take the pitch	protect the strike zone

RUNNER AT 3 RD STEALING HOME			
	0 strikes	1 strike	2 strikes
batter should	show bunt then take the pitch	show bunt then take the pitch	bunt fair if strike

LEAD AT			
	1st	2nd	3rd
0 out	on base line	on base line, if forced; 3 feet behind baseline if not	lead off in foul territory, return in fair
1 out	on base line	on base line, if forced; 3 feet behind baseline if not	lead off in foul territory, return in fair
2 out	on base line	on base line, if forced; 10 feet behind baseline if not	lead off in foul territory, return in fair

INFIELD POP WITH RUNNERS AT...			
	0 out	1 out	2 out
no runners	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops
1st	- fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, force runner at second and maybe first - runner tag up, advance if ball not caught	fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, force runner at second and maybe first	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops
1st & 2nd	- fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, tag out any advancing runners - runner tag up; no force because of infield fly rule, may advance if opportunity	fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, tag out any advancing runners runner tag up; no force because of infield fly rule, may advance if opportunity	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops
1st, 2nd, & 3rd	- fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, tag out any advancing runners - runner tag up; no force because of infield fly rule, may advance if opportunity	fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, tag out any advancing runners runner tag up; no force because of infield fly rule, may advance if opportunity	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops
2nd	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops
2nd & 3rd	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops
1st & 3rd	- fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, force runner at 2nd and maybe first, tag advancing runner from 3rd - runner at 1st tag up, advance if ball not caught; runner at 3rd tag up	fielder catch foul pops; let fair pops hit ground, field ball, tag out any advancing runners	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops
3rd	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops	fielder catch all pops except 3rd strike bunt foul pops

OUTFIELD GROUNDER TECHNIQUE		
	not last inning or last inning and ahead by 2 or more	trailing, tied, or ahead by 1 in last inning
no runners	on one knee	on one knee
runner at 1st or 2nd	infielder technique	do or die
runner at 3rd	on one knee	do or die

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batter should	show bunt then take the pitch	show bunt then take the pitch	bunt fair if strike

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runner at 3rd	on one knee	do or die



BASEBALL & FITNESS TESTING



The Strike Zone provides standardized baseball and fitness tests which should be done several times a year to compare results and analyze progress.

Baseball Test:

- 40-60 yard dashes
- Arm strength from Right field to 3 B
- Throws from shortstop to 1B (timed)
- Running Home to First base (timed)
- Running Second base to home plate (timed)
- Bat speed
- Hitting Evaluation
- Pitching Evaluation
- Catcher Pop Times

Fitness Test:

- Pro Agility (timed)
- Jump Rope-60 seconds (timed)
- Push Ups-60 seconds (timed)
- Sit Ups-60 seconds (timed)
- Grip Strength-Straight Arm Bar Hangs
- 40-60 yard dash (timed)
- 300 Yard Shuffle or 1 Mile Run (timed)
- Standing Broad Jump



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