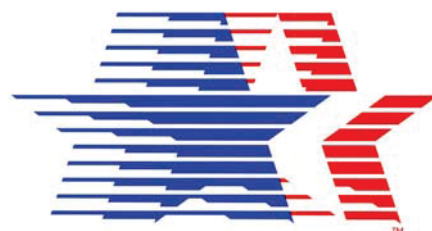


# Baseball Coaching Manual

*Life Ready Through Sport*





**T**he LA84 Foundation (formerly known as the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles) is the private, nonprofit institution created by the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee to manage Southern California's share of the surplus from the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. The LA84 Foundation promotes youth sports opportunities in Southern California and a better understanding of the role sport and its impact on people's lives. Since inception, the Foundation has invested more than \$164 million in youth sports programming by awarding grants to youth sports organizations, initiating sports and coaching education programs and operating the world's premier sports library.

The goal of the LA84 Foundation is to be an innovator in youth sports and coaching, and to increase opportunities for achieving athletic excellence at every level. The Foundation grants financial assistance to organizations providing youth sports opportunities, initiates and operates its own youth sports programs including Run For Fun, Summer Swim, Learn & Play Olympic Sports, and offers free coaching education workshops through the LA84 Foundation Coaching Program. This program provides men and women youth coaches with basic instruction in the philosophy and psychology of coaching young athletes. Information is also provided in the art of teaching, nutrition, general managerial skills necessary for coaching, and specific coaching techniques for particular sports.

For more information, call (323) 730-4600 or visit the LA84 Foundation Web site at [www.LA84Foundation.org](http://www.LA84Foundation.org).

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*The LA84 Foundation wishes to acknowledge the valuable contribution of  
Little League Baseball, Incorporated, in the preparation of this manual.  
This manual is written to cover basic skill levels beginning with tee-ball players.*

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# Forward

**C**oaching youth baseball can be challenging, rewarding, and confusing. So often coaches begin teaching techniques that are too advanced, leading to confusion rather than learning.

It is important to remember to teach based on age, experience, and skill level. Avoid teaching the complex techniques to your players who have not mastered the fundamentals of the game. If an eight-year-old, playing shortstop, has difficulty fielding and throwing to first, don't compound the problem by trying to push him to grip the ball across the seams. Keep it simple; take one step at a time.

Coaches with consistent teaching skills can be a league's strongest asset in developing competent players. Each season should show improvement and development in player ability, as coaches refine the skills taught in previous years. Remember also, one of the most important ingredients in coaching youth baseball is to make sure kids have fun and exciting practices.

As a coach, you cannot promise a championship team, but you can promise you will do your best to prepare your young athletes physically, mentally, and emotionally for the next level of play. If that is accomplished, you have done a good job.

Good luck,

Herb McNeely

# Introduction

Like most coaches, you're probably eager and ready to start working with your team. Initially, you might be tempted to give long, detailed, and complex instructions. This would be fine if young people could absorb all that information, turn around and play well right away. In reality, people learn best through simple yet accurate instructions, followed by time to practice and develop a "feel" for the skills. This manual is written to help you instruct your players simply and accurately.

The subject matter for this manual is organized into three sections for each skill. They are:

- Explain
- Demonstrate
- Practice

These are also three steps used for effective teaching. *Key Points* for each skill are included in these sections and should be used as part of your explanation and demonstration. They are great cues for effectively explaining skills and will help you identify and correct errors. Additionally, because you will learn as you coach, each page has an area for you to write "notes" and "hints" that you learn and don't want to forget.

Above all, remember that this is a working manual! So take it to the practice field! Take time to write notes as soon as possible during or following practice!

## 1

# Warm-Up/ Warm-Down

Warm-up and warm-down should be the first and last part of every practice because:

- Warm-up prepares players for more intense activity.
- Warm-down helps players recover from intense activity to resting levels.
- Both warm-up and warm-down help players perform better and reduce risk of injuries and soreness.
- You will teach habits that will benefit your players for a lifetime.

Stretching, jogging, and easy throwing allow players to gradually increase their heart rate, breathing rate, and ability to perform at a higher level. Without proper warm-up, sudden powerful movements like sprinting and longer endurance or repetitive activities like pitching can damage body tissues.



# Warm-Up/Warm-Down



Gradually decreasing playing intensity (i.e., easy throwing, jogging, and stretching at the end of practice), helps players recover. A proper warm-down reduces undue stress on the heart and helps rid the muscle of some of the waste products of physical activity.

Plan to spend a minimum of 10 minutes warming up and at least five minutes warming down. Baseball has many distinct skills; therefore players must practice independently. Players must warm-up for special skills such as hitting, throwing, base running, and pitching. This doesn't need to take much time; for example, always have an "on-deck" batter warming up during batting practice and have players stretch before base-running and pitching.

Some good baseball warm-up and warm-down activities are presented in the following pages. Emphasize the importance of warm-up and warm-down to every practice and the need for your players to be serious and focused. Practice begins with warm-up, not throwing or batting.

## Hamstring Stretch

### Explain

- This is for the back of the upper-leg, the rear, and the lower back.
- One leg is straight while the other is bent.
- Lean forward to stretch those muscles.
- Keep the lower back flat. Extend from the center of the pelvis. Do not round the back to touch the head to the knee. Do not bounce.

### Demonstrate (Fig. 1-1)

- Sit with both legs in front.
- Bend the right leg so the foot is flat against the side of the left knee.
- Keep leg straight but not locked and lean forward slowly.
- Hold for about 10 seconds.
- Repeat twice.
- Alternate legs.

*Note: On all stretches, remember that everyone has different levels of flexibility. The important thing is to seek gradual improvement and use good form.*



Fig. 1-1 Hamstring Stretch

## Groin Stretch

### Explain

- This stretches the inside of the legs from the knees up to the groin.
- Both legs are bent with the feet pulled toward the groin.
- Gently push the knees down to stretch those muscles.
- Excessive force will cause major soreness in the groin area, which will be slow to heal.

### Demonstrate (Fig. 1-2)

- Sit with both legs straight.
- Pull the feet toward the groin to sit “Indian style.”
- Hold the shins and push the elbows against the inside of the knees.
- Hold for about 10 seconds.
- Repeat twice.



Fig. 1-2 Groin Stretch

## Standing Quad Stretch

### Explain

- This stretch is for the front part of the upper leg.
- One leg is lifted, bending at the knee, while the opposite hand is placed against the backstop.
- Grasp the ankle and gently pull the heel to the buttocks to stretch the muscles.
- Tighten the abdominal muscles so the back does not arch. Keep the trunk upright; do not tip forward.

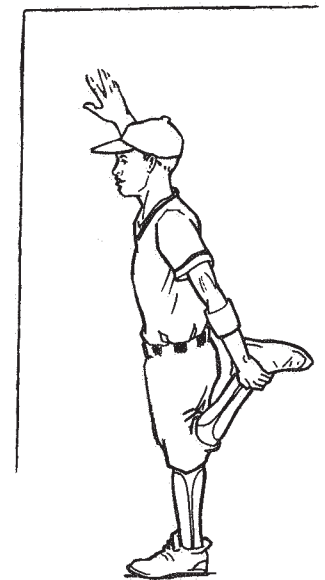


Fig. 1-3a Standing Quad Stretch



**Fig. 1-3b Standing Quad Stretch**  
**WRONG - Twisting Knee**

### **Demonstrate (Fig. 1-3a)**

- Stand and lift one leg, bending at the knee.
- Grasp the ankle with the hand on the same side.
- Place the other hand against the backstop.
- Gently pull the heel up to the buttocks.
- Hold for about 10 seconds.
- Repeat twice.
- Alternate legs.

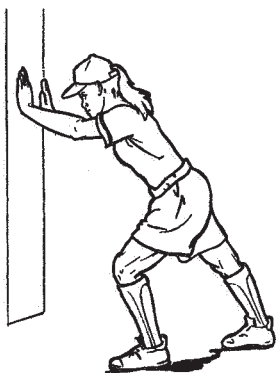
## **Gastrocnemius (Calf) Stretch**

### **Explain**

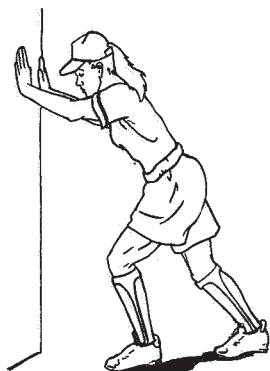
- This stretches the back of the lower leg.
- The leg to be stretched is kept straight, while the other leg is bent.
- Lean forward against the backstop to stretch the muscles.
- Keep toes pointed straight ahead. Keep heels on the ground.

### **Demonstrate (Fig. 1-4a, 1-4b)**

- Stand, placing both hands against an object.
- Step forward with one foot.
- The leg to be stretched should extend backward and be kept straight.
- Lean forward to feel the stretch in the back of the lower leg.
- Hold for about 10 seconds.
- Repeat twice.
- Alternate legs.



**Fig. 1-4a**  
**Calf Stretch, Straight Rear Leg**



**Fig. 1-4b**  
**Calf Stretch, Rear Leg Bent**



## Lateral Stretch

### Explain

- This stretches the side muscles of the torso area.
- One arm is extended overhead with elbow bent to isolate the side muscles. The opposite arm is relaxed and to the side.
- Leaning to the side stretches the muscles.
- Do not rotate the trunk to attempt to stretch further.

### Demonstrate (Fig. 1-5)

- Stand with knees relaxed and feet shoulder width apart.
- Extend one arm overhead with elbow bent.
- Gently lean to the side with the extended arm leading. Slowly slide the opposite hand down the side of the thigh toward the calf and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side.
- Repeat twice.



Fig. 1-5 Lateral Stretch

## Shoulder Turn-Away Stretch

### Explain

- This stretches the shoulder region.
- Extend the arm at shoulder level and place the hand against the backstop to isolate the shoulder.
- Slowly turn away from the backstop with the hand firmly in place and stretch the muscles.
- The shoulder should be aligned with the hand on the backstop.

### Demonstrate (Fig. 1-6)

- Stand perpendicular to the backstop.
- Extend arm at shoulder level.
- Slowly turn away from backstop, keeping hand firmly in place.
- Feel the stretch and hold for about 10 seconds.
- Repeat twice.
- Alternate arms.



Fig. 1-6 Shoulder Turn-Away Stretch

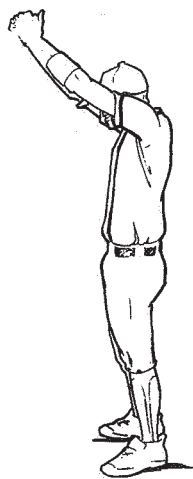


Fig. 1-7a Shoulders Overhead Stretch

## Shoulders Overhead, Behind Back Stretch

### Explain

- This stretches the shoulders, chest, and upper back.
- The first part of the stretch focuses on the front of the shoulders and chest.
- The second part of the stretch focuses on the back of the shoulders and upper back.
- Do not arch the back. Keep the trunk upright for all positions. Keep the chin tucked, not jutting forward.



Fig. 1-7b Behind Back Stretch

### Demonstrate (Fig. 1-7a, 1-7b)

- Stand with the legs shoulder width apart.
- Flex the knees slightly to prevent hyperextension.
- Interlace the fingers in front of the body at shoulder height.
- Hold the arms forward, rounding the upper back.
- Reach upward, squeezing the biceps to the ears.
- Place the arms behind the trunk after stretching overhead, interlace the fingers, and slowly raise the arms behind the back.

## Side and Neck Pull Stretch

### Explain

- This stretches the neck into the shoulders and upper back.
- Placing and holding each arm behind the body helps isolate the neck muscles.
- Do not rotate the head during the stretch.



Fig. 1-8a Side and Neck Pull Stretch

## Demonstrate (Fig. 1-8a, 1-8b, 1-8c)

- Stand with one arm behind the back.
- Bend the elbow with the arm close to the body.
- Grasp the wrist of the arm already behind the body with the opposite hand.
- Gently pull on the wrist of the back arm while tilting the head to the same side as the pulling motion.
- Repeat the motion with the other arm.



Fig. 1-8b Side and Neck Pull Stretch

## Triceps Stretch

### Explain

- This stretches the back of the upper arm.
- One arm extends upward from the shoulder and bends at the elbow so the hand is touching the back.
- The other hand assists the bent arm in holding its position to stretch the muscles on the back of the upper arm.
- Do not arch the back. Keep the arm in line with the ear, not forward.



Fig. 1-8c Side and Neck Pull Stretch  
Rear View

## Demonstrate (Fig. 1-9a, 1-9b)

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart.
- Extend one arm upward from the shoulder.
- Bend at the elbow so the hand is touching the back.
- Use the other hand to assist the bent arm in holding its position by grasping the elbow just below the bend.
- Gently push backward with the assisting hand to cause the hand that was touching the back to move further down the back.
- Hold for about 10 seconds.
- Repeat twice.
- Alternate arms.

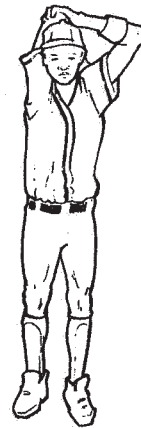


Fig. 1-9a Triceps Stretch



Fig. 1-9b Triceps Stretch  
Rear View

## 2

# Throwing

*Explain to your players that throwing involves how they:*

- Grip the ball
- Throw the ball

Be sure to explain the purpose and function of each throwing component so your players understand how each component adds up to a good throw.

## Grip

### Explain

- Throwing the ball correctly begins with holding or gripping the ball.
- Proper grip will help your players throw straight and control how fast they throw.



## **Demonstrate**

- How to grip the ball as you explain the key points listed below.
- The two common errors of resting the ball in the palm and holding the ball with all the fingers.

## **Key Points**

- Two fingers across the wide, or furthest apart, seams.
- Thumb below the ball.
- Hold firm, but relaxed.
- Have space between the palm and the ball.
- This proper form is also true for pitching.

*Note: Younger players with small hands may need to use three fingers on top of the ball.*

## **Practice**

### **Ball Grip Drill**

- Have players grip the ball and show you the proper grip.
- Have players throw the ball into their glove, then grip the ball without looking.

## Throwing the Ball

### Explain

- To throw well, the arms, body, and legs must work together.
- The throwing arm is bent at 90 degrees, or the “L,” position.
- The arms work in opposition; pulling the front arm down brings the back arm and shoulder forward.
- The legs shift the weight back, then forward to generate force for the throw.
- Release the ball while keeping the eyes on the target.
- Follow through by swinging the throwing arm down to the side of the body and bringing the back foot forward.

### Demonstrate

- How to move the arm.
- How to shift the weight.
- How to release the ball.
- How to follow through.

### Key Points

- Eyes on the target.
- Turn sideways by pivoting.
- Wrist back with “wrinkles.”
- Arm in the “L” position.
- The ball should be higher than the ear.
- Glove pointing to target (take one finger out and point).
- “Step” forward, “reach and throw” release. (Step toward your target.)

- Follow through by swinging the arm across the front of the body and bring the back foot forward.
- Point the throwing hand and ball directly toward the target, snapping the wrist as the ball is released.
- Rotate the thumb downward.
- Land on a flexed, or “soft,” knee.

## **Practice**

- Have players mimic the complete throwing motion.
- Have players practice each throwing component by using the following drills.

### *Wrist Snap Drill*

- Pair up the players and position them 6–10 feet apart in two lines.
- The player with the ball holds the elbow of the throwing arm in the palm of the glove to isolate the forearm.
- Players throw the ball to each other using only forearm and wrist, emphasizing pointing the hand at the target and snapping the wrist.

### *Arm Swing Drill*

- Pair up players and position them 5–10 feet apart forming two lines.
- Players kneel on the knee of the throwing hand.
- Players mimic throw to partner first, then add the ball.

### *Long Toss Drill*

- Pair up players, position them 20 feet apart, and have them throw to each other.
- Gradually move them back 5–10 additional feet after each 4–5 throws.
- Emphasize trying to throw on a line.

## 3

# Fielding

## Fielding the Ball

Explain to your players that to field well they will need to know how to use their glove properly. Encourage the use of small gloves rather than large ones. Short-finger gloves are easier to control and make it easier to remove the ball. Catchers and first basemen use specialized gloves. The components of fielding are:

- Being ready to move in any direction to field the ball.
- Moving into position to field the ball.
- Funneling, or actually catching the ball.

## READY POSITION

### Explain

- Standing with feet about shoulder width apart and leaning forward with knees bent with weight on the balls of the feet will allow players to move forward, backward, or sideways quickly.
- The ready position prepares players to field low balls or quickly adjust to catch bouncing or fly balls.



## Demonstrate (Fig. 3-1)

- How to stand with the feet apart.
- How much to bend the knees.
- How much to shift the weight.

### Key Points

- Feet shoulder width apart. One foot slightly ahead of the other.
- Weight balanced on the balls of the feet.
- Knees bent with shoulders forward in line with the knees.
- Rear down.
- Lean forward.
- Hands loose (not on knees).
- Hands below knees for infielders.
- Hands above knees for outfielders.
- Head up looking at the ball.

## Practice

### Get Ready Drill

- Have players stand up straight and on command or “Ready!” move quickly into a ready position.
- You can make this fun by having them walk before you call, “Ready!”

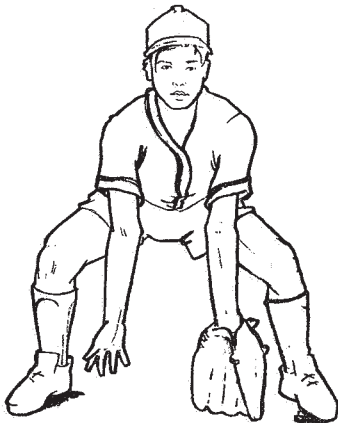


Fig. 3-1 Ready Position

## Moving Into Position

### Explain

- The faster the players move into position to field the ball, the more time they will have to catch and throw it.
- Move in the direction of the ball by either stepping forward, sliding to the side, or doing a drop step and slide.
- Once they reach the ball, they need to be in position to field or stop the ball.

### Demonstrate (Fig. 3-2)

- How to move forward in the direction of the ball.
- How to move left or right by shuffling.
- How to move backward.
- How the hands and feet form a triangle prior to ball contact.

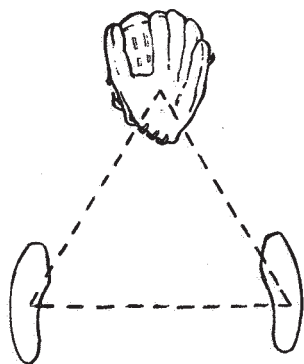


Fig. 3-2 Fielding Stance

### Key Points

- Turn in the direction of the ball.
- To move laterally, step sideways with the foot closest to the ball.
- To move backward, execute a side step with a drop step, then slide or run.
- Move the body into a set, or “triangle,” position in front of the ball.
- Form a triangle with the feet and glove.
- Get the glove and body in front of the ball.
- To cover a greater distance, use the cross-over step. Pivot on the foot closest to the ball and step across with the opposite foot.

# Moving Into Position

3

C H A P T E R

## Practice

### *Direction Drill*

- Line up the players in the ready position.
- Stand in front and hold up the ball so they can see it.
- Players move right, left, forward, or back on a diagonal as you move the ball right, left, up, or down.

### *Partner Roll Drill*

- Pair up the players.
- The player rolls the ball for the partner, who moves to the ball and gets in front of it.
- Start with easy, slow rolls and gradually progress to faster, more challenging rolls.
- Using a softball, let them do this drill without gloves and emphasize the use of both hands.

## Catching the Ball

### Explain

- The ball should be caught, or funneled, at the front tip of the triangle.
- Because the ball often travels fast, it needs to be slowed quickly by cushioning the ball or using “soft hands” (i.e., giving with the ball).

### Demonstrate

- How to form the triangle with the feet and glove.
- How to catch or funnel the ball at the front of the triangle as if it's going through a funnel.
- How to cushion the ball.
- How to use the free hand to secure the ball in the glove and grip it for a throw.

### Key Points

- Ready position
- Triangle position
- Squeeze the ball with the glove and use both hands.
- Place the throwing hand on top of the ball in the glove to secure and grip it for the throw.
- Cushion by bringing the arms and glove into the body with the catch. “Belly button” the ball.
- Look at the ball as it travels all the way into the glove.

### Practice

#### Partner Roll Drill

- Pair up the players and have them stand about 20 feet apart.
- Players alternate rolling balls straight ahead or to the side for their partner to move and field.

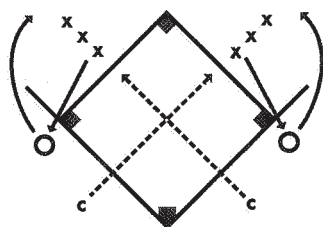


Fig. 3-3 Continuous Catches Drill

#### Continuous Catches Drill (Fig. 3-3)

- Arrange the players into lines directly across from coaches, who hit balls to them. The players place the balls in a bucket and move to the end of the line. Change lines after the players field 15 balls. This is also a good conditioning activity.

#### Rebound Wall Drill

- Individually, players throw tennis or rag balls against a rebound wall and field.

## Fly Balls

### Explain

- The outfielder has the right-of-way over the infielder.
- Sometimes more than one player may be in position to catch the ball, so players need to communicate by calling “I got it!”
- When moving to the side, pivot in direction of the ball using the banana approach (Fig. 3-4).

## Demonstrate

- How to move to the ball.
- How to call for the ball and call others off the ball.

## Key Points

- The eyes watch the ball all the way into the glove.
- Catch the ball in the glove and secure it with the throwing hand.
- Catch toward the throwing side to throw quickly.
- Catch at shoulder level or above.
- When running for the ball, extend the arm and glove only when ready to catch the ball.
- Learn to turn on a ball hit over your head; don't back up.



Fig. 3-4 "Banana" Approach

## Practice

### Footwork Drill

- Place an object where the fielder starts.
- The coach tosses or hits the ball to the player's left or right or directly overhead.
- A pitching machine can also be used.

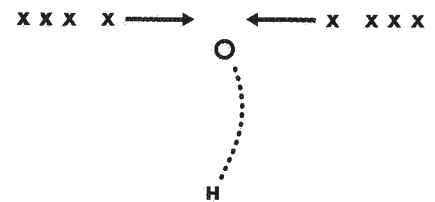


Fig. 3-5 Back-Up Drill

### Back-Up Drill (Fig. 3-5)

- Toss or hit the ball between two players.
- One player calls for the ball, "I got it!" The other crosses behind.

### Blooper Toss Drill (Fig. 3-6)

- A ball machine can be used.
- Toss a short ball between an infielder and an outfielder.
- Emphasize that the infielder goes back hard until called off.
- Stress the importance of communicating, "I got it."

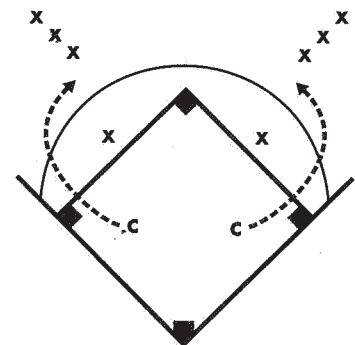


Fig. 3-6 Blooper Toss Drill



## 4

# Position Play

The nine field positions form the defensive unit of a team. Each position functions independently and together with other players to complete plays. With the exception of the catcher, all players must be in fair territory. The nine positions that have developed and are recognized in baseball are:

- Pitcher
- Catcher
- First base
- Second base
- Shortstop
- Third base
- Right field
- Center field
- Left field

*Explain why each position is unique; all defensive players have:*

- Coverage areas
- Playing duties
- Playing strategies

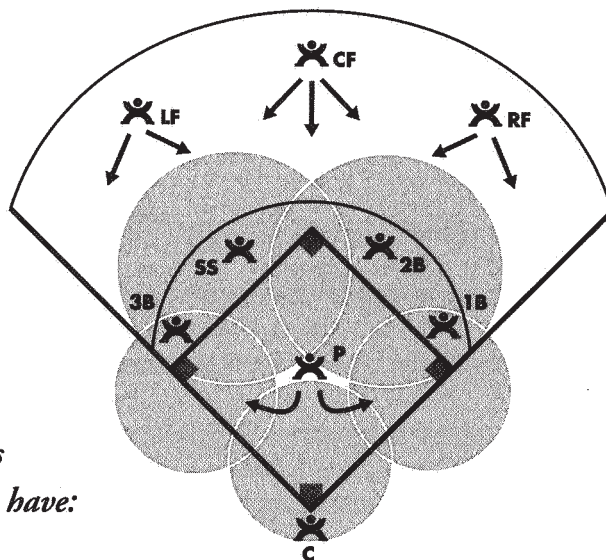


Fig. 4-1 Nine Field Positions

## Catcher

### CATCHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Catching pitches and fielding balls in the coverage areas.
- Directing and aligning players.
- Protecting the plate by tagging out runners trying to score.
- Backing up first base when there are no runners on base.
- Throwing out runners trying to advance.

### CATCHER TECHNIQUES

- Squatting on the balls of the feet for mobility.
- Holding the glove up and open as a target for pitchers.
- Dropping on the knees to block low balls.
- Moving quickly to field balls.

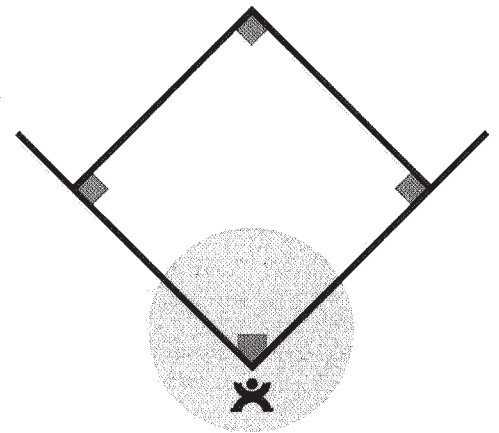


Fig. 4-2 Catcher

### Demonstrate (Fig. 4-2)

- How to wear equipment snugly so it will not come loose.
- How to position the feet further apart with one foot slightly back for a quick throw.
- How to position behind the batter's back elbow and bat swing path.
- How to hold the glove up, open, and steady for a good target.
- How to drop onto the knees and lower the glove to block low balls.
- How to stand, step and throw in one motion.
- How to remove the mask and throw it in the opposite direction while watching a pop-up.
- How to block the plate to tag runners.
- How to tag with the glove low to the ground and secure the ball with the throwing hand.

### *Key Points*

- Hold the throwing hand behind the body.
- Catch in the pocket.
- Stand, step, and throw in one motion straight ahead to the base.
- Stand for runners who are not sliding.
- Kneel and block the plate for runners who slide.

### **Practice**

#### *Low Ball Drill*

- Throw low balls in front of the plate for catchers to block and catch.

#### *Step Up and Throw Drill*

- Pair up the players.
- One player is the catcher and the other stands about 20 feet away.
- Players practice stepping out of a catcher's squat to step and throw in one motion.
- Vary this by having catchers stand behind the plate and throw to each base.

#### *Where's the Ball Drill*

- Pair up the players with one as a catcher and one as a tosser.
- The catcher wears a mask.
- The tosser stands about 5 feet in front of the catcher with the catcher looking straight ahead.
- The tosser tosses the ball underhand up, to the side or behind and calls, "Pop-up."
- The catcher removes the mask and tries to locate and catch the ball.

## First Base

### FIRST BASE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Fielding throws for outs at first.
- Catching the ball first, even if it means leaving the base.
- Positioning the toe on the inside of first base to make outs.
- Calling "Steal!" when a runner breaks for second.
- Relaying or cutting off throws from right field.

### FIRST BASE TECHNIQUES

- Playing 3–4 feet inside the foul line and 3–4 steps behind first base (Fig. 4-3).
- In most situations, the foot opposite the glove hand touches first base.
- Line up the body with the throw.
- Stretch with the glove hand and foot toward the ball, if necessary.

### Demonstrate

- How to place the toe on the inside of first base.
- How to hold the glove at shoulder height as a target.
- How to watch and scoop low balls.
- How to field and toss to the pitcher to make an out at first.

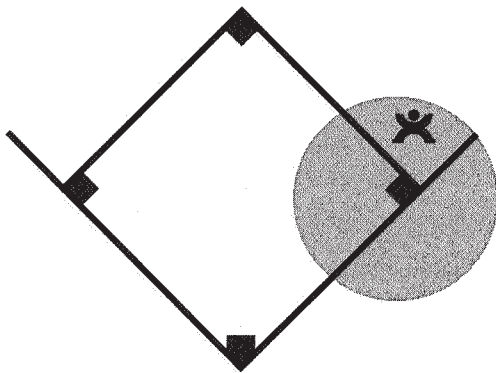


Fig. 4-3 First Base

*Key Points*

- First responsibility: catch the ball.
- Wait for the ball.
- Shift feet to the left or right before stretching to catch, if necessary.
- Toss underhand to the pitcher when the pitcher is covering first base.

**Practice***Wait and Extend Drill*

- Pair up players and positions them about 40 feet apart for throwing and catching.
- Acting as first basemen, players alternate throwing and catching.  
Be sure to:
  - wait for the ball to get closer.
  - plant the back foot.
  - step toward the ball and extend the glove for the catch.

*Scoop Drill*

- Pair up the players or work with the first baseman only.
- Catch low throws by stretching and scooping.

**Second Base****SECOND BASE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Playing 10–15 feet toward first base and 6–8 feet behind the baseline (Fig. 4-4).
- Covering second base on ball hit to left side, except in bunt situations.
- Sharing second base coverage with the shortstop for steals.
- Covering first base if the first baseman moves from first to field bunts or fly balls.
- Relaying and cutting off throws from the outfield.



## Demonstrate

- How to step and throw to first quickly.
- How to place the foot on the side of the base to receive throws for the force out.
- How to straddle the base to receive throws from the catcher for steals.
- How to apply a tag.

## Key Points

- Do not throw too hard since the positions are so close.
- Move the glove away as soon as the runner is tagged to get out of the runner's way.
- On a forced out, get there quickly and face the throw.
- Step on the base with the left foot when turning a double play.

## Practice

### Throw Down Drill

- Practice straddling the base and taking throws from the catcher for steals.

### Force Play or Double Play Drill

- Hit ground balls to third and shortstop, with the second baseman taking throws from each.

### Feed Drill

- Hit ground balls to the right and left of the second baseman, who underhands or throws them to the shortstop covering second.

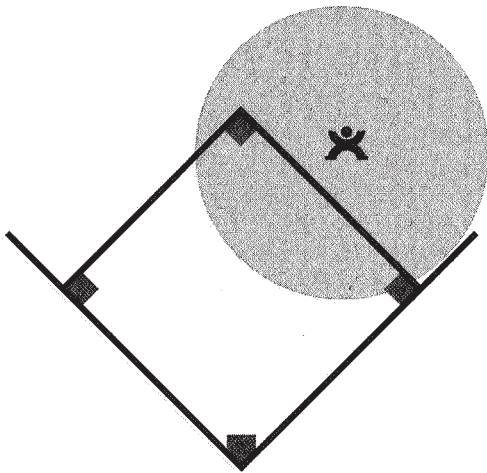


Fig. 4-4 Second Base

## Shortstop

### SHORTSTOP RESPONSIBILITIES

- Playing slightly in front of or behind the baseline (Fig. 4-5).
- Sharing second base coverage with the second baseman for steals.
- Covering second base on balls hit to the right side of the field, except during bunt situations.
- Straddling second base to receive throws for force-outs, then moving away from the base.
- Relaying or cutting off throws from the outfield.
- Backing up third base on throws from the catcher.
- Being the infield leader.

### Demonstrate

- How to step and throw to bases quickly.
- How to place the foot on base for a force-out.
- How to apply a tag.

### Key Points

- Stepping with the front foot toward the ball for a force-out.
- Dragging the back foot across the base on a double play.
- Moving the glove away as soon as a runner is tagged.

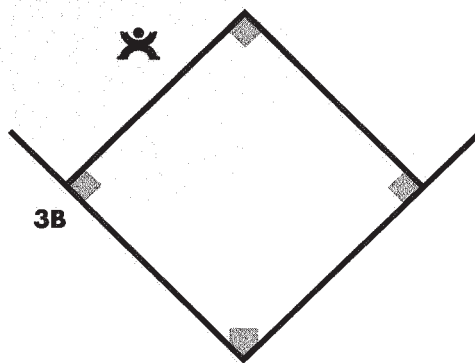


Fig. 4-5 Shortstop

## Third Base

### THIRD BASE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Playing about 3–4 steps inside the foul line and 2–3 steps behind the baseline (Fig. 4-6).
- Playing 6–8 feet in front of the baseline for bunts.
- Taking pop flies between third base and home plate.
- Fielding bunts to the third base side.
- Touching the inside of the base for a force-out.
- Fielding any playable grounder to the left in front of the shortstop.

### Demonstrate

- How to touch the side of the base and move away for force-outs.
- How to straddle the base to receive throws for steals and tag-outs.
- How to apply a tag.
- How to field bunts with a bare hand.

### Key Points

- Step with the front foot toward the ball in a force-out.
- Move glove away as soon as runner is tagged.
- Do not take the eyes off the ball on a bare hand pick-up.
- Be sure players are ready for hard hit balls.

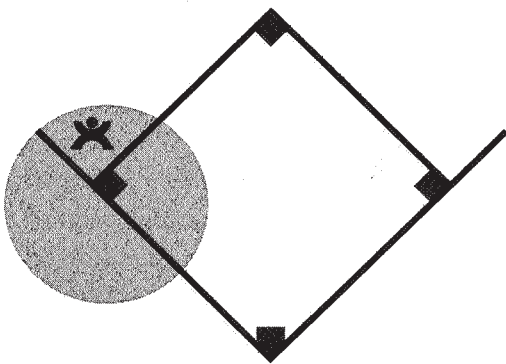


Fig. 4-6 Third Base

## Pitcher

### PITCHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Following through from the pitching motion into proper fielding position.
- Fielding balls in the coverage area (Fig. 4-7).
- Covering first base when the first baseman fields and cannot make the play.
- Covering home plate for the catcher.
- Helping players locate pop-ups, especially the catcher.
- Calling which fielder should catch pop-ups.
- Backing up third base and the catcher on throws from the outfield.
- Covering the area around the mound and home plate for bunts.

### Demonstrate

- How to follow through the pitching motion by stepping forward with the back foot and going into the fielding position.
- How to run to first base to receive a throw.
- How to cover home plate.
- How to back up third base and the catcher.
- Bare hand pick-ups.

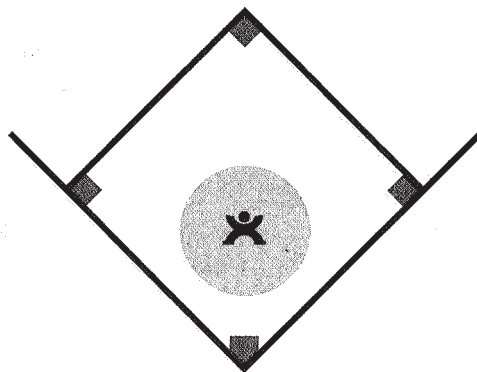


Fig. 4-7 Pitcher

**Key Points**

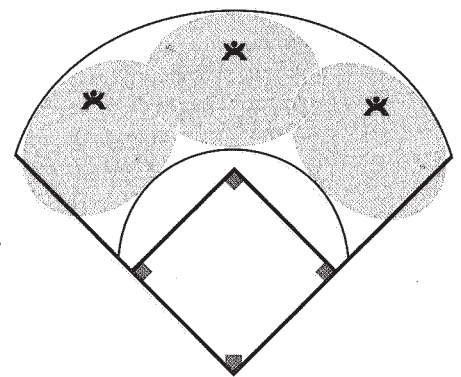
- Break toward first base.
- Curve to approach first base parallel to the foul line.
- Slow down just before catching.
- Watch the ball go into the glove.
- Touch the inside edge of first base.
- Stand at the edge of the base for a force-out.
- Stand on the infield side of home plate to apply a tag.

**Practice****Follow-Through Drill**

- Pair up and position the players 30–40 feet apart.
- One player is the pitcher and the other is the thrower.
- The pitcher goes through the throwing motion and follows through into the fielding position.
- The thrower throws balls for the pitcher to field just at the end of the pitching motion.
- The thrower should alternate pop-ups and line drives to the left and right side.

**Outfield****OUTFIELD RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Right and left fielders play 30–40 feet from the foul line; the center fielder plays in line with second base (Fig. 4-8).
- Be aware that they are the last line of defense.
- Anticipate plays and move quickly.
- Center fielder is the traffic cop who directs the right and left fielders.
- Back up the other outfielders.
- Back up the infield on all hits and throws.
- Throw to cut-offs and relays one base ahead of the runner to keep the player from advancing.

**Fig. 4-8 Outfield**



**Demonstrate**

- How to be positioned in the outfield.
- How to throw to the appropriate relay or cut-off position.
- How to back up the bases.
- How to feel for the fence with one hand.

**Key Points**

- Shift for left-handed, weak, and strong hitters.
- Throw one base ahead of the runner.
- Move about 15–20 feet behind the bases to back them up.

**Note for tee-ball players:**

- Stress the importance of getting in front of balls.
- Square the shoulders to home plate on batted balls.
- Teach the ready position:
  - toes pointed straight ahead.
  - feet about shoulder width apart.
  - knees bent, butt down.
  - lean forward with the head up.

**INFIELD AND OUTFIELD DRILLS****Partner Roll Drill**

- Pair up players and have them stand about 20 feet apart.
- Players alternate rolling balls straight ahead or to the side for their partner to move and field.

**Continuous Catches Drill (Fig. 3-3, page 30)**

- Arrange the players into lines directly across from coaches who hit balls to players. The players place the ball in a bucket and move to the end of the line. Change lines after players field 15 balls. This is a good conditioning activity.

## *Rebound Wall Drill*

- Individually, players throw tennis or rag balls against a rebound wall and field them.

## *Moving to Ball Drill*

- Place an object where the fielder starts.
- The coach tosses or hits the ball to the player's left or right or directly overhead.
- A pitching machine can also be used.

## *Back-Up Drill (Fig. 3-5, page 31)*

- Toss or hit the ball between two players.
- One player calls for the ball, "I got it, I got it!" The other player crosses behind.

## *Blooper Toss Drill (Fig. 3-6, page 31)*

- A ball machine can be used.
- Toss a short ball between an infielder and an outfielder.
- Emphasize that the infield goes back hard until called off.
- Stress the importance of communicating, "I got it!"

## *Throw to Cut-Off Drill*

- Position the outfielders and infielders and hit to the outfielders.
- The outfielders throw to the appropriate cut-off positions.
- Add runners to emphasize throwing one base ahead.

## *Infield-Outfield Back-Up Drill*

- Position the outfielders and infielders; hit to the infielders and have them throw to the bases.
- The outfielders must run in to back up each base and each throw.
- Hit the ball over the outfielders' heads.
- Hit the ball into the gaps.

## Defending Against Bunts

### Explain

- The most effective bunts are down the first and third baselines.
- In bunt situations, the first and third basemen play in front of their bases and closer to home plate. The pitcher charges toward the ball after a follow-through.
- The second baseman will need to cover first base.
- The shortstops will need to cover second base when a runner is already on first base or to cover third base when a runner is already on second base.
- Outfielders move in to back up infielders.
- Be sure to get an out.
- For forced plays, attempt to get the lead runner.

### Demonstrate (Fig. 4-9a, 4-9b)

- How to move to cover against a bunt with all combinations of base runners.
- How to move to field bunts to the first base side, the third base side, and toward the pitcher.

## BUNT COVERAGE DRILLS

### *Bunt Movement Drill*

- Position the players at their regular positions on the field and the coach at plate. The coach stands in the batter's box tossing balls along first base and third base and toward the pitching area.
- The batter either squares to bunt or swings away. If the batter swings away, the players remain in their regular positions. If the batter squares to bunt, the players move to field and cover the bases.
- Practice with all combinations of base runners.

### *Bunt Fielding Drill*

- The same as the Bunt Movement Drill only have the players field tossed balls or conduct the drill during batting practice for bunts.
- Practice with all combinations of base runners.

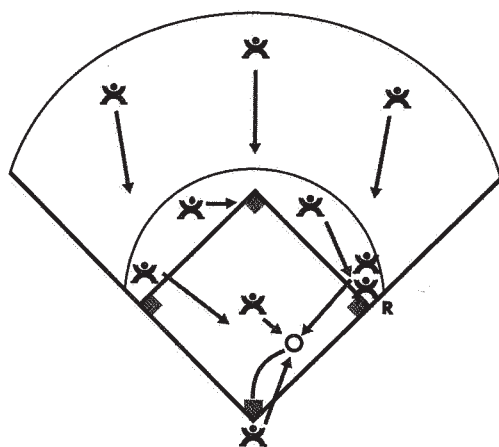


Fig. 4-9a

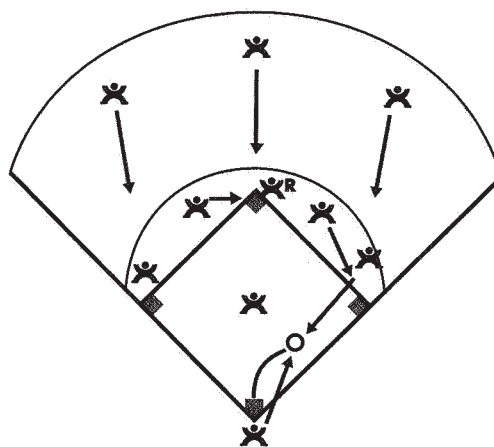


Fig. 4-9b

Defending Against Bunts

## 5

# Pitching

Explain that pitching is the key action in baseball because pitchers initiate the action. Pitching is a precise and powerful type of throwing. Pitching includes the:

- Grip
- Body position on the rubber
- The act of throwing the ball

The most important part of pitching is throwing strikes. Even the best defense cannot defend against walks.

## Grip

### Explain

- The pitching grip is similar to the throwing grip.
- The ball should be in the fingers, not the palm of the hand.
- Gripping the ball across the wide seams gives more control (Fig. 5-1).
- Gripping the ball along with the seams gives more movement (Fig. 5-2).



**Demonstrate**

- How to grip with two fingers on top and the thumb below.
- How to grip across the wide seams.
- How to grip along with the seams.

**Key Points**

- Keep the ball out of the palm.
- Hold firm until the release.

**Practice****Ball Grip Drill**

- Have players grip the ball and show you the proper grip.
- Have players throw the ball into their glove, then grip the ball without looking at it.

**Fig. 5-1 Cross-Seam Grip****Body Position on the Rubber****Explain**

- Once pitchers step on the rubber they must either:
  - Take a sign from the catcher.
  - Pitch to the batter.
- The position on the rubber is an important element in pitching correctly (Fig. 5-3).

**Demonstrate**

- How to pivot with the foot half on and half off the pitching rubber.
- How to read signs from the catcher.

**Key Points**

- Pitchers must have both feet completely within the ends of the pitching rubber.
- Stand comfortably on the rubber.
- Slide the pivot foot on the rubber; do not step off or raise the foot.

**Fig. 5-2 With-Seam Grip**

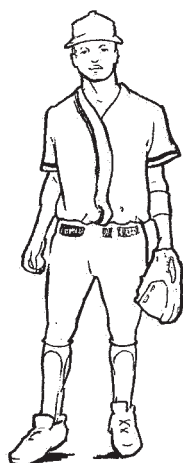


Fig. 5-3 Pitching Stance

## THROWING THE BALL

### Explain

- Pitching is similar to the throwing motion.
- The pitch can be thrown from a wind-up or stretch position.
- The importance of the wind-up and push-off is to help the legs and arms generate power.
- The pitching sequence is the wind-up, delivery, and follow-through.

## Throwing From a Wind-Up

### Demonstrate (Fig. 5-4 to 5-9)

- How to stand on the rubber with the feet pointing to home plate.
- How to grip the ball and keep the hand in the glove.
- How to step back with the non-pitching foot to shift the weight back; called the “rocker step.”



Fig. 5-4



Fig. 5-5



Fig. 5-6

- How to step forward and pivot on the pitching, or push-off foot, so the shoulders are closed and pointing to home plate.
- How to keep contact with the rubber and drive off the rubber bringing the entire weight forward.
- How to follow through into the fielding position.

## *Key Points*

- Pivot and coil the body; a right hander goes toward first base.
- Swing the pitching arm forward as the foot steps forward.
- Keep the body low, the knees bent and the eyes on the target.
- Keep the elbow at or above shoulder level.
- Keep the elbow in an "L" position, then reach forward.
- Point the front foot at the target.
- Move the entire body toward the target.
- Snap the wrist at the release.



Fig. 5-7

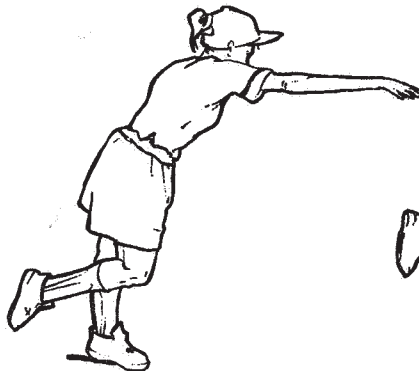


Fig. 5-8



Fig. 5-9

## Practice

### *Rock Back and Twist Drill*

- Have players practice shifting their weight back and forward by stepping or rocking back and stepping forward as they twist or pivot on their push-off foot.
- The focus should be on pivoting the body from the foot, rather than twisting from the waist.

### *Follow-Through Drill*

- Pair up and position players 30–40 feet apart.
- One player is the pitcher and the other is the thrower.
- The pitcher goes through the throwing motion and follows through into the fielding position.
- The thrower throws balls for the pitcher to field just at the end of the pitching motion.
- The thrower should alternate pop-ups and line drives to the left and right side.

### *Balance Position Drill*

- Position players in line with the ball, standing sideways, ready to throw.
- Lift the front leg, hold weight on the push-off leg for a count of three.
- Repeat until comfortable.

### *Attitude*

- Remind players that pitchers must have control of their emotions and cannot react to “bad” calls. A pitcher must always maintain focus.

## Arm Care

- Use a pitching chart to count the number of pitches to help determine when a pitcher is tiring.
- When not pitching, wear a jacket.
- Apply ice on the arm and shoulder after pitching.

## 6

# Hitting

*Explain that hitting takes time and practice to master.*

*Learning to hit includes the:*

- Grip
- Stance
- Swing

For players from tee-ball age to high school age, use the batting tee as the primary tool to teach hitting.

*Note: If a child is hitting very well even with bad form, don't interfere! If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Let the child be relaxed and comfortable.*

There is a natural progression for good hitting:

- Contact
- Consistent contact
- *Hard*, consistent contact

## Grip

### Explain

- Select a bat you can control.
  - A bat that generates speed through the entire swing.
  - A bat heavy enough to generate power.
  - Use a firm grip with the bottom hand, a loose grip with the top hand.

### Demonstrate

- How to select a bat.
- How to grip the bat.
- How to grip with the fingers, not the palm.
- How to use a firm grip.
- How to choke up.

### Key Points

- A loose, relaxed top-hand grip is essential for quickness and power.
- Right-handed batters place their left hand next to the knob and their right hand above the left. Left-handed batters do the opposite.
- Leave no space between the hands.
- Choke up to gain more control.

### Practice

#### *Bat Selection Drill*

- Grab the bat with one hand at the bottom of the handle.
- Extend the bat straight out and bring it to shoulder height.
- Hold for 15 seconds.
- If unable to do this, select a lighter bat.



## Stance

### Explain (Fig. 6-1)

- The feet should be shoulder width apart.
- The weight should be on the balls of the feet.
- The knees should be bent slightly.
- Bend forward slightly from the waist.
- Keep the head, shoulders, and hips level.
- Hold the hands letter high and over the back leg, arms away from the body.
- Hold the bat at approximately a 45-degree angle.

### Demonstrate

- How to stand balanced.
- How to keep the bat quiet.
- Correct body and foot positions.

### Key Points

- Be comfortable, relaxed, and alert.
- Have “soft” knees.

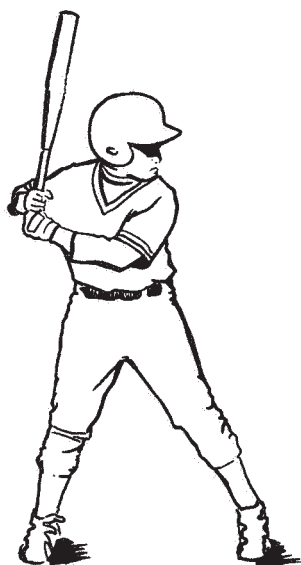


Fig. 6-1 Stance

## Stride

### Explain

- Step 6–8 inches directly toward the pitcher. This step should be as small as possible to help keep the head still.
- Keep the hands and body weight back during the stride forward.
- Pick up the release point of the ball with both eyes.

### Demonstrate

- How to step directly toward the pitch.
- How to keep the weight back.

### Key Points

- Step smoothly, not herky-jerky.
- Land with a “soft” knee.

## Hips

### Explain

- Hip action is more responsible for generating power than either the hands or wrist.
- Opening the hips helps turn the shoulders.
- A “quick belly button” initiates the rotation of the hips.

### Demonstrate

- How to rotate the hips.
- How to pivot on the back foot.

### Key Points

- Hips initiate the swing and shoulder turn.

## Swing

### Explain

- Keep the eyes on the ball.
- The hands move forward.
- Bring the knob of the bat to the pitcher.
- Initially, the swing moves slightly downward and then levels off.
- Shift the weight forward on contact with the ball.
- The arms are extended fully at the point of contact (in front of the plate).
- Explain the “hitting zone” (in front of the plate).

### Demonstrate (Fig. 6-2a-e)

- How to begin the swing.
- How to use the hands in the swing.
- How the body is positioned at the contact point.

### Key Points

- Watch the ball hit the bat.
- Tuck the chin down.
- Contact the ball in front of the plate.
- Hit the ball on the “sweet spot” of the bat (Fig. 6-3).

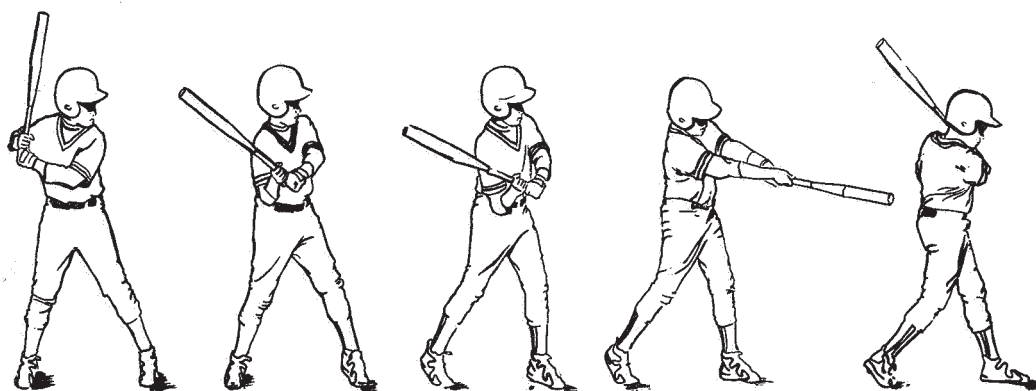


Fig. 6-2a-e

## Follow-Through

### Explain

- The hands and bat hit through the ball.
- After contact, the swing causes the top wrist to roll over.
- The front leg is straight, the back leg is in an “L,” or bent, position.
- The arms continue to swing through for power.
- Upon completion of the follow-through, the hitter should be balanced, with the body facing the direction of the ball.

### Demonstrate

- How to roll the wrists.
- How to follow through with good body balance.

### Key Points

- Do a wrist roll after contact.
- The belly button faces the pitcher after the swing.
- The well-balanced position allows for a quick start to first base.

### Practice

#### *Swing Check Drill*

- Prepare cards for each player with key points for swing.
- Pair up the players. One player has a card, the other is the batter.
- The batter steps and swings slowly.
- The player with the checklist monitors for proper technique.
- Alternate roles.

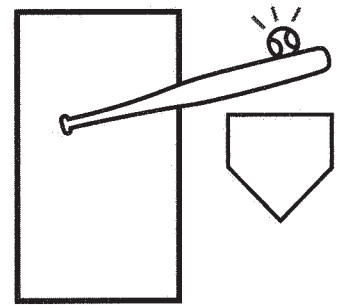


Fig. 6-3 “Sweet Spot”

### *Batting Tee Drill*

- Use a batting tee.
- Be sure the tee is placed ahead of the front foot and in front of the plate (not on it).
- The player swings and hits.

*Note: Emphasize the use of a batting tee throughout all levels of playing on a regular basis.*

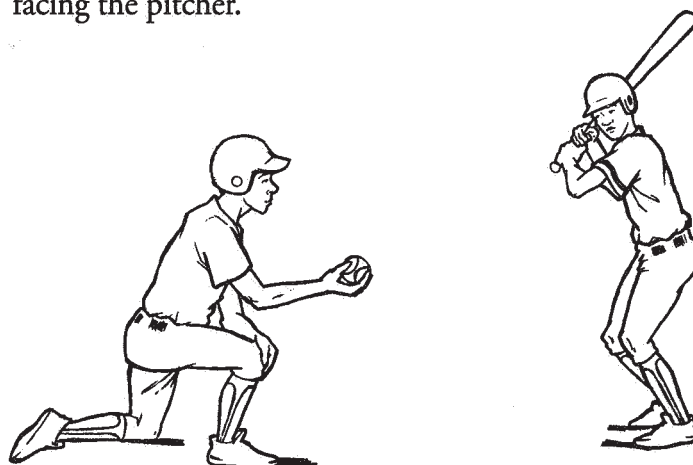
### *Soft Toss Drill (Fig. 6-4)*

- Pair up players. One player tosses balls while the other bats. Balls are tossed in front of the batter, so the arms are extended upon contact with the ball.
- The batter stands 10–12 feet away from a fence or screen, hits balls into it.
- The partner kneels about 10–12 feet away from the batter and at about 45 degrees between the fence/screen and the batter.

## **Bunting**

### **Explain**

- The purpose of bunting is to sacrifice a full swing to advance a runner or to gain a base hit.
- Pivot on the front foot and position both feet so you're not "opened up," facing the pitcher.



**Fig. 6-4 Soft Toss**

- Watch the ball all the way to the bat.
- Keep the shoulders square and level — do not dip.
- Slide the top hand down to the lower or middle part of the barrel (Fig. 6-5).
- Keep the elbows pointing to the ground and away from the body.
- Balance the weight on the balls of the feet.

## Demonstrate

- How to move into the bunting stance.
- How to grip the bat.
- How to move the body up and down with the legs.
- How to direct the ball by angling the bat to the left or right.
- How to hit the top half of the ball.

## Key Points

- Watch the ball all the way to the bat.
- Move the bat slightly down onto the ball to prevent pop-ups.
- Bunt softly as if catching the ball with the bat.
- The large part of the bat (the barrel) should be higher than the knob.
- Only bunt strikes.

## Practice

### Catch With Bat Drill

- Pair up players. One player tosses the ball while the other bunts.
- Position the players about 15–20 feet apart.
- The bunter tries to catch the ball on the bat — make it drop straight down.
- When players feel able, practice with actual pitched balls.

### Partner Bunt Drill

- Pair up players. One player bunts while the other pitches.
- Position the players about 20–25 feet apart.
- Pitch balls at a moderate speed.
- Bunt to the left, right, and straight ahead.



Fig. 6-5 Bunting



## 7

# Base-Running

Explain that base-running involves two things:

- Knowing how to run around and touch bases; and
- Making judgments about how and when to run.

Base-running is divided into five parts:

- Running to first
- Rounding the bases
- Sliding
- Lead-offs
- Stealing

## Note to Coaches

Smart, fundamental, and controlled aggressive base-running can turn a player with below average speed into an above average player on the base paths, adding pressure to opposing defenses.

Quickness can be more of an asset than speed. Your fastest player may not be your quickest runner. Quickness can be developed and improved upon through good technique and practice.

Quickness: 3 to 5 steps = Top Speed

Fast: 8 to 10 steps = Top Speed

## Running to First Base

### Explain

- First base and home plate are the only bases players can overrun without being tagged out.
- Running to first should be an all-out sprint.
- Always run through first base to the other side before slowing.

### Demonstrate

- How to leave the batter's box and run to first.
- How to run to the outside of the first baseman.
- How to run beyond first base.
- How to turn to the foul area, then hustle back to first.

### Key Points

- After contact, stay low, step, and drive directly toward first from the batter's box.
- Within the first three strides, a decision should be made to run through the bag at first base (if the batted ball has any chance of being played by an infielder).

- Once the decision is made to run through first base, the runner should focus on three things:
  - Running full speed.
  - Running outside of the first base line.
  - Focusing on a spot approximately 6–8 feet beyond first base to begin slowing down.
- Try and step in the center of the first base bag.
- Never jump or lunge — it's faster to run through.
- Avoid sliding into first base. There is no advantage unless the baseman is attempting to tag.
- After touching, look to the foul area for wild throws.
- Turning toward the fair area may be considered an attempt to run to second base.

### **Practice**

#### *Home Past First Drill*

- Players start in the batter's box and mimic the batting motion.
- Step directly toward first and run through first.
- Turn toward the foul area and hustle to first.

#### *Home to First Timing*

- Have the runner stand in the right-hand hitter's box, with the left toe touching home plate.
- With stopwatch in hand, start the runner.
- Stop the watch at the point of contact with first base.

## Rounding Bases

### Explain

- The key to rounding bases is maintaining as much speed as possible.
- Players should use the base to help them turn (Fig. 7-1).

### Demonstrate

- How to swing wide as you approach the base.
- How to touch inside a base with the inside of the left foot.
- How to push off base to help turn and run to the next base.
- How to round the base and return to it if the ball is thrown to infielders.

### Key Points

- Look for and listen to the base coaches for directions.
- Touching base with the outside foot is O.K., just do not break stride.
- Use the banana approach.
- Turn sharply and accelerate away from the base.
- After contact, stay low, step, and drive directly toward first from the batter's box.
- Within the first three strides, a decision should be made to round the bag at first base (if the ball goes through the infield and will be played by an outfielder).
- Once the decision is made to round the bag, the runner should focus on three things:
  - Running at full speed.
  - The spot from which the player starts the banana.
  - Rounding the bag with the intention of going to second base, until the outfielder fields the ball and prevents you from doing so.
- When returning to the first base bag, never turn your back on the ball. Watch the ball as you go back to the bag.

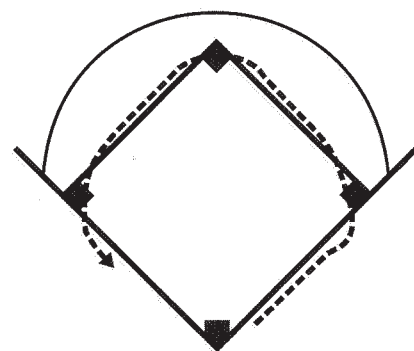


Fig. 7-1 Rounding Bases

- For balls hit to the left and center, return facing the infield; for balls hit to the right, return facing right, always watching the ball.

## **Practice**

### *Rounding Bases Drill*

- Players practice approaching the base.
- Touch the inside of the base, push off, and accelerate to the next base.

### *Adjusting Stride Drill*

- Players run toward the base from different distances.
- Try to adjust the stride so the left foot always touches the inside of the base.

### *Banana Drill*

- Have a coach stand in the baseline at the spot at which the runner should start the banana.
- Have the player run directly at the coach, full speed, and make the banana around the coach.

## **Sliding**

### **Explain**

- Sliding is the way to get around or under the tag and touch base.
- Sliding helps players touch base quickly and stop without overrunning the base.
- Sliding can be dangerous if not performed correctly.

## Demonstrate (Fig. 7-2a-d)

- How to ease into a slide — not a jump.
- How to bend one leg under the other, with the top leg straight.
- How to keep the hands up.
- How to slide straight into the base.
- Emphasize a left leg lead and a right leg tuck. Good, safe sliding requires a sense of timing that only comes with practice. Conduct sliding practice regularly and often.

## Key Points

- Practice sliding on wet grass or cardboard without shoes.
- Slide in old jeans or sweats.
- Keep the weight on the outside of the bent leg.
- Begin to slide by sitting down on the bent leg.
- Keep the knees bent during the slide.
- Bend the knee of the front leg 6–8 feet prior to touching the base, to prevent injury.
- Keep the arms up.
- Avoid sliding headfirst.



Fig. 7-2a-d



**Practice*****Slide Drill***

- If you use a base, it should not be fixed to the ground.
- Use cardboard, no shoes.
- Have several lines sliding parallel to each other.
- Players run at moderate speed, bend the back leg inward, and sit into the slide.
- Practice often. Good sliding is based on good technique and timing.

**Lead-Off****Explain**

- Getting as close to the next base as possible, to gain advantage, without being put out by a pick-off.

**Demonstrate**

- First step off the base with the left foot.
- Square off, facing home plate.
- Ready position: feet pointed straight ahead and shoulder width apart, knees bent, butt down, leaning forward on the balls of the feet.
- Watch the pitcher closely.
- Take 2 to 3 slide steps while in the ready position toward the next base.
- On pick-off attempts, return to the outfield side of the bag, standing.
- When necessary, dive back to the outfield side of the bag with the left hand.

***Key Points***

- Avoid jumping or hopping.
- Avoid leaning.
- Keep the weight balanced.
- Watch the pitcher.

**Practice**

- Have the team pitchers work on pick-offs with runners.
- Use left and right-handed pitchers, when possible.

**Base Stealing****Explain**

- Base stealing is a way to advance to another base on a pitch.
- Stealing allows a runner to get in scoring position at second or third base.
- How to avoid the easy force play at second base.

**Demonstrate**

- Lean and pivot on the right foot toward the next base, crossing over with the left leg.
- Stay low, driving with short, choppy steps to build speed.
- Once committed, the runner's focus should be:
  - Running full speed
  - Running in a straight line
  - Identifying the point at which to begin the slide.

**Key Points**

- Once committed to a steal, do not watch the ball.
- After sliding safely, find the ball immediately.

# 8

## Practice Organization

One very important factor in developing a successful baseball program that meets the needs of the players is to have an outstanding facility. The appropriateness of the facility allows managers and coaches flexibility in designing work stations for scheduling fundamental drills for each position. The following facility layouts provide examples for modifications depending on the managers and coaches' practice schedule.

*Design your practice plan so that you:*

- Keep the players hustling
- Are well-organized (a written practice schedule)
- Plan the work and work the plan
- Have knowledgeable coaches at each station

# Practice Organization

*All practices begin with:*

- Easy jog (approx. 200–400 yds.)
- Warm-up session (Chapter 1)
- Finish warm-ups with a faster jog.
- Run a series of sprints beginning at 20 ft. to 75 ft.
- Practice sliding
- Throwing

Consider the two-hour practice schedule designed for a facility that is laid out for station work (Fig. 8-1 for station locations).

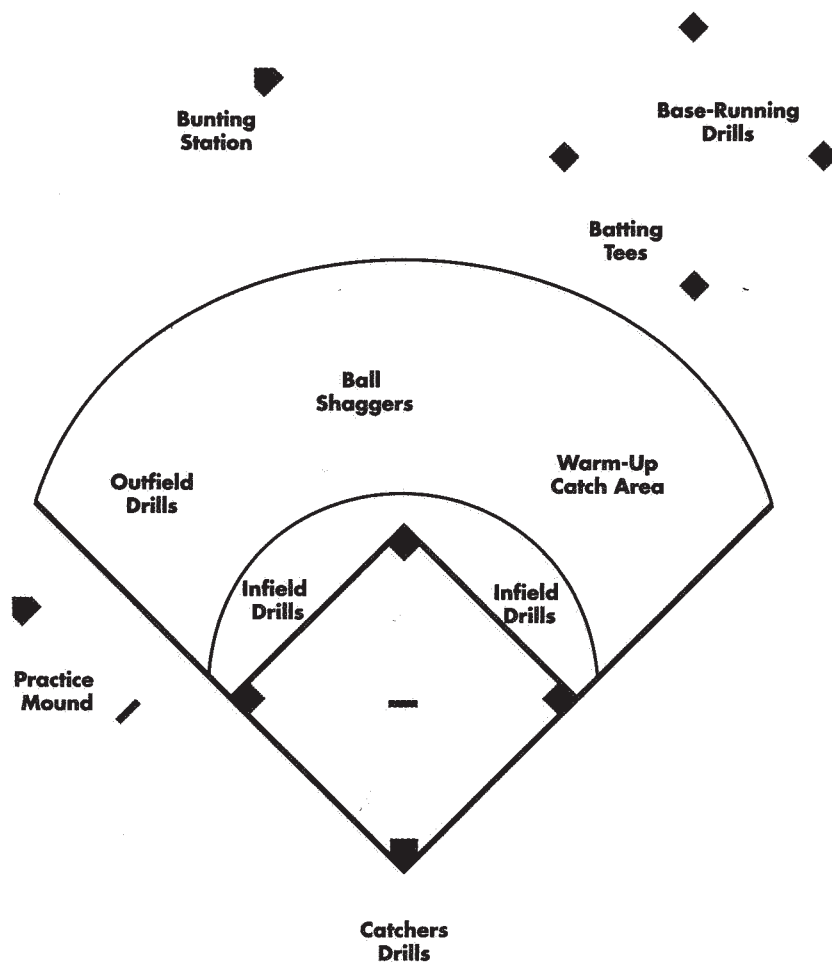


Fig. 8-1 Simultaneous Station Locations

## Sample Practice Organization Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Log #: \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment set-up \_\_\_\_\_

Pitchers' workout: \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Pitchers \_\_\_\_\_

Catchers \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Note 1: Practice begins for all players at the same time.*

*Note 2: Proceed with a warm-up session as prescribed in Chapter 1.  
(Establish a sequence of warm-ups that all players know.)*

# Practice Organization

Fundamental station work; varies daily and includes:

- Station fielding and throwing
- Station position play
- Station base-running
- Station bunting
- Station hitting

*Note 3: Station work where everyone is involved is simultaneously occurring on the same facility (Fig. 8-1).*

Warm-down and field maintenance.

## Comments:

Practice length should be age appropriate (i.e., 10- to 12-year-olds: 1½ to 2 hours, two to four times a week in pre-season; one to two times a week during the season).

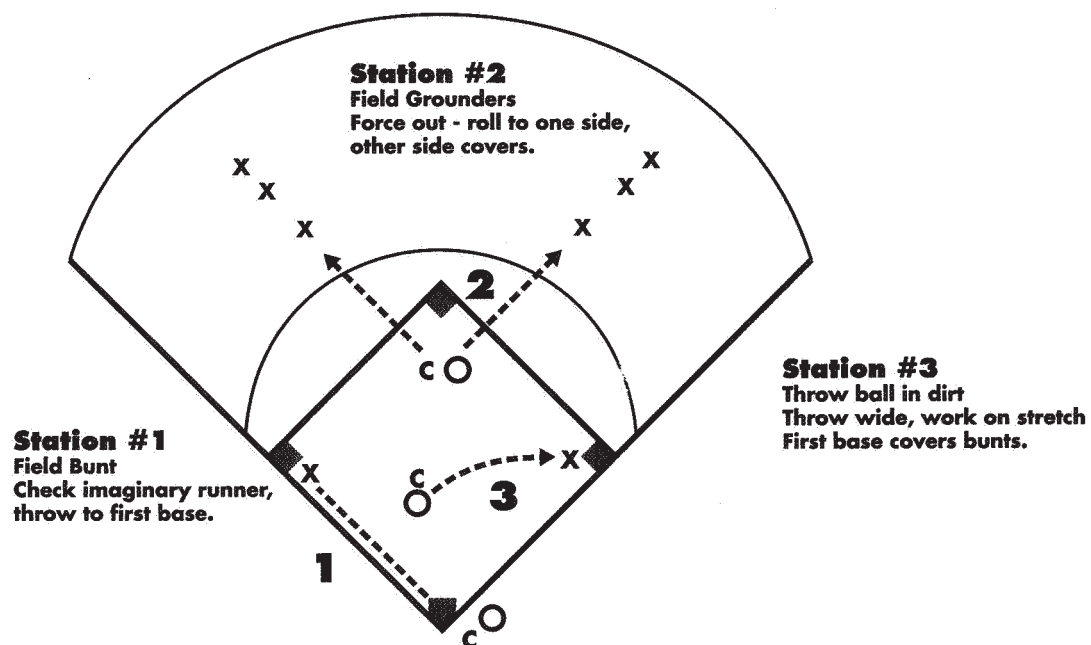
Players should have responsibility to care for equipment and field set-up and break-down.

Finally, find ways to maintain and make available to the players a facility that is safe and meets the regulations for sanctioned play. The facility is part of the equipment; therefore, it also should be in good repair, free of holes, glass, protruding sprinkler systems, and obstacles like trees or walls.

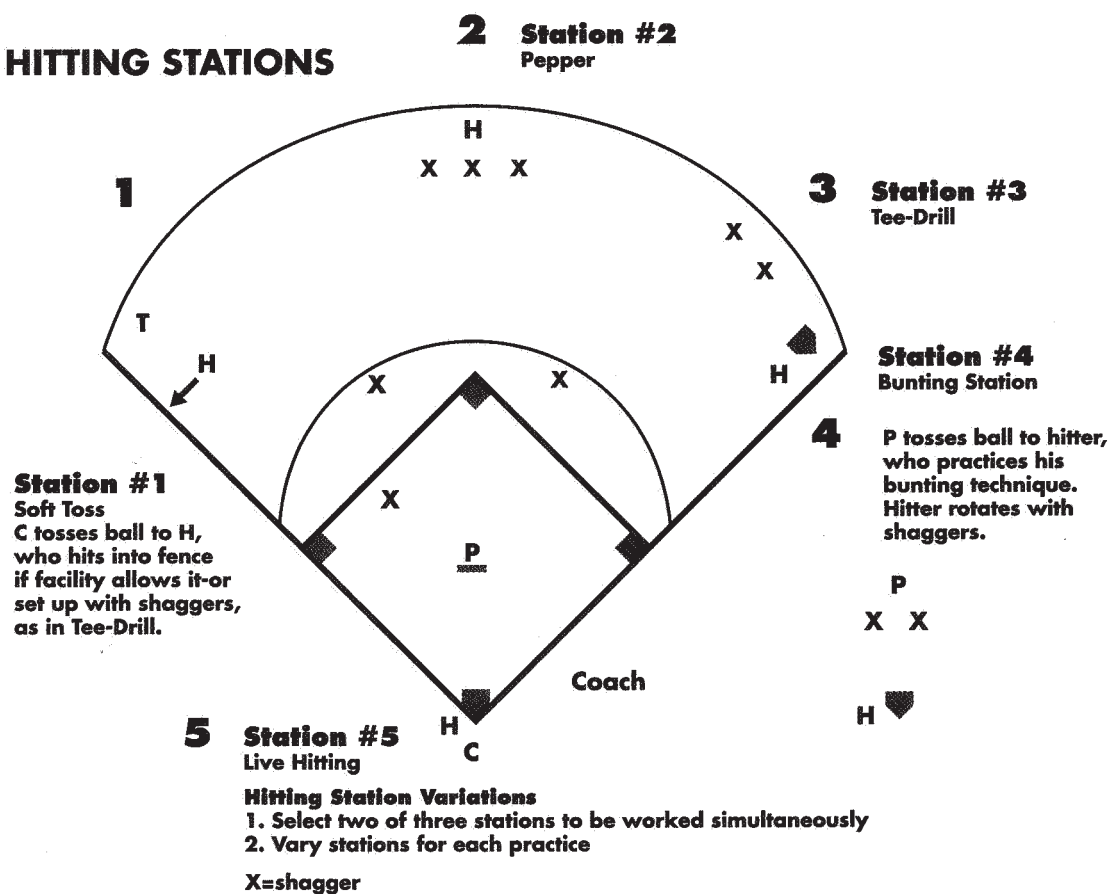


## INFIELD STATIONS

Fig. 8-2 Pregame Drill Stations



## HITTING STATIONS



## Pregame Drill

Infield practice, which includes the outfielders, is an excellent drill used to warm up the players to fielding ground balls, fly balls, and throwing the ball accurately. This drill should also be used as a confidence builder for the player, not a simulated game. The following is a basic outline of how to conduct an infield practice (Fig. 8-2).

Assign players to positions as directed in position play — first, second, shortstop, third, etc.

- May have more than one player at each position, alternating fielding.
- Remind players that every player should be moving somewhere when the ball is hit. (See position play.)

## Outfield

### *“Second Base” or “Go Two”*

The coach hits (3) soft fly balls to each outfielder, who, in turn, throws the ball to second base.

- Point to the field and/or call the name of the player who will field the ball.
- Call out the play.
- Hit the ball.

### *“Bring It Home”*

The coach hits (3) bounding or ground balls to each outfielder, who, in turn, throws the ball to home plate.

- Include one bounce to the catcher.
- Use the same method as described for second base above.
- “Follow it in” (can eliminate to retain outfielders).

The coach hits a fly ball to each outfielder, who, in turn, throws the ball to home plate and exits the field to the dugout or safe area.

- Usually done to end practice.
- Use the same method as described for second base above.

## Infield

### *“Come Home”*

The coach hits (3) medium ground balls to each infielder, who, in turn, throws the ball to home plate/catcher.

- Point to and/or call the name of the player who will field the ball.
- Call out the play.
- Hit the ball to build confidence.

### *“Get One”*

The coach hits (3) medium ground balls to each infielder, who, in turn, throws the ball to the first baseman.

- The first baseman returns the ball to the catcher.
- For catchers, roll or bunt the ball in front of the plate.

### *“Get Two”*

The Coach hits medium ground balls to each infielder, who, in turn, throws the ball to the second baseman.

- Hits to right side of infield, shortstop covers second base.
- Second base or shortstop throws to first baseman...get the force-out.
- First base returns ball to catcher.
- For catchers, use the same method as is given for second base.

### *“Follow It In”*

Use the same method as is given for outfielders.

- Ground balls only.
- For catchers, the coach may throw balls up (i.e., foul pop-ups) for them to field.

## Reference List

This is a listing of recommended books and journals available at the AAF's Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center. We hope you will use them and incorporate this knowledge in your coaching experience.

### BOOKS

Rookie Coach's Baseball Guide, *American Coaching Effectiveness Program, Human Kinetics Publishers*

You Can Teach Hitting, *Dusty Baker*

Play Better Baseball: Winning Techniques and Strategies For Coaches and Players, *Bob Cluck*

Strikeout: The Celebration of the Art of Pitching, *William Curran*

The Baseball Handbook for Coaches and Players, *Jim Depel*

Play Ball: The New Baseball Basics for Youth Coaches, Parents, and Kids, *Coop DeRenne*

Baseball Drill Book, *Gordon Gillespie and James Peterson*

The Pitching Edge, *Tom House*

Coaching Baseball Effectively, *Steven D. Houseworth*

Play Ball! The Official Little League Fitness Guide, *Frank W. Jobe, M.D., and Diane R. Moynes*

# Reference List

Science of Coaching Baseball, *Jerry Kindall*

Little League's Official How-to-Play Baseball Book, *Peter Kreutzer*

Branch Rickey's Little Blue Book, *Branch Rickey*

Coaching Baseball Skills and Drills, *Bragg Stockton, (Also in Video)*

Make the Right Call, *Triumph Books*

## VIDEOS

Teaching Kids Baseball, *Jerry Kindall*

Art of Hitting 300, *Charlie Lau*

Hitting, *Jim Lefebvre*

The Dodgers' Way to Play Baseball, *L.A. Dodgers*

Pitching, *Don Rowe*