

## **Good Indoor / Open Space Baseball / Softball Drills**

Bottle Cap drill – take broom handles and cut them into 2 equal halves. Then do soft toss using one half of the broom handle tossing bottle caps. This will train their eye for a small target.

Golf ball drill – same concept as above, only this time you will use plastic golf balls and a real bat or broom handle.

4 corners – have 4 players form a box and work on their turns for turning a double play.

Pitching on a line – spray paint a line 46 feet or 48 feet away. Paint one end like home plate and the other end like a pitching rubber (add a line toward home plate to the pitching rubber). No field is required then. Do simple drills with your catcher setting up on the outside. Then move him inside and eventually center. Work on your pitcher stepping on the line at release and measure his pitching by whether your catcher has to move his glove to receive the ball.

When you don't have access to a field, it is a great time for going over sign's.

This is also a good time to do base running drills and work on sliding. These are 2 very important parts of your offense. Please don't overlook them.

Hockey Goalie – Have the catcher in full gear inside the batting cage or outside of the fence. Set 2 cones up on both sides of the catcher. The coach will stand about 30 feet away throwing balls into the ground, but between the cones. Every once and a while throw one in the air, so he does not get used to dropping his glove early. Vary your pitches from side to side. Throw 10 pitches and see how many goals he allows. Do this drill 2 to 3 times at every practice. Keep up with the number of goals he allows. If he is consistently stopping all throws, widen the cones.

First baseman drill – throw down a base in open space. Make him play off the base and take throws from 2<sup>nd</sup>, short stop and 3<sup>rd</sup> base positions. The coach will throw the ball to the 3 positions. They will make bad and good throws to him and stress finding the base first and get in a ready position, (tell them to wait and do the stretch once they see the ball is a well thrown ball – that way they can defend the bad throws better) find the player with the ball, then catch and release the base. If the throw is wild, stress to catch the ball first – don't worry about the base. You want to hold the batter to 1 base and not 2. No one practices the bad situations. When you don't have a field this is a great time to go over the overthrown balls and situations that can go from bad to worst.

Pop Fly's - This can be done anywhere. Parking lot or open space it does not matter.

Think of bullpens as not just a session for developing pitchers. Catchers can practice their skills as well. They should use this time to work on their game.

They can work on the 3 stances (sign giving, runner on base, no runner on base).

They can work on blocking balls in the dirt. They can work on framing pitches. They can practice throwing to second base (footwork only.)

They can increase the skill of throwing the ball back to the pitcher on a line and hitting him in the chest. And they can simulate game conditions by setting up for the pitch 'late'. Instead of just planting their body behind the plate for the entire session they can give the sign from the middle of the plate and then set up as the pitcher begins his windup.

When the pitcher throws from the stretch the catcher should get in his runner on base stance.

### **"They don't draft designated hitters."**

One of the most important things a father can do for his son at an early age is to teach him proper arm action. We are seeing more and more kids that don't throw the baseball properly. Poor arm action will result in a kid leaving the game prematurely. You can't play if you can't throw.

It is true that certain position players, catcher and middle infield, have a shorter quicker arm action but we recommend that parents initially teach all players a long smooth throwing motion, such as a pitcher or outfielder.

The following are faults to look for and correct.

- Player rolls his hand under the ball. This puts the hand out of position as he cocks in preparation to throw.
- Wide hand separation. Player brings hand out away from the body resulting in poor arm alignment. Wrist hooking the hand drags up and is out of position in the cocking phase.
- Separates his hands too low. (Below the belt) This can cause a stiff arm action.
- Elbow too low. The arm should be at shoulder height.
- Poor feet alignment. The front foot opens up resulting in the shoulder opening and causing the arm to drag.
- Hand too close to the head.

What to look for in a sound throwing motion.

- The feet. The anklebone of his throwing-side foot should be pointed at the target (closed). The lead foot should land slightly closed and pointing at the target.
- Elbow. The elbow should be at shoulder height the instant before he brings his arm forward.
- Extension. The ball is released out in front of the head and not beside the head. The fingers remain on top of the ball and do not flop off to the side. The arm snaps to full extension.
- As the hand leaves the glove, keep the thumb underneath the baseball and the fingers on top. This is a vital point.

As you watch good players throw you will see a fluid motion, alignment of the body to the target, and the fingers on top of the baseball with the thumb underneath. We cannot stress strongly enough how important a good throwing motion is to the development of a player's future.