

# CATCHERS DRILLS

## **CATCHERS/2ND**

To get you throws faster and more accurate you can't just think about it you have to practice it. One of my favorite throwing drills involves two people. You and a willing person to catch the balls at second base. The first step is to lay about a dozen balls from home plate towards second about 1/2 foot apart on your throwing side. Get into your catching position with another ball in your hand and throw down to second base to where the other person should be standing. Then as fast as you can, go down the line of balls picking them up, and as accurate as you can throw them hard to second base. Make sure you tell the other person that you're going to be throwing one right after another so they don't turn away and get nailed. Also keep your throws low and on the side of the base you're practicing the pick offs from.

## **CATCHER'S PICK OFF**

Here's another drill for picking off runners at 1st or 3rd. You need yourself, a pitcher, a third or first baseman, and a batter. Give the pitcher a bucket of balls to throw into you. Have the pitcher not throw hard but just over the plate. Now just consistently work on low snap throws from behind the batter. If you use the batter to hide behind when coming up the runner won't notice as quick and you'll have a better chance of picking them off. Make sure you have your batter switch left handed and right handed batting positions. Although this drill might seem obvious, make sure you try it and keep with it because repetition really does help.

## **Barney Bop for Catchers**

The game is called "Barney Bop." Take a stool or high chair and place it straddling first base with a net or fence behind it to stop any errant throws. Place a stuffed animal on top of the chair (I use a Barney Doll, hence the name) at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Catcher assumes her position behind home plate and coach/pitcher throws the ball at the catcher—in the dirt, pop-up, left side, right side, etc. The Catcher needs to field the ball and make the throw to 2<sup>nd</sup> base attempting to knock Barney off the chair

## **CATCHER/PITCHER DRILL**

I dump a bucket of balls along the backstop behind the catcher. The catcher starts in her usual stance; the pitcher starts approximately halfway to home. On "GO" the catcher must turn around, go for a ball, look quickly, and backhand the ball to the pitcher running in. The pitcher works on fielding the ball and making the tag.

## **CATCHER BLOCK**

With full gear on (mask too) have your catcher get behind the plate w/out her glove. Make sure she has a balanced stance with her weight on the balls of her feet, knees bent (thighs parallel or slightly past) and toes slightly in towards the plate. Draw a circle in the dirt about the diameter of a washing machine around the plate. Have your catcher assume her crouch with both hands behind her back. A coach/player (never a pitcher) then throws Incredible/WhiffleBalls, Tennis balls (to start with then move to regulation balls) low pitches/short hops at the catcher. Using only her chest, legs and shoulders the catcher tries to make every ball stay within the front of the circle. The catcher must use her body/shoulders to keep the balls within the circle by 'bowing' her shoulders to guide the balls to the front of the plate within easy reach distance.

## **The cross**

A catcher should always bring their hand up to their ear and throw (of course with a snap). When a catcher throws their glove (which should be extended towards their target) should cross their chest when they throw. To gain speed on the throw down to second, a catcher has to pop-up after they have caught the ball. When they pop-up their feet should be at a 90 degree angle to what they were at before. A good drill to practice the popping up on steals is drawing a cross. Crouching down on one of the lines a catcher should be able to pop-up and land on the other line that crosses it.

\*good practice for throwing correctly is holding onto your ear as you pop-up each time\*

## **Garbage can**

One of the best catcher's drills I've ever used is to stick a 55gallon plastic garbage can on its side next to second base (1st base side) and throw balls into the can from home plate. Then move can to 3rd base, doing the same.

## **Pop-up**

The catcher is in ready position with all the gear on. The player/coach stands behind the catcher. The person in back tosses the ball high into the air and yells "ball" and the catcher immediately throws the mask & helmet and gets the ball before it hits the ground.

## **Pitcher/catcher/ss (TRIO DRILL)**

What happens is the pitcher pitches the ball, when the catcher catches it the pitcher drops to the ground and does 2 push-ups. While she is doing this the short stop runs to 2nd base, catches the ball and gets into the position like they're going to tag the base runner.

## **A CATCHER'S GENERAL RULES...**

- 1. Catching is 85% mental and 15% physical, so work on thinking about the game more than playing the game.**
- 2. Don't let the opposition's running game be a reflection of you, it is the team's job to keep runners from stealing bases.**
- 3. Go to the mound if there is any confusion between you and the pitcher.**
- 4. Be responsible for the pitcher's confidence and mentality, talk between innings.**
- 5. Minimize passed balls or wild pitches by not making wild throws. Catch every third strike and know the third strike rule. Attempt to tag a runner first on a dropped third strike.**
- 6. Don't be afraid to pick runners off in the right situations.**
- 7. Be a leader on the field, but don't be cocky**
- 8. Give good targets and move your body to adjust them, not just your glove.**
- 9. Always remember to play focused and tough but still have fun!**