

Catching

Dan Wilson

I. INTRODUCTION

- a. Only one facing the other way
- b. Sets the pace
- c. Key to pitching staff (knows the pitches – support, ??)
- d. Responsibilities – block, catch, throw (in that order)

II. STANCE

- a. Nobody on, less than two strikes
 - i. Nice and relaxed
 - ii. Arm extended (not locked)
 - iii. Protect throwing hand
 - iv. Elbow outside the left knee
 - v. As low to the ground as possible
 1. Target at or below knees
 2. Weight on inside arches of feet
 3. Knees inside the feet
- b. Runner on or two strikes on hitter
 - i. Thighs parallel to ground
 - ii. Throwing hand behind glove
 - iii. Feet shoulder width
 - iv. Weight on balls of feet
 - v. Heel to toe alignment of feet

III. FRAMING

- a. Arm
 - i. Extended – catch as close to plate as possible
 - ii. High pitch have more bend
- b. Hand
 - i. $\frac{1}{4}$ turn while pitch is on the way (while pitcher is in delivery)
 - ii. Quick hands
 - iii. Keep thumbs perpendicular to flight of pitch
 - iv. Soft hands – always stick it!
 - v. Low pitch – pick vs. underneath
 - vi. Catch outside of ball
- c. Upper body
 - i. Lean in direction of pitch
 - ii. Try to catch ball in middle of body
- d. Lower body
 - i. Offset feet to enlarge corners
 - ii. Feet patterns should form semi-circle
- e. Drills
 - i. Two ball drill (w/partner)
 - ii. Rapid fire jugs machine
 - iii. Tennis ball drill
 - iv. Pitches from jugs machine

IV. BLOCKING

- a. Arms
 - i. Bowed
 - ii. Bent
 - iii. Relaxed
- b. Hands
 - i. Open palms
 - ii. Relaxed or cupped
 - iii. Glove hand in front of cup
 - iv. Throwing hand behind glove
 - v. Do not try to catch ball
- c. Upper body
 - i. "C" shaped
 - ii. Relaxed
 - iii. Anticipatory lean
- d. Lower body
 - i. Angled to keep ball near plate
 - ii. Both knees on ground
 - iii. Weight on soft part of knee
- e. Recovery
 - i. Ball first
 - ii. Get rid of mask
 - iii. Two hands (heel of the glove)
- f. Drills
 - i. Regular block
 - 1. Little bit every day – 20 to 30 reps
 - 2. Use real balls
 - 3. Balls should hit in middle of chest
 - 4. Spin some like curve balls
 - 5. Make a game out of it (block ball as close to plate as possible)
 - ii. Dry blocking
 - iii. No glove blocking
 - iv. Blanchard Drill
 - v. Paul Blanchard drill

V. WILD PITCH/PASSED BALL

- a. Pitcher needs to help
- b. Do or die situation
 - i. Approach ball from right side
 - ii. Slide on left knee and shin
 - iii. Barehand ball
 - iv. Brace front foot
 - v. Give firm accurate feed
- c. Wild pitch drill
 - i. Catcher starts on knees
 - ii. Roll balls behind on various sides

VI. THROWING

- a. Always work with the ball
- b. Quick hands – misdirecting
- c. Throwing to 2nd base
 - i. Two step approach
 1. Weight forward
 2. Quick jab with right foot
 3. Hand to ear
 4. Step towards 2nd base
 - ii. Warnings
 1. Don't come up too soon
 2. Don't let body out front (lazy arm)
 3. Don't let feet be slow (quick arm)
 4. Don't jump out/Don't stay back
 - iii. Helpful hints
 1. Keep elbow up
 2. Imagine throwing down to base
 3. Get body movement done early
 4. Use legs
 5. Should finish up in front of plate
 6. Throw two seams when possible
 - iv. Drills
 1. Glove to hand
 2. Throw four times – full gear, once a week
 3. Dry throwing
- d. Throwing to 3rd base
 - i. Ball dictates technique
 - ii. No step technique
 1. Outside pitch
 2. Plant right foot
 3. Throw over top of batter
 - iii. Two step technique
 1. Short drop step with right leg
 2. Step towards third base
 - iv. Drills – same as second base

VII. POP-UPS

- a. Technique
 - i. Turn back to infield
 - ii. Find the ball
 - iii. Remove mask (Do not throw until ball has reached its peak)
 - iv. Play the ball at least a bat's length in front
 - v. Create a shelf for the ball
 - vi. Catch at the left shoulder with left foot in front
 - vii. Turn back to in-field to check runners
- b. Things to remember
 - i. Direction of ball different for right-hand and left-hand hitters
 - ii. Path of ball down the lines

- c. Drills
 - i. Hit fungoes
 - ii. Jugs machine
 - iii. Two balls in jugs machine

VIII. TAG PLAYS

- a. Runner tagging at third
 - i. Foot on line pointing directly at third base
 - ii. Heel of left foot on left corner of plate
 - iii. Turn head and upper body towards incoming throw
 - iv. Receive throw, make the tag and get out of there
- b. Runner scoring from another base
 - i. Foot should be angled slightly to face incoming runner
 - ii. Heel of left foot on left corner of plate
 - iii. Turn head and upper body towards incoming throw
 - iv. Receive throw, make the tag and get out of there
- c. Swinging door tag
 - i. Only when throw beats runner badly
 - ii. Step up the line with right foot
 - iii. Extend glove over the baseline
 - iv. Let runner tag himself out
 - v. Swing with momentum of runner
- d. Drills
 - i. Dry tags
 - ii. Use football dummies as runners
 - iii. Hit fungoes from mid outfield

IX. BUNTS

- a. Technique – ball to right of shortstop
 - i. Take a path to the ball that puts you on the left side of the ball
 - ii. Bend at the knees not at the waist
 - iii. Pick up with two hands – use heel of glove
 - iv. Step and throw
- b. Technique – ball to left of shortstop
 - i. Turn your back to first base as you approach the ball
 - ii. Bend at the knees
 - iii. Two hand pick up
 - iv. Wheel around under control to throw
- c. Drills
 - i. Roll bunts down each line (during infield practice)