

Park High School Coaching Catchers

“Everything we know, we learned from someone else.”-John Wooden

Stances:

- Signaling
- Primary
- Secondary- Man on base, 2 strikes
 - Feet wider than shoulders, hips just below knees, slight offset ok with glove foot slightly ahead, athletic
- Flexibility and mobility may be single most important thing

Receiving:

Overview:

- Soft hands, hand, wrist, shoulder in alignment
- Target, Relax, Adjust
- Soft Focus to Hard Focus
- Drive the bus in the top of the zone, thumb under on low pitch
- Low target, explain how high target leads to meat balls
- Athletic with ankle roll to get behind ball
- Track ball to glove pocket, begin emphasizing head and eyes, eventually to eyes only

Drills:

- *Bare hand stick it:* catch ball with index, middle finger and thumb; freeze it
- *Ball in hand stick it:* same as above with ball held with pinky and ring finger
- *Glove stick it:* focus on receiving in pocket of glove and freezing, no drift
- *Three man triangle stick it rapid fire:* 3 partners 5 each and rotate
- *Rapid fire:* two partners in front throwing 5 each rapidly
- *Gain ground:* walk toward catcher throwing balls shrinking the distance
- *Cross up drill-setup:* right knee down & left knee up, glove held high on left, coach throws ball low right; catcher switches knees and catches balls then reverses sides

Blocking:

Overview:

- C position= curved spine, chin to chest, forward lean, forearms in high thighs, weight on inside of the knees, glove covers up 5-hole, throwing hand and thumb behind glove
- Gain ground-reduce angles for ball to get by
- Practice focusing on the ball see the seams, do not look away
- Give them a visual on decision time, as well as expectations on how wide a zone to block

Drills:

- *NO 5-Hole:* start in C position model correct position
- *Don't Blink:* balls thrown at mask (I recommend soft and lite flite balls, or rag balls)
- *Glove Blocks:* glove to ground with throwing hand behind glove; 3 ball with coach pointing
- *Half Blocks:* start in stance w/glove already on ground, get to C position/get knees on ground, positive movement, gaining ground on the ball
- *Full Blocks:* start in ready stance, get to C position (lead w/the glove), first no ball, then add a ball
- *Glove Blocks Lateral:* glove to ground with throwing hand behind glove; 3 ball with coach pointing
- *Half Blocks Lateral:* start w/knee already on the ground, get to C position angled toward the plate

- *Full Blocks Lateral*: lead w/the opposite knee, first no ball, then add ball
- *3 Ball Drill*: 3 balls are put in front of catcher (inside , middle, outside), coach points to one ball simulating a ball in the dirt, catcher reacts
- *Mirror Drill*: work w/partner mirroring his movements
- *Assorted Blocking*: soft balls bounced to mask or chest, rolled balls blocked, thrown balls blocked, machine balls blocked, tennis racket with tennis balls, even practice game savers
- *3 man blocking drill*: C1 receiving, C2 on 1b line, C3 on 3b line; C2 throws in dirt to catcher's left and catcher gets around it to block; catcher resets, then C3 throws to catcher's right and catcher gets around it to block 3-5 reps each side then switch. Can be slow or rapid fire.

Throwing:

Overview:

- Quick not hurried, good transfer and grip improves throw
- Quick Feet for good throws; feet, hips and shoulders on line with target
- Gain Ground
- Accurate, Quick, Strong; an accurate one hop throw is quicker than high throw

Drills:

- *Transfer*: twist wrist transfer in front, fingers on top thumb below, elbow down
- *Partner knee throws with quick transfer*: on knees quick transfer easy throw 15' apart
- *Throwing Footwork*: T drill, gain ground, go to ball
- *Throws to second*: quick and accurate over max velocity, one hop ok (hat drill)
- *Three man drill*: two players at home to 2nd distance(127 3 & 3/8); the third in middle throws to catcher who throws to far catcher who practices tag then rotate, follow throw. Focus on target, one hop better than high.
- *Throws to first*: inside the line
- *Throws to third*: drop step, control momentum on drop step
- *Fake throws*: to trail runner then throw behind lead runner, fake to 2nd (1st and 3rd)
- *NOTE*: Throwing to sock net or in batting cage at short distance, increases player focus on fundamentals

Resources

YouTube Videos

<https://youtu.be/JSSrwX-FOuQ>

<https://youtu.be/12uXsLPFhxk>

Books

“Heads up Baseball”- Ken Rivizza & Tom Hanson

“BASERUNNING”- Mike Roberts with Tim Bishop

“The Mental Game of Baseball”- H.A. Dorfman and Karl Kuehl

“They Call Me Coach”- John Wooden with Jack Tobin

Coach Dan Harrison

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Youth Practice Catching Plans: 15 minutes each

Practice 1:Receiving

Review signaling, primary and secondary stances
Demonstrate alignment of glove wrist elbow shoulder, ankle roll to center pitch
Stick it-Partners and then 3 Man

Practice 2:Blocking

Demonstrate blocking position
Don't blink with lite flite or tennis ball
Glove Blocks- 3 ball coach point
3 ball half blocks

Practice 3:Throwing

Transfer demonstrate
Partner knee transfer and throw 15 feet to each other
Transfer and footwork gaining ground, done on a line

Practice 4:Receiving

Review alignment of glove wrist elbow shoulder, ankle roll
3 Man stick it
Gain ground

Practice 5:Blocking

Review blocking position
Blocking from C position-coach throws ball at blocker in position
3 ball lateral blocks
Dropped third strike inside the line throw

Practice 6:Throwing

Transfer and footwork gaining ground, done on a line, transfer and fake to second check runner at 3rd (good for 1st and 3rd)
3 Man home to second distance drill, emphasize quick and accurate target 15 reps approx.
Drop step to third footwork

Practice 7:additional skills

Block and recover
Past ball slide and throw to pitcher covering home
Catching pop-ups and finding fence, covering home

Pregame:

Gain ground receiving drill (2 x @ 5 reps each)
Cross up Drill (6)
3 ball glove only blocks (5)
3 ball full blocks coach points to ball (5)
Dropped 3rd Strike inside baseline to 1st (3)
Throw at 2nd base distance (4)

