



Berlin Youth Baseball – Throwing Accuracy

Goal of this document: Share with parents and coaches some of the drills uses at the skills clinics to teach youth players how to consistently make accurate to their teammates.

Throwing Accuracy: Teaching each youth on your team how to consistently make an accurate throw is key to having success. If your player cannot make an accurate throw to one of their teammates, you cannot expect them to get an out on a groundball. If an outfielder cannot make an accurate throw to the cutoff, you can expect the other team to advance an extra base. If your pitcher cannot make an accurate throw to the catcher, the opposing team won't swing and you'll be stuck with walk after walk. Thus, focusing early on in practice on a proper grip and throwing mechanics can lead to noticeable improvement in your team's overall defensive success. A primary goal when teaching throwing mechanics is simply to get the youth to use the same consistent mechanical throwing motion over and over again every time they throw the ball.

The grip: Review the fundamentals clinic and make sure players are holding the ball correctly when making a defensive throw by using the 4-seam grip.



Throwing mechanics:

Once gripped, start the “**Thumb to thigh, show it to the sky**” circular motion learned in the fundamentals clinic.

After this, point their “**front shoulder towards the target**”, have the youth move their “**front foot towards the target**” (same side as the shoulder), keep their “**elbow up**” (above the shoulder), as the arms comes to the “**Big T**”.



As the youth releases the ball and starts their follow-through, their **“back leg will lift in the air”**, the **“back leg will come forward”**, and it will lead to the youth **“taking step(s) towards the target after release”**



As the youth finishes their follow-up and their circular arm motion, the **“front arm finishes low on the opposite side of the body.”**



Elbow throw drill (no glove): This drill focuses on mechanics like **“elbow up”**, **“palm down”**, and a straight throwing motion. This drill can be done in replacement of regular warm-up catch in partners for youth and is bare-handed with no gloves. They partner up, get on one knee with their throwing arm up, their opposite arm cupping the throwing arm elbow, the throwing arm knee on the ground, and opposite leg up pointing at the teammate. Start with the arm at a **“L-shaped”** 90 degree angle. The bicep will not move in this drill. The forearm will pull back towards your shoulder, the move forward to throw the ball, all the while the elbow staying level and cupped by the other hand.



One Knee drill: This drill focuses on several mechanics like “**elbow up**”, “**Big T**”, “**front should towards target**”, “**front leg towards target**”, and “**follow through to opposite side of the body**”. This drill can be done in replacement of regular warm-up catch for youth. They partner up and throw from a short distance doing this one knee drill. Back knee down on the ground, front knee up, start in the “Big T”, and work through the upper body motion. The legs and knee do not move in this drill as they play catch. Have the receiving teammate place their glove up as a target, and the goal of the youth throwing is to hit the teammate’s glove without making the teammate move their glove.



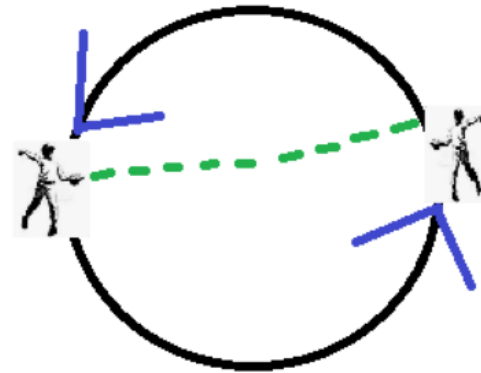
Towel slap drill: This drill will have the youth focus on keeping their “**palm down**” as long as possible and their arm following through across to opposite side of the body. You’ll need a towel or t-shirt that you grab at the corner. You’ll also need something to slap, such as a chair or upside-down bucket. Place the bucket at a normal step distance for the youth’s follow-through. Find a “starting line” and start the some



Chair throw drill: This drill will have the youth focus on “**flipping their back heel**” as they practice the rest of their follow-through motion on the throw. In this drill, the idea is their bag leg stays stationery and doesn’t move forward. Their back foot starts in a normal upright position on the chair and as they release the ball the heel flips up over the toes. With multiple chairs, this could be done with partners playing catch like, otherwise with fewer chairs this works well just having players taking turns throwing to a coach.



Moving Circle toss: A unique drill that can help improve accuracy of “on-the-move” throws is the moving circle toss. It’s essentially “partners” playing catch except instead of being in a stationary spot, the 2 players are rotating constantly in a circle while throwing. You may need to put out cones in a circular pattern in order to keep young players from straying too far from the “circle”. The players will both



rotate at a similar speed around the circle, whomever has the ball will need to make a toss to the teammate across the circle, leading them by throwing the ball a little out front. The teammate will catch the ball and return it back to their teammate, again leading them, all the while continuing to jog around the circle. This drill can be challenging and may not be possible for very young players, but can be enjoyable and a valuable lesson in throwing on the run for the older youth.

Bucket Toss Game: A simple, yet fun and accuracy building game that can be played both indoors and outdoors is the bucket toss game. On a regular diamond, this drill can be made fairly realistic by having your players line up in a line behind the 3rd base position, have a large quantity of baseballs (2-3 per player) in a bucket at third base, and have a tipped over 5 gallon pale at home lined up directly on the base line. One at a time each player takes a turn making a properly formed throw down the third base line to the bucket at home. The goal is to get it in the bucket or hit the bucket. You can turn this into a points game, where “as a team” you’re trying to set a high school, for example making in-the-bucket 3 points and touching the bucket 1 point. This can be thought of as simulating a throw to home where the catcher must tag the runner so you can it low and to the corner of the plate.



Tee Throw Game: A similar game to the bucket toss game, the tee throw game places a Tee perhaps on home plate, and a line of players behind the pitcher's mound (depending on the skill level of your youth this may need to be a shorter distance). Again, with 2-3 balls per player in a bucket near the pitcher's mound, each player takes a turn throwing a ball. Their goal is to either hit the ball on top of the tee, or hit the tee for which the ball gets knocked off. You could do a variety of point scoring and making this a chance to create a "team record" but saying hitting the ball directly is 3 points, hitting the tee is 2 points, and the ball crossing over the plate and below the ball ("in the strike zone") is 1 point.



Target Net Game: Another similar game as the bucket and tee toss, if using a target throwing net (if you have one available). These are commonly seen for football but can also be used for baseball. You can either award points for certain locations, or "call out a number" before each player throws and have them try to hit the called out target. Making it a "team game" where the points accumulated go towards the new "team record" will build comrade and team spirit.

