

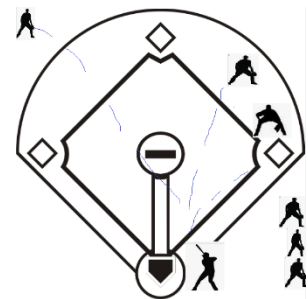


## **Berlin Youth Baseball – Defensive Awareness Drills**

**Goal of this document:** One of the most important aspects on a young baseball team is ensuring players are aware of what to do if the balls hit to them, and what to do when it's not hit to them. These drills help enforce what to do in some of the more common and critical defensive situations. Please note in all these drills, adjust based on age accordingly. For example, even though the drills call for "hitting" groundballs, it may be simpler or better suited to "roll" groundballs instead.

**The 3 "B"s (BALL – BASE – BACKUP):** It is critical to establish early on for all players on defense that even if the ball is not hit to you, you still have a job to do, thus you'll have to move every single play. If the ball is hit to you, you have to field it. If the ball is not hit to you, but you are near a base you should run to that base. If the ball is not hit to you, and somebody is already covering the nearest base, then you need to backup the nearest person. With this young age, you cannot expect them to know every single situation (e.g. Runners on the corners 1 out, bases loaded, winning run on 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc.), but you can expect them to do something (ball, base, or backup) every play. Below are some simple drills that can help re-enforce and get that point across. The below drills aren't meant to cover every scenario but instead to get them to always remember the 3 "B"s. Initially running these drills for each individual position may be necessary to get the point across, but eventually once players understand the concept, you should not need individual drills, but instead put the entire defense out on the field and run basic infield practice, watching to see that every defender did the proper "B".

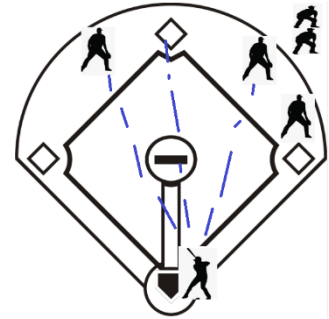
**DRILL - 1B 3 "B"s:** Have a line of first basemen waiting their turn along the fence, and one 1B at a proper fielding position (2 to 3 steps off the base). Have a single 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman, a single left fielder, and a coach at home. You have 3 basic situations you randomly cycle through. **BALL** – Hit a ground ball to the first baseman, the 1B should field it and touch first base. **BASE** – Hit a ground ball to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, the 1B should run over to first, put his foot on the bag, and stretch out for the throw. **BACKUP** – Hit a base hit to left field, the 1B has to watch not only the runner, but also be in position to backup the throw to 2B. After each play the ball is returned to the coach at home, and the next first baseman cycles in.



**DRILL - 2B/SS 3 "B"s:** Have a line of second baseman waiting their turn in the grass behind the primary second baseman. Have a single SS and a single 1B in position, and a coach at home.

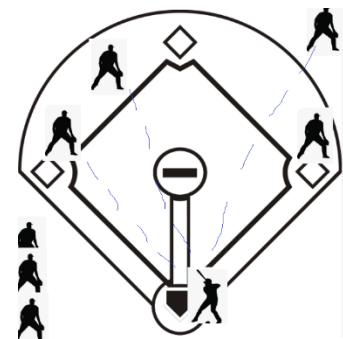
You have 3 basic situations you randomly cycle through. **BALL** – Hit a ground ball to the second baseman, the 2B should field it and throw to first base. **BASE** – Hit a ground ball to SS, the 2B should run over to cover 2B and the SS will flip it to him.

**BACKUP** – The coach yells "going" and instead of hitting the ball he throws it to the SS who is covering for a steal. The 2B backs up the throw to second. Even if your league is not allowed to steal, the 2B should be learning to back-up the SS. After each play, the ball is returned to the coach at home and the next 2B cycles in.



**DRILL - SS 3 "B"s:** Follow the same positions as above for the 2B drill, except have the line of extra players behind SS. Perform the same 3 scenarios just going to SS instead of 2B.

**DRILL - 3B 3 "B"s:** Have a line of third baseman waiting their turn along the left field fence. Have a single RF, SS, and 1B in position, and a coach at home. You have 3 basic situations you randomly cycle through. **BALL** – Hit a ground ball to the third baseman, the 3B should field it and throw to first base. **BASE** – Hit a ground ball to SS, the SS will field and throw to 3B. **DRILL - DRILL - BACKUP** – Hit a base hit to RF, have the RF throw into the SS at second base, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> basemen should get in a good position to backup the throw while still being able to get back to third base if necessary.



**DRILL - OF 3 "B"s:** Have a line of right fielders waiting their turn along the right field fence. Have a single CF, SS, 1B, and a coach at home. You have 3 basic situations you randomly cycle through. **BALL** – Hit fly ball to the RF and have them field it. **BASE** – Hit a ground ball to SS, the RF should run behind 1B to backup the base. **BACKUP** – Hit a flyball base hit to CF, the RF should run towards center, directionally behind the CF to back him up.

