WASHINGTON STATE
BASEBALL

PROGRAM MANUAL

THE MISSION

To develop an elite level division one baseball program which will enhance and enrich the student-athlete experience and foster the development of community, leading to a lifelong connection between the student-athlete and Washington State University. To create a highly competitive yet balanced environment where the student-athlete maximizes their potential intellectually, and athletically. To compete at the highest level in all endeavors with integrity, compassion and pride.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF COUGAR BASEBALL

PASSION

- No great deed can be achieved without the investment of passion into a goal that borders on obsession.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Understand your strengths and weaknesses, take responsibility for your actions.

SELFLESSNESS

- Make sacrifices, give of yourself for the betterment of the team.

INTEGRITY

- Represent yourself, team, university, and community with honor and respect.

PRIDE

- Develop ownership of the program from within and create a sense of unmatched pride.

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CHAPTER ONE
TEAM MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM STANDARDS

THE CRIMSON RULES

- Do what's right.
- Do your best.
- Treat others as they want to be treated.

THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

- Centered on these three questions:
  - Can I trust you?
  - Are you committed?
  - Do you care about me?

WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO

- To develop "high level" student-athletes.
- To guide our student-athletes toward academic and athletic excellence reflective of the values of the university.
- To mentor student-athletes in graduating from Washington State University and to find meaningful place in society.
- To represent with pride, the students and faculty of Washington State University; the Washington State University athletic department; the community of Pullman; our families; and our team.
- To cultivate amongst our team members a spirit of family pride and togetherness.
- To communicate effectively and identify the needs of the individual athletically, academically and socially, while cohesively uniting those needs with those of the team.
- To distinguish ourselves as quality student-athletes and coaches.
- To compete for championships on a regular basis.

OBJECTIVE OF COUGAR BASEBALL

- To develop the proper attitude toward the Cougar baseball program.
- To accept the responsibility of being a Cougar baseball player and coach.
- To develop the individual intellectually, academically, and athletically.
- To be the best prepared mentally and physically.
- To be squad conscious.
- To show initiative, helpfulness, and ruggedness.
- To learn how to compete.
- To learn how to win, consistently.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- We will be better prepared mentally than our opponent.
- We will be better prepared physically than our opponent.
- We will make fewer mistakes than our opponents.
- We will keep constant pressure on our opponents.
- We will play as close to our potential as possible.
- We will play better longer.

- We will always know we can beat our opponents.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

- Each participant is expected to remember that his primary objective at Washington State University is academic and intellectual development.
- Each participant is expected to conform to the rules that govern our turnouts.
    - Specifically: turn out each day; be on time; hustle at all times.
- Each participant is expected to conduct himself in a gentlemanly fashion and on as high a level as possible at all times during the season.
    - Specifically: on the practice field; during the game; on campus; in the community; and while on road trips.
- Each participant is expected to abide by the team training rules. They are:
    - Maintain proper dieting and sleeping habits.
    - Abstinence in the use of tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs.
    - Sensible outlook regarding late hours.
- To attain 100% team efficiency each member must adhere to the above.
- Additionally, we are trying to develop an atmosphere which will encourage proper social development.
- We feel the atmosphere of hard work and mental toughness, coupled with togetherness, pride and tenacity of purpose will best accomplish this goal.

ASK YOURSELF

- Do I run hard every chance I get?
- Do I slide aggressively every chance I get?
- Do I throw hard and accurate every chance I get?
- Do I concentrate?
- Do I practice with a goal in mind?
- Do I make the routine play every time?
- Do I make the big play when it counts?
- Do I have fun doing my part and more?
- Do I trust my routine?
- Do I play one pitch at a time?
- Did I follow my mission today?
- Did I improve today?

COUGAR BASEBALL REPRESENTS

- Togetherness
- Individual Excellence and Development
- Team Excellence and Development
- Class
    - Definition of "Class"
        - Rapport - among ourselves and constituents
        - Respect - earned from others

- Confidence - in our performance and our team members
- Knowledge - that we can win

COUGAR REWARD

- Development of Quality Character
- Togetherness
- Pride
- Winning - "The greatest thing in winning is to know we can."

COUGAR BASEBALL A-Z

ACADEMICS

- Degree completion – assist and monitor through completion of degree.
- Maximize the educational and career opportunities here at Washington State University.
- Take responsibility and ownership in one's academic and career plan.
- Meet regularly with coaching and academic support staff.
- Maintain academic eligibility throughout career by meeting NCAA percentage criteria.
- Mandatory attendance of all classes.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS RATE (APR) PLAN

- Recruiting
  - Academic integrity
  - Academic evaluations
  - Roster management
- Eligibility
  - Communicate eligibility guidelines
  - Proactive course planning
  - Employ regular monitoring system
- Retention
  - Control squad size
  - Communication
  - Player development

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

- Student-athletes will be provided support through study tables, tutoring, advising, etc.
- Student-athletes are encouraged to seek assistance through academic support.
- Mandatory weekly meetings provided to student-athletes with substandard academic performance.
- Study table hours must be accounted for at Academic Resource Center (ARC).
- Study table hours assigned based on student-athlete's academic performance.
  - Mandatory 10 hours a week for freshmen.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Be on time – all day every day.
- Do the right thing.

- Do your best.
- Treat others as they would want to be treated.
- Suggest what is expected of athletes rather than what they are not allowed to do

AGENT/ADVISOR

- NCAA rules prohibit the use of an agent at any time during your collegiate career.
- You may not agree, orally or in writing, to be represented by an agent regardless of whether the agreement becomes effective immediately or after your last season of eligibility.
- Receipt of any benefits from an agent or advisor is impermissible.
- It is permissible to have an advisor, a lawyer or other individual you receive advice from, concerning a proposed professional contract.
- Any services must be accounted for and reimbursed at the normal rate of compensation the advisor charges for his/her services.
- You may not use an advisor as a link between you and a professional team, nor have them communicate on your behalf during pre or post draft meetings.

ALCOHOL

- Abstinence is goal one in regards to the use of alcohol.
- Any violations of public intoxication (MIP, MIC, DUI, etc) will be dealt with according to team and university policies, resulting in game suspension and reduction of scholarship.
- Alcohol use is strictly prohibited at all team functions and travel.
- Alcohol use can lead to dehydration, which has proven to reduce athletic performance by up to 20%.

APPEARANCE

- You are a role model – think before you dress.
- When representing the university, be neatly dressed and groomed.
- Earrings are not permitted at any team functions.
- Facial hair will be groomed professionally.
- Maintain proper travel appearance on all road trips.

ALUMNI RELATIONS

- Continue to cultivate and regain the involvement of alumni.
- Annual events - alumni game, tailgate, game tent, dinner auction.
- Honor the past - yearly recognition of a player or team during a WSU home series.

ATHLETIC TRAINING POLICIES

- Daily communication between the athletic training staff and head coach.
- All injuries reported to the athletic training staff immediately.
- All treatment and doctor appointments will be administered under the direction of the athletic training staff.
- All recommended recovery periods will be followed by the coaching staff.
- Treatment as rehab and/or prehab maintenance will be attended mandatorily by student-athlete.
- Treatment will take place prior to practice or game day departure.

- All illnesses will be reported to the athletic training staff and their recommended treatment will be mandated. If an illness forces absence from a class, the student-athlete will not participate in the teams' daily activity for that calendar day.

BUDGET

- Have a vision - long term / master plan for program
- Short term needs and goals
- Prioritize our needs – take money from one area to enhance another area
- Quarterly summaries – stay informed
- Washington State University processing – understand the system

CAMPS

- Camps are the responsibility of an assigned assistant coach.
- Identify department and university policies and procedures.
- Plan year round camps.
- Plan and execute marketing and promotions of schedule.
- Coaching staff will participate in off-campus camps throughout region/country for recruiting purposes as well as program marketing.

CLUBHOUSE

- The clubhouse is a team area – only team members or staff will be allowed in clubhouse.
- Maintain a presentable locker at all times.
- Be conscientious of your teammates with any music, television, or comments made in the clubhouse.
- Team members will maintain responsibility and accountability for ensuring a clean and presentable clubhouse at the conclusion of each practice or game day.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Show class and dignity.
- Stand for truth, integrity, responsibility and accountability.
- Market the program – create a family atmosphere.
- Promoting the program – have fun at the park.
- Raise our profile in the community by being present, engaging, accessible and visible.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Be involved and represent Washington State University.
- Two hours a month required per athlete.
- Team visits to regional hospitals.
- Free youth/coaches clinics.
- Advisory positions on local boards.
- Alumni events – promote and regain the involvement of our alumni.

COMPLIANCE

- Student-athlete orientation yearly
- Student-athlete exit interviews yearly

- Quarterly compliance meetings with team – update NCAA standards
- Comprehension and administration of NCAA rules at highest level of awareness

CORE VALUES

- Conflict with one's core values leads to stress and underperformance.
- How do we want our program defined?
    - Who are we?
    - How do we define ourselves?
    - How do we want to be defined?
- How does the baseball program fit with Washington State University's values?
    - Care – we will foster the student-athlete experience to be one of great memories
    - Academic Excellence – we will push our athletes to achieve at their highest levels in the classroom
    - Diversity – we will celebrate individuals and bring them together as a team
    - Faith – we will embrace the spiritual differences within our team
    - Justice – we will be ethical and fair in all decisions surrounding our program
    - Leadership – we will develop leaders through sport and competition

DIAMOND CLUB – BOOSTER SUPPORT

- Develop relationships with key members of the community.
- Activate people with a vision and empower them to promote the program within compliance of university and NCAA rules.
- Work with university and department to create new fundraising opportunities.

DRUG TESTING

- Abstinence in the use of drugs is priority one.
- All members are subject to random drug tests by the NCAA.
- Any member of the baseball program who fails a drug test will be held to all university and NCAA sanctions.
- Scholarship renewal will be negatively affected by a failed drug test.

EQUIPMENT

- Be successful with the essentials.
- Prioritize purchases – allocate money on items essential in daily operations.
- Inventory and assess potential areas of need yearly.
- Only university issued equipment will be used, with exception of items not provided as part of our standard equipment issue.
- Equipment is university property and will be assessed a value for repayment if not returned.

FACILITIES

- Practice facility – close to campus for quick arrival from class
    - Hitting cages – covered and uncovered
    - Bullpen mounds – covered and uncovered
    - Hours of operation

- Playing facility
    - Lighted facility for use at night (minimize loss of class time)
    - How much control over facility products (clay, mounds, turface)?

FUNDRAISING

- Fundraise for the essentials.
- Work within the master plan / vision of the program.
- What will it take to compete at the highest level financially? Go get it!
- Camps – winter and summer camps to promote and raise funds.

GAME DAY POLICIES

- Complimentary tickets
    - Each student-athlete will be provided four complimentary admissions per home game.
    - Each student-athlete will be provided two complimentary admissions per road game.
    - Complimentary tickets will be issued through a pass list according to NCAA and athletic department procedures, and requested/approved through the WSU compliance department.
    - Each guest must provide photo ID at the pass gate to receive their complimentary tickets.
- Pre-game activities
    - Be dressed and ready by the posted stretch or load (road games) time.
    - We will follow team policy in regards to the National Anthem and our standing of attention.

GAME EXPECTATIONS

- Respect the game of baseball.
    - Know that we are not perfect, as the game is not perfect.
    - Hard work will allow us to achieve many of our goals, and respect will keep our efforts in perspective.
- Respect our opponents, opposing fans, and umpires.
    - Know that if we do what we are asked to do, than we will control our own fate, and the opposition and umpires will have little impact on our outcome.
- Be prepared physically and mentally at all times.
    - Anticipation plus preparation equals mental toughness.
- Understand that team success is the result of many individual successes.
    - Do your part for the team, and we all will benefit.
- Pace yourself to play hard.
    - There are many highs and lows during a game.
    - Remember, things are never as good as they seem, nor are they as bad as they seem, yet somewhere in between is where reality lies.
- PLAY LIKE A CHAMPION TODAY.

INDIVIDUAL SKILL PERIOD

- Non-championship segment of yearly calendar.
- Two hours of skill instruction per week.
- Six hours of strength and conditioning per week.
- Introduce individual skills and techniques.

- Evaluate and assess team member's abilities and design a development plan for each player.
- Build a foundation of strength to be utilized throughout the championship segment of competition.

MEDIA

- All appointments with the media will be arranged through the university's Sports Information Department.
- Respect the job the media has to do and give them your full attention during your meeting/interview.
- Additional interview tips:
    - Take your time; think before you speak, all questions can be turned into positive answers.
    - If you prefer not to answer a question, simply state that you prefer not to discuss that topic.
    - Never criticize and opponent, teammate or official.

MENTAL PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT

- It's uncomfortable being great.
- Daily opportunities for player development.
- Commitment to mental training – belief in system and its benefits.
- Positive thinking model – speak good to yourself

MISSED CLASS TIME

- All travel arranged to minimize miss class time.
- Weekday home games will be played at night.
- Departures will be schedule for late afternoon to allow class attendance the day we depart, with few exceptions allowed for longer flights.
- Class attendance is mandatory unless excused by athletic department policy.
- Class absence forms are available for team functions and arranged by academic support.
- Unexcused absence will result in missed practice or game.

OPPONENT SCOUTING

- Understand scouting template
- Create key areas of concern when preparing to play an opponent
- Develop a plan of attack
- Be flexible – what one team does may not work for our team

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT

- In-Season and Out-of-Season routines
- Focus on flexibility and core strength
- Emphasis on explosive lifting techniques.
- Collaborate with strength and conditioning coach for year round program allowing for peak performance during spring season.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- To prepare young men to contribute, compete, and succeed in their chosen careers beyond the student-athlete experience.
- To develop each student-athlete's ability to perform at his performance ceiling.

- To create a dynamic and successful team by maximizing the individual talents and abilities of the student-athlete in pursuit of greater team goals.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

- Dress - you will be issued the following uniform to wear during all team practices, including road practices.
    - Baseball pants
    - Crimson socks
    - Crimson belt
    - Crimson sleeves
    - Team practice jersey - tucked in at all times
    - Team baseball hat
    - Team issued cleats
    - In addition - a team issued jacket or sweatshirt may be worn, as well as a team issued beanie should the weather dictate.
- Field Work
    - Weekly assignments will be posted.
    - All persons in charge of an area will be responsible for that area, and are expected to show-up to practice as needed, and stay as needed after to accomplish their duties.
- Be on time, ALL DAY EVERY DAY.
    - Practice starts at scheduled time.
    - Optional early work will be available up to 10 minutes prior to practice time.
    - Use those 10 minutes to get dialed in to the practice plan and the daily mission within practice.
    - Being on time is a commitment to excellence.
    - Remember, the little things are what make a champion.

PRACTICE PLANNING

- Master plan for entire season – what's important to the program's development
- Focus on being great in three areas, practice these areas daily.
- Set up 4-6 week increments.
- Create daily themes for objective and subjective development evaluation
- Mapping the season – start on the last day and work to the first day.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Attend local and national coaching conventions/clinics yearly.
- Offer to speak at local and national clinics – through teaching comes understanding.
- Visit with opposing coaches to discuss ideas.
- Watch as many championship games as possible to see how your program matches up.

PROFESSIONAL SCOUTS

- Conversations will at no time interfere with study, treatment, practice or game times.
- Cooperate honestly and directly – they are evaluating both your physical ability and character.
- Individual meetings should take place on campus when able.

- Any evaluations or tests will be arranged through the head coach.
- No meetings with professional scouts will take place during the NCAA tournament.

REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES

- Institution first – we will follow the guidelines set up by Washington State University first and foremost
- Standards represent core values – practice what you preach
- Our athletes are rewarded with playing time and being a member of our team
- Tough love and honesty are necessary parts of our growth
- Denial of practice/playing time biggest consequence
- Responsibility – no matter what happens to you it's your fault
- Consequences include:
    - Verbal reprimand
    - Written reprimand
    - Suspension
    - Dismissal
    - Expulsion

SCHEDULING

- Assign duties to assistant coach with head coach final approval.
- 52 games in the spring, four games in the fall.
- 30 conference games.
- Three and four game non-conference series.
- Ideally done with midweek games by the start of conference play.
- Develop a schedule that challenges our student-athletes, establishes a vision or where the program is going, and excites the community, student-athletes, and recruits.
- Budget and facility considerations.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- As program evolves, allocate dollars towards highest need area – pitching
- Access academic awards to supplement athletic awards
- 27 max with a minimum combination of 25% (athletic and academic)
- Position hierarchy to be followed with few exceptions - pitching, shortstop, catching, corner, outfield.

SHORT TERM ACTION PLAN

- The following is a short term action plan aiding in the transition from one coaching staff to the next, and will be the blueprint for the first 30 days after hiring has occurred:
    - Contact signed / committed recruits.
    - Contact returning student-athletes.
    - Determine program resources / needs.
    - Hire coaching staff.
    - Define roles and responsibilities within coaching staff and support staff.
    - Recruiting responsibilities and needs identified.
    - Future scheduling finalized.
    - Community outreach through university functions and community events.

- Fundraising / development opportunities explored and procured.

SLEEP HABITS

- Your REM cycle affects how much energy you have each day.
- You should wake up at the end of a REM cycle: 4.5 hours, 6 hours, 7.5 hours, or 9 hours of rest.
- It is important that you wake up at the end of a sleep cycle so that your body literally wakes up as well.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- All team members will have a twitter account and follow the teams' twitter account for up to the minute adjustments and daily announcements at home and on the road.
- All social media will be the subject of random viewings by coaching staff – refrain from posting detrimental or embarrassing posts / photos.
- Remember, as a student-athlete at WSU, you are the subject to increased scrutiny and must limit the information the general population has available to them.
- Do What's Right – if your posts were on the front page of tomorrow's paper, would your family be proud of what they are seeing / reading?
- Failure to adhere to social media policies set forth by the team or university will result in immediate suspension of account.

SPIRITUALITY

- Respect the different beliefs amongst our team and community members.
- Your spirituality is yours.

SUMMER PLACEMENT

- Assign duties to assistant coach.
- Freshman - place where they are going to get the most playing time.
- Sophomores - place where they are going to be challenged the most.
- Juniors - place where they can play in an area close to home.

TOBACCO

- Tobacco products are not permitted in practice, study hall, class, weight room or any team activity.

TRAVEL

- Represent Washington State University at all times in first class manner.
- Provide quality experience for players.
- Appearance will be determined by coaching staff and followed by all members of travel party.
- Plan in advance all trip itineraries and budget accordingly.
- Prepare for unexpected expenses – rainouts.
- Clear through compliance all travel requests prior to the first game of the season, with roster adjustments expected throughout season.
- Zero tolerance policy during all team related travel – any rule violation will result in immediate suspension and possible return home.

RECRUITING PHILOSOPHY

RECRUITING OBJECTIVE

- Our biggest objective in recruiting is educating.
- We must be able to educate the player, coach, and family on how recruiting works within the NCAA rules, the admission process, financial aid resources, etc.
- Parents need to be aware of all the avenues available to supplement the cost of school.
- From there you educate about your program: the vision, the mission, and the attractions.

THE BUILDING STAGE

- Realistically the program will be in a building stage initially, thus it is imperative we recruit student-athletes we can lose with, before we learn to win together.
- This formula will not be for all, and many of the top prospective student-athletes will look to play where immediate success is likely.
- However, by bringing to campus young men who will learn the system, believe in the program, conduct themselves as model citizens, and achieve at high levels in the classroom success on the baseball field will soon follow due to the character these athletes demonstrate and possess.
- While immediate success is the goal of every program, we will build this program with a foundation which provides consistent, competitive baseball for many years.

A BELIEF SYSTEM

- Recruiting the student-athlete who demonstrates a pre-existing belief system similar to that of the university is a priority.
- We want the student-athlete to realize that if their baseball career ends due to unexpected circumstances, the community of Washington State University will be the environment which they could finish their academic career.
- Often student-athletes choose schools strictly for the baseball program.
- We want student-athletes to choose our baseball program because of Washington State University.

A DAILY COMMITMENT

- Recruiting must be a year round process, done daily to create relationships.
- Recruiting restrictions limit the ability to communicate with players directly until the summer of their senior year.
- However, a strong rapport can be created prior to the summer period through email and handwritten letters.
- As a division one program, communicating via these resources will build relationships with players, families, and coaches, thus making the decision to attend college a more comfortable event.

TARGETING GREAT STUDENT ATHLETES

- Academically, our focus will be recruiting student-athletes who strive to be the best in the classroom.
- While academic success in high school does not guarantee success in college, the belief is the student-athlete who dedicates himself to achieving at great levels within their high school courses will likely do all they can to achieve similar success at the college level.

- These individuals also show tremendous drive to be the best, a key factor in determining whether a player will dedicate himself to achieving greatness on the diamond.

A WELL ROUNDED STUDENT-ATHLETE

- A well-rounded student-athlete is a key factor in determining whether a player can compete at a high level.
- The more a student-athlete demonstrates the ability to compete, whether on the baseball diamond, the classroom, other sports or in an academic club setting, the more likely they will be able to handle the daily challenges attending a high level academic institution as well as competing at the division one level in baseball.

GETTING THE RIGHT KIND OF GUY (RKG)

- Have spent several years at "non-traditional" schools, where the student-athlete may not view the school as their first or second choice.
- Have developed players by making them believe in themselves, treat the environment as "the big time is where you're at", and work cohesively with one another to build something they can be proud of years later.
- While their success may not be immediate, they will develop a passion and level of responsibility that will remain with them the rest of their lives.
- We will recruit the best players in the region, but we will only sign the player that fits our system the best.

VENTURING ACROSS THE REGION

- While recruiting the state of Washington is a must due to the high number of quality division one players within the state, venturing outside the state to areas along the western United States will help to fill our classes with high level student-athletes.
- While the state of California has numerous division one options, states such as Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado have limited division one programs to choose from and a large talent pool of players to evaluate and recruit.
- Connections in all of these states will allow us to make contacts early and garner interest from student-athletes within these states, and several others across the country.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

- Ideally we will build our roster with players from the high school ranks.
- The process of playing competitive baseball at the division one level takes time for players to fully comprehend, thus a player who enters the program with four years of eligibility will likely gain more from the program's philosophies then a player who plays for one or two seasons.
- Players who enter as freshmen become involved in campus life more so then transfer student-athletes, thus creating a more positive experience.

FILLING SPECIFIC NEEDS

- It will be imperative we tap into the vast resources available within the junior college ranks.
- In doing so we will look to fill gaps with immediate needs when no player from within the program currently looks to fill such gaps.
- When recruiting at the junior college level, similar standards must be adhered to.

- The APR's impact on collegiate sports requires junior college athletes not only play at a high level and have an immediate impact athletically, but study at a similar level to advance towards their degree.

COMPETITIVE TOUGHNESS

- Finally, recruiting student-athletes who show the where-with-all to handle adversity through mental toughness will be a high priority.
- Throughout my coaching career I have seen marginal players play at high levels due to their mental toughness, and I have seen talented players play down a level or two due to a lack of mental toughness or maturity.
- Having passion for what you do combined with a mentality to be great provides an opportunity for players to maximize their talents and often play up a level.
- When evaluating a prospective student-athlete, seeing them play in person and fail is as important as seeing them have a great day.
- In times of adversity you will often see a player's true character.
- Accountability and responsibility will be daily guidelines within the program, thus the need to recruit players who understand the importance of the mental side of baseball and how it allows you to be accountable and responsible for your actions on and off the field.

CHAPTER TWO
TEAM FUNDAMENTALS

PHILOSOPHY

The Washington State University Baseball program will be built on a foundation of solid team fundamentals and routines. This section will highlight the fundamentals of our program and the routines we will emphasize through one's career in a Cougar uniform. Routines eliminate the element of surprise and allow the body to perform with a clear mind. Combining the importance of routines with the imperative nature of being fundamentally sound will be a priority throughout our program in all phases.

TEAM FUNDAMENTALS

- Early Work
  - Pitchers and position players have early work every day when at home.
  - The daily early work should be alternated from defense to offense or coach's choice.
  - Both pitchers and position players will have a checklist to ensure that all- important areas of concern are covered.

- Team Stretch
  - We must emphasize the importance of stretching to decrease injury.
  - Players must be taught the significance of team stretch through staff action and articulation.
  - Strength and Conditioning Staff implements all calisthenics with a forceful professional method.

- Throwing Programs
  - The Washington State University throwing program is a daily program designed to maintain and develop arm strength and proper throwing mechanics for all position players.
  - Each coach is responsible for ensuring that the throwing program is completed daily in a disciplined and structured manner.
  - Infielders work on receiving the ball with thumbs up, the exchange & footwork.
  - Catchers practice exchange and footwork.
  - Outfielders work on one hop with four-seam rotation that will give the ball the additional acceleration to the predetermined destination.
  - Key points:
    - Use four seam grip creating 6-12 rotation.
    - Get arm up and on top with fingers on top of the ball through release.
    - Follow through and achieve full range of motion.
    - Infielders catch the ball with two hands, thumbs up and step through with right foot and throw.
    - Outfielders use correct footwork as instructed.
    - Catchers use proper footwork and arm action as instructed.

- Rundown Fundamentals
  - Execute correctly – make only one throw!!
  - Get the ball out of the glove and get it up in the barehand.

- Attack the runner with the mindset of tagging the runner out.
- This forces the runner to commit to running full speed to avoid the tag.
- The player receiving the ball (when possible) should close the gap under control, and cut down the distance between fielders (leave enough space to catch, stride and tag).
- The player with the ball delivers the ball to his teammate instinctually when he feels the runner may be easily tagged out.
- The receiver should move to the same side as the infielder with the ball, clear the runner and should not stop moving forward when attempting to catch the throw.
- Both hands should be up when ready to receive ball.
- Player throwing the ball should not cross the path of the runner.
- After giving up the ball, stay to the side you are on and replace the other infielder.
- Tag the runner with ball in the bare hand inside the glove (if possible).
- Look for other runners rounding bases after the tag.
- Pump fakes are executed with intent to tag runner – no pump fakes with throws.
- If not directly involved in the run down, all players should adjust to protect exposed areas of the defense in case of errant throws - cover bases!

- Pop Fly Priority
  - The Washington State University terminology will be "I Got It!" when you are able to catch the ball easily.
  - Use "Take It!" when indicating you cannot get to the ball and allow the other player to take over or dive for the ball.
  - These are the only two terminologies we will use for a pop-up or fly ball.
  - Additionally there will be no verbal reply.
  - Infielders will use hand gestures when settling under a pop-up in the outfield.
  - Key notes:
    - Do not make the call until the ball has reached its highest point.
    - Make the calls loudly.
    - Centerfielder has priority over everyone.
    - Outfielders have priority over infielders.
    - Outfielders stay low (slide), infielders stay high on any in-between pop-up.
    - Infielders have priority over the pitcher and catcher.
    - Infielders must go hard to outfield area on every fly ball until called off.
    - Shortstop has priority over third baseman and second baseman.
    - Second baseman has priority over first baseman.
    - The corner infielders have priority over the catcher.
    - Pitcher should point to the ball and direct traffic – be the point guard.
    - Pitcher must not give up on low pop ups in center of infield – be an athlete.

- Bunt Defense
  - Players must be able to successfully execute all bunt defenses in a game setting.
  - Additionally, it is important to teach the players the correct way to relay the bunt signs to the defenders on the field.
  - The regular bunt defense "Out" is on until the coach calls another bunt defense.

  - Bunt defense plays:
    - Play 1 - Out
    - Play 2 - Lead Out
    - Play 3 - Special
    - Play 4 - Picks

- First and Third Defense
  - With runners on first and third the coach will flash the sign to the catcher, the catcher in turn will step out to the front of the plate, get fielder's attention and give the sign.
  - It is imperative to understand the objective of each play.
  - First and third defense plays:
    - Play 1 - defend against the squeeze.
    - Play 2 - priority is the runner at first base.
    - Play 3 - priority is the runner at third base.
    - Play 4 - priority is the runner at third base.

- Double Steal
  - With runners on first and second, the manager gives a sign to the catcher to throw to second in an attempt to throw out the trailing runner.
  - Catcher will step out in front of the plate and indicate which runner is the priority and where the throw is going.
  - Signs to infielder:
    - Right hand to glove of catcher = throw to second base. Third baseman hold your position during pitch.
    - Right hand to elbow of catcher = throw to third base. Middle infield hold position during pitch and hold runner closely with pitcher.

- Pick Offs
  - Backdoor pick at first base.
    - First baseman gives sign - pick anywhere on uniform.
    - Pitcher responds with a pick to the shirt or pant.
    - Pitcher comes set looking over right shoulder at second base.
    - When first baseman breaks to the bag the pitcher picks to first base.
    - With left-handed pitcher, first baseman breaks when pitcher lifts his leg.
  - Pop pick at second with second baseman.
    - Pitcher comes set looking at catcher and checks runner at second base.
    - As pitcher picks up catcher after a brief pause, the second baseman breaks to the bag.
    - Catcher drops his glove on infielder's move to second.
    - Pitcher spin moves to second base on pick.
    - Play is called by catcher through sign series - middle infielder must know and pay attention to sign series.
  - Pick at second with shortstop or second baseman.
    - Pitcher comes set and checks runner at second base, then turns head to plate.

        - When shortstop or second baseman sees back of pitcher's hand he breaks to the bag.
        - Pitcher will spin move to second base for pick.
        - Pick is given by middle infielder through sign series.
        - Pick is ran on either a two-look system or a two-rhythm count.
    - Daylight
        - It is highly discouraged to run daylight.
        - If a middle infielder feels a daylight play is there, they are to call a pick and run daylight through a sign, and not through an instantaneous reaction to runner's lead.
        - Daylight may cause a balk which defeats the purpose of holding runners.
    - Catchers to Infielders
        - Right ankle = back pick to first base.
        - Right knee = back pick to second base with second baseman.
        - Left knee = back pick to second base with shortstop.
        - Left ankle = back pick to third base.
        - Verbal commands are also available and vary, with a name given to each bag as an indicator where the pick will go.
        - Eye contact is the key to all these picks.
        - Infielders can initiate picks with catchers through eye contact.
        - Respond to sign with a knock of the cup.
        - Never pick to third base with two outs!

- Relay Fundamentals
    - Sure double, possible triple.
        - Infielders
            - Nobody on base - line up to third base.
            - Runner on first base - line up to home.
            - Constantly know the opponents foot speed!
            - As ball is hit move quickly to line yourself with the outfielder and the probable base in which play will be made.
            - Communicate visually and verbally with the outfielder.
            - Infielders must know the outfielder's arm strength. When in doubt the infielder should make the longer throw.
            - As throw approaches infield, infielder must position self in line with targeted base.
            - Anticipate play and begin to rotate the body to glove side.
            - Catch the ball, get a four seam grip, stay on top of the ball and make an accurate throw.
            - Relay infielder must go get a dying throw.
            - Never short hop excessively low throw or jump for high throw - let the trail defender get the ball.
            - Trailer is the lead man's eyes - he must check runners to determine what base to throw to.
            - Lead man gets out quickly and lines himself up with proper base keeping his

head on a swivel to check runners.
- Give outfielders some hand movement so he can see you.
- Trailer is approximately 30 feet behind the lead man and offset behind his glove and hand shoulder.
- Trailer do not vacate second base early and leave it uncovered on a long single - make certain it's a sure double before you leave base uncovered.
- Trailer will be final word on which base to throw, but catcher will echo calls from the middle of the field or change calls as necessary.
- Verbal commands:
  - Nothing is said = let it go.
  - Simply say one, two, three or four when wanting the ball relayed to a certain base.
  - Cut = hold the ball and get it to the middle of the diamond.

- Outfielders
  - Communicate early and loud at the fence or batted ball.
  - Responsibility is to get an accurate throw to the lead relay man as quickly as possible.
  - Non-throwing outfielder communicates throwing tract and receiving teammate.
  - Make it a practice every day to identify batter/runner as well as base runner's foot speed.

- Base Running
  - Base running during batting practice provides the player with the most realistic practice setting for learning and developing his base running skills and decision making process.
  - It is important that the base running program is implemented with instruction and discipline.
  - Situational rounds during batting practice include:
    - Runners at first base work (as a group/station).
      - Sacrifice bunts - work on secondary leads and reads.
      - Hit and run - runner breaks toward second base peaking in to find the baseball and reacting to where it is hit.
      - Base hit reads - work on angle to third base.
    - Runners at second base work (as a group/station).
      - Sacrifice bunts - work on secondary leads and reads.
      - Move runner - runner extends to secondary lead and reacts to batted ball.
      - Base hit reads - work on angle to score.
      - Fly ball reads - zero and one out reads at second base.
    - Runners at third base work (as a group/station).
      - Squeeze and safety squeeze - work on secondary lead and reaction to ball.
      - Infield in - make ball be in air before going home. Tag and go.
      - Infield back - make ball be on ground and away from pitcher before going home.

- Green going in looking - go on contact and react to ball accordingly.

- Rotations during rounds (hitters as base runners).
  - Round one
    - At first base - hit and run read
    - At second base - sacrifice bunt read
    - At third base - green going in looking read
  - Round two
    - At first base - sacrifice bunt read
    - At second base - move him read
    - At third base - infield back read
  - Round three
    - At first base - base hit to third base
    - At second base - fly ball reads - zero and one out
    - At third base - infield in read - tag and go
  - Round four
    - At first base - straight steal jumps
    - At second base - base hit reads - score
    - At third base - squeeze or safety squeeze read

- Defense
  - Balls off the bat.
    - Batting practice provides the defender with the most realistic non-game setting for learning and developing his defensive mechanics while simultaneously allowing the defender the chance to challenge himself to take chances and to learn his defensive capabilities.
    - It is important that the ball off the bat program is implemented with instruction and discipline.
  - Fungos
    - Batting practice time allows the defender the chance to work on his defensive mechanics (fielding and throwing) in a controlled environment.
    - The quality repetition allows a player to develop muscle memory and to improve his defensive abilities.
    - Fungos should be hit either by a coach (if a specific mechanic is being worked on) or by a pitcher.
    - Again the emphasis is quality of repetition not quantity.

INFIELD OUTFIELD ROUTINE

We will take infield outfield before every game. Inclement weather or special events are the only justification for not taking infield outfield. The coaching staff must emphasize to the players that infield outfield is a beneficial work period. Every time we step onto a baseball field we want to improve!

- Outfield
  - Ball hit to left field corner, gaps and right field corner for relay purposes.
  - Left fielder - two throws to second base and two throws home.

- Center fielder - two throws to third base and two throws home.
- Right fielder - one throw to second, two throws to third and two throws home.
- All outfielders to center field for pre-game ground balls and fly balls - emphasis should be put on fielding the ground ball.
- The number of throws to each base can be adjusted as needed.
- Hit all balls to the outfield in a realistic manner.
- Emphasis must be placed on quality, accurate throws through the relay man.
- Throw the ball in the air or long hop your target.

- Infield
  - Round one - infield in.
    - Third baseman - home to first double play.
    - Shortstop - check runner go to first.
    - Second baseman - arm fake to first, snap throw to third.
    - First baseman - tag play at the plate.
  - Round two - routine play to first.
    - Third baseman - at him ground ball with throw to first base and throw from catcher.
    - Shortstop - at him ground ball with throw to first base and throw from catcher.
    - Second baseman - at him ground ball with throw to first base and throw from catcher.
    - First baseman - at him ground ball with throw to second base with full arm fake and snap throw to third base by shortstop.
  - Round three - routine play to first.
    - Third baseman - to his left ground ball with throw to first base.
    - Shortstop - to his left ground ball with throw to first base.
    - Second baseman - to his left ground ball with throw to first base.
    - First baseman - to his right ground ball with throw to second base with full arm fake and snap throw to third base by shortstop.
  - Round four - double plays.
    - Third baseman - at him ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn.
    - Shortstop - at him ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn.
    - Second baseman - at him ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn.
    - First baseman - at him ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn with first baseman returning to the bag.
  - Round five - double plays.
    - Third baseman - to his left ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn.
    - Shortstop - to his right ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn.
    - Second baseman - to his left ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn.
    - First baseman - to his left ground ball with throw to second base and double play turn with first baseman returning to the bag.
  - Round six - long round.
    - Third baseman - to his right ground ball with throw to first base.
    - Shortstop - to his right ground ball with throw to first base.
    - Second baseman - to his right ground ball with throw to first base.
    - First baseman - to his left ground ball with run to first base to cover base.

- Round seven - slow roller round.
  - Third baseman - slow roller with throw to first base.
  - Shortstop - slow roller with throw to first base.
  - Second baseman - slow roller with throw to first base.
  - First baseman - slow roller with throw to third base
- Notes
  - Catchers are to wear full gear during infield outfield.
  - Incorporate pitchers to cover first base if needed on days first baseman doesn't need to make as many throws.

- Modified Infield
  - At manager's discretion, abbreviated infields will be used when time does not permit a full one.
  - Examples include Inside Game, Daily 18, Mass Groundballs, etc.

PRE-GAME ROUTINE

- Pre-Game Policy
  - All players out of the clubhouse 30 minutes prior to the National Anthem.
  - Position players meet the Strength and Conditioning and Hitting Coach down the outfield foul line 30 minutes prior to the National Anthem.

- Mini-Stretch
  - Strength and Conditioning Coach runs position player mini-stretch.

- Leads and Breaks
  - Two delay steals - one vs. LHP and one vs. RHP
  - Two hit and run - one each.
  - Two straight steals - one each.
  - One squeeze.

- Focus and Mental Preparation Segment
  - Load and timing work
    - All position players bring bats down the lines with Hitting Coach.
    - View and time opposing pitcher if possible.
  - Highly recommended to watch opponent's infield before first game of every series and to check the field before the first game of every road series.

CHAPTER THREE
COUGAR PITCHERS

SECTION I: THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COUGAR PITCHER

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Washington State University Baseball Pitching Manual is a detailed-oriented explanation of the development process of collegiate pitchers. The goal-oriented information is designed to give structure and direction to a variety of aptitudes and athletic abilities. The following information provides tools for teaching; the program is designed for the player and the university, with the ultimate goal being a well-conditioned Division One pitcher.

WHAT WE DO

A. Washington State University Pitchers:
   a. Dictate the Pace - work fast, solid tempo.
   b. Throw Quality Pitches – locate your pitches.
   c. Change Speeds – create great separation through pitches and Effective Velocity.
   d. Competitive Strong – great body language, mound presence and strong routine.
   e. Trust the Plan – mentally strong and prepared.
   f. Pound the Strings – dominate the bottom of the strike zone.
   g. Great Communicator – with other pitchers, the catchers and the coaches.
   h. Solid Secondary Skills – fielding your position, attacking runners, backing up bases, covering first, etc.
   i. Make Adjustments – pitch to pitch, batter to batter, inning to inning, and game to game.
   j. Relentless Approach – attack the batter, be the aggressor.
   k. One Pitch at a Time – tremendous pitch to pitch focus.

B. Washington State University Pitchers Delivery:
   a. Minimize risk and maximize performance.
   b. Develop a repeatable delivery with rhythm and tempo.
   c. Athletic position with timing, balance and posture maintenance.
   d. Throw downhill with angle and trajectory.
   e. Keep it simple – repeat the delivery.

YEARLY GOALS

The yearly goals of the Washington State University baseball program and pitching staff provide an outline of the minimum standards pitchers achieve in order to progress adequately through the system.

YEAR ONE

Goal: Acclimate to the program and the system. Understand responsibilities of representing yourself and Washington State University's Baseball program. Develop habits that form the foundation for your collegiate career.

- Learn program responsibilities.
  - Appearance.

    - On and off field behavior.
    - Respect for the game.
    - Respect for authority.
    - Classroom standards and expectations.
    - Community responsibilities.
- Introduction to routine.
    - Throwing program.
    - Bullpen and between innings work.
    - Conditioning and weight training.
    - Pitch to pitch.
    - Game to game.
- PFP and Running Game repetitions.
    - Fundamental Series.
    - Daily Ten Series.
    - Running Technique.
    - Backhand technique.
    - Five Ways to Cover First Base.
    - Back up duties.
- Understand the importance of being on time and responsible,
- Understand mental toughness.
    - Develop a routine.
    - Develop a release system.
- Understand "Everything that happens to you is your fault".
    - Create a no-excuses attitude.
- Fastball usage.
    - Importance of command.
    - No fear of contact.
    - Box fastballs.
- Learn the Change-Up.
- Establish fundamental delivery keys.
- Delivery goals.
    - Rhythm and timing
    - Directions
    - Health
    - Maximize current physical ability.
- Identify future breaking ball. Adjust as needed.
- Establish quick tempo.
- Learn to read scouting reports and charts.

YEAR TWO

Goal: Emphasis on work habits, making adjustments, understanding areas that need improvement, and having a plan to achieve them. Must understand positive contact and use it.

- Good routines.
- Emphasize repetitions.

- Mechanics – work to achieve a repeatable delivery.
- Expand on mental toughness and no excuses attitude.
- Develop command of fastball to both sides – Level Three (ON the plate vs. OFF the plate).
- Continue to develop changeup; start using it when behind in count when possible.
- Introduce future breaking ball; change current breaking ball if not healthy or productive.
- Warm-up routine should be solid; any new pitches should be incorporated into it.
- Continued development of warm-up routine as a reliever.
- Continued improvement in running game; quicker pick moves, improved times to plate.
- Learn logical reasoning and decision making.
- Learning the difference between pitching on the plate and off the plate (higher than high, lower than low).
- Learn count leverage.
    - First pitch strike and the value it creates.
    - 0-2 count.
    - Ahead vs. Behind protocols.
- Increase knowledge of pitching strategies.
- Continued development of fastball movement.
- Better understanding of pitcher/catcher relationship.

YEAR THREE

Goal: Becoming a pitcher: more emphasis on the mental part of the game, good habits, improved understanding of self.

- Should be self-motivated with good work habits.
    - Running
    - Weight Training
    - Nutrition
- Mechanics should be solid.
    - Know body positioning.
    - Ability to repeat delivery.
    - Make own adjustments: during pens and in games.
- Importance of routine/adjusting it to fit needs.
    - Warm-up
    - Pre-game
    - Between pitches
    - Between innings
    - Between games
- Command of fastball.
    - Both sides of plate
    - Elevate and expand zone
    - Pitch below the strings
- Develops quality two-seam fastball approach (based on individual's needs).
- Solid game plan which utilizes charts and other available information.
- Evaluates hitter's strengths and weaknesses.
- Sets-up hitters using Effective Velocity.

- High first pitch strike percentage (Goal: 63%).
- Game situations.
    - Know and understand them.
    - Anticipate and prepare.
    - Pitch to them.
- Able to call own game.
- Developed put away pitch and quality two-pitch put away combinations.
- Solid self-evaluator within your performance journal.
- Pitch with changeup as big part of attack (Minimum 15% usage).
- Better understanding of pitcher/catcher relationship.

YEAR FOUR

Goal: Understands what has to be done and knows how to do it.

- Ability to evaluate self and make adjustments (delivery, different pitches and game situations).
- Understands situational pitching and knows how and when to challenge hitters (examples: early in count, late in count, early in game, late in game).
- When to pitch to corners.
- Has put away pitch.
- Command of fastball in out and up.
- Knows how to avoid big innings.
- Can call own game.
- Mature and coachable.
- Command of two types of pitches and control of three.
- Understands different types of set-up strategies and how to use them within his style of pitching.
    - Changing speeds.
    - Changing eye levels.
    - Moving the plate.
    - Attack different areas of different hitters.
    - Observe hitting reactions.
- Has developed solid pick-off moves.
- Understands when and how to hold runners.
- Has quick step/release with runners on base (1.3 or better).
- Can “hold ball” and execute quality pitches.
- Projects confidence and game mentality.
- Enjoys challenges, no fear.
- Pride in good work habits.
- Prepared on and off the field.
- Follows disciplined running and conditioning program.
- Knows how to warm-up as both a starter and reliever.
- Prepared for heightened intensity and expectations.

COUGAR PITCHER PROFILE

MASTER YOUR MENTALITY

Pitching at Washington State University within Bailey-Brayton Field presents challenges to all pitchers in the sense of unprecedented competition and often challenging environmental conditions. Developing a consistent and constant routine, one that is simple yet effective is a must within our staff. Within our routine the ability to release the negative in a timely manner, allowing us to move forward is key. Our focus is on playing the game one pitch at a time. That pitch to pitch focus allows us to be in the now and WIN this pitch. It also allows pitchers to be in control of the situation and eliminate any distractions. Controlling what we can control in the now moment allows pitchers to remain aggressive and have an aura about them at all times. This aura also leads to the development of a trust in self, creating great confidence and belief in one's own abilities. Without a true belief-in-self, one's confidence will waver and the results will be inconsistent at best.

MAKE-UP

While this might be the hardest to evaluate, it might also be the most important. Delivery, fastball command and fastball usability are all key components to a winning pitcher at Bailey-Brayton Field, but they will all break down without strong make-up and the ability to handle the uniqueness of pitching at a Division One program in a major conference. No matter how good one's stuff and command, there will be times that the results will not be favorable due to the conditions at Bailey-Brayton Field. These are outings that will test the make-up and resolve of each individual. The ability to evaluate these attributes in non-Bailey-Brayton environments is very difficult, but extremely important to our success in procuring the right type of pitchers for Bailey-Brayton Field.

FASTBALL COMMAND

This is the basic asset a pitcher must have to be successful at Bailey-Brayton Field. Fastball command means being able to locate the fastball on both sides of the plate as well as being able to change eye levels up and down. It does not mean just throwing strikes, but also means throwing balls when the pitcher wants to. Obviously ball/strike ratios and base on balls to strike outs per innings pitched are important indicators, but those can be misleading. There are many pitchers that can pitch to both sides of the plate but only to the outside corner of the respective hitter.

PITCH AT A LEVEL THREE

Our primary focus as a pitcher is to develop our ability to pitch at a Level Three. Level Three pitching includes the ability to locate your pitches to the lower part of the outer and inner half of the strike zone. While having all pitchers pitch at a Level Three is the goal of the program, simply having three to four pitchers a weekend pitch at that level will often lead to winning the weekend series versus our opponent. Level Two pitching is described as pitching to the lower part of the outer half of the plate. Most pitchers who develop this ability will see significant playing time and have important roles within our staff. Finally, pitching at a Level One is the concept of simply throwing strikes. While throwing strikes is a key factor in any pitchers success, Level One pitching often means the pitches are not located to a specific area, the pitcher simply throws strikes.

FASTBALL USABILITY

We have all seen guys that light up the radar gun, but cannot get their fastball by hitters in fastball counts. The key factor in evaluating a pitcher's fastball usability is to see ***how hitters react to his fastball in fastball counts, when he has to use the plate.*** Very often pitchers with only average velocity are able to get hitters out with their fastballs in these situations. This usually is the result of one of two factors: movement or

deception. When it's deception, usually from an unorthodox delivery, it can be disastrous to try to straighten out the delivery. What you see is what you get. Very often these guys will not have great fastball command, but their fastball is still a valuable asset because of the movement or deception and the fact that they can use more of the plate and be successful.

DEVELOP THE FASTBALL IN

With the switch in bats in college baseball, more hitters are starting to emphasize covering the fastball away. Developing the fastball in has become a high priority. In MLB, the team that has the highest percentage of using the fastball in has the lowest batting average against. When a hitter is jammed it is an insult to them, thus potentially opening up the fastball away in later at-bats. However, several teams are sticking to the middle away approach and are susceptible to the fastball in at almost any time and count. Supporting the use of the fastball in is the MLB batting averages on those pitches: Up and in = .144 average, middle in = .199 average, and down and in = .186 average.

MOVEMENT

The most reliable movement for a pitcher at Bailey-Brayton is a sinker. Pitchers with sailing and riding fastballs will also work, but their mistakes will result in more damage than mistakes with a sinker. While fastball usability and movement may sound redundant, they differ in the fact that the usable fastball with movement is also tied into a pitcher that is ***willing to use a lot of the plate,*** instead of being a nibbler.

CHANGING SPEEDS

The main thing that will complement the fastball and its usability is the ability to change speeds. This will allow the fastball to be more effective. Again, this can result in an average to sometimes below average fastball having above average usability. In Bailey-Brayton Field change of speed becomes a very high priority.

EFFECTIVE VELOCITY

Another factor in changing speeds is Effective Velocity. Understanding EV and the separations that velocity plus location can create is a major tool in the development and success of pitchers at Bailey-Brayton Field. Effective Velocity also allows pitchers to use more of the plate and attack the zone with their fastball as well as secondary pitches, which are key factors in the development of successful pitchers at WSU.

DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY PITCHES

Commanding the fastball and changing speeds will give you a chance to be successful, but commanding a second and/or third pitch will lead to a much higher rate of success and give pitchers the greatest chance for victory. Elite pitchers are able to locate three pitches to at least two different locations. Our focus is the development of secondary pitches that we can throw at any time and in any count, especially key moments in a ball game. Developing an in-in breaking ball (a cookie breaking ball) as a well as an in-out breaking ball (the chase breaking ball) will add to a pitchers ability and the value to our staff. Often time hitters will cheat to the fastball in college baseball, thus the development of secondary pitches allowing the pitcher to cross up hitters only adds to the success of our pitching staff.

DELIVERY

A pitcher's delivery and his fastball command will usually go hand in hand. His overall command and ability to throw quality curves, sliders, and change-ups will also be connected to his delivery. A sound, simple delivery will enable a pitcher to repeat his arm action and his release point, which is the basis of command. The other

main reason for a sound delivery is durability. The pitchers who have long and successful careers have done so because they have had deliveries that do not put undue strain on their arms. We can go on forever about deliveries, but there are some basics that you will find in most successful pitchers.

RHYTHM/TIMING

The number one factor in the execution of a pitch or the non-execution of a pitch is the ability to be on time with the delivery. All the mechanical aspects of the delivery are meaningless if the pitcher is unable to kinetically sequence the delivery in a timely manner which allows a repeatable delivery with trajectory and angle. Our main focus of timing within the delivery is the three count system. Locating and developing the three count system is a must within our program. The three count system relies on the belief there is a natural body rhythm pitchers should pitch with, and that rhythm starts with a one count at knee lift peak, a two count at foot strike, and a three count at release point. The one-two-three count should be similar in rhythm to a pitchers normal walking pace, his natural rhythm. This system allows pitchers to have something to fall back on and simplifies the delivery when adversity arrives.

ALIGNMENT

A very high percentage of winning pitchers will stride and land with their landing foot in line with their push-off foot. There are more and more pitchers throwing across their bodies, which will eventually result in lack of command and can create undue stress and cause injury. This will most often occur during stress and fatigue situations. Often the remedy for this problem is to move to the opposite side of the rubber. However, this is only a bandage and puts off the inevitable struggles a pitcher may have with command or injury. Creating proper alignment is most successful when working on alignment exercises with the strength and conditioning coach as he can help you align your stride and strengthen your core at the same time.

ANGLE

The angle at which the ball crosses the plate will dictate how much ball is in the hitting area at the point of contact. The more downhill angle the less ball to hit. This is obviously a key factor in the pitching/hitting confrontation as was confirmed years ago: when baseball needed to get more offense into the game the first thing they did was lower the mound.

As stated earlier the delivery will take up a considerable amount of space within this manual. Thus, if a pitcher has proper alignment and creates good downhill angle with rhythm and timing, he will have done most of the other little things correctly.

THE UNORTHODOX

Then there is the exception to the rule. This is the guy who does not have a good delivery from the above stated stand point, but gets results nonetheless. He wins. In these cases understand their longevity and long-term success will probably be lessened. Do not project any more than what you see, as their success is usually a result of their funkiness. Any attempt to "straighten them out" will usually result in their failure.

TEMPO

The speed in which a pitcher works can have a direct impact on success and failure. A quick working pitcher sets a positive tempo for the game. By working at a quick tempo the pitcher sets a confident rhythm that keeps the defense ready. It also can disrupt the comfort of the hitter and make them overly aggressive early in the count. Our goals are to throw 14 pitches or less per inning, with each pitch coming at a pace of less

than 14 seconds between pitches. In order to work at this quick pace, the pitcher must get signs from the catcher quickly. First pitch strikes and creating early contact by the opposing hitters helps speed the game up.

PITCHER ROUTINES

DAILY ROUTINE

A. Early Treatment
   a. Meet with trainer prior to practice/game in training room.
   b. Prepare body for daily exercises associated with baseball program.

B. Pre-Stretch Routine
   a. Hip Mobility Exercises
      i. Series of exercises designed to increase functionality of hip and core area.
      ii. Great warm-up routine to raise core temperature prior to stretching and shoulder tube exercises.

C. Team Stretch
   a. Led by strength and conditioning coach.
   b. Typically a 10 minute stretch period.

D. Shoulder Tubing
   a. Jaeger Band Exercises
   b. Cross Symmetry Exercises

E. Weighted Ball Routine
   a. Arm strengthening exercises performed prior to actual throwing program.
   b. 4-5 groups of pitchers alternating between weighted ball drills.
   c. Pitcher will execute drill then rest while others in group execute drills.
   d. Pitcher will perform between 5-10 drills with weighted balls.

F. Throwing Routine
   a. Typically a 30 minute period for pitchers to play long toss and do their flat ground work.
   b. Bullpen routine immediately following throwing program for those scheduled to throw pens.
   c. Conditioning for those who are not throwing that day.

G. Post Throw Series
   a. Daily work on fundamental series and the running game.
   b. Performed at the end of throwing routine due to various times pitchers will use to throw each day.

H. PFP Routine Series
   a. Daily work on pitchers fielding practice (if time permits).
   b. Use the practice field or corner outfield depending on drills and time remaining.

I. Team Defense
   a. Defensive drills that bring the team together for execution.
   b. Work on bunt game, running game, live defense, situational offense, rundowns, cuts and relays, pop fly communication, etc.

J. Scrimmage or Batting Practice Duties
   a. Scrimmage if pitchers are available for live arm action.
   b. Batting practice duties include fungos, bases, stack shag, and home run balls.
   c. Conditioning for those who have yet to conduct their conditioning for the day.

WEEKLY ROUTINE

STARTERS

Starters at Washington State University follow a well-planned routine. This routine allows the starter great opportunities to prepare their body and mind for the upcoming week's battle. Alterations to the routine can be made based on the individual starter's needs, however, this is by and large the weekly program starters follow at WSU.

A. Day One
   a. Live: Start
   b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
   c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
   d. Conditioning: Post-Game Routine

B. Day Two
   a. Throwing: Light Day
   b. Conditioning: Ace Day One

C. Day Three
   a. Throwing: Arc Day
   b. Conditioning: Ace Day Two and Gassers

D. Day Four
   a. Throwing: Pull Down Day
   b. Conditioning: Agility Drills

E. Day Five
   a. Bullpen: Prep Pen
   b. Throwing: Pull Down Day
   c. Conditioning: Long Sprint Day

F. Day Six
   a. Throwing: Light Day
   b. Conditioning: Off Day

G. Day Seven
   a. Throwing: Arc Day

b. Conditioning: Medium Sprint Day

RELIEVERS

NO MIDWEEK GAME

This routine is a typical weekly routine for our relievers if we do not have a midweek game scheduled.

A. Day One
   a. Live: Relief Appearance
   b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
   c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
   d. Conditioning: Pre-Game Ladders

B. Day Two
   a. Live: Relief Appearance
   b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
   c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
   d. Conditioning: Pre-Game Agility Drills

C. Day Three
   a. Live: Relief Appearance
   b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
   c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
   d. Conditioning: Pre-Game Ladders

D. Day Four
   a. Throwing: Off Day
   b. Conditioning: Six Innings of Hell

E. Day Five
   a. Throwing: Arc Day
   b. Conditioning: Off Day

F. Day Six
   a. Bullpen: Prep Pen
   b. Throwing: Pull Down Day
   c. Conditioning: Long Sprint Day

G. Day Seven
   a. Throwing: Arc Day
   b. Conditioning: Medium Sprint Day

MIDWEEK GAME

This routine is a typical weekly routine for our relievers if we have a midweek game scheduled.

A. Day One
   a. Live: Relief Appearance

b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
d. Conditioning: Pre-Game Ladders

B. Day Two
   a. Live: Relief Appearance
   b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
   c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
   d. Conditioning: Pre-Game Medium Sprints

C. Day Three
   a. Live: Relief Appearance
   b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
   c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
   d. Conditioning: Pre-Game Ladders

D. Day Four
   a. Throwing: Arc Day
   b. Conditioning: Medium Sprint Day

E. Day Five
   a. Live: Relief Appearance
   b. Bullpen: Pre-Game Routine
   c. Throwing: Pre-Game Routine
   d. Conditioning: Pre-Game Ladders

F. Day Six
   a. Relievers Not Used on Day Five
      i. Bullpen: Light Pen
      ii. Throwing: Arc Day
      iii. Conditioning: Off Day
   b. Relievers Used on Day Five
      i. Throwing: Light Day
      ii. Conditioning: Off Day

G. Day Seven
   a. Throwing: Pull Down Day
   b. Conditioning: Medium Sprint Day

Both of these routines are based on the reliever who is used frequently during a weekend series or midweek game. Often times if a reliever is not used in a series they will have a different weekly routine the following week which includes facing our own hitters in a live situation such as rotational batting practice or scrimmage. While these routines shown above are the norm, pitchers may find themselves as relievers following a new routine every week based on their appearances over the weekend series.

SECTION II: THROWING PROGRAM

THROWING PROGRAM

The following will be done on a daily basis during the season. The key to the program is a gradual progression from pre-mound throwing to pen-mound throwing to live-game pitching. All throwing is aimed at "individual tolerance", thus preventing a stressful workload on the pitcher.

LONG TOSS

The long toss program followed by the Cougars program is done with great purpose and intent. While we use to place an emphasis on timed catch play, the feeling now is the pitcher knows his body best and should be allowed to play catch at distances and times that best fit his needs as part of the individual tolerance ideal. Be careful as pitchers will often tend to baby their catch play rather than push themselves during catch play. Thus, the point of great purpose and intent is to encourage pitchers to push themselves during catch play to improve their craft. It is a belief that throwing harder requires the pitcher to throw hard when physically able to do so.

As part of the long toss program we adhere to the Jaeger Long Toss program which includes:

A. An emphasis on shoulder tubing prior to throwing.
B. Spread base catch until 60 feet.
C. Step behind catch to 90 feet.
D. Open close arc toss to max distance.
E. Bullet catch with pull down emphasis and a squatting partner back to 90 feet - move in 10-20 feet with each throw.
F. Pull down catch is done 2-3 times per week.
G. Arc catch 2-3 times per week.
H. Light catch 1-2 times per week.
I. One day off per week unless otherwise needed.

Pitchers are allotted 20-30 minutes daily to perform their throwing program. Long toss is typically an everyday routine with optional alterations to the program including Arc Catch, which allows pitchers to eliminate the Pull Down Catch phase of the routine and continue to use the Open Close Arc toss on the way back in to 90 feet.

FLATGROUND WORK

The flat ground program allows pitchers to meet the workload needs of a pitcher without the stress of throwing on a mound. It is used to create downhill angle after the long toss program. Typically a pitcher will use 50-75% effort and can be lengthened or shortened based on the pitcher's previous day's work. The program includes the following:

BALANCE CATCH

Balance Catch is performed at a distance of 60-70' and places an emphasis on the fastball/changeup combination. In the stretch position, the pitcher will throw to his partner who is squatting and alternate between a fastball and changeup. Partners will alternate catch play to each other in a continuous manner for

a minimum of 10 throws and a maximum of 20 throws. Ideally this routine starts at the 70' distance emphasizing arm speed and the pull down phase of throwing the fastball, and more importantly the changeup with fastball arm action. Included in this routine is the ability to offset the squatting partner to arm side and emphasize throwing the inner half of the baseball using a two-seam fastball grip or a changeup grip. The offset catcher should set up about 5-8' off center during offset catch.

PITCHER CATCH

Pitcher Catch is performed at a distance of 50-60' and places an emphasis on the fastball/breaking ball combination. Unlike balance catch, pitcher catch requires the pitcher throw 10 consecutive pitches to a squatting partner using the fastball/breaking ball combination. After 10 throws the pitchers switch. If a pitcher has both a curveball and slider, then it is recommended they repeat pitcher catch using the second breaking ball in their arsenal. Ideally this is done at the 50' distance to emphasize spin and an on top / out front release point with their breaking ball. Veteran pitchers will tend to prefer the 60' distance to simulate game like actions.

Adjustments to both Balance Catch and Pitcher Catch can be made by either the pitching coach or the trainer based on pitch development goals or health rehabilitative goals.

Pitcher catch is suggested to coincide with the long toss program as follows:

- Light catch day = no pitcher catch.
- Arc Toss day = fastball/change pitcher catch.
- Pull Down day = breaking ball pitcher catch.
- As always, pitchers have the freedom to adjust as needed based on how their arm feels.

SHADOW CATCH

Part of the WSU throwing program includes shadow catch, which emphasizes delivery sequences from a mound. This routine is common amongst injured pitchers as it allows them to simulate their delivery while unable to physically throw a baseball. The pitcher should place high importance on having a partner or catcher squat for them and should include the following areas of intent:

A. Delivery Goals
B. Routine Development
C. Sign Series Development
D. Game Like Situational Pitching

Injured pitchers are encouraged to perform shadow catch during the staff's throwing routine portion of practice. If able have the pitching coach sit in on shadow catch and create game situations one can visualize and perform during catch play.

PITCH DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BASIC PITCHES

The key to developing any basic pitch is to use them in game like settings. Check grip often for initial adjustments.

FASTBALL

The most important pitch in every pitcher's arsenal is the fastball. All pitches originate from it and it is thrown more than any other pitch. Location of fastball gives pitcher four different pitches in the strike zone. The ability to locate fastball will give the pitcher an advantage in most situations. Emphasis is on down (strings) before in and out.

A. Movement - Proper rotation from a pitcher's fastball will be straight or have a slight tail down and in to a right-handed hitter from a right-handed pitcher. A live, moving fastball thrown with downward angle is difficult to hit because the hitter must judge two planes rather than one.

B. Four-Seam - Used mainly for location, pitching up and pitchouts. This grip will straighten ball and can give ball more velocity and direction.
   a. Hold across seams (horseshoe out)
   b. Loose wrist and grip.
   c. Half inch gap or closer between index finger and middle fingers.
   d. Gap between ball and palm. The bigger the gap typically the later and greater the movement.
   e. Young power arms should use the four-seam grip most of the time.

C. Two-Seam - The "with seams" or "two-seam" fastball usually will be thrown down in the strike zone. This grip will tend to yield a "sinking" or "running" movement. "Sink" is usually achieved with a variation of the two-seam fastball.
   a. Grip ball with fingers in line with seams (on or against)
   b. Finger pressure is found on the inside of the fore finger. Throw the inside part of the baseball.
   c. Don't turn / pronate the wrist. Be free and easy. Hand pronates naturally upon release.
   d. Use middle of plate as target and let ball break to arm side. Aiming for third or black will cause pitch to appear and be out of the strike zone.
   e. Pitcher wants hitter to swing at pitch "No Fear of Contact".
   f. Sink is created by staying on top of the baseball at release point.

D. Practice Approach
   a. Work on throwing with a loose arm. Long, loose arm action is very important. Keep wrist behind ball, firm and strong fingertips.
   b. During catch play, change grips for four-seam and two-seam as pitcher would in game.
   c. Flat ground work is critical. Use the partner's knees as the string level and get to extension to throw the ball downhill. Command and location starts here as it can be done daily, unlike mound work.
   d. Increase game and bullpen usage. Early bullpens will have fastball command emphasis and pitchers will only proceed to secondary stuff when fastball command and location is adequate.

CHANGE-UP

The "change" may be the most underrated pitch in baseball. Pitchers often have difficulty believing they can get hitters out by not throwing hard. The change-up is particularly effective when the pitcher is throwing to an opposite-handed hitter.

Arm speed is the most important element. The idea that "grip dictates velocity" must be emphasized. If the pitcher slows his arm, most hitters can identify off-speed and make adjustments. We want the hitter to look fastball and appear to get one, except the speed is short. Also, change-up is thrown off the fastball and should look like a fastball. In the initial stages of learning the change-up, it is better to throw the change too fast as opposed to too slow. Throw the change with trust that is exhibited by arm speed. You can slow the ball down with your grip, not a change in your arm speed. A deeper and looser grip will slow the ball down. While a separation of 8mph can result in soft contact and typically a separation of 10+mph can result in swing and misses, there is truly no optimum differential because there are too many variables. The hitter will tell you if it's the correct speed, if he's the right guy to throw a change to and if it's in the right location. If he's right on the change it's probably too fast and if he double clutches to hit it or foul it off it's probably too slow.

A. Grips - Although many grips are used, the one closest to the fastball grip should be tried first, especially with young pitchers just learning the pitch.
    a. Three Finger (Pitch Fork)
        i. With two or four-seam fastball grip, add the third finger, keeping the little finger and thumb under the ball.
        ii. Use fingertips.
        iii. This grip is closest in comfort to the fastball.
    b. Four Finger
        i. Use all four fingers on top of ball with thumb directly under the ball.
        ii. Throw with fastball arm speed.
        iii. White ball grip.
    c. Choke
        i. With fastball grip, hold ball deeper in hand, below fingertips with slight palm pressure.
        ii. No fingertips.
    d. Circle
        i. The thumb and index finger will be held together in shape of circle.
        ii. Lay ball against this circle with middle finger gripping large part of ball.
        iii. LHP should try this grip.
        iv. Keep wrist inside the ball.
        v. Be careful not to push the ball.

B. Practice Approach
    a. Use as part of daily catch (long toss and flat ground work)
    b. Check arm speed.
    c. Exaggerate downhill angle.
    d. Flat ground work should include offsetting the catcher to arm side to get feel for throwing the inside of the baseball.
    e. Pitch down in the strike zone. It does not have to be a strike, however, consistent non-competitive 55' changeups are not acceptable.
    f. Work from the ground up and pitch below the strings for swing and miss or soft contact.
    g. Pitch for contact.
    h. Called strikes are good but change of speed is the goal.

SLIDER

The slider is thrown much like a fastball, resulting in late break across plane of bat. A slider appears like a fastball (out of hand) and has "late darting" action to desired side of plate. RHP vs. RHH would be down and away.

A. Grip - The slider grip will vary from pitcher to pitcher. The most common grip involves placing the middle or power finger next to a seam and thumb underneath the ball on the seam. Many pitchers have also developed good sliders while gripping the fastball and slider the same way. Whatever finger placement is used, the slider must not be held too tightly. This will reduce the velocity and sharpness of the pitch. As an indicator of grip tightness a person should be able to slap the ball out of the pitchers hand when held sideways. The across the seams X slider may be beneficial to some pitchers having trouble maintaining velocity on the slider.

    a. Top right corner of the ball (RHP).
    b. Use cup (horseshoe).
    c. Hold ball as long as possible.
    d. Back of hand stays parallel to the ground.
    e. Prevent wrist turn, which can cause arm violence and elbow problems.
    f. Arm should move down and across the body so as not to have "flat" rotation.
    g. Think fastball all the way through the pitch.
    h. The slider is ultimately a fastball thrown on top of ball with slight turn of hand to create cut action.

B. Release Point
    a. Extension with arm at center of body or out front, creating outside rotation and avoiding pitch backup.
    b. Front side closure is important with possible stress put on the arm when front side releases too early.
    c. Allow arm to work through the same fastball window and stay inside the wall to prevent getting around the pitch. Stay through it, on top, out front.

C. Practice Approach
    a. Shorten distance. Flat ground, exaggerate arm with less body, use to get hand out front.
    b. Extend catcher to batter's box of desired location to emphasize releasing ball at center or out front.
    c. Spread base catch emphasizing upper half extension.
    d. Fastball with slider grip emphasizing fastball arm action and getting a feel for release point out front. This will often show cut action on the guys who can naturally throw a slider. From here emphasize out front release with same arm action resulting in cut and tilt.

CURVEBALL

A. Grip - Each pitcher must experiment to find the grip that best suits his hand size and wrist flexibility. The key is to achieve four seam downward rotation.
    a. The most common grip is the horseshoe grip.

b. The side of throwing hand should be facing the hitter at release. The side of the hand should also be perpendicular to the ground at release. This fundamental will help to prevent a slow, looping curveball.
c. It is extremely important that the throwing hand is not wrapped too soon. However, once the hand comes forward, it is angled for the curveball and is thrown with fastball hand speed.
d. It is important the throwing arm shoulder be above the glove arm shoulder when releasing the curveball. These fundamentals help prevent the uphill curveball.
e. The curveball is a pitch that has fastball aggression that you throw with the front of the ball. The goal is quick, late down or down and across action. Even though there is a speed variation from the fastball, this breaking ball should ideally develop as a change of direction power pitch.

B. Practice Approach
a. Work on spin from short distances, high-low angle emphasis.
b. Have the catcher check for four seam downward rotation.
c. Work towards a short quick breaking pitch.
d. Always check the target point. This point may change from day to day.
e. Focus on where to start the break not where you want it to end.
f. Stay back and ride the back leg down the hill to allow the arm to get to apex at foot strike and get out front to release point.
g. Stay inside the wall as your arm comes forward to avoid getting around the ball causing the slow and early loop curveball.
h. Bring your thumb up at release as in flipping the ball over a wall in front of you to gain proper rotation and four seam downward spin.
i. Creating tight rotation with proper arm slot will give best chance for results.

BULLPENS

Although nothing replaces the game, what's done in the pen is close. Our goal here is taking quality work from pen to game. The structure of a bullpen should have direct assimilation to game-like settings. Emphasis is on being down in the strike zone (pound the strings) before inner or outer half development. Pitchers are encouraged to incorporate their routine within the pen, thus pens can take varying rates of time. The catcher is responsible for counting the number of pitches a pitcher throws, with the amounts ranging from 20-50 pitches depending on the pen type. During the finish phase, or on your own phase of the pen, a catcher should signal in the pitch to the pitcher even if the pitcher indicates the pitch first with glove action. If pre-game pen, be sure to allow three-five minutes on the bench before the beginning of the game to take a break and catch your breath. Being rushed during game action is not a goal and should be avoided at all costs, thus it is imperative the starting pitcher know their needed time and start their pen accordingly.

PREP PEN

This pen is performed two-three days prior to the start of a series or a starter's game day. The prep pen includes 30-50 pitches and allows pitchers to develop their game plan and pitch plan for the upcoming opponent. Command and movement of pitches is a critical point of emphasis during a prep pen. A typical prep pen is as follows:

A. Fastball Series (10) - 2 Box, 2 Glove Side, 2 Arm Side, 2 Elevated, 1 Ext Glove, 1 Ext Arm
B. Second Pitch Series (10) - 2 Box, 2 Glove or Arm, 3 FB/2ndP Combinations
C. Third Pitch Series (10) - 2 Box, 2 Glove or Arm, 3 FB/3rdP Combinations
D. Fourth Pitch Series (If App) - Same
E. On Your Own (10-20) - Catcher call and work in 3-4-four pitch sequences to a hitter.
F. Conditioning - Light Jog Day (ie. 8 Poles)

The prep pen does not specify when the wind-up or stretch is used, but ideally 75% of the pitches thrown during this pen are out of the stretch, and at the least the On Your Own portion of the pen is done in the stretch.

WORK PEN

The work pen is done three days after a starter's appearance, or can be done with a reliever who has not seen action in a few games and needs to throw a pen the day before a game day. While the prep pen emphasizes game day preparation, the work pen focuses on the development of the delivery or pitch development. Since the pitcher is focused on his delivery or pitch development, little emphasis should be place on command, with the focus simply being pound the strings or box up your pitches. A work pen progresses as follows:

A. Balance Catch - 60-70' at the conclusion of long toss
B. Pitcher Catch - 50-60' at the conclusion of balance catch
C. Short Work - on the mound with catcher at 50' - 6 Fastballs and 4 Changeups (stretch)
D. Backside Mound Drill - five pitches to catcher at 50' throwing uphill to emphasize chest over front knee and release point - 5 Changeups (stretch)
E. Shadow Catch - 10 shadow throws with catcher calling the pitches (windup)
F. Spin Catch - on the mound with catcher at 50' - 5 Breaking Balls (stretch)
G. On Your Own - 20 pitches on your own – 5x4 pitch sequences (2FB/2OS combos) (stretch)
H. Running Game - 10 fundamental series from catcher with execution by pitcher
I. Conditioning - Hard Sprint Day (ie. 4 Hard Poles)

COUG PEN

The Coug pen was created with a heavy emphasis on command, where the pitcher is only allowed to progress to the next pitch type after successfully completing a series with the previous pitch. This pen starts with fastball command and progresses to the second and third pitch as earned. It allows a maximum of 30 pitches to be thrown. At the end of the pen a pitcher is recognized as a D-1 pitcher if completed in 30 pitches, a Regional pitcher if completed in 28-29 pitches, a Super Regional pitcher if completed in 27 pitches, an Omaha pitcher if completed in 26 pitches and a National Champion if completed in 25 or less pitches. The Coug pen is a used frequently at the start of both the fall and winter break bullpen sessions as fastball command is greatly emphasized before being allowed to throw secondary pitches. The Coug pen looks like:

A. 3 Boxed Fastballs
B. 2 Glove Fastballs
C. 2 Arm Fastballs
D. 2 Elevated Fastballs

E. 1 Extended Glove Fastball
F. 1 Extended Arm Fastball
G. 2 Boxed Second Pitch
H. 2 Glove or Arm Second Pitch (breaking ball glove / changeup arm)
I. 2 Buried Second Pitch
J. 2 Boxed Third Pitch
K. 2 Glove or Arm Third Pitch (breaking ball glove / changeup arm)
L. 2 Buried Third Pitch

If the pitcher hits the batter at any time, or throws a wild pitch at any time, he is required to move back a set and repeat the previous set of pitches. If the pitcher is able to hit the strings at any time during a pitch set, he is allowed to move forward to the next set instantly.

The Coug pen is also a great way to set up bullpen competitions amongst the staff as they can go head-to-head in competition to see who can complete the pen in the fewest amount of pitches, or who can advance the furthest in pitch sets by pitch 30.

LIGHT PEN

Used for relievers who have been inactive, but are needed the next day. This is also considered a shortened mid-week pen or a modified prep pen. Emphasis is quality pitches down in the zone.

A. Fastball (9) - 3 Box, 3 Glove, 3 Arm (windup)
B. Changeup (four) - 4 Strike or Contact Changeups (windup)
C. Fastball (7) - 3 Glove (fourseam), 2 Arm (twoseam), 2 Elevated (fourseam) (stretch)
D. Changeup (three) - 3 Strike or Contact Changeups (stretch)
E. Fastball (four) - 2 Arm (two or four seam), 2 Glove (fourseam)
F. Breaking Ball (four) - 4 Cookies (stretch)
G. Situational (three) - 1 pitchout RHH, 1 pitchout LHH, 1 3-0 Count strike

The light pen can be modified in pitch count if needed to accommodate the reliever's workload and needs.

FASTBALL/CHANGEUP PEN

This pen structure is ideal for most rehab assignments as the pitcher starts their pen progressions, or as part of the initial fall season pen progression, or winter throwing program pen progression. Use after a long toss session.

A. Fastball (4) - Boxed (windup)
B. Fastball (3) - Glove
C. Fastball (4) - Arm (stretch)
D. Changeup (5) - Boxed
E. Fastball (3) - Glove (windup)
F. Changeup (2) - Boxed Arm
G. Fastball (2) - Arm
H. Changeup (2) - Arm
I. Fastball (1) - Glove (stretch)

J. Changeup (1) - Boxed Arm
K. Fastball (1) - Glove

The bullpen program can be adjusted to the needs of the individual pitcher. Many pitchers can prepare with fewer pitches and should be allowed to do so accordingly, unless the pen is part of the build-up phase of the throwing program. Once the throwing program enters the maintenance phase, when pitch counts no longer progress upward and have leveled off for the season, then the pitcher should be allowed to throw pens at the lower end of the pitch count spectrum. A particular pitcher's personal development may require a change in the ratio between fastballs, breaking balls and changeups. Also you may find that a pitcher will throw two prep pens between starts or two work pens between starts. Regardless of pen type, the key is to find the best program for each individual pitcher that allows them to maximize their talents come game day.

BULLPEN PROCEDURES

The following are suggested items and guidelines:

EQUIPMENT

A. Surgical tubing (Cross Symmetry sets or Jaeger Bands).
B. Weighted balls and rebound mats.
C. Pitcher's bag with balls in game-like condition (replace weekly).
D. Sanitary sock with new balls (pearls) only used for mound work.
E. At least one catcher in pen at all times on defense (have shin guards on, glove and mask nearby).
F. Jacket (no matter the weather).
G. Sleeves and/or extra shirt.
H. Towels for both pitcher's use and to dry balls off with.
I. Rosin bag.
J. Tongue depressor or cleat cleaner.

GUIDELINES

PRE-GAME - STARTER

A. Nobody in pen except starting pitcher, catcher and coach.
B. No position players near bullpen mound at any time (ie. pepper play).
C. Starting pitcher routine.
    a. Treatment.
    b. Stretch.
    c. Light Run (produce a sweat) - two poles or six sprints.
    d. Surgical Tubing.
    e. Trainer Assisted Stretch.
    f. Throwing Program - Individual Pre-game Long Toss program.
    g. Structured Bullpen - Use last few pitches to sequence to first few hitters of game.
    h. Meet with pitching coach and catcher - one last review of game plan, signs.
    i. Rest in dugout (three-five minutes).

RELIEVERS

This is a key element for pitching success or failure. Without the luxury of time that the starting pitcher has, the reliever must be able to get ready in a hurry. This takes practice and discipline.

A. Make all pitches from the rubber.
B. Get arm loose quickly.
C. Throw in rapid sequence but not out of control - giddy up catch.
D. Concentration begins before the pitcher gets the call.
E. Majority of appearances will be from stretch, so pitcher should throw all warm-ups from stretch position.
F. Get fastball ready first.
G. Get out pitch or second pitch ready next.
H. If time permits mix both.
I. Get ready to pitch to on-deck hitter or pinch hitter - know who's playing and who key hitters on the bench are.
J. Once relief pitcher is ready don't keep throwing. A gauge is to not throw any more than the pitcher in the game - match him one for one. Don't leave it in the pen or not be able to pitch because pitcher threw too much in the pen the game before.

RELIEF PITCHER GAME PROCEDURE

A. Stay mentally in the game. Watch for:
    a. Hitter weakness.
    b. How pitcher would attack those weaknesses.
    c. Pay attention - know the details.

B. Stay physically ready.
    a. Play catch with outfielder between innings.
    b. Use surgical tubing.
    c. Stretch legs or jog between innings.
    d. Cold to hot can cause injury - stay loose.

C. Anticipate the call. Know possible role that day.
    a. Know if you're long, middle or short relief.
    b. Watch pitcher in game to anticipate call.
    c. Never be surprised if you get the call.
    d. Want the baseball.
    e. Know the head coach / pitching coach. This can give you extra time to stretch.

D. Upon entering the game, know the situation.
    a. Listen to the coach for situation instructions.
    b. Familiarize yourself with all surroundings.
    c. Have ability to understand and apply warm-up pitches to first hitter you face.
    d. Tell coach and catcher best strike pitch and best out pitch.

E. Eight warm-ups from stretch position unless no one is on base. Sequence:
    a. Boxed fastball (1).
    b. Fastball to strength side (2).
    c. Breaking balls (2) or out pitch if other then fastball.
    d. Fastball strength side (1).

e. Breaking ball or changeup (1); looks/hold, depending on the situation.
f. Fastball (1).
g. Use quick pitch / slide step on at least one pitch from the stretch for opponents timing purposes - be as quick as you can without worrying about command as they'll be more worried about your time to the plate then the quality of the pitch during your warm-ups. Make sure the pitch is a fastball when doing this.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESSION

PITCH LIMITS

Pitch limits are essential to the health and development of the pitcher. A steady progression from Fall Ball to Opening Day and throughout the season:

FALL BASEBALL

First Appearance	40 Pitches or three Innings
Second Appearance	50 Pitches
Third Appearance	60 Pitches
Fourth Appearance On	70 Pitches Max

SPRING PRE-SEASON

First Appearance	30 Pitches or two Innings
Second Appearance	40 Pitches
Third Appearance	50 Pitches
Fourth Appearance	60 Pitches
Fifth Appearance	65 Pitches
Sixth Appearance	70 Pitches
Seventh Appearance	75 Pitches

SPRING REGULAR SEASON

First Three Starts	75-90 Pitches
Second Three Starts	90-105 Pitches
Remainder of Season	90-120 Pitches

PITCHING PERCENTAGES

These are minimal percentage goals for pitchers to attain:

STRIKE PERCENTAGES

Overall	63%
First Pitch	59%
Fastball	64%
Curveball	61%
Slider	61%
Change-Up	61%
Other	60%

PITCH USE PERCENTAGES

When documenting the usage of pitches, we design to emphasize the use of the fastball. For the young pitcher the use of the fastball is the single most important aspect of his development. The fastball is thrown in all counts, and the ability to locate it with change of speeds is essential.

Fastball	65%
Breaking Ball	20%
Change-Up	15%

PITCHER ROLES

The pitcher's role will be decided by the coaching staff after evaluating the pitching staff and the role that allows the most success for the pitcher, staff, and team within that role. Most successful programs rely on six to eight arms which carry the load of the staff's innings throughout the season. As a reminder we typically carry ten pitchers on our roster during competition while we carry 14-16 pitchers as a whole on our team. As you can see the pitcher's development and innings pitched are often related to finding a spot in one of these roles.

The roles of the pitching staff are as follows:

1. Friday Starter
2. Saturday Starter
3. Sunday Starter
4. Closer
5. Set-Up RH or LHP
6. Set-Up RH or LHP
7. Swing Arm (Spot Starter or Long Reliever)
8. Situational LHP
9. Innings
10. Innings

SECTION III: THE DELIVERY

MECHANICS

THE DELIVERY

Mechanics are an avenue for location, durability and maximizing physical potential. The mechanics discussed here are by no means the only ones available for pitchers to learn, but more of a foundation from which basic adjustments can be made. Our goal through mechanics is creating:

A. Rhythm - work in unison with the body's natural pace.
B. Direction - must understand pathways or lines to home plate. Proper direction is achieved when the land toe and pivot toe are in a straight line to the plate.
C. Trajectory or Extension - work downhill.
D. Durability - taking pressure off arm through use of large muscle groups for balance throughout the delivery.
E. Finish - create a strong finish as the arm can only accelerate as fast as it can decelerate.

THE SETUP

A. Body in relaxed position, feet slightly spread (not together), torso slightly forward and upright with shoulders relaxed.
B. Feet positioned on throwing arm side of rubber for deception and outside edge angle on breaking pitches. Body weight should be positioned over pivot foot.
C. Ball should be set in the glove prior to stepping on the rubber. It is not advised to hold ball in hand during set-up.
D. Shoulders and hips should have slight angle open to throwing arm side.

PRELIMINARY MOVEMENT

A. A short three-quarter drop step with the free foot in the direction of second baseman (RHP) or shortstop (LHP) occurs as the pivot foot is moved into position in front of and next to the pitching rubber.
B. The hand lift should be coordinated with the drop step and the placement of the pivot foot.
C. Key points:
    a. Cover wrist and ball with the glove so that the view of the ball and wrist is obscured from both base coaches.
    b. Keep the back of the glove to the hitter during movement.
    c. Do not tilt torso toward second base.
    d. Keep head over pivot knee and get loaded.

BALANCE PHASE ONE

A. Hands should move down the mid-line of torso, moving simultaneously with the lift of the stride leg.
B. The stride leg should be lifted using the quadriceps. The calf and foot should remain almost limp during the leg lift. The stride knee should be moved toward the belt buckle during the leg lift. Key points:
    a. Do not swing stride foot. This may cause the torso to lean back or arch to maintain balance.
    b. During this movement, the eyes should remain parallel to the ground. The vision should be continually focused on target once catcher's signs are given.
    c. The stride leg should reach its highest position at or slightly above the pitcher's belt line. Extreme leg kicks may lead to balance / load problems. The leg kick should always be "soft".
C. Balance with the weight on rubber foot position. It should be emphasized that too great a turn can cause too much head turn and result in control problems.
D. The head position should remain stable. Head movement created by excessive hip and shoulder rotation may cause balance and vision problems. Both eyes on target!
E. The rear leg should remain moderately flexed with the pitcher's head over the pivot foot.
F. Head, back foot, and lifted leg are all in a balanced position.
G. Maintain posture during this phase.
H. Note: Arm angle dictates leg lift and the amount of turn the pitcher takes.
    a. Over the top arm angle take knee to front of chest.
    b. ¾ arm angle take lift knee to back of chest.
    c. Sidearm angle take lift knee beyond pivot leg during turn.

BALANCE PHASE TWO

Separation of the hands should occur at a point allowing arm to reach apex at foot strike.

A. As the hands break or separate there are several key fundamentals to execute:
   a. Balanced with weight retention and head riding the back leg.
   b. Glove stays inside the box.
   c. All actions stay inside the tunnel, allowing pitcher to stay linear with great direction.

EXPANSION AND DIRECTION PHASE

A. Lower Half - The stride should begin with the front side moving directly at the catcher's glove.
   a. This movement toward the target should be initiated by the glide of the back leg and should be considered a controlled fall. Stride like you hit.
   b. Linear direction allows better direction. All movement keeps the pitcher on-line and moving to the plate.
   c. During the stride/separation phase the head should remain over the rear leg thigh. This head position allows the pitcher to retain the body weight behind the center of gravity. During acceleration, the weight is shifted to the pitch.
   d. Lead with the front foot / knee.
   e. The stride leg foot should land slightly closed with the body weight landing predominantly on the inside of the stride foot, which has moved at the target. This landing allows the front side to stay closed longer, improves power and location and reduces arm strain. The knee of the stride leg should be flexed as the stride foot lands.
   f. Ideally the pitcher reaches a point 75% down the hill before opening up the front hip.
   g. Maintain posture during the delivery. Not concerned with posture tilt as long as the pitcher maintains that tilt throughout and does not change tilt while going downhill.
   h. By locking in the hip the pitcher is able to maintain back hip height as he goes down the hill.

B. Upper Half - The separation of the hands and subsequent arm action should occur simultaneously with the beginning of the stride.
   a. Lead elbow parallel with front shoulder, level with back shoulder.
   b. The glove stays level to or below the lead elbow. The glove should not reach a point higher than the front elbow.
   c. The lead shoulder should move directly at the inside third of the plate (RHP vs. RHH).
   d. The glove stays inside the box out in front of the body.
   e. The throwing arm should move down, back and up in a loose, free manner to apex.
   f. The throwing hand should move along this route on top of the baseball (palm down).
   g. Shoulder and arms stay inside the tunnel.

BALANCE PHASE THREE – FOOT STRIKE

As the stride foot lands the arm should be up on the backside of the body at apex. Proper timing at foot strike allows the rest of the delivery to take place naturally.

A. Lower Half – A loaded lower half lights the fuse for an explosive delivery.
   a. Energy at foot strike is sent through the body at a force up to six times the pitcher's body weight.
   b. Energy at foot strike is sent back to create an explosive backside.
   c. Front toe is slight closed, ideally at a ten degree angle.
   d. Feet are lined up to the target.

e. Front knee inside the front foot.
f. Hips uncoil at foot strike.

B. Upper Half – Throwing arm reaches apex position at foot strike to allow forward moment from this point. If the timing is right at foot strike the shoulder goes along for the ride during the rest of the delivery.
   a. Firm front side with glove out and over stride foot.
   b. At apex ideally the ball is facing the shortstop (RHP) or the second baseman (LHP) and fingers should be on top of the baseball.
   c. Throwing arm should be at 90 degrees or less between hand and shoulder when the spine begins to rotate.
   d. This position at apex provides optimal positioning for the medial elbow during the delivery.
   e. Chest faces third base (RHP) or first base (LHP) while the hips have opened up to create maximum torque.
   f. Proper arm positioning with both the throwing arm and lead arm (opposite and equal) minimizes risk and maximizes efficiency.

FIRING PHASE – POWER POSITION

A. Energy fired from plant foot to backside in previous phase now delivered to target.
B. Firing sequence is back knee to back hip to back shoulder to throwing elbow.
C. While the hips uncoiled the shoulders stay closed. During the firing phase the shoulders start to rotate to a squared up position with the plate.
D. There is a direct correlation between the velocity a pitcher can uncoil his hips and the velocity of a pitcher's fastball.
E. If the timing is correct when the hips uncoil and the shoulders stay closed, the shoulder should rotate during the firing phase at a rate twice as fast as the hips. If the shoulders open up when the hips open up during the stride phase, the rate is equal to that of the hips.
F. Back foot heel releases up to shoulder twist allowing the back hip to be released.
G. The firing phase is like building a house. Starting with the foundation, if done correctly, should lead to a solid delivery the rest of the way through.

BALANCE PHASE FOUR - ACCELERATION

With the stride foot planted and the shoulders rotated and squared up to the plate, the throwing hand will flip to a palm up position and acceleration will begin and continue through the release.

A. The pivot foot leaves the rubber and body weight is moved from the flexed backside to the flexed front leg.
B. Concurrently, the throwing elbow (remaining at least as high as the throwing shoulder (marginal) or slightly below (optimal)) leads the throwing hand toward the release point in a less than 90 degree slot.
C. As the throwing arm moves toward release, the lead arm glove will firm up and allow the chest to move towards the glove.
D. The throwing side, or power side, is now replacing the front or directional side.
E. Key Point: An axis for this acceleration toward release is created by having the pitcher's head directly over the flexed landing leg knee. This is a critical mechanical fundamental that helps the pitcher achieve maximum leverage.

F. At release there are several key checkpoints:
   a. Stable head is over a flexed front knee.
   b. Trunk tilts forward to cause back to arch.
   c. Trunk moves to the plate tilted at a 45 degree angle.
   d. Lead knee begins to firm up and must stop at some point to allow the back hip to fire. If the lead knee continues to drift the back knee will not be able to fire.
   e. Glove arm is non-aggressive. Squeeze and swivel and allow it to relax to torso.
   f. Glove is near body allowing pitcher to rotate with greater acceleration. Picture a figure skater. With their arms near their body they rotate quicker. If their arms get away from their body their rotation slows down.
   g. Back knee closes the gap between the back and front leg. Ideally the back leg creates a small L. If the back leg is straight the pitcher is not incorporating the lower body into the acceleration phase.
   h. Back leg and ankle get to extension.
   i. Fingers are on top the ball and wrist is behind the ball. Throw the top-back of the baseball.
   j. Arm snaps to full extension allowing pitcher to throw with trajectory.
   k. Elbows stay close together during this phase to maximize rotation.
   l. Throwing elbow is beyond glove arm.
   m. Throwing shoulder is closer to the target then the glove shoulder.
   n. Consistent release point out front of land foot.

BALANCE PHASE FIVE – DECELERATION, FOLLOW THROUGH AND FINISH

Our primary focus with any pitcher is to first create an exceptional efficient pattern of deceleration. Such a pattern will be unique to the individual pitcher, but the pattern will have six important qualities or characteristics:

A. At release the throwing shoulder is closer to the target then the non-throwing shoulder.
B. The hand/forearm is pronating immediately upon release therefore the banging of the elbow is minimal, greatly reduced or eliminated all together.
C. The trunk flexes at the waist.
D. The glove side stops, firms, folds and stabilizes so that distance closes between the elbows as the throwing arm decelerates.
E. After release and pronation, the throwing arm stays relaxed / flexed and does not cross the athlete's midline.
F. The trunk continues to rotate around the front hip.
G. Release back foot to help deceleration process. If back foot is outside of body at release point then upper body is dominating movement to the plate.
H. Throwing elbow is located outside or in front of firm front knee but not crossing the mid-point of the torso. Rotate the shoulders together to accomplish this.
I. Keep head out and down over land leg. If head is beyond stride foot the pitcher is using too much of his upper body.
J. Throw through the ball to finish and prevent recoil.
K. If head is over stride foot and back foot whips around then lower half is being utilized.

MECHANICS - DRILLS FOR CORRECTION

THREE COUNT RHYTHM DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. Teaches pitcher to pitch in three count sequence.
   b. Provides feel for pitcher to pitch in his natural rhythm.
   c. Provides simple delivery cues for pitcher to use during games or bullpen sessions to get their delivery back on track without over analyzing or complicating the matter with mechanical lingo.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Pitcher walks around in a normal pace counting each step up to three (one-two-three) and repeating the three count for several steps.
   b. This walk provides the pitcher with the rhythm that is his normal pace.
   c. The pitcher starts in the stretch position using a normal leg lift.
   d. As the knee gets to lift peak, the pitcher counts one, either to himself or out loud.
   e. The pitcher completes the pitching sequence in the rhythm the earlier walk provided for him.
   f. At foot strike the pitcher will count out two, either to himself or out loud.
   g. At release point, a point in front of his stride foot, the pitcher will count out three, either to himself or out loud. Often times a pitcher will say three prior to the ball and hand getting to a proper release point, indicating his timing is off and his ability to throw downhill and out front will suffer. An easy observation of this is made by the coach as he stands to the side and near release point.
   h. This drill can be repeated during all bullpen sessions and can even be part of the catch play routine, especially the balance catch and pitcher catch phase of the throwing routine.

TEN FOOT DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. To achieve downhill angle on flight of ball.
   b. To teach the pitcher to extend arm out front.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Start with towel or object ten feet in front of start position on flat ground.
   b. Achieve balance point through regular delivery.
   c. Pick up object with eyes.
   d. Throw pitch to hit object from ten foot distance.

C. Result
   a. The close distance eliminates time to do mechanics that cause angle problems.
   b. Quickens arm from ball-glove separation to release point.

KNEELING DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. Isolate the upper body.
   b. To get the feeling of trunk flexion over a flexed front leg.
   c. To keep good alignment within the arm swing.

d. To develop forearm, wrist and hand speed.
e. To develop good angle and a long arc of deceleration.
f. To keep chest from staying open on release.

B. Drill Procedure
a. Kneel on the pivot leg knee with the stride foot out in front, flexed at the knee.
b. Square-off, facing the throwing partner.
c. Throw at approximately 30 to 40 foot distance.
d. Start with both hands together in front of the body.
e. Break normally, throw with a natural pitching motion and throw below half speed.
f. Use a good long arc of deceleration outside the lead knee.

PIVOT FOOT SHADOW DRILL

A. Purpose
a. To teach pitchers to release the backside (hips) into the pitch by rolling over their pivot foot.
b. To teach pitchers that their pivot foot comes forward off the rubber even before they release the pitch.

B. Drill Procedure
a. Put the pitcher in a stride position with the pivot foot still on the rubber.
b. Pitching hand is in a high, cocked position at apex.
c. Coordinate the arm action with the rollover of the pivot foot (do not throw the ball).
d. Pitcher should feel the hips and shoulders rotate and square off and the lead leg stay flexed, versus stiffening too early.

WALL DRILL ONE (FRONT)

A. Purpose
a. To teach the pitcher to get up in a balanced position without moving or drifting forward before the lead leg starts downhill.
b. Good body control and balance prevents the pitcher from rushing.
c. Gives pitcher a general look at our meaning of drifting to arm side / across body, and a better idea of a corrected feeling.

B. Drill Procedure
a. Pitcher stands facing a fence, wall or net with his toes within one foot of the barrier.
b. Pitcher moves from his preliminary taking-the-sign position to the leg lift balanced position.
c. If the pitcher uses proper techniques, he will not move up into the barrier. This also demonstrates good balance and body control and prevents rushing.

C. Repetitions
a. For pitchers with balance problems: at least 10 reps daily with a five second hold.

WALL DRILL TWO (BACK)

A. Purpose
a. To allow feel of bad direction / alignment and how to correct it.

b. Give a better view of how mechanical parts should work in sync / together.
c. To cut down on over-rotation of arm swing upon separation and moving to apex position.
d. Prevents throwing arm from crossing acromial line.

B. Drill Procedure
a. Start with back against fence and heels about 8-12 inches from fence.
b. Lift into balance / load position in one continuous motion.
c. Make sure no part of your hand, arm or body touch the fence as you start towards an imaginary target along the fence line.
d. From start to finish, notice proper lower half alignment, extension and a controlled finish each time.

STRIDE DRILL

A. Purpose
a. To check the direction of the pitcher's stride.
b. To check length of stride (head and shoulders can get over the front knee).
c. To check stride leg knee flexion on landing.
d. To check stride foot landing – slightly closed toe. Watch for landing on the heel.

B. Drill Procedure
a. Wind-up or set position.
b. Good drill to be done in front of a mirror.
c. Mark a straight line from the ball of the pitcher's pivot foot to the land plate.
d. Pitcher takes his normal motion and throwing action (without throwing the ball at first) and checks his stride.
e. Can place hat under the stride leg at knee lift to give indicator of where to take foot during the stride.

C. Repetitions
a. For pitchers that throw across their body or open up too much, 20 reps per practice.
b. Place mark over the improper landing spot if needed.

CONE DRILL

A. Purpose
a. To check the direction of the pitcher's stride.
b. To eliminate the rotational habit of pitchers who like to swing open the stride leg knee rather than take the foot and knee down the hill in a linear manner.

B. Drill Procedure
a. Stretch position.
b. Place cone in front of rubber and in front of pitcher.
c. Pitcher uses his normal delivery and throwing action (without throwing the ball at first) and checks his stride, making sure stride foot is coming down from leg lift and striding down the hill inside the cone.

C. Repetitions
   a. For pitchers that throw across their body or open up too much, 20 reps per practice.
   b. Can use a chair or other large object in place of the cone to give pitcher a larger feel for keeping stride foot moving in a linear direction down the hill underneath him.

BALL GLOVE SEPARATION DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. To teach the proper time and location of the hand break.
   b. To teach the pitcher to break his throwing hand downward with the fingers on top of the ball.
   c. To teach the pitcher to lift his glove hand or lead elbow at the hitter. This helps to create trunk arching as well as rotational and downward forces.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Pitcher starts in his hand break position (hands together) with the pivot foot parallel to and in front of the rubber.
   b. Break the pitching hand down out of the glove. At the same time, lift the glove and lead elbow at the hitter.
   c. Get the lead arm and throwing arm in a proper sequence and rhythm.
   d. Allow the lead elbow and glove to stay firm out front of the body. Be careful not to be overly aggressive with the lead arm and allow it to fly open or pull back towards the body.
   e. Create tension between the distal and proximal end of the lead arm.
   f. Lead arm should firm up as the pitcher squeezes and swivels the lead arm as the chest moves forward towards the glove.

C. Repetitions
   a. No ball, ten reps, in mirror if able.
   b. Form throw into net, 30 feet away, emphasizing lead-arm action.

CROSS ARM DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. To teach the proper timing and arm action from glove ball separation to apex.
   b. To teach the pitcher to break his throwing hand downward with the fingers on top of the ball.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Pitcher starts in spread base position.
   b. Long arm action - place the throwing hand under the lead arm's armpit while the glove hand rests near the throwing arm's shoulder.
   c. Short arm action - place the throwing hand and glove hand in an X / cross arm position in front of body, with glove and throwing hand located at shoulder height.
   d. Start the delivery by taking a small rhythmic weight shift from center to backside, getting head over back thigh before moving forward.
   e. Bring the throwing hand back in either a long arm circle (thumb to thigh) or a short arm circle (catcher like) so that ball gets to apex at foot strike.

f. Get the lead arm and throwing arm in a proper sequence and rhythm, taking the glove arm to a firm position out in front of the body no further than a point over the stride foot.
g. Throw the baseball.
h. Use during the spread base phase of the daily throwing program.
i. Encourage pitchers to use the short arm action sequence as it allows the pitcher to get in the optimal position to throw the baseball.

DOUBLE CROSS ARM DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. The next phase of cross arm drills.
   b. To teach the proper timing and arm action from glove ball separation to apex.
   c. To teach the pitcher to break his throwing hand downward with the fingers on top of the ball.
   d. Allows pitcher to check that ball is getting to apex while glove hand is getting to a point out front of body in a timely sequence.
   e. Allows pitcher to check that throwing arm angles are less than 90 degrees from hand to shoulder and elbow to side of body, and throwing hand is located inside (in front) of body alignment when the spine begins to rotate.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Pitcher starts in spread base position.
   b. Long arm action - place the throwing hand under the lead arm's armpit while the glove hand rests near the throwing arm's shoulder.
   c. Short arm action - place the throwing hand and glove hand in an X / cross arm position in front of body, with glove and throwing hand located at shoulder height.
   d. Start the delivery by taking a small rhythmic weight shift from center to backside, getting head over back thigh before moving forward.
   e. Bring the throwing hand back in either a long arm circle (thumb to thigh) or a short arm circle (catcher like) so that ball gets to apex at foot strike.
   f. Stop at apex and allow pitcher to check that he is in proper positioning.
   g. Return throwing hand to initial cross arm positioning and repeat sequence, this time not stopping but continuing throwing motion.
   h. Get the lead arm and throwing arm in a proper sequence and rhythm, taking the glove arm to a firm position out in front of the body.
   i. Throw the baseball.
   j. Use during the spread base phase of the daily throwing program.
   k. Encourage pitchers to use the short arm action sequence as it allows the pitcher to get in the optimal position to throw the baseball.

THREE STEP PAUSE DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. To gain muscle memory at vital spots of the delivery.
   b. Teach repetition of correct movements.
   c. Help strengthen pitching muscles.

B. Drill Procedure

a. Start with pitcher at leg lift position on the rubber.
    i. Hold position for 10 seconds.
    ii. Unlock knee to slightly bent position and hold for 15 seconds.
b. At foot strike, position ball of foot to ball of foot.
    i. 10 seconds in relaxed state to slow movements to semi-squat position.
c. On coach's command shadow throw finish, holding finish position for 10-15 seconds.

FRONT TOSS DRILL

A. Purpose
    a. To gain balance awareness.
    b. Hold balance point at leg lift.
    c. Control violence on landing.
    d. Smooth ball-glove separation.

B. Drill Procedure
    a. Face pitcher from open side, underhand toss ball to him hands high.
    b. Pitcher gets to leg lift position (balance point) and hold position.
    c. Coach or partner tosses ball to pitcher.
    d. Pitcher receives the ball and throws.
    e. Throw to partner in squat position.

FOUR STEP FORM THROWING DRILL

A. Purpose
    a. The complete series is a mechanical breakdown of the four major points in a pitcher's motion. Isolating a particular flaw and repeating an adjustment can be seen and addressed here.

B. Drill Procedure
    a. Upper Body Isolation
        i. Pitcher has right knee (if right handed) on ground with land foot on ground (direct line from knee), slightly closed foot.
        ii. 10 30' throws emphasizing extension and finish to ground with head down.
    b. Lower Body Positioning
        i. Pitcher in stride position.
        ii. Stride is shorter than normal position.
        iii. Feet are in line with front foot, slightly closed.
        iv. Throw with backside coming through (foot lift).
        v. Emphasize extension.
        vi. Lead arm lift with throw.
        vii. Hand to knee.
        viii. 10 throws at 60'.
    c. Balance
        i. In stretch position hold ball in relaxed mind-set for count.
        ii. Move to balance point, hold for count, incorporate throw.
        iii. 10 throws at 50'.
    d. Step Four

i. Full delivery – incorporate first three steps with two second count hold on finish.
ii. Check for backside help (lift back foot).
iii. 10 throws at 50'.

COMEBACKER / WALL DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. Keep pitcher from recoiling.
   b. Keep pitcher's head from popping up.
   c. Helps reaction on comebackers.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Throw ball against cement wall from full pitching motion.
   b. From 10-15', throw pitch and receive ground ball.
   c. If pitcher is in proper finish position, he will field ball with head down and knees flexed.

KOUFAX DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. To reinforce proper mechanical position to maximize outcome.
   b. To understand proper leverage points from feet up to top.
   c. To reinforce proper body alignment.
   d. To understand the importance of the hip flexor area.
   e. This drill gives the best indication to the pitcher of several different points we often point out verbally about the delivery.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Establish Pull position
      i. Use slant boards that simulates the front of rubber parallel to the fence.
      ii. Place foot along the ridge so you can feel leverage on the entire inside of the foot.
      iii. Lift leg to balance / load position, holding on to the fence with the palm facing the fence.
      iv. Be sure arm and hand are inside body.
      v. Keep weight on back leg with a slight bend in knee.
      vi. You should feel the power with the back leg and the leverage to the instep of the back foot.
      vii. Allow the hips to move out first, feeling the power on the instep of the back foot throughout.
      viii. Finally, pull on the fence so as not to lose your balance.
      ix. The hand and arm should be inside the body line and you should feel the hip flexor muscle intensely.
      x. In viewing from the side, you should see an arch from the fence hand to back foot.

HERSHISER DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. To reinforce proper mechanical position to maximize outcome.
   b. To understand proper leverage points from feet up to top.

c. To reinforce proper body alignment.
d. To understand the importance of the hip flexor area.
e. This drill gives the best indication to the pitcher of several different points we often point out verbally about the delivery.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Establish Lean Position
      i. Use the same slant board, but position yourself moving towards the fence.
      ii. You may have to be 12-15 inches from the fence to get a good feel for this drill.
      iii. Lift to balance / load position.
      iv. From this position control your fall forward with the hip leading.
      v. Be sure not to touch the fence with your shoulders or your leg.
      vi. The front hip is the only part of the body touching.
      vii. From a side view you can see an arch from the palm of the throwing hand to the back foot.
      viii. Once your hip has touched the fence, gain more leverage from the inside of your back foot without dropping or breaking down the backside too much to gain the feel.

SLIDESTEP DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. Teaches pitcher to pitch in a quick step / slide step rhythm down the hill from the stretch position.
   b. Allows pitcher to pitch from the stretch in a time of 1.30 seconds or less.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Can be done during flat ground work or bullpen session.
   b. Pitcher starts in stretch position with a slightly wider than normal base.
   c. Hands are separated in front of the body just below chest height with palms facing down and ball in throwing hand.
   d. Using a three count rhythm, start by slightly raising the hands up (one), followed by a short stride step (foot strike = two), and finish with a pitch (release point = three) to the catcher or partner.
   e. Progression of drill includes starting with the hands together at chest height and ball in glove, and feet closer to a normal set position width.
   f. Repeat several times and do daily until pitcher has a feel for the quick step and being quick to the plate from the stretch position.

BACKSIDE MOUND DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. Force pitcher to firm up front leg and limit drift.
   b. Quicken delivery from balance point.
   c. Force pitcher to land with a flexed front leg.
   d. Allows pitcher to get chest over front knee and extend release point.
   e. Great drill for change-up and two-seam fastball development.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Start on flat ground behind mound.
   b. Work from the stretch with normal leg lift.
   c. Go through throwing motion allowing slope to change timing and delivery.
   d. Throw to catcher or partner.

THREE BALL DRILL

A. Purpose
   a. Allows pitcher to firm up the front arm during delivery.
   b. Provides weighted resistance to firm up the proximal and distal ends of the lead arm.
   c. Teaches the pitcher to keep a solid front arm during delivery.
   d. Eliminates opportunity for pitcher to open up with the front arm causing the rest of the delivery to drag.
   e. Allows greater chance for pitcher to stay on-line during the delivery.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Can be done during catch play, flat ground or mound work.
   b. Pitcher removes glove and holds three baseballs in his glove hand.
   c. Complete throwing motion with balls in glove hand and throwing a baseball to partner or catcher.
   d. May need another player or coach to catch the return throw.
   e. Repetitions vary based on front arm issues, however can be full part of catch play or initial part of bullpen sessions until pitcher has feel for front arm tension and locking it in.
   f. Use two balls inside of glove during catch play as progression of drill to allow daily use and development.

LEE/MARSHALL DECELERATION DRILL #1

A. Purpose
   a. Develop proper deceleration pattern for the individual pitcher.
   b. Develop patterns which allow natural deceleration to occur more efficiently and effectively.
   c. Drill emphasizes the last part of the throw, the finish, from release point to follow through.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Drill is to be done daily as a build-up or lead in to throwing program.
   b. A series of weighted balls are used to emphasize pronation. They include four pound, two pound, 21 oz, 14 oz, 7 oz, baseball and underload ball.
   c. As you get down to the baseball and underload ball it is more difficult to decelerate, thus the heavy balls will teach the arm how to pronate effectively.
   d. Pitcher's pivot knee is placed on a beam replicating the distance between the knee and the ground when throwing the baseball. Use a knee pad on the beam for comfort.
   e. The feet should stay in line and be uncomfortably wide simulating the stride length.
   f. The pivot foot toe is barely touching the ground and drags in a way similar to the throwing motion. Do not lean back with weight on back foot nor rotate back foot to external side of foot.

g. The land leg is out front and the knee is at an angle greater than 90 degrees for a positive ground force angle.
h. Pull throwing arm straight back with throwing hand inside much like pulling an arrow back with a bow.
i. Head stays over back hip as ball is pulled back.
j. Glove arm stays solid out front with glove over the foot as if holding a bow with slight flexion in elbow.
k. Rotate to the glove as throwing motion takes place.
l. Principle #1 - throwing shoulder is closer to the target then non-throwing shoulder.
m. Principle #2 - immediately in to launch we have pronation of the throwing arm.
n. Fold in to follow through with flexion at the waist.
o. Replace shoulders by rotating through a narrow doorway.
p. At finish the throwing arm is flexed and out front of the stride leg knee.
q. Do not allow throwing arm to over rotate beyond glove. Allow trunk to twist so that arm does not cross midline at follow through.
r. Hold the follow through for a two count.
s. Start with heaviest ball and work through series to underload ball.
t. Typically this is a series of five rounds starting with an easy throws in round one, then medium low effort, medium effort, medium high effort and finally a high effort throw on the last round.
u. Use a target to throw at each time.

LEE/MARSHALL DECELERATION DRILL #2

A. Purpose
   a. Similar to drill #1 with a couple of adjustments.
   b. Develop proper deceleration pattern for the individual pitcher.
   c. Develop patterns which allow natural deceleration to occur more efficiently and effectively.
   d. Drill emphasizes the last part of the throw, the finish, from release point to follow through.

B. Drill Procedure
   a. Drill is to be done daily as a build-up or lead in to throwing program using the same energy you would in a game throw.
   b. Drill is done in a same manner as #1 with the following adjustments:
      i. After setting feet up, bring the front foot in to a position under the front hip and then back out to start the drill.
      ii. Repeat this movement three times and prepare to throw on the third stride.
      iii. At follow through bring back leg up and over to simulate actual throwing motion follow through.
      iv. Do not hold follow through on drill #2.

CONNECT BALL DRILLS

Progress in order of Over/Under/Glove/Without. Pick 3 drills from the Velocity Drills / Weight Ball Drills to do using the Connect Ball. Use the 5oz ball or baseball throughout the delivery of all 4 steps.

a. Over Arm (Medial Elbow Development)
   i. Purpose
      1. Creates proper arm angle between throwing hand and shoulder during delivery.

2. Throwing forearm is inside of elbow when spine begins to rotate.
3. Assists with medial elbow development.
4. Provides assistance in getting arm (shoulder to elbow to wrist) to an angle of less than 90 degrees when reaching apex and right as the spine begins to rotate when throwing the baseball.
5. Studies show this angle of less than 90 degrees is ideal when throwing, while the old belief of 90 degrees is marginal, and anything beyond 90 is high risk for injury.

b. Under Arm (Anterior Shoulder Development)
   i. Purpose
      1. Creates proper arm angle between elbow and side of body during delivery.
      2. Assists with anterior shoulder development.
      3. Provides assistance in getting arm (elbow to armpit to lat) to an angle of less than 90 degrees when reaching apex and throwing the baseball.
      4. Studies show this angle of less than 90 degrees is ideal when throwing, while the old belief of 90 degrees is marginal, and anything beyond 90 (elbow higher than shoulder) is high risk for injury.
      5. The Connect Ball will fall behind the pitcher as he begins to come forward and raises his arm slightly, releasing the ball.

c. Front Arm (Firming up the Glove Arm)
   i. Purpose
      1. Assists with firming up front arm / glove arm during delivery.
      2. Throwing arm /scapula and glove arm / scapula are all connected to the spine when spine begins to rotate.
      3. Keeps front arm in a solid position throughout the delivery.
      4. Eliminates opportunity for pitcher to open up with the front arm causing the rest of the delivery to drag.
      5. Allows greater chance for pitcher to stay on-line during the delivery.

VELOCITY DRILLS

Progress in this order (14/7/5/3.5) but indicate we'd like to start with the 21 oz ball. Do in the order the drills are listed. Set of drills done to wake up the throwing arm and initiate the proper delivery by using weighted balls to get arm in most efficient movement pattern.

- Jump Backs (arm action & tempo)
  - Drill allows pitcher to work on a shorter, more efficient arm circle to apex at foot strike.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Make sure player jumps back with both feet up and down at the same time, then steps with stride foot to begin throwing motion.
- Hook 'Em Drills 1 & 2 (initiating and engaging the pelvis)
  - Drill is meant to emphasize the initiation and engaging of the pelvis, leading down the hill while the head rides over the back quad.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*

  - Teach them the difference between Hook 'Em 1 (foot behind knee) and Hook 'Em 2 (foot in front of knee).
- Step Intos (initiating and engaging the pelvis)
  - Drill is meant to emphasize the initiation and engaging of the pelvis, leading down the hill while the head rides over the back quad.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Make sure the pitcher keeps the pivot foot at a 45 degree angle as he moves forward to emphasize the hips and separation created by doing so.
- Walking Torques (tempo, arm action & separation)
  - Drill is set to emphasize a combination of arm action to apex, the tempo with which a pitcher accomplishes that arm action, and the ability to separate the hips and shoulders to create torque and allow the body to initiate the throwing action rather than the arm initiating the action.
  - *Use 14oz/7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Make sure the player is walking in a straight line and does not rotate the pivot foot (keep toes pointed at partner).
- Turn & Burn (tempo, arm action, and connection)
  - Drill allows pitcher to work on a shorter, more efficient arm circle to apex at foot strike.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Drill also emphasizes a pitchers tempo and how it can be more efficient in a quicker manner.
  - Finally, drill creates a connection with the arms and body at initial spine rotation that has shown to be most efficient in a study of pitchers.
  - Pitcher needs to emphasize starting as soon as he is touched to allow for anticipation of movement and being quick with movement.
- Walking Wind-Ups (arm action, separation, & tempo)
  - Drill is set to emphasize a combination of arm action to apex, the tempo with which a pitcher accomplishes that arm action, separation of the hips and shoulders to create torque and allow the body to initiate the throwing action rather than the arm initiating the action, and to load the body as you are moving forward during the delivery.
  - *Use 14oz/7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
- Stroms (arm action & tempo)
  - Drill allows pitcher to work on a shorter, more efficient arm circle to apex at foot strike.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Player faces sideways to throwing partner and alternates lifting his knee up to opposite hip in a rhythmic pattern, then throwing in a rhythmic manner with good arm action and tempo.
- Rocker Step (arm action & tempo)
  - Drill allows pitcher to work on a shorter, more efficient arm circle to apex at foot strike.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*

  - Player faces sideways to throwing partner and alternates lifting his feet up in a rhythmic pattern rocking back and forth, then throwing in a rhythmic manner with good arm action and tempo.
- Marshall Torque (arm action, separation & tempo)
  - Drill is set to emphasize a combination of arm action to apex, the tempo with which a pitcher accomplishes that arm action, and the ability to separate the hips and shoulders to create torque and allow the body to initiate the throwing action rather than the arm initiating the action.
  - *Use 21oz/14oz/7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Player faces sideways with throwing shoulder facing partner, then rotates shoulders with feet standing in place. Should replace front shoulder with back shoulder and be in an over-torqued position to allow the body to uncoil and throw.
- Step Behinds (tempo, arm action, hip engagement)
  - Drill is set to emphasize a combination of arm action to apex, the tempo with which a pitcher accomplishes that arm action, and the ability to initiate and engage the pelvis allowing the pitcher's head to ride the back quad and place the pitcher in a strong power position as he throws.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Player will start with throwing shoulder facing partner. Rhythmically bring back foot behind front foot and step and throw. Preferred method for the more rotational upper body thrower.
- Heel Clicks (tempo, arm action, & hip engagement)
  - Drill is set to emphasize a combination of arm action to apex, the tempo with which a pitcher accomplishes that arm action, and the ability to initiate and engage the pelvis allowing the pitcher's head to ride the back quad and place the pitcher in a strong power position as he throws.
  - *Use 7oz/5oz/3.5oz balls for this drill.*
  - Player will start with throwing shoulder facing partner. Much like step behinds but pitcher will click heels together. Allows body to work linear and is preferred for the more linear upper body thrower.

VELO AND CONNECT BALL DRILL OPTIONS

- Drills (What they work on) – Weighted balls to use
  - Pro1&2 (pronation & deceleration) – 32oz/21oz/14oz/7oz/5oz(baseball)/3.5oz
  - Marshall Torque (arm action, separation & tempo) – 21oz/14oz/7oz/5oz/3.5oz
  - Walking Torque (arm action, separation & tempo) – 14oz/7oz/5oz/3.5oz
  - Walking Wind-Ups (arm action, separation & tempo) – 14oz/7oz/5oz/3.5oz
  - Hook 'Em 1 & 2 (initiating & engaging pelvis) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz
  - Step Into (initiating & engaging pelvis) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz

- Heel Clicks (tempo, arm action, hip engagement & connection) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz
- Step Behinds (tempo, arm action, hip engagement & connection) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz
- Stroms (arm action & tempo) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz
- Rocker Step (arm action & tempo) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz
- Jump Backs (arm action & tempo) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz
- Turn & Burn (arm action, tempo, & connection) – 7oz/5oz/3.5oz
- Connection Drill – Over Arm (medial elbow development) – 5oz
- Connection Drill – Under Arm (anterior shoulder development) – 5oz
- Connection Drill – Glove Side (firming up glove) – 5oz

SECTION IV: DEVELOPING A PLAN

GAME PLANNING

The development of a game plan stems from the philosophy of creating early contact from the hitter. Statistics support this theory and are shown along with some key points of emphasis when developing a game plan.

A. Attack the Hitter
   a. ABCs of pitching – Aggressive behavior creates competitiveness.
   b. Dictate the pace – force the hitter to call time out often.
   c. Throw strike one.
   d. Get to two strikes in a hurry. Batting average against is .187 and only 30% of all runs driven in occur with two strikes.
   e. Finish an inning in 14 pitches or less.
   f. Command the strike zone with each pitch – any pitch in any count.

B. Pitch to Contact
   a. Out in four or fewer pitches.
   b. Rule of 63 – 63% of all balls hit in fair territory are outs.
   c. Strikeouts are fascist – only time we need a strikeout is with a runner at third base and less than two outs.
   d. Waste pitches are wasted pitches – every pitch has to have a purpose.
   e. Early contact is our goal against every batter.

C. The Perfect Pitch Myth
   a. Every pitch in every location at every speed has been hit for a home run.
   b. Every pitch in every location at every speed has been an out.

D. Use the Fastball Effectively
   a. Get fastball hitters out with fastballs – cross them up then beat them.
   b. Lead hitters from their strengths. Work away away away then jam them.

c. The 90% / 98% / 80% Fastballs – increase and decrease fastball effort percentage to create different velocities with the fastball.
    i. 90% = working fastball, the one you use most often.
    ii. 98% = max fastball, the one you dig down deep for.
    iii. 80% = BP fastball, taking something off in a hitter's count to get the hitter out front.

E. Upset Timing
    a. Change speeds and locations.
    b. Elite pitchers throw three pitches to at least two different locations.
    c. Learn the change up and use it.
    d. Effective Velocity's impact.

F. Effective Velocity
    a. Effective Velocity = initial velocity + location (reaction time)
    b. Hitter's reaction time increases or decreases based on location.
    c. Pitch sequences create a separation of plus or minus six EVMPH.
    d. 80% of all hard hit balls are the result of pitches that are within six EVMPH of each other.

G. Free Strike Opportunities
    a. Hitter taking – 50% of all hitters take the first pitch.
    b. Early count situations – taking pitches allowing the base runner to steal.
    c. Bad hitter – Pattern One hitter that the pitcher attacks.

H. Trust the Plan
    a. Pitch in for strikes.
    b. Move their feet by expanding in.
    c. Go in miss in.
    d. Go away miss down.
    e. Pitch around the hitter using the fastball and not secondary pitches.
    f. Know the situation – double play stay down in the zone.
    g. Read the hitter – look for his tendencies and pitch against them.

PITCHER-CATCHER RELATIONSHIP

It is imperative each catcher gets to know the personality of each pitcher. As the season progresses, the catcher will be the on-field coach who gets the pitcher to perform better. Thus, as the catcher gets to know each pitcher individually, they will be able to motivate and calm them down when needed.

During games, the catcher will relay signs to the pitcher. These signs will come from the dug-out, so make sure you are on the same page. Pitchers and catchers must understand the purpose of each pitch called (get an out, set-up a hitter, hold base runners, set up the catcher for a throw, etc.). Thus, stay within your framework of ability and work on the game plan being passed to you from the coach.

Our signs will come in via the number system to the catcher. The catcher will wear a wrist band with a grid that corresponds to the numbers sent in. The catcher will relay to you the location of the pitch first, then the

pitch selection. The location will always be first, while the pitch selection will be based on the series sequence we are using at that time. Once the location and pitch are called, commit to the pitch and execute the pitch.

Once the sign is relayed, the pitcher has the ability to shake the pitch selection and/or location. If the pitcher shakes his head once, this is a decoy to the hitter and the catcher will give the same pitch to him. If the pitcher shakes again, this is an indication the pitcher likes the pitch but wants it in a different location. If the pitcher wants to change pitch selection he will use the wipe system. Wiping the chest of the leg will tell the catcher to add or subtract from the pitch he selected/called and get the pitch the pitcher wants. Remember that a set-up (out pitch, set-up pitch, pick, hold, pitch to the defense, etc.) is occurring on the hitter or situation, thus you should try to stick to the game plan as much as possible. If the pitcher feels coach is not calling a certain pitch enough, or is using a pitch he does not feel good with that day, he should communicate this to the coach in the dugout or prior to the game. Wiping pitches repeatedly makes managing the game from a coaching standpoint difficult as we are never quite sure what pitch is coming, or where the defense should be aligned.

Part of our number system will also reflect our Fundamental Series of holding runners and pick attempts. The upside down longhorn followed by a number will indicate a certain pick or pitch intended to control the running game. We may give the Fundamental Series repeatedly so stick to the plan. Fundamental Series cannot be shaken to a new selection, however it is advised that the pitcher show a decoy shake to make sure the base runner does not simply go based on the knowledge you are throwing a pitch to the plate because all you do is shake off pitch selection. Instead of location being the first sign, fundamental will be the first sign, then the fundamental choice will follow just as a pitch selection would follow the series sequence.

If a pitcher is ever unsure of a pitch selection, fundamental selection, or game situation, come to a set position, step off, gather himself and prepare to go to work. If still unsure, step off again. After a second step off the catcher will come to the mound to discuss the situation. After the pitcher/catcher meeting, if the pitcher steps off a third time, the coach will come out for a visit to clear things up. The situation should right itself after the second step off and visit. This is a good maneuver when trying to get the bullpen warmed up if a pitcher feels like they have ran out of gas.

The pitcher, catcher and coach must communicate prior to each game/series about hitter profiles, team profiles, game situations, pitch selections (what's hot, what's not), etc. Our success is directly related to the success of this ability to communicate and be on the same page during a game. Working hard is not enough. Working hard and being smart will take us to new heights.

CALLING A GAME

Developing the ability to call a game is a critical part of the pitcher's, and catcher's development. In order to accomplish this, the following factors must be considered:

A. Get ahead. The best pitch of the game is strike one. Call the pitch that the pitcher is throwing most consistently that day.

B. Know your stuff. What is your best pitch today? Rate your pitches and use them accordingly.

C. On 2-2 counts throw your best pitch.

D. Runner on first and a left-handed hitter at bat, careful with the change-up or slow curve when the first baseman is holding the runner. A better decision is to work firm away.

E. Runner on third base with less than two outs and the infield in. Try to pitch the hitter in. Stay away from change-ups as they are easier pitches on which to hit fly balls.

F. Follow a curve with a slider, but try not to follow a slider with a curve.

G. Don't try to set up a poor, Pattern One hitter. Stay basic. Save your strategy for the good hitters.

H. Do not be afraid of contact. Groundballs and fly balls are outs too.

I. Just because a hitter is a first pitch fastball hitter doesn't mean you can't throw him a first pitch fastball. In fact he'll be more likely to swing at a fastball anywhere in the zone and chase a poor fastball.

J. A lot of catcher's have a tendency to call pitches they can't hit. They call the breaking ball too early and too often. This can get the pitcher behind in the count and force him to throw fastballs to catch up.

K. Do not be tentative when deciding what pitch to throw. Don't be afraid of being second guessed. Think two or three pitches ahead. Don't be afraid of failure.

L. There is no such thing as the perfect pitch. It has never been called or thrown.

M. Always remember the pitcher has the final say on what pitch to throw. The catcher and/or coach simply make suggestions. Own the pitch and execute it.

N. Concentrate on the first hitter of each inning. It is imperative our focus is on getting the leadoff hitter out each inning. College baseball is evolving to a small ball culture and much of that approach depends on the leadoff hitter getting on base.

O. Concentrate on the first pitch to a hitter with two outs. Often the pitcher will think the inning is over when the second out is made. Finish the inning as aggressively as you started it.

P. Know how to:
   a. Change eye levels.
   b. Expand the strike zone.
   c. Change speeds.
   d. Use the scoreboard.

Q. You must know:
   a. The score of the game.

b. The on-deck hitter.
c. The guy you don't want to beat you – Pattern Three.
d. Your own strengths and weaknesses at the time.
e. Not to get beat with your third or fourth best pitch.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

A large amount of information exists in today's baseball world regarding statistical data. The use of statistics can help better understand how to attack hitters as well as areas a pitcher needs to work on. The best part of statistics is their objectivity, eliminating the subjective analysis often associated with evaluating pitchers. The following areas are our focus when evaluating a pitcher's pitching process (the number indicates MLB averages):

A. Working Ahead in the Count
   a. First pitch strike (59%)
   b. One of first two pitches for strikes (85%)
   c. Two of first three pitches for strikes (60%)
   d. Percentage of 0-1 counts that become 0-2 counts (47%)
   e. Percentage of 1-1 counts that become 1-2 counts (53%)

B. Command
   a. Overall strike percentage (63%)
   b. Fastball strike percentage (64%)
   c. Breaking ball strike percentage (61%)
   d. Changeup strike percentage (61%)

C. Dominance
   a. Percentage of outs that are strikeouts in four or less pitches (11%)
   b. 1-2-3 innings percentage of completed innings pitched (31%)
   c. Swing and miss percentage of pitches in the zone (14%)
   d. Two strike at-bats that become outs (72%)

D. Efficiency
   a. Percentage of plate appearances that go to three ball counts (19%)
   b. First batter of inning out (68%)
   c. Three or less pitches per plate appearance (47%)
   d. Four or less pitches per plate appearance (65%)

E. Battle Tendency
   a. Percentage of runners who score (36%)
   b. Percentage of 2-0, 2-1, and three ball counts that end in outs (54%)

F. Overall Effectiveness
   a. On-base average vs. pitcher (.338)
   b. Percentage of batters faced who score (12%)
   c. Walks + hits per inning pitched – WHIP (1.41)

PITCHER'S REPORT CARD

From this information collected using the Edge data system, we are able to create a pitcher's report card. This report card gives a letter grade and is based on the following categories (the number indicates the B grade level):

A. Starts Ahead – first pitch strikes (59%)
B. Has Good Stuff – chase percentage + miss percentage on pitches in the zone (22%)
C. Keeps Runners Off Base – WHIP (1.54)
D. Strands Runners – runners left on base (74%)
E. Command and Dominance – K/BB ratio (2.1/1)
F. Battles – OBP after falling behind in count (33%)
G. Efficient – four or fewer pitch outs (72%)
H. Effective – well hit average (20%)

Note: Has Good Stuff and Effective are both subjective categories based on the view of the data collector. Thus, these two categories are weighed less when determining a pitcher's grade.

UNDERSTANDING THE COUNT

The basic sequence from which a pitch is thrown is dictated by many factors. Understanding the count can be an effective tool in selecting a particular pitch. The count itself leads to the hitter guessing what pitch is coming and when. The count is the single most important tool to exploit the hitter's "swing vs. take" decision. ***Our goal is early count contact!***

0-0 COUNT

A. Concept:
    a. First pitch to the hitter.
    b. Getting a strike here is very important.
    c. Getting ahead of the hitter early in the count sets pitchers up to go after hitter's weakness.
    d. Fastball should be used and is best chance for strike in middle-down part of zone (boxed fastball).
    e. With the first fastball hitter, change of speeds is an option but this is a chance for an out or at least a strike via first-pitch swing on a will executed fastball.

B. Thought Process:
    a. Get a strike
    b. Contact on down location
    c. First pitch for an out.
    d. Challenge hitter early.
    e. Know first ball hitters (Yes! in scouting report).

C. Statistical Analysis:
    a. First Pitch Strike = 80% chance to get to strike two within next two pitches.
    b. First Pitch Ball = 30% chance to get to strike two within next two pitches.

c. Hitters take the first pitch of an at-bat 50% of the time.
d. 14% of at-bats are 0-0 counts.
e. 18% of all RBI's come in this count (next highest 11% in 1-0 or 1-1 count).
f. .335 batting average against.

0-1 COUNT

A. Concept:
   a. Pitcher is ahead in count.
   b. Be aggressive.
   c. Hitter doesn't want to be 0-2.
   d. Concentration should be aggressive and depending on situation, a chance to put self in "put away" situation.
   e. Pitch inside with fastball.

B. Thought Process:
   a. Go after hitter's weakness (fastball elevated, etc.).
   b. Use thirds of the plate.
   c. Make hitters swing bat at pitcher's pitch.
   d. No hurry to change speeds, exploit hitter's swing (long or slow).
   e. Make hitter swing bat (no fear of contact).

C. Statistical Analysis:
   a. 10% of at-bats.
   b. 10% of RBI's.
   c. .309 batting average against.

1-0 COUNT

A. Concept:
   a. Very important count in sequence.
   b. Hitter mentality becomes more selective (or should).
   c. Identify hitter's approach (adjustments in feet or hands).
   d. Two of first three pitches for quality strikes.

B. Thought Process:
   a. Still in control of count even though behind.
   b. Get count back with a strike.
   c. If missed with first pitch off speed, good time for fastball to hitter weakness.
   d. Exploit over aggressive hitter with change of speed.
   e. Pitch the count - fastball away to pull hitter may result in middle of the field contact.

C. Statistical Analysis:
   a. 8% of at-bats.
   b. 11% of RBIs.
   c. .324 batting average against.

1-1 or 2-2 COUNT

A. Concept:
   a. If the 1-1 count is the action count, the 2-2 count is the close count. With 2-2 counts it is important to close out the hitter.
   b. Go after hitter down in the strike zone.
   c. Be aggressive to pitcher's strength or hitter's weakness.
   d. Identify previous pitcher's and hitter's approach.
   e. Aggressive on 2-2 count. Don't pick zone, go after hitter with action pitches. Make hitter swing it. Treat the 2-2 pitch like a 3-2 pitch.

B. Thought Process:
   a. Consider pitcher to be ahead.
   b. Use third of the plate, if command has developed.
   c. Exploit hitter's weakness.

C. Statistical Analysis:
   a. 1-1 Count
      i. 9% of at-bats.
      ii. 11% of RBIs.
      iii. .320 batting average against.
      iv. .854 OPS.
   b. 2-2 Count
      i. 14% of at-bats.
      ii. 10% of RBIs
      iii. .189 batting average against.
      iv. .503 OPS.

2-0 or 2-1 COUNT

A. Concept:
   a. Behind counts. A good hitter mentality is one pitch to one spot and usually a fastball.
   b. Typically looking for ball middle in, though today's college hitters have adjusted to more of a middle away approach with the new bats.
   c. Get the count back with a strike.
   d. Don't give in to hitter and give him a cookie.
   e. Stay tough with low strike.
   f. In MLB, 63% of all fairly hit balls are outs.

B. Thought Process:
   a. Stay aggressively down with the fastball.
   b. Off speed command is a major weapon in these counts. Crossing hitters will cause problems throughout the line-up as they'll not know what to look for and will not be as aggressive or offensive.
   c. Still consider pitching to the defense. Pitch away play away, jam it, etc.

C. Statistical Analysis:

a. 2-0 Count
    i. 3% of at-bats.
    ii. 5% of RBIs.
    iii. .339 batting average against.
b. 2-1 Count
    i. 6% of at-bats.
    ii. 8% of RBIs.
    iii. .338 batting average against.
    iv. .910 OPS.

0-2 or 1-2 COUNT

A. Concept:
    a. Ahead in the count.
    b. Exploit the hitter's weakness.

B. Thought Process:
    a. Identify how the count got to 0-2 (two in, go away), etc.
    b. Hard stuff (always) on 0-2; no change-ups or soft curveballs.
    c. Fastball expanded away (be off) or Slider/Curveball down in zone (0-2).
    d. Elevate fastball or repeat down breaking ball (1-2).
    e. Extend catcher for location importance. Use box to its fullest.
    f. Respect only the hitters you have to respect (Pattern Two Plus or Pattern Three)

C. Statistical Analysis:
    a. 0-2 Count
        i. 8% of at-bats.
        ii. 4% of RBIs.
        iii. .159 batting average against.
        iv. .422 OPS.
    b. 1-2 Count
        i. 15% of all at-bats (highest percentage of at-bats).
        ii. 9% of RBIs.
        iii. .172 batting average against.
        iv. .465 OPS.

3-0 or 3-1 COUNT

A. Concept:
    a. Hitter has large advantage if disciplined.
    b. Get a strike.
    c. Hitter becomes either very selective or very aggressive. Know the difference.
    d. If pitcher knows that hitter is aggressive, he has a good chance of getting hitter out on a pitcher's pitch.

B. Thought Process:
    a. Get count back.

b. Pitch to situation (base runners, score).
c. Keep pitch away (keep it in the yard).
d. Know the hitter.
e. Never assume 3-0 is a take. Know who swings 3-0 (Stanford w/risp, team's best hitters)

C. Statistical Analysis:
   a. 3-0 Count
      i. .359 batting average against.
      ii. 1.624 OPS.
   b. 3-1 Count
      i. 3% of at-bats.
      ii. 4% of RBIs
      iii. .357 batting average against.
      iv. 1.324 OPS.

The count is a valuable tool. The ability to adjust before the hitter is the pitcher's goal. Development of location and change of speeds will allow pitcher to use count to attack balance of hitter. While every pitcher should strive to develop a complete repertoire of pitches, most will still have strong pitches and weaker pitches. As these strengths may vary in some cases from game to game, the pitch sequences will often vary substantially from previous performances. As a general rule, pitchers should go with their strength if there is some doubt as to pitch selection, ie low fastball hitter, low fastball pitcher... if there is a doubt go with the pitcher's best pitch and fundamental sequences (ie hard in soft away, double up in with fastball). Use the shake off to create doubt in the hitter.

SCOUTING REPORT

The scouting report is handed out typically a day before the first game against an opponent. Ideally a discussion prior to the series will take place highlighting key areas of the scouting report and who the opposing players of concern are. Within each scouting report is information giving a general summary of the opponents and the game plan in attacking those hitters. While the information may be of great value heading in to a series, in game and in series adjustments will need to be recognized should a report contain misinformation. Included in the scouting report is as follows:

A. Player Information - This section of the report includes the player number, last name, position, what side he bats from, and what year of school he's in.

B. Defensive Positioning - This information is the pre-series plan for defensive positioning based on previous year's spray chart and current year shared reports.
   a. Infield Positioning
      i. Straight (ST)
      ii. Pull
      iii. Slight Pull (SL PULL)
      iv. Pinch (Play up the middle)
      v. Slight Oppo (SLOP)
      vi. Oppo

vii. Jam It (Extreme shift to the pull side)
viii. Split (3B-Line, SS-six hole, 2B-four hole, 1B-Line)
ix. Six Hole - either shortstop or third base covers the hole between these two positions
x. Four Hole - either second base or first baseman covers the hole between these two positions
xi. Corners In (CRNR IN) - defend against the bunt

b. Outfield Positioning
   i. LF CF RF - the order which the numbers appear on report
   ii. Numbers Represent
      1. 5 = Straight Up
      2. 6 = Move towards LF line
      3. 4 = Move towards RF line
      4. 2 = Straight up and in
      5. 3 = In and towards LF line
      6. 1 = In and towards RF line
      7. 8 = Straight up and back (power hitter)
      8. 9 = Back and towards LF line
      9. 7 = Back and towards RF line
   iii. Additional Information
      1. Slight Pull (SL PULL)
      2. Slight Oppo (SLOP)
      3. Flare - play straight up but take away flare w/2k

C. Runner Type - how fast is the hitter
   a. Blue - Fastest runner, sub 4.0 speed
   b. Green - Plus runner, 4.0-4.3 speed
   c. Yellow - Average runner, 4.4-4.7 speed
   d. Gray - Poor runner, 4.8 speed or higher

D. Stolen Base Total - number of stolen bases on the season. Helps indicate who biggest stolen base threats are.

E. Power - Plus, Average or Poor power numbers (Doubles-Triples-Homers) or swing identification.

F. Offensive Skills - What skills does the hitter implement to try and create action or get on base.
   a. Drag
   b. Push
   c. Hit and Run
   d. Slash
   e. Safety
   f. Sac

G. Pattern of Hitter - a basic plan for attacking the hitter. Especially useful in critical situations.
   a. Pattern One = poor hitter, attack the zone and make him hit.
   b. Pattern One Plus = poor hitter but attack carefully with RISP.

c. Pattern Two = average college hitter, must pitch to carefully but aggressively.
d. Pattern Two Plus = above average hitter that is pitched to carefully and cautiously in critical situations.
e. Pattern Three = best college hitters, do not give him a pitch to hit, do not let him beat us!

H. Sequence of Pitches / Location
   a. A three pitch sequence indicating how we'd like to attack a hitter during their at-bat.
   b. The sequence example AAJ means we'd attack the hitter with away-away-jam type pitches.
   c. We approach each hitter with a fundamental plan of in-out, up-down or hard-soft.
   d. The letters indicate the following:
      i. A=Away
      ii. J=Jam
      iii. H=Hard
      iv. S=Soft
      v. U=Up
      vi. D=Down
      vii. X=Cross
      viii. Y=Expand

I. First Pitch Tendencies - Does the batter swing early in his at-bat.
   a. No - Does not swing at first pitch.
   b. Occ - Only once in a while will he swing at first pitch.
   c. Yes - Regularly swings at first pitch, must execute location down early.
   d. Yes! - Always looking to swing at first pitch, must execute location down early, must look to cross with off speed pitches early.

J. Out Pitches - What type of pitch we'll use to get the hitter out late in the at-bat.

K. Pitch Plan - a summary of how we plan to attack the hitter. Typically the plan is mix away early and jam late, however, the plan may include crossing hitters in certain counts and what pitches the hitter typically struggles with.

L. General Notes - a summary of all the notes taken on the hitter from previous reports and previous opponents. The basis for what the pitch plan looks like.

M. Yearly Statistics - includes Average, Doubles, Triples, Home Runs, Walks, Strikeouts, Stolen Bases, and Stolen Bases Attempted. Gives a pretty good indication of what type of offensive player he is, however, each hitter is a Division One hitter and has shown offensive skill at some point in their career to warrant their place on the team. Statistics can give a good indication of who he is, but also can be misleading due to factors earlier in the year (injuries, major slump, etc.).

HITTER IDENTIFICATION

The ability to identify a hitter's strength and weaknesses, and make adjustments, can give the pitcher an important edge. It is never too early to learn the process of hitter identification. These situations provide the pitcher an opportunity to identify hitters:

A. Batting Practice
    a. Use batting practice to see hitter's priorities (exp. opposite field, pull, raw power (if any)).

B. Game - Each pitcher should look at game to see how he should attack particular hitters and situations.
    a. Hitting adjustments (first ball, 2k adjustment).
    b. Skills (bunts, hit and run).
    c. Strike out candidates.
    d. Match-ups (RHH vs. RHP, etc).

C. On Deck - Watch on-deck hitter for particular habits that hitter is trying to keep or break.
    a. Low arc (possible low ball hitter).
    b. High arc (possible high ball hitter).
    c. Nervous (possibly aggressive, undisciplined).
    d. Long/short (hands direction).

D. Stats/Chart - The numbers and spray charts may show tendencies.
    a. First ball hitters.
    b. Aggressiveness / Patience.
    c. Running skills.
    d. Hitting order / defensive position.
    e. Where he hits the ball (opposite field, ground balls, fly balls, etc.).

SIGN SYSTEM

BASICS

The sign system for relaying pitches includes an indicator for the zone (location) and pitch type. With no one on the system starts with the location first followed by the pitch type.

ZONES

The location of a pitch is indicated by a zone coordinating within or outside of the strike zone. These zones include:

A. Four Zone - Down and away to the hitter.

B. Three Zone - Down and in to the hitter.

C. Two Zone - Down and buried to the hitter, ideally just beyond the back tip of home plate.

D. One Zone - Up and in to the hitter, however the general rule is to go up then go up and in.

E. Zero Zone - Expanded away to the hitter indicated by the catcher with either his pinky (RHH) or thumb (LHH).

F. Five Zone - Expanded in to the hitter indicated by the catcher with either his pinky (LHH) or thumb (RHH)

RUNNER ON BASE

If a runner is on base a series of systems are in place to assist the pitcher catcher communication and prevent the opponent from tipping pitches. These systems include:

A. Tap System - the catcher taps a series of places on his body indicating which sign in a five sign sequence is either the location or the pitch type.

B. ABE System - this system uses the Ahead, Behind, Even method, where the pitch location or type is indicated by first sign (ahead), second sign (behind), or third sign (even) in a five sign sequence.

C. Outs Plus One - based on the number of outs in the inning, the pitch type or location is indicated by the first sign (0 outs), second sign (1 out), or third sign (2 outs) in a five sign sequence.

D. Strikes Plus One - based on the number of strikes in the at-bat, the pitch type or location is indicated by the first sign (0 strikes), second sign (1 strike), or third sign (2 strikes) in a five sign sequence.

E. Pre-Determined Hot Sign - the pitcher and catcher determine a sign that is always hot during a five sign sequence.

F. Fundamental Series - the upside down longhorn indicator allows the catcher to call a pick type. The indicator is followed by a number or hand signal indicating the type of pick that has been requested by the coach or catcher.

NIGHT SIGNS

At certain ballparks it is very difficult to see the catcher's signs at night. To address this problem, we will have a standard format for giving signs at night. All pitchers and catchers should know these signs so there is no confusion during the game. Catcher should give the sign while crouching using his bare hand. Secondary pitches should be located based on the count. Even = Quality Breaking Ball. Behind = Cookie Breaking Ball. Ahead = Chase Breaking Ball. Pitchers can change signs by swiping with their glove. An example of night signs:

Indicator:	Mask
Fastball Away:	One touch after indicator
Curveball:	Two touches after indicator
Slider:	Three touches after indicator
Changeup:	Four touches after indicator
Fastball In:	Five touches after indicator

To continue with running game using night signs, a double tap of the indicator would indicate a pick series based on the location of the runner.

Indicator:	Double Tap the Mask

Good Move/Inside Move:	One touch after indicator
Pitch Out:	Two touches after indicator
Pitch Up:	Three touches after indicator
Hold and Pick/Spin Move:	Four touches after indicator
31/Best Move:	Five touches after indicator

If no indicator is touched during a sequence then that is an effort to get the pitcher to hold the baseball until the hitter calls timeout. If in the stretch simply come set once the catcher is done with his touches and wait for the time out call by the hitter while anticipating a step off call should the runner start his actions early. If in the windup simply shake multiple times then step off as if to indicate a new pitch is desired from the catcher.

This is an example of the night sign system that can be used should the lighting dictate at certain parks. This can be changed at any time, with the primary change being the indicator. To change the indicator the catcher can simply step out and give a sign to the pitcher and infielders such as a rolling of the bare hand indicating he is changing the indicator. From there the first thing he touches on his body becomes the new indicator and the count starts from there.

SECTION V: DEFENDING YOUR POSITION

DEFENSIVE FUNDAMENTALS

BASICS

Receive ball with rear down, hands out in front and chest square to ball. If ball bounces high the pitcher may pre-turn to facilitate the throw. If the pitcher bobbles the ball the rule is to automatically get the out at first base. At no time should a pitcher bare hand a moving baseball. If the ball is moving the pitcher should use their glove to pick up the baseball. Only bare hand a stopped baseball.

FOOTWORK

A. Receive ball (let ball close glove)
B. Look ball into glove
C. Pull ball into body (belt area) with both hands
D. Turn front shoulder to direction of throw
E. Feet stay under control

COMEBACKERS

A. Running Technique
    a. After receiving ground ball comebacker that is directly at pitcher, or takes pitcher's momentum towards right side of diamond, begin controlled jog towards first base.
    b. Underhand toss the baseball to first baseman. The toss should be similar in style as if pitcher were holding a glass of milk and throwing the milk at the first baseman.
    c. Be sure to clear the glove from the first baseman sight line so as not to cause any deception from the underhand toss.

B. Back Hand Technique (RHP)
   a. On ball hit to left side of the diamond, the RHP should position himself to field the ball using his backhand.
   b. Position the feet in the direction of the throw, ideally with the right foot planted and in a ready position to throw the baseball.
   c. Backhand the ball inside the right foot.
   d. Bend at the knees and get butt down.
   e. Bring ball to waist and transfer to throwing hand.
   f. Use short arm arc in back to stay short and quick.
   g. Use a small rhythm step or no step as feet should be in a spread base position and only require a small weight transfer to throw.
   h. Note: the backhand technique is preferred over the effort to get in front of the baseball to make the play to the backhand side. Getting in front causes momentum to continue towards the third base line and may cause inaccurate throws with less velocity. The backhand technique allows the pitcher to throw the baseball in a spread base position worked on daily in practice.

C. Back Hand Technique (LHP)
   a. On ball hit to right side of diamond, the LHP should use the backhand technique.
   b. Field the backhand inside either leg as dictated by ball pace.
   c. Bend at the knees and lower the butt to stay down with the ball.
   d. Bring the ball to waist and continue with running technique.
   e. Note: it is highly unlikely the backhand technique with a LHP would be used for anything other than running technique.

D. Throw to Second Base (1-6-3 or 1-4-3 DP)
   a. After receiving ground ball comebacker, turn feet, shoulder in line with second base. Line up front side and control throw to make sure of lead out.
   b. If shortstop covers throw should be to left side of second base.
   c. If second baseman covers throw should be to right side of second base.
   d. Note: throw should not lead infielder over bag. Get ball to him as quick as possible. Make sure second baseman is under control at the bag in order to be balanced for the next throw.

E. Throw to Plate (1-2-3 DP)
   a. Receive ground ball.
   b. Close front shoulder.
   c. Turn feet to plate.
   d. Use firm throw above the waist over the middle of the plate.
   e. Use short arm arc in back to stay short and quick.
   f. Note: Keep your poise. Panic can set in because of possible importance of the play.

THE RUNNING GAME

CONTROLLING THE RUNNING GAME

The ability to throw quality pitches with runners on base will be a great indicator of the success and failure rate of that pitcher. Understanding the mental and physical ability of the pitcher will help in aiding him in his ability to separate holding runners and the actual pitch to the plate. The running game is controlled by the coach/catcher and middle infielders. While pitchers have the ability to pick on their own if they see something unusual, the general rule is to execute the sign relayed to them. This allows the pitcher to focus on execution and eliminates the need to think about the opponents running game. A basic knowledge of who the best, most likely runners are on the opposition is key to having a feel for the running game in the Cougar Pitcher system.

RIGHT HANDED PITCHERS

A. Stretch Delivery
    a. Pitcher should have the goal of delivering the ball to the plate from the stretch in 1.30 seconds or less with command.
    b. Use a modified leg lift or slide step to quicken the delivery from the stretch. With this quick step, the pitcher should set up by placing more weight on the flexed back leg.
    c. Bouncing the hands up during the stretch can cause the delivery to be slower. Instead use a small rhythm bounce with the hands at the beginning of the delivery.
    d. The 1.3 seconds goal along with the ability to vary the hold patterns will give the catcher an excellent chance to throw the runner out, even without picking.
    e. Pitchers with quick ball-glove separation have a better chance to maintain "stuff" while making the stretch movement quicker. The sequence is hand separation before leg lift.

B. Vary Tempos - The pitcher must vary the amount of time between coming set and throwing to the plate.
    a. Set, throw: quick tempo, be sure to stop. Pause and pitch. This is approximately a one second pause.
    b. Set, hold, throw: a two second pause.
    c. Set, hold, hold, throw: a three plus second pause.
    d. Hold until time out - disrupt base runner's rhythm and see if he flinches.
    e. Vary the tempo at which you pitch, and at which you pick off. Often pitchers pick and pitch on the same tempo thus giving the base runner a chance to time your delivery and steal bases.

C. Pick Off Moves
    a. First Base
        i. Basic: quick feet, short arm action, ball to ear, snap throw knee high to inside corner of the base.
        ii. The pitcher must move the left foot toward the base during the footwork portion of the movement.
        iii. Goal is to execute best pick move in 1.0 seconds or less.
        iv. Tempo: vary the hold time before the pick. This is effective for all pitchers. Varying the hold time will cause the runner to get on his heels or disrupt his rhythm to get a jump.

    b. Second Base

i. Always vary the number of "looks" or "rhythms" to second base so that runners cannot recognize a tempo pattern.
ii. Spin:
    1. Turn left shoulder and feet toward second in counter clockwise manner.
    2. The right foot should move forward and the left foot should spin to a point behind the rubber in a direct line with second base.
    3. The arm action should be short and quick as with the pick throw to first base.
    4. The throw should be belt high over the middle of the base.
    5. Quick feet quick arm.
iii. Inside move:
    1. Pitcher lifts stride leg and swings the leg toward second base and makes the pick throw.
    2. This move is valuable against a runner with an overly aggressive secondary lead.
    3. To improve this move:
        a. Pre-turn the heel of the pivot foot toward home plate. This will facilitate the turn.
        b. Make the leg movement smooth.
        c. Eyes on target all the way through the turn.
        d. Break hands at top of lift leg. Do not keep hands together as the leg swings back. Short arc to apex to ready throw position.
        e. Turn head and lock in front side before throw. A loose front side will often lead to an errant throw.
iv. Looks and Rhythms:
    1. Make runner stop with looks or rhythm holds.
    2. Runner should never be moving towards third base before delivery to plate.
    3. Exception to this rule is if we are in "go with the hitter" mode, where the runner's actions at second have no meaning to us.
v. Use the no look pitch. This can upset a runner's timing.

LEFT HANDED PITCHERS

A. Balance - If the LHP is to develop the ability to shut down the opponent's running game, a delivery with balance is critical. The ability to balance on the backside is the first component in the good pick-off sequence.

B. Leg Lift: there are some basic keys to the proper leg lift.
    a. Pitcher should have the goal of delivering the ball to the plate from the stretch in 1.30 seconds or less with command.
    b. Do not allow the free foot to break the plane of the rubber. This should be adhered to even with the full wind up delivery.
    c. Keep the knee action consistent.
    d. Keep the toes of the right foot pointing down during the leg lift.
    e. Move the heel of the pivot foot slightly away from the rubber.
    f. Keep the free foot underneath the knee. Do not kick the foot out towards first base.
    g. Pre-turn the heel of the pivot foot toward home plate. This will facilitate the turn with a runner at second base.

C. Head Movement
   a. First and home:
      i. Look at first until the hands separate, then move the eyes and head toward the plate.
      ii. If the pitcher is to pick move the eyes and head back to first base just before release.
      iii. Practice will allow the pitcher to delay returning the eyes to first base until the last possible moment.
      iv. Avoid reverse looking (looking at home throwing to first). This is a common read for the good base runner.
   b. Half-way:
      i. Some pitchers may get more consistent head movement by looking half way between home and first base.
      ii. This move is called the quarter turn.

D. Short Jab Step Move
   a. Come to a set position.
   b. Quick step to the plate by lifting the right foot about three".
   c. Drift toward first base and throw to first.
   d. This gives runner a different look, close to a quick step or slide step.
   e. This can also pick off a runner who goes on first movement.

E. Walk to First
   a. After the ball is released, the LHP should walk toward first base.
   b. This body movement will give the appearance of a direct step towards the base.

F. Torso
   a. The LHP must keep the upper body action consistent.
   b. Many pitchers will tilt before throwing to the plate.
   c. During the windup, as well as the stretch, the torso should remain either perpendicular to the ground or bent slightly forward.

G. Tempo
   a. The pick-off move and delivery from the stretch should progress at the same pace or tempo.
   b. A very rapid pace makes balance difficult.
   c. A very slow tempo may allow the runner to steal on first movement and beat the throw from the first baseman.

H. Picks at Second Base
   a. The footwork is simply the mirror image of the RHP footwork for picks at second base.
   b. Under control to close front side.
   c. Always keep feet under shoulders.

FUNDAMENTAL SERIES - PICK OFF MOVES

We will control the running game as a staff. In order to be competent at controlling the running game and to be able to consistently execute all the picks around the diamond we must practice these fundamentals on a regular basis.

A. Holds
   a. Come set and count three full seconds in a normal pitching pattern.
   b. We want our pitchers to become comfortable varying their times to the plate.
   c. Getting comfortable in holding for three seconds before pitching enables us to disturb a base runner's timing.
   d. We will Hold to Time Out, Hold and Pick, and Hold and Pitch in this drill sequence.
   e. Hold the ball is a vital part of disrupting the runner's timing and rhythm.
   f. Some general rules:
      i. Come to set position.
      ii. Hold the ball for one, two or three seconds.
      iii. On occasion hold to time out, specifically as instructed by catcher.
      iv. This mechanic also facilitates the pitcher riding his back leg down the hill as he often does not hurry his delivery during holds.
      v. Pitchers that come to the set position slowly must discipline themselves to not start the hold count until coming to a full set position.

B. Quick Step-Off
   a. Work on a quick step-off two or three seconds into the normal pitching pattern.
   b. Many big league clubs have concluded it is more effective to simply step-off and put doubt in the runner's mind than it is to actually continue to throw over.
   c. Some general rules:
      i. Avoid head bounce.
      ii. Be quick but in control.
      iii. RHP remove right foot quickly with the ball removed quickly from the glove and pointed down.
      iv. LHP remove left foot quickly with the ball being removed from glove and put in 90degree slot away from head.
      v. LHP may throw to first base but this move is primarily a no throw move.

C. Slide Step
   a. Must be comfortable in performing the slide step and must be able to throw strikes.
   b. If pitcher can master the slide step, it will go a long way in controlling the base runner. 1.3 seconds or quicker.
   c. Regular slide step mechanics or bounce hands mechanics.

D. Good Move / Great Move
   a. Work on your pick move to first base.
   b. The first move will be a move to first with quick feet, but a long arm action.
   c. This move is followed by a great move, which uses the same footwork as the good move, but utilizes a short arm action.

d. By using the good move / great move in succession, the base runner will think the good move is your best move, and thus when you shorten the arm up, you'll gain several inches on the base runner in regards to his timing.
e. A balk shall never be called when executing a Good/Great Move!!!

E. Pick from Signs
   a. Work on taking sign from catcher and pick over prior to coming set.
   b. Vary your spots where you pick so as to create doubt in base runner's head.
   c. If ball starts in glove then the pick must initiate when the hands come together on the way up.
   d. LHP work step-off pick from signs.

F. Inside Move to Second Base
   a. Work on maintaining similar tempo and body angle in your leg lift, then spin around towards second base.
   b. Occasionally this move will catch the runner napping, but mainly it is utilized to keep them honest at second base, especially teams who like to walk into their lead and timing when stealing third base.
   c. If a runner is at second base with no one out, we will use the move to read the hitter's intentions.
   d. Some general rules:
      i. Get sign from middle infielder or catcher.
      ii. Hold for a two count.
      iii. Head look returns to catcher.
      iv. Lift leg to balance.
      v. Keep head to catcher as long as possible.
      vi. Turn lower half to throw to second base.
      vii. Line up front side before throwing.
      viii. The pitcher does not have to throw the baseball! Only throw the ball if there is daylight between the infielder and the base runner.
      ix. Our hope is runner tries to steal third base. Anticipate the rundown. Back up third base if rundown occurs.

G. Spin Move to Second Base
   a. This move is used by a pick call from the middle infield or catcher, or as part of our bunt defenses.
   b. Practice varying your looks to second base and the plate, as our middle infield may call a pick after so many looks.
   c. There is no excuse why you should not be comfortable doing this move.
   d. Once again it will go a long way in controlling teams who like to steal third base.
   e. Must use a short arm action to have a chance.
   f. A throw is not required.

H. Fake to Third / Pick to First (31 Move) - RHP
   a. The idea here is to deceive the runner at first base, thus your pick to third base must look as much like a throw to the plate as possible.

b. Good leg lift balance and tempo are keys to maintaining deception from the first base side.
c. Stride leg should go to a point 45 degrees down the mound for greatest deception, followed by a full arm fake.
d. The quick step and turn will not be as effective in deceiving the runner at first base.

I. Pitch Outs
   a. It is imperative that we execute this fundamental.
   b. It is often ignored in the daily practice plan until a failed pitch out results in a positive for the opponent.
   c. The pitch out is a tool used by the coaches and catchers in holding runners.
   d. This gives the catcher a throwing lane to second base and time to execute the throw.
   e. Some general rules:
      i. Pitcher must use a modified slide step to the plate as a true slide step will often shut down the runner and a normal leg lift will take too long to give the catcher a chance.
      ii. Pitcher receives pitch out sign from catcher.
      iii. Come to set position.
      iv. Use a comfortable hold. Do not quick pitch and do not hold the ball too long.
      v. Use the four seam fastball.
      vi. Throw pitch into opposite batter's box, chest high. Trust your catcher will get there.
      vii. Visualize throw zone before the pitch.
      viii. Incorporate into flat ground and bullpen routines.

J. Pitch Ups
   a. Similar to a pitch out, but chest to shoulder high over the plate with a hitter.
   b. We will use this skill in an effort to entice the hitter into a swing, while at the same time giving the catcher a pitch they can handle if the runner is going.
   c. We will use this pitch a lot in bunt situations, so execution is critical.
   d. The true slide step is okay as we are not certain the base runner is stealing as when we call a pitch out.

K. Best Move
   a. This move by both the RHP and LHP should be conducted in a time of 1.0 seconds or less.
   b. LHP should push the envelope as far as their stride leg going to the 45 degrees point or further.
   c. RHP should incorporate quick feet and quick arm, or use the front knee flinch move otherwise known as a balk move.

L. No Look Pitch
   a. While base runners focus on rhythm or pitcher's looks.
   b. No look gives the runner only a time to plate to gauge the pitcher.
   c. Some general rules:
      i. Come set looking at catcher.
      ii. No long holds – one second is enough.
      iii. Runner in scoring position, “go with the hitter” focus.

HOLDING RUNNERS

A. First base related - Holding runners at first base is done by disrupting the runner's rhythm. This is accomplished by the following techniques:
    a. Hold ball for one, two or three seconds, or until time out.
    b. Hold ball then quick step off move.
    c. Hold ball and pitch.
    d. Come set and quick pitch.
    e. Short hold and pitch.
    f. Pick on way up or on way down.
    g. Pitch out.
        i. Note: Holding the ball is the single most important way to deter the steal of second base. To be able to come to the set position and be poised and relaxed will disrupt the runners timing. He will either get a poor jump or not go at all. Long hold must be mastered before any quick set or quick pick.

B. Second base related - With runners in scoring position the quality of pitch and the ability to keep the runner from stealing third is done with the following sequences:
    a. Mixing looks - come set looking at the base runner and vary the looks based on the number given by the middle infielder.
    b. Mixing rhythms - come set looking at the base runner and vary the rhythm/hold based on the count given by the middle infielder.
    c. No look pitch, or one look / one rhythm pitch - used when in "go with the hitter" mode. ***The hitter is the pitcher's priority.***
    d. Inside Move
    e. Spin Move

C. Third base related - With a runner at third base the pitcher will go from the stretch position at all times. Too many teams now incorporate the fake steal of home routine at third base. If in the stretch position it is highly unlikely a team will attempt to steal home. The step off with pivot foot should be taught to all pitchers should they inadvertently go to full wind-up position to avoid the balk when they step off.
    a. Right Handed Pitcher
        i. From stretch position get the sign.
        ii. Check runner with eyes on way to set position.
        iii. Come set.
        iv. Pitch

    b. Left Handed Pitcher
        i. Get sign.
        ii. Check runner over right shoulder on way to set position.
        iii. Come set.
        iv. Pitch

PRACTICE APPROACH - RUNNING GAME

The ability to practice against the running game not only provides the pitcher with an opportunity to work on these skills, but also allows base runners to practice their stolen base technique. Running Game is a great way to practice this skill set. Runners can be placed on a certain base, or can work from all bases, with a hot runner being indicated for each series. A series of picks, pitches, pitch outs and pitch ups can be scripted to provide work on the sign system between pitcher and catcher as well as the pick system. Catchers are also able to work on their receiving, footwork and throwing fundamentals during this practice drill. The Running Game script is set up by the coach and is read to the catcher at home plate. The catcher then relays the appropriate sign to the pitcher, at which time the pitcher executes the sign given.

BUNT DEFENSES

BASICS

A. Bunt play will be relayed to players from catcher. Be sure all eyes are on catcher during sign presentation. Review responsibilities prior to engaging rubber.

B. Be aware of runners and their speed on the bases and at-bat.

C. Get pitch selection from catcher. No matter what the situation, the priority is pitch concentration and execution, then move on to fielding your position.

D. After ball is bunted, bust hard to ball as if no one else is fielding it.

E. Listen for "ball" call from other fielders as they will have priority over the pitcher. If the play is a no doubt play for the pitcher verbalize "ball" immediately and attack the baseball to make the play.

F. Field ball inside throwing side foot with glove positioned between the ball and the base you are throwing it to.

G. Hands in front of body with knees bent and butt low.

H. Pull ball into belt area to lock in front side. Stay low and in your legs. Standing up can cause ball to sail once thrown.
   a. Note: Stopped bunted balls can be barehanded. All moving balls should be gloved. Do not bare hand a moving ball.

I. Point front side with feet directed to desired base (keep feet moving).

J. Throw with short arm arc in back to be quick with release.

K. Keep feet under shoulders to stay balanced.
   a. Note: Arm slot should be normal. Bad throws come from rushed or lazy body positioning. Avoid flying open by staying low in an athletic position and firm up your glove arm while throwing to keep you online.

PITCHER BUNT PLAY RESPONSIBILITES

A. Runner at First Base – Out
   a. The priority for all players fielding the bunt is the out at first base.
   b. Pitcher is responsible for right side of diamond and is to attack the baseball until called off by first baseman, who will be late to charge as he holds the runner on.
   c. Right handed pitcher reads the third baseman and allow him to creep towards home before pitching the ball. He should be 25-33% of the way towards home when delivery is initiated.
   d. Left handed pitcher reads the first baseman's glove flip for initiating delivery. He will read the third baseman and indicate when it is time to pitch by flipping his glove towards you.
   e. Execute a quality strike and finish the delivery before moving to fielding position.
   f. Identify bunt speed and runner and adjust accordingly to speed of play. If a hurry play, step and throw.
   g. Ball on or near the first base line pitcher is able to clear the throw and listen for inside or outside call for sight line of throw. As long as the ball and pitcher stay inside the first base line there should be a clear sight line inside as the runner is required to stay in the runner's lane.
   h. If third baseman makes the play the catcher rotates to cover third base and the pitcher rotates to cover home.
   i. Be quick but under control.

B. Runner at First Base – Lead Out
   a. The priority for all players fielding the bunt is the lead out at second base.
   b. Pitcher is responsible for right side of diamond and is to attack the baseball until called off by first baseman, who will be late to charge as he holds the runner on.
   c. Right handed pitcher reads the third baseman and allow him to creep towards home before pitching the ball. He should be 33-50% of the way towards home when delivery is initiated.
   d. Left handed pitcher reads the first baseman's glove flip for initiating delivery. He will read the third baseman and indicate when it is time to pitch by flipping his glove towards you.
   e. Execute a quality strike.
   f. Begin moving towards fielding position while ball is in midflight towards batter. Attack the baseball until called off.
   g. Identify bunt speed and runner and adjust accordingly to speed of play. Lead out is typically a hurry play wherever the ball is bunted. Step and throw with short arm arc.
   h. While fielding the ball listen for "ball" call from other fielders and for "base" call from catcher. Anticipate lead out at second base but the catcher will decide to check down to first base if there is no play at second base. He will indicate base by verbalizing "one" or "two".
   i. Ball on or near first base line be able to clear the throw and listen for inside or outside call for sight line of throw. As long as the ball and pitcher stay inside the first base line there should be a clear sight line inside as the runner is required to stay in the runner's lane.
   j. If third baseman makes the play the catcher rotates to cover third base and the pitcher rotates to cover home.
   k. Don't be surprised by anything. Anticipate, be quick and under control.

C. Runner at First Base – Pick
   a. The priority of this play is to execute a pitch out to the batter with a back pick to first base from the catcher.

b. Pitcher comes set with eyes on the first baseman. He will begin crashing immediately after the pitcher comes set.
c. As soon as the first baseman takes a couple steps towards home the pitcher executes the pitchout using a slide step technique.
d. Anticipate a back pick or possible rundown after pitch execution.
e. Note: A normal pitchout requires a modified slide step, but on this bunt play we want a normal slide step to prevent any stolen base action from the runner at first should he vacate when the first baseman crashes. If he continues to steal the quicker to the plate the better for the pitchout.

D. Runner at Second Base – Out
a. The priority for all players fielding the bunt is the out at first base.
b. Pitcher is responsible for left side of diamond and is to attack the baseball until called off by third baseman, who will be late to charge as he holds his ground reading the bunt and play in front of him.
c. The shortstop will indicate initiation of delivery with a glove flip to pitcher. He will stand behind the runner at second. Do not confuse his flip with a flash pick. He is reading the first baseman who is charging and waits until he is 25-33% of the way towards home.
d. Execute a quality strike and finish the delivery before moving to fielding position.
e. Identify bunt speed and runner and adjust accordingly to speed of play. If a hurry play step and throw.
f. If third baseman makes the play the pitcher rotates and covers third base for back pick throw.
g. Be quick but under control.

E. Runner at Second Base – Lead Out
a. The priority for all players fielding the bunt is the out at third base.
b. Pitcher is responsible for left side of diamond and is to attack the baseball until called off by third baseman, who will be late to charge as he holds his ground reading the bunt and play in front of him.
c. The shortstop will indicate initiation of delivery with a "back" call to pitcher. He will stand behind the runner at second. He is reading the first baseman who is charging and waits until he is 33-50% of the way towards home.
d. Execute a quality strike.
e. Begin moving towards fielding position while ball is midflight towards batter. Attack the baseball until called off.
f. RHP - clear stride foot directly toward third base and use short arm action with hand above elbow.
g. LHP - step directly toward third base with right foot.
h. Identify bunt speed and runner and adjust accordingly to speed of play. Lead out is typically a hurry play wherever the ball is bunted. Step and throw with short arm arc.
i. If runner at second base only the play is a tag play and the ball needs to be thrown waist to knee high for catch and tag by third baseman.

j. While fielding the ball listen for "ball" call from other fielders and for "base" call from catcher. Anticipate lead out at third base but the catcher will decide to check down to first base if there is no play at third base. He will indicate base by verbalizing "one" or "three".
k. If third baseman makes the play the pitcher rotates and covers third base for back pick throw.
l. Don't be surprised by anything. Anticipate, be quick and under control.

F. Runner at Second Base – Pick
a. The priority of this play is to execute a spin pick at second base.
b. After receiving all running game signs from shortstop, pitcher will look in and receive a dummy sign from the catcher.
c. Pitcher comes set with eyes on the shortstop. The shortstop will wait for a two count and yell "back" while crashing towards second base.
d. The pitcher initiates the spin pick on the "back" call.
e. Anticipate a back pick or possible rundown after pick execution.
f. Note: this play is run to keep the runner at second base close to the bag in preparation for lead out. This play is run once and if the catcher does not give a new bunt defense the bunt defense turns in to lead out on the next pitch. All sequences from lead out then take precedent.

G. Runners at First and Third – Safety Play
a. The priority for this play is getting the out at home plate on a first and third safety squeeze.
b. Pitcher is responsible for left side of diamond and is to attack the baseball until called off by third baseman.
c. The pitcher will come set in this situation with an eye on the first baseman.
d. The first baseman will crash towards home as soon as the pitcher comes set.
e. The pitcher must pitch to the plate after seeing the first baseman begin his crash. The runner at first base will be uncovered by a player and will have an opportunity to leave (steal) second base if the pitcher holds the ball too long as the first baseman crashes.
f. Execute a quality strike.
g. Begin moving towards fielding position while ball is in midflight towards batter. Attack the baseball until called off.
h. If the first baseman fields the ball his priority is to throw home, however, he has full view of the runner at third base and can check down to an out at first base if the runner at third base reads the defense and stays home.
i. If the pitcher fields the ball his priority is to get the out at first base as a properly executed safety squeeze needs the ball bunted to the first base side of the diamond thus the runner at third base should stay home. However, the catcher has a full view of the runner at third base and can check down to a play at the plate by calling for the ball "four!", at which time the pitcher will redirect the ball to home.
j. If first baseman makes the play there is a high probability of a rundown between home and third base. The pitcher will proceed to home and backup the catcher in a rundown, at which time all rundown protocol between home and third base will take over the play.
k. Note: If the play is ran and the runner at first base attempts to steal second as the first baseman crashes then 31 defense takes precedent with an emphasis on the runner at third base to prevent him from scoring. If this happens early enough before the pitch is started the

right handed pitcher will step off and full arm fake to second and spin around counterclockwise to immediately check the runner at third. The left handed pitcher will step off and immediately rotate clockwise to check the runner at third. The runner at first base is not a priority during this play.

l. Don't be surprised by anything. Anticipate, be quick and under control.

PRACTICE APPROACH - LITTLE GAME

Besides the PFP approach to fielding bunts, pitchers can get quality, game-like repetitions through a team defense called Little Game. Little Game allows the pitcher to throw live to the hitter as he attempts to execute various bunts. The catcher indicates which bunt play is on prior to each pitch. The format of Little Game is as follows:

A. Little Game - This sequence can be repeated based on the number of available arms
   a. Drag - No one on base, pitcher in the wind-up
   b. Push - No one on base, pitcher in the wind-up
   c. Sac - Runner at first, out play
   d. Pick - Runner at first, pick play, pitch out
   e. Sac - Runner at first, lead out play
   f. Sac - Runner at second, out play
   g. Pick - Runner at second, pick play, spin move
   h. Sac - Runner at second or first and second, lead out play
   i. Safety - Runner at first and third, safety play
   j. Squeeze - Runner at third, stretch, squeeze play
   k. Valentine - Runner at third, stretch, valentine play

31 DEFENSES

The premise of Cougar Baseball's 31 Defense is to select a hot runner and have each of the four plays focus on that runner. If the runner at first base is hot as selected by the coaches, then the defense's job is to get that runner out, regardless of the actions of the runner at third base. Only when the out is achieved on the runner at first base may the defense turn and focus on the runner at third base. Conversely, if the runner at third base is selected as the hot runner, then all focus is placed on him regardless of the actions of the runner at first base. Our 31 Defense plays are as follows:

A. Play One
   a. With runners at first and third base, and a potential safety squeeze in order, the primary focus of the defense is the runner at third base.
   b. Read bunt defenses for details on defending the safety squeeze.
   c. All actions / reactions will be with the intent of not allowing the runner at third to score, regardless of the runner at first base and his actions.
   d. The catcher will full arm fake to second base and look/throw to third base, and the pitcher will full-arm fake to second base and look/throw to third base/home if the runner leaves early or during a 31 move.

B. Play Two
   a. With runners at first and third base, the primary focus of the defense will be to record an out with the runner at first base who is trying to steal second base.

b. All intent will be directed at the runner at first regardless of the runner at third base and his actions.
c. The catcher will throw to second base, and the pitcher will throw the ball to second base if the runner leaves early or during a 31 move.

C. Play Three
   a. With runners at first and third base, the primary focus of the defense is the runner at third base.
   b. All actions / reactions will be with the intent of not allowing the runner at third base to score, regardless of the runner at first base and his actions.
   c. The catcher will snap throw to third base, the first baseman will full-arm fake to second base and look/throw to third base/home, and the pitcher will full-arm fake to second base and look/throw to third base/home if the runner leaves early or during a 31 move.

D. Play Four
   a. With runners at first and third base, the primary focus of the defense is the runner at third base.
   b. All actions / reactions will be with the intent of not allowing the runner at third to score, regardless of the runner at first base and his actions.
   c. The catcher will full arm fake to second base and look/throw to third base, the first baseman will full-arm fake to second base and look/throw to third base/home, and the pitcher will full-arm fake to second base and look/throw to third base/home if the runner leaves early or during a 31 move.

RIGHT-HANDED PITCHER

A. Play Two – Runner at first base is the hot runner. DO NOT concern yourself with runner at third base.
   a. Early Recognition
      i. When executing "Fundamental Aloha" with runners at first and third and pitcher recognizes "Runner" call prior to starting arm fake to third base.
      ii. Do not worry about runner at third base – no need to even look at him as you are positioning yourself to get the guy at second base.
      iii. Pitcher turns 90 degrees to his right and throws the ball to second base (primarily shortstop covering) for the out/rundown.
      iv. If run down occurs pitcher will move to first base to back up first baseman in a rundown.
      v. If for some reason the ball gets moved to the runner at third base (this should not happen since runner at first is our only concern), pitcher will run to cover/back-up catcher at home plate.
   b. Late Recognition
      i. When executing "Fundamental Aloha" with runners at first and third and pitcher recognizes "Runner" call during or after arm fake towards third base.
      ii. After executing 31 move with arm fake towards third base, pitcher will turn 270 degrees to his left and throw the ball to second base for the out/rundown.
      iii. If run down occurs pitcher will move to first base to back up first baseman in a rundown.

iv. If for some reason the ball gets moved to the runner at third base (this should not happen since runner at first is our only concern), pitcher will run to cover/back-up catcher at home plate.

c. Leave Early
   i. When coming to the set position with runners at first and third, the runner at first leaves early in an attempt to steal second base.
   ii. Step Off - Pitcher turns 90 degrees to his right and throws the ball to second base (primarily shortstop covering) for the out/rundown.
   iii. Pitcher does not worry about runner at third base – no need to even look at him as pitcher is positioning himself to get the guy at second base.
   iv. If run down occurs pitcher will move to first base to back up first baseman in a rundown.
   v. If for some reason the ball gets moved to the runner at third base (this should not happen since runner at first is our only concern), pitcher will run to cover/back-up catcher at home plate.

B. Play One, Three or Four – Runner at third base is the hot runner. DO NOT concern yourself with runner at first base.
   a. Early Recognition
      i. When executing "Fundamental Aloha" with runners at first and third and pitcher recognizes "Runner" call prior to starting arm fake to third base.
      ii. Pitcher DOES NOT look at runner at third base.
      iii. Pitcher will turn 90 degrees to his right and execute full-arm fake to second base.
      iv. After arm-fake to second, pitcher will turn 90-180 degrees to his left to pick up runner at third base.
      v. Pitcher will make one of four decisions:
         1. Hold the Ball – runner at third did not make a move
         2. Snap throw to third base – runner at third is off enough to pick him at third.
         3. Run at the runner – runner at third has wandered off but has not committed to running to either third base or Home plate. Pitcher will run at him at an angle to get runner going towards third base.
         4. Throw the ball home – runner at third has made a commitment towards home and is more than 50% down the line (45'). Rundown rules between third and Home dictate if runner is more than 50% towards home automatically throw the ball to home (no need for ball call).
            a. If run down occurs, pitcher will run to back-up catcher at home plate. If first baseman arrives he has priority in the run down and pitcher will thus back up first baseman at home.
   b. Late Recognition
      i. When executing "Fundamental Aloha" with runners at first and third and pitcher recognizes "Runner" call during or after arm fake towards third base.
      ii. After executing 31 move with arm fake towards third base, pitcher will turn 270 degrees to his left and execute full arm fake towards second base.
      iii. After arm-fake to second, pitcher will turn 90-180 degrees (continue turning in same direction) to his left to pick up runner at third base.

iv. Pitcher will make one of four decisions:
1. Hold the Ball – runner at third did not make a move
2. Snap throw to third base – runner at third is off enough to pick him at third.
3. Run at the runner – runner at third has wandered off but has not committed to running to either third base or Home plate. Pitcher will run at him at an angle to get runner going towards third base.
4. Throw the ball home – runner at third has made a commitment towards home and is more than 50% down the line (45'). Rundown rules between third and Home dictate if runner is more than 50% towards home automatically throw the ball to home (no need for ball call).
    a. If run down occurs, pitcher will run to back-up catcher at home plate. If first baseman arrives he has priority in the run down and pitcher will thus back up first baseman at home.

c. Leave Early
i. When coming to the set position with runners at first and third, the runner at first leaves early in an attempt to steal twob.
ii. Pitcher steps off and DOES NOT look at runner at third base.
iii. Pitcher will turn 90degrees to his right and execute full-arm fake to second base.
iv. After arm-fake to second, pitcher will turn 90-180degrees to his left to pick up runner at third base.
v. Pitcher will make one of four decisions:
1. Hold the Ball – runner at third did not make a move
2. Snap throw to third base – runner at third is off enough to pick him at third.
3. Run at the runner – runner at third has wandered off but has not committed to running to either third base or Home plate. Pitcher will run at him at an angle to get runner going towards third base.
4. Throw the ball home – runner at third has made a commitment towards home and is more than 50% down the line (45'). Rundown rules between third and Home dictate if runner is more than 50% towards home automatically throw the ball to home (no need for ball call).
    a. If run down occurs, pitcher will run to back-up catcher at home plate. If first baseman arrives he has priority in the run down and pitcher will thus back up first baseman at home.

LEFT HANDED PITCHER

A. Play Two – Runner at first base is the hot runner. DO NOT concern yourself with runner at third base.
a. When executing "Fundamental Fundamental" or "Fundamental Aloha" with runners at first and third and runner takes off on first movement.
b. Pick to first Base as called. Follow pick and back up first base or first baseman for potential rundown.
c. If run down occurs pitcher will move to first base to back up first baseman in a rundown. If the ball gets moved to the runner at third base (this should not happen since runner at first is our only concern), pitcher will run to cover/back-up catcher at home plate.
d. Leave Early

i. When coming to the set position with runners at first and third, the runner at first leaves early in an attempt to steal second base.
ii. The pitcher will step off the mound and make a 90 degree turn to his left to throw the ball to second base.
iii. If runner does not fully commit to stealing second, the pitcher will run at him at an angle to cut off his momentum to second base and get the run down started going back to first base.
iv. In the event the pitcher starts the run down with angle, he will have no concerns over the runner at third base and all focus will be on getting the runner at first base out.
v. If run down occurs pitcher will move to first base to back up first baseman in a rundown. If the ball gets moved to the runner at third base (this should not happen since runner at first is our only concern), pitcher will run to cover/back-up catcher at home plate.

B. Play One, Three or Four – Runner at third base is the hot runner. DO NOT concern yourself with runner at first base.
   a. When executing "Fundamental Fundamental" or "Fundamental Aloha" with runners at first and third and runner takes off on first movement.
   b. Pitcher will pick to first Base as called.
   c. First baseman's responsibility is to full arm fake to second base and turn to runner at third base immediately. Therefore, it is imperative for the pitcher to keep his head on a swivel and see what is happening so as to stay out of the line of fire should the first baseman have to make a throw home or to third base.
   d. If runner at third base commits to going home, pitcher will run to cover/back-up catcher at home plate to assist in the ensuing run down. If first baseman arrives he has priority in the run down and pitcher will thus back up first baseman at home.
   e. Leave Early
      i. When coming to the set position with runners at first and third, the runner at first leaves early in an attempt to steal second base.
      ii. The pitcher will step off the mound and make a 90 degree turn to his left and make a full arm fake to second base.
      iii. Pitcher will continue to turn to his left to pick up the runner at third base, potentially making a 180-270 degree turn.
      iv. Pitcher will make one of four decisions:
         1. Hold the Ball – runner at third did not make a move.
         2. Snap throw to third base – runner at third is off enough to pick him at third.
         3. Run at the runner – runner at third has wandered off but has not committed to running to either third base or Home plate. Pitcher will run at him at an angle to get runner going towards third base.
         4. Throw the ball home – runner at third has made a commitment towards home and is more than 50% down the line (45'). Rundown rules between third and Home dictate if runner is more than 50% towards home automatically throw the ball to home (no need for ball call).
            a. If runner at third base commits to going home, pitcher will run to cover/back-up catcher at home plate to assist in the ensuing run down.

If first baseman arrives he has priority in the run down and pitcher will thus back up first baseman at home.

C. Hat Tap/Spencer Play: Play One, Three or Four - Runner at third base is the hot runner. DO NOT concern yourself with runner at first base.
   a. The Hat Tap / Spencer Play is used to prevent the double steal attempt of our opponents.
   b. With runners at first and third, opponents may leave early or go first movement on a read pitcher to try and draw the throw to first base. At the same time as the runner at first, the runner at third takes off for home. If run properly, there is very little chance the ball can be exchanged from the pitcher to the first baseman to the catcher in time to get the runner at home.
   c. This play allows the pitcher to know that in all instances he is to pitch the ball to the plate.
   d. If the pitcher has a read move, he will not use it in this play.
   e. This play's indicator is given from the dugout by a coach and is simply a tap to the top of his hat.
   f. Leave Early - If the runner leaves early, the pitcher will step off and immediately turn 180 degrees to his right and pick up the runner at third base. If the runner at first base does anything, ignore him. Let the runner go to second base or return to first. The pitcher's priority and only focus is the runner at third base.

FIVE WAYS TO COVER FIRST BASE

BASICS

A. On ball hit to right side of the diamond run towards first base in a manner dictated by the rules of the Five Ways to Cover First.

B. At edge of orange turf or cut of grass get feet under control.

C. Hold glove up by head area for target and poor throw adjustment.

D. Touch inside of base with right foot and push off to fair ground.

E. Communicate with first baseman "I got bag!". First baseman has priority on bag coverage and can call you off. If called off simply stop in fair territory if you are too close to the bag, or continue into foul territory and back up the play at first base. Be sure to avoid any contact or interfere with the hitter's right to first base.

COVERING FIRST BASE

A. Banana Route – No One On
   a. Pitcher will take off to cover first in a banana route, aiming towards a spot 75% up the line then running parallel with the line to give the first or second baseman a clear line of throw to the pitcher.
   b. The basics still apply but without a runner on base the pitcher is able to continue through the bag.
   c. Stay on the inside of the bag in fair territory to avoid late contact with the base runner.

B. Banana Route – Runner on Base
   a. Pitcher will take off to cover first in a banana route, aiming towards a spot 75% up the line then running parallel with the line to give the first or second baseman a clear line of throw to the pitcher.
   b. The basics apply here but the pitcher must "Look In" at the conclusion of touching of first base.
   c. Know where the base runner started and where he would likely be and set your feet to set your throw. A short arm arc is needed to get in a ready position quickly and to release the ball as soon as possible.
   d. Runner starts at first base look for the advanced out at third and check down to the back pick at second base.
   e. Runner starts at second base look for the advanced out at home and check down to the back pick at third base.
   f. Call timeout after the play is finished to gather yourself and return to the mound area without any chance for the base runners to advance.
   g. Do not be an umpire on this play. Assume the out is called and look for the advancing runner. Any delay can cause the base runner to advance.

C. Banana Route – Bobbled Ball
   a. Pitcher will take off to cover first in a banana route, aiming towards a spot 75% up the line then running parallel with the line to give the first or second baseman a clear line of throw to the pitcher.
   b. The basics apply here but as soon as the ball is bobbled by the fielder the pitcher must break down at the bag and become a first baseman.
   c. Failing to breakdown will cause the pitcher to run past the bag or attempt to reach back to the bag with his foot as he'll likely receive the throw after passing the bag due to his momentum.
   d. The rules of no one on or runner on base apply after touching the bag.

D. Straight Line Route – Slow Roller
   a. Pitcher will take off in a straight line to the bag on all slow rollers.
   b. The basics will apply with an extra emphasis on touching the inside of the bag and clearing towards fair territory as this will likely be a close play with a collision imminent if the pitcher stays in the baseline or crosses in to foul territory.
   c. The rules of no one on or runner on base will apply.
   d. While running the straight line all efforts should be made to field the ball by the pitcher, with the first baseman being the next line of defense. If the pitcher is able to field the ball immediately call for "ball" to allow the first baseman to retreat to the bag for the running technique toss. If the play is a last second decision the pitcher must continue towards first base with the ball and plan on touching the bag himself as the first baseman will likely not be in position to catch the ball at the bag.
   e. The rules of no one on or runner on base apply after touching the bag.

E. Straight Line Route – Double Play Cover
   a. Pitcher will take off in a straight line to the bag on all balls hit to first baseman with runner at first base.

b. The pitcher must plan on being the first baseman on this play until called off by the first baseman. After being called off continue to foul territory to back the play up.
c. RHP place right foot on the bag in a balanced pre-stride position. Do not stride towards the baseball until the ball is in flight and the direction is known. Then stride towards the ball for the catch.
d. LHP place left foot on the bag in a balanced pre-stride position. Do not stride towards the baseball until the ball is in flight and the direction is known. Then stride towards the ball for the catch.
e. Priority is to catch the ball or to block and stop an errant throw.
f. Footwork and receiving drills for this play can be worked on during early work or pre-game BP.

NOTE: Depending on the speed of the pitcher, the banana route may be replaced by the straight line route on all Five Ways to Cover First in order to give the pitcher the best opportunity to be there on time. This decision will be a coach's decision and communicated towards the pitcher accordingly.

PASSED BALL

A. Communication
   a. Move toward the ball and point.
   b. Use verbal ("one", "three", "feet", or "back").
   c. On ball on the ground underneath the catcher the pitcher should repeatedly point to the ground using the verbal command "feet!".

B. Cover Plate
   a. Feet placed in front of the plate to make tag on third base side of home plate.
   b. Bent knees.
   c. Receive throw and tag with the back of the glove.
   d. Tag and get out.
   e. Do not block the plate. Avoid contact. This play is not worth a career. Protect the body and record the out.

BACKING UP BASES

A. First Base
   a. Go deep behind first base position.
   b. Line up with the throw from the second baseman or shortstop.
   c. Know where the dugout is.
   d. Anticipate overthrow or deflection.

B. Third Base
   a. Go deep behind third base position.
   b. Know where the dugout is.
   c. Line up with the throw.
   d. Come in to the throw slowly.
   e. Anticipate overthrow or deflection.

C. Home Plate
    a. Come off the mound in the opposite direction of the batted ball.
    b. Get to the backstop as quick as possible.
    c. Read the throw from the field.
    d. Come in to the throw slowly.
    e. Anticipate overthrow or deflection.
    f. If receiving the ball, keep head up, look for a possible play on the bases.

NOTE: If unsure of where to go, keep your head on a swivel, go to the area between third and home and react to the direction of the throw.

POP FLY COMMUNICATION

The pitcher should let the infielder catch pop flies in the mound area unless the pop fly lacks the hang time to allow another player to make the play. The pitcher should not automatically release the mound area on pop flies. He will be called off the ball by the infielder that can make the play. If the pitcher has an easy play on the ball, he will wave his arms in the air to indicate he can make a play. Do not call for ball! Position players can respond by calling out the pitcher's name or by making a "Take It!" call to inform the pitcher to continue on with the catch of the pop up. If the position player calls for ball the pitcher should move opposite of the player coming in for the ball.

Any ball hit in the air the pitcher will point at it and loudly communicate with position players. Make a decisive decision on the potential position player who can catch it and call his name or position. Be loud.

Balls hit in the air and down the lines that result in two position players chasing the ball the pitcher will be responsible for the base that is vacated.

Pitcher must look for places on the field to be. Avoid watching the play as a fan. Either back up a base, cover a base or anticipate being part of a potential rundown.

RUNDOWNS

BASICS

Executing a rundown in one throw is the goal of every rundown. Within the rundown we will do the following:

A. Win (runner is out) or tie (runner goes back to original base) never lose (runner advances) in a rundown.

B. Set the pace by charging the runner and making him commit.
    a. Pick a lane inside or outside the runner to allow clear throwing lane.
    b. Do not let the runner hangout.
    c. Get him to turn his back to you as you chase him.

C. Hold the ball in throwing hand prepared to throw at all times.

a. When called upon to throw the baseball, the pitcher should be close enough to partner that they can throw the ball in a dart throwing manner.
b. Partner calls for baseball by verbalizing "ball" loudly.

D. After throwing the ball clear yourself from the lane by moving further inside or outside.
   a. Do not cross into lane.
   b. Interfering with the runner allows everyone to be safe.
   c. Follow your throw to the next base and be ready for the rundown to come back your way.

E. If receiving the throw, shorten the distance between the runner and yourself and call for the baseball at the moment you believe you can take a couple of steps and tag the runner.
   a. Calling for it too early allows the runner to change direction and calling for it too late allows the runner to get by you and be safe.

F. Tag the runner in a forceful manner with two hands securing the baseball.
   a. A soft tag allows the runner to initiate force and possibly jar the ball loose.
   b. Clear yourself after the tag and look in for other runners.

G. Know the situation and pay attention for two runners at a bag.
   a. If two runners are at a base, tag the second runner first, then tag the runner you were chasing.
   b. Create an angle to cut off the second runner to prevent him from trying to retreat to previous base.

H. The rule of 50% applies on all rundowns between home and third base.
   a. If the runner is headed towards home then give the ball up automatically when that runner passes half way to home.
   b. Do not wait for a ball call.
   c. Do not attempt to chase runner entire way home and try to tag late or dive and tag.
   d. Get the rundown headed back to third base by giving the ball up early to partner.
   e. The timing of the ball call and tag at third base is critical to prevent multiple change in directions and throws.

I. Practice allowing only one throw to create better tempo and timing with ball call and tag.

PRACTICE APPROACH – RUNDOWN DRILL SERIES

Each of these series will be performed with infielders, and the outfielders acting as base runners. Three pitchers are at the mound area at the same time, with one pitcher at a time performing the drill repetition.

A. Fungo Series
   a. Runner at first base
      i. Groundball to first baseman
         1. First baseman touches bag and throws to shortstop.
         2. Runner stops and gets in a rundown.
         3. Pitcher starts on mound.
         4. Pitcher backs up first base in rundown.
      ii. Groundball to left field

1. Left fielder throws to home plate.
2. Cut man (third baseman) redirects throw to second base.
3. Rundown between first and second base.
4. Pitcher starts backing up home.
5. Pitcher backs up first base in rundown.

iii. Groundball to right field

1. Right fielder throws to home plate.
2. Cut man (first baseman) redirects throw to second base.
3. Rundown between first and second base.
4. Pitcher starts backing up home.
5. Pitcher backs up first base in rundown .

b. Runner at second base

i. Comebacker to pitcher.
ii. Runner at second base gets in rundown between second and third.
iii. Pitcher will cut runner off and start rundown, throw to third base, or throw to second base.
iv. Pitcher backs up third base during rundown.

c. Runner at third base

i. Infielders play in.
ii. Groundball hit to infielders or pitcher.
iii. Runner at third base is green going in looking, stopping and getting in a rundown after reading throw to plate.
iv. Pitcher backs up home during the rundown.

B. Pick Series

a. Runner at first base

i. RHP 31 move with throw to second base (two outs)

1. Pitcher executes 31 move and throws to second base.
2. Runner at first takes off first movement then stops after seeing 31 move and gets in a rundown.
3. Pitcher backs up first base during rundown.
4. Out during rundown must be executed quickly to prevent run from scoring.

ii. RHP 31 move with throw to first base (0-1 outs)

1. Pitcher executes 31 move and throws to first base.
2. Runner at first base plays dumb and extends secondary during move to get caught off base and in a rundown.
3. Pitcher backs up first base during rundown.
4. Do not worry about runner at third base during this rundown.

b. Runner at second base

i. Inside move to second base

1. Pitcher comes set and executes an inside move to second base
2. Runner starts technique on first movement and gets hung up in a rundown by the pitcher's inside move.
3. Pitcher will either cut the runner off and chase him back to second, throw the ball to third, or throw the ball to second base.

4. During the rundown the pitcher is responsible for backing up third base.

c. Runner at third base
   i. 31 defense – Play Four
      1. Pitcher will come set and execute a pitch to home plate.
      2. The catcher will full arm fake to second and look to third for rundown.
      3. Runner will break towards home on the full arm fake and remain in the rundown between home and third.
      4. Pitcher is responsible for backing up home during the rundown.
   ii. Squeeze play
      1. Pitcher will come set and execute a pitchout.
      2. Runner will break towards home at foot strike to simulate a squeeze play.
      3. Catcher will chase runner in rundown between home and third.
      4. Pitcher is responsible for backing up home during the rundown.

C. Long Throw Series
   a. Runner at first base
      i. LHP will execute a good move to first base.
      ii. Runner will take off on first movement drawing the long throw from the first baseman.
   b. Runner at second base
      i. Pitcher will come set and execute a spin move to second on two looks or two rhythm.
      ii. Runner will take off on spin towards third drawing the long throw from the shortstop or second baseman.
   c. Runner at third base
      i. 31 defense – Play Three
         1. Pitcher will throw a pitch to catcher at home plate.
         2. Catcher will snap throw to third base.
         3. Runner will take off towards home on snap throw and draw a long throw from third baseman.

PITCHER'S FIELDING PRACTICE (PFP) - ROUTINES

One of the goals of the pitching staff at Washington State University is to be the best pitching staff at fielding their position in the country. Statistically this is difficult to quantify, however, the daily effort to become a great fielding pitcher will be part of the norm at WSU. The ability to field the pitcher position is vital. The pitcher who has a difficult time performing any particular part of the game will be exploited throughout the season. PFP will be done on a consistent basis as a staff, however, opportunities exist with managers, coaches, and the Fungoman to receive early work or post-practice work on fielding the pitcher position. The following are PFP routines used by Cougar Pitchers:

ROUTINE #1 - FIVE WAYS TO COVER FIRSTBASE

A. Banana - No One On
   a. All pitchers on mound area.
   b. Coach with bucket of balls stands at first base positioning area.
   c. From landing pit (no shadow mechanic), bust hard to first executing banana route technique.
   d. Coach throws feeds from three different angles including bad throws.

e. Pitcher clears base to fair territory to avoid collision with hitter.

B. Banana - Runner on Base
   a. All pitchers on mound area.
   b. Coach with bucket of balls stands at first base positioning area.
   c. From landing pit (no shadow mechanic), bust hard to first executing banana route technique.
   d. Coach throws feeds from three different angles including bad throws.
   e. Pitcher clears base to fair territory and looks in for lead runners.
   f. Pitchers communicate "look in" call to pitcher covering.

C. Banana - Bobbled Baseball
   a. All pitchers on mound area.
   b. Coach with bucket of balls stands at first base positioning area.
   c. From landing pit (no shadow mechanic), bust hard to first executing banana route technique.
   d. Pitcher breaks down at first and becomes a first baseman anticipating a rushed and errant throw from position player who bobbled the ball.
   e. Coach bobbles the baseball and throws feeds from three different angles including bad throws.

D. Straight Line - Slow Roller
   a. Coach at plate tosses ball between first baseman and pitcher's mound.
   b. Pitcher stays on line being sure to not go outside reach distance. There is no communication.
   c. The pitcher goes for the ball and if able to field it continues to the bag assuming he will have to beat the hitter to the base.
   d. If unable to field the ball continue aggressively to first base.
   e. The throw from the position player will likely be behind the pitcher so keep the head on a swivel and be athletic.
   f. Clear to the inside of the bag after receiving the throw and look in if done with a runner on base.

E. Straight Line - Double Play
   a. Coach with bucket feeds from second base area.
   b. Pitcher runs hard to first base in a straight line and follows the technique described.
   c. Coach will throw the ball leading the pitcher, waiting for the pitcher to arrive then throw, and throwing a bad throw to the pitcher, especially balls in the dirt.

ROUTINE #2 - COMEBACKER - PLAYS AT FIRST

A. Running Technique
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound and extras lined up to third base side of mound.
   b. Extra pitcher acts as first baseman.
   c. Coach with fungo hits medium groundball to first base side of mound.
   d. RHP fields the ball with forehand and executes running technique, running ball to the bag and underhand tossing the ball to first baseman as if it were a cup of milk.
   e. LHP fields the ball with backhand and executes running technique, running ball to the bag and underhand tossing the ball to first baseman as if it were a cup of milk.

B. Backhand Plays
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound and extras lined up behind the mound.
   b. Extra pitcher acts as first baseman.
   c. Coach with fungo hits soft to medium groundball to third base side of mound.
   d. RHP fields the ball using their backhand technique, sets their feet and throws with short arm arc to first base.
   e. LHP fields the ball with their forehand technique and completes a clockwise spin to set their feet to throw with a short arm arc.

C. Bobbled Ball Plays
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound and extras lined up to third base side of mound.
   b. Extra pitcher acts as first baseman.
   c. Coach with fungo hits medium to hard groundball right at the pitcher.
   d. Pitcher will bobble the ball on purpose, pick it up with their bare hand being sure to not tap their glove with the ball, and throw to first with a short arm arc.

D. Check 'Em Go to One
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound and extras lined up to first base side of mound.
   b. Extra pitchers act as third baseman, shortstop, first baseman and base runner.
   c. Coach with fungo hits medium to hard groundball right at the pitcher.
   d. Pitcher will look runner at second base back to the bag and proceed to set feet and throw to first base with a short arm arc.
   e. Occasionally base runner should run to third base to keep pitcher honest on his reads of base runner at second base.
   f. If pitcher bobbles the comebacker he will proceed to throw the ball to first base.

ROUTINE #3 - COMEBACKER - DOUBLE PLAY FEEDS

A. 1-6-3 Double Play
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound and extras lined up to third base side of mound.
   b. Extra pitchers act as shortstop and first baseman.
   c. Coach with fungo hits medium to hard groundball right at the pitcher.
   d. Pitcher will set feet to throw the ball to infielder as soon as possible with short arm arc.
   e. Pitcher should throw ball to shortstop side of bag on this double play feed.
   f. If pitcher bobbles the comebacker he will proceed to throw the ball to first base.

B. 1-4-3 Double Play
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound and extras lined up to third base side of mound.
   b. Extra pitchers act as second baseman and first baseman.
   c. Coach with fungo hits medium to hard groundball right at the pitcher.
   d. Pitcher will set feet to throw the ball to infielder as soon as possible with short arm arc.
   e. Pitcher should throw ball to second base side of bag on this double play feed.
   f. If pitcher bobbles the comebacker he will proceed to throw the ball to first base.

C. 1-2-3 Double Play

a. One pitcher at a time on the mound and extras lined up to third base side of mound.
b. Extra pitchers act as catcher and first baseman.
c. Coach with fungo hits medium to hard groundball right at the pitcher.
d. Pitcher will set feet and close the front side to throw the ball to catcher chest high as soon as possible with short arm arc.
e. If pitcher bobbles the comebacker he will proceed to throw the ball to first base.

ROUTINE #4 - BUNT PLAYS - RUNNER AT FIRSTBASE

A. Runner at First base - Out
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
   b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
   c. Read either the third baseman charging (RHP) or the first baseman's glove flip (LHP) before starting shadow mechanic.
   d. Coach rolls or throws ball in front of plate to simulate bunt.
   e. Pitcher reacts to ball and makes play at first base.
   f. Only bare hand a stopped ball. Use glove and throwing hand on moving ball.

B. Runner at First base - Lead Out
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
   b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
   c. Read either the third baseman charging (RHP) or the first baseman's glove flip (LHP) before starting shadow mechanic.
   d. Coach rolls or throws ball in front of plate to simulate bunt.
   e. Pitcher reacts to ball and makes play at second base.
   f. If "first" is called or the ball is bobbled pitcher will throw ball to first base.
   g. Only bare hand a stopped ball. Use glove and throwing hand on moving ball.

C. Runner at First base - Pick
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound with a ball.
   b. Extra pitchers acting as first baseman and catcher.
   c. Come set looking at first baseman.
   d. Read the first baseman's charge and throw pitchout to the plate.

ROUTINE #5 - BUNT PLAYS - RUNNER AT SECONDBASE

A. Runner at Second base - Out
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
   b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
   c. Read the shortstop and execute shadow mechanic upon his glove flip.
   d. Coach rolls or throws ball in front of plate to simulate bunt.
   e. Pitcher reacts to ball and makes play at first base.
   f. Only bare hand a stopped ball. Use glove and throwing hand on moving ball.

B. Runner at Second base - Lead Out
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
   b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.

c. Read the shortstop and execute shadow mechanic upon his "back!" call.
d. Coach rolls or throws ball in front of plate to simulate bunt.
e. Pitcher reacts to ball and makes play at third base.
f. If "first" is called or the ball is bobbled pitcher will throw ball to first base.
g. Only bare hand a stopped ball. Use glove and throwing hand on moving ball.

C. Runner at Second base - Pick
a. One pitcher at a time on the mound with a ball.
b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
c. Read the shortstop and execute the spin pick upon his "back!" call and movement towards second base.

ROUTINE #6 - BUNT PLAYS - DRAG PUSH SAFETY SQUEEZE

A. Drag
a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
c. Pitcher works in both the wind-up and the stretch.
d. As soon as he reads hitters hands indicating bunt he jumps off the mound to cover third base line.
e. Pitcher aggressively makes play for the ball until called off by the third baseman.
f. RHP backhand technique highly encouraged on pressure bunts and hurries.
g. Use short arm arc on all pressure and hurry bunts.
h. Only bare hand a stopped ball. Use glove and throwing hand on moving ball.

B. Push
a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
c. Pitcher works in both the wind-up and the stretch.
d. As soon as he reads hitters hands indicating bunt he jumps off the mound to cover first base line.
e. Pitcher aggressively makes play for the ball until called off by the first baseman.
f. Running technique on balls that take you to first base.
g. Use short arm arc on all pressure and hurry bunts.
h. Only bare hand a stopped ball. Use glove and throwing hand on moving ball.

C. Safety / Squeeze
a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
c. Pitcher works in both the wind-up and the stretch.
d. As soon as he reads hitters hands indicating bunt he jumps off the mound and reacts to the ball.
e. Pitcher aggressively makes play for the ball until called off by infielder.
f. Pitcher will use shovel toss, underhand flip, backhand flip and overhand toss to catcher.
g. If checked to first, pitcher will use appropriate technique based on where he fields the ball.

h. It is okay to bare hand a squeeze play bunt, even if it's a moving ball and if the play is possible at home plate.

D. Valentine Play
   a. One pitcher at a time on the mound.
   b. Extra pitchers acting as infielders.
   c. Pitcher works in both the wind-up and the stretch.
   d. As soon as he reads hitters hands indicating bunt he jumps off the mound and reacts to the ball.
   e. Pitcher aggressively makes play for the ball until called off by infielder.
   f. Pitcher will use short arm arc and throw the ball at the back of the hitter running up the first base line. Place a hitting dummy at the appropriate spot up the line for target practice.
   g. It is okay to bare hand a squeeze play bunt.
   h. Play is only used if winning run is scoring from third and there is no play at the plate in hopes of getting a batter's interference call resetting the play for another opportunity on defense.

ROUTINE #7 - RUNNING GAME - BASIC PICKS

A. Good Move / Great Move
   a. One pitcher at a time. Pitcher comes to set position.
   b. Good move, quick feet, long arm w/two second hold.
   c. Great move, quick feet, quick arm w/two second hold.
   d. Each pitcher does a set before switching.

B. Hold and Pick / Hold and Pitch
   a. Same as above however hold the ball for four seconds then execute good/great pick.
   b. Follow pick by holding ball for four seconds then pitch.
   c. Each pitcher does a set before switching.

C. Pick From Signs
   a. This play is best utilized with an aggressive runner or a peeker at first base (a runner looking in to catcher's signs).
   b. This pick is best executed with ball in hand, however if ball starts in glove pitcher can execute pick once hands come together in the glove.
   c. Right handed pitcher pick on the way up with front shoulder slightly opened once sign is relayed from catcher to gain better sight and to minimize the time it takes.
   d. Left handed pitcher use step off pick to execute this on the way up.

D. Best Move to First
   a. Right handed pitcher use the front knee flinch balk move with quick feet and quick arm.
   b. Left handed pitcher use the balk move with stride leg at or beyond 45 degree mark.

E. Step Off Move / Pitch Up
   a. Pitcher comes set and holds for a two-four count.
   b. Quick step off without a throw.

c. Follow the step off move with a pitch up after a two-four count. Pitch should be letters to shoulders high.
d. Each pitcher does a set before switching.
e. Designed to read the runners actions and see a flinch at first.

F. Hold to Time Out / Pitch Out
a. Pitcher comes set and holds until the batter or catcher calls timeout.
b. The hold must be identical to a hold and pitch used earlier. Sell it!
c. Other pitchers are encouraged to distract the pitcher and try to get a balk.
d. After the hold to time out is executed follow it up with a pitch out.
e. Each pitcher does a set before switching.
f. Designed to read the runners actions and see a flinch at first.

ROUTINE #8 - RUNNING GAME - SPECIALITY PICKS/PLAYS

A. Inside Move to Second
a. Regardless of stride type to home, pitcher does full leg lift on inside move to allow coaches to read hitters actions or runner's actions.
b. It is okay to pre-set your pivot foot with heel away from rubber in order to facilitate a quicker effort.
c. Clear from the rubber and anticipate a throw to second base if the runner has vacated.
d. Pitcher does not have to throw the baseball on the inside move to second.

B. Spin Move to Second
a. One pitcher at a time.
b. Pitcher works spin move to second base.
c. Use extra pitcher to simulate middle infielder.
d. Practice the following plays:
i. Timed pick with middle infielder with a throw.
ii. Called pick by catcher without a throw. Middle infielder may not be there.
iii. "Back" call pick with middle infielder on a bunt play with runner at second base.

C. Cover Home
a. Extra pitchers in three spots with bucket feed pitcher covering plate on passed ball or wild pitch.
b. Pitcher should verbalize location of pitchers to simulate communication with catcher and indicate which extra pitcher throws to him covering plate.
c. Extra pitchers throw the ball from all angles.
d. Pitcher will catch, tag and release from play.

D. Intentional Walk
a. One pitcher at a time.
b. Each pitcher goes through the process of intentionally walking a batter.
c. Walk both a right handed hitter and a left handed hitter.
d. Switch after walking either a right handed hitter or left handed hitter (four pitch walk then switch).

e. Pitcher must come set for a one count before throwing each pitch.
f. Use extra pitcher or coach to simulate catcher's technique.

ROUTINE #9 - 31 DEFENSES

Note: See 31 Defense for play descriptions.

A. Runner at First - Priority
   a. Late Recognition
   b. Early Recognition
   c. Runner Leaves Early

B. Runner at Third - Priority
   a. Late Recognition
   b. Early Recognition
   c. Runner Leaves Early
   d. LHP Play

ROUTINE #10 - INSIDE GAME

Inside game is executed with the full infield and is a series of groundballs requiring communication and either pitcher fielding the ball or covering bases. The sequence of inside game is as follows:

A. Three-One Cover
   a. Pitcher covers first base on ball hit to right side of diamond.

B. Six Hole.
   a. If third baseman makes the play five-four-three double play.
   b. If shortstop makes the play then six-five force.

C. Four Hole.
   a. If first baseman makes the play then three-six-one double play.
   b. If second baseman makes the play the four-one cover.

D. 1-6-3 Double Play
   a. Come backer to pitcher.

E. 1-4-3 Double Play
   a. Come backer to pitcher.

F. 1-2-3 Double Play
   a. Come backer to pitcher.

G. 2-6-3 Double Play
   a. Bunt in front of plate.

H. 3-6-1 Double Play
   a. Ball hit to first baseman that carries him away from bag.
   b. Shortstop throws to Pitcher covering first base.

I. Jam It
   a. Infield on heavy defensive shift to pull side (Left Handed Hitter).
   b. Ball hit to third base who throws to shortstop for five-six-three double play.

J. Drag
   a. Pitcher / third base communication on drag bunt.

K. Push
   a. Pitcher / first base / second base communication on push bunt.

SECTION VI: OFF-SEASON PROGRAMS

SHOULDER AND ARM CARE

In coordination with the strength coach and the training staff at Washington State University, the baseball program has adopted the off-season shoulder and arm care manual developed by the Pittsburgh Pirates organization. The program allows pitchers to maintain shoulder strength and flexibility during the winter and summer months.

A. Weighted Exercises
   a. Pushup Plus
      i. MWF three sets of 10.
      ii. Start with hands shoulder width apart, head and neck in neutral position.
      iii. Retract scapula and keep shoulders straight.
      iv. Protract scapulas and return to starting position.
      v. Hold each position for three-four seconds.
   b. Seated Press Up
      i. MWF three sets of eight.
      ii. Start with hands just wider than hips, scapula elevated and retracted.
      iii. Elbows remain straight.
      iv. Press up, depressing scapulas while keeping shoulders retracted.
      v. Raise up for a one count and drop down in a two count.
   c. Cuff Weight Exercises
      i. MWF three sets of eight.
      ii. Protraction
         1. Lay on table with chest on table.
         2. Start with shoulder off table and scapula protracted.
         3. Retract scapula while maintaining elbow extension.
      iii. Retraction
         1. Lay on table with back on table.
         2. Start with scapula off table or half foam roll and punch towards ceiling.
         3. Return to retracted position.

B. Stretching

a. Sleeper Stretch
    i. Every day exercise.
    ii. Lay on side on table with throwing arm down on table.
    iii. Hold stretches for 5-7 seconds.
    iv. Repeat 10 times at both 90 degrees and 45 degrees.
b. Horizontal Adduction Stretch
    i. Every day exercise.
    ii. Lay on side on table with throwing arm down on table.
    iii. Position in 90/90 with towel under throwing arm.
    iv. Roll up on arm.
c. Y's
    i. MWF one set of 15.
    ii. Lay on table face down.
    iii. Start in Y position with palms facing down arms straight at table height.
    iv. Retract scapulas and lift arms above table.
    v. Hold with palms down for six seconds and turn thumbs up for six seconds.
d. T's
    i. MWF one set of 15.
    ii. Repeat same exercise as "Y" position but arms are in a "T" position.
e. I's
    i. MWF one set of 15.
    ii. Repeat same exercise as "Y" and "T" but arm are down by side in an "I" position.
    iii. Palms are down.
    iv. Hold for six seconds.
f. Bilateral Prone Row
    i. MWF two sets of 10.
    ii. Lay face down on the table.
    iii. Start with arms in a "T" position hanging off the table.
    iv. With thumbs pointing forward, retract your scapulas and lift elbows to 90 degrees and lift your hands to 90/90.
    v. Hold position for six seconds.
g. Kibler Scapula Exercises
    i. MWF three sets of 10.
    ii. Stand facing a wall.
    iii. Start with hands at chest and retract and depress your scapulas.
    iv. Do a lateral step to your right as you lateral punch at 135 degrees, palm facing down.
    v. Return to starting point and step to your left.
h. Lawn Mower
    i. MWF two sets of 15.
    ii. Squat down and take right arm to opposite knee while maintaining good posture.
    iii. Stand up and raise elbow above shoulder height.
    iv. Repeat on left arm.
i. Four Point Movements
    i. MWF three sets of eight.
    ii. Squat down and take right hand just below right knee.

iii. Stand up while bringing your elbow to shoulder height and retract scapulas.
iv. Forward punch and protract scapula.
v. Bring elbow back and retract scapula.

j. Standing RC Exercises
i. MWF three sets of 10.
ii. Standing, start with arms at sides.
iii. During exercise retract scapula.
iv. Shoulder flexion with thumbs up.
v. Shoulder scaption at 30 degrees with thumbs up.
vi. Shoulder abduction with palms down.
vii. Shoulder abduction with thumbs up.

k. Bent Over Horizontal Abduction
i. MWF two sets of 10.
ii. Bent over with forehead resting on training table.
iii. Bring arms up, palms down while retracting scapula.

l. Side Lying External Rotation
i. MWF one set of 15.
ii. Lay on side on table with throwing arm up.
iii. Place roll or towel under arm.
iv. Finish with thumb up.

m. Shoulder Flexion
i. MWF one set of 15.
ii. Standing with arms at side, use weights if necessary.
iii. Retract scapula and forward flex arm.
iv. Hold for a five count.
v. Repeat for throwing shoulder.
vi. Use a pronation grip.

C. Theratubing Exercises

a. Horizontal Abduction
i. TTH two sets of 10 each.
ii. Start with tubing elevated and then place tubing at shoulder height.
iii. Non-tubing hand touching back of head.
iv. Pull tubing towards side of chest.

b. Internal Rotation/External Rotation with Towel
i. TTH three sets of 10.

c. Scapula Retraction
i. TTH three sets of 10.
ii. Arm stays straight while retracting the scapula

d. Shoulder Protraction
i. TTH three sets of 10.
ii. Arm stays straight while protracting the scapula

e. Shoulder Abduction with External Rotation
i. TTH three sets of 10.

f. Shoulder Extension
i. TTH three sets of 10.

g. D2 Diagonal Extension
    i. TTH three sets of 10.

SUMMER THROWING PROGRAM

The summer throwing program is designed to give pitchers a chance to take a 10-14 day break following their summer season and still be ready for fall baseball upon arriving at school.

- Week One – Arc Catch
- Week Two – Arc Catch
- Week Three – Pull Down Catch
- Week Four – Pull Down Catch
- Week Five – Pen Week One
- Week Six – Pen Week Two
- Week Seven – Live Week (10 Pitches Live)

After week six, the pitcher will progress through live weeks by adding 10 pitches to each week, finishing up their fall season at a maximum of 70 pitches unless a foreign tour is planned.

WINTER THROWING PROGRAM

The winter throwing program is dedicated to preparing the pitchers at Washington State University for the upcoming spring season. The program allows pitchers to build-up their endurance while developing their pitches. It is imperative pitchers follow this program during the winter months and winter break as their will be a high emphasis on preparation once school starts in January, and being able to handle the workload injury free is key to the pitcher progressing through the winter program and subsequent spring season. Pitchers who ignore the necessary preparation will likely see a setback in their preparation for the upcoming season. The following program will begin after a 10-14 day rest period, with the goal of having the pitchers ready for 75 pitches in their first game of the spring:

- Week One – Arc Catch
- Week Two – Arc Catch
- Week Three – Pull Down Catch
- Week Four – Pull Down Catch
- Week Five – Pen Week One
- Week Six – Pen Week Two
- Week Seven – Live Week (10 Pitches Live)
- Week Eight – Live Week (20 Pitches Live)
- Week Nine – Live Week (30 Pitches Live)
- Week Ten – Live Week (40 Pitches Live)
- Week Eleven – Live Week (50 Pitches Live)
- Week Twelve – Live Week (60 Pitches Live)
- Week Thirteen – Live Week (70 Pitches Live)
- Week Fourteen – Live Week (80 Pitches Live)
- Week Fifteen – Game Week (75 Pitches Live)

CHAPTER FOUR
COUGAR CATCHERS

SECTION I: THE BASICS OF A COUGAR CATCHER

PHILOSOPHY

The catcher must be proficient in these five areas:

- Receiving
- Throwing
- Blocking
- Calling the Game
- Leadership

He is the quarterback on the field. He has the responsibility of guiding the pitcher and the defense. He must take pride in his catching and have knowledge of the hitters and how to get them out. His most important quality is his ability to communicate with his pitchers and knowing how to get the best out of them during each performance. He must be a tough, alert leader who projects a positive and confident demeanor. He must be aware of game situations. He must have a quality relationship with all coaches so that he understands how to and enjoys calling his own game. He must understand the importance of being a winner catcher and a gamer!

RECEIVING

"Catch every pitch like there's a man on third base."

- Giving Signs
  - Squat directly behind home plate as close to hitter as possible.
  - Feet are six to eight inches apart, on upper balls of feet, toes pointed at the pitcher.
  - Chest up, with good posture.
  - Glove below left shin guard, allowing SS to see signs.
  - Right arm against side of body, eliminating arm movement.
  - Finger height around the seam of pants.

- Set-Up to Receive Pitch
  - After sign, walk into position, moving both feet at the same time or move one foot at a time as long as it isn't too soon to give away location of pitch.
  - Feet slightly wider than shoulder width.
  - Right foot slightly set back of left foot (instep of left heel) and turned out slightly.
  - Set up with the weight on the balls of your feet, not back on heels or toes (although heels should be touching ground).
  - Chest directly facing pitcher (not turned sideways).
  - Target should be face of the glove with index finger pointed upward, left elbow outside the knee or out in front of it (never on the inside of knee). Set target knee-high to the hitter.
  - Head positioned low and comfortably near the glove.
  - Give good target by pointing your palm to the pitcher; as the pitcher breaks his hands give a slight turn of your glove (away from thumb) so you can handle inside pitch and prevent injury.

- With men on base or two strikes, change your posture by lifting rear end to create athletic position for the purpose of shifting your weight and blocking.
- Catcher should be concentrating on receiving each pitch cleanly, presenting all strikes confidently to the umpire.

- Catching Pitches
  - Glove positioned with index finger up.
  - Glove comfortably out front with bent arm (like you are holding onto the steering wheel of a car).
  - Always let ball come to you (don't stab at pitch).
  - Focus on arm slot and ball out of pitchers hand (anticipate).
  - Sway to the ball with your hips to keep yourself behind the ball, rotate your knees. This enables you to center the ball and helps with throwing.
  - Should receive all strikes with palm down (fingers up) with exception of pitches down and in to forehand.
  - Try to catch the outside of the ball. Don't yank pitches that are way out of strike zone back into the zone. You lose credibility with the umpire.
  - The closer to the hitter, the better "chance" of catching foul tips.
  - Bare hand is relaxed with your thumb tucked under your four fingers in a relaxed fist. Hand as close to glove as possible.

THROWING

- Grip
  - Always grip the ball across four seams.
  - Needs to be practiced during long toss program so it becomes automatic.

- Mechanics
  - Catch the ball with two hands.
  - Throwing hand should be positioned to enter the glove as soon as possible after receiving the pitch.
  - Break hands across the chest.
  - Use quick feet to get you to load position - weight on the backside.
  - Take your right heel to rubber.
  - Close your front shoulder.
  - Get throwing arm up to apex as quickly as possible.
  - Always take a direct line approach from your position behind home plate to second base.
  - Release the ball with weight shift and overhand, short arm motion - make sure you get extension.
  - Fingers should be on top the ball at release.
  - Must use the back leg to drive and finish the throw - short stride is better.
  - Try to throw the ball waist high to all bases - think about throwing the ball through the base and not to the base. A low throw is better than a high one.

- Snap Throw to First

  - Pivot on right foot to unload to first.
  - With left-handed hitters, position yourself before the pitch.

- Snap throw to Third
  - Depending on the pitch, outside clearance of right-handed hitters with jab step forward and unload with proper throwing mechanics.
  - Ball inside to right handed hitters, inside clearance with drop step, load with right foot.

- Common Technique Faults of Catchers
  - Doesn't pivot the back foot open, which allows for proper trunk rotation and keeps the front side closed.
  - During the cocking phase, doesn't transfer the body weight back onto the back leg. Weight should move back to load up before moving forward.
  - Doesn't take hands and break across the chest, which gives throwing arm full extension.

BLOCKING

- Controlling Balls in the Dirt
  - Ball in the dirt, don't try to catch it. .."BLOCK IT"
  - Method for ball down the middle: gain ground by going to glove when going to knees - weight lands on inside of kneecaps of shin guards.
  - Put bare hand behind glove, plugging up gap between legs.
  - Bare hand is cupped with thumb tucked under four fingers behind glove - this protects bare hand and helps square your right shoulder.
  - Tuck chin to chest - this protects throat along with helping see the ball all the way in.
  - Keep upper part of your body relaxed - this softens the blow and keeps ball from bouncing too far away.
  - Shoulders are rounder and body over the ball.
  - Elbows tucked at your side.
  - Knees spread wide, not together.

- Shifting
  - Shift weight from hips to move laterally and forward to center the ball on body.
  - With a right-handed pitcher, move right foot slightly forward so you have an easier angle forward to ball.
  - With a left-handed pitcher keep right foot slightly behind instep of left foot to give better angle to ball.
  - Remember with balls to either side use legs to drive body to ball.
  - Pick up the pitch out of the pitcher's hand to judge the velocity and movement - anticipate.

SECTION II: THE MAKE-UP OF A COUGAR CATCHER

CALLING A GAME

- Get ahead. The best pitch of the game is strike one. Call the pitch that the pitcher is throwing most consistently that day.
- Know your pitcher. What is his best pitch that day? Rate all his pitches.
- On 2-2 counts, call the pitcher's best pitch. That is what is meant by if you throw it 2-2, then throw it 3-2.
- Runner on first with a left-handed hitter at the plate, be careful with the change-up or slow curve when first baseman is holding the runner - a good call might be fastball away.
- Follow a curve with a slider but not a slider with a curve.
- Don't try to set up a poor hitter - stay basic. Save your strategy for good hitters.
- We cannot be afraid of contact - groundballs and flyballs are outs too.
- Just because a hitter is a first pitch fastball hitter doesn't mean you can't throw him a fastball. In fact, he will swing at fastball anywhere around the zone.
- A lot of catchers tend to call pitches they can't hit. They call too many breaking balls too early and too often. This often gets the pitcher behind in the count and forces him to throw fastballs.
- Do not be tentative in calling a game. Don't be afraid of being second guessed - think two or three pitches ahead. Don't fear failure.
- There is not perfect pitch - it has never been called or thrown.
- The pitcher has the last say as to what he wants to throw. The catcher makes suggestions. If you feel strongly about a pitch, call time and go talk to the pitcher. Ultimately the pitcher makes the final decision.
- Work at gaining a pitcher's respect with your pitch selection.
- Concentrate on the first hitter of the inning.
- Know how to:
    - Change eye levels.
    - Expand the strike zone.
    - Change speeds.
    - Use the scoreboard.
- Know these situations:
    - You must know:
        - The score of the game.
        - The on-deck hitter.
        - The guy you don't want to beat you.
        - The strength of your pitcher at that time.
        - Not to let the pitcher get beat with his third or fourth best pitch.
    - When you have a right-handed hitter and a runner on first base, try to keep the ball on the inside part of the plate so that the hitter doesn't have a chance to stretch or extend his arms. You can also call for a slider if you think the runner is stealing. Do not call all fastballs. Use all pitches.
    - Runner at second base, no outs and a RH hitter at the plate. Make the hitter pull the ball,

because he will be attempting to go the other way. Use good pitches: fastball inside, curveball, slider or changeup.

- Runner at second base, no outs and a LH hitter at the plate. Make the hitter go to the opposite field. He will be attempting to pull the ball to the right side. A good pitch would be a fastball away.
- Do not call change-up or soft stuff away and fastball away. The hitter is already tracking the ball away. You can mix a fastball inside then you can throw an outside fastball or slider.

MENTAL ASPECTS OF CATCHING

LEADERSHIP

The catcher runs the game by way of pitch selection, defensive signs and general game situations. The catcher must carry himself with confidence and maintain a strong, supportive relationship with the pitching staff.

GAME TEMPO

Game tempo is a very important part of the catcher's job. In general, we want the game to move rapidly. The catcher, through his energetic actions and pitch selection assertiveness, can keep the game moving. This is especially important when we have a lead. We can maintain momentum by keeping the game tempo at a rapid pace. Be smart!

At certain times the game situation may require a slower pace. For example, in the late innings when the opponents are rallying, a slower tempo may help change the momentum. We may also need time to get a relief pitcher ready.

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

The catcher can set the tone for the club in this regard. The ability and willingness to play the most physically demanding position with physical ailments, bumps and bruises will exemplify the toughness that the club as a whole should display. The role of the catcher in this regard can never be over-emphasized.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PITCHING STAFF

The exceptional receiver will know the strengths and weaknesses of each member of the pitching staff. There are several important considerations:

- Have a quality bullpen routine.
- Know the pitcher's best pitch.
- Know the type of command each pitcher has on each one of his pitches. Can he locate his FB in and out?
- Understand the emotional tendencies of each pitcher. Some pitchers need constant encouragement, while others need to be challenged.
- Keep the game tempo adjusted to the needs of each pitcher.
- Meet the pitcher after each inning to evaluate the past inning and get prepared for the next inning. Work closely with pitching coach on all of these matters!
- Give quality feedback in pitcher-catcher meetings.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Remind the pitcher of:
  - Bunts - where to throw.
  - Starting a double play - who's covering.
  - Ball hit to his left side - cover first base.
  - Backing up third and home on base hits.
  - The score and the importance of getting an out.
- Remind the third baseman of:
  - Speed of runner.
  - Bunts.
  - Cut-off man on single to left-field.
  - Helping him on pop-ups.
  - Giving inside target for third baseman when man is scoring.

- Remind the first baseman of:
  - Speed of runner.
  - Bunts.
  - Cut-off man on single to center and right field!
  - Helping him on pop-ups.
  - Importance of winning and tying runs.

SIGNS

- Go over signs before the game with the pitcher.
- Use a series of signs with runners on base - have a system that allows you to step out in front of the plate to relay hot signs to pitcher and infielders.
- Give signs for first and third situations.
- Give signs for bunt defenses.
- Give the number of outs to the infield and outfield.
- Indicate who the hot runner is with runners at first and second.
- Establish a night sign system and use accordingly.

ESTABLISH A POSITIVE RAPPORT WITH THE UMPIRE

Umpires enjoy working behind catchers who permit them to get a good look at the pitches. Remember, actions speaks louder than words. All umpires will miss some, but do your best to make their job easier and never indicate that you are upset with their strike zone judgment. We need the borderline pitches and can get them by properly receiving of pitches and realizing that umpires make mistakes just like we do. It is not your job to argue calls, but to help your pitcher get the borderline strikes.

COMMUNICATION

- Let your teammates know how many outs there are.
- Be vocal during the game - take charge.
- Check the dugout for the manager's signs - for example: pitch-outs, first and third, bunt defenses.
- Bases loaded, less than two outs: let the pitcher know that he is coming home on a ground ball

back to him.

- Line up the cut-off man to home plate on throw from the outfield.
- Communicate with cut-off man.
- Call One, Two, Three or Four. This means automatic cut and throw to that base.
- Cut means hold, check situation.
- Say nothing if you want the ball to go through.
- Know the importance of the run.
- Be aware of trying to keep the double play in order.

SECTION III: THE DEFENSE OF A COUGAR CATCHER

DEFENSIVE PLAYS

- Passed Ball / Wild Pitch
    - When ball gets by you, locate the ball and remove your mask in the opposite direction.
    - Sprint to the ball and point left shoulder toward the plate.
    - Break momentum by using bent leg slide and popping up to correct base.
    - Round off ball before sliding. This will set your angle.
    - Throws should be made from a short percentage position using only elbow and wrist action to deliver the ball.
    - The throw should be firm, yet easy for the pitcher to handle.
    - When unable to locate ball, look and listen to the pitcher.

- Plays at Home Plate
    - Tag Plays
        - Line up cut-off man as soon as possible on balls from the outfield.
        - When catching a throw from the outfielder, it's faster if you let the ball come to you. This depends on the accuracy of the throw.
        - The heel of your left foot should be at the center of the front portion of the plate. (This encourages the baserunner to slide by showing him the back portion of the plate).
        - Tag runner with the back of the glove and have the ball in the bare hand whenever possible.
        - To avoid injury, it is very important for the catcher to learn the proper positioning of the left foot and leg when taking away home plate. The toes should be pointed in the direction of the incoming base runner. This will help the catcher utilize his shin guard for protection. The flexion of the catcher's knee and ankle will protect him from the slide, as well as stop the base runner.
        - The bang-bang play - remember to get lower than the runner. Don't fight the collision - give with it. Don't worry about making a tag, just hold on to the ball and show it to the umpire for the out call.
        - Anticipate the low trajectory of the hop and adjust upward. Avoid a short hop whenever possible.

        - Remember to check the trail runner after making the out.
        - Keep mask on when possible.

    - Force Plays
        - Handle the throw cleanly and get an out at home plate first.
        - Chest up to where the throw is coming from.
        - Bent knees.
        - Both hands out front (palm to palm).
        - Keep both feet behind and straddling the plate.
        - Catch the ball while sliding your right foot across the plate and clear yourself to the middle of the diamond.

- Fielding Bunts
    - Get your head over the ball
    - Using both hands, push the ball into glove for a firm grip.
    - Stay down when you throw. It is easier to stay there and throw than to straighten up and throw.
    - Be aggressive to the ball - the play is in front of you.
    - Ball down first base line yell "inside" to the first baseman and drop step to get to the inside of the diamond to clear the runner.
    - Ball in front of you round off the bunt - this will get your body and shoulders into the correct throwing position.
    - Ball down the third base line, take your right foot past the ball - you will have your back to first base. Put your weight on your right foot and take your left shoulder toward first base.
    - Always be aggressive with your call as to what base to throw to. The only mistake you can make is to be indecisive.

- Pop-Ups
    - Pop- Ups on the diamond which the catcher can catch under no duress can be called for by the catcher. If the third or first baseman calls the catcher off, they are entitled to make the catch.
    - See the ball off the bat - try to get a read on direction.
    - Remove and hold mask, and turn your back to the field.
    - Don't rush - find the ball. When the ball has reached its peak, begin to make the approach and discard the mask in the opposite direction.
    - Run on the balls of your feet.
    - Remember the ball will always spin back toward the field on the way down - play the ball in front of you.
    - Catch the ball with two hands above your head.
    - When catching the ball, have knees bent, relaxed hands and body. Give with the ball.
    - Ball directly on the plate is most difficult - run out in front of the plate to get a better angle. Always keep distance between you and the ball.
    - Always be aggressive until called off by the first or third baseman.
    - If you can't locate the ball, remember that most foul balls off a right-handed

hitter's bat go the right or straight back. A left-handed hitter's foul ball will go left or straight back.
    - After the catch is made check all runners.

- Backing Up Bases
    - Never leave home plate when a runner is on second base.
    - Runner on first and ground ball to the infield: be moving to back up first base. Get as deep as possible (less than two outs).
    - Nobody on base: on any ground ball be moving to back up first base in case of an overthrow.
    - Base hit to right field: be moving towards first for a possible throw behind the runner (when first baseman has vacated position, first baseman diving to his right on a ground ball, pop fly down right field line, etc.)..
    - Be aware of covering third base on bunting situation with runner on first base - communicate with pitcher during play to let them know you have third base covered and they should go to home plate.

- Pitch-Outs
    - Give signal.
    - Move your body out over the outside comer of the plate.
    - Weight should be on your foot nearest to the batter.
    - Right-handed hitter: step out with your right foot toward the pitcher's mound, staying low with knees bent and receive the ball with your momentum going towards second base (keeping left shoulder closed).
    - Left-handed hitter: step out with your left foot towards the pitcher's mound, staying low, knees bent; take your right foot and step towards second base with your left foot and close your left shoulder.

- Intentional Walk
    - Stand up to the opposite side of the plate of the batter with arm extended.
    - Move out as the pitcher releases the ball.
    - Keep your knees bent. Don't assume you will get a perfect pitch. Be ready.

- Rundowns
    - Run hard at runner making him commit himself back to third.
    - Do not use fake arm motion.
    - Use one throw to get runner.
    - You make decision when to throw ball for tag.
    - Make sure after throwing the ball you veer away from path of runner.
    - On a rundown between first and second base with no other runners, your job is to get to first base and be the next guy in line, removing the pitcher from the rundown if possible.

BULLPEN ROUTINE

- Catch the last part of the pitcher's pre-game warm-up.
- Understand what the pitching coach wants to accomplish with each bullpen.
- This is a good time to work on your "area of improvement" - receiving, footwork in throwing, etc.
- Take pride in the importance of getting the pitcher prepared to go into game - reliever or starter.
- Establish his own bullpen routine.

STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

- Strong legs are a must for major league catchers.
- Flexibility is just as important - work on flexibility daily.
- No matter how strong a catcher is without flexibility he is lost.
- Be motivated to the WSU strength and conditioning program.
- Take pride in your work habits - this is where leadership is established.

CATCHER DRILLS

Rotate drills on a daily basis. Communication must be emphasized during all defensive and team drill periods.

DAY ONE - BASIC STANCE AND SETUP

- No one on base - long toss
- Man on base - long toss
- Receiving the ball - both stances
- Intro to footwork

DAY TWO - FOOTWORK DRILLS

- No ball.
- Ball in glove - long toss.
- Ball on ground - long toss.
- Close soft toss - no throw.
- 40' toss - no throw.
- Throwing.

DAY THREE - FIELDING BUNTS LONG TOSS

- Pop ups
- Throwing

DAY FOUR - INTRO TO DIRT BALLS

- Range finders
- Pop ups
- Long toss

DAY FIVE - BLOCKING

DAY SIX - RECEIVING THE BALL

- Pop ups
- Hands drills
- Long toss

DAY SEVEN - FOOTWORK DRILLS

- Throws to second base
- Throws to third base
- Throws to first base

DAY EIGHT - TAG PLAYS

ADDITIONAL RECEIVING DRILLS

- Soft Hands Drill
  - Throw tennis ball from 30' to emphasize soft hands while receiving the ball.
  - You can also use a wall if one is available.
  - Incorporate the sway/shift at a later date.

- Reaction Drill
  - Use a machine to throw from a short distance to improve quickness of the receiving action.
  - Also can be used for a specific pitch.
  - Use machine to teach sway and center technique by throwing balls to the edges of the strike zone.

ADDITIONAL BLOCKING DRILLS

- Reaction Drill
  - Visual - up, down, left, right.
  - Touch - stand behind catcher, touch direction you want him to go.
  - Verbal - verbal commands.

- Tennis Ball Drill
  - Use tennis balls or soft baseball.
  - Teach entry level blocking drills.

- Full Blocking Drill
  - Use machine or thrown balls to block.
  - Add block and retrieve action.

- Eight Ball Drill
  - Four balls in back row approximately three to four feet apart.
  - Four balls in front row.
  - Blocker, on his own, goes down to his right on back row then his left on front row.

- Shadow Drill
  - Two catchers face each other.

  - One is the leader and does his blocking technique.
  - The other catcher reacts and shadows the first catcher.

ADDITIONAL THROWING DRILLS

- Footwork Drill
  - Dry footwork series
  - Three sets

- Hand to Glove Exchange
  - Work on quick exchange while finding seams

- Short Throwing Drill
  - Throw to under-distanced bases to emphasize footwork, exchange and quickness while reducing the workload on the throwing arm.

- Full Throwing Drill
  - Simulate game situations by throwing to each base.
  - Use a machine or thrown balls.
  - Full gear and have hitter swing through pitches that are strikes.

- Long Toss Drill
  - Stretch arm out at least twice a week to max distance.
  - Throw to second base simulating the acceleration used to throw to max distance during long toss.

- One Knee Drill
  - Right knee down.
  - Emphasize fingers, wrist and forearm.
  - Rotate shoulders to get extension.

ADDITIONAL TAG PLAY DRILLS

- Balls thrown from a short distance to teach proper body angles and tagging technique.
- Blocking the plate can be worked on by hitting fungos from dirt area of the infield to simulate throws from the outfield.

ADDITIONAL POP-UP DRILLS

- Use machine to simulate pop-ups.
- Have each catcher handling four consecutive balls at three-second intervals.
- Fungos can also be used.
- Can be done at home plate or in the outfield.

ADDITIONAL FORCE PLAY DRILLS

- Ball tossed from various angles to teach double play and force play footwork.

ADDITIONAL BUNT PLAY DRILLS

- From a position directly behind the catcher, balls can be rolled in all areas of fair territory for the catcher to react, field and throw the ball.
- A series of balls lined up on the grass, each ball ten feet apart.
    - Catcher fields the ball with two hands first.
    - Then practice do or die plays.
    - Have other catchers stand at other bases.

ADDITIONAL PASSED BALL/WILD PITCH DRILLS

- Drill done with pitchers.
- Catcher in full gear at the plate.
- Pitcher simulates throw and coach tosses ball behind catcher.
- Pitcher lets catcher know of location of the ball.
- The catcher retrieves the ball and throws to the pitcher covering home plate.

ADDITIONAL PITCH OUT DRILLS

- Ball tossed by coach to teach footwork.
- Can do with pitchers - typically during a bullpen session.

ADDITIONAL INTENTIONAL WALK DRILLS

- Done with pitchers in the bullpen as part of the pitcher's defensive work.
- A hitter should be used when possible.

SECTION IV: THE CRITERIA OF A COUGAR CATCHER

YEARLY PROGRESS OF CATCHERS

YEAR ONE

- Introduction to proper throwing mechanics (grip, load, quick feet, etc.).
- Introduction to proper catching techniques (receiving, framing, etc.).
- Exposure to calling a game (pitch selection, game situations, etc.).
- Introduction to blocking (anticipate, quick hips, etc.).
- Introduction to warm-up routine (starter, reliever, between innings).
- Bullpen routine (taking charge of it, having equipment ready, etc).
- Awareness of tempo.
- Know how to catch pop-ups.
- Very basic understanding of relationship with umpire.
- Separation of at-bats and catching game (don't take AB's behind plate).
- Exposure to game awareness.
- Understanding the importance of being a winning catcher.
- Develop good work habits and routines.
- Respect for work schedules (being on time)

- Introduction to pitcher/catcher meetings (being able to give feedback).
- Learn mechanics of the pitch out.
- Introduction to plays at the plate.
- Value of long toss program.
- Awareness of mental toughness and no excuses attitude.
- Start basic communication with pitching coach.
- Introduction to conditioning and weight training programs.
- Exposure to pitcher/catcher relationship.
- Awareness of hitters' swing, stance, etc.
- Communication of cut-offs and relays.
- Teach mechanics of fielding bunts and turning double plays.
- Introduction to intentional walks, backing up bases, wild pitch or pass ball to screen, covering 3B on a bunt, throwing to corners, etc.

YEAR TWO

- Start refining throwing mechanics (consistency, release times, throwing to corners).
- Start refining catching techniques.
- Proper set-up (stance, stay back, catch outside of ball, target, signs, splitting the plate). Have an understanding of the importance of being consistent with all of these.
- Develop the ability to call a quality game.
- Refine blocking skills.
- Understanding the importance of a warm-up routine.
- Demonstrate importance of tempo.
- Know how to work the umpires.
- Work to get the most out of each pitcher (best pitch, when to go out to mound, 2 and 4 seam FB, etc.).
- Demonstrate game awareness.
- More advanced understanding of being a winning catcher (learn how to compete on an everyday basis).
- Understand the kind of approach needed to keep self game-ready over a long season.
- Learn how to take charge of a game (must be able to receive, throw, block and call a game for this to be a reality).
- Re-enforce importance of work habits and routines (should do drills everyday).
- Refine pitcher/catcher meeting (give quality feedback on both pre and post-game discussions).
- Understand importance of and refine mechanics of plays at the plate.
- Long toss program -implement on a consistent basis.
- Understanding mental toughness and no excuses attitude.
- Learn value of communication with pitching coach.
- Should become self-motivated toward conditioning and weight training.
- Understand and know the importance of pitcher/catcher relationship.
- Know how to evaluate hitters' swing, stance, prior at-bats, etc.
- Improve ability to make calls on cut-offs and relays.

- Refine mechanics of fielding bunts and turning the double play.
- Know how to help control running game.

YEAR THREE

- Mechanics of throwing should be solid with consistency, a quick release and the ability to throw to corners.
- Receiving should be consistent, with no dropped balls.
- Becoming a good self-evaluator.
- Know how to move around the plate with the FB; importance of pitching inside as well as changing eye level.
- Should be able to control tempo.
- Complete understanding of relationship with umpires.
- Should have complete understanding and be able to take charge of warm-up routine.
- More intricate understanding of his pitching staff.
- Pride in being a winning catcher.
- Understanding what needs to be done on a daily basis to keep self game-ready over a season.
- By this time he should be proficient in receiving, throwing, blocking and calling a game so he can take charge.
- Continue to refine work habits and knowledge of drills needed on a daily basis to remain effective as a quality catcher.
- Should be able to give quality feedback in pitcher/catcher meetings.
- Should continue long toss program.
- Should have quality relationship with pitching coach.
- Should be completely self-motivated with conditioning and weight training.
- Strong understanding of relationship between pitcher and catcher.
- Understanding pitching in game situations: running counts, moving runners and what his responsibilities are.
- Learn finer points of hitter evaluation.
- Know how to work inner and outer half of plate and how to use 2 and 4 seam FB.
- Take pride in his job.

YEAR FOUR

- Take pride in his throwing, receiving, and blocking.
- Good self-evaluator.
- Understands and enjoys calling his own game.
- Takes pride in having good work habits.
- Understands different types of set-up strategies and knows how to use them:
  - Changing speeds
  - Changing eye levels
  - Moving the plate
  - Chase problem areas of different hitters
  - Using hitter's reactions against him
- Projects positive and confident demeanor.

- Receptive to advice and accepts criticism.
- Continues long toss program.
- Understands how to maintain conditioning and strength.
- Knows how to help pitcher get the most out of his warm-up routine and side work.
- Has quality relationship with pitching coach.
- Knows how to use charts and advance information.
- Understands each pitcher's strengths and weaknesses and how to use each to his advantage.
- He must understand that he is the leader because it comes with the territory.

FUNDAMENTAL CRITERIA FOR CATCHING

RECEIVING

- Hands
- Stance
- Balance

THROWING

- Arm
- Feet
- Body position
- Balance
- Exchange

BLOCKING

- Feet
- Body Angle
- Anticipation

CONTROLLING THE GAME

- Pitch selection
- Working with the pitcher
- Communication

LEADERSHIP

- Body language
- Taking charge

BULLPEN

- Helping the pitcher
- Attitude
- Routine

DEFENSIVE PLAYS

- Pop-ups

- Backing up bases
- Plays around plate

CHAPTER FIVE
COUGAR INFIELDERS

SECTION I: THE BASICS OF A COUGAR INFIELDER

PHILOSOPHY

Our goal as coaches is to develop winning Division One baseball players. We must instill the importance of defense to a winning program. "Hitting wins games, but pitching and defense wins championships." A Pac-12 infielder must be fundamentally sound as well as mentally tough and confident in his own ability. If we are well prepared for the task at hand, we play with more confidence and are more relaxed. The following guidelines will help develop and prepare our infielders. Remember, the players are individuals, so be patient and try to find what works for each player.

IMPORTANCE OF DEFENSE

- 90% of games are finished and won with the defense making the last out on the field.
- The pitcher is an essential part of a team's defense.
- Team defense helps make each individual player better.
- Never let the pitcher struggle to do something. The defender should take charge and change the game momentum.
- Defend to help minimize damage – take the sure outs.
- Minimize damage with man on first base and two outs – no doubles, so play the line!
- Great plays are not supposed to be made all the time, that is what makes them great.
- A great defensive player turns outs into outs.
- A defender must focus on every pitch for a full 27 outs.
- 200 pitches during the course of the game equals roughly 10 minutes of total defensive concentration and focus time.

- Before the Pitch
  - Know where and what to do before the pitch is thrown.
  - Have some forward movement.
  - Anticipate where the ball will be hit.
  - Expect the ball to be hit to you every time.

- When the Ball is Hit
  - Read the hop.
  - Work through the ball.
  - Replace the feet for balance.
  - Throw strong overhead four-seam throws.

- When the Game Speeds Up
  - Stay within yourself.
  - Concentrate on one out at a time.
  - Catch the ball first then go to the next step.

- Pride
  - Do your job with pride.
  - On defense, don't ever think about your offense.
  - A defender should know that he can help the team win with his glove.

- Attitude
  - Field the ball with courage.
  - Throw the ball with courage.

WORK ROUTINE

Each player has a hitting routine to help him prepare for each game. Similarly, every infielder should develop a fielding routine to prepare for each game (i.e. backhands, count the hops, reads off the bat, etc.).

- Ground Balls
  - Quality over quantity.
  - 10 ground balls at you and to your left – develop good angles.
  - 10 ground balls to your backhand – must be as confident with backhand as you are with routine ground ball.
  - 10 reads off the batting practice hitter – helps anticipate and develops better jumps.
  - You can also have infielders throw to a bag when going through these work routines – amounts of ground balls will vary according to each player.
  - Each player should know what he needs to get ready for the game.
  - Double play depth
    - 10 ground balls to the left side.
    - 10 ground balls to the right side.
    - First basemen can take ground balls on or off the bag.

- Pre-Game Early Work
  - 20 – 6-4-3
  - 20 – 6-3 backhand
  - 15 – 5-4-3
  - 20 – 5-3
  - 20 – 4-6
  - 15 – 4-3 backhand
  - 20 – 3-6 played back
  - 20 – 3-6 played at bag

- Pre-Game Batting Practice
  - No early work – on the road.
  - 10 – 6-4-3
  - 10 – 5-4-3
  - 10 – 6-3
  - 10 – 5-3

- 10 – 3-6
- Balls played off the bat – get to as many as possible.
- React to the ball no matter where it is hit.

- Infield Depths
  - Depths vary according to player's ability, arm strength, speed of runner, and playing surfaces.

  - Shortstop and Second Basemen
    - Back – normal position usually at the edge of the outfield grass.
    - Double play – approximately in the middle of normal depth and in.
    - Infield in, no outs – play further back according to the speed of the runner at third base; force the runner to see the ground ball through the infield yet still be able to make a play at home if he goes on contact.
    - In – edge of infield grass; must be in position to throw the runner out at home.

  - First and Third Basemen
    - Back – off the line and behind the bag.
    - Double play – normal position.
    - Infield in, no outs – play further back according to the speed of the runner at third base; force the runner to see the ground ball through the infield yet still be able to make a play at home if he goes on contact.
    - In – even or in front of the bag depending on the speed of the runner.
    - No doubles – guarding the line, behind the bag; ball can't get down the line.

- Starting Position
  - Some sort of movement is essential for every infielder prior to every pitch.
  - It will vary from infielder to infielder.
  - Comfortable, relaxed and balanced.
  - In order to maximize first step quickness, player must find an approach that gets him to the balls of his feet and not back on his heels or flat footed.
  - Infielders should be in position to decleat when pitch enters the hitting zone.
  - Split step
    - Similar to the position of a tennis player as they are about to return serve.
    - Time the pitcher as he delivers the ball home and step forward with the right foot.
    - Now bring the left foot forward with a slight hop.
    - Weight should be on balls of feet, knees bent, in good athletic position.
    - Make sure your weight is distributed and you are not too far forward on your toes.
    - Both feet should just be hitting the ground as the ball enters the hitting zone.
    - Do not be off the ground when ball is hit.
  - Walk-in
    - Time the pitch and take a comfortable step with right foot – left foot for lefthanders.
    - Now bring other leg forward, ending up in a balanced and ready position.
    - Make sure you're not late on the pitch, and you're not moving forward as the ball

enters the hitting zone.
    - Simple Sway
        - Take a nice comfortable position – weight on balls of feet, balanced, knees bent, ready to react.
        - As the ball approaches the hitting zone, a slight swaying action readies the body to react.
    - Vision
        - When the pitcher is releasing the ball the infielders eyes should shift to the hitting area go get the best read of the ball off the bat.
- Preparation
    - Set-up (discussed above).
    - Concentrate on every pitch.
    - Don't take any ground balls for granted, maintain concentration throughout the whole play.
    - Keep your hands and body relaxed, with your mind alert and aggressive.
    - Keeping hands and body relaxed will:
        - Allow hands to be softer.
        - Allow hand to react more quickly.
    - React aggressively but under control on the first step to the ball.
    - Use crossover step when lateral movement is necessary.
    - Have body under control on the last step to the ball.
    - When possible, play the ball out in front of you.
    - Don't be hesitant to backhand the ball when it is necessary.
    - Learn how to create angles on the ball, depending on the speed of the ball – this will increase your range.

FIELDING THE GROUND BALL

APPROACHING THE GROUND BALL

When fielders get beat by ground balls it usually happens at the end or the last hop. This is usually because of improper fielding technique and improper approach to the ball. A proper fielding technique will slow the ball down or, in other words, let you feel like you have a lot of time. This will allow the fielder to get a good read on the ball and put his body in proper position to field so that if the ball does do something at the end when it gets to him, he will still be able to field it.

- Once the ball is hit, establish your angle on the ball – this depends on the speed of the ball.
- Establishing proper angle will:
- Be under control on last step to the ball by breaking down with bent knees and ankles with your butt down.
- Hands should be out in front of the body.
- You can't catch what you can't see – keep your eyes and head on the ball.
- See the ball into the glove.
- Have relaxed hands – do not jab or stab at the ball.
- Have your glove down to work up when fielding the ball – glove below the level of the ball. This will allow you to have glove in position if ball stays down and if ball takes a bad hop at the end you will be

in position to react quickly up to field the ball.

- While fielding you are much quicker reacting from a down to up position.
- Work to have everything in one fluid motion as you are working through the ball.
- As your fielding the ball work the glove and ball to your throwing hand side.

THROWING

- Set your feet.
- Close your front shoulder and lock your head on the target.
- Get your arm up in a good L position to stay on top of the baseball.
- Use your legs with a slight flex in your knees.
- When possible, grip the ball with 4 seams to create better carry on the throw.
- To create accuracy, always throw to a spot or a target when practicing.
- Player should never watch the flight of the ball – instead he should watch the target all the way.
- All plays cannot be made with a throw over the top – work on different arm angles on specific ground balls.
- Don't rush yourself – be under control.

INFIELD BASICS

- Know situation, inning and score.
- Make sure to know the number of outs.
- Know where you are going with the ball if it's hit to you.
- Determining the speed of the ground ball and knowing the speed of both the hitter and base runner will determine where you will throw the ball.
- Have an idea on how to play each hitter.
- Know the catcher's signs, and which is the hot sign with a runner at second base.
- Go back on all pop flies aggressively until an outfielder calls you off.
- Be aggressive on all foul balls and pop flies in the home plate area.
- Don't hide the ball on double play feeds.
- Know the range of all infielders playing next to you.
- Use pop fly priority system.
- Know the arm strength of all your outfielders.
- Know the speed of your hitter (blue, green, yellow, gray).
- Should you boot the ball, stay with it and use your bare hand.
- Know the signs and all your responsibilities on pick-offs, bunt plays, double steals, rundowns, cut-offs, and relays.
- Communicate - know the wind, sun, playing surface.
- Play aggressively without fear of failure.
- Always think two on double plays.
- Be aggressive on ground balls - don't wait back.
- Play the hop, not the ground ball.
- Always anticipate every ground ball being hit to you.

POSITIONING

A huge part of the game of baseball is proper positioning for each situation. There are many variables that will dictate the position of the infielders during the game:

- Situation
- Inning
- Score
- Outs
- Hitter
- Pitcher on the Mound
- Runner

As the various infield positions are discussed, various situations will be mentioned that could dictate the position each infielder may take.

SECTION II: SPECIFIC POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

FIRST BASEMAN

- Footwork
  - Get to the bag with your knees bent facing the infielder making the throw.
  - Right-handed first baseman touches the bag with right foot and stretches out with the left.
  - See the flight of the ball then stretch towards it.
  - Depending on where the ball is thrown you can slide left or right on the base with your foot.
  - Ball thrown to the right, go to the far right of the bag and cross over stretch.
  - To the left you may need to come off the bag and tag the runner with a sweep tag.
  - Ball in dirt stretch as far as possible and try to get the short hop.
  - Stay on the base and pick every ball unless situations dictate you come off the base and block the ball to keep it in front of you.
  - On high throws you may use the bag to catch the ball then step off into fair territory.

- Groundball to First Base
  - First baseman should take all ground balls himself when possible, waving pitcher off.
  - If unable to beat the runner to the bag, flip the ball to the pitcher covering first base.
  - Flip the ball underhand and throw it like you are throwing a glass of milk.
  - Stay low, show ball, and follow flip with your feet.
  - Try to give the ball to the pitcher before he hits the base - this will make it easier for him.
  - Ball hit to his right should be thrown overhand chest high, leading the pitcher a little bit.

- Holding Runners On
  - Right foot on inside of base.
  - Left foot inside foul line.
  - Knees bent with glove presenting a good target.
  - Take throw and make good hard tag.
  - If pitcher goes home, take first step off base with right foot then shuffle - this will square you up with the hitter. Stay low focusing on the hitting zone to get a good read of ball off bat.

  - Play behind a runner who doesn't run well and go back on the pitch.
  - Play back if the runner is inconsequential - don't care if he steals.

- 3-6 Double Play
  - Holding runner on and ball hit at him or to his right - throw is made on the inside of second base.
  - Get to the bag to take the return throw.
  - Communicate with the pitcher that you have the bag "I'VE GOT BAG!"
  - Ball to his left step on the base and throw to second base yelling "TAG!"
  - When playing behind the runner - throw is made to the outside of second base.

- Bunts
  - Runner on First Base
    - Take three or four steps in and read the bunt.
    - If bunted hard call off the pitcher and field the bunt.
    - Be aggressive in fielding bunts - you have priority over the pitcher at all times.
  - Runner on Second Base
    - Charge in a few steps further off the line.
    - Come under control when bunt is made.
    - Your responsibility is first base line to the mound when playing "out".
    - Your responsibility is any bunted ball when playing "lead out".
    - Work from the line towards the mound to gain momentum when in "lead out".

- Relays
  - With runner at first base and any ball hit for extra bases down right field line, trail the second baseman 10-20 yards for relay throw.
  - Line up off right shoulder of second baseman in fair territory.

- Cut-Offs
  - The first baseman is the cut-off man on throws from the left center gap to right field.
  - With runners at first base and a ball hit in the gaps or down the left field line and a sure double, the first baseman should act as the last line of defense on the relay throw to the plate allowing himself to be in position between the mound and home plate, and in line with the throw, to redirect the baseball to third base if there is no play at the plate and the trail runner is advancing.
  - It is important the first baseman remembers the following:
    - Relay = cut the ball and throw to the base you are lined up with.
    - Cut = cut the ball and attack the trail runner.
    - Nothing = If you here nothing let the ball go.
    - Make decisions on balls off-line or dying - you decide to cut the ball in both instances.

- Communication
  - Let pitcher know if you're playing behind the runner.
  - Priority over catcher on pop-ups.

- Let pitcher know you're taking it yourself.
- Double with man on first let second baseman know where the throw goes.
- Talk to pitcher, let him know the situation.
- Communicate on bunts.
- Let catcher know runner is stealing: "GOING!"
- Point out pop-ups.

SECOND BASEMAN

The second baseman should be tough, both mentally and physically. He should be constantly communicating with his teammates. He and the shortstop should have the best on-field relationship. Be a leader on the field!

- Approach
  - Every defensive player should have some type of pre-pitch movement.
  - It could be creeping in as the pitcher goes into his delivery.
  - Another is swaying back and forth like a tennis player waiting for serve.
  - If you're a creeper, start where you'll end up at the correct fielding depth.
  - When the ball nears the hitting zone our weight should be on the balls of your feet, knees flexed, hands relaxed, ready for the batted ball.
  - Your focus should be on the hitting zone to get the best read off the bat.

- Fielding
  - Field the ball out front.
  - Feet spread a little wider than shoulders width, backside down, bend at the knees with your hands out front.
  - Stay low and look the ball into the glove.
  - Bring it to your throwing hand side, make the exchange and step and throw.
  - Second basemen usually have more time - don't challenge the runner.
  - Make firm throws to first giving the first baseman time to tag runner or get back to base if throw is off-line.
  - Grip the ball with four seams.
  - Be consistent in your approach.
  - Play aggressively but intelligently and make the routine plays.

- Double Play Feeds
  - Draw imaginary line between your belly button and home plate.
  - Anything hit from that line to the right is a flip.
  - Anything hit from that line to the left is one of the following feeds:
    - Backhand Toss
      - Movement must be towards second base.
      - Show the ball so shortstop can see it.
      - Make good firm feed with firm wrist - don't sling it.
      - Follow your feed - one or two steps toward second base after flip.
    - Underhand Flip

- Show ball early to shortstop.
- Stay low.
- Follow through towards second base.
- Toss should be firm and chest high.
- Firm wrist and don't sling.

- Ball Firmly Hit at You
  - Plant left foot and either slightly drop right foot or open right foot to free hips.
  - Catch the ball - then be quick.
  - Pivot and stay low with short arm action - make firm throw.
- Pivot - ball hit a little to your left
  - Field with either one or two hands.
  - Preferably with one hand to free body up while trying to pivot feet.
  - After fielding the ground ball, quickly shift feet by replacing left foot with right foot.
- Reverse
  - Ball to left where second baseman must glove it going away from base.
  - Field off left foot and replace your left foot with your right foot.
- Take It Yourself
  - Say "I GOT IT".
  - Step on second base with your right foot and throw to first base.
- Slow Hit Ball - come in, tag runner and throw to first base.
  - If runner stops run at him and throw to first base.
  - Get runner in a rundown.
  - If runner tries to go around you make one good attempt to tag him then throw to first base.

- Pivots
  - There are a few different ways to turn the double play.
  - The most important factor is the second baseman's comfort with his way of doing it.
  - The player's first priority is to get to the bag quickly and be under control - he must position himself to do so.
  - Second, he must see the ball in flight before he reacts to it.
  - Work to get your feet set quickly - you can't get rid of the ball until your feet are set.
  - Work to shift your feet so the exchange takes place in the chest area.
  - Coming across the bag, staying behind the bag, or going in front of the bag:
    - Get to the bag.
    - Put left foot on back-front corner of the bag - this protects against a throw up and inside the baseline.
    - See flight of ball - shift weight to right foot as you are catching the ball.
    - Plant right foot - step to first base with left foot pointing towards first base and throw.
    - Stay light on your feet - don't get planted.
    - This is the easiest way to turn the double play.
      - It allows you to be protected from the incoming runner.

- Also the umpire can see you have touched the bag.
- By waiting to see the ball in flight you stay under control and can stay on the bag longer and not leave too soon.
- A short step towards first base with your left foot puts you in position to make a quick throw.

- Slow Roller
  - This is probably the toughest play a second baseman will have to make - charging the ball, fielding it off your left foot and throwing off your right.
  - Balls that stay low will be thrown across your body, so adjust your throw.
  - With balls waist high or higher you can turn shoulders (square them up to first) to the target and make a firm 3/4 or side arm throw.

- Bunts
  - With runners on first or runners on first and second, the second baseman covers first base.
  - Creep in, shuffle, then break to first base making sure not to give up on the slash bunt.

- Relays and Cut-offs
  - Second baseman covers first base on a single to center or right field and a runner on second base who is trying to score.
  - Second baseman is lead man on all double cuts on ball hit in right center gap or down the right field line.
    - Don't go out any further than you have to, make a strong throw to the base you are lined up to.
    - Give good target to the outfielders - arms up yelling "hit me hit me"
    - High or low throws you can't handle, let them go through to the trailer.
    - Catch relay throw in throwing position with momentum moving towards base you are throwing to.
    - You should be peaking in to line up and to get an idea of where the runner is.
    - Don't depend on the trail man.
  - Second baseman is trail man on all extra base hits to left center gap or down the left field line.
    - Trail shortstop about 10 to 12 yards.
    - Help line him up to the base the throw will go to.
    - If shortstop can't handle the throw step up and catch the ball with your momentum moving towards the base you are throwing to.
    - Terminology: one, two, three and four (repeatedly).
    - When you are trail man, think like you are the lead man - expect the throw.

- Communication
  - Let first baseman know when off speed pitch is coming.
  - Let the pitcher know who has second base on a double play ball hit back to him.
  - Tell outfielders how many outs there are.
  - Point out pop-ups and fly balls during twilight.

- Let the pitcher know who is holding the runner at second base and which looks or rhythms series you are using through the sign system.
- Communicate with shortstop on who is covering second base on a steal:
  - Open mouth = you
  - Closed mouth = me
  - Cover mouth with glove.

SHORTSTOP

The shortstop should be a leader on the field, always communicating with his teammates. Be consistent, make the routine plays. Think ahead and always anticipate the ball being hit to you. Play aggressively, but under control.

- Approach
  - Every defensive player should have some type of pre-pitch movement.
  - It could be creeping in as the pitcher goes into his delivery.
  - Another is swaying back and forth like a tennis player waiting for serve.
  - If you're a creeper, start where you'll end up at the correct fielding depth.
  - When the ball nears the hitting zone our weight should be on the balls of your feet, knees flexed, hands relaxed, ready for the batted ball.
  - Your focus should be on the hitting zone to get the best read off the bat.
  - Be consistent with your setup.

- Fielding
  - Field the ball out front.
  - Feet spread a little wider than shoulders width, backside down, bend at the knees with your hands out front and relaxed.
  - Stay low and look the ball into the glove.
  - Bring it to your throwing hand side, make the exchange and step and throw.
  - Stay in rhythm and throw - crow hop, rhythm step.
  - Play the hop, don't let the hop play you.
  - Grip the ball with four seams.
  - Slow rollers should be charged fielding the ball off your left leg and throwing off your right.
  - Play aggressively but intelligently and make the routine plays.

- Pivots
  - From the Second Baseman
    - Shortstop must be in position to get to the bag in time and receive the throw.
    - As you get close to second, break down and always expect a bad throw.
    - When you see flight of the ball, go towards the ball swiping the back corner of the base with the right foot, or use the right foot to push off the bag to clear yourself even further from the sliding runner.
    - Then, pivot and throw.
    - Crow hop after the throw to clear yourself of the sliding runner.
    - Be light on your feet after you release the ball.

- From the First Baseman
  - If the first baseman fields the ball in front of the base take the throw inside with your left foot on the base.
  - Push off the base, plant your right foot and throw.
  - If the first baseman fields the ball behind the bag, take the throw outside with your right foot swiping the back corner.
  - Get to the base and give him a good target.
- Take It Yourself
  - Hit the bag with the left foot on the back of the base, throw to first, and crow hop.
  - Let the second baseman know by saying "I GOT IT"
- From the Pitcher
  - Know who has the throw on a comebacker to the pitcher.
  - Get to the inside of the base, with the left foot on the base.
  - This helps protect you against a throw up the line inside of the base line.
  - After making all throws be light on your feet in case the runner gets to you.

- Double Play Feeds
  - Position yourself so if the ball is hit to your left you will underhand flip.
  - Stay low and follow your flip.
  - Make all flips firmly, using a stiff wrist.
  - Draw an imaginary line from your belly button to home plate.
  - Anything from the line to the left is a flip.
  - Anything from the line to the right or the back hand side, plant the right foot and drop the left foot back.
  - Ball hit right at you or to your left where you can get in front of it, open the left foot a little to free the hips and pivot.
  - Throw the ball from where you catch it – field it low, stay low and throw chest high.
  - Ball hit to the backhand, plant the right foot and drop left foot back.
  - If you can't plant the right foot use backhand flip feed to second baseman.

- Slow Rollers
  - Charge and field the ball off your left foot, then throw off your right.
  - Throw will likely tail on you so make an adjustment.
  - Make this play with either one or two hands, whichever is more comfortable.
  - Field the ball off to the right side when going down with two hands and outside the left foot when fielding the ball with one hand.

- Bunts
  - Runner on First
    - Shortstop covers second base.
  - Runner on First and Second
    - Shortstop plays off the left pocket of the runner on both plays.
    - Out play – glove flip to pitcher then cover second base on the bunt.
    - Lead Out play – "back" call to pitcher then cover second base on the bunt.

- Relays and Cut-offs
  - Ball hit to right center gap.
    - Shortstop is the trailer behind the second baseman on extra base hit to right center.
    - Quickly get out and in position to help second baseman line up and let him know where the throw should go.
    - Shortstop wants to be 10 to 12 yards behind the second baseman.
    - If the second baseman can't handle the throw, shortstop will move up to take the throw.
    - Low throw, shortstop will move up and get it on a good hop.
    - If it's a high throw, shortstop will move up and catch it in the air.
  - Ball hit to left center gap or left field line.
    - Shortstop is the lead man and the second baseman is the trail man.
    - Give the outfielders a good target by raising your arms.
    - Try to catch throw from the outfielder with momentum towards the base you are throwing to.
    - All throws should be received in fair territory on balls hit down the lines and into the comers.
  - Ball hit straight to left, center or right field.
    - Shortstop is the cut-off man on throw from left, center and right field to third base on singles with a runner on first.
    - Knowing your outfielders arms will help you position yourself so that all throws arrive chest high.
    - If nothing is said, let the ball go through. Take charge on throws dying or tailing off line.
  - Shortstop covers third base on ball hit to left field and runner on second base.
    - Third baseman is the cut-off man on base hit to left with man on second.
    - First baseman is the cut-off man on all other balls.
  - Ball hit down the right field line with man on first
    - The second baseman is the relay man while the first baseman trails about 20 yards (still on the infield dirt or at the edge of the outfield grass).
    - Shortstop hovers between second and third
  - Terminology
    - Relay – cut and relay throw to the base you are lined up with.
    - Cut – cut the throw and attack the trail runner.
    - Nothing – if nothing is said, let the throw go through.

- Communication
  - Always remind the outfielders how many outs there are.
  - Let first baseman know who will take the throw on a pick-off.
  - Let pitcher know who has the throw on a double play feed.
  - Know who has the throw on a steal.
  - Let second baseman know where to throw on a relay.

- Let third baseman know when off speed pitch is coming.

THIRD BASEMAN

- Approach
  - Every defensive player should have some type of pre-pitch movement.
  - It could be creeping in as the pitcher goes into his delivery.
  - Another is swaying back and forth like a tennis player waiting for serve.
  - If you're a creeper, start where you'll end up at the correct fielding depth.
  - When the ball nears the hitting zone our weight should be on the balls of your feet, knees flexed, hands relaxed, ready for the batted ball.
  - Your focus should be on the hitting zone to get the best read off the bat.
  - Be consistent with your setup.

- Fielding
  - Field the ball out front.
  - Feet spread a little wider than shoulders width, backside down, bend at the knees with your hands out front and relaxed.
  - Stay low and look the ball into the glove.
  - Bring it to your throwing hand side, make the exchange and step and throw.
  - Stay in rhythm and throw - crow hop, rhythm step.
  - Play the hop, don't let the hop play you.
  - Slow rollers should be charged fielding the ball off your left leg and throwing off your right.
  - Play aggressively but intelligently and make the routine plays.
  - Know the opposing players – can he run? Will he bunt?
  - Take away the bunt by moving in and a step towards the line.
  - Bare hand bunts only if the ball has stopped moving or is barely moving.
  - When going to your left field everything unless the shortstop calls you off.

- Throwing
  - Step towards your target
  - Grip ball across the seams – four seam grip (more accuracy and velocity).
  - Throw over the top or ¾.
  - Better to make a low throw than a high one – first baseman can only jump so high but can pick everything.

- Slow Rollers
  - Charge and field the ball off your left foot, then throw off your right.
  - Throw will likely tail on you so make an adjustment.
  - Make this play with either one or two hands, whichever is more comfortable.
  - Field the ball off to the right side when going down with two hands and outside the left foot when fielding the ball with one hand.

- Bunts

- No One On
  - Play in against the drag with no one on and no one out – leadoff batter.
  - Play in against the drag at all times when a left-handed hitter is facing a left-handed pitcher.
  - Play in against the drag when the scouting report indicates the player likes to drag.
- Runner on First
  - Play in.
  - When batter squares around, charge in and break down under control when ball is bunted.
  - Catcher will let you know where to throw the ball, however we will be in "Out" 99% of the time so the throw will go to first base.
  - If they're giving us an out get one!
  - The best defense on someone who might bunt is take the bunt away.
- Runner on First and Second
  - Play in with a two-step read once the ball is bunted.
  - Read the bunt.
  - If pitcher can't make the play call him off and make the play – be aggressive and get the out!
  - If pitcher is able to make the play get back to third base for "lead out" or trail runner.
  - If pitcher hears nothing from you he will keep coming and make the play, therefore be loud when calling him off.
  - Out Play – take the out at first base and come get the ball.
  - Lead Out Play – would like to get the runner at third base, but at the very least get an out. When in doubt go to first.

- Relays and Cut-offs
  - The third baseman is the cut-off man on a base hit to left field and a runner at second base.
    - Be even with the pitching rubber when lining up to home plate.
  - Terminology
    - Relay – cut and relay throw to the base you are lined up with.
    - Cut – cut the throw and attack the trail runner.
    - Nothing – if nothing is said, let the throw go through.

- Communication
  - Let the pitcher know the situation
  - Call the pitcher off loudly on bunt play.
  - Let the pitcher know he's got the line when you are playing deep.
  - Priority over catcher and pitcher on all pop-ups.
  - Know all the defensive plays and signals.

UTILITY INFIELDER

The utility infielder may go three to five days without stepping on the field. In order to have success, the utility infielder:

- Must be very self-disciplined.

- Must take ground balls at all the positions he can play and not be afraid to try some positions he can't play naturally.
- Must know all the assignments on all of the bunt plays, relays, first and third situations, etc.
- Must come to the ballpark every day expecting to play.
- Must develop a routine that prepares him for each game.
- Must pay attention at all times to the scoreboard, opponents, situations, and the manager.
- Must always stay upbeat and positive, rooting teammates on.
- Must get as much early and extra work as possible to stay sharp.

SECTION III: THE CRITERIA OF A COUGAR INFIELDER

FUNDAMENTAL CRITERIA FOR INFIELDERS

- Pre-ready and Ready Positions
- Aggressiveness
- Feet
- Hands
- Transfer
- Glove Work
- Anticipation
- Arm Strength
- Reads & Jumps
- Balance
- Throwing Accuracy
- Agility
- Angles or Routes
- Awareness
- Arm Angle

INFIELD PLAY YEARLY PROGRESSION

It is very important for everyone to understand that most of the players coming into college baseball do not have an understanding of the fundamentals. Patience and a lot of communication are keys between coaches and the players. Take time to learn about the players, their background, attitudes, strengths, fears, etc. The more we learn about our players and the more they learn about us, the more trust they will have in our ability to teach. Teach good work habits, sound fundamentals and keep it simple.

YEAR ONE

- Introduction to running, conditioning, and weight training program (introduction to proper warm- up routine).
- Respect for work schedules – be on time to stretch, BP, and treatment.
- Develop good work habits – early work, extra stretch, equipment check.

- Understand mental toughness – no fear of failure, no excuses, separate the offense from the defense.
- Introduce bunt defense – know assignment and purpose of each play.
- Introduce cut-offs and relays – importance of communication, trailer expect bad throw.
- Introduce first and third defense – explain main priority on each play.
- Teach proper pop-up priorities.
- Teach how and when to hold runners.
- Teach tag plays – pop, sweep, swipe.
- Explain coverage on steals – open and closed mouth communication.
- Teach proper fielding technique:
    - Starting Position – comfortable, relaxed, balanced.
    - Aggressiveness – play through the ball.
    - Feet – use footwork to help get in proper throwing and fielding position.
    - Hands – must be relaxed in order to be quick and soft.
    - Transfer – take ball out of glove with other hand, don't flip ball from glove hand.
    - Glove Work – field ball pinkie to thumb on backhands.
    - Anticipation – expect every ball to be hit to you, know where to go with the ball.
    - Reads and Jumps – concentrate on the hitting zone, know what pitch is being thrown.
- Teach proper throwing mechanics.
    - Grip – try to hold the ball across the seams – four seam grip.
    - Strength/Accuracy – use of legs and back, point elbow and shoulder to target, don't rush.
    - Arm Angle – learn to throw from different angles.
- Establish field awareness – play the scoreboard, wind, sun, speed of runners, etc.
- Teach double play pivot – use of bag, importance of good feeds, think aggressively.
- Discuss the importance of developing a daily work routine – backhands, counting hops, reads off the bat during BP, etc.
- Learn to play other positions – versatility is very important.
- Learn to respect the umpire.

YEAR TWO

- Continue to instruct, but start expecting execution of mechanics and fundamentals introduced in Year One.
- Developing a better understanding of all fundamentals, technique and mental approach covered in Year One.
- Re-enforce the importance of good work habits and routines on a daily basis that help players to prepare for games.
- Learn to become a good self-evaluator and motivator.
- Continue to develop good working relationships with umpires.
- Take pride in your defense.

YEAR THREE

- Continue to improve upon all fundamentals and techniques.
- Develop and understand the importance of all mental aspects of the game.
- Become more consistent at execution of all fundamentals.

- Being prepared for and understanding role.
- Begin to understand how to use umpires to increase our chance to win.

YEAR FOUR

- Should have a complete understanding of the importance of defense to a winning team.
- Should be very consistent in all phases of the game – physically, fundamentally, and mentally.
- Should have developed a positive no fear attitude.
- Should come to the ballpark with one goal in mind – what can I do to help our team win today.

INFIELD DRILLS

- Short Hop Drill
  - This drill can be done with a partner 15-20 feet apart or along against a wall.
  - With a partner, both players get in a good fielding position – butt down, hands out front.
  - Throw firm hops to one another.
  - Throw short hops in front, to the glove side, and to the backhand side.

- Hand Drill
  - This drill can be done with a partner standing 15-20 feet apart or alone against a wall.
  - With a partner each player throws to other.
  - Work on getting rid of the ball and throwing it to the other fielder as quickly as possible.
  - Works their hands and feet.

- Long Hop Drill
  - This drill can be done with a partner, coach, or machine.
  - The infielder should start in the fielding position with his glove on the ground.
  - The glove side leg is in a drop step position with the glove inside the leg when on the ground.
  - With the coach or machine approximately 50 feet away, long hops should be thrown to the fielder to simulate one hop line drives.
  - The fielder should start with his glove in contact with the ground.
  - He does not bring his glove up to catch the ball until after the ball has hopped.
  - Working on the fundamental of glove down work up.

- Box Drill
  - This drill is done with four fielders forming a square box standing approximately 30 feet apart from each other.
  - Players throw to one another around the box.
  - First, each player takes the throw and quickly gets rid of the ball and throws to the man on his left.
  - Then they reverse it and each player catchers and throws the ball, like a shortstop on a double play, to the man on his right.

- Knee Drill

  - This drill is done with the infielder on his knees and a fungo hitter with a bucket of balls standing at least 30 feet away.
  - The fungo hitter hits the fielder ground balls and he fields them while on his knees, using one hand.
  - Balls can be hit in front, to glove side, or to backhand side.

- Four Corner Drill
  - Hit slow rollers or balls directly at them.
  - Position four players in a square about 90 feet from each other.
  - Player with the ball starts by rolling it to his left.
  - That player fields it and throws it to the player diagonally across from him.
  - The drill continues with the ball always being rolled to the player's left and thrown diagonally.

- Relay Drill
  - Have infielders get in a straight line about 120 feet apart.
  - Start at one end with the ball and work to the other end using good footwork and exchange.

- Double Play Drills
  - Roll balls to both shortstop and second baseman having each of them work on all the various techniques of turning double plays.
  - Same goes for first baseman.

- Pop Up Drills
  - Get infielders used to playing with sunglasses by having them wear them in this drill.

- No Glove Drill
  - Field ground balls isolating footwork only.
  - Focus is on getting your feet in position to field the ball efficiently and with momentum in the direction of the throw.

- Fungo Glove Down Drill
  - Have the infielder start with his glove on the ground.
  - Have the fungo hitter hit balls right at the infielder.
  - He must keep his glove in contact with the ground until he catches it.
  - If the fungo is hit slightly to the left or right side the fielder must maintain contact with the ground with his glove.
  - This gets the infielder to understand the feel of glove down and work up.

- Fungo Glove Down Drill with Drop Step
  - Same procedures as Fungo Glove Down Drill but with a drop step when the ball is hit (Left foot drop with right hander and right foot drop with left hander).
  - Glove arm stays inside drop step leg - it's not "olay".
  - This teaches the infielder how to create a longer hop when he is getting caught in between and also give him a longer look at the ball.

CHAPTER SIX
COUGAR OUTFIELDERS

SECTION I: THE BASICS OF A COUGAR OUTFIELDER

PHILOSOPHY

Defense and pitching win championships! Our goal as outfielders at Washington State University is not solely as offensive contributors, but as versatile players. Our responsibility is to manufacture Division One players that can contribute nightly in Pullman and teaching defense is an essential part of our job. Developing into a productive defender takes hard work and commitment. Our job as a staff is to educate outfielders on the importance of game speed throughout our daily work along with the physical and mental challenge of going out every day to upgrade and maintain defensive preparation. Every night we need 27 outs to win. Skillful outfield play controls damage and contributes to achieving outs in a proficient manner. When the ball reaches the outfield it has arrived at the last line of defense. We must build a forceful final line. Remember. ..

"We are either doing it right, or we are doing it wrong!"

PRE-PITCH FUNDAMENTALS

- Stance
  - Check body weight distribution - athletic position.
  - Slightly open to the gap.
  - Body momentum at contact point.
  - Drop step and read ball's path.
  - Stay low.
  - Hands never rest on the knees or lower body.
  - Anticipate.

- Positioning
  - Straight Up
    - Left fielder lines up with first and second base.
    - Right fielder lines up with third and second base.
    - Center fielder shades to the opposite side of home and second unless noted as a pull hitter in the scouting report as most pitches are away in nature.
    - Straight up is 5, with 2 being shallow straight and 8 being deep straight.

  - Pull Side
    - Right-handed hitter - 3, 6 or 9
    - Left-handed hitter - 1, 4 or 7
    - All three outfielders should move together whenever possible to a hitter's pull side.
    - It is important that the center fielder takes responsibility for communication to the back side of all movement.
    - The back side gap should be covered.

  - Oppo Side

        - Right-handed hitter - 1, 4 or 7
        - Left-handed hitter - 3, 6 or 9
        - All outfielders should move together.
        - Remember the back side gap must be covered.
        - A hitter having problems pulling the fastball is most likely to handle the off speed pitch and be productive to the strong side gap.

    - Two Strikes
        - It is encouraged to move towards the weak side with two strikes on all hitters.
        - Off side outfielder should also sink in a bit.
        - The exception is the 3-2 count - you may want to move to straight up.

    - Movement In or Back
        - Challenge powerless hitters by moving outfielders shallow (1, 2 or 3).
        - Early in the game force hitters to hit the ball over our head.
        - All hitters on occasion are going to find a gap or run into one, but this should not affect our percentages.
        - All outfield movement is situational.
        - You should use the rules in general, not the exceptions.

    - Lefty vs. Lefty Matchup
        - Outfielders are always positioned slightly towards the opposite field.
        - Adjust the degree of oppo with the swing power and approach of the hitter.
        - Also adjust based on pitcher's velocity and breaking ball type - less oppo with curveball and change, more oppo with slider.

GROUND BALLS

- Non-Throwing
    - Butt down.
    - Glove in front.
    - Get ball back to infield immediately.

- Throwing Mechanics
    - Glove foot, upper body weight over front knee produces power.
    - Hand to the back of the head.
    - Front elbow (glove) aims at target.
    - Replace front side with back side - deceleration.
    - Pull and reach - follow through!
    - Three step release.

- Round-Off
    - Footwork allows a direct body path to the throwing area.
    - Be aggressive with open step.
    - A minimum of three strides through the point of the catch.

- Pivot/Spin Move
  - The last alternative in the ground ball process.
  - Catch the ball first.
  - Then spin and lock in on throwing target.
  - Glove side groundball.
  - Pivot/spin allows you to line up your feet to target without wasting steps.

- Cutting Off
  - Do not let the ball into the gap!
  - Damage control.

- Closing In
  - The speed in which the ball is hit will dictate your closing speed.

FLY BALLS

- Non-Throwing
  - Nose on ball - no drifting.
  - Work feet to the ball's downward flight path.
  - Work hard to get behind every fly ball.

- Throwing Situation
  - Be patient!
  - Minimum three strides through the point of the catch.
  - Position body to catch the ball on the glove side of the head, face high.
  - You can never be too far behind the ball - late break better than early break.

- Headed Back
  - Head down and go.
  - Beat the ball to a spot!
  - Trust your instincts!

- Headed In
  - Stay on toes.
  - Communicate early!

- Line Drive Approach
  - Freeze and attack.
  - Run through all line drives.
  - Never slow and sit to catch.

- All Situational Throws
  - Throws are low, cuttable and hard.

  - Man on third base - in tag-up situation prefer the ball to be thrown in the air or on one hop to the catcher.

- Jumps
  - Live balls off the bat - get jumps during batting practice daily.
  - Focus on initial break to develop a good habit of first step quickness.
  - Explode a minimum of five strides to the ball.
  - Finish the play during live reads - catch the ball!
  - Always concentrate through the play.
  - Game speed!
  - Encounter every possible angle off the bat.
  - Rule the grassland!
  - We don't just make catches, we make plays!
  - We are always ready to make a play!

- Pop-Up Priorities
  - Center fielder over corner outfielders.
  - Outfielder with the more appropriate throwing angle and better arm in throwing situations.
  - Outfielders over all infielders - know the communication and get to everything.

COMMUNICATION

A championship team has many characteristics that are special. Communication is one of the principal ingredients. Communication among teammates may seem insignificant; nevertheless, it remains the backbone of the defense. Communication is more important during outfield play than any other responsibility.

Effective communication is first and foremost and eliminates needless injuries. Some examples of when communication is critical:

- Flyball Priorities - "ball" or "you"
- Relays
  - Fence communication
  - Throw destination
- Outfield Positioning
- Situations
  - No doubles
  - Movement
  - Throwing strategy - which runner is most likely to be out.
  - Locating winning and tying runs.
  - Securing the double play - keep the hitter off second.
- Conditions
  - Sun
  - Wind
  - Wet turf
  - Slow turf

  - Fast turf
- Fence Recognition
  - Warning track
  - Fence
- The outfielder who is not catching the ball tells his teammates who is catching the ball and where the ball should be thrown or if the runners are tagging, half-way, etc.

SECTION II: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF AN OUTFIELDER

IDENTIFY THE HITTER

- Power
- Slap / weak
- Pull
- Opposite
- Straight
- Pitching game plan vs. hitters.
- Study spray chart / pitching chart.
- Two strike approaches
- Foot speed!

SECONDARY JOB RESPONSIBLITIES

- Every play requires some positive action from the outfielder.
- Anticipate all possible throwing lanes.
- Infield throws.
- Catcher throws.
- Pick-off attempts.
- Counterparts throws from the outfield.
- Bunt defense lanes.
- Rundowns – participate don't spectate.
- Cover any and all based left uncovered by infielders.

GUIDELINES

- Understand the importance of defense.
- Be prepared every day both mentally and physically.
- Be early for early work.
- Listen to everything – apply the information and learn from others mistakes or mastery.
- Acquire the most out of every drill.
- Work to Win!

SECTION III: THE CRITERIA OF AN OUTFIELDER

FUNDAMENTAL CRITERIA FOR OUTFIELDERS

- Pre-ready and Ready Positions
  - Communication and positioning between pitches.
  - Consistency

- Jumps
  - Correct read on contact
  - Good cross over and drop steps
  - Stay low and explosive – good first step quickness.

- Routes
  - Good angles to all directions without drifting

- Range
  - Good range – raw speed works with all of above bullet points.
  - Bad range – when raw speed makes up for mistakes on above bullet points

- Hands
  - Good when they are soft and quick both on fly balls and groundballs.

- Throwing Mechanics
  - Does raw arm work with crow hop on fly ball?
  - Does raw arm work with crow hop on ground ball?
  - Accuracy and good carry will be as good as their throwing mechanics and crow hop.

- Footwork
  - Quick feet with correct mechanics is a must.

- Running Form
  - Good form will improve all of the above bullet points.
  - On the balls of your feet.
  - Must stay low.

OUTFIELD PLAY LEVELS OF PROGRESSION

It is very important for everyone to understand that most of the players coming into college baseball do not have an understanding of the fundamentals. Patience and a lot of communication are keys between coaches and the players. Take time to learn about the players, their background, attitudes, strengths, fears, etc. The more we learn about our players and the more they learn about us, the more trust they will have in our ability to teach. Teach good work habits, sound fundamentals and keep it simple.

LEVEL ONE

- Introduction to running, conditioning, and weight training program (introduction to proper warm- up routine).
- Knowledge of the game - take time daily to talk about game situations. Keep it simple.
- Communication between players.
- CF has priority over LF and RF. Outfielders have priority over infielders.
- Communication between staff and players - review signs for gap situations, keeping double play in order, positioning, etc.
- Back up bases on double plays, runners stealing, balls hit to the infield, and rundowns.
- Positioning
- Game situations
- Playing field size
- Hitter
- Hitting count
- Pitchers' stuff
- Weather conditions (wind, sun, fast outfield, wet ground, hard ground, etc.)
- Who is running
- Pre-ready position and ready position (proper technique will help jumps, routes and range)
- Pre-ready positions – outfielders must make sure among each other that they position themselves right, know
- How many outs and know what to do with the ball before getting into their ready position.
- Ready position- it varies from player to player. However, it should be keep about the same at this level to create consistency.
- Semi crouch (athletic position) -player should have weight on the ball of feet, feet should be slightly outside shoulder width and hands off the knees as the ball is crossing the plate. Staying relaxed and low is a must for first step quickness and explosiveness. Best place to work of this is during B.P.
- Jumps and routes.
- Cross over step (used on balls to OF's right or left).
- Drop step on angles and straight over the head (used on balls going back).
- First step coming in on line drives of soft fly balls.
- Catching fly balls.
- Without runners on or two outs (two hands if camped under it, one hand if running full speed or stretching and extending to make the catch).
- With two hands, get in a habit of catching the ball coming into the glove and not away from it.
- With runners in scoring position or advancing with less than two outs. Give enough room to catch the ball coming in the direction towards the cut-off man with enough momentum to get good carry on the ball (must crow-hop).
- On fly balls going into the fence with time to find the fence, and then catch the ball.
- Playing the ball off the fence when it bounces back or is deadened. If the ball is dead, square the feet towards the cut – off with the ball in the middle area of the body within easy reach making sure of a good grip, crow-hop, and hit the cut-off man in the chest.

- Do not try to look for the cut- off man before you have the ball.
- Catching ground balls.
- Without runners on- routine ground balls. Outfielders must be infielders in the outfield when it comes to routine ground balls. Center ball in front, legs spread, butt down, bent knees.
- After catching the ball, crow-hop and get the ball in as soon as possible.
- With runners in scoring position- Get momentum and line the body towards the cut-off man. Stay low, with bent knees and get under control when getting close to the ball. Catch the ball outside and in front of glove side feet, bring glove up, exchange and square shoulders and feet towards cut-off man using glove as guide and follow through with body.
- Cutting ground balls off in the gaps or on the foul lines – Stay low and get to the ball as soon as possible. If you have to get extended, use either forehand or backhand. Get under control, use crow-hop and get the ball in. The longer the outfielder takes to cut off the ball, the more steps the runner will take.
- Throwing - work on grip (four seams).
- Arm action (long, but quick).
- How to get arm loose at all times (starting day, before infield, during game, between innings, etc).
- Must learn how to crow-hop.
- Work to develop arm strength and durability.
- Always make firm throws to the cut-off man and learn when to save your arm.
- Work on accuracy.
- Do not throw behind runners.
- Hands -work on soft hands and quick hands.
- Footwork- work on quick feet, coordination and control, especially on the crow-hop.
- Staying low and not drifting is a must – staying low and not drifting are the most important aspects of an outfielder's speed, range, agility, control, coordination, first step quickness and ability to make adjustments to the ball.
- As instructors, we must make sure that all outfielders understand what staying low and not drifting means.
- We should not take for granted that they understand, especially at the lower levels.

LEVEL TWO

- Maturity and professionalism on and off the field of play is important to implement at this level of play.
- Players must have a good idea of self-evaluation, mental preparation, fundamentals, and knowledge of the game.
- Continue to stress the importance of communication.
- Develop better understanding of positioning, taking into consideration opponents strengths, weaknesses, and the pitcher's stuff.
- Consistent approach to outfielder's ready position.
- Consistency on jumps and reads on contact.
- Develop proper and consistent techniques on catching fly balls, ground balls, exchanges, throwing mechanics, footwork, and crow-hops.
- Continue to re-enforce the importance of good work habits.

LEVEL THREE

- Must have a complete understanding of outfield play.
- Should have knowledge of the game and proper approach to each individual situation.
- Mental approach, toughness, and preparation on a daily basis will be stressed at this level.

OUTFIELD DRILLS

- Zap Drill
  - The objective is to recapture poise after wrong first step or read off the bat.
  - An outfielder should always use his head to change direction, never his lower body.
  - The drill concentrates on zapping a head from left to right or right to left without forfeiting ground.
  - Each outfielder along with a ball goes one at a time.
  - Outfielder flips ball to coach and proceeds full speed for twenty yards away from the coach.
  - At twenty yards he zaps his head to find the ball.
  - The coach should throw the ball over the opposite shoulder.
  - Outfielder zaps head to opposite side without relinquishing speed.
  - Catch the ball!

- Stride Drill
  - After all have done the zap drill, the stride drill begins.
  - Outfielder tosses the ball back and begins to run towards the coach.
  - The objective is keeping the outfielders on the tips of their toes to eliminate any head movement.
  - The stride part simulates coming in to catch a ball.
  - When an outfielder runs toe-hell the head bounces.
  - Staying on ones toes when running in pursuit of a fly ball safeguards against wobbly vision.
  - Catching the highest point is fundamental.
  - Do not panic!

- Line to Line
  - This drill enhances the Stride drill.
  - Group the outfielders and position them anywhere in the outfield.
  - One at a time, each outfielder starts running across the outfield towards a foul line.
  - The fungo hitter attempts to lead the outfielder with a fly ball.
  - The objective is to force the outfielder to run a lengthy distance, stay on his toes and maintain a steadfast head position and vision.
  - Finish the play by CATCHING THE BALL.
  - When all have gone, start again working both directions (left and right).
  - Usually outfielders are stronger to their left or to their right; it is necessary to master both routes.
  - Remember, an outfielder should always strive for proper fly ball mechanics: working the feet and body to a spot, feet secured under ball and catching the ball at the highest point.
  - NO DRIFTING!

- Blind Zap
  - Group outfielders together.
  - Go one at a time, starting with back to fungo hitter.
  - On the sound of contact outfielder zaps head and body around practicing proper fly ball techniques on all balls and finishes the play.
  - The objective is to develop poise during the process of picking the ball up in flight.
  - An outfielder must roam the outfield with his head down.
  - It is impossible to watch the flight of the ball and run one's fastest.
  - Outfielders must have the ability to recover the ball after taking his eyes off the ball.
  - This technique is employed for balls that are well hit – gaps, warning track, etc.

- Live Balls
  - Without any question this is the most important drill for our outfielders.
  - For one entire group or 15 minutes per day of balls off the live bat during batting practice.
  - Keep the pitchers on warning track, away from the outfielders.
  - This is NOT a social hour.
  - The objective is to create a game atmosphere.
  - All phases of outfield play are practiced.
  - Off side outfielder takes a minimum of 3 power strides to the ball (i.e. ball hit to the LF, the rightfielder explodes 3 power strides to his right).
  - Jumps and reads are the key to solid outfield play.
  - Balls live off the bat address these important elements.
  - Concentration, maximum effort, and production are ingredients for success during this drill.

- Corner Drills
  - The objective is to handle balls hit into the right field and left field corners, and the right and left field gaps.
  - This is a productive drill at home and especially on the road.
  - Take the outfielders to their respective positions.
  - The fungo hitter's station should be 50-75 feet from the corner on the foul line or in the gap.
  - Fungo balls off the wall – on the ground or in the air – until outfielders are proficient at reading the trajectory of the ball.
  - All ballparks are different.
  - This is invaluable information during a game – especially with the bases loaded and you're up by two, late in the game.

- FENCE DRILLS
  - "Face your Fears."
  - The outfield fence or wall is an issue.
  - The objective of this drill is creating boldness when encountering the fence/wall.
  - An accurate read is important.
  - Outfielders need to distinguish catchable balls and balls to be played off the fence/wall.
  - Set up a machine or fungo hitter behind SS or 2B.

  - Send balls off, over and headed for the fence/wall.
  - The proper technique is putting the head down and getting to the fence/wall.
  - NEVER leave a space between the player and the fence/wall.
  - Outfielders can always come back but it is very troublesome to stop and attempt to gain more depth.
  - When the outfielder arrives at the fence/wall, his throwing hand finds the fence and he zaps his head to locate the flight of the ball.
  - BACK-UP TEAMMATES!

- Communication Drill
  - Split outfielders into two groups.
  - Use a fungo or a machine and attempt to split the difference between the players with a fly ball or ground ball.
  - The outfielder with the better angle or jump calls off the other to solidify an out.
  - Loud, early and decisive communication is important.
  - The emphasis of this drill is making the outfielders work into throwing position and having the outfielder with the most productive angle prevail.

- First Step Quickness Drill
  - The objective is to have a short 1st step, then explode to the ball on a direct line. Remember-short, then quick.
  - Take one outfielder and have him go in these directions:
    - Straight in
    - In to his left and right
    - Straight across to his left and right
    - Straight back
    - Back to his left
    - Right with a drop step
  - Finish up with opposite turn; go straight back and to his left and right.
  - Throw the ball opposite of the way he starts off.
  - Make sure they run a direct line to the ball.

- Short Fungos
  - Players are facing the fungo hitter approximately 20 to 30 feet away.
  - Fungo hitter attempts to hit easy line drives to the player.
  - This will assist in a variety of balls hit.
  - This variety will assist the player in the development of "first step quickness" with the player reading the ball first.
  - Read steps, and first step quickness will be improved.

CHAPTER SEVEN
COUGAR HITTERS

PHILOSOPHY

The Washington State University hitting program is designed to provide the means for each hitter within the program to realize his potential and to develop into a productive, knowledgeable, division one hitter as quickly as possible. Accelerated development is a central goal and can only be achieved with continuity in instruction. Uniformity in teaching principles throughout the coaching staff is essential to the success of Cougar hitters. Staff and hitters alike must be well versed in all areas of the program.

DEFINITION OF A COUGAR HITTER

Balanced and relaxed foundation, focused mind-set, ability to see the ball, sound preparation and be on time.

- Other Key Points:
  - Ability to slow the game down.
  - Head discipline.
  - Hands inside and above the ball.
  - Hands and hips work in conjunction.
  - Approach simple as possible.
  - Ability to duplicate swing.

ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- Identify With the Player:
  - Knowing the player and amending his work ethic, behavior and characteristics takes an extended period of time.
  - The end of the season is not the end of his work year, rather the end of a segment of his hitting career.
  - He may be continuing his development through summer or fall baseball, as well as team and individual practice periods.
  - An unmatched hitting coach is one with passion for developing the entire hitter and one who can fill the players with enthusiasm.

- Goals:
  - Increase the amount of quality repetitions taken by hitters (on field, in the cage, in video room, weight room or any area related to hitting.)
  - Identify the strengths and weaknesses as soon as possible.
  - Establish maintenance programs to turn weaknesses into strengths.
  - Instruction needs to be consistent.
  - Coaches must know at what point the player has reached the saturation point both physically and mentally.
  - Leave ego at the door and realize success comes in developing the Cougar hitter.
  - Strive to help the underachieving hitter; broaden the scope and help him establish a strong work ethic.

THE PATIENTLY AGGRESSIVE HITTING APPROACH

- Characteristics:
  - Ready to hit at all times.
  - Knows his pitch, the game situation and the location of each pitch.
  - Knows what his strengths are and what he will selectively offer at until there is a two-strike count.
  - Takes advantage of a pitcher who struggles to throw quality strikes by waiting for his pitch to hit.
  - Exerts more effort both physically and mentally; intense focus is crucial.
  - Patiently aggressive versus impatiently aggressive is a fine line, but it separates a successful hitter from a mediocre hitter.

- Method
  - Keep daily hitting log.
  - Use the bullpen warm-up periods of the pitching staff to work on strike zone knowledge and pitch recognition.
  - Learn and understand your use of the strike zone as quickly as possible.
  - Use every at bat to your advantage, regardless of game/practice/cage, etc.
  - Hitters can improve strike zone knowledge by taking or swinging at pitches.
  - Establish an aggressive attitude as the foundation and then begin to refine the approach to include patience.
  - Elevate from the bottom of the strike zone: if it's high let it fly… if it's low let it go.
  - Understand the hitter will chase more balls low out of the zone than he will up out of the zone.

- Dugout Routine
  - Analyze pitching patterns. Watch opposing pitchers vs. teammates, watch other right handed or left handed hitters, identify situations, identify his out pitch.
  - Examine infield movements, their early movements can tip off pitches.
  - Categorize command. What pitches does he throw for strikes and more importantly what does he not throw for a strike?
  - Recall his approach the last time you faced him. Keep a journal on all pitches for future reference.
  - Watch catcher's throwing ability and his problem pitch at the plate. These can factor in on possible pitch selection. For example, poor arm and base stealing threat on first may equal more fastballs to hitter.
  - Pitchers pace. Works quickly (slow him down). Works slowly (keep your rhythm and step out). The hitter is in control.

- On Deck Circle
  - Visualize any and all possible hitting situations that might be challenging. Be prepared and relax!
  - Be familiar with the game situation.
  - Be a coach for base runner who is scoring (which way to slide or stand, etc.)
  - Time the pitcher's delivery by practicing load and launch.

- The Whole Story
    - Create an understanding of situations within the hitter.
    - For example, batting averages with less than two strikes are all over .300 whereas averages with two strikes are .187.
    - Almost 60% of all run production occurs within three pitches an 1/3 of run production occurs with two strikes.

- Results
    - Quality Plan + Quality Mind Set + Quality Swing = Patiently Aggressive Hitter

THE MENTAL GAME

Mental preparation is the key to hitter development. Physical skill is difficult to develop to its fullest extent without the proper mental approach. All successful division one hitters spend time each day visualizing the pitcher they will be facing that night, what pitches he throws, when he will see those pitches and what he has done with them in the past. He is going into his mind's library and using recall to prepare for the next battle.

- Characteristics:
    - Successful hitters have strong mental skills and know they can succeed because they manufacture positive thoughts and have an optimistic outlook flowing through their minds when at bat.
    - Good hitters deal with failure by quickly learning from it and by keeping success in perspective through goal setting, visualization, relaxation, concentration skills, and cognitive restructuring.
    - A hitter must realize that he cannot control the outcome, only his preparation and how he reacts to it.
    - Control of the personal thought process is the key to hitting development.
    - Research shows hitters have personal control 10% of the time but the other 90% of the time is what determines success or failure.
    - Hitters must develop a mental plan and follow that plan on a daily basis.
    - Mentally tough players take responsibility for their thought processes.
    - They focus their energy on the areas they can control and their thoughts are positive whether dealing with past or present unsuccessful performance outcomes.
    - Learn to play the game one pitch at a time, once pitch is over, the hitter must begin preparation for the next pitch.
    - Remember there is a 12 second period needed to learn from the last pitch before concentration and focus can be brought to the next pitch.
    - Preparation for the next day should begin shortly after the end of the game.
    - Replay the events in the mind, make not of what happened and what can be learned from the experience and then get ready for the next game.
    - Visualize as many different scenarios as possible; see successful execution.
    - Formulate the plan and work it the next day while getting ready for the game.
    - The good news is that all these mental skills can be learned and will be learned if the hitter puts in mental practice on a daily basis.

- Goals: Goals are the basis for success. They are not dreams and they are not wishes. Goals result from a plan and they are unique. Some are short term, while others are intermediate or long term.
    - A goal of every hitter should be to control his mental game. This means that he should control his thoughts and his emotions.
    - To be successful, hitters need to develop a goal system comprised of 90% process oriented goals and 10% outcome oriented goals. This goal system should be guided by short, intermediate and long range goals.
    - These goals should be specific, realistic and obtainable.
    - Be aware enough to reset goals when accomplished or met with resistance.

THE VISION PLAN

See ball, hit ball is a saying that has been around baseball for years. It is the act of hitting the ball in its purest sense. Successful professional hitters like to have more information available. Such as the types of pitches the pitcher throws, when he likes to throw them and if he can throw them for strikes. Pitcher knowledge is paramount in hitter's success. Still when the ball is thrown, early identification is perhaps the biggest single thing in hitting. Hitters do not perform the other skills of hitting equally so it stands to reason that visual skills are not equal. Vision is the guiding sense to human performance. Almost everything you do begins with what you see. The eyes provide you with the critical information your body requires to do almost anything.

- Vision is the most important sense, bringing in over 90% of what your body senses and observes.
- The average fastball takes .04 seconds to travel from release to contact. This can be an exciting time frame if the hitter has a plan in place to see the ball early.
- Half the time is spent recognizing the pitch, the other half is spent swinging the bat. In recognizing the pitch the hitter must decide whether it is a strike or a ball and whether to swing or take.
- By developing a plan to see the ball earlier the hitter will be able to slow down the action of the ball and make better decisions.
- Be aware of the pitcher's release point, what you are doing before release point and how you go to release point.

Vision by itself is not the entire answer to better hitting but certainly carries legitimacy in developing consistency in early pitch recognition.

SITUATIONAL HITTING

- Philosophy
    - Situational hitting is the essence of offensive, "winning" baseball. The whole reason to hit is to score runs.
    - To score runs consistently, hitters must be able to handle the bat and execute a variety of tasks, from sacrifice bunting to extra base hits.

- The entire lineup must be able to hit in situations to be a consistent run producing team.
- The foundation of situational hitting is to score runs intentionally by moving runners around the bases in a systematic fashion.
- The team that scores the most runs wins. Individual averages mean nothing.
- It doesn't matter who moves the runner or who gets the RBI.
- Baseball is a team game played by a group of individuals performing as one with a single objective: "WIN".
- The intent behind situational hitting is team offense.
- "Me" and "I" hitters are not team players or winners. Check the ego at the door and play to win.

- Developmental Steps
  - Be aware.
  - Attempt to execute.
  - Execute.
  - Execute without making an out.
  - All hitters are to be aware of the situations and are ultimately accountable for execution.

- Ultimate Team Play
  - The ultimate in team play is the execution of a situation with two strikes after battling the pitcher all through the at bat.
  - All three strikes are for us, not the hitter himself.
  - Right handed hitter uses all three strikes to move the runner.
  - Left handed hitters uses the first two strikes to move the runner, and then goes to our two-strike approach at the plate.
  - Develop the proper mindset, play winning baseball.

- Situations
  - The situation may change pitch by pitch in one at bat.
  - Runners may change locations on the bases and infielders may change depths.
  - In a single at-bat the hitter may have two or three situations to try to execute, the most common are:
    - Leading of an inning.
    - Sacrifice bunt with runner at first base.
    - Sacrifice bunt with runner at second base.
    - Hit and run, or run and hit.
    - Runner on second base with no outs.
    - Runner on third base with less than two outs and infield in.
    - Runner on third base with less than two outs and infield back.
    - Squeeze bunt.
  - The winning team player derives personal satisfaction in the successful execution of any of these situations at any time. This hitter is always ready to find a way to help the team win.

- Leading Off an Inning
  - Get a good pitch to hit.
  - If it is not a strike, we are taking.
  - If it is a ball we take until we get a strike.
  - If the first hitter makes an out on the first pitch, the second hitter automatically takes the first pitch of his at-bat.

- Sacrifice Bunt
  - Bunt the pitch you are able to bunt; it does not have to be a strike.
  - Non-directional, deaden the bunt.
  - Early bounce (down angle), get the ball fair. Don't try to be too fine.
  - Possible situations to drag and push also, unless the manager has called for a sacrifice.

- Hit and Run
  - Hit the ball on the ground! It is a great skill to have the ability to hit the ball to the right side in this situation.
  - Swing at every pitch unless it bounces clearly in front of home plate.
  - This play can be used to create a big inning with a base hit by opening up some holes, staying out of a double play, or getting a runner into scoring position.
  - Hitters should think about staying on top of the ball and look for a pitch up and away then make an adjustment if it's inside.
  - If possible avoid hitting ground balls to the middle of the infield.

- Man on Second Base – No Outs
  - Hitter tries to drive the ball to the right side, moving the runner to third base or possible scoring him.
  - Pitchers will often throw left handed hitters hard stuff away, making it difficult to pull the ball. Left handed hitters move up on the plate and look to pull the ball.
  - Pitchers will work right handed hitters hard in and with lots of off-speed stuff trying to get them to pull the ball on the ground or pop the ball up. Right handed hitters must be patient and get a pitch out over the plate that he can handle.
  - Being able to push or drag bunt in this situation is a great asset.
  - Cougar hitters should all have the ability to move a runner from second base with a ground ball when the job must get done. Coaches have the option of letting the hitter try to drive the ball to the right side or making him hit a ground ball to the right side.

- Man on Third Base – Less Than Two Outs – Infield Back
  - The other team is giving up the run as long as the ball is not hit to the pitcher (unavoidable) or the comers (avoidable). The hitter should try to drive the ball to the big part of the field.
  - Look for the ball down and out over the plate. Ground ball in the middle will score the run. A pop-up won't.
  - With two strikes, the hitter should think about hitting a ground ball up the middle.
  - A base hit bunt in this situation is also a good idea.

- Man on Third Base – Less Than Two Outs – Infield In
  - The hitter should look for a ball out over the plate that he can drive to the big part of the field.
  - The pitcher is trying to get a ground ball by working down in the strike zone.
  - Trying to drive the ball to the opposite gap will result in more sacrifice flies than ground balls and produce more runs in this situation.
  - Do not try to manufacture a fly ball by altering your swing. This causes more pop-ups than fly balls.

- Squeeze
  - Hitter attempts to bunt any pitched ball towards the shortstop or second baseman.
  - Hitter squares around when front foot of pitcher hits the ground.
  - Technique can be a shortened version of the sacrifice bunt.
  - Safety squeeze.

COUNT KNOWLEDGE

The patiently aggressive hitter has count knowledge ready beginning with the first pitch. The pitcher is trying to get ahead with his best pitch, not trying to be too fine and fall behind. Generally the pitchers goal is to get the hitter out within three pitches. If the hitter gets deep in the count because the pitcher locates it is good hitting, but if the hitter gets deep in the count because he took hittable pitches then he is not being patiently aggressive. Pitchers will struggle with control because they do not practice pitching enough; if they go to their second or third pitches it should be to the hitter's advantage. Based on a recent study of MLB hitters (over 165,000 at-bats), when the hitter puts the ball in play within three pitches the batting average is .298 and 60% of the runs are driven in. With two strikes the average is .187 and 30% of the runs are driven in. All averages with less than two strikes are above .300.

COUNTS	AVERAGE	% AB'S	TOTAL AB	RBI	% OF RBI
0-0	.335	14%	22,530	3893	18%
0-1	.309	10%	15,815	2223	10%
0-2	.159	8%	13,994	935	4%
1-0	.324	8%	13,867	2394	11%
1-1	.320	9%	15,693	2336	11%
1-2	.172	15%	24,826	1940	9%
2-0	.339	3%	5081	1004	5%
2-1	.338	6%	10,145	1619	8%
2-2	.189	14%	23,417	2046	10%
3-0	.359		312	166	
3-1	.357	3%	4190	960	4%
3-2	.226	9%	15,712	1942	9%

TWO STRIKE APPROACH

Two-strike hitting has been grossly over-rated as being a do-or-die hitting situation. Due to this fact, unnecessary fear and pressure to perform has been put in the minds of hitters, which substantially

empowers the pitcher. By focusing on what we want to accomplish, we are utilizing the premise, "what we think about, we bring about." When we focus on the "do's," the "don'ts" don't show up.

Hitters must realize that if only takes one strike to hit a single, double, triple or homerun. Successful hitting can come via the very first strike, second strike or the third strike. Therefore, if it takes only one strike to help your team win the game, the fact is every strike is significant and of equal importance. The third strike has no more importance than the first two unless you give it more importance. If a hitter is in fear of striking out, then you best change careers because striking out is not only inevitable in baseball but every All-American hitter has done so many times. Also, hitters should know that when they fear striking out, they are increasing the skill level of the pitcher and in doing so, giving him the competitive edge. We must use the same mental approach no matter what the count is.

- Do's with Two Strikes
    - You must never allow yourself to totally "sell-out" by looking for a specific pitch in a specific location. Never guess what a pitcher's out pitch might be. If you have done your homework and are "very sure" what the pitcher's go-to or out pitch is on the third strike, you can anticipate that pitch but always be ready to adjust to something different. Remember, being "very sure" does not mean "guessing". Informed anticipation is developed by past history with a particular pitcher and by watching the pitcher during the game to see what he will throw on the third strike.

    - Be ready to hit the fastball. Never ever take the fastball for a third strike.

    - Understand and believe that it takes just one strike to get the winning hit in order to help your team win a ball game. Therefore, it doesn't matter if it's the first, second, or third strike.

    - Remember the real pressure to perform in a two-strike count is on the pitcher. Why? Because he can't get an out unless he throws a strike and when he does, you'll be waiting for his mistake.

    - Hit the ball up the middle or opposite field with two strikes.

    - You must watch the warm-ups of a closer or reliever. 99% of the time they will throw their fastball to start their warm-ups and 99% of the time the pitch they throw after their fastball will be their go-to or out pitch.

    - Allow yourself to be empowered by not fearing striking out. Remember, your fear is the pitcher's greatest strength or competitive edge and it is your greatest enemy. How do you not fear striking out? By understanding that failure is as powerful and important, and needed, in your quest to the best as is success. Both failure and success are teachers in disguise helping you to be empowered by knowledge. When you succeed, you learn what you should do the next time to create success. When you fail, you learn what not to do in order to create your next success. This way of looking at failure will diminish or even eliminate the fear of strike out because you'll know that no matter what happens, empowerment will be the result when

you learn from the outcome. Remember, failure is potential success. If you fear failure, you will not see its potential. Learn from failure, and your potential is limitless.

- You must put the ball in play with two strikes.

- Mandatory Physical Adjustment with Two Strikes
  - Choke up or spread out, hitter's choice or do both (recommend doing both).
  - Look away and think away – let the ball travel.
  - Keep both hands on the bat throughout the swing.
  - Keep head and eyes on contact point past the actual act of contact.
  - Short, compact swing with solid contact being our goal.

BATTING PRACTICE ROUTINES

Batting practice must have a specific plan to help young hitters build habits that will ultimately lead to success. Structured sessions allow increased quality repetitions that enhance development. The batting practice routine is designed with both team and the individual in mind. Winning team baseball revolves around the successful execution of situational hitting.

All situations, from sacrifice bunting to hitting with the infield in, should be practiced as often as possible if we are to expect execution during the games. Games are won on the total number of runs scored, not hits. Execution each day in batting practice will accelerate our hitters' development in preparation to become unselfish, winning team hitters. In the first two rounds we concentrate on going the other way and hard up the middle.

- Batting Practice Routine
  - Round One
    - Two sacrifice bunts.
    - Five swings to opposite field.
    - One squeeze or safety squeeze.
  - Round Two
    - Two hit and runs
    - Two move the runner over from second base.
    - Two score the runner from third base with less than two outs.
    - Three swings.
  - Round Three – Coaches Choice – Five Swings
    - No Pop No Pull
    - Hit and run
    - Shoot the four hole
    - Two-Strike approach
  - Round Four

        - Three swings if time permits

    - Round Five
        - Well hit round – stay in if hitter hits the ball hard.

Each situation has to be successfully executed before moving on to the next. The routine, as always, is subject to time restraints, road, weather, promotions, etc. Base runners are mandatory.

MECHANICS

- Bat Selection
    - The weight, length and the thickness of the handle are all personal preferences in choosing a bat.
    - Bat control is the overriding factor in the final decision in selecting the apparatus of war.
    - Thriving hitters have bat speed and can control the bat head in the strike zone.
    - Young and senseless hitters have a tendency to swing a bat that is too unmanageable.
    - Bat control cannot exist with an incorrect grip or a bat that's too heavy.
    - The greater the bat speed...the more power. This can and will also work in reverse.
    - Bigger is not always better unless you can maintain bat speed.
    - Bat selection becomes extraordinarily important when compared and contrasted to bat speed or lack thereof.

- Stance / Setup
    - Hitting is a cause and effect activity, beginning with the stance.
    - Attain a simple, sound, relaxed and balanced stance that has control of the center of gravity and allows for the creation of rhythm and timing.
    - Substance is more important than style, refrain from adding extras.
    - Try to avoid the "set up to mess up" mentality.
        - The feet are the foundation; place them slightly wider than shoulder width apart, with the weight towards the balls of the foot and in a straight line towards the opposite batters' box.
        - Flex the knees and keep them between the feet.
        - Align the head, both eyes and the body squarely and level towards the pitcher.
        - Keep the head between the feet and let the arms hang relaxed, close to the body.
        - Place the bat close to the launch position angled at 45 degrees with a natural grip have the bat run through the base of the fingers.

- Loading Phase
    - As the pitcher gets ready to pitch the ball the hitters begins to get into position to hit the ball.
    - Hitter loads slow, easy and early approximately when the pitcher lifts the stride leg – hitters hands go back towards launch position.
    - Keep upper-body rotation to a minimum while maintaining posture.

  - This initial phase of rhythm and timing helps the hitter to be on time for the swing no matter what type of pitch is thrown or the velocity of the pitch.

- Stride to Balance
  - When hitter strides to balance the hands will move back towards the launch position as the stride foot simultaneously moves towards the pitcher prior to the release of the ball.
  - Hands will settle near the back shoulder moving the bat over the shoulder close to a 45 degree angle, with the knob of the bat pointing down to the ground in front of the catcher.
  - The stride foot moves directly towards the pitcher, landing on the inside ball of the foot on a 45 degree angle. Heel remains slightly elevated in preparation for the swing.
  - Stride must be short enough to keep strong balance and long enough to fit the hitter's body type.
  - The stride-to-balance linear movements are completed by the time the ball is halfway to the hitter.

- Swing
  - The swing begins the rotational action starting as the stride foot heel hits the ground elevating the back heel and opening the front hip.
  - Front shoulder remains closed with the hands back.
  - The lower half action begins the sequential swing and creates torque in the body.
  - The swing is feet first, hands last, from the ground up, with the back foot rotating to toe down or completely off the ground at contact.
  - The body delivers the bat to the ball.
  - During the swing the body rotates around an axis maintaining dynamic balance; if the hands remain close to the body the rotation will be quicker.
  - Less head movement during the swing is better, the head and eyes are angled towards the ball, while the hitter maintains eye contact with the ball as long as possible.

- Contact and Finish
  - The bat is fired through the hitting zone as the front or lead leg snaps straight.
  - The front or lead leg will snap straight just before contact is made.
  - A firm front side will not allow the hitter's weight to drift forward out over a collapsed front leg.
  - Hitting through the ball is a must. The hands stay above the ball and the bat will always be below the hands.
  - One hand is up and one hand is down at contact. Arms are never extended at contact.
  - A hitter is strongest when the top arm is at 90 degrees at contact.
  - The finish should be high to keep bat in the strike zone longer and decrease the chance of error.

- Head and Eyes
  - The head will move twice during the approach and swing. It moves first during the stride and it moves second during the swing.
  - Keeping these movements under control is important for success.
  - The eyes must be given a chance to track and recognize each and every pitch. Good decisions will be made when the ball is recognized correctly.

- Understand-Feel-Execute
  - We learn three ways – listening, seeing and feeling.
  - The most efficient of the three is feeling**.** A good hitter tells his coach what he feels and a good coach tells his hitter what he sees.
  - Together, difficult problems can be worked out and corrected.
  - Have an aggressive, positive attitude and work hard.
  - Never be afraid to fail or swing and miss. Go for it!

BUNTING

The short game has tremendous value to an offense and ultimately to the entire team. Moving runners into scoring position puts pressure on the defense. The bunting game draws the corners close and creates more openings in the infield. Everyone uses the short game differently. Our job as coaches is to make sure every player is capable of executing a sacrifice, push or drag bunt in order to move a runner into better scoring position, and the squeeze bunt in order to score a runner. The objective in our program is to teach the players winning baseball. The bunt game is clearly used in today's winning baseball at the division one level. It is important we produce well rounded division one players, not one-dimensional players. Teaching our players that the team comes first is a priceless statement in the future of the player and the program.

- Sacrifice Bunt
  - Move up in the box to assure the bat head is in fair territory and create a more appropriate bunting angle.
  - When the pitcher comes set, the hitter pivots or relocates the back foot 4 to 6 inches closer to the plate for better balance. Arrive early to the bunting position to avoid being late with the bat head versus a quick pitch or slide step.
  - Body weight is 60% on the front leg. The back foot is turned towards pitcher with the heel slightly off the ground.
  - The lower half of the body is flexed and balanced –in an athletic position.
  - Hands separate: top hand slides up to the trademark and the fingertips, not exposing the finger to the bunting area. The bottom hand comes up the bat slightly for better bat control. The farther the hands are apart, the softer the bunt.
  - The bat head is extended out in front of home plate. The bat head must be eye level, positioned at the top of the strike zone. The arms are never locked out, keep the elbows flexed.
  - The bat is held at the top of the strike zone. Use ONLY the knees to bunt a low pitch. NEVER lower bat head to bunt a low pitch. Only lower the body by utilizing the knees- back

knee to the ground if necessary!
  - Head and eyes attached to the tip of the bat head. Absolute eye tracking is imperative throughout the bunting process.
  - BUNT PITCHES YOU CAN BUNT – NOT NECESSARILY STRIKES!
  - Early bounces – attack the top half of the ball and propel the ball on the ground.
  - Do not stab at the ball. Catch the ball with the bat – slightly give with your body or step back, with contact of the ball on the bat with both hands at the same time.
  - Bunt first- run second: SACRIFICE YOUR AT BAT FOR THE TEAM!
  - Be aggressive – not timid. DO NOT TRY TO BE PERFECT.

- Drag Bunt – Left Handed Hitter
  - Designed to take firm at second baseman. Placement is everything.
  - First move is false-stride/jab step with right foot to disguise bunt.
  - Slide top hand (left hand) to just below balance point, holding the bat firm in hand.
  - Back leg should be stepping toward second baseman; your leg must be in that position before bunting the ball.
  - KEY TEACHING POINT: the back foot must be down before bunting.
  - Your top hand should be pointing towards the second baseman, using your chin as a sight to line your top hand.
  - Remember: you are walking into the bunt, NOT running.

- Drag Bunt – Right Handed Hitter
  - Designed to go to the third baseman.
  - Placement is more important than surprise (bunt, then run).
  - Get off the plate so you can step with lead foot towards first base.
  - Bring bat over back shoulder pointing end of bat between first base coach and first baseman to create proper angle.
  - Keep left elbow close to side.
  - Looking ideally for pitch away or breaking ball.

- Push Bunt – Right Handed Hitter
  - Stride leg is disguised to freeze infielders.
  - Take back leg (right leg) walking toward second baseman.
  - Right foot must be down and pointing toward second baseman before bunting.
  - Glide top hand to below balance point, holding bat firm in hand.
  - Top hand pointing toward second baseman, using chin and nose as sight to line up your head and foot.
  - The key is to walk into the bunt, making sure your back foot is down when ready to bunt. Ball contacts bat at same time the back foot touches down.
  - Looking ideally for a fastball up in the zone.

THE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

This is the main cog in the accelerated development wheel. Its design is to increase quality repetitions by providing a daily structure. Each day of the season, if possible, whether at home or on the road the hitting coach will meet with individual hitters one-on-one for a specified time frame (5-10 minutes) based on need.

- The maintenance program is how a hitter will make major adjustments in the swing outside of game situations over the long haul.
- Proper mindset and time frame will allow for current production and gradual change to take place at the same time.
- The goal of the maintenance program is to give each hitter in the organization an opportunity to acquire the mechanics used by successful hitters.
- The hitting coach plays a pivotal role in this program. He offers positive instruction and support to endorse this behavior modification. This is where the hitting coaches earn their money.
- Adjustments made based on the maintenance program are kept by the coach, who is in constant communication with the coordinator. The coordinator will then keep the master record in the computer.

HITTERS CHECKLIST

- Five Absolutes
  - Rhythm
  - Timing
  - Recognition
  - Stride/Separation – Stride to balance
  - Stride square

- Important Concepts
  - Dynamic balance
  - Axis of rotation
  - Sequence
  - Bat lag
  - *There are only two movements in hitting: linear and rotational. One movement must finish before the next begins to have an effective swing.*
  - *Timing = being in the right place at the right time no matter the pitch type or speed of pitch.*

- Setup
  - Square, level, straight
  - Balance
  - Feet approximately shoulder width apart
  - Weight, placed toward the balls of the feet

- Knees flexed, inside the feet
- Grip the bat at the base of the fingers
- Front elbow down-back elbow up or level with hand
- Hands set close to the body and back shoulder
- Bat angled close to 45 degrees or more with the barrel behind the body
- Level, 2-eyed look at the pitcher
- Establish rhythm

- Load
  - Rhythm, timing
  - Keep it simple, repeatable
  - Back knee remains inside foot
  - Avoid shoulder roll – linear only
  - Hands behind back shoulder (separation) and even or below back elbow
  - Lower half
  - Extremes-tap, kick
  - Maintain head over center of gravity
  - Maintain posture - eye level
  - Action is early, slow, easy
  - Initial action to allow the body to be in the right place at the right time
  - No load

- Stride / Separation
  - Dynamic balance
  - Stride foot lands close to a 45 degree angle on the inside ball of the foot with the heel slightly elevated.
  - Hands are close to the body and back shoulder with the lead elbow angle at no more than 120 degrees.
  - The bat is over the back shoulder close to a 45 degree angle or more with the barrel behind the body.
  - Proper timing puts the hitter in stride to balance position when the ball is approximately halfway to the plate (26 Ft).
  - Achieve the stride to balance position early rather than late; the hitter will be unable to swing with proper sequence when late.
  - Pitch recognition and identification phase of hitting, very important in mastering the most difficult skill of all.
  - Two eyes on the ball (in stereo).
  - Stride begins prior to release, when is determined by type and size.
  - Signifies the end of linear movement and puts the hitter in a strong position.
  - Maintain eye position with 3" of elevation from setup.
  - Stride square.

  - Maintain posture.
  - Lead elbow angled down at 45 degrees with back off lead hand facing pitcher.

- Swing
  - Sequence = feet first, hands last.
  - From the ground up, with the large muscles leading the small muscles to the ball.
  - Tum all potential energy into kinetic energy with proper sequence.
  - The swing starts when the front heel hits the ground.
  - Drop it, pop it, torque it or snap it.
  - Hitters have only two different movements in the swing: (1) linear and (2) rotational.
  - Complete the linear phase prior to beginning the rotational.
  - Back heel pops off the ground aggressively as the front heel drops and the front hip opens.
  - The lower body begins the swing while the upper body remains closed.
  - Rotation is around an axis and under a stable head.
  - Objective is to minimize head movement to three inches or less.
  - Maintain posture.
  - Create Torque
  - Allow the lower half of the body to bring the bat to the ball.
  - Keep hand placement close to the body to help increase bat speed.
  - Top hand elbow will fall close to the side on the body tum causing the barrel to drop creating the bat lag.
  - Feet first, hands last. Let the body tum before the hands go to work, take the back of the knuckles to and through the ball.
  - Aggressive quickness with the feet along with sustained dynamic balance will increase bat speed.
  - Level hips create rotation around the axis.

- Contact
  - Maintain dynamic balance.
  - Stride foot angle remains at 45 degrees.
  - Front knee snaps straight, or close to it.
  - Back toe is either pointed straight down or off the ground.
  - Head and eyes are angled down towards the ball.
  - Maintain posture.
  - Shoulders have tilt depending on the height of the pitch.
  - Top elbow is bent at 90 degrees - strong position.
  - Hands are palm up and palm down.
  - Hands are above the ball and the barrel is below the hands.
  - Contact is made in front of the stride foot.
  - Pitch location requires creating hand angles to get the barrel on the ball.
  - Back knee is bent, forming an L.

  - Hips are very close to level.
  - Top elbow is down and close to the body.

- Finish
  - Extend through the ball before rolling the top hand, think about hitting through 6 balls.
  - Roll the top hand around the comer rather than over the top.
  - Can be with one or two hands, whatever is best; top hand release must be late.
  - Finish high and around the body.
  - Allow head and eye angle to remain down as long as possible after contact.
  - Maintain a stable head position and let the body rotate around underneath.
  - Dynamic balance from start to finish.

VIDEO PROGRAM

- Video is the best available teaching tool in baseball today.
- The use of video is essential if we are going to give our hitters the best opportunity to develop their talents.
- Players need to make this a priority, it will be time well spent.
- The day-to-day operation should consist of taping as many hitters as possible, as often as possible and from as many angles as possible.
- Time slots will be set up for the coach and hitter to review the video.
- This is a valuable tool, both for the hitter as well as the coach, a tool that can help us create that edge.

EXECUTION GAME

The Execution Game is designed to perfect the skills necessary to accomplish our Team Plate Appearance goals. Acceptable point totals for Position Players are 30 points out of a possible 38 through execution round and 25 points for Pitchers.

- Team Plate Appearances:
  - Any hit
  - Any walk
  - Any hit by pitch
  - Any out advancing the lead runner
  - Any sacrifice fly
  - Any sacrifice bunt
  - Any error that would have counted
    - Ie, groundball error committed by second baseman with runner on second base and 0-1 out; fly ball error committed by outfielder with runner on third base and 0-1 out.

TERMINOLOGY

Communication between the coaching staff and hitters is more effective when the same terminology is used. Continuity is maintained, time is saved and development is enhanced. The following words and phrases should be understood and communicated by all staff:

Dynamic balance – Staying balanced from start to finish. Maintaining the head over the center of gravity throughout the entire swing. This is a primary goal of every hitter.

Center of gravity – The spot located just below the belly button. Keep it between the feet at all times.

Sequence -Refers to what body parts start the swing and continuing on through the completion of the swing. Feet first, hands last. Swing from the ground up. The swing starts in the feet and ends with the hands.

Axis of rotation- An imaginary pole that runs down through the hitter's body from the top of the head through the belly button and into the ground directly between the feet.

Kinetic link - The distance measured in degrees where the lower half of the body is leading the upper half to the ball.

Torque- Created when the lower half of the body and the upper half are moving in opposite directions.

Linear movement – One of only two movements made by the hitter. It begins when the center of gravity starts forward and ends when the front heel touches the ground.

Rotational movement- The other movement made by the hitter. It begins when the front heel hits the ground.

Bat lag -During the swing, the bat actually is the last thing to move to the ball. The body delivers the bat to the ball and the bat lags last.

Bat quickness – The time it takes the hitter to move the bat from launch to contact.

Bat velocity – How fast the bat is traveling at contact.

Pop it -Refers to the aggressive action of the back foot as it gets into rotation.

Snap it- Refers to the front knee locking' out close to contact, allowing rotation to be completed.

Timing – Being in the right place at the right time no matter what type of pitch is thrown.

Be On Time – Make front foot contact when the ball is half way from the pitcher.

E.P.R.- Early pitch recognition is accomplished while the body is in motion, a must for good hitting.

The body delivers the bat- The swing begins in the feet and ends with the hands and bat. Feet first, hands last, turn the body prior to swinging the bat.

Stay tall- Refers to upper body posture. There will be a slight tilt to the upper body on the swing. Try to avoid excessive bending at the waist.

Posture -Maintain an upright body position throughout the swing for quicker rotation, especially on the lower pitch. Do not go down to get the ball causing excessive bending at the waist and unnecessary head movement.

Head movement – The head will move two times during the swing process. It will move in relationship to the stride length and it will move a minimum amount on the swing.

Stride to balance – The action that puts the hitter in position to swing the bat. The hands are positioned close to the back shoulder, the bat is over the back shoulder, the body is dynamically balanced and the front foot is on the ground on the inside ball of the foot, on a 45 degree angle with the heel slightly elevated.

Launch position – Same as stride to balance.

Hand path – The route the hands take from launch to contact. It is determined by the body rotation with the hands becoming active late in the tum moving above the ball at contact.

Load – The initial phase of timing where the hitter coordinates his movements with the pitcher. Generally this involves the weight moving back in a controlled fashion to then move it forward under control.

Contact – The point where the bat meets the ball. It is in front of the body on all locations. The hands will be above the ball and the bat will be below. The top elbow will be bent close to 90 degrees and the palms will be up and down.

Turn it -Refers to what the hitter does with his body to get into the position to swing.

Extension- The position the arms get into after contact, prior to the hands rolling over.

Let the ball travel- Maintain dynamic balance throughout the swing. The ball will most always come to the hitter, just wait for it to arrive.

Head/Eyes down at contact – try to follow the ball as far as possible into the contact area. Keep the head on the ball because the body will follow it wherever it goes. Let that be a positive direction along with maintaining posture.

Elevate – Make the pitcher bring the pitch up higher. Avoid swinging at the pitch below the knees where the pitcher would like the hitter to work.

How to improve bat speed – rotate quicker.

Stay back -Maintain dynamic balance.

Go down and get it – Maintain posture when hitting the pitch down, the only thing that goes down to get the ball is the bat.

Take the back of the knuckles to the ball - Refers to the body turn starting with the feet first to get the bat to the ball rather than using the hands too soon.

Hub – Picture the head as the hub of a wheel and the body parts as the spokes and rim. The head remains as still as possible while body parts rotate around underneath.

Effortless power or powerless effort -Refers to the feeling in the body when the lower body starts the swing or the lower body does all the work.

Touchdown -Refers to the position of body when the front foot touches the ground.

DRILLS

Long tee: Soft toss on the field to work on the sequence of feet first, hands last. Puts emphasis on the aggressiveness of the lower half while leading the upper half to the ball. Gives immediate feedback by the flight of the ball. Can substitute a tee for soft toss.

Low tee: Ball is set on a low tee (below hitters front knee). This drill helps hitter to get into sequence, as well as create proper bat path on a low pitch. If this drill is done right, hitter will hit line drives off the baclt of the tunnel.

High tee: Ball is set on a tee higher than a high strike. Hitter has to get hands above the ball to create a proper bat path and to hit line drives. The difficulty in the first part of the drill makes it easier as we continue to move the ball lower and way in the strike zone. This drill helps create proper stroke, and keeping hands above the ball.

Front hip flip: Flip directly at the front hip to promote the mechanics of the lower half leading the upper half to the ball, putting the body in position to allow the hands to be pulled across in front of the body and ball. Maintain the head over the center of gravity. Can substitute a tee.

Front low flip: The ball is flipped low so that the hitter maintains posture and does not go down to get it by bending excessively at waist. The body does not go down to get the ball, the bat does. The drill is also intended to make the hitter elevate the pitch by making the ball be thigh high before swinging.

Take the ball at the knees.

Front high flip: The ball is flipped high, in and out of the strike zone with the hitter swinging at all pitches within reason. The objective is to 'get the hands above the ball at contact. The hitter delivers the hands above the ball on the way to contact and the barrel remains below the hands. Can substitute a tee.

Backside front flip: The ball is flipped from in front but five feet off to the backside of the hitter. The objective is to simulate and outside pitch. The hitter waits on the ball, swings from the ground up and hits the ball to the opposite back corner of the net.

All inclusive drill: Working on all aspects of the swing one thing at a time using tee, flip or short pitch. Hit 4-8 balls in an area and then move to the next. Going through the complete swing:

1. Create dynamic balance from the stance to the load to stride separation and finish.
2. Load, stride to balance landing on the inside ball of the stride foot at a 45 degree angle with the heel slightly elevated; body is dynamically balanced and the bat is positioned over the back shoulder angled close to a 45 degree angle with the hands close to the shoulder.
3. Begin the swing by dropping the front heel, opening the front hip and lifting the back heel while keeping the head as still as possible_ to rotate around the axis.
4. Keep the front shoulder closed and the hands back while the lower half is opening to create torque.
5. Rotate with level hips.
6. Finish high and around the comer.
7. Keep the eyes as close to the point of contact as possible through the completion of the swing.
8. Snap the front knee close to contact.
9. Increase the aggressiveness of the lower half by popping the back heel off the ground, create as much torque as possible and snap the front knee at contact.
10. Concentrate on the separation of linear and rotational movement.
11. Try to keep the head completely still on the swing.
12. Create the bat lag by dropping the top elbow down towards the side of the body on rotation.

Separation Drills: Walk Thru and Throw Back.
Hitter stands two steps behind tee and walks into the hitting stance. At the same time the hitter is walking into the stance, his hands are moving away from set up position to create good separation and putting hands into a good launch position behind rear shoulder. During the walk thru, start hands closer to the center of gravity which will force the hands to move back into a proper launch position outside the rear shoulder when hitter gets to touchdown. There are two ways to walk into hitting position:

1. back foot stepping inside of front foot and then coming back to square at touchdown.
2. stepping behind front foot and keeping shoulder square as you get to touchdown.

Beat it / Bash it: The objective of this drill is for the hitter to have the stride foot on the ground

and be balanced when the ball is halfway to the plate. This drill can be done in many situations including the bullpen, on deck circle, home plate, 3-man drill. The objective of the drill is to increase the aggressiveness of the swing, especially the lower half, thereby increasing bat speed.

Mirror: Hitters work in front of the mirror for everything from dry swings to full speed. Work on all aspects of the swing from the stance to the follow through and as many angles as possible. Be able to associate the look and feel of the swing. Use lines for posture rotation.

Keep two eyes down towards the point of contact: Seeing the ball early and late has to be a primary goal for hitters. This drill has the hitter trying to track the ball to as close to contact as possible and after contact leaving the eyes where they were without negatively effecting posture. A secondary objective is that the body follows the head in the ideal swing to make it a positive action, maintaining dynamic balance. This drill can be done from the tee to the game.

Bullpen tracking: Hitters stand in the bullpen as pitchers do their side work. Early pitch recognition (E.P.R.) and tracking using the correct mechanics of the load should be stressed. Stride to balance and the start of the swing are practiced. Hitters should umpire the pitches while working on pitch recognition and strike zone knowledge. Concentration must be high and a time frame established for maximum effectiveness.

Curve Ball drill: Coach throws in a turfed cage for proper and consistent bounce. Coach throws a one hop ball off turf into strike zone for hitter to react to and hit. Hitter is reacting to Coach's arm as if it is a fastball but has to slow body up as he realizes it's a bounced ball (just like recognizing a CB and slowing up the body so weight transfer and dynamic balance is under control). The change in speed is similar to the change in speed of a CB in a game.

One hand drills: Lead arm is loose and relaxed, think "snapping a towel". Top arm, elbow against side, palm up, on release think "sledgehammer". Body delivers the bat and backside drives through and rotates to contact.

Three man drill: Can be used during pre-game to lock in concentration. The drill consists of a hitter, pitcher and catcher. The pitcher is 35 feet away from hitter with the catcher set up behind the hitter. Catcher signals the pitch which is thrown and the hitter strides to balance identifying the pitch and umpiring strike or ball while tracking the ball as far as possible. Generally players switch positions after an at bat or specified time frame.

Pitch identification: Hitter stands in the bullpen and vocalizes out loud the type of pitch being thrown as quickly as possible.

Say "Ball": Hitter says "ball" as soon as he sees the ball leave the pitchers hand. Drill can be done in 3- man drill, bullpen, on deck circle or anywhere else where it may be effectively practiced.

Say "Ball-Hit": Progressive drill where the hitter will also say "hit" when contact is made. Good drill for concentration, tracking and the entire vision element.

Say "Ready-Hit": Hitter says ready at the start of the load and hit at contact. The objective is to be able to draw the "ready" out very slowly because the load is easy and early. There should be no rushing or sense of urgency.

Number and letter balls: Hitter calls out number or letter on the ball as quickly as possible. The ball is flipped to the hitter with little or no spin to make identification possible. Balls can be marked with different colors.

Fingers at release: Two man drill using a pitcher and hitter, pitcher goes through the delivery without a ball and holds up different fingers each time, the hitter in tum says the number of fingers as quickly as possible. The drill works best when the pitcher slows down the arm action.

Opposite field pepper: There are four players in the game: hitter, pitcher and two fielders on opposite field side. The hitter hits the ball to the fielders on the opposite side who then give the ball back to the fielder directly in front of the hitter who is acting as the pitcher.

High velocity short pitch: Velocity is increased by shortening the distance between the machine, coach or teammate. Can be done standing or on one knee, breaking balls can be included. Will help eliminate extras from swings and also help hitters understand when they have to be ready.

Forced hand movement: Hitter sets up with the hands closer to the center line of the body and then makes the hands move back and possible up to get into the proper position at stride to balance where the bat is thrown over the shoulder close to a 45 degree angle. Hitter may start with the bat vertical.

No stride, 3/4 release throw to simulate rotational swing: Stride to balance as if taking a swing. Work the lower half of the body from the ground up, rotate and make a sidearm throw 10 feet.

Slider flip: Coach is off to the slider side of the hitter 15 feet away and flips ball to outside of part of plate. Hitter lets ball travel deeper than normal into the contact zone and hits the ball up the middle and the other way by rotating the lower half first and keeping hands inside the ball.

Backside flip: Coach gets directly behind hitter who is 10 to 12 feet in front of him facing the other way. Coach flips ball from behind and hitter has to wait until ball is in contact zone to hit it straight ahead. Hitter has to get foot down early to insure contact in the right spot. Hands have to stay inside and hitter has to get foot down early enough to make proper contact.

In the line of fire: Hitter stands behind plate and is looking at ball in coach's hand who is standing behind flip screen. Hitter starts drill by taking 3 steps into hitting position starting with outside foot. As hitter approaches touchdown, the coach tosses ball. This drill stresses the eyes to focus on the ball

with more than usual head movement, to improve the ability of the eyes to scan and sweep.

No look: Hitter stands at home plate looking over rear shoulder. The coach doing the soft toss says, "ball" at the moment of release, and hitter then turns head to pick up the ball and hits a line drive off the back of the tunnel. Hitter should get into a loaded position before release of ball to make it a smoother transition. This drill emphasizes eye scanning and sweeping.

Jump Back/Explode: Player gets in stance, jumps backwards on back leg, front leg is raised up. When front foot strike occurs coach flips ball to hitter. Drill is designed to activate back hip.

Ball Chunker: Ball chunker is held with the tennis ball over players head. Load with hands below elbow and then throw the ball to center of batting tunnel. Drill is designed to create proper load with hands and to help create more extension through the hitting zone.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HITTING COACH

- Be responsible for the hitters understanding and learning the Cougars hitting plan.
- Work from the hitter's maintenance plan daily.
- Know the swing mechanics we are teaching: be able to break the swing down.
- Be able to identify problems and solve them using the Cougars plan.
- Be well versed in the Cougars hitter terminology.
- Know how and when to make adjustments.
- Hold hitters accountable for their actions.
- Communicate with each hitter daily.
- Establish a daily maintenance schedule/plan.
- Communicate with the manager concerning the hitters.
- Prepare the hitters for each game: both mentally and physically.
- Help each hitter formulate a mental plan as early in his career as possible.
- Prepare hitters to succeed at the next level.
- Video all hitters at least one time per home stand from side, back angle and front.
- You are responsible for maintenance of video library.
- Teach hitters how to use the video.
- Be able to throw BP.
- Supervise BP.
- In charge of all baseballs and bats for team use: BP, drills, etc.
- Keep all situational hitting, ratios and pitch tendency charts up to date.
- Have daily pre-game meetings to discuss opposing pitcher tendencies.
- Assist Head Coach with all enforcement of organizational policies.
- Keep a daily log for each of the players detailing individual daily activities.
- Keep mechanical talk to a minimum during the game.
- Provide statistical information to the hitter every two weeks.
- Demonstrate the following qualities:

Patience
Commitment
Work ethic
Confidence
Optimism
Passion
Motivator
Flexibility
Focus
Good listener

CHAPTER EIGHT
COUGAR BASE RUNNNERS

SECTION I: THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A BASE RUNNER

PHILOSOPHY

Base running is anticipation and it is the one area of the game that you have to work on to improve instincts, absent of a lot of fun. The fun part comes when you're shaking hands on the field after another victory that may have been due to the proper execution on the base paths. The more we're on base, the more we score and the more fun the club has. Hitting and pitching may slump, but aggressive, intelligent base running should never slump. Base running is often the least worked on and most taken for granted area on the diamond but remains one of the most criticized and vital components to the club. Being a great base runner is a priority for all members of our team regardless of one's speed, and we will work on this aspect.

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Take the Extra Base – the base in front of you is a given, how will you get to the next base the quickest?
- Study our opponents – their tendencies and rhythms.
- Be aggressive early and often – make them make plays.
- Ball in Dirt – follow the baseball, read the knees, go!
- Know the Situation – what color is our offense in? Where are the defenders?
- Trust your instincts – he who hesitates loses.
- Develop a mentality – what you lack in ability you will make up for with mentality, intellect and instinct.

GOALS

- To produce efficient, aggressive and intelligent base runners for Washington State University.
- To impart knowledge and skills that help players capitalize on their God-given talents.
- For each player to reach his potential in developing his physical and mental skills.
- For each player to create instinctive reactions.
- To understand intelligent, aggressive team play.
- To help players understand their role on the club as well as their projected roles. (There are three types of base runners: 1) the 10% elite, 2) the 65% good, and 3) the 25% don't go. All three can be excellent base runners.)
- To never be out-hustled on the bases.
- Run the bases hard from the start.
- Be responsible for learning how to run the bases well.

TEACHING POINTS

- Recognize all players learn at a different pace and that the pace may not be directly related to their offensive success.
- Positive reinforcement and positive mental intimidation are essential.
- Utilize drills as well as video to emphasize techniques.

- Think out loud; communicate your reactions and thoughts.
- Always consider what is best for the individual player's style.

PROGRESSIVE TEACHING

BEGINNER

- Primary leads and breaks – comfortable and consistent.
- Secondaries – controlled and balanced.
- Situational running (hit and runs, count running – 3-1, 3-2, delays).
- Rules – do's and don'ts.
- Batting practice routines – pre-game routines with coaches.
- Sliding – bent leg, take out, extended hook – all slides feet first.
- Rounding the bases, turns, etc.
- Anticipation – talk on the bench.
- Aggressiveness – extra bases, reading balls in the dirt, reading knees (no such thing as an aggressive failure).
- Timing on squeezes.
- Observing infield and outfield (reading arms, accuracy, aggressiveness and release times).
- Introduction to base stealing for plus runners – positive aggressiveness, forget failure rates.
- Observe and adjust running mechanics with strength coach.
- Signs and communication – verbal and visual.
- Base coaches – picking them up and knowing their styles.
- Focus on what can be done rather than what cannot.
- Drill structured routines.
- Body language awareness.
- Study pitcher's tendencies from dugout – steal based on tendencies (rhythms and looks).

INTERMEDIATE

- Same as beginner level but add:
- Attempts and reps plus experimentation are essential.
- Work more individually with role players, run scorers vs. run producers, or both.
- Start to develop base stealers or add more input.
- Pay attention to running mechanics.
- Give individual attention to all players of all speeds – a "no cloggers" approach.
- Set goals for stolen bases.
- Start to keep a black book – track player's development in practice and game stats.
- Focus on the game, pay attention to details, talk and produce situations.
- Form running for off-season programs.
- Drill structured situational routines.

ADVANCED

- All of the above, plus:
    - Higher, more refined stage of development.

  - Success rate enters the picture, helping the ball club becomes the goal.
  - They now should know their capabilities as well as their limitations.
- Pay more attention to details and habits.
- Start to understand pitch sequences and pitcher's habits and tendencies.
- Start to understand potential role for the club.
- Start to understand percentages of running efficiency.
- Learn about being in total control of all situations and opponents.

SECTION II: BASE RUNNING 101

BASE RUNNING OUTLINE

BASE PATHS

You don't have to have great speed to be a good base runner. Base running is a part of the game at which you have to really work to be good. All base running is controlled by the situations of the game. By keeping your head up, your eyes and ears open, and taking full advantage of the play in front of you, you can become an efficient base runner. Being efficient is important, but daring and aggressiveness creates defensive miscues. Knowing when to be greedy is key. Getting the most out of a player's speed by executing proper turns and reacting correctly to game situations will create a fundamentally sound mindset. Once a runner is on base, nothing should be on their mind except how to execute properly to reach home safely. Run the bases hard but smart.

QUALTIES OF A GOOD BASE RUNNER

PHYSICAL

- Well-conditioned
- Agile and balanced
- Quick reactions
- Speed
- Vision
- Physical toughness

MENTAL

- Intelligent and aggressive
  - Know self (strengths, abilities, weaknesses)
  - Know opponents
  - Know game situation (inning, outs, score, lineup, importance of run)
- Concentration
- Awareness and anticipation
- Confidence in ability and thought process
- Mental toughness

TECHNICAL

- Proper leads

- Proper reads
- Proper take offs
- Running mechanics
- Sliding mechanics

STRATEGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Run hard! A player that is lackadaisical while running the bases is a poor reflection on the program. A player who does not run the bases hard is either injured, too tired to play, or is displaying a lack of effort and should come out of the game. Good base runners think about and work on base running like good hitters think about and work on their hitting. Preparation is a key to your development as a base runner as well as your technique. We teach a simple yet mechanically solid running form. This form should be worked on during pre-game speed work or sprint work supervised by the strength coach.

TECHNIQUES

The running that we are concerned with in baseball are sprints, quick starts and quick reactions. Running form is an individual thing, but good runners do share many basic mechanics. In general, our running technique includes:

- Forward Lean
  - On take offs after swinging the bat or leading off from a base, when acceleration is the greatest, the body has significant forward body lean.
  - As the body reaches maximum speed, the body is nearly erect with only a slight forward lean for balance.
- Direction
  - Run in a straight line whenever possible.
  - The inner part of the feet should fall on a straight line, giving you a narrow base.
- Arm and Shoulder Action
  - The arm and shoulder move in opposition with the leg action.
  - Shoulder should be relaxed but steady to avoid any twisting action.
  - The upper arms move in relatively straight backwards and forwards motion with the hands moving from the lips to the hips.
- Hands
  - Carry the hands in a cupped and relaxed position.
- Stride
  - Careful to not over stride and force your center of gravity too far forward.
- Head and Eyes
  - Keep aligned naturally with the body.
  - Keep the head still with the neck, shoulders and jaw relaxed.
  - Keep the eyes focused a few yards ahead of you when not reading a fielder or the ball.

PRE-GAME ROUTINE

- Know all the natural elements before the game begins, such as:
  - Weather
    - Wet or dry (slow or fast track)
    - Footing to field bunts (solid or soft)

        - Footing in the outfield: dry (fast/uneven), wet (tarp removal, natural field drainage, excessive sprinkler).
    - Field layout
        - Fences – dimensions, angles, composition.
        - Slope off the base lines and area in front of home.
        - Thickness and length of grass.
        - Soil – sandy, firm, uneven, etc.
        - Artificial turf.

- Know all the human elements (scouting reports)
    - Check stat sheets on pitchers when available (IP, BB, K, WP, etc).
    - Check stat sheets on catchers if available (% caught, errors, PB, etc.).

- Observe batting practice
    - Study mannerisms while they get ground balls, fly balls and turn double plays.

- Observe infield
    - Outfielders
        - Arm strength
        - Accuracy, both vertically and horizontally
        - Quickness to the ball: conservative or aggressive
        - Quickness to the release point
        - Outfield Profiles
            - Left Fielder
                - Usually less arm strength
            - Center Fielder
                - Speed
                - Captain of the outfield – will call off LF and RF.
                - Arm strength will vary greatly from team to team.
            - Right Fielder
                - Usually has the best arm.
                - Usually has the highest ego because of that arm.

    - Infielders
        - Quickness on relay
        - Accuracy off relays
        - Aggressiveness
        - Agility
        - Where and how they turn double plays
        - Head droppers
        - Infield Profiles
            - Third Baseman
                - Check for agility, athleticism, aggressiveness

        - Check the slow roller action (athletic ability, quickness to the ball, release time and accuracy)
        - Mannerisms (lazy, bat to defense, etc.)
    - Shortstop
        - Usually the best arm or the quickest release.
        - Check double play turns.
    - Second Baseman
        - Usually has the least arm strength but good hand quickness.
        - Check feet and hand quickness for DP's and relays.
        - Check double play footwork (which direction on pivot).
    - First Baseman
        - Check athletic ability.
        - Throwing accuracy.
        - Glove to hand – ball transfer.
    - Catchers
        - Arm strength
        - Accuracy
        - Quickness to release
        - Foot quickness
        - Pop times

- Observe coaching styles
    - When and if he likes to:
        - Bunt, run and bunt, bunt for hit, squeeze, etc.
        - Hit and run (counts and outs)
        - Steal second, third, home, double steal, green light or delayed steal.
        - 1st and 3rd offense
        - Run on contact
        - Double tag
        - Trade a run for an out
        - Have offensive plays
        - Ball in dirt reads

- Observe starting pitcher
    - See all the pitches (big curve ball, split or change, out pitches, bounce pitches)
    - Wind-up position (falls off, stiff, etc)
    - Stretch (actions and keys to the plate, quickness to the plate).

GAME TIME

- Bench Work
    - Mental note taking – this is where the game within the game starts.
    - Conversation about your observations with teammates.
    - Observation of fielders and mannerisms.
    - Observing pitchers habits, keys, tendencies (looks & rhythms).

  - Staying involved in games, ready for participation when given the chance.
  - Be coaches on the bench – be vocal (Back! Yes Yes! Etc.)
  - Observe catcher or coach pitch calling tendencies in running situations.

- On Deck
  - Observe the fielders (see if the corner guys take their offense to defense).
  - Observe the pitcher's follow through.
  - Be a coach at the plate: use hand signs, in line with the runner and be visible.

- At the Plate
  - Know the game situation, score, outs, flow of the game and coach's philosophies.
  - Check the defense.
  - Check the fielders/pitchers reactions after errors, mental mistakes, etc.
  - Know when to bunt, especially with two outs.

OUT OF THE BATTER'S BOX

- Possible Infield Play
  - Hard 90 – force mistakes (can't change what happened to the ball – Run!)
  - Accept the challenge of running your best time every time.
  - Form run, straight line, don't follow the play – read the first baseman's feet.
  - Focus your eyes at the base (before 45') – avoid stutter steps or jumping at the base.
    - Stay within the 45' box/line.
    - Always step on the base.
    - Step on the front/middle part of the base with either foot (don't break stride).
    - Lean into and over the base.
    - Glance to the right after tagging the base – look for an errant throw.
    - Look for help from the coach.
    - Break down with choppy steps – avoid turning in until sure.
    - Walks do not mean walk to first – run!

- Possible Double
  - Angle out – maximize time, minimize distance.
  - To achieve an effective turn at first, begin creating an angle out of the box, pushing off the inside corner of the base.
  - Think third base on sure doubles.
    - Read throw to cut man.
    - Don't round base more than 2 steps if throws are in front.
    - Don't round base at all on throws from right or right center field.
    - Always remember the trail defender.
  - Tight turns and straight in to bag on close plays.
  - Slide away from the throw if necessary.
  - Run hard.

- Possible Triple

- Only need help from coach on balls in right field corner.
- Must not make the first or last out at third base.
- Run hard!

TURNS AT FIRST

- Base Hits
  - Angle straight out towards the coaching box.
  - To achieve an effective turn at first base, begin creating your angle out of the box, pushing off the inside corner of the bag.
  - Focus on the turn – don't stay on the flight of the ball.
    - Angle and lean – dropping left shoulder.
    - Eyes on the base – glance, head stays up.
    - Inside corner – either foot.
  - Accelerate off the base – can be referred to:
    - Throw your head.
    - Drive your right arm towards second.
    - Dip left shoulder as you push off the bases – Get Low!
    - Shift gears.
    - Make the defense stop you.
    - Push off the base.
  - Think greedy – always look for the next base.
    - Aggressiveness forces errors.
    - Defense always remembers the aggressive players.
    - Never assume they will make the play cleanly.
  - Square off either inside or outside depending on where the ball is hit.
  - Challenge turns farther on hits to left and center field.
  - Decide as late as you can.
  - Read throws.
  - Know infielders quickness on relays.
  - Head up, don't retreat too soon – anticipate poor throws.
  - Learn to break down then accelerate – on bobbles, poor throws, etc.)
  - Survey the scene.
  - Look around for the back door coverage with runners in scoring position.
  - Always think blind side coverage – especially on doubles.
  - Anticipate your hit scoring the runner or not – you may or may not need to sacrifice your AB for the run.
  - You must know the situation and the importance of the run – late inning that will break a tie or give us an insurance run.

- Fly Balls
  - Keep head up.
  - Be aware of the runner in front of you.

RUNNER AT FIRST BASE

The Check List Before taking the lead:

- Find the ball
- Get the signs, on the base. (First, give the coach the number of outs)
- Check the infielders
- Check the outfielders (depth, positioning)
- Check the scoreboard, know the situations
- Take your lead
- Secondary leads with less than 2 outs: conservative, looking for line drives at infielders, not being surprised, not killing the rally

Do not talk to or about:

- The opposing first baseman
- Your at bat (allow the coach to talk if he chooses)

Reminders

- All lefties have the step off move
- Recognize first to third play
- Always think first to third
- Never get picked off in a non-running situation
- Don't make the 1st or 3rd out at 3rd
- Don't let the 2nd Baseman tag you for a double play
- Slide cleanly into second base – straight in to bag, no pop-up.
- Back on low line drives through the infield
- Check the defense
- Anticipate dirt balls
- Look ahead at other runners
- Anticipate potential plays

Language

- Deeper - move toward outfield.
- In - move toward infield.
- More - inch out.
- One more - get another shuffle step.
- Back - get back!
- Close - feet too open.
- Open - front side too closed.

TYPES OF LEADS

- The Primary Lead
  - Get it early.
  - Consistent leads.

  - Left foot on the back inside corner, start by stepping with the right foot.
  - Walk off two normal strides and shuffle.
  - Normal stride = 12' (two strides and two shuffles).
  - Keep feet apart and close to the ground.
  - Hips and eyes on the pitcher.
  - Never glance back - two and two will give you your measured lead.
  - Athletic stance or wider - linebacker.
  - Both feet back on an imaginary line from the backs of first and second base.
  - Right foot is slightly open and back about three inches.

- One Way
  - Often used when there is a new pitcher and we need to see his move.
  - Clearly defying type lead - greater distance with extra step.
  - Balanced set-up.
  - Mental technique - thinking back and physically balanced.
  - We are trying to induce a good move from the pitcher.
  - *Can't get picked off!*

- One Way vs. LHP
  - 14-15' lead to disrupt pitcher and get him to throw over.
  - Looks the same as the two way lead, but the runner is thinking back on the pitcher's first move.
  - On the pitcher's first move the runner takes a short jab step to first and reads the direction on the throw.
  - If the throw is to first, he continues back to the bag.
  - If the throw is to home, he gets into his secondary lead and reads the action of the pitch.
  - *A runner should never be picked off on a one way, defensive lead.*

- Two Way
  - Defensive lead.
  - Not necessarily a defying type lead - shorten distance to normal lead.
  - Balanced set-up but weight is shifted to right side in an undetected manner.
  - Want the best secondary possible.
  - This lead is used in bunt situations.
  - *Can't get picked off!*

- Sucker Leads
  - Object is to set up the opposing bench coach, manager, catcher or pitcher into thinking the runner is or is not going.
  - Can take less or more of a lead - just can't get picked off!
  - Can be antsy and draw attention to yourself.
  - Can also be over-relaxed looking as if nothing is happening.

- Walking Leads

  - Used for stealing - inching out type lead.
  - The runner relies on timing and a pitcher that doesn't vary his rhythms.
  - Can be late like the runner wasn't ready - sneaky.
  - Keep feet balanced.

- False Break or Fake Steal
  - Break hard with a crossover than shuffle.
  - Rattles the catcher and pitcher and causes infielders to vacate areas.
  - Have to be very careful not to disrupt the hitter's at bat, especially at second base or with two outs.

- One Way
  - Balanced set up.
  - Weight shifted to front side.
  - Runner has got something on the pitcher.

- First Move Lead
  - Expanded lead typically against a left-handed pitcher.
  - Run inside baseline to take the throwing lane away from the first baseman.

- The Secondary Lead
  - Feet apart and close to the ground - basketball defense.
  - Balance weight over toes - balance over distance.
  - Weight must be slightly to the right side and feet on the ground when ball enters the hit zone.
  - Keep shoulders squared on the shuffle - do not fly open or bounce.
  - Angle follows feet alignment - slightly out.
  - The bigger the primary lead the more under control the secondary lead is and the need for less distance.
  - Secondary shuffles depend on the pitcher's quickness, defensive positioning, and catcher's abilities.
  - Be sure both feet are on the ground as the ball enters the hit zone.
  - Read the bat head with two strikes and two outs.
  - Do not crossover on line drives.
  - Read down angle on bunts.
  - Work as hard to get back as you did to get the lead.
  - Stay with the ball on the delivery - follow the ball as it leaves the pitcher's hand.
  - Anticipate balls in the dirt by reading trajectory out of the hand.
  - Know and anticipate your teammates tendencies.
  - Think aggressive.

- Getting Back to the Base
  - Crossover and dive on maximum if close - back corner of bag.
  - No shuffle or false steps - get back!
  - Straight line back to the middle of the base if standing up.

- Left foot to base - right toe drags.
- Move back or lean when the pitcher steps off - don't have to step back.
- Occasionally flinch as if stealing when a pitcher steps off to entice a pick or pitch out.

RUNNING FROM FIRST TO SECOND BASE

- On ground balls to second
  - Don't let the second baseman tag you.
  - Multiple runners - stay in the run down to allow a run to score or to force the defense to make other decisions on other advancing runners.

- On ground balls to the first baseman playing behind the runner
  - Run straight - already have the depth based on your primary lead.
  - Establish part of the angle to third base.
  - Get into the throwing lanes - outside.
  - Read the receiver's eyes - stay tall longer.
  - Run and slide toward the glove of the fielder.

- On ground balls to the first baseman holding the runner
  - Read the receiver.
  - Go to that side to create problem throwing the ball.

- To the left side
  - Anticipate where second baseman will be.
  - Balls down the line, backhands, slow rollers or in the hole - usually second baseman will go across the bag to get it.
  - Hard hit, at them, or to glove side the second baseman will usually pivot through or back off the base.

STEALING SECOND BASE

- Basic Technique
  - Start with an offensive lead from the back edge of the bases unless you are running first movement against a left-handed pitcher, then start in the line or in front of the line.
  - Make sure your lead is consistent with your non-steal lead - don't tip your intentions.
  - Weight on balls of your feet and dig in with your toes.
  - Right foot is slightly open and aligned with the left instep.
  - Use your upper body to get weight on right side, crossover and move directly to second base.
  - Stay low out of crossover as the body will naturally upright itself.
  - Unless the hitter is taking, look in to see the action of the pitch and to avoid being "deked" by the infielders.
  - Run with your best jump.
  - It is unacceptable to be thrown out at second base.
  - It is equally important to be able to steal second when you are on your own or are given a signal to steal.

  - Advanced stealers can read the catcher's signs to see pitch selection (breaking ball) or pick selection/pitch out.

- Basic Keys to Steal vs. RHP
  - Heels
  - Back knee
  - Front shoulder
  - Head
  - Tempo/rhythm

- Basic Keys to Steal vs. LHP
  - Direction of head
  - Shoulder turn
  - Body lean
  - Lead leg action
  - Hand action
  - Tempo/rhythm

RUNNING FIRST TO THIRD

- On balls through the infield.
- Use the coach at third base only on balls hit behind the runner.
- On balls behind the runner pick up the coach two-thirds of the way to second base.
- Don't round the base if not going.
- If coach's hands are up to stop you, stop on the base.
- Glance at the base, touch inside corner, push off, then pick up the coach again.
- Be aware of coach guiding you to part of base to avoid tag on a close play.

WHEN TO CHALLENGE THE OUTFIELDERS

- Depends on the game situations.
- Depends on the outfielders abilities.
- When outfielders are still approaching the baseball standing as the runner leaves sight of them to make the turn at regular playing depth or more.
- When they approach the ball carelessly.
- When they throw their arms up - faking that they can't make the catch.
- With one out - never make the first or third out at third unless you are trading the out for a run.

RUNNER AT SECOND BASE

SAME AS FIRST BASE – 6 POINT CHECK LIST

- Know coverage – short stop, second baseman or both.
- Third base coach reads shortstop, second baseman or both.
- Runner has safe primary – you musts be able to get back in order for it to be a “safe” lead.
- Runner concentrates on the pitcher and catcher.

TYPES OF LEADS

- The Primary Lead
  - Five normal strides and a shuffle - minimum distance for all players.
  - Variety of ways to reach this distance – quick six strides, or 4+2, etc. The key is to get your lead early.
  - Base stealers need movement and more distance depending on the pitcher.
  - Angle out no more than two strides deep, shuffle sideways and in.
  - Base stealers end close to the line.
  - Non base stealers stay back promoting more efficient turns.
  - Two outs, all runners can be back.
  - Sacrifice bunts - all runners close to the line.
  - Know the distance from the base.
  - Keep weight on right foot - for better push off towards second base.
  - Look in for signs from the catcher.
  - Look in for pitch identity in pitcher's glove – see breaking ball anticipate ball in dirt.
  - Listen for communication from third base coach.
  - Don't jockey around, this disrupts the hitter.

- The Secondary Lead
  - Same as at first base plus distance - controlled aggressiveness.
  - Shuffle preferred over crossover step.
  - Under control at contact point, looking for the line drive to the infielder, not being surprised, not killing the rally.
  - Over aggressive secondaries often lead to catcher pick offs, double up on liners, poor reads and jumps.
  - Bunt secondaries - catchers pick-off throw on a bunt miss (softer secondary).
  - When ball is hit, movement is slightly out – go back on the low liners.
  - Think tag with zero outs, halfway or read with one out - never make that third out at third base.
  - Read balls in the dirt- remember that you already are in scoring position.
    - Typically in a yellow read on ball in dirt.
    - Plus runners anticipate action.
    - Below average runners must read the carom – must be a sure thing.

READS AT SECOND BASE – ADVANCING TO THIRD

- With less than two outs and no trail runner, and knowing where the shortstop is, a runner can advance to third when:
  - Any ball hit from the center of your body and to the left, over (towards second base, to right side). After your secondary, you can advance.
  - Slow rollers or choppers in front.
  - A ball is fielded in the hole and the shortstop comes up throwing immediately (runner must slightly retreat or hold and wait for the release).

- A runner can advance to third on balls hit to the third baseman if:

- The third baseman is deep, back hands the ball and throws.
- The third baseman is deep and goes to his left.
- The third baseman has to come in on bunt, slow roller or chopper.
- The first baseman is a poor thrower, thus you can advance once the ball leaves the third baseman's hand.

READS AT SECOND BASE – ADVANCING TO HOME

- Using the third base coach.
- Have a scoring mindset-pick up the 3rd base coach early.
- If being waved home, round the base and pick up the coach again on your way to home plate.
- Run hard until stopped by the coach. Never anticipate being held by the coach.
- Slide on all close plays at the plate. Pick up the on deck hitter who should be coaching the runner at home.
- A two out secondary that is "super aggressive" is crucial in scoring on a base hit.

STEALING THIRD BASE

- Basic technique.
- Work to get distance and momentum towards third base.
- It is virtually impossible to steal third base from a dead stop.
- The key is timing – read the pitcher's looks and rhythms plus the action of the middle infielders.
- Understand running and non-running situations.
- A shuffle on the head turn creates the momentum needed to steal third base.

RUNNER AT THIRD BASE

SAME AS FIRST BASE – 6 POINT CHECK LIST

- Know coverage where the third baseman is playing.
- Runner has safe primary – you musts be able to get back in order for it to be a "safe" lead.
- Runner concentrates on the pitcher and catcher.

BE CONCERNED WITH

- Going on contact – always going forward.
- Reading the ball off the bat – looking down angle. Score, freeze, tag.
- Squeeze play – make sure pitcher's leg is on the way down.
- Double steal – know what color we are in on the pick and the throw.
- Straight steal of home – lull to sleep, distance, moving lead a must.
- Drag bunt – follow the third baseman up the line.
- Wild pitch or passed ball – anticipate, weight distribution, read the catcher.
- If the ball is going out of the catcher's circle – go!
- Throws back from the catcher – down on one knee, no back up from middle infielders.
- Tagging up – all foul balls and liners, especially with runners at first and third.
- Forcing a balk – right before they set their hands, fake squeeze (not everybody).
- Do not make the first out at home.

- The twelve ways to score from third base.
- Don't get picked off!
- Constantly check where your defense is at.

TYPES OF LEADS

- The Primary Lead
  - Start in foul territory, return in fair territory.
  - Lead is similar to that at first base - three steps and a shuffle minimum.
  - Take what the third baseman will give you then cut down your secondary if necessary.
  - More upright stance to start - controlled, relax.
  - Do not stray too far into foul ground, catcher's view improves.
  - Always return hard to the base once the ball is received by the catcher.

- The Secondary Lead
  - Do not crossover, especially when pitcher in in the stretch.
  - Shuffle staying square to the infield, finish with shoulders parallel to the line, foul ground.
  - Weight shift to right side slightly when ball in in the hitting zone – feet on the ground.
  - Return in fair territory.
  - Read third baseman when starting back – pick up the throw back to the pitcher.
  - Anticipate catcher's throws on missed swings in contact situations.
  - Read ball of the bat in non-contact situations with less than two outs.
  - Easier for the catcher to pick with a left handed hitter, and always look for pick-offs in "green" contact situations.

COMMANDS AT THIRD BASE

- Infield back with less than two outs – read situation.
- Back on line drives.
- Tag on fly balls and line drives.
- Score on ground balls.
- Corners in, middle back.
- Score on balls pass the pitcher and up the middle.
- Score on situations where trying to avoid a double play from the pitcher or corners – try to force the throw home to avoid the double play.
- Freeze on ground balls to the corner infielders.
- Tag on fly balls and line drives.
- Read choppers.
- Infield in contact play.
- Make ball be through.
- Follow in on bunts for base hits – delayed secondary.
- Green going in looking.
- Make the ball be bunted to right side of diamond – safety squeeze.

SECTION III: BASE RUNNING PLAYS

FUNDAMENTAL PLAYS

HIT AND RUNS

- Cannot get picked off – one way lead and break late acceptable.
- Don't change your lead or mannerisms.
- Keep max lead with no changes.
- Run full speed and look in.
- Look in first step and stay with ball.
- Trouble finding the ball look for the third base coach.
- Keep running on slow liners – will likely be doubled up if caught anyway.

DELAYED STEALS

- Same footwork as secondary lead.
- Regular two way lead.
- Stay square to the infield with the shoulders.
- Do not bounce or fly open.
- Get as many shuffles as you can and run when you see the glove opening.

READING BALLS IN DIRT

- No what color you are in – green, yellow, red.
- Green means go! If out it is on the coaches.
- Yellow means safe! If go you must be safe. Any doubts stay.
- Red means passed ball or wild pitch – only go if ball gets to backstop.
- Follow the ball out of the pitcher's hand and read the trajectory, then the catcher going to his knees. If go to knees go!
- Anticipate the pitch via the count and the pitcher's pitches.
- Read the catcher's position, get the signs if able or read the catcher's glove and arms.
- Avoid the stop and go secondary – trust your instincts.
- Anticipate and if not in the dirt turn it into a delay.
- Know the situation of the game and where you are – realize scoring importance.
- Hesitate and stay – do not force it if you do not jump it.

SQUEEZE PLAY

- Normal primary but working to increase.
- Strong, bold strides on the pitcher's start – strong walk.
- Run when lead foot is in a downward motion – almost landed.

TAGGING

- Fundamentals at first base
    - All foul balls.

  - Can double tag when a big run is at third on medium fly balls, read outfielders action and directions.
  - Must know all the outfielder's scenarios
  - Usually accomplished by the burners.
  - Usually deep fly balls with weak arms, easily catchable, and caught on the glove side.

- Fundamentals at second base
  - Tag with zero outs on all apparent catchable balls.
  - With one out go half way to score if dropped – tag late on deep fly balls.
  - Can double tag on a medium fly ball in a close game – read outfielder's actions.
  - Deep fly balls from right field line to left center.

- Fundamentals at third base
  - All foul balls.
  - Know the outfielder scenarios.
  - Establish a firm foot hold.
  - Turn to the side of the ball.
  - Draw throws all the time.
  - On shallow fly balls, stay close to the base but off until a catch has been made; look for dives, short hops, etc.
  - Tag and read the trajectory and direction of outfield throws on medium to shallow fly balls (catchable) to right field.
  - React on your own vision, avoid voice communication.
  - No false set up (flinches) moves before running.
  - Push off the base with foot nearly horizontal.
  - Read depth of fielder or whether you believe the ball will be run down (as the fielder narrows the gap, so does the potential tagging runner back to the base).
  - Tag on all definite foul balls, if unsure - go as far as allowed.
  - Read the receiver's eyes and get into the throwing lane, if a close play.

CONTACT PLAY

- Same secondary but all movement is forward on contact.
- No hesitation, no stop and go or pausing.
- Can tag on fly balls, must scramble at times to get back.
- Probably out on liners, but try to get back.
- Never give up – slide late and hard inside when the ball beats the runner to home.

MUST RUN

- Off the sign and in 3-1 or 3-2 counts.
- Treat like a hit and run.
- Must look in to see the ball – contact or not.
- Running under the protection of the hitter.
- Trying to stay out of a double play.

DOUBLE STEAL

- Runners on first and second.
- Trailing runner stays on the lead runner with a slightly open stance – able to see lead runner and pitcher.
- Trailing runner doesn't run – off lead runner, head up and on lead runner.
- Lead runner, no more than two strides to stop and hold/fake – trailing runner needs to release to second also.
- Coach can put the hold on the trailing runner.
- Trail runner has to work for a better throw than max lead since his jump will be later than the lead runner.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

- When catcher turns his back.
- Timing on draw.
- When the ball passes the pitcher's head.
- Freeze.
- Not going anywhere but must be ready for an error.
- When and why (steal a base or a run).
- Responsibility of back runner.
- Can't get picked off.
- Can't get fooled by third to first move.
- Must stop on throw through or slide way wide.
- Has to realize that they may not be throwing through and must continue to second base.
- Responsibility of front runner at third base.
- Need distance on lead and movement.
- Stay close to the line - disguise lead length.
- Run when the catcher turns (Otto).
- Releasing - off the rundown, runner at first hung up.

RUN AND BUNT

- Plus runner breaks off a two way lead.
- Peeks in to see the bunt direction.
- May or may not be able to go to third base – must check the defense while running and angle out.

BUNT PLAY OFFENSE

- Keep with the minimum leads on bunts – normal.
- React to the pitcher.
- Don't get bluffed back.
- Look for the back door picks off failed bunts.
- Look for early bounce.
- Can't force a poor bunt.
- Bunt defense is usually on when a sign is given by the third baseman.
- Shuffle off the base in a low, athletic position.

FORCED BALK

- Wind-up position.
- Check the pitcher's weight distribution.
- Check hands – separated or together.
- Start with shorter lead.
- Break when the pitcher is looking in for signs or when they are just coming set.
- Sell it that the runner is going to score but don't get too far down the line for the catcher's pick.
- Read the third baseman.

TWO-STRIKE TWO-OUT SECONDARIES

- Off an aggressive secondary.
- Runner is off with the bat head as it starts to enter the zone.
- Runner is always going forward on the swing – never back.

ESCAPING RUNDOWNS

- Pick the receiver's lane – read their eyes, stay tall.
- Listen for verbal commands – ball, now, etc.
- Half speed to full speed – when tagger narrows the gap.
- Try to keep an eye on the player with the ball.
- After one of the throwers release the ball, try to get an obstruction call by grabbing or running in to him.
- If obstruction is called, you will be safe but the fielder must be in the base path for obstruction to be called.
- Stay in it as long as possible with other runners on base to allow them to advance.
- Accept the challenge and give them hell!

COMMUNICATION

- Help is needed from the third base coach when the batted ball is behind the runner, from right field over.
- When there are runners ahead - coach will pick up the trailing runner when the first runner is even to beyond him.
- To determine where the play will be when running towards third - coaching by position.
- To control the runner at second; may change terminology per player, team, inning, etc.
- Never slow up until you score.
- Don't go for decoys.
- Run hard to every base – easier for the coach to make a decision.
- Know the third base coach's hand signs or if they coach by position.
- All runners must learn to peek (find the ball) while stealing. Base stealers are the exception early in the count.
- Learn to react on your own, as if 50,000 screaming fans were at the game.

SLIDING

To be a good base runner it will be necessary to execute various types of slides. A player may not be able to increase running speed, but through work and practice he can become skilled at sliding.

There are four reasons to slide:

1) To avoid a tag.
2) To slow down or stop at a base.
3) To avoid a possible collision.
4) To avoid contact on a double play ball.

We try to make sliding as simple as possible by asking that a player only learn to slide on his natural side even though the ability to slide on both sides has benefit in some situations. All players will demonstrate their ability to slide before playing in games.

SLIDING FUNDAMENTALS

- Aggressive acceleration on the approach – no hesitation.
- When in doubt slide.
- Eyes on the base.
- Where necessary read the receiver.
- Stay in the throwing lanes when necessary and slide hard and late.
- Extend feet.
- Tuck one leg under.
- Arms overhead.
- Skim the ground surface with the side of the calf, butt and even the back.
- Touch the base with the lead foot.
- Never slide head first into home.
- Be aggressive but not dirty – knock the ball out of the glove.
- Hands must be up.
- Upper body slightly forward with hands up.
- Be committed through the play.
- After slides to any base, look to the outfield for errant throws, and prepare to advance.

TYPES OF SLIDES

- Bent Leg Slide
    - Left leg extended, right leg tucked under knee or vice versa.
    - Crossover slide – inside or outside.
    - Bent leg slide past base and reach back with opposite arm on the roll over.
    - Used mainly at second base when you have very little chance of being safe and when the infielder likes to take the throw inside.

  - At home plate slide on the plate not up to it. When the ball beats you or the plate is not visible, slide late and hard to the inside.

- Pop Up Slide
  - Contact is on the bent leg shin.
  - The upper body should be leaning forward and hands up to create the pop-up.
  - Late bent leg slide with momentum lifting the body up after contact with the base.
  - Used mainly at second base.
  - Good, late and hard slide that gets the player in position to advance base.
  - Can be used as an intimidation slide – be careful with umpires.

- Take Out Slide
  - Bent leg slide where the right leg is extended and where the foot makes contact with the fielder's shin area.
  - Anticipate where the receiver will take the throw.
  - Hands are up, crossed and strong in front of the plate.

- Head First
  - Strongly discouraged especially with young players.
  - Fingers bent or up.
  - Used to dive back into bases on pick-offs – spoke slide.

SLIDING DRILLS

- Teaching progression
- Sitting down stationary in correct ending position for each type of slide followed by 4-point drill. Supported on hands and feet with butt off the ground and belly up/ kick feet out from under to bent leg position and throw hands up at the same time.
- Slide at half speed from 30' without spikes on moist grass or sliding mat.
- Same as above but at full speed.
- Full speed with spikes on the field at regular distance.

BASE RUNNING DRILLS

- Sliding once before any player plays in a game and as needed throughout the season.
- Base running during batting practice at each base, especially during execution rounds.
- Early work reading keys for breaks and leads plus team offense relating to base running.
- Combine base running with hitting drills.
- Pre-game running routine by all position players emphasizing the seven fundamental situations.
- Five explosive starts after pre-game sprints.
- Running times will be kept on all players throughout the year.
- All stolen base attempts and dirt ball reads will be tracked throughout the year.

CHAPTER NINE
PHYSICAL PREPARATION

EARLY TREATMENT

To be a prolific pitcher, you must first be a prolific thrower. Having injuries that prevent you from throwing on a daily basis will also prevent you from reaching your potential as a pitcher. With that in mind early treatment is an avenue all pitchers must take at WSU.

This program is designed to facilitate blood flow for warm-up and flush programs for the shoulder. In addition these exercises are used to assist in added rotator cuff strengthening and stretching of the shoulder capsule. These exercises are to be performed before daily practice/games and also used for post-game flush.

A. PNF Series: All exercises are set of 12
   a. D1, On Back
      i. Hand palm down on opposite hip.
      ii. Resist overhead motion.
      iii. Finish palm up, and return to start.
   b. D2, on back:
      i. Hand palm down on opposite shoulder.
      ii. Resist extension of elbow, and finish palm up.
      iii. Return to start.
   c. Scapular Punches Vertical
      i. On back.
      ii. Make fist, elbow extended.
      iii. Resist punching to sky.
   d. Scapular Punches Horizontal
      i. On back.
      ii. Make fist, elbow flexed.
      iii. Resist horizontal punching across and back.
   e. Scapular Punches Diagonal
      i. On back.
      ii. Same as above but punching is at a diagonal motion across face.
   f. Overhead Wing
      i. On back.
      ii. Arm on stomach with elbow flexed.
      iii. Resist moving arm overhead and back to stomach.
   g. Rhythmic Stabilization
      i. On back.
      ii. Arm locked out and straight up in air.
      iii. Have athlete hold arm in place while you move it around.
      iv. Three sets of 30 seconds.
   h. Internal/External Rotation
      i. Lying on non-dominant side.
      ii. Elbow flexed and resting on side.

iii. Resist internal and external rotation motions.

i. Shrugs/Depressions
   i. Lying on non-dominant side.
   ii. Elbow flexed and resting on side.
   iii. Resist shoulder shrug and depression of shoulder.

j. Superman Pulls
   i. On stomach.
   ii. Arms straight out in front.
   iii. Resist athlete pulling arms towards body.
   iv. Repeat.

B. Dumbbell Series: All Exercises are three sets of 10. No more than five lbs.
   a. Dumbbell Lateral Raise
      i. On stomach.
      ii. Squeeze shoulder blades together.
      iii. Raise arm laterally.
   b. Dumbbell Full Can Raise
      i. On stomach.
      ii. Squeeze shoulder blades together.
      iii. Thumb up raise arm at 45 degree angle.
   c. 90/90
      i. On stomach.
      ii. Squeeze shoulder blades together.
      iii. Raise arm to 90 degrees then externally rotate 90 degrees.
      iv. May need to lower weight on this one if too difficult.

C. Tubing Series: All Exercises are three sets of 10
   a. Standing internal/external rotation
      i. Elbow flexed and arm at side.
      ii. Internally rotate to stomach.
      iii. Place arm against stomach and flex elbow
      iv. Externally rotate to 90 degrees.
   b. Standing Overhead Internal/External Rotation
      i. Arm raised and elbow flexed.
      ii. Internally rotate.
      iii. Reverse and externally rotate.

D. Body Blade: three sets of 30 seconds
   a. Kneel on one knee.
   b. Go through throwing motion with the body blade.
   c. Three times with 30 second rotations.

E. Stretch: All stretches done daily (three times 30 Seconds each)
    a. Internal Rotation – 90/45 degrees.
    b. Horizontal Adduction.
    c. Inferior Capsule.
    d. Sleeper Stretch – 90/45 degrees

SOFT TISSUE THERAPY (SELF MASSAGE)

Muscle tissue can be bound up through training, overuse, and even dysfunction. This can give the feeling of muscles being tight and restricted from range of motion. A muscle is generally elastic and pliable, but when these "knots" occur it can present a problem to the individual. Massage therapy as a prior and post exercise is a great way to loosen up the "tight" muscles and get range of motion back to the joints. Coupled with active isolated stretching after exercise activity, it can help speed up the process to recovery. Your strength and conditioning coach will take you thru self-massage using foam rolls and tennis balls.

DYNAMIC AND STATIC STRETCH

MOVEMENT PREP

Preparing the body to endure the rigors of activity can help reduce the chance of injury during the activity. Properly activating muscles thru dynamic movement will provide the body to withstand the game's demands. Start out with light activity with the following movements:

PRE-PRACTICE AND GAMETIME WARM-UP

A. Light stride/jog out 30-50 yards
B. Back pedal back 30-50 yards
C. Carioca down and back 10-20 yards
D. Side Shuffle down and back 10-20 yards

DYNAMIC LOWER BODY MOVMENTS

All of these stretches are done while moving straight ahead about 10 yards for each movement.

A. Ankle Cradle w/ Instep Lunge
    a. Grab one foot underneath ankle and gently pull upward for one second.
    b. Release foot and lunge forward with same foot.
    c. Place opposite hand on the ground parallel with forward foot.
    d. Keep back leg straight and hold position for one second.
    e. Repeat with other side.
B. Reverse Lunge w/ Twisted Reach
    a. Lunge backwards with one leg.
    b. While in reversed lunge position and twist upper body over the front leg.
    c. Repeat with other side.
C. Side Lunge w/ Drop Step

a. Step out sideways toward one side lowering hips down to the floor and opposite leg straight.
b. Keep feet facing forward.
c. Bring lagging leg up and then behind the leading leg.
d. Keep chest up thru the entire movement.
e. Repeat with same side.

D. Walking Hi Knee Hugs
a. Pull knee up towards chest and hug.
b. Repeat with opposite leg.

E. Walking Quad Stretch w/ Toe Touch
a. Raise foot behind body and grab with same side hand.
b. Bend over and reach toward foot on the floor with other hand.
c. Repeat with opposite side.

F. Walking RDL (aka Airplane Walks)
a. Keep one foot on the floor and keep opposite leg straight while raising behind.
b. Keep back flat, chest up, arm out to the side.
c. Repeat with opposite side.

G. Hi Leg Kicks (aka Frankenstein)
a. Keep leg straight and kick upwards.
b. Repeat with opposite leg.

HIP MOBILITY SEGMENT

A. Left Side March
a. Drive right knee up and forward
b. After knee comes back to the floor drive left knee up and to the side.
c. Repeat same side.

B. Left Side A Skip
a. Drive right knee up and forward in a skipping motion.
b. After knee comes back to the floor drive left knee up and to the side in a skipping motion.
c. Repeat same side.

C. Right Side March
a. Drive left knee up and forward
b. After knee comes back to the floor drive right knee up and to the side.
c. Repeat same side.

D. Right Side A Skip
a. Drive left knee up and forward in a skipping motion.
b. After knee comes back to the floor drive right knee up and to the side in a skipping motion.
c. Repeat same side.

STATIC LOWER BODY STRETCH

A. ½ Kneeling Lunge (Hip flexor)
a. Kneel down on one knee in a lunged position
b. Push hips forward and hold.

B. ½ Kneeling Lunge (w/ Twist)
    a. In the kneeling lunged position, twist over the front leg and hold.
C. ½ Kneeling Lunge (Open Twist)
    a. In the same kneeling lunged position, twist body toward the leg behind and hold.
D. Sumo Stretch
    a. Squat down as low as possible keeping heels down on the ground.
    b. Place elbows on the inside of the knees with hands together and hold.

DYNAMIC UPPER BODY STRETCH

A. Trunk Rotation
    a. Stand tall raise arms straight out to the side and twist torso back and forth.
B. Trunk Rotation at diagonal angle
    a. Keep twisting in a back and forth motion and slightly bend at the waist keeping back flat.
C. Windmill
    a. Spread legs out wider than shoulder width.
    b. Bend at the waist.
    c. In same twisting motion, reach with hand toward opposite foot.
D. Overhead Press
    a. Stand tall and put arms out to the side with elbows parallel with shoulders and bent to 90 degrees.
    b. Keeping scapula retracted, raise arms up over head straightening elbows.
    c. Bend elbows back to 90 degrees.
    d. Repeat action.
E. Elbows In and Out
    a. Stand tall and put arms out to the side with elbows parallel with shoulders and bent to 90 degrees.
    b. Make sure scapula is retracted.
    c. Keeping elbows up, bring them forward meeting at the midline of the body.
    d. Bring them back to the starting position.
    e. Repeat action.
F. Arms Protract and Retract
    a. Reach out with both arms fully extended. Keep palms down.
    b. Pull arms back keeping elbows close to sides. Rotate palms up.
    c. Repeat action.
G. Snakes
    a. Completely extend arms out to the sides.
    b. Twist upper arm downward, simultaneously twisting the opposing arm in the other direction.
    c. Repeat action with opposite sides.
H. No Money
    a. Place arms by side of the body with palms facing forward.
    b. Bend elbows to 90 degrees with palms facing up.
    c. Keeping elbows close to the body, rotate forearms away from the midline of the body.

d. Bring back to starting position with elbows still bent at 90 degrees.
e. Repeat action.

I. 90/90 INT/EXT
   a. Stand tall and put arms out to the side with elbows parallel with shoulders and bent to 90 degrees.
   b. Make sure scapula is retracted.
   c. Internally rotate arms downward and raise back up in a ballistic motion.

STATIC UPPER BODY STRETCH

A. Arm Across body
   a. Bring straight arm across chest.
   b. Place opposite hand along the triceps and gently pull and hold.
   c. Repeat with other arm.
B. Arm behind head
   a. Bring arm up over head and bend elbow in order to place hand behind head.
   b. Use opposite to grab the elbow overhead, and slightly pull and hold towards the other side.
   c. This should give a nice subtle stretch to the tricep and latissimus.
   d. Repeat with other arm.
C. Handcuff Stretch
   a. Reach with both arms behind low back.
   b. Clasp hands together and pull the shoulders back retracting scapula.
   c. Push hands downward to the floor and hold.

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS)

A. Base Pogo Swivel (AKA Quick Hips)
   a. Get in a good "athletic position".
      i. Slightly bend knees with hips slightly back.
      ii. Keep chest up and back flat.
   b. On cue, slight hop and rotate both feet to one direction and back to starting position as fast as possible.
   c. Repeat actions.

SHOULDER EXERCISES

These shoulder exercises are part of the daily routine. These exercises are tremendously important and will be done consistently throughout the season. Completing the exercises in order and to their entirety is a key factor in this program benefitting the pitcher. Occasional use and poor effort will not be tolerated during these exercises. These exercises not only stretch but also strengthen the shoulder and rotator cuff area.

A. Jaeger Band Exercises – Each pitcher will be issued a Jaeger Band and will be expected to have this band with them at all practices and games.
   a. J-Band Workout Reminders
      i. Quality vs. quantity.

ii. Allow the arm to do the work.
iii. Maintain proper technique.
iv. Keep pace under control.
v. Keep arm, body and mind relaxed.
vi. Keep long, fluid breathing patterns.
vii. Walk closer to the fence to reduce tension.
viii. Walk away from the fence for more resistance.
ix. Work to the point of fatigue rather than failure.

b. Dual Arm Exercises
    i. Over the head forearm extensions
        1. Clip at mid-back height.
        2. Front knee over front heel at right angle.
        3. Elbows stay stationary
        4. Palms extended forward.
    ii. Side extensions
        1. Clip at mid-back height.
        2. Front knee over front heel at right angle.
        3. Lengthen (not round) the side.
        4. Extend from back hip through finger tips.
    iii. Diagonal extensions
        1. Clip at mid-back height.
        2. Front knee over front heel at right angle.
        3. Lengthen (not round) the side.
        4. Extend from back hip through finger tips.
    iv. Forward flies
        1. Clip at chest height.
        2. Slightly bent elbows at shoulder height.
        3. Palms toward each other.
    v. Reverse flies
        1. Clip at mid-back height.
        2. Same as forward flies in reverse direction.
        3. Palms move away from each other.
        4. Bend knees; keep chin over toes and head still.

c. Throwing Arm Specific Exercises
    i. Internal rotation
        1. Clip at hip height.
        2. Elbow on hip.
        3. Arm at right angle.
        4. Place off hand under armpit.

ii. External rotation
    1. Clip at hip height.
    2. Same as internal rotation in opposite direction.
    3. Opposite hand on outside of elbow to stabilize.
iii. Elevated internal rotation
    1. Clip at shoulder height.
    2. Arm at right angle.
    3. Throwing elbow stabilized directly in front of shoulder at shoulder height.
iv. Elevated external rotation
    1. Clip at shoulder height.
    2. Same as internal rotation in opposite direction.
v. Reverse throwing
    1. Clip at waist height.
    2. Take arm in reverse direction maintaining the same arm action and arm slot.
    3. Front shoulder facing clip.
vi. Forward throwing motion
    1. Clip at chest height.
    2. Use two fingers through wrist cuff.
    3. Keep proper throwing mechanics.
    4. Keep tubing in line with arm slot.

B. Cross Symmetry Exercises
    a. Perform all exercise with both arms moving together
    b. Row
        i. 10 reps.
        ii. High intensity cord.
        iii. Cords at eye level.
        iv. Start with hands in front of body and bring back to chest.
    c. Reverse Fly
        i. 10 reps.
        ii. Low intensity cord.
        iii. Cords at eye level.
        iv. Start with hands in front of body and pull out to “T” position.
    d. Punch Plus
        i. 10 reps.
        ii. High intensity cord.
        iii. Cords at eye level.
        iv. Start with hands next to chest, back to the wall.
        v. Extend arms out front of body.
    e. 90/90
        i. 10 reps.

ii. Low intensity cord.
iii. Cords at knee level.
iv. Start with hands at waist.
v. Pull hands up to Y position with elbows at shoulder height.

f. Scaption
i. 10 reps.
ii. Low intensity cord.
iii. Cords at knee level.
iv. Start with back to wall, hands behind back.
v. Extend arms up so hands are out front of body at shoulder height.

g. Incline Plus
i. 10 reps.
ii. High intensity cord.
iii. Cords at knee level.
iv. Start with back to wall, hands in front of shoulder.
v. Reach hands up to 135 degrees in front of body.

h. Victory
i. 10 reps.
ii. Low intensity cord.
iii. Cords at knee level.
iv. Start with hands down together below the waist.
v. Bring hands up above the head in H position.

STRENGTH TRAINING

The weight training program must produce strength resistance along with maintaining flexibility. The Cougar's strength program is designed to allow our players to stay healthy and improve performance. Consistent weight training throughout the season will help maintain health and performance. Emphasis on the core and legs is essential for balance and overall strength for a pitcher. Also make sure you do not lose an inning on the field due to your irresponsibility in the weight room!

Strength is a key component to performing at the best of your abilities. Baseball requires strength, power, speed, quickness, agility, flexibility, endurance, and stamina. Each of these can be enhanced through a proper weight-training program. Although there are many exercises used to strengthen a baseball athlete, the following exercises are just a few key components of our strength training program:

A. Squats
a. Starting Position
i. Stand upright with feet shoulder width apart and barbell resting behind the neck on your traps with hands placed slightly wider than shoulder-width apart using an overhand grip.
ii. Keep your back straight and your head tilted up.

b. Lift
    i. With your back remaining straight and your head tilted up, slowly lower the weight by bending your knees until the upper part of your legs is parallel with the floor.
    ii. Explode upward back to the starting position.
    iii. Be sure that the back remains in an upright position as you ascend to the starting position.

B. Box Step Ups (can be used with either barbell or dumbbells)
    a. Starting Position
        i. Stand upright with feet shoulder width apart and barbell resting behind the neck on your traps with hands placed slightly wider than shoulder-width apart using an overhand grip or holding dumbbells at your side.
        ii. Keep your back straight and your head tilted up.
        iii. Stand with a box, bench, or some sort of stable elevated apparatus in front of you.
    b. Lift
        i. Step forward up on the elevated surface with one foot.
        ii. Bring your other knee up so that its' thigh is parallel to the floor.
        iii. Lower your left leg all the way back down to the floor and bring your right leg back down to meet it.
        iv. Repeat with other leg.

C. Lunges
    a. Starting Position
        i. Stand upright with feet shoulder width apart and barbell resting behind the neck on your traps with hands placed slightly wider than shoulder-width apart using an overhand grip or holding dumbbells at your sides.
        ii. Keep your back straight and your head tilted up.
    b. Lift
        i. With everything remaining still, slowly take a large step forward with one leg, bending both knees.
        ii. The weight on your back foot should come up on your toes, and the knee on your back leg should come very close, but not touch the floor.
        iii. Using your forward leg, thrust yourself back to the starting position the same way you came down.
        iv. The entire lift should be in one smooth, fluid motion.

D. Lat Pulldowns
    a. Starting Position
        i. Sit at a lat pulldown machine.
        ii. Keep your back straight and lean backward a few inches with your feet resting on the floor.

iii. Grab the bar with both hands, using an overhand grip.

b. Lift

i. Keeping your body stationary, pull the bar down in front of your neck by squeezing your shoulder blades together and bending your arms at the elbows.
ii. Pull the bar down until the bar grazes your chest.
iii. Let the bar come down to a complete brief stop before slowly and controllably guiding it back up to its original starting position.

CORE TRAINING

Core training is a very important factor in a player's performance and overall athletic ability. Without a strong durable core an athlete could not be able to properly transfer power generated from the lower body to the upper body. Training from the middle section to our outer body parts is how we want to accomplish this. This doesn't mean go out and do sit ups and crunches every day, be practical and smart. We train the core for function (meaning stability, mobility, and rotational force), not the beach.

A. Medicine Ball Lateral Throws

a. Starting Position

i. Stand in an athletic based position.
ii. Keep feet pointing straight ahead as your body is perpendicular to a wall (or throwing partner).
iii. Make sure your knees are slightly bent.
iv. Keep chest up, and hold medicine ball to the outside hip furthest from the object you will throw the ball at.

b. Movement

i. Rotate upper body away from the ball.
ii. In a quick and violent motion, rotate upper body initiated by the hips toward the object you're throwing at and release the ball in that direction.

B. Planks

a. Starting Position

i. Lay down on your front side, with your toes tucked under your feet and lower arms firmly on the ground.

b. Movement

i. Keeping your shoulders directly over your elbow, raise your body off the ground so that only your toes and lower arms are touching the ground.
ii. Make sure that your abdominals are tightly braced and flexed.
iii. Make your entire body as straight and rigid as possible.
iv. Hold this position for prescribed time.

C. Russian Twists

a. Starting Position

i. Sit on floor with your chest out and back flat and leaned back at a 45 degree angle.

ii. Raise feet off the ground keeping your thighs together.

b. Movement
   i. Rotate shoulders back and forth to either side keeping your chest out, back flat, and feet off the floor.
   ii. Do this for the prescribed time or repetitions.

PITCHERS CONDITIONING

RUNNING

Our running program for starters and relievers involve similar types, however, there is a yardage difference for starters and relievers. These runs focus on both anaerobic and aerobic development, with an emphasis on anaerobic. The pitcher's stride down the mound is similar in nature to a runner who is sprinting, thus we will simulate that action as much as possible to incorporate the mechanic similarity. More studies have shown the benefits of sprinting as a pitcher instead of the old long slow jog we used to do. With that in mind, below is a list of run types within each category, as well as a weekly plan for the season for both starters and relievers, with the yardage total included.

Conditioning is a critical component to the overall health and mentality of a pitcher. Due to the number times a pitcher has to make a throw at near max velocity during a given outing, it is important that the pitcher has a solid level of fitness in order to last throughout the game. Although pitching is not an aerobic activity, it is an anaerobic activity which involves being able to recover quickly between pitches and outings. The more fit an athlete is, the quicker they will be able to bounce back from one outing to the next.

A. Anaerobic Running
   a. Long – A long anaerobic run can be any sprint lasting longer than 20 seconds but cannot be maintained for more than two minutes.
      i. "Hard" Poles - Full pole (200 yards).
         1. Ran in 30 seconds or less.
      ii. ¾ poles (150 yards)
         1. Ran in 20 seconds or less.
      iii. Gassers (200 yards)
         1. Shuttles 50 yards down and back twice.
         2. Ran in 25-35 seconds or less.
   b. Short – A short anaerobic run can be any sprint lasting between 10 and 20 seconds.
      i. ½ poles sprints (100 yards)
      ii. ½ Gassers (100 yards)

B. Creatine Phosphate Running (CrPH) – This is true sprint work that can only last 10 seconds or less.
   a. Sprint Ladder
   b. 10, 20, 30, 40 yard shuttle sprints.
   c. 20 or 30 yard sprints

C. Aerobic Conditioning – Utilized sparingly to help with a pitcher's flush. It is physical activity in a "steady state" form and used to provide some general fitness effects. Generally done the day after he throws.
   a. Continuous Poles – Run at 65-75% of max sprint back and forth without stopping for prescribed amount (i.e. 10 to 15 times).

SIX INNINGS OF HELL

This conditioning program is modeled to identify and focus on the areas of the body the pitcher utilizes the most during the delivery. It focuses on the shoulders, core and legs and is a circuit type conditioning unit. It is typically done two days after a live appearance and can be done two-three times a week. Modifying this program can be done by eliminating the medicine ball part of the circuit. The reps indicated is a baseline amount used during the season. Reps can be increased as the pitcher increases his workload, especially during off-season conditioning.

A. 1st Inning
   a. Reverse Throw (Med Ball) - 6
   b. 10/10/10 (Gasser) - 5
   c. Rolling Push Up – Hindus (Push Ups) - 4
   d. Reverse Plank w/Three Second Pause (Core – Back) - 3
   e. Medicine Ball Seated Twist w/Punches – 10+10=one Rep (Core – Abs) - 2

B. 2nd Inning
   a. Granny Throw (Med Ball) – 6
   b. 10/15/10 (Gasser) – 4
   c. Wide + Close Grip (Push-Ups) – 2
   d. Plank w/Alternating Glute Lifts (Core – Back) – 10
   e. Medicine Ball Twist w/Punch (Core – Abs) - 6

C. 3rd Inning
   a. Forward Squat Throws (Med Ball) – 6
   b. 10/20/10 (Gasser) – 3
   c. Glute Presses w/ Leg Raises (Push-Ups) – 5
   d. Hamstring Reverse Plank (Core – Back) – 4
   e. Alternating Reverse Crunch (Core – Abs) – 20

D. 4th Inning
   a. Reverse Squat Throws (Med Ball) – 6
   b. 10/30/10 (Gasser) – 2
   c. Staggered Arm Push Ups (Push Up) – 3
   d. Reverse Push Ups (Core – Back) – 3
   e. Tom House Abs (Core – Abs) - 2

E. 5th Inning
   a. Side Throws (Med Ball) – 8
   b. 10/40/10 (Gasser) – 2
   c. Push Up w/Hip Twist (Push Up) – 4
   d. Medicine Ball Full ROM Single Leg RDL (Core – Back) – 4
   e. Medicine Ball V Ups (Transfer Med Ball Each Time) (Core – Abs) - 6

F. 6th Inning
   a. Reverse Side Throws (Med Ball) – 8
   b. 10/60/10 (Gasser) – 2
   c. Medicine Ball Plyometric Push Ups (Push Up) – 4
   d. Reverse Plank with three Second Pause (Core – Back) – 4
   e. Pretzels or Iron Crosses (Core – Abs) - 8

IN SEASON - STARTERS

A. Week 1-4
   a. Anaerobic – Long 600yds
   b. Anaerobic – Short 400yds
   c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
   d. Six Innings Four Innings
   e. Aerobic (Poles) 2000yds

B. Week 5-8
   a. Anaerobic – Long 800yds
   b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
   c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
   d. Six Innings Four Innings
   e. Aerobic (Poles) 2000yds

C. Week 9-10
   a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
   b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
   c. Cr-Ph Sprints 200yds
   d. Six Innings Four Innings
   e. Aerobic (Poles) 2400yds

D. Week 11-12
   a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
   b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
   c. Cr-Ph Sprints 200yds

d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 2800yds

E. Week 13
a. Anaerobic – Long 800yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 400yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 2000yds

F. Week 14-15
a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 2400yds

G. Week 16-17 (Regional Week)
a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 2000yds

H. Week 18-19 (Super Regional Week)
a. Anaerobic – Long 800yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 2200yds

I. Week 20-21 (Omaha)
a. Anaerobic – Long 800yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 600yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 2200yds

IN SEASON - RELIEVERS

A. Week 1-4
a. Anaerobic – Long 600yds

b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 400yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 2000yds

B. Week 5-8
a. Anaerobic – Long 600yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 400yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1600yds

C. Week 9-10
a. Anaerobic – Long 800yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 200yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1600yds

D. Week 11-12
a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1800yds

E. Week 13
a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 300yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1200yds

F. Week 14-15
a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 200yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1600yds

G. Week 16-17 (Regional Week)

a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 200yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1600yds

H. Week 18-19 (Super Regional Week)
a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 200yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1600yds

I. Week 20-21 (Omaha)
a. Anaerobic – Long 1000yds
b. Anaerobic – Short 500yds
c. Cr-Ph Sprints 200yds
d. Six Innings Four Innings
e. Aerobic (Poles) 1600yds

NUTRITION

Research has clearly documented the positive attributes proper nutrition has on athletic performance, such as the enhancement of strength, power, speed, endurance, immunity, and reaction time, reducing soreness and inflammation, and decreasing risk of injury. Proper nutrition or fueling is the foundation for training, performing, and dominating your competition! Keeping a food first approach to enhancing athletic performance is the best approach. Remember, dietary supplements cannot make-up for poor nutrition, but may enhance if added to a well-balanced diet.

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are the primary fuel source for your muscles during training and competition. They are also the most efficient fuel source for your brain as they enhance the ability to concentrate and focus. Carbohydrates help maximize the body's usage of protein and fat for growth, repair and energy. The majority of a pitcher's diet needs to be made up of carbohydrates. They contain vital vitamin, minerals, and fiber to keep an athlete's body healthy.

PROTEIN

The primary building block of your body's cells, protein promotes tissue growth and repair. Protein from animal and soy sources contain essential amino acids that may help improve endurance and increase and preserve muscle mass. 15-25% of your diet needs to be made up of protein. It should only provide a small amount of energy during exercise and is used primarily for building and repairing muscle/tissue.

FAT

Fat acts as a continuous fuel supply for your body. It is the primary fuel source during low intensity exercise. Certain fats can decrease inflammation in the body and improve heart health. Fats from nuts, seeds, fish, and plant oils can help supply important fat soluble vitamins and boost immunity.

PRE-COMPETITION NUTRITION

This is an opportunity to top-off your body's stores of carbohydrates before competition. Proper pre-competition nutrition will help maintain blood glucose levels, which will improve mental focus and concentration. It also helps prevent hunger, fatigue, and light headedness during competition. Fluids will help hydrate your body and control body temperature during competition. Don't forget to drink fluids during competition.

A. Timing is the Key
    a. 3-5 Hours Prior to Competition – Moderate size meal and liquids.
    b. 2-3 Hours – Small meal and liquids.
    c. 1-2 Hours – Small snack and liquids.
    d. 30 Minutes – Mostly liquids.

RECOVERY NUTRITION

Consuming a carb/protein snack with ample amounts of fluid within 30 minutes of completing a weight room workout, practice, or game will help repair damaged muscle fibers, promote muscle growth, and replenish energy stores more efficiently than if you wait longer or do not consume anything at all. Your recovery snack needs to always consist of three things: fluids, carbohydrates and protein.

BREAKFAST

Eat a balanced breakfast. Breakfast sets the body's metabolic balance for the rest of each day. If you don't eat breakfast, no matter how healthy you eat the remainder of your day your metabolic thermostat is messed up. You must eat a balance breakfast within one hour of waking up each day.

EATING HABITS

It is better for your body to eat around five smaller meals throughout the day. Dinner should be the smallest meal of the day. Lunch should be the biggest. The caloric intake should match your energy needs. Small portions of healthy foods are more beneficial and more satisfying than big portions of junk food.

A. Eat a wide variety of foods. Food sensitivities and allergies can result from the consistent eating of specific foods on a regular basis.

B. The amount of protein you eat is a function of lean body mass and your level of physical activity. A good rule of thumb is to eat one gram of protein every pound of lean body mass.

C. Eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables daily. Fruits and vegetables should be your primary source of carbohydrates. Balance is the key and your goal should be to have 40% of your meals and snacks to be complex carbohydrates.

D. Eat more smart fats. Fish oils and nuts are examples of smart fat. Anything with omega three is a source of a smart fat. Beware of saturated fats that facilitate inflammatory responses.

E. Eat foods with high fiber content. Fiber helps shield the carbohydrates in food from immediate digestion. The sugar in fiber-enriched food tends to be absorbed into the bloodstream more slowly.

HYDRATION

Over 60% of your body is made up of water. Proper fluid balance is a necessity in maintaining proper body temperature. Body fluids are essential for the physiologic processes of digestion, absorption, and excretion. The slightest decrease in water weight can have a detrimental impact on athletic performance. You need to replace electrolytes you lose through your sweat during training and competition.

DEHYDRATION

Two percent dehydration of one's body weight can equate to the loss in performance by 15-20%. In most cases dehydration has already occurred when the athlete fells thirsty. Proper hydration should supply both fluids and electrolytes to the body. Water does not provide all the body's needs. Especially if exercise or competition last longer than one hour. Drinking only plain water over a 3-4 hour competition can lead to "water intoxication". This results in the dilution of sodium in the blood due to increased blood volume and excess sodium losses from sweating. All this adds up to headache, nausea, muscle cramping, and lethargy.

So how do you know if your sports drink is a good rehydration beverage? For a sports drink to be effective, must contain at least 75mg of sodium for every 8oz. of fluid. In addition to electrolytes, research has show that carbohydrates should be in the sports drinks. Research has shown that carbohydrate and sodium work together to increase water absorption. Drinks that provide these qualities would include Powerade and Gatorade.

A. Proper Hydration Tips
   a. Urinate every 1-2 hours.
   b. Urine color is a pale yellow or colorless. If you don't produce much urine or the color is very dark chances are you are dehydrated.
   c. Do not rely on thirst as an indicator to hydrate; you are already dehydrated at this point.
   d. Drink throughout the entire day, starting in the morning with three big glasses of water, juice or milk.
   e. Drink eight to ten big gulps of fluid every 15-20 minutes of activity.
   f. Use a carb/electrolyte containing drink primarily during training/competition lasting longer than 60 minutes or when the environment is hot and/or humid.
   g. If you are prone to cramping, you need to be proactive with consuming an electrolyte containing drink prior to activity.
   h. Know your sweat losses. For every one pound loss during activity replace with 20oz of fluid. Make sure to minimize sweat losses to less than 2% of your total body weight.