

2026 SCU HYLAND BALL CLINIC NOTES

Overall Expectations as a Coach:

How you teach/demonstrate (kinesthetic/ visual/ auditory):

Language matters! Make it common! (YOU, High School, Private lessons etc...)

What drives YOUR team?

Communication with parents & families

Progression matters!

Drills vs. skills... emphasis on the MOVEMENT!

Purpose & feedback

Space & Gear

HITTING MECHANICS/TECHNIQUE

ATTITUDE:

APPROACH:

- Document & write out your routine from signal to delivery of pitch
- Practice it in a mirror and pay attention to body language & stance
 - Kids and coaches should be able to replicate each other's routine

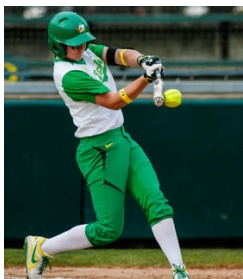
STANCE, GRIP, TIMING:



STRIDE TO BATLAG:



CONTACT:



EXTENSION & FINISH:



NORMALIZE NOT ALWAYS SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT EVERY SWING!

DRILLS DRILLS DRILLS!

UPPERBODY TECHNIQUE/HAND PATH: (make sure bats are manageable weight!)

- Top/bottom hand variations:
 - *Top hand only*
 - *Bottom hand only*
 - *2, 2, 2*

SPECIFIC TO THE PHASES:

- Negative move through contact: *slow fast drill*
- Lower half drive: *Backside drive drill*
- Proper Contact: *Insider bat drills*
- Negative move through extension: *Contact stop, Barely Through, Full to extension*

GETTING ON PLANE:

- *Double ball tee*: (need whiffle and light flight)

FUN/COMPETITIVE:

- BBALL style PIG or HORSE... do it with TEE & Front toss and what you're trying to do with the ball... example, use the cage or cones on a field as zones they're looking to put the ball to. In groups of 2-3 they call their shot and if they hit it, the partner gets a turn. If they fail they get a letter, if they succeed it is back to their teammates turn! After/if 3 consecutive letters happen switch to give other a chance.
- Target Tee: Same idea, set up a target for them to hit (so you can use a tee, sometimes we will get pinatas, etc... and their goal is to get direct hits from their contact point!

ZONES:

- Designate your 9 zones from your view to match with hitter view, after they hit the pitch make them tell you what zone it was.
- Designate your 9 zones from your view to match with hitter view, ask them what zone they're hunting and they only swing if it is that zone (this is hard!).

TIMING:

- 3 plate front toss/machine (toss at same speed, hitter moves from plate to plate)
- Bounce toss: Use tennis balls to simulate changes in speed. Alternate between bouncing to strike zone & underhand tosses

SHORT GAME MECHANICS/TECHNIQUE

1. Proper Stance & Setup (Balance + Control)

Teaching Points: “Athletic, balanced, quiet”

- Start in normal hitting stance, pivot or square into bunt position early
- Feet slightly wider than shoulders, knees bent (athletic base)
- Top hand slides up the barrel (fingers safely behind it)
- Barrel above hands (prevents popping up)
- Square to the pitcher (belly button facing pitcher)

Drills

Dry Bunt Reps (No Ball)

- Players get into bunt position and freeze
- Coach checks: balance, hand placement, barrel angle

Mirror Drill

- Partner or coach mirrors setup
- Helps younger players visualize correct form

2. Bat Angle & Ball Control (Deadening the Ball) Good bunters don't “hit” the ball/ they absorb it and control direction.

- Catch the ball with the bat (don't stab at it)
- Angle bat slightly: little bit goes a long way
 - Toward
 - Toward
- Give with the ball (soft hands)
- Keep bat still—let the ball hit the bat

Drills

Tennis Ball Bunting

- Use tennis balls for safety + confidence
- Focus on soft hands and control

Soft Toss Bunting

- Coach tosses from short distance
- Players work on deadening ball and direction

3. Timing & Pitch Selection- Even perfect mechanics fail if timing is off or players bunt bad pitches.

- Get into bunt position early (especially 8U–12U)
- Bunt strikes, pull back on balls
- Track the ball all the way in
- Adjust bat angle based on pitch location

Drills

Bunt Decision Drill

- Coach mixes strikes and balls
- Players must: Bunt strikes & Pull back on balls

Live Bunting

- Add a pitcher or front toss
- Include runners for game realism
- “Get there early, be quiet”

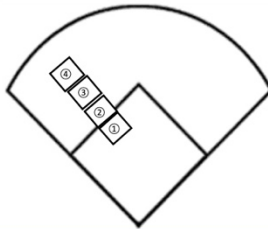
COMMON MISTAKES

Punching/stabbing at the ball Barrel dropping below hands (pop-ups)
Standing too tall (no balance) Not squaring early enough
Fear of the ball (especially younger players)

INFIELD MECHANICS/TECHNIQUE



Fielding Positions	Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 3 Point defense- Move around field- communicate strategically- use Go To Dialogue ▫ Starts & Stops- start, creep, stop to ready position ball in hitting zone ▫ Ready position- MIF tennis player like, COR light on the balls of feet ▫ Fielding Position- Routine glove out in front (tri), soft elbow, low, square shoulders ▫ Hold Position- Short pause before throwing footwork to eliminate the E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Pre-play: anticipate ▫ During-play: ball, base, backups SIMPLE ▫ Post-play: small V or FRS ▫ Pop-fly ▫ Priority ▫ Bunt defense ▫ Run downs ▫ Cuts and relays
Throwing footwork	Designed Plays w/ Signal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Quick feet- Get and get rid, ball high, pop feet into throw immediately from hold ▫ Step & throw- Stay in lane and set feet toward target, hit target in the chest ▫ Throw on the run- athletic, aggressive, attack ball, glove foot forward & outside foot ▫ Flips and Feeds- Flip and follow close range, feed 3/4 throw or dart throw to target ▫ DP footwork- communicate flip, feed or take it yourself, clear lane & avoid runner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1/3 plays ▫ Steal coverage ▫ Pitchout/ pickoff ▫ Slap defense
Defensive Positioning	Go To Drills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1- Play at home with speed/slap ▫ 2- Play at home with average speed ▫ 3- straight up ▫ 4- double play depth ▫ 5- grass line depth <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>*STAY ATHLETIC, WORK GROUND UP* *BALL, BODY, PLAY* *BALL, BASE, BACKUP* *PLAY CATCH, TOUCH IT-CATCH IT*</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Paddle work- square body up ▫ Angle footwork ▫ Reaction drills ▫ Wall ball ▫ OTS ▫ Mine, yours ▫ Ladder drills



5 GO TO INFIELD DRILLS

1. Infield routine progression

Routine goal: muscle memory, ROLE: detail oriented and slow until fast

LADDER WORK- quiet and loose upper body

a. Partner no glove on feet- bring it in, RL (righties), no feet to throw

Funnel x 5 no footwork all hand to back hand flip- respecting speed

Rake x 5 no footwork all hand to underhand flip- charging, aggressive

Rolled GB WORK- start/ stop/ ready position, fielding position, hold- separate throw

Work quick feet, step and throw and throw on the run.

1. Funnel x 3 each
2. Short hop rake
3. Routine backhands
4. Routine forehands
5. High hop
6. Angles

2. Touch Touch drill- need to diagram out for you

3. Rise and Shine Drill GOAL- need to diagram out for you

4. Sit on bucket routine gb's

Target sits on a bucket to lower mobility and emphasize good throws

5. Reaction drill with tennis balls/light flights- hit at with tennis racket- comebackers and hard liners

OUTFIELD MECHANICS/TECHNIQUE



Fielding Positions	Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Starts & Stops- start, creep, stop to ready position ball in hitting zone ▫ Split step ready position- creep into a split step when ball gets to hitting zone ▫ No one on- drop to a knee and block the ball- hit MIF cut in the chest to 2B ▫ Runner on 1B- Field like an infielder- throw through SS cut to 3B ▫ Runner on 2B- Attack, breakdown, through corner do or die to play at the plate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Pre-play: anticipate & talk positioning ▫ Pre-play: up and back angles ▫ During-play: ball, base, backups ▫ Pop-fly "MINE" /HELP/ FENCE/GOT ROOM ▫ On dive plays look for flips & comm ▫ Post-play: small V or FRS ▫ Arm strength for the day
OUTFIELD ABSOLUTES	Designed Plays w/ Signal- back up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Angles- First step quickness, angle reads increase range and make you effective ▫ Momentum- Legs, legs, legs and PUSH toward target (line self up)- Out vs. up ▫ Routine- Beat ball to the spot and accelerate through/catch throwing hand side ▫ Next level- Run, run reach, catch low, TRUST your sprint speed ▫ The throw- Everything sets you up for throw, TOP OF THE HOP! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ First thirds ▫ Steal coverage ▫ Pitchout/ pickoff
Defensive Positioning	*THROUGH CUTS, TOUCH IT-CATCH IT*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1- Slap defense shallow OF ▫ 2- Average hitter- B ▫ 3- Good hitter- C ▫ 4- Warning track power- D ▫ 44- Game on the line- no cut balls <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> Positioning ---> Left- BACK UP Right- MOVE IN </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> </div>	Go To Drills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Paddle work- quick release ▫ Angle footwork ▫ OTS catches ▫ Back to field ▫ 8 ball ▫ 3 ball ▫ Routes ▫ All out layout

5 OUTFIELD GO TO DRILLS

1. Routine:

- Routine run through- glove positioning/momentum
- Routine GB's- breakdown/ momentum
- Sunballs- preparation, angles, hand/glove- not pretty get job done
- Over the shoulder- drop steps- drop and drive/ full sprint
 - With tennis no glove
 - With glove and real ball
- Hip turns- transitions for plan b
- Head turns- transitions for plan b
- Dive to flip- glove action to prevent injury/ unconventional play
- Balls at the fence- find wall/ catch ball- air/ body position ground

2. Jugs machine angle pop flies/ line drives (have them start in different spots)- work routine and next level.
3. 3 ball drill- run them across a gym for 3 consecutive line drives
4. Hula hoop target throws (you can also use boxes on the wall)
5. 8 ball drill: give them a radius and toss 8 balls all over one at a time- lot of changing directions and thinking next play.

THROWING MECHANICS/TECHNIQUE

1. Proper Grip & Wrist Snap (Foundation of Accuracy & Spin)

- Fingers across the seams, not in the palm
- Ball held lightly (not squeezed)
- Emphasize a quick wrist snap on release

Drills

Knee Throws

- Players on one knee, short distance
- Focus ONLY on wrist + spin
- Watch for tight backspin

Wrist Flicks

- Stand 10–15 ft apart
- No arm swing—just flick wrist
- Goal: clean spin, no wobble

2. Arm Path & Overhand Mechanics: Efficient arm motion builds consistency, reduces injury risk, and improves velocity.

- Thumb to thigh/ elbow up/ throw
- Arm makes a clean circle (not pushing the ball)
- Elbow should be at or above shoulder height
- Finish across the body (don't stop short)

Drills

Towel Drill

- Use a small towel instead of a ball
- Focus on full arm circle + whip
- Listen for a “snap” at the end

3. Footwork & Body Alignment: Let's get position specific! Good throws start from the ground up, poor footwork = wild throws.

- “Step, point, throw”
- Front shoulder points at the target
- Step toward target (not across body)
- Use legs for power, not just arm

Drills

Target Step Drill

- Players step and freeze before throwing
- Coach checks alignment (feet, hips, shoulders)
- Then complete the throw

Shuffle & Throw

- Fielding position, shuffle feet, throw
- Builds game-like movement
- Emphasizes staying balanced

Common Mistakes to Watch For

- Sidearm throws (especially under pressure)
- Throwing all arm (no lower body)
- Dropping elbow= causes rainbow throws
- Rushing = bad footwork

CATCHING MECHANICS/TECHNIQUE

Core skills: Stance, Receiving, Throwing, Blocking

STANCE: Every catcher built different so every squat will be different

- Balanced
- Comfortable
- Mobile

SIGN, TARGET, BREAK (age dependent), RECEIVE

RECEIVING: PRIORITY SKILL!

- Steal the strike
- Quiet & SUAVE
- Tools for success

TRANSFERS & THROWING:

- Steal throws & pickoffs
- Feet vs. knees
- Strength/backside drive

BLOCKING:

- College level vs not...
- Lead with glove- BODY FOLLOWS WHAT GLOVE DOES
- Replace vs. drop
- Chin to chest/ throwing hand behind
- Lateral movement
- RECOVER!

SECONDARY SKILLS: Communication, relationships, leadership...

PSA: DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR CATCHERS!!!

- Incorporate them into INF drills
- Secondary plays during drill work
- Long toss/arm strength
- Make them move their gear!

BEST DRILL PRACTICES/ RESOURCES:

- Progressions & workups
- TOOLS!
- Let them THROW!
- Be smart with injury...

- Lisa Leftwich LSU staff & Jen Schroeder are excellent instructors and have great videos.

- Instagram: @goodrocatching, @jenschrocatching

PITCHING MECHANICS/TECHNIQUE

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY SOFTBALL- PITCHERS		
Leadership Expectations	GAME DAY- STARTER	GAME DAY- GAME CHANGER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Communicate spins/spots/mental status to coaches, catchers, teammates ▫ Strong chem pitcher-catcher relationship ▫ Stay poised & calm ▫ Manage tempo/game speed ▫ Steady energy ▫ Control the controllables ▫ Strong softball IQ ▫ Resilient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Read and know scout & game plan ▫ Constant comm. w/ catcher & coaches ▫ Make sure D set before pitch ▫ Always be in a backup for balls in OF ▫ Always know lineup, count, outs ▫ Honestly assess the day- spins/spots ▫ Know strategy of cuts & relays ▫ Know strategy of 1/3 plays & pickoffs ▫ Learn to trust your catchers calls & also feel when pitches need to be shaken off ▫ Primary & secondary play awareness ▫ Be in Control ▫ Be fully prepared for 1st pitch ▫ Go to dialogue awareness ▫ Bring the energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Read and know scout & game plan ▫ Actively chart/understand pitch calls ▫ Discuss pitching chart with coach/catcher ▫ Understand when to throw in bullpen ▫ Communicate batter tendencies ▫ Communicate pitcher tendencies ▫ Keep arm and legs loose ▫ Pick signals from other team ▫ Know strategy of cuts & relays ▫ Know strategy of 1/3 plays & pickoffs ▫ Learn to trust your catchers calls ▫ Understand how much time you need to be game ready (physically & mentally) ▫ Observe and learn from pitcher in circle ▫ Communicate to coaches/catcher ▫ STAND at the dugout fence- good energy ▫ Know how to manage personalities
Establishing Catcher Relationship	Know yourself	<p><i>"When you step inside that circle, all sounds stop, the game slows down, and the best thing you can do is take it ONE pitch at a time."</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Communicate your style & needs ▫ Only throw pitches you want/shake off ▫ Throw to ALL catchers ▫ Continual conversation ▫ Honest & motivational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Go-to/best/k pitch ▫ What pitches are practice focus? ▫ What pitches are game ready? ▫ What pitches are game ready today? 	
Establishing Umpire Relationship	PITCHING INFIELD ROUTINE	ROUTINE REMINDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Learn their zone ▫ Use your manners/ be respectful ▫ Don't show too much emotion when a call doesn't go your way/strategically show emotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Knees to field x 10 (each) ▫ Knees to pick x 10 (each) ▫ Short hops- FIELD x 5 (each) ▫ Short hops- PICK x 3 (L/S/R) ▫ High hops x 5 (each) ▫ Backhands x 5 (each) ▫ Forehands x 5 (each) ▫ Flips & tags x 5 (each) ▫ Attack bunt x 5 (each) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glove position thumb out, funnel ground in Rake ground out, glove frame in window Hips between knees, stay low, move feet Field out front, soft elbow, square shlders Glove outside foot, glove foot forward Respect speed of ball, transition step Respect speed of ball, transition step Follow flip, tag and move feet Elbow lead flip/follow, tag and move feet
	THROWING PROGRESSION	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ NOT on a day with pitching workout ▫ One knee 45° iso upper body x 10 (each) ▫ Two knee lose backside x 10 (each) ▫ Cement feet x 10 (each) ▫ Baseball (follow through)x 10 (each) ▫ Over the Moon- LEGS x10 (100 ft) ▫ One hops x 10 (100 ft) ▫ Throw on own (footwork!) x 10 (60ft) ▫ Quick catch x 10-20 (ea) 	

MORE RESOURCES

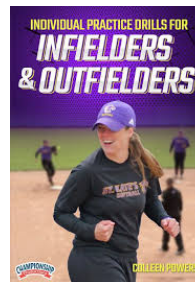
Any drill videos posted on NFCA or ABCA (softball/baseball coaches associations)

YOUTUBE is a gold mine of great catching drills to mix up development of the same skills!

I AM HERE TO GROW THIS GAME!!! Don't be a stranger!

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My DRILL VIDEOS: Championship Videos →



PSA: BE NICE TO UMPIRES!