

Infield grounder work

By Calvin Toffan

Five Infield pillars: Areas of primary focus that we want to excel at.

1. Glove's Barrel
 - this is the heart of your glove, the sweet spot
 - this is approximately at the base of your index finger, it is the equivalent to a hitter's barrel
 - consistency begins with accuracy
 - this is where the baseball needs to be so that you can get the baseball out of your glove quickly
 - this is for maximum efficiency
2. Lane Versatility
 - this is recognizing what path you will need to take to the baseball
 - basically to catch the ball, are you going to use two hands(luxury lane/speaks to feet), one hand(reaching lane, most range and versatility) or backhand(reaction and distance cutting lane)
 - this is for maximum consistency
3. Hop Recognition
 - what type of hop is hit
 - Phase 1 is eyes to the side of the ball with phase 2 being the "Read and React", is it a big hop, short hop or a snake
 - this is in preparation for athleticism
4. Arm Slot Range
 - what type of throw will need to be utilized
 - what type of posture will you need to execute the throw successfully
 - will you use a high slot, regular slot or low slot
 - this is primarily for versatility

5. Internal Clock -this is recognizing how much time you have according to the type of hop and speed that the baseball is hit
- can you do a 4 step approach, 2 step approach or does it need to be done on the run
- this is primarily done for creativity

Drills to foster the five infield pillars:

Hop theme:

One coach, 2 players, baseballs and 1 bucket.

Coach is 25 feet(distances can vary) directly in front of 2 players on their knees with a bucket between the players. Coach rolls out baseballs for the players to recognize hops and field the baseball. Players catch the ball in their glove barrel, take the baseball out of their glove and then get set to throw. However the players do not throw the baseball, they just place it in the bucket. The coach will throw any of the 3 types of hops to different locations so that they can use the two hands, one hand or backhand.

Stationary Rapid Fire Catches: Consistency and redundant

One coach, one player, baseballs and 1 bucket.

Coach is 10 feet in front of one player. Coach tosses baseballs for player standing on his feet to use two hand approach. Coach will throw 5 big hops, 5 short hops and 5 snakes(numbers can vary). Then coach throws baseballs for player to use one hand with the varying bounces. Lastly the coach throws baseballs for the player to use their backhand with the varying bounces. After the player catches the baseball he should quickly load to throw but then just roll the baseball to the side, the drill should be done quickly or at game speed.

Stationary Rapid Fire Catches: Variation and changing it up

Same drill as the one before but now the coach will change up the types of throws and location where it is being caught by the player. Again this must be done quickly and at game speed. Change up the footwork for the player in which they can use open backhands and closed backhands. There should be an element of the player not knowing what is coming next from the coach.

Walk the Line: Maintaining Posture Outside Your Feet

2 coaches(could use players), one player and 2 baseballs.

2 coaches are approximately 10 feet in front of the player, one slightly to his left and the other slightly to the player's right. Each coach has ball in hand, one bounces ball to player's right and the other coach to the player's left alternating so that player must alternate his forehand and backhand. When player catches the baseball he tosses it back to that same coach. The 2 variations in which this is done is that in one the coaches are backing up so the player is moving forward, then in the next one the coaches are moving forward so the player is moving backwards. Again, do in game speed!!!

Line Drill: Getting one lane over

One coach, one player, baseballs, use the baseline or tape/rope(to form the line) if in a gym.

Coach is situated directly on the line and will roll the baseball down the line. Player is approximately 50 feet away from the coach with right hip inside of the line(if player is right handed). Coach rolls baseball down the line and player must get over the line so that his left hip clears the line. Player then addresses baseball and sets up to make the throw. This is done 5 times and each time the player will be getting closer to the coach so his foot speed must increase. This foot movement allows the player to address the baseball in way that helps them to be in better athletic position to throw the baseball to intended target. Again, game speed!!!!