

Clinic Plan: Advanced Fielding

Time: 1.5 hrs

Participants: up to 15

Goals

- Practice dynamic movements with and without the ball
- Establish glove work practice
- Refresh tactics and situational responses

Warm-Up (15 minutes):

1. 3-4 minutes of slow jogging, one lap of field or to a destination and back
2. 5 minutes of dynamic stretches, including:
 - a. Shoulder and arm: arm circles, 90 degree shoulder rotations (see pic 1)
 - b. Legs: walking leg swings (“Frankensteins”), hip openers/closers, walking on toes, walking on heels
 - c. Lunges with upright twists (see pic 2), trunk rotations while reaching to the ground (see pic 3)
3. 5 minutes of footwork focusing on common movements.
 - a. **Shuffle-shuffle-go:** line up on grass facing into field of play. Coach gives verbal cues of “pitch” and “go” to practice taking a base on a ball past the catcher.
 - i. On “pitch”, runners take big shuffles to their right
 - ii. On “go”, runners turn and run as though stealing second base

Teaching points:

- Shuffling keeps the eyes toward the play and lets you see where the ball is - you know best if you can go or not
 - Maintain momentum rather than stopping once completing the initial leadoff
 - Pivoting from moving laterally to forward is very common in softball. The more practice we have at changing directions, the easier it will be to prevent our feet from getting tangled.
- b. **Arc/serpentine run:** cones in an S shape. Group runs in single file there and back.
 - i. Runners practice “leaning” in direction of turn while maintaining speed
 - ii. Aim for 50% effort first run, 75% effort second

Teaching points:

- Relevant to baserunning and tracking fly balls
- Arms are pumping – in game, the glove stays down while you run to the spot you think the ball will fall
- Eyes looking ahead so direction/terrain changes aren’t a surprise

- Feel the tilt coming into and out of apex of turn (see pic 4)

----- **Water break** -----

Throwing Warm-Up (up to 10 mins as needed)

1. Start close facing square, pulling down on triceps and flicking wrist
2. Move back a bit and face sideways (glove foot toward partner), plant feet and generate momentum through torso twist
3. Step back further, rock back and step toward target
4. Full throwing motion, focusing on following through all the way with throwing arm

Glovework (Dailies) (10-15 minutes):

1. In pairs kneeling ~6ft apart, roll the ball to each other with good pace
 - a. Straight on
 - b. Backhand side
 - c. Forehand side

Remind: bare hand close by, glove moving into the ball/away from body
2. In low ready position ~6ft apart, **short hop** the ball to each other by dropping or tossing with a low arc
 - a. Straight on
 - b. Backhand side
 - c. Forehand side

Remind: head down and eyes to the ball, keep glove ahead of body, very little “swing” of glove; will often need to make quick transfer in game situation

Pepper (5 mins)

1. Semicircle with coach ~15ft away
 - a. Briskly hit ball to a random fielder, switching up liner/grounder/short hop etc.
 - b. Fielders toss ball back to coach right away
 - c. Everyone must communicate to call the ball

Remind: Stay ready, be loud and confident, utilize the glovework from dailies

Dynamic Grounders (15 minutes):

- Pair of cones at front of line as starting point
 - Cone 4ish big strides ahead as charging depth marker
 - Cone 4 ish big strides to one side of the depth marker
1. Leader rolls ball toward fielder (briskly)
 - a. Fielder must charge the ball, aiming to meet it as close to the first cone as possible
 - b. Fielder feigns a throw (drops it)
 2. Leader immediately lobs ball at lateral cone
 - a. Fielder must catch lobbed ball on the fly or short hop
 3. Run through twice and switch lateral cone to opposite side, repeat

Teaching points:

- Rhythm = meeting the swiftness of the ball with softness in the hands, crisp and controlled movements
- Approach low, feel the arms straighten toward the ball, go and get it
- Glove contact in front of the body prevents extra bounces and protects the body, allowing you to step into throwing motion more easily
- Purpose of back-to-back plays is to maintain coordination and responsiveness through a secondary play
 - Smooth is fast
 - Similar to demands of turning a double play

Infield Practice (20 mins)

- If there are 1B players present, put them at their position and rotate them with each other
 - 1B technique focuses: when the ball is hit, heels to the bag first
 - stride once you know the trajectory of the ball
 - come off the bag toward the ball on a wide throw to prevent extra bases;
 - offer big target and big call for ball;
 - receive the ball as far out front of you as you comfortably can
 - avoid “swinging” at backhands - adjust feet and meet the ball at the dirt when short-hopping

1. Brisk grounders/choppers to each position, thinking about:

- Crossover step to move laterally, build confidence with backhand by “showing” the pocket and moving through the ball with eyes down
- Coverages – who is responsible for what bag if runners on, backups in case of missed ball
- Get to that ball! If you can’t field it cleanly, just knock it down and prevent the runners from advancing
- Throw decisions/internal clock – hold the ball if the runner is already there, throw the ball if you have time
 - Concerned with runner speed and how far you went to field the ball
- Put mustard on the throw to 1B
 - Bouncing it in is always better than sailing it over

2. Footwork at the bag: grounders to turn 2

- Hit balls to each position and try to turn a double play
- Ball hit to right side, SS receives the throw at 2B; ball hit to left side, 2B receives the throw at 2B
- Meet the ball at the bag, keeping feet in motion

- “Bounce off” the base or “hit the corner” based on runner and direction of the received throw

Remind: make a big target and prioritize a quick transfer from glove to hand

Outfield Practice (20 mins)

1. Catch/throw efficiency – leaders toss balls by hand to practice the following skills:
 - How long does it take us to get the ball back to the infield? How many bases have been taken because of sloppy/slow ball return?
 - Part 1: Catching on the run
 - “Sit down” to slow down
 - Victory laps and rainbows -> 3 or fewer steps, hard in to cutoff or base
 - Part 2: Maintaining momentum and creating easier throws
 - Come around balls on the ground rather than cutting them off from the side (**see picture 5**)
 - Move through fly balls from behind
 - Flat, hard throws “through” the cutoff person (fast transfer, tumble)
2. Line drives from straight on – leaders hit liners to outfield
 - Hardest ball to read, so have to build muscle memory: first step is always back
 - **Pre-pitch self talk practice (everyone, everywhere, all the time):**
 - **If the ball is hit to me, where do I throw? Are there different plays available if to the left or right? What are my coverage responsibilities? How many out?**
3. Middle infield/outfielder communication
 - Throw ball between backtracking infielder and charging outfielder
 - Outfielder has priority and must always try to call off infielder if possible (they have the easier play coming in on the ball)
 - Infielder should feel like they can go all out until called off

Cool-Down/Debrief

Slow stretching from top down

- neck, shoulders, triceps, wrists
- torso twist, front fold, side lunge, quad pull, ankle rolls

Group questions, thoughts on session?

Picture examples

1.

Shoulder Rotations

With arms out to side and elbows bent to 90 degrees, slowly rotate the hands down then back up while maintaining shoulder position



2.

Lunges with Rotation

Stand up tall with hands straight above head. Lunge forward with right leg. Bend both knees and keep torso in a vertical line. While you are in the down position, rotate your torso towards your right side. Pause then rotate back and stand up tall. Lunge forward with left foot and rotate to the left side. Continue for 20 yards. Now, take a step backwards with left foot and rotate torso to the right. Continue alternating backward lunges until you reach the starting point.



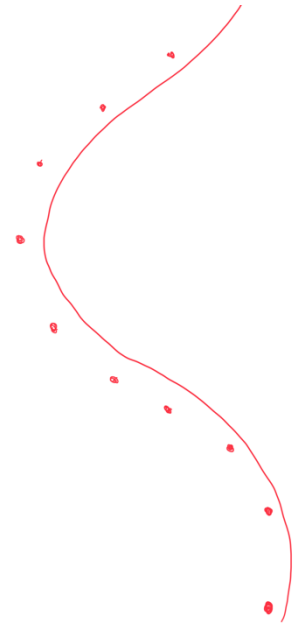
3.

“World’s Greatest Stretch”

Step forward into an exaggerated lunge. Place palms on the ground on the inside of the foot in front of you. Drop the hips toward the ground. Rotate the torso toward the side you stepped with and send the same sided arm toward the sky, following it with your eyes. Return the hand to the ground and walk both hands backward, shifting weight toward the back foot and letting the hips rise. Stand up and switch sides.



4.



5. Coming “around” a grounder in the outfield

