

THROWING

Coaching notes:

- At Youth and Primary, it's important to have as many parent (or older sibling) helpers as possible to receive throws, so that coaches and players are focusing on throwing mechanics, not throwing and catching. Less time will be spent chasing balls and more will be spent throwing. If coach(s) are free from catching themselves, they can provide feedback to more girls. As their catching skills, it's great to be able to be practicing both, but beginners really need to be focusing on the issue at hand.
- For the very young ones, or anybody brand new to the game, some of these drills can be performed without actually throwing a ball. This way, you can give feedback on their form without concern about where the ball goes. Changing or developing good throwing mechanics will almost always result in some pretty crazy throws at first, and it's important they know to expect this and that it's okay.
- **IMPORTANT:** Emphasize to parents that one practice a week is NOT enough to build muscle memory. For each kid to get the most out her season, parents need to invest time to understand basic principles and work at home with them.
- To teach the skill, start at the hand and work your way up the arm to the shoulder, down to the hips and finally to the feet. We isolate elements as much as possible to build the muscle memory.
- Elements of throw (in order of teaching) are grip, release (snap), arm position and action, follow through, shoulder & hip rotation, body position and step/weight transfer

• Grip:

3 or 4 fingers across the top of the "C", thumb as far around other side as hand will allow, pinky to the side. Gets ball out of palm, frees up wrist for snap.

• Wrist snap drill:

Positioning: 4-8 ft apart, facing target, throwing arm in front, pointing toward target at 90 degree angle, forearm perpendicular to ground.

Secure elbow and forearm with glove to prevent anything but wrist moving.

Action: Wave goodbye to ball with quick snap. Should feel the ball leaving the fingerprint area of 3 fingers, thumb should end down, forefinger pointing at target

Spin should be 12 to 6. Lined or taped balls help visualize the spin.

Isolates release and works to prevent "pushing" the ball.

Why spin? cuts through air/wind, keeps ball on line, leads to throws with zip.

• One knee drill:

Positioning: Throwing arm side knee on ground (can kneel on glove if they complain about it hurting their knee), glove-side knee up, pointing to target. If throwing to another player, have that player stand about 10-15ft away and just roll back to kneeler. Better to have one side of line doing drill and other side retrieving because it will be too hard for a kneeling girl to catch the ball and time will be wasted constantly having them stand to chase ball and get back in position.

Ball in hand facing behind, throwing arm bent at 90 degrees, forearm straight up. Very important to teach that elbow is at shoulder height or higher... never below.

Draw straight line to target: From ball, down arm, across shoulders and out glove-side arm to glove pointing at target.

Action: Shoulders rotate without changing throwing arm position. When arm moves past shoulders facing target, forearm starts to extend and, with wrist, combine to extend toward target snap ball (wave goodbye) and arm/hand continue through release to finish across thigh of knee that's up.

Throwing side shoulder should not stop at perpendicular to target, but continue until it's pointing at target. "Ike and Mike"— "Ike" is glove side shoulder, "Mike" is throwing side shoulder. Ike starts pointed at target, Mike finishes at target. (nice correlation to hitting principle)

Drill emphasizes shoulder turn, ball position and follow-through. Isolates motion from lower half.

• **Shoulder rotation drill**

Positioning: Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, facing target. Bring ball back to same position as in Knee Drill, with glove hand pointing to target. Line from ball to glove to target should now be straight to target, perpendicular to the line from toe to toe. Receiver should be 10-15 ft away.

Action: Without moving feet at all, throw is initiated by shoulder turn, maintaining throwing arm position. Glove pulls down to propel throwing arm forward (liken it to when kids swing on swings, hands pull back on chains of swing to pick up speed going forward.)

As throwing arm and shoulder passes perpendicular position, wrist and forearm combine to snap ball at target, continuing with full rotation and follow-through. Hand should go to pocket on glove side, throwing shoulder should be toward target.

Isolates shoulder and waist turn to promote full rotation

• **Body Position drill**

Positioning: Body is lined up 90 degrees to target with glove side shoulder facing target. Back foot is perpendicular, front foot at 45 degrees. Front foot should be in line toward target.

Arm position same as in One Knee and Rotation Drills.

Action: As in Rotation Drill, shoulders initiate motion, arm position doesn't change until elbow reaches shoulders, extend & snap at release and follow through to glove side pants pocket. Feet stay in place

Should feel weight transfer from back foot to front foot.

• **Arm Position drill** (good variation of Body Position Drill)

Positioning: Perpendicular to target with glove side shoulder toward target. Have both elbows bent at 90 degrees, and arms should be parallel to ground, forearms pointing straight out in direction she's facing. Ball in hand with palm facing back, not down.

Action: Simultaneously rotate forearms to vertical position, elbows still at 90 degrees. She's now in the same set up position as in earlier drills, with the exception that the glove is point up, not out. Throw is initiated and completed the same way as above.

This drill is a good way to help them "feel" the right ball/arm position on the throwing side. This can be done without ball or glove over and over as coaches walk around and correct, looking for good arm position, shoulder rotation and follow through.

• **"Past the thigh, to the sky, let it fly, wave goodbye" drill**

Positioning: Start with ball in glove in throwing hand (proper grip!) in front of chest. This simulates a good position after a catch.

Action: Throwing side foot steps perpendicular to target, which will bring body into proper alignment. Step toward target with glove side foot, foot at 45 degree angle to target

Hand brings ball out of glove to back position of earlier drills by traveling past the thigh as glove is moving out to point toward target. Ball goes up to sky (pointing back, forearm vertical, elbow at 90 degrees), in one sweeping motion shoulder starts move forward as glove hand pulls straight back. They "let it fly" and "wave goodbye" (wrist snap). Throwing hand continues in follow-through to glove side pants pocket.

Weight should transfer from back foot to front foot. Back foot slides up toward front as follow-through brings weight forward and hips rotate.

THROWING CHECKLIST

Grip

- 3 fingers across upper "C", pads of fingers on seams
- Thumb as opposite as possible
- Pinky on side
- Ball in fingers, not palm, for looseness of wrist

Body Position

- Feet and body face 90 degree angle to target, glove side toward target
- Feet a little more than shoulder length apart

Arm Position (at start of move forward)

- Elbow at shoulder height or a little higher (90 degree angle)
- Forearm vertical
- Ball pointing backward
- Glove points to target
- Straight line from ball, across arms, shoulders & glove to target

Step

- front foot steps toward target, lands at 45 degree angle to target
- push off back foot to transfer weight to front with throw

Hip rotation

- As weight transfers forward, throwing side hip begins rotating forward, pulling throwing shoulder into rotation

Shoulder rotation

- Strive for full 180 degree rotation ("Ike & Mike")
- Maintain throwing arm position through first half of rotation
- Glove pulls back and down (action-counteraction)

Release

- As throwing shoulder reaches perpendicular to target, forearm starts extension toward target and combines with wrist to snap ball at release
- Hand behind ball
- Snap hand forward and down at wrist ("wave goodbye")
- Feel ball leave middle 3 finger tips
- Ball spins with "12 to 6" rotation.

Follow-through

- As ball leaves hand, shoulders continue rotation and hand continues down and to the glove side thigh or pants pocket
- Weight almost completely on front foot.