



March 14, 2010

Coaching Points for Catchers

STANCE

- Feet are a little wider than shoulder width apart, toes pointed slightly out.
- Remains on the flat of her feet, with weight up toward the balls of her feet
- Arms are relaxed, elbows outside the knees and flexed when receiving the ball.
- Throwing hand is fisted with thumb inside fingers.
- Throwing hand is behind the leg with no runner on base.
- Throwing hand can be behind the glove with runners on base.
- Head is near the glove and facing directly toward the pitcher.
- Head is above the shoulders and hips below.
- Uses her body as well as her glove to set up behind the portion of the plate in which the pitch is being called.
- Shoulders and chest are upright and tall if receiving a high pitch.
- Shoulders and chest are leaning over, getting low to receive the low pitch
- The feet are staggered half a step with the glove leg up. The throwing toe even with the glove side instep.
- With Runners on, the Catcher raises her hips and butt, pressing the heels to the ground so that they are in a position to push off.
- Sits as close to the plate as possible, adjusts on different hitters.

GIVING THE SIGNAL

- The glove is outside below the left knee (right handed catcher) blocking the view of the base coach.
- Knees are close together to hide signals.
- Fingers stay even with legs, not below when giving the signal.
- Catcher indicates location and type of pitch clearly to pitcher (look for a clear understanding from the pitcher).
- After giving the signal and the Pitcher begins her motion, the Catcher moves to receive the pitch.

RECEIVING THE PITCH

- Catches the pitch with one hand.
- Moves and receives the pitch with the body behind the ball.
- Frames pitch by “framing out”, moving only the CLOSE pitches into the strike zone.
- Doesn’t try to frame every pitch. (Keep strikes strikes!)
- Moves behind the ball getting lead foot out first.
- Moves diagonal to field of play to receive the ball, so that if it is low, she can block and keep the ball in the middle of the field.
- Balls in the dirt are blocked by her body, yet catcher maintains balance.
- When blocking balls in the dirt, she is leaning with the upper body over the ball and chin down. Causes balls to drop right in front of her.
- When catching, brings both glove and ball up to her throwing hand to get into position for quick throw.
- Reaches into the glove to get the ball, does not flip it into throwing hand.
- When blocking balls in the dirt, she catches the ball between her legs with both hands (pinkie to pinkie). Gets the fingers down to the ground, not the back of her hand.
- When blocking, gets knees to the ground as quickly as possible.
- Replaces her feet with her knees to absorb the ball.
- When blocking side to side, gets an aggressive push off with legs toward the direction of the ball.
- Receives pitches in the dirt with glove fingers pointed down. If it is out of the dirt, tries to “pick flowers” with glove fingers pointed up.
- Receives high pitches with glove fingers pointing up.
- Keeps body down to aid in calls - doesn’t rise up with the pitch if she doesn’t need to.
- Turns pinkie in (right handed catcher) on inside pitches (to right handed batter) to frame for strikes. Circles the ball.
- Turns thumb in (right handed catcher) on outside pitches (to right handed batter) to frame for strikes. Circles the ball.
- Has quick hands. Beats the ball to the spot (doesn’t wait and jab at the pitch).

THROWING

- Gets into throwing position quickly using either pivot hop (for younger catchers) or pivot (for more advanced catchers).
- When in the throwing position her weight is on her back foot.
- Brings the ball and glove back to the throwing hand and not the hand up to the glove.
- Breaks the ball and the throwing hand from the glove out in front of the center line of her body.
- The movement of the throwing hand is efficient and comes directly back near the throwing hand ear.
- The throw is an overhand throw with vertical spin.
- The throw has a very short take back. “Thumb to the ear”.
- Catcher has a quick release.
- Catcher follows through with her hand and trail leg.
- When throwing out runners at first on a bunt or dropped 3rd strike, the catcher stays low and can use sidearm throw when necessary.
- Catcher rounds the ball getting her chest over it and in a position to scoop up the ball on bunts, pass balls or wild pitch.
- Picks up the ball with both the glove hand and ball hand in a scooping or raking action on bunts, pass balls or wild pitches.
- Angles her body to the base the runner is advancing toward
- Takes a side step if necessary to avoid the running lane.

DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

- Fields the bunt with two handed scooping motion next to the back foot.
- Prior to fielding the bunt has feet lined up in direction of anticipated throw.
- When throwing she takes a one step throw, does not shuffle or slide into the throw unless she needs to side step out of the running lane.
- Catches pop ups on throwing side facing foul territory. Glove fingers are pointed up.
- First step to the pop up is to the side in which it is hit.
- Finds the pop up before she throws the mask. Mask is thrown away from where she is fielding the pop up.
- Backs up plays at first base with no one on base.
- Communicates and lines up cut-off for throws home.
- Communicates to infield and calls plays in the infield.
- Blocks balls on throws home.

- Sets up about a foot up the foul line with the left foot on the foul line and is squared to the throw when receiving the throw home.
- Uses a two handed tag on the runner coming in at home plate.
- Blocks the plate with the ball when a runner slides at home.
- Throws each pitch back to the pitcher's left shoulder as a practice throw to second base.
- Throws knee high on the inside corner at second base for a steal
- Throws low inside to first base for a pick off throw.
- Throws leading the Shortstop for pickoffs and steals at third base
- Uses correct footwork on force outs at home and throws back to first or third.

INTANGIBLES

- Knows the rules!
- Have basic knowledge of pitching techniques, control, and how different pitches are thrown.
- Communicates with the pitcher in a positive and supportive approach.
- Learns the opponent's weaknesses and tendencies.
- Works well with the umpire and is aware of his strike zone.
- Communicates the umpires strike zone to the coaches and pitcher.
- Knows each pitchers strengths and weaknesses and adjusts calling the game to the particular pitcher on the mound.
- Gives energy to the pitchers and changes according to the pitcher's needs.
- Knows how to motivate each Individual pitcher.