

## Basic Throwing Mechanics

### *Warm ups –*

- ✓ Be sure to always have players stretch their arms and lower bodies.
- ✓ Emphasize that players must properly warm up before engaging in any kind of throwing.
- ✓ Proper warm up exercises include gentle windmills, shoulder stretches, leg and groin stretches, and isometric (resistance) pushes.

### *Mechanics –*

Use the three-step approach for throwing. Player starts from a balanced position with shoulder and hips squared to the target, feet shoulder width and pointing to the target.

- Position 1 – Player takes short rhythm, or trigger, stride toward target, placing what will be the back foot in the throwing motion slightly in front of what will be the lead foot. This back foot should be placed perpendicular to the lead foot (forming the top of a T). Ball should be in throwing hand; throwing hand should be in the glove, held about chest high.
- Position 2 – Player strides forward with lead foot, rotating hips and shoulders 90 degrees so that they are in line with the target. The lead arm comes up to shoulder height, with the lead elbow ‘scoping’ the target (pointing straight at it). The throwing arm first goes back to full extension and then comes up to shoulder height in an L, or cocked, position (elbow bent 90 degrees; ball gripped with thumb to the thigh, knuckles to the sky; wrist positioned so that the ball is facing away from the target.) Player’s weight should be evenly balanced on both feet.
- Position 3 – Player drives off of back foot, and triggers throwing motion by driving the lead elbow towards the front hip. This motion will start the shoulder and hip rotation that will add velocity to the throw and reduce stress on the throwing arm. As the throwing arm begins to come forward, the elbow comes through first followed by hand and ball, fingers on top of the ball. Keep the throwing elbow up, and throw “over the top” - it increases strength and accuracy, and it also protects the arm from injury. Player should keep his eyes on the target until the ball reaches it. Proper follow through brings the throwing side hip around and squares it with the shoulders, pulling the back leg forward into a balanced defensive position.

### *Practice –*

- ✓ Specific drills for developing throwing abilities can be found in Practice Drills section, but for now two words will suffice. **Play catch.**
- ✓ Play Catch – This is the single most important activity a young player can do to enhance his or her baseball catching and throwing ability, for playing catch develops two of the most important aspects of the game: catching the ball and throwing the ball.
- ✓ Playing catch properly teaches and reinforces throwing techniques, receiving techniques and footwork more than any single thing they do.
- ✓ They can play catch all year round – anywhere, almost anytime – so encourage players to keep their gloves close by in the off season.
- ✓ Urge parents to play catch with their kids, and encourage them to stress and reinforce the importance of proper catching and throwing techniques.