

# Concord-Carlisle Youth Softball 2009

Coaches' Packet-  
Skills, drills & tips

# Throwing

## Teaching the fundamentals– Drill: “Throwing Progression”

### Set-up:

- Girls grouped in pairs (different pairs each practice)
- Sitting cross-legged 6 feet apart.
- GRIP: turn the ball so the seams form a “C”
  - Place index, middle & ring finger on the seam on the top of the “C”
  - Thumb should be underneath ball, opposite of middle finger
  - Ball should not be down in palm of hand- this restricts the ability to snap wrist
- Elbow of throwing hand should be at shoulder height, straight in front of body.

### Action:

- Snap wrist- roll the ball off fingertips- do not let them use their forearm x10
- Incorporate forearm- set up the same way- but now let them add their forearm in, still snapping their wrist- x10
- Have them back up 3 steps each and put their throwing hand knee on the ground.
- Glove should be pointed straight to their partner, throwing arm should be behind
- Lead with the elbow, pull through with the glove
- Snap down, using core muscles, finishing bent over- x10
- Stand up, back up a couple steps.- same as above, but standing
- Add in step- righties step with their left foot, lefties step with their right foot.

**Tip:** Instruct the younger girls who are having a hard time snapping their wrist to try to touch their fingertips to their forearm

# Fielding-infield

## Teaching the fundamentals– Drill: “Skimmers”

### **Set-up:**

- Grouped in pairs, 6 feet apart.
- Feet a LITTLE wider than shoulder width apart.
- On the balls of their feet. knees bent, balanced on both legs,
- Create a triangle with feet and glove. glove out in front of feet as the top of the triangle.
- Throwing/bare hand above glove like an alligator's jaw.
- Finger tips of bare hand to the sky to avoid injury if hit by ball.
- Palm of throwing hand should be facing partner.

### **Action:**

- Roll the ball back and forth to each other.
- Girls are to watch the ball into their gloves.
- Use their throwing hand to cover up the ball, like an alligator closing its mouth.
- Teach girls soft hands by having them bend their elbows & draw the glove up into their stomach/belly button.
- Head/eyes should follow glove up to belly button.
- Ponytail should flip down, proving they're watching the ball in to the glove.

# Fielding-infield- continued

## Skimmers continued:

### Next step– Forehands

- Roll ball to their glove-side.
- Have girls shuffle feet, two or three steps, to get their body in front of ball
- These are forehands-
- Keys are to teach them to get their body in front of the ball and field using the fundamentals outlined above

### Next– Backhands

- Roll to their back-hands (opposite side of their glove).
- Again shuffle feet two or three steps to the right for righties & the left for lefties.
- Teach them to get their body in front of the ball

### What to look for-

Knees bent, waist bent, girls on balls of their feet. making triangle with their glove & feet. bare hand out in front, fingertips to the sky,

### Key Words-

“Bend your knees”

“Alligator”

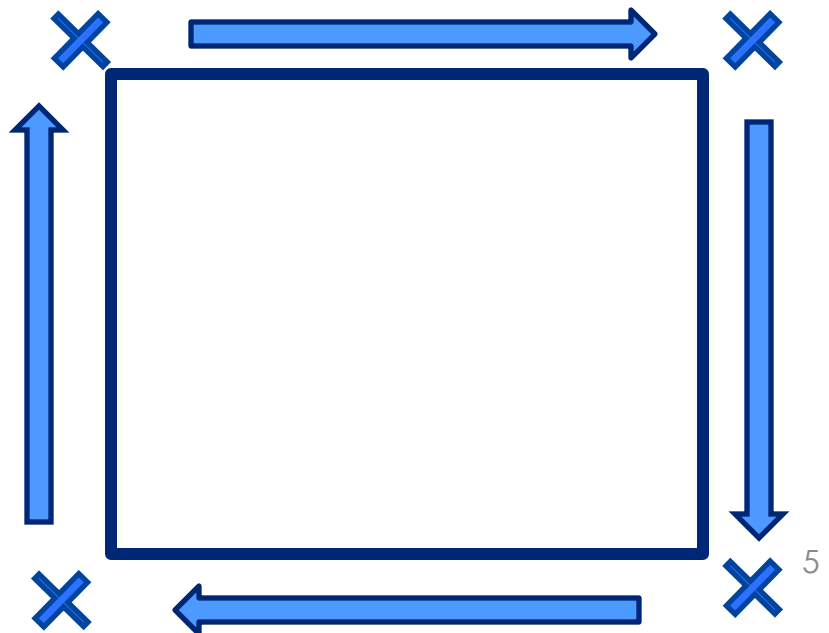
“Soft hands”- use elbows as “shock absorbers”

# Fielding-infield- continued

## Four Corner Drill-

- At least 8 girls needed, preferably more.
- Evenly divide the girls to 4 different corners/ the 4 bases.
- Ball starts at one corner and you instruct them to throw in one direction and follow their throw to the end of the line that they threw to.
- That line throws to the next, follows their throw to the end of that line & the drill continues.
- Incorporates: mental concentration, teamwork, communication, throwing mechanics, catching mechanics, accuracy, team-building, conditioning
- Can be used to help fielding as well: throw, roll, throw, roll.
- With the older girls, and I emphasize older girls, you can incorporate short-hops.
  - One line throws, the next throws a short-hop, and so-on.

- Also can be used for pop-ups
- Reverse direction to work on setting feet properly when throwing



# Fielding-outfield

## **Fundamentals-**

- Fly balls should be caught above & in front of fielder's head, always with two hands
- As with a ground ball, fielder should move to position her body centered underneath the ball

## **Drill-**

- Use soft/squishy balls (Nerf, or plastic "Chuck E. Cheese" balls) so fielders become comfortable with the ball coming down at them

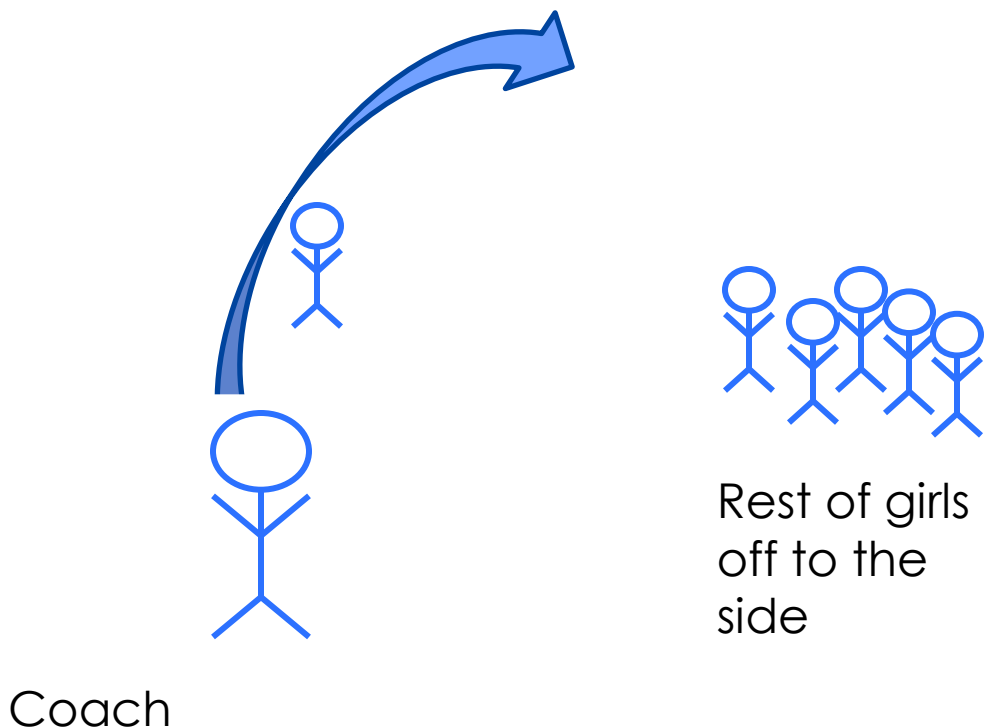
## **Fundamentals- "Drop step"**

- For balls hit over outfielder's head, outfielder must go backwards
- Do not backpedal
- Teach the players to drop step
- If the ball is over the fielder's right shoulder, take the right leg and step backwards, opening the hips to run back for the ball
- Pump the arms (arms going "hip to lip")
- Don't run with glove out like the Statue of Liberty
- Once under the ball, catch as outlined above
- Same for ball over the left side, drop left leg back, run by pumping arms
- Always keeping an eye on the ball

# Fielding-outfield

## Drill-

- Toss pop-ups/fly balls by hand at first, not off a bat
- One girl up at a time, facing coach
- Say “go” as you throw ball over left shoulder
- Fielder should drop step and run when you say “go”, tracking & loudly calling the ball- “I got it, I got it, I got it”
- She catches & goes to the end of the line & the next girl comes up
- After whole line goes, switch to throwing ball over right shoulder



# Hitting

## **Stance:**

- Bat should be held in “door-knocking” knuckles, NOT in the palm of hands
- Rest bat on back shoulder
- Instruct girls to pick up the bat like they’re answering the phone
- Bat should be 5-7 inches away from back ear
- Arms should make an upside down “V”
- Feet should be a little wider than shoulder width, knees slightly bent
- Weight should be evenly distributed on both legs

## **Action:**

- Stride should be short, soft & straight (no more than 6”), weight should shift from 50/50 to about 60% on back leg
  - Stride should be: toe first, heel second
- Front elbow should start swing (moving straight toward pitcher)
- Next, the knob of the bat should follow, moving forward toward the inside part of the ball.
- Barrel of the bat follows hands
- For a pitch down the middle of the plate, contact with ball should be made when the ball is even with the front knee of the batter.

## **Tip:**

- When evaluating your batters, make sure feet are wider than hips & knees & hands are no lower or further back than back shoulder in stance

# Hitting

## List of Drills:

- Swings off tees
- Soft toss from side
- Front toss (10-15 feet in front of batter)
- Bottom hand swings off tee
  - Bottom hand of grip on bat (front arm), top hand (back arm) holding some shirt at waist to maintain stance
  - Choke up on bat for control
- Top hand swings off tee
  - Top hand of grip on bat (back arm), bottom hand (front arm) holding some shirt at waist to maintain stance
  - Choke up on bat for control

## Tips:

- Consistently remind the girls to watch the ball
- Level swings
- Contact on barrel of bat
- Balanced swings
- Steady head

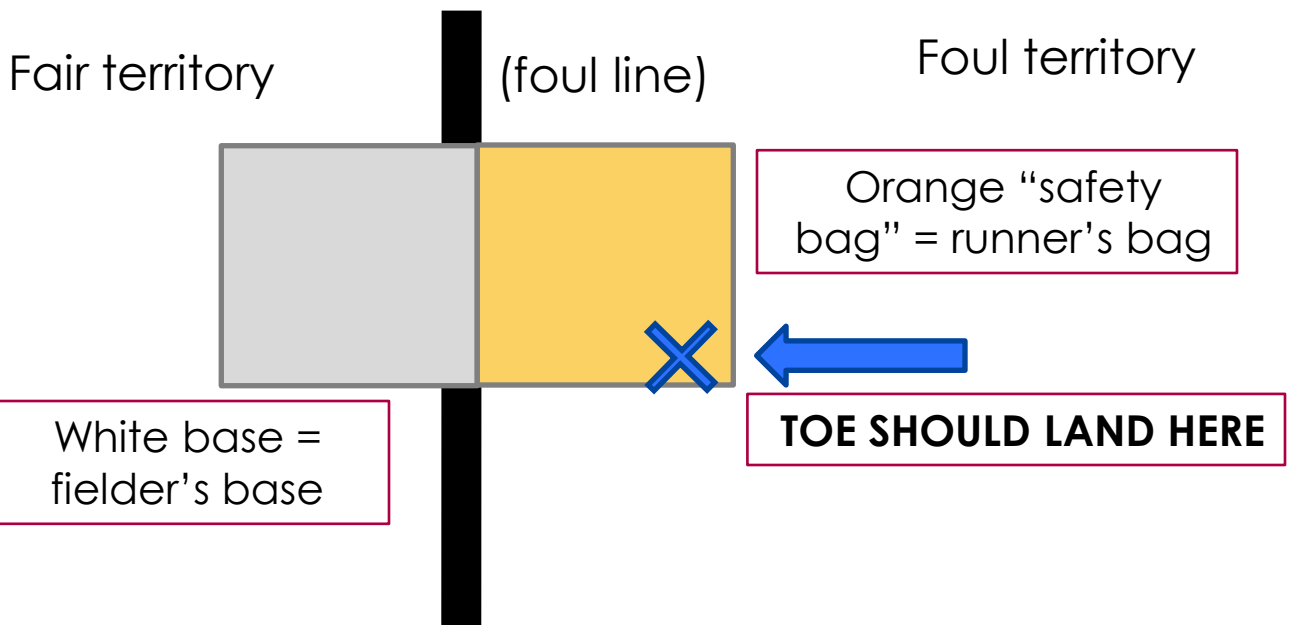
## Food for Thought:

- Pitchers throw at least 100-150 pitches in practice and often practice extra outside of team practice
- Most batters take 10 swings per practice and only practice during team practices
- We need batters to be practicing at least as much as pitchers in order to stay up with them

# Base running

## Fundamentals:

- First base- on a single
  - Run through first base
  - Do not slow down and stop on first base
  - Run to the front third of the base, towards foul territory.

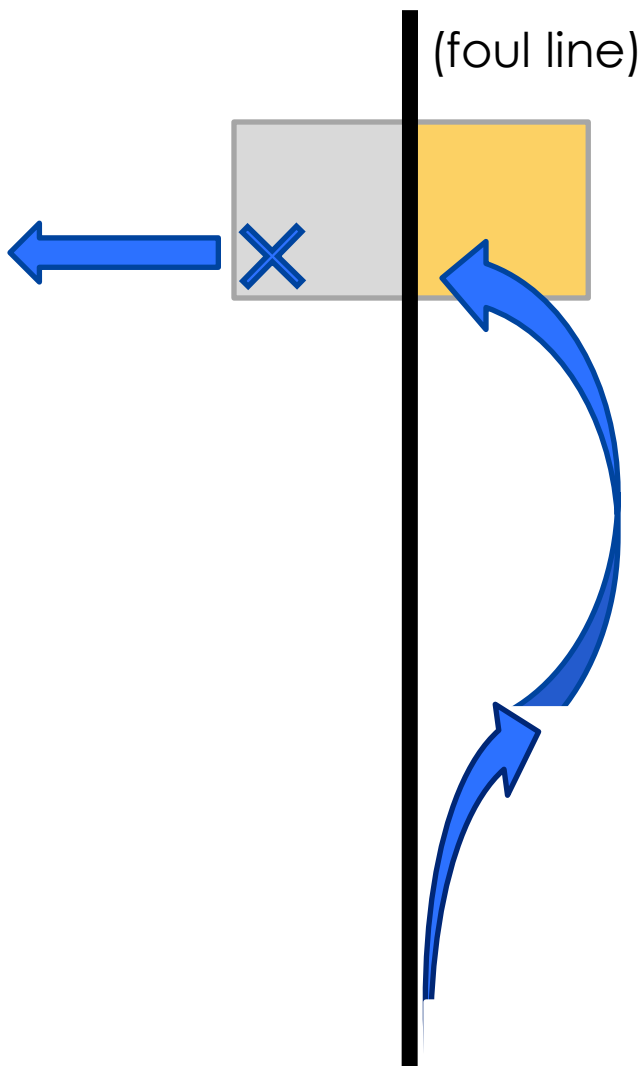


- Run straight through, don't slow down until 3 strides after first base.
- Girls should look into foul territory to see if there was an overthrow
- Turn to foul territory and walk back to first base
- If the runner turns towards second base, it could be considered an attempt towards advancing
  - The fielders can make a play on the runner.

# Base running- continued

## Base running Fundamentals continued:

- First base- on an extra base hit/ball through the infield
  - Run towards first and turn out to make a question mark
  - Goal: land on first with body/ shoulders turned & positioned towards second.

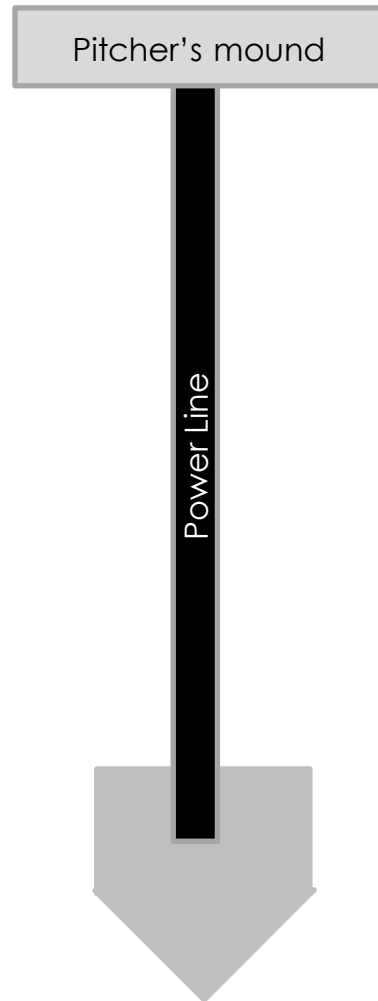


- Ideally, runner should land and push off of first with her right foot, but should not stutter step in order to do so (drastically slows her down)

# Pitching

## •Grip:

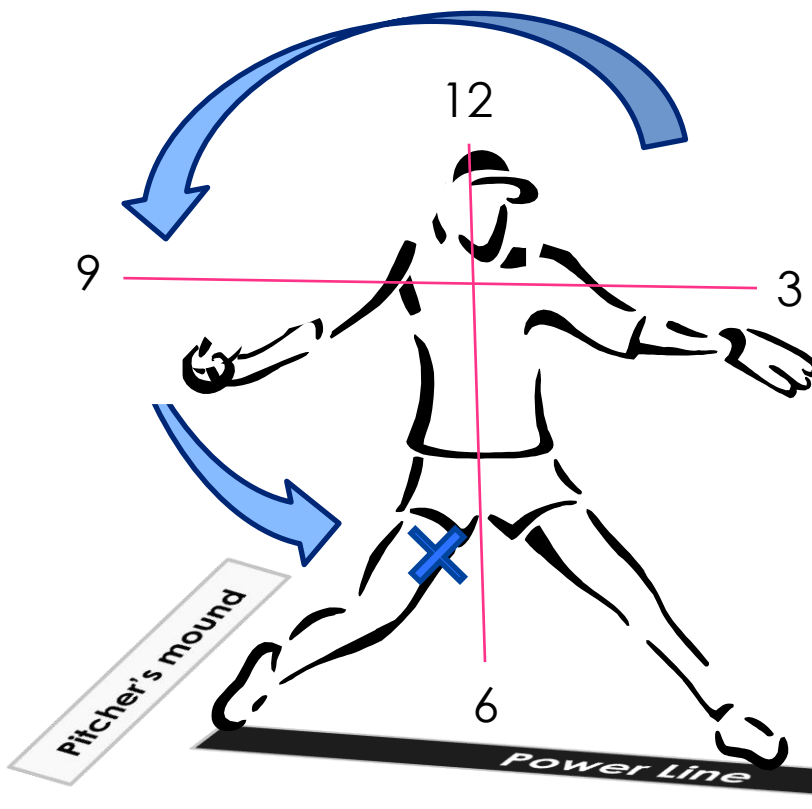
- Turn the ball so the seams form a “C”
- Place index, middle & ring finger on the seam on the top of the “C”
- Thumb should be underneath ball, opposite of middle finger
- Ball should not be down in palm of hand- this restricts the ability to snap wrist



- Both feet must begin on the rubber
- Pitcher should step with the opposite foot than her throwing hand (righties step with their left foot, & vice versa)
- Power line = straight line running through the middle of the pitcher's body straight through home plate to the catcher.
- Stride foot should land on the power line at a 45 degree angle, not pointing straight ahead.
  - Pinky toe at catcher

# Pitching- continued

- At beginning of arm circle, glove hand should drive out to catcher
- At back side of arm circle, glove arm should come down to front leg
  - Helps with leg power
- Arm should be coming down and be at roughly 8 o'clock when foot lands (see below)
- Wrist should snap, release ball inside the back leg (inner thigh)- (blue X)
- Follow through should be loose & relaxed, should not look like pitcher is flexing bicep, more like shape of Cape Cod



## What to look for:

- Balance
- Upper body should remain vertical
- Front/stride leg should remain strong
- Knees should be bent, use the power of the legs

**Tip:** Incorporate grounders & fly balls into pitchers' practice to teach them to field immediately after releasing the ball- vital as the game progresses

# Pitching- continued

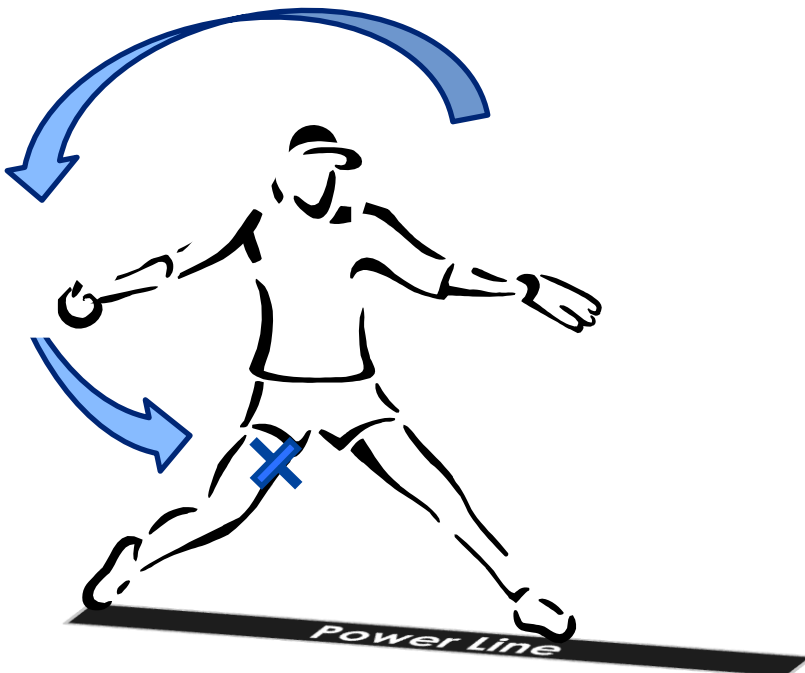
## Teaching the fundamentals– Duct Tape Flap

- Helps with arm circle, release point & muscle memory:
- Take a 16+” piece of duct tape
- Fold the middle ½ together, creating a flap
- Take the two ends (still sticky) and place on the thigh of the back leg, at release point (where the X is on the figure below)
- This trains the girls where the ball should be released and that the arm must stay close to the body during the motion.
  - It also teaches them to keep arm circle big & long (capitalize on as much leverage as possible)
- Pitcher’s arm should hit the flap, but not her leg

Leave ends  
loose/sticky

Duct Tape- fold on  
itself

Leave ends  
loose/sticky



# Catching

## Teaching the fundamentals– Stance

### **Stance:**

- Feet a little more than shoulder width apart
- Squat down, but stay on the balls of the feet
- Should be very balanced
- Bare hand should be in a fist (thumb on the outside of fist)- in 1 of 2 places
  1. Thumb tucked into back of shoe – or-
  2. Hand behind glove, but not touching glove
- Both protect bare hand from being severely injured if hit by ball
- Glove out in front- arm in a loose “L”
  - Not locked straight, use elbow as shock absorber
  - Loose arm allows faster reaction time

### **Drill- tennis balls**

- In full catchers gear- including helmet
- Remove glove
- In catchers stance, toss tennis balls at her bare hand
- Practice receiving the ball
- It helps improve concentration & trains the eyes to watch the ball all the way into the glove

**Tip:** Always have catchers practice catching drills in their gear so they get used to wearing it, moving in it, looking through the mask, etc.

**The game rewards those who compete  
with big hearts.**

**Good luck this season & remember to always keep it fun!**