

Playing the Infield – Second Base

Second-base defense –

Positioning:

- ✓ For second basemen, the standard positioning on a diamond of 60 foot bases is six steps toward first base and six steps toward right field. (On a regulation diamond, nine steps toward first and nine steps back.)
- ✓ In double-play situations, the middle infielders should “pinch” the middle of the infield, with the second baseman moving to a spot four steps toward first and four steps back. When left-handed hitters are up, play seven steps back and seven steps toward first. In bunt situations, play closer to first base. (Tom Emanski, <http://members.aol.com/baseparent/defense.html>)
- ✓ Second basemen have the shortest throw to first base of any infielder, and so in bases empty situations they should start deep very deep.

Fielding

- ✓ They should also charge nearly every ball, because since they play so deep it is less important for them to try to field ground balls at the height of their bounce.
- ✓ Once the second baseman reaches the ball he fields it using a balanced stance, feet shoulder width, rear end down, head down on the ball.
- ✓ Once he has received the ball, the player can then take a small hop step to align him with whatever base he is throwing to.
- ✓ The credo for second baseman is to make sure you get at least one out.

Runners on First and Second

- Double play depth for second basemen is two to three steps closer to second base and two to three steps in. This helps guard against steals as well.
- Balls hit to the left side of infield (third base/shortstop – covering second base)
 - ❖ On balls to the left side of the infield, the second baseman moves quickly to second base and straddles it.
 - ❖ He waits to see how accurate the throw to him is before leaving the straddle position and committing to the ball.
 - ❖ If the play is handled cleanly and a strong accurate throw is made, the player can catch the ball with a foot on the base, shuffle toward the pitcher’s side of the base and make the throw to first.
 - ❖ If the play is not made cleanly, or the throw is inaccurate, the second baseman must make:
 - a. sure of the catch and then
 - b. the out of at second.
- The second baseman can get double plays in several ways:
 - ❖ If a ball is fielded close to the base, he can step on second and throw to first.
 - ❖ If the ball is fielded further away from the base where he has to throw it to the shortstop he can either:
 - field the ball cleanly first, then take a step toward second base, with a lead foot, and underhand the ball to the shortstop.
 - field the ball cleanly first, then take a step toward second base, with a lead foot, and throw the ball to the shortstop.

Tag Plays at Second

- ✓ Avoid collisions; the second baseman should align his shoulders to the direction the throw is coming from, taking care to stay out of the base path until he has received the ball.
- ✓ Once he has received the ball, the proper position is to straddle the base, placing the glove on the ground in front of the base.
- ✓ It is important that the player does not reach his glove to the runner to apply the tag, which might result in the runner sliding under the tag.
- ✓ Placing the glove on the ground instead lets the runner slide into the glove, putting him out.
- ✓ As soon as the tag is applied the player should lift the glove to avoid having the ball knocked loose by further contact.
- ✓ Two hands can be used to apply the tag to further secure the ball.

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Pop Flies – Center Field/Right Field

- ✓ On pop flies to center field and right field, the second baseman tracks the ball until he hears it called for by another player.
- ✓ He should immediately give way on balls called by the outfielder, but prepare himself to make a play on the ball on the chance it might be bobbled and dropped.
- ✓ If he must make the play on the fly, the second baseman should endeavor to set his feet under the ball, and field the ball over his head.
- ✓ If he must make the catch on the run, he should try to angle his track so that he does not have to make an over-the-shoulder-catch. \
- ✓ Lastly, he should set himself as quickly as possible to make a throw back to the infield.

Pop Flies – Left Field/Shallow Left Field/Shortstop/Third Base

- ✓ Second basemen take all throws at second base from the left side of the outfield.

Cutoffs –

- ✓ Serve as cut offs for throws from right field to second base, and as the second (or back up) cut on throws from deep center field or left field.
- ✓ For balls to right field, the second baseman continues out for the cut until the outfielder picks up the ball.
- ✓ They back up throws from the left side of the infield to first base.
- ✓ Second basemen also coordinate with other infielders on double steal situations.