

BUCKET DRILL

This is a fun, productive drill, especially for younger kids, though older kids can gain benefit from it too. It focuses on the importance of getting rid of the ball in a hurry and helps in making accurate throws.

--What you need: A five gallon bucket or garbage can.

--How it works: Split your team in half. Line the first team up, one behind another, at the shortstop position. Take the second team and place them behind first base. Next, place a five gallon bucket or garbage can upside down on first base. Make sure that you have plenty of baseballs handy. Depending on the age level, the coach rolls or hits a ball to the first person in line at the shortstop position, who then has three seconds to pick up the ball and throw it at the bucket. The coach should loudly count off the seconds; this will initially fluster some of your younger players, but will also help them to cope with pressure better in the long run. If the bucket is missed, the player behind first base fields the ball and returns it to the coach. Regardless of the outcome, the player who made the throw rotates to the back of the line. After several passes through the line, switch sides.

As an added bonus, keep score between the two teams. You can give a point if the throw is in time and a point if they hit the bucket. It is amazing how much more effort you can get out of a kid if he's competing against his friends. If you have enough coaching help, you can vary this drill by having both teams throw at the same time; the competition is a big hit with players.

--Results: After repeatedly going through this drill, your players should be able to quickly field a ground ball and get it to a base with some degree of accuracy.