

A large, stylized logo for 'TEAM DEFENSIVE DRILLS'. At the top is a baseball with red stitching inside a circular frame. Below this are two crossed baseball bats. The text 'TEAM DEFENSIVE DRILLS' is written in a bold, white, blocky font with a blue outline and a red shadow, set against a dark blue and red background with flame-like shapes.

TEAM DEFENSIVE DRILLS

A large, stylized number '11' in white with a blue outline and a red shadow, set against a dark blue and red background with flame-like shapes.

11

**GAME SITUATION DRILLS
FOR DEFENSIVE SUCCESS**

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Fly Ball Communication Drill

Purpose:

Avoid collisions and ensure everybody knows who is going to catch the ball.

Setup:

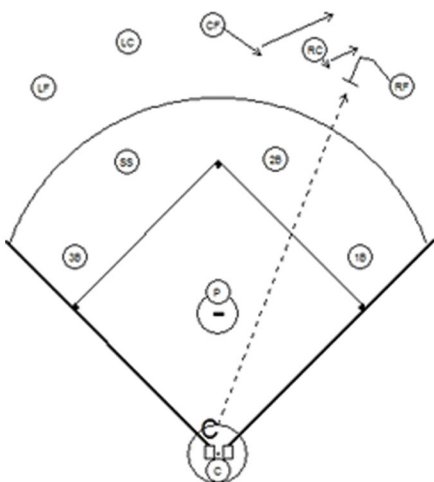
Put entire team in their positions on the field. You can put extra players in the outfield if you want. Coach is at-bat.

Instructions:

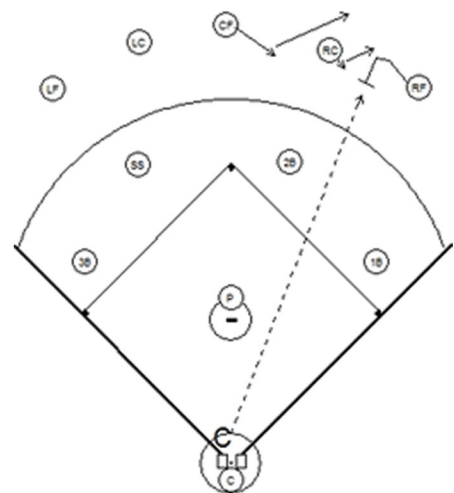
- 1 Coach hits popups and players catch the ball and throw it back in to the coach.
- 2 Players should verbally signal who is going to catch the ball.
- 3 Players should follow the following hierarchy when deciding who is supposed to catch the ball: Rule of thumb is outfielders have priority over infielders and centerfielder is king of the outfielders. Shortstop is the king of the infield.
- 4 On infield popups: third base has priority over pitcher and catcher; shortstop has priority over all other infielders; second base has priority over first base, pitcher and catcher; first base has priority over pitcher and catcher; catcher has priority over pitcher; and pitcher has no priority.

Coaching Tips:

- Players should use “me, me, me” and “you, you, you” to indicate who should catch the ball.
- Pitcher (and other players) should point in the direction of the pop up in difficult conditions or at night to ensure fielder can find the ball.
- Towards end of drill you can have players stare at the ground as you hit the popup. Have pitcher point toward the ball, fielders then look to pitcher to find direction and locate the popup. This can help with fielding at night if a popup gets lost in the lights.



Coach hits popup to right field. Right fielder calls for ball, RC and CF change their routes to back up the play.



Shortstop fields an infield popup. He has priority over all other infielders.

Collapse Drill

Purpose:

Have players take their positions on the field, including pitcher and catcher. Coach is at-bat.

Setup:

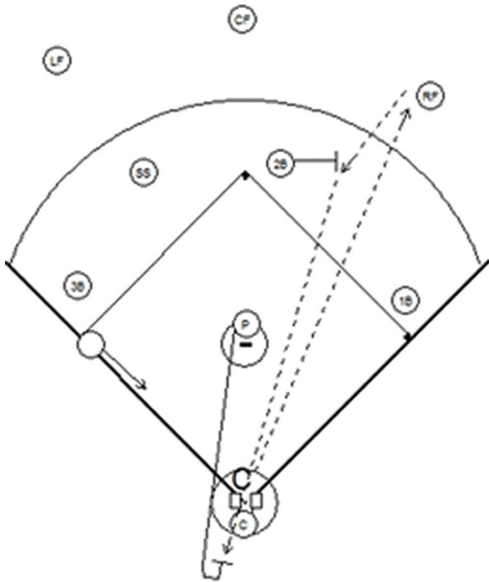
Make sure players are backing up bases correctly, especially outfielders.

Instructions:

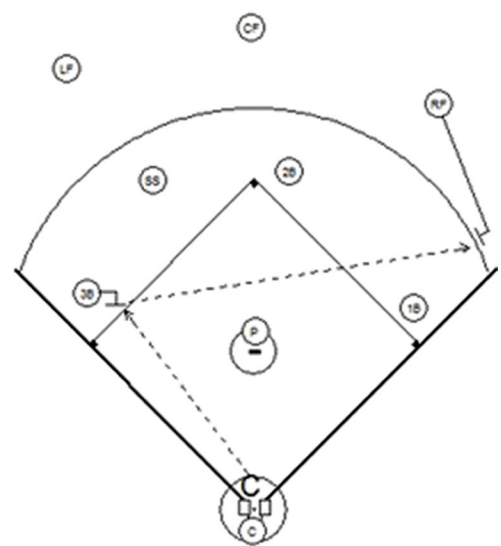
- 1 Coach announces a situation and hits the ball to an infielder who then on purpose makes either a fielding or throwing error.
- 2 For example, you could say "bunt with no one on base."
- 3 The goal here is for players, especially outfielders, to be backing up each infield position correctly.
- 4 On the example above, the third basemen would field the bunt and overthrow first base and the second basemen and right fielder would need to be backing up the play.

Coaching Tips:

- Without telling outfielders you can arrange signals with the infielders to indicate what type of error they should make – for example, a closed fist indicates a fielding error, an open hand indicates a throwing error.
- Allow your infielders to "act" as they make the error and to have fun in this drill.
- You can add baserunners and create more complex situations to really test your players understanding of how to back up plays.



Coach hits fly ball to right, runner tags and right fielder overthrows the catcher forcing the pitcher to back up the play.



Here, third baseman fields the ball and throws wild to first forcing right fielder to back up the play.

Perfect Outs Drill

Purpose:

Improve team defense.

Instructions:

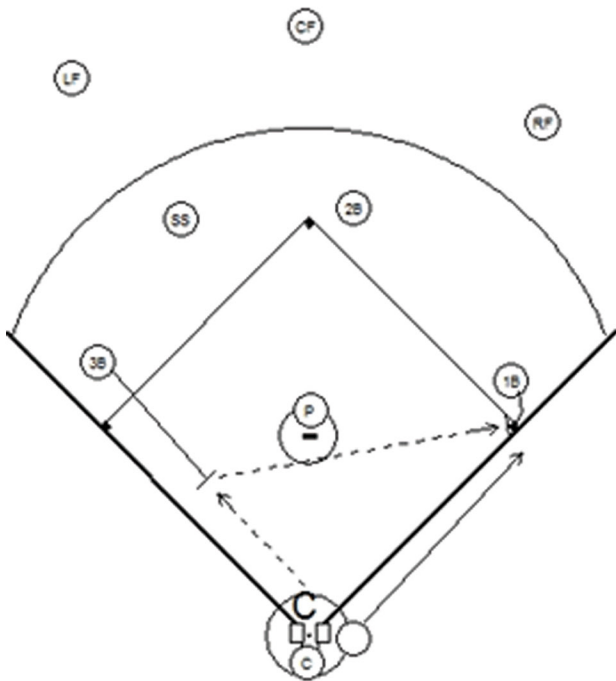
- 1 Defense is required to make a certain number of outs in a row to "win" the drill.
- 2 Coach sets the number of consecutive outs required to end the drill – it can be 5 or 9 or 15 or 21 or whatever the coach decides.
- 3 If an error is made or an out not recorded, the count goes back to zero and the defense must start all over again.

Setup:

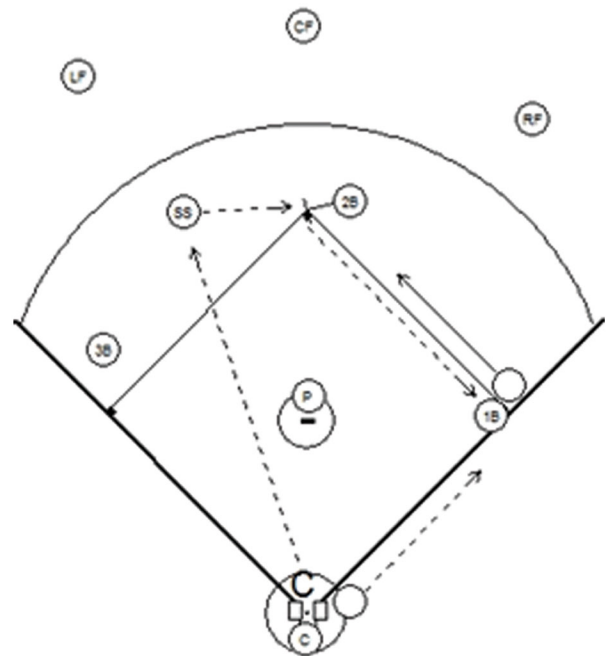
Have players take their positions on the field. Coach is at-bat.

Coaching Tips:

- Setting a high number of outs required like 9 or 18 or even more can, as the number of outs made grows higher, put real game type pressure on players not to mess up – which will make them that much better in real game situations.
- Use players to run for the coach.
- Add baserunners and create game type situations to put additional pressure on the defense.



Third baseman fields the bunt and tries to throw the runner out at first for out number one.



Defense attempts to complete the 6-4-3 double play to continue its streak of consecutive outs.

Relay Drill

Purpose:

Perfect relay throws from outfield to infield to catcher.

Instructions:

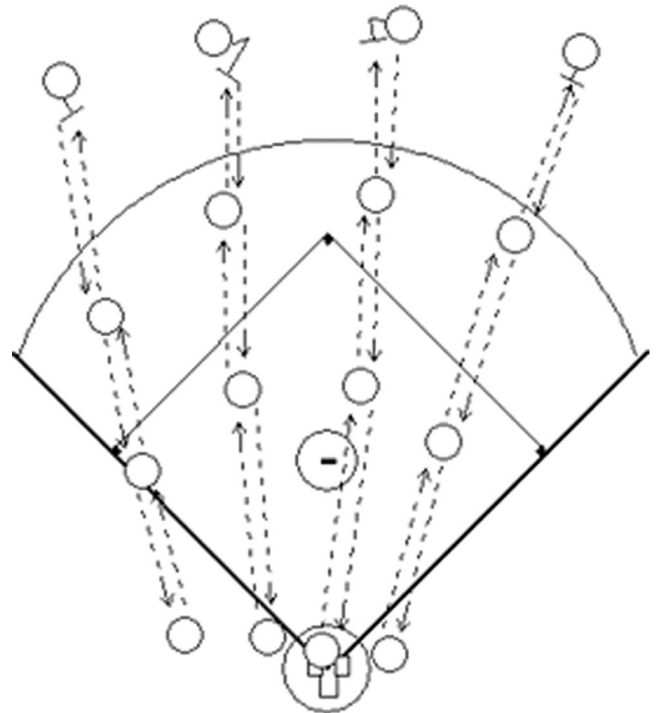
- 1** Infielder at edge of infield throws a ground ball or fly ball to outfielder who catches the ball and makes the relay throw back to the infielder at the edge of the infield.
- 2** Infielder catches the ball, turns and makes the relay throw to the second infielder who is standing halfway between the edge of the infield and the catcher.
- 3** He catches the ball, turns and makes the relay throw to home plate.
- 4** Catcher catches the ball and makes a swipe tag. Catcher then drops into squat position, pretends runner is trying to steal, comes up and throws back to the infielder.
- 5** He catches the ball and throws it to next infielder. He catches the ball and throws a ground ball or fly ball to outfielder and drill repeats.

Setup:

Outfielder sets up in outfield. Infielder sets up at edge of infield. Second infielder sets up in middle of infield. Catcher is at home plate.

Coaching Tips:

- Outfielder should be treating ground or fly ball like a real game situation – meaning he should either charge the ground ball or get behind the fly ball so that he is catching it with his momentum going forward.
- Keep throws relatively short to get in a lot of repetitions.



Four players line up vertically to participate in this relay drill.

Circle Drill

Purpose:

Teaches infielders to throw with accuracy and speed.

Instructions:

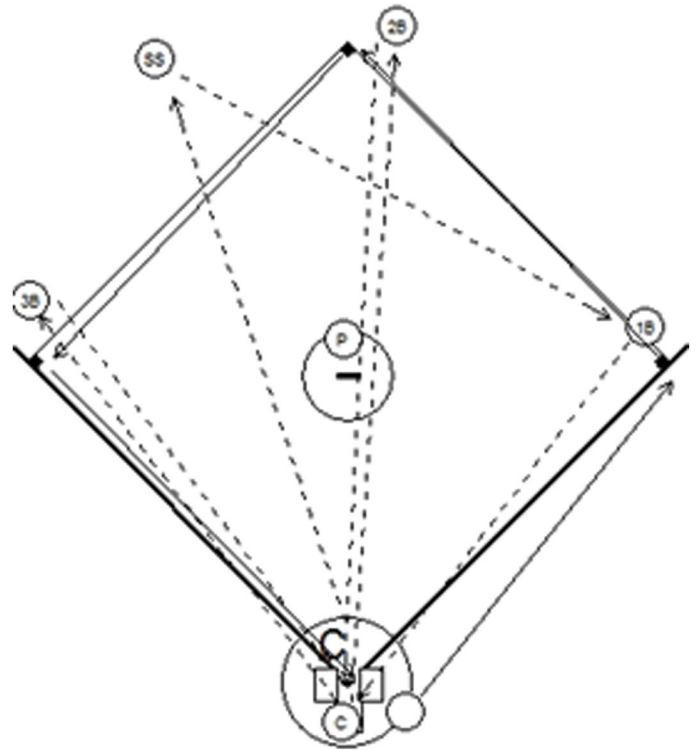
- 1 Coach says, "Go" and runner takes off toward first base.
- 2 When runner is about halfway to first, coach hits ground ball to an infielder who catches the ball and throws to first.
- 3 Runner continues around the bases, going all the way back to home.
- 4 First baseman throws the ball home to the catcher.
- 5 Catcher throws the ball to second base. Ball is thrown back to catcher.
- 6 Catcher throws to third base. Ball is thrown back to catcher, who makes a swipe tag on the runner if the play is close at home.

Setup:

Infielders take their positions. Baserunner lines up near home plate.

Coaching Tips:

- Look for good throwing fundamentals with fielders stepping toward their targets, pulling their glove to their chest and flicking their wrist.
- Infielders should be moving as quickly as possible to ensure the ball beats the runner home on the last throw.



Ball goes to first to catcher to second to catcher to third to catcher as the runner runs around the bases in this drill.

Multiple Task Drills – Phase One

Purpose:

Players learn fielding, throwing and tagging fundamentals.

Instructions:

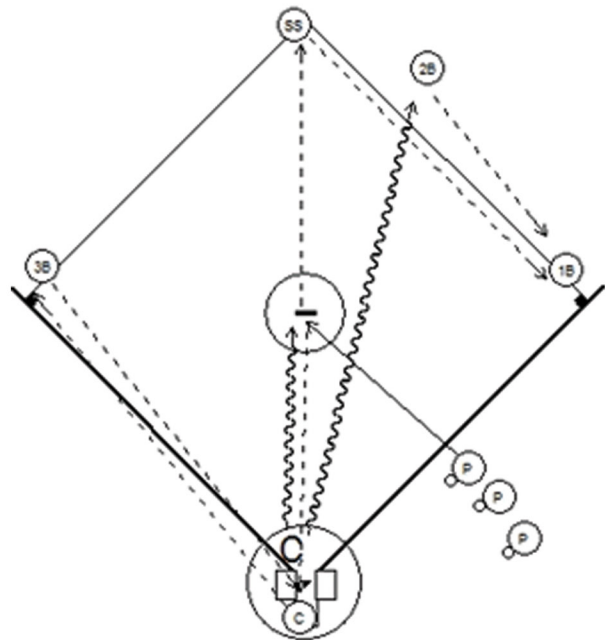
- 1 Each pitcher has a baseball. Coach says, "Go." First pitcher runs out to mound and throws the ball to the catcher.
- 2 Catcher pretends a runner is trying to steal third so he comes up out of his crouch and throws to third.
- 3 Third baseman catches the ball, makes a swipe tag and throws the ball back home. Catcher catches it and also makes a swipe tag.
- 4 As soon as pitcher throws the ball to catcher, the coach hits a ground ball to the pitcher who catches it and throws to shortstop at second. Shortstop then throws to first to complete imaginary double play.
- 5 As that is happening coach will hit a ground ball to the second baseman, who catches it and throws to first.

Setup:

Pitchers line up in foul territory between home and first. Rest of infielders take their normal positions.

Coaching Tips:

- Keep this drill fast-paced going quickly from one phase to the next so players have to react on instinct as they would in a game.
- Shortstop and second baseman, in particular, need to be aware of each other's position to avoid second baseman being hit with ball on the shortstop's throw to first.



A lot happens in this drill that starts with the pitcher throwing the ball home. Catcher then throws to third. Coach hits ball to pitcher who throws to second where shortstop catches and throws to first. Coach then hits ground ball to second baseman who also throws to first.

Multiple Task Drills – Phase Two

Purpose:

Players practice fielding and throwing.

Instructions:

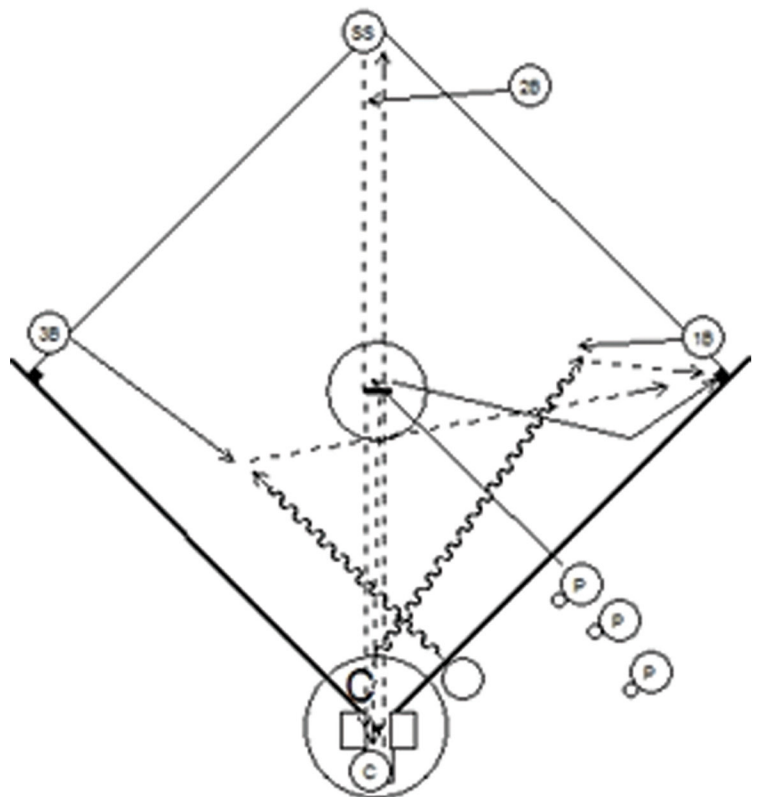
- 1** Pitcher runs out to mound and makes the pitch home.
- 2** Catcher throws the ball to second base. Shortstop and second baseman perform a double cut as they might in a first and third situation. So the ball can either go through to the shortstop covering second or the second baseman can cut off the throw, whoever takes the throw then throws it back home to the catcher.
- 3** As this is going on, coach hits ground ball to first baseman who fields it and tosses to the pitcher who covers first base.
- 4** Then an assistant coach or “shagger” simulates a bunt by rolling a ground ball to the third baseman who fields it and throws to the first baseman at first.

Setup:

Pitchers line up in foul territory between home and first. Rest of infielders take their normal positions.

Coaching Tips:

- Aim for continuous motion so that each action flows into the next. There shouldn't be any lapses or delays.
- Third baseman should be aware of throw going from second to home so he doesn't get hit.



In this phase, the catcher throws to second, the pitcher covers first and the third baseman fields a bunt.

Multiple Task Drills – Phase Three

Purpose:

Players practice fielding and throwing.

Instructions:

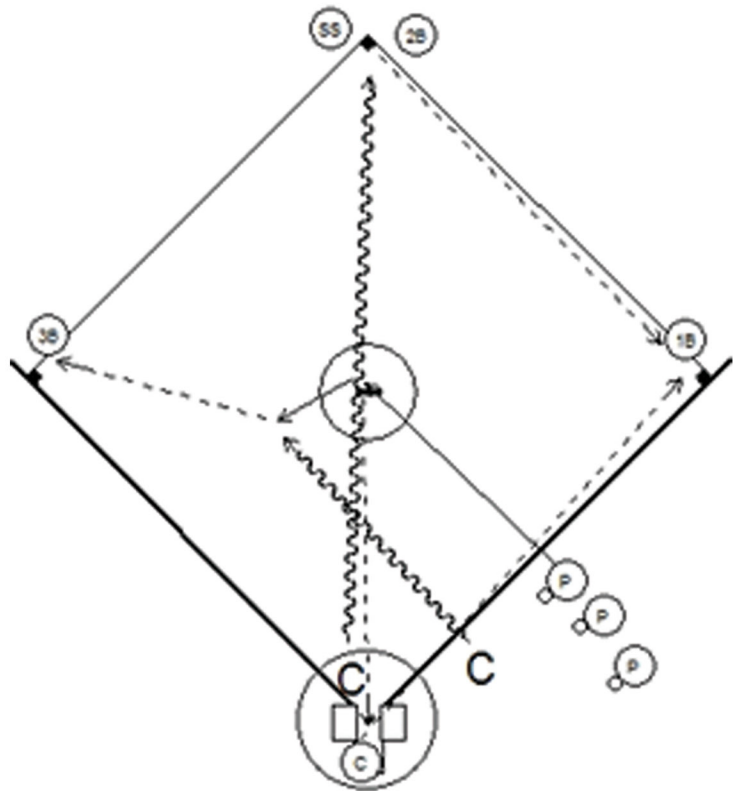
- 1 Pitcher runs out to mound and makes the pitch home.
- 2 After pitch, assistant coach rolls a bunt to third base side of pitchers mound for pitcher to field.
- 3 Pitcher fields the ball and throws to third.
- 4 At the same time, catcher, after catching the initial pitch from the pitcher, makes a snap, backdoor throw to first.
- 5 Coach hits ground ball to second where second baseman and shortstop make the turn at second and throw to first for double play.

Setup:

Pitchers line up in foul territory between home and first. Rest of infielders take their normal positions.

Coaching Tips:

- Don't let second baseman or shortstop know who you are hitting the ball to in order to keep them on their toes.



This phase involves the pitcher fielding a bunt and throwing to third, a snap backdoor throw to first by the catcher and the second baseman, the shortstop and the first baseman turning two.

Bunt Defense Drill

Purpose:

Offense learns to bunt a runner over. Defense learns to work together to execute good bunt defense.

Instructions:

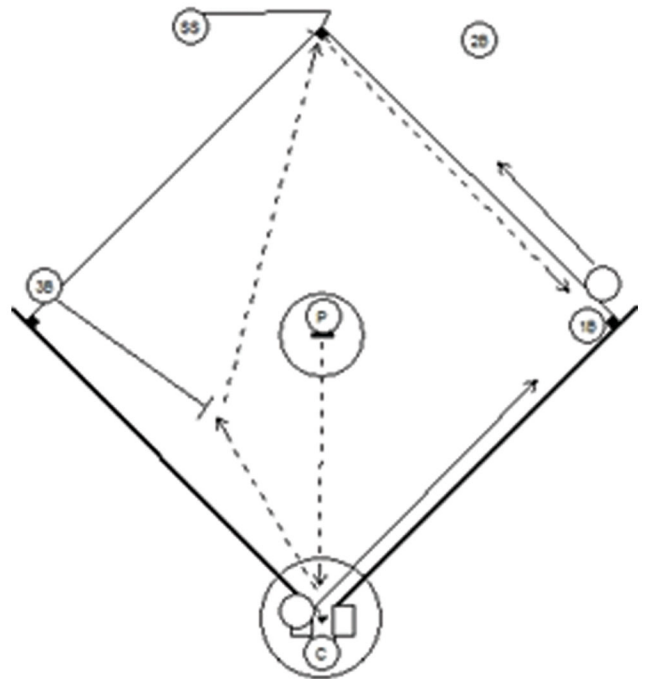
- 1 This drill is offense versus defense – first one to 10 points wins.
- 2 Offense scores a half point if batter bunts runner to second.
- 3 If runner is safe at second and batter is safe at first the offense earns a full point.
- 4 Also if pitcher throws a “ball” that is not buntable it is a point for the offense.
- 5 The defense scores a point if the pitcher throws a strike that is either not bunted or bunted foul.
- 6 They also earn a point if they get the runner out at second. If they turn a double play they get two points.

Setup:

Infielders set up at their positions. Runner at first base. Batter steps into the batter's box.

Coaching Tips:

- Stress all of the following in this drill: pitchers need to throw strikes, batters need to be able to recognize what pitches to bunt and what pitches to lay off of, runners have to make good decisions so they don't get picked off or doubled up, fielders need to be able to make the correct play under pressure.
- Up the competitiveness and pressure even more by requiring the losing team to run.



Offense tries to advance the runner to second with a bunt. Defense tries to get the lead runner and the double play if possible.

Run Down Drill

Purpose:

How to execute a run down so even the fastest baserunner can't escape.

Instructions:

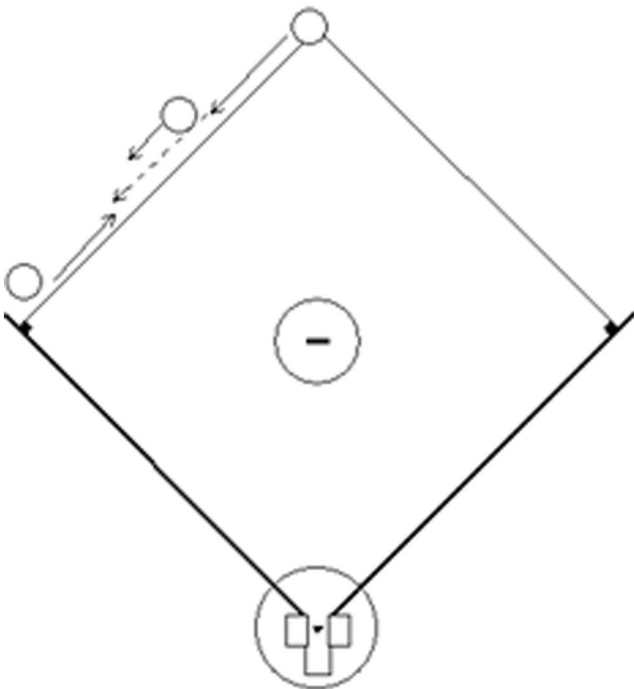
- 1 Coach says "go."
- 2 Player at second runs toward runner with ball in his throwing hand.
- 3 Fielder at third runs toward runner and calls "ball" when he has good momentum toward the runner and feels it is time to make the throw.
- 4 Fielder from third catches the ball and tags the runner.

Setup:

Infielders set up at second and third base. Runner is in between them.

Coaching Tips:

- Whoever has the ball should be running full speed at the runner – don't let the runner dictate the speed.
- Fielder with ball should hold it in bare hand not glove.
- Receiver calls for ball when he has good momentum going forward and feels it is time to make the throw.
- No fake throws or jukes. Fielders should run full speed and make the runner go full speed so it is difficult for him to stop and change direction.



Fielders get the out in a run-down situation between second and third.

Around the Horn Drill

Purpose:

Infielders learn to make throws to possible double play situations.

Instructions:

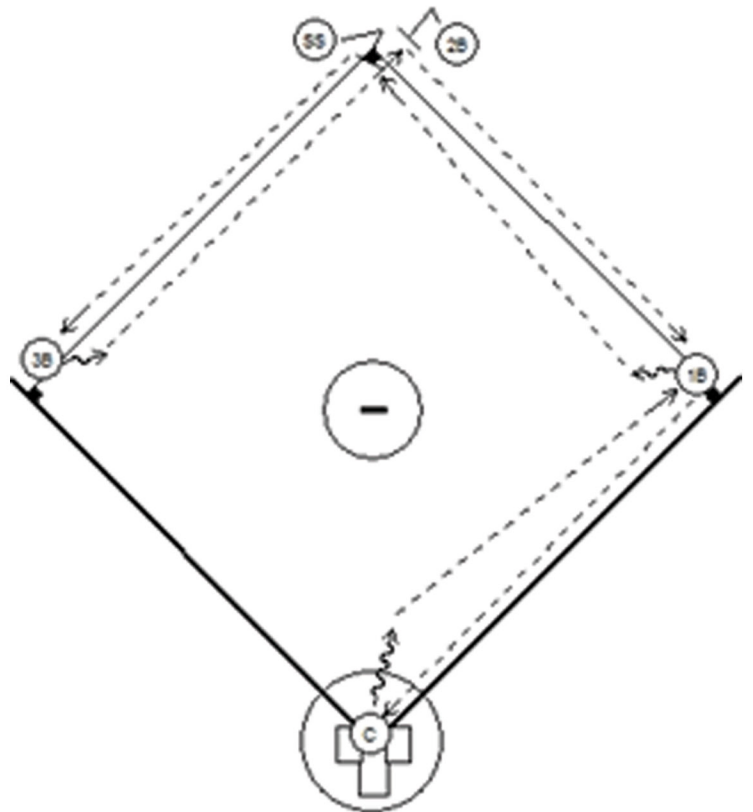
- 1 Catcher rolls the ball out in front of home, fields it and throws to first.
- 2 First baseman catches it to record the out. He then drops the ball out in front of him, fields it and throws to the shortstop at second.
- 3 Shortstop executes a backdoor spin and throws to third.
- 4 Third baseman catches the ball and makes a swipe tag. He then drops the ball out in front of him, fields it and throws to second.
- 5 Second baseman catches the throw on the bag and throws to first.
- 6 First baseman throws the ball back to the catcher.

Setup:

Infielders take their positions.

Coaching Tips:

- Throws should be crisp and on target. Fielders should always use good throwing fundamentals – step toward target, bring glove to chest, flick wrist and follow through.
- Fielders should move quickly with purpose – nothing lackadaisical in this drill.



Infielders throw the ball around the horn.