

## **FIELDING: 1,2,3 DRILL**

Hello, my name is Coach Stacey Baker and I coach High School Girls Softball in Camden, Tennessee.

One of my favorite fielding drill is what I call the: (1, 2, 3 drill). This drill is great for both infielders as well as outfielders.

This is a line drive and pop up fielding drill which teaches players to catch three types of flyballs.

- 1) a line drive right at them,
- 2) a line drive that they must stretch for,
- 3) and last a flyball that they must sprint to catch. This is how the drill works.

Line your players up in a single file line, players should start on the fair line just behind first base at the edge of the outfield grass. The coach will be in right-center field with a bucket of balls. The players will be running in a straight line about 50 to 60 feet away from the coach. (Running from first towards second.) One player at a time and they need their gloves.

The coach starts by throwing a line drive right at the players, the player catches it and will still running the coach throws the second ball in front of the player making her reach to catch it, while the player is still running the coach throws the third ball, which is a high pop fly out away from the player that she must track down and catch it. After player one has been she returns to the back of the line and it is time for the next player.

Keys importance to this drill:

- 1) Once the players starts running (she never stops nor hesitates) she sprints all the way, catching all the balls on the run.
- 2) Once the players catches a ball she quickly throws it down and looks for the next ball.
- 3) After the player has finish she retreats and picks up the three balls and gets in the back of the line. (balls on the ground may cause a twisted ankle)
- 4) The coach needs to be quick and accurate with his/her throws. A line drive right at them starts it off, then the second throw must be where they reach out for, and the last throw is a fly ball out away from the player which they must hustle down and catch.
- 5) This drill really works on catches you may encounter during a game.
- 6) There is a big difference between running and sprinting we like our players to sprint while doing this drill.

## **FIELDING: BREAK DOWN DRILL**

This drill is a "break down drill" Have your players get in partner.

On there knees they role each other the ball. While fielding with bare hands (inforce softhands, paddles can be good for this) they lift there feet of the ground behind them. This forces them to see the ball all the way in. After they have done about twenty of that tell them to put their gloves on. Do about twenty that way. Then have them work forehand and back hands the same way. When they are done with that tell them to stand up and do the same things while standing. Start with their gloves off and go back through the rotation. When they do backhands and forehands make them start with their feet already in the position they would be in when fielding the ball and make them concentrate on soft hands.

## **FIELDING: COLORED NUMBERS DRILL**

This drill is to help the kids keep an eye on the ball. I write numbers on the balls in different colors 1-5. The girls have to field the ball and call out the color the number is written in. When they get the hang of that have them call out the number written. I use permanent marker and depending on the age I will determine what size to make the numbers.

### **FIELDING: CLOCKWORK DRILL**

One drill I use with outfielders is called "clockwork".

A cutoff-approx. 50 ft. from the catcher. And 5 or 6 outfielders-each spread out from right to left, approx. 50 ft. from cutoff. I start by hitting a ball to the girl farthest left, she throws to cutoff, cutoff throws home. After throwing to cutoff the fielder then runs to take her spot, the cutoff after throwing home, runs home to become catcher, and the catcher is to run to the open spot in the outfield. In a short amount of time fielders get to field in all outfield positions, work on throws, and get some conditioning.

### **FIELDING: CONES DRILL**

Set out some small cones in an arc in the outfield and then hit grounders to the outfielders. They must round the cones before reaching the ball. This teaches them to go to the path of the ball and not directly at the ball.

### **FIELDING: FOUR CORNERS DRILL**

I call this drill the Four Corners. Players are located at 3B fielding position, 2B (on bag), 1B (on bag) and at catcher. All other players are lined up at 3B coaching box. Coach hits ground ball to 3B who throws to 2B who throws to 1B who throws to catcher. After they throw, the player then sprints to the position she threw to. The next player in line then assumes 3B and the drill starts over. When everyone has been through I then place the players at 1B and the drill goes from 1B to 2B to 3B to catcher.

This drill provides a quick warm-up, works on fielding ground balls, throwing accuracy, and pivoting to make the next throw.

### **FIELDING: FUNNEL DRILL**

This drill was one of the most helpful drills as a player, and now as an assistant coach. Players can do this drill after warming up their arms, with their partner. One player keeps their glove on, the other takes their glove off. The partner with the glove rolls them the ball. The fielder must get down on the ball, or they will miss it.

They also learn they must get completely in front of the ball, and scoop or "funnel" the ball to their waist.

### **FIELDING: GROUNDERS DRILL**

I coach fastpitch girls at Northwest High School and Northwest Senior League levels, in Southern Ohio.

Our high school and Sr. League team works frantically with this favorite of mine. It allows for each fielder to see nearly 75-100 ground balls within 20 minutes.

You need 2 coaches (if girls are skilled enough let them hit the grounders), 2 crates of balls (25 in ea.), & 2 empty crates to set at designated base.

The drill goes as follows: Grounders to 3B who throws to First; other coach hits to 2B who throws to SS covering second. Then: ss to 1B, 3B to 2b; 2B to 1B, SS to 3B; 1B to 3B, SS to 2B.

There are variations we mix in also with catcher throwing to bases.

### **FIELDING: OUTFIELD FLY DRILL**

There is a drill I have been using for the past 3 years for outfielders. Place half the team in left field and the rest in center. The coaches hit a fly ball in between the first two outfielders.

They both go for the ball with one catching it and the other properly backing up the fielder. If the ball happens to get by both fielders then they will use a relay throw to get the ball back to the coach.

This drill has helped greatly in backing up on all balls, and easy to do before games.

### **FIELDING: OVER-THE-HEAD DRILL**

Have the players line up and have one of them selected to field a ball hit over her head. Hit or throw the ball over her head and to the right or left. Make sure that she does not run with her glove up, but rather put the glove down and run to catch the ball and then get her glove up and make the catch.

Also, when doing these drills, make sure the fielder catches the ball in front or to her throwing side so she can make a quick release of the ball to an infielder.

### **FIELDING: READY FOR ANYTHING DRILL**

Have someone to throw the ball and to catch. First you form a line about 30 to 40 feet away from the person that is throwing the ball. Tell the players just to charge the ball. Also tell them that they could expect almost anything. Grounder, Pop Fly, or a line drive right to them. Anything.

It teaches them to be ready for anything. And to always charge the ball.

### **FIELDING: SITUATIONS DRILL**

One drill that our coaches use with us is where the infield takes their positions and the coach makes up situations for us. Like...A runner on 1st and 2nd...2 outs...and then she hits the ball to us making us like its a real situation and we have to figure out what to do with the ball so we'll be ready for any situations like that in a real game.

She goes through every situation possible with us so we won't get confused in a game. She does this every practice. It helps out a lot and causes less confusion during a real game. The outfielders participate too. It's just like a real game going on except it's practice. It really helps improve the mental aspect of your fielding skills.

### **FIELDING: STAR DRILL**

The fielder stands about 20 yards away from the thrower. The fielder runs to the right and makes the catch, then drops the ball and hauls it over to the far left, makes the catch, drops the ball, then runs away from the thrower for the long ball, catches it, drops it, and runs straight towards the thrower for the shallow ball and that's it.

### **FIELDING: TRIANGLE DRILL**

You have to divide your team up into 3 groups. The first group stands between first base and second base. The second group stands at short stop. The third group stands at home plate. A coach and the catcher stand a little to the side of the plate. The coach hits the ball to the first group, then the first group catches it and throws it to the second group while running to the second group position. The second group girl that catches the ball throws it to home plate while running there. You just keep on rotating in all of the positions.

## **FIELDING: THAT GAME DRILL**

You split your team into 3 teams it works well with 12 players and 2 coaches. One team goes to the outfield, one team plays the infield and the other team is up to bat. One coach pitches and one catches, you can also use the tee if you only have one coach, he/she needs to play catcher, or you can play pitcher and catcher after the ball has been hit. The pitcher pitches 3 pitches and the batter hits the ball and has to run all the bases, the team who touches the ball first has to field the ball and pass the ball under their legs until the ball has been passed to every girls on their team and the last girl has to throw the ball to the catcher before the batter/runner makes it home. The throw home has to be a good throw and the coach receiving the throw home can stand on home plate and can stretch to catch the ball but can't leave the plate.

If the ball arrives before the runner then the home team has one out--three outs and they go to the outfield and the infield team is up to bat, the kicker is that the pitcher can pitch as soon as a batter is up to the plate with a helmet on so if your team was just at bat you better be running to position yourself in the outfield. We end up with girls not even taking their helmets off, but they also learn teamwork, they have each others gloves ready for their teammates on their way to the field and they usually have the girl with the best arm line up at the end of the line to assure a good throw home, coaches beware, this game has just pooped me out, especially when you are playing pitcher and catcher!!!!

Oh yah, the batter only gets 3 pitches, if she doesn't hit a fair ball after 3 she is out. And no bunting.

## **FIELDING: TIGER DRILL**

This drill is used to have everyone participate in fielding, catching and throwing.

Have everyone spread out evenly into a deep infield position. One player on first and I use another player for backup to the first baseman. Have an assistant be the catcher or you could use another player.

Start the drill by coach saying ready. This is a que for getting all the players into a ready position.

You then hit grounder or fly balls to them. They will need to be sure and call it if it is a fly ball. On grounders make sure they setup in the PFP (Perfect Fielding Position) and keep the ball in front of them. Once the catch is made a good throw to first base is then made. The first basemen then throws the ball to the catcher.

If a ball is missed the player missing the ball runs and retrieves the ball runs back and rolls the ball into the backstop while everyone else continues on with the drill. After they all have received at least one ball hit to them I will then yell switch. At that time the player that is backing up the first baseman becomes the first baseman. The first baseman goes to where third would be and everyone else rotates toward first.

I usually have punishments for trying to correct certain aspects of the drill. For example not getting ready, not getting in front of the ball, not using PFP, making bad throws to first ect. have to run a short distance and return to the drill.

I also award players doing things correctly.

PFP - Perfect Fielding Position - Glove foot forward. Other foot shoulder with apart at the inseam of the glove foot. Glove out in front and on the ground. Back parallel with the ground. Shoulders square with the hitter.