

# Identifying Poor Skills & Bad Habits

Analysis & Correction

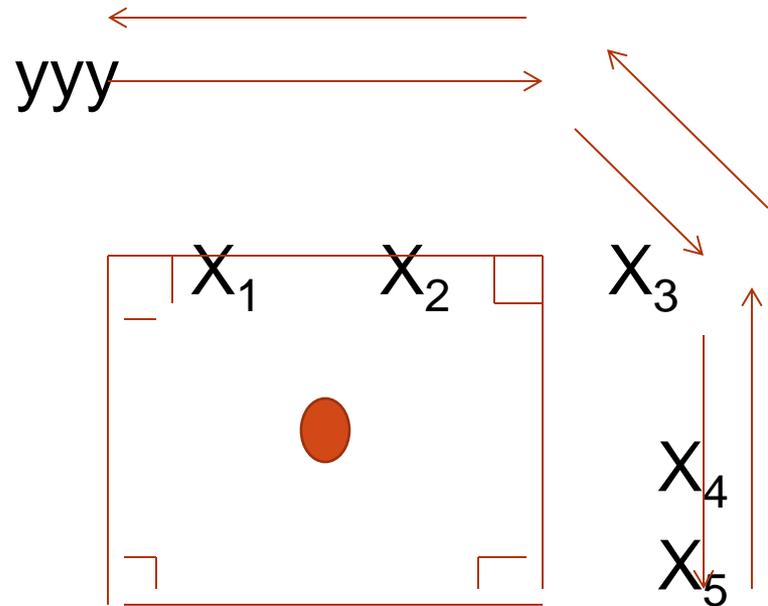
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# Footwork!

- To the trained eye, most skills start and end with proper footwork! The problem is, far too many coaches, outside of running the bases, don't pay attention to it. In turn, very few spend time teaching it.
- Throughout the class, you will quickly realize how important footwork skills are throughout the game of softball.
- Most of the Drills I use for my practices involves the repetition of good footwork habits.

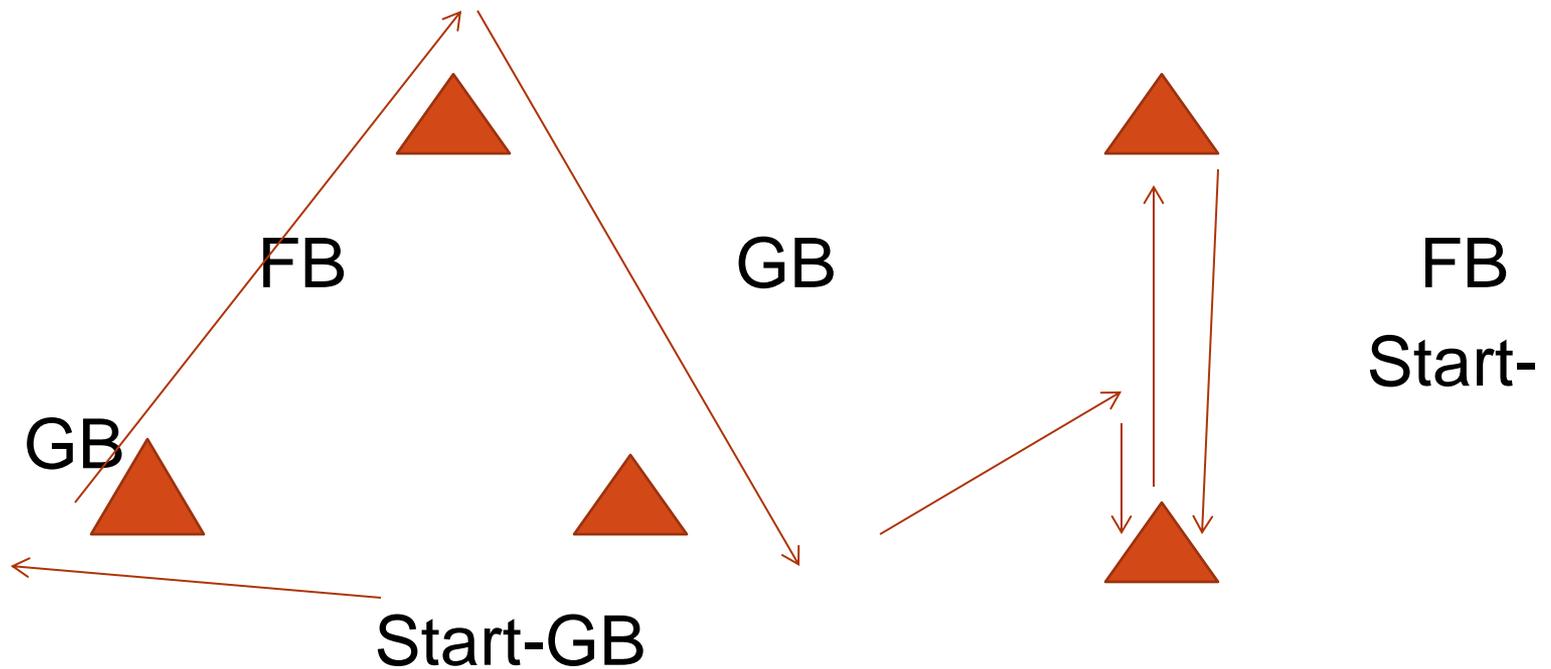
# Teaching Footwork – My Favorite Drill



**Y = Fielders – X = Throwers**

- Y<sub>1</sub> in motion...X<sub>1</sub> tosses easy FB,, Y<sub>1</sub> fields it & throws back. Y<sub>1</sub> continues and gets a GB from X<sub>2</sub>, throws it back & continues...
- Once everybody has made it to RF, they start again with a FB from X<sub>5</sub>...working there way back to left field.
- Rotate your Xs & Ys.

# Teaching Footwork – 2 & 3 Cones Combined



A great 20 min Drill – Works on all skills and technical ability. Great cardio!

5-7 players at a time works best.

# Fielding Ground Balls

## Correcting & Fine Tuning

- Most fielding flaws come from the fear of having the ball hit you. Thus not squaring up to the ball!
- Not charging. Always taking the ball on the glove-side.
- The left foot (glove-side foot) is behind the right one.
- These are all signs that the fielder is not confident when approaching the ground ball.
- **The use of Flat Gloves is the best way to teach proper fielding habits!**

# Fielding Ground Balls

- When fear is not part of the problem, mechanics are. Repetition after repetition...here is a good, simple drill for teaching a fielder how to approach a ground ball properly.



- Each coach has a  $\frac{1}{2}$  bucket of balls beside them...rolls soft GB to Players-A, who field the ball and mock toss (they do not actually throw it). They hustle and drop the ball in coaches bucket and proceed to the line of Players-B.

# Fielding Ground Balls

## What to Look For:

- Do they field with one hand, or two?
- Do they charge the ball or tend to stay back?
- Do they square up to the ball, or tend to take the grounder on the glove side?
- Upon approach to the ball, are their feet close together or far apart? Are their knees bent enough so the glove reaches the field?
- Footwork – When she receives the ground ball, are her feet parallel, is the glove-side foot behind the other, or is the arm-side foot behind?

# Fielding Fly Balls

## **A Simple, Yet Effective Drill for Teaching FB Skills**

- Using the volunteer players, we will conduct a simple OF drill where we can break down and analyze the various components of taking a fly ball.
- I will let the class offer up their opinions on fixing the flaws that we see...
- “My Favorite Drill” the one we worked on earlier, is also a very good drill for improving FB techniques.

# Fielding Fly Balls

## What to Look For:

- Are they catching the ball with one hand, or two?
- On easy FBs are they catching over their glove-side shoulder, or over their throwing shoulder?
- Going back on a ball, do they back-step, or drop step?
- When having to make a post catch throw, do they get their feet and bodies into proper position, or do they wait until they catch the ball before they get their feet right?
- Do they stay straight up when they throw, or do they follow through by having their upper body “follow the ball?”

# Throwing - Overhand

- ...Anybody who plays catcher, third or the OF, must throw overhand! Do they actually throw overhand?
- Volunteers & Students will rotate playing catch.
- Together we will have a discussion on the various aspects of the overhand throw.
- Do they take the ball off the shelf, or do they short arm the throw?
- Prior to the forward rotation of the throwing arm, do they hold the ball with the thumb down?

# Throwing - Overhand

- Is their arm & forearm shaped at 90 degrees just before the toss?
- Spin – **Why** do we worry about the spin?
- Are they following through...arm and body? **Why?**
- **Question:** If you throw overhand, where or what direction “should” the follow through take the throwing arm?
- If you throw sidearm or 3/4s, where will your arm end up?
- Where is the glove, when the throwing rotation begins?  
Where should it be?
- Is the lead foot facing it’s target? Is the elbow up?

# Throwing - Sidearm

- For today's purpose, sidearm includes submarine, sidearm & 3/4s. What's the difference between them?
- The only players who "could" be throwing sidearm are your middle infielders.
- Don't teach it! As the players start to mature into ball players, tolerate your second baseman & shortstop throwing this way.
- Make sure the arm & forearm are at 90 degrees, just like an overhand throw would be.
- Make sure the players are following through.

# Base-Running

- As I stated in the previous class, coaches cannot teach speed. Some players have it! Most don't! What we can teach is good base-running skills.
- Sometimes, smart runners are better than fast runners.

## What to Look For?

- When rounding bases, what foot do most runners touch the base with? **Does it matter?**
- Pre-pitch, do base-runners glance at the OF to see the depth of the fielders? **Why is this important?**

# Base-Running

- Do they take a proper leadoff (& stance)?
- Do they take an aggressive leadoff *every pitch*?
- How do they read bloopers & balls hit to the gaps?

## Correcting & Fine Tuning

- All runners should round the bases with their left foot. It's shorter! **Drill** – Coach stands on 2/3s of the outer part of the base, leaving only the inside 1/3 exposed. Players round the base touching only with their left foot.
- The skill becomes learned when each player can round a base looking up & touching left.

# Base-Running

- At the same practice where you work on rounding, work on leadoffs...**have the class show: The Stance! The Approach-Rocking! The Leadoff!**
- Constantly remind your runners to look at the OF to see where the fielders are playing? I like to work on this during team scrimmages & live runner drills. It's a skill that every elite base-runner has to have.

# Hitting – Class Exercise

## Breaking Down the Swing!

Hands & Arms

Feet & Legs

Rotating Hips

Weight Shift

Head & Eyes

Balance – Pre & Post Swing

The Follow-Through

- All students & volunteers will take a bunch of swings. Collectively, we will critique the group of hitters by breaking down all the facets of the swing.

# Bunting

- Together we will look into the differences between a:
- Sac Bunt
- Bunting for a Base Hit
- Drag & Slap Bunts (left handed hitters)
- Bunting off Home plate – Corey West Virginia example
- Fake Bunt and Hit
- Read the defense – specially 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> basemen