

## **Majors BB; Seniors BB & Majors SB; Seniors SB Curriculum**

- 1. Baserunning**
- 2. Catcher**
- 3. Batting**
- 4. Infield**
- 5. Outfield**
- 6. Pitching (baseball only)**

### **Baserunning Curriculum (Majors Level)**

#### **Objectives:**

- Improve ability to run the bases efficiently
- Increase ability to steal bases and recognize when stealing can be done effectively
- Learn to lead and take secondary leads on every pitch
- Improve upon ability and knowledge at tagging up and taking extra bases when possible
- Develop players' abilities to practice situational baserunning including anticipating opponents mistakes
- Recognize pick-off moves and returning to base safely on them

#### **Expectations:**

- Players should be practicing at least one new baserunning fundamental (knowledge) or skill as a part of each practice
- Integrate baserunning skills into the warm-up each practice for more efficient use of practice time

#### **Curriculum**

- How to leave the batter's box when the ball is batted
- Understanding base coaches' role and taking direction from the base coaches while advancing
- Running to first base
  - run through the base, turn head towards foul territory to look for overthrow, stay in foul territory

- rounding the base on balls hit to the outfield
- Thinking ahead on the bases
  - Know the number outs
  - Know the situation
- Taking a lead
  - Proper length of lead
- Taking a secondary lead
- Recognize pick-off moves and how to return to base safely
  - Head first to outside of bag with inside arm, head turned to outfield
- What to do if a ground ball is hit
- What to do if a pop fly is hit
  - Know the safe distance to be off a base
- Receiving complex signs from base coaches
- How to round each base (bellying out)
- Sliding
  - Players should be learning what a pop-up slide is
- Improve technique for stealing bases
  - Cross-over step, starting low and driving hard with quick leg turnover
- Anticipating balls in the dirt and wild pitches to get a better jump on “taking a base”
- Tagging up on fly balls to the outfield

## **CATCHER INSTRUCTION (Majors)**

### **Objectives:**

- Learn proper set-up & stance
- Improve receiving & blocking techniques including framing pitches
- Demonstrate mastery of at least one of the catcher throwing techniques
- Be the field leader, including communication & responsibilities

### **Expectations:**

- Each team should have a minimum of 2 catchers who adequately master the Majors curriculum by the end of the season
- Catchers are to be given individual or small group instruction on some portion of the fundamental skills outlined in this curriculum at least 1x per week.
- Catchers should be working in full gear with pitchers as a regular part of each practice

### **Catcher's Curriculum**

- **Set-up & stance:** Set-up should be low & wide with both your legs & feet. Weight should be distributed on the inside of your feet with concentration of weight at the balls of your feet.
  - **Bases empty:** lower stance & target with throwing hand behind back for safety.
  - **Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>:** “Ready” position (butt should be positioned higher & throwing hand should be in a fist, behind your catching hand thumb).
- **Receiving & blocking:** When receiving good pitches your body needs to be “quiet”. Avoid rotating the shoulders, and also avoid excessive movement up & down and side to side. Catching the ball with your glove hand smoothly and gently. **Framing pitches** when necessary.
  - Thumb up on pitches to your left.
  - Thumb down on pitches to the right

Blocking: Keep shoulders square to pitcher so that ball bounces off your body back towards the pitcher. Close the whole between your legs with the glove. Head facing down and chest out so that the ball will be deflected towards the infield.
- **Throwing:** There are two main rules with any of the approaches. 1<sup>st</sup> stay low, and 2<sup>nd</sup> avoid stepping on the plate so you do not slip.
  - **Jump Pivot** produces a quick release and requires a strong arm. While staying low you will hop with your feet shifting to the 6 & 12 positions.
  - **Rake & Throw** is for backhand pitches (outside to righties). Keep your right foot planted and pivot off it to throw.
  - **Jab Step** is for catchers with weaker arms. Take a small pivot step with your right foot towards the back point of the plate & stride with your front foot towards second while raking with the ball back. This approach is slower and more deliberate, but produces a stronger base for throwing off of and thus a stronger throw.
- **Communication & Responsibilities:** Encourage and reinforce good pitching. Take trips to the pitcher’s mound to talk to the pitcher when the pitcher is upset or struggling to throw strikes. Tell him that you are going to catch his pitches and get him some strikes. Back-up 1<sup>st</sup> base on ground balls with no one on base.
- **Being the field leader:** Let the team know how many outs there are with every new batter. Call out who is covering second in a stealing situation.
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> basemen:** for righties
  - **SS:** for lefties

#### **Advanced Catcher skills & knowledge:**

- Learn to give signs to the pitcher
- Fielding Pop-ups
  - Find ball then throw face mask
  - Back to the infield on pop-ups hit behind home plate

## Hitting Training (Majors level)

### **Objectives**

- All players will utilize plate discipline and identify strikes for hitting
- Learn to take signs and understand the batters responsibility for each sign/play
- Learn the batters responsibility when there is a passed ball with runners on base
- Recognize how to call time as a batter and when to stay in the batter's box and when to get out
- Pitch count recognition and improved ability to expand zone for two strike counts
- Develop situational approach to hitting; bunting & RBI situations
- Improve ability to bunt and understand why and when to bunt

### **Expectations**

- Goal of 40 swings at every practice (tee, soft-toss, &/or BP)
- Mastery of stance and swing fundamentals should be exhibited as to hitter's curriculum below (all players should demonstrate mastery of #'s 1-4)
- Reinforce players ability to get out of the way of pitched balls: reminding them of which way to turn
- Advanced player skill:
  - All players should be able to perform soft toss with teammates
  - Players should participate in two strike drills where they practice the ability to "waste" pitches by fouling pitches away until they get a pitch they can handle

### Hitter Curriculum

1. Grip and hand position
  - Bat in finger tips
  - Line up knocking knuckles
  - NOT in palm
  - Loose hands
2. Stance and Position in box
  - There is no wrong position
  - Feet shoulder width apart (athletic position)
  - Preferably a straight/neutral stance
  - Balanced position achieved by "getting rhythm" (light bounce in knees)
3. Stride and weight transfer

- Slow take back – “bow and arrow” approach
  - Reach with front foot – toe first (DON’T move weight forward) Power transfer thru hips
  - Stay Straight – head & eyes level
  - Transfer weight – hands go straight to ball
  - KEEP FRONT SHOULDER DOWN ON BALL (chin to shoulder)
4. Swing & follow through
- Level swing (for liners and grounders)
  - Do NOT look up! Again, shoulder down!
  - Head Down.

## **INFIELDER INSTRUCTION (Majors level)**

### **Objectives:**

- Demonstrate mastery of “set position”
- Correctly position self independently according to situation
- Learn to effectively turn double plays
- Mastery of cut-off roles and back-up responsibilities
- Utilize advanced tagging techniques like positioning of body at bag and use of the sweep tag
- Improve “drop step” for tracking balls hit in the air

### **Expectations:**

- Infielders should be fielding a minimum of 40 groundballs on each game day and during each practice
- Players should be able to run their own infield drills with teammates hitting grounders to infielders off of a tee
- Develop player knowledge of bunt defenses

### **Infielder Curriculum**

- **Set position and situational positioning**
  - Ready Position – glove at waist facing up, steps in as pitcher delivers, bend at knees and waist
  - Understand double play depth, infield in, and cheating to a base for covering a steal.
- **Receiving ground balls**
  - Proper ground ball fielding technique (head low, glove out front, button of cap)
  - Sense of urgency to get to the ball quickly

- Circling the ball to get in a better throwing position when there is time
- The throw – plant feet and make strong accurate throw
- **Receiving balls in the air**
  - Drop step on balls hit beyond infield (no back pedal)
  - Calling the ball
  - Get to ball fast, don't float
  - Plant feet and throw ball back into the infield quickly
- **Communication & Responsibilities:**
  - Let outfielders know the number of outs before each batter
  - Let catcher know when a runner is stealing
  - Back-up on every play
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> &/or SS back-up pitcher on throw back from catcher with runners on base
  - Cut-offs

**Advanced Infielder skills & knowledge:**

- Bare handing slow rollers
- Defending the bunt

## **Outfield Training (Majors)**

**Objectives:**

- Master proper positioning & the outfielder's "set" position
- Improve fielding techniques for receiving both ground balls and fly-balls
- Master the "crow-hop"
- Properly judge the flight of a batted ball
- Throw to the appropriate cut-off man and through the cut-off when necessary

**Expectations:** (Outfielders have 3 major assignments)

- All players should field a minimum of 20 fly balls or pop-up at every practice
- Players should be aware of the 3 major assignments (below for outfielders)

1. **Take a base hit away** from a batter whenever possible. (Catch the fly ball).
2. **Cut down the length of base hits.** (Hustle and work together to hold the batter and/or runners to the minimum number of bases).

3. **Keep runners from advancing** whenever possible. Get to the ball fast and get it in fast! (Throw to the right cut-off or base; throw strongly and accurately).

### Outfielder's Curriculum

**ON EVERY PITCH** – an outfielder must:

- Be in the correct position. (see positioning below)
- The outfielder should watch the batter and **not** the pitcher, as the ball is being delivered to the plate
- As the batter strides to hit, the outfielder should be moving forward slightly in the set position.
- He should **listen to the sound of the bat meeting ball**. With a little experience it will tell him how hard the ball is hit.
- The outfielder *always* breaks FAST! (*crossover step & pivot step*)

**ON BALLS TO THE OUTFIELD** – an outfielder must:

- **Fly balls:** Get to the ball fast and wait for it. Never drift to a ball.
- **Ground balls:** Try to get it off an early hop. The longer and slower it rolls the trickier the hops become. Get to grounders FAST!
- Run on your toes, not your heels. Running on heels makes your head bounce and makes tracking a fly ball more difficult. Especially important on balls hit over your head where you have to turn and run.
- Use your bare hand to block the sun. (if necessary)

### **POSITIONING**

- Opposite field outfielder should move in closer than pull side outfielder.
- Play power hitters to pull (shift).

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The center fielder makes the "call" on all balls hit to his right or left.
- The outfielder makes the call on all fly balls dropping behind the infield.
- Outfielders should **back each other up on every outfield play**.
- Each outfielder should **back up the base in front of him on every infield play**.

## PITCHER INSTRUCTION (Majors BB)

The CBB Pitcher Curriculum is based on using athletes' natural throwing motion to create the most effective, efficient throwing motion for their particular body type. It is important to value the fact that each pitcher has a unique muscular make up and therefore allow them to be unique in their throwing motion. The most important aspects of youth pitcher development are to foster sound mechanics that are safe, focus on consistency in the delivery and to emphasize the mental approach to pitching.

### **Objectives**

- Master two and four-seam grips
- Learn to throw change-up with effectiveness
- Master consistent, sound mechanics on all pitches
- Identify how and when to step off the rubber
- Learn how to deliver an accurate pick-off throw to first base
- Learn to receive and incorporate basic signs from the catcher
- Learn to use location to pitch more effectively

### **Expectations**

- Pitchers should be working regularly in practice with the team's catchers
- Catchers should be able to give locations for certain out pitches and pitchers should be able to come reasonably close to hitting those locations
- Reinforce the importance of a mechanically sound delivery (preferably from the set position) and be sure to also reinforce the importance of consistency with the delivery.

### Pitcher Curriculum

#### **Warm-up --**

- Starting pitcher
  - Light Jog followed by running 2x from foul pole to foul pole in the outfield
  - Full body stretching focusing on legs, shoulders, arms and wrists
    - **\*See recommended dynamic stretching at end of Majors BB pitcher curriculum**
  - Throw casually to take an inventory of how arm and body feels
    - Start at about 25-30 ft. and stretch out distance to at least 60 feet
  - Once loose – begin with about 5-10 throws doing a casual delivery
  - Progress to about 80% effort at regulation distance
    - Number of throws depends entirely on the pitcher and how they feel
  - Finish with a few near game speed pitches that are thrown to specific locations

#### **Proper way to hold/grip the ball –**

- The farther apart your fingers are the weaker they become for throwing. The proper distance between fingers is just about an index fingers width apart.
- Use two or four-seam grip for fastball

**Wind-up** – Coach Corral video

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj4SNscPlbc&feature=player\\_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj4SNscPlbc&feature=player_detailpage)



### Basic steps of pitching motion

- The Set-up
  - Offset foot angle (about 40 degrees from center)
  - Rest hands under chin
  - Both elbows relaxed and at side
- The step back
  - Baby step back
  - Nose over toes
- Plant foot
  - Plant foot against rubber
- Leg lift/balance point
  - Turn hip and lift knee
  - Balance point – head over back leg
- Separate hands and drive
- Land at Power position
  - Hips and shoulder align with target
  - Get arm up and out – ball pointed back to SS for RHP, 2B for LHP
- Release and follow through

### Stretch – SportsMED video

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMgfz1X9bmc&feature=player\\_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMgfz1X9bmc&feature=player_detailpage)

- Start position
  - Aligned with plate
  - Knees bent and relaxed
  - Feet spread comfortably wide
- Come set
  - Stay “square” to the plate – feet should stay in alignment
  - Bring feet to shoulder width by stepping in with lead leg
  - Hands come together with elbows now at sides and relaxed
  - Hands just below chin
- Leg lift/balance point
  - Turn hip and lift knee
  - Balance point – head over back leg
- Separate hands and drive
- Land at Power position
  - Hips and shoulder align with target
  - Get arm up and out – ball pointed back to SS for RHP, 2B for LHP
- Release and follow through

### Pick-off moves – ClubHouseGas video

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnRf6Y6ZZOo&feature=player\\_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnRf6Y6ZZOo&feature=player_detailpage)

### Covering first on grounder to first basemen

- Pitcher runs as fast as (s)he can for a spot near the foul line that is about 10 feet to the home plate side of 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- Turn left to run along the inside of the base line (but not in the base line!)

- Hands should be up near chest and open as a good target
- After catching the ball, look down for the base
- Hit 2<sup>nd</sup> base side of bag with right foot and continue with momentum towards second to avoid entangling with base runner running up the foul line
- If runners are on base: after tagging 1<sup>st</sup> quickly face the infield ready to make the next throw

### **Additional considerations**

- **Mental approach on the mound**
  - Work on slowing down and focus on every pitch
  - Pitching is not a sprint, stress not rushing
  - The best pitch in baseball is a strike
- **Proper positioning of feet on the pitching rubber**
  - Right side or left side of rubber
  - Arm angle and throwing motion decide
- **Positioning the catcher/target**
  - Teach focus – stress throwing from pitcher to catcher
  - Majors should begin mastery of throwing to edges of plate
- **How to take the throw back from the catcher**
  - Position oneself at the foot of the mound and give a chest high target
  - Catch the ball with 2 hands
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> base or SS must backup the throw from catcher
  - Be aware of pitch count
  - Be aware of where runners are on base paths and recognize that you will need to return to stretch position if runners are on
- **The correct way to turn back to the mound**
  - Teach head on swivel and be aware of the situation
  - When pitcher on the rubber, play stops at Instructional, Junior and Minor levels
  - Majors pitch from stretch with runners on base, must be aware of runners on base and the situation (Outs, Forces, etc....)
- **Backup responsibilities**
  - Pitcher backs up 3<sup>rd</sup> on a throw to 3<sup>rd</sup> base
  - Pitcher covers home on a passed ball
  - Pitcher backs up home on a throw to the plate from outfield or cutoff man

### **Advanced pitcher knowledge & skill**

- Use of signs and location in games
- Learn effective pick-off moves to all three bases
- **\*Dynamic Stretching Warm-up**
  - Toe Touches Right foot over Left and then Left over Right
  - Side lunges – Twice each side
  - Sumo Squat - 10
  - Lunges with Hands on hips – 20 yards / 2 times

- High knees for 20 yards – 2 times
- Jog 10 yards / sprint for 10 yards – 2 times
- Jog foul pole to foul pole – 2 times