

Fundamentals of Outfield

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Agenda

- Fielding Fly Balls
 - Stance
 - Approach
 - Angles
 - Securing the Catch
 - Transition to Throw
 - Crow Hop
- Fielding Ground Balls
 - Routine ground balls using “Safety Stop”
 - “Do or Die”
- Advanced: Tracking the Ball
- Advanced: Shoe String Catch
- Advanced: +2 Rule of Thumb
- Misc.

Obligatory Safety Comment

- Safety First!
 - 6U and 8U should always use low compression (soft) balls, especially for outfield drills
 - For 10U players, it may be best to do outfielding drills in your practices with low compression (i.e. soft) balls for the entire season to avoid injury
 - Start with easier drills in the beginning of the season and have the players build confidence
 - In drills that involve runners, the runners must wear helmets

Fielding Fly Balls

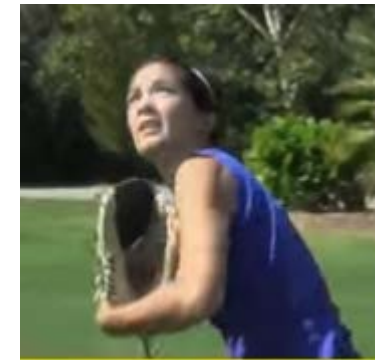
Universal Outfield Stance

- Athletic position
- Square shoulders towards home plate
- Thumbs up
- Oh so slight jump up as ball is released by pitcher so as to land on balls of feet



Approach

- Drop Step is your first step
 - The step is always back
 - Step with the foot that is closest to the direction of the ball
 - If ball is hit directly overhead, drop step to the glove side
- Run with glove tucked
- Raise your glove when you get under ball
- Preferably catch with fingers pointed to the sky
- Catch with body behind ball (so to be in position to make throw)
- Younger players should catch with two hands
- Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Agwan7HeaSQ> (:16 to 2:15)



Angles

- Long ball, take deep angle
- Closer the ball, the shallower the angle



Securing the Catch

- If possible, secure the catch with glove on throwing side, to facilitate a quicker throw
- Also have throwing hand close to glove

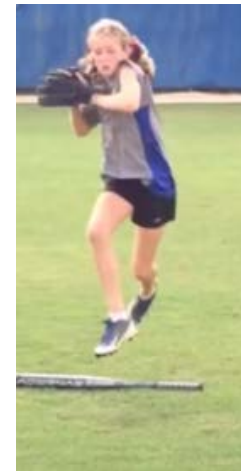


Transition to Throw

- Key here is to get further back when catching the ball, so you can then move forward to throw, i.e.
 - Get behind the ball
 - Move forward
 - In other words, should be not be backpedaling when making the catch
- Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZ4lrNN5Pv8> (5:50 to 7:40)
- Also see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjplijgwIbo> (3:34 to 3:45)

Crow Hop

- For long distance throws, an outfielder should use a crow hop
- It is a leap forward to provide forward momentum
- First get throwing arm knee up, and then follow with glove knee
- When back foot lands, then throw
- Follow through
- See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BP96sZeAqg>
- Also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia1ObjZmsk0> (:45-1:20)



Fielding Ground Balls in Outfield

Fielding Routine Ground Balls

- If there is no play in the outfield, you should field a ground ball hit to the outfield with a “safety stop”
- Approach ball and drop down on throwing side knee
- Extend foot to the side as shown in picture
- Square hips and shoulders to the ball
- Angle chest forward
- Lower glove between legs
- Keep head down
- Alligator the ball
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryWAF9kJ8pI>
(:10 to 1:30)
- Also see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjplijgwIbo>
(4:40 to 5:15)



Fielding “Do or Die” Ground Balls

- In situations where a play needs to be made on a ball hit in the outfield, the outfielder needs to field on the run aka “do or die”
- When fielder sees the ball hit, start charging
- Stay low
- Field ball on glove side and the glove should skim the grass
- Field ball with one hand
- Run through
- Keep head down and see ball go into glove
- Then transition into crow hop
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvw8J87k3l0> (:20 to 1:30)
- Also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjplijgwlb0> (5:15 to 5:45)



Advanced: Tracking the Ball

Tracking the Ball

- Key for any hit ball into the outfield is for the fielder to have a good drop step going back and tuck the glove when running
- Don't turn back to ball when tracking the ball
- If heading in one direction and then need to readjust, do the following
 - Quick stutter step and open chest to ball
 - Always keep eyes on the ball, i.e. don't lose it
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3kNMRaokzk> (:05 to 2:10)



Advanced: Shoe String Catch

Shoe String Catch

- This is for a ball hit in front of the outfielder
- Sprint to ball
- Position glove lower than waist
- Catch and run through
- In general must stay low while approaching the ball
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NGGzIATMeQ>
(:30 to 1:15)



Advanced: +2 Rule of Thumb

+2 Rule of Thumb

- Outfielders should be trained to know where to throw the ball when ball is hit on the ground and cleanly fielded
- Typically the +2 rule is used to get lead runner if the ball does not get past an outfielder
- Example: no one on base, hitter hits ball on ground. Infielders would go to 1st base (i.e. “innies go to out 1”), but unless the ball is hit to right field and can be cleanly fielded and thrown to 1st base to make an out, the outfielders should throw to 2nd base (“outties go to 2”)
- Similarly, if the lead runner is on 1st, the outfielders should go to 3rd (1 + 2), unless a force out can be cleanly and quickly made at 1st or 2nd
- If lead runner is at 2nd base, outfielders should look to get the ball home if the ball is hit to shallow outfield (if deep, then hit cut off)
- See <http://probbaseballinsider.com/baseball-instruction/outfield/outfield-strategy-where-to-throw-the-ball/>

Misc.

Misc.

- Teach outfielders to back up (e.g. RF backs up 1B) on plays that happen in the infield
- Teach that the CF is the field general in the outfield and has override power when it comes to balls hit in the gap (i.e. if CF and LF both call “ball ball ball”, then LF should defer to CF)
- Teach that outfielders have priority over infielders when it comes to shallow pop ups (i.e. easier for outfielder to come in vs. infielder to run back)