

Catchers Gaining Ground 2023- Todd Dulin

I. Throwing Warm Up

- A. Throwing Square - Catchers are working at throwing to bases while warming up. If you have 4 catchers you place one at each base, if you do not have four catchers you can use infielders to fill in. They can throw to any of the bases as they warm up...
 - 1. Start with feet in cement at a short distance (20-30 feet)... they need to be in that athletic linebacker stance. Their feet do not move, but they are moving their torso. The coach is looking for athleticism and quick hands.
 - 2. Then they move out to (60 feet) and they start moving their feet, they need to gain ground and use the proper footwork. In this part of the throwing we are looking for quick feet.
 - 3. Then go to (90 feet) and this is where we want to put it all together, and we want to work on all of the possible scenarios. They can work on their snap throw down to first base, a third strike that gets away, simulate bunts, someone stealing second, or someone stealing third base with a righty hitter at the plate.
 - 4. The catchers then move out to (120 feet). We want to work on arm strength, and really drive off of the lower half.
- B. Warm up throwing on the day before a game should be with the pitcher. Great catchers need to psychologically understand their pitchers.

II. Receiving Drills

- A. Three fingers- mini frisbees, tennis ball, or baseball, and they can hold a ball in their bottom fingers. Get that thumb under the ball.
- B. Barehand- We use tennis balls, baseballs and weighted balls. We exaggerate sticking that pitch right down the middle.
- C. Framing drill- We go around the steering wheel and will start this drill with a bare hand, then we will go to a wooden glove, and then a catcher's mitt. If the catcher is struggling with a certain pitch we will fire up the pitching machine and have them work that spot..
- D. Bullpens- Catchers are working on the psychological part of the game. They are creating a bond and connection with the pitcher. We want our catcher to be a coach on the field. We want them to give the pitchers confidence. They need to understand mechanics, and when they start to fall apart. Each pitcher has its reversion.

III. Receiving and Throwing - Gaining Ground Drill

- A. This is a two man drill and they work in a straight line gaining ground across the gym. The first round is from the linebacker stance. One catcher flips and the other catcher receives, and on each flip they are working on their feet by gaining ground and their hands by getting them into the throwing position. (The catcher's throwing loop is short and quick, get the hand to the ear.)

- B. The second round is from the catcher's stance. There is a straight line from the catcher's chin to the ground... that is where the front foot should land. (Catchers can use the step through or the jump pivot.)

IV. Bunts

- A. Three balls- the coach will point at one ball and they go and field that ball. The coach is checking for footwork around the ball. Make sure the shoulders and feet are in the proper position. Down the third baseline we get around, towards the pitcher and first base side the catcher needs to banana, and anything around the feet the catcher will have time to move the feet and create a throwing angle.
- B. Role outs- the catcher needs to dust pan, and get the feet and shoulders lined up.
- C. Third strike in the dirt- this is a good time to simulate that, and work on the throwing angles.

V. Blocking

- A. Down in position- check for an athletic stance. We will start with tennis balls and then move to hard balls.
- B. Starting in catcher stance- and then going into that down position... (gain some ground).
- C. Slides- driving that back knee into the lead foot. (gain some ground)

VI. Pop Ups

- A. Get depth around the umpire. Then find the ball.
- B. Priority- Home plate triangle to the on deck circles towards dugout entrances and then back to the fence.
- C. Hold the mask until the ball reaches the apex.

VII. Stances

- A. No one on base and less than two strikes- relaxed (keep the umpire clean).
- B. On base or two strikes- linebacker stance, square and athletic, balls of the feet with a slight stagger.

VIII. Stretching and Conditioning

- A. Quick feet- 1. Hand 2. Glove 3. Front 4. Back
- B. Mirror slides with partner
- C. Foam roller
- D. Static and movement stretch
- E. Stretch cords- slide under and hop over
- F. Medicine ball

