

BULLDOG Baseball/Softball

“THROWING”

Throwing a baseball/softball is the 2nd most basic skill set for all levels of baseball/softball. The steps below are critical components. Throwing should be part of your daily routine.

Throwing Steps

- Ready receive position (athletic position) (High/Low 5)
- Turn step/In-step – toward the target
- K.A.S.H. up to Power(Athletic Position). K-knee, A-ankle, S-shoulder, H-hip, towards the target.
- LOVE, Spin, Throw, follow thru

This is a critical aspect of the game. This should be a primary focus of everyday practice and every game.

The curriculum should be completed before your throwing segments of practice. Included below are developmental check points for each of the levels of play prior to starting High School. Our goal in working with you is that all athletes are properly prepared when they arrive for High School Competition. Build the best Bulldogs we can.

LEVEL STANDARDS:

Because throwing skills are universal all levels must be able to complete all 4 steps of throwing. What coaches need to consider is how to break down each part to improve individual player's skills sets and then increase arm strength and endurance each season.

8U player:

- ✓ Achieve with a high degree of routine all four steps of throwing - ACCURACY over VELOCITY
- ✓ Incorporated “playing catch” standards with throwing steps
- ✓ “W” grip on four seams
- ✓ “Knock on door” to rotate wrist
- ✓ Begin Rhythm throwing (boom-boom-boom)
- ✓ Long toss to 90+ feet with a bounce - Rainbows to Frozen Ropes

10U player:

- ✓ Achieve with a high degree of routine all four steps of throwing (boom-boom-boom) – A over V
- ✓ Incorporated “playing catch” standards with throwing steps
- ✓ “V” grip on four seams and “Knock on door”
- ✓ Understand basic Crow-hop technique, Scissor kick, and back-step
- ✓ Flips, shovel tosses
- ✓ Long toss to 120+ feet with a bounce – Frozen Ropes

BRONCO/PONY:

- ✓ Achieve with a high degree of routine all four steps of throwing (boom-boom-boom) – A over V
- ✓ Incorporated “playing catch” standards with throwing steps
- ✓ “V” grip on four seams and “Knock on door”
- ✓ Able to effectively Crow-hop, Scissor kicks, back-step, and off balance plant step
- ✓ Under hand/over hand Flips, shovel tosses leading teammates
- ✓ Long toss to 150-180+ feet with a bounce – Frozen Ropes

TERMS & VOCABULARY:

Ready Receive Position (Athletic Position): Feet should be shoulder width apart, knees bent, butt down, hands out and ready in front with flex at the elbows and wrists. The athletic position should always be attempted to gain a square on the ball.

Turn Step/In-Step: From the Ready Receive position, the player will step with his throwing side foot at a 90 degree step at the center of their target's body. This is a critical distance cut down and set up for getting into the proper perpendicular throwing position.

K.A.S.H. UP (Athletic Position) : Following the turn step, the player's entire body now moves to a 90 degree perpendicular to the center of their target's body. Their Knee, Ankle, Shoulder, and Hip get lined up with their target.

LOVE, SPIN, THROW, FOLLOW THRU: Player "LOVES" glove, bringing front side glove and shoulder towards body to "SPIN" and generate core rotation. "THROW"ing rotation through "FOLLOW THRU" to finish motion and provide increased velocity.

Accuracy over Velocity: the simple concept that where the ball goes is more important than how fast it gets there!

Rainbows to Frozen Ropes: the path of the arc of the ball. We want to progress to slight rainbows to line drive "frozen ropes", better to bounce a ball than throw a pop up.

"W" Grip (four seam grip): for use with smaller hands or Softball players. Players would use a "W" with their first three fingers across the four seams of the ball to throw it with proper rotation. Four seam grip allows the ball to rotate in a 12 – 6 rotation which allows the ball to travel farther, faster, and straighter. When the ball loses momentum it will also bounce more true.

"V" Grip (four seam grip): for use with more advanced players with larger hands. Players would use a "V" with their first two fingers across the four seams of the ball to throw it with proper rotation. Four seam grip allows the ball to rotate in a 12 – 6 rotation which allows the ball to travel farther, faster, and straighter. When the ball loses momentum it will also bounce more true.

Knocking on the door: the act of rotating the throwing hand in line with the KASH position completely backwards as if "knocking" on an imaginary door.

Rhythmic Throwing: the uniform movement of the throwing steps. Paced by the boom – boom – boom pattern.

Crow-Hop: all of the steps for throwing but in a highly active motion, which will include a "hop" into the "turn step", rather than just stepping to it.

Scissor Kick: a quick lateral step used by infielders primarily for making snap throws such as the front side of a double play.

Back Step/Off-Balance Plant step: due to angles of attack, another step to get the body into the best position to setup a perpendicular throwing position to their target. Plant step is often used on bunt plays or do or die plays in the infield grass, usually very short quick throws.

Long Toss: the process of stretching, strengthening, and increasing the stamina of the arm and shoulder muscles. Proper technique begins with a crow-hop, to using the full arm-action, followed by a wrist snap, and follow thru. Ball should be thrown on a low arc to line drive angle. It is gradually built into the throwing warm-up.

DRILLS:

Coach Controlled groups – Smallest groups relating to # of Coaches able to work. All drills can be used for all levels, however they should be qualified for the skill level. Do not be afraid to challenge the athletes, but be conscious that if they experience consistent failure the drill will be counter productive.

Coach sets distance and pace. Team should move as a unit. COACH CONTROLS ALL DRILLS.

· THROWING ROUTINE:

Divide the team into two equal lines starting at the same distance apart. Be sure to follow the distance and number of throws below as your team completes its throwing routine. The distance increases as ability increases. Always RETURN to starting point***

1. Standing dart Toss - facing your partner, elbow at shoulder height. Using only elbow and wrist to snap the ball. - 1 min.
2. One knee – Goal posts (Power position) - emphasize rotation.– 1 min.
3. Prairie Grass - isolated lower half, focus on shoulder and hip rotation, follow through to touch grass. - 1 min.
4. KASH -up position - rocker motion to goal post to rotation. - 1 min.
5. Turn/In-step to KASH-Up throws – from the ready receive position to KASH- up –Backside rotation to Active – Start from KASH-Up position to LOVE-SPIN-THROW FOLLOW THRU – 1 min.
6. Full throw ALL STEPS - Gradual increase of distance every 5 throws (approximately 10 feet)
7. Long Toss (based on age range as described above)

THROWING ROUTINE IS DONE DAILY – other drills can be used to supplement skill sets

· Line Ball:

Divide the team into two equal lines the same distance apart. Take older baseballs and using a permanent marker draw a line through the four seams. Have athletes with partners practice throwing their respective “W” or “V” grips. If thrown correctly they should see a solid line dividing the ball in half as it rotates through the air. A quarter size dot should appear on each side. You can modify this drill with older players so they can see the rotation of the ball with “other” pitches or grips.

· Shovel pass:

Divide the team into two equal lines approximately 15 feet apart. With athletes in an athletic position, place glove with ball inside and throwing hand on top of ball on the ground. Pick-up ball and glove and from static athletic position have players shovel pass the ball back and forth. When partner receives ball he goes back to start position and does the same steps back.

· Quick Hands/Quick Feet:

Divide the team into two equal lines approximately 15 feet apart. With athletes in an athletic position have them jump pivot to KASH UP position and flip ball back and forth. When partner receives ball he goes right back to athletic position and starts the motion again. Increase difficulty by using outside of glove only and then no glove.

GAMES:

For "FUN" but should increase skill level, NOT decrease skill to win at all costs!

Point Game:

Athletes play catch on their own, receive 2 pts. for a throw to partners face, 1pt. to partner's chest. Play game to 20 pts. Coaches observe and correct technique. This is a good way to focus efforts on ACCURACY over VELOCITY! Very good drill for higher levels to maintain a competitive focus during the routine warm-up.

Back Me Up Game:

Athletes partner up to play coach controlled catch. Using commands, on coach's cue, athlete throws to partner. If catch is completed pair is still in game and moves back however many paces coach determines. If athlete drops the ball the pair stays in the game but must turn their hats to the right (signaling that they have had one drop). If athlete drops the ball a second time the pair stays in the game but must turn their hats to the back (signaling that they have had two drops).). If athlete drops the ball a third time the pair is out and sits down until the last pair of athletes remain. FOCUSED ON "PLAYING CATCH" as well as "THROWING" – Coaches should also call "drops" when players do-not use correct form. The expectations for this game should increase at each level of baseball.

Four Corner Baseball:

Uses bases, set up like an infield (approximately 60 ft. apart). Choose two teams. One team is lined up near 1st base, one lined up near 3rd base. Athletes use their gloves, each team has one ball. This is a tag game. Athletes concentrate on rounding the bases (see base running steps), positioning themselves in the proper receiving position for catching the ball, moving to the ball, and throwing with their body in the KASH-up position towards their target. First athlete on each team comes up to their base with ball in glove. Athletes then run around the bases attempting to catch and tag the opposing athlete. As athlete gets to the base before their starting point he will then (turn step, KASH-up etc.) throw the ball to the next athlete in line, who continues the chase. The team that misplays a thrown ball or does not banana route well will be at a disadvantage. This will allow the other team to gain ground eventually making a tag. Play to 3 outs. Whichever team records three outs first (tags the opposing athlete) wins the game. This drill will incorporate "playing catch", "throwing", and "base running". All three skills being critical to develop for athletes.

Throwing Relay Drill w/Race:

This is a relay throwing drill w/ a race incorporated. Break up athletes into equal groups (generally 4 athletes per group). Spread out athletes in their respective lines approximately 40 ft. apart. To mark their starting point, have each athlete take off their hat and place it on the ground next to them. One baseball per group w/ first athlete in line ball in glove. On command of ready, throw, first athlete in each line turn steps to KASH-up-Power and throws ball to next athlete in line. That athlete does the same steps to the next athlete and so on until the end of the line. When ball reaches the last athlete in line they race to the front of the line and each athlete moves up one position (hat). When your group completes the drill and returns each athlete to their original position have them sit down. First team to sit down wins. Expectations of each player should go up. Inaccurate throws should be forced back to the original thrower to repeat the correct steps. Each "cut-off" should be held to the following 3 standards: 1. Hands high and body angled for the next throw, 2. Ability to keep the ball in front and knocked down on errant throws, 3. Follow their glove for increase speed of the transfer between cuts. Great for conditioning and increasing the level of expectations on each athlete. This game is highly useful for working on hitting cut offs and learning the value of accuracy over velocity.