

Accreditation Resource Manual

Furthering Your Catching

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**180
minutes**

Giving Signs

Posture

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right knee points just right of pitcher• Left knee to points to shortstop• Glove on end of left knee, thumb toward pitcher• Trunk held vertical
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Arm and hand position

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Throwing arm wrist against “belt buckle”• Arm tight up against side of trunk• Fist hangs down into crutch• Fingers extended down as required (keep them out of view)
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Runner on 2B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a system and practise it until you are proficient• Remind pitchers at the appropriate time in games• If you suspect that the opposition are “getting your signs”, change
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Throwing to bases

Second base



- Starting in 'runners on base' stance
- Movement commences prior to receiving the ball: slight weight shift forward and to the left
- Move right foot under centre of gravity
- Simultaneously transfer the ball to the throwing hand (from below the glove)
- Close front shoulder; step in direct line towards target
- Throwing arm needs to be in cocked position (with front elbow at shoulder height) as front foot touches the ground
- Throw overhand to maximise backspin and carry on ball
- Head should remain stable with eyes focused on target throughout delivery
- Full follow-through
- Each individual needs to find the best balance between a quick release and throwing velocity



Third base



- As for second base
- The need to clear the hitter is often overstated: Throw in as direct a line as possible

First base



- As for second base
- Essential to close off front shoulder (even though this may be difficult)

Pitchouts

To right handed hitter



- Set up to the outside corner of the plate
- As the ball is released move to the side and then forward through the ball
- Receive the ball in front of over the right shoulder
- Move onto left foot as the ball is received
- Replace feet (crow-hop) and make a firm accurate throw



To left handed hitter



- As above (but to opposite side)



Intentional Walks

Right handed hitter



- Start in standing position in the outside half of the catchers box
- Right arm extended for a target
- As the ball is released shuffle to the side (moving too early could result in a catchers balk)
- Remain in a good athletic position throughout (throw could go wild)

Left handed hitter



- As above (except that left arm is extended for target)

Tag plays at the plate

Accurate throw



- Wait behind the plate as long as possible to maximise field of vision enabling a better read on developing play
- Once ball is on the way assume position with left heel on third base corner of the plate, giving the runner a good view of the plate (encouraging him to slide to that portion of the plate)
- Drop back into the baseline to receive the ball in a 'side on' position (chest and leg guards facing the runner). This enables a quick tag as well as providing maximum protection for the catcher
- Keep the mask on throughout the play



A variety of workable positions for making a tag: standing, one knee, two knees.

In-between hop



- The importance of the run will dictate whether blocking the ball or attempting to catch it is the best play
- When the ball is overthrown but will still bounce (in-between hop), drop back (rather than coming forward)
- Retain side-on position if possible
- Keep posture low and read the bounce

Throw slightly to the right



- Attempt to retain contact with the plate while stretching for the ball
- On a wider throw move feet to get the ball

Barging runner.



- Tag strongly, with arms slightly bent to acts as shock absorbers
- Tag, push off the runner, spin away and be ready to throw

Retrieving wild pitches

Ball coming to rest within a short distance of Home



- Discard mask and approach ball quickly, staying low
- Field ball as for a bunt (two hands, ball fielded below eyes)
- A short (but firm) flip is all that is required (with minimal excess movement)

Ball coming to reaching the fence (or nearly so)



- Discard mask and approach ball quickly, but remain low and under control
- Using a sliding technique allows the catcher to approach the ball quickly and retain body control
- Slide just to the right of the ball so that the ball can be fielded on the left side of the body
- The front foot is used to stop the bodies momentum (either on the fence or just in the ground)
- Field the ball with two hands (if possible)
- Glove hand may also be used to aid stability
- The momentum of the slide makes for an easy transition into a kneeling position for the throw back to the plate

Double-plays through Home

Accurate throw



- After the ball is hit assume a position (similar to a first baseman) straddling the plate in a good athletic position
- As the throw approaches push off the plate with the right foot
- Using a long stride with the left foot, stretch just left of the incoming throw to receive the ball in front of the right shoulder (A long first stride helps to clear both the runner coming home and the runner heading to first)
- Close the front side, replace the feet and throw to the first baseman inside the line



Throw on the 3rd Base side



- Start as above
- Make sure of the first out; catch the ball! (Come off the plate and make a tag if need be)
- Once the ball is caught come up looking to throw to first but assess the situation; do not risk a throw if there is no chance
- Be aware of other runners on base

Reverse pivot on a throw to the 3rd base side



- Start as above
- After catching, use a reverse pivot to redirect momentum and put yourself in good throwing position
- Pick up target before release

Other Aspects

Communication



- When communicating with the defence move out in front of home plate and ensure their attention
- Use a loud voice
- Make signals very clear (ensure everyone's eye contact before beginning)

Backing up first base



- Back up first base on all ground balls to the infield with no one on base or with a man on first
- Take a direct path to the fence behind first base
- Read the play: if a runner reaches second base a swift return to home plate may be required
- On base hits to the outfield (with nobody on base) trail the runner and be prepared to cover first if required

Dealing with Umpires

	Key Points	Discussion
Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Establish a working rapport 2 Act in your team's best interest 3 Don't show him up 4 Maintain credibility 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Simply introducing yourself can commence the process
Establish a working rapport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Know him by name 2 Always respond in a friendly but professional manner 3 If he doesn't, you can initiate some harmless small talk 4 Sell yourself as a good bloke by showing appropriate interest in him 5 Treat him the way he wants to be treated 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Umpires are sometimes directed not to talk to players but most will 3 Good umpires are secure enough to respond reasonably to comments about neutral subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -weather etc -comments on the pitcher or pitches when the umpire takes his pre-game "sighters" -the state of the game during a break 4 Avoid obvious flattery or crawling. 5 If he likes to talk, talk; if he doesn't, don't. Remember, you are the one who needs to make the sale, not him
Act in your team's best interest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Treat the umpire respectfully (umpiring is a difficult task) 2 Obey your manager's instructions with regard to questioning calls etc 3 Prevent friction from developing between the umpire and a pitcher 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Personal feelings come second: act as if you really think he's a competent professional 2 You need a clear understanding of your managers expectations 3 Do whatever it takes to keep the pitcher focussed and in the game. You may have to act as if you are on the umpires side; eg: say quietly "Leave this whinger to me, Dan" then go out and calm your teammate down

<p>Don't show him up</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Face the pitcher at all times when conversing with the umpire 2 Avoid obvious confrontation 3 Get the ball back to the pitcher without delay 4 Let the umpire retain public credibility 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Going face to face with the umpire sends a very definite message and constitutes playing to the crowd. 2 Watch your language, verbal & non-verbal. Good umpires are tolerant, within limits, of things said in the heat of battle, as long as the whole park doesn't hear or see obvious insult 3 All eyes stay on the person with the ball so get rid of it then have your say. Likewise, holding a "framed" pitch looks amateurish, and if done repeatedly is inflammatory 4 Derogatory off-field comments will come back to haunt you
<p>Maintain credibility</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Complimenting good calls (subtly), especially those that go against you, gives your complaints more credibility 2 Behave with friendly respect toward umpires when off the field 3 Cultivate a "hard but fair" image 4 Make allowance for the occasional umpiring mistake 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Don't go overboard with either; talk about the call, not the personality 2 It is human nature to treat more favourably those who treat you likewise 3 You will not receive respect from anyone, umpires included, if you don't show a willingness to compete 4 You don't want to be famous for complaining about everything: a simple comment, as if to a respected professional, can make the point without inciting reprisal

Catcher's Attributes

	Key Points	Discussion
Natural Physical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Strong, durable frame 2 Arm strength and accuracy 3 Balance and agility 4 Good eye-hand coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 While muscle can be built, basic bodily dimensions are predetermined. 3 Good catching demands quick, accurate footwork 4 He will have to develop exceptional hands
Conditioned Physical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Flexibility 2 Quick hands and feet 3 High pain threshold 4 Total body strength and endurance, particularly the legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Needs to be comfortable and agile in the crouch position 2 Throwing out runners requires extreme development of these qualities 3 High velocity ball impacts and collisions with runners are an integral part of this position 4 To enable consistent daily performance in a physically demanding position
Makeup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Team-oriented competitor and hard-working hustler 2 Good communicator 3 Willingness to take charge 4 Intelligence and focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Personal success or failure a secondary consideration: plays hard and likes to push himself 2 With Manager, pitchers, other teammates, umpires etc 3 Can handle, but doesn't demand, the spotlight & responsibility 4 Can see and retain both the immediate and the overall picture despite distractions
Priority Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Glovework 2 Working with pitchers 3 Blocking balls in dirt 4 Throwing out runners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Above all, a catcher must catch the ball well 2 Helps the pitchers be consistently at their best 3 Instills confidence and aggression in pitchers 4 Make them use the bats

Knowledge	1 Defensive percentages and strategy 2 Opposition hitters and runners 3 Teammates' strengths and weaknesses 4 Own team's systems	1 Knows what the specific requirement is in a given game situation: score, inning, hitter, pitcher etc 2 Can recognise and combat particular hitters and styles 3 Decision making based on realistic assessment of capabilities 4 Manager's expectations, communication mechanics, defensive plays etc
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Daily Work Habits

	Key Points	Discussion
Warmup	1 Develop a solid routine	1 Must meet individual requirements
Throwing	1 Always throw with quality backspin 2 Sharp focus on a small target 3 Rehearse mechanics (footwork & release)	
Communication	1 Clear, loud voice 2 Maintain decisive manner 3 Clarity is the major priority 4 Develop positive body language	
Receiving	1 Catch every ball cleanly 2 Provide best possible opportunity for umpire to make call	
Getting to know your pitchers	1 Catch the starter's last few minutes in pen 2 Know their plan 3 Understand their strengths & weaknesses	1 Let someone else catch the initial portion of their pen 2 Discuss their pitching (technique, strategies, etc) before, during & between games.
Opposition hitters	1 Understanding their strengths & weaknesses will help with decision-making 2 Go with the pitcher's strengths	2 These are more important than the hitters' weaknesses
Physical conditioning	1 Maintain flexibility 2 Maintain leg strength 3 Recovery routine	1 Stretch for flexibility every day after the game or practise 3 Sports science has made great gains in this area:

		nutrition, rehydration, sleep, massage, other therapies
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