

Oshkosh West Baseball

Infield Fundamentals

I. Mental Approach

- A. The Future Is Perfect
 1. The most important play is the next one
 2. The most important game is the next one
 3. Stay positive
- B. Visualize your success

II. Fielding

- A. Grounders
 1. Stay Down! ...butt down, glove down, head down
 2. Get in front of the ball if possible
 3. Charge everything possible
 4. Get the big hop or the short hop...avoid the "in-between" hop
 5. Have "soft" hands, look the ball in to the glove
 6. Come through the ball into your throw when possible
 7. 3B cuts off everything going to his left in front of SS; SS in front of 2B up the middle.
- B. Pops
 1. Go after everything you can until called off...find the fence first & come away
 2. Cover bases, watch runners, communicate (be loud)
 3. Priority (who has the best angle to catch & throw)
 - a. OF over all IF, SS/2B over 1B/3B & P, 1B/3B over P & C, P over C (usually) if fair
 - b. listen for man with priority to call ("Mine" or "I've got it")
 - c. make the call loud & as early as possible to avoid collisions
- C. Double Plays
 1. Starting the DP
 - a. double play depth = 2 steps in, pinch middle (but play the hitter first)
 - b. **let your partner turn it...you make sure of one out.**
 - c. SS
 - i. bang-bang (at you) = collapse the right knee
 - ii. barehand side (hole) = backhand, left leg off ground
 - iii. glove side = field, flip & follow
 - iv. make a good feed = near glove & in front (lead him into the pivot)
 - v. taking it yourself = step on bag with left foot while throwing
 - d. 2B
 - i. bang-bang (at you) = down to left knee
 - ii. barehand side = field, flip & follow
 - a. underhand toss if close
 - b. backhand toss if farther away (reverse pivot, keep palm facing down)
 - iii. glove side = jump turn (make sure of one out)
 - e. 3B (if runners on 2B & 3B)
 - i. if you have to charge = go to home or 1B
 - ii. ball to left side = go to 2B (wait until 2B is there, make a good feed)
 - iii. ball to your right = step on 3B (3B to 1B)
 - f. 1B
 - i. if taken away from bag, make a good throw to SS & let P or 2B cover 1B
 - ii. if close to 1B, get the force & yell "tag" for reverse DP (don't hit runner with throw)
 2. Turning the DP
 - a. get to the bag ASAP, keep your feet moving
 - b. give 2-handed target (fingers up), chest to target always, expect a bad throw
 - c. momentum towards target, receive ball with 2 hands, weight off front foot
 - d. SS = drag right foot over back corner; shuffle step, hop to avoid runner, turn front shoulder towards 1B with shuffle
 - e. 2B =basic pivot = straddle bag; across the bag = left foot over bag
 - * feet facing 1B, hop to get spikes out of ground (don't get taken out from the side)
 - f. 3B = tag 3B with right foot, push off for throw to 1B

D. Tags

1. Ball in bare hand & cover with glove when possible
2. Make a firm “V” tag when possible & get the ball out (show ump & be ready to throw)
3. Hold tag on a runner who may overslide the base
4. Make the tag a step in front of the base when possible, avoid tagging “high” on sliding runners

E. Throwing

1. Sacrifice speed for accuracy... Be quick, but don't hurry.
2. Keep your elbow up, fingers on top.
3. Pick a specific target (e.g. 1B's nose or “OW” on jersey)
4. Step towards your target, follow through

III. Situations

A. Backup throws back to pitcher with a runner on 3B (SS or 2B)

B. 1st & 3rd walk-off steal = “step back second” (SS or 2B)

C. Infield in on grass (check with coach)

D. Corners in, two up the middle (with bases loaded to avoid big inning)

E. 1B playing behind runner (big lead, lefty pull hitter, slow runner...check with coach)

F. Bunts

1. Know the coverage, get there ASAP (cheat a bit when possible)...communicate!
2. Get the sure out...set up & make a good throw

G. Cut-offs

1. 2B to right & right-center, SS to left & left-center (100 – 150 feet away)
2. Hands up, call for throw from OF, listen to be lined up with the base
3. Catch the ball with your glove side already turned towards your target for a quick relay.
4. Listen for the call of where to throw (maybe “ice”), or run the ball back into the infield.
5. Keep throws low; a long one-hopper is better than over the head.
6. 3B cuts to home from LF, 1B others
 - a. be on IF grass about 70 - 75 feet from the plate (don't step on mound)
 - b. SS covers third when 3B is cut-off

H. Rundowns (Communicate!)

1. If a runner is caught off, **run at him** & make him commit.
2. Get the ball ahead of the runner ASAP (run him back where he came from).
3. Minimize the number of throws.
4. Get an angle for the throw so you don't hit the runner (throwing side).
5. Give the fielder time to make the tag.
6. After making a throw, get out of the way of the runner...back up the nearest base.

I. Decoys

1. Runner running on pitch = “Ball's up - you're down; ball's down - you're up”.
2. Others/decoy cuts.
3. Never fake a tag.

J. Pickoffs...keys are communication & timing (practice)

K. Be aware of the shift – pull, opposite or straight-up – and the coverage adjustments.

IV. Thoughts

A. Expect (and **want**) every pitch to be hit to you.

B. Get yourself ready & moving when the ball is pitched.

C. Always **anticipate** what might happen & how you will react.

D. Practice turning DP between innings (maybe in even numbered innings).

E. Put your gloves together with other infielders...pick each other up.

F. Keep runners out of scoring position. Always make sure bases are covered.

G. Always try to make sure of one out on every play.

H. On a tough play or bobbled ball, bluff a throw & look for runners over-running bases.

I. Smaller gloves are better for 2B/SS/3B

J. Always communicate who's covering 2B (signals may be open/closed mouth or simple pointing).

K. On force plays with no DP turn, play like first baseman & stretch.

L. Don't stretch too soon...see where the throw is going first.

M. Separate your defense from your hitting (don't take a bad AB into the field).

N. Use the time between pitches to analyze the situation & communicate.

O. Know the strengths & weaknesses of your teammates... “pick them up”...help them get better.