

THROWING TO BASES

COACHES:

If you want your team to play tight defence, it's important to teach your catchers the proper foot work and technique for throwing runners out at all bases. It is critical because it happens frequently and the outcome of each play can affect the outcome of the game.

Throwing to bases calls for quickness, balance, mobility and A *FAST ARM*. No wonder success is largely dependent on the catcher's ability to master the basic mechanics of position and stance!

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Let's start with Basic Principles #2, and 3, which are;

**2. WHENEVER THERE ARE RUNNERS ON BASE,
BE READY TO THROW ON EVERY PITCH.**

**3. ESTABLISH A GOOD THROWING POSITION
BEFORE RECEIVING THE BALL.**

THROWING PRINCIPLES

To that we add the following ideas to achieve the best and quickest possible throw to any base.

- 1. STEP TO THE BALL WITH THE FOOT OUTSIDE PITCHES.**
- 2. TAKE THE FEWEST NUMBER OF STEPS POSSIBLE BEFORE THROWING.**
- 3. ESTABLISH A FIRM BASE OF SUPPORT FOR MAXIMUM POWER.**
- 4. ALWAYS STEP TOWARD THE**
- 5. USE THE WHOLE BODY TO RELEASE THE THROW.**

Here are a few more points for catchers to keep in mind

- a) Throw over the top with back spin on the ball
- b) Throw from the ear. Use the shortest wind-up you can.
- c) Aim for a spot about 30 cms. (12 inches) above the ground, on the runner's side of the base. i.e. The throw to second base should be on the first base side of second.
- d) Follow-through on every throw, to increase power and save your arm.

FOOTWORK

Because balance and power are essential, achieving a hard, accurate throw starts with proper footwork.

The actual foot patterns used depend on a number of factors such as pitch location, the destination base, whether the batter is left or right handed and the location of the batter in the batter's box. Veteran catchers react naturally to these factors, but younger ones need to practice their foot patterns in each situation until they become automatic.

There are essentially four basic footwork patterns every catcher needs to master, which will accommodate any throwing situation. These are defined in Chart 3-1, matched to specific game requirements. As you review that chart, keep the following points in mind.

CHART 3-1**BASIC FOOT PATTERNS**

1. **SHIFT WEIGHT TO THROWING FOOT, PLANT, STEP AND THROW. (ONE STEP ONLY)**
2. **STEP RIGHT (RIGHT FOOT), PLANT THROWING FOOT, STEP AND THROW. (TWO STEPS ONLY) ONE TO THE SIDE AND ONE FORWARD.**
3. **STEP LEFT (LEFT FOOT), STEP BEHIND WITH RIGHT FOOT) PLANT THROWING FOOT, STEP AND THROW. (THREE STEPS)**
4. **STEP BACK AND SIDE (LEFT OR RIGHT), PLANT THROWING FOOT, STEP AND THROW. (TWO OR THREE STEPS)**

N.B. #4 PATTERN PERMITS THE CATCHER TO THROW BEHIND THE BATTER.

GAME SITUATIONS	FOOT PATTERN PITCHES		
	ACROSS PLATE	LEFT SIDE	RIGHT SIDE
STEAL OF 2ND BASE	1	3	2
STEAL OF 3RD BASE			
LEFT HANDED BATTER	1	3	2
RIGHT HANDED BATTER	4	4	4
PICK OFF AT 1ST			
LEFT HANDED BATTER	4	3	4
RIGHT HANDED BATTER	1	3	2
PICK OFF AT 3RD			
LEFT HANDED BATTER	1	3	2
RIGHT HANDED BATTER	4	4	4

KEEP THIS CHART HANDY FOR EASY REFERENCE.