

TAGGING THE RUNNER AT HOME

COACHES

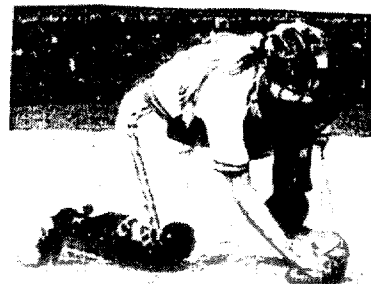
This is one of the most physically demanding and dangerous of all softball plays. Every play requiring a tag at home plate is close and creates the greatest chance of collision and consequent injury for the catcher. But it is an essential play calling for technique and courage. Proper execution can reduce the chance of injury so the onus is on the coach to ensure catchers are taught proper technique and practice it regularly.

The play is normally executed on an infield hit with a runner on third base, especially with a quick runner or when the hit is to the right side of the diamond. Occasionally it will also occur on a safe hit with a runner at first or second, depending on the distance of the hit, when runner tries to score on the play.

Here is the proper way to execute the tag at home plate. Have your catchers practice these steps until they become smooth and natural. As you read this description study the diagrams that follow. Train your catcher to;

1. **ANTICIPATE THE RUNNER TRYING TO SCORE.**
2. **WHEN THE BALL IS HIT, MOVE QUICKLY TO THE FRONT OF THE PLATE,**
3. **PLACE THE LEFT FOOT ON OR NEAR THE THIRD BASE CORNER.**
4. **WAIT FOR THE BALL TO ARRIVE - DO NOT MOVE OUT TO GET IT.**
5. **CATCH THE BALL - SECURE IT INSIDE THE GLOVE WITH BOTH HANDS.**
6. **DROP TO ONE KNEE (WHICHEVER IS MOST CONVENIENT AND COMFORTABLE) TO BLOCK THE EDGE OF THE PLATE WITH THE SHIN GUARD.**
7. **STAY LOW. FORCE THE RUNNER TO SLIDE INTO THE PAD OR GO OVER THE TOP. TAG THE RUNNER WITH THE BACK OF THE MITT.**

NOTE: IT IS NOT ALWAYS NECESSARY TO BLOCK THE PLATE. IF THE RUNNER IS GOING TO BEAT THE THROW EASILY, OR THAT RUN IS NOT IMPORTANT, LET THE RUN SCORE, MOVE TO THE BALL AND BE READY TO MAKE THE NEXT BEST PLAY.



TAGGING DRILLS

Here are two drills to practice making a tag play at home plate. This first one simulates the movements with an without blocking.

SIMULATION TAGS

1. **3 OR 4 PLAYERS WITH SEVERAL BALLS EACH, SPREAD OUT IN THE OUTFIELD.**
2. **FIELDER ROLLS BALL IN FRONT, PICKS IT UP AND THROWS TO CATCHER COVERING HOME PLATE. FIELDERS WORK ON ACCURATE THROW.**
3. **CATCHER RECEIVES BALL AND SIMULATES TAG AT HOME PLATE, WITH AND WITHOUT BLOCK.**
4. **DRILL CONTINUES UNTIL ALL BALLS HAVE BEEN THROWN BY FIELDERS.**

This drill is much the same but using a second ball to simulate a runner trying to score from 3rd base. This increases the pressure on the catcher to move quickly.

TAG THE BALL

1. **FIELDER THROWS BALL TO CATCHER FROM THE OUTFIELD.**
2. **COACH ROLLS SECOND BALL DOWN THIRD BASE LINE SO BOTH BALLS ARRIVE AT PLATE ALMOST TOGETHER.**
3. **CATCHER MUST RECEIVE BALL FROM THE OUTFIELD AND TAG ROLLED BALL BEFORE IT GETS PAST.**
4. **CATCHER MUST HAVE POSSESSION OF THROWN BALL BEFORE BLOCKING ROLLED BALL.**