

BEAT THE INFIELDBERS

Here at the University of Oregon we pride ourselves in taking care of the details and being competitive in all the things that we do on a daily basis. Our “Beat the Infielders” drill fits well into this philosophy. Below is an outline that we hope you find very useful in the development of your players.

NEED:

- Small front toss net
- Bucket of balls
- Stopwatch
- Bats

FIELD SET UP:

Here are the things to set up for this drill:

- We use a narrow/small net designed specifically for front toss. If you do not have one, use the smallest one available to you that reduces the amount of balls being hit off of it during this drill. This is vital since it is essentially a ground ball drill. You will need to set up a net approximately 8 to 10 paces away from home plate towards the mound. The distance will depend on your front toss ability. The front toss can be done from the seated position or the standing walk up technique. We suggest that you set up the screen at an angle, even if it is a small front toss net. Keep in mind the safety of the person tossing, while attempting to allow for maximum ground balls that will not be stopped by the net.

- Infielders at their respective positions
- Catchers and OF's are the hitters (no bubble screen needed)

PURPOSE:

- This should be no more than a 15 minute drill at a high level of energy and intensity. We like to keep things fun and competitive so we will also do this drill with some incentives from time to time.

- **OBJECTIVE FOR INFIELDBERS:** To get game like first steps and ground balls against live swings in a controlled environment with some applied pressure.

- We encourage you to manipulate the drill to work on different situations (i.e. regular depth, double plays, infield in plays at the plate (with live throws to a geared up catcher), bases loaded, etc.

- Defenders play each pitch live with throws vs. the stopwatch.
- If you have multiple players per position just have them alternate when appropriate

- **OBJECTIVE of STOPWATCH:** This tool gives infielders a good feel for how much time they really have or how they have to account for speed by shortening their depth to give them time. It also gives the fielder an idea of how to overcome the panicked scramble and throw after a bobble based on time/internal clock (internal clock development)

We use the times listed below as a standard for our development of a sound internal clock. This becomes valuable in a game when we yell out an opponent's time down the line as they are coming to bat. By training our fielders with these standard times in this drill, they have a greater feel for how they need to approach balls hit to them during a game. We have found this type of preparation very beneficial for our infielder's development and use the stopwatch in almost every groundball drill that we do. Here are the times that we use for the purpose of the drill.

- 4.2 and below = fast runner
- 4.4 - 4.5 = average runner
- 4.6 and above = slow runner

- **OBJECTIVE FOR HITTERS:** For hitters to master bat control for hit and run skill

- We emphasize downhill with shoulder alignment, encouraging our hitters not to change their swing tempo just to execute. We say "GO FOR IT!"

- Each hitter gets two opportunities: Their mission is to hit ball past or eat up an infielder with an aggressive hit and run swing

- If a hitter takes a pitch or hits a fly ball on either pitch the hitter runs to the foul pole and back upon completion of his turn

- Encourage and allow your hitters to pull balls hard on the ground when the feed is on inner half and expect them to hit the ball hard the other way when the pitch is middle away.

- Low line drives are acceptable in this drill for hitters

Have fun and good luck with this drill. It is a staple in our practice plans.