



Progressive Development and Drills for Youth Catchers

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Instructional Philosophy

- Providing a structured and progressive plan of development..
- Time Dedicated to Catching Development..
- Resources - Equipment needed for Skill Progressions..
- Assessing and Identifying Skill Ability..
- Defensively proficient..



Big “7”

1. Mobility (Hip/Ankle)
2. Stance (Balanced)
3. Receiving (Catch Play)
4. Blocking (Technique)
5. Throwing (Sequencing)
6. Fielding (Tag, Force, Bunt, Pop Ups)
7. Field Presence (P/C - Umpire Communication)



Practice Drill Sheet



| <u>Catching Drill Checklist</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>Static & Hip Mobility Drills</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Frogger Stretch | | | | | | | | | | |
| Side Leg lifts (10 per side) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Side Leg Circles (Hip Socket Focused) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lateral lunges (Ankle & Groin Focus) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 -15 Quick Squats (Ankle, Knee, Hip Focused) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Warn Ups:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Step Chip Forward | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lateral Chip Step | | | | | | | | | | |
| V step Reach | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lateral Reach Steps | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Throwing Progressions:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Team Throwing Progression | | | | | | | | | | |
| Self Feeds series: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bunts 1st, 2nd, 3rd (x2) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Blocked 3rd (K) to 1st (x2) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steals @ 2nd, 3rd (x2) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Stance - Set Ups:</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sign / Primary / Secondary / KD | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sign to Set | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Receiving</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bare Hand / Zones 10 pt. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bare Hand / Heavy ball | | | | | | | | | | |
| Machine Feeds | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sways | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bull Pens | | | | | | | | | | |

Practice Drill Sheet



| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <u>Blocking</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Downs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Turns | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drop Downs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Live | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Ball Dry | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Recovers (Dry/Live) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Transfer Footwork Drills:</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Glove Transfers (Self Feeds) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Glove Transfers (Toss) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tee Takes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tee Rakes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Footwork (1st/2nd/3rd) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Step Drill (In/Out) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Fielding:</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tags | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Picks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Force Plays | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bunts (1st/2nd/3rd Funnels) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pop Ups | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wild Pitch/PB 2-1 Feeds | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Trails | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Mental/Visuals:</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Non Verbals</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Field Command/Situations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Umpire Communication | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Video Analysis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Mobility and Functional Movements (Keep it Simple)

- Prep the body for functional movements within the position
- Hip and Groin Flexibility
- Ankle Mobility Routine
- Lateral Walk or Hops
- Ladder Drills Footwork Focus



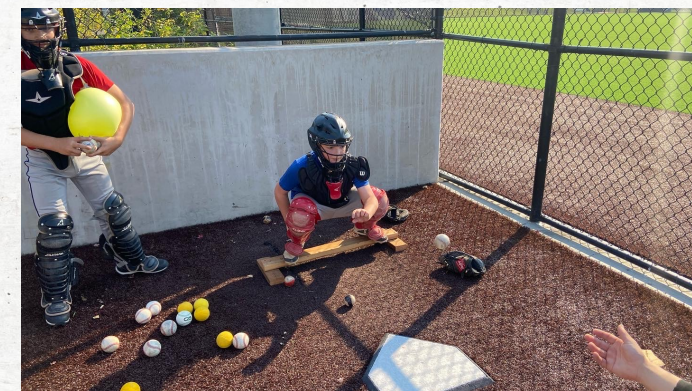
Stance Variations 60/40

- Allow the best set up from sign to set that creates the strongest position and a visual lane for the umpires
- Both situational and pitch dependent
- Absolutes: Go traditional secondary w/runners on!
- Stance Variations must be repped so that your C feels fluid in their movements both receiving and blocking skill sets
- KD Setups are fine but can't be a crutch for lack of hip mobility



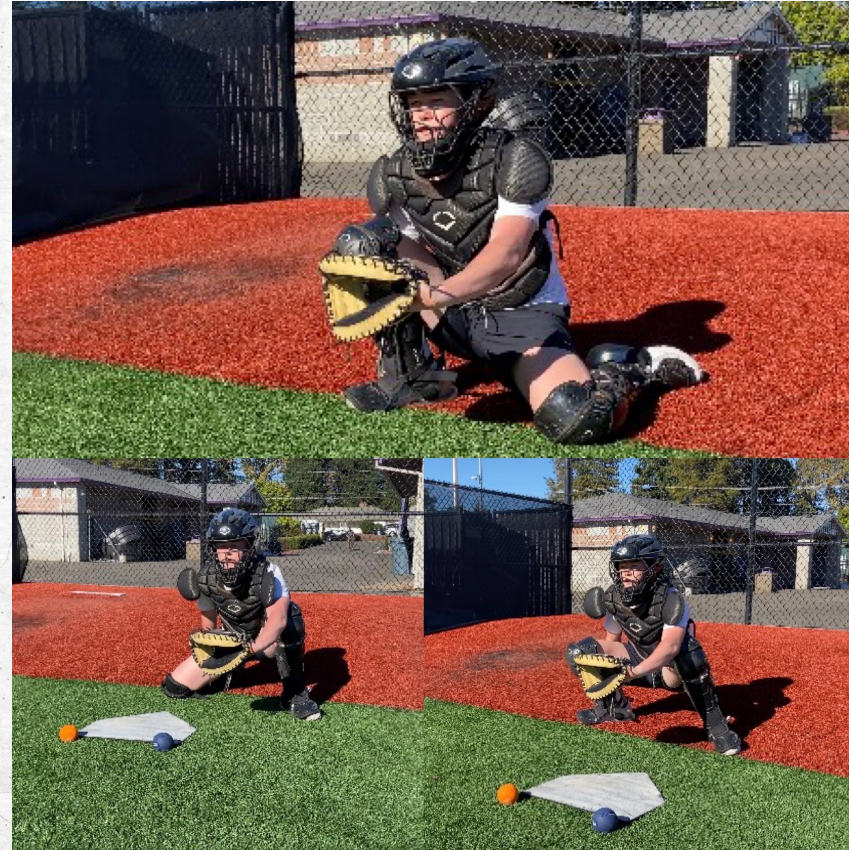
Rest - Sign Stance

- Weight over heels (Rest - Sign)
- Sign side elbow tucked, sign and location given wrist to fingers
- Glove side forearm rest on thigh with glove hang to block view
- Primary Stance. Key points: Weight on the inner half of their feet, knees between feet, hips below knees, and chest between knees. Chin, pocket, and cup are vertically aligned. Glove side elbow rest outside of the left knee, with low target given at the knees. Throwing hand is hidden behind rt. Heel in a relaxed manner.
- Secondary Stance: Additional spread in the base footwork. More athletic in the base to allow the catcher the ability to block or throw from this Stance.



Stance Variances

- Allow for them to work from a variety of stances especially during bullpen sessions. Whether is a RKD, LKD, or traditional stance there are benefits of each situational dependent.
- Its not a lazy thing! Kids emulate what elite Catchers are doing so teach to it.
- In game really encourage 60% catch reps are in a traditional set up.



Receiving (Simply Put: Catch the Ball)



- Target - Relax – Receiving (Implantation of Catch play)
 - (Static for location then unload to allow for mobility to make proper adjustments.)
- Big 3:
 - Pitch and Movement
 - Gaze – Tracking (Trajectory – Angles)
 - Implementing proper motor skill (Catch or Block)
 - *Don't get beat the last 6ft*
- Stay Quiet with the body. Be mobile with movements that will allow for your move through the pitch to desired zone location.
 - Elbow to Wrist (Flex / Extension)
 - Shoulder (Vertical Movement)
- Pocket presentation: Work back to Parallel with the Thumb
- *Philosophy on swaying*
 - Let it be early to get midline back to pitch trajectory.
 - Positive vs Negative Sway movements.

Receiving Drills

- Progression Based Drills: Static, Flip, Machine, Live Arm feeds
- Bare Hand: (Feel Fitment)
 - Plyo balls - Variable weights, Timing Bounce variations, Reaction wall drills, etc.
- Static T (Visuals): Understanding Your Move
- Bullpens Live Arm: (Nothing Better)
 - Trust the Progressions
- Know when the training needs to be Controlled vs. Chaotic.
- Live arms can be unpredictable so that needs to be implemented into the training as well!



Plyo Ball B.H.



Roll Through / Bounce Feed



B.H. Targeting



Self Feed Bounce



Bounce Feeds



Read Combo Flips



Static T w/ Ankle Sway



Progressions



Walk Ups







Blocking

- Technique Focused
- See the down angle early to arrive on time with technique.
- Good set up up will allow you to block in either Primary, or Secondary stances.
- Work over the glove staying soft (Exhale) with top half.
- Slide the glove into body while tucking chin to hood the ball.
- See the ball in, see it out.
- Escape Tech to field the ball out front, establish throwing lane.
- Reverse Progressions to controlled technique focused drill sets.
- Starting from the blocking position and working drill up to an active stance. Downs, Turns, Drop Downs, Live
- 3 Ball Dry
- 5 Ball Laterals
- Roll Blocks
- 2 Ball Lateral Blocks (Dry or Roll)
- High Bounce (Controlling the Long Hop)
- Recovers Dry/Live (Progression from Blocking pos. to live recovers)
- Be a Wall!!



Blocking Drills: Reverse Progressions



Blocking Drills: 3 Ball Dry w/ Static Recovers



Blocking Drills: Variable Hop Blocks



Blocking Drills: Hockey Blocks



Blocking Drills: Mirror Blocking



Blocking Drills: Reverse Progressions



Throwing-Exchanges

- Reinforced with all basic catch play!
- Quick hands and feet in the box.
- Exchange happens out front @ midline to ensure short arm slot and release.
- Gain ground with the Lft. foot, drive off of the Rt. foot in a linear and level position. Rt. / Lft. foot action short and quick.
- Let the pitch and zone determine how footwork is used in a run stop situation.
- Uncoil / Launch through it!



Throwing-Exchanges

DRILLS

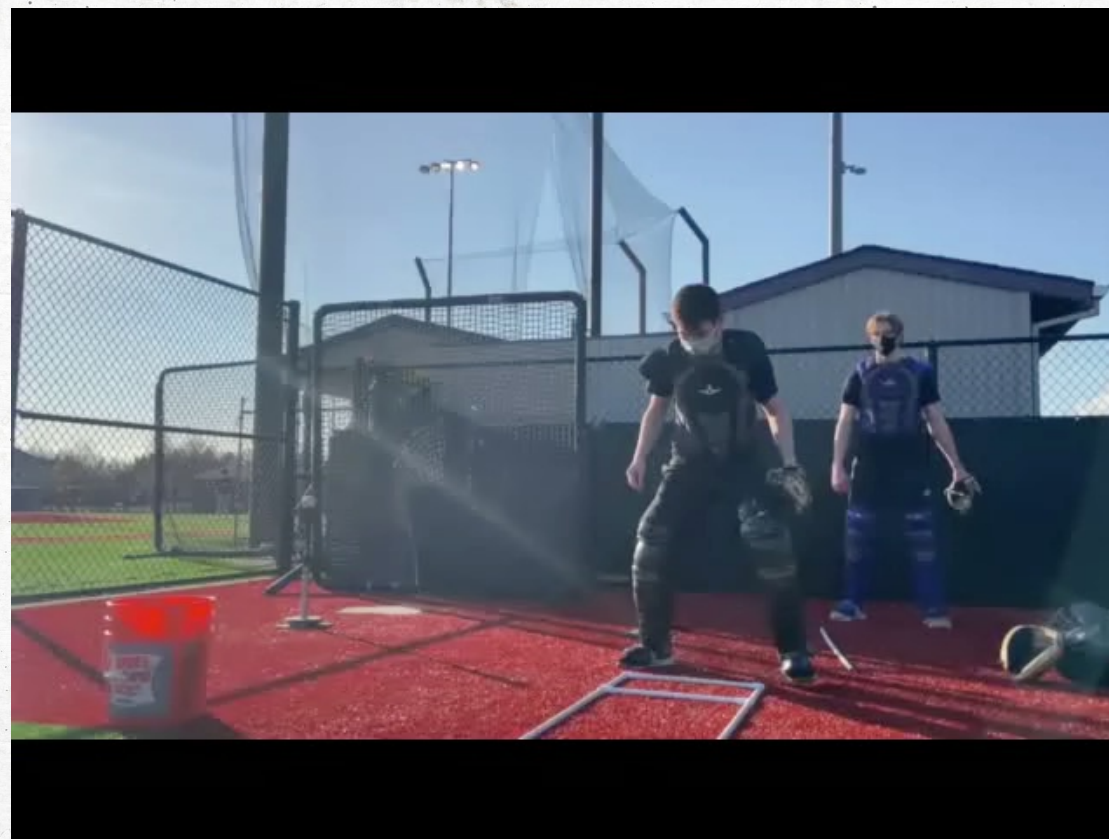
- Warm Up Throwing Progression
- Great time to work on footwork, exchanges, and armslots.
- Transfer Drills with Flat Gloves to work on Glove/Hand relationships
- Iso (Exchange Only) – Throw
- Repeat with gloves or Trainers
- Self Feeds / Toss
- Tee Takes & Rakes (Bare Hand)
- Timed throws



Throwing-Exchanges: Lead Up Drills



Transfer Drills to work on Glove/Hand relationship and footwork



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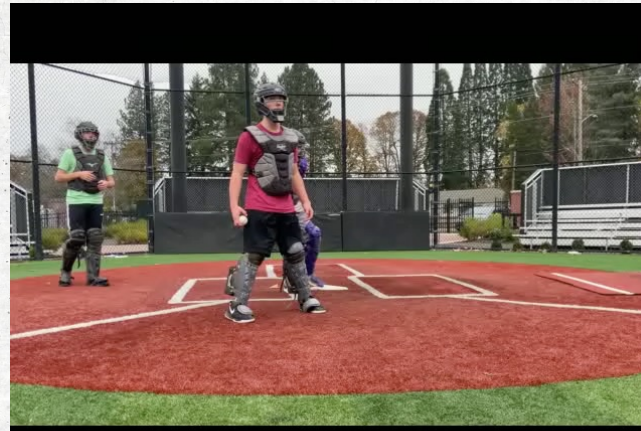
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Blocking

- Bunts (1st, 2nd, & 3rd funnels)
- Tag Plays: Toss or Fungo
- Regular - Swipe Tags - Pick Tags
- Trail Technique
- Slide Stop Technique on PB or WP's
- Pop Ups both Catch and Communication
- Big League Plays (Swag plays)

Roll Tags / B.H.



Fungo'd Pick Tags



Fielding Bunts

Field Presence – Make a Statement!

- Non-verbals (When Less is More)
- Handling the Staff (Servant Mentality)
- Team Communication (Relaying D Plays)
- Know Your Umpire (Relationships Win Pitches)
- Situational Awareness
- Play the position with Positive body language and Energy!



Conclusion

Going back to the primary focus of developing youth catchers 3 domains:

Resources, Consistency of the work, Skill Level shapes practice environment.

Foundation 1st then let their enjoyment for the position guide their future development.

Have measurable developmental goals with that can be met in layers throughout the season.

Be realistic: their kids so make sure that the development can be tailored to their skill level yet challenging enough see growth.

Thank You:

Kevin Lovings

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