



BACKSTOP CATCHING

Nolan Johnson – Founder/Coach

Glove Shaping

- Make the ball disappear
- Youtube – “Wilson Baseball: Aso Breaks In Catchers Mitt”
- Test pocket with tennis balls

Warm Up & Recovery

- Catchers have specific and unique needs
- Preparation and recovery are key to longevity

Mindset & Breath

- Be aware of what you hear/are listening to
- Be aware of what your vision is doing
- Be aware of your breath in all situations

Timing of Set Up

- Be still at pitch release, avoid moving while ball is in flight

Take Advantage of Playing Catch

- Mix in getting the ball out of your glove quickly
- Make a quick transfer every rep you possibly can
- Short arm motion to strengthen pathway, aim for a target to increase accuracy

Daily Warmup Drills

- Implement a warmup every time before practice or training
- Equivalent to T- work and front toss
- Hands and eyes need to be synced

Receiving

- Most coordinated when completely still, glove is in peripheral vision
- Make sure our first goal is not dropping any pitches
- Glove doesn't follow the ball by going up then back down
- Ping Pong balls for focus and form
- Tennis balls for pocket awareness

Strength and Hand Eye Drills

- Band resistance
- Weighted wrist straps
- Strengthen the bond between your hands and eyes as much as possible

Blocking

- First step: eliminate fear of pain
- This comes by perfecting form and speed of reaction
- Keep glove on the ground. Protect 5 hole at all costs with balls right in front
- No hands blocking for form
- Glove on the ground to break habit of pulling glove up
- Nothing beats live reps from bullpens. Make them block everything

Transfers

- Catch the ball first
- Separate hand and glove so we can pull the glove through for strength
- Keep lead shoulder from pointing down
- Accuracy is crucial
- Measure time to tag along with standard pop times during practices to show catchers importance of the location of the throw

Transfer Progression

- Standing upright and throwing with two steps to master distance and accuracy
- Solo in squat position, full transfer. Super slow with perfect form
- Solo full speed (ball in glove)
- Regular reps with a pitcher throwing to them

Throwing to First and Third

- Get shoulders turned and pointing right at the base
- Keep arm short
- Practice throwing from both from knees and rotating up on two feet

Bullpens

- Treat these like a game
- Block everything. Mix in transfers. Catch every pitch
- This is where true progress is made
- Nothing beats full distance reps from on a mound

Pump Fakes

- Trick the runner, don't pick off the runner
- Sell pump fake all the way through
- Finish the throwing motion and then find where the runner is
- Hold that ball tight

Wild Pitch Technique

- Slide on knees and grab the ball vs. going down to one knee
- Secretly time both to see what works best while including accuracy of the throws to home.

Plays at the plate/Tags

- Stay at the plate while play is developing
- Patience while the throw is being made towards home
- Don't lose track of where home plate is

Thank you and please email us with any questions and ideas at nolan@backstopcatching.com!