

Foundational Catching Tactics For Youth Catchers



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Setting Positive Expectations for Growth

First, thank you for purchasing Foundational Catching Tactics! I truly believe this will be a great foundation for you as a catcher and will help set you on the right path to becoming the best catcher you can be!

One of the main keys to success as you grow as a catcher or grow in coaching catchers is that you set positive expectations. What I mean by that is, that you set expectations that are realistic! If you have never done one of the drills in this book, a positive expectation is that you or your catcher needs some time to learn and become proficient at the drill; that means that they might fail from time to time and that's okay! Expecting to be perfect your first week is only setting you up for frustration and disappointment (especially as a coach). Be okay with failing a little bit as you learn these drills and work to become proficient. If you are working hard, with a good attitude, and not giving up then you can be proud of the work you have put in. Enjoy this process as a player and as a coach!

My recommendation for you is to set an expectation that it will take more than 1 week even more than 1 month of hard work to start to see progress in these drills! My recommendation would be to continue your hard work for at least 3 months before you decide whether or not this is working for you. There is no magic drill or magic formula for making great catchers. Every big leaguer and professional catcher has had to work their butt off to get where they are. You won't be any different!

These drills have worked well with the catchers I train every day at our facility but it isn't the drills themselves that make it happen! It's how you approach each drill and how you do that particular drill that matters. The greatest drill in the world won't be effective if you aren't doing it correctly. It's my goal to walk you through the foundational drills that we do every day with every catcher in our facility so that you can learn the necessary skills as a catcher to get started on a path becoming the best back stop you can be!

Enjoy the process of getting better! You will be in that process your whole baseball career and you can either be frustrated with learning new skills or you can find the joy in working hard to acquire those new skills. The choice is yours.

I hope you find this book helpful and that you enjoy the process of becoming the best catcher you can be!

Thanks again for becoming a part of the Catching iQ Team!

Jeremy Howard

Catching iQ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Howard', written in a cursive style.

Basic Stances

1. Sign Giving Stance

The sign giving stance is how we give a sign to our pitcher. We might get signs from the coach but we still need to be able to tell the pitcher what pitch to throw without giving that information to the other team.

There are a few key positions we need to be in in order to give our pitcher a clear sign and hide our signs from the other team (pictured below).

- First you want to be up on your toes with your knees in tight and facing forward. Both knees should be pointed just left of second base, this ensures that the 1st base coach can't see your signs. Because we are pointed just left of second base we expose our signs to the 3rd base coach, to block off the 3rd base coach you need to put your glove in front of your left knee. It should be an extension of your knee and this will block off the 3rd base coach.
- You want to use your throwing hand to give your signs; you should place your throwing hand right against your cup. If you place your hands below your cup your signs may be seen by the opposing team, too high and they can see which fingers you are moving.
- The key to sign giving is to be discreet (secretive)! Try to give your signs with as little hand movement as possible. If a coach or player sees you tap the inside of your leg to tell the pitcher which location to throw, it may give away the location of the pitch.
- BONUS TIP – Before giving your signs, take a peek at the hitter and make sure they aren't looking at your signs!

2. Primary Stance

A primary stance is the stance a catcher is in when there are no runners on and less than 2 strikes. With no runners on and less than 2 strikes, if the ball gets passed the catcher nothing happens. No runners advance and the hitter isn't able to run to first base. This stance should be our most comfortable position and should put us in a great position to receive pitches.

There are two primary stance that we teach our catchers, the first is the half kneeling primary, which you are seeing a lot in the MLB and the second is a more traditional primary stance.

Half Kneeling Primary

The half kneeling primary stance (pictured below) is one of my favorites because it gets us in a great position to receive pitches low in the strike zone. It can also help us maintain our stamina for when we are in our secondary stance. I prefer to teach the half kneeling stance with the left leg down as this gets our knee out of the way of our glove and makes it much easier to receive pitches that are low to our glove side. The goal of the half kneeling stance is to set up as low in the zone as possible. We also want our glove to start as low in the zone as possible while presenting a good target for the pitcher. If we start low in the zone with our target we will be able to keep low strikes in the strike zone as we catch the pitch. This is the same for each stance, we want to work from the ground up as we catch the ball. A good verbal and mental cue is to catch the bottom half of the ball. If you catch the bottom half of the ball you will be able to keep low pitches in the strike zone as you receive them. If you catch the top half of the ball you will push the low pitch out of the bottom of the strike zone, making it appear like a ball.

Traditional Primary Stance

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I say traditional primary stance but the primary stance we teach is not like what you used to see back in the 80's and 90's where catchers were up really tall presenting as big of a target as possible with the glove positioned above the knees. Now that receiving has become such an important part of the game being in a stance that allows you to receive better, especially pitches at the bottom of the zone, has become imperative.

A good primary stance should position catchers at the bottom of the strike zone and give them the ability to work from the bottom up when receiving. This means catchers need to be flexible and mobile, having the hip mobility to get as low as possible in a squat. As much as possible we like to see our catchers squared up to the pitcher, so there is no staggering of the feet in the primary stance. The glove should be positioned at the knee height or lower. The left elbow should be positioned on the left knee or slightly to the left of the left knee. One of the toughest pitches to receive is a pitch thrown low at our left knee, starting with our elbow on or slightly left of our left knee gives us a better chance to receive that pitch well without having to work over the top of our left knee.

The goal of the primary stance is to set up as low in the zone as possible, stay compact, and give catchers the best chance to present pitches as best as possible.

(See the picture below)

3. Secondary Stance

The secondary stance is the stance we want to be in when there are runners on base or if there are two strikes on the hitter. These situations present either, throwing opportunities or blocking opportunities and because of that we need to be in a stance that allows us to accomplish those two things.

In a secondary stance, we want our feet much wider than our hips. Our knees should be slightly inside our feet with our hips up higher. Our hips should be up high enough that our thighs are parallel to the ground. Our upper body should be leaning forward at about 40-45 degrees, this allows us to keep our glove low in the zone for receiving. And as always, our glove should be at our knees or slightly below.

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Our throwing hand should have our thumb lightly tucked in our fingers, making a softly closed fist, which should be tucked between our chest protector and thigh. Make sure the throwing hand isn't tucked back into your thigh, it should still feel relatively free and able to move quickly for a block or a throw.

For your basic secondary stance we teach our catches to slightly stagger their feet. If we drew a straight line we would want their left heel on the line and the ball of their right foot on the line. This allows your footwork for throwing to be slightly easier but doesn't stagger your feet too much to make blocking more difficult.

Feel free to adjust slightly so that you are able to move quickly. It may take some time to be comfortable in a secondary stance but it will drastically improve your blocking and throwing!

(See photo below)

Receiving

Goal of Receiving

The goal of receiving is to present strikes as strikes. That is the simplest definition that you can possibly give. We've all seen the youth catcher that reaches way outside for a pitch a foot off the plate and drags it back into the zone waiting for the umpire to call it a strike. That's not what we are trying to do. Some pitches are just balls, there's nothing catchers can do about that. Trying to make balls look like strikes makes us look bad as catchers and we lose credibility with umpires. If we continually try to make pitches that are clearly not strikes look like strikes, the pitches that are right on the border won't go our way. If the pitch is a strike, catch it with confidence and present it as best you can. If it's on the edge of the zone, catch it with confidence and present it as best you can. If the pitch is clearly a ball, catch the pitch and throw it back to your pitcher. Keep it as simple as that and you'll earn a few more close calls for your pitcher.

Receiving Basics

1. Start low in the zone

The toughest pitches to keep strikes are at the bottom of the zone, our starting position (stance) should put us in the best position to catch those pitches well.

2. Catch the bottom half of the baseball

For 90% of pitches we'll want to stay under the ball and keep it from pulling our glove down! The only pitch we'll catch the top half of the ball is a pitch at the very top of the zone, other than that we want to catch the bottom half. This is a great verbal cue for catchers and it helps them understand the concept of staying below the baseball and keeping low pitches in the strike zone.

3. Minimal body movement

A common error with young catchers is overselling borderline pitches. Lots of glove movement and body movement only indicates the pitch missed its spot and shouldn't be called a strike. A verbal cue we use with our catchers is to "stay quiet" with their body.

4. Neutral Glove Positioning

Of all the receiving basics I believe this might be the most important. For a long time catchers have been taught to "frame" pitches by curling their glove back into the strike zone. Imagine a steering wheel and moving your hand around the top half of the steering wheel; that is how coaches have taught catchers to

catch each pitch. If you catch the pitch on your glove side your glove is in a vertical position, the pitch that is in the middle of the zone puts the glove in a horizontal position, and the pitch away from your glove side is caught with the thumb pointing down to the ground. This means that nearly every pitch is caught with the glove in a different position. When we consider presenting pitches to umpires on borderline calls; the pitch that is caught in the center of our body (when a pitcher hits his spot) is caught with a horizontal glove position. That pitch looks like a strike. If I catch a pitch that is to the left or right of the center of my body with a different glove position, I am presenting that pitch differently than when the pitcher hits his spot perfectly. We are giving the umpire a very inconsistent presentation.

Our goal should be to present every pitch with the same glove positioning. It's what we call the neutral position. I like to describe the neutral position as the same position we would catch a pitch that was thrown right to our glove. We want the thumb underneath the ball and the glove positioned horizontally. Once we have an understanding of what the neutral position looks like, we want to try and catch every pitch in that position. That is going to give a consistent look to the umpire, so when our pitcher misses their spot to the left or right our glove is in the same position as if the pitcher threw the ball right to our glove.

One of my training mentors said to me when I was first beginning as a strength coach, "there are no magic trainers". I've carried that over to the baseball world by saying, "there are no magic drills"! Youth coaches and players everywhere are looking for that one drill that's going to make them a big leaguer. While some drills are definitely better than others, how you approach the drill and how consistently you work at it are far more important. Which is why understanding the basics of receiving is so crucial. Every drill should be approached with the goal of following these basic rules. If you can accomplish these during the drill, the drill will help you become better. The greatest drill in the world can make you a worse baseball player if you don't approach it with the right understanding. So keep that in my mind as you look at these drills we are sharing with you.

Receiving Drills

1. Rolling Receiving Drill — (20 — 50 Reps)
 - a. Start in a half kneeling stance; catching barehanded
 - b. The ball will be rolled from approx. 15ft away at a slow pace
 - c. Your catcher should follow the basics of receiving
 - i. Start low in the zone
 - ii. Catch the bottom half of the ball

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- iii. Minimal body movement
 - iv. Work to stay in neutral position
 - d. A good verbal cue; “slide your thumb across the ground as you receive the ball”
 - e. Your catcher should extend at the elbow as he catches the ball
 - f. We want to see the hand move from low to high as the catcher extends his arm through the ball.
 - i. The ball will be lifted to about the knee height, this is so the catcher can feel what it’s like to work underneath low pitches and keep them in the zone
2. Rolling Receiving Drill with underhand flip (20-50 reps)
 - a. Perform the same drill as above
 - b. Alternate 1 ball rolled on the ground and 1 ball underhand flipped in the air
 - c. You want to see your catcher approach the ball on the ground and the one in the air in the same way; from low to high, catching the bottom half of the ball and staying in the neutral position
3. Underhand Flips (20-50 reps)
 - a. Underhand flips are done from 15ft – 20ft away; caught barehanded
 - b. Try to keep the location at the knee height or slightly lower, this will challenge the catcher to catch the bottom half of the ball and work from low to high
 - c. The goal should be to catch every pitch working from low to high, you should be able to notice if there is a downward approach to the pitch or if the glove is moving up as the catcher is catching the ball.
 - d. In order to catch the low pitch on the way up, the glove needs to work from below the ball. A high glove position at the start of the drill will make it very difficult to catch the bottom half of the ball.
4. Glove and Mask Receiving
 - a. Now the catcher will put their glove and mask on
 - b. Continue receiving in the half kneeling stance or in a quality primary stance
 - c. You should be throwing from about 25ft to 30ft
 - d. Catchers will try to approach pitches in the same fashion as the previous drills, this is a big step for most catchers starting out so have patience as they learn to catch faster pitches with the same technique as the easier drills.

- e. You are looking for all the basics of receiving while throwing pitches

BONUS TIP: As your catcher progresses you can throw the ball with more velocity or work on these techniques with curveballs.

Final Thoughts on Receiving

This is the most important skill for a catcher, as receiving metrics have begun to evolve becoming a quality receiver of the baseball is key in increasing your value to coaches, scouts, your pitchers, and your team! Learning the basics will go a long way in setting your catcher up for the future.

Try to keep these drills as simple as they are, execute them properly and put in the effort and you will become a great receiver behind the dish!

Blocking

Goal of Blocking

The goal of blocking is to control the baseball and by controlling the baseball we control the running game. Everything we do with our blocking drills should be with this in mind. But when your catcher is first learning to become an efficient blocker our goal is slightly different; we want to make sure they are getting into the right positions and have an understanding of the blocking mindset. Once they show they can do those things efficiently we can start to focus on the main goal of controlling the baseball, with an understanding of the basics of blocking they'll be able to execute a well-controlled block.

The Blocking Mindset

Letting a baseball hit you is a very counterintuitive thought process. Our first reaction is always going to be to shy away from jumping in the way of a pitch thrown in the dirt. If your catcher starts out like

this, be patient! This is a learned skill and catchers that struggle with it early can definitely gain confidence and become great blockers. The drill progression we use has worked great for us in getting catchers to instinctually block. While this is something that catchers can learn through drills, the blocking mindset has an element of toughness. At some point you will end up blocking the ball with your wrist, shoulder, forearm, or facemask and it will most likely hurt! You have to be tough enough to shake it off and play through a little bit of pain if you're going to be a catcher. Toughness is a major factor in the blocking mindset. Another part of the blocking mindset we instill in our catchers is that no pitch should ever get past us when we're in our secondary stance! That means pitches bounced way out in front of the plate, pitches thrown way over our head, and pitches thrown way off to the side we are diving, jumping, and throwing our body in the way to keep runners from advancing. If you can bring commitment to the learning process, some toughness, and some hustle you will have a blocking mindset!

Before we get into the blocking drills let's talk about the basics of blocking and how to start catchers out with a solid foundation for becoming an elite level blocker.

Blocking Basics

Many of our young catchers come in not ever having blocked a baseball, typically they try to pick the ball instead of moving their body in front of the ball. Intentionally getting in the way of a baseball is counterintuitive and the first step for catchers learning to block is getting used to letting the ball hit them. This doesn't mean we launch baseball at them, telling them to get tougher. There is a progression of drills we use to build confidence in them. Even a timid catcher can learn to block if they gain the confidence to know they can do it.

Each drill we do should help build their confidence and should be at a level they can succeed at. While we are building their confidence with the drills, we also want to focus on getting into a good blocking position.

A good blocking position has the glove covering the space between our knees, a good angle over the ball (around 45 deg to start, but that angle can change based on where the ball bounces), our chin tucked (eyes on the ball), and our throwing hand behind our glove. When you first start blocking with your catchers, getting into a solid blocking position will be the primary focus.

Once we establish what a good blocking position is and our catchers understand where they need to be. We want to start working on block timing and blocking accuracy.

Every part of baseball deals with timing and blocking is no different, we can be late, early, or on time for our blocks. Understanding what on time is will be key in being able to control the ball. When I first started watching myself catch on video I realized I was late to a lot of blocks; when I started to get down earlier I was able to control the ball and blocking became much easier.

A block that we are late to is when we get into our blocking position after the ball bounces, an early block is when we get into our blocking position long before the ball bounces, and a well-timed block is when we get into our blocking position just slightly before the ball bounces. This means our knees should be hitting the ground just before the ball bounces. If we can get into our blocking position on time we'll be moving less as the ball hits us, this makes it much easier to control the ball and keep it close. Most often catchers are late to their blocks, even the big leaguers. This is the tough part of blocking, especially as we start to catch higher velocity throwing, being on time gets much more difficult.

Blocking accuracy is simply where the ball hits us. Is it hitting off our shoulders, our arms, our belly button? When I first started to block I was taught to put my chest on the ball, the problem with blocking the ball off our chest is that it's very hard to control the ball that high up on our body. We want to be able to get over the top of the ball so that it is blocked back down to the ground. The chest is too high up for that to be the optimal spot. Our goal should be to block the ball with either the pocket of the glove or the belly button. To start out I like to see our catchers use their belly button as the target; as they become more advanced we do a lot of blocking with the pocket of the glove. Make sure you don't skip steps and start blocking with your pocket right away. Many younger catchers have a tendency of trying to pick the ball and you'll be fighting a losing battle if you focus on using the pocket straight away. Start having them focus on getting their belly button to the ball and they'll have much better success early on.

If you can keep blocking simple early on catchers will improve very quickly. Make sure to follow this progression of focus:

1. Mindset
2. Blocking position
3. Block timing
4. Block accuracy

Blocking Drills

1. Blocking From Knees —

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- a. Catchers will be on both knees, the focus is on the upper half of the body getting over the ball (about 45 degrees), the glove getting between the knees with the throwing hand behind the glove, chin tucked (eyes on the ball).
 - b. Start by rolling the ball down the middle from about 10ft away; catchers will simply focus on getting into the right position as the ball is rolling to them. If the ball isn't rolled right between their knees they won't be able to execute the drill. Make sure you are accurate.
 - c. The next progression is to underhand short hops to the same spot. This will give catchers a more realistic feel of letting the ball hitting them off the bounce.
 - d. The next progression is overhand throwing or off a machine if you aren't an accurate thrower from about 20ft - 25ft. This is much more advanced.
2. Block or Receive From The Knees –
- a. This drills starts in the same position as the first drill but at about 15ft – 20ft; now catchers will have to decide to receive the ball (in neutral position) or block it. This can be done with underhand tosses or overhand however you are most accurate with throwing. These pitches are in the air or bounced in front.
 - b. Catchers will be on both knees, the focus is on the upper half of the body getting over the ball (about 45 degrees), the glove getting between the knees with the throwing hand behind the glove, chin tucked (eyes on the ball).
 - c. You can progress this drill with more velocity or by throwing the ball in a spot that is tougher for the catcher to decide to block it or catch it.
3. Block Timing Drill –
- a. Catchers will start in their secondary stance; the coach will have a baseball in hand and throw it in the air at varying heights. The goal for the catcher is to land on their knees in a good blocking position just before the coach catches the ball again. Remember, good timing is being in our blocking position just before the ball bounces. Catchers should not be in their blocking position while the ball is still high in the air or after the ball is caught.
 - b. This is a great and simple drill to start catchers out with understanding timing. They don't have to worry about anything else except getting to a good position on time.
 - c. To progress this drill we will throw balls in the dirt at different speeds; the goal is still to be in our blocking position just before the bounce.
4. Lateral Blocking Drill (Rolling Blocks) –

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- a. Catchers will start in their secondary stance, with their glove and throwing hand reached out to the ground ready to block. We call this the half block stance because we are halfway into our block.
- b. The ball will be rolled from about 15ft – 20 ft away slightly left or right of home plate
- c. Catchers will lead with their glove to the ball and then take their body (belly button) to the glove.
- d. The focus of this drill is on blocking accuracy; the ball should hit in the pocket of their glove with their belly button directly behind them.
- e. We can work on every part of blocking with this drill; mindset, positioning, timing, and accuracy.

Final Thoughts On Blocking

With repetition over time your catcher will become an excellent blocker. Please remember that each drill and each focus is a progression. You can do the more advanced progression with your catcher but set a realistic expectation. If your catcher is scared of having the ball hit them, they probably won't crush the block or receive drill from a pitching machine. Start simple and help them build confidence!

Throwing

Goal of Throwing

The goal of throwing is to make accurate throws to each base as quick as possible with as much velocity as possible.

Throwing Basics

Throwing should be prioritized in the same order as above;

1. Accuracy
2. Quickness

3. Velocity

While throwing velocity is what will eventually get you noticed by colleges, it should not be a focus when building your foundation as a catcher. Quick and accurate throws should be your goal when starting out, velocity will increase over time as catchers get older and get stronger.

To be more accurate we need to be in a good throwing position and in the same throwing position over and over again. When we get to the throwing position we should see catchers low in their legs, with their hips pushed back slightly (60-70% of their weight on the back leg and back hip), feet in a straight line towards the base they're throwing to, throwing elbow up at shoulder height and bent at 90 degrees or less, and the glove hand elbow up at shoulder height. Many people like to call this the bow and arrow position. Using an image can help catchers get into the right position, so we call this the bow and arrow position.

There are two parts of getting into a good throwing position:

1. Transfer
2. Footwork

Transfer

The transfer is the exchange of the ball from our glove to our throwing hand. The glove should always feed the ball to the throwing hand around chest height. We do not take both hands to the ball, the glove will bring the ball to the throwing hand which should be close to the chest. This ensures we have a consistent transfer. Once the ball is transferred to the throwing hand we get into the bow and arrow position. To get to the bow and arrow position, after we transfer the ball, we want to immediately separate our glove and throwing hand at the chest. We don't want to bring our glove back to our ear to exchange the ball.

Having a consistent transfer is very important in making quick and accurate throws. The main problems I see with transfers is transferring the ball too low (around the hips) and taking the glove towards the ear to make the exchange.

Footwork

Great catchers have great footwork! Just like a short stop, catchers should have some of the best footwork on the team! Being quick and accurate with your feet is crucial when throwing the ball. From bunt plays to throwing out runners, catchers need to be athletic.

We want our footwork to be as simple and repeatable as possible. Catchers should never take more than two steps to make a throw to any base. Catchers will always step with the right foot first. Essentially, throwing is a “two step” dance. “Right, Left, Bow and Arrow”, that is something we consistently hear at our facility.

One of the biggest issues I see with catchers is really long footwork. I like to ask a funny question to our catchers, “If you could run the ball to 2nd base or throw it which would get there quicker?” Obviously the answer is to throw it but this question gets them to understand that taking big steps toward 2nd base is slower than having short footwork to 2nd and a quick release. A good measurement to use for catchers is that their right foot (back foot) should not travel further than where their left foot (front foot) starts. If it does, their footwork is too long.

As we move into the drill portion, remember that the initial goal is for catchers to get into the right positions. Once they are getting into the right position consistently we start to worry about performance; how quick they get into the throwing position and increasing the difficulty of the pitches they receive as they are throwing.

Throwing Drills

1. Kneeling Transfers
 - a. Catchers will start on both knees facing the coach
 - b. The goal of this drill is to consistently transfer the ball from glove to throwing hand at the chest
 - c. The glove should bring the ball to the throwing hand at the chest
 - d. To progress the drill catchers will get to the bow and arrow position after the transfer is made
2. Half Squat 2 Step (2nd base throw)
 - a. Catchers will start out halfway into a squat (this makes it easier to focus on footwork)
 - b. To start find a straight line; catchers should line up the middle of their body over the line
 - c. Catchers will go through their footwork without receiving the ball to start and then progress to receiving a pitch while going through their footwork
 - d. The footwork should be; right foot steps on the line (behind where the left foot starts), left foot on the line
 - e. Catchers should land in a wide base with the left foot open to around 45 degrees
 - f. As the front foot lands our hand should be loaded up in the bow and arrow position
3. Right Left Bow and Arrow (2nd base throw)
 - a. Catchers start in their secondary stance with the center of their body lined up over a straight line

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- b. The footwork should be; right foot steps on the line (behind where the left foot starts), left foot on the line
- c. Catchers should land in a wide base with the left foot open to around 45 degrees
- d. As the front foot lands our hand should be loaded up in the bow and arrow position

Once proper footwork to 2nd base is established we then turn our focus to throwing to 1st and 3rd base. These throws are also two step throws and work best to learn after establishing solid two step footwork to 2nd. That doesn't mean you can't work on them all together, I have found it easier to teach 1st and 3rd footwork once catchers understand how to move their feet to 2nd.

- Footwork to 1st base
 - a. Catchers right foot will step right underneath them or slightly behind them
 - b. The front foot will line up to 1st base
 - c. The bow and arrow position stays the same no matter when or where we are throwing the ball
 - d. There is little to no forward movement in our footwork; we are essentially just lining ourselves up to first base as quick as possible
- Footwork to 3rd base
 - a. Catchers right foot will step back behind the left foot far enough to create space behind a right handed hitter
 - b. The front foot will line up to 3rd base
 - c. The bow and arrow position stays the same no matter when or where we are throwing the ball
 - d. When throwing to 3rd base it is important that our butt is leading our throw, this means we should be bent over at the waist while going through our footwork
 - e. This helps ensure that we are in a balanced position when we land
 - f. If we stay up to tall and are not bent over at the waist we will be off balance

When doing these throwing drills we like to do them with this progression in mind:

1. No receiving (Focus on footwork only)

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2. Footwork from half squat position (no receiving)
3. Footwork from half squat position (receiving pitch)
4. Footwork from secondary stance (No receiving)
5. Footwork from secondary stance (receiving pitch)
6. Footwork from secondary
 - a. Increase velocity
 - b. Vary pitch location
 - c. Extreme pitch location
 - d. Pick short hops and throw

Final Thoughts

I hope you have enjoyed Foundational Catching Tactics and found it useful for you and your catchers! The big take away I hope you all get from this book is that it is possible to learn the catching position for any aspiring catcher. It isn't just about being tough (although that's important) there is also a lot of skill involved. Those skills are learned over time and as part of a progression. Don't rush the process and don't be frustrated if you or the catchers you coach aren't at the final stage of the progressions. Start where they are challenged but succeeding and watch them grow from there.

Thank you for being a part of the Catching IQ team! Good luck on your journey at the catching position and thank you for letting us be a part of that!

Coach Howard