



Niles West Baseball

GARRY GUSTAFSON – HEAD COACH

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Niles West Baseball Team Rules



Absence Policy

If an athlete is excused from a practice the day before a game, he is eligible to play in the game the next day, though his participation will depend ENTIRELY on the course of the game and the availability of other players. In NEARLY every case, he will not start the game. If an athlete is excused on game day, he is eligible to play in the next game, though, in NEARLY every case, he will not start.

Accepted excuses include, but are not limited to:

- Personal or family illness
- Family/personal problem
- Unanticipated causes of absence

Unaccepted excuses include:

- medical/dental appointments (*coach approval*)
- Overnight field trips or other outings
- 2 unexcused absences results in a suspension for the duration of the season

An unexcused absence from practice will prevent the player from participating in the next scheduled game. An unexcused absence from a game will prevent the player from participating in the next scheduled game.

Spring Break: Athletes who miss games during the week of vacation will likely see limited playing time upon their return. Those athletes who are in attendance over break will get priority in terms of playing time until players who were on break have shown they are in game shape both mentally and physically.

Parents

Bench Conduct:

- Thank you in advance for your support of your son.
- Please feel free to talk with your son prior to warm-ups and before a game or after the game and team meeting.
- If you would like to request a meeting please do so by phone or email.

13 Essentials

1. Nobody gets anything in life for free; you have to work for it.
2. When you make work fun, it's easy to overcome difficult tasks.
3. Being positive and supportive of the team helps strengthen morale.
4. Hustle! If I tell you to hustle you are not!
5. Always respect the game and the equipment, playing ball is a privilege.
6. You haven't lost until you hang your head and quit on yourself.
7. Be humble and show class to your opponents you beat; they will feel they were beaten by good players.
8. Don't argue with umpires, players or fans. It's hard enough to stay focused on your own job..."the game".
9. Find something positive after each practice or game.
10. "Believe in you", this will build confidence.
11. It's only a game, just one small facet of your life.
12. "Don't every be afraid to fail"
13. Be efficient and organized.



Niles West Baseball Times & Measurements



| Baserunners | Pitchers & Catchers |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 yard dash: Infielders - 7.0↑ Outfielders - 7.0↓ • Home to 1st: Left hand batters – 4.1 average (<i>Ichiro: 3.6</i>) Right hand batters – 4.2 average • Stealing 1st to 2nd: 3.1↓ - above average 3.3 - average 3.6↑ - throw them all out! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitchers time to home plate: 1.2 - Good 1.3 - Average 1.4↑ - Run • Catcher time to second: (<i>127' 3 3/8"</i>) 1.8 - D1 College (<i>1.7 Ivan Rodríguez</i>) 2.0↓ - Throw most guys out 2.1↑ - Teams will run on us |
| Infielders | Outfielders |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double plays Under 4 seconds 2nd to 1st 1.2↓ • Arm Strength -Throw from Short Stop to 1st base -Ball rotation -Does the ball jump or have little life getting to first? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arm Strength -Throw from right field to 3rd base -Ball rotation -Does the ball die or have life as it comes in to the infield? |
| Field Measurements | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home plate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 17" wide / 8½" from middle up and 8½" from middle back • Batters Box: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 4' wide / 6' deep (<i>3' from middle of the plate up and back</i>) (<i>6" from plate to inside line of the box</i>) • Mound: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Pitchers Plate – 24" x 6" / set on a level area 5'34" x 34" ◦ Distance - 6'6" from back of the plate to front of pitcher's plate ◦ Mound should have a radius of about 9' centered 1' behind the midpoint of the front edge of the pitcher's plate ◦ Pitchers plate should be 10" above the top surface of home plate. • Diamond (or infield) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 90' square: measure from the back edge of home, 1st, 3rd, and the middle of 2nd ◦ 127' 3 3/8" between: 1st and 3rd / home and 2nd • Baseball <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 9 to 9¼ inches in circumference / 5 to 5¼ ounces / 108 stitches (<i>In 1975 switched from horsehide to cowhide</i>) | |



Niles West Baseball Communication



| Defensive Priority System | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Defensive Position | Has Priority Over On A Fly Ball | Has No Priority Over On A Fly Ball |
| First Baseman | Catcher Pitcher | Second Baseman Third Baseman Shortstop Right Field |
| Second Baseman | First Baseman & Pitcher | Shortstop & All Outfielders |
| Shortstop | Second Baseman Third Baseman First Baseman Pitcher | All Outfielders |
| Third Baseman | Catcher Pitcher First Baseman | Shortstop Left Field |
| Catcher | Pitcher | First Baseman Third Baseman |
| Pitcher | No Fielder | Catcher All Infielders |
| Left Field | All Infielders | Center Fielder |
| Center Field | Left Fielder Right Fielder All Infielders | Every Player |
| Right Field | All Infielders | Center Fielder |
| Bunt Defense Priority System | | |
| Position | Priority Over | |
| Pitcher | First Baseman Only | |
| First Baseman | No One | |
| Catcher | Pitcher and First Baseman | |
| Third Baseman | All Players | |
| Second Baseman (early break) | No One | |
| Communication Calls | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "MINE, MINE, MINE" 2. "Throw the ball across the infield" 3. "I've got the base" 4. "Which ever way it takes you" (Corner infielders) 5. "Two outs" (1st and 3rd) 6. "Five-six-three" (Left handed pull hitter) 7. "Let me know" 8. "Let him know" 9. "I've got back up" 10. "Ground ball to my right, I'll let you know" 11. "Keep moving" 12. Cut Hold / Cut Base Number (1,2,3,4) | | |



Niles West Baseball Positioning



| Defensive Movement By The Count | | |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Outfielders | | |
| Count On The Hitter | Steps to the Pull Side | Steps to the Non-Pull Side |
| 0-0 | - | - |
| 1-0 | 3 | - |
| 2-0 | 6 | - |
| 2-1 | 3 | - |
| 3-0 | 9 | - |
| 3-1 | 6 | - |
| 3-2 | 2 | - |
| 1-1 | - | - |
| 2-2 | - | 1 |
| 0-1 | - | 2 |
| 0-2 | - | 4 |
| 1-2 | - | 2 |
| Defensive Movement By The Count | | |
| Infielders | | |
| Count On The Hitter | Steps to the Pull Side | Steps to the Non-Pull Side |
| 0-0 | - | - |
| 1-0 | 1 | - |
| 2-0 | 2 | - |
| 2-1 | 1 | - |
| 3-0 | 3 | - |
| 3-1 | 2 | - |
| 3-2 | 1 | - |
| 1-1 | - | - |
| 2-2 | - | 1 |
| 0-1 | - | 1 |
| 0-2 | - | 2 |
| 1-2 | - | 1 |
| Defensive Movement By The Count | | |
| First Baseman & Third Baseman | | |
| Count On The Hitter | Steps to the Pull Side | Steps to the Non-Pull Side |
| 0-0 | - | - |
| 1-0 | ½ | - |
| 2-0 | 1 | - |
| 2-1 | ½ | - |
| 3-0 | 2 | - |
| 3-1 | 1 | - |
| 3-2 | ½ | - |
| 1-1 | - | - |
| 2-2 | - | ½ |
| 0-1 | - | ½ |
| 0-2 | - | 1 |
| 1-2 | - | ½ |



Niles West Baseball

Infield Drills (Red / Black / Short Bag)



| RED 1 | BLACK 1 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P – Cover 1st & come backers • 1B – Cover 1st • SS/2B – 643 & 463 double plays. • C – Throws to 3rd: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Off bunts -Off pitches • 3B – Receive throws & tag | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C – Throws to 2nd: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Off bunts -Off pitches • SS/2B – Receive throws & tag • 3B – Forehand backhand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P/1B – Pick at 1B |
| RED 2 | BLACK 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P – Pick at 2B • SS/2B – Receive throws & tag. • C – Blocking • 3B/1B – Throws across diamond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Off bunts -Ground balls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C/1B – Throws to 1B: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Off bunts -Off pitches • P/3B – Pickoff at 3rd • SS/2B – Forehand/Backhand |
| RED 3 | BLACK 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P/C – Come backers & throw to plate Catcher receive throw & tag • P/C – Past ball to backstop • 3B/2B/1B – 543 double plays • SS – Pop-ups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1B – Throws in dirt (forehand/backhand) • C – Pop-ups • P – Forehand/backhand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS/2B – Bad toss double play |
| RED 4 | BLACK 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C/3B/1B – 523 & 323(4) double plays • P/SS/2B – 163 & 143 double plays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C/2B/SS/1B – 623 & 423 double plays • P 3B – Pop-up communication |
| SHORT BAG WORK | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5 – 3 Short Bag / 4-6-3 & 6-4-3 Regular 2. 6 – 3 Short Bag / 5-4-3 Regular 3. 4 & 5 Short Bag / 3 – 6 – 3 Regular 4. 4 – 3 Regular / 6 – 5 Ball in the 6 hole <p>*(Work Forehand/Backhand & Slow Rollers)</p> | |



Niles West Baseball Signs



| Offensive Signs |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Bunt Signs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sacrifice Bunt: _____ 2. Drag Bunt: _____ 3. Squeeze Bunt: _____ 4. Fake Bunt and Slash: _____ 5. Fake Bunt Slash Hit and Run: _____ 6. Bunt and Run: _____ |
| <p>Take & Wipe Off Sign</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Automatic on 3-0 count unless given green light: _____ 2. On all other counts the sign is: _____ 3. Wipe Off: _____ |
| <p>Running Signs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leads 2. Straight Steal: _____ 3. Hit and Run: _____ 4. Delayed Steal: _____ 5. 1st and 3rd Double steal <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Straight steal of 2nd base: _____ b) Steal and stop: _____ c) Forced pick-off at 1st base: _____ d) Steal on the stretch: _____ |
| <p>Visual Signs with Runner(s) on Base</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pointing toward the ground (<i>make sure ball is on the ground</i>) 2. Rolling of the hands in front of the chest (<i>get a jump and break up 2</i>) 3. Closing hands in front of chest (<i>shorten lead</i>) 4. Widening hands in front of chest (<i>widen lead</i>) 5. Horizontal motion with hand in front of chest (<i>freeze on a line drive</i>) 6. Pointing at the shortstop (<i>remind runner at 2nd in case of a non force</i>) 7. Pointing to 2nd base (<i>remind runner at 2nd to tag on long fly</i>) 8. Crossing hands in front of the chest (<i>runner at 2nd to get off as far as you can on a fly</i>) 9. Holding hands in front of the chest (<i>take no chances on the bases</i>) 10. Pointing at 3rd base (not make 1st or 3rd out at 3rd base) |

| Defensive Signs |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Bunt Defense</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standard Bunt Defense – Runners at 1st and/or 2nd: _____ 2. 1st base early break – Runner at 1st and/or 2nd: _____ 3. 3rd base early break – Runner at 1st and/or 2nd: _____ 4. 1st base and 3rd base early break: _____ 5. Pick-Off Early Break Defense – Runner at 1st: _____ 6. Pick-Off Early Break Defense – Runner at 2nd: _____ |
| <p>1st and 3rd Defense</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Play #1 – Throw to 2nd base: |

3. Play #3 – Cut to shortstop: _____
4. Play #4 – Full arm fake to 2nd, throw to 3rd: _____
5. Play #5 – Walk off or steal and stop situation: _____

Infielders

1. Regular Depth: Defensive position 1
2. ½ Way: Defensive position 2
3. Corners In: Defensive position 3
4. Infield In: 2 hands to the chest (play in on the edges of the grass) Defensive position 4
5. 2 hands to the chest followed by punching motion (in on the grass then drop 3 steps on pitchers delivery)
6. Shade 3: Infielders shade toward first base
7. Shade 5: Infielders shade toward third base
8. Pull side back, non-pull side in: Verbal Communication
9. No doubles: Hold up arms and point in opposite directions

Outfielders

1. Straight up
2. Shade 3: Outfielders shade toward first base
3. Shade 5: Outfielders shade toward third base
4. Move individual Outfielder: Raise opposite arm in which player should move. With other arm move in direction player should move. (Each point = 1 step)
5. Move in (point down) (Each point = 1 step)
6. Move back (point up) (Each point = 1 step)
7. No doubles: Hold up arms and point in opposite directions

Catcher

1. Pitchout: _____
2. Pick off: _____
3. 1st and 3rd: _____

Pitcher

1. Circling of right hand – Do not take so much time between pitches. Speed up for you are working too slowly.
2. Holding up both hands in front of chest – Take more time between pitches. Slow down for you are working too fast.
3. Holding elbow up – You are starting to drop your elbow.
4. Pointing at eyes – Concentrate more on what you are doing. Watch the target.
5. Pointing at a base – Hold the runner a little closer. A steal threat or runner is taking a big lead.
6. Word "up" – Pick

Between Catcher & Pitcher

1. With no base runner at 2nd base we will always use the 1st sign.
 - 1 – Fastball / index finger and pinky for location
 - 2 – Curveball / unless pitcher does not have curve, then 2 would be slider
 - 3 – Slider or specialty pitch
 - 4 – Or wiggle 4 is change-up
 - 4 finger's straight for false shake – Pitcher shake off
 - Location shake off – 1 shake
 - Pitch shake off – more than 1 shake
 - Thumb followed by #1,2,3 is pick to that base
2. Runner at 2nd base
 - Make sure catcher reminds infield that there is a runner at 2nd
 - Outs +1 (0 out=1st sign, 1 out=2nd sign, 2 out=3rd sign)

- Pick the number and keep it
- 1st sign indicator (1=next sign, 2=2 after, 3=3 after
- Outs = sign (0 out=last sign, 1 out=1st sign, 2 out=2nd sign)



Niles West Baseball Defensive Skills



Defensive Philosophy

Active / Aggressive / Efficient Defense

1. Know where to be at ALL TIMES in ALL SITUATIONS
2. Deal with EMOTIONS – Demonstrate “not to high not to low”
3. Mentally Tough – Not afraid to fail
4. Maximize your tools – NEVER accept less than your best
5. Never allow the ball to get past you
6. Think one play ahead of your opponent
7. Sprint on and off the field

Defensive Drills

Infielder Drills

Throwing Routine

- **One knee** – right hander, right knee down / lefty opposite
- **Square drill** – elbows up, follow through, catch with 2 hands
- **Power Position** – toe tap, weight middle, follow through
- **Regular Catch** – get more and more distance (should always be past 90 feet when done when we are outside)
- **Quick Catch** – Position orientated, catch on your throwing side

Two-Man Drills

These are our “breakdown drills” for infielders. Work with partner, concentrating on:

- Stance and set up – set up high, hands out in front, knees slightly bent
- Fielding position
 - Toe to heel relationship
 - Knees bent, hands out in front, butt down
 - Field the ball “left of center
 - Back is flat (parallel to ground)
 - Non-glove hand is above, then in
- Post-fielding position
 - Bring hands in to the gut
 - Step in front to get momentum going toward 1st
 - Follow through, step through.

In two-man drills, the fielder’s partner is rolling (like a bowling bowl) grounders to the fielder. We will field grounders right of us, to our right, and to our left. Stress a good cross-over step when going right and left.

Short-hops

Working with a partner; can be done at end of two man drills

Concentrating on:

- Staying low (butt down)
- Glove starts low, then comes up – give with the ball

- Keep head down, back flat to the ground

The fielder can also work on backhand and forehand short-hops here. The thrower should not be lobbing the ball; he should put something on the ball, challenging his partner.

Three-man flip work

Good to do at the beginning of the season

Players can do a round with-out their glove, then with it on. Three players work on:

- Hands together
- Getting the ball out of their glove
- Making good flips, following their flip

Hat Drill

This drill is designed to force the fielder to take the correct approach to the ball, and have his momentum going towards first base to make the throw.

- Lay a hat down about 10 feet in front of the fielder
- Roll a ball towards the fielder, forcing him to quickly get around the hat and make the throw.
- The player is "rounding off" the ball to get a strong throw to 1st.

Slow Rollers

Fielder has to come get the slow roller. The fielder should

- Field the ball on the inside of the left foot
- Make one step and get rid of the baseball
- Get the elbow up, no underhand – out-of –control type throws

We can start this drill slowing, concentrating on footwork. The player can start with the ball, "field it, take one step, and throw to a short first baseman.

Wall Drill

Good drill for all infielders, but especially 1st and 3rd baseman who need quick reactions. Thrower gets behind fielder who is facing a wall about 5 feet in front of him. Thrower throws a ball low and hard off the wall, forcing the fielder to react quickly.

Pop-up Drill

Can do occasionally inside with infielders. Concentrating on:

- Taking a good drop-step to get the ball
- Running on toes
- Communicating "I got it"
- Getting behind the ball, don't drift

Dive drill

Here, the fielder works on finishing-off the great play. It can be organized different ways.

- Player can start with the ball on two knees, simulate dive, get up, make throw
- Coach can throw ball to player, simulate dive, get up, make throw
- Coach can roll ball to player, dive, get up, make throw
- When making a forehand dive, player should concentrate on getting closed before making throw

The dive drill is good to do once a week, no more than twice-a-week

Relay drill

In this drill, the players are acting as relay men; usually in a group of three. The men on the end will fake their relay throw, then throw back to the middle. The player should be concentrating on:

- Catching the ball on his glove side
- Catching the ball with two hands
- Having his feet ready as the ball is in the air (left foot back for right handers)
- Dive drill
- Coming-off the bag and fielding (include throw to second)
- Communication with a pitcher on bunt or tweener

Middle infield work

2nd base pivots = left foot

2nd baseman gets to the bag with his left foot and can

- Step across
- Stay behind
- Pivot (tough for younger kids)

2nd baseman flips and throws. On all flips be sure to show ball and follow your flip.

- Forehand flip
- Backhand flip (bring up, then out)
- Trunk twist throw, or pivot feet
- Turn back in the hole

Short stop pivots = right foot (except on throw from first baseman)

SS will get to the base with his right foot, aiming for the back corner of the bag. After going across the bag the SS needs to get "closed" before throwing to first SS flips and throws

- Show ball, follow flip (rarely have to backhand flip)
- On throw, drop back knee, thro a dart (short-arm)

*be sure middle infielders are always calling out "flip" when flipping to each other.

Combination Drills

It's always good to combine some drills so no one is standing around. Be sure you have enough baseballs, buckets. Organize, organize, organize... we don't want anyone to get hurt.

Outfielder Drills**Throwing Routine**

- **One knee** – right hander, right knee down / lefty opposite
- **Square drill** – elbows up, follow through, catch with 2 hands
- **Power Position** – toe tap, weight middle, follow through
- **Regular Catch** – get more and more distance (should always be past 90 feet when done when we are outside)
- **Quick Catch** – Position orientated, catch on your throwing side
- **Self-fly Ball** – Player is throwing ball up in the air. He will:
 - Get behind ball
 - Have left foot forward
 - Catch the ball with two hands, on throwing side of his body

- o Good crow-hop (right, left) and make throw to his partner, who has his hands up simulating a cut-off man
- **Field a ground ball** – Fielder takes a knee (right knee for righties), fields ball in front, immediately gets into his crow hop, and makes throw.
- **Do-or-die** – Fielder is coming to get ball and has to throw runner out at a base. He fields ball outside his left foot, while his right foot is coming forward. He then tries to get rid of the ball in three steps (for a righty – one step with his left, then a crow-hop)

Take Away Double

Line of players on one side. Coach throws ground ball to right or left of line. Fielder concentrates on rounding off the ball, fielding it with his momentum going towards the infield. He then makes a strong throw to the cut-off man.

Take Away Triple

Same idea here as in the double drill. Coach will now throw the ball farther out. Fielder's goal is to cut off before it gets to the wall, then hit the cut-off man.

Banana Drills

Great drill to do without gloves. The fielder works on taking a drop step, then sprinting back. The coach will yell "ball"; the fielder then tries to locate and catch the ball. Player jogs back, puts ball in bucket.

The player can also work on coming back in for a "misjudged" fly ball.

Defensive Back Drills (D-B)

Fielder faces coach, coach will point to direction of the drop step and throw over outside shoulder. Fielder works on drop-step, and getting a good angle on the ball.

Line Drive Drills

Fielder is simulating coming in on the line drive. If this drill were being done inside, for example, the coach would stand on one baseline, with the line of players on the other. The fielder starts running at the coach; the coach then throws either right at him, or to his right or left. The player should be catching it around his shoe tops. He then places the ball in the bucket on either sideline.

Roll Ball to Wall Drill

Fielder starts with ball about 15 feet away from the wall. He faces out, rolls ball behind him, when ball hits the wall, he sprints to go get it. He will get back foot around the ball and pick it up, gather, take a quick crow-hop, and hit his partner acting as the cut-off man.

Wall Drill

Fielder works on going back on the ball over his head, finding the wall, and hitting the cutoff man after making the catch. He should concentrate on feeling for the wall with his hand (for back-handed catch) or his glove (for fore-handed catch).

Sun Drill

Player starts with ball throws ball up towards light. Player works on shielding eyes with his glove and making the catch with two hands.

Eyes Closed Drill

Coach or partner will throw ball in air. The fielder has his eyes closed. He

can open them and find the ball after he hears "ball". He is simulating reacting to a sun-ball or a high sky.

Corner to Corner Throwing

An indoor drill, but could also be done outside. Fielders split up between each corner (diagonal throwing). This is a good drill to make competitive – number of catches made, team with least bad throws, etc. Fielders can also catch, then throw a self-fly ball, use proper footwork and make throw (non-competitive).



Niles West Baseball Defensive Skills



Catching Philosophy

"Captain of the Defense"

1. Leadership (take charge / coach on the field)
2. Toughness (hard-nosed / enjoy contact)
3. Enthusiasm (it is contagious)
4. Hustle (involved on every pitch)
5. Anticipation (movement of pitches / opposing offense)
6. Reaction (location of pitches)
7. Help the pitcher (work to earn more strikes)
8. Defense-oriented (defense wins)

Stances

1. Sign Giving

- Comfortable
- Feet close together
- Butt down
- Knees closed
- Angle towards the shortstop
- Lay forearm across thigh
- Hand against cup
- Glove in front of knee
- Slow controlled finger movements (slow)
- Fingers straight down
- 1, 2, wiggle
- Shake off sign
- Pick sign
- 1st and 3rd signs
- # of outs

2. Primary (no runners on base)

- Feet nearly flat
- Toes outside the knee
- Shoulders upright
- Hips down
- Body square to the pitcher
- Give full glove target (turn up on pitch without moving elbow)
- Thumb at 3 o'clock, middle finger at 12 o'clock
- Maintain balance
- Let the ball get to you and freeze it
- Hide bare hand behind ankle

3. Secondary (runners on base or 2 strikes on the batter)

- Bend at the hips
- Maintain target (same as primary)
- Bare hand behind glove (tuck thumb)
- Keep loose fist
- Stay on the same plane
-

Catching Drills

Important emphasis when doing these drills, and for catching in the ballgame

- Always catch in 3rds - Use the inside corner, middle, and outside corner for every drill (catchers never just set up in one spot).
- Use the balls of your feet; don't get caught on your heels (especially with 2 strikes and runners on base).
- Give 100% for each drill (the only way to make yourself quicker and better is to work at it and push yourself past your limits)
- Watch each ball all the way into your mitt just as if you were a hitter.
- Work with runners on and nobody on for every drill.
- Do not be afraid to listen to advise

Drill #1 – Tennis ball framing

Work on catching tennis balls from a coach 10-20 feet away flipping balls underhand at the catcher. Start out with no ball in hand, then place a tennis ball between your pinky and the palm of your hand. Work with runners on and no runners on, along with catching in 3rds.

Drill #2 – Soft Body

Make sure the catcher is set up in down blocking position. The coach should set up 10 to 15 feet in front facing the catcher. The coach throws ball in front of the catcher 5 times to emphasize being soft and learning to block not catch the ball

Drill #3 – Shadow Blocking

Make sure the catcher is set up in the runners on base position. This is a quickness blocking drill were the catcher works on blocking imaginary baseballs in the 3 blocking zones. The coach should set up 2-3 feet in front facing the catcher. The coach points to each spot randomly 5 times. The catcher should work quickly bouncing back up to their original spot after each repetition. I recommend doing 5 sets of 5.

Drill #4 – Live Blocking

Coach should set up 15 – 20 feet away on a bucket to create the correct path of the ball out of the pitchers hand. The coach can work the five zones working no more than 10 balls to a set. Start out with every ball in the dirt and work into reacting from strikes to balls in the dirt. Mix in pitches up high because those are often tough to get when the catcher is thinking about blocking. If the catcher is not keeping their glove down throw the ball underhand like fast pitch softball and try and get the ball through the 5 hole.

Drill #5 – Contest Blocking

Catcher should align themselves in front of a Goal. The coach sets up 15 – 20 feet away on a bucket. This time the coach throws the ball underhand keeping the ball low. The catcher will have to stay down and get the mitt down if they want to block the ball. Make a contest out of the drill to create competitiveness between the coach and the player.

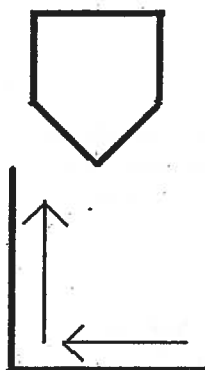
Drill #6 – Block and Retrieve

This drill is set up the same as shadow blocking. Make sure the catcher is set up in the runners on base position. This is a quickness blocking drill were the catcher works on blocking imaginary baseballs in the 3 blocking zones. The coach should set up 2-3 feet in front facing the catcher. The coach points to each spot 1 time. The catcher should block the imaginary ball to the spot pointed to, then get up retrieve

the ball and throw it to another player standing in the direction of the base you are working on. I recommend doing 3 sets of 3.

Drill #7 – L Footwork Practice

Draw a line from the back left corner of home plate back and then to the right. The lines create an L as shown in the diagram. The L creates a path for the catcher. The catcher should open the glove to their face, step right, then left. Emphasize staying low, quick, and in staying in control. Catchers should always get 4 seams and face the ball away.



Drill #8 – Live L Footwork Practice

Drill #9 – 1st and 3rd Footwork Practice

Drill #10 – Live 1st and 3rd Footwork Practice

Drill #11 – Sign Recognition

Drill #12 – Jump rope

Drill #13 – Dot Drill

Drill #14 – Bunt practice

- Nose over the baseball
- Rake the baseball in
- Step in front of your left foot
- 1B line – step back to clear a lane
- Middle – Rounded angle toward 3rd
- 3B line – Turn back toward 1B

Drill #15 – Covering Home Plate

Tag Play

1. Leave mask on
2. Stand relaxed
3. Catch the ball first (hand over the ball in your glove)
4. Left foot up the line, Right foot in front of home
5. Drop right knee, make a hard tag and spin out of the play to look for an additional play

Force Play

1. Right foot on back edge of home
2. Stretch late and drag foot to make sure you touch the base
3. Be sure of an out

Drill #16 – Bullpen Work

Catch in 3rds

1. Relaxed no runner on
2. Runner at 3rd base
3. Footwork practice
4. 2 or 3 at each spot
5. fastball corners, off-speed middle

Drill #17 Pop-ups**Drill #18 Wild Pitches**



Niles West Baseball Pitching Skills



Pitching Philosophy

Every time you step on the mound:

1. Throw 1st pitch strikes
2. Stay ahead in the count
3. Change speeds frequently
4. Throw one pitch at a time, hitting spots
5. Stay in control, stay calm, cool, and confident!
6. Think that no one will beat you today, NO ONE!
7. Stay on the mound and in the tunnel to create rhythm

Pitchers Dissecting Hitters

Types of Stances

| Stance | Strength | Weakness |
|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Parallel | Good plate coverage | Best pitch weakness |
| Open | Sees ball inside better | Weaker away |
| Closed | Better plate coverage | May be weak inside Use best pitch |
| Deep | Longer time to see ball | May be weak away Weak on off speed |
| Up Front | Less time to see ball | Weaker on fastball |

Pitching Drills

Throwing Routine

- **One knee** – right hander, right knee down / lefty opposite
- **Square drill** – elbows up, follow through, catch with 2 hands
- **Power Position** – toe tap, weight middle, follow through
- **Balance Position** – Work from knee up
- **Regular Catch** – get more and more distance (should always be past 90 feet when we are outside)

Chair Drills

- **Right handed Pitcher** - Place right foot on chair, left foot out in front (throw from the power position and emphasize follow through)
- **Left handed Pitcher** - Place left foot on chair, right foot out in front

Pick-offs

- **Change Delivery times** (see times and measurements chart)
- **Vary looks**
- **Work picks** - from set position, going up, going down, on to rubber
- **Specialty Pickoffs** - TBD

Mechanics

- **Gripping the ball** (4 seam, 2 seam, change, curve, slider, specialty pitch)
- **Delivery** (calm, balanced)
- **Windup** (short drop step / nose over toes)
- **Pivot** (Controlled)
- **Balance** (Bring knee toward back shoulder)
- **Stride** (Keep heel toward catcher, work toe to heel)
- **Follow through** (Balanced, back shoulder to catcher)

THE PATHOLOGY OF PITCHING

Researchers at the American Sports Medicine Institute broke down the fastball pitches of healthy, elite pitchers frame-by-frame to study the effect of pitching on the human arm. Their conclusion: Unless it's done very carefully, a major-league baseball will eventually spell major league arm trouble.



Critical instant Arm acceleration

The outer ligaments of the elbow absorb much of the energy as the arm decelerates from the throwing motion. The shoulder takes punishment here too, as the "hair" in the pitcher's ball-and-socket joint — slams forward and outwards.

The total pulling force can add up to as much as 125% of the pitcher's body weight, or 700 pounds or more of pull on the arm.

Centrifugal force is liberally trying to pull the pitcher's arm out of its socket. The pitcher's muscles respond by pulling back with all their strength.

Both the elbow and the shoulder twist backward about as far as they can go, and the momentum tries to push them even farther.

The insula ligament of the elbow and the tendons and cartilage of the shoulder bear the brunt of the pitcher's effort as he begins to whip his arm forward.

The six stages of the pitching motion

The windup
Stress to the body is minimal as the pitcher coils his body, developing potential energy to propel the ball.

The stride
As the legs spread wide, the placement and rotation of the feet is critical; too "open" a stance can put undue stress on the arm.

Arm cocking
The arm assumes a 90-degree angle from the trunk; the elbow cock is to about 90 degrees as the trunk begins to rotate forward and the shoulder begins to rotate backward.

Arm extension
High velocity forces build up on first the elbow, and then the shoulder as the pitcher whips his arm forward to fire the ball toward the plate.

Follow-through
Stretching, compression and torque hammer the shoulder and the outer ligament of the elbow as the whipping arm reaches the end of its forward motion.

Follow-through
The trunk moves forward and down to help absorb the tremendous throwing energy. Maximum inward rotation of the throwing arm occurs here.

LOW STRESS

STRESSES BUILDING

MAXIMUM STRESS

SOURCE: American Sports Medicine Institute

WILLIAM WOOD | KEELY PEAR DEKALB



Niles West Baseball Offensive Skills



Offensive Philosophy

"Watch the Ball, Think Middle, and React"
"Work on your swing during drills, then simplify and hit"

Types of Swings

Long to short: This is when the hitter cast or goes around the ball.

Short to short: Hitter gets in the hitting zone quick, short, and comes out quick and short

Short to Long: Ideal swing plane, hitter gets into zone quick, short, and "stays" in the zone long.

Setup / Stance

Weight on balls of feet

Knees in between feet

Grip - relaxed

Bat - 45 degree angle

Hands - top hand thumb even with back shoulder

Elbows - front elbow down, back elbow 45 degrees

Be able to cover the plate

Tight lower half - loose top half

Load

In control - slow and easy

Negative movement - hands straight back / AVOID SHOULDER TURN

Lift your front leg - toe down first

Heels - plant / lift

Swing

Drive the hands and hips after weight transfer

Hands inside/above the ball

Barrel above your hands

Knob to the ball

Bat Lag

Whip action - drive through the ball

Contact - palm up / palm down, firm front side

Do not roll over until you are through the ball

Hitting Zones - right / middle / left

Finish

Two hands on the bat

Back eye on the ball

Offensive / Hitting Drills

Dry Run Drills

- **1-6 Commands (Emphasis on 6 key points to the swing) / or 1-2 Commands (1-2-Swing)**
 - Load
 - Toe
 - Plant / Lift or knee drive (weight transfer)
 - Hands / Hips / Bat Lag (connection)
 - Contact / Through the ball
 - Finish
- **Lower Half**
 - Place hands on hips
 - Land on toe
 - Work: plant and lift
 - Firm front side on contact
- **Weighted bat / light bat / regular bat**
 - 10 dry swings with each to increase bat speed (work hitting zones)
- **Fence Drills**
 - Stand facing fence: knob of bat against hip / to stay inside the ball
 - Stand w/ side against the fence: 1 ft. away / to work on not dropping barrel
- **2 ball drill**
 - To work on back elbow staying in
 - Not rotating shoulders
 - See coach for demonstration

Tee Drills

- Work each hitting zone / different heights
- 40% away / 40% middle / 20% in
- Work the top inside of the ball
- Long tee drill – to view the flight of the ball
- High Tee – to work staying inside the ball

Flips

- Work each hitting zone / different heights
- 40% away / 40% middle / 20% in
- Work the top inside of the ball
- Bottom hand – to increase quickness
- Top hand – work staying above the ball
- 2 hands – work your mechanics
- Speed Bat – 3 in row from the 2 position / works on firm front side extension

Drop Drill

- See coach for demonstration

Short Toss (Under-hand / Over-hand)

- 10-20 ft away behind L screen
- Work situational hitting
- Separate your swing in 2 parts / toe down, hands back
- 40% away / 40% middle / 20% in
- Bad ball drill

Batting Practice

- Situational Hitting (Sacrifice Bunt, hit and run, move the runner, positive counts, negative counts)

Bunting

- Sacrifice Bunting**
- Drag Bunting**
- Push Bunting**

Base Running

1. Base running starts with the crack of the bat
2. Good hitting mechanics allow a player to get a better jump out of the batter's box
3. 1st step out of the batter's box
4. 1st initial steps out of the batter's box
5. Picking up the flight of the ball
6. Running in a straight line to first base
7. Stay on the baseline when the ball is fielded in front of the plate
8. The base runner should be responsible for himself if the ball is hit from the shortstop to the right field line
9. The base runner will pick up the 1st base coach when the ball is hit to the 3rd base side of shortstop
10. 1st coach's signs to the batter-runner (*see signs*)
11. The batter-runner should never leap for 1st base
12. The runner should attempt to touch the front of first base
13. The runner watch the base as they touch the base
14. The runner must run full speed straight through first base
15. The runner must watch the first baseman's feet as he approaches 1B
16. The runner should be responsible for any overthrow at 1B
17. The batter-runner must run full speed to 1B on every play
18. Stretching a sure single into a double
19. The runner must evaluate the entire situation before attempting to advance
20. Know your speed
21. The score of the game
22. Number of outs
23. Hitter at the plate
24. Ability of the defensive player
25. The distance of the turn at 1B
26. Returning to 1B on the turn
27. Outfield throwing behind the runner
28. Fly ball to the outfield
29. Decoying infield or catcher
30. Head first slide
31. Using the coach (*see signs*)
32. Trick plays
33. Lead offs/stance(primary and secondary)
34. Returning to 1B
35. Pitchers pick off moves
 - Right Hander
 - watch the heels
 - Left Hander
 - unnatural leg kick / lead leg swing / head and eyes / pivot leg bend / hands / Shoulders / Tempo