



Coach Steve's Softball Training Modules for Primary & Middle School Players

Module 1	The Game
Module 2	Batting
Module 3	Base Running
Module 4	Fielding & Throwing
Module 5	Pitching & Catching
Module 6	Physical Conditioning
Module 7	Situational Play
	7.1 Base Running
	7.2 Ground Balls
	7.3 Fly Balls & Line Drives
	7.4 Special Situations
Module 8	Softball Strategy
Module 9	Video Links

February 2018

Softball Training Modules for Primary & Middle School Players

4. Fielding & Throwing

Fielding Team Players use Physical and Decision Making Skills on every Play in Softball

Decision Making Skills

- Before each play - Team Captain calls target base or bases for defensive “Outs” or to restrict the Runners from “Advancing”
- Each Fielder mentally
 - prepares to Toss or Throw to the target bases before each pitch
 - notes which base(s) are a potential “Double Play” in the event of a caught Fly Ball or Line Drive

Physical (Ball Handling) Skills

- Before the start of each Inning in the Field the Infield and Outfield Vice-Captains warm-up their units to practice:
 - Fielding Ground Balls
 - Catching Fly Balls (and Line Drives)
 - Overhand Throws
 - Underhand Tosses (also called “Flips”)

Physical Ball Handling Skills used by Fielding Team (Two or three Fielders A, B & C)

- **Force-Out (Ground Balls)** - Field, Throw or Toss (Fielder A)
& Catch (Fielder B)
 - Double Play Outs - Throw or Toss (B) & Catch (C)
- **Fly-Ball Outs** - Catch (A)
 - Double Play Outs - Throw or Toss (A) & Catch (B)
- **Tag-Outs** - Throw (A) & Catch, Tag-Out (B)
 - Run-Down Outs - Throw & Back-up (A);
- (B) Catch, Run-down. Tag-out or Throw to (C)
- And repeat

*Goals: Middle School Players develop Fielding & Throwing Skills (Sections 4.1 to 4.4)
Senior School Players also develop Advanced Skills (4.5 to 4.7)*

4.1 Tosses & Throwing

On almost every play in Softball, two or more Players on the Fielding team throw (or Toss) and catch the Ball. The most common play is for an infielder to throw the ball to the 1st Baseman for a Force-Out at 1st Base. Force-Out plays also occur at 2nd, 3rd and Home Plate and other defensive plays also require consistent Throws and Catches of the Ball.

Throwing accuracy comes about through the following techniques

- **“Grip”** the Ball with Fingertips in the **“4-Seam”** or **“C-Grip”**
- Body aligned perpendicular (sideways) to the Target
- Throwing arm behind head & Ball facing away from the Target
- Step front foot towards and with eyes fixed on the Target
- Bring arm forward, push off back foot & rotate core towards Target
- Release the Ball at the top of the Throwing arc.
- Follow through with throwing arm towards the target

Underhand Tosses (or Flips) accuracy is achieved by:

- Running or moving towards the target
- Gently raise throwing hand to point at target Fielder’s Head height &
- Release the ball and maintain hand pointing and the target



Fielder readies to Throw Ball

Notes:

**Body perpendicular to Target
Throwing arm behind head,
Ball facing away from the Target
4-seam fingertip “C” Grip**

The video link “Throwing a Softball” describes Throwing techniques used for infield distances of between 10 and 22 metres while the “Outfield Throws” link describes techniques to achieve throws of 25 metres or more. Underhand Tosses (or “Flips”) are used for short distances between 5 & 10 metres

[Throwing a Softball](#)

[Outfield Throws](#)

[Underhand Toss](#)

4.1 Tosses & Throwing (cont'd)

Tosses



- 1) 2nd Baseman Tosses to 1st Base
- 2) Shortstop Tosses for the Force-Out at 2nd

Notes (for both cases):

Ball Tossed between waist & Chest height

**Fielder moving towards the Target
Eyes on the Target**

Tossing Hand follows through to the Target

Throws



- 1) 3rd Baseman Throws to 1st Base
- 2) Outfielder Throws to Infielder

Notes:

Both Players moving towards their targets

Pushing off with their Right Foot & Landing on their Left Foot

Eyes on the Target

**Player 1) releasing ball at the top Of his arm over-arm action
With ball held in his fingertips**

Player 2) throwing arm following through towards his target

4.2 Catching (Baseball Throws)

A “Force-Out” usually involves one Fielder Catching a Ball Thrown by his team-mate.

Things to remember when Catching a Throw:

- Face the Thrower standing in balanced athletic position
- Hold Glove away from the body at chest height,
- Arms at right angles to form a “W” to create a Throwing Target
- Hands ready to make a “Two-Hand” Catch
- Pull Glove, Ball & Throwing Hand towards the body to secure the Throw



2nd Baseman Catching Throw from 3rd

Notes:

**2nd Baseman faces Thrower,
Hand & Glove ready to make
A 2-Hand Catch**

**Left Foot on the Bag to make the
Force-Out at 2nd Base**

Infielders should perform the “Clock” drill described in the “Catching a Softball Throw” video to practice catching off-Target Throws

[**Catching a Softball Throw**](#)

All Fielders should perform the “Quick Feet” drill describe in the video below to improve their ball handling skills when transitioning from a Catch to a Throw

[**Catching & Throwing "Quick Feet" Drill**](#)

Proper positioning to Catch Throws for Force-Outs at First Base is reviewed below:

[**How to Play First Base**](#)

4.3 Fielding Ground Balls

Proper technique for Fielding Ground Balls is similar to Catching Throws

- Move to be in Line of the Ball Flight
- Deep knee bend crouch and body core leans forward
 - glove fingers touch the ground in the 6 o'clock position
 - Eye on the ball,
 - Throwing Hand in the "SNAP" position for a 2-handed Catch
- Pull Ball, Glove and Throwing hand into the body - "Soft-Hands"



**Ground Ball about
15 cm above ground**

Notes

**Player moving to his left to be
in Line of the Ball Flight**

Eye on the Ball

**Glove touches ground and in upright
6 o'clock position**

**and Right Hand in "SNAP" position to
make the 2-handed Catch**

Steps to successfully Field Infield Ground Balls is demonstrated in the video below:

[Fielding Infield Ground Balls](#)

The same techniques are used to field Ground Balls in the Outfield **EXCEPT** that Outfielders should use the "Knee Crouch" position to Catch the Ball

[Fielding Outfield Ground Balls](#)

4.4 Catching Fly Balls

The ideal Technique for catching Fly Balls involves positioning oneself so that the Ball is in front of the Outfielder at the point the Catch is made. The sequence of baseball moves is:

- Always Drop (Step Back) when the Batter hits a Fly Ball
- Track the Ball and RUN to be in “Line with the Ball”
- Eyes on the Ball, Glove and Throwing Hand at the 12 o’clock “SNAP” position
- Secure the Ball with a 2-Handed Catch



Standing Catch of High Fly Ball

Notes:

Player in Line with BallFlight

Eyes on the Ball

Glove and Throwing Hand in Upright “CLAP” Position

Glove and Throwing Above Forehead Ready to pull the ball towards his chest in a “Soft Catch”

Steps to successfully Catch Fly Balls is demonstrated in the video below:

[**Catching Fly Balls**](#)

Fielders often have to run to Catch a Fly Ball. This is called “Tracking” the Fly Ball

[**Tracking Outfield Fly Balls**](#)

Advanced Play for Senior School Players

4.5 Fielding on the Backhand

The technique to field ground balls or catch line drives on the backhand:

- Glove between 6 and 10 o'clock, forward foot & elbow points to the ball
- Glove held away from the body towards the ball
- Body crouched down, either leg forward, knees bent
- Stand up into a throwing position and bring glove and throwing hands together at the same time



Backhand Catch by 3rd Baseman

Notes:

3rd Baseman low in one knee crouch
With "Throwing Leg" forward

Glove pointed downwards in 6
o'clock

Forward from the Body & opposite
"Throwing Leg" Foot

Elbow towards the Ball line of flight



Backhand Catch by Shortstop 3rd

Notes:

Shortstop low in "Running" knee
crouch

With "Glove Leg" forward

Glove pointed downwards in 6
o'clock

Forward from the Body & opposite
in front of "Glove Leg" Foot

Elbow towards the Ball line of flight

Fielder has 0.5 metres of extra reach when Fielding off the "Glove Leg"

[Fielding on the Backhand](#)

4.6 Tag-Out & Force-Out Plays

A Base Runner must stay in the Base Path when running to the next base (see Section 3.4).
A Fielder can Tag-Out or Force-Out a Runner trying to reach the next base.



Base Runner Tagged-Out at 2nd

Notes:

**Fielder's Eyes and Glove focus on
Runner's Body Core
between waist & chest**

**Runner must stay on the
Base-line between 1st & 2nd Base
When trying to avoid a Tag-Out**



Base Runner Forced Out at 2nd Base

Notes:

**Shortstop STEPS on 2nd Base for
The FORCE OUT and Throws to
1st Base for a Double Play**

**Runner tries to DISTRACT
the Fielder with a high profile
(Hands in the Air) Foot First Slide**

The "Force-Out Explained" video below briefly describes both Tag-outs and Force-Out Plays.

The "Backhand Catch & Double Play" video shows these skills at a major league baseball game.

[Force-Outs Explained](#)

[Backhand Catch & Double Play](#)

4.7 Run-Downs

A Run-Down occurs when a Runner is trapped between two Bases by two or more Fielders who are trying to Tag-Out the Runner.

- The Runner must stay on the Base-Path
- Correct technique for the Fielders to achieve a “One-Throw Run-down is:
 - To chase the Runner as fast as possible towards a Fielding Team-mate
 - Both Fielders position themselves on the same side of the Base Path
 - Hold the ball in Throwing position
 - Overhand flip to Team-mate Fielder when Runner in about 5 metres from the base he is trying to reach
 - Team-mate catches the ball and runs to Tag-Out the Base Runner

The “Run-Down Out” video below illustrates correct Run-Down techniques.

[The Run Down Out](#)

4.8 Cut-off Throws from the Outfield

When a ball is hit deep to the Outfield, the Fielding team uses a Cut-Off Man to limit runners from advancing more than one base on the play. Typically the Cut-Off Man is:

- Shortstop for balls hit towards left field; 2nd Baseman covers 2nd Base
- 2nd Baseman for balls hit towards right field; Shortstop covers 2nd Base
- When one is the Cut-Off Man the other covers 2nd Base

The Cut-Off Man positions himself between the Outfielder and the intended target base

- No Runners on Base, Target Base is 2nd Base
- Runner on 1st Base, Target Base is 3rd Base
- Runner on 2nd Base, Target Base is Home Plate but Cut-Off man
 - LOOKS to see if another Runners might be caught in a Run-Down

[Throwing to the Cut-Off Man](#)