

MIDDLE INFIELD PLAY and DRILLS

David Deiros—Head Softball Coach
Florida Gulf Coast University
DDeiros@fgcu.edu 239-590-7052

Philosophy

- QB of your defense
- It's all about the FEET!!
- Make 100% of the routine plays
- One-one thousand, two-one thousand, three-one thousand!! Plenty of time!!
- Have a plan prior to each pitch
- COMMUNICATION—relay signs to OF, coverages
- Pitch location and type will dictate tendency and positioning.
- Responsibilities:
 1. Each must cover 2B and corner base
 2. Cuts and Relays
 3. Steal Coverage/Pickoffs/1st and 3rd Defense
 4. Slappers/Bunt-base coverage/double plays
 5. Short outfielder

Goals

- Range—Depth then forward—especially towards 2B—CONES!!
- Consistency with glove—GOLDEN TRIANGLE/Softhands
- Backhands and forehands—ONE Hand
- EVERY throw—flips/quick toss/on the run/across body/reverse pivot
- Control Ball Direction

Practice Organization

- Split your defensive practice into three parts:
 1. Pre-practice—During or after stretch/warmup and before throwing—REPS, REPS, REPS!!
 2. Individual—Incorporate specific fielding skills with appropriate throws.—REPS, REPS, REPS!!
 3. Team—Game Situations—use live runners as often as possible and reinforce simulations in which the coach hits as often as possible with live pitching and hitting—INTENSITY/EXECUTION—KEEP SCORE!!
- Reinforce proper throwing mechanics
- Incorporate practice of infield skills during throwing

Pre-Practice

- Pre-pitch communication/reads
- Ready Positions/Lines for Corner Infielders vs. Middle Infielders
- Approaches to Balls—Charging/Crossovers/Dropsteps--CONES
- Footwork on Covering Bases/Tags/Force outs/Pivots

Individual

- Partner Drills—Part of throwing daily—work on specific skill
 - Backhand Forehand Short Hops Force outs
 - Tags Quick Release Relays On the Run
 - Fungoes/Tees/Soft Toss—As often as possible, have the players do the hitting—if necessary, reposition your fielders and have your hitters hit to the same location each time. Advantages—frees coach to truly evaluate performance of task
 - Diving Practice (“Get Dirty”).
 - Line Drills—Anywhere from 2 to 5 points on a line will work depending on the drill.
 - Relay Drill Rundown Throws
 - Fielding Bunts Throws on the Run
 - Square Drill—Any throw that needs to be made can be down in a square drill.
 - Flips Pivots Pop Fly Communication
 - Mass Drill—Two Hitters hit simultaneously to different fielders who have specific throws to make. Each coach goes through a bucket at a time—put a bucket at each receiver’s base.
 - Ex. 1: Coach 1 hits to 3B who throws to 1st
Coach 2 hits to 2B who works on DP with SS
 - Ex. 2: Coach 1 hits to 3B who works on DP with 2B
Coach 2 hits to SS who throws to 1st.
- **Many possible combinations—lots of reps

Team Drills

- “Hubby/Wife”—All Triangles—Emphasize Communication
- Situations with baserunners—Coach Hit--vary baserunners, outs, lead vs. behind, inning.
- 3 or 4 way scrimmages
- 21 Outs