



FIRST BASE



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INTRODUCTION

First base is the center of activity and sees a lot of action! A great first baseman has to be comfortable working hard and cannot be afraid of the ball. While the first base position does not have to be held by someone who is an especially fast runner, he must be able to get back to the base quickly and be good with the glove.

A dedicated and determined first baseman is willing to put in the effort to perfect his fielding skills. In this eBook, we'll go through 8 fun and effective first base drills that you can perform as part of a team practice, for individual or small group workouts, or in the back yard at home.

If you'd like to see all these drills performed live with step by step video instructions, you can upgrade to include the Ultimate Fielding Drills Online Video Clinic by going here:

<http://baseball-practice-plans.com/p/upgrade-fielding>

FIRST BASE DRILLS

Drills are an excellent way to break down the basic fundamentals of fielding. They help build game skills and hone a player's technique. Drills also help set a good tempo for the rest of practice or an upcoming game.

Drill #1: Bad Throw Up-the-Line Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill replicates a game time situation in which the first baseman must catch a bad throw up the first base line and tag out the runner.

Setup: The player should be in position at first base. The coach will be standing halfway between the mound and first base, throwing balls to the player. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. *The coach throws to the first baseman.*
2. *The player catches the ball and turns to swipe-tag the baserunner's back.*
 - Swipe-tag is to slap the glove against the runner's back so the ball is not jarred loose from the glove.
 - Run parallel to the foul line when coming off of the bag. Do not cross into the path of the baserunner.
3. *Throw the ball back to the coach and set up for another repetition or return to the line.*



Swipe-Tag Simulation without a Baserunner

Coaching Tips:

- This drill can be performed with or without a baserunner. Including a baserunner will make the drill feel more game-like.
- Remind players not to hit a runner's helmet when tagging, this will only pop the ball out of his glove.

Drill #2: Bad Throw Overhead Drill

Complete 25 repetitions

Purpose: This drill focuses on catching an overhead throw and landing properly on the base.

Setup: The player should be in his position at first base. The coach will be standing halfway between the mound and first base, throwing balls to the player. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. Balls and gloves are required.



Overhead Drill

Execution:

1. *The coach throws an overhead ball to the first baseman.*
2. *The player jumps up to catch the ball and comes down with his heels on the edge of the bag.*
 - Avoid landing on the middle of the bag to avoid a collision with a baserunner.
3. *The player throws the ball back to the coach.*



Landing on the Edge of the Base

Coaching Tips:

- Emphasize how important it is to land on the edge of the bag as opposed to the middle. Colliding with a baserunner will result in injury.

Drill #3: Holding Runners on Base Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill practices the positions required to hold a man on first base effectively.

Setup: The player should be in his position at first base. The coach will be standing nearby to give commands. Only a glove is required.

Execution:

1. *The coach calls "Target."*
2. *The player holds a Ready Position with his feet spread, parallel to the first base line.*
 - Hold your hands up showing a "target box" to the pitcher.
3. *The coach calls "Go."*
4. *The player moves quickly into a Fielding Position by taking two long sliding steps toward second base.*
5. *The player returns to first to set up again.*



Ready Position



Fielding Position

Coaching Tips:

- The pitcher is much more likely to accurately throw the ball to the first baseman if he has a target to aim for. Remind the first baseman to always keep his glove up for the pitcher.

Drill #4: Cutoff Technique Drill

Complete 5 repetitions from each of the four outfield positions

Purpose: This drill covers the proper catching and throwing technique that is needed to maximize the first baseman's throwing velocity and help get rid of the ball faster in a cutoff situation.

Setup: The player should be in his position at first base. The coach will be standing in the outfield throwing balls to the player. Another player or catcher can be at home plate. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. *The player is in position at first base, holding up a target box.*
 - Always show a target to the throwing player so that he knows who to throw the ball to.
2. *The coach throws to the first baseman.*
 - Practice right field, right center field, center field and left center field cut-offs.
3. *The player begins to turn his body into the Throwing Position as the throw arrives.*
 - If his body is not turned, the baserunner will gain two extra steps (six feet) while the first baseman waits for the catch and then repositions himself to make the throw.

4. *The player smoothly transitions from the catch to the throw to home plate.*



Target Box



Catch and Turn



Throw to Home

Coaching Tips:

- The first baseman must be able to read game situations and react accordingly.
- A good rule for high school and up: the first baseman is responsible for covering cutoffs from the right field line to halfway between second and third base.
- It's important that a first baseman knows how far each outfielder can throw so that he can position himself accordingly.

Drill #5: Double-Play Lead Throw Drill

Complete 10 repetitions

Purpose: This drill simulates a lead throw for the double play.

Setup: The player should be in his position at first base. The coach will be hitting balls from home plate. Another player or net can be set up at second base. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. A bat, balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. *The player is holding a Ready Position at first base.*
2. *The coach hits a ball to the first baseman.*
3. *The player catches the ball, turns and throws to second base using good fielding and throwing techniques.*
 - He turns his back either to the infield or outfield when opening up to throw.

4. *The player quickly gets back to first base, with his foot on the edge of the bag, and holds the Ready Position again.*

Coaching Tips:

- On a bobble or an error on a potential double-play, focus on getting the runner rather than making the double-play.
- Remind players to always be sure of the first out on a double-play.

Drill #6: Flip to Pitcher Drill

Complete 15 repetitions

Purpose: This drill focuses on flipping the ball to the pitcher when he is covering first base.

Setup: The player should be in his position at first base. The coach will be standing at the mound (or closer), throwing balls to the player. The pitcher (or other player) will be running from the mound to cover first base. This drill can be run through rotations with multiple players. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

1. *The first baseman is holding a Ready Position at first base.*
2. *The coach throws a ground ball to the first baseman.*
3. *He catches the ball.*
4. *The first baseman flips the ball to the pitcher as he is running to first base.*
 - Flip by leading with the right foot, stiffening the wrist and “pushing” the ball to the pitcher.



Catching the Ball



Flipping to Pitcher



Pitcher Crosses First Base

Coaching Tips:

- It is important to practice this drill in anticipation of a game situation in which the pitcher is either closer to first or is running fast enough that he will make it to the plate before the baseman can.

Drill #7: Pick-Off Play Drill

Complete 10 repetitions of each version

Purpose: This drill practices two different pick-off plays. These are important drills for the first baseman and pitcher to practice on a regular basis.

Setup: The player should be in his position at first base. The pitcher will be on the mound. For a more game-like simulation, have another player act as a baserunner. Balls and gloves are required.

Execution:

Daylight Pick-Off Play – used with overly aggressive baserunners.

1. *The first baseman is standing behind the baserunner so the runner cannot see what he is doing.*
2. *The first baseman communicates to the pitcher*

Pick-Off Play

Communicates and Breaks for Bag



Makes the Catch



Tags the Base

that the pick-off play is on. He only does this if he thinks he can beat the baserunner to the plate.

3. The first baseman breaks to the bag and the pitcher throws to him.

4. The first baseman tags the runner.

Timing Pick-Off Play

1. The first baseman and the pitcher communicate that the timing pick-off play is on.

2. The pitcher counts two seconds and throws. At the same time, the first baseman counts one second and breaks to the bag to receive the throw.

- First baseman must be at the bag when the pitcher turns to throw.

3. The first baseman catches the ball and tags the runner.

Coaching Tips:

- Use a few different pick-off plays. Make sure each one can be performed well.
- Baseball is a game of communication. The pitcher and first baseman must have effective communication strategies to complete successful pick-off plays.

A first baseman must be able to execute routine plays perfectly every time. This is only achieved through hard work and extra effort. These eight drills will perfect a first baseman's timing and technique so that he can understand and handle any game-time situation.

Never stop practicing! Be able to make the routine play EVERY time.

Thanks for reading this report! If you'd like to see my complete collection of drills and online clinics, please visit: <http://www.coachkennybuford.com/>

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