

Drill No.1: Running Lap Tosses

Purpose: To develop catching and throwing skills while conditioning. This drill uses time efficiently.

Procedure: Partners are about six feet apart and play catch as they run using underhand tosses. They can run a full lap or in a straight line down the field and back. The drill develops players' catching and throwing skills and takes their minds off running.

Drill No.2: Merry-Go-Round

Purpose: For infielders to warm up or work on conditioning while fielding ground balls.

Procedure: Players form two fielding lines at opposite corners of the infield; one to the left of second base and one at home. Be careful that the players in line at second don't trip over the base.

Two hitters hit or throw from the pitching circle area, one to each line.

Players field and run to the end of the opposite line. Hitters hit ground balls, fly balls, range balls, line drives, and scoops.

Players return the ball to their hitter or place it in a bucket at the line they are running to. Hitters should have a bucket of extra balls to replace balls that fielders miss so the drill can be done at a steady pace.

Drill No.3: Weave Drill

Purpose: To improve softball conditioning for outfielders while catching fly balls.

Procedure: Four players start in a line in left field. A tosser throws a ball to the first player, who fields and throws the ball back to the tosser and then runs toward center field to catch another ball thrown by the same person. The fielder returns that ball to another tosser at second base, who repeats the sequence as the fielder continues to run toward right field.

A third thrower at first base repeats the sequence. Fielders wait in right field and then repeat the drill going the other way. This is a good drill for all players.

Drill No.4: Pitchers Field and Cover First

Purpose: To practice fielding all types of balls after delivering a pitch. This is an excellent conditioning drill as well.

Procedure: The drill works best with at least three pitchers, a catcher, and a hitter. If you don't have three pitchers, another player may play first and pitchers rotate only on the mound.

Pitchers form a single-file line at the mound, and one pitcher is at first to catch the throw. The pitcher pitches the ball to the catcher, and the hitter hits a ground ball back to the pitcher for fielding practice. The pitcher fields, throws to first, and then rotates to first to receive the throw from the next pitcher. After catching at first, the receiver rotates to the end of the fielding line.

Vary the type of balls hit, hitting to each side of the pitcher and bunting and slapping as well. Include a sequence of having pitchers look imaginary runners back before making the throw.

Drill No.5: Random-Ball Conditioning

Purpose: To practice throws to bases and improve softball conditioning for catchers.

Procedure: Randomly place six to eight balls in front of home. From the squat position the catcher explodes and throws to a receiver at the base, hustles back into catching position, and continues until all of the balls have been thrown. Repeat the drill with the catcher throwing to a different base.

STAR DRILL:

Have the girls line-up at the tips of a pentagram (5-point star). The lines are equally placed approximately at the positions of Short Stop, 2nd Base, 1st Base, 3rd Base, and Catcher (home plate). Time the girls each week to mark their improvement and error reduction to complete the drill. The girls have to catch the softball and throw it to the next station and hustle to the end of that line or they might be in the middle of the next throw (incentive to hustle). The order of the stations are as follows: SS, 1B, 3B, 2B, Home, and back to SS.

The girls must go through each station (star point) until the girl that started the drill at SS catches the last ball at SS. With our team of about 20 girls, we can get through this softball drill as fast as 90 seconds or as slow as 4 minutes. If a girl misses the throw or drops a catch, she must hustle to get the ball, without help from her teammates, get back to her position before she can throw the ball to the next station. If there is an errant

throw, her teammates can “pick-her up” by digging the ball out of the dirt or jumping to catch it.

We do this drill 2-5 times depending on how well we are achieving our goals from the drill. We keep track of the lowest errors and times of the season to compare each week our improvement. It is a great drill to put “game like” pressures on the girls, and it allows them to build cohesiveness and trust.