

Dilworth Baseball Coaching Manual 2016



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Player Development Mission Statement

As baseball coaches we are committed to fair play, teaching and playing the game the right way! We will stay focused on fundamentals and sound play in every aspect of the game. We mentor, coach, we are fans, and friend's, we are committed to up-holding the integrity of the game. In short, we play baseball the Dilworth way all the time!

Use of this Manual

This manual is to accompany the instruction in the coach's clinic. Please feel free to add notes during the sessions. Dilworth's hope is that this manual will serve as a resource for you to return to during the course of the season.

Video References

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLccAuOKS9nMur1xY5IUZYBh4Zy-PIDrvO>

Dilworth Play Hard Index

- **Fight for 60 feet, 70 feet, or 90 feet all the time! Run the bases hard!**
- **Get on and off the field in a business-like manner!**
- **Turn Bases hard- think advance base, pressure defense!**
- **Outfielders should back up all plays. The ball should move all defensive players.
Don't be a spectator!**
- **Pitchers execute back-up responsibilities without fail!**
- **Round Bases hard- Think advance base, pressure the defense!**

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; An optimist sees the opportunity in

Chapter 1: Playing Catch

Playing catch and devoting time to this skill is the most important time during practice. Demand complete focus from your players and be prepared to give guided instruction and corrections on a daily basis.

Key coaching points when instructing your team or player during throwing progressions and drills.

- Create Rhythm in your players throwing motion. Smooth and on time with motion.
- Create good arm circles- Once the hands break the throw side thumb should work down and around to a solid arm slot.
- At the apex of the arm circle the ball should face the shortstop if a righty or second basemen for a lefty. This will help player create whip in throwing motion and place fingers correctly on top of ball.
- The elbow, hand, and shoulder should work together during throwing motion and should all be aligned at the apex of your arm circle.
- The most common area for a players release point is at the bill of the baseball cap. It's out front not behind the ears, teach extension, and full arm circle from players.
- Most players do not use their front side when throwing. The glove side arm should have the same actions as the throwing side arm. Teach extension with the front side as well.
- Players throwing shoulder should finish down and through the baseball. The player's glove should work into his or her arm pit. The player should imagine the throwing arm and hand drawing an "X" during the follow through.
- There are a ton of players that throw off their front side. Make sure players are properly loading their back leg to gain energy power when throwing and to use their lower half

when throwing taking stress off the throwing arm.

Chapter 1: Continued

Basic Throwing Progression: Throwing progression should be done during every practice and with purpose. Each progression or throwing drill requires a throwing partner.

Progression #1- Wrist Flicks (3-5 feet)

Progression #2- Ten Toes Stationary (5-10 feet)- Freeze/ Check/ Throw

Progression #3- Stationary Stride (10-12 feet)- Finish

Progression #4- Lead Ankle Throwing (15-20 feet)/ Catch and Exchange (Redirect)

Progression #5- Position Throwing (25-35 feet)/ Catch and Exchange (Redirect)

Progression #6- Cross Overs/ Step Behinds/ Crow Hops (35-90 feet)/ Catch and Exchange (Relay Throw) Players are trying to create carry and slight arc on throws.

Progression #7- Pull Downs (90-35 feet) Players start to pull down and finish throws, attempting to throw ball on the line.

Progression #8- Balls on the line (15-10 feet) Quick toss and Quick catch and exchange

Throwing and Catching Drills

Baseball Passes- Divide team into two groups. One coach will keep a group on the foul line and the other coach will take the next group 60 feet away. Players will start on the right of each coach so players don't run into each other. Player takes off on a fly route and catches tossed throw by the coach. After player catches ball he or she will go to opposite line to restart drill.

Around the Horn- Set your infield, catcher, 3B, SS, 2B, and 1st. Catcher starts drill by throwing ball to 3B, 3B to 2B, 2B to SS, SS to 1B, 1B to H. Fielders are concentrating on making clean catches by moving their feet to the ball. Also they are focused on making strong accurate throws at all times. Players should receive the baseball with both thumbs up ready to catch and exchange to redirect throw.

Baseball Relay Game- Set two balls at the wall in centerfield. Divide team into two separate teams. Each team should have equal outfielders, infielders, and catchers. 4 total players per line in the drill with two waiting at each point in the line. Outfielders will start at each individual cone, and the remaining infielders on the team will form a line back to home plate to set the relay order. This setup applies for the other team as well. On the coaches command both outfielders will race in the direction of the placed balls. Outfielders will retrieve ball and make a strong and accurate throw to the first Infielder in line. The infielder will then relay to the next fielder 30ft away, that fielder would then make a relay throw to the catcher. The first catcher to make a tag play wins. Teams have to complete the drill first and make the correct throws without missing cutoff men and in order. **(5 Reps)** This is a great team defense drill.

Box Drill- Form a box with thrown down bases about 15 ft apart. Gloves will be off. The coach can determine the direction of throws. Plays should concentrate on making proper catch with both hands then setting hips and shoulders in direction of intended throw to make an underhanded throw to the player at the next base. The player receiving should focus on meeting the ball at the plate with hands up and ready to catch. (double play ball) The coach can switch directions of throws

Target Toss for points-Fun game for the little guys. Once you reach the last stage of throwing progression. Have players line up 90 ft away from a bucket placed on its side. Players take turns throwing short hops into the bucket. Focus on shoulder turns and crow hops to make the throw. First to 3 wins.

Basic Infield and Outfield throwing to bases (Game Situations/Cut-Offs- Set team up in their IF and OF positions. Coach will teach the team where to throw and cut the ball when hit to the outfield. It's important that your middle infielders know where to be and your 3rd men and middle infielder covering 2b lines up relay and communicates if ball needs to be cut. Outfielder should be encouraged to throw through their cut-off man. The middle infielders should be coached to work GLOVESIDE (Shoulders turned and pointed toward intended target) and use momentum to cut or redirect throw. (3-4 throws to each base)

“In my mind, there has never been a direct correlation between statistics and the size of a player’s heart.”
“New Yankees Clubhouse Quote”

Chapter 2: Base-Running

Base-running is the most under taught fundamental in the game. This chapter will cover the basic coaching points to help you instruct your players on the base paths. Be prepared to devote (10-15) minutes daily to address this skill in your practice plan. The best way to integrate base running into practice is use it as a way to warm your team up. Instead of running basic poles or laps, you could have your team $\frac{3}{4}$ jog and work on home to first base drill progression. Below are the drill progressions that you can do with your team and add to your practice plan. Remember base running drills can be used for pre practice warm-ups and addressed again later in practice.

Home to 1st Base-Running Progression

#1- Contact Straight through the Bag: Picking up ball, hitting front of bag, breaking down, and returning to bag.

#2- Contact Ball through the Infield: Getting out of box, picking up ball, working down the line then creating a turn through first base, hitting front corner of the bag with an aggressive turn, spring return back to first base.

#3- Contact Sure Double: Getting out of the box, working 3 steps down the line, then creating a turn through first base advancing to second base.

First to Second Base-Running Progression

#1- Teach how to push off bag, Leads for (LL), How to get in Secondarys- Kids should have a basic understanding on how to hold a bag and create a secondary. Fundamentals vary for age groups.

#2- Spring Return- Player creates secondary and springs returns to first base. We are forming good habits by making our players aware of the baseball and hustling on every play.

#3- Ground Ball Read- Player creates secondary and anticipates contact. The key is to anticipate and gain momentum with your secondary.

#4- Dirt Ball Read LL Level- Player creates secondary and reads flight of thrown pitch down in the dirt. The key is to read ball flight and to trust your read. The catcher has to block the ball cleanly and recover to throw runner out. This becomes a low percentage play for any catcher when runner makes a good dirt ball read.

Chapter 2: Continued

Second to Third/ Score Progression

#1- React and Advance (Ball hit to right or left)-Create secondary and read hit ball to determine whether to advance or return to second base.

#2- Tag and Advance (Ball to right field), halfway for ball hit to (left), tag with the catch

#3- Score from Second-Create angle to score from second. The key is to create an angle to help you score while round third base.

Third to Home Base-Running Progression

#1- Tag and Advance- Sprint return to bag and find the ball. At the time of the catch push off and spring to home. Coaches can use commands to instruct runners when to tag and when to push off bag to score. “Tag, Go”!

#2- Contact Play- One out, runner breaks on contact. Sprint return on fly balls hit to the outfield.

#4- Pass Ball Read and React- Runner should be 2/3 down the line reacting on front foot and reading passed ball. The key is to have your front foot down so that momentum takes you towards home and runner gets the best jump as possible.

Base Coach Instruction

To keep it simple for your players base coaches should use simple instructions for running bases.

Below are basic calls for 1st and 3rd base coaches:

Run Through- Play is at 1B and the runner needs to beat the run. Coach yells “run through”

Player should hit front of bag and run to right of foul line

Turn and Look- Player touches front inside corner of bag and makes turn picking up the ball.

Player should run 15 ft off the bag and determine if advancing is possible.

Halfway- Player on base goes halfway up baseline towards next bag. Usually done on pop flies or with other runners on forcing defense to make a play. On pop flies player returns to bag or advances.

Run on Contact-Runner does not hesitate and runs as soon as ball is hit

Tag on Fly-Runner tags up on fly ball. Player does not leave bag on ball in the air. Is in position to push off as soon as catch is made.

Take 2- Player attempts 2B on well hit ball or overthrow.

Drills for Base-Running

Mass Base-running- Use drop down bases at the league distance 5 ft away from permanent bases. Divide your team into three groups to form three lines. The first progression is home to 1st, straight through the bag, the second progression is home to first round the bag after a single, the third progression is home to second working on a double. **Key coaching points**- Make sure runners peaks in after first three steps working down the line. Also instruct runners to hit the front of the bag and beak down looking right and turning left back to the bag. You can also use mass-base-running to working on base running actions from second base.

Four Base Base-Running (Drill) - Divide your team evenly at every base. Assign each base a base running action. H-1 (Straight Thru), 1st-2 (Hit and Run, or Ground Ball Read), 2nd-3 (Tag Play or contact play), 2nd-H (Score from Second), 3r-H (Contact Play or Tag Play) **5min Drill** Mix in Base-Running during B.P. to work off-live situations- Make sure your base-running with BP correlate with the BP rounds or hitting situations that you set up. Live base-running during ground ball scrimmage.

“In my mind, there has never been a direct correlation between statistics and the

Chapter 3: Fielding/ Infield Play

Infield play is highly important to any team's success. It's important that our fielder learn the proper fundamentals that are age appropriate. Below I have split the required fielding fundamentals for each level of Dilworth, LL baseball so that we have a natural teaching progression for the entire program.

T-Ball- Pocket to Pocket Drills, Master Two Basic Angles, Gain Basic Understanding on where to throw the ball.

Machine Pitch- Pocket to Pocket Drills, Master Three Basic Angles, Starts to display and can execute where to throw ball.

Minors- Pocket to Pocket Drills, Master Four Basic Angles, Double Play Execution, Good Understanding on where to throw ball.

Majors- Pocket to Pocket Drills, Master Five Basic Angles, Double Play Execution, 1st and 3rd and Bunt Coverage Execution.

Challenge- Pocket to Pocket Drills, Master Five Basic Angles, Double Play Execution, 1st and 3rd and Bunt Coverage Execution, Holding runners, day-light plays,

Senior League- Routine Angles, Master Five Basic Angles, Double Play Execution,

Pocket To Pocket Drills

The PTP drill is a stationary drill. Players will take proper infield form, coaches can exercise this drill at the start of all infield practices by pairing up teammates. Below is the drill progression

and descriptions for PTP routine. Each progression requires **(10-12 Reps)**.

Proper Infield Form: Feet spread shoulder length apart. Throwing side foot slightly back from glove side foot. Knees bent with backside out. Bend at the knees not at the back. We look for a flat back. Hands are out front. Head up watching ball to glove.

PTP #1- Glove extended and centered off glove side eye, partner should field ball with fingers underneath ball and out of their bodies. The fielder should focus on presenting an open pocket to the rolled ball.

PTP #2- Glove arm extended to the backhand side, partner should field ball with elbow raking through and finger tips down. The fielder should focus on presenting an open pocket and raking through rolled ball.

PTP #3- Glove extend to the glove side, partner should field ball out front on his glove side. The fielder should focus on presenting an open pocket and picking through the rolled ball.

PTP #4- PTP drill #1 is repeated, but during this progression players will receive a short hop tossed ball to the center of their body. Players should focus on an open pocket and working hands through short hopped toss.

PTP #5- PTP drill #2 is repeated, but this progression players will receive a short hop toss to the backhand side. Same glove fundamentals apply.

PTP #6- PTP drill #3 is repeated, but this progression players will receive a short hop toss to the glovehand side. Same glove fundamentals apply.

Routine Angles Progression

Coaching Points: We want players to understanding that they are fielding balls that are inside a railroad track. Imagine a ball being rolled in the middle of a train track. The objective is to work slightly outside of the tracks and the rolled ball. Players should take an aggressive 45 degree step toward the ball. Working right, left, right, left with this footwork to their fielding position. Proper footwork and fielding angles will be taught from this progression. Any ball hit to an infielders right, he or she needs to work beyond this ball and back through first base.

Routine Angles Progression Explained

Ball Right at You- The ball right at you is the most routine play. But we want our fielders to create a slight angle to gauge spin, speed, and hops.

Slight Right- This is the ball that is not a backhand but hit slightly to the fielder's right.

Backhand- Fielder has to take deep angle and work beyond ball, at best trying to work through ball. Front leg should be slight open so glove can work through.

Glove- Side- This ball is hit to the glove side, fielder should field and lead angle back to first base to finish throw. Fielder should keep ball on glove side eye to field this ball correctly.

Slow Roller- This is the top spin ball. Teach your fielders to attack when they read top spin. The fielder first needs to create an angle with his or her 45 degree step. Field ball of left step and catch and exchange with the right step, to gather to throw on the left step.

Infield Drills

Mass Infield (Dodger Drill)-Set your infielders up into their primary infield positons. This drill requires that you at least have two coaches hitting fungo. The first series has one coach hitting to third and second, while the other coach hits to shortstop and first base. You can start by hitting balls right at them, slight right, backhands, glove side, and slow roller. You can also set this drill up where your middle infield can work on double play exchanges and your third baseman can also work on double play exchanges. In this drill you can set up any infield situation that you need.

Box Drill- Set your infielders up in a box. 15 foot apart box for flip or 60ft for sharp throws. The coach will set the desired direction of the ball. The coach can have the infielders either flip in the desired direction or make strong sharp throws. The key here is to work on the infielders catch and exchange and popping their feet.

18 Outs- Set your infielder into their primary positions. Have two coaches hitting fungo. The coaches will alternate turns hitting balls to the infielders. The infielders will be set on the edge of the infield grass. The coach will hit a ground ball to a fielder and he has to field and throw ball back to a position called out by the coach. The goal is for your fielders to make no throwing and fielding errors until they get 18 outs. 18 outs are the number of outs that you need to complete six innings of play. This drill can also be done with players in each position outfield and infield. Coach calls out where runners are and outs. Players make play based on the situation.

Star Drill- Place one player at each infield position except for pitcher. This will be team one. The rest of your team should wear their helmets and form a line on the side of home plate. This will be team 2. The coach will hit the ball to any position, the runner will leave on contact and run until he reaches home. The fielder will field the ball and make a routine throw to 1B. Then 1B will throw to C, C to 3B, 3B to 2B to 1B back to C. If the runner makes it home before the throw that team gets 1 point. If the throw makes it before the runner that team is given 1 point. First team to 5 wins then switch.

Chapter 4: Fielding Outfield Play

Outfielders can play a huge part in any team's success. To become a great outfielder it requires attention to detail and a ton of practice. Dilworth outfielders must master the skill set of the position but also develop the will power and focus to stay alert and concentrate on the actions of the game. A Dilworth outfielder must be alert and anticipate too get a good jump on the ball and cover a lot of ground.

Footwork:

We teach a drop step aimed at getting outfielders to run a direct route to a fly ball. We want to eliminate a false step and gain as much ground as possible. This could be the difference between making a great catch, or not making a catch at all. Your first step should be explosive, decisive, and quick.

Route Running:

Once the drop step is completed in the direction you plan to go. Outfielders should turn and run. The chest and body should be turned in the direction you are running and your head should be turned to the ball. Drifting occurs when the chest and body are still angled or turned towards the ball. You will not be able to run as fast as you are capable when you are in this position.

Get behind Ball and Come through It to make the Catch:

Once an outfielder gets into his route, his objective is to get completely behind the ball and come through to make a catch. We want to create momentum behind our throw. Sprint to a spot and come through it to make a catch. Make it a habit! We want to catch all fly balls on our throwing side shoulder right at or above our forehead.

Communication:

Centerfielder has priority on all fly balls. We communicate in this manner when we want to make the catch. "Ball, Ball, Ball, the back-up outfielder should communicate "Take it, Take it, Take it"

Defensive Positioning:

Straight Up: CF- Plays to pull side, LF- between SS and 3rd, RF- Position over 2nd and 3rd

Pinch the Gaps: CF- Shades to pull side, LF- play in the gap, RF- play the gap

Play Opposite Field: CF- Shade to opposite side of hitter, LF- opposite of pull, RF- opposite of pull

Play to Pull- CF- Shade to pull side, LF- Play closer to line if on pull side, RF- play over 2nd and 3rd base

Ground Ball Skills to Master

- Flexed wrist when fielding ground balls in outfield.
- We want to field the ball with our glove foot forward and glove next to foot out front.
- If a ball is 6-8 steps away from you, create an angle to cut the ball off and come through it.
- SAFE Pick-Up- Fielder's throwing side knee is in the dirt. Glove out front. Goal is to knock ball down and prevent past balls. See illustration below.
- Master your crow hop- Refer to Clinic notes. Illustration below
- Inside Move- Refer to Clinic notes. Illustration below

- Reverse Pivot-Refer to Clinic notes. Illustration below.



Behind the ball and coming through



Drop Step and Turn for Ball Behind Outfielder



Crow Hop



Safe Pick-Up

Outfield Drills

Triangle Drill- Place 3 baseballs in a triangle in the area you would like to conduct the drill. Outfielders will center the top ball and assume a strong outfield stance. The outfielder should take a drop step over the ball behind them in the direction you want them to work. The keys are to gain ground over the back base-ball, turn and run, then come back through the ball to make the catch. This is a basic drill to address route running and footwork. This drill can be used to work on balls right at outfielders as well. (2-3 reps in all three directions)

Stationary Ground Ball Progression- Have outfielders partner up into pairs. The outfielder receiving the rolled ball will start in a stationary fielding position. Once the ball is rolled the outfielder will field ball correctly and gather into crow hop. The next progression is a ball rolled to the glove side. Outfielders again start in a stationary fielding position and can work on their inside move and reverse pivot. (10-15 reps per progression)

3-Ball Drill- Have your outfielders set up the basic triangle drills. During this drill we will have 3 balls placed in our hands. The fielder will drop and sprint in the direction commanded and will continue to run and catch the three balls that are being thrown from the coach. The key is for the outfielder to get used to turning and running without turning back to the ball. (2-3 reps in each direction)

Box Drill- Set up four cones and or four buckets. The coach will be positioned outside of the outlined box and behind the cones. The outfielders can start at either cone on the side the coach is set up. Coach will throw pop ups in direction of next cone. Player makes catch then moves to next cone.

Infield Outfield Triangle Communication- Divide teams into 3 lines. One line at CF, One at RF, One at 2^B. Coach stands on mound with a bucket of balls. Coach will throw into the center of the triangle encouraging players to call for the ball. Players makes the catch using appropriate terms (ball ball ball or take it take it take it) then switch lines. CF goes to 2B, 2B to RF and RF to CF

Chapter 5: Catching

Basic Stances

Signal Stance- Feet shoulder length apart, butt low and chest high, signal hand pressed firm against cup, glove hand resting out front and on the side of knee.

Primary Stance- Feet shoulder length apart, catcher should try to get low as possible and athletic. Catching arm should be relaxed with glove position out from with total range of motion

to make multiple catches. Chest should be slightly leaning forward but not too much that the catcher is off balance. Catchers have an option of placing throwing hand behind his ankle or catching mitt. The toes of the catcher should be slight open to help with comfort and balance.

Secondary Stance and Blocking- This stance is primarily use with runners on any base and when breaking balls are the expected pitch. This is the blocking stance that all catchers must get into to keep the base in front of the plate. The catcher must anticipate a pitch that is thrown downward and drop forward on his knees. The glove should be placed between the legs and lower body to cover the open space of the catchers blocking stance. Some people would say blocking the “five hole” similar to hockey. The catcher also has to be able to shift his weight right and left blocking the baseball back to the center of the plate.

Receiving Fundamentals- The key to receiving a pitched baseball is to have catchers with soft hands, flex elbow on the glove arm, and have the ability to beat the baseball to the spot. Teach your catchers that they should only look to frame pitches that are in the strike zone. Catchers can maximize their chances to catch the ball in the sweet spot of the glove by having their index finger pointed at “One O Clock”. On low pitches instruct your catchers to receive the ball with their thumb underneath the ball to keep low pitch in the strike zone. On pitches on the corners of the plate, teach your catchers a slight quarter turn. The key is to keep balls on the back inside of the glove and to maintain the impression that the ball is a strike to the umpire.

Video Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIJ7wJ14CA8>

Catching Con`t

Throw-Down Fundamentals- It’s key to understand that great throw down fundamentals happen from a secondary stance. The catcher should be in an athletic secondary stance, the butt should be parallel to the knees. The feet should be staggered in a manner where the right toe is centered to the left foot. With the feet staggered the catcher should be square to the pitcher. The feet should pop or shift to align the hips and shoulders square to second base. It’s important that the glove doesn’t snatch the ball, but be raked across the top of the chest with throwing hand placed into the glove. The catcher should feel as he is pulling a bow and arrow across his chest. A high exchange will help the catcher get the ball to his ear and make a snap- throw to any base on the field.

Catching Drills

Mirror Drill- Pair two catchers up facing each other. Choose one catcher to be the leader and the other one to be the mirror. The objective is for the mirror to mimic the leader as he blocks forwards, right, and left returning to the original secondary stance. (8-10 Reps)

Rapid Toss- The coach will have a bucket full of balls. He can place the balls in a manner that he or she can grab in a rapid manner. This is done by the coach feeding his catcher from his knees. The objective is to feed as many balls as possible in a rapid manner. The catcher should focus on soft hands, catching the ball out front, and being quick to beat the thrown balls to the catching spot. (10-12 Reps)

Basic Blocking- Have your catcher assume into a basic blocking position. The coach should position himself 15 feet directly in front of player with a full bucket of baseballs. The coach will then start to feed or throw short hop balls toward the center of the catcher chest. The key is to have your catcher develop a feel of blocking baseballs off his chest. You can also do this drill by having your catchers get into their secondary position and block the thrown short hop throws.

(10-12 Reps)

Block and Receive- Have your catchers assume a secondary position. Then throw a short hop throw that has to be blocked. Once the catcher has blocked the ball he should bounce up and retrieve the throw and position him-self square to the base intend to throw too. (5-8 Reps)

Chapter 6: Pitching

Step By Step Guide to Address Pitching Mechanics

- A. Addressing the Mound- The pitcher should set his feet at a 45 degree angle with his hips and shoulders square to the plate. Glove should be placed out front of the body anywhere from the chin to the belly button. When addressing the mound a pitcher should be aware of feet placement and being balanced.
- B. Starting the Pitching Motion-The pitcher should take his glove side foot and take a short step back (rock step) to start the wind-up. Glove out front chest high. The pitcher will take his other foot (pivot foot) and place it in front of the rubber.
- C. Leg Kick to Balance-Pitchers raises glove side knee to waist height. The foot should pointed down. At this point the in the delivery, the pitcher should be completely balanced and steady. The shoulders and the hips should be in line with the target. Hands stay in relation to where they started.
- D. Stride/Hand Break to Gun Sight L-Weight loaded on back thigh. Hand breaks from the glove. Hand goes down with thumb pointed down and creates a full arm circle. Pitcher pushes off his back foot and feet spread to beyond shoulder length. Pitchers front foot should land softly and should be slightly closed (45 degrees). Glove side reaching out to target. Ball in hand in facing slight towards SS for RHP and 2B for LHP. Back arm should be in L position.
- E. Reach and Pull- Pitcher drives back hip through. Glove collapses into chest/armpit. Ball Release Point is at the bill of the cap. Follow through is out front. Back foot comes up and around. Pitcher should draw an x on release with throwing hand finishing in opposite pocket.

USA Baseball Pitch Smart Program- Please visit PitchSmart.org, in this link you will be able to learn pitching guidelines, risk factors, and gain access to other related resources. It's important as coaches that we manage this area of the game correctly. This guide will help you develop pitch counts for your pitchers and educate you on proper rest recommendations. In short it's about proper arm care and keeping your pitchers healthy.

The Four Components to Handling and Managing Pitching Staffs

- The first component to handling your staff is having pitchers with individual talent, strengths and weaknesses, his or her mental toughness, and mound composure. As coaches we have to identify these traits. We also need to be aware that these traits can be developed and nurtured.
- The second component is mechanics. Anything that a pitcher or you as a coach need to accomplish on the mound will happen with solid mechanics. We understand that pitching mechanics center around a proper delivery that is balanced and utilizes the lower half and core.
- The third factor to managing your pitching staff stems around your pitchers ability to locate pitches. There is debate, but in LL, play, pitchers should be highly encouraged to master control of their fastball and change-up. They should develop, enhance, good feel of these two pitches. They should also be able to throw both pitches in all four areas of the strike zone with command.
 - Also related are pitch counts, numbers of pitchers on your team, and each pitchers endurance level.
 - Planning strategy, pitching individual hitters, or an entire batting order.
 - Always looking for ways to keep hitters off balance, and keeping hitters from getting the fat part of the barrel on the ball.
 - The last factor is your pitchers ability to change speeds. The key battle between hitter and pitcher is timing. Pitchers are trying to keep hitters off-balance, and hitters are always trying to be on time. A good fastball and change-up approach is a good combination for all levels of Dilworth LL.

Pitching Drills

These pitching drills will help you develop a strong foundation for your pitching staff. Below is a six step drill guide to help reinforce strong pitching habits and fundamentals.

Two Knee Drill- Two pitchers should be 15 feet apart and square to each other. The first pitcher making the throw will separate his hands and create an arm circle. As this occurs he will also turn his shoulders so that his glove hand is facing his throwing partner. His shoulders will be pointed to partner and his glove and throwing side will be in a gun sight L position. The pitcher will then start throwing motion pulling glove into arm pit, finishing throw out front to desired target. This drill is done at half speed. (10-12) reps

One Knee Drill- This drill is conducted at 20 feet apart. The pitchers should be on the glove side knee with stride leg bent toward opposite pitcher. The pitcher making the throw will also turn his shoulders so that his glove hand is facing his throwing partner. His shoulders will point to partner and his glove and throwing side will be in a gun sight L position. The pitcher will then start throwing motion pulling glove into arm pit, finishing throw out front to desired target. This drill is done at half speed. (10-12) reps

Stationary Stride “Hip Drill”- This drill is conducted at 30 feet apart. The pitcher should be in a stationary stride position facing the catcher. Glove is positioned out front like a professional. Then he will rock weight to the back leg while breaking his hands and creating an arm circle. Bring arm and shoulder through the proper throwing path, ending with correct follow-through. The backside foot does not come over in this drill, the back foot merely turns. (10-12) reps

Balance Point Drill “Coppe Drill”- The drill is conducted at 45 feet apart. With all the weight over the drive leg, the pitcher raises his stride leg (glove leg) until his thigh is parallel to the ground. The stride toe should be pointed down to allow the

pitcher to land on the front half of his foot. The pitcher focuses on the catcher's mitt, breaks his throwing hand down and out of the glove, and brings it quickly to a gun sight L position. At the same time, he strides toward the plate, transferring his weight from the back to the front leg, begins hip rotation, and brings his drive foot off the ground and forward as he moves his arm and shoulder through the proper throwing path. The pitcher should end with the proper follow through

Flat Ground/ Bullpen Sessions- Here is the chance to put steps 1 thorough 4 together. You can stop and check your pitcher at every point during the next few steps of live bullpens. (Flat grounds 10 feet of normal pitch distance, Bullpens can be thrown at normal distance required by LL.)

- Addressing the rubber and starting pitching delivery.
- Emphasis the balance point at the height of leg kick.
- Focus on release point (Out front by the bill of the cap)
- Throwing and Follow-Through

Chapter 7: Hitting

Dilworth Baseball Hitting Standards

1. **A Balanced and Workable Stance**

- a. All good hitters are balanced, centered, and squared. Great plate coverage is established in a hitter's set-up or stance.
- b. A balanced stance is solid, comfortable base that helps produce a tension free swing.
- c. Feet set apart, your knees flexed and your body bent slightly at the base. Young hitters should start square to the plate.
- d. Become Jello and Tension free.

2. **Rhythm, Weight Shift, and Timing**

- a. All hitters have some sort of movement in their stance. That movement is back to front with an effective weight shift. A positive move back toward the pitcher.
- b. Hitters should load and stride within the context of the pitchers rhythm as well. This is done with timing. A hitter must shift weight back in order to go forward this

- is done in rhythm with the pitcher.
- c. Store weight on the inside back thigh of the back leg, hitters should walk away with stride foot or stride to heel plant.
 - d. All good hitters get their front foot down on time.
3. **Walking Away or Striding with Front Foot Closed**
- a. A square front foot will help a hitter maintain balance throughout the swing.
 - b. A square front foot will enable a hitter to stay through the baseball.
 - c. A closed front foot will help the hitter stay square.
 - d. Pitfalls of an open stride foot: pulls hitter out of hitting zone, causes front side of body to pull off, affect's other parts of hitters swing.
4. **When Front foot Lands Bat has to be in Launching Position (Ready to Hit)**
- a. Knob of bat over the back foot at completion of the stride.
 - b. All hitters stride or walk away to swing. They never combine the stride and swing, also good hitters never come to a complete stop.
5. **Using Your Hands and Backside**
- a. Take the knob of the bat to the ball. Where ever the knob goes the bat head will follow. Taking the knob properly to the ball produces a short quick swing.
 - b. A solid bat path is forward, down, to the level of the ball.

Palm up/Palm down at contact, top hand stays on bat through extension.
 - c. Hitters should use the back hip not front hip. Hands and back hip work together.
 - d. The top hand should stay on top of the bottom hand from start to finish.
6. **Tension free Swing**
- a. Starts with good breathing, clear mind, and great grip.

- b. Causes head movement in wrong direction, creates inconsistent swing,
 - c. Creates unwanted thoughts and length in the swing.
7. **Pick Ball in Hand Early and Putting your Head Down During Swing**
- a. Great hitters pick the ball up as early as possible. In most cases in the pitchers hand. Hitters should try to form an imaginary box around the release point.
 - b. Having your head down helps the hitter track the ball at the moment of contact. Your head controls your spine making this one of the most important aspects of hitting.
 - c. Identify release points!
8. **Hit the Ball Where it's Pitched**
- a. It's hard to hit a ball where pitched if you hitter doesn't strike inside part of the ball.
 - b. A hitter's objective should be to hit to all fields. Don't pull away pitches, hit balls over the plate up the middle, it's ok to pull the inside pitch.
9. **Stay or Hit Through the Ball**
- a. A solid follow through is critical to driving balls to all parts of the field. This is done by hitters attacking the inside half of the baseball.
 - b. Pulling the front side of the body off the ball will create a cut or cause hitter's to pull of ball.
 - c. Good hitters follow the ball off the bat with their backside and hands during the follow through.
10. **Get on Top of the Ball**
- a. Attack the top inside half of the baseball to produce back spin. Backspin equals distance, Topspin equals no distance.
 - b. Good hitters think down- through the ball.
 - c. Laser eyes on the top half of the ball. Light is always on the top half of the ball. The bottom half of the ball is always in a shadow.

Hitting Drills

Basic Tee Work- During basic tee-work we are identifying or reinforces fundamentals. Off the tee a player should be able to hit the ball back through the middle with back spin. If this happens the swing is working the right way.

Front Toss- This drill is used to increase the accuracy of pitches and to shorten the distance. Fundamentals and reps are key points in this drill.

High Tee- High Tee is used to help a hitter understand the concept of getting on top of the ball. Try to place ball at the sternum of the hitter.

Two Tee- This drill focuses on getting hitter to come down to contact and eliminate swinging up on the ball and getting under. Place one tee with ball directly in front (1ft) of a second tee which is raised slightly higher than front tee. The batter should focus on clearing the rear tee to hit the ball off the front tee.

Load Stride Pause Drill- This drill is used to break the down the stance, load, stride, and swing phase of the swing. The command follows, load/stride- swing. This is a great drill to check balance and to correct key fundamentals. Good way of doing this drill is

off tee. Go through sequence and coach yells stop at different progressions to check on form.

Angle Toss- This drill is used to help a player understand the concept of staying inside of the ball. Set the L-screen at an angle so that the ball comes in at an angle forcing the hitting to stay inside of the ball.

Shore Drill- This drill has the hitter completely facing the feeder behind the L-screen. The hitter will square his shoulder to the

feeder and throw the hands directly back where the pitch came from. This drill will help hitters understand the proper use of their hands and extension.

4 on 4 on 4 Live Hitting- Break up teams into teams of 4 for full field scrimmage. Team 1 hits, Team 2 infield, Team 3 outfield. After 3 outs Team 1 to outfield, Team 3 to infield and Team 2 hits. Continue rotation.



Chapter 8: Offensive Fundamentals

Bunt Offense

EVERY PLAYER will be able to sacrifice bunt to the proper location.

Sacrifice Bunt Technique

Runner at 1B: **Bunt the ball toward the first baseman* - Start in your natural hitting stance and once the pitcher starts his motion - the hands will move to the proper location on the bat (top hand with a “pinching” action about 18” up the bat with the bottom hand around 6”) **RH hitter**, the chest will be facing the second baseman and the back foot will “pivot” around and the arms will be locked out with the bat eye high and stay low. (Photo 1). **LH hitter**, the chest will be facing the Short stop the back foot will pivot around and the left arm will be extended out with the right elbow next to the body and the bat eye high . **Use your legs to move up and down on the pitch.*

Runner at 2B or 1B & 2B: **Bunt the ball toward the third baseman* – Start in your natural hitting stance and once the pitcher starts his motion - the hands will move to the proper location on the bat (top hand with a “pinching” action about 18” up the bat with the bottom hand around 6”) **RH hitter**, the chest

will be facing the second baseman the back foot will “pivot” around and the right arm will be extended with the left elbow next to the body and the bat eye high ; LH hitter the chest will be facing the Short stop the back foot will pivot around and both arms will be locked out with the bat eye high.

Runner at 3B (safety squeeze): **Bunt the ball toward the first base line* – Start in your natural hitting stance and wait to the pitcher is at *release point* until you pivot around to bunt – the technique is the same as the sacrifice bunt to 1B for both RH and LH hitter.

Drag Bunt: **Bunt the ball down the 3B line* - Start in natural hitting stance and wait until the pitcher is at release point before pivoting around – RH hitter, lead with your hands and extend the right hand with the left elbow by the body and drop the right foot back to be in a position to run. LH hitter will have two options; 1) lead with your hands and back leg will step forward, lock both arms out as the shoulders are squared to the short stop; 2) Instead of stepping with the back leg, use the sacrifice technique but wait later before locking out arms. **Always bunt then run and put the ball as close to the foul line as possible.*

Push Bunt: **Bunt the ball to the right of the first baseman and toward the second baseman* - Start in natural hitting stance and wait until the pitcher is at release point before pivoting around – RH hitter, lead with your hands and have a slight bend with your arms and let the ball come to the plate before bunting with the bat eye high; LH hitter, lead with the hands and get bat angle set

by left arm extended and right arm next to body, let the ball come to the hitting zone and step toward the location you are attempting to bunt, keep the bat out front to make contact – this is a hard bunt and it needs to get by the pitcher.

Slash or fake bunt and hit: *You must hit the ball on the ground!
 Start in normal stance and when the pitcher starts his motion sell the bunt to get the corner infielders moving, once the pitcher has thrown **the ball, pull the bat back into hitting position and hit the ball on the ground to the 6 hole. On most bunt defenses the SS will go to the bag and the whole left side is open, right or left handed hitter.**

Sac to 1B (RH)
 (RH) bunt to 3B

Sac to 1B (LH)
 Drag (RH)
 Drag to 1B

Sac to 3B
 Step up



Drag to 3B

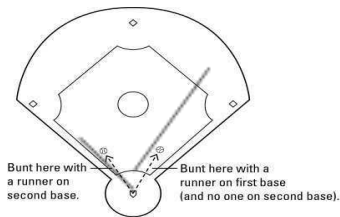


Push bunt



Sac bunt





Chapter 9: Managing your Team/ Simple Practice Plans

Below is the description on how you line-up should look based on the idea personal. This reference is only a guide and many factors truly go into making a line-up.

1. **Leadoff Hitter-** The leadoff hitter should be emotional and aggressive, yet patient. He must be a good starter. A good leadoff hitter doesn't strike out much and has a high on base %. The leadoff hitter is also a great baserunner with the ability to swipe bags.
2. **The Two Hole-** This hitter is great at contact and can bunt. Speed is a plus, but this hitter should be able to hit the ball to the right side of the field. This hitter should be able to work the count and allow the leadoff hitter to get favorable counts to swipe bags. This hitter should be a good two strike hitter and be mentally tough.
3. **Three Hole-** This is generally the best overall hitter on the team. This hitter should be the most consistent hitter in the line-up. This hitter should also have a mix of speed and power.
4. **Clean-Up-** This hitter has the ability to hit under pressure and with runners in scoring position. Coaches should look for a hitter that has the ability to hit for power and consistency.
5. **Five Hole-** This spot is normally reserved for the kid on the team with the most power. A player who bats in this spot should have hitting skills equal to or resembling those of the fourth hitter.
6. **Sixth Hitter-** Choose a hitter similar to the lead-off hitter or a batter with power. This choice should relate to the other skill sets that you have in the line-up. The coach's offensive approach should dictate this spot as well. Depending on what type of hitter that you have in this spot, you can play for a big inning or attempt to create runs.
7. **Hitters in the 7th, 8th, and 9th spots-** Generally the hitters that occupy these spots are the weaker hitters on the team. These hitters could lack ability or consistency, these players could also provide a defensive impact to the team. Personally I like having a second leadoff hitter in the nine hole that has the ability to flip the line-up.

Simple Practice Plans:

Example 1:

10 Mins- Dynamic Warm-Up- Baseball Passes Drill, or Base Running Drills

10 Mins-Throwing Progressions: See Chapter 1

30 Mins- Group Defense Drill- Split Infield/Outfield. Switch at 15 mins. See Infield Drills and Outfield Drills

15 Mins- Team Defense Drills- Cut-off Drills, 18 outs, Bunt Situations, Game Situations

25 Mins- Hitting- Cage Work, Hitting Circuits, Bunting Drills, Live Hitting

Example 2:

10 Mins-Dynamic Warm-Up- Baseball Passes Drill, or Base Running Drills

10 Mins-Throwing Progressions: see Chapter 1

30 Mins- Group Defense Drill- Split Infield/Outfield. Switch at 15 mins. See Infield Drills and Outfield Drills

10 Mins- Team Defense Drills- 18 outs

30 Mins-4 on 4 on 4. Live Hitting. See Hitting Drills

Example 3:

10 Mins-Dynamic Warm-Up- Baseball Passes Drill

10 Mins-Base Running Drills

10 Mins-Throwing Progressions: see Chapter 1

30 Mins-Team Defense Drills-Game Situations with Base Runners

30 Mins-Hitting Circuits