



Greetings!

Hope everyone is enjoying the great baseball weather this week and starting to get your teams in shape. You can smell baseball in the air!

This part of the pre-season practices should include conditioning not only for the players arm but leg strength as well. Jump squats are an excellent conditioning exercise that helps promote quad strengthening and quickness.

Strong quads must also be flexible so stretching is a must. Please make sure to strengthen and stretch arms, legs and core. It will definitely help towards the end of the season.

By this time your players are starting to get back into the swing of practices and this is a great time to instill the proper fundamentals such as:

- catching every ball with two hands

this forces players to use their feet. Try having the players hold their hands behind them and get them to try and get the ball to roll between their legs i.e. catch the ball between their legs as a starting point. Then have them catch the ball by trying to 'sit' on the ball. Make it into a game and they will enjoy it. This would help all levels.

- Practice throwing with the wrist flick or flip

One of the most fundamental ways to increase velocity and accuracy is the wrist flip. Of course having the right stance, arm back and pointing at the target is primary however, if the ball is not spinning backwards sufficiently then it may indicate a player that is holding the ball too tightly or with too tight of a wrist.

Here's an easy way to practice this. Have your player lay on the ground with a tennis ball. Have them 'flick' the ball in the air with their tricep (back of their bicep) on the ground and try to catch it without moving. The ball should spin backwards fast and up and straight back down to their hand.

You can check my previous email about practice drills for performing this drill standing up. If you've ever wondered why a MLB catcher can throw a strike to the shortstop without leaving his crouch you'll understand the flip or flick.

The two basic fundamentals we must see on every level is proper throwing and catching. Two hands in catching every ball and proper throwing motion.

Even if the player can't hit a HR every time up or pitch at 70mph, they'll get playing time if they can field and throw properly.

Please focus on these skills at all times i.e. during infield practice, warming up, outfield practice etc AND teach these to the parents so they can practice these at home... it will help you greatly as the season goes on...

Thank you for your support and cooperation and if you have any questions or need help with your practices etc please send me an email at [paul.retlewski@gmail.com](mailto:paul.retlewski@gmail.com) or [training@quitoll.org](mailto:training@quitoll.org)

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