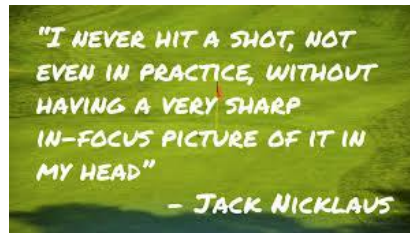


2025 Sluggers Winter Team Practice- Week 7



Mental Approach

Active Visualization

“ If you cannot see yourself doing it, you will not do it”

Mechanical Approach

Hitting: Hitting Off Speed Pitches

Fielding: Run Downs / Infield PFP

Throwing: Throws on the Run

Pitching: Spinning the Ball (Curve Balls)

Team Defense: PFP Situations (if time allows)

1. **Mental Approach- Active Visualization/Educated Guessing**

“ If you cannot see yourself doing it, you will not do it”

1. Active Visualization and educated guessing vs. hoping you get a good pitch to hit or “trick the hitter” when pitching.
2. If we know the game, and are paying attention to trends that are obvious, we can anticipate, and almost predict what may happen.
3. Great players are often great because they see things in games that others do not. If you are observing and looking for the trends of the game, you are able to guess correctly most of the time.
4. Q: What does the pitcher typically throw after he throws the first strike. What does he throw 0-2...or 2-0. If we gather this information over the first couple of innings, we can create better at bats in the 3-5 innings, see more pitches, get more hits and get the starter out of the game.
5. Q: What are the best running counts? Does the opposing team like to hit and run?
6. Q: If you are playing third base (and first base) what are you looking for in a bunt situation? (hitters hands)
7. Is the pitcher tipping his pitches? Is the catcher not looking at runners after he catches the ball (delayed steal)
8. Active Visualization: While on deck, if you visualize what pitches you might see at the plate, and visualize where you will hit them, it is better than taking batting practice!!
9. If you are playing shortstop, and you visualize all of the plays you might have to make in this situation, you will react faster and make fewer mistakes.
 - a. You should never be surprised by what happens in a game. You should have already played it out in your head.

Obscure Rule or Game Strategy

1. When we score a run, what does the entire team do when the runner who scored gets in the dugout (Everyone gets up and gives the player who scored a hive five)
2. Before each game, what are you going to do with each teammate before the game starts? (Look each other in the eye, shake hands and wish each other a good game.)
3. When is a good time to bunt for a base hit?

**Goals for Week 7:****a. Practice Visualization**

- Picture in your head each swing, throw, pitch, and ground ball before it happens.

DAILY ROUTINES - FIRST 30**a. Dynamic Warmup**

- 20 foot wakeup (20 feet up and back- 5 times for each movement)
 - Forward/backward run
 - Side Shuffle
 - Karaoke (big steps forward and back)
- Knee/Hip Circles - 10 each side - [Video](#)
- Over/Under the Fence - [Video](#)
- Single Leg RDL Airplane - [Video](#)
- Walking Lunge with Reach and Rotation - [Video](#) (add reach up to sky on lunge with back foot side)
- Lateral Power Shuffles- [Video](#)
- A-Skips - [Video](#)
- Single Leg Diagonal Hops - [Video](#)
- Power High Knee Jumps
- Power Shuffles to Sprint

b. Resistance Band

- Pull Aparts, Overhead Pull Aparts, Diagonals, External Pulses

c. Towel Drills

- Rocker
- Quick Shoulder Turn (Head Still)
- Hop Stride Throw
- Quick Pivot Pick
- Shuffle/Quarterback Throw Pull Downs- 10

d. Heavy Ball Throws

- Flips
- Shoulder Turn
- Rocker Drill
- One Foot Throws

e. Short Hops- [Ron Washington Short Hops](#)

- 10-10-10 from knees
- 10-10-10 on feet
- 10-10-10 Drop step and drive short hops
 - One left, one middle, one right
 - Work back through every short hop

f. Partner Ground Balls- Getting Around Ball

- Video- <https://youtu.be/R3qra149xjA>
- Partners roll ground balls to each other
- Fielder works from outside of ball, field and set feet to throw, two low shuffles
- Work on getting around the ball, Field through the ball, funnel, footwork to throw

g. Partner Ground Balls- Backhand Focus

- Partners throw 20 backhands to each other- Fielders focus on proper backhand mechanics

h. Two Line Quick Catch

- Split up into two teams
- Run quick catch from a line
- Catch - Quick Release throw - follow throw to the opposite line



- i. **Two Line Quick Catch- Short Hop Version**
 - Split up into two teams
 - Run quick catch from a line
 - Drive through short hop- Quick Release throw - follow throw to the opposite line
- j. **Partner Drop Step Fly Balls**
 - Tennis ball, no glove
- k. **4 Person Gauntlet Drill (Short Hop Pepper)**
 - <https://coachesinsider.com/baseball/infielders-gauntlet-drill-with-tyler-gillum-sa-vannah-bananas/>
- l. **Two line tag and throw drill**
 - Get in two lines...catch, tag, throw as quickly as you can to your partner.
 - Focus on perfect tag mechanics, quick feet and hands

Throwing Instructional

- a. **Throwing Instructional (Coach discuss during Resistance Bands and Towel Drills)**
 - Theme: 1) **Head positioning for accurate throws on the run**
 - **Focus on keeping head over throwing side while throwing on the run**
 - a. Head stays over throwing side to jump throw or throw on the run
 - b. Keep momentum to throw on the run. Do not slow down
 - c. Glove side mechanics are a must. Keep glove close to your body!!

Rundown- Chaos Drill (with heavy ball)

[Run Down Rules Document](#)

- Use a heavy ball to throw during rundowns – Players must make appropriate adjustments to get outs with the heavy ball
- 3 groups of players (2 groups of fielders, 1 group of runners)
- Run down starts on one side and players compete through run down to finish
- Immediately on finish on one run down, ball is thrown to the next fielder and run drops into baseline for the next rundown.
- No hesitation / constant movement and communication

Throwing Drills

Partner Throwing and Catching Detail (10 minutes)

- **Power Shoulder Turn**
 - a. Players 60 feet apart - Generate as much shoulder rotational velocity as possible
- **Power Position Long Toss**
 - a. Stay 60 feet apart - Generate as much momentum as possible from a still power position
 - b. Throwers allowed to release back foot to follow through
- **Catch - Shuffle - Throw**
 - a. Full distance throwing to partner
 - b. Catch - One drive shuffle - throw and follow throw
 - c. Thrower must get back to original position quickly to catch next throw
- **Catching Focus**
 - a. Step into catch - Face behind catch

- b. Catch out front, Short Shuffle, Shuffle Throw
- c. Athletic positioning at all times
- **Sprint through Short Hop Pull Downs**
 - a. Drill moves very quickly - Keep players moving fast.
 - b. Player 1 is 30 feet from player 2 with ball basket
 - c. Player 1 tosses a ball to hit ground about 10 feet from player 2
 - d. Player 2 sprints through the short hop, and throws on the run (pull down). Week 7 we are starting to build the intensity of our throws. We are not going all out with our arms but are throwing 100% with our lower half.
 - e. Player 2 follows throw to ball basket, quickly get ball and tosses the ball to next player in line
 - f. Option 1 - Create angles so that fielder must sprint around the ball to get in position to throw
 - g. Option 2 - Thrower is closer, throwing true short hop to fielder
 - Fielder steps into ball with left (glove side foot) to “catch in rhythm)
 - Explode to target with right/left footwork to throw

Pitching Focus- Throwing Breaking Pitches

- **Mechanics Overview- CURVE BALL**
 - a. Curve Ball Spin is created with
 - Hand positioning
 - Fingers and hand velocity
 - b. Grip: Middle Finger along seam, fingers together, thumb underneath bottom seam
 - c. Keys to Release
 - Back of hand to the target (palm facing pitchers head)
 - Fingers over ball - Release with fingers on other side of ball
 - Fingers down, thumb up
 - Pull down through release, finish with hand at opposite hip



[Max Fried Curve Ball Technique](#)

[Adam Wainwright Curveball Demo](#)

[Curve Ball- Slow Motion \(Strasburg\)](#)

[MLB Best Curve Balls](#)

Strategy Overview- When and Where to Throw Curve Ball

- Goal is to be able to throw curve ball first pitch for a called strike
- 2 Locations
 - 1st Pitch - Called Strike, Aggressive middle
 - 2-Strike- Start on the plate and end out of the strike zone
- Design pitch by visualizing how your curve ball should be shaped (arm angle and ability to spin the ball/amount of break)
- Visualize where to start the curve ball, be aggressive to that spot

Team Fielding



Fielding Focus- Slow Rollers/Running Throws

- Running/Jump Throws
 - Athletic Move but need to get your shoulders turned as much as possible to target
 - All of our pre-throwing routine helps our ability to throw on the run or in the air.
 - Throwing on the run
 - Throw with your throwing side foot on the ground
 - Ideally, you catch on glove side foot, throw on throwing side foot
 - Video - [Two handed slow roller mechanics](#)
- Previous Videos and Themes
 - Getting Around the ball Video- <https://youtu.be/R3qra149xjA>
 - Fielding Backhands - [Video 1](#)
 - Fielding Backhands- [Video 2](#)
 - Fielding Backhands- [Video 3](#)

Position Specific Daily Drills

- a. Pick a partner and choose 1 or multiple options below
 - Softball Pitchers
 - Daily drill progression
 - Baseball Pitchers Shadow Work - Focus on holding runners
 - Vary hold times
 - Quick step, reducing time to home plate
 - Pitcher Pick Off Practice
 - Variations to first base and second base
 - Catcher
 - Partner Blocking and receiving Drill progression
 - Perfect Blocks
 - T Blocks
 - I Blocks
 - Glove Down Knees Up
 - Starts with their glove on the ground
 - Lower half is in a secondary position
 - Works on exploding down into the ground to throw
 - Glove Down Side to Side Blocks
 - Starts with their glove on the ground on either side of their body
 - Lower half is in a secondary position
 - Works on exploding laterally to get their direction facing back towards home plate
 - 1st Basemen
 - Partner 1st baseman
 - Footwork around 1st base- Short hop scoops - Off line right and left - High throws
 - Flips to pitcher covering first base off of backhand ground ball
 - Pickoff tags
 - Outfield
 - Drop step partner fly balls - Get behind the ball drill
 - Do or Die field to throw footwork (sprint through the ball)
 - Getting around the ball to get momentum to the base you are throwing to
 - Throw ball so that outfielder must sprint around the ball to get momentum to where the throw is going.
 - Middle Infield



- Quick feet Short Hops- R/L catch - R/L throw rhythm footwork (gain ground to the target)
- Backhand focus - one step short hop to feet set to throw
- Running backhand to jump throw
- Double Play Feeds and turns

Team Fielding

- **TCU - Get around ball and Quick release (quick hands to release and footwork)**
 - a. Basic TCU drill, but throwers toss ball short so fielder can sprint around the ball, catch the short hop and throw on the run.
- **PFP Situations- 1st and third with runners-** Quick moving and faster than game speed (let the players make mistakes and correct quickly)
 - a. 1st and Third Situations
 - Early Steal Step Off and run down
 - Middle Infield Cutoff on Steal home
 - Catcher Pop Throw to Third into rundown
 - 1st/3rd Comebacker to pitcher - No Steal
 - b. Pitcher PFP
 - 3-6-1 double play - Runner on Second
 - c. Bunt plays
 - Runner on First
 - Runners on 1st and 2nd
 - d. Run through these plays as quickly as possible, almost like a conditioning drill
- **Fielding Machine- Runner on Second 3rd/1st option**
 - a. Fielding machine is placed on mat in cage 1 or 2
 - Players get in 4 lines (behind machine, front corner of cage %, back corner of cage 5 or 6, and top of cage 1)
 - On every ground ball
 - Player 1 (at machine) calls out 1-1-1 or 3-3-3 right before fielder fields ball
 - Fielder must quickly set feet and throw to the base called out
 - 3rd baseman tags and quickly throws to 1st
 - If throw goes to 1-1-1, 1st basemen comes of base and throws to 3rd for a tag.
 - Final throw to player at machine area for a tag
- **Fielding Machine - Sprint to catch**
 - a. Configure 2 lines so that players can sprint to a short pop up/line drive
 - b. This should be an almost dive and reach to catch play
 - c. After catch, set feet and throw to the next line
- **Fielding Machine - Step and Dive Drill**
 - a. 2 lines - player dives for ground ball then hops up and throws to next line near fielding machine

Team Hitting

- **Swing Build Routine**
 - a. Windshield Wipers- 10 each arm
 - b. Forward/Backward Bat Raises- 8 each arm
 - c. Pendulum Swings- 10 each arm
 - d. Contact Pulses- 20 seconds
 - e. Stride and Separate - 30 reps
 - f. Contact Position - 5 oppo, 5 middle, 5 pull



- g. Donaldson Swings with Balance hold at finish
- **Bunting Pepper (5 minutes)**
 - a. Groups of 3 players
 - b. Fast moving and athletic (1 bunt every 2 seconds!!)
 - c. Off balance throws- catch and release

Hitting Clinic- Hitting Off Speed Pitches

Theme: 1) Stance/Posture 2) Weight Transfer /Bunting 3) Hitting Extreme Pitches 4) Push Off 5) Bat Speed Training/Hitting High Velocity 6) Back Side Path / Hit and Run **7) Hitting Off Speed Pitches**

Keys to Hitting the Off-Speed Pitch- Mechanics

- Front foot down on time for the fast ball, but keep hands back for off speed pitch
- Hands stay back, even when our weight is forward on an off-speed pitch
- Front shoulder down, and stays in (locked into pitchers feet)
- Feet stay planted- Stay down into legs, balanced during stride and swing
- Keep swing level and on plane- Do not chase the ball uphill
- Front knee softens immediately after contact to keep the swing on plane out in front
- Back knee down to allow hitter to get on the plane of a pitch moving down

Keys to Hitting the Off-Speed Pitch- Strategy

- Attack the bottom inside of the ball. The pitch is typically moving down off of the plane of the fastball. Hitters must hunt and attack the bottom half of the ball.
- Keep bat speed do not slow down with the pitch (hands back, late and quick)
- Study the pitchers release point while in the dugout and on deck
 - Baseball- Curve ball usually is perceived to “pop up” out of pitchers hand at release
 - Softball- Hitter can sometimes see ball release off of side of hand (perceived sideways)
- Recognize off-speed- first thought is WAIT/Hands back. Then see spin and react to pitch angle.
- Curve ball swing approach- “High, let it fly -- Low, let it go”. See off-speed pitch up to swing.

Hitting Drill Set

1. Tee 1- **No Stride, Lean into front foot to hit**
 - a. Hands back with scap load
 - b. Move into front foot (off speed fooled)
 - c. Swing using stability from front foot into ground
2. Tee 2- **Out front down and away tee: ¾ slo mo swing over ball → Full swing through ball**
 - a. ¾ swing past ball in slo mo - top hand and back shoulder stays line to pitcher
 - b. Full swing, full extension with back side through the ball
3. Tee 3- **Three Stride Tee Drill [\(Video\)](#)**
 - a. Start in leg kick balance position
 - b. Front foot down, accelerate through the ball
4. Tee 4- **Stride-Pause- Swing [\(Video\)](#)**
 - a. Land in an athletic, strong position with hands back
 - b. Weight is forward, hands are back
 - c. Explode on the ball
5. **Short Toss Hit Downs** (wiffle balls, hitting into cement wall)
 - a. No home runs or ground balls. 1 point for hitting wall in the air
 - b. Compete!!



6. **Optional - Heavy Ball Launch Angle** (Do not hit into wall, hit into a net if possible)
 - a. Low pitch, hit the bottom of the ball for a long line drive to the outfield
7. **Pitchers Pitch to Hitters- (long cage) Pitchers- 3 pitch sequences with at least 50% breaking balls (15 pitches)**
 - i. Hitters- 3 Hit and runs, then compete starting in a 1-1 count
 - ii. Catchers catch if available
7. **Pick off Moves-** After pitchers throw, they must do 15 pickoff moves
8. **Pitcher BP (short cage)- ½ curve balls**
 - i. After long cage pitching, Pitchers rotate to short cage.
 - ii. Rocker Drill BP- ½ of pitches are off speed
 - iii. Hitters Dig in and compete
9. **Ground Ball/Fly Ball** (basketball court)
 - i. Coach or player throw tennis ball ground balls or fly balls

Game Speed Finishers: Coaches choose 1 or 2

1. **Triangle ground ball to throw drill**
 - a. Divide into 3 groups
 - b. Group 1 is first baseman
 - c. Group 2 are shortstops
 - d. Group 3 Catching for coach
 - e. Coach hits (or throws) ground ball to forehand or back hand of shortstop.
 - f. Shortstop makes quick and accurate throw to first baseman.
 - g. Shortstop follows throw to get in line for first base
 - h. First baseman catches throw, quick shuffle to flips ball to player catching for coach
 - i. First baseman rotates to line catching for coach
 - j. HANDLE THE BALL!!!
2. **The Gauntlet Fielding Drill**
 - a. Five players spaced about 10 feet apart with ball in hand
 - b. Five players in line as first basemen
 - c. 1 Fielder
 - d. Five cones set up 10 feet away from each of the five players
 - e. Fielder must run around cone toward players with ball.
 - f. Players throw a ground ball to fielder
 - g. Fielder fields ground ball, throws to first basemen, runs around next cone
 - h. Next player throws ground ball to fielder as fielder runs around cone.
 - i. Fielder goes through all five cones and ground balls for time.

2- Ball Drop Step Fly Ball Contest

1. First ball Diagonally across field
2. Second ball short, back into the line

Body Control Running throws

1. Start in one line
2. First player runs to the cone about 40 feet away
3. At about 20-30 feet, the player turns and throws to the next person in line
4. As fielder 2 catches the ball, he/she throws the ball back to fielder one, then fielder 2 runs toward the cone.
5. At about 20-30 feet, fielder 1 throws the ball back to fielder 2
6. Fielder 2 catches and immediately turns and throws to fielder 3 in line.
7. Create 2 teams and compete against each other



Drop Step Fly Ball Contest

1. Player starts in corner of facility
2. Coach throws fly ball to other corner
3. Player sprints to catch it
4. Last man standing wins

Rapid Fire - Two Goal Fireball Contest

1. Set up 2 smaller goals about 15 feet apart on each end of facility
2. One team player throws ball to try to score goal in one of the goal
3. 1 player from opposing team has to cover both goals to make diving or running stops
4. Goalie catches and quickly tries to throw ball into goal of opposing team
5. Players switch to new goalie after each throw