

2026 Sluggers Winter Team Practice- Week 12

Mental Approach- Pre-Pitch Routine and Process

Consistency is the key - Routine/Process/Pattern/Preparation

- Video 1- [JD Martinez Pre-Pitch Routine](#)
- Video 1- [Kris Bryant and Addison Russel Pre Pitch Routine](#)

Our pre-pitch routine and thought process are important to find consistency and familiarity before each pitch. Pre-pitch processes help players find their mechanics, visualize and anticipate what may happen next. Players should never be surprised by anything that happens on the field. Pre-Pitch routines get players prepared for the next play, swing, pitch.

See below for some ideas for players to find their pre-pitch routines.

Hitting Pre-Pitch Process Ideas

- Check coach for sign
- 2 stress free (downhill practice swings)
- Hold bat in front of you (like a samurai)- Eyes to the barrel of bat
- Deep Breath
- Quick thoughts.
 - What pitch or location are you anticipating (what pitch or location do you have to cover)
 - 1-2 Quick Mechanical thoughts - "foot/shoulder down, extend through the ball)
- Step into box
 - Find your feet and the outside corner- See the outside corner
 - Find your stance
 - Move your bat through the zone (pendulum or top of strike zone)
 - Look to the shortstop, then the pitcher (both eyes on the pitcher release)
 - Soft focus- Pitchers hat (or throwing side hip in softball)
 - Hard focus- as stride starts, see the release point window
 - Find a moving rhythm in stance- athletic position



Fielding Pre Pitch Process

- After Pitch, step out of your "ready circle" or circle of focus
- Say something to your teammates (communicate every pitch)
- Anticipate your plays at your position (drop step fly ball, slow roller, backhand, etc.)
- Step back into your "ready circle"
- Quick thoughts:
 - Self Talk- "Hit the ball to me!!"
- Hop or step into your Ready position
- Make a great play!!



Pitching Pre-Pitch Process

- Get ball back
- Ground your thoughts and vision- Find your consistent place for your eyes (Center Field Wall, Foul pole)
- What pitch will you throw- (What does the situation tell you to throw)
- Address the pitching rubber
- Deep breath
- Visualize the pitch
- Execute the pitch you just saw in your head



Baserunning Pre-Pitch Process

- Get back to the base
- Check your coach for sign (every pitch)
- Anticipate the number of action scenarios (dirt ball, fly ball/ground ball reaction)



- Visualize your next base turn on a base hit (base hit = advance 2 bases)
- Aggressive lead
- Aggressive secondary lead

Obscure Rule or Game Strategy

1. Defensive Communication
 - a. With a runner on first, what does the shortstop, 2nd baseman, and pitcher have to communicate about?
 - b. With a runner on second, what does the 3rd baseman have to tell the left fielder
 - c. With a runner on second, what does the 1st baseman have to tell the right and center fielder.
 - d. In a bunt situation, who is the captain of the infield?
 - i. Catcher needs to direct the infield on the bunt play, starting the communication.
 - ii. All infielders need to confirm with each other what they are doing in a bunt situation.

DAILY ROUTINES - FIRST 30 (Players lead - Everyone Together in open areas) via

- 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. **2 (or 3) ball juggling - 120 seconds**
 - Switch directions after 60 seconds
- c. **Resistance Band**
 - Pull Aparts, Overhead Pull Aparts, Diagonals, External Pulses
- d. **Towel Drills**
 - Quick Shoulder Turn (Head Still)
 - Quick Pivot Pick
 - Hop Stride Throw
 - Power Position
- e. **Heavy Ball Throws**
 - Flips
 - Shoulder Turn
 - Rocker Drill
- f. **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
- g. **Quick Catch (focus on catch and release efficiency and timing)**
 - No feet/stride- Partners at about 25 feet apart
 - 1- Straight Catch, no stride, 20 each (feet stay planted)
 - 2- Short Hop (20 each player) - One player take 20 in a row, switch
 - One foot throws
 - Balance on throwing side foot, catch, throw, finish all on one foot



- h. **Partner Ground Balls- Getting Around Ball**
 - Video- <https://youtu.be/R3gra149xjA>
 - 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
- i. **Partner Ground Balls- Backhand Focus**
 - Partners throw 20 backhands to each other- Fielders focus on proper backhand mechanics
- j. **4 Person Gauntlet Drill (Short Hop Pepper)**
 - <https://coachesinsider.com/baseball/infielders-gauntlet-drill-with-tyler-gillum-sa-vannah-bananas/>
- k. **Partner Drop Step Fly Balls**
 - Tennis ball, no glove
- l. **Tennis ball run downs**
 - 3 groups, play "hot box" (rundowns) on the basketball court
 - No hesitation between plays.
- m. **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
- n. **3 person (short swing) pepper - with tennis balls**
 - No gloves
 - Hitters choke up, and watch ball hit bat
 - Short, easy swing (not much more than a bunt)
- a. **Fielding- Turn Drill**
 - Two Lines
 - Player 1 has ball, player 2 about 30 feet away, facing away from Player 1
 - Player 1 throws a short hop at Player 2
 - When player 1 is about to release the ball, the next person in line behind player 2 yells "Turn".
 - Player 2 has to turn quickly and react to catch the short hop

Baserunning

- Turns around 1st on a single to the outfield
 - Base hit to the outfield - Hitter is automatically thinking double
 - Turn around first should be full speed around first and 4 steps toward second while picking up the ball. Listen to the first base coach but pick up the ball to make a decision.
 - You are going until the ball stops you!!
- Turns around second on a base hit to the outfield
 - a. Runner is automatically going to third on a base hit to the outfield until coach or the ball stops you.
 - b. Never assume you will stop at second.
 - c. Pick up coach ½ way to second, and again immediately after hitting second base. You are going until coach stops you.

Rundown- Chaos Drill (with heavy ball / regular 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

Team Fielding and Throwing

Instructional- Holding Runners

Holding Runners on Base/Pickoffs (two large groups)

Read this – [Situational Defense- Holding Runners on Bases \(Pickoffs\)](#)

- **Group 1 - Pitcher first base holds**
 - Runner (taking leads), 1st baseman, pitcher
 - Pitcher and 1B holds runner, and runner takes maximum leads to attempt a steal.
- **Group 2 - Pitcher, Middle Infield Holds**
 - Runner (taking leads), 2B/SS, pitcher
 - Pitcher and 2B/SS hold runner, and runner takes maximum leads to attempt a steal.

Team Fielding- Quick Drills (quickly run through these 3-5 minutes each)

- **Short Hop Triangle Drill- Quick Hands**
 - a. 3 player triangle drill for speed
 - 1- Short hop fielder, 2- catch/throw, 3- feeder
 - All Back hand short hops
- **Throwing and Catching Detail (5 minutes)- Follow Throw Drill**
 - Players get in groups of 4 or 6
 - Set up Bucket or cone 15 feet in front of player
 - Player catches ball, athletic shuffle, Fire and follow throw through the cone/bucket
 - Next player be ready to catch and throw.
 - Catch and Tag Option - All players catch and tag, then set feet to make throw
 - Catch out front, Athletic positioning at all times
- **Sprint around cone to get around ground ball**
 - a. Fielder sprints right, around cone then attacks ground ball to the left
 - b. Set feet or running throw depending on ground ball
- **Touch Bucket Fly Ball Drill**
- **Two fly ball drill**
 - a. Player drop steps to run around cone, then sprints in to catch short ball, then drop step sprint back to catch second fly ball
- **TCU - Quick release (quick hands to release and footwork)**

Position Specific Work

- **1B**
 - a. **First Basemen Feed to Pitcher**
 - Field Ground ball
 - Drive feet and body toward pitcher or 1st base (push toward throw)



- Push ball underhand (not bowling), leading pitcher to catch the ball on the run
 - Follow throw (keep momentum)
 - b. **Back Pick from Catcher - Tags**
 - Focus on feet setup and tag speed
- **2b/SS - Double Play Turns**
 - a. Keys to Double Plays
 - Feeds- Field, Firm Flip and Follow
 - Second Base Turns- Left foot on base, take right foot to ball (flip), quick right left throw
 - Shortstop Turns- Come through the base, right foot tap on outside corner of base, athletic throw
 - b. Holding Runners - Pick off Tags
 - Focus on footwork and tag speed/mechanics
- **3b-**
 - a. Double play feeds to second
 - b. Slow Roller / Bunt Field to Throw
 - On short ground ball, 3B must make decision to either field through the ball and throw to 1st base, or throw to second base.
 - Must assess time to throw to second and angle/momentum to first base
 - c. Catcher Back Pick Tags
 - Focus on footwork and tag speed
- **Catchers**
 - a. Receiving and Blocking drills
 - b. Footwork throwing to second
- **OF**
 - a. Running through the fly ball (getting behind the ball and sprinting to the short fly ball)
- **PFP Situations with runners-** Quick moving and faster than game speed (let the players make mistakes and correct quickly)
 - a. Bunt plays
 - 10-14U Teams review and go through bunt plays
 - 1st base only (baseball)
 - 1st basemen stay at first (read bunt) with runner on first only.
 - Pitcher has 1st base line
 - 3rd baseman has 3rd base line
 - 1st and second
 - 1st baseman charge
 - 3rd basemen stay near 3rd and read bunt
 - Pitcher has 3rd base line
 - b. 3-6-1 double play
 - c. 1st and third double steal
 - d. 1st/3rd Comebacker to pitcher
 - e. Run through these plays as quickly as possible, almost like a conditioning drill

Pitching Focus (Baseball)

Mechanics Overview- Stride Speed

- a. How we use our feet and the ground together creates athletic speed to the target
- b. It is a combination of using the ground to drive off of the back foot, with foot speed and head positioning for momentum to the target.



- c. Every pitcher is different in how they can manage this, but all pitchers can train to be faster and more athletic through their balance and stride.
- d. Athletic Balance → Back Leg Drive → Stride Speed → Head Positioning → Arm speed

Own ½ of the strike zone

- Every great pitcher owns part of the strike zone and challenges hitters consistently with their strength. Mariano Rivera (1st base side), Tom Glavine (outside), Maddux, Scherzer (bottom), Pedro (inside)
- Our pitchers need to understand what their strength (location) is and train to own it!!

Team Hitting

Hitting Clinic- Extreme Pitches

Theme: 1) Stance/Posture 2) Weight Transfer /Bunting 3) Front Foot and Hands Mechanics 4) Push Off 5) Bat Speed Training/Hitting High Velocity 6) Back Side Path / Hit and Run 7) Hitting Off Speed Pitches 8) Power and Launch Angle 9) Pull Side Power 10) Opposite Field Power 11) Hitting Coordination (Feet, Hips, Hands) **12)**

Hitting Extreme Pitches

Mechanic Overview- Key to Hitting Extreme Pitches (High, Low, In, Out)

- Simple Answer - Good balance, and Good Hands
- High Pitch- Hands above the ball
- Low Pitch- Back knee goes down to the low pitch (Hip should be at level of ball)
- Outside Pitch- Back hip to the outside pitch gets hands and bat into correct slot. Hit ball off of back hip
- Inside Pitch- Barrel to the ball early, hands in, back hip turn, top hand inside the ball
- All pitches- Good Posture, athletic positioning, front foot down, quick hands

Strategy Overview- Own 2/3 of the strike zone (Middle In, Middle Away, Up, Down)

- Know what you hit well - Hunt it and Hammer It
- The best hitters know what they hit well, and swing at pitches in their hot zones most often.
- Next level- Know what you hit for power and hunt that in plus counts

Hitting and Live Competition

Warm Up

- Windshield Wiper
- Strides x 30
- Shoulder Rotations
- Contact Position
- One Handed Pendulums/Swings
- Hand Activation-Pulses
- Shoulder Hip Separation
- Full Swing-Balance

Tee Stations

1. Tee 1- High Tee
 - a. Hands above the ball, hit the ball down
2. Tee 2- Extreme Down and Away
 - a. Tee is front outside corner and down
 - b. Head up, hip to the ball.
3. Tee 3- Extreme In



- a. Tee is mid height, at front inside corner of plate
 - b. Hands in, back hip through the ball, top hand punch through the inside of ball
4. Short Toss Hit Downs
 - a. No stride, hands above ball, hit the top of the ball
 - b. Thrower delivers ball to the top of the zone
5. Bunting Pepper
6. Live Pitcher Hitter Competition
 - a. Count starts at 0-0
 - b. Pitcher must choose and announce $\frac{1}{2}$ of the strike zone to pitch to... except for one pitch per batter can deviate from that side of the zone
 - c. Pitcher can throw all pitches
7. Front Toss
 - a. Pitcher throws pitches 3-4 inches inside, outside, high/low
 - b. Hitter must barrel all pitches
8. Pitching Machine
 - a. Above average velocity- Up in the zone
9. Tracking Station - Juan Soto knob down drill
10. Dry Swing Station
 - a. Walking Karaoke, holding scap load and shoulders still while hips move with steps
 - b. 30 reps- Quick swings over tee

Game Speed Finishers: Coaches choose 1 or 2

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1. **Step and Dive Drill**
 - a. <https://coachesinsider.com/baseball/outfield-step-and-dive-drill-with-kerrick-jackson-southern-univ/>
2. **Game Speed Cutoff and Relay Drill**
 - a. Set up Defense and baserunning situation
 - b. Run through situational cutoff and relays
 - c. Make it a game or competition of some sort.
3. **Wiffle Ball Game**
 - a. Divide up teams and play!!
4. **2- Ball Drop Step Fly Ball Contest**
 - a. First ball Diagonally across field
 - b. Second ball short, back into the line
5. **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 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!!!
6. **Diagonal Ground Ball Drill**
 - a. Two lines at opposite sides of facility (diagonal)
 - b. Player one throws ground ball to open end



- c. Fielder runs to ball, fields and throws to opposite end of facility
 - d. Fielders continue to run/field/throw continuously.
7. **Run Downs with Runners-** [Run Down Rules Document](#)
 - a. Two run down stations- 4 players each if possible
8. **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.
9. **PFP Situations with runners-** Quick moving and faster than game speed (let the players make mistakes and correct quickly)
 - a. 1-6-3 double play
 - b. Bunt plays
 - c. 3-6-1 double play
 - d. 1st and third double steal
 - e. 1st/3rd Comebacker to pitcher