

Defensive Baseball – The Finer Details (by position)

Outfielders

- Yells out, while signaling, the number of outs to these teammates and in this order – (CF) corner outfielders, middle infield; (LF) center fielder, third baseman, and shortstop; (RF) center fielder, first baseman, and second baseman
- Understand that they are the “last line of defense” and take great pride in drop-stepping and covering territory behind and to either side of them
- Want every fly ball hit to them
- Are in constant communication with one another regarding where they are playing (i.e., toward the line, in the gap, two steps in, two steps back, etc.)
- Like to show off their arm strength and take pride in hitting the cut-off or relay man in the chest
- Live for the diving play in the gap or in front of them and work hard on practicing those skills
- Are aggressive and fundamental in fielding ground balls hit out to them in front of them in order to prevent the opponent from taking the extra base
- Understand the importance of checking the flag pole or tossing blades of grass in the air in order to gauge wind speed and direction and then shift their positioning accordingly
- Are vocal in fly ball communication and allow everyone in the ballpark to know who is going to catch it
- Will give way to the middle infielder who is “camping” under a fly ball and will provide back-up when necessary
- Will aggressively call off infielders who are “drifting” back to catch a fly ball in order to make the catch
- Circle behind routine fly balls in order to make the strongest possible throw back to the infield
- Break to back-up bases on steal and bunt plays
- Practice going back to the fence and practice communication to warn other outfielders who are at the wall in order to keep each other safe
- Work on reading and then aggressively attacking the soft line drive to take away would-be hits, yet will break down and keep the play in front of them when the score and the situation dictates to play it safe
- Are “Gap Busters” who practice expanding their range to the gaps by understanding and playing angles
- Work tirelessly on throwing the ball accurately to bases by knowing when to make the one-hop throw or “airing it out” on the line
- Always back each other up and know that they can afford to “sell out” because someone “has their back”
- Knows the opponent’s line-ups strengths/weaknesses and the pitcher’s velocity and pitch strengths/weaknesses and adjusts their positioning accordingly
- Hustle on and off the field
- Understand that good outfield play often bails pitchers out of tough spots turning would-be triples into outs at third, RBI base hits into outs at home, gap shots into catches, etc.
- Create a comfort zone for the pitching staff, allowing them to work ahead, pitch to contact, and challenge hitters