

Regular Infield Drills

Glove-Side Foot Backhand Drill

Age Appropriate

Grouping 4, ages 7 to 15+

Objective

To learn and practice proper technique for backhanding ground balls to the glove-hand side

Setup

A bucket of balls, a coach to roll balls, cones or markers (optional)

Execution

This backhand provides more reach for players ranging farther to their backhand side. Just as for a regular ground ball, the backhand is caught out in front of the body so the eyes can follow the ball into the glove and the wrist and forearm don't get in the way. Players need to establish a wide base with the butt down. A player lines up in front of a coach and crosses the glove-side leg over the other leg as if turning to walk. The throwing-side knee is dropped to the ground, much like a walking lunge. Player creates a wide base to help get the butt down and the glove in front of the body. Ball is caught off the front foot instead of in front of it (but still out in front of the body). Coach should be close enough to roll balls directly into glove until player gets the hang of catching the ball out in front with one hand, squeezing the glove, and bringing it to the center of the body. Ball is rolled slightly in front of the lead foot. Glove-hand wrist should be relaxed so coach can see into the glove. Tell players to avoid twisting the glove so they don't close it too soon. After five repetitions, have another player try. As players get more advanced they can raise the trail knee off the ground a few inches. Adding repetitions can help with conditioning.



Coaching Keys

For all backhands, the most common mistake is the ball jumping up and smacking off the player's wrist instead of going into the glove. This happens when the glove is positioned behind the player's body, which creates a glove angle in which the wrist is actually forward of the glove. By placing the glove in front of the body, the wrist is naturally relaxed in such a manner that it doesn't get in the way if a ball takes a tricky hop. Again, just as with the technique for fielding a basic ground ball, the fingers of the glove should point straight down toward the ground.

An error frequently made when it comes to backhands is twisting the glove. This may happen because young players have gloves that aren't fully broken in or don't feel that they're strong enough to just squeeze the ball and keep it in the glove. The problem is that sometimes they start to twist the glove before the ball gets there, preventing the ball from entering the glove. Players should squeeze the ball when it enters the glove and bring it straight to their chest for the transfer and throw.

