

DIVE-BALL DRILL

PURPOSE

To develop the confidence to leave the feet, or dive, when fielding a hard-hit ball on the ground.

EQUIPMENT

Bucket of baseballs, gloves

TIME

3 to 5 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the team into two or three groups, depending on the number of available coaches.
2. The coach calls out the first player, who stands 10 to 20 feet from the coach, facing him.
3. The coach takes a ball from the bucket, then yells, "Left." The player moves toward the left, and the coach leads him with the ball so that the player must dive for it.
4. If the player catches the ball, he rolls it back to the coach. Knocking down the ball or stopping it with his body is as good as a catch. The player should kick aside any balls in the active or "diving" area.
5. The coach then yells, "Right." The player moves to his right. The coach leads the player with the ball so that he must dive to catch or stop the ball.
6. Each player gets three or four turns before the next player's turn.

KEY POINTS

The player's main objective is to stop the ball and keep it in front of him instead of worrying about making a spectacular catch.

1. Players should start off in the ready position.
2. Teach players to keep their gloves open as they run to make a backhanded catch.

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3. Teach players to run toward the ball to make a catch rather than reaching out and diving for it. A dive should always be a player's last resort.
4. As the players progress, add a player at first base, and instruct the fielders to throw to first after making a diving stop.

Variation

Begin this drill with the players kneeling, diving for the ball from their knees. This variation trains players how to dive even if they aren't in the ready position.

