

Outfield Fundamentals

GENERAL

- **BE AGGRESSIVE!**
- **ELIMINATE ERRORS!** (Mental and Physical)
- Know your pitcher.
- Know and read the batter.
- Know the situation/where to throw ball. ALWAYS THINK AHEAD!
- Know the baserunners.
- Positioning.
- Awareness of your location. Find the fence when going back. Know where your other OFers are.
- Back up all IFers, OFers, and throws in ALL situations.
- Be the best conditioned athletes on the field.

FOOTWORK

- Running speed—head turned toward where you are running, pump your arms, reach late.
- Good athletic stance.
- In the zone movement – feet in the air or moving when ball passes thru strike zone.
- Quick first step.
- Gain ground with drop step.
- Develop the cross-over step.

COMMUNICATION

- Communication.
 - Before and during plays.
 - With other OFers and IFers.
 - OFers take precedence over IFers on balls.
 - Work in triangles

THROWING

- Long arm throwing mechanics – thumb to thigh, arm up high. Ball out to side.
- Throwing accuracy, not velocity.
- Gripping the ball correctly—across the big seams.
- Throw through the cut-off, not to the cut-off.

FIELDING

- Circle the ball and get behind it – shoulders squared to target.
- Sprint to a spot, don't drift.
- Field the difficult ball.
 - Fly balls over your head.
 - Short fly balls.
 - Fly balls and grounders to the side & and in the gaps.
 - Line drive right at you

GROUND BALLS

- Fielding ground balls.
 - When no throw has to be made.
 - When throw is necessary—"do or die" footwork. Transfer at waist, don't reach into glove.
- Take good angles on balls hit in the gap or down the line.
- Circle the ball and get behind it – shoulders squared to target.
- If you are unable to circle and work behind the ball, be confident in your forehand and backhand glove work and foot work.
- Use chop steps to pick out good hops and accelerate thru the ball into a throw when runners are on base,
- Keep all balls in front and eliminate bobbles.

FLY BALLS

- Be relaxed and confident when catching fly balls. Catch balls in a consistent spot as much as possible.
- Catch the ball with a high glove.
- Catch the ball at eye level.
- Transferring the ball from glove to throwing hand—transfer happens at the waist.
- Get rid of the ball quickly. (Know where you're throwing!)
- Lay out and dive when necessary.
- Chop your feet to stay behind fly balls then work thru the ball with good footwork.
- Keep the glove high on fly balls over your head—keep it in your line of vision.
- Catch the ball low to side or in front. Sink your hips when possible.

Characteristics of a good outfielder

- Does not hesitate when making a play on the ball
- Good perception of the field
- Works well with other outfielders around them
- Moves with the other outfielders as a unit
- Good communication skills
- Vocal leader
- Aggressive, agile, athletic, quick reactions, smart
- Strong accurate throws to all parts of the field
- Getting behind the ball, both on ground balls and fly balls
- Reads the ball off the bat well
- Good foot work and powerful first step
- Good hand-eye coordination

Game goals

- No ground balls under the glove, keep everything in front
- No routine fly balls off the glove
- Strong accurate throws to bases and cuts
- Limit total bases by opponent.
- Well hit balls do not turn into anything more than a double- take good angles to cut off ground balls and good jumps off fly balls/line drives.
- Dive for the ball when needed
- No misread balls (false steps)
- Catching all balls in the air
- Constant communication before and during plays
- Knowing where we are going with the ball prior to each play
- Back each other up on every play

Season goals

- Limit runners to zero extra bases
- Limit errors on the year
- Good communication between all outfielders
- Improve number of assists
- Least amount of outfield errors in the conference
- Highest fielding percentage in conference.
- Lead the conference in assists
- Limit errors (mental and physical)
- Don't allow triples

In your drills, focus on the following:

- Communication, loud, 3x – mine, mine, mine
- In the zone movement - Chop the feet, creep, pop
- Ball grip across the big seams every time
- Long arm throwing mechanics - Thumb to thigh, arm up high
- Stay on top of the ball when throwing, good release point and follow through
- First step/crossover – gain as much ground as possible
- Good angles
- Eyes steady and tracking all balls early
- Footwork on GB's (use chop steps when needed)
- Sprint to fly balls-no drift-head down and go
- 2 types of long toss—flat foot, power steps/crow hop
- Foot work on power steps (show the instep to turn the shoulders)
- Work shoulders toward the target on angle balls
- Plant step vs reverse pivot on balls down the line or in the gap
- Run with glove tucked
- Backhand catch when running toward throwing side (glove high)
- Catch with one hand when on the run
- Glove up high—fingers up on balls above the waist
- Sink the hips, don't just drop the glove on balls that are below the sternum

Throwing progression

- Start with throwing progression exercises and throwing positions
- Slowly back up with regular throw
- Flat footed long toss
- Power step or Crow hop long toss
- One legged throws stand on glove side foot, swing throwing side foot 3 times. Work on developing an explosive forward movement
- 3 hop, emphasis on:
 - *driving off back foot*
 - *using glove side to pull the backside thru*
 - *good follow thru down and across*
- Finishers – do or die throws with partner, GB & FB (middle, left, right)

****** When long tossing, throws should be long and HIGH.

Also work on receiving the ball into a throwing position!

Outfield Skill Progression

- Throwing
- Footwork
 - Drop Step straight back
 - Drop step at an angle
 - Crossover
 - Lead step
 - Fall forward
- Glove work
 - Fly balls above waist
 - Fly balls below waist
 - Balls on the run and over your head
 - Do or die Ground balls
- Ground Balls
 - Nobody on
 - Do or die
 - Field off of each foot
 - Slow gappers – attack with lead step
 - Medium/Hard gappers – drop step and work behind
- Fly Balls
 - Communication
 - Nobody on
 - Do or die
 - Slow gappers – attack with lead step
 - Medium/Hard gappers – drop step and work behind
 - Balls over head
 - Hip turns
 - Head turns
 - Short pop-ups
 - Shoe string catch
 - Dive
 - Line drive
 - Right at you
 - Diving situations