

Catchers: Creating a general on the field

Kristi Bredbenner

WICHITA STATE SOFTBALL

Characteristics of a Catcher

Leadership

Communication

Reactions

Game Smarts

Umpires Friend

Take Charge Attitude

Communication

- ▶ Pitcher
 - ▶ Honest and open
 - ▶ Can't be afraid to confront
- ▶ Coach
 - ▶ Honest and open
 - ▶ Be able to be the coach on the field
 - ▶ Relaying information about the pitcher

Confidence

- ▶ Communicate with Confidence
- ▶ Know when to call a conference
- ▶ Lead by example
- ▶ Everyone's watching you
- ▶ Fake it if you are having a bad day
- ▶ Carry yourself with confidence
 - ▶ Shoulders straight
 - ▶ Head held high

Reactive and Decisive

- ▶ Game smarts
 - ▶ Know the situation
 - ▶ Know the what ifs
 - ▶ Communicate it to the team
 - ▶ Always know the outs and count
- ▶ Read the defense
- ▶ Know the upcoming batters

Umpire is your friend!!

- ▶ Direct communicator with the umpire
- ▶ Be nice and friendly 😊
- ▶ Get to know the umpires zone
- ▶ Never embarrass or challenge
 - ▶ Leave that up to the coaches

Communication Drills

- ▶ Leading the team in drills
- ▶ Games Situations
 - ▶ Make the catcher yell out situations
- ▶ Cut Drill
 - ▶ Outfield throws to cut, catcher directs the cut
- ▶ Force/Tag Drill
 - ▶ Infielders throwing home, catcher yells cut or tag

Cuts

- ▶ Make the catcher read the defensive opportunities
- ▶ Catchers rarely base run or think for themselves
- ▶ Clear and Concise terminology
 - ▶ Cut 2, Cut 3
 - ▶ Breathe and react
 - ▶ Avoid rapid talk
- ▶ Practice with live situations!!
- ▶ Watch softball on TV!!

Throwing Form

Basic Guidelines

- ▶ Receiving the Ball
 - ▶ Catch first
- ▶ Grabbing a Seam
 - ▶ Important for grip and rotation
- ▶ Follow Through
 - ▶ Important for extra zip and accuracy

Throwing Mechanics

▶ Footwork

- ▶ One, Two Step, Follow Through
- ▶ Load and create momentum
- ▶ Let the ball turn you

▶ Exchange

- ▶ Let the ball get to you
- ▶ Glove and throwing hand to the ear

Throwing Form

- ▶ Grip/Rotation
 - ▶ Three fingers across long seams
 - ▶ Rotation across four seams
 - ▶ Back spin
- ▶ Straight line position
- ▶ Finish to your target

Steals

▶ Standing

- ▶ One, two step
- ▶ Shoulder point
- ▶ Quick release
- ▶ Follow Through



Throwing Mechanics

- ▶ Throwing from knees
 - ▶ Important to follow through
 - ▶ Strong Arms
 - ▶ Drive glove leg
 - ▶ Benefits catchers with slow feet

Steals

▶ Kneeling

- ▶ Shoulder point
- ▶ Drive off your glove knee Quick release
- ▶ Follow Through



Steals

▶ Steals at Second base

- ▶ Shortstop Covers
- ▶ Aim for the base
- ▶ Height at the shortstops knees

● Steals at Third base

- Third baseman covers
 - Inside corner of the base
 - Knee Level
- Shortstop covers
 - Throwing to a fielder on the run
 - Throw to the right of the base
 - Knee level
 - Don't hesitate

Steals

▶ Glove to Glove Time Drill

- ▶ Time it takes from catcher to 2nd
- ▶ Time starts when the catcher receives the ball
- ▶ Time stops when the receiver catches it
- ▶ 1.6 seconds - great time
- ▶ 1.8 seconds - good
- ▶ 2.0 seconds - keep improving

Drills

- ▶ One, Two Step
 - ▶ Quick Feet
 - ▶ Drop Step
 - ▶ Forward Step

- ▶ Mirror Drill



Pick-offs



Techniques

- ▶ Quick release
- ▶ Target inside corner of the bag

Pick-offs at 1st

- ▶ First Baseman Covers
- ▶ Second Baseman Covers
- ▶ When is the best time to pick at first base?
 - ▶ Bunt Situation
 - ▶ Lazy Runner
 - ▶ Bases Loaded



Pickoff's at 2nd & 3rd

- ▶ Third Baseman Covers
- ▶ Shortstop Covers
- ▶ When is the best time to pick at third?
 - ▶ Lazy Runner
 - ▶ 1st & 3rd Situation
- Second baseman covers
- When is the best time to pick at second?
 - Lazy Runner
 - Bunt Situation

Pickoff Drills

▶ Target Throwing

- ▶ Tape low targets on wall
- ▶ # out of 10
- ▶ Chart results

▶ Glove to Glove Time

- ▶ Catchers glove to first baseman's glove

Pickoff Drill

▶ Tee Drill

- ▶ Set Tees at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd
- ▶ Catcher tries to knock off the ball on the tee
- ▶ Creates accuracy awareness and fun competition

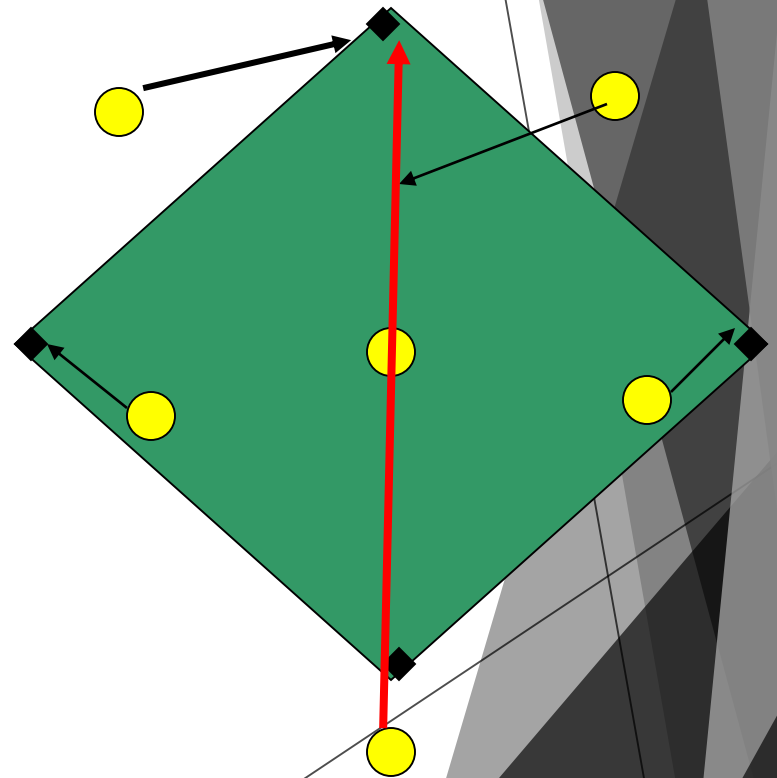


1st and 3rd Situations

- ▶ Situation
 - ▶ # Outs
 - ▶ Score
 - ▶ Speed of the runner
- ▶ Jump at Thirdbase
- ▶ Catchers Arm
- ▶ Watch out for the bunt
- ▶ Throw Down to Second
- ▶ Throw Down to Second with Cut
- ▶ Pick at Third
- ▶ Fake to Second, Go to Third

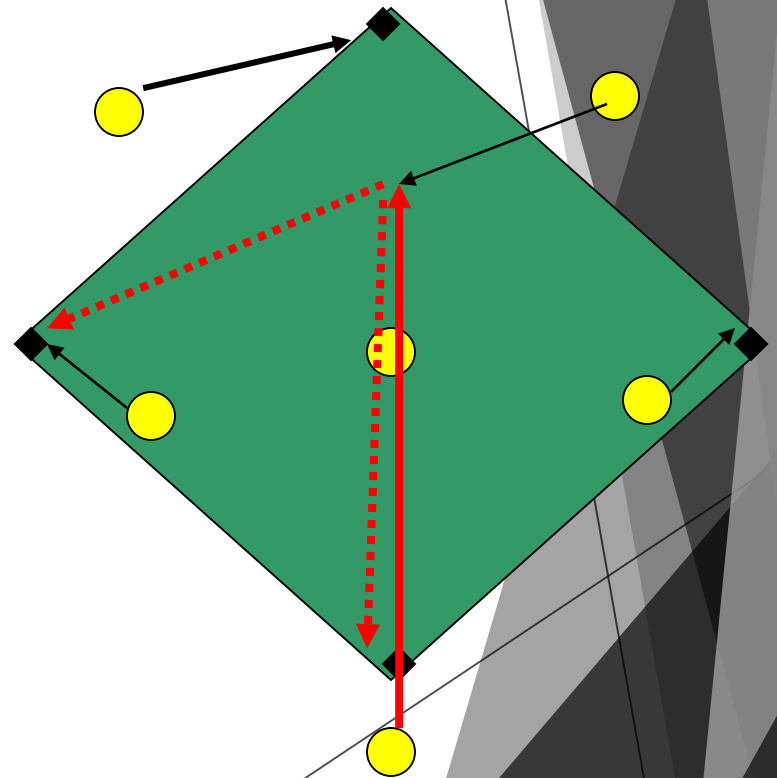
1st and 3rd Situations

- ▶ Throw Down to Second
 - ▶ Shortstop tags runner
 - ▶ Shortstop checks runner at third
 - ▶ Avoids tag and throws home if the runner breaks for home
 - ▶ Delay Steal Situation
 - ▶ *SS sprints* at the runner back to first, peaking at 3rd



1st and 3rd Situations

- ▶ Throw Down to Second with Cut
 - ▶ Shortstop Covers 2nd
 - ▶ Second baseman cuts the angle between Pitcher and Second
 - ▶ Cuts if runner breaks or can be picked

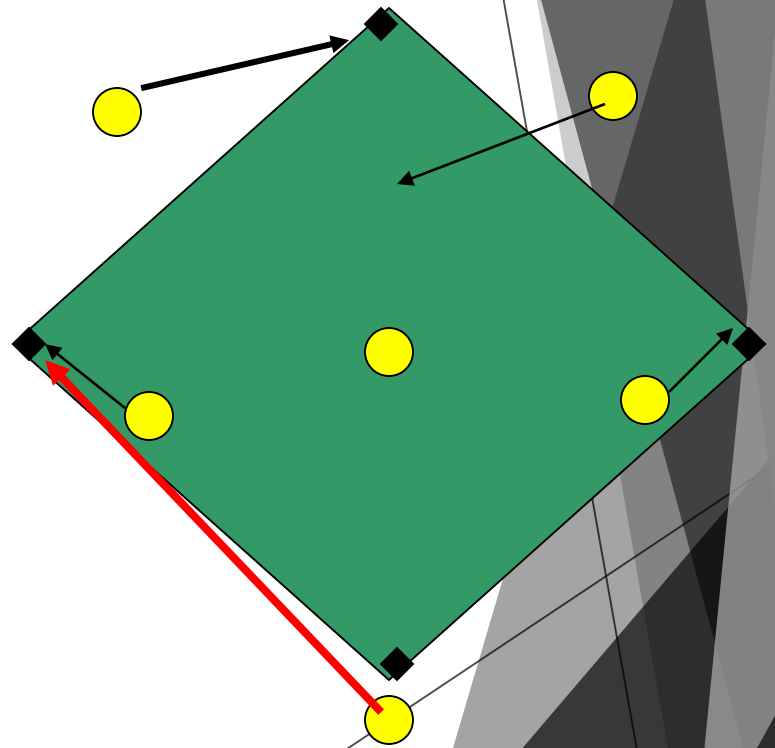


1st and 3rd Situations 2nd Cuts



1st and 3rd Situations

- ▶ Pick at Third
 - ▶ Third baseman covers
- ▶ Why
 - ▶ Speed at Third
 - ▶ Weak Arm



1st and 3rd Situations Pick at 3rd



1st and 3rd Situations Fake SS Covers



Blocking

TECHNIQUE

- ▶ Glove first
- ▶ Knees replace feet
- ▶ Shoulders Rolled Forward
- ▶ Head down
- ▶ Glove and Throwing Hand
- ▶ Important to Teach Reaction

Blocking Technique

- ▶ Knees Straight Down
 - ▶ Drop knees down
 - ▶ Butt off heels
 - ▶ Avoid jumping forward



Blocking Technique

- ▶ Shoulders Rolled Forward
- ▶ Head Down
- ▶ Glove Position
- ▶ Throwing Hand Position
 - ▶ Behind Glove
 - ▶ Behind Back



Blocking Technique

- ▶ Teach reaction with the body not the glove
- ▶ Glove swatter
- ▶ Be tough
- ▶ Catchers cannot be scared of the ball



Blocking

■ Side to Side

- Quick
- Kick out feet and knees
- Angle shoulders square with the ball
- Stay low to the ground
- Roll shoulders forward

Bunts

- ▶ Technique
 - ▶ Awareness
 - ▶ Leg Explosion
 - ▶ Footwork
 - ▶ Throwing Position
 - ▶ Follow Through



Bunts

- ▶ Awareness
 - ▶ Bunting Situations
 - ▶ Runner at 1st or 2nd with no outs
 - ▶ Slapper at the plate
 - ▶ Batter with Sneaky Bunt Speed
 - ▶ Squeeze Play
 - ▶ Be Loud, Take Charge
 - ▶ Priority over pitcher and first baseman

Bunts

▶ Leg Explosion

- ▶ Explosion and Stay Low
- ▶ Drive out with legs

▶ Footwork

- ▶ Get around bunts to pitch and first base area
- ▶ Plant and pivot on bunts to third base

Bunts

- Throwing Position

- Point shoulder to target
- Focus on the target
- Two hands to pick up the ball
- Glove to the ear
- Weight transfer
- Side Arm vs Overhand Throw

- Follow Through

- ▶ Establish a throwing lane to the Second baseman
- ▶ If the runner is in the baseline and is struck with the ball they are out
- ▶ Tough call for umpire

Bunt

- ▶ Leg Explosion Drill
 - ▶ From squat position
 - ▶ Leg drive out
 - ▶ First two steps are quick and powerful
- ▶ Superman Drill
 - ▶ Lay on stomach
 - ▶ Work leg drive and quickness to the ball



Bunting Drills

▶ 5 Ball Drill

- ▶ Set balls in front of home
- ▶ Work on getting set to field each bunt



▶ Coach Drop Drill

- ▶ Basic bunt drill
- ▶ Catcher reacts and field bunts
- ▶ Throw to First



Bunt coverage

- ▶ Catcher needs to get to bunts within 6 feet of the plate
- ▶ Communication is key
- ▶ Corners playing in
- ▶ Third baseman has the best angle
- ▶ C or 3B needs to cover 3rd
- ▶ Outfielders backing up throws to all bases
- ▶ Know bunter and base runners speed
- ▶ Make sure you get an out!
- ▶ Catcher can communicate chances on lead runner

Bunt Coverage w/ runner at 1st

Bunt to 1B, Pitcher, or
Catcher

-2B covers 1B

-SS covers 2B

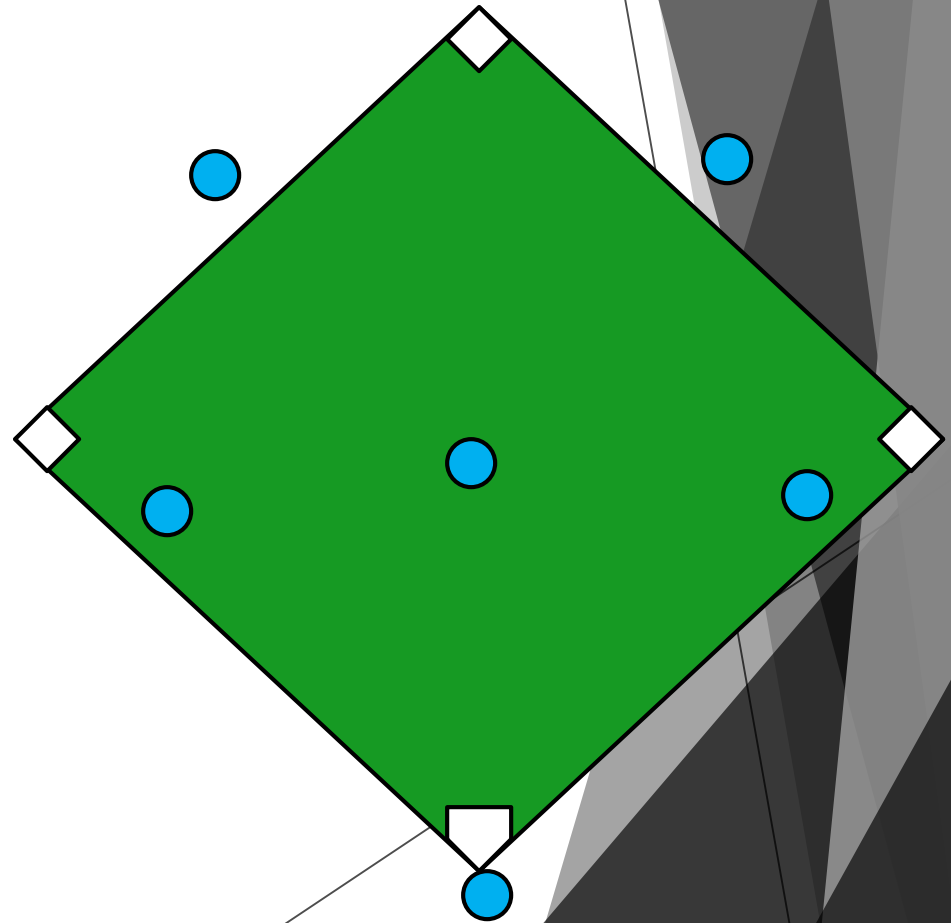
-Third get back covers 3B

-LF backs-up 3B

-CF backs-up potential
throws to 2B

-RF backs-up throw to 1B

-Catcher covers home



Bunt Coverage w/ runner at 1st

Bunt to 3B

-2B covers 1B

-SS covers 2B

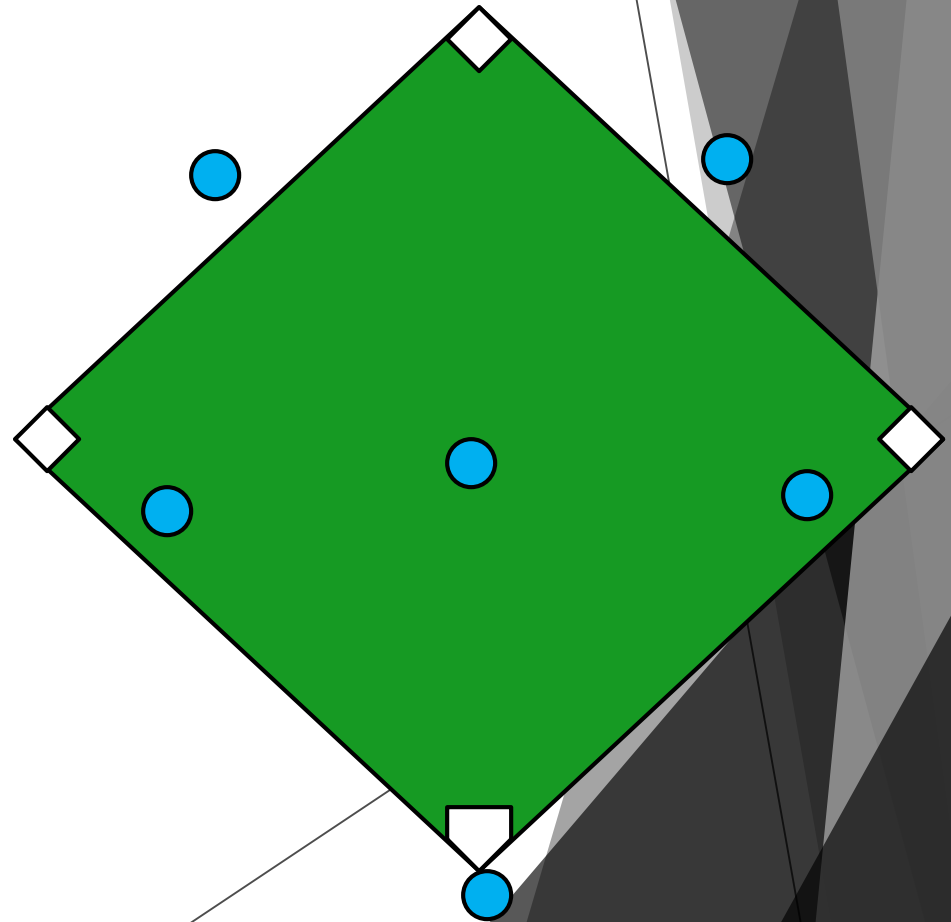
-Catcher covers 3B

-LF backs-up 3B

-CF backs-up potential
throws to 2B

-RF backs-up throw to 1B

-1B covers home



Bunt Coverage w/ runner at 2nd

Bunt to C, P, 1B, or 3B

-2B covers 1B

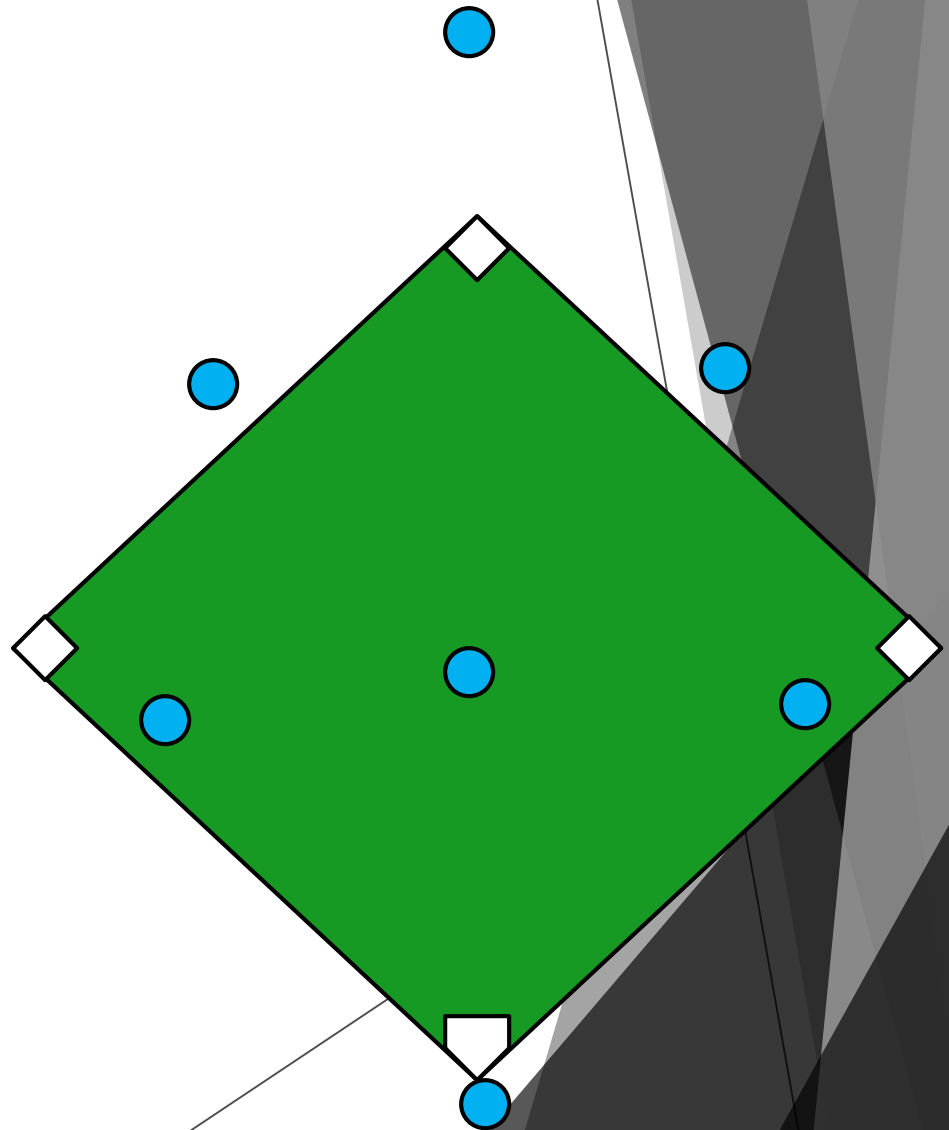
-SS covers 3B

-Catcher covers Home

-LF backs-up 3B

-CF covers 2B

-RF backs-up throw to 1B



Bunt/Pick Play w/ runner at 1st

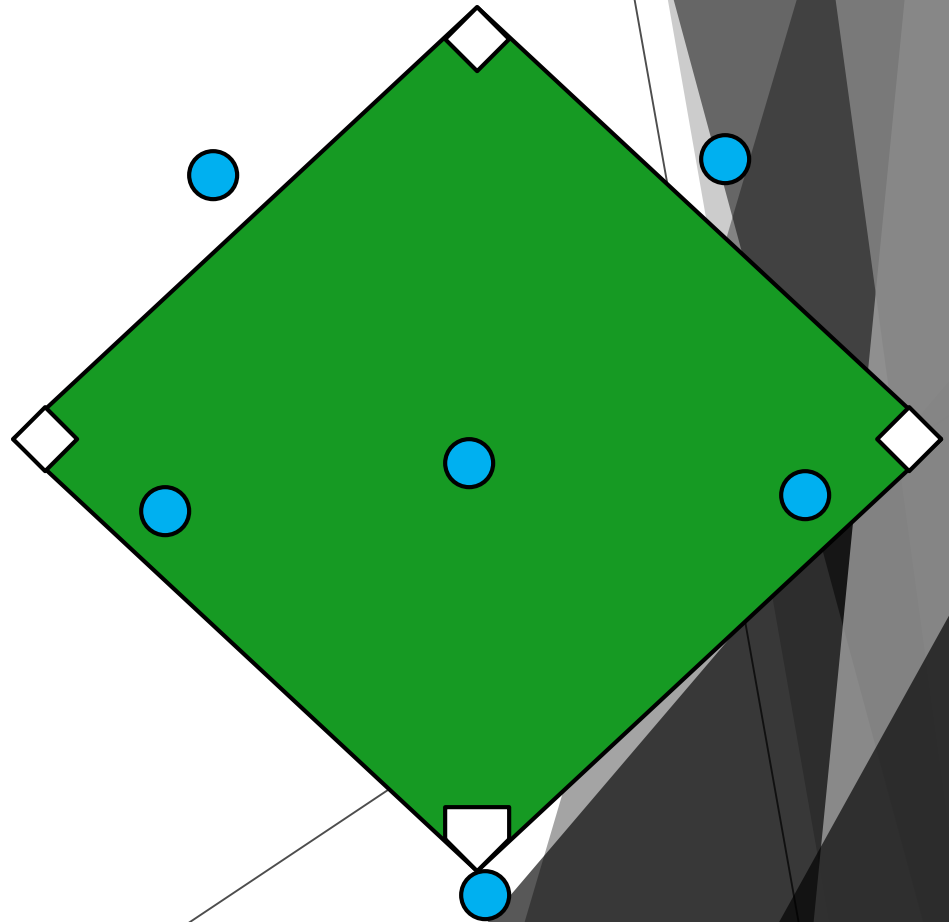
2B breaks for pick at 1B
early

Pitcher throws strike

Fielders look for out at 2B

Goal:

Make the runner & 1B
coach think a pick is on
so they don't get a good
jump and potentially will
be thrown out at 2B



Receiving/Framing

- ▶ Quiet Glove
- ▶ Setup Positioning
 - ▶ Catch into the strike zone
- ▶ Drop knee on low pitches
- ▶ Get close to hitter
- ▶ Get around the ball
- ▶ Condition Wrists, Fingers and Forearms



Soft Hand Receiving Drill

- ▶ Toss 10 feet away
- ▶ Use tennis balls or baseballs
- ▶ Focus
 - ▶ Weight on front half of the feet
 - ▶ Catching arm elbow above and/or outside the knee
 - ▶ Good Balance
 - ▶ Pinch index finger and thumb
 - ▶ Track the ball in with the eyes

Practice makes perfect!

▶ Intentional Walks



Overlooked skills/opportunities

- ▶ Pitch-outs
- ▶ Rundowns
- ▶ Backing up first base
- ▶ Framing
- ▶ Bullpens

Catching Skills Checklist

- ▶ Basic Pitch Receiving
 - ▶ High/Low Balls
 - ▶ Framing
- ▶ Pop-ups
- ▶ Tags/Force Plays
- ▶ Bunts
- ▶ Backing Up
- ▶ Signals
- ▶ Pitch outs/Picks
- ▶ Intentional Walks
- ▶ Steals to all bases
- ▶ Cut-offs
- ▶ Rundowns
- ▶ Passed ball to backstop
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Game calling
- ▶ Leadership

QUESTIONS!!

Email: kbredbenner@goshockers.com

Wichita State Softball

Kristi Bredbenner

316-978-3260

Twitter: [@coachbredbenner](https://twitter.com/coachbredbenner)

Shocker Softball Twitter: [@WUSHOCKSoftball](https://twitter.com/WUSHOCKSoftball)