

## Team Defense Drills

- **Bunt Defense** – Set up full infield defense, coach gives situation, rolls/hits bunt. Players react and make play. Practice first without live runners.
- **1st & 3rd Defense** – Full infield defense, including pitcher and catcher. All other players are runners at 1st or 3rd. Practice whatever system you choose for offense/defense. For example, catcher can throw through to 2nd base, fire ball back to pitcher, fake to 2nd and throw to 3rd. Must practice all options frequently. We can't expect players to execute these plays in games unless they have done so successfully, multiple times, in practice.
- **Steal Defense** – Put pitcher on mound, catcher, middle infielder(s). All other players are runners at 1st base who practice getting jump to steal 2nd. Catchers work on throws; middle infielders work on tags. Then do same for steal of 3rd.
- **Cutoffs and Relays** – Do with no runners and then with live runners. Full Defense. Coach fungoes balls to OF who make throws to 2nd, 3rd, home, using whatever cutoff and relay system you choose (for example, some coaches have the pitcher take all relays to home, some use shortstop).
- **Rundowns** – Simulate rundown between any two bases. Player has ball (at say, 2nd base) and will chase runner (toward 1st). Player at 1st base will call "NOW". On the Now call, player with ball tosses ball to player (at 1b) who tags the runner. Then do same between 2nd and 3rd, 3rd and home. Practice this with NO runners at first, so players become successful with the techniques. Then add a live runner.
- **Middle and Corner Groups** – Infielders, including P and C, in position. Two groups (2b, SS) and (1b, 3b, P, C), each with a coach. Middle infielders – coach stands behind mound and rolls ground balls for work on forceout feeds and pivots. Other group is working on bunts; coach at home plate rolls bunts and players make play to designated base.
- **UMaine Team Defense Drill** – Learned this drill from UMaine coach. Full defense, no baserunners. Catcher starts with ball, rolls bunt toward pitcher while coach calls "1". Pitcher makes play to 1st baseman as coach calls "2"; 1st baseman throws to shortstop covering 2nd as coach calls "center field"; shortstop throws base hit to center field as coach calls "3" and center fielder/infielders execute relay to 3rd; coach calls "4" and 3rd baseman throws home to catcher. Can vary calls in any manner you wish. This gets all players involved, moving, thinking. Takes practice, but they will get better at it!
- **18 Outs** – Can be done with full defense or just infield defense. Coach fungoes balls; players execute each play, in turn, until 18 outs are reached.
- **1-2-3-4** – Full infield defense. Coach calls "one" and hits ground ball, players play to 1st base. Then Coach calls "2" and players make play at 2nd base. Then 3, then 4 (home).
- **Fly Ball / Pop Up Communication Drill** – Full defense with outfielders playing shallow. Fungo (or tennis racquet) pop-ups and fly balls between outfielders or between infielder and outfielder. Can use two fungo hitters: one to left side (LF, SS, 3b, P); one to right side (RF, 2b, 1b, P). Center fielder can be in either group.
- **Purdue Hustle Drill** – Don't know why it's called this, but great drill for outfielders and baserunners. Put runners at home plate, full outfield defense, and one middle infielder. Coach fungoes ball to outfield and runner MUST try to get to 2nd base. Good practice for outfielders fielding/throwing and infielders making tags. Then do same with runners on 1st who have to try for 3rd base while OF makes throw.

- **Rotation Game** – Full defense. Coach pitches (overhand toss). Batter hits designated number of swings and then "runs out" the last hit while defense plays live. Batter now becomes runner and works his way around the bases. After he scores, he takes a defensive position and all defenders rotate in whatever order coach chooses. Good drill for getting every player experience at all positions.
- **Fungo Scrimmage** – Full defense, other players are runners at home plate. Coach hits fungo and defense makes appropriate play while batter/runner runs. Can play by innings and switch defense every 3 outs or 6 outs. Or can set up various situations, e.g., runners on 1st and 2nd. Great drill for team defense and baserunning.
- **Overhand Toss Scrimmage** – This has all the features/benefits of Fungo Scrimmage, plus batters get to actually hit (coach throws overhand toss) and run balls out. Options: 1) switch hitters every 3 outs; 2) have 3 teams of 4 and rotate hit-defense-defense; 3) can have one group of hitters stay up until they do not score within 3 outs.