

4 Station Combine Practice

Station 1 - Infield

Things to watch for when they are fielding:

- Make sure they are staying low.
- When the glove is receiving the ball it needs to be at a slight angle. Not straight up and down and not completely flat.
- When in the ready position they should have their glove down and their bare hand to the side of the glove
- When receiving the ball the girls should use their bare hand to cover the ball and close off the opening of the glove.
- Teach them to stay low through their throw.
- Standing straight up after receiving the ball is not what you want them to do.

Bat Drill (beginner)

- Partner the girls up facing each other.
- Draw a line where they will line up their feet in a good defensive stance.
- Their feet should be lined up with the outside of their shoulders.
- When they bend down their bottoms should go over their heels with their weight on the balls of their feet.
- Have them reach out with their glove to touch the ground out in front of them. Place the bat on the ground between their feet with the handle of the bat behind their glove.
- The partner then rolls the ball to the girl standing over the bat.
- This teaches the girls to reach out and get the ball in front of them.
- Tell them to watch it in and bring it to their belly.
- Each girl does 10 rolls and then switch.

Bat Drill – Add Short Hops (intermediate)

- In same stance, the partner will bounce the ball right in front of the bat. Have the girl watch the ball in and bring it with both hands to their belly.

Bat Drill – Shuffle and Throw (advanced)

- Once the girl receives the ball, she will shuffle her feet to the side of the bat and freeze in her throwing motion (Stand, Point, Step, Throw – see below)
- 2 Step Shuffle
 - The right foot will step back behind the left foot and then the left foot will stride towards the partner.

Bat Drill – Backhand Drill (advanced)

- Partner should roll the ball to their backhand so that the receiver can cross over

their left foot, backhand the ball and then step through with the right foot.

- Make sure the girls turn their glove over to receive the ball.

Hitting Grounders – 2nd Base and Shortstop

- Girls should form two lines, one at shortstop and one at second base position.
- One coach will hit to the second base line and the other will hit to the shortstop line.
- Use a coach/parent at first to catch the throws from the girls.
- Player should be in ready position. When the ball is hit, the player should take at least two steps toward the ball to get their momentum going forward.
 - Make sure they stay low when they step towards the ball.
 - Make sure they reach out for the ball, bring it in towards their stomach with soft hands.
- Player completes the throw to first base.
- Hit through the line 2-3 times, rotate players so that the other line will have the longer throw and they will all receive the ball from different angles.

Hitting Grounders – 1st Base and 3rd Base

- Rotate players to third and first base positions for Third and Firstbase positions.

Station 2 - Hitting

Stance!!!

- *Check grip* - A tight grip does not help them, but makes things worse. The bat is a teammate, it needs to be loose!
- *Arms* should be in a small V. Back elbow should not be raised. If the elbow is up it tends to make them drop their hands during the swing.
- *Hands* should be over their back shoulder. Generally no higher than the top of their ear. The bat should be angled straight back. Not wrapped around their head or pointing down their back.
- *Feet* should be about shoulder width apart.
- *Legs* - A slight bend in the knees at the beginning of the stance is a great way for the girls to get their lower body into the swing! Using every part of our body is important!

Swing!!!

- *Don't Lean in!* This is **NOT** a great way to see the ball! When swing begins, hands go out which tends to pull your head back, thus changing the view of the ball! Have the girls in a more upright position so they see the ball the whole way, the same way they will see it at contact.
- Younger girls tend to shift their weight forward when they step, so no stepping is okay when they are beginning.
- Older girls - a stride/step can be a trigger for them as long as their weight stays over the center of their body.
- A girl does not have to stride but can **IF** they can control their weight (stays over center of their body, not on their front foot).

Tee Station

- Tee should be in line with the stride/front foot (left foot for a right handed hitter, right for a left hand hitter).
- Knob of the bat should be pointed at the ball.
- Full extension of the arms does not happen until after contact
- Teach them to take the front elbow towards the ball.
- Once contact is made, teach them to extend through the pitcher and third baseman.
- A saying that I use for this is "Short start; Big Finish"

Top Hand/Bottom Hand Station

- With a really light bat, have player choke up all the way on the handle of the bat. With one hand at a time the girl will put the bat on their back shoulder and drag the bat, knob first at the ball on the tee.
- Complete 10 swings with each hand.
- Make sure the bat is being dragged off of their shoulder towards the ball.

- Watch to see that the arms get fully extended through contact. Not before.
This drill helps with eliminating the long arm swing and teaching knob to the ball.

Soft Toss

Coach/parent helper toss the balls to the hitters.

- Sit on a bucket or kneel down so the ball is coming up at the girls.
- Toss the ball so that their contact to the ball is over the front foot.
- Tell the girls to hit the ball straight up the middle. This will help with not getting the girls to pull out.
- Make sure they get their (correct) stance every time.

Front Toss

Coach tosses wiffle balls from about 10 feet away.

- Make sure you toss the pitch straight.
- Tell the batters to make sure they watch the ball and that their chin should go from Shoulder to shoulder as they swing.
- Tell the girls to hit it back up the middle.
- Make sure the knob of the bat is coming to the ball.
- Make sure they get full extension after contact.
- Hips should explode with a full twist as contact is happening.
- The back leg should have a slight L shape when hips and body rotation has been completed.
- Front leg should be straight when twisting and when the swing is complete.
- There should be a straight line from the middle of their head to their belly button, to the middle of their feet on the ground.
- Weight should be over their body, not on front foot.

Station 3/4 - Throwing

5 Steps to Throwing... Each step should be used during every warm up.

- Goose Neck
 - Kneel on throwing arm knee (Right handed players kneel on right knee. Left handed players kneel on left knee).
 - Make a L with your throwing arm. Glove hand is under the tricep of the throwing arm. Wrist is cocked back towards body.
 - On this drill **ALL** they are doing is snapping the ball to their partner.
 - Fingers should be pointed towards the ground once the ball is released.
- Forearm Extension
 - Still on their knee. Starting in the L position
 - Snap the ball to her partner
 - Extend forearm through.
- Kneeling Throw
 - Starting position:
 - Throwing knee is still on the ground, glove shoulder is turned toward their partner. The ball is pointed away from the partner behind the body. The arm should be in an L shape and the back of the girls hand should be pointing at her head. Ball is pointed away from body.
 - Point the glove hand at partner and throw the ball easily. Keep elbow in front of the ball and snap at release.
 - Finishing through to put her throwing hand in her opposite side pocket. (She should bend into the throw and be able to pick up some grass on her follow through)
- Stand, Point, Step, Throw
 - Stand with their feet shoulder width apart
 - Glove shoulder is pointed at their partner (So they are standing sideways.)
 - They will have their arms in the same position as the previous drill and will step with the glove side leg towards their target. They should have their arm in the L position, ball facing away and once they snap the ball and follow through after release they should bring the back foot through the throw as well, stepping it around their body landing somewhat in front of them.
- Show me Don't show me
 - Stand facing their partner. They show their belly button towards their partner, then they will go through the whole throwing motion. They start with belly facing partner then as they throw they will not show their belly button because they have turned sideways, and after the release they will show their belly button again to their partner.

After warm-ups – add distance

Once everyone is warm you can gradually move them back further and further from each other after a few throws at each distance. This builds arm strength. When warming up, the girls do not have to throw as hard as they can. They are just simply warming up their muscles.

Key Notes to remember and look for:

- When throwing make sure the girls are throwing over their shoulder and not sidearm.
- The arm needs to be in the L position, if they let the release point get too high, the arm will be out of the L position and the girl will throw a high arc throw.
- For little ones or beginners, encourage them to throw the ball towards the ground instead of up high.
- ****Teach the girls to use their legs!!! Many arm injuries occur when the girls use only arms.
- Bend the legs and push the throw through from the back leg.

Station 3/4 - Outfield

Popups (Beginners – use ‘soft’ balls)

- Simple throw pop ups to the younger ones.
- Teach them to turn their glove around to catch anything over their head.
- Teach them to watch the ball into the glove.
- Throw some right at them and let them get use to seeing it in the air.
- Then throw some to the side of them and let them learn to move their glove.

Over the shoulder drill (intermediate)

- The girls will stand in line next to the coach. (can do in two or three lines)
- The first girl stands in front of the coach looking at the coach.
- Coach says go and the girl will drop step with her left foot and run at an angle away from the coach. The coach then throws the ball up in the air in front of the girl. She will be watching for the ball over her right shoulder.
- Do this a couple times and then we go to the other shoulder.
- Say go and have the girl drop step with her right foot and looking at the coach over her left shoulder.
- Repeat a couple of times and then do one straight back.
- They will turn either way and have their back completely turned to you when they are running.
- Through the ball straight out in front of them.

Teach the Crow Hop to all girls

- Start with partners not too far away from each other.
- Have the partner toss the ball up in the air.
- The receiver will then get behind the ball to be able to come through the ball when catching.
- Once they receive the ball they will then bring their right leg up as high as they can, still moving forward.
- After the right leg comes up the left leg will come up.
- You want them to get a little air, so they need to hop. Think of it as high knees as they are moving forward.
- They do not have to throw the ball.
- They will then toss the ball up to their partner.
- Do this a couple times and then have them move back and do the same thing, but this time make them go all the way through the throw.
- Make sure they are using their legs all the way through the throw.

Hitting Fly balls and Grounders

- Hit the girls a variation of grounders and fly balls.
- Make sure they are getting behind the ball in the air so they can come through the ball when they are catching it.
- Make them throw the ball in using the crow hop every time.