

## Fundamental Skills Checklist

### Throwing

- *Grip* – Grip the ball with the index and middle fingers across the seams where the seams are the widest. Place the thumb under the ball, and the ring finger resting against the side of the ball.
- *Directional Side* – Swing the arm back smoothly, front shoulder should be closed, and pointed at the target.
- *Release* – Ball should be released off the tips of the index and middle fingers, which allows backspin on the ball. The wrist must be supple and drive downward as the ball is released. If the release point is too early, the throw is high and if the release point is too late, the throw is low.
- *Arm Action* – Shoulder, elbow, and hand inscribe a circle. Elbow should be shoulder high. Hand and fingers should be on top of the ball, and the thumb should be underneath, at the time of release.

### Catching

- *Eyes* – Keep your eyes on the ball.
- *Hands/Elbow* – Both hands ready, with arms relaxed and stretched out toward the ball. Bend elbows to help absorb the force of the throw.
- *Ready Position* – Be ready to move to receive or field the ball.
- *Eyes/Hands* – Watch the ball into the glove and squeeze it. Immediately grip the ball right away with your throwing hand.

### Pitching

- *Stance* – Elbow should be relaxed and close to the body. Place weight over pivot foot and your eyes visualizing the path of the ball to the target area.
- *Balance Position/Windup* – Weight should be over the back leg, and knee should be up at the highest point. Stride forward when hands separate.
- *Stride* – Fingers on top of ball and shoulder should be aligned with target. Stride toward the plate with your lead leg. Too long of a stride makes the ball go too high; too short of a stride makes the ball go low.
- *Explosion* – Stride knee bent, but firm. Hand pulls shoulder through, which then shoulder follows hands.
- *Follow Through* – Shoulder below chin to target. Glove pulled into body. Throwing shoulder should be lower than glove shoulder, and armpit should be over the stride knee.

### Hitting

- *Grip* – Hands together with your knuckles lined up. Dominant hand on the top of the grip, and opposite hand should be on the bottom near the end of the bat. Hands up (level with waist) and back (near rear shoulder). Hold the bat loosely, until you are ready to swing, then the grip should be tightened.
- *Stance* – Feet should be about shoulder width apart and pointed towards home plate. Typically, back foot parallel to the back line of the batter's box, and front foot should be parallel with the

front line of the box. Toes should be pointing toward the plate. Knees and waist should be slightly bent.

- *Elbow* – Elbows out from the body and bent, pointing down toward the ground.
- *Bat Back* – Bat back, over your shoulder, pointing up.
- *Eyes* – Find the ball in the pitcher's hand, follow the ball's flight, and watch the ball hit the bat.
- *Stride* – Shift body weight to the rear leg. At the same time, turn front shoulder, hips, and front leg inward.
- *Step* – After the ball is released, take a small step forward with your front foot. Pivot rear foot and push off the rear foot toes. Keep feet pointed towards home plate. Avoid lunging forward.
- *Swing* – Shift weight to the front foot, your back foot and back knee should turn. Keep front foot straight and firm, and bring your hands down and through. Head should remain still with eyes focused on the ball. Bat should be parallel to the ground.

### **Baserunning**

- *Running Out a Double* – If the ball goes in the outfield, run a “flat arc” to first base, touching the inside of the base, and continuing hard past the bag, looking for the chance to advance to second.
- *Taking Leadoffs* – Start in a relaxed stance with your feet placed no wider than your shoulders. Put your weight half on each foot. Take a short step with your right foot toward the next base. Keep your shoulders facing the infield and get a good, yet safe, distance from the bag. When you stop moving, you should be in ready position to advance to the next base, or return to current base.
- *Tagging* – When a ball is hit in the hair, decide to go halfway to the base, or tag up. To tag up means to stay in contact with the base during a fly ball, while planning to advance to the next base after the ball is caught. Stay low, keep your knees bent, and push hard off the bag to advance after the ball is caught.