

DEFENSE: We want our ballplayers to be fundamentally perfect. In order to insure this, the correct fielding fundamentals must be reviewed and drilled regularly. These fundamentals must become a subconscious action. We do not want to have to think about A, B, and C when we are making an important play during the game. We should react! Once the correct fundamentals have been established, then the athletes natural talent will take over.

In our program we have many partner and group drills that break down the fielding fundamentals. We want to practice and improve our fundamentals, so they can become second nature. I have outlined all of the defensive drills that we use in our program.

INFIELD DRILLS

- I.) Partner Drills
 - A.) Rolling Ball Drills
 - 1.) Straight
 - 2.) Right
 - 3.) Left
 - B.) Short-Hop Drill
 - C.) Quick Hands Drill
 - D.) Hockey Drill
 - E.) Circle Drill
- II.) Group Drills
 - A.) Square Drill
 - B.) Back On THE Ball Drill
 - C.) Slow Roller Drill
 - D.) ~~DOUBLE PLAY~~ DRILLS
- III.) Fungo Drills
 - A.) Four Station Fungo Drill
 - B.) Two Station Fungo Drill
- IV.) Team Drills
 - A.) Combo-6 Drill
 - B.) Form Running Drill

OUTFIELD DRILLS

- I.) Partner Drills
 - A.) Coming in on the ball
 - B.) Back on the ball
 - C.) Ground ball drill
- II.) Group Drills
 - A.) Wind blown balls
 - B.) Over the sholder
 - C.) Fence drill

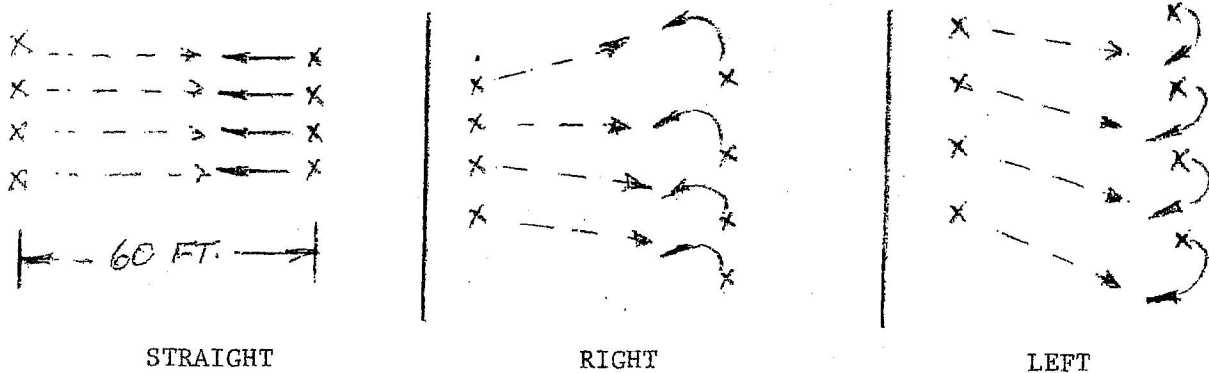
INFIELD DRILLS

I. PARTNER DRILLS-

A.) ROLLING BALL DRILL: The purpose of this drill is to develop the correct fielding fundamentals. In this drill we concentrate on: 1.) charging the ball, 2.) sitting down on the ball, and 3.) having soft hand when receiving the ball. When setting up this exercise, we put our fielders in two lines, so each player has a partner across from him. Then, starting the balls on one side, we roll the balls across to our partner. When doing these drills we will start the athletes with no gloves, and then add them later.

1.) Rolling Ball "straight", "right", and "left"

When we start this drill, we roll balls to the athletes in a controlled manner. We start by rolling them straight, concentrating on charging, getting the hands out, and sitting down on the ball. When we roll the balls to the right and left, we want to emphasize the hard crossover step, and the circling of the ball. Here again, we want to charge the ball, sit down, and get the arms extended. See Fig. #1., 2., & 3.



ROLLING BALL DRILLS: STRAIGHT, RIGHT, LEFT

B.) SHORT-HOP DRILL: In this drill our partner remains the same distance (about 60ft.) as in the rolling ball drills. Here, the main objective is concentrate on stepping in, with the glove foot, towards the ball, and picking it up as close to the ground as possible. The closer one fields the ball to the hop, the easier it is to pick it up cleanly. This drill will also work on having soft hands. The athlete must give with the ball as he receives the throw. A diagram of this drill is drawn in fig. #4.

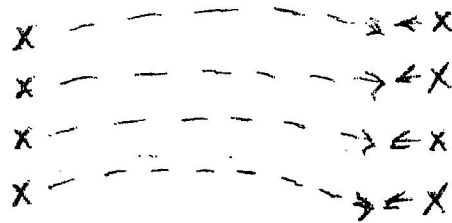


Fig. #4
SHORT-HOP DRILL

- C.) QUICK HANDS DRILL: This partner drill was developed to help develop quick, soft hands. In this drill we stay in our lines, and for 20 seconds we throw the ball back and forth, concentrating on a quick release, and good throws. This drill will also work on the quickness of the feet. The infielders must learn to shift their feet as they catch the ball, so they will be in a balanced position when they throw the ball. Note: Accuracy is important in this drill. A diagram has been drawn up to outline this drill. Fig. #5.

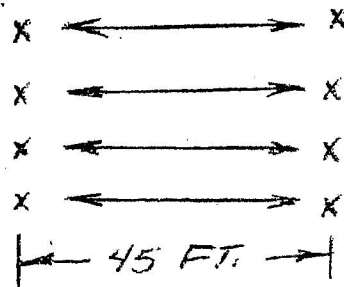


FIG. #5

Quick Hands Drill

- D.) HOCKEY DRILL: This drill is a excellent learning device. We use this exercise to develop soft hands. The partners stand about five feet apart. They get in their fielding position, with their butt down and their hands out, and they receive the ball from their partner. While their partner bounces the ball into them they are working on soft hands, bringing their glove up to their belly button.

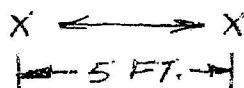


Fig. #6
HOCKEY DRILL

- E.) CIRCLE DRILL: In this drill we have one man rolling the ball, and one man feilding, circling the roller. This drill is used to simulate the double play feed behind secondbase. The fielder circles the man rolling the ball, and picks up the ball and throwing in the same motion. After a few revolutions we will roll the ball in the other direction. NOTE: One direction resembles the shortstops feed, and the other the second-basemens feed. Each infielder should do both.

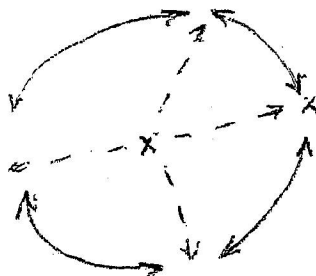


FIG. #7

CIRCLE DRILL

I. GROUP DRILLS:

- A.) SQUARE DRILL: This is a very good drill for the infielders. It works on many areas:
- 1.) Double play turns
 - 2.) Double play feeds
 - 3.) Soft/Quick hands
 - 4.) Accuracy when throwing

In this drill, we put our fielders in a big square about 60 Ft. from eachother. Then we start by throwing the ball in one direction. Once we have done this for a while we change the direction. The coach may switch the direction at any time by saying "Switch". See Fig. #8.

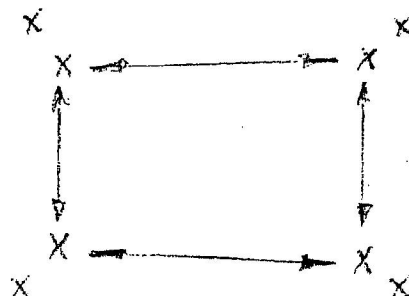


FIG. #8

SQUARE DRILL

B.) BACK ON THE BALL DRILL: This drill is develop skills needed for fielding balls hit deep in the hole to either the left or right. The main objective of this drill is to learn how to quickly drop step and crossover in order to get back on the ball. The fielder must start back on a 45 degree angle, and then cut the ball off as needed. He will not be able to reach the ball if he does not move back on it first. This is a group drill, so the coach will be feeding the balls. See Fig. #9.

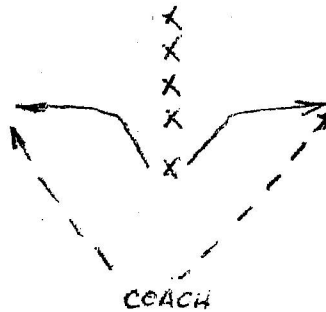


FIG. #9

BACK IN THE HOLE DRILL

C.) SLOW ROLLER DRILL: In this drill the coach will roll a slow roller to each player, simulating the topped ball hit in the infield. Here, the main objective is to field the ball with two hands out in front of the glove foot. Once the ball is caught, the player must quickly throw as he steps with his pivot foot. The key for successful completion of this play is to be quick getting rid of the ball. See Fig. #10.

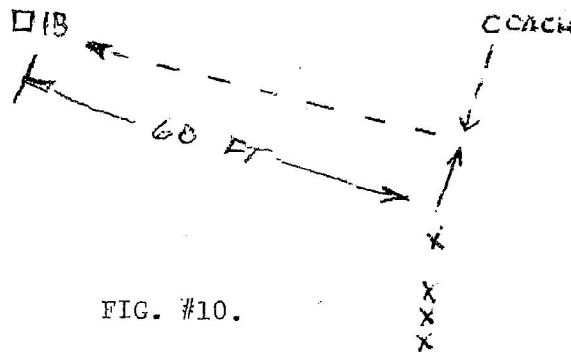
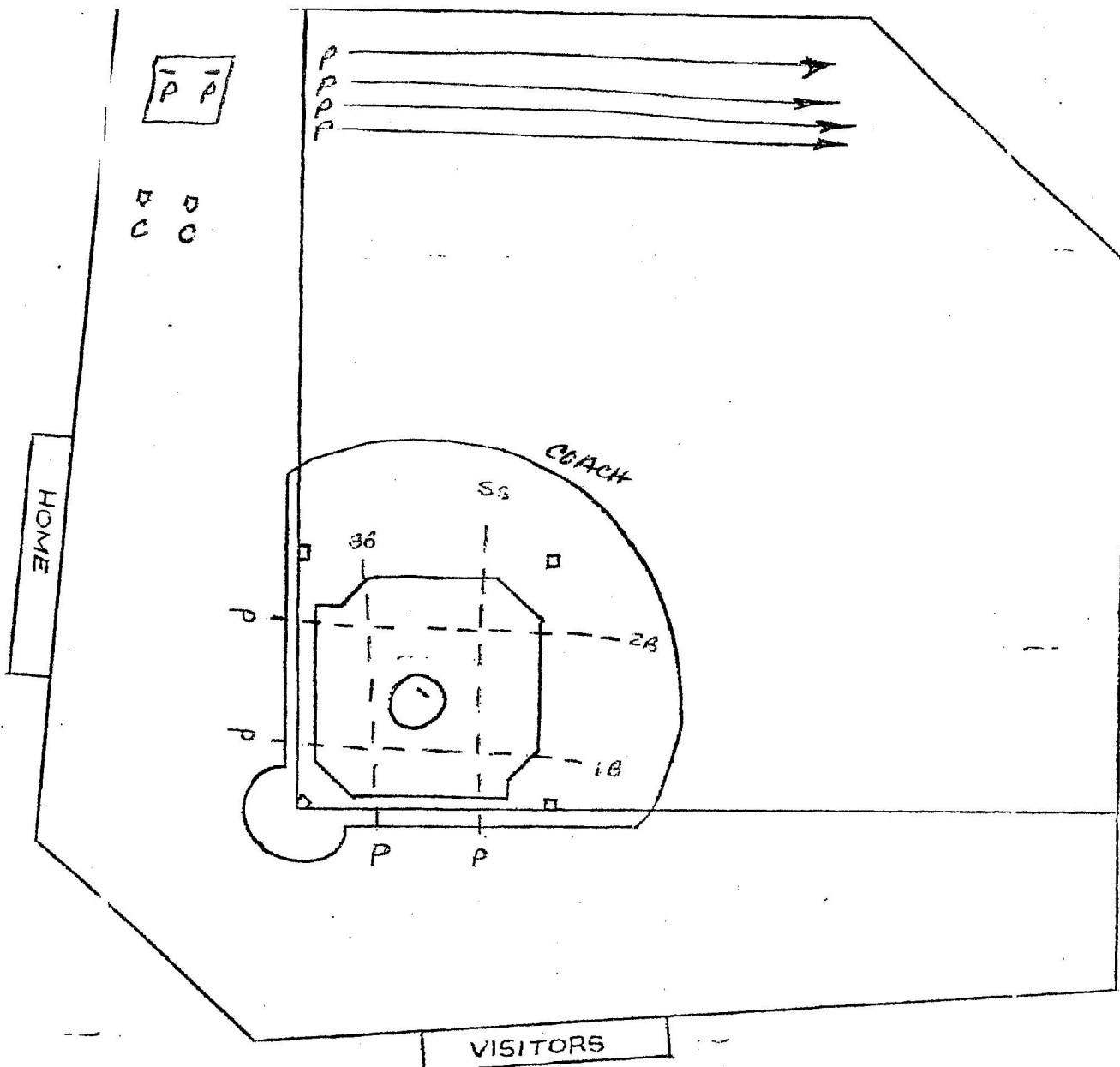


FIG. #10.

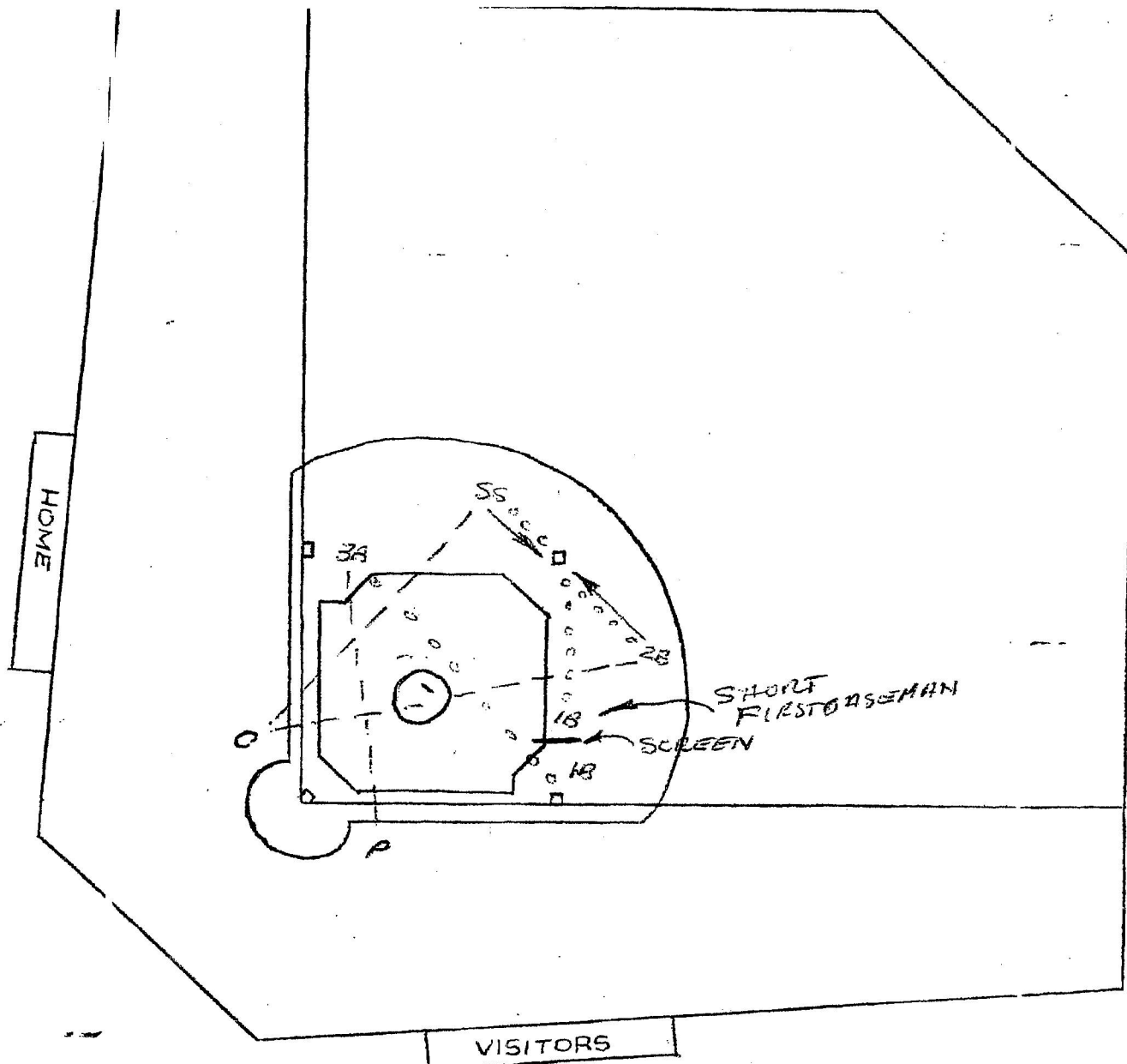
SLOW ROLLER DRILL



III. FUNGO DRILLS

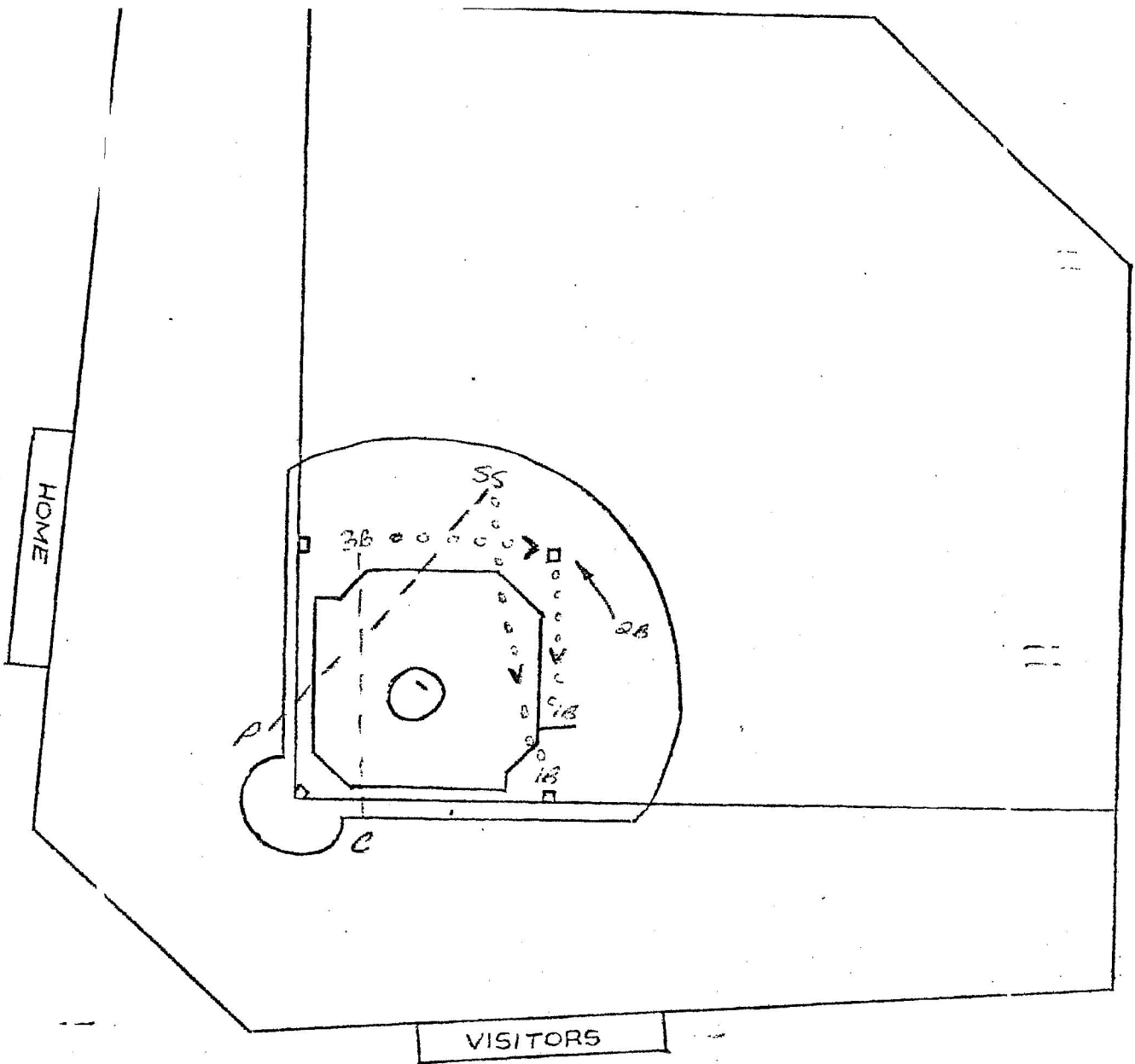
These drills can be used either inside or outside, depending on indoor facilities that are available. We use these drills when we want our fielders to receive a lot of fielding practice. With this method each fielder can pick up about 50-75 ground balls in a short period of time. Also, there is no one standing around without anything to do.

- 1.) FOUR STATION FUNGO DRILL: In this drill we have four pitchers hit fungos to our infielders shown in the figure above. We rotate these pitchers so each can have a break from their running. During this drill, the coach can walk along the back of the infield to help each player with his fundamentals. This drill should be done for about 15 or 20 minutes.



- 2.) DOUBLE PLAY DRILL: In this drill the coach can hit balls or he can watch from the back of the infield. The only change that we make is that we only use two fungo hitters. Also, we use a short firstbaseman ^{who} will be receiving balls from the secondbaseman and shortstop double plays. Here, the hitter on the firstbase side starts by hitting balls to the thirdbasemen, who in turn throw over to the regular firstbaseman. The hitter, on the thirdbase side will hit fungos to the shortstop and secondbasemen, who in turn, turn the double play to the short firstbaseman.

*NOTE: We want to make sure that each fungo hitter has a man shag for him.



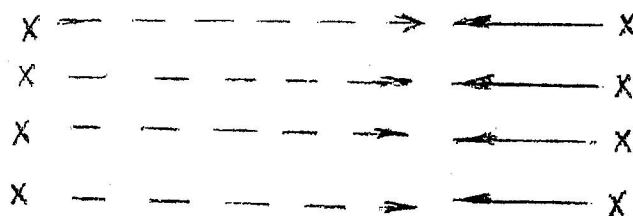
2.) DOUBLE PLAY DRILL:(CONTINUED)

Once the middle infielders turn about 30 double plays, we switch and have the thirdbaseman turn with the secondbaseman. At this time the shortstop will throw to the regular firstbaseman.

OUTFIELD DRILLS:

I.) PARTNER DRILLS: In the same fashion, we have partner drills for the outfielders. We want our outfielders to be fundamentally perfect. These drills are used inside and outside. The indoor drills are modified for indoor use. These drills are performed each day until a good habit has been formed, then, they are continued outside.

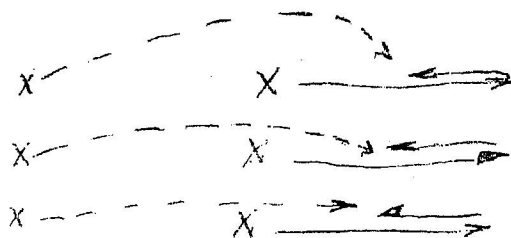
A.) COMING IN ON THE BALL: In this drill we line our fielders up the same way the infielders line up for their drills. One side throws the ball in the air, simulating a pop-up. The other side is working on two fundamentals; 1.) They try get back on the ball so that they can get about three steps into the ball before they catch it. We want some momentum built up before we catch the ball. 2.) We want the fielders to work on getting a good "crow hop" after they catch the ball. We can either throw the ball back to our partner or have them throw against a concrete wall in the gym.



COMING IN ON THE BALL DRILL

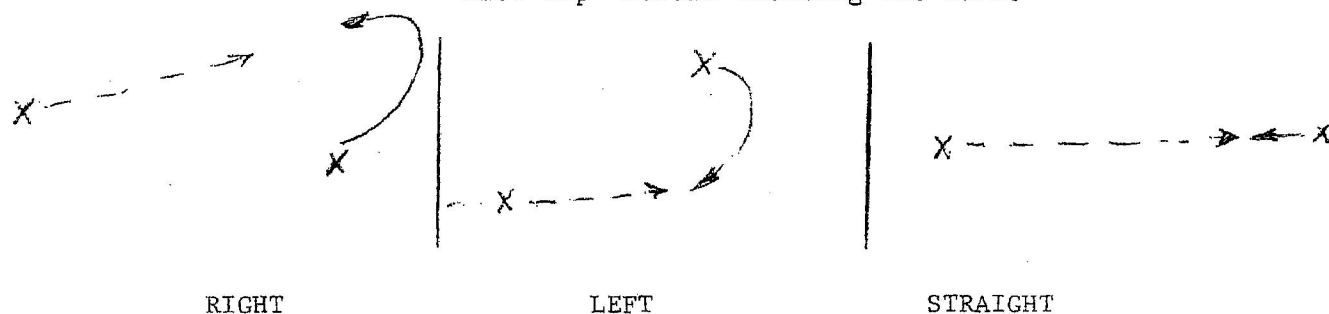
3 STEPS INTO
THE CATCH

B.) BACK ON THE BALL: This drill is designed to teach the outfielders how to get back on the balls hit to their left and right. These balls are also deep fly balls. We want to learn how to get some momentum into our throw. On these balls, we want to dropstep, crossover, and circle the ball, making sure that we step into the catch with a couple of steps. This will give us the momentum necessary for a good strong throw.



BACK ON THE BALL DRILL

C.) GROUND BALL DRILL: With this drill we are working on our ground ball technique. When there are no men on base, and a ball is hit into the outfield, we want our outfielders to go down on one knee to pick up the ball. We do this so that the ball does not get by us, allowing the hitter to get another base. When there are men on base, we must field the ball with two hands, fielding the ball like an infielder. In this drill we will use both techniques. This drill simulates the balls hit to the right, left, and straight on. Also, in this drill, we want to concentrate on getting a good "crow-hop" before throwing the ball.

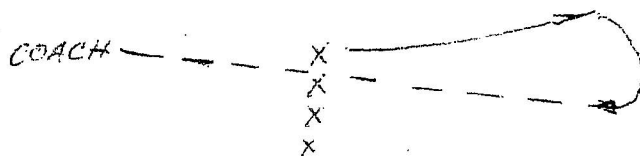


GROUND BALL DRILLS:

GROUP DRILLS

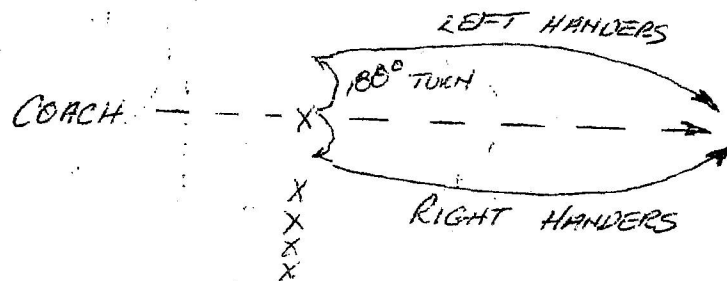
II.) GROUP DRILLS: These drills are performed with the coach controlling the drills. These drills can also be used indoors.

A.) WIND BLOWN BALLS: In this drill we work on fielding balls that have been blown over our opposite shoulder. Here, the coach sends the player out in one direction then throws the ball over his opposite shoulder, simulating a wind blown ball. The player must take his eye off the ball and spin in the same direction that he is running, and catch the ball. We will work this drill going back to the right and left.



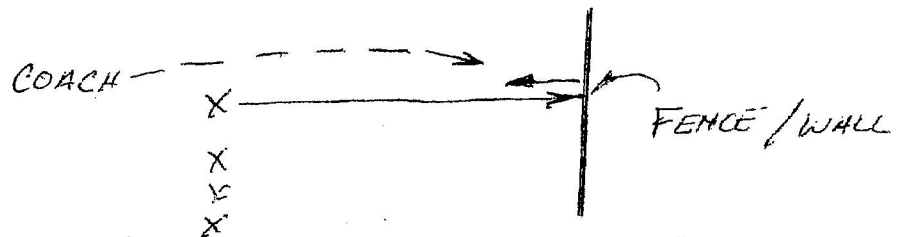
WIND BLOWN BALL DRILLS

B.) OVER THE SHOLDER OR HEAD DRILL: In this drill, we are working on balls hit directly over the head. Here, the athlete must make a 180 deg. turn with his glove side being the pivot point. We turn this way for two reasons: 1.) So we can get out of the path of the ball. It is easier to look out at an angle while running back on the ball, than it is to look straight overhead while running. 2.) We turn in this direction so that our glove remains to the infield side of the field. This way we can make the catch and throw immediately, instead of having to turn around and throw.



OVER THE HEAD DRILL

C.) FENCE DRILL: This drill is designed to help fielders learn to find the fence and come in on the ball. Here the coach will throw balls to the fence, and the fielders will go after them. When outdoors, we will use the outfield fence. Indoors we will use the gym wall. It is important that the outfielders learn to communicate to each other. So, in this drill, we also have them talk to each other.



FENCE DRILL