



Coaching Youth Softball

Defensive Breakdown



Now we are going to talk about the defensive segment of softball. We all know how important it is when a player hits the ball somewhere, that it is very important we can put people out there who can catch the ball. We are going to talk about the infield portion of defense and getting the player into the proper position.

Fielding Position

As the infield assumes their position they should make sure they feel comfortable and step into their defensive position. Players have to take some pride in defense. They have to want the ball to come to them and must feel like they want to make the play.

First of all they have to have a proper stance. The key word is “Break down”. The important thing before you get into your stance is to feel comfortable in your position. Do you need to check the surface? Are there rocks out there? Do you know where the sun is? Do you know if the wind is blowing? These are things that players can think about as they progress and get better.

When players get ready for the breakdown position they should think about the whole body. They should start at the bottom and be on the balls of their feet. They don't want to be right up on the toes because they would be in a position that is too tense. By being on the balls of their feet they are ready to go and get the ball.

The knees should be flexed to enable the player to move left and right. Not every ball is going to come right to them and they are going to have to move to get the ball. They should have their head up to be able to see the ball and have an idea of where it is coming to.

The back should be in a reasonably straight position. Not a rigid position, but in a comfortable straight position so the player can reach up to get the line drive if necessary. After the ball is hit and the player sees it coming towards them, they should have their glove in the ready position, down right next to the ground and watch the ball come into the glove. This goes back to progressive coaching where you taught them to watch the ball into the glove. You are now teaching them to do the same thing with a pop up or a ground ball. A good coaching point would be if you were hitting a ground ball to an infielder, you would be seeing the top of their head when they field the ball.