

LESSON 1: THROWING, CATCHING, AND DEFENSE

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

Throwing: Throws with a mature pattern for distance or power appropriate to the practice task (e.g., distance = outfield to home plate; power = 2nd base to 1st base). (S1.M2.6)

Catching: Catches, with a mature pattern, from different trajectories using a variety of objects in small-sided game play. (S1.M21.7)

Reducing space: Selects the correct defensive play based on the situation (e.g., number of outs). (S2.M11.7)

Embedded Outcomes

Assessment & program planning: Maintains a physical activity log for at least 2 weeks and reflects on activity levels as documented in the log. (S3.M16.6)

Working with others: Problem-solves with a small group of classmates during adventure activities, small-group initiatives or game play. (S4.M5.7)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- demonstrate proper throwing technique using all critical elements of a mature pattern during the four-corners practice task.
- demonstrate proper catching technique using all critical elements of a mature pattern during the four-corners practice task.
- demonstrate appropriate footwork three out of five times when playing a base for a force out during partner practice.

Equipment and Materials

- Ball options: tennis balls, Wiffle balls, racquetballs, foam balls, etc.
- Four-base grid options: bases spray-painted on grass, rubber bases, poly spots
- Cones
- Pedometers

Introduction

Pique students' interest by commenting or asking questions about a local softball team or a favorite baseball team. Discuss Wiffle ball as a safe activity option for softball or baseball. Explain that today's lesson involves throwing and catching; provide a brief overview of the module. Ask about students' participation in after-school or community softball or baseball programs (embedded outcome: S3.M16.6).

We also will continue tracking our physical activity with this module. I will provide you with an individual step-count goal for each lesson, as well as asking you to track your physical activity outside of class.

Instructional Task: Catching Warm-Up

■ PRACTICE TASK

Catch on the run

Partners with one ball travel within cones while underhand tossing and catching. Partners count all successful catches in the time period (30 seconds to 1 minute). Give safety reminders about avoiding others. Partners need to communicate.

Guiding questions for students:

- What did you do to be successful?
- How did you toss?
- How did you catch?
- How did you catch a ball that was high?
- How did you catch a ball that was low?

Extensions

- Have partners talk to develop strategies for improving the number of successful catches.
- Repeat the same activity one or two more times, using the same time period.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Partners choose the type of ball they want to use.
- Partners may decide how fast they want to move.
- Partners may decide how far apart they want to be (minimum of two arm lengths).

What to Look For**Critical elements for catching:**

1. Watch the ball to anticipate its flight.
2. Get both hands ready: “When it’s high, thumbs will meet; pinkies touch when it’s at your feet.”
3. Absorb the ball into the body.

Instructional Task:**Throwing and Catching Practice and Pre-Assessment****■ PRACTICE TASK****Four-corners throwing**

In a grid formation (four bases), one student is at each base. One student with the ball begins by throwing to the next student, clockwise around the bases. Students continue throwing for a designated time (at least five times around the grid). Students call for the ball.

Be sure to stagger the grids so any overthrows are not in line with the next grid.

The group should take two or three extra balls in case students lose one from the playing area.

Guiding questions for students:

- What do your feet do when you throw?
- Why do you want to turn your body when you throw?
- Why should you reach high when the ball is behind you?
- When you catch, what can you do to make sure the thrower knows where to throw? (Answer: Say the thrower’s name and “right here.”)

Extension

- Do the same activity but counterclockwise.

Guiding questions for students:

- Which direction of throwing was easier? Why?
- What do you need to do with your feet if you have to catch a ball and then turn to your throwing side to make your throw?
- Does anyone know what that movement with your feet is called? (Answer: crow hop)
- How does the crow hop help your throw?

- Groups go back to their grids and throw three more times around the bases, focusing on the crow hop.
- Each group then creates a different throwing pattern that might include throwing across the grid, along with throwing around the grid.
- Challenge each group to make at least 12 successful throws and catches using the new pattern.

Refinement

Make sure that students are stepping toward the target when they throw.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Each group of four students chooses the type of ball it would like to use and also chooses the size of grid.
- If a group is having difficulty with successful throws and catches, decrease the size of the grid.

What to Look For

Critical elements for throwing:

1. Step to the target.
2. Reach high with the ball and point at the target (T position).
3. Turn and push off back foot.
4. Release high and follow through down across the body.

Critical elements for the crow hop:

1. Straddle an imaginary (or real) line.
2. Jump in the air, turn to the throwing side, and land with the throwing side foot on the line.
3. Step to the target with non-throwing-side foot.

Focus feedback on throwing in the first activity and then on the crow hop and calling for the ball in the second and third activities.

Pre-assessment

Use a simple checklist or rating scale (see example) on a single recording sheet or portable electronic device for assessing throwing and catching during this task.

Instructional Task: Footwork at a Base for a Force Out

■ PRACTICE TASK

Ask students about the rules for getting runners out, and follow up with “why” questions (e.g., Why should you move to the side of the base that is closest to the thrower? Answer: to catch the ball sooner, giving you a better chance of getting the runner out).

Play the base

In the same groups of four, students make partners. Each set of partners uses one base; one partner underhand tosses the ball to the partner who is practicing the footwork for making a force out at a base. After five throws, partners switch places.

Give safety reminders about making sure that the receiver is ready before throwing.

Extensions

- The tosser should now throw from different angles to the partner playing the base to make that partner move to the side or corner of the base that is closest to the throw.
- Have the student playing the base begin several steps away from the base and then run to the base, turn, and make the catch.

THROWING AND CATCHING RATING SCALE

Critical Elements for Catching

- Watch the ball to anticipate its flight.
- Step toward the target.
- Get both hands ready. “When it’s high, thumbs will meet; pinkies touch when it’s at your feet.”
- Absorb the ball into the body.
- Release high and follow through

Critical Elements for Throwing

Reach high with the ball
and point to target.

Turn and push off back foot.
across the body.

Rating Scale

- 3 Student performs the skill consistently, using all critical elements properly; skill appears automatic.
- 2 Student performs the skill using critical elements; repetitions may not be similar; cognitive concentration necessary.
- 1 Student attempts the skill; performance of critical elements is inconsistent.

Directions: Enter a number that best represents each student's performance of each skill. Use the "Needs Practice" column for notes on follow-up.

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From R.J. Doan, L.C. MacDonald, and S. Chepko, eds., 2017, *Lesson planning for middle school physical education* (Reston, VA: SHAPE America; Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Partners choose the type of ball they want to use.
- Partners determine the distance from the thrower to the partner covering the base.
- Partners determine the variation in the direction from which the throw is made.
- Partners determine the starting position of the student playing the base (right next to the base or several steps from the base).

What to Look For

Critical elements for footwork at a base for a force out:

1. Standing with back to the base, move to the side of the base that is closest to the thrower.
2. Face the direction from which the throw is coming, and put the throwing-side foot on the edge of the base (toes pointing down).
3. Put both hands up to show a target.
4. Call to the thrower.
5. Step forward to catch the ball, keeping the other foot in contact with the base.

Instructional Task: Game Application of Throwing, Catching, Playing a Base

■ PRACTICE TASK

2 v 2:

Using the same grids and groups of four, two students play first- and second-base defensive positions. The other two are at home base as the offensive team. An offensive player throws the ball toward the right side of the grid and runs through first base. The defensive team fields the ball and works to make a force out at first base. After each of the offensive players have had three “at bats,” the teams switch roles.

Have the thrower run to a cone 6 to 8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) beyond first base to prevent collisions at the base.

Refinement

Make sure that students are keeping one foot on the edge of the base.

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S4.M5.7 As a problem-solving challenge, students work in groups to determine which defensive player will field the ball and who will cover the base. Students can discuss and implement strategy.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Each group of four should choose the type of ball it would like to use and also choose the size of the grid.

What to Look For

- Students look before throwing.
 - Students make accurate throws.
 - Students are able to catch under pressure.
 - Students are able to apply their base-playing skills in the modified game.
 - Students play the base, keeping one foot just on the edge of the base and not on top of it.
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Formal and Informal Assessments

- During the lesson introduction, ask students about their softball or baseball participation in after-school or community programs.
- Use a throwing and catching checklist or rating scale.

Closure

Today, we reviewed the catching and throwing skills that you'd learned previously, and also, you learned some new skills—crow hop and playing a base for a force out.

If students are primarily at the pre-control and control levels in throwing and catching skills, use questions such as:

- What are some things to remember about catching a ball?
- Why are those things important?
- What do you have to do to be an accurate thrower?
- Show me how you do a crow hop. Why do we have to do that when throwing?

If students are primarily competent and proficient in throwing and catching skills, ask questions such as: Who can show me the footwork of how to get a runner out at a base? Can someone else explain the important things to remember about the footwork? When you were playing 2 v 2, how did you know which person was going to cover the base? How did you cooperate? Did you talk to each other? When you were the thrower, where did you throw the ball to give yourself a better chance at being safe? Why did that work? Would you try anything different next time?

Reflection

- At what level are students' throwing and catching abilities?
- Is more teaching and practice time needed on those basic skills?
- Can students begin to combine throwing and catching with other skills?
- Are they grasping the offensive strategy of where to hit a ball and the defensive strategy of how to get a runner out at first?
- Are they remembering to communicate with each other?

Homework

Practice the crow hop at home with or without throwing a ball. Watch yourself in a mirror performing the crow hop with the throwing motion.

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S3.M16.6. Remind students to record physical education step counts, daily physical activity time, and reflections in a personal log after each lesson in the module.

Resources

- Graham, G., Holt/Hale, S.A., & Parker, M. (2012). *Children moving: A reflective approach to teaching physical education*. 9th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Mitchell, S.A., Oslin, J.L., & Griffin, L.L. (2013). *Teaching sport concepts and skills: A tactical games approach*. 3rd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Potter, D.L., & Johnson, L. (2007). *Teaching softball: Steps to success*. 3rd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.