

LESSON 2: OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE SKILLS

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

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

Offensive skills: Executes at least one of the following designed to create open space during small-sided game play: pivots, fakes, jab steps. (S1.M6.7)

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

Embedded Outcome

Working with others: Cooperates with a small group of classmates during adventure activities, game play or team-building activities. (S4.M5.6)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- demonstrate proper catching technique using all critical elements of a mature pattern during the four-corners practice task.
- demonstrate techniques (pivot, fake, jab step) to avoid being tagged when running the bases during the tag 'em out and pickle game practice tasks.

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

Begin with a review of footwork at a base for a force out. Do a recognition check for understanding. Demonstrate the footwork two times, one done correctly and one incorrectly. Ask students which one was correct and why. Follow up with “why” questions about the footwork (e.g., Why is it important to put your foot on the edge of the base? Answer: So you can catch the ball sooner and you don't trip the runner). Provide an individual step-count goal.

Instructional Task: Throwing and Catching Practice

■ PRACTICE TASK

Four-corners throwing:

In a grid formation (four bases), one student is at each base. Based on your whistle, students throw clockwise and then counterclockwise.

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

Each group should take two or three extra balls in case throws go astray. Give safety reminders about looking before throwing.

Refinements

- Crow hop: Use a low and quick step for a short throw. Exaggerate a high step to make a long throw.
- Footwork on base: Wait to put your foot on the base until you know the direction the throw is coming from.

- Calling for the ball: Repeat, calling for the ball multiple times.
- Students self-assess on the critical elements for catching.

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.
- If a group is having difficulty with throwing and catching successfully, decrease the size of the grid.

What to Look For

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.

Instructional Task: Tagging Runners

■ PRACTICE TASK

Ask students about the rules for tagging unforced runners out, asking primarily “why” questions (e.g., Why should you hold the ball with two hands when tagging a runner? Answer: to ensure that the ball is held securely) to check for understanding.

Tag 'em out: In the same groups of four, one student is the defender of a base, one throws the ball to the defender, and the other two take turns as runners coming from the previous base. The defender tries to tag the runner, while the runner tries to avoid being tagged before she reaches the base. After five throws, students rotate to a new position: thrower, defender, runner 1, runner 2.

Do not allow sliding into a base.

Emphasize that the tagger should stand outside of the baseline to avoid collisions.

Extensions

- Increase the distance of the throw.
- Increase the tagger's distance from the base.

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

- Runners use pivots, fakes, and/or jab steps to evade being tagged.
- Critical elements for tagging a runner:
 1. Hold the ball with two hands.
 2. Tag the runner on the upper body.
 3. Stand to the side of the baseline to avoid collisions.

Instructional Task: Game Application of Defending a Base With Unforced Runners (Tactical Approach)

■ PRACTICE TASK

Pickle game:

In groups of four (three on defense and one on offense),

- two defenders start at one of the bases and one starts at the other base; one defender from the group of two has a ball;
- the runner starts in the middle;
- play begins when the defender with the ball moves;

- defenders throw the ball back and forth, trying to tag the runner out before she reaches either base;
- when a defender throws the ball, he runs to cover the base of the player to whom he threw;
- runner scores a point when reaching either of the bases without being tagged; and
- after three tries, the runner switches with a defender.

Keep track of points scored individually. Do not allow sliding or diving into a base. Emphasize that the tagger should stand outside of the baseline to avoid collisions.

Guiding questions for students:

- What was the runner's goal? (Answer: to reach either base without being tagged)
- What did you do as the runner to keep from getting tagged? (Answer: watched the player with the ball; changed directions when he threw the ball; used a fake, pivot, or jab step to avoid the defender's tag)
- What was the defenders' goal? (Answer: to tag the runner before she got to a base)
- As defenders, how did the three of you move between the two bases so that you worked together efficiently? (Answer: We followed our throws to rotate to the other base.)
- What did your throws look like, or what kind of throws did you make? (Answer: short throws made with the wrist, just like throwing a dart)
- How did you communicate so that you knew when to throw the ball? (Answer: We told the thrower when to throw the ball to us.)

Extension

Have each group run a shuttle relay, using dart throws on the run, the receivers calling for the ball and throwers following their throws to the next base. Each group keeps a continuous shuttle going until all members have returned to their starting positions without dropping the ball.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Each group of four should choose the type of ball it would like to use and the distance between the two bases.

What to Look For

Critical elements for defenders:

- Run fast to cover the base.
- Keep the ball high (throwing hand).
- Use a dart throw.
- Follow your throw.

Critical elements for runners:

- Watch the ball.
- Change directions when the defenders throw the ball.
- Use a fake, pivot, or jab step to avoid the tag.

Formal and Informal Assessments

Self-assessment of catching

Closure

- Discuss tagging runners (defending a base with unforced runners).
- Groups of four discuss: When playing the pickle game, what can a runner do to reach a base?
- What should a defender do to tag the runner out?

Reflection

- Are students' throwing and catching skills at the competency level so that they can use them in small-sided game play?
- Do students understand the difference between forced and unforced runners?

Homework




Ask students to update their physical activity logs.

Part or whole worksheet (see example): Have students list the critical elements of catching a thrown ball, then identify one element to take away. Have students respond to the following questions: What would happen to the skill if this part was missing? Why do we need to do that part of the skill?

Resources

- Bailey, J. (2008). Rundowns in physical education? Try the tactical approach. *Strategies*, 22(2), 10-12.
- Graham, G. (2008). *Teaching children physical education: Becoming a master teacher*. 3rd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- 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.

PART OR WHOLE ASSIGNMENT: CATCHING

Catching

List the critical elements:

Take one part away:

What would happen to the skill if this part was missing? Why do we need this part?

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).