

Run Down Drill

Your players can practice this simple drill on their own once fully explained to them. The drill requires five players:

1. A base-runner.
2. Four infielders

The drill can be practiced between first and second base, second and third base, or third base and home plate. It starts with a runner caught off base and a run-down ensues, involving three of the five with the other two backing up and rotating into the play whenever the fielder he is backing-up throws the ball.

The fielder that throws the ball moves out of the line of action and replaces his former backup who is now involved in the run-down. This run-down play requires practice until the fielders automatically perform their duties in a smooth and orderly fashion.

Teach your players to communicate in a fashion that they understand who is covering the different positions.

Teach the base-runner to force as many throws as possible without being tagged out and make a successful recovery. He can do this by faking change of direction, etc.

The infielders exhibit these four objectives:

1. Chase the runner back toward the previous base.
2. Run the base-runner down if you can, rather than making an errant throw.
3. Make few throws as needed.
4. Fake throws to force base-runner to change direction.

Not recommended for younger age groups

Practice the run-down between all bases and stress that the pitcher is involved in every one of them. For example, with a runner trapped between first and second, the first baseman and second baseman are in the initial run-down with shortstop backing up the second baseman and the pitcher backing up the first baseman.

Between second and third base, the shortstop and third baseman are initially involved with the second baseman backing up the shortstop and the pitcher backing up the third baseman. Should the runner be trapped between third and home, the catcher and third baseman are involved in the beginning with the pitcher backing up the catcher and the shortstop backs up the third baseman.

Past experience teaches me that when a run-down goes astray, it is usually because a pitcher failed to go to his proper position; therefore, stress this in your instructions.

This is a fun drill that can be practiced by different groups at the same time. Both the base-runner and fielders will benefit and result in a better team.