

## Outfield Communication Drill

For some reason the same kids who like to call out in school or yell and scream around the house don't like to speak up on the baseball field. At times this can cause serious problems – and lead to injury situations – in both the infield and outfield. We have a drill that emphasizes the importance of outfielders communicating about who is going to catch a fly ball. Our instructors make the drill fun by encouraging the kids to get excited and to be loud.

### The Setup

The setup for the outfield communication drill is very simple: one bucket of balls, one coach and two single-file lines of players. The lines should be parallel and about 25 feet apart.

This drill is designed to help players understand the importance of clearly calling a fly ball that they are going to attempt to catch. It also can be used to introduce the concept of outfield fly ball priorities. The drill will help teams avoid potential injury situations and teach players not to be shy about communicating on the baseball field. A team that communicates well most likely will be a good defensive team.

### Points of Emphasis

1. The outfielder calling the ball should be loud and clear.
2. The outfielder calling the ball should yell, "I got it!" at least three times: "I got it! I got it! I got it!"
3. The player calling the ball should get to the spot where it is coming down quickly to set up and catch the ball over the head with two hands.
4. The player not making the catch should get out of the way and back up the other fielder.

## **Executing the Drill**

The coach finds the mid-point between the two lines and backs up so that he can throw simulated fly balls in between the first two players in each line. After the ball is thrown, the player closest to it should call the ball forcefully three times: "I got it! I got it! I got it!" before getting to the spot quickly and catching the ball with two hands over the head. The other player should get out of the way quickly and back up the player who called the ball. If the player farther from the ball calls it, the other player still should defer to the fielder who called the ball to avoid a potential collision situation. This introduces the importance of effective communication on the baseball field. The players should switch lines after each turn. A more advanced version of the drill introduces the concept of outfield priorities by designating one line as the center field line and the other line as one of the other outfield positions. Any ball the center fielder calls is his, with the other player moving out of the way and backing up the one who called the ball.

## **Teaching Point**

The main teaching points here are the importance of being loud and forceful and deferring to a teammate who has called a fly ball. In addition, the basic fundamentals of catching a fly ball should be stressed: get to the spot quickly and catch the ball with two hands above the head so that you can see the ball and the glove at the same time. Outfielders should try not to drift when catching fly balls.

**By Cal and Bill Ripken**