

Catching Stances, Receiving, and Blocking

Patriot Athletic League

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Catching Stances

- The catcher's stance is the foundation from which everything happens. From here, your catcher will call the game, receive pitches, and throw out runners.
- With each situation, the stance is altered in anticipation of the next play. Three basic stances are:
 1. Signal Stance
 2. Receiving Stance
 3. Stance with Runners on

Signal Stance

- Your **catcher's feet** should be square to the pitcher and their body should split the plate in half.
- The **left knee** should point at the shortstop position and the **right knee** should be pointed to the second baseman, **or closed enough so a runner on first base/first base coach cannot see the signs.**
- Your **catcher's glove** should extend beyond the left knee to guard against the third base coach seeing the signals.
- The **throwing arm** should rest in the hip flexor crevice with the **elbow** tucked in.
- Make sure your catcher's **signal hand** is even with their cup. Your catchers should be aware not to give signs too high or too low.
- Your catcher should always check the positioning of the batter in the box and be aware of them peeking.



Receiving Stance

- After giving the sign, your catcher should shift into a comfortable but fundamentally sound receiving position with their **thighs resting on their calves and their heels on the ground**.
- A quiet move to the proper location inside or outside should be at the right time so that the hitter cannot see it and runners on base cannot relay the location of the pitch to the batter.
- Your **catcher's feet should be roughly shoulder-width apart with weight on the inside of the feet and toes turned slightly out**.
- The **glove arm** should be slightly extended to give a good target.
- **The glove positioning** should be with fingers pointed to the sky. This will allow the elbow to remain tucked and give the pitcher an open glove target.
- Your **catcher's glove** should be visible and not move until the pitcher releases the pitch.
- The position within the catcher's box will vary according to the hitter. **Have your catchers always stay as close to the hitter as possible without interfering**.
- The **bare hand (throwing hand)** should be behind the right heel, behind the back, or on the outside of the throwing-hand leg.



Runners on Stance

- **With runners on base or with two strikes on the hitter**, a modified receiving stance becomes a more athletic throwing and blocking position.
- Your **catcher's feet** should be roughly shoulder-width apart with weight on the balls of the feet.
- The **rear should be elevated** in an athletic ready position.
- Make sure your catcher is still giving a good, open target. Remember "fingers to the sky."
- **The bare hand** should be in a comfortable place behind the glove or on the outside of the throwing hand leg.



Receiving Tips

- Catcher Keeps their **eyes on the ball** and following it into their glove.
- Your catcher should always give a **good target** to the pitcher.
- **anticipate where the ball is going to** be when it crosses the plate so they can get their glove to that spot before the ball gets there to catch the ball firmly.
- Make sure your catcher **is being firm enough and sticking the pitch to present the location to the umpire**, but also soft enough so they are not jabbing at the ball and changing the location.
- Your catcher should **catch the ball out in front of their body** to give the umpire a good look at the pitch.
- Remember: A good catcher goes unnoticed. One of the best compliments a catcher can receive is that they are unnoticeable. **Limiting glove and body movement and catching the ball cleanly makes for a very good receiving catcher.**



Receiving / Framing / Presenting

- Your catcher should catch all strikes that are in the zone and let them be strikes.
- For pitches that are on the edges of the plate, the catcher's fingers should start pointed to the sky and the glove should move side-to-side in handling those pitches.
- Your catcher should never try to make an obvious ball look like a strike. That will only irritate the umpire and is an unnecessary action.
- Your catcher should not be in a hurry to jump out of the catching position on strike three.
- Remember: Bullpens are a great time for your pitchers to work on skills, and also for your catchers to work on their fundamental skills. Make sure your catchers are using this time to perfect their craft.



Blocking Introduction



- **Your catcher must understand that it is their responsibility and commitment to block every ball in the dirt with runners on base or two strikes on the hitter.** The ability to block provides trust for the pitchers in throwing their best pitches in crucial situations. When working on blocking with your catchers, remember the following:
 - Your catchers should **always anticipate balls being** in the dirt with runners on base or two strikes on the batter.
 - Have your catcher **cut the distance between themselves and where the ball bounces** so that the ball bounces off the chest protector.
 - Gaining ground shortens the hop and creates a better angle.
 - The distance your catchers can cover will vary.
 - The catcher's range will dictate the angle at which they cut distance from left to right.
 - If **the pitch is in the dirt straight ahead**, your catcher can cut distance or simply go to their knees as quickly as possible.
 - If **the pitch is in the dirt to the left or right**, your catchers should take a 45 degree angle to cut the ball off.
 - Your catchers should always try to block the ball by getting around it to control where it bounces, ideally back funneling the ball to home plate.
- **Soft movements translate to control** of the ball when it hits your catcher.
 - Your catchers must relax, let the ball hit them, and not try to “pick it” with their glove.
- Depending on the situation, after blocking the ball, the catcher must locate the ball quickly, get to their feet, and retrieve the ball and be ready to throw to the appropriate base.

Blocking Checklist



Knees

- Get both knees to the ground in the direction of the ball as quickly as possible.
- Do not jump to the knees. Soft landings make for soft movements.

Glove

- Lead with the glove and cover the hole between the legs with both the glove and bare hand.
- The bare hand should be entirely behind the glove.
- The glove should remain open at all times.

Elbows

- The elbows should sink into the correct position when the hands are in the correct position.
- Keeping one's elbows tucked into the sides creates a bigger target for the ball to hit. In doing this, the shoulders will stay squared to the ball.

Chin

- The chin should go directly down to the chest to locate the ball on the ground.
- This movement will cause the shoulders to round and be over the ball, creating a good angle for the ball to bounce off the catcher.
- The catcher needs to keep their eyes open to locate the ball quickly.

Drills

- [Bare Hand Receiving Drill –](#)
- [Tennis Ball Soft Hands Drill - Video](#)
- [Nose Behind Ball - Video](#)
- [Tic Tac Toe – Video](#)
- [Block and Recover - Video](#)
- [Block, Recover, Throw Drill -video](#)
- [Proper Catching Stances](#)