

- CATCHER'S CHEAT SHEET -

Catcher is the most physically demanding position on the field. Good catchers are always "in the game" mentally; and as the only player who can see the whole field, the catcher expected to be a "coach" on the field, delivering pre-pitch and in-play instructions to the team when needed. Listed below are five key things, along with a few additional tips, Catcher's should focus on to be successful...

1. THE STANCE, OR PREPARING FOR THE PITCH (All Levels):

- ❑ Proper stance forces the catcher to "SWAY" his body to the pitch, versus "STAB" with his glove...
- ❑ ...and puts him in a better position to "SMOOTHLY" receive a good pitch...or block a bad pitch!
- ❑ **REST STANCE** (used between pitches, when giving signs, with no runners on base)
 1. Squat with feet shoulder-width apart, on balls of feet
 2. Toes pointed in, heels pointed out, knees pointed at pitcher
- ❑ **READY STANCE** (used all other times)
 1. Same as rest except: right foot 6-12 inches out and 3-6 inches back
 2. Thighs off of calves (or off Knee Savers), back parallel to the ground

2. RECEIVING THE PITCH (All Levels):

- ❑ Glove arm elbow @ 90° angle, throwing hand hidden behind right shin guard
- ❑ Glove (the "target") open, at CALLED pitch location (hold glove as still as possible!)

3. FRAMING THE PITCH (Majors, AAA Only):

- ❑ Minimum sideways glove and arm movement is the key to "framing" pitches
- ❑ Proper "framing" can occasionally turn a "borderline" pitch into a strike
- ❑ If pitch is IN or NEAR the strike zone:
 - i. Extend your glove outward (toward pitcher) to the ball, "shortening" the pitch
 - ii. Simultaneously "sway" to the ball with your body (should come natural if stance is correct)
- ❑ If pitch is OUT of the strike zone, don't get fancy, JUST CATCH IT!

4. BLOCKING LOW PITCHES (All Levels):

- ❑ The objective of "blocking" is to KEEP THE BALL IN FRONT OF YOU...
 - i. DROP to knees in direction of pitch, glove on cup, right arm on body, tuck in CHIN
 - ii. IF you catch it, POP UP FAST to see what the runners are doing
 - iii. IF you miss it, or don't know where it is, TAKE MASK OFF and go get it
 - iv. On passed ball or wild pitch with runner on third, use "backstop slide" technique

5. THROWING (All Levels):

- ❑ Objective is to get NON-THROWING SHOULDER pointing toward the target base
 - i. PIVOT TECHNIQUE - Bring ball and glove TOGETHER up to RIGHT EAR while rocking back and PIVOTING on RIGHT toe, then step toward base with LEFT foot and RELEASE the ball
 - ii. JUMP TECHNIQUE - Bring ball and glove back TOGETHER up to RIGHT EAR while jumping into position (non-throwing shoulder at target base) and RELEASE the ball
- ❑ QUICK RELEASE beats strong throw (quick release AND strong throw is the best)

OTHER TIPS (All Levels):

- ❑ **MASK:** ON when receiving or returning pitches, throwing out base stealers, otherwise OFF.
- ❑ **COVERING HOME:** Stand in front of home plate; go up line for "dead" runners (don't wait)
- ❑ **FIELDING BUNTS:** Field the ball with non-throwing shoulder facing the target base
- ❑ **EQUIPMENT:** if you take care of your equipment, it'll take care of you
 - i. MASK - keep the face pads clean...dirt in your eyes is no fun
 - ii. CHEST PROTECTOR - keep properly adjusted as not to restrict throwing
 - iii. SHIN GUARDS - cross two middle straps behind knee, buckles facing outward