

WHS Coaching Resource – Throwing Progression

Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consistent throwing progression should be used at every practice and game to develop good mechanics, muscle memory, and prevent injury (now and in future)
Warm-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure athletes have completed dynamic stretching exercises as well as static stretching on arms and shoulders
Reminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper grip – fingertips should feel a seam on the ball; keep gap between hand and ball (do not palm the ball); fingers lie across the seams (across a “C”) • Proper catching technique – fingers point to the sky with thumbs together (unless ball is below waist then fingers point down and pinkies together); use both hands (bare hand is beside the glove, not behind) – throwing hand is ready to grab ball and/or trap ball; step towards the thrown ball with glove foot • Aim for partner’s chest area (except for “Darts” step) • Repetitions – 10-20 reps per progression (reps may be less prior to game or as season progresses and will vary with skill/age level) • If passed balls are an issue, then could require both thrower and catcher to run to get the ball (this will decrease wild throws)
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not throw unless your partner is looking at you • Pitching masks are optional but recommended (players should get used to wearing their masks – practice like you play in a game)

Throwing Progression:

1. Darts or Wrist Flips	<p>Set-up: throwing elbow in glove (or on top of) at shoulder height, throwing arm in “L” shape, partners 2 metres apart</p> <p>Action: using wrist snap only, looking for lots of back spin</p> <p>Note: ball does not have to make it to your partner</p>
2. Laser Beams	<p>Set-up: same as Darts</p> <p>Action: shoot a “laser beam” with your forearm and wrist</p> <p>Key point: shoulder does not move, harder throw than Darts</p>
3. Upper Body Throw	<p>Set-up: feet side by side, point at target with glove hand elbow, extend throwing arm back (arm is bent, not straight), and rotate trunk</p> <p>Action: no step, follow through throwing arm should hit opposite leg</p> <p>Key point: encourages separation of ball hand and glove hand</p> <p>Variation: Figure 8 (see description under Optional Progressions)</p> <p>Variation: Door Knockers – ball hand “knocks” on imaginary door behind thrower</p>
4. Power Line	<p>Set-up: feet on power line, front arm out at target, extend back arm into L shape (arms form Nike “Swoosh”)</p> <p>Action: throw with no step, lead with elbow up, follow through arm to hit opposite leg, face should finish in the glove (“glove puke”)</p> <p>Key point: encourages hip rotation (hips/chest face side then face forward)</p> <p>Variation: Standing Scarecrow – arms (elbow and hands) at shoulder height, elbows at 90-degree bend, palms down; when you begin to rotate hips, hand comes up (as hand comes up then elbow is starting to follow hips)</p>

5. Two Step Throw	Set-up: start facing partner Action: step with throwing foot (inside of foot pointing at the target) to force hips to turn, step with glove foot pointing at target, throw, follow through, bending at the hip, arm to opposite leg, tucking glove elbow Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footwork is important (start slow before moving to game speed) • Both arms must be used – stretch out (bent arms but glove/ball are away from head) • Follow through – throwing arm finishes on outside of front leg but not across body (touch the shin of your front leg to exaggerate the follow through) • Glove tuck
6. Full Throws	Game speed throws. Focus of throw is on “shortstop to first base” distance where ball is in glove at chest height and then arms extend out from there. Note: Can pause to work on footwork before continuing throws. E.g., a right-handed thrower is “left-right-left” (catch on left foot, plant right foot, step left foot & throw)

Optional Progressions (additional steps if time permits or to add variety to throwing progression):

Half Throw Laser Beam	Standing or kneeling. Arm bent at 90 degrees to side of body with elbow at shoulder height (player can look at arm shape before throwing), lead with elbow and then finish with laser beam
Figure 8	Feet side by side, ball in the middle – start motion on glove side, finishing on throwing side and up into throwing motion – no step; encourages trunk rotation
Knee Drill	Glove foot forward towards target; back leg down on knee; extend arms out with back arm in “L” shape (Nike “Swoosh”), throw and follow through across body Key point: finish with throwing hand outside of front knee
Scarecrow	On one knee with upper body turned to side; partners 3-4 metres apart Key points: hands/arms at shoulder height, elbows at 90 degree bend, palms down, finish with throwing hand outside of front knee
Arm Circle	On one knee with upper body turned to side; partners 3-4 metres apart Key points: start with ball in glove at belly button, separate ball from glove and bring it back in a circle to scarecrow position. “Pet the dog” or “thumb to thigh” (bring the ball down around the bottom of the “circle”). Arm needs to transition to and through the “scarecrow” position smoothly
3 Step Throw	Left foot (catch), right foot (plant), left foot (throw) – footwork focused drill
Toss Up	Toss ball up in air and catch with free hand then step and throw
Hop Backs (or Rocker)	Hop back (on back foot) and then forward (on back foot), and then step & throw. Key points: create awareness of weight transfer to create momentum
Swing Shuffle	Outfield throwing drill – start with arms out and feet along power line with front leg raised. As arms swing down, step behind. As arms come back up then step into throwing position and release. Encourages forward momentum, full circle for throwing arm, hip rotation, and use of both arms.
Long Toss	Continue throwing taking a couple steps back every few throws to stretch out (until players are one-hopping ball to each other); then move back in Note: as distance grows, throwing arm needs to do a larger circle where the ball is brought down around the bottom of the “circle” (i.e., “thumb to thigh”)

Other Exercises and Suggested Drills/Games:

Underhand Throws	Proper technique to step through and follow the throw. Ensure proper footwork (glove foot is forward)
Bare Hand Catches	Re-enforce using two hands and absorbing the ball. Players start close together but gradually move farther back
Back-of-Glove Catches	Let the ball hit the back of their glove, trap it with bare hand, turn and throw quick. Re-enforces using two hands and absorbing the ball
Quick Throws	Feet side by side facing partner; when you catch, jump sideways to partner, throw. Key is to begin to shift weight and move feet prior to catch
Throw/Catch Competitions	In groups of 2, first to catch 10 without dropping OR how many throws/catches can you do in 30 seconds
Arm Slots (Side Arm)	Advanced level players only (RISK of re-enforcing wrong throwing techniques and injuries). Ensure player bends at waist and arm remains bent (shoulders and ball hand should form a line). Shorter distance throws only (e.g., SS to 2B).
Outfield Throw Initiation	Use to generate more momentum for long throws. Players can use: (a) hop on back foot, (b) crossover behind, or (c) traditional crow-hop
Batting Tee Under Arm	For one knee or power line, put a tee under throwing arm to have player keep throwing arm up
Bounce	Fix poor snap, low elbow, or sidearm throwers (force over the top throws). Have the players throw and bounce a ball off a target in front of them on the ground (ideal for in a gym with a tennis ball). Player tries to bounce the ball as high as possible
Star Drill	Create a star shape with 5 players. Throw ball around the star, or throw 2 players to your left (or right), etc.
Target Practice	In lines, create a target for players to throw at (on wall, a net, or something on top of a bucket like a cone). Points for hitting the target
Pivot Drill	Triangle of 3 players, player catches the ball and jump pivots to face next player on power line and throws without taking a step
Reaction Catching Drills	Practicing moving glove to catch the ball around the body 1 coach per 2-4 players, stand 20 feet away; can start with bare hand / tennis ball Throw one left, right, high, low ... give warning, progress to no warning Advanced: short hops, high hops, etc.
Hot Box	Set-up cone halfway between two lines; have players run to middle cone and forearm flip (laser beam) to other player, thrower then joins back of far line Advanced: focus on catching the ball OFF the line for a target away from runner
Four Corners	Players split evenly at 4 bases; throw the ball to next base and follow it; proper pivots. Add 2 nd ball for added difficulty
Reaction Drill	Set-up 4 cones in a square. Coach stands in middle w/ bucket of balls. Player goes to cone 1 facing AWAY from coach; Coach yells "GO" and throws toward player who turns around and catches it; drops the ball and runs to next cone; Coach throws ball at next cone as they are rounding it; continues around all cones
Zig Zag	Two lines of players spread out; throw ball down the line in zig zag (first throw straight across, then throw to next person on opposite line, etc.). Put a bucket at the end. Count # of balls in bucket in time period
Pivot Relays	Create multiple lines of players who will relay the ball down their line and back, racing against the other lines. Can use overhand or underhand depending on distance. Ensure players rotate their correct way and catch/turn quickly