Inside this catcher's manual you will find useful information about what the role of a catcher is, throwing mechanics, signaling information and many more tips that will help you become the best catcher you can possibly be. Take pride in yourself and your work ethic. It covers all aspects of catching (with the exception of calling pitches as most coaches do that for you) from receiving stance to plays at the plate (with the exception of calling pitches as most coaches do that for you). Coach Joey Swanson put this manual together after his experience as a player, coach and umpire. All information is based off playing/coaching/umpiring experience, numerous catching camps both attended and taught and countless hours of research and instruction.
Table Of Contents

I. CATCHER MENTALITY
   a. Role of the Catcher
   b. Leadership – The Most Important Intangible to Possess
   c. Umpire/Catcher Relationship

II. PRE-GAME ROUTINE

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF CATCHING A GOOD BULLPEN

IV. CATCHING MECHANICS
   a. Crouch Positions
      i. signaling
      ii. relaxed stance
      iii. ready stance
   b. Pre-Pitch Set Up and Shift
   c. Receiving/Framing

V. BLOCKING MECHANICS

VI. THROWING MECHANICS
   a. Footwork
   b. Throwing Styles
      i. Jab step
      ii. Rock and Throw
      iii. Replacement
   c. Throwing to 3rd Base

VII. FIELDING YOUR POSITION
    a. Bunts
    b. Relays
    c. Tag and Force Plays
    d. Catcher Pop Ups
    e. Covering Bases
I. CATCHER MENTALITY

ROLE OF THE CATCHER – GENERAL OF THE FIELD

The catcher must be a team’s most vocal and inspirational leader. They have the whole field in front of them and need to be able to react AND direct (teammates) in every situation. Everything must go through the catcher. They are responsible for calling pitches, keeping up the pace of the game, reacting to all situations, and being an on-field psychologist. They must be able to get everything out of their pitchers and their teammates.

We believe strongly that every great team is strong up the middle – that starts with the catcher. A team’s destiny can lie in the hands of their catchers. If a team is short on talent and experience behind the plate, then their odds of winning on a daily basis diminish. On the opposite end, if a team is solid behind the plate and their catcher is a great general and can motivate teammates then the possibility of being competitive day in and day out just increased.

The catcher must be able to anticipate all situations from bunt defense to relay communications. A catcher must have had enough drilling and practice that they do not have to think about the situation in much detail. They must be able to react and respond to the situation given. He has to be the toughest guy on the field EVERY time. He must take command and demand respect and performance from his pitching staff and other position players. When a crucial situation arises, the catcher must step up and take charge of the game.

LEADERSHIP: THE MOST IMPORTANT INTANGIBLE TO POSSESS.

From calling pitches and defenses to working with pitchers and umpires, catchers have a wide range of responsibilities that require intelligence, tact, baseball sense, and above all, leadership. One of the most important qualities for a catcher to possess is the ability to lead. A coach needs to develop a catcher’s leadership ability and a catcher needs to accept his role as a leader and work on those skills.

CONFIDENCE AND MENTAL STABILITY

Take charge of each situation. Be vocal. Make decisions with confidence and trust in your training/preparation. Confidence comes from the knowledge that the decisions you make are correct. Focus on your responsibilities. You job is to catch and lead and leave the baseball bat on the bat rack and your last at bat (good or bad) in the dugout. Forget about what is going on off the field and what happened at school or earlier in the day. You can take care of all other distractions after the game. Your responsibility to the team is to focus on the present. Pitch by pitch.

COMMAND RESPECT

Respect is earned not given. As a catcher you must earn the respect of your battery mates. What do the pitchers want from you? The pitching staff has to respect your work ethic and your intelligence,
your ability to call a game, and your ability to help them be a better pitcher. They have to feel you’re helping them to be the very best pitcher they can be. The pitcher must feel as confident and comfortable with you as possible. Get to know the pitching staff. The only way a catcher can know the members of his pitching staff is to catch ALL of them. Be able to relate to different types of personalities.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOME PLATE UMPIRE**

Another notable aspect of the catcher’s leadership role is interacting with the umpires. Be a diplomat and a politician. On a game by game basis, interact with the umpire. Develop a professional relationship. Never show up the umpire and always do you best to protect the umpire from being hit with a baseball. As an umpire I always knew when “my catcher” was coming up and always protected him if he protected me. Your relationship with the umpire as a catcher can be very effective for you and your pitcher.

This is probably the most important and yet overlooked aspect of catching. How you treat the umpire in the very first inning can make or break a tight game in later innings. You must protect the umpire at all cost so, BLOCK THE BASEBALL ALL THE TIME. Getting the umpire on your side early is important. While most umpires I truly believe try to stay bias when calling pitches, I know from experience that they will always give a little if they like the catcher. If the catcher is working to protect the umpire then the umpire will work to protect him on borderline strike or ball calls both offensively and defensively.

It’s important in the first inning to introduce yourself and get friendly with the umpire. Don’t suck up but, let him know that you are there to help make his job easier and get a good look at the baseball. Don’t ask him after he’s missed a pitch but rather start the game out like that. A lot of times the umpire will get behind you the first inning before a hitter comes up to get an idea of what the pitcher is throwing, maybe let him know what pitches he has and which ones moves a lot. “Am I giving you enough room to see the pitch?” “Let me know if I’m getting in your way or moving too quickly because I want to help you out.” Catchers need to have that mentality that there is always an umpire behind me and he is going to make a call on this pitch and I must make it easy on him. You must take this approach in bullpens and even flat ground. If you try and clean it up in a game then it will be too late and you will just look sloppy.

I used to ask my catchers during the game if a pitch was a ball or strike. We would come up with some sort of signal system (chest for strike, mask for ball or something like that). I always wonder if the umpires would pick up on that so, now I try to just go straight to the umpire. The catcher and umpire have a very unique relationship and we need to try and keep that as natural and cooperative as we can. They must get along throughout the course of the game and season.
II. **PRE GAME ROUTINE**

Before every game it’s always a good idea to try and get to know your surroundings and go through a little pre game routine, especially on fields which you have never played on before. Get to know the backstop and foul lines.

**FIRST AND THIRD BASE LINE**

Before the game begins roll a couple baseballs down each foul line. Read the break on hard and soft bunts. Some clubs drag the foul lines differently. For many years I used to drag the 3rd base line right to left and the 1st base home to first. If you want to bunt for a base hit opposing players would bunt the ball foul down third while we bunted down first for base hits. Are their lips on the grass that could cause the ball to roll foul? Is the grass long or short? All these and more may have an impact in the game.

**CHECK THE FENCE**

Are there holes in the fence a ball could get through on a passed ball or wild throw? How close is the fence? Will the ball hit hard or soft off the fence? Throw some baseballs to find out. Clear any debris that may cause the ball to bounce out of play.

**KNOW THE OUT OF PLAY RULES**

Every field is different and has its own set of out of play rules. Consult with your coach or umpire to be clear about them.

III. **THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD BULLPEN**

You are going to hate to hear this but, this is where you get better. Treat it as a game and focus on the little things. A lot of times during a practice you will catch a bullpen more often then you will take swings in the cages. Catchers don’t need to hit; they need to catch. Try to go full speed in a bullpen; it will help the pitcher out too. Take pride in yourself and your work ethic.

If the pitcher goes from the wind up then act as if runners are on base and receive from your ready position. Go through the footwork every other pitch as if a runner is stealing. Block the baseball all the time because it’s the most game like situation you can be in.

**Bullpen Goals**

Take advantage of your time in the pen. Listen to what the pitchers are learning from the pitching coach. You can pick up a lot of valuable information just by listening. Some of the best pitching coaches and coaches in general were former catchers. Catchers have an opportunity to gather information on every aspect of the game.
Pay attention to what the pitchers are throwing. What is their best pitch? How are certain pitches moving? Does the slider bite so hard you need to be aware for blocking purposes? What pitches is he wild with? You need to know this among other things and should be able to put to use in a game and in a bullpen.

Work on receiving pitches. Be soft with your hands and work on receiving in every session. Stick the strike and make borderline pitches look like strikes.

Work on blocking. How are you going to get better if you don’t practice blocking? In season, set aside two bullpen sessions a week to work on your blocking. Out of season or before your in season schedule games you should work on blocking almost every day IF you want to be good.

IV. CATCHING MECHANICS

Signaling from the basic crouch position is simple. The idea is to only let your pitcher an middle infielder see the sign.

GIVING SIGNS/COMMUNICATION

Remind yourself, who can steal your signs? -1B/3B coaches, runner on 2b, on deck hitters, dug out

Feet – close together/knees close together

Knees – parallel to the pitcher – pointed towards 2B/SS. Push the ankles out to bring the knees in.

Mitt Hand – relaxed and rested on the outside knee, use it to shield your sign from 3B coach; be careful not to block the view of the middle infielder who may be trying to see the sign as well.

Hand/Fingers – make a fist, grab your inseam with your fingernails at your cup. Use only your fingers. Right forearm should rest comfortably on the upper thigh with elbow tucked in tight. Only thing that should move is your fingers. Be careful and keep quiet when signaling location, a lot of young catchers will move entire arm when going inside or outside. REMEMBER THESE IMPORTANT STEPS:

- Make sure the hitter is not peaking in at your signs and if so switch them up
- The signal for a pitch should only be given while the pitcher is on the rubber. If a pitcher takes a sign off the rubber it is a balk and all runners advance one base
- Allow the hitter a brief moment to get set in the box before you give your sign.
- If a pitcher has trouble seeing your fingers use white athletic tape between your middle knuckles on your throwing hand or paint your finger nails with White Out. You can also switch to giving body signals or glove signals.
**Pitch Type/Location** – be sure to give one sign for pitch type and a different sign for location. With runners on 2B, you should probably move to a second or third sign pitch call.

**Chest** – High/full for balance and comfort (no shadows)

**Elbow** – Don’t tip pitches, keep it tucked in tight.

**Rhythm** – show good rhythm when giving signs and be consistent with your signs so you are not tipping them off.

**View from 3B:**
![View from 3B]

**View from 1B:**
![View from 1B]

**NOTES:** Notice how both Mauer and Bench are a little different in their signal stance but, mitt is blocking 3B coach and elbow is in tight.

**RELAXED STANCE (NOBODY ON/ LESS THAN 2 STRIKES)**

- low as possible with your body
- weight on the inside of your feet (balls of your feet)
- weight is slightly forward (off your heels)
- butt close to the ground/low target

**Mitt Position** – relax your muscles/wrist and keep elbow on left knee – DO NOT EXTEND YOUR ARM ON SET UP

**Elbow** – flexed/relaxed- coiled and compact allows for quicker reaction

**Throwing hand** – wherever you are comfortable but it must be hidden from foul balls
**Target** – somewhere near the bottom of the strike zone (knee line) – elbow relaxed – glove hand relaxed and glove opened up (pitcher needs to inside it to the pocket)

**Mitt** – ¼ turn and relaxed which allows you to control the glove side of the baseball (inside part of the baseball)

**Distance from the hitter** – a few inches away from the hitters back leg

**Body Language** – Must be relaxed (BREATHE)

*Matt Wieters in a relaxed stance (right)*

Joe Mauer in a relaxed stance (below)

---

**READY STANCE (RUNNERS ON BASE/2 STRIKE COUNT)**

**Feet** – slightly wider than receiving stance – heels are on the ground, toes slightly pointed out

- Comfortable position with feet and body so you are able to move side to side ("sway")
- Weight on the balls of your feet

**Shoulder/Hips** – square to the pitcher, low athletic position.

**Butt** – Thighs parallel to the ground and butt level with the knees allowing your body to block or throw easily. Goal is to get out of a deep crouch quickly and allow hips to move quickly towards second or third. If you stay in the crouch your first movement will be up and that will waste time. Need to try and stay as athletic as possible.
Throwing Hand – Behind the glove protected from foul tips also allowing for a quicker transfer of baseball when throwing to a base. Wrap your thumb in your fingers to protect it.

Target – Knee line – elbow relaxed – mitt hand relaxed and pointed up, palm towards pitcher leaving glove open

PRE-PITCH SHIFT AND SET UP

Be careful not to tip your pitches by setting up too early somewhere. Remember, ALL EYES ARE ON YOU. The hitter, on deck hitter and base coaches are all watching you.

WHEN – Shift when the pitcher comes to his balancing point – leg lift

Be consistent with your movement – step one, step two then target

Target – Knee line – on or above your elbows

After you shift, the center of your body should split the back of the plate

Mitt – ¼ turn, controlling the inside part of the baseball.

RECEIVING/FRAMING

Catchers must get every pitch their pitcher deserves. Keep strikes looking like strikes.

1. Beat the ball to the spot
   a. Catch the ball in front of the shin guards
   b. Extend the arm/glove to go get the ball (except high pitches)
2. Control the baseball – don’t let it control you
   a. Stick it, be strong with your wrist and forearm
3. Catch the ball in the zone and hold it
   a. Low pitches get early and high pitches get late, this gives your umpire a better view. Umpires will always set up in the slot between the hitter and the catcher which gives them a difficult view of a pitch low and away from the hitter. Getting a pitch early that is down and a high pitch late will give the umpire a longer time to see the pitch.
4. Eyes/Head goes to the ball
   a. Track pitches with your eyes and head not your body and glove.
5. Move Body (sway)
   a. The ideal spot to catch the baseball is in the middle of your body. “sway” on the balls of your feet to put your body a position to do so.
6. Umpire determines the strike zone
   a. Take what the umpire will give you. Every umpire zone will be different and it’s up to you to give feedback to your teammates and coaches as to what it is. Does he give the outside or inside corner? High or low?
Notes: There is no perfect way to set up in a stance when receiving. When catching a game for 3 hours sometimes it is fun to play around with different styles and comfort levels. You lower half will get worn out with so many squats each game.
V. BLOCKING MECHANICS

Blocking the baseball consistently is the single toughest task to do on the defensive end of the game. Blocking a baseball takes great instinct and great technique. There is no perfect way to block the ball and the only thing your coach and teammates will care about is that you keep the baseball in front of you and not give the runner an opportunity to advance. The better you are at blocking the baseball the better your pitchers will be because they will be more confident in you. Knowing your catcher will block the ball in dirt will get hitters to chase more hard breaking pitches that are down and out of the strike zone. The ultimate goal in blocking the baseball is to block it in the middle of your chest and let it bounce harmlessly in front of you. Do not try and catch the ball in the dirt. The common result is a pitch to the back stop and runners advancing.

A catcher should look to block when runners on base or without runners on base and especially with two strikes. If a pitcher can get a hitter to chase a pitch in the dirt then he should be rewarded for doing so with a strike out and not a free base for the batter-runner.

Blocking breaking ball pitches will be determined by the throwing arm of the pitcher. A right hander’s breaking ball will hit the ground and spin right; a lefty’s will hit and spin left. A catcher must angle their body to adjust for the spin of the baseball. They must be able to push off with the opposite leg and drive their body over to meet the baseball and block it back towards the middle of the field. An aggressive push with the opposite leg is crucial to beating the ball to the spot and being able to maintain the proper position. TIP: When you know a breaking ball will be in the dirt, sway the opposite way of the spin to gain momentum to get your body into proper position.

When you block a ball you must be able to 1. Find it quickly and 2. Pick it up using your glove hand to help “rake” it into your glove. DO NOT pick up the baseball with your glove or throwing hand alone. Two hands will give you a greater opportunity to field the ball the first time. Keep in mind when “raking” the baseball that you want to get your body in an angle towards the base the runner could be advancing to. YOU MUST BE READY TO THROW TO ANY BASE. If the runner is not advancing and leaning then throw behind him but be careful, a great base runner will bait you into throwing behind him and then advance to the next base.

In my opinion there are two ways you can block a baseball (as a set up, ideal position). Each catcher is going to block differently based upon size, quickness, work ethic, athleticism and skill. Remember no matter which style we use, the objective is to keep the ball in front of home plate as close to you as possible.

The first traditional style protects your throwing hand, the one most commonly taught at all levels and the most effective. The other is what I like to call the rodeo style block and I learned it from former Univ of Washington catcher Ryan Bundy who also played in the minor leagues for several years. Everything stays the same with the traditional style except that the throwing hand is NOT behind the glove. Instead think as if you are riding a bull and have it away from the ball. This is a risky move exposing your throwing hand but can be very effective for an athletic cathcher or balls to the throwing hand side
because you don’t get tied up with bringing the throwing hand down when blocking. A good catcher should be able to both and see which one works best for each pitch.

*Former MLB catcher Brent Mayne demonstrates ideal blocking position on a pitch down the middle for both styles of blocking.*

![Image](image1.png)  ![Image](image2.png)

### BLOCKING THE BASEBALL

**Mitts first** – take your mitt to your cup and keep it perpendicular to the ground (no ramp)

**Knees follow** – hips are low and knees are wide in relationship to location of ball in dirt

**Chin down** – tuck your head and chin to protect your throat and allow to track pitches deeper.

**Shoulders forward/back arched** – 45 degree angle with the chest with the upper body leaning out over the glove and knees.

**Exhale with your chest** – when the ball hits exhale hard, suck in abs and roll the shoulders in. We want to cushion the impact and pull the energy out of the pitch. Goal is to have the ball stay between us and the back of the plate.

### VI. THROWING MECHANICS

Being accurate with your throws is absolutely essential for a catcher. Throw to the bag and keep the ball from going to the outfield. It is not your fault if there is not a fielder there to catch the baseball. Being able to transfer the baseball quickly from mitt to hand is very important to improve your throwing times.

1. When the baseball hits the glove, the first move is to turn the glove so the pocket is now facing you. (you must anticipate this happening)
2. Transfer the ball in front of your body with a small arm circle. Take the ball from the glove with a direct line to your throwing shoulder. (ball to ear is a good thought sometimes)
3. Avoid catching the ball with your glove facing down because it pushes your arm down and creates a longer arm circle.
4. Throwing hand immediately begins its path back through the throwing slot. The back of the throwing hand leads the hand back not the elbow. The glove stays out in front of the players. It does not travel back towards the throwing shoulder after the ball is removed.
5. Always grip the baseball with four seams during your exchange.

FOOTWORK

The first foot to move is the right foot. It slides straight across towards the left foot. It is planted at a spot that would be ½ ways between where it was and where the left foot is. DO NOT replace your feet as it causes too much momentum in the wrong direction.

Left foot follows quickly after the right. The target for the left foot is to land basically directly in front of the right foot. This will put the body in a straight alignment to second base.

Slight lean forward at the beginning and strong push off the back leg and avoid the problem of having ALL the weight sitting on the back leg which results in strictly arm strength.

THROWING STYLES/THROWS TO SECOND BASE

1. **Jab Step (weaker arms)**
   Jab step towards second base with your throwing leg, inside of your ankle should be pointed towards second base. Stay low and do not stand up straight. As you catch the ball “rake” it quickly to your ear or throwing shoulder. As you are raking you should be transferring the ball to your throwing hand. Front shoulder should be pointed at second base, the ball in hand and you should be striding with your left leg toward the target.

   Stay low, make a short quick throw to second base, transferring the weight from your backside to your front. Stay on top of your throw (don’t drop your elbow), throw through the target – not to it – and keep your momentum moving toward the target. Your follow through should be low and your throwing hand should almost hit your left knee. If you stand up too early or do not follow through, your throw will most likely be off-line and sail into the outfield.

2. **Rock and Throw (for pitches down the middle or to the backhand side)**
   Simply keep your right foot planted where you caught the ball. Now, transfer your weight to the backside leg (rock) or load, rake to the throwing position, step toward your target (transferring your weight to the front side), and deliver a strong accurate throw.

3. **Replacement (for stronger arms)**
   Replacement is the quickest style and demands a strong arm to use properly. A strong arm is needed because there is little forward body momentum toward your target. Your legs start parallel with home plate and you “hop” into throwing position perpendicular to home. The back
foot should actually be planted a little sooner than the front foot to facilitate a proper backside load. Make sure to rotate the hips and shoulders. You should be raking to the throwing position as you perform the “hop”.

**NOTES**: Make contact with a hitter who is out over the plate when you are throwing to catch a runner stealing; its interference on the batter and he would be out while the runner goes back to his original base...Pitch location will determine what style you use when throwing to a base; experiment and practice each style so you will be able to use them without thinking.

**THROWING TO THIRD BASE**

A catcher can utilize three methods to throwing to third base. Pitch location, hitter, arm strength and size of the catcher will determine which method is used.

1. Jab step towards the backhand
2. Throw over a right handed hitter
3. Shuffle behind a right handed hitter

Use pitch location to determine which method you use. Pitches inside or toward the backhand, the jab step is appropriate. Take a jab step with the outside foot, stay low point the shoulders to third and be accurate with your throw.

Whichever method you want to use, the main objective is to create a clear throwing path while being quick and accurate with your throw.
VII. FIELDING YOUR POSITION

FIELDING BUNTS

A catcher must be able to anticipate the bunt situation and relay to his team ahead of time. Know the situation, speed of the runner(s)/hitter, athlete on the mound and speed of the bunted ball. CATCHER MUST TAKE CHARGE OF THE DEFENSE. A catcher should want to field all bunted balls. Everything is front of them and they can make a quick early decision. If the ball is fielded down the first base line or towards the middle of the field, the catcher should take a direct line to the baseball, rake the ball in with both the hand and glove, set their feet, stay low and athletic and make a strong accurate throw to the intended base.

A ball bunted down the third base line, you will not have time to round it. Instead, take a direct route towards the ball and as you reach for the ball step over it and plant your right leg. You are then in a good position to scoop the ball, turn, step and throw. However, you field the baseball it’s important to be an athlete and be quick.

A ball bunted down the first base line, you will need to make sure that you clear some space and don’t throw into the runners back. A good base runner will run down the inside part of the base line until he reaches the runner’s lane (45’ down the base line – the box on first base line that extends to first base) in which case he has to move to the outside part of the line. Be on page with your first baseman and get him off the bag to help get a better angle on your throw and be sure to throw the ball over hand to eliminate it from tailing in towards the runner.

Relays and Cutoffs

Your job as a catcher is to direct the defense when the ball is put in play. A number of situation arise throughout the course of a game where you will have to align a cutoff man to home or call out where a relay throw should go. These situations include runners who tag on a fly ball, base hits, and extra base hits. The catcher should help direct the defense as you have the entire field in front of you. As a catcher, be vocal on plays not only to home, but also to other bases. Remember, to yell in an authoritative and loud manner so your team can hear you.

Relays to Home

Before a throw to home can even take place, you must position your relay man. Know the arm strength of your outfield and the length fo the throw determine the infielders positioning. Your job is to align the cut off man with home. Simply use left and right commands to make adjustments. Know who your coach wants for the relay man in each situation. Remember, the relay man may have his back to the infield and will have to rely on your communication to quickly relay to the correct base or hold the ball. One area that takes some practice is using your judgment as whether to cut or relay throws to the plate.
You need to be aware of a lot of things as a catcher on relay throws. For example: How good is the outfielder’s arm? How thick is the infield grass if I let the ball through the relay and it bounces; will it slow down or speed up? How fast is the runner? What’s the score? Is it do or die? Do I let the run score and take the out at second?

**Plays at the Plate**

Aside from the home run, this is probably the most exciting play in baseball. Plays at the plate, whether good or bad, safe or out always show up on the highlights. A catcher must be ready to move in any direction to catch a thrown ball, or be ready to drop to their knees and block a poorly thrown ball to keep runners from advancing. Whatever happens, a catcher must be able to keep the ball in front at all cost.

**Position**

Position your left heel a foot off the front left corner of the plate. Angle your left foot toes & knee toward third base and position your other leg to accept the throw (throw comes from LF your body will be squared up to LF, throw from RF your right leg will open up more towards RF). LEAVE YOUR MASK ON and keep the angle of your foot towards third base. An improper angle anywhere except third base can cause knee and ankle injuries. Also, the catchers gear protects the front of your shin, not the side.

**Field the Throw**

Throw is on it’s way from the relay man or outfield, you must read the flight of the baseball and DO NOT let the throw short hop you. A good throw will be in the air or should have a long hop. If you read a short hop go get the ball before it bounces. Field the ball out in front of your body and apply the tag to the runner ideally with two hands with your throwing hand surrounding the baseball inside your mitt. If you cannot field the ball cleanly knock it down and prevent other runners from advancing.

**Apply the Tag**

Once you have fielded the ball cleanly, quickly find the base runner using your peripheral vision. The best tag to use is a two handed sweep tag. The ball is in your bare hand and your hand should be in your mitt. After you have tagged out the runner, spin and look in to find another runner. Always stay focused on the next potential play.

**Force Plays at the Plate**

Most important goal is to get the lead out. Position your right foot on the plate in a good athletic stance allowing you to adjust to a good or bad throw. Try to bring the ball into your body and with quick footwork move to your throwing position. On a bad throw you will just have to act as a first baseman and remember to get the first out.
When the ball is hit the catcher should set up somewhere around a foot BEHIND home plate. They are positioned such that if they moved one foot forward they would be straddling the plate. Get your hips and feet square to the fielder that is making the throw. Then get into a low ready position with their mitt up at chest height.

As the baseball approaches they step directly at the ball with the glove side foot. This step should carry them OVER home plate. This foot never touches the plate. Then as the ball is making contact with their mitt they are sliding their back foot forward and dragging it across home plate. Then continue to first making a cross step to begin the throw to first without any breaks in the movement. Should look like a middle infielder turning a double play a t2B.

NOTE: If you are anticipating a bad throw then move to the front of home plate and act as a first baseman would and be sure to get the out.

**CATCHING POP UPS**

When a ball is a pop-up, the most important thing you have to do is locate the baseball. A lot of times pitchers are instructed to point to where the ball is in an effort to help but, the more time you look at the pitcher the less time you have to find the ball and make the play. When catching a pop up in foul territory or fair territory, it’s vital that you understand the baseball will curve towards the infield on the way down – physics won’t allow anything else. Don’t stand directly underneath the pop up or it will land behind you. Stand so it looks like the ball will land a few yards in front of you. Read and react to the baseball. Remember, it’s easier to move forward then to backpedal. Once you are set under the ball, throw your mask hard and to the right. Make sure it’s far enough away to not interfere with the play.

**COVERING BASES**

You are involved in every play either through communication or action. Besides catching basics, the catcher has other responsibilities that require movement from the home plate are with one or nobody on base.

Remember to back up first base on routine grounders hit to the infield. Your purpose for doing so is to keep balls from going out of play on a wild throw to first base. Take a good angle for the corner of the dugout or any openings you may see up the first base line. Your second baseman and right fielder should have the same idea here (backing up first base).

With a runner on first base you can still back up first but just be aware of the play developing and how many outs there are.

Covering third base only happens when a runner from first may get over there on a bunt attempt when third baseman fields the ball.

**THANK YOU. HOPE THIS HELPS YOU BECOME THE BEST CATCHER YOU CAN BE.**