



BASEBALL

Middle School Program

“Developing Sequoyah High School’s Future State Champions”

Super Set Baseball Long Toss Program

This is a required exercise for all Sequoyah Junior Chiefs Middle School Teams.

The strength, health and longevity of the arm are essential for a player to be successful. A Long Toss Program will employ a workload based approach that will balance arm strength and arm health. Each player is unique with regards to mechanics, build, recovery times, practice habits and playing environments. Therefore, a Long Toss Program should be used as a baseline.

A Long Toss Program combines with a rotator cuff exercise program will strengthen the rotator cuff and scapular muscles. This program will strengthen the fast twitch muscle fibers, which is a major ingredient in improving velocity and lowering the rate of injury in your players.

The goal of the Long Toss Program is to maintain arm health while building a strong foundation in the pre-season. By gradually increasing throwing workloads, this will help to reduce recovery times during the season. By reducing recovery times, pitchers can start post outing workouts sooner, allowing for an additional long toss session and/or bullpen to fine tune mechanics and pitches prior to their next outing. Position players can benefit from building a strong foundation in the pre-season, just as pitchers do, as well as refine their fundamentals with position specific drills.

GUIDELINES

This section outlines the basic knowledge needed prior to starting the Long Toss Program.

Listen to your arm. This is not a generalized throwing program. The duration and number of throws are determined by how the individual feels. The athlete’s awareness of how his arm feels on a particular day is the best guide to determine whether to continue with the throwing program or shut it down. This will also determine the pace in which you and your partner back up to increase the throwing distance. One day, it might take you fifteen throws to reach a distance of 90 feet, whereas the next day it could take you more than 30 throws to reach that same distance because your arm is taking longer to loosen up. Listen to your arm! If you feel a hinge that “doesn’t feel normal” or cannot be worked out by continuing to throw, “SHUT IT DOWN!”

If a player is feeling any discomfort in the shoulder or elbow, get it checked out by a licensed professional. Just as our long toss program is designed for players as individuals, arm injuries cannot be diagnosed in a booklet.

Pre-Season is the time when an athlete is not in a structured practice or game setting. The pre-season training starts two months prior to the first day of practice. The pre-season is when you develop your foundation by preparing your arm for the day to day stresses it will endure throughout the season. This foundation is the most important element of the Long Toss program. If you wait until the season to develop your foundation, it will be more difficult to handle the workloads due to an under conditioned arm, resulting in early fatigue and substandard performance.

Foundation is the arm strength and endurance built in the pre-season. This is accomplished by starting light and gradually increasing throwing workloads, so that the arm is prepared to meet the demands of the season.

In-Season is when the athlete is playing games or practicing with a team on a regular basis.

Position Specific Drills are optional throwing and receiving drills that can be implemented as part of the throwing program. These drills assist the player in developing key fundamentals and footwork required to play their specific position. These drills are performed from 30 to 120 feet in distance prior to reaching the “Long Toss” distance. The drill chart on pages 8 and 9 shows where players should perform each of the throwing and receiving drills on the field. Pages 10 to 12 provide detailed illustrations of all the drills listed on the drill chart.

Throw Hard. Once your arm is loose, throw as hard as you can while maintaining proper mechanics. The harder you throw, the more you will get out of the program. Focus on putting 100% into every throw.

Indoor Training. Unless you live in warm weather states, your pre-season schedule will coincide with harsh winter months, making it difficult to complete the program outdoors. You can perform the entire program indoors, by setting a 10 to 15 minute time limit on the long toss program. This time limit is necessary because the players will be unable to reach their maximum throwing distance due to space restrictions.

5 STEPS OF LONG TOSS

TOTAL BODY DYNAMIC WARM-UP/RUNNING

Dynamic warm-up and flexibility training are essential elements of any pre-practice or pre-competition routine and helps prepare the body for the demands of a practice or a game. An effective warm-up accomplishes five very important things:

1. Increases body temperature allowing muscles to work more efficiently.
2. Gets the heart and lungs ready for vigorous activity.
3. Stretches muscles actively, preparing them for the forces experienced during a baseball game.
4. Ingrains proper movement patterns and the coordination needed in baseball.

5. Wakes up the nervous system and gets the brain talking to the muscles.

THROWING PROGRAM: BULLET OR AIROUT

The Long Toss Program was designed to give the player or coach two throwing program options, the Bullet or the AirOut. The difference between these program options is that with the Bullet program there is a fifteen foot ceiling (the baseball should not go higher than 15 feet) and with the AirOut program there is no ceiling. By removing the ceiling from the AirOut program, the players will move a further distance apart than with the Bullet program, thus increasing the throwing workload (number of throws).

For many years, it has been debated whether throwing with or without a ceiling is more beneficial to the player. We believe that there are benefits to be gained from each program as long as maximum throwing distances are reached. The players will be reaching their maximum throwing distance with both program options by utilizing the “Max One Hop” design. The number of throws is going to differ between the program options but the intensity should not. Once the arm is properly loosened at shorter distances, all throws should be performed with 100% intensity while maintaining proper mechanics.

Getting Started

1. Select a partner with similar arm strength and playing position (infielders, outfielders, pitchers & catchers).
2. Start with one person on the foul line with your partner standing 30 feet away.
3. Back up at your own pace not dictated by number of throws or time but rather how long it takes your arm to get loose on that particular day.
4. Once you reach the point where your arm is loose, you should throw at 100% intensity at your partner. At the shorter distances, this means you will be throwing the baseball on a line (i.e. a “bullet”)
5. When using the AirOut or Bullet Program, you will reach your maximum throwing distance when you can no longer throw to your partner on the fly. At this point, your partner will gradually move in at the same pace that was used to reach the maximum throwing distance.