

First Touch: Prep Step and Ground Ball Basics

Outdoor	2 hours	Arm-load: Light — everybody stays inside 120 ft all...
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OBJECTIVE

Most of what a defense needs starts with two things: get in an athletic position before the ball is hit, and go get it when it is. Today builds both from scratch — no scrimmage speed yet, just reps.

BENCHMARKS THIS PLAN FEEDS

- B9 — Prep step
- B3 — Field batted balls

PREP — BEFORE PLAYERS ARRIVE

Equipment	fungo + baseballs + gloves + cones + throw-down bases
Setup	cone off a landing box at each infield spot so the prep step has a visible target

PRACTICE TIMELINE

0:00-0:10	Dynamic warm-up (10 min) Run the routine, all 12 movements, down and back on each. Card's on its own sheet.
0:10-0:20	Catch play (10 min) Start close and work out in five-foot steps to 90 ft, then back down to a crisp line at 45 ft. Two hands, glove out front on the catch, every rep.
0:20-0:30	IF/OF/C daily work (10 min) Infielders and outfielders split to their own grass, catchers pair up with full gear on. — Infield/outfield: Short-hop reads off the fungo, glove down and out front. — Catchers: Framing reps on a knee, glove soft, don't stab at it.
0:30-1:10	Attack benchmark 1 — Prep step (40 min) Send the whole group to their primary spots. Fungo a ball to every kid, one at a time, and don't let the next rep start until the last kid has landed. — The cue is simple: hop as the fungo leaves the bat, land with your feet under you, then go get the ball. A kid standing flat-footed when contact happens is the one who's always a step late. — Rotate through three rounds — infield only, outfield only, then everybody together with the coach calling out a side before each swing. — Keep return throws short, back to a bucket near the plate, not full distance.
1:10-1:50	Attack benchmark 2 — Field batted balls (40 min) Same fungo, now it's about the whole play — prep step, first move, glove, throw. — Infielders: routine grounders at game speed, transfer clean, throw to a bucket at first. — Outfielders: routine flies hit right at them first, then a step or two off either shoulder once they're catching it clean. — A missed rep isn't the problem today. A kid who never gets his feet moving toward the ball is.
1:50-2:00	Baserunning work (10 min) Primary lead off each base, secondary lead as the pitch is thrown. Right-handed runners: right, left, shuffle, shuffle, weight on the balls of the feet. Left-handed runners: watch the front leg, shorten the lead a half step, jab-step back toward first when the pitcher lifts. Cue: your last step lands when the ball leaves his hand.

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COACH'S NOTES

This is a foundation day, and it should feel almost boring compared to what's coming later in the week. That's fine — prep step and a clean first move to the ball are the two things every other defensive benchmark in this library builds on top of. Don't rush past a kid who's landing flat or late just because the reps are simple; fix it here, while there's no live bat and no pressure, and it'll hold up better once both show up.