



OUTFIELD BASICS

CINCINNATI REDS

by John Morris, Cincinnati Red Scout.

7 seasons in MLB as an outfielder for the St. Louis Cardinals, Philadelphia Phillies and California Angels.

Good outfield play begins with the expectation that the ball is going to be hit to me on every single pitch that is thrown. This understanding always gives me a better chance of fielding the ball properly. So after I get on the balls of my feet in an athletic ready fielding position I may want to consider the following.

1. Gathering information:

- Understand the basic dimensions of the field
- Does the outfield play big, small, fast or slow?
- How big is the wall or fence and how does the ball come off of it?
- Is there wind and in what direction is it blowing?
- Is there sun and am I prepared to handle it if the ball is hit my way?

2. Positioning:

- I need to be willing to adjust my OF position based on the type hitter at the plate.
- I need to be willing to move to a different spot based on who my pitcher is.
- Do I want to play deep to keep balls in front of me or do I want to play shallow knowing I can go back on balls effectively?
- If the wind is blowing in I may want to move in.
- If the wind is blowing out I may want to move back.

3. Understanding situations:

- Always know how many outs there are.
- Always know what bases are occupied.
- Always anticipate where I am going to throw the ball if it is hit to me.
- ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS throw through the cutoff man to keep the double play in order.

4. General fielding suggestions in the outfield:

- Always field balls on the ground with 2 hands and position my body in the direction of the base I want to throw to.
- Always catch fly balls and popups with 2 hands.
- Get behind the ball in the air if I can to gather momentum throwing toward my intended target.
- When having to run and catch a ball on the ground, the line or in the air run to a spot and reach with my glove hand to field the ball. This is the only time I should use one hand to catch a ball in the outfield.

5. Arm strengthening and accuracy:

- Take care of my arm and it will take care of me.
- My arm will become stronger by throwing long toss. Stretch it out!
- Practice throwing to all bases including 2b, 3b and home plate.