

Introduction to basic positional play



How you assign your players to the defensive positions depends on their stage of development of your players and the team goals. For example, if the coaching emphasis for your team is on enjoyment and development (as it should be for a junior club team) then you should give your players experience by rotating them through all the positions.

If your team is experienced and contains players with well-developed fundamental skills, you may wish to maximise your team's potential, particularly in defence. To do this you could assign fielding positions for your players according to their skills and abilities. To enhance team performance you need to know the basic skill requirements, responsibilities and coverage area for each position. A brief outline is presented below.

Skill requirements

- Pitcher – pitching ability; quick reflexes; accurate arm
- Catcher – good ball handling skills; agile; strong; accurate arm
- 1st Base – good ball handling skills; agile; quick reflexes
- 2nd Base – agile; mobile; accurate arm
- 3rd Base – quick reflexes; strong, accurate arm
- Short stop – agile; mobile; strong accurate arm
- Left fielder – mobile; strong accurate arm; good judge of fly balls
- Centre fielder – fastest outfielder; strong, accurate arm, good judge of fly balls
- Right fielder – mobile; strong accurate arm; good judge of fly balls

Duties and responsibilities of the fielding team

A softball diamond is divided into two areas with the area enclosed by the bases known as the infield and past the bases known as the outfield. Generally in softball there are three outfielders and six infielders (includes the pitcher and catcher) making up the defensive team.

Duties of infielders

- Fielding ground balls in the infield area
- Catching fly balls in the infield area
- Throwing to bases
- Receiving throws at a base
- Tagging runners
- Covering bases

Duties of outfielders

- Catching fly balls in the outfield area
- Fielding ground balls in the outfield area
- Throwing to bases
- Backing up infielders/outfielders
- Covering bases (when required)

All players have a role to play on every batted ball or running situation. If they are not fielding the ball or accepting a throw from another defensive player, they should be **backing up a play** in case of an error, or otherwise supporting a teammate.

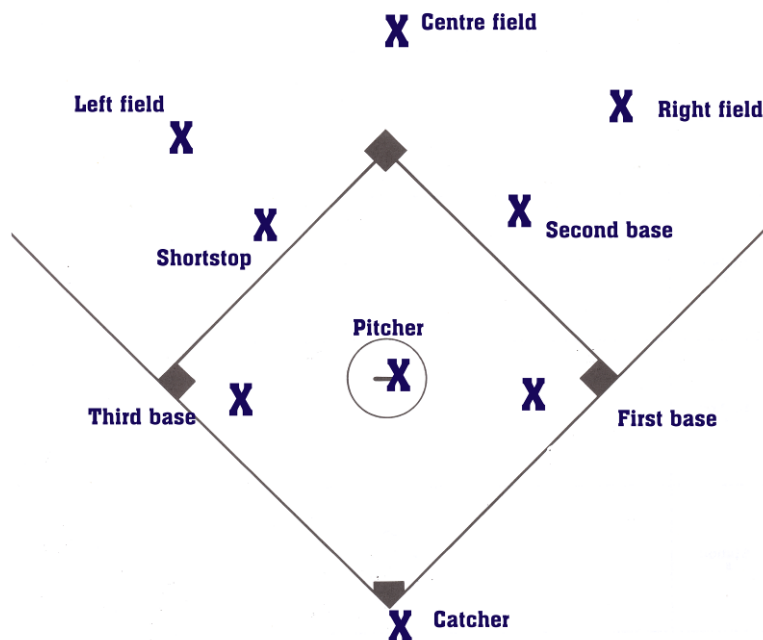


Diagram showing defensive field positions:

- Infield includes Pitcher, Catcher, 1st Base, 2nd Base and 3rd Base and Shortstop.
- Outfield includes Left field, Centre field and Right field.