

Training drills – Force plays

A force play is defined as a situation where a baserunner loses the right to the base which he/she is occupying and is 'forced' to proceed to the next base because the batter becomes a batter-runner after a safe hit.

Key points for players making a force play

- The fielding team must always know where the runners are on base
- Always try and take the lead runner in a force play
- Fielders should understand that the force does not require a tag. The fielder in position of the ball only needs to be in contact with the base.
- Always check to see if the runner has over run the base
- Fielders should aim to throw the ball at the base player's chest. This could give them an opportunity to get another out (double play).
- All runners should be wearing helmets

Practise making force outs

Here are a few examples of the types of drills you can set up at practice.

Force out at 2nd base

Place a runner on 1st base

- Depending on which side of the diamond a ground ball is hit to the infield, will determine whether Shortstop or 2nd base player covers 2nd base.
- If the ball is hit toward 3rd base or Shortstop, the 2nd base player will cover the base
- If the ball is hit toward the 1st base or 2nd base player, the Shortstop will cover the base
- If the ball is hit toward the Pitcher, the Shortstop will cover the base
- All outfielders should be backing up and covering bases if necessary

Force out at 2nd base from the outfield

Place a runner at 1st base

- If the ball is hit to Right field or Centre field, Shortstop should cover 2nd base
- If the ball is hit to Left field, the 2nd base should cover the base
- All outfielders should be backing up or covering bases where necessary

Force out at 3rd base

Place a runner at 1st and 2nd base

- **If the ball is hit to 3rd base**, depending on where the 3rd base is positioned or where they receive the ball, the 3rd base player and Shortstop have two options:
 - If the 3rd base player fields the ball near the base, they can play the force at 3rd and look for the double play at 2nd base
 - If the 3rd base player is dragged away from the base to field the ball, they can try for the force out at 2nd base (Shortstop covering 3rd base to hold the runner at 3rd)
- All outfielders should be backing up or covering bases where necessary

Place a runner at 1st and 2nd base

- **If the ball is hit to Shortstop**, depending on where the Shortstop and 3rd base players are positioned or receives the ball, they have two options:
 - If Shortstop is dragged toward 3rd base to field the ball they can do a backhand flick to the 3rd base player, who can then look for the force out at 2nd base.
 - If Shortstop is dragged toward 2nd base to field the ball, they can try for the out at 2nd base (3rd base player covering 3rd to hold the runner).

Place a runner at 1st and 2nd base

- **If the ball is hit to the 1st base or 2nd base player.** Depending where either of these players are fielding and where they receive the ball, they have two options:
- If they are both fielding in close, they should play the force out at 3rd base
- If they are both fielding deep, they should get the safe out at 1st base.

Force out at the home plate

This can often be the most important out, particularly in a close game.

Place runners at 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases

Key points for making a force play at home

- Infielders should play in close
- 2nd base and Shortstop should play close inside the 'imaginary line' between 1st and 2nd bases, 2nd base and 3rd base should play in to attempt to get the force out at home.

These examples are only a few of the possible scenarios. There may be others that you may want to incorporate into your training sessions.