

8I The King and His Court Drill

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The purpose of this document is to describe a hitting, pitching and fielding drill. This drill in combination with the 7 Drill for Throwing, Fielding and Hitting (which also includes running) will keep a whole team very busy in most of the elements they need to practice. The original “King and his Court” was a four man softball team from nearby Walla Walla, Washington. Playing with a pitcher (Eddie Feigner: The King), a catcher, a shortstop and a second baseman, they traveled the world beating nine man softball teams. In this drill we use the same setup and a batter to produce live batting practice, with the other half of the team running the other drill in the outfield.

Four Men and a Batter

This drill pits the pitcher and catcher against a batter. If there are only two people available, it can be done with just a pitcher and a batter. Adding a catcher really improves the game. Adding the shortstop and second baseman sets the defense, giving the batter two targets to miss. The shortstop and second baseman get live fielding and throwing practice, throwing to first or second depending on the imaginary runner situation. The defense (normally the catcher) acts as the umpire.

Pitch Location

For several reasons we reverse the pitch location from what we would normally do when competing in a game. If you look at a home plate you will notice there are front and back corners on the plate. Therefore, there are pitches that just catch a front corner or just catch a back corner. In this game, until the batter has two strikes the front corner pitches are not strikes and there is a wide strike zone for back corner pitches. We want to learn how to hit pitches coming in to the strike zone, and learn to lay off pitches leaving the strike zone. So, until two strikes the preference is for low rise balls and high drops. In other words, we do not call strikes just leaving the strike zone and we are generous on strikes entering the strike zone.

Hit location

We want to see line drives between the infielders at foot level or over the infielders into the outfield gaps. When you use the four inside-out swings (hook, sit, tomahawk and golf swings) that move away from the body, you can see where the ball is going when you hit it. Therefore, you can learn to hit those holes by adjusting your contact point. Besides those line drives, we also want to see bloopers and high hoppers instead of lazy fly balls and easy grounders. Therefore, imaginary hits go to what we want to see. Otherwise we are hitting against the best defense in the world.

Summary: 8I The King and His Court Drill

The purpose of this document is to describe an effective and efficient hitting, pitching and fielding drill. This drill in combination with the 7 Drill for Throwing, Fielding and Hitting (which also includes running) will keep a whole team very busy in most of the elements they need to practice.