

SAMPLE



Photo: Paulo Pics NZ

SOFTBALL

© Copyright Raise My Game 2022



2

## About the card sort

- The cards describe competencies, behaviours and qualities in the game of softball.
- The sort should be completed in a conversation with a coach, parent or mentor.
- The cards should be used to identify competencies to grow into super strengths or areas to work on.
- On the back of the cards are ideas for actions to support development planning.
- Use the cards at the beginning and end of the season, and following key milestones.

Categories of generic competencies include:

- mental skills
- self
- athlete life
- health
- physical
- technical skills
- tactics

*Turn over to see the full list of competencies.*

Mental Skills	Self	Athlete Life	Health	Physical	Technical Skills			
Performance Focus	Team Values and Culture	Managing Time and Energy	Health	Speed	PITCHING	Technique	BATTING	Technique
Motivation and Passion	Leadership	Circle of Support	Women's Health	Agility		Accuracy		Pitch Selection
Resilience	Team Person	Financial Skills, Facilities and Equip.	Robustness	Balance, Strength and Core Strength		Velocity		Short Game
Self-Belief and Confidence	Programme Ownership	Future, Change, and Career Planning	Injury Recovery	Co-ordination, Timing and Reactions	FIELDING	Ground Balls and Fly Balls	CATCHING	Receiving
Performance Preparation	Identity, Purpose and Self-Awareness	Sponsorship and Athlete Brand	Mental Health and Wellbeing	Flexibility		Throwing		Game Management
Performance Review	Competitiveness	Relationships	Sleep	Recovery	BASE RUNNING	Base Running		Blocking
Practicing Pressure	Work Ethic		Nutrition					Throwing
Mastery	Drive and Ambition			Tactics				Calling
Deep Practice	Continuous Growth			Tactics				
	Communication							

2

## How to use the cards

### ATHLETE

1

#### **SORT FOR STRENGTHS**

Sort the cards into roughly three even piles with the following black cards forming the top of each set:

- high/strength
- middle/average
- low/work-on; and
- not applicable.

Sort based on your highest level of competition.

2

#### **EXPLAIN/RECORD**

Explain reasons for placement, focusing on strengths and areas to work on. Take a photo or fill in the worksheets to record placement to refer back to on review.

3

#### **PRIORITISE**

Once completed, pick up the cards sorted as areas to work on. You may also wish to select some strengths to include in your development plan that could become super strengths. Flip over the header cards and sort again for priorities for the next season or training block using the black cards (high, medium, low). Aim to narrow down to not more than two development priorities per category.

*Once you have identified your priorities, turn over the cards. The back of the cards have development planning ideas.*

*Please Turn Over*

2

## How to use the cards

### COACH/ MENTOR

1

#### INTRODUCTION

Explain the purpose of the process.

Explain the process (see website for more detail) and discuss confidentiality.

Check for comfort and questions.

2

#### GUIDE

Guide the process.

Question, clarify and summarise to help the athlete identify the critical priorities.

Listen with an open mind, avoid making judgements.

3

#### PLAN

Record placement of cards with notes. Select priorities emerging from the second sort and identify development actions (see ideas on the back of cards) in collaboration with the athlete.

*TIP: You can complete a separate card sort for comparative discussion.*

# STRENGTH



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A STRENGTH AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL  
OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

# HIGH PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR  
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

# MIDDLE/AVERAGE



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS MIDDLE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL  
OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES



# MEDIUM PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A MEDIUM PRIORITY FOR  
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

# WORK-ON



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS AN AREA TO WORK-ON AT THE HIGHEST  
LEVEL OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

# LOW PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A LOW PRIORITY FOR  
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

# NOT APPLICABLE



THESE ARE EITHER NOT APPLICABLE OR TO BE SORTED AT A LATER DATE



# MENTAL SKILLS<sup>©</sup>

— SORT CARDS —



# Performance Focus

- I am able to maintain my focus on doing what I need to do, regardless of the level of competition.
- In adversity, under pressure or following unexpected events, I will:
  - Acknowledge my thoughts and feelings in the moment.
  - Use strategies to actively manage my emotions and reactions (e.g., self-talk, imagery, affirmations).
  - Focus on the process, not the outcome.
  - Lead by example with both words and actions, continuing to communicate positively and effectively.
  - Maintain confidence in others and have a settling effect on the team.
  - Make rational decisions.

## Developing Performance Focus

### Experiment with ways to stay calm, manage focus and eliminate distractions

Feeling stressed or anxious affects your focus. Set up situations in training where you could get distracted (e.g., under fatigue, situational pressure).

In these situations, practice different strategies to stay present, e.g., breathing control, imagery or visualisation, cue or focus words, and/or thought dumping/stopping.

### Reflect on the consequences

Discuss with someone (a mentor or coach) what the outcomes and impacts of losing your composure are. Discuss high profile examples.

### Identify your triggers

Consider what triggers you away from focusing on the present. Build a plan to manage these, testing out how quickly you can refocus.

### Key moment planning

Focus is having less in your mind. Use a journal to identify and plan your focus for key moments that may arise. Quiz the consistent performers in your team/sport on their strategies. Evaluate your focus at training as well.

### Focus on what you can control

Draw a circle. Inside the circle write down everything about your performance that is within your control. Next, write down everything that is outside of your control outside of the circle. Observe and review how much time you spend thinking and worrying about things outside of your control.

### Become actively aware

Keep a journal/daily training diary in which you rate yourself every time you train or play. Simple daily evaluations are critical to improving your focus because you are building a habit of being consciously aware.



# Motivation and Passion

- Self motivated to play sport for the love of the game.
- Enjoys the game, has fun.
- Enters training with clarity and intention on areas for improvement.
- Understands the importance of the work/mahi put in now for the long term goals.
- Motivated by internal rather than external rewards.
- Often stays at the end of the training to do something extra.
- Loves to learn more, talk more, and watch more softball.



## Developing Motivation and Passion

### What's your definition of success?

Make sure your definition of success is related to things that you can control, rather than external things that you have no control over (e.g., media reviews, player-of-the-day awards).

### Understand your why

What is the source of your motivation? Ask yourself the 5 whys, i.e., why do I play my sport x5? Each time you answer the question, drill down to a deeper level of understanding.

### Focus on process goals

Are you measuring your success with process goals or outcome goals? Set process goals to give intention and focus to your training week.

### Celebrate success

Think about how you can acknowledge and celebrate little milestones or day-to-day successes.

### Bring back the fun

Brainstorm and implement some ideas to add fun and competitions into training sessions.

### OK to make mistakes

Learning from mistakes is important, but don't linger on them. Remember, mistakes are part of learning: 'the biggest mistake you can make, is to not make any'.

### Have fun celebrating successes

Recognise the effort and courage that is required to master a new thing.

### Have down time

Plan your down time and use it wisely to recharge your batteries.

### Thrive/survive score

Define what behaviours you would see when you are highly motivated. Track your energy and wellbeing on the thriving-coping-surviving scale, where -10 is barely surviving and +10 is thriving. If you get a series of low scores, or are tracking downwards over a week or two, discuss it with someone in your circle of support that you trust.

### Ownership builds motivation

Reflect on any areas you could take more control or ownership over your programme, discuss it with your coach.



**SELF** Raise My Game<sup>®</sup>

— SORT CARDS —



# Team Values and Culture

- Aware of self and impact on others.
- Is a guardian (has kaitiaki) of team values (during both good times and bad times) and encourages others to do the same.
- Is widely trusted. Contributes to team feedback and is seen as a direct, truthful and humble individual.
- Respects and trusts the coaches/leaders, and shows confidence in others.
- Understands role in the team, is selfless, and willing to support the development of others.
- Doesn't misrepresent him/herself for personal gain.
- Can quickly sense what will help or hinder the team to accomplish a goal.
- Can see the bigger picture (i.e., not just where I am headed, but also where I come from).
- Has considered the whakapapa of the group (i.e., the story of the group, land, or water that we perform on).

## Developing Team Values and Culture

### Understanding our culture

- Has your team discussed how they are seen from the outside, and how they want to be seen?
- Has your team discussed what moments or events have created those perceptions and how you might go about changing them?
- Is everyone absolutely clear on what behaviours are expected within the 'desired' culture and which are not?
- Have you discussed scenarios and what you would be expected to do?
- Have you discussed consequences of falling short of expectations with the team?

- Does your team integrate team values into review and reflection of team performance? e.g., if courage is a team value, do the team use courage as a way to reflect on the team performance or look for moments of courage on the field.

### Supporting the leaders

What feedback loops have been set up? How does the coach best receive your feedback? Discuss your ideas and observations with your coach and captain, and work together to build the culture you desire. If you are a junior player and you see something that's not quite right, approach a senior player you trust to ask if you can help.

### Reflecting on the past

Reflect on the times when you have known a behaviour was outside of what is expected. Reflect on what action you took and what your motivations were. Reflect on any barriers to taking action and how you would approach the situation in hindsight.

### Knowing why it's important

Have you drawn a clear line of sight between the impacts/consequences of not respecting team agreements and the team's ability to be successful?

### Using humble enquiry

If you see or hear something that doesn't sit right, try asking a humble question to check others' perceptions.



# Leadership

- Is respected and followed as a leader.
- Is an architect of the culture and vision; helps lead and shape it, encouraging a strong sense of commitment to the team goals.
- Is skilled at getting individuals and/or the team motivated to perform at a higher level.
- Communicates well, inspires through actions and words.
- Is a role-model in all things.
- Is a guardian of team values.
- Is committed to what needs to be done.
- Contributes to a strong team spirit.

## Developing Leadership

### Self-leadership

First and foremost, you are a leader of self. You have a responsibility to lead through your actions. Ask others how they perceive you and reflect on whether you are a role model to others. Do you put the team interests before your own? Are you committed and dedicated? Do you use initiative? Do you consistently demand excellence of yourself and others?

### Is leadership for you?

Do you see yourself as a leader? Just because you are a senior player or one of the best in the team, this doesn't mean that you have to take on a leadership role.

### Be conscious of your influence on others

If you are respected by others in the team, you are a leader whether you are formally called a leader or not. Is your influence on others positive? Do you openly support the other leaders in the group, the coaches, management and senior players? Do you hold yourself accountable to the team's standards?

### Building connections

Build knowledge of others to form a deeper connection to them outside of sport. Seek to understand what they bring into the environment and where they come from. Think about how you are cultivating their sense of belonging and connectedness. Show you care.

### First steps

Talk with your coach or captain about what support you can give them, and what opportunities there might be for you to take a leadership role. Start with small leadership responsibilities.

### Find role models

Identify some leaders that you know and respect. Research them or ask to meet with them to find out about their experiences as a leader.

### Encourage others to lead

Good leaders delegate and create space for others to show leadership too (sometimes all others need to show leadership is an invitation).



# ATHLETE LIFE<sup>®</sup>

— SORT CARDS —



# Managing Time and Energy

- Concentrates on the most important priorities.
- Has structure within each day.
- Manages device/screen time.
- Uses a diary and/or calendar.
- Uses down time wisely to recharge my energy.
- Knows that priorities change at different times.
- Life is mostly stable and well balanced.
- Has friends and interests outside of sport that allow some variety, challenge and stimulation.
- Is OK with things outside of control.



## Managing my Time and Energy

### Noticing when things are out of balance

When things get out of balance, you may start to feel stressed or anxious. Do you know what behaviours others would see that reflect a healthy or unhealthy balance?

Reflect on your life balance weekly, and if you notice a series of low scores or downward trend over weeks, talk to someone trusted in your inner circle of support about what changes are needed.

### Plan your down time

Look at your schedule, and plan when you have spare time that you could use. Think about how best you can use this time to refresh mentally and physically.

### Set aside time to plan

Set aside time on a Sunday night to plan your week and then take 10 mins each morning to plan your priorities for the day.

### Examine how you spend your time

Is your life one-dimensional? Do you spend all of your time on softball and only hang out with people related to softball? Having another way to engage the brain, e.g., study, a job or interest, can help you stay fresh, continue to enjoy softball, work towards a career after you retire, and provide perspective.

### Device time

Set limits for your device time and avoid screen time in the 30mins before sleep.

### Planning in and using breaks effectively

Look at whether you can plan a complete break in your annual programme. Use this time wisely to refresh; e.g., try something new, do something outside your comfort zone, meet new people. TIP: keep your fitness up during your break through cross training.

### Managing priorities

Write a list of everything you have to do in priority order. Look down your list and draw a line between the things you 'have to do' and the things that you can delete, defer, or delegate. Now set about 'managing' the things below the line to move them off your short term 'to-do' list.



# Future, Change, and Career Planning

- Has a plan for at least the next year (i.e., income source, living arrangements, sporting competition plans, etc.).
- If at school or studying, is actively preparing for the transition into part-time or full-time work.
- Knows what careers are of interest and is developing skills, experience and/or networks in this area.
- Has a transition plan for any upcoming changes.
- Has a strong support network to navigate through changes and support settling into new routines (may take six to 18 months).

## Tips for Future, Change and Career Planning

### Not sure what career you would like to follow?

- Write down your strengths/talents and what you are passionate about.
- Write down the times in your life you have been in flow (when everything has clicked and you've been in your element). Identify industries or the type of work you are interested in.
- List jobs in which your skills, passions and interests were being used.
- Research; have conversations with people you know in careers you are interested in.
- Consider study options to work towards a career pathway.

### Need a job that works in with softball?

Make a list of the job parameters that would be ideal:

- How many hours per week?
- What days/times you would be available to work?
- How much flexibility you would need to attend competitions?

Identify jobs that may fit this profile. If you have no experience in this area, consider what work experience would support your application. Prepare your curriculum vitae and identify a list of people/businesses to approach. Search job advertisements.

### Building a network of support

- Make a list of the areas of your life you might need some help/support with (e.g. somewhere to live, finding a part-time job).
- Identify people in your current circle of support and ask them to make introductions to people who may be able to help you in these areas.
- Talk to other athletes who have followed a similar path, and ask them for help identifying people who may be useful connections during your change journey.
- Ask your regional or national sporting organisation for any contacts or relationships they have that may help you through your change journey.



# HEALTH

SORT CARDS



# Health

- Is consistently able to turn up to training and competitions healthy and ready to go (no ongoing sickness or health challenges).
- Has self-care routines to maintain health.
- Will proactively see the GP with any health concerns.
- Has a positive body image and healthy eating habits.
- Is able to manage health during travel, including adjusting to time zones and new sleep routines.
- Is able to train and compete at altitude and in heat within normal adaption expectations.
- No addictions (i.e., drugs, alcohol, gambling).

## Tips for Good Health

### General health, body image, addictions or mental health

If you have concerns, talk to someone in your trusted circle to support you to seek help from a GP, counsellor, or clinical psychologist.

### Sleep

If you are struggling with sleep, look at your sleep habits:

- Does your bedroom environment promote consistent, uninterrupted sleep?
- Do you have a stable sleep schedule?
- Is your bedroom comfortable and free of disruptions?
- Do you follow a relaxing pre-bed routine?
- Do you have healthy daily routines and habits that contribute to supporting your sleep?
- Do you know how much sleep you need?

Seek professional help if you are struggling with getting the right amount or quality of sleep.

### Build your knowledge

Identify someone in your circle of support that will have access to research and specialist knowledge on athlete-specific approaches to subjects such as travel, altitude, and heat.

*Also, see women's health, sleep and nutrition cards.*



# Women's Health

- Understands the importance of menstrual cycles and the role hormones play in recovery, bone, and overall health.
- Is knowledgeable about menstruation and what is normal.
- Knows when to ask for help in relation to pain, bleeding, or other menstruation symptoms. Feels confident to be able to manage symptoms well.
- Can identify the key markers for menstrual health and knows who to contact if she notices any problems.
- Understands that contraception is a choice and is well-informed about the full range of choices available. Knows where to seek help, and has the information and support to make contraception decisions.
- Is aware of common female health issues such as premenstrual syndrome, dysmenorrhea (very painful menstruation), menorrhagia (very frequent or heavy menstruation, amenorrhea (not starting periods until after age 16 or missing more than three periods in a row), endometriosis, and polycystic ovarian syndrome.
- Has positive support from coach/sport to talk about and manage women's health issues.

## Tips for Women's Health

### See your GP

Ask your GP or sports doctor for information on women's health issues related to sport. Did you know that endometriosis and polycystic ovarian syndrome affect around 10% of all women? Recent research has highlighted the prevalence of girl's and women's health concerns but also that they are under-recognised and under-reported. This means they are diagnosed late and the side effects and outcomes made worse. Don't put up with any negative symptoms which impact what you choose to do or how well you perform. Ask and seek support and help.

### Support from your coach/sport

If you have concerns about managing women's health issues in relation to performance or training expectations, identify someone within softball or circle of support that can help you to get understanding and alignment with your health needs.

### Managing your whole health is key to menstrual health

Wellbeing is a balance of social, emotional, physical and mental health and together they are key to your performance as an athlete. Your menstrual cycle is sensitive to imbalances in your health. Keeping a 'balance' is critical to your cycle and hormones.

### Improve your menstrual health knowledge

Did you know that menstrual cycle hormones can affect metabolism, bone density, hydration, immune response, pain tolerance, body temperature, weight, muscle recovery, injury risk, mental health and many other aspects of health and performance? Get informed, and regain choice and power over your body.

Check out:

- HPSNZ website, WHISPA.
- Sport NZ balanced female health handbook and infographic, [sportnz.org.nz/balanced-female-health](https://sportnz.org.nz/balanced-female-health).
- Australian Institute of Sport, female performance initiative.





# PHYSICAL SKILLS<sup>©</sup>

— SORT CARDS —



# Speed

- Quick off the mark.
- Has an effective change of direction.
- Maximum speed is good relative to age and stage of development.
- Is able to slow down (decelerate) quickly and safely.

Raise My Game<sup>©</sup>

## Developing Speed

### Technique

The foundation for speed and agility development is the execution of sound movement technique. Initially, perform activities at slower speeds to establish proper mechanics, increasing speed as you progress toward proficiency.

### Sprint assistance

Sprint assistance includes gravity-assisted running (e.g., down grade sprinting on a shallow [3–7°] slope), high-speed towing (e.g., harness and stretch cord), or other means of achieving an over-speed effect. The objective is to provide assistance without significantly altering movement mechanics, primarily as a means of improving stride rate.

### Sprint resistance

Sprint resistance is gravity-resisted running (e.g., sprinting up gradient or up-stairs) or other means of achieving an overload effect (e.g., harness, parachute, sled, or weighted vest).

The objective is to provide resistance without arresting movement mechanics; primarily as a means of improving explosive strength and stride length. In general,  $\geq 10\%$  changes in movement resistance have detrimental effects on technique.

### Deceleration training

Practice slowing down from faster speeds. This helps to prevent injury and condition the muscles that decelerate the body.

### Other factors

Tertiary methods of speed and agility training include mobility (range of motion of the hip, knee and ankle), strength, and speed endurance training. The ability to fully retract the leg during recovery helps to achieve proper ground preparation position and ground strike. Inadequate mobility can therefore result in improper foot strike. On strength, the ability to achieve high movement velocities requires skillful force application across a range of power outputs and muscle actions. Resistance training programs should progressively address the entire force-velocity spectrum.

*Also, see agility and strength cards.*



# Agility

- Good movement technique in all angles of movement.
- Is able to keep balance to achieve maximal power output through both legs.
- Strong turning.
- Strong footwork.
- Good anticipation and quick reactions.

Raise My Game<sup>©</sup>

## Developing Agility

Agility is the ability to change the direction of the body in an efficient and effective manner. To achieve this, you require a combination of:

- Balance – the ability to maintain equilibrium when stationary or moving (i.e., not to fall over) through the coordinated actions of our sensory functions (eyes, ears and the proprioceptive organs in our joints).
- Static Balance – the ability to retain the centre of mass above the base of support in a stationary position.
- Dynamic Balance – ability to maintain balance with body movement.

- Speed – the ability to move all or part of the body quickly.
- Strength – the ability of a muscle or muscle group to overcome resistance.
- Co-ordination – the ability to control the movement of the body in co-operation with the body's sensory functions e.g., catching a ball (ball, hand and eye co-ordination).

### Ideas for training agility:

- Aim to improve the component parts of agility (listed above) individually or in combination.
- Cross-train in high agility sports, e.g., squash, badminton or touch rugby.

- Incorporate reacting to visual stimuli (e.g., a ball) into your movement exercises.
- Add in 10 mins of ladder or cone work before your existing sessions (as a guide, a time of less than 2.8 seconds for males and 3.4 seconds for females for running the length of a 20-rung ladder, one foot in each rung at a time, is considered as excellent for senior athletes).

*Also, see speed and strength cards.*



# TECHNICAL SKILLS

— SORT CARDS —

SELECT CARDS TO SORT FOR PLAYER POSITION AND ROLES



Pitching



Batting



Base Running



Catching



Fielding



# Technique

Pitching



- Present yourself facing the catcher with front foot, back of heel touching the pitching plate.
- Ball in pitching hand or glove, what feels comfortable for you.
- Take your grip, with your body weight on your back foot.
- Transfer your weight to the front foot (can be done using your hands (ball and the hands in the glove) to get momentum to the front foot).
- Push off front foot and leap towards catcher.
- Glove hand to point at the catcher.
- Land on lead foot, snap the wrist on release and follow through.

## Developing Technique

### Self-analysis

Seek to understand the technical skill execution required to get maximum power and control. Knowledge could be gathered through:

- Using video with a speed radar at training to get instant feedback.
- Asking technique specialists to review your technique.
- Watching videos of the best in the world and placing their video alongside yours.

### Use targets

Set up a target with areas that you are aiming to hit, set goals and then measure % success rate.

### Identify a pitching mentor

Do you have someone in your circle of support that is providing specific pitching advice?

Raise My Game<sup>©</sup>





# Short Game

Batting



- Has a short game option, and is confident to use it in any situation.
- Has a positive mindset towards executing the short game, to help the team strategy.
- Can execute sacrifice push-bunt or squeeze-play options consistently.
- Has an awareness of the defensive set-up.
- Good pitch selection - it doesn't have to be the first pitch, just the first strike.
- Good footwork is the key to a good outcome.
- Visually tracks the ball to the point of contact on the bat.
- In bunting situations, a slightly angled bat will ensure that the ball is bunted down.
- In slapping/push-bunt situations, doesn't swing too hard (i.e., it's like a half swing).

## Developing Short Game

### Self-analysis

Seek to understand the technical skill execution required for ideal ball placement in order to create time to get to first base.

Knowledge could be gathered through:

- Working with your coach to analyse technique and pitch selection.
- Using video at training.
- Asking batting specialists to review your technique (i.e., footwork, angle of the bat, tracking the ball with your eyes, swing).
- Watching videos of the best in the world and placing their video alongside yours.

### Gaining confidence

Set targets to practice your short game in club matches when there is less pressure on.

Raise My Game<sup>©</sup>



# Ground Balls and Fly Balls

Fielding



- Moves in on each pitch. Has anticipation, athleticism, flexibility and speed to get to the ball quickly.
- Gets feet in the right position quickly when fielding the ball.
- Quick transition to throw.
- Keeps head on the ball, will not shy away from the ball when fielding.
- Has the confidence to attack the ball, rather than staying back and waiting for it to bounce.
- Isn't afraid to get dirty (i.e., dive for the ball, both in the infield and outfield).
- Infielders always looking for the lead runner.
- Has good situational awareness in decision-making.
- Outfielders, when tracking back to the fence, where possible, have glove-side to the ball.
- Outfielders, focus is forward and positioning is from the diamond, not in from the fence.
- As a unit, gaps are maintained.

## Developing Ground Balls and Fly Balls

### **Mastery**

Skill development is about repetitive practice, whilst managing your training loads without getting injured.

### **Technique**

Understand what good fielding technique looks like through talking to coaches or other athletes, watching videos or other athletes training. Then video yourself or get someone to watch you and give feedback.

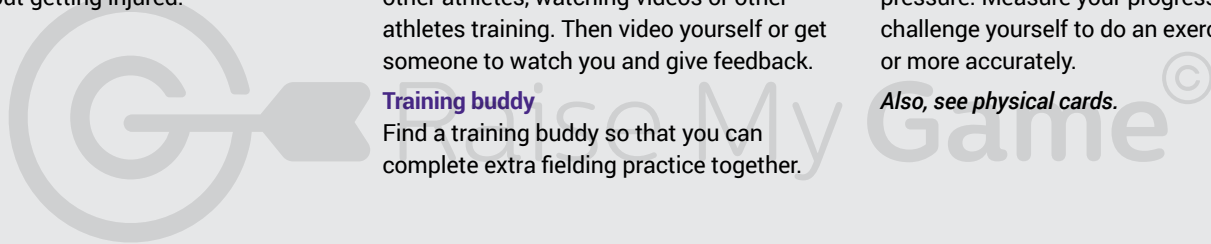
### **Training buddy**

Find a training buddy so that you can complete extra fielding practice together.

### **Small games and challenges**

Set up small games, competitions or challenges to keep it interesting. Create pressure. Measure your progress and challenge yourself to do an exercise faster or more accurately.

*Also, see physical cards.*





# Receiving

Catching



- Catching position is a solid, steady, foundation (i.e., wide stance, well balanced).
- Has soft hands, can cradle the ball to receive it, so that it sticks.
- Can frame the pitch, that is, can twist/rotate glove, so that the pitch looks like it is in the strike zone.
- Has the ability to catch pitches that are high, low or wide, especially when there are runners on base (i.e., no free bases).

## Developing Receiving

### Technique self-analysis

Seek to understand the technical skill execution required to receive pitches that are in the zone, high, low or wide. Also, review your ability to frame the pitch as described on the front of this card. Knowledge could be gathered through:

- Using video at training to get instant feedback.
- Asking technique specialists to review your technique.
- Watching videos of the best in the world and placing their video alongside yours.

### Identify a mentor

Do you have someone in your circle of support that is providing specific catching advice?

### Training buddy

Find a training buddy who is a pitcher so that you can complete extra practice together.

### Small games and challenges

Set up small games, competitions or challenges such as catching without knowing the pitch; and catching in different areas (in the zone, high, low or wide).

Raise My Game<sup>©</sup>



# Base Running

Base Running



- Good jumps off the base.
- Is aggressive, always looking for an extra base (i.e., builds pressure through attacking every base with urgency).
- Runs everything out regardless.
- Anticipates when a ball is going to land in a gap.
- Runs tight and efficient lines round the bases.
- Has mastered multiple different sliding skills (e.g., hook slide, pop-up slide, head-first slide).
- Always slides if in doubt.
- Able to pick-up the coach, and their instruction early, when going from first to third.
- Never makes the first or third out, at third (runners on base build pressure).
- Can anticipate the wild pitch when on third base, always keeping feet pointed towards home base.

## Developing Base Running

### Technique self-analysis

Seek to understand strong technique for base running including jumps off the base, lines and sliding. Knowledge could be gathered through:

- Using video at training to get instant feedback.
- Asking technique specialists to review your technique.
- Watching videos of the best in the world and placing their video alongside yours.

### Training scenarios

Practice using scenarios to develop your decision-making and reactions for different game strategies and game situations (score, stage in the game, bases loaded).

### Debrief

Debrief your decision-making and execution, ideally with input from your coach. Assess yourself against the description on the front of this card and keep notes on what you learnt, so that you can refer back to them in the future.

### Discipline

Review your discipline on the little things (e.g. always sliding if in doubt, running everything out regardless) and set targets in competitions if these things could be improved.

©  
Game





# TACTICS

©

— SORT CARDS —



# Tactics

- Completes scouting diligently, and keeping notes to build a good understanding of the opposition (pitchers and catchers).
- Has an understanding of the game plan and role within it.
- Has a plan B, if plan A isn't working (i.e., short game option as an alternative offensive strategy).
- Can assess the situation, and either speed the game up when things are going well to keep the pressure on the opposition, or alternatively slow the game down, when the opposition has the momentum.
- Has good situational awareness, and the confidence to make the right decisions relative to the situation (i.e., scoreline, runners on base, opposition momentum, or late in the game).

## Developing Tactics

### Training scenarios

Practice using scenarios to implement different game strategies in training.

### Practice in competition

Look for opportunities to practice tactical leadership at lower levels of competition.

### Work with a mentor

Identify someone who could mentor you on tactical decision-making.

### Debrief

Debrief every game alongside the coach. Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the tactics. Review implementation of the tactics with the coach including communication, intent and timing of decision-making within the strategy. Review decision-making under pressure. Keep notes on what you learnt, to refer back to.

### Learn from history

Become a student of the game. Watch videos of games played, analyse the tactics, decisions made, and whether you would have made the same decision(s). Read books and talk to former players to pick their brains on game strategies.