

# Rundowns [ARTICLE]

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## Rundowns

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Rundowns executed poorly by a defense can be a painful thing to watch. Believe me, I've seen more than my fair share of ugly rundowns in my 30 years of head coaching. The key to being successful in rundown situations is to break down the skill, dissect the moving parts, and practice those skills individually before throwing your whole team into a rundown with runners (figure 12.3). Take the time to teach the snap throw and get your players comfortable throwing on the run. Teach them that their glove is on their hand to change the direction of the ball or redirect the ball. That transition, the skill of redirecting the ball, will come in handy in rundowns and countless other situations. Teach them that the second they get the ball, they should sprint at the runner, not trot; after the runner turns her back, she's toast. The player receiving the ball will be on the move, and the runner will have no chance.

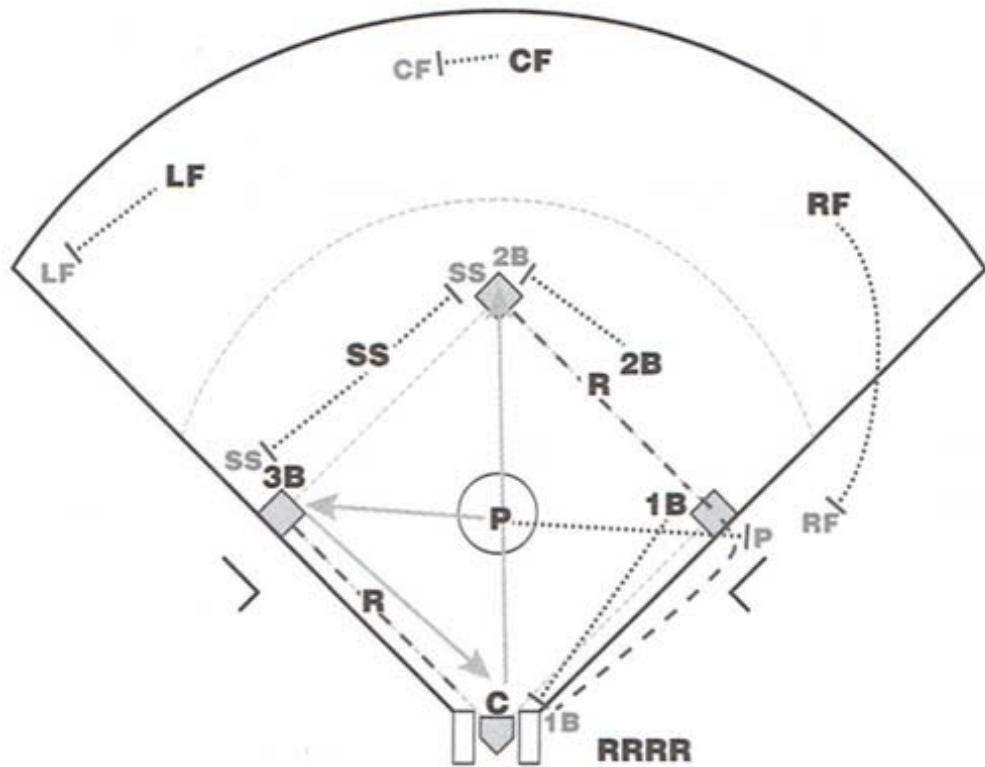


Figure 12.3 Rundowns.

### ONE-THROW RUNDOWN

We refer to a rundown as a one-throw rundown. We expect to make an out in a rundown situation with one throw. For that to happen, every one of our players needs to have practiced the aforementioned skills. Then we need to set up situation work in practice to learn how to execute a one-throw rundown.

We break our team into equal groups (you must have at least five players in a group) and set up two bases 60 feet (18 m) apart for each group. If you have a lot of players, you can have several groups of five spread across the field from the third-base line to right field. One person runs in the middle, and two players are at each base. We practice the skills needed to execute a one-throw rundown. After we think that everyone understands how to execute a rundown, we set up a game-like situation.

### GAME SIMULATION

We have a full defensive lineup on the field, a runner between third base and home plate, and a runner at home plate running to first base. The pitcher throws the ball to either the third baseman or the catcher to initiate a rundown with the runner between third and home. When the pitcher throws the ball to initiate the rundown at third, the base runner at home plate sprints to first base and tries to get to third base before the base runner at third gets out. After we complete the out on the base runner between third and home, our defense calls out where to throw the ball to initiate a rundown with the backside base runner. She may be between first and second base, between second and third base, or standing on third base, all depending on how quickly we get an out in the first rundown situation. I like this drill because it forces us to execute the rundown quickly and

to communicate loudly where we need to throw the ball to get the backside base runner. The drill is game-like because infielders and outfielders are involved in the play, and our players have to react at game speed and make quick decisions.



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