

4 Ways to Improve Outfield Defense



The mental aspect of being an outfielder is often overlooked. Here are four tips to keep your outfielder's mind in the game--and in optimal shape for making a great defensive play. An easy way to remember this set of outfield defense tips is the acronym MAFA, which stands for:

Mentality

- Outfielders are the last line of defense and need to make plays on the ball with that mindset.
- Keep your attention focused on every batter. Any lack of focus can be detrimental to the team's overall defensive goals. Even if you go a few batters or innings, you must keep your attention sharp.

Adjustment

You must be able to adapt to changes to your outside environment as a player. Always keep in mind what the playing surface is like.

- Will the ball be wet?
- Will the wind carry the ball deep, knock it down short, or blow it to the left or right?
- Do I have to battle the sun?
- Is the outfield grass short or long, and how will that affect the speed of groundballs.

Focus

Each situation in a game presents different circumstances on which you need to focus.

- What is the game situation?
- What is the score and the number of outs?
- What inning is it?
- How many runners are on base?
- Did they use a pinch hitter?
- Where did the batter hit the ball in previous at-bats.
- What is the hitter's count?

Outfielders should always be aware of their positioning, and that starts with knowing the game situation.

Attitude

As a competitor, you should want to be involved in every play. This doesn't always mean making the specific play. It could mean simply backing up an infielder on a play. You should know the role that you are assigned to play and always be ready.