

The View From Behind the Mask

TODD COBURN



&

ROY ANDERSON



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Last but not least, thank you to wife Chrysee and the rest of my family for their continued support through out my baseball career and life. I wouldn't be who I am and where I am without them!



Roy Anderson would like to dedicate his contributions to “The View From Behind the Mask” to the greatest man and coach he ever knew...his father.

Andy Anderson lived, played, coached and taught the game with honor and respect.

November 5, 1922 – January 21, 2007

FOREWORD

In my book, *The Baseball Playbook*, I share my coaching techniques and philosophies that I have developed over my 40 years of experience in college baseball. As thorough and detailed as it is, my book, like every other book dedicated to coaching baseball, has only a small section focusing on the position of catcher. To actually encompass everything involved with the position, in a manner that is readily understandable and easy to put into action, would require a significant undertaking and very detailed resource.

Todd Coburn and Roy Anderson have accomplished exactly this with their book, *The View From Behind the Mask*. It takes a talented athlete with a leader's personality to play the position of catcher successfully. It is also a distinct advantage if the coach teaching the catchers has played the position at a high level. Coach Coburn and Coach Anderson, both former professional catchers, have produced a resource that will help any player or coach who wants to learn and understand the "ins and outs" of what it takes to be a successful catcher. There are many tips, strategies, drills and easy to follow guides that will help players and coaches in practice and during games from Little League through College and beyond.

Catchers are the "quarterback," "point guard" and "general" of the baseball field. They have the entire field and all of the players in front of them. Everything that occurs during a game happens as a result of what the catcher does or does not do. The Catcher who knows how to make the right choices and handle the inherent responsibilities will go a long way in determining the success of an entire baseball team.

The View From Behind the Mask not only provides numerous drills and practice techniques to help produce a fundamentally sound catcher. It also provides invaluable information on understanding pitchers and hitters, giving catchers and coaches the knowledge to develop strategies for every situation a catcher may encounter during a game. *The View From Behind the Mask* provides all the information and tools you will need to achieve your individual and team goals.

Coach Ron Polk

INTRODUCTION

In the baseball coaching world it is understood that in order for your team to be successful your defense must be solid “up the middle,” meaning your best defensive players should be positioned in centerfield, shortstop and at catcher.

With that said, out of those players “up the middle,” catchers are considered by many coaches as the most important player on the field. They are expected to be an extra coach and leader while also needing to possess nearly every important physical characteristic of all the other players on the field.

Even with the understanding that they are the most important player on the field; catchers are often neglected during practice. This is due to the fact that catching coaches are very rare. While most teams have a hitting coach, a pitching coach and even a fielding coach, many don't have a catching coach on staff. During defensive practice time, catchers are often sent to the bullpen to catch the pitchers or go to the bullpen to practice drills by themselves. All other positions typically have their position coaches with them during workouts.

This book was written to help those teams that may not have the luxury of having a catching coach. Chapter one explains in detail the characteristics needed to be a successful catcher. Chapters two through 10 give detailed descriptions of the fundamental skills involved with the position of catcher. Included in these chapters are fifty drills that may be utilized for skill improvement. Chapter 11 provides information that will help catchers better understand the mechanics of pitching, the psychological aspect of pitchers and the strengths and weaknesses of hitters.

Also included in the book are a Catcher Evaluation Chart, a Practice Drill List and a Pitching Strategy Chart. These are provided to help coaches evaluate the talent of their catchers, organize the catchers defensive practice time and help catchers understand hitter's tendencies which can be used to help set the hitter's up for failure.

So whether you're a catcher trying to maximize your potential or a coach that is not familiar with the position, use this book to help improve your team's success by solidifying your defense “up the middle.”