



Hitting

Main Points – Philosophy

1. The goal of the offense is to score runs...period. We can do so by hitting for average, hitting for power, playing small ball, being excellent on the bases, or a combination. Your/our “style” of offensive play should be adaptable to the composition and skill set of your team.

2. The goal in each plate appearance is to have a Quality At Bat. Discuss this with your players. Teach it. Measure it. Emphasize it in other ways that you see fit. Quality At Bats at the high school level are any of the following, and could be adapted as appropriate to whatever you age level may be:

- A hard hit ball, regardless of the result
- Walk
- HBP
- Make a productive out – moving a runner from 2nd with 0 outs, driving in a runner from 3rd by making an out, sacrifice bunt, sacrifice fly
- 7+ pitch at bat that doesn’t end in a strikeout
- Any 9+ pitch at bat, regardless of result

3. Hitting is situational. Hitters must be versatile enough to adjust their focus or approach either in between or during at bats. For example:

-With a runner at second and nobody out and an empty count, a hitter may begin the at bat simply by focusing on getting a pitch to hit hard

-If the hitter gets to two strikes, his approach should change to one that allows him to make a productive out by moving the runner from 2nd to 3rd base by hitting a ball to the right side

4. Though free bases are quality at bats, and we love them, young hitters should be focused on developing their skills of hitting. We are not looking to create young hitters who are looking to walk – we are looking to create hitters who want to hit. Develop confidence in your hitters abilities, and our coaches at upper levels can help them refine their plate discipline.

4. Teach your players and focus most of your batting practice on working to hit the ball hard up the middle. You want your players to drive the ball up the middle of the field. Some suggested cues that you might use with your players to help them practice this approach (during PRACTICE, not during game at bats) might be:

- Attack the inside part of the baseball
- Hit the ball hard off the top part of the L screen
- Narrow the outfield from gap-to-gap

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Main Points – Technique

1. Pre-at bat routine – each player should develop a mental and physical routine that he goes through before taking an at-bat. The routine should begin no later than when the player is “in the hole”. The routine can be very simple, for example a specific order in which he puts on his batting gloves and helmet, and should also include a mental process, like reminding himself that his goal is simply to get a good pitch to hit, for example.

2. Stance – The starting point in the batter’s box; The hitter’s feet should typically be slightly outside of shoulder-width apart with good balance in the center of the body. Most importantly, the positioning of the feet should be what is most comfortable for the hitter, but most hitters will want their feet square to the pitcher or have their front foot/hip slightly open to the pitcher. Both eyes should be fixed on the pitcher with the hands in a relaxed position in the area of the back shoulder.

3. Load – The swing begins with a shift of the weight into the back hip that may slightly rotate the hips and upper torso away from the pitcher, as well as a slight movement back of the hands.

4. Stride – The stride should occur at the same time as the load or instantly afterwards, creating separation between the hitter’s front foot and his hips/hands. The stride is primarily a timing mechanism, and should typically be a small step forward toward the pitcher or simply be a pick up and put down of the front foot.

5. Swing – Rotation of the hips starting with the front hip begins the swing as the hitter’s body uncoils. The hands begin to go forward, started by the hip rotation. The goal is to get the bat on plane with the incoming pitch; excessive chopping down on the baseball or upper cut into the bottom of the ball are to be avoided, with the goal being to hit line drives back up the middle of the field.

6. Follow-through – Some hitters will use two hands to follow-through, while others will use one. A balanced follow-through can indicate that the previous elements of the swing are being executed properly – an unbalanced follow-through is an indication that there is an issue earlier in the swing, and usually not an issue in and of itself to be fixed.