

Base Running Program

Philosophy: Players need to believe in base running. Our number one goal is to create and score runs with aggressive, smart base running. We will stress the importance of base running at practice through repetitions.

I. Pre-Game and Dugout

1. Know weather and field conditions
2. Know other teams strengths and weaknesses on defense
3. Pay attention to the fielders:
 - OF - playing depth, handed, ability, stopwatch to all bases
 - INF - playing depth, ability, tendencies, stopwatch to 1B
 - P - release point, pick moves, break time, stopwatch
 - C - arm position, ability, tendencies, stopwatch to 2B

II. On-Deck

1. Prepare to hit--timing and mental
2. You are the Coach for runner approaching home stay back to not interfere and you **MUST BE THERE!**

III. Leads

Normal leads (13 ft at 1B and 15 ft at 2B)
Adjustments can be made by coaches situationally

IV. Home to First – Most important part is the first 3 steps out of the batter's box

1. Go hard to 1B every time; on walks we go 3/4 speed
2. First step out of batter's box is with the back foot
3. Approx. 3-5 steps down the line take a quick glance to know where the ball is
4. Run in a straight line to 1B

If the ball stays in the infield: **(coach points to base)**

- a. keep head up
- b. about 3/4 of the way look at the feet of the 1B to see if the throw is wild or good
- c. run through the base - avoid lunging or jumping as it may lead to an injury
- d. once past the base, look over shoulder for ball, spread feet, lower hips

If the ball gets through the infield: **(coach makes circular motion with arm and points)**

- a. make aggressive turn; begin turn early if you know (no more than 5 ft out)
- b. open up to field where ball is located
- c. touch inside of base and tuck inside shoulder
- d. immediately after touching base, turn head to 2B and keep eyes on base
- e. when ball comes back in, sprint back to base (read ball on approach)

Fly balls that are high, think double **(look at coach for sign)**

- a. if ball is dropped runner will be on second
- b. know where other runners are, runner on 3B or two outs get to second

V. Once at First

Once at first, each runner must do the following: all three must be done with every pitch

- **look at coach for signs**
- **scan field to see where fielders are playing**
- **know the outs - acknowledge coach**

Leads at 1B:

Primary Lead – regular lead at 12-14 feet; depends on confidence of runner
Technique is **Right – Left – Square Up – Shuffle – Shuffle** (distance is personal)

One-Way Lead – used to setup a steal. Weight on left foot and when pitcher makes a move, the first motion of the runner is to return to the base. Think white/blue lead

Jab Step – used when a left-handed pitcher is on the mound; sets up straight steal

Returning to the base

- a. diving > always head first and reach with the right hand (back of base)
- b. standing > be balanced with flexed knees and sturdy arms (own the base!)

Stealing

1. use either a crossover step or jab step
2. right arm goes with left foot and vice-versa
3. body must be moving prior to stealing (action/reaction principle)
4. pick up pitch 1/2 way to base to see pitch (optional) (GLANCE)
5. on steal slide > read fielder's position to see where to slide
6. LHP > steal on first move (learn tendency from dugout)

VI. At Second

Leads at 2B:

Primary Lead – regular lead at 17 feet; similar to lead at 1B
Technique is **Right – Left – Right – Left – Square – Shuffle – Shuffle**
Pick up sign after R-L-R-L-SQ

Walking Lead – Keep feet moving with lead and is great for stealing 3B (timing)

1. Never extend lead when pitcher is looking at you
2. Once he looks home extend lead
3. Be aware of middle infielders positioning, game situation, and coaches calls (back, #, hold)
4. Keep lead in straight line with 3B unless there are 2 outs, then we will start back 1-2 steps for an aggressive turn at third
5. Use rhythm and looks of pitcher to decide what may your choice of stealing.
6. Coach likes to use a Green Light sign at 3B. **PLAYER MUST HAVE CONFIDENCE TO STEAL 3B!!!**

VII. At Third

Leads: (leads will vary depending on situation)

Pitcher winds up > use walking lead

Pitcher stretches > use primary lead; same as 1B

Bases Loaded > use primary lead or walking lead and PAY ATTENTION

1. Leads may and will vary with placement of 3B and situation (inning, score)
2. Lead is always taken in foul
3. We want our players thinking aggressive, read pitch and be ready to go on every pitch
4. Checklist must be done here (3 questions/checks)
5. Once catcher receives the ball, SPRINT back to the base in fair territory or run toward the 3B to block his view of the ball

VI. Fly Balls and Tagging Up

Read ball off bat to determine what to do

- a. less than 2 outs, find fly ball or freeze on line drive (better jump knowing where fielders are located PRIOR to the pitch)
- b. with 2 outs, run hard until told by coach or umpire that there are 3 outs
 - **discuss lead at 1B and ball hit behind runner > choices**
 - **ball in infield, runner needs to stay on base**

Find ball off bat and know distance of ball:

- short fly ball > freeze and see what happens
- long fly ball > be ready to tag, stay off base as far as possible while being able to get back to tag
- outfield loses ball > be ready to go; be careful not to get tricked

- * When tagging up, the same principles apply at all the bases
- * Depending on where the ball is hit, put the foot that is closest to the ball on the base to give the runner a better view of when to run or show run
- * Runner's chest must point to next base – only turn head to see ball being caught
- * We will always get back to tag when a foul fly ball is hit (less than 2 outs)
- * If defense is camped under the ball, get to base immediately to tag or show tag
- * When we have a runner on third, other runners need to see and know situation
 - never run the runner in front off
 - do not run into third out and not get a run
 - show fakes and be ready to read ball and cut-off person

Delayed Steals

- * Add three big shuffles to the lead
- * Catcher tendencies to look for:
 - drops to knees, sticks pitches (complainer)
 - lobs ball to pitcher and fielders not paying attention
 - does not look runners back after receiving pitch
- * Infield tendencies to look for:
 - fielders not paying attention; put heads down, look to outfield, out of position
 - not covering bases after pitch is received by catcher
 - defense does not communicate well
- * Other situations to use delayed steals:
 - hitter is struggling with pitcher or is in slump
 - 0-2 count and LHH at bat to block runner at 1B
 - works well with 1 or 2 strikes
 - when the defense least expects the play

Stealing Home

- * We will teach it and use it in games!!!
- * Extend lead at third and need to start with a 6-8 step lead (prefer 8, but don't tip play)
- * Show fake steals throughout game and have long leads to setup play late in game
- * Learn the pitcher's tendencies:
 - Look for the following:
 - slow wind-up
 - never looks at runner
 - poor communication on defense
 - pitcher shows a hesitation in move to home
- * Batter at home must know play is on; be careful not to get called for interference (stay out of the way of the catcher and runner, hold ground {open up to see sign at third})
- * Slide into a pop-up slide as foot hits home
- * If catcher comes around the back of the batter, you may slide headfirst to avoid tag (we prefer to never slide headfirst at home unless it is to avoid a tag only)

Sliding

- * **We will never slide spikes high!!!**
- * Four reasons to slide: avoiding a tag, breaking momentum, breaking up a DP, avoiding a collision
- * Once a player decides to slide, finish the slide (safety factor)
- * Slide on the buttocks and not the knees
- * Types of slide to teach:
 - Bent-leg about 12 feet from base, sit down for slide
keep hands close to head or chest for balance
used to break up double plays or distract infielders from throwing

Stopwatch and Charts

* How to use a stopwatch:

- Catcher's time is from time he touches ball until middle infielder receives the ball
- Pitcher's time is point of release until catcher receives ball
- Pitcher's move is from beginning of move home until catcher receives the ball
- Add above together to get more accurate times to compare with runners

* Study pitcher's tendencies and chart each inning

* Gain knowledge of pitcher's pickoff moves to all bases, make sure to chart all these

Other Important Notes

1. Players need to understand they are responsible for 90% of base running.
2. Be consistent with leads
3. Anticipate and be prepared to advance on every pitch
4. Base running starts in the dugout.
5. Will utilize the direct and indirect steal
6. To break up a double play we will slide hard into base; rule and safety
7. Always tag on foul fly balls when there are less than 2 outs
8. Never get picked on full counts, be ready to sprint once pitcher goes home (shorten lead)
9. Whenever ball is in the infield, never round a base; know situation
10. Never have first or third out at 3B
11. Line drives with less than two outs, FREEZE; know play at 1B if ball is hit behind runner
12. On infield hits:
 - when on 2B, advance on ground balls hit behind you
 - if the ball is hit in front of you, create a disturbance
13. Stealing on LHP must be done as his movement begins to home
 - if P has a slow move may be able to take a Blue Lead and Jab Step - Go

Reading Pitcher's Move

1. There are many moves to look for and most pitchers stick to the same move throughout a game
2. Do not make it harder than what it is

More popular moves seen at 1B:

RHP

- Leaner → leans toward home is going home
- Shoulder Turn → starts open and tucks shoulder on first movement home
- Cap → down and up
- Rhythm → get timing down or learn pattern

LHP

- Foot Crosser → foot crosses rubber must go home
- Open Thigh → going to 1B (usually)
- Closed Thigh → going home
- Lean Back → going to 1B
- Shoulder Turn → going to 1B (Brett Schmitt move)
- Book Head → looks at 1B goes home; looks at home goes to 1B

Moves seen at 2B:

- know the moves we use
- pitcher will either spin or open and throw
- look for movement of middle infielders; coach needs to help runner
- catcher may give sign to pitcher and infielders, once noticed let team know
- make pitcher worry about runner at 2B with aggressive leads and fakes

Moves seen at 3B:

- same moves are seen at third that are seen at first, roles change with RHP & LHP
- make sure to know where the 3B is playing and what his distance is to the base

Situations and Strategies

1. 1st and 3rd Offense
2. 1st and 3rd and Infield Positioning
3. Rundowns
4. Ball four wild pitch – runner on second
5. Extended leads at 1B vs. LHP
6. Extended leads at 1B vs. RHP
7. Runner on 1B, less than 2 outs, questionable fly ball
8. Runner on 2B, less than 2 outs, questionable fly ball
9. Runner on 3B, fly ball with less than two outs
10. Runners on 1B and 3B, fly ball with less than two outs
11. Runners on 2B and 3B, fly ball with less than two outs
12. Runner on 2B, responsibilities with less than two outs
13. Runner on 3B, responsibilities with less than two outs