

Oshkosh West Baseball

Offensive Fundamentals of Baseball

I. Team Offense

- A. Goal = score more runs than opponent (not more hits or anything else)
- B. Be aggressive
- C. Manufacture runs
 - 1. Get baserunners (any way to get on)
 - 2. Advance runners
 - a. stealing
 - b. hit-and-run
 - c. hit behind the runner
 - d. sacrifice bunts
 - e. sacrifice flies
 - f. squeezes

II. Hitting

A. You Have A Job To Do

- 1. "Have a good at-bat"
- 2. Get on base
- 3. Advance runners
- 4. Drive runners in

B. The Absolutes Of Good Hitting

- 1. Be free of tension
 - a. overcome your fear
 - b. have confidence
 - c. physically tension-free stance and swing
- 2. Have a controlled grip
 - a. hold the bat in your fingers, not your palm
 - b. line up middle knuckles as close as possible
 - c. don't hold the bat too tightly
- 3. Have a balanced stance, with rhythm and movement
 - a. parallel is best
 - b. closed stance hits opposite
 - c. open stance pulls
- 4. Have a good weight shift and timing
 - a. movement overcomes inertia -- hands go back to go forward
 - b. firm, rigid back side to firm, rigid front side (inside of back leg to inside of front leg)
 - c. "weight back, wait back" (don't stride too soon)
 - d. don't let your center of gravity dip
- 5. Think "front toe closed" when you take your stride; keep your stride short
- 6. Have the bat in the launching position at the moment your front foot touches down
 - a. two motions: step, then swing
 - b. keep your hands back when you step
 - c. short swing; throw hands down; swing plane is "short to long"
- 7. Make a positive, aggressive motion back toward the pitcher
 - a. go to the ball to hit it (keep stride short)
 - b. keep your shoulders, hips & knees parallel to the ground
- 8. *Keep your **head down** when you swing*

- a. see the ball!!
 - b. keep your front shoulder in
 - c. look straight down -- don't tip your head sideways
9. Hit through the ball
- a. arm extension (top arm on contact)
 - b. palm facing forward
 - c. follow through (back shoelaces face pitcher)
10. Use the whole field to hit
- a. focus on contact and control
 - b. "hit it where they ain't"
 - i. SS to RF line to RF power alley for right-handed hitters
 - ii. 2B to LF line to LF power alley for left-handed hitters

C. Finer Points of Hitting

1. Bat selection
 - a. make sure it's light enough -- better an ounce too light than an ounce too heavy
 - b. $F=ma$ force equals mass times acceleration (velocity squared)
 - c. quickness generates more power than weight
 - d. timing is absolutely critical to hitting
2. Pitch selection
 - a. consider your job to do (do you need a ground ball or fly ball?)
 - b. changes with the count (protect 0-2; 3-0 or 3-1 must be perfect or take)
 - c. know the strike zone (Ted Williams)
 - d. be patient -- don't chase bad pitches
3. Hitting off-speed pitches
 - a. always be ready for the fastball
 - b. pick up the rotation of the ball as it leaves the pitcher's hand
 - c. wait back longer on off-speed pitches (keep hands back)
 - d. hit off-speed pitches up-the-middle or opposite
4. Hit the ball where it is pitched
 - a. divide the plate into thirds
 - b. pull balls on the inner third -- make contact out in front
 - c. hit balls on the middle third back up the middle -- make contact right off front foot
 - d. go opposite with balls on the outer third -- make contact behind front foot
 - e. bat angles for each third (perpendicular to your target area)
 - f. keep your swing the same -- adjust where you make contact
 - g. see Contact Zone diagram
5. Hit-and-run
 - a. know the signs
 - b. protect the runner
 - c. hit the ball on the ground (swing down on high pitch) or foul it off
 - d. hit the ball behind the runner (or the hole vacated by infielder covering)
6. How to get hit
 - a. know when to get hit and when to avoid the pitch
 - b. protect your frontside, head & hands
 - c. take the hit on the backside by turning shoulders back and putting head down
 - d. take your bat down with you (drop it or swing it down behind you)
 - e. avoid jumping -- you still get 1st base on a pitch that bounces and hits you
7. Taking signs
 - a. step out of box after every pitch to get signs
 - b. watch the whole sequence & acknowledge
 - c. if you miss a sign or aren't sure, give coach the sign to repeat sequence (avoid calling time)

8. Make adjustments as needed
 - a. know the situation
 - b. be willing to adjust
 - c. move in batter's box
 - d. choke up on bat
 - e. bat selection
 - f. step out of box to disrupt pitcher's rhythm
9. Always run everything out!
 - a. assume an error will be made (a dropped fly ball means you are at least on 2nd)
 - b. a hit to the outfield is a double until the defense hits the cut-off (e.g. throw to home)
 - c. it's not hard to sprint 90 feet five times a game

III. Bunting

- A. Know the signs
- B. Know where to bunt
 1. Moving runner to 2nd = 1st base side
 2. Moving runner to 3rd = 3rd base side
 3. Squeeze = get the ball down, either side
 4. For base hit = where is defense vulnerable? (out of position, slow, weak arm, etc.)
 - a. 1st or 3rd baseman deep
 - b. shifted infield (2nd or SS = push past pitcher)
- C. Proper mechanics
 1. Square up (bring back foot even with front foot)
 2. Bend your knees
 3. Grip bat loosely with bottom hand (tighter grip for a hard bunt)
 4. Balance bat with your top hand (hold behind bat)
 5. Keep the bat head above the handle! ($\approx 45^\circ$ angle)
 6. Get the bat out in front of the plate (extend arms)
 7. Adjust bat angle to target area
 8. "Catch" the ball with the bat -- don't chop or swing at it
- D. Bunt only strikes (unless squeeze)

IV. Baserunning

- A. Know the situation (# of outs, count, tying/go-ahead run, etc.)
- B. Know the strengths & weaknesses of defense (who to run on)
- C. Leading off
 1. Always know where the ball is
 2. Get your signs first
 3. Keep your weight on the balls of your feet
 4. Slide your feet -- don't get tangled up
 5. Jab step vs. lefty
 6. 1st base: get close to infield grass
 7. 2nd base: back a few steps, take a walking lead if possible
 8. 3rd base: lead off in foul territory, go back in fair
 9. Take what defense gives you
 10. Know when to gamble and when to be conservative
- D. Pick-offs
 1. Be alert -- listen to coach
 2. Don't be afraid to get dirty
 3. Slide away from the tag (back corner)
- E. Stealing

1. Usually steal on the pitcher -- get a read on his move & delivery
 2. Get a good jump (don't have to go if real bad jump)
 3. Crossover step -- push off
 4. Use your arms -- look straight ahead
 5. Good times to steal (off-speed pitch, no pitchout, etc.)
- F. Hit-and-run
1. Treat like a steal, but don't get picked off
 2. Glance to pick up the ball on contact
 3. Pick up 3rd base coach
- G. Tagging up
1. Be ready for situation
 2. Listen to coach for "go" or "stay"
 3. Don't look back
 4. Heads-up plays
- H. Sliding
1. Types
 - a. bent-leg (stand-up)
 - b. hook
 - c. head-first
 2. Make up your mind -- don't start & stop
 3. Slide to a corner -- avoid the tag -- maintain contact with the base
 4. Don't slide into the catcher head-first
 5. Break up the double play
- I. Running the bases
1. Run through 1st base -- don't lunge; only slide to avoid a tag -- always touch the base!
 2. Rounding corners: inside corner, either foot -- do it in stride; widen out a little
 3. Pick up coach as soon as possible -- keep your eyes up
 4. Never make the 1st or 3rd out at 3rd base (or rounding 2nd base)
 5. Be alert for errors, wild pitches, other chances to advance
 6. Be aware of other runners
 7. Scoring positions & situations
- J. Rundowns
1. Stay in it as long as possible (allow runners to advance/increase chance of error)
 2. Try to make play at advance base
- K. Be smart & aggressive

V. Practicing

- A. Work ethic
- B. Repetition
- C. Develop and maintain good habits -- "practice makes permanent"
- D. Work on your weaknesses as well as your strengths
- E. Drills
 1. Live (field or cage)
 2. BP (field or cage -- hitter knows what's coming)
 3. Tee hitting
 - a. 5 in, 5 middle, 5 out (contact zone)
 - b. two-tee to stop uppercutting
 4. Toss hitting
 - a. side toss
 - b. back toss
 - c. front toss (use a screen)

d. toss high, low and middle

5. Fungos

6. Dry swings & stance

7. Pitching machine (not as good as live/BP)

8. Weighted bat/donut

9. Thunderstick™/broomstick

F. Conditioning

1. Sprints

2. Distance running (esp. pitchers)

3. Strength -- weight training -- focus on legs, wrists/forearms

4. Stretching/flexibility

5. Mental preparation (toughness, determination) -- visualize