



# SHORT GAME AND BASE RUNNING

Amanda Buchholz

*Assistant Coach*

*DePaul University*

*abuchho3@depaul.edu*



*Chicago, IL*





## Basic Bunting

---

### Fundamentals:

- \* bottom hand stays low and controls direction
- \* top hand slides to bottom of barrel with “thumbs up”
  - finger can point behind barrel if comfortable for more stability
- \* rip your bottom hand to your front hip, keep it tight to chest
  - keep the bat at the top of your strike zone
- \* control the bat head
  - keep bat head above the knob
  - keep bat head in front of the knob
- \* chest angled towards plate, not the pitcher



## Basic Bunting continued.....

---

### Fundamentals:

- \* bend your knees and stay athletic
- \* back foot can stay flat
  - helps keep your weight back & stay more balanced
- \* work to 'catch' the ball on the end of the bat
  - this is how you deaden the ball
- \* use a small 'tap/punch' forward to counter the speed of the ball





## Push Bunting

---

### Fundamentals:

- \* use when the corners are charging hard or cheating in close
- \* hold the bat tighter with your hands so it is firm when ball hits the bat
- \* work to bunt the ball off the 'sweet spot' of the barrel for more power
- \* slight push with your legs to get it past the corners (very slight)  
-- push happens with your legs *NOT* your arms
- \* you will never use any type of 'swing' of the bat when push bunting



## Breakdown Drills

---

### One Knee:

- \* drop your back knee to the ground
- \* bunt normal
- \* feel how balanced you are
- \* do a few reps with back knee dropped, then go regular
- \* alternate in reps and feel your body be the same for each





## Breakdown Drills

---

### Develop Key Words:

- \* make each player identify a key word
  - something that gets them to focus on the fundamentals
- \* have them say it out loud as they bunt
- \* it will help them narrow their focus and slows their mind
  - pay attention to how fast/slow they say their key word
- \* be sure they are executing whatever they are focusing on
- \* alternate in reps with saying their key word and doing it regular (silent)
- \* it gives them a tool to use when there is pressure, anxiety or heart racing





## Breakdown Drills

---

### Work Around a Tee or Pool Noodle:

- \* put a tee/noodle on the back corner of plate -- right off their back hip
- \* it should be about chest high
- \* focus on whipping the bat directly forward -- keeping the bat head high
- \* if you drop the bat down or are late with the bat head, it will hit the tee/noodle



## Breakdown Drills

---

### Bare-hand Progression:

- \* catch a tennis ball with your bare hand  
-- chest towards plate
- \* try to catch it by your belly button  
-- feel back hand reaching forward
- \* do some reps with tennis balls then regular bunting
- \* alternate reps and make it feel as similar as possible





## Bunting Games

---

### Tip the Bucket:

- \* place a bucket or bin anywhere in front of the plate
  - typically aim for the alleys
  - or directly at pitcher to ensure it's fair
- \* tip it towards the batter
- \* focus on sending the ball directly down
  - move your bucket/bin to work on accuracy and bat control
- \* create a challenge or scoring competition amongst partners or split the team in half



## Bunting Games

---

### Race to Cone:

- \* place a cone halfway from 1<sup>st</sup> to home
- \* put a teammate on 1<sup>st</sup>
- \* as soon as the ball is bunted fair, both players race to the cone to see who wins



- \* it helps the batter focus on getting the ball down first, then run to 1<sup>st</sup>  
-- this helps make it as game-like as possible



## Bunting Games

---

### Ultimate Bunting:

- \* have about 3-4 players with a handful of tennis balls by the machine
- \* bunter will focus and get ball down
- \* other players will throw tennis balls at them
  - you can NOT throw it directly at batter
  - just throw the balls around them
  - the ball can cross through the zone
- \* create chaos/distractions and make the bunter narrow their focus on the ball







# Bunting Games

## Offense vs Defense:

- \* keep track of points and create a scoring template
  - identify a certain amount of reps that will be played out (10-15 balls)
- \* make it “game-like” off a pitcher or machine
  - we created a rule that if the batter ‘took a pitch’ like they were hitting, but the defense charges like a bunt.....they have to do some burpees
    - > to help eliminate just going through the motions
- \* put a runner on 1<sup>st</sup>
  - PUSH (no score) = SAC bunt, defense gets out & Offense moves runner
- \* examples of scoring:
  - Offense = gets a point for each ‘extra’ base, point if safe at 1<sup>st</sup>
    - > bonus point if they score
  - Defense = gets a point for each lead out, point for foul balls
    - > bonus point if they turn a double play





## Base Running Tips

---

### **The Details Matter:**

- \* look to steal an extra base.....take what the defense gives you
- \* base running is when all your weight training and speed/agility work pay off
- \* fight for the inches that make a difference in bang-bang plays
- \* you need an aggressive mentality for successful base running
  - you can see their mentality based on when they start to slow down
- \* when training, point out specific game moments it directly impacts
  - example: change of directions can be when tagging up
  - example: taking rounds can get you closer to stealing an extra base
- \* establish a mentality that creates excitement and fun on the bases





## Base Running - Leads

### Lead Progression:

- \* work reps to focus on the fundamentals of each skill
- \* put out cones to give them a measurable marker to focus on
- \* progression ideas

- leads off base (explosion & 1<sup>st</sup> step)
- steal leads (stay low and one speed)
- lead and return (straight lines and control your hips)
- lead and decision (keep it smooth)

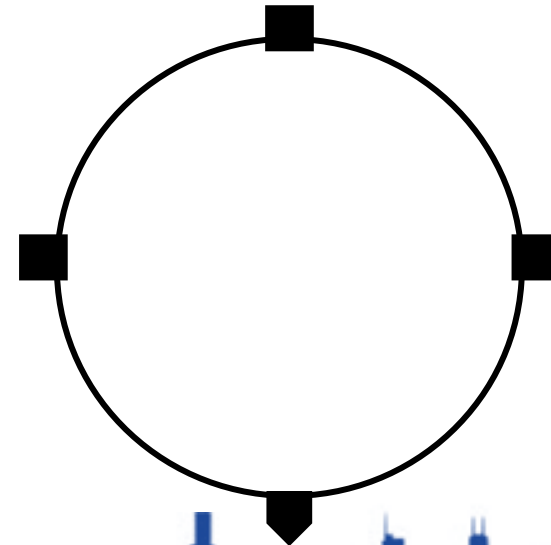
- \* have a coach at home plate to point a direction when they have to make a decision



# Base Running - Turns

## Fundamentals:

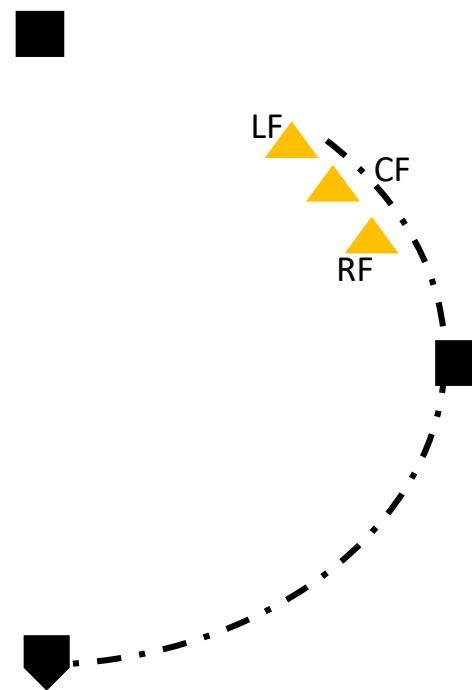
- \* hit the base with your outside foot
- \* tip inside shoulder to help with momentum
- \* try to keep a tight circle around each base  
--limit straight lines or 'kicking out'
- \* your speed should never change  
-- no stutter steps
- \* Drill = Mini-Field  
-- put bases close and run full speed  
-- it puts an emphasis on the correct feeling when taking efficient turns



## Base Running - Turns

### Pushing Turns:

- \* continue full speed all the way through 1<sup>st</sup> base
- \* depending on where ball is hit, determines how far you push the turn
- \* expect the defense to make a mistake
  - make them STOP you from running
- \* chest will always follow/face the ball
- \* use cones in drills to give the different visuals
  - LF = almost halfway to second
  - CF = not as far
  - RF = closer to first and chest opens up



## Base Running – Tagging Up

### Fundamentals:

- \* chest follows/opens up to the ball
- \* sprint back to the base
- \* inside foot is on the base
  - leg closest to the ball
  - keeps your chest open
  - prevents you from looking 'over' your shoulder
- \* get in an athletic/running stance
- \* the timing read of when to go is on the runner





## Base Running – Types of Tags

### Regular Tag:

- \* Drill: have the runners point to follow the ball
  - helps them get chest open to ball
  - staying open helps with efficiency

### Get off Base:

- \* if you know you can't tag and advance
- \* the further the ball, the further you get off
- \* you can also push with the hit
  - if OF is chasing the ball, you chase the next base



### Draw a Throw:

- \* if you can't tag and advance and OF is clearly making a catch
- \* can use if it is questionable if you will make it
- \* get the OF to make a throw and try to create something







**QUESTIONS???**

**Amanda Buchholz**

*Assistant Coach*

*DePaul University*

*abuchho3@depaul.edu*

# DEPAUL

BLUE DEMONS

