

## Softball – playing 1<sup>st</sup> base

- Starting position is generally 2-3 steps away from 1<sup>st</sup> base toward 2<sup>nd</sup> base and one step inside the baseline (toward home plate). This can depend on the batter though; for a hard-hitting batter, you may want to play a couple of steps outside of the baseline (toward the outfield vs. toward home).
- Area of coverage includes from 1<sup>st</sup> base to about halfway between 1<sup>st</sup> base person's starting position and 2<sup>nd</sup> base person's starting position.
- Ideally, you should get any ball hit in your area and if you are pulled well off the base, then 2<sup>nd</sup> base person (or pitcher potentially) will run and cover 1<sup>st</sup>.
- If the batter shows a bunt is coming, 1<sup>st</sup> base should charge in close to halfway between 1<sup>st</sup> and home.
- Priority is getting to the ball in your area you are defending. If you won't be able to get to the ball or it is hit somewhere else, then go cover 1<sup>st</sup> and wait for a throw.
- If no play at the base, give the runner plenty of room—do not obstruct the runner or the umpire can potentially award the runner an extra base.
- Covering 1<sup>st</sup>:
  - For a righty, the right foot is on the base, stay in an athletic position until the ball is thrown toward 1<sup>st</sup>. Once you see it is thrown, then pivot / slide the foot on the base to help get in the proper position to field the throw. Then stretch with left foot and glove to field the ball. Don't stretch until you can see where the ball is going. For a lefty, the left foot will be on the base and the right foot and glove will eventually be stretching toward the ball.
  - Come off the base if you need to, to field the ball and prevent the runner from going to 2<sup>nd</sup>. The right outfielder should also be backing up this throw for you.
  - If the throw pulls you off 1<sup>st</sup> base but toward home plate, you can tag the runner heading to 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - If there is already a runner on 1<sup>st</sup>:
    - You are trying to get the out at 1<sup>st</sup> base as a priority almost all of the time. If you can do that quickly, you can attempt a double play at 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - If the ball is not hit, be in a position for a throw from the catcher to catch and tag the runner that was taking a lead off of 1<sup>st</sup> base. Don't stay in your defensive position a few steps away from the base; get close to the base and be ready for a throw.
- "Scoops" - If a ball is thrown your way but is low and may or may not bounce just before reaching you, position your glove with your wrist facing up and the glove wide open, with the webbing of your glove touching the dirt. It is instinct to react upwards to protect yourself, but you have to react to reach down to the dirt. Most short-hops will bounce into your glove in this scenario.
- Slow rolling ball toward 1<sup>st</sup> that the pitcher can't get to; run to this ball and tag the runner. If there's also a runner coming home from 3<sup>rd</sup>, throw to the catcher for a potential double play.
- Know the situation; if there is a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>; once you get the out at 1<sup>st</sup> base, look to throw to 3<sup>rd</sup> or home to get another out. If the bases are loaded and less than two outs in a

close game, your coach may want you to play in a few steps toward home and try to get the out at home plate.

- Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike rule (12u on up); on a strike 3 pitch that hits the ground, the batter can advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base. Be ready for a throw from the catcher. Position yourself to give the catcher a good target where they don't have to throw over the runner's head. Ideally, both you and the catcher are positioned inside the 1<sup>st</sup> base line with a clear throwing lane.
- Backing up the pitcher or catcher:
  - If the pitcher runs in to home plate to try to get a runner stealing from 3<sup>rd</sup>, your coach will either want 1<sup>st</sup> base or 2<sup>nd</sup> base to run to the pitcher's circle to back up that throw, in case it's a bad throw from the catcher to the pitcher.
  - If the catcher runs toward 3<sup>rd</sup>, trying to get a runner out in that baseline (pickle), your coach will want either 1<sup>st</sup> base or the pitcher to run to home and back up the catcher.
- Before the inning starts and you go on the field, bring a ball to warm up your other infielders. Roll grounders to the 2<sup>nd</sup> base person, shortstop and 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Then practice getting on 1<sup>st</sup> and fielding their throws back to you with good form.
- One-minute video; getting to the base from starting position, pivoting to the ball, once it has been thrown (not before):

[https://www.google.com/search?q=playing+first+base+softball&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enUS879US884&oq=playing+first+base+softball&aqs=chrome.69i59j0i22i30l2.2168j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#kpvalbx=\\_gbbgYJ\\_4ONG3tAb7oIPgDw19](https://www.google.com/search?q=playing+first+base+softball&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS879US884&oq=playing+first+base+softball&aqs=chrome.69i59j0i22i30l2.2168j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#kpvalbx=_gbbgYJ_4ONG3tAb7oIPgDw19)

- Two-minute video; fielding throws to 1<sup>st</sup> base:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lx74C9BJJE0>
- Nine-minute video; start at the 27 minute mark and go to 35:40:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV0Cljuiz4o>