

UP YOUR GAME – April 2026

April Edition Topics:

- Defensive Positioning with keys for consideration

Countdown to the 2026 Softball Season:

Here we are.... Tryouts for new members begin this week! The season is upon us and we hope you are ready for another season of competition, fun, and camaraderie! I see many of you are now hitting outdoors.... fantastic! Remember, especially in the colder weather, stretching is very important before you step out onto the field!

Defense Overall:

As you talk to many players, Senior Softball is considered a “Hitters Game” but, with the 5 run rule per inning and the final Open inning, DEFENSE is a critical factor in winning games. This is especially true for tournaments as well as for our Cape Cod Senior Softball League as often games remain very close, and defensive play can be the difference between winning and losing.

Defensive Positioning:

Defensive positioning starts before the batter steps into the batters box. The key mantra for defense is..... **Anticipate and React!** Let me explain a few things that I believe are critical success factors for positioning a strong defense.

Cutoffs: Establishing who is going to take cutoffs from every Outfield position is essential. Communicate this frequently and broadly across the team. Also, another point for Outfielders, **HIT the Cutoff** it is HIGHLY unlikely that you will be able to throw someone out at the plate from mid to deep outfield.

Here are some key considerations to position yourself defensively:

- Know the game situation, Men on base, run situation, # of outs etc. as these factors could influence the batters' intent
- Know the batters' tendencies, pay attention to where the batter has hit in the game. Always pay attention to each batter's results during a game and communicate with your teammates
- Understand where the Pitcher is pitching to the batter, inside or outside, short or deep as these factors contribute to batters' intent
- Watch where the batters' back foot is placed, this is a big factor to where the batters' directional intent to hit the ball
 - ✓ Back foot in close to Home plate typically results in a ball hit to the left field side of the diamond (between 2nd and 3rd base)
 - ✓ Back foot away from home plate typically results in a ball hit to the right field side of the diamond (between 2nd and 1st base)
- Outfield can shift accordingly to adjust to some of these key factors but be sure to communicate your positioning to your teammates because it is essential that the team is aware of an adjustment you have made.
- 1st and 3rd Base positions are stable, but they can adjust closer to the foul lines or somewhat off the line depending on some of the above factors.
- Shortstop and 2nd Base have a large range to position; they can move laterally or play deeper in the "grass" should the situation warrant
- The Middle Infielder (or Rover) has the opportunity for the biggest adjustment. Play next to 2nd base moving to either side of the base, they can move to the Outfield creating a 5-outfielder scheme, or they can move deeper into the grass anywhere between the 3rd and 1st baselines.

All of these adjustments require communication to the entire team, especially to the Pitcher!!!! Don't be afraid to make these adjustments, typical high percentages do apply with these factors. Occasionally a batter will beat the shift and at that point, you have to give them credit for making their own adjustment to beat a shift.

- Get yourself in ready position prior to the pitch:
 - balanced, athletic stance
 - stay relaxed, not tense
 - weight slightly forward
 - don't cheat on one side or the other
 - catch the ground ball out in front of you
- **Know where you are going to throw the ball prior to every pitch if it is hit to you!**

One final point to make on the defensive side..... Whenever there is a batted ball, every player on the field should react accordingly and be in motion somewhere. Cover a base or backup a throw or potential throw to a base to prevent a runner from gaining extra bases.....never stand still on a batted ball!

As we get closer to the start of our season, we want to wish all of you a very healthy, fun, and competitive season!

Play Ball!

We Want to Hear from You!

Thank you for your continued interest in **Up Your Game**. We hope these topics have been beneficial to your training and preparation. Please feel free to share any comments or suggestions for future editions.