



Victory in sports is obtained by:

The Most Prepared,

The Most Driven by the Desire to Win,

The one who LOVES the game and has FUN enjoying the game and their teammates,

The one Most Committed to the Team and Sport,

The one Most Willing to OUT-WORK, OUT-THINK, and OUT-HUSTLE their competition.

Winning is not a sometimes thing - it is an all the time thing. (Vince Lombardi) It is displayed in the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you carry yourself in your daily life, and then it is poured out on the field in your attitude, actions, and character for everyone to see.

Winning is not the outcome of a single game, tournament or season, but the sum of every moment knowing you gave all you had all the time, and prepared yourself like there was no tomorrow – Playing every play like it was your last.

CHAMPIONS ARE BUILT

LEADERS ARE DEVELOPED

WINNERS – WIN

Success is not the destination or the result of one's actions, but the journey that approaches the fulfillment of one's potential.

"There's only one way to succeed in anything, and that is to give it everything." (Vince Lombardi)

BE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE GAME AND SHOW IT ON THE FIELD!



MISSION STATEMENT

Prepare young ladies for the game of softball and life through participation in a competitive youth fastpitch program.

Create a team environment that gives players the ability to be teammates and friends who work towards a common goal with joint purpose.

The players learn how to achieve greatness through the concerted efforts of the whole, which is exponentially more powerful than the sum of its individual talents.

We will play softball with integrity and character at the highest levels, competing against the best competition in our area, our state, and the nation.

Develop the skills and talents of each player as an athlete, a leader, a teammate, and young lady - providing them the platform to achieve their goals and aspirations in sports and in life.

Prepare our young athletes to play in college and beyond. To provide our players the best opportunity to showcase their talents and abilities to college coaches, and find a college program that best fits their athletic ability and scholastic aptitude.

We will conquer our mission:

One pitch at a time ----- 100% Focus on Every Pitch!

BE FULLY COMMITTED!

BE POSITIVE!

BE ENERGETIC!

BE PASSIONATE – LET IT SHOW!

Don't be afraid to make mistakes, but make them going 100 MPH - fully committed 100%!

Chickens contribute to Breakfast, but the Pig is Fully Committed!



SET GOALS

Team

Qualify for ASA Nationals
Finish Top 10
Qualify for ASA Hall of Fame
Finish Top 10
Compete in Colorado
Finish Top 10

Winning Percentage .785
Score 6 Runs per game on Avg.
One Strikeout or less per game on Avg.
Team OBP > .500
Commit < 2 Errors per game on Avg.
Unearned Runs < 1 per game on Avg.

Individual

Offense	Defense	Pitching	Catching
BA	Errors	BB	PB's
OBP	Field%	K	Steals
K's	Mental	WP's	Field %
PABs	Talking	O-BA	Talking

GPA (grades/report card)

SAT

ACT

Camps / Clinics

College Contacts

H.S. Team

Other

(Note: Track all progress and steps toward achieving your goals in the Journal Section – Be Specific.)

BE COMMITTED

PRACTICE IT – LEARN IT – DO IT RIGHT (or wrong) BUT ALWAYS DO IT 100%!



PHILOSOPHY = AGGRESSIVENESS

On Offense

Pressure the Defense with Aggressive Baserunning
Be Aggressive at the Plate and with runners in motion
Always look for an additional base, and draw throws
HARD and LOW is the way to go! Line drives and hard ground balls!
Put the ball in play – good things happen when you make the defense make plays.
PRODUCTIVE AT BATS – Do your job 1st
Never strikeout looking with runners in scoring position
Heroes are in the armed forces and comic books – Softball Players do their job!

GET ON BASE - A walk is as good as a hit, find a way to get on base.

MOVE 'EM INTO SCORING POSITION - With aggressive running or Productive at Bats.

KNOCK 'EM IN - With hits, SACS, or productive at bats – FIND A WAY HOME!

The goal on Offense is to score more runs than the other team! There are no style points.

On Defense

Be aggressive – Charge the ball – **HUSTLE ALWAYS**

Get the lead out – keep runners away from homeplate.

NO FREE BASES and NO FREE PASSES

If the runner is safely on base – find the next play, don't chase a safe runner.

Contest every runner not safely on a base

Make runners go back to the bag or GET THEM OUT

COMMUNICATE LOUDLY AND OFTEN

HIGH ENERGY AND CONSTANT POSITIVE CHATTER – SHOW PASSION!

BACK UP EVERYTHING - Anticipate the next throw, and be there waiting.

NEVER GIVE UP ON A BALL – Sell Out for your teammates!

If a play doesn't happen – **SELL THE PUMP FAKE** and create the next play

CATCH IT OR DIVE TRYING – LAYOUT For EVERYTHING!

NOTHING HITS THE GRASS – NOTHING DROPS – Take Pride in stealing hits!

Always look for the next out – if there is no other play – sharply get the ball in the circle

NEVER BE AFRAID TO THROW THE BALL - Confident / Quick / Sharp

Know the pitch, Know the Batter, Know the Runner, Know the Count, Know the Situation

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING WHEN THE BALL IS HIT TO YOU

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING WHEN THE BALL IS HIT TO SOMEONE ELSE

Go after Every ball like it is yours to catch - until you are called off!

Always get an out!

When in doubt get the easy out.



OFFENSE

HITTING BASICS

Feet slightly wider than your shoulders, neutral and parallel to the plate.

Toes straight on and perpendicular to the plate, with feeling of slight pigeon toe.

Knees slightly pinched and inside the feet.

Body weight is neutral and in *rhythm* – relaxed eyes, jaw, and shoulders – exhale / BREATHE.

Knuckles are aligned but strong and loose. Hands back over back shoulder and below the ear.

Positive simple swing thoughts - only one or two. (ie. see ball / hit ball)

Load weight to inside ball of back foot. (negative movement)

Feel it down and in slightly removing weight from front foot.

Tuck and Tap – While toe touches / pull hands back with slight separation and inward turn.

Front shoulder should also feel the “down and in” when approaching strike zone.

Stride to Soft Toe Touch - with weight back – ready to release and attack the ball.

SEE PITCH – FOCUS – RECOGNIZE = ball, spin and location

YES _ YES _ YES Hitting for the pitch we want to hit.

YES _ YES _ NO Hitting for pitches that don't meet our swing criteria on a specific pitch.

NO = pitch is in the wrong location, wrong speed, or wrong for situation or count .

Never decide to swing, only make one decision not to swing. Keep it simple!

If YES = Drop the front heel into a plant

Drive Knob of bat and hands into the hitting zone in a circular motion.

Hands are above and inside the ball.

Simultaneously the back knee fires into front side.

Enacting the ability to Rotate driving the hips into the swing.

While hands are attacking, the Hips DRIVE the full Power of the Body into the ball at impact.

The Drive is the motion that carries all the back side as it is released into the bat and ball.

Back hand drives the barrel to square up on the ball and extend to the field we are hitting to.

Back elbow remains behind hands, while everything else on backside releases into contact.

At contact chin is down with both eyes on ball and nose pointed to ball as it contacts the bat.

Accelerate hands through ball into full extension to the field we are hitting to.

Accelerate barrel – palm up / palm down w/out rolling hands through full extension.

Remain consistent and level without jerking up and off the ball – through full level extension.

After Full extension, continue into a high and complete finish behind the neck and shoulders.

Finish with BALANCE – Ear, Shoulder, Hip, Knee in line and in center of body.

A level swing may have upward motion, but never because we are leaning back or have our shoulders pointing up. Remember head follows front shoulder.

The barrel goes to the ball – never drop the hands.

EXTEND where you want the ball to go!

Zone Hitting – look to a specific section of the strike zone to swing at, based on information observed while watching the pitcher or in your last at bat. Early in the count shrink the zone while looking for certain pitches to handle and be productive. If you get down in the count, then you can begin to expand the hitting zone, and if you get two strikes expand the hitting zone to a large portion of the strike zone.

BE CONFIDENT – BE AGGRESSIVE – BE PRODUCTIVE



BUNTING

Rotate body squaring shoulders down into strike zone.
Knees should be bent and back knee bent more than front.
Hands comfortable on the bat, but choked up enough for increased control.
Barrel remains slightly above top hand at all times – only slightly.
Use knees to move up and down in the strike zone – NOT HANDS.
Quiet Calm Hands – DO NOT POKE or stab at the ball - RECEIVE THE BALL with the bat.
If sacrificing – square early enough to focus on the job at hand, and keep the ball on the ground.

SLAPPING

Keep hands above and inside the ball – extend where you want the ball to go.
Do not leave the power line before the ball has been struck in play.
Have a plan, but the Pitch is the ultimate factor in deciding how and where to hit the ball.
Use your speed - keep it out of the air, unless you are powering the ball over the outfielders.
Accelerate body and hands through contact into extension.
Be patient, not hurried, in the box.

BASERUNNING

Go full speed – NEVER JOG
Pick up the Coach and don't outthink the coach – you can't lose!
Always plan on going the extra base (+1), Make the Coach give you the stop sign.
Slide into bags when there is a close play or possible tag.
Always slide in at home if there is a potential play! ALWAYS!
When sliding – get up quickly while in contact with the bag.
GET DOWN – GET DIRTY – GET UP – GET GOING
Slide away from tags and not always a hook slide – get to bag as fast as you can.
In general - With less than two outs – freeze on a line drive and tag up on a fly – listen to coach.
With two outs be aggressive on the swing, anticipating contact – especially with two strikes.
Always leave bag like you are stealing – full speed and aggressive!
BE AWARE – Know the outs, Know the count, and Know where the defense is set up.
KNOW the SCORE and KNOW the SITUATION – use the base coaches to help you.
Leave on the pitch – be borderline early and never late!
When on 3rd lead into foul territory and come back down the base line to block catcher.
Always dive back into bags if there is a possible play – then get up off the dirt!
We want to score from 2nd so leave the bag like you are scoring - round 3rd and listen to coach.
Never give up into a tag out. Either force a run down, or go for a great evasive slide!
Banana and circle bags when running bases – make the shortest and quickest turn to next bag.

Go = Advance to next bag

Back = Retreat to previous bag

Stay or Wait = Not Advancing or Retreating

Score = Go all the way home to score

All the way back = commit to get back to bag

Round the bag = Take a turn and find ball

Inside or Outside = Slide to in or out part of bag

Tag Up = go back to bag and wait for go

BE AGGRESSIVE – PRESSURE THE DEFENSE – LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL BASES



PRODUCTIVE AT BATS / PRODUCTIVE OUTS

The greatest hitters bat .400 – which means 60% of the time batters make an out. During a large number of plate appearances players are on base and/or in scoring position. So, how often can we make that 60% of the time that we do not get a hit, still be a productive At Bat. Always find a way to advance the runner, and find ways to score runners by putting balls in play without popping up, and most of all without striking out.

When runners are on first or first and second, especially in closely contested games = HIT BEHIND THE RUNNER. Embrace the sac bunt to move a runner into scoring position. Do not be selfish! Forget about being the HERO – be a great teammate and offensive weapon by executing with PRODUCTIVE at bats.

When runners are in scoring position NEVER TAKE STRIKE THREE! Look for pitches we can drive, and especially early in the count look for pitches we can hit behind the runners. ZONE HITTING.

Back up off the plate to increase the chances of being pitched outside, and look early for pitches away that can be driven behind the runners, especially into right center field for doubles. See the ball deep by waiting longer, and allow the ball to travel increasing the chance of hitting up the middle to the right side. Focus on keeping your hands inside the ball. With two strikes, focus on solid contact – shorten up and hit wherever your pitched, but NOT to the 3rd baseman or pitcher = Unproductive at bat.

Runner at 3rd with less than two out - focus on Ground balls to middle infielders or Weak ground balls to right side. Deep fly balls can also be productive outs when they are deep enough for a tag up. Look for pitches to handle for productive at bats, in case we do not get the hit we want. If asked to bunt, get the ball away from the catcher and not hard back to pitcher – ALWAYS ON THE GROUND.

NEVER take strike three with runners on base.

Focus on the task at hand, which is a ball that we can score on.

If it is not your pitch or one we can use productively – foul it off and spoil the pitcher's pitch.

With two strikes - get the ball in play, and focus on contact point. Middle of bat / Middle of ball.

See the ball deep into the zone.

Keep the hands inside the ball.

Shorten up the swing, with intensified focus on solid contact.

Being a productive hitter, even when we do not get a hit separates us from the competition.

Take pride in moving the runners, scoring runners, sacrificing yourself for your teammates.

Teammates show your appreciation to the players who execute while at the plate!

Make our team's pride and focus - "NO RUNNERS LEFT ON BASE"

NEVER STOP CHATTERING – Keep shouting out cheers and positive words of encouragement to your teammates. Show them vocally your support and your appreciation – ALWAYS – ALL THE TIME!

GET 'EM ON – GET 'EM OVER – GET 'EM HOME >>> BE PRODUCTIVE!



OFFENSIVE SIGNS

INDICATOR = what coach touches to turn signals on – like a power button it turns touches on.

TOUCHES = count the number of times the coach contacts his body after indicator.

(INDICATOR DOES NOT COUNT AS A TOUCH)

CLAP HANDS = Signals are over - Batter Responds with A BIG DEEP EXHALE in agreement.

If Player needs signs again then player will tap side of helmet twice. Coach will do signs again.

Touches	Signal	Execution or Description
1	Bunt	<u>If strike</u> , then bunt on ground.
2	Hit & Run	<u>Must swing</u> and make contact to protect runner
3	Fake Bunt & Swing	Show bunt - pull back - <u>if strike</u> then hit away
4	Squeeze	<u>MUST BUNT BALL DOWN</u> – Runner is stealing
5	Steal	Runner is stealing next bag on the pitch

INDICATOR Last = If indicator is the final touch – Power Off, turns signals off like a Power Button

TAKE SIGN = Hook ‘em Horns to coaches eyes. No indicator needed! This sign is always active if given!

TWO GUNS = Swing through and miss ball to protect runner stealing. Swing to miss and distract catcher.

½ WAY = Chop on Elbow – Fire off big like stealing to force throw, but be able to get back to bag. No indicator needed! This sign is always active if given!

DELAYED STEAL = Chop on Elbow then drag hand up arm and shoulder to neck – Fire off and then advance to next bag after a pause to see what catcher does. If they throw ahead to next bag, then retreat to previous bag safely.

If there is a runner on 3rd and coach gives Delayed Steal sign with index fingers waving back and forth, try to seduce a rundown to score runner at 3rd. If defense doesn’t bite or catcher and pitcher do not engage, then advance to next bag if it can be done safely. No indicator needed! This sign is always active if given!

WIPE OFF = Swipe hand across chest means starting signs over like a reset button. Wipe off everything given prior and start signs over again.

Signals can be given in combinations and multiple signs during the same pitch. Every pitch resets.

Examples:

Take Sign + Indicator + 1 touch = Take using the Fake Bunt

Take Sign + Indicator + 1 touch + Indicator again + 5 touches = Batter Takes with a Fake Bunt + Runner Steals

Take Sign + Indicator + 5 touches = Batter Takes while Runner Straight Steals

Indicator + 1 touch + Indicator + 5 touches = Run & Bunt (Bunting Strikes NOT A SQUEEZE + Runner Steals)

Indicator + 5 touches + Two Guns = Runner Steals while the Batter swings and misses to protect the runner

Slappers have additional slapping style signs for soft, hard, drag, or direction etc...

When tagging up on a fly ball = coach will put both hands up, and drop one hand to fire off and draw a throw, but not plan on advancing to next bag.

When tagging up on a fly ball = coach will put both hands up and drop both hands to advance to next bag.



DEFENSE

FIELDING BASICS

Fielding a ground ball correctly is done by moving forward through the ball into target.
NEVER WAIT ON A BALL – Charge a ball, pick the hop, and be aggressive!
Field the ball between your legs just to the glove side and between belly button and big toe.
Field the bottom of the ball out in front of your face, not back in stance.
Both eyes and nose stay on ball all the way into glove, top of head and chin down.
Funnel the ball through center of your body right into quick shuffle and throw.
Shuffle and throw is done while shoulder is pointing towards target and feet line up to target.

Fly Balls are caught by drop stepping and getting behind the ball as fast as possible, and moving forward through the ball whenever possible.
DO NOT DRIFT or FADE BACK when catching flyballs.
NEVER BACK PEDAL – TURN and RUN – Then SET UP – USE TWO HANDS!
Catch ball high and with front shoulder slightly pointing to target for a quick transfer and release.

Tag outs are made by allowing ball to travel all the way to the bag.
Do not reach out for a ball on a tag, unless ball is off line or too late and moving to next play.
We always tag feet not high, and never reach out to runner, but instead stay in front of bag.
Tag with two hands with ball in glove and throwing hand protecting ball, squeezing ball in glove.
Once tag is made, get the glove up and away from runner to avoid having the ball punched out.
Find the next play immediately – if tag is made aggressively, correctly, and with confidence, the umpire will make the right call – so move on to the next play.

Cutoffs / Relays are made with shoulders turned and glove shoulder pointing toward the target.
Start with Both Hands Raised and arms up, shoulders square to ball, and as ball is released...
Move feet, and turn shoulders with glove side shoulder pointing to target at catch.
Keep Both Hands together and throwing hand goes with glove for quick transfers.

BACK UPS

BACK UP EVERYTHING! HUSTLE and RUN EVERYWHERE – BE THERE ON TIME or EARLY!
Middle infielders back up pitcher on throws from catcher.
1st and 3rd back up throws from corner infielders back to pitcher.
Pitcher and Catcher back up throws from outfielders into the infield.
Outfielders anticipate the next throw and be there waiting for a back up.
Anticipate bad throws, so we never get hurt by them.
Line yourself up where the bag or target is directly in a straight line between you and the ball.
Give a little room to react to a throw that is off line.
Cover dugout or fence openings whenever possible to avoid ball out of play and free bases.
Be aware of fencing, walls, bricks, concrete borders, fence openings, temp fences, etc... and make adjustments when backing up to account for hard rebounds.
Pitcher and 1st back up home plate on plays at the plate.
ANTICIPATE where the ball is going, and beat it there!

We can throw the ball with confidence, because we trust our teammates to be backing up!



MENTALLY ON DEFENSE

ANTICIPATE the next throw, where the runner is going, where the ball is going, then beat it there.

ANTICIPATE bad throws or the other fielder is going to miss and be there waiting for the ball just in case.

NEVER ASSUME a ball is going to be caught, fielded, or thrown perfectly – BE PREPARED IN POSITION!

Where am I lining up for this batter on this pitch:

Batter's size?

Big Hitter or Small Hitter...

Is she a Lefty (Slapper or Power hitter) or Righty?

Where does she bat in the order?

Leadoff, #4-#6, or bottom of the order?

How many outs do we have?

What is the score?

Can I afford to dive and miss?

Should I be especially back to guard against extra base hits?

Where are the runners?

Do I need to be in a do or die at home?

Is it a bunting situation?

What is the count on the batter?

What is the pitch call?

Is the pitch being called inside or out – what does that mean for me?

Is it a hard pitch or change up – what might that mean for me?

What is the wind doing?

Is the wind strong enough to effect a fly ball?

Is the wind strong enough to effect my throw in?

Is the wind blowing in or out?

Is it a cross wind?

Which way might a ball travel or get knocked down by the wind.

WHERE am I going if the ball is hit to me?

If I am moving to my left or right?

Soft or hard?

On ground or fly ball?

Line drive? Can I get a double play? Where is my best shot - which runner on which bag?

Step into the CIRCLE OF FOCUS – where the entire world is the ball, this pitch, this batter, and Runners!

Middle Infield give the outfielders the pitch call behind your back during the game, every pitch.

Entire Defense needs to be aware of all play calls and coverages, so look to coaches, catcher, SS, and corner infielders before every pitch to pick up signs, signals, and alignment direction – EVERY PITCH!

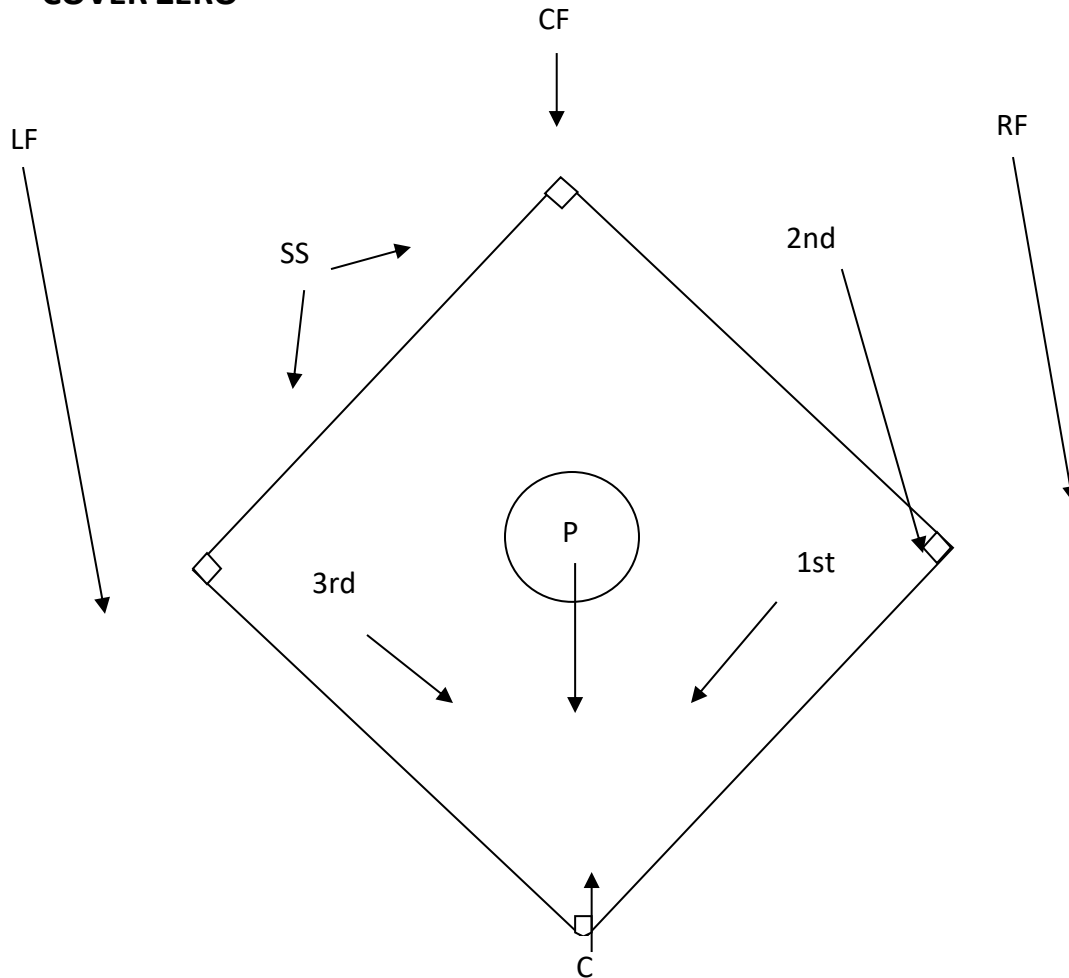
NEVER STOP COMMUNICATING ensuring everyone knows situation, coverage, play, outs, who has the bag, where you are going with the ball hit to you, that everyone around you is on the same page on every pitch!

BE POSITIVE – LEAVE the last play in the PAST – GOOD OR BAD it is OVER!
NEXT PLAY – THIS PLAY!



BUNT COVERAGES

COVER ZERO



Catcher, Pitcher, 1st, and 3rd charge all bunts.

2nd covers first base for throws to 1st on bunts – cheat a little toward first.

SS goes to second base if nobody is on base and covers 3rd if **anyone** is on **any base**.

CF covers second base if SS is not there, and backs up the entire middle of the field.

RF backs up all throws to first base.

LF backs up all throws to third base.

Obvious bunt situations where we are trying to get outs at first base.

Fast runner or slapper where we need everyone charging.

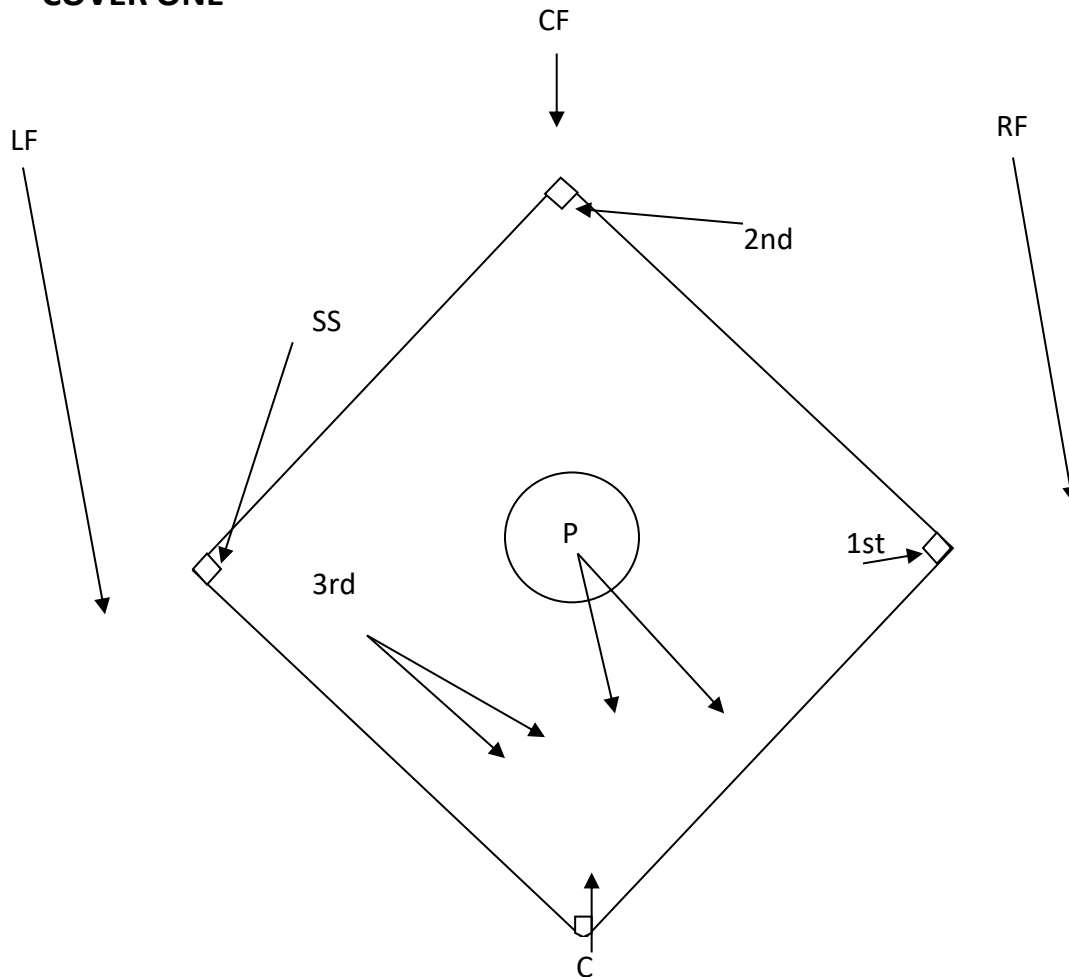
Plays at the plate where everyone is going home with the bunt, or checking runner at third before going to first base for the out.

Most common Bunt Coverage – Consider this the base coverage.



BUNT COVERAGES

COVER ONE



Catcher, Pitcher, and 3rd charge all bunts.

1st covers first base for snap throws and any plays or bunts and throws to first etc...

2nd covers second base for throws on force outs and throw downs on steals etc...

SS goes to third base for coverages and throw downs on steals etc...

CF covers second base if 2nd is not there, and backs up the entire middle of the field.

RF backs up all throws to first base.

LF backs up all throws to third base.

Shortstop cheat a little toward third to cover 5/6 hole.

Second base cheats up and toward second base to be there quicker for covering second base.

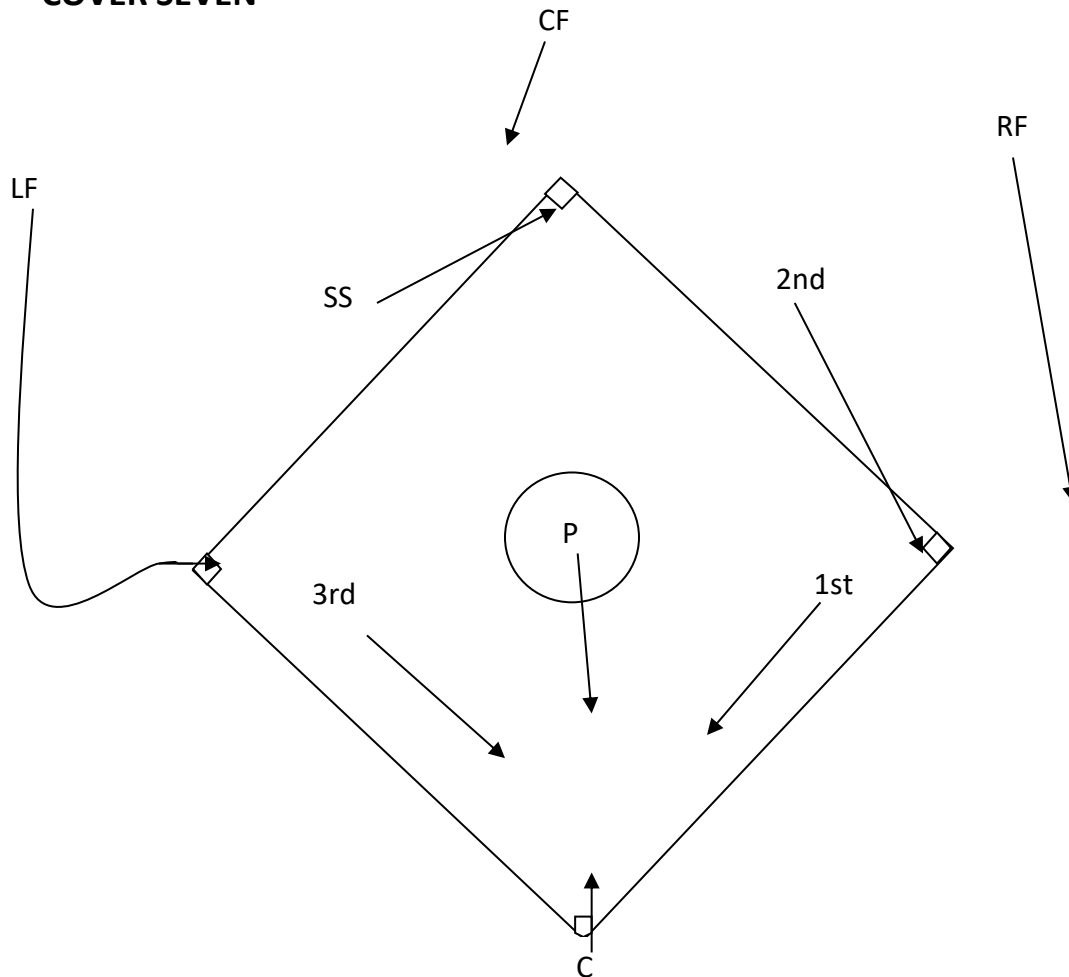
Use on slappers with runners on first, or if we have a dead pull hitter up to bat, and we pitch the batter inside to a right handed batter.

This keeps our tall first baseman at first for bigger target in certain situations depending on score, inning and batter.



BUNT COVERAGES

COVER SEVEN



Catcher, Pitcher, 1st and 3rd charge all bunts.

2nd covers first base for throws to first on bunts and catcher pickoffs, bunt fakes and pull backs...

SS goes to second base for coverages and throw downs on steals etc...

CF covers second base if SS is not there, and backs up the entire middle of the field.

RF backs up all throws to first base.

LF sprints to 3rd going out into foul territory then sneaking in to cover third in case runner goes for third.

LF has to sell the back up first and then sneak onto third – like a “trick play” to lure an out at third.

Infield has to sell that nobody on the infield is covering third – make it look like a mistake.

2nd takes throw at first and then fires to LF covering third base – surprising runner and coach.

Anticipate the LF will be there and throw on time, do not pump or hesitate. IF you wait it is too late.

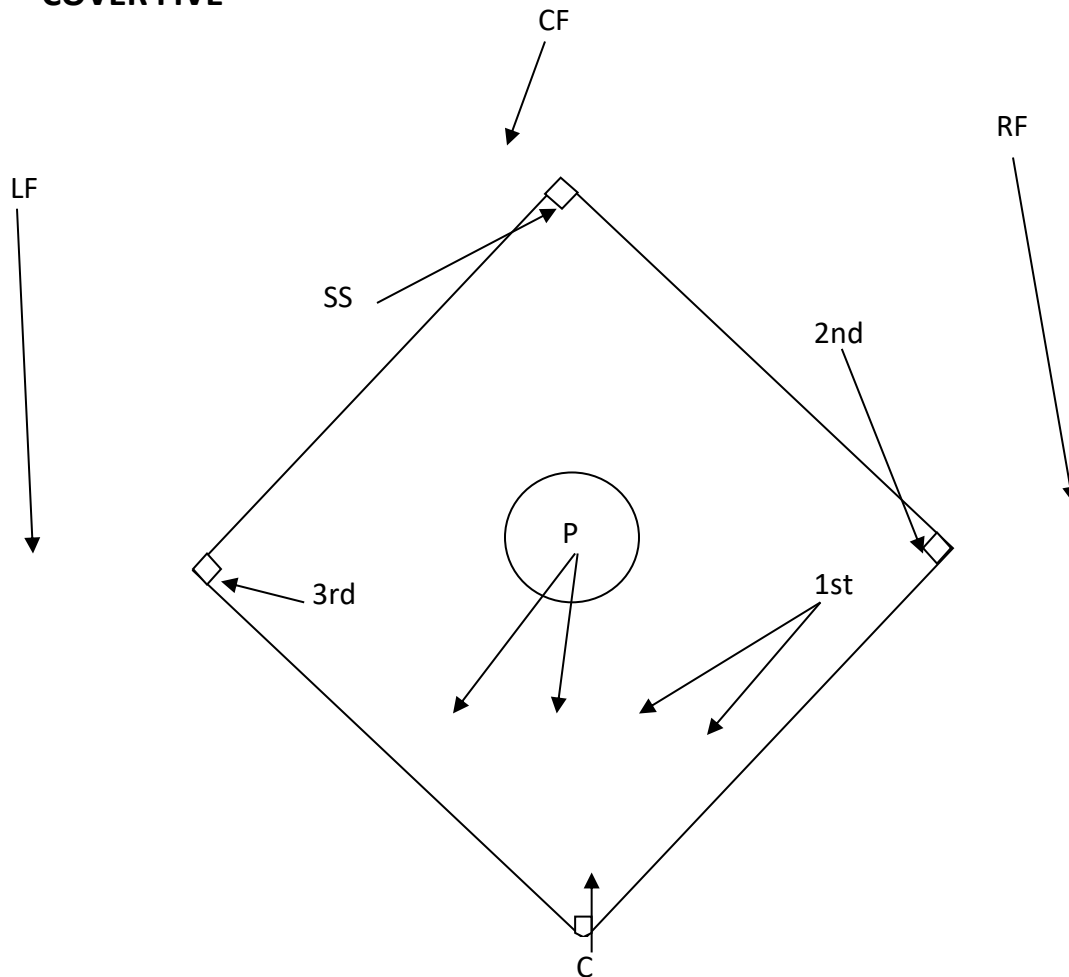
We use this with a runner at first with an aggressive baserunner or team...

Always sell the play, by everyone being in there spot and acting surprised nobody has third base.



BUNT COVERAGES

COVER FIVE



Catcher, Pitcher, and 1st charge all bunts.

2nd covers first base for throws to first on bunts and catcher pickoffs, bunt fakes and pull backs...

SS goes to second base for coverages and throw downs on steals etc...

3rd covers third base

CF covers second base if SS is not there, and backs up the entire middle of the field.

RF backs up all throws to first base.

LF backs up all throws to third base.

Use this coverage with runners at first and second, with a force out at third base.

Use with a runner who is threatening to steal third, and we want 3rd back to cover the bag on steals, especially with a big hitter up who is not threatening to bunt.

We would like to pitch batter outside to bunt to pitcher and 1st.

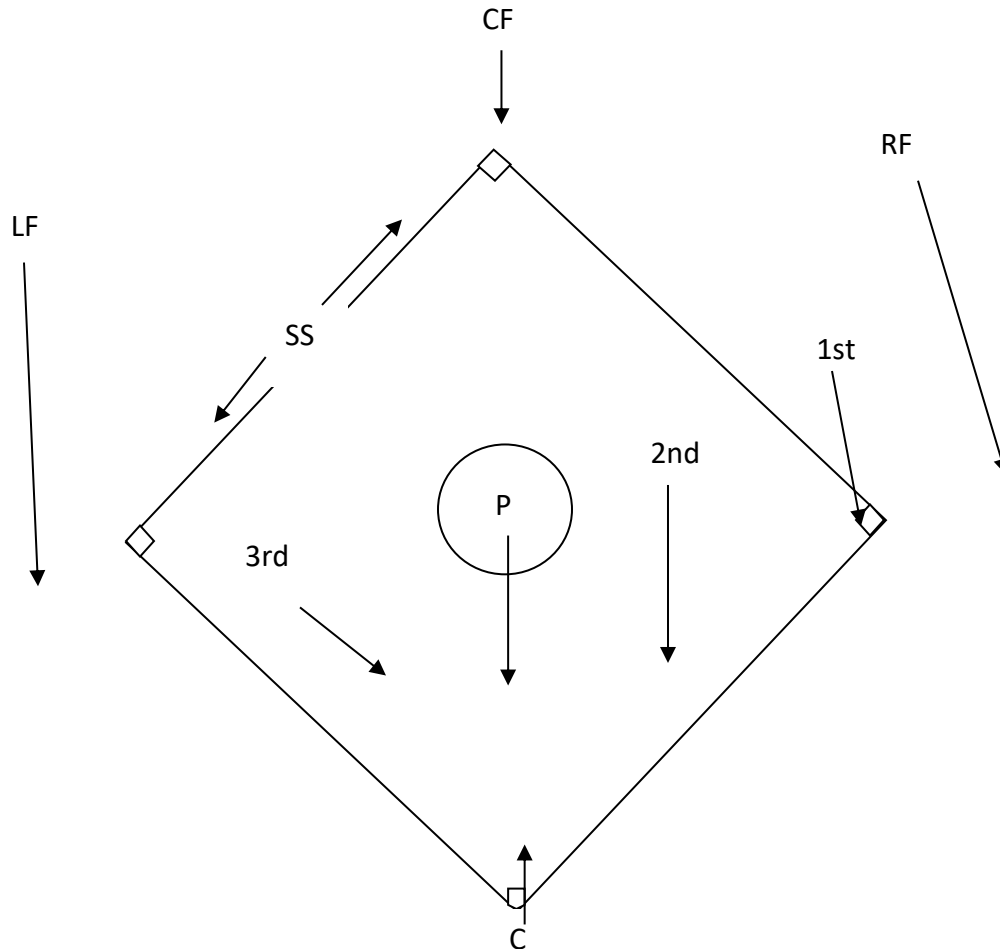
Could also use the 2nd sneak in behind runner at first if they are too aggressive.

If runner at second is slow or bunt is fielded quickly to get force then look to third.



BUNT COVERAGES

COVER FORTY



Catcher, Pitcher, 3rd, and 2nd charge all bunts.

1st covers first base for throws to first on bunts.

SS plays up in base line goes to second base if nobody is on base and covers 3rd if anyone is on base.

CF covers second base if SS is not there, and backs up the entire middle of the field.

RF backs up all throws to first base.

LF backs up all throws to third base.

Use this coverage for certain slappers and small ball situations. Novel coverage used very little.

1st plays back and covers for dinks and pops over 2nd head, but still can get to first to cover bag.

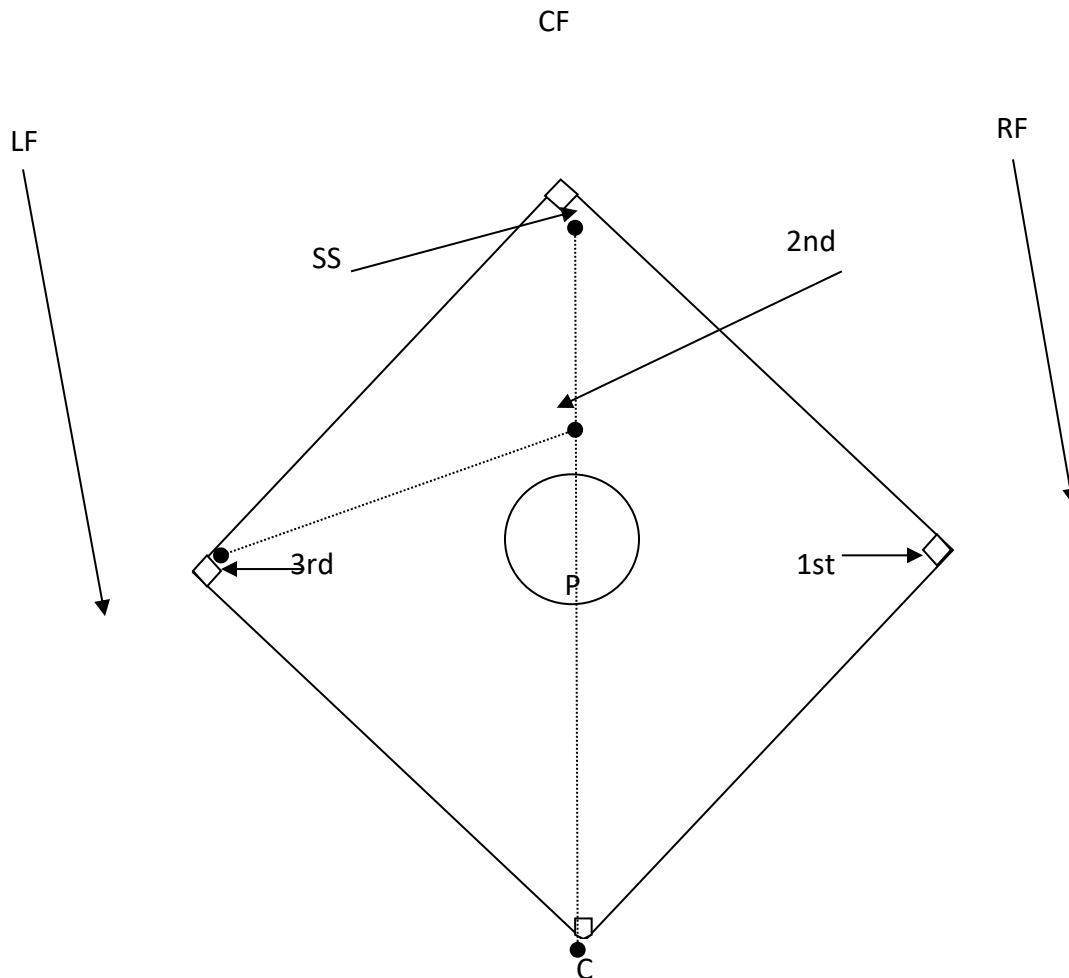
We use this coverage to take the slapper out of their comfort zone, and try to make them do something different. Takes away small ball soft slaps and bunts.

All defenders play in slapper coverage to take away small ball and soft hits.



PICK OFFS and SPECIALTY COVERAGES

FIRST AND THIRD



With runners on first and third, if **catcher** calls the **cut her down play by touching top of helmet**:

3rd goes to bag to cover third for throw down, run down, or quick throw from **2nd** on the cutoff.

2nd cuts straight at third base just behind pitcher circle. The line and angle straight at third is critical.

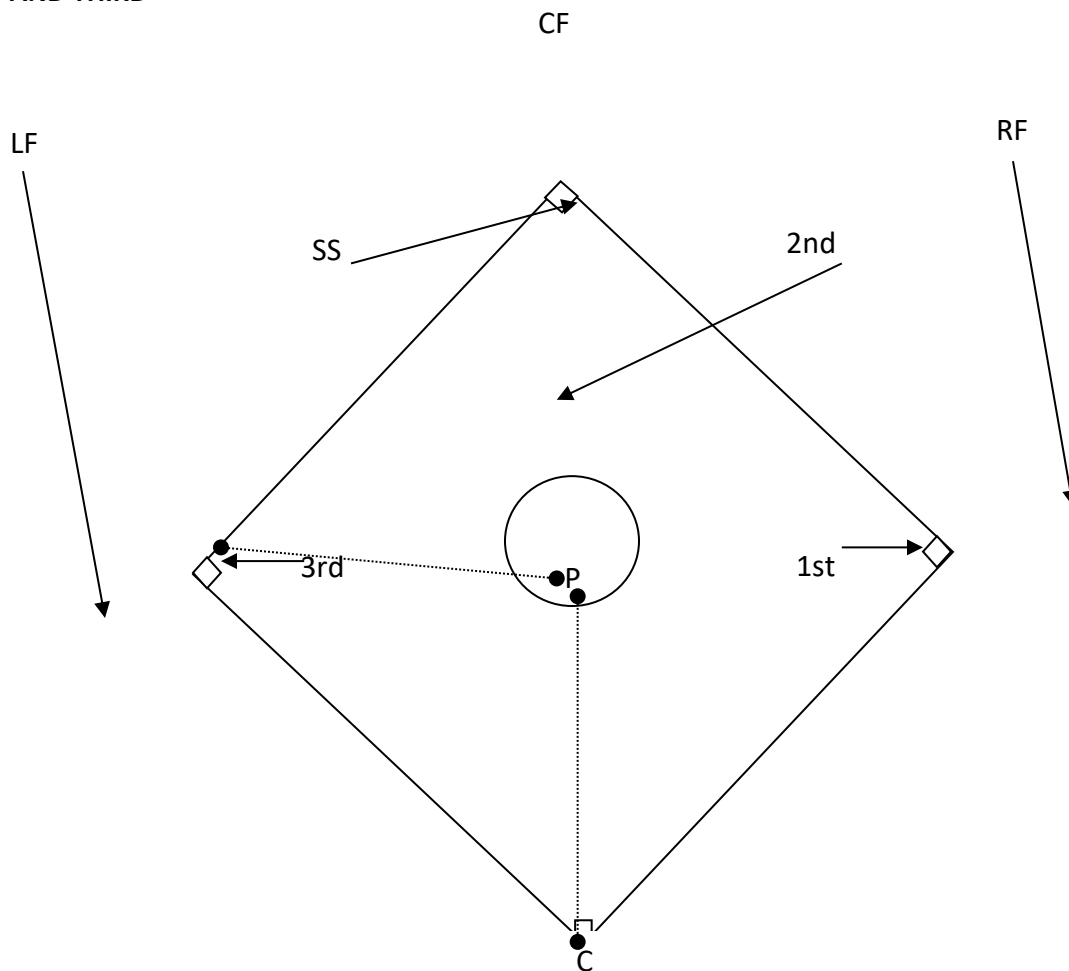
If **2nd** sees runner too far off, or running towards home, and/or feels threatened by runner at **3rd**... Then

2nd is to cut off throw with shoulders pointing towards third to get runner at third, by either running at the runner's homeside shoulder, or throwing to home if runner is running home, or throwing to third if runner is diving back to the bag or is off balance, but close to third base.

If runner at third is not a threat or is going back to the bag, then we fake like we are cutting off the throw from the **catcher**; however we are letting the throw go all the way down to second base where the **shortstop** is covering, and tags out the runner going to second. After, runner is out, then we look to throw home to get runner if the runner at third breaks for home.



FIRST AND THIRD



With runners on first and third, if **catcher** calls the **Pick her off play by touching front of face mask**:

3rd goes to bag to cover third for throw down, run down, or quick throw from Pitcher on the cutoff.

2nd cuts straight at third base just behind pitcher circle. The line and angle straight at third is critical.

2nd is there to clean up a bad throw or ball if it glances off **Pitcher's** glove etc...

Pitcher is to cut off throw with shoulders pointing towards third to get runner at third, by either running at the runners homeside shoulder, or throwing to home if runner is running home, or throwing to third if runner is diving back to the bag or is off balance, but close to third base.

If runner at third is not a threat or is going back to the bag, then we pump fake like we are throwing to third and then turn to look at runner going to second... Looking to see if runner rounds the bag too far or does something careless. If not, then we just keep the ball in the circle and get ready for the next pitch.

On both First and Third plays, the infield reacts the same so we have players in position on every play.

Catcher always has the right to pump fake, and throw to third or snap throw to third, SO **3rd** MUST ALWAYS be ready for a quick throw on any play. **IF THE RUNNER at first DOES NOT STEAL, then the whole play is off. Just pump fake and look for another play!**



PICK OFFS

With runners on base, in Cover 5, Cover 7, or Cover Zero; **2nd** should ALWAYS loop in behind the runner at first for the throw behind **on fake bunts or show bunt and take**. This play is automatic and at the **Catcher's discretion**, if we have a chance make the play – throw the ball.

We will also run the **2nd baseman** in behind the runner at first for a **called play**, not just when the batter shows bunt and takes or fake bunts, but on a **called play**.

The signal for this called **2nd baseman pickoff behind the runner play** is when the coach makes a bunt coverage call out loud with his arms straight out like a big "T". The **first or third baseman**, whichever is closest to the dugout we are in will relay the bunt coverage call and also hold their arms out in a big "T". The **second baseman and catcher** will respond by calling out bunt coverage followed by the number of outs.

When Coach **snaps fingers** and holds up a number 1, 2, or 3 – The **Catcher is going to Snap Throw** to that bag, so everyone needs to be covering their bags and be heads up. **Catcher** always has the right and ability to make throws to any bag at any time with or without the call on, so everyone should be ready and heads up ALL THE TIME!

If coach calls a **Pump Fake Play** by pumping his arm up and down like pulling a big rig horn, then the pump play is on. This can be for the **catcher** to pump a runner and throw behind, Pump a lead runner and throw to another runner, pump first and throw to second or third etc...

Pump Fake Play can also be for when a runner is on third, and we are going to pump a throw to first, and try and come back to get the runner at third who might be leaning or taking off to score. This can go for the **3rd baseman**, catcher, or pitcher if it is a called "PUMP PLAY". The **3rd baseman** will simply and discreetly turn to infield while calling out the number of outs and show a small pump sign to the **SS** and **Pitcher**. **SS** must cover third if the ball is a bunt or hit back to **3rd or Pitcher**.

The Coach can take any Play off by calling 86.

Bunt coverages remain in place until another coverage is called.

Pick off plays only work if the defense is not tipped off, so we must be communicating throughout the entire game on every pitch and every batter, especially with runners on base. This way they do not pick up a play is on, when all the sudden we start talking and making hand motions. EVERYONE not just the catcher and SS, even though it is especially the SS and Catcher who must be heads up on every play.



RUN DOWNS

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| First and Second - | 1 st , Pitcher, and RF line up at first base
SS, CF, and LF line up at second base.
3 rd covers third base in case runner tries to advance.
Catcher stays at home to protect the plate. |
| Second and Third - | 2 nd , CF, and RF line up at second base.
3 rd , Pitcher, and LF line up at third base.
SS goes to second or third – wherever the play has taken her.
1 st baseman looks to help at home or in middle of infield for errant throws that bang off of a runner.
Catcher stays at home to protect the plate. |
| Third and Home - | 3 rd , SS, and LF line up at third base.
Catcher, Pitcher, and 1 st line up at home.
CF hustles over to back up in LF for errant throws.
RF hustles down into infield for errant throws that bang off of a runner. |

Players not involved in a run down need to always be looking for ways to back up and be available for errant throws etc... If someone falls down or otherwise doesn't make it into the run down, then a player without a run down responsibility needs to fill in. Never get caught watching a run down without backing up or being in position to help.

Players receiving the ball should ***catch the ball moving forward*** and call "now" when they want the ball. Players chasing the runner with the ball should hold the ball up behind ear ready to make a short dart throw to the receiver immediately upon the "now" call.

The throw is not too hard and not with the arm in motion, just short and sharp, as the arm just simply extends out to the target, which is the face and chest of the receiver who is calling now.

Always push runners away from home plate, and back to the bag furthest from home.

We don't want sliding tag plays at home.

We want the fewest throws possible.

Players Chasing always run full speed to create urgency for the runner to go back or commit to a bag.

If we are coming from across the infield, then we always run towards their front shoulder to make them want to retreat back to the previous bag – NOT ADVANCE!

Keep the ball up by ear, until you are reaching to tag, then it goes in the glove – NOT BEFORE!

If a player is uncommitted to a bag, then run at them first to make them retreat or advance, then throw the ball in front of the runner to the bag they are headed to.

If there is any doubt when home is involved, get the ball to home first and start the rundown away from home plate and back to third.

Tag with two hands with ball in glove and throwing hand protecting ball, squeezing ball in glove.

Once tag is made, get the glove up and away from runner to avoid having the ball punched out.

AGGRESSIVE – RUN THEM BACK AWAY FROM HOME – SHORT SHARP THROWS



PITCHERS AND CATCHERS

Pitchers and catchers should be at the park early on game day. After the team warm ups pitchers and catchers should get their hitting and batting done first before position players. That will allow you to move into your pitching and catching warm up.

Warm up - Know how long it takes to go through your stretches, warm up, snaps and throwing. Warm up should be complete and pitchers and catchers should be ready for the field 15 minutes before the game starts.

Pitchers and catchers should ice after every tournament or extended throwing sessions. You throw more than any other player on the field. Take care of your arms, knees etc.

Pitchers and catchers should have a light throwing, stretching and workout session the day after a tournament to get the lactic acid out of your muscles. It will help minimize soreness and stiffness.

Practice, practice, practice! Always practice with a purpose. Practice your pitches, spins, blocks and throws.

PITCHERS

Throw strikes – Throw strike one on the first pitch, throw strikes, challenge the hitters and work ahead in the count. Let your defense do their job.

Hit your locations - Pitchers must have command of both sides of the plate both up and down. We throw to specific locations based on hitter tendencies, swings and based on what the offense is doing, especially when we have runners on base. When we have runners on base we need specific infielders to handle the ball. Throwing to the proper locations will help us get the ball to the proper place in our defense if/when the ball is put in play.

Be committed to every pitch –

Check the defense before every pitch. Make sure they are ready and in the proper position. Make sure the catcher or coach has called the defense and the team knows what to do if the ball is put in play.

If you are not comfortable throwing the pitch that is called, shake it off and get another sign. Remember you are the one throwing the pitch.

If you are not comfortable with the sign, glove location or the defense that is called step off and get comfortable before you throw a pitch.

Communicate to the coaches and catchers during the game. Let them know what is working and what is not. Let them know what you are throwing well and what you are not throwing well. Share your observations on the hitters and offenses.

Other defensive responsibilities – (Know the situation and anticipate your responsibilities)

Back up third and home when we have runners in scoring position.

Cover home on passed balls or wild pitches

Respect the umpire at all times

The Pitcher and Catcher are a “Battery” or a team within the team, Partners in the act of pitching the game to the opposing team. They must be in unison, and committed to each other and the game plan. A great pitcher will not look great without great catching, and a great catcher will never show their true capability without adequate pitching. So, these two positions, above all others must have mutual confidence and a unified presence during a game and tournament to maximize our team’s ability to perform on game day.



CATCHERS

Catchers are in charge of the defense- be confident. A confident, communicative, verbal catcher breeds confidence in the entire team, especially the pitchers. Get Loud and be Proud of your position as the catcher and captain of the team. A catcher is not most beloved for their ability to receive the ball from the pitcher, or block a ball in the dirt, and it is not only about wearing the gear behind the plate. The Catcher has to be the toughest player on the field, both mentally and physically. They have to be loud and energetic. They must direct the defense and call the plays. Call the pitches with the coach and enact the game plan. A Catcher must be the enforcer and backbone of a team.

The Catcher's #1 Focus and above all else must make the pitcher and team look good. A Catcher is admired for leading her team and holding the hand of her pitching staff. It is the closest thing a team should have to a coach on the field. A Catcher must put the team and her pitching staff before herself, as it is the only way to really be a first rate Catcher. A Catcher more worried about her own skills or selfishly caught up in how she looks or acts, will never make it as a Catcher, it is not their #1 Priority!

Protect and respect the umpire at all times. Develop a good relationship with him or her and let them know you will take care of them.

Give clear signs to the pitcher. Give clear glove locations to the pitcher. Frame pitches and make adjustments as needed based on the umpires strike zone.

Figure out the umpires strike zone quickly and provide feedback to the coach calling pitches and the pitcher.

Give clear signs and directions to the defense. Make sure the defense knows the coverage and knows where we want the ball on every pitch and every ball put in play. The catcher must be out in front of the plate communicating with the defense on every pitch, talking loudly and giving directions to the team like a Captain.

The Catcher should be the first player on the field every inning, sprinting out behind the plate. Be there early to maximize the comfort and ability for the pitcher to get properly warmed up for the next inning. Chat with the umpire, and start communicating to the defense. Shout words of leadership and encouragement. Strike fear in the other team, and admiration for the coaches and people in the stands, as they see the Captain of the team taking charge and being the LEADER this position REQUIRES!

LINING UP FIELDERS

When Coach Lifts Hat off of head, then start moving back towards fence. Stop moving back when coach puts hat back on and holds up a fist.

When Coach starts putting his hand on his chest keep moving forward towards batter. Stop coming in when coach puts his hand up in a fist.

When Coach takes his hand and starts moving it up and out away from his body move to the left when the arm is making a motion to your left, and move to the right when the arm is making a motion to the right. Stop when coach puts his hand up in a fist.

When Coach calls **"No Doubles"** then corner infielders play back and guard the line and the outfield plays a deeper set where they can cut all balls off before getting to the fence holding the batter to a single only.

When Coach calls **"Give her some room"** then back up a few steps to stop anything from getting over our head.

When Coach calls **"Tighten Up"** we come in shallow to take away bloopers or give us a chance at a do or die play at the plate.



PRE-GAME / PRACTICE WARMUP

Circle Up for Static Stretching

Touch Toes	10 Seconds
Nose to Right Knee / Left / Middle	10 Seconds
Groin Stretch to Right / Left / Middle	10 Seconds

With bat in hand

Big Arm Circles forward	10 Reps
Big Arm Circles Backward	10 Reps
Wrist Rockers Below Waiste	10 Reps
Torso Twists	10 Reps
Helicopters	10 Reps
Lat Stretches	10 Seconds
Triceps Stretch	10 Seconds

Dynamic Stretching in a Straight Line

45 Feet

1,2,3 Toe Pull	Lady Liberty
Frankensteins	Knee Hug into Lunge with Rock to Calf
Back Knifes	Ankle Pull into Side Lunge with Rock/Rock and Turn

60 Feet

High Knees
Butt Kicks
Carioca
Explosive Skips
Ballerina
Quick Touches 30 feet accelerate into jog other 30 feet (Down then Back)
¾ Speed with full strides on Pitchers Arm (Down then Back)
Full Sprint on Pitchers Arm (Down then Back)

Throwing Progression in Two Straight Lines – Partnered Up

Wrist Flips from Knee	@ 10 Feet	10 Reps
Toss from Knee	@ 15 Feet	10 Reps
Stationary Throws	@ 30 Feet	10 Reps
Step Into Throws	@ 45 Feet	10 Reps
Shuffle Throws	@ 60 Feet	10 Reps
Skip Into Full Throws	@ 90 Feet	10 Reps
Crow Hop into Long Toss	@ 120 Feet	10 Reps
Shuffle Throws Back In	@ 90 -->30 Feet	5 Reps
Hot Potato / Quick Darts	@ 30 Feet	10 Reps

Pre-Game then goes into hitting drills with Two Nets

Tee Drills Each Player - **(PITCHERS AND CATCHERS GO FIRST!)**
Front Arm / Back Arm / Walk Ups / Contact Point / Full Swings

Bunts - Pitch each player a bucket of Bunts

Wiffle Balls – Pitch each player 20 cuts off of front toss with wiffle balls.

Pitchers and Catchers start pitching routine and game warm up to be ready to start 15 minutes before game time.



COLLEGE RECRUITING

8th and 9th Grade

Create a list of colleges and universities that the player has interest in attending. Consider the distance from home, where you have family and scholastic interest. This is a big dream list of schools big and small, and any that fit your interest level. These list is meant to evolve and grow or shrink as you continue through the recruitment process.

Find out when these institutions are having camps and clinics and attend as many as possible.

Start filling out on-line questionnaires for recruits and send an introductory email to say who you are, what graduation year you are in, what your primary position/s you play, and that you admire their school and softball program and hope to meet the coach and possibly attend their school or play for them one day. Short and sweet just to get on the radar.

Generally kids are not being actively recruited while in 8th or 9th grade, but putting your name in the hat, and beginning some correspondence etc... is a good start.

Sign up with the NCAA clearinghouse at the end of 9th grade.

10th Grade

Ramp up your frequency of correspondence and begin requesting information from the school about athletic and academic programs.

Continue seeking out camps and clinics where the coaches can be found.

Do an unofficial visit to colleges and universities on your list.

Send a video and resume to your list of colleges.

Keep up with your grades, class rank, and GPA, and try to keep them as high as possible.

Take SAT and ACT, and begin working on getting your scores high enough for admissions.

11th Grade

Send new video and updated resume

Send the college your school and Travel team schedule

Send emails to assistant coaches regularly updating them

Continue making unofficial visits where there is interest.

Continue sending emails and correspondence.

Ramp up attendance at college clinics and camps where there is any interest.

Keep up with your grades, class rank, and GPA, and try to keep them as high as possible.

Take SAT and ACT, and begin working on getting your scores high enough for admissions.

12th Grade

Take official visits

Continue with correspondence with colleges, coaches, and assistants.

Widen the net and be open to college interest

All players will have an opportunity to play in college, however, the level they play at, and at what point they may or may not receive financial assistance is completely individual. Not everyone will be at the same point or on the same pace in the recruiting process, do not become discouraged or anxious, but stay the course. Be open to schools who show interest, and be willing to review any school to see if it can be a good fit for college. Be diligent in your correspondence and most of all build a good resume with high scores, a high GPA, and high achievements. Colleges have a lot of girls seeking to play in college, so give them a reason to recruit you – BE SPECIAL!