

SYBA Coaches' Continuity

1. In general:

- A. Attitude, Hustle, Hard Work, and Sportsmanship are the foundations of our program
- B. Stress and practice sound fundamentals/hard work: fielding, hitting, throwing, agility, all forms of bunts, hit and run, hit the cutoffs, turn double plays, etc. – build your team up
- C. Hustle on the field and off the field – lots of chatter – work hard to build a team atmosphere – it doesn't take any talent to hustle . . .
- D. No tolerance for anyone swearing, throwing equipment, taunting the other team or a teammate, not hustling or anything that will embarrass you, the team, the community, or the player/family. Communicate with players and give them a second chance to prove themselves; communicate!
- F. HAVE FUN!

2. Signals: Develop a system that works for you and your players – simple yet easy to adapt

- Sacrifice bunt
- Sacrifice squeeze
- Fake bunt (and take) – often used to set up a hit and run on the next pitch
- Drag bunt (usually they can do this on their own but some may need guidance from you)
- Suicide Squeez
- Fake suicide squeeze (to gain a ball on the count)
- Regular steal (batter swings through strike if no strikes; free to swing if 1 or 2 strikes)
- Early steal (go when pitcher brings hands together in stretch – especially against lefty with two outs when you need a run and don't have a strong hitter at the plate.)
- Late steal (good secondary lead = shuffle, shuffle, GO!) – must have secondary lead every time not just on late steal – good with slower runner or with lefty/quick move home – defense falls asleep/catcher goes to knees
- Hit and Run = Love it! Please work on it as runners and hitters
- Bunt and Run = goal to get from 1st to 3rd or 2nd to home (must bunt to 3B)
- Fake bunt and run (possible steal third base)
- Wipe off (or start signs over)
- Take sign (3-0 automatic take in most cases)
- Green light to swing or steal a base

3. Standard Bunt coverage:

- A. Pitcher and catcher have full responsibility for fielding the bunt.
- B. First base and third base always cover own base (unless it is a very hard bunt toward them).
- C. Shortstop always covers 2nd base
- D. Second baseman is free to cover 2nd for a steal or back up first base for the throw from the catcher or pitcher.
- E. Right fielder sprint to 1st base foul line for back up.
- F. Centerfielder sprint forward to back up second base.
- G. Left fielder sprint to 3rd base foul line for back up.

***** (You may add a more traditional defense: 3B or 1B charge (create signal or verbal), 2B covers 1B, SS covers 3B (w/runners on 1 and 2) or 2B (with runner on 1st). We also run a pickoff call for a pitch out with 2B covering 1B – 1B charges hard – catcher throws to behind runner at 1B*****

4. Cutoffs and Relays: PRACTICE THIS OFTEN! Try to get the cut-off man himself to get lined up as close as possible; he has time to look behind him. The fielder of the base to which the ball will be thrown should just have to tell him to move right or left one or two steps. The other outfielders should move toward the ball and holler to the fielder what base he's throwing to, so he knows where the cut-off man will be; **THE FIELDER MUST HIT THE CUT-OFF MAN.** The fielder at the base will holler, "Relay" if he wants the ball to be relayed to the base. He will say nothing if it is a perfect throw that will reach the base quicker without a relay. If there is no play, he hollers, "Cut, run it in" and the relay man catches the ball and sprints into the infield with it. If the fielder at the base wants the ball thrown to another base, he will holler, "Cut 1, Cut 2, Cut 3, or Cut 4."

*Cut-off/relay people must adjust to the arms of the fielders and the depth of the batted ball.

*Shortstop is the cutoff man from straight-away center to left field (for cuts to 2B, 3B, or double cut to home on a gapper.)

*Second baseman is the cutoff for right-center to right field for 2B, 3B, or the double cut to home on a gapper.

*Varsity will have a double-cut with the first-basemen covering second base on a sure double.

*Third baseman is the cutoff for home from the left-fielder.

*First baseman is the cutoff for home from CF or RF; he should not leave the infield grass.

5. First and third defensive plays against the double steal: Coach relays signal to catcher; catcher's steps in front of plate; first sign is hot – catcher gives a number of signs

A. Red - signal from coach to catcher - from catcher to infielders - signal is the throwing hand to the mask - (use most of the time/practice often) - **Play:** 2B cuts in front of the bag (10-12 feet); it is his responsibility to read what the runner does and react to him. The SS always goes to the bag and expects to receive the throw and makes the play on the runner from 1st only. The pitcher immediately backs up home plate. The catcher very briefly glances to the third baseman and throws his normal throw to the corner of second base. The third baseman signals to the catcher if the runner is too far off of third base by raising and waving his glove, or he goes to the base after the throw has been made to second base. First baseman yells, "Going!" and follows the runner - after he sees that the batter has not swung. Outfielders back up their bases.

B. White - signal from coach to catcher - from catcher to infielders - signal is throwing hand on top of hat/catcher's helmet - (if the catcher is not throwing well and tight situation) - First baseman and bench yell that the runner is "Going!" Catcher does not glance to third but comes up throwing hard, head-high or slightly above to the pitcher who is bent over but reaches up to catch the ball and throws to third **only if the runner is off the base.** 3B covers his bag. SS or 2B (depending on right or left-handed batter) move to second base only after the batter does not swing. Outfielders back up their bases.

C. Black - signal from coach to catcher - from catcher to infielders - signal is the throwing hand on the chest - (if we have a big lead and the catcher is throwing well) - First baseman and bench yell, "Going!" Catcher throws to second base. 2B or SS (depending on the batter) covers the bag and tags out the runner from first. 3B covers bag; pitcher backs up home plate; outfielders back up their bags.

D. 3B option =catcher fake to 2B first or straight throw to 3B – signal is right hand to left shoulder from coach to catcher and catcher to infielders.

6. Pick off plays from the catcher to any infielder:

General Signal: throwing hand to the elbow by catcher and infielder involved.

Play: After the pitch, catcher throws to base with infielder sneaking in behind the runner. (Strong-armed catcher could work on throwing from his knees)

7. Pick-off plays between pitcher/infielder: Teach the pitcher that if he gets confused at any point to step off the rubber.

A. To first base with runners on 1st and 2nd or bases loaded.

1. Signal: glove to the elbow by first baseman and pitcher

2. Play: Pitcher takes the sign from the catcher. The pitcher starts his stretch to the pause position and counts one thousand one. The first baseman dashes for the bag when the pitcher's hands come together during the stretch. The pitcher makes his move to 1B - **THE PITCHER MUST THROW THE BALL.** (Unless he has stepped back off the rubber to start his move - this is NOT encouraged)

B. To second base anytime a runner is on second.

1. Signal: Pitcher and 2B or SS give signal to each other by tapping throwing elbows with their gloves (one acknowledges the other.)

2. Play: Pitcher takes the sign from the catcher and starts his stretch. He immediately looks at second base and back to the catcher. When his head looks back to the catcher, the 2B or SS breaks to the bag; the pitcher counts "one thousand one" and delivers his quickest move to second base. **THE PITCHER DOES NOT HAVE TO THROW THE BALL.**

C. To third base - right handed pitcher

1. Signal: Pitcher and 3B give the signal to each other by tapping throwing elbows with their gloves (one acknowledges the other.)

2. Play: The third baseman breaks to the bag on the first movement by the pitcher out of the stretch or the wind-up (must step off with throwing-hand foot first). Pitcher makes the throw to 3B. **THE PITCHER DOES NOT HAVE TO THROW THE BALL.**

8. Pregame Infield: You may develop your own!

*Outfield 2 throws to each base: 2nd, 3rd, Home (Communicate relays!)

*Last throw to home "Do or Die,"

*Around the horn twice 3B around and 1B around.

*Infield up: throw to home

*Infield back: throw to 1st

*Infield back: throw to 1st/throw from catcher

*3B/SS check imaginary runner at 2nd, throw to 1st, 1st throws to third

*Double play depth: Turn two

*Double play depth: Turn two/throw from catcher when grounders are hit up the middle; SS and 2B run "red" 1st and 3rd coverage.

*Infield back: Hit a slow roller/throws to 1st

*Infield up/outfielders come in: infielders throw to home

*All players greet each other in front of our dugout; Stand up

While you are hitting to the outfielders and they are making throws to 2B and 3B, have your starting pitcher/pitchers for the game:

A. Make 3 pickoffs to the first baseman

B. Throw 3 pitches to the catcher - who rolls the ball between first and the pitcher's mound - pitcher or first baseman fields the ball while the other covers the base...communicate!

C. Throw 3 pitches which the catcher allows to get by him - the catcher retrieves the ball sliding on his shin guard and tosses to the pitcher covering home plate.

9. Baserunning note = ball in the dirt = secondary lead = green light when they read the ball in the dirt = shuffle, shuffle go!

Practice Plan (Sample)

Get to practice 10-minutes early and stretch on your own.

6:00 = agilities or combos

6:10 = Steals (go on coaches move or dominos = read the guy in front of you/teach this early – what to look for in LH and RH)

6:15 = throwing routine – teach this and what you expect – don't let them throw on their own or they will goof off.

6:30- 7:15 = set up 3 stations (defense, hitting, baserunning, etc.) and rotate in small groups (approximately 4 players)

7:15 = water

7:20-7:45 = Game situations/full OF/IF Live runners, etc.

The first couple of practice will take more time at the beginning to teach them what you expect; eventually, they'll have the system down and will be ready to roll from one station to the next prior to each game, etc. We still do the same warm-up routine for practice and games.