

OBA Bunting Program

Philosophy: Bunting is a team philosophy. The ability to utilize bunts and bunt situations will be one of the main focuses of our offense. To be a successful aggressive offensive team, we must put pressure on the opponent with a well-organized effective short game.

I. Bunting Basics

Box Position

1. Move up in the box -- this will help to keep the ball fair
2. Move closer to home plate -- 1/2 step to full step (plate coverage)
 - be discrete when moving to not tip the bunt off
 - By moving, bunter will reach outside strikes and inside pitch may hit you

Body Position

1. The following body parts will face the pitcher when bunting:
 - toes
 - knees
 - belly button
 - chin, nose, eyes
2. Torso should be upright
3. Knees flexed (bent) for balance

Arm/Hand Position

1. Elbows must be in and pointing to ground
2. Top hand *pinches* bat logo or higher - higher the hand, softer the bunt
 - use the logo as the balance point
 - to find balance point, hold bat in top hand and balance bat with that hand only
3. Bottom hand stays on grip - shortening the bat will give better control, slide hand up
4. Let the wrists give to cushion bunt - keeps bat in front of plate
5. Tighter Grip = Slower Bunt Loose Grip = Harder Bunt

Bat Position

1. Bat angle must be at 30-45 degrees
2. Bat should be in front of home to keep ball fair
3. Bat should be at top of strike zone after knees are bent
4. Bat should be in front of the eyes - see self bunting ball
5. Set direction of bat *early* - this will increase bunters chances for success
 - bunt to 1B side - point knob toward third base
 - bunt to 3B side - point barrel toward first base side (knob can move toward elbow)

Other Notes

1. Attack low pitches with the legs - back leg determines level of body for bunting
2. Players need to learn and master bunting the ball to the Hurry Zone (21 ft. from home)

II. Timing For Bunts

1. **Early** - when the pitcher begins his leg lift; may go a little later, not much though
2. **In-Between** - when the throwing arm reaches bottom of arc
3. **Late** - when pitcher reaches point of release (stride foot lands)

III. Methods

Pivot

1. Widen stance (No-stride hitting technique)
 - back foot will be closer to home for better balance and vision
 2. Front foot needs to be on ground and back foot heel off the ground - controls balance (60:40)
 3. Toe/ Heel relationship will keep body balanced and weight distributed properly
 - back foot toes should be across from front foot heel/arch
- * Preference may be to use a method that is between both methods

Jab Step (use to bunt to opposite side of field)

1. Slight step to opposite side of field with front foot
2. Easier to bunt to opposite side of field
3. Puts bat in proper position

Modified Pivot (use to bunt to same side of field)

1. Slight step to catcher with back foot
2. Helps with setting bat angle early
3. Use mainly for sac bunts and bunt for hits on same side of field (RHH to 3B)

Square-Around

1. Hips, feet, knees, and shoulders are square to pitcher
 2. Back foot moves up close to parallel to front foot
 3. #1 mistake is for bunter to square around late - leads to all other mistakes
 4. Must be sure to not step on home
- * If back foot comes up in front of front foot, may give better balance
- * Preference may be to use a method that is between both methods

IV. Types

Sacrifice

1. Choose either method - easiest to be consistent
2. Do not run until you see the ball hit the ground
3. Ball must be bunted to the **Hurry Zone (21 feet)**
4. Must bunt strikes or pitches you can handle
5. **Timing is early to in-between**
6. This bunt is for the bunter to sacrifice his at bat for the team!

Drag

1. Footwork is drop step
 - back foot moves 4-6" diagonally to prepare bunter to run
 - toe will hit ground just right before the bunt happens
 2. Bunt down lines - if you miss, MISS FOUL!
 3. Must bunt strikes or pitches you can handle.
 4. **Timing is late**

 5. Technique for a left-handed hitter is a crossover step or a shuffle step:
 - Shuffle step : front foot steps first, back foot second
: make sure to be done shuffling when bunt happens
: all other mechanics are basics
 - Crossover Step : back foot will cross over and be in front
: bunt down 1B line, beat pitcher down line
- * It is important to understand that the bunt happens in front of home and the eyes. The drag bunt must be down the lines and bunted for a hit. Timing is critical, as well as the technique.

Push

1. Bunt this ball **To Dirt (teach dirt and not past pitcher)** - target is to shortstop and second baseman
2. **To Dirt (teach dirt and not past pitcher)**
3. Footwork is front foot drops back and back foot will be in front
4. Step is to ball - DO NOT REACH AT BALL, but let ball come to you - take a step w/o lunging
5. **Timing is late**

Suicide Squeeze

1. Name implies the bunt
2. Rule #1 is to protect the runner
3. **Timing is late** - turn to bunt when pitcher's foot hits the ground
4. Runner on 3B begins walking on the leg lift of pitcher and sprints as stride foot lands
5. Both hitter and runner(s) must acknowledge coach so everyone knows the play is on

Double Squeeze

1. Same rules as **Suicide Squeeze**
2. Bunt needs to be down 3B line so the runner from second does not tip the defense

Safety Squeeze

1. Must bunt strikes or pitches that can be handled
2. Bunt down 1B line so runner on third can read ball - set the bat angle immediately
3. Runner works same lead as suicide, difference is to read ball and sprint does not happen as early
4. Both hitter and runner(s) must acknowledge coach so everyone knows the play is on
5. **Timing is late**

Shadow Squeeze

1. Same as regular squeeze, only that the runner shadows the 3B
2. Important to know defense reaction to bunt/squeeze and react to play (SS is key)

Fake Bunt

1. Keep bat out as long as possible to sell bunt to defense
2. Have the bat run with the pitch to the catcher – **Throw barrel quickly at catcher**
3. This is a take pitch - the bat must be pulled back
4. Hold your ground after the pitch is received by the catcher
5. **Timing is early to in-between**
6. We want the defense to react and possibly leave a base open

Slash – use in obvious bunt situations; cause infields to move and create confusion

1. **Timing has two parts:**
 - The first part is to square early so the defense reacts. Use early timing or even a little sooner. Idea is to have corners in and SS/2B moving.
 - The second part is to rock back and ‘slap’ ball to the SS or 2B; whichever player is moving and where to ball is pitched. Keep the ball away from second base (middle)
2. The technique is pivot and rock back into a hitting position. The hands must move short and quick so there is a chance to control the bat and the ball.
3. We must have a ground ball on this play.

Bunting Drills

Technique Drills

Dry Bunting Mechanics

This drill has the player working on mechanics without seeing a live pitch. This drill is very important for the coach and player to pinpoint any mechanical faults the player may be having. If the bunter is bunting the ball up in the air, then his hands/bat are too low. If the bunts are going to the pitcher stress bat angle. Make sure the player feels balanced on his pivot. Great time to work on proper box location.

Timex Drill

Place a watch on the end of the bat and have the bunter tell the time after each bunt. This teaches the bunter to stay back and focus on the ball. This drill is great to teach the bunter to first bunt the ball and run second.

Bat Drop Drill

Position the bunter at home plate and have him square in his regular bunting stance. Ask him to drop the bat on the ground by moving his hands back so the bat drops directly down. This drill is great to see bat angle and plate coverage. Great to use with all drills.

Bazooka Bunting

Hold the bat like a bazooka gun. The bat handle should be on the shoulder and the bunter should place his top hand on the balance point of the bat. The emphasis is for the bunter to bend his knees to the ball. Use whiffle balls or ATEC's for safety.

Shot Gun Bunting

Same drill as Bazooka Bunting, but hold bat like a gun. Stresses knee bend and vision.

Types of Bunts

Every type of bunt should be utilized each practice. These drills should focus on timing, reps, and placement. Remember to stress mechanics and do not let the player get a false sense of accomplishment by having poor mechanics. This will lead to failure in games.

Sacrifice

Timing is early to in between and placement must be toward 3B or 1B depending situation. Have bunter first bunt at targets, then remove targets and stress placement.

Fake Bunt

Timing is early and as the ball is coming in, pull bat back and **ride** the ball the catcher's mitt. Hold your ground and stay balanced.

Suicide

Timing is late and batter must protect the runner. Batter **MUST** bunt whatever pitch is thrown. Remember to protect the runner. If it is a full count bases loaded pitch, pull back on an obvious ball. This drill needs the runner at 3B to work on proper timing when running. Each time this drill is used, the bunter must show the acknowledge sign prior to the pitch.

Safety Squeeze

Same as suicide drill, but only the batter must bunt strikes. The runner on third will read the ball and make the call to run or not to run. The bunt should be place down the 1B side so the runner can have a better read of the ball.

Slash Bunt

This is known as a fake bunt swing. The key here is to square early and quickly pivot back around and slide hands to grip. The ball needs to be hit to starting position of the SS or 2B. This drill is great to use in situations and to add the base runners reading the ball off the bat.

Push Bunt

Timing is in between to late. Place the bunt past the pitcher to 2B or SS; **to Dirt (teach dirt and not past pitcher)** Use this drill at a home plate so the feeling of the bunt can be learned. Remember to make sure the bunter does not lunge at the ball, but steps to the ball for the harder bunt.

Drag Bunt

Emphasis is on mechanics and timing. Timing should be late and placement must be down lines. Use the term, "fault foul" to let the bunter know to use the lines. Drill can be done anywhere to stress mechanics, but use home plate for bunter to feel proper placement of bunt.

Repetition Drills

Pitching Machine Bunting

Great drill for reps. and for the bunter to learn proper top hand pressure. This drill can not be used for timing as the bunter will begin to lunge at the ball. This is a rep drill. Increasing the MPH of the pitch will help the bunter to see faster pitches and he will gain confidence in his bunts. Use the drill to correct any mechanical faults that may arise from poor bunts.

Partner Bunting

In pairs, have a pitcher and bunter. Make sure the pitcher throws strikes and the bunter stresses mechanics. Can be used with targets or any other technique drills.

4-Base Bunting

I prefer four players per base with a bunter, a pitcher, and two shaggers (one on each side). Have the bunter bunt to the shaggers and after the last bunt sprint to the next base. The pitcher must throw strikes! The bunter will bunt at all four locations and once back to beginning location, switch to next bunter. Use all the types of bunts for this drill.

Situation Drills

For these drills, add consequences for poor bunts. Use sprints or other means of exercise. This will put pressure on the bunter to perform and prepare him for games. I prefer not to use pushups.

2-Strike Bunting

Give the bunter a count with 2 strikes. Use all game situations and add defense and runners. This is a great confidence builder. Do not forget to add consequence for poor bunts.

All Bunt Types

Great drill for situations. Have runners and defense play live and add consequences for poor bunts. Divide team into two teams and have a competition. Losers run, winners rest!

Full Count Bases Loaded

Great play, but must be practiced. Give the bunter the count with runners on each base. Let him see all types of pitches so he is prepared for the game. This play can win games for the team!

Other Favorites

Target Bunting

Have targets setup for the bunter to bunt at. Great drill to stress mechanics and proper ball placement. This drill can be utilized as a station during batting practice.

Quadrant Bunting

Have different levels to bunt to. Use numbers for each level and keep score. Divide the team into teams and have a competition. Use a consequence for the losing team. Great drill and players will enjoy this.

1-Knee Bunting

Have the bunter place his back knee on the ground. The emphasis is for the bunter to stay back and see himself bunt the ball. Stress proper bat and hand placement along with ball placement from the bunter.

Fungo Bunting

Bunt with a fungo. Do not throw a live pitch as the bat may break and create a safety issue. This drill stress acute concentration as the bunter will be bunting with a smaller barrel. Another great tool for this drill is the Hitting Stick.

Timing Drills

Have partner go through pitching mechanics and bunter stresses the proper timing for each type of bunt. Great drill to build confidence for when to pivot for each bunt. This drill takes pressure off the bunter and lets him know when to pivot for the bunts. Another great teaching tool for this drill; have the pitcher throw an ATEC ball at the bunter, who does not have a bat in his hand, and for the bunter to catch the ball. This will let the bunter work on the timing and add vision training to the drill. Make sure bunter catches the ball with his top hand only.