

## [Bunting, Bunting Where For Art Thou Bunting? – Renee Ferguson](#)

If there is one thing my last two years as the Head Women's Softball Coach of Anne Arundel Community College has taught me, it's that the art of laying down a good bunt has all but disappeared. Lost are the days of the push bunt, surprise bunt, right handed power slap, drag bunt, and even just simply bunting. Anyone who has ever seen me coach knows I like to bunt and that I rely on bunting strategies to make something happen- instead of waiting for something to happen.

In this post I am going to cover the types of bunts and my strategies for using them.

**First let's cover the types of bunts so I can be sure we are all on the same page:**

**Bunt:** The goal is to lay the ball down softly in a 3 foot half circle area in front of the plate; batters should be able to position the ball where they want/need it to go.

**Slap Bunt (left):** This is the moving bunt or hit from the left batter's box

**Push Bunt:** Can be from left or right side, goal is to try and push the ball past the fielders

**Drag Bunt:** Usually done from the left side, goal is to drag the bunt up the first base line

**Power Slap:** From right side, batter shows a bunt then pulls back to take a full cut at the ball. Can be done from left side with a true lefty.

**Surprise or Sneaky Bunt:** This is when the batter drops the bat on the ball at the last second hoping to catch the defense by surprise.

**Fake Bunt:** Batter squares to bunt and either pulls back at the last second or leaves the bat out to take a strike, either way the batter has no intention of making contact.

Now that we are all on the same page, I'll go through a couple of "short game" situations and my thought process for each.

### **BUNT**

#### **1st batter to expose the other teams bunt defense.**

Things to look for: do the corners crash hard, does 3rd base get covered every time, how quick are their corners and pitchers, can the pitcher pitch through a bunt, to test the fielders arms not only strength but accuracy. Use this bunt the most at the beginning of the game unless weaknesses are exposed, then exploit those weaknesses the rest of the game.

**To move a runner.(Sacrifice Bunt)**

If you need to get a runner into scoring position. Be sure your runner at 1st is fast enough to keep the other team from trying to get the lead runner.

**With 2 strikes:**

I don't hesitate to have a batter drop a bunt with 2 strikes early in the game and especially if the fielders automatically drop back in position or if the opposing coach tells them to move back because there are 2 strikes.

**Pitcher is overpowering:**

Call me crazy but I'd rather resort to bunting than strike out the whole game. They still have to make the plays defensively to get you out

**3rd baseman stays back:**

Batter should know to bunt up third base line by reading the defense. Reasoning: the 2 potential fielders (P and C) momentum will be headed in the opposite direction from where she has to throw the ball. We are trying to make the fielder throw off balance or off the wrong foot resulting in slower throw times to first or a wild throw.

**PUSH BUNT:****If corners crash hard:**

If corners crash hard and fast batters can push the ball (hopefully to either side of the fielders, but most effective if pushed towards middle infielders. The hope here is to push the ball by the Pitcher, 3rd and 1st baseman, whereby freezing or pulling the middle infielders away from their coverage assignment to get the missed ball. I usually do this to the 1st base side for obvious reasons (no coverage at 1st, in case it wasn't obvious), just know that it is a risky move if the ball doesn't get by the first line of defense.

**If 3rd baseman stays back:**

The objective here would be to push the ball a little harder down the line hoping that the pitcher will have to give chase to the ball in order to field it. (HINT: Can be used on 1st base side just know you risk getting out on a quick flip from the pitcher to 1st or by getting tagged.)

**As a type of suicide bunt:**

If you are confident your batter can push the ball through the herd of fielders that will be crashing to protect the plate, you can try this. If it works you will look like a genius if it doesn't....well you know the rest.

**POWER SLAP**

**If corners are crashing or pitcher is quick off the mound:**

Nothing is scarier than being 3 feet away from a batter who reloads and takes a giant cut at the ball. The goal is to get the fielders to think before crashing. If it works and they are slower to charge on the next bunt it may be the couple of extra steps your bunter needed to be safe at first. Don't just do it once do it a few times with various batters, keep the fielders on their toes, the more they are thinking, the more likely they are to make a mistake.

**For timing purposes:**

If the pitcher is a little slower than usual have your batters take the power slap stance and work on timing the ball. (HINT: When the batter pulls the bat back they should not swivel their hips, this creates too much movement in the swing)

**Get creative:**

Use this instead of a standard bunt when trying to move the runner or during a suicide bunt. Teach a variation where the batters are good at squaring, pulling back and then dropping a sneaky bunt instead of swinging through.

**DRAG BUNT****If teams go to a slap defense**

You are hoping the chaos that is created by the runner and fielders all moving to the line cause their bunt defense to break down or result in an errant throw. Risk of the runner getting tagged out if the fielders get a good jump on the ball are REAL, so don't say I didn't warn you.

**SLAP BUNT/HIT****With batters who have speed and have the ability to read the defense.**

Slappers should be the smartest people in the game. They should know how to exploit the defensive weaknesses of the opposing team. If they can't do this they shouldn't be slapping. Otherwise they are just up there taking a shot in the dark and hoping to get on base.

You can look at any of the scenarios above or below and make them applicable to a slapper because a slapper should be the real deal, they should be able to execute all types of bunts and know when the team needs a hit. Maybe I will cover this in another post.

**FAKE BUNT****When runner is stealing second**

This is used both as a distraction and as a way to keep the catcher back in her stance longer. I recommend having the batter follow the ball back into the catcher's mitt with her bat, whereby keeping the bat in the catcher's line of sight as long as possible.

**When runner is stealing third**

If third base coverage is a weak point, exploit it by having the batter fake bunt when your runner is stealing 3rd.

**To shake the bat or not shake the bat**

Reason to shake the bat: if the pitcher cannot pitch through it, If your batter is good at shaking the bat but still dropping the bunt

Reason NOT to shake the bat: you're giving yourself away. The other team now knows it is a fake bunt and will not break to cover.

**SURPRISE/SNEAKY BUNT****To bunt for a hit**

Square at the last second hoping to catch the other team off guard and give the runner a few extra steps toward first

**Suicide situation**

Dropping a sneaky bunt on a suicide steal is good because the corners will get a late jump on the bunt, which will help create a little more chaos as the ball is fielded. You also want to try and pull the catcher out from behind the plate, the ball has to be bunted perfectly for this to happen.

**With a power hitter**

If your power hitter has the other team playing back at the corners and has decent speed a surprise bunt will allow her to keep the fielders on their toes. If she squares to bunt and the fielders make an adjustment of moving in this may be all your hitter needs to drive the ball through the infield. If the fielders don't bite she can always take a chance and drop the bunt as long as it is not a do or die situation.

In short, bunting makes the world go round. So, let's not wait for things to happen; let's make them happen! Happy Bunting!