

BASE RUNNING PHILOSOPHY

Base running is anticipation and it is the one area of the game that you have to work on to improve instincts, absent of a lot of fun. The fun part comes when you're shaking hands on the field after another victory that may have been due to the proper execution on the base paths. The more we're on base, the more we score and the more fun the club has. Hitting and pitching may slump, but aggressive, intelligent base running should never slump. Base running is often the least worked on and most taken for granted area on the diamond but remains one of the most criticized and vital components to the club. Being a great base runner is a priority for all members of our team regardless of one's speed, and we will work on this aspect.

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THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COUGAR BASE RUNNER

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WHAT WE WILL DO

- Take the Extra Base – the base in front of you is a given, how will you get to the next base the quickest?
- Study our opponents – their tendencies and rhythms.
- Be aggressive early and often – make them make plays.
- Ball in Dirt – follow the baseball, read the knees, go!
- Know the Situation – what color is our offense in? Where are the defenders?
- Trust your instincts – he who hesitates loses.
- Develop a mentality – what you lack in ability you will make up for with mentality, intellect and instinct.

GOALS

- To produce efficient, aggressive and intelligent base runners for Washington State University.
- To impart knowledge and skills that help players capitalize on their God-given talents.
- For each player to reach his potential in developing his physical and mental skills.
- For each player to create instinctive reactions.
- To understand intelligent, aggressive team play.
- To help players understand their role on the club as well as their projected roles. (There are three types of base runners: 1) the 10% elite, 2) the 65% good, and 3) the 25% don't go. All three can be excellent base runners.)
- To never be out-hustled on the bases.
- Run the bases hard from the start.
- Be responsible for learning how to run the bases well.

TEACHING POINTS

- Recognize all players learn at a different pace and that the pace may not be directly related to their offensive success.
- Positive reinforcement and positive mental intimidation are essential.
- Utilize drills as well as video to emphasize techniques.
- Think out loud; communicate your reactions and thoughts.
- Always consider what is best for the individual player's style.

PROGRESSIVE TEACHING

BEGINNER

- Primary leads and breaks – comfortable and consistent.
- Secondaries – controlled and balanced.
- Situational running (hit and runs, count running – 3-1, 3-2, delays).
- Rules – do's and don'ts.
- Batting practice routines – pre-game routines with coaches.
- Sliding – bent leg, take out, extended hook – all slides feet first.
- Rounding the bases, turns, etc.

- Anticipation – talk on the bench.
- Aggressiveness – extra bases, reading balls in the dirt, reading knees (no such thing as an aggressive failure).
- Timing on squeezes.
- Observing infield and outfield (reading arms, accuracy, aggressiveness and release times).
- Introduction to base stealing for plus runners – positive aggressiveness, forget failure rates.
- Observe and adjust running mechanics with strength coach.
- Signs and communication – verbal and visual.
- Base coaches – picking them up and knowing their styles.
- Focus on what can be done rather than what cannot.
- Drill structured routines.
- Body language awareness.
- Study pitcher’s tendencies from dugout – steal based on tendencies (rhythms and looks).

INTERMEDIATE

- Same as beginner level but add:
- Attempts and reps plus experimentation are essential.
- Work more individually with role players, run scorers vs. run producers, or both.
- Start to develop base stealers or add more input.
- Pay attention to running mechanics.
- Give individual attention to all players of all speeds – a “no cloggers” approach.
- Set goals for stolen bases.
- Start to keep a black book – track player’s development in practice and game stats.
- Focus on the game, pay attention to details, talk and produce situations.
- Form running for off-season programs.
- Drill structured situational routines.

ADVANCED

- All of the above, plus:
 - Higher, more refined stage of development.
 - Success rate enters the picture, helping the ball club becomes the goal.
 - They now should know their capabilities as well as their limitations.
- Pay more attention to details and habits.
- Start to understand pitch sequences and pitcher’s habits and tendencies.
- Start to understand potential role for the club.
- Start to understand percentages of running efficiency.
- Learn about being in total control of all situations and opponents.

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BASE RUNNING OUTLINE

BASE PATHS

You don't have to have great speed to be a good base runner. Base running is a part of the game at which you have to really work to be good. All base running is controlled by the situations of the game. By keeping your head up, your eyes and ears open, and taking full advantage of the play in front of you, you can become an efficient base runner. Being efficient is important, but daring and aggressiveness creates defensive miscues. Knowing when to be greedy is key. Getting the most out of a player's speed by executing proper turns and reacting correctly to game situations will create a fundamentally sound mindset. Once a runner is on base, nothing should be on their mind except how to execute properly to reach home safely. Run the bases hard but smart.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD BASE RUNNER

PHYSICAL

- Well-conditioned
- Agile and balanced
- Quick reactions
- Speed
- Vision
- Physical toughness

MENTAL

- Intelligent and aggressive
 - Know self (strengths, abilities, weaknesses)
 - Know opponents
 - Know game situation (inning, outs, score, lineup, importance of run)
- Concentration
- Awareness and anticipation
- Confidence in ability and thought process
- Mental toughness

TECHNICAL

- Proper leads
- Proper reads
- Proper take offs
- Running mechanics
- Sliding mechanics

STRATEGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Run hard! A player that is lackadaisical while running the bases is a poor reflection on the program. A player who does not run the bases hard is either injured, too tired to play, or is displaying a lack of effort and should come out of the game. Good base runners think about and work on base running like good hitters think about and work on their hitting. Preparation is a key to your development as a base runner as well as your

technique. We teach a simple yet mechanically solid running form. This form should be worked on during pre-game speed work or sprint work supervised by the strength coach.

TECHNIQUES

The running that we are concerned with in baseball are sprints, quick starts and quick reactions. Running form is an individual thing, but good runners do share many basic mechanics. In general, our running technique includes:

- Forward Lean
 - On take offs after swinging the bat or leading off from a base, when acceleration is the greatest, the body has significant forward body lean.
 - As the body reaches maximum speed, the body is nearly erect with only a slight forward lean for balance.
- Direction
 - Run in a straight line whenever possible.
 - The inner part of the feet should fall on a straight line, giving you a narrow base.
- Arm and Shoulder Action
 - The arm and shoulder move in opposition with the leg action.
 - Shoulder should be relaxed but steady to avoid any twisting action.
 - The upper arms move in relatively straight backwards and forwards motion with the hands moving from the lips to the hips.
- Hands
 - Carry the hands in a cupped and relaxed position.
- Stride
 - Careful to not over stride and force your center of gravity too far forward.
- Head and Eyes
 - Keep aligned naturally with the body.
 - Keep the head still with the neck, shoulders and jaw relaxed.
 - Keep the eyes focused a few yards ahead of you when not reading a fielder or the ball.

PRE-GAME ROUTINE

- Know all the natural elements before the game begins, such as:
 - Weather
 - Wet or dry (slow or fast track)
 - Footing to field bunts (solid or soft)
 - Footing in the outfield: dry (fast/uneven), wet (tarp removal, natural field drainage, excessive sprinkler).
 - Field layout
 - Fences – dimensions, angles, composition.
 - Slope off the base lines and area in front of home.
 - Thickness and length of grass.
 - Soil – sandy, firm, uneven, etc.
 - Artificial turf.
- Know all the human elements (scouting reports)

- Check stat sheets on pitchers when available (IP, BB, K, WP, etc).
- Check stat sheets on catchers if available (% caught, errors, PB, etc.).
- Observe batting practice
 - Study mannerisms while they get ground balls, fly balls and turn double plays.
- Observe infield
 - Outfielders
 - Arm strength
 - Accuracy, both vertically and horizontally
 - Quickness to the ball: conservative or aggressive
 - Quickness to the release point
 - Outfield Profiles
 - Left Fielder
 - Usually less arm strength
 - Center Fielder
 - Speed
 - Captain of the outfield – will call off LF and RF.
 - Arm strength will vary greatly from team to team.
 - Right Fielder
 - Usually has the best arm.
 - Usually has the highest ego because of that arm.
 - Infielders
 - Quickness on relay
 - Accuracy off relays
 - Aggressiveness
 - Agility
 - Where and how they turn double plays
 - Head droppers
 - Infield Profiles
 - Third Baseman
 - Check for agility, athleticism, aggressiveness
 - Check the slow roller action (athletic ability, quickness to the ball, release time and accuracy)
 - Mannerisms (lazy, bat to defense, etc.)
 - Shortstop
 - Usually the best arm or the quickest release.
 - Check double play turns.
 - Second Baseman
 - Usually has the least arm strength but good hand quickness.
 - Check feet and hand quickness for DP's and relays.
 - Check double play footwork (which direction on pivot).
 - First Baseman

- Check athletic ability.
 - Throwing accuracy.
 - Glove to hand – ball transfer.
- Catchers
 - Arm strength
 - Accuracy
 - Quickness to release
 - Foot quickness
 - Pop times
- Observe coaching styles
 - When and if he likes to:
 - Bunt, run and bunt, bunt for hit, squeeze, etc.
 - Hit and run (counts and outs)
 - Steal second, third, home, double steal, green light or delayed steal.
 - 1st and 3rd offense
 - Run on contact
 - Double tag
 - Trade a run for an out
 - Have offensive plays
 - Ball in dirt reads
- Observe starting pitcher
 - See all the pitches (big curve ball, split or change, out pitches, bounce pitches)
 - Wind-up position (falls off, stiff, etc)
 - Stretch (actions and keys to the plate, quickness to the plate).

GAME TIME

- Bench Work
 - Mental note taking – this is where the game within the game starts.
 - Conversation about your observations with teammates.
 - Observation of fielders and mannerisms.
 - Observing pitchers habits, keys, tendencies (looks & rhythms).
 - Staying involved in games, ready for participation when given the chance.
 - Be coaches on the bench – be vocal (Back! Yes Yes! Etc.)
 - Observe catcher or coach pitch calling tendencies in running situations.
- On Deck
 - Observe the fielders (see if the corner guys take their offense to defense).
 - Observe the pitcher's follow through.
 - Be a coach at the plate: use hand signs, in line with the runner and be visible.
- At the Plate
 - Know the game situation, score, outs, flow of the game and coach's philosophies.

- Check the defense.
- Check the fielders/pitchers reactions after errors, mental mistakes, etc.
- Know when to bunt, especially with two outs.

OUT OF THE BATTER'S BOX

- Possible Infield Play
 - Hard 90 – force mistakes (can't change what happened to the ball – Run!)
 - Accept the challenge of running your best time every time.
 - Form run, straight line, don't follow the play – read the first baseman's feet.
 - Focus your eyes at the base (before 45') – avoid stutter steps or jumping at the base.
 - Stay within the 45' box/line.
 - Always step on the base.
 - Step on the front/middle part of the base with either foot (don't break stride).
 - Lean into and over the base.
 - Glance to the right after tagging the base – look for an errant throw.
 - Look for help from the coach.
 - Break down with choppy steps – avoid turning in until sure.
 - Walks do not mean walk to first – run!
- Possible Double
 - Angle out – maximize time, minimize distance.
 - To achieve an effective turn at first, begin creating an angle out of the box, pushing off the inside corner of the base.
 - Think third base on sure doubles.
 - Read throw to cut man.
 - Don't round base more than 2 steps if throws are in front.
 - Don't round base at all on throws from right or right center field.
 - Always remember the trail defender.
 - Tight turns and straight in to bag on close plays.
 - Slide away from the throw if necessary.
 - Run hard.
- Possible Triple
 - Only need help from coach on balls in right field corner.
 - Must not make the first or last out at third base.
 - Run hard!

URNS AT FIRST

- Base Hits
 - Angle straight out towards the coaching box.
 - To achieve an effective turn at first base, begin creating your angle out of the box, pushing off the inside corner of the bag.
 - Focus on the turn – don't stay on the flight of the ball.

- Angle and lean – dropping left shoulder.
 - Eyes on the base – glance, head stays up.
 - Inside corner – either foot.
 - Accelerate off the base – can be referred to:
 - Throw your head.
 - Drive your right arm towards second.
 - Dip left shoulder as you push off the bases – Get Low!
 - Shift gears.
 - Make the defense stop you.
 - Push off the base.
 - Think greedy – always look for the next base.
 - Aggressiveness forces errors.
 - Defense always remembers the aggressive players.
 - Never assume they will make the play cleanly.
 - Square off either inside or outside depending on where the ball is hit.
 - Challenge turns farther on hits to left and center field.
 - Decide as late as you can.
 - Read throws.
 - Know infielders quickness on relays.
 - Head up, don't retreat too soon – anticipate poor throws.
 - Learn to break down then accelerate – on bobbles, poor throws, etc.)
 - Survey the scene.
 - Look around for the back door coverage with runners in scoring position.
 - Always think blind side coverage – especially on doubles.
 - Anticipate your hit scoring the runner or not – you may or may not need to sacrifice your AB for the run.
 - You must know the situation and the importance of the run – late inning that will break a tie or give us an insurance run.
- Fly Balls
 - Keep head up.
 - Be aware of the runner in front of you.

RUNNER AT FIRST BASE

The Check List Before taking the lead:

- Find the ball
- Get the signs, on the base. (First, give the coach the number of outs)
- Check the infielders
- Check the outfielders (depth, positioning)
- Check the scoreboard, know the situations
- Take your lead
- Secondary leads with less than 2 outs: conservative, looking for line drives at infielders, not being surprised, not killing the rally

Do not talk to or about:

- The opposing first baseman
- Your at bat (allow the coach to talk if he chooses)

Reminders

- All lefties have the step off move
- Recognize first to third play
- Always think first to third
- Never get picked off in a non-running situation
- Don't make the 1st or 3rd out at 3rd
- Don't let the 2nd Baseman tag you for a double play
- Slide cleanly into second base – straight in to bag, no pop-up.
- Back on low line drives through the infield
- Check the defense
- Anticipate dirt balls
- Look ahead at other runners
- Anticipate potential plays

Language

- Deeper - move toward outfield.
- In - move toward infield.
- More - inch out.
- One more - get another shuffle step.
- Back - get back!
- Close - feet too open.
- Open - front side too closed.

TYPES OF LEADS

- The Primary Lead
 - Get it early.
 - Consistent leads.
 - Left foot on the back inside corner, start by stepping with the right foot.
 - Walk off two normal strides and shuffle.
 - Normal stride = 12' (two strides and two shuffles).
 - Keep feet apart and close to the ground.
 - Hips and eyes on the pitcher.
 - Never glance back - two and two will give you your measured lead.
 - Athletic stance or wider - linebacker.
 - Both feet back on an imaginary line from the backs of first and second base.
 - Right foot is slightly open and back about three inches.
- One Way

- Often used when there is a new pitcher and we need to see his move.
- Clearly defying type lead - greater distance with extra step.
- Balanced set-up.
- Mental technique - thinking back and physically balanced.
- We are trying to induce a good move from the pitcher.
- *Can't get picked off!*

- One Way vs. LHP
 - 14-15' lead to disrupt pitcher and get him to throw over.
 - Looks the same as the two way lead, but the runner is thinking back on the pitcher's first move.
 - On the pitcher's first move the runner takes a short jab step to first and reads the direction on the throw.
 - If the throw is to first, he continues back to the bag.
 - If the throw is to home, he gets into his secondary lead and reads the action of the pitch.
 - *A runner should never be picked off on a one way, defensive lead.*

- Two Way
 - Defensive lead.
 - Not necessarily a defying type lead - shorten distance to normal lead.
 - Balanced set-up but weight is shifted to right side in an undetected manner.
 - Want the best secondary possible.
 - This lead is used in bunt situations.
 - *Can't get picked off!*

- Sucker Leads
 - Object is to set up the opposing bench coach, manager, catcher or pitcher into thinking the runner is or is not going.
 - Can take less or more of a lead - just can't get picked off!
 - Can be antsy and draw attention to yourself.
 - Can also be over-relaxed looking as if nothing is happening.

- Walking Leads
 - Used for stealing - inching out type lead.
 - The runner relies on timing and a pitcher that doesn't vary his rhythms.
 - Can be late like the runner wasn't ready - sneaky.
 - Keep feet balanced.

- False Break or Fake Steal
 - Break hard with a crossover than shuffle.
 - Rattles the catcher and pitcher and causes infielders to vacate areas.
 - Have to be very careful not to disrupt the hitter's at bat, especially at second base or with two outs.

- One Way
 - Balanced set up.
 - Weight shifted to front side.
 - Runner has got something on the pitcher.
- First Move Lead
 - Expanded lead typically against a left-handed pitcher.
 - Run inside baseline to take the throwing lane away from the first baseman.
- The Secondary Lead
 - Feet apart and close to the ground - basketball defense.
 - Balance weight over toes - balance over distance.
 - Weight must be slightly to the right side and feet on the ground when ball enters the hit zone.
 - Keep shoulders squared on the shuffle - do not fly open or bounce.
 - Angle follows feet alignment - slightly out.
 - The bigger the primary lead the more under control the secondary lead is and the need for less distance.
 - Secondary shuffles depend on the pitcher's quickness, defensive positioning, and catcher's abilities.
 - Be sure both feet are on the ground as the ball enters the hit zone.
 - Read the bat head with two strikes and two outs.
 - Do not crossover on line drives.
 - Read down angle on bunts.
 - Work as hard to get back as you did to get the lead.
 - Stay with the ball on the delivery - follow the ball as it leaves the pitcher's hand.
 - Anticipate balls in the dirt by reading trajectory out of the hand.
 - Know and anticipate your teammates tendencies.
 - Think aggressive.
- Getting Back to the Base
 - Crossover and dive on maximum if close - back corner of bag.
 - No shuffle or false steps - get back!
 - Straight line back to the middle of the base if standing up.
 - Left foot to base - right toe drags.
 - Move back or lean when the pitcher steps off - don't have to step back.
 - Occasionally flinch as if stealing when a pitcher steps off to entice a pick or pitch out.

RUNNING FROM FIRST TO SECOND BASE

- On ground balls to second
 - Don't let the second baseman tag you.
 - Multiple runners - stay in the run down to allow a run to score or to force the defense to make other decisions on other advancing runners.
- On ground balls to the first baseman playing behind the runner

- Run straight - already have the depth based on your primary lead.
 - Establish part of the angle to third base.
 - Get into the throwing lanes - outside.
 - Read the receiver's eyes - stay tall longer.
 - Run and slide toward the glove of the fielder.
- On ground balls to the first baseman holding the runner
 - Read the receiver.
 - Go to that side to create problem throwing the ball.
 - To the left side
 - Anticipate where second baseman will be.
 - Balls down the line, backhands, slow rollers or in the hole - usually second baseman will go across the bag to get it.
 - Hard hit, at them, or to glove side the second baseman will usually pivot through or back off the base.

STEALING SECOND BASE

- Basic Technique
 - Start with an offensive lead from the back edge of the bases unless you are running first movement against a left-handed pitcher, then start in the line or in front of the line.
 - Make sure your lead is consistent with your non-steal lead - don't tip your intentions.
 - Weight on balls of your feet and dig in with your toes.
 - Right foot is slightly open and aligned with the left instep.
 - Use your upper body to get weight on right side, crossover and move directly to second base.
 - Stay low out of crossover as the body will naturally upright itself.
 - Unless the hitter is taking, look in to see the action of the pitch and to avoid being "deked" by the infielders.
 - Run with your best jump.
 - It is unacceptable to be thrown out at second base.
 - It is equally important to be able to steal second when you are on your own or are given a signal to steal.
 - Advanced stealers can read the catcher's signs to see pitch selection (breaking ball) or pick selection/pitch out.
- Basic Keys to Steal vs. RHP
 - Heels
 - Back knee
 - Front shoulder
 - Head
 - Tempo/rhythm
- Basic Keys to Steal vs. LHP
 - Direction of head

- Shoulder turn
- Body lean
- Lead leg action
- Hand action
- Tempo/rhythm

RUNNING FIRST TO THIRD

- On balls through the infield.
- Use the coach at third base only on balls hit behind the runner.
- On balls behind the runner pick up the coach two-thirds of the way to second base.
- Don't round the base if not going.
- If coach's hands are up to stop you, stop on the base.
- Glance at the base, touch inside corner, push off, then pick up the coach again.
- Be aware of coach guiding you to part of base to avoid tag on a close play.

WHEN TO CHALLENGE THE OUTFIELDERS

- Depends on the game situations.
- Depends on the outfielders abilities.
- When outfielders are still approaching the baseball standing as the runner leaves sight of them to make the turn at regular playing depth or more.
- When they approach the ball carelessly.
- When they throw their arms up - faking that they can't make the catch.
- With one out - never make the first or third out at third unless you are trading the out for a run.

RUNNER AT SECOND BASE

SAME AS FIRST BASE – 6 POINT CHECK LIST

- Know coverage – short stop, second baseman or both.
- Third base coach reads shortstop, second baseman or both.
- Runner has safe primary – you must be able to get back in order for it to be a “safe” lead.
- Runner concentrates on the pitcher and catcher.

TYPES OF LEADS

- The Primary Lead
 - Five normal strides and a shuffle - minimum distance for all players.
 - Variety of ways to reach this distance – quick six strides, or 4+2, etc. The key is to get your lead early.
 - Base stealers need movement and more distance depending on the pitcher.
 - Angle out no more than two strides deep, shuffle sideways and in.
 - Base stealers end close to the line.
 - Non base stealers stay back promoting more efficient turns.
 - Two outs, all runners can be back.
 - Sacrifice bunts - all runners close to the line.
 - Know the distance from the base.

- Keep weight on right foot - for better push off towards second base.
 - Look in for signs from the catcher.
 - Look in for pitch identity in pitcher's glove – see breaking ball anticipate ball in dirt.
 - Listen for communication from third base coach.
 - Don't jockey around, this disrupts the hitter.
- The Secondary Lead
 - Same as at first base plus distance - controlled aggressiveness.
 - Shuffle preferred over crossover step.
 - Under control at contact point, looking for the line drive to the infielder, not being surprised, not killing the rally.
 - Over aggressive secondaries often lead to catcher pick offs, double up on liners, poor reads and jumps.
 - Bunt secondaries - catchers pick-off throw on a bunt miss (softer secondary).
 - When ball is hit, movement is slightly out – go back on the low liners.
 - Think tag with zero outs, halfway or read with one out - never make that third out at third base.
 - Read balls in the dirt- remember that you already are in scoring position.
 - Typically in a yellow read on ball in dirt.
 - Plus runners anticipate action.
 - Below average runners must read the carom – must be a sure thing.

READS AT SECOND BASE – ADVANCING TO THIRD

- With less than two outs and no trail runner, and knowing where the shortstop is, a runner can advance to third when:
 - Any ball hit from the center of your body and to the left, over (towards second base, to right side). After your secondary, you can advance.
 - Slow rollers or choppers in front.
 - A ball is fielded in the hole and the shortstop comes up throwing immediately (runner must slightly retreat or hold and wait for the release).
- A runner can advance to third on balls hit to the third baseman if:
 - The third baseman is deep, back hands the ball and throws.
 - The third baseman is deep and goes to his left.
 - The third baseman has to come in on bunt, slow roller or chopper.
 - The first baseman is a poor thrower, thus you can advance once the ball leaves the third baseman's hand.

READS AT SECOND BASE – ADVANCING TO HOME

- Using the third base coach.
- Have a scoring mindset-pick up the 3rd base coach early.
- If being waved home, round the base and pick up the coach again on your way to home plate.
- Run hard until stopped by the coach. Never anticipate being held by the coach.

- Slide on all close plays at the plate. Pick up the on deck hitter who should be coaching the runner at home.
- A two out secondary that is "super aggressive" is crucial in scoring on a base hit.

STEALING THIRD BASE

- Basic technique.
- Work to get distance and momentum towards third base.
- It is virtually impossible to steal third base from a dead stop.
- The key is timing – read the pitcher’s looks and rhythms plus the action of the middle infielders.
- Understand running and non-running situations.
- A shuffle on the head turn creates the momentum needed to steal third base.

RUNNER AT THIRD BASE

SAME AS FIRST BASE – 6 POINT CHECK LIST

- Know coverage where the third baseman is playing.
- Runner has safe primary – you must be able to get back in order for it to be a “safe” lead.
- Runner concentrates on the pitcher and catcher.

BE CONCERNED WITH

- Going on contact – always going forward.
- Reading the ball off the bat – looking down angle. Score, freeze, tag.
- Squeeze play – make sure pitcher’s leg is on the way down.
- Double steal – know what color we are in on the pick and the throw.
- Straight steal of home – lull to sleep, distance, moving lead a must.
- Drag bunt – follow the third baseman up the line.
- Wild pitch or passed ball – anticipate, weight distribution, read the catcher.
- If the ball is going out of the catcher’s circle – go!
- Throws back from the catcher – down on one knee, no back up from middle infielders.
- Tagging up – all foul balls and liners, especially with runners at first and third.
- Forcing a balk – right before they set their hands, fake squeeze (not everybody).
- Do not make the first out at home.
- The twelve ways to score from third base.
- Don’t get picked off!
- Constantly check where your defense is at.

TYPES OF LEADS

- The Primary Lead
 - Start in foul territory, return in fair territory.
 - Lead is similar to that at first base - three steps and a shuffle minimum.
 - Take what the third baseman will give you then cut down your secondary if necessary.
 - More upright stance to start - controlled, relax.
 - Do not stray too far into foul ground, catcher's view improves.

- Always return hard to the base once the ball is received by the catcher.
- The Secondary Lead
 - Do not crossover, especially when pitcher in in the stretch.
 - Shuffle staying square to the infield, finish with shoulders parallel to the line, foul ground.
 - Weight shift to right side slightly when ball in in the hitting zone – feet on the ground.
 - Return in fair territory.
 - Read third baseman when starting back – pick up the throw back to the pitcher.
 - Anticipate catcher's throws on missed swings in contact situations.
 - Read ball of the bat in non-contact situations with less than two outs.
 - Easier for the catcher to pick with a left handed hitter, and always look for pick-offs in "green" contact situations.

COMMANDS AT THIRD BASE

- Infield back with less than two outs – read situation.
- Back on line drives.
- Tag on fly balls and line drives.
- Score on ground balls.
- Corners in, middle back.
- Score on balls pass the pitcher and up the middle.
- Score on situations where trying to avoid a double play from the pitcher or corners – try to force the throw home to avoid the double play.
- Freeze on ground balls to the corner infielders.
- Tag on fly balls and line drives.
- Read choppers.
- Infield in contact play.
- Make ball be through.
- Follow in on bunts for base hits – delayed secondary.
- Green going in looking.
- Make the ball be bunted to right side of diamond – safety squeeze.

SECTION III:
BASE RUNNING PLAYS

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FUNDAMENTAL PLAYS

HIT AND RUNS

- Cannot get picked off – one way lead and break late acceptable.
- Don't change your lead or mannerisms.
- Keep max lead with no changes.
- Run full speed and look in.
- Look in first step and stay with ball.
- Trouble finding the ball look for the third base coach.
- Keep running on slow liners – will likely be doubled up if caught anyway.

DELAYED STEALS

- Same footwork as secondary lead.
- Regular two way lead.
- Stay square to the infield with the shoulders.
- Do not bounce or fly open.
- Get as many shuffles as you can and run when you see the glove opening.

READING BALLS IN DIRT

- No what color you are in – green, yellow, red.
- Green means go! If out it is on the coaches.
- Yellow means safe! If go you must be safe. Any doubts stay.
- Red means passed ball or wild pitch – only go if ball gets to backstop.
- Follow the ball out of the pitcher's hand and read the trajectory, then the catcher going to his knees. If go to knees go!
- Anticipate the pitch via the count and the pitcher's pitches.
- Read the catcher's position, get the signs if able or read the catcher's glove and arms.
- Avoid the stop and go secondary – trust your instincts.
- Anticipate and if not in the dirt turn it into a delay.
- Know the situation of the game and where you are – realize scoring importance.
- Hesitate and stay – do not force it if you do not jump it.

SQUEEZE PLAY

- Normal primary but working to increase.
- Strong, bold strides on the pitcher's start – strong walk.
- Run when lead foot is in a downward motion – almost landed.

TAGGING

- Fundamentals at first base
 - All foul balls.
 - Can double tag when a big run is at third on medium fly balls, read outfielders action and directions.
 - Must know all the outfielder's scenarios
 - Usually accomplished by the burners.

- Usually deep fly balls with weak arms, easily catchable, and caught on the glove side.
- Fundamentals at second base
 - Tag with zero outs on all apparent catchable balls.
 - With one out go half way to score if dropped – tag late on deep fly balls.
 - Can double tag on a medium fly ball in a close game – read outfielder’s actions.
 - Deep fly balls from right field line to left center.
- Fundamentals at third base
 - All foul balls.
 - Know the outfielder scenarios.
 - Establish a firm foot hold.
 - Turn to the side of the ball.
 - Draw throws all the time.
 - On shallow fly balls, stay close to the base but off until a catch has been made; look for dives, short hops, etc.
 - Tag and read the trajectory and direction of outfield throws on medium to shallow fly balls (catchable) to right field.
 - React on your own vision, avoid voice communication.
 - No false set up (flinches) moves before running.
 - Push off the base with foot nearly horizontal.
 - Read depth of fielder or whether you believe the ball will be run down (as the fielder narrows the gap, so does the potential tagging runner back to the base).
 - Tag on all definite foul balls, if unsure - go as far as allowed.
 - Read the receiver's eyes and get into the throwing lane, if a close play.

CONTACT PLAY

- Same secondary but all movement is forward on contact.
- No hesitation, no stop and go or pausing.
- Can tag on fly balls, must scramble at times to get back.
- Probably out on liners, but try to get back.
- Never give up – slide late and hard inside when the ball beats the runner to home.

MUST RUN

- Off the sign and in 3-1 or 3-2 counts.
- Treat like a hit and run.
- Must look in to see the ball – contact or not.
- Running under the protection of the hitter.
- Trying to stay out of a double play.

DOUBLE STEAL

- Runners on first and second.
- Trailing runner stays on the lead runner with a slightly open stance – able to see lead runner and pitcher.

- Trailing runner doesn't run – off lead runner, head up and on lead runner.
- Lead runner, no more than two strides to stop and hold/fake – trailing runner needs to release to second also.
- Coach can put the hold on the trailing runner.
- Trail runner has to work for a better throw than max lead since his jump will be later than the lead runner.

RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

- When catcher turns his back.
- Timing on draw.
- When the ball passes the pitcher's head.
- Freeze.
- Not going anywhere but must be ready for an error.
- When and why (steal a base or a run).
- Responsibility of back runner.
- Can't get picked off.
- Can't get fooled by third to first move.
- Must stop on throw through or slide way wide.
- Has to realize that they may not be throwing through and must continue to second base.
- Responsibility of front runner at third base.
- Need distance on lead and movement.
- Stay close to the line - disguise lead length.
- Run when the catcher turns (Otto).
- Releasing - off the rundown, runner at first hung up.

RUN AND BUNT

- Plus runner breaks off a two way lead.
- Peeks in to see the bunt direction.
- May or may not be able to go to third base – must check the defense while running and angle out.

BUNT PLAY OFFENSE

- Keep with the minimum leads on bunts – normal.
- React to the pitcher.
- Don't get bluffed back.
- Look for the back door picks off failed bunts.
- Look for early bounce.
- Can't force a poor bunt.
- Bunt defense is usually on when a sign is given by the third baseman.
- Shuffle off the base in a low, athletic position.

FORCED BALK

- Wind-up position.
- Check the pitcher's weight distribution.

- Check hands – separated or together.
- Start with shorter lead.
- Break when the pitcher is looking in for signs or when they are just coming set.
- Sell it that the runner is going to score but don't get too far down the line for the catcher's pick.
- Read the third baseman.

TWO-STRIKE TWO-OUT SECONDARIES

- Off an aggressive secondary.
- Runner is off with the bat head as it starts to enter the zone.
- Runner is always going forward on the swing – never back.

ESCAPING RUNDOWNS

- Pick the receiver's lane – read their eyes, stay tall.
- Listen for verbal commands – ball, now, etc.
- Half speed to full speed – when tagger narrows the gap.
- Try to keep an eye on the player with the ball.
- After one of the throwers release the ball, try to get an obstruction call by grabbing or running in to him.
- If obstruction is called, you will be safe but the fielder must be in the base path for obstruction to be called.
- Stay in it as long as possible with other runners on base to allow them to advance.
- Accept the challenge and give them hell!

COMMUNICATION

- Help is needed from the third base coach when the batted ball is behind the runner, from right field over.
- When there are runners ahead - coach will pick up the trailing runner when the first runner is even to beyond him.
- To determine where the play will be when running towards third - coaching by position.
- To control the runner at second; may change terminology per player, team, inning, etc.
- Never slow up until you score.
- Don't go for decoys.
- Run hard to every base – easier for the coach to make a decision.
- Know the third base coach's hand signs or if they coach by position.
- All runners must learn to peek (find the ball) while stealing. Base stealers are the exception early in the count.
- Learn to react on your own, as if 50,000 screaming fans were at the game.

SLIDING

To be a good base runner it will be necessary to execute various types of slides. A player may not be able to increase running speed, but through work and practice he can become skilled at sliding.

There are four reasons to slide:

- 1) To avoid a tag.
- 2) To slow down or stop at a base.
- 3) To avoid a possible collision.
- 4) To avoid contact on a double play ball.

We try to make sliding as simple as possible by asking that a player only learn to slide on his natural side even though the ability to slide on both sides has benefit in some situations. All players will demonstrate their ability to slide before playing in games.

SLIDING FUNDAMENTALS

- Aggressive acceleration on the approach – no hesitation.
- When in doubt slide.
- Eyes on the base.
- Where necessary read the receiver.
- Stay in the throwing lanes when necessary and slide hard and late.
- Extend feet.
- Tuck one leg under.
- Arms overhead.
- Skim the ground surface with the side of the calf, butt and even the back.
- Touch the base with the lead foot.
- Never slide head first into home.
- Be aggressive but not dirty – knock the ball out of the glove.
- Hands must be up.
- Upper body slightly forward with hands up.
- Be committed through the play.
- After slides to any base, look to the outfield for errant throws, and prepare to advance.

TYPES OF SLIDES

- Bent Leg Slide
 - Left leg extended, right leg tucked under knee or vice versa.
 - Crossover slide – inside or outside.
 - Bent leg slide past base and reach back with opposite arm on the roll over.
 - Used mainly at second base when you have very little chance of being safe and when the infielder likes to take the throw inside.
 - At home plate slide on the plate not up to it. When the ball beats you or the plate is not visible, slide late and hard to the inside.

- Pop Up Slide
 - Contact is on the bent leg shin.
 - The upper body should be leaning forward and hands up to create the pop-up.
 - Late bent leg slide with momentum lifting the body up after contact with the base.
 - Used mainly at second base.
 - Good, late and hard slide that gets the player in position to advance base.
 - Can be used as an intimidation slide – be careful with umpires.
- Take Out Slide
 - Bent leg slide where the right leg is extended and where the foot makes contact with the fielder's shin area.
 - Anticipate where the receiver will take the throw.
 - Hands are up, crossed and strong in front of the plate.
- Head First
 - Strongly discouraged especially with young players.
 - Fingers bent or up.
 - Used to dive back into bases on pick-offs – spoke slide.

SLIDING DRILLS

- Teaching progression
- Sitting down stationary in correct ending position for each type of slide followed by 4-point drill. Supported on hands and feet with butt off the ground and belly up/ kick feet out from under to bent leg position and throw hands up at the same time.
- Slide at half speed from 30' without spikes on moist grass or sliding mat.
- Same as above but at full speed.
- Full speed with spikes on the field at regular distance.

BASE RUNNING DRILLS

- Sliding once before any player plays in a game and as needed throughout the season.
- Base running during batting practice at each base, especially during execution rounds.
- Early work reading keys for breaks and leads plus team offense relating to base running.
- Combine base running with hitting drills.
- Pre-game running routine by all position players emphasizing the seven fundamental situations.
- Five explosive starts after pre-game sprints.
- Running times will be kept on all players throughout the year.
- All stolen base attempts and dirt ball reads will be tracked throughout the year.