



Hitting Miscellaneous Tidbits

1. When a hitter fouls off a pitch off of his foot and the ball goes fair, the batter should “sell it” by acting like it hurt, even if it didn’t. This is a difficult call for the home plate umpire and sometimes the base umpire also misses it. By yelling out or dropping down like it hurt (many times it does hurt!) the umpires will call “foul ball” late. There aren’t a lot of things worse than fouling off a ball and having it go fair and being called out!
2. In the last inning if a team is losing, the hitter doesn’t have to take a strike, unless a coach gives the "take one" signal. Taking a strike just puts the hitter in a hole and most pitchers think the hitter will be taking a pitch and they just groove in a pitch.
3. In this same situation, if the first pitch is a ball, the hitter should automatically take pitches until a strike is thrown.
4. When automatically taking pitches the hitter should get right on top of home plate and deep in the batter's box to get closer to the catcher and umpire. This will make it more difficult for the pitcher to throw a strike and many times it distorts the umpire’s strike zone. They should still make it look like they are going to hit. Some hitters lazily stand there and this many times opens up the umpire’s strike zone.
5. Aggressiveness at the plate does not mean to just take three hard swings and then walk back to the dugout. Take good swings at hitter’s pitches and not pitcher’s pitches, at least until you get two strikes.
6. Hitters don’t need to look down to 3rd base for signs with nobody on base or with two outs and the bases full or just a runner on 3rd base. The only sign the coach can put on in these situations is a bunt for a hit. And verbal signals should be used. This will take away the element of surprise with the bunt. This also keeps the game moving.
7. Hitters need to have different swings and different approaches for different counts and different situations. Hitters shouldn’t just go up to the plate and have a “grip and rip” approach. They need to have a game plan. A leadoff hitter should make the pitcher throw some pitches and work the count. A hitter with a runner on 2nd base and zero outs should try to hit the ball to the right side of the infield. A hitter should have a different swing when ahead in the count 2-0 or 3-1 vs. 0-2.
8. Coaches shouldn’t CLONE hitters...they’ll end up looking like CLOWNS!! Yet, many coaches make their players hit the same way. Two of the top hitting instructors of all time, Ted Williams and Charlie Lau had two almost totally opposite hitting philosophies/styles with both being very successful. Much of hitting is a personal comfort style. Each player has his own style. Obviously, if it’s not working changes need to be made. “Tweaking” a hitting style/stance many times works better than changing everything.
9. Different hitting approaches should be used when hitting into a strong wind vs. hitting with a strong wind at the hitter's back. This doesn't mean all hitters should be home run hitters with a strong wind. It just means there should be different hitting approaches with strong winds.
10. The old saying, "it’s not the size of the bat, it's how you use it," really holds true. Make sure the hitter can handle the bat's length and weight.
11. Hitting a round ball with a round bat is one of the most difficult tasks in sports, much less baseball. Instruct to your players that hitting is a game of failure with 3 out of 10 at bats being considered successful...and that they will make millions of dollars if they can be successful 3-10 times at the professional level!