



Base Running Tidbits

1. On a hit and run, if the base runner can't see the baseball after his third to fourth step in, they should pick up the 3rd base coach to see where the ball was hit. The coach shouldn't YELL at the base runner, but arm signal him what he wants him to do. For some reason many players lose their sense of hearing when they are running full speed. The coach should point back to 1st base if the ball was hit in the air and he wants him to return, arm circle signal if he wants the base runner to advance to 3rd base, or point to 2nd base if he wants the base runner to stay there.
2. A base runner shouldn't stop running on an infield line drive when stealing or the hit-and-run is on. If the infielder catches the ball the runner will be doubled off 1st base anyhow. He should keep running and hope the baseball goes through the infield. The only exception would be on an infield line drive to the shortstop's backhand. This is a very difficult play to get doubled off on with the shortstop having to make a long, deep throw back to 1st base.
3. Secondary leads need to be more aggressive with two outs and less aggressive with less than two outs to stay out of line-drive double plays. Many base runners think getting far off the base is a good, aggressive move when it actually puts them at risk of getting doubled off a base - because the middle infielders usually play farther off of the base than the corner infielders. The runner at 2nd base can get a bigger secondary lead with less than two outs. This should be worked on during batting practice.
4. The base runner's secondary leadoff at all bases with less than two outs should be proportional to where the infielder is playing. The farther off the base the infielder is playing the farther the runner can get off. This is especially true at both 1st and 3rd base when they are playing close to the base. Line drives will be automatic double plays if big lead offs are taken with the baseman playing close to the base.
5. Base runners shouldn't get a huge secondary lead on 1st base with a bunt attempt and they also shouldn't lean to 2nd base, assuming the batter has bunted the ball. This can be a huge defensive momentum changer when a base runner is caught off 1st base leaning to 2nd base, assuming the batter bunted the baseball.
6. When stealing 3rd base, the runner needs to get a better primary walking lead. Be ready for a coach's verbal "careful" or "back" signal, which would wipe off the steal attempt.
7. When stealing home plate, the base runner needs to get a huge walking lead and "time" his break the exact time the pitcher makes his first move. Obviously, this has to be done when the pitcher is only in the wind up position, slow to home plate, isn't paying attention and the 3rd baseman is playing off the base. If the pitcher looks over or the 3rd base coach says back if the 3rd baseman creeps closer to the base the runner shouldn't attempt to steal.

8. Fake steal attempts can set up a lot of offensive options. It allows the coach/batter to see what middle infielder will be covering 2nd base, which can dictate what direction the ball should be hit on a hit and run. It takes the pitcher's attention off of the hitter and puts it on the base runner. The middle infield will be out of position on a ground ball hit and some coaches will even yell at their 1st baseman for yelling "going" or "stealing," if they are really good fake steal attempts! This can get the opponents frustrated with each other.
9. Coaches should think about giving your great base stealers the "green light" to steal when they want to. This gives the players confidence. In late inning games that are close, the coach can always wipe off the green light if they feel it's necessary.
10. Base runners shouldn't miss hitting 1st base when running past the base when they are forced out, yet many times they do this out of frustration. Once a year the 1st baseman will drop the baseball.
11. Base runners should attempt to "get in the line of fire" (in between the fielders) on run down situations to create an interference or the ball hitting you in the back. (ex: Reggie Jackson in the 1977 World Series)
12. On infield plays where the base runner can only advance one base, they shouldn't round the next base and have the defense "back door the runner," by throwing behind them. The only time the base runner will be able to advance another base is on an infield overthrow to another base without any defensive player backing up the bad throw.
13. Base runners should not just "freeze" on infield line drives. Many times they are taught to do this. They should go back two steps and if the infielder catches the ball they will be back to the base, eliminating the double play. Also by teaching this method and working on it during batting practice they will condition themselves to not move to the next base. Double play line drives are huge defensive momentum changers.
14. Stealing home plate on a 1st and 3rd situation. When a LHP pitcher has a lazy move to 1st base a speedy base runner at 3rd base can steal home plate. They need to get a walking primary lead and make sure the pitcher doesn't step off of the pitching rubber with his left foot. On the pitcher's first movement the base runner at 3rd base can start breaking half speed to home plate. If he sees the throw to 1st base he keeps going. If the throw is towards home plate he needs to react back immediately. This can also be done as a set play with the base runner at 1st base getting a very big primary lead, drawing a throw over to 1st base.
15. The base runner rounding 2nd base should pick up the 3rd base coach to see if he should advance to 3rd base on a triple down the 1st base line and when an attempted pick off at 1st base goes down the right field line. All other times the base runner should make the decision to advance to 3rd base on his own, keeping in mind the situation of the game.
16. On a 1st and 3rd base double steal the base runner going to 2nd base should never run into an out at 2nd base with two outs.

17. On a 1st and 3rd base double steal the base runner on 3rd base should break to home plate if he sees a high throw to 2nd base from the catcher. If he doesn't break then he should break the first time the baseball gets thrown from 1st base to 2nd base. (away from home plate) The same holds true if the base runner gets picked off 1st base in a 1st and 3rd base situation.
18. Base runners should use one way leads early in the game vs. left-handed pitchers to see what type of move they have. Usually, either a LHP has a great move or a bad move. This will allow you to see early on in the game what type of move he has. If a LHP has a great move, either you stop the stealing game or do more hit and runs or steal on his first movement. If he doesn't have a great move, which many LHP's don't you should continue to steal 2nd base.
19. Coaches should use a stop watch to time the opponent's pitcher's delivery time to home plate. This is from his first movement to when the catcher catches the baseball. Any time under 1.3 seconds is pretty good. A time of 1.1 seconds or below will be very difficult to steal on.
20. Coaches should also time the catcher's pop-to-pop time to 2nd base. This is from the time the baseball hits his glove to when it hits the middle infielder's glove. Any time under 2.0 seconds is pretty good. So a combined time of 3.3 seconds or below would be a time you would try to straight steal on as much. And contrary, if a combine time is above 3.5 seconds you should be stealing a lot.
21. If a base runner at 2nd base can read the catcher's signals, especially if the catcher is just giving one signal he can relay that to the hitter to make it much easier for the hitter with knowing what pitch is coming. Something as simple as this can be done: If a fastball is coming the base runner at 2nd base just slightly extends his right arm out signaling a fastball. If he sees a curve ball coming he slightly extends his left arm. And if he sees a change-up coming he slightly extends both arms. He shouldn't be obvious when signaling. That is the reason for not fully extending the arms. If he doesn't pick up a pitch he can make it obvious to the hitter by touching the top of his helmet and then keeping both arms in.
22. Trail base runners on high fly balls that will be caught should look to tag up and read the outfielder's throw. If the throw is high or to the wrong base they should advance a base.