



Base Runners on Base Tidbits

Base Runner on 1st Base

- The primary lead footwork at 1st base is 3 ½ shuffles or: right, left, right, shuffle, shuffle (+1/2 shuffle for a player with good speed) the runner should be leading off at a height he will be running at. They shouldn't be squatting down because the first move will be an upward move, which will slow the runner.
- All 1st base "cut out" areas are different on every field, so don't look down to where you are at.
- The secondary lead (shuffle) at 1st base is the same footwork as a delay steal. It should be a shuffle and not a hop or cross over step. The shoulders should stay level and the runner should land in a balanced position. The hips should be squared to home plate and not opened up to 2nd base. The right foot should land when the catcher is catching the ball or the hitter is making contact with the ball.
- With runners in front of you and routine fly balls hit, look to tag up or fake tag up.
- Get off the base on line drives/gappers to the outfield. The farther the ball is hit away from 1st base the farther the runner gets off of the base. If you see an outfielder's back, then get even farther off the base.
- If the runner gets picked off 1st base and no other runners are on base keep running to 2nd base and run to the infielder, hoping the baseball hits you in the back or you beat the throw to the base. You do have to run to the base when you get closer. Base runners have a better chance to advance with this method vs. getting in a run down. With a runner on 3rd getting in a rundown will work better, unless the runner thinks he can make it safely to 2nd base.
- On sacrifice bunting situations, the base runner shouldn't lean towards 2nd base on his secondary lead and assume the batter will bunt the baseball successfully. Many times the base runner ends up in "no man's land" when the batter misses the bunt and the catcher easily throws him out.
- Don't rely on the 1st base coach to tell you to go "back" to the base on a pick off at 1st base. It will be too late by then.
- Base runners at 1st base should use one way leads early in the game vs. left-handed pitchers to see what type of move they have. Our first runner vs. LH will often take a 4+ step lead and go back on his first move. Then he'll take a 3-step lead and steal 2B on his first move. Usually, either a LHP has a great move or a bad move. This will allow us 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 don't you should continue to steal 2nd base.
- Base runners have no excuse for getting picked off of 1st base against a right-handed pitcher.
- When stealing on a 3-2 count the base runner should look back into the hitter after his third step to see if the hitter made contact with the baseball. This is the same as a hit and run, so the runner can pick up the baseball.



Base Runner on 2nd Base

- The primary lead at 2nd base can be farther than 1st base because there is nobody holding the runner directly on the base and it's a longer throw back for the catcher. There are different styles of primary leads at 2nd base with the most common being a straight up lead similar to 1st base and a deeper walking leadoff at 2nd base. Generally, the deeper lead is used with two outs when advancing to 3rd base on a steal isn't as common and it allows the runner to get a better angle rounding 3rd base or when there is a player already on 3rd base. The straight up lead is used more with zero outs and in bunting situations.
- The secondary lead at 2nd base can again be bigger than at 1st base. There is less of a chance of getting doubled off 2nd base as the middle infielders are playing off of the base in most all cases. Again, the runner needs to be trained to go back a step on an infield line drive.
- With a runner at 2nd base and not 1st base the runner should go to 3rd base on ground balls to the left side of the infield (1st and 2nd base), high hops over the pitcher, slow ground balls to the shortstop, and very slow ground balls to the 3rd baseman.
- In this same situation, the runner shouldn't go to 3rd base on hard ground balls to the shortstop, 3rd baseman or pitcher or on infield line drives.
- When stealing 3rd base the runner needs to get a better primary lead. Be ready for a coach's verbal "careful" or "back" signaling a middle infielder is moving to 2nd base. This should wipe off the steal attempt.
- 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 their own, keeping in mind the situation of the game.
- A speedy base runner on 2nd base that sees a lazy catcher that is throwing the ball back to the pitcher off his knees can steal 3rd base on his throw back. The base runner should casually get a bigger secondary lead and time his move the same time the catcher is lobbing the ball back to the pitcher. Even if he sees you breaking you will have enough time to get back to 2nd base, as he is on his knees.
- A strong armed catcher that likes to show off his arm can be decoyed into trying to throw a heads up base runner out while getting a big secondary lead at 2nd base. After getting big lead and being in "no man's land" the base runner should make it look as if he's trying to get back to the base. As the catcher is throwing back to 2nd base the base runner plants a foot, reverse pivots and sprints to 3rd base.



Base Runner on 3rd Base

- The primary (and secondary) leadoff at 3rd base is one of the least taught fundamentals in baseball. With the pitcher in the stretch position and less than two outs the runner should have a similar lead as being on 1st base. With the pitcher in the wind up the runner should get in a position ready for a walking secondary lead with the hips opened up towards home plate.
- The primary and secondary leadoffs at 3rd should also be practiced during batting practice. The runner should be farther off of the base and farther back, so he doesn't get hit with a line drive.
- Both leads with less than two outs should be proportional to the distance the 3rd baseman is playing off of the base. This will allow the base runner the time needed to get back on line drives to the 3rd baseman. A big "rally killer" happens when the 3rd baseman catches a line drive and tags 3rd base for a double play.
- With the pitcher in the stretch position and less than two outs the runner should have a similar lead as being on 1st base. When the pitcher breaks to home plate the right foot turns to open up the hips, the left foot takes a step to home plate, followed by a step with the right foot that lands the same time the hitter is hitting the ball or the catcher is catching the ball. This position will allow the runner to get a good read off the bat depending on the position of the infield. The length of the lead should be directly proportional to the distance the 3rd baseman is off the base.
- With two outs the runner can take a few extra steps off the base as the threat of a double play is eliminated. They should shuffle back a few steps not allowing the catcher to throw them out. They should then hold their position until the pitcher catches the baseball. Every year, at least one time a pitcher misses a throw back from the catcher with a runner on 3rd base. If the middle infield isn't backing up this can be an easy run that will create momentum.
- With the pitcher in the wind up the runner should get in a position ready for a walking secondary lead with the hips opened up towards home plate. With less than two outs it shouldn't be a big lead, again, just proportional to the depth off of the base the 3rd baseman is. With two outs, this lead can get more aggressive. Again, the right foot should land the same time the hitter makes contact or the catcher catches the ball.
- The secondary leads off of 3rd base should always be in foul territory, eliminating any chance of getting hit by a fair ball and called out.
- The return lead to 3rd base should be in fair territory, hoping a throw back from the catcher might hit the runner.
- When tagging up at 3rd base the runner should have his left foot on the base and he should watch the outfielder catch the ball, instead of listening for the coach to tell him to go. This can cause the runner to leave early. The runner's right foot should be on the base when he tags on a ball hit down the right field foul line, which will allow him to see the catch better and not have to look across his body.