

# EFFECTIVE BUNTING MANUAL

There are three types of baseball players: those who make it happen, those who watch it happen, and those who wonder what happens.

-Tommy Lasorda



## ARE YOU A GOOD BUNTER?

**Bunting is rarely ever about you. It's about putting pressure on the defense and sacrificing yourself for the team!**

So there I was in my first D1 player meeting in the club house prior to the upcoming fall ball season. My coach was reciting a story of when he had meandered into the opposing clubhouse searching for a bathroom during his college years.

He was in the Florida State Seminoles locker room when he by chance passed by the "college super star" J.D Drew's locker. In it was a note by legendary college coach Mike Martin.



It read:

***Drew, you will never be a great hitter until you learn how to bunt.***

***-Mike Martin***

Do you understand the importance of being an effective bunter?

Do you write it off, saying to yourself, "**you can't bunt yourself to the big leagues**"?

The truth is, that mentality is a selfish mindset and is the type of thinking that will keep you from becoming the type of hitter that never reaches his full potential. You bunt to help your team win. You bunt to get on base, and put pressure on the defense. These things always have a way of coming back to you in a reciprocating way.

What I would like to discuss are a few things that hitters need to learn to make sure they are still having effective at-bats when there job is to do something other than swing.

Call it a "**Bunter's Checklist**" is you will.

### **BUNTING BAT PATH**

Rule number uno! The bat head has too stay slightly above the handle. If it drops below, the bat angle dramatically becomes inclined to making contact with the ball-hitting the top portion of the bat which induces pop-ups or goes of the bat into foul territory. Neither serve an effective purpose.

Lower pitches that are strikes need to be made contact with by bending the knees. I can't stress this enough. One of the most common mistakes I've seen hitter's make is dropping the barrel below pitches. Pitchers love this. Bunting is like any other movement on the baseball field. It's an athletic movement. You're still in an athletic stance. By showcasing this truth you're giving yourself and your team a better chance of moving runners over and scoring a run.

### **BUNTING CONTACT SPOTS**

Now that we understand what the correct bat-angle is for successfully bunting a pitch in the respective areas, we have to simultaneously understand on what part of the bat you need to make contact as a hitter.

I've also seen a lot of hitters that fail at bunting because they bunt the ball too hard. They haven't grasped the concept of deadening the ball. In majority of bunting situations, the goal is to move a runner to avoid a double play or put the runner in scoring position. Bunting the ball too hard will almost always keep this from happening successfully.

When bunting the ball and attempting to put it far enough away from the pitcher and catcher, **making contact with the ball at the end of the bat** is your safest bet.

## BUNTING LOCATION

Understanding each specific bunting situation is key for being a leader and getting the job done at the end of the day.

Here is what you need to know.

**WITH A RUNNER ON FIRST-** You bunt down the first base side. The 1st baseman is playing in while holding the runner on first.

**WITH A RUNNER ON SECOND-** You bunt the ball down the 3rd base line. The goal is to get the 3rd baseman to charge which allows the runner on second to reach 3rd base easily.

**WITH RUNNERS ON 1ST AND 3RD-** Same as with a runner just on second.

Knowing these situations instinctually while being able to dictate what you need to do to get the job done shows leadership. Be the hitter that knows and does these things effectively and you'll always find yourself in the line-up!

## STAYING PUT

I've been guilty of this. Chances are so have you. When you're sacrifice bunting, you're not trying to get a base hit. You're sacrificing your at-bat for your team. Running out of the batter's box to try to get a jump shows that you're not 100% committed to laying down the best bunt. It shows you're trying to still get a hit.

You better believe scouts, college recruiters, and experienced coaches notice these things.

**Remember to be a team guy.**

## TIMING

Similar to a swing at a pitch, bunting takes a certain level of timing and finesse. Even in a sacrifice bunt, you want to avoid being in a static position before bunting a pitch.

Normally with a sac-bunt you should square when the pitcher comes set. This gives you enough time to get focused but not too much time that you become cold.

## PLACEMENT IS KEY!



### Know the game!

Understanding each specific bunting situation is key for being a leader and getting the job done at the end of the day.

## WHAT'S YOUR POSITION?



### Create your space!

The only way to create more foul ball territory is to move up in the box. This widens the room for error immensely and allows you more freedom to put the ball in play an in an error that gets the runner over.

With a bunt for base hit, the timing is a little bit different. Great bunters normally square **as the pitcher strides forward**. This is the perfect timing to allow you the best opportunity to lay down a decent bunt without having the corner defenders gain too much ground before you square.

Still keep in mind the location of where you're making contact with the bat.

### BATTER'S BOX MOVEMENTS

The placement of your feet are an important factor in your approach to bunting.

There are two things you're trying to accomplish in regards foot placement while bunting.

1. Give yourself as much fair ball territory
2. Force tough breaking ball pitches to be higher in the zone.

The only way to create more foul ball territory is to move up in the box. This widens the room for error immensely and allows you more freedom to put the ball in play an in an error that gets the runner over.

Remember to make sure that you're not squaring to earl and moving up in the box to early though. This will give the defense a chance to make an adjustment, charge in and throw the lead runner out.

The best way to scoot up in the box is while you're squaring around to bunt at the same time in one single motion.



# BASE-HITS AND NO- NO'S

## IMPORTANT:

Feet Placement. Some baseball coaches teach a certain style of placement where the back foot rotates to become even with the front foot or even in front.

They teach for the shoulders and feet to become square to the pitcher upon preparing to bunt. I for one will never advocate this style of bunting because I think it's dangerous.

A player still need to protect himself in case of a wild pitch. The ability to rotate back away from the plate in the same way while hitting is absolutely crucial.

It's also important to note that a player will always perform better when he isn't concerned with feeling and being vulnerable to injury at the plate.

The back foot should always be back.

## NO NO'S

Lastly there are certain unwritten rules in baseball that deal with bunting that you really need to be aware of. Call it proper etiquette or good sense. There are times when you should NEVER bunt.

Here they are as follows.

When there are less than 3 innings left and your team is up by 10 or more. Don't bunt.

When a pitcher has a no-hitter going into halfway through the game.



Don't be bush!

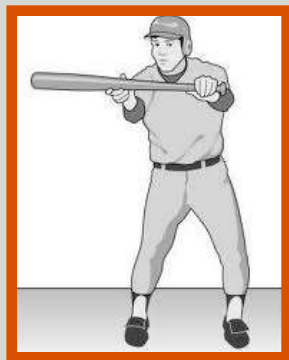
Two outs with runners in scoring position.

No outs and a runner on third ( unless the corner infielders are playing very far back and are just asking for it)

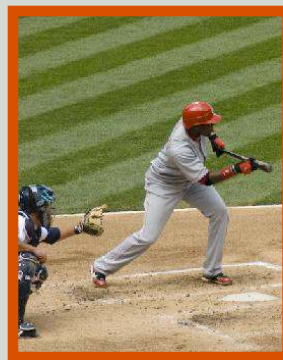
This are just a few tips that you should remember while playing against players at higher levels. This has nothing to do with rules and more to do with sportsmanship.

Make sure to remember these or you may have to "wear it".

## WRONG!



## RIGHT!



# BUNTING FOR BASE-HITS

I think being able to effectively bunt for base-hits is a huge weapon that you can use to:

- 🏆 put pressure on the defense
- 🏆 get out of a slump
- 🏆 increase your overall production
- 🏆 give your team-mates a chance to be successful

I was a switch-hitter so my favorite bunts were a “push bunt” to the second baseman from the right side and a soft bunt of the end of the bat to the third base side while hitting lefty.

It’s still important to make sure that your focus is on putting a good bunt down and not getting a good jump out of the box.

You will always be giving yourself a better chance of getting on base when you do a great job on placement instead of getting out of the box quickly.

## NOW GO MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN!

### Key things to remember:

- ☑️ It not about you
- ☑️ Utilize the last 3-4 inches of the bat to achieve best placement
- ☑️ Know what the situation calls for
- ☑️ Look for something up in the zone
- ☑️ Use your knees to hit lower pitches
- ☑️ Keep the bat-head level or above the hands