



# Buffalo Hanover Baseball Association

## Coaches Manual

## INTRODUCTION

All Information included in this manual is for referencing purposes only. Coaches will need to be able adjust per their team's abilities, ages, ETC. There is no fool proof method for coaching youth baseball, the materials contained are to be a guide to help coaches understand the basic fundamentals to allow teaching at the youth level.

## THE MECHANICS OF HITTING:

### THE GRIP



- Bottom Hand (firm grip)
- Top Hand (fingertip grip, wrist hinged inward)
- Knuckle alignment (knocking knuckles)
- Hands together
- Index Fingers pointed out should line up
- For new hitter – tell them to imagine a laser pointing out of the butt end of the bat – it should point into the opposite batter's box

### THE STANCE



- Feet shoulder width or wider, knees bent, shoulders over toes. (Athletic Posture) □ Hands shoulder height!!
- Front shoulder slightly lower than back shoulder.
- Head vertical.

## THE LOAD



- Hands remain shoulder height, bat position 45\* angle or less.
- Front forearm and bat complete 90\*
- Front Side: Short stride to toe with heel up and out to maintain closed  Back side toes pointing inward.
- Front shoulder angled to baseball and coiled in slightly.
- Weight transfer to middle.  Knees remain bent (athletic posture)  Head Vertical.

## THE SWING: APPROACH



- Back foot pivot.
- Hands, back side shoulder, hips and pivot all turning together.
- Maintaining 90\* bat angle. Bat follows the hands, does not cast. Like pulling the bat out of a sleeve.
- Eyes tracking (head still).
- Bottom hand pulling knob Inside path of ball.
- Hands remain loaded (hinged).
- Head Vertical

## THE SWING: CONTACT



- Full Rotation of the hips (belt buckle faces pitcher)  Back foot heel up.  Front leg locked (post in the ground)  Front foot planted.
- Back knee slightly bent
- Hands inside the path of the ball (bat barrel to the ball)
- Palm up, palm down
- Front arm extended; trail arm slightly bent. (power V position)
- Back shoulder through contact (follows hands)
- Head Vertical, Eyes on the BALL

## THE FINISH



- Balanced
- Head / back shoulder on the ball □ Spine angle!!
- Hands extended to maximize swing speed (no deceleration)
- Wrist rotation, knob of bat pointing to 3rd base (righty) 1st base (lefty)
- Bat finishes on plane (shoulder to shoulder)
- Head Vertical



FIELDING INSTRUCTION – GROUND BALLS



Ready Position Mechanics:

- Athletic position.
- Legs not too far apart (be ready to move/react)
- Get into a routine of walking into a set position. Footwork -Right – Left Set as the pitch is coming. Balls of your feet

Mental:

- Want the ball to come to you
- Know the situation (where are you going with the ball).
- Learn the hitters (i.e. pull guys, bunters, etc)

Fielding Mechanics:

- Close the distance prior to getting a wide base – glide into the ball. Footwork -Right – Left Field.
- Hands – Imagine a short pair of handcuffs on (just like the photo) - allows for a quick transition.
- Hands are out front and come in as the ball is fielding (soft hands).
- Wide base
- Rear end down- Glove Down Butt Down!

Mental:

- See the ball into the glove

Throwing Mechanics:

- Get feet parallel to throwing line - Footwork -Right – Left Throw.
- Point the opposite shoulder/elbow to the target (point the gun before firing)
- Make a great throw at your first baseman's head/chest.
- Throw – then follow your throw Right Left Follow!

FIELDING INSTRUCTION – OUTFIELD- KNOW THE SITUATION (WHERE ARE YOU THROWING THE BALL)

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|    |   |    |
| <p>Ready Position Mechanics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Athletic position.</li> <li>- Legs not too far apart (be ready to move/react)</li> </ul> <p>Mental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Want the ball to come to you</li> <li>- Know the situation (where are you going with the ball).</li> <li>- Learn the hitters (i.e. pull guys, bunters, etc)</li> </ul> | <p>Fielding Flyballs Mechanics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drop step: Open up &amp; drop foot on ball side - Get under the ball as quick as possible.</li> <li>- Hands – ideally, catch the ball above your head (see photo). <b>DO NOT CATCH BALL IN-FRONT OF YOUR FACE/ EYES.</b></li> <li>- Attempt to be coming in as you catch the ball as shown above(this allows for a quicker throw).</li> </ul> <p>Mental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See the ball into the glove</li> </ul> | <p>Fielding Ground balls Mechanics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If it's a hard-hit grounder, field from one knee.</li> <li>- If it's a slow rolling grounder and you need to make a quick throw, field it on your glove side (as you're gliding into into it). Come up into a crow-hop throw.</li> </ul> |

PITCHING INSTRUCTION



Ready Position

Mechanics:

- Note lines in photo 1 – head should stay inside the lines (a wide side-step will take you out of the lines).
- Small Rocker Step
- 

Mental: Make Competitive Pitchers Pitches (Nothing over the Heart of the plate)

- Know the situation (what's the count, where are you going with the ball,). 0-2/1-2 count – work the zone
- Learn the hitters (rt fouling to rt – blow it bye him, if rt hitter is fouling to left field – think about changing speeds)

Balance Position to T-Flex Position

Mechanics:

- Get to a gathered balanced position – first photo above
- Next – the thumbs of both hands go under to the T-flex position (note – elbow-toelbow straight lines above).
- Lead ankle to the target

## T-FLEX TO FINISH POSITION

## MECHANICS:



Head and chin to the target

Foot lands slightly closed

Note – glove position in photos (gets pulled in as body goes forward)

Follow-through is critical to avoid arm injury – bend at the waist, arm must pass the opposite leg, drive should be snapped up as shown.

Eyes always stay on the target (as shown in all the photos)

Be ready to field your position

## BASE RUNNING

- Know the situation
- Watch for loose balls
- Down angle off bat- you break-otherwise hold tight
- Line drives must get through-look where defenders are playing!
- Best base runner may not be the fastest-(smartest)

- Learn proper way to slide and to shuffle after a pitch, extra bases-hit inside corner with inside foot
- While running know when to pick up coach and or the ball □ Run all balls out hard-puts pressure on the defenders

### STEALING/LEADING OFF:

10U - early in the year, steal like mad....catchers will be out of sync and you can steal at will. By the end of the year, it is much more difficult as catchers get better, you cannot steal until it crosses the plate. Teach your kids to leave when the ball crosses the plate, NOT when the catcher catches it.... draw a line in the dirt 5 feet up from home - and teach the kids to leave when the ball appeared to be there so they would get a legit jump....

11U – difficult to steal....Ball needs to leave the pitchers hand. Watch for Back Picks from the Catcher if you are not Stealing...

12U and up – Steal on first movement off the front foot. Make sure back foot does not move. If anything seems weird, go back! Just because you have the steal sign does not mean you have to steal. If something goes wrong, stay on first and we will reset for the next pitch!

Get good leads, test your limit. Sometimes get a big lead, but lean back and expect a throw back, just to see how far out you get.

WATCH THE PITCHERS MOVE, even when you are on the bench. Be a student of the game and try to find tendencies for your teammates.

#### Home to first

- get down the line-run through the base
- do not watch the throw (quick glance at fielders)
- do not slow down- Run thru the Bag. 1b Coach will be your eyes on over and bad throws.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> to second

- down angle off the bat----- line drive freeze, must get through the infield. Expect to get to 3<sup>rd</sup>, make the defense stop you from going to 3<sup>rd</sup>
- head down and get to the base
- slide unless you have a reason to round the base
- Lazy fly ball to LF, 2/3 way to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, lazy fly ball to CF, 1/3 to 1/2 way to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, lazy fly ball to RF 1/3 way to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

1<sup>st</sup> to third

- pick up third base coach when you're not sure if you can advance on a ball to the outfield.
- top speed rounding second
- come to third staring at the coach. Be Ready to go Home
- down angle off the bat----- line drive freeze, must get through  ball into right field-if you got any jump at all we are going!

2<sup>nd</sup> to home

- down angle off the bat----- line drive freeze, must get through
- ground ball hit behind you –go. ground ball in front of you wait for the throw, if possible, advance to 3<sup>rd</sup>.

3<sup>rd</sup> to home

- down angle past the pitcher on right side
- prepare to tag on any pop-up or fly ball. No Matter how far the ball is hit. DO NOT WATCH THE BALL COACH WILL TELL YOU WHEN TO GO.
- infield in or infield deep- Infield in ball must get thru, Infield back go on contact (Ground ball only)

Extra base hits ----- coaches will be telling you when to advance!!!

- Be Aggressive on the bases when you can!!!
- Put the Pressure on the defense to make plays
- Always run hard out the batter's box. No Excuses

Spend time at Baserunning at all Practices

The catcher is a leader/ captain on the field, they must command the game. Signals will be as follows:

1=fastball

2=curveball

3=slider

Fingers wiggle=change-up

Fist =pitch-up in the zone. Baserunner will be stealing

### CATCHER SET UP POSITIONS

- always protect your throwing hand
- glove arm on the outside of the knee
- fingers of the glove pointing at the pitcher-slightly turned to left
- Set-up early and change position at times to throw off opponents

With no runners on base a catcher should be compact and give pitchers a smaller precise target and umpire a good view to get more strikes. Do not have to block pitches unless it is third strike. Ground ball in the infield, Catchers must follow the runner down the line, with a slight angle towards the dugout/ fence behind 1<sup>st</sup> Base.

With runners on base the catcher needs to be in a ready position with the right foot set slightly back a 3-5 inches from your left foot. You must be able to get right up into attack position.

### BLOCKING THE BASEBALL

- Block it-not catch it

- Use the chest area if possible
- Smother with fingers spread and head down to protect the neck
- Arms and elbows are tight to the body
- Throwing hand behind catcher's mitt to protect  
Pick the ball up with bare hands-avoid "five fingering" or by doing the scoop method with both hands.
- Listen for the pitcher to help locate the ball for you

## FRAMING THE BASEBALL

- At the same time, you catch the ball make a  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn with glove toward strike zone
- Practice framing with tennis balls and no gloves
- Don't bother framing pitches out of strike zone-showing up the umpire
- Don't hold borderline strikes "too" long as to upset the umpire-you can quietly ask the umpire where that pitch was?
  - Don't question an umpire by turning around and get the crowd upset.
  - Frame the ball with your elbow away from the body and slightly bent
  - Work on framing whenever warming someone up or playing catch.
- Catchers should think of the strike zone as oval in shape-not rectangle
- Keep the framed ball in the strike zone
- Attempt to get your head over the baseball when it is caught to give the umpire a better look.

## THROWING OUT RUNNERS

- Catch the ball first
- Create some movement by keeping feet in good position before you catch the baseball
- Remind your infielders to be talking when stealing attempt is likely
- Throwing hand back behind your head
- Quick accurate throws are more important than velocity

## CATCHER THROWS

Last number is where the throw will end up.

- X1 (i.e. 11, 41) – Pick off at first
- X2 (i.e. 12, 42) - glance to third throw out runner at second
- X3 (i.e. 13, 43) – pump fake to 2<sup>nd</sup> and throw the runner out at third
- X4 (i.e. 14, 44) – throw directly to shortstop, who will then throw it back

- Walk-off steals –Winner/ trying run at 3<sup>rd</sup>. Do not take the Bait. Know your team, there is no set play that is the end all.

## BUNT DEFENSE:

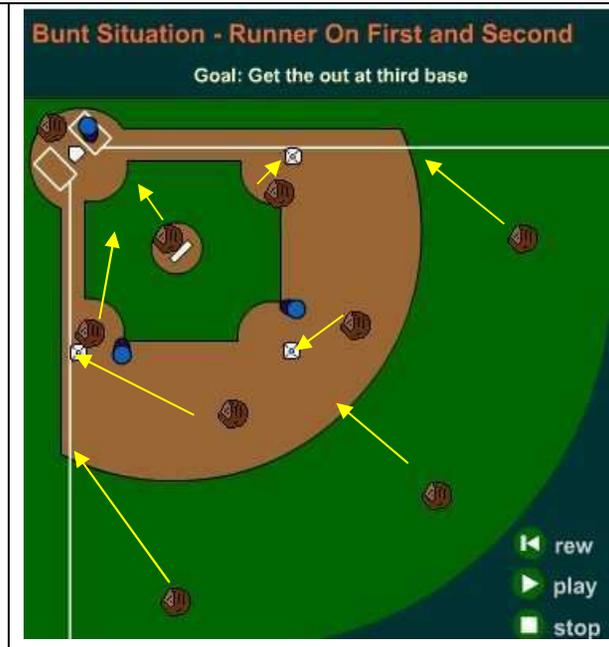
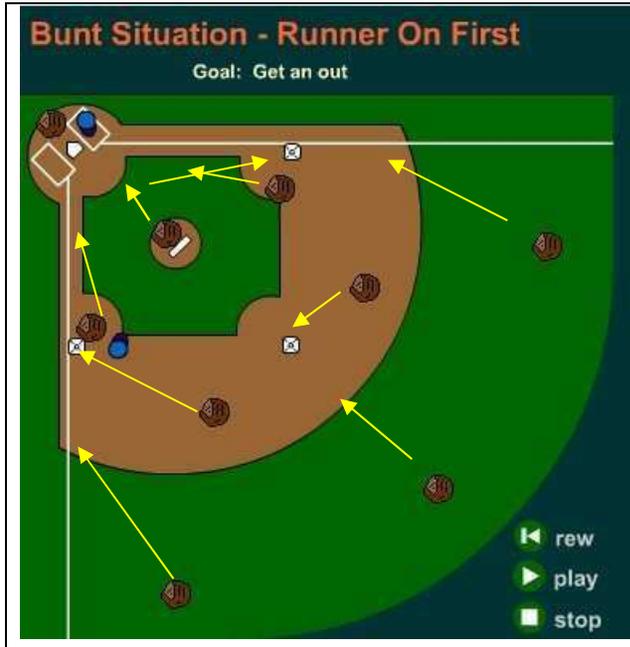
Note – diagrams below are for 12U and above. 10 and 11U with younger players and smaller fields, we tend to want to keep things simple. 10U and 11U:

Pitcher ALWAYS charges for a bunt. Catchers make the call.

3<sup>rd</sup> base charges right away when a bunt is shown EXCEPT with a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup>. In that case he stays put. 1<sup>st</sup> baseman stays put, as the play is always to get the out at 1<sup>st</sup>.

2<sup>nd</sup> baseman to back up first. THIS IS THE KEY, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman needs to understand he has to go to first, so that as they get older, they will be in the habit of going that way when they are supposed to cover first. With 60-foot bases, it is difficult to expect a 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman to cover first on a bunt.

Defensive Situations – Bunt Defense



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Responsibilities: Bunt Coverage Call X35, 235, 835, ETC</p> <p>Catcher – field any ball in front of you (you have an easier throw moving forward). If you're not sure that the lead runner can easily be thrown out, call for the ball to be thrown to first (1).</p> <p>Third Baseman – charge to field the bunt – return to 3<sup>rd</sup> if someone else fields the bunt.</p> <p>Pitcher – charge to field the bunt – cover 3<sup>rd</sup> base if the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman fields the bunt.</p> <p>First Baseman – charge to cover the bunt...</p> <p>Second Baseman – cover first base</p> <p>Shortstop – cover 2<sup>nd</sup> base</p> <p>Outfield – back-up the base in front of you</p> <p>*Note – same coverage for no one on (i.e. bunt for a hit – 2<sup>nd</sup> covers first)</p> | <p>Responsibilities:</p> <p>Catcher – field any ball in front of you (you have an easier throw moving forward). The goal is to get the out at third - if you're not sure that the lead runner can easily be thrown out, call for the ball to be thrown to first (1).</p> <p>Third Baseman – cover 3<sup>rd</sup> (stay at home) - unless ball gets past pitcher</p> <p>Pitcher – cover third base side (right half of field)</p> <p>First Baseman – charge to cover the bunt (cover left half of field)</p> <p>Second Baseman – cover first base</p> <p>Shortstop – cover 2<sup>nd</sup> base</p> <p>Outfield – back-up the base in front of you</p> |
|--|--|

Squeeze Situations- Late in the game, everyone charges. Walk off play must be made at Home. If not and you cannot get the out at home easily, take the out at 1<sup>st</sup> Bunt coverage would be 235

## OUTFIELD CUTOFFS

Note – diagrams below are for 12U and above. 10 and 11U with younger players and smaller fields, we tend to want to keep things simple.

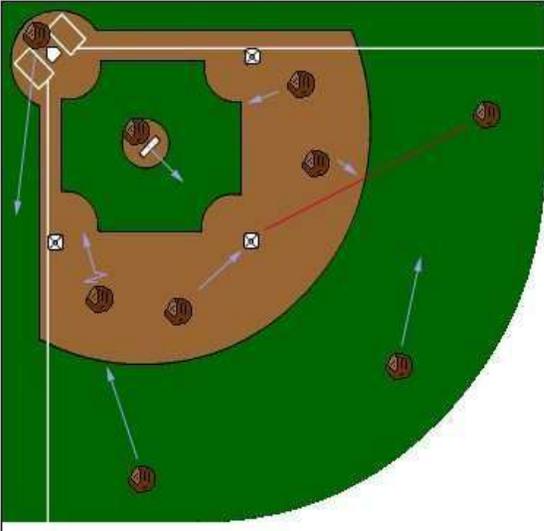
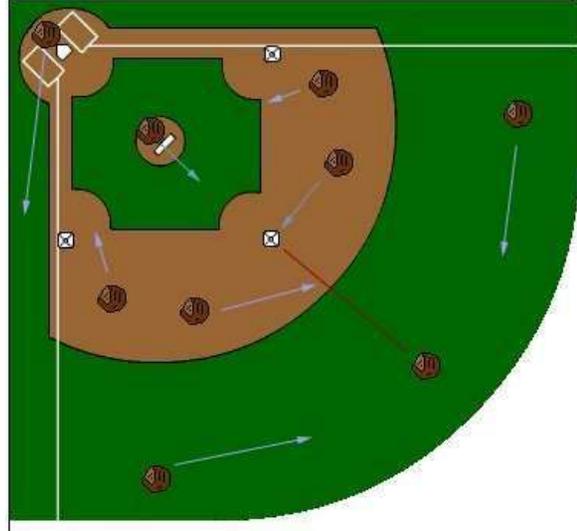
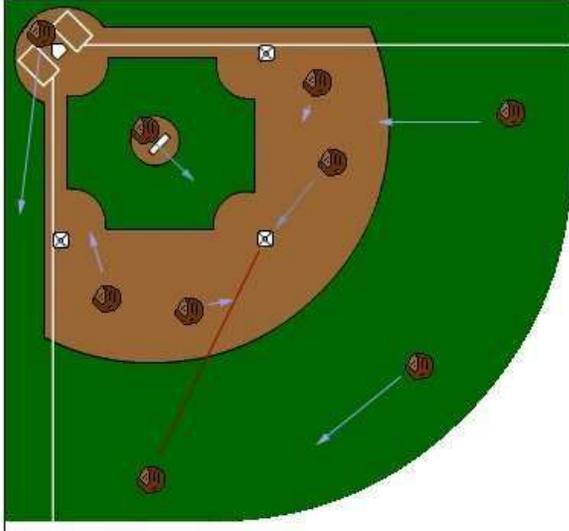
10U AND 11U:

Progression 1: ALL Outfield cuts go to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. This takes the thought process out of play for younger players, and teaches them to get the ball in, while using a correct cut play to 2<sup>nd</sup>. With the 60-foot bases, you can usually relay to another base easily from 2<sup>nd</sup> as well.

Progression 2: When Progression 1 is mastered, use the pitcher for a second cut option to home. Pitcher should have his hands up and roughly be around the home plate side of the baseline. The pitcher is only used when there could be a play at the plate, Catcher needs to communicate if too cut. With 60-foot bases, it is not realistic to use a 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman in this situation (my opinion), and this has worked.

DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS – CUT-OFFS

NO RUNNERS ON (THROW TO 2<sup>ND</sup>)

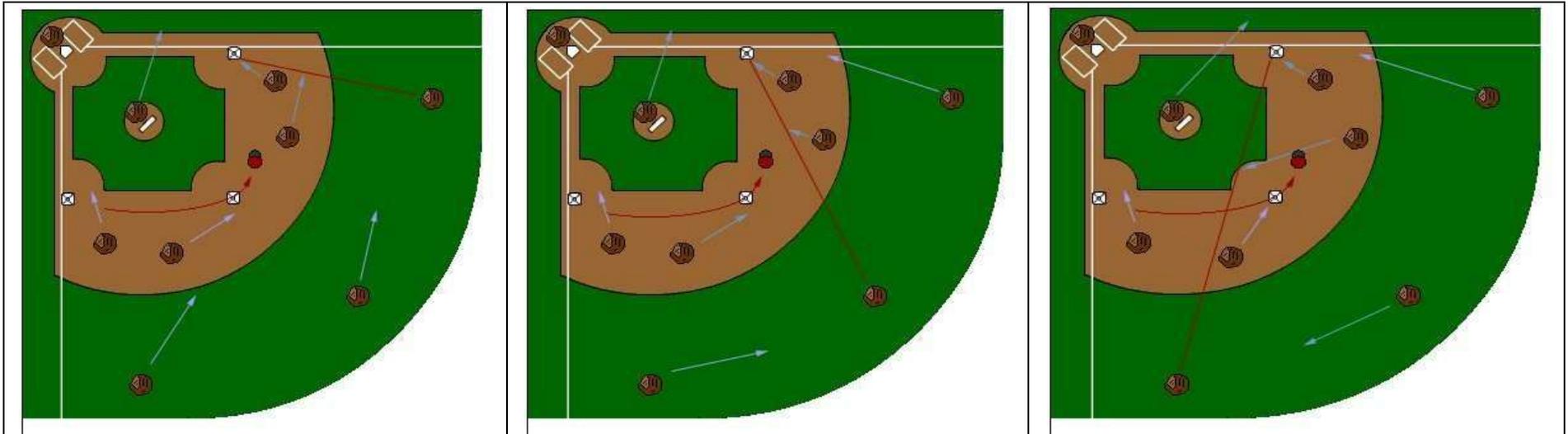
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|--|--|--|
|    |   |    |
| <p><b>Single to Left Field</b><br/>On a single to left field the shortstop will be the cuto to second base. The second baseman will cover the bag. The first baseman should primarily back up the throw from left and then move towards first. This will put him into position to receive a throw at first in case the runner takes too large of a turn.</p> | <p><b>Single to Center Field</b><br/>On a single to right-center field the second baseman will be the cuto to second base. The shortstop will cover the bag. The pitcher must position himself to back up second base.</p> | <p><b>Single to Right Field</b><br/>On a single to right field the second baseman will be the cuto to second base. The shortstop will cover the bag. The left fielder and third baseman must back up second. First baseman must get close to first and be ready for a throw behind the runner.</p> |

\*Mental Note: Outfielders- you need to know what to do with the ball on a base-hit (think about this before each batter/pitch). On a routine basehit, your mental thought is to throw one base ahead of where the runner is going. For example – no one on, therefore he’s heading to first (one base ahead is 2<sup>nd</sup> base). If there’s a guy on first – he’s heading to second (one base ahead is 3<sup>rd</sup> base). etc.

Infielders – similar to outfielders, but you’re thinking about where I am going to cut the ball (on balls hit to the outfield).

DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS – CUT-OFFS

1. Runner on First (play at third)

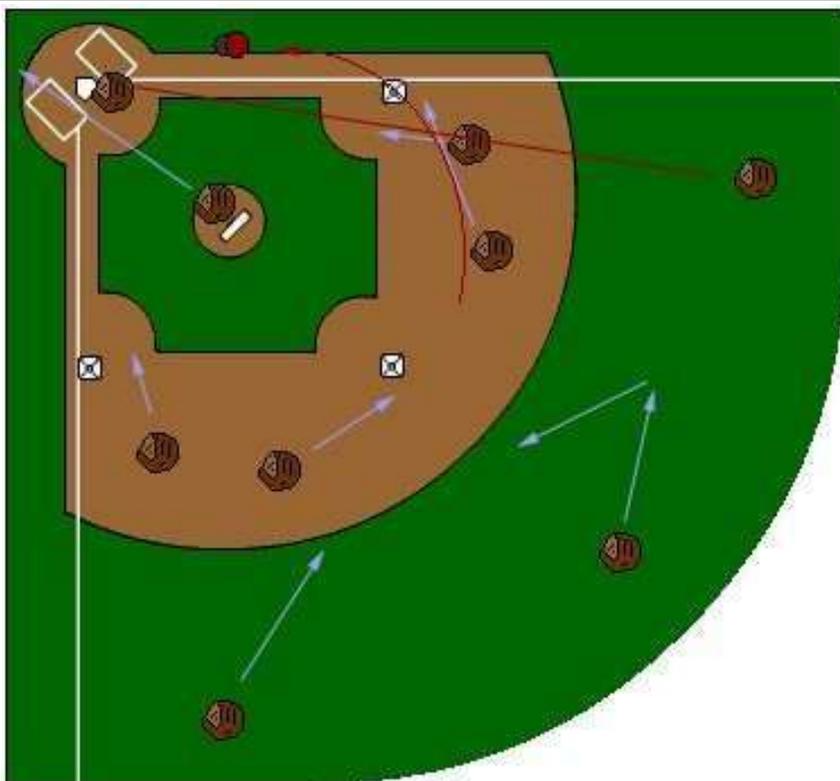


| Single to left   | Single to Center Field   | Single to Right Field   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>On a single to left field the shortstop will be the cuto to third base. The second baseman will cover second base. The pitcher must hustle to get in position to back up third base. The catcher should also be in a position to back up the throw.</p> | <p>On a single to center field the shortstop will be the cuto to third base. The second baseman will cover second base. The pitcher must hustle to get in position to back up third base. Unless the ball is hit to left center, the left fielder should move in to help back up third base.</p> | <p>On a single to right field the shortstop will be the cuto to third base. The second baseman will cover second base. The pitcher must hustle to get in position to back up third base. The left fielder should move in to help back up third base.</p> <p>With younger players you may want to have the second baseman be the cut on this play. It depends on the arm strength of the right fielder. In general, you want to have the second baseman be the cuto person if the shortstop would have to go on the second base side to be in proper position.</p> |

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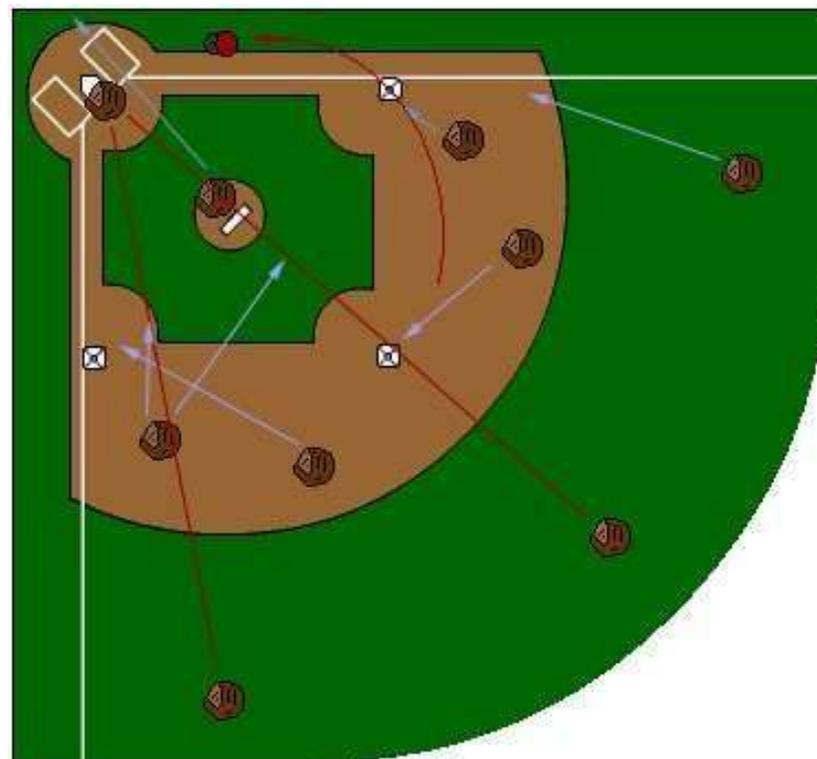
DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS – CUT-OFFS

2. Runner on Second or Third (play at home)



### Single to Left Field

On a single to left field the third baseman will be the cuto to home. The shortstop will cover third base. The pitcher will backup home. The catcher will make the call if a cut is needed and to what base. The center fielder should start toward left and once the ball has been fielded cleanly, he should go to back up second in case a throw is made there either from the cuto or the catcher.



### Single to Center or Right Field

On a single to center or right field the first baseman will be the cuto to home. The shortstop will cover second base. The second baseman will cover first. The pitcher will backup home. The catcher will make the call if a cut is needed and to what base. The diagram below shows both options, with the only difference being the position of the first baseman as the cuto .