

SACRIFICE BUNT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this play is to advance a runner from 1st to 2nd base, while minimizing the chances of hitting into a double play. Bunting increases the success rate, because it is easier contact the ball with a bunt, than with a full swing. It is also used to move a runner from 2nd to 3rd, to set up a score a run on a fly ball or infield out.

WHEN TO USE

In a close softball game, this play is automatic with a runner on 2nd base and nobody out. It is very frequent with a runner on 1st and less than two out, with a weak hitter or good bunter at bat. Many coaches will let a good hitter take a swing, before calling for the bunt. But against strong pitching, the sacrifice bunt is a must play for every team.

EXECUTION

BATTER: The role of the batter is to ensure the ball is bunted on the ground, so the focus must be on contacting the top half of the ball with the bottom half of the bat. Moving forward, in front of home plate, helps the batter keep the bunted ball in fair territory.

1ST BASE RUNNER: The runner on 1st must take a good lead, then looks to see the ball on the ground before advancing. If the ball is down, the runner must think "slide" into 2nd, anticipating a close play there. This is always a force play so a straight in, bent leg slide is the preferred technique.

2ND BASE RUNNER: This runner must see the ball on the ground, then plan to slide into 3rd base. If there was no runner on 1st at the time of the bunt, there is no force play, so the runner should prepare to use a back door or hook slide, to avoid a tag.

THE TWO BASE BUNT

Occasionally it is possible to move a runner all the way from 1st to 3rd base on a sacrifice bunt, but two conditions have to exist to make this work. First, the initial play has to be made at 1st base. Second, there has to be a mental lapse by one of the defenders, leaving 3rd base uncovered. Baserunners trained to be alert to these conditions, can and do accomplish the two base bunt.