

Base Stealing Philosophy

Definition of Base Stealing: A runner(s) trying to take advantage of the defensive team thru good technique and speed going in a straight line to advance a base as the ball is thrown from the pitcher to the catcher.

Confidence: The base stealer(s) must feel they have control of the game even though the pitcher is initially in control of the baseball.

Comfort: The base stealer must be as comfortable when off the base preparing to steal as they are when just standing on the base.

1) Developing a Base Stealing Philosophy: A TEAM SYSTEM is not based on speed!

- **PASSION:** Coaches must have a passion for the base stealing game to develop their distinct Base Stealing Philosophy that carries the team to more Championships.
- **DETAILS:** Coaches must learn detailed aspects of base stealing. This will help each athlete to execute on that one pitch. Many times the next pitch is too late.
- **SYSTEM:** Base Stealing systems are NOT built on speed but on ALL players being able to use different parts of the system in a game cohesively and affectively.
- **PRACTICE:** Base Stealing must be a part of everyday practice just like defense, hitting, and pitching. Include pitchers in the actual base stealing drills even if some do not ever hit. This will help pitchers know more about how to handle base stealing teams and individual players who pose a threat on the base paths.

2) What is a Team System?

- Each athlete is knowledgeable and comfortable at every base
- Each athlete and the team are prepared to run in every situation
- Each athlete has an understanding of when to continue the steal. If he does not get a jump which will lead to a stolen base then athlete shuts steal down.
- Each athlete understands they never have to run on a sign. If athlete(s) have not gotten an excellent jump turn the proposed steal into a good secondary lead.
- Coach depends on each and every athlete to have polished basic leads at each base, learn rhythm and control with jump leads, knowing when they have a jump, knowing how to execute on front and back side of a double steal, and knowing when to shut down steal attempts so runners are rarely thrown out stealing.

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3) Developing Base Stealers: Teach, Teach, Teach because every player has the ability to steal a base and help the team!

- **Leads:** Teach step by step on initial leads, not generalities, at ALL bases
 - a) **1st base:** Basic teaching lead is 12' with the left foot
 - b) **2nd base:** Basic teaching lead is 15' to 21' with the left foot
 - c) **3rd base:** Basic teaching lead is 12' with the left foot
- **Footwork:** Teach detailed ways to utilize the best foot work
 - a) **Athletic Stance:** Feet shoulder width apart
 - b) **Lead Foot:** Bury ball of lead foot in the ground as it turns either direction
 - c) **Follow Leg:** Must thrust knee past lead leg for immediate acceleration
- **Hips:** Must rotate the body as it turns either direction
- **Upper Body:** Shoulders DO NOT rotate the body as it turns either direction
- **Hands and Arms:** Stay relaxed
- **Rhythm:** Athlete practices rotational movement in both directions until they have beautiful rhythm. Body stays flexed and does not rise up immediately as athlete makes the initial turn to go back to a base or turn
- **Sliding Back into 1st Base:** Teach 1 step and a dive and little friction from the body
- **Jump leads at 2nd Base and 1st Base: The Key Element to an average speed athlete becoming a base stealer.**
 - a) **Controlled jump:** Athlete learns how to rhythmically jump or shuffle side to side
 - b) **Chest angle in controlled jump:** Must stay facing the pitcher until sure ball is going to the plate
 - c) **Jump Leads:** 1st base leads are 4' to 8' when using a small controlled jump lead and left foot never goes beyond 12' until runner knows ball is going to the plate
 - d) **Jump Leads:** 2nd base leads are 15' to 21' when using a jump lead. This jump is longer than at 1st base (can stretch out to 30' from base if under control) and more explosive than at 1st base but body movements are still under control

Conclusion: Each Athlete can become a base stealer regardless of speed. I tell my players "My mother can easily learn to steal 3rd base but it takes a little more work to learn to steal 2nd base". Learning base stealing makes every practice like playing waffle-ball in the back yard.