



*Be a Batter  
Not Just a Hitter*

*By*

*Skip Lindemann*

## *Be a Batter Not Just a Hitter*

For most people batting and hitting are the same. Yes in away. Hitting is a function of batting. We can all agree on that. What is lost in today's baseball players and especially young and high school players is the approach to hitting which is batting. Go on the web an google hitting and you will find everything you need to know about hitting from all walks of life. There are gadgets galore along with famous ball players to people you probably would not want to invite over to your house. Just Facebook them it will be ok. Yet type in batting or batting philosophies and there is not much. They all tend to get you to buy into their style of hitting but very rarely go into the approach of batting.

Know the situation and then hit the situation is what I used when I played. Not because I was some guru that found the inner meaning to baseball. It was something I adapted from when I worked out with Kevin Seitzer (see his bio). He was not a power hitter but a gap to gap hitter. He told me you can make it further in baseball as a batter then a hitter. He then explained his reasoning which made some sense to me even though I was a 19 year old College ball player that knew it all. I was just coming off major shoulder surgery and the only thing that kept me on the team at the time was my batting. I also was a gap to gap hitter so I really related to what Kevin was telling me. Kevin also preached know your strengths as hitter and then adapt them to your batting. If you're a contact hitter then don't try to hit homerun to win the game, do what you do best.

Years go by and now I am immersed again in baseball because of my son. I started studying all these new stances and buzz words. Squash the bug, then don't, then maybe. Drop 10 bats, BB Core, indoor batting cages etc!! It was somewhat overwhelming. But after years of watching kids, coaches, and most of important

parents or parental guidance (PC Police) because they know what is best for their kids. I felt something was missing. Yes I felt alone, ahhhhh says the crowd. Well I did but that's a whole another talk show, hello Ellen.

These players are so overwhelmed by all these Coaches and what is the right way to hit. Toe tap, Load, don't load, liner, rotationally they are just really going up to hit. I asked one my players what is your approach when you get the plate. "Try to hit the ball" he replied. A valid answer. Then it hit me and jarred back my memory to when I was working with Kevin. I am teaching these kids to hit but not teaching them to be a batter.

So here we are. I hope now you know what I am trying to do is help get across in the next couple of pages and I hope it helps you and maybe gets you to the next level on your approach at the plate.

## GAME PLAN

Game plan is for football not baseball. Well a good game plan as a hitter will help you develop your approach at the plate to be a batter. Your game plan has to be flexible. Why? because of the game situation, different pitchers etc. If you just go up to try to hit then you are limited your chance of success for your team and yourself. Remember hitting a baseball is the hardest thing to do and don't let the Lacrosse guy tell you and differently. Google it, there got that off my chest.

There is only a 30% chance that you're going to get a hit. That is for your batting average. But if you know the situation and then hit the situation then you increase your percentages to be successful. We define successful as advancing the runner, working a walk, working the pitcher, making the defense make a play. These are not too measurable in High School on down because of the score keeping is not as advanced. Especially when Joe's dad is doing the book. What, that was a hit??? College and in the Pros the stats are crazy thanks to Mr. Bean. These are great but sometimes you get paralyses by analysis.

For a batter the game plan is a constant cycle.

BENCH  
IN THE HOLE  
ON DECK  
BATTERS BOX  
BETWEEN PITCHES  
REFLECTION  
REPEAT

## **BENCH**

Here is where we watch the pitcher. See what he is throwing. Try to see if he has got tendencies. Is he starting off everybody with fastball? What is the pitcher throwing in certain counts? Get feedback from your team mates that have already faced him. This a great time not only to build your game plan but stay in the game. Now when you are up you already have some information to process for the situation you find yourself in.

Also if they let the other team take infield before the game (some places don't) you can pick up who has strong arms and who has weak ones. This is good if a ball is hit in the gap or down the line. If you already know the Left Fielder has a weak arm then you can maybe push a single to a double or double to a triple. So you already have in your game plan anything hit to left your exploding out of the box. Should be anyway but we are human, at least some of us.

Because you took the time to use your time on the bench your giving yourself a better chance to be successful at your bat. You're not just going up to hit and come back and check out the cheerleaders. Oh yeah this is not football.

## **IN THE HOLE**

Here you are starting to put the plan together. Run the different situations that might be presented to you when you get up. Pick up on the pitcher. Look at how the infield and outfield is positioning. Start to crank up the focus. You can also check out some of the cheerleaders at this point.

## **ON DECK**

Now you can start dialing in your timing of the pitcher with your butt dance or whatever your buzz word for getting you timing down. If he is a hard thrower then

you want to get back into the box or more off speed pitches then you might want to get up in the box. Again start surveying the field for the different situations you might find yourself in. Crank up the focus some more and no more looking at the cheerleaders.

## **BATTER BOX**

Now you know the situation. Your Coach will dictate what he wants you to accomplish. Hit away, bunt, hit and run, etc. Deep breath then focus on your situation and then prepare yourself to be in the best position to be successful.

Remember it is the situation that you're batting for, not hitting for. Prepare for the pitch and look for what your game plan calls for and either attempt to execute or take the pitch.

## **BETWEEN PITCHES**

After every pitch you must again run thru the situation. What if the Coach now wants you to bunt? What if the runner advanced on a passed ball? This is where your game plan has to be flexible. All the hours you have put in and running the game thru your head pays off. Again set yourself and prepare to bat the situation. Prepare for the pitch and look for what your game plan calls for and either attempt to execute or take the pitch.

## **RELFECTION**

Weather you were successful or not you need to reflect on what happened.

Remember there is a 70% chance you were not successful. What did you learn from that at bat? Can you use it the next time you face the pitcher? If successful or not get feedback from your Coaches. Did you drop your hands? You got on top of that pitch and drove it. If you're a passionate person like myself this is where you

have to take aggression out and then let it go. Give yourself a short amount of time to be upset then start the process over until you get back on the field. There is nothing wrong with getting upset but you have to learn to move on quickly. Again it is the hardest thing to do and no one hits .500. The process should stop once the inning is ready to start when you're on the field.

You also want to watch out for "hit-I-tis" This is where you cranked one and then you let human nature creep in that you're going to do that every time and you get out of your routine. Your next at bat can suffer because you're a little too confident.

## **SUMMARY**

This is a humbling game and success means you failed 7 of 10 times. You work so hard on your swing. Getting the mechanics down. Being the best you can be by putting in the extra work. You have it all covered from a physical aspect. But I have seen to many times players just go up to hit. No game plan. So take the time and try the Batting Cycle or whatever you want to call it. Change it to fit your personality. Do not just follow it to the letter but I promise you that if you implement some kind of game plan you will increase your chances to be successful.

It works not only in baseball but in life. If you have some sort of game plan then you have goals which leads to measuring your results which means it is working or it is not. If it's working then keeping plugging away if not then twick it. The point is you have something to work with which makes you more of a Batter then a Hitter.

## ***To Pull or Not to Pull, Middle Right is the Answer***

This is the great debate with younger players from College down. Even now with the Pros with the success of San Francisco and Kansas City. What we will try to do is show you some interesting facts and percentages on why have a game plan to hit the ball middle right increases your chances to be successful but is not the most popular concept with players and sometimes coaches. Chicks did the long ball!!!

But really the power numbers are now down from the Majors down. In college and high school it is more the bats and the majors more the drug testing. Hitting a home run is not easy. It supposed to be hard but we will still watch players swinging for the fences as if they are going to hit it 500 feet. This goes back to knowing your strengths and working on them. 95% of the players if not more are not going to hit home runs constantly so why try. Hence Chicks did the long ball!!!

So will focus on a couple of things that I hope make you think a little differently when putting your game plan together. Location of pitches, Rethinking the outfield, and When to pull.

### ***Location of Pitches***

Most of the time pitchers are going to pitch middle away. Pitching inside takes control and even the pros have a hard time with pitching inside. So as a batter then you should focus handling pitches middle away. If you make that a strength instead of a weakness then you increase your chances of being successful because most of the pitches you see will be middle away. Also if you can handle the pitch away you make the middle and inside pitch easier for you to hit.

This approach also helps you with the off speed pitch and breaking pitches. Because you are working on taking the pitch middle right your bat has longer lag and is in the strike zone longer. This enables you to drive the ball. If you're looking to pull you are accelerating the bat forcing you to be out on your front foot or pulling off the ball.

### ***Rethinking The Outfield***

As a batter to help you get a better mind set on hitting middle right we want to look at outfield differently. Make centerfield in your mind now Right Center gap. Now when you think middle you actually batting is right center gap. A pitch just a little in is now up the middle. By rethinking the outfield you have now again increased your chances for success. This also puts pressure on the defense. This applies more to right handed hitters then left hander hitters. Left handed hitters see more middle away pitches and natural develop to hit the ball the other way. Yet sometimes the game situation calls for the left hander to pull the ball to advance the runner. So rethinking the outfield for a left still is a great place to start and the great Tony Gwynn made a living on it.

### ***When to Pull***

Being able to pull the ball is also necessary. If a pitcher is working you in you want to be able to blast one to keep them honest. Also the situation and the pitch count might call for the batter to pull the ball. Remember that pitchers make mistakes. They are not perfect even if they tell you so. Especially with location being the last thing for a major leaguer to master and most do not master location. If a pitcher hangs a curve in the middle then fire away. The problem is when you become a pull first batter. You have to start your swing earlier which leaves the

batter exposed to the middle away pitch. Remember that most pitches the batter is going to see are middle away. But the idea goes back to the game plan. Having that game plan before each at bat and swing only increases your chances to be successful.

## ***The Swing***

As we mention in the opening that there are many different hitting philosophies and techniques that are out there. Yet we have been playing baseball for over 100 years so there really is not a lot of secrets left on the table. What we will try to do is help you the batter define yourself as a batter and then let you and your coach decide how to get there.

## ***Be Honest With Yourself***

This is a hard thing to do in life let alone baseball. Looking in the mirror is tough especially if you look like me. Everybody is different so it baffles me that I see Coaches teaching the same swing or drill to the whole team. It is not that it is wrong but it is not giving each batter the chance to be successful. Just because it works for some does not make it works for others. I call this YouTube Coaching. A Coach will see a new technique or drill and will apply that to the whole team without breaking it down to the individual batter. This is why I feel there is not a lot of good hitting teams. There are good hitters but as a team there is not a lot.

If you are a strong batter that can hit the ball 500 feet you want to develop swing that hits the situation, say what. Yes!! Look at Miguel Cabrera. His career batting average is .313. His batting average when Runners on Base is .337 and Runners in scoring position is .336. It's safe to say that Miguel's approach is about the situation. He hits .296 with nobody on. Adam Dunn Career batting average is .237 and .237 with runners on but dropped to .226 with runners in scoring position. But this year 2014 he stopped trying to crush the ball and still only hit .219 but hit .223 with runners on and .252 with runners in scoring position. You can still be strong and still hit the situation. The homeruns will come. Remember, it is hard to hit a homerun.

If you are contact batter with good speed then don't go up to bat trying to hit a homerun even on the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch. We can go on and on but I think you get the idea.

### ***Weakness and Strengths***

Now you have been honest with yourself. It is also good to get a couple different opinions from Coaches and players. List your strengths and weakness 1<sup>st</sup>. Then get with your Coach to develop a routine that will enhance your strengths and strengthen your weaknesses. You just don't want to say hit 100 balls to right off the Tee. You need to set goals that can be measured by you and your Coach. It is proven that a player will get only a little better when they just practice. But they get increasingly better when they practice with goals that can be measured. So just like your game plan at the plate you need a game plan when you practice.

There are many drills you can do that will help you and hurt you. There is also many strength exercises that will do the same thing. You take your list of strengths and weaknesses and put a game plan together with your Coach or trainer. Later we will list some drills that you can look at and see if they apply to you.

Now we will just give an example to help show you what we are talking about.

We have a strong player that has a long swing, does not really load his hips and tends to get to get upright at contact. This causes him to hit almost all upper body negating his lower body. He has great ball contact though and is able to muscle some pitches out of the infield for a hit when he is off balance. The goal is to shorten his swing some, get him starting in a more balanced athletic position in the box and get him to load his hips. These 3 things will enable to hit the ball a long way because he is natural strong.

With that now noted we look for some drills that will directly help him in the 3 areas that we have identified. If you incorporate those with his regular routine and put in place goals so you can measure his progress. It seems like a lot to do for a whole team. It is if you try to do it all at once. With camera phones and videos it because much easier to track progress. The other check is you make the player become a part of the solution with his parents or parental guidance. Wow I am now PC again, politically correct. This next section is geared for Coaches but I hope the parental units (*OK OK I just had so use the Cone Heads once. Actually I think I will use it going forward*) will read with an open mind.

Most Parental Units know best and are unable to look at their kids with any faults. With making the player identify his strengths and weakness this helps brings the parental units in to be a part of the solution. Now some players will never admit they have any weaknesses so you just move on. The other 95% the process seems to work. Now you, the player and the parental units are on the same page so when the player is home working on something the parental unit is reinforcing instead of tearing apart what you worked on.

Each week have the player go over his goals with you and measurements. Then you twick it or keep going forward. Again you make them part of the solution and hold them accountable for reaching their goals. You as a Coach are just trying to help them along the way.

Remember that you are not going to be successful 70% of the time. This is a fact more the fiction. Again the higher you move up in baseball the harder it gets. The hardest working guy on the field does not make him the best player. Look at Michael Jordon. The greatest basketball player of our time and look how good he did when you tried baseball. He worked harder then anyone out there but only hit

.202 with .289 OBA. There is some truth to hitting a baseball is the hardest thing in sports and remember that Lacrosse guy.

Here lies the fundamental issue. Some players have more talent than others. Weather it is breeding, the baseball Gods blessed them or little green people from the planet Ziion gave them special powers. It is just fact. To get to that level you have to have talent and then it becomes what you do with it. There are so many stories about the ones who pissed it away and then there are the feel good stories. Oh yeah I left a little word called luck. Yeah you need some of that too.

I am not big on what I did stories but this one relates because it hit home with me. My junior year at Georgia College Mark Collins was our Short Stop and a Senior. I played 3<sup>rd</sup>. He worked harder than anyone on the team. A work out freak, Tee Freak, extra ground balls and BP freak. Yet he was hitting .270. Not bad and a solid College Short Stop. Made all the routine plays, just solid. We were hitting before practice and I asked him why puts all this work in and still hitting .270 does that frustrate him. I did the same work out he was doing and I was hitting .403. He told me in his Southern Draw “Spike if I did not put the work in then I would be a .230 .240 hitter and you would be .370 so shut up and get to work!!” I was scared of Mark because he had Black Belt in some Karate were they hit you with bamboo plus he bleeds on the inside. The point I am trying to make is that your talent can only take you so far. You still have to work it to get better. My talent was just a little bit more then Mark’s. That is it.

## ***Some What Conclusion and Soap Box***

So players this gets back to being honest with yourself and setting your goals. Baseball taught me and gave me a lot. I was able to get a college scholarship an education because of Baseball. Now that I am coaching I am still learning. You got to. If you stop learning at anything then you can't grow anymore as a person.

Oh yeah the most important thing I feel is you got to have fun. All the players I played with and Coached will tell you that is what I am about. If you do not want to be out there then why bother. I have seen to many players get burned out by Coaches, Parental Units or themselves. Remember the mirror. It is hard to lie to that person in the mirror. Does not mean you have to be Comedy Central. But enjoy the process. You are going to struggle at times, you are going to have crappy Coaches at times but such is life.

Remember that baseball is a game, enjoy it!!! All I am trying to help you with is things that most successful people do in their everyday lives. Do you think Steve Jobs just woke up and started Apple? No he had a plan and you know what he failed at a lot of things also. You can burn down a city with all the books that are on goal setting, positive mind sets, and stuff. I am just trying to help you use those ideas to increases your chances to be successful at baseball.

## ***Soap Box***

Baseball is also about respect. This is another thing that has been lost not only in baseball but life. Respect the players you play with which does not mean you have to like them but respect them. Respect the players you play against. Most are not jerks and the good ones you can learn from. Respect your Coaches and Coaches respect your players. No one is above anybody. Yelling puts everyone on the

defense. Sometimes as a player or Coach you have to but it should not be the norm. Coaches are there to teach the game and help the players reach there potential. Respect the umpires. Yes you heard me. Does not mean you will get the call but when someone feels respected you will get that person's best effort. Remember we all make mistakes.

Drum roll please because here is the last one!!!

Hard work is called hard work for a reason. It is not called easy work!!!

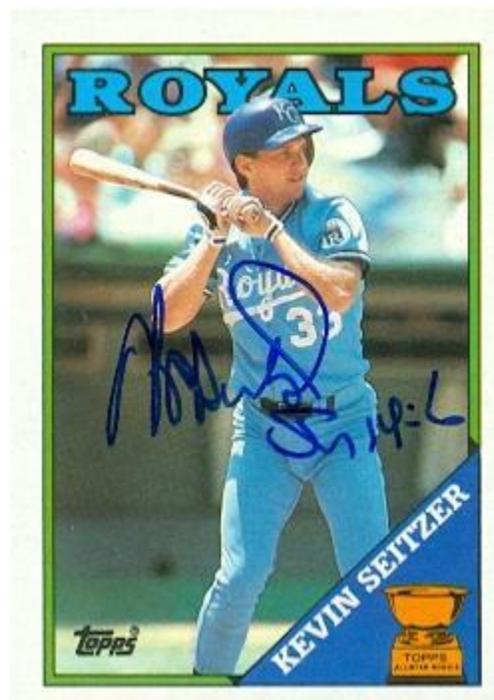
So put some hard work in on trying to be a Batter not Just a Hitter!!

Kevin Seitzer:

Kevin is the new 2014 Atlanta Braves hitting Coach.

Seitzer spent the 2013 season as Toronto's hitting coach and the Blue Jays ranked fourth among AL teams in scoring—including second in home runs. He previously served as hitting coach for the Diamondbacks and Royals.

As a player he was a two-time All-Star third baseman whose career spanned from 1986 to 1997, hitting .295 in 1,439 games for the Brewers, Royals, Indians, and A's.



Skip Lindemann:

Skip played at South Plantation High School from 1981-1984. Was a 3 year starter and 2<sup>nd</sup> team All County 3<sup>rd</sup> Baseman his Senior Year. He received a Baseball Scholarship to Georgia College where he batted .351 lifetime and elected All Conference 3<sup>rd</sup> Baseman his Junior year. Several injuries caused him to stop playing.

Skip now Coaches Baseball and is hitting resource to many players and BasesLoaded Indoor Batting Cages.

**SKIP LINDEMANN — Third Base** #13  
 Ht: 6-1      Wt: 190      Throws: R      Bats: R  
 Born: 9/9/66      Home: Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
 Parents: Mr. & Mrs. David Lindemann      Class: Senior  
 High School: South Plantation      High School Coach: Overfield

YR	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	SB	BB	SO	RBI	AVE.
86	18	36	10	13	0	0	0	2	7	2	7	.361
87	39	111	22	33	7	1	1	5	24	6	20	.297
88	57	199	51	79	16	4	1	2	25	18	38	.397
Totals	114	346	83	125	23	5	2	9	56	26	65	.361

Skip was the Colonials leading hitter in 1988. His .397 batting average last season ranks among the highest single season averages in Georgia College history. Skip was a All-GIAC selection in 1988.

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