

## On-field Teaching Outline for Fastpitch Coaching Bunting Videos

### Teaching the Team

**Line up** team members -- with helmets and bats, in three rows, staggered.

Call out instructions as you demonstrate the movements.

Use the words in bold print very often, usually by themselves.

If any team members are lefties, tell them your instructions are for a right-handed hitter and ask them to reverse each instruction that mentions their right or left hand or the right or left side of the field, including the shortstop in place of the second baseman.

### Set Up

Demonstrate and describe the stance as shown at 2:25 in bunting video 1.

(Do not use an upright stance. See *hitting* video #1 if more information is desired.)

Have players **Set Up** (get into their stance) four or five times:

Stand with **feet** outside shoulders, feet straight ahead and **squared to the plate**.

Bend at **knees**, push **hips** back. Weight on front half of feet. Shoulders back. Relax.

Bat up with **elbows angled down like the letter "A"** and feeling out over the plate.

### Snap Turn, then Bunt

Demo the two movements: Snap Turn, then Bunt. Stay **relaxed but** make each motion **quick**.

Maintain good posture throughout the bunt motions.

*Do not bend over* toward the pitcher at any point, just **maintain posture**.

Keep your whole body at the same level you Set Up at, as you Snap Turn.

Do the **Snap Turn**:

Turn feet, body and bat to point to the **second baseman**, (not to the pitcher);

**Slide** right hand up to **tapered portion** of bat, then **pinch** it, thumb on top;

Lower bat head to **30 degree angle**, keeping left hand just **above the waist**;

Extend arms slightly, **halfway out** from body.

Do the **Bunt**:

Bend the knees to **lower body and bat to ball** (with little arm and hand motion);

**Use left hand** (not right hand) to **control** the bat;

**Use right hand only** to maintain 30 degree angle and **provide firmness**.

Execute movements with precision, **mechanical, like a robot**.

Have players **Set Up carefully**, then **Snap Turn and Bunt** 4 or 5 times with no ball.

Call out, for all to hear, *one improvement to make* after each execution.

Whenever possible, tell them *how to do it better, not what they're doing wrong*.

Try to avoid making an example of any one player, at least during the first session.

### **Bunt against front toss -- whole team**

Split the players into pairs, with one player “pitching” a softball and the other bunting. The “pitcher” stands about 15 feet from the batter and throws pitches at slow speed. The batter stands next to a throw-down home plate or base.

Have your players execute the Turn and Bunt motions **without really trying to put the bat on the ball**. As they get used to “pitching” and the bunting motions, they will automatically start making good contact with the pitches. Use this drill often.

For the initial practice, have the players bunt the ball toward the second baseman, or wherever it happens to go. Don’t have them try to direct it left or right until you tell them how, later.

Players should feel like they are catching the ball with their bat. But you *shouldn’t* ask them to try to (consciously) “put the bat head onto the ball”. Instead, tell the players to execute the Snap Turn and Bunt as described, then “**let the bat go where it wants to go.**”

Don’t push your bat out at the ball. The right hand provides firmness as the ball hits the bat – firmer to make the ball go farther, but don’t punch at it, not even a tiny bit.

Never *pull* the bat back away from the ball (unless taking the pitch), but it’s **OK to let a fastball push the bat back a little**.

### **Bunting down the foul lines**

To bunt **toward third base**, pull the knob of your bat into your body with your left hand without moving your right hand in or out.

To bunt **toward first base**, push the knob out with your left hand.

Your body should not turn at all. Your right hand should hardly move at all.

It is generally easier to bunt pitches down the third base line when they are strikes over the inside half of the plate, and down the first base line for strikes over the outside half.

### **How hard to bunt the ball**

A sacrifice bunt should travel at least six feet and no more than fifteen feet for maximum effectiveness. At a later practice, preferably when the field is damp from earlier rain, demonstrate how bunts travel slower on damp ground, so use a firmer right hand.

### **Taking a pitch while bunting**

**Right after the Snap Turn, quickly pull the bat back** to your shoulder, moving mainly your **right hand**.

No need to move any part of your body other than your right arm and hand, unless trying to avoid being hit by the pitch.

If you feel like **raising the bat to bunt** the ball, the **pitch is too high**. Always pull the bat back when you feel like raising it up. Practice this as a team as well as individually.



**Notes to the coach:**

- a) Try to cover all the sections above in the practice where you first introduce the sacrifice bunt, with the exception of “Bunting down the foul lines” and “Taking a pitch while bunting.” Just cover what you can in the time available, and have fun with it. Sometime after that practice, review this video again and make notes of the details you didn't cover, so you can cover them next time. Repeat all of the fundamentals with them at several practices, using fewer words as appropriate, and inserting points you've selected from the Strategy video.
- b) It is proper but not necessary for the batter to execute a Load motion as the pitcher approaches release of the ball. If you choose to have any or all of your players to do a Load, have them keep it small, slow, and level -- don't change posture. Just press the hips and shoulders toward the catcher an inch or two.
- c) Tell lefties, or the whole team, not to start running to first base or turning toward first, before the ball contacts the bat. (Reserve this for a later lesson.)
- d) It is OK for the right knee to touch the ground while bunting a low pitch.