

Moorhead Baseball
Routines/Hitting Drills

Philosophy – How we train:

- Teach everyday with the goal of our players becoming their own coach. Get them to feel what's going on.
- Consistent mix of instruction with video and mirror work as well as specific hitting drills.
- Speak consistently and watch video with our players about the “why and how” we train. Get them to buy in.
- Work in smaller groups to maximize individual attention.
- Measure what we can to show improvement.
- We try to build confidence and make hitting FUN for the players!
- Don't let them be robotic, let their athleticism take over, unless it is needed to get them to understand.

Intent – Hit the ball hard:

- Get our best swing off every at bat!
- The harder you hit the ball the better chance of getting a hit.
- Focus on the 10-25-degree launch angle. Line Drives!!
- To hit the ball hard you have to swing at good pitches.
- Take your walks! A walk is a hit. Pitch recognition is a must to hitting the ball hard.
- Get the starter out of the game before they can go to their closer.

Mental game:

- Play the game one pitch at a time. Develop quality routines in all phases of the game.
- Keep simple, easy to repeat, every pitch, every game of the season!
- What are you committed to? Protect your mind from distractions.
- Eliminate distractions by being committed to your plan and routine.

Hitting routines:

- Focus on the process and not the results. Batting average and personnel stats throw out the window.
- Take the YOU out of the equation!
- Beneficial and constructive routines make this happen.

In the hole:

- Gather all the information you can before you go on deck. Hitting coach, tipping, hitters before you, charts, etc.
- Be in the dugout getting yourself ready to hit, once you've gathered all the information start to focus on your plan and anticipate possible situations.

- Lock in on the pitcher to see for yourself if he is tipping anything. Think about previous AB's.
- See how and when the catcher is shifting.
- Have an idea when you have to start your load before get to the on deck circle.
- You will chase foul balls.

On deck:

- Watch all signs being given as if they were being given to you.
- Work on your timing with each pitch.
- Practicing your approach on deck is crucial to not throwing ABs away. If you get your pitch early in the count, you need to be on time. Visualize the pitch you want to hit while watching the hitter ahead of you.
- Pay attention to how the pitcher is attacking the hitter.
- Know the situation and what might be expected of you when you go to the box.

Pre-AB:

- Walk to the box with confidence. Chest out!
- Some players wipe the box clean. Take the sign with one-foot in and one foot out.
- Lock in on the trademark and take a deep breath.
- Clear your mind and focus on seeing the ball flight you want.

In the box swing version:

- Keep your focus on what you want the ball to do when you hit it. Visualize the line drive where you want it.
- This will prevent bad thoughts from coming into your mind. (I have to get a hit; I can't strike out)
- Make sure your physical routine is subtle, easy to duplicate and doesn't take much time.

Post pitch:

- Wipe the last pitch away. Let everyone know you are playing in the present. Show your teammates and coaches you are in control.
- 15 seconds between pitches. What you do with it will determine your success. Explanation below:
- 1-5 Gather information as you step out of the box (Do your thinking out of the box). Get the sign, Was I ready to hit? Did I see it well? Was I on time? Any other information is a distraction!!!
- 5-9 Get control of your mind. Eyes on the trademark, deep breath, re-set & slow the game down. Keep things from spinning out of control.
- 9-12 Visually see the plan. See the ball into the hitting zone. See the ball flight you desire.

- Remember an outcome is not a plan! Plans involve pitch type locations and ball flight only.
- 12-15 COMMIT TO THE PLAN-No second guessing or plan B
- You must be willing to lose with your plan! ALL IN!
- The last three seconds are the most important. At this time, you must be visually connected to the baseball.
- No more thinking. Let your training take over.
- You don't actually hit, your sub conscious mind does - YOUR TRAINING!
- Trying too much or too hard defeats your training!
- Be athletic, See it and hit it!

After Contact-K:

- Run it out hard and have great body language.
- If you strike out, go back to the dugout with your chest out and say something beneficial to the next hitter.
- Never let the pitcher see you show bad body language, all it does is add to his confidence.

Post-AB in the dugout:

- It's ok to be upset, but don't let the whole world know it.
- Stay in the dugout until you are ready to let the AB go.
- Do something to signify letting the AB go-Taking off your batting gloves, your helmet, drink of water.
- Don't take it to the field!
- Focus on what you learned from the AB and start focusing on the next pitch.
- Being a great hitter requires repeating the same process every pitch, each at bat, every day for _____ games each year!
- 4 for 4 each game. **YOU HAVE TO PRACTICE IT!**

Hitting drills – What we are trying to accomplish:

- What does your training system start with? Instruction that includes video. Visualize learners.
- Being athletic, moving fast, being able to adjust to off speed pitches and learning what pitches we can hit hard are all things we are striving for.
- Building bat speed AND bat quickness (strength and conditioning program combined with training and mechanics).

Hitting drills:

- Proper loading pattern is key to our players' development. Work on it every day.
- Heavy bats always mixed in.
- Drill 1
- Drill 2

- We use drills that involve a moving ball 80-90% of the time.

Hitting drills:

- Verti max (you can make your own).
- Hit Trax or radar gun-INTENT! CONFIDENCE!
- Launch angle cage (You can make it yourself!)
- Heavy bat routine (You can make it yourself!)
- Light bat.
- Back hip drill.
- Leg lift drill.
- A lot of the same drills with the TEE.

Batting practice routines:

- Use counts and situations in most of hitting routines.
- BP with different angles, machines, screens.
- Have names for specific BP routines you want to accomplish.
- Team Defense BP.
- Defensive BP with rotations.
- Five station BP.
- Two strike drills-plan-machines.
- Bunt Game.

Miscellaneous drills:

- No stride drills! They must learn to hit no stride, then add whatever you want.
- Tee drills (How to hit off the tee) No stride, leg lift, jump back, toe tap, slow motion, in, out, pull, high, low, in, out.
- Machine Velo drills
- Hack attack Breaking balls every day.
- Live Arm Slow, fast, mix, angles, counts.
- Gadgets One hand, small balls, heavy bat, Muhl drills, mirror.

Hitting for Success-Offensive Mechanics

1. **Our plan/goals:**
 - A. Hit "YOUR" pitch early in the count.
 - B. Get our BEST swing off at least once every at bat! Intent to hit the ball hard!
 - C. Maximize bat speed and bat quickness.
 - D. Get the starting pitcher or reliever to a high pitch count – meaning be selective, don't swing at everything, but finding your pitch to drive.
 - E. Must have a great "two strike approach-mentality".
 - F. High on base %, lead the league in doubles, runs scored. More walks/ hit by pitches than strikeouts.
 - G. Be the Toughest out in the league!! Beat the best pitchers!

2. **Mechanical breakdown overview:**
 - A. Comfortable and athletic.
 - B. Eliminate alignment variables in the stance and the load.
 - C. Players understand how the load works and why.
 - D. Proper contact position.
 - E. Extension and follow through.

3. **Pre-pitch routine:**
 - A. Keep it simple and focus on your breathing.
 - B. Play the game one pitch at a time.
 - C. Positive self-talk and swing vision for focus.
 - D. Eyes focused in the right place.

4. **Stance:**
 - A. Comfortable-Workable-Individual. Lots of bad stances out there!
 - B. Balanced, good spine angle
 - C. Knees in between your feet
 - D. Back toe inside the ankle.
 - E. Both eyes on the pitcher/Watch for over rotation from the beginning!
 - F. Tension free
 - G. Proper alignment here can fix a lot late!

5. **Gather to load:**
 - A. In the gathering stage, watch for the head and back hip to move back too far.
 - B. When the weight transfers around the back hip and into the back shoulder.
 - C. Control and relaxed is best. Must stay on the inside with energy coming from the core!

- D. Look for players who load against the back knee (fake load) and not around the hip. Stretch!
- E. A “real” load gives you adjustability
- F. Generate bat speed as you load. We want intent to swing and hit the ball hard as the load is happening each pitch.
- G. The hands must stay active. Yes-No every pitch! Great takes!
- F. Back elbow position and proper shoulder rotation during the load- Nothing past 45 degrees (alignment). This gets you to the launch position.
- G. Shoulder rotation and alignment. What to look for.
- H. When do you start? No correct answer to this. Players need to figure it out!!
 - a. Different for each hitter
 - b. Speed of pitch, different pitchers release and arm angles.
 - c. Wind up vs. stretch
 - d. Early, middle, late (2 strike)

7. Stride:

- A. Many different ways. Experiment with your guys to find the best way for each player. (Exit speed drills)
- B. Knees and ankles must stay inside feet.
- C. Try to keep weight on the ball of front foot and off the toe as it lands from 45 degrees to open so the hips can clear. The pelvis must be able to open up!
- D. Dynamic balance and posture in this position. You should look the same at this point whether you swing or take.
- E. Stride and load must have adjustability as you go.
- F. Avoid two part swings! You must commit much earlier with this approach.

8. Benefits of real load:

- A. Pitch recognition. You don't have to cheat.
- B. Allows you to let the ball get deep (come to you-see the ball longer)
- C. It gets your lower half in proper position to maximize hip rotation
- D. Slows the game down and reduces late head movement.
- E. Prevents you from going and getting the ball-Stride to hit, double stride.
- F. Easier to keep the hands active.
- G. Better chance to hit off speed and stop chasing. Gets your best swing off more.
- H. Some check points in the load:
 1. You should be able to see the pitcher with your back eye.
 2. The pitcher should see your bottom hand.

3. The knob should be pointing towards the catchers opposite shin guard.
4. The bat should be somewhere over your head.
5. The front elbow should be even with your hands. Wrist cocked.

9. Swing:

- A. When the front heel comes down slightly, open the back knee and hip, uncoil towards the pitcher
- B. Hand path. The bat is turned and flattened out. On plane from the start! No hand push.
- C. Back forearm will be vertical.
- D. The front elbow will point towards the pitcher and the back shoulder will drive down and in.
- E. Back elbow beats the tricep to the rib cage. Bat lag, not bat drag.
- F. Must focus on the tilt of the shoulder to get the launch angle you desire.

10. Contact:

- A. Palm-up/palm-down with the front leg blocked.
- B. Front foot should be open at least at a 45 degree or more.
- C. Lower half should be tall with the belly button facing the pitcher.
- D. Back elbow flexed and close to the body. Front elbow flexed with the elbow facing the pitcher at the same tilt as the bat.
- E. Shoulder tilt to pitch height. The bat extends along this line (launch angle). Lower half stays tall.
- F. Head should be behind the ball.
- G. Dynamic balance. Head and eyes out front.

11. Extension:

- A. Arms extend through the ball after contact.
- B. Power V before follow through.
- C. Direction is crucial to good extension
- D. Extension is the result of an on time, in sequence swing!
- E. You don't try to make extension happen.
- F. If you break the chain and cast or spin you won't have good extension.

12. Finish/follow through:

- A. Usually over the front shoulder/launch angle will determine.
- B. Front elbow close to body early.
- C. Balanced with head down on the contact zone.
- D. One hand or two?
- E. The front leg can be firm or bent.
- F. If the swing is in sequence, the follow through will take care of itself