



Teaching Bunt Defense

Many coaches make bunt defense too difficult and confusing by having ten different plays and having an intricate naming system. The defenses below are standard bunt defenses, nothing revolutionary. The real success of defending bunts lies in the team performing the general principals of the bunt defense.

The numbering system below is just one possible naming system. It is entirely plausible to simply name your bunt defenses and not use a numbering system since it really doesn't matter if the other team knows what defense your team is in.

Initial Tactical Game:

Set up a full infield including a pitcher. The offense starts with a runner on first base. Pitcher delivers the pitch and the hitter sacrifice bunts to advance the runner.

Give no instruction to your defense and see how many of the rules and defenses they can come up with on their own.

General principals of bunt defense

- 1.) Communicate "BUNT!" as soon as you see it
- 2.) Sprint to your assignment as soon as you see bunt
- 3.) Be under control when you get to the ball
- 4.) The quicker you get to the ball, the less rushed you are to make the play
- 5.) Pitcher must hop off to his responsibility after he finishes his pitch
- 5.) Set your feet!
- 6.) Cover every base (whoever doesn't field bunt between P/3B has to cover 3rd)
- 7.) GET AN OUT!!!!

Calling system:

There are many numbers of ways to communicate bunt defenses to your team. This is just one system that may work for you

The number 1 represents the first baseman charging

The number 3 represents the third baseman charging

The number 13 represents both the first and third baseman charging

Call a three digit number, the first number represents who is charging.



If you want both first and third baseman charging, the first two numbers will be "1-3"

EXAMPLES:

178 = First baseman charges

345 = Third baseman charges

136 = First and third baseman charges

Bunt Defenses w/no Runner on:

Default (Called by any number beginning with 13 or just "default")- The first baseman, and third baseman charge hard when the hitter shows bunt and are responsible for their respective sides of the infield. The pitcher charges in the middle of the field as soon as he releases the ball. The second baseman covers first, and the short-stop covers second. The third baseman has to retreat to third if he does not field the ball. If he does, the pitcher must cover third.

Bunt Defenses w/ Runner on 1st only:

Default (see above)

Third baseman charges only (Any number beginning with a 3) - The third baseman charges when the hitter shows bunt and is responsible for the 3rd base half of the field. The pitcher hops off to the 1st base side after he delivers the pitch and is responsible for the 1st base side. The second baseman backs up the play at first base. Who ever doesn't field the bunt between the first baseman and pitcher, covers third base.

If the ball is bunted hard down the first base line, the first baseman must come get the ball. If the first baseman leaves the bag, the second baseman must cover it since he is heading that way anyways.

Bunt Defenses w/ Runner on 2nd or 1st & 2nd:

First baseman charges only (Any number beginning with 1 not followed by 3)- The first baseman charges when the hitter shows bunt and is responsible for the 1st base half of the field. The pitcher hops off to the 3rd base side after he delivers the pitch and is responsible for the 3rd base side. The third baseman stays home to cover third base, but does charge if a ball is bunted hard down the third base line that the pitcher cannot field.

****Do not call any bunt defense where the third baseman leaves early, this leaves you susceptible to a fake bunt and straight steal****



Basic Performance Stage:

During this phase, call a bunt defense, have the coach show bunt and watch players move to their responsibilities. This is where the principals of sprinting to their spots, communicating, and the pitcher hopping off after deliver should be perfected. Do not use a baseball during this phase.

Intermediate Performance Stage:

When your team is comfortable with the bunt defenses and the general principals, and can perform them without a baseball, add a baseball to the mix. Practice fielding bunts to all spots on the field in all bunt defenses and throwing to any base you may have to in a game.

During this phase, add the principals of setting their feet when they throw, getting to the ball quickly so they can be more under control when they throw, covering every base, and getting an out.

Performance Stage (Game Conditions):

Once your team is comfortable with bunt defenses at full speed with no runner, add runners to the mix. Once they are able to perform them well with runners, have hitters bunt live against a pitcher throwing live.