

BATTING SESSION with Kevin Greatrex

Aims

- Main point of agreement; players should swing the bat as fast as possible as the faster the bat is swung the harder the ball is hit; hit the ball hard and flat
- Batting should be smooth and rhythmical flowing process ; golfer or tennis player
- Batters should be aggressive; enter the box with attitude “going to hit every pitch”
Only one decision to be made on pitch- not to swing
- Coach individuals to improve themselves; don't just facilitate practice

Stance

- Position in box; front foot level with mid side of plate so that after step player is hitting a strike
- Both feet at right angles to side of plate
- Both feet are aligned so stance is regular not open or closed
- Grip; align hands so that mid knuckles are aligned; thumbs hold down index fingers
- Bottom arm is relaxed and has right angle at elbow
- Hands level with shoulders (height & forward or backward of back shoulder)
- Knee bend is slight & upper body trunk slight lean toward plate; puts body weight on balls of feet
- Head upright so eyes are horizontal
- Back elbow in relaxed 45degree angle from body
- Weight even on both feet

Weight Transfer

- Starting position of 50% weight on each foot; belly button centred between feet
- GO BACK so that belly button is inside back foot
- Hands and arms stay in same position as in stance relative to back shoulder
- STEP (front foot)by driving forward using inside of big toe on back foot
- Weight distribution has changed on step to be 0% front foot and 100% against back foot
- **STEP (glide) to land on inside of big toe with foot still at right to side of plate**
- If done properly belly button returns to starting position
- Landing should cause weight to stop moving forward and convert to rotation of hips
- Faster weight shift results in more explosive hip rotation
- **Back foot rotates 90 degrees (on middle to inside pitches) and points down**
- Hips rotated so belly button faces pitcher (on middle to inside pitches)
- Hip rotation causes front foot to rotate on ball and turn about 45 degrees
- On hitting ball weight distribution is ?% against front foot and /% back foot

Hands

- **INSIDE PITCH:** after hip rotation hands leave ready position and travel in straight line to ball; allows bat head to reach hitting (strike) zone without pulling foul balls; bottom arm straightens on (about) contact while top arm still has bend at elbow; belly button points toward pitcher
- **OUTSIDE PITCH:** there is less hip rotation (and back foot rotation) causing hands to take arc to outside pitch; bat head trails ball hit to opposite field; hitting outside pitches normally requires both arms to straighten on contact and for low pitches a slight body lean is also needed just to reach ball; belly button points in direction of ball path
- After contact top hands rolls over bottom and swing is completed when hands finish just below front shoulder.
- **FLAT SWING;** the swing should be as flat as possible; ensure more chance of hitting round ball with round bat in centre thus hitting line shot

Coaching thoughts

- **“PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT”;** Repetition is how we learn
- All players are different so coach individuals to improve by using drills each player needs
- Batting is sequential so try and help players overcome faults early in the sequence first; this may solve a problem you have found later in the sequence
- Most coaches see the result; that’s easy **BUT find the cause; fix the cause** by being very specific about what needs to be done only then will the result be different
- If a player has many problems in their batting start at the beginning and work on **ONE** thing at a time; some “coaches” like to show their knowledge by telling players too much at one time; it takes time and repetition (practice) to make changes to batting; the older the player the more permanent their technique has become and the longer it will take to help them modify it.
- Humans forget things so review batting techniques regularly; get the players to explain sequences and problems so they understand the process of batting (and softball generally); explaining batting once does not mean players understand it fully