

Offensive Game Situations: What Strategy to Use, When & Why

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The 3 Parts of Offensive Strategy

- Short Game
- Power Game
- Running Game



The Power Game

- Key – The Long Ball

- Object:

- *Put Pressure on the Defense and Pitcher*
- *One Mistake is a Run*



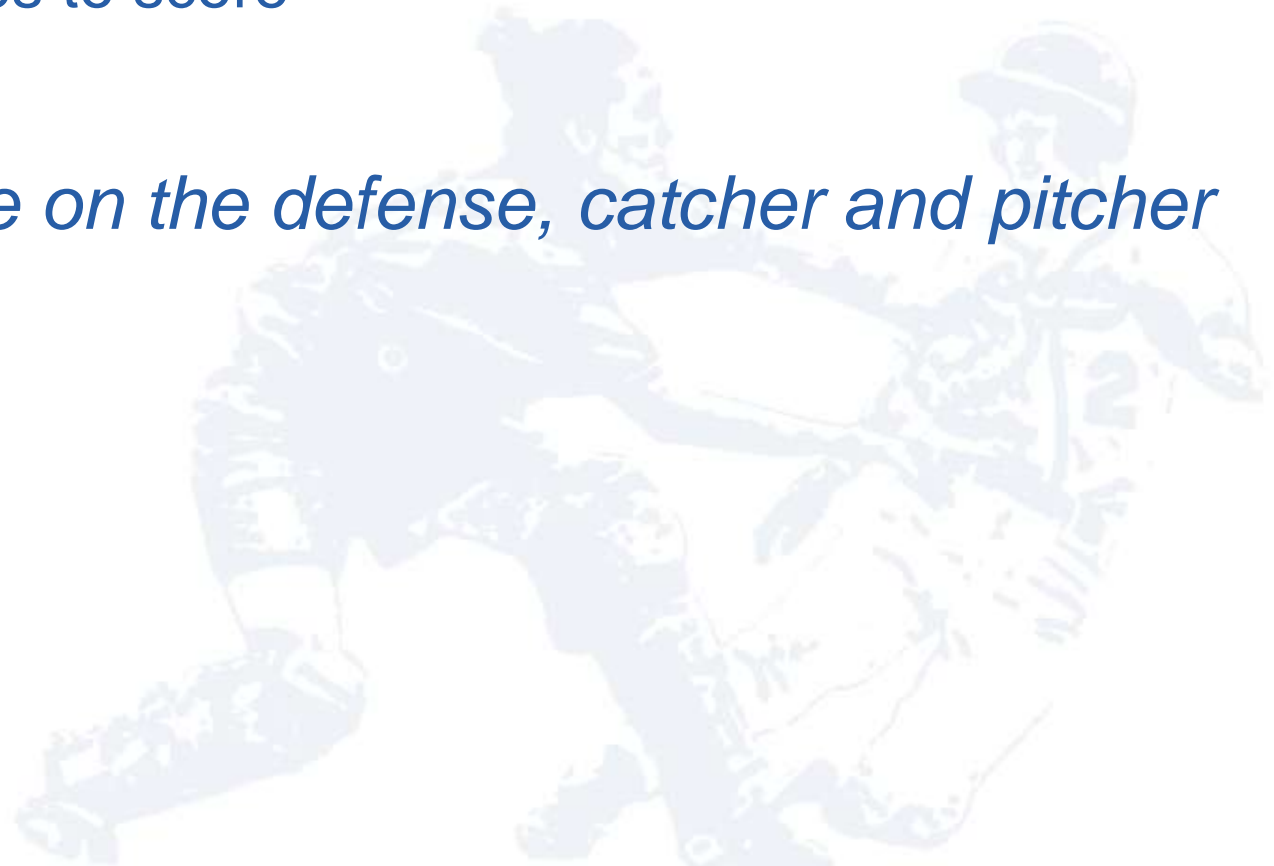
The Running Game

- **Key – Speed & Aggressiveness:**

- Beating out infield hits
- Stretching singles into doubles
- Taking chances to score

- **Object :**

- *Put pressure on the defense, catcher and pitcher*



● Percentages:

- Good **Batting** average: .350
- **Stealing** percentage: .750
- **Sac Bunt** percentage: .500 - .800

● Times:

- Runners time from 1st to 2nd : 2.5 ave. to slow
- Catchers throw from glove to glove: 1.9 – 2.0 average
- Pitchers release to glove: .5 average



The Short Game

● Key – Speed & Aggressiveness:

- Hard slap – running slap (RS) for hard hit
- Soft slap – RS for bunt or touch
- Running slap – regular RS
- Running drag – RS with a drag bunt
- Squeeze – suicide or safety
- Fake slap & bunt – right handed
- Timing hit – batter shows bunt for timing & hits
- Drop bunt – basehit bunt from righty

● Object:

- *Put pressure on the defense*
- *Get runners on base*
- *Force defense to rush & make errors*

Positives

- Can Score Lots of Runs
- Exciting
- Creates Momentum
- Never Out of the Game
- Stretches Out Defense
- Better Pitches to Non Power Hitters
- Strategy is Easier

Negatives

- More Strikeouts
- More Prone to Slumps
- Must Hit to Win
- Can be Dominated by Excellent Pitcher
- Easier Outs on Flyballs
- Harder if No Fences
- Usually Slower Runners
- Hard to Develop

Running Game

Positives

- Can Intimidate Other Team
- Create More Out of Less
- Puts Pressure on Defense to Stop You
- Don't Need Hits to Win
- Pitcher Feels Pressure
- Can Limit Changeup & Drop

Negatives

- Must Get on Base
- Doesn't Matter if Flyball
- Must Practice Decision Making
- Takes More Runners to Score
- Can Run Yourself Out of Game

Positives

- Puts Pressure on Defense
- Lots of Ways to Get On
- More Ways to Advance Runners & Score
- Less Strikeouts
- Can Beat Excellent Pitcher
- Creates Defensive Space

Negatives

- Must Get Ball on Ground
- Must Have Lots of Skills to Create Space
- Takes a Few Hits to Score
- Tough to Make Up Lots of Runs
- Some Players Want to HIT!

Balanced Offensive Attack

- **Makes Your Opponent Need:**
 - **A Good Defense** (shutdown running & short game)
 - **A Powerful Pitcher** (shutdown power game)
 - **Catcher with a Strong Arm** (shutdown running game)
 - **Well Coordinated Defense** (shutdown short game)



Skills Needed

POWER GAME	Ability to hit speed, movement & location, hit for average, hit for power, place hit, situation hit, hit with all counts.
RUNNING GAME	Ability to straight steal, delayed steal, double steal. Game sense to seize opportunities to run.
SHORT GAME	Ability to sacrifice bunt, push bunt, slap, fake slap + bunt, drop/drag, running LHS, pitch selection, bat control.

When to Be Aggressive

● When **TO Be** Aggressive:

- The greater the game, the greater the risk!
- When umpire has a BIG zone
- When the ground is wet, force them to throw wet balls
- Runner in Scoring position – 1st

● When **NOT** to Be Aggressive:

- When pitcher has as many K's as BB's
- When pitcher is struggling (also crowd plate)
- When umpire has a small zone
- Late innings, down by 1 run – try to get the lead-off walk

Offensive Strategy Concepts

● Score First!

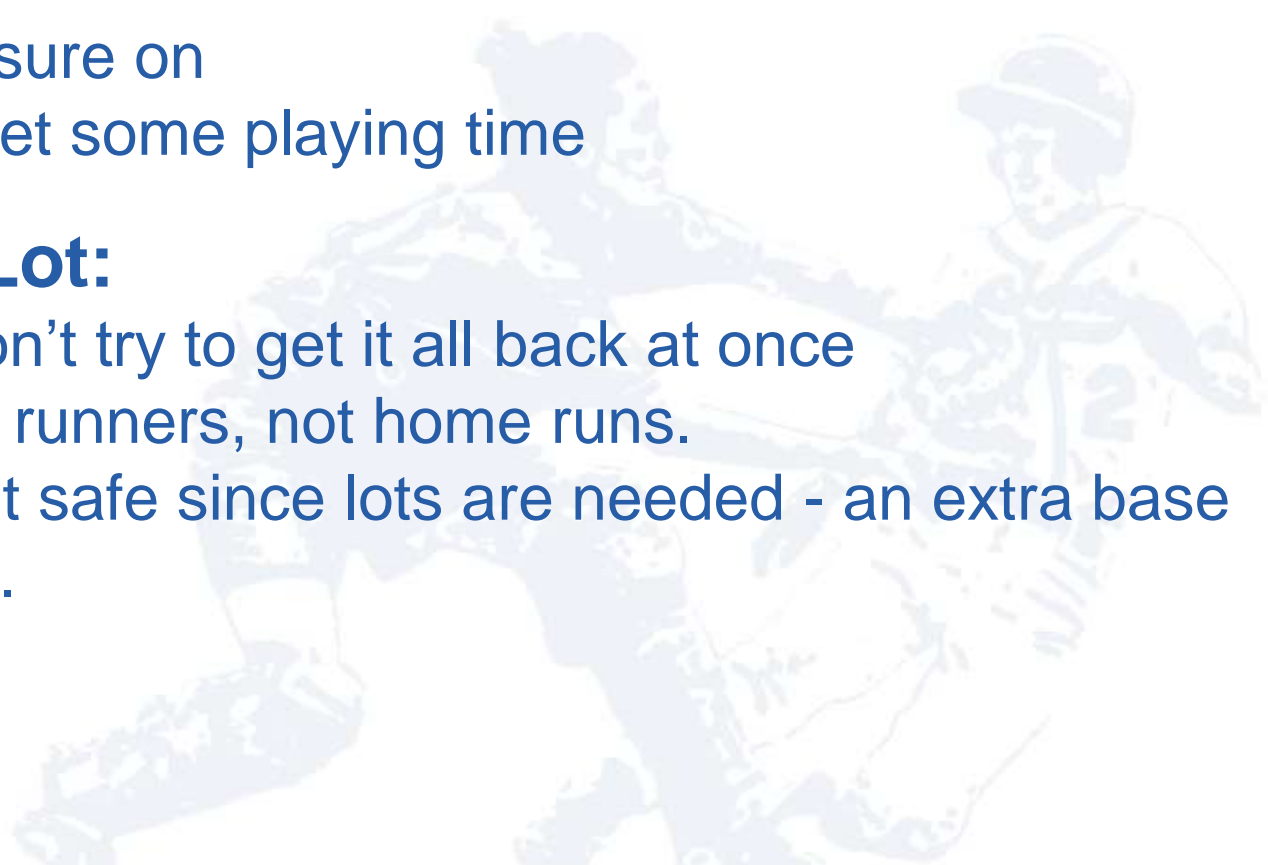
- Your opponent must score 2 runs to beat you

● Ahead By A Lot:

- Keep the pressure on
- Let reserves get some playing time

● Behind By A Lot:

- Chip away. Don't try to get it all back at once
- Need for base runners, not home runs.
- Runners play it safe since lots are needed - an extra base isn't worth risk.



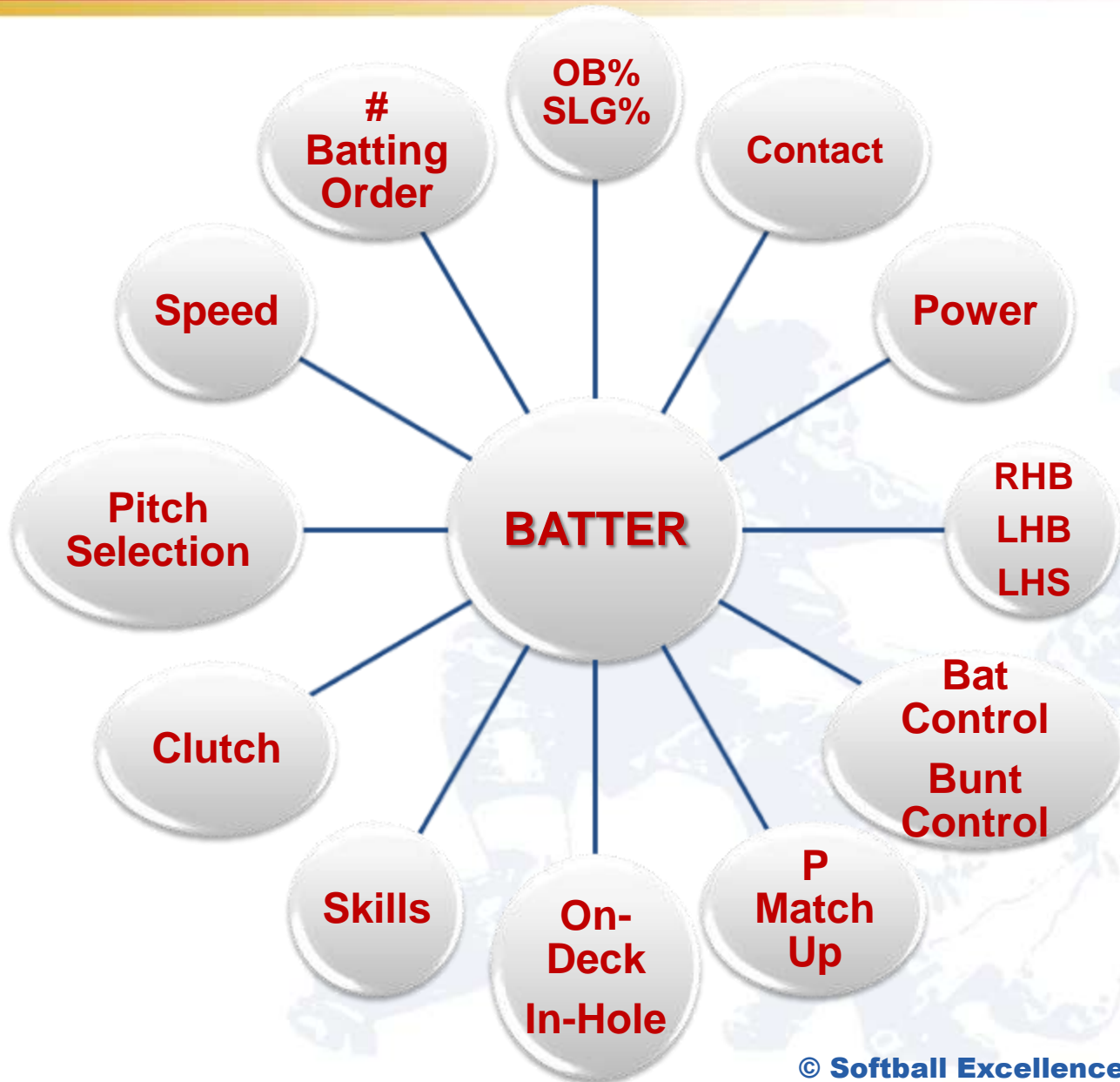
Know Before the Game Starts

- How Good is Your Pitcher Today?
- How Long Will She Throw Well?
- How Well Will Your Hitters Do Against Their Pitcher Today?
- Will This be a High or Low Scoring Game?
 - *If High* – save outs and build up runners to play for big innings.
 - *If Low* – give up outs to advance runners into scoring position
 - Play base by base
 - play for 1-2 runs using bunts & Hit and Runs

Things to Know to Call a Play

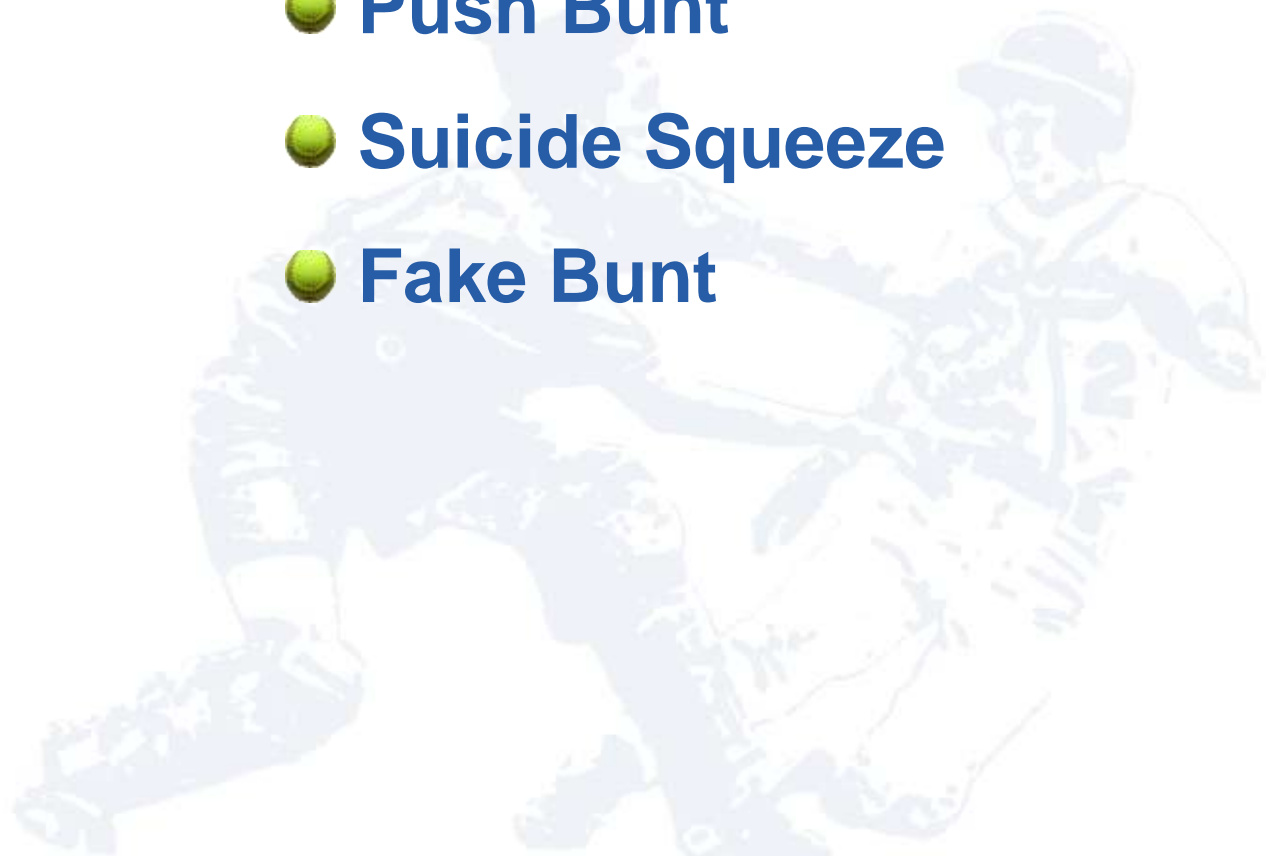
- Batter
- Count
- # of Outs
- Score
- Inning
- Runner
- Occupied Bases
- Defensive Coverage
- Pitcher
- Catcher
- Elements
- Field
- Bench Players
- Umpires
- Coaches Tendencies

Batter's Factors



Offensive Plays

- Running Slap
- Bunt & Run
- Hit & Run
- Run & Hit
- Straight Steal
- Delayed Steal
- Double Steal
- Angle Down
- Sac Bunt
- Basehit Bunt
- Push Bunt
- Suicide Squeeze
- Fake Bunt



When **NOT** to Use **RUNNING SLAP**

● **Runner on 2nd – 1 Out:**

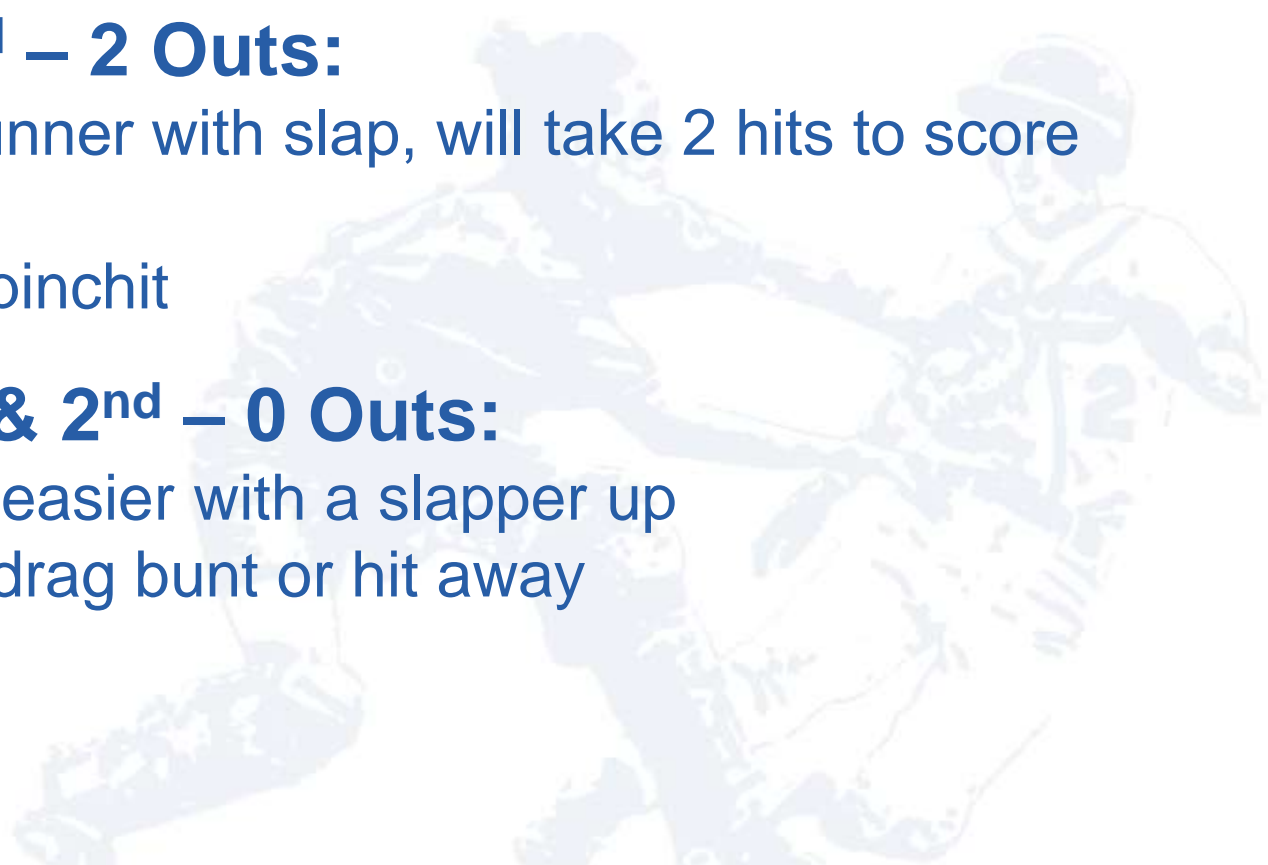
- Want ball to Right side where slappers don't usually go
- Have slapper drag bunt instead in this situation

● **Runner on 2nd – 2 Outs:**

- Won't score runner with slap, will take 2 hits to score runner
- Powerslap or pinchit

● **Runner at 1st & 2nd – 0 Outs:**

- Force at 3rd is easier with a slapper up
- Have slapper drag bunt or hit away



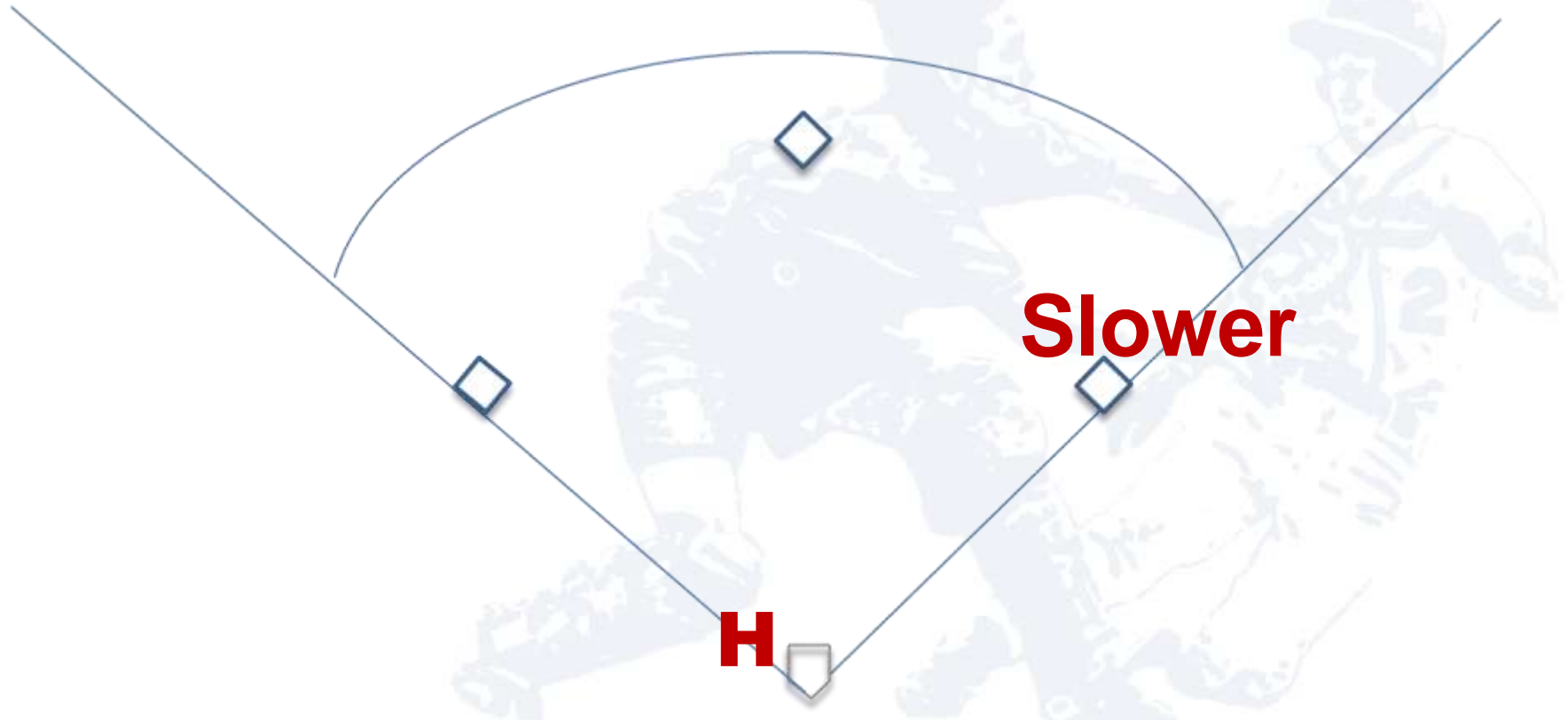
DRAG Bunt vs SACRIFICE Bunt

- Drag Bunt Early in Game
- Drag Bunt Early in Count (no strikes)
- Drag Bunt if Lefty throwing curveballs
- *“Perfect or Foul”*



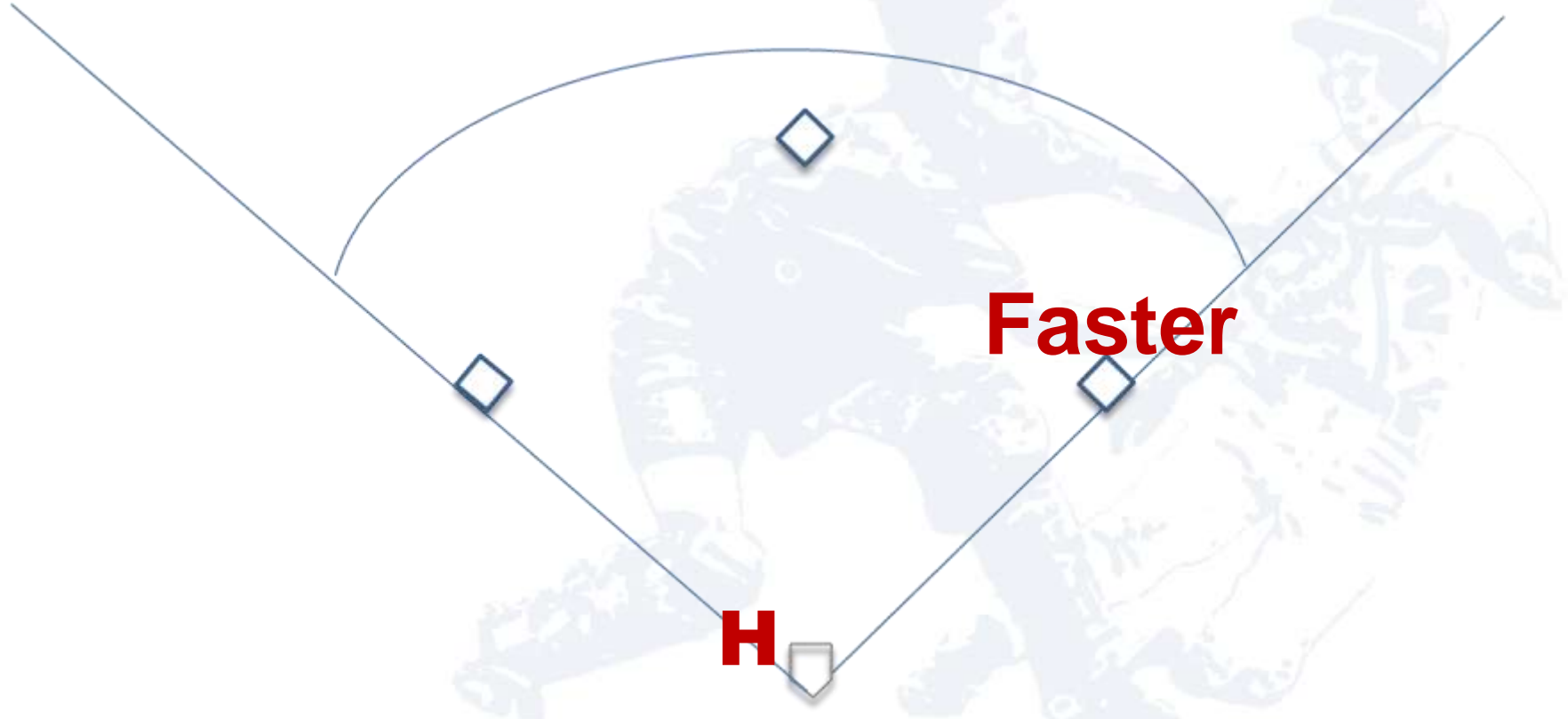
Hit & Run

- Runner Goes on Pitch
- Batter Must Protect Her by hit, slap or bunt no matter what pitch is or where pitch is



Run & Hit

- Runner Goes on Pitch
- If Batter likes pitch she can hit, slap or bunt
- If not – batter takes & runner steals

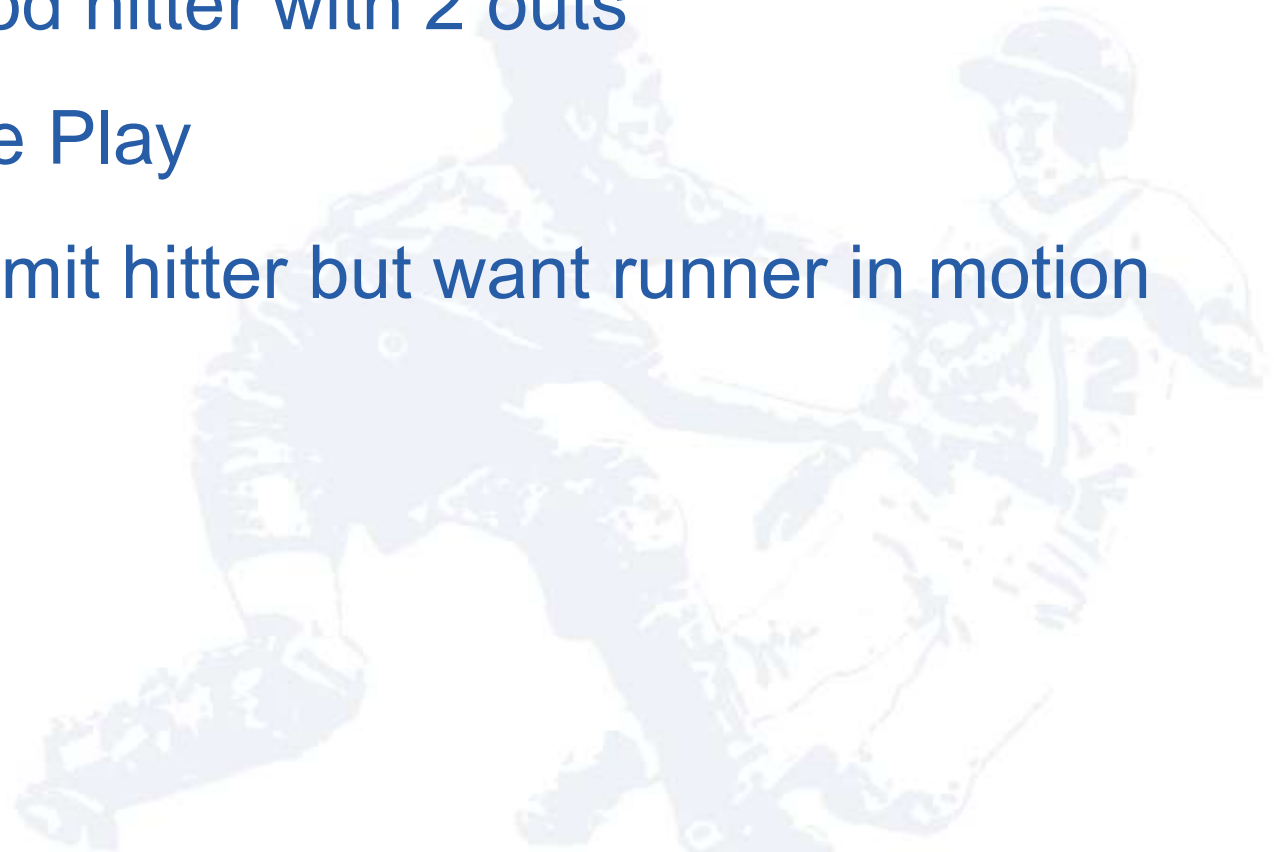


WHY Hit & Run?

- Forces batter to be aggressive
- Gets runner moving (ave to slow runner)
- Create IF openings with R going and IF breaks early
- Slow R at 2nd weak hitter (OF in) – H&R puts R in motion for only chance to score
- Good hitter up, weak hitters follow
- Slapper up
- 0-2 outs – hit on ground
- 2 outs – hit it hard

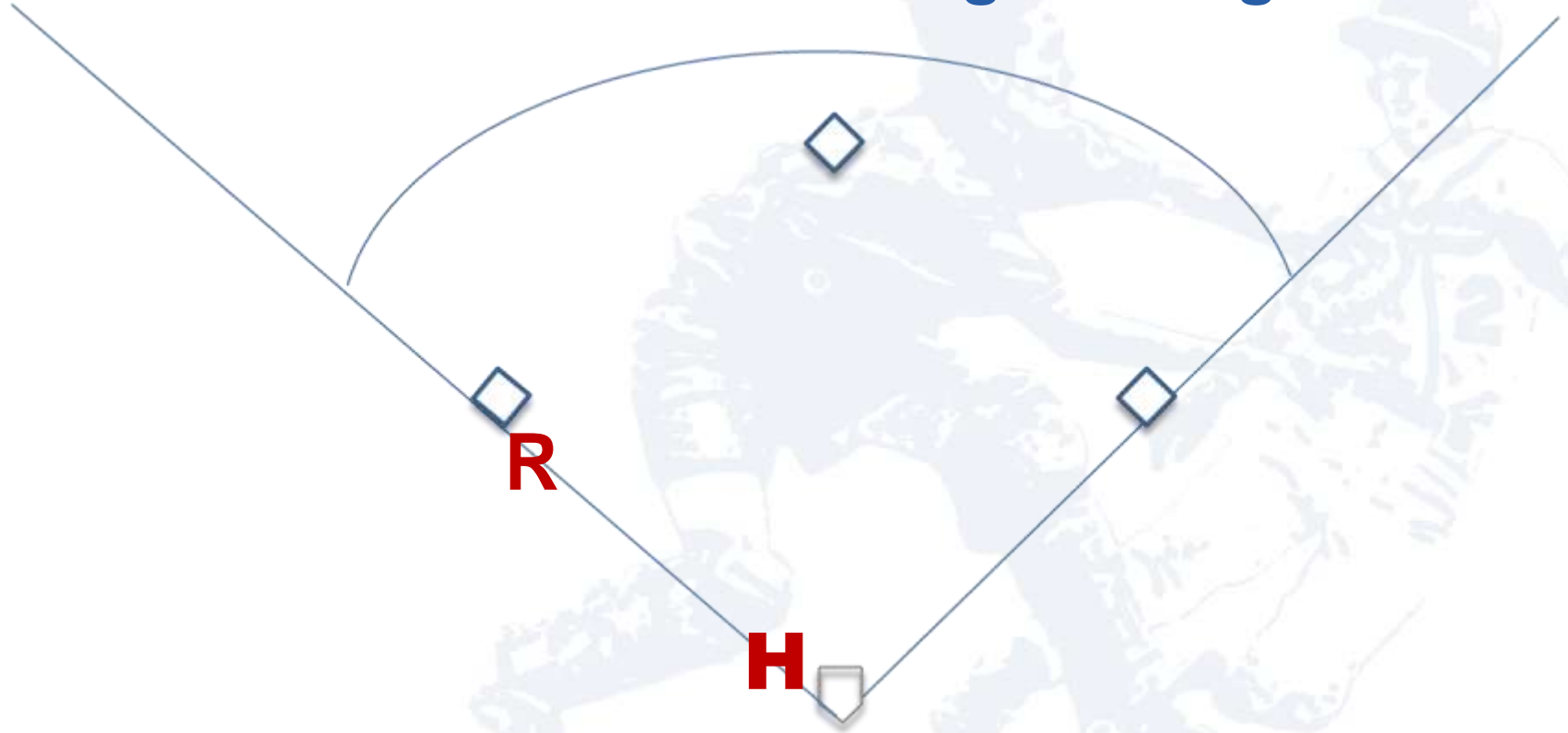
WHY Run & Hit?

- Want Runner to advance 2 bases
- Early in Game
- 2 strikes or good hitter with 2 outs
- Prevent Double Play
- Don't want to limit hitter but want runner in motion



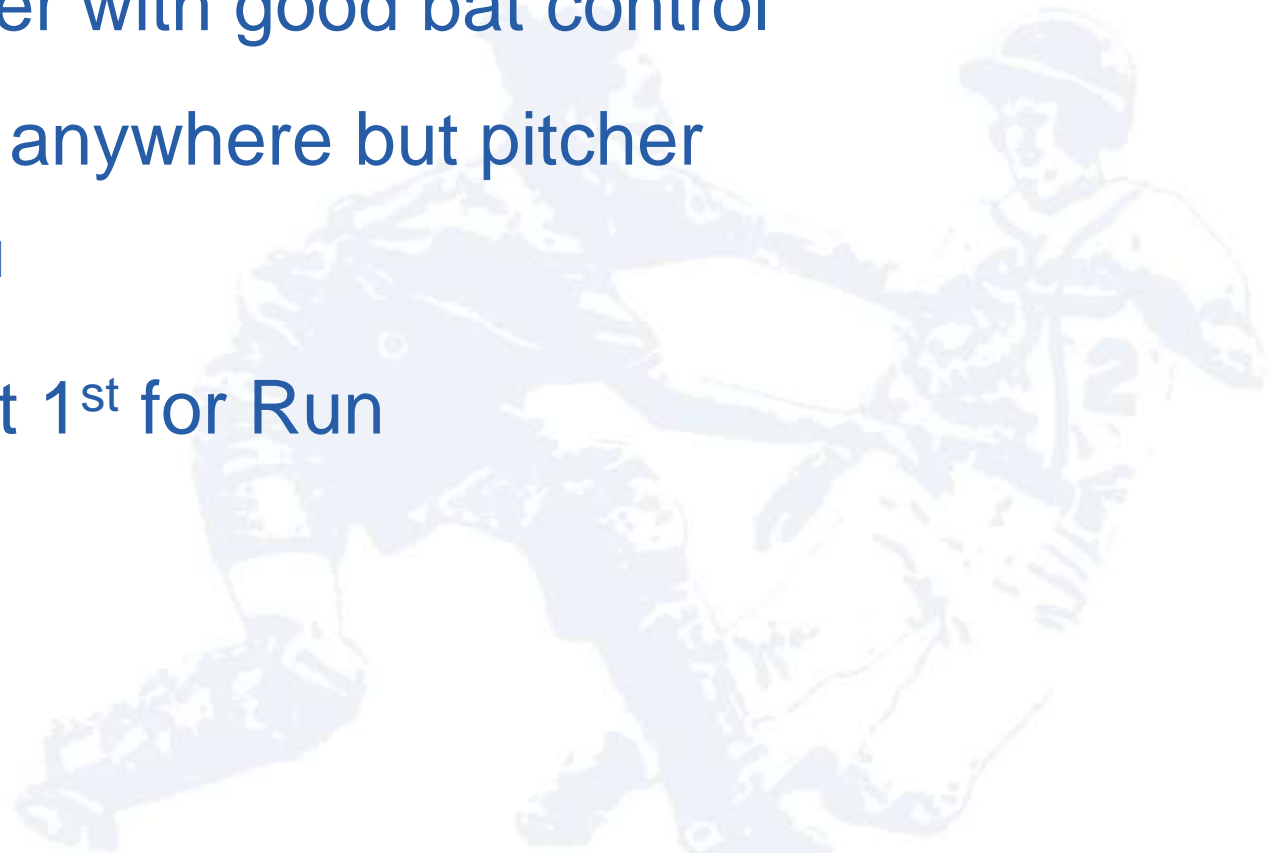
Angle Down

- Runner at 3rd takes lead & watches angle of hit
- If batter likes, she hits or slaps
- R breaks for home if ball “angles” to ground



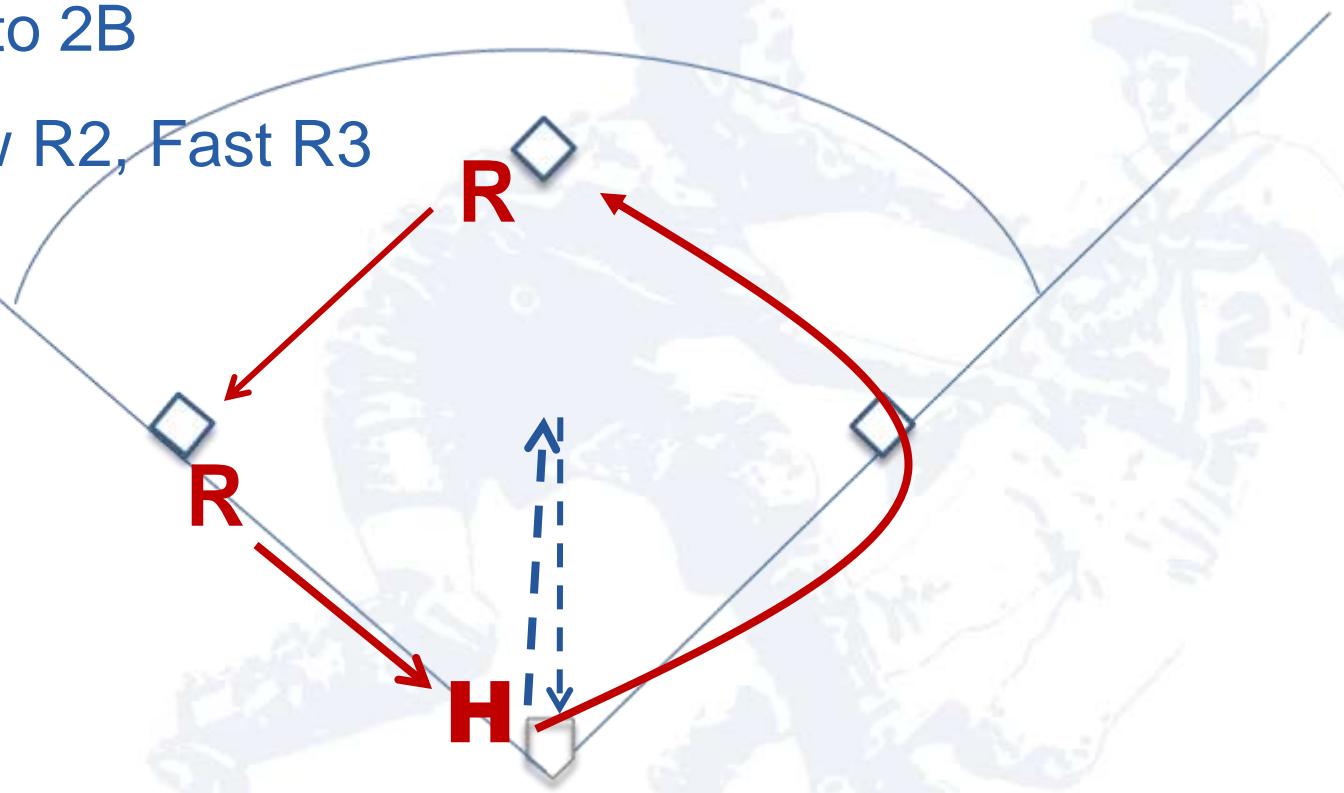
WHY Angle Down?

- Weak hitter(s) up against dominant pitcher
- Less than 2 outs
- LHS up or batter with good bat control
- Hit Groundball anywhere but pitcher
- Slower R at 3rd
- Trade an out at 1st for Run



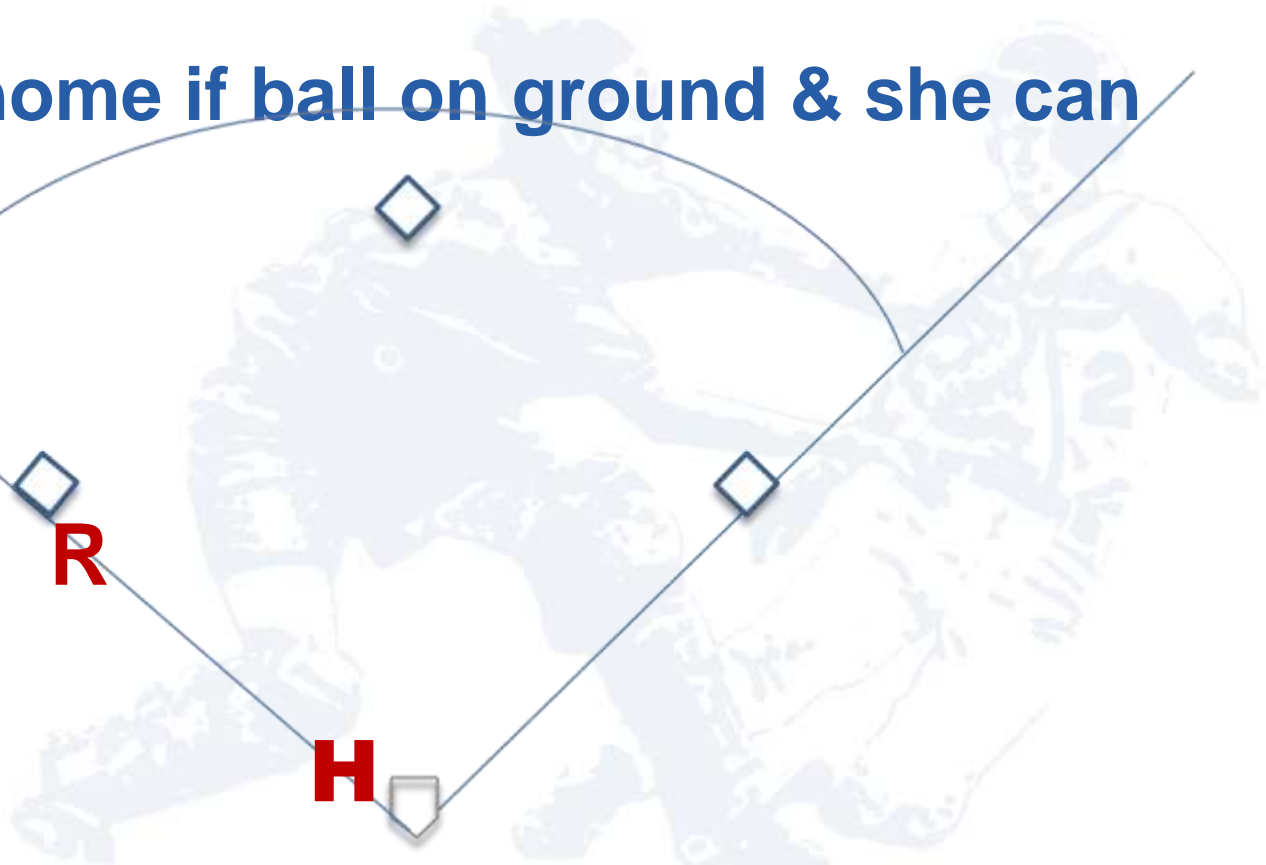
Angle Down – R's at 2nd & 3rd

- Ball hit to Pitcher
- R at 3B goes home, P throws Home
- R at 2B goes to 3B,
- Batter goes to 2B
- No with Slow R2, Fast R3



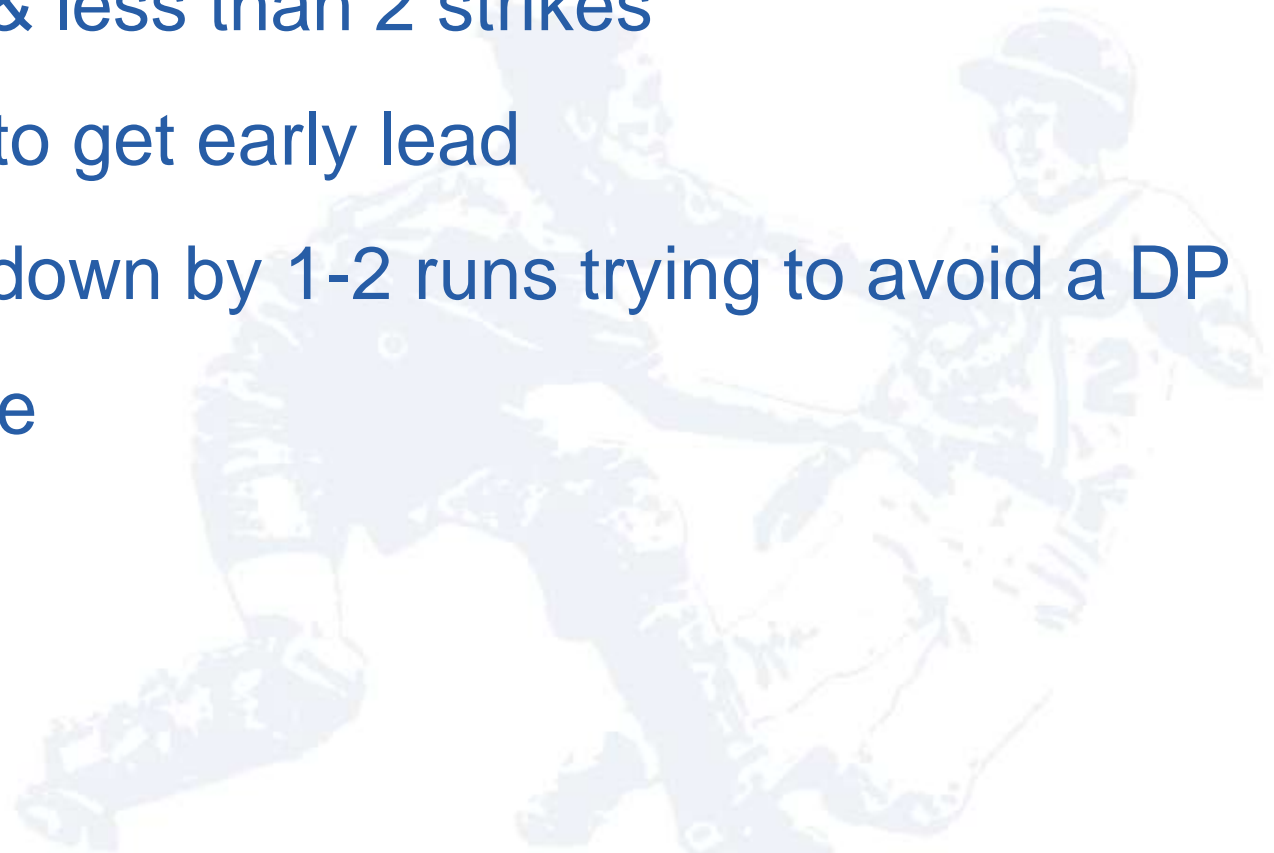
Safety Squeeze

- **Runner at 3rd takes lead & watches play** (lead equal to where 3rd is covering)
- **If a strike, batter bunts**
- **R breaks for home if ball on ground & she can score**



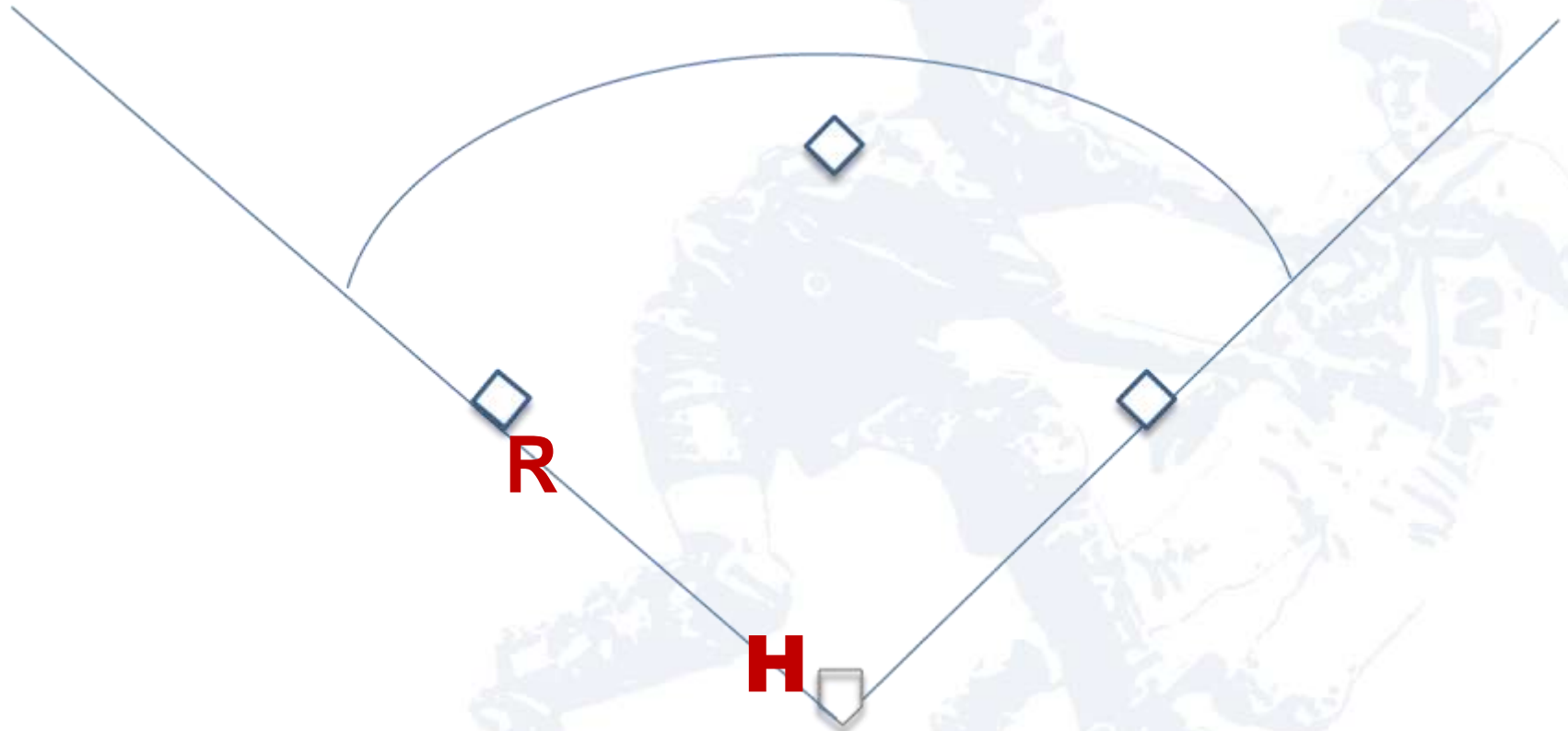
WHY Safety Squeeze?

- Slapper (or weaker hitter) up followed by good hitter
- #9 hitter up
- Early in count & less than 2 strikes
- Early in game to get early lead
- Late in game, down by 1-2 runs trying to avoid a DP
- Bunt to 3rd base



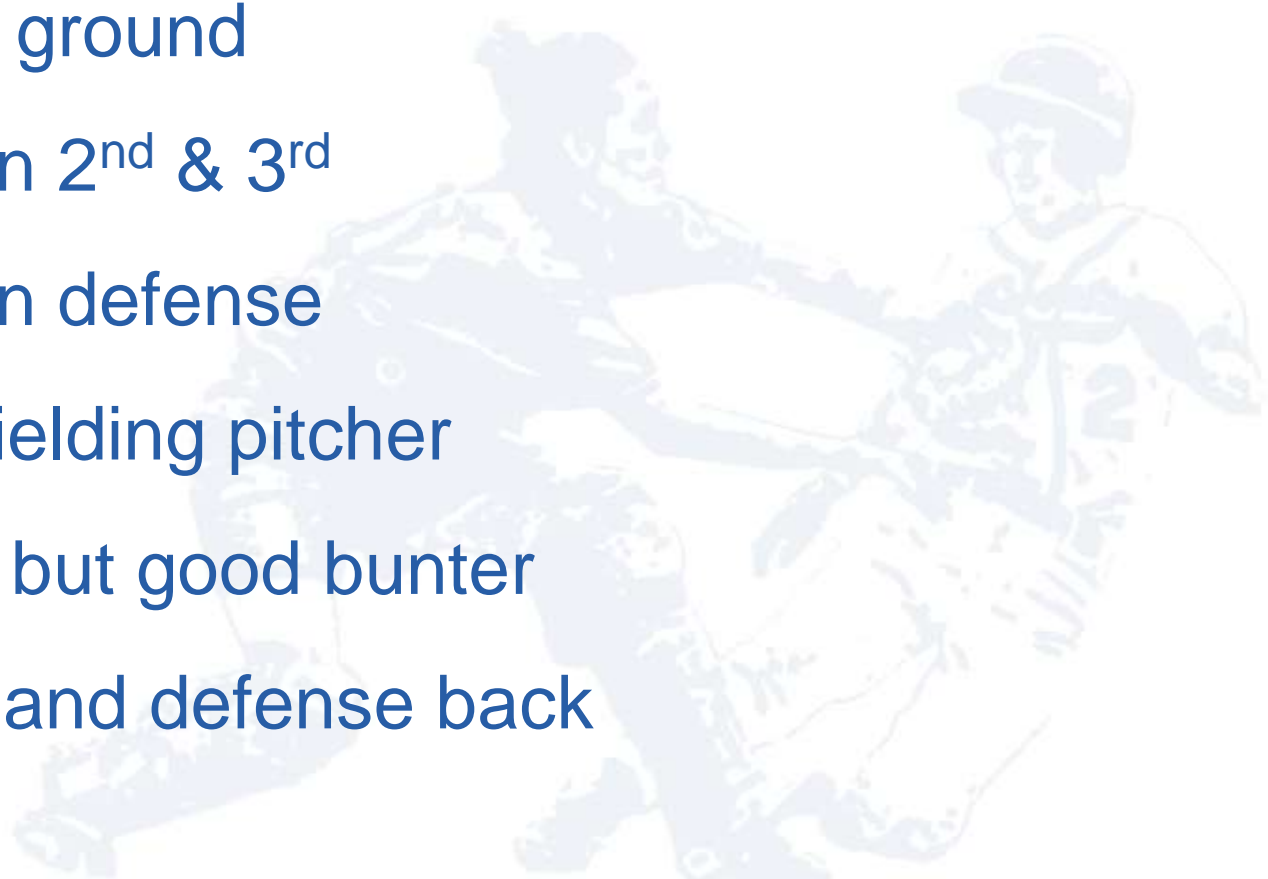
Suicide Squeeze

- Runner at 3rd breaks for home on the pitch
- Batter must protect the runner by bunting the pitch wherever it is



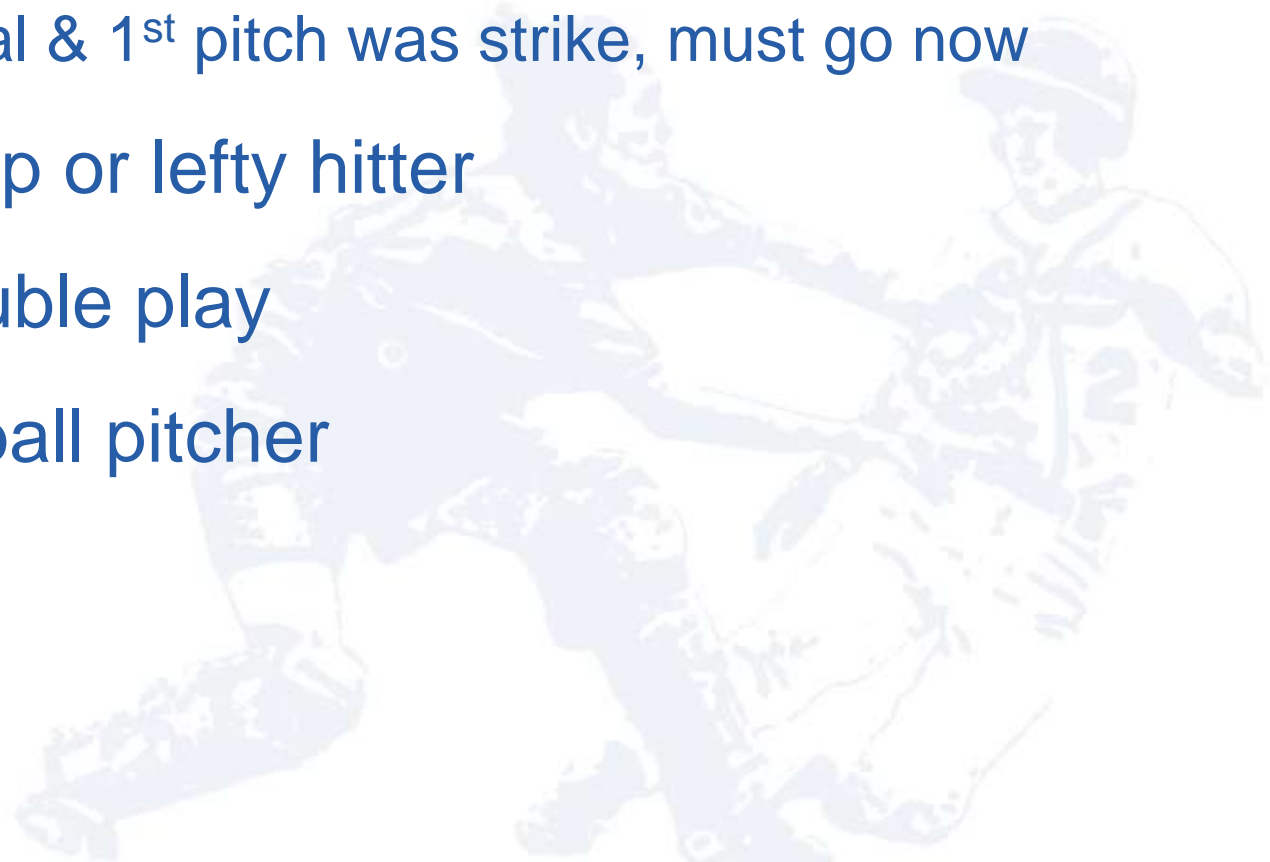
WHY Safety Squeeze?

- Make something happen
- Catch by surprise
- Get ball on the ground
- With runners on 2nd & 3rd
- Put pressure on defense
- Attack a poor fielding pitcher
- Weak hitter up but good bunter
- Good hitter up and defense back

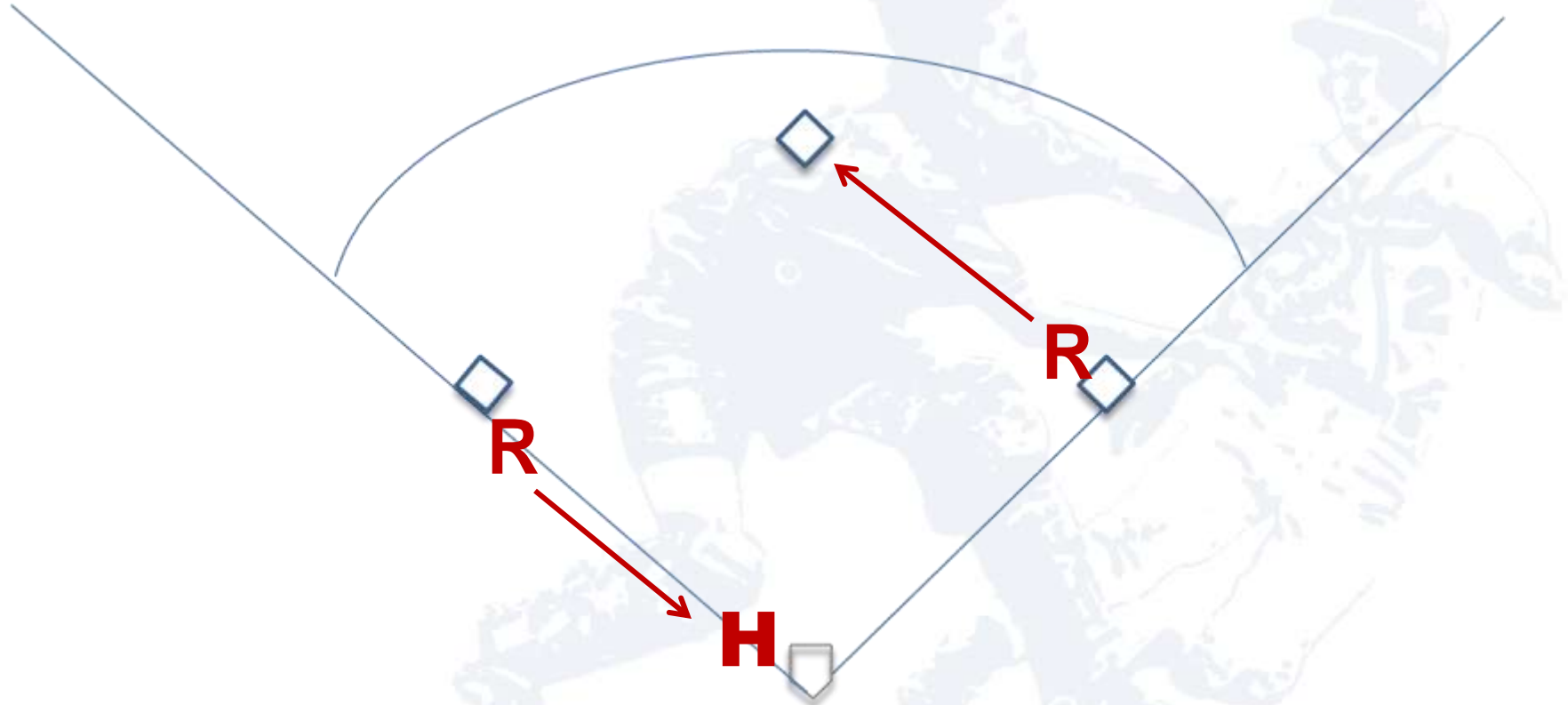


WHY Straight Steal?

- 1st Pitch:
 - If pitchers likes to throw changeup or drop
- 2nd Pitch:
 - If trying to steal & 1st pitch was strike, must go now
- With Slapper up or lefty hitter
- To prevent double play
- Facing a dropball pitcher

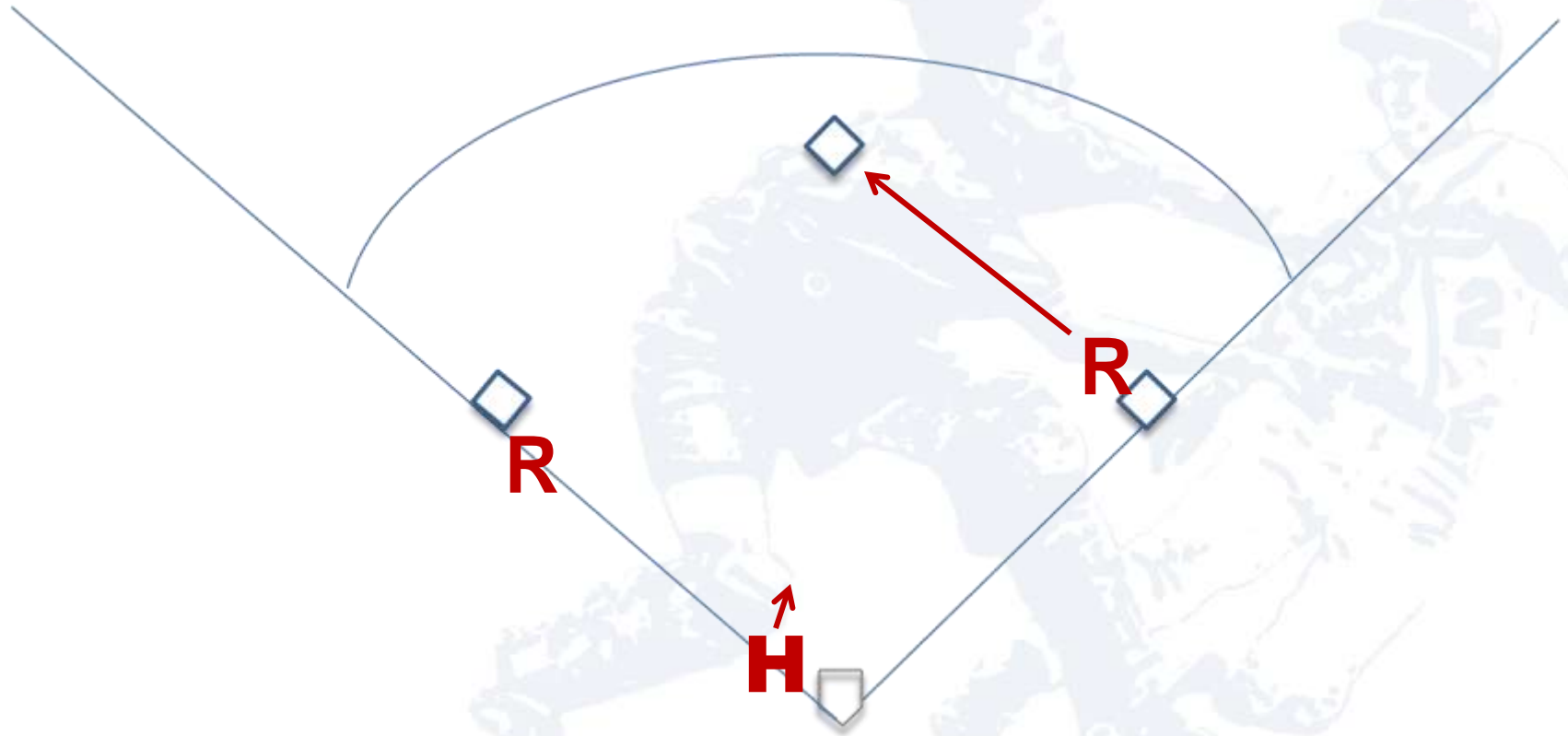


1st & 3rd – Double Steals



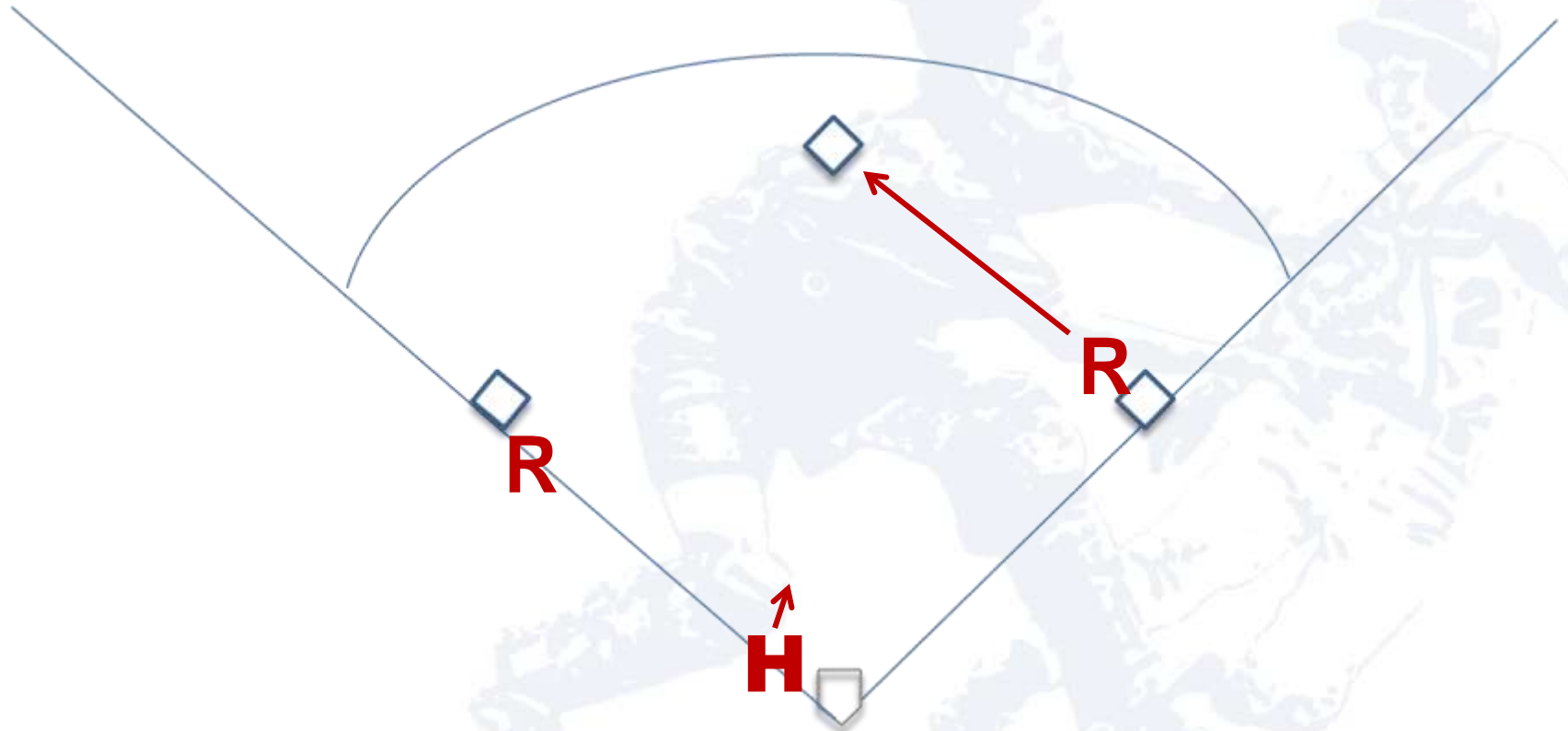
1st & 3rd – #2: R1 gets to 2nd

- R1 straight steal
- Batter fakes a suicide squeeze to force catcher to hold the ball & focus on R3



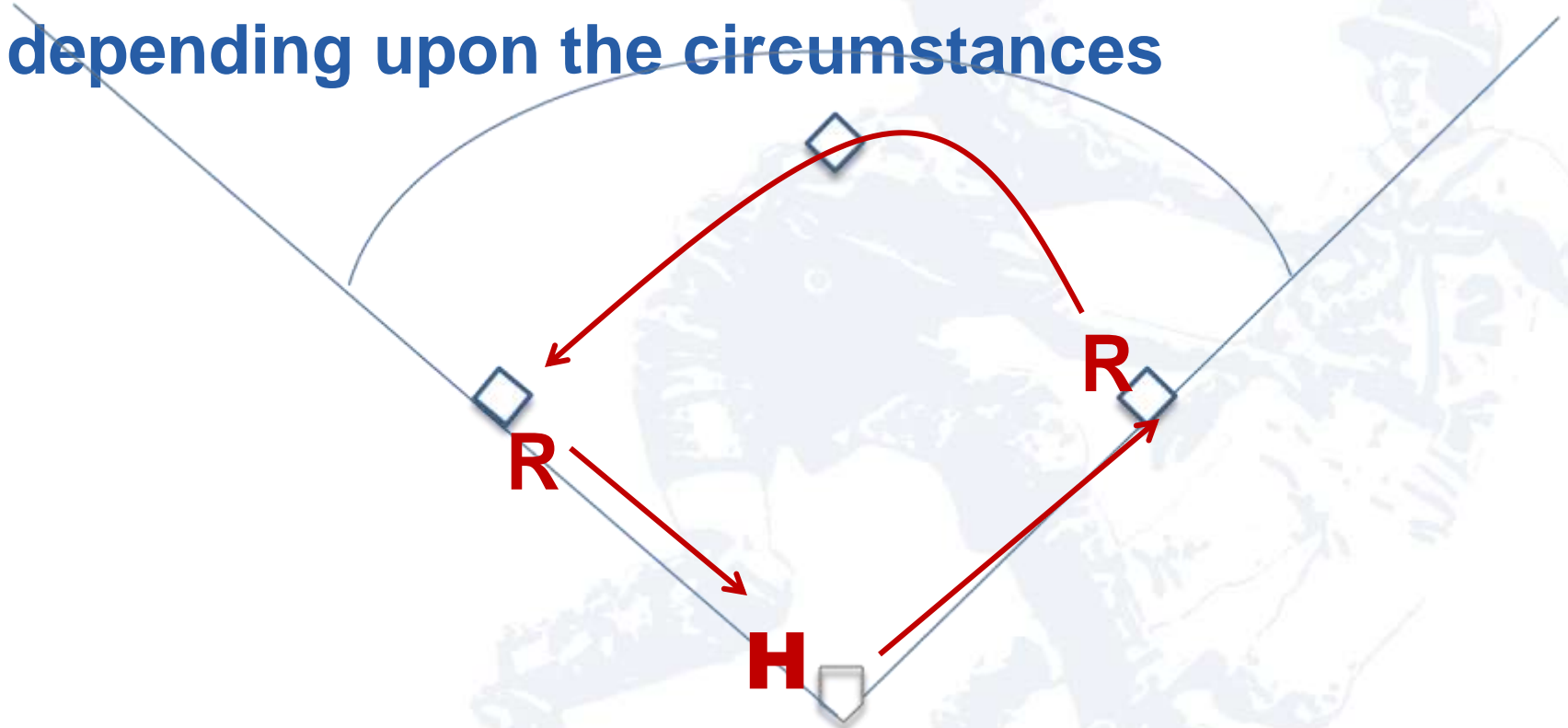
1st & 3rd – #3: R1 gets to 2nd

- Batter Sacrifice Bunts while R1 runs on pitch



1st & 3rd – #3: R3 Scores - Suicide

- R3 breaks for home on the pitch
- R1 sprints from 1st to 3rd.
- Batter bunts and then advances to 1st or 2nd depending upon the circumstances



What Skills at What Age?

	Short Game	Running Game	Power Game	Pitching	Catching	Defense
Under 12's	Sac RSlap	Steal	Hit	fastballs	Receiving Blocking Throws2B	Throwing Catching GB FB
Under 14's	Sac RSlap Fake Bunt Squeeze	Steal Hit & Run Double St. Squeeze	Hit Hit & Run Hit /opp Flyballs	Fastballs Change Pitchouts Int walk	Receiving Blocking Throws2B Signals Pickoffs Int. Walk	



What Ages to Try What Skills

	Short Game	Running Game	Power Game	Pitching	Catching	Def.
Under 16's	Sac Fake Bunt RSlap Squeeze Slap Bunt & R Sneaky Push Bunt Angle Dn	Steal Hit & R Double St. Bunt & R Angle Dn Delayed St. Run & Hit	Hit Hit & R Hit /opp Flyballs Gballs Run & Hit	Fastballs Change Pitchouts Int walk Pitch #2	Signals Receiving Blocking Throws 2B Pickoffs Int Walks Calling GM Movement Pitchouts	



What Ages to Try What Skills

	Short Game	Running Game	Power Game	Pitching	Catching	Def
Under 19's	Sac Fake Bunt Slap RSlap Squeeze Bunt & R Sneaky Push Bunt Angle Dn Soft Slap	Steal Hit & R Double St. Bunt & R Angle Dn Delayed St. Run & Hit	Hit Hit & R Hit /opp Flyballs Gballs Run & Hit Hard Slap	Fastballs Change Pitchouts Int walk Pitch #2 Pitch #3	Signals Receiving Blocking Throws2B Pickoffs Pitchouts Int Walks Calling Game Movement	



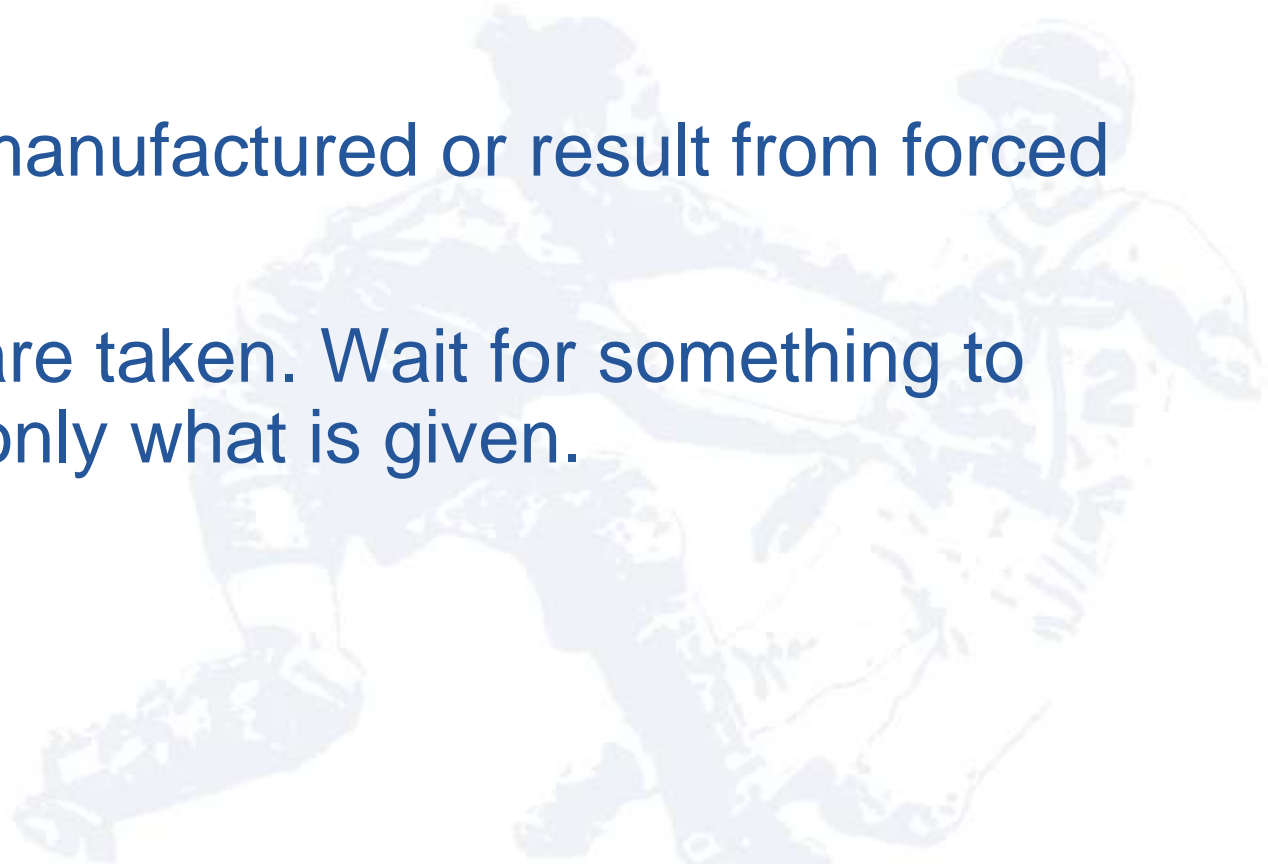
What Ages to Try What Skills

	Short Game	Running Game	Power Game	Pitching	Catching	Defense
Open	Sac Fake Bunt Slap RSlap Squeeze Bunt & R Sneaky Push Bunt Angle Dn Soft Slap	Steal Hit & R Double St. Bunt & R Angle Dn Delayed St. Run & Hit	Hit Hit & R Hit /opp Flyballs Gballs Run & Hit Hard Slap	Fastballs Change Pitchouts Int walk Pitch #2 Pitch #3 Pitch #4	Signals Receiving Blocking Throws 2B Pickoffs Pitchouts Int Walks Calling Game Movement	



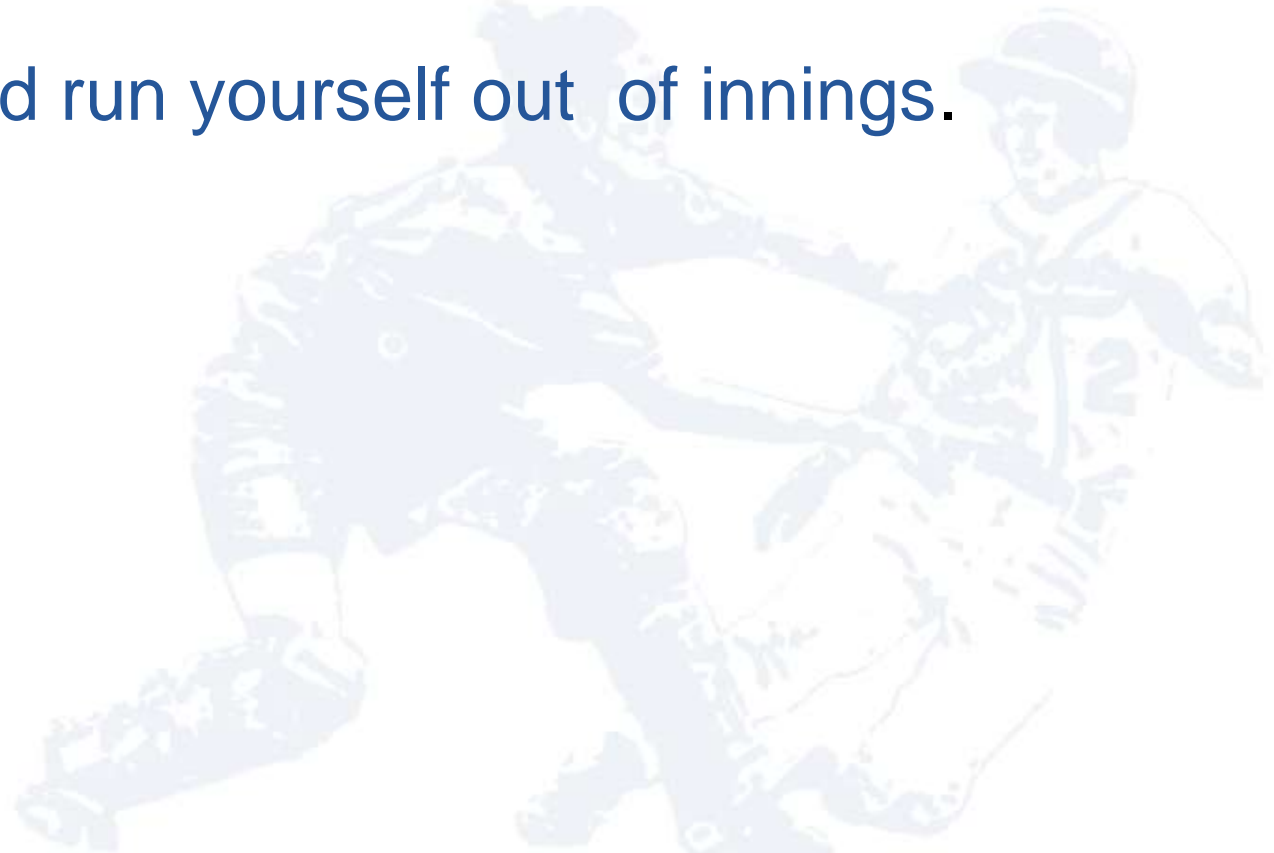
AVOID – Overly Conservative

- A runner is rarely, if ever, thrown out on a close play at the plate.
- Steals and squeezes are consistently absent from game plans.
- Few runs are manufactured or result from forced errors.
- Few chances are taken. Wait for something to happen. Take only what is given.



AVOID – Overly Aggressive

- Try to make something out of nothing.
- Impatient. Want to score so badly that emotion and adrenaline take over and reason takes a back seat.
- Force plays and run yourself out of innings.

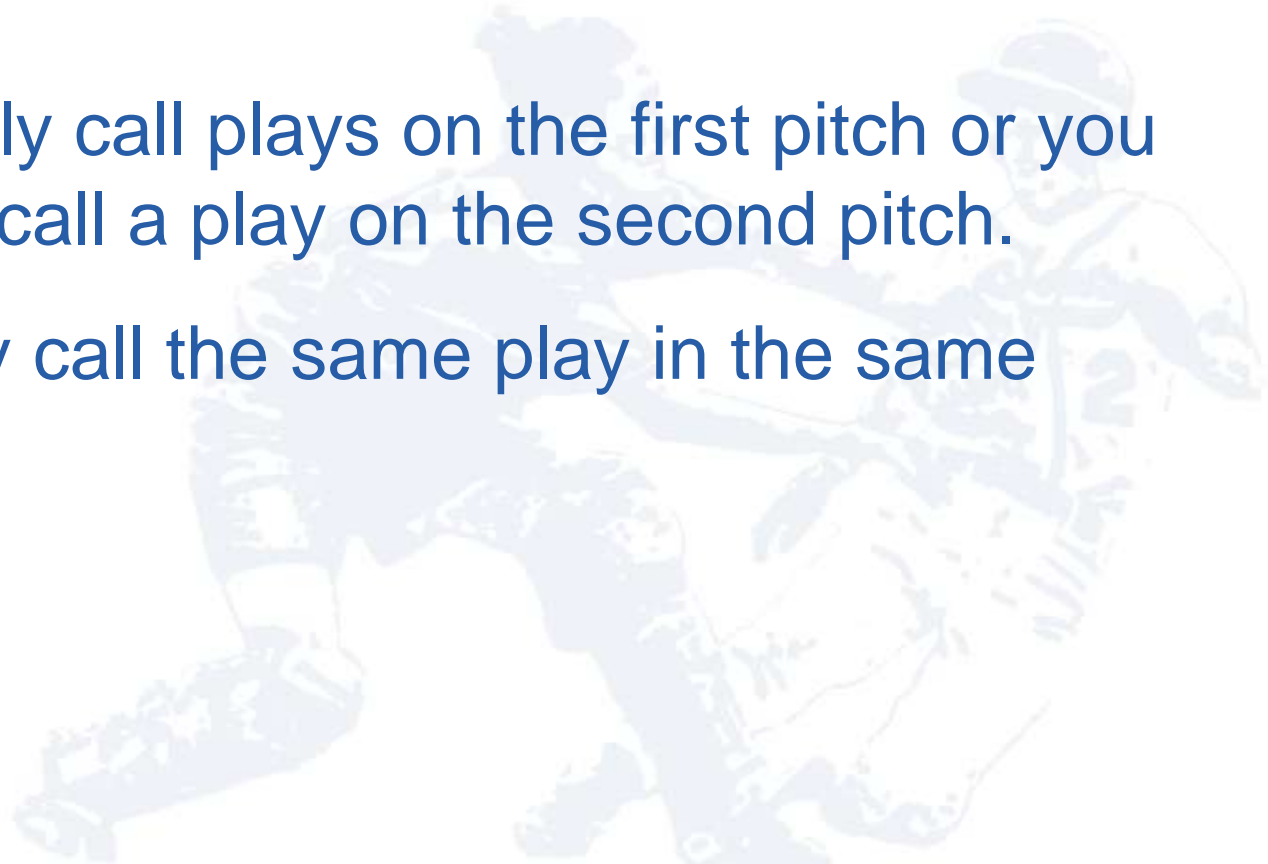


AVOID – Too Controlling

- Many opportunities to advance are lost.
- R3 must wait to be told when to go on a WP/PB.
- Runners must wait to be told when to leave the bag on a caught fly ball.
- Runners are afraid to take chances and unable to make their own base running decisions.
- Players develop little game sense of their own

AVOID – Too Predictable

- Your opponent reads your mind.
- The defense is consistently prepared to handle your offense
- You consistently call plays on the first pitch or you always wait to call a play on the second pitch.
- You repeatedly call the same play in the same situation.



- Drag bunt if the corners are back.
- Hit or slap and run if the shortstop breaks early to cover a steal.
- Steal 3rd with a fake bunt if the shortstop is playing up the middle and the third baseman is responsible for bunts.
- Advise your team when bases are left uncovered, the catcher drops to her knees to block low pitches, an outfielder has a weak arm, etc.

- Put all forced runners in motion on the pitch with 2 out and a 3-2 count on the batter.
- Think a couple of batters ahead when deciding whether to attempt a steal. Avoid leading off an inning with a weak hitter if you can.
- Plan your strategy on a pitch to pitch basis.
- Tell runners to start their slide later on a wet field,
- When backstop is closer to home than usual make sure R3 is aware

- Steal on catcher weak or inaccurate arm
 - Take extra base on fielders with weak arms – force throws
 - Delay steal on P who fails to check runners
 - Go from 1st to 3rd on bunt if the defense is slow covering 3rd
 - Narrow strike zone, be selective when facing a pitcher with poor control.
- Go on hits if defense doesn't hold runners.
 - Move back runner in 1st & 3rd when defense is indifferent, or always goes to 1st on bunts
 - Take advantage of a “rabbit arm” – delayed steals

GREAT Softball Educational Material

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