



# diamondawgs

## Providing Purpose to the First Base Coach

Whoever ends up at first base, whether it is an assistant coach or a player, many times they are unsure of their job. In actual fact, there are a number of very important responsibilities for the first base coach and understanding them will help provide a first base coach with a sense of purpose, rather than punishment.

### Responsibilities

- Remind batter-runners to hustle up the line and run through the bag at first
- Remind batter-runners to round the bag hard on singles, helping them pick up the ball on the throw back to the infield, and encouraging them to get more distance when the ball is in left field
- Assist the batter-runner with reading the relay throws back to the infield after singles; especially important with other runners on base
- Help runners read the pitchers pick-off moves: ID a pitchers A, B, and C moves so they can adjust accordingly
- When they are the trail runner, help the runner at first base avoid back-picks: you should position yourself so you can see the 1st baseman and the runner without having to turn your head
- Help the runner at 2nd read the pitchers pick move (3rd base coach responsible for middle infielders)
- Assist runners at first with reading fly balls and whether to tag
  - Remember that if there is another lead runner, the runner at first should always come back to tag prior to an out being made so he can advance on throws to other bases
- Review the game situation and prepare runners for likely offensive tactics (“this is a good opportunity to hit and run, don’t be surprised if coach gives you one this at bat”)
- Help baserunners decipher signs



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## Information to Communicate

- Number of outs: Every time a baserunner reaches first base remind them of the number of outs immediately.
- Other baserunners: Remind the runner at 1st if there are other baserunners in front of them. If there is, make sure they don't "run them off" and force your team into an out. If there isn't any runner in front of them...
- Find a way to second base: Taking away the force at 2nd (and the double play) is so critical that runners need to ALWAYS be looking for a way to move up one base. Cue them to look for downward angle of the pitch. If, after 45 feet, the ball is on a downward angle and will hit the ground baserunners should be challenging catchers to throw them out after having to block a pitch. Runners can also, if they have the "green light", look for breaking ball counts to run on. They can also take advantage of a lazy catcher or middle infielders who are not cover second between pitches.
- Remind them to get a quality secondary lead
- Review responsibilities on ground ball, line drive, fly ball, and foul ball (automatic tag)
- Speed of the pitcher's pick-off move, time of the pitcher to the plate, and arm strength/willingness to throw of the catcher
- The count on the hitter
  - Reminder on breaking ball counts to anticipate balls in the dirt
  - On full counts with 2 out, players can be in motion when pitcher commits to the plate
  - On 2-strike counts with 2 out, players can be in motion when they read swing
- Check outfield positioning
- ID the indicator for a pitcher's pick-off move
- Discuss number of moves or timing that the pitcher falls into at 1st base AND 2nd base



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## Positioning

### Batter-runner trying to beat a throw:

- Ensure you are not in a direct line with the throw
- Set up past the bag and off the foul line
- Runner can run to your voice and through the bag
- Easier to communicate with player that has crossed the base if a ball gets by the 1st baseman

### Batter-runner rounding the bag:

- Set up past the bag and close to the foul line
- Keep angles at first base sharp by forcing runners to run inside of you
- This will also provide you with the best view of throws and opportunities to advance

### Communicating with a runner at the bag:

- Have the baserunner stand with his left foot on the outside corner of the base
- First base coach can then set up on the players right and communicate without having to share information with the first baseman

### Runner leading off – lead runner at 1st base

- Set up at the back of the coaches box
- Ensure a direct view of the pitcher that is most similar to the baserunner
- Ensure you can see past the 1st baseman without moving
- Be ready to dodge errant pick off attempts

### Runner leading off – trail runner at 1st base

- Set up as far back as possible so you can see the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman and the baserunner without turning your head
- From this position you should be able to assist runners with the movement of the 1st baseman and potential back-picks from the catcher
- Make sure the runner knows that his responsibility is reading the catcher and you will watch the 1st baseman – he should NEVER turn to look at the 1st baseman

**\*\*POST THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST IN YOUR DUGOUT FOR REFERENCE\*\***



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## 1<sup>st</sup> Base Coach Checklist

### ***During the course of this game try to:***

- ✓ Communicate the game situation to every base runner when they reach 1<sup>st</sup> base
- ✓ Provide ONE focal point to allow base runners to get a better jump on a steal
- ✓ Communicate at least one situation where base runners can get a better jump:
  - Full count with 2 outs & force plays (breaking when pitcher commits to plate)
  - 2 out & 2 strikes (breaking on swing)
- ✓ Help base runners:
  1. Extend their secondary lead
  2. Take an extra base (overthrow, missed cut, dirt ball read)
  3. Improve their turns around the bag on singles