

## Controlling the Running Game

### 3 Things To Use To Control The Running Game

**1. Mixing up your holds.** Once you come set, make sure you are not consistently holding your set position the same amount of time. Base runners can pick up on this and get good jumps when stealing bases. A good system to use to make sure you are not consistent is the **0, 1, 4, Infinity** hold system.

- 0 Hold: Basically, come set and pause and then pitch the baseball.
- 1 Hold: Come set and hold for 1 second and then pitch the baseball.
- 4 Hold: Come set and hold for 4 seconds and then pitch the baseball.
- Infinity Hold: Come set and hold your set position until the hitter calls time or a coach does. If nobody calls time after 10 seconds, step off. A great situation to use this would be when you have an aggressive runner on base who you think might steal. It can end up getting him on his heels and then the next pitch you would 0 hold him and possibly get him out if he is running.

**2. Mixing up your looks.** Make sure that when you come set you are also not consistently looking at the runner the same duration or the same amount of times. For example, sometimes when a runner is on second, a pitcher can get into a routine of looking at the runner once and then pitching as his head turns away back to the catcher. If the runner picks up on this, he can get a good jump and steal the base easily. So, mix up the length of time you look and the runner and the amount of times.

### 3. Have an A and B pick off move to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

- **Left Handed Pitcher to 1<sup>st</sup> Base:**
  - **A Move:** This is your best move to first when you think you have a chance at picking the runner off. This could be you lift your leg, look at home for a brief second, and 45-degree step pickoff move. Don't show this move until you think you have a chance at getting the runner because if you do show it then the whole opposing team knows your best move.

- **B Move:** Either a quick step off throw over or a lazy leg lift while looking at the runner with an easy throw over. Use these to try and control the runner's distance off of 1<sup>st</sup> base.
  
- **Right Handed Pitcher to 1<sup>st</sup> Base:**
  - **A Move:** A combination of quick feet, short arm action, and a hard throw to first. Think of your arm action copying the arm action of a catcher. Use this when you think you have a chance at picking off the runner.
  - **B Move:** Any combination of slow feet/quicker arm action or quicker feet/long slow arm action. Make sure that your throw is not your top arm strength. This move is used to limit the distance of the base runner's lead.
  
- **Left Handed Pitcher and Right Handed Pitcher to 2<sup>nd</sup> Base:**
  - **Daylight Play:** This move is used when either the SS/2B break to the base. The middle infielder flashes his glove and the pitcher's job is to automatically step off and spin glove side and throw the ball to the bag. He should not try and lead the middle infielder like a quarterback. Once the middle infielder flashes he is breaking hard to the bag and the pitcher needs to get the ball there quickly. The term daylight refers to if the pitcher can see the SS's glove flash in between the base runner and second base.
  - **Inside Turn:** This is when the pitcher goes through his normal leg left when he is pitching the baseball but instead of going home he brings his lift leg around to second base and steps and throws to second base. The middle infielder is to read this play on the pitcher and break to second base when he sees it. In order to sell this move, the player must have the same leg lift height, keeps his shoulder square until the highest point of his leg lift, and keep his hands in the same position as if he were going to pitch the baseball. At this point, hopefully you have the runner leaning or even already getting into his secondary lead and you rotate your leg around and you have him. Make sure before making a throw to second base you square your shoulders and feet.
  
- **Any pick off to 3<sup>rd</sup> Base:**



- Any pickoff to third base should only occur if the base runner is sleeping over there or has a very large lead. Otherwise it is not worth risking a bad throw.

To get better at controlling the running game, implement your holds and mixing of looks into your bullpen sessions. Pretend a runner is on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> base and work on it. To get better at your pickoffs, dedicate a day a week during your warm up catch routine to work on a certain pick off move for 5 minutes. Doesn't take long but will certainly pay off when game time comes around.

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