

Food for Thought

1-Are they an early or a late maturer? Some kids are physically stronger than others earlier in life (google early and late achievers) Every coach of younger players especially needs to know those terms.

2-An early maturer is more coordinated than a late maturer UNTIL the late maturer catches up. An early maturer is great at a young age and may level off and be passed by the late maturer.

3-How tall are they? Taller players should be able to hold a longer bat more easily than a shorter player. "Should" being a word that has to be proven by seeing if they actually are able to use a longer bat. In younger players especially with long arms and legs they need to "grow into" those arms and legs. Again, a part of growing.

Note: the tip off is if they fall back trying to get the bat around, the bat is too long, too heavy or the player is not strong enough to get the bat out to the pitch.

4-During batting practices, teach all players to hit to all fields, to hit for power, to hit line drive, to bunt for a base hit. Also, EVERYONE needs to be able to do a successful sacrifice bunt.

5-Baserunning-"the forgotten gem"

-the breakoff from a base. I am a believer in the aggressive three step rocker start with a slide step if possible. A slide step allows the runner to go a little forward if the defense isn't paying attention or showing fear. An aggressive break off does a couple of things-pumps up and focuses your players to be aggressive and basically takes the defensive players attention away from the hitter. The defense tends to worry more about the runner.

-runners on first and second should use the aggressive breakoff. With an aggressive player on second it allows the player on first to turn that slide

step into multiple steps going halfway to second or maybe a little more. If the defense allows it, do it. If the runner on first gets a little too far off, the defense could throw to first. In that case, she should take off to second and the player on second goes to third. If she goes back on the defensive throw to first, the player on third takes off for third. Takes practice and a lot of focus but it sure is fun.

6-Teaching everyone to hit a home run worries me especially with the younger teams. I have mixed feelings about this one. We had homerun hitters through the years but instead of trying to "jack" the ball holding it down to the knob, not lining up the knuckles, etc, we attacked the ball without doing that. Not saying it is wrong, but if the coach is having everyone trying to hit one and a lot of striking out, it may be time to rethink it.

It's easy to watch the home runs flying out while watching the D1 teams hitting a bunch. But it's NOT that easy. Those kids are **strong** and train a lot. There are a lot of hours that go into those games. As a young player who is trying to hit that way and striking out, there is a lot of frustration. That doesn't help anyone.

CONSIDER THIS

1-The D1 players spend a lot of time in the weight room with a trainer.

2-The D1 players have full time trainers during their sessions

3-the D1 players have the best equipment around

On and on, the thing to remember is not compare all players to the best home run hitters in the Country. Can players become D1 players-of course but coaches need to understand and evaluate. Some can and some cannot hit home runs consistently. The ones who cannot hit the home runs, might be a fantastic bunt and run player. Maybe they can draw a walk regularly or be a great hit and run hitter or opposite field hitter. Teach and learn what the player does the best

JUST SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

