

RUSS FOSTER'S SYSTEM BASEBALL

System Baseball is an innovative and unique approach to learning the game, originally designed for the beginning player -- now expanded for all ages. Former professional player and long-time coach Russ Foster teaches how to develop the proper mental approach for both the player and Mom & Dad, demonstrating that the right mental attitude allows the player to maximize his full potential. "System Baseball" makes learning the game easy and fun. Russ has developed a step-by-step approach to each skill, helping every player improve.

I. What Is It?

System Ball is first and foremost -- an attitude. We try to create the most positive atmosphere possible, letting players know it's okay to fail. (Pete Rose struck out over 1300 times, and even the best hitters get an out 7 out of every 10 times.) Gradual improvement, not perfection, is the goal.

We also teach the parents. If necessary, we redirect their expectations and goals away from wins & losses and funnel those energies into a positive support system that promotes improvement and a fundamental understanding of the game.

System Baseball is designed to work with both boys and girls (fast-pitch softball). In the descriptions below, "he" has been used for simplicity.

System Baseball, quite simply, breaks down the game movement by movement.

- We find players can more easily understand one movement at a time.
- As they understand one movement we move on to the next until the skill is completed.
- The child is able to understand how his body works through each skill.
- He is better able to understand when he is making a mistake and how to correct it.

II. Attitude and Approach

A. How important is baseball?

1. Baseball is not life or death.
2. Baseball should be played for fun first.
3. Never allow Baseball to affect the rest of your life.

B. Game of Failure

1. Best hitters make an out 7 out of 10 times.
2. Pete Rose had 1300 career strikeouts.
3. Don't let a single failure affect the rest of the game.

HITTING SYSTEM

- I. Element No. 1: "The Hitting Square" (The Stance)
 - A. Feet shoulder-width apart.
 1. Right handed hitter - feet set left, then right
 2. Left handed hitter - feet set right, then left
 - B. Breathe deeply and relax.
 - C. Balance up.
 1. Weight on the balls of the feet
 2. Knees flexed (This brings quadriceps and hamstrings into play - the strongest muscles in the body.)
 - D. Center Point - Most powerful position in our stance
 1. Head, chest, chimney-changas from the center line
 2. Head will never move
- II. Element No. 2: "The Big Toe" (The Stride)
 - A. We take a four-inch stride at a 45 degree angle
 1. As we get older we will learn we stride to the ball depending on whether it is inside, down the middle, or outside.
 - B. Most importantly, we transfer our weight from the back quadricep to the front quadriceps.
 1. We maintain our center point
 2. We sit into the stride
 3. Our head doesn't move
- III. Element No. 3 - [The "Hitting Triangle"]
 - A. Maintaining front-side closure
 - B. The Triangle is made up of three points.
 1. Point #1 front-side, shoulder over
 2. Point #2 front side knee
 3. Point #3 back-side hip (aligned with front-side knee)
 - C. Maintaining the triangle allows us to hit:
 1. The curve ball
 2. The slider
 3. The change-up
 - D. Keeps us from falling in the bucket

IV. Element No. 4 - ["Squish-a-Bug"] (Hip thrust)

- A. We pretend to squish bugs with our back hip
 - 1. This action produces our impact power
- B. Our head does not move.

V. Element No. 5 ["The Trigger Position"]

- A. We line up our middle-finger knuckles
 - 1. Dinosaur back (Stegosaurus)
- B. The trigger position is formed by:
 - 1. Top thumb touching top of ear
- C. Back elbow points to the floor
 - 1. Never put back elbow up!
 - 2. Back elbow up is a myth
 - a. Back elbow up produces the very mistake coaches think it solves.
 - b. Simply won't work when trying to hit a 95 mph fastball.
 - c. Back elbow up creates a slow swing.

D. Swing Phases

- 1. Chop-a-Tree
 - a. Hit down on the ball
- 2. Punch-The-Pitcher-In-The-Nose
 - a. Extension
- 3. Finish High
 - a. Follow-through

E. This swing is not a one-arm swing

- 1. Another common misconception
- 2. We hit through the ball with two hands

THROWING SYSTEM

I. Closed Position

II. Make a Bow

- A. Hands in the praying position
- III. Draw the Bow (1st extension point)
 - A. Touch second base
 - B. Touch the catcher
- IV. Step to the Russian Squat
 - A. Bending legs as if you are squatting weights
- V. Throwing Phases
 - A. Elbow - Just like throwing a football
 - B. Target - Second extension point
 - C. Pocket - Follow through

PITCHING SEQUENCE (Wind Up)

- I. Feet square, shoulder square, glove up
- II. Backwards
- III. Plant Step
- IV. Apex
- V. Tall and Fall
 - A. Chest touches down on front leg
 - B. Back leg comes up after hand touches pocket

FIELDING SYSTEM

- I. Ready Position - Hands resting on knees
- II. Pitcher Pitches
 - A. Ready to move in any direction
 - B. Hands held directly out in front
- III. Alligator - Catch Position
 - A. Hands form alligator's jaws
- IV. Catch
 - A. Belly-button stays directly over ball
 - B. Forms fielder's web (like spider's web)
- V. Footwork - (Crow-Hop)

A. Right-Left-Throw (Right Handed)

B. Left-Right-Throw (Left Handed)

RUNNING SYSTEM

I. Relax - Breathe deeply

II. Make Doughnuts

III. Move Arms Freely

A. Upper cut

B. Elbow to the stomach

IV. Pick Knees Up

V. Land on the Front of Your Feet

VI. Keep Strides Comfortably Long