

Defensive Baseball – The Finer Details (by position)

Catcher

- Yells out, while signaling, the number of outs to the rest of his teammates
- Builds a friendly rapport with the home plate umpire by being respectful and polite (“Mr. Umpire” or “Sir”, politely asking “Was that pitch a little outside? Okay. Thank you.”, “Did he swing, Sir?” when asking for an appeal, and always “Thank you!” when he gives you a baseball after a foul ball goes out of play)
- Likes to get dirty and likes to wear the equipment – always anticipates blocking the ball in the dirt
- Is the tone setter and lets everyone know he is the field general (the way he throws the ball down to third on a strikeout, the way he throws the ball back to the pitcher, the way he sprints off the field in his gear after a strikeout to end the inning, the way he is constantly vocal, the way he “manages” the pitcher (motions to him to slow down or calm down, or directly tells him to do certain things, “ball back to you with the bases loaded your comin’ home,” etc.)
- Hustles down to first to back up on all groundballs with nobody on, then hustles back home to take control of the defense and the situation
- Hustles after a blocked ball by jumping to his feet
- Lives for the swinging bunt, the third strike in the dirt, the pop-up behind the plate, the runner stealing, the snap throw down to third or first, and the play at the plate - he is always anticipating how he will become part of a play that results in an out
- Sees himself as the last line of defense and loves blocking the plate
- Takes great pride in his ability to “steal” strikes when the pitch is off the plate by framing the pitch and subtle body shifting, especially the called third strike
- Takes great pride in his ability to block balls in the dirt without giving up an extra base by always trying to keep the ball directly in front of him
- Accepts the fact that most bases are stolen on the pitcher, so he is constantly checking runners leads and signals to the pitcher for a pick-off, tells the pitcher to “step off!”, or asks the umpire “timeout”
- Asks for timeout and initiates a mound visit in situations where the pitcher or the defense need conferring with to save the coach a charged visit
- Understands that he has the best view of the hitter and the pitcher’s command of pitches and the umpire’s zone and, therefore, communicates with the coaching staff and the pitcher about how to pitch a certain batter, what pitch is working best (movement, hitters’ weaknesses) and what the umpire is willing to give and not give
- Thoroughly communicates with the defense prior to bunt defenses and first and third steal defenses and alerts them to it as soon as the situation occurs