

Softball Glossary of Terms

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Arm action: The movement of the throwing arm after the hands break in a throwing or pitching motion.

At bat: [statistic] A batting sequence in which a batter makes an out, gets a hit, or reaches base on an error. Being hit by a pitch, a base on balls, and a sacrifice are not recorded as official "at bats." Also, to be "at bat" is to be the batter.

Athletic stance: A balanced and ready position.

Attack the ball: While batting: taking an aggressive swing; while fielding: charging the ball aggressively.

Backhand: A catch made to the far throwing-hand side of the body with the glove positioned so that the fingers are above the thumb.

Backstop: A permanent protective screen behind home plate.

Bag: See *base*.

Ball: A pitch that is thrown out of the strike zone and at which the batter does not swing.

Base: One of 4 points that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run.

Base coach: A team member or coach who is stationed in the coach's box at first or third base.

Base hit: Any ball that is hit and results in the batter safely reaching base without an error or a fielder's choice being made on the play.

Baselines: The two lines that run from home plate through first and third base, respectively. They separate fair territory from foul and extend beyond the bases to become the right and left field lines, respectively.

Base on balls: An award of first base granted to the batter who, during the time at bat, receives 4 pitches outside of the strike zone.

Base path: The running lane for base runners.

Base runner: A player on the offense who is on base.

Bases loaded: The situation when base runners occupy first, second, and third base.

Bat speed: A term that is used to describe bat head velocity. Developing bat speed is crucial to hitting for power.

Batter: The player at bat.

Batter's box: A 1m by 1.2m area on the right and left sides of home plate in which the batter must stand when at bat.

Batting average: [statistic] The number of hits divided by the number of official at bats.

Batting tee: A piece of equipment the ball sits on. Used for batting practice.

Beaned - When a batter is hit anywhere in the body by a pitch. Anytime a batter is hit by a pitch, he or she advances to first base.

Bent-leg slide: A sliding into a base technique in which the bottom leg is flexed under the top leg, which extends to the base.

Bottom hand: Refers to the hand on the bat that is nearer the knob.

Block technique: The catcher stops pitches that are in the dirt with the body or mitt. See also *down-and-block technique*.

Bunt, drag: A bunt in which a hitter delays showing in an attempt to reach base safely. The ball is bunted in a direction to the same side as he bats from. i.e., left handed-hitters drags down the first base line.

Bunt, push: A bunt in which a hitter delays showing in an attempt to reach base safely. The ball is bunted in a direction to the opposite side as he bats from. i.e., left handed-hitters pushes down the third base line.

Bunt, sacrifice: A bunt in which a hitter intentionally gives himself up at the plate in order to advance a runner into scoring position. Under normal conditions, if the runner is on first you are trying to advance, bunt to the first base side unless special defenses dictate otherwise. If the runners occupy second, or first and second, you should bunt to the third base side, attempting to make the third baseman field it. Unless special defenses dictate otherwise, this is accepted as a standard.

Bunt, suicide squeeze: A bunt that is used as an offensive weapon to score a run. The runner on third breaks to steal home as soon as the pitcher's releases the ball from their hand. The batter also waits to show bunt until the pitcher has committed, or the pitcher could alter his arm path and throw a pitch that is not bunt able. The hitter has a responsibility of getting the ball on the ground, regardless of where it is pitched or the runner will be tagged out easily. He must avoid stepping on the plate while making contact or he will be out. Normally upon receiving a suicide squeeze signal, the hitter will have a return signal to indicate the play is on. A suicide squeeze is usually executed with a good bunter, and one out. Squeezing with no outs could possibly take you out of a big inning.

Catcher: Position 2. This fielder takes a position in back of home plate and is primarily responsible for receiving pitches.

Center fielder. Position 8. This player is positioned in the middle of the outfield.

Change-up: - "off speed pitch"

This is a pitch that is slower than the pitcher's fastball, It's purpose is to throw off the batter's timing.

Coach's box: A 1m by 7m area outside of first and third base where the coach or a player stands to coach the team when it is at bat.

Cocking: A term used to describe a rotational action of either the hands, bat, trunk, hips, or knees as it is used to gather potential energy to be applied during the swing. example: a stretched rubber band, due to its position, (stretched), has potential energy that will be transferred when it returns to its original state.

Contact: A term used to describe the collision of the ball with the bat.

Contact hitter: A hitter who normally hits for a high average but has little power.

Count: A term that refers to the number of balls and strikes on a hitter. Example, a count of 1-2 is read 1 and 2, meaning the hitter has 1 ball and two strikes. The balls are always given first. When an umpire raises his hands and extends his fingers to indicate the count, the strikes are always on the first base side, or his right hand, balls on the left.

Count, neutral: A count that doesn't really favor the hitter or pitcher. Examples are 1-1, 2-2. Dependent on the pitchers ability to throw his breaking pitch for strikes, 0-0 and 3-2 can become a neutral count.

Covering the bases: This phrase refers to a player who is responsible for plays at that base.

Crow-hop: The technique used by outfielders to organize their feet and gain momentum and power for making a throw.

Cut-off person or player: A defensive player positioned in the infield to receive throws directed to a base.

Cutoff: See relay.

Double play: A play in which two outs are recorded on one batted ball.

Double: A two-base hit.

Down-and-block technique: An outfield technique used to field ground balls. See also *block technique*.

Down the line: Refers to a batted ball hit near a foul line.

Drop ball:

This pitch's downward movement often causes the hitter to hit a ground ball.

Drop-step: A step back and a step to the side taken by an outfielder when fielding fly balls.

Earned run average: [statistic] The number of earned runs allowed by a pitcher divided by the number of innings pitched; the product of which is multiplied by the number of innings in a game.

Error: A misplay made by a defensive player that results in a runner or runners advancing to bases that they otherwise would not have reached.

Extension: A term used to describe the lengthening action of the front arm and bat about the longitudinal axis of the body through contact.

Extra innings: Innings played beyond the normal stopping point as a result of a tied score.

Fair ball: A legally batted ball that settles on or over fair territory.

Fair territory: All area located inside and including the baselines.

Fielder's choice: A defensive play in which the batter reaches base as a result of a defensive player opting to make a play on another base runner.

Fielding percentage: [statistic] The number of plays, putouts, or assists handled properly by a defensive player divided by the total number of chances.

First-base player: Position 3. This player is an infielder responsible for plays at first base.

Fly ball: A ball hit in the air to the outfield.

Fly out: An out made bycatching the ball in the outfield.

Follow-through: A term used in both throwing, batting, and pitching to indicate the part of the throwing motion that occurs after the ball is released, or the part of the swing that occurs after the bat has gone through the contact area.

Force Out: - See force play

Force Play: - Occurs when a batter hits a fair ball and runs to first base forcing a base runner directly ahead of him or her to run to the next base. In this situation, an infielder holding the softball need only tag the base ahead of a runner in order to get him or her out.

Forehand: A catch made to the far glove-hand side of a player.

Form running: Proper running technique.

Foul ball: A ball that is hit into and touches foul territory.

Foul poles: The two poles that extend vertically at the points where the right and left field lines meet the outfield fence. A ball that hits a foul pole is considered to be a "fair ball".

Foul territory: All area located outside the foul lines.

Free substitution: Players may reenter the game.

Full count: 3 balls, 2 strikes on the batter.

Fungo: A ball batted in practice situations.

Good hitting counts: A term, which refers to counts that favor the hitter, where pitchers are

inclined to a strike for fear of falling further behind in the count or walking a hitter. Normally, hitters can expect fastball in these counts. Pitchers who can locate good change-ups many times can take advantage of hitters in this situation because they are normally expecting a fastball and can easily be fooled. The following are normally considered hitters counts: 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 3-1. Also, if a pitcher has difficulty in throwing their breaking ball for a strike, 0-0 and 3-2 becomes hitter counts.

Glove-hand side: A ball to the glove side of a defensive player.

Grand slam: A home run hit with the bases loaded.

Grip: The grasping or holding of the bat. The part of the bat that a hitter holds, usually consisting of a non-slip material.

Grip, choked: A term used to describe a hitter moving his hands slightly away from the knob. This moves the hands nearer to the center of gravity of the bat and allows a hitter more control. This is highly advised with younger hitters, especially if the bat may be too heavy. Example: Telling a player to "choke up, or choke the bat" means to move the hands up the bat, away from the knob.

Grip in fingers: Holding the bat at a position where the fingers and palms meet. This position best facilitates proper wrist action and control of the bat head, allowing it to accelerate through contact.

Ground ball: A batted ball that rolls along the ground.

Ground out: An out made on a batted ground ball.

Grounder: See *ground ball*.

Hand-eye coordination: A term used to describe the process of receiving sensory information through the eyes and feeding it to the brain where it is processed. A motor nerve from the brain sends the information to the muscles in the hand, requiring a precise movement. This action between the sensory and musculoskeletal system is essential to becoming a successful hitter.

Hands inside the ball: This phrase describes a hand path that moves inside-out to the ball. On an inside pitch, it may require a hitter to delay extending the front arm in order to get the hands through, staying inside the ball. This maneuver shortens the swing arc and allows the hitter to get to the inside pitch faster. Thinking hands inside also helps square the bat head and keep the ball fair.

Hit for the cycle: When a player hits at least one of each of the following in a single game: single, double, triple, and home run.

Hit: See *base hit*.

Hit-and-run: A planned offensive play in which a base runner steals and the batter attempts to hit the pitch on the ground behind the runner.

Hitting zone: The area in which the batter swings and attempts to hit a pitch.

Home plate: The base at which a hitter takes their stance. The plate is 450mm wide (17 inches) and is 450mm (17 inches) from the middle of the front to the back tip next to the

catcher.

Home run: A four-base hit in which the batter scores a run and is credited with an RBI.

In the gap: The space in between outfielders into which a batted ball is hit.

In the hole: The area between infielders into which a batted ball is hit.

Infielder: A defensive player who plays in the dirt area of the diamond.

Infield fly rule: A fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied before two are out.

Inning: A unit of play defined by two half-innings, in each of which 3 outs are recorded.

Inside pitch: A pitch thrown anywhere between the middle of the plate and the batter's body.

Jammed: A term used to describe contact made just above the hands on the bat handle. Hitters often get jammed on an inside rise ball if they have long, sweeping swings. In order to hit the ball with the barrel, they must make contact well out in front, usually pulling the ball. Being too late, exposes the handle, resulting in contact just above the hands causing vibration.

K: A scorer's term for a strikeout.

Launch position: The position reached during the batter's swing as the stride foot lands (and weight is transferred or "loaded" to the back foot) and just before the bat is accelerated forward toward the pitch.

Left fielder: Position 7. This player is an outfielder.

Line drive: A term used to describe hard contact in which the ball travels roughly parallel to the ground for a distance before dropping. Approximately 80% of line drive contact results in hits, versus 20% of fly balls, and 30% of ground balls, respectively.

Load: This is a generic term used to describe a cocking action, which can apply to the hands, bat head, or the hitter's front side. A load is used to gather potential energy, much like pulling a bowstring back to propel an arrow, or taking a backswing in golf or tennis. There are numerous ways hitters load. This action is also used to overcome inertia, to make a smoother action starting the swing. Loading is also an important factor in separating the stride from the swing, and can assist the front side from flying open too soon.

Lunge: A term that describes a hitter's forward weight transfer that occurs at the same time of the stride. Lunging does not allow a hitter to separate. Many hitters bring their hands forward with their weight transfer, leaving them nothing to hit off speed pitches with.

Mash the bug: A term used with young hitters to remind them to pivot on their back foot as if they were mashing a bug.

Mitt: A glove used by a catcher or first-base player.

Muscle memory: A term used to describe a learned movement pattern or habit. By performing the same movement pattern repeatedly, more effective nerve muscle connections are made. These new connections repeat more efficiently each time used. Research from motor (movement) learning specialists indicate that repeating the same action 3,000 to 5,000 times,

or performing a task approximately 30 minutes for a period of 21 days is necessary to create muscle memory. After developing muscle memory, the new action is automatic and can be performed without conscious thought.

Off-speed pitch: A grouping of pitches, that are used to deceive hitters by disrupting their rhythm and timing. These pitches are slower and change planes.

On deck: The position of the next player on the offense to bat.

On-deck circle: The area in which the on-deck batter warms up.

Out: A declaration by the umpire that a player who is trying for a base is not entitled to that base.

Outfielder: A defensive player who is positioned beyond the infield dirt. There are three outfield positions: left field, center field, and right field.

Outside pitch: A pitch thrown anywhere from the middle of the plate out away from the batter's position.

Passed ball: A pitch that gets past the catcher and is ruled the fault of the catcher. "

Pinch hitter: A substitute player who bats for a player listed in the lineup.

Pinch runner: A substitute player who runs for a player who has reached base.

Pitcher: Position 1. The fielder designated to deliver the pitch to the batter.

Pitcher's circle: The circle (2.5m) around the pitcher's rubber.

Pitcher's rubber: A rectangular whitened rubber slab set in the ground from which the pitcher must be in contact at the start of the pitching motion.

Pocket of the glove: The inner portion of a softball glove.

Pop fly: A fly ball hit high and short over the infield or short outfield.

Pull: A term used to describe the direction of a batted ball to the same side of the field he takes his stance upon. Example: a right-handed hitter pulls the ball when he hits it anywhere from the left-center gap to the left field line.

Relay: A defensive play in which an outfielder throws the ball to an infielder who, in turn, throws the ball to a teammate covering a base.

Relief pitcher: A player who enters the game to replace the current pitcher.

Replacing your feet: The technique used by infielders to gain momentum and quickly get their feet into a good throwing position after fielding a ground ball.

Right fielder: Position 9. This player is an outfielder.

Rise pitch: This pitch has a backward or upward spin that makes it move slightly upward.

Rip: A hard hit ball.

Run: A unit (score) awarded to the team on the offense when a runner legally advances to home plate.

Run Down: - Happens when fielders, throwing the ball to one another, trap a base runner between two bases and chase him or her down for the tag out.

Run and slap: Term to describe a batter who from the left side of the plate slaps at the ball to get it into play on the ground. Also referred to as a "slapper."

Runs Batted In: (or RBI) - Credited to the player who brings home a base runner as a result of his or her turn at bat. It can occur with a hit, a walk with the bases loaded, a "sacrifice," and sometimes an out - if the out leads to a run.

Sacrifice bunt: A batter bunts the pitch so as to advance a base runner.

Sacrifice fly: A batted fly ball that is caught for an out but that allows a runner at third base to tag up and score.

Safe: A declaration by the umpire that a runner is entitled to a base because they reached it before being put out.

Scoring position: Runners are at second or third base.

Second-base player: Position 4. This infielder is positioned to the right of the second-base bag.

Shoulder to shoulder: A term that describes the position of the head starting inside the front shoulder and finishing inside the back shoulder remaining relatively unchanged in position during the swing.

Shortstop: Position 6. This infielder is positioned between second and third base.

Sidarm: A throwing motion in which the throwing arm is horizontal to the ground.

Single: A one-base hit.

Soft hands: A fielder who rhythmically funnels the ball into the body.

Softie balls: A regulation-size softball made out of *soft* material.

Stance: A term used to describe the placement of the hitter's feet in the batters box. Stance also could mean the initial starting position of the swing.

Stance, closed: A stance in which the front foot is closer to the inside line of the batters box than the back foot. A closed stance many favor a hitter who hits to all fields.

Stance, opened: A stance in which the front foot is further from the inside line of the batters box than the back foot. An open stance may favor a hitter by improving their vision. It is also used by pull hitters who stand close to the plate. In an attempt to keep hitters from opening up too soon, some coaches start hitters with an open stance, and have them stride closed.

Step in the bucket: A phrase used to describe the striding foot stepping away from the plate, causing the front side to open up. This is a common problem in young hitters with narrow stances.

Stealing: The act of advancing one base after the pitcher has released the ball to the batter.

Step, length: Refers to the distance the front foot moves from its starting position in the stance to where it ends up after the stride occurs.

Strike: A pitch that is entered in the strike zone but not swung at, or a pitch at which the batter swings and misses or fouls off.

Strikeout: An out that is the result of three strikes being called, or when a batter swings and misses the third strike. Also called a K.

Strike zone: The area over home plate from the batter's kneecaps to directly below the batter's armpits when the batter assumes a natural stance.

Swing, looping: A swing path in which the barrel drops below the hands

Swing, uppercut: A swing path characterized by the bat moving abruptly upward through the contact zone, resulting in the ball being lifted into the air. The barrel drops below the hands and an upward trajectory is created. This can be caused by gripping the bat in the palms, a high front side, a high back elbow, low hands, or collapsing on the back side.

Tag out: The act of a fielder tagging a base runner, or a base with the ball securely in the hand of glove.

Tag up: The act of a base runner returning to touch a base after a fly ball is caught. The runner may then attempt to advance to the next base.

Take: A term used to instruct a hitter not to swing at the pitch.

Take a strike: A phrase used to instruct a hitter not to swing at a pitch until the umpire has called a strike on him.

T-ball: A simulation game when the ball to be hit is placed on a tee rather than pitched.

Texas leaguer: A poorly hit fly ball that lands out of reach of an infielder and in front of outfielders. These hits are often called flares or bloop hits.

Third-base player: Position 5. This player is positioned near the third-base bag.

Triple play: A play in which three outs are recorded on one batted ball.

Trigger: A term used to initiate an action to follow, such as a trigger to begin the swing. It is used along with the terms "load" or "cocking".

Triple: A three-base hit.

Umpire: The ruling official in a softball game.

Uppercut: An upward swing at a ball.

Up the middle: The area in between the shortstop and second-base player.

Walk: See *base on balls*.

Wild pitch: A pitch thrown to a location where the catcher cannot catch it.

Windmill: The most common motion used by fast-pitch pitchers.

Wrists cocked: a setting of the wrists as the hands and bat load, so they can be forcibly unleashed through contact.