

COACHING DECISIONS, NOT SWINGS

HOW TO DEVELOP HITTERS
WHO CAN THINK FOR
THEMSELVES



BUILD
BASEBALL IQ



TEACH
THE PROCESS



CREATE
CONFIDENT,
ADAPTIVE PLAYERS



GREAT COACHES DON'T JUST BUILD SWINGS.
THEY BUILD THINKERS.

HITTERSIQ

BOOK 5

Coaching Decisions, Not Swings

How to Develop Hitters Who Can Think for Themselves

This is not a mechanics book.

This is a coaching system.

If a coach reads this and applies it, the entire lineup changes.

TEACH · SIMPLIFY · DEVELOP · SUSTAIN

CONTENTS

PART I WHAT COACHES GET WRONG

- Ch. 1 Coaching the Swing Instead of the Decision
- Ch. 2 Overloading Players With Information
- Ch. 3 Practicing Without Context

PART II WHAT GOOD COACHING ACTUALLY IS

- Ch. 4 Teach Decisions First
- Ch. 5 Simplicity Wins
- Ch. 6 Build Awareness, Not Dependence

PART III BUILDING A SYSTEM

- Ch. 7 The Decision Framework
- Ch. 8 Count-Based Training
- Ch. 9 Pattern Recognition Training

PART IV USING THE APP WITH A TEAM

- Ch. 10 What to Track as a Team
- Ch. 11 How to Review Data
- Ch. 12 Turning Data Into Game Plans

PART V WHAT TO SAY (AND NOT SAY)

- Ch. 13 Between At-Bats
- Ch. 14 In the Dugout
- Ch. 15 During Struggles

PART VI PRACTICE THAT TRANSFERS

- Ch. 16 Stop Mindless Reps
- Ch. 17 Build Decision Drills
- Ch. 18 Simulate Game Conditions

PART VII MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

- Ch. 19 Stats Don't Tell the Full Story
- Ch. 20 Decision Quality Score (DQS)
- Ch. 21 Tracking Progress Over Time

PART VIII BUILDING A PROGRAM

- Ch. 22 Creating a Team Identity
- Ch. 23 Scaling Across Players

Ch. 24 Long-Term Development

PART I

WHAT COACHES GET WRONG

CHAPTER 1

Coaching the Swing Instead of the Decision

The swing is the most visible thing in baseball. You can see it on video frame by frame. You can slow it down, draw lines through it, compare it to a model, and describe exactly what the hands are doing wrong. That visibility is exactly why coaches default to it — and exactly why defaulting to it keeps hitters stuck.

The swing is the final event in a chain that started well before the bat moved. By the time you see the hands drop, the hitter has already made a decision — wrong or right, early or late, with a plan or without one. The swing is not the source of the problem. It is the evidence of it. And fixing the evidence without addressing the source is why the same problems return, at-bat after at-bat, game after game.

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE

When a hitter is late on a fastball, you see the late swing. You don't see when the hitter decided it was a fastball. You don't see whether they had any expectation of pitch type before the windup started. You don't see whether they had a defined zone or were simply reacting to everything with equal attention.

When a hitter chases a breaking ball below the zone, you see the reach. You don't see that no zone was defined before the pitch. You don't see that the hitter stepped in with five competing thoughts and no clear plan. You don't see that the decision to

swing happened during the pitch rather than before it, which is always too late for good outcomes.

These invisible factors — what the hitter was looking for, when they committed, whether they had a plan — are the actual cause of every swing problem you observe. They are just not available to the eye in real time. So coaches go to what is available.

THE LOOP THIS CREATES

Bad swing → Coach adjusts mechanics → Temporary improvement → Same decisions → Same problems return

This loop can run for entire seasons. The hitter gets a new load, a new trigger cue, a new hand position. Things feel slightly better. The new feel masks the underlying decision problem for a few at-bats. Then the same situations arise — same count, same pitch type, same lack of pre-pitch clarity — and the same bad swings reappear. Now it's the mechanics again. More adjustments. Another cycle.

What never gets examined is the decision. Was the hitter ready for that pitch? Did they have a plan? Was the zone defined? Were they deciding during the pitch or before it? Because those questions are harder to answer, and because they don't produce the immediate visual satisfaction of a fixed hand path, they get skipped.

WHAT SHOULD BE COACHED INSTEAD

The three questions that unlock every hitting problem are: What were you looking for? When did you decide? Why did you swing?

These questions cannot be answered by looking at video. They require the hitter to reflect on the internal process that created the swing you watched. And that reflection — when it is consistent and honest — is what actually produces improvement.

If a hitter can't answer "what were you looking for" with something specific, that is the coaching moment. Not the hand position. The absence of a plan. If the answer is "I was ready for fastball but he threw a breaking ball," the follow-up is "what told you it was a fastball, and did it confirm or did you guess?" That line of questioning produces awareness. Awareness produces better pre-pitch work. Better pre-pitch work produces better decisions. Better decisions produce better swings — without ever touching the swing directly.

Instead of saying: *"Your hands dropped."*

Ask: *"What pitch were you ready for when you stepped in?"
Now you're at the cause.*

WHY THIS IS HARDER TO COACH

Decision coaching requires you to work with information that is invisible, delayed, and subjective. You cannot point to it on video. The hitter has to introspect and report, which requires trust and honesty. You have to believe them when they say they had no plan, rather than defaulting to the explanation you can see. That is harder than drawing a dotted line through a bat path.

But harder is not the same as impossible. And the coaches who commit to coaching decisions — who make "what were you looking for" a standard post-at-bat question rather than an occasional one — build hitters who adjust faster, perform more consistently, and