

A close-up photograph of a baseball base on a dirt field. The base is a light-colored, rectangular object with rounded ends, positioned on a reddish-brown dirt surface. A white chalk line runs vertically through the base, extending from the top of the frame towards the bottom. The background is a blurred green field.

# Baserunning with a Purpose

- Bobby DeWitt  
WHS varsity coach, 2025

# Why Learn Proper Baserunning?

- Ever see a close play at 1B?
- How about at the plate?
- What about runners going from 1B to 3B on a single
- Scoring from 2B?
- Stretching out a 2B?
- How many times do those calls go against you?
- Perhaps proper technique could have made the difference



# Topics for Tonight:

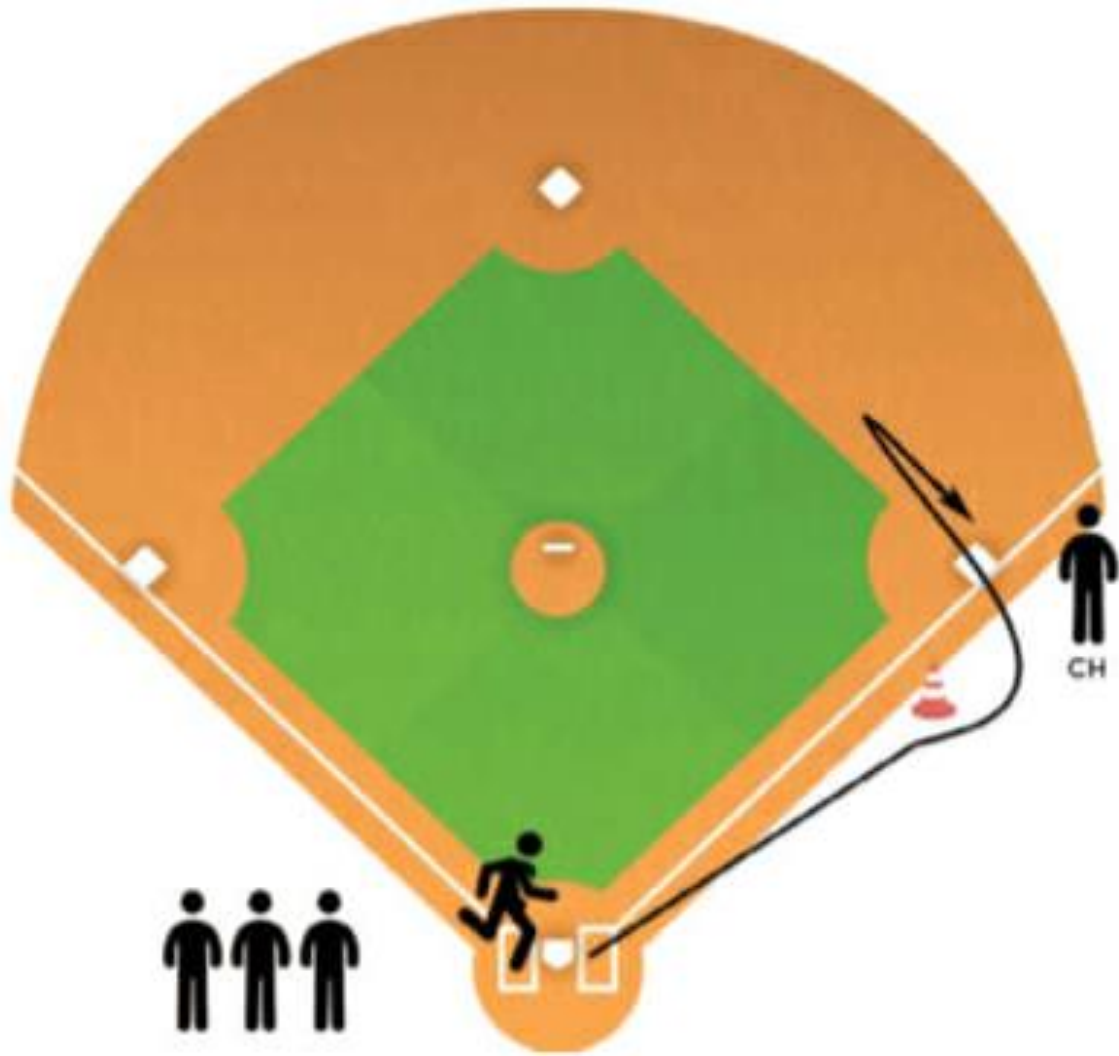
- Home to 1B
- Rounding 1B
- Taking two bases
- Initial and Secondary Leads
- Stealing
- Sliding
- Tagging up

# Home to First



- Make sure you finish your swing
  - After 3 hard steps out of the box look in to find the ball
  - Know whether to run through or round
  - RUN THROUGH THE BAG – Don't slow down
  - Once clear of bag – break it down
- 
- Listen for Coach instruction (stay or two)
  - But also look out towards fence for overthrow

# Rounding 1B



- Remember 3 hard steps out of the box?
- See the ball going into the OF?
- Need to adjust course and start to round (some call it a ? Shape)
- Don't want a wide sweeping turn
- Should still be somewhat near the foul line
- Small curve further into foul territory without slowing down
- Helps to line up body towards 2B
- More direct path
- Don't want to run towards the back of the infield cut past first

# A Few More Ideas on Rounding First

- Stepping on 1B with right or left foot?
- Personally, don't care although some do
- Just don't want to stutter-step on the turn
- Even though we might not be planning on going to 2B – still want to round the bag fast and aggressively
- OF might bobble, miss the cut-off, etc.
- With a runner on 2B – definitely want a hard turn
- Try to force the cut on the throw going home

# Taking Two Bases

## Home to Second

- Turn at 1B makes all the difference
- Runner should try to keep their eye on play so they can decide

## First to Third

- Runners should always be thinking it
- Anything down the line or gap should be automatic
- Must check 3B coach BEFORE getting to 2B



## Second to Home

- Check OF positions before each pitch
- Create angle around 3B
- “We’re going!”
- WANT to score
- Force the 3B coach to stop you

- Take signs on the bag
- Once you step off –  
**EYES ON PITCHER!**

## Taking Leads – 1B

### Initial Lead:

- Both heels on the bag – toes pointing to 2B
- Step off LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT
- SHUFFLE-SHUFFLE
- Goal – one step and a dive to get back (inch in or out....)

**Get your hands off your knees!**

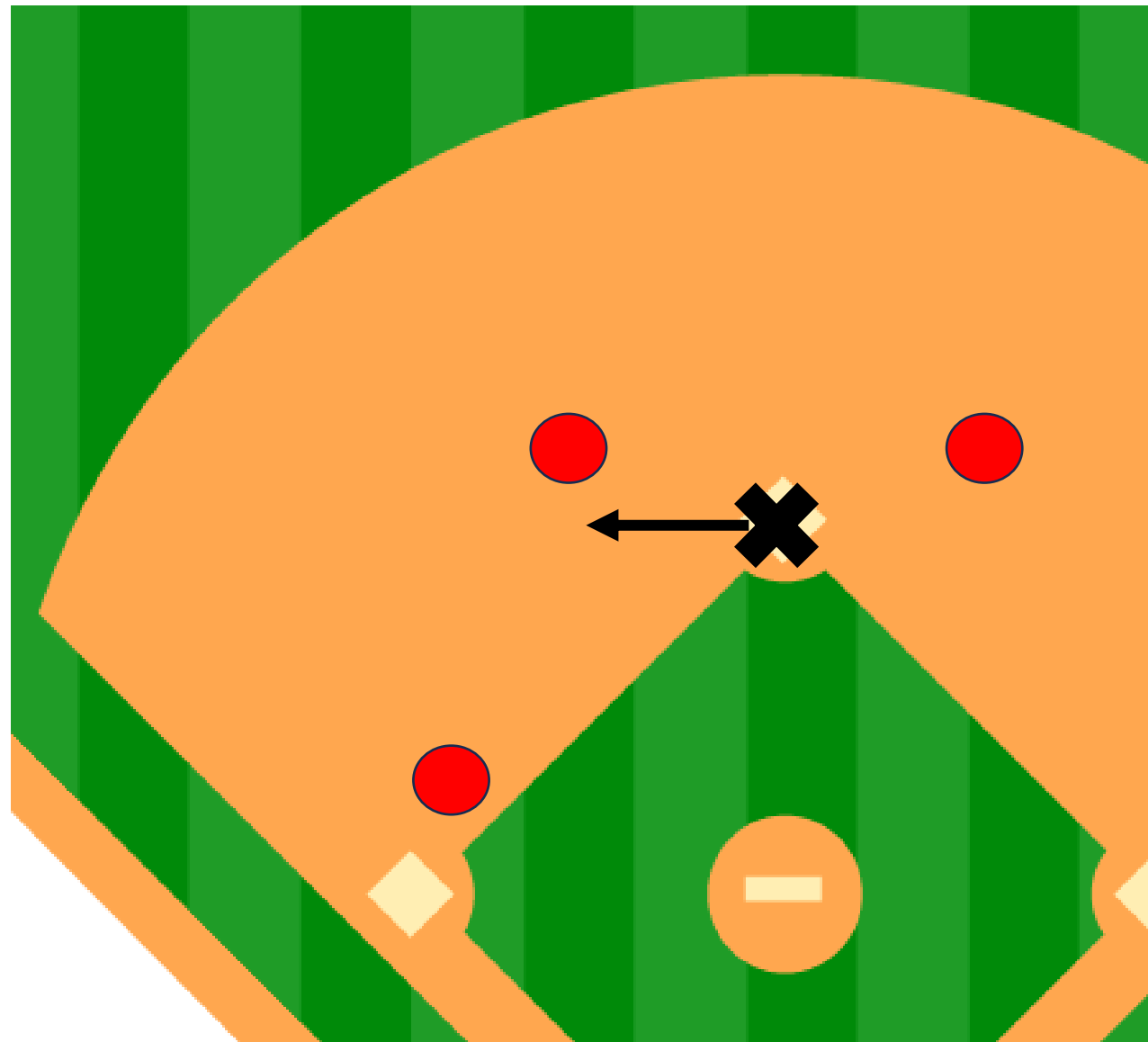


# Taking Leads – 2B



- When you step off, aim deeper into the hole at SS
- Not directly to 3B
- Creates an illusion that you are closer to 2B, allows you to get off further
- Also creates a good angle for rounding 3B
- Lead will be larger than at 1B
- Keep your eye on pitcher

- Angle out in front of SS
- Makes it harder for him to get around
- Corner of eye can see 2B moving in
- BUT DON'T TAKE EYES OFF PITCHER
- 3B Coach primary objective – don't let him get picked off



# Taking Leads – 3B

- Stay in foul territory
- Lead at 3B can be bigger than at 1B or 2B
- Few teams have a pickoff to 3B - risky





**Stay foul**

# Secondary Leads



- Purpose is to decrease distance to next base
- Must know the P is going home

## Secondary Lead – 1B



- Watch the Pitcher's feet
- Right Handed:
  - Right moves first – pick
  - Left moves first - pitch
- Left Handed:
  - Need to delay secondary
  - Don't get picked
- Shuffle, shuffle (more?)
- Keep body square to home
- Catcher has ball – get back
- **Ground ball – go**
- **Fly ball – half-way (depth)**
- **Line drive - FREEZE**

## Secondary Lead – 2B

- Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle (more?)
- Or teach walking lead
- Secondary lead should be bigger here
- Keep body square to home
- Shuffles should angle to 3B from starting point
- Ground ball behind – go
- Ground ball in front – stop
- Fly ball to LF, CF – halfway
- Fly ball to RF – half or tag
- Fly ball to deep RF or gap – tag
- Line drive - FREEZE



# Secondary Leads – 3B

- **STAY FOUL!!!**
- **Once pitcher commits to home...**
- **Square shoulders to the plate**
- **Walk in a crouch towards home (athletic position)**
- **DO NOT shuffle, jog or run-stop**
- **OBJECTIVE – right foot hits the ground at moment the ball hits the catcher’s glove**
- **Maintain forward momentum through the point of bat contact**
- **Tag on ALL fly balls**
- **Ground ball – choice (typically no to corners or P)**
- **IF playing in? – MUST “SEE IT GO THROUGH”**
- **Line drive - FREEZE**



**(Walk)**

**DOWN IN FOUL,**



**BACK IN FAIR**

**(Hustle)**

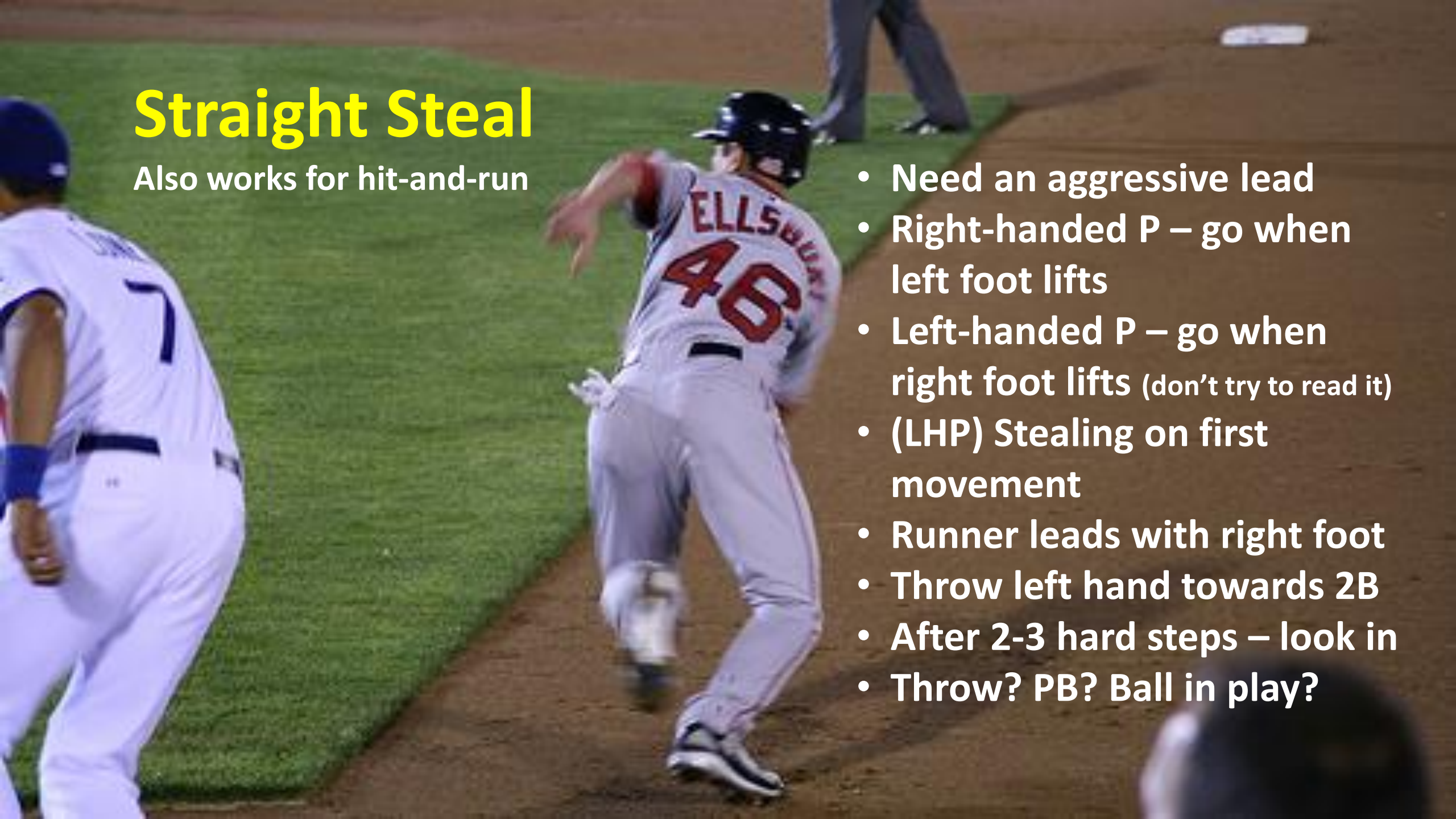


# Stealing

- Straight steal
- Delay steal

# Straight Steal

Also works for hit-and-run



- Need an aggressive lead
- Right-handed P – go when left foot lifts
- Left-handed P – go when right foot lifts (don't try to read it)
- (LHP) Stealing on first movement
- Runner leads with right foot
- Throw left hand towards 2B
- After 2-3 hard steps – look in
- Throw? PB? Ball in play?



# Delayed Steal

- Keep consistent lead
- Take secondary lead as pitcher goes home
- But take 3 shuffles
- Keep body square to home
- After 3<sup>rd</sup> shuffle – break for 2B
- Goal – catch defense off-guard
- Starts with 1B not yelling runner
- And a lazy catcher

# More on Stealing



- Need to practice jumps – develop anticipation
- Get a bad jump? Don't go – pull up after 1-2 steps
- Aggressive runners will read the pitch as it moves towards plate
- See ball down? Break!
- Stealing 3B? Try to maintain a walking lead
- Stealing is a math problem
- Time runners from 1B-lead to 2B (practice)
- Time Pitcher's first movement from stretch until it hits the C glove (game)
- Then add that to the catcher's time to 2B
- Start when it hits glove until it hits 2B's glove



# Sliding

- Feet-first
- Head-first

# Sliding at 1B

- Stop sliding at 1B to beat the throw – that is incorrect
- Proven that running through is faster
- The only time you slide at 1B is to avoid a tag:
- Throw takes the 1B off the bag
- Or the pitcher is covering and you must avoid the tag

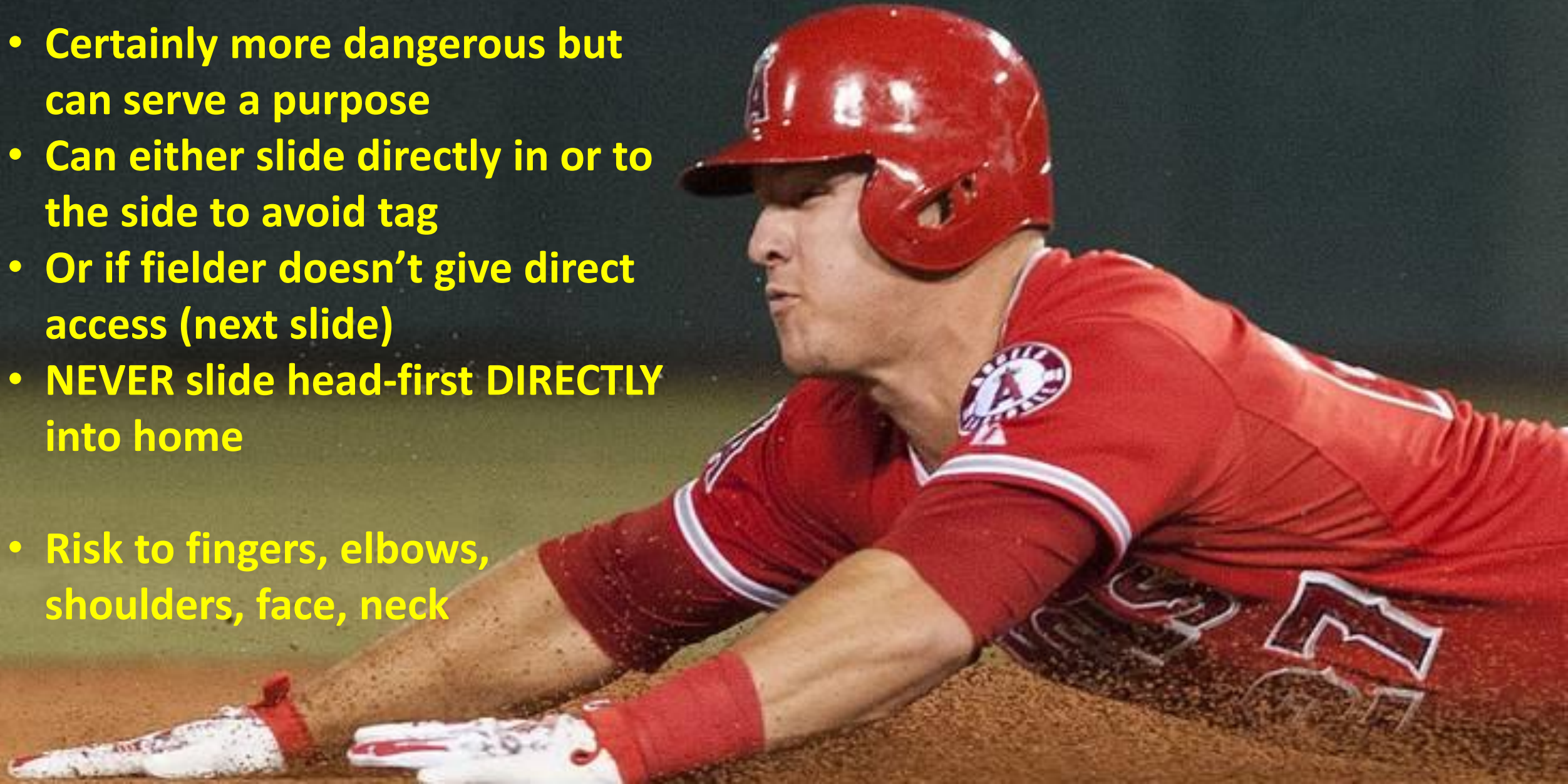
# Head-first on a Pick-off Attempt

- Lead should be big enough to require a slide
- If you can get back standing up – too short
- Slide to the back of the bag
- Tough 1B with right hand
- If you get beat - swim



# Head-first Other Bases

- Certainly more dangerous but can serve a purpose
- Can either slide directly in or to the side to avoid tag
- Or if fielder doesn't give direct access (next slide)
- NEVER slide head-first DIRECTLY into home
- Risk to fingers, elbows, shoulders, face, neck

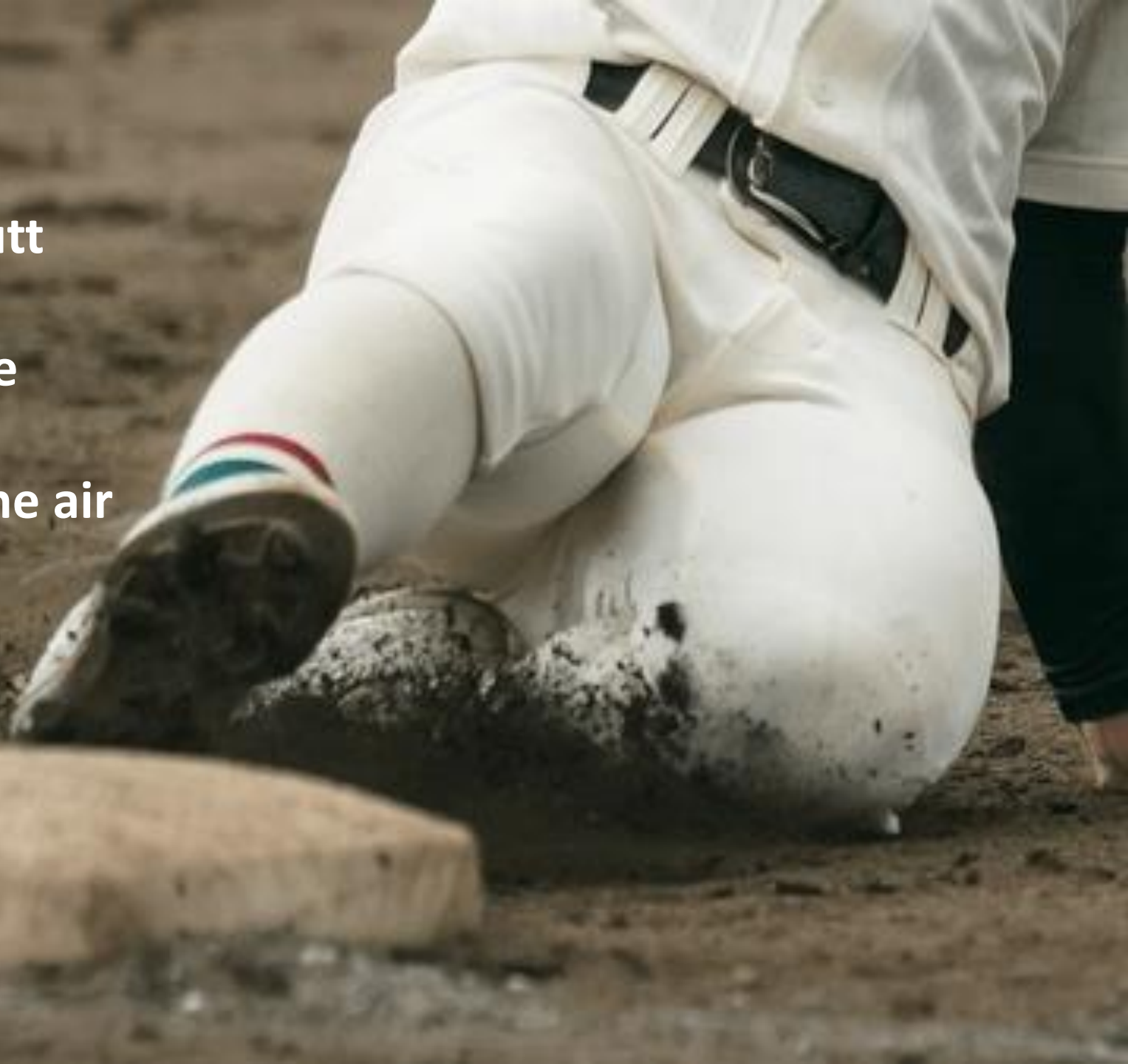


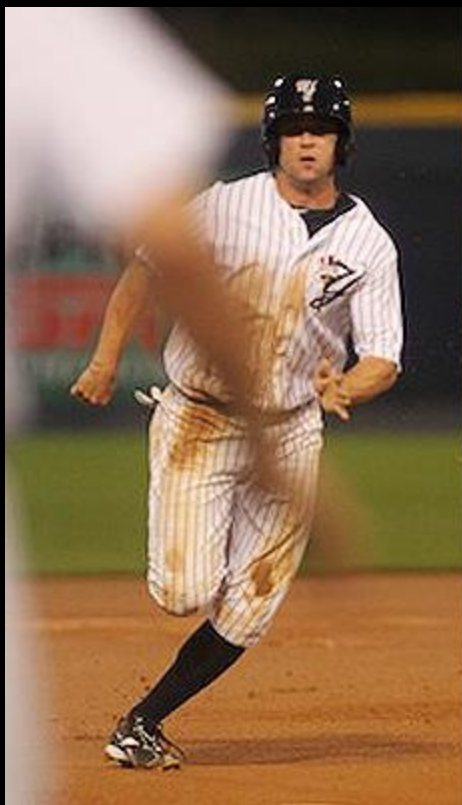




# Feet-first Slide

- Tuck one leg under (figure 4)
- Slide on tucked leg and hip/butt
- Lead foot hits bag
- Hand on tucked leg side can be down to brace
- Typically other hand is up in the air





# Feet-first Hand Slide

- Usually when the catcher is up the line or to either side
- Use the normal feet-first slide
- Inside hand will reach out for plate as you slide by





**Old School Hook Slide**

# Tagging Up

## Second base

- Only on deep flies to center or right
- Runner watch the catch
- With runner on 3B and “mid-range” flyball – bluff a tag
- Draw throw away from home



# Tagging Up

- Tag on all flies
- Runners should watch the catch – quicker reaction time
- Left foot on bag in order to face the catch
- Don't rely on coach saying go (bobble?)
- Shallow fly – bluff a tag with 2-3 hard steps
- OF might throw it away



# Baserunning Drills

- Home to First – Swing, Look in, Look Out
- Leads at First – dive back or get secondary
- Leads at First – straight/delay steal second
- Leads at Second – Initial, Secondary Score
- Home to Second – work on rounding 1B
- Second to Third – tag on deep ball to right – MAKE THEM LOOK
- Third Base – initial and secondary leads (freeze or go)
- Third Base – initial and secondary leads – then tag up
- Home to Second – rounding 1B, watch coach at 3B
- Second to Home – work on angle, either send or stop runners

