



Berlin Youth Baseball – Batting Order Tips

Goal of this document: This document is intended to give some general guidance on how to create a successful batting order for your team.

Leadoff batter: Your first batter in the order should be somebody that has an extremely high contact percentage. What that means is, they put the ball in play. They don't always get on base, but they also rarely if ever strike out or swing and miss. At a young youth age, the opposing team many times will struggle defensively in fielding groundballs and flyballs and actually throwing a runner out, so the key to success in many cases is actually finding players that can simply make contact and put the ball in play. Your leadoff batter needs to be the best person at doing that, because there's nothing worse than your first batter of the game striking out and your team getting down on themselves, and there is nothing better to motivate a team than having their first batter put them ball in play and get to first base.

Clean-up hitting: Depending on how many strong hitters your team has you want the number 3 and/or 4 batter to be your power hitter, the person on your team that you know can hit the ball the farthest. You're banking on your leadoff batter getting on base, so you're believing you'll have at least 1 runner on when this batter comes up to the plate and your expectation is they can hit it far enough to get that leadoff batter to score, guaranteeing your team at least 1 run in that first at bat.

Bottom of the order: A common mistake is putting your worst player on the bottom of the order, a player that is weak, a slow runner, who rarely swings and when they do they almost always miss. Instead, remember that the on-deck batter is your leadoff batter. Your leadoff batter almost always gets a hit or puts it in play. Your leadoff batter is usually a pretty fast kid. So you don't want an automatic out batting right before your leadoff batter, you want somebody who has a decent chance of getting on base. And once that last batter gets on base, you don't want somebody who is slow and will stop your leadoff batter from getting extra bases, so you want essentially a "second leadoff" batting in that bottom spot, who is pretty speedy as well.

Two mini-batting orders in one: A batting order typically consists of around 10 players but could be up to 15 or 16 depending on how many youth are on your team. It's a common mistake at a very young youth level, to stack all your great hitters at the top, and all your weak hitters at the bottom. That may be something you do at higher competitive levels, but at a very young youth age, many times it's more advantageous to

create 2 mini-batting orders without your batting order. What is meant by that is, say you have 10 players, try making to 5 player batting orders (with a leadoff & clean-up hitter) and making one group the 1-5 hitters and the other group the 6-10 hitters. (thus both 1 and 6 are leadoffs, and both 4 and 9 are cleanups). Thus if one of your mini-batting orders fails to score any runs in an inning, that's ok because you have your next mini-batting order coming up the next inning.

1-2-3 Innings: You should also try to avoid having 3 weak hitters in a row. Anytime you put 3 players in a row that you know are afraid to swing, or struggle making contact, or haven't had a hit all season, you're essentially giving up an entire inning (3up , 3down). Instead, you want to interweave these weaker hitters in between some better hitters so that you always have a chance each inning to get a runner on base and make something happen.

Consistency: While it may seem fair to randomly choose the batting order each game, in order to give each player a chance to bat first, second, third, etc. introducing that inconsistent fluctuation typically ends up negatively impacting players ability to deliver hits and can cause moral issues when the team is unable to deliver and produce runs consistently. If possible, introduce at least some consistency by keeping certain players batting near each other in the order, or keeping the same leadoff and clean-up hitters, etc. and by rewarding those players who are making contact and hitting the ball well and similarly dropping players down who are struggling. In the same way that repetition and consistency is good for practice while throwing and swinging, repetition and consistency is good in a batting order because players know what to expect and what is expected of them.