

UP YOUR GAME – March 2026

March Edition Topics:

- Opposite Field Hitting
- Situational Hitting
- Base Running Techniques and Guides

Countdown to the 2026 Softball Season:

Well, the season is almost here.....and I know many of you, including those that haven't started with the Stretching and Training recommendations we made in the January/February editions, hopefully got in some exercise activity as you spent time clearing snow after the 2 large storms we experienced over the last month. And for those of you who simply get someone else to do this snow removal work.....**IT IS TIME** for you to start training for the 2026 season!

Opposite Field Hitting:

In this session, we are going to build on the hitting fundamentals that we published in our earlier editions. To recap, the Bob Woldyk video showed you the proper technique to improve your swing mechanics and generate more power. We also discussed your approach to the plate and positioning for success. These are key focal points to not only improve your overall hitting performance but serve as the basis to adjust your position when hitting to the opposite field. Remember, positioning yourself at the plate to “**barrel up**” and for hitting the ball between your Shoulder and Waist are the critical success factors to concentrate on.

If you recall from the February edition, here is my typical positioning.

- Position to the plate: Back foot is about 1-2 inches from the very front of home plate
- Distance from the plate: Two and ½ shoe lengths from the side of the plate
- I will adjust this depending on the Pitcher and the situation

To go to the **opposite field**, I adjust my position slightly from my typical position by moving my feet as follows;

- Move my back foot away from home plate by ~ ½ step
- Move my back foot forward towards the Pitcher to be equal to the very front part of Home plate.

What this slight adjustment does is.....create an outside pitch and allows me to still make contact with the ball between my shoulder and waist.

The second adjustment that has to be made is to keep my swing mechanics the same but slightly **“LAG”** my swing which will create the inertia/push to hit the ball to the opposite field. The critical focus point to do this effectively is to ensure that you keep that back shoulder/elbow high through the swing.

Dropping your shoulder/elbow almost always result in a fly ball!

A couple of ancillary points here relative to the pitch. If you have positioned yourself similar to how we have outlined, you are essentially creating the outside pitch you want to succeed for this swing. If you are in this adjusted position and the pitch is inside, then it is most likely a Ball, so let it go.

Obviously knowing the Strike zone is important so that you can ensure you are swinging at the right pitch. Keep in mind, this adjustment should be a subtle move such that the Pitcher doesn't also adjust seeing how you have positioned yourself.

The best way to test this adjustment is to attempt it off a batting tee and practice until you can demonstrate the effect consistently. Swing from the normal position 5 times, then make the adjustment to enable the opposite

field swing. Finally, personal preference is key for your position and approach to the plate so practicing these techniques will enable you to get more comfortable with adjusting to go OPPO!

CCSSL is offering private and small group (1 - 3) hitting instruction through the Hitting Club. Please visit the Hitting Club link and sign up or leave your request in the comments section below for follow-up.

Situational Hitting:

We obviously can't cover every situation in this section so we will try to tackle a few key areas that do occur frequently.

Let's first start with an easy one;

- 0-2 Count with nobody on base.... What do you do?
 - Grip the Bat as tight as you can?
 - Swing at the next pitch no matter where it is?
 - Call time out, give the umpire a dirty look then swing at the next pitch?

NO.... we never do any of this! What you should do is call time out, gather yourself and think about where you are going to successfully hit the ball!

Again, knowing the Pitcher is important because a good Pitcher will likely try to throw you something close, but it may not be a strike. Too anxious and you swing at that bad pitch. This is where knowing the Strike zone (and how the Ump is calling Balls and Strikes) is important. Have confidence in your swing mechanics, wait for that pitch in the Strike zone. If its close, hit away, if not, let it go!

- Men on base, Force play situation;
 - In this situation your thought process has to be **AVOID a Double Play**
 - Get the ball in the air, stay away from ground balls, especially to the Pitcher, 3rd Base, or Middle infield.
 - Lay off that inside pitch, think middle/right line drive.

- Runners in scoring position, tight game with < 2 outs;
 - Again, avoid the Double Play
 - Focus on advancing the runners with a line drive to your power
 - This is a good opportunity to utilize an **Opposite field** swing
 - Hit the ball in the air, preferably behind the runners
 - A Sacrifice fly gets the run
 - Don't be afraid to take a walk

Base Running Techniques and Guides:

In this section we will focus on a few fundamentals:

- Make sure you run to the Orange/Outside bag at First base on a batted ball with a play at First Base
- NEVER step on Home plate.... see the new CCSSL rule for advancing to Home from 3rd Base.
- When rounding a base and advancing, focus on hitting the **inside corner** of the base to maximize your turning radius and reduce injury. Try to never step on the middle of a base.
- Position yourself to **Tag** on a routine fly ball with less than two outs
- Listen to your Base coaches

Topics for the next Edition of **UP YOUR GAME**:

- Defensive Positioning with keys for consideration
- Topics You place in the Comments section

We Want to Hear from You!

Thank you for your continued interest in **Up Your Game**. We hope these topics have been beneficial to your training and preparation. Please feel free to share any comments or suggestions for future editions.