



FIELD MANUAL • PROPERTY OF THE ROSTER

THIS BOOK IS ISSUED TO

NAME _____

NUMBER _____ POSITIONS _____

SEASON _____

ONE OF ELEVEN ISSUED. A GENERAL TAKES CARE OF HIS EQUIPMENT — AND HIS
EQUIPMENT TAKES CARE OF HIM. WRITE YOUR NAME. IT'S YOURS NOW.

STANDING ORDERS · SITUATIONAL BASEBALL

FIELD ORDERS

THIRTY ORDERS FOR THE THINKING BALLPLAYER
READ THE GAME. KNOW YOUR JOB. MOVE.



100 TRAVEL BASEBALL · HALFTIME PRESS · SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

BEFORE THE FIRST PITCH

THE GENERAL'S CHARGE

GENERALS —

Every play you will see this season has already happened ten thousand times. The ground ball to short with a runner on second. The fly ball two of you can reach. The throw coming home with a batter sneaking toward second behind it. None of it is new — and that is the best news in baseball, because **anything that repeats can be learned, and anything learned can be executed at full speed.**

Talent is loud. Everybody sees the home run. But watch a good team closely and you'll see something quieter deciding the game: nine players who all know where the ball goes **before it's hit.** A runner who was told to take third by the second baseman's turned back. A right fielder sprinting twenty feet behind a routine throw that never gets away — until the day it does.

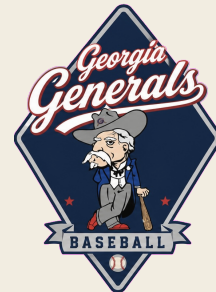
This book is thirty orders. Not suggestions — orders. Each one is short enough to memorize and true often enough to trust. Read them, write your reps in pencil, argue with the answer key at practice if your why holds up. Then bring them to the field, where they belong.

You don't need to be the biggest player in the park. You need to be the one who **already knows.**

REPORT FOR DUTY.

— COACH

GEORGIA GENERALS • 100



READ THIS FIRST

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

EVERY ORDER IS ONE SPREAD. Left page: why the play works, the rules in rungs, and the field diagram. Right page: **four write-in reps** (A-D), **THE TRAP** — the mistake that looks smart, **FROM THE COACH**, and the one-line **ORDER** in the bottom corner. Orders marked **ADV** are advanced — earn the ones before them first.

1

GO IN ORDER

The book is a ladder. Order 14 leans on 13, Order 24 repeals 22 and 23 on purpose. Skipping rungs is how ankles get broken.

2

PENCIL, NEVER PEN

Your answers will change as you get smarter. That's the point. This book should look argued-with by June.

3

SAY IT OUT LOUD

Half these orders are about your voice. A report written silently is half a rep. Your dog is an acceptable audience.

4

ALL FOUR REPS BEFORE THE KEY

The answer key starts on page 74, and every answer comes with its why. Match the why, not just the answer. A different answer with a solid why is worth bringing to practice.

5

MEMORIZE THE ORDER LINE

The sentence in the bottom corner is the whole lesson compressed. All thirty live together on the Standing Orders card in the back — pull it out, keep it in your bag.

★

BRING IT TO THE FIELD

One order per practice. Watch for it in your next game — live, at full speed, where it counts. The season log in the back is for the day each order shows up.

SAY IT TOGETHER

THE GENERALS' CREED

I KNOW THE COUNT **BEFORE EVERY PITCH.**
I KNOW MY JOB **BEFORE THE BALL IS HIT.**
I MOVE ON CONTACT. **NOBODY STANDS.**
I CALL IT LOUD, **AND I ANSWER LOUDER.**
I TAKE THE SURE OUT **AND BACK UP EVERY THROW.**
WHEN I DON'T KNOW – **FIRST BASE.**
QUIET IS THE ERROR.
KEEP YOUR HEAD UP. **GENERALS LISTEN.**

SAID TOGETHER BEFORE EVERY GAME. EIGHT LINES, THIRTY ORDERS, ONE TEAM. IF YOU ONLY KEEP ONE PAGE OF THIS BOOK, KEEP THIS ONE.

THE THIRTY ORDERS

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ORDER 01

BY THE NUMBERS

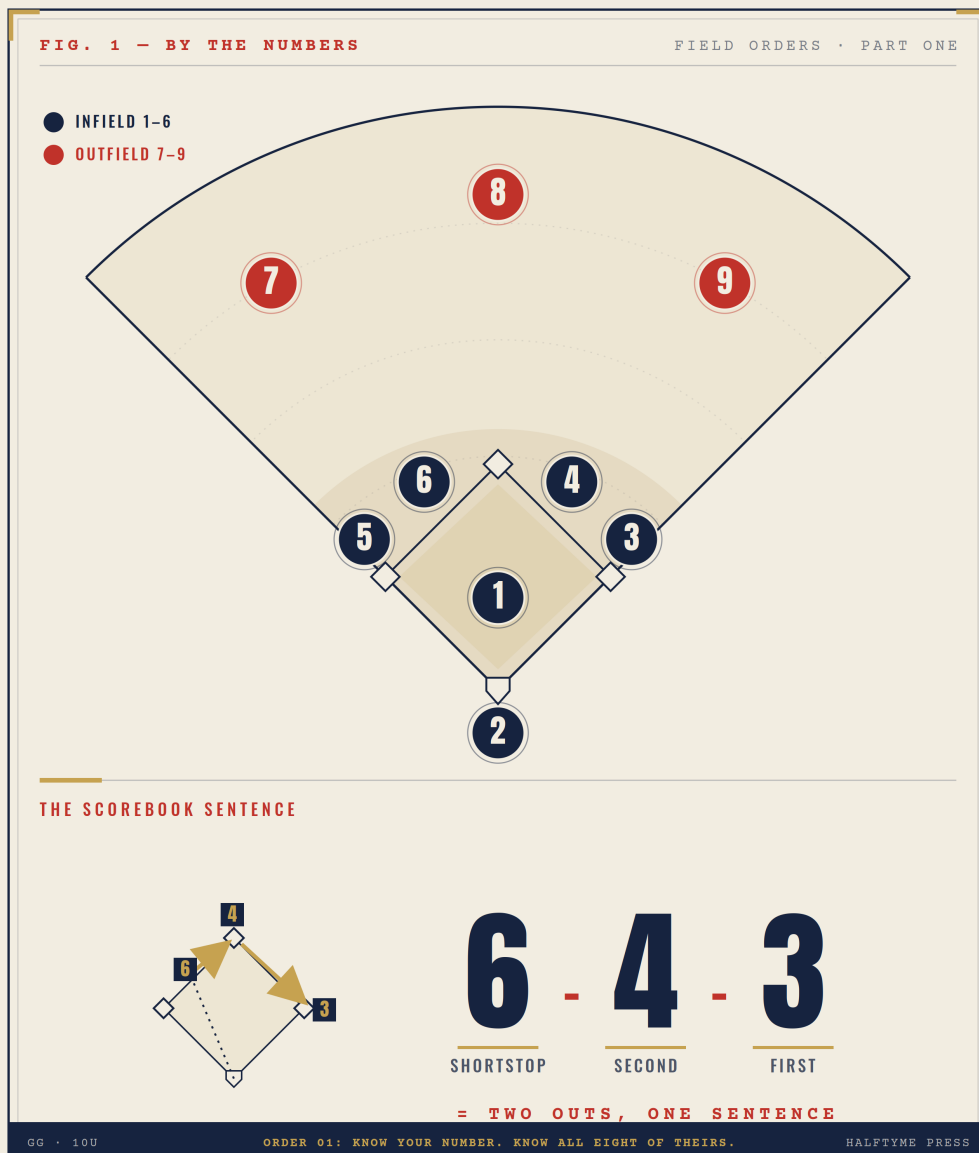
CORE

Every position on the field has a number, and the number never changes. It isn't a ranking. It's an address.

Coaches use them. Scorebooks use them. Every conversation you'll ever have about defense uses them. When a coach says "we've got a play at 5," he isn't giving you a code — he's giving you a location, and he expects you to already know where it is.

The numbers don't run in base order, and that's what trips people up. They start with the two men who touch the ball on every single pitch — the pitcher and the catcher — and then they run around the infield starting at first base, and finish left to right across the outfield.

Learn them cold. Six-four-three isn't three numbers, it's a sentence: shortstop to second to first, and that's two outs.



THE RULES

- 1** Pitcher
- 2** Catcher
- 3** First base
- 4** Second base
- 5** Third base
- 6** Shortstop
- 7** Left field
- 8** Center field
- 9** Right field

THE REPS

- A** Your coach says he wants the next ball hit to 6 to go to 4 for the force. Say it back in position names.

BALL GOES TO _____

- B** Ground ball to the shortstop. He flips to second for one, and second fires to first for two. Write it the way a scorebook would.

SCOREBOOK SHORTHAND _____

- C** A pop fly drops between 7 and 8. Which two of your teammates just let it drop?

POSITION _____

- D** Write your own number here, and then the number of the teammate you throw to most often.

MY NUMBER _____

THE TRAP

Almost everybody guesses that second base is 2. It's 4. The counting starts with the battery — pitcher, then catcher — and only then goes around the infield. Say this out loud five times and it sticks: three, four, five, six is first, second, third, short.

FROM THE COACH

This is the smallest order in the book and the one I'd fight hardest for. Not because the numbers matter on their own, but because a kid who knows them can follow a conversation he used to just stand next to. That's the first time the game slows down for you.

ORDER 02

READING THE BOARD

CORE

There are five facts on a baseball field at all times. Every one of them changes what you should do with the ball. Most players know maybe two.

Outs decide where the out is — with two down you take the easy one, with none down you might get greedy. Runners decide whether it's a force or a tag. Score decides whether you'd trade a run for an out or never. Inning decides how much time is left to get it back. Count decides what the hitter is likely to do to you.

Four of those five hold still for a whole at-bat. One of them moves every single pitch. That's why this is a pre-pitch habit and not a between-innings habit.



THE RULES

- 1** How many outs
- 2** Where the runners are
- 3** What the score is
- 4** What inning it is
- 5** What the count is — this one moves

THE REPS

- A** Runner on second, nobody out. Ground ball right at you at shortstop. Where's your throw?

THROW TO _____

- B** Same exact ball, same exact spot — but now there are two outs. Did your answer change?

THROW TO _____

- C** You're up six runs in the last inning. Runner on third, ground ball to you. What are you willing to give up?

MY PLAY _____

- D** Count is 0–2 on the hitter. What does that tell you about where the ball is probably going, and how does it change where you stand?

WHAT I EXPECT _____

THE TRAP

Reps A and B are the same batted ball and they have different right answers. That's the whole point of this order. Any player who gave the same answer twice is playing the ball instead of playing the game.

FROM THE COACH

Watch a good high school shortstop between pitches. His head is on a swivel and his lips are moving. He isn't nervous, he's counting. Everything that looks like instinct at that level is really just somebody who checked the board a thousand more times than you did.

ORDER 03

THE SITUATION REPORT

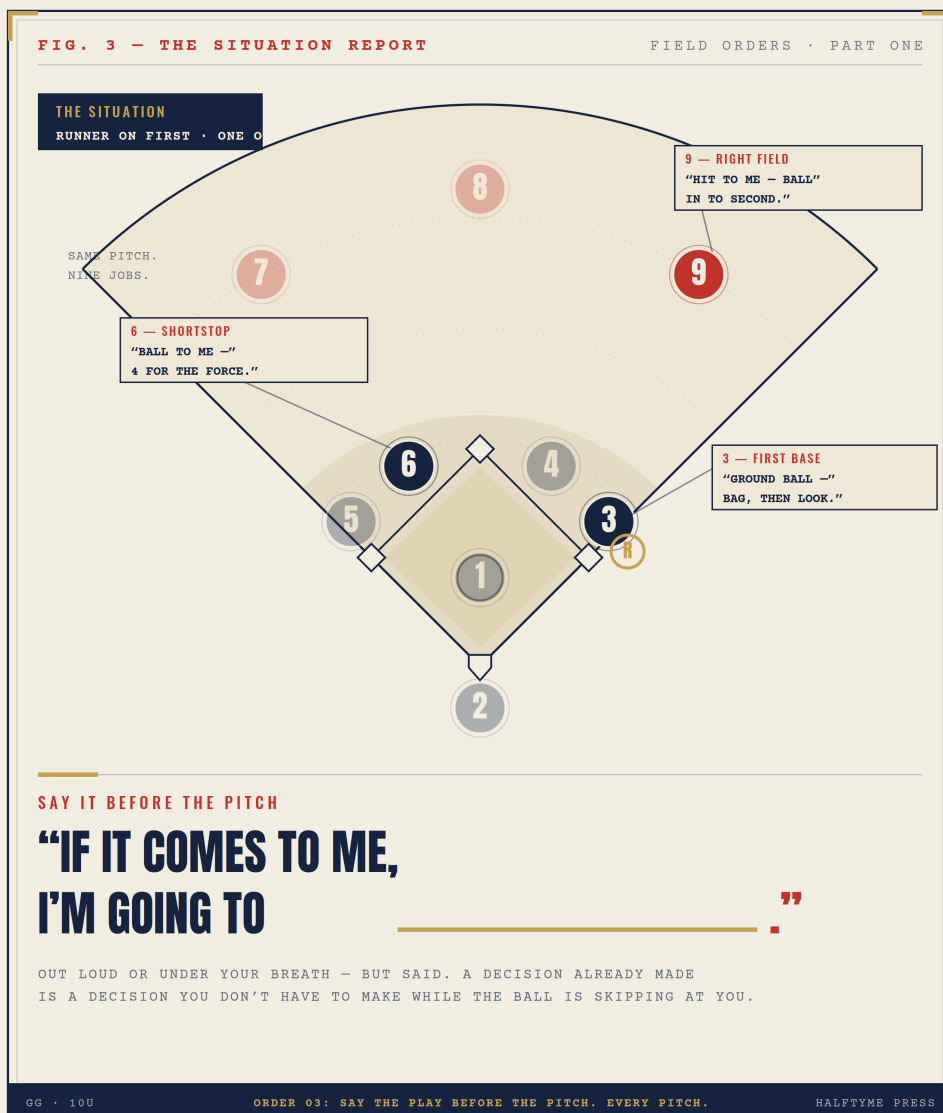
CORE

Knowing the five facts isn't the same as having a plan. The situation report turns what you know into what you'll do — before you have to do it.

It's one sentence, and it always has the same shape: "If it comes to me, I'm going to ____." Say it out loud or say it under your breath, but say it. Thinking it isn't the same. Something about putting it in words makes your feet believe it.

The reason this works has nothing to do with baseball. A decision you've already made is a decision you don't have to make while a ball is skipping at you. You're not faster than the other guy. You just started earlier.

And here's the part most players miss — the report changes when the facts change. The count moves every pitch, which means your report gets said again every pitch. Nine fielders, nine different reports, all of them out loud, all of them new.



THE REPS

A Runner on first, one out, you're at second base. Write your report, out loud first, then here.

IF IT COMES TO ME, I'M GOING TO _____

B Same runner, same out, but now you're in right field. New position, new report.

IF IT COMES TO ME, I'M GOING TO _____

C Bases loaded, nobody out, you're the pitcher. This one has two answers depending on where the ball goes. Write both.

HIT AT ME _____

D Nobody on, two outs, you're at third base. Some players think there's no report to make here. Prove them wrong.

MY REPORT _____

THE TRAP

Saying it once an inning feels like doing it. It isn't. The count is one of your five facts and it moves every pitch, so the report moves every pitch too. A report you made three pitches ago is describing a game that isn't happening anymore.

FROM THE COACH

I can hear this one from the dugout, which is why I love it. When nine Generals are all mumbling to themselves between pitches, we've never played worse. Quiet infields make errors. Noisy ones make plays.

ORDER 04

FORCE OR TAG

CORE

This is the most-missed idea in youth baseball, and it costs more outs than any dropped ball ever will.

A runner is forced when the batter becomes a runner and there is nowhere else for him to go. He has to run, so you don't have to touch him — you just have to touch the bag before he gets there. If he doesn't have to run, he's not forced, and the only way to get him is to put the ball on him.

Work it from first base backward. Somebody on first? He's forced. Nobody on first? Nobody behind him is forced either, no matter how many runners are standing out there.

Runner on second and third, nobody on first, ground ball to you — those two runners can stand on their bags all day and laugh at you. Your only out is at first.

FIG. 4 — FORCE OR TAG

FIELD ORDERS • PART ONE

THE ONE QUESTION

DOES HE HAVE TO RUN?

SOMEBODY ON EVERY BAG BEHIND HIM? HE'S FORCED. GAP BEHIND HIM? HE ISN'T.

GOLD BAG = A FORCE LIVES THERE

FORCED — TOUCH THE BAG

RUNNER ON FIRST

TOUCH

FIRST AND SECOND

TOUCH

BASES LOADED

TOUCH

NOT FORCED — TAG THE RUNNER

SECOND ONLY

TAG

SECOND AND THIRD

TAG

WORK IT BACKWARD FROM FIRST

NOBODY ON FIRST? NOBODY BEHIND HIM IS FORCED.

THE BATTER IS ALWAYS FORCED AT FIRST — THAT'S WHY FIRST IS ALWAYS GOLD.

IN DOUBT? THERE IS NO DOUBT. FIRST BASE.

GG • 10U

ORDER 04: DECIDE FORCE OR TAG BEFORE THE BALL IS HIT, NOT AFTER.

HALFTIME PRESS

12

THE RULES

- 1st** Runner on first — forced. Always.
- 1-2** First and second — both forced.
- Load** Bases loaded — everybody forced, including home.
- 2nd** Runner on second alone — not forced.
- 2-3** Second and third — neither one forced.

THE REPS

- A** Runners on second and third, nobody out. Slow ground ball right to you at third. What's your play?

MY PLAY _____

- B** Bases loaded, one out, ground ball to you at third and you're standing near the bag. Where's the easiest out on the field?

EASIEST OUT _____

- C** Runner on first only. He takes off on the pitch and the batter grounds it to short. Is that runner still forced?

YES OR NO _____

- D** Runner on third only, one out, ground ball to you. He breaks for home. What do you do first?

FIRST THING _____

THE TRAP

Rep B catches almost everybody. Bases loaded, ball to third, and the kid turns and throws to first — while he's standing two feet from a force bag with a runner sprinting into it. Home was free. He gave it away because he'd already decided that ground balls go to first.

FROM THE COACH

I've seen a kid chase a runner back toward second who was never forced to leave it in the first place. That's not a baseball mistake, that's a language mistake — he didn't have the word for what was happening. Give him the word and the play shows up on its own.

ORDER 05

THE PRIORITY LADDER

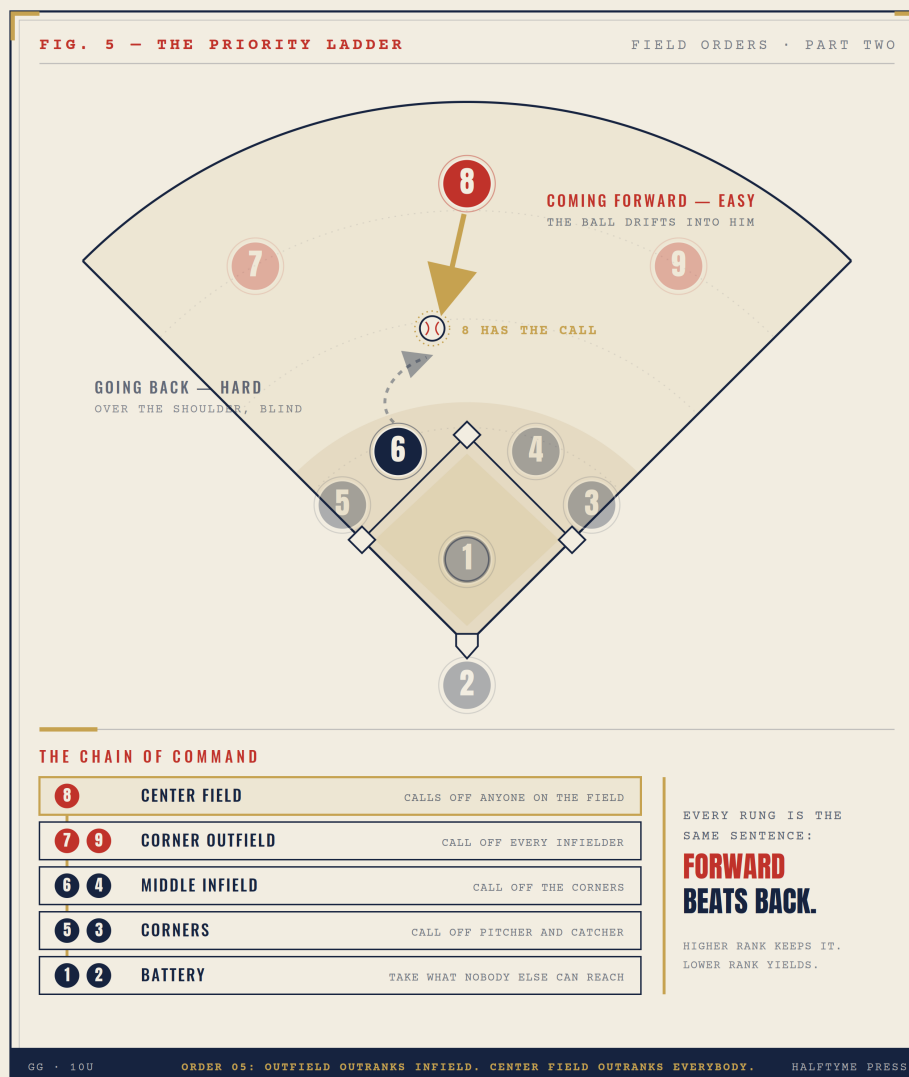
CORE

Two Generals under the same pop fly is not a hustle problem. It's a command problem — and it gets solved before the ball is ever hit.

Here's the whole reason the ladder exists. A ball in the air is drifting toward the outfielder and away from the infielder. Running forward under a ball you can see the whole way is easy. Running backward, over your shoulder, with your glove above your head, is hard.

So the man moving forward always outranks the man moving backward. That's it. Every rung on this ladder is that same sentence, said about two different players.

It's also why the outfielder should want it. He catches it moving toward the infield, already in position to throw — and if a runner is tagging, that throw is the whole play.



THE RULES

- 8** Center field calls off anyone — nobody calls him off
- 7-9** Corner outfielders call off every infielder
- 6-4** Shortstop and second base call off the corners
- 5-3** Third and first call off the pitcher and catcher
- 1-2** Pitcher and catcher take what nobody else can reach

THE REPS

- A** Pop fly halfway between your shortstop and your left fielder. Both of them can get there.

WHO CALLS IT _____

- B** High pop up over the mound. Pitcher, catcher, first and third are all circling under it.

WHO HAS IT _____

- C** Fly ball into the left-center gap. Left fielder and center fielder both have a real shot at it.

WHO CALLS IT _____

- D** Now flip it. You're the shortstop drifting back on a shallow fly, and you hear nothing behind you. Whose ball is it?

WHOSE BALL _____

THE TRAP

Most Generals get rep B wrong, and for a good reason — the pitcher is usually your best athlete, so it feels like his ball. It isn't. He's standing on a hill and the catcher is climbing out of a squat. First and third are already moving forward. Forward beats everything, even talent.

FROM THE COACH

I've never once been mad about two guys running hard at the same ball. I've been plenty mad about two guys standing still, looking at each other, waiting to be told. Silence is the only real mistake here. Somebody has to open his mouth, and the ladder tells you who.

ORDER 05 Outfield outranks infield. Center field outranks everybody.

ORDER 06

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

CORE

The ladder tells you whose ball it is. The call is how everybody else finds out. A ladder nobody says out loud is worth nothing.

The call has rules, and they exist because a ball in the air is loud country — wind, parents, cleats, your own breathing. A call has to cut through all of it and leave zero doubt about who's catching.

Wait for the peak. Call it while the ball is still climbing and you're guessing. Young players call early because calling feels like hustle. It isn't — it's a promise you might not be able to keep, and a broken call is worse than none.

Three times, loud. "I got it, I got it, I got it." Once can be missed. Three can't. And if you're an infielder going back with your eyes on the sky, get your arms up — the outfielder charging at you can see hands he can't hear.



THE RULES

- 1** Track it — everyone chases until called off
- 2** Wait for the peak of the flight
- 3** "I got it" — three times, loud
- 4** Arms up if you're going back
- X** Never yell "ball" — it names the ball, not the man

THE REPS

- A** Why do we wait for the peak instead of calling it off the bat? Say it in your own words.

BECAUSE _____

- B** You call a fly ball at the peak. Halfway down, the wind carries it and you know you can't get there. What do you yell?

WHAT I YELL _____

- C** Two players both yell "ball!" at the same time. What went wrong, and what should each have said instead?

WHAT WENT WRONG _____

- D** You're at second base drifting back on a shallow pop, and you've called it. What do your arms do, and who is it for?

ARMS _____

THE TRAP

"Ball, ball, ball" feels like a call. It isn't one. Everybody on the field already knows there's a ball — the question is which man is catching it, and "ball" doesn't answer it. "I got it" has an I in it. That's the whole point.

FROM THE COACH

The bravest thing on this page is rep B. Calling a ball and then giving it up when you're beat isn't quitting — it's the most honest play in baseball. The kid who yells "you take it" when the wind wins just saved an out. Nobody claps for him. I do.

ORDER 06 Call it loud, call it three times, and never yell "ball."

ORDER 07

YIELDING THE RIGHT OF WAY

CORE

Getting called off is not the end of your play. It's the middle of it. The man who yields has two jobs left, and most players do zero of them.

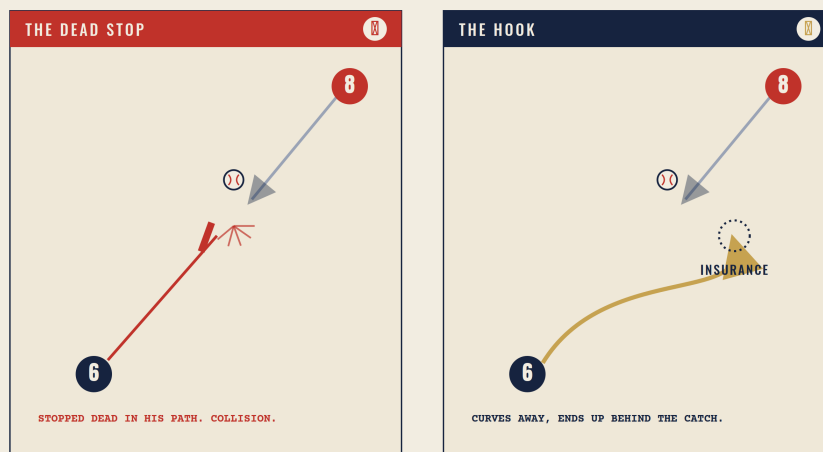
Job one: answer him. When you hear the call, say "take it, take it." That's the confirmation — it tells the man catching that you heard, you're out, and he's not about to get run over. Silence leaves him catching with one eye on you, and a fielder watching two things drops both.

Job two: get behind the play. Peel off in a curve, not a dead stop — a sudden stop right in his path is how collisions happen even after a good call. Curve away, then swing around behind him. If the ball pops loose or a runner tags, you're the closest man to the mistake.

The ladder gave the play a first man. Yielding gives it a second one. Every fly ball should end with two Generals near the ball — one catching, one insuring.

FIG. 7 — YIELDING THE RIGHT OF WAY

FIELD ORDERS • PART TWO



AFTER THE CALL

- 1 ANSWER HIM**
"TAKE IT, TAKE IT" — SO HE CATCHES WITH BOTH EYES
- 2 PEEL IN A CURVE**
NEVER A DEAD STOP IN HIS PATH
- 3 CIRCLE BEHIND**
10-15 FEET BACK OF THE CATCH
- 4 EYES UP**
LOOSE BALL OR TAGGING RUNNER IS YOURS

**EVERY FLY BALL ENDS
WITH TWO GENERALS.**

ONE CATCHING. ONE INSURING.

THE RULES

- 1** Answer — "take it, take it"
- 2** Peel off in a curve, never a dead stop
- 3** Circle behind the catch, 10–15 feet
- 4** Eyes up — loose ball or tagging runner is yours

THE REPS

- A** You're chasing a gap ball and your center fielder calls it. Write your next three moves, in order.

SAY _____

- B** Why do we answer "take it" instead of just shutting up and getting out of the way?

BECAUSE _____

- C** Your left fielder calls it, catches it — and drops it on the transfer. Runner on second is halfway to third. Where should you already be, and what happens if you're there?

WHERE I AM _____

- D** Why a curve instead of stopping dead in your tracks when you get called off?

BECAUSE _____

THE TRAP

The called-off player who jogs back to his position with his head down thinks the play is over. Watch how many extra bases get taken in the three seconds after a catch. The play isn't over when the ball is caught — it's over when the ball is back in the infield and dead.

FROM THE COACH

Yielding is a rank thing, and Generals should understand rank better than anybody. Standing down isn't losing the ball — it's taking the second post, and the second post saves more runs than the first one does. The best teammate on the field is usually the one who didn't make the catch.

ORDER 07 When you're called off, answer him, then back him up.

ORDER 08

NOBODY'S BALL

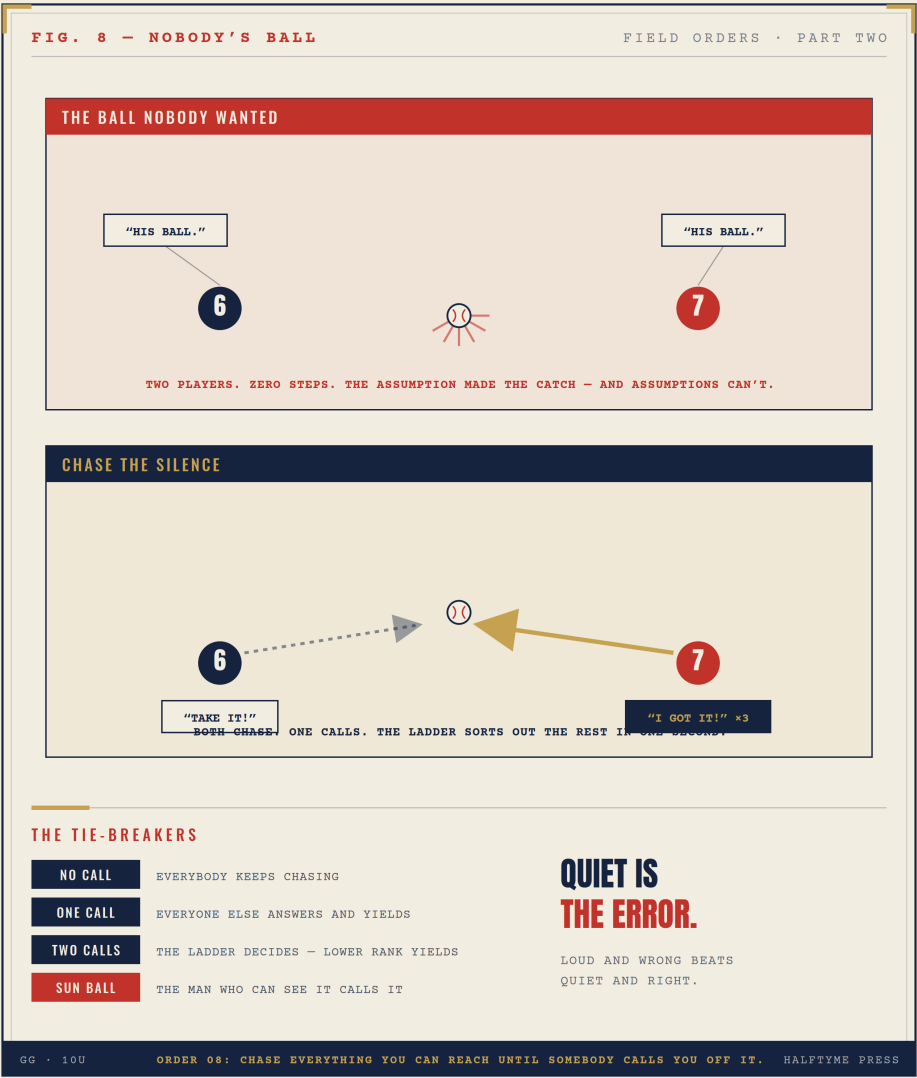
CORE

The ball that drops between two standing players didn't fall because nobody could reach it. It fell because each man decided it was the other man's ball.

So here's the rule that closes the gap in the ladder: you chase everything you can reach until somebody calls you off it. Not until you think he's got it. Not until it looks like his ball. Until you hear a voice.

"He's got it" is an assumption. Assumptions can't catch. If both players chase and one calls, the system worked. If both players chase and both call, the ladder breaks the tie — the higher rank keeps it, the lower rank yields. But if both players stand and watch, no rule on any page of this book can help you.

The tweener, the sun ball, the wind-blown pop — every one of them is testing the same thing: whether your team chases silence or waits in it.



THE RULES

- 1** No call yet — everybody keeps chasing
- 2** One call — everyone else answers and yields
- 3** Two calls — the ladder decides, lower rank yields
-  Sun ball — the man who can see it calls it, rank second

THE REPS

- A** Blooper behind first base. You're at second, and it might be yours, might be the right fielder's, might be the first baseman's. When do you stop running after it?

I STOP WHEN _____

- B** You and the center fielder both call the same gap ball at the same time. Who keeps it, and what do you say next?

WHO KEEPS IT _____

- C** Pop fly into the sun. The ladder says it's the center fielder's ball, but he's lost it in the glare and you can see it fine from left. Whose ball is it now?

WHOSE BALL _____

- D** A ball drops untouched between short and left. Neither player moved more than two steps. Write what each one was probably thinking — and the one sentence that would have saved the out.

THEY THOUGHT _____

THE TRAP

The trap here is politeness. Nobody wants to be the kid who called a ball that wasn't his. But an over-called ball costs you nothing — the ladder sorts it out in one second. An un-called ball costs you a base hit every time. In this book, quiet is the error.

FROM THE COACH

Here's the drill we'll run until you hate me: I toss tweeners all practice, and the only way to get it wrong is silence. Wrong man calling it? Fine. Both calling it? Fine — that's what rank is for. Nobody calling it is the only score against you. Loud and wrong beats quiet and right, every day of the season.

ORDER 08 Chase everything you can reach until somebody calls you off it.

ORDER 09

MOVE TO THE BALL

CORE

A ground ball puts nine men in motion, not one. If you're standing still when the ball is in play, you've made an error nobody scores.

The field splits into two kinds of jobs. The three men in the middle — pitcher, shortstop, second baseman — move toward the ball. Always. They're the rangers; the middle of the field belongs to them, and one of them is chasing every ball that gets through.

The corners work the other way. Third and first run to their base, because a corner man chasing a ball he can't reach leaves an empty bag behind him — and an empty bag is a free base for every runner on the field.

This one rule kills the two ugliest plays in youth baseball at the same time: the shortstop and second baseman both covering the bag while the ball rolls between them, and the first baseman chasing a ball into right field while the batter jogs to an uncovered first.



THE RULES

- 1-6-4** Middle men — move toward the ball
- 5-3** Corners — run to your corner base
- 2** Catcher — own home, then trail the batter
- 7-8-9** Outfield — every ground ball is yours until it stops

THE REPS

- A** Ground ball up the middle, just past the pitcher. You're the second baseman. The shortstop is also chasing it. Do you stop?

STOP OR KEEP GOING _____

- B** Slow roller to the first baseman, and he has to charge it. Who covers first, and where does he come from?

WHO COVERS _____

- C** You're at third. Ball is hit sharply into the left-center gap — nowhere near you. Write your job anyway.

MY JOB _____

- D** Why do the middle men chase while the corners retreat? It's the same reason, flipped. Say it.

MIDDLE MEN CHASE BECAUSE _____

THE TRAP

Rep A is where kids flinch. Two middle men chasing the same ground ball feels wrong — like the pop-fly collision all over again. It isn't. Ground balls don't have a priority ladder; they have a first-man-there rule, and the second man becomes the backup the instant the first man gloves it. Both chase. Neither stops.

FROM THE COACH

Here's how I grade a ground ball from the dugout, and it has nothing to do with whether we got the out. I count the moving Generals. Seven or more and we're a real team, whatever the scoreboard did. Three or fewer and I don't care that the play worked — we got lucky, and luck runs out by the fourth inning.

ORDER 10

COVERING THE BASES

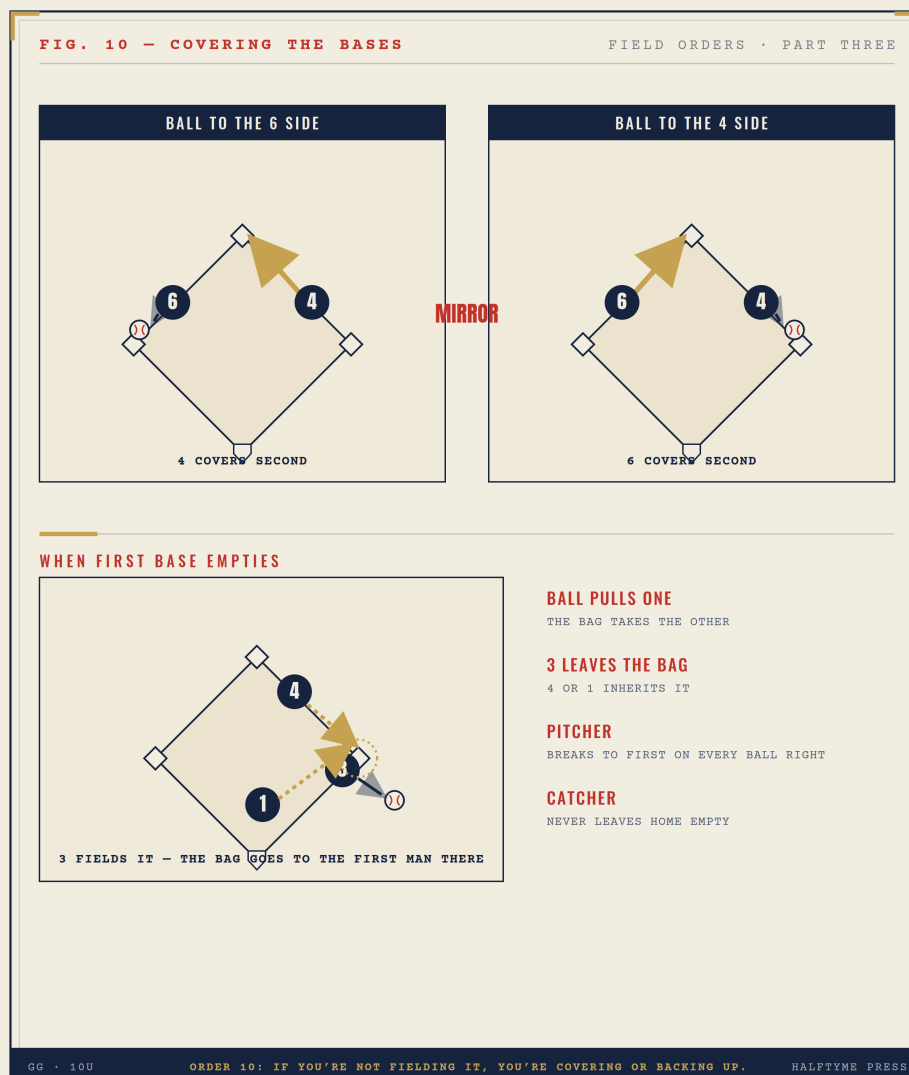
CORE

Order 09 put everybody in motion. This order tells you where the motion ends: four bags, and every one of them owned, on every play.

The rule that decides who covers second is the simplest one in the book: the ball pulls one middle man, the bag takes the other. Ball hit to the shortstop side, second baseman covers. Ball hit to the second-base side, shortstop covers. Same on a steal — whoever the batter is less likely to pull the ball toward takes the throw.

First base has its own version: when the first baseman leaves the bag to field, the second baseman inherits it — unless the pitcher gets there first, and the pitcher should be trying. Every ball to the right side, the pitcher breaks for first. Every time. Even when he doesn't need to. The one time he doesn't go is the one time he needed to.

And the catcher never leaves home empty while runners are on. His bag is the one they're all trying to reach.



THE RULES

- 2B** Ball to the 6 side — 4 covers second
- 2B** Ball to the 4 side — 6 covers second
- 1B** 3 fields the ball — 4 or 1 takes the bag
- 3B** 5 fields the ball — 6 slides over behind him
- HP** Runners on — 2 never abandons home

THE REPS

- A** Runner on first takes off stealing. Ground ball never comes — it's a pitch in the dirt. Who's covering second, and what decided it?

WHO COVERS _____

- B** Ground ball wide to the first baseman's right. He ranges over and gloves it — now he's 15 feet from the bag. Walk the play home.

BAG COVERED BY _____

- C** You're the pitcher. Ball hit to the right side — the first baseman has it easily and won't need you. Do you still break for first?

YES OR NO _____

- D** Ball hit deep in the hole at short. The shortstop is chasing it — so who has second, who has third, and who told them?

SECOND _____

THE TRAP

Rep D's third blank is the real question. Nobody told them — that's the answer. Coverage isn't assigned during the play; it was assigned the moment the ball picked a direction. If you're waiting for somebody to yell your name, you're already late. The ball is the order.

FROM THE COACH

Every base that stands uncovered for three seconds is an invitation, and good baserunners read invitations fast. Play a team that's been coached and watch what they do to an empty bag. Then decide you'll never be the empty bag. Covering is boring right up until it's the whole ballgame.

ORDER 10

If you're not fielding it, you're covering or backing up. Nobody stands still.

ORDER 11

BACKING UP

CORE

Every throw in a baseball game is a plan. Backing up is what your team does about the fact that plans miss.

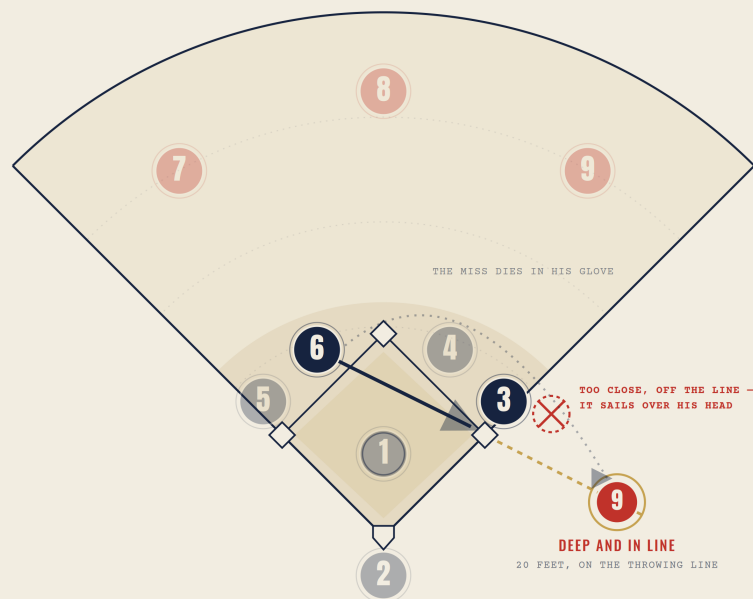
Here's the math that makes this order worth a whole page. A missed throw with a man behind it costs you nothing — the runner holds, the ball comes back, the game goes on. A missed throw with nobody behind it costs a base, sometimes two, sometimes a run. Backing up is the cheapest insurance in baseball. It costs a sprint. That's the entire price.

The rule for where to stand: get deep and in line. Twenty feet behind the bag if you have room, on the line the throw is traveling. Ten feet behind the play, an overthrow sails over your head too — you sprinted for nothing. Deep and in line, and the mistake dies in your glove.

The pitcher carries the heaviest load here. Ball to the outfield with runners on, and he's sprinting to back up third or home — whichever base the play is coming to. He threw the pitch. He insures the ending.

FIG. 11 — BACKING UP

FIELD ORDERS • PART THREE



THE STANDING ASSIGNMENTS

1	PITCHER BEHIND THIRD OR HOME ON EVERY OUTFIELD HIT
2	CATCHER TRAILS THE BATTER TO FIRST ON INFILDT OUTS
7 8 9	OUTFIELD BEHIND EVERY INFILDT THROW ON YOUR SIDE
ALL	EVERYONE DEEP AND IN LINE — 20 FEET, ON THE THROWING LINE

**A SPRINT.
THAT'S THE PRICE.**

THE CHEAPEST INSURANCE
IN BASEBALL.

THE RULES

- 1** Pitcher — behind third or home on outfield hits
- 2** Catcher — trails the batter to first on infield outs
- 7-8-9** Outfield — behind every infield throw on your side
- ALL** Deep and in line — 20 feet, on the throwing line

THE REPS

- A** Ground ball to short, routine throw to first. You're the right fielder. Where exactly do you go?

WHERE _____

- B** Single to center, runner on second heading home. You're the pitcher. Where are you sprinting, and why there instead of the mound?

SPRINTING TO _____

- C** Batter grounds out to third, nobody on. Most of your team relaxes. Who's still working, and where?

WHO _____

- D** The throw you backed up never gets away — the play works clean, and your sprint gets touched by nobody. Was it wasted?

YES OR NO _____

THE TRAP

Backing up feels optional because it almost never gets used. That's the trap — you back up forty throws, and thirty-nine of them are fine, and you start to coast. Then the fortieth one skips into foul ground and rolls to the fence, and you're standing on the grass watching a run score that you'd already paid to prevent. Insurance only works if you buy it every time.

FROM THE COACH

Backing up is the most honest stat in baseball because nobody keeps it. No scorebook column, no cheer from the bleachers, no highlight. Just a kid sprinting forty feet so that a mistake that hasn't happened yet won't matter. When I talk about playing like a General, this page is what I mean.

ORDER 12

WHERE'S THE OUT

CORE

Every ground ball offers you a menu. The lead runner is the prize. The sure out is the paycheck. Knowing which one you're allowed to want is the difference between aggressive and reckless.

Getting the lead runner is always worth more — it kills the runner closest to scoring. But it's only on the menu when you can beat him there comfortably. Ball hit hard, right at you, runner barely off the bag: take him. Ball you had to range for, runner already moving on the pitch: he's gone. Forget him, take the paycheck at first.

The test is one question, asked before the pitch — because this is Order 02 and Order 03 doing their job. "If it's hit soft, where's my out? If it's hit hard, where's my out?" Two answers, made in advance. Then the ball picks one for you.

And the out count bends the whole menu. With two down, the lead runner stops mattering — any out ends the inning, so you take the closest one, every time. Greed is for early in the count of outs, never late.



THE RULES

- ✓ Hit hard, at you, runner close — lead runner
- ✓ Hit soft, or you ranged, or he was moving — first base
- ✓ Two outs — nearest out, always, no menu
- ✗ In doubt — there is no doubt. First base.

THE REPS

- A** Runner on first, nobody out, hard ground ball right at you at second base. Where's the out — and is there a second one behind it?

FIRST OUT AT _____

- B** Same runner, nobody out — but this time it's a slow chopper and you're charging it. Where's the out now?

OUT AT _____

- C** Runner on second, two outs, ball deep in the hole at short. The runner is breaking for third and it'll be close there. Where do you throw?

THROW TO _____

- D** Write your two pre-pitch answers for this situation — runner on first, one out, you at third base: "hit hard at me I go ___, hit soft I go ___."

HIT HARD _____

THE TRAP

The throw that airmails into left field trying to nail the lead runner wasn't a bad throw. It was a bad decision that turned into a throw. Almost every "error" on a lead-runner play was lost two seconds earlier, when a kid chose the prize over the paycheck on a ball that only paid the paycheck. Fix the choice and the arm fixes itself.

FROM THE COACH

You will never get chewed out on my field for taking the sure out. Not once, not ever. The scoreboard doesn't know the difference between a boring out and a brave one — it just counts to three. Be the player who counts to three fastest, and let the other team be the heroes.

ORDER 13

THE CUTOFF MAN

CORE

No ten-year-old can throw a ball from the fence to home plate. The cutoff man is how your team throws it anyway — two arms doing the work of one that doesn't exist yet.

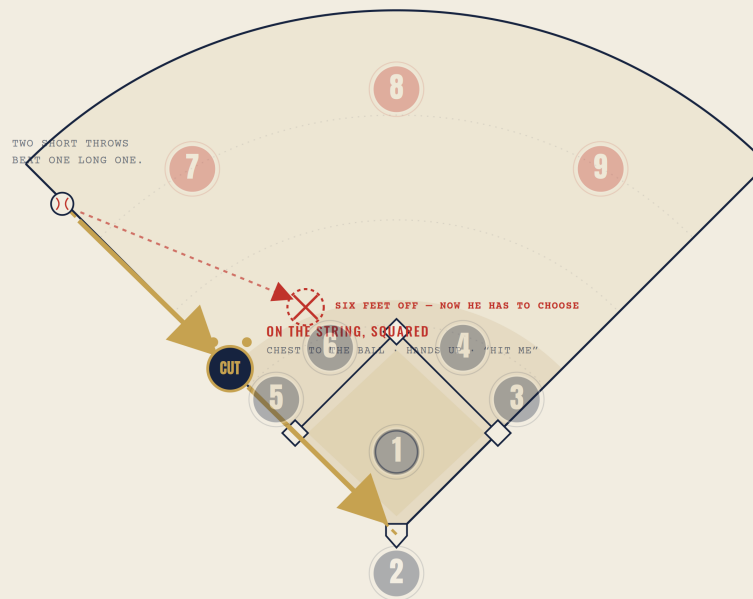
The job has two halves, and the first one is pure geometry: get on the line. Not near the line — on it. Draw a string from the outfielder's glove to the base the play is going to, and stand on the string. If you're six feet off the line, the outfielder has to choose between hitting you and hitting the base, and choosing takes time nobody has.

The second half is being a target worth hitting. Face the ball, square, hands up, and give him your chest. A cutoff man standing sideways is a stripe; a cutoff man squared up is a wall. Yell too — "Hit me! Hit me!" — because a target that talks is twice as easy to find as one that doesn't.

Where on the string? Close enough to the outfielder that his throw reaches you in the air, on a line. His job is a strong, flat throw to your chest. Yours is everything after.

FIG. 13 — THE CUTOFF MAN

FIELD ORDERS · PART FOUR



THE CUTOFF JOB

- 1 FIND THE STRING**
BALL TO BASE — STAND ON IT, NOT NEAR IT
- 2 SQUARE UP**
CHEST TO THE BALL, HANDS HIGH
- 3 TALK**
"HIT ME, HIT ME" — A TARGET THAT TALKS IS EASY TO FIND
- 4 CATCH TURNING**
GLOVE-SIDE, ALREADY ROTATING TO THROW

**BE A WALL,
NOT A STRIPE.**

SIDEWAYS, YOU DISAPPEAR.
SQUARED, YOU'RE A TARGET.

THE RULES

- 1** Find the string — ball to base, stand on it
- 2** Square up — chest to the ball, hands high
- 3** Talk — "hit me, hit me"
- 4** Catch glove-side, already turning

THE REPS

- A** Base hit to right field, runner rounding second and heading for third. Draw the string in words: from where, to where — and who stands on it?

FROM _____

- B** You're the cutoff man and the throw is coming. Write the three things your body is doing before it arrives.

FEET _____

- C** The outfielder sails it ten feet over your head, all the way to the base, and the runner is safe anyway. What did the high throw cost that a chest-high throw to you wouldn't have?

IT COST _____

- D** Why does the cutoff man catch glove-side, already turning? What's he buying with that half-turn?

HE'S BUYING _____

THE TRAP

Young outfielders believe the long heroic airmail is the better throw, because it looks like the ones on TV. But a ball ten feet in the air can't be cut, can't be redirected, and can't stop the trail runner from taking second behind the play. The big throw shows off your arm. The flat throw to the chest shows off your head.

FROM THE COACH

Supply lines win wars, and relays win baseball games — same idea. The ball is supplies, and it has to move through stations to get where it's needed. One kid trying to carry it the whole way by himself isn't brave, he's a broken supply line. Two short throws beat one long one almost every time at this level. Trust the station.

ORDER 13 Get in the line. Give him your chest.

ORDER 14

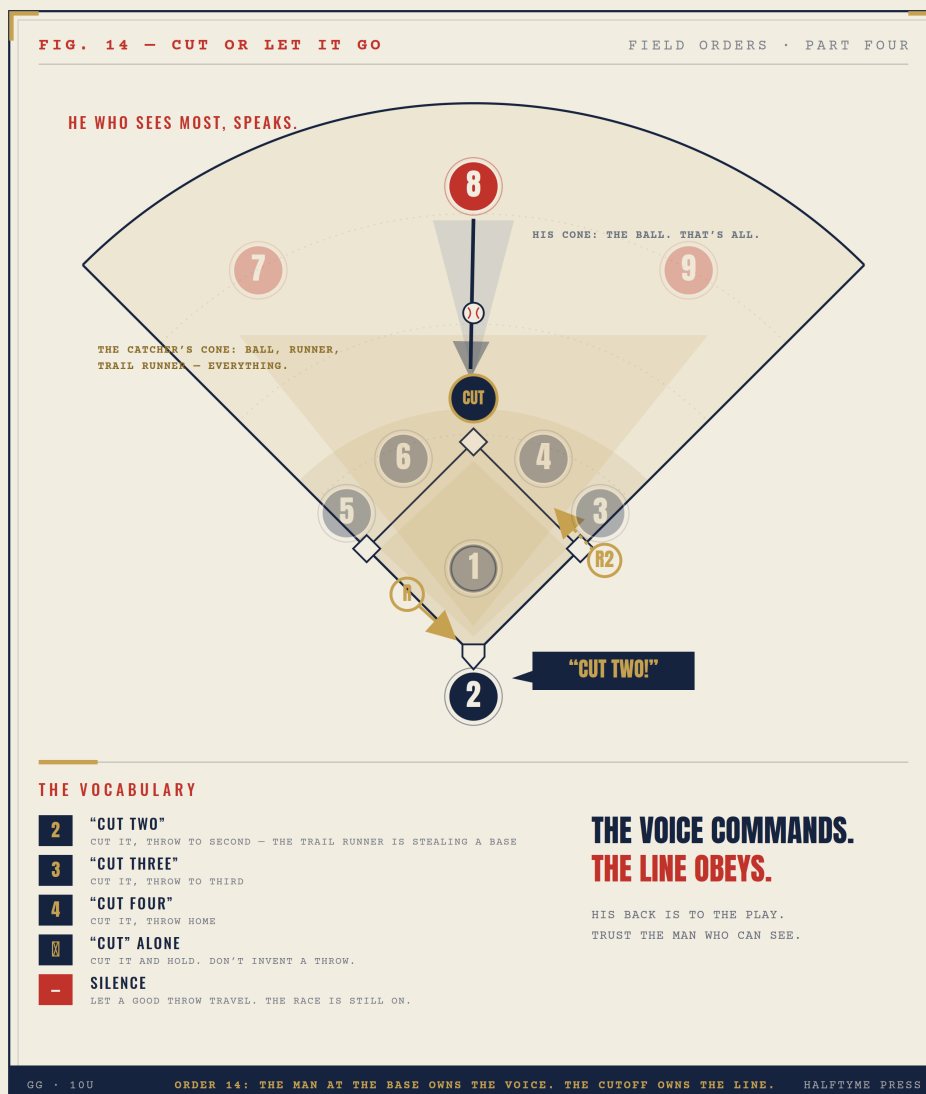
CUT OR LET IT GO

ADV

The cutoff man has the hardest no-decision in baseball: he never chooses. The voice behind the play chooses for him.

Here's why. The cutoff man is facing the ball, which means his back is to the play. He can't see the runner slowing down, can't see the trail runner getting greedy, can't see any of it. The man standing at the base can see everything. So the rule is absolute: the man at the base owns the voice. The cutoff owns the line.

The vocabulary is three calls and a silence. "Cut two!" — cut it and throw to second, the trail runner's stealing a base behind the play. "Cut three!" or "Cut four!" — same idea, third base or home. "Cut!" alone — cut it and hold, nobody's going anywhere, don't invent a throw. And silence means let it go through — the play at the base is live and the throw is on target. Silence is a call too. It's the one that means the race is still on.



THE RULES

- 2** "Cut two" — cut, throw to second
- 3** "Cut three" — cut, throw to third
- 4** "Cut four" — cut, throw home
- "Cut" alone — cut it and hold everything
- Silence — let it travel. The play is live.

THE REPS

- A** Throw coming home, runner clearly beat by fifteen feet — he's slowing down, giving up. Batter is sprinting for second behind the play. You're the catcher. What's your call?

MY CALL _____

- B** Same throw home, but this one's a true race — bang-bang, on line. What's your call now?

MY CALL _____

- C** You're the cutoff man. You hear nothing, but the throw looks way off line to you. Do you cut it on your own?

YES OR NO _____

- D** Why does the cutoff man never make this decision himself, even when he's your smartest player? One sentence about what he can't see.

BECAUSE _____

THE TRAP

Rep C is the honest one. The textbook says silence means let it go — but a throw dying in the grass twenty feet up the line helps nobody at any base. So here's the full rule, the one the textbook mumbles: silence means let a GOOD throw go. A throw that's clearly never getting there, you cut and hold. The voice commands the play. Physics outranks the voice.

FROM THE COACH

This is the first order in the book where a General takes a command instead of giving one, and I want you to notice how that feels. The cutoff man is the most skilled player on the play and he's also the one who obeys. That's not a demotion. Armies work because the man who can't see the field trusts the man who can. So do teams.

ORDER 14 The man at the base owns the voice. The cutoff owns the line.

ORDER 15

THE DOUBLE RELAY

ADV

A ball in the gap or at the wall is too far for one relay throw. So we send two men — and the second one is not a spare. He has his own job.

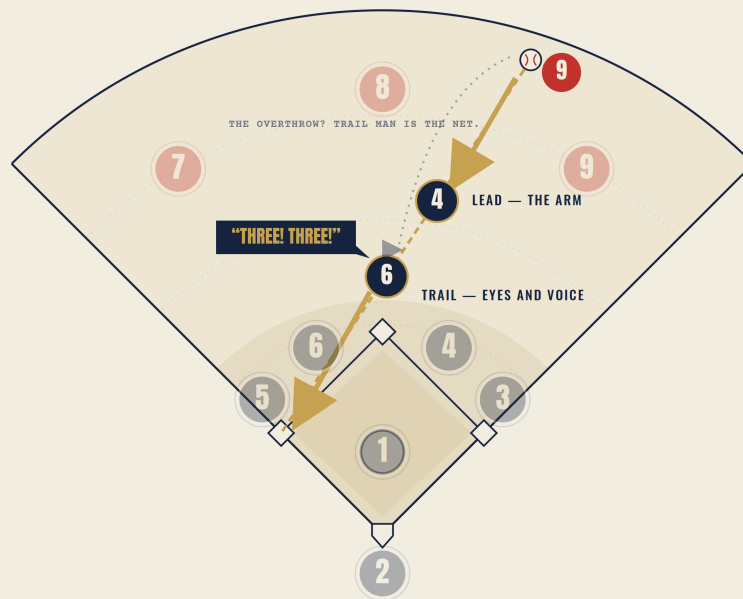
Ball past the outfielders, and both middle infielders sprint out together. The lead man goes deep, lined up with the base the play's going to — he's the arm. The trail man stops fifteen to twenty feet behind him, on the same string — and he's the eyes and the voice.

Why stagger them? Two reasons, and they're both about mistakes. If the outfielder's throw sails over the lead man, the trail man catches it and the relay is only one station slower instead of dead. And because the lead man is sprinting out with his back to the entire infield, the trail man tells him what to do before he even touches the ball: "Three! Three!" or "Four! Four!" — so the lead man catches, turns, and throws in one motion to a base he never had to look for.

Lead throws. Trail talks. Two arms, one brain, and the brain stands in back.

FIG. 15 — THE DOUBLE RELAY

FIELD ORDERS · PART FOUR



THE TWO JOBS

LEAD

DEEP, ON THE STRING, GLOVE UP
CATCH, TURN, THROW — IN ONE MOTION

TRAIL

15-20 FEET BEHIND, SAME STRING
CALLS THE BASE BEFORE THE CATCH

CALL

"THREE!" OR "FOUR!" — EARLY
THE LEAD MAN NEVER HAS TO LOOK

MISS

OVERTHROW SAILS THE LEAD
TRAIL CATCHES IT — ONE STATION SLOWER, NOT DEAD

**TWO ARMS.
ONE BRAIN.**

AND THE BRAIN
STANDS IN BACK.

THE RULES

- LEAD** Deep, on the string, glove up — the arm
- TRAIL** 15–20 feet behind, same string — eyes and voice
- CALL** Trail calls the base before the catch
- MISS** Overthrow? Trail man is the net

THE REPS

- A** Ball rolls to the wall in left-center. Which two players sprint out, and which one leads?

WHO GOES _____

- B** You're the trail man. The batter is rounding second hard as the outfielder reaches the ball. What are you yelling, and when do you start?

YELLING _____

- C** The outfielder's throw sails over the lead man. Walk the ball home from there — who has it, and what's still possible?

WHO HAS IT _____

- D** While both middle infielders are out on the relay, who's covering second base? Somebody has to be. Figure it out.

COVERING SECOND _____

THE TRAP

Rep D is the one that unravels teams. Both middle men leave, and second base becomes nobody's — unless the first baseman slides over to take it, which pulls attention off the middle, which is exactly why the pitcher is sprinting to back up home. A wall ball moves all nine players. If you can name all nine jobs on that play, you can skip to Part Six.

FROM THE COACH

The double relay looks like choreography when it works, and parents will ask how long you drilled it. Here's the secret: the drill isn't the running, it's the talking. The lead man's job is easy the moment the trail man's mouth is working. Every beautiful relay you've ever seen was really just one kid yelling a number early enough.

ORDER 16

RUNNER ON FIRST

ADV

One runner on first changes the whole map. Every single to the outfield is now a play at third — and one General owns that string every time.

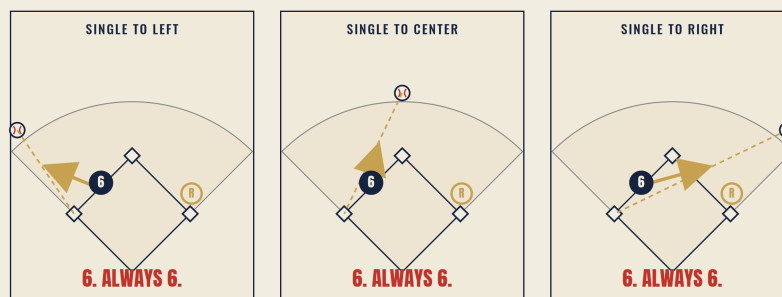
Base hit to the outfield with a runner on first, and the question is always the same: does he try for third? Your team's answer has to be ready before the ball lands. The cutoff to third is the shortstop — on a single to left, to center, and to right. All three. No exceptions, no sharing, no "whoever's closer."

Why one man for all three? Because exceptions are where relays die. The moment the assignment depends on where the ball went, somebody hesitates — and a hesitating cutoff man is worse than none, because the outfielder is counting on him. One rule, zero thinking: ball hits outfield grass with a runner on first, the shortstop is already moving to the string between the ball and third.

And the domino behind it: with the shortstop gone, the third baseman stays home on his bag and the second baseman owns second. The map redraws itself in one move.

FIG. 16 — RUNNER ON FIRST

FIELD ORDERS · PART FOUR



THE REDRAW

- 6 SHORTSTOP**
CUTOFF TO THIRD — LEFT, CENTER, AND RIGHT. ALL THREE.
- 5 THIRD BASEMAN**
STAYS HOME ON THE BAG. CALLS THE CUT.
- 4 SECOND BASEMAN**
OWNS SECOND BASE.
- 1 PITCHER**
BACKS UP THIRD, DEEP AND IN LINE.

EXCEPTIONS ARE
WHERE RELAYS DIE.

ONE RULE, ZERO THINKING — THE MAP
REDRAWs ITSELF IN ONE MOVE.

CLOSEST IS NOT ASSIGNED

ON A SINGLE TO LEFT, THE SHORTSTOP IS STANDING NEXT TO THE BALL.
IT'S STILL THE LEFT FIELDER'S BALL — CLOSENESS JUST MAKES
THE SHORTSTOP'S SPRINT TO THE STRING SHORTER.

HIS JOB DOESN'T MOVE. ONLY HIS COMMUTE DOES.

THE RULES

- 6** Shortstop — cutoff to third, all three fields
- 5** Third baseman — stays on the bag, calls the cut
- 4** Second baseman — owns second base
- 1** Pitcher — backs up third

THE REPS

- A** Runner on first, single to right field. Name the cutoff man to third, who's on the bag at third, and who's behind the bag.

CUTOFF _____

- B** Same situation, single to left. The shortstop is closest to the ball — does that change his job?

CHANGES OR NOT _____

- C** The runner rounds second, looks at your relay already set up — cutoff on the string, third baseman waiting — and retreats to second. No throw was made. Did the relay do anything?

DID IT WORK _____

- D** With the shortstop out on the string and the second baseman on second — who's watching the batter, and what's the batter thinking about?

WATCHING HIM _____

THE TRAP

Rep B is the whole order. On a single to left, the shortstop is standing practically next to the ball, and every instinct says "I'm closest, I'll field it." No. The left fielder fields it — that's his ball the moment it touches grass — and the shortstop's closeness just means his sprint to the string is shorter. Closest to the ball and assigned to the ball are two different things, and mixing them up collapses the relay.

FROM THE COACH

Rep C is my favorite question in this whole part. A relay that never throws still wins — the runner saw the machine assembled and decided against testing it. Most of what a good defense does never shows up in the scorebook. It shows up in the bases the other team stopped trying to take.

ORDER 17

BUNT COVERAGE

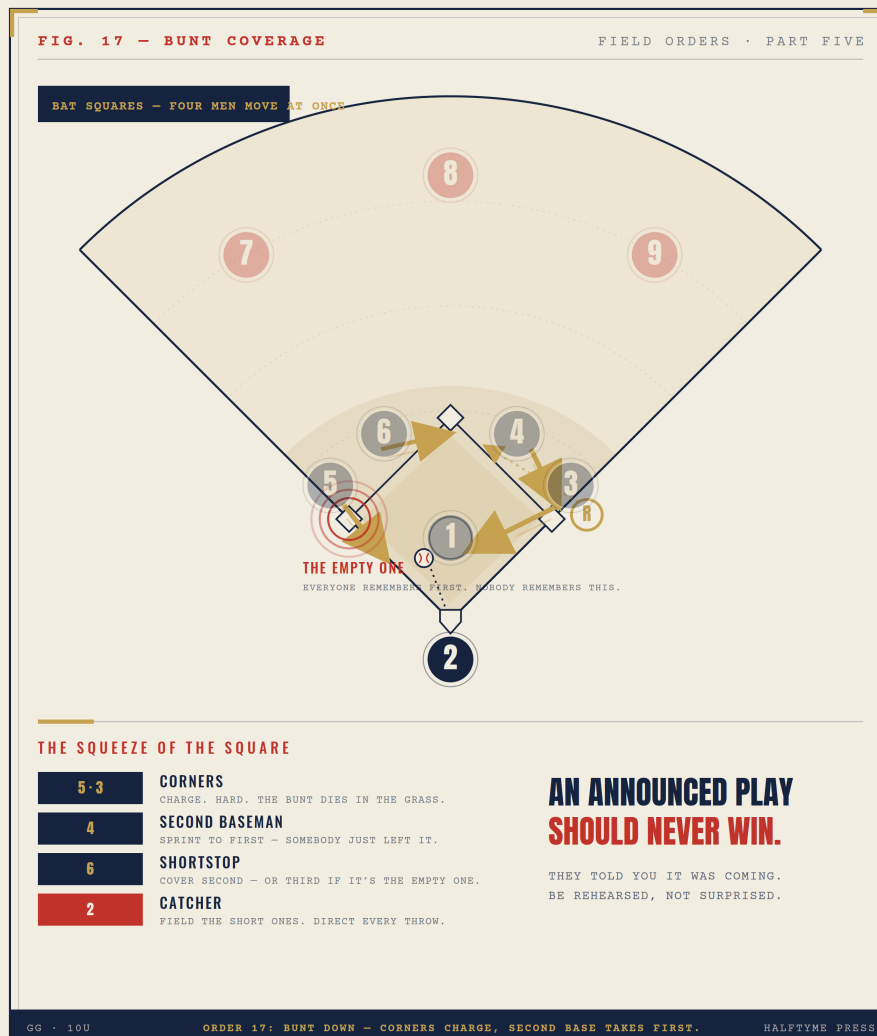
CORE

A bunt isn't a surprise. It's an announcement — the batter squares, and for one second the whole field knows what's coming. The team that rehearsed its answer wins the second.

The moment the bat turns flat, four men move at once. The corners charge — third and first sprint in hard, because a bunt dies in the grass and somebody has to get to it before it stops. The second baseman sprints to first, because the first baseman just left it, and a bunt with no one at first isn't a sacrifice anymore, it's a single. The shortstop takes second — or third, if the runner's coming from second and third base is the one standing empty.

That last piece is the one that loses games. Everybody remembers the charge. Everybody remembers first base. The empty bag behind the play — the one the corners just abandoned — is the one the smart team is actually bunting at.

Fielding the bunt itself is one rule: whoever gets there first calls it, and the catcher directs the throw — he's the only one facing the whole field.



THE RULES

- 5-3** Corners — charge, hard
- 4** Second baseman — sprint to first base
- 6** Shortstop — cover second (or third if it's empty)
- 2** Catcher — field the short ones, direct every throw
- 1** Pitcher — field your lane, then get out of the way

THE REPS

- A** Runner on first, batter squares to bunt. Write where all four infielders go — before the ball is even touched.

5 _____

- B** Same play — why does the second baseman cover first instead of the pitcher, who's closer?

BECAUSE THE PITCHER IS _____

- C** Runner on second now, batter squares. Which base is the dangerous empty one, and who has it?

DANGEROUS BAG _____

- D** The bunt is fielded cleanly by the third baseman. Who tells him where to throw, and why him?

WHO _____

THE TRAP

The charging third baseman who fields the bunt and then spins to find third base uncovered — because he's the one who was supposed to be standing on it — just learned why the shortstop's rotation matters. The bunt doesn't beat you at first base. It beats you at the bag everyone forgot was part of the play.

FROM THE COACH

We will rehearse this rotation until you can run it with your eyes closed, and here's why: a bunt is the only play in baseball where the other team tells you what they're doing before they do it. If an announced play still beats us, that's not their execution — that's our preparation. Announced plays should never win.

ORDER 18

FIRST AND THIRD

ADV

Runners on first and third is a trap dressed up as a steal. The runner on first takes off, and he's bait — the run is standing on third, waiting for your catcher to take it.

Every defense needs an answer chosen before the inning, because the one thing you cannot do is decide during the play. There are three standard answers, and they're all fine — what's fatal is having none.

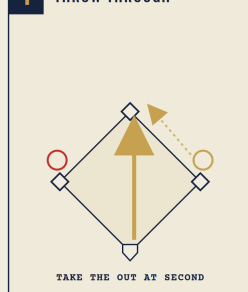
Throw through: the catcher fires to second like the runner on third doesn't exist. Best when the runner on third is slow or the game situation can afford the run. Fake and fire: the catcher pump-fakes toward second, then snaps to third to catch the runner leaning. Best against aggressive teams. Cut it short: the throw goes toward second but the pitcher — or a crashing middle infielder — cuts it in front of the bag and looks the runner back. The safest, and the standard call when the run matters.

The signal comes from the dugout or the catcher, every time this situation appears. Your only job as a fielder: know tonight's answer before the pitch.

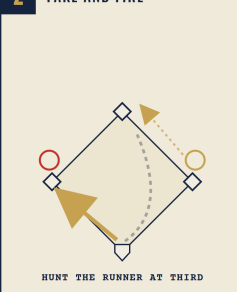
FIG. 18 — FIRST AND THIRD

FIELD ORDERS · PART FIVE

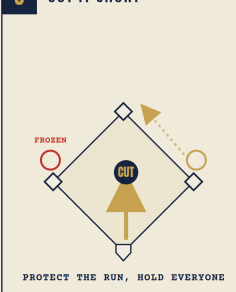
1 THROW THROUGH



2 FAKE AND FIRE



3 CUT IT SHORT



THE ONLY LOSING PLAY

HAVING NO ANSWER.

ALL THREE ANSWERS WIN OFTEN ENOUGH. WHAT LOSES IS DECIDING MID-WINDUP — THE STEAL IS BAIT, AND BAIT ONLY WORKS ON A DEFENSE THAT'S STILL CHOOSING.

BEFORE THE INNING

SIGNAL

ONE CALL FROM THE DUGOUT OR CATCHER
EVERY TIME THIS SITUATION APPEARS

KNOW IT

EVERY FIELDER KNOWS TONIGHT'S ANSWER
BEFORE THE PITCH, NOT DURING THE PLAY

HIDE IT

NOTHING IN YOUR STANCE GIVES IT AWAY
A REHEARSED PLAY LOOKS LIKE NO PLAY

**A BAD PLAN YOU KNOW
BEATS A GOOD ONE**

YOU DON'T.

THE RULES

- 1** Throw through — take the out, concede nothing
- 2** Fake and fire — hunt the runner at third
- 3** Cut it short — protect the run, hold everyone
- X** No answer — the only losing play

THE REPS

- A** Why does the runner on first steal in this situation when he'd never steal it straight up? What is he really doing?

HE'S REALLY _____

- B** Tie game, last inning, runner on third is their fastest player. Which of the three answers do you want, and what are you giving up to get it?

ANSWER _____

- C** You're up eight runs. Same steal. Now which answer — and why did the score change it?

ANSWER _____

- D** You're the shortstop and you never got the signal. The runner takes off. What's the one thing you must NOT do, and what's your safe default?

MUST NOT _____

THE TRAP

The catcher who makes up his mind mid-windup is the one who throws it into center field. This play punishes improvisation harder than any other in the book, because the bait only works on a defense that's deciding in real time. A rehearsed answer executed slowly beats a brilliant answer invented at full speed.

FROM THE COACH

Notice what the order says: never show them what you're about to do. It doesn't say which answer to pick — because the answer changes with the night, the score, and the runner. What never changes is that we decided together, before the pitch, and eight other Generals aren't guessing. A team with a bad plan it knows beats a team with a good plan it doesn't.

ORDER 19

RUNNER ON THIRD

CORE

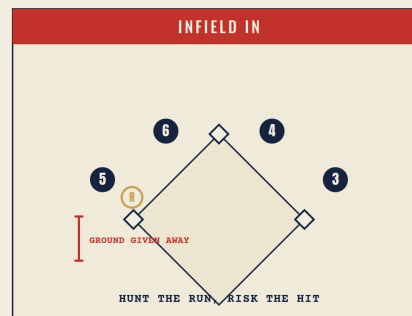
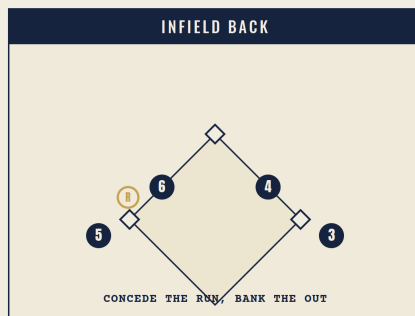
A runner ninety feet from home changes what every ground ball means. Now the infield has a choice to make before the pitch — and a weapon most kids never use.

The choice is depth. Infield back is normal depth: you're conceding the run on a ground ball to take the sure out at first. Infield in — everyone up on the grass — is the trade going the other way: you're closer, so you can throw the runner out at home, but every ground ball gets to you faster and hits get through easier. In means the run matters more than the out. Back means the out matters more than the run. The coach calls it; your job is to know what it means for your throw.

The weapon is the look-back. Ground ball to you with the infield back, and the runner on third is dancing, bluffing a break for home. Don't throw at the dance. Look at him — a real look, ball cocked. If he's bluffing, he stops. Then take your out at first. The look costs half a second. The throw home that he baited out of you costs a run and the out.

FIG. 19 — RUNNER ON THIRD

FIELD ORDERS · PART FIVE



THE LOOK-BACK — THREE BEATS



RUN THE CLOCK HONESTLY

THE LOOK COSTS HALF A SECOND.
THE BAITED THROW COSTS A RUN.

HE'S NINETY FEET FROM HOME. YOU HAVE TIME. HIS WHOLE PLAN IS CONVINCING YOU THAT YOU DON'T.

THE RULES

- BACK** Concede the run, bank the out
- IN** Hunt the run, risk the hit
- LOOK** Ball to you, runner dancing — look him back
- GO** He's actually running? Now throw home. Hard.

THE REPS

- A** One out, tie game, last inning, runner on third. In or back — and what did the score just buy?
- IN OR BACK _____
- B** Up six runs, second inning, runner on third. In or back now — and why is this the opposite answer?
- IN OR BACK _____
- C** Infield back, ground ball to you at short, runner on third bluffing hard toward home. Walk your next three beats.
- BEAT ONE _____
- D** Same ball — but this time he's not bluffing, he broke for home on contact. What changes, and what's your target?
- WHAT CHANGES _____

THE TRAP

The bluff works because the dancing runner makes the play feel urgent, and urgent hands throw early. But run the clock honestly: he's ninety feet from home, and your look takes half a second. You have time. You almost always have time. The runner's entire plan is convincing you that you don't.

FROM THE COACH

The look-back is my favorite play to teach because it's pure poise — no arm strength, no speed, no size. Just a kid refusing to be rushed by a dance. When you look a runner back to third and then calmly take your out at first, every coach on both sides of the field knows exactly who the most disciplined player out there is.

ORDER 20

THE PITCHER'S OTHER JOB

CORE

The pitch is not the pitcher's job. It's the first half of it. The moment the ball leaves his hand, he becomes the ninth fielder — and the ninth fielder has the longest to-do list on the team.

Run the list. Ball hit to the right side: sprint to cover first — every time, even when the first baseman has it easily, because Order 10 already told you why. Ball to the outfield with runners on: back up third or home, whichever base the play is coming to, deep and in line, because Order 11 owns him too. Bunt: field your lane, the strip in front of the mound, then clear out. Wild pitch or passed ball with a runner on third: sprint to cover home while the catcher chases — the plate can't stand empty with a run bearing down on it.

Notice what this list really is: it's the whole book, applied to one position. The pitcher doesn't get new rules. He gets everybody's rules, because he's the only player standing in the middle of every single play.



THE RULES

- 1** Ball right side — break to first, every time
- 2** Ball to the outfield — back up third or home
- 3** Bunt — field your lane, then clear
- 4** Ball to the backstop — cover home, now
- X** Standing on the mound watching — not on the list

THE REPS

- A** Ground ball to the second baseman, routine. You just pitched. Where are you going, and when did you leave?

GOING _____

- B** Single to center, runner on second rounding third. Pick your base to back up, and describe your spot in Order 11's words.

BASE _____

- C** Runner on third, your curveball skips to the backstop. Two players need to move instantly. Who, and where?

CATCHER _____

- D** Count the plays in a full game where the pitcher's job ends when the pitch crosses the plate. Write the number.

THE NUMBER _____

THE TRAP

Pitchers watch. It's the most natural thing in the world — you threw it, so you spectate what happens to it. But the mound is the worst seat in the house, because it's the only one with a job attached. The pitch is a handoff, not a finish line. The kids who understand that are the ones coaches trust with the ball in big games.

FROM THE COACH

Rep D's answer is zero, and I want you to sit with that. Zero plays. There is no pitch in any game you will ever throw where the crossing of the plate ends your responsibility. The arm gets the attention. The legs get the wins. Every Part of this book you've read so far — motion, coverage, backup, relays — the pitcher carries all of it, on every pitch. That's why the ball starts in his hand.

ORDER 21

LEADS AND SECONDARIES

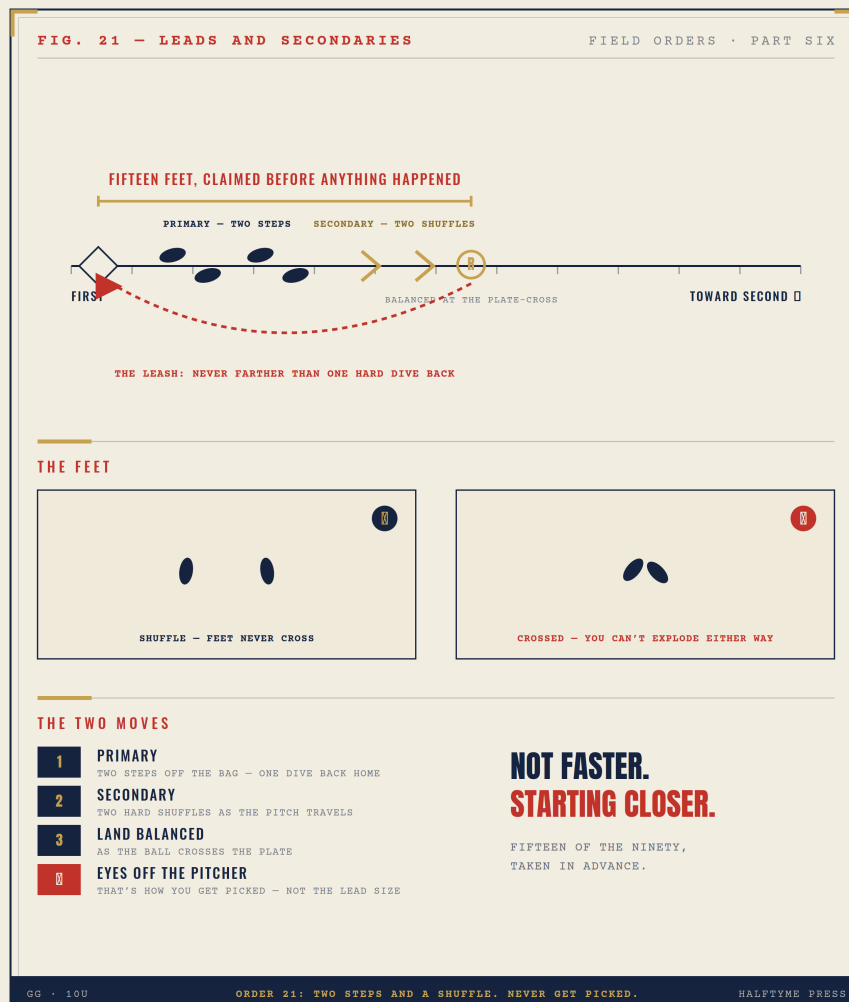
CORE

The book flips here. Nineteen orders taught you to take bases away. The last ten teach you to steal them back — starting with the first few feet.

The primary lead is what you take before the pitch: two confident steps off the bag, maybe a bit more, with one rule governing all of it — never farther than one hard dive back. Your lead is exactly as big as your ability to return. Bigger than that isn't aggressive, it's a gift to their pitcher.

The secondary is what you take as the pitch travels: two hard shuffles toward the next base, landing balanced as the ball crosses the plate. The shuffle is the whole trick — feet moving sideways, never crossed, so you can explode either direction. Ball's hit? You're already moving. Ball's caught? You're balanced to get back. Ball's in the dirt? You're closer than anyone who stood still.

Watch what this adds up to: the lead plus the secondary is fifteen feet of the ninety, taken before anything has even happened. Good baserunners aren't faster. They start closer.



THE RULES

- 1** Primary — two steps, one dive back home
- 2** Secondary — two shuffles as the pitch travels
- 3** Land balanced as the ball crosses the plate
- X** Crossed feet, leaning, guessing — that's how you get picked

THE REPS

- A** What decides how big your primary lead gets? Write the rule as a distance you can feel, not a number of feet.

THE RULE _____

- B** Why do we shuffle the secondary instead of just walking or leaning toward second?

BECAUSE SHUFFLING KEEPS ME _____

- C** Pitch crosses the plate, catcher gloves it clean, and you're at the peak of your secondary. What's your very next move?

NEXT MOVE _____

- D** Ball skips off the catcher's glove and rolls six feet away. Who reaches the next base — the runner who took his secondary or the one glued to the bag — and how much of that race was over before the pitch bounced?

WHO _____

THE TRAP

Getting picked off doesn't usually happen because the lead was too big. It happens because the runner's mind left first — he was watching the batter, dreaming about second, feet crossed mid-shuffle. The pickoff doesn't beat your legs. It beats your attention. Keep your eyes on the pitcher until the ball leaves his hand, every time, and the lead takes care of itself.

FROM THE COACH

I judge baserunners the same way I judge fielders in Order 09 — by what they're doing when nothing has happened yet. Anyone can run after contact. The secondary is effort spent on a pitch that's probably a called strike, forty times a game, and that's exactly why it wins: the one time the ball squirts loose, you already paid for the base three shuffles ago.

ORDER 21 Two steps and a shuffle. Never get picked.

ORDER 22

READING THE BALL DOWN

CORE

Contact happens, and you have a quarter of a second to answer one question: what kind of ball is that? Three kinds. Three answers. Memorize all three and the quarter-second is enough.

Ground ball: go. If you're forced — and Order 04 taught you when you are — there's no decision left; you're running the moment it touches dirt. Not forced? Then go only if it's behind you or through, but a forced runner never watches a ground ball.

Line drive: freeze. This is the hard one, because a line drive looks like the best hit in baseball and your legs want to celebrate. Freeze anyway. A caught liner with you halfway to the next base is the fastest double play that exists — the fielder barely has to try. Freeze, read caught-or-through, then go. You lose half a step on the ones that get through. You save an entire out on the ones that don't.

Fly ball: read it down. Less than two outs, you hold or you tag — that's the next order. The short version here: a fly ball is a question, and you don't run on a question.



THE RULES

- GB** Ground ball — go (forced runners always)
- LD** Line drive — freeze, then read
- FB** Fly ball — read it down, hold or tag
- ¼S** The read happens off the bat, not off the bounce

THE REPS

- A** You're on first, nobody out. Sharp ground ball to short. Are you deciding anything right now?

DECIDING OR ALREADY RUNNING _____

- B** You're on second, not forced. Screaming line drive right at the shortstop. What do your legs do, and what would it cost if they did the other thing?

LEGS DO _____

- C** Same liner — but it's past the shortstop's glove and into the outfield. When did you start running, and why is being half a step late here okay?

STARTED WHEN _____

- D** Write the three reads from memory, one word each — then say them out loud with your eyes closed. This is the one you'll use most this season.

GROUND BALL _____

THE TRAP

The line-drive freeze feels like cowardice the first fifty times you do it. The ball is smoked, your dugout is up yelling, and you're standing still like you missed the play. You didn't miss it — you read it. The runner doubled off on a liner ran on hope. Hope is not one of the three reads.

FROM THE COACH

This is Order 03 wearing a helmet. The read is fast only if the plan already exists — "liner, I freeze" decided before the pitch is a reflex; decided after contact is a gamble. Baserunning IQ isn't reacting quickly. It's having nothing left to react to.

ORDER 22 Ground ball, go. Line drive, freeze. Fly ball, read it down.

ORDER 23

TAGGING UP

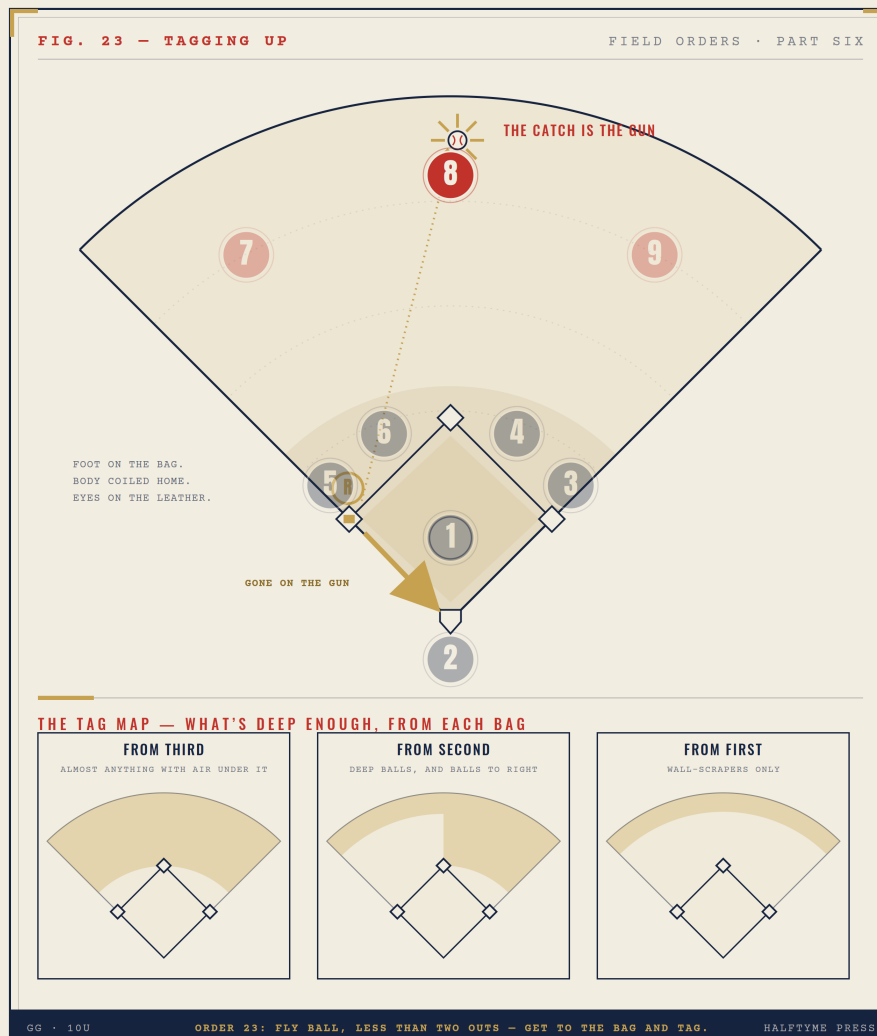
CORE

A deep fly ball with less than two outs isn't an out waiting to happen. It's a delivery service — if you're standing in the right place when it arrives.

The rule of the tag: you may advance on a caught fly ball, but only if you're touching your bag at the moment of the catch. So the play is simple. Ball goes up, deep enough to matter — get back, foot on the bag, body coiled toward the next base, and watch the ball into the glove. The catch is your starting gun. Glove touches leather, you're gone.

When does deep enough matter? From third, almost any medium fly scores you — this is where runs come from, and it's why Order 22 told you a fly ball is a question. From second, you tag on balls hit deep or to right, because the throw to third is long. From first, you tag rarely — only on a ball at the wall.

The shallow fly is the judgment call: too short to tag, too dangerous to drift. On those, get back, touch, and hold — a free base you didn't take is still yours. An out you handed them is gone forever.



THE RULES

- 3rd** Tag on almost anything with air under it
- 2nd** Tag on deep balls and balls hit to right
- 1st** Tag only on the wall-scrappers
- EYE** Watch the ball into the glove — the catch is the gun

THE REPS

- A** You're on third, one out, deep fly to center. Where is your foot, where are your eyes, and what starts your sprint?

FOOT _____

- B** You're on second, one out, medium fly ball to right field. Tag-worthy or not — and what makes right field different from left here?

TAG OR HOLD _____

- C** You drifted halfway to home on a fly ball instead of tagging. It's caught. Describe the next four seconds of your life.

THE NEXT FOUR SECONDS _____

- D** Shallow pop fly, you're on third, infield fly territory. Why is get-back-and-hold the winning play even though nobody advances?

BECAUSE HOLDING KEEPS _____

THE TRAP

Drifting is the disease. Halfway feels smart — you're closer if it drops! — but halfway is the one place on the baseline where both outcomes beat you: caught, and you can't get back; dropped, and you've lost the head start a tag would've banked from the bag. The bag is where all your options live. Drift, and you own none of them.

FROM THE COACH

The tag from third is the closest thing baseball has to a free run, and it's powered entirely by patience — a kid willing to go backward first so he can go forward faster. Plenty of runs in our season will score without a hit, because someone coiled on a bag, watched leather, and left on the gun. That run belongs to the reader of this page.

ORDER 24

TWO OUTS CHANGES IT ALL

CORE

Stop. Before this page, the book taught you to freeze on liners and tag on flies. This page repeals both. Two outs, and the rules you just memorized are suspended.

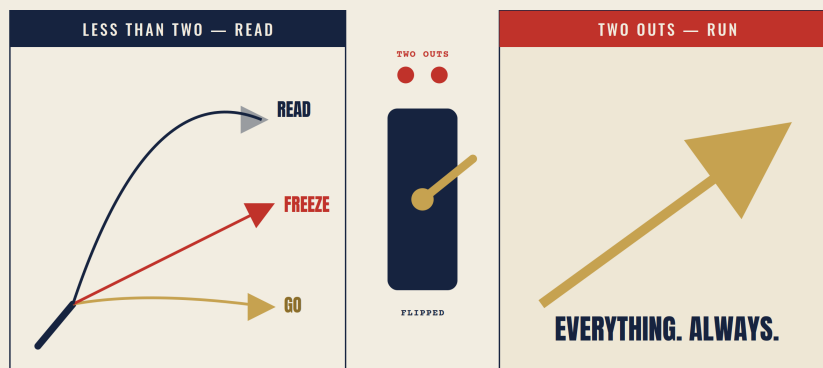
Here's the logic, and it's clean: every rule in Orders 22 and 23 exists to protect you from the double play and the double-off. With two outs, there is nothing left to protect. If the ball is caught — liner, fly, anything — the inning is over whether you're standing on your bag or standing in the dugout. Being doubled off costs nothing that the catch didn't already take.

So with two outs you run on contact. All contact. Ground ball, gone. Line drive, gone. Fly ball, gone — no tag, no read, no looking back. The only version of the future where the inning continues is the one where the ball hits the ground, and in that future, you want to be two bases into your sprint, not one.

This is the easiest order in the book to understand and the hardest to obey, because Orders 22 and 23 will be screaming at you from two pages ago. Let them scream. They were written for a world with outs left to lose.

FIG. 24 — TWO OUTS CHANGES IT ALL

FIELD ORDERS · PART SIX



THE OUT COUNT IS THE HAND ON THE SWITCH. NOTHING ELSE MOVES IT.

THE SUSPENSION

- 2
LESS THAN TWO OUTS
 ORDERS 22 AND 23 GOVERN. READ, FREEZE, TAG.
- 2
TWO OUTS
 RUN ON CONTACT. EVERYTHING. ALWAYS.
- +
TWO OUTS, FULL COUNT, FORCED
 YOU'RE RUNNING ON THE PITCH ITSELF
- =
CAUGHT ANYWAY?
 THE INNING WAS OVER EITHER WAY. YOU LOST NOTHING.

THOSE RULES WERE WRITTEN FOR A
 WORLD WITH OUTS LEFT TO LOSE.

THE RULES

- <2** Less than two outs — Orders 22 and 23 govern
- 2** Two outs — run on contact. Everything. Always.
- +** Two outs, full count, forced — running on the pitch
- =** Caught? Inning was over anyway. You lost nothing.

THE REPS

- A** Two outs, you're on second. Screaming liner right at the shortstop. Order 22 said freeze. What do you actually do, and why is 22 wrong here?

I DO _____

- B** Two outs, you're on third, high fly ball to left. Do you tag?

TAG OR RUN _____

- C** Two outs, full count, you're on first. Explain why you're running on the pitch itself — before contact even happens.

BECAUSE ON THIS PITCH, EITHER _____

- D** One out — not two — and your teammate takes off on a fly ball like it's two outs. What did he forget, and what does it cost?

HE FORGOT _____

THE TRAP

The trap runs both directions, and rep D is the proof. Freezing at two outs wastes the free sprint. Sprinting at one out is the double-off Order 23 warned you about. The skill was never "run" or "freeze" — it's knowing the out count so cold that your legs pick the right rulebook without asking your brain. Order 02 said take the count before every pitch. This page is why.

FROM THE COACH

Watch our third-base coach with two outs — arm windmilling before contact, yelling "you're running on anything!" That's not a strategy, it's a reminder, because he knows your instincts are two pages behind. The best two-out baserunners are a little bit reckless on purpose. It's the only time in baseball I'll ask you to stop thinking.

ORDER 24 Two outs — you're running on contact. Don't stop to look.

ORDER 25

TAKING THE EXTRA BASE

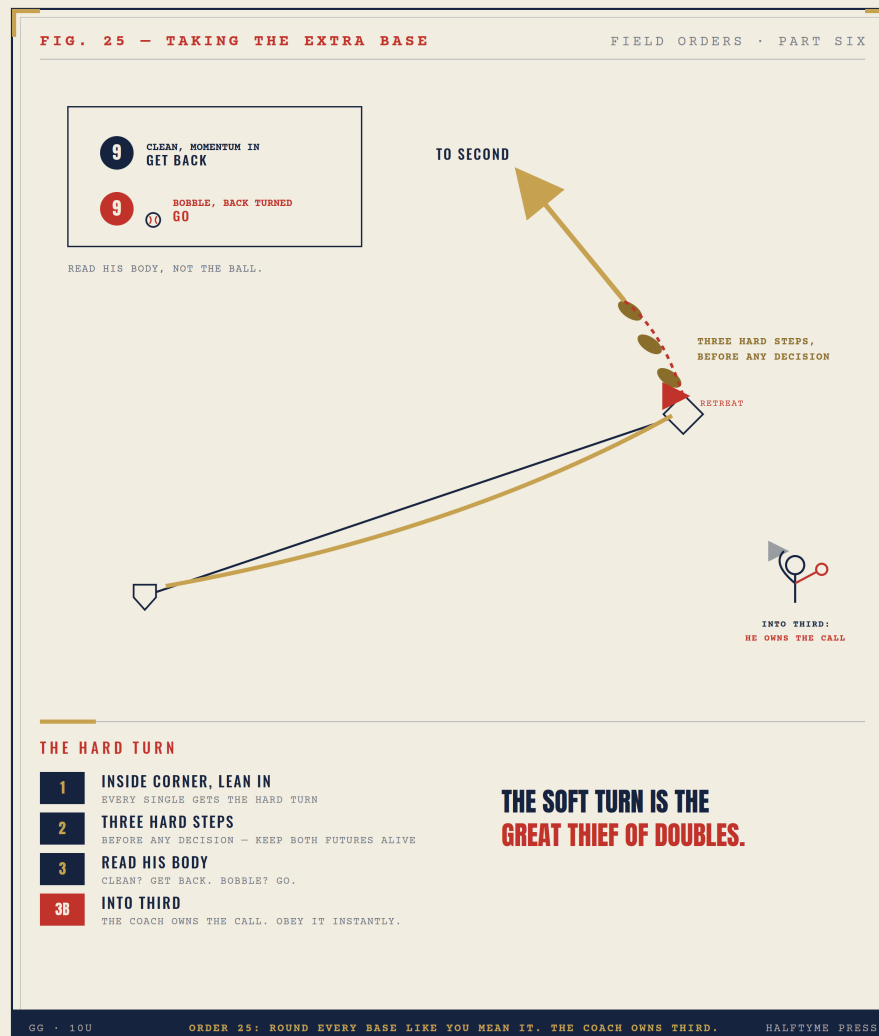
CORE

Singles become doubles in the first three steps past first base — not at second. By the time you can see whether the extra base is there, it's too late to start wanting it.

So the rule: round every base like you mean it. Every single gets the hard turn — hit the inside corner of the bag, lean in, and take three aggressive steps toward second before you decide anything. The turn costs nothing. If the outfielder fields it clean, you retreat, and all you spent was effort. If he bobbles it, takes a lazy route, or lobs the throw in — you're already a third of the way there, and the base is yours because you rounded before you knew.

What you're reading in those three steps is his body, not the ball. Fielding clean, momentum toward the infield? Get back. Ball kicked, back turned, jogging? Go. His body announces the play before his throw does.

And the boundary: from home to second, your eyes make the call. Heading into third, the coach owns the decision — the play is behind you now, and he can see what you can't. Round hard, then obey the windmill or the stop sign. Both, instantly.



THE RULES

- 1** Inside corner of the bag, lean in
- 2** Three hard steps before any decision
- 3** Read his body, not the ball
- 3B** Into third — the coach owns the call. Instantly.

THE REPS

- A** Clean single to left, fielded on the second hop. Do you still make the hard turn — and what did it cost you?

TURN OR NOT _____

- B** Single to right, and the right fielder takes it casually, gloves it jogging, lobs toward the infield. Which of his three body signals told you to go?

SIGNALS _____

- C** You're flying around second, ball somewhere behind you in right-center, and the third-base coach throws up the stop sign — but you're SURE you can make it. What do you do, and why is sure not enough?

I DO _____

- D** Why do the three hard steps come BEFORE the read instead of after it? What's gone if you watch first and turn second?

WHAT'S GONE _____

THE TRAP

The banana turn — the wide, gentle loop that feels fast because you never slowed down — is the great thief of doubles. A runner who rounds soft has already voted: he voted for staying at first, before he saw a single thing the outfielder did. The hard turn isn't a decision to go. It's a refusal to decide early. Keep both futures alive for three more steps.

FROM THE COACH

Rep C is the last lesson of the defensive book hiding in the offensive one — it's Order 14 again. You're the cutoff man now: the play is behind you, the coach can see it, and obeying the man with the better view IS the smart play, even when your legs disagree. Aggressive feet, obedient eyes. That's a General on the bases, and that's the whole part in four words.

ORDER 25 Round every base like you mean it. The coach owns third.

ORDER 26

WINNING THE COUNT

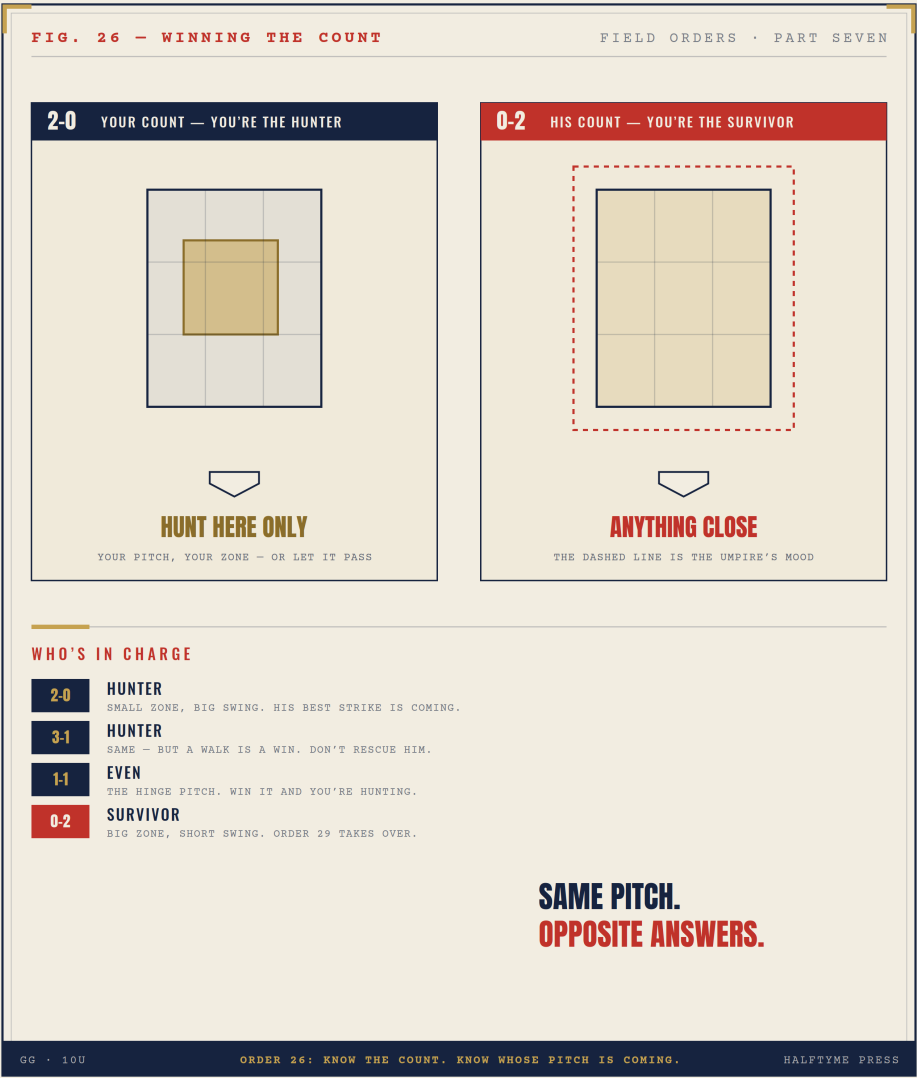
CORE

Every at-bat is really two contests. There's the pitch you can see — and underneath it, a running score called the count, quietly deciding who's in charge.

Ahead in the count — 1-0, 2-0, 2-1, 3-1 — the pitcher has to come to you. He can't afford another ball, so something hittable is coming, and that means you're allowed to be picky. This is when you hunt your pitch: the one in your happy zone, the one you drive in practice. See anything else, even a strike? Let it go. A strike you didn't want is a small price for the swing you did.

Behind in the count — 0-1, 1-2, 0-2 — the deal flips. Now he's allowed to be picky, painting corners, wasting one in the dirt to see if you'll chase. Your zone has to grow. Anything close, you're swinging — not to do damage, but to survive to a better pitch.

Same batter, same pitcher, same swing. The count decides which one of you is hunting and which one is protecting. It's Order 02 with a bat in your hands: the fifth fact was always the one that moves.



THE RULES

- 2-0** Ahead — hunt one pitch, one zone
- 3-1** Way ahead — his best fastball is coming. Sit on it
- 1-1** Even — hunt, but honor strikes
- 0-2** Behind — grow the zone, protect the plate

THE REPS

- A** Count is 2-0. A strike comes in, but it's low and away — not your pitch. Swing or take, and what does taking cost you?

SWING OR TAKE _____

- B** Now it's 1-2. Same exact pitch, low and away, catchable but ugly. What changed?

SWING OR TAKE _____

- C** Draw your happy zone in words — where's the pitch you drive best? Be honest, not hopeful. This answer becomes your 2-0 hunting ground all season.

MY HAPPY ZONE _____

- D** It's 3-1. What pitch is almost certainly coming, and why does the count force his hand?

COMING _____

THE TRAP

Reps A and B are the same pitch with opposite right answers — the book's oldest trick, played one last time. If that feels familiar, it should: it's Order 02's ground ball, Order 12's lead runner, Order 24's line drive. The situation, not the ball, decides the play. Hitters who swing at 2-0 like it's 1-2 aren't aggressive. They're just not keeping score.

FROM THE COACH

I don't need you to be a great hitter this season. Ten-year-old swings come and go with growth spurts. I need you to be a great count-keeper, because that skill compounds forever. The kid who knows when he's in charge of the at-bat will out-hit the kid with the prettier swing by the time they're both fourteen. Every year, without fail.

ORDER 26 Ahead in the count, hunt your pitch. Behind, protect the plate.

ORDER 27

RUNNER ON 2ND, NOBODY OUT

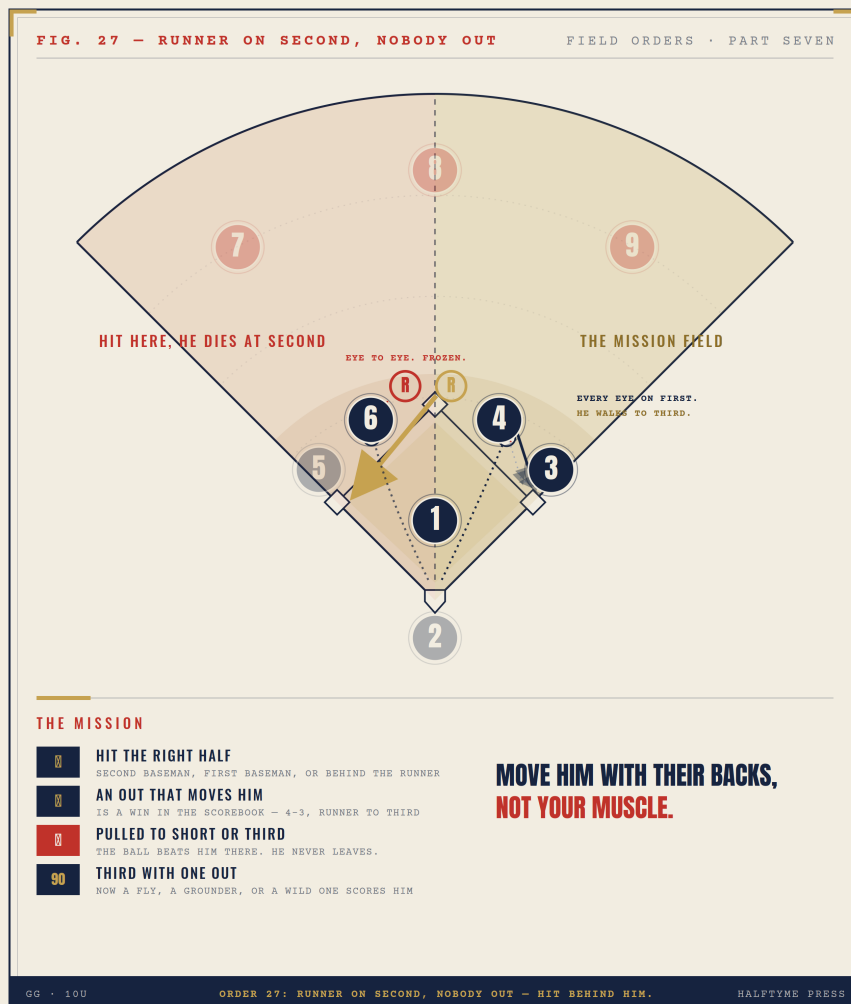
ADV

This is the at-bat where doing your job looks like doing nothing. You will ground out to the right side, jog back to the dugout — and you will have won.

Here's the arithmetic. A runner on second with nobody out scores on almost anything once he reaches third — a groundout, a medium fly (Order 23 taught him the tag), a wild pitch, an error. A runner stuck on second needs a real hit. So the mission of this at-bat isn't a hit: it's ninety feet. Move him to third, and you've turned three chances to score into a near-certainty.

How: hit the ball to the right side. A ground ball to the second baseman or behind the runner means the play is at first — the whole infield's back is turned to him, and he walks into third. Pull one to shortstop or third instead, and he's frozen, staring at the fielder, going nowhere.

The scorebook will call it an out. Your on-base percentage will frown. And the next batter drives in a run that you built. Some of the most important at-bats of our season will end with you jogging back to the dugout — and me meeting you at the top step.



THE RULES

- GO** Right side — second baseman or behind the runner
- OK** Deep fly to right — he tags to third (Order 23)
- WIN** A hit works too — nobody's mad at a hit
- X** Pulled grounder to 5 or 6 — the runner dies at second

THE REPS

- A** Why is a runner on third with one out worth more than a runner on second with nobody out? List two ways he scores from third without a hit.

WAY ONE _____

- B** Why does a ground ball to the RIGHT side move him and a ground ball to the LEFT side freeze him? It's about where the fielders are looking.

RIGHT SIDE WORKS BECAUSE _____

- C** You're the runner on second now, not the batter. Grounder to short — right at the shortstop's glove, in front of you. Go or hold? Which earlier order already answered this?

GO OR HOLD _____

- D** You ground out to second and the runner takes third. The scorebook writes 4-3. Write what actually happened.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED _____

THE TRAP

Nobody bats .1000 on this play — even trying to hit the right side, you'll pull some. That's baseball, not failure. The trap is never trying: swinging for the fences with a job on the bases, because the fences get the cheers. A General who won't trade his at-bat for the team's run isn't a slugger. He's a soloist, and soloists lose to orchestras in October.

FROM THE COACH

Watch what I do, not what the scorebook does. When you give yourself up on purpose and it works, I will meet you at the top step of the dugout like you hit one off the fence — because to me, you did. The stat sheet measures what you got. I measure what you gave. Those are different numbers, and only one of them wins championships.

ORDER 27 Runner on second, nobody out — move him over.

ORDER 28

RUNNER ON 3RD, LESS THAN TWO

CORE

Order 27 built this moment: runner on third, less than two outs, run standing ninety feet away. Now finish it — and finishing it means aiming low.

Count what scores him. A ground ball with the infield back — he walks home while they take the out at first. A medium fly ball — Order 23's tag, the free run. A ball up the middle, an error, a wild pitch. Now count what doesn't: a strikeout, and a pop-up. That's the whole list of failures, and both of them live at the top of the strike zone, where big swings chase high pitches.

So the mission is contact, and the target is on the ground or up the middle. Not a bomb — a transfer. Shorten up a touch, look for something you can hit downward or back through the box, and put the ball in play. At this level especially, a ball on the ground with a runner on third is nearly a guaranteed run: the throw home is the hardest throw an infielder makes, and most of them won't even try it.

Check the depth first, though — Order 19 taught you the other side of this. Infield in means they're hunting your runner at the plate. Now up the middle beats on the ground, because the drawn-in corners are exactly where soft grounders go to die.

FIG. 28 — RUNNER ON THIRD, LESS THAN TWO FIELD ORDERS · PART SEVEN

POP-UPS LIVE UP HERE

RUNS LIVE DOWN HERE

THE WATERLINE: HUNT THE BOTTOM TWO-THIRDS

GRINDER TO SHORT — THEY TAKE FIRST

THE RUN WALKS IN. 6-3, RBI.

MEDIUM FLY — THE FREE RUN

ORDER 23: HE TAGS AND SCORES

IF THE INFILDEER CREEPS IN

INFILDEER IN? → **SAME SWING, AIMED PAST THEM — HARD THROUGH THE MIDDLE**

IN CLOSE, THEIR GLOVES COVER LESS GRASS. MIDDLE IS THE GAP THAT'S LEFT.

WHAT SCORES HIM

- GROUND BALL**
EVEN AN OUT DOES THE JOB — RBI GROUNDOUT
- MEDIUM FLY**
THE TAG. ORDER 23, RUN SCORED.
- ANYTHING LOW AND HARD**
THROUGH OR NOT, HE'S MOVING
- THE HIGH POP**
THE ONE BALL THAT STRANDS HIM

HE NEEDS CONTACT,
NOT A HERO.

GG · 10U ORDER 28: RUNNER ON THIRD, LESS THAN TWO — PUT IT ON THE GROUND. HALFTIME PRESS

THE RULES

- ✓ Ground ball, infield back — run walks in
- ✓ Medium-deep fly — the tag (Order 23)
- ✓ Anything up the middle
- ✗ Strikeout and pop-up — the only two failures

THE REPS

- A** List everything that scores the runner from third with one out and the infield back. Then list everything that doesn't. Compare the lengths.

SCORES HIM _____

- B** Why is the high pitch the enemy of this at-bat? Follow the swing: what does chasing high produce, and which failure list is that on?

CHASING HIGH PRODUCES _____

- C** The infield creeps in onto the grass. Your target just moved — from where, to where, and why?

FROM / TO _____

- D** You ground to short, they take the out at first, the run scores. The scorebook says 6-3. Sound familiar? Write what actually happened — same as Order 27's rep D.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED _____

THE TRAP

The RBI situation makes kids swing bigger — the run is right there, so the moment feels like it deserves a big swing. Flip it: the run is right there, so the moment deserves the SMALLEST swing of your game. He doesn't need your power. He needs your contact. The runner on third turns a dribbler into a run and a majestic pop-up into nothing. Match the swing to the mission.

FROM THE COACH

Here's a secret from the third-base coaching box: when the runner's on third and my hitter shortens up, I relax — because contact is coming, and at 10U, contact with a runner on third is a run more often than not. The defense has to field it clean, throw it true, and catch it at the plate, all under pressure. Make three ten-year-olds be perfect. That's the whole strategy, and it's a good one.

ORDER 29

TWO STRIKES

CORE

Two strikes, and a different hitter walks to the plate — same jersey, same bat, new job. The old hitter was hunting. This one is surviving, and surviving is a skill you can practice.

The changes are physical and you make all three at once. Choke up — an inch on the handle buys control and quickness. Shorten the swing — you're not driving the ball anymore, you're beating it to the spot. Widen your zone — Order 26 already told you why: behind in the count, anything close gets defended, because the umpire's opinion of the corner pitch is a risk you can't carry.

And here's the weapon nobody puts on a highlight reel: the foul ball. With two strikes, a foul ball is a shield — the at-bat continues, the pitcher throws again, and every extra pitch is another chance for his mistake. Spoiling tough pitches until he leaves one over the plate isn't failing to hit. It's winning ugly, one pitch at a time.

A long two-strike at-bat wears on a pitcher even when you make an out at the end of it. Eight pitches of fouls and takes is eight pitches he can't throw in the sixth inning. Sometimes your at-bat's real RBI shows up an hour later.

FIG. 29 — TWO STRIKES

FIELD ORDERS · PART SEVEN

BEFORE TWO STRIKES — THE FULL SWING

AT TWO STRIKES — THE BATTLE SWING

SPEND HIS PITCHES

THE BORDERLINE PITCH, FOULED OFF:

+1 PITCH
 +1 PITCH
 +1 PITCH
 +1 PITCH

SHIELD. NOT SHAME

THE TWO-STRIKE HITTER

- 1

CHOKE UP ONE INCH

TRADE AN INCH OF POWER FOR AN OUNCE OF TIME
- 2

SHORTEN THE SWING

COMPACT. FLAT. THROUGH THE MIDDLE.
- 3

WIDEN THE STANCE

LESS STRIDE, LESS HEAD MOVEMENT, MORE TIME
- ∞

FOUL BALLS ARE FINE

EVERY FOUL IS ANOTHER PITCH HE HAS TO THROW

A DIFFERENT HITTER

WALKS TO THE PLATE.

GG · 10U

ORDER 29: TWO STRIKES — CHOKE UP, SHORTEN UP, FIGHT.

HALFTIME PRESS

THE RULES

- 1** Choke up an inch
- 2** Shorten the swing — beat it, don't drive it
- 3** Widen the zone — defend anything close
- FOUL** The foul ball is a shield. Spoil and survive

THE REPS

- A** Write the three physical changes you make the instant strike two goes up. Hands, swing, zone.

HANDS _____

- B** 1-2 count, nasty pitch on the outside corner — maybe a strike, maybe not. Why can't you leave that decision to the umpire?

BECAUSE HIS OPINION _____

- C** You foul off four straight tough pitches, then he finally floats one over the middle. What did the foul balls actually do? Name it as a weapon.

THE FOULS WERE _____

- D** You battle nine pitches with two strikes and fly out. Your teammate swings at the first pitch and singles. Whose at-bat helped more in the sixth inning — and what did yours take from the pitcher?

IT TOOK _____

THE TRAP

Pride keeps the big swing alive at 0-2. Choking up feels like admitting something, so kids stand there with their home-run cut and their tiny zone while the pitcher picks at corners. Read the order again: a DIFFERENT hitter walks up with two strikes. It's not the same hitter swinging smaller — it's a new job entirely. The kid who can't change hitters mid-at-bat isn't proud. He's predictable.

FROM THE COACH

This is the page where the mental game and the bat finally shake hands. Two strikes is a pressure test, and the answer to pressure is always the same: smaller task, executed now. Not "don't strike out" — that's a wish. "Choke up, see it, beat it to the spot" — that's a job. Generals under fire don't try harder. They simplify.

ORDER 30

READING THE DEFENSE

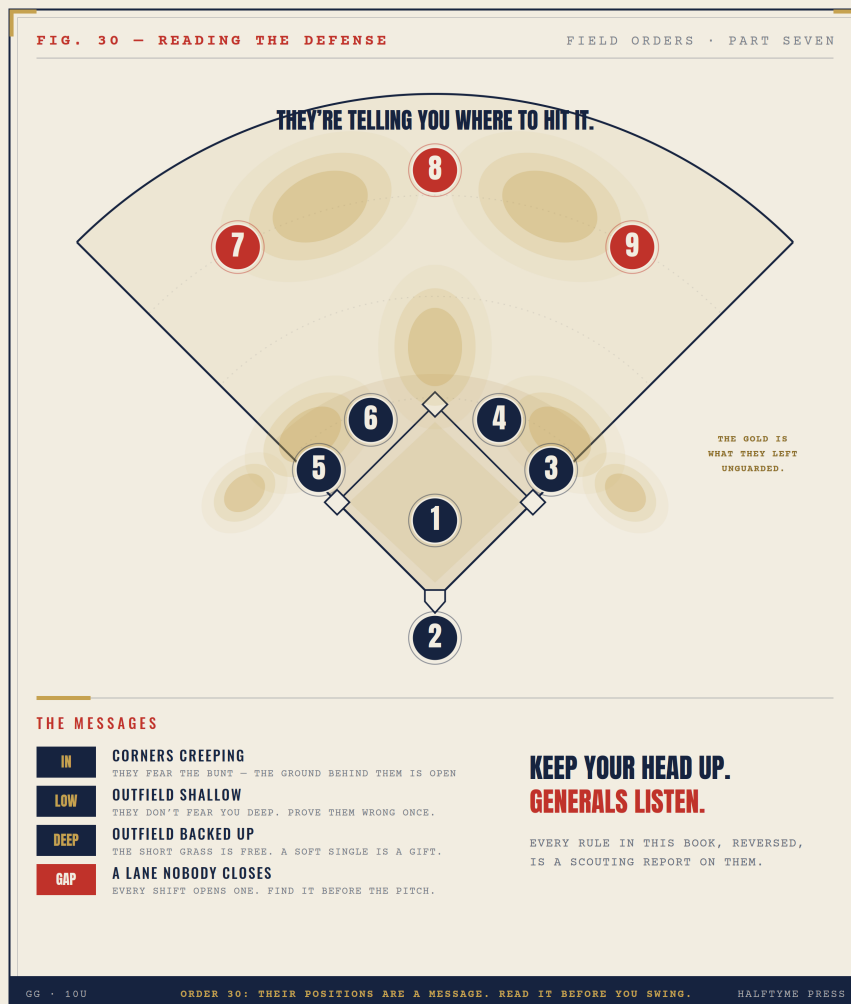
ADV

The last order in this book asks you to do one thing before you step in the box: look up. Nine players are standing in nine chosen spots, and every choice is a message about you.

Corners pinching in? They're expecting a bunt — which means the ground behind them is open, and a hard chop past a charging third baseman is a double. Outfield playing shallow? They've decided you can't hit it over their heads — so a ball over their heads is extra bases, and even a routine liner drops behind a drawn-in fielder. Second baseman shading toward the bag? They think you pull everything — and right field is standing open, unguarded, like a door someone forgot to lock.

You've spent twenty-nine orders learning why defenses stand where they stand. That knowledge runs in both directions. Every rule in this book, reversed, is a scouting report — you know where they should be, so you know instantly when they're somewhere else, and somewhere else is always an opening.

This is the whole book in one habit. The player who looks up before every pitch — bat in his hands or glove — is playing a different game than the player who doesn't. Slower. Clearer. Already decided. That was always the point.



THE RULES

- IN** Corners crashing — chop it past them
- LOW** Outfield shallow — over their heads is gold
- DEEP** Outfield deep — the single in front drops free
- GAP** Anyone shading — the space he left is the message

THE REPS

- A** You step in and both corners are on the grass, creeping. What do they expect, and where did their positioning just open a door?

THEY EXPECT _____

- B** The whole outfield is playing you shallow. What are they saying about you — and what's the most expensive way to prove them wrong?

THEY'RE SAYING _____

- C** The second baseman is shading way toward second. Which order taught the DEFENSE to shade like that — and what does the empty grass behind him offer you now?

IT OFFERS _____

- D** Last rep in the book. Next game, before one at-bat, look up and read all nine. Write the date, the count, and the one message you saw.

DATE _____

THE TRAP

Reading the defense fails one way: trying to aim mid-swing. The read happens BEFORE you dig in — it picks your plan, maybe your pitch to hunt, and then the swing is just the swing. A hitter steering the ball at contact is a hitter who does nothing well. Look up early, decide once, then trust it. Sound familiar? It's Order 03. It was always Order 03.

FROM THE COACH

Thirty orders, and here's what they were all secretly teaching: baseball is a game of information, and most of it is standing in plain sight, free, before every pitch — for anyone willing to look up. You know the numbers now, the ladders, the strings, the reads. So here's my last order, and it covers everything: keep your head up. The game will tell you what it's about to do. Generals listen.

ORDER 30 Look where they're standing. They're telling you where to hit it.

PAGES 67–68 ARE ONE SHEET OF PAPER

THE STANDING ORDERS CARD

The next leaf isn't a page. It's **equipment**. All thirty orders, front and back, sized for a bat bag — the whole book compressed to one card you can read in the dugout between innings.

1 **Cut on the dashed line.** Scissors beat tearing. Ask for help if the line wanders — a General keeps his equipment square.

2 **Both sides matter.** Orders 1–15 face you; flip it for 16–30. Red numbers are advanced orders — earn them in the book first.

3 **It lives in your bag.** Not your dresser. Not a drawer. The card only works where the game is.

LOSE IT? No court-martial. Every order on this card lives on its own spread in this book, and the book can issue a replacement — trace the dashed line onto notebook paper and copy the thirty lines by hand. Honestly? You'll know them better for it.



STANDING ORDERS

GEORGIA GENERALS · 10U · SIDE ONE · 01-15

CORE ORDER ## ADVANCED — EARN IT FIRST

- 01 Know your number. Know all eight of theirs.
- 02 Before every pitch, take the count.
- 03 Say the play before the pitch. Every pitch.
- 04 Decide force or tag before the ball is hit, not after.
- 05 Outfield outranks infield. Center field outranks everybody.
- 06 Call it loud, call it three times, and never yell "ball."
- 07 When you're called off, answer him, then back him up.
- 08 Chase everything you can reach until somebody calls you off it.
- 09 Middle men move to the ball. Corners run to the corner.
- 10 If you're not fielding it, you're covering or backing up. Nobody stands still.
- 11 Every throw gets a second man behind it.
- 12 Take the sure out first. Be a hero second.
- 13 Get in the line. Give him your chest.
- 14 The man at the base owns the voice. The cutoff owns the line.
- 15 Ball in the gap — two men go. Lead throws, trail talks.

FIELD ORDERS · HALFTIME PRESS

FLIP FOR 16-30 ►



STANDING ORDERS

GEORGIA GENERALS • 10U • SIDE TWO • 16-30

- 16 Runner on first, ball to the grass – shortstop owns third.
- 17 Bunt down – corners charge, second base takes first.
- 18 Never show them what you're about to do.
- 19 Look him back first. Then throw.
- 20 Ball's in play – you have a job. Find it and sprint.
- 21 Two steps and a shuffle. Never get picked.
- 22 Ground ball, go. Line drive, freeze. Fly ball, read it down.
- 23 Fly ball, less than two outs – get to the bag and tag.
- 24 Two outs – you're running on contact. Don't stop to look.
- 25 Round every base like you mean it. The coach owns third.
- 26 Ahead in the count, hunt your pitch. Behind, protect the plate.
- 27 Runner on second, nobody out – move him over.
- 28 Runner on third, less than two – put it on the ground.
- 29 Two strikes – bigger zone, shorter swing, foul it off.
- 30 Look where they're standing. They're telling you where to hit it.

FIELD ORDERS • HALFTIME PRESS

KEEP YOUR HEAD UP. GENERALS LISTEN.

THE ORDERS, IN THE WILD

SEASON LOG

Every order in this book shows up in a real game eventually. This page is for catching it in the act: the day you saw Order 12 decide an inning, or made the Order 23 tag yourself. Date it, write one line. By the last game, this is the story of your season.

01	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
02	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
03	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
04	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
05	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
06	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
07	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
08	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
09	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
10	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
11	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
12	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
13	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
14	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
15	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____

SEASON LOG, CONTINUED

16	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
17	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
18	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
19	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
20	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
21	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
22	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
23	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
24	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
25	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
26	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
27	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
28	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
29	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____
30	DATE _____	WHAT HAPPENED _____

ANYTHING WORTH REMEMBERING

FIELD NOTES

PLAYS YOU SAW. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE. ARGUMENTS WITH THE ANSWER KEY.
SCOUTING NOTES ON YOURSELF.

HOW TO USE THIS KEY. Check your reps only after you've written all four. The answer alone is half credit — the **why** is the other half. If your answer differs but your why holds up, bring it to practice. Generals argue their orders; they don't skip them.

01 BY THE NUMBERS

Know your number. Know all eight of theirs.

- A** Ball to the shortstop goes to the second baseman for the force.
WHY — Numbers are radio code. You translate both directions without thinking.
- B** 6-4-3, double play.
WHY — The scorebook speaks in numbers: flip, fire, two gone.
- C** 7 and 8 — left field and center field.
WHY — A ball that drops between two numbers belongs to both of them.
- D** Your number, and the number you feed most.
WHY — Every throw in this book is two numbers with a dash between them.

02 READING THE BOARD

Before every pitch, take the count.

- A** Look him back to second, then throw to first.
WHY — He isn't forced. The look freezes him; the out lives at first.
- B** Same throw — but no look needed. Straight to first.
WHY — Two outs erases the ceremony. Any out ends the inning.
- C** The run. Take the sure out at first and let him score.
WHY — Up six, outs are worth more than runs. The board sets the price.
- D** Weak, late contact is coming — creep in a step and lean opposite-field.
WHY — He's defending, not driving. The count moves fielders too.

03 THE SITUATION REPORT

Say the play before the pitch. Every pitch.

- A** “If it comes to me, I'm flipping to 6 at second for the force.”
WHY — Runner on first means the force is on. Your out is the near one.
- B** “Hit to me — ball comes in to second. Batter stays at one base.”
WHY — New position, new job. The outfield report is about the throw, not the catch.
- C** “Ground ball to me, I go home for the force. Slow roller wide, I take first.”
WHY — Bases loaded gives you a force everywhere — and a backup plan when the play dies.
- D** “Everything goes to first — and I charge anything soft, because mine is the long throw.”
WHY — Empty bases don't erase the report. They just make it shorter.

04 FORCE OR TAG

Decide force or tag before the ball is hit, not after.

- A** Look both runners back, then take the out at first.
WHY — Nobody is forced. The sure out plus a hard look is the whole play.
- B** Step on third. The force is under your foot.
WHY — Bases loaded forces every bag. The easiest out is the one you're standing on.
- C** Yes. Running on the pitch doesn't un-force him — the batter still pushes him.
WHY — A force is about the man behind you, not about when you left.
- D** Eyes first, throw second — look at him, freeze him or chase him back.
WHY — Home isn't forced. He has to be tagged, so a panicked throw to first scores him.

05 THE PRIORITY LADDER

Outfield outranks infield. Center field outranks everybody.

- A** Left fielder's ball.
WHY — Forward beats back. The man coming in sees everything; the man drifting back sees sky.
- B** A corner infielder takes it — never the pitcher, and the catcher yields to the field.
WHY — The ladder exists so four circling players become one catcher.
- C** Center fielder's ball.
WHY — Center outranks all. That's the whole rung.
- D** Yours — keep chasing.
WHY — Quiet is the error. Silence behind you means nobody called you off.

06 RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Call it loud, call it three times, and never yell "ball."

- A** Off the bat, everyone is guessing. At the peak, the ball has told the truth.
WHY — A call made early is a guess made loudly.
- B** "TAKE IT! TAKE IT!" — reverse yourself, loud.
WHY — A wrong call corrected beats a right call whispered.
- C** They named the ball instead of a man. One says "I got it," the other answers "take it."
WHY — Everybody already knows there's a ball. The question is which man.
- D** Both arms straight up — for the outfielder behind you.
WHY — Hands can be seen when voices can't. Going back, you're talking to a man you can't hear.

07 YIELDING THE RIGHT OF WAY

When you're called off, answer him, then back him up.

- A** Answer him — “take it, take it.” Peel off in a curve. Circle 10–15 feet behind the catch, eyes up.
WHY — Called off isn't dismissed. It's reassigned.
- B** Your voice tells him he's alone — so he catches with both eyes instead of one.
WHY — Silence makes him brace for a crash that isn't coming.
- C** Behind him, in the insurance spot — you pick up the drop and third base stays closed.
WHY — The backup man turns his mistake into a held runner instead of an extra base.
- D** A dead stop is a wall in his sprint lane. The curve clears his path and keeps your legs alive.
WHY — You're not leaving the play. You're orbiting it.

08 NOBODY'S BALL

Chase everything you can reach until somebody calls you off it.

- A** When somebody calls you off — not one step before.
WHY — Chase everything you can reach. The call ends the chase, nothing else does.
- B** The ladder keeps it for center. You answer “take it” and hook behind.
WHY — Two calls is fine. That's exactly what the tie-breaker is for.
- C** Yours now. Call it — “I got it” times three.
WHY — The sun-ball exception: vision outranks rank. The man who can see it owns it.
- D** Each thought: “his ball.” The sentence that saves it: “I GOT IT, I GOT IT, I GOT IT.”
WHY — The assumption made the catch — and assumptions can't. Quiet is the error.

09 MOVE TO THE BALL

Middle men move to the ball. Corners run to the corner.

- A** No. Ground balls have no ladder — both chase, first glove wins.
WHY — The fly-ball rules stay in the air. On the ground, hunger is the system.
- B** The second baseman, sprinting from up the middle — and he leaves on contact.
WHY — The bag empties the moment 3 charges. Somebody inherits it at a dead run.
- C** Sprint to third and own the bag.
WHY — Corners run to the corner. The play you're not in is coming back to you.
- D** The ball pulls gloves; the bases pull owners. Middle men have no bag to guard — corners do.
WHY — Same rule, two directions. Nobody stands still.

10 COVERING THE BASES

If you're not fielding it, you're covering or backing up. Nobody stands still.

- A** Whoever took the pre-pitch signal. The call came before the ball ever did.
WHY — Coverage is decided in the huddle of a glance, not in the middle of a steal.
- B** Glove it, look up — 1 or 4 is already sprinting to the bag. Soft underhand toss, chest high.
WHY — The ball pulled him off; the bag pulled somebody on. That's the trade working.
- C** Yes. Every ball to the right side, you break — need gets decided later.
WHY — The sprint is free. The play you didn't make costs a base.
- D** 4 has second. 5 has third. Nobody told them tonight — the rule told them in February.
WHY — Assignments that need a conversation arrive too late.

11 BACKING UP

Every throw gets a second man behind it.

- A** Twenty feet behind first, on the shortstop-to-first line extended.
WHY — Deep and in line. Shallow or off-line, the miss sails right past you.
- B** Behind home plate, deep — the throw is coming there, and the mound has no job left.
WHY — Back up the base the play is racing toward, not the dirt you pitched from.
- C** The catcher, trailing the batter down the line — and the right fielder behind the throw.
WHY — Routine is when backup work is invisible. That's not the same as unnecessary.
- D** No. Insurance isn't wasted when the house doesn't burn.
WHY — It's the most honest stat in baseball — because nobody keeps it.

12 WHERE'S THE OUT

Take the sure out first. Be a hero second.

- A** Force at second — flip to 6. And yes, the double play is living behind it.
WHY — Hit hard, at you, runner close: take the lead runner. The prize is real when the ball says so.
- B** First base. The paycheck.
WHY — You charged it — the lead runner's race was over before you gloved it.
- C** First base. “Close at third” is doubt — and in doubt, there is no doubt.
WHY — Two outs wants the sure out, not the short throw.
- D** Hard at me: second, 5-4 force. Soft: first.
WHY — Two answers, made before the pitch. Then the ball picks one for you.

13 THE CUTOFF MAN

Get in the line. Give him your chest.

- A** From the right fielder's glove to third base — and the shortstop stands on it.
WHY — The string is drawn glove-to-bag. The cutoff man is a knot in it, not a bystander near it.
- B** Feet on the string. Chest square to the ball. Hands up, talking — “hit me, hit me.”
WHY — A target that talks is easy to find. A stripe standing sideways disappears.
- C** The batter took second behind the play. A chest-high throw gets caught, held, and nobody moves.
WHY — The high sail didn't just miss an out — it sold a base to the man you forgot.
- D** Half a second. The throw leaves while a flat-footed man would still be winding up.
WHY — Catch turning: the relay is one motion pretending to be two.

14 CUT OR LET IT GO

The man at the base owns the voice. The cutoff owns the line.

- A** “CUT TWO!” — kill the dead race, start the live one.
WHY — The runner quit. The play at the plate is a museum piece; the batter is the crime in progress.
- B** Silence. Let it travel.
WHY — A true race gets no commentary. The throw is the answer.
- C** Yes — this is the one exception. A dying throw isn't a race anymore; save the ball.
WHY — Physics outranks voice. Silence assumes the throw can arrive.
- D** He can't see the runners. His back is to every base that matters.
WHY — The voice belongs to the man facing the whole field. The line obeys.

15 THE DOUBLE RELAY

Ball in the gap — two men go. Lead throws, trail talks.

- A** 6 and 4 sprint out. Ball's on the shortstop side, so 6 leads and 4 trails.
WHY — The gap picks the pair; the side picks the leader.
- B** “THREE! THREE!” — and you start before the outfielder even gloves it.
WHY — The call has to beat the catch. The lead man should never have to look.
- C** The trail man gloves it — the net. Batter holds at second, and the ball never rolled free.
WHY — One station slower, not dead. That's the entire reason the trail man exists.
- D** The first baseman slides over once the batter is past the bag.
WHY — Both middle men are gone, but the bag never goes bare. The infield redraws itself.

16 RUNNER ON FIRST

Runner on first, ball to the grass — shortstop owns third.

- A** Cutoff: 6. On the bag: 5. Behind it: the pitcher, deep and in line.
WHY — Three jobs, written before the season. The single just presses play.
- B** No. His job doesn't move — only his commute does.
WHY — Closest is not assigned. The left fielder fields it; the shortstop sprints to the string.
- C** It did everything. The base it saved will never appear in the scorebook.
WHY — Defense by architecture: the runner read your setup and surrendered without a throw.
- D** 3 stays home at first with eyes on him — because the batter is shopping for second.
WHY — The moment the string breaks, he's gone. Somebody has to be watching the store.

17 BUNT COVERAGE

Bunt down — corners charge, second base takes first.

- A** 5 and 3 charge. 4 sprints to first. 6 takes second. Written before contact.
WHY — An announced play should never win. Four men move on the square, not on the bunt.
- B** The pitcher is part of the bunt — he has a lane to field, moving the wrong direction for the bag.
WHY — 4 arrives facing the play at a full sprint. The closer man is the busier man.
- C** Third — 5 just charged off it. The shortstop takes the empty one.
WHY — Everyone remembers first. Nobody remembers the bag the charge left behind.
- D** The catcher. The whole play is in front of him — he's the only one facing it.
WHY — The fielder has the ball and no eyes. The catcher has the eyes and no ball.

18 FIRST AND THIRD

Never show them what you're about to do.

- A** He's bait. He's trading himself to pull a throw — the run at third is the real purchase.
WHY — Nobody steals into a 1-in-3 out for fun. He's fishing.
- B** Cut it short. Concede the steal, keep the run in the yard.
WHY — Tie game, their fastest man ninety feet away: the out at second is a luxury you can't afford.
- C** Throw through — take the out.
WHY — Up eight, the run is confetti. The score changed the price tag, so the answer changed.
- D** Never throw to second blind. Pump-fake and hold — keep the run in front of you.
WHY — No signal means no play. A bad plan you know beats a good one you don't — and no plan means hold.

19 RUNNER ON THIRD

Look him back first. Then throw.

- A** In. The run ends the game — the score just bought the risk.
WHY — Infield in hunts the run when the run is everything.
- B** Back. Bank the out, concede one run.
WHY — Up six in the second, outs are the currency. Opposite price, opposite answer.
- C** Glove it. Look him back — a real look. Then a calm throw to first.
WHY — The look costs half a second. The baited throw costs a run.
- D** The target flips to home: charge, glove, fire.
WHY — He stopped bluffing, so you stop looking. Everything speeds up except your throw.

20 THE PITCHER'S OTHER JOB

Ball's in play — you have a job. Find it and sprint.

- A** First base — and I left on contact, not when he needed me.
WHY — Every ball right side, you break. Need is decided later, at a sprint.
- B** Home. Twenty feet behind the plate, on the center-to-home line: deep and in line.
WHY — Order 11 wrote your spot; the play just tells you which base gets it.
- C** Pitcher sprints to cover home; catcher chases the ball.
WHY — Trade jobs instantly. The plate can't stand empty with the winning run ninety feet away.
- D** Zero.
WHY — The pitch is a handoff, not a finish line. Zero plays end when it crosses the plate.

21 LEADS AND SECONDARIES

Two steps and a shuffle. Never get picked.

- A** As far as one hard dive gets you back. The leash — felt, not measured.
WHY — If the dive doesn't reach the bag, the lead was never yours.
- B** Shuffles never cross your feet — you can explode either direction any instant.
WHY — A walker is committed. A leaner is committed. A shuffler is dangerous both ways.
- C** Back. Hard. First move toward the bag.
WHY — Clean catch means the play is over — the leash yanks, and you land ready to do it again.
- D** The secondary man takes the base — and most of that race was over before the bounce.
WHY — He banked fifteen feet in advance. Good baserunners aren't faster; they start closer.

22 READING THE BALL DOWN

Ground ball, go. Line drive, freeze. Fly ball, read it down.

- A** No. Forced on a ground ball: GO. The decision was made before the season.
WHY — There is nothing to read. That's the entire gift of the force.
- B** Legs plant. FREEZE.
WHY — Caught, you're safe standing there. Running, you're a doubled-off rally-killer.
- C** The instant it passed his glove — and half a step late is the cheapest insurance in baseball.
WHY — The freeze costs you almost nothing. The double-off costs the inning.
- D** GO. FREEZE. READ.
WHY — Ground ball, go. Line drive, freeze. Fly ball, read it down. Eyes closed, forever.

23 TAGGING UP

Fly ball, less than two outs — get to the bag and tag.

- A** Foot on the bag. Eyes on the glove. The catch is the gun.
WHY — Tagging up is a sprinter's start, not a stroll back.
- B** Tag-worthy. Right field's throw to third is the longest lane in the park.
WHY — From second, deep balls and balls to right are money. The map says go.
- C** Sprint back, dive, and probably get doubled anyway.
WHY — Four seconds of learning that the bag is the only launch pad you own.
- D** The dive-back man keeps the inning. The drifter gambles ninety feet for zero profit.
WHY — When nothing can be gained, protecting everything is the winning play.

24 TWO OUTS CHANGES IT ALL

Two outs — you're running on contact. Don't stop to look.

- A** RUN. Order 22 isn't wrong — it was written for a world with outs left to lose.
WHY — Caught, the inning was over anyway. Through, you score. There is no downside left.
- B** No tag. You're running on contact.
WHY — Two outs turns the catch into the end either way — the head start is free.
- C** Ball four walks you, strike three ends it, contact forces you. No future where holding helps.
WHY — Full count, two outs, forced: every branch says run. So you leave on the pitch.
- D** He forgot the switch has two positions. Doubled off — a rally erased at the cost of nothing.
WHY — With one out, the old rules still govern. The out count is the hand on the switch.

25 TAKING THE EXTRA BASE

Round every base like you mean it. The coach owns third.

- A** Yes. It costs three steps and nothing else.
WHY — The day you don't turn hard is the day he bobbles it.
- B** The lazy lob — glove moving away, ball floated in. His body said no throw is coming.
WHY — Read his body, not the ball. Clean and loaded means back; casual means GO.
- C** Stop. He sees the whole field — you see nothing behind you.
WHY — Sure, built on half the picture, isn't sure. Into third, the coach owns the call.
- D** Momentum can't be added afterward. Watch first, and you've already chosen the single.
WHY — Three hard steps keep both futures alive. The soft turn is the great thief of doubles.

26 WINNING THE COUNT

Ahead in the count, hunt your pitch. Behind, protect the plate.

- A** Take it. 2-1 is still your count — swinging at his pitch is a rescue mission for him.
WHY — The hunter doesn't chase. He waits in his zone.
- B** Swing if it's close. Order 29 owns this pitch now.
WHY — The count flipped the owner. Ugly contact beats a called third.
- C** Your answer — written honestly, not hopefully.
WHY — That box is your 2-0 hunting ground all season. Hunt there only.
- D** A fastball in the zone. A walk hurts him worse than your swing, so he has to come to you.
WHY — 3-1 forces his hand. Sit on his obligation.

27 RUNNER ON 2ND, NOBODY OUT

Runner on second, nobody out — move him over.

- A** Sac fly scores him. RBI groundout scores him. So do the wild pitch and the passed ball.
WHY — Third with one out scores without a hit. Second with none out is still a hostage.
- B** Right side: their backs turn to him as they play first — he walks in behind them.
WHY — Left side: the ball and the shortstop are staring straight at him. Eye to eye, he dies.
- C** Hold. It's in front of you and you're not forced — Order 22 already answered this.
WHY — Running into a tag ten feet in front of your own eyes isn't aggression. It's a donation.
- D** The scorebook says 4-3. What happened: you bought third base and paid with an out.
WHY — Some purchases get recorded as losses. Make them anyway.

28 RUNNER ON 3RD, LESS THAN TWO

Runner on third, less than two — put it on the ground.

- A** Scores him: any grounder, medium fly, wild pitch, passed ball, error, hit. Doesn't: strikeout, pop-up, caught liner.
WHY — The scoring list is longer. That's the entire at-bat, in two lists.
- B** Chasing high produces the pop-up — the shortest list's favorite ball.
WHY — The swing under a high pitch lifts it straight up. The waterline exists to keep you off it.
- C** From “the ground anywhere” to “hard through the middle.”
WHY — In close, their gloves cover less grass — and the middle is the gap that's left.
- D** Same as Order 27: the out was currency, and you bought a run with it.
WHY — 6-3, RBI. Write it proudly. The scorebook still can't see it.

29 TWO STRIKES

Two strikes — bigger zone, shorter swing, foul it off.

- A** Choke up an inch. Shorten the swing flat. Widen the stance — and the zone grows to anything close.
WHY — A different hitter walks to the plate. On purpose.
- B** His mood is invisible and his call is final.
WHY — Anything close gets your bat, not your hope. Hope is not one of the reads there either.
- C** They were the shield. Every foul spent a pitch and kept you alive until he had to throw a fair one.
WHY — Foul balls with two strikes aren't failure. They're ammunition, spent in your favor.
- D** Yours. Nine pitches came out of his arm — the single cost him one.
WHY — The box score disagrees. The sixth inning won't.

30 READING THE DEFENSE

Look where they're standing. They're telling you where to hit it.

- A** They expect a bunt — and the ground behind them just opened.
WHY — A firm swing past a charging corner is a double wearing a bunt's disguise.
- B** They're saying you can't reach them. The expensive proof: one ball over their heads.
WHY — You only have to cash it once. The threat backs them up for the rest of the season.
- C** Order 10 — he's guarding coverage at the bag. The hole between first and second is the widest it will ever be.
WHY — Every rule in this book, run by them, opens a door for you.
- D** Yours to write: the date, the count, the message you read.
WHY — Thirty orders, and the last one is an open field. Keep your head up. Generals listen.