

# OPPOSITE FIELD HITTING

Opposite field hitting is what separates superior hitters from the average ones. I contend that those hitters that can go opposite field with their ball striking, will make a greater contribution to their team's run production and win more ball games as a result. Hitting opposite field with power adds even more to this skill. Pitchers are educated from a young age to keep the ball away from the good hitters and if they do, they will have much more success. This means that pitchers from little league and on up in skill level will be trying to establish the low and outside pitch to batters during games.

A skilled hitter that can effectively hit those pitches on the outer half of the strike zone will be of more value than just your basic pull-hitter to your ballclub. We've all experienced in senior softball, when your scorekeeper yells out where the next batter is most likely to hit the ball. As a consummate hitter try and use all fields in which to land the ball. Some hitters are dead pull; some go up the middle and some can hit the other way as well. Why tip your hand by being too predictable? Almost every hitter, beginning at the Varsity level in high school, can effectively pull the ball. What can distinguish you as a hitter is the ability to go the opposite way and with power.

## ***Where does your power originate from?***

*The power of the swing is a total body effort starting from the ground up with your feet, to your legs, then a rotating torso, chest, arms and into the hands that deliver the bat barrel to the incoming ball.*

What does opposite field hitting entail? For example, a right-handed hitter will bat from the left side of the plate (*just the reverse for a left-handed batter*), and will tend to hit the ball to the left side of the field thus a "pull hitter". So, the opposite of pull hitting is known as hitting opposite field, also referred to as hitting OPPO! Note that I recommend trying to crush the ball the other way thereby, taking advantage of all the good things that can happen by hitting the ball hard.

## ***How do you hit a ball harder?***

*Basic physics tells us that the faster you swing the bat, the potential for hitting the softball harder and farther increases. The bat speed/exit velo calculation is quite fundamental. For every mph of bat speed you add to your swing, you will be able to increase your exit velocity in the neighborhood of ~1.5 mph. This means balls get through the infield faster and will have more carry in the air.*

Hitting to the opposite field (*right-handed hitters to right field and left-handed hitters to left field*) is a valuable skill not only for place hitters but for power hitters as well. If your opponent figures out that you can only effectively hit to the pull side, they will load up to that side of the field reducing your base hit chances.

The best way to hit opposite field is to use an inside-out swing approach. Let's discuss the inside-out swing. Instead of hitting the ball out-front like a pull-hitter, allow the pitch to travel deeper into the strike zone thereby delaying your swing action so you hit the other way. Keep your hands trailing slightly behind the bat barrel (*this is the inside out action*) as you strike the ball to your opposite field. Don't tip your hand that you are going to the opposite field by facing that

direction which defeats the surprise element. When the pitch is delivered, first move your back foot backwards then turning your body in the direction of the field you are hitting to; let the pitch get deeper into the strike zone, then stride toward the opposite field you're aiming for and deliver a mighty blow to the softball.

Happy hitting,

Art Eversole



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