



So why do you coach? [Not a job but a calling....](#)

"In the end, it's about the teaching, and what I always loved about coaching was the practices. Not the games, not the tournaments, not the alumni stuff. But teaching the players during practice was what coaching was all about to me".... John Wooden

Signs.. And more signs..

So what are those fancy armbands about? Do I need them for my team? A kid asked me what my indicator was? Is she asking me what I use to flip someone off? HELP!!!

As a manager you need to communicate with your players both during defense and offense. A steal isn't very effective if you are screaming it to the runner: "Sally you're stealing on the next pitch".. (albeit at some point in your coaching career you WILL be screaming this to the runner at first..)

Offensive Signs:

What are some of the signs you need to give.. Steals, Bunts, Hit and Runs, Take, Delay Steals to name some. Each manager brings their own style in choosing their signs but they should be kept simple enough for the age being coached and not so simple the opposition can easily pick it up. 8U division doesn't need a 3 level delay steal sign for example. "Ok I got that.. Now what's this indicator thing".. Indicator is just a signal that precedes the actual signal to let the player know that the sign that follows is the one they need to perform. For example: Touching the ear is the steal sign. Touching the hat is the indicator... coach touches his ear three times without touching the hat.. No signal. Coach touches hat and then ear.. Steal signal is on!

Defensive Signs:

The most obvious defensive signs are the pitching signs. Again, it is up to the coach to determine what the signs will be and it is strongly encouraged that the pitchers/catchers participate in the sign creation. There is no point in calling a rise ball if the pitcher can't throw it! Pitch calling will consist of the type of pitch and location for the pitch and is usually done with numbers. For example: 1 Fast Ball 2 Change Up followed by location 1 inside 2 outside... an outside fast ball would be 1-2. Note that location should never be down the middle!

More advanced teams can call additional defensive plays: Ignore steal to second, backpick 1st, 3rd, outfield shifts etc. These are usually audibles: OMAHA! BARNEY! Whatever keywords you like!

Armbands:

My kids cant figure out my visual signs! I want to look “professional”. I want to make sure the opposition doesnt steal my 101 signs! I cant keep track of my own signs and need to see it in writing! Whatever the reasons using armbands is another way to give out signs.

Armband Choices:



There are many choices online for armbands ranging in price from \$3 to \$10 each. In general most follow the picture shown to the left where you have 3 “windows”, one with the band closed and two inner windows when opened.

There are many choices online for generating the armband cards that get inserted into the “windows”, from free templates to paid software. A simple spreadsheet will work but may need some trial and error to get the sizes just right.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
White	HIT	STEAL	TAKE	Delay Steal	Bunt	Fake Bunt						
Black	STEAL	TAKE	Delay Steal	Bunt	Fake Bunt	HIT						
Red	Fake Bunt	HIT	STEAL	TAKE	Delay Steal	Bunt						
Blue	Bunt	Fake Bunt	HIT	STEAL	TAKE	Delay Steal						

Sample Offensive Card

For a 3 “window” armband it is recommended the offensive signs be placed in the outside window while the inside 2 windows be used for defensive signs (one for pitches and the other for advanced defensive plays)

In addition to the armbands you may choose to laminate and printout a coaches version that has all 3 “windows” in one page. Coach would then callout the signs by calling a row/column combination. In example above a steal would be: White-3 or Red-6. By having multiple row/column combinations for the same sign it prevents opponents from memorizing the signs.

Closing thoughts on signs:

You must practice sign calling and picking up signs in practice! Kids missing signs is part of the game. The more you practice the less missed/botched signs there will be. Keep it simple and age appropriate. Just because the other coach is using armbands doesnt mean you need to. Keep the game moving. Hand signs/audibles/or armbands it doesnt matter.. Keep it simple and fast paced. **Teach your players to acknowledge they have received the sign by tapping their helmet!**

Send in your tips! Questions or comments and share with the other coaches!!!