

# The Mental aspect of seeing and hitting effectively

## Why is seeing the ball well so difficult for a batter?

- **Effect of fear, anxiety, tension**
  - Muscular tightness and poor breathing patterns result
    - Concentration is also affected – eyes may react to irrelevant cues
- **Hitter is forcing himself to hit**
  - "I gotta/I'm gonna" syndrome
  - Causes tension, as referred to above
- **Divided Attention** – You can really only handle one function at a time. Options include:
  - *Thinking* (internal function)
    - Kid needs to quiet his mind and focus on seeing the ball
  - *Seeing* (external function)
    - The right and only function!!!
  - *Hitting* (physical function)
    - Kid can't think of mechanics – he should be on auto-pilot.
- **Improper use of eyes**
  - Good hitters have consistent eye patterns
    - Where they look
      - Near release point (Broad focus)
      - To Release point (fine focus)
    - When they look
      - Broad Focus – Beginning of windup or into the stretch
      - Fine Focus – hand break
    - Type of focus they have
      - Broad Focus -General area of interest (usually logo on cap or pitcher's head
      - Fine Focus – specific area of interest (always Release point).
- **Tendency of eyes to move ahead of objects they are tracking**
  - Often caused by not seeing the ball out of the pitcher's hand @ release point
- **Overswinging**
  - Head moves out vs. tracking (with nose) all the way in.
  - If your head doesn't follow the ball from the pitcher's hand into the hitting zone, you're not seeing the ball as long as you can.

## Optimal Coaching:

- Teach mechanics and burn into muscle memory in practice. Coach AND player focus on mechanics **only** at practice and before games.
- Establish relaxed and confident mentality at the plate
- Bear down on PROPER EYE PATTERN in batters box
  - When doing Strategy/thinking – batter steps out of box.

## Optimal Hitting:

- Visualize beforehand
  - Get thinking, analyzing, planning out of the way before you get in the batters box
- Let your eyes take control
  - Relax, clear your mind, and put your body on autopilot
- Establish consistent eye patterns
  - Avoid concentrating too soon
  - Go from broad to fine focus – establish rhythm
- See the release
  - Train yourself to see the ball come right out of the pitcher's hand
- Track the ball
  - Zone 1
    - From release point to ½ way to the plate
      - If having trouble in this zone, you're not seeing release
  - Zone 2
    - From ½ way to 6 feet in front of batter
      - Where movement/spin become obvious
  - Zone 3
    - Last 6 feet
      - Keep tracking – and keep head down for an instant after contact

*Or, more simply put, track the ball the whole way from the release to contact.*