

Outcome 30.5 –Assignment #1 - Skill Analysis

What you will learn

Outcome 30.5: Complex Skills, Tactics and Strategies – You will learn how to breakdown a skill into its parts and use your skill analysis to plan for improvement of the skill.

What you will need

- Device with video capability (phone, camera, apps)
- Implements depending upon chosen skill

What you will do

You will read the following exemplar using a skill analysis approach for softball batting. After you have worked your way through the exemplar you will use the Skill Analysis Worksheet found [HERE \(you will find all the worksheets needed for this assignment at this site – please download and save\)](#)

Softball: Batting Technique

When learning and refining a skill it is very important to understand all the fundamentals or parts of the skill. Most skills can be broken down using the following phases.

- 1. Preliminary Movement**
- 2. Backswing or Recovery Movements**
- 3. Force Producing Movements**
- 4. Critical Instant**
- 5. Follow Through**

Once you understand the all of the parts of the skill then you can use drills to perfect each phase. Remember, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link so if you do not work on and refine each phase then you may not be as successful as you could be. Your chain would have a weak link.

There is an old saying that says **Practice Make Perfect** but I disagree.....**Perfect Practice Makes Perfect**.....if you practice and you are using poor technique then you will get really good as doing something wrong!.....and you may hurt yourself☹

The video below is an excellent breakdown of all the phases involved in **softball batting**. The coach breaks down the skill into all of the phases but just uses different terminology.

1. The grip and the stance would be examples of **Preliminary Movements**
2. Negative movement or loading would be examples of **Backswing or Recovery Movements**
3. Positive Movements and Rotation would be examples of **Force Producing Movements**
4. Contact is an example of the **Critical Instant**
5. The Finish is an example of **Follow Through**

Task #1: Watch the video from the link below and follow along using the notes below. Feel free to make your own notes as well.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUa2OEo8HSI>

The coach breaks down each phase of the skill and provides cues to think about when practicing.

1. Grip

- a. Door knocking knuckles

2. Stance

- a. 3 Types of Stances
 - i. Square Stance
 - ii. Open Stance
 - iii. Closed Stance
- b. Key elements in Stance
 - i. Good athletic position
 - ii. Feet outside of hip
 - iii. Knees outside of feet
 - iv. Balance – Flexion in knees and ankles
 - v. Elbows down
 - vi. Bat at 45 degree angle
 - vii. Lead arm bent at 90 degree angle
 - viii. Upper body relaxed
 - ix. Plate coverage – have a routine

3. Negative Movement (Loading)

- a. Load back leg and hands in hitting position
 - i. Heal lift
 - ii. Weight on back leg
 - iii. Hands in hitting position
 - iv. Common mistake in young hitters
 1. Don't twist upper body
 2. Make negative move with upper body and positive move with lower body.

3.

4. Positive Movement (Stride)

- a. Toe touch

5. Rotation

- a. Hands in strong position
- b. Spacing from elbow to hip
- c. Connection – elbow and hands line up with strip of the pants (skipping a rock)
- d. Bat lag –
 - i. barrel pointed toward catcher and knob pointed at pitcher
 - ii. Hands in front of centre of gravity
- e. Rotate ‘around the stake’
- f. Great hitters do not move their head

6. Contact point

- a. Hand positioning
 - i. Top hand is up and bottom hand is down
 - ii. Straight wrist
 - iii. Firm front side – foot on ground
 - iv. Hips are rotated

7. The Finish

- a. Contact to extension
- b. Roll wrists after extension
- c. Finish along back shoulder
- d. Do not roll your wrists at contact

Task #2: Create your own checklist of coaching cues from the above note or from your notes. You will use the checklist to assess your current skill level.

Task #3: Create a video of yourself swinging a bat. Take at least five swings. Use the Skill Analysis Chart to analyze your current swing. Remember that no one is perfect. You want to find things that you need to work on. Now you have a starting point from which to work on improvement.

Task #4: Find drills that work on each of the parts of the skill that you have identified. Some drills may be very specific to a phase of the skill and other drills may work on all of the phases.

Remember that drills provide an opportunity to provide repetition that is necessary for skill development. You do repetition drills in math and reading all of the time.....physical skills are no different. You will not learn a skill or perfect a phase all at once and it may take many sessions to see improvement. It is a guarantee that if you work on a skill consistently over a period of time and get your reps in that you will improve. Professional athletes and Olympians will say they need to work on a skill for 10,000 reps before they get really good at it.....and remember that is practicing perfectly with intent. If you don't think about what

you are working on or practice the technique wrong then you just get really good at doing it wrong. You should work on your batting swing 10-20 minutes per day (how many reps would that be?)

Drills:

Grip and Stance Drills:

Every time you practice be sure to check your grip and stance. Remember to create a routine for setting up in the batter's box. You should check your grip and stance at the start of every new drill.

Fence Drill: Do every time you practice your swing. Do necessarily need a fence but could use side of a building or a tree.....a fence is best cuz if you hit a tree it might hurt☹

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oi7BkBF4mGg>

Tee Drills: These should be done every day.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_OP_KnOSVM

Toss Drills: These are a must. You need a good tosser. Be sure to use objects that reflect the batter skill level. If you use a real ball and the batter is a novice then the tosser may be at risk of getting hit in the face with a ball. Novice batters could use rolled up socks, badminton birds or wiffle balls

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leDfLWdAZQk>

What you will improve

So you have broken down your batting technique and analyzed your own swing and have come up with drills and have started to practicing.....BUT.....what is missing???

The answer is **Feedback**.....remember that Perfect Practice Makes Perfect but how do you know if your repetitions are perfect or getting closer to perfect. You could video every swing and look at it right after but that would be really time consuming and probably really boring.....SO.....you need a coach.....it could be a sibling, or a friend or a parent who has learned the proper technique and can give you immediate feedback.

If you are the one giving feedback here is the most important tip I can give you. Tell your partner one good thing about their swing and then tell them just one thing you saw that they need to work on. After a two or three repetitions.....repeat the process.

Now for the most important question.....**how do you know if you are improving?**

Task #5: Create and submit a plan to log your perfect practice.

What you will reflect on

Task #6: Create a rubric that demonstrates improvement over time in your self selected skill.