



COACHING

5 to 8 year olds

Good at Bat - Stat

Use the "GOOD AT BAT" approach and have all of your players hit over the magic, 400!

Calculating batting averages for Little Leaguers the way they do for Major Leaguers doesn't make sense. The only "At Bats" that count for a MLB player's average are singles, doubles, triples and homeruns. If a major leaguer hits a ball through the shortstop's legs and ends up on 2nd base, it is ruled an error and the player is 0 for 1 with a batting average of .000. Hitting is arguably the toughest skill in any sport and many Little League players often go long stretches during the season without getting a hit.

The following approach sets you up to pat your players on the back every time they have a "good at bat", not just when they get a clean hit.

I called it a "GOOD AT BAT - A GAB".



A "GOOD AT BAT" is:

- getting a single, double, triple or homerun (of course these are all GABs)
- getting a walk (why not give a player credit for working the pitcher for a walk)
- getting hit by a pitch (getting hit by a pitch puts the hitter on base and is a good play)
- hitting line drive out (this is an excellent effort, so the player should get credit for a GAB)
- hitting a fly ball, a ground ball or a pop-up (hitting is such a tough skill, so when a little leaguer puts the ball in play regardless of the outcome I like to reward him with a GAB)
- swinging at a third strike and striking out (I want all of my players to be aggressive and swing the bat, especially on the 3rd strike, so this is also a GAB)

The only situations that I would not give the player credit for a "GOOD AT BAT" was when:

- a player does not swing at a called third strike (just waiting for a walk is not a good at bat, I want the players to be aggressive and not be afraid of striking out)
- swinging at a ball way out of the strike zone on a 2 strike pitch (if the pitch was out of reach, I want players to learn to be a little more selective)

Using this GAB approach most of my players hit over .500 for the season and all of my players hit over the .400. Lots of players will

go 4 for 4 and have a 1000.00 GAB average during the game. This approach almost guarantees that every player has some success at the plate in every game.



I liked to keep track during the game and post each "GOOD AT BAT" for each player on a chart at the end of the dugout. This way every player could see how they were doing and that I was proud of their efforts at the plate even if they didn't get a clean hit.

Coaches, describe the GAB stat to your parents. They will be more positive with their own son or daughter during the game and it gives them something very positive to talk about on the way home from the park.

Give the GAB stat a try and celebrate every player on your team hitting over the magic, 400 mark!



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