

An Open Stance Has Many Advantages ©

Summer 2013 – Art Eversole

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“Open Stance Offers Many Advantages to Hitters.”*

Which of the three standard batting stances is best for a senior softball player? Many of us seniors grew up playing baseball learning about the three basic batting stances: ‘open’, ‘closed’, and ‘square’. When the batter's front foot is closer to home plate than the back foot, it is considered a closed stance. When a batter's front foot is parallel with the back foot to home plate this is a square-up stance (see figures 4 & 5).

What is an ‘open’ batting stance? When the hitter sets themselves into the batter's box with the back foot closer to home plate than the front foot, it is considered to be an open batting stance. My contention is that an ‘open’ stance offers advantages that the other two don’t possess.

When I say ‘open stance’, I’m not referring to the extreme ‘open’ stances that some major league players are using today. It’s simply a front foot drop-step back about one half the length of your rear foot. The front foot’s toe should be about even with the back foot’s instep while placing your back foot at a distance from home plate that allows the batter full strike-mat coverage.

Many seniors chose their batting stances by copying their favorite pro baseball player at a young age and have not changed. Reasons for possibly changing to an “open” stance:

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- 1) 'Open' stance is an all-in-one stance if executed correctly,
- 2) Both eyes of the batter will be facing forward allowing for the best look at the incoming pitch,
- 3) You can achieve optimum plate coverage,
- 4) The inside pitch is much easier to handle because you're already opened-up to drive your hands to the ball around the hips reducing handle hits.

Hitting with an 'open' stance is not considered "stepping in the bucket" because you're going to pull an inside pitch, then step toward the pitcher on middle pitches and toward the opposite field for outside pitches. Attempting to pull the ball from a square or closed stance can result in a trademark- or handle-hits missing the sweet spot of the barrel.

The hitter must keep his or her body weight on the balls of the feet in an athletic posture. About ~70% of your body weight should be on your back foot pressing down on the instep of the foot. When the front foot is lifted then the weight goes to 100% on the rear foot. After completion of your swing ~90% of your weight should have been transferred forward to your front foot. Power and stability come from hitting off the back foot correctly with a weight transfer from the back-side to the front-side allowing hips to rotate freely for more power.

Understand that all batting stances are going to have their pros and cons. The 'open' stance will allow for better strike-plate coverage and,

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with simple foot-placing adjustments, will make your softball swing much more efficient.

