**Executing and Defending the Bunt**

**Purpose:**
Incorporate a daily drill sequence that focused on executing and defending the bunt.

**Equipment:**
4 buckets, 2 cones, and baseballs

**Setup:**
Infield take their positions with the exception of the pitcher (drill can also be ran with a pitcher). The coach sets up two orange cones, separating the bunting zones into three sections: right side, middle, and left side. The coach, on a knee, has a bucket of balls about 50 ft. from the plate lined up in the middle section.
The cones give the hitter two specific areas their bunts must reach: either the left or right side. Also, an empty bucket needs to be placed at all three bases. These buckets allow infielders to easily deposit fielded balls, insuring constant repetition to players.

**Execution:**
Stage 1 (3 minutes):
The coach, with the bucket, pitches the ball toward the catcher. The bunter at the plate must push the ball toward either line or hustle down the line toward 1st base. The 1st and 3rd basemen charge the bunt and throw it to the 2nd baseman covering the bag at 1st. The fielders must play the ball out, even if it is not fielded cleanly. A heavy emphasis should be placed on communication between 1st and 2nd baseman. Make sure all the infielders get back to normal depth before the next pitch is delivered.
Stage 2 (3 minutes):
The hitter, in Stage Two, is working on pushing the ball to the left side. This drill focuses on the 3rd baseman attempting to force the runner at 2nd base.
Stage 3 (3 minutes):
In Stage Three, hitters are focusing on placing the bunt on the right side. While fielding during Stage Three, 1st basemen charge the pitch and look to get the force or tag out at 3rd base. The coach will stimulate the situation before the pitch. If the ball is not fielded cleanly, the 1st baseman must throw to the 2nd basemen cover the bag at 1st. Furthermore, 3rd basemen must work on getting in front of bad throws in the dirt or off the base and work on swiping the tag in front of the bag.
Stage 4 (3 minutes):
In Stage Four, half the position players bunting split up and practice running from 3rd base. The coach, moves to the mound, comes to the set position. During the stretch, the 3rd baseman must practice holding the runner on at 3rd. The coach either throws over or goes to the plate. During the pitch, the 1st and 3rd basemen charge toward home plate. The bunter’s objective is to put the ball on the ground, either to the left or right side. When the bunt is successful, the 1st or 3rd basemen must field it and toss it to the catcher. The catcher must apply the tag to the base runner coming to the plate. If the ball is not fielded cleanly, the 1st or 3rd basemen must attempt to get the out at 1st base. Heavy emphasis should be placed on infielders to quickly transfer the ball from glove to hand. On the squeeze play, fielders have no time to mishandle a transfer and still get the out at home.