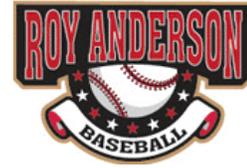




CATCHER'S TIP #2:



Question: "You have the hitter 0-2, what should you do and what should you not do in this situation?" "What should you be thinking?"

There are common mistakes that many coaches, catchers, and pitchers make. Do you know what to do?

Successful catchers understand (instinctively) what pitch or pitch options they have to throw when getting a batter to a specific count during an at-bat. What you throw to "get ahead," what to throw "when behind," and most importantly, what to throw to "get the out."

This month's "TIP" will focus on **finishing off the batter when you have them 0-2.**

With the 0-2 count, the pitcher should have the hitter in a position to literally "hit out of their hand." Pitchers who can consistently get hitters in the 0-2 ball-strike count are going to "win." Now is the time to get the hitter to swing at a bad pitch since they are just trying to protect the plate, and are very subject to swinging at a pitch out of the strike zone.

UNDERSTANDING PITCH COUNTS AND THE APPROACH TO TAKE TO SUCCESSFULLY GET THE BATTER OUT:

The catcher (and pitcher) should understand that at no time should the 0-2 pitch enter the area of the strike zone so that the hitter can make good contact with the ball. At the same time the pitch should not be a total wasted pitch that the hitter would never swing at due to the fact that the ball is so far out of the strike zone.

A good control pitch is preferred in this situation so that the pitcher does not miss with the pitch only to find the pitch entering the "heart" of the hitter's strike zone. The pitcher must throw a control pitch to a vulnerable area outside the strike zone with a 0-2 count on the hitter.



Basically, there are three areas of thought here and they can all be used depending on the situation. The 0-2 pitch can be used to: (1) move a hitter off the plate; (2) set-up the hitter for the 1-2 pitch; and (3) get him to go after a pitch he can not hit well.

The Los Angeles Dodgers conducted some research to determine how Major League hitters performed when they were at a certain “count” during their at-bats. The chart below shows the enormous difference between a 0-2 count and a 2-0 count.

Pitch Count	Batting Average
0-2	.130
2-0	.390

“The Bottom Line” – As a catcher you must understand the importance of getting ahead of the batter and what to do (what pitch to throw) once you are ahead in the count. When you get the batter to a 0-2 count, you shouldn’t completely “waste” a pitch that could potentially get the batter out. You should attempt to get the batter to “chase” a “pitchers pitch” that is away from the “heart of the plate” and get the out without having to throw several more pitches.

For more information on understanding pitchers, pitch counts and setting up hitters for failure, check out **Chapter 11** in **“The View From Behind the Mask.”**

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