

5 Tips for Getting Started with Your Play Ball Situations™ Board

Dear Coach,

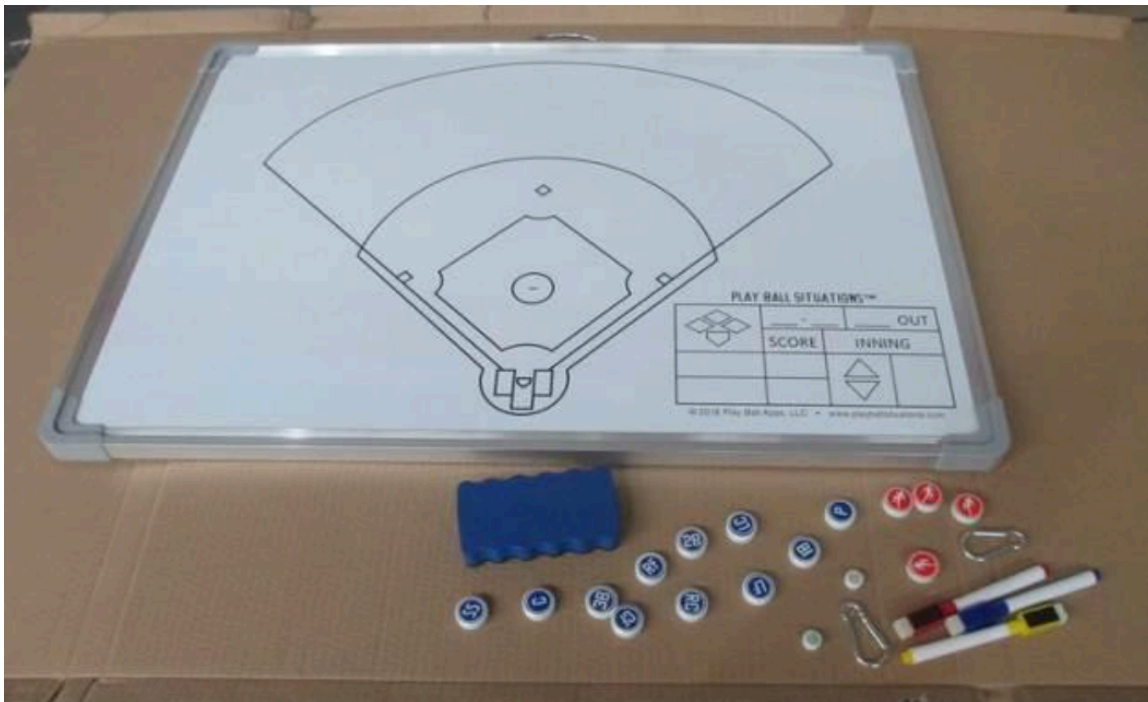
First, thank you for purchasing the **Play Ball Situations™** board. We are thrilled you will be using the board to help visually teach your players the game.

Taking the time to teach situational baseball or softball is just as important as teaching hitting, pitching, fielding or throwing. If your team consistently knows what to do when the ball is hit, either when at bat or in the field, then you are going to be in most games.

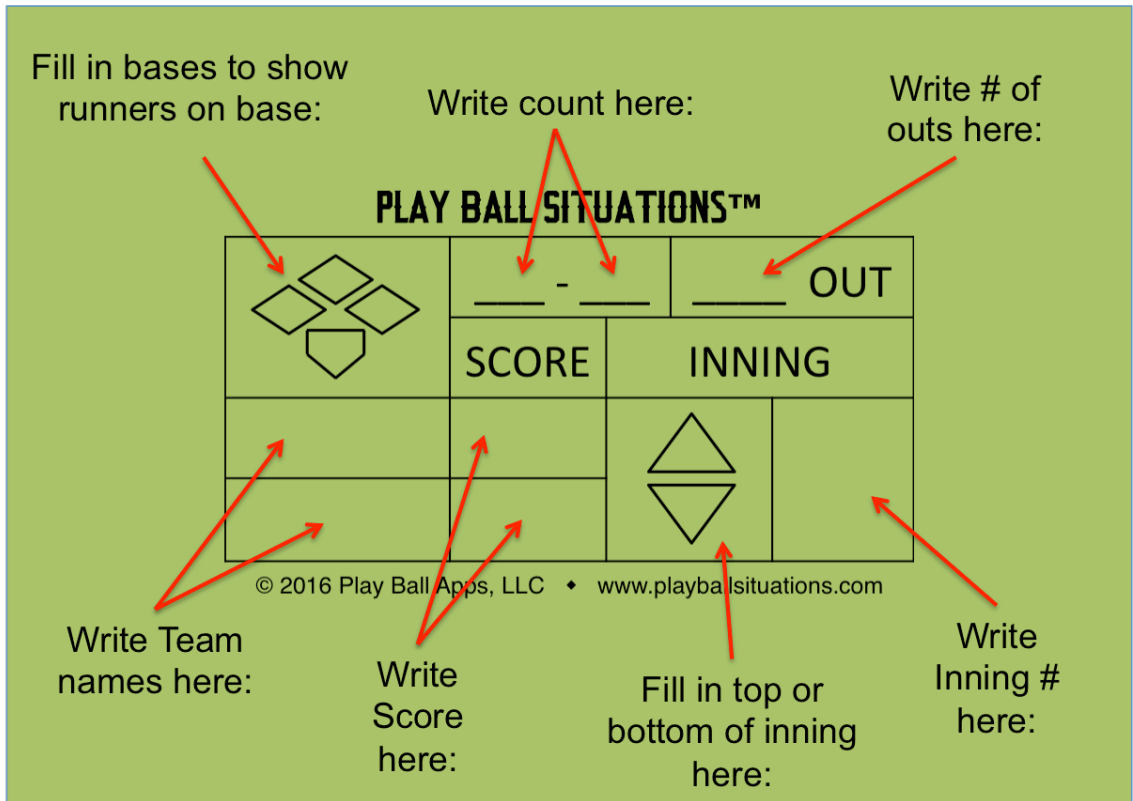
Second, we thank you for checking out this PDF. It's filled with useful information and ideas to get you thinking about how to best use your board to get the results you want.

1. **Upon receiving your board, please confirm you have the following items.** If for some reason, all of these items were not included in your box, or you board arrives damaged, please notify us immediately.

- (1) Play Ball Situations board with handle, 2 sliding frame hooks and 2 clip hooks
- (11) Positional Magnets (P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, LF, LC, CF, RC, RF)
- (4) Base Runner Magnets (Note: 2 are running left, 2 are running right)
- (2) Ball Magnets (Baseball and Softball)
- (3) Magnetic Dry Erase Markers (Red, Blue, Yellow)
- (1) Magnetic Dry Eraser (Blue)



2. **The Play Ball Situations™ board is compatible for baseball & softball.** You will be able to teach and coach to any situational concept that is appropriate for your team's age, league level, and skill and playing ability. The scoreboard in the lower right hand corner can be used to set up a visual of any situation. NOTE: Using the scoreboard may not always be necessary.



3. **Start basic.** We recommend teaching all players the following three (3) defensive concepts to start. There is a good chance some of the players have heard the game broken down this way before, as these concepts are not new. But, I'm willing to bet all of them have never seen what the concepts actually look like visually. Your players will benefit by seeing this visually and seeing it together as a group. This will put all of them on the same page defensively.

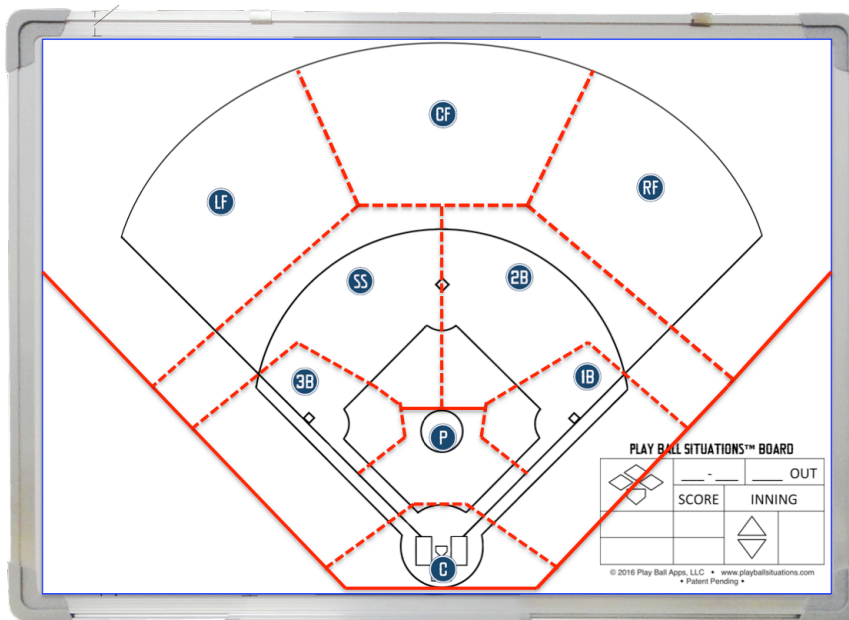
Defensive Concept #1: PLAY THE BALL.

This concept applies equally to both infielders and outfielders. As a fielder, you must pay attention at all times and be ready to chase/field the ball when it's hit to the area your position is responsible for covering.

Unfortunately, the ball isn't always hit right at us, so it's important to know how the infielders and outfielders work together to cover the entire field.

We use the following diagrams to visually teach whose ball it should be based on where it's hit.

NOTE: The dotted lines mean there could be some area of responsibility overlap among fielders.



You may decide to draw some of your lines differently, but the idea is the same.

Depending on your situation, you can easily draw this diagram with 3 or 4 outfielders or no outfielders at all.

As you are teaching the areas of responsibility to your players, you might consider describing each position's geography along these lines:

PITCHER (P):

The P is primarily responsible for fielding balls hit back up the middle and out in front of home plate too far for the C, 1B or 3B to get. The P must cover baseline to baseline. NOTE: Depending on the hit, the 3B, 1B or C may also field a ball in the P's area of responsibility. This is ok.

CATCHER (C):

The C is primarily responsible for fielding balls out in front of home plate too far for the P, 3B or 1B to get and behind and to the sides of home plate in foul territory. NOTE: Depending on the hit, the 3B, 1B or P may also field a ball in the C's area of responsibility. This is ok.

1st BASE (1B):

The 1B is primarily responsible for balls hit to the right side of the infield that are too far for the P, C or 2B to get. The 1B also covers foul ball territory on the right side of the infield. NOTE: Depending on the hit, the P, C or 2B may also field a ball in the 1B's area of responsibility. This is ok.

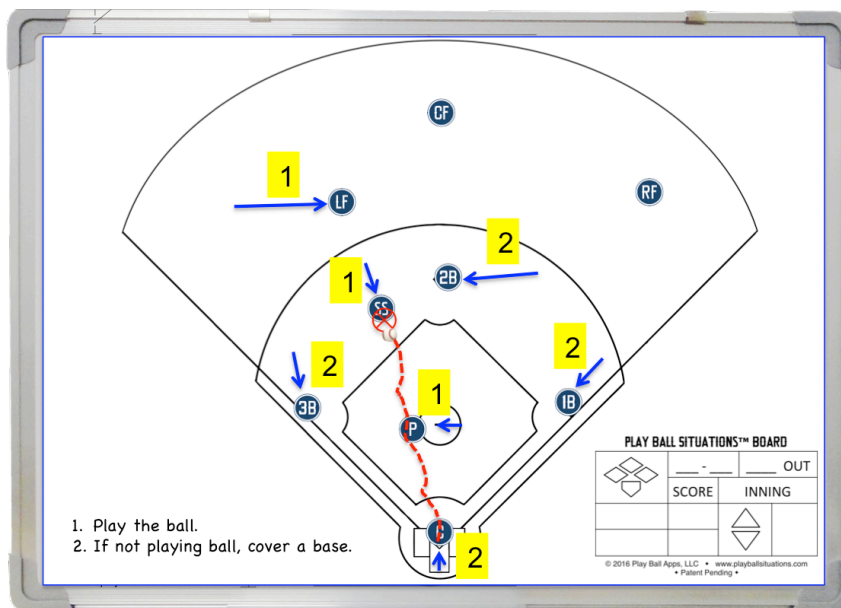
And so on. You get the idea. Just remember, this explanation isn't about how to play the position or where to play. It's about the area the position is responsible for covering.

Defensive Concept #2: IF YOU AREN'T PLAYING THE BALL, COVER A BASE.

This concept applies to infielders more so than outfielders simply because infielders are positioned closer to the bases. Here is how it applies:

For example, ground ball hit to the left side of the infield toward short. The SS and LF are playing the ball and possibly the P, assuming the P made an attempt for the ball. LF is playing the ball in case the SS misplays it. But all other infielders are not playing the ball. Therefore:

3B covers 3B; 2B covers 2B; 1B covers 1B; C covers Home



Since this concept only applies to covering a base, we won't discuss what the other outfielders should be doing at this point.

We also don't want to complicate this too much at this point with things like the "the C should be backing up 1B", etc. The concept is every base should be covered on every play.

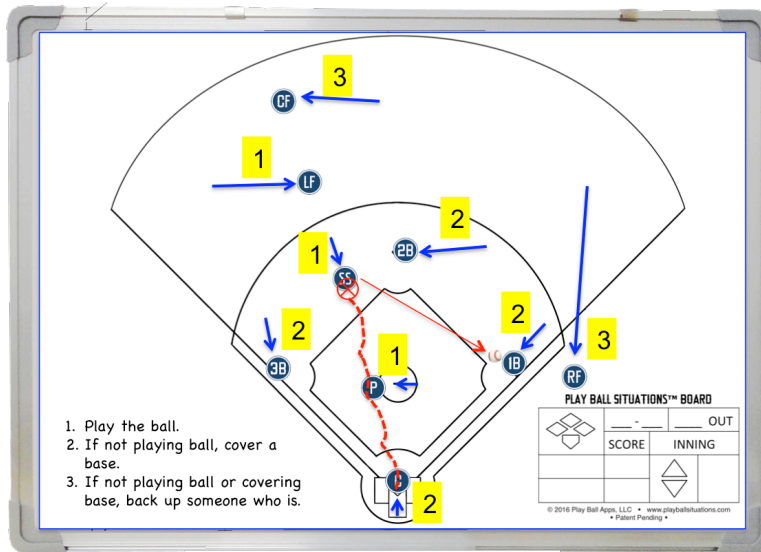
Ideally, players should get in the habit of covering/moving towards a base on every play, even when there are no runners on base. Again, every one should be moving on every play.

Defensive Concept #3: IF YOU AREN'T PLAYING THE BALL OR COVERING A BASE, BACK UP SOMEONE WHO IS.

This concept obviously applies to outfielders more so than infielders but there might be times when a situation requires an infielder to back up. Here is how it applies:

Using our example again from concept #2, ground ball hit to the left side of the infield toward short. The SS and LF and possibly P are playing the ball. All other infielders are not playing the ball. Therefore: 3B covers 3B; 2B covers 2B; 1B covers 1B; C covers Home

In this simple example, the CF is not technically playing the ball, and does not have a base to cover. So the CF should be backing up someone. Therefore, the CF should be backing up the LF in the event that the SS and LF both misplay the ball. The RF would back up 1B in case of an errant throw from the SS.



These three (3) concepts we just discussed are just a few of the situations you will encounter on the field. But they are some of the most important and will get you going if you weren't sure where to begin.

4. **Take it one situation at a time.** With so many situations to cover, where do you focus? It depends. Mostly you will want to focus on the situations your team will most likely experience in a game.

For example, starting with “base defense” type of situations like “nobody on and nobody out” is always a good thing. Then, once your players grasp that situation, then you can consider moving to a “runner on first, no out” situation.

This type of situation brings the concept of force outs into play. If you have a younger team, force outs are something that you will want them to understand because they will see it in a game.

If you coach an older team, they are probably going to know what to do in many situations already. We still think you should review these concepts with them. You will simply spend less time on them than you would with a younger team. Again, the idea is to make sure you have everyone on the same page.

We like to use the board at the beginning of practice to visually teach what we want to work on that practice. Then we move to the field and practice what we taught. It makes our on-field coaching that much more effective because the players have seen what we are talking about so it make more sense to them and they are able to grasp the concept faster.

5. **Stay connected.** Hopefully you liked the ideas we’ve shared and want to learn more about using your board to teach baseball & softball situations. We’d also love to hear from you about how you are using the board to get results with your team.

There are several ways to stay connected.

- Visit us at www.playballsituations.com
- Like us on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter.

Lastly, be sure to check out our blog at Playballsportz.com where we discuss all things situational.

That’s all for now. Here are a couple of things to keep in mind when using your board.

WARNINGS:

1. Use only dry erase markers on your board. Eventually the markers that come with the board will run out and you will need to buy new ones.
2. Magnets are potential choking hazards for little children. The board is intended for use by players of all ages. Always supervise the use of the board & magnets around younger players and/or their younger siblings if they are playing with the board. The board is not a toy.