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Instructor's Name

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Date

Setting Up for the Pitch

When I was around the age of five, my dad taught me how to be a good batter by showing me how to set up for the perfect pitch, whether it was in softball or baseball. When I would set up for that perfect pitch, the one pitch that was right down the middle, I would need to be ready for it. There are at least three things that I would need to do before the pitcher would release the ball. I would need to keep my chin on my front shoulder until the pitch was thrown; keep both eyes on the ball; and turn my hips into the pitch, or “squash the bug,” as my dad would say.

When first stepping into the batter's box, I would need to keep my chin on my front shoulder until the pitch was thrown. When I kept my chin on my front shoulder, I would not pull my head out or turn my head away from the ball so that I could not see it. In Little League, I would pop the ball up into the air a lot and get called out. My dad, in turn, would always say, “Sis, that is happening because you are not keeping your chin on your front shoulder.” I learned, in time, to keep my chin on my front shoulder so that I could hit the ball much better. As a result of hitting the ball better, I won the Offensive Player of the Year award three years in a row.

After getting my chin in the right position for the pitch, I needed to keep both of my eyes on the ball. If I did not keep both of my eyes on the ball, I would end up striking out frequently. Sometimes after getting hit by a pitch, I would be scared of the ball. I would close my eyes when the pitcher would release the ball. As a result of closing my eyes, I would miss the ball. I

would have to remind myself that being hit by a pitch hurts for only a while and that I have to keep my eyes open to be able to hit the ball.

Another thing I would need to do is to turn my hips into the pitch. My dad would always tell me, “If you are squashing the bug, or twisting the ball of your back foot, then you are turning your hips into the pitch.” By doing this, I would get more power in my swing. If I did not do this, I would ground out or hit the ball on the ground just a short distance, and the other team would throw me out. My dad, who was watching from the stands, would say, “Are you squashing the bug, Sis? I didn’t see those hips turning. Just remember that you need to turn those hips and squash that bug.” After listening to my dad, I would not ground out as much.

Every time I would step into the batter’s box, I would need to remember those steps to keep hitting the ball the best that I could. Sometimes I would forget one of the steps, and I would be called out, but my dad was always there to encourage me. In high school, I was in a batting slump for a while, and every time I would hit the ball, I would get called out. But my dad had a way of keeping my spirits up; he would always say something like, “I don’t know about you, but I am having the time of my life watching my little girl playing ball and having fun. You are having fun, aren’t you? Just remember what I taught you. You will find a gap soon.” After I would remember what my dad had taught me, I would be hitting the ball into the gaps again. I would be ready for the big hit that people dream about. I can hear the announcer saying, “Well, folks, it is the bottom of the ninth with two outs, and they are down by one. It is their last hope. They need a hit right here. Oh, and that ball is hit hard to the dead centerfield wall! It’s GOING, GOING, GONE!”