

Updates

- 11/12/2020 initial post

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Bat Drag is the #1 Hitting Flaw

Bat Drag is the #1 hitting flaw in the world. I have been studying and commenting on kids' swings for over 20 years. Based on my observations, I would say that 99% of youth hitters have bat drag, and most have it at the very beginning of the swing.

Severe bat drag is a fatal flaw that will end most kid's baseball/fastpitch hitting careers before they get to high school. It results in serious power loss, reduced ability to hit off-speed pitches, weak opposite field ground balls, and loss of confidence.

Most instruction provided to fix 'bat drag' or swings generally, exacerbate bat drag problems because of a fundamental misunderstanding of what bat drag is. So let's begin.

What is Bat Drag?

Bat drag is created by using poor leverage with the arms, resulting in 'dragging' the bat around to contact.

In other words, it is a bat speed killer and it usually inhibits early bat speed. Most of the bat drag battle is lost from the very start of the swing - at toe touch.

Bat Drag usually begins at Toe Touch

1. Having the hands behind the back elbow at toe touch. [This is both a leverage problem and a tight turn problem] The rear forearm is not horizontal, thereby losing critical initial leverage on the bat.
[fig1]
2. Having the bat head not in an upright position [leverage]
[fig2.1][fig2.2][fig2.3]

3. The back/rear forearm is not close to flat/horizontal [leverage] [fig3.1][fig3.2]
4. The rear elbow starts out tucked at the side of the body [leverage] [fig4]

Bat drag will occur during the swing forward phase if these positions are not achieved.

This is the problem that most kids have with their swings today.

Bat drag can also begin after Toe Touch, when the swing forward phase starts

1. Bat drag can initiate if you do not use the built-in leverage of the rear arm and bat, and you drop the back elbow to hip slot with taking the bat head down in unison. [leverage] Any leakage/slack in this phase is bat drag and loss of early bat speed.

[fig5.1][fig5.2][fig5.3][fig5.4] Many times this is caused by one or more of the following: improper grip, loose back/top wrist/action, or opening the hips too early (this causes the swing to begin)

2. From toe touch to hip slot, if you don't bring the back elbow all the way down to the height of the belt, you have not used the leverage of the downward turning body/torso to get the bat around [leverage]

[fig6.1][fig6.2][fig6.3][fig6.4] Note that this will cause one of two things to happen: a) the hips will freeze, and the arms will push away from the body [fig6.5][fig6.6] or b) the hips rotate but the body lunges forward [fig6.7][fig6.8]

Bat Drag Continues to Contact

Bat drag once initiated continues unless overcome using other techniques or leverage.

What Bat Drag Is Not

Bat drag is not a strength issue. It's a leverage issue. Anyone at any age can improve their leverage and improve their swing.

What are Telltale Signs of Bat Drag?

1. Generally, from toe touch forward, the hands should never be behind the back elbow at any point in the swing forward phase to contact.
2. At hip slot, if the bat has not gone slightly past vertical so that the bat head is toward the catcher, you have introduced some bat drag [leverage]
3. You had to push the rear forearm and hands toward the plate and away from the body, too early (before hip slot) in order to get the bat head around (even with the hands) to contact [bad initial leverage causes a loose turn]
4. At contact, the bat head should be even or slightly ahead of the hands, and the bat should be lined up with the front forearm

5. You typically make contact 6-8 inches ahead of your front foot, thereby pulling most hard hit balls

Bat Drag Results In

The results of not using the optimal leverage with your arms (bat drag) are:

1. Reduced bat speed
2. The bat head generally will not be ahead of the hands at contact and/or the bat won't be lined up with the front forearm (it should be a straight line)

Note: The bat head may be ahead of the hands if ball contact is made 6-8 inches in front of optimal position (hitter has less/little ability to adjust to off-speed pitches)

3. The back elbow may push away from the torso (breaking CAM)
4. Foul balls on faster pitches
5. Strongest hits are mostly made to the pull side
6. Weak hits oppo, especially on pitches outside, and even down the middle of the plate