



The Game within the Game

Fundamental Concepts of Pitch Calling



In Game Goals: The Race to 21 Outs

Team Defense

- 14 Pitch Inning
- Lead-off out
- Next out (after a runner or a “take-it”)
- 5 Defensive “take-its”
- Defensive efficiency (75%)
- Deny big inning (<3)

Pitching Independent of Defense

- Strike % (70%)
- Total swings (46%)
- Swing & Miss % (23%)
- Hard hit % (<35%)



The Game within the Game

Know your Role

Know the Pitches

Establish a clear system of signs



Know Your Role

The coach's job is to create certainty



Pitch Caller's Job

- Put the pitcher in the best position to do her job well
- Develop a clear & efficient system of signs
- Know your pitcher's routines & habits
- Know your pitcher's strengths
 - Pitcher's self-evaluation
 - Angled pitches *versus* breaking pitches
 - Go-to pitches *versus* secondary pitches
 - Pitch speed *versus* spin speed

The Pitcher's Role

- Must know her pitches
 - Angled pitches
 - Breaking pitches
 - 4-point rating scale (*Speed – Spot – Spin – Shape*)
- Must take ownership of the pitch calling
 - Must have a “feel for her pitches”
 - Must have a “feel for the game”
 - Must know her “specialty”
- Must take the pressure off her teammates
- Must protect the lead

Know the Pitches

There is no set numerical value you can put on a pitcher. They're all different
(Tom Seaver)



The 3 measures of a Pitcher

1. Does she throw hard
2. Does she throw strikes
3. Is she deceptive

4-Point rating system (4 S's)

- **Speed:** Pitch speed or change in speeds
- **Spot:** Command
- **Spin:** Spin Rate
- **Shape:** Amount and timing of the break of the pitch

Rank the Pitches



Go-to

- Tip: Must have a go-to on each side of the plate
- 3-points or higher on ranking system

Out-pitch

- Tip: Everyone knows it's coming but you still get a high % of outs
- 3-points or higher on ranking system

Secondary pitches

- Purpose: to compliment your go-to and out-pitch
- 2-points on the ranking system

The System of Signs

Establish a consistent pre-pitch routine



- The pitcher / catcher pitch calling signs
- The pitch caller's dugout routine & rhythm
- The catcher's dugout signs



Pitch Calling Principles

Pitcher's priorities

Pitching for a count

Expanding the strike zone

Disrupting the batter's rhythm & timing



The Pitcher's Priorities



- #1 Priority: Get the strikeout
- #2 Priority: Control the batter
- #3 Priority: Get quick outs
The 14-pitch inning

Pitching for a Count



- The pitcher is in a one-on-one competition with the hitter for the count
 - Neutral counts
 - Pitcher's counts
 - Hitter's counts
- The three strike zones
- Angled pitches *versus* breaking pitches
- Pitch speed *versus* spin speed

Expanding the Strike Zone

Pitcher's need to tempt the hitter to swing



- “Set-up” pitches *versus* “waste pitches” (*tunneling*)
- Precision pitching (*pound the zone*)
- Attacking the batter who learns from AB to AB
- See when the batter “shortens-up”
 - Lead-off approach
 - RBI situations
 - Two-strike approach

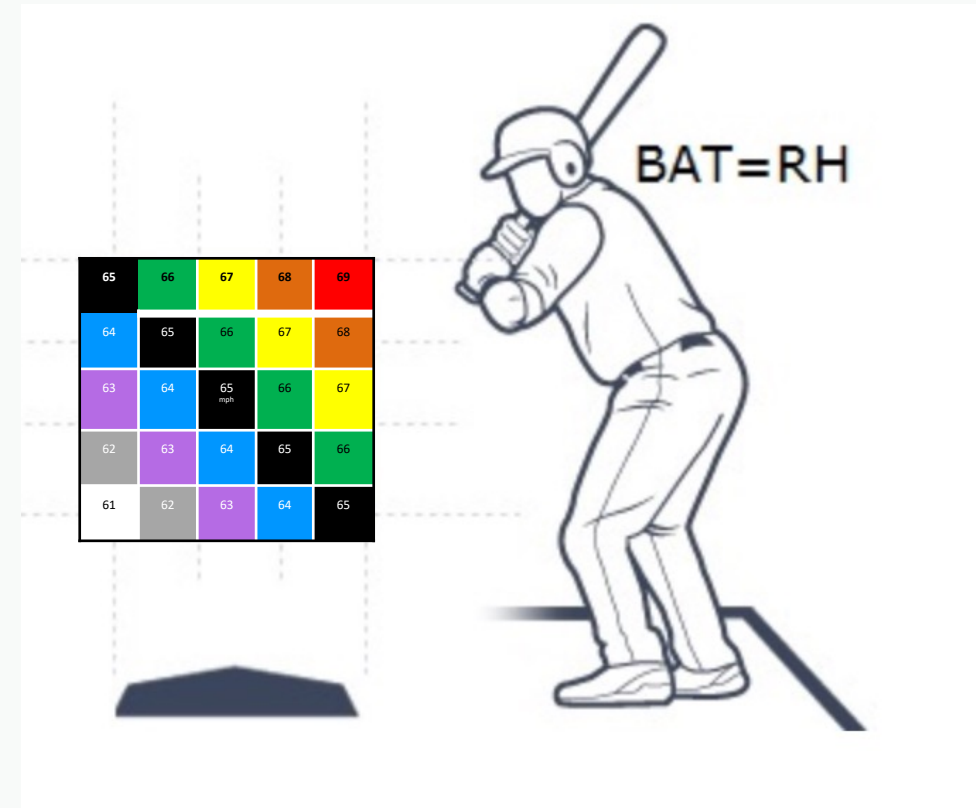
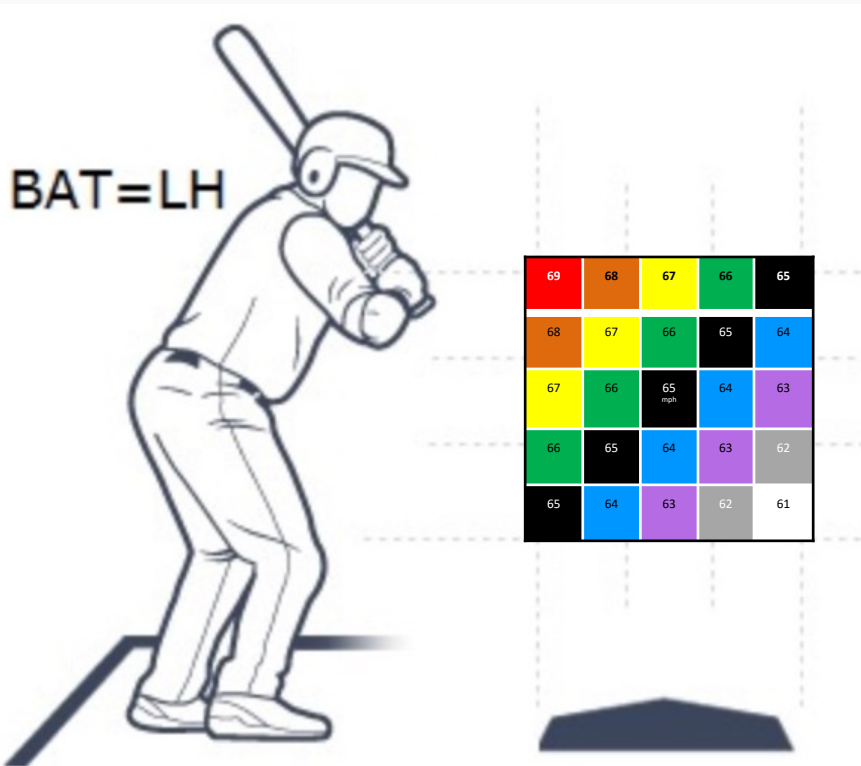
Disrupting the Batter's Timing

Effective Velocity: batter's reaction time based on pitch selection



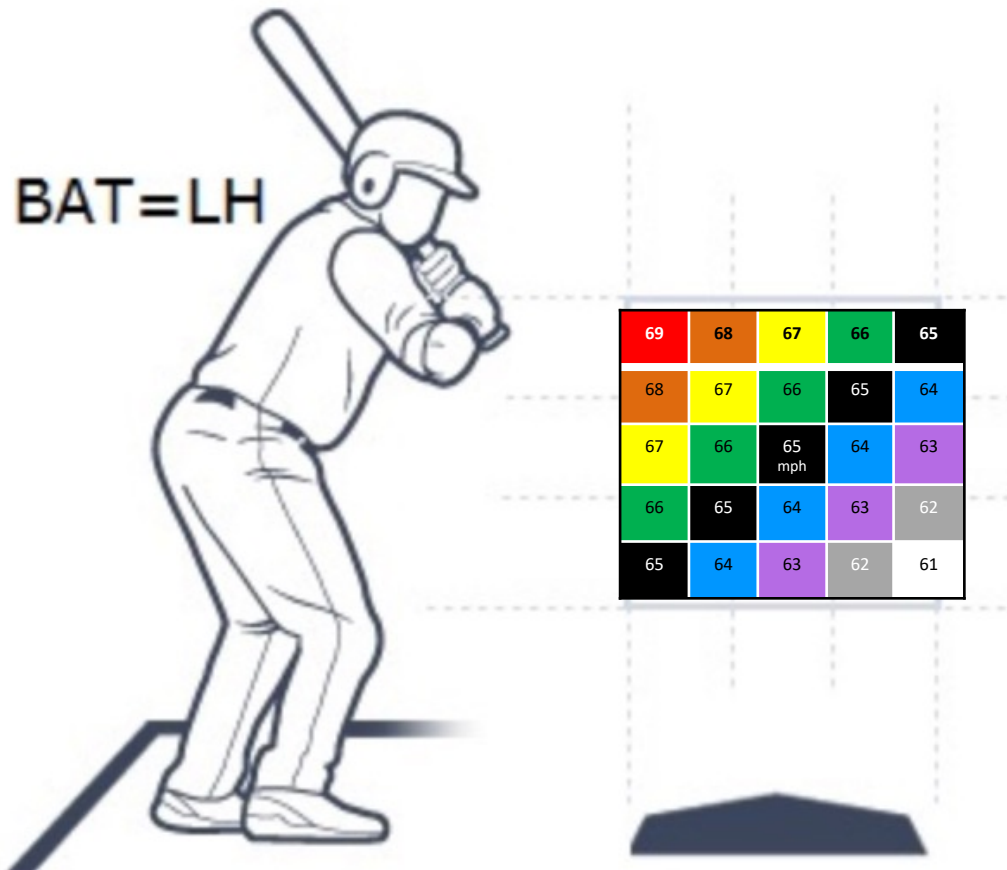
The boxes represent how location changes the reaction time of the batter

When a pitch is inside or outside, the speed “effectively” changes because the batter must hit the ball earlier or later as if the pitch gained or lost speed



Effective Velocity

LHH View

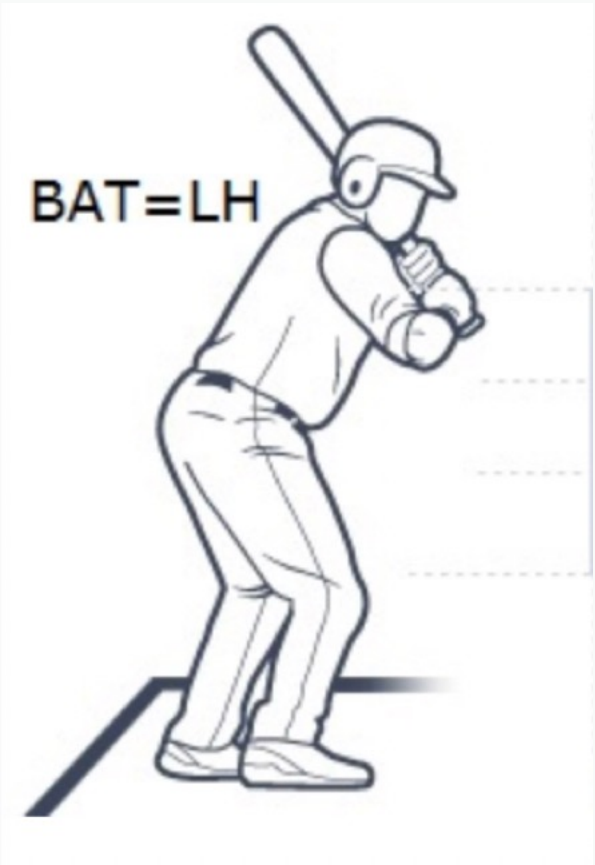


Example: Ahead in the count

- Assume RHP & the batter is sitting on the screwball that is mid-high height
- The pitcher's pitch speed is 65mph but because the batter is hunting the screwball, she must get on time for a 65-62 mph pitch zone to hit the ball with a lot of power
- If she hunts this pitch and it comes, she will be on-time. She will also be on time for all pitches in black, purple & grey.
- If she hunts the screwball but swings at an inside pitch, she will be late on the pitch because the location requires a faster reaction time.

Effective Velocity

LHH View



69	68	67	66	65
68	67	66	65	64
67	66	65 mph	64	63
66	65	64	63	62
65	64	63	62	61

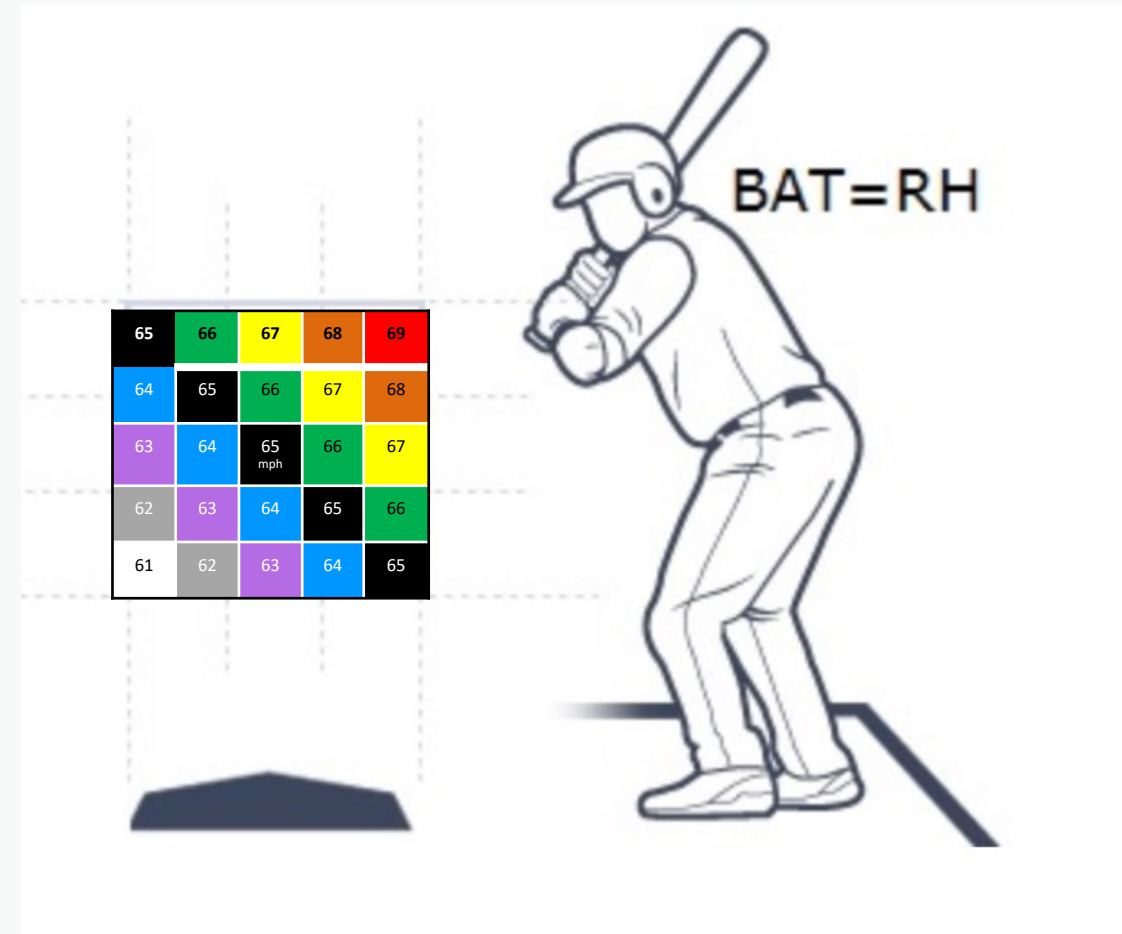
Effective Velocity

RHH View



Example: Ahead in the count

- Assume RHP & the batter is sitting on the screwball that is mid-thigh height.
- The pitcher's pitch speed is 65mph but because the batter is hunting the lower screwball, she must get on time for a 65-67 mph pitch zone to hit the ball with a lot of power
- If she hunts this pitch and it comes, she will be on-time. She will also be on time for all pitches in black, green and yellow.
- If she hunts the lower screwball but swings at an outside pitch, she will be early on the pitch because the location requires a slower reaction time.

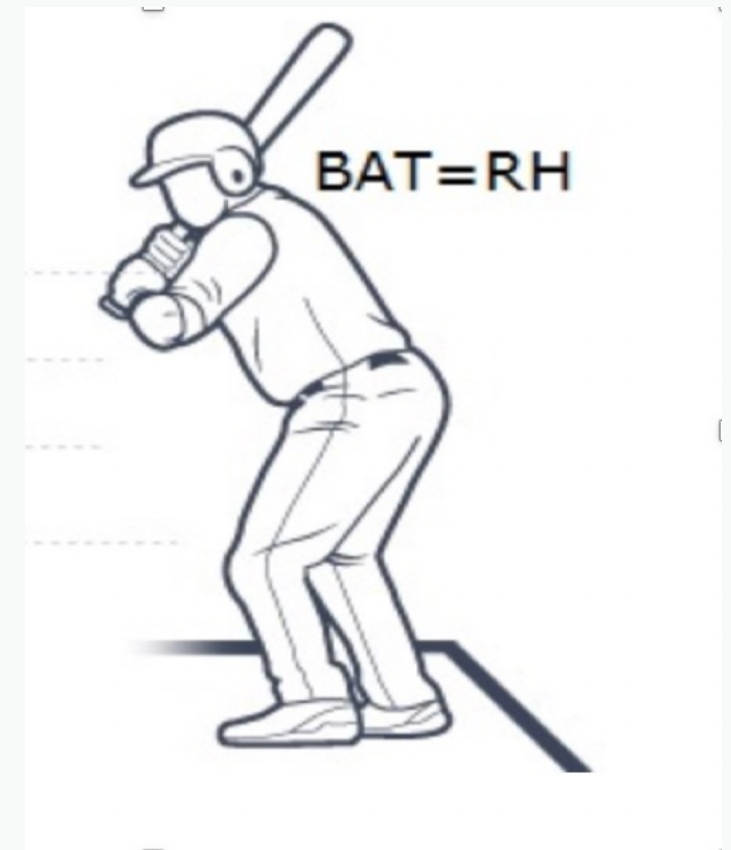


Effective Velocity

RHH View



65	66	67	68	69
64	65	66	67	68
63	64	65 mph	66	67
62	63	64	65	66
61	62	63	64	65





Pre-game scouting tools

Reading the batter
Batter's spray chart & statistics





Reading the Batter

The Batter's swing profile



The Batter's Profile

**What is she
showing
me?**

**The
batter's
set-up**

**The
batter's
timing**

**The
batter's
tendencies**

The “Set-up”



- The batter's position in the box (*does she move?*)
- The batter's stance (*upright vs lateral*)
- The batter's stride direction (*closed vs open*)
- The batter's barrel path (*angles to contact*)
- The batter's contact point
- The batter's posture at and through contact

Posture: Up-Right

- **Path of hands** will have a steeper angle to contact on lower pitches
- Greater success on pitches that spin 12:00 / 6:00





Posture: Lateral

- **Path of hands** will have a flatter angle to contact on lower pitches
- Greater success on outside pitches and pitches with an axis of rotation from 3:00 / 9:00

The “Set-up”: The Batter’s Timing



- **When does the batter “start”?**
- **What “speed” does the batter moves to the ball?**
- **When is the timing of barrel release?**

The Batter's Tendencies



- **Is she a count hitter?**
- **Does she have a two-strike approach?**
- **What pitch is she hunting?**
 - Does the hitter “sit” location?
 - Does she “sit” speed?
- **Does she have a situational hitting tendency?**



Video: Example

Scouting chart

[illegible]

One Plate Appearance

PITCHER TYPE

Vs / @

Gm

1

2

3

#:

RHP / LHP

Relief:

#:

RHP / LHP

STANCE

Out

1

2

3

RBI

Score

(

-

)

RESULT OF THE AT BAT

IN-GAME SITUATION

✓ Score

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

PITCH TYPE

LOCATION

PITCH TYPE

PITCH RESULT

SWING TYPE

Inn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Runners: 0 1 2 3

Outs: 0 1 2

BALLS

STRIKES

IN-GAME SITUATION

✓ Early vs Late in the game

✓ Runners on base

✓ How many outs

At Bat #1

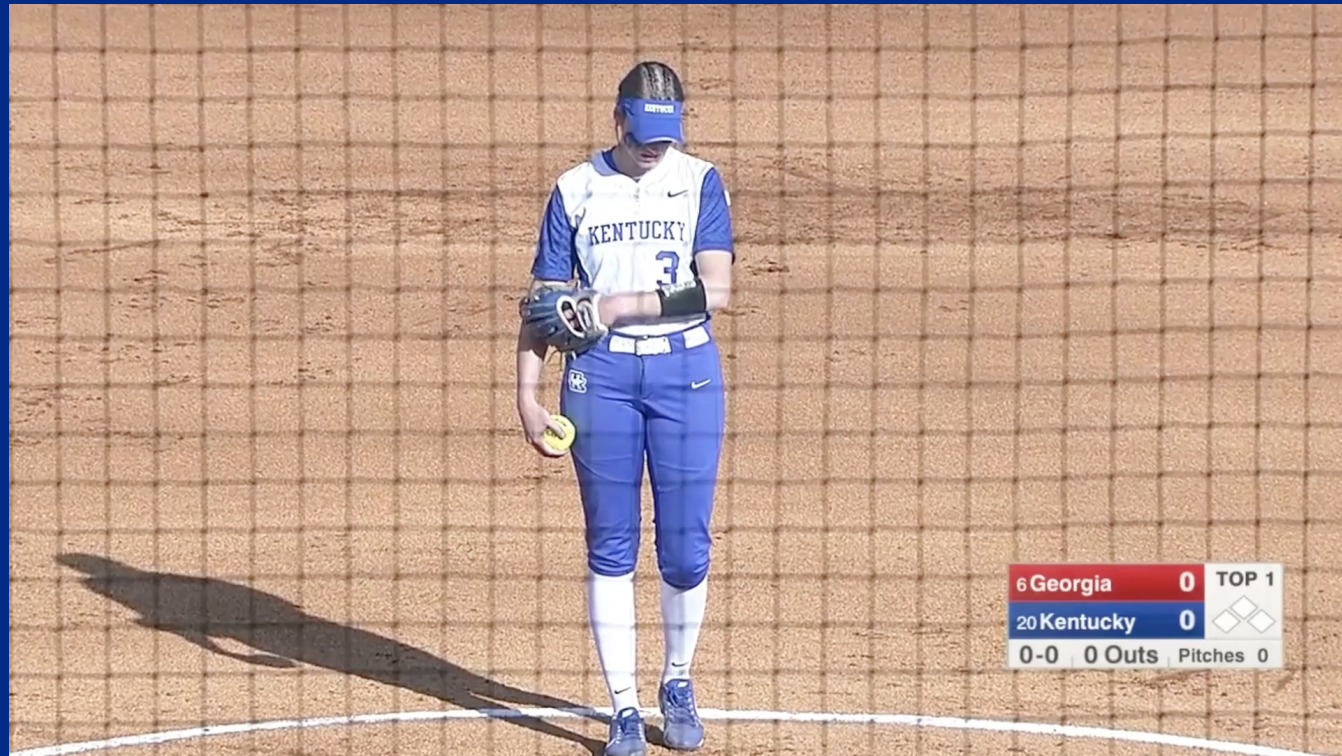
Vs / @ _____ Gm 1 2 3 #: _____ RHP / LHP
 Relief: # _____

RHP / LHP
 RHP / LHP

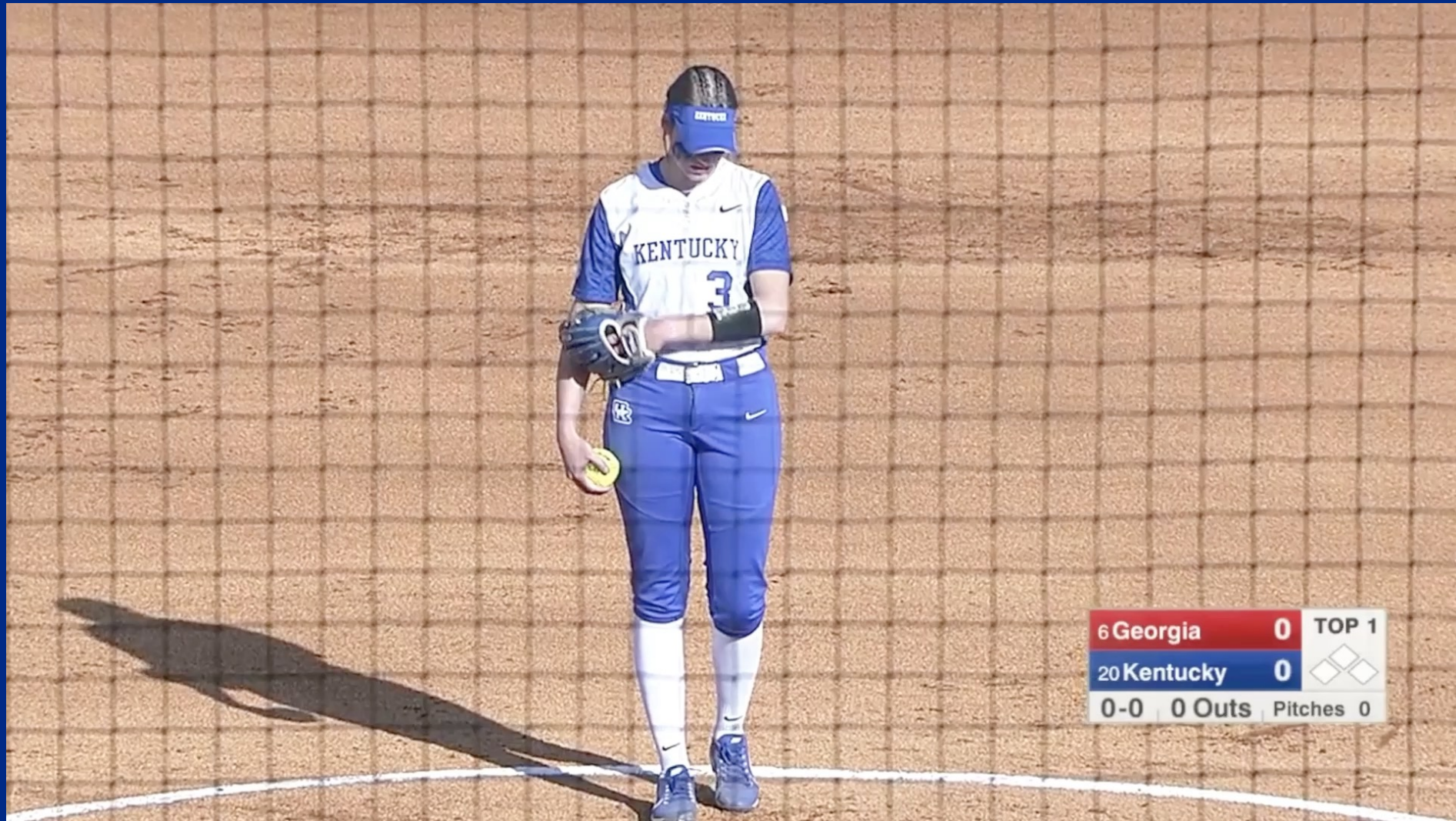
Fast Thru
 Hi
 Stop @
 Contact /
 Deep

BD
 NP
 BD
 T
 F
 F
 F
 Extend
 Extend

In: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Runners: 0 1 2 3 Outs: 0 1 2

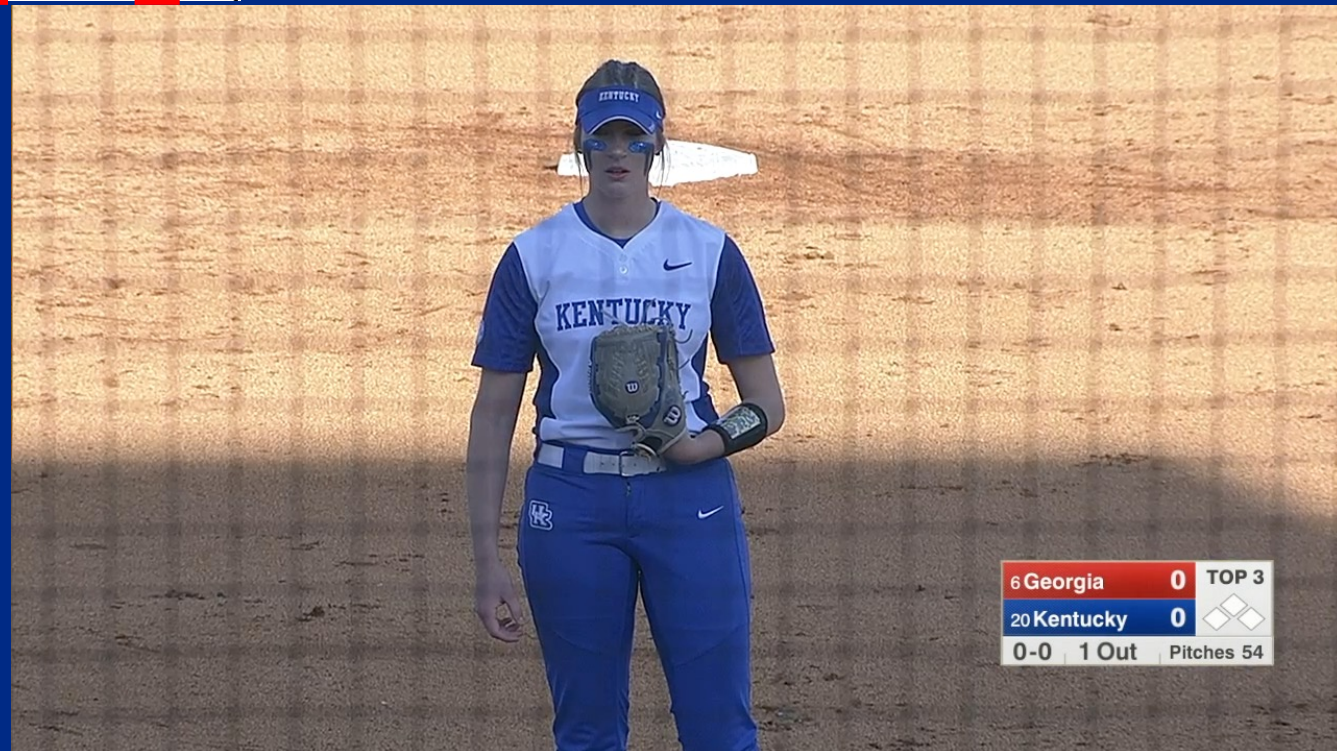


At Bat #1

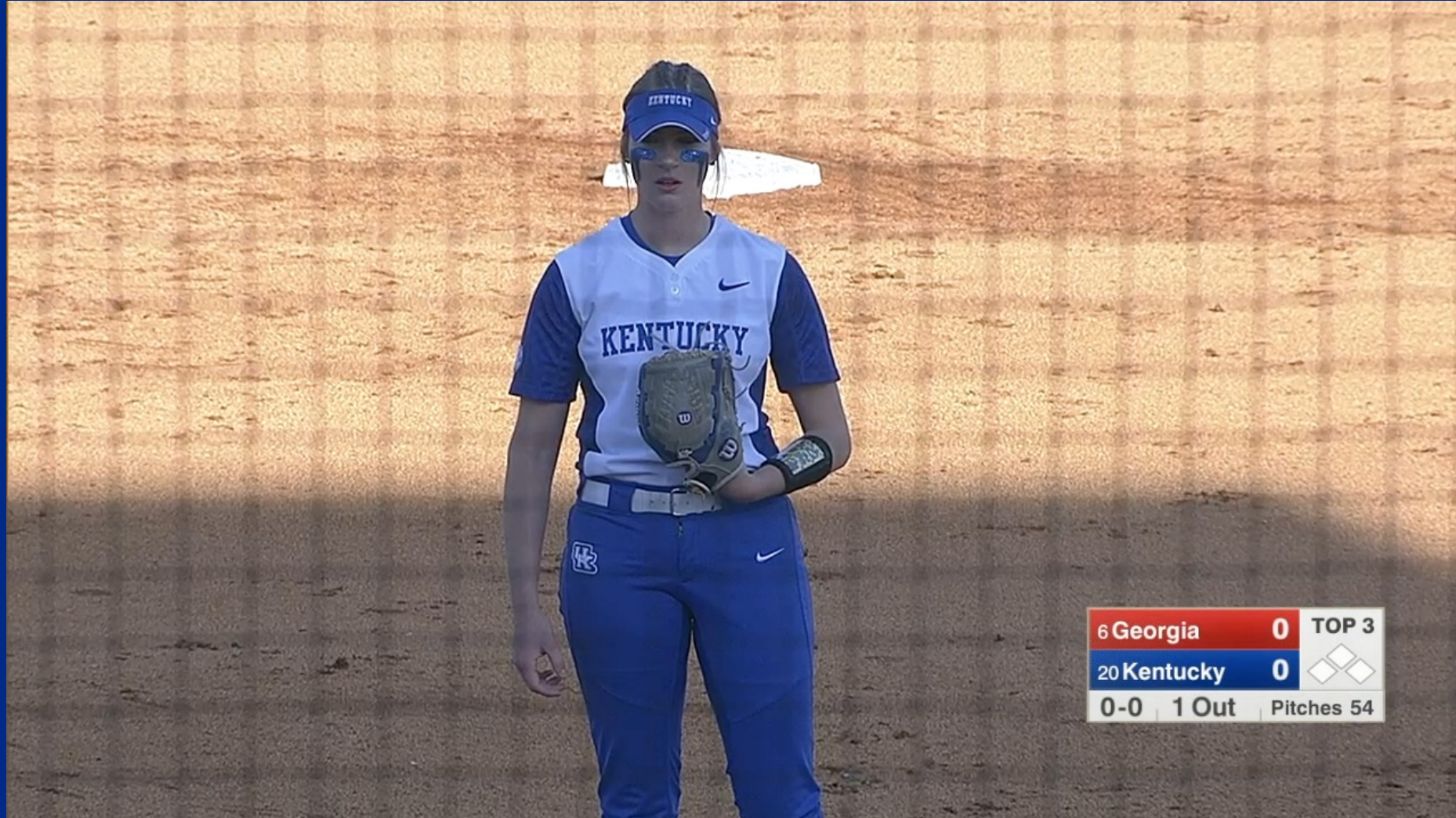


At Bat #2

Vs / @ _____ Gm 1 2 3 #: _____ Relief: # _____	RHP / LHP <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">RHP</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table border="1" style="width: 100px; height: 100px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">HHH</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; font-size: 2em; margin: 0 5px;">Tall</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">RHH</div> </div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 10px;"> </div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 10px;"> Score (0 - 0) </div>																																																															
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At Bat #2



At Bat #3

Vs / @ _____
Gm 1 2 3 #: _____
Relief: #: _____

RHP / LHP

RHP

HHH

Tall

RRH

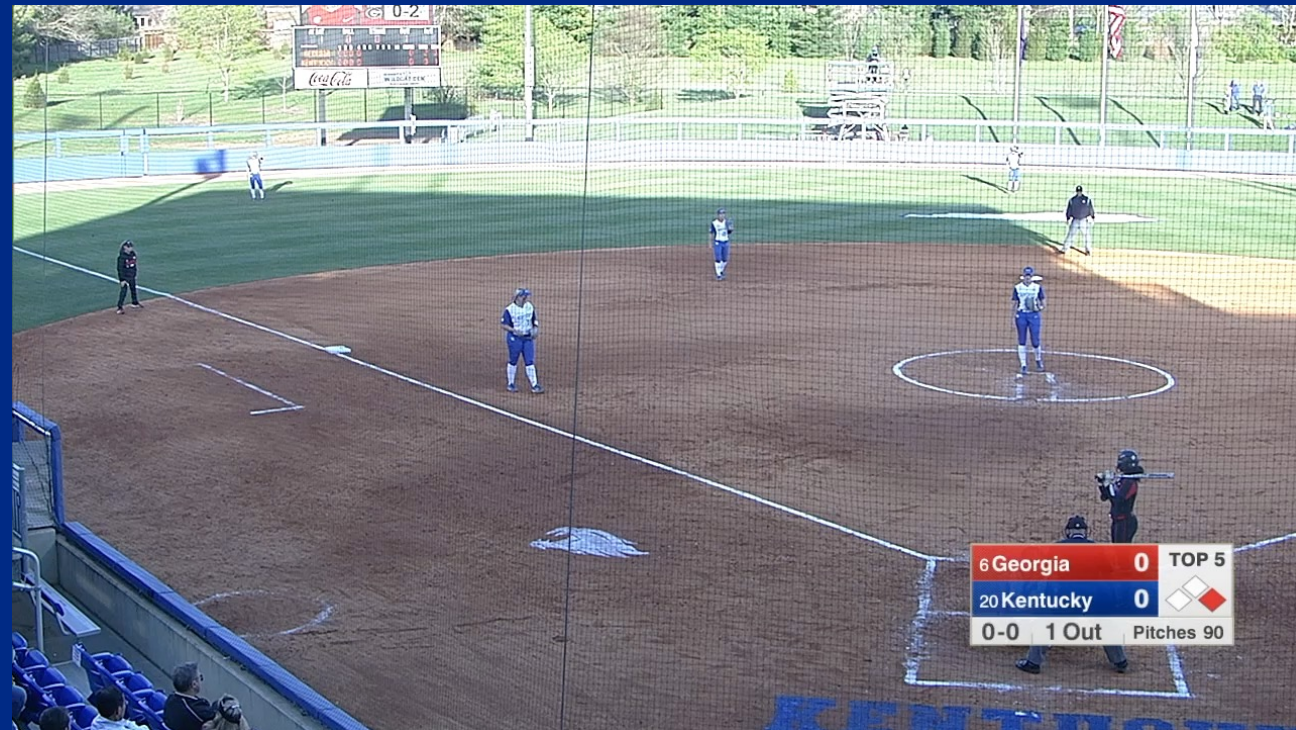
Running Play

5-3 Do Bounce

Score (0 - 0)

Out 1
2
3
RBI

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
BD								
T								
Inn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Runners: (1 2 3	Outs: (1 2						



Vs / @ _____ Gm 1 2 3 #: _____ RHP / LHP
 Relief: # _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
BD	NP	Went down & got it	Fast Thru	Stop @	Contact / Deep			
BD		Fo	Ri	Fo				
T		F	F	F				

Inn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Runners: 0 1 2 3 Outs: 0 1 2

L6 Hi
 Stop @
 Fast Thru

Out 1 2 3
 RBI

Score (-)

Vs / @ _____ Gm 1 2 3 #: _____ RHP / LHP
 Relief: # _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
BD	O							
T		BD	Thru					

Inn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Runners: 0 1 2 3 Outs: 0 1 2

Tail
 Do

Out 1 2 3
 RBI

Score (0-0)

Vs / @ _____ Gm 1 2 3 #: _____ RHP / LHP
 Relief: # _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
BD								
T								

Inn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Runners: 0 1 2 3 Outs: 0 1 2

Running Play
 5-3 Do Bounce

Out 1 2 3
 RBI

Score (0-0)

Approach

- Takes the first pitch
- Might take the second pitch if the first pitch is a strike?
- Does not like to go deep in the count
- Might be a good situational hitter???

Swing

- Better with 12/6 spin & screw spin than lateral spin
- Stays inside the inside pitch

Timing

- Fast timing thru the box
- Early barrel release on the outside

Batter Profile (game 1)

Isolated Example

Isolated Example

Vs / @ _____ RHP / LHP _____

Gm 1 2 3 #: _____ RHP / LHP _____

Relief: # _____

Score (2 - 0)

Out 1 2 3
RBI

Inside out
3b
DC
Tall
Open
Open
Deep

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	▲		DC						
L			L		Open				
		SC		SC	DC				
		O		O	F				
					Deep				


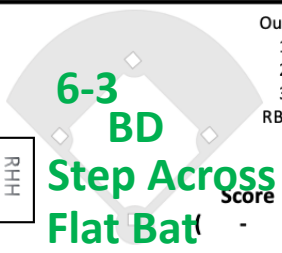
Inn: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Runners: 1 3 Outs: 0 1 2



Isolated Example

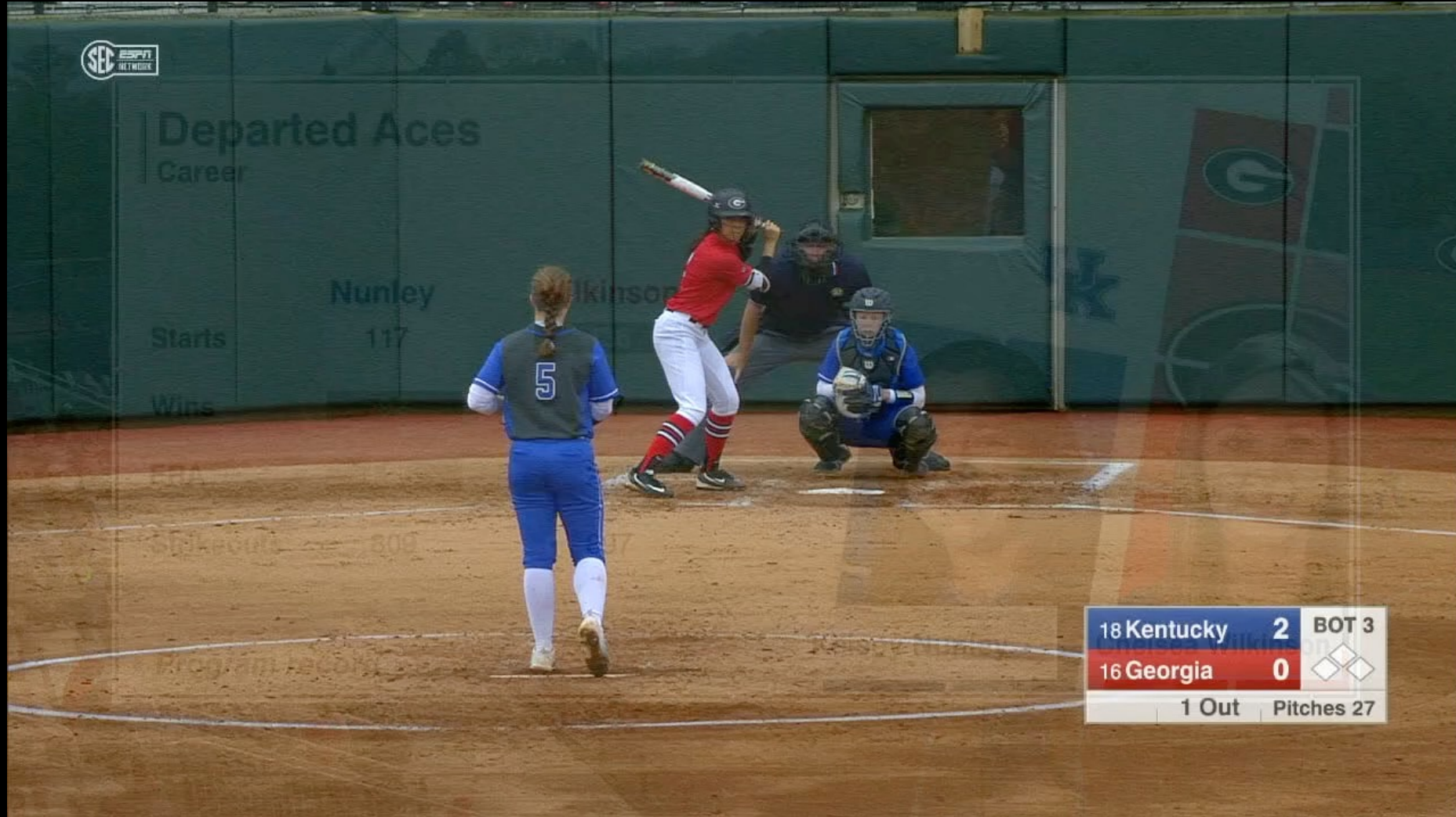


Isolated Example

Vs / @	Relief: #:	Gm	1	2	3	#:	RHP / LHP	RHP	LHP			Out 1 2 3 RBI Score (-)																																																																																	
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Isolated Example





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