

Winning In Senior Softball  
*The big strategy considerations that matter*

1. **21 outs.** Senior softball strategy can be summarized in one sentence: *Make outs on defense and don't make outs on offense.* The team that **gives** away the fewest outs will usually win.
2. **Fun Teams Win.** Loose, well-led teams having fun together will win more than they should. Tense teams that have inter-team conflict/pressure or chaotic leadership will lose more than they should. Team unity and team chemistry are magic. Fun is the cause, not the effect.
3. **Pitcher Pros.** Really good pitchers (control, knowledge, fielding) make a really big difference. They can take away hits up the middle, back up or cutoff OF throws, and cover the plate on errant throws to the catcher. Knowing and exploiting hitter preferences is a big plus.
4. **Pitcher Cons.** Walks can be a double whammy: you give them a runner instead of a potential out. Slow paced games with lots of balls and walks exhaust and bore the fielders putting them on their heels. Disrupting DP balls up the middle can cost you outs.
5. **Catchers Count.** While usually not the most mobile guy, a loud, savvy catcher can make an important difference in keeping the team unified in the field and situationally aware.
6. **Infield Pros.** Infielders need good hands, balance and reliable arms. An agile fielder at 1B that can catch marginal throws is golden by giving other infielders throwing confidence.
7. **Infield Cons.** The extra infielder around 2B can lead to confusion, so outfield cutoff throws and infield base covering assignments need to be crystal clear. The non-cutoff guys need to get out of the way.
8. **Outfield Pros.** Outfielders need good range, good sight/judgment and quick strong throws to the cutoff man. Good outfielders steal occasional outs and don't give away extra bases. Charging base hits prevents extra bases since every OFer step in equals a runner's step to base. Force plays at 2B are the surest, easiest outs. Keep men on 1B whenever you can to keep force outs in play.
9. **Outfield Cons.** Most outfielders should not be trying to throw out runners at third or home. Throws should usually go to the cutoff to retain force plays at 2B. Most outfielders play too deep. If a ball goes over your head, the hitter earned it, if it drops in front of you, it is a lost out. Weak side OFers can play shallower since most batters have less power to the opposite field.
10. **Baserunning.** Smart, aggressive base running usually pays off. A runner on 1B should be running for 3B on a hit, and a runner on 2B should be scoring on a hit, unless the 3B coach stops it. Freeze on any line-drive until you know it is by the infielders. DPs are deadly and much worse than the extra base you might get with a good jump. Don't let up running until the play is obviously over. Don't be too aggressive going to 3B or home with less than 2 out. Baserunning boners depress your team and excite the other team.
11. **Defensive Headgame.** Know the situation and anticipate where to make the play before each pitch. Constantly help others do the same so our minds don't wander like old men.
12. **Offensive Headgame.** Most Batters should be thinking and hitting situationally. Hitting to the right side with a runner on 1B or runners on 1B and 2B is usually smart. Hitting grounders up the middle with a man on first is risking a DP. Hitting to third with a runner on 3B or with runners on 1B & 2B is also risky.
13. **Coaching is Crucial:** A smart 3B coach can save you an out or two each game. A smart 1B coach can make you an extra base or two each game. Dumb base coaching does the opposite.