

Name _____

Baseball Strategy: The Game Within the Game

Short Answer Key

1. The count affects the strategies of both the pitcher and the batter. For the pitcher, being ahead in the count allows them to be more selective with pitches, potentially trying to get the batter to chase a bad pitch. For the batter, being behind in the count may force them to be more defensive and protect the plate, while being ahead may allow them to look for a pitch to drive.
2. "Small ball" in baseball strategy is a style of play that prioritizes advancing runners and manufacturing runs rather than relying on power hitting. An example is when a team has a runner on second base with no outs. They might use a sacrifice bunt to move the runner to third, putting them in a better position to score on a subsequent play, such as a sacrifice fly.
3. Defensive positioning and shifts are crucial because they aim to maximize the chances of making an out based on the batter's tendencies. By positioning fielders strategically, a team can anticipate where a batter is likely to hit the ball and increase the likelihood of recording an out. This relates to strategy as it involves making informed decisions to gain a competitive advantage.
4. A manager might decide to make a pitching change for various reasons, including when the current pitcher is struggling, has a high pitch count, or when facing a lineup of batters with opposite handedness. Other factors like the score of the game, the inning, and the availability of relief pitchers also influence this decision.
5. The mental aspect of baseball strategy is critical as players must stay focused, anticipate plays, and outthink opponents. They need to make split-second decisions, read the game situation, and adjust their strategies accordingly. Mental toughness, concentration, and the ability to stay calm under pressure are essential for success.

