



Fundamental Tidbits

- ★ Perfecting pitching mechanics is the best way to increase ball speed and control.
- ★ Keeping the ball in the pitching plane during the entire arm circle is the key to good left/right ball control.
- ★ A consistent grip and a consistent ball release are the keys to good up/down ball control.
- ★ The arm whip may be the most mysterious part of the windmill pitching motion. It requires the arm to be flexible at the elbow and wrist, which in turn requires that the arm muscles be relaxed. Like snapping a towel or whip, the forearm and hand snap to produce high velocity at the fingers as the ball is released at the hip with the desired ball rotation.
- ★ Consistent body orientation is a key first step to learning consistent release of the ball.
- ★ Pitchers sense the proper release point by sensing the forces on the pitching arm and sensing the position of the pitching hand relative to the hip.
- ★ Balance and stability on the stride foot provide the foundation on which good ball control is based.
- ★ The errors caused by even small instabilities in footwork are magnified enormously.
- ★ Pitching against a firm left side or blocking the left side of the body is an important speed mechanism. To exploit this mechanism it is important that the body be stopped abruptly when the stride foot plants.
- ★ When working on ball speed, do not be concerned about control. It is time to “let it all hang out.” A pitcher is not really experimenting and pushing the speed envelope if all the pitches are well controlled.
- ★ The importance of ball spin cannot be emphasized enough. Proper ball spin is the essence of nearly all advanced pitches and ball spin is a good diagnostic tool for detecting an improper release of the ball.
- ★ Movement = direction of spin and speed of spin. The faster the spin, the faster the ball movement and the more the movement.
- ★ Some advanced pitches can lead to poor pitching mechanics. Be aware of the deviation from good mechanics and try to keep it from “contaminating” your other pitches.
- ★ Learning how to throw an advanced pitch is step one; learning when to throw it in a game is step two.
- ★ The pitcher must learn in practice what it feels like to throw her highest percentage pitch, not in a game when the bases are loaded and the count is full on the batter! It is this knowledge which provides the underlying self-confidence that enables the pitcher to weather rough times on the mound and to stick with the pitching mechanics and rhythm that will produce the best results.
- ★ On game day, examine the mound area. Make sure the footing is sound. Get help if it isn't. Clear away any rocks that might cause a bad bounce on a ground ball. No excuses that the mound messed you up!
- ★ A player cannot dwell on a failed pitch or a bad call by the umpire, but must instead always be looking forward with confidence to the next pitch.
- ★ The necessary self-confidence to master the mental game comes from practice and knowledge that you CAN perform the pitching mechanics, that you CAN throw strikes and that you CAN get batters out.
- ★ As you pitch to a batter, put yourself in her shoes. What would you expect to be thrown next? Do the opposite. Vary your holds, presentations, wind-ups and arm circle speeds.
- ★ Learning how to peak physically for a game is an important part of becoming an experienced pitcher. All pitchers are different and each must learn what works best.
- ★ Everyone needs reminding now and then that fast-pitch softball is a game and that the primary reason we play the game is to have fun!