

Pitching Philosophy & Goals

Our Philosophy

1. **Hard Work** – there is no substitute! Outwork, outlearn, and prepare yourself to be the best!
2. **Perfect Practice** – Practice does not make perfect – perfect practice makes perfect! If you are going to do something – do it right! Learn the right way.
3. **Mental Preparation** – if we have prepared ourselves physically we will have confidence in our abilities. Concentration, focused, positive attitude, goals, aggressiveness.

Pitching Goals

1. Strike One – Statistics say a hitter with an (0-1) count vs. (1-0) count has a .100 point lower average.
2. Pitch to advantage counts. (0-1, 0-2, 1-2) Make the hitter hit your pitch.
3. Eliminate the free pass (walks, HBP) There is no defense for a walk! Walks score!
4. Let your defense work for you. 65% of all balls hit in fair territory are outs. We want the ball hit in fair territory before a 3-ball count! (3-0, 3-1, 3-2)
5. Reverse Pitching – be able to throw an off-speed pitch in disadvantage counts. (1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 2-1, 3-1, 3-2)
6. One Pitch at a Time! – the only pitch you can control is the next one. You can't do anything about the past. You can control the future. A negative pitch you throw can affect future pitches if you do not pitch one pitch at a time!

How do we accomplish our Goals?

1. Delivery Drills – 40 ft. drills (power, balance, stretch, wind-up)
2. Pitching Patterns – see sheet.
3. Mentally Prepare – Be a baseball rat! Live, eat, breathe baseball! Positive visualization. Constantly learn!

AVCE PROCESS

ANALYZE – Look at the situation.

VISUALIZATION – Picture what you want to do and visualize a positive result

CENTRALIZE – Take a deep breath and focus

EXECUTE – Do what you've practiced a thousand times!

The Mechanics Of Pitching

Coaching Tip: *When starting your practices assume your player's know nothing! If a player makes a mistake and we have not taught them the proper way, then it's our fault.*

The Grip – Hold it like an egg. Do not choke the baseball. Two fingers on top of the ball, thumb directly in the center of the bottom of the baseball. If a younger player has smaller hands we will allow them to use three fingers on top.

1. 4- seam fastball – fingers across the “horseshoe” so that 4-seams rotate. 4-seamers will usually stay straighter and faster.
2. 2- seam fastball – fingers with seams so 2-seams rotate. 2-seamers will move more (sink) causing velocity to be slightly slower.
3. CH- change-up is a feel pitch. Several grips can be used from as simple as a 3-fingered fastball type grip to the more difficult circle grip.

The Mechanics- If we can't control our body, we can't control the strike zone. Your pitchers should be able to go through all the steps in a super-slow motion as to be in control of our body. In order to be consistent with our control and velocity we must be able to repeat delivery over and over again.

1. The Stance
 - a. Stand tall on top of the mound
 - b. Glove up
 - c. Starting with the most difficult pitch to grip in the glove (usually change-up) as to not tip our pitches
 - d. On the balls of our feet
2. Rocker Step
 - a. Small 45 degree angle step
3. Pivot Step
 - a. Drop step foot in front of the rubber.
4. Knee-to-Knee
 - a. Rub knees to get to balance to keep from swinging and falling off-balance
5. Balance Position
 - a. Hands center of chest (in line w/belly button) elbows in the letter “A” shape.
 - b. Leg parallel to ground and slightly back for more hip rotation
6. Hand Break
 - a. Pretend as if a string is connected from your legs to your hands.
 - b. As our leg lowers our hands break (thumbs to thighs)
 - c. Ball is out of our glove thumbs down and into the power position
7. Power Position
 - a. Lead arm is pointed directly at our target
 - b. Throwing elbow is up above our shoulder, fingers are on top as to wave towards 2nd base

- c. Elbows are at equal angles and inside our shoulders to form a straight line to our target
 - d. Lead foot lands closed and in a straight line from our heel
 - e. Head stays in the center of the balls of our feet
8. Delivering the baseball
- a. Our lower half begins to rotate first and delivers our upper half
 - b. Our lead arm palm rotates up as our throwing hand does the same
 - c. Our body has rotated square to the target, head straight
9. Finish
- a. Our body explodes towards our glove
 - b. Hand whips through the zone
 - c. Chest parallel to ground, back leg up and over
 - d. Nose in the catcher's glove over front side

Pitching Drills

Coaching Tip: *Video-tape all your pitchers. Slow motion can show you things you might have trouble seeing with the naked eye. Also allows pitcher to learn by seeing themselves and what their body actually does. Just telling a player what to do doesn't work. Teach them to be their own pitching coach!*

1. Knee Drill
 - a. RH on right knee/LH on left knee
 - b. Assume power position (above)
 - c. Eyes and head level and focused on target
 - d. Throw and finish to the knee
2. Power Position (see above)
 - a. 4 F's (feet lined up, front arm lined up, fingers on top w/ elbow up, finish)
 - b. Rotate and finish
3. Ball Toss Drill
 - a. Start in power position w/o ball in hand
 - b. Partner tosses ball directly into throwing hand
 - c. Catch ball and quickly, but under control, throw to a target (if thrower takes too long will go back to old habits [drop elbow, pie throw])
 - d. Variations
 - i. Start arm down – catch ball and bring to proper position and throw
 - ii. Toss ball from side – thrower must turn hand back towards 2nd base
4. Balance-to-Power
 - a. Start in balance position
 - b. Break hands and land in power
 - c. Throw if in proper position
 - d. Variations
 - i. Flip ball to partner behind you in direction of 2nd base. Will show if in straight line as well as having fingers on the top of the baseball.
5. Balance Drill
 - a. Start in balance position
 - b. Hold for a few seconds
 - c. Give command to throw
 - d. Make sure player starts to break and not drift
 - e. Variations
 - i. Pick up drill – put ball by back foot. Start in balance position w/o ball. Pick up baseball and get back to balance position. Repeat.
6. Direction
 - a. Balance beam drill – throw off a board (improves balance and direction)

- b. Use an object – put a visible object in the way of the problem (ex: stepping in the bucket)
 - c. Lead arm drills – work on bringing body towards the glove to avoid pulling the front arm. Will allow pitcher to release ball further out in front, closer to the hitter.
 - d. Mirror Drills – the body follows the head. If the head is not straight body will not have good direction to the target. Put the nose in the catcher's glove.
 - e. Hopping Drill – take 2 hops after delivering the baseball. Assures the pitcher has good balance in the finish and direction towards the target.
7. Finish
- a. Chair Drill – back leg on the chair, throw and freeze w/ upper body (coach can then lift pitcher's back leg off the chair and hold it there so player can feel what a finish is)
 - b. Bucket Drill - bring back leg over the bucket
 - c. Remember – direction and finish go hand in hand so you can combine variations of both drills
8. Arm Action/Hand Speed
- a. Towel Drill – can work on mechanics w/o having to throw a baseball, place kitchen size towel in between middle and ring/pointer finger. Partner holds a glove out and pitcher reaches to whip towel to the glove. Can combine any drill w/ the towel. Great Drill to concentrate on mechanics. Can also use a wooden dowel in place of a towel.
 - b. Long Toss – the further you can throw the harder you will throw. Take a crow-hop and from a comfortable distance, using proper mechanics, hit your partner in the chest.