

Hi everyone.

Thank you for participating in yesterdays clinic, i am sure you took away alot of good ideas from all the coaches. I enjoyed working with all of you to help you better understand and help the pitchers on your team. Because in the big picture that is the ultimate goal...make it a fun and great learning experience for the players and everyone else...i wish i could of had 3 more hours with all of you(i know all of you were getting pretty thirsty), lots of drills and mechanics to go over, but hopefull you can see some things in your pitchers that you can help them with. Please feel free to email me or call...i would love to help in anyway i can. The handouts that i gave you yesterday are guidelines to help you coach your players. NOT all pitchers are the same, body or minds. So please use the handouts as a spring board as you learn more about your own pitchers.

thanks again for coming....

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Stationary feet- feet shoulder width apart, not like the feet on the mound. You will use full upper body and open at the ankles/knees to use your hips. This drill will help to work upper body with adding the element of the hips. Relax the knees for a smooth ending

-**single arm circles-** one time around

-**double arm circles-** twice around- you can do the first arm circle slow then speed up the second. Or you may do both circles fast, but in control. Keep the left side pointing out until the second arm circle.

Open stance- feet are placed at open to help get the hips going. This drill is used for the full upper body and the second part of the lower body. With the feet angled slightly the pitcher will start their upper body motion. The arms will do everything from beginning and will pick up the hips in the middle of the motion. This really helps to focus on the hips to use at the end for power. Single, double and triple arm circles, same as above.

Walking drill- this drill helps to flow through your motion and get a rhythm. Without a ball pitchers may use this to help them stretch. The pitcher will continue to walk into their pitch, finish, then begin the next one. With the ball you will only walk once. You can do it easy (jell-o) then increasing your speed and walk. Walking into your pitch can also be done long distance. Back at 2nd base or half way can help to increase velocity on the ball. These will not always be strikes or even make it to the catcher without a bounce. The point of the drill is to make the pitcher use the whole body for the pitch, not just the arm. When the pitcher moves back to the mound they will find an increase of power. The pitches may tend to be high until the body gets back on track for the shorter distance.

idea for a warm-up for pitchers

You will come up with your own style of pitching, but what should stay the same every time is your warm-up. You need to have a routine to help you get into your motion. Everyone warms up at different rates. Please take some time to properly warm up with little things before continuing on to the full motion.

Here are some options for a warm-up. Repetition is the key.

25 wrist snaps to catcher-5-7 ft away

25 open to close (9 o'clock) further back

25 12 o'clock moved back

25 slow motion or walk into

The amount you do is great for the repetition factor. Do it according to your experience and age. Be close enough to have all your warm-ups be successful. You are not going to do 9 o'clock from 40 feet away, for example. Eventually some pitchers may be able to do their 12 o'clock from a further distance.

Pound ball against wall to help build up muscle memory of the wrist snap. Stand with front of body on wall looking to the side and down at the wrist snap. Cock wrist back and pound to wall. No curling under, scraping fingers is not what we want. The ball will hit the wall with the hand(palm) still located behind the ball.

Following your fingernails or ball. Standing next to the wall with the right side of the body touching it. Take the arm out in front and turn so that the palm is resting on the wall with arm stretching above the shoulder/head. Watch the fingernails slowly all the way around without moving your feet. Take it slow and stretch while doing this drill. You may add the feet to open along with a slow close/follow through.

Checklist of mistakes on a pitch: these can vary with pitchers, could be 1 or could be a combo of a couple

Ball going to high

- let go too late
- leaning back too much
- turned hand over and out while snapping
- over stride
- hand angled to high
- lifting or pushing the ball instead of snapping at the hip region

Ball going to low

- letting go too early
- leaning forward
- too short of a stride
- rolling off fingers to long, snap sooner
- slowing down arm
- giving the ball instead of snapping

Ball going to the right too much

- stepping too far to the right
- not closing up enough, staying open
- ball coming off the side of the hand
- hand turning out
- elbow flying (chicken wing)
- letting go too early
- stepping too far to the left and falling back over to the right
- left side pull not helping to bring back to center balance

Ball going to the left too much

- stepping to the left too much
- crossing the body with the arm
- not opening
- over rotating
- turning hand over and crossing
- pulling left side pull too soon or hard

Softball Pitching-basic mechanics that most pitchers will possess

There are several ways to pitch a softball, i will list several ways on each mechanic, try them and see what works

Finding the "C"- hold ball in left hand and turn until you see the seams making the "C"

Place right hand on ball with the pads of the fingers touching the top of the "C"

Thumb rests on bottom of ball, hand will also create a "C"

-Some hold the ball on the two seams, this will rotate like a fast ball and may have a drop effect as it gets to the plate

Stance on mound- right foot resting on right side of mound(can be slightly angled to encourage the pivot, make sure the pitcher proceeds forward 1st to the plate then open) with the ball of the foot on edge for push off

Left foot is touching the back left to middle of mound. Ball of foot or toe resting on the back edge

ASA,NSA rules both feet contact with the mound at the beginning of the pitch

To open- stance on mound, arms relaxed at sides- simple start, other ways can be attempted

Come together out in front of body going no higher than chest

Weight shift at this time from back to front foot

Hands together will row back towards body and then down right leg

There are several ways to start a pitch, a drop arm is useful if done straight back, cover ball with glove as ball is dropped back

Left foot and knee will be driving straight out while the right foot pivots off of mound

Glove hand will stay out (stop sign) in front while the ball hand will keep going around the top of the circle

Left foot will sit down sideways (whole foot landing for balance and power) on the line on the ground

* legs and arms work together

* do not cut circle in half

* reach for the sky and brush the arm by the cheek

* right hand will turn out away from body to easily get to open position

* weight is on the right foot

To close- in open position (9 o'clock)

Three things happening at same time - foot drag, push the door closed, and drop the arm

Foot drag- the front hip will do a bump forward so the back hip can come through on the line

-the foot will start on the inside and gradually work its way up onto the toe

-the left foot pivots when the drag foot meets it

- knee faces target

- a figure 4 maybe done as the ball is being release at the hip region, left leg will be solid as the other foot comes to the back of the calf. like the body is hitting a wall, power will continue on with the ball

Left side pull- glove will turn out away from body and will swing out, can also be brought down with a slap to the leg or thigh

Glove may end up back beside left hip

* the left side pull helps to close hips and balance the body

Arm drops- The ball arm will start to drop straight down to complete the circle, it will turn so that the pinkie will be closest to the hip

- when the ball gets to the swinging hip the wrist will snap and fingers will come up or back to you

-after the fingers wrist snap there will be a follow-through, bending the elbow and facing it towards the plate (knee and elbow connected with a string) remember that the snap can happen around the hip region anywhere, the pitcher will need to work on where she wants to snap at.

hand comes through 1st and the hip will follow and push it the rest of the way through

- * weird swimming motion
- * should be able to see wrist when you follow through
- * left foot doesn't move(pivot) until the right one makes it
- * weight will end up on left foot, unless stepping through some

Drills

Wall drills- wall drills are used to work on upper body mechanics and strength

right knee down, left knee facing out towards wall

Single arm circle- one time around, all upper body

- together down and out
- open upper body
- close- elbow facing target

Double arm circles- two times around

- everything is the same as single except, the left arm will stay out (pointing towards wall) until the second arm circle and then will do the left side pull
- first circle is nice and slow, speed up the second one fast!!

Under the leg- right knee up away from the body (right) left knee is down facing the wall, upper body is facing the wall also, this is used to know where to snap the ball

- do beginning and middle of pitching motion
- the hand will come to the right thigh and snap, no follow through

- * do not come up on toe
- * do not side bend to get under leg, let the wrist come to the thigh and snap

Line drills- done without glove or ball and can be done on a field, gym, or in front of a full length mirror

These are used to help the pitcher concentrate on each specific part of the motion
These can later be used with a ball and glove

- find a line and separate your body with it
- stance on mound
- go to open - after 10 times start at open and then just do the closing part 10 times

Wrist snaps- hold ball in hand on the "C"

- forearm is parallel with the ground, elbow is bent slightly
- wrist will bend back and snap up
- spin on the ball (4 seams)
- fingers will face back towards body, no follow through
- catch it with same hand

- * do not push the ball up into air with the palm
- * if ball goes to far forward it is rolling of the fingers to long
- * if it goes behind you the wrist is snapping too soon
- * may be able to catch it right back on the "C"

- snapping to wall or catcher-stationary feet, shoulder width apart
 - right arm will swing straight back (bottom of circle) and the wrist will cock
 - arm will come back, with pinkie closest to the hip and snap and follow through

- * ball going to high- following through to soon before release or releasing late
- * ball going to low- snapping to soon or finger not coming back to you

Covering home

Most of the time a pitcher will cover home on a pass ball with a runner on 3rd base (sometimes 1st base will). The thing to remember is that you are probably going to meet the runner at home so it will be a quick catch and tag. When you are running to home make sure to go to the right of the base so when you receive the ball you will be able to tag the runner before she reaches the plate. Call for the ball from the catcher, remember the catcher is running after the ball and may have their backs turned to you. You want them to know you are coming in and also it gives them location of the base. Try to keep two hands on the glove with the ball in it when putting down a tag or a quick swipe will work sometimes. Hopefully the catcher has kept the ball low enough so you can tag the closest body part coming first to the plate, most likely the runner will be sliding. Try not to get your legs in the way because you do not have protection from a sliding runner.

- sprint in to home- right side of the plate
- say that you are coming and keep talking for the catcher to throw to you
- position yourself to receive the ball so you are ready to put down the tag on the runner
- after a successful or unsuccessful tag is put on then watch for the other runners that maybe on base and running

Covering a bunt

Realize where everyone area is on the field. The catcher will have in front of the plate a couple of feet or any ball that dies down in the box. Remember the catcher is coming from a crouched position, with gear, the ball is moving away from them, and she has to wait for the batter to go past. So a catcher is not going to go out very far for a bunt. 3rd base has their alleyway, so does pitcher and 1st base. There is also a community area where anyone may get it. The best thing to do is keep calling the ball whomever feels they can get it. 3rd base is the best for this since they are running in on the ball and are able to throw it quickly without having to turn, it usually can be done in one motion. If the pitcher or 1st base field the bunt then it is wise to go to the right of the ball when fielding it so they can transition smoothly into a throw to 1st or 2nd, if trying to get the lead runner. There are several ways to pick up a bunt. If the bunt is not moving then get over top and stab it with the throwing hand, then throw. If the ball is moving then you can use a shoveling method (gorilla) to get the ball in the glove and hand together, then throw.

After a bunt is fielded, where does everyone go??

If 3rd fields the bunt-

1st base is watching to see the play then go back to base to help cover runner rounding the base

Pitcher will peel off and circle back around to 3rd to cover or back up the left fielder covering the bag. You want to take away the runner being able to advance from 2nd base on the throw to 1st

Catcher will be telling 3rd base where the play is at. The catcher can see the field and if there was a runner on 1st at the time of the bunt then they may have time to get the lead runner at 2nd.

If pitcher/1st fields the bunt-

1st is charging the ball until called off by pitcher, unless you have your 1st baseman staying back to cover 1st. Usually all throws from fielders will be taken by the 2nd baseman covering 1st base.

3rd is charging the ball until called off then will cycle back to their base to cover

Catcher- same as above

Pitcher will stay out of the way or go back up a base on a throw, usually 3rd or home will be the areas the pitcher will back up the throws

If catcher fields the bunt

Pitcher will maintain their ground in the circle area, ducking if the ball is going to be thrown to 2nd

3rd will cycle back around to cover 3rd

1st will peel off so catcher has a clear throw to 1st

Drills for catchers- whiffles, tennis balls, foam balls and real balls will be used

Set up for catchers can vary on the body type of the player. Most of the time feet will be far enough apart that the catcher feels that they have balance and can bend at the waist without falling over feet can be slightly offset for quick turn. Glove will be loose, relaxed and the wrist will be loose. Eyes open big to see the ball come in, don't anticipate too soon, but take the body with you quickly and efficiently.

1. Low ball straight on

Use whiffles and progress to tennis

Catcher will set up, drop knees down and turn over glove

the catcher may also swing the feet out/back and replace with the knees, this can give the catcher more time to react and keep ball in front

2. Ball side to side with or without bounce

Use whiffles and tennis, and real balls

Catcher will set up, put knee opposite of ball down and swing body around to keep ball in front with glove following

the catcher may also attempt to take the closest leg to the body, lift and reach out to side with other leg following, knees will open up when on ground with glove in the middle of body if possible

3. Pop ups, foul and fair

Catcher set up, close eyes, tosser tosses ball up in air and says "up". Catcher will rip off mask and find ball or can bring helmet up to forehead and let the mask drizzle down their back so it doesn't get in their way, catcher may also keep mask on if visibility is okay. Try to toss ball high and low.

4. Pass balls, tossing to home

Catcher sets up and tosser will throw ball past catcher. Catcher gets out of stance and runs to the right of the ball. Grabs ball and tosses underhand home plate.

- use fence if ball is close, slide in
- keep ball and body low
- backhand flip if needed

5. Throwing to bases/pick-offs

Catcher will receive ball from pitcher and has different options on how to get it to the base.

One step and throw- staying low to keep ball down and quicker

Two step- crossover, takes some time but handy for long 2nd base throw especially for younger catchers

Quick feet- feet will both come up in air and get body sideways, or a one/two without a crossover, like the letter L, the right handed catcher will take the right foot and push the left foot to the top of the letter L- right foot replaces where the left foot was.

Throwing from knees and also from one knee- right knee will drop down after receiving the ball, left leg will swing around for balance, turning the body sideways. The arms will be coming up to throwing position.