



Pitching

Main Points – Philosophy

1. The pitcher sets the tone for the pace and feel of the game, along with the team's attitude. No other player on the team or field is in a position to lead quite like he is. As a result, what a pitcher projects to his own team, as well as to the other team, is paramount. **A pitcher's body language must project confidence regardless of the situation.**

3. The pitcher's primary job, particularly at the youth levels, is to **attack the strike zone**. Throwing strikes allows a pitcher to remain efficient, keep pitch counts down, pitch deeper into games, keep his teammates engaged in the game, and get his hitters back on offense.

4. Young pitchers should be seeking to develop some variety of pitches at age appropriate levels. 10-11 year old pitchers should be establishing their fastball and working with a change-up, 12 year old pitchers should be building on those two and begin exploring breaking balls that work for them. There is no "right way" to throw any particular off-speed pitch, and different grips will work for different pitchers. There are many grip-related resources available on the internet for teaching off-speed pitches to young pitchers. By the time pitchers get to high school, we tell them:

- If you have one quality pitch that you can command, you can survive or be good for an inning.
- If you have two quality pitches that you can command, you can be a very good pitcher.
- If you have three quality pitches that you can command, you can dominate.

5. The act of pitching the ball is only a component of being a pitcher. Pitchers need to be situationally aware and able to both field their position and control the running game.

Pitching from the windup

Main Points – Technique

1. Foot positioning on the rubber – Pitcher's heels should be on top of the rubber, with toes in front of the rubber and feet angled about 30° toward the baseline on the pitcher's throwing arm side. Some pitchers will be most comfortable centered across the rubber, with some more comfortable closer to either the 3rd or 1st base side of the rubber. The distance between the feet should be comfortable for the pitcher, but hip-width apart is appropriate.
2. Beginning the delivery - Take a small step back and to the side at a 45° angle with the glove side foot (called a rocker step), keeping the weight over the stationary foot, which is turned parallel to and touches the rubber with the outside of the foot (not on top of the rubber).
3. Balance Position – Bring the glove side leg up to approximately waist height, with torso slightly tilted forward so that the weight is centered over the pivot foot. Hands are still together in the glove at the balance position. The pitcher should never fully stop his movement at this position; rather he should move through this position at a controlled pace.
4. Power Position (T Position) – From the balance position, the pitcher moves into the power position as he begins to deliver the ball towards the plate. The pitcher begins to stride towards the plate with his front (glove side) leg, beginning to rotate the hips at the point when his front foot lands, while keeping the torso and upper body square to the target. At the same time as the stride is occurring, the pitcher's hands separate, with the throwing hand taking the ball down out of the glove and up (circular motion) as the glove side elbow, if bent, or fully extended glove arm points toward the target.
5. Rotation and Release – Once the pitcher's front foot has landed, the hips fully rotate, with the shoulders following suit and the chest leading the pitcher's upper body movement forward, and driving over the pitcher's front leg. The force of the rotation and forward movement leads to a release of the ball when the pitcher's throwing arm is nearly fully extended towards home plate.
6. Follow-through – The pitcher should finish with his chest over his front leg. Pitchers who throw somewhat “across their bodies” will likely fall off at least slightly towards their glove side. Just as in hitting, the follow-through is primarily the result of what happens before it, and therefore is not often in and of itself something to be corrected.