

PITCHING: Miscellaneous Thoughts

Gripping the Ball:

Teach your players that holding the ball in their fingertips - as opposed to jamming it into the hand - will help them get good velocity and wrist snap for control. Have your pitchers vary their grips on the seams to experiment with the fastball and change-ups. For example, gripping the ball with the seams causes the pitch to sink or tail; gripping the ball across the seams makes the pitch appear to rise and will go the straightest.

Stride:

The length of the stride depends on the height of the pitcher and what feels most comfortable.

Too long a stride can make the ball go high; too short a stride can make the ball go low. Have your pitchers experiment to find what works best.

Follow-Through:

A good follow-through is critical for speed, control, and proper fielding position. As the pitcher releases the ball, the wrist snaps and the arm snaps across the body.

Ideally, the pivot (ball side) foot swings around to a position that squares the pitcher up to the plate. It should land around equal with the foot strike (stride foot).

Focus:

The pitcher's eyes must be on the target in preparation to field any balls hit back to the mound, once he pitches, he is a defensive player.

Advanced pitchers can be concerned with the location of their pitches (for example, outside corner). Young pitchers should simply focus on getting the ball across the plate, in the strike zone.

Here are some key points to emphasize with young pitchers:

1. Make sure the catcher is in the crouching position, providing a target, before the Pitcher starts his delivery.
2. Be relaxed and in control throughout the pitching motion.
3. Keep your eyes on the target throughout the pitching motion. Don't overthrow.
4. Follow through and be ready to field at the end of the motion.
5. Make the first pitch a strike every time to get ahead of the batter.
6. Be a leader on the field, the game and every batter after starts with the Pitcher.