

The Glove Hand (Squeeze and Swivel)

What to do with the glove hand as we are rotating our hips to release?

I was taught and have been teaching to pull the glove into the armpit as the shoulders come around. I still think this is a perfectly good way to teach kids, especially with younger kids that are just learning. I have had success with this at the 9-12 year old levels and can see many examples of this at upper level baseball, including the professional ranks.

- The problem with this technique is that you are creating a lot of rotation with the upper body as opposed to the lower body that we have been talking about in previous sections. The concern is that the upper body will start to rotate too soon compared to the hips - thus reducing our torque associated with our Delayed Shoulder Rotation.

If however the glove to the armpit is done on time (after the hips have opened with closed shoulders) I think it is a very good way to teach kids how to pitch.

- In addition, if a Pitcher is pulling the glove to armpit, it can also cause him to release the ball back a little bit in the delivery as opposed to getting out over the front foot at release of the baseball. This means we are releasing the ball from farther away from the plate and thus not getting the most out of our velocity. Which would you rather have, a 70 mph pitch from 41 feet or a 70 mph pitch from 40 feet? I would rather be closer to the plate on release of the baseball.
- Another area where I can see the need to change the "pull the glove to armpit" is in the area of balance and maintaining your center of gravity or proper posture. Often times when I tell a kid to pull the glove into his armpit, he pulls so hard that it knocks him way off balance, which contradicts everything we are striving to achieve.

I do see where the "Pulling the Glove to Armpit" can be problematic so I am going to share another point of view regarding what to do with the glove hand as we are rotating our hips to release.

I encourage you to decide for yourself by working with your Pitchers on both methods and see how they react, I will be doing the same this year...

The Squeeze and Swivel technique basically asks a Pitcher to keep the glove centered to their spine, out in front of the body, over the front landing foot, about Sternum level.

- The glove hand will squeeze and the elbow will drop and rotate (swivel) to the center of your body, leaving the glove centered to your spine at Sternum level. The level (Sternum for example) of the glove is of less importance as long as it is centered on your spine. Randy Johnson centered the glove around belly button level for example. Posture, Balance and Center of Gravity.
- The key or the philosophy is that you should not get caught up on using the glove hand to help you rotate, this should be done by the lower body, specifically the hip rotation and back toe. I can see where that makes sense and I will be trying it this year.