

INTRODUCING PITCH MOVEMENT**THINK QUESTIONS****COACHES:**

Start teaching your players how to throw the various pitches at Squirt level. The first pitch should be the Slow Ball, followed by the Drop and Rise pitches at Pee Wee level then Bantams can learn the Curve if they wish. Be patient; it takes a full season to master each pitch. The important thing for players to understand is that precision is the most important feature of a pitch. The following questions can be useful in stimulating your players to think about using different pitches.

Illustrations of the grip and release for each pitch are contained in the Player Manual for Pitchers. A more detailed explanation is available in, "Gold Medal Pitching - Level 2", available in print or electronic format. Contact Dave Pearce for either of these.

A) WHAT IS "STUFF" IN PITCHING?

B) HOW DOES "STUFF" WORK?

C) WHAT FACTORS DICTATE THE AMOUNT
OF "STUFF" ON A PITCH?

D) WHY ARE GRIP AND RELEASE IMPORTANT IN THROWING "STUFF"?

THE SLOW BALL

THIS IS THE FIRST PITCH YOUNG PITCHERS SHOULD LEARN BECAUSE IT IS SIMPLE, VERY EFFECTIVE IN KEEPING BATTERS OFF BALANCE AND CAN LAST A CAREER. IT'S NOT A BREAKING PITCH AS SUCH BUT RELIES MORE DECEPTION THAN MOVEMENT. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GRIP THIS PITCH BUT THE TECHNIQUE SHOWN HERE IS THE SIMPLEST AND QUICKEST TO LEARN.

- MAIN POINTS:**
- The key to this pitch is **DECEPTION**.
 - Delivery motion must be identical to other pitches.
 - Hold ball deep in the hand and tight to increase friction.
 - Squeeze ball with last two fingers and thumb only
 - Lock wrist to reduce force.
 - Generally keep pitch low/outside.

GRIP & RELEASE: See illustrations in the Player Manual.

- DRILLS FOR THE SLOW BALL:**
- Blind Grip drill
 - Pendulum drill
 - Short release drill

THE DROP BALL

THIS IS A TOP PRIORITY PITCH AND USUALLY THE SECOND PITCH LEARNED AFTER THE SLOW BALL. IN FACT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO WIN AGAINST GOOD COMPETITION WITHOUT AN EFFECTIVE DROP. THE BALL DOESN'T HAVE TO BREAK MUCH, BUT IT NEEDS TO BREAK. THE MOST COMMON PROBLEM WITH THE DROP IS THROWING IT TOO HIGH IN THE STRIKE ZONE.

- MAIN POINTS:**
- Develop the feeling of throwing the ball down.
 - Use 2, 3 or 4 fingers whichever is most comfortable.
 - Hold the ball across the seams, same as for Down Spin.
 - Distribute finger pressure evenly.
 - Throw the pitch low; 4" above the knees.

GRIP & RELEASE : SAME AS ABOVE

- DRILLS FOR THE DROP:**
- Blind Grip drill
 - Finger Spin drill
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THE RISE BALL

THE RISE PITCH IS CONSIDERED THE STRIKEOUT PITCH IN GIRLS SOFTBALL. IT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO LEARN AND WILL PROBABLY TAKE MOST OF TWO SEASONS TO REALLY MASTER. BUT THE TIME IS WELL SPEND BECAUSE THIS PITCH CAN BE VERY EFFECTIVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THROWN HIGH IN THE STRIKE ZONE. VERY FEW FEMALES CAN HIT THIS PITCH WITH AUTHORITY. FOR THOSE COACHES NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE METHODOLOGY, SEE THE ARTICLE, "TEACHING THE RISE BALL"

- MAIN POINTS:**
- Use a firm grip, throw the pitch high for best results.
 - Use 2, 3 or 4 fingers.
 - Bend the index finger for better rotation.
 - Keep fingernails short - even with the end of the finger.
 - Develop the feeling of throwing the ball up.
 - If necessary, bend back knee slightly to get under the pitch.

GRIP & RELEASE: SEE PLAYER MANUAL FOR PITCHERS

- DRILLS FOR THE RISE:**
- Blind Grip drill
 - Wall/Arm drill
 - Pendulum rotation drill
 - Finger rotation drill
 - Wall rotation drill

THE CURVE BALL

BASICALLY A CURVE BALL IS JUST A BADLY THROWN RISE BALL. ALTHOUGH IT'S A FOURTH PRIORITY PITCH, IT CAN BE USEFUL IF AND WHEN THE RISE PITCH IS NOT WORKING WELL. IT IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN THROWN AT THE EDGES OF THE PLATE BUT HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF BREAKING WELL BOTH HIGH AND LOW IN THE STRIKE ZONE.

- MAIN POINTS:**
- Experiment with various grips.
 - Let index and second fingers spread apart for better side spin.
 - Adjust thumb position until comfortable.
 - Use sideward wrist action to create side spin.
 - Bend one or two fingers for added pressure.
 - Throw high or low, but always at corners.

GRIP & RELEASE: SEE PLAYER MANUAL FOR PITCHERS

- DRILLS FOR THE CURVE:**
- Blind Grip drill
 - Pendulum rotation drill
 - Finger rotation drill
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