

Softball Pitching Reference Sheet *"Speed before Accuracy"*

Feet/Legs

- Feet about 6-8 inches apart on pitcher's plate
- Pivot foot slightly in front of stride foot, knees slightly bent
- **STEPPING BACK OFF THE PITCHER'S PLATE IS ILLEGAL**
- Long stride, but needs to be able to push off pitcher's plate
- Stride foot is pointing in direction of powerline (powerline is imaginary line that runs from home plate to the pitcher)
- Pivot foot is pushing off of pitcher's plate – THIS is where the power comes from! Pivot foot **drags** behind after the pitch.

Torso

- Very important girls are standing straight up and down, not bent over

Wind-up/Windmill

- Each pitcher has a unique wind-up as her own. When TEACHING pitching, less is more. The least amount of motion before the pitch, the more energy a pitcher will have.
- Full circles – pitcher should be as tall as possible. "Cutting Corners" will drastically impair a pitcher's potential. Arm should brush by ear.
- Think of the windmill as a clock:
 - Top of windmill – 12 o'clock
 - Pitching hand parallel to ground – 3 o'clock
 - Bottom of windmill (where wrist snaps) – 6 o'clock
 - Glove hand/Follow through – 9 o'clock
- Follow through is as important as the pitch. It allows for the most power and brings them into a fielding position. Pitchers should not be Prima Donnas!
- Coach Check: if pitches are low/high check release point
 - Pitches too high are released late (after 6 o'clock)
 - Pitches too low are released early (before 6 o'clock)

Hips

- One of the hardest concepts to master in pitching
- Opening when ball is at 12 o'clock
- Opened when ball is at 3 o'clock
- Closed when ball is at 6 o'clock

Hands/Wrists

- "C" grip for fastball – more movement on ball
- Less fingers the better, big gap between fingers
- Wrist remains cocked back throughout windmill until strong snap at 6 o'clock
- Glove hand is pointed in the direction of the catcher throughout the pitch. Pitchers need their bodies moving towards the target, this includes glove hands.

Pitching Warm-Up Drills

Wrist Snaps: (glove and one ball) Pitchers should eventually do 50-75 wrist snaps a day. Glove and ball are shoulder length apart, wrist cocked back. Girls snap ball into glove and follow through after the snap.

Work around the Clock: (glove, ball, wall/fence/net) Girls stand with hips open, hand at 3 o'clock, glove at 9 o'clock ("T" position.) Pitch into the glove (both hands meet at 6 o'clock.) Work on speedy delivery from 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock, and also closing those hips and following through. Move ball hand to 12 o'clock, glove hand still at 9 o'clock throwing to a wall/fence/net. Still focusing on opening and closing hips and following through.

"X" Throws: This helps keep the weight back on the pivot foot. Start with both feet on pitcher's plate, pitcher steps towards home plate raising the stride foot high off the ground (forcing the weight back.) Glove hand comes up toward home plate, ball hand comes BACK to almost 12 o'clock (when pitcher is in this position it looks like an "x".) Pitcher brings ball up and down very quickly pushing off that pivot foot. Glove and ball meet at 6 o'clock.

Ally – Oop: (Named after a kid) Place an object (Kid's equipment bag works great) about 12-18 inches in front of the pitcher's plate. Going through her regular pitch motion, the pitcher must lift her stride foot up and over the bag while pitching. Getting the front leg up and over, keeps the weight back, important for push off. It also ensures the pitchers are stepping far enough away from the pitcher's plate. Coaches can also make sure pitchers are standing straight up, not bent over!

Walk on, PUSH off: Pitchers start behind the pitcher's plate (about 2 ft.) Pitchers step with their stride foot first, then onto the pitcher's plate with their pivot foot then use that momentum to push off. Their hips/stomach thrusting forward. Once they understand this drill, it should be QUICK! This helps pitchers get the feel of pushing off.

Powerline: Draw a long, perpendicular line in the dirt to the pitcher's plate (will form a "T" on the mound.) Pitcher's should get in the habit of drawing this line every inning. Visually it helps them stay on course to home plate. Pitchers can visibly see how far and straight their stride foot steps when pitching. You want a pitcher to step far enough to get an advantage to home plate (WITHOUT JUMPING/HOPPING) But still be close enough to push off the pitcher's plate.

Long Toss: (Senior league mostly, or EXPERIENCED junior league pitchers) Set the pitcher up about 10-15 feet farther away from catcher. She pitches her regular fastball, trying to get it to reach her catcher. This helps with leg strength (she can't depend on arms to get it there) and endurance. Do not do this if the pitcher is inexperienced.