

RFYBO Throwing and Pitching Guidelines

Intro Basic Throwing Mechanics

Sound mechanics = better control and less injury down the road

Overlooked form keys to watch when throwing:

- 4 seam grip, hand on top of the ball (take ball off shelf analogy)
- loose grip, loose wrist, loose arm like a whip
- down, back, and up motion (don't short-arm)
- straight back, not to either side ("equal and opposite" with front arm)
- elbow above shoulder, wrist above elbow
- lead arm up

Basic Throwing – Warm Up Catch

- Give a target, throw to a target
- Always move feet and "catch the ball with your chest"
"Be a ball player, not a kid playing catch"
- 10 form throws from 1 knee to start every time we play catch, doing the 3 checks:
 1. hand on top of ball
 2. wrist above elbow, elbow above shoulder
 3. lead arm up
- Work back to long toss, 6-8 air outs
- Work back in to "rapid fire"
 1. hands up and together
 2. moving feet into throwing position
 3. can do this with a partner, or also in groups of 4
- "Pitch/Catch 21"

Intro 5 Steps To Pitching Delivery (Wind-Up):

1. *Stance:* start on far side of rubber, shoulders square, deep breath, and relax before every pitch
2. *Pivot:* small step, in balance, weight over front foot, drop front foot right in front of the rubber, look at target and not your feet
3. *Balance:* thigh parallel to ground, toe relaxed, back knee bent, hands in close to body, hands are breaking with the leg kick (should be able to pause and hold at balance point)
 - Simple Balance Drills: 1) hold 3 seconds and coach flip ball, 2) hold 3 seconds, flip ball back
4. *Power:* lead arm up, throwing arm extended back (good throwing mechanics), land on ball of foot, toe slightly closed in, hips start opening up, chin on front shoulder, eyes focused on target
5. *Follow Through:* to opposite ankle, throw through the catcher, finish in good balance and squared up to the catcher

Intro Stretch Position:

- right foot beside front side of rubber
- feet a little wider than shoulder width apart
- hands apart, at sides with the ball held in throwing hand for quick pick-off move at any time
- bring front foot back to "set position" about shoulder width now
- hands together in glove, and hands fairly close to body at chest level
- once in this "set position" may turn head to check runners, **not** shoulders
- must pause in set position before coming home with the pitch
 - but do not have to pause during a pickoff move at any time
- once hands come together in glove they cannot separate unless making a move
- slide-step without high leg kick, just pick foot up slightly and "slide step"

Holding Runners On Base:

- most runners steal because a pitcher doesn't do a good enough job intimidating the runners (they get in a predictable sequence)
- vary your looks up to the runners, look 1,2, even 3 times sometimes
- keeping the runners off balance so they can't get a good jump is key

Intro Basic Pickoffs:

- *To First Base:*
 1. Step-off pick: slower move, easy to teach young players. Set-up move
 2. Jump Pick: best move, quick quarter turn, short arm action, snap from ear
 3. Lefty move: keep leg kick the same, mix up looks, use your 45 degrees
- *To Second Base:*
 1. Step-off pick: similar as one to first base, slower but easy to teach young players.
 2. Jump Pick: same as 1st base except a quick half turn now
 - Open glove/hand: shortstop or 2nd baseman flashes to base
 3. Spin move: picks leg up as if going home but spins back around to 2nd.

Basic Pitcher's Defense:

1. *Comebackers:* anticipate where you're going with it, "step and throw"
2. *Cover 1st:* Sprint to the corner of the infield, breakdown, turn and look

Basic Pitchers Strengths:

1. Understand that it's ok to get hit!
2. Find a rhythm and get comfortable
3. Work to get ahead in the count
4. Think like the hitter, throw the opposite
5. Do not let incidents disturb you (umpire calls, errors, etc.)
6. Observation of hitter
 - a. Hitter's stance
 - b. Position in batters box
7. Know what the situation is *before* you pitch
 - a. Who's covering what bases?
 - b. Where are you backing up?

Pitching Drill Series:

1. *I knee* (arm circle down, back, and up, do your checks, follow through over opposite knee)
2. *T-Position* (focus on the 3 checks)
3. *Balance Position* (parallel thigh, relaxed toe, hold for 3 seconds – then throw)
4. *Full Motion* (the 5 steps to delivery: step, pivot, balance, power, follow through)
 - * For "robotic" kids, a few *figure eights* can help loosen things up a little

Pitcher's Cardinal Sins:

1. Never walk the lead-off man in an inning
2. When an 0-2 count, ball should never be hit hard
3. Never go from 0-2 to 3-2
4. Never have 2 walks in the same inning
5. No 2 out walks
6. Never stare down the umpire!

REMEMBER: SOUND MECHANICS = BETTER CONTROL AND LESS INJURY