

Pitching – The Finer Details

A pitcher's goals should be to . . .

Develop quality pitching mechanics.

Commit to proper preparation. How you prepare for a pitching performance will ultimately be reflected in your game performance. Therefore, sleep and eat well the night before, and properly eat, exercise and stretch the day of a game.

Throw first pitch strikes.

Establish command of your fastball. A good fastball sets up every other pitch.

Mix effectively by commanding at least three pitches – a fastball, a change-up, and a breaking ball.

Display the mental discipline to handle tough situations. Pitchers who learn how to work through adversity often become better at avoiding it in the future.

Use positive self talk after difficulty.

Throw effective pitches while you are ahead in the count. Try to avoid “wasting” pitches.

Finish batters off quickly. Aim to get hitters out in four pitches or less.

Work with a quick rhythm/tempo.

Aim for a strike-to-ball ratio of 67% to 50% respectively.

Take deep breaths to relax.

Get outs before the 3 ball count.

Focus on the target with every single pitch.

Concentration, or what is commonly referred to as “in the zone,” is the difference between great pitchers and good ones. One bad pitching location or one bad pitch because a you're not concentrating, and it could be the difference between winning or losing a game.

Control the inner half of the plate ... own it!

Field your position well. Know your bunt coverage assignments and, if the lead out is not available, get at least one out.

Break hard toward first base and, if necessary, cover it on balls hit to the right side of the infield.

Be positive: support teammates, even after errors and let the ump call his game. (Be the first one to congratulate your teammate after a good play behind you and the first one to pick him up after a mistake.)

Back up bases correctly.

Hold runners well. Take pride in keeping runners close to the bag. If they don't, drive them back with persistent “pick” moves.

With runners on, be quick to plate (under 1.3 seconds gives your catcher a chance, over that, and you better hope the runner trips and falls)

Recognize and then take advantage of the strike zone the umpire is calling.

Use a modified slide step from the stretch, so you can have a quick release to the plate with runners on base.

Tell yourself three things: “I'm going to attack the strike zone;” “I'm going to work ahead of batters;” “I'm going to control the tempo.”

Remember one thing. If you have nothing else in your bag of pitches, have a fastball that you can consistently locate low and away in the strike zone.