


WHS Coaching Resource – Pitching 101

Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing consistent fundamentals is key, control and speed will come later
Warm-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure athletes have completed dynamic stretching exercises and are warm to prevent injury. Please see warm-up video below for suggestions.
Pitching Distances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U7/U9 (30”), U11 (35”), U13 (38”), U15 (40”), U17/U19 (43”)
Basic Rules for Fastpitch Pitching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitchers must have ball in their hand or glove when they approach the pitcher’s plate. If they do not have the ball, they do not step on the pitching plate (or rubber) Pitchers need to step on the rubber with their hands apart-the ball can be in either hand <i>*Pitcher does not have to “present” the ball, this rule is now obsolete</i> Once they take the signal (or in most cases, take a deep breath and ensure they have their “C” grip), their whole body must come to a full and complete stop with the ball held in either the hand or glove with both held together in front or at the side of the body. This position must be held for not less than 2 seconds and not more than 5 seconds before starting the pitch. Starting in 2022 for all ages, only the front foot is required to be on the pitching plate The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball. Lots of leniency on this rule for new and younger pitchers, but it is important they try to stay still once they bring their hands together. The pitcher cannot lift or step forward with the same foot as their pitching arm (the pivot foot), doing so is called a crow hop and is illegal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pivot foot should be used to push off the rubber while they are stepping forward with their other leg. Starting in 2022 for all ages, the pivot foot may now leave the ground provided it occurs in conjunction with the delivery of the pitch (leap, land, release) <p>Here is a video from Canada Softball and the Softball Canada Umpires on all pitching changes for this year and examples of legal pitches: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5H-NsYG40A</p>

Pitching Steps & Mechanics

#	Step	Explanation
1	Set-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power line: this is a line from the middle of the pitching rubber down the middle of home plate. When the stride foot lands along the power line (@30- or 45-degree angle), pitchers will generate more power and have more control. Grip: “C” grip is recommended for new pitchers. Fingers are over the “C” seams of the ball. Pads of the fingers and thumbs rest on the seams

		 <p>Fastball - C-Grip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stance: Comfortable and relaxed and hips parallel to the catcher, shoulders back and feet shoulder width apart <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Throwing side (push off or pivot foot) is at the front of the rubber, Stride foot is either touching the pitching rubber or behind it.
2	Back Swing (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take ball out of the glove, swing back to 9 o'clock so pitching arm is level to the ground • Pitchers can also start pitch from glove
3	Arm Circle and Stride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As leg strides to the plate (along the power line), pitching arm completes windmill circle and arm remains relaxed and straight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The pitcher cannot make two revolutions of the arm; however, they can swing their pitching arm backwards and then bring it forward for their windmill, this adds momentum and will help to speed up their pitch • Drive forward off the rubber with throwing side foot • Leg should land at a 45-degree angle along the power line
4	Release and Follow Through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the arm comes down past the hip, keep wrist back and then snap forward as ball is released • The stride leg stays firm but push off foot drags along dirt (unless leaping) • Finish in an athletic position ready to field the ball
5 Basic steps for a beginner pitcher		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 steps for beginner pitcher You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIx9CvpGXsU • Foot placement for pitchers <i>*Note that pitchers can start with back foot off pitching rubber</i> You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwqzkzEYCvw
Pitching foundation and release point		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation comes first You Tube: https://youtu.be/88WNGW8KBbQ

Suggested Pitching Progressions/Warm Up

Wrist snap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hip facing towards the catcher, feet along the power line, correct grip, pitcher and catcher start close together ie: 5 feet • Pitcher throws using wrist snap only
9 o'clock or T position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hip facing towards the catcher, feet along the power line, athletic stance and bend knees, correct grip, approx. 15 feet from catcher • Pitcher throws ball from 9 o'clock position (start with no feet and then feet) • Arm brushes side of the leg
12 o'clock or K position (arm starts by ear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same set up as T position • Pitcher throws ball from 12 o'clock position
Windmill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above, feet/no feet, stack weight on front foot to finish
Full pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitcher starts with full pitches

Pitching Video Resources

Pitching Warm up (Meg Rem)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a good summary of the above pitching progressions YouTube: Softball Pitching Drills For Warm Up - YouTube
Jennie Finch Pitching Mechanics from Catcher's View	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catcher's view of all of Jennie Finch's pitches YouTube: https://youtu.be/GhvSarZ9_1c
Jennie Finch Pitching Demo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennie Finch demo YouTube: https://youtu.be/fN0GT2ECubs

Jennie Finch Pitching Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Softball pitching instruction demo YouTube: https://youtu.be/F9d2evfGPcc • Slow motion YouTube: https://youtu.be/9pNrpi19d7s
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Pitching Drills

Glove Snaps (Amanda Scarborough)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a consistent release point YouTube: https://youtu.be/-ghr6q0u9L8
Flamingo/Karate Kid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with stride knee bent to a 90-degree angle. This drill promotes balance and concentration. Start with hand together • Pitcher then kicks stride leg back and forward concentrating on pushing off the back foot for power
Long Ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase pitching distances stepping back from the rubber. Catcher stays behind the plate but may stand
Rapid Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for pitchers to increase their endurance, but mechanics should be solid before this drill • Timed drills with 20 balls
Four corners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catcher puts glove at 4 corners of the plate • Try to hit the 4 targets in as few pitches as possible. Can also time pitchers how long they take to hit the targets and try to improve over season
Weighted ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be a great tool for older pitchers. Start with wrist snap and T position first before moving to a full pitch
Lunge Drill (Jill Stephens)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages your legs and strong dive off the rubber • Focus on form and engage core YouTube: https://youtu.be/7-a-MWeFqNc
Power Drills (Softball Spot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitching power drills YouTube: https://youtu.be/cAYZSiNzhE4