

Fastpitch Strategy Blog

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The purpose of this document is to list the Fastpitch Strategy documents. Included in the list are the introductory purpose paragraph, a link to the document on line and the copyright date. The first list will be by date newest first. The second list is alphabetical.

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Both Feet on the Rubber

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The purpose of this document is to define the purpose of starting with both feet on the rubber. The rule of starting with both feet on the pitching rubber was implemented to help people learn how to pitch properly. It almost forced pitchers to push or pull “back” with the feet to generate power against the ground. Using the big muscles of the body to push or pull back turned the arm into a whip that both propelled and spun the ball much faster than could be obtained by the pushing or pulling forward. After the rule changed the pitchers all began to push or pull forward. We had speed guns back then and the speed was faster with the whip by about ten miles an hour, but probably more important was the spin and where the ball appeared to break. The purpose of forcing pitchers to start with both feet touching the rubber was to help people learn to pitch properly.

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Turning, Twisting, and Crunching

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The purpose of this document is to define turning, twisting and crunching in relation to throwing and hitting in softball and baseball. To generate power by snapping the whip we twist or crunch. We turn to get the whip started, and make it release to the target with a nice follow through. Nice follow-throughs protect the arm. Here are the rules for a nice follow through: How many ways do we turn? We turn both ways. How far do we turn? We turn all the way, both ways. When we turn all the way both ways, the final result depends on the way the feet are pointed and the position of the hand upon release. So, besides protecting our arm, turning till the body stops the turn tremendously improves accuracy. You can feel the stops and use them to control the whip.

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Snap the Towel with both Hands

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The purpose of this document is to define throwing and hitting. How do you snap a towel? What makes it snap? I am not saying we should ever snap a towel. But, if we know how to snap a towel it can really help in understanding throwing and hitting in softball or baseball. The ability to snap a towel is all about directing energy to a point. That direction makes the towel snap. Hitting and throwing is like snapping a towel with both hands. The only way to snap a towel in a specific direction is related to the only way we throw or hit a ball with some snap. There are only two ways to do it, one is a pulling-twisting motion and the other is a pushing-slinging motion. Both ways go right in line with the eyes to a specific point. In other words, because there is no specific direction, side-arm or around the corner does not work, no snap. Bat and ball speed come from the snap, just like snapping a towel with both hands.

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Clockwise Counterclockwise: Throwing, Fielding and Hitting

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The purpose of this document is to define clockwise and counterclockwise in relation to throwing, fielding, and hitting. First, I want to introduce the idea of practicing our pitching by throwing the ball around the diamond both clockwise and counterclockwise. This drill will demonstrate the relationship between rhythm and accuracy. Very few throws in the game are back and forth. Most of the throws in the game can be simulated by throwing the ball around the horn clockwise and counterclockwise. The longer throws are simulated by throwing the ball across the diamond then clockwise or across the diamond then counterclockwise. What we learn by doing this is: Rhythm and Accuracy; Natural Ball Movement; and Apparent Movement.

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Short Powerful Swing Simply Defined

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The purpose of this document is to define a short powerful baseball or fastpitch batting swing. It is simply a swing that hits the ball hard on the inside or outside of the ball. The ball has sides because it is coming at you, inside and outside in relation to you. Bat commitment is the bat movement associated with a wrist-break. If the wrists do not

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break, the bat does not move over the plate. Because a short swing has a short bat commitment, the more we hit on the side of the ball the shorter the swing. Plus, with a short swing there can be a lot of bat movement without bat commitment. It is like a whip, like throwing the sweet spot at the ball. The power from the big muscles that generates bat speed will mostly come from the bat movement before commitment. In other words, when hitting on the side of the ball, we can begin to throw the bat at the ball without committing the swing by releasing the wrists. A short powerful swing is like throwing the sweet spot of the bat at the contact point. It begins by throwing the butt end of the bat at that point, and ends by allowing the wrists to break when the bat begins to twirl. Hitting on the side of the ball forces us to throw the bat at the ball, and use this short powerful swing.

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Hands below the Ball Continued

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The purpose of this document is to expand the definition of hand location when positioning to hit a baseball or softball. The previous document introduced the visibility and gravity benefits of hands below the ball. This one will get into plate coverage benefits that will also explain why the approach is more natural and powerful.

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Hands below the Ball

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The purpose of this document is to define hand location when positioning to hit a baseball or softball. The most natural way to position to catch a ball is with the hands below the ball, and the same for hitting. I believe it should be taught that way. Why?—Gravity and Visibility.

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Rotation and Counter Rotation

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The purpose of this document is to define batting swings and throwing motions by heel and hip rotation. I believe hitters and throwers should master both rotation and counter-rotational hip movements. In hitting it expands the hitting zone, in pitching it expands

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the strike zone, and in fielding it improves both throwing speed and accuracy. In previous documents I have used the terms “Windmill” and “Figure-eight” for describing these movements, but in this document I will focus on hip rotation. Compared to “Figure-eight”, “Windmill” uses an extra counter rotational hip movement. In hitting, for the same type comparison we “Turn-on” an inside pitch with rotation and we “keep the front shoulder in” or “hit it out of the catcher’s mitt” with both counter rotation and rotation.

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Heels and Hips

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The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between heel and hip in throwing, pitching and hitting. This heel and hip relationship produces the power that is then distributed by the toes out to the hands. As I have been emphasizing in previous documents, the power comes from inside out, and is contrary to power generated in the smaller muscles and bones as they contract in towards the body. I believe once this direction of power is understood, then the balance and timing of this distribution is natural. It is natural when the focus is on the heels and hips, and not the ball or bat in the hands. Focus on heels and hips for natural distribution, timing and balance of power.

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Keep the Heel Down

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The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between heel and toe in throwing, pitching and hitting. In each, we swing the arm off the heel, and then extend the arm towards the target off the toe. Whether hitting, pitching or throwing, pushing off the toe too soon causes both balance and power problems. The secret to hitting and pitching is a coordinated arm swing. Pushing off the toe too early before the end of the arm swing (where you crack the whip) takes the power out of that coordination. The coordinated arm swing is always an accelerating motion off the vertical axis, and this type of motion starts and ends at the heel. By coordinated I mean, after you get your arm up to speed, you extend it towards your target to twirl the bat or spin the ball. Also, coordination means the whipping motion (that causes the arm to extend, the ball to spin, and the bat to twirl) comes all the way from the heel. So, whip off the heel and extend off the toe. Also, use the vertical axis and the big muscles of your body to power your whip. As you are powering your whip, you are accelerating your arm swing.

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Understand Shoulder Movement

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The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between shoulder movement and the various ways we move things. Shoulder movement keys or indicates the way we move things, and this key can be very helpful in learning how to throw or hit properly. Focus is important for Understanding: Normally with my strategic approach I do not define or describe movement. In other words, definitions normally paint a static picture, but (like in any type of navigation or strategic view) heading, direction or focal point is a major part of that static picture. Just like a navigator's course line on his strategic map, here the focus will be on the direction of shoulder movement for the different ways we move things. By the way, this definition is in my Fastpitch Blog, where it applies to hitting, pitching and throwing both underhand and overhand; but it also applies to all the sports with which I am familiar. In previous documents I have described pushing or pulling as two ways we move things. I have also contrasted inside-out and outside-in ways we move things. I write about skiing, baseball and fastpitch; and I have just lately taken up the game of Golf. More than 50 years ago I took some bowling lessons from a man who bowled 300 games. In all these sports, inside-out provides the most power and balance when moving things. Think of a figure skater pulling her arms in to accelerate a spin, or the opposite (like fighting just to stay on fast, flat merry-go-round without seats) inside-out accelerates the thing being moved, and outside-in accelerates the thing doing the moving.

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Apparent Movement Release Points

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The purpose of this document is to define Apparent Movement Release Points. In previous documents we have described apparent movement and release points. Pitchers want speed, change of speed, and movement. This document will pull this all together so we can throw with speed and movement to all parts of [Jimmy Moore's Pitching Smart Zone System](#). If you do not change release points, you lose both apparent movement and speed. This definition of Apparent Movement Release Points will help us understand why each release point has a speed zone in the target area. In other words, each release point is designed to produce speed in a certain target area, and the ball slows down as we change the target area from that release point. Many pitchers know they are faster in certain target areas, and this document will explain why that happens. With practice, it should help pitchers use all the release points so they can have easy speed, change of speed, and apparent movement in all the target areas. To explain why there are speed zones for the release points, we again focus on the shoulders working as a unit.

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Focus on the Feet and Shoulder Positions

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The purpose of this document is to define important feet and shoulder relationships when throwing. Previous documents have defined [using the shoulders as a unit](#), throwing [pitches that feel the same](#) from various release points, and [throwing off both feet](#). This one will define the feet and shoulder position relationships for each of those release points. For example: when throwing a low release pitch off the front foot, we want to delay the opening of the chest until we get to that front foot. So, we push off the rubber from the toe with the shoulders coming together. We want them all the way together when we land on the heel of the front foot where we immediately begin to open the shoulders. Like this, each type of pitch then can be described with a focus on the important feet (heel or toe) and shoulder (opening or closing) relationships. Also, each type of pitch has only one target height (high, low or on the hands). A feet and shoulder position focus makes the transition between target areas natural and easy.

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Both Shoulders as a Unit

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The purpose of this document is to define the shoulders as a unit. When hitting, pitching or doing anything with a throwing motion, we want the power to come from the big muscles (back, butt and leg muscles). The key to using the big muscles: moving both shoulders as a unit.

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Pitching - Critical Hand Positions

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The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between hand and ball when pitching. Ball spin is extremely important for speed, control and pitch movement. But, that spin must be generated by the larger muscles, not wrist flip. In both overhand and underhand pitching, hand movement rotating the ball generates ball spin, but that rotation happens as we extend before we relax the arm and hand like a whip upon release. It is just like hitting where we get the work done early so the whip can happen.

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Top and Bottom Hand Dominant Swings

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The purpose of this document is to define swings as either Top Hand or Bottom Hand Dominant. In order to have solid powerful short quick swings for all types of pitches, one has to throw the bat with either the top or the bottom hand. To understand those short powerful quick swings, the key may be to first understand the top hand dominant swings, then the fact that in all these short swings we throw the bat down at the ball (with both hands towards the bats “butt end”), then to understand that there has to be a helpful hitch (or Figure 8) in a short quick bottom hand dominant swing.

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Lean into It Footwork

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The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for throwing and hitting hard off the back foot. Because of the obvious forward lean we see in catchers throwing to second base and great baseball hitters like Babe Ruth, Ted Williams (and even not so great hitters like Cal Ripken) it is called “Lean into It Footwork”. When we lean into something we are pushing; but, when we are pulling we are leaning away. Throughout my documents I have described both hitting and throwing together because the way I was taught when done properly they are both throwing motions. Many people question the power of leaning into a pitch, but in both Baseball and Fastpitch the longest balls hit have been hit by people “leaning into the pitch”. Similarly, some of the fastest pitches have been made leaning forward off the back foot whipping into a front foot pivot without any rotation until after the release. The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for throwing and hitting hard off the back foot.

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Sidearm (Arm-swing Wrist-flip Head Pulling) Footwork

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The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for sidearm throwing. From the beginning I have described hitting as throwing the bat head at the ball, and I have encouraged extending the arms when throwing. I have also described two completely different and correct ways to throw. One is rotational with a slow two circle figure 8

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pulling type movement, and the other is a quick linear pushing (with a non-twisting pivot) windmill type movement. Sidearm throwing is a combination of both. In other words, it is both linear and rotational, and so is the footwork. I believe a study of sidearm will expose some problems caused by that footwork.

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With (Figure 8) Against (Windmill)

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The purpose of this document is to define the power source for both Figure 8 and Windmill leverage. In previous documents I have defined Figure 8 as a pulling motion and Windmill as a pushing motion. Whether hitting or throwing or whatever, we pull with something and we push against something. Since pulling and pushing are obviously opposites, the source for power is also opposite; but the key to all this power is in one place: the footwork. Since we naturally use both pulling and pushing footwork while fielding each position, that opposite footwork should be easy to learn. Problems occur though when we try to combine them, or fail to use inside-out arm extension. Like the source of fulcrum or pivot type leverage power, first I will describe what we push against when we Windmill. Then, like the source of gear or transmission type leverage power, I will describe the Figure 8 as two circles that pull “with” each other.

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Knocking the Ball Down

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The purpose of this document is to define positioning for corralling a ball, by knocking it down where we can easily pick it up. The key is being ready to move backward, instead of side to side. I have been catching for a long time. From my viewpoint I have seen that Shortstops and Second Basemen (male or female) set up to move side to side, while Third and First Basemen set up like a Catcher, ready to move fore and aft, especially aft. Because they do not have to catch a ball to make a play, they set up to block and corral balls in the dirt. Plus, all players use this positioning whenever all they have to do is knock a ball down where they can pick it up.

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Pitching Baseball

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The purpose of this document is to use apply my strategic definitions to baseball pitching. Hopefully, a useful by-product of this purpose will be to help overhand throwers understand fastpitch (underhand throwing). Since I have caught professionals in both sports, I believe I have a unique perspective. In previous documents I have discussed extending inside-out throwing as opposed to sidearm outside-in (arm swing and wrist-flip) throwing. I have also discussed windmill motions (without twisting) and figure-eight motions (that emphasize twisting). Plus, I have also discussed throwing with various release points off both feet as something that we do naturally when playing each of the positions in the field, including varying the speed of the throw by the way we combine windmill and figure-eight motions with release points. In other words, changing speeds by the way we use the thumb. This document will use those definitions to define common baseball pitches and relate them to fastpitch. Using my language, it will define fastballs, curves, sinkers, sliders, cutters and split-finger pitches, and show how they relate to the full array of rise-balls, drops and curves in softball.

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Two Ball Drill

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The purpose of this document is to describe a two ball infield drill. When you want to add a little more action to the regular infield drill, try two balls at once. I have seen it done and it looks great. My friends on the one team that did it say it is easy to learn. They were a young team, and were honored to do it at a national tournament before the championship game. Looking harder than it is, it teaches accurate throwing under pressure and decision making,

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80 Complex but not Complicated

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The purpose of this document is to summarize and simplify the ideas presented in my previous documents. Whenever I pitch, I like to only use three signals and keep things very simple, rise drop and change. But at the same time I can deliver these three pitches

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from many different release points. Hopefully this document will help people master the trick of making each pitch feel the same while hiding the ball (and those release points) from the batter. It is complex but not complicated. My pitching ideas are simple and easy to learn. They are easy to learn because they are the same principles you use throwing when fielding, and they are easy because like when fielding you use the same principles on each pitch. Fielding throws have different release points. Once you learn them you just do them without thinking. I only teach three pitches: rise, drop and change. But I teach eight release points that put those three pitches where and when you want them.

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8N Hide the Ball

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The purpose of this document is to describe the advantages of hiding the ball when pitching.

There are obvious advantages to keeping the batter from seeing what you are doing with the ball for as long as possible in the delivery, but there are also some other technical advantages that add movement, speed and accuracy to the pitch. Hiding the ball is simply keeping your body between the batters eyes and the ball for as long as possible. Hiding the ball makes it harder for the batter to pick up the pitch and determine which way or how fast it will be moving. For example: it is easier to hit batting practice off a live pitcher that shows the ball than from a gun that just spits out pitches at different speeds and spins. Hiding the ball is impossible with the current fad of arm-swing and wrist-flip, but it is the secret to the inside-out arm extension used by the great pitchers.

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8M Figure Eight and Windmill Deliveries

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The purpose of this document is to describe, recognize, and combine the use of Figure Eight and Windmill fastpitch deliveries. Because they let you know the release points and which way the ball will move, I believe hitters should recognize these deliveries. Because the combination of these deliveries multiplies the release points changing timing, I believe pitchers should combine these deliveries. I also believe the specific combination of windmill and figure 8 deliveries described here: the easiest to master. Figure Eight Windmill Delivery: The Figure 8 Windmill Delivery is a combination of the original figure 8 delivery with a windmill. The best pitchers I ever saw (Jimmy Moore, Michael White, and Chuck D'Arcy for example) all used it to throw the hard low rise balls early to set up all the other pitches. The eight in the delivery is caused by the twisting of the shoulders while the ball moves straight overhand or underhand.

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8L “Light Ball” Concept

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The purpose of this document is to define a feeling to strive for when throwing. In previous documents I have described throwing a ball or bat with an inside-out (overhand or underhand vs. sidearm) motion. A “light ball” feeling upon release creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. Plus because the ball will jump off the bat, a “light bat quick hands” feeling upon release also creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. In both hitting and throwing the key is the inside-out release where the effort is finished by the big bones and muscles before the release creating the light feeling to strive for when throwing. In other words, with an inside-out swing or pitch, the bat or ball feel light upon release. Release of a ball would be when the arm is fully extended and the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. Release of a bat would also be when the arm is fully extended and the bat twirls right before contact. In both cases, strive for the light feeling when throwing.

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8K Front Corner and Back Corner Pitches

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The purpose of this document is to define front corner and back corner pitches. I like to use these terms in both pitching and hitting strategies. Plus, these terms help define efficient and effective practice sessions. The catcher is on the back side and the pitcher is on the front side of home plate. The front corners are the two corners on the front of home plate. The back corners are the three corners on the back of home plate. A front corner pitch just catches a front corner without catching or crossing inside a back corner. A back corner pitch just catches a back corner without catching a front corner. For example: front corner pitches are moving away from the center of the plate and back corner pitches are moving toward the center of the plate. These definitions are used for framing the pitch and strike zone control.

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8J Bend then Extend the Pitching Arm

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The purpose of this document is to point out how important it is to bend the pitching arm during delivery. I teach the overhand or underhand inside-out release. Since the 1960's I have been watching the great pitchers and most (if not all) extend the pitching arm and hand upon release. Since you cannot extend a straight arm, the purpose of this document is to point out how important it is to bend the throwing arm during the delivery.

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8I The King and His Court Drill

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The purpose of this document is to describe a hitting, pitching and fielding drill. This drill in combination with the 7 Drill for Throwing, Fielding and Hitting (which also includes running) will keep a whole team very busy in most of the elements they need to practice. The original "King and his Court" was a four man softball team from nearby Walla Walla, Washington. Playing with a pitcher (Eddie Feigner: The King), a catcher, a shortstop and a second baseman, they traveled the world beating nine man softball teams. In this drill we use the same setup and a batter to produce live batting practice, with the other half of the team running the other drill in the outfield. This drill pits the pitcher and catcher against a batter. If there are only two people available, it can be done with just a pitcher and a batter. Adding a catcher really improves the game. Adding the shortstop and second baseman sets the defense, giving the batter two targets to miss. The shortstop and second baseman get live fielding and throwing practice, throwing to first or second depending on the imaginary runner situation. The defense (normally the catcher) acts as the umpire.

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8H Hook, Sit, Tomahawk, and Golf Swings

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The purpose of this document is to describe four swings that are required to hit fastpitch. Knowing these four swings, a batter can easily shape his (his/her) body to make firm contact with any pitch. Firm contact comes from hitting against the spin. To hit against the spin, a batter must line the swing up with the pitch. These four swings are required to align the bat with the pitch. Hitting against the ball's spin will align the bat with the

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movement of the ball. If the pitch is moving away from the batter, that alignment will be on the inside of the ball. If the pitch is moving up, that alignment will be down trying to spin the ball back where it came from. You want to hook (on the outside) any pitch moving in, and you may want to lift any pitch moving down. And finally, you want to sit on any pitch right down the middle. Level swings only line up with level pitches, which do not happen often in fastpitch. To hit pitches back where they are coming from, you need to practice all four types of swings.

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8G Butt and Elbow - Up or Down

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The purpose of this document is to describe important keys to proper throwing. Earlier documents described throwing with or without twisting. We whip the bat or ball with our hips in a pushing or pulling motion. The hip and elbow positions are good keys because they go together for balance and that balance is opposite for pulling and pushing. When throwing by pulling with a twist, the butt and elbow are both down. When throwing without twisting (by pushing), the elbow and butt are both up. In other words, at the release point when you get power from your hips and release the ball the positions of your butt and elbow are balanced and key the power you can develop.

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8F Twisting and Whip

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The purpose of this document is to describe two ways to use the hips when throwing: the twisting whip and the non-twisting whip. Whether throwing a bat or a ball, there are two ways to create the whipping action. Plus, because we have two feet there are three ways to do each of those types of whipping actions: off one foot or the other, or off both feet. That seems complicated enough, but there is one more level: in-side out (overhand or underhand) and outside-in (sidearm). We use the hips when throwing. We throw inside-out without a wrist snap or outside-in with a wrist snap. And we have two feet, so luckily that is as complicated as it gets. This document will focus on the two ways we use the hips when whipping a bat or ball: Twisting and Not-Twisting. Before I begin I must first say why we need to learn both hip movements. Plus, why would I want players to learn them from the beginning. The answer is easy, because it is easy (more natural) to whip both ways, depending on the situation. Every position on the team requires both types of throws. Plus it makes hitting much more natural (easier). So (all together now for both hitting and throwing) I will describe both hip movements.

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8E Release Timing Trigger

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The purpose of this document is to describe timing (specifically release timing) in pitching, hitting and throwing. In a throwing motion, something has to trigger the release. The release is the inside-out explosion or outside-in snap that ejects the ball or twirls the bat. In all types of throwing, whether throwing a bat or pitching a ball (underhand or overhand) that timing mechanism should be found in the hips.

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8D Footwork and Grips

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The purpose of this document is to describe subtle adjustments to footwork and grips. This document describes grip types as characteristics of footwork, and subtle changes to footwork are improvements related to those grip types. So far, I have not introduced grip types, because of their relationship to footwork and the quality and understanding of the footwork has to be more advanced. In other words, I did not want to introduce too much too soon. However, when the time is right the subtle changes to footwork with their corresponding grip types should help both speed and control. By the way, this applies to both overhand and underhand.

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8C Sidearm

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The purpose of this document is to describe “sidearm” for throwing, pitching (underhand and overhand), and hitting. Sidearm should be avoided. The problem: at first sidearm seems easier, but in the end it is both slower and harder to control. Since we throw the bat in hitting, there is also a similar problem with throwing the bat sidearm. Sidearm pitching (underhand or overhand) deceives the pitcher for the same reason: at first it is easier to do, but for someone who can hit on both sides of the ball it is easier to hit. The purpose of this document is to help players and coaches recognize “sidearm” in opposing pitchers and teammates who want to improve their throwing and hitting.

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8B the Crow Hop

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The purpose of this document is to describe the Crow Hop. I am going to take a new approach to this sometimes confused subject. Before I describe the crow hop when pitching underhand, I will describe it as used when throwing from the infield or outfield. It should not be used there either. When throwing on the run, you can either throw off the front or back foot. The only way to throw on the run and throw off the back foot is to crow hop. In other words, you have to push twice consecutively off the back foot (feet) without ever pulling off the front foot. With no hips like ours, a crow does not have a front foot.

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8A Heads UP Heads Down

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The purpose of this document is to describe body positions and leverage power with heads UP and heads DOWN. So far in the other TeamsWin Fastpitch documents we have described Heads UP and Heads DOWN positions in each strategy: running, fielding, throwing, hitting and pitching. The head position is the easiest place to start in describing technique for improving leverage power. Like learning how to start running with the head down and finish with the head up, I believe players need be able to use both techniques in the other disciplines: hitting, fielding, throwing and pitching. This document examines the heads up and heads down leverage and benefits for each discipline. When running we start with the head down and finish with the head up. When starting to run, there is more power and quickness when pushing with the legs. However when we are up to speed, there is more leverage when pulling with the legs. For all the disciplines, head down is for pushing and head up is for pulling, and an inside out push is quicker than an outside in pull.

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7 Drill for Throwing Fielding and Hitting

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The purpose of this document is to describe a drill for throwing, fielding and hitting. It also includes some running. This drill works best with four to eight people. It is like a normal outfield drill where a coach hits balls to the outfielders and they throw the ball back to

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the coach. But, here the players do the hitting, fielding, throwing and running, while perfecting efficiency and effectiveness. It teaches when to have the head up and when to have it down when running, throwing, fielding and hitting. It teaches the inside out swing when hitting, and the inside out release when throwing. Like a chest-pass in both, it teaches the away from the body swing and the throw that sails.

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3 Strategy for Offense

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The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for offense. Definitions are the most important part of any strategy. This document will name and define some terms that will be the basic objects for understanding goals and objectives and this language of terms will also provide meaning to tactics and their practice. In other words, strategy is what you are doing and why. Tactics are how you are doing what you are doing. We practice tactics, and we understand our practice because we understand our strategy.

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2 Strategy for Defense

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The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for defense. Definitions are the most important part of any strategy. This document will name and define some terms that will be the basic objects for understanding goals and objectives and this language of terms will also provide meaning to tactics and their practice. In other words, strategy is what you are doing and why. Tactics are how you are doing what you are doing. We practice tactics, and we understand our practice because we understand our strategy.

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5 Strategy for Fielding

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The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for fielding. Fielding strategy is all about position. Position yourself to move. Position yourself to throw, and probably most important position yourself to hurt. I am a 60+ year old catcher, so I have been watching fielders for many years. The first thing I think of when I think of fielding is getting in front of the ball. If you put yourself in position to hurt unless you catch it, then you will

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catch it. You will catch it with unconscious movements faster than you can think. You will also have time to catch things that miss you. But if you are not in front of the ball so it will hurt, then when you get any kind of bad hop subconsciously you will protect yourself. Your first move will be to protect yourself, so you will be slow to catch things that miss you.

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6 Strategy for Running and Sliding

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The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for running and sliding. Running and sliding go together, whether running the bases or running in the outfield. Being able to track a ball while you run is the same whether you are running the bases or in the outfield. Being able to shift gears is the same and for the same purpose whether running the bases or in the outfield. To be understood, running and sliding requires some definitions. To run with your head up, your shoulder blades have to be all the way together in the back, and you have to come down on your toes first. To run without decelerating or bouncing requires you use your toes to soften the step. To accelerate, the head is down, the shoulders are together in front, and the weight or center of gravity is way forward. The first definition would be first gear: the name of the body position when you start out. The second definition: second gear is running with your head up and chest out.

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4C Strategy for Low Pitches: Hitting It through the Infield

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The purpose of this document is to discuss the advantages of focusing on low pitches. It focuses on covering pitches (the strike zone) up and down and should be used with “Strategy for Covering the Plate” which focuses on covering the strike zone (the plate) left and right. This document also builds on a previous document “Shoot it Inside Out Hitting”, and setting up to hook the ball which keeps the hands back. Because the defensive catcher and pitcher can see these three strategies in the way the offensive hitter sets up, together these three documents can be used in understanding pitching strategy. This document points out the advantages of setting up to hit low pitches hard through the infield.

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4B Strategy for Covering the Plate

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The purpose of this document is to discuss a strategy for covering the plate. It focuses on covering pitches (the strike zone) left and right and should be used with “Hitting it Through the Infield” which focuses on covering the strike zone (the plate) up and down. This document also builds on a previous document “Shoot it Inside-out Hitting”, and setting up to hook the ball which keeps the hands back. Because the defensive catcher and pitcher can see these strategies in the way the offensive hitter sets up (swings), these documents can also be used in understanding pitching strategy. This document points out the many advantages of forcing the pitcher to pitch, of setting up the pitcher to give you what you want when you have two strikes, and of covering the plate.

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1C Shoot It Inside Out Pitching- Aiming the Pitch

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The purpose of this document is to record the aiming portion of my pitching strategy. Besides aiming, this document will show how to make the ball move both in and out and up and down. The idea is to make the ball move a little bit and use location to take advantage of apparent movement. Also, the idea is to expand the zone the batter has to cover. The aiming will cause this to happen. The aiming will also maximize spin with minimal effort. The idea is to get easy speed and movement with the most accuracy.

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1B Shoot It Inside Out Pitching

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The purpose of this document is to record my pitching strategy. Because inside-out is the best release when throwing, passing hitting, or pitching anything, it is called “Shoot It Inside Out Pitching”. With any strategy, terms need to be understood (to understand goals and objectives). So, I will define some strategic terms that will support technical goals, and then add some strategic terms for tactical goals.

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4A Shoot IT Inside Out Hitting

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The purpose of this document is to record my approach to hitting a baseball or softball. To begin with I will describe my approach to an outside pitch. Therefore, with an inward turn to line up with the pitch, all the other pitches are hit the same way (with hands back). The front foot is for off speed pitches. Everything about the back foot translates to the front foot. If you see the pitcher stab the front foot, look for off speed and stab your front foot.

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1A Strategy for Pitching Hitting and Throwing

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The purpose of this document is to record my thoughts on pitching, hitting and throwing. These are the concepts that are fundamental whether one is pitching, hitting or throwing. Also, these fundamentals apply for both baseball and Fastpitch softball. I have been pitching, catching and playing utility in Men's Fastpitch since 1967. The last two years (2007 and 2008) our Seattle team has won the North American Fastpitch Association (NAFA) Western World Series. To stay active in the game so long, I have had to work on my pitching, hitting and throwing.

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Alphabetical Sort

Aiming the Pitch

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The purpose of this document is to record the aiming portion of my pitching strategy. Besides aiming, this document will show how to make the ball move both in and out and up and down. The idea is to make the ball move a little bit and use location to take advantage of apparent movement. Also, the idea is to expand the zone the batter has to cover. The aiming will cause this to happen. The aiming will also maximize spin with minimal effort. The idea is to get easy speed and movement with the most accuracy.

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Apparent Movement Release Points

Copyrighted 07/03/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define Apparent Movement Release Points. In previous documents we have described apparent movement and release points. A pitcher wants speed, change of speed, and movement. This document will pull this all together so we can throw with speed and movement to all parts of [Jimmy Moore's Pitching Smart Zone System](#). If you do not change release points, you lose both apparent movement and speed. This definition of Apparent Movement Release Points will help us understand why each release point has a speed zone in the target area. In other words, each release point is designed to produce speed in a certain target area, and the ball slows down as we change the target area from that release point. Many pitchers know they are faster in certain target areas, and this document will explain why that happens. With practice, it should help pitchers use all the release points so they can have easy speed, change of speed, and apparent movement in all the target areas. To explain why there are speed zones for the release points, we again focus on the shoulders working as a unit.

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Bend then Extend the Pitching Arm

Copyrighted 06/14/11 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to point out how important it is to bend the pitching arm during the delivery. I teach the overhand or underhand inside-out release. Since the 1960's I have been watching the great pitchers and most if not all extend the pitching arm and hand upon release. Since you cannot extend a straight arm, the purpose of this document is to point out how important it is to bend the throwing arm during the delivery.

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Both Feet on the Rubber

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The purpose of this document is to define the purpose of starting with both feet on the rubber. The rule of starting with both feet on the pitching rubber was implemented to help people learn how to pitch properly. It almost forced pitchers to push or pull "back" with the feet to generate power against the ground. Using the big muscles of the body to push or pull back turned the arm into a whip that both propelled and spun the ball much faster than could be obtained by the pushing or pulling forward. After the rule changed the pitchers all began to push or pull forward. We had speed guns back then and the speed was faster with the whip by about ten miles an hour, but probably more important was the spin and

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where the ball appeared to break. The purpose of forcing pitchers to start with both feet touching the rubber was to help people learn to pitch properly.

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Both Shoulders as a Unit

Copyrighted 05/27/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define the shoulders as a unit. When hitting, pitching or doing anything with a throwing motion, we want the power to come from the big muscles (back, butt and leg muscles). The key to using the big muscles: moving both shoulders as a unit.

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Butt and Elbow - Up or Down

Copyrighted 05/23/11 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to describe important keys to proper throwing. Earlier documents described throwing with or without twisting. We whip the bat or ball with our hips in a pushing or pulling motion. The hip and elbow positions are good keys because they go together for balance and that balance is opposite for pulling and pushing. When throwing by pulling with a twist, the butt and elbow are both down. When throwing without twisting (by pushing), the elbow and butt are both up. In other words, at the release point when you get power from your hips and release the ball the positions of your butt and elbow are balanced and key the power you can develop.

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Clockwise Counterclockwise: Throwing, Fielding and Hitting

Copyrighted 03/14/16 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define clockwise and counterclockwise in relation to throwing, fielding, and hitting. First, I want to introduce the idea of practicing our pitching by throwing the ball around the diamond both clockwise and counterclockwise. This drill will demonstrate the relationship between rhythm and accuracy. Very few throws in the game are back and forth. Most of the throws in the game can be simulated by throwing the ball around the horn clockwise and counterclockwise. The longer throws are simulated by throwing the ball across the diamond then clockwise or across the diamond then counterclockwise. What we learn by doing this is: Rhythm and Accuracy; Natural Ball Movement; and Apparent Movement.

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Complex but not Complicated

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The purpose of this document is to summarize and simplify the ideas presented in my previous documents. Whenever I pitch, I like to only use three signals and keep things very simple, rise drop and change. But at the same time I can deliver these three pitches from many different release points. Hopefully this document will help people master the trick of making each pitch feel the same while hiding the ball (and those release points) from the batter. It is complex but not complicated. My pitching ideas are simple and easy to learn. They are easy to learn because they are the same principles you use throwing when fielding, and they are easy because like when fielding you use the same principles on each pitch. Fielding throws have different release points. Once you learn them you just do them without thinking. I only teach three pitches: rise, drop and change. But I teach eight release points that put those three pitches where and when you want them.

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Crow Hop

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The purpose of this document is to describe the Crow Hop. I am going to take a new approach to this sometimes confused subject. Before I describe the crow hop when pitching underhand, I will describe it as used when throwing from the infield or outfield. It should not be used there either. When throwing on the run, you can either throw off the front or back foot. The only way to throw on the run and throw off the back foot is to crow hop. In other words, you have to push twice consecutively off the back foot (feet) without ever pulling off the front foot. With no hips like ours, a crow does not have a front foot.

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Drill for Throwing Fielding and Hitting

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The purpose of this document is to describe a drill for throwing, fielding and hitting. It also includes some running. This drill works best with four to eight people. It is like a normal outfield drill where a coach hits balls to the outfielders and they throw the ball back to the coach. But, here the players do the hitting, fielding, throwing and running, while perfecting efficiency and effectiveness. It teaches when to have the head up and when to have it down when running, throwing, fielding and hitting. It teaches the inside out swing when hitting, and the inside out release when throwing. Like a chest-pass in both, it teaches the away from the body swing and the throw that sails.

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Figure Eight and Windmill Deliveries

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The purpose of this document is to describe, recognize, and combine the use of Figure Eight and Windmill fastpitch deliveries. Because they let you know the release points and which way the ball will move, I believe hitters should recognize these deliveries. Because the combination of these deliveries multiplies the release points changing timing, I believe pitchers should combine these deliveries. I also believe the specific combination of windmill and figure 8 deliveries described here: the easiest to master. Figure Eight Windmill Delivery: The Figure 8 Windmill Delivery is a combination of the original figure 8 delivery with a windmill. The best pitchers I ever saw (Jimmy Moore, Michael White, and Chuck D'Arcy for example) all used it to throw the hard low rise balls early to set up all the other pitches. The eight in the delivery is caused by the twisting of the shoulders while the ball moves straight overhand or underhand.

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Focus on the Feet and Shoulder Positions

Copyrighted 06/22/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define important feet and shoulder relationships when throwing. Previous documents have defined [using the shoulders as a unit](#), throwing [pitches that feel the same](#) from various release points, and [throwing off both feet](#). This one will define the feet and shoulder position relationships for each of those release points. For example: when throwing a low release pitch off the front foot, we want to delay the opening of the chest until we get to that front foot. So, we push off the rubber from the toe with the shoulders coming together. We want them all the way together when we land on the heel of the front foot where we immediately begin to open the shoulders. Like this, each type of pitch then can be described with a focus on the important feet (heel or toe) and shoulder (opening or closing) relationships. Also, each type of pitch has only one target height (high, low or on the hands). A feet and shoulder position focus makes the transition between target areas natural and easy.

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Footwork and Grips

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The purpose of this document is to describe subtle adjustments to footwork and grips. This document describes grip types as characteristics of footwork, and

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subtle changes to footwork are improvements related to those grip types. So far, I have not introduced grip types, because of their relationship to footwork and the quality and understanding of the footwork has to be more advanced. In other words, I did not want to introduce too much too soon. However, when the time is right the subtle changes to footwork with their corresponding grip types should help both speed and control. By the way, this applies to both overhand and underhand.

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Front Corner and Back Corner Pitches

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The purpose of this document is to define and define the use of front corner and back corner pitches. I like to use these terms in both pitching and hitting strategies. Plus, these terms help define efficient and effective practice sessions. The catcher is on the back side and the pitcher is on the front side of home plate. The front corners are the two corners on the front of home plate. The back corners are the three corners on the back of home plate. A front corner pitch just catches a front corner without catching or crossing inside a back corner. A back corner pitch just catches a back corner without catching a front corner. For example: front corner pitches are moving away from the center of the plate and back corner pitches are moving toward the center of the plate. These definitions are used for framing the pitch and strike zone control.

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Heads UP Heads Down

Copyrighted 03/19/11 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to describe body positions and leverage power with heads UP and heads DOWN. So far in the other TeamsWin Fastpitch documents we have described Heads UP and Heads DOWN positions in each strategy: running, fielding, throwing, hitting and pitching. The head position is the easiest place to start in describing technique for improving leverage power. Like learning how to start running with the head down and finish with the head up, I believe players need be able to use both techniques in the other disciplines: hitting, fielding, throwing and pitching. This document examines the heads up and heads down leverage and benefits for each discipline. When running we start with the head down and finish with the head up. When starting to run, there is more power and quickness when pushing with the legs. However when we are up to speed, there is more leverage when pulling with the legs. For all the disciplines, head down is for pushing and head up is for pulling, and an inside out push is quicker than an outside in pull.

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Heels and Hips

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The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between heel and hip in throwing, pitching and hitting. This heel and hip relationship produces the power that is then distributed by the toes out to the hands. As I have been emphasizing in previous documents, the power comes from inside out, and is contrary to power generated in the smaller muscles and bones as they contract in towards the body. I believe once this direction of power is understood, then the balance and timing of this distribution is natural. It is natural when the focus is on the heels and hips, and not the ball or bat in the hands. Focus on heels and hips for natural distribution, timing and balance of power.

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Hide the Ball

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The purpose of this document is to describe the advantages of hiding the ball when pitching. There are obvious advantages to keeping the batter from seeing what you are doing with the ball for as long as possible in the delivery, but there are also some other technical advantages that add movement, speed and accuracy to the pitch. Hiding the ball is simply keeping your body between the batters eyes and the ball for as long as possible. Hiding the ball makes it harder for the batter to pick up the pitch and determine which way or how fast it will be moving. For example: it is easier to hit batting practice off a live pitcher that shows the ball than from a gun that just spits out pitches at different speeds and spins. Hiding the ball is impossible with the current fad of arm-swing and wrist-flip, but it is the secret to the inside-out arm extension used by the great pitchers.

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Hook, Sit, Tomahawk, and Golf Swings

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The purpose of this document is to describe four swings that are required to hit fastpitch. Knowing these four swings, a batter can easily shape their body to make firm contact with any pitch. Firm contact comes from hitting against the spin. To hit against the spin, a batter must line the swing up with the pitch. These four swings are required to align the bat with the pitch. Hitting against the ball's spin will align the bat with the movement of the ball. If the pitch is moving away from the batter, that alignment will be on the inside of the ball. If the pitch is moving up, that alignment will be down trying to spin the ball back where it came from. You want to hook (on the outside) any pitch moving in, and you may want to lift any pitch moving down. And finally, you want to sit on any pitch

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right down the middle. Level swings only line up with level pitches, which do not happen often in fastpitch. To hit pitches back where they are coming from, you need to practice all four types of swings.

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Keep the Heel Down

Copyrighted 07/06/13 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between heel and toe in throwing, pitching and hitting. In each, we swing the arm off the heel, and then extend the arm towards the target off the toe. Whether hitting, pitching or throwing, pushing off the toe too soon causes both balance and power problems. The secret to hitting and pitching is a coordinated arm swing. Pushing off the toe too early before the end of the arm swing (where you crack the whip) takes the power out of that coordination. The coordinated arm swing is always an accelerating motion off the vertical axis, and this type of motion starts and ends at the heel. By coordinated I mean, after you get your arm up to speed, you extend it towards your target to twirl the bat or spin the ball. Also, coordination means the whipping motion (that causes the arm to extend, the ball to spin, and the bat to twirl) comes all the way from the heel. So, whip off the heel and extend off the toe. Also, use the vertical axis and the big muscles of your body to power your whip. As you are powering your whip, you are accelerating your arm swing.

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King and His Court Drill

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The purpose of this document is to describe a hitting, pitching and fielding drill. This drill in combination with the 7 Drill for Throwing, Fielding and Hitting (which also includes running) will keep a whole team very busy in most of the elements they need to practice. The original “King and his Court” was a four man softball team from nearby Walla Walla, Washington. Playing with a pitcher (Eddie Feigner: The King), a catcher, a shortstop and a second baseman, they traveled the world beating nine man softball teams. In this drill we use the same setup and a batter to produce live batting practice, with the other half of the team running the other drill in the outfield. This drill pits the pitcher and catcher against a batter. If there are only two people available, it can be done with just a pitcher and a batter. Adding a catcher really improves the game. Adding the shortstop and second baseman sets the defense, giving the batter two targets to miss. The shortstop and second baseman get live fielding and throwing practice, throwing to first or second depending on the imaginary runner situation. The defense (normally the catcher) acts as the umpire.

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Knocking the Ball Down

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The purpose of this document is to define positioning for corralling a ball, by knocking it down where we can easily pick it up. The key is being ready to move backward, instead of side to side. I have been catching for a long time. From my viewpoint I have seen that Shortstops and Second Basemen (male or female) set up to move side to side, while Third and First Basemen set up like a Catcher, ready to move fore and aft, especially aft. Because they do not have to catch a ball to make a play, they set up to block and corral balls in the dirt. Plus, all players use this positioning whenever all they have to do is knock a ball down where they can pick it up.

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Lean into It Footwork

Copyrighted 03/26/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for throwing and hitting hard off the back foot. Because of the obvious forward lean we see in catchers throwing to second base and great baseball hitters like Babe Ruth, Ted Williams (and even not so great hitters like Cal Ripken) it is called “Lean into It Footwork”. When we lean into something we are pushing; but, when we are pulling we are leaning away. Throughout my documents I have described both hitting and throwing together because the way I was taught when done properly they are both throwing motions. Many people question the power of leaning into a pitch, but in both Baseball and Fastpitch the longest balls hit have been hit by people “leaning into the pitch”. Similarly, some of the fastest pitches have been made leaning forward off the back foot whipping into a front foot pivot without any rotation until after the release. The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for throwing and hitting hard off the back foot.

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Light Ball” Concept

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The purpose of this document is to define a feeling to strive for when throwing. In previous documents I have described throwing a ball or bat with an inside-out (overhand or underhand vs. sidearm) motion. A “light ball” feeling upon release creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. Plus because the ball will jump off the bat, a “light bat quick hands” feeling upon release also creates a “heavy ball” feeling when caught. In both hitting and throwing the key is the inside-out release where the effort is finished by the big bones and muscles before the

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release creating the light feeling to strive for when throwing. In other words, with an inside-out swing or pitch, the bat or ball feel light upon release. Release of a ball would be when the arm is fully extended and the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Release of a bat would also be when the arm is fully extended and the bat twirls right before contact. In both cases, strive for the light feeling when throwing.

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Pitching - Critical Hand Positions

Copyrighted 05/10/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between hand and ball when pitching. Ball spin is extremely important for speed, control and pitch movement. But, that spin must be generated by the larger muscles, not wrist flip. In both overhand and underhand pitching, hand movement rotating the ball generates ball spin, but that rotation happens as we extend before we relax the arm and hand like a whip upon release. It is just like hitting where we get the work done early so the whip can happen.

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Pitching Baseball

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The purpose of this document is to use apply my strategic definitions to baseball pitching. Hopefully, a useful by-product of this purpose will be to help overhand throwers understand fastpitch (underhand throwing). Since I have caught professionals in both sports, I believe I have a unique perspective. In previous documents I have discussed extending inside-out throwing as opposed to sidearm outside-in (arm swing and wrist-flip) throwing. I have also discussed windmill motions (without twisting) and figure-eight motions (that emphasize twisting). Plus, I have also discussed throwing with various release points off both feet as something that we do naturally when playing each of the positions in the field, including varying the speed of the throw by the way we combine windmill and figure-eight motions with release points. In other words, changing speeds by the way we use the thumb. This document will use those definitions to define common baseball pitches and relate them to fastpitch. Using my language, it will define fastballs, curves, sinkers, sliders, cutters and split-finger pitches, and show how they relate to the full array of rise-balls, drops and curves in softball.

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Release Timing Trigger

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The purpose of this document is to describe timing (specifically release timing) in pitching, hitting and throwing. In a throwing motion, something has to trigger the release. The release is the inside-out explosion or outside-in snap that ejects the ball or twirls the bat. In all types of throwing, whether throwing a bat or pitching a ball (underhand or overhand) that timing mechanism should be found in the hips.

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Rotation and Counter Rotation

Copyrighted 09/19/13 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define batting swings and throwing motions by heel and hip rotation. I believe hitters and throwers should master both rotation and counter-rotational hip movements. In hitting it expands the hitting zone, in pitching it expands the strike zone, and in fielding it improves both throwing speed and accuracy. In previous documents I have used the terms “Windmill” and “Figure-eight” for describing these movements, but in this document I will focus on hip rotation. Compared to “Figure-eight”, “Windmill” uses an extra counter rotational hip movement. In hitting, for the same type comparison we “Turn-on” an inside pitch with rotation and we “keep the front shoulder in” or “hit it out of the catcher’s mitt” with both counter rotation and rotation.

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Shoot IT Inside Out Hitting

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The purpose of this document is to record my approach to hitting a baseball or softball. To begin with I will describe my approach to an outside pitch. Therefore, with an inward turn to line up with the pitch, all the other pitches are hit the same way (with hands back). The front foot is for off speed pitches. Everything about the back foot translates to the front foot. If you see the pitcher stab the front foot, look for off speed and stab your front foot.

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Shoot It Inside Out Pitching

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The purpose of this document is to record my pitching strategy. Because inside-out is the best release when throwing, passing hitting, or pitching anything, it is called “Shoot It Inside Out Pitching”. With any strategy, terms need to be understood (to understand goals and objectives). So, I will define some strategic terms that will support technical goals, and then add some strategic terms for tactical goals.

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Short Powerful Swing Simply Defined

Copyrighted 11/21/14 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define a short powerful baseball or fastpitch batting swing. It is simply a swing that hits the ball hard on the inside or outside of the ball. The ball has sides because it is coming at you, inside and outside in relation to you. Bat commitment is the bat movement associated with a wrist-break. If the wrists do not break, the bat does not move over the plate. Because a short swing has a short bat commitment, the more we hit on the side of the ball the shorter the swing. Plus, with a short swing there can be a lot of bat movement without bat commitment. It is like a whip, like throwing the sweet spot at the ball. The power from the big muscles that generates bat speed will mostly come from the bat movement before commitment. In other words, when hitting on the side of the ball, we can begin to throw the bat at the ball without committing the swing by releasing the wrists. A short powerful swing is like throwing the sweet spot of the bat at the contact point. It begins by throwing the butt end of the bat at that point, and ends by allowing the wrists to break when the bat begins to twirl. Hitting on the side of the ball forces us to throw the bat at the ball, and use this short powerful swing.

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Sidearm

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The purpose of this document is to describe “sidearm” for throwing, pitching (underhand and overhand), and hitting. Sidearm should be avoided. The problem: at first sidearm seems easier, but in the end it is both slower and harder to control. Since we throw the bat in hitting, there is also a similar problem with throwing the bat sidearm. Sidearm pitching (underhand or overhand) deceives the pitcher for the same reason: at first it is easier to do, but for someone who can hit on both sides of the ball it is easier to hit. The purpose of this document

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is to help players and coaches recognize “sidearm” in opposing pitchers and teammates who want to improve their throwing and hitting.

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Sidearm (Arm-swing Wrist-flip Head Pulling) Footwork

Copyrighted 03/23/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define the footwork used for sidearm throwing. From the beginning I have described hitting as throwing the bat head at the ball, and I have encouraged extending the arms when throwing. I have also described two completely different and correct ways to throw. One is rotational with a slow two circle figure 8 pulling type movement, and the other is a quick linear pushing (with a non-twisting pivot) windmill type movement. Sidearm throwing is a combination of both. In other words, it is both linear and rotational, and so is the footwork. I believe a study of sidearm will expose some problems caused by that footwork.

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Snap the Towel with both Hands

Copyrighted 08/03/16 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define throwing and hitting. How do you snap a towel? What makes it snap? I am not saying we should ever snap a towel. But, if we know how to snap a towel it can really help in understanding throwing and hitting in softball or baseball. The ability to snap a towel is all about directing energy to a point. That direction makes the towel snap. Hitting and throwing is like snapping a towel with both hands. The only way to snap a towel in a specific direction is related to the only way we throw or hit a ball with some snap. There are only two ways to do it, one is a pulling-twisting motion and the other is a pushing-slinging motion. Both ways go right in line with the eyes to a specific point. In other words, because there is no specific direction, side-arm or around the corner does not work, no snap. Bat and ball speed comes from the snap, just like snapping a towel with both hands.

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Strategy for Covering the Plate

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The purpose of this document is to discuss a strategy for covering the plate. It focuses on covering pitches (the strike zone) left and right and should be used with “Hitting it Through the Infield” which focuses on covering the strike zone (the plate) up and down. This document also builds of a previous document “Shoot it Inside-out Hitting”, and setting up to hook the ball which keeps the

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hands back. Because the defensive catcher and pitcher can see these strategies in the way the offensive hitter sets up (swings), these documents can also be used in understanding pitching strategy. This document points out the many advantages of forcing the pitcher to pitch, of setting up the pitcher to give you what you want when you have two strikes, and of covering the plate.

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Strategy for Defense

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The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for defense. Definitions are the most important part of any strategy. This document will name and define some terms that will be the basic objects for understanding goals and objectives and this language of terms will also provide meaning to tactics and their practice. In other words, strategy is what you are doing and why. Tactics are how you are doing what you are doing. We practice tactics, and we understand our practice because we understand our strategy.

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Strategy for Fielding

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The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for fielding. Fielding strategy is all about position. Position yourself to move. Position yourself to throw, and probably most important position yourself to hurt. I am a 60+ year old catcher, so I have been watching fielders for many years. The first thing I think of when I think of fielding is getting in front of the ball. If you put yourself in position to hurt unless you catch it, then you will catch it. You will catch it with unconscious movements faster than you can think. You will also have time to catch things that miss you. But if you are not in front of the ball so it will hurt, then when you get any kind of bad hop subconsciously you will protect yourself. Your first move will be to protect yourself, so you will be slow to catch things that miss you.

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Strategy for Low Pitches: Hitting It through the Infield

Copyrighted 10/25/10 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to discuss the advantages of focusing on low pitches. It focuses on covering pitches (the strike zone) up and down and should be used with “Strategy for Covering the Plate” which focuses on covering the strike zone (the plate) left and right. This document also builds on a previous

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document “Shoot it Inside Out Hitting”, and setting up to hook the ball which keeps the hands back. Because the defensive catcher and pitcher can see these three strategies in the way the offensive hitter sets up, together these three documents can be used in understanding pitching strategy. This document points out the advantages of setting up to hit low pitches hard through the infield.

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Strategy for Offense

Copyrighted 11/05/10 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for offense. Definitions are the most important part of any strategy. This document will name and define some terms that will be the basic objects for understanding goals and objectives and this language of terms will also provide meaning to tactics and their practice. In other words, strategy is what you are doing and why. Tactics are how you are doing what you are doing. We practice tactics, and we understand our practice because we understand our strategy.

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Strategy for Pitching Hitting and Throwing

Copyrighted 12/28/08 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to record my thoughts on pitching, hitting and throwing. These are the concepts that are fundamental whether one is pitching, hitting or throwing. Also, these fundamentals apply for both baseball and Fastpitch softball. I have been pitching, catching and playing utility in Men’s Fastpitch since 1967. The last two years (2007 and 2008) our Seattle team has won the North American Fastpitch Association (NAFA) Western World Series. To stay active in the game so long, I have had to work on my pitching, hitting and throwing.

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Strategy for Running and Sliding

Copyrighted 11/04/10 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to discuss strategy for running and sliding. Running and sliding go together, whether running the bases or running in the outfield. Being able to track a ball while you run is the same whether you are running the bases or in the outfield. Being able to shift gears is the same and for the same purpose whether running the bases or in the outfield. To be understood, running and sliding requires some definitions. To run with your head up, your shoulder blades have to be all the way together in the back, and you have to come down on your toes first. To run without decelerating or bouncing requires

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you use your toes to soften the step. To accelerate, the head is down, the shoulders are together in front, and the weight or center of gravity is way forward. The first definition would be first gear: the name of the body position when you start out. The second definition: second gear is running with your head up and chest out.

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Turning, Twisting, and Crunching

Copyrighted 05/05/17 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define turning, twisting and crunching in relation to throwing and hitting in softball and baseball. To generate power by snapping the whip we twist or crunch. We turn to get the whip started, and make it release to the target with a nice follow through. Nice follow-throughs protect the arm. Here are the rules for a nice follow through: How many ways do we turn? We turn both ways. How far do we turn? We turn all the way, both ways. When we turn all the way both ways, the final result depends on the way the feet are pointed and the position of the hand upon release. So, besides protecting our arm, turning till the body stops the turn tremendously improves accuracy. You can feel the stops and use them to control the whip.

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Twisting and Whip

Copyrighted 05/20/11 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to describe two ways to use the hips when throwing: the twisting whip and the non-twisting whip. Whether throwing a bat or a ball, there are two ways to create the whipping action. Plus, because we have two feet there are three ways to do each of those types of whipping actions: off one foot or the other, or off both feet. That seems complicated enough, but there is one more level: in-side out (overhand or underhand) and outside-in (sidearm). We use the hips when throwing. We throw inside-out without a wrist snap or outside-in with a wrist snap. And we have two feet, so luckily that is as complicated as it gets. This document will focus on the two ways we use the hips when whipping a bat or ball: Twisting and Not-Twisting. Before I begin I must first say why we need to learn both hip movements. Plus, why would I want players to learn them from the beginning. The answer is easy, because it is easy (more natural) to whip both ways, depending on the situation. Every position on the team requires both types of throws. Plus it makes hitting much more natural (easier). So (all together now for both hitting and throwing) I will describe both hip movements.

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Top and Bottom Hand Dominant Swings

Copyrighted 05/08/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define swings as either Top Hand or Bottom Hand Dominant. In order to have solid powerful short quick swings for all types of pitches, one has to throw the bat with either the top or the bottom hand. To understand those short powerful quick swings, the key may be to first understand the top hand dominant swings, then the fact that in all these short swings we throw the bat down at the ball (with both hands towards the bats “butt end”), then to understand that there has to be a helpful hitch (or Figure 8) in a short quick bottom hand dominant swing.

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Two Ball Drill

Copyrighted 10/19/11 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to describe a two ball infield drill. When you want to add a little more action to the regular infield drill, try two balls at once. I have seen it done and it looks great. My friends on the one team that did it say it is easy to learn. They were a young team, and were honored to do it at a national tournament before the championship game. Looking harder than it is, it teaches accurate throwing under pressure and decision making.

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Understand Shoulder Movement

Copyrighted 11/05/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define the relationship between shoulder movement and the various ways we move things. Shoulder movement keys or indicates the way we move things, and this key can be very helpful in learning how to throw or hit properly. Focus is important for Understanding: Normally with my strategic approach I do not define or describe movement. In other words, definitions normally paint a static picture, but (like in any type of navigation or strategic view) heading, direction or focal point is a major part of that static picture. Just like a navigator’s course line on his strategic map, here the focus will be on the direction of shoulder movement for the different ways we move things. By the way, this definition is in my Fastpitch Blog, where it applies to hitting, pitching and throwing both underhand and overhand; but it also applies to all the sports with which I am familiar. In previous documents I have described pushing or pulling as two ways we move things. I have also contrasted inside-out and outside-in ways we move things. I write about skiing, baseball and fastpitch; and I have just lately taken up the game of Golf. More than 50 years ago I took some bowling lessons from a man who bowled 300

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games. In all these sports, inside-out provides the most power and balance when moving things. Think of a figure skater pulling her arms in to accelerate a spin, or the opposite (like fighting just to stay on fast, flat merry-go-round without seats) inside-out accelerates the thing being moved, and outside-in accelerates the thing doing the moving.

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With (Figure 8) Against (Windmill)

Copyrighted 03/13/12 by Robert D. Pace

The purpose of this document is to define the power source for both Figure 8 and Windmill leverage. In previous documents I have defined Figure 8 as a pulling motion and Windmill as a pushing motion. Whether hitting or throwing or whatever, we pull with something and we push against something. Since pulling and pushing are obviously opposites, the source for power is also opposite; but the key to all this power is in one place: the footwork. Since we naturally use both pulling and pushing footwork while fielding each position, that opposite footwork should be easy to learn. Problems occur though when we try to combine them, or fail to use inside-out arm extension. Like the source of fulcrum or pivot type leverage power, first I will describe what we push against when we Windmill. Then, like the source of gear or transmission type leverage power, I will describe the Figure 8 as two circles that pull “with” each other.

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