

Strategy for Pitching Hitting and Throwing

1A Strategy for Pitching Hitting and Throwing

The purpose of this document is to introduce fundamentals shared by pitching, hitting and throwing. These fundamentals apply for both Baseball and Fastpitch softball for men and women. 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 these common fundamentals for pitching, hitting and throwing.

Throwing the Bat

All these fundamentals apply to hitting when we throw the bat at the ball. Personally, I never hit very well until I began throwing the bat at the ball. The other way is to use arm swing and wrist flip. For me, the more bat speed from throwing the bat means both more power and a quicker swing. The quickest and most powerful way to throw is an inside-out movement (from the inside big bones out to the small bones). The quicker the swing means I can wait on the ball longer to see the ball better.

Two types of Throws – Snaps and Flips

Through grade school and high school, I was always the catcher. Then as a freshman in college I played shortstop. As a shortstop, I had to learn to throw a new way. I had to learn how make those little flips and throw from many different positions. My catching helped me throw hard from many different positions, but I had problems with my soft flips. Up until that time I believe I had always used a good inside out "catcher's snap" with backspin for throwing hard. But, my flips were sidearm with an outside-in wrist flip. Since that time I have learned to throw both hard and soft with both top-spin and backspin and off both feet, with it all feeling natural. The secret is to never throw sidearm. In other words, always throw inside-out. The problem with sidearm or outside-in: it is very limiting to what you can do with your footwork. So, I am writing this to help people keep it natural, and throw, hit and pitch well in all situations.

Outside-in – Sidearm "Show the Ball"

When I became a shortstop, I had to learn how to flip the ball on double plays; thumbing the ball, and throwing my arm in the direction of the throw. Outside-in primarily refers to the way the hand moves the bat or ball. When the hand moves outside-in, the thumb stays with the fingers, the bat or ball releases off the side of the fingers, and the arm moves in the direction of the target. When trying to throw hard with the thumb on the ball (whether underhand or overhand) outside-in is called "sidearm".

Inside-out – "Hide the Ball and Use Gravity"

Inside-out hides the ball and the arm moves down and out using gravity. Because the ball comes from over the head with the hand facing in, inside-out has for years been called

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overhand, and is much quicker, faster and easier to control than sidearm. Inside-out the ball or bat head explodes away from the top thumb.

Elbow Position

Whether pitching (or throwing) underhand or overhand, showing the ball will point the elbow back. When hitting, they call it “get your elbow up”. Whether hitting or throwing the elbow position is back causing a sidearm (arm swing and wrist flip) throw. Plus with the outside-in motion the arm is shortening upon release.

Inside-out – “Catcher’s Snap”

The inside-out throw has for a long time been called a “Catcher’s Snap”. A catcher puts the ball behind his ear, bringing his elbow forward. Hitting inside-out is the same thing, elbow forward and bat behind the ear. Both are quicker. That’s why they call it a snap.

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