

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.

Shoot it Inside Out

I believe the way to get easy speed and movement with the most accuracy is to shoot it inside out. To do this the fingers are relaxed. Outside in movement comes from the small bones into the big bones (including the thumb), and the fingers are not relaxed. Inside out movement comes from the big bones out to the small bones. I teach that accuracy, speed and movement comes from aiming the pitch with relaxation of the small bones. The effort is focused on the big bones connected to the hips and torso. Because of the resulting angles of that relaxation, the effort is not towards the target, but towards the feet. It is easier to balance and produce energy towards the feet, and it is easier to coordinate and balance relaxed fingers and toes.

Hit a Spot

Before I describe how to aim a pitch, I want to describe the target as a spot like the pocket of a catcher's glove. I will be defining the pitches with the feet and hands (toes and fingers) assuming these are lined up with a small target. Aiming a pitch is like aiming a gun with gun sights. The target is lined up with the front and rear sights. The sights in pitching are the feet and hands, and the target is the pocket of the catcher's glove. Aiming and balance go together.

Balance Point

A subtle change in the balance point will help disguise the pitch. When moving the ball right to left, the balance point is to the rear of the foot. When moving the ball left to right, the balance point is to the front of the foot. An exaggerated change in the balance point will increase the left right movement. Balance and aiming go together, experiment for understanding how they go together.

Thumb Power

When shooting the ball inside out, the thumb (a big bone) is extremely important. The thumb powerfully propels the ball out of the hand. By leaving the ball abruptly, the thumb causes the ball to spin off the tips of the relaxed finger tips. In other words, the thumb propels the ball out of the hand: shooting the ball inside out. Like shooting a basketball, the fine touch control comes from the relaxed finger tips.

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Change-ups

Once you understand thumb power, you understand change-ups. Reverse the process, keeping the thumb on the ball and you have a change-up. Keeping the same arm speed, the ball will go much slower with the thumb not propelling the ball out of the hand. You can also adjust the footwork, but that may tip the pitch.

Aiming with Feet and Hands

As much as possible, the system of aiming should be the same for every pitch. But, at the same time I want to teach an easy way to expand the area the batter must cover (look for strikes), without visibly tipping the batter by changing the aiming system. By just changing the toes and fingers used for aiming, the ball will move in or out. By changing the lead fingers (thumb or fingers) the ball will start out moving up or down. I say start out because the pitches that appear to the batter to break late (rise and then fall or fall and then rise) are consistently moving in a tight spiral curve. Slowing down, they only appear to break late. Only the catcher and umpire have a good view of this spiral movement. When the pitch is down low, it looks flat to the pitcher, batter and spectators on the bench. Expand the strike zone by making the ball move up, down, in and out. Make the pitches look the same to the batter for as long as possible by aiming with specific the toes and fingers.

Aiming with Relaxed Toes and Fingers

For every pitch, I teach aiming with relaxed toes and fingers. Which toes and which fingers change depending on which way the pitch will be moving left or right (in or out). Which fingers lead (thumb or other fingers) determine whether the pitch moves up or down. I like to keep it as simple as possible by aiming with only two toes in combination with only two fingers. For me if I want the ball to move a little right I line up the target with my big toes and my pointer fingers. If I want the ball to move a little left I line up the target with my middle toes and middle fingers. Like the fore and aft sights on a gun, I use the toes on both feet and fingers on both hands. When aiming with the middle fingers and toes, you will be pulling the ball from the front foot causing the movement to go from right to left. When aiming with the big toes and pointer fingers you will be pushing the ball from the back foot causing the movement to go from left to right. Adjusting the release points will change the way the ball appears. For me the best late breaking appearance is when I keep the release points quite forward.

Summary-Inside out Aiming

The purpose of this document is to record the aiming portion of my pitching strategy. Besides aiming, this document shows 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. Relaxed aiming will cause this to happen. Relaxed aiming will also maximize spin with minimal effort. The idea is to get easy speed and movement with the most accuracy.