

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 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.

Only three pitches: Rise, Drop and Change

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 you use the same principles on each pitch. For example: just like when you throw overhand when fielding, you also want to pitch off both feet. In other words, you have to know how to change speeds off both feet, when to twist, when not to twist, and when to use your thumb upon release. In fielding, sometimes you have to throw off the front foot and sometimes off the back foot. Sometimes you have to throw hard and sometimes you have to throw soft with the thumb. If you are throwing at a base, you want backspin. If you are throwing at someone's chest, you want topspin. These 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.

Only three pitches from eight release points

Just like in fielding, in pitching we also want to change speeds, spin with release points. Many things are the same for all release points. The more you perfect the things that do not change, the easier it is to change release points. I present them all here for a complete understanding of what speeds and targets go with which release points. You change release points to: expand the strike zone, have both high and low profile speed, and to increase apparent movement, causing the pitches to seem to break late. Once you learn the things that do not change, you should be able to change release points like you do overhand to be able to put the ball where and when you want, and there is a limit to the number of release points you may ever want to use. There are eight possible release points and no more. So it is complex, but not complicated. It is a complex of eight release points because it involves: pitches off both feet, for both speeds, and for both hip movements (Figure 8 and Windmill). That is a total or limit of $(2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8)$ eight possible release points.

If you do it right, it feels familiar

All you have to do is learn how to do four things that you may already know overhand: change speeds; pitch off both feet; and use both hip movements (a twisting Figure 8 and a non-twisting Windmill). It is complex but not complicated. We throw off both feet in playing every position; so, (because we are familiar with how it feels) pitching off both feet is easy. When we throw off both feet while fielding every position, we

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are using both a twisting and a non-twisting hip motion. The way I have defined things, the Figure 8 is pitching with that twisting motion and the Windmill is pitching without a twist the way a catcher throws to second base or anyone throws hard off the back foot bending at the waist (the twist comes in the follow-through). In both cases the pitcher winds up like a slingshot or windmill, but the difference is in the hips bending at the waist in the Windmill or twisting in the Figure 8.

Some things are always the same

The great thing about the technique used by the great pitchers (inside-out arm extension while hiding the ball) is that there are many things that feel and look the same on all the pitches. When you extend the arm the wrist always turns, and it feels the same and has the same release point whether it turns up or down. So, extending the arm with the hand ending palm down feels the same as extending the arm with the hand ending up palm up. Plus, they share release points. If you do all the work early in the extension (backing that work up with your footwork) there will be little pressure on your fingers upon release, and the more you hide the ball the better the spin, speed and movement on the pitch. It feels the same to back up the extension off the front foot as it feels off the back foot. It feels the same to back up the extension with a twisting Figure 8 as it does with a non-twisting Windmill. I say it feels the same, because in comparison to the other method of wrist flip with arm swing where every pitch has a different feel, it feels the same.

Changing Speeds with the thumb

I think changing speeds is the most interesting. If you know how to do all these other things, then changing speeds involves knowing which pitch combinations work for speed and which keep the thumb on the ball. For example: Windmill off the front foot is good for speed high in the strike zone, and because the thumb is still on the ball the front foot Windmill is good for an off-speed low pitch that starts from a high release. Figure 8 off the front foot is the opposite, and Windmill off the back foot is also the opposite. All Windmill pitches have high release points, and pitches off the back foot are released higher than pitches off the front foot. All off-speed pitches coming off the thumb are released further back than the high speed pitch they mimic. The fewer fingers on the ball, the faster it will go and vice-versa. The more the ball comes off the thumb, the more fingers and the slower the ball will go. Fastballs come off the fingers and there is very little pressure on those fingers upon releasing a fastball. Change-ups come off the thumb and fingers with more pressure on the thumb than fingers. Because the extension is exactly the same, change-ups look like fastballs.

Changing Spin with arm extension

Changing spin is easier with arm extension and an inside out release, easier than with arm swing and wrist flip. In other words, with arm extension and inside out release young girls can spin the ball both ways, ending up with their hand facing up or down. It is true that with wrist flip, you have to be much stronger to throw a rise ball. But with arm extension, changing spin is easy and as we said before they share release points.

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Here are the 8 Release Points:

With the purpose for each, here are the 8 release points.

- 1) Front foot Figure 8 for Low Profile
- 2) Front foot Figure 8 Low Profile Change-up
- 3) Front foot Windmill for High Profile
- 4) Front foot Windmill High Profile Change-up
- 5) Back foot Figure 8 for High Profile
- 6) Back foot Figure 8 Curve Out Change-up
- 7) Back foot Windmill for High Profile
- 8) Back foot Windmill Curve-in Changeup

Start with the Low Profile Pitches

Notice: there are only two low profile release points, the two front foot Figure 8 release points for fastballs and change-ups. Because they are easy to throw for strikes, learn those low profile pitches first and make sure they are always working. When you know it is coming and because it has the lowest profile, the hardest strike to hit is the low rise ball. It is the safest pitch because it is furthest away from the eyes, and you have to hit down on the ball to hit it against the spin. The next hardest is the low profile drop. They both can be thrown below the strike zone and still be called a strike. You can hit the low profile pitches by putting your eyes down there, but that makes you vulnerable to other pitches. Pitchers and catchers can see that adjustment, so low profile pitches set up the other pitches.

Summary: Complex but not Complicated

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