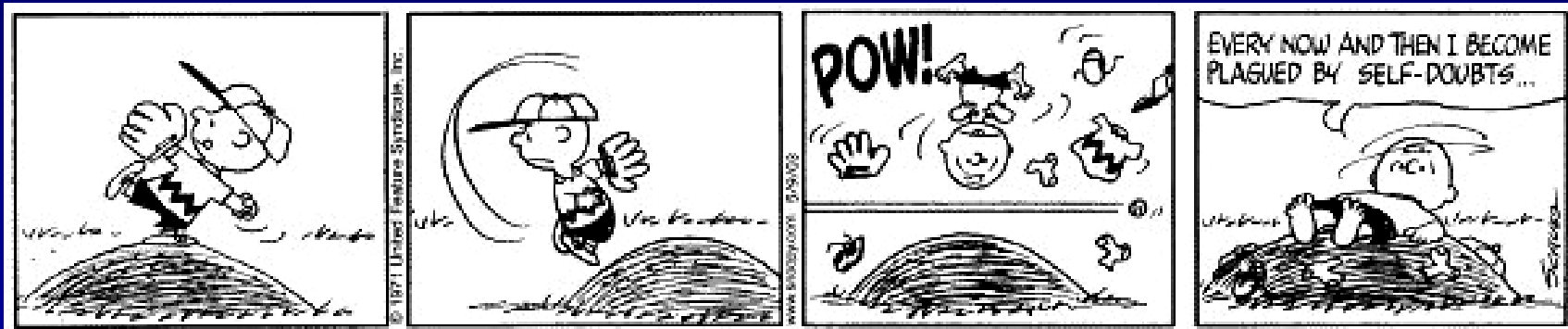


# PITCHING: Proper Mechanics & Increasing Speed



Cindy Bristow

International Softball Federation

Who thinks PITCHING is crucial to success?

How many of you feel qualified to teach it?

*How many of you played 1<sup>st</sup> base?*

*Or Leftfield?*

*Or Catcher?*

*How many of you teach these skills?*

*WHY?*

Pitching IS NOT any harder to understand or do than any other softball skill

You just lack a frame of reference

**OVERHAND vs. UNDERHAND is your basic frame of reference**



start



take-away



stride



release



follow through



# SIMPLY PUT – BOTH INVOLVE:

**A STEP**

**A CIRCLE**

**A RELEASE**





take-away

- **About the Legs**
- **Driving off the Back Foot – or *Reaching with the Stride Foot***
- **Under Control – NOT RUSHED**



stride

- **Stride is Aggressive (*usually long*)**
- **Body Weight is Moving Toward Front Foot**
- **Begins the Hand/Arm Portion of the Motion**



release

- **Hand Behind the Ball**
- **Upper Body is Upright**
- **Weight is Moving to Front Foot**
- **Hand is Moving as Fast as Possible**
- **Glove is Down**



Follow through

- **Weight has Transferred to the Front Foot**
- **Hand Continues to Accelerate**  
*(doesn't stop right away)*
- **Eyes are on the Target**
- **Glove is Close to Body**

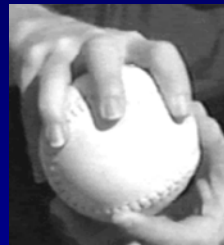
## GRIP:

Finger pads across the seams

As few fingers on ball as necessary (will change with age)

Not too much ball in the hand

Thumb on a seam - control



## STARTING POSITION: (presenting the ball)

Relaxed and Upright

Shoulders Relaxed - DOWN

Weight over Back Foot (*when ready to begin – not getting signal*)



## **BEGINNING MOVEMENT: (arm at hip to begin circle)**

Controlled Fall (*body lean to help momentum & stride*)

Weight Shift Forward – Head Beyond Feet

Relaxed Hand Speed

Shoulders Relaxed -  
DOWN



## **STRIDE: (middle of motion)**

Relaxed on the Take-Away

As LONG a Stride as is  
**Balanced, Comfortable,  
Possible**

Body Upright — *prepare for  
landing*

Arm Extended — *as long as  
is comfortably possible*



## STRIDE: (middle of motion)

Relaxed on the Take-Away

As LONG a Stride as is  
**Balanced, Comfortable,  
Possible**

Body Upright — *prepare for  
landing*

Arm Extended — *as long as  
is comfortably possible*



## RELEASE POINT:

Body is Upright

It's all about the Hand!

Head/Chest/Shoulders  
between Feet

**FASTEST** Part of Motion

Hand Stays **IN FRONT**  
of Hips

Elbow Straight – *not stiff*



## RELEASE POINT:

THE MAIN thing to  
do for more  
Speed...

MOVE YOUR  
HAND FASTER AT  
RELEASE



## FOLLOW THROUGH:

Body Beginning to Relax

Hand Continues Moving AS  
FAST AS POSSIBLE

Ending Hand Position –  
UP or DOWN – Left Up  
to Pitcher

If UP – it goes OUT first

Ending Position is **Balanced**



## MAIN PROBLEM AREAS:

Beginning (rush it & stiff)

- **Rushing this part**
  - *thinking that speed at the start means speed of the pitch*
- **Stiff**
  - *using the shoulder to pitch*
- **Forcing the Pitch**
  - *making it about more than the hand & legs*



## MAIN PROBLEM AREAS:

### Stride

- **Too Short**
  - *weight needs to move forward toward front foot*
- **Twisting**

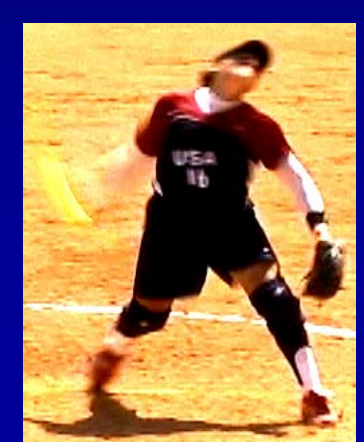


## MAIN PROBLEM AREAS:

### Hips

- Too Much, too Soon





## MAIN PROBLEM AREAS:

### Follow Through

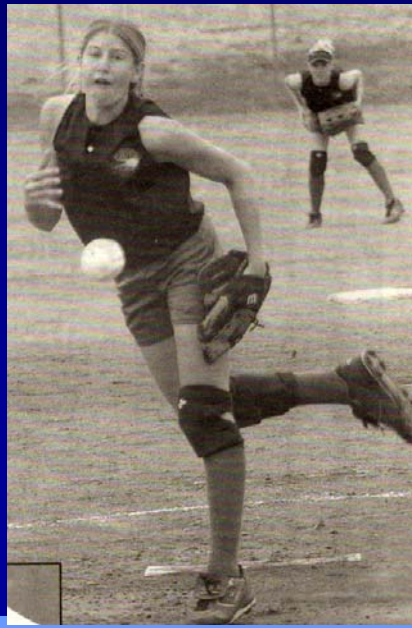
- Too Short
- Forced Ending Position



## MAIN PROBLEM AREAS:

### Release Point

- Hand Too Slow – FOOT LANDS @ RELEASE
- Pitching with Chest & Shoulders (*instead of hand & ball*) – *balance???*



## MAIN PROBLEM AREAS:

### General

- Wanting a Short Cut
- Unrealistic Learning Time

## A LOOK AT THE WHOLE MOTION



# **SEND USED EQUIPMENT**

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