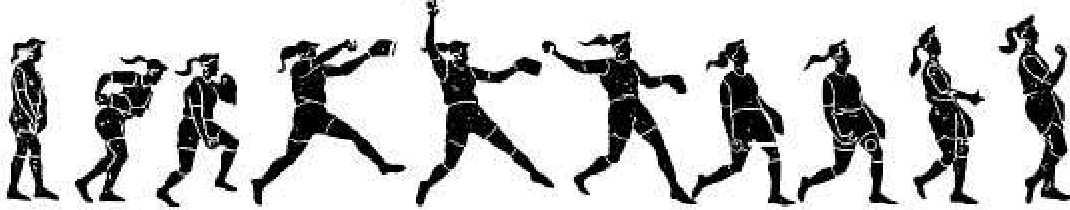


Girl's Windmill Pitching



By
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Measuring Success

What are you using as a yardstick when you measure the success you as a pitcher are having?

Is it your speed?

Is it the number of strikes you throw?

Is it the number of strikeouts you have?

It is amazing the criteria we think means success.

One D-I college college coach said she wanted a power pitcher and apparently 65-66 mph was not enough power for her school.

Another, and might I add a much more successful one, said he would rather have great movement at 61-62 than a flamethrower at 65+ with little or no movement.

Two different D-I coaches with two entirely different yardsticks for measuring what they think makes a successful pitcher and the one who is less worried about speed is the much more successful coach.

If you are a pitcher or a pitcher's parent, chances are all you are worried about is speed. How can she get faster.

In fact, I had a young lady who has worked with me at clinics for a couple of years ask me this weekend how she could get faster.

I asked if she was doing long toss and she said yes.

I asked her if she was working with weighted balls and she said yes.

I asked her if she was working with strength training and she was.

She was also doing core strengthening.

A couple of years ago I taught her to load and it increased her speed by several miles per hour.

I will do some high speed camera work with her mechanics to see if I am missing anything in the mechanics but I told her that her mechanics are solid, she is loading, driving off the mound and I see nothing that stands out as a flaw. She does everything right. I then told her that maturity will add some speed and a growth spurt will add some but she is not in control of that. She just needs to keep doing what she is doing. That's probably not what she wanted to hear but we can't often cause dramatic increases in speed, particularly if everything is good.

My yardstick for measuring success is not a yardstick at all. It's a folding ruler and I don't want to look for the end of the rule. I want to fold it out one section at a time and use each section as a measurement of success.

Whether it is a yardstick or a six-foot folding ruler, if I look at the end I miss the small measurements that get me to the end. I am looking at the end rather than the means and for success the means of achievement are the true criteria. If I am just looking for the end of the yardstick I end up putting the 3 foot end next to the 0 end and that doesn't equal 3 feet. It equals zero because you have not left the zero end. All off those inches and feet are not being used. So what you have done as far as pitching is zero. You did not advance along the inches that are the constructive steps. You tried to get to the end by bringing the end to you. It won't work. It's a waste of time.

The first measure requires nothing physically.

It is attitude, patience and determination.

Are you willing to have an attitude that allows the instructor to critique you and instruct you and let you know when you need to correct something? Do you have the determination to work on each aspect of pitching and get it right? Do you have the patience to put in the time required?

The physical measurement, first and foremost, begins with mechanics from the ground up and that means correct footwork.

Correct stride length, foot placement, drive and drag are the basic components that create success. A twisted stride foot or a straight stride foot will affect the accuracy and speed of the pitch. If you don't have correct foot placement and angle, work on that alone until you do. It may be tedious but it is a necessity. If you can't get that right you will be throwing, not pitching. You leave yourself open to wild pitches; hit batters, walks, slow speed and inevitably, failure. You also leave yourself open to injuries. All can be avoided by the "back to basics:" rule.

I have worked with a few girls who have lost good footwork. Generally it happens when they start trying to overthrow. The base goes and then everything else goes as they try to compensate for the inadequacies of the base. Almost all of the girls have gone back to the basics and worked drills that will correct the situation and all of those who have done that have succeeded in correcting the problem. It may take a couple of weeks of nothing but drills but it will be corrected. Get it right before you move on to another section of the ruler.

Move up the body for the next measurement in the yardstick. Push hard from the rubber and drive the drag knee to the stride knee. This helps to do a few things. It is the base of speed production when coupled with a good stride length and correct foot placement. It helps keep the body in line so the hips don't close early. It helps maintain a 45-degree closure of the hips, which is optimal for release. It helps the body to pitch tall against a firm front side by allowing the body to fight the tendency to lean forward at the waist. If the drive leg

stays back the body will bend or lean forward which is counter-productive to pitching with power. Make sure you drag the side of the big toe not the whole foot which will hold you back and slow your speed.

While the third measurement may be described as hip closure or the lack thereof correct foot and leg use will help to stop the hips from early closure. We do not want to snap the hips closed to 90 degrees because it will cause the ball arm to be drug through the circle rather than whipped. It will also cause the ball arm to leave the good, tight circle and cause the right shoulder to thrust forward, which is also counter-productive.

Sequencing the pitch is the next criteria for our yardstick, but we will address that in the next newsletter.

Why wait until then?

Too much information at one time results in a bunch of gibberish that you may get mixed up and end up putting two plus two together and getting 5 and a half which is unacceptable unless you live in my house.

So, for now, consider the bottom half of your body and how you are using it.

Don't measure with your yardstick of success. Use mine and you may find yourself improving.

Photos



Alyssa Wilcox, pictured here playing for the Maryland Stars 18U at the Cardinal Classic. Note the balance as she drags. The toe drags correctly and the right shoulder and right hip are aligned

Tips

For those young ladies who intend on trying out for middle school, junior varsity, or varsity softball teams, your time is short. Some can begin tryouts in late February and some begin March 1 in this area. Either way it is the middle of January and you should be preparing yourself. Taking swings, ground balls, fly balls, pitching or practicing at your preferred position now will help you when tryouts begin. You can prevent sore arms and other body parts by exercising them from now until tryout day. That doesn't mean every single day but at least 2 or 3 times a week. Those who are on travel teams have already started winter practices so you will be ready. Also, those coaches who are coaching showcase teams, have you started videos of your players yet? Have you had your kids contact colleges with your schedule yet? This is the time. Your schedules should be pretty well set by now.

Girl's Windmill Pitching Online

Jan Greenhawk maintains www.windmillpitching.org and you can find the newsletters posted on that site if you cannot get them from me by email.

Maryland Stars Pitching Clinic

All six time slots are filled for this clinic.

Featured Pitchers

Occasionally I am going to try and feature a short video of one of my pitching students on YouTube. These will be girls showing great pitch mechanics. So if any of my students want to be included make sure your mechanics are excellent. Practice them!!

You can see all of the pitching clips at:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=billdryden&search_type=&aq=f

This week I have added Elspeth Schalk, a 2011 home school student who plays summer ball for the Maryland Stars 18U team. She demonstrates her riseball.

I have also added a clip of Holly Melson, a 2011 Stephen Decatur graduate who plays for the Delaware Diamonds 16/18U team. She is demonstrating her drop/curve.

Elspeth and Holly are demonstrating from 43'.

Bengies-Chase Pitching Clinic

Both sessions of this clinic are full.

Andy Givens' Hitting Instruction

Andy Givens is the former Delaware Technical and Community College Assistant Baseball Coach, and former Head Softball Coach. He is currently the Cape Henlopen High School Head Softball Coach along with being the Delaware Diamonds 16U Black Head Coach. Andy gives private hitting instruction at his place between Georgetown and Laurel, DE. If you are looking for a

superb, patient instructor to help give you an edge, contact Andy at (302) 228-7960 or email him at: ragivens@verizon.net

Virginia Stars Looking for a Few Exceptional Players

The Virginia Stars Gold team invites all 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 players to contact us if you are interested playing with us in high profile tournaments and showcases in the summer and fall. Our summer schedule includes the Pennsbury Showcase, Colorado Fireworks, Team New Jersey, Cardinal Classic and Carolina Bandits Showcases to mention a few. Our team travels outside the Mid-Atlantic area in order to give our players high visibility to college coaches. This is a great opportunity for any player who wants to play softball in college.

Positions are available for committed players with hustle and drive to succeed in order to make it to the next level and into college play. Our team will be practicing indoors throughout January and February. If interested, call or e-mail Mark Anderson, 540-272-1031, andersonmh@verizon.net or Jan Greenhawk, 410-310-9662, jan417@aol.com.

Visit our website at

www.virginiastars.org

to find out more about us.

News and Tournament Results

Welcome to new private pitching student Alleigh Townsend, a 9-year-old from Delmar, Delaware. The day after her first lesson her mother sent this nice email:

“Bill,

Thank you so much for her lesson last night – I think the facility is great (no distractions). I was so excited when I left there last night I kept calling my husband at the races and telling how well I thought she did and how much harder she was throwing and how nice you were. I think Alleigh will be able to learn a lot from you. I know she would love to see Ashley again so maybe she can come out some night.

Can’t wait to watch Alleigh’s pitching continue to improve under your coaching and direction – thank you again and I look forward to seeing you every week.

Heather. “

Alleigh plays for the Delmar Little League and the First State Swoop 10U program.

Welcome back to Alyssa Wilcox, an Arcadia High School (VA) senior. Alyssa is returning from lower back problems.

Kristy Marsh, Mid-Atlantic Shockers 14U is being treated for a cyst in her foot. When they pain was first noticed it was thought that she had fractured the foot but an MRI showed the cyst. Kristy had an injection in the site last week and gets another this week. Hopefully, the injections and physical rehabilitation will allow her to get back to pitching soon.

Ken Whited told me at Korryn's lesson Monday that their practice building is complete and ready for Korryn to practice pitching. Look out now when all she has to do is walk out the door of the house and into the building to practice pitching. She will be ready!!

The pitching clinic for the Bengies-Chase softball organization began Thursday and I saw a lot of new faces there and they worked hard. We have 15 girls (5 per time slot) for 45-minute slots. I asked each what she wanted to accomplish in the sessions and the answers varied from the ever present more speed to better control to more endurance to trying to improve mechanics. I then shot each one with the high-speed camera so we could examine their mechanics, finding the things they did right and the things they could improve. Each was really working to get better results and I think they will be able to do it. I stressed to each it is one step at a time and can't be done overnight. It's a great group and a fun group.



Brittany Donalds Joins 18U Delaware Storm

Congratulations to Parkside High freshman Brittany "Biscuit" Donalds. She has been offered a spot on Coach Jerry Kirby's Delaware Storm 18U Showcase team. Britt did a couple of tournaments with the team in the summer before playing with the Storm 16U in the fall. This will give Britt a lot of exposure to the college coaches. For those of you who don't know Brittany was the sole pitcher for the Delaware Storm 14U at the Delaware State ASA Tournament and in 100-degree heat pitched every inning of every game as the Storm won and became the 2008 Delaware State ASA Champions. Coach Kirby is getting a power-pitching workhorse who shows absolutely no emotion on the mound. You cannot tell if she is 5 runs up or 5 runs down, if she likes the umpire's calls or doesn't. I know I will be hearing great things about her.

Carissa Throckmorton played as a guest player with the Lady Orioles 18U team (Fisher) at Rising Stars and set a mark for herself in the SPARQ camp.

The South Western high 2011 graduate ran a 4.50 in the shuttle. Her lateral speed was the best in the camp.

Jim Barsalona has announced the college coaches who will attend the Team New Jersey winter workout January 25th.
included are:

- 1. Florida State Univ**
- 2. Univ Of Maryland**
- 3. Penn State Univ**
- 4. St. John's Univ**
- 5. Univ Of Virginia**
- 6. Syracuse Univ**
- 7. Villanova Univ**
- 8. Fordham Univ**
- 9. Lehigh Univ**
- 10. Univ Of Delaware**
- 11. Providence College**
- 12. James Madison Univ**
- 13. Elon Univ**
- 14. Univ Of Pennsylvania**
- 15. Drexell Univ**
- 16. St. Joseph's Univ (PA)**
- 17. Wagner College**
- 18. Siena College**
- 19. Caldwell Univ**

The indoor facility can only accommodate a limited number of college coaches and they will watch roughly the potential TNJ players showcase their skills. Jim limits the number of players and coaches for this workout to keep it simple and let every coach have the opportunity to watch every participant. The field of players is by invitation only. There is no application process or tryout process.

Shelby Colona Nandua High (VA) sophomore is pitching three times a week and working out with weights the other three days to get ready for the high school season. Her high school coach tells her she has really improved since last season. When she began with me we began working on keeping her body from bending at the waist which increased her power.



In the photo on the left you can see how Shelby would bend at the waist, which cost her velocity. In the photo on the right she is more upright with the right shoulder over the hip, which has increased her speed. Working to improve mechanics will improve velocity and control. Great job, Skelby!! I know it is hard but the results are worth the work!

I received a phone call from Maryland Magic Orange 14U Head Coach Dave Salisbury Saturday. They are back in the gym and preparing for the season. Dave is looking for a lights out pitcher to add to the mix currently on the team. The staff is working with the team toward the goal of eventually showcasing. Of course Magic Orange has the reputation to get them in the major showcases when the time is right and according to Dave they already have some fall invitations extended to them. Maryland Magic and Wagner's Gold is the same organization.

Lauren Tamayo, 2011, IF/OF, Justin Northwest High, Justin TX, Texas Glory (Shelton) has verbally committed to Texas A&M Universtiy

Remember 2011's are sophomores. If you want to play college ball what are you doing to get exposure?

Last week Amanda Seagrist, Glenelg High and Maryland Stars 16U pitcher was having drag foot problem and I brought it to her attention last week and we began working on it. I told her we had to address it or her velocity would suffer. I was amazed at this week's lesson how much she had worked on it and how much better it looked. She told me she felt like she was throwing slowly just to get the mechanics of the foot corrected. I put her on the gun and showed her the speed was essentially the same. The smoothness with which she was throwing made her feel like she wasn't doing as much. When it gets into muscle memory her speed will increase a lot.

It was good to see the girls back for the 2nd session of the Maryland Stars Clinic and a few new ones also. Hopefully everyone will get something out of it.