



We prepare this newsletter because we enjoy talking softball and seeing pitchers improve. Please send it to friends who also enjoy the sport.

OPENINGS...OPENINGS...OPENINGS

July has a few slots open for lessons in Roanoke, Tuesday, July 20th (midday), Wednesday, July 21st (evening)
Email Susan soon if you'd like to schedule!

GETTING INTO THE SWING

PITCH CALLING, PART 2

by Kelsey Hoffman-Schmitt

Catcher for VirginiaTech 2004-2008
Current member U.S. Professional All-StarsTeam
kelseyschmitt@gmail.com

As I said in the last pitch calling article, studying a swing to learn how to call a game is one of the best learning tools. So, here we will discuss what to look for in a hitter's swing and how to use that to our advantage for pitch calling. When looking at a swing we first start at the feet because they are a good indication to the weaknesses and strengths of hitters. If a hitter is standing off the plate they are either trying to compensate for slow hands or trick you into thinking they are doing this to help them with the inside pitch. Be aware that the hitter will try to fool you so she gets the pitch she wants! If she is off the plate, you want to think inside. Your pitcher must hit her spots to make this work, or look off the plate outside. You'll want strikes early so you go with inside first, then try to get her chasing off the plate. If a hitter is on top of the plate your pitch calling would be opposite of what it is for the hitter who stands off the plate. So go in hard to test the hands and if you go with an outside pitch make sure it is a ball or two off the plate.

...continued on next page...

"Heat" Wins Softball Tournament!



Delmas Bolin, MD PhD

Director PCA Center for Sports Medicine
Head Team Physician, Radford University
Associate Professor, Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
1935 West Main Street, Salem, VA
(540 387-0441 ext 2029)

It's finally summer! Now is the time when most of us will spend more time outside in the heat. To follow up on last month's emphasis on the importance of staying hydrated, this month's column is about staying safe in the heat. Warm temperatures are great for softball – you move easier and the ball flies farther. Watch out for warning signs of too much heat, particularly if you are playing in one of those marathon weekend tournaments that have several games in one day. Heat injury and the resulting loss of performance have cost many teams that elusive championship; heat can beat the best.

Your body is programmed to maintain a temperature right around 99 degrees. When you exercise, you literally get "warmed-up". As you warm up, the bodies temperature control system kicks in and you begin to sweat. While a little "warming up" is actually helpful for performance, some conditions - especially with temperatures above 100 degrees and high humidity – are too severe for sweating to cool your body. With prolonged exposure to hot humid environments, athletes can develop cramps, heat exhaustion or even heat stroke.

Heat cramps are probably mis-named. The cramps are very strong involuntary muscle contractions that can be painful. They were previously thought to be due to dehydration and temperature, but newer evidence suggests that other factors also contribute. Usually gentle stretching and hydration (and rest) will lead to complete recovery. Heat exhaustion, also known as exercise-associated collapse, usually occurs just after an athlete stops exercise for a long period of time.

...continued on next page...

...continued from previous page...

Next thing you want to study on a hitter is her stride. Is it open, closed, or lunging? If the hitter steps out she will get her hands to the inside pitch well, but the outside pitch will be the hole in her swing. If a hitter steps in, the outside pitch is what she is looking for, and inside will jam her up (unless she has really quick hands). If the hitter is taking a long stride causing her to lunge her body weight forward before her swing, stick with outside or off speed pitches.

The last thing to really focus on is the hands. The hands are an important part of the swing and if they are not where they need to be they cause problems for your swing. If hands are high the hitter is trying to stay on top of the ball, you can counter this by mixing the pitches with a drop and rise in and out. If their hands drop, look at throwing high pitches (just be careful of power, sometimes even miss-hits go over the fence). If hands are casting, you want to stay inside to get foul balls. And if hands are going inside out then you want to go with outside.

For some situational basics I will give you some ideas. In a bunt situation you can look at it two ways. You want the easiest out; (because you are ahead in the game) select a pitch for the hitter that is easy to lay down a bunt. Or if you want the bunter to pop up for the possible double play if your defense is not great with bunt coverage throw high and outside. For getting batters to hit into double play situations you want the hitter to ground out so stay with the low pitches, drop is always the best for this. Remember for pitch outs or steal situations never throw a changeup!

I am giving you ideas to help develop your pitch calling. Specifics will only get you into following routine. You must use the best tool you're born with in order to get better... your brain! Pitch calling is about thinking and reacting, not memory and following a guide.

...continued from previous page...

Blood flow needs to travel from the leg muscles back to the heart; under some conditions, the muscles are more important to that process than usual; the sudden stop of contractions leads to blood not getting back to the heart and the athlete faints.

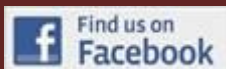
Finally, the most severe form of heat injury is "heat stroke". With prolonged exposure to high temperatures, the body can become confused and all cooling mechanisms "shut down." When this happens, the heart rate goes up and the athlete can actually stop sweating. Dangerously high body temperatures can occur.

Luckily, your body will give you signs to pay attention to when you are getting "too hot." At first you will be sweating very heavily, but if you start to notice that you are pale or develop cramps, a sense of tiredness, weakness or heaviness, dizziness, headache – these are all symptoms that suggest your body is starting to not handle the heat well. In these early stages of heat injury, the skin may be cool and moist, which may cause you to think that there is no issue with heat. Often the athlete has a fast and weak pulse and is breathing faster than normal. With continued exposure to heat, the patient may develop an extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees), red hot and dry skin, a throbbing headache, confusion or even loss of consciousness. This can be an emergency if untreated, resulting in permanent brain injury, heat intolerance and even death.

When you recognize any combination of these symptoms, let someone know! If you are helping one of your teammates, tell the coach. First, get the person to some shade. A cool sports drink is helpful – remember it is important to stay well hydrated. Cool wet towels or wrapped ice packs behind the neck and under the arm pits (and even on the groin/upper thighs) can help to lower body temperature – as can a cool shower. If symptoms continue, it may be necessary to get the person to medical assistance such as the emergency room.

It is possible to minimize risk. Practice early or late and avoid the heat of the day (11-3 pm). Dress appropriately; light colors with good sweat wicking fabric and shorts; use equipment to protect you but minimize layers where you can. Stay well hydrated. Plan for a cool down after you play; swimming or water slides get you wet and cool you down. If you have to play several games in a day, plan to use between games for recovery; stay in the shade, drink cool drinks and get equipment off to maximize cool down. While summer is a great time to be outside, knowing a few warning signs and reacting appropriately can keep you and your team not only beating the competition but also beating the heat.

Click on the "find us on Facebook" button to see our page!!!



TincherPitching@aol.com



***Several teams around Virginia contacted us **looking for pitchers and players**, if you are searching for a team get in touch with Denny and he can point you toward one of those teams.



About 45 students of the game (coaches & kids) got a good work out at The POWER UP YOUR HITTING CLINIC.

We think it was a great success !

Gerry Glasco, of University of Georgia, and his daughter Geri Ann, put us to work for two hard days in the heat, but we all came away with a better knowledge of hitting. The first day we focused on the importance of the legs in hitting....the second day we worked on hands...learning many great new drills for making it happen at the plate. Gerry and Geri Ann shared some of their expert knowledge and experiences to help us better understand the hitting game.

We also want to thank two regular contributors to our newsletter, Robbie Hebert of The Edge, and Dr. Delmas Bolin for helping make it an informative and exciting two days.

Practical Tips for Pitchers

(and the mechanical issues related to them)

By Denny Tincher

How to patch indoor shoes: Gym shoes, tennis shoes, whatever you call them, they wear out quickly indoors. The product we love, to help make them last, is Shoe Goo, available at Walmart or KMart in the shoe department. Use it like "Pitcher's Toe". It's incredibly tough and easy to use.

-Related Mechanics: If you are wearing through your shoes, on the drag foot, around the inside of the big toe, use the Shoe Goo and continue pitching. If the wear is further back toward the ball of the foot or side of the foot, stop and get that corrected. It is killing your efficiency and toying with injury. The exception: Pitchers who throw mostly riseballs will wear further back.

TincherPitching@AOL.COM

Find us on Facebook!

540-960-1750

AUGUST LESSON SCHEDULE:

The Edge, Roanoke -- Monday and Tuesday evenings 4-9pm

Richmond area, Virginia Sports Complex at Ruther Glen

– Thursday/Friday, Aug 5th & 6th, noon-9pm

Georgia – TBA

Bristol - TBA

YOUR CATCHER CAN INCREASE YOUR K'S

BY DENNY TINCHER

Having worked with some great catchers, I have seen how dramatically they can increase your effectiveness. Young catchers, especially, are often judged on their ability to simply catch and block, as well as throwing out people trying to steal. However, a great catcher can often help a good pitcher become great with a little training.

One mistake young catchers make is placing the target too high or too “fat”. Having begun their training in rec ball or 10U, their main goal was to keep the pitch in the zone. Therefore they held the target in the middle of the plate at the height of the thigh. If the pitcher missed slightly, it was still a strike. Many times they fail to adjust to more experienced pitchers as they age, and leave too much ball in the zone, leading to excessive hits.

I often see fathers and mothers do the same thing as they catch their daughters. They “train” their pitcher to throw too high and then are surprised that opponents hit hard shots in games. Here are a couple of suggestions to help your catcher help your pitcher.

Keep the target at the bottom of the back knee of the batter and only raise it slightly if the umpire won't call that as a strike. Get to know the umpire quickly. If his zone is “chalkline to chalkline”, use all of it. I have heard catchers complain that the umpire's zone was too wide or too low when they were batting, but the same catcher never thought of adjusting the target when receiving pitches.

The catcher needs to communicate constantly with coaches. Let the coach know if certain hitters crowd the plate or stand too far from it. We often can't see that from the dugout and need to know how to pitch her next time at-bat. Let the coach know the umpire's zone quickly, especially inside and outside, so we can warn our own batters.

Help your pitcher find the zone. If the coach wants an outside pitch, but your pitcher is drawing it toward the middle of the plate, adjust your set-up to help the ball finish where you want it. Same goes for high and low pitches. And, learning to frame the ball is too obvious to mention.

Catchers and pitchers need to be partners. Communicate constantly. Praise your catcher so that she will want you to be successful. Ask her for feedback so you will know which pitches are working. Finally, give her credit each time you get a K. She worked as hard as you and should enjoy the moment, and should have incentive to get you another and another.

A great catcher can make a good pitcher great. Get her on your side and you are off to the right start.

TincherPitching@AOL.COM

540-960-1750

Be sure to tune in for some great softball during...

The KFC World Cup of Softball on ESPN

July 22nd - 26th

(and watch for Angela playing for the USA Futures team)

You'll find over 14 hours of live coverage on ESPN, ESPN2, and ESPN3.com highlighted by multiple prime time windows including the Championship Game on July 26 at 8 p.m. CST. Games may be re-aired throughout the year.

The complete domestic ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPN3.com live air schedule is below.

July 22 at 7 p.m. – USA vs. Canada – ESPN and ESPN3.com

July 23 at 7 p.m. – USA vs. Japan – ESPN and ESPN3.com

July 24 at 1 p.m. – USA vs. **USA Futures** - ESPN (tape delay from 11 a.m.) and ESPN3.com

July 24 at 7 p.m. – USA vs. Japan - ESPN2 and ESPN3.com

July 25 at 4 p.m. – USA vs. Canada - ESPN2 and ESPN3.com

July 26 at 8 p.m. – No. 1 vs. No. 2 - ESPN2 and ESPN3.com

All times are local (CST) and subject to change

Angela's Canada Update:

From July 8th – 11th- Angela played for Team USA in the 2010 Canadian Open Fastpitch Marquee Games, held in Surrey, British Columbia.

Game 1 went to Canada 4-3.

Game 2, Canada 5-0 – Angela saw her first action, 3 innings in relief

Game 3, USA 12-5 –Angela pitched 3.6 perfect innings in relief

Game 4, USA 3-1—Angela pitched entire game giving USA its second consecutive win

If you'd like to see box scores or further info on Team USA's games in Canada go to:

<http://www.canadianopenfastpitch.com/woreresults10.asp>

July 13th-14th – Team USA meets Team Canada in two exhibition games in Whitehorse, Yukon. This is the scheduled home for the 2012 International Softball Federation XIII Women's World Championship.