



**Pitching**

At the beginning of each play the pitcher, while in contact with the pitcher’s plate, will pause and then with a continuous underhand motion, deliver a pitch with an arc of between 1.83m (6ft.) and 3.05m (10ft.) from the ground and towards home plate. The object of the pitcher is to get either: three strikes on the batter, in which case the batter is called out and the next batter takes their place in the batter’s box, OR the batter hits the ball in play and the fielders on the pitcher’s team can make a defensive play in order to get an out. Four balls by the pitcher would result in the awarding of first base with no liability to be put out.

**Pitch the softball underhand through the strike zone**

**Skill Progression – Pitch the softball underhand through the strike zone**

<b>Your Athlete Can</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>
Find the pitchers plate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wait for the catcher, batter and/or umpire to take their positions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Position one foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Come to a complete stop with the ball in one or both hands in front of their body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pause for 1-10 seconds while simulating taking a signal from the catcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep head up and eyes focused on target (i.e., strike zone) at all times during the pitch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assume ready-to-field position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Totals</b>			

**Teaching Points – Pitch the softball underhand through the strike zone**

1. Demonstrate the correct position of the pivot foot on the pitcher’s plate. From a complete stop, show the pitcher how to maintain one foot in contact while delivering a pitch. Make sure knees are bent and balance is maintained. (If a step is taken, it can be in any direction, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact until the ball is released.
2. Have the catcher make a target for the pitcher. Tell the pitcher not to aim, but to release the ball with moderate speed towards the catcher.
3. Practice throwing the distance between the pitcher’s plate and home plate. Learn how much momentum is necessary for the pitch to pass through the strike zone.
4. Practice throwing at different arc levels to compensate for wind conditions and to keep batters from always seeing the same pitch.
5. Discuss the rules with the pitchers and demonstrate the correct way to follow the rules.
6. Keep the grip on the ball consistent by asking the pitcher to lay the ball in their glove (if possible) and picking it out of the glove with the same grip every time. A proper grip should utilize the stitching of the softball. The ball should not be squeezed too hard nor held too loosely.



**Faults & Fixes Chart – Pitch the softball underhand through the strike zone**

Error	Correction	Drill Reference
Does not pause	Have catcher stand and hold up a stop sign	Basket target drill
Loses contact with pitcher's plate	Start with front toe of pivot foot on the back of the pitcher's plate	Basket Target Drill or Basketball Arc Drill
Too much arc on pitch	Release the ball sooner	Basket Target Drill or Basketball Arc Drill
Excessive speed on pitch	Slow down arm speed and hold the ball a little longer prior to release	Basket Target Drill or Basketball Arc Drill
Pitch is too deep	Adjust pitcher's plate or reduce arm speed or add more arc to pitch	Basket Target Drill or Basketball Arc Drill
Pitch does not reach the strike zone	Adjust pitcher's plate or add arm speed or reduce arc	Basket Target Drill or Basketball Arc Drill
Pitch is wide right or left	Adjust the pitcher's hips to compensate	Basket Target Drill or Basketball Arc Drill
Is off balance after the pitch is released	Demonstrate landing the non-pivot foot solid and then stepping with the pivot foot to be in balance	Combine Basket Target Drill with Ready to Field Drill



**Pitching Rules**

**Skill Progression – Understand and follow the pitching rules at all times**

<b>Your Athlete Can</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>
Pitch underhand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Must pitch once the arm starts forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Must wait for umpire to be ready before pitching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Must keep contact foot on pitcher’s rubber until the ball leaves the hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Must pitch with a moderate speed within the legal pitching arc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learn rules for pitcher substitution, adjustment of pitching distance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Totals</b>			

**Teaching Points – Understand and follow the pitching rules at all times**

1. Explain to the athlete the reasons for the different pitching rules.
2. Discuss the problems of not following those rules.
3. Advise the pitcher to think of one thing, throwing the ball to the catcher’s mitt.



### **Pitching Drills**

1. Have the pitcher stand with legs at shoulder width and knees slightly bent. Have a catcher stand at 2m and ask the pitcher to throw 5 pitches at a slow speed with some arc and NO step. Keep their feet balanced and in place! Ask the catcher to step back to 3m and have the pitcher pitch another 5 pitches while adjusting their delivery to keep the arc legal. Continue with the progression to a comfortable legal pitching distance of between 12.19m (40ft.) and 15.24m (50ft). (As the distance is increased, a legal step can be incorporated into the pitch if the pitches are falling short). Adjust the placement of the feet slightly forward or backward in order to get the best pendulum motion from the pitching arm. It is likely that the shoulders will not be in line with the catcher in order to achieve the best stance for balance and accuracy. Make adjustments at each progression to ensure the maximum consistency.
2. INDOORS: Tape a rectangular strike zone to a wall simulating the strike zone of an average size batter and ask the pitcher to release 5 pitches from distances beginning at 3.05m (10ft) and keep a consistent arc while moving back to a comfortable pitching distance of between 12.19m (40ft) and 15.24m (50ft). You can also set bars or poles at 1.83m (6ft) and 3.65m (12ft) to help visually keep the height of the pitches consistent. OUTDOORS: A similar drill can be conducted on a softball field by placing a bucket behind home plate

