



**TOMAHAWK BASEBALL**  
**PITCHING & CATCHING GUIDELINES / PRINCIPLES**

**PILLARS – PHILOSOPHY (Pitching)**

1. Reduce walks
  - a. Develop consistent mechanics
  - b. Develop mound presence / confidence (GOOD MENTAL GAME & PROCESS)
  - c. Develop confidence in 3 pitches to throw for strikes
  - d. Pitch to contact (Action in FOUR or FEWER pitches)
2. Throw first OR second pitch strikes to 80% of batters faced
3. From item #2, get 75% of 1-1 counts to 1-2
4. Retire 1<sup>st</sup> batter of inning (GOAL: 5 of 7 innings or 70%)
5. Hold opponent scoreless after we score (GOAL: 65%)
6. Throw 13 or fewer pitches per inning (GOAL: 50%)
7. Record last out of inning IMMEDIATELY AFTER recording 2<sup>nd</sup> out (GOAL: 65%)
8. Control opponent's running game (through various techniques)

**PILLARS – PHILOSOPHY (Catching)**

1. Limit passed ball / wild pitch combo to 1 per game / average
  - a. Improve blocking / receiving techniques
  - b. Improve mental focus (GOOD MENTAL GAME & PROCESS)
  - c. Improve physical stamina
2. Throw out 30% of base stealers
  - a. Improve / refine throwing techniques
3. Develop good relationships with umpires
  - a. Address him as 'sir'
  - b. Ask questions on pitch location and if he can see balls cross plate, etc.

## PREGAME WARM UP ROUTINE – Starting Pitcher & Catcher

1. Starting Pitcher & Catcher will participate in the team pregame warm up exercise as follows:
  - a. Pitcher will work a fielding routine during each of the 4 outfield sequences (routine will be shortened for road games)
  - b. Catcher will work a fielding routine with the starting pitcher during each of the 4 outfield sequences (routine will be shortened for road games)
    - i. FOR HOME GAMES: starting catcher will STAY with full squad after outfield sequences and AFTER the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman fielding sequence, we will do a round of '1 and cover'.
    - ii. FOR ROAD GAMES: starting catcher will leave the field with the starting pitcher to begin his bullpen warm up sequence. Catcher will RETURN to field as infielders finish final sequence to make throws to each base & field pop ups to finish the set
2. Sequence for both players is as follows:
  - a. PITCHER – Sequence 1: work on throws to plate / wild pitch covers  
Sequence 2: helping C w/pop ups / C fielding bunts  
Sequence 3: work on covering 1B on ground balls to 1B  
Sequence 4: work on throws to 2B (starting double plays)
  - b. CATCHER – Sequence 1: work on throws to plate / wild pitch covers  
Sequence 2: work on pop ups near mound / foul ground  
Sequence 3 & 4: receive return throws from infield  
AFTER 1B fielding sequence: 1 and covers (ground ball to each position player, catcher throws to that player at their respective base (3B=third, SS/2B=second, 1B=first)  
(ROAD GAMES: catcher will throw to bases AFTER infield fielding sequences  
Finish so he can catch warm up bullpen for starting pitcher)

## PITCHING DETAIL

### R. PITCH SELECTION ACCORDING TO THE SITUATION

1. Vulnerable - 3-0 - 3-1 and 3-2 and 2-0 and 2-2 and 2-1 - must have strike
  - a. Hitter must hit the ball.
  - b. Fastball strike below waist - think spin and movement not velocity.
  - c. Curve/slider down in zone.
  - d. Can throw change sometime.
  - e. Definitely must throw this pitch for a strike.
  - f. Fool hitter with pitch selection not with location.

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2. Percentage - 1-1 and 0-1 and 1-0 and 0-0 (get ahead pitch)
  - a. Want a strike.
  - b. Fastball down on outer third of plate
  - c. Curve/slider is down crotch to knees
  - d. Can throw change sometimes (except not 0-0 count)
  - e. 1-1 most pivotal count, go 2-1 much more predictable.
  
3. Fine - 1-2
  - a. Power pitches in good locations.
  - b. Fastball outer third of plate below crotch
  - c. Curve/slider below crotch on outer third of plate.
  - d. No off speed pitch here.
  - e. Use power pitch that gets hitter out now.
  - f. Put away - your best pitch.
  
4. Extra Fine - 0-2
  - a. Let's get him now - you have hitter where you want.
  - b. Put ball in tough location - a non-strike outside at the knees or half-way between inside corner and toes at the belt buckle. Command inside part of plate.
  - c. Want power pitch in good location - hard fastball, hard curve or slider.
  - d. Do not let count get past 1-2. If you have the hitter 0-2 and do not get the hitter with this pitch, then you must get the hitter with 1-2 pitch.
    - \* When a runner at third and less than two out always go with power. Fastball and hard breaking pitch.
    - \* If you are in trouble, think about location and movement, not velocity
    - \* Smart pitching is when you get a hitter to hit an unexpected pitch when you are behind in the count or in trouble.

#### S. WHAT HITTERS THINK ON CERTAIN COUNTS

1. 0-0 - checking you out, most hitters not ready to hit.
2. 0-1 - hitter now defensive expects anything and must set himself for any type pitch. The element of pulling for power is cut down.
3. 0-2 - really defensive. Contact somewhere is all the hitter thinks. Choke up, expect anything anywhere and must protect strike zone.
4. 1-2 - should be set up for anything. Defensive, protect strike zone and just make contact.
5. 1-0 - seen a pitch and is ahead. Knows you need a strike and he can afford to be selective on pitch and location. Expects fastball.
6. 2-0 - all things go. Knows you must throw a strike, so pitch will likely be a fastball in a good spot to hit. Very selective, can be very aggressive. Think pull for power.

Looks for certain pitch in certain location. Ideal hitting situation. Excellent hit and run pitch.

7. 2-1 - still aggressive and selective. Has your over the barrel as he knows you must throw a strike. Pull for power still there.
8. 3-1 - knows you must throw a strike. Aggressive, selective and pull for power. Looking for certain pitch in certain location. Ideal hitting situation. Excellent hit and run pitch.
9. 3-0 - all hell breaks loose. You've lost the hitter unless you're lucky.

#### T. CLASSIFYING HITTERS

First pitch swingers (chart first pitch tendency)

1. Dead pull - pitch away
2. Upper cut - hard up
3. Slow bat - hard in
4. Best hitter, mix pitches, get guys out in front of and behind him
5. Breaking ball out - curve balls away
6. Make hit guy - have him put it in play

#### U. HOLDING RUNNERS ON

1. LHP
  - a. Find a way to freeze runner
  - b. Break runners rhythm
  - c. Throw hard
  - d. Step back move neutralizes runner who breaks on first move
  - e. On move ball higher than elbow and push ball
  - f. Knee to knee
  - g. Pre-determine move
2. RHP
  - a. Knee to knee, abbreviate what you are doing still gets ball there quicker.

#### V. PRE-GAME ROUTINE

1. Lift
2. Stretch
3. Long Toss
4. Sprints
5. Get good and loose
6. Call for pitching coach to watch you
7. Pitches to work on right before going into game.

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- a. 0-2 command inside part of plate
- b. Put away - best pitch
- c. 3-2 - Tough pitch.

W. REMEMBER

Proper rhythm and timing are the basis of successful pitching. "A pitcher is only as good as his legs. Therefore, he must do a great deal of running."

Early Wynn

"To be a winning pitcher, a player has to have control of the pitches he has"

Sandy Koufax

"Getting better spin on the ball is one of the surest ways toward pitching improvement."

Johnny Sain

## THE PITCHING PROCESS

### A. Self Analysis

1. Determine best out pitch
2. Determine type of pitcher
  - Predominately FB
  - Predominately CB
  - Control
  - Changing
  - Combination
3. Starting point for success is to know yourself

### B. Pitching Plan

1. Find ways to get batter out.
2. Concentration, determination, and confidence are a must if you are to be a winner.
3. Warm up command pitches – third will come.
4. First five innings use them on outer third of plate, as game progresses then pitch inside – Rough early; pull out all stops.
5. Always strikes – Only way you are the aggressor – Must get leadoff hitter, negative to offense, positive to defense.
6. Days of poor stuff, the main thing getting you past fifth inning is being ahead in the count.

### C. Philosophy

1. Make living outside third of plate.
2. Pitch inside when ahead in the count not when behind.
3. Have a positive mental attitude.
4. Get hitter out best way you can. Pitch to pitcher's strengths.
5. Play nine versus one.
6. Pitch to letter "L".
7. First pitch ground ball strike.
8. Want two out of first three pitches in the box.
9. four things that make a winning pitcher – In order of importance:
  - A. Confidence
  - B. Control of self and pitches.
  - C. Knowledge of pitching
  - D. Ability

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### B. General

1. Take mound with any doubt of outcome – I promise outcome will be negative.
2. Don't give hitters too much respect – Best are three out of ten.

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3. Don't back away from challenge – The bigger the challenge the more aggressive you become.
4. There are very few good two strike hitters.
5. We can survive on occasional 1-2 run inning but not a 4+ inning, you will give up hits, walks, errors but refer back to the now theory, "stay cool".
6. Divorce yourself from hitters, scoring – Your responsibility is pitching – No matter what, keep a solid mental involvement and stay aggressive and do your thing.
7. Pitch your own game.
8. run to and from mound.
9. Apologize for nothing – You aren't there to make friends but to beat people.

#### C. Warming up.

1. Fine tune concentration.
2. Don't let head fail you before arm has a chance (loosen arm up).
3. Save time by what you want to do rather than what you don't want to do (Think about what you're doing right).
4. Get mad; make it short and sweet and get rid of it.

#### D. Across Lines Don't:

1. Lose concentration.
2. Try to throw better than did in bullpen.
3. Don't hope to do well or throw strikes – Be determines to.
4. Nibbler – Afraid of hitter – Give hitter too much credit.
5. Can't be perfect = Unattainable.
6. 1<sup>st</sup> pitch hitters - .190 average.
7. Know how to set up and put away 0-2, 1-2, don't delay.
8. Get out of jam – Then lose edge, focus and determination must be consistent. Deal one pitch at a time – When things go poorly, think about solution not problem.

### The "Top 5" Pitching Skills

1. Hitting the Target. The absolute number one goal of pitching is hitting the target. If you think of it in very simple terms, pitching is really nothing more than target practice. Everything else is secondary. But you truly have a fighting chance when you can throw the ball where you want it to go. In fact, it's one of the two things the pitcher has control of – where to throw the ball. The other is how you react to the outcome of that pitch.
2. Changing speeds. The ability to change speeds is the second factor in refining the pitching process. Changing speeds creates a timing problem for the hitter. Hitting is timing, and pitching is destroying the hitter's timing. If the pitcher can do that, he's another step on the way to success.



3. **Creating Movement.** The third factor is the ability to create some movement on the baseball. The most desirable movement is a two plane type of movement where the ball moves horizontally and vertically as in the fast ball, change-up, or breaking ball. The ability to throw a ball with this kind of movement is advantageous for all pitches.
4. **Maximizing Velocity.** The ability to generate velocity creates a situation in which the hitter has less time to react to the pitch. A pitcher can become more effective by cutting down the hitter's reaction time. Mechanically, it's the result of the whole body working together at high speed in the right sequence.
5. **Working Fast.** A fast tempo adds to the pitcher's edge. He should get the signal before the hitter gets into the batter's box. Change pitches and location with wipes rather than going through all the pitches and wasting time. One of the things that really kills the tempo of the game is a pitcher walking down off the rubber at the edge of the grass. Get the ball back from the catcher near the rubber and get ready to make the next pitch. Fast tempo pitching takes the hitters out of their routine and disrupts their rhythm.

You should slow the tempo down only when you need to regain composure to pitch effectively. Sometimes the hitters will slow you down, but if you're ready, the umpire will push the hitter to get into the box. Even if the umpires don't force the tempo, you should be ready to pitch immediately after the hitter gets ready, which makes the hitter feel rushed. If you force the hitter back into the box quickly after a bad swing, many times the result is another poor swing.

A quick tempo doesn't mean quick pitching to the hitter. You should let the hitter get set in the batter's box, but put pressure on the hitter to get into the box rapidly.

Keep in mind that efficient mechanics give the pitcher a chance to have the most consistent ability to hit the target because they lead to the repetitive delivery with a consistent arm slot and release point. Good mechanics also give the best possible chance to maximize arm strength and arm speed and to reduce the chance for injury. Pitchers with good mechanics can maintain their stuff for a longer period, which allows them to pitch later in the game.

## **WORKING WITH PROBLEMS**

### **Working with Problems and Solving**

In order to efficiently solve technical problems you must:

- A. **Thoroughly understand the problem (you must understand the symptoms)**
- B. **Research the problem and come up with a plan of attack (you must develop a plan to solve the problem)**
- C. **Your plan must have both a short-term solution (winning a game) and a long-term solution involving drills to help prevent the problem from occurring**

can't throw my change for a strike so I don't use it" or "I'm too inconsistent with it so I'll throw it next game". Before long, the season is over and it's "We'll have to work on it next year". Pitchers must be FORCED to throw change-ups at all levels until they feel comfortable and develop consistency with it.

## PITCHING SITUATIONS

As we know, pitching is not something easily mastered and often never mastered. One of the reasons pitchers never really seem to be able to master their craft is because of the lack of understanding situation (which pitch to throw and where to throw it). Orel Hershisser or Greg Maddox have mastered the essence of pitching. They control a game by controlling the strike zone and know what type of pitch needs to be thrown. Remember, pitching is being able to adjust to a batter and make him hit your pitch. You must learn to develop and manufacture your outs. You must have enough options to show the hitter you can and will do it. Know your surroundings. For example, here are some important situations that will come up:

1. Left-handed batter with a man on first base – he is trying to pull the ball. No change-ups or slow breaking balls over the plate. Hard stuff away or in tight.
2. Man on 2<sup>nd</sup> and no outs – the batter is trying to hit the ball to the right side. Keep the ball on in the right-handed batter and way from the left-handed batter.
3. Man on 3<sup>rd</sup>, infield back with less than 2 outs – try to get him out with a good fastball up and in or a pitch that will hit a short fly ball or a pop up in the infield. A change-up is OK in this situation.
4. Man on 3<sup>rd</sup> with the infield in – we want the ball hit on the ground. No curves. A hard slider on 2 seam fastball down is fine.
5. Squeeze play – catcher and pitcher must communicate that the pitch called for must be thrown away from the hitter.
6. Bunt situations – fastball or a good hard curve (if the pitcher has one).
7. Close game with an open base – whatever base it is, don't give into the batter when or if you get behind in the count. Don't just throw a fast ball down the middle. Work the hitter hard.
8. Close game – know who to challenge and who to work off.
9. Lead of batter on base – pitch the next hitter into a right-handed batter, away to a left-handed batter to prevent the runner on 1<sup>st</sup> from going to 2<sup>nd</sup> with less than 2 outs.
10. Man on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> with less than 2 outs – use hard stuff don't prevent ball hit up in the air. Fastball, slider or if the pitcher has hard curve or a controlled curve.
11. Man on 3<sup>rd</sup> with 1 out and a power hitter up – but are hard to prevent bad extension (no sac flies). ~~Can go to a back door curve or slider to power hitter because they have tendency to give up on them.~~ No back-door curves or sliders to power hitters.
12. Man on 2<sup>nd</sup> with 2 outs and a weak hitter on deck – can pitch around a little to get to the weak hitter. If ahead in the count, go after him. This situation also depends on the strengths and/or weakness of the hitter at the plate.

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13. Base stealer on 1<sup>st</sup> – vary hold times to disrupt runner's timing/rhythm.
14. After getting 2 quick outs – a change-up middle/down works well.
15. In obvious fastball counts – a head shake can be effective (mandatory with a 3-2 count)
16. 0-2 counts – fastball up and in and hard in. Make him move his feet or stand him straight up. This is a purpose pitch, not a waste pitch.

## PITCHING OBJECTIVES

What's In our Heads as pitchers:

1. Play winning Baseball
  - We can't always win but we can and must always PREPARE to win.
2. Stay aggressive and Challenge the Hitter
  - Don't give the hitter too much credit
  - 1<sup>st</sup> pitch strikes (winners work ahead)
  - Run on and off the mound
  - When in doubt, have the guts to go after him
  - Pitch inside effectively
  - Pitcher shows the attitude of the team
3. Learn to Command Your Off-Speed Pitches
4. Maintain Self-Control and Confidence – Avoid Frustration
  - Make one pitch at a time – get one out at a time – take on inning at a time, the “Now Theory”
5. Strive for Excellence – Set Goals for Yourself
  - Work toward goals
  - Concentrate and consistent effort during work
  - Study the hitters
  - Constantly improve – never be content
  - Work on the secondary aspect of your position
    - Hold runners on
    - Fielding your position
    - Be fundamentally sound
6. Be a Team Player
  - Develop catcher relationships
  - Wait for outfielders after play
  - Compliment teammates
  - Criticize maturely
7. Be Prepared to Work Hard
8. YOU ARE A COMPETITOR– EXPECT TO WIN!!!!!!!!!!!!

~~PITCHING – THE MENTAL ASPECT~~



## **TOMAHAWK PITCHER'S PREGAME BULLPEN**

(Relief pitchers use as well)

### **THROWN FROM 40 FEET**

(1-2 MINUTES from STRETCH):      Fastball / changeup alternate

### **THROWN FROM 50-55 FEET**

(1-2 MINUTES from STRETCH):      Fastball / curveball alternate

### **THROWN FROM MOUND in WINDUP**

\* (6) – FASTBALLS; 1 – middle & down

1 – inside (RH hitter)

1 – inside (LH hitter)

1 – under hands (RH hitter)

1 – outside (RH hitter)

1 – upstairs (chest to neck high, middle)

\* (4) – CHANGEUPS; 1 – down / middle (knee to thigh high)

1 – down / middle (shin to dirt)

1 – down / in (RH hitter; knee to shin height off plate)

1 – down / away (RH hitter; knee to shin height off plate)

\* (4) – BREAKING BALLS; 1 – down / middle (knee to thigh high)

1 – outside / off corner (RH hitter / LH hitter from STRETCH)

1 – dirt / middle

1 – dirt / away (RH hitter / LH hitter from STRETCH)

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### **THROWN FROM MOUND in STRETCH**

(4) – PITCHOUT FASTBALLS; 2 – RH hitter

2 – LH hitter

\*- follow same routines with FAST, CHANGE & BREAK listed above

(32 pitches TOTAL; pitcher can adjust number of pitches for personal preference)