

SOFTBALL PITCHING MASTERY



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Introduction

Because pitching technique is so varied, the best way to determine a player's best style is to practice and experiment. As long as the activity in question does not lead to injury or decreased effectiveness, it should be recognized as a potential positive technique in the pitcher's repertoire.

The best way to avoid injury, develop consistency, and see results is through repetition and attention to detail. Even a slight change in style can dramatically affect the accuracy of the pitch, so pitchers and coaches should watch for any changes due to fatigue, injury, compensation, or desire for better results. While it is good to experiment and discover the best pitching style for each player, this should be done under your adult supervision to ensure safety and good habits.

This report focuses heavily on technique, because no pitcher can be consistent and accurate if they do not have proper technique. Though you will not be a terribly popular coach preaching nitty gritty details of technique, you will develop a strong, consistent team that has the necessary foundation to rise quickly through the levels of softball and find themselves performing advanced skills long before their peers.

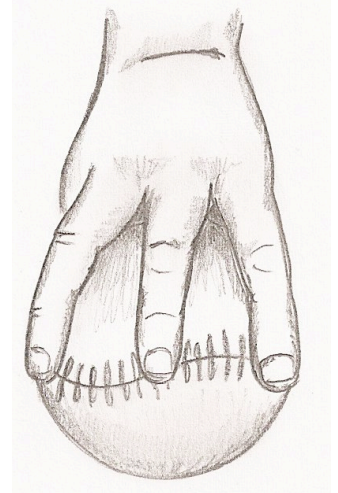
As a coach, you must put emphasis on technique during practice. Help pitchers change their philosophy about pitching by telling them not to worry about pitching strikes while they are learning. Instead, they should focus on absorbing the necessary skills to eventually pitch strikes often than not. It is very important that you set the tone of practice with your pitchers and show them that the foundation is more important than spotty, but exciting, results.

Mechanics of Pitching

Grip

As with most parts of pitching, there is no right or wrong way to hold the ball. However, most pitchers find control and comfort with a grip that allows the ball to rotate from top to bottom. The best way to get this movement is to turn the softball so that the seam makes a “U” to the side, instead of up and down.

Pitchers should grip the ball so that their fingers rest on the seam when it is on its side. The grip should be tight and steady but not so intense that it causes strain to the forearm or wrist. The wrist should always be kept in line with the arm to avoid any potential injuries, not flexed up or down or twisted to the side.



Ball and Glove Together

Most softball associations and leagues require pitchers to bring the ball and glove together for at least one second before the pitch. While this will not help your pitchers develop good technique, it does create a rhythm, which is equally as important in developing solid pitches.

Players can bring the ball and glove together at any point, but a natural meeting point is in front of the body near the waist. This allows the pitching arm to stay in a natural location prior to the start of the pitch and conserves energy before the wind-up.

Parts of the Swing—Arm Movements

The basic softball swing has several independent components that come together to make up the swing. By identifying each part of the swing and its importance, you can better prepare your team to understand their swing, make necessary adjustments, and improve the quality of their pitches.

The following movements make up a swing:

- Back swing
- Arm rotation
- Final down swing
- Release
- Follow-through

Back Swing—The height and speed of the back swing are not important and should not be focused on. The back swing is simply the beginning of the swing. Players should practice with different back

swings until they find what is comfortable; for many, this means a back swing that is about parallel with the ground. For others, it is much less.



Arm Rotation—The arm rotation is the most important part of the swing because it determines the power of the pitch. After the back swing, the arm and the body will naturally move forward. Ensure that players make their arm rotation equally fast from beginning to end. By maintaining power, pitchers ensure that they deliver a pitch with maximum speed.

When bringing the arm around, players should keep the arm straight and in line but not “locked out,” where their elbow is locked and stiff. This poses the risk for injury and reduces the arm’s range of motion.

Final Down Swing—This motion is what finishes the arm rotation and precedes the release. It is crucial that the final down swing is tight, fast, and consistent, because that determines how successful the release will be.

Release—The release is the most difficult part of the entire swing, because even minor variations can result in huge changes in ball placement. As the arm comes through the final down swing, pitchers should keep their wrists back so they get a full snap as they release the ball.

The hand should stay turned up through the release. This means that just before letting go of the ball, if the pitcher looked down, she should be looking at her palm, not the back of her hand.

One of the usually-overlooked but rather important points of the release is the body position. Pitchers should keep themselves tall, not allowing themselves to fold at the waist or lean to one side. Their pitching arm should be outstretched, putting them in position for a good follow-through and maximizing the power they get from that arm.

During the entire pitch, but especially at the release, pitchers should keep their body still, including the head. By not moving the head, players avoid injury and ensure that they release the ball when and where they intend to.

The pitch should be released when the arm is at waist height or slightly higher. This is the optimal strike zone and will most consistently provide good, fair pitches.

Follow-Through—After the pitch is released, it is essential that pitchers execute a good follow-through. The technique and form of the follow-through is not as important as its consistency. Pitchers must always allow their arms to continue the movement to avoid injury.

Many players find that their follow-through extends to near shoulder height and that their arm bends at the elbow. This is a natural, comfortable position for many pitchers, but it should not be seen as the only or the best follow-through method.

Parts of the Swing—Foot Patterns

Though the arms may seem difficult to master, the real work and intricacy in pitching comes from the body and leg movements. Pitchers go through three stages when they are pitching: closed, open, and closed again.

When starting the pitch, pitchers are directly facing the catcher and are considered to be “closed.” As they step forward and begin the arm rotation, the body opens up so that the pitcher is no longer facing the catcher; her side is facing the catcher. As the ball comes through the final down swing and into the release, the body closes back up most of the way and allows the pitcher to place the ball directly at the catcher.

This pattern is often difficult to pair with the arm rotation because it requires muscle control and significant focus. Coaches should work with players extensively to help them develop a habit and a rhythm that allows them to make simultaneous arm and leg movements leading to a successful pitch.

The following movements make up the foot pattern for a pitch:

- Stepping Stride
- Leaping Stride
- Drag

The stride starts with the player on the mound. According to most associations and leagues, at least one foot has to start touching the pitching rubber. This is to ensure that everyone starts at the same place on the mound and that there is no room for confusion or cheating.

The stride itself refers to the step that pitchers take with their glove foot. As players bring the ball up and back during the arm rotation, the opposite leg, or the leg on the same side as the glove hand, takes a giant step forward. This is called the stride.

Strides can be different lengths, but a longer stride usually equates to a better pitch, as long as the pitcher can control both the arms and legs during the stride. This is because the stride gives momentum to the ball by putting the weight of the entire body behind it, instead of just the arm. It also puts the pitcher closer to the plate, increasing the speed of the ball when it gets to the batter and making it harder to hit.

A good rule of thumb for stride length is to encourage players to make their strides about the same length as their height. If they can make their strides longer, that is great, but they should at least aim to stride their body length. As pitchers become more comfortable with the mechanics of the swing and the components that make up the big picture, encourage them to extend their stride without

changing any other process. This leads to big advantages when pitchers know how to stride properly for their height and maximize the power they can put behind the ball.

Stepping Stride—There are two methods for the stride—stepping and leaping. The stepping stride is a less-aggressive, easier style that is good for beginning pitchers and those who want to focus on technique and the basics. The stepping stride simply involves pitchers stepping forward as far as they can go as they go through the arm rotation. It means that their step will be shorter than a leaping stride, but more controlled and possibly more successful for that reason.

The stepping stride begins with the arm movement and follows with the step. As the arm comes through the final down swing, the step begins. The key point of the stepping stride is the push off the pitching rubber. It provides the necessary resistance and momentum for the release of the ball.

Leaping Stride—The leaping stride is illegal under most association and league rules, because it involves players having both feet off the ground at once. To avoid doing an actual leap, pitchers often involve the drag, which will be discussed later. A leaping stride allows pitchers to get better range of motion and a longer, more aggressive stride.

Leaping strides also help with momentum and power. This style of stride is considered a more advanced move and should be treated as such, with progression between the stepping stride and the leaping stride. It is more difficult because it requires more thought, more muscle control, and more strength than the stepping stride.

As players land on the leaping foot, they should push backwards to stop their momentum from carrying them forward and create the necessary resistance for the release. This is different from the stepping stride, where the resistance comes from pushing off the rubber, not absorbing the leap and pushing against the ground.

Drag—The drag is important with leaping strides, because it makes them legal in most standard rule-books. The concept is this: in order to keep one foot on the ground at all times, and therefore make the leaping stride legal, the pitcher drags the back foot, or the pitching foot, on the ground while the opposite foot, the glove foot, leaps forward to help the pitcher gain the necessary momentum and stretch for a good pitch.

The drag takes practice and precision, because it is very hard to ensure that the foot stays on the ground. If a player does not have enough momentum during the leap, the dragging foot will jam into the ground and actually slow the pitcher down instead of helping keep them legal. If the pitcher has too much momentum, they run the risk of having the dragging foot come off the ground as well, making the pitch illegal and risking disqualification.

To properly drag, pitchers should turn their foot to the side and point it, like a dancer. Dragging the inside of the foot, on the “big toe” side, allows for maximum extension on the leap as well as comfort for the pitcher, so it is recommended.

Dragging should only occur until the leaping foot lands on the ground again, which means that the drag will be about one foot long or shorter. Any more drag and your pitchers will decrease their balance and speed. The drag should begin as soon as the dragging foot leaves the pitching rubber to ensure that at no time is the pitcher completely airborne.

Avoiding Injury

Many pitchers suffer from common injuries because of their time playing softball. The following habits and techniques are ones to watch out for when building up a team's endurance and pitching ability.

Over-use Injuries—Too much pitching, or simply too much repetitive movement, can result in shoulder or rotator cuff injuries in pitchers. To avoid suffering an overuse injury, pitchers should be rotated through so that no one pitches too many innings or games without rest in between. Also, pitchers should avoid throwing the same pitch over and over with no variation. The lack of variation will quickly lead to an overuse injury.

Unprepared Muscles—Without a sufficient warm-up and stretching period, athletes, including pitchers, put themselves at risk for injuries that result from cold muscles. Coaches have the responsibility to include warm-up and stretching time in their practice plans and game strategies to protect their athletes and instill good habits for the future. To help pitchers warm-up properly, coaches should encourage them to wake up their entire body, usually through jogging and stretching. Pitchers should also ready themselves by mimicking the movement they will do, such as circling their arms and throwing soft pitches.

No Follow Through—Pitchers who stop their arm movement as soon as they let go of the ball are at serious risk for injuries resulting from “snapping” their arm. Follow-through allows pitchers to safely defuse the momentum created by their arm circle and ensure that no sudden action puts their arm at risk for injury. Lack of follow through can lead to elbow and forearm injury because of the immense pressure put on this area of the arm during a pitch.

Bending at the Waist—Pitchers who bend forward at the waist when they release the ball put unnatural pressure on their backs and run the risk of injury. This technique is common among new players and can come from simply bending at the waist or from opening the body to the catcher. When pitchers turn sideways to the catcher, they tend to bend forward at the waist on the final downswing and the release of the ball. This method also puts unnecessary strain on the back, leading to lower back injuries.

Jerking the Body—In an effort to maximize momentum, some players jerk their head, neck, or shoulders as they whip their arm down to release the pitch. Without correction, this habit can lead to head and neck injuries as well as back problems.

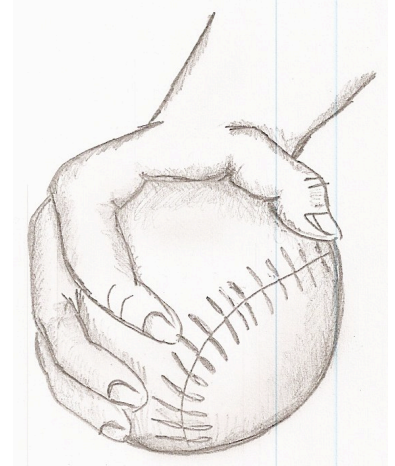
Additional Pitches

Change-Up

The change-up is a pitch that looks like a fastball but is actually about 30% slower than the pitcher's average fastball. It is deceiving to batters, who prepare for a fastball, and is effective at messing up their timing.

The most common grip for throwing the change-up is the palm grip. Instead of holding the ball in the fingertips, the pitcher should force the ball into her palm and grip it with all four fingers and thumb. Use the regular fastball motion and delivery, eliminating wrist snap on release.

The friction caused by the ball coming off the palm will slow the speed of the pitch, confusing and surprising the batter.



Drop Ball

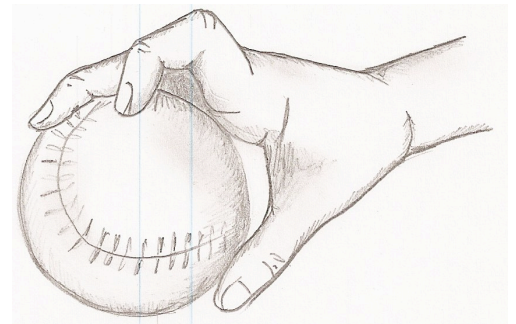
The drop ball is one of a pitcher's most effective weapons. It should be used when batters are becoming comfortable with a pitcher's style and pitching rhythm to switch things up.

For pitchers to throw a drop ball, they must be able to snap their wrists sufficiently at the point of release so that it gets the proper amount of backspin. Pitchers hold the ball with their four fingers on the "U" portion of the seams. The pitcher takes a shorter stride than normal and, upon releasing the ball, pulls her fingers back and up so that the ball "peels" off her hand and gets good spin.

Rise Ball

The rise ball is only successful for pitchers who can throw over 50 mph. The pitch also has to have intense speed and backspin so that the air breaks properly over the ball so that it rises. As a result, the pitch appears to be coming in straight to the strike zone, then suddenly jump up over the batter's swing path.

To throw a rise ball, pitchers should grip the ball with the middle finger along the length of one of the four seams, on the raised part of the seam. Place the index finger next to the middle finger, either flat, or with the tip of the finger on the ball. The thumb rests on a seam opposite the fingers.



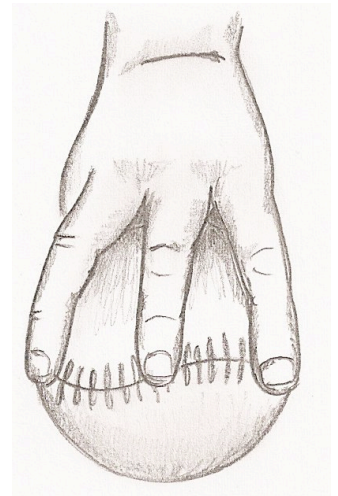
The arm rotation is the same as a fastball, but the release is different. On the final down swing, release the ball with the hand under the ball and away from the body. Rotate the wrist outward so the thumb goes up and to the rear, and the middle finger pulls up against the seam, causing the backward rotation of the ball. The follow through should be high, toward the target and out in front of the body.

Curve Ball

In softball, a curve ball will break from side to side, rather than the top-to-bottom movement seen in the game of baseball. So a right handed pitcher's curve will move from right to left, away from a right-handed batter.

The curve ball works best with a three-finger grip (similar to the traditional fastball grip). The ring finger should be on the seam, with the middle finger between the seams. The ball is released by pulling the index finger across the ball and releasing the ball slightly in front of the hip.

Pitchers should throw across their bodies, with their pitching arm ending up crossed over their abdomen. For the legs, players should step across their pitching line, to help create the necessary curve for this pitch.



Mental Preparation

Pitching is as much a mental game as a physical one. Pitchers who are scared, tired, worried, injured, or distracted will lose the game for their team. In order to develop a pitching corps that understands the importance of mental endurance and preparedness, we feel it appropriate to investigate this topic here.

All pitchers should develop a routine and rhythm that works for them. This includes any of the following actions or rituals:

- Listening to music during the warm-up
- Always beginning practices or competition warm-ups the same way
- Throwing the same number of pitches before taking the mound
- Visualizing success before pitching
- Repeating a positive phrase when they get nervous

All pitchers face the same mental pressures; everyone is looking at them, expecting them to do well, heckling them to do poorly, and so much more. Pitchers are the very most visible part of a team, and they suffer mentally because of it. Strong pitchers are in control of both their minds and their bodies.

To help pitchers develop mental control and endurance, work with them to identify their needs. Try some of these tips to help pitchers beat the mental game.

Visualization—Visualizing a good pitch, winning the game, or any other positive experience helps pitchers calm down, see themselves executing the pitch flawlessly, and increase their self-confidence. If pitchers can see themselves doing the move, they are more likely to do it how they saw in their minds, not how their bodies may want to perform. By visualizing perfection, pitchers become more likely to achieve it.

Calm Anxiety—Players are bound to get unnerved by a bad call, angry fans, or several bad pitches in a row. Regardless of what makes your pitchers angry or worried, help them recognize those signs and create a plan to deal with them. When players get upset or out of their groove, talk with them. Encourage them to take a few deep breaths to calm themselves and ask them to visualize success. Invite them to block out everything but your voice and remind them of their many successes.

Focus on One Pitch—When pitchers relive bad pitches or look forward to good pitches, they forget about the pitch they are about to throw. Remind players that the only pitch that counts is the one about to leave their hands. This will bring their minds back to the present and help them remember that they cannot change the past nor predict the future, so they should do their best to control the present in the way they prefer.

Fear no Batter—The worst concentration-breaker is fear. As soon as pitchers fear something, they shrink away from pitches, giving their opponents a mental and physical victory. Pitches become shorter, slower, and more erratic. They become easier to hit and less precise. Coaches must work

with players to confront their fears and overcome them on the field. Common fears include: batters with a well-known reputation, starting a streak of bad pitches, breaking a streak of good pitches, and pitching in a predictable way.

Stop Thinking of Throwing Strikes—If a pitcher's only goal is to throw strikes, they will unfortunately be disappointed much of the time. Rather than focus on something so impossible to attain with absolute certainty, pitchers and coaches should focus on the mechanics behind the pitch.

Rather than thinking of where the pitch will land in the strike zone, players should concentrate on throwing the ball as hard as they can with every throw. This may mean that their pitches do not go where intended, but precision comes with practice and a deep understanding of one's own pitching style.

Because your players are young, help them develop this understanding of their own pitching style so they will be able to make adjustments when necessary. Some players release sooner than others. Some hold the ball slightly different than their peers. However, a pitcher that always pitches as hard as she can will find that these minor details simply allow her to put the pitch in a better spot—she's already done the hard work and is just playing with the details.

Drills

The following drills are designed to help players master the components of the pitch before putting the whole pitch together. It is absolutely essential that pitchers understand the details and the movements making up the entire pitch instead of launching straight into learning a drop or curve ball.

By taking things one component at a time, you can focus your team in whatever area you feel is most important. This also gives you the freedom to separate out any skill that is weak among your players and help them improve it with intense practice.

Swing Mechanics Drills

Wall Throws—This drill focuses on speed and only involves the arm rotation instead of the feet as well. Pitchers stand as close to a wall as possible while still being able to complete the entire movement freely. This drill should use a softie instead of a regular ball.

Pitchers wind up like normal and pitch as hard and fast as they can into the wall. Though this may sound strange because this is a speed drill, players should not focus on speed. They should focus on putting 100% power behind each pitch, which will translate to more speed. If they focus on speed they will actually slow down because of the mental component that is not usually there.

After a few pitches directly into the wall, pitchers back up a bit but continue the drill, focusing on total power instead of control or speed. When the pitcher continues to back up but feels that she is losing her power, bring her back closer to the wall. The point is that eventually she will have the same power right next to the wall as she will at her normal pitching distance.

There is a variation on this drill that targets endurance. Standing in the original spot next to the wall, pitchers throw as many balls as they can in a one-minute period, focusing as always on completing each pitch with total power.

Circle Speed Drill—This drill improves a pitcher's arm rotation speed, leading to more powerful throws and controlled speed. To do this drill, the pitcher's feet should be wider than shoulder width and in a stride position, as if she has taken a small stride.

She will make three fast circles with her pitching arm, releasing the ball on the third rotation. The shoulder should stay relaxed but controlled. The purpose of this drill is to increase arm rotation speed and help pitchers release the ball with more momentum.

To help aim the ball, the pitcher should have her glove hand at shoulder height and facing the catcher, where she wants to throw the ball. After working on three rotations before a pitch, reduce it to two rotations before the pitch and finally, one rotation and the pitch.

If players feel any pain during this drill, they should stop immediately. The shoulder must be relaxed enough that it can rotate quickly without pain, but players should never push through shoulder pain.

Walk-Up Drill—This drill begins with the pitcher behind the mound. The pitcher gets only one step onto the mound before the pitch. The pitcher will take a step onto the mound as they are presenting the ball and then throw a pitch. The step should be aggressive and long, helping the pitcher to extend her pitching range and get momentum.

Full Pitching Drills

Dummy Batter Drill—The dummy batter drill involves a cardboard or wood cutout of a batter, standing in their first stance at the plate. This drill is best for pitchers already understanding the mechanics and simply wanting to improve their accuracy and aim.

The dummy batter should have a line coming down in front of it, made from some stiff material that will not blow about in the wind. This line is the proverbial “bulls eye” for a pitcher. Since pitchers are working here to improve their aim and number of strikes, having a visual cue denoting the perfect strike line will help as they experiment with pitches.

The dummy batter is also great because of the safety concerns with pitching. When a pitcher is learning a new pitch or tweaking their aim, the chances of a batter getting hit with a ball are pretty high. With the dummy batter, batters stay safe and the pitcher is free to experiment as necessary.

The dummy batter drill can be used for much more than developing proper aim. It is also a great pitching tool for learning new pitches, especially pitches like the drop, curve, rise, and screw. Since pitchers will have to practice over and over to develop the proper ball movement, having a dummy batter there will lend consistency to their practices.

Pitching Distance Drill—For pitchers needing to improve or practice control and accuracy, this pitching distance drill can do the trick. The catcher starts at the plate like normal and does not move. The pitcher starts at a designated line, about half her normal starting distance from the catcher. After throwing a few strikes from this closer location, the pitcher backs up to another designated line, about 10 feet behind the first. She repeats the drill, throwing several strikes before moving back to the next pitching line.

The lines should start about half the normal pitching distance and end at twice the pitcher’s normal pitching length. The coach can determine how many strikes are necessary before moving on to the next line.

The important point about the pitching distance drill is that pitchers should essentially keep their form the same as they pitch, regardless of where they are in relation to the catcher. It is important that they provide the right amount of power, which will depend on where they are standing, but the body mechanics and pitching technique stays the same.

As pitchers move farther out, they should focus on:

- Taking a longer stride
- Making a more controlled final down swing
- Getting a good flick of the wrist at the release

20-4 Drill—The 20-4 drill, or the 10-3 drill if you are working with younger players, focuses on strike accuracy and ball control. Pitchers start at their normal pitching distance or somewhat closer, depending on the development and skill of the pitcher. It is fine to start at half the distance and work back up to the normal pitching distance.

This drill requires pitchers to pitch 20 strikes for every 4 balls they pitch. If the pitcher gets the fourth ball before getting the 20th strike, they start over. Be careful not to overwork pitchers in this drill, because it requires lots of repetitive pitching.

One of the points of this drill is to keep players from focusing on speed and instead, to focus on accuracy. Pitchers should be encouraged to pitch slower, at about 60% of their normal pitching speed. This is because the drill is repetitive and requires pitchers to pitch much faster than usual, with less downtime between pitches.

Conclusion

Pitchers have an especially hard job because the game literally depends on their performance. Coaches should work with players to develop a healthy arm rotation that allows them to pitch consistently. Certain drills focus on arm rotation and help players develop strength and power in their pitching arm. To avoid injury, the arm should always be relaxed and the body should open up naturally as the rotation happens.

Pitchers can either use a stepping or leaping stride. As with most aspects of pitching, preference plays a big part in choosing a stride. Pitchers should find a rhythm that works well for them and then work to lengthen their stride, increase the speed of arm rotation, and flick the ball at the release to improve the pitch and put the pitcher solidly in the strike zone.

Pitching is also a mental game. With preparation, coaches and pitchers can come into a game with the confidence that no outside influence is going to disrupt their pattern. Coaches must work with pitchers to understand their needs, both physical and mental, to ensure that players stay healthy, happy, and successful.



For more help with pitching, including step by step video instructions, drills, mechanics, and mental training- check out Sue Enquist's Softball Pitching Mastery:

<http://www.softballspot.com/sp/pitchingmastery.html>

Recommended Resources

The Coaching Essentials:

Softball Drills & Practice Plans - Would you like to have 25 pre-designed practice plans at your fingertips? My ebook, "Softball Drills & Practice Plans" is jam packed with over 50 unique, fun and effective softball drills. The drills are fully organized into clipboard-ready practice plans... so you can prepare for practice in just 5 short minutes. Includes softball tryout plans and my own "Team Selection Matrix". Perfect for the beginner coach looking to get organized, or for the experienced coach looking for fun, innovative ways to teach fundamental softball skills. (\$34.68)

For more information visit:

<http://www.softballspot.com>

Softball Blueprint - Designing your own animated plays and drills can be as easy as 1-2-3. Softball Blueprint software allows you to create stunningly effective animated drills and plays and share them with your team in 3 super easy steps. (from \$49.95)

For more information visit:

<http://www.softballblueprint.com>

Online Clinics:

Underground Hitting Secrets Clinic - Every book, magazine article, and instructional video is just dead wrong about hitting- this clinic reveals 7 simple secrets that will improve your players' skills forever. The focus is on hitting mechanics... the specific "underground" secrets of stance, spine angle, head tilt, hand position and swing path that nobody seems to get right... and nobody ever teaches. Discover the 6 biggest mistakes hitters make and find out how to quickly correct even the most difficult-to-cure bad habits. (\$49.95)

For more information visit:

<http://www.coachkennybuford.com/ar/hitting.html>

Signs and Signals Clinic - Discover the secrets to a mega-effective on-field communication system that will give your team a massive mental edge on the competition. Find out how to make use of verbal, touch, and descriptive hand signals that are simple enough for your team to memorize and recall easily, yet deceptive enough to prevent other teams from "cracking your code". (\$29.95)

For more information visit:

<http://www.coachkennybuford.com/signs/fullstory.html>

Must-Have DVD Packages:

Sue Enquist's Hitting Bootcamp - Discover Sue Enquist's softball coaching secrets that will boost your hitting game to the next level FAST...World's most natural Softball Hitting System will have your players crushing the ball with lightning quick bat speed and titanic power - without even trying! You'll see how she kept her UCLA team on top of the rankings year in and year out. (\$239.99 + S/H)

For more information visit:

<http://www.softballspot.com/sp/hittingbootcamp.html>

Pitching Mastery Program (Featuring Dee Dee Weiman and Sue Enquist) - Discover the best kept coaching secrets behind softballs greatest pitchers. NCAA pitching guru and former All-American Dee Dee Weiman pulls back the curtain on her stunningly effective system for coaching softball pitchers. This is a complete system for coaching your pitchers, including mechanics, drills, mental training and more. (\$159.99 + S/H)

For more information visit:

<http://www.softballspot.com/sp/pitchingmastery.html>

Slap Hitting Mastery (Featuring Darren Mueller, North Dakota State University Head Softball Coach) - Slap Hitting Mastery presents a detailed overview of how to effectively put the ball in play and exert maximum pressure on the defense using slap hitting techniques. All key factors involved in sound slap hitting are covered including footwork, developmental drills, drag bunting, and more (designed for coaches working with beginning and experienced slap hitters). (\$39.99 +S/H)

For more information visit:

<http://www.softballspot.com/sp/slaphitting.html>

Softball Coaching Aids:

Solo Hitting Machine - This is the world's first "Self Contained" hitting machine that allows your batter to swing full speed at a moving target (just like real batting practice)...then get instant feedback on swing accuracy and power. You're batters will get a massive number of swing reps in only 5 minutes. Can be set up inside or outside. (\$249 + S/H)

For more information visit:

<http://www.coachkennybuford.com/ar/solohitting.html>

New coaching tools are being added all the time, for a current list of the best coaching resources we offer, please visit our main catalog at:

<http://www.softballspot.com/catalog.html>