



**In this Issue:** Dates coming up, Stats leaders, Match report, Pitching 101

**Coming up:**

Practice Mon 06/06/16 Metrovicks  
 @ Barflies Tues 07/06/16 Pitch 9  
 Practice Mon 13/06/16 Metrovicks  
 NO GAME Tues 14/06/16 n/a

**Batting Leader board**

<u>On base percentage</u>	<u>(M)</u>	<u>On base percentage</u>	<u>(F)</u>	<u>Home Runs</u>	
JD	1000	Emma	760	JD	7
Dave	909	Annie	750	Dan	5
Tony	800	Helen	688	Rob	2
				Steve A., Tony, Dave W.	1

OBP = On Base Percentage = hits + walks / plate appearances. (It's not a hit if another runner is **FORCED** out on the play).  
 Minimum of 10 plate appearances needed to feature in the OBP figures .You also need to have played in 1 or more of the last 4 games.



**31/05/16 Freeze W 29-9 (4)**

An impressive display of hitting was the centrepiece of a 4 inning mercy win against Mayhem Freeze. A defensive wobble in the top of the 2<sup>nd</sup> suggested we may not have things all our own way but we tightened things up in the field after that and also set a Tigers single game record of 7 Home Runs on our way to the win.

Home Run Hero was JD with 3, closely followed by Dan and Rob with 2 apiece. OBP champions were Rob, Dan, Tony, JD and Dave (all 4 for 4) and Annie (3 for 3), who all batted 1000.

In the field Tony made a welcome return to the pitching mound, with Dave finishing the game off in relief. The Czech connection (TK and Sandra) both performed well on the right side of the infield, Annie at catcher made a couple of nice throws to record outs at first and everyone else chipped in in an efficient defensive display. Rookie Jen got a late call up, making her league debut, and celebrated by recording her first base hit. TK hurt her leg sliding into 3<sup>rd</sup> and had to leave the game, get well soon TK !

**MVPs were TK and Rob.**

Freeze	2	6	1	0	9
Tigers	8	8	7	6	29



### **New Facebook group**

I've set up a new "Tigers admin" Facebook group, the idea is that the group is for team only stuff, as opposed to the Facebook page, which is for public facing stuff (photos etc.). I have deliberately set it up as a "closed" group so please don't add anyone who isn't a team member.

At the moment it mainly consists of some coaching bits and pieces, most of which I have sent round the team at some time or another. I suspect most of you have seen some of them but I may not have circulated all of them recently so hopefully some of it will be new to you. You can see them all together by clicking the group "files" tab.

BTW – if you have not already "liked" the team page: <https://www.facebook.com/Tigerssoftball> then please do so and don't forget you can also follow the team on twitter: [@tigers\\_sb](https://twitter.com/tigers_sb), and of course don't forget the team web site: [www.tigerssoftball.co.uk](http://www.tigerssoftball.co.uk)



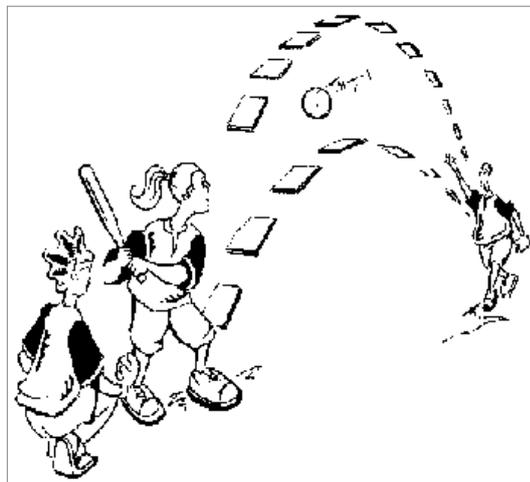
# Pitching 101

## Introduction

The pitcher begins each play within a game of slowpitch Softball by delivering a pitch to the batter. The rules expect that each pitch:

- Be pitched by the pitcher whilst he is in contact with the pitching plate.
- Be delivered in one continuous underarm motion.
- Pass in an arc, reaching a height of between 6' and 12' before falling to pass over the pitching plate between the height of the batter's back shoulder and that of the batter's knees whilst passing over home plate.

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## Basic pitching mechanics

A typical pitcher:

- Starts each pitch stood facing the batter with the ball held in front of their body. Their throwing side foot will be touching the pitching plate and their glove side foot 6 to 12" behind the plate.
- Begins their pitching motion by stepping forward with their glove side foot whilst bringing the ball back underarm behind their body.
- As they complete their forward stride, brings their throwing arm forward in a smooth underarm motion, releasing the ball towards home plate.
- Goes into a defensive "ready position" after releasing the ball, glove in front of their body, in case they need to field a batted ball.

## More about mechanics

It's important to keep the pitching arm vertical through the delivery of the pitch. A vertical arm means the ball will go forward in the direction intended by the pitcher. Inexperienced pitchers often deliver the ball in a sideways curve, pitching around their body rather than at their side, this makes it much more difficult to create a consistent repeatable delivery.

Pitchers often look to increase the arc of their pitches by bending and then straightening the knees during the pitch (often starting in a slight squat and then straightening their posture whilst pitching). A full follow through of the pitching arm after release will also help give a full arc to the pitch.

## Exceptions to the rule

Whilst the vast majority of pitchers step with their glove side foot, because it's easier to stay balanced stepping with that foot, some people find it more natural to step with their throwing side foot. If you can reliably throw strikes stepping with your throwing side foot then that's fine, but as a general rule beginners should begin by stepping with their glove side foot.

Some pitchers have the arm strength to deliver consistent strikes without stepping forward. If you can do this then it is a useful skill to have as it leaves the pitcher both better balanced and further away from the batter. This gives the pitcher more time to adopt a proper fielding stance before the batter hits the ball, but most people can't pitch reliably without stepping, so whilst it can be worth trying a "no step" delivery if it isn't producing results I'd be quick to move back to a more orthodox style.

## Grip

There are two basic grips the rookie pitcher should try to find which one suits them best, overhand and underhand.

With the underhand grip the hand is under the ball as the ball is released, the ball will have forward spin on it.

With the overhand grip the ball is under the hand as it is released, the ball will have backspin on it, so may need to be released with a bit more forward force than the underhand pitch, as an overhand pitch will tend to rise higher and then drop more quickly than will be the case for the more even path of the underhand pitch.

More advanced pitchers will also use other grips on the ball but we won't worry about them here !

## Learning to pitch

When starting out as a pitcher all your emphasis should be on creating a simple, repeatable, delivery that results in a strike.

You may need to experiment to find the delivery that suits you best, which foot do you step with ? do you need a step ? do you deliver the ball overhand or underhand ? but once you have found a delivery that best suits you, you need to repeat that delivery time after time until you can reliably throw strike after strike.

All you need to begin practising are some softballs and a tape measure to mark out the 50' pitching distance. Measure out the distance and start pitching.

## Measures of success

When you begin to practice pitching you need to pay attention to three main variables, the direction/line of your pitches, their height and their depth/ length.

### Line

When starting to pitch the most important of these is to get a consistent line. There are 2 main reasons for this:

1. line is often the hardest thing for a new pitcher to get consistently right
2. umpires and batters find it easy to spot pitches that are not on-line

The key to getting a consistent line is to keep the arm vertical whilst delivering the pitch. This is not a natural way of delivering the ball, most beginning pitchers bring their arm round their body in an arc, if you can do this and deliver consistent strikes then great, but most people can't, Just like throwing sidearm the slightly change in your release point will mess you up, a vertical arm is much more forgiving.

Players and umpires find it much easier to read line than they do read depth and height, so the pitcher has much less room for error on line than on length and height. Get the line right first, then work on the other stuff.

### Height

You need to make sure that your pitches are high enough. Different umpires have very different idea of where 6' is, some think anything shoulder high is OK, others expect 7'+. There isn't anything you can do about this so you have to work with it. If you naturally throw a flat pitch practice with a 6' high net halfway between home and the pitcher's plate. As you get more experienced you will want to vary the height of your pitches but to start with work on getting a consistent strike.

### Depth

As a pitcher you need to be aware that the higher you throw your pitches the more quickly the ball has to descend behind the plate. Pitchers often get a bit of leeway here because a lot of umpires are poor at recognising pitches that are in fact too deep to be properly called a strike but you can't rely on this, just be aware that if your pitches are going 12' in the air they really need to be landing no more than 6-9" behind the plate.

