



In this Issue: Dates coming up, Stats leaders, Match report, Pitching part 2

Coming up:

Practice Mon 13/06/16 Metrovicks
NO GAME Tues 14/06/16 n/a
 Practice Mon 20/06/16 Metrovicks
 @ Freeze Tues 21/06/16 Pitch 8

Batting Leader board

<u>On base percentage</u>	<u>(M)</u>	<u>On base percentage</u>	<u>(F)</u>	<u>Home Runs</u>	
Dave	920	Emma	759	JD, Dan	7
JD	917	Annie	650	Rob, Steve A.	2
Tony	800	Helen	650	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.

07/06/16 Barflies W 16-6

We saved our best performance of the season so far for this top of the table clash. The whole game was played at a higher level than our previous games, the Barflies fielded well and could hit the ball with power so we needed to play well to record the win, and we rose to the challenge. We took a lead in the first 2 innings that we never relinquished but that lead was never a comfortable one and we had to play hard throughout.

OBP leaders, batting 1000, were Dan, Rob (both 4 for 4) and Dave (3 for 3), with Emma (3 for 4) leading the way for the women. Home Run heroes were Dan, with a brace, and Steve A. with a blast to right field.

We were efficient in the field throughout. Dan was excellent at short stop, Emma made some nice plays at 2nd, Helen took some nice catches in left field, Steve did a fine job at 1st, Dave both pitched and fielded his position well and JD was excellent in the outfield with his running catch in the bottom of the 7th perhaps the best play of the whole game.

Jen looked even better in her 2nd game than she did in her first, and Rob's hitting deserves a special mention because it has come on in leaps and bounds over the last couple of weeks, he just can't stop hitting line drives !

MVPs were Helen and Dan.

Tigers	3	4	3	1	4	0	1	16
Barflies	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	6



Pitching 101 – part 2 (part 1 in issue 12)

In part 1 we looked at the basics of pitching, now in part 2 we look at recognising and sorting out problems and in what we can do to practice our new found skills....

Recognising what's going wrong

If you are struggling to throw strikes consistently you need to recognise what is going wrong so that you can do something to put it right. Pitching problems can be divided into 2 types, mental and physical, and it's perfectly possible for the 2 to coexist and feed off one another.

Mental Problems: Staying in control

It's important to stay in control whilst you are pitching, take your time and don't rush. If things start going wrong during a game most people's natural reaction is to tighten up and speed up, neither will you do you any good. Force yourself to work at a measured even pace – and don't forget to breathe 😊. Try to forget about the batter and just think about dropping the ball into the area behind home plate.

Physical problems

Physical pitching problems can be divided into the 3 areas we discussed above, line, height and depth.

If you are struggling to get a consistent **line** the two most likely possible causes are that either:

- You are not bringing your arm through vertically - *get someone to watch you from behind home plate to look for this or*
- Your fingers are flicking or putting pressure on the ball as you release it and that is causing the ball to veer off line on its way to the plate – *you may need to fiddle around with your grip on the ball to fix this, try switching from holding the ball across the seams to along the seams, experiment with each of palm up, palm down to and palm at the side of the ball to see what suits you best..*

Height and **depth** (length) are often interconnected. If you are struggling to get enough height on your pitches, or they are landing on or short of the plate you need to put more emphasis on bringing your body and arm up and through, start with knees slightly bent and straighten up as you go forward to pitch. Don't stop your arm movement at the instant you let go of the ball, follow through. If that doesn't give you the distance you need you may need to put more effort into your pitching stride to get more forward momentum.

If your pitches are high enough but aren't dropping in time to fall into the strike zone again you may need to put more emphasis on rising up as you pitch to get a fuller arc, to get the ball to drop at a steeper angle, or just throw the ball slightly slower ! On the other side, if you are throwing pitches in too high an arc then it's time to dial down the upward push as you pitch.

Practicing

There's more than 1 sort of practice. Most of what follows assumes you are pitching alone, but it's important to also pitch to batters as part of your development, even if you don't feel confident enough to pitch in a game, you should start pitching to batters as soon as you are happy that you can get a reasonable proportion (1/3+) of your pitches over for strikes. Pitch batting practice for the team, pitch in friendlies, take any chance you get to get some pitching under your belt.

Whenever you pitch in practice, either to a batter or by yourself, it's worth having a cloth or other flat target behind the plate, roughly 18" deep and the same width as the plate. This should give you a good read on whether your pitches are actually landing within the strike zone or not. It's easy to kid yourself when you practice, particularly about the depth of your pitches, if they landing well beyond your target it's unlikely that an umpire would give you those pitches as strikes in a game.

(It's true that the target won't give you a totally reliable guide to what is or isn't a strike but it'll be a close enough match to give you useful feedback each time you practice).

Most of your practice should consist of throwing pitches as you would in a game but there are a few drills that are worth building into your routine that will help you improve:

Pitching with a net: A 6' high net half way between the two plates will reinforce the point that you must pitch with an arc. If you don't have a suitable net then improvise, anything that you can put in the path of your pitches that is tall enough to give you a read on the height of your pitches will help. (It does help if you can still see home plate though !).

Pitching from 60 feet: Pitching from further from the plate really puts a strain on your pitching mechanics, but because you have to work that much harder to throw strikes it can be an effective way of ironing out kinks in your delivery. Don't worry if you aren't throwing too many strikes (especially at first) as long as your mechanics are sound, when you move back to the regulation distance you should find it easy by comparison (!).

Pitching from 40 feet: It's worth trying this if your pitches are coming in flat. Emphasise getting the ball to go up and then down to land just behind the plate. It can be worth combining this with the use of the net to make sure you really are getting the pitches to arc.

Pitch to a smaller target: I like to put the bottom half of a batting tee behind either the inside or outside edge of the plate and try to pitch so that the ball lands on the top of the vertical part of the tee. As with pitching from 60' don't worry too much if you don't land too many right on the target, if you do this regularly and aim to increase the number of "near misses" each time it will still help you direct your pitches more accurately when you are pitching to a batter.

Pitch at bats: When practising by yourself keep count of the balls and strikes to an imaginary hitter and pitch a complete at bat until you either strike the batter out or walk them. Then swap to the other type of ball (12" – 11" or v.v.) and pitch to the next batter. Keep doing this, it makes you pay close attention to how many strikes you are really throwing – if you don't keep track it's easy to con yourself into believing you are doing better than you really are – and it gets you used to pitching both sizes of ball in the same way as you have to do in a game.



Getting better

As you get more confident in your ability to throw strikes you can start to work more on the location and height of your pitches, use the inside and outside of the plate, mix low and high pitches to try and upset the batters rhythm. You will find that that not every day is the same, some days you will have better control than others, learn to recognise your limits on that particular day and work within them.

Other pitches

As you improve you can look at bringing other pitches into your repertoire. If you turn your pitching hand as you deliver the ball you will put spin on the ball, a clockwise turn will make the ball tail in on a right handed batter, an anti- clockwise turn will make the ball curve the other way.

A knuckle ball is a ball released with minimal spin. Hold the ball with the very ends of your fingers ,and try to let go with all your fingers at the same time, deliver your pitch otherwise as normal this should allow the ball to come out of your hand with no or little spin. This means any air currents will have a much bigger impact on the path of the ball than on a normal spinning ball. This means the ball can wobble erratically in the air on its way to the batter which (in theory) makes it harder to hit.

