

FRENCHTOWN BRONCS SOFTBALL

TRUST • PREPARATION • COURAGE • PERSISTENCE • RESILIENCE • ADAPTABILITY

CORE BELIEFS ABOUT OUR PITCHERS FROM THE COACHES STANDPOINT

- We believe we can help kids with average ability be great and maximize their abilities. We can be a good team without a gifted pitcher!
- We want our pitchers to become their own pitching coach – we want to help them understand what their bodies are doing. Empowerment leads to confidence.
- We will call pitches – but we develop a trusting relationship with our pitchers so they trust the pitch call – each pitch is a connected event between coach, catcher, and pitcher. We want our pitchers to understand the numerous ways to get hitters out so they can embrace the strategies we employ.
- We want to celebrate the competitiveness of our pitchers – it is OK to be themselves and present with a swagger. They have to want the ball, they have to smile, they have to develop confidence-we have to let them have their personality. (There is a line however!)
- We seek kids who have the intellect and work ethic to accomplish hard things. Our pitchers have to understand this isn't easy and they need to know we as coaches recognize this as well.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL PITCHER

- Dedicated Students
- Willing to match the work the coaching staff is willing to put forth
- They love to pitch, want to be the center of the game
- They have the ability to develop leadership skills
- They can maintain composure in any situation

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- I. Simplified Mechanics – Focus on 4 Major Components
 - A. Stand Tall/Stay on line – Maintain Balance Throughout
 1. Shoulders over hips over knees
 2. Stride leg somewhat on line
 - B. Leg Drive/Stride
 1. Stride length nearly equal to pitcher height
 2. Leg Drive toward target
 - C. Consistent Arm Path and Release
 1. Hand tight to body on release
 - D. Stay Loose –Avoid Aiming/Guiding the Ball
 1. Accuracy isn't as important when we are starting out with a new pitcher
 2. Over Time They Learn to Adjust – Patience from both Coach and Pitcher

- II. Establish and Communicate Goals with Our Pitchers
 - A. Off-Season Goals
 1. Have pitcher establish an offseason goal – dependent on level and age
 - a) Develop a change-up of some kind if they don't have one
 - b) Develop a new pitch – experiment with spins and grips
 - c) Work on location with best pitch
 - d) Become more consistent with mechanics
 - e) Get stronger – durability, velocity, stamina
 - f) Once established –do the research to help meet the goal
 - B. Clearly Communicated Game Goals for Pitchers
 1. 75% strike percentage for fastball (or best pitch) – this must happen
 - a) Charted and reviewed (Pitching Chart in Appendix)
 2. 50% change-up for a strike – this must happen
 - a) Charted and reviewed (Pitching Chart in Appendix)
 3. One Base on Balls per 7 innings
 - a) Base on balls connects to success (Chart in Appendix)

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III. Off-Season Workouts

- A. Consistent Warm-Up Focused on Mechanics
 - 1. May be pitcher specific with common themes
- B. Warm-Up 5-10 of Each Pitch
- C. Remainder of Workout Devoted to ‘Pitching Strategy’
 - 1. Pyramids – different every time (Chart in Appendix)
 - 2. Location game
 - 3. Pitcher/Coach devised hitters
 - a) Usually someone in our league we are familiar with
 - b) Pitcher choice of approach – considers count, strengths
 - c) Coach is free to interject ideas that match their in-game strategy
- D. Coach as Catcher to Gain Better Perspective on Movement, Spin, Location
 - 1. This is the beginning of a trusting coach-pitcher relationship

IV. In-Season Workouts

- A. Our Most Neglected Players – Often on Their Own
 - 1. Try to work pitching practice into our practice plan with catchers
 - 2. Usually happens as part of our hitting circuit rotation
 - 3. Most of the coaching staff is working with another position
- B. By This Time it is Maintenance
 - 1. Low priority on changing mechanics in this time-frame
 - 2. We play so often they are often sore or tired
 - 3. Recovery time is important for our kids
 - 4. Some do better when they throw light every day

V. Teaching and Learning In-Game Pitching Strategy

- A. Constant Communication
 - 1. Often we hear our pitchers say my voice is the only one they hear
 - 2. Devise short phrase specific to the needs of each pitcher
 - 3. Don’t flood their minds with mechanical suggestions

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- B. Pitcher Understands How to Approach Hitter
 - 1. Get ahead early in the count
 - 2. Locate Pitches at the Proper Count
 - 3. Throw off-speed when you are behind in the count
 - 4. First time through the line-up vs. second time
 - a) Try to get through without the change-up the first time
 - b) Change our location based on chart information
- C. Confidence in What They are Doing
 - 1. Want the ball – be the center
 - 2. They have done the work – they deserve the success
 - 3. Spend the time talking about mental preparedness
- D. The Ability to Self-diagnose When Things Aren't Going Well
 - 1. Asses what is happening
 - a) Where are they missing?
 - b) What may cause the issue they are facing
 - 2. What aspect of our basic mechanics are out of line?
 - 3. The pitcher can be their most effective pitching coach
- E. Trusting Relationship Between Coach and Pitcher
 - 1. Pitch call
 - 2. Situational pitching
 - 3. Develop a strategy for how we can get people out
 - a) 0-2 pitch call and location
 - b) Change-up behind in the count
 - c) Willing to be opposite of what we do well in big moments

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