



**Coach Steve's Softball Training Modules  
for  
Primary & Middle School Players**

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# Softball Training Modules for Primary & Middle School Players

## 5. Pitching & Catching

Basic Pitching Skills described below refer to the “**Windmill Action**” method to pitch a softball from the **Pitcher’s Plate** towards **Home Plate** (see Section 1.1 of Module 1).

### 5.1 Basic Pitching Skills for Under 13 Players

#### Definitions:

- The “**Power Line**” is an imaginary straight line between the **Pitcher’s & Home Plate**
- The “**Pivot Foot**” is on the same side as the Pitcher’s Throwing Hand
- The “**Stepping Foot**” is on opposite side of the Pitcher’s Throwing Hand
- The “**Alignment Position**” is facing Home Plate with the heel of the Pivot Foot and the toe of the Stepping Foot touching the Pitcher’s Plate
- “**Separate the Hands**” means standing in the **Alignment Position** with arms at the Pitcher’s sides (Ball can be either in the Throwing Hand or in the Glove).

#### Alignment Position



- “**Pause Position**” means the Pitcher brings the pitching and glove hands together and **holds them in front of the body for at least 2 seconds**



The delivery of a softball pitch using the **Windmill Action** involves five distinct motions **to be executed in sequence in less than one second.** The **Windmill Action** involves **throwing the ball across the front of the body** down the Power Line towards Home Plate. To accomplish this, the **Pitcher's glove hand shoulder must be pointing towards Home Plate** at the moment the ball leaves his throwing hand at the **Bottom of the Windmill Action (the Release Position)**. This means the Pitcher must rotate his body 90° during the delivery in the time between the end of the Pause and the release of the ball as follows:

- Bend body core forward slightly at the waist and then rock backwards to lift the toe of the Pivot Foot slightly off the ground while simultaneously swing the pitching arm (and ball) and cocking the wrist backwards away from Home Plate
- Create the “Open Position” by **rotating the toe of the Pivot Foot 45° angle** away from the Stepping Foot keeping the Pivot Foot heel in contact with the Pitcher's Plate.
- Then simultaneously:
  - Move the **Stepping Foot** forward to land at a **45° angle on the Power Line**
  - **Rotate the upper body and core** to be parallel to the Power Line
  - **Rotate the pitching arm 360° in a clockwise direction** releasing the ball with a **Wrist Snap**
- Follow through with the pitching hand in a relaxed fashion along the line of ball flight toward the Home Plate target

The Windmill Action components as illustrated on page 5 below. The video link directly below is recommended viewing for Under 13 Pitchers

[Softball Pitching Basics](#)

## Windmill Action Components

### Start of the Windmill Action

- Shoulder Rotates
- Arms “rock” sideways
- Pivot foot rotates 45°



- Core moves towards upright posture
- Stepping Foot starts moving forward

### Top of Windmill Action

- Shoulder Fully Rotated
- Stepping foot landing on the Power Line at a 45° angle



### Bottom of Windmill Action

### Follow Through

- Ball in Release Position
- Stepping Foot at 45° to Power Line



- Throwing arm in line with Power Line
- Balance with Pivot Foot and Glove hand at finish

Goals: See page 5 below

## Module 5 - Basic Pitching Skills for Under 13 Players

### Goals: At the end of this Module

#### Players will know:

1. What the “**Pitching Plate**”, “**Home Plate**” and the “**Power Line**” are
2. Which foot is the “**Pivot Foot**”, the “**Stepping Foot**”
3. What the starting “**Alignment Position**” is
4. What the expressions “**Separate the Hands**”, “**Pause Position**”, “**Open position**” (of the Pivot Foot) mean
5. What coordinating the “**Step**” and “**Rotate the Core**” mean
6. What the expression “**Windmill Action**” means

#### Players will be able to demonstrate:

7. **Their starting “Alignment Position”** of feet on Pitching Plate
8. **Their “Pause Position”** - (hands together with ball in glove)
9. **Their “Open Position”** of the “Pivot Foot”  
- (**Pivot Foot** heel rotates away (45°) from the **Stepping Foot**)
10. From the **Open Position**, **Rotate the Core** away from the **Stepping Foot** and then:
11. **Complete the Windmill Action** of the pitching arm in coordination with the **Stepping Foot** landing at a 45° angle on the **Power Line** towards **Home Plate**
12. **Full Pitching Action** – Steps 7 to 11 in sequence

#### Drills related to Basic Skills Development

1. **Grip** - four fingers across the seam
2. **Snap the wrist** - hold the ball in your finger tips in front of the body and toss the ball upwards by extending the wrist downwards and then snapping the wrist upwards

#### Practice routine (Simulates Game Condition)

1. Throw up to six pitches with the objective of achieving 3 Strikes before 4 Balls  
On your own, use a tennis ball against a wall or garage door  
With a buddy, alternate back and forth, first one to pitch 3 STRIKE-OUTS wins “the inning”
2. The goal here is to achieve a walk to strikeout ratio of 1 Walk to 4 Strikeouts

#### Pregame Warmups

1. **Snap the wrist** – **Throw** ball into own glove 8 to 10 times
2. **Windmill action** across the front of body (standing sideways towards Home Plate)
3. (two players 7 to 8 paces apart) **Step and Toss ball** 8 to 10 times, then  
**Step, Rotate Core and Wrist Snap** ball 8 - 10 times
4. (two players 10 paces apart) **Full Pitching Action** - medium pace; 10 to 15 times

#### Then:

5. (Pitcher & Catcher 13 m apart) **Full Pitching Action** - game pace; 10 to 15+ times

*Note: Warmup 5 is the normal game distance between the Pitching Plate and the Catcher behind Home Plate. The distance between Home Plate and the Pitching Plate is 12 metres. The ball travels about 11 metres between the Pitcher’s release point and Home Plate*

## **5.2 Basic Catching Skills for Under 13 Players**

*(Module 5.2 under development)*