



*We prepare this newsletter because we  
enjoy talking softball  
and seeing pitchers improve.  
Please send it to friends who also enjoy the  
sport.*

### **Last Minute Lessons**

Just about every week we have last minute openings in Roanoke as we fill in our schedule. If you are interested in being on our "call" list for a given week be sure to send Susan an email with your availability. She can let you know of last minute lesson opportunities. This is an easy way to pick up extra lessons.

### **Summer Pitching**

Most of us are busy with tournaments on weekends, but summer is a good time to catch up with Denny during the week. If you want to come to Roanoke for a couple of days, he would also be happy to schedule time for you with trainers at The Edge Sports Performance Center, people who have been working with us to understand the pitching form and ways they can design workout programs to enhance your strength, explosiveness, and flexibility. These programs can be done at home without special equipment. If you have free time during the week in summer, let us know and we can get to work.

### **Form Matters**

#### **By Delmas Bolin, MD PhD**

Director PCA Center for Sports Medicine

Head Team Physician, Radford University

Associate Professor, Via College of Osteopathic Medicine

1935 West Main Street, Salem, VA 24153, Phone 540-387-0441 (Ext 2029)

Have you noticed that some softball players seem to cruise through the season while others don't? One of the contributing factors to injury is improper form. This is particularly true of the throwing motion. To understand how problems can arise, one needs to understand a little about the mechanics of throwing. Everyone "knows" how to throw a ball overhand. Did you know that the legs and trunk muscles are critical to achieving maximum accuracy and velocity? Image yourself throwing a ball; now imagine doing that with your feet frozen to the ground. You can still throw, but it isn't pretty is it?

Athletes that don't properly use their legs and "core" trunk muscles risk overusing their shoulder muscles. Over time, the shoulder muscles develop too much stress and can develop several problems including tears of the "rotator cuff" muscles or cartilage tears that lead to instability of the shoulder.

How can you prevent overuse injuries? By concentrating on your throwing form early in the season. It is important to have a good warm-up; don't throw too hard too quickly. Spend time strengthening your core and lower body as well as your shoulders and your shoulder blade muscles (performing shoulders back/chest out maneuvers). This will improve your stamina and your posture.

Pitchers need to be particularly aware of their form. Most pitchers want to develop several pitches and have great velocity on the ball. Both come not only from the shoulder muscles which control the fine-tuning of the pitch (along with the arm and hand), but also the trunk and leg muscles. It is important for developing players to work both sides of the body to remain "balanced" and also to develop good stamina for the trunk and leg muscles. When you play 4-6 games in a weekend, tired core and leg muscles translate into overworked shoulder muscles.

What are the common throwing injuries? Sometimes, when throwers go too hard too fast, they "throw their arm out." Athletes complain of a deep ache, sometimes severe in the shoulder and over the outside part of the shoulder. This is usually related to bruising of soft tissues that protect the muscles. The treatment is ice and Tylenol or ibuprofen. The pain may last a day or too but should quickly resolve. Signs that might suggest you should see your doctor include pain that lasts more than a week, night pain, or loss of speed and accuracy. Luckily, most problems are readily addressed and prevented by developing good form and good habits. Great form will keep you in the game.

April Lesson Openings at The Edge.....

Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> at 5pm; Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm; Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5pm

## Importance of a Warm Up

**By: Robbie Hebert, CSCS**

Director of Sports Performance  
Edge Sports Performance Center, Roanoke  
Ph: 540-265-8585

Warming up properly is important when getting ready to perform a specific skill or competing in sports. Many athletes “stretch” before playing. Is it enough? The old school way of warming up is stretching by touching your toes, bending side to side while holding the position for 20-30 seconds. Why? When you compete in your sport will you hold the position for 20-30 seconds?

When warming up for your sport you must think of the movements that you are making in the sport to execute the skills needed. If you will be making explosive movements we want to warm up the muscles the same way. In the sport of softball, the movements are short in duration and explosive. Whether it is fielding a ground ball, running to first or pitching off the mound, the movements are explosive.

The dynamic warm up should be 10-15 minutes with the goal of raising the bodies' core temperature. It should include 8-10 exercises focusing on the upper and lower body. Most of the exercises should be made while moving (ex: forward and backward skips with arm swings forward and backward). Performing a dynamic warm up before competition will get the body ready to perform and will be great for injury prevention.

*Marc Powell, in Charlottesville, has some openings for 12-u and 14-u pitchers. He is a really great guy if you are looking for a team!  
Talk to Denny for more info!*

**Watch for details  
of exciting softball training sessions  
coming this summer  
from TincherPitching !!!!**

## SPINNER TIPS

The Spinner is a good tool, when used correctly, for refining breaking pitches. There are a lot of nuances, so just picking it up and trying to learn a pitch isn't very effective.

A good example is something we learned this week. If a kid holds the spinner for the drop ball in the joint near the end of the finger, she is far more likely to try to get the wrist involved far too much in the pitch. That forces her to use the shoulder and elbow to create downspin, both of which slow the rate of spin and can be unhealthy for the pitcher.

If a pitcher holds the spinner as far as possible out on the pads at the end of the fingers, she finds it much easier to let the fingers explode over the ball and cause dramatic downspin, which eliminates the need to use the shoulder and elbow. We have found this also allows the pitcher to stay taller during delivery, allowing her to start the ball downhill, which is the direction of the break, making it even more effective.

Does this hold true for the riseball? Yes, in most ways. But, these tips are just a tiny part of the entire pitch. Feel free to let me know of questions. The Spinner is a good tool, and if you need one, I keep a few on hand at a reduced price. Just let me know.

*Denny*

**MONTH OF MAY LESSONS ARE NOW BEING SCHEDULED.** Denny will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays at The Edge in Roanoke, although the first two weeks of May we will shift to Wednesdays for a couple of JV Softball schedule conflicts. Get your requests for lessons in soon.

[TINCERPITCHING@AOL.COM](mailto:TINCERPITCHING@AOL.COM)

540-960-1750