**FINISH & FOLLOW-THRU (FF)**

Successful Finish and Follow-Through positions have great commonality. First, the Finish and Follow-Through movements are healthy and natural responses to earlier movements in the pitch. Second, pitchers will be in a variety of posture positions depending on the pitch being thrown. And finally, after the pitcher has completed her attacking mission, the Finish and Follow-Through phase is an automatic and natural response to the body seeking balance.

Let’s take a look at our Pro Models, Jennie Finch and Lisa Fernandez. Jennie Finch is in an open as she moves through the sequencing phase, she stabilizes her upper arm against her body, releases the ball as she releases the throwing foot from the ground and is driving directly to the front side. Now, with forces so great and rotation beginning the hips will rotate and the throwing foot will land in the place of the stride foot.

Lisa Fernandez is in an open as she moves through the sequencing phase, she stabilizes her upper arm against her body, releases the ball as she releases the throwing foot from the ground. The throwing leg drives directly and accurately against the front leg making the shape of a “4”.

Let’s take another look at both Jennie Finch and Lisa Fernandez in the Finish and Follow-Through phases from the Target View.

Deviations in the Finish and Follow-Through happen for several reasons. Let’s examine these reasons by asking assessment questions about your pitcher’s motion. And then our youth models will demonstrate the common problems and provide a working set of drills to help you find solutions.

**The important questions to ask would be “Is the finish and follow thru a healthy and natural response to an earlier movement in the pitch? Is the body completing its attacking mission and then seeking balance?**

If the answer is no, the pitcher’s motion might stop or slow down prior to the finish and follow-through of the pitch. Let’s examine several pitchers who are not fully committed to the finish of the pitch. In the first example, the pitcher is guarded and hesitant in her attack. The second pitcher has deceleration issues because she did not provide the energy in her start to fuel the entire mission. The third pitcher cannot finish freely because her front leg has crossed and blocked out the possibility of an energy transfer. And the last pitcher struggles to throw her force through the zone due to an excessive reverse posture that prohibits a full finish.

Variations are acceptable in the Finish & Follow-Through. While Jennie and Lisa customize these movements differently, they both share the successful commonalities.

If you discover that your pitching movements deviate from the fundamentals of our pro models, please refer to following Finish & Follow-Through drills.

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**Is the finish and follow thru a healthy and natural response to an earlier movement in the pitch? Is the body completing it’s attacking mission and then seeking balance?**

**Common Problem FF-1: Motion stops or slows down prior to follow-thru**

**Solution FF-1a: Explore Options**

***Promotes creativity and freedom by testing five different Finish and Follow Thru options.***

*The Finish and Follow Thru phase must be a healthy and natural response to an earlier movement in the pitch. It serves as a zone through which the pitcher can complete the forward attack and then dissipate that energy over time. It is important to evaluate the Finish and Follow Thru. Is this phase allowing the maximum levels of energy to be thrown through to the catcher? Or, is there a roadblock that may be prohibiting acceleration?*

*Exploring options of Finish and Follow Thru will help remove some of the physical and mental roadblocks by challenging the pitcher to release energy in several different ways. The drill provides five options for completion along a full range of motion. Each option can target specific problems or when used in a five pitch series, it inspires the pitcher to be more creative and free in movement. After several cycles of the five pitch series, assess which Finish and Follow Thru option (or options) produces the best speed and spin levels on that day.*

*The first is called Release & Return. This is a great drill for pitchers who struggle with either leaning forward or with rotating their hips prematurely. It provides a finish and follow thru that will keep the hips in an open position. This will give the sequencing phase the posture and spacing necessary to be successful.*

*The second drill for Exploring Options is called Drive the “4”. Designed for pitchers who have posture lines that are leaning back too far or falling off to one side, this exercise requires a stronger and more exact commitment to the finish of the pitch. It requires higher levels of efficiency and an on-time summation of forces.*

*The next drill is called Drive the “4” with Rotation. This drill is designed for pitchers who may be locked back behind their front side and not getting the full benefit from the rotational forces at the completion of the motion. It requires an efficient and summed drive to the front side and is then capped with a strong trunk rotation.*

*The fourth Explore Options drill is called Drive to “4” Plus 4. This requires the pitcher to drive forces in a linear direction against the front side. And because that force is so great, after release of the pitch, the throwing leg will push out the stride leg and the entire body will replant itself up to 4 feet closer to the catcher.*

*The last drill for Exploring Options is called Release and Replant. It requires the pitcher to drive forces in a linear direction against the front side. After the release of the pitch and due to the great force and rotation of the body, the stride leg will release from the ground and the throwing leg will land in place of the stride leg.*

**Solution FF-1b: Arm Path Check - Finish and Follow Thru**

***Provides a physical contact goal to achieve throwing arm attack and extension in the Finish and Follow Thru Phase.***

*A foam noodle can give safe and instant feedback for the arm path. In this drill, a coach will hold the foam noodle perpendicular to the power line, about 4 feet high and approximately 7-8 feet in front of the mound.*

*To test and challenge the pitcher’s attacking extension through the Finish, ask for contact with the noodle in this phase. The pitcher will throw a pitch and continue the acceleration through contact with the noodle. If a pitcher tightens or curls the bicep through this zone, limited to no contact will be made. This drill will also challenge stride length and explosiveness off of the mound.*

**Solution FF-1c: Finish!!!!**

***Using a self-defense tactic to train an attacking FINISH in the pitch.***

*When a pitcher is asked to attack the hitter, it is possible that she has never before felt the physicality of an actual attacking move. This lack of experience makes analogies that involve the aggressive movements of push, kick or punch irrelevant. Integrating self-defense tactics into pitching workouts can bridge the gap between words and actual feeling.*

*Several striking moves called “Off, Drive, Kick, Punch & Finish” are applicable to the pitching motion. The strike that will strengthen the completion of the pitch is the Finish. In this drill, the Finish comes from a strike with the throwing leg. To execute, place hands on opponent’s shoulders, set the stride foot just in front of the opponent’s pad and with a powerful thigh strike yell “FINISH”. This stride placement and quadricep strike makes the movement more applicable to the actual pitch finish. After multiple repetitions of the Finish strike, throw a series of pitches asking for complete focus on integrating the striking tactic into the pitch. The focus of the “Finish!!!!” is to complete the acceleration of the motion with the legs into the rotational force.**Each striking word should be vocalized to also work on breathing techniques and aggression.*