

Drop and Rise ball Grips for Softball Pitchers

By Michele Smith

Last month we talk about the grips of the fastball and change-up. We noted that a good softball pitcher and a successful softball pitcher are often separated by their ability to change speeds and locations. Pitchers use one of two ways to fool batters. One way is with timing-as with the change-up and mixing speeds and the second is with movement of pitches through the strike zone. The Drop and the Rise are examples of movement pitches through the strike zone to fool batters. Here's a glimpse at the different grips for the Drop and Rise ball.

Drop ball

- Make sure your grip on the ball is firm, yet not so hard your knuckles are turning white, this should be the case no matter what type of pitch you are throwing.
- Make sure you hide the grip from the batter so you don't tip your pitch.
- Use a four-seam grip to get a tight, true "over the top" spin and downward movement on the ball. See Picture # 1.
- Use your index, middle and ring fingers over the "smile" or "horse shoe" of the ball as in picture #1.
- Be sure your fingers are resting over the seams of the ball. This will give you better spin and control of the pitch.
- Keep the thumb opposite of the middle finger.
- During the snap, keep your thumb over the ball, so the fingers will be behind the ball. This will give you a good downward rotation on the ball.
- "Over the top" and downward rotation will make the ball "drop" down through the strike zone.

Rise Ball

- Make sure your grip on the ball is firm, yet not so hard your knuckles are turning white, this should be the case no matter what type of pitch you are throwing.
- Make sure you hide the grip from the batter so you don't tip your pitch.
- The Rise grip can be a 2 seam grip or a 4 seam grip. See picture # 2 for the 2 seam grip. See picture # 3 for the 4 seam grip.
- The 2 seam grip uses the 2 seams that are close together on the ball. The middle finger is on the top seam, the ring finger on the bottom seam, and the index finger is tucked on the surface of the ball. Again see picture # 2.
- Keep the thumb opposite of the middle finger.
- The 4 seam grip puts the middle finger on the side of the "smile" or "horse shoe" of the ball. The ring finger should rest comfortably below the middle finger, and the index finger tucked on the surface of the ball. See picture # 3.

- During the snap of both the 2 seam and 4 seam Rise grips, the thumb should be pointed down toward the ground and then during the snap the thumb will move around the ball will be pointed straight back. This will make it be a “palm down to palm up” snap.
- Another way to view the snap is like “turning a door knob.” This is will give you a backward spin on the ball making it “Rise” through the strike zone.
- The rotation or spin on the ball should be backward and from 12 to 6 o’clock or slightly to the side. For a RHP slightly to the side would be 5 to 11 o’clock and for a LHP from 7 to 1 o’clock.