

6 Things Every Pitcher Needs in College

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Do your pitchers have the right pitches to make it in college? Find out the 6 things she'll need to pitch in college and be successful there.



If your pitchers have the goal of someday pitching in college, they should know what 6 key things they'll need once they get there. There are a lot of different pitches out there, find out if it's better to have all the pitches or if certain ones are better than others.

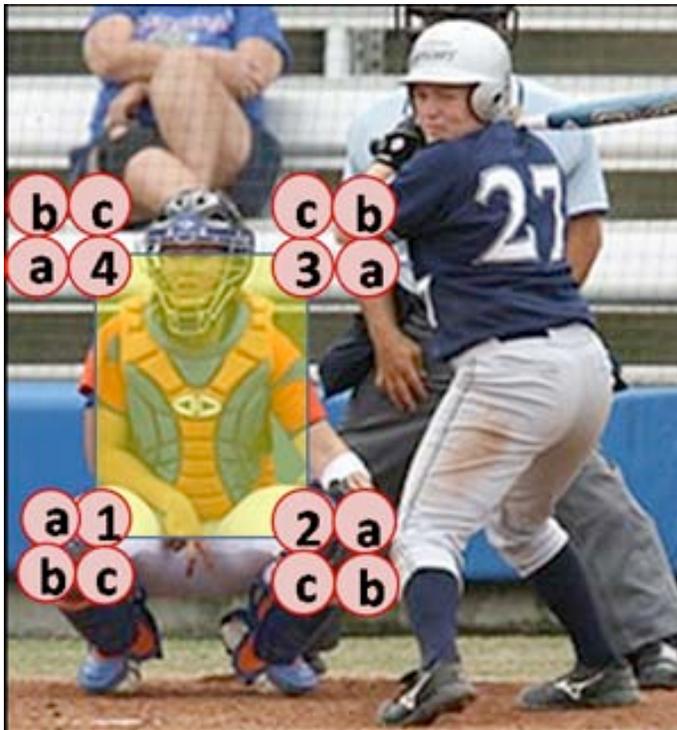
When thinking about pitching in college and the number of pitches you'll need it's important to think of pitches in terms of attacking the hitter in the following ways:

- In and Out
- High and Low
- Fast and Slow

In college your pitcher will be facing college hitters who tend to CRUSH pitches that stay over the plate, become predictable, or are always the same speed. Changing speeds is vital to upsetting the timing of good hitters and the better your pitcher's change-up the more successful your pitcher will be in college.

Think back a few years ago to the Women's College World Series 2007. In that World Series pitcher Taryne Mowatt pitched University of Arizona to the championship mainly due to her incredible changeup. She didn't have overpowering speed, but when mixed in with her virtually unhittable changeup Taryne was able to keep the best hitters in college softball so off balance that Arizona won a championship when nobody gave them much of a chance to do so.

Young pitchers are obsessed with throwing faster. And while speed is one of a pitcher's weapons it isn't the only weapon or even the most important one. Speed can be impressive for a pitcher, especially at the younger levels when the hitters aren't quite as good as the pitchers. But that changes drastically when a pitcher gets into college and meets up with hitters that have worked as hard on their hitting as the pitcher has on her pitching. When that happens and the hitters are finally as good at hitting as the pitcher is at pitching then control, movement and the ability to change speeds becomes crucial if the pitcher has a prayer of being successful.



College pitchers don't try to throw as many different pitches as they possibly can, instead, they try and attack different parts of the strike zone using different pitches and different speeds to do so.

A basic pitching strike zone has 4 different parts:

Low-Outside (1)

Low-Inside (2)
High-Inside (3)
High-Outside (4)

The yellow part of the strike zone is what pitchers work hard to stay away from as it's the part that's over the plate and that hitters tend to hit and hit pretty hard.

The better the pitcher gets, the more she wants to pitch near the 4 points mentioned above, but not right to them. She wants the batter to think the pitch is coming in as a strike and then it ends up outside of the strike zone, either a little higher or lower or more inside or more outside.

Let's take target #2 - Low-Inside to a righthanded hitter. If the pitcher is ahead in the count, or has a great deal of control then she's going to throw a pitch a little more off this target to see if the batter will fish for it. So she might throw a Drop that goes to 2C, or a Screwball to 2A or a Fastball to 2B, or a changeup to 2C or 2B. The same thing goes for all of the other 4 target areas as well.

The pitcher uses her different pitches as ways to attack these 4 different areas of the strike zone. The more pitches and speeds she can throw to these different areas the better she is. Conversely, the less pitches your pitcher can throw to any one of these 4 different target areas the tougher time she'll have in college.

6 Keys for Pitchers to Succeed in College:

Change It Up - Get a change-up and get control of it! If your pitcher doesn't have a change-up or can't throw it with control then that's the first place to start. Put time in to your pitcher's future by practicing her change-up and being able to throw it for a strike when she needs to.

Use Pitches for a Purpose - Pitches should simply be ways that your pitcher attacks these 4 areas of the strike zone: low-inside, low-outside, high-inside, high-outside, instead of simply pitches that have no real destination or seem cool to throw. Instead of just trying to get as many different pitches, try instead to attack each of the 4 parts of the strike zone as many different ways as possible and you'll be a good college pitcher.

Use Your Head - When a pitcher pitches in college the facts are - she's going to fail. Now hopefully she won't always fail or else she won't be pitching very long. But it will take her sometime to adjust to the level of hitter she'll face in college, and during that adjustment time she will struggle and fail. So keeping her emotions to a minimum and using her head to figure out how to improve her last pitch will be crucial for her future success.

Attack All the Zones - Pitchers will need to be able to attack all of the different parts of the strike zone with as much accuracy as possible and with as

many different speeds as possible.

More Isn't Better - A successful college pitcher isn't the one with the most pitches or speed, but instead, is the one with the most control of the pitches she has. Instead of constantly seeking to develop more pitches a pitcher should work harder to improve the control and movement and dependability of the pitches she has. More isn't always better.

Get Your Weapon Stronger - A pitcher's weapon isn't her bat so she doesn't have the benefit of a \$300 weapon assisting her in her skill. Instead, the pitcher has a priceless weapon - the human brain and body. A pitcher must strengthen her mind and her body as much as she can since these are her weapons. **Pitcher's should get in**

shape and stay in shape - both mentally and physically - so all those thousands of hours of practice can pay off in the college pitching circle.