



TEAM ONTARIO BASEBALL

What are Professional Scouts Looking for in a Pitcher?

RADAR GUNS

There are two basic models of radar guns used to clock the speed of fastballs. The Jugs Speed Gun (Fast Gun) will pick up the speed of the fastball after it has traveled 3.5 feet and the Ra-Gun (Slow Gun) will pick up the speed after the ball has traveled 40-50 feet. A fastball will lose 8 mph from the time it leaves the pitchers hand to the time it crosses home plate. The JUGS speed Gun is usually 3-4mph faster than the Ra-Gun.

The average major league fastball is 88-89 mph on a JUGS Speed Gun and 84-85 mph on the Ra-Gun. Scouts will rarely if ever sign a pitcher who does not throw at least 85 mph on the JUGS Speed Gun.

It is important to remember that movement and location are just as important as raw speed. Good hitters will handle fastballs that don't move

GRADING A PITCHER'S TOOLS

Fastball -- The first thing a scout looks for is a fastball with good velocity and movement. A fastball should sink, rise, slide or tail. A major league fastball is in the high 80's.

Curveball -- When grading a curveball, scouts look for a fast tight rotation on the ball. A good curveball will break both laterally and downward about two feet. A good curve ball gives the illusion of falling off the table with its sharp downward breaking motion as it approaches home plate.

Slider -- A good slider can be a tremendous compliment to a good fastball. A good slider will have a tight lateral spin, like a bullet. A slider will break about 6-18 inches as it approaches home plate. It should look like a fastball until it breaks across the plate.

Change-Up -- A good change up can be a tremendous asset to any pitcher by making fastball seem that much quicker to the hitter. A good change-up should look identical to the hitter only it travels 15-20 mph slower than the fastball. It will make the hitter way out in front of the pitch.

Delivery -- A pitchers delivery should be as smooth as possible. It should look effort-less with no mechanical problems like: throwing across the body, landing on a stiff front leg, overstriding, landing on the heel or his arm lagging behind his body. Any mechanical problems left uncorrected can lead to control and arm problems.

Control -- The ability to throw strikes on a consistent basis is vital for any pitcher to have success at any level. If the pitcher has less than overpowering stuff his control becomes even more important to his success. A good pitcher will be able to throw 70% of their pitches for strikes and can throw breaking pitches for strikes when behind in the count.