

May12

“Use the athletes words”

A pitching example of Athlete Centred Coaching

Pitchers at all level s need to be able to throw strikes whether it’s a social or competitive level.

I took my pitcher through a pitching test. The first thing I wanted to know is:
Can she throw strikes with her dominant pitch - the rise ball?

Coach says: Let’s pitch 6 pitches - Rise called strike.

Catcher says: Coach, do you want it inside or out?

Coach says: I want a called strike so you need to sit directly behind the plate so that you are a big target for the pitcher.

The pitcher throws 6 pitches and all 6 were too high to be called a strike = 0/6.

Coach says: When we throw a low rise we are looking for the pitch to go from the knee height to the hip height so that it stays in the strike zone and the umpire will call it a strike.

Pitcher says: Oh ok, so you want a low rise! I thought you just wanted a rise!

Catcher says: Yeah, we were just throwing rises.

Coach says: I want a “low rise” in the zone as a called strike. Let’s try it again.

The pitcher throws 6 pitches and all 6 are in the strike zone all called strikes = 6/6.

Is this an example of the athlete not listening?

Or this an example of the athlete having a different interpretation of what you the coach is saying.

When the coach used the athletes words “throw low rise” the pitcher got it and performed.

The catcher says: Coach, why are we throwing the pitch so good?

Coach says: All pitchers need to know that they can pitch called strikes. If the batters aren’t swinging and the umpires not giving any corners, then the pitcher needs to be able to throw through the zone.

The best way to do this is for the pitcher to use the whole zone to pitch to. Instead of trying to hit a small spot either inside or outside, they give themselves the freedom to pitch to a bigger target. The catcher needs to recognise when the pitcher is struggling and constantly getting behind the count and therefore sit more directly behind the plate to provide a bigger target. The reality is, that it is seldom that the pitch actually goes down the pipe. It will usually move a little to the right or the left or up or down which is good. The pitcher has simplified their job and is no longer constantly behind the count.