Spicing Up Your Bullpen Sessions

- ✓ **Know Your Arsenal**
- ✓ **Know There are 3 "Strike Zones"**
- ✓ **Know Your In-game Goals**
- ✓ **Know How to Think**
- ✓ **Know Your Pre-pitch Routines**
- ✓ **Know How to "Read" Hitters**

UK SOFTBALL

Rate Each Pitch in Your Arsenal

- **Pitcher will list & rate each pitch**

- *Rating categories*
  - *"go to"*
  - *"out pitch"*
  - *"secondary pitch"*

- **The assigned rating initiates the dialog between the pitcher & the coach**

- **Discuss each pitch in terms of the 4 S's** *(4-point system)*

4 Pitching Talents (4 S's)

- **Speed** *(velocity & change in speed)*

- **Spot** *(command)*

- **Spin** *(spin rate & spin direction)*

- **Shape** *(vertical & horizontal break)*

Training Speed

- **To throw fast you must <u>TRAIN FAST</u>**

- **Tip: Need good timing between arms & legs to develop speed**

- **Tip: Strong at foot strike** *(ankle stability)*

- **Tip: Strong front side** *(glove arm Mechanics)*

- **Tip:** to have acceleration, you must train the decelerators

Spot

- **How many times can the pitcher throw a breaking pitch <u>through</u> the zone with late movement (Ropes)**

- **Command of the corners**

- **Can the pitcher get ahead in the count**

- **Can the pitcher win the 1-1**

- **Can the pitcher command on a 2-0 count**

Spin

- Spin rate: the tighter the ball spins, the longer it stays in the flight zone

- Spin direction

- Can you throw the ball THROUGH the zone with spin 7 out of 8 times?

Shape

- **Amount and timing of LATE break/run**

- **Vertical break**

- **Horizontal break**

- **Angled pitches versus breaking pitches**

The Three Strike Zones

The Three Strike Zones

- Pitcher's strike zone

- Hitter's strike zone

- Umpire's strike zone

In-Game Goals

In Game Goals: The Race to 21 Outs

Team Defense

- 14 Pitch Inning

- Lead-off out

- Next out (after a runner or a "take-it")

- 5 Defensive "take-its"

- Defensive efficiency (75%)

- Deny big inning (<3)

Pitching Independent of Defense

- Strike % (70%)

- Total swings (46%)

- Swing & Miss % (23%)

- Hard hit % (<35%)

The Mental Game

Teach them HOW to think

- **Feeling prepared**

- **Knowledge of their mechanics**

- **Can they "self-correct" at game speed**

- **Do they have experience working out of difficult situations**

- **DO NOT pace. Throw ONE great pitch at a time**

Mental Game Starts with the Pre-pitch Routine

- **Don't let the game "speed up" on the pitcher**

- **Troubleshooting: Over-pitching**
  - Gripping the ball too tight
  - Mechanical issues when "rushing"

Pre-pitch Routine

- Develop a consistent **ROUTINE**

- All thinking is done **BEHIND THE MOUND**

- Take a **DEEP BREATH**

- Before stepping on the mound, **COMMIT** to the pitch

- **STANCE**, take a relaxing breath

- Set your **FOCAL POINT**

- Begin

The Equipment

9-Hole Net, Dummy, Ropes, Noodles

Woody

Hurdle

Hurdle

The Workouts

The Workouts
Repeatability

Pound the Zone

1. Pound the zone: Must pitch the same pitch in the same spot 5x in a row … *(tip: use noodles or 9-hole net)*

2. Pound the zone - "grids": Must use the same pitch but move the ball the different grids

"One Pitch" – Command Drill

- Pick one pitch ….

- Throw that pitch for 5 minutes into a designated net
  - Can use ropes, a frame
  - 9-hole net
  - Radar gun

- See how many perfectly executed pitches you throw during the 5-minute period

"21" - Combos

1. Choose two pitches
    • The first pitch is the "set-up pitch"
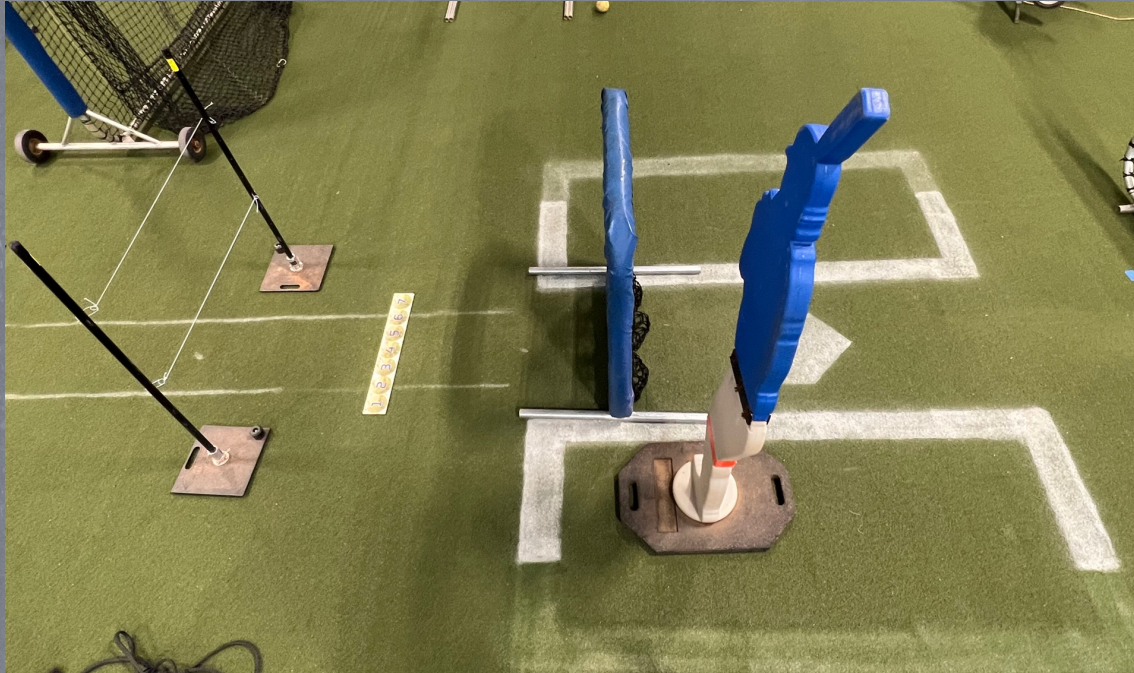   • The second pitch is the "out pitch"

2. Must throw each pitch back-to-back to get a point
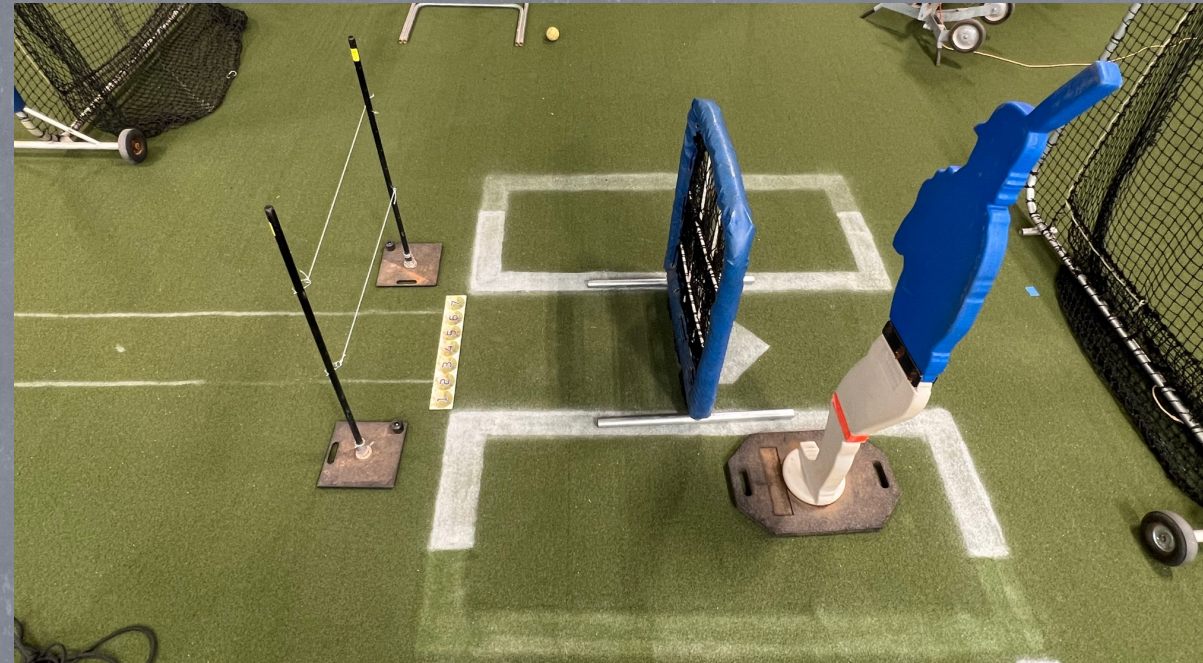
3. Play to "21" points

Altering Breakpoints

- **Altering Breakpoints**
  - Move the Dummy Up in the Box / Back in the Box
  - Move the Dummy on the plate / off the plate

- **Tip:** Work in a lot of change-up

Altering Breakpoints

Up in the Box

Back in the Box

Grip & Go

Sets: Tunneling

- Pick different combinations of pitches to alternate
  - Tip: for advanced pitchers, execution must be in a row

- <u>Examples of sets:</u>

  - Changing Height: rise arm-side, drop arm-side

  - Precision sets: Ahead – even – behind in the count

  - Chase sets: Curve, Drop ball outside

 - Blurring pitches: example: screw and rise

Sets: Around the Zone

- **Use all pitches to work around the zone ….**

- **Pitch counter-clockwise from high to low**

- **Pitch clockwise from low to high**

- **Pitch in diagonals**

- **The 4 corners**

Pyramid – Consecutive

- Pick 3 pitches to transition *(One must be a change-up or off-speed)*
  - Tip: A fastball is a pitch
  - Must stay in the moment

- **Round 1:**
  - Execute pitch #1 three times (example: curve – curve – curve)
  - Execute pitch #2 three times (example: fast – fast – fast)
  - Execute pitch #3 three times (example: change – change – change)
  - Tip: for advanced pitchers, execution must be three in a row before advancing

- **Round 2:**
  - Execute pitch #1 two times (example: curve – curve)
  - Execute pitch #2 two times (example: fast – fast)
  - Execute pitch #3 two times (example: change – change)
  - Tip: for advanced pitchers, execution must be two in a row before advancing

- **Round 3**
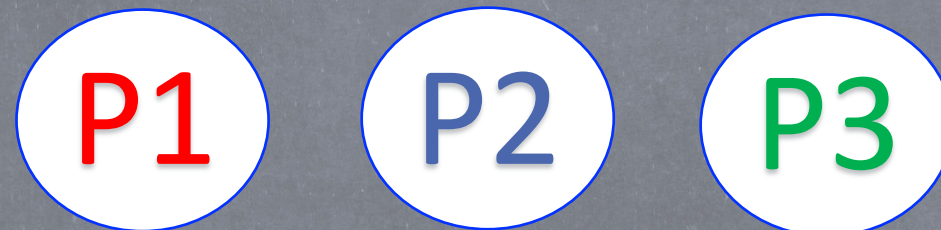 - Execute pitch #1, #2, #3 **IN A ROW** (example: 1 curve – 1 fast – 1 change)
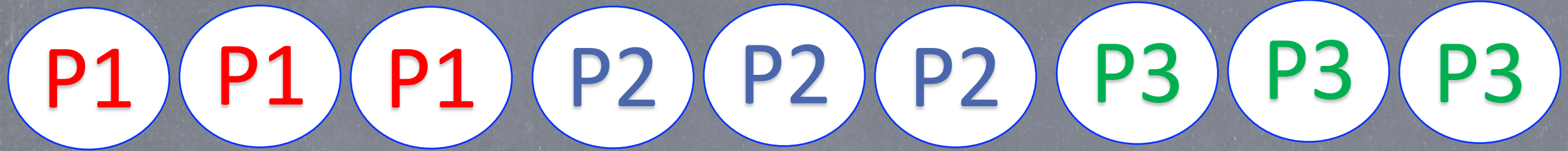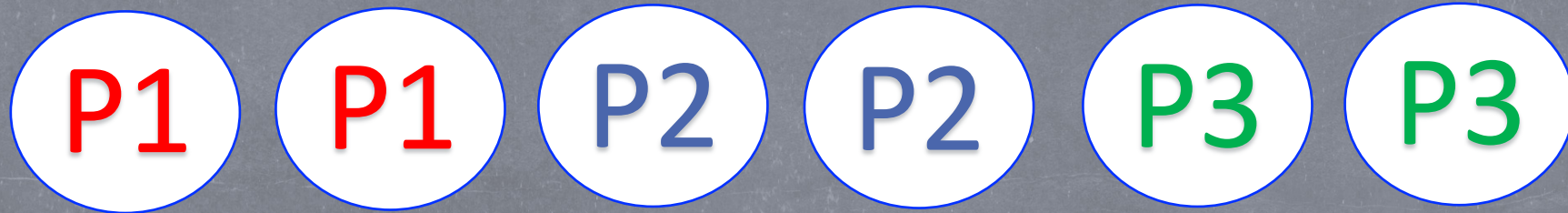
Deception Sets

- "Sets: Effective Velocity Combos

- "Pitching Backwards": Throw breaking balls and/or change-ups in fastball counts

- Wind-up deception

Effective Velocity

Batters' reaction time based on pitch selection

The boxes represent how location changes the reaction time of the hitter

When a pitch is inside or outside, the speed "effectively" changes because the hitter must hit the ball earlier or later as if the pitch gained or lost speed
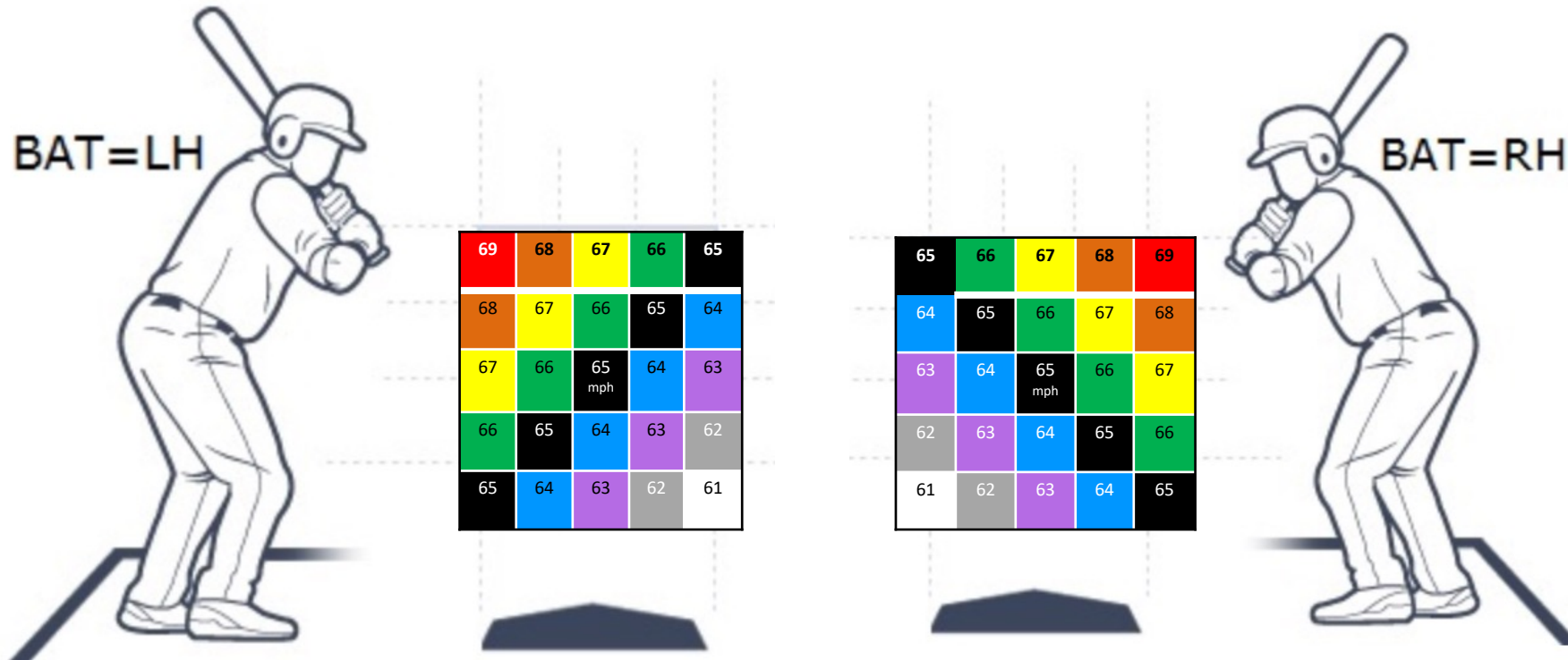
The Workouts
Challenges

Create Stress Innings

- **Take away pitcher's "go to" in any competition**

- **"horse"**

- **The perfect game** *(must execute 63 pitches at "2" or higher)*

- **14 Pitch Inning**

- Live *(use all in-game pitching charts)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Batter: L/R																					
Pitch Type																					
Result B, K																					
QP Score (4 S's)																					
Rec Score (+, -, NA)																					

14 Pitch Inn: Y or N

Lead-off Out: Y or N

Next out: Y or N

Win the 1-1:

Strike %:

14 Pitch Inning

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