

The Difference Between ASA 9 Man and 10 Man Modified Pitching



10 Man



9 Man

Objective

The objective of this manual is to clarify the difference between 9 Man vs. 10 Man ASA Modified Pitching.

Background and History

I figure I better give you a little of my own background so you know I am speaking from experience and have some credibility. My name is Sal Guerriero. I starting pitching on Staten Island NY in the New York City Park League as a teenager back in the 60's. Yes, I have now been pitching for over 40 years. I have played on many teams in New York, New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania. I still have a passion for the game and as of this writing I am still competing in several Eastern Pa. leagues and participating in State and National tournaments. Back when I started pitching, the only style that was allowed was the 10 Man Modified style (it was not called that then – it was called Medium Pitch). I grew up watching my older brother Ray (who still plays on Staten Island) play the game. The pitchers for his team were Nick Amodeo (the father of the figure 8 style) and Jim Fallucca (unbelievable knuckle ball). Paul Minucci ran the team and put together the best players from the area. Their team Depompo's and Trio Licastri won three of the first 4 national titles in Modified. Teams from Staten Island won the first 5 National titles. On any given Sunday more than 90 Modified games were played on Staten Island. I grew up watching Nick Amodeo and emulated his figure 8 style.

I have seen most styles of pitching in my many years and can tell you that the 10 Man Modified style of pitching is probably the hardest to become proficient at. In order to throw strikes with any type of velocity or movement requires years of practice

Types of Pitching

There are 3 basic styles of softball pitching:

- 1. Fast Pitch or Wind Mill**
- 2. Slow Pitch or Arc Ball**
- 3. Modified Pitch**

The first two are very easy to differentiate. The issue gets more difficult as we move into Modified. Within Modified, there are 2 distinct styles recognized by the ASA:

- 1. 9 Man Modified**
- 2. 10 Man Modified**

9 - Man Modified:

A variation of Wind Mill except you cannot make a full revolution (to be explained in detail later) and is commonly called Sling Shot. It is not uncommon for an experienced pitcher to throw the ball in excess of 65 mph (which equates to over 85 mph in baseball).

10 - Man Modified:

Sometimes called True Modified, Original Modified, Bowling Style or incorrectly called B Style. It has many more restrictions on the delivery (as will be explained later). The fastest "legal" pitchers can throw the ball about 50 mph (which equates to about 65 mph in baseball).

If you have been around for a while, I am sure you have noticed that many of the 10 Man Modified Pitchers are no longer in there 20's, or 30's or even 40's. We need some younger arms out there if the 10 Man Modified style is to survive.

Value of 10 Man Modified Pitching Game

I will admit right here that I prefer the 10 Man Modified pitching game. The 10 Man Modified Pitching game gives teams a chance to be competitive because very few pitchers can dominate a game as opposed to the 9 Man Modified Pitching game (which can be easily dominated by a pitcher). Therefore the 10 Man Modified Pitching game does not revolve solely around the pitcher.

It also gives players with little previous experience in baseball a chance to hit the ball.

If both teams have good pitchers, there will be few walks and a lot of action. There will be very few strikeouts (if any), which means you better have a good defense. Hitting for power can help but since there is bunting and stealing, speed is a critical factor as well. To be successful your team requires:

- 1. Pitching**
- 2. Defense**
- 3. Speed**
- 4. Power**

Very few teams have all four elements. If your team is proficient in 3 of the 4 elements (including pitching) you will be competitive with most other 10 Man Modified Pitching teams.

Confusion between the two styles of Modified – WHY?

There is a lot of confusion between the two Modified styles. The reason for the confusion is that many tournaments and leagues that utilize 10 defensive players allow any type of Modified pitching. Many umpires and players do not have enough experience to know the difference. So even if you are following the 10 Man ASA rules, the 9 Man style is often allowed. Unless you were umpiring or playing in the early 70's you may have never

seen anything but 9 Man sling shot. In addition, some 10 Man Non-ASA tournaments allow the 9 Man sling shot style of pitching.

Whatever the reason, there is confusion and it needs clarity.

Do the pitching Rules change as you move through different classifications (D – Majors)?

This is a common misconception.

I want to clarify that the pitching rules DO NOT change as you move through the different classifications (D – Majors). (with one exception for 9 Man Majors - explained later).

I want to reinforce this point. If you are playing ASA 10 Man Modified Pitching rules, the Pitching regulations are EXACTLY the same in D through Majors!

What is the difference between 9 Man and 10 Man Modified Pitching Rules?

Introduction

Using the intent of the ASA pitching rules as a guide, the following will illustrate the difference (or similarity) between 9 Man and 10 Man Modified pitching. I have segmented the various body parts and have included pictures to illustrate the rules and the difference between the two styles. I will tell you that I have seen a lot, but I will never say I have seen it all.

As more leagues and tournaments are enforcing the ASA 10 Man Modified rules, we are seeing more 9 Man Modified pitchers trying to convert. Some have done a great job while others have found loopholes in the current 10 man modified pitching rules. Here I am trying to close the loopholes while explaining the differences in words and pictures.

I do not go through all the nuances of the pitching rules. If you are interested, get your hands on an ASA rule book and read the rules for 9 Man and 10 Man Modified Pitching.

NINETY FIVE PERCENT OF THE ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO STYLES REVOLVE AROUND THE BALL BEING OUTSIDE THE WRIST.

In trying to write this manual I have discovered a simple way to illustrate the ball being outside the wrist. Stand up with a ball in your hand at your side: shoulders and hips square to home plate, palm and ball facing home. Slowly bring the ball backward AND rotate the humerus (upper arm bone) clockwise (like turning a door knob clockwise) so that the thumb is facing second base (ball facing third for a righty), the ball is outside the wrist and it is illegal in 10 Man Modified.

Wrist (9 - Man)

The ball **IS** allowed to be outside of the wrist resulting in the palm being allowed to be facing third base for a right handed pitcher (first base for a left handed pitcher). A 9 Man style pitcher rotates the humerus in a clockwise direction which results in the palm (and ball) being outside the wrist

Start of the Back Swing (*illegal in 10 Man*)



The ball is outside the wrist. An easier way to think of it is... the palm is facing third base.



From Second base, it is much easier to see that the ball is outside of the wrist (palm facing third).



From home plate it is not as easy to see palm facing third base.

Top of the Back Swing (*illegal in 10 Man*)



Here I have rotated my body so that the ball is now facing second base. The first base ump would see the "back of the hand".



In this image from second base you can easily see that the palm is facing towards second base.



From home plate you can clearly see the wrist cock and that the palm is facing towards second base.

Wrist (10 – Man)

The ball can NEVER be outside of the wrist at any point in the delivery. The wrist can NEVER be cocked laterally resulting in the palm facing third. The humerus is NEVER rotated clockwise.

Start of the Back Swing



In this series of images, you will note that the palm never faces third. The wrist is not cocked laterally. The arm is being brought straight back without any clockwise rotation of the humerus

Top of the Back Swing



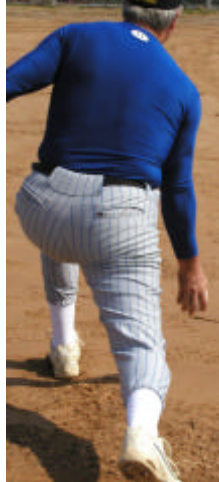
In these two images, you will note that the humerus does not rotate clockwise. The arm is brought straight back and the wrist is not cocked laterally.

Top of the Back Swing – from second base and home plate



In these two images, you will note that the humerus does not rotate clockwise. The arm is brought straight back and the wrist is not cocked laterally.

Release of the ball



In this series of images, you will note that the palm never faces towards third. The wrist is not cocked laterally. The ball will roll off the finger tips with downward spin.

If you could just understand this distinction, then 95% of the issues between the two styles would go away. This is the critical distinction between the two styles.

**THE HUMERUS CANNOT BE ROTATED CLOCKWISE
RESULTING IN THE PALM FACING THIRD BASE FOR A
RIGHTY AT ANY POINT IN THE DELIVERY FOR 10 MAN
MODIFIED.**

Elbow (9 – Man)

The elbow can be cocked laterally any time or all the time, including the release (this allows the wrist to be outside of the elbow, which in turn allows the ball to be outside the wrist).

(illegal in 10 Man)



In this image you can clearly see the elbow being cocked resulting in the palm facing third base and the ball being outside the wrist.



Even though the ball is close to the body, the elbow is cocked, palm facing towards third and the ball is outside the wrist.

(illegal in 10 Man)



Here is where experience comes into play. In this picture the elbow is NOT cocked. There is no clear wrist cock either. However the wrist, elbow and entire arm is angled away from the body resulting in the ball being outside the wrist. Increase the distance the hand is away from the body and you would have a baseball side arm pitch. This motion. This is allowed in 9 Man but illegal in 10 Man.

Elbow (10 – Man)

The elbow can never be cocked laterally (if it is, then the wrist will be outside the elbow and the ball will be outside the wrist) and the elbow must be locked on release.



In these images, the elbow does not cock laterally, nor does it angle away from the body. The entire arm stays parallel to the body. The elbow is locked on release of the ball.

Upper Pitching Arm/Torso Angle (the angle created between the humerus and the torso). (9 - Man)

No restriction on the angle of the humerus/torso (in fact I have seen pitchers able to bring the humerus over their head {greater than a 180 degree angle to the torso} add in a cocked elbow and the result is the ball being in front of their face on the back swing).

Back swing (illegal in 10 Man)



The humerus is 180 degrees from the torso. Note that the palm is facing towards third. In order to do this, the humerus was rotated clockwise.



Here, the humerus is still 180 degrees to the torso, but the elbow is cocked (palm facing third base). This allows almost a complete windmill motion and is legal in 9 Man Modified.

Upper Pitching Arm/Torso Angle (the angle created between the humerus and the torso). (10 – Man)

The Humereus/Torso angle should not be greater than 90 degrees. This angle can be determined by drawing a line from the hip socket to the shoulder socket. Then draw a line 90 degrees from that line as shown.

There is no formal ASA restriction on the Humereus/Torso angle. However, in order to allow the Humereus to be $>$ than 90 degree angle to the torso:

1. you must rotate your shoulder joint clockwise so that the palm is facing towards third, which results in the ball being outside the wrist. Or...
2. you have to raise the arm laterally which results in the ball being outside the wrist

Try bringing the arm straight backward (no clockwise rotation of the humerus). I guarantee that you cannot bring it above a 90-degree angle to the torso without doing one or both of the above.



Draw a line through my hip socket and shoulder socket. The angle of my upper arm to the torso will not be greater than 90 degrees. The shoulder joint will not allow it even if you tried.

In this picture the angle is still not greater than 90 degrees. If I was to bend my back so that it was parallel to the ground, my upper arm could be pointing straight up and it would not be greater than 90 degrees. This is legal in 10 Man.

Squaring of Driving Hip (9 – Man)

The driving hip (the leg that is contact with the rubber) must be square on release. The easiest way to tell if the driving hip is square is to look at the pivot foot. If the pivot foot is pointing towards home plate, then the driving hip will be as square as possible. If the pivot foot is angled towards third for a right handed pitcher or first for a left handed pitcher, the driving hip will not be square on release.

On Release (illegal in 9 Man & 10 Man)

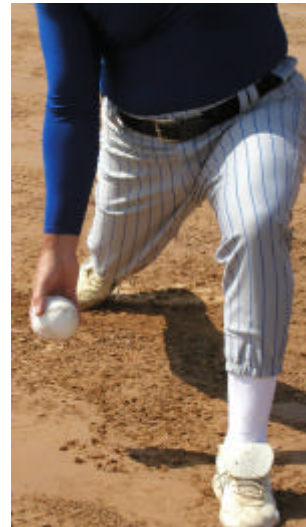


As you can see in these 2 pictures, the driving hip is NOT square on release. Technically this is illegal in 9 Man. However it is rarely called.

However, note how in the picture to the left, that it is difficult to see that the palm is facing towards third base. The entire arm is behind the body. The release will be very fast as the pitcher follows through with the arm in front of their body. Ex – Windmill pitchers commonly throw this way. From the point in these pictures, they will “roll” the wrist over in order to throw a drop, curve or change up. Or undercut the ball to generate a riser. Both actions are illegal in 10 Man because to do so the ball will be outside the wrist for a split second.

Squaring of Driving Hip (10 – Man)

The driving hip (the leg that is contact with the rubber) must be square on release. The easiest way to tell if the driving hip is square is to look at the pivot foot. If the pivot foot is pointing towards home plate, then the driving hip will be as square as possible.



As you can see in these 2 pictures, the driving hip is close to 100% square on release. The driving hip will be lower than the other hip.

Squaring of Shoulders (9 – Man)

The ASA rules states that the shoulders must be square on release. This does not happen often in 9 Man. Many 9 Man style pitchers have the non-pitching shoulder closer to home plate on release.

(illegal in 9 Man & 10 Man)



Squaring of Shoulders (10 – Man)

The shoulders need to be as square as possible (be an equal distance from home plate). The intent is to make sure that the non-throwing shoulder is not closer to home plate than the throwing shoulder. The reality is that the throwing shoulder will actually be closer to home plate than the non-throwing shoulder on release. In addition, the pitching shoulder WILL be lower than the non-pitching shoulder on release.

Release of the ball



As you can see in these 2 pictures, the pitching shoulder is actually closer to home plate on release (the lower your pitching hand is on release of the ball, the closer the throwing shoulder will be to home plate vs. the non throwing shoulder). In addition, the throwing shoulder is lower on release. This is 100% legal.

Feet (9 - Man and 10 – Man) (*rules are the same*)



Both feet must be touching the rubber as the pitch begins as shown above.



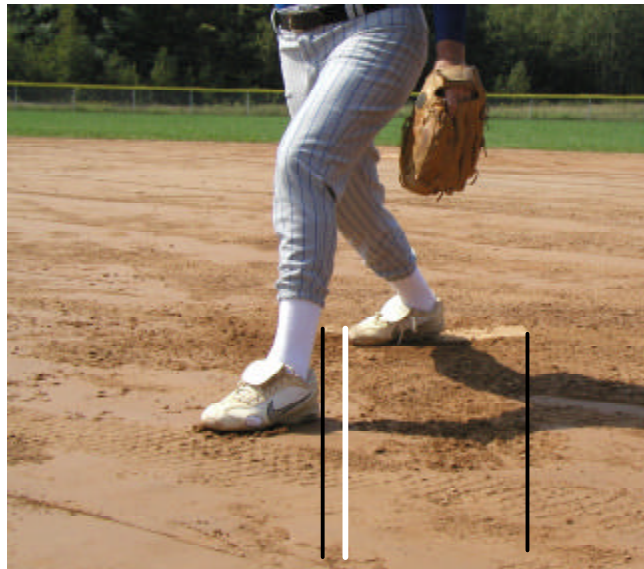
You cannot lift the pivot foot off the rubber and replant it (this action is illegal). However, you can “slide” the foot as long as contact is not lost between the pivot foot and the rubber.



You cannot slide the non-pivot foot back (or step backward) towards second base. This “rocking” motion is illegal. However, you can lift the non-pivot foot straight up as part of your forward momentum.



Your pivot foot needs to maintain contact with the rubber as you “push off”. Some pitchers start with the heel of their pivot foot touching the rubber and then when they release they are about a foot closer to home plate (this is illegal).



Your landing foot cannot cross over an imaginary line drawn from the front of your pivot foot towards home plate (as shown above) and be within the 24” width of the rubber on release*. This action allows you to keep the hips “closed” and gives the pitcher much more torque and is technically illegal. However, the majority of 9 Man pitchers do this as do many 10 Man pitchers. (exception – 9 Man Major Tournaments allow the cross over). Remember to look at the toe of the pivot foot as your starting point for the crossover, not the heel. The action above is illegal.



The landing foot must be pointing forward on release*. (exception – 9 Man Major Tournaments allow the landing foot to be pointed towards third for righties, first for lefties). The picture above would be illegal for both 9 man and 10 man modified.

**** After the initial planting of the landing foot and release of the ball, it is permissible on the follow through that the landing foot then crosses over and/or the landing foot is not straight.***

Others Common 10 man Modified Pitching Questions

Is there a restriction on the distance of the ball from body?

There is no formal restriction on the distance that the ball can be from the body on release. However the other rules previously mentioned will often result in containing the distance. But there is an exception as shown below.



In this picture the ball is about a foot away from the body. However, the ball is actually inside the wrist (palm is facing the body) and is legal.

Do the shoulders and hips have to be square at all times?

Not all the time. But they must be square on release.



You are allowed to twist your upper body as much as you can. So it is possible that you may actually see the pitchers back from home plate. This is one the way a figure 8-style pitcher generates speed. However both feet must maintain contact with the rubber as you twist.

Can the ball be above the shoulder?



Yes. If you bend at the waist and raise your arm straight backward, then the ball will be above the shoulder and it is legal. However, you will not be able to raise it above a 90-degree angle to the torso as previously discussed.

Can I bring the ball behind the back on the back swing?



This is allowed as long as the other rules are followed. This is another way a figure 8-style pitcher generates speed.

Can I bring the ball inside the wrist in order to throw a riser?



This is allowed. In this case I will pull up with the fingers to generate upward spin (6 o'clock to 12 o'clock for the riser).

Can the palm be facing the ground on release in order to throw a riser or change up?



Both techniques shown above are legal. Both styles result in "backspin" on the ball and if you throw it hard enough, it will rise. If you do not generate enough speed it will be a change up.

SUMMARY OF ILLEGAL ACTIONS (10 Man) IN PRIORITY ORDER

1. The ball is outside the wrist (the humerus has been turned clockwise in order to allow the palm to face away from the body (towards third for a right handed pitcher, first for a left handed pitcher). 95% of the illegal issues
2. The humerus/torso angle is greater than 90 degrees. 99% of the time when this occurs, # 1 is occurring as well. However, I have seen 9 Man style pitchers "mask" # 1 by twisting their body and rotating the humerus counter-clockwise at the top of the backswing, it appears as if the ball is not outside the wrist. (2% of the issues)
3. The landing foot crosses over the imaginary line from the front of the pivot foot to home plate. (2% of the issues).
4. Arm/elbow/wrist/ball angled away from the body as in a modified submarine baseball pitch. (1 % of the issues)

Next Steps

Hopefully, this information has been informative. Now that you have a better understanding of the difference between 9 Man and 10 Man ASA Modified Pitching, the question becomes, how can we preserve and extend the 10 Man Modified game. The biggest issue that I see is the lack of new pitchers. Unfortunately it takes several years of work to become a good pitcher in 10 Man Modified. Therefore if you are interested in learning how to become a good pitcher in 10 Man Modified, you need to start now. If you are truly interested, feel free to contact me and perhaps we can arrange a time to get together so we can do some live work. Maybe you know a group of guys that want to learn. I am willing to travel even further if there is a group.

Contact me at sal.Wanamaker@mindspring.com

I am in Montgomery County in Pennsylvania. I am also in the process of working on an instruction manual for 10 Man Modified Pitching.