**Sports**

**Hey, pitcher can’t pitch...**

By Eric Fleming

There is more than one pitcher who writes columns. Robert Balchman chronicled the demise of his pitching career on these very pages, and not to be outdone, I tell of another such stint, I speak now of my slow-pitch softball career.

At this point, I’m sure there are those who ask, “What’s so big about slow-pitch softball? All ya gotta do is hit it up there and let them hit it.” Well, we un-informed friends, after watching numerous games and pitchers over the last ten or so years, it’s a little more involved than that. I began by watching my father pitch when I was a kid. I always thought he was a good pitcher, of course, not too many ten - year olds will tell their dad’s dad was any good. When I started to pitch, I attempted to imitate his style, like all good sons do, it didn’t work. In my first game at MIT, I was shelled, and lasted only three innings.

After some thought, I decided to develop my own style. I also noticed what good pitchers did: throw with a high arc. “Flats” pitches are easier to hit because the chances of “topping” (which results in pitches being beaten into the ground) or getting under the ball (leading to pop ups) is reduced. In short, line-drive pitches mean line-drive base hits. Good hitters will usually get their shots no matter how one pitches, but a good arc turns weak batters into outs. A good arc also enlarges the strike zone. Good umpires (bless their souls) will often call pitches that cut across the back shoulder for strikes. I’ve seen four batters called out on such a pitch; I love to throw pitches as high as possible, and watch ‘em drop. Batters have some mighty strange looks when they’re called on strikes.

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