

What are Scouts Looking For? Pitchers

Players with dreams of playing baseball at the next level are constantly evaluated at showcase events, tournaments, games and even practices by professional scouts and college coaches. Baseball Factory's professionals will aim to give these players insight on what these scouts are looking for and hope to find in prospective athletes.

When observing prospects, professional scouts look for several key position-specific components. Players are evaluated on these aspects as they are considered for the Major League draft. Though their approach is somewhat different, college coaches tend to look for these same attributes in their potential recruits.

"The major difference between what professional scouts and college coaches are looking for is present ability versus future ability," said Andy Ferguson, Baseball Factory's Director of Scouting. "College coaches say 'can this player help me now' and professional scouts look towards the future."

In providing college coaches and pro scouts with detailed evaluations, Ferguson and the scouting team at Baseball Factory use the criteria below to evaluate high school players who aspire to play at the next level.

Tool	Considerations
Fastball	Movement of pitch, velocity of pitch
Breaking Ball	Type of spin and break, depth of break (proximity to hitter), deception of release (how similar is release of breaking ball to player's release of fastball?)
Change Up	Movement of pitch, velocity of pitch (difference from fastball), deception of release and delivery (how similar is release of change up to a player's release of fastball?)
Other Pitch	Combination of Breaking Ball and Change Up considerations
Control	Ability to throw pitches for strikes
Skill	
Delivery	Balance, control of body, coordination of body, ability of upper and lower body to work together, alignment to the plate, plane of shoulders, amount of effort exerted through motion, consistency of motion, repeatability of motion
Arm Action	Path of arm out of glove, path of arm through release, speed of arm through release, range of motion allowed and completed both out of glove and through release, amount of tension present during arm swing, consistency, amount of effort exerted through release

High school baseball players with the intent to take their talent to a college or professional diamond should work diligently to make the most of their tools and hone their skills. By developing solid mechanics a player will gain more control and command of all his pitches.

Ferguson advises high school pitchers to focus on their general throwing mechanics as many high school pitchers display a "lack of balance and a delivery that relies mostly on their throwing arm." He said that basic throwing drills could help pitchers just as much as position players and will help young players learn how to use the rest of their body.

While training, high school players should be careful not to place too much emphasis on their variety of pitches.

"Some high school players have too many pitches when they should be worrying about how their arm works, how they use their body and then improving the pitches they have," said Ferguson.

It is more important in a scout or college coach's mind for a player to have above command of two effective pitches rather than the ability to throw four average pitches.

Baseball Factory's BATS program gives high school players the chance to be evaluated by professional scouts. The ensuing evaluation aims to help high school players gauge their current talent level, recognize the areas that need improvement and project their success at the next stage.

For more information on Baseball Factory's BATS Program, call 800.641.4487 and speak to a Baseball Factory representative.

