**PITCHER’S STARTING POSITION**

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**Much like a basketball player uses one foot to turn or pivot while in possession of the ball, a softball pitcher must push off from the pitcher’s plate with one foot, the pivot foot. That is the right foot for right-handed pitchers and left foot for lefties. And that pivot foot has to be in contact with the pitcher’s plate. Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step, which must be forward toward the plate.**

# KEY TERMS

* **24-inch width of pitcher’s plate.**Both feet must start (and finish) within or partially within the 24-inch width of the pitcher’s plate.
* **Shoulder positioning.**Must be in-line with first and third bases to start.
* **Hand positioning.**Must be separated with ball in glove or pitching hand when stepping onto the pitcher’s plate.

### PULLOUT

The pitcher is not considered to be in the pitching position until the catcher is in position and ready to receive the pitch.

### PIVOTAL RULE

All codes require the pivot foot to be in contact with the pitcher’s plate. The stride foot can be in contact with or behind the pitcher’s plate in all codes.

## UMPIRING TIP

The plate umpire is generally responsible for watching the pitcher’s hands and if she stays inside the width of the pitching chute. The base umpire(s) is mainly responsible for watching the pitcher’s feet.

**All codes require the pitcher to take or simulate taking her signal with her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate, or it is an illegal pitch.**

# STEP ON IT

When the pitcher does not pause after contact with the pitcher’s plate to take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher, it is known as “walking into the pitch” and is not only illegal but dangerous to an unsuspecting batter. That rule protects the batter. The pause indicates the pitcher is ready to throw the ball.