

Information on Illegal Pitches

"The Leap"

The leap is an illegal act that results in the pitcher becoming airborne on the initial push-off from the pitcher's plate. When using the leap, the pitcher pushes up and away from the rubber, and both feet are simultaneously off the ground during the delivery. The rules mandate that the pitcher's pivot foot must remain in contact with the rubber or must drag on the ground away from the rubber on the delivery motion. It's legal if the pivot foot turns or slides as the pitcher pushes off the rubber, providing there is no loss of contact with the rubber. The pitcher may also legally slide the pivot foot across the pitcher's plate. If contact with the rubber is maintained, that sliding is not considered a step and is allowed.

"The Crow Hop"

The crow hop is, and for many years has been, a blatant violation in fast pitch. With the crow hop, the pitcher steps, jumps, hops or slides the pivot foot off the front of the rubber while maintaining body weight on the pivot foot. The pitcher then replants the pivot foot in front of the rubber. That replant establishes a new impetus for the pitch in front of the rubber. The pitcher then pushes off illegally from in front of the rubber when delivering the pitch. A pitcher who raises the pivot foot off the rubber and then returns the foot to the rubber did not crow hop but is illegally pitching.

Many pitchers pitch with the stride foot in front of the body but kick up some dirt as the pivot foot stabs the ground or turns as the ball is released. That stabbing action is usually an ending segment of a legal delivery or recovery step, not a crow hop. **The key is whether the body weight is moving forward (legal) or on the pivot foot (illegal) when the pivot foot stabs the ground.** A real crow hop affords a tremendous advantage for the pitcher.

"The Creep"

The "CREEP" – With leaping outlawed, many pitchers concentrate intently on keeping their pivot foot on the ground to comply with the "drag" rule so they aren't called for leaping. However that attentiveness to keeping the pivot foot on the ground resurrected an old-time style of pitching called the "creep". With the creep, the pitcher slides the pivot foot off the front of the rubber to comply with the drag rule but keeps the body weight on the rear foot. By creeping forward off the rubber with the pivot foot and keeping the body weight back, the pitcher can push off anew with a forward motion not related to the original pitching motion. This method is difficult for umpires to recognize. That pitch is also known as the "crow drag" or the "slide." The creep can result from a pitcher's honest attempt to keep the pivot foot on the ground, or it can be an intentional act to disguise that form of the crow hop. Either way, the pitch is illegal.