

AN ANALYSIS OF CLIFF POLITTE'S PITCHING MOTION & MECHANICS

1/30/2006

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General Comments About Cliff Politte

- 5' 10"
- 200 lbs.
- Can start or relieve.
- Generally good control.
- Tough on RHP but weaker against LHP.
 - He ought to consider adding a screwball to his repertoire.
Same thing and reason Mike Marshall had to do.
Would serve as a slider to LHPs.
- Weak fielder.
 - Once had jaw broken due to come-backer.
- Good pick-off move.
- Pitches...
 - Fastball (Mid-90s).
 - Two-Seamer/Sinker.
 - Hard Slider.
 - Change-Up.
- Injuries...
 - Pulled elbow ligament (April 2005).
 - Sore shoulder (September 2004).
 - Strained right shoulder (June 2003).
 - Injury problems limited effectiveness during 2000 and 2001 seasons.
 - Sore back (May 1999).
 - Fractured jaw due to being hit by line drive.

Comments About Cliff Politte's Pitching Motion And Mechanics

- Eyes always locked on the target.
 - Head generally quite smooth and level.
- Huge differential between his hips and his shoulders (which is very good).
- Some possible (but equivocal) signs of Early Pronation (which is good since it will tend to protect the UCL).
- Very good timing of when he starts to rotate his shoulders.
 - Very late rotator.
- I really like how his motion starts out.
 - Very smooth and controlled.
 - Very simple.
- I don't like how he turns over his PAS forearm or many aspects of his motion from that point on.
 - Motion looks fairly Tom House (e.g. Mark Prior).
- Stiffens GS leg at the release point.
 - If his shoulder pain is in the rear, then this help to explain things.
- Finishes in a weak fielding position in some photos.
 - Facing 1B with glove down at waist.
 - Could explain fractured jaw due to come-backer.
- PAS elbow goes behind acromial plane but not too far above shoulders (which is a slight cause for concern but generally good).
- Limited reverse-rotation of the shoulders (which is good).
- Does show the ball to Center Field (which I don't like).

Rating

- From the standpoint of injury prevention, I would rate Cliff Politte's mechanics as being **average** to **worse than average**.

Glossary

- GS = Glove Side
- PAS = Pitching Arm Side

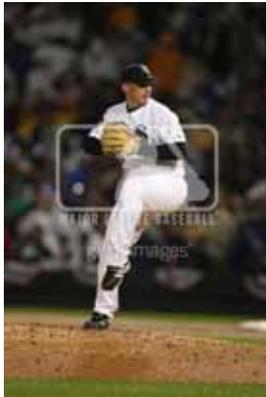
Year	Ag	Tm	Lg	W	L	G	GS	CG	SHO	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO	HBP	WP	BFP	IBB	BK	ERA	*lgERA	*ERA+	WHIP	
1998	24	STL	NL	2	3	8	8	0	0	0	0	37.0	45	32	26	6	18	22	1	2	172	0	1	6.32	4.19	66	1.703	
1999	25	PHI	NL	1	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	17.7	19	14	14	2	15	15	0	2	85	0	0	7.13	4.61	65	1.925	
2000	26	PHI	NL	4	3	12	8	0	0	1	0	59.0	55	24	24	8	27	50	0	3	251	1	0	3.66	4.73	129	1.390	
2001	27	PHI	NL	2	3	23	0	0	0	7	0	26.0	24	8	7	2	8	23	1	1	109	3	0	2.42	4.28	176	1.231	
2002	28	TOT		3	3	68	0	0	0	20	1	73.7	57	33	30	5	28	72	2	2	304	2	0	3.67	4.32	118	1.154	
		PHI	NL	2	0	13	0	0	0	7	0	16.3	19	10	7	0	9	15	1	1	77	1	0	3.86	3.79	98	1.714	
		TOR	AL	1	3	55	0	0	0	13	1	57.3	38	23	23	5	19	57	1	1	227	1	0	3.61	4.47	124	0.994	
2003	29	TOR	AL	1	5	54	0	0	0	30	12	49.3	52	32	31	11	17	40	1	1	216	4	0	5.66	4.71	83	1.399	
2004	30	CHW	AL	0	3	54	0	0	0	9	1	51.3	52	26	25	6	22	48	2	2	225	5	0	4.38	4.92	112	1.442	
2005	31	CHW	AL	7	1	68	0	0	0	14	1	67.3	42	15	15	7	21	57	3	1	262	4	0	2.00	4.45	222	0.936	
8 Yr WL%				.488	20	21	300	16	0	0	81	15	381.3	346	184	172	47	156	327	10	14	1624	19	1	4.06	4.53	112	1.316
162 Game Avg				4	4	64	3	0	0	17	3	82.0	74	39	37	10	33	70	2	3	349	4	0	4.06	4.53	112	1.316	



1. 1



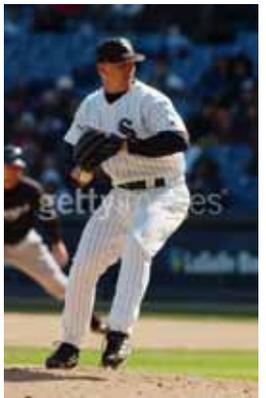
2. 1



2



3. 1



2



3

Shoulders stay closed for a long time, but hips start to open up fairly soon.



4. 1



5. 1



6. 1

GS foot just skimming the ground.



7. 1



8. 1

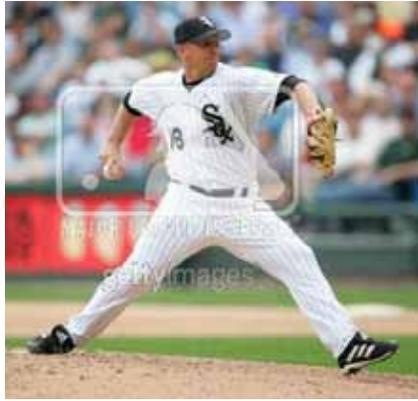
Limited reverse-rotation of the shoulders (which is good). Initially takes the ball straight back toward 2B.



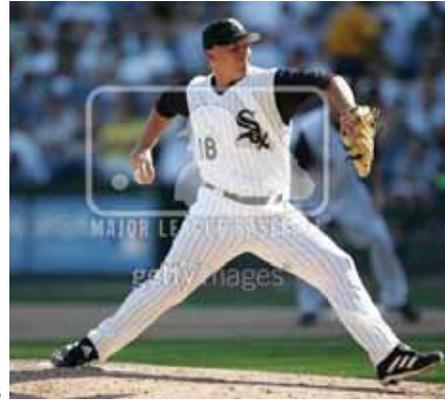
9. 1



10. 1



2



3

Notice that in frame 10.3, his shoulders are significantly more reverse-rotated than in frames 10.1 and 10.2. This could be due to a slight mechanical glitch or could vary from pitch to pitch (and might act as a “tell”).



11. 1



12. 1



2



13. 1



2

This is a classic Tom House pose (see Mark Prior in frame 13.2) with the upper arms horizontal and the forearms hanging down nearly vertically. The problem with this pose is that it can worsen the Reverse Pitching Forearm Bounce that a pitcher will experience.

As an aside, it's interesting that Tom House says that Mark Prior has perfect mechanics, but it would seem that Politte is a better example of what House calls "symmetry" than is Prior (e.g. equal and opposite elbow angles). Also, Politte turns his PAS forearm over differently (e.g. in a different manner and at a different angle) than does Mark Prior.



14. 1



2



15. 1



16. 1



2



17. 1 2 3

PAS elbow goes behind acromial plane but not too far above shoulders in frame 17.1. This is a slight cause for concern but Politte doesn't seem to do it as badly as does Mark Prior (see frame 17.3).



18. 1 2 3



19. 1

GS Foot Planted: GS toe pointing pretty much directly at the target.



20. 1



2

Look at the huge differential between his hips and his shoulders in frames 20.1 and 21.1 (it may be the largest H/S differential I've seen). His shoulders haven't yet started to turn but his belt buckle is pointing at home plate. This is an example of what some call "Late Torso Rotation" and will maximize ability to rotate his shoulders and likely explains his high velocity. However, not everyone's back can take this load (I know mine can't).



21. 1



22. 1

Seems to be trying to show the ball to Center Field. I don't like that he does this because it can lead to UCL problems by limiting how much he can pronate his forearm while extending his arm (since his forearm is already quite pronated in frame 22.1).



23. 1



24. 1

Since his forearm was so pronated in frame 22.1, his forearm will tend to supinate as his shoulders start to turn and his elbow starts to extend. I believe that pitchers whose forearms are supinated as their elbows extend through 90 degrees while flying out are more prone to experiencing UCL problems.



25. 1



26. 2



27. 1



2



3



28. 1

2

3

The reports that Politte had a strained elbow in April 2005 concern me. This is backed up by the fact that Politte's forearm is relatively more supinated in frame 28.3 than it is in frame 27.3, which means he is focusing the load on his UCL as his elbow passes through the Danger Zone of 90 degrees of extension. This could be an indication that Politte could be due for Tommy John surgery in the next few years if he does not learn to pronate his forearm earlier in his motion.



29. 1

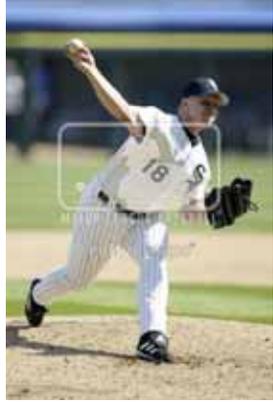
2

3

Stiffens GS leg (locks GS knee) just before releasing the ball, which is a concern because, while it can help to boost velocity (by increasing the amount and rate with which the hips rotate), it may also contribute to the development of elbow and shoulder problems. If his shoulder pain is in the rear, then this help to explain things.



30. 1



2



31. 1



2



32. 1



33. 1



2



3



34. 1



2



3



35. 1



36. 1



37. 1



38. 1



39. 1



40. 1



2



41. 1



42. 1



43. 1

2



44. 1



45. 1

Weak fielding position. Facing 1B so vulnerable to bunt down 3B line. Glove down at waist so vulnerable to come-backer (likely explains his broken jaw).