

AN ANALYSIS OF BOB GIBSON'S PITCHING MOTION & MECHANICS

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General Comments About Bob Gibson

- Won Cy Young in 1968 and 1970.
- Pinpoint control.
- Pitches...
 - Fastball.
 - Slider.
 - Curveball.
- Injuries...
 - Strained elbow (1966).
 - This injury concerns me a little, because it doesn't appear to have been bad enough to hurt his performance.
 - His numbers were down in 1967 due to a broken leg.
 - Strained elbow (1968).
 - Torn knee ligaments (1973).

Comments About Bob Gibson's Pitching Motion And Mechanics

- Nice level head with eyes always on the target.
- Does a better job than most of keeping most of his motion directed toward Home Plate.
 - Relatively little reverse-rotation.
 - While he does reverse-rotate after breaking his hands, he only swings the ball up to High Cocked position when his shoulders are back to parallel to driveline.
- Shoulders only start to turn once his glove-side foot is planted.
- I think that some of his success had to do with his follow-through.
 - It must have been incredibly distracting to see him flying off of the mound.
- Lunge-style pitcher.
- Does not show the ball to Center Field.

Year	Ag	Tm	Lg	W	L	G	GS	CG	SHO	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO	HBP	WP	BFP	ERA	*lgERA	*ERA+
1959	23	STL	NL	3	5	13	9	2	1	3	0	75.7	77	35	28	4	39	48	1	4	333	3.33	4.22	127
1960	24	STL	NL	3	6	27	12	2	0	3	0	86.7	97	61	54	7	48	69	1	3	399	5.61	4.10	73
1961	25	STL	NL	13	12	35	27	10	2	3	1	211.3	186	91	76	13	119	166	6	8	916	3.24	4.39	136
1962	26	STL	NL	15	13	32	30	15	5	2	1	233.7	174	84	74	15	95	208	10	11	967	2.85	4.26	149
1963	27	STL	NL	18	9	36	33	14	2	2	0	254.7	224	110	96	19	96	204	13	6	1088	3.39	3.55	105
1964	28	STL	NL	19	12	40	36	17	2	3	1	287.3	250	106	96	25	86	245	9	6	1191	3.01	3.82	127
1965	29	STL	NL	20	12	38	36	20	6	1	1	299.0	243	110	102	34	103	270	11	8	1233	3.07	3.86	126
1966	30	STL	NL	21	12	35	35	20	5	0	0	280.3	210	90	76	20	78	225	5	12	1119	2.44	3.61	148
1967	31	STL	NL	13	7	24	24	10	2	0	0	175.3	151	62	58	10	40	147	3	3	703	2.98	3.27	110
1968	32	STL	NL	22	9	34	34	28	13	0	0	304.7	198	49	38	11	62	268	7	4	1161	1.12	2.90	258
1969	33	STL	NL	20	13	35	35	28	4	0	0	314.0	251	84	76	12	95	269	10	4	1270	2.18	3.56	164
1970	34	STL	NL	23	7	34	34	23	3	0	0	294.0	262	111	102	13	88	274	4	5	1213	3.12	4.14	132
1971	35	STL	NL	16	13	31	31	20	5	0	0	245.7	215	96	83	14	76	185	7	10	1026	3.04	3.61	119
1972	36	STL	NL	19	11	34	34	23	4	0	0	278.0	226	83	76	14	88	208	3	10	1119	2.46	3.42	139
1973	37	STL	NL	12	10	25	25	13	1	0	0	195.0	159	71	60	12	57	142	3	6	790	2.77	3.67	133
1974	38	STL	NL	11	13	33	33	9	1	0	0	240.0	236	111	102	24	104	129	5	2	1041	3.82	3.59	94
1975	39	STL	NL	3	10	22	14	1	0	4	2	109.0	120	66	61	10	62	60	4	6	499	5.04	3.78	75
17 Yr	WL%	.591	251	174	528	482	255	56	21	6	3884.3	3279	1420	1258	257	1336	3117	102	108	16068	2.91	3.70	127	



1. 1



2. 1

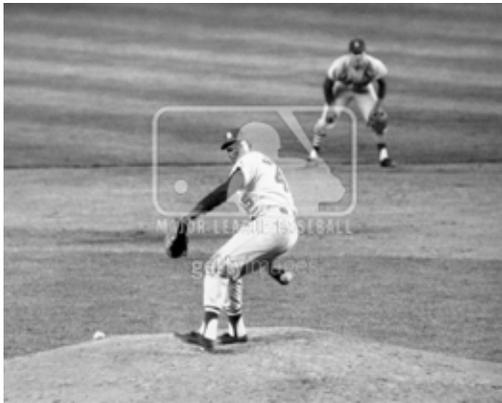


3. 1



4. 1

In frame 4.1, Gobson is looking directly at the target. His shoulders are tilted backwards (and his weight is back), which probably helps him get his weight on top of the glove-side leg. He has some reverse rotation (maybe 30 degrees), but 1) he has the ball down at his side while reverse rotating 2) the ball and his elbows are still in front of the acromial plane 3) when he starts bring his arm up to the High Cocked position, his shoulders are again parallel to the driveline. This method of reverse-rotating may have enabled him to enjoy the benefits of pre-stretching the muscles of the hips and trunk without flattening out his arm slot excessively.



5. 1



6. 1



7. 1

Frame 7.1 suggests that, by the time that he swings his arm up to the cocked position, Gibson has largely eliminated the reverse-rotation of his shoulders. Instead, he is striding toward the plate with his shoulders square to the driveline. This will make it easier to throw strikes since he doesn't have to worry about being both horizontally and vertically accurate. He is still tilting the shoulders back and has a long arm swing. His glove-side foot is just skimming above the ground. He has pointed his glove at the target and is starting to pull the glove into the body in preparation for starting to turn his shoulders.



8. 1

2

In frame 8.1, Gibson's upper arms are level with his shoulders.



9. 1

In frame 9.1, Gibson's glove-side foot is just about to plant. He is landing on the inside of his glove-side foot but with his foot generally flat (and with his GS knee bent). His pitching arm is almost up and ready for shoulders to start turning. In contrast to most contemporary pitchers (e.g Mark Prior), who turn their pitching forearms over with their elbows bent 90 degrees or more, Gibson's elbow is almost completely extended as he turns his pitching forearm over. This will reduce the amount of Reverse Pitching Forearm Bounce he will experience and will protect both his pitching shoulder and his pitching elbow.

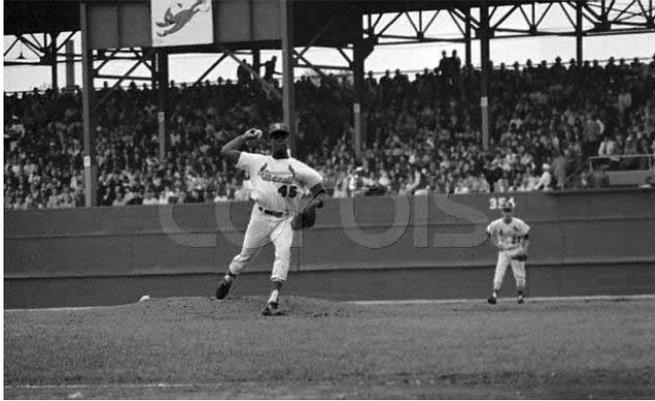


10. 1

GLOVE-SIDE FOOT PLANTED and SHOULDERS STARTING TO TURN: His pitching-arm-side elbow looks like it is bent a little more than 90 degrees. Notice that he is arching his back, with his elbows behind his acromial plane. Per one of my pet peeves, also notice that Gibson is not showing the ball to Center Field. Instead, his palm is facing 3B.



11. 1



12. 1



13. 1

Frame 13.1 demonstrates that Gibson was a lunge-style pitcher. Instead of releasing the ball with his glove-side knee extended, he instead flexed his knee approximately 120 degrees. This lowered his release point (which is bad) but let him release the ball closer to the plate (which is good).



14. 1



15. 1



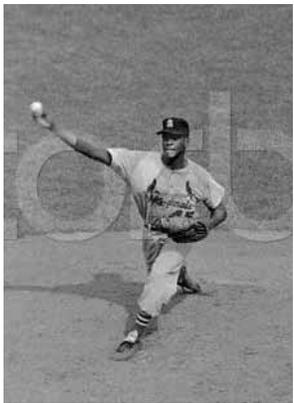
16. 1



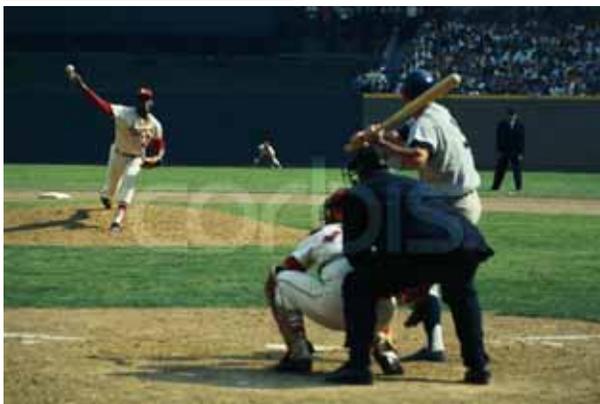
2 RP



17. 1



18. 1



19. 1



2



3

RELEASE POINT: Even though he is lunging toward his glove-side knee, his hand is fairly high at the release point. This will give the ball a decent amount of vertical movement. Shoulders are tilted but head is level with eyes locked on the target. Probably throwing a slider in frame 18.2. His torso is also fairly vertical at the release point, which means that he will release the ball slightly farther from the plate but higher. Lower leg vertical and bent slightly in frame 19.3. His torso is more vertical than most at the Release Point.



20. 1

2

Pronating his forearm. GS leg is almost, but not completely, straight. He doesn't seem to lock his GS knee.



21. 1

2



22. 1



23. 1



24. 1



25. 1



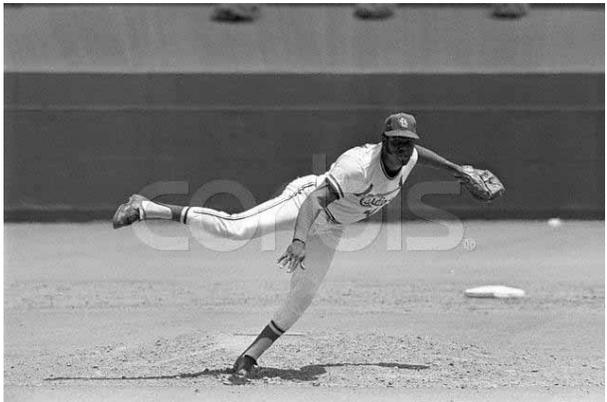
26. 1



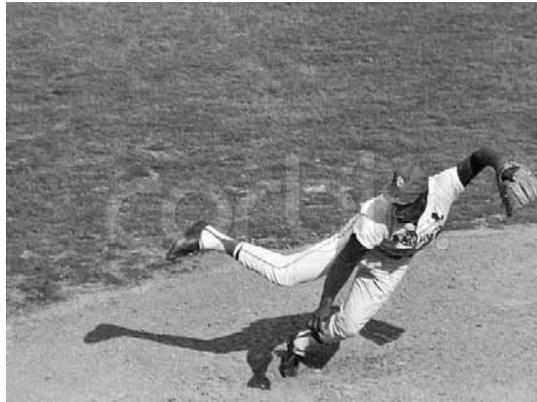
27. 1



28. 1



29. 1



2

Wild, seemingly out-of-control follow-through must have been very distracting for hitters. Eyes still locked on the target may help to explain his good fielding skills.



30. 1



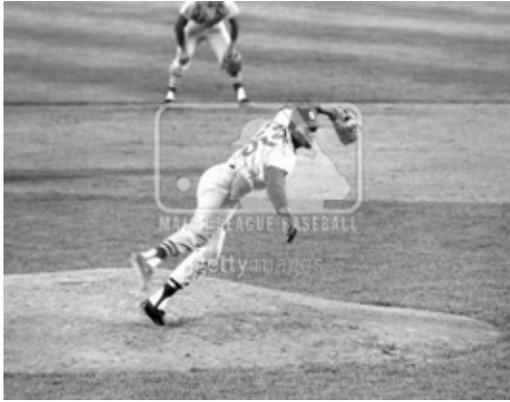
31. 1



32. 1



2



33. 1



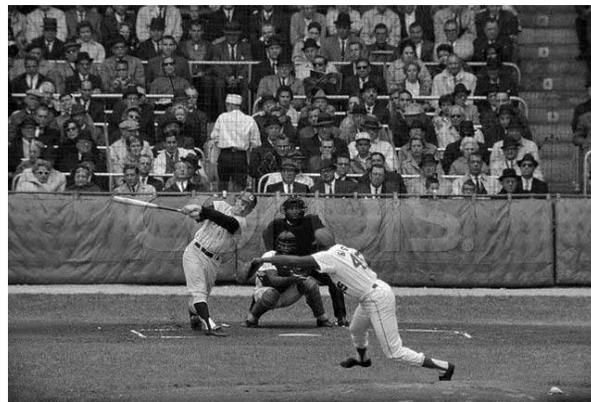
34. 1



2



35. 1



2



36. 1

Gibson loved to pitch inside. You can see evidence of this in frame 36.1 in which the batter just broke his bat from hitting the ball off of the handle of the bat.



37. 1



38. 1