

Dissecting the Illegal Pitch for Base Umpires

Clues to Recognizing an Illegal Pitch

**Following are several series
of pitchers pitching illegally.**

**Most of the examples are of
LEAPING since it is the most
prevalent.**

**But most LEAPING also
involves REPLANTING.**

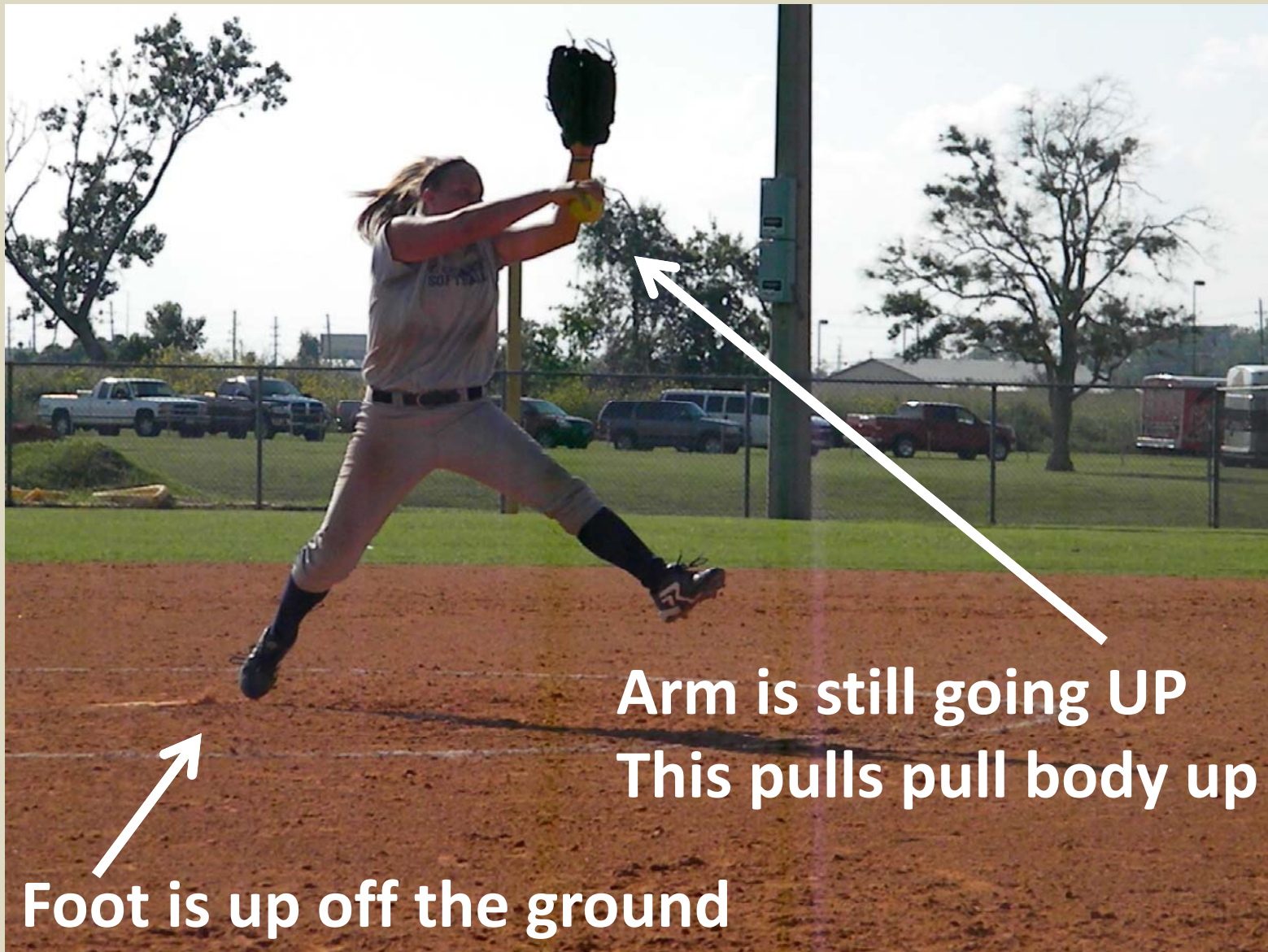
Learning to recognize and identify some of the various components of an illegal pitch will help umpires recognize the violation and make the call with confidence and assuredness

EXAMPLE 1





Push is more UP than FORWARD

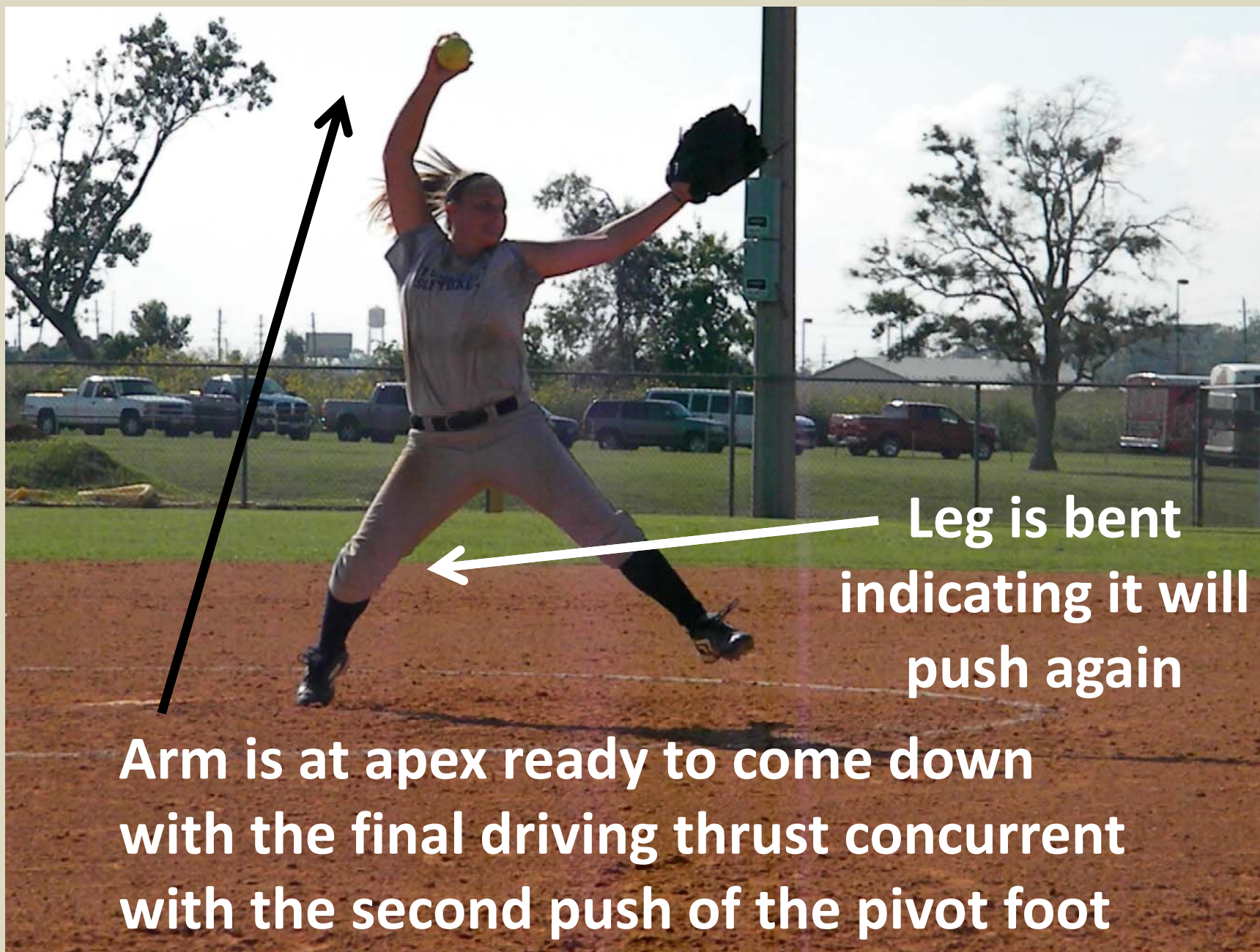


Foot is up off the ground

Arm is still going UP
This pulls pull body up



Pivot Foot lands while Non Pivot is still in the air, thus the Pivot has Replanted





Finally the Non Pivot Foot lands preventing
any more forward movement



And the Pivot Foot follows through with the visible drag mark on the ground...

**...several inches from the
pitching plate.**



Example 2

**Look for the same Clues
identified in Example 1**



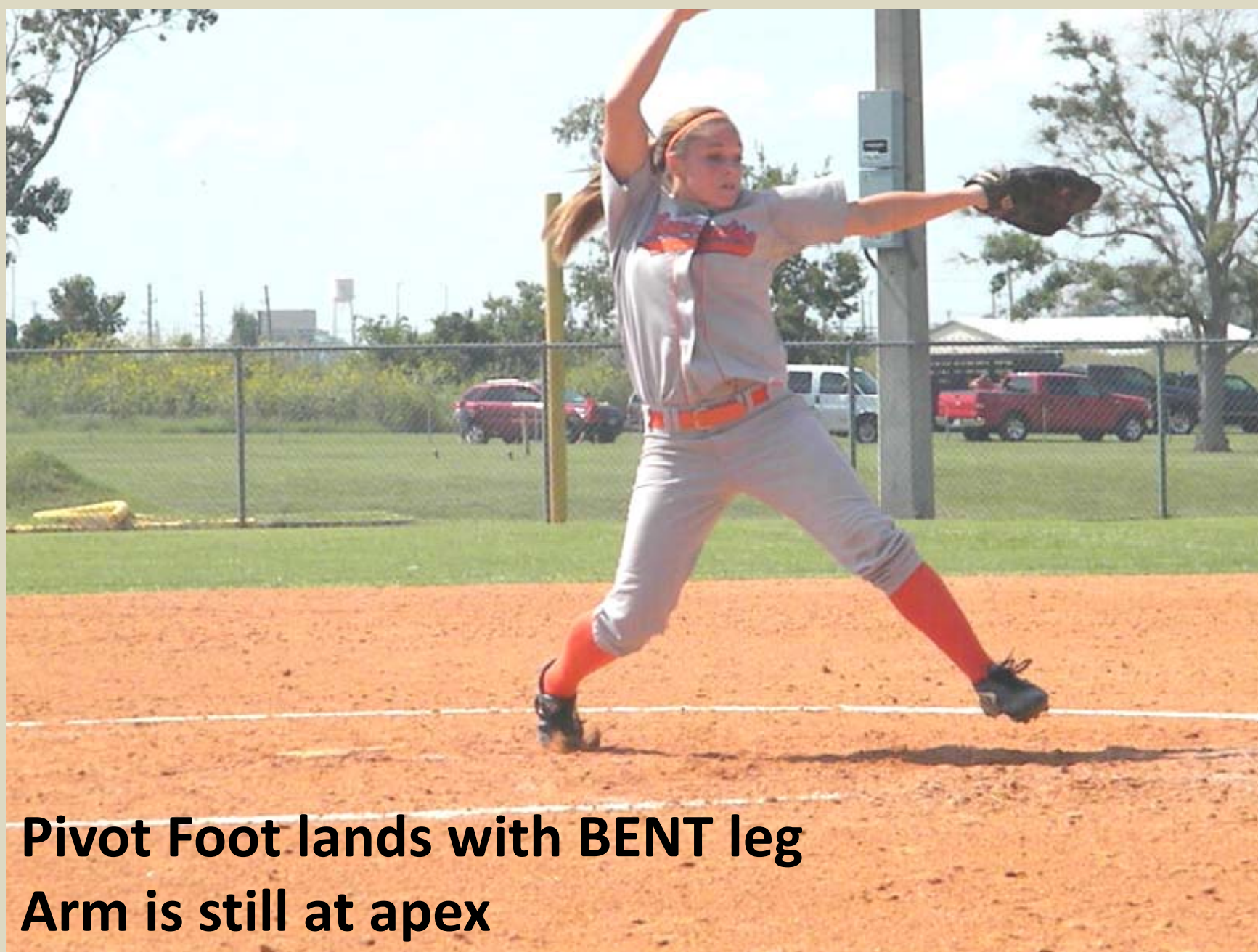




Arm pulling body UP, not forward



Both feet off the ground at the same time



Pivot Foot lands with BENT leg
Arm is still at apex



**Downward arm thrust and second push
provide final driving force**



Drag mark begins



Example 3

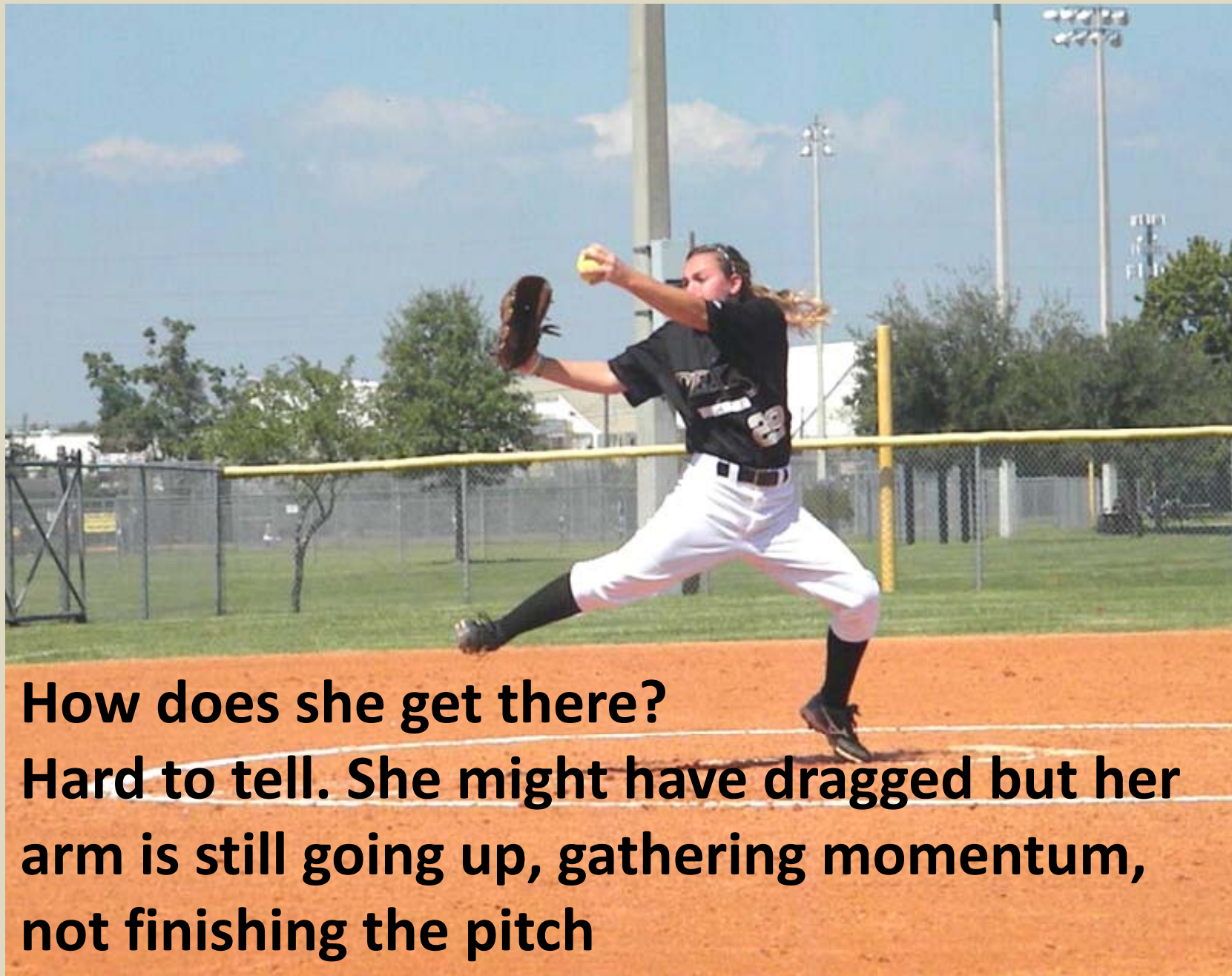
REPLANT

So far so good



**Drive is definitely
UPWARD**





How does she get there?

Hard to tell. She might have dragged but her arm is still going up, gathering momentum, not finishing the pitch



Look at that BENT LEG!

**Think it might be getting ready to PUSH
AGAIN as that arm comes around and down?**



Look at that ARM!
It is still only going up, still generating power.

Here it comes...



...the down-thrust of the arm, the drive off the bent leg, non-pivot foot still in the air...



Example 4

But her toe is pointing down





Yep. The toe is down.



It's still down. She can't push off her toe unless she is a ballerina...



Omigosh! She IS pushing cause look, her non pivot foot is still in the air.



Okay, now it is down and she is back on her toe...



...and dragging away from a new spot.

Watch her from the other side





Bent Leg



**Pushing with Pivot Foot.
Non Pivot Foot in the air.
Arm at apex.**



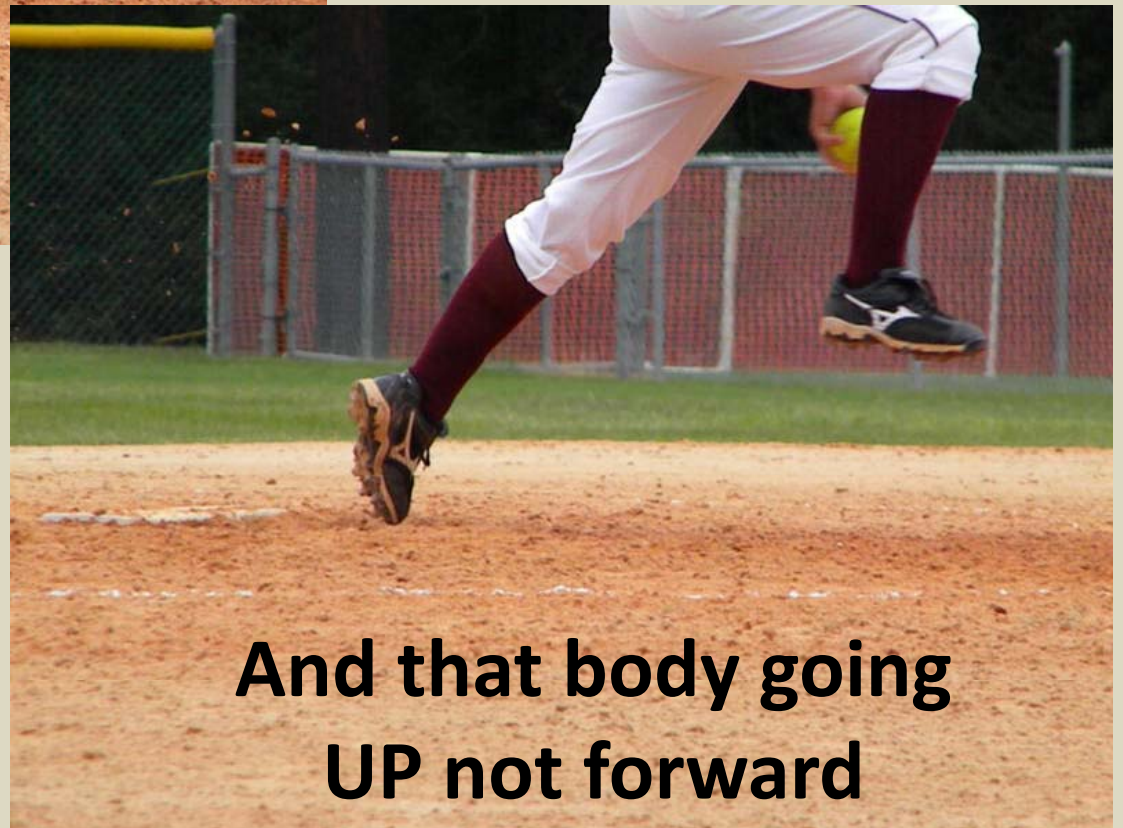
Final push and drag away from a whole new spot.

**Well I guess ballerinas
AND PITCHERS
can push from a toe!**

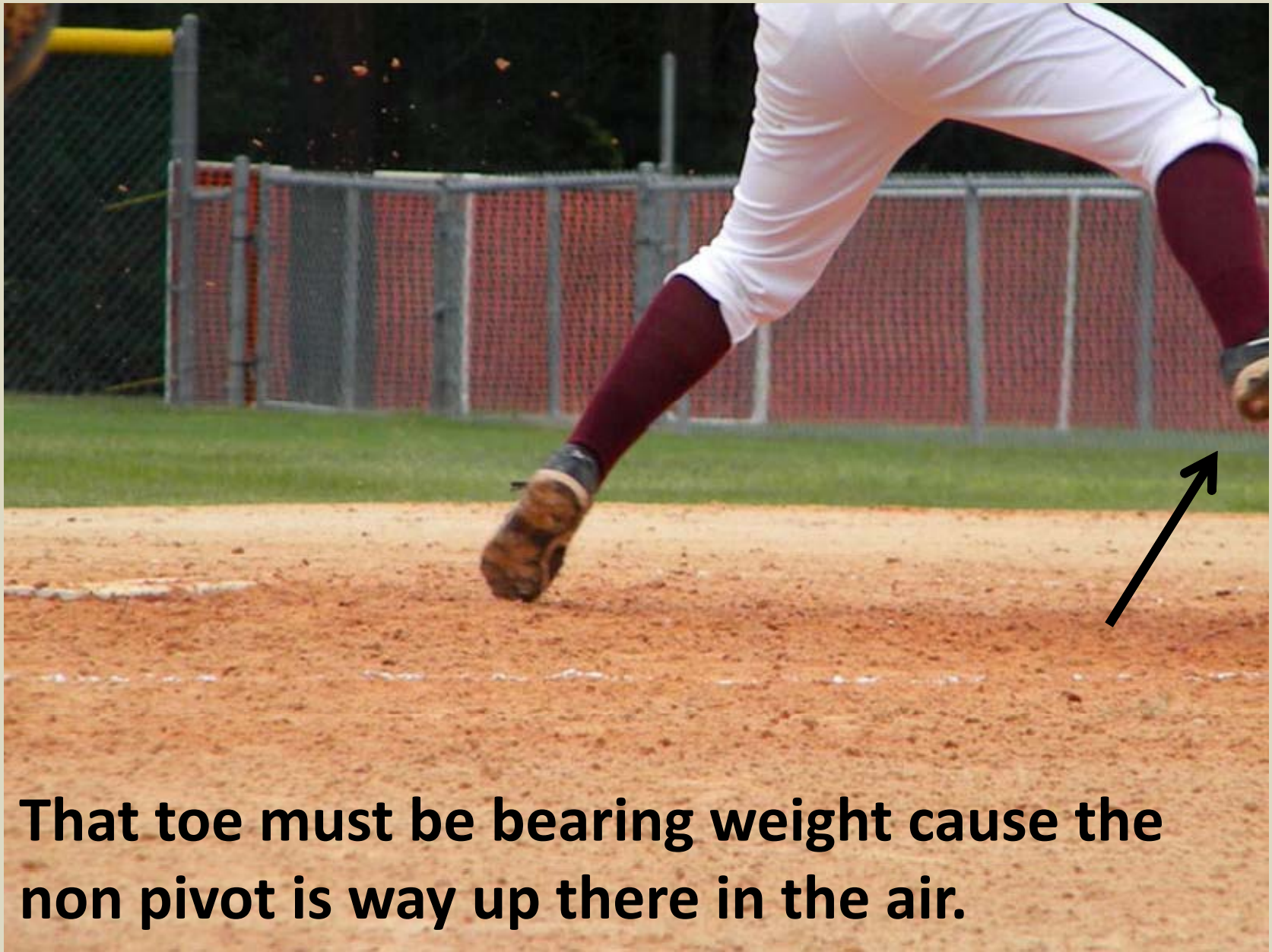
Example 5



**There's that toe
pointing down
again.**



**And that body going
UP not forward**



That toe must be bearing weight cause the non pivot is way up there in the air.



Sure enough! That BENT LEG is a good indication that she is pushing off that toe...that and her non pivot foot being in the air.



No doubt about it. She definitely pushed again from a spot other than the pitching plate.



She still has the ball

Example 6

**Leap with No Replant
Toe Pointing Down**



**Leaves legally
with toe pointing
down**

**Non Pivot lands,
Pivot Foot Toe
comes down and
drags along the
ground**



**Becomes
airborne. Toe
still pointing
down**



Example 7

WOW!

**She flies through the air with the
greatest of ease
That daring young woman on the
flying trapeze ...err, softball field.**



CLUES

- First move up, not forward
- Air under both feet
- Pivot foot down, in new spot, leg bent, non pivot still in air, arm still above head
- Drag mark on ground begins many inches from pitching plate
- Cannot SEE the pivot foot dragging

MYTHS

- She can't replant if the toe is pointing down
- She can't leap if the toe is pointing down
- She must be dragging because the toe is pointing down

COP-OUTS

- She is not getting an advantage
- No one is complaining
- I don't want to deal with the coach ranting
- I can't tell for sure (**can you see her drag?**)
- I don't want to call attention to myself
- My partner is not calling it

**If it sounds like
RATIONALIZATION**

then it is!

**That's a CLUE for YOU to
Make the call.**

**This is slow motion.
Umpires must see with the
naked eye.**

But...

**...if you can't SEE that the
pitch is legal with the naked
eye,
then it is not.**