

# HOW TO: TWIRL A DANDY

**THE HOT STOVE LEAGUE** saw plenty of aces change uniforms, but one prominent hurler was overlooked. As a member of the New York Knights, Long Island's **Joe Nord** won the 2005 Cy Young and MVP awards—as well as a championship—in Fast Plastic, the preeminent Wiffle ball organization in the country. Nord's skills led him to 64 straight wins in FP tournament play. But he's happy to share his secrets. Here's how to put your sandlot cohorts in their place come spring.

-CHARLES CURTIS



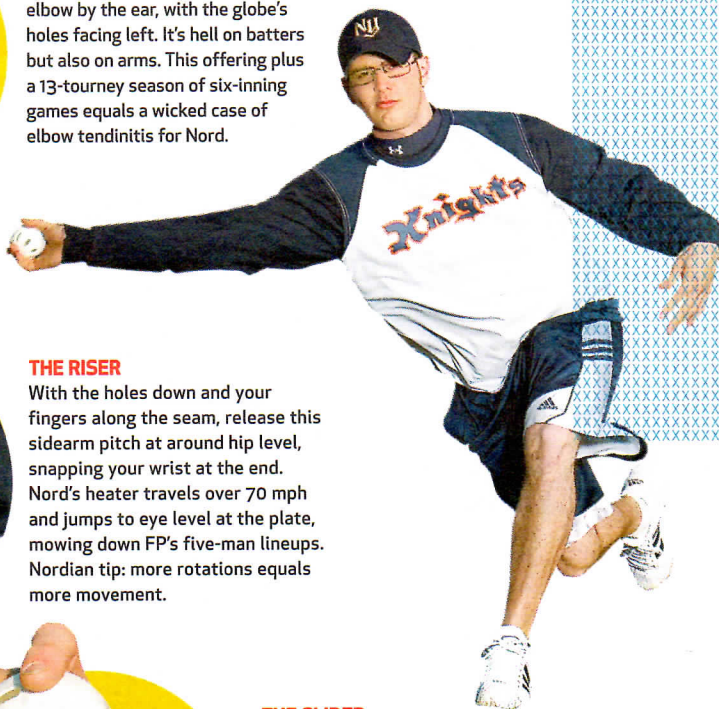
**THE DROP**

Delivered sidearm with the holes facing skyward, the 12-to-6 curve has been known to dip 36 inches as it travels the 48 feet to the 23-inch-by-27-inch strike zone. To ensure that it ain't still on the table when it gets there, Nord says you should twist your wrist forward over the top of the ball as you let it fly.



**THE SCREWBALL**

Nord's out-pitch is chucked overhead, elbow by the ear, with the globe's holes facing left. It's hell on batters but also on arms. This offering plus a 13-tourney season of six-inning games equals a wicked case of elbow tendinitis for Nord.



**THE RISER**

With the holes down and your fingers along the seam, release this sidearm pitch at around hip level, snapping your wrist at the end. Nord's heater travels over 70 mph and jumps to eye level at the plate, mowing down FP's five-man lineups. Nordian tip: more rotations equals more movement.



**THE SLIDER**

In FP play, singles and doubles are determined by lines on the field, triples make it to the wall, and dingers make it over. Up to three fielders chase down batted balls, but the down-and-away motion of Nord's overhand slider—holes to the right, a finger on the seam—often makes them superfluous.

WATCH NORD DEMONSTRATE SOME WIFFLE MAGIC AT [ESPNTHEMAG.COM](http://ESPNTHEMAG.COM).

PLAY LIKE THE PROS ... VIRTUALLY

## The Gamer



"He's got nothing!" a virtual heckler screams at Jose Reyes in **MLB 2K8**. But what do fans scream in real life? "Girls have told me they want to marry me," says Reyes.

Of his in-game self, the Mets shortstop has one gripe: a 96 speed rating. "I should be faster." He also envies virtual ballplayers' virtual travel.



**SONIC BOOM** Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends take center court in **Sega Superstars Tennis** (March; DS, PS2, PS3, Xbox 360, Wii). An evil scientist smashes electrocuting balls, a monkey makes foes slip on banana peels, and players can serve against an onslaught of zombies. (Turns out they're still less intimidating than Federer.)

**CHEAT SHEET** **MX vs. ATV Untamed** (DS, PS2, PS3, PSP, Xbox 360, Wii) To unlock everything in the game—tracks, handlebars, gear—enter YOUNGOTTIT (PS2, Wii) or NOHANDS (PS3, 360) at the cheat menu.

**CONTRACT SIGNING** EA extended its exclusive licensing agreement with the NFL and Players Inc. through 2012. Says EA Sports prez Peter Moore, "We think it's great for gamers." Except for any **NFL 2K8** fans. -JON ROBINSON

THE LIST

### TOP CELEBRITY BOWLERS\*

MORE T.O.? SPARE US.

1. **JOHN BURKETT** (MLB, retired)
2. **JEROME BETTIS** (NFL, retired)
3. **TOM CANDIOTTI** (MLB, retired)
4. **DAVE MIRRA** (BMX)
5. **DWIGHT HOWARD** (Magic)
6. **MIKE CONLEY** (Grizzlies)
7. **GILBERT ARENAS** (Wizards)
8. **CHRIS PAUL** (Hornets)
9. **TERRELL OWENS** (Cowboys)
10. **JIMMIE JOHNSON** (NASCAR)

\*According to US Bowler Magazine