

Best Of Show Winners

Remarkable Products Are Shown At 2014 ABCA Dallas Convention

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technique.

If players are prone to extending their arms early, casting their hands, or have trouble pulling the ball, the Pro Glider helps players keep a short, compact and explosive swing that all coaches ask for.

The ability of Pro Glider to help players tutor themselves forces players to examine how they swing so they can understand adjustments need to be made.

The advantage of seeing the ball leave the bat provides players with feedback to create the necessary swing for their desired results.

For more information, go to: www.progliderbats.com

Ball Coach

The Ball Coach is the latest innovation from the good folks at Pocket Radar.

Pocket Radar was the first speed radar that was small enough to use on the field every day in coaching at an extremely reasonable price.

The new Ball Coach model is the result of direct feedback from top coaches on their specific needs.

The ball tracking technology in this model is specifically designed to automatically find the fastest



BALL COACH

speed of a ball in flight. It can measure the speed of the incoming pitch and outgoing hit.

The new constant-on-auto-trigger features allow you to focus on coaching and training — not on the radar gun.

You simply place the device on a tripod with any smart phone tripod mount and press the constant-on mode and point Ball Coach in the direction of the pitcher.

The Ball Coach model eliminates any manual timing requirements that were necessary with the original Pocket Radar.

The pocket-sized Ball Coach runs on two standard AAA alkaline batteries and has a 25 deep recall memory and 120 feet of range.

The product includes a two year warranty, belt holster case, wrist strap, batteries and quick start guide for \$299. The company also offers a 30 day risk free trial.

For more information, contact www.pocketradar.com or call (888) 381-2672.



Pro Glider

Team Defender

Catchers are more physically abused than any other position in baseball.

If it isn't foul tips or balls in the dirt that cause nagging bruises, a glove thumb injury happens all too often.

Young receivers frequently and unnecessarily backhand pitches as their thumb absorbs the entire force of the pitch which is pointed in a downward position.

Experienced catchers also can become injured too. A foul tip or an unexpected break on the pitch can really affect the catcher's plan of receiving the ball, which is likely to produce the same unanticipated and painful injury to the thumb.

That can happen for many reasons, but it really doesn't matter how it happened. When someone gets injured, it hurts two people on both ends of the throw.

Team Defender has created a batting style type glove that is worn on the catcher's glove hand.



Team Defender Hand Protection For Catchers

Inserted in the thumb extension is a comfortable, but rigid, piece of material that surrounds the thumb.

The design prevents hyper-extension of the thumb and protects the thumb from the force of the ball in an incorrect catch. This simple product (\$34.99) can prevent your starting catcher from losing weeks of game time from this painful injury.

The Team Defender glove

itself is well designed. It is double stitched, padded and very soft. It's made of tactile material and has padded reinforcements in both the index and middle fingers and in the heel of the hand as well.

Initially in our conversation with the Team Defender folks, we thought this would be a great training aid for recreational and high school players learning how to catch.

But they informed us that many professional catchers are using the product.

Catcher's hands are valuable but yet vulnerable.

For more information, go to: www.team-defender.com

Throw It Right

A new product called Throw It Right will allow the youngest of Little League age pitchers to easily understand the correct finger position as the throwing arm goes down, back and up.

Usually pitching coaches on this level ask pitchers to point pads of the middle two fingers toward the shortstop or simply give the "peace sign" to the shortstop to be in the mechanically correct position.

You obviously don't want the pads of those two fingers to point

toward home plate as the ball is taken backward.

But rarely do young kids utilize the correct mechanics when bringing the ball back. They might the first time or two.

Then they revert back to what comes naturally — pointing the pads of the two middle fingers toward home.

Throw It Right solves this problem by allowing the two top fingers to be placed on top of this training aid to build muscle memory.

All a kid must know is the color green and red to see if he is placing his fingers properly on this device.

If the young man sees green, he is in a mechanically correct position.

But red is wrong.

Once he has mastered this concept, the training aid is simply replaced with a ball.

For high school and college coaches who have camps, this device will be great for instructing this basic fundamental to young pitchers.

The cost is \$24.99 and can be ordered through www.throwitright.com



Sculpting The Mind Helps Assimilate Hitting Lanes

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a split second to decide whether or not to swing. It also starts to reinforce to each hitter through repetition and muscle memory what pitches they will naturally swing at and what pitches they will naturally take.

All of a sudden a hitter's mind is getting used to swinging at specific hitting lanes (green light) while getting used to taking balls outside of these hitting lanes (red light).

One of the great benefits of this drill is that the mind wants to get specific — it wants a game plan — it wants to know where to go, and where not to go.

With that in mind, Drill #3 is about teaching the mind how to hunt for those lanes it's interested in and leave alone those lanes that can get the hitter in trouble.

This sculpting of the mind helps the mind assimilates to those specific, ideal hitting lanes, or bread and butter lanes. (This drill is designed to optimize your most preferred zones in luxury counts.)

This is why you hear hitters talking about getting locked-in. They may not realize it but their mind is so tuned into what it wants and what it expects. This expectation of the lane creates a sensation or light that attracts the muscle memory to respond to it because of the practice.

What can then happen in a game situation is that if the pitch is a ball or outside the stored lanes, the mind can be in a position to not respond to it (red light). If you train the mind to look for something specific through repetition then it tends to gravitate toward that stimulus.

This is classic habituation. The body responding to a specific reinforcement that has been

repeated over and over.

The same is done for Lanes 2 and 3. Hitters should be only looking for the perfect pitch to hit in Lane 2. If the perfect pitch comes into Lane 1, the response is still a no. Remember, we are working on lane identification and plate discipline, not hitting at this point.

When a player can stand in the batter's box with their mind at a rating of 90-100, and their yeses are happening naturally and closer to the pitchers release point, then you know that their mind is being sculpted and developed just as their physical mechanics have been developed.

And just as the physical swing has been well practiced to be relied on, the practicing of these lanes can lead to mental reliability in game situations.

Drill #4: Eliminate Potential Distractions In Games

"When the mind is consumed by the Process of hitting, consequences eliminate themselves."

Once players can get into the "Box of Unconscious" with a 90-100 state of mind, and have filed away both their hitting (green) and non hitting (red) lanes, you can now work on teaching hitters how to stay connected or default back to their mental practice (Drills 1, 2, 3) without focusing on the potential distractions of a game situation. Through this drill, you'll find out if players are able to maintain these drills or approach (process) or whether or not they are affected by game like situations that are simulated in this drill.

For Drill #4, call out a specific, consequential situation (e.g. bases loaded, winning run on third) prior to each hitter entering the Box of Unconscious. Then remind them that the situation is actually

irrelevant because their process (commitment to the way they get into the box and their commitment to the hitting lane they are looking for) is all that matters.

Next, ask each hitter to choose a lane (which is based on favorable counts, for example, 0-0, 1-0, 2-0, 2-1, 3-1).

When hitters have the luxury to look for a specific bread and butter lane, their mind will tend to want to recall those lanes that have been previously ingrained. Though this approach is based on luxury counts and specific lanes, a player still has a great chance of hitting other pitches that are close to this predetermined lane (green lights) due to previous mental practice.

Even with two strikes, hitters can't really afford to sit on one lane. They can still trust that their lanes will take over. (Note: The more ingrained these lanes get the more a player can look for a specific lane and still react instinctively to the other lanes.)

The idea of this drill is to prove to each hitter that when they trust their process, consequences are naturally eliminated. In other words, each hitter no longer needs to worry about the consequences of the situation because they are too preoccupied with their approach or process.

This is the key to a great at-bat — to be so consumed by your approach that everything else becomes irrelevant — to be so consumed by the present moment that the past and future cease to exist.

Thus, Drill #4 is about learning to rely on a hitters process (Drills 1, 2, 3) rather than buying into the consequences of the at bat.

By having the ability, through practice, to get into the batter's box

(Box Of Unconscious) with an ideal state of mind and know to look for an ideal lane (visual) that the mind has been trained to look for (green light), each hitter can learn to focus on committing to a plan (process) that has been put in place.

Heed The Call

Remember, skills like relaxation, clarity, confidence, discipline and freedom are earned. These four drills were designed to provide some practice time and mental development to prepare the mind so it can be better prepared to be relied upon — that it is in a better position to default to those things that have to do with your approach or process in a game situation.

I would strongly suggest that you consider an additional 10-20 minutes a day of some form of mental practice (relaxation, breath work, meditation, visualization) away from the playing field to augment these drills (Please see Mental Practice Plans, *Collegiate Baseball*, January 2012, www.jaegersports.com/press_articles.php?psid=31).

Remember, the mind wants to be developed like any other skill.

Alan Jaeger has consulted with over 300 professional players and several college and high school programs. For more information about Jaeger Sports and their products (Mental Training Book, "Getting Focused, Staying Focused," "Thrive On Throwing 2" DVD or Digital Download and J-Bands) please visit their website at www.jaegersports.com or call 310-665-0746. You may also download additional articles/videos at http://www.jaegersports.com/press_articles.php/, and youtube.com, keyword jaeger sports. Twitter: @jaegersports