

THE BASEBALL COLLEGIAN

THE COACHES' SOURCE FOR AMATEUR BASEBALL

www.baseballcollegian.com

Issue 14 - August 1, 2026

THE NATIONAL BASEBALL CONGRESS WORLD SERIES



Photo by Ed Bailey

Wichita, Kansas Hosts a Grand Tradition

Starting in 1935, the National Baseball Congress World Series is one of the greatest traditions in baseball. The tournament features 16 top college summer teams from around the country who descend on Wichita, Kan. for 10 days of a flurry of outstanding baseball. It is a distinctly special event, featuring its Round the Clock baseball games going all through the night, and as a place to watch all kinds of future MLB Hall of Famers.

The NBC World Series takes place at Wichita State's Eck Stadium, with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

“Have an Approach” What Does That Mean?

By MARK WOODWORTH
EDITOR/THE BASEBALL COLLEGIAN

Coaches and great hitters are always speaking these words of wisdom:

“You have to have an approach.”

Sounds great and perfectly reasonable! But too often, the conversation stops right there without the most important aspects: What is an approach? What are the available approaches? What are the best approaches? Does the same approach fit every circumstance? How do you practice a certain approach?

Let's look at some of these questions and potential answers:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Why The Current Model of Player Development is Broken

By ERIK WAGLE - HEAD COACH: ST. FRANCIS HS, CALIF.
OWNER: KINETIC PERFORMANCE INSTITUTE - MORGAN HILL, CALIF.

The game of baseball is in constant evolution, but it is historically much slower than the other sports. Baseball is rooted in tradition, maybe because it is America's game or maybe it has something to do with it being the oldest of the sports invented in our country. What we do know is that the system that was organically created to help players develop is broken. The reason why it is broken is not because of what common observers might think, but because of the silo approach that is taken by most involved in the process. Putting up walls, creating lanes of expertise, and not having an integrated system

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

THE BASEBALL COLLEGIAN

THE COACHES' SOURCE FOR AMATEUR BASEBALL

www.baseballcollegian.com

Issue 14
August 1, 2026

Publisher/Editor **Mark Woodworth**
413-531-9289
mark@baseballcollegian.com

Asst. Editor/Website **Loren Foxx**
loren@tcbagency.com
tcbagency.com

Advertising **John Keefe**
508-942-3272
jhkeefe44@gmail.com

From the Publisher

Summer College Baseball Leagues might be, dare I say, the best thing about college baseball. Sure, there's less intensity than the college season, winning is less dire, there is less money and prestige and national championships, and you're not together for nine months and/or four years. However, for half of the country, summer weather is so much better; players play almost every night; players can experiment and develop with less pressure, and in general, there is a relaxed joy that seems to be found.

There is a movement to eschew summer baseball, and while good intentioned, baseball is worse for it. "Get stronger" - "Don't get hurt" - "Don't get pilfered in the portal" - "You better be ready for the fall." These are all valid exhortations from college coaches. Yet, at the same time, there is a great lament across the country that players are lacking baseball IQ, don't know the game, and only care about strikeouts and home runs.

These two things completely contradict each other. You can train, get stronger, be healthy AND play and practice a lot and learn the game. For an industry obsessed with limiting pitch counts to create healthy arms, why are there more injuries than ever? Maybe it pitchers pitched more, they wouldn't go max effort every pitch, and maybe learn there are many ways to get hitters out. For hitters, scouts used to say you needed 3,000 at-bats to learn the strike zone. If there's any truth in that at all, then hitters need to play way more than they do now. For fielders, you can't possibly practice all the different situations that come up in games, thus, they *really* need to play a lot.

For every player that is blowing off the summer and having a good college season, there an incredible amount of players that don't play and don't have a good college season. Plus, college players can't see the big picture. The clock is ticking down fast on their baseball careers, so maybe they should just take advantage of this small window of time that they get to play this beautiful game, and they can rest when they're done.

And maybe the experience of the joy of playing where the games all blur into one on hot summer nights, helps them love the game more, and in turn, play better.

Mark A. Woodworth

Online www.baseballcollegian.com **Publication** Online/Emailed monthly/Printed Quarterly **Social Media** Twitter/Instagram

PLEASE Support The Baseball Collegian!

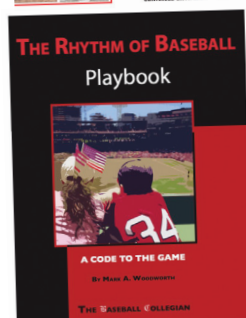
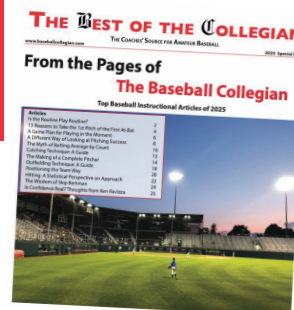
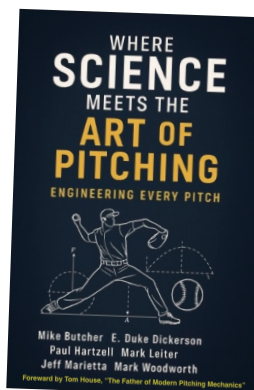
The Baseball Collegian is available three ways:

Website: FREE!

Email: Monthly - FREE! with signup

Newspaper: Printed quarterly (January/April/July/September)

Cover printing & mailing costs with your contribution.



Sign-up at:
BASEBALLCOLLEGIAN.COM

Free Subscriber
Gifts!

"Best of Collegian" Top Instruction articles
"Rhythm of Baseball" 75-page coaching playbook
"Where Science Meets the Art of Pitching"

“Have a Hitting Approach”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

What is an Approach?

An approach is having a plan or an intention, and then following through with it.

What are the Available Approaches?

Here are a bunch of approaches that are commonly discussed:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Pull the ball | 12) Look up |
| 2) Hit it oppo | 13) Look down |
| 3) Hit it up the middle | 14) Look middle |
| 4) Attack the first pitch | 15) Look middle-away |
| 5) Get deep into counts | 16) Look middle-in |
| 6) Guess | 17) Look hard |
| 7) Hunt | 18) Look slow |
| 8) Sit on pitches | 19) Hit liners or grounders |
| 9) Look fastball, react curveball | 20) Hit liners or in the air |
| 10) Look fastball, hit hanging CB's | 21) Take an A swing |
| 11) Look away, adjust in | 22) Just put it in play |

That's 22 approaches and there are probably a whole lot more.

What are the Best Approaches?

This is where the debates can get intense. It seems like for every one of those 22 approaches, there are strong pros and strong cons. Hitting researcher Russ Hubbard put it this way: “Everything works, and everything doesn't work.”

For every hitter or coach that swears by focusing on hitting it up the middle, there's a whole lot of video evidence of elite hitters who pull everything. For those who pull everything, there's a ton of ground-outs. For every hitter or coach who talks about adjusting to pitches in the strike zone mid-pitch, there are a million pitching coaches who feast on hitters who try to time pitches like that.

Ted Williams says to be a guess hitter; Tony Gwynn says to be balanced and react. Brent Rooker of the Athletics (and former SEC Triple Crown winner) says he hunts fastballs, “unless the situation screams curveball.” Nomar Garciaparra swung at the first pitch almost every time. Lots of guys would rather strikeout while going for a walk or home run rather than hit a single. See it deep. Hit it out in front. Be selective. Be aggressive.

What Does That Mean?

An Example: One Possible Approach

Here is one plan that is by no means the only the answer (no plan is), but is based on these precepts:

Maximizing the easiest thing to do.

Reduces having to adjust mid-swing for different pitch speeds.

Frees up the hitter to be aggressive and not tentative.

Recognizes that putting the ball in play HAS TO help the team more than striking out.

One (of Many) Plans

1) Hunt fastballs with less than two strikes. They are the straightest, most predictable pitches to track and time.

2) Choose a height or side of the plate you are either A) Best at hitting; or B) The pitcher throws to most often; or C) is easiest to time up. *Fast* pitches up-and/or-in are more difficult to catch up to, while low-and/or-outside pitches are easier. *Slow* pitches up-and/or-in are easier to time, while low-and/or-outside are harder.

3) Be prepared physically to hit a pitch where you want to hit it, like inside (pull), or outside (oppo), or low (in the air), or high (on a line). Sometimes you might want to go oppo on inside pitches or pull outside pitches!

4) Attack this pitch only. If fooled, swing through it (as opposed to slowing up the swing and just throwing your hands at it).

5) With two strikes, change the approach: No guessing, no hunting. Swing hard and late. This will result in hitting fastballs opposite field, and then if there's an offspeed pitch, pull it down the line. This will maximize not being really late by guessing offspeed, and not being “stupid early” by guessing fastball.

How do you Practice a Certain Approach?

Don't just swing at everything in BP. Pick an approach, and stick to it. Practice two-strike approaches. Practice less-than-two strike approaches. Have the coach mix in fastballs and curveballs (if not good at curveballs, have them throw fast and slow). Pay attention to the results when applying a certain approach on certain pitches.

Final Thoughts on Approach

It seems like it is pretty imperative to have “An Approach.” If it works, great. If it doesn't, choose another (or see if the swing needs work.) It is rare for hitters to be consistent by just swinging at anything, or using some approach preached to them that doesn't work. At the end of the day, hitters have to “Be Your Own Best Coach.”

DISPATCHES Chatham, Massachusetts



A NIGHT IN THE CAPE COD LEAGUE



WELCOME TO VETERANS FIELD									
Home of the CHATHAM ANGLERS									
CAPE COD BASEBALL LEAGUE - STARTING LINEUPS									
Anglers					Wareham Gatemen				
POS.	#	PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL		POS.	#	PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL	
1	RF	40	James Palmer	Kent	1	RF	23	Al Phillips	UConn
2	1F	10	Bino Westers	UConn	2	1F	25	Levi Clark	Wareham
3	CF	42	Armani Guzman	West Virginia	3	CF	28	Sean Burke	Greenfield
4	SS	21	Jack Bell	Worcester State	4	CF	19	John Kelly	Wareham
5	C	65	Eden Westfall	Florida	5	SS	18	Conor Kelly	Wareham
6	3B	1	Ty Peoples	Florida State	6	3B	27	Kevin Deane	Wareham
7	2B	1	Cam Pruitt	Missouri	7	2B	24	Kevin Deane	Wareham
8	DH	20	Cole Johnson	Georgia	8	DH	21	Conor Kelly	Wareham
9	TB	43	Walter House	North Carolina	9	SS	21	Conor Kelly	Wareham
10	P	37	Oliver Prewer	UConn	10	P	31	Walter House	Wareham



THE PRESS BOX:

COACHING INSIGHTS FROM THE SOURCE

The Press Box series chronicles the great lessons coaches give at press conferences into how they created their championship teams. Featured this month are insights from first-time coaches at the College World Series, Skylar Meade from Troy University and Stave Sabins from West Virginia.

Skylar Meade – Troy Head Coach

I think it's a good reminder to me -- and I think there was a time where, if I'm being totally honest -- we've had so many things really going on in the last 15 months. I think I'd be remiss if I said that maybe I didn't catch myself couple times not appreciating their growth. I'll battle my lock-in versus anybody. That doesn't mean I'm the best. I'm definitely not the smartest or whatever, but locked in.

We will tell them if something's not good enough. I don't MF players, let's make sure that's clear, for the record. And I think sometimes, like, we all worry -- oh, don't challenge this guy or don't do this, he'll go in the portal. If he goes in the portal, okay, whatever, who cares? We'll get good players. You know what I mean? But you've gotta have guys who are in the foxhole with you. So you can't forget to be whatever your culture is.

Coach Schlossnagle is one of the greatest coaches in the world. I don't know what his culture is. I'm not privy to that, right? Coach Bianco, all these guys, I don't know what they are. But I bet what's made them incredibly successful and what I hope to do in my career is to always stay true to what I really am and what I value in communicating with people. And if I don't do that or I drop two or three percent of that, then I'm not doing the best job possible.

And I think that reminding yourself of that and then the players show you the way to do it, that's why I credit, not just the seniors, although they certainly deserve a lot because a lot of those guys have been here for a couple years, but it's all the players. And if guys can't handle that, then they were never going to be winners for us. And that is the cold hard truth of how things work in this day and age.

And that's a huge part - as a head coach there are things you like. I like home runs and I like velocity, that's cool. But you know what? Our team's never going to be scared. That's a cool thing to have said about it.

And that's the players. You can message all you want and be confident and bravado-ish, you know, as a coach and coaches. But when your team shows that every time that you compete, you can sit there -- I ran into Coach Kingston, who I worked for, and he used to say this about a player on our team. He's like, "Hey, I'm okay if we lose with him."

I'm not okay losing, I don't want my words misconstrued. But when your guys fight at that level, you're not sitting there going, "Well, they had something in the tank." Our guys, they emptied the clip.

Culture is like a program thing, and I utilize culture a lot.

But each year you still have your own individualized identity. Look, we all think we're smart. Of course I think I'm smart. I have to be. I can't be an idiot and try to lead a program. But you don't totally know what your guys are made of or how to make them what you hope they are day one, and I think with our guys, there was a learning curve.

We had a ton of new players. They're very talented. But sometimes when you're very talented, maybe you expect it to go easy. I think that's a fair thing that happens from time to time.

And for us, we had to figure out how to push buttons within them to get them to be their best version. But then the biggest part of credit goes to the players to understand if we're challenging them, we're on them, we're pushing, nodding, prodding on them, "Hey, this is why we're doing it, because it means you're awesome. But we're not going to let you just be very good. We need you to be awesome. We need you to be great. We need you to be elite." And it took us some time to do that.

But within all of that, fearless means you have an insane level of confidence. Nobody that's fearless is shaking on the edge of the cliff before they jump, right? They're not. They're standing there going, "I'm about to jump and I don't care." And I think our guys, once they realize how to do that individually and collectively, that's why we are where we are. It doesn't mean we win a national championship. It's the hardest thing to do in all of sports, especially our sport.

But they've maximized their fearlessness and what's expected and asked in our culture. And for me, that's why I'm not going to sit here and enter that bus in a second and say, "Oh, man, so and so" -- no, every person that traveled, every person that suited up today, they gave us exactly what we asked for, and to me that's how you're fearless and you have an elite culture.

Steve Sabins – West Virginia Head Coach

Skill develops. It's not always talent, where in some other major sports, talent is always king. Sometimes just growth and strength and skill. And when strength meets skill, you can start to get really good. There's like this evolution of baseball players. That's why you can always see great players at all these different levels.

So if you're courageous enough as a coach like Skylar Meade is, I

think this Division II guy can take us to Omaha without feeling too crazy, and you'd really trust your gut and your evaluation, then those things can happen. I think a lot of times those D-II kids, things haven't always been easy for them, and there's been some adversity along the way, and that matters in this sport. And the development hasn't always been easy. So when you get to a great program that has those resources, they're so thankful for them and they take advantage of them every day.

For me I've got a little bit of a soft spot because I was a walk-on at a junior college. And I played at Division I, and then I ended up playing at an NAIA school that's now D-II. And so I just remember throughout my journey, there's some guys on the team who are like, "I'm pretty sure that guy's way better than the guy that I was at Division I with." Or the three-hole hitter for Angelina Junior College, that guy should be banging in the Big 12, right?

But there's just a lot of factors, whether it's where they're from or their background, or their grades at that time, or if they were able to play in certain tournaments. So I think part of the fun in recruiting is trying to find those guys that maybe are a little bit undervalued.

So I want people to know that our culture means a lot to us and that this thing has been built by people, and it's been built by our staff, and it's been built on the belief that you can accomplish anything that you want if you have the belief. And that's what this place is all about.

Our state is a state that's really rooted in unity and rooting for each other and believing that anything is possible -- and it's a little bit of a chip on the shoulder kind of state. It's a small rural state that thinks that things haven't always gone their way. You've got to fight extra hard and work extra hard and you've got to show up longer and harder in order to accomplish great things. So that's kind of the mentality that our team has taken.

I think this was game 61 for the Mountaineers. And in order to get here at West Virginia, you're practicing long, hard days. When you get back from Christmas break, you're in sleet, and you're in snow, and you're in freezing temperatures.

We travel as much as anybody in the nation. We got Cincinnati in the league now, so every couple of years you get a bus trip. But other than that, we're bussing an hour and a half to the Pittsburgh airport and then



flying out of there across the country, often times, to small college towns. Got another two or three hours on that side.

And so playing 61 games together, the amount of hotel eggs that you've eaten together and the amount of time that you've spent together and the amount of adversity and the ups and downs, you just end up becoming really close with the team because things happen in life. Parents get sick and grandparents die and school happens and girlfriends happen, and you just grow with these guys.

And I think the tighter and the more you win, the closer the group gets together. So, I think some of that grit just comes from trusting each other and kind of letting go of whatever, like, "What happens to me individually happens. Let's go fight for something bigger than ourselves."

And so I think grit is more based on love and relationships, probably, than being mean and angry on the field. It's more about "Dude, you're giving your best, I'm giving my best. We'll go to war together. Whatever happens, happens."

They know that the staff's staying up 12 hours a day doing scouting reports. We know that they're going to bed on time and hydrating and making good choices and bringing positive energy and representing the program with class. It's just a unity.

At a certain point, like when Armani [Guzman] scored on that steal home, he pops up and he points at me, I'm pointing to him at the same time. It was just a natural thing. It wasn't like we planned that, right? But it's like giving credit to each other and working together. These guys are as much peers as anything.

Take the Free HS Baseball Test!

6Tool

WHAT SCHOOL ARE YOU FROM?

Select your state and school so we can link your test to your team.

State *

Select a state

High School *

Select a school first

Continue to Test

6Tool TEACH YOUR TEAM THROUGH INTERACTIVE QUIZZES

What should the 6i do?

Run the batter back towards home

Throw the ball home

Tag out the runner

Hold out your arms to cool time

The Baseball IQ App

6Tool Puts You in Control

- Get an accurate read on what each player knows
- Select from over 1000 questions in the database
- Create custom questions that fit your team's strategy
- Send video recordings giving signs to your players
- Filter questions by categories, positions, and difficulty
- Easily group players for targeted training

Are you tired of losing close games due to mental mistakes on the field?

Amplify development off the field 6-TOOL.COM

Know your role in every situation



THE NBC WORLD SERIES WICHITA, KANSAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

championship game at Wichita's minor league stadium, Equity Bank Ballpark. That first tournament in 1935 happened thanks to Raymond "Hap" Dumont who offered Satchel Paige \$1,000 to bring his Bismarck, N.D. barnstorming team. With coverage and sponsorship from the *Sporting News* (baseball's bible at the time) the tournament was an instant national success.

MLB Players

Satchel Paige played in the first one, and current MLB stars Aaron Judge, Paul Goldschmidt, Garret Crochet and Corbin Burnes also played. And this doesn't even include a host of others over the last 91 years: Albert Pujols, Roger Clemens, Tony Gwynn, Barry Bonds, Dave Winfield, Robin Ventura, Lance Berkman, and Mark Texeira.

Baseball Round the Clock

One of their most renown traditions is their Baseball Round the Clock weekend, where teams play 11 games in 33 straight hours. Fans who stay through the night for all 33 hours receive an "I Survived Baseball Round the Clock" t-shirt that can't be purchased.

National Baseball Congress founder Hap Dumont came up with the idea of having late-night and early-morning games in the tournament to make games accessible to Wichita fans working graveyard shifts. Tournament director Steve Shaad formalized the tradition in 1990 with the introduction of 'Baseball 'Round the Clock' as 17 games in 56 hours. BRTC ran every year after that at the NBC World Series through 2016 before coming to a halt. It returned in 2024 as 11 games in 33 hours.

NBC Baseball Foundation

The NBC Baseball Foundation connects communities through baseball, empowers young athletes, and preserves America's pastime for future generations. Through their comprehensive programs and the renowned NBC World Series, they create opportunities for players to showcase their talents while building lasting bonds that extend far beyond the diamond.

The Foundation's commitment spans from supporting local youth leagues to celebrating the rich history and traditions that make baseball America's beloved national pastime. To support their mission, learn more on their website.

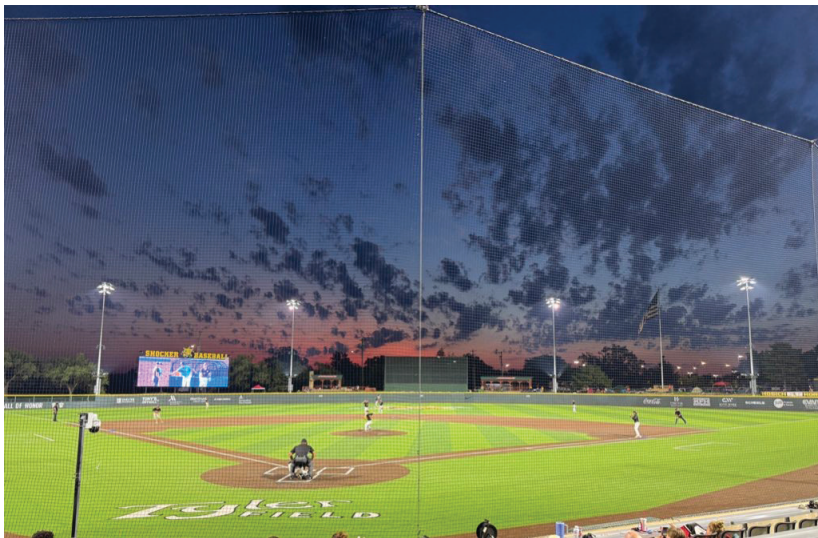
Watch Live!

All games are broadcast live on YouTube.

Follow along and learn more!

NBC World Series Tournament Central

Source: NBCBaseball.com



2026 National Baseball Congress World Series

Teams

Alaska Goldpanners – Independent
Austin Gold Sox – CenTex Collegiate Baseball League
BTL Hornets – KC Collegiate Baseball League
Great Bend Bat Cats – Jayhawk League
Hays Larks – Rocky Mountain Baseball League
Hutchinson Monarchs – Jayhawk League
Junction City Brigade – Jayhawk League
Liberal Bee Jays – Rocky Mountain League
Lonestar Baseball Club – CenTex Collegiate League
Oklahoma Lookouts – AABC Oklahoma
San Diego Stars – Western Baseball Association
Santa Barbara Foresters – California Collegiate League
Seattle Blackfins – Pacific International League
Seattle Cheney Studs – Pacific International League
TPA Texas – AABC Texas
Tess's Army – Independent

Game Schedules

Thur. July 23 Opening Day
Fri. July 24 Military Appreciation Day
Sat. July 25 Baseball Round the Clock
Sun. July 26 Baseball Round the Clark
Mon. July 27 Grassroots Baseball
Tue. July 28 Sonic Buyout Day
Wed. July 29 Midwest Ford Dealers Buyout Night
Thur. July 30 Heartland Heroes Day
Fri. July 31 Aviation Night/Semifinal
Sat. August 1 Championship Game

The **Santa Barbara Foresters** won their 11th NBC World Series with a 7-2 win over the Alaskas Goldplanners in 2026.



Why The Current Model of Player Development is Broken

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

holds back many athletes looking to move up in the game. A modern player development system, and the system that will prevail with this generation of athletes, is one that is completely integrated and takes into account every need of every athlete.

What's wrong with having a specialist for each area of development?

There are two large problems, amongst many smaller ones, with having the siloed approach to player development. The first problem is each of the coaches of each speciality think they are the most important part of the process. The personal skill coach (hitting or pitching), the high school/college/pro field coach, the personal trainer, the parents, the travel ball coach, and the medical team all feel that their role is the most important role for the athlete to develop and be successful. Because of this ego based dynamic, each one of these coaches in the process tries to take possession of the athlete's process and they load the athlete up with their focus and philosophy. The problem presents itself when the athlete becomes overloaded with all these different stressors presented to them by all the different areas of their development. Here are some common examples that athletes go through on a weekly basis:

- **Private Skill Coach** – Demands weekly lessons at a high pay rate and often undermines the field coaches. The private coach presents their own philosophy and protocols the athlete must follow for success. If success does not happen, the private coach usually blames the field coach and states more private lessons are needed, leading to the vicious cycle of the lesson model that plagues modern player development.
- **High School Coach** – The high school coach is tasked to win games and often overvalues his/her impact on that outcome. They feel their philosophy and focus on the field is the most

important for an athlete and they often don't consider the other areas of development when designing weekly routines and individual considerations for each athlete.

- **Personal Trainer** – This coach values the strength training of the athlete above all else. Very often they are not connected with what is happening and/or the success/failures of the athlete on the field. They have a narrow view of the process because of their limited scope, so they often prescribe what they know, instead of what is happening with the athlete at that moment.

- **Travel Coach** – Depending on the time of the year or the regional rules of high schools in the athlete's area, the travel coach might be with the athlete more than the high school coach. The travel coach is usually motivated by making money, so decisions are often made in that scope instead of the scope of what is best for the individual athletes. The travel schedule is usually fairly intense and demanding and can pull an athlete away from the other areas of development.

- **Parents** – Parents have the enviable job of filtering all of these different areas for the athletes. Parents are inevitably biased towards their kid's desires and sometimes the level of play their child is at. They are spending thousands of dollars on all these different areas, much of the time without a long-term plan or perspective on what actually works in this disjointed process.

- **Medical (Athletic trainer, physical therapist, chiropractor, medical doctors)** – This area is often an understated part of this process, but it can be one of the most consequential. Without an integrated development system in place, there usually is a loose understanding on who refers out to medical specialists. And if those referrals aren't targeted and logical, an athlete can often get passed around and/or given improper advice. The current medical system is setup to defer and delay in the name of cost saving. Most medical doctors will give a blanket



rest period without actually diving deep on an issue and that can be costly in many different ways for an athlete.

As displayed above, there are a lot of hands in the cookie jar for the modern day athlete. Every one of those aspects of the process has their own unique thoughts, philosophies, egos, and experiences they draw from. With all of these different chefs in the kitchen, it is unavoidable to have a disjointed process and there will always be a lot of push and pull between each entity. This is why the siloed approach to athlete development is so flawed and disjointed... it really has no other outcome in this setup.

What an integrated athlete development system looks like

As evidenced above, there are a lot of moving parts to get under control for high level athletes. This is why it is so integral to get into a comprehensive system that can encompass all important areas for the athlete. A system like this creates a common mindset, philosophy, and communication across the board. This kind of structure is exactly what the athletes need as they develop and navigate the different landscapes they will encounter. Without this kind of integrated approach, athletes get lost in all the voices and stress that everyone provides them. With this kind of a system, all of that communication and stress can get consolidated across the spectrum and everyone can work together.

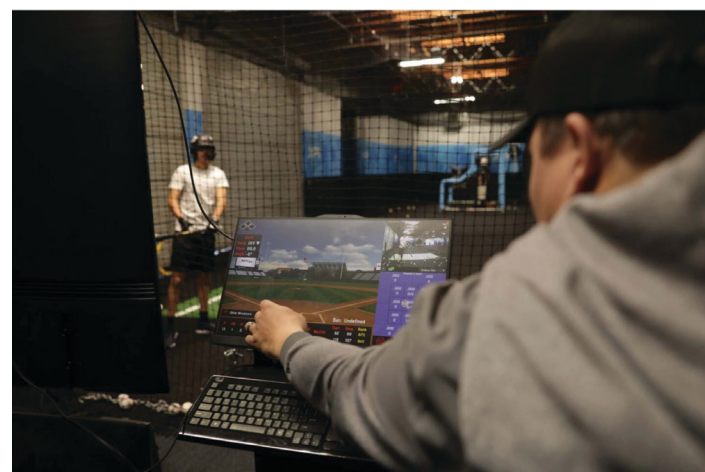
At KPI we have created an incredible athlete development system that caters to every aspect a developing athlete needs to achieve. Here is how we take each part of the system and use them to make one large athlete development machine:

- **Athlete** – The athlete is the center of this system and has to be. This only works if the athlete invests in all areas and is the one driving the process.
- **Parents** – The parents job is to provide the resources needed and to support the athlete as they pursue their dreams
- **Skill Coaches** – We have some of the very best skill coaches in the industry coaching all ages at KPI. In our development programs we have our skill coaches work hand-in-hand with the strength coaches, and oftentimes, coaches perform both functions in our building. There is constant communication and flow between the skill coaches and other areas.
- **High School/Travel Coaches** – We are in constant communication and outreach to as many high school and travel coaches that will have it. We make a concerted effort to update the field coaches in all parts of our training. We are building systems to make this more seamless and we also hold a coaching clinic every January where we bring coaches from all levels together with a theme of working together and

a collective mindset.

- **Strength Coaches** – We employ strength coaches at KPI and the strength program is the hub of everything we do here. The strength coaches are all former athletes that understand the importance of working hand in hand with the skill side. We cross reference assessment notes taken by a trainer and then use that information to build out a skill and strength program for the athlete.

- **Medical** – We have an internal Return To Training program we use to pull athletes out of general population that are experiencing some level of pain. We give them a structured system to follow. If they do not progress, we refer out to our medical partners for the next layer of treatment. If the issue is serious enough, we have relationships with the best orthopedics in the area and we know how to navigate the sometimes tricky process of getting proper treatment. We then work with our physical therapy partners to get returning athletes everything they need to heal and get back to training and the field.



Conclusion

There is a better way out there. On the surface this is simple... would an athlete rather be in a chunky setup where each part of the process has their own thoughts, beliefs, and philosophies? Or would an athlete flourish in a one-stop-shop system where there is a common thread and open communication running through every aspect?

The answer is simple, a system that has every aspect working together and in conjunction with each other will outshine the old way every time.



Erik Wagle - Head Coach-St. Francis HS, Calif. & CEO of Kinetic Performance Institute

In his time in baseball, Erik Wagle has sent over 200 players to play in college, coached numerous college All Americans, and has mentored or advanced nearly 20 players into professional baseball.

He is the author of *Choose a Side: A Beyond the Field Blueprint for Baseball Success*. In the book, Wagle outlines the entire process from youth to professional and how to effectively navigate every aspect of the process for talented ballplayers.

Wagle was an All-Monterey Bay League player at Live Oak HS (Calif.). At San Jose City College, he was a JC All-American his sophomore year after leading the nation in saves. Wagle signed a scholarship with Division I UC Riverside before playing his final two seasons at Division II power Sonoma State.

He coached for five seasons at Live Oak HS, helping the Acorns win their first-ever CCS Championship in 2008. At San Jose City College, his teams broke more pitching records, and the Jaguars led Northern California in wins during his tenure. He then helped Cal State Monterey Bay revive the program, going from 8-41 record the year before to a national ranking in year two of the revival.

Wagle has been an associate scout for the Dodgers and Nationals and was the Commissioner of the Far West College League.

He has a Master's Degree from Saint Mary's College in Kinesiology, a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from Sonoma State, and teaching credentials in Physical Education and Social Sciences. Wagle has served as a Professor in the Kinesiology Department at Cal State Monterey Bay.

Wagle has numerous current certifications and affiliations: Armcare.com - Arm Care Specialist, Biomechanics. Driveline - Hitting, Pitching, Pitch Design. Motor Preferences Expert. OnBaseU - Hitting, Pitching; Rapsodo: Hitting, Pitching. K-Vest - Hitting; Wellness. Masters of Kinesiology. American Sports Medicine Institute - Injuries in Baseball. Grays Institute: Soft Tissue. Cup Therapy - Cupping. Rock Blade - Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization.

The Wisdom of Skip Bertman

CHAPTER 5 - Part 2

MOTIVATION

Coach Bertman has inspired the LSU Tigers to many championships, including six Southeastern Conference titles in the 1990's and five NCAA national championships. One of Bertman's cornerstones is his belief in motivation.



Most of the stories that I have told my teams come from books. There are hundreds and hundreds of books and so many great stories of inspiration that you could use. Many stories make a point.

ROCKY MARCIANO

One time during a season I thought that our team wasn't really putting the other team away. We would get a lead, we wouldn't build on it, and we would let them back into the game. I looked up Rocky Marciano — an old hero of mine. He could really put them away. Here is the story that I told my players:

Rocky Marciano was born in Massachusetts. He was a great baseball player and had a minor league career cut short with a bad arm injury. He went into football as a minor league football player in the old Continental Football League. The NFL didn't give him a shot, so he decided to go into boxing.

He was the only guy to ever retire undefeated. In 1952, he ended the boxing career of Joe Louis, who was on a comeback bid. On 1952, he beat Jersey Joe Wolcott in the 13th round. Then eight months later, he defended the title again, beat Wolcott in the first round. Six years later, he retired — 49-0. He was a vicious puncher. Eleven KO's in the 1st round, 43 of 49 knockouts. And that's what this story's about. He could finish them off. He didn't play with them like Muhammad Ali. He could sense it when they were on the ropes and when he had it, he would take the finish.

We've got to sense it today. So must you finish them off today. I know you'll do that. You represent LSU, your family and your Maker. Today, finish them off. Have fun. Play like champions.

STORIES

After I got the story about Rocky Marciano and putting them away, I put it into my computer. I have lots of stories about Henry Aaron and Jim Abbott, about Roger Bannister or Billy Mills. Let's go down to the Marciano story, call it up at the right time and make sure that I've rehearsed it and that I can do it flawlessly when I give it to my team. It just takes a minute or two before the ball game. The thing is be accurate when you tell a story. Have the names correct and the dates correct. That's very important.

And here's an important point: Stories help me, too. I want to feel the white-hot, searing, passionate heat of their excitement. In order to get that, I have to coach and teach with a passion. It has to be what you love to do so that you and your team can make some memorable stories of your own.

RUBBER BAND TECHNIQUE

I have some techniques that the players can use themselves, like the imaginary base trip and, of course, the poster board which I mentioned earlier. Here's another. It's an old, simple, but extraordinarily effective technique to help players break bad habits.

Each player takes a rubber band, puts it around his or her wrist and, whenever necessary, snaps it. For example, many players have negative thoughts during the ball game and every time a negative thought appears, they snap the rubber band as if to say, "Stop."

It's a good tool for players who let their mind wander and lose the moment – it snaps them back into the present. It works well for players who get too angry after a strike-out or a poor play. It's a good teaching tool and is usually used for about three weeks, until players can get into the habit of reminding themselves without the use of a rubber band. It's simple and it's effective – both on and off the field.

SUCCESSFUL SPEAKERS SERIES

Here's a point to think about: Sometimes the best motivators are people outside of the program. Your players hear from you day-in and day-out. Sometimes advice from someone else could be taken very well. Give yourself and your players a break – bring in someone else. Here's what I do: I call it the "Successful Speakers Series."

About once a month in the fall and nearly every week in the spring, I ask someone from the community to come in and speak to our team. We do it in our squad room right at the field, many times before practice or before a game during the other team's batting practice. I tell a speaker, up front, that he or she only has 10-20 minutes to get the message across. I ask speakers to tell the team why they are successful, what works for them, and to share some life lessons that they think are important.

The list of people I've had includes LSU professors, administrators and coaches, of course. But we have had some wonderful moments with local businessmen and businesswomen, doctors, attorneys, teachers, clergymen and parents.

Now these are not professional speakers, and they are not asked to motivate the team before a game that week. They are simply asked to speak informally about feelings they may have had on the impact of the team on the community or about athletics in general. They sometimes tell a story about when they, or someone they knew, failed but stayed with it and became successful. I have a player present the speaker with a plaque or an autographed baseball in a holder to keep it on his or her desk, giving even more exposure for our team. The team does get a lot of exposure, but remember that the speaker feels honored to do this and that he or she gets a lot out of it, too. This is truly a twice-blessed situation. Successful Speakers Series. Give it a shot.

WRITTEN MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGES

Another way I get successful people to be part of our program is to gather up all of their wisdom and hand it out to our players. I have collected, through the years, volumes of quotes, short stories and bits of advice. I call these motivational sheets. Before each game, a coach or player hands out copies of a thought, quote or story I think is appropriate for the situation our teams' happened to be in at that time. The coach or player puts one in every locker, and I keep them in our squad room so the players can read and use them whenever they want. A good tip is to keep each sheet in its own cover in a binder so players can simply remove it and copy it. Over the years, I have collected hundreds and hundreds of quotes, short stories and bit of advice. I type each one in a different style and then file them under subject matter in the binder.

You have to start collecting your quotes, short stories and statements now. And not all of my players can be moved by the statement I hand out that day. It depends on timing, their needs and how they feel that day. But my goal is for each player to keep the sheets and ultimately use the information when it's best for him. Believe me, you'll be surprised at the impact this technique can have on a player.

LOU HOLTZ

Here's a true story: One day, I handed out a quote from Lou Holtz, the former Notre Dame football coach. I didn't know it at the time, but one of our pitchers was going through some very real emotional struggles in his personal life. Later he told me that simple, little statement from Lou Holtz got him through that game and that day and that it stayed with him in his personal life.

You may have some stories, demonstrations and techniques of your own. But you must make it a habit to continually search for more. You must improve your own performance every day just as your team must. Make notes, read, talk to others and develop each thought you have to its fullest.

Remember that some of your best ideas are going to come late at night or early in the morning when you just get up. Make sure you have a voice recorder or a pad and pen close by your bed. All of us have a lot of homework to do. So let's get started.

DOUG THOMPSON TESTIMONIAL

"And what's so special about the motivational sheets and things like that is that he really focuses on them. They're not just another prop to the big scene of our program. You know, they really mean something to him. And in the long run, they mean something to us and our team."

CHAPTER REVIEW

- Motivation is the fuel that enhances people's performance.
- Baseball skills, stories of ballplayers, stories about the game itself.
- General motivational videos. These are videos of all kinds of people being successful and people overcoming adversity.
- Music videos. These are videos of our players, energetic pieces which let our players see themselves on the screen.
- Educational videos. Videos like those which carry a great message such as anti-gambling or anti-tobacco or another message.
- The nickel demonstration.
- Check out any audio program about personal improvement and team building and management.
- When people hear a story, their imaginations are set off that form pictures in their minds.
- The rubber band technique when used for three weeks is a great way to help someone break a habit.
- Your team hears from you all the time. A great way to relay the message of success is through the Successful Speakers Series.
- Written motivational sheets handed out at the right time can have a huge impact on the mindset and focus of your team.

Espinosa
BASEBALL

ACCESS ANYTIME. ANYWHERE

ONLINE VIDEO COURSES

Expert instruction from **Joe Espinosa, Perry Hill, Juan Nieves, Jeff Smith and Bill Thurston.** A video toolbox for coaches of all levels.

7 DAY FREE TRIAL
ALL COURSES

Courses: Hitting, Pitching, Catching, and Infield

Courses for Coaches, Instructors, and Players of all ages and levels

Enroll Now: espinosa-baseball.com/online-courses

Soul Throwers

We All Have Problems

By Brooks Hall

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR/SOUL THROWERS



I was talking to someone about throwing, and they said, “I have to find my velo again.”

It’s not always mechanics, people. It’s rarely the mechanics. It’s usually the ability to access the amount of energy you need to be your max capacity.

You probably have stress from your life. Your girlfriend broke up with you. You’re stressed about your family. You’re stressed about school. You’re stressed about working out early. Your body is just run down, and you’re thinking your mechanics is the reason you’re six-miles-an-hour down.

In reality, it could be a little timing, but it’s probably that you’re just kind-of run down from just life.



You have to accept that, and find a way to dismantle that, and maybe use the stress to access what you want.

There’s a reason people in a game jump higher dunking on somebody than in practice. There’s a reason people throw harder in a game than in a bullpen.

Because the expectation and the ability they want to win outweighs what they can provide in a practice or bullpen setting.

Each month at *The Baseball Collegian*, we highlight insights from 14-year pro pitcher Brooks Hall found on his Soul Throwers Instagram page.

“We take our own approach when it comes to finding the path for you. We start with a full body assessment and then determine your body’s capacity. We find ways to go back to the basics and find a way to turn the brain off and just play. We have more of a holistic approach compared to the industry. Our favorite thing is to throw gas and win on the mound and mold players to do the same thing.”

“We’ve helped hundreds of players gain velocity, get rid of anxiety, create confidence they never thought they would have, look at baseball in a different lens, and much, much more. We are trying to help people gain perspective on what they are trying to accomplish. We are just helping shape real humans that want to keep playing baseball.”

- SoulThrowers.com



National College Summer Leagues

Cape Cod League
Northwoods League
Coastal Plain League
New England Collegiate Baseball League
Alaska League
Valley Baseball League
California Collegiate League
Futures League
MLB Draft League
Appalachian League
West Coast League
Texas Collegiate League
Great Lakes Summer Collegiate League
Hamptons Collegiate Baseball League
Florida Collegiate Summer League
Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League
New York Collegiate Baseball League
Southern Collegiate Baseball League
Sun Belt Baseball League
Old North State League
Pacific Empire League
Prospect League
Perfect Game League
MINK Collegiate Baseball League
Jayhawk League
Rocky Mountain Baseball League
Western Baseball Association

Massachusetts
 Minnesota/Wisc./Illinois
 North & South Carolina
 New England
 Alaska
 Virginia
 Northern/Central California
 New England
 Pennsylvania
 Tennessee/W.V./Virginia
 Oregon/Washington
 Texas
 Ohio
 New York
 Florida
 Maryland
 New York
 North Carolina
 Georgia
 North Carolina
 Northern California/Oregon
 Indiana/Illinois/Iowa
 New York
 Missouri
 Kansas
 Colorado
 Southern California

capecodleague.com
northwoodsleague.com
coastalplain.com
necbl.com
alaskabaseballleague.org
valleybaseballleague.com
calsummerball.com
thefutureleagues.com
mlbdraftleague.com
appyleague.com
westcoastleague.com
texascollegiateleague.com
glscl.org
hamptonsleague.com
floridaleague.com
calripkensrleague.org
nycblstats.com
scblbaseball.com
sunbeltbaseballleague.net
oldnorthstateleague.com
pacificempireleague.org
prospectleague.com
pgcbl.com
mhcb.com
jayhawkleague-kansas.org
rockymountainbaseballleague.com
wba1998.wixsite.com/westernbaseball

National Alliance of College Summer Baseball

While there are at least 59 college summer baseball leagues, the NACSB is an alliance of 12 non-profit summer collegiate baseball leagues that are each partially funded by Major League Baseball. Members of the NACSB provide a platform for elite college baseball players to compete at a high level. Players are bound by NCAA eligibility and are sent to each member league by their college coach.

The 12 members of the NACSB are: Cape Cod League, NECBL, ACBL, Great Lakes, California Collegiate, Hamptons, Valley League, Florida Collegiate, Cal Ripken, NY Collegiate, Southern Collegiate, and the Sun Belt.





Regional/Local College Summer Leagues

Arizona Collegiate Wood Bat League
Golden Coast Collegiate League
Bay Area Collegiate League
Pacific Coast Collegiate League
Mile High League
Connecticut Collegiate Baseball League
Collegiate League of the Palm Beaches
Florida Collegiate Summer League
Florida Gulf Coast League
Gulf Shores Collegiate League
Hangout League
Metro Collegiate Summer League of Illinois
Corn Belt League
Kansas Collegiate League
Commonwealth Collegiate Baseball League
Ban Johnson Collegiate League
KC Collegiate Baseball League
Atlantic Baseball Federation College League
Metropolitan Collegiate Baseball League
Hudson Valley Collegiate League
Atlantic Collegiate Baseball League
Blue Chip Collegiate Baseball League
Ohio Summer Collegiate Baseball League
Ohio Valley League
D-Bat Collegiate League
Cascade Collegiate League
Beach Collegiate Baseball League
Independence League Baseball Association
Metro Summer Collegiate League
CenTex Collegiate Baseball League
Mid-American League
Pacific International League

Arizona
Central California
Northern California
Southern California
Colorado
Connecticut
Florida
Florida
Florida
Florida
Florida/La.Texas/Southern Calif.
Illinois
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Missouri
Missouri
New Jersey
New Jersey
New York
New Jersey/New York
New York
Ohio
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon/Washington
South Carolina
South Dakota/Wyoming
Texas
Texas
Texas/Mississippi
Washington

azsummerball.com
goldencoastcollegiatebaseballleague.com
baclbaseball.com
pccleague.com
mhcbl.com
ctcollegebaseballleague.org
clpbaseball.com
floridaleague.com
fgclbaseball.com
gulfshorescollegiateleague.com
hangoutleague.com
metrocollegebaseball.com
cornbeltleaguecom
kclbonline.com
ccblofky.com
bjbaseball.com
kccbl.org
abccl.com
metropolitanbaseball.com
hvcbl.com
acblbaseball.org
leaguelineup.com/thebccbl
leperad.wixsite.com/ocsbl
ohiovalleyleague.com
dbatcl.com
cascadecollegiateleague.com
beachcollegiatebaseball.com
independenceleague.com
msummerleague.com
centexbaseball.wixsite.com
malbaseball.com
pilbaseball.org



2026 Cape Cod Baseball League

All-Star Game Rosters

East Starters

C	Mateo Sema	Y-D Red Sox	Alabama
1B	Tommy Goodin	Chatham Anglers	Vanderbilt
2B	Rob Rispoli	Chatham Anglers	UConn
SS	Tyler Smoliniski	Harwich Mariners	Kansas State
3B	JP Peltier	Harwich Mariners	Kentucky
OF	Bino Watters	Chatham Anglers	LSU
OF	Jay Abernathy	Brewster Whitecaps	Oklahoma
OF	Colin Larson	Harwich Mariners	Boston College
DH	Quinton Coats	Harwich Mariners	Cincinnati
LHP	Andrew Wright	Y-D Red Sox	Cal State Fullerton

East Bench

C	Jacob Lee	Brewster Whitecaps	VCU
INF	Dominic Cadiz	Orleans Firebirds	UCLA
INF	Jaime Laskofski	Brewster Whitecaps	William & Mary
INF	Nate Castellon	Harwich Mariners	Cal Poly
INF	Avery Ortiz	Y-D Red Sox	Oklahoma State
OF	Tyler Myatt	Orleans Firebirds	Tennessee
OF	Kevin Takeuchi	Y-D Red Sox	USC
OF	Jake Souders	Y-D Red Sox	Mississippi State
DH	Cash Strayer	Brewster Whitecaps	Florida
RHP	Angel Cervantes	Chatham Anglers	UCLA
RHP	Max Luzarraga	Chatham Anglers	Dallas Baptist
LHP	Casey Euper	Orleans Firebirds	Pepperdine
RHP	Peyton Rogers	Y-D Red Sox	UC Irvine
LHP	Payton Manca	Brewster Whitecaps	Florida State
RHP	Zach Kmatz	Brewster Whitecaps	Oregon State
RHP	Tate Derias	Brewster Whitecaps	Baylor
RHP	Easton Teel	Y-D Red Sox	Oral Roberts
RHP	Connor Hamilton	Y-D Red Sox	Vanderbilt

Manager: Kelly Nicholson Orleans Firebirds





West Starters

C	Andrew Costello	Bourne Braves	South Carolina
1B	Levi Clark	Wareham Gatemen	Tennessee
2B	Noah Coy	Cotuit Kettleers	Notre Dame
SS	Blake Schaaf	Bourne Braves	Wake Forest
3B	JJ Moran	Cotuit Kettleers	Stanford
OF	Luke Costello	Bourne Braves	South Carolina
OF	RJ Hamilton	Wareham Gatemen	Duke
OF	Fabio Peralta	Falmouth Commodores	Miami
DH	Austin Mallee	Falmouth Commodores	Indiana
RHP	Brady St. Pierre	Hyannis Harbor Hawks	Southeastern Louisiana

West Bench

C	Jesse DiMaggio	Cotuit Kettleers	Dallas Baptist
INF	Riley Jackson	Falmouth Commodores	Kentucky
INF	Ty Kaunus	Falmouth Commodores	Maryland
OF	Landon Beaver	Cotuit Kettleers	UAB
OF	Matt Bolton	Bourne Braves	SUNY Binghamton
OF	Ben Slanker	Falmouth Commodores	Louisville
UTL	Ruston Ridgon	Bourne Braves	Vanderbilt
UTL	Dawson Park	Cotuit Kettleers	LSU
UTL	Charlie Bates	Hyannis Harbor Hawks	Stanford
RHP	Kenyon Collins	Falmouth Commodores	Marshall
RHP	Jackson Kircher	Bourne Braves	Arkansas
RHP	Truitt Manuel	Cotuit Kettleers	North Carolina State
RHP	Ben Dean	Bourne Braves	Duke
RHP	Nick Robert	Bourne Braves	Mississippi State
RHP	Cohen Gomez	Hyannis Harbor Hawks	Stanford
RHP	Chase Van Ameyda	Cotuit Kettleers	Notre Dame
RHP	Mark Brissey	Wareham Gatemen	Arkansas
RHP	Ethan Baiotto	Wareham Gatemen	Tennessee

Manager: Scott Landers Bourne Braves

2026 Home Run Contest
Participants:

Jacob Lee	Brewster	VCU
Bub Terrell	Orleans	Auburn
Junior Laukai	Chatham	Georgia
Coen Niclai	Wareham	Oregon State
Brady Christman	Cotuit	Mississippi St.
Ben Slanker	Falmouth	Louisville

**2026 CONVENTION SESSION VIDEOS
NOW AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE**

**36 INSTRUCTIONAL
VIDEOS FOR
BASEBALL COACHES**

**25+ OUTSTANDING
PRESENTERS**

**GET PREPARED
FOR THE SEASON!**

100+ VIDEOS AVAILABLE AT BASEBALLCOACHESCLINIC.COM

Tracy Smith
University of Michigan



2026 American Legion

State Champions

Alabama	Daphane	Louisiana	Bossier City	North Dakota	Fargo
Alaska	Kenai	Maine	Sanford	Ohio	Harrison
Arizona	Oro Valley	Maryland	Funkstown	Oklahoma	Ada
Arkansas	Bryant	Massachusetts	Franklin	Oregon	Portland
California	Fairfield	Michigan	Midland	Pennsylvania	Pittston
Colorado	Fort Collins	Minnesota	Excelsior	Puerto Rico	Dorado
Connecticut	South Windsor	Mississippi	Tupelo	Rhode Island	Cumberland
Delaware	Dover	Missouri	Washington	South Carolina	Florence
Florida	Jacksonville	Montana	Missoula	South Dakota	Rapid City
Hawaii	Honlulu	Nebraska	Lincoln East	Tennessee	Columbia
Illinois	Aviston	Nevada	Reno	Texas	League City
Idaho	Lewiston	New Hampshire	Bedford	Utah	Hyrum
Indiana	Valparaiso	New Jersey	Whitehouse	Vermont	Essex
Iowa	Dubuque County	New Mexico	Alamogordo	Virginia	Chesapeake
Kansas	Pittsburg	New York	Kingston/Saugerties	Washington	Kennewick
Kentucky	Owensboro	North Carolina	Garner	West Virginia	Wheeling

Regionals

August 5-9, 2026

Region 1: Northeast

Fitton Field - Shrewsbury, Mass.

Region 2: Mid-Atlantic

Tivnan Field - Worcester, Mass.

Region 3: Southeast

Fraleigh Field - Cherryville, N.C.

Region 4: Mid-South

Sims Park - Gastonia, N.C.

Region 5: Great Lakes

Kentucky Proud Park - Lexington, Ky.

Region 6: Central Plains

BNC National Bank Field - Mandan, N.D.

Region 7: Northwest

Harry and David Field - Medford, Ore.

Region 8: Western

Laurel Creek Park - Fairfield, Calif.



World Series

August 13-18, 2026

Keeter Stadium - Shelby, N.C.

2026 MLB DRAFT COLLEGE PLAYERS



California	60	Missouri	7
Texas	46	New York	7
Florida	33	Utah	7
North Carolina	29	Nevada	6
Georgia	26	Indiana	5
Alabama	21	West Virginia	5
Virginia	20	Connecticut	2
Tennessee	17	DC	2
Louisiana	16	Iowa	2
Mississippi	16	Maryland	2
Arizona	15	Massachusetts	2
South Carolina	15	Nebraska	2
Arkansas	13	New Jersey	2
Kansas	13	New Mexico	2
Oklahoma	13	Rhode Island	2
Kentucky	12	Washington	2
Oregon	12	Wisconsin	2
Ohio	11	Delaware	1
Illinois	10	Hawaii	1
Minnesota	9	Maine	1
Pennsylvania	8	New Hampshire	1
Michigan	7	North Dakota	1
Total		486	

Total Drafted			
4-Year Colleges	474	77%	
Junior Colleges	12	2%	
High School	127	21%	

2026 MLB DRAFT HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS



California	17	Louisiana	2
Florida	17	Missouri	2
Georgia	12	New Mexico	2
Texas	8	Connecticut	1
South Carolina	6	Iowa	1
Mississippi	5	Kansas	1
Wisconsin	5	Massachusetts	1
Arizona	4	Minnesota	1
Illinois	4	Nevada	1
New Jersey	4	Ohio	1
Pennsylvania	4	Vermont	1
Alabama	3	Virginia	1
Colorado	3		
New York	3	Canada	6
Oklahoma	3	Puerto Rico	3
Tennessee	3		
Indiana	2	Total	127

Greg Maddux

The Epitome of Pitching

The Mind, Mechanics, and Mastery of Pitching

BY DUKE DICKERSON - ASST. COACH/CAPITAL UNIVERSITY

1. Overview

- Greg Maddux (MLB 1986–2008) is one of the most intelligent and efficient pitchers in baseball history. Though he never possessed overpowering velocity, his career—355 wins, 3,371 strikeouts, and a 3.16 ERA—was built on precision, anticipation, and advanced understanding of hitters and physics.
- Nicknamed “The Professor,” Maddux transformed pitching from brute competition into a form of strategic chess — every pitch designed not just to get an out, but to set up the next.

2. Philosophy: “Less Force, More Thought”

Maddux’s philosophy was grounded in control, deception, and efficiency rather than velocity. He once said: *“The key isn’t to throw harder; it’s to throw smarter.”*

Key Tenets:

- Efficiency over power: Focus on minimizing wasted energy – physically and mentally.
- Movement over speed: A well-placed, moving 86-mph fastball beats a flat 96-mph fastball.
- Perception over reaction: He aimed to make hitters see something they expected and then deliver something subtly different.
- Maddux approached pitching as an information game: the more he knew about the batter’s tendencies, body language, and reactions, the greater his advantage.

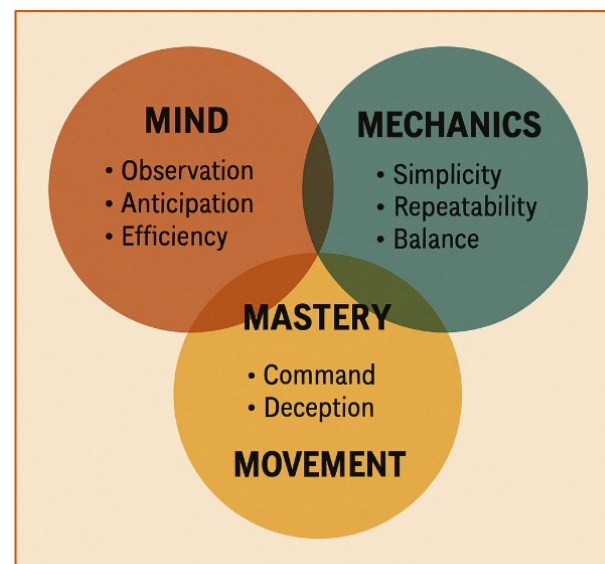
3. Strategy: The Maddux Matrix

A. Commanding the Quadrants

- Maddux divided the strike zone into four quadrants and sought to own each corner.
- His ability to paint edges—especially down and away to right-handers—forced hitters into defensive swings.
- He exploited the perception of the strike zone:
- Early in games, he’d establish one side of the plate.
- Later, he’d expand the opposite edge — hitters would chase because he’d subtly shifted their visual reference point.

B. Changing Eye Levels and Speeds

- Maddux manipulated vertical and horizontal planes masterfully:
- A sinking fastball down and away set up a rising fastball up and in.
- A slow changeup after a two-seamer caused perceived “hop” in the next fastball.
- By altering time perception (Einstein would approve), he controlled hitters’ rhythm and timing — the core of his dominance.



C. Movement Mastery

Maddux’s pitches—especially his two-seam fastball and change-up—shared identical arm action but had late, differential movement. He created “late life” by perfecting:

- Spin efficiency (seam orientation for maximum movement)
- Seam-shifted airflow (akin to a real-world Navier–Stokes effect)
- Grip pressure variance (micro-adjustments that altered movement subtly)

This wasn’t accidental; it was physics in action. He intuitively understood the Magnus effect, Bernoulli pressure differentials, and drag coefficients long before those terms became common in baseball analytics.

4. The Maddux Mindset

A. Observation

- Maddux was famous for noticing the smallest cues — a batter’s weight shift, grip change, or breathing pattern.
- He often said he could tell what pitch a hitter wanted just by how they stood in the box.

B. Anticipation

Rather than react, Maddux anticipated:

- “You don’t throw where the hitter is — you throw where he’s going to be.”
- This anticipation allowed him to pitch ahead of time — strategically controlling not just the pitch, but the hitter’s mental state.

C. Efficiency

He valued finishing games quickly — with minimal pitches and maximum precision.

- A “Maddux” (a complete game shutout in fewer than 100 pitches) is now an official term in baseball statistics — a testament to his mastery of conservation and control.

5. Mechanics: Simplicity and Repeatability

- Maddux’s delivery was compact, balanced, and easily repeatable:
- Minimal moving parts = consistent release point.
- Front-side stability = precise control over movement.
- Efficient kinetic chain = reduced stress and maximum command.
- His motion exemplified Newtonian efficiency — every action produced a controlled, proportional reaction.
- He didn’t overpower the ball; he guided it through geometry and timing.

6. The Legacy: The Scientist on the Mound

In Maddux’s Own Words:

- “The art of pitching is upsetting timing.”
- “Movement, not velocity, gets people out.”
- “You learn more from watching hitters than watching film.”

Read more about the great masters of pitching in the book “**Where Science Meets the Art of Pitching.**” Published by The Baseball Collegian, and written by former MLB pitchers Mark Leiter, Mike Butcher and Mike Butcher, along with college coaches Duke Dickerson and Jeff Marietta. Also featuring a forward by legendary pitching coach Tom House, the book can be ordered at baseballcollegian.com

7. Summary: The Maddux Equation

Pitching Mastery =

$(\text{Intelligence} \times \text{Efficiency}) + (\text{Movement} \div \text{Effort})$

Greg Maddux turned pitching into a living equation - a harmony of observation, physics, and psychology. His career proves that the ultimate weapon isn’t velocity; it’s understanding the geometry and aerodynamics of the game, and using them to outthink the opponent.

THE PORTABLE MESSAGE DEVICE
TRUSTED BY THE PROS

THEPRORELIEVER.COM

BC
The Pro Reliever

LIVING WITH TIGHT MUSCLES?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO!

RELIEF IS IN YOUR HANDS.



THE INTENT OF THE BASEBALL COLLEGIAN PITCHING PROJECT is to inform coaches and players and parents of some of the many theories on being a successful pitcher.

Most every concept has advocates with very strong opinions on either side of the argument. Too often, a theory is chosen based on popularity, conventional wisdom, or because someone famous does it that way, as opposed to one's own analysis. With so many contradicting theories, it is essential to have an understanding of all of the possible options before deciding which one to commit to.

These pitching theories are presented without judgment, without confirmation bias, with no preconceptions, and without dogma or commercialism. In turn, the strong hope is that people are inspired to do the work to make up their own mind based on as much information as possible – and in turn, do what makes most sense to them.

Last month, the discussion was about pitch calling and pitch sequencing. This month, the discussion turns to the front leg.

Q. Should your front leg be extended at release or bent?

General Belief:

• Bent or Locked out, but Firm Josh Boggs

This is not to say that the leg should land completely straight, or even that it has to straighten as the throw occurs.

There are great pitchers whose front leg is bent throughout the throw, like Roy Oswalt. There are also a lot of pitchers whose leg completely straightens into a bracing position, like Justin Verlander or Zack Greinke. Both are fine, as long as the knee doesn't go forward after foot plant. This is an extremely common reason why a lot of kids have postural issues in the middle and at the end of the motion, don't follow through effectively, and don't throw as hard as they should. It's all related to lack of stability on landing.

The second way a front leg can thwart success, is if it moves left or right on foot plant. This is more common in young pitchers, as their muscles are not fully capable of supporting as much weight as is needed for explosive pitching. To see this, it's best to watch (or video) from behind. If the knee moves inward (uncommon) or outward (more common), then the pitcher's accuracy will be very hard to maintain. Accuracy is largely about release point and there's nothing easy about consistent release point if the knee is steering the body left or right as the throw is happening. This is one of the most common factors in a youth pitcher missing left and right in the zone that I have ever found. (pitchmechanics101.com)



Photo by Ed Bailey



Other Philosophies:

• **Bent, into extended** Bill Thurston

Upon firm stride foot placement, the lead leg is flexed at the knee at about a 135 degree angle.

- As the trunk is rotated to a squared off throwing position, the lead leg starts to brace-up (extend) so there is a firm base, a firm front side to rotate up against.
- The bracing action of the lead leg stops the body from continuing to move forward, allowing the hips, trunk and shoulders to generate tremendous horizontal rotation and centrifugal forces which produce great arm and hand speed, resulting in greater velocity.
- Many young pitchers, after foot contact, allow their lead knee to stay flexed and actually continue to drift forward. This prevents good rotational forces and causes a loss of power and velocity. (The Fine Art of Pitching, by Bill Thurston)

• **Bent, into extended** Phil Rosengren

When talking about good front knee action and extension, I'm specifically talking about what you want to be happening at ball release. I am NOT advising that you should land with a stiff or locked out front knee. This would be very jarring, increasing the stress on the arm and hurting your control. You want to land flexed and firm with that front leg, and then brace up into ball release.

To help understand how this works, imagine you're riding a bicycle at full speed and suddenly slam on the front brake. What happens? The front wheel will stop and inertia will launch the back of the bike up in the air sending you over the handlebars. Well the same thing is happening in your pitching delivery. (betterpitching.com)

• **Lock Out** Graeme Lehman

This supports the data presented by Escamilla et al (1998) which reported that collegiate pitchers demonstrated knee extension just prior to maximum external rotation of the glenohumeral joint during a fastball pitch.

High velocity cricket bowlers have also been shown to exhibit similar front knee movement patterns. Wormgoor et al. (2010) demonstrated that greater front knee extension at ball release was the biomechanical factor that correlated the highest with throwing velocity. (lehmanbaseball.wordpress.com)

• **Lock Out/Claw backwards** Kyle Boddy

While back leg "drive" did NOT significantly correlate with increased ball velocity, lead leg posterior force did. This can best be viewed by the following clip of Shohei Otani from the Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) league in Japan, their version of MLB. Otani has thrown 101 MPH in a game and regularly sits mid-high 90's! Watch how the lead leg not only compresses vertically downwards, but claws backwards in a direction opposite of the throw before it rotates over due to residual momentum of the trunk and hips following through (www.drivelinebaseball.com)

• **Don't Lock Out** Chris O'Leary

I teach pitchers to firm up but not lock out the GS knee because locking it out, while it WILL give you a velocity boost, can definitely lead to hip and knee problems and maybe arm problems. (www.baseball-fever.com)

The Humboldt Crabs

The Heart of a Community

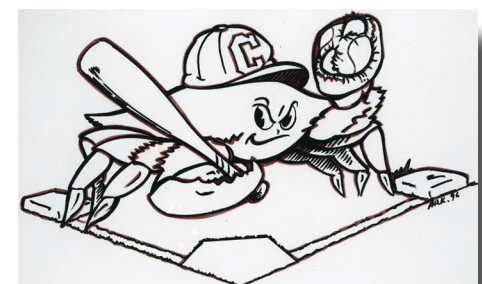
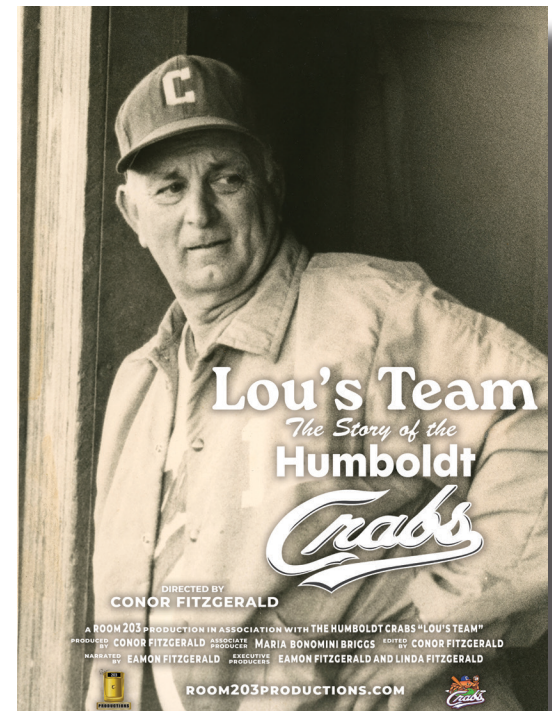
By MARK WOODWORTH
EDITOR/THE BASEBALL COLLEGIAN

There's a must watch for baseball coaches and really, all true baseball fans.

Lou's Team: The Story of the Humboldt Crabs is a 2026 documentary about a semi-pro baseball team, mostly of college players, in Arcata (and sometimes Eureka), California on the coast near the Oregon Border.

The documentary is written and directed by Conor Fitzgerald who grew up with the Humboldt Crabs as an inspirational part of his life. Along with Dean and Linda Fitzgerald, they have created a masterclass on all aspects of amateur baseball including program building, culture building, facilities, recruiting and the heart behind the baseball experience.

Lou is Lou Bonimini who founded the team and served as manager for an incredible 44 years. He partnered for many years with Ned Barsuglia who served as an ace scout/general manager. Lou and Ned and so many others are featured in the incredibly researched doc with footage and photos and interviews that chronicle all 82 years of the Crabs, from 1945 to the present.





There are many highlights, including:

- The incredible story of Jack Fimple and his journey from the Crabs to the Coast Guard to the major leagues.
- The Crab Grass Band who play passionately in the stands at home games.
- Their streak in 1985, where they won their first 47 regular season games, before falling in their last game to finish 47-1.
- The few local kids and the immense pride of growing up watching the Crabs, then getting to play for them.
- Their great tradition of winning the California title and traveling to the NBC World Series in Wichita, Kan.
- The 73 Major Leaguers who wore Humboldt Crabs uniforms, as well as legendary college coaches Augie Garrido (Cal-State Fullerton and Texas) and Mark Marquess (Stanford).
- The passion of the players, coaches and fans, summed up by a former coach:

**“You’ve got to come up here and smell it, feel it, and live it.
If you don’t know Humboldt Crabs Baseball, you’re missing out.”**

Lou’s Team: The Story of the Humboldt Crabs can be watched for free on YouTube.



All Photos courtesy of
Conor Fitzgerald
Room 203 Productions

The Baseball Collegian
424 Matson Hill Rd.
S. Glastonbury, CT 06073

THE BASEBALL COLLEGIAN

Two Ways to Look at Getting Better

"The goal is not to be perfect by the end, the goal is to be better today."
-- Simon Sinek

Getting better each day can be a healthy goal and a great way to approach life.

But our motivation behind wanting to get better is equally important and deserves some attention, because it makes all the difference. Here are two possible approaches:

Person A: You're not happy with who you are. You beat yourself up for missed opportunities in the past and desperately want to get better today because you hope you'll eventually get to a place where you'll like yourself and you'll finally be as good as (whoever you're comparing yourself to). You want to finally "fix" yourself. When you don't improve as much as you want, you go to bed upset at yourself and feeling like you've failed. That discouragement causes you to give less and less effort each day.



by Steve Gilbert

Person B: You're happy with who you are. You're not perfect. You know that you've made mistakes in the past and you'll make them in the future and you're OK with that because you continually try to learn from them. You want to improve today because it's fun to learn. It's fun to get a little better and see how much you can improve. You're not looking to get to a certain spot and you're not comparing yourself

to others because you understand you're unique and you know that you'll improve more on some days than you will others.

Today ask yourself: Which one of these two would you rather be? Which one has the better chance to succeed? Which one is going to enjoy their life more?

Win Your Day!
Steve Gilbert

Contact MLB.com writer Steve Gilbert at winyourday@gmail.com to sign up for his daily inspirational emails.

