

# Collegiate Baseball Magazine

## February 2001

### The Business of Baseball Training

*John Pinkman*

#### Good Competition, Bad Competition, New Competition

**Author's note:** *The commentaries in this year's column "The Business of Baseball Training," are my opinion. I don't expect everyone to agree. It is the result of 20 years of coaching and 10 years of study and experience as a teaching professional.*

*These articles are an attempt to create dialog, either within your staff or through me. They are by design incomplete and lacking in total concept. I'm not abrogating my responsibility in any way...I'm simply trying to evoke your responsibility as a thinker – a creator – an innovator in the educational business.*

*There are no clinics for the business aspects of baseball training. Baseball is our livelihood, not our hobby. Therefore, personal growth, continuing education is essential to our future. Communication in its purest sense is education.*

Competition is good. It fuels the game, sharpens our skills, and makes us reach for levels previously unattainable. Bad competition evolves when our opinion of our opponent dominates the game. It poisons our attitude and enjoyment of the game. We are also less likely to perform at our best.

However, there is a new type of competition emerging in baseball. Business competition. It is reasonable to take all the benefits of natural competition in the game and apply them to the training business. Oddly enough, the same pitfalls can and do occur from arrogance, jealousy and negativity.

For many years the baseball schools have had no competition. In your part of the country, your school may still be the only game in town. However, with the rapid growth of the training market, that may change, as it has in many other areas. Whether it is books, videos, teaching pros, or schools, the training business is growing and so is competition.

The benefits of a competitive model are always seen for both the supplier and consumer.

Competition challenges us to

- Operate cleaner and safer facilities
- Identify customer problems and provide solutions
- Provide professional levels of service with attention to administrative detail

For instance, schools (baseball or public education) are notorious for failure to answer phone calls in a timely manner or at all.

Competition forces us to study the art of teaching. Which is extraordinarily different from running a practice. As educators we miss the opportunity to succeed when we just regurgitate old information in a staid or stagnant manner.

Problems occur in business when you focus on making someone else lose. The new competitive values in the business of baseball should not focus on beating someone else, but rather improving yourself and recognizing and benefiting from the success of others. Unprofessional cynicism or flat out lies used to degrade your competition do not work in the business world. Trash talking in business draws integrity distinctions between you and your competition. Customers make negative judgments quicker about the people doing the talking, than the business they are trying to degrade.

Trying to put your neighbor out of business, won't necessarily increase yours. It is a complete waste of time. You have to produce. It's one skill to get a new student, quite another to keep him coming back. As always your value as a teacher is the successful results experienced by your student (in both his and his parents opinion).

Competition has brought us from the 286 PC to 1.5 Ghz. Innovative products such as wireless phones, GPS cars that talk to you and verbally give you block to block map directions, and now complete pitch charting systems on Pocket PC's. Let's join this movement and learn from and with each other. If you would like to comment on this, suggest a topic, or join the effort to create a teaching pro association, contact me at [throw@pinkmanpitching.com](mailto:throw@pinkmanpitching.com)