

Collegiate Baseball Magazine

Jan 2001

The Business of Baseball Training

John Pinkman

Starting this month in Collegiate Baseball, this column will address the issues and concerns experienced on a daily basis by Baseball Schools and Teaching Professionals. Each issue of CB will contain an article discussing and detailing information pertaining to subjects that readers have requested.

In the October issue, I wrote an article concerning how the business of baseball training has grown in the past 10 years and exploring the need for a teaching professional association. Since then I have received many letters of agreement and interest from coaches in the baseball business throughout the country.

The very old game of baseball is experiencing many new changes. As we all know the days of sandlot ball and pickup games are rare. The game and its players are reflecting those societal changes we have experienced on the job and in our homes and family. It's natural. Baseball has just ignored it longer than other sports.

Ten years ago some leagues were insulted at the suggestion that you would charge real money to teach baseball skills. Now the concept of a baseball academy is commonplace throughout the country. Amateur baseball has and will continue to grow more technically oriented in both the medical and competitive sectors. We now have answers to questions that just a few years ago didn't even exist. Today a training industry has emerged with an extremely diverse product base. From videos to computer programs to nutritional aids to psychology, we are immersed in the business of professional education.

With growth comes challenge. Many schools have closed not due to their lack of baseball skills, but from their lack of business skills. Many new teaching pros need assistance in creating new businesses. Traditional support resources available to public & private schools, volunteer organizations, recreational leagues or institutional team play do not help. They are not focused on, capable of, or intended to provide services to those coaches earning a living as a teaching professional. The very nature of running a profitable business is different from managing a team, even though the game is the same.

Here are a couple of examples. When are baseball clinics and trade shows held? They occur from December to March. If you are a team coach this makes sense. However, if you run or work at a baseball school this is the busiest time of the year. Many can't possibly afford the time (and loss of revenue) away from teaching. As a result, they miss a great opportunity.

Much of the equipment made for teams is designed to be used for only 3 to 4 months a year. A baseball school would use this same equipment 3 times as much in the same period. Baseball schools need industrial/commercial quality for safety (they are more likely & easily sued) as well as practicality and cost effectiveness.

This column will address these and other issues. What are your concerns or suggestions? Email me at throw@pinkmanpitching.com. We'll work together.