

Notes for 9/28/09 Meeting at Hammerbodies

Why are we here?

- The Gamers High school program is for players who want to play college baseball -- elite athletes, top 7% of high school baseball players
- Four parts to this: good grades, good mental approach, baseball skills AND ATHLETICISM
- As a program, we are going a very good job on the first 3 ==> but, for us to achieve our goals together, we need to get you more athletic -- bigger, faster and stronger. There are some exceptions to this. We will talk about this later.
- This is something that we have been talking about since our program started. We educate you on sports nutrition. We have a weightlifting clinic and a program developed specifically for our players by a MLB trainer. We do strength testing 2 times per year.

But it is not enough, we have too many players that are not in elite athletic condition, who do not have the core athleticism to succeed at higher levels of baseball.

Here are some facts:

- the average D1 college baseball player is **6'1" 190 lbs with 8-10% body fat**
- On average our **60 times are 0.3 seconds slower** than players that participated in the Midwest USA Baseball program. That is a big gap. We have too many players that run a >7.5 sec 60.
- Our throwing velocities in showcase drills are on average **3-4 mph below the USA Baseball participants.**
- The strength tests we just completed last week were disappointing. On average, players tested **25% lower** that the levels tested last year.

Here are the sizes and weights the players we took to USA Baseball in North Carolina with us:

For players born in 1992/93, the average size for the Midwest USA team was 6'1", 180 lbs. Our average is 6'0" 160 lbs. for players born in 1992/93.

For players born in 1994 and 1995, the average for the Midwest USA team was 5'10", 165lbs. Our average is 5'9" 150lbs for players born in 1994 and 1995.

We are 10-20 lbs short on muscle weight. And we are 0.3 seconds slower in the 60.

At elite levels, baseball requires power, speed and skill. It is not a sport for skinny guys or overweight guys. It is definitely not for slow guys.

This is not really meant to beat you up. These are just facts that together we need to address. With the right focus, we have time to fix this, to get you where you need to be athletically.

Some players in a program are doing a great job on this. If you are working out and getting bigger, faster and stronger -- that is great. The purpose of this meeting is to say congratulations, keep up the hard work and good things will happen. We want use you as role models for the rest of the players in the program.

But, with most of our players **something needs to change**. The Gamers program will help you develop the skills, mental discipline and knowledge to play baseball in college or beyond.

That's only part of the equation. You need the body too -- you need to have speed and strength to compete, or all the skill in the world will not get you there. That is a cold reality. College baseball coaches are not looking for skinny players that run a 7.5 60. If you are skinny, then you better be running a 6.5-.6.8. If you are 6'1" and 190 lbs, then you better be running a 7.0. If not, then you better throw 90, or absolutely mash the ball.

So, as a program, we need to take strength and speed training more seriously. We have decided to include our 14u players in this -- because frankly most of you are old enough now to participate in a strength program and most of you need it.

So what can we do about it?

This is something that you can change. You can hit the weight room and put your running shoes on and get on the right track. But, it is like grades. It is something that you have to do for yourself. No one can do it for you.

A couple of weeks ago, we did the nutrition clinic. This is the foundation. If you are not eating right, nothing else we say matters. If you are still skipping breakfast, and your diet consists primarily of bad carbs (if you are eating like an average teenager), then you need to fix that first. The nutritionists here at Hammerbodies can help you develop a custom nutrition plan that is built around your goals.

Nutrition is the foundation. If you are not following a nutritional plan geared for elite athletes, then you are probably wasting your time in this program.

So, now let's talk about speed and strength training.

We are introducing the following four elements for our speed and strength training

1. Setting goals. We want each of you to set three goals for your strength and speed program over the next 6 months. By March 1st, where do you want to be. Body weight. 60 time, strength, etc..

Goal sheet is available on the clubhouse section of the website.

2. Tracking activity. We have developed a monthly tracking sheet that you will be required to hand in every month to your head coach. It is a simple sheet. We just want to know how many days you are:

Cardio

Speed/Agility Work

Upper Body lifting

Lower body lifting

Throwing/Long Toss

Hitting

These are the 6 things you need to be doing to improve as a baseball player.

If you are not playing a Fall or Winter sport, we expect you to be doing something 4-5 days a week. You cannot be an elite athlete part time.

If you are playing football, soccer, basketball or wrestling, then we still want to track what you are doing.

There are two purposes here -- First, we want to know what you are doing. Second, we want to teach you how to track and be accountable for your own training.

The tracking sheets are available in the clubhouse section of the website. A reminder will be sent out at the end of each month. Email, mail, or hand in these sheets to your head coach every month.

3. Measuring Results. We have been doing limited fitness tests for high school age Gamers 2 times per year. Usually in September and November. We are expanding and enhancing the testing program. There now will be REQUIRED TESTING for all 14u and above Gamers 4 times per year. This testing is going to be done here at Hammerbodies from now on. The testing will be done by professional trainers. Is a required part of the program. We will test in November, February, May and August.

We will test in five areas:

40 yard dash

20 yard Shuttle

Squat

DB Bench

Medicine Ball Throw

Results from the testing will be used in making roster decisions at the end of each season. To get the most out of this program, you need to be athletic. For us to help you achieve your baseball goals, you need to get stronger and faster. So we are now going to build this testing into our program. And, we are adding this element to our roster selection criteria.

So, those three parts -- setting goals, tracking activity and measuring results related to strength and speed are things we are enhancing in our program.

The last part is the most challenging part.

4. The right speed and strength-training program.

Obviously, doing something is better than doing nothing. For each player there is a different answer -- depending on your goals, your time available and finances.

If your goals are to put on 10 lbs of muscle and cut your 60 time by .3 seconds, then you need a serious program to accomplish this. This kind of improvement does not just happen.

Here is the ideal situation:

Each of you has a training program developed specifically for you, to help you achieve your individual goals. Then, 3-4 days a week, you train with a professional trainer, who motivates you and makes sure you are doing things right. This is the ideal. But that would cost a whole lot of money. It definitely makes sense if you are heading towards a top round draft pick. But, for most of the players in our program it is out of reach.

So, what is the right approach?

This is our third year as a program. We can definitely tell you what does NOT work.

When we ask our players what they are doing for training, a lot of them say they are in a weightlifting class in high school and are lifting 5 days a week. Initially, we

thought this was pretty cool. But, high school weightlifting classes do not work for 95% of our players.

All we can do is look at results. **Our players have NOT had results from participating in high school weightlifting classes.**

This is for 3 reasons. high school weightlifting programs:

- are geared for "average" athletes, not elite athletes. If you are doing the same program as a second string girls volleyball players, it is probably not the right program for an elite baseball player.
- are not hard enough -- if you do not have to take a shower after training, then you are wasting your time.
- are not baseball specific exercises -- many of the lifts are football/wrestling related and are dangerous for throwing athletes. Last year we had 5-10 high school players with shoulder and back injuries due to high school weightlifting.

You have a bigger chance of getting hurt, than meeting your goals in these classes.

Our recommendation, take Spanish or another elective. Not a high school weightlifting class. Maybe there are exceptions to this. I have personally not seen one.

So, if your plan for getting stronger and faster is to take weightlifting in high school, then you are probably not going to achieve your goals. Maybe you will be different, but don't bet on it.

Second, **"working out with friends"** is a great concept. But, unless your friends are also elite athletes, motivated and committed to doing things the right way, this is a path that usually does not work in high school. This usually means that you spend two hours doing something that should take 30 minutes. So instead of lifting, running and throwing long toss. You end up just lifting for two hours. One set every five minutes is not going to get you where you need to be.

Finally, during the winter program, we have fitness training on Saturdays and then a 30-40 minute intensive program during the rep sessions. You definitely work up a sweat during these sessions. And, you definitely need a shower when you are done. But, for high school players, these two sessions are meant to be supplements to your workout regime. They are not meant to be a replacement for your workout routine.

So, if your plan for meeting your goals is to do rep sessions and Saturday workouts in the Gamers program, that is not enough. You are not going to put on 10 lbs of muscle at All-Star Performance.

That is what doesn't work. Here is what DOES work.

1. Gamers weightlifting program that you do on your own at your high school weight room or other gym. This takes a lot of self-discipline. 3-5 days per week, about 40-50 minutes per day. But, the players who do it get results. If you cannot get into your high school weight room, then find a local gym. It might cost \$25-50 per month to join. It is worth it.

The Gamers weightlifting program is available on the website. It is a 22 week offseason/pre-season program, followed by an in-season maintenance program.

This is a program that is challenging and baseball specific. But, frankly, we know that a lot of players struggle with the self discipline to do a program like this on their own. This program is not just weightlifting. There is a lot of cardio too.

This program works and it a good program. We have been pushing it for three years now. But, not enough players are doing.

2. Personal training. About 15-20% of our high school players work out with a trainer, either in group training or in one-on-one training. There are lots of training places out there. Some do a great job. Overall, most of our players have had success in these programs. This is a higher cost option. When selecting a program, consider the following:

The program needs to be challenging. You are training to become an elite athlete. Do not get into a program that is geared for average high school athletes.

The facilities need to be good. Some are facilities geared to elite athletes. Other facilities are geared to moms.

The trainers need to be in tune with elite athletes. The trainers need to understand how hard to push. Elite athletes need to be pushed harder to see improvement.

This is the best approach, but also is the most costly. For group training, you are looking at \$20 per session. For one-on-one, it is 2-3x more expensive.

You will get results. But it costs a lot.

A couple of weeks ago, we explained our dilemma to Coach Hammer. Here is what we told him:

We have a lot of high school age players that want to play college baseball and potentially beyond. But, as a group, they are behind athletically. On average, they need to put on 10-15 lbs of muscle, drop their 60 times by 0.3 seconds and throw 3-4 mph harder.

The 90 minute training session on Saturdays during the winter program is good, but is not getting our players where they need to be. It is not enough. Our players need to be training 3 days a week and year-round, not just 12 weeks during the winter.

We asked Coach Hammer if there was a way he could make his facility and trainers available to Gamers players during the week, year round at a reasonable cost.

So, the final part of the meeting tonight is to present a new training option for you, run by the folks here at Hammerbodies. We need to point out that this is not part of the Gamers program. It will be 100% run and administered by Hammerbodies. To make it work, we need at least 20 players to participate.

It is not the right option for every player But, it is a very good option for a lot of players. Coach Hammer will explain the details.