



***A STERLING REPUTATION***

# **FEBRUARY SIGNALS**

## ***Register Now for February and March Mini Camps***

Camps begin February 24 and are currently half full, so don't delay.

Pitching and Catching mini-camp registration is now underway. We invite coaches to generate 4 pitchers or 4 catchers from their teams to participate in a custom camp. Also, there is opportunity for independent or single players to enroll.

Camps are small enough to accommodate each player's need to learn. We will group age-appropriate players with your evaluation of skill level as well.

Catchers need to provide their own equipment. We can help you purchase the set if necessary. Also, leagues are very accommodating to new catchers borrowing equipment.

At this time, there are openings on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday for pitchers and on Sunday mornings for catchers.

**Call Jeff Pinkman to register.**

## **2003 Summer Camp Planning**

If you would like your league to participate with us in sponsoring a training camp, **CALL NOW**. Summer camp planning is already underway with several leagues. Last year's attendance was

higher than ever, largely due to the cooperation received from several local leagues.

As you know, our camps are educational in content and not focused on "Day Care" recreation. Our student to teacher ratio is always very low to provide for the best learning environment. We work in partnership with the local leagues to meet specific training needs.

## ***John Pinkman Speaks to Indiana Coaches Association***

400 high school coaches met in late January in Indianapolis, a -5 degree climate to hear John, Tom Runnels (Detroit Tigers), Itch Jones of the University of Illinois, and other coaches present training seminars.



*John with Tom Runnels, Director of Hitting for the Detroit Tigers, and former manager of the Montreal Expos*

John was asked to make 2 one-hour presentations on subjects he had written about in Collegiate Baseball News. The first was “The Art of Teaching in Baseball” and the second was “Baseball Movement – How to Understand and Control It”.



*John speaking to Coaches Association*

John created colorful PowerPoint presentations incorporating video clips from our new digital system. Both speeches were big successes. A good evaluation is how many coaches attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> speech. They increased 25% to room capacity at his 9:00am speech.

## **2003 American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) Convention**

The ABCA is the largest baseball coaches association. Most members are college, high school, and elite team coaches, in addition to teaching professionals. Their convention is held each year on the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend after New Years. Each year the show moves around the country region by region. Past conventions have been in Nashville and Orlando. This year it was held in San Diego and in 2004 it will be held in San Antonio.

3,500 coaches generally attend. This year there were over 300 trade show booths. The convention has several components:

- College Conference Meetings
- 2 ½ days of coach clinics
- Trade Show
- Awards Dinner and Presentation
- Association Committee Meetings
- Networking opportunity for high school and college coaches

This year John took Pat and Ruth Ann. This has been a good method for us to meet new friends and maintain relationships with old ones. We had an opportunity to spend quality time with Auggie Garrido of Texas, Bobby Moranda of Georgia Tech, Paul Mariner of Notre Dame, hitting professional Mike Epstein and Ken Ravizza, author of “Heads Up Baseball”.

Comical moments emerged when Pat would introduce his dad to a coach he had played against several times in college. The coach would say, “John Pinkman is your father? I’ve been reading his work for years, Pat, but I never made the connection.” Pat replied, “Yeah, there are SO many Pinkmans in college ball!”

John also writes the “best in show” or the top products column for Collegiate Baseball News. That issue will be early in February and a copy will be published on our website. This, by the way, is how we find so many fun training tools for use at Battery Park.

In addition to some great clinic sessions, we use this time to establish relationships for our players with college programs.

## **College Signings at Harvard and Presbyterian**

Pinkman Pitching is proud to announce the official signing of right handed pitcher Jake Bruton (Robinson H.S.) to Harvard University, and the signing of left handed Pitcher Matt Neal (Strasburg H.S.) to Presbyterian College. Both young men are enrolled in the 2003 High School Winter Workout Program and are coincidentally in the same session. Congratulations and keep up the hard work, men!

## **Mark Rueffert Brings ACC Experience to BP as a Catching Instructor**

We are pleased to announce that Herndon High graduate Mark Rueffert will be teaching catching classes at Battery Park.



Mark and our hitting instructor Greg Miller played with the famous HHS teams of the past. Mark as you would expect was All- District, Region, Met & State. He then went on to an outstanding career as a catcher at UVA. Mark is one of the few Cavaliers who routinely found a way to hit Pat Pinkman in the hotly contested UVA – VA Tech matches. Mark will also be teaching hitting at Battery Park.

After Virginia days, Mark played with the Detroit Tigers organization. He is now an assistant coach at Herndon High School and an instructor with us. Mark is an outstanding young man who loves the game and is passionate about teaching it to younger players.

### ***Rawlings* Professional Equipment Now at Battery Park**

We have entered into a trial agreement with Rawlings Baseball. Both Rawlings and Pinkman Pitching have a continued interest in developing a true Pro Shop Service Center.

Currently we have in stock 7 tan “Professional Preferred” gloves. These exceptional, top of the line gloves are handmade of calfskin.



We also carry catchers’ equipment head to toe. Many new catchers have asked us about equipment. We will have 3 complete sets to offer in different sizes and at different price levels. The latest in pro chest protectors has pocket inserts that are form fit to your actual body size.

We also carry Rawlings Pro Stock wood bats as well as batting gloves.

### **Advanced Training Software**

**...PINKMAN PITCHING discovers the newest in technology and training equipment.** The latest in vision training and video analysis programs is now for sale in the Pro Shop. The Vizual Edge CD-ROM program is utilized in the Ranger, Indian, White Sox & Brewers organizations as “weight lifting for the eyes”. It used in our High School Winter Workout Program and in private lessons. The Vizual Edge program can be purchased for \$325 from us ([vizualedge.com](http://vizualedge.com)).

Many of you who have been to our facility know how & why we use JC Video software to analyze athletic motion. JC Video now has a personal edition of its video software you can use on your home computer or laptop. With this software we can save digital imagery to a disc during your lesson or you can video at home with a digital camera. The JC Video software is \$100.

# How To Choose An “AAU Team”

*PINKMAN PITCHING* receives many questions on how to choose and participate on a independent team. So many in fact, we are posting this article on the website and in flyer format at Battery Park. There has been a predictable explosion in the independent leagues, perhaps too many.

First let us say that *PINKMAN PITCHING* strongly supports independent baseball **if** the purpose of the team is to create a learning environment and develop elite skills for dedicated, committed players who desire to play in high school or college. At a minimum, if you do not wish to play high school baseball stay in the house league.

While we believe these teams have the political independence to require a higher standard of athletic discipline, character and values - not all teams share that need. We have seen teams that are solely organized to win titles and trophies, become disillusioned and disband quickly. They do not commit to building a system and program with long-term goals.

Here are some considerations:

- The term AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) has become like “Kleenex” to tissues. Not all (and maybe most) independent teams register and play AAU competition.
- The website for independent travel teams in our area is [www.NVTBL.org](http://www.NVTBL.org) Visit that site for news and general information. The NVTBL league has made it incredibly easy to find local games and has fought tooth and nail to find fields to play on.
- NVTBL rules are different. There are no standings, trophies, titles or records kept. There is free substitution and coaches can bat the entire team throughout the game if they choose.
- Teams are generally formed in late summer or early fall.
- Most teams consist of and are created with friends or local all-star teams who want to play at a higher level of competition. That is why many do not have tryouts. They send out invitations.
- 25% of all players are not in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile. All Star status does not automatically qualify a player for elite status. There are many all-star players who can't qualify for elite playing status. Be very clear as to the actual talent standard that teams use.
- Teams need strong and enforced player/family commitments and contracts; otherwise you are just trading uniforms with the same politics and problems that plagued you in house league.
- Independent teams require total parent participation. A parent “not involved” or not participating in some way on the team is usually unacceptable. So consider your personal time commitment as well as your son's.
- Good programs have talented, informed, and compassionate coaches. Head coaches must act as CEO's not committee chairmen. Vision, drive and the pursuit of excellence are absolutely required characteristics.
- Coaching staffs should operate as do professional staffs. The Manager directs the coaches. A team should have at the very least a hitting coach, pitching and catching coach and infield/defensive coach. These coaches are teachers and instructors with substantial knowledge of current baseball training techniques.
- The task of creating an independent team requires a time commitment equal to or more demanding than a serious part time job.

- There are 2 basic types of teams. Teams that are formed for the primary purpose of developing player skills. Their budgets are a minimum of \$6000. Other teams are formed to pursue national titles. Their budgets can routinely run \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year for full time teams. Both programs are valid. Be sure however that you know which priority a team chooses.
- Teams formed to achieve competitive goals contract the best players they can find to play a specific position. That position is not guaranteed each season.
- Do not necessarily assume that just because a team is independent or competitive they are good organizers. Organized teams focus on written vision statements, team philosophies and clear rules. They first spend money on training and player development. Many now hire coaches.
- Regrettably many young age group teams are formed to showcase individual talent. This only matters for high school sophomores and juniors that want to play college ball.
- College showcase teams fall into two categories, for profit and non-profit. Good consumer practices should be followed. The best policy is to seek several referrals from last year's team parents. When and if this decision comes around to your family please call us first. Our many years of experience will surely comfort and save you a lot of unnecessary expense.
- We believe that value is what is the total experience received. The cost of participation should be related to the program delivered. You need to evaluate the total cost of participation vs. the total experience received.
- Cost is not only playing fees. Travel, hotel, and meals can easily triple participation fees.
- **We strongly believe that travel teams carry too few players on the roster.** The concept of quality participation should have a higher priority than quantity of games or innings played. Not everyone needs to play every inning. Quality competition at the elite level should outweigh quantity of innings.
- We would like to see fewer teams with more players that have the organizational and financial stability to last longer.
- Every year we give this advice. Every year coaches tell us that this will not happen in their organization. Every year in July/August it does!  
A shortage of players on the team scheduled to play 60+ games, can create physical and mental fatigue. Tired arms, shallow depth in pitching, family conflicts and vacation, boredom and the lack of a full and necessary commitment can place a team who plans to play 8 games in four days in July in a bad predicament. A team of 10 or 11 fatigued competitors on the road is not pleasant. College teams who play 50-60 game schedules have 25-30 in-shape athletes.
- Be very careful – you may play TOO much. Most players 10-11 years old have no concept of the physical stamina and conditioning that is required to play at the elite level. Combining house and travel team schedules can be dangerous to a child's health.
- Many towns are creating Sunday leagues. **Be careful. Pitchers' throwing schedules should not be based on the ability to play in two different leagues with different rules for innings pitched.** The pitchers total weekly pitch count, rest and between game strength conditioning and training should be the sole considerations for pitching appearances.