

## DRHS Hitter's Guide

### **What you should be doing while the pitcher is in their windup?**

**(Almost every hitter does this wrong...including me when I was hitting .190)**

When I was hitting .190 in my first professional season I was thinking about all the wrong things while I was in the batters box. I was worried about what pitch the guy was going to throw, in what count, and sometimes just not even mentally focused on anything. I went up to the plate without a plan. **WITHOUT A BASE & WITHOUT TOTAL PREPARATION.** Operating like this, as I have learned, leads to failure. So what were the things I changed to go from hitting .190 to .340 in just a year? It started with developing a plan.

This is exactly what a hitter needs to be focused on when they are in the box so they can make hitting as simple as possible... Just see it and hit it! When the pitcher is in their windup or stretch you should be looking for a focus point. You should be looking for a specific spot; some call it a window that the ball is coming from based on that pitcher's release point. When you know where that window is, then you need to pick a spot on the pitchers body that is close to this window and focus on it.

Lock in onto the spot on the pitchers body. When the pitcher releases the ball from his specific window, then your eyes will immediately lock onto the ball, giving you an extra 8 feet to track the ball! Instead of picking up the ball when it is half way or three quarters of the way to the plate, you can now see it right out of the pitchers hand! Sounds simple, right? Well, if this helps that much then why doesn't everyone do it? They don't know about it, and if they do, they do not have the mental discipline to put it into use every at bat.

This is something that you have to make a conscious effort to make it a part of your game. Start with this in batting practice. Pick a spot on the "L" frame right next to where the window is for your batting practice picture so your eyes can become trained to unconsciously perform this activity.

## **Mental Strategies to Take you to the Next Level**

- Go to your happy place on deck,
- Focus point (staring at your bat),
- Why 3 of 10 is better than 10 out of 10 in baseball
- How to Slow the Game Down
- How to Get Your Pitch Every Single Time!

## **Happy Place on Deck**

Bobby Jones, one of the greatest golfers of all time, has a famous quote about the game of golf that is truly applicable to the game of baseball. "Competitive golf is played mainly on a five-and-a-half-inch course, the space between your ears."

This quote states that the outcome of a round of golf significantly depends on your mental abilities and mental toughness. Baseball shares this same trait. I know when I am playing golf, if I have any doubt in my mind before or during my address to the ball, I might as well just take it on to the clubhouse because I will be spending the next three hours looking for the ball I just hit into the woods. That being said, I have a routine that I do every single time I am on deck. This exercise removes any doubt, fear, or anxiety I may be feeling at that specific moment in time. Sources of negativity may come from maybe poor performance, lack of energy, your mom is in the stands, your manager or coach is putting pressure on you and many, many more. This exercise is guaranteed to bring you back to focus on what matters, and that is your upcoming at bat.

The very moment I leave the dugout I go to what I like to call my happy place. No, my happy place is not like Happy Gilmore's. For those of you who haven't seen Happy Gilmore, several times throughout the movie he uses a visualization technique before he performs important shots in order to calm himself down. That is exactly what I do, but my happy place isn't my grandmother playing slot machines riding and girlfriend lying by the pool tanning. Keep your happy place connected to the game of baseball. My happy place is at Whataburger Stadium in Corpus

Christi, Texas. That may seem like a weird place to have a “happy place.” This is the setting for my “happy place” because this is the location where I hit the hardest ball of my entire life. I’m talking about that one ball where you couldn’t even feel the ball hitting the barrel because it felt so good. It’s that sensation where you know you absolutely just dominated that baseball and sent that pitcher crying to his mommy. It’s that split second after you absolutely mash the ball, when you know you have won. It’s the thing that keeps you coming back. It’s the swing that rationalizes the irrationality of baseball. I still remember everything vividly.

Wearing our home white Mississippi State Jerseys I dug in the box. It was a 3- 1 Count against a left-handed pitcher from Texas A&M Corpus Christi. The Islanders wore their grey and blue away jerseys. The score was 2-1 in the bottom of the 8<sup>th</sup> with no one on base and two outs. The southpaw went into his wind up and when he released the ball I knew it was the pitch I wanted, belt high and out over the plate. This was the pitch I dream about. 89 mph, flat, and from a lefty! Juicy!!!! Clinching my 34 inch 31 ounce blue and white Easton stealth, I lifted my leg off the ground to initiate my swing. I tracked the ball, and when my front foot engaged the ground my hips exploded with my hands lagging behind. I released the barrel and absolutely demolished this ball. It may have been flattened.

For that 3 or 4 seconds when I watched the ball soar over the hitters eye in dead center, I had the best feeling in the world. Absolutely crushed. That feeling you get when you absolutely smash a ball, that adrenaline rush, confidence, swagger. Like you are on top of the world. That is the specific moment in time I go back to every time I go up to the plate to give me adrenaline, confidence and swagger before every at bat. This is an instant pick me up for your game and something you need to start doing right now if you want to compete at the highest level and get the most out of your abilities.

### **Concentration Point – Staring At a Specific on Your Bat**

This technique I use is called my concentration point strategy. After I go through my “happy place” technique on deck it is time to get mentally

prepared to use my approach so I can hit lasers all over the field. Before every pitch of the at bat I step out to take signs, but before I get back in the box I find a spot on my bat that I can stare at, such as the logo, the pine tar or a specific letter on the bat. When I used metal bats, I always used Easton. I would always find between the "S" and the "T" on the bat because that is where I wanted to strike the ball with my bat. While you are staring at this specific point, you are rezoning in on your approach and what you want to accomplish that at bat. Your mind can wonder, just like Crash Davis in Bull Durham. There is a scene in that movie when Crash is in the batters box and he is battling himself to keep thinking about the game and not a girl in the stands. The idea is your mind can and will wonder during games, and this exercise is the best way to refocus on your at bat.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> mental trick I use is called my "3 of 10" strategy. It is a pretty simple, but affective concept. I look at baseball very similar to golf because of the amount of precision the game requires. In order to be as precise as you possibly can you have to always be under control, especially in the batters box. Whenever I feel my self getting too "amped up" (Excited, angry, wanting to run around the bases before I even swing the bat) during an at bat, I call time and step out of the box. This over excitement can come from many different sources. Internal pressure of wanting to succeed, or succeed for the team or an external reason (pitcher threw at me, tie game bottom of the 9<sup>th</sup>, etc) I tell myself to take a deep breath and put my adrenaline at a 3 out of 10. A 10 out of 10 adrenaline level would be running out of the tunnel at Michigan stadium before the Ohio State game in front of 114,000 passionate fans. 0 out of 10 would be lying on the couch eating potato chips. A 3 out of 10 means you should have the same adrenaline level as if you are riding a bike through central park in New York.

## **How to Slow the Game Down**

What do I mean by slowing the game down? What I am talking about here is anytime during an at bat or even during the game for that matter when you do not feel like you are in complete control of the situation. This happens during at bats, out in the field, or even in the dugout. One of the biggest differences between each level of baseball, little league to

high school, high school to college, college to pro, and minor leagues to major leagues is the speed of the game. The speed of the game at each level is much higher than the level before. This can cause confusion, frustration, failure and ultimately can cause some kids to give up the game simply because they do not understand what is happening and how to slow the game down to make it feel like they are playing a pick up game with their friends in the backyard. When the speed of the game is too fast it can leave you with feelings of anxiety, confusion and you can feel like you are lost out on the field. When you recognize this situation happening I want you do to exactly what I do, and it may seem too simple to be true. When I find myself in these situations, I pause, take a deep breath, and repeat the number “one” over and over in my head to myself. Research has shown that if you repeat the word “one” over and over in your head it will decrease your heart rate and blood pressure levels. When I am repeating the word “one” over and over in my head it allows me to calm down, get my bearings, and get back to playing the game I love at a high level.

## **How to Get Your Pitch Every Single Time!**

The way to get your pitch every single time involves having good plate discipline and a good approach. Every single time you come up to the plate you need to be ready to take your best swing, and be on time with the fastball. Why the fastball? The fastball is the pitch that a pitcher is going to try to get ahead of you with, and you are guaranteed to get one every single at bat. There are times maybe when a pitcher may throw you only off-speed pitches, but chances are he will not throw 3 unhittable breaking balls for strikes. He may throw one off-speed pitch for a strike, and then you are frustrated and chase two balls in the dirt to strike out. I've been there, tried it, and had the same result. It just doesn't make any sense to try to hit the pitchers best pitch. You want to hit the pitch that you have the highest likelihood of getting a hit off of, and that is the fastball.

One of the biggest adjustments I had to make when I got to professional baseball was to hit off the fastball because I had been used to college and high school where guys would get me to chase breaking balls out of the zone, and because my plate discipline was not the best at that point

in my career, I lost a lot of at bats that way. If I could go back in time, I would take every single breaking ball with less than 2 strikes. Every single time if you have enough discipline to take a first pitch breaking ball for a ball, the pitcher is behind and he will more likely than not throw a fastball in the zone. If you swing at that pitch, it is 0-1 and he has the advantage. Even if he does throw a first pitch breaking ball for a strike, you have gained a lot of information from that take. You know the speed, you know how it comes out of his hand, you know the path that it breaks on, and you can use all of this information for either later in that at bat or another at bat when you have 2 strikes so that you do not chase a breaking ball out of the zone. So, by having good plate discipline, and working off the fastball, ready to hit every single pitch, you will be able to get your pitch every single at bat.

### **How to Become a Better Hitter While Going to Sleep**

One of the best ways to become a better hitter off the field is before you go to bed at night, lying comfortably on your pillow. Instead of counting sheep 100 times, I want you to take 100 full, deep breaths and during each breath I want you to visualize what it feels like to square a baseball up as hard as you can. In your mind say "I hit the ball hard," each of the 100 breaths. Every night, for 365 days out of the year, that is 36,500 times you will be giving yourself positive confidence about your baseball ability. This will help you become a better hitter and get a better understanding of the "Power of visualization".

### **Quality over Quantity**

What is a good total number of swings to take during a batting practice session? The answer lies in the fact that what truly matters is quality swings over quantity swings.

You can take 500 swings in a day, and that's great you are committed to working that hard, however what you have most likely accomplished is the creation of a lot of bad habits instead of a great swing.

It is much more productive to take 50 quality swings, with maybe only 5 to 10 below average swings as opposed to taking 150 swings and increasing the below average swings to around 50 or so.

Baseball is a building block game. You build one day upon another upon another upon another. You can't just go out there and take 1,000 swings in a day and expect to be in the show the next. It's an every single day thing.

## **Why Showcase Baseball is Bad For Your Swing**

The scouts are in the stands, the wind is blowing out, and there are brand new shiny white pearls in the bp basket. It is time to LAUNCH!

That was always my approach during batting practice at showcases, and it should be yours too if power is your specialty. Scouts are looking for tools at the showcases, and usually don't care how good you are at the game of baseball. So while you are at the showcases, crush the ball, throw hard, run fast, and play sick defense.... But once you leave the showcase....**Leave that style of baseball at the showcase!**

Showcase baseball will not help you become a better player and be in the line-up every single day. If the game rolls around and you go 0-4 with 2k's and 2 fly outs, your leash will be short, no matter how far you can hit the ball in batting practice. Do not let your showcase approach interfere with your regular baseball approach.

## **Working on One Specific Mechanic at a time**

If you are working on one thing specifically, don't worry about the result of the swing. Worry about whether or not you achieved your goal for that swing.

So, for example if you are working on keeping your back elbow loose, and the result of the swing is a roll over ground ball, you should not view this as a failed swing as long as you achieved your goal of having a loose elbow.

Limit the total number of these types of swings so that you prevent building bad habits.

## Batting Practice Approach

Fly balls are the easiest way to make an out in baseball... so why would you practice hitting them?

(The exception would be during situational rounds of batting practice.)

Oh, you want to hit a home run on every single swing of batting practice? That will really let everyone know how good you are. Dumb, dumb, dumb, dumb, dumb

Hitting high, lazy fly balls during batting practice will develop a long, loopy swing with minimal bat control. Fly balls don't win. This type of swing does not transfer over to games, especially at higher levels.

**So what does transfer over? Short, explosive, clean swings transfer over.** If your goal is to have a short, explosive, clean swing, you need to hit hard line drives with a middle of the field approach during BP.

I'm not talking about lazy line drives. I'm talking about line drives that explode off the barrel of the bat. The kind of line drive that would blast a hole straight through a fence.

This summer I had the pleasure of watching one of the most freak athletes in the MLB take batting practice... Josh Hamilton.

Because of the intense buzz I'd heard about Josh Hamilton's batting practice, I was going to be shocked if any baseballs would actually stay in the stadium, let alone the field of play.

During the first round Hamilton was hitting crisp line drives to shortstop and centerfield. Most of them were head high, exploding off the bat.

"He must be warming up," I thought to myself. The next round was the exact same thing. It wasn't until his last round did Hamilton drive any balls out of the park... and when he did they were from gap to gap, with the exception of one ball that he just massacred down the line.

Now, I am sure that Hamilton does have his days where he just hits titanic blast after titanic blast... but the thing is that he does



have *that* much power so he can launch baseballs into the upper deck at will. **If you don't have Josh Hamilton power, stick with hitting line drives to the middle of the field.**

The main thing I took away from watching his batting practice is that he had a very well defined plan for what he was doing. When Hamilton hit a home run it was because he was trying to hit a line drive gap to gap and it happened to carry out. He wasn't separating and lifting every ball as far as he could. **He uses his batting practice to get better and work on his swing, not fill his ego up with helium from hitting meaningless home runs in batting practice.**

Check your ego at the door. Have a plan. Have a purpose.

The best hitters in the world do, so shouldn't you?

## **Staying Out of a Slump**

If Robinson Cano can go 0 for 26, so can you. I hate to break it to you but slumps are just part of baseball.

There are two types of slumps, the good slump and the bad slump. I call it the good slump because it's the stretch of at bats when you are hitting everything on the screws, with nothing to show for it.

Then there is the other kind of slump....

Its like you just woke up one day and someone placed an evil spell on you. You can't hit the barrel of the bat, you begin to subconsciously lose a little confidence, and then before you know it you have absolutely no idea how to swing a baseball bat.

There is a famous quote about life, "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% of how you react to it."

This quote is so true when it comes to slumping. The primary factor in the length of your slump is how you react to it. The more anxious,

fearful, or lost you become, the longer you will stay in that slump.

There are stages of a slump.

The first stage is usually during a 2 to 3 game stretch which I call the denial phase. Even though deep down you know you haven't come within 3 feet of actually hitting the baseball, you convince yourself that you are completely fine and chances are that you are actually fine. You are probably just trying to hit a grand slam with no one on base.

Slumps are mentally subconscious. You don't know that you have lost your confidence, but based on your actions at the plate it certainly appears that way.

And yes, sometimes you end up in a slump because of a physical mechanical problem you may be having. I have found that more often than not, mechanical issues can be largely connected to your approach at the plate (which can be dramatically influenced when you have been scuffling).

This is the stage where action is necessary. If no action is taken, then you will spring into stage 2.

The second stage is when you decide that your whole entire swing should be rebuilt because you feel *THAT* awful at the plate... this is usually decided by yourself when you are tossing and turning in bed at night **thinking** about what in the heck is going on.. As Crash said, "You just got lesson number one: Don't think; it can only hurt the ball club."

I'm not talking about making minor adjustments. I am talking tear down and rebuild.

Stage 2 creates paralysis by analysis. Its what causes you to take two fastballs right down the middle, then chase the slider in the dirt.

Stage 3 eventually shows its face when you are so defeated that you almost stop caring. It's the mental point where you just say, "screw it, I'm just going to go play. I don't care if I get a hit today or not. I'm just going to play."

During stage 3 is you will fist a pop fly into short center that lands right in front of a diving center fielder. A Hit! Finally! The next at bat you square a ball up, your confidence returns like it had never left, and the slump is history.

I look at the whole scenario like a wildfire. Every single year there are going to be some wildfires somewhere in our country just like there will be slumps in baseball. If we don't contain these wildfires(slumps), they will grow so quickly that they will destroy everything in their path in the snap of a finger.

Stage 1 is a wildfire. They are going to happen, but if we catch it in time and contain it, then there are not many lasting problems. There are going to be stretches of 2 or 3 games where you don't get any hits.

Stage 2 is where the wildfire(slump) can get out of control. I look at all of the thinking, tearing our swing apart, and anxiety as gasoline to the fire. The more we part take in those things, the bigger and more uncontrollable the fire is going to get.

So, how do you avoid stage 2?

There is the obvious; don't get to stage one and just get a hit in every single game. Duh.

For the rest of us who are human, you have to take action during step one.

The main reason we get to step two, is because **we feel like we feel like we need to do something to get out of this hole we are in.** The problem is that the majority of the actions we take only makes our slump worse. (taking too many extra swings which end up creating bat habits, worrying about our swing mechanics, etc)

Instead of sitting there for hours after the game thinking about how your backside is collapsing, your hands aren't getting to where they need to be, or that you are breathing out of the wrong eyelid, do this instead...

## **Get Away Mentally**

After you have a bad game, you need to figure out something to do mentally get away from baseball for the rest of the day. Read a book, play call of duty, or whatever it is that your outlet might be. Just get away. Sitting there for hours building up anger and anxiety because you missed a 2-0 fastball right down the middle will not help you in your next game. I promise you. Been there, tried that. It is a great way to reset yourself.

There are a few other preventative steps you can take to avoid the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of a slump.

## **Have a routine**

Another preventative action you can take is to have a routine you do exactly the same every single day. this will prevent you from feeling lost when things start to go wrong. It gives you a base of confidence every single day... and yes, I know the definition of insanity(paraphrased as how can you expect different results when you do the exact same thing) so if you feel there is a drill you can place into your daily routine to spice it up and change things, go right ahead... but it needs to be added to your base routine.

## **Know Your Swing**

Yes, that means you are going to have to put in a lot of time when no one is watching or telling you what to do. Its important that you know your swing better than someone else because your coach cannot hold your hand while you are in the batters box. When you know your swing like the back of your hand, panic doesn't set in after a couple of bad games.

## **Remind Yourself that You Can Rake**

Whenever doubt creeps into your mind, squash it with positive thoughts. Whether you are sitting in class, on the bus, at home, wherever. If the image of you taking a fastball , right down the middle for strike three flashes into your memory bank, I want you to

immediately think about how it feels when you absolutely lace a line drive up the middle. Eliminate the doubt, and build your confidence back up.

Mental exercises can often impact your game more than physical exercises especially during a slump.

While I cannot promise you that just by reading this e-mail and making these adjustments to your game that you are never going to have a slump again, it is important to understand the nature of slumps and why they happen. The more familiar you are with the warning signs and stages, the easier it will be to recognize them and minimize their damage.

## **We Always Want More**

Focus on what is next

No matter what happens, positive or negative, forget about it and move onto what is next. What's done is done. Focus on sticking to your approach for your next at bat.

One of the most important aspects of playing baseball is having a short, amnesia like memory.

We all know why you would want to forget about a negative at bat, but why would you want to forget your last when you crushed an extra base hit to the gap?

Because human nature comes into play, and as you are standing on second base this little thought pops into your head, "man if I had just hit that ball a *little* harder, it would have been a homer!" We always want more.

Part of playing sports is to never be satisfied, and that thought process is okay as long as you punt that thought out of your head the moment you take your lead at second base.

If you don't punt that thought, you are going to get sacked your next at bat. (attempt at a football metaphor ha!)

When you walk up to the plate thinking about putting that little extra oooooomf into your swing, you are doomed. Usually when I do that I am holding half a piece of lumber in my hand watching the barrel fly through the infield. Big swings don't get you anywhere. I guarantee you weren't thinking about adding a little extra anything to that ball you smashed into the gap.

Separate your at bats and stick with your approach each and every single time you step into the box. The game will reward you for your focus.

### **Where bat speed actually comes from (it's not even close to what you think)**

So, throughout college I was always a student of the game. I would go to any extreme to get better (as should you). I was never big with working out until I came home for Winter Break and my entire perspective changed. My first year of professional baseball I was fortunate enough to work out with one of the world's top sports performance trainers (Jack Cascio) and not only did he help me become a more explosive hitter, but he motivated me to work out more.

His theory is, "it's not about working hard, it's about working smart", and that's what we did. Instead of working out until I puked and couldn't like most coaches force their athletes to do, we would do interval training where I would have to go hard for 5-8 seconds, and then a break.

Baseball is the most anaerobic sport there is, meaning: your heart rate isn't constantly high like it is in basketball, soccer, etc...You can actually play baseball while holding your breathe. Next to golf, it is arguably the easiest on your respiratory system. That said, I based a lot of my training off off game like situations. When it came to bat speed, I always thought it was just a combination of leg strength, and forearm strength. Within five minutes of working out with my new trainer I had an entirely new perspective on where power comes from.

He ran me through a muscle deficiency test where he tested me from head to toe to figure out my strengths and weaknesses. I am embarrassed to say this, but I was in TERRIBLE hitting shape!! In the weight room I always stood out as one of the stronger and more athletic kids, but Jack scientifically broke me down and assured me I would create more power in my swing from a few simple changes.

Our main focus in our training was:

- Creating an “explosive” core rather than going for that 6-pack.
- Increasing the strength and flexibility in my hips.
- Overloading/Underloading my swings (swing with resistance/swing a

lighter bat)

Having a 6-pack does you absolutely nothing...well it may get you some girls, which is great! But Homeruns will get you more girls!! You need to be doing exercises that create a balanced and explosive upper body so you can generate insane amounts of power.

Increasing the strength in my hips was one of the things I had never heard of up until this point. I couldn't believe the power change in my swing when I started to get strong/flexible hip flexors. Everything in my swing started to fall into place and I have been addicted to increasing my hip performance ever since.

When I say overloading and underloading your swing, all it requires is a heavier bat 16-32 ounces heavier, and a lighter bat, 6-16 ounces lighter. I wouldn't suggest anything heavier or lighter.

#### **O/U Training Workout:**

1. Take 8 swings with your heavy bat: Rest for 30-60 seconds.
2. Take 8 swings with your light bat: Rest for 30-60 seconds.
3. Take 8 swings with your regular bat: Rest for 30-60 seconds.

**\*\*Repeat this for 5 sets so a total of 120 swings.\*\***

I did this exact O/U warm-up RIGHT BEFORE I won the NCAA Home Run Derby!! Trust me, you will notice an INSTANT increase your power/bat speed. When I did this warm-up I obviously didn't do 120 swings.

I went through each phase for 5 swings each, and only did 2 sets. So a total of 30 swings.

My trainer would be able to explain the science behind this more than I can but here's the objective:

#### **The Heavy Bat (Overloading):**

Increases your muscular strength used for the exact movement of your swing. But if you **ONLY** do heavy bat swings you will actually make your bat speed slower due to “muscle memory”. Your body is so smart that it will actually remember the speed at which you could get your “heavy bat” through the zone and because of that, your mechanics will slow down.

### **The Lighter Bat (Underloading):**

The lighter bat actually teaches your body to move at a higher rate of speed. Now that your muscles are warmed up from the heavy bat you can let loose with the light bat. Like I stated above, your muscle memory plays a role because it remembers the speed at which you are swinging. Your bat speed will naturally be faster with a lighter bat making it a perfect time to grab your real beat...Now just get up to the plate and **RAKE!!**

### **Write Your Own Name in the Line Up**

This is one of my favorite quotes, "Champions are made when nobody is watching."

The main idea I take from this quote is that if you truly want to be great at whatever it is you are doing, you have to put in extra work with the right intentions... to get better.

You don't only go and hit extra when the guy who makes the line-up is throwing extra BP. You don't skip weight lifting the day that your Coach has a family emergency and can't take you through your lift. If **you** want something, **you** are going to have to go out and get it.

What should you do when no one is watching?

You go and hit extra even if it is just you, the tee, and the ball at 6 o'clock at night, after school, in an empty cage when all of your friends are at home playing video games.

You work hard because you want to be the best player that you can possibly be, not because you want to please your coach.

If you have concerns about being in the line-up during the spring, put in



the extra work starting today to **force your coach to put you in the line up.**

Say whatttt? You can't make your coach put you in the line up!?!?

During my last 2 years at Mississippi State, we had a new coach(who is still there and just won the SEC Tourney last year, and doing a great job with the program I might add.)

Everyone was constantly worried about being treated unfairly... At the end of the day, he wanted his own guys(recruits) and I can't blame him. I probably would too if I were taking over a college program.

Players were worried about losing their spot... "oh, hes a new coach, he just wants his own guys. I don't have a chance" He used to call scenarios like this TOB or Transfer of Blame.

In this case, the players were blaming the coach because they didn't want to put in the extra work.**(this only applies to a few of my former teammates, not all. We busted our tails.)**

The only ones treating anyone unfairly were the players treating themselves unfairly. Blaming the situation and saying, "Coach is screwing me over. I earned that spot before he got here!"

Instead of saying something like this, "oh, who's that new guy in the dugout this year? I don't really care who is in there to be honest. I am just going to keep working my tail off, getting better, and competing. His name is Cohen? Oh Neat... well he better make sure he knows how to spell my name right because he's going to be writing it in the starting line up every single day during the spring."

**He didn't put me in the 3 or 4 hole every single game because he liked my personality or thought I was a good kid....** He put me there because he knew I was going to get in there, compete, and give us a better chance to win the game than someone else on the bench.

Cohen always reminded us that **we were the ones writing the line-up**, not him. He wrote the line-up based on what he saw during competition.

## **Pain of Regret vs Hard Work**

The pain of regret vs the pain of hard work... which one is worse? I could turn this into a 3 thousand word essay, but I'm not going to. I'm just going to ask you one simple question... which one lasts longer?

Sore quads and blisters on your fingers only last a few days, while regret lasts a lifetime.

Do you want to be the guy looking back in 20 years saying, "I know I did everything I could to become the best player possible,"

or the guy who says, "if I had only...

taken that extra round of bp with quality swings, fielded 10 more ground balls a day, spent a little extra time at the field working on my game instead of playing call of duty....

Man I wonder what I could have been." Regret will continue to eat at you until you leave this world, but the pain of hard work is only temporary. It's your choice.

Who do you want to be?