



## **SPRING 2015**

### Clinicians

Todd Armstrong (15U Coach) – [toddandtam@comcast.net](mailto:toddandtam@comcast.net)

Greg VanMeter (Board President) – [gbvanmeter@comcast.net](mailto:gbvanmeter@comcast.net)

Mark Delagarza (Program Founder) – [delagarza0185@gmail.com](mailto:delagarza0185@gmail.com)

Kelby Weybright (13U Coach) – [Kelby.veybright@nwcs.k12.in.us](mailto:Kelby.veybright@nwcs.k12.in.us)

### Agenda

Introductions

Hitting / Fielding and / or Pitching

Q and A

## ***Sluggers Baseball*** **Mechanics of Hitting**

There are only 5 parts, or movements involved in hitting a baseball. They are:

Stance

Stride

Slam the Hip

Swing (Hands Follow)

Stay Through It

### **THE FIVE S's**

In the following outline, each one of these areas is broken down and explained. This material is intended to be both a teaching tool, and a reference for all of our players.

#### **I. Stance**

##### **A. General Guidelines**

1. Feet slightly wider than shoulder width in an athletic position.
2. Ideally the bat will be angled at a 45 degree angle. Avoid standing with the bat straight up and down, or hanging the barrel below the shoulders.
3. Weight is distributed 60/40 in favor of the back side.
4. Eyes should be parallel to the ground, and both should be able to see the baseball.
5. The back foot should be perpendicular to the plate.

#### **II. Stride**

##### **A. When the pitcher shows the L in the arm, the hitter begins his load by going back.**

1. Move the front knee to the back knee, imagining that you have a basketball between your knees.
2. When the stride occurs, hands go back – Separation (Similar to a Bow and Arrow)

##### **B. Stride To Swing**

1. The only thing that goes forward is the front foot. Be sure to keep your hands and weight back until you begin your swing. The easiest way to stay back is to land on the ball of your front foot, and think of it as a wedge. Stride as if you are stepping on thin ice.
2. The shorter the stride, the easier to stay back

##### **C. During the stride, stay closed with the front side**

1. Front shoulder, knee, and foot will all be in a straight line

#### **III. Slam the Back Hip**

##### **A. Without doubt, this is the most important part of hitting a baseball.**

##### **B. Key is to activate the back hip in order to cause a pivot (Belly Button and Back Foot and Knee will follow the hip.)**

##### **C. How much you pivot depends upon the location of the pitch**

1. Outer Half – 75 Degrees
2. Middle Half – 90 Degrees
3. Inner Half – 110 Degrees

Note: As the conclusion of your swing, your back foot will be pointing in the same direction as the ball that you have just hit. For example, when a RH hitter hits a ball to RF his back foot should also be pointing toward RF.

##### **D. As you slam the hip, the hand follow this path therefore starting your swing.**

#### IV. Swing

- A. Imagine the knob of the bat as a flashlight. In beginning your swing, show the flashlight to the ball (Barrel will go below the hands at the point of contact.) Hit through the bottom of the baseball. Doing so will create backspin, making the ball carry
  - 1. As you swing, keep your weight on your back side -- allow your hip turn to create power.
- B. Where you hit the ball will depend upon its location
  - 1. Inside Pitch -- 6 inches off of your front foot
  - 2. Middle Pitch -- Off of the front foot
  - 3. Outer Half -- Off of your navel
- C. At point of contact, the palm of your bottom hand will face the sky
- E. Keep the body upright throughout the swing
  - 1. Imagine a pole going through your head and exiting your rear end
  - 2. If weight stays back, your front leg will end up in a straight line at the end of your swing.

#### V. Stay Through It

- A. Keep the barrel in the strike zone and on the ball's plane for as long as possible.
  - 1. Outer Half -- Hands Behind the Barrel
  - 2. Middle Half -- Hands Even with the Barrel
  - 3. Inner Half -- Barrel in front of the plate
- B. As you stay through it, make sure that the top hand is palm up for as long as possible.

#### DRILLS

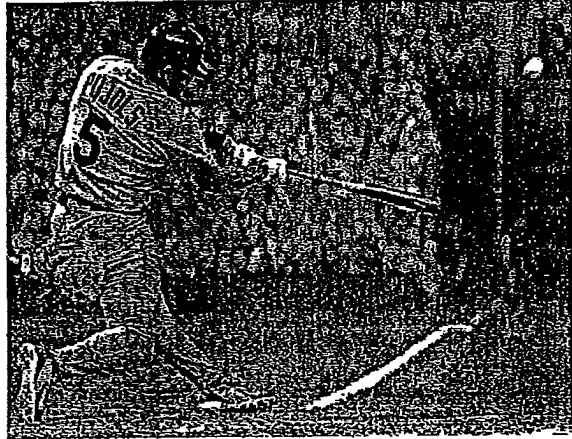
1. Stance and Stride (Incorporates ALL of your mechanics. Also fosters listening and focus.)
2. Balance Beam
3. T Work
4. On Knee Tee
5. Rice Bucket or Rolling a Weight
6. Frisbee
7. Zip Line
8. Mini Golf Balls or Clown Balls
9. 45 degree flip
10. Off Center Flip -- Underhand or Staple?
11. Straight Flip -- Underhand or Staple
12. Dots on Ball Flip - Vision
13. Overhand BP
14. Dead Field BP
15. When Struggling -- BUNT!

**SLOW DOWN! LIMITED REPS -- 8-10 MAX!**

Questions?

Common Items -- Choosing a bat, The best pitching machines,

**Albert Pujols**



**Alex Rodriguez**



**Tony Gwynn**



**Manny Ramirez**



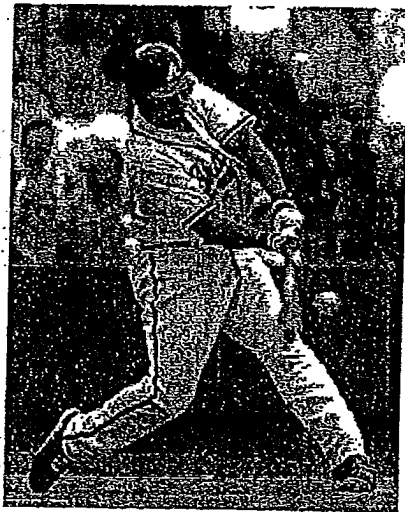
**Alfonso Soriano**



**George Brett**



**Andruw Jones**



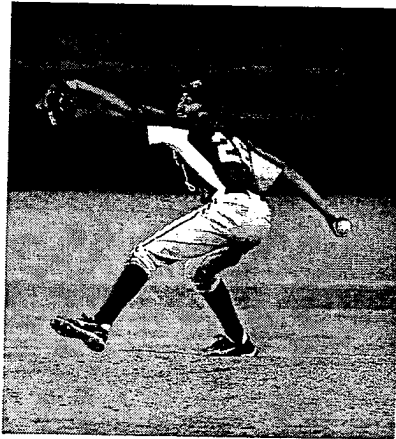
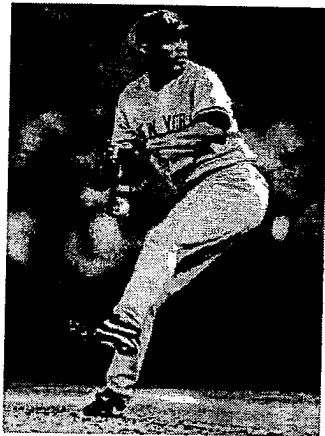
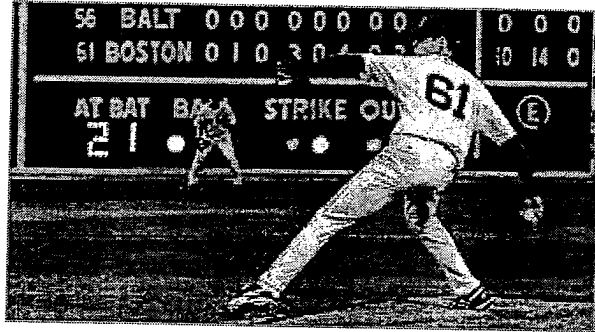
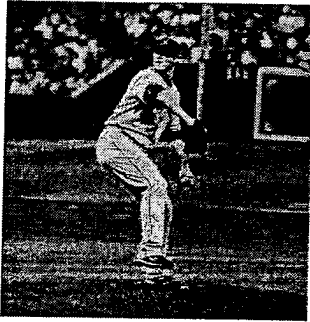
# *Sluggers Baseball*

## Mechanics of Pitching

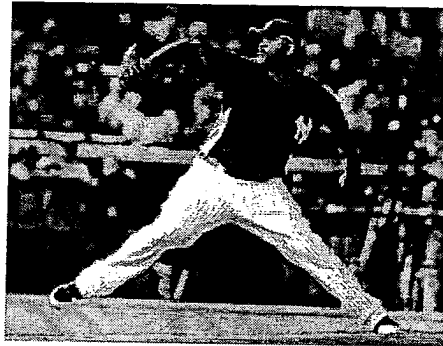
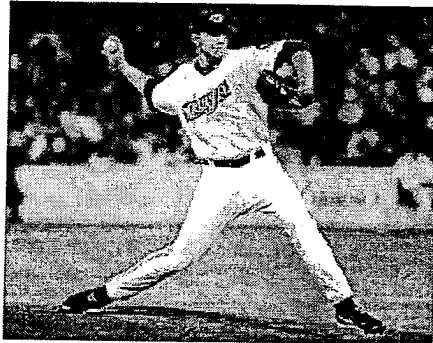
### Mechanics of Pitching

- I. The Windup
  - a. The purpose of the windup is to begin a controlled momentum toward the plate. As a result, be sure to take a short and controlled rocker step.
    - i. To ensure balance, keep your head over your body
- II. The Pump
  - a. After the rocker step, step in front of the mound (parallel to it) with a flat foot
  - b. Once planted, lift the stride leg until a comfortable balance point is reached
    - i. Your stride leg hip should face the hitter
  - c. Once the balance point is achieved, the pitcher should take his hand out of his glove with the palm facing down. As our goal is for the arm to be extended before your stride foot touches the ground, get your hand out of the glove quickly.
- III. The Stride
  - a. Stride with the foot closed, working for placement consistency
  - b. Goal – BALANCE! A shorter stride may be advantageous because
    - i. It assists in keeping balance
    - ii. May allow quicker explosion of the hips
    - iii. Makes it easier to get on top of the baseball so as to ensure downward plane.
  - c. Land on the ball of your foot with a slight break in the knee.
  - d. At this point, you should be closed off meaning that the front foot, knee, and elbow are all in a straight line, perpendicular to the target
  - e. HIGH FRONT SIDE!
- IV. The Pivot
  - a. A Pitcher pivots off of the back foot similar to a hitter swinging a bat. Other ways to think of it are either to “Squash a bug,” or to “Roll the Laces”
  - b. Explode your hips toward the hitter
- V. Release Point
  - a. Should be the same for each pitch
    - i. This is the reason we do so many progression drills that center around the arm slot
- VI. Finish
  - a. Finish with the chest over the stride leg
  - b. Stay in a straight line from home to second base

### Loaded on the Back Side



### Land Balanced with High Front Side



### Arm Slots

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mELid9505o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aZHPuss9jo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1A3ZRYPUqM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZj7Re45fPg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPw-Om2Xf5I>

## **DRILLS**

**Footwork to Balance – vs Wall?**

**Start at Stretch and Get to Balance (Drive and Land with High Front Side)**

**Wrist Flips (Standing, Feet Face Partner)**

**“Lay it Down” (Standing, Shoulders and Feet Square to Partner) – Take Hand Straight back and attempt to get hand below shoulder (Flexibility)**

**One Knee – Start with hands in front, Break at Belly Button and Throw. Finish with elbow on outside knee. High Elbows on Way Back!**

**Torso Drill – (Standing, Shoulders and Feet Square to Partner) – Without feet moving, rotate hips and throw. High Elbows!**

**Power Pray – (Standing, Hands in Front at Chest Level) – Hands break at Belly Button and throw. High Elbows – Don’t Step Thru with Backside.**

**Swing Arms – Arms cross in an X pattern, break at belly button. High elbows. You may now step thru.**

**Release Position – Start at release, go back to launch and throw**

**Load and Go – Start at set, break hands at belly button and throw (High Leg Kick.)**

**Black / White Location Game with Partner (Fastball and Change Up)**

### **Arm Strength Specific Drills**

**12 Minute Catch – Timed out at 45’, 90’, 120’, 150’, and Beyond (More Air Under Throws as the Distance Increases. Emphasize GOOD MECHANICS!**

**Must be flexible (Stretch) and Have a Strong Core (AB Work!)**

**Long Toss Goal is 300 Feet (300 Feet = 90 MPH)**



## Throwing Basics

4 Seams Grip

Being In Line (Lead Shoulder, Elbow, Knee, and Foot)

Crow Hop – Activates the Bottom Half

Hand Behind the Ball

## Catching Basics

Show a Window / Target with Hands (Start Fingers Up)

Above Waist – Fingers Up, Below Waist – Fingers Down

One Hand vs Two Handed Catch?

## Infield Play Basics

### I. Fielding Position

1. Feet slightly wider than the shoulders with the glove foot slightly ahead.
2. Weight on the balls of the feet
3. Butt down so as to allow you to field the ball in front
4. Slight break in the elbow to allow for shock absorption
5. Show the palm of your glove to the baseball
6. As you receive the ball, "Put a Cap on It" with the meat hand and PUSH THRU!
7. Efficiently get to a throwing position by keeping the elbow up
8. On a ball to your left or right, use a good crossover or drop step (Depends upon how hard the ball is hit) to get around the ball.
9. Field the ball on either the high or low hop, never on the in between. As a result, sometimes you may have to take a drop step back, while other times you will have to come and get it.
10. Work to be able to get to the ball quickly and under control.

### Drills – Play Catch

Partner Ground Balls - At You, Left / Right (Forehand / Backhand) NO GLOVE THEN GLOVE

Pick Hops and Wall Drill

4 Corners Ground Balls (2 Groups) – Look to 1<sup>st</sup>, then back to Fungo

2 Fungos – One Throws to Base, Other Back to Fungo

## Outfield Play Basics

### I. Stance

- A. Take short creep steps in as the pitcher delivers
- B. When the ball gets to the hitter, you should be squared to the plate with your weight on the balls of the plate

### II. Footwork in Running Down a Ball

- A. The key to good outfield play is to get behind the baseball – Catch it Moving In
- B. The shortest distance between two lines is a straight route
- C. If in doubt, your first step is back
- D. You have priority over an infielder on a fly ball
  1. Call it early
  2. On a tough play, you have the low route (bent leg slide) and the infielder has the high route (jump)
  3. Ball hit to your right / left - Drop step and crossover
- E. Ball hit hard over your head
  1. Turn and burn – DO NOT BACKPEDAL
- F. Run on the balls of your feet at all times. If the ball bounces as you run, then you are running on your heels
- G. Call every ball and decoy if you cannot get to it



Todd Armstrong  
toddandtam@comcast.net  
(260) 615-6895

Coaches Name: Todd Armstrong Age: 40

High School Attended: Dekalb High School

Colleges Attended: Indiana University (BA History, 1996), Brigham Young University, Northwestern (LA) State University (M.Ed – 2002), IPFW (K-12 Principal Licensure, 2012)

Currently Employed by: Whitley County Consolidated Schools

Years Coaching: 20 Years coaching in the Sluggers program: 5

Coaching Experience: Woodlan HS (Volunteer Assistant, 1993), Indiana University (Student Assistant, 1995-96), Brigham Young University (Graduate Assistant, 1996-97), Washington School (Head Baseball Coach) Indiana Tech (Assistant Coach, 2000-2001), Hamilton High School (Head Baseball Coach, 2002), Whitko High School (Assistant Baseball Coach, 2003), Elmhurst High School (Head Baseball Coach, 2004-2005), Columbia City High School (Head Baseball Coach, 2006 – 2010), Summit City Sluggers (2010 – Present.)

Former Players Drafted: Scott Mudd (Rangers), Brian Greene (Cubs), Brian Partenheimer (Red Sox), Kevin Zaleski (Marlins), Brian Harris (Phillies), Steve Smella (Rangers), Dan Ferrell (Marlins), Matt Braughler (Indians), Roger Rodeheaver (Phillies), Jared Jensen (Athletics), Michael Tejada (Rockies), Ryan Pond (Angels), Spencer Oborn (White Sox), Luke Hagerty (Cubs), Micah Mangrum (Royals), Troy Farnsworth (Cardinals), Troy McNaughton (Phillies), Jeremy Guthrie (Indians), Steve Andrade (Rays), Stace Pape (Reds), Jesse Hoover (Yankees), Bubba Castaneda (Mets), Jon Skaggs (Yankees), Josh VanMeter (Padres)

Coaching Goals: Through baseball, I hope to have a positive impact on players both on and off the field. To accomplish this goal, I strive to continually improve both as a teacher and as a communicator. In the end, I believe that my legacy will be determined by the relationships that I have with players.

Wife's name: Tammy Years married: 11

Children (spouse) name(s) and age(s) / grandchildren: Bryan (17), Ricky (16)



**Mark Delagarza**  
[Delagarza0185@gmail.com](mailto:Delagarza0185@gmail.com)  
(260) 402-0789

Mark DeLaGarza recently celebrated his 33<sup>rd</sup> year with General Motors, where he currently serves as a team coordinator within their truck assembly plant in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. In addition to his day to day activities at GM, Mark has also pursued opportunities various opportunities amateur baseball and has developed a strong passion for assisting young players in accomplishing their dreams.

In 1996 Mark founded the Summit City Sluggers Developmental Baseball Program, considered to be one of the elite amateur baseball programs in the in Midwest. During his time with the Sluggers, Mark has served in various roles both on and off of the field. In his current role, he serves as a member of the Sluggers's Board of Directors and is directly responsible for overseeing the program's coaches. In addition, he assists in player development and serves as both a recruiting liaison and player advisor.

In addition to his time with the Sluggers, Mark has additional experience in both collegiate and professional baseball. After several years of serving as an associate scout with the Minnesota Twins and New York Mets, in 2013 Mark served as the pitching coach at Manchester University, where he assisted the Spartan baseball program in their run to the NCAA Division III World Series.

Now entering his 20<sup>th</sup> year in sports, Mark's experiences have provided him with an extensive skill set. With a strong background in event planning and leading large groups, Mark possesses tremendous communication and organizational skills. As a result of his efforts, he has developed a strong network of professionals, and is regarded as a tireless worker with a strong commitment to integrity.



