

HE WANTS TO PLAY A PARTICULAR POSITION

TIPS FROM 'THE COACH'

The object of playing baseball is for the TEAM to make its best effort to WIN. To do this the manager places his players into positions that will allow the TEAM the best opportunity to WIN. This may mean that a player that in the past has played SS on another team may be placed at 3B on this team because the team has a better SS or because the TEAM is stronger with him at 3B. Kids quite frankly don't care and shouldn't care where they play because there is no "I" in TEAM. But parents care. Parents care because they are not members of the TEAM. They have only one interest, their son. They have the misguided idea that there are "premium" positions on the field. They are wrong! Parents get their egos involved because they feel that if their son is playing 3B instead of SS, THEY lose status!

My son was the SS most of the time when he was in youth league. Yes, there were times that because of Daddy-ball he didn't play SS but was moved all over the field to fill the spot vacated by a son of a coach that was pitching. In HS he played every inning at SS. But before he went to the Jr. TEAM USA trials, we worked at 2B and 3B because I (correctly) figured there would be the top 6 SS's in the country there and if he wanted to make the team he had better be able to play someplace else because he wasn't going to be the best SS there. In JUCO, he played 3B because the TEAM was strongest with him at 3B. At the University of Texas he started his first game at 1B. The next year at U of Louisiana/ Lafayette, he was back at SS. He was drafted as a SS but when he got to Brooklyn there was a 19 yr old bonus baby SS and there were 500,000 reasons he was going to play SS. My son played 3B. The next year he was back at SS but was moved to 2B half way through the season where he played this year. Because of his versatility, the organization wants him to work on his OF skills because they think that his quickest way to the Majors is as a utility player.

I went through this personal baseball history to show you the importance of learning to play multiple positions. To learn how every play at every position should be executed, get [Defensive Skills By Position](#) from the [BASEBALL SKILLS AND DRILLS](#) video series.

As I have said many times before, it is crucial that a player learn to not concern himself with things over which he has no control. The same can be said for parents. A player or parent has NO control over the coach's decisions about the lineup so it is useless and counterproductive to concern yourself with where the player is playing. It is a terrible example for parents to rant in the car on the way home that, "you should be playing SS. You're better than Billy." Hey, the team won, your son is happy for the TEAM'S success and you are teaching him that HE is more important than the team and further that he should concern himself with something over which he has no control.

Yours In Baseball
Bruce Lambin
THE COACH

PS: If you are going to work with your son on his defensive skills, you need a [fungo](#) bat to allow you to hit quality grounders and fly balls.

THROW THE CURVE OR NOT

First off, if you think young baseball players don't mess around with throwing different pitches, curves, splitters, knuckleballs, screwgies, you are very naive so the point is somewhat moot. Does a properly thrown curve ball place more strain on the arm than a fastball? Little League Baseball did a study on the subject some years and decided that IT DOES NOT! But still the myth persists. For a more detailed explanation of why a properly thrown curveball does not place more strain on the young players arm and how to throw a curveball correctly, I suggest you get my video, the FUNDamentals Of PITCHING.

The better question might be, why are so many young ballplayers coming up with sore arms? I think the answer must be attributed to today's lifestyle. When I was a kid, we ate breakfast and were out the door. Where ever we went we were throwing something, a ball, a rock at a critter, a pine cone at each other. We probably threw something a hundred times a day, every day. At dusk, when it was getting too dark to see we would throw the ball high into the air so the person catching it could see it against the waning light still in the sky. Sometimes we would throw curves 150 feet to see how big a break we could achieve. Big, roundhouse, palms up. Little League curveballs! Neither I nor any of my friends ever had an arm injury or sore arm!

What does the modern day young player do during the day? He spends all day in air conditioning, playing video games, or watching MTV. He goes to practice or a game where he doesn't even know how to warm up correctly. Pitchers are limited in the number of innings they throw so they probably only pitch once a week. Imagine the shock to his muscles and tendons when once a week they are asked to perform with max effort! These kids are babied and pampered. Heaven forbid they should sweat. Parents are warned in the direst terms of all the dangers that await outside the air conditioned confines. Don't let them get overheated. Avoid the sunlight, Bicycle without armor, Mosquitoes, Perverts, and Gangs etc. I actually know kids that go to aerobics classes. I know 12 year olds with strength trainers! I heard of an 11 year old that pulled a hamstring. You would not believe how many times I have been approached about giving private lessons to 6 year olds! I tell their Dads to give them a tennis ball and a wall and let them learn to catch just like thousands before them or even better play with your kid. Now there is a novel idea.

There is nothing you can do to protect you kids from all the ills in the world. Wrap them in an air conditioned cocoon and don't be surprised when their soft little bodies break when exposed to the rigors of athletic competition. But don't blame the curveball.

Yours in Baseball,

Bruce