

TOSH TIMES

TOSH Baseball Program Newsletter

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The Five Tools Baseball Players Are Graded On – How Do You Rate?

Do you recognize any of these names?

Oscar Charleston, Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Dave Winfield, Mike Schmidt, Rickey Henderson, Kirby Puckett, Bo Jackson, Ken Griffey, Jr., Barry Bonds, Vladimir Guerrero, Alex Rodriguez, Josh Hamilton, Ichiro Suzuki.

I'm sure you have heard most of these names. In fact, many of them are still baseball heroes to many of us. Most are players that we have idolized, and maybe even modeled our swing, throw or fielding mechanics after. I know a few players that, if you asked them, could even confidently show you what most of these legends' pre-pitch hitting routine looks like.

While there are many other outstanding players and baseball icons I could have listed, I chose these because they were part of a list of the "Top 20 Five Tool Players in Baseball History." I had to dig a little deeper to find out, and realize, how well rounded each of the players on this prestigious list was/is in what baseball scouts call, "The 5 Tools of Baseball."

The 5 tools by which athletes are graded

More than one source explained that some tools are more important than others, depending on the primary position of the player. However, the overall value of a baseball athlete's tools probably rank in this order:

1. Hitting for average
2. Fielding
3. Hitting for power
4. Arm strength
5. Running speed

Thanks to "Baseball America" and "Baseball Examiner" the following chart breaks down the importance, or value given, to each tool separated by position:

	Value of each tool from most important to least important by position				
Catcher	Fielding	Arm	Hitting	Power	Speed
First base	Hitting	Power	Fielding	Arm	Speed
Second base	Hitting	Fielding	Power	Speed	Arm
Third base	Hitting	Power	Fielding	Arm	Speed
Shortstop	Fielding	Arm	Hitting	Speed	Power
Left field	Hitting	Power	Fielding	Arm	Speed
Center field	Fielding	Hitting	Speed	Power	Arm
Right Field	Hitting	Power	Arm	Fielding	Speed

So what is the point here?

Looking at the chart and understanding the game of baseball, there are some obvious points that stand out. Any player or parent wishing to prioritize improvement in certain key areas, or coaches looking to focus practice time around vital concepts in these last few weeks before the 2016 season begins, should focus on correct hitting and fielding mechanics.

And, some of you just went... Duh!!! No kidding, Mike!



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From the hitting perspective:

Just doing repetitive tee work, soft-toss, or live hitting does not defeat the beast of the hitting for average tool, let alone the correct swing mechanics that high school and college coaches and pro scouts are looking for to help develop hitting power.

It takes skilled hitting instructors and coaches who understand correct timing and sequence mechanics from the ground up, and the ability and time to break each individual down according to their specific physical abilities, bad habits, body awareness, and attention to detail.

Opinions and experience being what they are, I recommend that players and coaches utilize video technology to show the individual their current biomechanics, timing issues and the physics of planes and angles. This is very useful for most young players.

Add to that the teaching of helpful pre-pitch mental and physical routines, and the important use of eyes and tracking the ball through contact, and your athlete will be on the path to success in the hitting for average tool.

Easy right?

Coaches and parents, while I am on hitting for contact, let me take a second to ask you a question: Do you teach and allow your athletes the time between every contact rep (yes, even soft toss and tee work) to briefly step out of the box, learn from their last swing, make or practice an adjustment, and repeat their pre-pitch routine like they would in a game? If not, why?

The more important question:

How can we expect them to learn adjustments and proper mental habits if we don't develop and encourage proper game prep practice/drill habits?



From the fielding perspective:

Just hitting ground and fly balls to kids over and over does not improve correct foot work, body position work, correct glove work, or correct angles and momentum through the ball, that are crucial to improving their defensive skills.

This requires coaches or expert instructors who can not only teach the correct fielding mechanics for each position set, but also spend reasonable amounts of time breaking down the individual athlete's skill set at their own level. Good coaches not only teach them correct skills, but can

also break them down in multiple ways depending on the age group to correct the "31 flavors" of form problems that exist, the player's baseball savvy, and as we instructors know, the attention span or focus of the individual.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at TOSH at **801-314-2996** for instruction or assistance, or to help inspire or enhance your preparations for the upcoming 2016 baseball season and beyond.

I'm planning to discuss arm strength and the tools expected of a recruitable or draftable pitcher in the April TOSH/RMSB newsletter. In the July issue, I will complete the series regarding hitting for power and speed.

Michael S. Everett
TOSH Baseball Program Coordinator





The four “R’s” of recovery nutrition to enhance your performance

As spring baseball season approaches, it is important to keep in mind the importance in recovering after every practice and game to build strength and keep your immune system strong.

The four main goals of recovery nutrition are to: **Restore, Replace, Repair, and Rest.** By following these key components, you will ensure that you are fully prepared for your upcoming season.

The first “**R**” is about restoring the fluids and electrolytes lost in each practice. Get in the habit of drinking adequate fluids to ensure you will be hydrated before your next practice, and eventually next game.

The second “**R**” stands for replace. This refers to replacing the carbohydrates burned through exercise. Carbs are your brain and body’s main fuel source.

Along with carbohydrates, it is important to repair torn muscle tissue with protein. The best proportion for recovery is a 4 to 1 ratio of carbohydrates to protein mix. For example, chocolate milk has this recovery ratio, and will help replace and repair nutrients lost through exercise.

The last, and one of the most overlooked “**R**’s” is rest. Try and aim for 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night. It can be a challenge to get this many hours if you are caught up on your cell phone and/or computer late at night. Rest is not only important for recovery, but also for growth and keeping your immune system strong.

Recovery is a crucial component to improving your overall performance. If you focus on restoring fluids lost, replacing both carbohydrates and protein post-exercise, and resting 8-10 hours a night, you will be well on your way to optimal performance.

Good luck out there this spring, and remember your preparation starts before game day!

Ashley Hagensick
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