



MEMORANDUM

TO: DTMBA Supporters/Partners

FROM: Mike May (Don't Take My Bat Away)

DATE: May 29, 2008

Dear DTMBA Supporters and Partners:

The “non-wood vs. wood” baseball bat topic has been discussed in the media a great deal in recent weeks – especially since May 1 when I assumed day-to-day duties for Don't Take My Bat Away. The stories have ranged from printed articles to online reports to blog commentaries to TV news stories. I want to take this opportunity to tell you about the main stories and what has been done to educate baseball coaches and the media about current bat performance standards. As I have discovered, the problem with coaches having their bat-type preference/opinion printed in the newspaper is that it becomes “gospel-like” truth for the reader, especially when the “safety” issue is used for their reasoning. It's worth noting that the overwhelming number of responses from the general public on this issue is pro-DTMBA. The responses range from “All bats are here to stay. They are safe and cost effective.” to “Metal and composites are just fine for baseball and last longer.”

As an aside, Jim Darby and I attended the 49th Annual Awards for the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association (NSSA) in Salisbury, NC on the weekend of May 3-5. While there, Jim and I had an opportunity to address roughly 65 sportscasters and sportswriters from around the country about the TRUTH on the ‘wood vs. non-wood’ baseball bat matter. We also had a number of one-on-one discussions with many of these journalists. Our presentation has already reaped editorial dividends as A. J. Carr of the Raleigh News & Observer wrote a very fair article last week (around May 22) which also appeared in the Charlotte Observer (on May 28)...and I was a guest on a sports radio talk show (WSYB-AM) in Rutland, Vermont this past Saturday morning (May 24). More talk radio interviews will be scheduled throughout the summer.

DTMBA Media Report:

-- April 17: “Maple Bats Post Danger, Russell Says” was the headline in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in a story about the bat fragment that hit Pirates hitting coach Don Long just below the eye on April 15. Russell is Pirates manager John Russell.

-- April 20: A story in the Lawrence (KS) Journal-World by Matt Tait stated that aluminum bats have too much “pop.” I spoke with Tait, notified him of the current bat standards, and he responded with a desire to write a story soon that will focus on the DTMBA's stance, which is wonderful. I will stay in touch with Tait in the coming weeks.

-- May 1: A story written by Alan Scarabello appeared in the Northern Star, the publication for Northern Illinois University, about an NIU pitcher (Mark Badgley) who was hit by a batted ball in April of 2005. I have notified the writer about the exit speed information and that any implication that the bat was at fault is not an accurate assumption. He has also been sent a written response.

-- May 2: A story in the University of Delaware Review by Antonia Donato implied aluminum bats are “unsafe.” I corresponded by email with Donato's editor (Wes Case) and sent a letter to the editor to explain current non-wood bat standards.

-- May 6: In Madelyns Blog, the following question was posed “What's the Difference Between Wooden Baseball Bats and Metal Ones?” I responded with an answer in the “comments” section of that blog.

-- May 7: A Q & A appeared in the Grand Forks (ND) Herald – written by sportswriter Greg DeVillers who spoke with a current high school player and a current high school coach. The theme of the Q & A: “Which Is Sweeter?”

Debating the Merits of Wood & Metal Bats?" As you know, only wood is used in North Dakota in high school. While the player likes non-wood, the coach preferred wood because of "safety" reasons. When I spoke with the coach, he said he was misquoted/misunderstood because he was referring to the old (pre 2003) metal bat. He said that he manages an American Legion team in North Dakota where all the players use metal, which he supports!

-- May 8: A story in Notre Dame's 'unofficial' publication – Blue and Gold – referenced the injury to the face (swollen eye and knot above the eye) by ND pitcher Wade Korpi. In that report, ND head baseball coach Dave Schrage made some inaccurate comments about the metal bat. I'm attempting to reach the coach to bring him up to date on current bat standards and exit speeds. In DTMBA's defense, I was a guest on the Blue and Gold Internet radio broadcast on the evening of May 20 where I told listeners (and the show hosts) about current bat standards.

-- May 8: A poll appeared in the Patriot (Needham, MA) Ledger that posed the following question: "Your Opinion: Get Rid of Metal Bats in High School." Most people support metal bats. I responded with a letter to the editor of the Patriot Ledger – sent on May 15.

-- May 8: KTVI-TV in St. Louis ran a special FOX 2 News Fox Files report on the 'wood vs. non-wood' debate. This interview did include some sound bites from Representative Molaro from Illinois as well as some off-target comments by University of Missouri-St. Louis baseball coach Jim Brady. I'm still trying to touch base with Coach Brady – as voicemail messages have not been returned. I did speak with the KTVI reporter Andy Banker and sent him a written response. The story did include a positive comment from a Little League parent – "I've never seen too many injuries from batting; more injuries from sliding and other aspects of baseball."

-- May 9: KSDK-TV in St. Louis ran a story entitled "Sports Safety Debate Continues: Metal vs. Wood Bats." It featured sound bites from St. Louis-area baseball coach Tony Perkins (pro non-wood), Jim Muskopf (St. Louis Amateur Baseball Association) who is neutral (pro choice), and Mike Primo (a parent) who is pro-wood. We did speak with the producer of this story in advance, he checked out our website, and the overall reporting was more pro-choice and pro-metal than anything else. I did respond to producer Jordan Palmer and reporter Rene Knott to remind them of DTMBA's stance on the issue.

May 12, 19, and 25: Three stories (as part of a four-part series) have appeared in The News-Dispatch in Michigan City, IN about this the 'wood vs. non-wood' issue. The overwhelming theme is pro-DTMBA and pro 'bat of choice.' Writer Nick Dettman spoke with Rick Redman, he referenced the Illinois State University bat study, and quoted many Indiana high school baseball coaches who are in favor of non-wood bats.

May 19: A series of stories about the Steven Domalewski lawsuit have appeared on a variety of news outlets: from AP to CNN to Fox News Channel to WCBS-TV in New York. Between Rick Redman and myself, we have responded to every story with telephone calls, emails, faxes, and written letters. While the Domalewski event is a sad tragedy, public opinion is on our side.

May 19: A story from one of the bloggers (Shari Roan) at the Los Angeles Times put forth this question: "Should Kids Swing Aluminum Bats?" For the most part, the theme of the editorial was pro-DTMBA. I did respond with a comment supporting DTMBA's point of view. The vast majority of public opinion is in our court.

May 20: Free lance journalist Kevin Hayward wrote a story – entitled "Family Asks WIAA to Consider Wood Bats" – which appeared in the The Olympian in Olympia, WA. Due to their son getting hit in the jaw by a line drive, Scott and Tammy Hetrick want the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association to ban the use of metal baseball bats at the high school level. Jim Darby is attempting to reach those coaches quoted in the story to bring them up-to-date on current bat standards. In the meantime, the boy who was hit (Taylor Hetrick) doesn't want to give up his metal bat. I did speak with the writer and submitted a written response to his editor.

May 28: Journalist Michael Cummings of the Cullman (AL) Times wrote a pro DTMBA story – "Lawsuits Not Right Answer to Injury" -- as a response to the Domalewski case...Earl McRae of the Ottawa Sun (Canada) wrote a great story – "It's Ridiculous to Sue Bat Maker for Boy's Injuries."

May 28: John Dudley of the Eire (NY) Times feels the Domalewski lawsuit is unguided, but questions whether youth baseball diamond dimensions should be revisited.

May 29: Sam Donnellon of the Philadelphia Daily News wrote an opinionated/anti-metal bat column. I have already responded to his column with a letter and am currently trying to reach him via telephone.

May 29: An editorial – entitled “Metal Menace?” – appeared on NorthJersey.com, the online edition of The Record in Hackensack, NJ. The story, for the most part, doubts the claims of those who are against non-wood. We are currently drafting a letter to the editor, which will be signed and submitted by a New Jersey baseball coach, to add further support to this editorial.

May 29: I have taped an interview with KREI-AM (Farmington, Missouri) which will air this Saturday (May 31) morning around 8:00 am (Central time) and can be heard on KREI.com

Finally, here’s a quote from Purdue University first baseman Ryne White who set a Big Ten record this year for most home runs in league play: “I don’t think wood would be good in the college game. Aluminum helps with the excitement of the game and, with all the hits that come off the handle of a bat, wood would just make college ball painful to watch – and play.”