

“INJURY EPIDEMIC CAUSED BY MECHANICAL ERRORS”

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July 14, 2006 COLLEGIATE BASEBALL printed an article written by Jon Solomon entitled “Overusing Pitchers” that first appeared in “The Birmingham News.” The main focus of the article was the alarming epidemic of injuries to pitchers with “overuse” listed as the major cause.

I contend the alarming epidemic of injuries in baseball today is caused by errors in a pitcher’s throwing mechanics. With the pitch count so strongly emphasized at every level of baseball, the possibility of “overuse” is greatly reduced as the major cause of arm injuries. I vehemently disagree with the “overuse” theory.

I have written this article to shed light on a theory that I have proven to be true. We will begin with lifting weights. If you make errors in your mechanics while lifting weights, you can snap or tear muscles, ligaments and tendons. I am working with three pitchers today that have a sore elbow that has lasted for several months. We traced it back to lifting weights two weeks before they picked up a baseball. I believe the soreness was caused by mechanical errors made when lifting weights. This may be an area that needs more research, because many high school, college and major league players lift weights.

Since 1969 I have been searching for the cause of injuries that occur when a person throws an object using the overhand delivery. Some of my findings may enlighten coaches when working with pitchers. In the 1920’s and 1930’s, the following coaching theory was developed: “Do not change the form of a pitcher that throws with great velocity for this is a gift. If you try to change a pitchers form, he could lose his velocity, come up lame and soon drop out of baseball.” Many coaches are following this theory and refusing to change a pitchers form even when pain is involved. I disagree with this theory, which I have proven to be wrong time and again.

With the alarming epidemic of injuries to pitchers at all levels, maybe we should question this age-old theory above. Below the picture on page 17 of the article ‘OVERUSING PITCHERS” is the comment that states, “**Poor Mechanics Can Cause Problems.**” I have found this statement to be true in every case after working successfully with over two hundred injured baseball players, or players that had pain when throwing a ball. This includes players that had previously broken their humerus while pitching. I changed the form of every player with great success! This form change also worked with a player that had been diagnosed for three years with Steve Blass disease. Twelve different coaches and a psychiatrist had not been able to help or cure the “disease” in this player. I found it to be in his throwing mechanics and not a “disease” at all. It was not a “mental problem” either, as major league baseball believes it to be. This young man I helped is playing college baseball today in Pennsylvania.

When a pitcher is throwing with persistent pain that does not heal rapidly, many times a doctor will operate to try to relieve the pain. All the pitcher needed was for someone to help him get into his **natural throwing groove**. When talking to players about the cause of pain and injuries, doctors and coaches use the same two theories: “The overhand delivery is not normal, so injuries will occur when throwing and the other is overuse.” Is it overuse that causes the many one-throw injuries that occur when an outfielder throws the ball all the way to home plate and tears his rotator cuff? Is it overuse when a pitcher makes the first pitch in a game and his humerus breaks, or he snaps or tears the UCL in his elbow?

I have discovered a simple and very fast way to get a pitcher or player into his natural throwing groove. Once they know how to get into their natural throwing groove, they will throw with more consistency on a daily basis-no more slumps. This will virtually reduce or eliminate sore arms, pain when throwing and most injuries to the arm, shoulder and elbow. Knowing the cause of the pain or injury will speed up rehabilitation, even after surgery. This knowledge will also reduce or eliminate the fear of throwing again after a major injury.

This article was written in hopes that coaches and some of the research centers around the nation will do as I did and look beyond the **iron clad theories** that exist in baseball today. The **most alarming epidemic** in baseball is the total number of Tommy John surgeries that take place every week nation wide! We as coaches can reduce or eliminate this epidemic by changing players throwing mechanics when they are having problems or pain. Players need our help!

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