

DAILY

VITAMINS

OF

BASEBALL

V.2 PITCHERS EDITION

WRITTEN BY David Seccombe

Introduction

The mission of this book is to engage the mind about pitching. Baseball is a simple yet complex game. Pitching is the most complex position in baseball because the game begins with “the pitch.” Sharing my personal experiences on and off the field, I will convey to you I have always been a student of the game. You and I are students of the game and we began this journey at a young age. We are responsible to play, understand and carry on the information the way we have come to know as the inner workings of baseball. The photo used for the cover of this book is from the Baseball Hall of Fame. Any guess to the colored baseballs? Considered to be “the greatest student of hitting,” Ted Williams gave us what he believed to be his batting average based on the location of the pitch. He was the last player in MLB history to hit over .400 avg., (.406 average, Boston Red Sox 1941). Ted Williams wouldn’t acknowledge until later in life but he was a student of the game the moment he touched the baseball for the first time.

Starting from a young age I collected baseball cards, stayed outside until it was dark playing whiffle ball, anything and everything baseball. My passion runs deep, and if you’re reading this good chance you feel the same way.

Daily Vitamins of Baseball Volume 2 is a personal journey zipping around stories, quotes and facts about pitching. I suggest you read one page per day. If you’re a player, reflect, take notes and apply any tips that may be helpful.

“I firmly believe that the only disability in life is a bad attitude.” – *Scott Hamilton*

“Be a student of yourself.” – *David Seccombe*



MULTIVITAMINS

This program will help you understand pitching from all angles, giving the mind and body a balance of pitching nutrients. Read each day and enjoy the plethora of information!

Day 1

“You must have dreams and goals if you are ever going to achieve anything in this world.” – *Lou Holtz*

Personal Contract. Have you ever wanted something so bad you would give up anything to get it? I can remember when I was 14 years old, living in Hayden Lake Idaho enjoying the outdoors no matter what I was doing. I would be outside during the winter shooting hoops. Even if there was a light flurry of snow I would be slipping around the icy driveway making personal pacts with myself. “If I make this shot I’ll play pro baseball.” If I missed I would toe the free throw line, mind in the moment and arc a swish. I never left the court until I made a few in a row solidifying my fate. Shooting hoops wasn’t the only way I signed my personal contract. During baseball practices when the team ran sprints, I would sprint to the front, just another time to challenge myself to my personal contract. I ran cross country in high school and this was another approach I trained my brain to reach even further mentally and physically. When my body was saying “NO” I was telling myself this pain and sweat is for baseball. I was aware of the investment I committed to and I wouldn’t enjoy the fruits of my labor until years from these moments. The pain was worth the wait. I signed my personal contract around the age of 13. The age where I no longer felt like a boy, but a man to grow and become who I wanted to be. Determined to use what God gave me, I had a sense that work ethic was the one thing I had an abundance of. Go to school, work hard, be a good person and avoid distractions. In a small town like Hayden I had large aspirations for my future in baseball. I signed my contract and nothing was going to stand in my way.

Sign your baseball contract. It only takes a decision to commit. Once you have committed to your contract attaining your goals will be unlocked. The journey is satisfying with plenty of life lessons and experiences. Baseball gives you those experiences. I am walking proof baseball has given me the opportunity to commit, excel and teach anything I put my mind to. The brain is a powerful tool. Invest in yourself, it will be the best decision you’ll ever make.

Day 2

“It’s all about the journey, not the outcome.” – *Carl Lewis*

The battery. The “battery” in baseball consists of the pitcher and catcher. Without those positions the game doesn’t begin. The strongest teams in baseball have great batteries. It is true that good pitching and defense wins ball games because limiting teams to score is the main goal, especially in a game where the team who has the ball is on defense. Catchers have a tough job and must have a high pain tolerance to block dirt balls, and sometimes block the plate from an incoming runner from third. The pitcher is working on every pitch, driving off the mound, locating pitches and thinking their way through hitters. It is chess and not checkers when choosing the correct types of pitches and locations. After games pitchers and catchers are exhausted because of the physical exertion, in addition to the brain power needed to power through each inning. The energy produced between the pitcher and catcher is why they are referred to as the “battery.”

Head Scratcher

Coined by Henry Chadwick in the 1860s, “battery” was used in reference to the firepower of a team's pitching staff and inspired by the artillery batteries then in use in the American Civil War.

Day 3

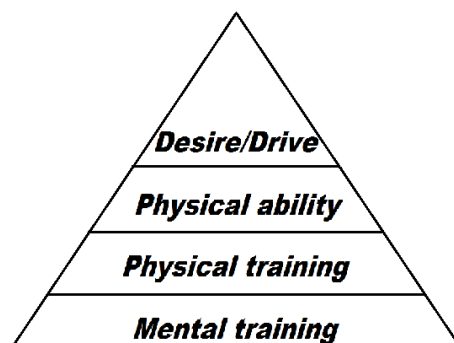
Pitchers fielding responsibilities. Aside from having solid mechanics a pitcher must have great agility around the mound. A pitcher must have quick reflexes for those hard liners back up the middle. If a batter squares around to bunt, a pitcher must first pitch a strike and then anticipate where the ball will be placed. Covering first base on balls hit to the first base side requires a pitcher to sprint over as soon as the ball is hit, any delay may result in a late arrival and a safe runner. The footwork needed at first when covering first base takes practice as pitchers can get hurt colliding with the runner. Turning a double play up the middle starts by communicating before the pitch, confirming with the shortstop or second baseman to who is receiving the ball. Hitters who successfully drive the ball to the outfield will be moving around the bases requiring the pitcher to back up bases in case of errant throws. An errant throw towards a base should never get behind a pitcher, especially at third or home, because there is nobody else to back up the pitcher except the fence. Pitching fielding practice (PFP's) is the best way pitchers can improve their fielding responsibilities. I remember the long mornings at the Yankees spring training fields in Tampa Florida, spending hours on PFP's. To improve reaction time on line drives coaches would use soft Tee-Ball baseballs and hit rockets back at us. At first this is scary, but after a couple days the eyes and reactions catch up.

TIP: Reaction drills are great for pitchers, improving agility and coordination. Have someone stand behind you about thirty feet away. They will throw either a tennis ball or whiffle ball. No glove is recommended. As soon as they throw the ball to you, back turned, they will say "ball" and that is your cue to turn around, look for the ball and catch. The better you get at catching, increase the ball speed.

Day 4

“Each of us has a fire in our hearts for something. It’s our goal in life to find it and keep it.” – *Mary Lou Retton*

The supercomputer. Athletes who excel demonstrate similar characteristics in their routines, mental make-up and desire for their sport. Desire to succeed is the strongest attribute of an athlete's DNA. Some athletes propel forward due to “fear of failure” but this motivation is weaker than the desire to succeed. Pitchers who are self-motivated and create a world of seeing successes as goals will benefit lasting satisfaction. I was entering my senior at Cimarron Memorial high school in Las Vegas and I wanted to be the best player in the city. I had just moved to the Vegas area a year before from Idaho. That year in 1999 I had a solid 11th grade season and based on my performance and accolades I knew the goal was attainable. I set my mind to a goal, stayed disciplined to a solid work ethic and by the middle of the season I could see the light at the end of the tunnel. The reality I was living was created months prior and at times felt like an out of body experience because I was living the vision. The mental training had paid off, especially when nagging injuries were barking. At the end of the regular season I was named Southern Nevada Most Valuable Player. I firmly believe I followed a simple plan, a plan every pitcher can follow. Below is a diagram depicting the 4 basic elements of the plan.



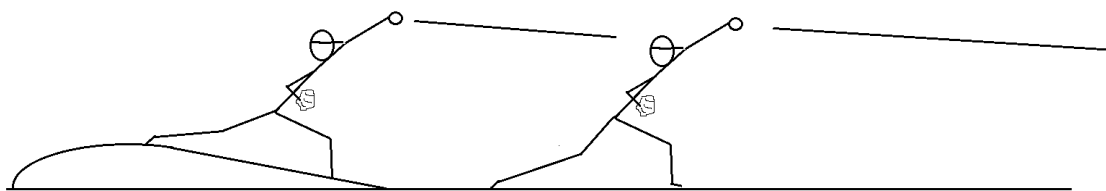
Take a look at your plan. Does it resemble the one shown above? Why is Desire/Drive at the top? The reason is because an athlete **MUST** have this “fire” to succeed. The only way to tap into your full potential during physical training is to have the **DRIVE**. Every moment is an opportunity to perfect your plan.

Daily Vitamins of Baseball V.2

Day 5

“The only discipline that lasts is self-discipline.” – *Bum Phillips*

Flat ground is where home is. If you are like me than you picked up a ball at a young age and threw it, and maybe it wasn't a ball! We are taught to play catch, hit the ball, and run, the basic recipe for baseball. We were taught to play catch at the park or in the hallway at the house. The point I am making is at the core of a pitchers throwing routine consists of practicing “flat grounds.” The idea of playing catch on a flat plane is primitive but when the catcher is squatted down the pitcher must make an effort to pitch downhill. There are many benefits of pitching to a catcher on a flat surface. Pitching phrases like “stay on top of the ball” is referencing to the throwing elbow and wrist position above the shoulder at “power L.” This position creates a “downhill” throw which has a steeper flight angle to the catcher's glove. This trajectory is tougher for a hitter to hit.



Notice the similar flight angle (trajectory) to the strike zone. The idea of practicing flat ground is to mimic the angle thrown from an elevated mound.

