



Making the Transition from High School Baseball to College Baseball

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Making the transition from one level of baseball to the next always takes some adjusting. The more the player is prepared to make the transition the easier it will be physically, but also mentally. One of the hardest transitions is from high school baseball to college. The physical demands as well as the location demands make it difficult for many young men and women. So how can a high school athlete prepare themselves for the transition so not only do they succeed but thrive in the situation? The player learns to prepare themselves physically through a strong performance development program. The player learns to practice in a more efficient manner, and the player learns to plan their schedule more effectively.

I believe a cornerstone to the transition to college baseball is the performance development program. In most cases the young athlete has not been involved in a strong program and so does not understand the demands both of time and of energy a program can ask. In most cases the college baseball team will have a program and if you reach the D2 or higher level, the player will most likely have a strength and conditioning coach. Unlike most high schools this program is not voluntary, and the players must stick to a strict schedule. This adds another hour or two to the daily routine. The player will be sore like never before, and as the program progresses the player has to adjust to the strength and power they have just gained. I have interacted with many parents and coaches, and believe there is a gross misunderstanding of the benefit a young athlete can see from starting a performance program as they start their high school career. During this time, the 13 to 18 year range the player's body is hungry for stimulus. It wants to grow, it wants to get strong and powerful, and as a performance coach, laying down and expanding on a strong foundation raises the potential for the level the player can achieve. The high school player has 4 years to make his case to college coaches. They don't want to hear excuses. They want to hear why you deserve to be on their team and can you contribute to their program. Have you been disciplined enough to make your game the best it can be? Have you taken care of your body to make sure it doesn't break down? These qualities only come from a performance program. How can you make yourself faster without training to be faster? How can you make sure your arm stays healthy and free from injury without a shoulder stability program? Remember that every one at the next level is an all-star; they all made all-state. What did you bring that

they did not. You can bring a strong powerful player that is ready from day one. You can start a baseball specific performance program. As I remind my players every year, when you walk onto the field you should be prepared to play, not preparing to play.

As the player prepares to transition to the college level they should also learn to practice with more efficiency. They must learn to not waste time. Every minute on the field should be focused on a task, even if the task is shagging. Can you work on your approach to a fly ball while you shag? When you are taking cuts off the tee, what are you working on? Learn to in-side out that ball; learn where your strike zone is. When you are turning that double play can you make it quicker, is the throw to the target every time? I ask many players these questions, and many times they don't have answers or even worse don't know what I am talking about. Be ahead of the curve. The college coach does not want to babysit; they have more important things to do. Not only can developing a practice of efficiency raise the player's level of play it can impress the coach with how focused the player can be. As they say in the business world time is money. Now later that time can translate into money but now it can translate into a few more hits, a few more catches and the difference between a player that makes an immediate impact in college and one that rides the pine for a few years.

Now if you can start to implement these couple of simple transition tasks the last task will become easy. As a high school player you must learn to manage your time, to keep a schedule and prepare yourself for every day. I hear the same excuses everyday, I don't have time to practice more, and I can't take those extra cuts. Many times it is a lack of planning not a lack of time. As I tell many young athletes, "you have the same amount of time that Einstein had everyday." The simplest and most effective time manager is writing down what you have to do and when you're going to do it. Make that schedule and stick to it. If you plan to workout every day, you will. If you plan to take 50 ground balls a day you will. You will learn to make time. I can't express how important this is. If you have played at the next level you know what I am talking about, but if you have not then please take note. Playing a college sport is like having a full time job while attending school as a full time student. In college many players are asked to practice 3 to 4 hours a day, while attending 2 hours of workouts a day, and during certain parts of the year the player may extend practice time to 6 hours a day. That can demand from 5 to 7 hours a day specific to baseball. The athlete is then asked to attend classes that with a full load can be 6 to 8 hours a day. They must still eat, sleep, study and complete homework. Have you been keeping track? The player still might need a job, but let's not go there right now. In most cases the average college student should spend about 1 to 2 hours of studying for every hour of class. Do you see how this gets out of control real fast? The players that have learned to keep and follow a schedule, find the transition easy and in most cases find themselves with free time to spend in extra curricular activities.

These three simple transition tools can not only improve you as player now, but will help you become the best college player you can become. Take the time to do the little things. Start with one stone and before you know you've moved the mountain.

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If you need help with a plan for making the transition from High School Baseball to College Baseball, please take the time to visit us, it is what we specialize in. The High School to College Baseball Recruitment Mentoring Program could be just what you are looking for and can be found at www.WorldwideBaseballProspects.com. Good Luck!