



As reported....

### **FRESHMAN (9th)**

Settle into the high school environment ... get to work developing good classroom and home study habits. Learn to manage your time.

#### **September**

Play fall baseball, if available  
Long toss after school  
Run sprints and medium distance

### **SOPHOMORE (10th)**

Continue to "hit the books" hard your grades these years count as much as any other year  
Follow the same off - season schedule as last year.  
Meet with your high school guidance counselor -- tell him/her of your desire to play college baseball ... you want to be "on track" with the required core courses, as well as other needs, such as foreign languages.  
Follow the same spring and summer schedule as last year.  
Play as many summer baseball games as possible ... the more you play the more experience that you will get. And the more you should improve.

#### **July - August**

Attend a Pro Try-Out Camp in your area -- these will be listed in the message section of your daily newspaper's sports section.  
Start learning about Showcases and make contact with several of the directors -- find out if they may be interested in including you in one of their events.

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### **JUNIOR (11th)**

## **September**

Send out your first contact letters --  
Ask your high school coach to write letters to a few preferred colleges  
Include a copy of your fall schedule (if available)

## **SEPTEMBER 1**

Written contact by college coaches is allowed  
Register with the NCAA Initial - Eligibility Clearinghouse  
Register for the fall SAT standardized tests ...a player should write early and often, most students take these tests at least twice ... try to avoid the spring dates, as they may conflict with your high school season. Check into pre-SAT study groups in your area. Request that your SAT test scores be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse (there is a box on the application form that you check for this)

## **DO NOT LET UP ON ACADEMICS**

Familiarize yourself with the NCAA admission / eligibility requirements NCAA  
Online or review the previous section

## **Feb - March**

Send out your spring schedule  
Prepare a videotape to be sent out when requested (do not send unsolicited tapes· Plan visits to as many schools as possible this spring and summer  
Some schools have "Junior Days" during the spring season ... don't be shy write a letter to the coach and ask about them.  
All of these visits are "unofficial" this means that the college cannot pay for any part of the visit. These are done on your own. Summer  
Play a top schedule against strong opponents where you will be seen  
In this environment you will be able to gauge yourself against some of the best players, at each camp. The college coaches will be able to do the same.

## **JULY 1st**

Phone contact from college coaches is permissible

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## SENIOR (12th)

### July - August

Seek out a team that plays fall "showcase" tournaments (pro scouts can be helpful with this)

### DO NOT LET UP ACADEMICALLY

Review core academic requirements with your guidance counselor. Make sure you are "on track"

Send out your fall baseball schedule

Request information on Christmas camps ... especially from schools that you are most interested in or those that have shown an interest in you.

### November

Early signing period -- dates vary slightly from year to year -- Update college coaches on any changes to your fall schedule

You can contact college coaches (by phone) at any time (prior to July after your Junior year they can not call you)

Continue your fall and winter schedule as you have in previous years

### Official Visits

If you are offered an official visit -- prepare for your visit with a list of prepared questions. Be prepared for any questions the college may have for you. See the Recruiting Tips section for information about official and unofficial visits.

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## What are the scouts looking for in a position player?

### January 22, 2005 -- ARM STRENGTH

This is a tool that is often overlooked by ball players today and one of the most lacking tools at the major league level. With 10 teams playing on artificial surfaces, making fielders play their position deeper, a strong arm is even more necessary today than in the past. The player with a strong arm will have less teams take a chance by running against him thus preventing runs from scoring. Thus a team with a weak throwing outfield or catcher will have more opportunities taken against them leading to more throwing errors and more runs given up.

When scouts are evaluating a players' arm strength it is usually during pre-game infield-outfield practice. A scout will get to see several throws by the outfielders to second, third, and home plate. If a player has a good arm, chances are he will show it here, particularly on throws to home plate. Scouts are looking for four things from outfielders: a strong overhand throw, a straight-line trajectory, good carry, and good life on the turf when the ball finally hits the ground.

A strong arm is also necessary for infielders particularly the shortstop and third baseman. Scouts will pay the most attention to throws made from the outfield grass from deep short. If a player has a strong arm, it will show here. Look for a straight-line trajectory, strong hissing noise, and a sharp smack in the first baseman glove.

## **RUNNING SPEED**

Foot speed is the only common denominator of offense and defense. This is one tool that does not go into slumps. A fast runner is of greater priority for clubs that play on artificial turf because they are playing in a bigger park and the ball travels faster than on grass. A fast outfielder may be able to catch up to two more balls a game thus saving his ball club an average of one run a game. The same player can steal bases thus putting ore pressure on the defense and making the pitchers throw more fastballs.

A players running speed is usually timed in two ways; 60 yard dash and from home to first. The average major league time is 6.9 for the 60 yard dash, from home to first 4.3 seconds for right handed hitters and 4.2 seconds for left handed hitters

## **FIELDING ABILITY**

This is the one tool that has the greatest chance of improvement. While you cannot develop great foot speed or a great arm, fielding has the greatest chances of improvement with consistent practice. When judging fielding scouts are looking for a number of traits:

- Quick Feet -- the ability to move quickly laterally and forward and back.
- Range -- how much ground does he cover?
- Soft Hands -- the ability to catch the ball smoothly in the center the glove.
- Quick Hands -- the ability to field bad hops.

## **HITTING ABILITY**

This is the most difficult tool to scout because you are judging a hitter on how they will hit do at the major league level, by watching them hit against amateur pitching. There are a lot of amateur hitters that will look great against amateur pitching and then fall flat on their face once they enter professional baseball. A hitter should have these lists of skills:

- Bat Speed -- the ability to swing the bat quickly
- The ability to consistently hit the ball hard.
- Knowledge of the strike zone
- The ability to turn on a major league fastball.
- The ability to hit breaking pitches.
- The ability to hit to all fields.
- The ability to make adjustments at the plate when fooled.

## **HITTING FOR POWER**

Hitting the ball for power is one of the more desirable traits for any hitter, unfortunately it is often the most poorly projected tool at the major league level. In order to hit for power, a hitter needs outstanding batspeed. Batspeed is what makes the ball travel and all outstanding hitters have it. A hitter with major league power will regularly hit the ball over the fence in batting practice and should be able to drive the ball over 400 feet.

A lot of care should be taken when judging amateur hitters swinging aluminum bats. The aluminum bat has a greater hitting surface, and because they are lighter they can be swung with

much greater bat speed, driving the ball 18% farther than with wooden bats. A 400-foot drive with a wood bat will travel 470 feet with aluminum. So many hitters are home run hitters swinging aluminum become warning track hitters with a wood bat. It is very important for hitters to get used to a wooden bat before signing into professional baseball. Most hitters find they have a tough time getting used to not driving the ball the way they used to in college or high school baseball.

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## **What scouts are looking for in a pitcher?**

**January 22, 2005 -- RADAR GUNS**

There are two basic models of radar guns used to clock the speed of fastballs. The Jugs Speed Gun (Fast Gun) will pick up the speed of the fastball after it has traveled 3.5 feet and the Ra-Gun (Slow Gun) will pick up the speed after the ball has traveled 40-50 feet. A fastball will lose 8 mph from the time it leaves the pitcher's hand to the time it crosses home plate. The JUGS speed Gun is usually 3-4mph faster than the Ra-Gun.

The average major league fastball is 88-89 mph on a JUGS Speed Gun and 84-85 mph on the Ra-Gun. Scouts will rarely if ever sign a pitcher who does not throw at least 85 mph on the JUGS Speed Gun.

It is important to remember that movement and location are just as important as raw speed. Good hitters will handle fastballs that don't move

### **GRADING A PITCHER'S TOOLS**

**Fastball** -- The first thing a scout looks for is a fastball with good velocity and movement. A fastball should sink, rise, slide or tail. A major league fastball is in the high 80's.

**Curveball** -- When grading a curveball, scouts look for a fast tight rotation on the ball. A good curveball will break both laterally and downward about two feet. A good curve ball gives the illusion of falling off the table with its sharp downward breaking motion as it approaches home plate.

**Slider** -- A good slider can be a tremendous compliment to a good fastball. A good slider will have a tight lateral spin, like a bullet. A slider will break about 6-18 inches as it approaches home plate. It should look like a fastball until it breaks across the plate.

**Change-Up** -- A good change up can be a tremendous asset to any pitcher by making fastball seem that much quicker to the hitter. A good change-up should look identical to the hitter only it travels 15-20 mph slower than the fastball. It will make the hitter way out in front of the pitch.

**Delivery** -- A pitcher's delivery should be as smooth as possible. It should look effort-less with no mechanical problems like: throwing across the body, landing on a stiff front leg, overstriding, landing on the heel or his arm lagging behind his body. Any mechanical problems left uncorrected can lead to control and arm problems.

**Control** -- The ability to throw strikes on a consistent basis is vital for any pitcher to have success at any level. If the pitcher has less than overpowering stuff his control becomes even more important to his success. A good pitcher will be able to throw 70% of their pitches for strikes and can throw breaking pitches for strikes when behind in the count.

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## **Defensive Tools by Position**

### **January 22, 2005 -- WHAT SCOUTS LOOK FOR IN CATCHERS**

A good catcher is vital to the success of a championship team. The catcher will provide leadership on the field and work with the pitcher when setting up the hitters and calling the game. The catcher must be durable and is responsible for the team's defense.

A catcher needs soft hands, quick feet and the ability to block pitches in the dirt.

### **WHAT SCOUTS LOOK FOR IN INFIELDBERS**

A good infield is worth his weight in gold to a successful team. A strong defense will take the opposition out of more rallies and save wear and tear on the pitching staff.

Teams are looking for these qualities in their infielders.

**Arm Strength:** A strong arm is especially necessary from the shortstop who will often be making throws up to 150 feet flat-footed on the edge of the outfield grass. The third baseman also needs a strong arm when called upon to make throws up to 120 feet from along the foul line. Look to see if the infielder's throws are straight and do not die as they approach the first baseman.

**Range:** Look for infielders with good body control. They need first-step quickness able to field the ball to their left, right, over their head and able to charge the ball and come up throwing. Also they need soft hands, able to move their hands quickly and smoothly to bad hops and sharply hit line drives

### **WHAT SCOUTS LOOK FOR IN OUTFIELDERS**

A good outfielder is vital to the make up for a successful team. Although most outfielders are in the lineup for their bats, their defensive skills cannot be overlooked. Scouts are looking for these basic skills from outfielders

**Arm Strength:** A strong arm is vital for the defensive make up of the outfield. A strong arm will cut down base runners trying to score and prevent runners from taking extra bases. When evaluating a players' arm strength, it is important to be at the game in time to see infield-outfield practice. If the player has a strong arm, chances are he will show it here. Teams will often decide whether to run on a team by the strength of the arms demonstrated before the game. You should look for four things from outfielders: a strong overhand throw, a straight-line trajectory, good carry, and good life off the turf when the ball finally hits the grounds. A strong arm is vital for right field because he will often be called on to make throws to third base and home plate up to 275 feet.

**Range:** A good outfielder will be able to cover a lot of ground in the outfield. The centerfielder has the most territory to cover, so obviously getting a good jump on the ball and having good speed is vital for a good outfielder. The outfielder must be able to field ground and fly balls and come up throwing. Outfielders need to be able judge how hard a ball is hit and be able to field fly balls hit over his centerfielder requires the most speed and the right fielder the strongest arm. A good

centerfielder can run the 60-yard dash in under 6.6 seconds.  
Left and right fielders should run the 60 yard dash under 6.8 seconds.

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## **What scouts look for in hitters?**

**January 22, 2005 -- What Scouts Look For In Hitters**

This is the hardest all tools to predict whether a player will hit major league pitching because you often do not know whether they will hit at the major league level until they get there.

The quality the most necessary to become a major league hitter is a smooth quick level swing. A player with a quick bat can wait on the pitches longer therefore have a better chance of hitting the ball harder. Another important quality to look for is a good knowledge of the strike zone. A player will not become a good hitter by swinging at pitches outside the strike zone. The more patient the hitter is, the more dangerous they become.

When hitting pay close attention to your hands when you stride. If a player drops or raises his hands when the pitch is being delivered, he increases his chances of not hitting the ball hard. The hands should go back, the less unnecessary movement, the better. The harder the pitcher is throwing, the more mechanically correct the hitter needs to be to hit. A hitter that lunges, doesn't keep his hands back, hitches or has a pronounced uppercut will not hit at a consistent level.

When evaluating hitters focus on tools, not statistics. You should scout tools not performance. Statistics are good for evaluating weaknesses. A hitter with a high strikeout and low walk total is swinging at too many bad pitches, unless corrected will never hit at a constant level.

A hitter should be able to turn on a good fastball on the inside part of the plate. If he can't, he has little chance of becoming a good hitter, because pitchers must throw inside to be successful at the major league level. A hitter must be able to hit breaking pitches or he will not last at the major league or minor league level. Once word gets out about a hitters can't hit the breaking pitches, he will see nothing else until he learns to hit it.

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## **NCAA - Reference Guide**

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