



Preparation for America's Pastime... Youth Baseball

This month we are talking about community. In almost all communities, there are child and teen baseball leagues. Unfortunately, with participation in sports there are injuries.

Medical literature is a good source of guidance when developing recommendations and guidelines for child and teen pitchers. In one research report of 467 child and adolescent baseball pitchers, they examined the types of pitches these kids threw.

Curveballs, sliders, and change ups were studied in this population and they came up with some interesting recommendations:

- 1 Breaking pitches such as the curveball and slider, place more stress on the pitcher's shoulder and therefore, caused more pain in the elbow and shoulder. The curveball was associated with a 52% increased risk of shoulder pain, and the slider was associated with an 86% increased risk of elbow pain.
- 2 A change up is a safe pitch because it does not require rapid twisting of the hand and forearm which torques the elbow and shoulder.
- 3 Because shoulder and elbow injuries are the result of overuse (throwing too many pitches), the number of pitches is important. The authors recommend limiting the number of pitches to 75 in a game and 600 in a season.

Now that we have some recommendations, we need some good programs to help condition the throwing athlete. We are going to suggest a couple ways that you can better prepare your child for the baseball season.

First, it is important to get the arm in shape for baseball season. Like most other sports, a progressive return to a sporting activity is recommended. A marathon runner wouldn't go out and run 26.2 miles on day one of training; rather, he or she would work their way up to the competitive distance. So too, a baseball player should work his or her way up to a reasonable number of tosses.

Here are some recommendations for a program over the course of two weeks:

While there are no strict guidelines, a progressive throwing program varying distance, intensity, and toss count can help prepare your child for the season.

The other way to prepare your child for the season is with an endurance training program.

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