

## Are You Prepared to Prevent Injuries or Handle Them?

Many coaches before the 1980s, were Physical Education teachers who also coached. We had to take courses like Anatomy, Physiology, Human Movement, Kinesiology, First Aid, CPR, Athletic Injuries, Theory of Coaching, Ethics in Coaching, Fundamentals of Coaching and many other related classes.

With softball being in the Olympics, the sport saw a boom in females wanting to play the sport across the country and the World. That meant more teams and more coaches resulting in non-physical education majors becoming coaches which is now the norm. That is fine if the training needed is there.

But how many of the coaches have been trained in the above courses. Everyone says they are a coach but have they put in the time developing into a coach in all aspects.

Many will say that they do not need to know the information in those courses and that has nothing to do with coaching softball. That is such a wrong assumption. Those courses are there for very good reasons.

Many of we “older coaches” who grew up taking those courses cringe when we watch some softball games. The lack of fundamentals that the players have acquired and the lack of strategy used in the games, is really sad to us.

For most coaching the sport now, it is not reasonable to expect them to take those courses because most are not physical education majors. But they need to realize and learn what hazards to watch for in their players.

Players should be taught the proper fundamentals needed to be successful and the proper mechanics to play the game safely. Otherwise they are risking injuries to their bodies from the lack of those proper mechanics.

Example: When I watch a team warming up, I look at specific things like simply playing catch. If the players are throwing without following through after releasing the ball, they will develop throwing shoulder injuries somewhere in their career.

Watch to see if their throwing side foot leaves the ground and passes the hip on their follow through. If not, the stress goes straight to the throwing shoulder. Plus, the ball will be slower to the target and will die in the air since there was no followthrough.

There are snap throws where this may not occur but with most balls they field, they should use the correct follow through or injuries will occur. Outfielders especially need to learn opposition when throwing.

Also, I look at their feet. Are the toes pointed in? That is an athletic position. Toes pointed out and the player will be slower getting started for the ball. Pointed out puts the player on their heels, toes in-player is on her toes and quicker. Plus, pointed in puts less stress on the knees.

Researching the fundamentals of first aid and techniques of taping are very important to learn as a coach. Injuries are part of the game. A twisted ankle, a bad contusion, a cut from a spike, etc. Seldom are their athletic trainers at most team's games. So, the coach is the one to help the players.

We had a couple of players get spiked, one accidentally and one intentionally. **We had to know how to stop the bleeding and get the player the initial help they needed.**

We had a diabetic player, an epileptic player, a couple of players run into the fence teeth first. **Do you know what to tell the player not to do when a tooth is pushed back?**

We had a runner get hit in the nose with a thrown ball, a dislocated ankle, a dislocated finger and so on. **Do you know how to handle those situations immediately?**

**Do you have the proper first aid equipment to handle emergencies?**

We had to know what to do before getting them professional help. It is extremely important to know what to do in emergencies and how to keep the injured person and the rest of the team calm.

**Please watch your players and be able to tell if their lack of fundamentals is hurting them. Please also know basic first aid, wrapping a wound, taping any part of the body and how to keep everyone calm. This is crucial to the well being of a team.**