

## HIGH PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CRITERIA

As a general guide in evaluating the baseball skills of a young, developing player, a number of basic and key observations should be made with an objective eye and understanding. Without a clear set of evaluative criteria, our judgments can often be misread and not truly measured in terms of the accepted baseball skills of reference that are applied consistently for evaluation purposes.

### "What to Look For"

The following abbreviated "scouting" elements should be recognized and critically appraised as a basic guide in the player evaluation process:

#### A. Athleticism

- agility of movements and actions;  
(fluid vs stiff or uncoordinated)
- hands and feet quickness, balance, reaction skills;
- body frame size;  
(weak look vs bulk, muscular; loose and limber vs tight, limited flexibility)

#### B. Identified "Tools" of the Game

##### 1. Arm Strength:

- fluid arm action, easy release, "effortless" look;
- carry on the ball, line of flight, flexibility;
- aptitude for making a mechanical adjustment;
- release quickness (middle infielders and catchers);
- proper follow through, feet positioning, raised arm angle;

##### Terms of use:

- "proper/poor throwing mechanics"
- "quick/slow release"
- "lacks arm strength to play"
- "solid arm action"
- "shows on line carry, live arm"
- "ball tails, lacks life"
- "rushes throws, off line"

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B. Identified "Tools" of the Game (cont'd)

2. Fielding:

- live, active body; quick feet, agility;
- shows instinct, alertness, reaction skills;
- soft hands, "ball disappears in his glove";
- watch for flaws, e.g. stabbing at the ball, stiff arms/body, dragging feet, slow reacting, limited mobility, bad reads, back on heels, not aggressive, poor anticipation;
- are they/some correctible? - judgment of the évaluateur;
- for catchers: strength, durability (with a strong arm), smoothness in receiving, soft hands, glove technique, active lower body.

Terms of use:

- "glove instincts"
- "soft hands, cushions ball"
- "quick/slow feet/lower half"
- "reads hops well"
- "shows lateral agility"
- "gets good/poor jumps in OF"
- "frames pitches well"
- "has lazy look/body language"

3. Running:

- stop watch use for best evaluation;
- use of 60 yard sprint times as well as home to first game action clockings;
- scale of measure to result times to determine ratings:
  - \* 60 yard sprint - first movement to tape;  
"Average" set at 7.2 secs. (7.0 MLB)  
"Above/Below" levels offset by .01 secs.
  - \* Home to First - ball contact to bag touch;  
"Average" set at 4.4 secs. for LH box,  
set at 4.5 secs. for RH box  
"Above/Below" levels offset by .01 secs.
- consider field conditions re "slow track";
- look for athletic movements, use best judgment if no times.

Terms of use:

- "long, fluid stride"
- "slow out of box"
- "choppy steps, better underway"
- "easy/labouring runner"

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### B. Identified "Tools" of the Game (cont'd)

#### 4. Hitting:

- usually the most difficult of categories of judgment and evaluation based on the many attributes involved;
- look for basics, both general batting approach and specific elements of the player;
- general - overall strength, aggressiveness, fear factor;
- specific - balance, set up, lower body use, head position, shoulder turn, hands use, arc of swing, plane of bat, extension, stride length/set, bat/hand speed, reaction/pitch reads, hip rotation, etc.;
- note any mechanical adjustments necessary for improvement; (lowering/raising hands, opening/closing stance, hands set up, shorten/widen stance, foot/legs backside use, etc.);
- common faults - wraps bat, hand hitch, sweeps bat, upper cutter, pulls head, over/long stride, doesn't get bat started, locks lower half, poor weight transfer, weak top hand;
- evaluate physical observations for hitting capabilities; mental batting approach improvements could be suggested if relevant to a player's evaluation results.

#### Terms of use:

- "sound approach"
- "uses whole field"
- "fluid stroke"
- "contact type hitter"
- "ball jumps off bat"
- "swing too long/sweeps bat"
- "over matched/not aggressive"

#### 5. Power:

- grade use at this level likely more for extra base potential re doubles, triples;
- watch for - ball jumping off the bat, ball carry, gap area balls, long fly/warning track balls;
  - strength for power potential, ability to drive the ball, plus bat speed evident;
- combination of hitting mechanics, strength and consistency.

#### Terms of use:

- "shows gap power"
- "good lift for power"
- "warning track power"
- "strength for power potential"

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B. Identified "Tools" of the Game (cont'd)

Pitching:

- start with strength, stamina, aggressiveness and flexibility;
- principal mechanics related to arm action and delivery;

Arm Action - how the arm works;

- flexibility, extension and arm speed;
- movement of arm from glove to release point.

Delivery - arm working in conjunction with the body.

- look for an effortless, easy arm action, free delivery - usually generates a live arm (plus velocity);
- importance of velocity with movement and deception with off speed pitch use;

Velocity - radar gun readings if available;

"Average" grade at 82-84 MPH (age specific);  
"Above/Below" grades offset by +/- 2 MPH for level rating;

- also note hitters failure to make contact, fouling off pitches, strike outs recorded;
- faults to look for:
  - arm action (hands set up, arc, arm angle);
  - delivery (poor completion, balance, stride, hip rotation, front leg stiffness);
  - other (opening up of hips/shoulders too soon, not staying tucked/closed, arm action restricted);

Breaking pitches - proper spin action, tight rotation, downward movement, flexible wrist, proper follow through;

Change Up - as shown if used, proper technique (arm speed, grip), confidence in use;

Other pitches - as shown if used (e.g. split finger, sinker, knuckle ball, etc.;

Control - command shown with all pitches used;

- positive to see, plus rating option as judged.

**Terms of use:**

"lacks arm speed"	"FB has life/tails"
"short armer"	"loses vel. from stretch"
"throws across body"	"CB with sharp break"
"rushes delivery"	"CB has looping action"
"max. effort thrower"	"slows arm with Change"
"strong/weak hip turn"	"FB straight at plate"

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### C. Other Considerations

#### \* Who Is, Who Isn't Projectable:

Not all players will automatically improve. The type who most times will get better are:

- dedicated, hard workers, willing to listen;
- lean, wiry, lacking in maturity now;
- come from successful baseball programs/coaching;
- have had limited experience, opportunity;
- flexibility in body;
- physically strong.

The type who most times won't get better are:

- lazy, not motivated;
- muscular, bound up body;
- other interests or commitments;
- won't listen to instruction, poor focus skills;
- not hungry or aggressive with activity.

#### \* Don't Scout Performance:

Statistical references as a basis for evaluation can be misleading. Be wary of player's averages, league competitive level, etc. Look for players with a strong flexible body (athleticism).

Watch for things that he does mechanically that will eventually bring results and success.

Be careful not to be overly influenced by a player's strong desire, determination and aggressiveness alone. There is still the primary need for strong "tools" to be evaluated objectively.

### D. Player Evaluation Report

The report model (see attached sample) has been drafted as a summary listing of a player's skill level evaluation as determined by a standard "rating key" scale with additional comments for supplementary appraisal.

The High Performance Standard (HPS) "Average" rating as it applies to the identified skill categories is the basis for reference. All evaluators must fully recognize this skill level meaning and objectively assign value ratings appropriately.

Subjective comments are also encouraged based on supportive observations or a more detailed knowledge of a player's background, etc.

The Player Evaluation Report should be a useful guide, if productively applied, to fairly identify and rate the High Performance Program players for the present and the future.