



ProBatter turns from pitcher's mound to cricket pitch

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A cricket bowler prepares to deal on-screen at ProBatter in Milford, which is selling its baseball pitching simulators, with the sport-appropriate changes, into the cricket market. Photo: Contributed Photo / Stamford Advocate Contributed

ProBatter Sports LLC now is helping players hit a cricket ball over the rope.

Building on its success with baseball, the Milford-based provider of video-pitching machines used by Major League Baseball recently sold its first units to the English and Australian national cricket teams.

"It's exciting because it's the second-largest sport in the world behind soccer," said Adam Battersby, ProBatter's president, whose father, Norwalk patent attorney Greg Battersby, invented the machine in 1999 to help Adam's batting swing. "We're looking to develop a sales rep team for cricket."

Since 2001, ProBatter has sold about 300 machines from \$9,000 to \$45,000 to baseball and softball teams at the collegiate and professional levels as well as commercial batting centers in the United States, Puerto Rico, Canada, China, Japan, Korea and Venezuela. There are eight MLB teams, including the New York Yankees and the New York Mets, and about 10 college teams using the \$45,000 PX2 model, Battersby said.

ProBatter Sports also is looking to sell its cricket-version machine, which costs \$50,000, to South Africa's national cricket team, said Battersby, who sees little interest in the machine from U.S. cricket leagues.

"The way our machine is built we can program any delivery," said Battersby, who was approached by the English and Australian teams and is aware of the sport's popularity in Pakistan. "We're looking to sell it to every major country."

ProBatter Sports is owned by Kent Communications Ltd., a diversified publishing and communications company that publishes Battersby's books on intellectual property, and New York City real estate firm Stahl Real Estate. About a dozen patents have been issued for the ProBatter, which simulates a real person pitching the ball on an 8-by-10-foot screen.

A video-pitching -- actually, video-bowling -- machine for cricket would be helpful to Connecticut's cricket players because batting practice is limited to the outdoors from May to September, said Lester Foster, the Bridgeport Cricket Club's representative to the Southern Connecticut Cricket League.

"Such a device you can use indoors, so you can practice 24 hours a day and have practice time in the winter," he said, adding that a facility in Long Island, N.Y., offers use of a cricket machine. "I do hope that something like that can come about in Connecticut."