

HITSTREAK®

OWN THE ZONE

Fundamental Methodology with High Technology



LEFT: The Pro Batter Professional's enormous screen projects the batter's "pitcher of choice" giving him the opportunity to face many different game situations against pitchers.

BELOW: Before facing the pitching machines, the batter is put to the test with fundamental focus-work including the "soft toss", "drop toss" and tees.

BOTTOM: Each member receives a wooden bat, hat, t-shirt, software for viewing their hitting sessions, and a planner.

Photography by Sarah Gilbert

BY LINDA SARGENT WEGNER

At a time when kids put so much of their energy into sports, a new facility in Centennial, HitStreak, takes the time to focus on each individual kid – in this case – the baseball player. HitStreak's goal is to bring out the best batting in each of its member athletes by "teaching their members how to teach themselves" so they can reach their true hitting potential.

A combination of fundamental methodology and high technology, offered exclusively at HitStreak, advances the batting abilities of local baseball players, age 13 years and older, who are serious about significantly improving their batting skills and, ultimately, their game.

Scott Vatter, President and Founder of HitStreak, acknowledges the paramount importance of batting skills in the baseball player's game. He maintains that young baseball players are not always given access to what they need to enter next level of competition. Vatter says, "Most hitters today have to rely on coaches and/or parents to educate them on the art and science of hitting. These options can all be very useful, but they are grossly inadequate for the hitter who wants to play at an elite level. I wanted to make this 'professional level' training available to everyone. A complete program that gives the serious ballplayer all the resources he needs in order to have success."

When Vatter says "complete program", he truly means it. Mental, visual and physical training, fundamental mastery, and video analysis are provided in various forms, and the members are encouraged to take full advantage. Members are allowed unlimited access to the numerous training features at HitStreak.

Upon joining, each member is supplied with a wooden bat, hat, t-shirt, software for viewing his own videotaped hitting sessions, and a planner to document

his daily goals and keep track of workout sessions.

Ideally, every workout begins with the member addressing his planner in the "Mental Room". Here, also, the member has access to computers and software that provide exercises for improving depth perception and visualization. Professional ball players perform these same exercises.

Fundamental focus-work in the batting cages comes next, with the "back to basics" approach. The batter is put to the test with "soft toss", "drop toss" and tees. Then it's on to the pitching machines where small balls and bats test the batter's hand-eye coordination. Tracking drills also comprise the challenge here. For example, balls with numbers on them are pitched and the batter is required to call out the number on the ball. Repetition of all of these elemental drills considerably improves the player's batting capabilities.

The most impressive piece of machinery at HitStreak, the "Pro Batter Professional", builds on the fundamentals by putting the batter virtually at the plate. HitStreak is the first facility in the U.S. to retain one of these machines, and it promises to be the biggest draw. Again, professionals use this same type of machine in their training.

An enormous screen projects the batter's "pitcher of choice" giving him the opportunity to face many different game situations against pitchers. Here, he can improve his batting against the types of pitchers that might trip him up in a real game. The batter chooses from many options; the pitcher that the batter calls up on the screen could be a lefty or righty, and may throw any kind of pitch at any speed and to any location over the plate.

The pitcher on the screen winds up and throws. A ball shoots out of the screen and toward the bat-



ter, who takes a swing and attempts to make contact. Cameras, placed strategically around the batter in the Pro Batter cage, capture images of the batter that can be reviewed immediately to further associate the batter with his swing.

The variable factor in the comprehensive training process is the commitment of the player. "They will be able to go as far as their ability and work ethic will take them," Vatter states. "I want this place to offer a team atmosphere where the members, by nature of the workout, encourage other members. I envision the best of the best working out here and inspiring each other to do better and better."

Vatter played baseball at Rangeview High School in Aurora, and college ball at University of Northern Colorado. He then signed as a free agent in the minor leagues. He has coached at local high schools, including Highlands Ranch, Gateway and Mountain Vista, and is still involved with high school baseball. Through the venue of HitStreak and all that it offers its members, Vatter intends to show young baseball players how concentrated challenge can, and will, benefit and improve the batting segment of their game, making them a more valuable part of the team.

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