

Instructor Biographies



The Action Sports Center's instruction philosophy is founded on the principle of training the athlete to become as athletically efficient and fundamentally sound for their specific skill; be it pitching, hitting, fielding or throwing. In addition to the physical approach to the game, Action Sports Center's instructors reinforce and instill intangibles such as:

- Confident and Disciplined approach to the 'trade' of baseball
- Techniques to help maintain Focus
- Mental Approach and Attitude towards the skill, the team and the game
- Personal Accountability
- Appreciation and Respect for the coach, the team and game of baseball

Action Sports Center prides itself in the coaching staff. Below currently represents our on-staff instructors.

Michael Murphy – Head Instructor

Instruction Focus: Pitching and Throwing Mechanics

Philosophy:

Mike takes pride in teaching and helping young athletes achieve their goals, whether it's as simple as performing better at the recreational level or playing the game at higher levels. Mike's teaching philosophy is simple, learn the game, respect the game, enjoy the game and practice the game with discipline. As it applies to pitching and throwing, mechanics, like most sports is the cornerstone to successful execution. Focus is always given to maximizing all aspects of the delivery of a baseball, from balance to weight transfer and follow through. Focus is placed on finding a player's comfortable arm slot/throwing angle and working from there. No two players are alike and every player learns differently. The key is find what works for the particular athlete. The desired goal is to maximize mechanics by minimizing extra or unnecessary motion often introduced to the throwing techniques of young athletes.

Experience:

- Over 30 years playing experience at all levels of baseball
- Manhattan College Varsity Baseball - Bronx, NY – 1980 – 1983
 - Catching
 - Pitching
- Cleveland Indians
 - Drafted 1983 June Draft –18th Round 455th pick overall as a right handed pitcher
 - 1983 – Batavia Trojans – (Rookie) – NY Penn League
 - 1984 – Waterloo Indians - Midwest League (A) – All Star
 - 1984 - Buffalo Bisons – Eastern League (AA)
 - 1985 - Waterloo Indians – Midwest League (A)
 - 1986 – Waterbury Indians - Eastern League (AA) – All Star
 - 1986 - Maine Guides – International League (AAA)
 - 1987 - Buffalo Bisons - American Association (AAA) - 40 Man Roster
 - 1988 - Colorado Springs Sky Sox – Pacific Coast League (AAA)
 - 1988 - Williamsport Indians – Eastern League (AA)
 - 1988 - Retired

Tony Stritenberger – Resident Instructor

Instruction Focus: Hitting and Infield/Defense

Philosophy:

Hitting a baseball is one of the hardest things to do in sports. It is imperative that hitters have a confident approach to the art of hitting. Building confidence through drills, mental approach and application of routines is the foundation of teaching at all age levels. Every hitter is evaluated for their natural swing and the gradual adjustments are made to the parts of the swing that they do not perform well. The goal is to find what each players comfortable hitting zone and work from there, eventually building to a compact powerful swing built upon a strong physical and mental foundation.

Experience:

- Chaminade Julianne Records
 - Single Season, Hits, Doubles, RBI's
 - Single Season, 2nd in Home Runs
 - Career Records, Hits, Doubles, RBI's and 3rd in Home Runs
 - 4 year Varsity player
 - CJ Hall of Fame for Baseball, Basketball and Football
- HH Morgan (DABC)
 - Single Season hit record with 130
 - 4 Times selected to the All Nischwitz tournament team
 - Inducted into the DABC Hall of Fame
- Kansas City Community College
 - Single Season hits and doubles record
 - .430 career batting average

Rob Cooper – Guest Instructor

Instruction Focus: Hitting

Biography:

Rob Cooper was named just the fourth head coach in the 37-year history of the program on July 14, 2004, Cooper came to WSU and began to build a program that modeled him as a person. In his first four seasons at the helm, Cooper has appeared in two Horizon League Championships Games, led the Raiders to three-straight 30+ win seasons and guided the program to its second NCAA Regional appearance in 2006.

After serving as an assistant coach at Oral Roberts University, Cooper took the reigns at Wright State, bringing a passion and vision to an already strong program. In his first four seasons, Cooper has guided the Raiders to 124 wins, set a new school record for league wins in a season (21) and led his squad to the NCAA Tournament in 2006. The skipper has also watch his players win a pair of Horizon League Player of the Year honors and one Pitcher of the Year honor.

The 2008 season was the third straight season that Cooper won 30 or more games, posting a 30-23 mark, and the Raiders completed their Horizon League schedule with a 16-6 mark. The 16 wins were good enough to finish second in the league and six players received All-Horizon League honors. Jeremy Hamilton was named the Horizon League Player of the Year, while four other players were named to the All-Horizon League First Team.

At seasons end, Cooper watched as a school and Horizon League-record three players were drafted during the 2008 Major League Baseball First Year Player Draft. Jeremy Hamilton, Justin Parker and Ross Vagedes were all selected during the draft, in the fifth, sixth and 35th rounds respectively.

Last season, the Raiders set school records for batting average and slugging percentage, while Hamilton became the fifth WSU player to post a batting average of .400 or better (.410). The Raiders also led the Horizon League in batting average, total bases, fielding percentage and fewest hits allowed by a pitching staff. Five Wright State players led the Horizon League in an offensive, defensive or pitching category, with Hamilton leading the league in walks, slugging percentage and on-base percentage.

In 2007, Wright State enjoyed one of the most prolific offensive seasons in school history as they broke three career records and 11 single-season school records. Ross Oeder was named the Horizon League Player of the Year and garnered Second Team All-American Honors, while Dan Biedenharn won the Rawlings Gold Glove at third base. Oeder and Justin Parker were each selected to the ABCA All-Region team and Hamilton was added to the USA Collegiate National Team roster during the summer.

During the season the Raiders posted a pair of victories over then-18th ranked Mississippi in Oxford, MS and posted a winning record on the Road for the first time since 1994. The Green and Gold also posted 15 wins at home and set a new school standard for league wins in a season

with 21. WSU made their second trip to the Horizon League Championship game in 2007, falling in the finale to UIC. Senior Brian Shoup set a tournament single-game record for home runs, with three, against Milwaukee to propel the Raiders into the championship game.

In the summer of 2007, Cooper joined an elite group of coaches when he was selected as an Assistant Coach for the USA Collegiate National Team. The WSU head coach traveled around the world with the National Team and won the Silver Medal at the Pan-Am Games in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. Cooper helped Team USA compile a 25-12 overall record during their summer of play.

The 2006 edition of the Green and Gold set six school records and posted the most season wins in five years. During the '06 slate, Coopers team defeated nationally-ranked TCU on the road, topped national-powerhouse Notre Dame in South Bend and were on the brink of an upset against eventual national champion Oregon State in the NCAA Corvallis Regional.

In four seasons at the helm, Cooper has seen nine of his players sign professional free agent contracts and has had five of players selected in the Major League Baseball Draft. Joe Smith, who was the 2006 Horizon League Pitcher of the Year, was drafted in the fifth round by the New York Mets and made his major league debut on Opening Day of the 2007 season with the Mets. Ross Oeder, the 2007 Horizon League Player of the Year, was taken by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 2007 draft and played for the Quad City River Bandits last season. In 2008, Hamilton was drafted by the Philadelphia Phillies in the fifth round, Parker was taken in the sixth round by the Arizona Diamondbacks and Vagedes was chosen by the Chicago Cubs in the 35th round.

Cooper has coached 29 All-League performers and one All-American. Oeder and Smith are the first players in history to garner the Player and Pitcher of the Year honor since WSU joined the Horizon League/Midwestern Collegiate Conference. Oeder became only the sixth player in league history to earn the league's player of the year and tournament MVP honor in his career. When Hamilton won the Player of the Year honor in 2008, he and Oeder became the third teammates to win back-to-back awards since 1995.

Oral Roberts, a perennial power of the Mid-Continent Conference, advanced to the finals of the NCAA Austin Regional in 2004, beating TCU twice and losing to top-seeded Texas 7-3 and 7-5. The Golden Eagles, who finished with an overall mark of 50-11 in 2004, also boasted regular-season wins over national powers Arkansas, Arizona State twice, Creighton three times and Wichita State. ORU also had five players selected in the Major League Baseball draft, two honored as All-Americans by the American Baseball Coaches Association and three named All-Americans by the College Baseball Insiders website.

Cooper, who served as ORU's hitting coach as well as recruiting coordinator and bench coach, began his coaching career at national power Miami (FL), spending two seasons (1994-95) as a student/graduate assistant on the Hurricanes' staff. While at Miami, Cooper helped lead the Hurricanes to College World Series berths in 1994 and 1995.

The Colorado native spent the 1996 season as an assistant and team academic coordinator at Wake Forest, then moved on to Tulane for the next two seasons, serving as the Green Wave's

hitting coach. Cooper left Tulane following the 1998 season and returned to Sacramento City College, where he starred in the early 1990's before lettering at Miami in 1993.

In his first season at Sac City, Cooper helped guide SCC to the California Community College State Tournament championship. Sac City was then the runner-up in 2002.

During his tenure as an assistant coach at Miami and Tulane, his teams advanced to NCAA Tournaments in 1994-95 (Miami) and 1998 (Tulane). In 1997, the Green Wave won the Conference USA regular-season crown.

Along with his college coaching experience, Cooper also was an associate scout for the Los Angeles Dodgers from 1990-92 and has been selected to three coaching stints with USA Baseball in 2000, 2007 and 2009.

Cooper earned his bachelor's degree in psychology from Miami in 1994 and a master's in sports sciences/administration from UM in 1996. Cooper and his wife, Maureen, reside in the Beavercreek area and have two children, Jake and Tyson

Blaine Wright – Staff Instructor

Instruction Focus: Pitching

Experience:

- First Team All Region for National Junior College Association (NJCAA)
- Member of 2006 and 2007 Regional Champion Clark State Eagles
- Captain Clark State Eagles
- Two Time All Ohio Heritage Conference Selection
- State Champion, The Natural Athlete Strength Association

Kyle Kearcher – Guest Instructor

Instruction Focus: Pitching

Philosophy:

In baseball, the mental game plays such a predominant role in all aspects of the game. For a young athlete learning to play the game, not only does he want to develop his skills physically, but will also need to become mentally prepared to face the challenges ahead of him.

Confidence is what this mental aspect revolves around. It is difficult as a baseball player to keep his composure under some circumstances, but in learning to control emotions, players of all ages can reach the ultimate goal of baseball, to reach ones full potential and have fun doing it.

I believe the most important pitch in baseball is **strike one**. The second, the very next pitch. A pitcher cannot change the last pitch he threw, or the pitch before that, so as soon as it is thrown, no matter what the outcome, it can't affect his next pitch. When throwing a baseball your body is like a whip. Generating power and force from the base, with repeated efficiency of balance and timing, allowing your body to create a smooth powerful motion in order to produce maximum arm speed at your release point. A pitchers worst enemy is **fatigue**. The goal is simply to get the pitcher from point A to point B as efficiently and stress free as possible while generating as much arm speed as possible.

Experience:

- **Wright State University: Pitcher (L) 2003-'07**
 - '04-Tied for fifth in the Horizon League in starts (13) and tied for ninth in wins (5)
 - '05-14 appearances making 8 starts
 - '06-11 appearances with 1 start; Horizon League Champions, Corvallis Oregon regional.
 - '07-Sixth pitcher in WSU history to win 10+ games in a season, 7th highest win total in school history. Received "Raider Award" for outstanding commitment to program
- **Kalamazoo Kings Professional Baseball –July '07-Aug. '07**
 - '07- 12.1 innings pitched
- **Midwest Sliders Professional Baseball- 2008-'09**
 - '08- Led the staff with team record 7 wins 113 innings and 107 K's
 - '09- Pitched 76.1 innings before being shut down with bicep tendonitis