

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USA BASEBALL YOUTH COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON NON-WOOD BATS

USA Baseball, the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of baseball as designated by the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, recently held a meeting of its National Youth Membership, and on behalf of the following organizations has released the following statement:

1. American Amateur Baseball Congress (AABC)
2. American Legion Baseball
3. Dixie Baseball
4. Little League Baseball, Inc.
5. Babe Ruth Baseball
6. PONY Baseball
7. National Baseball Congress / Hap Dumont Baseball
8. Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)
9. United States Sports Specialties Association (USSSA)
10. National Police Athletic League (PAL)
11. T-Ball USA

PERCEPTION: Aluminum bats are more dangerous than wood bats.

The National Consumer Product Safety Commission studied this issue and concluded in 2002 that there is no evidence to suggest that aluminum bats pose any greater risk than wood bats. Multiple amateur baseball governing bodies, including the NCAA, National High School Federation, Little League International, PONY, et al, all track safety statistics and have concluded that aluminum bats do not pose a safety risk.

PERCEPTION: Balls come off aluminum bats faster than wood.

Since 2003, all bats are required to meet the "Bat Exit Speed Ratio" (BESR) performance limitation, which ensures that aluminum bats do not hit the ball any harder than the best wood bats.

PERCEPTION: Injuries from aluminum bats are more severe than with wood bats.

Two out of the three deaths from a batted ball in the last decade came from wood bats. Dr. Frederick Mueller, Director of the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research, has indicated from his studies that catastrophic injuries from wood bats may be more frequent than aluminum bats.

PERCEPTION: The Brown University study proves that aluminum bats hit the ball harder than wood bats.

This study is irrelevant by today's standards. All of the bats used in the Brown study would not be allowed to be used today, because they do not meet the BESR standard.

PERCEPTION: The use of aluminum bats places children at an unacceptable risk of injury.

A study from the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research shows that there have been only 15 catastrophic batted ball injuries to pitchers out of more than 9,500,000 high school and college participants since 1982.

During the last five years a number of states, individual organizations, city councils, and others have proposed the banning of metal baseball bats on a number of different levels. These actions have typically been in reaction to a catastrophic injury as opposed to being based on creditable injury data or research. In May of 2002 the Consumer Product Safety Commission stated, "The Commission is not aware of any information that injuries produced by balls batted with non-wood bats are more severe than those involving wood bats". This statement was true in 2002 and it is true in 2007.

The Medical/Safety Advisory Committee of USA Baseball was initiated due to the lack of injury data needed to make decisions affecting the safety of baseball participants. Prior to 2005 there has not been significant research comparing injuries to baseball pitchers from metal bats versus wood bats. In 2005 the USA Baseball Medical/Safety Committee initiated a three year research project comparing line drive baseball injuries to pitchers from metal bats and wood bats. Metal bat injury data were taken from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Injury Surveillance System and wood bat injury data collected from college summer leagues (NCAA recognized college summer league teams all use wood bats).

After two years (2005 and 2006) of collecting batted ball injury data to the pitcher from 93 NCAA college baseball teams and 246 college summer league teams there have only been 17 injuries to NCAA college pitchers and 15 injuries to college summer league pitchers. Only 32 injuries after 331,821 balls were hit into play (Balls hit into play are calculated by taking the number of at bats and subtracting strike outs and bases on balls). The injuries in the summer leagues were more severe than the NCAA injuries. One-third of the summer league injuries involved the head and face as opposed to none in the NCAA. The third year of the study will be completed in 2007.

What this data does indicate is that injuries to the pitcher from batted balls are very rare and can happen while using metal or wood bats. There is no data to indicate that the few catastrophic injuries to baseball pitchers from metal bats would not have happened if the batter was using a wood bat. Before any sport makes rule changes, equipment changes, or other changes related to the safety of the participants, it is imperative that these changes are based on reliable injury data and not anecdotal information.

USA Baseball is the National Governing Body of amateur baseball in the United States and a member of the United States Olympic Committee. The organization selects and trains the USA Baseball National Team, the USA Baseball Junior National Team (18-under), the USA Baseball Youth National Team (16-under), the USA Baseball 14-U National Team (14-under), and the USA

Baseball Women's National Team which participate in various international competitions each year.

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