

What Are You Looking for When Recruiting Hitters?

Justin Lewis Interview 2021-01-20

Justin Lewis 00:00

I think she hit two home runs off those, she was like four for four with two jacks. Yeah, she was incredible.

Joey Myers 00:09

Wow. Well, there's a bunch that opted out last MLB season two. I don't know who really, but I know there were a few. Are you ready to get started?

Justin Lewis 00:20

Yes, whatever you need, brother.

Joey Myers 00:22

All right, let me do an official role here.

Joey Myers 00:25

Welcome to Swing Smarter monthly newsletter. This is your host Joey Myers from hittingperformancelab.com, and I have the pleasure today of returning the favor, Mr. Coach Justin Lewis.

Joey Myers 00:34

He had me on his podcast a few years back, and he has just moved here to California actually, specifically Fresno, he just got the hitting instructor job for Fresno State softball.

Joey Myers 00:48

I want to first welcome you to the show, and welcome you to California, Justin.

Justin Lewis 00:51

Yes, brother. Thanks for having me. I appreciate it, and yes, the tables have turned here.

Joey Myers 00:58

Well, in those days, you were still doing the firefighter gig and you were looking to start to get your foot in the door for coaching and things like that. Now, you're the hitting coach for Fresno State softball.

Justin Lewis 01:10

Yeah, it's kind of been a whirlwind last three and a half years. I was driving a fire truck three and a half years ago when we last chatted. What's funny about that podcast, I loved doing that podcast, and I actually miss it a lot.

Justin Lewis 01:23

I miss having great conversations, with people like you, but I started it because I wasn't having any luck getting back into the game. It was like, well, let's start this little journey and then I got the opportunity to kind of get back in. This is my third school and three and a half season goal, and my fourth season now.

Joey Myers 01:46

So, Tracy's back there, you started the podcast to try and get your foot back in the door in the game. How did you get to where you are now? How did that domino help you to get to where you're at?

How did you get to being the hitting coach for Fresno State softball?

Justin Lewis 01:58

Yeah, I don't know that the podcast really helped me that much. Basically, Mike Kandrey at University of Arizona is one that really helped me out the most.

Justin Lewis 02:07

I was living in Tucson, driving a fire truck, but I was working on Mike's camps. That's really what helped me get in. Then, Craig Nicholson was out of coaching and was looking to get back in and he took a Division Two head job at Texas A&M Kingsville.

Justin Lewis 02:27

I had known him from we were both at Central Arizona College together. He was the head softball coach, and I was coaching baseball there. We had a relationship and that's kind of how it worked out.

Justin Lewis 02:39

I went to Kingsville, took a team that hadn't been to the conference tournament in 10 years. We went to the conference tournament the first year, and then the second year, went all the way to the DII World Series and finished second.

Justin Lewis 02:51

We got double dipped on the last day to lose it. It was kind of a rough one. But D2 right, they're going to make you do a doubleheader in the championship game.

Joey Myers 03:03

Yeah. Right. Like little league?

Justin Lewis 03:07

Yes, and so then a friend of mine got the head job at Texas A&M Corpus Christi, which is a D1 school down there. I was already living in Corpus Christi, so it was an easy transition, I got to sneak into division one ball and didn't even have to move.

Justin Lewis 03:23

Then this opportunity came along, and it was just too good of an opportunity to pass up, being able to join a program that's firing on all cylinders. They had a great run before COVID hit last year. I can join them, and hopefully, coming here will not screw things up.

Joey Myers 03:44

Was it just one of the few openings that came up, Fresno State? How did you land here?

Justin Lewis 03:58

It came open. They kind of went through the hiring freeze with COVID, after the Coach Lisle left. It was just kind of a timing thing, and I had some people reached out to me and asked if I would be interested in it.

Justin Lewis 04:16

I hadn't even really thought about it, I wasn't planning on leaving where I was at, we were building, we took over a team that had only won eight games the year before we got there. We were kind of in our complete rebuild.

Justin Lewis 04:29

I was really looking forward to going through that journey because we brought 13 new kids into Corpus this year, and then had an amazing recruiting class coming in 2021. I was super excited because that team is going to be nasty.

Justin Lewis 04:45

I was looking forward to being part of that. I wasn't planning on leaving until I could get a head coaching job, it was kind of my goal.

Justin Lewis 04:54

I wasn't really looking to leave for another assistance role, but again, just the opportunity to come join a top 25 program, with the facilities that we have here.

Justin Lewis 05:05

As a hitting guy, they got everything in the world you could want here. I haven't been to a school yet that had any more technology than my cell phone. Having an indoor hitting facility with hit tracks, K motion, blast, and everything we got, it was just kind of an ideal situation for us.

Joey Myers 05:27

What do you do when you come into a program? Like the last couple ones you talked about, they only won eight games. As a hitting guy, where do you start? That's a big challenge. Where do you start with that?

What do you do when you come into a new program?

Justin Lewis 05:42

Just start with the basics, if you don't even know where to sometimes, it's so overwhelming, because you didn't recruit any of those kids, right? When I recruit, I try to recruit swings that I already love, because they limit us in time so much that we don't have time to do complete rebuilds of swings, it's just unrealistic.

Justin Lewis 06:04

That's even if the kids want to. It's a lot of just band aids and try to make them as good as they can possibly be with what they're already working with.

Justin Lewis 06:17

At the end of the day, one of the reasons I recruit swings that I already love, besides the timing factor, is I don't want to take something away from a kid, even if you make a change, you still kind of took something from them, right?

Justin Lewis 06:29

To me, mentally that does something to them. Luckily, we're in situations where those kids were hungry for any kind of knowledge and work ethic. It was just kind of lucky that when I was at Kingsville, there were some really talented pieces that were in place, and we kind of fell into a great situation. That was nice.

Justin Lewis 06:55

The last year was a little rough just because there wasn't a whole lot of talent there, but just great kids that wanted to work. We were better, we were 6 and 16 when COVID hit and kids were gelling and starting to really buy in.

Justin Lewis 07:14

We probably would have won about 20 games is my guess, which doesn't sound great but compared to eight the year before. I was kind of sad for those kids to not get to finish off showing that we were better.

Justin Lewis 07:30

The teams that we played could tell that we were better. We were competing in games that they had no business competing in the year before and snuck a couple of sneaky wins in over some teams that we had no business beating.

Justin Lewis 07:45

You miss it for those seniors that didn't get to finish it. As far as just the hitting goes, it's just tough, it is just putting in the reps with the kids that want to work and just trying to put it all together.

Joey Myers 08:00

It makes it nice when they actually want to learn and want to get better and things like that. I always tell my dads or my buddies "hey, do you want to get into college coaching or high school coaching? I'm doing a little league thing by default because my son's eight now". We've been doing that, you know?

Joey Myers 08:19

I always tell him, well, it's nice with the private small group stuff we do because all those kids want to be there. They all want to get better and the parents want that as well.

Joey Myers 08:29

When you say that it makes it easier when you walk into a facility or program even if you didn't recruit those hitters. You mentioned the kind of swings that you're looking for, what are the top, maybe one or two things, say like Fresno State moving forward, when you get to start recruiting bid? Or maybe you guys are still kind of doing that now? What are you looking for?

What are you looking for when recruiting hitters?

Justin Lewis 08:54

A couple things, the biggest thing I look for is, I look for kids that are already naturally keeping their barrel in the middle of a field. It's like the recruiting velocity for pitchers. It's just more room for air.

Justin Lewis 09:10

Kids that already naturally do that, that's like number one for me. Are we swinging the bat hard? Are we trying to do damage? It may look pretty but there's no juice behind it. Kids that are real spinning, I try to avoid even if they look the part.

Justin Lewis 09:33

A lot of times in travel ball you get these kids that are 5'9". Big strong kid, they're on the right travel ball team, and they get enough bad pitching in high school and travel ball that they can make that swing work.

Justin Lewis 09:47

You better understand that swinging will translate to this level where kids are upper 60s and painting corners like crazy and 80% of our pitching is probably on the outside part of the plate and it's there for a reason, it's all these kids come in.

Justin Lewis 10:03

As they're growing and getting older, they are getting stronger, they realize that if I get going this way in a hurry, spin it in one direction, I got a little bit of juice. That just doesn't translate when you get to this level. Naturally, I just look for those kids that naturally just keep their barrel in the middle of the field.

Joey Myers 10:23

The other thing in softball, you have the high fastball and baseball but on the big field, 60 feet six inches to see that ball come and travel. But in softball, it's 43 feet, right? You have less time, so the rise ball comes in, and when you have that spinny swing, typically what follows is that barrel gets in the zone way too early and drops because the minute that barrel leaves the shoulder, gravity starts taking over and rotational forces start taking over and drag the barrel down.

Joey Myers 10:51

That rise ball becomes a challenge. The past school, was that baseball or was that softball?

Justin Lewis 10:58

I've been in softball ever since I got back. I played men's fastpitch for 15 years. That's kind of where I fell in love with the game. You look at it as like a business move if you looked at just that way.

Justin Lewis 11:17

Softball, to me, is the way to go. I talked to baseball guys all the time, like you got to get into softball. There's so much room for growth, and there's so much dominant coaching, just excellent coaching, and all levels of college baseball.

Justin Lewis 11:32

I was getting in as a 40-year-old assistant, starting from the bottom. I wasn't 23 or 24 right. I had to make a business decision as well. It wasn't just that, I love softball, after playing it, and you see how fast the game is compared to baseball.

Justin Lewis 11:52

I have a hard time watching baseball anymore, it's just so slow and dry. It doesn't even hold my attention. I grew up with four older sisters, I got a wife and a daughter, like I should have known, it should have been foreshadowing years ago that I was going to end up coaching females, but I absolutely love it. I wouldn't trade it for baseball in a heartbeat right now. There's no way, I absolutely love it.

Joey Myers 12:22

I love my boys. I love working with my boys, but the girls are a little bit more fun. Boys are sponges, they want to soak it in, they want to learn, they want to get better, and some more than others. But it just seems like every girl that I've worked with, they just want it a little bit more sometimes.

Justin Lewis 12:42

I was nervous about it. I'll tell you a funny story. My first road trip and Kingsville were kind of letting me know that there's not a whole lot of difference between them either. We're driving, we're not 30 minutes down the road and I hear this man who farted, and I was like, they're the same.

Joey Myers 13:05

They're humans.

Justin Lewis 13:09

There's some obviously particulars where we got to be careful touching and hand placements.

Joey Myers 13:18

Yes, no more butt slaps.

Justin Lewis 13:21

Yes, none of that. No grab ass at all. You must be particular where you stand, especially once the relationship gets built, they understand that you're just there to help them but I'm very particular and make sure I keep my distance.

Justin Lewis 13:36

I stand in front of them, "Hey, is it okay if I touch your shoulders?", if I want to try to manipulate them a certain way, the same with their hands. I got about a three-foot-long PVC pipe for one, stand that back hip, it's like that right there.

Joey Myers 13:55

Instead of using your finger, you're poking them with it.

Justin Lewis 13:59

I grab them if their hips are going a certain way, I grab their hips and manipulate them the way you wanted to, but that's just not an option.

Joey Myers 14:06

Exactly. Yes, that's a good point. I think you coming from a female background family wise, you understand that, and that's good for others to hear, too. Especially those that have daughters that are getting into softball, like the little league version of softball and stuff. It's good to know.

Joey Myers 14:24

On game planning, do you guys do game planning? Do you have a strategy that you help the girls with? Like you hunt? Do you have them hunt in certain scenarios? How does that go?

Do you guys do game planning?

Justin Lewis 14:36

I try to look at what the other pitchers are trying to do to us. Most of them are trying to throw strike one, let's find out, can she throw a strike one? If she can, is that our best pitch to hit?

Justin Lewis 14:54

If it is, to me we got to go bang strike one. If they have proven through scouting whatever, they're not great at throwing strike one, we can be a little bit more patient.

Justin Lewis 15:05

I battle with these kids a lot because no one wants to hit down and away curveball running away from you at 68 miles an hour. That might be legitimately your best shot. If you're 0-1 now because you didn't want to go attack that pitch, now most of them are just going to try to throw rise balls above your hands. Good luck with that.

Justin Lewis 15:33

Let's find out if strike one is an option for us, and if it is, we got to drop our egos and we got to go attack it. I'm also real big about the 1-1 count, it makes a big difference in that -pitch, are we going 2-1? Or are we going 1-2, and that's just vastly different scenarios there.

Justin Lewis 15:54

Pitchers tend to get into rhythm and pitch callers get into rhythms, those are two counts that I track, the 0-0 count and the 1-1 count, and just having an idea of what that rhythm and routine is, if there's any pattern there.

Justin Lewis 16:13

At this level, the higher up you go into Division One, the lower levels and DII, a lot of times you're just facing two pitchers. There will be curveball rise ball, the special ones got that third one that change up, if they got that trouble.

Justin Lewis 16:29

The higher up we go, you're facing kids that almost every kids got that change up, and maybe they got a fourth pitch. We start looking at what pitches can we eliminate. To me when I played and face guys that were throwing absolute gas and had four devastating pitches, I'll start eliminating some of these pitches.

Justin Lewis 16:47

How do I do that? To me it was, if I go hunt something down at my knees, the rise balls a lot easier to take when I've got to be focused down in the zone. I do a drill with our girls where I'll tell them in front toss, every pitch is going to be at your kneecap, to your shin and I want you get down there and drive it.

Justin Lewis 17:08

We're not just going to pound ground balls running that pitch, and they focus and it's always their best round, and they're super focused on it. About three quarters of the way through that round, I'll throw a one up at their chest level, and they take it effortlessly.

Justin Lewis 17:24

I'll talk about it afterwards. "Hey, that was a great round. Why do you think you did so good?" "I was focused". Oh, that's a mind-blowing stuff here. Then, I'll ask them, "Hey, I threw that ball up kind of simulated rise ball, how easy was that to take?" "Well, it's really easy". "How come?" "I was focused down in the zone."

Justin Lewis 17:45

Shocking. From me having to do that over and over again and chasing my fair share of rise balls through the years. That's what I try to get through to them. We face so many rise ball pitchers, that seems to be the key for us.

Joey Myers 18:06

Do you guys ever switch your plan, and go and hunt the rise ball at all, like rise ball, obviously up to a certain limit? You're not swinging at one that's up here.

Do you have your girls hunt the rise ball?

Justin Lewis 18:15

Flat rise balls go a long way. What's interesting is this summer, or during quarantine, a bunch of us hitting coaches got together on a weekly zoom call. It was awesome.

Justin Lewis 18:30

There's probably as many as 28-29 of us every week from all the top programs and just JuCo programs, all different levels, and everyone's sharing their information and one of the coaches, his approach sometimes is like, "whatever their strength is, let's go hunt that", it was kind something I hadn't really thought.

Justin Lewis 18:55

Why would I go look for their worst nastiest pitch, and when we start looking at a lot of the statistics, some of these guys really get into the weave with the tracking of some of this stuff, they have the technology to do it.

Justin Lewis 19:10

They still miss, and we got to be ready for where we act. A lot of times pitchers never miss, and they do at all levels, even the greatest ones, miss right in the middle of the plate a lot. It certainly made me question and made me think a little bit more about it.

Joey Myers 19:27

Have you ever dug into Perry Husband stuff? Effective Velocity?

Justin Lewis 19:32

Absolutely.

Joey Myers 19:32

He's gotten really big into the fastpitch softball world and he's worked with I think some of the top five programs, when it comes to both the hitters and the pitchers.

Joey Myers 19:44

Hitters, it's the hunting, if it's the pitchers, they're moving their pitches around in the zone to take advantage of the discrepancy between how close the ball is versus how far it is away.

Joey Myers 19:55

That was a big one for me, from a hitting perspective because now I have to counter that. How do we counter that? He says, it's like a wide receiver trying to cover two cornerbacks, one cornerback trying to cover two wide receivers.

Joey Myers 20:11

Both wide receivers run a similar route, one's a deep route and the other one's like a deep post, he can just kind of hang out in the middle, read the quarterback and then just peel off whenever the quarterback goes and releases the ball.

Joey Myers 20:22

The problem happens when you have one wide receiver that goes deep, and you have another one that does like a 10 yard cut in the middle. Now that cornerback has to decide, do I need to defend the deep ball because I don't have a safety behind me to help or can I peel off and go inside?

Joey Myers 20:39

With the pitching, it's the same idea. If you guys are facing a lot of rise ballers, like this coach is saying why not? Why not hunt their best stuff and teach the girls how you get to that rise ball and crank on it?

Justin Lewis 20:51

Yes, absolutely. One of the things with softball, you're not like baseball, you have different arm slots, everything like that. That's not a thing in softball, and so everything's coming out of one spot.

Justin Lewis 21:03

The ability for these pitchers to have everything busting out of one plane different directions, it's nasty. Some of these kids are just filthy with what they do, and I think the EV stuff in softballs is barely scratching the surface right now.

Joey Myers 21:23

Now, pitch recognition, like you mentioned is a little tougher softball, because it's coming out it seems like the same slot. Do you do pitch recognition stuff with the girls? And if you do, how do you do that?

Do you do pitch recognition stuff with the girls?

Justin Lewis 21:36

I don't dabble with it much. Again, worse. Especially right now, where Fresno State didn't even have a fall. It's like fire ready aim right now.

Joey Myers 21:47

Yes, it's a little advanced.

Justin Lewis 21:51

It's just trying to get reps right now and some of these kids have been off for 10 months, relying on what kind of work they put in. Luckily, at this level, most of these kids have still been putting in work, they haven't seen a live pitching in 10 months.

Joey Myers 22:09

Talk to that, because there's a lot of coaches out there dealing with the same thing, both baseball and softball, where their hitters may or may not have been working over the term, but they obviously haven't been getting a lot of LIVE. When is the first game of the season?

Justin Lewis 22:24

It's like the 20 or 12th, I think February 12, we got like 23 days.

Joey Myers 22:30

You got less than a month. How do you guys attack that? You're getting ready in a short amount of time? What's high priority right now?

You're getting ready in a short amount of time? What's high priority right now?

Justin Lewis 22:39

There's no manual for this, this is something we've never really had to do. We started the first week, we didn't know what our athletes were going to come in. We didn't know what shape they were going to be like.

Justin Lewis 22:53

You must move as your slowest runner. We just brought them in, and then kind of did like an individual the first week and come down, let's just hit for an hour and see where everybody's at.

Justin Lewis 23:06

I'm coming in with I don't know any of these kids. I try to build that relationship quickly, and I just wanted to see what they're trying to accomplish with their swings. We're still just kind of tracking them along slowly.

Justin Lewis 23:21

We're kind of hitting the ground running now, just started team practice and revving up those the number of swings and the amount of work we're trying to do.

Justin Lewis 23:30

Fortunately, we have two GAs and a pitching coach that all throw full arm. There's nothing that is better than that. Our first year at Kingsville, it was just me and the head coach, and neither one of us threw.

Justin Lewis 23:47

Our kids' timing issues were evident, our first quarter of the season was we're late on everything. The next year, we played one of our... running a GA basically that threw non-stop for us, and it made the world of difference.

Justin Lewis 24:04

In my school last year, the Corpus Christi, both the head coach and the pitching coach both threw a lot. Now having three here, we're kind of spoiled. It makes a huge difference.

Justin Lewis 24:19

We haven't even started with the pitchers as far as seeing live pitching, but I think it's coming pretty soon because we don't have a choice. We got to get them as many looks as we can.

Justin Lewis 24:33

There's just no playbook for it, and I'm interested talking to buddies across the sport, seeing what everyone's doing to get ready, but also keep in mind that a lot of them had falls.

Justin Lewis 24:45

They're kind of building off of what they did in the fall to where we're just kind of getting started. I'm really interested as far as a coaching perspective to see if it even matters. That's what I'm really interested in.

Joey Myers 24:59

Yes, the ultimate experiment.

Justin Lewis 25:03

In Corpus Christi, we had our fall cut short because of COVID. We lost the last two and a half weeks of the fall, and just getting into bunt defenses, and first and thirds, and all that kind of stuff, and it was taken away.

Justin Lewis 25:20

We're feeling very unprepared. As I was interviewing for this job, they were "we've had no fall". I was like, I don't feel so bad anymore.

Justin Lewis 25:28

I'm just wondering, as coaches, we always feel like we're not prepared enough. We've got to do that bunt slap defense for the 9 millionth time and our kids are like, "got it". I'm interested to see how much it matters that we didn't have a fall.

Justin Lewis 25:46

I'm sure it's going to matter a little bit here and there, but I have a sneaking suspicion that it may not matter as much as we think it is.

Joey Myers 25:55

I agree. It will be interesting on the hitting, and the timing, and all that kind of stuff, too, with minimal prep time to see. I think the experiment really is, is it the amount of work you're putting in? Or is it the software? That's the hardware, the software and the brain, how long does that take to really actually get it?

Joey Myers 26:16

You're talking about higher level cream of the crop hitters. You're talking about better software at that point. It would be interesting to see how that goes.

Justin Lewis 26:24

The NFL just kind of showed us, they had their training camp, but they didn't play any pre-season games. It was completely different. I watched a lot of games that kind of look like the NFL to me.

Justin Lewis 26:38

I'm sure the coaches would disagree with that, and point to numerous areas where they fell short, because they didn't feel like they were prepared. I'm sure we're going to miss; we're going to screw up a cuts and relays.

Justin Lewis 26:53

Maybe we miss a couple bunt defenses, but at the end of the day, I'm interested. Look at the recovery side for the student athletes. Baseball and softball players can traditionally claim to

be some of the most overworked athletes around just because there's no stopping, especially those college baseball players, and they go off in the summer, and they're just that grind.

Justin Lewis 27:18

Softball doesn't really do that, they start a summer league here and there, getting to be a little bit more popular, but we may have the freshest athletes we've had in a long time. I'm interested to see how that plays.

Joey Myers 27:31

If you get out of the gate screaming, like you said, they're fresh, and they kind of hit their stride, that kind of subsides a little bit. That would be interesting, we will be staying in touch because for me too, I'm learning.

Joey Myers 27:43

I've had my hitters coming and seeing me and I just felt bad for them when we shut down. I just felt like they had about two or three weeks into the high school season, when it when it shut down here.

Joey Myers 27:57

My hitters were poised to do well, do really big things, and it just got shut down. We do our share of little games of random pitch and whatnot, but it's just not enough of the reps. Like you said, it'll be interesting to see how that goes.

Justin Lewis 28:18

The fall can be a grind, you're looking at the mental grind of the whole season. That includes the fall and the spring. Our kids are just chomping at the bit to be back and be around their teammates.

Justin Lewis 28:32

From a mental health standpoint as well, I'm curious about a lot of things. I think it may change; the world has changed clearly. I'm always fascinated about things that change the world. After 9/11, we haven't worn shoes through airports, and it's just normal. Now, I'm interested to see what other ways the world has changed because of all this.

Joey Myers 29:01

Exactly. Well, I want to be respectful of your time. Anything that besides the congratulatory on getting a new job and being closer to me and all this stuff, anything you're working on outside of trying to get this band of elite athletes to where they need to be?

Anything else that you're working on?

Justin Lewis 29:20

I just try to learn all the time. Take everything I can, I read way more than I probably should right now. My family is not out here, they're still in Texas. It's softball and just trying to get better at everything.

Justin Lewis 29:36

There's a couple of books that I read recently. I always put out a reading list every year, I keep track all the books that I read, and my two bests are Unlearn by Humble the Poet and Think Like a Monk by Jay Shetty. Those are my two best read.

Justin Lewis 29:56

Those were amazing books. I just investigate ways to apply it, and always the ultimate hunt for becoming a better coach, and a better leader, and a better husband, and father, and it's amazing how much I think I fall short on that from time to time.

Justin Lewis 30:15

That's really been it, just trying to adapt to this area and these kids, just trying to serve them in the best ways I possibly can. It's all about them, and as long as we keep that attitude, good things are going to happen here.

Joey Myers 30:33

That's what I like about you, you got that growth mindset. You always want to be around those kinds of coaches, because they're willing to say when they're wrong, they're willing to keep learning and that kind of thing.

Joey Myers 30:42

I think if you're not falling short, you're not doing some right. You got to be setting those goals out there far enough that sometimes you do reach them, but sometimes you don't, and that keeps you going.

Joey Myers 30:52

I think that you have all the formula of a great growth mindset coach, I appreciate everything you guys are doing and take care of my girls. I won't mention their names but take care of them out there.

Justin Lewis 31:04

You got a couple good ones. They're some of my favorites.

Joey Myers 31:07

Talking about growth mindset. Those two and the older one, I won't mention her name. She is a sweetheart and she's one that you'll definitely want to lean on with recruiting because she is just likeable, network-y, bubbly personality. She's awesome.

Justin Lewis 31:25

She's a rock star. She broke my PVC wall yesterday.

Justin Lewis 31:31

I've never had one explode like this, how hard does this kid swing the bat? She's a little ball of terror. Like the rest of the kids that came through the station, they're like, "of course it was her that broke it"

Joey Myers 31:48

You know when you mentioned her name? I think I told you this, it was all her, I always say I'm a compass and the flashlight in the dark, you have to put the work in.

Joey Myers 31:59

That summer, she worked so hard, she went from like a 65 mile an hour ball exit speed with the softball to 75 plus, in three months or two and a half months, however long that we were working together. She's just a hard worker.

Justin Lewis 32:15

Yes, it comes off her bat in a hurry. When she keeps that barrel in the middle of the field, it's nasty.

Joey Myers 32:22

When she came, she used to think that she was taught her whole life before she got into college to slap the ball, slap. Then, I think the coaching change after her freshman year that she recruited her to slap and the new coach that comes in says, "You know what, we're not slapping, we're driving".

Joey Myers 32:39

She didn't know how to do that. because she'd been taught her whole life to slap. Now to think how far she's come. It's great to see that, so proud of her and you're going to be taking care of them.

Justin Lewis 32:51

She's amazing, she's been a big help in my transition here. Both have actually, I got to go, we had a day off. They're both local kids, getting all the spots where I got to go hiking and everything else. They've been taking care of me, they're good people.

Joey Myers 33:12

They're both great. I haven't met the other girls but I'm sure they're great, too.

Justin Lewis 33:18

It's a diverse group of kids here. I love it. They're all different walks of life and just getting to hear their stories and what their whereabouts.

Justin Lewis 33:31

I come back to coaching, I say it all the time, I love hitting and I spend way too much time thinking about it and studying it and swing, trying to fix swings in the middle of night when I'm sleeping, but really, it's the kids.

Justin Lewis 33:45

I'm trying to help them, use my experience to help them become the people they were meant to become is really why I came back to it and I need that interaction more than they need me. They will never find that out, though.

Joey Myers 33:59

They don't realize it now, they'll realize it later, but it's not about softball, it's about life. You're teaching them life through softball, and I agree with you. That's why I do it and continue to do it, it's you're mentoring.

Joey Myers 34:12

Like you said, you're getting more out of it probably more than they realize, although when they get older, and they start you know, getting dealt families and stuff, they'll say "Ah, Coach Justin, he was really pouring into me and I learned actually a lot from him". But at the time they didn't realize it.

Justin Lewis 34:26

Hopefully.

Joey Myers 34:28

All right, brother. Hey, keep up the good work out there. Good luck with all the COVID happenings, I know we talked before we started recording about your stuff out there. Stay safe and healthy.

Justin Lewis 34:40

Let's get together. Let's get you over to the facility soon and let's whack it around a little bit.

Joey Myers 34:43

I would love it.

Justin Lewis 34:45

Awesome, brother.

Joey Myers 34:46

All right, Coach Justin. See you, bud.

Justin Lewis 34:47

You got it, take care.

Joey Myers 34:48

Take care.