

“You Can Have Average Mechanics and If You Have A Good Approach, You Can Still Be Successful”

Mark Gonzalez Interview 2021-09-30

Joey Myers 00:06

Hello and welcome to the Swing Smarter Hitting Training Podcast, it's your host Joey Myers from HittingPerformanceLab.com and today with me is coach Mark Gonzalez aka East Bay Mark.

Joey Myers 00:19

I want to welcome you to the show Mark.

Mark Gonzalez 00:21

Thank you for inviting me.

Joey Myers 00:24

I just want to let everybody know what kind of call this is going to be, I like to have my parents on that have worked with their kids and in Mark's case, is Atticus a sophomore or junior?

Mark Gonzalez 00:36

He's a junior now.

Joey Myers 00:37

Junior this year, yes. So, Mark's been a follower of mine for a while and he's been doing the thing on his side of the computer and in California because he's East Bay, right? Are you still in East Bay?

Mark Gonzalez 00:48

Yes.

Joey Myers 00:50

San Francisco kind of area.

Mark Gonzalez 00:52

Just outside of Oakland.

Joey Myers 00:54

Just outside of Oakland. He's been working with his son and doing the thing like many of you parents out there that are listening, and I always like to get the take of those parents that are getting their elbows dirty, their knees dirty, and are in their trenches so there you go, Coach Mark Gonzalez.

Joey Myers 01:11

First question I have for you, maybe we'll start with today so it's more recency. What do you find to be the biggest mistake, one or two mistakes on hitting that you see out there?

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Mark Gonzalez 01:27

From a coaching perspective, in terms of a dad-coach to a kid anywhere from 10 to 17 is over coaching and this is something that has just taken me years and years to figure out that I just need to get this little thing right here and zip it up.

Mark Gonzalez 01:53

The human body is smart, and kids are smart and a lot of times they can figure it out for themselves and so a lot of times they're just sort of a difference between what I say I want to happen and what I actually do.

Mark Gonzalez 02:13

For example, I've been telling my Junior, my son, for years and years and years that my goal is to become unnecessary but then if I'm always over coaching, always over correcting well there's a gap between what I'm saying and what I'm doing which I think is important for dad coaches out there.

Mark Gonzalez 02:39

You can work with your son, give them basic instructions, and this is something I got from you Joe, but it's like let them take five or six or seven swings and then ask questions.

Mark Gonzalez 02:51

A lot of times you can say, what are you feeling? What do you think? Were you on time there? A lot of times they know, and as my son is 16 years old now, he's much more vocal and he can tell me Hey, Dad, let me figure this one out on my own. I'm like Oh, yes.

Mark Gonzalez 03:19

I think that's great because that's the goal, that's not just a goal for coaching, it's the goal for being a dad, right? You want to get your kids out there in society and become productive human beings of a good character and the only way that you can do that is a lot of times stepping aside and letting them sort of try to figure things out on their own.

Joey Myers 03:47

I love that. Was there an aha moment at some point where you finally said Oh, you know what, I might be over overdoing this being the helicopter parent or coach or whatever.

Was there an aha moment at some point where you finally said Oh, you know what, I might be over overdoing this being the helicopter parent?

Mark Gonzalez 03:59

Absolutely. Atticus might have been 10 or 11 years old and the aha moment was whenever I was too busy at work and I couldn't go to a game Atticus would start hitting home runs, maybe there's a correlation between my involvement and his performance.

Mark Gonzalez 04:22

That was like an aha moment, you don't want to be the dad who the kids are looking over for instructions and that's a balance sometimes because you want to work with your sons, and you want them to develop a good hitting technique, good mentality, and all that stuff.

Mark Gonzalez 04:24

There's a time to work with them and then there's a time the game is you should pretty much just shut up and let them play.

Joey Myers 04:53

I love that and I heard a similar story, probably not quite as nice a story but one of my hitters, one of my younger hitters was playing with another one. I know the dad and the dad's a good dude, I played with him at Fresno State but maybe something's going on at home or whatnot, and he's got three kids.

Joey Myers 05:11

It's the oldest one that my hitter was playing with, and dad was usually the coach, dad was out there as kind of the head coach, assistant coach, whatever. But the games that dad wasn't out there, he did well, he was well mannered.

Joey Myers 05:26

The days that his dad was out there, he was very combative, not just with dad, but just with the other team players, I guess there was at one point, he was taking a throw from shortstop, they're trying to turn a double play, the runner slid into him, and then he punches the runner for sliding into him.

Joey Myers 05:44

We're talking 11-12 year old kids. It was interesting to hear that there was one player, same player, when dad was there, and one player when dad wasn't there. Again, I'm not making assumptions, I don't know what's going on in the house, I don't know any of that stuff. All I know is that you got A and you got B, so that's a great thing that you kind of found that out when you're busy.

Mark Gonzalez 06:10

99% of boys out there, they grow up and they want to please their dads, right, and that's a really good thing, but you need to sort of impart the wisdom to your kid that they really can't do anything for you to make them love them anymore, right? That's already there.

Mark Gonzalez 06:32

If you're going to love them, no matter what they do, that kind of takes the pressure off that sometimes I think younger kids can sort of think what they do, in sports, or in school, or whatever.

Mark Gonzalez 06:48

That sort of condition on the parents loving them and it's not, and that's something that as a parent, you really try to tell your kids every day, whatever they're doing, that their performance has no way indicative of your love for them.

Joey Myers 07:07

Right. Great point. Is he driving now?

Mark Gonzalez 07:12

He's driving, yes.

Joey Myers 07:13

It's a whole new world, ain't it?

Mark Gonzalez 07:15

It's a whole new world. It has made it a lot easier where he gets to go to tournaments, and I sleep in. For you dads out there, there is a light at the end of the tunnel, getting up on those weekends then driving to wherever, you drive, there's going to be a light at the end of the tunnel.

Mark Gonzalez 07:40

Maybe you can still show up, but it's on your schedule, and maybe you see one game or maybe you don't or maybe you just show up one day, and I think that kind of creates a much different father-son dynamic.

Joey Myers 07:56

Do you miss it, though? Or not yet? Are you still on vacation?

Mark Gonzalez 07:59

I'm still on vacation.

Joey Myers 08:01

You're still enjoying it.

Mark Gonzalez 08:02

Yeah, and it's nice. He has all his friends on the team. He's always recording his at bat. He's trying to do the college recruiting thing, so he's always filming at bat and putting them on the social media.

Mark Gonzalez 08:20

It's been an interesting transition where we started out more with the mechanics, and now we're sort of transitioned more now to feel and he asked me for hitting advice more on the well what should my approach be.

Mark Gonzalez 08:49

Years ago, I'm 55 years old, but I played a few years of college baseball, back in the 1980's. I understand approach and feel and what you should be looking for and all of those things that I think are the inner workings of hitting that are very helpful that a lot of times people focus too much on the mechanics of hitting.

“You can have average mechanics and if you have a good approach, you can still be successful...”

Mark Gonzalez 09:13

You can have average mechanics and if you have a good approach, you can still be successful. I think a lot of times people overly focus on the mechanics, now you want to have good mechanics, but when you're in the game facing like 88 with hard sliders, and it's not about mechanics. It's about the mental toughness there.

Joey Myers 09:37

Right. It's all about competing. If I forget, tell me to send you a video on that. This year, we really moved.

Joey Myers 09:47

Every year, it seems like there's an aha moment, it's either a mechanical thing or whatnot. This year, little bit of 2020 we started working with what you're talking about the hitting, we call them hitting strategies, and we have six of them.

Joey Myers 10:01

It's from the point of controlling your verticals, right? Controlling your flyball, line drive, groundball ratios, right? Controlling your line-to-line approach or your horizontals so being able to pull the ball or go oppo and your curveball approach.

Joey Myers 10:17

You'd mentioned an 88 mile an hour fastball pitcher, we call it fast guy pattern, that fast guy pattern, the fast guy tends to have different patterns where he locates the ball, what pitches he throws, that kind of thing versus a slow guy pattern so we have a fast guy pattern, slow guy pattern.

Joey Myers 10:33

We have a two strike we just started doing probably about two three months ago, we started doing a two-strike approach and nothing to do with the physical side not choking up, none of that widening out your stride, none of that.

Joey Myers 10:46

It's all based on brain observations, what they do when they're ahead, what they do when they're behind that kind of thing. I'll send that to you. When you talk about approach, what do you talk to Atticus about?

Mark Gonzalez 11:00

A lot of patterns and situations, you're in the number three batter and he bats third, so if you're the number three batter and it's first and second and nobody out and you're coming up, you're probably not going to get a fastball. It's interesting.

Mark Gonzalez 11:00

Like last season, Atticus had a few good games against this one team and so we were driving back from practice one day and I said, you know, they're not going to throw you any fastballs next year.

Mark Gonzalez 11:12

He had an idea and it's just little things, just little things about the pitches you're going to expect. If you pay attention to the pitchers, like you're saying, humans are creatures of habits and if you're paying attention, it's the same habits repeatedly.

Mark Gonzalez 12:04

There's also of course situational, everyone wants their kid to mash, I get that. But hey, if you're in a tight ballgame, you need that run, you got to try to figure a way to hit a groundball to the right side, if that's bringing the tying run in.

Mark Gonzalez 12:22

If you're not thinking about those things, if you're not practicing those things, I think so much in the baseball community, it's either or it's like, well, you must be going yard every single swing or you're not going to be an effective baseball player.

Mark Gonzalez 12:38

I'm all for hitting the ball long and far in the right situation. Situational baseball, you look at the major leagues, I think they lost a little bit of the situational skills that they might have had 30-40 years ago, but 30-40 years ago, dudes weren't dotting 101 on the outside corner either, so that might have something to do with it.

Joey Myers 13:09

You've been with me for a while and at one point, I think you were probably as far back when we were talking about the ground balls are horrible and no bunting and all that kind of stuff. You were that far back.

Joey Myers 13:20

You probably noticed the change probably within the last three- four years where we said, it was really Perry Husband from hittingisaguess.com, we became pretty good friends. It was him that really turned

me around, well, hey, in the big leagues, for every ground ball that's 95 miles an hour and above the batting average is like 550. That's interesting.

Joey Myers 13:42

We're saying bad ground balls but there are good ground balls, the one hopper, maybe two hoppers that are getting through the infield, those are good as well.

Joey Myers 13:52

Anytime I see a far one side approach so like you said, the launch angle swing, they say whether it's all dingers and doubles and that's all you need to do, or all situational hitting and you got the coaches on the other side, they go oh, they hate that launch angle thing and they would rather be 100% situational hitting, which is 15% of the game or depending on the game.

Is it all about hitting dingers and doubles?

Joey Myers 14:15

But it could be 2% of the game, it could be 30% of the game. But like you said there has to be a middle ground where situational hitting is great and you should be able to have barrel control to be able to do a hit and run or like you said hit a ball to the right side of the diamond or hit a deep fly ball to the outfield to score run from third base, you should be able to do that kind of stuff and I agree with you, I think major league has really gone away from that the last five years if not the last decade.

Mark Gonzalez 14:45

Yes, it's interesting in youth baseball, I don't think I've seen kids play pepper like in 10 years, maybe even 15 years.

Mark Gonzalez 14:51

Where I grew up that's all you would do before a game and in my estimation, it helps with bat control. If you can't play pepper, then it's going to be hard to hit a ball the other way when you really need to.

Mark Gonzalez 15:07

Also, another challenge for dads and youth out there is young kids don't watch as much baseball as you and I did growing up, I coached a number of youth teams and recreational youth teams and even some travel and you would be surprised of the lack of just baseball foundation that's out there because kids don't watch as much baseball as they used to.

Mark Gonzalez 15:39

Even my son who really enjoys baseball, he doesn't watch that much baseball. He enjoys playing baseball. He has the MLB app; he sees the home runs. He's not sitting there watching two outs and on like June 3rd.

Mark Gonzalez 15:39

I think that's the big change that I think a lot of dads need to really consider that a lot of kids just don't have the foundation of baseball because we're in a much different world right now.

Joey Myers 16:14

I agree and even playing baseball video games because we were outside, you and I we had like both feet in each world, right? We were at the beginning of the tech world, the video game world, Atari, the Nintendo and then kind of went from there, but we played baseball stars and R.B.I. baseball and watched baseball.

Joey Myers 16:34

The other thing that I was thinking when you were talking about that was whiffle ball. When do kids play whiffle ball anymore, we did that with my eight-year-old, our son who's in third grade, this last year, we didn't really like how our league took the whole COVID thing this last year, so we went independent, we went on our own and this was like the transition year between machine pitch in our league and player pitch.

Joey Myers 17:01

I really wanted to take that year and help that transition and help the kids, the hitters, especially, well both the pitchers and the hitters, but the hitters, especially with the fear of getting hit by their own peer as they're throwing.

Joey Myers 17:15

What we did big time this summer, so we practice, did our thing we were able to get some games in, we scrimmage ourselves quite a bit just because other teams were playing in their leagues, and they didn't have as much time and room for us to play and we just got started in the travel thing.

Joey Myers 17:31

I'm starting to build relationships with travel ball coaches and whatnot. We pretty much scrimmage each other more than anything but in the summer, we decided to keep going like one day a week.

Joey Myers 17:41

What we would do is we would do a couple of drill things, couple things like hit the heavy bag, because you know a lot of them, they stop they're bat at contact, and I have a thing called a V flex. I don't know if you're familiar with that.

Joey Myers 17:51

It's like the ring that floats in the middle, it looks like a dreamcatcher, a big dream catcher and it has a ring in the middle and so the thrower will go under hand, and we just throw balls through that little circle whiffle balls, golf whiffle ball sized balls, and they only swing if it goes through the ring.

Joey Myers 18:09

If it goes outside the ring, they don't swing so a little bit of strike zone awareness and at the end we would do whiffle ball, we would play whiffle ball games, so we play their Home Run Derby or we play an actual game where they play against each other and got to get each other out and stuff like that but whiffle ball, what happened to that?

What ever happened to playing Whiffle Ball in the street, and can kids learn anything from video games?

Mark Gonzalez 18:27

The funny story is that I was always a good opposite field hitter growing up and the reason why I was a good opposite field hitter because I was left-handed and right field was closed in our neighborhood.

Mark Gonzalez 18:38

You just have to figure stuff out on your own but those MLB games right now and this is sort of like a point enter your kid's life where they are, and my kid plays a lot of MLB like the show, the game or whatever it is, but it's so good now if you're really paying attention, you can really get a lot of lessons there in terms of pitching sequences.

Mark Gonzalez 18:41

If you're paying attention and as a dad you can kind of point out a little bit of things, you can get a lot of really good information from those video games because it tries to follow normal pitch sequencing so if you're going low outside soft you can kind of come back up and in ...

Joey Myers 19:28

I agree, that's a great point. I think that's how some of us learn the game just growing up even though it wasn't quite as complex as like you said now, the games are so lifelike now and the sequencing so lifelike, whereas back in the day, it was almost 2D, we're seeing 3D on these video games, right?

Joey Myers 19:47

But you're still learning the rules of the game. We got Wii during COVID so that keep them active and stuff like that in the house. They have that baseball game with the Wii which they have the weird faces and the bodies that seem to be floating, big heads that float on top of the bodies.

Joey Myers 20:06

You learn what the rules are, you can't go back to the base at least in those video games, and we got to get ahead of the runner. If they hit it in the gap, well, you're not going to get that player out at first, so you got to get it in either the second or the third, to be able to get them off, that was my thing in the outfield.

Joey Myers 20:27

We were always about cutting off that extra base. If a guy headed to the wall, you got to make sure you get to it and get it to your cut off guys so that they can either throw it to third if they're fast and try and break for third, or you can get him in second or whatnot.

Joey Myers 20:41

I love that. It's a great point about the video games.

What things have you guys been doing on the recruiting side?

Joey Myers 20:43

I got a question, so you guys are in the recruiting side right now. Junior year, that's a great year to start the recruiting process. For some of those dads out there that may be freshmen, they got freshmen, sophomores, you mentioned that Atticus has been putting his stuff out on social media video and things like that. What things have you guys been doing on the recruiting side?

Mark Gonzalez 21:05

Well, one of the things, I kind of try to use this as a sort of developmental process in terms of life skills. I started off by sitting Atticus down and trying to go over, okay, well, why don't you send some emails to coaches at universities that you think meet your skill set, and I was pretty laid back in terms of getting to some basic points, but I wasn't writing his emails.

Mark Gonzalez 21:36

He sent some horrible emails, that's how you're going to learn. One day you're going to be going out looking for a job and you need the skill of how to communicate and writing to sort of potential employers and recruiting is very much similar.

Mark Gonzalez 21:55

You are writing to future college coaches, and you want to put your best self forward, you want to show yourself to be a smart person, a person of good character, you want to show your baseball abilities, and you want to show that you're interested in that college.

Mark Gonzalez 22:13

Now, he writes good emails, and he texts back and forth with the particular coaches, and guess what, I'm not involved.

Joey Myers 22:24

I love it.

Mark Gonzalez 22:25

That's it really and then, he does a lot of stuff on Twitter in terms of posting at bats and highlights from games and like working out and stuff. I'm not really involved in that either.

Mark Gonzalez 22:40

Maybe a little bit sort of like from, hey, what type of colleges you're looking at, why, where, what do you expect to get out of it, even have your major just to make sure he's approaching the college recruiting thing the right way.

Joey Myers 22:59

What's he looking for it? What schools and why? I love hearing the answers to those questions.

Mark Gonzalez 23:07

He's changed. I think it's fair that he's changed, when he was a freshman, it was like, I just want to go anywhere, you know, D1, they kind of started very broad, and now he's sort of narrowing things.

Mark Gonzalez 23:20

Right now, he's looking at California schools, he's looking at California schools, but he knows that that's going to be a challenge. I've been part of the wisdom that, it doesn't have to be D1, it's about fit, you go somewhere, and if it's a good fit for you, and the rule is, you want to go somewhere where people want you.

Mark Gonzalez 23:47

In my opinion, you don't want to be the last guy to get on a D1 team, I think that makes it really, tough. I'd rather be the first guy on a D3 recruiting board or D2 recruiting board.

Mark Gonzalez 24:02

We're looking across the board. We're looking at California, we have some out of California schools, too, that we're looking at. I've been open with my finances in terms, I've been open with all my kids, this is how much we have budgeted for you for college.

Mark Gonzalez 24:21

I've just gone through the process with a daughter, she's now majoring in bio engineering at Cal Berkeley. She applied to a number of colleges, and we had to sit down and look at the math and see what would work and talk about whether you're going to have Cal Berkeley that's something within my budget.

Mark Gonzalez 24:51

Some other schools that she had gotten into, like certain Ivy League schools she got into but that would have been alone, so I had to sit her down, Okay, well if you want to borrow this much money, how much are you going to make in five years?

Mark Gonzalez 25:05

What the loan payment is going to be? Here's what your rent payments going to be, here's what your car payments going to be, and it was like, well, Cal Berkeley is looking pretty good.

Joey Myers 25:14

I love it. That's a great approach. I love that and i don't know maybe he's doing this in his emails. I don't know what his emails look like, but with my hitters, my local ones, the ones that are about that age Junior, seniors, I mean, sophomores, hopefully not seniors.

Joey Myers 25:30

They're hopefully thinking about this a little bit earlier, but sophomores-juniors, one of the things I picked up, there was a book, it was a book on negotiation, it was something like, "negotiate as if your life depended on it".

Joey Myers 25:42

It was an FBI guy. His name will pop into my head here, but he was an FBI guy for like 30 years and he was the one on the negotiation team for like child abduction that was outside of the United States.

Joey Myers 25:58

It could be child abducted, an American family in Southeast Asia, could be Vietnam, something like that. He was called in to do the negotiating and stuff. He had a son who was playing football in high school, and the same time came Junior, and he had to do some recruiting.

Joey Myers 26:17

One of the interesting things that he said, it was like, oh the light bulb went on with me, was when you send those emails out, letters out to those recruiting coaches, is to ask them how do you evaluate your hitters?

Joey Myers 26:31

Or how do you evaluate your pitcher? How do you evaluate your pitchers? How do you recruit hitters? What is it that you're looking for? Because some hitters, hitting recruiting coaches will say, well we're looking for the launch angle swing and then you'll have another coach that will say the opposite, we're not looking for a launch angle swing.

Joey Myers 26:50

What I tell my hitters, they want to be a little bit lazier and make one video that has a little bit of everything and send it out to all the coaches, but I told them, I said if you do that and you send a launch angle piece of your big video as launch angle, they're going to go this is disgusting, I don't like this.

Joey Myers 27:09

I tell them just create videos of different things of your ball exit speeds of your games of you maybe during BP spraying the ball around the infield or around the field, showing that you can go up, oh you can pull the ball, you can go straight away center, show that you can hit a double dinger, show that you can hit a 10 degree line drive, show that you can hit a one hop screamer.

Joey Myers 27:31

You have all these little pieces and then based on what the coaches are telling you, then you just piece together the right pieces that they're looking for and then send it out to them.

Mark Gonzalez 27:41

I think that's great advice, I'll probably give that to Atticus, see what he wants to do with it, I just think that really kind of hit it on the nail on the head that you're trying to make yourself attractive to colleges and everyone has a different sort of idea of what they're looking for.

“If this college wants a certain type of hitting approach and if that's the hitting approach you really don't like well maybe that's not the school for you...”

Mark Gonzalez 28:06

That also helps the like the kid because if this college wants a certain type of hitting approach and if that's the hitting approach you really don't like well maybe that's not the school for you.

Joey Myers 28:19

Exactly.

Mark Gonzalez 28:22

It's not a match, but I think today with all of the technology and I think that's something that I probably started using two to three years ago where you have the little blast motion stuff, you can get a lot of data there, a lot of data where it really helps to have a dad just you can kind of see, hey look where you were six months ago and now look where you are now in terms of bat speed or attack angle or all those things you're working on.

Mark Gonzalez 28:51

That also helps sort of settle just give them the cage where someone know, oh that's an absolute bomb, I'm like, Are you sure? Yeah, let's see what the blast motion says on that one.

Joey Myers 29:03

Do you guys have hit trax up there, yeah?

Mark Gonzalez 29:05

Yes.

Mark Gonzalez 29:06

Speak of a reality show video game to be able to go on, we would have a hell of a time, fun time back in the day if we had hit trax.

Mark Gonzalez 29:16

Yes, I grew up the same way, just a whiffle ball. When I was in college, we would play a doubleheader and then we would go back to the dorm and eat dinner and then we would come out and play whiffle ball.

Joey Myers 29:33

Totally different now, they get on their headphones, and they listen to their music, or they play video games instead. I'm not saying video games are bad, in moderation, I would think but, like you said you can learn a lot from playing MLB The Show.

Mark Gonzalez 29:49

I think so.

Joey Myers 29:52

So I want to be respectful of your time ,before I let you go , I want to also let people if they want to get contact with you and stuff we'll go over that but before we get there any other parting thoughts that you

would give to those parents out there with freshmen, sophomores, juniors in high school, coming from a dad who's coaching their own kid?

Any other parting thoughts that you would give to those parents out there with freshmen, sophomores, juniors in high school, coming from a dad who's coaching their own kid?

Mark Gonzalez 30:15

I would say, number one, it just depends on who you are. Having played baseball myself, I would say it was like, a blessing and a curse.

Mark Gonzalez 30:30

The blessing, I have a general understanding of baseball, but the curse is, I had a general understanding of baseball from 35 years ago.

Mark Gonzalez 30:41

There was a lot of unlearning that I had to do a lot of things really developed over the years, so I had to just completely relearn things and it was fun. I would say, for the dads, have an open mind and just go out there and look at all of the leaders in the field.

Mark Gonzalez 31:06

Now with Instagram and Twitter, you can follow some really, excellent coaches out there who can give you all the information you need that you can pass along to your sons, and I say don't assume you know baseball because you played baseball.

Mark Gonzalez 31:26

I think that's a big mistake that I made early on, but I sort of develop myself, I was able to say, you know what, I just assume, I don't know anything, and I'm entering this like someone with no baseball experience.

Mark Gonzalez 31:43

I think that's when I was able to get a lot of information, really good information that I was able to pass on to my son. Now my son, he just has so much information, I hear him sometimes coaching up other kids, you know, move this way, do that way.

Mark Gonzalez 32:01

That's where I was like, okay, at least I've accomplished something, I passed on some really good information. If he can understand that information enough, where he could pass it on to other people, I think he's in the right place and it makes me feel like I've done a pretty good job of sort of passing on my baseball knowledge or even my new baseball knowledge, but all baseball knowledge as well to my son.

Mark Gonzalez 32:28

I think that's what it's all up. That's what it's all about. For dads out there who have no baseball background, I think that's perfectly fine. I think you can coach your team, have a good time.

Joey Myers 32:45

Learn everything, they don't have to buy anything.

Mark Gonzalez 32:48

Yes. My wife, she coached my daughter's volleyball team, she never even been on a volleyball court. She just got some books and there was like some Stanford volleyball player who lived in our neighborhood, so she talked to her, and she ended up taking the team to the CYO finals, she was second out of 32 teams, because she knows how to run things.

Mark Gonzalez 33:21

If you know how to run things, well, then you can do well running a baseball team and then just outsource the baseball knowledge. Usually, when you go to rec ball or travel ball, it's like the one coach who's just doing everything, he's organizing, and he's doing the baseball and sometimes that can get kind of lost a lot of times for running a team and it's rewarding.

Mark Gonzalez 33:45

You can have a good time with running a team, I've coached a bunch of teams, I don't like running the team. Whenever people would come to me and say hey, do you want to coach and I was like, Well okay, as long as I'm not running anything, so then people would say hey, when's the next practice? I don't know. I'm waiting for the email.

Mark Gonzalez 34:06

I was able to do that for several years which made it really fun where I just got to go to the field and coach the kids up. I had a lot of fun with that and I think I told you this story years and years ago, I had this young team I was coaching with my younger son and so we just had fun with it and we had this rule if anyone ever had a walk off because you know we live close to Oakland, we would do the Oakland A's pie in the face right.

Mark Gonzalez 34:39

It was a close game, and we were scratching and crawling, but like we weren't nervous everyone was just cheering pie because they wanted to get it, we ended up winning.

Joey Myers 34:50

Oh, that's awesome.

Mark Gonzalez 34:53

Be creative. Don't focus so much on the winning and losing, focus on the experience. My youngest son just the other day, he mentioned, He's like, remember when we're putting the pie in the face? He remembers the pie in the face, he got no idea probably what happened in the game.

Joey Myers 35:14

That's such a great point. Hopefully some people can take some nuggets out of what you have to say, Mark, because I think you have a lot to say and in our relationship that we've built over the years.

Joey Myers 35:26

Thank you, again for following me and supporting me and all that. So where can people find you if they wanted to reach out? Say if they had a question or something like that about anything?

Where can people find you Coach Mark and powerful BONUS tips???

Mark Gonzalez 35:36

My Twitter handle is just East Bay Mark, that would be the easiest, I'm on Twitter, pretty much every day and night, just kind of seeing what's out there. DM me, I'll pass along whatever information I can, but there's a lot of wise baseball people out there on Twitter and Instagram and I'm not one of them.

Joey Myers 36:05

I beg to differ.

Mark Gonzalez 36:07

I can point you to who they are, and I think that's the most important thing. I would say to the dads out there, just be willing to see the long game. What I mean by that is like Atticus, he wasn't in every travel ball team.

Mark Gonzalez 36:25

There were teams out there who wanted to play every weekend. That just wasn't the path that we were going to go, I have two other kids, our whole life doesn't revolve around baseball.

Mark Gonzalez 36:44

There's a draw that out there where you almost feel like, wow, if your son's not on every team playing every weekend that he's getting behind. Guess what, it's just not true. That playing baseball every single weekend, as much as some teams do, that you're not getting behind, I'd rather have kids play other sports, especially when they're younger.

Mark Gonzalez 37:08

I'd rather not play a tournament and hit in the cage, because I think one of the things with all these games is somewhere the development is getting lost, because it's hard to get better in games, it's very counterintuitive.

Mark Gonzalez 37:27

I really believe that improvement comes when you're not playing the game for two or three months. You can really sort of break things down, and suddenly, the results don't matter. Because you're working towards something but if you're always playing games, you can never break something down, you can never change an arm path or hey, this swing just isn't working.

Mark Gonzalez 37:56

There was a period of time where Atticus had a leg kick for a while, and it just wasn't consistent. When he had it, it was great, but it just wasn't consistent. During a period of two or three months, we kind of change it to a toe tap.

Mark Gonzalez 38:13

It took a while, that's not something you can do on a weekend. If you're playing games all the time, then that's something that's not going to work.

Mark Gonzalez 38:24

I would also say, kids develop at different sort of times, so don't get caught up in sort of what's happening out on the field if you feel like your son's making the progress that he needs to be making and don't focus on the result so much.

Mark Gonzalez 38:43

I remember, this might have been when Atticus was like 11 or something or 12 and he played off on some team and maybe he probably shouldn't have but that's just how it happened.

Mark Gonzalez 38:54

I don't think he got to hit the whole season, that was like a long season, and we went right back from tournament and sometimes your son just needs to hear that he believes in you.

Mark Gonzalez 39:08

I remember saying, this close, you were so close. You can't imagine how close you are, and I know you don't see it out there. I know you're frustrated right there. But you are so close.

Mark Gonzalez 39:21

Next summer he just broke out. He went from not getting a hit during the entire season to like hitting 500 the next season. You need to take the step back and, as the dad see the long game, see how he's improving.

Mark Gonzalez 39:40

I guess one final point is, don't forget the strength and conditioning, that's so important. So many families get caught up into having to play baseball every weekend and then they get into high school, and they don't have the body they need to compete on a varsity level baseball field and having that body is really important.

Mark Gonzalez 40:10

I was telling Atticus the other day that there's something called body discrimination, if you're really put together, guess what? Everyone's going to assume you can play, you get a little more latitude in terms of whether you're going to produce a lot because you just look like a baseball player versus if you're underweight or whatever you know they're going to assume you can't play.

Mark Gonzalez 40:37

That's just a reality, that people have their biases of what a baseball player looks like so as a young kid you don't have to go hard lifting weights, especially when you're in middle school but push-ups and pull ups and sprints and all those things, they make you athletic.

Mark Gonzalez 40:56

When you're old enough to start lifting weights it's an easy transition and there's a lot of great programs out there that can really help dads guide their kids in terms of weight training that's really focused on baseball development and speed development.

Mark Gonzalez 41:20

Atticus was never a fast runner. That just wasn't his skill and he's worked at it through strength and conditioning, and he went to a camp a few weeks ago and he had a seven flat 60 [yard dash].

Mark Gonzalez 41:30

For him that's flying, that's flying for him, he's probably getting near his max, just sort of maximizing who you are, some kids can wake up out of bed and go run six-seven, that's just who they are.

Joey Myers 41:38

Yep.

Mark Gonzalez 41:40

All you can do is try to make yourself the best person you can with the abilities that God gave you.

Joey Myers 41:56

I love that, all great points, Mark.

Joey Myers 41:58

All right, so for those out there who want to contact Mark, go Twitter @EastBayMark, you can just go there and like he said DM him if you've got any questions and things like that, but hey man, I appreciate you making the time during your busy lunch hour over there in the East Bay

Joey Myers 42:14

Thanks, and we'll have to do maybe a part two at some point. Definitely want to keep up, keep abreast of Atticus and how he's doing, and he's got a year and he got another year and then the big things happen.

Joey Myers 42:25

Thanks again, coach Mark for jumping on today.

Mark Gonzalez 42:28

Okay, take care.