

SPORTS

TAKE A BREAK - JOIN THE PENN STATE PRIDE

Don Walters
Capital Times Sports Editor

If you're continuing your education here at Penn State Harrisburg, consider enhancing that education by participating in PSH sports.

Participate by courageously competing at the varsity or intramural level. Participate by spectating and enjoying the beauty and physical grace of athletes in action on a crisp cool fall afternoon. Participate and emancipate yourself from the labors of everyday college life by educating your passions

and joining the pride at a PSH sporting event.

WHAT! Not enough time? You have to study. Hmm. You do have a point and I too realize a lot of emphasis is placed on academic performance these days which in turn places more pressure on you and me to keep those grades up, but hey, you know as well as I do that the best way to relieve some of that tension is through sport and recreation.

Besides, academics are one thing but extra-curricular activities say a lot about a person too. Not only do they promote physical fitness, but they develop interpersonal and time management

skills as well as enhance student body cohesion and school spirit. These attributes may help you discover that extra dimension you seek in reaching a post-graduate goal.

That is why the athletic department at PSH urges all new and continuing students to take part this fall. There are a variety of intercollegiate and intramural sports offered, and if you have a will they have the way.

The fall agenda offers intercollegiate baseball, men's and women's basketball and cheerleading, soccer, and women's volleyball. All are played at the NAIA level.

There will be an organizational meeting for soccer this evening at 6:30 p.m. in room 125 CUB. Thursday there will be organizational meetings for Volleyball, Cheerleading, and Baseball at 8:00, 8:30, and 9:00 p.m. respectively in the CUB gym.

On a lighter competitive note fall intramurals offer slow-pitch softball (entry deadline 8/31), flag football, walleyball, and 3 on 3 basketball. Anyone interested should stop by the athletic department in room 121 for more information

Also available are aerobic and anaerobic programs.

SPORTS FEATURE

BASEBALL ... PASTIME OR PROFESSION?

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Recently I have heard that baseball has the pace of America's pastoral past. True. I agree that in its childhood the game may have matched the description of an unhurried or leisurely "pastime", but less than exciting moments became a thing of the past after the introduction of overhand pitching and livelier balls balanced the scales between pitcher and batter. Also, fielding gloves gave fielders the defensive edge that they needed, and spectators eventually perpetuated the million dollar player, another exciting extra. These additions helped our pastime mature into a million dollar business.

But hold it right there. Lest we forget that this business owes its success to a precise craft involving blazing speeds and fractions of seconds; a scientific ritual played between tenacious competitors at a relentless pace; and a religiously dedicated congregation who worship their timeless "pastime" of nine innings.

Take for instance, Nolan Ryan of the Texas Rangers, who "strikes" fear in the mind of every batter he faces. This guy's fastball has been consistently clocked at over 90 mph. You don't need a scientific calculator (a business model will do) to figure that when one of these pitches leaves Mr. Ryan's hand approximately 55 feet from the plate it will reach its destination in .4167 second. In comparison, his change-up or breaking-

ball pitch only loiters along at 80mph. It travels 117.3 feet per second and will arrive in .4688 second. Now the difference of .052 may not seem like much but that is an important split second. According to the batter's swing, it can be the difference between a home run and a foul ball.

But wait. Take one step at a time. First the courageous batter must hit the ball.

Therefore he must immediately decide - if not guess - whether the pitch will pass through the strikezone. Having decided to swing he has about two-tenths of a second to do it.

Meanwhile, he has been striding forward and holding his hands just right just long enough like a snake about to strike. Then turning his hips and then his upper body with a precise flow of energy while keeping his head down and his eyes everlastingly on the ball- he swings.

Any player who proceeds to put the ball into play is doing something quite remarkable. Consistently good hitters are truly astonishing;

Whether a strikeout or a homerun is experienced baseball also thrives on the precise compilation of both the physical and mental skills possessed by each pitcher, batter or fielder involved in a play. These skills endlessly perpetuate nuance after nuance of this composite sport which is an exacting profession demanding constant attention to the law

of cumulation.

A lot of little things add up to big differences. Especially throughout a 162 game season which is sort of like life-another exercise in cumulation. Both life and baseball are not complicated in their objective: everyone wants to succeed or win. But to execute successfully one must surpass layer upon layer of complex situations. There is a lot of thought involved.

This pattern characterizes baseball as an individual sport that you play as a team member. It is not a team sport in the sense that football is. In football eleven men move in an assigned pattern on a prearranged signal.

Baseball, however, is most like a team sport on defense, when a full team is on the field. Then it is more of a team sport than most fans realize. If a team on defense is doing its job correctly, all nine men are playing as one on every pitch. This playing as a team may not involve nine discernable movements. Indeed it should not. Playing together should not reveal too much. Some, even most of the playing together must be inferred - to stay one step ahead of the opposition.

Just imagine taut elastic bands connecting every player behind the pitcher and catcher. As the pitcher begins his delivery, every player should impart some change in the tension of the band. A change that radiates throughout the team. Most changes would be a slight

movement, or leaning, denoting the essence of defensive play- anticipation.

It is this type of play in which baseball exemplifies a tension in the early- American mind: the constant pull between our atomistic individualism and our yearning for togetherness. It is a team game in which the episodic action begins by repeated confrontations between two individuals standing alone, the pitcher and the batter.

But baseball is really a one against nine game, and if the batter has more than one teammate on base, there is two or more against nine. To understand defensive play is to realize that there is no simple batter - against - pitcher confrontation.

It was through this scientifically competitive perspective that the late 19 century American fell in love with the game.

Today, baseball is big business; part of the vast entertainment industry that has grown in response to the growth of leisure time and disposable income. In 1989, 55,174,603 spectators paid megabucks to get into 26 major league ballparks. What they paid to see was a realm of excellence in which character, work habits and intelligence-mind- make the difference between mere adequacy and excellence.

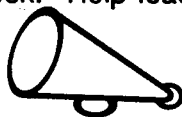
The work is long, hard and sometimes dangerous. The work is a game men play, but they do not play at it. That is why they, and their craft live on.



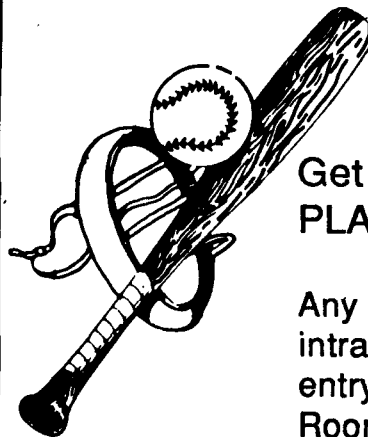
NEEDED: Cheerleaders

We need energetic men and women to help support our athletic teams during the 1990-91 academic year. The PSH Cheerleaders cheer during soccer and basketball seasons.

There will be a meeting this Thursday at 8:30 p.m. in the CUB building or leave a note in the cheerleading mailbox (216-Olmsted building) or see Vicki Cuscino or Amy Killeen in Church Hall. Practices for try-outs begin next week. Help lead our teams to VICTORY!



INTRAMURAL SOFTBALL:



Before the semester gets underway, have some FUN...

Get your friends together and -- PLAY BALL!

Any co-ed teams interested in playing intramural softball should pick up an entry form in the CUB and return it to Room 121-CUB by August 31, 1990.