

## Questions of the Month

### ■ 1. BILL FROM CYPRESS, TEXAS

**Bill:** "I have father buying expensive bats for their daughters that I believe are too heavy. I prefer a bat that is light, so the player can be quick into the strike zone. Where is the balance when it comes to bat weight, and tangible guidelines?"

**Coach Candrea:** "Selecting a bat is not an exact science. It would be great if we could develop a "Bat Chooser" that would give you the exact specs regarding length, weight and distribution of weight (end loaded or balanced). Unfortunately, we have no such device and simply put – swing the heaviest bat that you can maintain your bat speed. It is basically trial and error. On my college team, we use 33" and 34" bats that are minus 8 or 10 in weight. Example 33/23 ounce or 33/25 ounce. The lighter the bat, the more bat speed you can create although the more mass you have, the farther you can hit the ball. Both elements are important so that is why I suggest swinging the heaviest bat that you can maintain your maximum bat speed."

### ■ 2. RICK FROM VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

**Rick:** "What should I do, if anything, to help my daughter overcome her new fear of the ball after being hit by a pitch?"

**Coach Candrea:** "Getting hit by a pitch or a ground ball can take some time to overcome the fear. The fear is natural and through time will get back to normal. I would suggest using whiffle balls, tennis balls or anything that can eliminate the fear to develop confidence once again in the basic skills. Eventually, she will overcome her fear but it will take some time and effort. Protective gear may be another suggestion (face mask, arm guards etc.) Time is the biggest factor and controlling her practice sessions to make sure safety is your priority. Good luck and let me know how it is going!!!"

### ■ 3. MANNY FROM VENTURA, CALIFORNIA

**Manny:** "I was wondering how you are ALWAYS able to maintain such a calm demeanor on the field? Is this something that can be learned? I have a tendency to get REAL excited (in a good way) and show lots of enthusiasm when one of my travel players executes something we have worked on very hard to achieve!"

**Coach Candrea:** "Manny – Getting excited in a positive way is your personality and you should never change that as long as it is positive. The only concern I have with emotions is you either control your emotions or your emotions will control you. As we all know, the game we play can be a roller coaster ride and my thought is I never want to get too high or too low. A steady approach to the game has worked best for me and you need to find what works best for you. Kids will feed off your emotions when things are good and bad. As long as you are consistent and react in a positive way, no need to worry. Negative emotions will drain the energy of your team and as long as you understand when your emotions are leaning towards the negative side, you must be in control at all times!"

### ■ 4. TOBY FROM MIAMISBURG, OHIO

**Toby:** "What should be emphasized more in the off season - basic fundamentals and slowing down the basics or just taking ground ball after ground ball?"

## Questions of the Month (Continued)

**Coach Candrea:** “Great question regarding off season development. I am a firm believer that every skill has a progression. When learning a skill, you slow down the process to make sure the athlete understands the proper execution of the skill. Once the execution becomes proficient, I feel you need to match the speed of the game so that when they are in competition, the game seems slow vs. practicing at a slow pace and the game gets too quick. We play a game that is based on monotonous repetition of fundamental skills. It takes 10,000! repetitions to learn a skill so you need to find a balance in teaching the execution of the skill and performing the skill without thought! ”

### ■ 5. GREG FROM LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

**Greg:** “Coach, my daughter really enjoys playing her winter sports with her friends. But some other parents and coaches are encouraging her to focus on softball year round. Seems a little early for that, what are your thoughts on playing multiple sports or specializing?”

**Coach Candrea:** “I am a firm believer that you should allow young athletes to play as many sports as they desire. Playing multiple sports helps develop their overall athletic skills and there will come a time when they decide on the sport that they feel will match their passion. I played multiple sports until my junior year in high school when I made a decision that baseball was my passion and the sport I could achieve at the highest levels and pursue in college. Everyone is different and there is not a definitive answer that matches every kid. Follow your passion!”

I hope you find my thoughts on your questions helpful this month. If you want more information, I suggest reading more in the [Responsible Sports Coaching](#) section. I will be answering more questions from you next month, so keep submitting me this great feedback. [Submit your question](#) to be answered next month!

- Coach Candrea