

Develop Your Coaching Skills With Important Advice

By **BRIAN CAIN**

Special To Collegiate Baseball

ORONO, Maine — Steve Trimper, head baseball coach at The University of Maine is one of the brightest young coaches in the country.

In his first season at the helm of the tradition-rich Black Bear program, Trimper led his team to the America East conference tournament championship and an NCAA Regional bid. Trimper sat down with *Collegiate Baseball* writer Brian Cain to share some of his success tips.

Bring In Good People

Trimper attributes a lot of his success to having the opportunity to work with and play for some of the game's best coaches.

"I have been fortunate to be around great people," Trimper said. "I played for Bill Holowaty at Eastern Connecticut State University and he is one of the best in the business — a great role model for players and coaches. I also had the opportunity to coach with Bill Currier at The University of Vermont and I think he is one of the best hitting guys around."

"I got my first head coaching job at Manhattan College when I was 27 years old and was able to develop my coaching skills. Bob Byrnes our Athletic Director was extremely supportive and worked hard to provide us with everything we needed to be successful. Surrounding yourself with great people not only helps you speed up the learning process, but it also motivates you to be the best you can be day in and day out."

kids a few times in hope that I see them strike out or give up a walk-off homerun. I want to see their reaction to failure because at the Div. I level everyone is going to taste failure at some point.

"We then bring the recruits on campus and try to surround them with the good people in our program. That is critical because they get a good feeling for what we are all about, and our players are pretty good about getting a feel for what the recruit is like, and if he is the type of person we want in our family for the next four years."

Stress The Positives

Trimper knows that if he is going to land a top recruit he needs to spend all his time talking about the positives of his program and not waste time talking down other programs which happens by some coaches in the recruiting process.

"We really try to stress the positives here at Maine," Trimper said. "We have some of the best indoor and outdoor facilities in the Northeast and are very fortunate to have those things."

"We have a stadium that seats about 4,000, a clubhouse that is first class.

"Last year, Larry Mahaney, a tremendous supporter of the school and Black Bear Baseball, stepped up to the plate and built us a baseball dome so when the weather is bad, we can go inside and get a lot done."

"We are also off from school for about three weeks in the spring and take some great trips down south to Florida and to other parts of the country. We take a true



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Recruiting More Than Tools

Trimper knows that the success of his coaching career is largely determined by the quality of student-athletes that he can get into the blue and black of a Maine baseball uniform. He has been able to recruit as well as anyone in the northeast, having brought in an outstanding class last fall.

"You have to get the players with the physical tools, but I also try to get in and pick their mind a little bit," Trimper said. "I try to find out what their social skills are like, what their families are like, and what their character is like. I really want to know how they handle failure. I like to see

spring training very much like a professional team. We really try to sell the positives about our program because that is what we can control. I cannot control what other schools can offer, or what other coaches say to their recruits about the University of Maine. All I can do is focus on that which I can control which is promoting what I think makes UMaine Baseball one of the best programs in the country for a kid to play at."

Honesty & Integrity Win

Trimper knows that there are many different approaches to becoming a successful recruiter. He has found that the best way, is the honest way.

"It is not about trying to pull the wool over kids' eyes or getting them to believe things that are not true," Trimper said. "You have to be honest, stress the positives and also let them become aware of the areas of your school and program that need improvement."

"You have to treat that student-athlete like they are one of your own. You need to make a commitment to that person and their family and nothing should change when they show up on campus. If it does, you were probably less than honest in the recruiting process."

"You have to help the recruit find the right fit for him and his family. Sometimes that may or may not be your school and that is ok. The recruits will often get a feeling when they are on campus that this is or is not a place for me. They will usually get that feeling right away by the way you greet them as a coach and by the way the players interact with them."

"I usually will get a call about 20 minutes after a recruit leaves campus saying that UMaine is the place for them or not. It really should be that easy for a kid if we

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have done our job at being upfront and honest with them through the recruiting process.”

Trimper Utilizes Past Players

Trimper knows that he cannot physically get out and see all the great players in the country, so he utilizes past players and peers in the game of baseball as filters for a prospective Black Bear.

“As I have said before, when you surround yourself with good people, good things happen. I constantly get calls from former players and peers such as Brian Cain and Ed Hockenbury who are willing to share with me some of the names of the top players in their areas,” Trimper said. “There is probably a list of 100 strong that if they call and give me a heads up on a player, I am in my car the next day to go see that player.

“It is all about developing positive relationships with people. That is not just on the baseball field, that is a life skill.

“I truly feel that when a person makes a commitment to come play for the Black Bears, that it is not only my job to coach that person on the field, but to be their mentor and teach them the skills that are necessary to succeed in life after baseball as well. I want our players to leave here with the confidence that they will do the best they can do in the first job interview they have.”

Opportunity To Grow

Often, athletes personalize their performance and put too much pressure on themselves because they only see themselves as baseball players. Trimper knows that this trap is unhealthy and tries to put his players in situations where they can be successful and develop life skills off the field.

“I try to get our players out in the

community and doing some form of public speaking,” Trimper said. “I want them to be heavily involved with our camps for a variety of reasons. It is great for them to give back to our program and to the game of baseball, but most importantly, it gives them an opportunity to teach and interact with the future of the game, the youth that come to Black Bear Camps.

“We try to give them a good experience both on and off the field so that no matter what happens to them in the future, they will be confident and prepared.”

Experience Helps

Trimper who started his playing career at Div. II Elon College in North Carolina and then was a key part of a Div. III National Championship team at Eastern Connecticut State University, has both playing and coaching experiences at each level of baseball.

“At the higher levels of each division, all those teams are good. If you change the Division 3 to a 1 for a lot of those teams, they are still going to be very competitive, they have some great ball players,” Trimper said.

“I think there is a wide range of teams in each division. Having experience at each level has helped me to understand how I can best help each kid, even if they decide they don’t want to come to Maine. I have always felt, that if I take the approach of trying to help a kid find the best fit program for them, that the game will reward me and I will get the right guys to come to our program.”

*For more information on *The Mental Game of Baseball* and how you can use failure as a spring board to success, visit www.BrianCainBaseball.com.*