

Never Suffer from Hitting Paralysis by Analysis Again

(Interview with Jaime Cevallos 2020-06-23)

Joey Myers 00:00

Hello and welcome to Swing Smarter Monthly Newsletter. It's Joey Myers, your host and with me today is one of my good friends Jamie Cevallos. I had heard about him back in 2010 when he authored published the book Positional Hitting. I actually saw him on one of the guys I was following quite a bit Tim Ferriss blog. Tim Ferriss did a blog post with Jamie and that kind of put him on the map for me I reached out and since then we've kind of had a good friendship or made a good friendship over the years.

Joey Myers 00:30

He is also the author of his latest book Swing Cheat Code. I know you got two out, one must have been the first edition he came out with a second one, One Simple Change to your Mechanics and Start Hitting for a Higher Batting Average and More Home Runs. And then he has also created a couple hitting aids, one was the mp30 mp28, More power 30 inch and the more power 28 inch which had a thicker grip, shorter bat. And that was kind of where I had jumped onto his journey.

Joey Myers 01:08

And then recently, I think he's taking it off the market, that pitchview, which is a pitch recognition, hitting aid, which is actually pretty, pretty cool. So that's some Jamie stuff. We're going to jump into some hitting. Get into a really good hitting conversation. So welcome to the show, Jamie.

Jaime Cevallos 01:27

Thank you, Joey. Good to be here.

Joey Myers 01:29

Got a brother. So hey, my first question, Positional Hitting you published in 2010. And these, the two other books, Swing Cheat Code, one and two you published in 2019. So there's a little bit of a break there where I think in our past conversation, you jumped over kind of the golf for a while and kind of jumped away from hitting just kind of temporarily and came back. And what was the biggest eye opener when you came back on the baseball scene with hitting?

What was the Biggest Eye Opener when you came back on the Baseball Scene with Hitting?

Jaime Cevallos 02:00

Well, the biggest eye opener...I've been kind of obsessed with figuring out the baseball swing. That's kind of been my life in 2000 and what was it seven I started working with guys I was fortunate enough to work with major league guys like I wasn't in baseball per se like I was just a guy obsessed with the

swing. I worked with baseball teams and on some capacity but mostly as the quote unquote video guy, like I have golf courses in baseball.

Jaime Cevallos 02:47

And, for baseball teams, minor league teams and so it gave me like a background kind of it was so unintentional but what it did was it gave me an inside look in doing that like I was just interested in learning more about the swing really but in doing that I actually had an inside look at exactly how at the higher level of the swing was taught. And so I had a little stint there from 2007 to about 2012 maybe where I was like giving lessons a lot and like working with high level hitters all levels but I really focused on like the, the high level guys and the major league guys and like I said, I was fortunate enough to come into contact with some high level guys.

Jaime Cevallos 03:41

But I just wasn't really happy with where I was like, in terms of my understanding of the swing, and like I said this journey it was about figuring out the swing. It wasn't I never, embarked on it. I don't think a lot of us get into this field to make a ton of money. But maybe so but I didn't. My goal was just to learn to figure out the swing. And I thought that by going to the higher levels and filming, I could learn a lot about it.

Jaime Cevallos 04:19

So around 2012 I just, I kind of it wasn't that I got into golf I've always been looking at the golf and baseball swing together. They've always been, to me, they're the two most valuable movements in sports. And, so they they always attracted me, I've always been into movement. And as I got into where I into my 20s I just got into two particular movements, the golf and baseball swing.

Jaime Cevallos 04:54

So then I saw around 2012 I just I kind of backed away from it all, and went back to the drawing board and thought like, I want to, it's like I felt like I, I achieved some outward success and I had what I thought was, at the time it was pretty how would you say it? Kind of I had a, just ideas about the swing that just weren't out there, and I thought could be valuable. And so, I did. But nonetheless, I just felt like there was more, there still is more, and I still the biggest thing is I needed to figure out, how to get someone to achieve a great swing. I had learned what it looked like, well, what separated a great swing from the other swing.

Jaime Cevallos 06:01

What on video, like what it looked like, and then why it looked that way. I had pretty much that nailed. But I didn't have the best methods for getting someone to achieve it. It was always coming out a little bit awkward. They would improve because their positioning through contact was improving. But it was not like I wasn't looking like Griffey or Ruth or anything like that when they moved, so I just thought that there was something missing.

Jaime Cevallos 06:39

So for those years, it wasn't really that I got into the golf swing it was that I just kind of went back to this kind of secluded and tried to get away from teaching so much because when you're teaching you're just

kind of reiterating your own beliefs and it's hard, when people are coming to you for advice and asking a lot of questions, like, it's hard for you to really revamp because you're more taking the role of instructor.

Joey Myers 07:09

So yeah, that's a great point man. And, that's one of the things I really value in you is you're very philosophical and you do like to get kind of into that deep thought and reevaluate and kind of use that scientific process, right? Or you build a question, you have a hypothesis, you gather research, you do the, you get the data together, and then you do a conclusion. And I've just one of the questions that big question was when you came back especially online?

Joey Myers 07:42

I know you were thinking about it. You'd be like you said you recluse but you weren't done with it. You didn't just throw it away. You were thinking about it. But I was always interested in to hear what your thoughts are when you came back, back on Twitter and all that stuff. And what was the big eye opener like? You got away from it. You came back. What was that? What was that experience for?

What Changed (*for better or worse*) in the Hitting Community that you Noticed when you came back from Reclusion?

Jaime Cevallos 08:03

Yeah, and you're absolutely right. Like I really did kind of come back and see the state of things and it was kind of like a, like I was waking up, what I mean? In some sense because I really feel like it's just so necessary to, for me, to accomplish what I wanted to accomplish. It was really necessary for me to get off the vibe that you pick up when you're around, sort of, the vibe of the industry, the swing, or even just the sport itself? So yeah, I did and when I came back, what was different? What was an eye opener to me?

Jaime Cevallos 08:56

Well, I would have to say, I am somewhat impressed with what how the swing is being taught by some people. But there are other people that seem to have not even like looked at video for more than 10 minutes. I got to be honest like I just the first I would say five years that I was really serious about, making this a quote unquote profession. I was really I just look at video all the time and I was so proud of my laptop. I would, bring it everywhere I had the v1 system on it.

Jaime Cevallos 09:50

Even back then, it was said that I downloaded it from the golf course I worked at but I'm not sure if that was true. But anyways, it was just like my love my computer and I would film people's swings, on the golf course or the baseball field, like I was filming everyone's swing, my swing would get filmed 100 times, a day.

Jaime Cevallos 10:20

And that was just, my head was just in the video. And I think that a lot of guys these days, they don't...look, I don't expect people to do what I did. Like, I just like to go crazy with what I'm into. I like to

get into it like, like crazy, and so I don't really expect that but like, a lot of guys just don't do... they're not curious Joey. That's really what it is like they're just not that curious. So I would say that the biggest surprise is that a certain swing, whereby, you swing as if you had a swing rail on your I don't even know where that thing goes but, but like that particular swing is actually still being taught.

Jaime Cevallos 11:19

And it doesn't take much time on the video to realize that, there actually is a correlation between that type of swing and poorer hitting. So just I would say the video just does not looking... The video is so valuable. It's so valuable like it's being under appreciated and undervalued now because of launch angle and exit velocity.

Jaime Cevallos 11:52

But I have to tell you those are numbers on a page, but so there's another one I was surprised that I didn't know anything about launch angle and exit velocity, by the way, I feel I came back and kind of, woke up and, and these were like, being thrown around. It took me a few months to even know what they were or to even realize that I should be paying attention to them.

Joey Myers 12:14

Or there's an ideology behind launch angle and what that means and...

Jaime Cevallos 12:19

Yeah, I mean that like, I thought, man I got I got to look into like, what all this means. And it wasn't all that much looking into it. Like, people were just like, yeah, launch angle swing. And it's like, Wait, what? Okay...

Joey Myers 12:32

What is that, though?

Jaime Cevallos 12:33

Yeah. So you, there's just not a whole lot of...it's very quick to come to conclusions. That's probably the biggest thing is it very, quick to, to kind of come to conclusions about things, and I don't find that to be helpful. I think that... Hold on just said. I'm getting another call and it's distracting me. Yeah, I just, I just feel like my process has always been prove it. But to myself, I'm saying that to myself, like, you have this hypothesis about the swing, now prove it. And if it has any flaw, then, it's probably, I just it has to be perfect before I move on. Like, I'm not just going to come to a hypothesis and then declare it, winner

Joey Myers 13:43

...the winner. Yeah, without doing the actual test. And I that was a biggest eye opener for me too. And I that's when I first started kind of back in 2013 branched away. I went on my own and it was that the idea that people weren't testing stuff they weren't taking some of the things at the time, Zepp which is kind of going out of business or they were sued out of business I guess and then you have blast motion now you have those kind of knob trackers and nobody was doing swing experiments where you can take one mechanic and take the opposite doing the opposite like what Tim Ferriss says and testing it.

Joey Myers 14:23

None of that and even now, it's not really happening. It doesn't really matter if you're hitting on a HitTrax and you got all these launch angle numbers and ball exit speed number just because you got numbers for numbers sake doesn't mean anything. The numbers we always say are stupid and you need a brain to pull context out of the numbers. So yeah, oh man, I had a great launching on that one. Oh, I got a higher ball exit speed Why?

Joey Myers 14:47

What causes, what are the correlations that causes the ball exit speed to go up versus go down? What causes launch angle to be in a certain area to be consistent or inconsistent? What is it in the mechanics that is the direct correlation of what those numbers mean and how you can adjust them? You can move those numbers; you can move the averages of those numbers. That's where everything should be and I don't think it's gotten that far yet.

Jaime Cevallos 15:17

Yeah, yeah, I agree. And you do a lot of that testing. And that's what's needed. More of that.

Joey Myers 15:27

So I'd seen you recently put up a bunch of YouTube videos and I really urge people to go to YouTube and put in Jamie Cevallos. Check out his videos and on his page, subscribe to him. And I've noticed you've been doing some research on some people. Like they're hitting theories, philosophies, and you're doing kind of like a review of those.

Joey Myers 15:48

So in recent, recent memory, in the last like week or two, what are some key aha moments you realized about hitting or about the swing? You don't necessarily have to reveal the person that you were... You were reviewing, but maybe some like, aha moments as in good. Like, raise your eyebrows. Oh, that's cool. That's interesting to me or aha moments like, Oh my gosh, this is horrible.

What were Key Aha Moments in all your Research with Hitting Gurus

Jaime Cevallos 16:17

Well, I had never, I had heard of Steve Englishby, and I'm just going by, what a recent... just one recent I've heard of him. But I just never, when my head was deep in the stuff, I like I wasn't I wasn't about to go see what other people were teaching necessarily. But I finally looked into him someone asked me to look into him and man, we're very similar in at least the first stepping stone that you have to hurdle to figure out the swing, which is what is the look?

Jaime Cevallos 17:01

What is the look that separates a great swing from the rest and he has come to find a very similar look so I was really impressed by that like I said I mean most of the time when I look at some of these guys who are teaching a lot like it's very swing "rail-ee". Their swing that what they advocate and hands directly to the ball that the swing and that's just, so I was kind of pleasantly surprised to see that.

Jaime Cevallos 17:40

And so that kind of sticks out...

Joey Myers 17:46

Englishby is good guy. He's got a lot of I think a kines background he's very bio mechanically sound where he's got what I call a higher standard for hitters, right and I'm totally into the video. I love video. I started that. You opened my eyes to that with Positional Hitting. But then I kind of took it a step further and said, well, how do we know what we're looking at, if we don't know what we're looking for?

Joey Myers 18:08

And so I had kind of a similar with Englishby. I didn't have a kinesiology background from college, but I was all self-taught. I had that passionate curiosity you talk about in learning how the body's supposed to move, how it breaks down, how it performs better, and that was the thing. So let's take a look at human movement principles that are validated by science, whether that be physics, biomechanics, or body work or engineering principles, right? And then let's look at now to on video, how are the best doing what they're doing?

Joey Myers 18:41

Because there's certain things like Bryce Harper back in the day, probably about two three years ago. He's kind of fixed it to now, but he used to roll his head his, as a lefty, his left ear would crash into his left shoulder and I've seen a few videos where after his swing his helmet falls off like it's not from running. It's from how voracious his head or aggressive his head movement was in rolling to the side towards his ear.

Joey Myers 19:07

And the Prince Fielder did the same thing and he ended up costing him his career. I don't know if that was the exact thing that caused it but he would swing, Prince Fielder, left ear - lefty again - left ear go diving into crashing into his left shoulder as he swung, and he was so aggressive when he swung and how many times how many hundreds of thousands of swings did he take over and over and over eventually going to wear a hole in your neck? And the poor guy, I think got his career got cut short.

Joey Myers 19:35

So, we looked at a move like that like Bryce Harper or Prince Fielder rolling their head and we say, okay, is that an optimal move? Or is that a not optimal move? We all know that those two hitters are supreme their elite hitters, but is that move, teachable? Should we be teaching that move to youth hitters or coaches to teach to their hitters. You have to how you kind of have to know what you're looking for...to know what you're looking at; you know what I'm saying?

How do you know what you're Looking at, if you don't know what you're Looking for?

Jaime Cevallos 20:02

Yeah, yeah. I think it can get very confusing to, to really piece out mechanically, what is the best thing to do. Now, there are a lot of people who just want to back out of the game and say, there is no best

way to swing. It's all relative, you have to find your own swing. I'm sure everyone out there has heard these phrases. Okay. What these guys have done is that they quit. They looked into mechanics for a little while. It was too frustrating. And they backed out they've decided there's no best way to swing. Now, 100% disagree with that.

Jaime Cevallos 20:56

There is the best way to swing, so it is hard, man. It's hard to pick it out to piece it out because well first of all, a lot of swing coaches out there will use just a major league baseball player to give as an example to what they teach, and friends, this is a big mistake I mean, they're, swing flaws are abundant in Major League... It doesn't mean just because you made it to the Major Leagues...

Jaime Cevallos 21:24

Tom Emanski had a video back in the day. The mechanics of the major league swing or something like that, you know? And, that kind of tells you right there like, and he was he was just kind of picking any like, if you watch his videos, which I have done lately, I've done so much research on what other people teach lately, like that's my new thing, which I'd never did before. And so I would watch the Tom Emanski videos and he does even he brings up pictures. He kind of pulls up pictures of guys who are just, average Major League Baseball player and so that's the one... that's a big mistake that's out there. We have to pick the right models.

Jaime Cevallos 22:09

And two, even when you have guys who are just dominating did they have? Is it that they're dominating year after year? Is it that they're six foot eight and 250 pounds, that maybe that helps is it that maybe some of the other skills of hitting are at a high level and maybe their mechanics are not at such a high level, but they fool you because everything else is at a high level right?

Jaime Cevallos 22:43

I mean, Barry Bonds is one example. Like Barry Bonds, I'm not saying his swing is terrible, or was terrible, but obviously he was a great player before the steroids but some guys are grabbing him and take in that as the ideal model, and I think that's a huge mistake. If you take it back to before he blew up, he was hitting very well, but I mean very, very well let's, I mean, I obviously but not at the Ruth level not at the Williams level, not at the Mike Trout level, not at the Ken Griffey level.

Jaime Cevallos 23:27

So, we really have to pick the right models. We have to then, try to piece out the best we can, where their skills were in the other areas of hitting and, and try to really distill what the best mechanics are. And again, there is that group of people that don't think that there's any best way to swing. There's always there's that group of people, but for everyone else who is still in the game, I think it's important to, to just be aware that you like to have sort of a, a good system for figuring out mechanics.

Jaime Cevallos 24:21

Mechanics is only one of five, in my book, five skills of hitting, it is, to me the most important and at the same time, it's also the easiest to get. So it's like a really exciting area of hitting, because you can literally, like, propel yourself to the best hitter on your team in a single instant, of understanding. You

can't do that with any other skill, pitch recognition. It's a brick by brick, skill. Strength and speed, brick by brick, you're going to build that over a year over year over year.

Jaime Cevallos 25:01

Hand eye coordination. To me that's pretty tapped out by, by Little League, I don't think there's too much. I bought into the whole hand eye coordination thing as a kid until I learned how to juggle and ride a unicycle and do the both at the same time and, toss pins with my friends and my uncle. I just was so focused on hand eye coordination.

Jaime Cevallos 25:29

But anyways, and there are other skills too. Just your mental approach is a skill. And that is also something, that is built for the most part over time. However, that could be something where there's something you could learn just a little, a little tip from somebody could propel you completely, like maybe they recommend you do some sort of meditation exercise for five minutes before a game and suddenly, you know it...

Jaime Cevallos 26:04

I know for me mentally, one of the best things I ever did was visualize myself having the worst game possible and reacting, not just having the worst game but then reacting as classy as I possibly could to that four strikeout game...like maybe walking back to the dugout with my head up, and not freaking out not getting all upset. And, maybe just visualizing that for five minutes, could really be a good really make you improve your mental side in a single instant.

Jaime Cevallos 26:44

But to me, mechanics just provides you with, that single moment where everything changes.

Joey Myers 26:52

Right. I agree. Totally. Yeah, stoicism the getting a headspace app. I was talking to Dr. Tom Hanson who wrote the Heads Up Baseball and if you ever read that that was a life changer career change. Yeah, he wrote that with the late Dr. Ken Ravizza back in '94 I think and I got my hands on that book and '95 is like my junior year sophomore year in high school. But he talks a lot about that kind of stuff too and breathing and what not.

Joey Myers 27:21

But hey, man, I want to be respectful of your time. And I know we're going to be jumping on a call you and me zoom on here later in the week to talk about hitting a little bit more, so we'll we'll open up probably on some of these subjects a little bit more. But where can we where can others get more information on your work, where can they find you?

Where can Others get more About your Work?

Jaime Cevallos 27:40

TheSwingMechanic.com. And on YouTube I'm just Jamie Cevallos spelled with a C. The last name if you put in the swing mechanic, you'll get my website. Twitter I'm @JamieCevallos and Instagram @TheSwingMechanic so it's either Jamie Cevallos or the swing mechanic and you'll find me.

Joey Myers 28:03

And you're doing pretty good about putting out content every time I log on, Twitter's kind of my, I don't troll it per se but I just I try not to engage a lot of people but I see you post in quite a bit. So there's, that's always good when I see you guys that are out there doing stuff more frequent and whatever so anybody that's on those just yet search either Jaime's name or the swing mechanic and you'll find them but hey man, I appreciate your time and I know you're busy guy. So we'll maybe we'll do a take 2 to take 3 later on, but I'm looking forward to our call at the end of this week.

Jaime Cevallos 28:39

Absolutely Joey. Me too.

Joey Myers 28:40

Alright brother, well take care and we'll talk in a couple days.

Jaime Cevallos 28:43

Sounds good. Take care everyone.

Joey Myers 28:45

Thanks.

Jaime Cevallos 28:46

Bye

Joey Myers 28:46

bye.