

“I’ll have kids doing fielding drills, and then I’ll stop and I’ll say, I’ll have mine up and I’ll go you, you and you, you can’t touch your toes, can you?”

Joey Myers

All right. Hello and welcome to the Swinging Smarter Monthly Newsletter or Swinging Smarter newsletter monthly, I use both interchangeably. Today, I’m honored to have Mr. Jim Macarelli. How many people butcher your name?

Jim Macarelli

You didn’t butcher at all Joey.

Joey Myers

How many people though?

Jim Macarelli

Ah really, it’s not that bad. People don’t sound very well, but in terms of in all say macaroni, they’re not bad.

Jim Macarelli

Cool! Jim has been a follower of mine for a while we met over, well, in person we met at ABCA in Dallas and Jim is a fellow instructor like myself. He’s thirsty for knowledge on hitting. He’s gone around the block, and then some and gone even farther than that. He’s a good guy, keeps an open mind, skeptical, all that kind of stuff. And I’m just happy to have you on Jim.

Jim Macarelli

Thanks. I’m happy to be here, Joey. I mean, I think you and I connected, it’s got to be at least six years ago, originally. And I think some of your information was the first that I fell onto that resonated with me and started to follow and you help me out and my son did virtual lessons with you for a while and put us on a good path. I think part of what you showed me sparked my interest for knowledge as well.

Joey Myers

Cool! Well, I’m honored to do that, honored to help you guys out and I think the big message that probably resonated with you is the fact that we were able to take human movement principles that are validated by science and apply those to hitting a ball. And that was the thing back then, or at least when I got 2013, I think January is when I, when Chas and I had split ways.

Joey Myers

And I saw some interesting stuff in spinal engine and springy fascia, and it was, Wow! Some of the things that we’ve been learning that I’ve been taught, really had no basis in anything, it was just more of opinion based. It was so and so said this and maybe a prominent baseball person, player, coach, and

people just lockstep obeyed the order, instead of questioning it, and going into the science is that about, right?

People just lockstep obeyed the order, instead of questioning it, and going into the science is that about, right?

Jim Macarelli

Yeah, that's accurate. And for me, too, I think the industry as a whole, once we started slowing down video, and really being able to see truly what was going on, real versus feel, the eye test, etc, combination of that, and then human movement principles, because a large part of what I try to teach today is I don't do a lot of cues, what I try to do is help players get into positions that they can feel a change or makes a change something to that effect, as opposed to... We can tell an eight year old till we're blue in the face to keep your hands up. They think they are but won't do it. It's a combination of those things to try to get them to feel their body in space and time to somehow create, almost create proprioception for them.

Joey Myers

Give me an example of a cue that you wouldn't use. We talked a little bit last night and you were talking about a cue that's oftentimes used. We look at these people as if they don't know what they're doing. But if we know what we're doing some of these cues, cues or like you said, feeling type things help. Can you go into an example?

Give me an example of a cue that you wouldn't use?

Jim Macarelli

Yes, I think it's individual to. Like when you and I were talking last night. I'm not a guy who teaches swing down, or hands to the ball. What I see too often from younger kids is when you put a ball on a tee, you tell them to take the hands to the ball, they do it literally. So now they're swinging down, they're chopping down. And we know data supports slightly upward barrel path, approach angles of 5 to 15 degrees to hit line drives, etc, etc. And there's always other things that need to be taken into context, what the kids current exit velocities are, etc. We can get into a million things.

Jim Macarelli

But I think that the thing that really has to be taken into consideration is how you communicate whatever it is you're trying to communicate. The example I use with you last night when we were chatting a little bit is when my son was 10, he was dumping the barrel terribly. The cue, the verbal cue for him was slam your hands into the ground as quickly as you can. And it changed his barrel path and it worked for him.

Jim Macarelli

People would say to me, Jim, I thought you didn't teach swinging down. Well, I wasn't teaching my son to swing down, I was simply trying to rewire his movement pattern by giving him some type of verbal cue, and I think what we need to be able to do it again is communicate. What I say to all my players

and kids that I instruct, if I'm telling you something and you don't understand it, you have to let me know because it's my responsibility as the instructor, the teacher to be able to share the information with you in a way that you understand. It's not your responsibility to understand what I'm telling you, if that makes sense.

Jim Macarelli

Yeah, exactly. And I think that you hit the nail right on the head with that, that coaches oftentimes get stuck in a box and they teach it's this, this and this, step one, step two, step three, and when it doesn't work with this particular hitter, maybe it works with a couple, but a couple others, it doesn't really work with, they just say, well, it's the hitters fault.

Jim Macarelli

That kid is not coachable. He's not coachable, he doesn't listen. You might want to ask yourself, if you're explaining it correctly, because that's what I say to a lot of the kids, you may know of certain terms that sound familiar to you and I may be using different terms and they may mean the same exact thing, right? Regardless of, to me, regardless of the terms that you use, again, it goes back to, are you getting your point across to the player and do they understand what you're asking them to do?

Jim Macarelli

And again, that's why a lot of times, I'll go back to the movement patterns. I'm doing drills that are patterning drills, to get them to feel things, maybe we use a heavy bat, short bat, whatever it'll take a connection ball, I've wrapped rubber bands around people's elbows for crying out loud. You've done a ton of testing and some people think these are hokey and weird, it's over the top. But again, my goal is to provide that hitter a means to reach his or her goal. My ego needs to stay out of it and I need to be able to teach them what they want to learn, and help them achieve their goals.

Joey Myers

Right. It's almost like an experiment with each hitter, you're experimenting, you're trying one thing, it doesn't work, you try another thing and you just keep going. And like you said, you can't let your ego get in the way and say, well, you're just not coachable. And one of the coolest things I like to do with my hitters, especially when they get it, so we do this experimenting stuff, we try this, we try that and then when it clicks, I try and ask them what they're feeling, or what was it that helped them click.

Joey Myers

It might not be what I told them, sometimes it is, but it might not be. For instance, we like to do... I know you're not as big into getting this arm longer, we work on that with our hitters. And one of the things was in the beginning, I was telling my hitters to actually use the front arm tricep to get the elbow straighter, slightly straighter.

Joey Myers

And I wasn't seeing a big change, maybe a 20% of the hitters would get it. But then I asked one of my hitters that has been with me for a while, took him took him a little bit of time to get that position correctly. And I asked him, I said, "What are you feeling or what are you trying to do to get to that point? And he said, "Well, it's more of the top hand. I'm using the top hand to pull the arm, into that position."

That's an easier one because it kills two birds with one stone. Number one, with the hiding the hands and the scap row or this we call it the scap pinch, right, the pinch on the backside.

Jim Macarelli

I call it a mini push up these days. Tell kids do a mini push up.

Joey Myers

Yeah, yeah, exactly. So, hold your pushup. Exactly. It's another way of explaining it. And the point is that you're asking your hitters to actually tell you when it does click, obviously you got to get it to click first but get them to ask you. And now I use that with most of my hitters now when we teach those two things, when we teach the front arm shape, and we teach the scap pinch, and it worked. I mean it went from 20% compliance, not compliance, but more of them getting it to like 40 to 60% now, so like, if not tripled what it was. I like to do that. Do you do that with your hitters? Do you ask them?

Joey Myers

Yeah. I think and sometimes, right, we almost again, it goes to thinking, thinking out of the box and you may start taking one direction. And what I'll often do is think about what the complete opposite is. In golf, we're right-handed everybody slices the ball and what do they do open up more and more and more and more and more, when in reality if you close your stance that might help you. Again, it goes back to something you said in the beginning is, trying to have an open mind, trying to think of different ways.

When teaching, it goes back to something you said in the beginning, trying to have an open mind, trying to think of different ways...

Jim Macarelli

There are days I'm sitting in, I'm cooking in the kitchen, and I got a frying pan, right? And I'm using it like it's a flat bat or something. Is my shoulder externally rotating, am I pronating my...? What am I doing here? Again, just to try to come up with stuff that will work, or that a player can feel. If we can't get them to feel these things, I think it's hard for them to make the changes. Kids prefer different verbal cues, visual cues, tactile cues, whatever it is you need to do.

Jim Macarelli

I think that's the challenge as well, because what we run into sometimes as parents who want the quick fix, so a large portion of what I'll do, if I'm taking on a new player, is I ask for a commitment from the parents for a particular length of time. And also, to make sure that when the kids go home, they're going to do their homework. If they're not doing their homework, and they're not going to be committed to it... You might as well just go somewhere where somebody's going to sit on a bucket, and flip balls to you and find your barrel for you. Because I can do that all day long. I can flip right to where your barrel goes and make you hit the ball pretty good. That's not helping anybody.

Joey Myers

Right? Are there any things that you, because that's a big question that I get from parents is or even coaches, parents, instructors? How do you get the kids to take their work that they've done with you and to actually work on it at home? Are there any strategies that you give them? Any tips tricks?

How do you get the kids to take their work that they've done with you and to actually work on it at home?

Jim Macarelli

I mean, what I will do a lot of times is I'll actually do video of the drills, and put them on YouTube for them. And then what I can do is I can see how many times they've been viewed. It'll give me an idea if they're actually doing things, and then what I always ask the parents to do as well, how many days this week do you think you're going to be able to work? They'll tell me two, three or four. Okay, when you're working do me a favor, just shoot me a quick two minutes video, 20 second video, show me what's going on.

Jim Macarelli

And in around about way I'm getting them to commit to doing something and trying to hold them accountable. And I'm doing it in a simple way by getting them to send me a video. They send me the video, and they're watching the YouTube stuff, then I know they're doing the work. And I can often tell when a kid comes back what his movement patterns currently look like, compared to what they look like the day before, and their lesson before. And I think what really gets the kids motivated is when they start to see the results.

Jim Macarelli

They start to see the results, they're hitting the ball better, or they're moving more efficiently, and they feel more confident in the box. Once that starts to occur, then I think it's pretty easy to get the kids to continue to do their homework. Because if their goal really truly is to get to become better hitters, we both know it takes a lot of work. And for some kids more work than others. I'm not giving them too much to do either.

Jim Macarelli

You and I both know we can look at an eight-year-old and we'll see we've talked about really arm bar, raising back elbow, squishing the ball, poor posture. I don't want the kid to work on 15 things at the one time.

Joey Myers

Good point.

Joey Myers

Is it going to be posture first, what's it going to be first? With that said, I think what you have to be able to look at is, how is one change possibly going to affect everything else down further down the kinetic chain, if you want to get into that. Right? Just changing a kid's posture can change his swing plane. You get a kid who comes in a little bit of a slump, you take a look at him, he's standing straight up, which some people teach. I'm a little bit more of a hip hinge guy, whatever. But I can just get you to hip

hinge and bend over and take the same exact swing. And now your path is different. That might literally just take that to get you through a weekend.

Joey Myers

Amazingly different.

Joey Myers

Because when I do a lot of truism, it goes back to the frying pan. I try to think of where the cues that we were taught when we were kids like where did these cues come from? Whether it be taking your hands on the ball, hands above the ball, and I try to figure out in my mind, what was the person actually trying to say. We hear that every Little Leaguer stay back, stay back, stay back. To me, I think stay back is a good thing.

To me, I think stay back is a good thing

Jim Macarelli

What I say is you have to be able to move forward, but stay back. Where is your center mass? And oftentimes people think it's, keep your hands back. Well, kids will keep their hands back, but then they launch on their front foot. It's gone back to being able to communicate these things in the correct way that makes the most sense to the player, which is going to get you results.

Jim Macarelli

I agree, totally. There's a doctor Victor Frankel wrote the book Man's Search for Meaning. I don't know if you read that one. That was the, he survived four Nazi death camps. He was a psychologist before that and then even after that, and he had written, I can't remember what he called, the actual type of psychology. Bruce Lee was Jeet Kune Do, he created his own martial arts. Dr. Victor Frankel did a similar thing of an outreach or outskirts of psychology.

Joey Myers

One of the terms he used was, and he wrote all this on little napkins, and he stored them and kept them through the whole thing. And he had a written record of all these ideas that came to him during that horrible time. And one of the things he talked about was paradoxical intention. It's a big word, but all it means is doing the opposite of the problem that you're having. In his term psychology, if somebody came to him, a client came to him patient said, I just can't sleep, I have insomnia, horrible insomnia, I just can't get to sleep.

Joey Myers

And he'd ask them, what's your mental? What do you tell yourself? What's your inner dialogue when you can't sleep? And they say, "Well, I tell myself I got to get to sleep, I got to get to sleep." And he says, try doing the opposite. You mentioned this, doing the opposite sometimes. Right? They would say, what's the opposite of saying I need to get to sleep, say, "I want to stay up, I want to stay, I want to stay up." And when they would do that, odds are they go to sleep.

Joey Myers

Same with sweating, if somebody would sweat a lot tons, buckets, if they were in a crowd, or if they were in a social gathering or whatever. And the doc would ask them, well, what's your inner dialogue? And they say, don't sweat, don't sweat, don't sweat", and it would cause him to sweat more, because, and so he doing the opposite. Okay, "I'm going to sweat buckets, sweat buckets", almost like you're going into the fire. But what it does is it releases the tension in the brain, the anxiety, and you actually sweat less.

Joey Myers

With hitting how we apply this to hitters and you can apply it, this is a great principle, psychological principle you can apply across the board, whether it's mechanics, whether it's mindset, but paradoxical intention. As an example, hitting line drives, you mentioned the 10 to 15 degree as the line drive launch angle like the 20% of the major leaguers hitting line drives in that 10 to 15-degree range. If they hit it a pop-fly, we tell them to do the opposite, hit a chopper.

Joey Myers

If they hit a chopper, tell them to hit a pop-fly. And we're trying to do is we're trying to get their aim or their crosshair, we talked about horizontals too, right across the field line to line. But as we call them, we don't call them launch angles because a lot of coaches hate that word.

Jim Macarelli

Everybody's head will explode.

Joey Myers

We call them verticals. If our hitters use that term, their verticals, it's not launch angle. They're trying to figure out, they're getting to this point where they can actually get it to now they're in this zone here, instead of going from up, down, up, down, up down. They get better at it. That's about paradoxical intention. You can use it like you said, stay back, stay back is a great cue, if you've got a hitter, that's lunging forward. Exact opposite. And if they're sitting back too much, which I don't see too often, but if they're sitting that way too much, then you can tell them to lunge.

Jim Macarelli

Right. Yeah, absolutely. And again, it goes back to each player being an individual, and trying to figure out what's going to work best for them instead of just having them come in, and you have your process that you're going to go through, and only stick to that process. There are parts of the process that I do with everybody in terms of, I look at everybody's grip, I look at everybody's posture. I try to do some type of movement assessment to see, you got an eight-year-old who has no core strength and their hip flexors are tight or something and you're trying to get them to make a move and they can't.

"I'll have kids doing fielding drills, and then I'll stop and I'll say, I'll have mine up and I'll go you, you and you, you can't touch your toes, can you?"

Jim Macarelli

And it's funny, because with all my kids on my teams, I'll have kids doing fielding drills, and then I'll stop and I'll say, I'll have mine up and I'll go you, you and you, you can't touch your toes, can you? They're

like, I don't even know. And I'm like, I know you can't because when you go to feel the ground ball, your back is rounded, you can't keep your chest up, and they literally cannot touch their toes. So again, how am I supposed to have them get into an efficient fielding position?

Jim Macarelli

If they can't get their body into that position, so part of what I'm getting at is as instructors, we have to be careful with what we're asking an 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15-year-old player to do. But also, I think what we need to be careful of is not, not assuming they're not athletic enough as well, or not giving them the opportunity to start growing when they're earlier. I'll say to a kid, listen, I was hoping you could be able to do this now. But if your goal is to play high school baseball, we really need to just be able to do it over the next two or three years, so we can grow and get stronger. But it doesn't mean we can't start trying to work out a particular move, or swing change early, if that makes sense.

Jim Macarelli

Yes, movement is huge. And that's everything that we that we do as well. Let me switch gears a little bit. Talk about your new venture and it's bombastic. Right?

Jim Macarelli

This Bombstic.

Joey Myers

Bombstic. Got it!

Jim Macarelli

Yeah. B-O-M-B S-T-I-C

Joey Myers

Is that a little reggae hint there?

Jim Macarelli

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, it's funny because I was going to have Richardson make some hats for me. I sent them to the little design and stuff and on the back of that hat, it was going to say bombstic. The first two times they sent back to me, it said bombastic. Yeah, it's pretty, it's pretty interesting. But yeah, actually.

Joey Myers

Bring it, bring it over and tell us a little bit about it.

Jim Macarelli

Well, so this is it. And that's backwards for you guys. Essentially, it's a training bat, similar to what Victus and CamWood currently produce and some others. I have a two-hand trainer and on one hand trainer. And what I'm going to do with it essentially, is put together a 30-day program that's going to help kids with mechanics, strength, and barrel speed.

Jim Macarelli

And then within the program, there'll also be a video library of drills that they'll be able to utilize. And within all that, what I'm going to offer that I don't know of other bat trainer, organizations doing is I'm going to have a video analysis within there as well. I'm taking the analysis, giving it to the player, and then having a series of drills within the library that'll allow them to work and make the improvements at home and continue to send a video back through similar to stuff that you've done in the past, or still do actually, is basically how the program will work.

Jim Macarelli

At this point in time, it's very green, where I don't even have a website yet. I almost put the cart before the horse and had the product made and the response to it has been great. It's going to be at a very competitive price point. I'm going to offer the two bats, the 30-day program, the video analysis in the hitting library for \$125. It's hard to find, in my opinion, that much value in something. So yeah, I'm excited. But I appreciate you asking.

Jim Macarelli

And I know that's going to be limited time. Just for, we talked last night getting people to come in and give their testimonials about it because you're really the mechanical side you got. I think it's coming around now. A lot of guys like you and like Taylor Gardner, the Gardner brothers of Backspin Tee, where we're starting to get these hitting aids where the people who invented them actually know what they're doing.

Joey Myers

And when I say not know what they're doing, but more of a science-based system, right? I want to say I know what I'm doing or what you're doing just because your Jim and I'm Joey, it's because we stand on the shoulders of giants, whether it's physics, biomechanics, engineering principles, that kind of thing. It's more of adherence to those rules, and we're just applying them to hitters.

BombStic: Why the design and how does that benefit the hitter?**Joey Myers**

Limited time getting more testimonials. Let the people know what it is, what's the main benefit? There some people maybe that aren't familiar with CamWood the other ones. Why the design and how does that benefit the hitter?

Jim Macarelli

Sure. The design is pretty simple, because what it does is, if you take a heavy bat, for instance, and it's end-loaded, right, a lot of times, we'll call them younger, weaker players have difficulty swinging an end-loaded bat, it'll literally swing them with the weight being more towards the hands, then if you swing this back properly, it's almost weightless. There's almost like a counter lever on the bottom.

Jim Macarelli

A lot of people used to wonder why Bonds knob was so big. Did it actually helped him turn the barrel, it's possible. It takes the weight away from the top of the bat puts it above the hands, help strengthen

the wrists, helps strengthen the forearms as well. And again, if it's swung correctly, it almost feels weightless, but it's still doing the job of increasing bat speeds, helping kids get stronger.

Jim Macarelli

But what I really want to make sure of is we've all seen it, right? We've seen bad mechanics that can hit the ball really well. And we talked about this, if you're on plane and you're on time, you can hit the ball. We've seen kids with severe racing back elbow, crazy early armbar that are so hyper mobile that they're in a position that they should never be able to hit the ball, but their timing is perfect.

Jim Macarelli

They'll whip through the zone and smack the heck out of the ball. But what I want to do is, is get kids to improve some of the mechanics first, and then work more on and worry about your bat speed and your strength and so on and so forth. I don't want bad swings that can just swing faster. I want a good swing that can swing faster.

Joey Myers

Yeah, you don't want 150,000-mile tires on a Ferrari and hey, the Ferrari can go fast but man, there's limited by... What's the weight differentials with that? What's the plus on?

Jim Macarelli

Yeah, so the plus on the youth sizes and youth sizes, generally go from like a 26-inch two hand bat to a 31 and they're plus six. The adult size bats, 31 to 34 are going to be a plus 12. Softball size bats for girls are plus six. And then the 31-inch bat is interesting because I do a plus six or a plus 12. And the reason for that is in our area in New York, when you leave Little League at 12 years old and you go to Babe Ruth or you go to Seventh Grade, you have to be able to swing the bbcor bat, we go straight to drop threes, we don't go to drop fives.

Jim Macarelli

Those kids who have to go to the drop three are probably going to benefit a little bit more from the plus 12. And then those kids who don't have to take that big leap can utilize the plus six. And then the one hand trainer is for kids, for the youth is a plus three is 20 inches long plus three and then the adult is right around plus five and there's a little bit of variability, in terms of production when you're turning wood there can be a little bit of variability.

Jim Macarelli

Right. Very cool. Well, I want to be respectful of your time. I know this is Sunday, you're doing a little lot. I usually don't do this stuff on Sunday either. But I thought after our conversation would be good while the iron is hot. I know you don't have the website up yet; I know we're working on that. But what can people do? And maybe when people see this, we'll have the website there. And what I'll do is I'll take the transcription and we'll edit that in so once the website is there, we'll put that in. As of now, since we don't have the website, how can people, if they're they wanted to get more information, should they email you? Where can they find you on the socials?

Joey Myers

Probably on Facebook would be one of the easiest places right now just look me up, Jim Macarelli. My profile pictures me and my wife and my two kids, you'll be able to figure it out pretty quick and easy, in New York. You can friend me or just send me a DM through that way. I'm on Twitter @JimMacarelli. But I think Facebook is a little bit easier right now, if anyone wanted to email me currently, mac3150@gmail.com is my current email. But I mean Facebook's pretty easy right now.

Joey Myers

Are you going to do a Facebook page for this?

Jim Macarelli

I'm going to make a bombstic. And again, it's BOMBSTIC, I'm going to make a bomb Facebook page, I should have that up really in a couple days. People can look for that as well. And then the people who buy the product, what we'll end up doing is a private Facebook page as well. They can go in and get some more information in there.

Jim Macarelli

But yeah, I'm excited about it. My whole goal is it's really simple, it's to help kids get better help players get better, eliminate some of the confusion, the trying times as a parent, right? We have a lot of parents who are trying to do things at home. You give them a bat sensor, and gives you all his data you have no idea what to do. It's not helpful. I'm trying to alleviate some of that stress for people and the players have fun and start hitting bombs.

Joey Myers

Very cool. And before I let you go, what was it you sent out, can't remember how you reached out to some people but you got quite a bit on the bat. You got quite a bit of people wanting to take you up on the offer. What were those numbers, you had one that was like a group of 96 or something?

Joey Myers

A travel organization that has 97 players, they have a strong interest right now. I had another guy reach out to me last night and I think they have about 45 within their organization. I literally started out, I produced 15 sets, and I had them finished last Thursday, they were gone by Friday. And all I literally did is I put one video on one of the Facebook, it was like travel baseball bats something and information. I don't even remember which one it wasn't part of so many of them.

Jim Macarelli

I just put it on there, a picture, showed what it was and it, I woke up in the morning, my phone was exploding. But the challenge with that too, is people where's the website? Where is this? Who are you? I'm putting the cart before the horse a little bit. But that's okay, because it'll generate some interest. I think competition is good. There are other competing bats out there and they're great products, the Victus product is great product, CamWood product is a great product. And I think the value is going to be more in the video analysis and the tailor-made approach that I'm going to have, as opposed to just one cookie cutter approach for everybody who buys product.

Joey Myers

Exactly. People will be getting a hitting aid from somebody who adheres to the science and the real science, not the pseudoscience. And I think that's big. I hope anybody out there will go check it out. And that'll help to just having a Facebook page. It'll buy you a little bit more time and putting the website together where people can go and get it. And you'll just have to take orders by hand for now.

Joey Myers

You get to talk to customers, which is good. You get to get what they're struggling with right now. You'll get to get a lot information. So good work man. I'm glad we connected. And I think we got most of the contact info for people. So other than that, man, hey, enjoy your Sunday. Have a happy thanksgiving. At the time we're doing this video and we'll have to do maybe a part two and see how you're doing. You have to give us an update.

Joey Myers

I'd love to. Thanks, Joey. Happy Thanksgiving.

Joey Myers

All right. Thanks, Jim. We'll see you, bye.