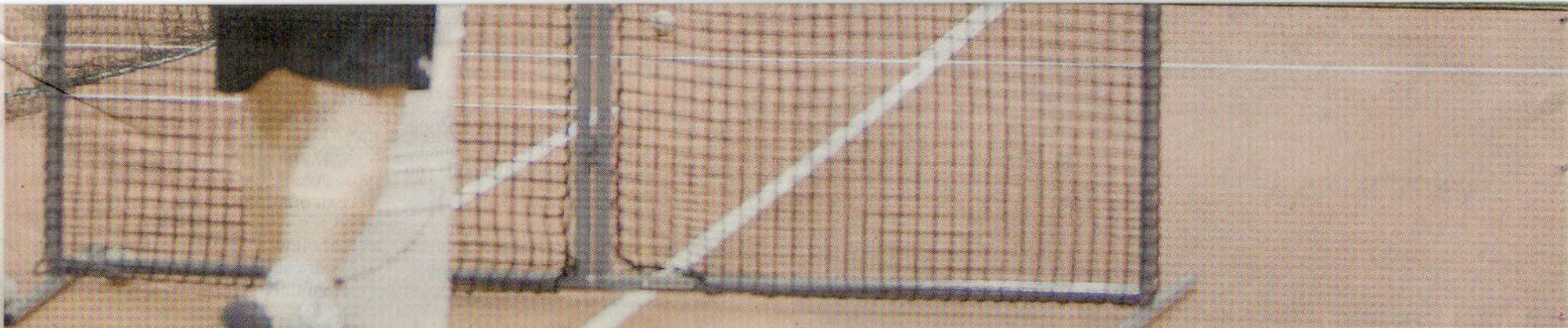


Sports





—Sun Photo by Greg Pender

A hitting camp for young baseball players, set up by Saskatchewan Baseball Association, was held at the Field House during the February school break

Batting around the Field House

□ Players get chance to break out the bats at baseball camp

By Darren Zary
for The Saskatoon Sun

If you're not hitting the books, you might as well be hitting the leather off baseballs.

Even though spring hadn't even sprung, some Saskatoon baseball players were getting a jump on their spring training thanks to a winter-season hitting camp held during the February school break.

The camp — set up through the Saskatchewan Baseball Association — included three daily sessions at the Saskatoon Field House. Hitting instruction

was provided by Dan Kasperski and Galen Sonntag, a pair of former Team Canada players with Saskatoon baseball roots.

"It was a chance for some kids to knock the rust off their bats and come and work on three parts of their hitting," Sonntag says of the camp. "It's earlier than spring training. It's really a chance to work on the full mechanics of their swing and work, how to groove their swing and develop power, and hit in different situations.

"They could sit at home, watch TV and watch a few Olympic events or come and get active. They got four hours of swinging, swinging, swinging."

Kasperski, a Saskatoon-based sports consultant and camp instructor from Kasper's Life Sports, teamed up with Sonntag, who runs his own program called The Complete Baseball Player.

"What we're doing today is try and get kids active, but with an idea of HOW to

get active," stressed Kasperski. "If you want to learn how to play a sport — and we saw that with tennis here (at the Field House) — they've just got to figure out where to find it.

"We went through Saskatchewan Baseball with (SBA technical director) Greg Brons but Galen has his own company and I have my own company. What we decided to do is work together — you've got to have somebody to show the kids how to go through this the right way. To be able to see a few more parents and coaches out here would be great."

Kasperski has also worked with Saskatchewan Hockey Association, Saskatchewan Baseball Association and Saskatchewan Volleyball Association.

"What I do now is get around to as many sports as I can and help them how to do this the right way," Kasperski says.

"It's been a lot of fun having kids learn

the basics of sports."

Sonntag also has his own camps currently running until the end of March. Starting in the middle of March, he'll conduct both the Complete Player Camp as well as the Complete Pitcher Camp.

"We've been trying now, for six months, to team up between Sonntag sports management and Kasper's Life Sports," Sonntag says.

"This is a great opportunity for us to work together. We're hoping to do more of this in Saskatoon, outside of Saskatoon all over the province, wherever kids want to improve their baseball skills."

Both former athletes played college baseball in the United States.

"We both have that Team Canada in our blood," Sonntag says. "Now we're trying to bring that experience to some kids here."

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