

# THE 10<sup>TH</sup> INNING

SEPTEMBER 2023

“One of the beautiful things about baseball is that every once in a while you come into a situation where you want to, and where you have to, reach down and prove something.”

- Nolan Ryan, HOF 1999

## COACHES CORNER



**PITCHING - The Left-Handed Pickoff Move**  
In order to neutralize a running game, Coach Thrun breaks down the pickoff move to first base in three categories: *Step Back Move*, *“A” Move*, and *Show Me Move*.

A left-handed pitcher has the ability to control the running game far greater than a right-handed pitcher. It's his job to keep the runner at first base, keep the double play in order, and prevent a stolen base. These three pick off moves help execute that.

The *Step Back Move* can be done at any time during the stretch sequence. The baseball is always in your hand as you take the sign from the catcher or are coming set. As you come set, the pitcher steps back with his left foot, making sure to clear the rubber, while getting his left arm up in a throwing position as quick as possible. The pitcher then can do one of two things, fake a throw or proceed to throw to first base.

The *“A” Move* is the move predominantly used to pickoff runners and is used from the set position. It is intended to deceive the runner while staying inside the confines of the rule. After taking the catcher's sign, the pitcher comes set, breaks his hands, and steps towards the imaginary line while throwing to first base, taking full advantage of the 45 degree angle permitted down the mound.

The *Show Me Move* is a scaled down version of your A move. It allows for a pickoff to first base without showing your best move; intended to just let the runner know you are thinking about him. The idea is to keep your *“A”* move in your pocket for a key spot in the game. The *Show Me Move* does not play as much down the 45 degree line, rather, the pitcher steps more towards first base in a straight line while using the same sequence, come set, break the hands and throw to first.



*SAL BANDO, JR.*

Author

Sal breaks down 20+ years of his coaching experience and has packed it into our monthly newsletter, *The 10<sup>th</sup> Inning*. Exclusive interviews, coaching tips, rule clarifications, and game insights, are only some of the topics he covers each issue. Additionally, Sal is an RT Elite coach and has been the head baseball coach for Marquette High School Hilltoppers since 2011.

## THE INTERVIEW



Shaun Wegner was promoted to the role of head baseball coach at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, his alma mater, in July of 2023 after spending the last five seasons on staff as an assistant and associate head coach. During his time as an assistant, he helped the program to 129 wins over five full seasons, which included runs to the championship round of the Horizon League Tournament in 2019 and 2021. During Coach Wegner's tenure, 22 Panthers earned All-Horizon League First or Second team honors. Prior to Milwaukee, Wegner served as an assistant for five years at NCAA Division III powerhouse Wisconsin Whitewater. During his five seasons as a Warhawk, they made an NCAA postseason appearance each year, including a trip to the D3 College World Series in 2015 and the D3 National Championship in 2014.

**You recently took over the state of Wisconsin's only NCAA D1 program, Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Share with our readers your vision for UWM baseball in the coming years.**

This is an extremely exciting time for myself and my family, being able to return five years ago to my alma mater and now having the opportunity to continue the vision and direction of MKE Baseball into the future. However, we are still a young program in collegiate baseball, all things considered, and I now see my role as the head alumnus trying to continue to elevate our program and standing within the state, region, and national sphere of the sport. We have a chance to become a program that represents this state at the highest level of NCAA athletics, while also becoming a regional player and mainstay for the NCAA tournament. It is going to take alumni support, donor contribution, and community pride but we fully intend to provide our student-athletes with a Division I experience that they can remember and reminisce upon with their friends, family, and kids in the future.

### **What advice would you give to any prospective student-athlete?**

Working hard doesn't separate you anymore. That is the expectation! We still value multiple sport athletes here at UWM and believe, more than anything, that can help develop your all-around athleticism and competitive spirit. You must have a plan for where you want to be and go after it with intentionality. There is more access now than ever before to strength training, nutritional supplements and information, exposure opportunities, and development facilities for sports. Taking advantage of them is completely up to you and it pays off when no one is watching. Working smart is how you attack this with intentionality.

### **What do you look for from prep players when you are out recruiting and scouting?**

The physical skillset is the introduction to an athlete. If you don't have physical skills, it is going to be hard to play at the Division I level, let alone college baseball entirely. What separates those players is whether they fall into our OKG (Our Kinda Guy) moniker. We target guys that play the game hard, the "blue-collar" type that don't mind getting in the dirt and making the extra effort play. We place an emphasis on baseball IQ and instinct. There are sites and organizations out there that can provide valuable metrics and data on players and their skill sets. It is our job as recruiters to then follow up and either match the skillset with the type of player we expect or find out that they aren't who we thought they might be. I personally value someone who is not afraid to use their voice and exhibits leadership qualities.

## DID YOU KNOW?

That Cal Ripken, Jr. broke a 56 year MLB record in 1995 when he played in his 2,131<sup>st</sup> consecutive game for the Baltimore Orioles, breaking Lou Gehrig's record of 2,130 consecutive games played.

Ripken went on to play another 501 consecutive games, setting the seemingly unbeatable record of 2,632 consecutive games played.