



Collegiate Baseball

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Dr. Harrison Explains Vision Advances

□ Vision performance skills can be enhanced with futuristic concepts brought to life by Dr. Bill Harrison.

By LOU PAVLOVICH, JR.
Editor/Collegiate Baseball
(First Of A 2-Part Series)

LAGUNA BEACH, Calif. — Vision is the centerpiece of all baseball playing activities.

Whether it is tracking a ball in hitting, chasing down a fly ball in the outfield, or picking up the catcher's glove in pitching, nothing happens in the game without vision.

If this is undisputed, why in the world are only a small minority of coaches in the game utilizing vision performance drills to fine tune their players' sight skills?

The Godfather of all vision performance specialists in the game of baseball is Dr. Bill Harrison of

Laguna Beach, Calif.

In early 1972, Dr. Harrison and Dr. William Lee consulted with the Kansas City Royals and introduced the following concepts:

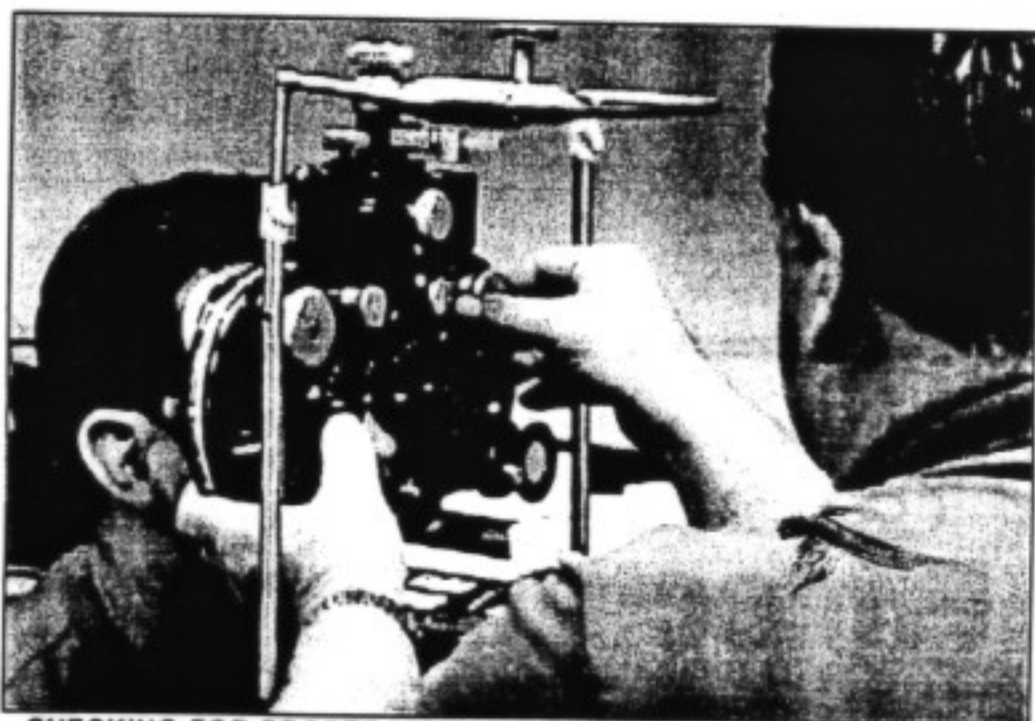
> The eyes can be trained to see the ball better.

> Concentration can be better controlled by utilizing soft center vs. fine centering and applying this concept when picking up a ball from the pitcher's release.

> The importance of body rhythm and relaxation in seeing the ball was noticed. They found a need for the hitter to have rhythmic movement prior to a pitcher's release.

> They found a natural reflex with the eyes looking away as soon as they received enough visual information. There was a need to over accentuate a focus at contact and a need to track balls to the glove (ideally without head movement).

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CHECKING FOR PROPER VISION — Dr. Bill Harrison (right) examines a member of the Cincinnati Reds organization for vision problems. Dr. Harrison began his baseball vision performance career in the early 1970s.

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State-Of-The-Art Training

Vision Skills Can Be Enhanced With Special Concentration, 3-D Drills

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> This duo discovered that seeing the velocity of the ball and changing the velocity of the ball is the toughest visual task for hitters. They must have the eyes in the best position when the ball is released and found that depth perception can be trained.

> They found that tracking pitches involved 14 muscles of the eyes. Tension deteriorates their skill unless they are developed to a high level of proficiency, just like any other muscle group.

> They discovered the important role of visualization and found that a player sees what he looks for and the value of seeing action in advance.

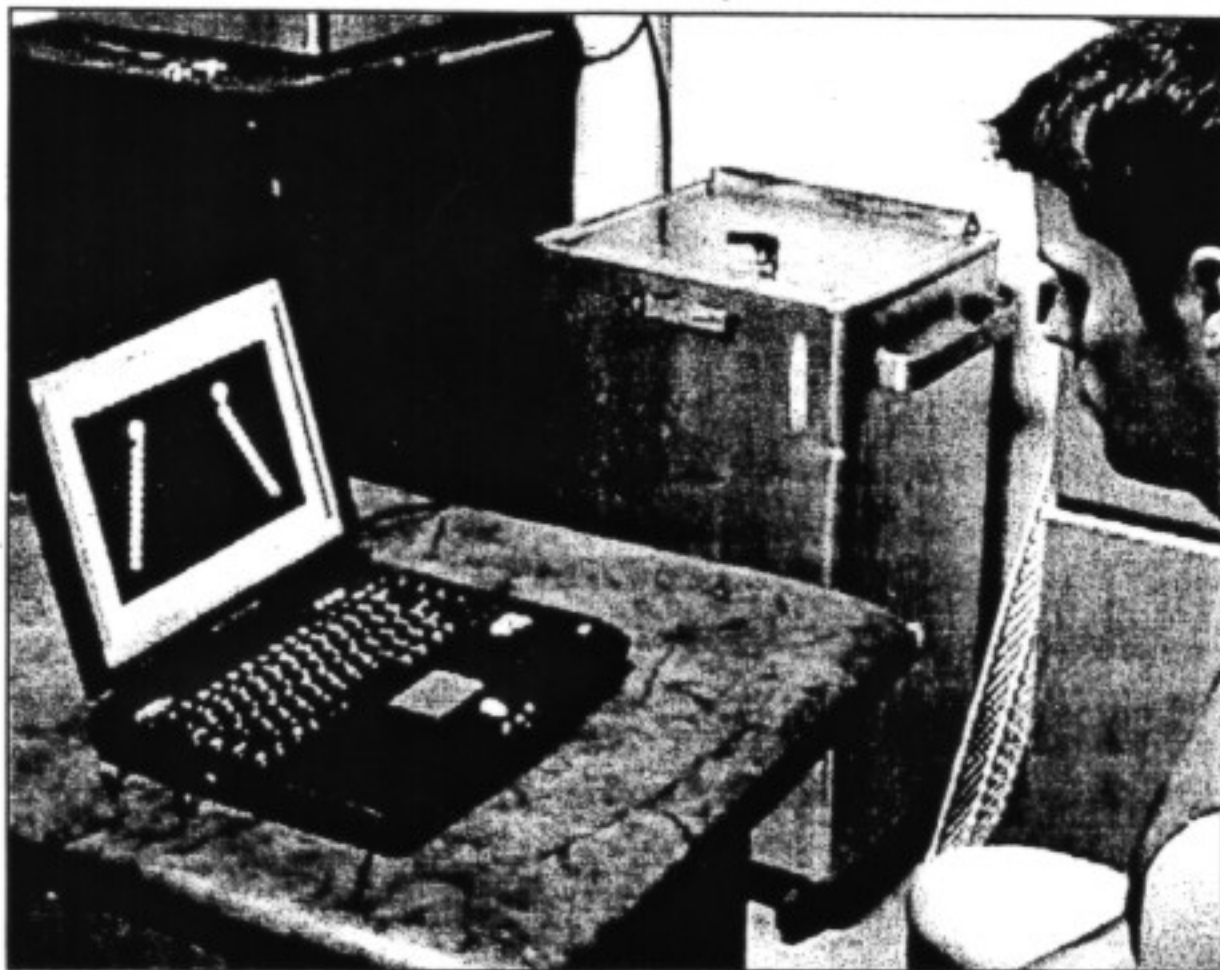
> This duo showed the importance of small or limited movement of the eyes... up and down toward the pitcher and the need for proper mechanics to keep the eyes in the right position.

> They showed the pitfalls of seeing with a tilted head.

> They also vividly showed the importance of balance for pitchers.

Track Record Of Success

Dr. Harrison has worked with many Major League teams over the years after his work with the Royals during the 1970s as he worked with such coaches, officials and players as Jack



SPECIAL COMPUTER DRILLS — This athlete is running through a series of visual drills on a computer which will help him perform his skills better in baseball.

McKeon, Charlie Lau, Cookie Rojas, Syd Thrift, Buzzy Keller, Joe Tanner, Buck Martinez, Paul Splittorf, Steve Busby, Dennis Leonard, George Brett, Fred Patek and Amos Otis, to name just a few.

During 2001 spring training, Dr. Harrison met with several Major League organizations.

In addition to every player receiving an eye test, each player was given a training product to train and develop his concentration skills to the highest possible level.

They were shown how to train properly and given instructions how it "warms up" the eyes and mind prior to any performance. The goal was to develop skills so that no longer would distractions, time pressures, stress, rapid movement or fatigue could disrupt their ability to concentrate.

"The training helps them adjust their focus from a wide focus to a very detailed fine focus under maximum pressure and need to perform at their best," said Dr. Harrison.

"It will help overcome distractions and allow rapid recovery from fatigue."

speed between the two pitchers.

"Also, if a player is out of the lineup due to an injury or is used as a platoon player, he will immediately get his timing back when he returns to the lineup. In simpler terms, he will have great timing as he adjusts to any type of pitching he faces."

Big Leaguers Benefit

Dr. Harrison said players who use these ideas and training tools include: Sean Casey, Mike Sweeney, Carlos Delgado, Shawn Green, Jason and Jeremy Giambi, Carlos Febles, Hector Ortiz, Jason LaRue, Aaron Boone, Pokey Reese, Javier Lopez, Travis Wilson, Brady Clark, Chris Reitsma, Chad Durbin, Jason Johnson, Pete Narnisch, Danny Graves, Scott Williamson, Rob Bell, Greg Maddux, Mike Remlinger and many others.

"Performance Fundamentals is a physiological based program and not a psychological based program," said Dr. Harrison.

"More importantly, it is a player development program and not a medical program. We address the

tionally well when they take a pitch and become highly confident as a result.

3. If hitters see 3-5 pitches in their first at-bat, they feel they can handle just about any pitch the pitcher throws the remainder of the game.

4. Hitters with exceptional timing have exceptional depth perception.

5. Hitters with exceptional timing (depth perception) can handle an assortment of pitches, can adjust from pitcher to pitcher and can recover from injuries sooner. They are more successful hitting off-speed pitches but also can adjust to the high-speed fastball.

6. Hitters with average depth perception are in front of off speed pitches and behind high-speed fastballs. They can't adjust.

7. Many hitters lock in on the pitcher too soon and lose their focus by the time the pitch is released.

8. Most hitters are receptive to methods that help them consistently see the ball well.

How To Reach Dr. Bill Harrison

LAGUNA BEACH, Calif. — Dr. Bill Harrison sells several products which can enhance vision in baseball players.

For information on these products, call Dr. Bill Harrison at (949) 215-2477.

You can also e-mail him at wdharrison@home.com

The web site for his business is: www.performancefundamentals.com

You can also write him at: Dr. Bill Harrison, 540 S. Coast Highway, Ste. 202, Laguna Beach, CA 92651.

each are.

"The first thing we test for is visual acuity. There are 50 ways to see 20/20 but only two that provide the quickest vision. This test and the correction of any problems makes certain there is no limitation on speed of recognition and no difficulty in handling changing lighting situation (brightness, shadows, under the lights, etc.)

"The next area we test for us 3-D stereo acuity depth perception. This is based on the ability of the brain to use the two eyes exceptionally well together. This is the supreme visual skill of a baseball player and determines his abilities to: (1) Have consistent ability to hit changes of speed pitches, (2) Handle an assortment of pitches more easily, (3) Adjust to changes in pitchers easily, (4) Make excellent pinch hitters or part-time players, (5) Resume mid-season hitting skills after recovery from injury, and (6) Can adjust to the high-speed fastball."

Dr. Harrison said the next area he tests is contrast sensitivity.

"An important visual skill that relates to the ability to see the spin or rotation of the ball is contrast sensitivity. This helps in identifying curve ball and other spinning pitches."

Testing for eye alignment follows.

"The relationship of the two eyes can make balls look faster or slower than reality."

Eye muscle coordination is then tested.

"Tracking is a visual skill and

2 Key Rules Will Help Coaches

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with jeans, that is wrong. If you are not made aware of that, a young man might show up with jeans.

"We do not have a written rule for everything. This is a way of being for us. Players who have been in the program know what is right. The reason I like to do it this way is I want my older guys to communicate the proper procedures with the younger guys. I also tell the players what I would like as well.

"For instance, I will mention to the players that we would like them to curtail their cussing on the field and be courteous in the classroom, among other rules that every program has instituted