

Davis' pitching guru: Miramontes' MVP band has been approved by Little League

By Bruce Gallaudet | Enterprise staff writer | May 28, 2009 00:15



Dave Miramontes has first-hand knowledge about keeping a pitching arm healthy.

As a standout pitcher with Woodland High and Butte College

in the early 1980s, Miramontes struggled to keep his arm live.

There were few proven exercises or contraptions available for pitchers 30 years ago, so Miramontes - like most pitchers - bounced from routine to routine, trying to stay fit and mound ready.

Now living in Davis with his wife of 20 years, Jennifer, the longtime youth coach, father of four and director of A Change of Pace marketing thinks he's found the answer to a healthy arm...

And Little League Baseball of America agrees.

The MVP Band, designed to provide a myriad workouts for arms of all ages, earned Little League endorsement this year. Those baseball officials believe Miramontes and his staff have found a key to arm strength and rotator-cuff health.

'We see the MVP Band as another way to help ... reduce the risk of

future arm-related injuries, while at the same time helping to improve a player's confidence and ability.'

Miramontes says his sore arm began as a youth, but traditional training-room techniques kept it live enough to advance from level to level.

After a couple seasons at Butte, Pepperdine University came calling and it was there that Miramontes met Rich Taylor.

Taylor, now in business with Miramontes, was the Waves' pitching coach. While the young college hurler worked hard to maintain his health, Taylor's work program was instrumental in getting his new pitcher through the grueling 70-game collegiate schedule.

At the same time, Taylor was trying to be preventative in his approach.

'The sports cycle in high school now is way different than it was 20-30 years ago,' Miramontes explains. 'Then you'd have students playing three sports. Now they concentrate on one - two at the most.'

'The focus was reactive to injuries. Now, especially with the MVP Band, prevention is the key.'

Miramontes, 41, allows that there are 'plenty of other' stretching and strengthening products available - many of them stretch bands. But his product and anchor cuff are different.

'Instead of using your hands to pull, we have a (loop) that fits around the wrist. The energy goes right to the rotator cuff. Ninety percent of the emphasis is on the rotator cuff, the weakest part of the body.'

Borne of Taylor's knowledge and Miramontes' product-design and marketing skills, the MVP Band underwent serious scrutiny by Little League Baseball.

Doctors at the American Sports Medicine Institute and California State University conducted a study of the band and its versatile program.

Glenn Fleisig, the doctor evaluating the biomechanical worth of the band, found that the group using the product 'significantly increased their thrown-ball velocity;' more so than the test group using traditional methods.

'The training group believed that the program improved their shoulder flexibility, shoulder strength and ball speed,' Little League officials said in announcing their support in April.

Miramontes adds that there are 21 exercises available to band owners and that, as beneficial as the product is to softball and baseball players, volleyballers, water polo participants, football quarterbacks and swimmers are well-served by the MVP Band.

Jennifer and Dave came back to Davis, prompted by an illness in the family.

Both knew it was a good move, adding the 'region is so healthy, fitness-minded. Davis is a great place to raise a family.'

Sixteen-year-old son Alec played junior varsity baseball at Davis High this spring and Ian, 12, is a member of the local Little League Phillies, one of the teams Miramontes coaches.

He and Marc Hicks also coach a summer competitive club, the Cyclones, and Miramontes' foundation, A Change of Pace, conducts a handful of area fitness events, most notably the annual Turkey Trot and Davis Stampede.

Jennifer and Dave also have daughters, Emma, 12, and Maya, 8.

'I was working at area schools, talking to kids about obesity and nutrition,' the coach remembers. 'I startling realizing we had to get these kids out ... do better conditioning. That's when (A Change of Pace) went non-profit.'

And Miramontes began concentrating on the MVP Band.

'Baseball was always my first love,' he continues.

Speaking of that first love, Miramontes - who still plays baseball in the Roy Hobbs adult league - once matched up against Randy Johnson in a big Pepperdine/USC game.

'We won, but I came out with the game tied, 4-4,' Miramontes remembers. 'I was pitching well ... could have finished. That would have been nice, to beat Randy Johnson.'

Mike Fetters, who went on to major-league fame with four clubs, picked up that win in relief of Miramontes.

Meanwhile, Miramontes went on to play a little in the Brewers' organization before settling into his world of sports marketing.

Notes: Miramontes used to promote kids' camps with former UC Davis baseball coach Phil Swimley and still has six to eight annual fitness events as part of A Change of Pace. ... For more information about the MVP Band, visit <http://mvpband.com>, or go to ABS Sporting Goods in Woodland. Bands sell for \$35-45, depending upon the band style purchased.

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