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NEWS ARCHIVE

MANAGEMENT GRAD INVENTS PRODUCT TO TRAIN TOMORROW'S BASEBALL PLAYERS

By **Bryana Wall**

A recent Muma College of Business graduate is combining a love for baseball and entrepreneurship to bring a new sports product to the market.

USF management alumnus

Addison Maruszak came up with the idea for the BALLSeye, a sports training aid, while working with local Little League teams. His passion for baseball followed him from his time on the USF baseball team to his career as a MLB player, and on – to the development of this new sports product.



At age 3, Maruszak started playing baseball, starting down a path that led to being recruited by the New York Yankees as a junior at USF. He spent six years with the organization, played a year with the Philadelphia Phillies, and then returned to USF in 2013 to complete his degree in management.

That management degree came in handy running his own business - AMP Pro Training. Through this business, he trains local Little League coaches and works with the players personally to improve technique. He also hopes to revive interest in Little League teams, which are struggling to maintain membership. The Little League team he works with recently won their state championship three years in a row.

In his business, Maruszak saw a need for a product that would help young players improve focus. As a training tool, Maruszak used bucket tops as targets, but it was inefficient because once they were hit they would break into pieces. Maruszak started exploring more effective materials to use instead and created BALLSeye, a thin sheet of metal, which could be used as target practice for a multitude of sports.

"They make a unique 'ping' sound when they are hit," Maruszak said. "That helps the kids to focus and it draws attention to the product. They are also portable, so you can hang them anywhere."

With the help of his business partner, Maruszak is securing the necessary patents and trademarks to bring BALLSeye to the market and hopes to see his product in big-name sports retailers by this fall.

Maruszak has taken a hands-on approach to move from an idea to a completely developed product. From designing his own website to engineering the machine that cuts the metal, Maruszak has taken the middle man out wherever possible.

"I didn't think it was true when people said this, but I face challenges every day, from finding the right metal to use to finding shipping at reasonable costs," Maruszak said. "But it's been fun. It's an adventure."

Through his business, Maruszak hopes to strengthen the game of baseball while providing jobs to recent retirees and minor league players who don't get paid during the off season – something Maruszak remembers all too well from his time as a professional athlete.

"When I use this product, the main focus is not to teach the kids to win, although it helps," said Maruszak. "It's to keep kids in love with baseball."



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