

Controversy between metal and wood bats

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The Controversy Whether College Baseball Players Should Use Metal or Wooden Bats? ` In college baseball today the players are becoming so strong because of the weight lifting plans, constant conditioning, and the use of drugs to enhance their performance. The baseballs are being wound tighter and the quality of pitching has declined over the years. It is becoming a major concern for college players because they hit the ball so hard with metal bats. It is just a matter of time until someone gets hit and either seriously injures or even kills them if it hits them in the wrong place. It is getting too dangerous for players today to be using metal bats. The most dangerous position for players is pitcher because they are the closest to the batter at sixty feet six inches away from home plate. Balls hit up the middle of the field off metal bats give pitchers an average reaction time of 0.056 seconds less than that of balls hit with wood bats. This could be a difference of life and death (Shively 1). This is very little time to get out of the way of a ball. In my recent experience, we were playing Tennessee Westland and our lead-off man Chris Rankhorn hit a line drive back up the middle hitting the pitcher in the head. The blow caused him to be immediately rushed to the hospital. The pitcher received stitches and won't see any action on the field for a while. An NCAA survey showed that 375 injuries from balls hit up the middle occurred over the course of the 1998 college baseball season. Thirty-four of those pitchers exited the game and six received serious injuries that put them out of action for months. In that same year, a 14-year-old in Arizona was hit in the temple and killed by a ball off an aluminum bat (Shively 1). Pitchers are not the only players on the field that are in danger, a sharp line drive down the line or a short hop to a player could have serious

consequences. Wooden bats are safer than metal bats. Major league baseball conducted the same study that college baseball did about the use of metal or wood bats on the same amount of games in 1998 and found that only 316 similar injuries occurred in a league that only uses wood bats and has far more powerful hitters (Shively 1). This stat proves that the use of wooden bats prevents injuries. Wooden bats can also prepare a college athlete for the next level. In my experience of using a wooden bat balls I hit were not hit near as hard, not hit as far, and if you did not hit the ball square the player would know it. If you do not hit the ball on the barrel of the bat with a wooden bat it stings your hands and may break the bat training the player to hit the ball on the barrel of the bat. If I hit a ball out of the ball park by ten or twenty feet with a metal bat the ball probably would not go out with a wooden bat. One of the toughest transitions for players in college baseball to the professional level is the switch between metal to wood; therefore it would better prepare them for professional level if they so choose to play at that level. Every batter wants any advantage they can get on the pitcher. Metal bats give you more pop off the bat and you don't have to hit the ball completely solid to get a base hit. Part of the confidence of a hitter is knowing that the bat won't break (Shively 1), but the advantage you get from using a metal is not worth the danger you are putting the players in by using a metal bat. Safe or not, metal bats are here to stay -- at least for a while. Bat companies such as Louisville Slugger, DeMarini, and Easton make too much profit on college sports and endorsements for any type of movement toward using wood bats (Shively 1). At least they are making strides to make the game safer, in the article Wood vs. aluminum bats in

college baseball by Chris Shively it states in 2002 the NCAA made bats constructed of the hardest-hitting aluminum illegal in game play. To cut down bat speed, they also required that the bat's length in inches must be at least 3 greater than the bat's weight in ounces. Such measures show that the NCAA has concern for its athletes and, despite less favorable offensive numbers, the NCAA cares about preserving the safety and integrity of baseball. Wooden bats would not only make the game at the college level much safer, but you would find out who the real hitters are. Word count: 925

bibliography Page Shively, Chris. " Wood vs. aluminum bats in college baseball." 2005. 8 March 2007.