



WHAT IS THE AZBCA?

The Arizona Baseball Coaches Association (AzBCA) is committed to advancing coaching expertise by offering professional development through our annual clinic, packed with valuable training and resources. We create opportunities for coaches to connect, collaborate, and build lasting relationships within the community. Members gain access to shared resources, including drills, strategies, and player development insights, along with the chance to vote for and participate in AzBCA all-star games. Ultimately, we are dedicated to fostering a strong, supportive community that promotes the growth of both baseball coaches and the sport.

COACH SPOTLIGHT

Built to Last: The Legacy of Coach Robert Abalos

For Coach Robert Abalos, baseball has never been just a game. It has been a lifelong passion, a calling, and a legacy that he is proud to carry forward at Safford High School. His journey began as early as T ball, and by age 12, he was already running baseball camps in his own backyard. That early leadership foreshadowed the career to come. His first official coaching opportunity came right after high school, when he led a summer baseball team in Safford. He went on to play at Eastern Arizona College and later at Grand Canyon University before an injury cut his playing career short. But the end of one chapter opened the door to another. He returned to school and took on the role of pitching coach at Eastern Arizona College from 2000 to 2004. Then came the opportunity that would define his career, the head coaching job at Safford High School. Abalos did not come into coaching just to fill a role. He came to build a program. Drawing from his own experience as a state champion player at Safford in 1994, he brought a championship mentality into the dugout from day one. That mindset paid off. In 2008, he led Safford to a state championship. In 2017, they finished as the state runner-up. And in 2020, he felt confident that his team had what it took to go all the way until COVID canceled the season. Coach Abalos remains the only person in Safford history to win state titles both as a player and a coach. Through it all, his coaching staff remained consistent. Assistant coach Bob Park has been by his side for over 20 years, helping develop the kind of program where consistency, culture, and year-round commitment define success.

No story about Coach Abalos would be complete without mentioning his biggest supporter, his wife, Kristen. High school sweethearts, the two have been together for 32 years. She has been there for every milestone, often sacrificing family moments so he could pursue his coaching dreams. In fact, one of Abalos' most cherished memories came during the 2017 championship game, which was held on the same day his daughter graduated from college. Over the phone, his daughter told him, "Dad, you raised us to compete. Go compete." It was a moment that captured the values he has instilled both at home and on the field. This year, Abalos reached a major milestone, his 300th win, making him the winningest coach in Safford baseball history. Kristen drove three hours to surprise him in the stands. She has been more than a supportive partner. He calls her his best assistant coach ever. In one memorable moment, she even learned his signs. After signaling a bunt during a game, he looked into the crowd and saw her shaking her head. He took the sign off, the batter swung away, and doubled. For Coach Abalos, coaching goes far beyond the scoreboard. His core belief is grounded in accountability, on the field, in the classroom, and in life. He teaches his players to navigate challenges head on, to stay focused when things get tough, and to always own their effort and actions. Even after all these years, the drive has not faded. Abalos still has the itch to compete. While his teams may not always have the flashiest arms, they win through strategy, fundamentals, and fierce preparation. He thrives on the chess match of the game, studying charts, analyzing opponents, setting up plays, and finding an edge. It is the little things, bunts, pick offs, player tendencies, that keep him locked in. Safford High School baseball has a rich history, and Abalos knows it well. As a former player under legendary coach Rich DeRidder, he understands what it means to wear that uniform. In over four decades, Safford has had just two head baseball coaches, and Abalos is honored to continue that legacy. With deep roots in the community, an unwavering commitment to his players, and a love for the game that never fades, Coach Robert Abalos is not just building wins, he is building something that lasts.

AZBCA ALL-STATE AND ALL-STAR GAME

All-Star Voting is Now Open!

To have your player selected for All-Star teams, you must be an AzBCA member: <https://azbca.org/membership/>

Coaches, please submit your nominations using our online form, the deadline for nomination forms is 11:59 PM on 5/3/25: <https://form.jotform.com/250764986015161>

Teams will be selected by each region representative during the All-State Meeting, which will take place at 9:00 AM on May 4 at Apollo High School.

Game Schedule at Goodyear Ballpark

 Saturday, May 24

- Academic All-Star Game – 2:00 PM

- 1A–3A All-Star Game – 5:00 PM

 Sunday, May 25

- 4A All-Star Game – 10:00 AM

- 5A All-Star Game – 2:00 PM

- 6A All-Star Game – 6:00 PM

Start nominating today and help us recognize the outstanding talent across Arizona!

AZBCA UPDATES

Congratulations to Scott Richardson on being named the new Vice President of the Arizona Baseball Coaches Association!

YOUR AZBCA BOARD

Executive Board of Directors

President - Garye LaFevers (Retired)
Vice President - Scott Richardson (Tolleson)
Secretary - Cody Brassfield (CGCC)
Northern Arizona Rep- Art Griffith (Retired)

Board of Directors

Central Arizona Rep - Stan Luketich (CDS)
Clinics - JR Langston (Westwood)
All-Star Games - Phillip Miglio (Tonopah Valley)
All-Star Games - Nick Swanson (Canyon View)
Fundraising - Eric Godfrey (Retired)
Hall of Fame - Mike Woods (Hamilton)
Membership - Jerod Aker (Apollo)
Special Assistant to Executive Board - Ron Davini
Southern Arizona Rep - Fred Trujillo (Benson)
Team Arizona - Matt Denny (Casteel)
Team Arizona - Scott Richardson (Tolleson)

AZBCA WEBSITE

The Arizona Baseball Coaches Association is excited to announce the launch of its brand-new website, AzBCA.ORG! Designed with coaches, players, and baseball enthusiasts in mind, this site is your go-to hub for everything baseball in Arizona.

