



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

Dalton Mills: Building a Legacy Through Baseball and Community

Dalton Mills, head baseball coach at Bagdad High School, has dedicated his career to the game he loves. His coaching journey began during summers home from college, balancing work during the day and coaching 13- to 15-year-olds in the evenings. Baseball was always more than just a sport to him—it was a passion shaped by his high school mentor, Carl Ridenour.

"Coach Ridenour was a huge influence in my life," Mills recalls. "He was all about the small details—bunting, holding runners, pick-off plays. He was old school, tough on his players, but he instilled belief in the team. I've taken so much from him and implemented it in my own coaching." That foundation has served Mills well. He has led teams to three state championship appearances, finishing as the runner-up each time.

His first high school coaching experience came in Bagdad during the 2008-2009 season, where he inherited a team with a solid mix of seniors and sophomores. Despite early struggles, they found their rhythm at the right time and made an improbable run to the state championship game. "I had to learn quickly how to manage different personalities, discipline players when necessary, and keep the team focused," Mills says. "We beat the No. 1 seed to get to the finals, and that experience really helped shape my approach as a coach."

Throughout his career, Mills has emphasized the importance of multi-sport athletes, hard work, teamwork, and positivity. More than anything, he teaches his players how to handle failure—an essential life skill both on and off the field. One of the toughest aspects of coaching, he explains, is dealing with real-life challenges that go beyond the game. "When players face personal hardships—like car accidents or struggles at home—it's tough, but those experiences make them stronger," he says. "My role isn't just to coach baseball; it's to help them stay on the right path in the classroom, on the field, and in life. Social media adds a lot of pressure on kids today, so I try to provide balance and be a positive influence." Mills' impact extends far beyond the baseball field. Many former players return to coach alongside him, and others still reach out for advice years later. "It's rewarding to see them succeed, whether it's in baseball or life," he says. "When former players come back to coach, it's a reminder of how much this program means to them."

After years of coaching, Mills admits it can be challenging to stay energized. But every season brings a new group of players, fresh personalities, and different expectations. "Some years are easy, some are tough," he says. "The challenge is figuring out how to get the most out of each group."

For those just starting out in coaching, Mills emphasizes the importance of mentorship. "Find someone you connect with," he advises. "Every coach needs a mentor to lean on when things get tough. And be yourself—players can tell when you're not genuine. Most importantly, you have to love the game because you're definitely not doing it for the money."

Looking ahead, Mills has no plans of stepping away from coaching anytime soon. With a stepson who is a freshman and an nine-year-old just starting club baseball, he expects to be involved for years to come.

Bagdad is more than just where Mills coaches—it's home. Though he once left for college seeking something different, he ultimately returned to where it all began. "Bagdad is a small town, a fishbowl where everyone knows what's going on," he says. "In small communities like this, the torch keeps getting passed down. I've coached multiple generations of families, and it's an awesome feeling." For Coach Mills, baseball is more than just a game—it's about building a lasting legacy, both on and off the field.

AIA REMINDERS

SPRING BREAK IS EITHER HERE OR QUICKLY APPROACHING, AND MANY OF YOU WILL BE HOSTING OUT-OF-STATE TEAMS FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY. PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO REMIND THEM ABOUT THE PITCH CLOCK RULES AND ENSURE THEY BRING HELMETS FOR BASE COACHING.

ADDITIONALLY, BRIAN GESSNER, THE STATE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIALS, HAS A FEW IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR ALL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, BASEBALL COACHES, AND UMPIRES: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES – ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION IS ONLY PERMITTED BETWEEN THE DUGOUT AND THE CATCHER. ANY OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION USED ON THE FIELD WILL RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE EJECTION OF BOTH THE PLAYER AND THE HEAD COACH. THIS MUST ALSO BE ADDRESSED DURING THE PLATE MEETING. CONSIDER THIS EMAIL YOUR OFFICIAL WARNING.

USE OF PROPS – THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN NON-BASEBALL-RELATED ITEMS BEING BROUGHT OUT FROM THE DUGOUT FOR CELEBRATIONS. THIS IS CONSIDERED TAUNTING AND HAS CAUSED GAME DISRUPTIONS. ANY PROPS BROUGHT ONTO THE FIELD FROM THE DUGOUT WILL RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE EJECTION OF BOTH THE OFFENDING PLAYER AND THE HEAD COACH.

RULE REMINDERS FOR THE SEASON:

PITCHING CHANGES – ONCE A PITCHER CROSSES THE FOUL LINE TO START A NEW INNING, HE MUST COMPLETE AT LEAST ONE BATTER UNLESS REMOVED DUE TO INJURY OR ILLNESS.

COACHES MAY NOT MAKE A PITCHING CHANGE BEFORE A BATTER HAS BEEN FACED.

BETWEEN-INNING CLOCK – SINCE THERE ARE NO VISIBLE GAME CLOCKS, UMPIRES SHOULD ACTIVELY MONITOR THE TIME BETWEEN INNINGS AND PROVIDE PERIODIC UPDATES. IF THE BALL HAS NOT BEEN THROWN DOWN BY 20 SECONDS, A CLOCK VIOLATION MAY BE ENFORCED TO MAINTAIN THE PACE OF PLAY.

20-SECOND PITCH CLOCK – BY THE 20-SECOND MARK, THE BATTER MUST BE IN THE BOX, ALERT, AND READY TO HIT WITH AT LEAST 10 SECONDS REMAINING ON THE CLOCK. IF THE BATTER IS NOT READY BY THEN AND THE CLOCK REACHES ZERO, A STRIKE WILL BE ASSESSED. IF THE BATTER IS SET BEFORE THE 10-SECOND MARK AND THE CLOCK STILL EXPIRES, A BALL WILL BE AWARDED TO THE BATTER.

AZBCA ALL-STAR GAME

Nominations and Voting

All-Star voting will be conducted through our online nomination form, which will be available at the end of the season in April. Teams will be chosen by the regional representative during the All-State Meeting in early May.

The All-State voting will take place at Apollo High School on Sunday, May 4th at 9 AM.

YOUR AZBCA BOARD

Executive Board of Directors

President - Garye LaFevers (Retired)
Vice President - Tom Succow (Yavapai)
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.



eTeamSponsor.com

