

Batter up to bat!

By Rich Batten

I never was much of a baseball player but some of my best memories with dad are playing catch in the backyard. You don't have to be a baseball player or even a fan to appreciate the movie *Field of Dreams* or learn something from the game of baseball. One of my favorite books on fathering is a simple 100 or so page paperback by [Jack Petrash](#) called [Covering Home: Lessons on the art of fathering from the game of baseball](#).

Petrash effectively takes his passion for fathering and baseball and combines them to create a great resource to talk fatherhood with the guys. Throw in a commitment to catch a game together with your kids and you I'm convinced you will have some takers. Below is a brief description from the book of each of the chapters. Chapters are easily digestible by men who aren't into reading and serve as great discussion starters.

LESSON ONE: If You Want a Season of a Lifetime, Prepare for It. "Without spring training, the first half of a baseball season would be a calamity of walks, strikeouts, and errors. Take the time to work on fundamentals. Understand your role as a father and cultivate a willingness to change yourself for the good of your child."

LESSON TWO: Understand the Pace of the Game and Manage Accordingly. "Like baseball, childhood has its early, middle, and late innings. Each period requires its unique strategy to meet its particular needs."

LESSON THREE: To Be an All-Star, Make the Highlight Film (and Avoid the Bloop Reel). "As with baseball season, fathering gives rise to a collection of memories. Crucial saves and late-inning triumphs leave strong impressions – but so will embarrassing errors and disappointing strikeouts. Here's how to foster positive memories while avoiding negative ones."

LESSON FOUR: Good Habits Last All Season Long, So Establish Them Early and Practice Them Often. "Establishing good habits from the outset can make all the difference. Yet, it will take a prolonged and determined effort to sustain the proper discipline throughout the entire season of childhood. Difficult? Maybe. Impossible? No!"

LESSON FIVE: Work Both Sides of the Plate. "Switch-hitters and complete pitchers have the edge in any situation they face because they have overcome one-sidedness. The ability to team up with your spouse helps in the same way. It affords flexibility and support, but is only achieved through patience and practice."

LESSON SIX: If You Have a Shallow Bench, Keep Your Game Simple. "Parenting alone is one of the hardest things a father can do. When you don't have a partner to turn to, keep your game simple and direct to avoid serious errors (and to keep your sanity)."

LESSON SEVEN: Develop Well-Rounded Players. "Complete players who can hit for average and hit for power, who can run the bases with speed and play defense, are sought after by all teams. Well-roundedness counts in children, too. Learn to help yours develop the skills they need to be all-around healthy, balanced individuals."

LESSON EIGHT: Remember, You Can't Win Them All. "Failure is an integral part of baseball and of fathering. The challenge is not how to avoid failure but rather how to respond to it."

LESSON NINE: Start a League of Your Own. "Teamwork is one of the most important ingredients of good fathering. Finding other fathers to team up with gives us the encouragement and fellowship that we need."

So this baseball season I encourage you to start a league of your own using Petrash's playbook. Drop me a note if you would like some additional tips on starting a group. I look forward to hearing how it goes!

PS Petrash's latest book on parenting is: [Navigating the Terrain of Childhood: A guidebook for meaningful parenting and heartfelt discipline](#).

