

Foreword by Tony Gwynn, 8-time National League Batting Champion



Hit Like a BIG LEAGUER

**Batting Tips, Techniques, and Strategies
for Coaches and Players**

JACK MALOOF, HITTING COORDINATOR, ATLANTA BRAVES

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and Strategies for Coaches and Players**

JACK MALOOF

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"During my professional career I never forgot the people who helped me. The San Diego Padres were my first organization, and I was fortunate to have had good managers and instructors around me. They taught and encouraged me to be the best player I could be. For my hitting technique, it was Jack. His book will do the same for you."

—OZZIE GUILLEN, MANAGER, CHICAGO WHITE SOX

"This book is so fundamentally sound that I would advise anyone considering picking up a bat to read it first. Watching Jack work with the Florida Marlins hitters has proven to me how important a hitting coach can be."

—BOBBY COX, MANAGER, ATLANTA BRAVES

"Whether you are in Little League or pro ball, *Hit like a Big Leaguer* will help you. It's excellent advice for anyone wanting to learn more about hitting a baseball."

—ROBERTO ALOMAR, 12-TIME ALL-STAR

"Jack gives great advice. This book will help anyone develop their hitting ability. It can really make the difference."

—CLIFF FLOYD, NEW YORK METS, ALL-STAR

"As a young player with the Marlins, learning about hitting was very important to me; and I learned a lot from Jack."

—EDGAR RENTERIA, ATLANTA BRAVES, FOUR-TIME ALL-STAR

"The techniques used in this book were instrumental in the development of my game. The drills and advice Jack offered me lifted my game and took me to the next level. A must read."

—JEFF FRANCOEUR, ATLANTA BRAVES

Just like hitting a baseball, Jack's words and instruction are very timely. This book is a home run!"

—KEVIN MILLAR, BOSTON RED SOX

Hit like a Big Leaguer gives great insight into the very basics of hitting."

—SANDY ALOMAR JR., LOS ANGELES DODGERS,
SIX-TIME ALL-STAR

This is a must read for coaches and players. Jack covers the bases when breaking down the fundamentals of hitting."

—LYNN JONES, MAJOR-LEAGUE COACH

Becoming a consistent hitter takes time, effort, and the desire to excel. Jack's patience and understanding helped me achieve my hitting goals."

—MIKE REDMOND, MINNESOTA TWINS

Even in the minor leagues, Jack made me feel like I could hit in the big leagues. This book will do the same for you."

—JOSE VALENTIN, NEW YORK METS

Finally, we have a book on hitting that coaches and players will want to read and use. *Hit like a Big Leaguer* has sound hitting philosophies, excellent guidelines, analysis of mechanics, drills, and techniques good for all levels."

—BEN HINES, FORMER MAJOR-LEAGUE HITTING COACH

In *Hit like a Big Leaguer*, Jack captures the very essence of hitting. If you need to know, it's in the book."

—JEFF BLAUSER, ATLANTA BRAVES,
TWO-TIME ALL-STAR

**Hit Like a
BIG LEAGUER**

To Ben Hines

*During your many years in baseball,
at both the college and professional levels,
you have touched many lives.
Thanks for touching mine.*

Foreword

Playing for the San Diego Padres was a dream come true. After all those years of hard work, dedication, and accomplishments, the memories I walked away with were of my family, teammates, and those who were a part of my life during that very special time. Their devotion to me is something I will always treasure.

I met Jack during my first year in professional baseball, 1981, in Instructional League in Mesa. I was excited to have the opportunity to learn and further my development as a pro player. Although Jack's philosophy and instruction came early in my career, they helped confirm my hitting instincts.

In *Hit like a Big Leaguer*, Jack teaches the fundamentals he shared back then, with simple step-by-step instructions that provide solutions to the many challenges that today's hitters face. This book will make hitting a baseball fun and exciting and help hitters at any level of competition succeed.

Because I know Jack and his passion for teaching, it is easy for me to recommend this book to anyone willing to take the challenge and learn to "hit like a big leaguer."

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Tony Gwynn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tony Gwynn
September 19, 2005

Preface

I have written *Hit like a Big Leaguer* to provide information for the amateur and professional player or anyone who is willing to learn more about the fundamentals of hitting. In today's society, education is the key to anyone's future. Becoming educated with the correct information can and will unlock a person's true potential to score and set him on the base path for success. *Hit like a Big Leaguer* was written and designed with those purposes in mind. It is my hope that the following pages will become a valuable source, complete with comprehensive information and pictures that will provide guidance, insight, and answers.

Although the mechanics of the swing are important and need to be correctly learned, adjusted, and maintained and consistently applied throughout a player's development and career, once a proper swing is achieved, I strongly believe that for the player to improve and attain the success he desires, his primary assets will ultimately be mental rather than physical. Prior to going to the plate and during his plate appearances, the level of confidence he has in his ability will ultimately determine the amount of success he will experience. Thus, how and what a player thinks and, more important, how much he believes in himself will routinely be revealed during his performance. Therefore, in addition to the physical and mechanical segment of *Hit like a Big Leaguer*, I have devoted the first part of the book to the importance of a hitter's mental approach—his attributes and overall mental perspective—as it applies to the game, his hitting ability, and, above all, himself.

Acknowledgments

I started thinking about writing this book more than 10 years ago, although the concepts and principles contained in it are something I've been working on for my entire professional career. A life lived in baseball is not always easy, but I'd like to specially thank those who have made *Hit like a Big Leaguer* possible:

Joan, my wife of nearly 37 years. We started out on this wild ride together, and I would not still be in the game if it weren't for her. Her love, devotion, and encouragement continue to amaze me. She has always been and will always be my partner in life. Thank you for being my number-one fan.

Justin and Jessica, my two children. A father could not be prouder than I am of you. Justin spent many hours working on the photos and captions for this book, based in part on his own personal knowledge and firsthand experience of the game. Thanks to his wife, Laura, for allowing those long editing sessions. Jessica has been working with words since before she started kindergarten and has read more books in 27 years than most people do in their entire lives. Because of that, combined with her professional editing experience, she whipped this book into shape and got it ready to submit for publication. Thanks for your love and support.

The Seibu Lions. Playing in Tokyo gave me an experience that most ballplayers don't get: the chance to see what it's like to play in an international setting. The fans were exceptionally supportive and knowledgeable about the game. The Lions gave me the motivation to pursue baseball as my lifelong career.

The San Diego Padres, Florida Marlins, and Atlanta Braves clubs. Each organization gave me the opportunity to teach in this exclusive area: hitting. Without those chances to learn and hone my craft, I would not be where I am today.

The players I've had the privilege of coaching over the years. Not only have I been able to teach each of them the best way I know how, but I've had the honor of watching many of them advance to the top of their game. Everything, from the 12-hour bus rides with no air-



conditioning to the late-night curfew checks to the day-to-day grind of the long season to the championship wins and watching them grow both personally and professionally, has been exciting.

Dr. Garry Griffith, professional baseball broadcaster, teacher, and columnist. The persistence, encouragement, and many “red pens” resulted in this finished product.

Steven M. Terry. His time and professional photography skills were greatly appreciated. A lot of sweat went into making sure that each photo was exactly right. I certainly couldn't have done it with my own “point-and-shoot” skills.

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1

Positive Mental Characteristics

In my 30 years of working in professional baseball, I have had the opportunity to associate with many professional scouts. Their job is difficult as they evaluate players at all levels of competition. From high school and throughout the professional levels, players are rated, graded, ranked, and filed. Make no mistake, a hitter's tools are highly sought after and a major factor in what a scout looks for in a player. His size, physical strength, barrel speed, hand-eye coordination, power, and running speed are great yardsticks in measuring talent.



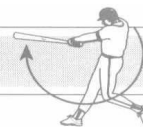
But there is another unseen quality that scouts look for and try to uncover. It is a hidden quality that needs to be highlighted and understood by every young hitter: the mental strength or toughness required to compete at the highest levels of play. A hitter's physical tools, although highly important, are only part of the total equation, which is why scouts have such a difficult task.

Over those same years I have also been fortunate to have been involved with many good, young professional hitters who have displayed their talent at both the minor- and major-league levels: hitters such as Tony Gwynn, Ozzie Guillen, Mark Kotsay, Roberto Alomar, Sandy Alomar Jr., Benito Santiago, John Kruk, Kevin McReynolds, Derrek Lee, Charles Johnson, Cliff Floyd, Jose Valentin, Carlos Baerga, Luis Castillo, Edgar Renteria, Preston Wilson, Kevin Millar, Randy Winn, Mike Redmond, and Mike Lowell. There have been others, as well, who have distinguished themselves and who over the years have proved themselves accomplished and dangerous hitters. However, like any hitter, they've experienced failure. They've experienced slumps and periods of adjustments. They have been fooled, swung at bad pitches, and made routine outs. What has separated them from countless others has been their innate desire to excel, to compete at a higher level than their competition, to learn from and minimize their mistakes, and to draw from within themselves a strength of character that cannot be measured—except over time and by success.

For a player, strong character traits such as dedication, trust, patience, sacrifice, responsibility, determination, and courage, combined with ample physical ability and an overwhelming desire to win, will be the tools that will lead him to his highest levels of competence. Building positive character attributes will help him develop mental strength and allow him to become more confident and aggressive in his overall hitting ability.

From a professional standpoint, here are some examples of positive mental characteristics consistently displayed by successful hitters:

- They *trust* their hitting ability. From an offensive standpoint, whatever the circumstance, situation, or final outcome of their plate appearances, their faith does not change in what they believe they can consistently accomplish.



- They display *confidence* in their hitting skills. Any adversity they encounter creates a challenge to learn and improve.
- They display a *willingness to lead*, either by word or example. They walk the talk of success with teammates on and off the field.
- They have mastered a *fearless approach* to succeed. They strive to excel with no limitations. For them success or failure is not a threat.
- They display a *patient, relaxed demeanor* during their plate appearances. They seem panic-resistant. They are confident in their present expectations and future potential.
- They display an *undying determination* to accomplish short- and long-range goals. They are dedicated to a consistent workout program and maintenance routine that prepares them for success.
- While at the plate, they respond *visually* to pitches, not emotionally to feelings.

As noted, accomplished hitters have developed strong mental capacities to coincide with their physical tools. In so doing, they have overcome many of the adversities that surround hitting. They have confidence in themselves and their ability, and that confidence has instilled a positive offensive mind-set. For those offensive-minded hitters, there is no doubt that aggressiveness is their underlying motive, and they show it. When they make a mistake, it usually is aggressive in nature.

