



NEWS RELEASE

Games with Non-wood Bats Produce More Hits

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Contact: Bob Gardner

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (September 28, 2007) — In a comparative study of Illinois high school baseball teams using wood bats and non-wood bats during the same season, games with non-wood bats lasted longer and produced more hits than those with wood bats, but researchers at Illinois State University found that there was no statistically significant difference in injuries.

The research project was commissioned by the Illinois High School Association (IHSA), with research conducted by the School of Kinesiology and Recreation at Illinois State University. Funding was provided by the NFHS Foundation.

“Based on the results of this study, we have determined that using non-wood bats results in a greater number of hits per game and a longer duration of games when compared to wood bats among high school baseball players. However, there was no statistically significant evidence that non-wood bats result in an increased incidence or severity of injury,” said Kevin Laudner, assistant professor in the School of Kinesiology and Recreation at Illinois State and principal investigator for the Illinois bat study.

Thirty-two IHSA schools submitted data on wood bats from spring 2007 baseball games, and 11 of the 32 reported data for games played both with wood and non-wood bats.

In the 412 games played by the 32 teams using wood bats, there were 368 broken bats, resulting in a bat-breakage rate of 28.3 per 1,000 at-bats. If the bats were just used in games, this rate calculates to 23.49 broken bats per team for the entire season. Stated another way, a wood bat could be used for an average of 35.5 at-bats before breakage.

The comparative research of teams using both kinds of bats during the season indicated an average of 8.77 hits per game in games with non-wood bats compared to 6.50 hits per game in games with wood bats. In addition, non-wood bat games lasted 12.35 minutes longer (2:05 compared to 1:53). Although there were also more extra-base hits, at-bats and runs scored in non-wood bat games, the length-of-game and total hits categories were, according to Laudner, the only ones with statistically significant differences.

The participating schools reported five injuries in games with non-wood bats in a total of 4,682 at-bats, compared with two injuries in games with wood bats in a total of 4,462 at-bats; however, ISU researchers said, after analysis, these data show that there is no statistical difference in injury rates when using a non-wood bat compared to a wood bat.

Of the seven total injuries, only two caused the players to miss playing time, and neither of those involved a bat. One player was hit in the face by a pitched ball and another sustained a blister on a finger. None of the injuries from a batted ball required any player to lose playing time – in either the wood-bat games or the non-wood-bat games.

The idea for the wood-bat study came from the Illinois High School Association.

“After an extensive search for wood vs. non-wood bat usage, we concluded that there was no research available to answer our questions,” said Anthony Holman, assistant executive director of the IHSA. “So, we decided to commission our own study using high school teams and players to obtain some concrete data. In addition to seeking information on injuries through a comparative study of wood vs. non-wood bats, the IHSA wanted to be proactive by providing its members and others information on hits, runs, length of games and breakage rates of wood bats.”

The NFHS Foundation, which funded the project, serves the interests of young people who participate in interscholastic sports and activities by awarding grants for research and program development in the areas of character education and sports risk minimization.

“Independent research about sports equipment performance is useful to everyone involved in limiting the inherent risk of injury faced by young people in high school sports,” said Bob Gardner, president of the NFHS Foundation. “The NFHS Foundation was glad to be of assistance to the Illinois High School Association in this research project.”

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