



Nicholas Barker, 4, eyes the ball and prepares to swing during baseball clinic Saturday.

Baseball is for the children

by STEVE HUNTER
Staff writer

About 15 children ages 2½ to 5 left their morning television cartoons for a new adventure Saturday in Gresham — a baseball clinic.

Preschool Sports Inc. of Portland uses the slogan "America's Youngest Baseball Clinic," and nobody will top that unless they start to run clinics in playpens.

Dave Brown, 27, of Gladstone, developed the idea for preschool clinics while working last year as a teacher at Laurelhurst Preschool in Portland. He has since left that job to devote all of his time to organizing clinics and publishing a preschool newspaper from his downtown Portland office.

"For so long kids have wanted to do this, but nothing has been available to them because they're too young," said Brown, who attended Gresham High School before moving back east for a few years.

"My main goal is for them to have a good time," he said. "It's not competitive, it's just fundamentals. If they become professional players, great. If not, that's fine, too."

Four-year-old Nicholas Bruch

of Gresham knew Saturday meant another trip to the baseball clinic and he also knew just what he wanted to wear.

"He made sure we put his (baseball clinic) shirt on him and he always has his (St. Louis) cap glued on his head," said Lorrie Bruch as she watched her son bat, throw and catch plastic balls and tennis balls. "Baseball is his No. 1 love."

Saturday at Hall Grade School in northeast Gresham marked the third and final clinic for the youngsters, whose parents paid \$35 for the series. That fee included a jersey, diploma and a pizza party.

"I've never heard of anything like this for the little guys," said Lorrie Bruch. "He's enjoying it. It's fun to him."

Brown designed batting stations where the boys and girls swing a plastic bat at a ball attached to a string, which is tied to a cutout wooden stand. The children also rotate through throwing, catching and fielding stations.

"Everything is real, real basic," said Brown. "It's the things they need before T-ball. As long as they come out, have a good time and are exposed to it — that's what the parents want."

Bob O'Neal of Portland brought his son, Devin, 5, to the clinic. He

said Devin had played some baseball before, but never anything organized.

"This opens him up to being in groups more," said O'Neal when asked what he hoped his son gained from the clinics. "He seems to be enjoying this — to get away from his parents and to get involved."

Making a professional ballplayer out of his son isn't one of O'Neal's goals.

"It's whatever he wants to do," said O'Neal. "This gives him some skills and we'll let him go with it."

Bruch said her son also is involved in swimming and gymnastics, although baseball is his favorite sport right now. She joked it would be nice if he got a million dollar contract someday, but said that isn't why she and her husband signed up their boy for the clinic.

"Hopefully, he'll do it because he enjoys it," said Bruch about the future playing days of her boy.

When Brown ran a baseball clinic for the Laurelhurst Preschool last summer, the response from parents was so positive that he expanded the clinics throughout the Portland metropolitan area.

Brown left his teaching job in

February when he decided to start a quarterly newspaper called Preschool Times. The first issue came out last week and is available at day care centers.

Preschool Sports Inc., which is owned by Brown and Ozell Hazzle, also has its own clothing line. And greeting cards are the next new item.

In addition to baseball clinics, Preschool Sports (222-1535) also offers soccer and bowling clinics in the Portland area. Golf and swimming sessions will soon be set for later in the summer and Brown also hopes to add tennis and basketball clinics.

"I think it's endless," said Brown about the market for such clinics. "The parents want to get their kids involved early."

"My biggest goal is to promote parent and child interaction," said Brown. "Just getting the parents involved with their kids and concerned about them is the biggest thing."

As O'Neal watched his boy participate in the clinic Saturday, he said he would definitely sign him up for another one.

"I think it's been a real nice experience," said O'Neal. "He looks forward to it and that's the main measure of success at this point."

Sandy Cascade Soccer Club still taking registrations

The Sandy Cascade Soccer Club will accept registrations for summer games until the season begins in early August.

Boys and girls aged 5 through 13 are eligible to compete in the club.

Fee for registration is \$21 for one child, \$37 for two and \$11 for each additional child thereafter.

Registration forms are available at Sandy Secretarial Service, 39261 Proctor Blvd.

All of the games played are at local sites.

For additional information, call Rhonda Schoppert, president of the Sandy Cascade Soccer Club, at 668-7153.

Dogs get early start Saturday

Greyhound racing will start an hour earlier Saturday night at Multnomah Kennel Club so fans can enjoy a fireworks display from the facility's parking lot after the races.

Racing will begin at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, the first time in the 30-year history of the park that an evening performance hasn't started at 7:30 p.m.

The fireworks display will start at 10 p.m. from a vacant lot near Northeast 223rd Avenue and Glisan Street. One of the best viewing areas will be from the parking lot at MKC, which has room for more than 5,000 cars.

Track club plans meet

The Sandy River Hawks Track Club will play host to an all-comers track meet on July 4, beginning at 11 a.m. at Pop Rannow Stadium.

The meet will be for boys and girls from preschool through age 18.

A \$1 entry fee will be charged.

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LENDER

Paola's team captures two additional victories

The Paola's Pizza Barn American Legion baseball team grabbed two more wins over the weekend and entered the six-day Yakima, Wash., Invitational Tuesday night with a 13-9 overall record.

Paola's opened the Yakima round robin tournament against Bellevue, Wash. The club also has games through Saturday against Redmond,

Wash., Lewiston, Idaho, Lake Oswego, Yakima, Vancouver, Wash., and Tacoma.

In Mount Hood League action Friday, Paola's tripped Round Table Pizza of Gresham 6-1. That evened Paola's league record at 2-2.

On Saturday, Paola's split with Action Trophy of Salem. Paola's dropped the first game 6-2, but then blank-

ed the Salem club 2-0 in the second game.

Dan Carlson fired a four-hitter and struck out seven in the win over Round Table. He raised his record to 4-2. Bill Haworth suffered the loss for Round Table, the Gresham High School legion team.

James Dinette and Ron Sams each collected three hits for Paola's. Dinette ripped a triple and two

singles while Sams stroked three singles for two RBIs.

Louie Nasuta slugged two hits for Paola's, including a two-run homer to left field in the third inning. Kevin Goodman also had two hits.

A two-hitter by Brian Booth led Paola's to the 2-0 win Saturday against Action Trophy. Booth struck out six as he notched Paola's first shutout of the season.

Hwy. 26, Sandy 668-8058

PAOLA'S PIZZA BARN

Stephanie Miljus, 12, is prep of the week.

A member of the Sandy River Hawk Track Club, she is the top shot putter and discus thrower in the state in both TAC and Junior Olympic competition. She won the state TAC titles a few weeks ago. Saturday she won both events in Junior Olympic state competition.

Congratulations, Stephanie!

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