

# PBATS Opening Doors for International Interns

As part of an on-going effort to spread knowledge of the American brand of athletic health care to peers across the world, PBATS invited two sports medicine practitioners from Japan and another from Italy to work with major league athletic trainers this spring.

Taking advantage of a rare opportunity to learn from and work with PBATS members at spring training camps were Yasuo Umezaki, an athletic trainer for the Japanese Olympic Baseball Team; Tokuyoshi Kono, a Japanese athletic trainer; and Massimo Marenzoni, an athletic trainer for the Italian National Baseball Team. The three interns not only were able to observe many phases of health care in pro baseball, but were also given opportunities to put some of their newfound knowledge to use.

Umezaki, 32, and Kono, 30, who spent three weeks in the Cactus League with the Mariners, Padres, Giants and Angels, were impressed by the resources that their American counterparts have at their fingertips.

"The extensive facilities and abundance of equipment the teams have here in America far exceed those in Japan," said Kono, who is currently attending the Interlink Language Center at Indiana State University to prepare for the NATA certification exam. "The baseball trainers here also have the luxury of working with a network of physicians, physical therapists and consultants to help diagnose and treat injured athletes. We have learned how important computers are to documenting injuries."

Kono, who served as a translator for Umezaki, said in order to become an athletic trainer in Japan, they must be certified in acupuncture and massage therapy, concentrations which fall short of preparing them for the level of health care required for the 1990s.

The Japanese trainers' educational visit actually turned into a two-way street, as they were able to share some of their unique knowledge and techniques with their American hosts. They also made the most of their opportunity to work with the big-league trainers by videotaping some of the techniques and procedures that they were taught.

"They were fasci-

nated by our use of mobilization and therapeutic exercise," said Padres assistant trainer Todd Hutcheson, who in some cases performed some stretching routines directly on his guests in an effort to demonstrate their effectiveness. "They showed us some of their techniques targeting the lower back that we've tried on some of our players."



Pirates trainers Kent Biggerstaff (left) and Dave Tumbas (right) were one of four training staffs in the Grapefruit League who hosted Massimo Marenzoni this spring. (Photo courtesy of Pittsburgh Pirates)

Marenzoni, 34, visited the Gulf Coast of Florida for two weeks, gaining experience at spring training camps for the Pirates, Orioles, Cardinals and Phillies. Marenzoni, who speaks four languages fluently, impressed his hosts with his extensive knowledge of athletic training. His outgoing personality also made him a favorite with the trainers, athletes, physicians and other team personnel.

"One of the main things I came to learn were the techniques American trainers use to warm up the pitching shoulder," said Marenzoni, who works at a sports medicine clinic in Parma, Italy, during baseball's off-season. "This was also a great opportunity to see how much more advanced health care is here in the United States. I learned dozens of new procedures that will benefit my athletes."

Cardinals head trainer Gene Gieselmann said Marenzoni, or "Max" as he was fondly referred to, didn't lack any expertise in the health care basics.

"Max has a strong grasp of all the essentials in athletic training and does lots of studying to expand on his knowledge base," said Gieselmann, who didn't hesitate to put Marenzoni to work on his athletes during his four-day stretch in St. Petersburg, Fla. "I know everyone in the Cardinals organization felt he was a delight to have around because he immediately fit right in with all of us."

## Braves' Pursley Back at Work After Surgery



David Pursley

Longtime Braves head trainer David Pursley is fully recovered and back working with athletes after undergoing successful quadruple heart bypass surgery in November.

After experiencing chest pains, Pursley wasted no time in getting to a doctor. Once he was diagnosed with having a severely blocked artery, Pursley's physician prescribed the surgery.

"I just want to thank all the friends who wrote and called to wish me well," said Pursley, now in his 35th season in the big leagues. "I want everyone to know that I feel great and enjoy being back at work with the team."

## Expanding the Program

By all accounts, the PBATS International Intern Program was a success and plans are underway to expand it.

"We can easily accommodate at least one more trainer in the future, someone who could visit some of the spring training camps on Florida's east coast," explained PBATS President Biggerstaff, who developed the program with PBATS International Relations Committee Chairman Charlie Strasser. "We'd like to thank The Gatorade Company for helping underwrite the program. The participating team trainers deserve a lot of credit for devoting their time and effort to help our guests make the most of this unique opportunity. We'd also like to thank the team executives who allowed us to bring a spring intern into their training rooms."

Biggerstaff and Strasser are also examining the possibility of an exchange program, where PBATS members could someday visit the 1995 interns in their homeland.

"We hope this type of program can continue to develop," Gieselmann added. "I know several major league trainers would welcome an opportunity to go to Europe or Japan and see first-hand how they treat injuries."

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Tokuyoshi Kono



Yasuo Umezaki