



PST COACHES OPENING NEW D-BAT FACILITY IN MARION

Darren Lewis and Casey Pauli care passionately about baseball and treasure the impact it's had on their lives. Now Darren and Casey, who both coach teams in the Positive Sports Training league, hope to create new opportunities for thousands of boys and girls in Eastern Iowa by opening a new D-BAT indoor baseball and softball facility in Marion.

The opening is scheduled for approximately Feb. 9 at 1783 Red Fox Way in Marion, alongside Highway 13. Darren, 44, and Casey, 35, both played baseball at Kirkwood Community College for John Lewis, the Hall of Fame coach who is Darren's father. Darren then played at St. Ambrose and Casey continued his career at Wartburg. Both of them have starred in the Iowa Valley League as well. Darren, who has four children, and Casey, who has five kids, are confident the new D-BAT facility will give kids in our area an excellent chance to improve their skills and enjoy baseball and softball.

"It's all about youth development," said Darren. "This is something this area needs. We want kids to get better. This is for parents who say, 'I want my kid to get better, where am I going?' This is where kids can go to get better at their game."

The new D-BAT facility will be offering camps, clinics and private instruction, along with 15 cages and other stations. There are two membership plans and walk-in opportunities. The facility will be geared for baseball, fast-pitch softball and slow pitch softball for people of all ages.

"We want our facility to be full of both softball and baseball players," said Casey. "A lot of indoor places tend to cater to baseball and we want D-BAT to break that norm and ensure we're providing the same opportunities to softball players."

The 15 batting cages will be in three areas, with five cages per area. The five cages in one area will be 15-foot wide and 70-foot long, five cages in another area will be 15-foot by 48-foot, and the other five cages will have automatic D-BAT pitching machines. Two of the three areas will have sliding nets to provide open areas for fielding drills and longer throwing. There also will be a pro shop with bats, balls, gloves, caps, helmets, shirts and other items for sale. There are more than 88 D-BAT franchises in the United States with 20 more set to open in 2020, including the one in Marion.

Darren and his father have been operating the Line Drive Hitting facility in Swisher for a number of years, but Darren became interested in opening a bigger facility that could serve more people. He and Casey did some research and liked what they learned about D-BAT and the possibility of buying a franchise of their own. There are other attractive indoor facilities in Eastern Iowa, including PerfectGame in Cedar Rapids and Dugout Sports in Fairfax, but Darren and Casey think the national DBAT model offers an especially attractive opportunity.

"We came across the D-BAT model and thought, 'This is pretty cool.' There was nobody offering some of the stuff that D-BAT was offering," Darren remarked.

For more information, visit their website at dbatmarion.com. Facebook will be the place to find updates and progress reports.

Membership sales have begun.