



## CLEARING THE BASES

with Brett Helmer

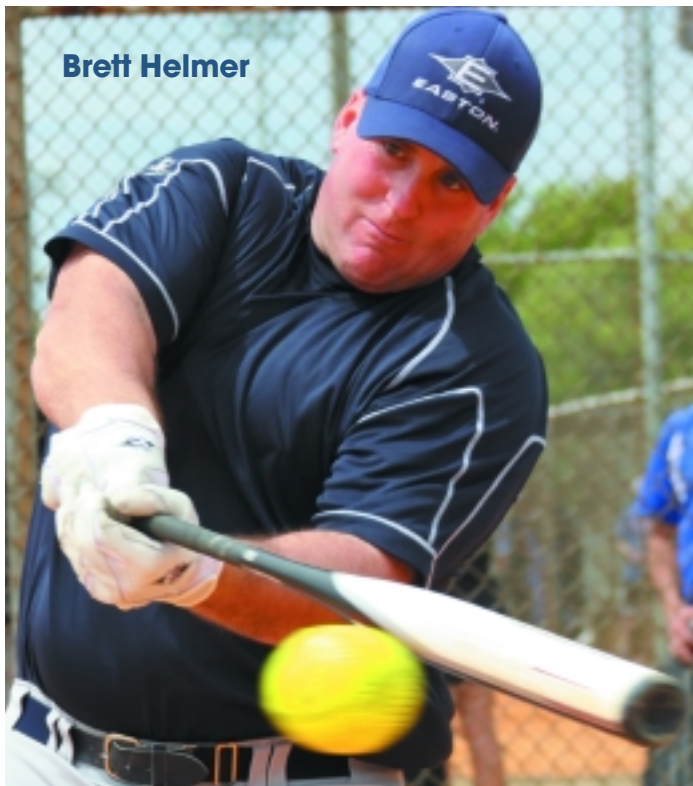


Hello Softballers,

The weather has finally broken, the sun is out, and you all know what that means; it's time for softball. I hope everybody has gotten enough swings in the cage, taken enough grounders, and, most importantly, nursed all those nagging injuries back to health. We've got a long season ahead of us, and I hope everyone is ready to roll.

Just got back from Cocoa Beach, Florida, where Softball Magazine holds their annual Spring Training. It was a great time. We ran clinics for all skill levels on four different fields. We worked with people on their hitting, fielding and played several pick-up games. They've been doing it for about five years, and it's a great way for players to get ready for the season.

The USSSA Major Conference schedule kicked off with the Hall of Fame Classic the weekend of April 16th in Kissimmee, Florida at the Houston Astros spring training facility. It was a double-NIT format, meaning teams will be competing in two tournaments simultaneously. Many teams played as many as 12 games by the time the weekend was over. It was an excellent way for teams to test the



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waters, find out who came out in shape and who didn't. That will be followed up by the Cactus Classic in Phoenix, Arizona.

The next Long Haul Bombers Tour event came and went in early May. Fellow Team Easton member Brian Wegman and I will continue to take on teams from competing manufacturers Worth, Miken and DeMarini in a home run derby competition at Major League Baseball stadiums around the nation. We'll be releasing the Fall schedule very soon.

Easton's Real Skilz events are already in full swing. If you're not familiar, Real Skilz is a series of tournaments around the country, in which Easton provides its products to be used exclusively, and gives out prize packages throughout the tourney. It's a great way to test out that new Easton bat or glove before you buy it. We've already had some events in California that were really well received.

Also, Easton has released a couple of new 1.20 bats – made for all associations other than ASA – which just hit the shelves. The SCN17 Stealth Tri-Zone is perfect for those of you who love the long-barreled two-piece bats. My signature bat – the SCN18 BH Synergy Tri-Zone – is a one-piece with a 12-inch barrel. This bat continues to be one of Easton's most popular year-in and year-out. Be on the lookout for other new Easton models to be released in May.

As always, I'd like to thank all of you for taking the time to read "Clearing the Bases." I hope you guys are ready for the summer. It's going to be a blast.

Happy Hitting,  
Brett