



Mavs teach AAE students about the four bases

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Program focuses on staying in school, studying hard, staying active and saying no to drugs

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APPLE VALLEY • Some 350 children were on the edge of their seats as players from the High Desert Mavericks spoke during a presentation at the Academy for Academic Excellence campus in Apple Valley.

The presentation, called the “Four Bases,” teaches children that reaching each base will help them on their road to success. The four bases are: Staying in school, studying hard, staying active and saying no to drugs.

“We usually do this about 30 to 40 times a year,” said Maverick GM Eric Jensen, who led the hour long assembly on Thursday. “This is another way of serving the community, which the Seattle Mariners are big on.”

Scott Gormley, the school's athletic director, said he wanted to bring the presentation to the school to give the kids an opportunity to see athletes at the professional level.

"The coaches asked us to speak and we're more than happy to come down and share with the kids," said Maverick catcher Billy Marco.

As Jensen shared, he used the game of baseball as backdrop as he spoke on the four bases and how they relate to life.

"Follow the four steps and you'll always hit a home run," Jensen said.

After Jensen shared, Mavericks players Jack Marder, Steven Proscia and Marco fielded questions from a few curious second, third and fourth graders.

The players answered questions about the amount of junk food they were allowed to eat, getting hit by baseballs and if crying was allowed in baseball.

And one young boy posed the all-important question: "Do you guys wear a cup?"

"You know we take baseball very seriously," Jensen said, "especially the protection of our players. Take our newly designed helmets for example." A look of relief swept over most of the adults and the players as Jensen finished the answer.

Jack Marder, who also catches for the team, said when he was in college he had the opportunity to share at a few school functions.

"As an Oregon Duck we were really into helping the community," said Marder. "I'm excited to do that here in the High Desert."

Gormley said he'd like to set up a pen-pal program between the students and players as a means of keeping the kids accountable.

Second grader Jocelyn Nedel said the presentation was a big hit.

"I really liked listening to the Mavericks and I love Wooly Bully," said Nedel. "I hope they come back."

For more information on the Four Bases, call the Mavericks office at (760) 246 - 6287.

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