

Dick Bosman *on* PITCHING

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF A MAJOR LEAGUE
BALLPLAYER AND PITCHING COACH



TED LEAVENGOOD AND DICK BOSMAN

Dick Bosman on Pitching

PRAISE FOR *DICK BOSMAN ON PITCHING*

“Dick Bosman was a very good pitcher and a great pitching coach; he has taught me so much about the art of pitching. He also knows about golf and cars and kids. It’s all in this book. I loved it.”—Tim Kurkjian, ESPN

“A true professor of pitching, Boz has a natural gift for teaching, whether it’s educating a genuine prospect or an aging broadcaster. He’s certainly impacted my baseball knowledge in a positive way.”—Phil Wood, host of *Nationals Talk Live* and commentator on Mid-Atlantic Sports Network

“Long known to baseball insiders as a pitcher’s pitcher, Dick Bosman now shares his thoughtful insights with a wider audience. A must-read for not only baseball fans but any reader wanting to understand better the complicated, demanding, yet beautiful game of baseball.”—Lee Lowenfish, author of the award-winning biography *Branch Rickey: Baseball’s Ferocious Gentleman* and collaborator with Tom Seaver on *The Art of Pitching*

“Dick Bosman has led one of the most spectacularly underrated baseball lives in the history of the game. From its beginnings on a farm in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to a productive stint on the mound during baseball’s most glamorous era to an innovative and ongoing tenure as a pitching coach, this career is more than book worthy. Long-time DC baseball expert and author Ted Leavengood thoroughly details Bosman’s journey, not only focusing on his career but also on Bosman’s passion, the art of pitching.”—Dave Marran, retired sports editor, *Kenosha News*

“Follow the ideas detailed in this book, and you are well on your way to understanding what it takes to pitch at the highest level. One of the reasons that every generation gets better than the one before is because people like Dick Bosman share with the world what they have learned from their experiences.”—Dr. Bob Rotella, sports psychologist and author of *Golf Is Not a Game of Perfect*

“Dick Bosman’s life in baseball has endured so long because of his love of the game, the fact that he’s better at it than most, and his innate knowledge and understanding of its intricacies that he’s happy to pass along. That’s Dick Bosman in a nutshell, and in *Dick Bosman on Pitching*, Ted Leavengood pulls back the curtain and shows readers how Bosman grew his love of the game into a career, reinventing himself along the way and paying it forward as he helped the next generation learn and appreciate baseball the way he has.”—Pete Kerzel, managing editor, MASNsports.com

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Lessons from the
Life of a Major League
Ballplayer and Pitching Coach

TED LEAVENGOOD
DICK BOSMAN

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Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>Dr. Bob Rotella</i>	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
PART I: A Fiery Competitor	
1 Baseball and Cars	3
2 Learning to Pitch	12
3 The Head Game	23
4 Opening Day Starter	40
5 No-Hitter	57
6 End Game	75
PART II: Teaching the Art of Pitching	
7 Learning to Teach	89
8 Slide Step	105
9 Baltimore Pitching Coach	121
10 Money and Baseball	139
11 Returning to Texas	156

12	Creating a Winning Combination	167
13	Johnny Oates	181
PART III: A Philosophy of Pitching		
14	Back to Teaching	197
15	A Philosophy of Pitching	216
	<i>Notes</i>	229
	<i>Bibliography</i>	241
	<i>Index</i>	245
	<i>About the Authors</i>	255

Foreword

One of the greatest joys in life during the past 40 years has been the time I have spent with major-league and minor-league pitchers and their pitching coaches and managers, and helping them learn how to pitch successfully at the highest level. During that time, I have spent many hours with Dick Bosman discussing how to combine the art and science of pitching so that pitchers can gain solid, individualized fundamentals they can then take into game situations, trusting in their skills. It takes a talented, knowledgeable, and canny coach to consistently help pitchers succeed at the highest level. From my experience in baseball, Dick Bosman is one of the best. He truly “gets it.”

Some may ask what I mean when I say Dick “gets it.” First, Dick has a positive, optimistic approach that involves a consistent process, one that, if adhered to, leads to success. He understands that he has to get players to “buy into” his process and live it for a sustained time period. But Dick also understands that he must believe in his players’ abilities and potentials as much as they believe in his process. Dick knows that a pitcher’s perception of his own talent may be even more important than how much actual talent he may possess. Belief and faith in one’s self when it is time to pitch will ultimately play a huge role in how successful a pitcher becomes.

At the major-league level, a pitcher must see himself making the batter miss or hitting pop flies or ground balls. If they cannot see themselves doing this against the best in the game, it will not matter how good their “stuff”

looks in the bullpen or at lower levels. This is the game within the game. This is where pitching becomes more art than science. Some see pitching as consisting solely of technique and speed. Others think it is all in the mind. The truth is somewhere in between. The problem is complicated by the fact that no one can take a picture of what is going on inside a pitcher's head when he is throwing. Thus, it is easy to pretend that what goes on inside a pitcher's head does not exist, even though pitchers know what takes place. I do not know for certain if the difference is in the mind, the heart, the soul, or the human spirit or will, but I do know it is the stuff inside that separates pitchers at the top levels from those elsewhere.

Most observers tend to think the mind starts above the shoulders and everything below the shoulders is the body, treating the two areas as separate entities. But you cannot pitch without getting the mind and body to work together as one because they are intimately connected.

Dick Bosman understands that to succeed you must have a true passion for pitching. You must be willing to prepare physically and mentally for every hitter and every situation. Dick knows that to succeed, a pitcher must be strong enough to deal with disappointment and setbacks. He recognizes that at the major-league level a pitcher can make great pitches and still get hit. Dick helps each pitcher understand that a good pitch is the one thing you can own and control. He wants a pitcher to control what he can and stop trying to control what he cannot—like a big-league hitter sometimes hitting a really good pitch.

Many times I have watched Dick support a pitcher by saying, "Welcome to the big leagues, the hitters are real good also. Just keep making good pitches and stop worrying about outcome." He teaches every pitcher that *he* has the ball. The pitcher owns the ball and the mound—but only if he has his mind in the right place. He must have a clear plan and picture. Clarity, trust, and commitment give a pitcher power. And doubt and fear when it is time to throw will make a pitcher weak. By doubting himself, a pitcher gives away his position of strength. Pitchers with confidence and a clear plan and mind-set attack the hitter and get ahead in the count, and stay ahead; adhering to that principle gives them power and a huge advantage.

By following the ideas detailed in this book you will be well on your way to understanding what it takes to pitch at the highest level. One of the reasons

every generation of ballplayers gets better than the one before it is because people like Dick Bosman share what they have learned from their experiences, and the same mistakes do not have to be repeated.

—Dr. Bob Rotella, sports psychologist and author
of *Golf Is Not a Game of Perfect*

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—Ted Leavengood

Thanks to my wife, Pam, the light of my life, who is truly the straw that stirs the drink. To my mom and dad for their love and support. To Andy Smith, who made it fun. To Frank Howard, who next to my dad is the best man I've known. To Billy Klaus for sticking with me when things looked bleak. To Ted Williams for teaching me how to pitch from the neck up and Sid Hudson who as a pitching coach was the only teacher I ever had. To Ken Aspromonte for believing in me. To John Koons Jr. for his friendship and providing me with the opportunity to start my coaching career. To Donald Malan and Mike Harris for saving my sanity in the early days in the car business. To Syd Thrift and Ken "the Hawk" Harrelson for taking a chance on an unknown coach. To Buzz Capra and Chuch Hartenstein. To Jim Marshall for his guidance and advice. To Doug Melvin, who hired me three times but only fired me once. To Greg Biagini and Johnny Oates, who led by example every day and for nine years let me be the pitching coach. To Larry Hardy, Tom Foley, and Jimmy Karr, Head Professional Kingsway CC. To Mitch Lukevics, a man's man—if you can't work for him, you can't work for anybody. To Bob Rotella for his wisdom and advice. To Neil Allen, a dear friend and the best pitching coach I've ever been around. Thanks to Ted Leavengood for getting this project started and to the staff at Rowman and Littlefield for finishing it in such fine form. Lastly, thank you to the countless numbers of aspiring pitchers I have had the pleasure of working with over these many years who have helped me arrive at my philosophy on how to teach what Tom Seaver calls "this search for perfection we cannot totally achieve."

—Dick Bosman

I

A FIERY COMPETITOR

1

Baseball and Cars

For high school players, it was the end of the 1962 baseball season in Wisconsin. The final pitch of the state championship game had been thrown, and for Mary Bradford High School it was a disappointing 2–0 loss. But a whole new world of baseball beckoned to George and Nella Bosman, who sat at their kitchen table looking in all seriousness at their son Dick, who had pitched the state championship game for Mary Bradford High. There had been long conversations with Dick about signing a contract to pitch for a major-league team. Everyone knew it was a weighty step they were preparing to take. “When you sign on that line, you are their property,” George Bosman told his son.¹

Despite the gravity of the conversation, excitement bubbled just beneath the surface. The vision of pitching in the majors had been shared by George and Dick Bosman for half a dozen years and now it was taking shape, a real thing sitting in front of them in the form of Paul Tretiak, the scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates. The Bosman family had no idea what the future might hold for their son Dick, but the proposition before them had been carefully tailored to their needs, and they were ready to act.

As thoughtful as the Bosmans were trying to be, only Tretiak had a realistic idea about the likely progression for a talented kid signing with a major-league team. He had seen Bosman throw numerous times but wanted

a second opinion. With parental permission, he had taken Dick to Burlington, Iowa, the prior week to have him throw in front of the manager for the minor-league team there. At the end of the session, the manager told Tretiak that Bosman could pitch for his team that night if he wanted to. “Your career can start right here,” Tretiak told Bosman, as he recalls.

Tretiak had followed this road himself, playing in the majors after World War II for eight seasons. He played second base for the Yankees and Cubs, and had been a friend to Whitey Ford. Tretiak had followed his playing career with one as a major-league scout and coach. He was a baseball lifer, someone who would be around the game until the day he died.²

He could not know how long Dick Bosman would be in the game. He could not know that Bosman himself would have a baseball career that would span five decades and that the

The aggregate knowledge Dick offers to young pitchers has accumulated from the many baseball savants he has known and the countless baseball situations he has observed on the most personal level. That knowledge becomes a philosophy of pitching, one that is like a single game on the mound that evolves to meet the moment, one that is fluid and changing.

most profound contributions Bosman would make would be as a pitching coach for four teams. Bosman would become what his teammate in Washington, Jim Hannan, called a “very good pitching coach.”³ More importantly, he was a coach that young pitcher Ben McDonald—his protégé for the Baltimore Orioles—would call “not only a good pitching coach, but a good friend.”⁴

Paul Tretiak knew only how much potential Dick Bosman had. He did not know if the young man would find mentors to mold that potential into major-league success or whether Bosman would be a teachable student of the game. Tretiak knew there were many twists and turns on the way to the ultimate goal, and he knew how precarious the road could be. But it had to start somewhere, and Tretiak believed Bosman would be well-served to start as soon as possible.

The excitement about Dick’s prospects had built steadily during his senior year at Mary Bradford High School. As a junior, he had pitched and played first base, slugging 13 home runs. He was the second starting pitcher on that team but became the ace as a senior. The scouts began showing up as he piled

up one impressive win after another and the high school team remained undefeated. The scouts were there from his hometown Milwaukee Braves and the Cincinnati Reds.

Tretiak wined and dined the Bosmans more than his competition, and there was a comfort level between the Pirates scout and the Bosmans that did not exist with the others. George and Nella believed he had the most interest in their son, and they had concerns where baseball would take Dick. Was it a legitimate career choice or just a dream? George Bosman was a practical man who wanted something that made sense for his son. But the issue was settled when the Bosmans—members of the Christian Reform Church who took their faith seriously—insisted to Tretiak that their son could not play baseball on Sundays. They wanted that in writing as part of the contract. When Tretiak included language to that effect in the documents that Dick was to sign, the decision was made.

Dick knew there would be a day of reckoning on the issue of Sunday baseball. He was aware of only one major-league player, Johnny Vander Meer, who early in his career refused to pitch on Sundays. He doubted he could do the same, but he wanted his parents to be comfortable with the decision, so he deferred to them. He was a minor as well and needed his father's approval to play professionally, but Dick was ready to take the leap into the future and for a \$7,000 bonus he signed his first professional baseball contract at that kitchen table in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Bonus money for young prospects was far more modest in 1962 than in the decades that followed. One of the elite prospects that summer, Jim Palmer, would sign with the Orioles for \$50,000, far more than many major-league players made annually.

A baseball career was a long-shot deal. Few made the grade, but when there was real money attached to the dream, it was hard to turn it down. There was one more caveat linked to Bosman's contract. Dick had no doubts about the direction he wanted to go, but he wasn't sure he was completely ready. He wanted the rest of the year for himself. He did not want to pitch for the Burlington Bees that summer. He asked Tretiak to give him until the following spring to start his career. Tretiak said he was wasting a year of his major-league career but agreed.

The reason Bosman often gave for the delay was wanting to try college. He attended the University of Wisconsin at Parkside that fall, but in truth, as he said, "I was in love and reluctant to leave home. I wasn't worth a darn as a

student.” It was just part of the process of saying good-bye, and soon enough, he revealed, “I found out that girl wasn’t for me,” admitting, “It was a wasted year.” But he pitched for a semipro team in Kenosha to stay in shape and worked at a factory just across the Illinois border to make enough money to gain a sense of financial independence.

Home had been a good place for Dick, and his reluctance to leave was easy to understand. When Dick signed his contract, there was a new baby sister who had just taken up residence with the Bosmans. Dick was the oldest of the children, but he had three sisters now. There was Diane, the baby, who would know little of baseball or softball except what she would put together in scrapbooks. And then there were Virginia and Barbara, who would always remember. They were two and four years younger than Dick, respectively.

They were a large and close-knit family. Uncle Clarence lived just 250 yards up 52nd Street, a “good three wood” from the family. Another relative was the Kenosha fire chief, and another would become mayor. The Bosman family was woven integrally into the fabric of the community, and baseball had always been part of that connection.

Uncle Clarence was the brother of Dick’s grandfather, and he had been a fast-pitch softball player of some reputation for many years. George Bosman and his brother Clarence both had considerable talent with a softball. Each man had perfected the underhand whip action, which sent the sphere hurtling through the air at speeds to rival anything a professional baseball pitcher could manage.

George was the first to see the potential in his son and the first to dream of Dick pitching in the majors. When Dick was 11, he had asked his father if he could go into town for Little League tryouts. There was little question what the answer would be. After he saw his son pitch for the first time, George could see that his boy threw harder than the rest of the kids. The following year, when Dick was 12 and in his last season of Little League, his father taught him how to throw a “spinner.” It was, in effect, a slider, the same pitch that would take Dick all the way to the big leagues 10 years later.

Wisconsin was hardly the perfect place for developing major-league talent. Bosman said of his senior year in high school, “We had snow outs, freeze outs, rain outs. By the time all was said and done, we were lucky to play 12, 15 games in a season.” But there were many factors that went in his favor as

well. Some of the obvious ones—like his father’s love for the game—and others—like growing up on a farm—outweighed the negatives.

“Some of the apples were good for eating and some were good for throwing,” Dick remembered of the orchard next to his father’s 10-acre farm. Whether it was chucking tomatoes from the farm at his friend Jim Renick or apples from the orchard, there were plenty of ways to build arm strength for a kid raised on a farm.

The Bosman connection to the land was a strong one. Grandfather Richard Bosman farmed a 500-acre tract of land in Wheatland, Wisconsin, 25 miles west of Kenosha and the shores of Lake Michigan. He leased the land because men like him who had survived the Great Depression were leery of owning it. The Bosman family lived on his grandfather’s farm when Dick was born on February 17, 1944. But two years later, they bought a place closer to town, a 10-acre tract of land just outside Kenosha.

It was still a farm on which they planted soybeans, corn, and tomatoes. But according to Dick, “Intuitively my father knew that if he did not go to work for someone that had a union so that he could accrue a pension, he was never going to be able to retire.” George found work driving for Yellow Transit Freight Lines, which had a hub in Kenosha. He did not drive long haul on the road. “He drove locally because he wanted to be home at night.”

The new place wasn’t a grand old farm in the same sense as the one on which he had been born, but the place on 52nd Street was big enough for Dick to think of it as a farm. There was annual plowing of the fields and a large garage in the field where they stored and worked on their tractors and trucks. “I learned to drive a tractor by the time I was eight or nine,” Dick remembered.

Whether it was the chores on the farm or throwing apples and tomatoes, when Dick joined his first Little League team, he had a stronger arm than any of the other boys his age. He was also guided by the tradition of George and Clarence Bosman, who only played softball after the chores were done but were good enough at getting a softball past the opposing hitters to wonder how much talent they really had. They had enough knowledge of the game that when George saw that his young son Dick could do much the same with a baseball as he and his uncle could do with a softball, he began to see a future that men and boys of that era dreamed about.

And then there was Dick’s mother, who drove him throughout the wider Milwaukee metropolitan area to his games. “I did not have a driver’s license

when I was 14, 15 years old, and my dad was busy working. It fell to my mom to get me to all of those games,” he reflected. She was the one in the stands much of the time, as she stayed and watched her son’s games, watching him chase his dream from early on. “There was never a complaint on her part.”

After Little League there was Babe Ruth League Baseball, run by the city of Kenosha, and the Mary Bradford High School coach, Andy Smith, managed one of the teams and encouraged the more talented players to try out for the high school team. He worked with the best kids from Babe Ruth League teams and guided them through their baseball experience. By the time they reached Mary Bradford High, he knew what kind of talent each young boy had.

There were only two high schools in Kenosha, Saint Josephs, a Catholic school, and Mary Bradford. Most of the kids on those teams had been playing against one another for several years. Andy Smith had been working with Dick Bosman from an early age and was a significant influence on Bosman’s development as a pitcher and person until he graduated and signed with the Pirates.

Smith saw what the scouts did: a kid who was a little stronger, a little bit bigger, and could put a little more on the ball than his peers. That ability did not wilt as Dick got older and the competition got better. By the time he reached Mary Bradford High, his baseball world had expanded beyond the boundaries of Kenosha, as the team had begun to play further afield in the area between Milwaukee and Chicago. He was pitching against teams from Racine and Waukegan as the season progressed.

In 1962, Mary Bradford High remained undefeated behind Dick’s strong right arm. Then there were the playoffs, which Dick remembered as consisting of only four games before the championship finals of the Wisconsin State Tournament. With the tournament so close to both Chicago and Milwaukee, it attracted attention from major-league scouts, and it was difficult for a hard-throwing kid to fly under their radar. It was an easy drive to see what all the fuss was about, so by the time the Mary Bradford team was in the Wisconsin state finals, there were plenty of scouts in the crowd.

“I pitched my heart out,” Dick remembered of the game. “It could have gone on all night because we weren’t going to score any runs. But our short-stop threw a ball away, and we lost the game 2–0.” Although he lost the game, Bosman won the right to continue his career in baseball, which proved the more lasting trophy of them all.

As important as baseball and softball were in the Bosman household, there was another sporting venture that demanded almost as much attention and one where speed was just as important. Cars were magic in the early 1960s, and racing them at high speed could bring almost as much excitement as an extra-inning game for the state championship.

It started for Dick when he was 14 years old. There was an old 1937 Chevrolet that sat wasting in the barn next door to the Bosman family home. They bought the car for almost nothing. "It was a brown car with mohair seats in it," Dick remembered. The car had been sitting for quite a while, and the motor was frozen from disuse.

"Dad showed me how to take the cylinder head off, and then he poured kerosene on top of the cylinders," Dick related. They worked the cylinders loose and put the head back on, and Dick's father pulled the old car down the long drive from the garage with the tractor. Dick let out the clutch as his father had instructed, but he had forgotten to turn the key on. "As soon as I turned the key that thing lit off, and I ran right into the back of the tractor. We were laughing, but I was excited too that we had gotten that motor running."

Bosman and his friend Jim Renick learned to drive a car by running the old Chevy in the fields behind his parents' house on a small track they created. But they never drove it on the streets. It was not until Dick was 16 that he got his first car for use on the road. It was a 1951 Chevrolet four-door sedan that a cousin was selling. George Bosman paid \$75 for the car, and although it was not new in 1960, it was deemed street worthy.

Dick began working on it with much of the knowledge he had gained from the old '37. It had three gears on the column when he got the car, but with parts scrounged from the junkyard he installed a three-speed floor shift

There has to be that spark, that fire within that can set an old engine running or a fine pitching talent on a path toward the majors.

and dual exhausts. "It did not go all that fast, but it made a lot of noise," Dick remembered. They marked off a quarter mile on 52nd Street outside their house and began drag racing. The street was only a two-lane road, not the main artery it is today. They

did not have the expertise or the money to add horsepower to that Chevrolet engine. "We did not know that much about it . . . and we could not afford a head gasket," Dick recalled.

It was just another way to compete, but it was also a tremendous rush to get a car going fast in a hurry. As he spent more time racing, he came to understand how expensive a proposition it was. The other drivers were getting sponsorships if they wanted to pursue racing seriously. He did not take that step but also could not walk away from the sport, relating, "In my fantasy heart of hearts, I always thought I might want to drag race professionally." In pursuit of this idea he spent the better part of the bonus money he got from the Pittsburgh Pirates on speed equipment.

It was straight line racing, not "roundy-round," although that was something of interest to Bosman as well. But his focus was on dragsters, if only because it was easier to find a place to match up against someone else. "Great Lakes Dragway, which is still running . . . is where we would go," Dick related. They watched the best of the racers from Milwaukee and Chicago. But it was getting behind those massive engines that intrigued Bosman, one that was practically sitting in your lap, as he remembers it.

Several drivers let him race their cars, and he "got up to some pretty good speeds," topping out at 215 miles per hour, according to articles at the time.⁵ But it was a serious endeavor and not one to be taken lightly. "Those things were belching fire and smoke at you, and might blow up."⁶ It was apparent from his experiences on the track just how perilously close to the edge those drivers were operating. Maintaining control of the machine could be difficult, and it was not something to do just for fun. It was a serious business that required the full attention of anyone doing it.

Bosman continued to race during the offseason well into his professional baseball career. When he became part of the Washington Senators minor-league organization, they expressed concern about the hobby. Bosman's father George had been opposed to his son's interest in racing from the first time he altered the old 1951 Chevy. "He was never in favor of me getting into a car and trying to make it go as fast as possible," Dick revealed.

But the deciding moment came when a dragster Bosman was racing caught fire and the only thing that stood between the young pitching prospect and a career-ending injury was his flame-retardant suit.⁷ When Bosman stepped away from that inferno, he left drag racing as a serious venture. He knew that racing was its own career and if he could not give it the kind of attention it needed it would be best not to pursue it at all.

A sigh of relief could be heard both in the Washington front office and at the old kitchen table when Bosman decided that baseball was going to be enough to get his adrenaline going. He drove hard and threw hard because he was an intense competitor in whatever he was doing, one with that extra motivation, maybe even the swagger, that it took to make it to the top. Whether throwing a fastball or spinning a tight slider, it was that added effort and last dollop of confidence and desire that would help him become a major-league pitcher.

2

Learning to Pitch

The Pirates sent Dick Bosman a Greyhound bus ticket to take him to his first professional baseball camp in Kingsport, Tennessee. But George Bosman would have none of it. His son was not riding a bus all the way south. George, Dick, and sister Virginia packed up the car and made the long trip to Tennessee. No matter what route you took to Kingsport, it was not a major destination point unless you were trying to make a minor-league roster for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Dick had few expectations about the experience. What he found in the first week was a diverse group of young kids like himself. “There were a lot of 17-, 18-, 19-year-old kids, many of whom had never been away from home before. We were playing baseball every day for the first time,” Dick remembered.¹ For many of those gathered at the Pirates camp, the sessions were actually a tryout. Having signed a contract with bonus money attached to it, Dick’s status was relatively secure, but this was not the case for most of the rest in camp at the beginning.

For Dick Bosman, baseball is not just a game. There is nothing more important than winning, regardless of what you are doing. That fiercely competitive spirit makes every game, every season as new and important as the first time.

Pirates officials would read out a list of names of players to be cut before lunch each day. By the time the afternoon practice began, those kids were

gone. It was hardly the well-organized camp that a team in recent decades would conduct. Branch Rickey III was the general manager in charge of the operation, and Al Kubski was the manager. “We talked baseball, but he was almost like a babysitter,” Dick recalled. “There wasn’t a lot of coaching. It was more a time of evaluation.”

“A lot more goes into it today,” Bosman said, comparing the Pirates camp in 1963 to the modern Major League Baseball operation, which oversees a well-managed system to feed talent up the hierarchy of player development. He is now intimately involved in the process and knows how from early in the spring training camp until the Amateur Draft in June, the Tampa Bay Rays—Dick’s current major-league organization—put together the rosters of the minor-league teams that comprise the organization.

A much larger group of scouts and evaluators are charged with not only helping the team pick the “best available talent in the first five rounds,” according to Bosman, but also “filling out the rosters of the minor-league teams.” In the later rounds of the draft, the team works just as hard to make certain there is a shortstop and third baseman at the lower reaches of the organization. Sometimes that concern can trump the idea of the best available talent.

In 1963, Dick Bosman was part of a very different world, and although he may have had higher status as a player signed to a contract, there was no real road map as to how to develop his talent or where he fit into the organization’s plans for the future. It was sink or swim for the most part, and the ones who wanted it the most progressed at the end of each season. Dick worked in relief that first season, tossing only 46 innings in the six-team Appalachian League in the 68-game season of Rookie League play in 1963. He had a good degree of success throughout the course of the season, with 66 strikeouts and a respectable 3.52 ERA.

Kubski called Dick into his office at the end of the season and said, “We’re going to put you on the Columbus roster.” Columbus was the highest level of play in the Pittsburgh organization at the time. Bosman did not know what the sudden promotion meant, but he was told that the Pirates were trying to protect him from the upcoming Rule 5 Draft. According to the rules as they then were structured, a team could only select him in that draft if they were willing to play him at a higher level than where he was lodged at the time. The rule was intended to prevent a team from stockpiling players at lower levels.

For Dick it meant that any team that selected him would be required to bring him to their major-league camp the following spring.

When Dick left for home at the end of the season, he believed his career with the Pirates was secure. In late fall of 1963, however, the Bosman family got a letter from the ownership group of the San Francisco Giants telling them that his contract had been purchased by that team. Having been told by Kubski that he was safely ensconced with the Pirates, he called Paul Tretiak to find out what had happened. The Giants had seen Bosman pitching against their Salem Rebels affiliate in the Appalachian League and liked what they saw. Tretiak told him only, “Congratulations, you are going to major-league camp in Casa Grande, Arizona, with the San Francisco Giants.” It was only then that he understood that he would be playing somewhere new in 1964.

The key for Dick was his first chance to play alongside major leaguers in the spring. In February, Bosman made plans to travel to Arizona. He had done nothing special to get ready for his second year as a professional. “They gave me no workout plan or anything like that,” Bosman said, contrasting the limited conditioning he undertook with the extensive training the modern-day player undergoes, making their career a 12-month regimen that requires a workout routine for much of the offseason.

The most important aspect of any athletic endeavor is getting into the best possible physical condition. It doesn't happen overnight. It is a grind.

For his first big-league camp, Bosman flew to Phoenix, Arizona, before continuing on to Casa Grande, where San Francisco held forth in the spring. An older-model bus with “San Francisco Giants” painted on the side picked him up from the airport in the evening and carried him through the darkness toward Casa Grande. The Giants were copying the blueprint of the Los Angeles Dodgers in designing a plush spring training complex that included a golf course, a team motel exclusively for players, and other appealing amenities. It was in the middle of the Arizona desert that Bosman was first introduced to such big-league players as Willie Mays, Willie McCovey, and Juan Marichal.

Alvin Dark was the Giants manager, and Dick would play for him at the major-league level in Oakland late in his career. Jack Sanford was a proven member of the Giants rotation who befriended Dick, teaching him the rudi-

ments of how a major-league camp operated and what was expected of a rookie.

For the first time, George and Nella Bosman came to see their son play professional baseball that spring. It was the big leagues, and everyone was excited. Dick left them tickets for exhibition games, and they were no doubt happy to see that the next team on the schedule was from Chicago. Dick did not last long at the major-league complex, but before being sent out he told Dark he had not gotten a chance to pitch. Dark promised to remedy the situation, and the next day Bosman made the trip to Mesa, Arizona, for the game against the Cubs. Dark inserted Bosman into the game in the eighth inning on a hot, dry Arizona afternoon.

The Cubs were still being led by one of Dick's heroes, Ernie Banks. He was facing a lineup, even in the eighth inning, that included hitters the likes of Ron Santo and Billy Williams, as well as Banks. Bosman was not getting anyone out as he stood on the mound beneath an unrelenting Arizona sun. Giants catcher Del Crandall came to the mound and said, "I don't know what you're doing kid, but you need to figure this out, cause I'm dying back there." Bosman found a way to get out of the inning, but he knew with certainty that he was not ready for the big leagues. He was happy to report to the minor-league complex the next day.

Bosman spent the 1964 season in Lexington, North Carolina, in the Class D Western Carolina League. "It was exactly where I needed to be," he admitted. Ray Miller, who went on to become a highly successful pitching coach with the Baltimore Orioles, was his roommate. Max Lanier was the manager, and his son Hal played for the Giants. The level of organization was a notch above the Rookie League play he had experienced the prior year with the Pirates, but there was no more well-developed plan for Bosman's career than there had been with Pittsburgh.

Major-league teams at the time did not deploy pitching or hitting coaches to minor-league teams, especially at the lower levels. Each organization had a minor-league roving instructor who visited with a team, watching the action and working with players in an attempt to provide instruction. Bosman was still primarily being used as a reliever, and he went to Lanier and asked him about his status as a bullpen pitcher.

"Am I ever going to get a chance to start, Max?" he said as an honest query.