

Manipur baseball camp concludes

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Imphal, Nov. 16: "Safety first" was the main concern for American baseball coach Jeff Bruggemann as the First Pitch camp in Manipur ended on Monday. Though the two American coaches Jeff Bruggemann and David Palese were unhappy with the shortage of proper equipment at the camp, they felt that the state was moving in the right direction as far as promotion of the game is concerned.

Before leaving for their next coaching destination in

Calcutta today, the two coaches, along with officials of the Manipur Baseball Association, said they were overwhelmed by the passion of the people for the game.

Bruggemann felt it was too early to predict anything at such an early stage, but the enthusiasm and response was far more than he expected. However, the deterrent factor at present is the lack of proper equipment, which involves the safety of the players.

The coaches and officials of Manipur Baseball Association are contemplating using locally available products, including bamboo bats as substitutes until proper equipment is acquired. Some of the equipment that have arrived in Manipur, including helmets, are meant for the left-handed while almost all Manipuri players are right-hand-

ed. Bruggemann added that it is important for players to stay focussed on the first level, as it is the foundation stage. He said the game, if introduced in schools, will flourish in the country. As for the future of the game in Manipur, he asked the local coaches to work hard to make the game popular.

Richard Brokeman, a board of director for First Pitch, said, "We think Camp Manipur has been a success in propagating the game."

Camp Manipur, which took place between November 5 to 13, attracted 31 coaches and over 100 players from all over the state. However, the camp was more focussed on the training of the local coaches by the two US coaches.

One of the coaches said he has benefited a lot from the coaching.