



Article published on January 5th 2012 | [Business](#)

Purchasing indoor batting cages can be a particularly good decision for schools. Sometimes an indoor location is purely a necessity, when there isn't enough room outdoors – even seasonally – to accommodate batting cages. But choosing an indoor batting cage also helps alleviate problems created when “unfriendly” weather encroaches on baseball and softball seasons.

Indoor batting cages enhance ball programs because players get more practice, no matter what the weather. Warm hands grip better, so it's easier for players to maintain proper batting technique. And you can maintain your sports schedule without sacrificing practice time.

Installing batting cages in a gymnasium requires special considerations, but you can choose a system that will provide years of service without devastating your school's limited budget.

A gym serves numerous purposes for the school, so a retractable system can be especially beneficial because it's entirely out of the way when not in use.

Key indoor batting cage characteristics:

Convenience. Your system should be simple to set up and put away, quickly leaving the gymnasium free for the next activity. A retractable system is right at hand and can be easily raised or lowered, manually or electrically.

Durability. Heavy-duty frames and netting will ensure years of tough use, even from students who aren't always as careful as they could be. Choose the heaviest netting you can afford, because netting is the batting cage component that's going to take the greatest hit, so to speak, over time.

Options. Look for choices in colors, netting weights, etc.

Other important considerations:

Standard lengths (55' for softball, 70' for baseball) cost less than custom. Short cages place the pitching machine too close, possibly even dangerously so.

When retracted to the ceiling, batting cages still have a depth of about three feet, so if your overall ceiling height is less than 20 feet that may not leave enough clearance for games such as volleyball.

Indoor batting cages don't have to withstand wearing weather conditions, but you will need to think about the heat and humidity levels in your gym.

Buy from a company with an excellent reputation for quality and service.

Remember, a quality warranty reflects a quality product.

Getting professional advice will help answer size, configuration and potential expansion questions. Combining that with an understanding of your unique needs will help you find the best fit for your school's gym, ball programs and budget.

Article Source:

<http://www.articleside.com/business-articles/how-to-buy-a-batting-cage-for-your-school-s-gymnasium.htm> - [Article Side](#)

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Article Keywords:

HIGH SCHOOL LOCKERS, LOCKERS, MAINTENANCE & SAFETY

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