

Baseball and sports law team up to work with kids

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Hamilton Wise, left, who is in the JD/MBA class of 2016, talks baseball business with 12-year-olds Alfred Ripoll IV, center, and Andreas Palmer, right, as part of a new partnership between the Tulane Sports Law Program and Major League Baseball's New Orleans Urban Youth Academy. (Photo by Linda Campbell)

Salary cap. Competitive balance. Arbitration. Sabermetrics.

If you heard these terms being thrown around a room, you probably would think it's a front-office meeting for a big league baseball team? Not the small, albeit well-equipped, classroom underneath the bleachers of Wesley Barrow Stadium, home of Major League Baseball's New Orleans Urban Youth Academy.

It's part of a new partnership between the [Tulane Sports Law Program](#) and the [New Orleans Urban Youth Academy](#). Adding a sports law program was the brainchild of UYA director Eddie Davis III and [Gabe Feldman](#), law professor and director of the Tulane Sports Law Program.

The sports law “pilot” is designed to serve as a benchmark for future versions of the program. The ultimate goal is to introduce kids aged 12 to 14 to the possibilities of internships and jobs with Major League Baseball and its teams.

“We can't just focus on the 1 percent that potentially will play pro ball,” Davis said. “It's all about the 99 percent of kids and opportunities outside the lines.”

Feldman, whose prominence in the field of sports law has made him the second-most-followed U.S. law professor on Twitter, shares Davis' sentiment and enthusiasm.

“It's opening their eyes to opportunities and giving them something to strive for,” Feldman said.

He taught the program's first installment; other sessions included a discussion with an MLB Players Association agent, and salary arbitration exercises featuring the kids taking on the roles of attorneys and agents trying to hash out contract disputes in the same fashion as the National Baseball Arbitration Competition hosted annually by the Tulane Sports Law Society.

MLB sponsors academies offering baseball skills training in several cities, but opportunities like sports law are unique to the New Orleans Urban Youth Academy and are helping to create a blueprint for the others.

Kirby Campbell is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, where he played and coached baseball. Before moving to New Orleans, he was an assistant coach for the Palm Springs Power of the Southern California Collegiate Baseball League.