



# Sports Sense

## Kids Are The Future Of America's Pastime

(NAPSA)—As cabin fever gives way to baseball fever, it is a natural time to think about what it is about baseball that has made it America's Pastime for generations.

Youth baseball players maintain the game's character with their idealism and spirit. They represent what baseball truly is—something that teaches individual strength in the context of teamwork and the value of giving your all.

World Series hero Tino Martinez personified all that is right with the game during his 15-year career. He is joining Briggs & Stratton Corporation to recognize and reward youth ball players with a champion spirit.

They are encouraging kids to enter the Diamonds in the Rough contest and inspire others with stories about how playing baseball has given them a power within to overcome challenges on or off the field.

And there is great incentive to participate. One grand-prize winner will win \$10,000 and equipment for his or her field, plus a trip for four to New York to see a Yankees game.

Contest rules and an entry form can be found at [www.briggsdiamondbintherough.com](http://www.briggsdiamondbintherough.com). The entry period runs from February 19 – March 23. Online voting for the grand-prize winner will happen from March 26 – April 13.

### Tips from the Pro

Martinez, an instructor for the 2008 New York Yankees spring training camp, is offering youths some of the tips he is giving the pros.

#### Batting

Keep your knees slightly bent and center your weight on the insides of your feet. Turn your head toward the pitcher and focus on the ball's release point. Rotate your hips while swinging. Extend



**Former all-star Tino Martinez is encouraging young baseball players to share their stories about what the game means to them.**

your arms after making contact until your hands are behind your lead shoulder.

#### Fielding

Maintain a wide stance, with your feet shoulder-width apart. Remain alert even if the ball isn't headed your way. Make a great play by covering a base, backing up a teammate or cutting off a throw.

#### Sliding

Slide to avoid a tag, stop at a base or break up a double play. Begin sliding two body lengths away from the base and tuck one leg in a bent position under your other leg. Land with your head up, arms out for balance and toes pointed upward.

#### Bunting

Perfecting the bunt will make you a well-rounded hitter. If runners are on base, show the bunt early so your teammates have the best chance to react. If no runners are on base, aim for the left side of the diamond to create a longer throw for the defense to get you out.