

# ACADEMY: Expanded operation to be a one-stop shop

## FROM PAGE A3

Street in Gahanna. The academy opened there in January.

"Four months into it," Dave Morlan said, "we realized from a business perspective we were losing money because we were not a one-stop shop (for baseball training)."

Teams use the Batter's Box's batting cages and hitting instruction equipment, he said, but must shift to church and school gyms for infield practice because there isn't enough space at the Gahanna site.

The new building will have room for an artificial-turf infield with 70-foot-long base paths. The area can be divided into three sections for hitting and pitching instruction and practice.

The baseball side of the building will include batting cages and a bullpen with two pitching mounds. The other half of the facility will contain two full-sized courts for basketball or volleyball.

There will also be room for a concession stand, cafe and pro shop.

### A Morlans production

The Morlans said basketball and volleyball leagues, clinics and tournaments will be added to broaden the academy's business base, but baseball and softball instruction will

remain their principal focus.

The Morlans' father, Joe, played minor league baseball and was a minor league manager in the Cleveland Indians organization. He worked as a scout for the Indians, St. Louis Cardinals and New York Mets before retiring last year.

Joe Morlan serves on the Batter's Box Academy's advisory board with former Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher and high school baseball coach John Morlan, a cousin of the Morlan brothers. Also on the board is Dave Kobelentz, an Ohio High School Hall of Fame baseball coach who was also a scout for the Indians.

Brian, Mike and Dave Morlan played baseball at New Albany High School and Otterbein College before Brian and Mike went on to work as high school baseball coaches. Dave Morlan and John Dempsey have volunteered as coaches in New Albany and Gahanna youth leagues.

Brian and Mike are responsible for day-to-day operations at the Batter's Box and oversee the academy's instructional curriculum and player assessments. Most of their students are players in fourth grade through high school, but some college players and adult softball teams rent time in the batting cages.

Dave Morlan and Dempsey also

work with the players but devote more of their time to marketing and accounting matters.

"We understand business and strategy," said Dave Morlan, a certified public accountant and senior manager in enterprise risk services for Deloitte & Touche's Columbus office. "It's been a great bridge to this business."

### Teaching more than baseball

Working for Deloitte & Touche also connected him with Gahn, also a CPA and president of the Central Ohio Institute of Internal Auditors. A former All-Big Ten softball player at OSU, Gahn will focus on instructing softball players when the Batter's Box opens its new facility.

In addition to individual instruction, the academy will offer six-on-six and four-on-four hitting leagues for baseball and softball teams. The facility's batting cages, infield and pitching mounds will be rented hourly, as will the courts for basketball and volleyball.

The academy also plans to hire coaches in the sports featured to provide individual instruction.

"The key in a place like this is to get things going during the day and year-round," Brian Morlan said. "That will be really important for us."

# Owners on deck for grand opening

By **KATHLEEN L. RADCLIFF**

*Suburban News Reporter*

Batter's Box Academy is stepping up to the plate in anticipation of bigger and better things.

Former OSU softball standout Sue Gahn, along with her partners, recently closed on the purchase of a new 25,000-square-foot warehouse style building at 48 Klema Drive, Reynoldsburg.

The youth baseball and softball academy, currently housed in a former auto parts store on Gahanna's Mill Street, has grown by leaps and bounds since its opening in Jan. 2002.

Gahn said she is hoping for an early October opening at the new academy, on the western edge of Pataskala, bordering Reynoldsburg.

"This is huge, compared to

what we have currently, which is 5,000 square feet," Gahn said, and able to accommodate between 150 and 200 players per week currently, along with one very small local hitting league.

The love of baseball and softball is definitely all in the family, as Gahn's partners, brothers Dave, Mike and Brian Morlan, along with their brother-in-law, John Dempsey, founded Gahanna's Batter's Box Academy.

In addition to Gahn, the Morlan brothers and Dempsey, Columbus businessman Tim Pallone has joined the ownership and management team at the academy.

"We're most definitely excited," Gahn said, regarding the move to the Reynoldsburg area.



News photo by Ann Tormet

Dave Moran and Sue Gahn are seen at the new site of Batter's Box Academy at 48 Klema Drive in Reynoldsburg. The 25,000-square-foot facility offering softball and baseball infields, basketball and volleyball courts will open in October. Moran and Gahn are two of the six owners of the facility. The grand opening is from 5 to 9 p.m. Sept. 20.