

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RECRUITING...

1. "It doesn't take talent to hustle and be on time."

For many coaches, this is the first thing noticed. Who shows up early? Who runs on and off the field EVERY TIME regardless of what others are doing? You should always be 15 minutes early or you will be considered late. And if you are late, you better be running, with cleats on ready to go, not having to still get "dressed" as you approach the field. **Prepare ahead of time for situations that may potentially deter you from being on time so as to give the best initial impression to the coaches.**



WE NEVER WALK in this game. ANYTIME, ANYWHERE. Hustle on and off the field and in everything you do and you will be noticed. You should come off the field after try-outs, and after every practice once the season starts, knowing that you gave 100% the entire time.

When you are "on time" that does not only mean "showing up physically there" at the time you are expected. It means coming to the field with your "game face" on. It means being ready to play the second the coach arrives. You are "locked on" and your mentality is nothing but focused on the game and the task at hand. Being on time is more than just what your watch says. It means being present and making sure you are 100% ready to go at all time. **If you have difficulty staying focused, continually repeat to yourself, "Be here now." This statement alone will improve your focus and overall playing ability.**



2. "Attitude is everything."

If you have a player who is less talented but has a great "team-first" attitude, most coaches will take her any day over a more talented player with a poor attitude. This includes taking constructive criticism, being positive, encouraging other players, and working hard. Have the right attitude, be the right teammate, and you can flourish beyond your beliefs on the field. You can teach skill. You can't teach attitude.

The most gifted athlete is not always the most successful on the field. A great example of this is the story of Athlete A versus Athlete B. If you look at talent as something that is made up of units, zero to one hundred units (the highest), then imagine Athlete A having 95 units of talent. She only accesses 60% of it, giving her 57 units of talent available to her. Athlete B is less talented and only has 70 units of talent. She, on the other hand, uses 90% of that talent which gives her 63 units of talent. In this example, which happens often in our sport, the "better" or, "more talented" athlete doesn't always come out on top.

How do you learn to utilize everything you have? You start by “walking the walk.” You start by learning what your weaknesses are and pursuing them first to work at and develop them. If you are a good curve ball hitter, don’t just hit curve balls in practice. If you are a good warm weather pitcher, don’t just practice pitching when it is sunny and warm, go out and throw in the cold and rain to work on the things that you struggle with more. Create a positive energy flow by working with your teammates to pick each other up after mistakes and learn to be in the NOW.



Softball, like Ken Ravizza and Tom Hanson preach in the book “Heads up Baseball,” is played ONE PITCH AT A TIME. You MUST be present and not worry about what just happened. Learn how to surround yourself with winners and do what they do. If you want something you have never had, you must be willing to do something you have never done. Watch those who are more successful than you and do what they are doing. You will find that it isn’t always hard, it just takes hard work. Attitude is the stepping stone of success.

Also, don’t argue with parents, complain, hang out outside the dugout or any other behavior that sets you apart from the team in a negative way. It is a sure way to watch a coach walk away without ever giving you another look. Trust me, I have done it.

“Ability is what you are capable of doing, motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.” – Lou Holtz

3. “Know your position...better than anyone else.”

If you know where you are supposed to be AT ALL TIMES, whether the ball is hit to you or not, you will succeed in this. Most people just learn how to play their position with the ball in hand. Something that is critical is the ability to cover where you are supposed to cover even when the play doesn’t directly involve you.



Every time a ball is hit you should be prepared to take action for one of three things: (1) If the ball is coming to you on the ground, (2) if it is coming to you in the air, or (3) if it is not coming to you. The more you stay aware on EVERY play and know that you have a job EVERY play, the better chance the coach will take notice of you. Coaches like “heads up” players.

This point goes right back to the statement, “Be here now.” You may know your position very well, maybe even better than anyone else, but if you do not stay focused, you have lost your chance to impress. Opportunities will be presented to you, take advantage of them. The coaches will notice.

4. “Be versatile.”

The more versatile you are and CAN be, the better off you are when it comes to cut time. If you can play 3 different positions WELL enough to be there, you are of more

valuable than someone who can play 1 just as well, if not a little better. Be open-minded to trying something new.

I was an All-Area shortstop before I ever stepped foot on the pitcher's mound. Never in a million years did I think I would ever pitch. I was a short stop. Then one day, the coach put the ball in my hand and told me to get it over the plate. The following Saturday at 8am, I was in a pitching lesson with the top pitching coach in NJ. You just don't know what you are capable of unless you try it.



Understand that if there are 10 shortstops trying out for the team, you may not be the best one.

Be prepared for the possibility that someone may be a better fit for that position, and stay open to other positions that you could play. Sometimes your coaches see something in you that you would or could never see or believe. Stay versatile.

5. "Go in with no Expectations, just Personal goals."

By placing expectations on yourself, you are adding undue *pressure* to your performance. Sometimes things will not fulfill your expectations; keep realistic and controllable goals. When you set high expectations and things do not go your way, it will lead to almost inevitable disappointment. If you are feeling anxious and pressured, most likely you are placing too high of expectations on yourself.

Here is a formula that will NEVER fail you:

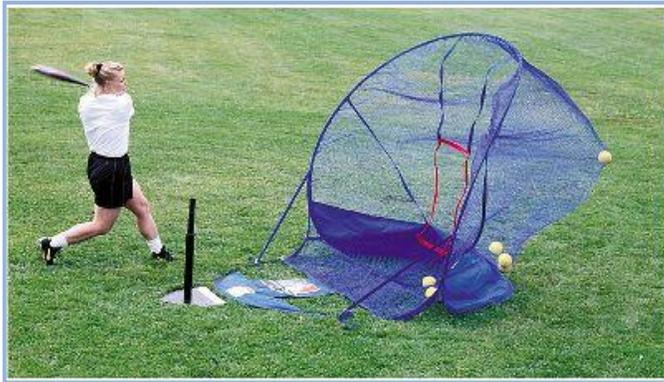
- Identify and replace expectations with objectives
- Set manageable objectives (mini-goals) to focus on the PROCESS not the OUTCOME. (Ex: Give 100% on every play)
- Maintain an attitude of *confidence* and belief in yourself.
- Make sure your goals are controllable. You cannot control how other players perform, but you can control how *you* perform. So don't limit yourself by creating high expectations!
- Take a breath, step into position, and be PRESENT.



6. "Identify where you need to improve...and do it BEFORE you are being evaluated."

Take some time in advance to see what you need to work on, get out on the field and practice! DON'T WAIT TO PICK UP A BALL OR BAT for the first time that season right before the first fall tournament. That will not help anyone, especially YOU! It is critical to start ahead of time in order to be prepared. You do not want to appear "rusty" to the coaches.

If you feel hitting is your weakness, hit the cages a few times before your tryouts.



Go through the mechanics of hitting, rather than just swinging the bat. This is what the coaches will be looking for in tryouts so put time into the basics. Pitchers, make sure you are loose and warmed up, ready to go prior to tryouts. Don't wait until the warm-up period they give you to show how well you throw. Show up early, get warmed up the way

YOU need to, without pressure or people watching. Then when they give you some time at tryouts to warm up, you can do so loosely and lightly. This is the time to show off your skills.

7. "Most importantly, BE YOURSELF."

When you step out onto the field in the recruiting process, be yourself. The coaches will be looking for an authentic player, and will notice when someone is acting or putting on a show. Go out there and play YOUR game. It is easy to become distracted by other players, but it is vital that at tryouts you don't compare yourself to other players.

Take the opportunity you have to do your best and leave it all out on the field. If you do not make the team, the coaches may have believed that you were not a good fit. Stick to your game and don't give up. Find the areas that you are able to improve on and continue to work on them.



"Champions get up one more time than they fall down." –Zen proverb

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