

# TIPS FROM THE COACH

## *3 KEYS TO BASEBALL SUCCESS*

*There are three vital elements necessary to be successful at playing or coaching baseball...*

- 1. RESPECT THE GAME**
- 2. WORK HARD**
- 3. HAVE FUN**

### **RESPECT THE GAME**

You must respect how difficult the game is. Sure, you must show up prepared. Get enough sleep, eat right and prepare correctly so that you have a chance to succeed, but you must also realize that this is a game of failure. Fail only 2 out of 3 times at the plate for your career and you'll end up in the Hall of Fame. The player that throws a tantrum because he struck out is not respecting the game. Babe Ruth struck out over 4000 times, and your ballplayer isn't Babe Ruth! The coach that yells at a player that boots a ground ball is not respecting the game. I personally saw Ozzie Smith kick it 3 times in a game. So, how dare a coach yell at a youngster for doing that which even The Wizard did.

It is how a player deals with the failures - not the successes - that will determine how many more failures he has. How many times have you seen a player make an error and after the coach berates him, then make 2 more? "E" on coach! He got in the player's head. He made it much more likely the player will not be able to "shake it off" but will "gator arm" the next one. The coach did not respect the game.

### **WORK HARD**

This is the easy one. Work hard but work smart. Practice having success. It is better to take 10 perfect swings on the tee than 100 with little thought or consistency. I am very familiar with some "big time" college programs that work their players to the point of exhaustion daily. Hundreds of defensive reps, with max intensity and max effort, each timed with a stopwatch. I assure you they would get far better results in the games if they were to just take 20 to 30 ground balls a day focusing on the players executing correctly and having success. If he boots one, see to it you hit him several "Sunday hops" in a row to regain his confidence. Failure in the name of hard work is counterproductive.

### **HAVE FUN**

This is the most often forgotten essential element in baseball. Baseball is a little boys game that if you are lucky you can play into adulthood. Even Major League players sometimes forget that you are not playing the other team - You are playing only the ball. To the ball, there are no big games. It is just a ball thrown over the plate. It is just a ball bouncing along the ground. The player must execute as he has thousands of times before. He will not do better by trying harder. He will, in fact, often do far worse! All things being equal, If one team is grim faced and fired up before the big game, having gotten a rousing pre-game speech from the coach, and the other is loose, horsing around and laughing, guess which will play better?

COACH