

Key Tips for Working with Players (Must Read)

1. Think long term – Often, the kids that play in high school are not always the best players at younger ages but those who stick with it patiently and keep improving. The key to that is **you, the coach. I absolutely can predict which young players will have a chance to play into their high school years and it has little to do with their ability. The key is how positive and patient their coaches and parents are!**
2. Remind yourself and players that “this is hard stuff” and even major league players, who work at hitting every day, still fail a lot and make more outs than hits. It’s the nature of the business.”
3. Show enthusiasm and be positive no matter how far they are from figuring things out. “You got this” and “We got this” should be frequent statements. Tone of voice is everything, especially when working with own child. Use a matter of fact tone of voice for repetitive instruction but show elation when they do something well.
4. Describe the action, “that last swing.” For example, “In that last swing, you did this, let’s try it again.” Do not say, “You did that wrong” or “That’s not what I told you to do.”
5. The following words and gestures build confidence and relieve stress. They need little explanation.
 - ✧ “Yes”
 - ✧ “Sweet” (Good)
 - ✧ “Way to battle”
 - ✧ “Great effort” (Nice try)
 - ✧ “Awesome”
 - ✧ “Nice”
 - ✧ “Not bad”
 - ✧ “Better”
 - ✧ “Wow” - Did you see that?
 - ✧ “Relax” – “Clear your mind”
 - ✧ High five - Fist pump
 - ✧ Thumbs up

- ✧ The point (One or two fingers at player)
- ✧ A smile (used with all of the above)
- ✧ “I’m proud of you”

Things you should never do:

- ✧ The look-away
- ✧ Head shake
- ✧ Eye roll
- ✧ Slamming down or kicking an object
- ✧ “Come on.”
- ✧ Forcing players to keep practicing when they tire
- ✧ Palms up with a quizzical look on the face
- ✧ “That’s terrible.”

6. Have patience, patience, and more patience. Having the patience to repeat fundamental swing ideas to players like, “Check your feet” and “What about your grip” is mandatory. Unless, the hitting coach is willing to have that amount of patience and do that, they will have trouble helping players. Letting things go because you are tired of saying the same things is not an option for the dedicated baseball coach, but once again, an understanding tone of voice is key.
7. Stay focused on one fundamental and drill at a time. Giving players many things to work on and think about at the same time is a recipe for trouble and confusion.
8. Use a show, stop, ask method of teaching. A big part of the teaching process involves stopping hitters in action before asking “Is that the correct position?” or “What was wrong (or right) with that last swing?” The sign that the hitting instruction works is the ability of players to self-analyze and explain their right and wrong baseball swing movements. Of course, with younger players don’t expect them to have the answers, at first.
9. Have short term and long-term goals but keep these to yourself. Some muscle memory change comes easy for some and not others. I have some players who make changes with the mention of it, others do not adapt nearly as soon. Additionally, some hitting flaws are more difficult to change than others. Hitting coaches must recognize the hitting fundamental changes that are difficult for each individual batter. Once recognized, they should break things down into short- and long-term goals.

10. Quality of repetition trumps quantity. Twenty fundamentally correct swings are better than 100 mediocre ones, but it takes time for the quality to come.
11. Demonstrate and/or show kids the actions “we” are looking for by pulling up a major league player on you tube or when watching a game on TV.
12. Explain that filming them is to show their progress not to tell them how wrong they are doing things. A couple of swings is all that is needed to analyze swing on video, don't overdo it.
13. Have fun and keep the fun in your practices.