

## Zoning In—Have a Focus

This game is tough. There are lots of components that go into being a successful player and team. How do your players keep everything together on and off the field? How do they handle the pressures of a game and the season?

Your coaching will have a lot to do with keeping their focus positive. One little thing can help in the heat of the moment though. Ask them to think of something that makes them smile, something that immediately makes them feel tougher and stronger, something that draws their mind away from any negative thoughts and turns them into positive ones. Something that gives them a razor sharp focus.

Mine is my visor. I have always worn a visor during my coaching days and still do when walking, hiking, hosting the Showcase in St Louis, etc. I hiked the Grand Canyon in 2006. The preparation with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society was grueling during the practices leading up to the Grand Canyon hike.

Every weekend for months, we prepared for that hike. The first one the temperature was 8 degrees. Others in the heat, rain or snow. Starting with short hikes and building to an 11 mile hike in a very hilly area. The Grand Canyon hike was three miles down into the Canyon. But then you had to go back the 3 miles up to the top. 9 hours with most of it being 12-15" steps. My visor gave me the focus and determination to get down and back to the top.

On the softball field, my visor kept me focused on the job of being the best we could be. Sounds weird but that was the trigger that made me feel like I was on top of my game, it made me feel like no one would beat us, it allowed my mind to stay focused on the strategy on the game and pulling the strings needed to win.

The trigger for the players has got to be something personal to them. It could be a number or saying that is written on their gloves, visors or hats. It could be a woven bracelet they wear, a sweatband, something hanging in the dugout, a cheer, a word they can say on the field or at bat. Anything that they can look at or say that triggers that feeling in them of focus and being the best player out there.

The mind is very complexed and a player's focus can easily turn to doubt and insecurity in certain situations. Ask each player to find that trigger that brings them back to a positive focus and that feeling of being invincible.