

SYNOPSIS OF MENTAL APPROACH WITH REGARD TO HITTING

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Have complete focus and attention on each pitch and at-bat:

Eliminate negative baggage.

Practice the three R's:

1. Rhythm: Know when to start the take-away.
2. Release: Find the pitcher's release window.
3. Rotation: How does the breaking pitch, fastball and change move?

Discipline:

Know your strong zones and discipline yourself to swing at pitches in a strong zone.

Aggressiveness:

Keep your frame of mind "hit, hit, hit"—it eliminates guesswork. Always expect the next pitch to be your pitch.

CONFIDENCE

Pre-hit routines:

Be diligent in developing a pre-hit routine with four components.

1. Analyze: What is the situation?
2. Visualize: Create a mental picture of the predicted pitch.
3. Center: Visually soft-center on the pitcher's' whole body as he comes set.
Fine-center on release window as pitcher breaks hands.
4. Execute: Swing mechanics are allowed to flow as trained. The swing should be without thinking—automatic.

Attacking the pitcher:

During the pre-hit process, good hitters analyze the opposing pitcher.

1. Can he throw a fastball by me? If no, look for other pitches.
2. Will he throw inside with any frequency? For most hitters, the middle-out approach is the most productive.
3. Can he throw a breaking ball for a strike? If no, lock in on the fastball.

4. How has he pitched to me, or other hitters similar to me, in the past?
5. What does the pitcher throw with a key runner in a scoring position? Pitchers are creatures of habit—they revert to favorite pitches in stressful situations.
6. What did a previous hitter do? A recent or immediate success or failure may be fresh in a pitcher's mind. If a curve ball was just hit 400 feet, look for a fastball.

Situational hitting:

Special game situations may require a shift in mental approach.

1. Moving the runner from second base to third base, with no outs: Think opposite field, or Left-Handed ground ball to the right side. If left-handed, move closer to the plate to pull the ball.
2. Sacrifice fly situation: Don't tinker with swing mechanics, look hard middle mind-set. Look for a pitch higher in the strike zone..
3. Hit and run: Attempt to drive the ball on ground, make contact.
4. Run and hit: Swing only at desirable pitches. Take a normal, aggressive swing at a pitch in the zone.
5. Two-Strike hitting: Shorten your grip, look for a middle-out fastball, think "Drive the ball to the opposite gap."

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PLAYERS

If you keep the game fun, it changes all the PRESSURE into PLEASURE.

Respect for the game will help you play relaxed and with intensity.

Pride:

A strong sense of pride in your baseball performance motivates you to prepare and play at your highest level.

Clarify and follow through with your mission statement as a player:

Do what your mission statement says, instead of, at times, how you might feel. Attitude is a decision. Stay with your purpose. Staying with your mission statement will also minimize stress, and keeping the game in perspective will keep you from falling into the trap of tying your self-worth to your performance. Understand what you want out of the game and how baseball fits into your life.

Establishing a mission

- minimizes stress.
- provides direction.
- fuels intensity.
- adds meaning to the game.
- gives you the discipline at times when it is lacking.

Play the game, one pitch at a time.

You can't control what happens around you, but you can control HOW you choose to respond. You must be in control of yourself before you can control your performance.

Don't choose to ride the mental roller coaster.

Stay level. Studies show the most elite, successful athletes keep their heart rates steady throughout competition.

Be a confident player.

Seeing yourself play well, with positive thoughts running through your head, leads you to success. Trust in yourself.

Make a commitment to learning as much about yourself and about your game as you can.

This will help you to

1. constructively evaluate each performance.
2. have quality in your preparation and practice.