

Century Baseball Philosophy and Guidelines

Coach Philosophy:

As coaches we will promote the following statement:
"Play hard, Play loose, and Play without fear"

Century baseball coaches will maintain the perspective that the person is the most valuable asset we have to develop. Our goal is to create a family environment in our program.

It is our job to fill the player's emotional tank when under our tutelage. We will teach during failures and praise during success. When a player or team's success becomes about we, the coaches, and not the person then we need to step back and reevaluate our perspective.

We will not attack a player for failure to execute at anytime and will not talk in a negative manor to players on the field or in the dugout. Players understand when they have made a mistake so we will not compound the situation by stating the obvious. **This does not mean** you do not bring to the attention of a player a missed sign or fundamental break down and use the situation as a teachable moment. Our goal is to use good judgment in this area and not humiliate a player on the field. We must be comfortable and empowered as coaches to hold players accountable. But again, we will not make a negative production of mistakes/breakdowns with the intent to humiliate a player during a game or practice. We will hold players accountable for inappropriate behavior and will discipline immediately during a game or practice. I DO NOT deem this as negative on the coaches' part, when we are addressing a negative behavior we can be firm and direct.

Our goal is to create an environment where fear of failure does not exist and the willingness to risk and play without fear is nurtured. Though we value one player's ability to hit over another player we value all players equally as human beings.

Players will be taught to move on to the next play (quickly) no matter what the result of the prior play. This must be modeled by the coach or it is an empty request and behavior change will not occur in the player. The field is not the place to display negative emotions. If we need to kick a bucket or break a bat (been there done that) we need to do it in the privacy of our own home☺.

As a coach we need to evaluate what we can and cannot control. For example:

What we can control:

- How we respond to a player/parent
- How we respond to a poor call
- How we plan and implement a practice plan
- The what and how when teaching the fundamentals of the game
- Holding players accountable to team expectations
- Decision we make offensively and defensively
- How we respond to wins and losses

What we don't control:

- An individual's choices
- Base hits
- Errors
- Strikes and balls
- Successful plays
- How many runs we score
- Basically, you can make a good or bad baseball decision but execution or lack thereof will determine the result

I realize, as do parents and players that we as coaches **will still make mistakes** but our goal is to strive for consistency in modeling Century Baseball Philosophy.

Basic Practice Structure:

The following is an outline for season practice:

One month before the season, open gym workouts will be available for players to begin work on throwing, hitting, and development of fundamentals.

The first week of baseball practice will focus on basic defensive fundamentals, offensive fundamentals, and pitcher preparation. During this time program philosophy will be introduced and expectations for team culture will be developed. Player cuts will be determined during this week. The amount of players kept will be determined on talent, present need, and future need. Rosters will range from 12-14 players.

Week two practice will focus on defensive situations, offensive situations, base running and the finalization of Frosh, JV and Varsity rosters for the beginning of play.

Week three will focus on game preparation (review), pitchers, and hitting repetitions.

The remainder of practice times will focus on game prep (adding additional strategies), fine tuning, and repetitions. It is our job to keep balance. We will keep practices as focused as possible and build in days off when deemed appropriate.

Field Maintenance:

Coaches will assign duties to players for general field maintenance. Players will be held accountable for the locker room condition. The Freshmen and JV coach are responsible for dragging and mowing the JV field. The Varsity coach and assistant are responsible for dragging and mowing the varsity field.

Basic team duties:

- Cleaning dugouts (home and away)
- Raking and edging in the front of dugout
- Raking base paths (lawn rake is used to rake dirt back into paths)
- Raking bases
- Picking up bases
- Preparing the pitchers mound (rake, tamp, cover)
- Raking Home Plate (cover)
- Field Edging
- Organizing storage
- Weeding (minimum of 5 minutes after games-use several players for this task)
- Garbage pick-up
- Packing and transporting gear
- Chalking field before games
- Other duties may be identified
- *Keep the dirt in the dirt*

Equipment:

Each team will have their own set of equipment and be responsible for maintaining equipment and inventory. It is the coaches' responsibility to ensure that equipment is accounted for and prepared at the beginning and end of each season.

General Equipment:

- Balls (bucket/bag)
- Wiffle balls (bucket/bag)
- Catcher gear (bag)
- Bats/Helmets (bag)

Uniforms

Each coach will pass out uniforms no less than 4 days before the first scheduled game. An inventory sheet will be used to record the issuing and collecting of each uniform. The player will initial verifying gear check out. Players are expected to turn in a laundered uniform at the end of the season. Players failing to do so need to be reported to the head coach before the school year ends.

Player Conduct/Expectations:

Your goal as a player is to strive to be the best you can be. Concern yourself with what you can control. You can control how you think, prepare, listen, practice, and play. Striving to give your best each and every play is all you can ask. Often times in baseball this may still result in failure so you must move on! Do not dwell on what you cannot control! If you can't enjoy the moment and the challenge of attempting perfection in that moment then you will not enjoy your experience. If your significance is dependent upon making a play or how people view you as a player then you will be on a constant emotional roller coaster and be a joyless player. Have fun by playing hard, playing loose, and playing without fear. When failure comes your way you must learn from it and move on. Failing in baseball is part of the game and you cannot let this part of the game define you as a person.

Attitude: Players that do not want to choose to have a positive attitude are not needed in our program.

What is Attitude?

Belief: How we think, and what we think about an issue or event

Affect: The emotional component—how we feel about the issue or event

Behavior: The unmistakable behavior that is attached to our internal attitudes

Is this behavior destructive to you, coaches and teammates?

Is this behavior distracting to you, coaches and teammates?

Is this behavior self serving or team serving?

The following is a list of expectations for players:

- Any player not maintaining a passing grade at anytime during the season will not be eligible to play until proof of passing grade is confirmed.
- Players will wear baseball pants, sleeves, and hats to all practices unless otherwise directed.
- Players are expected to stay drug free and abide by the guidelines presented in the Student Handbook.
- Players will encourage teammates on and off the field. Players will not address fellow teammates in a negative manor. It is the coaches job to discipline and critique and the player's job to pick up their teammates
- Players will not use vulgar language
- Players will not argue umpire calls
- Players will not throw bats, helmets, etc.
- Players will run on and off the field
- Players will run back to the dugout after being a strike out/putout victim (without acknowledging the umpire when you deem the call wrong)
- Players will run hard to first base in all situations (run hard at all times)

- Players are expected to not talk negatively about a coach or teammate when leaving the field. A player is expected to be mature enough to talk with their coach. Bad mouthing someone behind their back is cheap and cowardly! This does not mean you can't talk with your family or debrief after a game or even vent. But the **expectation** is that Century players, coaches, and parents **will not blame, attack or engage in negative non-productive discussion concerning individuals**. Focus on your behavior, your response and your play. Take responsibility for your actions and your performance.
- When a player is being taught, critiqued, disciplined, etc. they are expected to listen and not give excuses.
- Players are expected to address the coach with concerns first and coaches are expected to consult Head Coach if a third party is deemed necessary.

Playing Time:

Players need to stay away from building in excuses for not playing and not succeeding.

As a player you need to understand that we as coaches are charged with running the baseball program and putting a product on the field that represents Century athletics at its highest level athletically and emotionally. While you may not agree or understand all of the decisions it still boils down to the player taking care of doing his job when the opportunity arises.

As a player you need to perform to the best of your ability in practice so that when you get the opportunity to play you will be ready. If you think that because you'll do fine in the game you don't have to hustle or do things right in practice, you're mistaken and will find it difficult to get on the field as a Varsity player even if you are extremely gifted.

There are also a lot of other factors that will affect your ability to play at the Varsity level, even if you make the team. Such factors include:

- How many returning players?
- What position do you play and who is in front of you at that position?
- Are you only a **one tool, two tool, or three tool** player?

All these are questions that you and your coach need to answer both individually and together.

What you need to do is show up to practice on time, do your best, and execute! Do things well and you will get noticed. Focus on these areas and you will increase your **opportunity** to get playing time.

Do not compare yourself to other players. You should focus on being the best you can be and not concern yourself with other players. Realistically, if I were to ask you to rank yourself with all the other players (take a coach's perspective) that you know are going to be on the field with you, the truth is you know who the top players are at each position. So focus on being prepared and then enjoying the experience of being part of a team. The bottom line is don't worry about the coach's decision just worry about doing things right on your end. That's all you can control.

Based on the above philosophy:

Not everybody will play in games. Several players may be used sparingly throughout the season at all levels. Being a senior **does not guarantee** playing time. Player concerns need to be discussed with the coach. Discussing other players will not be part of the conversation (this is a message to parents and players). The goal is to give every player an opportunity to play during the season but no guarantees are given on how, when, and where. This is especially a reality at the varsity level. Often times the difference between skill level and what a player brings to the field is small but the reality is there is a difference. The coach's responsibility is to be honest and straight forward with each player. In most cases players not seeing playing time will not fully agree and will need to make a decision as to how they would like to conduct themselves. You have **two** options in this situation:

One-continue playing being the best you can be no matter what your role, being a positive influence to the culture of the team and continuing to work hard so you are ready when an opportunity presents itself to play in a game.

Two-make the decision that your current role is not an option for you and turn in your uniform.

Message to parent and players:

The following philosophy comes from my perspective as a coach, as a parent, and a former athlete.

Yelling negative obvious statements to players or the team in general during a game or practice is unproductive. Our players will be taught and expected to pick up their teammates at all times. Yes, even the pitcher who sees a ground ball booted in a crucial situation will pick up the teammate who just failed. Basically, what goes around comes around so when that pitcher misses a location and gives up a crucial walk or hit, his teammates are expected to have his back. Players that are negative, can not control their emotions (pout, feel sorry for themselves) are a major distraction and create babysitting situations for the coach which is non-productive.

I DO understand having a child play for a less then desirable coaching environment and have played in a couple of the most critical and emotionally unproductive environments any of us have seen. I Do understand the emotions of getting to a game and see my son not playing. I Do understand the emotions of my son batting last in the line up day after day and at times only getting one at bat. I Do understand seeing my son playing a position they do not necessarily like. As a former player I Do understand not playing and getting to the point in my career where there simply were better players at my position.

On the flip side I understand the emotions of my son playing more than other players and having the opportunity to play his desired position. I do understand what it feels like to get a majority of the playing time while a teammate was my back up.

I am a parent but I am also realistic. This is the message I convey at to my own children and convey to our team. You may not agree with it but it is important you understand my philosophy:

Son, you choose to play this sport because you have a passion to play and nobody is making you play. Everyday you must decide how you will respond to your situation good or bad. It does not matter how much you played yesterday or what year you are in school. If you are the last batter your responsibility is to be the best "last batter" you can possibly be. If you are playing a position you do not want to play it is still your responsibility to be the best at that position you can be. If you do not play very much it is your responsibility to be the best bench player for your team you can possibly be (my son's hate this when they get this lecture☺ but they know I hold fast to the statement). The reality of sports is some players bring more to the table then other players. The nicest person or person with the noblest character does not always get to play. You will always take full responsibility for your actions, and make your own destiny. Never let a coach's decision dictate how you believe in yourself. No coach is capable of ruining your season. They may make it less than enjoyable but it is **your choice** to respond with guts, hard work, and with character of a champion. You cannot let others actions or decisions drive you or you will never be happy and will be at the mercy of your situation or environment. To say a coach ruined your season or chances to go to college is a cop out and not acceptable. The reality is if you are good enough they will find you. Life is not fair and you will not have a fairy tale environment in everyday life. Basically, take responsibility, don't blame others, and live life with a passion!

I always support my players and children emotionally but I refuse to enable them and cripple them emotionally. I am a parent and a coach, I care about people, but I also understand I cannot make everyone happy and ultimately do not have control over the decision my children or other individuals make. I WILL make decision that will frustrate you, for some I will not play your child enough I can guarantee this but I will always do my best to teach them to be better people and give them the life skills I believe they need to be better people and successful in life.

Once again, it important to me as a coach that you understand the way I think. I understand you may not agree with my philosophy but it is critical you are aware of it. I am looking forward to the upcoming season and am excited to build new relationships and work toward excellence.

Coach Gower
Varsity Baseball Coach