

Routine, Leadership and Problem-solving

The Importance of a Routine

I had a call from my son's little league manager last night about 10pm. I help out on the team coaching so had just seen him earlier in the evening. As it happens when baseball dads get together the conversation moved on to other things pretty quickly and we ended up speaking for an hour.

Coach has an itinerary and agenda we try to follow each practice that emphasizes the basics, reinforces the skills taught in earlier practices and introduces new skills. Even though the kids are young, this method has been very effective.

These are little kids and the basics are critical for them to have fun AND be safe. It's also important if they're going to have a chance to win a few games.

Practice was not a success. The kids weren't focused. They were running around with bats, back talking each other, not paying attention to the coaches or remembering to use the basics we've been stressing since the first day--

We started at one location (a grass field behind a school) and after a few minutes loaded all the kids and their parents into a few cars driving five minutes to another field (an open baseball diamond behind another school), unloaded them and the equipment and because of the time we lost moving around jumped right into batting practice.

Frankly, coach and I were more than a little responsible for the kids' behavior.

Let me explain...

WE SHOULD NOT HAVE RUSHED THINGS. We should have been prepared to:

- Ignore the late start and stick to the routine by shortening the activities or eliminating non-critical activities planned for later in the practice, or
- Cancel or reschedule the practice

You see, the kids were used to a routine, an order of progression that met expectations outlined the beginning of each practice, and every decision their coaches made that day only disrupted their routine. Naturally, the practice was a total washout. There was chaos, higher levels of disrespect, sassiness and generally poor athletic performance even from the more tenured players.

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Coach and I let ourselves become victims and react poorly. We didn't realize we had a problem or were contributing to a problem. We needed to step back. We needed to be leaders. We needed to be problem-solvers. We needed to recognize that the problem was the total absence of a proven winning routine and make the appropriate problem-solving decisions.

If you want to win more business, you need to be a leader and a problem-solver for your customers... even when they don't know they have a problem.

Be The Hero,
Mark

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