

DISCIPLINE IN SOFTBALL

INTRODUCTION

We hear coaches and fans talk about playing a “disciplined” game, or being a “disciplined” player. But most coaches and players, don’t know what this really means.

Although we talk about “discipline”, perhaps a more appropriate term would be “self-discipline”. It is the responsibility of *EVERY* player to discipline themselves in every aspect of the game, so they can be a better, more productive player for their team.

In general terms, self-discipline is simply the willingness and strength to do what you know to be the right thing, even though you may want, or be tempted to do otherwise. Conversely it means the willingness to avoid doing what you might want or have an urge to do, because it’s not in the best interest of the team.

PLAYING VS. COMPETING

Keep in mind, you can not be competitive without discipline. Competing is not the same as playing. Anyone can go out, learn the skills and play the game. But competing is more than that. Competing takes determination and perseverance to be the best and that take discipline. It requires strength of mind and the will, not to be beaten.

To put this idea into more practical terms, here are some concrete examples of behaviour that indicate self discipline on the part of a player.

AT BAT

Discipline in hitting means

1. Doing your 100 swings every day to ensure maximum muscle memory and transfer of swing mechanics to the game.
2. Being prepared to hit - doing your homework and having as much information as possible to increase chances of success.
3. Cutting back on the third strike swing to ensure contact.
4. Making the required adjustments as the count changes to maximize potential for effective contact with the ball.
5. Having and following a hitting routine that keeps you properly focussed on every pitch.
6. Maintaining confidence and poise even when you get a bad call, strike out or look bad at the plate.
7. Attempting to hit according to the game situation i.e. behind the runner, hitting the ball where it is pitched, sacrifice bunt, etc.
8. Knowing the umpire’s strike zone, and adjusting to it.

ON THE BASES

Discipline in base running means:

9. Maintaining concentration on the ball. Knowing where it is at all times.
10. Exploding off the base on EVERY pitch, even when you are tired.
11. Being ready and prepared to slide on all close plays.
12. Practising lead-offs, running technique and sliding regularly.
13. Knowing and playing the odds. This means not running when it is not in the team's best interest, even though you may want to.
14. Hustling to first base at ALL times, even on shallow pop flies and infield hits that appear to be sure outs.
15. Watching and following instructions from the base coach even when you think you know better.

ON DEFENCE

Discipline while playing defence means:

16. Forcing yourself to catch the ball with two hands even though it takes a little more energy.
17. Doing your 100 pick-ups daily until it becomes completely automatic.
18. Moving your feet to get behind the ball whenever possible, instead of reaching out and making the lazy play.
19. Resisting the urge to make a throw when it would be better for the team to hold on to the ball.
20. When bringing the ball in from the outfield, hitting the cut-off player instead of trying to throw it all the way in yourself.
21. Working continually on throwing technique until your accuracy is perfect.

DISCIPLINE - SELF ASSESSMENT

Complete the following questionnaire to assess your own level of self-discipline. To get the best results, you must be honest with your answers.

	YES	NO
1. Do you swing a bat every day during the season to ensure maximum muscle memory?	()	()
2. Do you constantly study all factors that could have a bearing on your hitting success?	()	()
3. Do you adjust your third strike swing to increase your chances of making contact?	()	()
4. Do you make physical and mental adjustments as the count changes?	()	()
5. Do you have and following a hitting routine that keeps you properly focussed on every pitch?	()	()
6. Do you maintaining your confidence and poise even when you look bad at the plate?	()	()
7. Do you try to hit according to the game situation I.e. behind the runner, sacrifice bunt, etc?	()	()
8. Do you have a hitting plan when you go to the plate, and know exactly what you want to do?	()	()
9. As a base runner, do you maintain concentration on the ball, and know where it is at all times?	()	()
10. Do you explode off the base on every pitch, even when you are tired?	()	()
11. Are you always prepared to slide on a close play?	()	()
12. Do you practise lead-offs, running technique and sliding regularly?	()	()
13. Do you always run the bases with the team interest in mind?	()	()
14. Do you hustle to first base at all times, even on shallow pop flies and infield hits?	()	()
15. Do you always watch for and follow instructions from the base coach?	()	()
16. Do you always catch the ball with two hands whenever possible?	()	()
17. Do you regularly practice pick-ups to make the moves completely automatic?	()	()

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| 18. | Do you always try to get behind the ball instead of reaching out and making the lazy play? | () | () |
| 19. | Do you resist throwing the ball when it would be better for the team to hold on to it? | () | () |
| 20. | As an outfielder, do you always throw the ball through the cut-off player? | () | () |
| 21. | Do you continually work on your throwing technique to improve your accuracy? | () | () |
| 22. | Do you work out regularly to maintain a good level of fitness? | () | () |
| 23. | Do you set practice and performance goals for yourself to keep track of improvement? | () | () |
| 24. | Do you have an organized pre-game warm-up Routine that gets you to your best performance level? | () | () |
| 25. | When you are not playing, do you always find something useful to do to help the team? | () | () |

There you have it! 25 behaviours that represent a highly disciplined softball player.

To assess **your** level of self-discipline, simply count the number of “Yes” answers. At the same time, make a note of the “No’s”, and start working on these items. The more items you can convert to, “Yes”, the higher the level of self-discipline you can claim!

EVERYONE HAS THE WILL TO WIN!

ONLY A FEW HAVE THE WILL TO PREPARE TO WIN -

THAT TAKES DISCIPLINE!!