

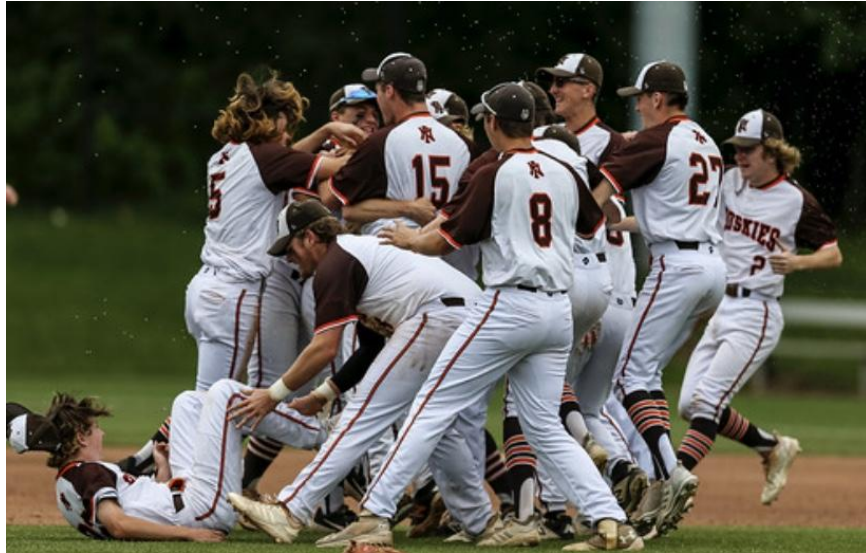


The Mental Game

Baseball is 90% mental, the other half
is physical. Yogi Berra



About Portage Northern



- I have been head coach since 2001 (21 seasons)
- Division 1 School with about 1300 students
- Varsity and JV Team
- About 40 Players in our program
- Most players play multiple sports
- Average 3-4 players a year moving on to play baseball in college
- State Champs 2019 & Runner Up 2015



The Mental Game

- If over half of the game is mental, why don't we spend over half of our time practicing it?
- We must find ways to incorporate it into our practice everyday.



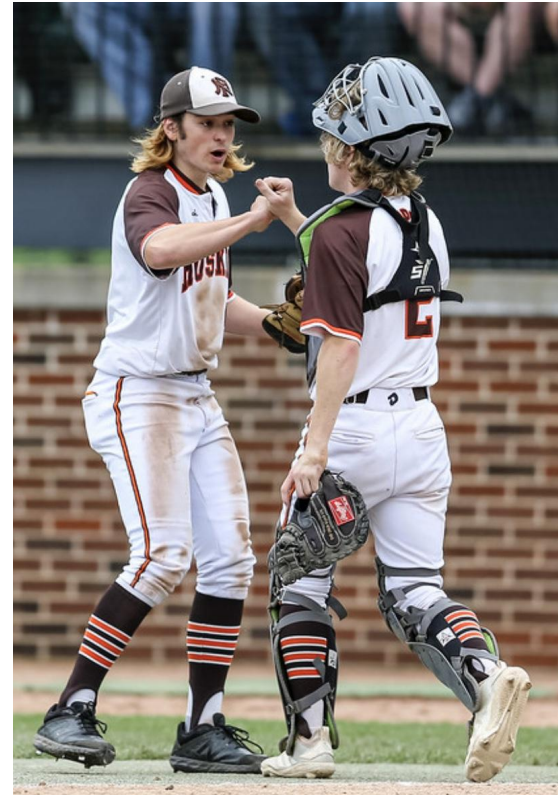
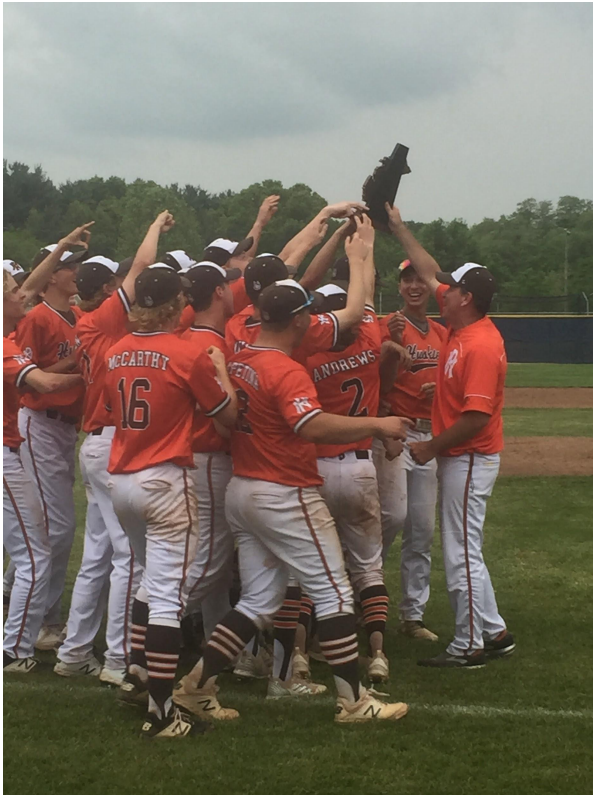
You must practice it!

- It is not a pep talk before or after practice/games.
- Must be intertwined into your practices throughout the whole session.
- Why is it so important?



Mental Conditioning

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxinNI_iHmo





Dealing with failure

- Baseball is a sport of failure!
- How do you deal with failure is what is important.
- $E + R = O$ (Event + Reaction = Outcome)
- Ex: Strikeout + can't get it out of mind = Error in the field or bad at bat next time.



What can you do?

- Focus on the things you CAN control!
- $K-A=0$
- Have something to go to (Toilet example).
- Develop a language your players use.
- Do a little a lot, not a lot a little.
- Use routines in practice and games.



Flush it!



- You can't dwell on mistakes or failures.
- Toilet can flush it away.
- Keep in dugout at practice and games.
- Used it with my 9U players and it works.
- Kids like it and buy in.



Foreign Language

- Develop a list of words you can use.
- Green Lights, Yellow Lights, Red Lights?
- Process over outcome
- WIN
- Get Big
- Stay Present



Routines

- Most important component in my opinion.
- Use them for hitting, pitching, fielding.
- Stops the game from speeding up on the player.
- Make breathing an important part of the routine. (Bigger the moment, Bigger the Breath!)



Routines cont...

- Habits and routines lead to familiarity.
- Familiarity leads to confidence.
- Confidence leads to success.
- Gives you “something to go to” when the pressure is on.
- What is your at bat routine?

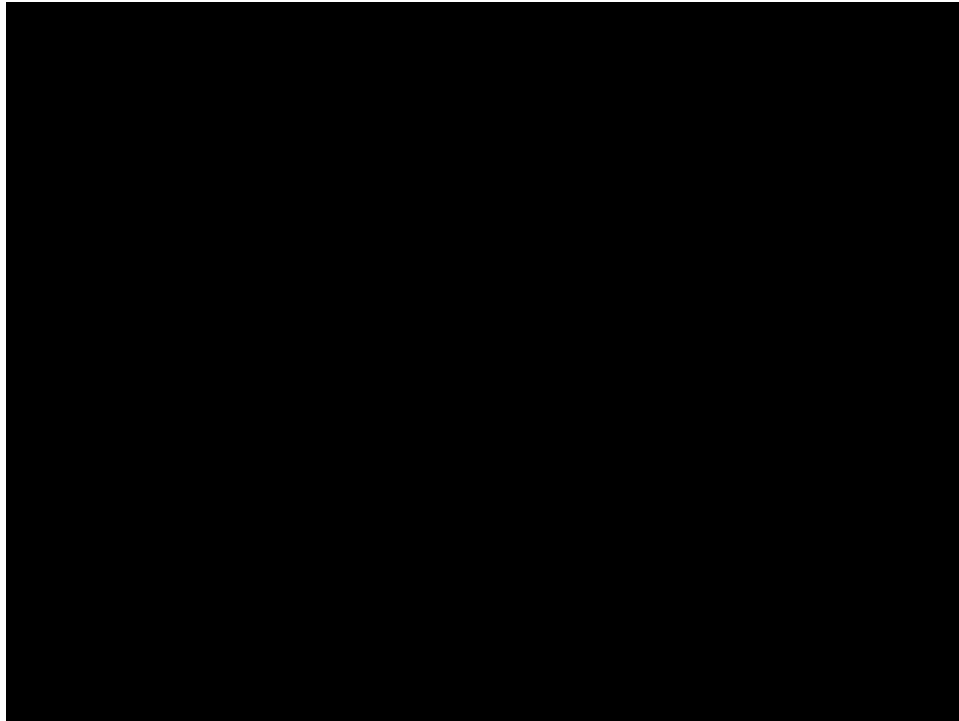


Routines cont...

- At bat starts for us when you are in the hole.
- On deck batter is focused on timing.
- Never have on deck batter get a ball at the backstop.
- At bat – step into box and go through routine, (green plate practice) then **breathe** and think “see the ball hit the ball.”
- Release Routine used when needed (red/yellow plate practice).



Hitting Routines



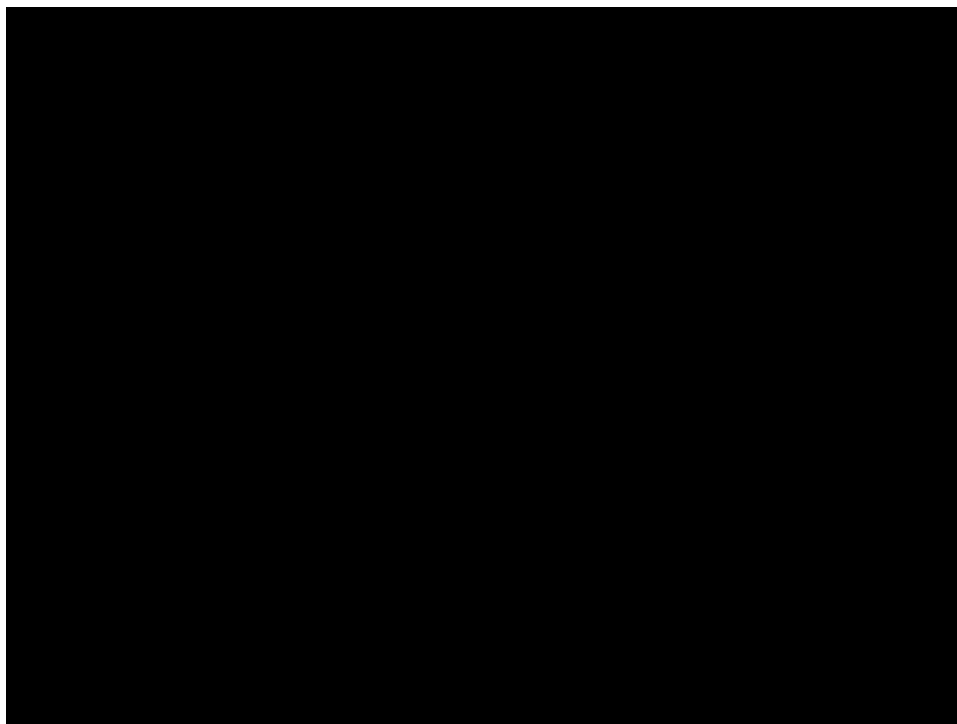


Routines cont...

- Pitching routines similar to hitting.
- Step on the rubber, means you are ready and in “Green Lights,” complete focus on next pitch.
- Deep breath, visualize pitch, throw pitch.
- Can’t control what happens once it leaves hand.



Shadow Bullpen Work





One Pitch at a Time

- Part of the routine is to focus on one pitch at a time.
- Can't think of the last pitch or you will get caught in “Yellow Lights”.
- We make our players communicate to their team what they learned after their at bat.



Other Mental Skills

- Concentration Grids
- 6 X 2 X 8 Breathing Exercise
- 14:24 - 1% of your day
- Well, Better, How
- Start, Stop, Continue
- Process Journal
- Make practice harder than the games



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I am an MPM Certified Coach and work with coaches and athletes at all levels