

TIPS FROM THE COACH

I was recently asked by a friend for some tips about how his sons should approach their upcoming Little League tryouts. They wanted to know how to catch the coaches' eye. The obvious answer is to play well. But there are a few things they should do to insure an eye-catching performance.

1. Understand that a tryout is not a social event. You are there to take someone's job.
2. Dress like a ball player. Wear baseball pants, cleats, a hat and tuck in your shirt. You will get major deductions if you show up in baggy jeans and the latest skater dude apparel. Wearing your hat backward or sideways is a major no no.
3. When you arrive, place your equipment away from everyone else's. Run, preferably, by yourself, to get warm. Stretch away from everyone else in the outfield. Coaches will notice that this is a serious, disciplined, knowledgeable ball player. Also your equipment is less likely to grow legs.
4. Throw sufficiently to be completely warm. There may be a lengthy wait while waiting to perform at your position. Be sure to keep throwing if necessary to stay loose and warm.
5. Many think that hustling and trying to aggressively make plays is the way to impress coaches. Understand that it is early season and your game is not in midseason form. When it comes time to show your defensive skills you will be much better taking it slow and smooth, focusing on proper mechanics. Get your feet under you and focus on making an accurate throw. The odds are if you try too hard, rush it and throw it as hard as you can, you will boot it and throw it into the stands.
6. When hitting, take a pitch to get a feel for the timing of the pitch. Be selective and only swing at pitches that you can expect to hit with a high degree of success. Here again it is early season so your stroke is not in midseason form. Don't over swing but just swing smoothly and try to hit line drives and hard ground balls. I once saw a kid hit four straight line drives, turn to the coaches and say, "its going to be a long day, do you want to see any more?" I drafted him!