

## Your Most Important Coaching Responsibilities

by: Todd Williams

Your main responsibilities as a baseball coach are to **teach the skills and strategies of baseball**. Pure and simple. However, your coaching responsibilities go beyond the playing field, and into an area where you can really impact a young person's life.

One of the most important lessons you can offer is your **value system**, including a **strong work ethic** and a **zero-tolerance for alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse**. Your expectations regarding these values should be loud and clear from beginning to end.

The use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs counteract nearly all of the physical benefits of athletic competition. And it seems that every year, drugs are abused by an ever younger generation of kids. It's a shame, but it's also a problem with which society must deal, as well as you and I as part of our communities.

You should **state these expectations** in your first pre-season meeting with the players and their parents. You should have **clear rules** regarding any penalties for violation of those rules. Let your players know that if you catch them, **you'll report** them to their parents. You may even go so far as to have your players and their parents sign an disclosure agreement regarding your rules. Let there be no misunderstanding!

Your players deserve a **positive role model** who believes in **responsible behavior** with it's intrinsic rewards (and who believes in the intrinsic consequences for irresponsible behavior). They need a mature, adult role model; rather than a middle-aged buddy.

As a trusted steward with significant influence for good, please do your part by being the kind of person your players can emulate and follow (as opposed to someone they can hang with or of whom they can take advantage).

**Your example** in your personal practices can also be a very powerful teaching tool. Together with your player's other role models, we can make a difference!