

Softball Informative Speech Outline

Specific Purpose: At the end of my speech, the audience will understand the importance of communication in softball.

Central idea: Communication is key for a successful softball team.

Introduction

- I. Play YouTube clip.
- II. That was just a snippet of Abbott and Costello's famous "Who's on First" stand-up routine. And while it is funny, it does bring up an important aspect of sports that is often overlooked by its spectators: communication.
- III. I played softball for 18 seasons growing up.
- IV. While softball is fairly easy to understand, I will spend the next six minutes giving insight on both verbal and nonverbal communication that occurs during the game between coaches and teammates that provide understandable details, keeping the team from creating a similar, much more frustrating, situation like the one we just watched.

Body

Transition: Playing the position of catcher for 18 seasons brought me to the same realization as James and Robert Arkin, who in their article published in *"Association for Psychological Science,"* determined that the catcher is the leader of the team (Arkin).

- I. The catcher is responsible for relaying important information to her team.
 - a. The catcher is the only player that can see the entire field, so it is up to her to determine what plays should be made.
 - b. The catcher watches the other team for potential base stealers and warns the appropriate teammates.

Transition: (Gestures) Who knows what that means? Depending on what team you're on, it can mean many things such as steal, hit a ground ball, take a pitch, bunt, slap hit, or swing away. Our textbook, The Speaker, defines gesture as "a physical movement used to convey a message" (Valenzano, 81). A gesture is a type of nonverbal communication. One of the most common forms of nonverbal communication in a softball game are gestures given by coaches.

II. Offensive players look to their coaches for signals telling them what to do.

- a. Batters look to the coach for instructions on their next swing.
- b. Runners generally look to the coach standing at third base for instructions on whether or not to steal and to see if they need to keep running the bases or stop.

Transition: Although there is a lot of communication that goes on during a game, the most important communication is between the pitcher and the catcher.

III. The most important on-field relationship is between the pitcher and the catcher.

- a. Pitcher and catcher are the two defensive players that are actively involved in every play.
 - i. The coach, catcher, and pitcher communicate with hand signals.
 - 1. Laura Smith, an Assistant Editor at Coaching Management notes that college coaches recommend letting catchers call the pitches starting at an early age because catchers can usually call better pitches than the coach (Smith).
 - 2. A catcher usually signals numbers with her throwing hand, telling the pitcher what type of pitch to throw and where to throw the ball.
 - ii. Position of the hand signals is important.

1. It needs to be placed where the other team's coaches and players cannot see the call.
 2. Tapping a specific part of the leg can indicate where the pitcher needs to throw the ball.
- b. There is no set signal for a certain pitch; it is up to the catcher and the pitcher to come up with a set signal for each pitch.

Transition: Before I conclude, I want you all to close your eyes and imagine trying to play catch without any cues from your throwing partner.

Conclusion

- I. You can't, can you? That is how vital communication is in softball, or any team sport.
- II. So let's review the different interactions we discussed: the catcher's duty to provide insight to the entire team, non-verbal signals between coaches, batters and baserunners, and the importance of a strong relationship and understanding between the pitcher and the catcher.
- III. If these three interactions are utilized, then the team does not have to worry about a comedy of errors similar to the "Who's on first?" conundrum.

References

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