

Tryout Pointers for Players & Parents

Adapted from the Cleats and Carpool Podcast



Player Tips:

I know we're talking about tryouts, but this is where coaches evaluate, not just the raw talent, hitting, fielding, throwing, base running, but they also value effort, attitude, coachability, and how you'll fit into a team. This list that I put together is a standard, and I'll say it again, the standard of what's to be expected when you have already made the team. Stay hydrated. Being in top form helps you perform throughout the entire trial and the season to come.

Number 1, arrive early and come prepared. Practice the drills you'll see, grounders from both sides, fly balls, T-work, front toss. Here's a quick tip. All too often at tryouts, I'm still seeing kids not knowing how to do a forehand and a backhand properly, especially a backhand. Work on the timing of those heavily. Get in shape, run, do arm care. But get there at least 30 minutes before start time to warm up properly, stretch, get loose, and mentally prepare. Focus on effort over outcome. This shows commitment and gives you time to knock off any unwanted rust without rushing.

Number 2, dress and look like a baseball player. Wear proper gear, baseball pants, athletic shirt, or jersey. Make sure those are tucked in, please. Cleats if it's outdoors, and gym or turf shoes for inside. Hat, glove, and any position specific equipment like catchers gear, if you're trying out for that spot. It demonstrates respect for the game and how serious you actually take it.

Number 3, hustle everywhere. Run to stations, sprint on and off the field, finish every show with maximum effort, and be first in line. But don't throw hands with somebody just to be first. You get what I'm saying, guys. Coaches notice players who give 100% all the time. Hustle stands out more than perfect skills alone.

Number 4, show a positive attitude and bounce back from the mistakes you make. Even if you don't say anything, coaches can see that you drop your head, and you from time to time will give a big sigh. If coaches can see it, your teammates can see it. Next thing you know, we all are feeling it. Stay upbeat, encourage teammates, and quickly move on after the errors, striking out or walking batters. Coaches want players who handle pressure that can save resilience and keep their energy high for their team.

Number 5, be coachable and engaged. Listen actively to instructions, make good eye contact, nod, ask smart questions if needed, and apply feedback right away. Show you're willing to adapt, learn, and play any position that the team may need.

Number 6, focus on fundamentals and consistency. Execute the basics cleanly. Solid mechanics in hitting, throwing, fielding, good footwork, quick transfers, and reliable contact. Consistency impresses more than one flashy homerun. I promise you that.

Number 7, be vocal and energetic on the field. Coaches talk about this all the time. Communicate, call for balls, back up plays, show some passion, and bring positive energy. Coaches love the heck out of the players who are engaged even when not directly involved.

Number 8, warm up seriously and take care of yourself. Do dynamic stretches, light throwing, and eat a balanced meal beforehand for energy.

The Do's & Don'ts:

Number 1, don't show up late or unprepared. Arriving rushed or without gear sends a message you're not committed and it can hurt your focus right from the start.

Number 2, don't slack on hustle or effort. Walking between drills, jogging slowly, or gaming minimal effort is a huge red flag. Coaches often cut talented players who simply lack work ethic.

Number 3, don't let mistakes ruin your vibe. Sulking, throwing your glove, arguing, or showing frustration after errors makes you look so uncontrollable and negative.

Number 4, don't try to do too much flashy stuff. The loud and bright highlighter colored bats in the gloves is the only flashy things I want to see. What I'm referring to is avoiding the unnecessary risk like basket catches or sidearm flips when safe fundamentals work better. Play smart and be reliable. Coaches value dependability over showboating 100% of the time.

Number 5, don't ignore instructions or act too cool. Tuning out coaches, chatting excessively, distracting others, or not paying attention during explanations hurts your evaluation.

Number 6, don't overthink or get too nervous. Trying to force big plays or dwelling on pressure can instantly lead to tense, inconsistent performance. I get it, you're at a tryout competing with a bunch of kids you just met.

The best thing you can do is stay grounded, be present, breathe, and focus on one play at a time.

Number 7, don't bad mouth others or complain. Stay positive. Negativity about the process, other players, or the conditions turns coaches off.

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