



## **“A Higher Standard Than That of Winning”**

### **Player, Parent, Coach Agreement**

Advanced Player Academy and the North Jersey Diamondbacks baseball program is blessed to attract great players, great parents and great coaches to the program. To maintain the impeccable reputation, we have worked so hard to build, and to ensure a fun and rewarding experience, we are very clear on the standards and core values of the program. Advanced Player Academy reserves the right to remove any player, parent or coach from the program for behavior not consistent with the policies outlined below. As a player, parent or coach at North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball you agree to the following:

### **Parent Agreement (All Advanced Player Academy Parents must agree to this)**

1. Conduct myself in a way that would never bring embarrassment to North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball.
2. Never verbally root against the other teams or argue with umpires.
3. Do not use any profanity.
4. Talk to the coaching staff only about your player and never about another player.
5. Talk to the coaching staff about your player only in privacy and never immediately after a game.
6. Not publicly participate in conversations with other parents that are negative toward other players, other parents, the organization and/or the coaching staff.
7. Not to publicly second guess and discuss coaching decisions with other parents or players.
8. Not shout coaching tips i.e. follow through, keep your hands back, to your son during a game.
9. Not question umpire calls during the game where other people (and umpires can hear you)
10. Not carry your son's baseball gear to and/or from the game.

11. Not bring drinks or snacks to your son before, during or after a game.
12. Not purposely sit within earshot of the dugout.
13. Not attempt to talk to coaches during the game unless it is an emergency.
14. Not "sit in" on team talks before or after the game unless invited by the coaching staff.
15. Not stand around the batting cage with the team during pre-game hitting.
16. Stay at team hotels until previously agreed upon by the head coach.
17. Sign waiver of liability agreement.
18. Stay current on financial commitment to North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball according to the contract you signed. Failure to do so could result in suspension or removal from the roster.

### **Player Agreement (All Advanced Player Academy players must agree to this)**

1. Hustle at all times according to the coaches' definition of hustle which is sprinting.  
Regulation field times: OF 13 seconds on and off the field. 6 seconds for INF. 5 seconds on turns, walks or HBP.  
For 12U 9 seconds to OF, 5 seconds to INF, 5 seconds on turns, walks or HBP.
2. Be coachable and open to new ideas.
3. Play multiple positions when it is best for the team.
4. Maintain a team first attitude.
5. Never use profanity on or off the field while wearing North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball, or representing the APA.
6. Be respectful of coaches, players and parents.
7. Never argue with an umpire.
8. Never throw equipment.
9. Never wear the North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball uniform other than at our tournaments.
10. Win with class and lose with dignity.
11. Look for ways to show good sportsmanship.
12. Accept discipline or reprimands without "copping an attitude".
13. Attend all team practices unless previously excused by the coaches via the Request to Miss form.
14. Attend all tournaments unless previously excused by the coaches via the Request to Miss form.
15. Maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA in school.
16. Never fight or argue with a teammate or opposing player.
17. Not get detention or expelled from school.
18. Never use drugs or alcohol.
19. Never use performance enhancing drugs.
20. Conduct yourself in a mature and professional manner while staying in hotels and dorms.
21. Obey curfew when on the road as designated by your head coach.
22. Wear a uniform professionally. Shirt tucked in. Hair/bangs tucked under the hat. Hat straight.

23. Show appreciation and thank coaches, umpires and parents after each tournament.
24. Be on time for all meetings and pre-game.
25. Never tryout for another team/organization while in season with North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball unless first discussed with your head coach.
26. North Jersey Diamondbacks has zero tolerance for use of ANY tobacco products used by our athletes.
27. Player must get approval from head coach BEFORE playing with any other organization on an off weekend by using the Request to Play online form.

### **Coaches Agreement (All Advanced Player Academy coaches must agree to this)**

We will...

- a. Coach each player equally and without bias or favoritism. No double standards.
- b. Prepare our players for success both on and off the field.
- c. Teach dignity, class, character and discipline.
- d. Be respectful of our players and never intentionally embarrass them.
- e. Strive for perfection and accept excellence.
- f. Be respectful of time away from baseball.
- g. Be honest and forthright about a player's role and position on the team.
- h. Never talk about a player with anyone other than him or his parents.
- i. Work hard to get our players recognition and exposure to higher levels of baseball.
- j. Be respectful of our player's time and not hold him and/or his family longer than our scheduled time.
- k. Try to Never use profanity.
- l. Give honest and accurate player evaluations
- m. Be willing to be held accountable for the things we say and do.
- n. Agree to have passed a verified and official background check.
- o. Be held accountable for the actions of players and parents on our teams.
- p. Commit to 100% of the schedule, unless previously discussed with North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball.
- q. Play a style of baseball as specifically directed by North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball.
- r. Hold all players and parents accountable to the contract they signed without favoritism, bias or double standards.
- s. Never engage in a public confrontation with a player, coach, parent, ump or any other person while representing North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball.

t. Make sure there is an option on each road trip for a fellowship opportunity for all players.

u. Pass a background check.

**As a new player, it is paramount that you understand the expectations we place on our players and parents.**

**Please review the following explanation of what will be required of you should you accept your roster spot.**

### **10 things to make your Advanced Player Academy Baseball experience enjoyable...**

1. Review and be familiar with Player, Parent, Coach Agreement
2. Stay VERY active in private, online community
3. Make an “ALL IN” Commitment to your teammates and coach.
4. Prepare yourself properly for each event (players)
5. Trust North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball with your son
6. Represent the brand with pride
7. Police yourselves (parents and players)
8. Embrace the process and the journey, not the results
9. Be positive!
10. Don't Blink

### **Bonus: Don't leave home without this checklist**

\_\_\_\_ hat(s)

\_\_\_\_ 2 jerseys

\_\_\_\_ 2 pants

\_\_\_\_ helmet

\_\_\_\_ belt

\_\_\_\_ stirrups

\_\_\_\_ bat

\_\_\_\_ glove

\_\_\_\_\_spikes

\_\_\_\_\_sleeves

### **Attention Parents! Important numbers to watch for...**

- ❖ Home to first on BB, HBP or pop fly. (5 sec.)
- ❖ On and off the field (6 seconds for INF 13 sec. for OF)
- ❖ Pitchers.... Mound to home (<3.7)
- ❖ Home Run: Fast Jog

### **The North Jersey Diamondbacks Difference.... Watch for our players....**

- Calling umpires Sir.... not just Blue!
- Handing balls to umpires, not tossing balls at them.
- Third hitter (on deck hitters do not chase foul balls to the backstop)
- Players running out of the dugout getting foul balls
- Thanking umpires after games
- Catchers introducing themselves to umpires before games
- Standing proud, tall (and still) during the National Anthem.
- Dressed, ready to play and on time when they arrive at the field.
- Thanking their coaches for throwing BP to them
- Addressing adults in public places by their name
- Everyone "up" when our team is on offense.
- Players not in the game talking to coaches (learning).
- Players up and out of the dugout to congratulate teammates Catch our players doing something right (and let them know)

### **What does Development Mean at North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball?**

At APA, we use the word "development" quite frequently. I'm also starting to hear it used more and more in the world of "travel ball". My fear is that it will become a "buzzword" or a "cliché" that everyone uses. My experience shows me that many people still do not understand what it means to truly develop. I wanted to take a few minutes and clearly identify what we mean (at APA) when we talk about development. In its simplest form, development means to get better. One of

our primary goals at APA is to help our players get better. But, I really think a lot of people still associate development with simply getting bigger, faster and stronger. Or, having a higher batting average, lower ERA. Certainly, those are good things, but they are not the only areas of development that are important. Here are some areas that you may not necessarily think of when you think of development, but we do.

## **Baseball IQ**

If you want to learn how to play the game at the highest levels, watch a lot of MLB baseball. Certainly, they are the most talented and gifted players in the world. But, they are also the players with the highest baseball IQ. These guys have studied the game and know how to play. Almost every night I watch a MLB player make a play using baseball IQ that I rarely see at the high school or college level. MLB players are always thinking about the next base or the next out. They have plan B and C already in their head, while they are making plan A. It's fun to watch. Obviously, our APA players are much younger, however, there is a wide gap in our program between players with regard to baseball IQ. As coaches, we know who understands the game and who studies. It's easy to watch a player play and recognize his baseball IQ fairly quickly. Players with higher baseball IQ get more opportunities than players with low baseball IQ.

## **Maturity**

As Founder and Director of North Jersey Diamondbacks Baseball and the owner of the Advanced Player Academy, I have had the distinct pleasure of watching many players in our organization grow up. We have had many players start in our program at 9 or 10 years old and leave us at 17. One of the most rewarding aspects of that journey for me personally is watching our kids mature. In essence, they go from being a boy to a young man in our program. I have watched them mature physically, mentally, academically, emotionally, and sometimes even spiritually. At APA, we care about all areas of maturity.

## **Leadership**

As stated in my recent blog on leadership, I believe some aspects of leadership are innate. However, I also believe that much leadership is learned. In studying leadership, I have learned that leadership begins with a desire to make things better. It is rarely present without preparation and confidence. Most people will not follow someone who lacks confidence and is not prepared. So, at APA we want to teach our players what real leadership is. To do this, they need to first have a desire to make things better. Then, they have to be prepared, which will give them the confidence to lead. It's a journey, but I have witnessed many players in our program become great leaders.

## **Dedication**

We all know that success in anything rarely happens without dedication. Many talented players come into our program and learn a new level of dedication. In short, they get "more serious" about their goals. That's fun to watch and I have seen it many times. Sometimes a player gets humbled before he comes to the realization that he needs to be even more dedicated if he wants to play at the next level. The game of baseball, and stiff competition can humble players pretty fast, which is never a bad thing.

## **Responsiveness**

A lot of players come into our program from other programs that have put very little, if any, demands on them. Many are somewhat "shell shocked" when they get exposed to all the disciplines in our program such as entering info into a google spreadsheet, responding to a post, obeying curfews, wearing the right uniform combination, showing up on time, etc. There are a lot of assignments at APA and that is by design. Even better (for players) they are held accountable and will

feel the sting of consequences when things don't get done as assigned. Yes, at APA we teach accountability. Everyone is held accountable. Being responsive is the key to being held accountable. In other words, when a player is asked to do something, he learns quickly that he is expected to get the job done. He learns to be responsive.

## **Communication skills**

It's public knowledge that my number one life skill to teach at APA is interpersonal communication skills. Yes, I'm probably a bit biased since my degree in college is that. But, I have not met many successful people in life who were not effective communicators. Therefore, I want our players to learn how important communication skills are. It starts with a firm handshake, eye contact and the use of someone's name. But, it's so much more than that. It's posture, it's enunciation, it's grammar, it's how you write, it's your penmanship, it's vocabulary, it's how you dress, it's your personal hygiene, it's your mannerisms, it's your physique and even your humility. Yes, it's all of that, and much, much more.

## **Competitiveness**

If you were to ask college coaches what they dislike most about travel baseball they will tell you it's the lack of competitiveness that it has created. Paying to play is the worst thing that could have ever happened to baseball. It breeds entitlement and kills competitiveness. Here's why; kids do not really have to compete anymore. If they don't make a team, or they don't like a team, or a coach, they just move to another program. If they don't get to play as many innings as they want, they just move to another program. It happens every day in travel baseball. That option of jumping from place to place, instead of competing and getting better, is hurting our sport. It's hurting our players. They are not learning to compete. Instead, they are learning to take the path of least resistance. At APA, we are teaching competitiveness. To stay in the program (get invited back) you have to win that roster spot. To play in the lineup you have to win that lineup spot. We'll never be all things to all people and we'll never be "pay to play". We are the "anti-entitlement, learn to compete, someone wants your job and is outworking you" program.

## **Academics**

Less than 1% of all players will ever get a chance to play professional baseball. While we encourage setting big goals, and working hard towards them, we do not want our players to ever think that "baseball is their future profession, or worse, their life. It is simply a game to play as long as they can, but it will end sooner than they want. Getting a college degree is the goal in our program. Having a successful career is the result of getting that degree. At APA, we will also place a huge emphasis on being a great student and competing in the classroom.

## **Mechanics**

Certainly, part of the developmental process is learning how to use mechanics in baseball that allow a player to play at a high level. Kids with long swings will not hit higher levels of velocity. Players with long throwing motions will not catch or play the infield at a high level. Kids who can't run will not play at the higher levels. Kids who don't have light feet and soft hands will not play infield at a higher level. Pitchers who can't throw strikes due to inconsistent deliveries will not play at higher levels. Pitchers who throw mechanically incorrectly and are prone to injury will not pitch at the higher levels. It is true that improper mechanics will shorten a player's career. At APA, we will help our players develop mechanically.

## **Managing Failure**

Baseball is a game of failure. it can bring you to your knees and be downright cruel. Nobody is immune to it. It's only those players who learn to manage the failure that get to move on. Baseball is also a great precursor to life. As we adults all know, there will be many disappointments in life. A wise man once said, "life is 10% of what happens, and 90% of how

you handle what happens". I believe that. It's not a question of "if" we will encounter disappointment, but rather "when", and to what degree. Therefore, part of the developmental experience at APA baseball is helping our players learn to manage failure. Fortunately, we have great mentors to help our players. They understand the game and the failure that comes with it. They are teaching our players that failure is a part of the process. You can't avoid it, or act like it can't or won't happen. You also can't be fearful of failing. It's not easy, but managing failure can be a fantastic life lesson. It's easier for some, than others. But, everyone needs to go through it. In summary, development is a big word and includes a lot of things not normally associated with baseball. I hope this Blog helps you understand what the word "development" means at the Advanced Player Academy.

***Best Regards,***

***The North Jersey Diamondbacks Executive Staff***