“Today’s Task is Tomorrow’s Success.”

STANDARDS OF THE PROGRAM:

1. IT IS OUR GOAL TO CONSISTENTLY BE A PREMIER PROGRAM NOT A STAGNANT PROGRAM.

2. DECISIONS WILL BE MADE BASED UPON THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE PROGRAM.

3. ANY GIRLS, REGARDLESS OF GRADE, HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO PLAY FOR MILLARD SOUTH.

4. COACHES DETERMINE WHO WILL MAKE A TEAM AND PLAYING TIME.

5. ALL COACHES AND PLAYERS WILL EXHIBIT THE 4 “E’s” – GREAT EFFORT, GREAT EXECUTION, GREAT ENDURANCE, AND GREAT ENTHUSIASM.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. A YEAR OLDER DOES NOT MEAN A YEAR BETTER.

2. I DIDN’T COME TO MILLARD SOUTH JUST TO PLAY, I CAME TO PLAY FOR A CHAMPIONSHIP.

3. MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACCOLADES FROM A PRIOR SEASON MEAN NOTHING IN THE NEW SEASON.

4. THE ONLY PLACE FOR DRAMA IS ON THE BIG SCREEN.

5. I WILL ADMIT TO AND CORRECT MY MISTAKES AND WILL NOT BLAME OTHERS.

6. I CHOOSE MY OWN ATTITUDE.

7. I WILL RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT THE TALENTS OF MY TEAMMATES.

8. I WILL HANDLE ADVERSITY AND CONFLICT APPROPRIATELY TO AVOID JEOPARDIZING THE SUCCESS OF THE TEAM.

9. I WILL EARN THE RIGHT TO BE CALLED A CHAMPION.

10. MANY OF US ARE MORE CAPABLE THAN SOME OF US...BUT NONE OF US IS AS CAPABLE AS ALL OF US.

Created and modified by: Steve Kerkman, Millard South Patriot Softball
JUST ME

From the time I was little I knew I was great
‘cause the people would tell me – “You’ll make it - just wait.”
But they never did tell me how great I would be
if I ever played someone who was greater than me.

When I’m at the ball field - I’m awesome with the ball.
To hit all those balls is no sweat at all.
But all of a sudden there’s a girl in my face
who doesn’t seem to realize - I’m queen of this place.

So the pressure gets to me - I rush with my swing.
My throws to teammates; well, the error can sting.
My hits are not falling - my glove’s not sure.
My hand is not steady - my eye is not pure.

The fault is my teammates - they don’t understand.
The fault is my coach’s - what a terrible plan.
The fault is the call by that blind man in blue.
But the fault is not mine - I’m the greatest – not you.

Then finally it hits me when I started to see
that the face in the mirror looks exactly like me.
It wasn’t my teammates who were dropping the ball,
and it wasn’t my coach not hitting at all.

That face in the mirror that was always so great
had some room for improvement - instead of just hate.
So I stopped blaming others and I started to grow.
My play got much better and it started to show.

And all of my teammates didn’t seem quite so bad.
I learned to depend on the good friends I had.
Now I like myself better since I started to see -
I was lousy being great - I’m much better being me.

Tom Krause - Copyright 2000  (adapted for softball by Coach Kerkman – 2008)
How to be a good teammate

By Garland Cooper (Big Ten Conference Player of the Year three years in a row – National Player of the Year Finalist)

There are many things in the game of softball that contribute to a team's success. A lot of those things do not occur on the field. Many times the most important factor in a team is chemistry. It is not always the most talented team that wins, but the team that plays the best together.

In order for a team to have chemistry and succeed as a collective unit, each member must be a good teammate. This can be done in countless ways and below are just a few behaviors that will help an athlete become a better teammate and, as a result, help lead the team to success.

1. Cheer
Cheering is first on the list. Some athletes seem to think that they are "too cool" to cheer during games. This, however, should never be the case. You win and lose as a team; it only makes sense that everyone celebrates each other's success. Cheering can bring a team together and it can intimidate an opposing team. There is no excuse for a quiet dugout. A good teammate always cheers for their fellow athletes.

2. Be a good example
On a team it is important to have players that demonstrate what it means to be a great softball player and a great teammate. This does not necessarily mean action on the field. A good teammate shows the other athletes how to work hard, cheer, and be respectful. Attitude can be contagious and that goes for positive and negative attitudes. A teammate with a positive attitude can infect the whole team and create an atmosphere that promotes success.

3. Respect
A good teammate respects their fellow athletes. Softball players spend so much time with their teammates that they can become like a family. That means they are very close knit and comfortable with each other, but it can also mean bickering and gossiping. It is important to always respect your teammates and never say or do anything you would regret. That is your family and any time you do or say something that is not in the best interest of the team, you are taking a step backward from your goals. Although you can't be best friends with everyone you can respect them.

4. Have each other's backs
Always support and believe in your fellow teammates. If you believe in them, it is easier for them to believe in themselves. Sometimes when
things get hard, maybe a player is in a slump, it is important that she have her teammates support. This goes back to the concept of the team as a family. **Families help each other through tough times and support each other through thick and thin. It is easier to overcome hard times when there is support from the team. In the end, each individual will be stronger with her family behind them, and therefore the team itself will be tougher.** Teams lose and win together, and they should go through it all knowing that they have each other's backs.

5. **Take responsibility**

When things get hard it is easy to blame mistakes on other people. **To be a good teammate you have to take responsibility for yourself. It is a team sport; no win or loss can be contributed to one person.** This also means that every team member needs to know her role on the team and take ownership over that role and be responsible for it. If you are a pinch runner, make sure you are warm and ready to go in every inning. If you are injured, cheer constantly and support the team. Be responsible for your role on the team. If everyone really takes ownership of their role within the team and does their job then success will follow.


**We are all something, but none of us are everything.**

Created and modified by: Steve Kerkman and Chris Raabe, Millard South Patriot Softball
1. **Mistakes Happen to Everyone** – You can watch any sport whether it’s softball, football, soccer or the Olympics and the very best players in the world still make mistakes. Take college softball on TV – how many times did you see a pitcher walk a batter, a batter strike out, a fielder miss a grounder or somebody throw it away? Even at the very highest level mistakes happen. Mistakes happen to Champions so of course they’re going to happen to the rest of us. Making a mistake won’t kill you, it’s what you do after the mistake that makes all the difference. So the next time you bobble that groundball, or walk that batter, or strikeout in a big situation, remember those same things happen to champions – now you’ve got to respond like a champion!

2. **Champions Dominate Their Mistakes** – This is where champions separate themselves from the rest of us…champions dominate their mistakes instead of letting their mistakes dominate them! When that college softball shortstop bobbles an easy groundball on national TV, she doesn’t hang her head and get mad and really blow the next play. No way! She quickly gets over it, hopes the very next ball is hit to her and when it is (because you know how balls always find you as soon as you make a mistake) she keeps her concentration and makes a great play to help her team! Champions have the ability to keep their mind focused on the present – what’s going on right now – instead of thinking about how bad they were in the past. That’s called focus; being able to immediately shake off that bad play and concentrate right now on the play that’s coming up. Dominate your mistakes instead of letting them dominate you!

3. **Rebounds Aren’t Just for Basketball** – I’m not talking about grabbing a ball off the backboard, I’m talking about rebounding from a mistake. Turning a bad play into a good one. In order for a champion to dominate their mistake, or turn a bad play into a good one, they’ve got to mentally rebound. You won’t see a champion kicking the dirt and hanging her head, throwing her arms up in the air and whining long after a bad play has happened. They might do all of that in a split second as soon as the play is over – but then they QUICKLY get themselves under control, and rebound their mind into what they need to do now in order to make a successful play. Staying in the past by complaining or pouting is what keeps you making mistakes, but rebounding right away and focusing back on the play you need to make is what champions do!

4. **Never Let ‘Em See You Sweat** – Watch the top pitchers in college softball – which is pretty easy since they have the camera’s on them all the time – and you can’t really tell if they just pitched a ball or a strike. Their faces don’t really change. They don’t get super mad when they throw a ball or walk somebody and they don’t get super happy when they strike someone out (unless, of course they just won the whole thing!). My point is that this kind of even emotional look is important to a champion’s success. All the softball players you watch on TV are just like you – they get nervous, they want to win, they don’t want to blow it, they want to make their coaches and parents and teammates proud of them. They just know that they can’t show all of these emotions or else they won’t play good enough to win. Champions know how to be crazy inside but look cool and calm on the outside. Never let anybody see you sweat!

5. **It Isn’t Over Till It’s Over** – While this might sound obvious, and is actually a quote from an old Yankee’s catcher, Yogi Berra, it’s true – the game is never over until all the outs have been made. You might think, “Cindy, what are you talking about? Everybody knows this so why even bring it up?” How many times have you made a mistake and gotten so mad that you pretty much gave up? Maybe you felt like your mistake cost the game, or there’s no way your team will ever come back now and win? I see this a lot on ballfields, and yet, as long as there are still outs left in the game – you can still win! Champions always fight until all the outs have been made. During the Softball Regionals there were tons of amazing comebacks. Teams won games on their last swing because champions NEVER quit fighting until it’s over – until all the outs have been made and as long as you have a pitch or a swing or an out left, you’ve still got a chance! So the next time you make a mistake, quit pouting, start fighting to turn that mistake around and make a championship-like comeback!

Remember that all Champions started off just like the rest of us. They might look like super-heroes with capes but they’re really just normal softball players that work extra hard, have extra-good focus and give an extra-effort until all the outs have been made!

Created and modified by: Steve Kerkman, Millard South Patriot Softball
Pledge to BE POSITIVE

I pledge to be a positive person and positive influence on my family, friends, teammates and school.

I promise to be positively contagious and share more smiles, laughter, encouragement and joy with those around me.

I vow to stay positive in the face of negativity.

When I am surrounded by pessimism, I will choose optimism.

When I feel fear, I will find strength.

When I want to hate, I will choose love.

When I want to be bitter, I will choose to get better.

When I experience a challenge, I will look for opportunity.

When faced with adversity, I will conquer it.

When I experience a set-back, I will be move forward.

When I meet failure, I will fail forward towards future success.

With vision, hope, and the support of others, I will never give up and will always move forward towards my goals.

I believe my best days are ahead of me, not behind me.

I believe I'm here for a reason and my purpose is greater than my challenges.

I believe that being positive not only makes me better, it makes everyone around me better.

So today and every day I will be positive and strive to make a positive impact on my environment.
Performing under pressure

Author: Michelle Paccagnella, Psychologist, ACT Academy of Sport
Issue: Volume 28 Number 1

It’s the seventh inning; there are already two outs. Your team has to score two runs with no runners on base in order to make the final and your chance at gold and glory. Everyone is fired up and tensions are running high. The coach is pacing the coach’s box and the players on the bench are leaning against the fence, shouting to their team-mates on the field. Some of the players look intensely focused; others look desperate, or slightly ill…

This scenario is very familiar in sport – high-pressure situations when athletes simply have to perform in order to make the next step. Some athletes and coaches love these moments, however others dread those feelings of pressure. Pressure has always been an integral part of sports. Exciting competitions often have pivotal moments when the outcomes are decided. These pressure situations are such an innate part of sporting experiences and yet many of our athletes are not taught how to deal with them.

So what is pressure?

Pressure usually refers to the feelings an athlete has about performing in a sporting situation. It is often experienced as a compelling or constraining influence on the mind, or an urgent demand that must be met. Pressure is a feeling that is created by ourselves, when we react to particular events or situations.

Pressure isn’t necessarily bad – it can actually enhance motivation, concentration, and enjoyment. That feeling of stress that often accompanies a pressure situation can help keep you on your toes, ready to rise to a challenge.

Where does pressure come from?

Pressure can come from a variety of internal and external sources. For example:

- parental expectations to perform
- athletes’ expectations about the competition (desired result, anticipated reward, selection opportunities, travel, praise, payoff for all their hard work)
- other people’s expectations (especially team mates and coaches, but also from other people such as friends, relatives, boyfriends, opponents)
- press and media expectations (newspaper articles, school announcements, etc)
- preparation for competition (how well prepared the athletes feel, and how ready they feel on the day)
- crowd or audience effects (their reactions to performance, either supportive or negative)
- importance of this performance (selection, championship game, last game of the season)
- anticipated contest difficulty or importance local (“easy” game vs district finals)
• officials’ and organizers’ actions (the way the people in charge affect the athletes)
• athletes’ readiness to perform (fully fit, mentally ready, injury-free, etc)
• timing (last inning, need two more runs to win, bases loaded – two outs)
• other areas of life that compete for athletes’ attention (school, work, relationships etc)
• lack of self-confidence (doubting their ability to perform)
• implementing a new technique in competition
• repeated errors

Thriving under pressure

The way your athletes deal with pressure is the key to using pressure situations positively. Learning to respond well in a pressure situation will be an invaluable tool for your athletes.

Pressure is an illusion!

The most important concept in dealing with pressure is to start with the realization that there is no such thing as competition pressure, except what you make of it in your mind. Pressure isn’t something that happens to us – it is something that is manufactured by our own thinking. Aside from the physical pressure exerted on one opponent by another on the field, pressure in the competitive context isn’t real – it doesn’t exist. It doesn’t have a form, a color, a smell. Pressure is simply how we perceive the situation we are in. Athletes need to learn this, because once they understand that pressure is something they create, then they also understand that pressure is therefore something they can control. By controlling their responses to pressure situations, athletes learn to take them in their stride.

Controlling responses to pressure: tips for athletes

• Pressure only exists if you are concerned about the outcome. Playing in a scrimmage and playing in the district finals are exactly the same thing! It’s still the same ball, the same strategies, the same rules – nothing has changed in terms of how you play the game. So approach pressure situations as though they are practice. Train your mind to stay in the present and let the outcome take care of itself.
• Learn to practice at the same level you compete at. Your best possible play in a game can only ever be as good as your best possible training performance. People labor under the illusion that all those little successful moments in training will somehow combine together on game day to bring about higher levels of performance. This just isn’t true, so learn to train as you mean to play.
• You must practice pressure situations in training, so they become normal and easy to handle.
• Ensure you have good preparation leading up to competition.
• Pressure situations require enhanced communication – practice this in training.
• Never, ever give in – maintain commitment and desire in the face of adversity.
• Learn to focus on the right thing at the right time, regardless of what is going on around you.
• Often athletes (and coaches) rush things when they are under pressure. This detracts from performance, communication, vision, and enjoyment. Slow down. Even though
you may feel under time constraints, it’s better to slow down and get it right than to rush it and make an error.

- Some people will benefit from engaging in some relaxation exercises prior to competing, to help them to feel calm and focused.
- Practice mindfulness (no negative thoughts... I mean, think positively!).
- Share how you feel with others – talking about how you feel can help you to deal with it. However be mindful of who you choose to talk to, you don’t want to put ideas of pressure into your teammates’ heads!
- Strive for excellence, not perfection. It is okay to make mistakes under pressure, just as it is alright to make mistakes in training – so long as you recover well and learn from them.
- Focus on technique or strategy. Pay attention to the things you have practiced – they are familiar so they won’t feel pressured.
- Have good error recovery strategies – people tend to make more errors when they perceive they are under pressure, so you need to have a good strategy to deal with them without them affecting your confidence.
- Remember, it’s not about your feelings; it’s about your actions. Take the focus off how you feel, by putting your focus onto what you will do. Your actions affect your emotions so go through the right actions (pretend if you must) and you will feel better.
- Identify the actions/skills that suffer most when you are in a pressure situation. Put extra time into practicing those skills so that you feel confident in them in any circumstance. The appropriate action must be practiced to the level of a conditioned response (it must be automatic).
- Increased fitness helps you deal with pressure. Also make sure you train sometimes when you’re fatigued.
- Maintain your belief in yourself, no matter what the situation.

**PRESSURE MODEL**

Situation changes

↓

Mental response

↓

Emotional response

↓

Physical response

↓

Consequences

Created and modified by: Steve Kerkman, Millard South Softball
In life, __________ of the people are making 80% of the difference!

We want to be Top 20!

**The Circle**

Negative Influences on Softball (outside the circle)

Positive Influences on Softball
(Inside the circle)

Created and modified by: Steve Kerkman and Chris Raabe, Millard South Patriot Softball
An Inside Job

We live two lives.

1. __________________________
2. __________________________

Top 20s realize:

90% of their ______________________ comes from ______________________.

Top 20’s always have control over their ________________________.

Name a negative experience from summer softball or last fall.
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

The Frame

Label the four corners of the FRAME.

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

If we keep on doing what we have always done, we will keep on getting what we have always gotten. We need to _________________________________!
Change Your FRAME!

THE FRAME – GET WHAT YOU WANT

SEE
Three Options to Get what you want to be getting:

**Change Nothing.** Continue to see things the way you have been seeing it. This will mean that you get the same results. Ex. You have failed every test. You change nothing. You continue to fail every test.

**Change what you feel or do.** You will see some minor results, but it won’t bring about the big change you desire. This new action will continue to seem like hard work.

**Change what you see.** By changing how you see a situation and everyone involved, you will quickly change what you are feeling, doing, and getting. Change in seeing gives you the possibility for big changes in the results you desire.

The frame only works to the positive when you change your view.