



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEAM CAPTAIN

What I am looking for in a Team Captain is not the oldest most experienced player on the team. Nor is he necessarily the best player on the team. Captains cannot simply be elected; this is not a popularity contest. Captains naturally surface by who they are and what they do! Here are some of the traits they naturally possess and demonstrate.

1. Unselfishness- He will praise teammates in front of the team when praise is deserved. He acts as an encourager when a teammate makes an error. The Captain acts unselfish by letting the 15th man pinch-hit for him.
2. Humility- Give your teammates the credit. **Show all others respect, teammates, all coaches umpires, opponents.** A team Captain is constantly sacrificing his own desires and putting the best interest of the team first. Being humble means also listening; the Captain is not always yelling or talking down to his teammates, but instead he is always listening for ways to help the team.
3. Accountability- Admit when you are wrong publicly, to the whole team. Take responsibility for your actions. Take the consequences for your actions and move forward. It is also very important to me that I can place my complete faith and trust in the Captains ability to carry out orders as well as encourage others to do the same. The team Captain is also on the coach's side, anytime the team starts complaining about what they have to do; the team Captain is there to guide the team in the direction the manager and coaches under the manager's orders intended.
4. Toughness- It's very difficult to "push" a teammate to play when he may be hurt. You feel terrible when a player gets hurt, but at the same time, if you are not "injured," you should be on the field. Again, rewarding a player by praising him in front of the team when he played with pain has an impact on everybody else.
5. Mental Toughness/Dealing with Adversity- Becoming mentally tough requires a pre-meditated approach. The primary way to help your teammates become mentally tough is to model to always "focus on the things they can control." As a hitter, you do not control whether you get a hit. A player has more control over whether he hits the ball hard, but still, does not directly control that. A player does control his approach, thought process, and the type of swing you take. Unexpected things usually happen to a team during a season. Likewise, things sometimes happen to individual players. Draw on your past experiences to help your teammate. Help your teammates coach themselves through this is "dumping it out."
6. Discipline-Discipline is "subtle control through team." As a Captain, it is your job to exercise this. Just as important, however, is "self-discipline." The Captain helps his teammates become self-disciplined by teaching them to reward themselves for doing the little things well.
7. Competing- I don't believe in playing without a scoreboard. A big part of life is learning how to compete. Yes athletics should be fun, and yes we must keep a balanced perspective, but part of the enjoyment comes from giving it your all. **MODEL THIS!** It is important for EVERY kid to learn what it means to be a competitor, regardless of his ability level. Some of the best competitors I've coached have been average to

below average in ability. But, those same kids will find something they enjoy doing and be very successful, because they know how to compete. What happens to kids when they fail? They pretend not to care. And what do parents usually do? They reinforce. Johnny gets in the car after a bad game and says, "I hate baseball, it's stupid." And parents usually say, "Hey, it doesn't matter, your playing "just for fun". To that player, just for fun means he's no good. As a Captain, why not tell him, "I know you're upset, and that's actually a good thing. It means you care. You just need to keep giving your best effort."

8. Leadership- *He who thinks he leads but has no followers, is only taking a walk.*

You have to be a leader. A leader empowers others to do the work. The true leader can be recognized because the players who work with or under him consistently demonstrate superior performances. Lead by actions, anyone can talk like they are a leader but actions speak louder than words. Do the little things in practice that show you are really trying, like following all the coaches direction treating each of them with respect, do every drill to the utmost of your ability. Be passionate about everything you do. Do more than asked and have others join you. Run farther, faster, stay longer and try harder than the next guy. Take charge; help to start practice on time, eve if the coaches are still getting ready.

As a varsity coach, I am constantly looking for ways to give our assistant coaches, our captains, and our other players more responsibility. This is the way they grow. I believe a Captain should do the same. Every once in a while, ask your teammates what they feel you need to work on at practice.

Concluding thoughts these are attributes important to me to have in a Captain. Someone who naturally rises to the occasion and works by my side to accomplish our Mission, (To Honor God Thru the Vessel of Baseball), and to reach our Objective, (To Win Every Game); I need the whole package to help us get there. One of you may be fulfilling some of that role without even knowing it. I just want you to encourage you to be aware of this and to do your best to influence all of your teammates in a positive way.