

Cain Explains How Coaches Get Players To Buy Into 'Mental Game'

By **BRIAN CAIN**
Special To Collegiate Baseball

RICHMOND, Vermont — One of the questions I often get from coaches is, "How do I get my players to buy into the mental game?"

I have found that one of the best ways to get your players to buy into the mental game is to give them easy to use tips and techniques that they can easily remember and become a part of your program's overall mental game vocabulary.

In this article I will share with you some of the most effective mental game acronyms and teaching strategies that I have used with some of the top collegiate and high school baseball programs in the country, as well as with Olympic and professional players.

E + R = O

Many coaches and players fail to take responsibility for their careers and subsequently fall short of their goals and true potential.

One way that I have had success in getting people to take responsibility is to get them to understand the formula $E+R=O$.

Event plus Response determines Outcome. Most people look to specific events that have caused them a lack of success.

A teammate that made an error, an umpire that missed a call, a coach that did not give you a chance. While those things may play a role, it is your response to those events that ultimately determines what your true outcome will be.



BRIAN CAIN

Today + Today = Your Career

In their award winning book, *Heads Up Baseball: Playing The Game One Pitch At A Time*, Ken Ravizza and Tom Hanson talk about how your career is really the sum of your todays. This is a concept that I feel is truly the foundation of the mental game.

A lot of players that I talk to get caught up in counting the days to the big game or just go through the motions of practice thinking that they are a "gamer" and can turn it in when it counts.

Players and coaches need to understand that success in baseball is not about counting the days, but making the days count. The goal is to get better today, every day and let the results take care of themselves.

Run The Marathon

Rod Delmonico, former University of Tennessee Head Baseball Coach, had a sign in his office that said, "Run The Marathon."

The sign served as a reminder to his players that the game of baseball is a marathon not a sprint. Baseball is a long season.

The goal is to be there at the end and to play steady the whole way.

Players that ride the roller coaster of consistency often get caught up in the pace of the game and find themselves sprinting to stay ahead. Viewing baseball as a sprint is a sure fire way of falling short of your goals.

Be Big!

I often talk to athletes about the importance of body language and what kind of message they say about their confidence and belief with their body language.

We spend a lot of time talking about walking with a swagger and being big. Your psychology will effect your physiology and your physiology will effect your psychology.

By watching the way a person walks and listening to a way a person talks, tells you a lot about that person's belief in getting the job done. Having big body language helps with your self confidence, even if you are faking it till you make it.