

Getting to know the coach: Softball Advice for Junior Nauts



For our first Junior Nauts Feature, we asked Coach Smith, a few questions to help all you Jr. Nauts take important steps in your softball careers, so take notes!

1. What are the basic fundamentals necessary to succeed in softball and what can kids do to improve themselves as players?

Answer: To succeed in anything in life, whether it's softball, math class or a new job you must first **understand the basics** of the task. In our sport the basics are hitting, throwing, fielding and running. Measuring success is an ongoing process and you will do it throughout your career. Getting your first base hit! Now that is a success, but remember everything in this sport takes **practice**, even teamwork. **Effective teamwork** is necessary to succeed in softball because you rely on your teammates as much as they rely on you. Personally I think that being the ultimate teammate is a success in itself.



The key to improving yourself is **setting personal goals**, which you can measure honestly. For example, the first question you might ask is "why do I play this sport?" Hopefully, the answer is because you love it! Next, you might ask yourself, "What areas of the game do I want to get better at?" Really think about that one, and remember to be specific. Visualize what you want to do whether it's fielding the ground ball or hitting the game winner. Your last step in improving your softball skills is to actually go out and **work on them!** Ask your coach to hit you extra ground balls, attend a summer softball camp, or even a Juggernaut clinic! To be successful, you have to go the extra mile!



2. What do you love most about the sport and why do you coach?

Answer: What I love most about this sport is that it is a challenge every time you step on the field. I always love challenging myself to be better than I was the last time. Remember, "You are only as good as your last at bat!" so you should always push yourself to work hard and become a better player. I love coaching because I've been through what my players experience now and I enjoy helping them work through their issues.

3. How important are role models in the sport of softball and name a few?

Answer: Role models are so important in this day and age because they give little girls across the world something to look forward to in sports. I remember Billy Jean King and Martina Navratilova were my role models growing up because they were two of the most successful women in tennis. There were no professional softball players for me to look up to when I was younger. Now all that has changed, girls across the world have plenty of role models in the sport of softball including Natasha Watley, Carri Leto and Jackie Pasquerella to name a few. Sign up for our Junior Nauts club and have one of our players or coaches serve as your personal mentor!