

“THE ROAD TO OMAHA RUNS THROUGH US!”

Infield Identity

Focus, Aggressive, and Athletic

FOCUS

A major league coach once told me the secret to why infielders at the big league level can make 6 errors in a 162 game schedule is because they believe 100% that every pitch was going to be hit to them. This requires unbelievable discipline to stay focused and be in the PRESENT. Not worried about what happened in the past or what might happen in the future. Focus involves a lot of attention to detail and a serious commitment to your craft. We go to work every day on that field with a high level of focus.

AGGRESSIVE

There are aggressive infielders and safe infielders. Safe infielders get the least out of their potential. They are happy as long as they make the play right to them. They never want to step outside of the box and attempt to make the extraordinary play that could determine a win or a loss. I don't want that in a player. I want the guy who looks at each ground ball as a challenge. Even on a ball that is deep in the hole, where there is no play, I want a guy who wants to at least get a glove on it. There are no longer enough infielders in the game with this approach and the reason is because we as coaches preach to “make the routine play”. My question is - why not make both?

ATHLETIC

I talk a lot about staying athletic when making plays in the field. Good infielders have the ability to use their feet and hands to create good hops on every play. Some plays will require fielding balls in that “textbook” position but I want us to be comfortable using one hand on plays that don't fall into that category. Balls hit laterally, hard hit one hops, and slow rollers will all be plays where moving your feet and using one hand will increase your chances of successfully completing plays. Stay athletic in everything we do out there.

“People don't buy what you do – they buy why you do it.”

WORK ETHIC

- Your work ethic can take you as far as you want it to take you. Many of you have blossomed because of this. A few of you had your backs against the wall and would not accept being an average player.
- Make sure we are working smart and with a purpose. Too many times we can fall into that category of just punching the clock at practice.
- Coaches cannot always be with you 24/7. Some of our older players do a great job of working on their own, never being satisfied.
- Early/Late work is not just for the cages. Everyone wants to go hit a little more. I'll know when you have fully bought into the importance of infield play when I start seeing guys putting more extra time into their defensive than offense.
- In 10 years I want you to be able to look back at your time here and know that you did everything you could to make this program better. Please understand that all the extra work you put in as an individual will benefit the TEAM.

"The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses – behind the lines, in the gym, and out there on the road, long before I dance under those lights." - Muhammad Ali