The Mental Game of Hitting

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"I can't control the pitcher, the ball, the fielders or the crowd, so I must be in control of myself. My routine not only prepares me physically, but mentally creates the SAME frame of mind every time."

Tim Salmon – California Angels 1993 AL Rookie of the Year

I. CONFIDENCE
Hitting is a confidence game. Most players let their confidence be determined by whether or not they are getting hits. You can't Control Getting hits, but you can CONTROL the quality of your at bats. The more quality at bats you have, the more hits you are likely to get.

II. KNOW YOURSELF
What is your pitch?
Where in the strike zone do you hit the ball best?
What type of hitter are you?
When you're hitting well, what are you trying to do with the ball?
When you're hitting well, where does the ball go?

III. BE IN CONTROL
Have a plan every time at the plate
What am I trying to do?
Where am I trying to hit the ball?
What pitch am I looking for?
Where in the strike zone am I looking for the ball?

IV. TRUST YOURSELF
See the ball better
Swing is fluid
"Small Ball" is a result of lack of trust
Pretend you're nervous or scared, or indecisive…. What did your eyes do?
Your eyes usually shift rapidly… resulting in not seeing the ball at the release point.

V. PRE BAT ROUTINE
When do you begin preparing for the “at bat”?
What are you doing physically and mentally to ensure success?

At batting practice
In the hole
On deck
At the plate
VI. EVALUATING THE QUALITY AT BATS

Try to evaluate your at bats on the basis of their quality, not the outcome. You don’t completely control the ability to get a hit. However, you do control the ability to put yourself in the best possible position to succeed. Whether or not you followed your plan to do so is what should be evaluated.

1. Did you study the pitcher from the dugout?
2. Did you use your routine?
3. Were you in control of yourself before each pitch?
4. Did you experience any “warning signs” that tempted you to abandon your routine?
5. What did you do to regroup and get back under control?
6. Did you have a clear and simple plan on each pitch? What were they?
7. Were you committed to the plan or did you just pat it “lip service”?
8. Did you TRUST yourself or were you anxious and jump out at the ball?
9. Were you able to disregard all distractions (previous at bats, errors, score, fans, etc)?
10. What was your “Quality at Bat Average” for the game?