

Congratulations to our Baseball Coach of the Week - Ken Bowman



Photo of Coach Bowman with his son Trayden

What age is your team? What leagues do you play in?

6U International League. I have also coached 6U, 8U, and 9U in previous seasons; and my oldest son, David, plays for the National League Chihuahuas.

When did you know you wanted to coach at SSYS? How long have you been coaching?

I knew I wanted to coach at Sandy Springs the first day we came to the park after moving here a few years ago. This is my seventh year coaching; my fourth season at Sandy Springs.

What do you enjoy most about coaching?

I love seeing each kid accomplish something he/she has never done before, or didn't think was possible - a catch, a hit, a throw, a double play, a slide. I love seeing the team start to come together and cheer for each other. I love seeing a kid run to his/her parents after the game, and say, "did you see me do that, Mom?" And most importantly, I love seeing each of my kids sign up for baseball at Sandy Springs the following season.

How do you go about motivating your players?

Our teams go really fast during practice, and we have games and points associated with almost every drill. I have found that kids - especially the younger ones - really

like feeling like they've "accomplished something" so I try to recognize each new skill that a player showcases, no matter how remedial or advanced. I also bring fun props to most practices - sprint parachutes; basketballs; tennis balls - that help important drills get masked as "games." Game balls work pretty well as motivation during games.

What skills/characteristics do you look for in your players?

Coaching the younger side of our park, I don't really care what skills or characteristics my kids come to me already displaying... in fact I love getting the kids who have never played before or don't even know the rules. A little enthusiasm; a little friendship; a little listening and trying-hard, and I can create a fun team where each kid will advance both friendships and baseball skills

What is the biggest challenge you've had as a coach and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge I've faced is rain. No joke, it's been brutal. The last couple spring seasons have been rough, and the logistics associated with rainout changes stretch my organizational skills, and those of my team parents, to the limit. Other than that, each of my teams and all of my assistant coaches at Sandy Springs have been amazing!

What advice would you give to new coaches?

Really caring, being organized, communicating well and often, and clearly communicating your expectations of the kids and parents, are all far more important than knowing anything about the game of baseball at the younger ages. A little baseball knowledge, a little enthusiasm, a great set of assistant coaches and a lot of patience goes a long way in the older ages.

When not rooting for your SSYS team, who is your favorite baseball team and player? Currently, the Atlanta Braves, Freddie Freeman. Though my favorite player of all time is Cal Ripken, Jr.

What has been your most memorable SSYS moment?

Our 9U Storm team winning a really challenging tournament on Father's Day last June, with each kid's dad being in attendance and cheering for his boy on that special day.

When you are not at the fields, what do you enjoy doing most?

I love watching Braves baseball, reading, hiking, cooking, and hanging out with my wife, Amy, and our other awesome kids.