



Mental Maturity

How strong minds make stronger players and teams

Maturity is defined as the state of being mature, and handling situations in an age-appropriate or “grown-up” manner. Mental (thinking and responding) maturity is especially important for athletes and members of a team.

When athletes are mentally mature, it positively impacts their own performance and the performance of their teammates. There are many ways to be mentally mature in softball...

Resilience

As you know, the sport of softball is imperfect and so are its players. Mistakes happen and things don't go your way, even when you are giving maximum effort. How you handle these bumps in the road is important. You are allowed to feel emotion (frustration, anger, etc.), but it's important to recover and get over them as quickly as you can so it doesn't negatively impact the next opportunity.

Being mentally mature means you give yourself a very small amount of time (30 seconds) to feel a certain way, and then you move on. That shows you can handle adversity. You've become resilient, and mentally mature.

Emotional Control/Regulation

When you are upset, are you under control? Or do you erupt and allow your emotions to overtake you? It's okay to be briefly upset, but the level of emotion is up to you. Your response and vibe can negatively impact your performance and the performance of your teammates.

Be mindful of how upset you are, your body language, and what you say to your teammates and coaches in those moments. Mentally mature players keep their emotions low(er) and don't allow them to erupt.

Coachability

Mentally mature athletes accept feedback and directions without pushing back on those giving it. They ask questions at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way. In fact, mentally mature athletes crave the feedback, critiques, and directions from others because they understand it will benefit both the individual and the team.

Words/Tone

Mentally mature athletes are mindful of what they say and how they say it. They aim to support those around them and make the team better. This can be difficult in challenging situations, but mental maturity means finding the right way to communicate with, and motivate, your teammates.

Self-awareness

Mentally mature athletes are aware of their own strengths and their own areas of improvement. They look in the mirror and want to improve, knowing that growth comes from working on their craft.

The Bottom Line

Mental maturity doesn't happen overnight. It's a skill that develops with experience, practice, and reflection. The more you commit to being resilient, coachable, consistent, respectful, and emotionally in control, the stronger you'll become as both a player and a teammate.

Take a moment to reflect:

- Which of these areas do you feel strongest in?
- Which one needs more attention?

The athletes who embrace this growth mindset not only improve their own game, but also make their entire team better.