

Alex G

"DING, DING, DING!" The bell rang for eighth period. I am sprinting. Going at the fastest pace I can possibly go down the halls and stairs. Nobody can or will get in my way. I must be on time. The only option is to hastily weave to the left and right around the casual walkers. I make a sudden right and enter the locker room, change, and grab my gear. I start a dead sprint outside towards the fields with the others. After sprinting about one hundred yards I approach the field. Slowing my sprint to a jog, I go into the dugout. My coach suddenly shouts in his military like energetic voice, "Three minutes!" Everyone is almost here. It is time for practice.

I rapidly put on my cleats, grab my glove, and run to the left field line with my teammates. Warm ups are about to start. We are in lines two people deep ready to go on the line. Coach comes over and gets us started. He yells with soldierly authority, "Knee hugs with a twist. First line, ready, GO!" In perfect unison we clap, "CLAP!" The noise is deafening for a split second and I do the first exercise. The first line finishes. The next line goes with the same routine, "Second line, ready, GO!", "CLAP!" Every exercise is done with urgency and a precisely timed clap. After, we move to the second part of warm ups. We grab our gloves and start throwing exactly to coach's instructions. As I throw, I start to feel the coldness of the air on my ears, notice the bright sunlight that adds warmth to the chilly day, and see the slight sheen of dew on the grass. We are done warming up. Coach quickly gathers everyone together and tells us where everyone needs to be and what they need to do. We break out by shouting, "Bobcats take State!" and begin. Everyone darts to where they need to be. Everything is timed down to the second. We must be on schedule. We sprint from place to place, and get better with every rep, thinking of our goal; we strive to be state champions. Every swing, every throw, and every step has a purpose. We want to get better.

After about two hours of practice, the sun is setting and the air is getting colder. Again, coach gathers us together and talks. He tells us what we need to be prepared to do for

tomorrow, gives us the latest news we need to know regarding our baseball program, and tells us a quote of the day. He simply asks, "How did you get better today? What was your one percent?" He does not want an answer; he just wants us to think. Although, not only think, but evaluate ourselves. For a brief second, I think about the things I did right with my throwing form, and also the little mistakes I made while hitting, and ponder how I will fix them with a plan in mind. A small bit of improvement everyday goes a long way over the course of our year round program. Finally, we break out once more, although this time, as we do at the end of every practice and game, we yell, "Family!" and we go home.

I head upstairs to my room after dinner, turn directly left after entering, and turn on my desk lamp. The old wooden desk is brightly lit with the faded dull yellow, almost white light revealing the small chips and scratches from the past. Just the top of the back of the archaic desk chair can be seen, as the rest of it is neatly tucked under the desk. My desk faces the wall, although my entire room is filled with the lamp's dull ambient light illuminating my bed directly behind about seven feet from my desk with a subtle glow. The faint light is thrown on all of the walls and closet door. I put my backpack down to the left of my desk, sit down, and pull my planner out of my backpack. Math, Chemistry, and English. It is time to study. I study like I practice; I put forth one-hundred and ten percent effort and accomplish my tasks with precision while not only learning, but also understanding. Understanding is learning to me, memorization is not the key. With every number and equation I write, I internalize the process of solving while learning to understand every step. With every chemistry problem my mind is set in the past remembering mistakes I had made and apply them to the current situation. With every word and sentence of analysis I write, I embrace and learn to appreciate and understand the literature, making connections to myself and the world around me. By nine thirty I am finished and ready for bed. The average January day comes to an end.

With all of my experiences that I have experienced, baseball and school have taught me the most out of anything. Baseball has taught me lessons not only on the field, but off the field as well. Both school and baseball have taught me how to have urgency, how to stick to a schedule, how to plan, and how to lead. They have shown me how to be successful; how to deal with failure, mistakes, and adversity; and what true work ethic and determination are. Baseball is a game of failure. It is the only game where you can be successful when you fail seven out of ten times. Not even a student can achieve perfect scores on everything either, so there is always room for improvement no matter who you are. Nobody can be perfect. Although, no matter where I end up or what major or career path I choose, I will always strive for perfection and an ideal goal. Perfection is impossible in most cases, but I take that mindset because if you fall short of perfection you can still be successful. Although if perfection can be reached, I will achieve it, I will achieve excellence.