

## **A Message to Parents from Head Coach, Nik Anderson:**

I read an excerpt called, "The Matheny Manifesto," by Mike Matheny (Manager of the St. Louis Cardinals.) It is a letter to the parents of a little league team, that he coached, which he shared every year. He coaches his big leaguers the same way. Matheny's letter hit home with me, so I wanted to share some pieces of it with you, that apply to our baseball team. I've made adjustments to it for our organization, but would like all of you to track along with me --

There are a few things that I would like to nip in the bud right off the bat. The very first thing is that this experience to play baseball for Tri-City Red is ALL about the boys. If there is anything about it that includes you (the parents), we need to make a change in plans. My main goals are as follows:

- (1) to teach these young men how to play the game of baseball the right way,
- (2) to be a positive impact on them as young men, and
- (3) to do all of this with class.

We may not win every game, but we will strive to be the classiest coaches, players, and parents in every game we play. The boys are going to play with respect for their teammates, opposition, and the umpires -- no matter what.

My job, along with the other coaches, is to give the players our very best every time we show up to the field. Does that mean everything will be equal? No. That's the reality of competitive sports.

Do I expect to have conversations with your sons along the way when they need an explanation as to why a particular move was made, or why a player is getting a certain amount of playing time? Absolutely. That is what I expect, and that is the way I would like things to go this year -- open communication directly between players and coaches. I would greatly appreciate if you would encourage your sons to take this approach, whenever you believe they need clarity into how things are going on Red. That is, refer them directly to me -- as opposed to you taking an intermediary role. It is through this model that they will grow best -- and become better prepared for their future roles at college and at work.

With that being said, I need to let you know where I stand. I have no hidden agenda. I have no ulterior motive other than what I said about my goals. I also need all of you to know that my priorities in life will most likely be a part of how I coach, and the expectations I have for the boys. My Christian faith is the guide for my life. I have never been one for forcing my faith down someone's throat, but I also believe it to be cowardly, and hypocritical to shy away from what I believe. You as parents need to know for yourselves and for your boys, that when the opportunity presents itself, I will be honest with what I believe. It is my responsibility to live my faith out in any endeavor that I get into. Again, my agenda doesn't go beyond the goals I listed, but in understanding me as a coach, that is something you should know.

Lastly, I believe that the biggest role of a parent is to be a [relatively silent] source of encouragement. I think if you ask most boys what they would want their parents to do during the game; they would say "NOTHING". So with that, let the record stand right now that we will not have good umpiring. This is a fact, and the sooner we all understand that, the better off we will be. We will have balls that bounce in the dirt that will be called strikes, and we will have balls over our heads that will be called strikes. Likewise, the opposite will happen with the strike zone while we are pitching. The boys will not be allowed to show negative emotion toward the umpire. They will not shake their heads, or pout, or say anything negative to the umpire.

This is my job, and I will do it well. I am really doing all of you parents a favor that you probably don't realize, at this point. I have taken the work out for you, so that you can simply come and watch your son -- and enjoy 😊! Trust me on this; I am not saying that you cannot clap for your kids when they do well. I am just saying that if you hand your child over to me to coach them, then let me do that job. Will I be perfect and make zero mistakes? Absolutely not, and I will be the first to admit that. With that, though, you can know that I promise to do the best that I possibly can do -- to invest, into your boys, what they deserve.