

Use your smile to change the world; don't let the world change your smile.

Unknown

A typical visit to the BBC for me involves quite a bit. Whether it is cleaning or administrative responsibilities, the work adds up and soon enough, it is time to leave. As the BBC has grown, I have spent less and less time inside the facility working with athletes and that is frustrating for a baseball coach who loves to practice with athletes. However, I do try and tell myself each day to stop and go inside and just sit down and watch. When that happens, my own personal problems seem to melt away. Next to seeing my wife and kids it's the best ten minutes of my day. It truly is a stress reliever to watch our clients having fun doing what they love and seeing hard work in progress. These kinds of moments that I often savor, come to mind as I write about our February Athlete of the Month, Nick Rucky, an individual who attacks every obstacle life can throw at him with an infectious smile.

I met Nick at the Extra Bases Clinic before we opened the BBC. As long as I have known him I have never seen Nick upset, cry or complain. I have seen him face difficulties for sure, but I have witnessed his consistent ability to positively address those difficulties by picking himself back up and moving forward. The way he deals with adversity can make a person, including myself; contemplate their own concerns and how they address them. There is no doubt he has that type of influence on his teammates as well, who all look up to Nick as a leader.

Nick is also very humble and patient. Nick never brags about his abilities; and believe me he could, he is getting that good. He also is never one who rushes to the front to hit first; he is okay with waiting his turn. As he has developed, I love using Nick as an example for others; his tremendous skill set is something others continually strive for. Nick works all year, from Fall Baseball to winter classes, meanwhile also taking lessons with Coach Jay Schnabel and Coach Bill Berman. Both coaches stated the following about Nick,

“Nicholas has been a fixture at the BBC since our early days. He has a love for baseball and the process of working hard on a daily basis for short term and long term goals. His attitude is always positive and agreeable. He is as gritty and hardworking as any player we have. Nick has helped many of our club AAU and fall ball teams find success. He is a better young man than ballplayer. Nick also participates in many fundraisers and charitable causes with his classmates and family off the field. It has been a pleasure working with him.”

There is no doubt in my mind that this year will be a breakout year for him on the diamond both in AAU and Little League. John Richardi, his AAU Coach, and I, feel it a privilege to be able to coach him on our Bandits team.

Nick is one of those unique individuals who comes into your life and impacts it for the better. I know I am not the only one who thinks working with him is an honor and how his influence leaves you wanting to be a better person.

Nick keep working hard, with a smile on your face every step of the way.

Jim Joyce