

A FREE GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF HITTERS

Why He Crushes It in the Cage and Freezes in Games

What happens in your son's head between the on-deck circle and the batter's box, and why it decides the at-bat before a pitch is thrown.

Geoff Rottmayer | HittersIQ



The Walk

Watch the walk. You can read the whole at-bat in it.

The shoulders drop before he reaches the box. The bat hangs instead of resting ready. He looks at the dugout. He looks at you. The at-bat has not started and it is already speeding up.

That walk is the most important time in his at-bat. Everything he carries gets sorted there, or it does not get sorted at all.

Here is what is happening inside it. A plan built before the pressure hits has a chance to survive the pressure. A plan built during it does not. The hitter who decides what he is hunting while the noise is low walks in with instructions his whole mind agreed to. The hitter who waits until he is in the box is trying to think clearly with the game leaning on him, and clear thinking is the first thing pressure takes.

Two hitters can have the same swing. The difference you see from the stands is which one did his thinking on the walk.

So stop grading the walk as body language. It is a work period. It has a job. When nobody has taught him the job, he spends those forty feet worrying, and worry is a plan too. It is just a bad one.



The First Thought

Strike one gets called on the corner. It was low. Maybe it was a ball. Watch what happens next, because the pitch is over and the damage is not.

The first thought arrives on its own. He does not choose it. That one sounds like this: here we go again. Then it drags the next ten behind it. The umpire is squeezing him. The count is gone. Now he has to protect. The emotion rides in on the chain, frustration first, then hurry, and by the time the pitcher is set he is swinging at the at-bat that already happened.

One thought triggered the next thoughts. The next thoughts triggered the emotion. The emotion picked the swing.

Where is his vote in all that? In the space between thoughts. There is a gap, a short one, between the first thought and the chain it wants to drag. A hitter can be taught to use that gap. Catch the first thought. Name what it is doing. Then say the sentence he chose in advance, the one that returns him to his plan. Coaches call it an anchor. He hears it in his own voice, and it does the same job every time: it puts the at-bat back in the present tense.

Name it. Challenge it. Shift it. Anchor it. Four moves, all teachable, all useless if he first hears about them from you in the car.



The Story and Where He Is Standing

Underneath the thoughts sits a story. Every hitter believes one about himself at the plate, and he swings like it is true.

The story runs the emotions. A hitter who believes the story that he always fails in big spots does not need a bad call to fall apart. The first pitch of the at-bat confirms the story and the chain from page 2 starts itself. Change what he believes and the behavior follows it. That is why this work starts with the story, not the swing.

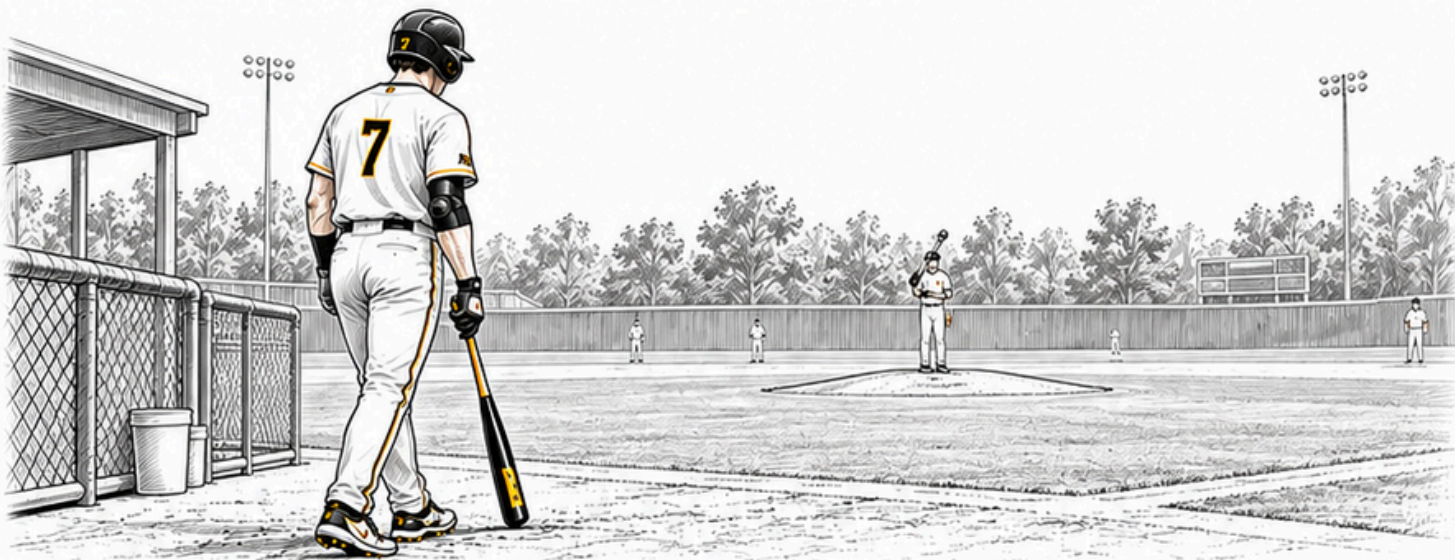
You can hear which mindset he is standing in, if you know the three.

Compare and Convince. He measures himself against everybody. The ride home is full of the shortstop's stats and who got moved up. His worth rises and falls with the comparison, and so does his confidence. You will hear it in how he talks: proving, always proving.

Compete and Contribute. He talks about his role. He wants to help the team win, he takes a tough at-bat for the group, setbacks land softer here. This is a healthy place to stand.

Strategic Advantage. He talks about the pitcher. What he saw. What he was hunting and why. He has a plan per at-bat and the count awareness to run it. This is the top of the ladder.

Hitters slip in and out of all three across a season. The coaching job is to catch him in the first one and move him up, fast.



What Teaching This Looks Like

This is taught the way a swing is taught. In order, with names, with reps.

First, catch it. The hitter learns to spot the trigger, the bad call, the error behind him, the teammate who just went deep, and to notice the first thought it produces instead of obeying it.

Second, name it. Which mindset is he standing in? What is the story saying this time? A problem with a name gets smaller. A problem without one runs the whole evening.

Third, rebuild it. The story gets tested against what actually happened, pitch by pitch, until a truer one is standing. The anchor gets written in his words. The walk gets a routine with a job to do. Then it gets repped, at-bat after at-bat, until the space between thoughts is his.

The test of the whole thing is conviction. Conviction is how convicted his plan is when the count is stacked against him. Ask him his plan at 0-2 and listen to his voice. If he cannot say it with confidence, he will not swing it with conviction. When he can say it plain and swing it the same way, the teaching has landed.

The evaluation is where I read this layer on your son's actual at-bats: the walk, the first thought, the story, the mindset, and whether the plan survives the count. In writing, so you can see exactly where he stands.



The 3-Question Review

Diagnosis does not need a lecture, and the ride home does not need a breakdown. It needs three questions, asked in order, with you listening more than you talk.

Question 1: “What did you see out there today?”

His read of the game, in his words. You are learning how he sees, not grading what he did.

Question 2: “What were you hunting in that 2-0 count?”

Now you hear the plan, or you hear that there was not one. Both answers tell you the truth.

Question 3: “Which pitch would you want back, and what would you do with it?”

This one hands him the rebuild. He names the moment and the better decision himself, and a hitter who can do that is already learning to coach his own thoughts.

You have the diagnosis now. The signs from the stands, the layer underneath them, and three questions that open him up.

The evaluation is that same read done properly. I study his game at-bats, build the decision profile in writing, and walk you through it on a call. \$199, and it comes off the program if we end up working together.

Book it here: cal.com/geoff-rottmayer/60min-eval

And for parents who want the teaching all season, the Inner Circle is the shelf I built for it: my books, the worksheets, and the film room, at geoffrottmayer.com/inner-circle.

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