

March 22, 2024

I was Declan Gonge's baseball coach for his 12 and 13 year old seasons with the Golden Spikes Baseball Academy. I was also his private hitting and fielding instructor during that time, and I continue to work with Declan privately through his high school journey.

Declan is one of the hardest working players I have had the privilege to coach. He is highly self-motivated to improve every day and is willing to go above and beyond to achieve his goals. Most impressively, he is hungry for knowledge as he takes it upon himself to ask high-level questions about his mental and physical approaches to the game. His ability to think critically and adjust to the situation at hand is what makes Declan truly special at his young age. He understands himself and the game of baseball better than his opponents and this has allowed him to grow rapidly in his young career.

When I met Declan, my favorite quality about him was his need for perfection. While that sets a high bar, it can create unrealistic expectations and unattainable goals in a sport commonly referred to as the game of failure. While I love coaching Declan's physical game, watching him mature mentally has been my favorite part of our journey together, thus far. He learned how to fail and he learned how to handle his attitude and emotions during times of failure, allowing him to maintain his competitive edge for every pitch of every game. All of these traits turned Declan into a phenomenal leader to his teammates, both vocally and by example.

Declan comes from a great support system. His family does everything they can to assist him in achieving all of his life goals, especially baseball and academically. I have no doubt Declan will live out his dream of being a collegiate student athlete, and I highly recommend him for any team, organization, or university that chooses to pursue him. His passion, competitiveness and leadership is contagious and any school will be lucky to have him.

Sincerely,

Scott Saylor