

Got Jesus? Pencil Him Into the Starting Lineup

There are few things in life that mean more to parents than wanting their children to succeed.

Let's be honest. Parents want their children to win and be winners. Period. Emotions fire and spill out onto the field of battle as parents cheer on their children.

Our oldest daughters just finished their spring softball seasons. Since late March, our family has been immersed in softball, having a practice or a game nearly every night during the week and many weekends with the same. As a family, we lived, ate and breathed softball for three months.

In the Heathcott household, the proverbial blood, sweat and tears sports mantra came true during our grueling journey through the season....and we loved every minute of it. My wife and I were just like the other parents - cheering wildly for good plays, bemoaning bad ones.

Now, it's over.



(Image via Flickr, tinatruelove)

I am a bit sad to see the season end, but there is also some relief. It was a long three months. I coached my oldest daughter's 10U travel softball team. We did quite well, finishing in what they called the Super Six (final six teams) during the season-ending tournament. Pretty good for a league with 21 teams. My nine-year old finished her season over the weekend after an all-star tournament.

Reflecting back on the season, there was much for me to be proud of regarding my girls. They played hard, played well (most of the time) and most importantly, they had fun. I felt like they learned a lot about the game of softball and competition in general.

Unfortunately, they may have learned and seen a bit too much. Parents arguing with parents, parents arguing with coaches...parents arguing with umpires. See a pattern here? One of our games had to be stopped when the umpire forfeited the game because the coaches and parents were screaming at him. When that happened, I pulled our girls and talked to them about the importance of treating opponents and umpires with respect, while at the same time playing the game with dignity and character.

There were times this year when I wondered if we all sang the national anthem before the game or better yet, said a prayer for the safety and well-being of the girls while they played and had fun, if cooler heads may have prevailed. Just like our schools, our kids' sporting events could use a little bit more of a Godly presence. Reminders of tragedies such as Oklahoma and Boston - where children were lost and parents grieved - might put things into perspective and make a parent think twice before screaming about their child being called out on a close play at first base.

It's amazing how competitive parents can become when their kids are on the field. I'll add myself and my wife to this mix because we have our moments as well. Who doesn't want their children to do well and to be on the winning team?

Maybe we should picture Jesus on the field with our little Johnnies or Susies? Think about that. I mean, What Would Jesus Do if the umpire called him out on a pitch that was just a bit outside?