

# TIPS FROM THE COACH

## *GREAT COACHES MAKE A GREAT LEAGUE*

I would truly like to drive a stake through the phrase, "Just let the kids play ball and have fun!". There is nothing intrinsically fun about baseball. Stand in the middle of a room and swing a bat. After about 30 seconds you will determine that this is no fun. Hitting the ball is fun! Swinging the bat and not hitting the ball is not fun. NOT catching the ball and having it hit you in the nose is NOT fun! That is why we have coaches, to teach the skills necessary so that the players can have the maximum amount of success and FUN! I guarantee the player that is batting .500 is having more fun than the one who is batting a buck fifty. But the beautiful thing about baseball is that with discipline and hard work the player that is batting .150 can have more success and HAVE MORE FUN. What a great lesson in life to learn from a little boy's game. If you are disciplined and work hard, you will have more success and more fun!

The challenge to coaching is how to inspire the players to strive for excellence in overcoming a difficult task (baseball) so they can have the maximum amount of fun. I once had a Dad ask me why I asked his son to practice his skills in a home training program. Did I think he was going to play pro ball? I asked if he required his daughter to practice her scales on the piano every day on the piano. He said "yes". I asked if he thought his daughter would grow up to be a concert pianist? He said "heck no, she doesn't have that much talent". I asked if he wanted her to grow up to play in a honky tonk? "Heaven forbid", he answered. "Then why do you make her work so hard at her piano"? Well, he replied, "I want her to develop a love and appreciation for music and discipline in overcoming a difficult task." I pointed out that his son was not gifted enough to play pro ball or possibly even in high school, but that I too desired that he develop an appreciation and love for the game and discipline to work hard to overcome the difficult task of playing baseball.

Isn't it amazing we never hear someone say, "Just let the kid play piano and have fun", because it is no fun to bang out discordant notes that have no relationship to music. Baseball is the same. It can be a symphony of beauty or a cacophonous jumble of movements that would make a punk garage band cringe.

I hope that because of my efforts as a baseball coach, I have motivated my players to develop character traits that will help them to become better doctors, lawyers, cabdrivers, or plumbers, when the little boy games are over.

Anyone that takes a team is a good guy. He is going to give hundreds of hours of his time to try to help other people's kids to have a great baseball experience. No one ever said, "Gee, Margo I think I am going to coach a Youth League baseball team and see if I can make 12 boys have a miserable time and hate baseball...." The key to having a great Youth League baseball experience is having knowledgeable coaches.

COACH