

Take Me Back to the Roots of Baseball

DAN PIERGALLINI

I recently attended my first "professional" baseball game in years. However, it didn't really seem like a truly professional baseball game. Where were the temper tantrums? The yelling at umpires (by players or coaches), the bench-clearing brawls, the egos? And most importantly, where was a single player with a million dollar contract worth a small country? All the elements of professional baseball were missing from this game. Or were they?

What we currently see in the majors is competition between the management and the players for the highest salary possible rather than for a World Series ring, let alone a division

title. No, I'm not saying that Alex Rodriguez does not deserve \$252 million dollars for playing shortstop for the Texas Rangers. Of course he does. However, the 866 Major League Baseball players will earn a combined \$1,968,088,814 this year. Just for playing baseball. The average salary for all players is \$2,272,620. These salaries don't make baseball unprofessional however; what players do after earning all of this money does.

Albert Belle tried to run a fan over with his truck, punched another fan in the face, and threw a baseball at a newsman, among other things. Since then, there have been numerous fights, encounters, and all sorts of other spectacles one would expect to see only in a circus. This is

what makes professional baseball unprofessional. Even after players are earning these exorbitant salaries, they still have the audacity to act like circus clowns. They sit out games because they don't get along with the coach, they don't give 100% because they don't feel like it, and then they leave their thousands of hometown fans for more money. If baseball games were free, maybe we wouldn't have room to complain, but when games cost an average family a small fortune, we should get to see a game where the players play hard so that we get our money's worth. Even when a team does play their hardest, sometimes it's just not good enough anymore. Alex Rodriguez earns as much as *all* of the Minnesota Twins do combined. Major League Base-

ball has gone in a downward spiral, taking everything that was once loved about the game away from the fans.

As I said, I recently attended a very professional baseball game. It wasn't, however, a Major League Baseball game. In this game, the players displayed team unity, unlike the majors, where players are paid to do their job and don't really care about the other members of the team. In this game, talent and skill were what was important, not the size of the player's contract or his ego. I didn't see a single player or coach yell at an umpire or throw a temper tantrum, and I didn't even get to see any major altercations, let alone a fan get punched in the face by Albert Belle.

Yet somehow, I was not disappointed. I was able to en-

joy a baseball game the way that they were played back in the old days, good old-fashioned baseball. And I loved it. The fans did too, as they didn't throw any batteries, garbage, debris, or napkin holders at the outfielders. This was minor league baseball, where the players may not be as good as the players in the majors (at least skill wise). However, they play with more heart and enthusiasm than the pros do. Maybe all the pros used all their enthusiasm up playing in the minors. Whatever the case may be, a minor league baseball game seems far more interesting to me now than a major league one. The atmosphere is better, not to mention the fact that the most expensive seat is seven dollars as opposed to a major league game, where a hot dog can cost that much.

Through the Eyes of a Teacher...

MICHAEL MUELLER

Long before you moved in on Move-In Day or headed to class in the morning, they were there to help you out, and long after you leave class in the afternoon or graduate on June 2, they will still be there to help students like you. Yes, they are the teachers of NCSSM. Some, like Ms. Doyle and Dr. Miller, have been here since the school's inception, while others, like Dr. Ross-Nazzal, are new teachers, all adding to NCSSM's rich pedagogic tradition. Whether this is their first year at NCSSM or their twenty-first, NCSSM's teachers have lived through it all; the good times, the bad times, the coming of new juniors, and the leaving of seniors. Throughout it

all, they have shaped different perspectives and formed lasting memories. One of Dr. Miller's first impressions was that he thought NCSSM was "a wonderful opportunity that had been given to all of us to do new things." Similar reflections came to the mind of Dr. Ross-Nazzal: he called NCSSM "a unique opportunity for students of North Carolina to be presented with material and ideas years ahead of their chronological peers." Ms. Doyle and Dr. Miller, however, who have been here considerably longer, emphasized NCSSM's community spirit. Dr. Miller remembers "lots of faces, lots of people, lots of good times, and some hard times." In fact, as a result of their tenure at NCSSM, their long hours of teaching have taught them a few les-

sons. Dr. Miller said that through teaching at NCSSM he realized "how very important fineness is" and that "in all that we do there is significance and meaning." Dr. Ross-Nazzal and Ms. Doyle have also learned personal lessons from their experiences at NCSSM. Dr. Ross-Nazzal was surprised by the ability and eagerness with which NCSSM juniors learned U.S. History and the close bonds he formed with students. "I came here expecting to be an instructor, but students told me I was a role model and even a surrogate father," he said. Dr. Ross-Nazzal said that he will always remember the thanks that he received from NCSSM students for the help that he gave them with their work. Dr. Miller said that he is "always struck by the hope, courage, and high idealism at the end of the [end-of-year] slide show when they show the senior faces." Ms. Doyle fondly re-

called the time she took her hall sledding at midnight "in the middle of a blizzard." Both Ms. Doyle and Dr. Miller laughingly recalled an incident during the early years of the school in which students threw Dr. Miller into a pool that used to exist behind Hill.

All could reflect on the changes they had seen students undergo once they come to NCSSM. Ms. Doyle commented that "in general, they're more mature and independent" and that "kids know better how to learn from each other." Dr. Ross-Nazzal commented on students' "emphatic, strong writing" and how he had "seen students get excited about getting into subfields of U.S. History. A lot of juniors put forth a lot of enthusiasm that I had not expected. I would certainly hope that [future NCSSM students] are as prepared, moti-

vated, and willing to put forth the necessary effort as [this year's NCSSM students] did." Ms. Doyle, Dr. Ross-Nazzal, and Dr. Miller all seemed optimistic about future NCSSM students. Ms. Doyle commented, "I hope they're intelligent, responsible, and interesting." Dr. Miller said, "I think they'll be just like the ones we have now, with the same hope, fear, pride, nervousness, and commitment. It's up to us who are here to nurture those students...students are always students."

Indeed, NCSSM instructors have nurtured thousands of students on their way from high school to college. As we look toward the future, NCSSM's teachers will still be here, helping other groups of bright and hopeful students to "accept the greater challenge."

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