



BILL CURRIE

Mouth of the South

Little League Ball

A few nights ago on my Charlotte television program, I figured it was time, now at the beginning of the silly season, to issue a shrill cry against the more obnoxious Little League parents who have turned what seemed to be a very good idea to begin with in many cases into a ridiculous experience in vicarious living off the doings of very small children.

There were a couple of indignant phone calls which insinuated that to criticize Little League activities at all is tantamount to an attack on Motherhood. But there was an avalanche of letters from Mamas and Daddies who agreed that too many Little League parents are, indeed, sick!

When one is forced because of the drab unproductivity of his own life to find whatever thrills he can from the lives of his children, he has a serious problem. And when parents attempt to force little boys to play and win beyond their physical and emotional capabilities, then the resulting trauma is little short of criminal.

The country over, antics of many Little League parents have been the subject of severe criticism of child psychologists, coaches and the few sportswriters with courage enough to speak out about it.

Playing Should Be Fun

Kids ought to have fun playing. Of course, they will play to win, but if they lose or strike out with the bases loaded it ought not be viewed with seriousness like a professional manager might see the same incident involving one of his play for pay adults.

To be brutally brutal, when we were kids all adults were considered natural enemies, and we would not have welcomed anybody's Dad onto our ball field, nor for that matter, in our tree house or our swimmin' hole or anywhere else. Kids were kids, and we wanted the older folks to keep their distance and they did.

In recent years it has been argued that Pops ought to be pals and buddies with their sons. I cannot imagine my father as a pal. He was a fature of benevolent despotism.

To argue that Daddy-buddies can know more about their kids and do more with them is answered by the incontrovertible fact that my Daddy could control me completely, and I had an awesome and affectionate respect for him until the day he died.

Familiarity breeds contempt. In my boyhood there was a stern line between kids and adults which neither crossed, and we didn't have much trouble with each other.

Everyone Should Play

But times do change, and if now it is a good thing to take the play away from kids and dress them in uniforms and have some adult supervise their every move from the time they pick up their first ball...okay! But let all the little boys play.

We used to choose up sides and each team had to have its share of the little ones and the poor players. Sometimes when a boy was really small someone else was allowed to take his last strike, but in the event of a hit the little one would do the base running.

It was fun, and it really didn't matter who won. We all tried to win, but the next day the teams would all be different anyhow.

Believe me, I have nothing against junior baseball. I know that many sincere and well meaning people devote untold hours of time and effort and considerable money to it, hoping they are helping boys. I hope they are accomplishing just that.

But on the old neighborhood pickup teams there were no broken hearts because everyone played, and there were no recriminations if someone failed in the clutch. It was, after all, just for fun.

So, hoping the parents will behave with restraint, hooray for the Little League season which begins soon. And, incidentally, hooray for the millions which have been made selling equipment and national certification for all these good-time, little boy fun teams.



DAVIE SHOT STAR — Alan Barger placed second in the North-South Piedmont Conference track meet in the shot put. Barger won the NPC meet, and he

will be a threat in the Association meet on Saturday at North Rowan. (Photo by Barringer).

Davie To Defend Track Title Saturday

James Ijames led all scoring in pacing Davie County's track team to a third place finish in the North-South Piedmont Conference track meet at North Rowan last week.

Ijames will again lead the Rebels in the Western North Carolina High School Activities Association track meet on Saturday at the North track.

Ijames placed second to Boyden High's Roger Jackson in both hurdles events, won the 100 and tied for fifth in the 220 in the meet.

Davie County's sophomore Andy Atwell triumphed in the mile in a time of 4:44.5, edging Boyden's Coleman Ramsey by two-tenths of a second in an exciting finish.

Other records were broken by Boyden's strong Robert Pulliam in the shot put, Kannapolis' Ronnie League in the discus, Lexington's Joe Mason in the 440, and Kannapolis' Benny Bishop in the 880.

Team Standings

Boyden	107½
Kannapolis	91½
Davie County	58½
East Rowan	57
North Rowan	51
Thomasville	39
Lexington	36
Concord	22½
South Rowan	10
West Rowan	8
North Stanly	8
Albemarle	2
North Davidson	2
Statesville	1
South Iredell	1
Central Davidson	1
Mooresville	0



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