

SPORTS WEEK

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Timothy Ramsey
Sports Columnist

Are we helping or hurting?

I have fond memories of my athletic competitions as a child. I won some and I lost some. I felt those losses made me appreciate the victories even more. I didn't walk away with a medal every tournament or field day, but that was okay with me. Nowadays, with schools and sports teams wanting everyone to feel included, I think they are somewhat doing the kids a disservice.

With every kid getting a "participation" trophy or certificate, I think once they begin to compete in higher level sports, they do not know how to handle adversity or defeat very well. I am not saying all kids, but just comparing the kids I see now, versus when I was a child.

As a reporter, I have seen some of the worst behavior from kids in various sports. Verbal outbursts, profanity, disrespect to coaches and officials, and inability to handle negative outcomes are some of the things I have observed in today's generation of players. I think not allowing kids to fail is one of the major contributors to the negative behavior from some of the players.

When I was a kid, I could not imagine saying or doing some of the things to a coach or official that I have witnessed. I looked at my coaches as an extension of my parents and respected them as such. Once again, I am not saying every kid does this, I just have seen way too much of it in today's youth sports.

I firmly believe if we allow kids to fail in youth sports, they will learn how to deal with failure better. Losing builds character, allows you to become a better competitor, and makes you value success when you are triumphant.

Failing is a part of all areas of life and for most kids, sports play a major role in their lives, so why not teach them it's okay to fail? As long as you gave it 100 percent, there is no shame in failing.

When I saw another competitor walking away with a trophy or certificate, that made me fight harder the next time, so I could be the one with the trophy. That drive to succeed carried over to other parts of my life as well.

As adults, many of us deal with failure more than success. I remember filling out nearly 50 job applications before getting my first journalism job. That is 50 failures to one success. I was not deterred by those 50 rejections; it just made me try harder for that dream job. A lot of that ability to handle adversity comes directly from what I learned playing sports as a child.

We have to start taking some accountability in how these kids are acting out there. I understand we have changed the way we play sports today. No longer are sports teams allowed to train, practice and play the same way we did 25 years ago. I know the changes were made to

See Failure on B2



Tee Ball



Photos by Alphonso Abbott Jr.

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

Major League Baseball just wrapped up

another mid-season classic with their annual All-Star game on Tuesday. Hoping to one day get their shot at the major leagues, area youth are living out their baseball dreams playing tee

ball. Tee ball gives kids an opportunity to learn the basics of the sport of baseball, with most of the youngsters ranging from 4 to 6 years of age.

Flag Football league in our own backyard

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

American football is the most popular sport in America. People can't wait until the fall to get their football fix. For those who still enjoy getting out on the field for some fun, the Camel City Flag Football league might be right up your alley.

Camel City is a 5 on 5 flag football league that was started in 2017 by Jakob Black, league di-

rector. The league began as a means to bring flag football back to the city, but it evolved into much more, said Black. It is a

contact league that allows blocking and some hitting, which attracts players who are used to the physicality of the sport.

"We started out as more of just a recreation, kind of trying to get flag football back in Winston-Salem," Black said. "Flag football stopped around 2012 here and once we got started from there, we slowly built and got to know the community of flag football more."

"We started pulling guys from Raleigh, Char-



The league is played 5 on 5 with 14 minute halves.

lotte and even a team that comes from Wilmington. We have gotten pretty well known, but we have stuck to the five on five, which is a pretty popular

format in flag football." Black tossed around several ideas trying to come up with a name for the league. He did not want to mimic any other sports leagues, so he chose Camel City.

"I thought about what we could call the league that represents Winston-Salem, but hasn't been taken already," he said. "I thought about Twin City, but that was taken already and associated with soccer. Winston-Salem kind of affiliates with the old flag football league and I want guys to know this is new, so I thought about another name and I thought of Camel City."

Black is very up to date with the promotion of his league. They keep statistics, pictures and run highlights of the games on the leagues' social media

pages. He receives a lot of positive feedback from the teams in the league.

"We do different things for the players that a lot of other leagues don't do," he continued. "We have heard a lot of great things from our players and we continue to try and make the league better."

Dallas Steelman has been with the league since its inception. He has seen it grow from its humble beginnings to one of the best flag football leagues in the area.

"I started playing with my friend Matt Morton, who assembled what is now the team that I play for, and the talent level since 2017 has skyrocketed," said Steelman. "The teams that we play with and the amount of experience that have come along since then is amazing to

see in just a two-year period.

"I have made so many friends in a short period of time and I have been able to meet people from so many different places as I travel around and play. The camaraderie is great, it's not always nice on the field, but when you come off everyone is cool with one another."

Many of the players, including Steelman, have played the game from the Pop Warner level all the way to college. This league gives them an outlet to still be involved with the game.

Even though Black is a fan of the sport, he does not participate in the league, because he wants to remain unbiased as the director. He enjoys the competitive nature of the players.



Photos by Timothy Ramsey

Jakob Black is the league director for Camel City Flag Football League.

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