

A tribute to a fellow teammate in the game of life

Sometimes life throws you a wicked curve ball — the type that looks like it's heading directly toward your head, but then cuts back in for a strike.

As a batter, it's the type of pitch that you're never quite sure how to react to.

This past week I was faced with one of those situations when I lost a good friend to a motor-



COMMENTARY
Jeff Smith

cycle accident.

Chris Coser was two months shy of his 21st birthday when his life was taken from him. As it always is with sudden deaths such as his, a lot of people regret never having that chance to say good-bye.

Chris was the type of guy that always stressed to people that they need to do something in their life that they loved.

Chris loved adventure. I love to write about sports.

So I thought what better tribute to the man that he was and what better way to say good-bye to my buddy than by dedicating a column to him in the sports section of this paper.

Granted, all of you out there nev-

er got the chance to meet Chris Coser and never got to experience his genuine enthusiasm for life. But hopefully there is a message we all can take from Chris and carry it on into our everyday lives.

Namely, live life, baby. Live it with all your heart. And realize that every single person you come in contact with can affect you in a certain way and vice versa.

As I looked around at the diverse group of people who showed up at his funeral, I realized that Chris had affected each and every person in some distinct way. I saw ex-baseball teammates that played with me and Chris back in fifth grade. I saw teachers, principals, parents, coaches and many, many friends.

It was deeply touching, and I know his parents must have been moved by the outpouring of support.

And the thing is, there were so many more people who wish they could have been there. But some would tell me, "It would be weird because I hadn't hung out with him in a long time."

I just tried telling them that Chris remembered everybody who had been in his life. He would always share the most random of details with me about a certain ballgame that was played practically ten years ago.

Remembering the past is a great way to get a reality check on your future.

Sure, this may not be a prototypical sports column, but so often sports is used as a metaphor for life.

Chris' dad was my baseball coach for a few years when I was young and he would often tell me when I was up to bat, "look for the fastball and react to the curve."

Well, this curve ball certainly did catch a lot of people off guard, but hopefully the memory of Chris will help us stay focused and we'll react in a way that will enable us all to make solid contact and bring in our runners home safely.

Take care of yourself, buddy.

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Oregon Daily Emerald

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