

Letters to the Editor

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problems in any area, to please follow through. I encourage the Vernonia School District to continue this screening process, whatever it takes. The ramifications are truly profound for all concerned.

PLEASE let your readers know they are free to call me, 503-429-0159 for more info.

Michelle Blum
Vernonia

Winning isn't always a negative endeavor

To the Editor:

The following is my own opinion and in no way do I speak for the [Vernonia Summer Youth] baseball association, except as a coach of one team.

In response to Don Bruers' letter "Winning shouldn't be kids primary focus", I would like to offer a different perspective.

I have heard so many people say "winning or losing don't matter, as long as you have fun." I played baseball from tee ball through my late teen years. Along the way, I was on both championship teams and losing teams.

Speaking from personal experience, if you are not having fun just playing baseball, then you shouldn't be doing it, but for those who are really dedicated to the sport, winning is more fun than losing.

The group of young men that I coached this year, for the most part have played together for most of their lives. They are a special group who possess above average skills, and played in a very competitive league this past season because of it.

To me, baseball (and, for that matter, sports as a whole), are a reflection of life. You learn to face challenges and share the ups and downs of a season as a team. You also learn that it takes a concerted effort from everyone on the team, or the individual (depending on the type of sport), to be successful.

The young men I coached this past season are entering

(sooner than we, as parents, would want), an adult world that requires that you do your best in order to succeed.

In life, the individual, or team, that is the most talented, prepared, and focused, usually succeeds, and those that want to compete with them try harder to reach that level of success.

Colleges and companies do not recruit the least qualified applicant, and as these young men are soon to be a part of that world, why not start preparing them now.

At what age do we start asking our kids to live up to the potential we, as parents, teachers and coaches, recognize in them? Do you start when they reach their adolescent years? Or would you rather we pander to them all through their teenage years and tell them they deserve the same as another for less effort? Is that how it works in life?

The more talented teams in our league were made up of players who had to go through try-outs, and those teams were able to take the most talented players from which they built their teams.

As many of my players do possess exceptional skill and talent and play very competitively. Do you think it is fair to them to be on a team with other players who are only on the team because their parents paid money and they have nothing better to do during the baseball season? Oh yeah, and then ask those players to compete against teams who are made up of the most talented players in their towns/cities?

Our team's success this year raised a lot of eyebrows in our league and also statewide. We didn't start the season just to have fun, we also wanted to win a championship. Winning a championship requires a lot of desire, effort and discipline from all involved.

Along the way, we were able to reinforce lessons of sportsmanship and integrity that my players have already been taught by their parents and previous coaches. But, in "raising the bar", we were able to challenge the players to dig deep and help them to recognize skills and talents they were not aware they possessed and will be able to draw upon in other

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