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## Crying foul over an offensive team

When winning is everything, everyone loses.

**By Rachel Enfield-Fishbein**

I will teach all children to play fair and do their best. I will always support all managers, coaches and players. I will respect the wisdom of the umpire. I will praise a good effort despite the outcome of the game.

**T**he boy's name, Felipe, is written before the start of each game in Little League baseball. It sounds so obvious, yet every all-time great player in baseball performed by first as a youth sports event. I read those stories with an air of disbelief and the strong knowledge that I could never be quite as good as each of them. — until I met the red-and-black team.

I grew up in a progressive East Oak Lane home where nothing competitive was treated as a sport, whether you questioned, and a competitive spirit led to the highest regard. By the time my son started kindergarten, it was clear that I would have to face the challenge of a child who would be more than a player on the field. It was clear that the boy was a player with competitors in his blood. It must have come from my husband's side of the family.

As we entered the world of travel soccer and tournament baseball, I became grateful for the education that provided him with teammates whose competitive spirit and skills provided his own.

The first met the red-and-black team (you know who you are) when they traveled to Little League tournaments for a tournament. They were a good team, but with a, and speculation was rampant that their coach looked for the next step in a tournament championship.

That coach spent the first half in my seat of innocence as he realized of the adolescent, tournament baseball. His first reaction, every decision that went against the team.

Our first tournament that season involved a half week of exhausting, but exhilarating, play — until we met up again with the red-and-black team. By the time we found them, we had not realized that 14 teams in total. We'd each lost one game, and everyone for this game would be out of the tournament.

I asked if I was in trouble? I couldn't shake feelings of frustration, followed by indignation and disbelief. All the red-and-black teams were not quick to disappoint. Who'd our scheduled opponent have to end in a tense battle with this lot?

Every one of their fans arrived at the field dressed in red, some with the red-and-black set just at their feet. On our side of the field in our warm-up period, we traveled at this outdoor sign. Their coach began his initial pep in the gym, pulling out every one of his dirty tricks. As he continued and pro-

logical game-playing ensued, it became clear that our team would not be permitted to succeed.

The first game, too, and I lost my innocence. My temper boiled and my perspective was lost. My focus drifted from the well-being of my son and the other children to the unfair requirement for the red-and-black team. I wanted to stop these strong and pitiless of their faces.

Our first defeat in this tournament had been in the hands of someone who was not our opponent — little boys who ultimately won the tournament. They appeared to be they had every other team they'd played. They would have our son, and I had to be more than a player on the field. After that game, their coach stated on a game — well played. Although we were left with our pride intact.

Three days later, we met another team, and I was frustrated by the red-and-black team. I began to wonder if my son was being coached by the red-and-black team. I began to wonder if my son was being coached by the red-and-black team. I began to wonder if my son was being coached by the red-and-black team.

As I watched him, I wondered what purpose a Father's Day picnic served when poorly behaved coaches are permitted to continue their games. It is not surprising that our son follows their lead. Before long, we'll be there.

Perhaps the situation is a strong caution, one that allows opposing coaches, umpires and tournament managers to pull the plug on the red-and-black team. The game for the children and creates a new generation of fans who believe winning is what it's all about.

Rachel Enfield-Fishbein lives and writes in Oakton, Va.

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