



My Two Cents

The REAL Boys of Summer

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Springtime in Pryor Creek, Oklahoma. You have to love it.

It's this time of year, when you see the boys of summer playing.

One night this past week, I was driving by the Pryor Sports Complex, when I noticed lights beaming into the night sky. These were no ordinary lights. These were magical lights. These were baseball field lights.

Instantly, I was thrown back to my so-called glory days of baseball. Of course, anyone that knows me knows that my baseball days were not as glorious as I may tell them, but that's what happens when you get older. Stories tend to get better with time.

This past Thursday, my twin boys had their first t-ball practice. Their head coach, who I shared books and lockers with in my junior and senior high days, called me one day last week and told me that he was their head coach. I was surprised, but yet relieved. At least I knew this man, and he was a good friend we all have seen around town.

My friend asked me if I would help him out coaching, and I said yes. After all, I had been planning for this moment for five years.

So, we began practice on Thursday near the Pryor Park. It was kind of like the blind leading the blind out there. We made the kids spread out and took turns hitting. What I saw happen out there was something I will cherish for the rest of my life. It is something that happens on every field in America with 5 year olds having their first practice...when the ball was hit, seven boys and one girl took off after it, with only one boy prevailing with the ball. The other six, were all laying on the ground...and I was fighting back my laughter.

The whole hour was like that, and I cherished every minute of it. A little kid calling me coach; showed me his "ouchy on his finger"; kept telling me his "glove was messed up and that he needed me to fix it"; that "he was cold". It was so awesome.

Now, I am a huge baseball fan. My team is the Kansas City Royals, and they haven't been good since 1985 when George Brett led them to a World Series title in seven games against the Cards in the "I-70 Series".

But baseball is not the same as it was then.

Individuals trying to gain an advantage by taking performance-enhancing drugs have tarnished baseball in the last couple of years. Whether it was overpaid men going on strike, or these same overpaid men taking steroids, baseball is dying a slow death. To be honest, I don't care if I go to another major league game for a while. I am sure I will one of these days, but I would rather watch the REAL BOYS OF SUMMER!

If you want to go see some great ballplayers (in the making) you don't have to go to New York and watch "A-Rod". You don't have to go to Chi-town and watch "Slamming Sammy".

All you have to do, is go to your nearest little league ball field and watch the magic happen under those lights. And when the games are over, everyone is happy.

Not because they won or lost...but because they got to go to the concession stand and get them some candy and a pop.

Those are the REAL Boys of Summer!