



## Hey batter-batter...where's the chatter?

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*Times Writer*

This past week, I made my debut as an assistant coach of the Pryor Sharks T-Ball team. The Sharks are not a championship team. We don't have a multi-million dollar deal with Nike or kids testing enhancing drugs with Barry Bonds.

What we have are nine little boys (seven which have never played before) who like to help keep the field nice, by picking the flowers and grass in the outfield. Or the ones who like to keep the dirt raked nicely, by playing in the dirt in the infield. And, the ones who like to climb the poles in the dugout when it isn't their turn to bat. (I mean, c'mon...you have to have something to do besides just sitting there, right?)

As I was sitting there in the third base coach's box, I noticed something in between the kid with the glove on his head and the outfielder that was facing the wrong way and looking up at the heavens, probably saying to his self, "I wonder how many popsicle sticks it would take to reach the moon?"

Nobody was chattering...but its not just happening here.

A buddy of mine told me that in Claremore's youth recreation league, you couldn't say "*Hey batter-batter, swing batter*", because it is "too personal".

In Knoxville, Tennessee, one of the baseball leagues has put a ban on phrases like "*Hey batter-batter, swing batter*" because it was deemed as "unsportsmanlike".

In the Frenship Youth Baseball League in Texas, their on-line rulebook clearly states that, "for all leagues, no chatter will be allowed". And also, according to Tee Ball Baseball Organization Rules, "Members of one team shall not ride, kid, heckle, poke fun at, or in any other manner do anything that in the opinion of the umpire distracts the opposing team. This does not include normal baseball chatter unless words like "batter" or the like are included."

Please.

Chatter in baseball IS what makes baseball so fun. Coaches use chatter to relay hidden messages to their kids. *Rock and fire kid, rock and fire!* (Throw it as fast as you can, I'm hungry and ready to go eat). *Just you and the mitt son, just you and the mitt.* (Please throw a strike this inning...the mosquitoes will be out soon)

Taking away the chatter at youth games, is like taking away the gloves and bats in the middle of the fourth inning, and tell them to keep doing what they were doing. You couldn't.

Back in my day, this was a great chatter to say. *We need a pitcher, not a belly itcher* or *we need a batter, not a broken ladder*. They make no sense to us now, but in the mind of a youth baseball player, it was as good as a brand new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle toy.

Nowadays, you could get sued for saying that stuff. I'd like to see that.

*Judge: Now mam, explain to the court why you are suing the Little League for \$4.6 million dollars?*

*Mrs. Moneybags: Well your honor, the other team was chattering. They said such awful things like, "Little baby batter, can't control his bladder." Little Timmy wet the bed when he was three years old, and that chatter comment gave us both nightmares from the past. I'm suing for pain and suffering.*

*Again...please.*

If kids that are playing t-ball can't catch or throw, then at least, they need to know how to chatter. Chatter means that kids are behind one another. It also means that kids are paying attention and have their head in the game, instead of picking flowers and raking the dirt.