

The Thrill of Victory, Not Caring about Defeat!

by Jonathan H. Buzby

As parents, how many of us get more upset about our child's team losing than they do? Probably and hopefully, most of us do (even though we shouldn't get upset either).

If children playing youth sports are getting overly upset about losing at this age imagine what they're in for when they get older. This isn't to say that children will enjoy losing or understand the old adage, "You can learn a lot from losing," but they should not let it ruin the fun they are supposed to be having playing youth sports. And neither should you!

If you ask most children why they play sports, the answers won't include, "To learn about sportsmanship," "For the social aspects," "To become a better player," or "That's the only way I'll ever get a scholarship." What most kids will tell you is that they play sports because it's fun. And children having fun is the number one reason why they should play sports. All the other reasons will be outcomes of having fun playing sports (except probably the scholarship part).

As parents it is our responsibility to ensure that our children are having fun playing youth sports (or any youth activity for that matter). We can do this by encouraging but not making them play sports. Once they are playing we must continue to encourage, encourage, encourage. You wouldn't want another parent putting your child down for making an error, why should you? Would you want to continue going to an activity that every time you made a mistake you were criticized? Do you like to be lectured after a long day at work about all the things you could have done better? Put yourself in your child's shoes.

If a child is not having fun playing sports, he will want to stop playing. I'm a firm believer that when organized and run correctly youth sports provide a wonderful environment to learn life skills. But if a child isn't having fun he won't want to play and will miss out on all the other benefits derived from youth sports.

Our coaching staff used to laugh that the most important thing to the kids after a game was what the snack was that day. You know what? Kids are smarter than we think!