

Injustices in Cleveland County School Sports!!?? Letter to the Editor Letter to the Editor (unedited) published by Robert A. Williams

Dear Editor,

I am seeking to raise awareness of the injustice in Cleveland County School sports and request that you publish this article in your paper.

Is it For the Love of the Game?

As two-year-olds, they don't understand why they can't be on a baseball field when their older brother is playing. As they grow older, then comes their time to play the game. Their desire to play goes from T-ball to bigger and better fields. Putting in time for practice and playing the game becomes a priority. The thrill of the game and competition can be invigorating. Hopes and dreams have been achieved on baseball diamonds. Records of home runs are made, and no-hitter pitching is among some of the great stats of baseball players. Unfortunately, the best players also make errors. Starting out in baseball, kids are told to have fun in the game. Later on, it becomes more competitive, and it's more about the win. Of course, everyone likes to win. Coaches push for the win. They desire for their team to win the Championship. Parents, family, and friends want to see their team win. The words from the song Centerfield come to mind "Put me in, Coach I'm ready to play." Being in a dugout waiting to play is probably the most challenging position as a baseball player.

Sitting on the sidelines as a parent waiting for your player to be put in the game is a challenging position also. We try to teach our children that life is tough and life isn't fair. But to watch it unfold in front of you can be a hard pill to swallow. Often in life, I always say don't put your trust in people but put your trust in the Lord. People will disappoint you every time. People, however, even in positions of coaches and leaders, have the potential for positive influence or a negative one. Not only do our words make a difference in the lives of others our actions speak volumes also. As a coach and leader, I ask you, Do you want to be the one to crush and diminish a player's love of the game?

Are we so caught up in the win that we can't see the potential of every person on the team? To be a part of a team is a great privilege and experience. But if each person's potential isn't allowed to grow and soar. How will they ever get their wings in flight to take off the ground? Sometimes it is hard to believe in someone when other obstacles or outside influences get in the way. Coaches and leaders in school positions should not show favoritism to certain players. But lots of time, that takes place based on social status, friendship, and other influences. This is such an injustice to the other players who put in just as much time and effort in practice. They often desire to have equal playing time in the game. But in positions of coaches and leaders, we should give an opportunity to believe in each individual person or player. We have the greatest job in these positions to build others up and watch them reach a greater goal. Also, helping them to be all they can be as a baseball player or in other positions in life. Are we going to be the ones not to influence this player's life positively? Given an opportunity is sometimes all they need to prove they can do great.

Are you, as a coach going to keep them in the dugout, or are you going to decide to let everyone play. The Bible states let him who is without sin cast the first stone. I am not without

sin. I am not trying to cast a stone. I merely want to send a ripple in the water with my voice. To say give each person a chance. Please make a difference in our youth. If we don't use our voice to speak out for others, who will? When injustice occurs, whether it is in Cleveland County School sports or something even of greater importance, we should be Rosa Parks of the world and make a difference. As a coach, ask your self Is it the Love of the Game, or is there a reason that it is for **My Gain**.