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I Believe in Little League Sports

“Just try and swing at the ball,” my new stepfather said when it was my turn to bat. Not knowing how to start our life together, Little League baseball is where my new family unit began to bond. It was where things came into perspective, and where I learned important steps in order to succeed.

Little League is a way of life for some families. Important values and experiences are taught through sports. The rules of the game rival the rules of life. Success takes dedication, discipline, patience, and understanding. It can span through generations. During the season, it consumes life. It brings the family together.

My parents divorced when I was three. For years, we struggled. My mother was always at work or at school. My brother and I fought without restraint. My mother remarried when I turned eight. Pete, my stepfather, was only twenty-six. He was a new father to four children with daggers for eyes. It had just been my mother, two brothers, and sister for five years. What was he to do? As unsure all of us were to how this would unfold, he turned us to Little League baseball.

My entire family became engrossed in baseball. My stepdad would go out into the yard and help my brother and I get better at the game. “Look at the ball until it hits your glove. It will hit you if you turn away. Do not be scared,” he would say. I started to realize he was not so bad. He was a nice guy who took time out of his day to interact with me. During games, as I looked

into the stands, there he was. Standing beside him was my once arch-enemy, my brother. Both there cheering, and they were cheering for me. Even as my brother and I grew too big for Little League, we continued the tradition. Four years after the birth of my new baby brother, there we were at the same field where I once played, watching him play t-ball. When he turned six, we turned to football. Some of my fondest memories involved going to all of his practices, games, and even being the team mom. Now, as we all have aged, we do not go to little league games anymore. We watch sports on TV. We talked about sports every time we get together as my mother and sister rolled their eyes. It is funny how things develop. A man who was once a stranger in my home is now one of the most important people in my life. If it were not for him, there would have been no little league and most importantly, no little brother and sister.

Little League also reflects life lessons. You are only as strong as your weakest player teaches you to help those who struggle. It taught me to honor commitments. There have been many times when I signed up for something or volunteered and did not like it. I finish out the season. When things get tough, I try harder. Little league has so many positive attributes. It brings newly formed families together. Little league has flowing tears of crushed hearts and captures happiness rivaling the birth of a child. Life and sports are full of real emotions. You develop a love for all sports through little league. Sports can turn complete strangers into comrades or enemies. There is nothing that can compare to the emotion of sports. There is nothing that can compare to the emotions of real life. I get so nostalgic when I watch my stepdad playing with my one year old son. "Throw the ball. You can do it," he says. I sit back, watch, and smile.