

## TIPS FROM THE COACH

“ If a kid isn’t playing ‘select’ ‘travel’ and just plays ‘rec’. ‘league’ ball when he is 8-12 years old he will never catch up and make the High School team.” As proof, then comes the statement, “every single player to make the High School team the last 3 years has played ‘travel’ ball since he was 8.”

First, this is totally incorrect statement. The part about all the players that made the High School team having played “travel” ball may be true but that only proves that the parents of every quality athlete that attended that High School drank the Koolaid and followed the masses in an attempt to ‘keep up with the Jones’.

What a ballplayer does prior to puberty is no indicator of his future potential as a ballplayer. Whether he plays 30 or 100 games a year has no bearing upon how much he knows about how to play the game. Hiring the priciest Private Instructor at age 10 will have no bearing upon how he performs at 14.

There is a mass hysteria that is driven by people that wish to make a buck that prey upon parent’s desires to help their kids succeed. Ten year olds swinging \$300 plus bats because they might be able to hit a HR. \$75 an hr PIs because if a 9 yr old doesn’t learn proper rotation hitting mechanics he won’t make the elite ‘travel’ team and be shunted to the lower echelons of LL from which he will never emerge. Imagine the pressure placed on a kid to succeed by the amount of money and expectations that are being placed on a kid when his parents spend thousands of dollars on lessons and equipment to facilitate a future and he doesn’t get selected to that elite team.

Baseball prepuberty is about having fun, playing ball with your buddies, learning a love for the game, and lessons in life. Nothing a player does will give him a future in baseball. Nothing he does will doom him to not have a future in baseball. This youth baseball experience is a short and precious period that you as parents get to share. If the kid is an athlete, and plays ball for 6 or 8 years prior to High School, he knows how the game is played. If he wants to succeed as a ballplayer and make the HS team, in a couple of years of diligent work he can surpass the less athletic kids that played absurd amounts of games and studied at the hands of the ‘Masters’. There are valid reasons to play "travel" baseball but don't be sucked in that it is the only path to future glory.