

Everyone was winner in 13-inning game

Dear Mr. Kuyper,

I am a big fan of your Kids and Sports articles. I have two boys, 8 and 10, who are active in sports.

My husband also manages and assists their teams. I appreciate your input and advice about all aspects of sports.

The other night, I witnessed a Little League game that brought everything you write about together.

All of the parents, grandparents and every spectator there will never forget this game, and they are still talking about it. I immediately thought of you and that you would appreciate a story like this.

The Majors division Blue Jays and White Sox played each other for a regular season game beginning at 7 p.m.

Let me preface this by adding that these two teams definitely feel a friendly rivalry. The Blue Jays won the first half of our season. The White Sox had to beat the Blue Jays in order to stay in contention for first in the second half of the season.

The Blue Jays were ahead going into



Kids and Sports
TOM KUYPER

new pitchers. The seventh inning ended with no runs, then the eighth, then the ninth, still nothing.

The players were making plays physically and mentally like I have never seen before.

The 10th inning came and went and then the 11th.

It is now around 10 p.m. These 10-, 11- and 12-year olds have been playing for three hours.

The fans from both teams were cheering as the opposing team players were

the fifth inning 5-4. In the top of the fifth inning, one of the White Sox players hit a double to bring in the tying run. The inning ended 5-5.

This is where it starts to get crazy.

In Majors, there are no ties and there is no time limit. The seventh inning began with two

new pitchers. The seventh inning ended with no runs, then the eighth, then the ninth, still nothing.

The players were making plays physically and mentally like I have never seen before.

The 10th inning came and went and then the 11th.

It is now around 10 p.m. These 10-, 11- and 12-year olds have been playing for three hours.

The fans from both teams were cheering as the opposing team players were

making great plays to stop any runs from scoring. The boys kept their enthusiasm up, their energy levels up and just kept digging down deep for whatever they had left.

In the 13th inning, after two full games of play back to back, a White Sox player singles for an RBI and the Sox went up 6-5.

In the bottom of the 13th inning, one out, runners on second and first for the Blue Jays, a line drive to first base is caught and the first baseman steps on the bag for a double play.

Game over, Sox win — 13 innings and three hours and 40 minutes of play.

At the end of the game, after the teams had congratulated each other, the coaches brought both teams together for the after-game talk. They told them as a group that there were no winners and no losers for this game. They told them how they would never forget this game. They told them how they learned things in this game about teamwork, about baseball, about unity that they may not fully un-

derstand until years from now.

At that moment, I was so proud of those players and those coaches. That is what it is about. That is how you develop players physically and mentally.

I believe this story was worth sharing. I hope you do too.

— Jennifer Newman

Tom Kuyper says: I love it, and you are right. It is worth sharing, as are the names of the coaches of the teams in the Cactus Foothills South Little League, which covers north Phoenix and south Cave Creek, so here you go:

White Sox coaches: Tom Newman, Brian Oakley and Mike Knoop.

Blue Jays coaches: Mike Stirling, Jim Shelby, and Jeff Horn.

Thank you to all of you, and I hope you realize the tremendous impact you have made in these lives. Thanks for sharing it with us!

Questions or comments? E-mail Tom at tomkuyper@kidsandsports.com