

I looked in at home plate as the batter dug in. I gripped the ball behind my back determined to make the next pitch a strike. I came ready, then fired toward the plate. I watched the ball make the sinking movement I had planned but was shocked to see it soaring high over my head and landing gently into the Japanese Maple behind the house.

“It’s gone!” I yelled in my baseball announcer’s voice as Hillel circled the bases and high-fived Elon at home. Avi was sitting disappointedly on the grass. That homerun had won the game for Elon and Hillel.

“We’ll play again tomorrow,” I quickly told my youngest brother as I saw him starting to cry. “Elon and Hillel were still celebrating as we walked inside. It is not unusual for one of my brothers to cry about a wiffleball game. They take our games very seriously and do not always take so well to losing.

Our back yard is conveniently shaped very similarly to a baseball field. The roof of the house represents the left and center field wall as the house has a slight inward curve toward the yard. The bushes behind the pool are the right field wall. The chimney and a small cherry tree act as foul poles. We set up four sets of two or three chairs to be our fielders. If the ball hits any of them, the batter is out. We have many more complicated rules and regulations that I have continuously perfected over the passed five or six years. It is, truthfully, my pride and joy and I do not know what I would do without my homemade wiffleball field.

It might seem like it is a normal game that we occasionally play but it is much more than that. When the weather permits, we play almost every day. We keep count of our homeruns for each season as well as our win and loss record. We even tried to keep complete statistics one year. That failed. It isn’t all just fun and obsessive stat keeping however. There is a lot more that I have taken away from years of the greatest pastime I know. Playing with three younger brothers takes a lot of patience. I know that my patience level is not perfect by any stretch of the imagination but it has improved over years of dealing with the three most competitive, short tempered, sore losers that have ever walked the face of the earth. It has also taught me the responsibility of being a role model. My brothers look up to me and try to be like me. It is hard sometimes not to get upset at them for things like not swinging like I have taught them to or missing a pop up. I have to balance being their coach, teammate, opponent and many other things while having the responsibility of taking care of three boys under the age of 12. Most of all, I learn how to be a better big brother for them each and every time we step out onto our beloved wiffleball field. Though my wiffleball career will soon come to an end, the love I have for my brothers will never go away. The times I have spent with them have had more of an impact on who I am today than anything else.

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