

# Davis Little League levels the playing field

**LITTLE LEAGUE GETS IT RIGHT** ... while it was no doubt a controversial and difficult decision, I applaud the Davis Little League for its attempt to level the playing field and make the games more competitive and, presumably, more fun for the kids involved ...

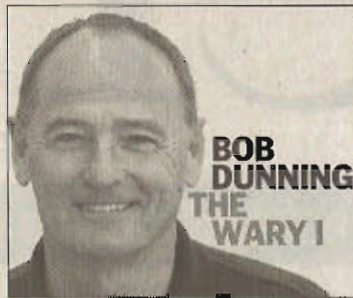
In the past, players stayed for their entire Little League careers with whichever major league team drafted them ... now, a new draft will be held every year that includes every player in the majors, rather than just those players who are new to the division ... in other words, the deck will be reshuffled with regularity, which should lead to greater parity and more competitive games ...

As LL president Jim Davis told *The Enterprise*: "We wanted to create more equitable teams to be more competitive so everybody has fun. Some teams with five or six returning majors players have a distinct advantage

over teams with only one or two returning players, and it leads to blowouts. Not only is that not fair competition, it's not fun for the kids." ... indeed ...

One coach, who wished to remain anonymous, disagreed with the decision, claiming that re-drafting will lead to more "stress" for coaches who have to get to know a new batch of kids every year ... with all due respect to coaches who donate their time, if any part of the Little League coaching experience is causing you "stress," it's time to take a long look in the mirror ...

Yes, drafting and developing talent are important in baseball, but let's keep that sort of competitive advantage for later in life ... at this age, participation and fun and learning the skills of the game should be of prime importance ... the new rule goes a long way toward accomplishing those goals ...



**SPEAKING OF KIDS AND BASEBALL** ... "I enjoyed reading your column recalling the wonderful experiences you had with your father, especially the sports-related ones," writes Skip at [pacbell.net](http://pacbell.net) ... "Ted Kluszewski was my all-time favorite baseball player as well." ... and nowadays, Skip, in our steroid-laced baseball world, nobody's even heard of the Big Klu ... heck, if they'd had the designated hitter in his day and he managed to play in the American League, he'd be over 1,000 home runs by now and probably still going strong ...

Adds Skip: "As a kid, I lived in Cincinnati on Findlay Street within blocks of the old Crosley Field and my grandfather would take me out to the ballpark as often as he could. Almost every series with the Brooklyn Dodgers we would attend at least one game to see his idol, Jackie Robinson." ... a one-of-a-kind human being, to be sure ...

"I can still see Big Klu with the cutoff sleeves standing at the plate and hitting a home run. When my grandfather couldn't take me, I would often go down to the ballpark and peep through the many holes that were drilled into the outfield fence and marvel at the green grass and the wonderful uniforms of both teams. When a ball was hit over the fence, I would risk getting run over by cars whizzing by on Western Avenue to get a souvenir before the other eager lads. Every so often the school would allow us to attend an afternoon game if

we were a member of the Knot-hole League." ...

Ah, to be a kid in Cincinnati, one eye pressed to the fence with the mighty Klu at bat, about to knock one out onto Western Avenue ... that is as good as it gets in this life ...

**EVEN MORE BASEBALL.** ... wasn't it great to see two Big West teams competing last week in the College World Series in Omaha? ... it was especially interesting to see the nation falling in love with UC Irvine and its "Anteater" mascot ...

This, you should note, is the same league populated by our very own Aggies, who will be eligible for the World Series themselves come next spring ... don't laugh, stranger things have happened ... and won't it be fun when we explain to the nation what an "Aggie" is? ...

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