

#24

Little League Dreamer

Someday, I'm going to coach a Little League baseball team. When I do, I'm going to let everybody have a turn to play in every game. No. Not just a turn to play; everybody's going to have a turn to *start*.

I go to all the practices, but I hardly ever get to play in the games. I just sit on the bench and watch and yell for the other guys. Oh, once in a while I get to go in, but it's usually the last inning and we're either so far ahead that there's no way we can blow it, or else we're so far behind that there's no way we can catch up. If the game is close at all, I never get a turn to play.

On the first day of practice, the coach asked all of us what position we wanted to play. Most of the guys wanted to be the pitcher, but I said I wanted first base, so he put me at first base. I was doing great until two ground balls got by me. Then I caught a pop fly, but when I threw to third, to get the runner there, I overthrew and the runner scored. After that, I didn't get to play first base anymore, which really isn't fair because those were just mistakes and I would never make them again.

Although I prefer to play first base, I'd be happy with center field or any other position. I'm not fussy.

The coach says he puts Ricky Anders at first base because Ricky's arm is better than mine and so is his batting average. That may be true, but the reason Ricky's arm is better and he gets more hits is because he plays more. I'd be a better hitter if I got a chance more often. I admit I don't hit so well in practice, but that's different. I know I'd be great if I had a chance to hit during a game.

Once, I actually got up to bat during the last inning of a game. The batter ahead of me walked, so there was a runner on base. I knew it was my big chance. I couldn't win the game — we

Monologs for Boys /61

were already eleven runs ahead — but if I could hit a home run, it would show the coach how good I really am. Maybe he'd even let me start next time.

I didn't get the home run. I didn't even get a single. What I got was a strike-out, on a called strike three when I wasn't even swinging. I'll never make that mistake again, either, but the coach just won't listen.

It's such a waste of talent. I know I could be an All-Star baseball player, if only I got to play more often.

