

Letter to the Editor, Metal Baseball Bats Have No Place in Youth Sports

December 15, 2010

Dear Editor:

A brain injury sustained in May 2010 by a Mokena, Illinois 11-year-old Little League pitcher, will now be litigated in Federal court against Easton-Bell Sports, Inc., a leading manufacturer of metal bats.

It should never have happened because metal baseball bats have no place in youth sports. We all know that metal bats perform better than wood bats, and the price tag is an indicator: \$200-\$400 for an engineered device with a thinner handle and larger sweet spot to hit the ball faster and farther. But lighter and quicker bats spell doom for the undersized pitcher who throws a good pitch to an over sized hitter of the same age who happens to hit it right on the nines.

These injuries do not happen with wood bats because they can not. Wood does not perform to the level that composites and metal can. No one understands the engineering that goes into a metal bat until a parent tells you that as quickly as the ball was hit off the bat was the same moment their son, the pitcher, hit the ground. It happens that quickly.

Sadly, Little League has fallen in love with metal bats. In most leagues, wood bats are banned! Imagine the thought that an 11-year-old could shatter a wood bat to the extent that pieces are flying all over the field as you would see in the major leagues. It's never happened, and as long as we have children using metal bats, it will never happen.

The Mokena accident is not an isolated incident. There are news reports from around the country about severe injuries to young players and in at least one case, a death. Metal bats are so dangerous that New York City and the entire state of North Dakota has banned them for use in youth sports. Several other states and communities are considering bans on metal bats in youth sports.

At one time, cigarettes and steroids were deemed safe also. Now it's time

to recognize the dangers inherent in metal bats, and take action. How many more injuries must our kids sustain before we put a stop to something that can be easily prevented? Let's stop using these "weapons" before they injure and kill again.

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