

## Is it still child's play?

### Danny Amonte's parents pushed their son too far

As memories of the 2001 Little League World Series fade, there will be one that will not be forgotten — the story of Danny Amonte. Amonte, a towering left-handed pitcher for the Bronx's Rolando Paulino All-Stars, pitched a no-hitter, a one-hitter and the league's first perfect game in 44 years in three of the four games he played. Indeed, Amonte's successes were feats destined for the record books, until Little League officials announced last week that his team would be forced to forfeit all of their victories because of a startling revelation — Danny's father had falsified the age on his son's birth certificate in order to qualify him to play.



J.J. TREVINO

Unfortunately, in youth associations across the country, interference by overly aggressive parents is becoming more widespread and continues to erode the friendly atmosphere that children enjoy in competitive sports. Although a few associations have begun forcing parents to sign a code of ethics or watch a video on sportsmanship before their child is allowed to play, these mediocre resolutions do not go far enough and more should be done before more children are affected by this harmful behavior.

Fred Engh, president of the National Youth Sports Alliance (NYSA) said, "Parents have gotten so out of control that it has become a commonplace to see verbal abuse and even physical violence."

In Amonte's case, it is not clear what role he played in his ineligibility. It is known that his father severely compromised a game that is a national pastime and ends in snowcones and ice cream, not embarrassment. In fact, the results of the League's investigation were announced just days after the mayor of New York presented the team with a key to the city. While the damage Amonte's father has caused appears to be minimal, other youth associa-

tions that have witnessed the parental, win-at-any-cost mentality have not been as fortunate.

A baseball game in Georgia recently was interrupted after a vicious fight involving parents and coaches broke out in the stands as four and five year-old players watched in awe from the field.

How could parents possibly argue an umpire's call so violently in a game that absurdly are failing to realize that they are gravely reducing the enjoyment of the game, and even more so, their children are having to watch their parents yell, scream and punch other fans.

At a boys hockey practice in Boston, Mass., a security guard would have been a hero if they had been present during an incident that resulted in two fathers getting so out-of-control that one of them was killed during a bleacher-clearing brawl. Apparently these parents forgot the competition was among the youth - not the adults in the stands.

In a recent survey of 500 adults conducted by Survey USA in south Florida, 82 percent said parents are too aggressive in youth sports, while 72 percent also felt that those aggressive parents should be banned from the programs entirely.

Indeed, while program directors are correct that exhibiting good sportsmanship is an essential factor in competitive sports, it seems that the problems stem from parents who place too much importance on the game. In many tournaments held each year it is common to see high-dollars and scholarships going to the victorious participant.

According to Victor Jackson, a former pro-football player who is now an assistant head coach for two youth basketball teams, parents get so involved because now, "the stakes are higher, so [emotions] are magnified."

Forcing these parents to sign a measly sheet of paper will not make them realize that no matter what the outcome, children

usually remember nothing else but the enjoyment they experienced while playing the game.

In these types of scenarios, it is the kids who have indirectly become the victims. Before more lives are lost, or more children's recreational games ruined, something should be done to control parents who cross the line. If nothing is done, the children will suffer.

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## AIDS is not a joke

### ACT UP group denies AIDS will kill

Ever since our country's first encounters with the HIV virus, Americans have grown certain of one fact: AIDS kills.

From pale skin and lesions to wiry bodies and tears, the HIV virus has left an ugly mark on this great nation.

But from out of the ashes of the AIDS-fearing 20th century comes a new group, one which spits, shouts, intimidates and threatens to deliver its twisted message to the world: AIDS is a lie and AIDS drugs kill.

In its fight to spread this myth and rid itself of its own fear and paranoia, this group, ACT UP San Francisco, is threatening to not only compromise efforts to battle HIV, but to also step on those who dare to get in its path.

To some, ACT UP may sound familiar. It was started as a San Francisco-based AIDS activism group in the early 1980s. The group's original intent was nonviolent civil disobedience to increase AIDS awareness and make AIDS drugs more affordable and accessible to those stricken with the illness.

But since then, differences of opinion led some group members to initiate a split from the organization. These members incorporated the name "ACT UP" in an effort to lend credibility to their own views.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, armed with ignorance and hate, the group began to mass-produce and distribute bumper stickers and T-shirts with messages like "AIDS DRUGS ARE FAG POISON" and "AIDS IS OVER," as they decided that the national government was to blame for their unfortunate situations.

According to ACT UP's website, they encourage people not to take HIV tests, and they consider condom-free sex to be everyone's right.

In 1996, ACT UP member Ronnie Burk interrupted an AIDS health forum by pouring



GEORGE DEUTSCH

25 pounds of feces-laden cat litter on San Francisco AIDS Foundation Pat Christensen's head. Mr. Burk felt that his efforts would discourage the distribution of AIDS medications, drugs ACT UP believes the government provides in an effort to eliminate homosexuals.

Unaffected, AIDS drugs do not kill. Admittedly, the drugs have occasional side effects, but users must accept this and realize the medication may not be totally effective for everyone. Without these drugs, many HIV-positive people would not be alive today; these drugs are our nation's best attempt at eradicating this illness.

As San Francisco Chronicle writer Dan Wohlfeiler said, "ACT UP San Francisco responds to scientific data with half-truths. It commits ... malpractice by saying that we don't need HIV medications, even though many of us are enjoying healthier and longer lives because of them."

Despite its intentions, ACT UP's methods of dealing with the AIDS virus are counterproductive. In its efforts to deny the destruction of AIDS and the effectiveness of AIDS medications, the group is stepping on the toes of those who depend on these medications to survive.

The group insists that its target is the fat-cat drug companies, but its actions only hurt those stricken with AIDS. And these are the same people the group has pledged to help.

The inevitable result of ACT UP's continued action will be more AIDS infections and more deaths, point blank. This group must take responsibility for itself and realize the full effect of its actions on AIDS sufferers.

ACT UP San Francisco is entitled to its beliefs, but it is not entitled to impose its judgment and intolerance on others. In the end, ignorance, violence and lies will prove to be more deadly than any disease.

George Deutsch is a junior journalism major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Red, White, Blue for Patriotism

In response to a Sept. 12th mail call:

I think that we should definitely where the red, white, and blue at the next game. I think that it would be very special and people could see that there is still patriotism in our country.

I was in class the other day and I heard people make comments about how they did not want our government to retaliate. Because "innocent people" may get hurt. My question to you is this: Are the 50,000 people that just got blasted deserving of this sort of terror? I think that you know the answer. If this is not stopped immediately it will only serve to get worse.

Terri L. Wood  
Class of 1999

#### Classes should have been canceled

In response to a Sept. 12th mail call:

President Bowen, I hope you read this, because your decision to not cancel classes on Tuesday was sickening. As stated in the mail call today, what has to happen before classes are cancelled?

I totally agree with the fact that you keeping us in classes tried to

downplay the event to us and kept us from fully realizing what had happened. That's why I left after my first class, and lost it when I got home and realized the enormity of the situation.

In my last class my professor took up a homework problem for a quiz grade, and yet when I ask about making it up, he says I have to have a university excused absence. Give me a break. With me being in the Marine Corps reserves, I had just a bit too much on my mind to worry about something as trivial as class.

My respect for The TAMU administration, as well as all of the professors who took up homework or gave quizzes on the day, has been forever lowered. God speed.

Clint Laceywell  
Class of 2000 & 2003

### CARTOON OF THE DAY



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