

Alpenrose. Where Softball Dreams are Made!

WRITTEN BY: KEN CARON

For years I have enjoyed the opportunity to watch softball games up at Alpenrose with my girls. I would tell my girls to watch players and how they ran the bases and give them money for snow cones or ice cream. Four years ago I watched my oldest daughter dream her dream of making to the Little League World Series, held each August at Alpenrose, only to come up short in the championship game. This year I had the chance to coach in that same championship game with my youngest daughter Sammi Caron for Tualatin's Little League All Star team. It was an experience that I can honestly say neither I nor the girls of this year's All-Stars team will ever forget.

Our semi-final was a hard fought and close game from beginning to end with Tualatin winning 3-2 over Murryhill. Camryn Robbins took the mound and pitched her heart out. On the first pitch of the game she let out a HUGE exhale after the first strike was called, and she went on to strike the batter out. Another big exhale occurred. Camryn went on to strike out five of the first seven batters of that game and finished with a total of 11 strikeouts in six innings with only 1 walk. The game ended in a dramatic fashion as a pass ball happened and Larissa Tashchuk, our catcher, grabbed the ball and she turned around and saw the tying run racing to the plate and made a dive to try and make the out. Two bodies



lying on the ground around home plate and with all of Alpenrose quietly awaiting the outcome of the umpire's decision, OUT!

(#3!) Game over and Tualatin wins!

The emotions that occurred were the excitement of the win, the realization of dreams of girls getting to play for that magical chance to go to the World Series. I had the best seat in the house as I got to see my fellow coach tell his daughter how proud he was of her. The huge hug that followed shared between a father and daughter that was of joy of winning, of comfort of making it through a tough game on top, and of a daughter letting out of all those emotions and a few tears of a hard fought game. As they hugged for a while it brought a smile to this coach's face. Coaching our daughters is very trying at times, but when we get to one of those rare moments like this one it makes it all worthwhile. This semi-final game was the best game of

the tournament and I am glad that I was able to watch as the girls had their moment to cheer and to dream big about the game to come and keep the dream alive for one more day. Dreams are what make us work harder, and desire to be a part of something special. This has been true for my daughter Sammi who has been dreaming of playing in this game since she was 5.

The tears flowed on Friday night as the dreams of our girls came to an end. There were a few bright spots in our loss. Sammi Caron struck out the first batter of the game and went on to strike out 7 batters and only had 3 walks in the game in her 5 innings of pitching. Megan Woodward had a hard fought walk to start the 4th inning to help bring a little light to a dark dugout in the 4th inning where heads and spirits were hanging low. The team went on to bat our entire line-up to tighten the game to 5-6. That was a close as we would come in the game.

When the game and tournament ended many of our team had tears including my daughter for at least a moment their dreams would come to an end. However, they do not realize that they were the ones that younger girls were watching and yes dreaming their dreams of one day playing in that championship game with all its possibilities. The dreams for this year may have come to an end, but as long as girls have the chance to play on the big field up at Alpenrose the dreams will continue and yes more snow cones and ice cream will be bought and enjoyed as you get that chance to watch Tualatin girls dream dreams and work to make them come true.

The All-Star team was made up of Larissa Tashchuk, Rachel Dixon, Camryn Robbins, Epic Gourde, Alexandria (Ali) Herrera, Kelsey Downing, Megan Woodward, Grace Marshall, Rachel Still, and my daughter Sammi Caron. Coaches were Craig Robbins, and Joey Hall.

So here is to next year, and another group of girls dreaming big and hoping for their chance to play in the World Series. Keep the dream alive and the ice cream flowing! Thanks Alpenrose!

Written by Ken Caron, Manager of the 11-12 All-Star Team for Tualatin Little League. Go Tualatin!