



Jus'
BEKUZ

By Rick
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Picture imperfect

The image remains as vivid today, nearly 30 years later, as when it occurred on a Little League diamond during an all-star tournament.

Picture this: A mother dismayed that her son had been called out on a close forceout play at second base to end a tight game decided to file her own protest. She sauntered out to the very base where her son had slid moments earlier and sat down on the bag. She crossed her legs and placed her purse in her lap. She didn't move.

There she stayed until a couple of police officers who happened by in time picked her up by each arm and shoulder and carried her off the field — and maybe elsewhere. All the while, she maintained her defiant seated position.

Now picture this: Or don't. After an all-star team representing the Jefferson County Little League won the district Senior League championship on Thursday, the players — and members of the coaching staff, too, — delivered, in triumph, a version of the No. 1 signal, only with an improper finger. The wrong finger.

Use your imagination, though the picture could be viewed all over social media on Friday, a day after their big-time gaffe, and seen by how many people. It's still out there and will stay out there.

While Mom on Second Base offered a humorous twist to a competitive game, what Boys Under Scoreboard delivered after a championship victory was a bit more ghastly.

Sad, really. Agreeing was Little League International, the organization in which many of the area's youth baseball and softball leagues are members. It swung the bat quickly and hit the Jefferson County Little League's Senior squad with a banishment of the coaching staff and players.

Whether their pointed message was directed at the opposing team — and we sure hope not — or it was fostered by adolescent hijinks is irrelevant.

It was stupid, pure and simple. As for the participating adults in the picture, appalling.

Few would dispute that premise based on reactions from people on social media sites on the web.

Heck, they were discussing it at an employees' meeting at a local Sheetz. News travels fast.

Thirty years ago, though,

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Facebook photos

The "#prayfortrey" slogan sits atop a Facebook page devoted to Trey White (above), who underwent a recent heart transplant after doctors determined he was suffering from congestive heart failure. He is all smiles as he shows a poster that lists his place on a heart transplant list. The sophomore at Spring Mills used to play baseball for the Cardinals, but earlier in the year he wasn't feeling well, and it was determined he needed a heart transplant. White has a new heart. Pictured at right, White is shown with friends Jantzen Szanca (top) and Drake Szanca.



Former Spring Mills athlete receives new heart

BY JESSICA MANUEL
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SPRING MILLS — Trey White has always been a talented athlete, but his sporting career was sidelined a few months ago when he and his family received some bad news.

The 15-year-old Spring Mills student and baseball player was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, which meant he needed a new heart to continue to live.

Fast forward to the middle of June, and Trey is now home, healthy and with a new heart.

After Trey received a new heart, the family waited for news of when they could go home. Seemingly forever away from home had passed when that day finally arrived.

Trey handed his mother two Beads of Courage: a survivor bead and a graduation bead. He avoided the question when Rhonda asked if they were going home, but when Trey asked for the car keys and said his bags were packed, Rhonda knew part of the journey was finally over.

"The Beads of Courage are great," Rhonda said. "Each bead tells a story of his journey. For every procedure you get done, you get a different bead."

During his first 20 days of hospitalization, Trey had about 150 beads. Now, the number is between 300 and 500, Rhonda said. She added that the beads became more important to Trey as time went on and the beads represented everything he went through.

"He looked like he was dying. I'll never forget that look on his face."

Rhonda White
Trey's mother

"There's not many people who would be home after what he went through," she said.

Trey decided not to play baseball this year, a blessing in disguise for the family. He played as a freshman during the first year of Spring Mills existence.

Looking back, Rhonda saw problematic signs: Trey was running slower than he normal even though he always gives 100 percent, things like that. Despite the problem, he was an outstanding athlete and did so with only partial use of his heart.

No one ever thought anything was wrong until one day Trey called home from school, saying he was having trouble breathing and was very tired. Rhonda took her son to Winchester to get help.

That's when the doctor gave the diagnosis. "He looked like he was dying. I'll never forget the look on his face," Rhonda said. "I knew I had to be strong. I'm usually emotional."

"He's always given 110 percent, because he's always been that type of kid."

Rhonda, Trey's family and his friends became his support system through the months. However, the whole Eastern Panhandle and some in the city of Pittsburgh, where the procedure took place, offered help to the entire family.

The Pray for Trey Facebook page currently has more than 1,600 likes, some people whom the family doesn't even know offering support for them.

"It helped me get through many long nights," Rhonda said.

The Szanca family provided plenty of support for Trey and his family. Drake and Jantzen Szanca, along with their friend Destiny, visited Trey whenever they could, bringing smiles and sometimes gifts from home.

"When they came, I'm not kidding when I say it, it helped lift spirits," Rhonda said. "It helped his health. It helped him fight for his life. They mean the world. They are what true friends really are. God answered many prayers."

"There's only so much a mother can do. Drake and his mothers and their family and his other friend Destiny have been his rock."

Whether it be for 10 minutes or hours, seeing his friends truly helped Trey, Rhonda said. Sometimes they'd bring gifts, like a Spring Mills Cardinals banner signed by classmates, which hung in Trey's room while he was away.

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3 Things to know

1. HOSTS OUSTED IN WORLD CUP

Jodie Taylor and Lucy Bronze scored in the first 14 minutes, and England shocked and then eliminated Canada from its home World Cup with a 2-1 victory in the quarterfinals Saturday.

2. TWO SHARE SENIOR OPEN LEAD

Bernhard Langer and Jeff Maggert shared the lead over a bunched field heading into the final round of the U.S. Senior Open, while eight other players were within a shot of the lead.

3. EPIC TEAMS LOSE REGION I CONTESTS

Four EPIC soccer teams playing in the United States Youth Soccer Association's Region I tournament in Barboursville struggled on Saturday in the second day of play.



JCLL tries to overcome controversy President thinks it will take time after issue with picture

BY ERIC JONES
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SHENANDOAH JUNCTION — Jefferson County Little League is still reeling from a controversy in which players and coaches from the Senior League Baseball team are seen in a photograph giving a vulgar gesture after winning the District 6 title last week.

The photo, which showed players and coaches displaying the middle finger, quickly made it to social media after it was taken Thursday, and the Little League International Tournament Committee quickly handed down a punishment, banning the manager, two coaches and 12 players. Now, with the punishment taken care of, JCLL is working on damage control.

"It's unfortunate. It was a bad choice from the coaches and players on the team, and by no means is it a reflection of our league," said Nikki Albright,

Jefferson County Little League president. "That's not the image we want out there for our league, and hopefully, it's a lesson for our league."

Albright and the rest of the JCLL board members learned about the picture Thursday night, and Albright organized an emergency meeting for Friday night to address the situation. Soon after, Albright was notified by the LLITC of its decision.

"I received a call from (Southeastern Region Director Jennifer Colvin) saying they had been flooded with e-mails and calls. They met and made a decision, and we as a board, we had to follow that," Albright said. "We definitely support the decision 100 percent."

The league must now decide whether or not to field a team for the state tournament, which begins in a few weeks. It is allowed to put together a team, although it must be comprised of all

new coaches and new players.

"We can pull kids from the high school level, but with the tournament starting soon, I don't see our league going forward with that," Albright said. "There have been discussions, but I don't think that's the route we're going to take."

The league will do its best to move forward with the incident and try to repair its image. It's something Albright believes could be a long and difficult process.

"There's not a person out there that didn't see that photo or comment on the pages. We're not wanting it to reflect on the entire league. It was a bad choice, we did what we needed to do and I'm hoping we can move on from it. It won't be easy," Albright said.

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Today's TV Highlights

2 p.m. — U.S. Senior Open (Fox)
7:30 p.m. — All-Star Selection Show (MLB)