HOW TO REACH US
SPORTS EDITOR: Frank DiLeo
(973) 428-6670
fdileo@gannett.com
TO REPORT SCORES: (800) 398-8933

SPORTS

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LANCE GETS NO HELP
Armstrong's teammates fall back while he has to fend for himself, **B6**.

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YANKS FALL TO INDIANS
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SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2005 www.dailyrecord.com ★★ DAILY RECORD, MORRIS COUNTY

Separating coach from parent

DAILY RECORD FILE PHOTOS

Above, Tom Wilson, right, who is the girls basketball coach at Whippany Park High School, coaches his daughter, Jocelyn, 12, in the Catholic Youth Organization basketball league. Wilson also coaches his other two children. **Below**, Bruce Driver, background, coaches his daughter, Whitney, in 2004.

Child's happiness is all that matters

FRANK DILEO

Joe Hofmann coaches his own kids.

Good for Joe Hofmann. Me, I tried to coach my son during his first year of Little League and, like Mr. Hofmann, enjoyed every minute of it.

My son, Haden, however, wasn't a happy camper.

Even while I was in high school, I would help to coach Little League teams whenever I could. All this knowledge of baseball had to be put to some good use. So I was always eager to get involved when Haden was old enough to play sports… *if* he wanted to play.

But after a few practices, it was clear that Haden just wasn't comfortable with Dad holding the whistle. I'm not a yeller or screamer and I try to let kids be kids whenever possible. But when I said "Haden, keep your head down and weight back," it became clear that he was hearing "Haden, get your homework done and clean your room."

Growing up, my father never really coached my teams. I can't thank him enough.

I watched in horror as many of my friends were treated differently than the rest of us because Dad was the coach. They were pushed much harder, received much more criticism and worst of all, weren't allowed to just be a kid.

Now, before I go any further, let me say that without parents coaching their own kids, we would have almost no coaches left at the youth level. And most, like Joe Hofmann, do a fantastic job separating the coach from the parent.

But every now and then you come across some Bobby Knight wannabe who's living vicariously through his children and can't stand to lose. Those are the parents who give coaches a bad name.

While playing Little League in my hometown of Hillside, I had one such coach; we'll call him Mr. P.

Mr. P. has been permanently burned into my memory after he told me I had to strike out during one plate appearance.

SEE DILEO / B8

Teaching sports to children both tough, rewarding

BY JANE HAVSY
DAILY RECORD

■ Former NHL defenseman Bruce Driver tries to make youth coaching easier through his book, **B8**.

Susie Sweeney took her first steps on the lacrosse field at Kent Place. She was nine months old, and her mother, Suzanne, was coaching the freshman team.

Susie grew up at various fields, first on the sidelines toddling behind as her mother worked, then playing with the teams. When Suzanne Sweeney became her daughter's coach in second grade, it seemed like a natural next step.

Tiny but quick, Susie Sweeney went right into the goal, with older, more experienced players firing shots at her. And, of course, after watching for so long, she made save after save.

Driving home after one particular afternoon when Susie had a great day in the net for her mother's Madison town team, Suzanne Sweeney was waiting for her daughter to say, "Yeah Mom, you're a good coach."

Instead, Susie said she'd imagined younger sister Shannyn was behind her in the goal, and she couldn't let the ball hit her. The words stung Suzanne Sweeney just a bit, but she has gone on to be mom and coach to both her daughters.

"I'm a very maternal coach," Suzanne Sweeney said. "I love my kids, my Peck kids, my Madison kids. I'm not a screamer. When the kids come off the field, I give them a hug. … For Susie, it was just Momminess."

No other option would have been acceptable.

Just ask Tom Wilson.

The Whippany Park coach's household seems in constant thrall to an oversized calendar hanging on the wall in the computer room.

SEE COACHING / B8

Watching your kid develop is worth all of the time, work

JOE HOFMANN

I coach my kids. Both of them. Travel, AAU, rec leagues. Baseball and basketball.

And I love every single moment.

Over the last seven years, I have coached my two sons and I wouldn't trade any of the moments with them — and their teams — for a million dollars.

Should fathers volunteer to coach on the youth level?

Absolutely, positively Y-E-S!

I know what some of you are thinking: This guy is living his life vicariously through his children.

I've heard that expression all too often — mostly from people who don't have kids.

My response to them? What am I supposed to do, NOT get involved with my family?

The most obvious reason why parents should coach is simple: Without fathers (or mothers) doing the organizing and coaching, who would? In every league I have been involved in in the Woodbridge-Colonia area, fathers have run the leagues and coached in them.

If they didn't, there'd be no teams.

And no leagues.

That goes for mothers, too. My wife Donna has sold maybe thousands of boxes of candy and hundreds of tee-shirts and jackets for fund raising. If she didn't, who would? And if no one did, how would the leagues survive?

SEE HOFMANN / B8

Hanover's Sara Laferrara, right, slides into home past Madison catcher Nicole Iannarone during Hanover's 4-3 win on Saturday. Hanover advances to play Par-Troy West today in the Little League softball District 1 final.

DANIELLE AUSTEN / DAILY RECORD

Hanover stays loose, advances to play Par-Troy W.

Little League softball team battles to make District final

DISTRICT 1 LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL
HANOVER 4, MADISON 3
HANOVER PLAYS PAR-TROY WEST IN FINAL TODAY

BY MARK VIERA
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

Bob Bartholomew had a plan from the beginning.

Though he didn't buy into the idea, he knew his Hanover Little League softball team was considered the underdog against the Madison team that had already beaten it in pool play, 3-2, so he kept things easy for his squad.

Prior to the start of the game that would decide who was to play Par-Troy West for the District 1 Little League Softball championship, his team was found sitting on the bench in the dugout. Eventually they got up and did some quick exercises to get warmed up, while the favored Madison team was taking batting practice and running through fielding drills in the outfield.

Bartholomew's plan paid off on Saturday, as Hanover Park upended Madison, 4-3, off of a Kalli Makris single.

"We were very nervous against their pitcher," Bartholomew said. "I think keeping them loose helped them out."

Makris, who was also Hanover's starting pitcher, singled with one out in the top of the sixth, and final, inning to score pinch-runner Jill Hall.

Makris said her only thought at the plate was "just put it in play."

SEE SOFTBALL / B5