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# Scholar's View : Setting an Example

April 01, 2009 | David Wheeler

Sara Tucholsky was a 5'2", seldom-used senior outfielder for the Western Oregon University softball team. She recently became nationally known after slugging her only career home run in a key conference game against Central Washington.

However, it was not the home run that prompted ESPN.com to display her picture on their web page or to memorialize the event with a coveted ESPY for "Great Sportsmanship." Rather it was the unique response from two players on the opposing team.

While rounding first base she inadvertently missed the bag. When she turned to go back, her ACL gave out leaving her writhing on the ground in pain. Unfortunately, softball rules would not allow her coaches or trainers to touch her while on the base path, even after a home run. The only solution was to credit Tucholsky with a single, thus nullifying her home run, and give her a pinch runner.

Knowing that the rules allowed defensive players to touch base runners, it was then that Central Washington's senior first baseman, Mallory Holtman, stepped in and shocked everyone by stating, "Excuse me, would it be OK if we carried her around and she touched each bag?"

Believe it or not, Holtman and shortstop Liz Wallace carried Tucholsky to each base, eventually handing her to her coaches and teammates after passing home plate. Even more incredible is that a bid to the Division II National Tournament was on the line!

I share this with you because in the midst of a generation that is overly criticized as distant and rude, this act of sportsmanship is a defining snapshot. As a professor at Liberty, I am encouraged by the tremendous passion in the students of today. They are not unlike the young Moravians in church history who willingly sold themselves into lifelong slavery in order to take the gospel into impossible situations.

Sadly, I fear that my generation would have been too consumed with winning the softball game to perform such a selfless act. Rather than exalting Christ-like humility, compassion and servanthood in our lifestyles, too often we act like consumers, and God is the store clerk assigned to meet our every need.

I am reminded of the time in Matthew 22:36-39 when Jesus was asked to define the "Greatest Commandment." He responded, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all of your soul, with all your mind ... the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

We should go and do the same.

Dr. David Wheeler, Liberty University professor of Evangelism and Student Ministries, contributes to “SBC Life,” a journal published by the Southern Baptist Convention.



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