

Softball Players Help Opponent

In 2008, two college women's softball teams – the Western Oregon Wolves and the Central Washington University Wildcats – faced each other for a final game before the division playoffs.

Sara Tucholsky played for Oregon. She was not one of their strongest players, but that day she hit a home run. As she ran around the baseline, she accidentally missed first base. As she turned back to touch the base, Sara tore her ACL.

That is an excruciating injury for an athlete. Now, Sara wouldn't be able to complete her home run, the only one she had ever hit. If her teammates helped her in any way, she would be called out by the umpires.

She was safe on first base, but she couldn't even stand up on her own, much less run the bases. The fans began shouting for Sara to get off the field, but she wouldn't budge.

Just then, Mallory Holtman, who played first base for the opposing team, Central Washington University, jogged out onto the field and lifted Sara up from the dirt. She called out to the umpires, "Excuse me, would it be OK if we carried her around and she touched each bag?"

One umpire shouted back, "Why would you want to do that?"



But no one really needed to know the answer. So Mallory and the Central Washington shortstop, Liz Wallace, lifted Sara, hands crossed under her, carried her to second base, and gently lowered her so she could touch the base.

Then Mallory and Liz started to giggle, and so did Sara, through her tears, and the three of them continued this odd procession to third base and home to a standing ovation.

The extra run made it easier for Western Oregon to win the second game, 4-2, and sweep the doubleheader. More importantly, all involved realized they had taken part in an event they would always remember.

That story illustrates what true sportsmanship is all about.

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There is also a spiritual corollary.

We human beings slip and fall and find ourselves short of the law and the prophets, the Bible reminds us and we discover our failings in the experiences of life. We cannot match God's holiness. The law cannot save us. But God saw our fallen state, and He sent Jesus to lift us up out of the dirt.

By His own sacrifice, He carries us to home plate.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter