

Press&Dakotan DAILY DOSE

Daily opinions from the P&D Sports Staff on local and national high school, college and professional sports.



BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
james.cimburek@yankton.net

One of my media counterparts, who is located to the north and east of Yankton, chirped on Tuesday that the loud roar you hear to the south is Yankton celebrating the fact that O'Gorman will petition up to 11AAA. (I am paraphrasing a bit, but you get the idea.)
Maybe some Yankton fans are celebrating, but not all. In the playoff era of South Dakota high school football, there has been no more played matchup than the Sioux Falls O'Gorman Knights and Yankton Bucks. This year's playoff matchup between the squads marked the 13th time since the playoffs began in 1981 that those two storied programs met to end one or the other's season.

Yankton, O'Gorman In Separate Divisions Not Good For S.D. Football

Six times, that final was played in the DakotaDome, including four of the first five big-school championships ever contested in the state. Not all of those have lived up to billing, like O'Gorman's 42-0 win over the Bucks in 2005, but some have been barn-burners worthy of the rivalry. I had the fortune of covering one of those great games, the 28-23 Yankton victory in 1999.

O'Gorman's decision to join its Sioux Falls brethren in the new big-school class means that — at least for the next few years — we won't see the Dome filled to the brim in fans wearing blue or red (except, maybe, next year's State-U game there). If either team makes the finals, it will likely be against a program that doesn't provoke memories of the great battles of the past.
And both programs will be lesser because of it.

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

9A ALL-STATE FOOTBALL TEAM
Arlington — Zach Wamke, linebacker; Lane Weber, defensive back
Canistota — Cody Bunger, quarterback; Eric Tieszen, fullback; Alex Robertson, running back; Jason Van Winkle, guard; Boone DeKramer, linebacker
Chester — Austin Opdahl, punter
Corsica/Stickney — Cameron Kosal, defensive end; Adam Bormann, linebacker
Eureka Bowdle — Brady Brockel, defensive tackle
Hamlin — Mason Leiseth, wide receiver
Hanson — Jacob Paradesi, linebacker
Herried/Selby Area — Kennedy Kosters, center; Nick Larson, special team player
Phillip — Chaney Burns, kicker
South Central — Sam Hazen, defensive tackle
Wall — Tyler Trask, long snapper
Wiemer — Mitch Bossel, running back; Jarrod Tuszka, tight end; Brian Peterson, guard; Clay Rozell, defensive end
Wilmot — Landon Hammer, wide receiver; Austin Hulscher, defensive end
Honorable mention
Canistota — Nick Hofer, Tyler Decker; Hamlin — Alex Holzwarth; Herried/Selby Area — Dakota Thorstensen; Irene-Wakonda — Dustin Livingston; Kadoka Area — Chandler Stuebck; Clint Stout; Lymon — Charlie LaRoche; Wall — Laketon McLaughlin; Trevor Anderson

Open: Minnesota, N.Y. Giants, Seattle, Tennessee
Monday's Game
San Francisco 32, Chicago 7
Thursday, Nov. 22
Houston at Detroit, 11:30 a.m.
Washington at Dallas, 3:15 p.m.
New England at N.Y. Jets, 7:20 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 25
Denver at Kansas City, noon
Minnesota at Chicago, noon
Oakland at Cincinnati, noon
Pittsburgh at Cleveland, noon
Buffalo at Indianapolis, noon
Tennessee at Jacksonville, noon
Atlanta at Tampa Bay, noon
Seattle at Miami, noon
Baltimore at San Diego, 3:05 p.m.
St. Louis at Arizona, 3:25 p.m.
San Francisco at New Orleans, 3:25 p.m.
Green Bay at N.Y. Giants, 7:20 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 26
Carolina at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.

BASKETBALL

USA TODAY/ESPN WOMEN'S TOP 25

The top 25 teams in the USA Today-ESPN Women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Nov. 19, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and last week's ranking:

Record	Pts	Pvs	
1. Stanford (17)	5-0	758	4
2. UConn (12)	2-0	749	2
3. Baylor (2)	4-1	719	3
4. Duke	2-0	678	3
5. Notre Dame	2-0	646	6
6. Louisville	3-0	603	8
7. Penn State	3-0	582	9
8. Kentucky	2-1	545	7
9. Georgia	4-0	519	10
10. Maryland	2-1	502	5
11. California	3-0	464	12
12. Purdue	3-0	386	14
13. Oklahoma	2-1	323	11
14. West Virginia	3-0	319	19
15. Tennessee	3-1	287	20
16. St. John's	2-1	255	18
17. Ohio State	2-1	253	21
18. Oklahoma State	3-0	212	22
19. Vanderbilt	3-1	189	16
20. Nebraska	3-1	180	15
21. Texas	2-0	168	24
22. UCLA	2-0	109	—
23. Kansas	3-0	106	25
24. Texas A&M	0-3	95	13
25. Dayton	4-0	81	—

Others receiving votes: Miami 53, Gonzaga 41, South Carolina 38, Georgia Tech 31, Iowa State 30, North Carolina 29, Virginia 20, Delaware 18, DePaul 18, Green Bay 16, Georgetown 12, Middle Tennessee 11, Syracuse 11, Chattanooga 10, Rutgers 6, Florida State 3, Minnesota 2.

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
New England	7	3	0	.700	358	225
N.Y. Jets	4	6	0	.400	242	241
Buffalo	4	6	0	.400	230	299
Miami	4	6	0	.400	187	205

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Houston	9	1	0	.900	293	180
Indianapolis	6	4	0	.600	210	260
Tennessee	4	6	0	.400	219	311
Jacksonville	1	6	0	.100	164	289

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Baltimore	8	2	0	.800	267	206
Pittsburgh	6	4	0	.600	217	190
Cincinnati	5	5	0	.500	248	237
Cleveland	2	8	0	.200	189	234

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Denver	7	3	0	.700	301	212
San Diego	4	6	0	.400	232	221
Oakland	3	7	0	.300	208	322
Kansas City	1	9	0	.100	152	284

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Atlanta	9	1	0	.900	270	193
Tampa Bay	6	4	0	.600	287	230
New Orleans	5	5	0	.500	287	273
Carolina	2	8	0	.200	184	243

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Green Bay	7	3	0	.700	263	207
Chicago	3	1	0	.750	249	165
Minnesota	6	4	0	.600	238	221
Detroit	4	6	0	.400	236	246

W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
San Francisco	7	2	1	.750	245	134
Seattle	6	4	0	.600	198	161
Arizona	4	6	0	.400	163	196
St. Louis	3	6	1	.350	174	237

Thursday's Game
Buffalo 19, Miami 14
Sunday's Games
Dallas 23, Cleveland 20, OT
N.Y. Jets 27, St. Louis 13
Houston 43, Jacksonville 37, OT
Washington 28, Kansas City 6
Washington 31, Philadelphia 6
Green Bay 24, Detroit 20
Atlanta 23, Arizona 19
New Orleans 27, Carolina 21, OT
New York 38, Oakland 17
Denver 30, San Diego 23
New England 59, Indianapolis 24
Baltimore 13, Pittsburgh 10

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL
American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Traded INF Robert Andino to Seattle for OF Trayvon Robinson.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
AMERICAN CONFERENCE
East
W L T Pct PF PA
New England 7 3 0 .700 358 225
N.Y. Jets 4 6 0 .400 242 241
Buffalo 4 6 0 .400 230 299
Miami 4 6 0 .400 187 205
South
W L T Pct PF PA
Houston 9 1 0 .900 293 180
Indianapolis 6 4 0 .600 210 260
Tennessee 4 6 0 .400 219 311
Jacksonville 1 6 0 .100 164 289
North
W L T Pct PF PA
Baltimore 8 2 0 .800 267 206
Pittsburgh 6 4 0 .600 217 190
Cincinnati 5 5 0 .500 248 237
Cleveland 2 8 0 .200 189 234

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOC.
Monday's Games
Charlotte 102, Milwaukee 89
Indiana 96, Washington 88
Atlanta 81, Orlando 72
Denver 97, Memphis 92
Golden State 105, Dallas 101, OT
L.A. Clippers 82, San Antonio 87
Utah 102, Houston 91
Tuesday's Games
Charlotte at Philadelphia, 6 p.m.
New York at New Orleans, 7 p.m.
Brooklyn at L.A. Lakers, 9:30 p.m.
Wednesday's Games
Philadelphia at Cleveland, 6 p.m.
Toronto at Charlotte, 6 p.m.
New Orleans at Indiana, 6 p.m.
Detroit at Orlando, 6 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City, 6:30 p.m.
San Antonio at Boston, 6:30 p.m.
Washington at Atlanta, 6:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Miami, 6:30 p.m.
Chicago at Houston, 7 p.m.
Denver at Minnesota, 7 p.m.
New York at Dallas, 7:30 p.m.
Portland at Phoenix, 8 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Sacramento, 9 p.m.
Brooklyn at Golden State, 9:30 p.m.

BASEBALL
American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Traded INF Robert Andino to Seattle for OF Trayvon Robinson.

CALENDAR

Wednesday, November 21
No activities scheduled
Thursday, November 22
No activities scheduled
Friday, November 23
BASKETBALL, MEN'S Culver-Stockton at USD (7 p.m., KVHT-FM)
BASKETBALL, WOMEN'S Pepperdine Holiday Tour at Malibu, Calif.: USD vs. Pepperdine (5:30 p.m., KVHT-FM)

Brundage manager and Ray Burris pitching coach of Lehigh Valley (IL); Dave Lundquist pitching coach of Reading (EL); Bob Mikala pitching coach of Clearwater (FSL); Aaron Fultz pitching coach of Lakewood (SAI); Lino Connell coach and Les Lancaster pitching coach of Williamsport (NYP); Ramon Henderson coach of the Gulf Coast Phillies; Andy Tracy minor league hitting coordinator; Carlos Arroyo minor league roving pitching coach; and Jorge Valera pitching coach and player development. Fightin' Phils Field Staff Announced for 2013
PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Selected the contracts of RHP Phil Irvin and C Tony Sanchez from Indianapolis (PCL) and RHP Victor Black, C Ramon Cabrera and RHP Hunter Strickland from Altona (EL).
PITTSBURGH CARDINALS — Selected the contracts of RHP Michael Baez, RH Keith Butler, RHP Eric Fomatario and LHP Kevin Siegfist from Springfield (FL).

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Named Pat Murphy manager, Bronswell hitting coach and Tom Tomincassa hitting coach of Tucson (PCL). Jacques Jones hitting coach and Daniel Turner trainer of San Antonio (TL); Brian Lawrence pitching coach of Lake Elsinore (CAL); Morgan Burkhardt hitting coach and Ricky Huerta trainer of Fort Wayne (MWL); Jim Gabella manager, Dave Rajisch pitching coach, Ivan Cruz hitting coach and Mitch Mattoon trainer of Eugene (MWL); Michael Collins manager, Nelson Cruz pitching coach, Carlos Rosa hitting coach and Wade Yamasaki trainer of the Gulf Coast Padres; and Miguel Serrato trainer and Jonathan Borges assistant strength coach of the Dominican Summer League Padres.
American Association
LAREDO LEMURS — Signed INF Eric Griffin.
Can-Am League
QUEBEC CAPITALS — Sold the contract of RHP Chris Cox to the Arizona Diamondbacks.
BASKETBALL
Women's National Basketball Association
CONNECTICUT SUN — Fired coach Mike Thibault and assistant coaches Scott Hawk and Bernadette Mattio.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
NFL — Reduced the one-game suspension of Baltimore S Ed Reed to a \$50,000 fine.
ATLANTA FALCONS — Signed G Harland Gunn.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed CB Malcolm Williams to the practice squad.
NEW YORK JETS — Waived WR Jason Hill and LB Marcus Dowlin.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Signed WR Plaxico Burress.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed LB Mike Mohamed to the practice squad. Waived LB Rico Ruiz.
WASHINGTON REDSKINS — Signed CB Jerome Murphy. Placed S Brandon Meriwether on injured reserve.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
EDMONTON OILERS — Promoted RW Toni Rajala and RW Cameron Atney from Stockton (ECHL) to Oklahoma City (AHL).

American Hockey League
TORONTO MARLIES — Loaned F Leo Komarov to Dynamo Moscow (KHL-Russia).
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
D.C. UNITED — Signed D Dejan Jakovic.
COLLEGE
BIG TEN CONFERENCE — Announced Rutgers will become a member at a date to be determined.
CALIFORNIA — Fired football coach Jeff Tedford.
IDAHO STATE — Announced offensive line coach Derrick Rohde, secondary coach Daniel Drayton, defensive line coach Todd Bates and linebackers coach Rudy Griffin will not return next season.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Selected the contracts of LHP Caleb Thielbar, RHP Mike Gibson and RHP Tim Wood from Rochester (IL); OF Aaron Hicks (New Britain); C Jossim Pinto (New Britain) and RHP B.J. Harrison from Brockton (EL); and INF Mike Sadina and RHP Brian Tinkler from Fort Myers (FSL). Agreed to terms with RHP Samuel Deduno, RHP Shairon Maris, RHP Luis Perdomo, RHP Esmerling Vasquez, RHP P.J. Walters, OF Brian Dinwiddie, OF Wilkin Ramirez, INF James Beresford, INF Delmonico Romero, C Eric Fryer, RHP Tom Boleska and INF Jason Christie on minor league contracts.
LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Selected the contracts of RHP Ryan Brasier, LHP Brandon Sisk and OF Travis Witherspoon from Salt Lake City (PCL).
HOUSTON ASTROS — Selected the contracts of RHP Jose Cisnero, RHP Jarrod Cosart, LHP Brett Oberholtzer and RHP Ross Seaton from Oklahoma City (PCL); OF Robbie Grossman and INF Jonathan Villar from Corpus Christi (TL); and RHP Chia-Jen Lo from Lancaster (CAL). Assigned INF Scott Moore outright to Oklahoma City.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Agreed to terms with RHP Jeremy Guthrie on a three-year contract and C Brett Hayes on a one-year contract. Selected the contracts of LHP Chris Dwyer, LHP Donnie Joseph, LHP John Lamb, LHP Justin Gutzler, LHP Mike Montgomery and RHP J.C. Marquess from Omaha (PCL). Designated RHP Vin Mazzaro, LHP Ryan Verdugo, C Adam Moore, C Bryan Pena, INF Clint Robinson and OF Derrick Robinson for assignment.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Claimed RHP Mickey Storey off waivers from Houston. Selected the contracts of LHP Manny Banuelos and LHP Francisco Rondon from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL); OF Ramon Flores, RHP Brett Marshall and LHP Nik Turley from Trenton (EL); and RHP Jose Ramirez from Tampa (FSL). Announced RHP Dave Herndon refused outright assignment and elected free agency.
OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Selected the contracts of RHP Arnold Leon, INF Grant Green and OF Shane Peterson from Sacramento (PCL) and RHP David Lesh from New Britain (NYP). Assigned RHP Andrew Carignan outright to Sacramento. Designated RHP Jim Miller and INF Brandon Hicks for assignment.
TAMPA BAY RAYS — Agreed to terms with RHP Joel Peralta on a two-year contract.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Named John Gibbons manager. Selected the contracts of SS Ryan Goins and C J.J. Jimenez from New Hampshire (EL). Designated 1B Mike McDade, INF Mike McCoy and RHP Cory Wade for assignment.

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New York at Dallas, 7:30 p.m.
Portland at Phoenix, 8 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Sacramento, 9 p.m.
Brooklyn at Golden State, 9:30 p.m.

CINCINNATI REDS — Selected the contracts of RHP Daniel Corneo, RHP Curtis Parrish and RHP Josh Rawlin from Pensacola (FL); RHP Carlos Contreras from Bakersfield (CAL) and LHP Ismael Guillon and OF Yorlan Rodriguez from Dayton (MWL).
COLORADO ROCKIES — Traded LHP Matt Reynolds to Arizona for INF Ryan Wheeler.
MIAMI MARLINS — Selected the contracts of LHP Edgar Olmos, OF Kyle Jensen and C Kyle Stoworth from Jacksonville (FL); OF Marcell Ozuna from Jupiter (FSL).
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Selected the contracts of RHP Hiram Burgos and OF Khris Davis from Nashville (PCL); INF Scooter Gennett and OF Josh Prince from Huntsville (TL) and RHP Nick Bucci from Brevard County (FSL).
NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with LHP Scott Rice and RHP Carlos Torres on minor league contracts.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Selected the contracts of RHP Jonathan Pettitte from Lehigh Valley (IL); RHP Ethan Martin and RHP Trevor May from Reading (EL); and OF Zach Collier from Clearwater (FSL). Named Dave

Column: Still A Lot To Be Thankful For In Sports

BY TIM DAHLBERG
AP Sports Columnist

The bad stuff is easy. You read about it almost every day; hear it discussed endlessly by the talking heads on radio and television.

But if sports is a microcosm of society — and it is — then there's a lot of good going on, too. And, as we celebrate Thanksgiving, here are some things to be thankful for this year that have nothing to do with wins and losses, the World Series or the Super Bowl:

A COACH'S FIGHT: Circumstances. That's what Indianapolis Colts coach Chuck Pagano called his health problems when he came in the locker room after a win against Miami a few weeks ago and addressed his team for the first time since unexpectedly being hospitalized just as his first season as head coach was beginning. The circumstances are that Pagano has leukemia, an insidious disease that's difficult to beat no matter how hard you fight. In an moving speech that you have to watch to fully appreciate, Pagano vowed to dance at the weddings of both his daughters and to host more than one Super Bowl trophy before he's done fighting. "It's already beat. It's already beat," Pagano told his team.
DRUG BUSTERS: It would have been easy for Travis Tygart and his investigators at the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency to simply give up on nailing Lance Armstrong. Federal prosecutors already had, and if they couldn't build a case against Armstrong, hard to imagine the doping agency doing any better. But Tygart pressed on, eventually building a case that tore apart the facade Armstrong had created, detailing a widespread and systematic doping scheme on a level not seen before in organized sports. Yes, he took down an American sports hero and damaged his charitable work, but Tygart also sent a message that a level playing field is important. Sports will be a cleaner and better place because of it.

BROOKLYN REBORN: No, the Dodgers aren't returning. Suddenly, though, Brooklyn is a sports town again, thanks to a new, \$1 billion arena and a Russian billionaire who parked his basketball team there. The New York Islanders will also be moving there in 2015, assuming, of course, that the NHL lockout is resolved by then.
BRITISH INVASION: Bradley Wiggins became the first Briton to win the Tour de France, while Andy Murray became the first British man to claim a tennis major in 76

years when he won the U.S. Open. Perennial also-rans, the British had a spectacular sporting summer the country will never forget, including a London Olympics that surpassed expectations at every turn.

VIN SCULLY: He would be a national treasure, but the people of Los Angeles like to claim him as their own. For more than 60 years, Scully has broadcast the Dodgers, and his gift to the new Dodger owners was the announcement that he will come back for at least one more year at the age of 85, calling games as he always does, solo in the announcer's booth. In the interests of full disclosures, I was one of those kids in LA who went to sleep at night with a transistor radio underneath my pillow, growing up listening to Vinny.

RORY TIME: For years, golf fans waited for a rival to the great Tiger Woods, only to be disappointed by every David Duval who came along. Rory McIlroy is the anti-Tiger, an accessible and grounded superstar from the town of Holywood in Northern Ireland who hits the ball incredible distances, all with an inner joy that Woods will never have. McIlroy has his own reason to be thankful, with tennis star Caroline Wozniacki as his constant companion.

CONCUSSIONS: Good things are happening in the fight against the once silent epidemic of concussions on sports. Brains are being analyzed, millions of dollars are being poured into research, and there's an awareness about the danger of hits to the head that could save lives everywhere from your child's soccer field to the stadiums of the NFL. Unfortunately, it's too late for thousands of former players who are paying for the blows to their head every day of their lives — something the NFL refuses to own up to.

DEATH OF THE BCS: Our long national nightmare is almost over. The Bowl Championship Series is, for all intents and purposes, dead, killed off by a fan revolt at the age of 16. It will be replaced in 2014 by a four-team playoff that, while not perfect, will help legitimize the national championship game. Meanwhile, a possible Notre Dame against Alabama title game this season could be one of the biggest ever.
OPPORTUNITIES: Forty years ago this summer, Congress passed and President Nixon signed into law a bill that changed sports forever. Title IX opened up opportunities for women to play sports that were once unimaginable, and it's a

gift that will keep on giving for generations to come. When Title IX was enacted, fewer than 30,000 female students participated in sports in colleges and universities, a number that has now increased nearly six-fold. Some 3 million girls participate in high school athletics today, 10 times the number who played sports in 1972. Women may never make big breakthroughs in professional sports, but the resources now devoted to female sports means your daughters and granddaughters can dream of doing things in sports they could never do before.

SPORTS EXTRA: You pay for it more than you realize, every time the cable or satellite bill is due. The Yankees cost you money, and so do the Knicks. There are so many new sports networks popping up that each want their share of the pie that the bill will keep going up until customers finally revolt. What you once got for free now costs a lot, but what a bargain it really is. The variety of sports on television is astonishing, even more so to the generations that grew up before ESPN, when watching sports meant a few football games and Saturday's baseball game of the week — and having to get up to turn the channel to watch it.

We're living in a world where the options for sports fans are greater than ever. We can watch basketball on the decks of aircraft carriers, hockey on the infield of old baseball parks, and the NFL from soccer stadiums in London. Instead of being parked in front of a TV we can feed our seemingly insatiable sports fix on laptops, tablets and even smartphones. If that's not enough it's easier than ever to have a little something riding on the game, whether in form of a wager or a fantasy team payout.

Still there's nothing like a Saturday morning spent watching the kids play soccer or, at my house, a Thanksgiving Day street football game with relatives of all ages. Even in an era of amazing technology, there's room at the local playground for a pickup game of hoops, and grass at the park to toss a baseball around.

So enjoy the turkey and the NFL on TV as well. Save room for the pumpkin pie, and yet another game to feast your eyes on.

There's a lot to be thankful for.

Tim Dahlberg is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at tdahlberg@ap.org or <http://twitter.com/timdahlberg>

Youth

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Nonetheless, it will be oversimplifying to say the United States has become a nation of couch potatoes. Experts who track youth sports say many young people simply don't have the chance to play, or resources to do so.

Some schools in cash-strapped districts have cut back on sports and physical education. And even in some wealthier districts, high school populations have grown, leaving more kids to vie for fewer spots on teams.

These dwindling opportunities have only fed the hyper-competitive atmosphere, says VanderStoep, who admits that, as a dad of two daughters who play volleyball, even he feels beholden to the system.

For his daughters, that has meant weight-lifting camps and tournaments, required practices and schedules packed with games that could be any night of the week — and have made it more difficult for his youngest daughter to find the time to play other sports. "You feel obligated to do it. You want to give your kids the opportunity," he says. "And if they don't show up, they lose opportunities to play."

Corinne Henson, a mom in suburban Chicago, knows about those hard choices. Her sons, 11-year-old Tyler and 14-year-old Dylan, play year-round baseball on different traveling teams and also manage to squeeze in basketball and football for their local park district.

The boys do it because they love it — live for it, really. "I wouldn't give up sports for anything," Dylan says as he sits on the couch in his living room waiting for football practice to start.

"Me either," his younger brother quickly adds.

But there are sacrifices, especially for their parents. Time spent on sports has meant giving up their longtime campsite in Indiana where they'd kept a travel trailer. They simply have no time to go there. "Our vacations are baseball trips," Henson says.

The toughest compromise came in July when their town, Oak Forest, Ill., had a fundraiser for Dylan's best friend, who was seriously injured when he was hit by a hit-and-run driver. Dylan, a catcher who is captain of his traveling baseball team, had four tournament games that day. He decided he had to be at the tournament, and showed up at the fundraiser as it was wrapping up.

His friend understood. "I would have done the same thing," he told Dylan. The traveling team won the tournament, likely be-

cause Dylan stayed, his mom says.

"But it's so hard, as a parent." There is, however, one rule in the Henson house that does not bend: "Homework first," says mom, who's a teacher.

And that's a perspective that Jon Butler, executive director of Pop Warner Little Scholars, an international youth football and cheerleading program, hears less and less.

He used to worry about overzealous coaches. But in more recent years, he's watched as parents have clamored to find ways to improve their children's athletic prowess. He says his advice to them — "don't hire a speed coach, hire a tutor" — is often met with disgust.

"It's not what they want to hear," he says.

Bill Jaworski, a dad who's also a youth baseball coach in New Jersey, says he is often "shocked and chagrined" at how easily some parents lose perspective about their kids' sports.

"These are people you see at the pub, or on the train, or out on the street. They're just normal folks — and then you get them to the game and they turn into these rabid freakazoids," says Jaworski, a philosophy professor at Fordham University.

He remembers learning baseball at the local park with friends or in the backyard. Today, he's seeing kids as young as age 7