

Then I Became a Softball Dad

I used to have a regular life. (Actually, many of my friends say that sentence should say, "I used to have a life", period.) It doesn't really seem that long ago. Then I became a Softball Dad.

My lawn used to be like a carpet. It was green, mowed, trimmed, fertilized, and watered. Any weeds that dared to show their leaves were pulled out by their roots. Now I have two big bare spots forty feet apart. I like the bare spots. I like them because they are the only places that the weeds and crab grass aren't threatening to take over.

My car used to draw admiring looks and comments. It was clean and waxed and shined and Armor All'd. Now it only draws attention when it wins the "dirtiest car in the parking lot" prize.

My friends and I used to spend Monday mornings talking about five-iron shots, three-putts, and titanium shafts. Now I bore them to death with detailed play-by-play descriptions of five or six low-scoring ball games. Somehow, they just don't understand the drama of a 2-0 game.

I used to think anything over \$40 was an exorbitant price for a ball bat. Now the contents of my daughter's equipment bag are worth more than everything else in the car together - including clothes, jewelry, watches, and laptop computer.

I used to have a great wife. Still do, Thank God. But that's a tribute to her patience and good humor. We used to sit and talk for hours. We still do - to keep each other awake when we're headed home in the wee hours of Monday morning. We used to wonder what the kids would do when they grew up. Now she wants to know what I'm going to do IF I ever grow up.

My summer casual wardrobe used to be made up of color-coordinated polo shirts, cool cottons in bright colors, and the occasional "aloha" shirt. Now I have a closet full of T-shirts in gray and red. Those that don't have COMETS on the front have a cute saying on the back, like "If You Follow Me Long Enough, You'll End Up at a Ball Field." or "Friends Don't Let Friends Play Slowpitch

I used to glue myself to the sofa and watch the NCAA basketball tournament and the Masters from opening Ceremony through network sign off. Now, I catch the highlights on Sportscenter.

I used to be one of the tops in my field. Thank goodness, I still am. (You have to keep a good paycheck coming in if you want to support a Tournament Softball habit!)

I used to have sympathy for umpires. I used to think boys were tough. I used to think a double-header was a long day at the ball field. Now we're just getting warmed up.

We used to spend our summer vacation relaxing on the beach or visiting family. Now we hit the road with 40 of our closest friends.

I used to think the ideal woman had brains and beauty. She still does, but now she better also be quick, courageous, and able to bunt a good rise ball.

I used to look for little restaurants that served seafood fresh off the boat. Now I'm a connoisseur of nachos and smoked sausages.

I used to be concerned that I would fall into the trap of living my life through my daughters. Now I know that I'm privileged to live my life WITH my daughters.