Girl softballers don't mess with Ponytails

Imagine being 9, with your first baseball glove, running for the first time in a pair of cleats, and playing in your very first organized softball

time in a pair, to solve in the property of the property of the games — every game of the season. That was the experience of the Pooytails, 14 hardworking little girls in the Novice division of the West Bloomfield/North Farmington Baseball for Youth League.

The averages don't tell the whole story, however. And, their success did not come easily—they worked for it, according to their team manager, Nancy Gressler. The team practiced after school two and three times a week before the skason's games began. They had to do the usual drills on fielding and running, but because of the girls inexperience, they also had to be taught the fundamentals of the game itself—where too stand in the filed, where to throw the ball if it comes to you, how to relieve to attach in the filed, where to throw they—all weep practiced. Still discontent, Gressler insisted on warm-ups before each game to calin the girls and renew their confidence. It was more than hard work that made the difference for this team, Gressler believes the parent's interest also had a lot to do with their overwhelming accesses, believes we seen. Apparently, their repeated successes did not inflate their egos, for they were just as nervous for their final game as they were for their first.

"Before each game she would get nervous. The girls always thought the choler team's nine-year-disk looked higger or were better fielders. As each game came along they thought hey would lose," said one mother.

But, the girls didn't lose, Each girl was at but about 40 times, scoring a team total of 289 runs. Their battle averages ranged from 250 to an amazing .864.

also had a lot to do with their over-meltining successs.

"We had a meeting before the season actually started. The parents all of-fered to help out in any way they could. We wound up with two coaches, Barb Coulson and Kathy Dawson, besides myself as manager. Some of the other teams only had the manager or just one coach.

coands with the mining or in John Courts.

"And", the continued, "our parents saw to it that the girls came to as many practices as possible, and that helped, of course, our attendance was outstanding. We had parents, qualty parents, aunts, cousins, friends. No other team had as many watching as we did."

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The girls also had a manager with some unusual attitudes. "I never reprimanded them when they were on the field if they did something wrong, I also disliked yelling dout instructions be also disliked yelling wrong. I also disliked yelling wrong, I always thought they were doing terrible I wouldn't want them to know. I always thought they were trying the best they could."

This manager had another unusual philosophy. She never allowed the girls to know the score until the game was completed. Though they won every game, usually by wide margins, the

girls actually thought they had lost some games because of this unique practice.
"I don't let them know because they

than a Sail game, Cresser sain. On the way the play that of the very track myself. I'm more interested in the way they play that was received in the way they play that was presented in the way they play the play that play they have been so that they are the play they have been so members reacted quite strongly by throwing base, pushing each other, and screaming. "After that happend, at our very next practice, we sat down in the shade and talked about losing. How they would feel if they lost. I tald them I expected them to be good sports. I don't think there's anything wrong with them to be them to be good sports. I don't think there's anything wrong with them to lose their tempers," Gressier explained. The wouldn't do any good to throw a betinet or a bat. I didn't want them to lose their tempers," Gressier explained. The wouldn't do any good to throw a betinet or a bat. I didn't want them to have their tempers, "Gressier explained." The total they wouldn't do any good to throw a betinet or a bat. I didn't want them to have feel and the same purposely tries to prevent one-tone of the work of the same purposely tries to prevent one-tone of the work of the same purposely tries to prevent one-tone of the work of the same propers of the work of the wo

her that the team would probably lose. But, then I thought about how young they are. They'll face lots of defeats in their lives. But, how many times is a person able to enjoy the Knowledge that they were part of the best, and that they contributed to the effort that was successful? So, I stopped warning her. I didn't want to say anything that



good game. The Ponytells are the girls in the light uniforms, while the defeated Chickadees are in the dark uniforms.



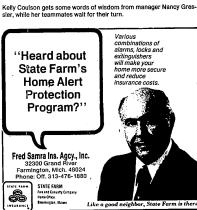
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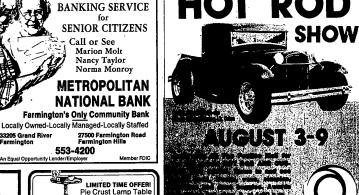
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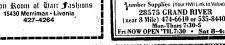




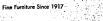




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