

One part of high school that stands out to me looking back is being an athlete. As an athlete there have been a lot of ups and downs, and I've been a part of numerous teams throughout my time here. For the most part, I've spent my time on the hill with either the Aspen High School Alpine Team, the Aspen Valley Ski Club Alpine Team, or just out messin around with buddies. In the fall I was out on the football field running into other dudes with pads on, and I loved that too. By spring, I fit in a quick baseball season, then back through the cycle again with spring football and dryland training for skiing. For the record, I also played basketball as a freshman but after I single-handedly lost the c-team multiple games I decided to put basketball behind me.

Each of my three sports was completely different from the last. From the solitude and silence of standing in the starting gate above an icy slope, to the brotherhood in the mud and rain of a 4th quarter football game, to kicking dandelions in right field and blowing bubbles in my gum, there was one lesson which seemed to stick through everything.

Call me lazy for coming up with the most cliché sports lesson ever heard of, but it's an important one and one I've seen over and over nonetheless. It is that how successful you are and how much fun you have

is in no way connected. (now that it seems a bit less true, it may be a little fun to win...). Regardless, I think it's entirely possible to be terrible and still have fun.

Now let me give you all an example of that. The last two years of high school sports, for the teams I was on, were pretty successful (coincidence???). The football team went to playoffs both years, after being 2-7 the year prior and not having made playoffs yet this decade before that. The Alpine Ski Team won states back to back seasons, and the 2018 baseball team won its first playoff game in more than 30 years. This was an awful lot to be proud of and I was spoiled with red booster club bags after trip after trip to state playoffs. Then, suddenly, I joined the baseball team this year. The entire starting lineup had graduated, including our starting pitcher who is now playing college ball. I was saddened further to find that the only other seniors had either deserted the baseball team for lacrosse (probably the call) or had been banned from Aspen Sports for lyrical reasons. The only senior the baseball team would get this season was a tired old ski-racer joining a month late with two worthless shoulders from countless football injuries. Basically another benchwarmer.

As one would imagine, having a starting lineup whose average player couldn't legally drive was not conducive to winning. With a record of 2-20, we were only marginally not the worst team in the state (56/59 to be exact, which for the record is better than the softball team, but only barely).

Although we were one of the worst teams to set foot on a diamond this year, there was one thing that set the group apart, in my mind, from the other teams I had been on the last two years. We seemed to never not be enjoying ourselves. This may be partially attributed to the laid-back nature of baseball, but I know for a fact that if any of my other teams had performed so blatantly bad, we would have been pretty grumpy to say the least.

I guess my parting message would then be to just roll with the punches and look on the bright side because you can find ways to have fun even when you're terrible at something.

Man that sounds so much more cliché now that I'm reading it outloud.