

"A Tale of Two Little Leaguers" by Rick Reilly

If you're looking for a way to kill Little League, you should call a woman named Jean Gonzalez of Staten Island, N.Y. I think she's found it.

A little more than five years ago her 12-year-old son, Martin, got a hit and the first-base coach waved him on to second. The problem was, Martin did not generally get many doubles. In fact, he'd never slid in a game before. So when he got to second, he slid clumsily, wrenching his knee, ripping his ACL and tearing his meniscus.

So what did his mom do?

She sued.

She sued the manager. She sued the first-base coach. She sued the local Little League. She sued Little League Baseball, Incorporated. She sued everybody but the kid who cuts the outfield.

She said the manager—Leigh Bernstein—hadn't taught Martin the proper way to slide. (The coach said he had.) She said the local Little League had the wrong kind of bases—Soft Touch detachable bases. (But the bases were on Little League's approved list of bases. They detach when you hit them with too much force.) She said it was everybody's fault but Martin's.

And just over two weeks ago, she settled for \$125,000.

If you're looking for a way to feel good in this whacked world, you should call the Millers of Fullerton, Calif. I think they've found it.

Pamela Miller and her husband, Rolf, are the parents of Dieter, 12. This year, Dieter, a catcher, played in the first scrimmage of the season. While trying to tag a runner at home, he broke his arm. He was out of action for all but the end of the season.

And what did his parents do?

This is just an opinion, but I think it would be wonderful if people like Jean Gonzalez and her attorney were tied to the next shuttle and fired into space.

Here's a coach who is volunteering his time to teach kids the dying game of baseball and what does he get for his trouble? A lawsuit hanging over his head for five years.

Here's the local Little League—New Springville—trying to do something fun for the kids, at zero profit and thousands of migraines, and what does it get for its efforts? A lawyer of its own and a tugboat of paperwork.

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