

## Mercy Rule

(a found poem - Medicaid Severe Services Re-Assessment/youth baseball blog discussion)

**The Mercy Rule - or, to the slightly less polite, the slaughter rule, skunk or knockout call is the practice of bringing a sports event to an early end when one team has a presumably insurmountable lead over the other team in order to spare the losing team humiliation**

The Mercy Rule has become controversial in youth sports.

*Can you still raise your arms to have someone put on your shirt?*

What exactly are we teaching our teams about resilience?

*Can you keep yourself clean anymore?*

Kids know losing is losing. Does it actually make it hurt less?

*Can you put on your own socks?*

Whose dignity are we saving in teaching early that when it gets tough you can just call it off?

*Can you still toilet yourself?*

Shouldn't we be teaching our kids both the dream of the comeback and also that when it shows itself to be only that, how to hold up their chins?

*Are you ever a moment without pain?*

There is no shame in losing, after all, if you've played well.

*You know, honey, you've got a light. It's as if you weren't sick at all. Maybe it's just you were blessed with good skin. We're going to do what we can.*

I call to abolish The Mercy Rule. Let's just see it out until the end.

Betsy Unger