

Orinda's Incredi-Ball Wraps Its Season

By Chris Lavin

Incredi-Ball, a baseball program sponsored by the Orinda Youth Association, wrapped up its season earlier this month with 142 first and second graders stomping over home plate for the last time.

The game, one step up from T-ball but one step below keeping score and making outs, fielded 12 teams this year. It's coach-pitched. The OYA has been hosting the program for more than 20 years.

"Our focus is always on fun first," said recreation supervisor Jerry Johnston. "Yes, the kids might start to learn some basics, but we're mainly focusing on team-building, and showing the kids what it's like to be on a team."

Parents, armed with digital cameras to capture broad grins on their batters' and runners' faces, all seem to endorse the program.

"I wanted something physical," said Marla

Williams, whose 7-year-old daughter McKenna participated. "We've done Girl Scouts and piano, but we wanted to try something like this, too. It's great to get out and be a part of something."

Williams began playing softball as a child, and continues to actively play to this day. She wants to McKenna to be exposed to sports, as well. "This is a great stepping stone for that," Williams said.

Ashwini Oak, whose 6-year-old daughter Apurva played for the Mariners, liked that her daughter got her first experience with baseball. "She has really liked it," Oak said.

Second grader Stephen Tse rounded the bases while his father, Frank, watched from the sidelines.

"We like the approach this league takes," Tse said. "We all come out here for the kids and just want them to have a good time. If they learn some basics, that's good, too."

Johnston actively works with the Positive Coaching Alliance to attract coaches who will focus on team-building and not get too serious about the game itself.

"These kids are just learning how to function as a team," Johnston said. "If it so happens that, by the way, a coach might say here is how to throw a ball and how to hit it, well that's good, too. But that's not our priority at this stage."



First-grade slugger Quinn Rochette of the Mariners in

Lafayette Health Club



Owned and Operated by
Debbie Swigert
for the last 26 years.

"Indoor Conditioning for
your Outdoor Lifestyle"

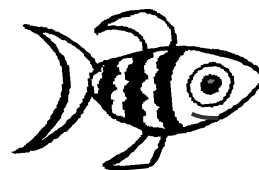
3 Month
**Summer
Special**
\$174
(new members only)

Mon-Th: 5am-9:30pm • Fri: 5am-8:30pm
Sat/Sun: 7am-7pm

85 Lafayette Circle • Lafayette • 284-7732
Down from Chow Restaurant
www.lafayettehealthclub.com

Sherman Swim School *skills for life*

Since 1961



Available
to rent for
parties!

sessions begin every 3 weeks
M-W-F or T-Th • day and evening classes

swimming:
infants thru adults
private & semi-private
classes in 90° water
diving:
beginning thru advanced

Voted "Family Favorite" by the Bay Area Parent Magazine



925-283-2100

1075 Carol Lane • Lafayette (off Mt. Diablo)
www.shermanswim.com