By the time you read this, I will have attended my first tee ball game.
I have no way to predict the future, so I can only tell you that I hope our son James had a good time playing in it.
At four years old, he has been introduced to the ballfield. He is too young to really understand the true concept of the game. But the important thing is he seems to be having fun, and there will be plenty of time to take it more seriously when he gets older. Hopefully he'll remember that having fun is the most important thing.
As a young child, I played baseball with a large group of the neighborhood kids. We weren't an official team, but we did love to play the game...however unruly it may have been.
With no real bases, we used a pillow, an old feed bag filled with cotton seed, a dish detergent box and the lid of a toilet seat. A few times, the toilet lid would slip off into the field, but it usually made its way back after a bad call.
In a vacant lot in the neighborhood, my friends and I would sweat, scream, laugh, yell, catch, throw and hit in that dusty lot. Before video games and consoles fully took over, we would spend all afternoon out there.
To be such a beanpole of a little girl, I hate to brag, but I had a pretty good arm on me. I could throw better than most would think.
Hitting on the other hand was not my strong point.
There were other girls who played in the group. But they made no effort to really get dirty and play the game. It was clear that they were "the diamond princesses."
I, however, was a true blue tomboy. I would spit, kick dirt and yell if I needed to with the boys. The little boys also acknowledged my throwing skills, "for a girl." But I was no threat to them when it came to hitting.
Approaching the old pillow plate one afternoon, I admit that I took an arrogant stride up to the plate. With a huge wad of Big League chewing gum in my cheek, I meant business.
I even pointed my cracked, hand-me-down bat to a random location in the outfield.
"Just like Babe Ruth," I yelled.
"Oh, just get it over with," Charles screamed back.
The pitcher that day was a boy named Tom. He was related to one of my neighbors, and he had made a few appearances that summer.
Watching me wiggle into position, he completely turned his back to me and began to shout to all the outfielders.
"If you gotta go to the bathroom, you can go now," he yelled. "This one ain't even gonna touch

the ball."
"Just hush up and pitch," I said. "Come on, ladies. Get ready."
Referring to the outfield as "ladies" really got everyone fired up so I was determined to hit the ball.
I didn't come close to the ball the first pitch. But closing my eyes and saying a quick prayer, I actually hit the second one pretty good.
I ended up getting to the old feed bag that posed as first base.
I was feel really good about myself when I shot toward the detergent box after the next hit. The old toilet lid did skip a little, but I made it to third without a problem.
Feeling proud of myself, I decided to make a dramatic entrance back to the home plate.
When Greg made his way to bat, it was understood that it would be a home run. He always knocked the ball over into Mrs. Lee's yard next door.
With his red face and tangled hair, he just looked like he could scare the ball into the outfield. I used to think he really dipped tobacco instead of the fake bumble gum all the other boys (and me too) would chew on.
As soon as I heard the bat nail the ball, I took off. Assuming it was a home run and a perfect opportunity to set it up, I slid into home. Surely, everyone would see my dramatic entrance even if it wasn't completely neccessary.
As the dust settled, I soon realized that I was no where near home plate. The pillow case base was a good yard in front of me. I had managed to completely stop myself ahead of the plate.
Frustrated with my slide, I almost didn't feel the glove tap me on my head. I was out.
"Hey, geek," Tom said, looking down at me. "He didn't even make a home run."
Usually, I would let my temper flare up when I was a kid. But for some reason that day, I kept laughing. I didn't even get up. I just laughed.
Tom even started chuckling and grabbed my arm to help me up.
"What were you thinking," Charles asked, who at this point was sitting on the ground from laughing so hard.
I will never forget that afternoon. We were a bunch of kids, just playing a game. There weren't many rules, no official calls or real bases. It was just a game.
For a brief moment, our last names were Ruth, Mantle, DiMaggio, Robinson or Mays. We were playing America's game, and it became our own pastime.
Now my own son is getting a taste of holding a ball, grabbing a bat and running around bases.
I hope he enjoys the game.
But most of all, I hope he has fun.