

The weekend is almost upon us. The only three days in which we don't look forward to this weekend are the Friday, Saturday and Sunday that the tournament takes place. The competition will be fierce. Ryan Bush is going to throw really, really, fast. Carl Coffee's announcing will be controversial. These are the facts that we know, but what brings us back every year is the unknown.

Will Chris Harley break his own record and finish the tournament with a billion strikeouts? Will the welcome dinner feature the same wonderful fruit salad as last year? Will I get any tinder matches from the girls that go to Ohio State? Is Kalamazoo a real place; like, do people live there, or is it some type of Dr. Seuss character?

I can't wait to find out.

The trip to the site of the NWLA tournament: Dublin, Ohio, is a sacred pilgrimage of sorts. It is the Mecca that the Wiffleball Gods demand you visit once yearly. It is the Dome on the Rock of Wiffleball. It is the altar in which you must pay the Gods of Plastic their tribute in the form of the sweat and tears of competition. We train and play in our respective leagues against local competition of friends and family. We have our own quirky league rules that make our leagues unique: The PWL is backed by the U.S. Government, TBW still wins despite using enormous bats, and HWL is from West Virginia. No matter where you are from, we all have fun playing in our local leagues. But on July 18th, everything changes.

We will all strive for success and notoriety within the wiffleball community. We will all envision a day in which our names are enshrined forever on the hallowed ground that is the NWLA website, and we become immortal in the minds of the tens, maybe hundreds of people who read it. We will sacrifice our bodies in an attempt to bring glory to our respective leagues, (but seriously guys make sure you stretch before games, I don't know if the NWLA has a good insurance plan). In the beautiful and rolling hills of Ohio, we will all take in America's ultimate backyard pasttime, and we will never forget it.

When you explain to friends and coworkers your plans for the weekend, they may scoff, but pay them no mind. They do not understand what we know to be true: the pure and unadulterated love for wiffleball is not learned, it is inherent. We share a trait with each other that few people in this world possess. It goes by many names, but the passion for the plastic, once discovered, never dies. Others may think of you as childish, and that is their prerogative. But it is also your prerogative to think that they are big dumb jerks that lack the mental fortitude that it takes to lead your team to glory in the national tournament. The looks on their faces if and when you bring back a NWLA championship to your hometown will be well worth it. You can tell them all to suck it and that you knew you were going to be somebody.

We will be transported back to a simpler time, before we became the wiffleball studs that we now see in the mirror each and every morning. We will go back to the first time we picked up that beautiful golden stick, when we just played for the love of the game. We will remember the times when the homerun line was just a tree in a friend's backyard, and the foul lines were completely arbitrary. We will, dare I say it, become children again. Or in the case of the MYWL, remain children still.

I wish the best of luck to every team competing this year. I look forward to the storylines that arise. Most of all, I look forward to playing a little Wiffleball. When your head hits the pillow every night until the tournament, I implore you to say a little prayer to the Wiffleball gods that everything and everyone has a great time this tournament, we all play our best, and that someone, anyone, gets into the Championship game besides Tampa Bay or the god damn Freaky Franchise.

See you in Ohio,

Edloe Donnan
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