



# Embrace the Change in Sports

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I recently read through the article, "Hooray, Appleton, U.S.A.!" from the August 11, 1986 edition of Sports Illustrated. Yes, if you didn't know, Sports Illustrated had a 32-page feature story on sports and life in Appleton and the Fox Cities! If you get the chance, I strongly encourage giving it a read. It was fun to see how much has changed and how much things have stayed the same. But it was hard not to be nostalgic for the "good old days" after reading through the article.

Life was different 40 years ago. Hundreds of adult softball teams played in local nightly leagues all summer long. Baseball fans attended Appleton Foxes games at the quaint Goodland Field. Youth sports were led by Little League games at local parks and pickup games with all the neighbor kids.

Today, hundreds play pickleball in area parks each morning. Baseball fans get to watch the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers play at Neuroscience Group Field at Fox Cities Stadium while hanging out with Fang and Whiffer and grabbing food and drinks from one of 15 concessions areas. Youth sports are led by club teams traveling to weekend tournaments all season long.

Part of the reason we participate in or attend sporting events is to create life-long memories. It's great to have those fond memories of the "good old days". But, we also have to remember that those days and that lifestyle probably aren't coming back. Too often it seems like we hear the complaint that "things aren't like they used to be" as a purely negative statement, specifically in regards to youth sports. How we play, watch, and administer sports today is far different than it was 40 years ago. Not better, or worse, just different. It is perfectly ok to cherish memories from the past and also at the same time embrace the games, practices, and travel of today.

Life is short. Enjoy every moment and every day and make new "good old days".