

Guess it isn't banned from schools after all

In days of banning tag from the playground because some kids "get too rough" it seems only natural that dodge-ball is so far banned, it is even anathema to mention it. Perhaps that is really only valid in the elementary school though. Or maybe the ones making the rules don't like the attitude of middle schoolers so they say to go ahead and bash each others' brains out with round throwable objects. In any event dodge ball is definitely allowed in middle school, or at least some middle schools. It was probably banned a while ago before the advent of soft foam balls more commonly known as gatorskin, or rhinoskin balls, though something tells me no alligators or rhinoceroses were hurt in the making of these balls. Softer even than Nerf™ balls ever were, it would take a pretty thin head to actually get hurt by one of these balls, but yet they can still be thrown across the room or even used in a pinch for kickball.

If you haven't figured it out by now I subbed for a PE teacher today. I actually wanted to get up a 6AM to see what was available, but I woke up at 5:30 instead, and this was the only job on the systems so it's the one I took. Of course I didn't mind at all since it was only a mile away too. □ I probably mentioned earlier that middle school PE is one of the easier positions to sub for as the other teachers usually run the show with me helping out. Not always, but most of the time. Because there was another teacher out as well, and the field was still wet from yesterday's two downpours, they mixed up thing a little and instead of doing softball and whatever one of the other teachers was supposed to do (health?) we all played dodge-ball instead. We divided them up into six teams and they played three-minute games, rotating between games to keep things fresh. Three grades, six PE periods, all dodge-

ball. There was one period where a girl came up to me and asked if she could take attendance. I had to do a double-take as she clearly had some hormonal problem. There were patches of hair on her face. Growth that would take a guy weeks to grow, so it wasn't just peach fuzz like on many eighth-grade boys. I just took a look at Wikipedia and it looks like it could be either [androgen](#) excess or a rare disorder called [hypertrichosis](#) (werewolf syndrome). I tried very hard not to stare at her, and felt guilty every time I so much as glanced in her direction. Of course I let her take attendance even though I was really just playing at it since I was told I didn't need to take attendance and didn't have a record book to take it in in any event. I just didn't want the kids to feel they could blow off gym sometime and not be missed.

The end of the day was kind of interesting. This school schedules homeroom at the end of the day, so I was on my way up to the 8th grade classroom I was supposed to be in when I found out all the eighth-graders were on their way to the multipurpose room for an assembly. Okay then, I went there instead. They had a presentation from some Japanese-American people about World War II. I'm guessing it was put together by a teacher from one of the middle schools as she was there and she teaches world history. And she is Japanese-American. They had a video of shots taken in the WWII internment camps and then two elderly people who lived through it talked to them. It was interesting, especially as one of them after going through this decided to join a special Japanese-American infantry that was formed some time after Pearl Harbor. He did this even though he like the rest of the Japanese-Americans were treated so shabbily. He had a few reasons for doing this though other Japanese-Americans understandably refused to have any part of the not-so-good 'ol US of A at this point in history. One reason was he had very good childhood growing up under the tutelage of several teachers who left good impressions on him. Also he wanted to prove that not all Japanese-Americans were on the side of Japan. In reality, I

think very few were on Japan's side in this war making this whole internment camp thing a ridiculous waste of time in addition to being reprehensible. This man became a teacher himself, apparently well-regarded in the circle of Chicago's school system. It would be eye-opening for me if I didn't already think the whole thing was wrong. In fact, when 9/11 happened we didn't do anything even close to this to Middle-Easterners in this country and it looks like we're still here. I still don't trust Islam, and many others don't either, but there have been no more terrorist bombings in this country since so it was clearly the right choice to leave them be.