

Batting practice.

Once a week, as part of his practice schedule, my son Cass has batting practice for baseball. It takes place in a sports complex called Sportsplex. The building actually used to be an ice skating rink, but has been converted into a place where you can play sports that don't involve ice. It is an old building that has a comfortable, used feeling about it. Cass usually has to go on Wednesday's for an hour and a half. A small corner of the building has been reserved for any team that wishes to book in advance, and perfect the batters' swings. The boys put on their helmets, and face the pitcher. Thankfully, the pitcher is usually the coach, so the pitching is good and accurate. However, because the coach is an adult, there is no mercy when it comes to the speed. The boys have to be ready, with their eyes on the ball. Another piece of protection that the boys wear is the 'cup'. It's to protect their genitals, or as we say, their privates. It's a very necessary piece of equipment that older boys won't play without. In fact, if you can't find your cup, you'd better not play. It could be used as an excuse to get *out* of playing...

"Your son not playing today, Bill?"

"Nope. The poor boy couldn't find his cup."

"Oh, gees. He'd better not be out there without it. Nope. No way!"

I don't see what all the fuss is about, really. I thought that sportsmen were supposed to be tough. Anyway, I digress. Batting practice is essential. The kids acquire what's called 'muscle memory', when their correct response to the approaching ball is automatic. Practice makes perfect; it's the same with anything, isn't it? Another good thing about batting practice is that it can take place any day of the year. If it is snowing heavily, or blowing a gale, it doesn't matter. You don't have to miss out on your practice time, because you have the Sportsplex. In a town where the longest seasons are cold Winter, and very hot Summer, it's a relief to have a place where the temperature is a consistent seventyish degrees. There is a full weekend of games coming up, and we'll see how the practices pay off. So cameras and cups at the ready!

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: ...doesn't involve, reserved, the pitcher, converted.

1. I'd like to see a movie that doesn't involve shooting and police for a change!
2. Our table was reserved for six thirty, but we were an hour late, so the table was taken.
3. The pitcher stared fixedly at the catcher, as if the batter wasn't even there.
4. We converted our garage into a playroom, and our basement into a wine cellar.

