

## Parentally Speaking February 2008

### **What do you tell a left-hander who wants to play one of the positions usually reserved for righties?**

This is a question that has been haunting baseball for years. I tend to think, especially at the younger age levels, that a left-hander can play all the positions. As you progress higher up in baseball, it becomes more difficult for a left-handed second-baseman to complete some of the more advanced skills such as turning a double play. It's not impossible, but rarely will you see a lefty playing second base at the high school level. There are no models out there for left-handers that say, "This is how you turn a double play," so you almost have to invent ways to make certain plays on the field if you are a left-handed second baseman or shortstop.

I think it would be easier to play shortstop as a left-hander, because the plays are in front of you and your momentum carries you toward your target on some of the more advanced plays. But I don't think it's impossible for a left-hander to play second; it's just a matter of working on it and figuring out the best way to turn a double play.

There are certain positions in baseball that have been "off limits" to left-handers throughout the years. Those positions would be catcher, shortstop and second base. There have been a few left-handers who have been able to play third base, but even that generally is considered a right-handed position. I think third base and shortstop over time can be modified. Second is going to be harder because of the angles of the throws and the double play pivot. I don't see any reason that there can't be a left-handed catcher in this day and age. There's no real advantage that I can see to having a right-handed catcher.

**By Cal Ripken, Jr.**