

Coaches go all out for their sons, their team

Uncounted hours away from work and home are just part of the bargain

By **MILES VANCE**
Of the Times

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — It's all been worth it.

Together, Murrayhill Majors coaches Jeff Keller and Ron Pool have spent thousands of dollars, traveled thousands of miles, donated hundreds of hours and burned week upon week upon week of vacation, but there's no hesitation from these two — it's all been worth it.

Keller, 45 and the Murrayhill manager, hasn't worked at his regular job — he owns two Subway Sandwich restaurants in Beaverton — since mid-July, and has had to hire additional help to cover for his absence while he's led his team through the state, regional and now World Series tournaments.

But the joy he's gotten from coaching his son Derek, a pitcher and shortstop, has far outweighed any financial cost or logistical problems that traveling with the Murrayhill all-stars has caused.

"I would not trade it for the world," Keller said, noting that he's only been home a week since the end of District 4 tournament play some six weeks ago. "It's been mind boggling."

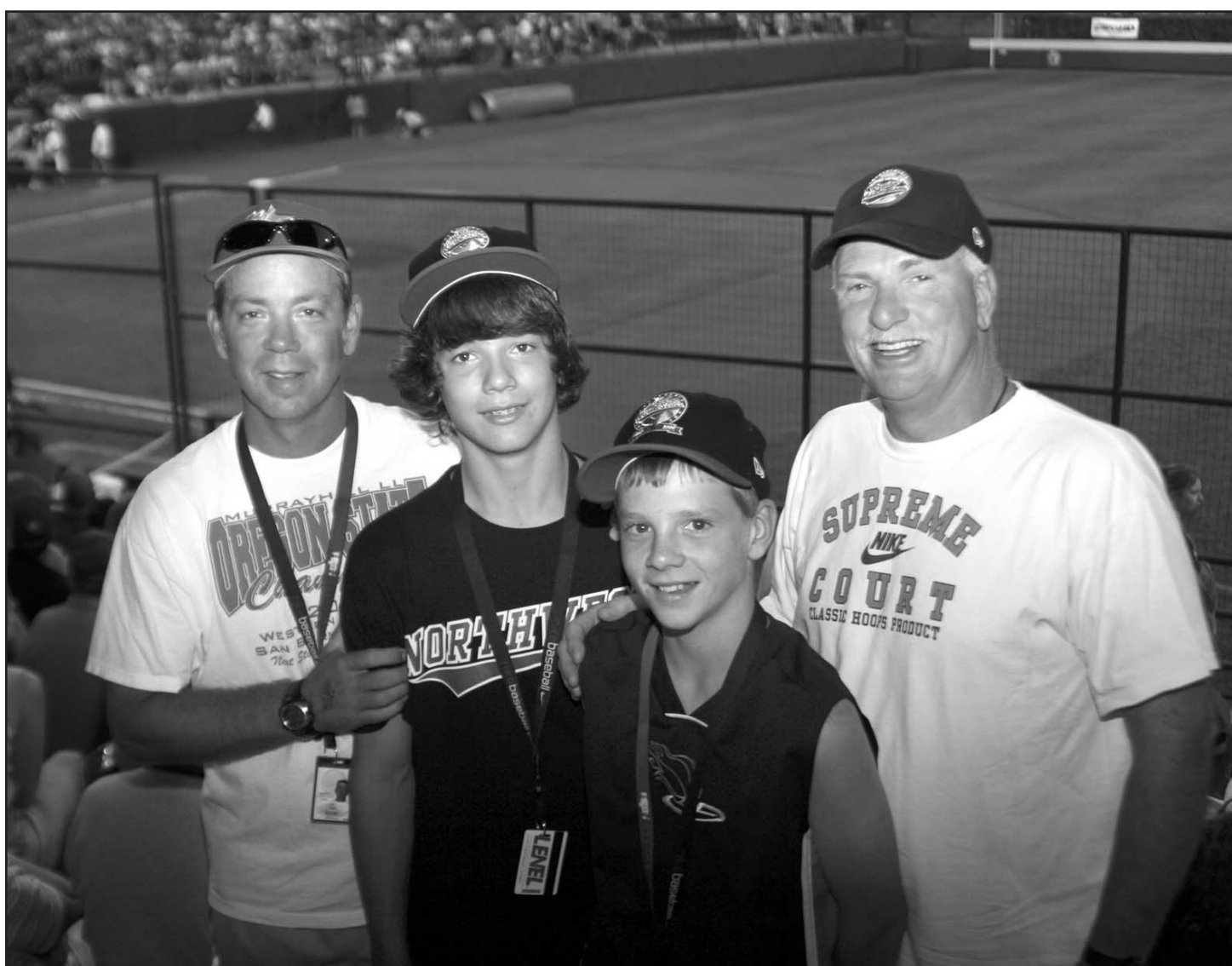
Pool, 50, would probably agree wholeheartedly.

A salesman for Frito-Lay in Tualatin for the past 25 years, Pool has used his entire year's worth of vacation travelling with Murrayhill this summer.

"We just decided (that the cost and time) didn't matter," Pool said. "You have to do it no matter what."

Like Keller, Pool hasn't been to work since July 21, but getting to share an adventure such as this with his son Corey, an outfielder, was just too great a temptation to pass up.

"When you begin (all-star



"I would not trade it for the world."

◆
Jeff Keller
Murrayhill manager

(the time and expense) a bit."

While the Little League World Series gives youngsters a chance to bask in the glow of worldwide media attention, the coaches themselves have made a few fans along the way.

Bill Powell, whose son Alec plays third base and outfield for Murrayhill, appreciates the coaching his son has gotten, but it's the attention Pool has given to one of his other children that really got Powell's attention.

Powell's older son, Kyle, 14, has Downs Syndrome, but Pool made sure that Kyle was as much a part of the team as possible during its long summer run.

Pool "would always take Kyle down on the field and include him in all of the team meetings and keep him involved any way he could," Powell said. "I just want (people) to know what a special guy coach Pool is."

While Kyle Powell is watching the Series from the family's Beaverton home, he still feels very much a part of the team.

"He knows all the (players') faces and he gets really excited when he sees them on TV," Bill Powell said.

Tom DeJardin, father of pitcher/first baseman Devon DeJardin, is another Murrayhill parent appreciative of the attention his son has gotten from Pool and Keller.

"It's just been phenomenal how well they've handled the boys," DeJardin said.

Jeff Keller probably summed it up best at the end of the regional tournament, though.

"The final prize of getting to the Series makes every hour, every second, every month worthwhile," he said. "Just the look in the kids' faces. It's just joy. It's amazement."

FAMILY AFFAIR —

Family was front and center during Murrayhill's trip to the Little League World Series, with the team led by (above, from left) manager Jeff Keller and son Derek, and Corey Pool and coach Ron Pool.

FOR LOVE OF THE GAME —

While their players enjoyed the batting cages and timed running races at the Little League Museum (left), Jeff Keller and Ron Pool kept their sights on the historical exhibits and displays there.

play), you have no idea you're going to go this far," he said. "But when you get to the World Series, you just don't think about

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