

SPORTS

“Ninety percent of our games go off without a hitch. But 10% of the games, you’re going to have moments in a game where it’s blood in the water. What I’m asking our parents, referees, coaches, players is, in those moments, to be at your best, not at your worst. Unfortunately, sometimes they’re at their worst, and that’s what we end up having to deal with and trying to fix.”

SCOT BOYD | Utah Youth Soccer Association league commissioner and in-house counsel



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

Diego Godoy coaches girls' youth soccer club Utah Rio FC during a match in Heber City on May 18. The UYSA has received 25 reports of racist language being used during games since last fall.

Out of bounds

Young Hispanic soccer clubs are hearing racist comments — often from adults. Is UYSA doing enough to help?

By ALEX VEJAR | The Salt Lake Tribune

Every time she touched the ball, the song restarted.

It was a familiar tune, one people may have heard from turning on Disney Plus in the last few years. It's called "Un Poco Loco," the most popular song from the Pixar film "Coco."

The title means "a little crazy" in Spanish. But to teenager Mia Godoy, the song wasn't a celebration of the movie or Mexican culture. It was racist.

"My brain fogged up automatically," Godoy, an American Fork teen who is of Argentine descent, said. "As soon as I heard those comments, my brain shut down."

Godoy plays for a girls' team on a youth

soccer club called Utah Rio. In addition to the singing, she said parents of opposing players said "Coco has the ball" as she played during a game in October 2022.

Godoy's experience is just one example of several instances where mostly Hispanic youth soccer teams say they have been subjected to racist or discriminatory behavior from opposing players, parents and even referees.

Since last fall, the UYSA has received 25 complaints of racist language being used during games, per data shared with The Salt Lake Tribune. In 10 of those incidents, someone received a suspension. Most of the suspensions went to players who had to sit out two games. One parent received an "indefinite" suspension.

"This is more than one team and one

unique situation," said Eduardo Mendez, director of the Weber County soccer club Grêmio FC. "This is way more than that."

Discrimination from adults

The Utah Youth Soccer Association, which governs hundreds of youth soccer clubs all over Utah, has a "No Discrimination" initiative. In March, Scot Boyd, the organization's league commissioner and in-house counsel, led two trainings on eliminating racist language.

But coaches of youth soccer teams say there have still been multiple instances of people using offensive language toward their players. They say the comments largely come from adults — parents and sometimes referees.

Last month, Diego Godoy, Mia's father who coaches multiple Utah Rio teams, said parents on the opposing sideline yelled things like, "Órale, órale," and, "C'mon Mexican, can you not play soccer?"

Diego Godoy said he spoke with the referee, who then ejected him with no explanation. When he refused to leave until the referee gave him one, he said the referee just yelled at him to leave.

"What you're doing to me, it's just racist," Diego Godoy said he told the referee. "You're hearing racist comments from parents and you don't take action" against them.

Chiqui Pelaez coaches a boys' youth team for Utah Rio currently, but was previously a team manager at La Roca in Weber

Photo by: YOUTH SOCCER, 84

Tape measures aren't enough to tell the tale of these blasts

By STEVE BUCKLEY

The Boston Globe

It sounds like a tall tale, a campfire story. Yet, in some fashion, it happened: On June 9, 1946, in the first inning of the second game of a doubleheader between the Red Sox and the Detroit Tigers at Fenway Park in Boston, Ted Williams jumped on a Fred Hutchinson change-up and hit it so good that it climbed two-thirds of the way up the right field bleachers before crashing atop the straw hat worn by Fred Boucher of Albany, New York. No fewer than five Boston newspapers ran accounts of the mighty blast. A sports writer from The

Boston Globe trekked out for a chat with Boucher, who told the hustlin' scribe: "The sun was right in our eyes. All we could do is duck. I'm glad I didn't stand up. They say it bounced a dozen rows higher, but after it hit my head, I was no longer interested."

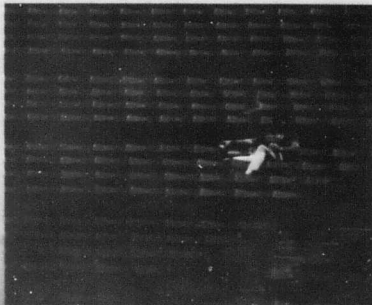
The next day's papers put the distance at 450 feet. After input from physicists, mathematicians, meteorologists and baseball scholars, the home run is now listed as having traveled 502 feet. In 1984, Williams' hat-denting homer was granted landmark status at Fenway Park when the Red Sox applied a coat of bright-red paint to Seat 21 in Section 42, Row 37. That

Fenway did not have bleacher seats in 1946, just wooden benches, is beside the point.

But, yes, many a slugger over the years has expressed doubt that Williams really hit the ball that far. Red Sox first baseman Triston Casas, after hitting an April 13 home run at Fenway Park that was measured at 429 feet, told reporters: "That's my best ball, for sure. I had one hit harder, exit velo-wise, last year. But that Ted Williams seat is starting to feel more and more like a myth."

But let's not quibble: Everyone agrees Williams hit a home run for the ages that day, which is why the

Photo by: MICHAEL DWYER, 82



MICHAEL DWYER | Associated Press file photo

Boston Red Sox infielder Michael Chavis sits next to the red seat in the bleachers that signifies the longest home run ever hit at Fenway Park, by Hall of Famer Ted Williams in 1946, during practice on July 5, 2020, in Boston.