

by Aaron Derr
Illustrations by Gary LaCoste

When Luis joins his new baseball team, the Manatees, things seem hopeless at first. Some of his new teammates—including "loud and obnoxious" home-run slugger Jimmie—are mean to him or to each other. His new coach doesn't tell the players everything to do like his old coach did. And some of the Manatees seem more interested in goofing off than in sportsmanship or working hard. Then Coach Joe makes Luis team captain. Will Luis rise to the challenge? Can he get the Manatees to balance working hard and having fun? Will he help his teammates learn to be friends rather than compete with each other? Baseball Buddies explores the power of working together, what it takes to build a team, and the lasting friendships that form on the baseball field.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Aaron Derr is a writer, specializing in sports content for kids, based just outside of Dallas, Texas. He has more than 20 years of experience writing and editing magazines and books for kids of all ages for companies such as Red Chair Press, TIME For Kids, Sports Illustrated for Kids and the Boy Scouts of America. When he's not reading or writing, Aaron enjoys watching and playing sports with his wife and two kids. He's learned a lot about being a good sport and building teams.





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"Hey guys, everybody say 'hi' to Luis," said Coach Joe. "He's a terrific baseball player—or so his mom tells me."

This got a giggle from a few of the players. Not as many as Coach Joe would have liked, but it was better than nothing.

"Seriously though, I'm thrilled to have him on our team."

This got a giant chuckle—more like a snort, really—from the big kid. Coach Joe said his name was Jimmie. Well, when Jimmie chuckled, it sounded like a big old bear snorting.

"Hi everybody," Luis said. He did his best to sound strong and confident, but he wasn't sure if he came across that strong and confident to

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With illustrations by best-selling artist Gary LaCoste





"Wait. What?" said Luis.

He wasn't sure if he had heard correctly. Surely, he hadn't heard correctly.

"Coach, I really don't know..." said Luis.

"Ha ha ha... duh... Coach, I really don't

It was Jimmie making fun of Luis, but Jimmie was the least of Luis's problems now. His top priority at this moment was to make this whole captain thing go away.

"All right, everybody," said Coach Joc. "That's enough of my yappin'. Let's get this practice started. Defense wins championships, so everybody... get to your positions... it's time to practice ground balls and pop flies."

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"...Whatever your level, it's a perfect tale of building a team, working hard, trying your best and--of course--having fun!"
-- Scott Franzke, Voice of the Philadelphia Phillies