

Went to a Seattle Thunderbirds game this weekend

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This past weekend I fell into tickets to a Seattle Thunderbirds game. (The Seattle Thunderbirds belong to the “U.S. Division” of the otherwise-Canadian Western Hockey League, one of the three Major Junior Leagues.) I hadn’t been to a hockey game since my college days. It was quite enjoyable and I may very well do it again. On the message board, the various groups in attendance were recognized. In addition to the usual things like “Fred’s 9th Birthday” and “Company X”, there was the curious juxtaposition of “David’s Bachelor Party” and “XYZ Church”. I hope they weren’t seated next to each other. I was there with a bunch of seventh graders and their parents because the middle school choir performed the Canadian and U.S. national anthems. I had forgotten that to seventh graders, the world is one giant social event, just with different background noise. In this case, it was a big social event with hockey noise in the background. They were chatting away, waving to their friends, changing seats, calling each other on their cell phones, writing notes to each other... To give you an idea of the tenor of play, I refer you to the game report: Under “Seattle Penalties”, observe that in the second period, player number 28 was assessed a two-minute roughing penalty which expired at 3:13. Now look down a little bit more: At 3:23, the same player was assessed a Checking from Behind penalty. I watched this happen. When his penalty expired, the player dashed out of the penalty box straight for an opposing player and walloped him. And then was promptly sent back off the ice. Ah, minor league hockey. “We may not play very well, but we make up for it with really aggressive tactics.”

And yes multiple fights broke out, to my disappointment (but to the delight of the crowd, it appears). As we left, I overheard one seventh grader say to her friend, “It was fun, but there wasn’t enough fighting.”

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