

## A Profile in Courage

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He was my guinea pig. I, like most parents, had no idea what I was doing when he was born. So I did what came natural. I read "Love You Forever" to him everyday until he had it memorized and could read it to me, dressed him in the cutest smocked rompers until one day he told me he wasn't a girl and convinced myself that everyone who approached us in public was out to

kidnap my baby.

We all want our children treated fairly. We want everyone to see how great our kids are and when they don't they become what I like to call, "the enemy."

When he first started playing basketball, I was convinced that sport's wasn't an important part of life. After all, I turned out fine and I didn't play sports. I think part of my lack of excitement was due to the fact that I'm not tall and my husband isn't either. I didn't want him to set his sites on a professional career in basketball or at the very least a high school career in sports if proportionally it wasn't possible. I didn't want his feelings to get hurt.

When I voiced my concerns to my older sister, I thought she would totally agree with me. Instead she said getting your feelings hurt is a part of life and who was I to say he wasn't going to be big enough to play a particular sport. Then she said the words that would forever change the way I felt about sports and my kids. "It's not the size of the player that counts, it's the size of their heart." And my boy couldn't have a bigger heart. So that's when I knew he would be fine.

This is not to say I didn't have to sit back in silence when he missed a shot, walked the ball or when the coach had to fuss at him for not paying attention or worse, not give in and let him quit the team when he had a bad game and was feeling "not good enough."

The big test came a few weeks ago when he wanted to try out for his schools basketball team. He was so excited. I however, knew this would be different. In the past he'd only played recreation ball. We all paid the same money so everyone made the team. And now one person- who didn't know my son, how much he loved this sport or how he played at home everyday until the sun went down- was in charge of whether or not he would make the team. After each day of tryouts, he would come home exhausted and complain about being the smallest. I wouldn't hear of it! "Big surprises come in small packages honey. Just ask your Papa. He got a college football scholarship and was only 5 feet 5 inches tall."

The day came when all those who made the team were announced. When I dropped him off at school he said he was nervous. I told him there was no reason to be nervous. I didn't have the heart to tell him that I had bitten my nails down to the nub with anxiety in anticipation of the results. The whole day I told myself it would be ok if he didn't make the team. That this would be

one of those life lessons he could tell his children about. I started scanning the internet trying to find stories of great men who, had they not failed at one time or another they wouldn't be the people they were today. As I drove up to pick him up that day I was fighting back tears for either answer.

He opened the door and had his head down. My heart sank. He looked at me as he buckled in and said, "I MADE IT!!!" After we called everyone we knew and shared the good news I realized my little boy taking a chance and trying out was a true profile in courage.

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