

Sports

Get Your Game On

The Dark Island

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The Fencing Match

Who will win? Will it really be an easy match for Sophia, or will Lin be victorious? Page 11

A Driving Disaster

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SHOOT OUT



Vs.



Sports

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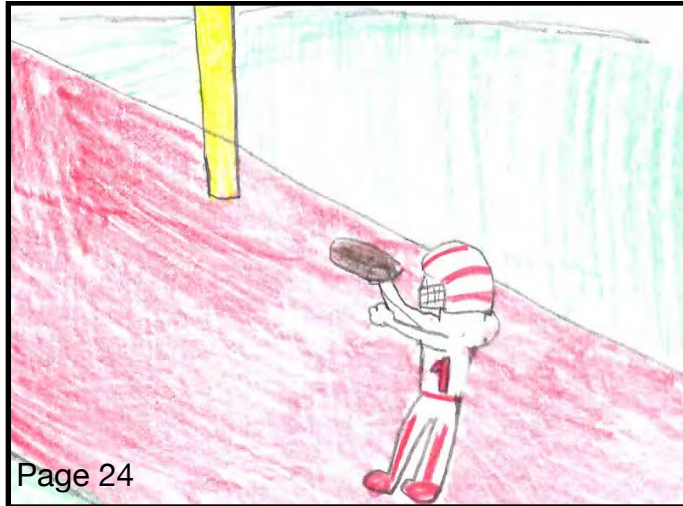
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From Our Readers

Karate

Dear Martha,

My name is Conner Bauds. I am 13 years old. My friend across the street just got his blackbelt in Karate. I was thinking about learning Karate too, but wondered what a student can do after they have achieved a blackbelt in Karate. My friend just takes classes. Is that all you can do? I am trying to decide if I should take Karate. Please respond soon.

Sincerely,

Conner Bauds



Dear Conner,

Karate is a wonderful sport, but to take it and succeed you must have discipline, patience, and time. One thing that you can do after you have achieved a blackbelt is participate in competitions.

Another thing that you can do is train at home. You can practice daily so that you won't forget all of the knowledge that you have gained. You can meet with your senseis (teachers) and practice with them.

A third thing that you can do is teach other students. You need plenty of skill and patience for this task.

You should also ask your mom and see if she has any advice. Have fun with this exciting sport.

Sincerely,

Martha Blair

Baseball

Dear Editor,

I wanted to know if the kid in your April magazine really hit a 40-foot-high grand slam? That is really high, especially for a kid who's only 9 years old! You said that it went way past the fence and that the crowd went wild. I bet that kid was happy.

I hit a grand slam once when I was 11. My team also won by one run

because of my hit.

Enclosed is a picture of me after I hit my grand slam.

Your curious friend,

Benny



Dear Benny,

I received your letter.

Yes! The boy named Tucker Posey hit a 40-ft-high grand slam and stunned the crowd. He was indeed extremely happy after the game and when we interviewed him he said, "This is the best day of my life!" Tucker's family is known for playing extraordinary baseball. Buster Posey, his brother, is a Major League Baseball player. He is a catcher for the San Francisco Giants.

As for your own hit, congratulations!

Sincerely,

Annalise Baniecki

Ping Pong Blog

Ping pong was first invented by James Devonshire in 1885. He originally called the game Gossima. The game was not a success. After the Gossima thing didn't really take off, John Jacques came up with a different name: *Ping Pong*; that's how history was made.

Ping pong helped restore the relations between the United States and China in the 70s. In 1971, China surprised everyone by inviting the U.S. Ping Pong National Team for a series of friendly matches against their home team. Together with accompanying journalists, they were the first U.S. delegation to visit China since 1949 and the first foreign delegation to visit after six years of self-isolation.

The event marked a major shift in the U.S.-

China relations and was followed by President Nixon's visit to the country a year later. He described it as "the week that changed the world." According to the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai: "Never before in history has a sport been used so effectively as a tool of international diplomacy."

Ping pong is considered the number one brain sport in the world for a good reason. Numerous studies have proved that playing ping pong has big positive effects on the human brain. It helps develop strategic planning and thinking,

increase concentration and alertness, and strengthen your long term memory.

Skiing Poem

Ice hurls off a snowy cliff
Ski poles and boards fly
wildly
Travelers ski down

Baseball Poem

The ball flew into left field
Shocked fans saw a new
athlete join
My dog had caught the
ball!

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ShootOut



Vs.



Daniel's nose wrinkled. He looked over at Ethan, who was his teammate, and raised his eyebrows.

"Sorry," Ethan apologized, "Sometimes I get sweaty."

"That's ok," said Daniel, "but you don't have to put on so much AXE body spray. Right now you could wipe out an army!"

Ethan gave a sheepish grin.

The coach motioned for the team to gather around him on the picture of the big wolf with a hockey stick in his mouth on the floor. "Ok, team, ok. Let's settle down! Let's get back into the zone of hockey. Now you all know that the five-minute overtime just ended, so we will be going to shoot

outs," the coach yelled. "OH MY GOSH! Ethan! Watch the body spray. You probably are keeping that store in business right now. Wow!" coughed the coach.

There were snickers throughout the room. A buzzer sounded from outside the locker room.

"That's our cue," said the coach.

Daniel started to feel a little nervous. Since he was the goalie, he would be one-on-one with the players from the other team for the shoot out.

"Daniel, earth to Daniel. DANIEL!" yelled Ethan, almost in his ear.

"What? Ok, I'm going. Geez," stammered Daniel.

Daniel walked down the long hallway to the rink.

Then he felt the cold air on his face. He relaxed. He could do this.

"Ok, champ, listen," announced the coach. "The first player that will be up against you is Logan Howell. Look, he is right there, the player on the ice warming up. He likes to shoot five hole. That's great because you're good against that kind of shot. You'll do great. Go get 'em!"

Daniel looked across the rink and saw Logan Howell. Daniel knew that he was a good player and made most of his shots. Daniel must be like a wall, nothing would get past him. Daniel looked over and saw Ethan muttering in a singsong way, "Nothing will get past you. Nothing will get past you!"

"Thanks for the encouragement," smiled Daniel.

"Tweet!" the whistle rang out. Daniel skated onto the ice. He got in front of the net. He saw Logan starting to move down the ice. A question popped into

into Daniel's mind; "Which tastes better caramel popcorn or butter popcorn? Concentrate!" Daniel thought. "But really, which did taste better?" Suddenly Daniel snapped out of it.

Logan was five feet away now, and he had a determined look on his face; Daniel's face was a picture of worry. Daniel looked like a child who had gotten a new baby brother when he had wanted a puppy.

Wham! Logan shot the puck. Daniel was confused. He couldn't see the puck so it must have gone in. The crowd wasn't cheering so it couldn't have gone in. Where was the puck?

The referee skated over. "Ok kid, take 'em off." Daniel turned pale.

"Sir?" Daniel asked.

"Take your shin guards off!" explained the referee. "The puck must be in there somewhere!"

"Oh, ok," Daniel sighed with relief." Daniel bent down to untie his shin guards. They wouldn't come off! Daniel shook one leg then the other. He was shaking all over now. He looked like he was having a seizure. Over the loudspeaker they began to play, "*I like to move it, move it.*" Daniel was exasperated. He could see that Ethan was almost falling off the bench with laughter. Finally, the puck fell out. The referee blew his whistle. The music stopped and Daniel went back to his net, shaken.

Daniel looked over and saw that Ethan was getting on the ice. He was approaching the goalie on the other side to take his shot. Ethan was skating faster and faster. Wham! The puck went through the startled goalie's armpit and landed neatly in the net. The crowd erupted with applause! Daniel rushed over to Ethan and gave him a high-five.

"You know," said Ethan, "I think when I got close, the goalie smelled my musk and got a little dizzy!"

Daniel laughed. "Then you should write AXE body spray a thank you note! But seriously, even without the musk, you did great!"

With huge smiles, the Wolves got off the ice.

The Seekers



Children strayed
away

From well-known
spots.

Searching the steep
slopes

And tangled
underbrush.

Peering through tree
trunks,

The wind whistled
and howled.

Searching in the
game

Of hide-and-seek.

HOW TO CRAFT A PING-PONG PADDLE

Looking for a fun craft that will amaze your friends? Try decorating an original ping-pong paddle and change it into a trendy tool. In a few fun and easy steps you will have a masterpiece!

**Great
Project To
Do With
Friends!**

Step 1

Peel traction material off the paddle. Make sure not to splinter the wood. The material should come off in one sheet.





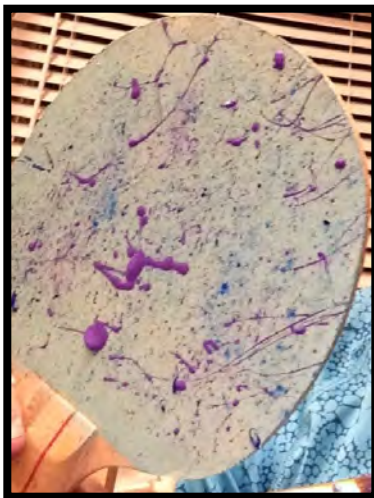
Step 2

Carefully sand and wipe off the ping-pong paddle. Do not worry about sanding around the edges. If your paddle is already smooth, you can skip to step 3.



Step 3

Draw the outline of a picture that you want on your paddle lightly with a pencil. Make sure you don't carve into the wood. The lighter you draw on the wood, the less you can see the pencil marks through the paint. If you want a splatter design, you don't have to draw an outline.



Step 4

Paint the design on your paddle with acrylic paints. This kind of paint will allow your design to be more durable and vibrant. Make sure not to smear your paint. For a more transparent color, mix the paint with a small amount of water. For my paddle, I used a splatter technique.



You now have a cool craft! This is a great idea to have your friends do at a slumber party. With only a few tools, you can make a masterpiece! Now you can play ping pong and amaze you friends!

Step 7

Putting the contact paper on the ping-ping paddle can be tricky. To easily do this, follow the steps below!

A. Trace the outline of the paddle face on contact paper and cut it out. Make sure to trim off any sharp edges.



B. Peel the contact paper off the backing paper. You might have to use tweezers to get it off.

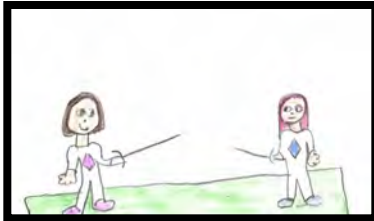


C. Stick the contact paper on both faces of the paddle. Make sure that there are no bubbles in the paper. Trim any excess paper off the sides of the ping-pong paddle.



The Fencing Match

At a fencing match way off
in Kentucky,
Sophia got ready for an
easy win
Best in the league the
opponent stood no
chance
For up against Sofia was
the
rookie, Lin.
At their starting sides the



two girls got ready,
The ref blew his whistle,
“Let it begin!”
Sophia charged forward in
treating stance
And her pole neatly jabbed
Lin.

Win, win, an easy match,
Lin stood no chance at all.
Let’s go, celebrate an easy
match
I propose ice cream for all!

The ref looked perplexed
approaching Sophia,
Why did you stop the
match?
Sir, I hit her right in the
stomach,
Right there on that blue
patch.

I saw no such thing, let the
match continue
Go back to your starting
line,
Lin couldn’t believe her
great luck,
Sophia thought she would
die.

Once again the girls started
fencing,
Sophia jabbed Lin with a
quick blow,

Lin reeled backward, the ref
gave no sign,
Sophia glowered at her foe.

“Come on, start again” the
ref said cheerfully,
Sophia looked ready to
drop,
Both girls advanced
forward
Lin jabbed out her pole,
With landed on Sophia
with a plop.
Tweet, tweet the match is
done,
Lin won, shake hands,
good
bye,
Sophia did not think it very
fun
Though no one could
understand why.

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THE

DARK ISLAND

When 22-year-old Chad Gangwer woke up one sunny morning, the ship was on fire.

He jumped out of bed and ran through a cloud of smoke to the deck. He looked around. "Fire! Sailors, there is a fire!" shouted Chad. Only the sound of burning wood responded. "They couldn't be gone!" panicked Chad. He ran to the side of the ship and looked over. No lifeboats! They had left him to die.

There was a loud crack. Chad turned around and saw the mast falling toward him. He grabbed a board that the sailors used as a table and jumped into the warm South Pacific Ocean as he cried, "Onward!" He looked over his shoulder and watched as the falling mast split the ship in two.

Chad's body ached. He had been paddling and floating the entire day. Now it was getting dark. He wondered what had happened to the crew that was traveling with him from Chile to Australia. A seagull flew overhead and gave a cry. Chad straightened. Never in his life had he thought that one bird could give him so much joy. Where birds were, there was land! He strained his eyes and... yes, he did see a speck in the distance. Strength returned to his body and he paddled as fast as he could towards the island.

When Chad was closer to the island, he got a better look at it. A volcano loomed up. Rocks jutted out. Suddenly, there was an explosion! The volcano shot lava into the sky. Chad looked in horror as one

flaming mass arched and descended straight towards him. Chad launched himself off the raft and landed in the shallow waters of the beach. The flaming mass hit the raft and the whole thing burst into flames. Chad let out a sigh of relief. He had escaped just in time.

Chad looked up. Was that an outline of a house? In the middle of rich trees, a roof rose up into the sky. "Onward!" shouted Chad.

Chad looked in disbelief. This was no small house; this was a mansion! Tall elegant pillars rose to support intricately carved marble blocks. Formal estate gardens spread over a huge lawn. Not a leaf was out of place. Chad fixed his eyes on the metal gate looming before him. He took a deep breath and opened the gate. Then

there was darkness. A mechanical club, triggered by the opening gate, had hit Chad in the head.

When Chad was conscious again, he realized that he was lying next to one of the stately lawn bushes. He also noticed a small girl standing over him. Wait! He knew this face. It was the face of the ship captain's daughter. "Tabitha!" he muttered.

The girl looked pleased that he remembered her, but a sense of gloom hung around her. "Hello sir," she murmured. "I must take you to the boss."

"Who?" asked Chad. The girl started to walk away but stopped and beckoned for him to follow. Chad stood up quickly and realized that his body ached. Still, he followed the girl through the gate and into the house. Moments later, they reached a big door, and Tabitha, struggling, finally pushed the door open.

They entered a room with a ceiling so high that

Chad could barely see the top.

He looked across the room and saw a family of six seated at the table. The clinking of silver and china stopped abruptly as Chad entered the room. The tall man at the head of the table stood up.

"Who are you?" Chad stammered.

"Why, I am surprised



that you do not know me! I am Edward Forosa, a billionaire of the world," said the gentleman.

"Excuse me sir, I would like a way off this Island. I must get to Australia to compete in a weightlifting competition."

"Fascinating. You must be very strong. But as for

leaving, there is no way for you to get off my island. While you are here I could show you around," smirked Mr. Forosa.

Chad stammered, "Mr. Forosa, I really must—"

"NO!" Mr. Forosa pounded the table abruptly. "You will stay on this island for a long time. As for your weightlifting competition, I will see if you can complete a challenge that I have here."

"I will not be put to a test that I do not like," grimaced Chad.

"No? Well then, we will have some entertainment tonight, won't we family?" smiled Mr. Forosa. His wife and children laughed meanly. "If you do not do the task that I give you, you will be immediately thrown to our piranhas. Believe me, they can tear you up in less than a minute."

Chad paled. Thrown

to piranhas! No, he would not be threatened. "I will try your weightlifting test. In fact, I will enjoy it," boomed Chad.

"Very good!" said Mr. Forosa, a wicked smile on his face. "Girl," he barked, "show this man to the sleeping quarters. You will begin in the morning," he said to Chad.

"Onward!" Chad said as he was led down a passageway that got more shabby as they went. He looked at Tabitha. He was bursting with questions.

"Tabitha, where is your family?"

"They are sleeping in the quarters. My father scrapes the sulfur from the rocks and my mother makes the powder. The rest of the crew push the load up. That is... what I mean is that they are working for the boss. They have to make and push the load up



the volcano every day. You will see in the morning," Tabitha explained.

Finally, they stopped in front of a dark room that smelled like old socks. People were lying on small piles of rags scattered around the room.

"I must go to sleep," muttered Tabitha. Chad watched as Tabitha collapsed on one of the plies of rags near two sleeping figures that must be her parents.

Chad sat down on the floor and tried to puzzle out what Tabitha had said. But before he got very far, he collapsed from exhaustion.

A few hours later, Chad was roused by a rapid poking on his shoulder. It was Tabitha. "I am so sorry! I forgot about you. You are going to be late. We have to be there now," she stammered.

Chad looked at his watch. It was 3:30 in the morning. Chad quickly got up and followed Tabitha outside. Then Chad stopped in horror.



All around him people were slaving at scraping and mixing. The strong, terrible smell of sulfur hung thick in the air. A long line of people were throwing powders and salts into a pit. Then one man threw water and mud into the pit. Another scooped blobs from the pit until there was a massive boulder in front of him.

Then, five men pushed the great mass to the bottom of the volcano. Chad realized what they were doing. They were going to push that boulder up into the volcano. Then the volcano would explode, just like it had done last evening. That would provide a great entertainment for Mr. Forosa and his cruel family. That was the challenge Mr. Forosa had planned for



him!

Chad rushed over to the men pushing the boulder up the volcano and helped. “Onward!” he shouted. The men were startled at how strong the young man was. He could do the work of three men. Chad and two other men pushed and heaved all day to get the giant boulder up the mountain. They groaned and struggled. Sweat poured down their faces.

Just as it was dusk, they reached the top. With one last great heave, Chad pushed the boulder into the volcano. He looked down. At first nothing happened. All of a sudden, the volcano started to bubble. Then there was an explosion!

Lava shot upward in a blaze. “Run!” shouted the men who had pushed the boulder up the hill with him. Chad didn’t have to be told. He sprinted down the volcano and could hear it

spitting out lava. Chad was amazed at how quickly he reached the bottom of the volcano. He looked frantically at the people walking towards the house. None of them seemed to be concerned by the great explosion. They all seemed intent on two things — eating the small meal that had been provided and getting some sleep. Chad remembered that they only had a few hours before work began again.

When Chad settled himself on his sleeping mat, he knew that he had to stop the madness. But before he could think of how, he dropped off to sleep.

Over the ten days that followed, Chad slaved away with the rest of the prisoners. All the while, he was trying to think of a plan. He gathered all of the captives and asked them for ideas. None of them could think of any. One day, Tabitha came up to Chad.

"I have noticed that Mr. Forosa goes outside for his tea every day at 12:00 lunch," Tabitha said.

"Tabitha!" exclaimed Chad. "That could be our missing piece! Hmm...Let's see. I've got it! We could roll the boulder up the volcano so we reach the top just before noon. Then, if we could angle the boulder toward the mansion and push it down the volcano, we could crush Mr. Forosa and rid the world of his evil. Yes...that is it!" Chad would tell his plan to the other prisoners

tomorrow and soon they would be free!

In the morning when he told his plan, everyone immediately agreed to help. "Onward!" shouted Chad. For the last time the crew pushed the boulder up the mountain, groaning with its weight. Once they reached the top of the volcano, it was almost noon. They were right on schedule. Chad looked at the mansion below him and angled the boulder.

"Now!" yelled Chad. With a mighty push, they sent the boulder tumbling down the side of the volcano. Chad watched as it weaved its way down. But suddenly, the boulder ran into three trees and stopped.

"Fine!" shouted Chad. He looked over his shoulder at the other men and yelled, "wait till you see me on the patio. Then try to loosen the boulder from the trees."

Chad ran down the mountain. Thoughts of punishing Mr. Forosa formed in his mind. He must bring an end to that

man. He ran straight towards the formal gardens. "Onward!" Chad thought to himself.

He spotted Mr. Forosa on the patio smoking a cigar.

"You!" shouted Chad. "You have made all of these good people work too hard. Some of them are almost dead!"

"So you don't like my establishment then?" mused Mr. Forosa, not sounding frightened at all.

"Never, you heartless man!" bellowed Chad. Then there was a small rumble.

"What on earth..." began Mr. Forosa. Before he could finish, Chad was leaping towards him.

"You vile man! You will pay for what you have done!" shouted Chad. Then Chad looked towards the volcano. The giant boulder, loosened by the men, was upon them.

The Rounders' Softball Review

How can a game be won when no points have been scored? The night was turning gray when the team started to warm up. The Rounders threw the ball back and forth preparing for the softball game. Broken and chewed sunflower seeds were scattered on the ground. People started to gather to get good seats on the uncomfortable bleachers. The crowd waited for the game to start.

At 7:18, 18 minutes after the game was supposed to start, the umpire came onto the field and called the game as forfeit. I sat in the stands and watched the disappointed crowd move away. A cheer was heard from the Rounders' players

as they came out onto the field.

A once stressful and tense warmup turned into a fun batting practice. Dirt was kicked up in clouds, almost choking the excited players. They began to play



ball. The pitcher groaned when he couldn't pitch the ball into the strike zone. CRACK! A ball went flying into the outfield where players scrambled to get under it, and they gave a scream of joy when the left fielder caught it!

I looked and saw the batter as she pounded the plate as if telling the pitcher, "Give me all you got!" Then,

the angry cry when she got strike three. Excited screams of "heads up!" rang out as a ball flew foul and hit the bleachers. A ball soared high into the sky, almost out of view, just to come short of going over the outfield fence.

Player number 22 dove and caught it, getting dirty in the grass.

Players in red and navy uniforms ran all over the field. I looked and saw the funny

names like "Wall-E," "BuyMeFood," and "Wrecka" above the numbers on the back of the jerseys. The team gathered up and yelled "Rounders!" closing the batting practice that was supposed to be a game. I said to myself, "Self, always come to see the Rounders' games, for they always hold a surprise!"

An Eight-Legged Adventure



At 5:30 in the morning, a team ran three miles to a boathouse on the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These women, between the ages of 18 and 22, were attending Duquesne University in 1998. Finally, they reached their destination.

When one of the teammates, Karen Yakubisin, opened the door to the boathouse, she saw the long eight-person rowing boat hanging on the wall. Karen walked into the cold, damp boathouse. All of her teammates followed her.

As a team, they lifted the boat off the shelf and carried it to the edge of the water. Then they ran back to the boathouse to grab the oars. One at a time, the team carefully got into the

boat, butt first. Once they were in, they tied on the bulky shoes attached to the boat. Karen thought that they looked like bowling shoes. Then, with the help and balance of their oars, they were off down the river. Practice had started.



The eight rowers stared rowing. From Karen who was the first rower to Kelly who was the last rower, they pulled on the oars with all of their might. At the front of the boat, the coxswain pulled hard on

the tiller ropes, steering the boat straight. Their coach sped alongside the team in a motor boat yelling out tips through his booming megaphone. Some of the teammates felt almost deaf in the ear closest to the megaphone! Karen wondered if people along the river were mad at being woken up at 5:30 in the morning by the booming megaphone.

“Give me a power 10!” yelled the coach. Karen knew this meant to do ten strokes with her oars as fast as she could. She braced herself. “Go!” the coach yelled. The team pulled on their oars, grunting in the process. They were moving very fast down the river now.

Suddenly, a bloodcurdling scream rang

out from Kelly at the back of the boat! Karen's heart jumped. What was wrong? She couldn't stop rowing or her oars would hit her in the face. The coach yelled to slow the boat down. All of the rowers slowly pulled against their oars, trying to stop the boat.

Once the boat stopped, Karen looked back at Kelly and saw that she was laughing and crying. Kelly quickly scooped a brown spider, about the size of quarter, off her lap and into the water. Kelly was almost hysterical and looked like she was going to lose her breakfast!

The spider had crawled onto Kelly's lap from the inside of the boat. Kelly, who was absolutely terrified of spiders, had to just sit and look at it, because they couldn't stop the boat! When everyone realized what had happened, they all began to laugh, and started to gently tease Kelly.

"Why did the spider buy a car?" asked the coach.

"Why?" the team yelled.

"To take it out for a spin!"

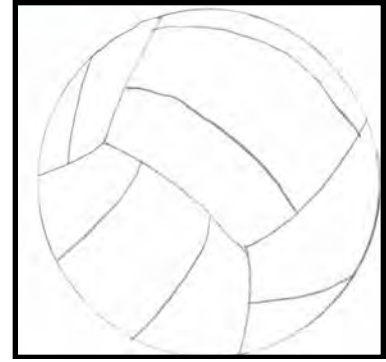
The team laughed about the spider incident. After a while, the rowing team continued their practice. Still, from that day on, Kelly always looked in the boat before she got in!

Basketball Poem

Balls flying through hoops;
The sound of squeaking shoes.

Kids running around on a crowded court;
Boys and girls together in this amazing sport.

Coaches dribbling behind their backs;
Children trying to follow.
Layups left and right;
This is basketball.



Volleyball Poem

The net
Players jump up
Hitting the ball around
Trying hard to win the game
Triumph!

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Sacrificing the State Meet

Kristen thought she was going to be sick. "I don't feel so good," she muttered.

"Don't worry," reassured her friend Rose who was standing next to her. "You will do great."

The two girls were standing outside *Flip* gymnastics studio. As soon as Kristen opened the door, she sighed and realized Rose was right. She saw familiar athletes that would be competing in the big meet that day. The winner would go to the state meet!

Kristen's coach, Mrs. Lavinia, ran over to her. "Ready for the big day? You will have some hard competition. Olivia Werner is here! She is very competitive," exclaimed Mrs. Lavinia.

"I am also very competitive," retorted Kristen.

"Yes you are," smiled Mrs. Lavinia. "Now hurry along, Kristen. You must start stretching and warm up."

"Good luck!" shouted Rose as Mrs. Lavinia led Kristen away. "You will do great."



Kristen looked back and smiled.


Kristen looked at the schedule that Mrs. Lavinia had handed her. She was going to compete against Olivia Werner in all three of her events. Kristen wanted to win the competition so badly!

"Mrs. Lavinia," asked Kristen, "did you sign me

up to compete against Olivia on purpose?"

"Yes I did," said Mrs. Lavinia proudly.

Kristen automatically clenched her fists. She couldn't wait to meet Olivia on the battlefield. She smiled with anticipation. I will do everything perfectly Kristen thought. *I must win.*

~~~~~~~~~~  
Kristen looked across the gym and saw Olivia. The first event was about to start. The loudspeaker came on, "Now Kristen Juoghs will be performing on the balance beam."

"Time to go," said Kristen confidently.

"You will do great," whispered Mrs. Lavinia.

Kristen walked over to the balance beam. The music started and Kristen counted the beat in her head. Kristen hopped on

and started her routine. She did a few steps to the right then she pushed off of the balance beam. Kristen did a split in the air and followed up with another split the opposite way, imitating a pair of scissors opening and closing. Kristen landed on the balance beam with perfect grace. She walked to the left and did the scissor leap again even more gracefully than before. Kristen finally flipped in the air for her dismount and landed on the ground with her hands in the air. The music stopped. A smile spread over Kristen's face.

In a few minutes Kristen's score was posted on the scoreboard: 10. A perfect score! Kristen ran over to Mrs. Lavinia and hugged her.

"You did amazing," Mrs. Lavinia hugged. Kristen ran over to where Rose and Kristen's mom were sitting in the stands.

"Fantastic!" Rose shouted. "You were fantastic!"

"I am so proud of you," Kristen's mother smiled.

Kristen was extremely happy.

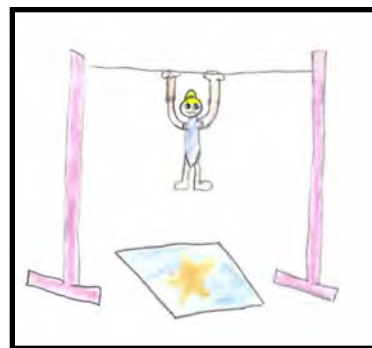
The loudspeaker echoed, "Olivia Werner will now be performing on the balance beam." The room quieted and every head turned toward Olivia.

The music started and Olivia flew up onto the balance beam. She gracefully pushed off one foot, assumed a split position in the air and landed on the balance beam on the other foot with perfect balance. She tiptoed to the other side of the balance beam, put one leg out and twirled around three times. Then she slid to the ground with a little wobble. The room was filled with applause. After a few minutes Olivia's score was on the board: 9. Almost a perfect score. Kristen eagerly waited for the next event.



"The next event will be the the bars," said Mrs. Lavinia.

Kristen felt even more confident than before. She had always been good on



the bars. She loved the swinging motion of nothing but air beneath her. She would definitely beat Olivia in this event.

The loudspeaker rang out, "Now Kristen Juoghs will be performing on the uneven bars."

Kristen walked over to the low bar, jumped, and hung on. She swung back and forth a few times and then swung around the bar five times. With a mighty force she flew off and grabbed the high bar. She hoisted herself up by her arms and swung around the bar one more time. Then Kristen let go of the bar, did a flip, and landed on the floor smiling.

Kristen looked over at Mrs. Lavinia and gave her a thumbs up.

When Kristen's score was shown there was a

cheer from Rose and Kristen's mom. Kristen had gotten 10 points, another perfect score!

Then the loudspeaker announced, "Now Olivia Werner will perform the on the uneven bars." Olivia crossed the room to the bars. She jumped and hung onto the low bar. She swung back and forth two times and then released the bar, flipped in the air twice, and hung onto the high bar. She swung around one more time with her legs apart and landed on the ground. Cheers sounded throughout the gym.

In moments, Olivia's score was on the board: 10. That meant that Kristen was only one point ahead of Olivia! Kristen started to feel pressured again. She must beat Olivia.

Mrs. Lavinia looked over and saw the worried look on Kristen's face. "Don't



worry," calmed Mrs. Lavinia. You will do great on the next event." Kristen smiled her thanks.



During her 30-minute lunch break, Kristen dreamed about going to the state meet. She would see top gymnasts and compete against them. She would even get to meet 2016 Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles who would be at the meet! That was everything Kristen wanted.

"Let's go, Kristen," called Mrs. Lavinia. "It's time to get back to the competition."

Kristen followed her out the door.



Again the loudspeaker announced, "Now Kristen Juoghs will be performing on the vault."

Kristen stepped up to the long ramp. She took a deep breath and then started running. She pushed off of the springboard, did a half turn, and then did a backflip. She did two summersaults in mid-air, and then finally



landed on the floor shakily but grinning at her performance.

"Amazing! Encore!" cheered the crowd.

Kristen ran back to Mrs. Lavinia and cried, "I did it!"

When Kristen's score appeared on the board she was concerned. She had gotten a 9. That meant that Olivia could tie with her. No, Kristen must win.

The loudspeaker announced, "Now Olivia Werner will perform on the vault."

Olivia stepped onto the mat. She started running. She did a handstand and then pushed off of the springboard backwards. She was supposed to push off of the vault when her hands rested on it, but instead her foot got caught on the bottom of the vault! Olivia was flung to the ground and landed on her

ankle with a crack. Her ankle must be broken or at least fractured.

A thought leaped into Kristen's head: Olivia was injured. She was out of the meet. That meant Kristen would beat Olivia! But what about Olivia? Since she had hurt her ankle, that meant her season would be over. Kristen felt sorry for Olivia and realized that she should not win because someone else had gotten hurt. Kristen made up her mind.

Kristen was the first to reach Olivia. She saw that the bones in Olivia's ankle were sticking out at an awkward angle. It must be broken.

"Are you ok?" Kristen asked. "Let me help you up!" Olivia groaned in pain. She started to say something but fainted. Kristen watched as a medical team put Olivia on a stretcher and loaded her into an ambulance. Kristen was extremely worried about Olivia. Would she be ok?

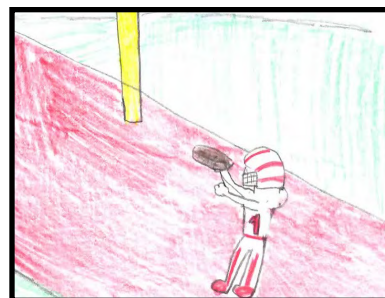


The next day, Kristen opened the door to Olivia's hospital room. She saw Olivia in the hospital bed sitting up with a bright pink cast on her right leg from her knee to her toes. Olivia saw the door open and looked at Kristen. A smile spread over her face.

"I am glad that you are ok," Kristen said. "I have decided to not go to the state meet. I would rather stay with you and make sure that you get better."

A puzzled look spread over Olivia's face. "You would do that for me?" Suddenly, Olivia smiled. "Thank you. We can be good friends now and help each other out. I really appreciate your sacrifice. Thank you."

The two girls sat on the hospital bed, now perfect friends, willing to do anything for each other, even skipping the state meet!



### **Football Poem**

Quarterback throws the ball  
Spinning rapidly through the air  
Between defenders' hands  
The receiver jumps  
Lands in the end zone,  
Touchdown!  
The crowd erupts with joy



### **Diving Poem**

There once was a lad  
named Ivan,  
Who decided to go divin'.  
The water went smack  
On poor Ivan's back;  
A sad fate to come to  
Ivan.

# A Driving Disaster

I was exasperated! There had been nonstop traffic for 2 hours. After the traffic cleared away, I was stuck on a 40-mile stretch behind this extremely slow driver. I would never make it to San Diego in time for my archery tournament.

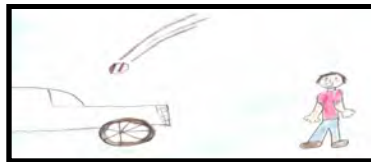
I cocked my head... What was that sound? Rain started to fall. I gripped the steering wheel so tightly that my knuckles went white. The car swerved. I should've checked the weather before I left my apartment.

All of a sudden, a giant truck roared in front of me. I swerved off the road into a ditch. What a mess!

I used my phone to call a tow truck. I settled myself for a wait. Once the tow guy got there, he took the toothpick out of his mouth and said, "Well, at least your car isn't damaged, but it will cost two hundred dollars to tow your car out." My eyes became the size of saucers.

As the tow truck drove away, I started my engine. At least it was sunny again so that I wouldn't slip for a second time. I looked down at my map and realized the orange juice I spilled on it this morning had made the map unreadable. I sighed.

In the distance I spotted a blue lake with little blobs



moving around. Those must be people. I'll ask them for directions.

I parked my car and walked over to a picnic table where a family was eating sandwiches. Some kids playing a baseball game nearby laughed, having a good time. "Excuse me, could you give me some directions?" I asked.

"Why sure!" exclaimed a woman who must have been the mom of the family. While she was talking, a

shout of "heads up!" rang out over the grass. A baseball flew through the air and landed with a crack on my windshield. I grimaced. I shouldn't have parked my car there.

"That will be \$300," said the man with *Fred's Windshield Company* on his navy shirt. I handed him a check and was on my way. This was an extremely expensive trip.

Suddenly, my car began to beep. The gas tank light flashed bright red. I had only 10 miles of gas left! I looked around frantically and spotted a gas station. I pulled in with relief. I should have paid more attention to my gas gauge.

When my gas tank was full, I pulled out of the station. I rolled my window up so I didn't have to hear the noisy construction crew right outside the gas station. "What a day," I thought to myself. "I need to pay more attention to what I am doing." There was a jolt. I looked out my window. I had driven into a lane of wet cement.

# *The Swim Meet*

The waiting crowd stops  
the noise

Holding their breath, a  
quiet, tense,

Moment, then the loud  
buzzer sounds.

The frigid water like a hard  
slap

In the face, a stunned  
second before,

Regaining consciousness,  
and



Starting the laborious swim  
to the finish line.

Opponents follow, closing  
in, trying to

Pass, struggling to stay  
ahead,

Swimming and straining to  
the limits,

At the wall, they push off,  
half-way done.

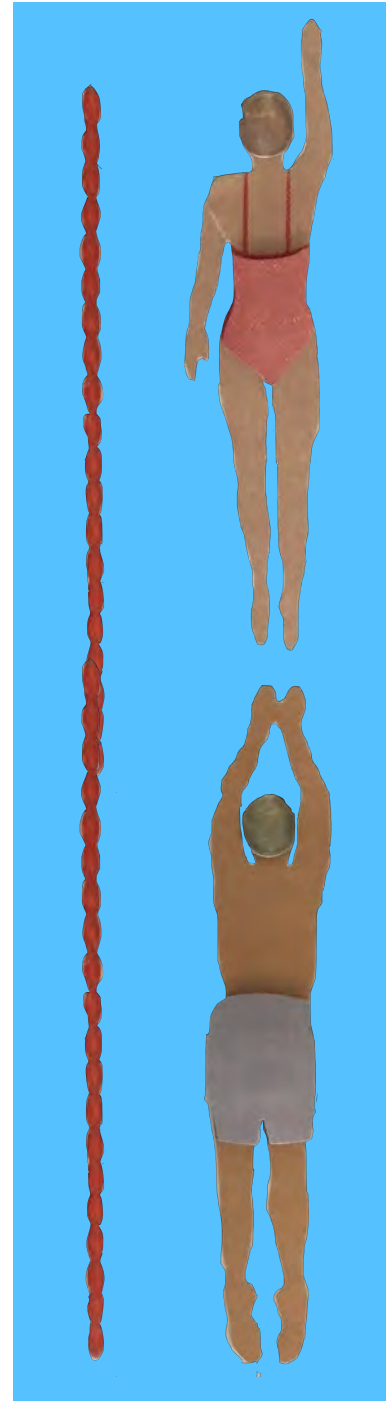
The final stretch, all counts  
on this,

The swimmers struggle, all  
about the same,

One pulls ahead, fighting to  
touch, the wall

And get the final, glorious  
prize

The first place ribbon!



# THE PERFECT GAME

It was one of those clear, crisp October mornings in Pennsylvania. I could imagine a thin layer of frost on the golf course. I couldn't wait as I got out of my truck to see my three good friends, Tom, Bobby, and Ronnie. We all looked forward to Tuesday morning golf. When I got on the golf course, the three buddies in T-shirts and shorts were chatting and having a good time. They shouted, "Joe!

How are you buddy?" as I walked up the freshly cut grass hill. I smiled back and said, "As good as I can be."

We took out our clubs and got ready to tee off. Each of us had fourteen clubs, which is the maximum number of clubs allowed. I chuckled to myself when I saw the knitted minion golf club covers on the tops of my clubs. The funny, little yellow faces of Kevin, Bob,

and Stewart smiled back at me. I looked over the bright green grass of Black Hawk Golf Course in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania and thought of when I first started golf as a caddy over forty-seven years ago.

We hit the balls casually taking our sweet old time. Black Hawk was a very hilly course, so naturally my ball rolled down a hill and into a sand trap! I hit two other balls into sand traps that day. Ugh! At least I didn't hit any tall, looming trees. Trees are the worst hazard, in my opinion.

We rode in our golf carts over the rolling hills to the next hole. Golf carts really speed up the game, especially since the course is very long. We would've had to have been mountain goats to climb all of those hills! Professional golfers have to walk (Ha!), but at least they have caddies to carry their golf clubs. Black Hawk Golf Course features



eighteen holes. It is a par seventy-one course, but we all expected to score higher than that. Only professional golfers score lower than par, and Tom, Bobby, Ronnie and I aren't too competitive (we just like to have fun!).

We looked at the handicap for each hole, rated eighteen to one (eighteen being the easiest and one being the hardest). We worked our way through the easy and hard holes.



The game was a little frustrating when I couldn't hit the ball right, but overall it was really fun. After nine holes, we stopped playing to have a rest and eat lunch. Then we continued playing the last nine holes.

Finally, we rode out on our golf carts to the final putting green. We lined up and hit the balls into the hole (or at least they found their way there eventually). Ronnie won with a score of eighty-five points followed closely by Tom who scored eighty-six. I scored ninety-three points, and Bobby brought up the rear with ninety-eight points. Not bad for a bunch of guys in their seventies. Our game took a little over four hours. Afterwards, we laughed about the game as we said good bye to each other.

I hopped into my truck and thought what a perfect golf game it had turned out be with my three great friends.

## **Hockey Poem**

**Hurried** players skating  
around the rink

**Overtime** clock ticking  
down

**Coaches** yelling out  
plays

**Keep** your eye on the  
puck!

**Every** player counts

**Yelling** fans bang on the  
glass

