

“What Basketball Means to Me”

At the age of six, I joined the co-ed PeeWee basketball team at our local Boys & Girls Club. I was one of only two girls on the team. Ever since, basketball has been my life. I have lived and breathed basketball - winter, spring, summer and fall for the past twelve years. I have played for the Boys & Girls Club, my school teams and various AAU teams.

Although I have had to overcome many obstacles, it has not changed my love for the game. Each experience has helped me grow. It was an incredible feeling being the only freshman on the varsity team my first year of high school. I had to work hard and prove I deserved my spot on the team. My coach, my team and I had high expectations for us that year. Then, everything changed. I tore a ligament in my leg during the biggest game of the season. I had to cheer my teammates on from the sidelines most of the season. After therapy, I was able to return for the last few games.

Each year our team became better, worked harder and advanced a little further. At the end of my sophomore year, I was faced with yet another obstacle. I broke my collar bone in my very first summer league game. I had to cancel my registration at the elite camps and had no physical activity for six weeks. This was a small set back, but I knew I would bounce back as usual. My junior year, I tore my meniscus and had to have knee surgery. I missed part of the AAU season, but I attended every practice and watched the conditioning and intense workouts my teammates endured. I could not wait until I was cleared to participate. I went to therapy, did my exercises and finally received clearance to step back on the court and give it my all.

It was at this point I realized how much basketball really meant to me. It was second nature because I had been playing all my life. But this was the most important time; basketball had to mean everything to me. It was my last AAU season and soon to be my last high school season. I had to push myself like never before and I was more determined than ever to make up the time I had lost. The hard work finally paid off. I remained healthy and as Team Captain helped lead my high school team to the State Championship.

Basketball means so much to me because it has helped me develop into the person I am today. It has matured me physically, mentally and socially. I have become more physically fit and stronger than ever before. I have been challenged mentally to outthink opponents both on and off the court. I have developed socially creating bonds and lasting friendships. Most importantly, it has prepared me for my ultimate goal – playing in college!