

The Missed Fly Ball  
Final Draft

It was only a fly ball, but I missed it. I missed a fly ball in the final baseball game my 3rd grade year . It was a beautiful day, a few clouds covering the extremely blue summer sky. It was very hot. I remember this because of the tremendous amount of sweat that would run down my face while I stood out in right field. When I heard that crack of the bat, all I could hope for was that the ball would not come my direction. I have never had good luck, so the ball was coming right for me. I didn't even have to move, all I did was put my glove in the air and again hope it hit my glove. It did hit the glove but bounced right out and behind me. Now all there was to do was pick up the ball and throw it. It was not this simple for me. I turned around, bent down for the ball, and after the third try successfully grabbed it and stood back up and prepared to throw. Well the first thing that came to mind was just to fling it up in the air and hope it makes it to somebody around the base runner. Considering my previous luck, I just threw it to the first basemen. The throw was not any better then the catch. It landed 5 feet short and by the time the first basemen recovered the runner had rounded third base and was at least halfway home. The runner did score on a close play at the plate. The run gave the other team a two run advantage going into the sixth inning, which was the last in midget league. I knew at this point I was going to have a hard time facing the other guys on the team after this big let down. It also made me decide to quit baseball all together. Since quitting baseball at such a early age I missed on the opportunity to take part in what could have, at one time, been considered America's Pastime.

Once a few years later I started to learn how to play basketball for the first time. It was just a few friends and myself down at the park shooting hoops. I wasn't terrible, considering I had never really played before. We played a few games of Horse and a few other simple shooting games. I wasn't the best but I wasn't always last. I was doing good until someone suggested we play twenty-one. I was okay with the decision, but I had a gut feeling that I wouldn't do well. It sparked my fear of putting myself in that vulnerable position, that leaves me open for embarrassment and ridicule. The idea of missing another fly ball or mispronouncing a word in front of anybody else makes me cringe. Living in reality as it is, I have come to accept that a totally sheltered life is not possible and that I will make mistakes and have to live with them. This game required me to dribble the ball and run and shoot. The game had to many things to do all at once. Out of no where John looks at me a yells, "Here Cliff you break the ice." And he threw me the ball. I was so nervous I could not even catch the ball. But then I had to ask, "Where do I shoot from?" I got all kinds of strange looks, and John looked at me and said, "From the top of the key." And I get this real blank look on my face letting every-one know that I was totally clue less. I remember hearing "Give me the ball," and "Shoot the ball." Dan said, "Just go to the foul line and shoot the ball." And that is just what I did. I think it could have been considered the biggest air ball in the history of the sport. For most of the game I just stood out of the way and watched. The few times I did get my hands on the ball I would shoot an air ball, dribble it off my foot or have it stolen. I ended up scoring once toward the end, but I was still at the bottom of the pile. I believe also that it has had an effect on my willingness to stay with something until the end. For a very long time, I would not stick with something and see it through. I would pick a new hobby every week or so. A new club every month. As I got older I gained more responsibility in the clubs and organization I was involved with. This ended up in undue stress and work. In my senior year in high school I was able to edit my school yearbook, be president of the junior academy of science and treasurer of the stu-dent congress.

Since learning just to do it, and not to worry about the consequences I have had an easier time opening up and trying new things. A few summers ago I was invited to

go roller blading with a few friends on Saturday. I first thought, I'm going to make a fool out of myself and bust my ass. Then I thought well it could be fun. I did go, and it was the first time for three of the four of us. The forth had been a few times before. After we strapped ourselves in the blades, we started making our way to the ring. This was quite frightening because out there the experience bunch would fly around the ring at high speed swerving in and out of crowded areas with ease. This also gave me a little confi-dence because seeing them do that, I realized the it couldn't be impossible to have some fun on these things. All four of us made our way on the arena floor. Slowly starting to move with the flow of traffic. Jessica was the first to go down, around the first curve. But by natural reaction she grabbed John who feel right down beside her. All I could do was laugh and well I lost my balance and busted my ass. But this time it was innocent because I wasn't the first and we all were learning and making mistakes at the same time. That night set the stage for the entire summer. We spent three to four nights a week at this place, trying to get better and have fun. Most of the time just having good old fash-ioned fun. Each time I would feel more confidence, not only in roller blading, but in eve-rything I did. By the end of the summer we were getting good, we could weave in and out of crowded areas do a few jumps here and there but for the most part just have fun.

On the brighter side of my early misfortune, the time I did not spend sporting it up, I spent hitting the books. This helped me do well in school and prepare myself aca-demically. I was able to get involved with a few of the organizations at my school and help in unorthodox ways at my high school. I was involved in Yearbook, Student Gov-ernment, Junior Academy of Science and Principal's Council. In Yearbook, I edited what has been judged the number one yearbook in the country. As an officer in student government I was able to lay the ground work for a new and improved Student Congress. All of this while maintaining a respectable grade point average in all honors and ad-vanced placement classes. All of this because of one great misfortune and a missed fly ball.