

The gym

Literature, Russian Literature



As I stroll up to the two giant doors I reach out and grasp one of the pairs of handles, my fingers smudging its shimmering, chrome profile. As I enter the gym, the smells of stale sweat and cleaner mingle with my nose, creating flashbacks of prior experiences. I flash my ID card to the employee working at the front desk and continue on through until I reach my ultimate destination; the basketball court.

When I enter the court the first thing I notice are the baskets. They stand over the court like sentinels; opposing each other on opposite sides like guards on the border of North and South Korea. The padding on the backboards, now a bland blue from wear and tear, is falling apart like an old sofa, while the backboard itself, once crystal clear, is streaked with white blotches and scratches. The rims, connected to the backboard, are a rusty orange that blisters whoever is foolish enough to hand on it. While the baskets are needed to play the sport, the most important component of a basketball court is the floor.

The basketball court's floor is springy and seems to assist in your jumping ability. They are made of a hard wood that is a tinged yellow, similar in color to an old desk. When the floor is clean, you can nearly see your reflection, but don't let its shiny surface fool you though; landing on it may prove to be more painful than you think. However, when the floor is dirty it is unforgiving; your shoes slip and slide across the surface, like a scene out of a comic book. Even though the floor of a basketball court is important, there is something else needed to play the sport.

In order to play the sport of basketball you need, quite simply put, a basketball. Employees working in the front of the complex will provide you with a basketball, but you have to leave your ID card with them. The basketballs are made out of bright, orange leather that is firm, yet soft to the touch. They bounce easily, allowing you to perform whatever dribbling technique your heart desires. Every player handles a basketball differently though and there are many different types of players that play at the gym.

The people that hoop at the gym can be put into different categories. Most players fall into the stereotypical role of the player that just plays for fun: he wears ankle socks and cheap shoes, and usually isn't that great of a player. Other people include the buff guy that relies on his strength rather than his fundamentals, the shooter with his reliable ability to spread the floor with his range, the slasher who is able to get to the hoop and create open shots for the shooters, and finally the ballhawk who annoys you with his intense defense and his knack of getting loose balls. All of these people are different but they mesh because their strengths compliment other people's weaknesses.

Whenever I go to the gym all of the sights, smells, and sounds help create images in my head that make me want to go back again and again. But probably the most memorable experiences are leaving; my slow, fatigued steps finally leading myself back through the giant doors and out into the world.