

It was my last year at  
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It was my last year at San Fernando high.

It was a memorable time of my life because I knew that I would graduate at the end of that year. My senior year also became the most significant year of my life, because I got to do something that I have always wanted to try tennis. I had always wanted to play tennis ever since I was a kid, but there wasn't enough time for me to join tennis team. One day, Mr. Cockerill who was my teacher and also the tennis coach, encouraged me to join the team.

I thought it might be the only chance for me to get involved, and decided to join the team. Mr. Cockerill was assigned to be our coach. He is a tall, strong old man with a red face.

I loved to listen of what he said, because I felt he was giving me a valuable lesson especially during practice hours that he thought it could be use for the game. My first lesson was not that great. I had to pick up the balls most of the time. I was unable to hold firmly a tennis racket's grip. I practiced very hard almost every day after school included the weekends. There were few times I wanted to quit the challenges, but my friends had given back my courage. These friends of mine had started playing tennis two years before I came in to join the team. Their skills were so much improved compared to me.

They were willing to stay and practice with me. I was also happy that my oldest brother, an excellent singles player helped me out at the start. At home I often admire his awards and whispered to myself that; "I would never get one like this all my life. It is impossible for me to be an athlete." In the

beginning, I knew that I wasn't a good player, but it didn't stop me from joining the team.

However my father was worried that if I came home so late at night, I wouldn't have enough time to study for other classes. He didn't allow me to be involved in this kind of activity. I wanted to beg my dad to let me continue, but we didn't have a good communication with each other. I felt either very guilty for not joining the team or for going against my dad's will. He would disown me if I didn't listen to him. I felt I was pushed to the edge of a cliff. His attitude had emotionally hurt when I personally heard it of what he had treated me.

I couldn't stop crying for days. My tears just ceaselessly drooped. My coach worried why I didn't look so well in class. He asked few times, but I couldn't find a way to start explaining the whole situation. I really wanted to resolve this problem as soon as possible. It was my dream to be in tennis team, and Mr. Cockerill was the only person who can talk to my dad. Finally, he actually did let me join the team.

In the end, I realized that how difficult it was for me to be on the tennis team. I should play my best in order to please my dad, my coach, my friends, and for San Fernando high. During the first tournament, I was very nervous and excited at the same time. It was my first competition; I couldn't hold my racket still. My entire body was shaking, but luckily no one noticed that. Mr.

Cockerill gathered us in class and explained what the strategies would be and how we should play. He also reminded us to have a positive attitude even if we lost the game. At the end of the game I lost to my opponent with a scoring

3-8. I felt very happy that at least I had made some effort for my score, and I took me few weeks to practice. Mr.

Cockerill was very kind and so understanding. He didn't only slow anything about the lost, but he also took well care of us with cookies, fruits and drinks. I had followed his teaching, " as long as you all do your best, I am very please, and I ask no more than that.

" I kept it as an encouragement. My time was devoted to this game at least one or two hours every day. Mr. Cockerill was very satisfied because I would never complain about the practice section and I always gave smile at him.

I practically never won the game myself, although I had learned to improve my skill from those experts who had been playing for years. I didn't feel that bad because it took me a few months to be Varsity. I didn't win any game, but I could tell myself each time I had to play that, " I have done my best." Once, during a game, I twisted my ankle when I served the ball. I said nothing to my coach, because I was afraid to let him down nor I wanted him to be worried. They didn't realize how hurt I was at that day. I had to pretend to smile at my team. I was very queer; I had to endure that physically pain till the last second.

It took me few days to recover my ankle. That was also the last game that I played for San Fernando high. The last day of a semester, Mr.

Cockerill invited all of members in the team to the banquet. There most of my team members had received their award letters and trophies. At last, the final trophy was given as an " inspiration to Kim-Anh Le," he yelled out loud.

“ It is forme?” I was so surprise and looked around the room to see if he was kiddingme. I was speechless at that moment. As I walked up to the stage to receive theaward, I heard all the clapping hands toward me. Mr. Cockerill gave me a hug andwhisper in my ear, “ you deserve it, honey. I am very proud of you.” This beautiful day has always been there ever since I graduated.

It was such abest memory that I had treasured in my heart. It couldn't describe how myfeeling was at the banquet, but Mr. Cockerill had adhered to my mind, he wasalways there for me to look up to.

All I really wanted to say is “ thanks toMr. Cockerill for giving me a best lesson that I have ever had.” Now I haveable to play tennis without any help.

Sports and Games