

THE BIG GAME

BY ROSS M.

JIM LOVED TO PLAY BASKETBALL. IT WAS HIS FAVORITE SPORT AND HE PRACTICED EVERYDAY. NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER, HE PRACTICED SPRING, SUMMER, FALL, AND WINTER. JIM WAS ON A TEAM NAMED THE PIRATES. THEY WERE NOT VERY GOOD, BUT JIM WAS. HE WAS THE BEST PLAYER ON THE TEAM.

THE SEASON WAS JUST ABOUT TO START, AND TOMORROW THE PIRATES WERE PLAYING THEIR FIRST GAME. JIM COULD HARDLY WAIT. THAT NIGHT HE COULD NOT SLEEP BECAUSE HE WAS SO EXCITED.

FINALLY THE MORNING CAME. IT WAS GAME DAY! JIM PUT ON HIS SHORTS WITH THE PIRATE LOGO. THE PIRATE WAS FIERCE LOOKING WITH A PATCH OVER THE LEFT EYE. HE PUT ON HIS JERSEY WITH THE SAME LOGO AND THE NUMBER TEN ON THE BACK. HE PULLED ON HIS SOCKS AND SLIPPED ON HIS SNEAKERS. THEN HE CALLED TO HIS MOM, "LET'S GO!" SHE CAME DOWNSTAIRS AND THEY HURRIED RIGHT OUT THE FRONT DOOR. JIM AND HIS MOM JUMPED INTO HER BRIGHT RED CONVERTIBLE. JIM LOVED RIDING IN HIS MOM'S CONVERTIBLE BECAUSE HE LOVED HAVING THE AIR BLOWING IN HIS FACE.

WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE GYM WHICH WAS INSIDE AN OLD CHURCH, JIM STARTED TO FEEL NERVOUS BECAUSE HIS TEAM WAS PLAYING THE SHARKS. THEY FOULED A LOT. THE LAST TIME THE PIRATES PLAYED THE SHARKS, A PLAYER ON THE SHARKS' TEAM PUSHED JIM WHEN HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A THREE POINT SHOT. HE FELL TO THE HARDWOOD, TWISTED HIS LEFT ANKLE AND SCRAPED UP HIS ELBOW.

THE COACH BLEW THE WHISTLE AND SAID, "HUDDLE UP!" HE TOLD US TO PLAY HARD. THEN HE SAID, "PIRATES ON THREE." WE ALL SCREAMED, "ONE, TWO, THREE PIRATES!!!!" JIM WALKED ON THE FLOOR WITH FOUR OTHER TEAMMATES. THE REFEREE BLEW THE WHISTLE AND SAID, "JUMP BALL." ANDREW JUMPED FOR THE PIRATES AND HE ALWAYS WON THE TIP. THE REF THREW THE BALL INTO THE AIR AND SURE ENOUGH, ANDREW WON THE TIP! THE BALL BOUNCED RIGHT TO JIM AND HE STARTED DRIBBLING THE BALL UP THE FLOOR. HE QUICKLY SHOT A JUMPER AND IT HIT THE BACKBOARD AND WENT IN THE BASKET. AFTER THAT, JIM WAS HITTING EVERY SHOT THAT HE TOOK. AT THE END OF THE FIRST HALF HE HAD ELEVEN POINTS AND SIX ASSISTS. THE SCORE WAS TWENTY-TWO TO THIRTY. THE PIRATES WERE LOSING.

JIM WAS READY FOR THE SECOND HALF. HE KNEW HE HAD TO PUT FORTH HIS BEST EFFORT IF THE PIRATES WERE GOING TO PULL OFF AN AMAZING WIN. JIM WOULD HAVE TO SCORE MORE POINTS WHILE SETTING UP HIS TEAMMATES FOR SHOTS. HE ALSO KNEW THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO GET MORE REBOUNDS TO PREVENT THE SHARKS FROM GETTING SECOND CHANCE SHOTS. JIM STARTED OFF THE THIRD QUARTER WITH A THREE POINTER. THE PIRATES WENT ON A TEN TO TWO RUN TYING THE GAME AT 32. WHEN THERE WERE FIVE SECONDS LEFT IN THE THIRD QUARTER, THE SHARKS HIT A TWO POINT SHOT AT THE BUZZER.

THERE WAS ONE QUARTER LEFT. JIM KNEW THAT HE HAD TO PLAY HIS BEST QUARTER OF BASKETBALL TO WALK OUT WITH A WIN. THE SCORE WAS NOW THIRTY-FOUR TO THIRTY-TWO IN FAVOR OF THE SHARKS. JIM WALKED ONTO THE FLOOR READY TO PLAY. THE SHARKS CAME STRONG SCORING FIVE UNANSWERED POINTS. WITH TIME

RUNNING OUT, THE SHARKS LEAD BY SEVEN. JIM DRIBBLED QUICKLY UP THE COURT AND SHOT A LONG THREE. HE SWOOSHED IT, NOTHING BUT NET! JIM LOVED THAT SOUND. THE SHARKS RAN DOWN THE COURT AND MISSED A LAY-UP. JIM GRABBED THE REBOUND, HUSTLED DOWN THE COURT AND SHOT UP A FREE-THROW LINE JUMP SHOT, NOTHING BUT NET. THE SHARKS BROUGHT IT SLOWLY DOWN THE COURT, TRYING TO RUN OUT THE CLOCK. ANDREW MADE A QUICK MOVE AND STOLE THE BALL. HE PASSED IT OFF TO JIM WHO WAS SET TO MAKE A LAY-UP AS THE BUZZER SOUNDED, BUT ONE OF THE SHARKS' PLAYERS FOULED JIM AS HE BANKED THE BALL OFF OF THE BACKBOARD. THE GAME WAS TIED WITH JIM AT THE LINE TO SHOOT THE GAME WINNING FREE THROW. AS JIM STEPS UP TO THE LINE, HE BOUNCES THE BALL THREE TIMES AND TAKES A DEEP BREATH TO CALM HIS NERVES. JIM SHOOTS THE BALL. AS IT MAKES IT WAY TO THE RIM, JIM THINKS THAT IF HE MISSES THE SHOT HE WILL PASS OUT RIGHT THERE ON THE HARDWOOD. BUT LUCKILY FOR JIM AND THE PIRATES, HIS SHOT SWISHES THROUGH THE NET!

THE PIRATED CLEARED THE BENCH IN A SPLIT SECOND. ALL OF HIS TEAMMATES PICKED JIM UP AND CHANTED, "JIM, JIM, JIM!"

JIM WAS THE HERO THAT HE HAD ALWAYS DREAMED OF BEING.