

Grade 8 - Narrative

Last but not Least

“On your mark, get set, GO!” shouted the referee to indicate the first race of the swim meet was beginning.

Davis Jeffries watched three of his teammates from Preston Junior High compete in the backstroke relay race, sprinting through the water in hopes of a win. The opposing team, Gifford Junior High, was a highly competitive team and was just as eager to win this relay.

Davis cheered for his teammates hoping they would win first place, but at times it seemed impossible because Gifford’s swimmers increased their speed as the relay progressed, making it a very close match. At the end of the relay, Preston was the top scorer but not the overall champion because the meet continued until late in the afternoon.

The champion of the swim meet would be the team that accumulated the most number of points from all the events of the meet. A clear winner could not be determined until near the end of the meet because the lead kept alternating as both teams accumulated more points. The roar of the crowd told the Preston team members that they were victorious.

The bus ride back to Preston was more subdued than the ending of the swim meet, because the team was exhausted from the events they had participated in earlier that day. Their faces did not show signs of being tired, but rather grins that reflected their happiness about a triumphant victory.

The bus pulled into the Preston school parking lot, and the team members disembarked to search for their ride home. Davis noticed his father’s car, climbed into the passenger’s seat, and buckled his seatbelt.

“Well, which team was triumphant?” asked Mr. Jeffries.

“Preston won another close competition against Gifford. It came down to the last two medleys, but Jack was able to withstand the fierce competition. He was able to sprint through both medleys without showing signs of fatigue!” explained Davis enthusiastically.

“How many events did you participate in?” asked his dad.

Davis’s excitement of his play-by-play retelling of the meet was replaced with a frown.

“Remember, Dad, I couldn’t participate in any swim events for this meet because

I was sick and missed a few days of school this week, which also meant I missed swim practice on those days. I wouldn't have been adequately prepared for the meet," said Davis with a note of melancholy.

Dad felt badly that he had forgotten Davis had been sick earlier in the week. He knew that Davis had worked tremendously hard since he arrived at Preston to be a member of the swim team and must have been disappointed that he could not compete.

Davis had only attended Preston a few months and had tried out for the swim team when he arrived. The coaches were impressed with Davis's talent and had chosen him to be a member of the swim team. Davis was overjoyed that he had proven his swimming skills and abilities to the coaches through his continuous practice and qualifying for the swim team. To participate in another meet, Davis would need to keep practicing to show his coaches that he was able to compete effectively.

Preston continued a winning streak with one exception—a loss to another team that had the same record—nine wins and one loss. Now Preston was facing Greenwood Junior High once again, the team they had lost to earlier in the season. A win was needed in order to achieve the district title. The swim team had doubled their practice drills in the water just for this event, and Davis had put in additional hours of practice to prepare for the meet. The team was ready.

The Preston swim team gathered near the pool. Their competition, Greenwood, seemed assured of a win. Preston did not let this bother them and appeared confident, standing and waiting for the opening ceremonies to begin.

Davis looked up at the bleachers and was excited to see both of his parents cheering for Preston. He would be completing the last medley of the meet doing the freestyle technique.

"Okay, team! This is it—time to win the district title! Who's with me?" inquired Jack, the team captain.

"We are!" shouted the team in unison.

The district title would be determined by the total number of points received during the meet. The lead had changed several times during the meet, but Greenwood currently was ahead by one point. The fans of both teams were surprised by such an even match. Davis encouraged his team whenever possible; then it was his turn to compete.

Davis was quite nervous, since he was the finisher of the medley and the district title would be determined by the outcome of this event. He hoped the extra practicing would pay off.

"On your mark, get set, GO!" shouted the referee.

It seemed unreal to Davis when he entered the water after one of his teammates, Greg, had touched the pool wall. Davis sprinted through the freestyle and completed the medley in record time.

Davis's determination and persistence in the final medley ultimately led Preston to a victory. The team was jubilant and hoisted Davis onto their shoulders for the outstanding finish of the medley, which had made Preston the district champions!